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Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights

Arab Women and Peacemaking

Contributions and Failures in Light of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

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Report summary

Arab Women and the Peace Industry: Contributions and Failures in the Light of the Women, Peace, and Security (“WPS”)

The effects of war are felt by both men and women alike. However, the suffering of women is different given their roles, responsibilities, and view of society. Women face various forms of violence including rape, displacement, killing, arrest, in addition to their responsibilities as wives and mothers. Wars and armed conflicts also have devastating effects on health, education, economic and social life. Besides, they trigger civilians to leave their homes and flee the bombing and fighting. Conflicts also affect development programs as they deplete state capacities for humanitarian aid.

Women are the most affected by wars and armed conflicts. Women in the Arab region face obstacles in times of conflict and peace, despite the positive steps taken by some Arab countries to empower and protect women. They strengthened the legislative structure of these countries, and the implementation of these legislations and executive decisions ensured equalize women with men in parliament and allocated specific ministerial quotas to women in some Arab governments. These positive steps reinforced the concept of humanitarian security, which brings together all segments of society, building sustainable community peace that enhances the achievement of SDG 16. However, women in the Arab region still face various challenges that impede their effective participation in peace-making as an equal to men and not incompetent. These challenges are mainly represented in the stereotypical image of women in society, which perceives the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women contrary to religious norms and traditions, the widespread armed conflicts that marginalize women and subject them to a wide spectrum of violations and abusive practices. The prevalence of impunity and lack of accountability for crimes such

as sexual violence, physical attacks, and gender-based violence reinforced these practices. Women in these conflict zones seek not to obtain their legitimate rights, but to avoid abuse, stigmatization, and defamation. Even at the international community, women were not considered partner in preventing conflict and concluding peace negotiations and other armistice and ceasefire agreements.

However, in 2000, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, the most important resolution on women's peace and security agenda, followed by nine other resolutions that complement it, causing women to be considered partners in conflict resolution, prevention, and management. Security Council Resolution 1325 is the first document of an official and legal nature to be adopted by the UN Security Council to call on the parties to the conflict to respect women's rights and support their participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction and reconstruction.

The resolution also emphasized the positive relationship between peacekeeping and women's participation in negotiations that aimed at sustaining peace. According to recent statistics, from 1992 to 2020, women constituted 13% of negotiators, 6% of mediators, and 6% of signatories to peace processes. However, these percentages are declining in the Arab region, despite the lack of accurate data regarding the participation of women in peace negotiations, especially in countries experiencing armed conflicts.

After adopting the resolution, which main pillars are participation, protection, prevention, prevention, recovery, and peacebuilding, the issue of women become a constant item on the agenda of the Security Council, as an issue closely related to international security such as economic and military issues.

This paper focuses on the legal references for women's participation in peacebuilding, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,

Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, and finally, the regional strategy *Protecting Arab Women: Security and Peace* launched by the Arab League in 2012. It also discusses the second part of the paper: Involving Arab women in peacebuilding, focusing on contributions and failures. The third part focuses on the four pillars of Security Council Resolution 1325 and the extent of their implementation in the Arab region. The fourth part discusses the role of governments in involving women in building peace, and the last discusses the role of civil society in involving women in peacebuilding.

First: Legal References for Women's Participation in Peacebuilding

International treaties and regional strategies beside the Security Council resolutions have many references that put women as partners in peacebuilding processes, especially in countries with armed conflicts, including: **the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Resolution 1325 of 2000, Resolution 1820 of 2008, Goal No. 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the regional strategy "Protecting Arab Women: Security and Peace.**

Second: The importance of women's participation in the peace-making process

1. More sustainable and inclusive peace can be achieved through women's participation in peacebuilding negotiations; it meets the needs of all segments of society.
2. Women contribute to the peacebuilding process from the family to the community, bring up peace for future generations, establish the democratic transition process, and post-war reconstruction.
3. Proving the importance of the women's role - regardless of their being a victim of war - as an active partner who possesses aspirations, visions, and interests and can express and lead them.

4. Women are usually more affected during and after periods of conflict; therefore, they are the ones who can express and demand the needs of vulnerable groups (missing persons, widows, refugees ...); that are usually ignored.
5. Ensuring the representation of women in international forums and peace conferences; to enable them to raise women's issues, needs, and aspirations.
6. Ensuring the implementation of gender considerations and decisions.
7. Provide funds specifically directed to address women's issues; since the provision of financial funding enables women's movements to achieve independence; thus, it enhances their participation in public affairs and their involvement as partners in the peacebuilding system.
8. Ensuring the inclusion of women in political processes and structures that follow peace agreements such as government, constitution-drafting committees, and temporary governance structures.
9. Ensuring that women enjoy has equal opportunities with men in the decision-making process.
10. Ensure that the women's agenda is included in the final peace agreement.

Third: Involving Arab women in peacebuilding: contributions & failures

Armed conflicts, widespread terrorism, external interference, the weakness of some countries, and their inability to meet the needs of their people on the economic and social level affected the Arab region. Women are the most affected by armed conflicts, especially in the Arab region. This part focuses on the urgent need for women's participation in peace negotiations as a primary party and peace-building processes,

not just a secondary presence that does not support women's issues in the concluded agreements.

Although there is no indicator to measure the impact of women's presence in peace talks and at the negotiating table between the conflicting parties, some research has concluded that the failure rate of negotiations increases by 50% if civil bodies, especially those related to women, are not involved. A study also confirmed that women's access to peace negotiations increases by 20% the peace agreement continuation chances and 35% the continuation chances for at least 15 years¹.

Some research concluded that about 61 conflicts ended from 1980 to 2016. 77% of them ended with a peace agreement after protracted negotiations between the parties to the conflict. 16.4% of these conflicts ended as soon as one of the parties to the conflict achieved a military victory. That confirms the importance of negotiations aimed at reaching peace agreements in the event of armed conflicts. Yet hardly any woman-led these negotiations or even participated in them on an equal with men. The negotiations neglected the integration of gender issues in peace agreements as not a top priority, inconsistent with the pillar of Security Council Resolution 1325, which is important to the women's peace, and security agenda.

Fourth: The pillars of the women, peace and security agenda and its applicability in the Arab region

Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security does not refer to specific pillars in the content and provisions of the resolution. But these were drawn from the Commission conclusions on the Status of Women, the Committee of the Economic and Social Council²; specifically the consensus on these pillars that were drawn from the 48th session of the

¹ مشاركة المرأة في العملية السلمية والمفاوضات في العالم العربي، منظمة المرأة العربية، ص 22، على الرابط التالي:

<https://bit.ly/35vVtRK>

² لجنة فنية تابعة للمجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي للأمم المتحدة، وهي الهيئة المتخصصة في وضع السياسات الدولية لتعزيز المساواة بين الجنسين وتمكين المرأة، وتعد اللجنة دورة سنوية في مقر الأمم المتحدة في نيويورك وتستطيع المنظمات غير الحكومية ذات الصلة الاستشارية في الأمم المتحدة المشاركة في هذه الدورات.

Commission position of women³. These pillars were participation, protection, protection, recovery, and peace building.

1. Participation

Participation is a cornerstone of human rights in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Security Council Resolution 1325 reaffirmed the participation and representation of women in particular in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts. It included urging the Member States of the United Nations to ensure the representation of women at all levels of decision-making in national, regional, and international institutions and mechanisms for conflict prevention, resolution, and management⁴. The women's participation and representation were reaffirmed in the nine resolutions after Resolution 1325. Participation in these resolutions is not only women's participation in peacebuilding committees and conflict resolution mechanisms but also participation in executive institutions, national parliaments, and administrative and public positions.

2. protection

The protection pillar represents the second pillar of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security and its subsequent resolutions. Such as Resolution 2122 of 2013, which emphasized the protection of women in preparation for elections and political processes and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs. And Resolution 1820 of 2008 requested the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations agencies to put effective mechanisms to protect women and girls from violence, including sexual violence, in refugee camps and internally displaced persons. Despite the Arab countries' efforts to protect women and the adoption of protective mechanisms, these mechanisms and measures remained limited to specific countries and

³ Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2004, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), <https://undocs.org/en/E/2004/INF/2/Add.2>

⁴ القرار 1325 لمجلس الأمن، الفقرة 1، ص 2، على الرابط التالي: <https://undocs.org/ar/S/RES/1325> (2000)

absent or inactive in other Arab countries, especially Arab countries in armed conflicts such as Yemen, Somalia, and other post-conflict countries such as Iraq, Libya, and Syria.

3. Prevention

Prevention is the third pillar of the women's peace and security agenda. This pillar includes the measures taken by states, including Arab states, to create an environment conducive to the rule of law and violent extremism prevention, which enables women to exercise their rights without fear and intimidation. In March 2021, the Ministry of Youth and Sports launched a program towards a youth vision to confront extremism and terrorism, among the good practices related to this pillar in Egypt. This program's first activities were implemented in cooperation with the Al-Azhar Observatory for Combating Extremism. The program aims to educate young people about the methods used by terrorists to recruit young people, especially on social networking sites. The program also focuses on promoting the values of citizenship and spreading a culture of tolerance and dialogue⁵.

4. Recovery and Peacebuilding

The fourth and final pillar of the women, peace and security agenda is recovery or relief and peacebuilding. The pillar will be achieved by rehabilitating women victims of human rights violations and acknowledging these violations. On March 21, 2021, the Iraqi parliament passed the Yazidi Survivors Law. The law recognizes the trauma suffered by Yazidi women, compensates survivors of ISIS crimes, women and girls who were subjected to sexual violence, child survivors who were kidnapped when they were under the age of 18.

⁵ إطلاق أولى فاعليات برنامج «نحو رؤية شبابية لمجابهة التطرف والإرهاب» | صور، الاهرام، 31 مارس 2021، على الرابط التالي: <https://bit.ly/3pFdJih>

Fifth: The role of governments in involving women in peacebuilding

Governments can contribute to the participation of women in decision-making and participation in peace processes, through the following:

- 1. Support the establishment of formal consultation mechanisms with women's civil society organizations**
- 2. Develop national action plans to implement the women, peace, and security agenda**
- 3. Encouraging civil society to submit parallel independent reports**
- 4. Involving religious leaders in implementing the women, peace, and security agenda**

Sixth: The role of civil society in involving women in building peace

Civil society efforts led to the endorsement of the women, peace, and security agenda represented in Resolution 1325 and its subsequent resolutions. The civil society worked hard to ensure that this agenda is implemented at the national, regional, and international levels, ensure organizations receive funding and support, and be heard in all consultations. Arab civil society organizations can take specific measures that contribute to the women's, peace, and security agenda implementation. Among these measures:

- Submit parallel reports to the treaty bodies and the universal periodic review mechanism focusing on the State's commitments related to women, peace, and security.
- Work with women and girls who complain of human rights violations resulting from armed conflict and assist them in submitting complaints about individual violations to treaty bodies and other human rights mechanisms, whether international or regional.

- Participation in advocacy activities calling for the accountability of perpetrators and those responsible for violations of the human rights of women and girls.
- Share knowledge, good practices, and lessons learned about women who have made contributions to building peace and security and expanding partnerships with the private sector, academia, media, and all stakeholders.
- Providing financial and technical support to women peacemakers participating in peace negotiations in areas experiencing armed conflict, supporting them in all stages of negotiation, and providing them with legal support if they are subjected to any abusive practices.
- Launching campaigns to adopt special measures to increase women's participation in peace processes and implementation and monitoring mechanisms.
- Establishing partnerships with international organizations and local women's organizations and building the capacities of local women's organizations to qualify them to obtain and manage funds provided by donors

Seventh: Challenges Facing the Integration of Women in Peace-making

Arab women face challenges and difficulties for their inclusion in peace-making processes, as follows:

- 1. The stereotype that international agreements supporting women are incompatible with religions**
- 2. Armed conflicts**
- 3. Lack of funding for women's programs**

Recommendations

- Adopting national action plans to implement resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security.
- Developing national strategies for combating violent extremism and building peace, with women's participation in the follow-up and implementation of operational action plans for these strategies.
- Protecting all women and girls at all times and ensure efforts to counter violent extremism strategies do not stereotype women and girls or turn them into tools and commodities.
- Revising each country's legislative and legal frameworks to ensure the abolition of discriminatory laws against women.
- Working with local women and local institutions to involve women in developing gender equality strategies.
- Working to achieve the sustainable development goals, especially SDG 5 on gender equality, SDG 10 on reducing inequalities within countries, and SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies. And giving women a priority about their consultation and participation in the sustainable development agenda implementation and monitoring.