

Concept Note

Side event – Reality check: What is working in Yemen and CAR when it comes to international support for women’s leadership in peace and security?

Identifying concrete opportunities to improve international support for the meaningful participation of women from Yemen and CAR in humanitarian response, peacebuilding and security

Date: October 24th 2018,

Time: 08.00 – 09.30 AM

Venue: Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in New York
666 Third Avenue, 19th floor
(Between 42nd and 43rd street)

Although international support for the Women Peace and Security agenda is now widespread, there is a clear disconnect between the ambitions laid out in WPS resolutions and the reality women and girls face on the ground. Despite good intentions, only a tiny fraction of global humanitarian aid dollars go directly to local organizations focused on girls and women’s rights and needs. Similarly, women continue to have to fight for a seat at the table when peace is negotiated, and few women are managing to attain leadership positions in their communities once the guns are laid to rest. Yet all the evidence points to the fact that efforts to protect and assist people caught up in natural disasters and conflict will be more effective when women and girls can contribute. So what are we missing?

At this side event, women civil society leaders from Yemen and CAR will provide the international community with a reality check. They will discuss what approaches and tailored programs local women’s organizations are putting in place to reach and empower women and girls impacted by the world’s worst humanitarian crisis in the case of Yemen, or to address pervasive sexual violence in the case of CAR. They will go on to lay out concrete actions the international community needs to consider if it is serious about empowering women and girls to have agency in their local communities, and to have a meaningful and central role in rebuilding a sustainable peace at the national level.

Inclusive Peace Building in Yemen

In Yemen, the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths has recently resumed consultations with the parties to the conflict ahead of reviving peace negotiations. Yemeni women are among the civil society leaders the Special Envoy is consulting with. However these consultations need to take into account the diversity of Yemeni women’s experience and ensure their meaningful inclusion in a future peace process. This raises tough questions about what kinds of international support are helpful and will further the needs and aspirations of Yemeni women and girls seeking to rebuild their lives and communities after a brutal conflict and acute humanitarian crisis. Between them, **Suha Basharen**, CARE Yemen’s gender specialist, and **Rasha Jarhum**, founding director of Peace Track Initiative and an experienced human rights activist from Yemen, have decades of experience working with local women’s organizations across the country. They are well-placed to reflect on lessons learned and

identify where specific actions by the international community could make a discernable difference to the lives of women and girls.

Combating sexual violence in CAR

In CAR, new research reveals an exponential increase in sexual and gender-based violence. MINUSCA has the protection of civilians as its utmost priority and therefore has a critical role to play in protecting women and girls in CAR. This is especially the case when it comes to strengthening the government's efforts to combat impunity for GBV. However, as is the case with many UN missions, women are often absent from decision making and women's organisations lack access to MINUSCA and its senior leadership in particular. **Nadia Carine Fornel Poutou**, executive chair of the Central African Association of Women Jurists will talk about the importance of local women having a voice to identify protection threats, recommend how best to address them, and suggest how accountability can be advanced.

Agenda

- 08.00 – 08.10am Opening remarks of the moderator **Ambassador Karel van Oosterom**, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the UN: *How can Security Council members advance the key role of women in peace and security processes at local, regional and international level?*
- 08.10 – 08.40am Panel discussion: *How can the international community – based on lessons learned - strengthen women's and girls' leadership in humanitarian responses, peacebuilding and security processes in Yemen and CAR?*
- Panel speakers (5 min each with questions by moderator 30 min in total)
- **Suha Basharen**, gender specialist at CARE in Yemen and member of the PACT
 - Video with **Rasha Jarhum**, founding director of Peace Track Initiative and an experienced human rights activist from Yemen
 - **Nadia Carine Fornel Poutou**, executive chair of *l'Association des Femmes Juristes de Centrafrique*
- 08.40 – 09.15am Co-reference speakers: *What are existing policies, programs and other mechanisms to support women and girls' leadership in humanitarian responses, peacebuilding and security processes? What are the challenges to use these mechanisms for/in Yemen and CAR?*
- Speakers (5 minutes each, plus moderated responses and Q&A by moderator 35 min in total):
- Video with **Radwa Nour**, senior Peace and Security advisor, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, UNDPA
 - **Sarah Douglas**, deputy chief of Peace and Security at UN Women
 - **Sanam Naraghi Anderlini**, co-founder and executive director International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)

Agenda (continued)

- 09.15 – 09.20am Closing remarks by **Andreas Glossner**, Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN (tbc)
- 09.20 – 09.30am Closure: Moderator summary up of lessons learned and key take ways

Biographies of the panelists from Yemen and CAR

Suha Mohamed Saeed Basharen is a strategic, multidisciplinary development practitioner. She has years of dedicate work and demonstrated passion for gender equality and women empowerment. She has worked in the field of development cooperation for about 15 years with different organizations; UN, INGOs and national NGOs. She has also developed and participated in a number of working papers and studies. Although her skill sets are vast, her greatest expertise revolves in the area of supporting community initiatives, serving society in a creative and innovative way. She holds an academic Master degree in International Development from the University of Bradford, in the UK. Basharen is currently the Gender Specialist with CARE International, based in Yemen.

Rasha Jarhum is a South Yemeni. Jarhum is founder and Director of the Peace Track Initiative. She is a Gender, Peace, and Security Expert. She has more than 15 years' experience working to advocate women's, children's and refugees' rights with many organisations including UNICEF, ESCWA, UNDP, and JICA, in Yemen and the Middle East and North Africa region. She held the position of Regional MENA Gender and Advocacy Manager at Oxfam Regional Gender Justice Programme. Jarhum was invited among seven women by the UN Special Envoy to Yemen to support the peace talks held in Kuwait in 2016. She is an affiliated scholar with the American University of Beirut and an Executive in Residence Fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP). She is also a 2016 New Voices Aspen fellow at Aspen Institute, USA. Jarhum holds a master's degree from the University of Nottingham, in International Business Management. Jarhum is an award winner of the Women with Wings Award. She is a member of the Women Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL). She is also a founding member of the Women Solidarity Network in Yemen. Twitter: @RashaJarhum

Nadia Carine Fornel Poutou is executive chair of the Association des Femmes Juristes de Centrafrique (AFJC), an association of women lawyers and advocates founded in 1992 to protect human rights, and the rights of women and children in particular, in the Central African Republic. The AFJC's goal is to help survivors of violence (many of whom are women) by providing legal support and psychosocial counselling. This forms part of a comprehensive case management for individuals that addresses physical, emotional, psychological and social violence.