



dr. Denis
Mukwege
Foundation

HIGH LEVEL SIDE EVENT OF THE GROUP OF FRIENDS FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Women in conflicts

In partnership with UN Women and Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation

Concept Note

21 September 2021, 16:00-17:30

RSVP link: <https://forms.gle/Mec7SpkijhZskbCD6>

Context

Women are often at the front lines. Whether it is in the role of human rights defender, political activist, health worker, reporter or peacebuilder: women contribute substantially to conflict prevention and resolution.

From Afghanistan, to Myanmar, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Belarus or Colombia, women are leading movements for justice, accountability and peace, and they play a key role in rebuilding their communities. There is evidence showing that women's participation in peace processes contributes to more durable and resilient peace after conflict.

Yet, women remain largely excluded from matters related to peace and security. Women represent only 6% of signatories of major peace processes worldwide, and only 22% of peace agreements include gender equality provisions.

Gender-based violence and discrimination, along with a lack of adequate protection measures, represent a major challenge for women's participation. Sexual violence continues to be used as a method of warfare. Together with other structural threats, such as economic insecurity, and the non-enforcement of legal protections, sexual and gender-based violence silences women and hampers their freedom to act. A paradigm shift is needed to protect and empower women in conflict situations, and to address and eliminate the specific forms of violence they encounter.

Objective

Taking place in the margins of the UN General Assembly, and co-sponsored by the European Union, UN Women and Dr. Denis Mukwege Foundation, the High-Level event of the Group of Friends for the elimination of violence against women and girls will bring the voices and experiences of women in conflict to the forefront of the international arena.

The meeting will aim to:

- Outline the positive roles and contributions of women, including leaders and survivors, in conflict situations.
- Highlight the specific challenges and threats they encounter in order to identify appropriate measures to ensure their participation and protection, including access to holistic services.
- Mobilise action and resources through commitments by world leaders.

Expected outcome

The event will reaffirm the commitments of world leaders to the protection of women and girls in conflict and to their full, equal and meaningful participation. Heads of State and Government will be invited to take concrete and robust actions to end conflict-related gender-based violence and to support the roles of women in shaping peace processes.

Speakers

- H.E. Mr Charles Michel, President of the European Council (host)
- H.E. Mr Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations (tbc)
- H.E. Ms Pramila Patten, Executive Director a.i. of UN Women
- Ms Fawzia Koofi, First Woman Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, Afghanistan
- Dr Denis Mukwege, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, gynecologist, DRC
- Ms Nadia Murad, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and UNODC Goodwill Ambassador, Iraq
- Ms Fátima Muriel, President of Alianza de Organizaciones de Mujeres “Tejedoras de Vida”, Colombia
- Ms Dima Moussa, Member of the Syrian Constitutional Committee
- Testimonies by survivors
- World leaders

Moderator: Stéphanie Fillion, UN Correspondent and journalist specialising in international affairs

Background

The recognition of women's indispensable role in building peace and preventing conflict has been a core demand of global feminist movements for more than a century and a staple of Security Council resolutions in the past two decades. Even as they remain excluded or under-represented in the halls of government or at peace tables, women – including survivors - are increasingly leading social movements for peace and are active at the frontlines of conflict. Their equal, full, and meaningful participation in conflict prevention and resolution is crucial for international peace and security.

Ongoing events in Afghanistan and Tigray demonstrate once again that much more needs to be done to address and eliminate the violence that directly targets women in conflict. Sexual violence continues to be used as method of war. Activists and leaders fighting for women's rights and peace are being targeted for what they do and who they are. The international community must be better prepared to respond to and prevent these forms of violence. This ranges from taking concrete action to hold individuals and states accountable and ensure justice, providing sufficient political and financial support for women leaders and activists, and putting in place concrete protection solutions for when they are in imminent danger

The UN Group of Friends for the elimination of violence against women and girls was created in December 2020 in response to the UN Secretary-General's appeal to stop the surge of gender-based violence during COVID-19. With 93 members, covering all regions of the world, the Group of Friends aims to act as a platform to coordinate and step up global efforts to end gender-based violence and to place women and girls at the center of debates and action at the United Nations.