

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

This executive summary highlights the most relevant conclusions and recommendations that came out of two panel sessions organized by WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform, Care Netherlands, Cordaid, Oxfam Novib, co-sponsored by ICAN and WILPF and hosted by the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This event brought together women civil society from Yemen and CAR in the presence of the international (donor) community. It identified opportunities to improve international support for meaningful participation of women in humanitarian response, peacebuilding and security. The event took place on 24 October 2018 at the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands during the week of the Women, Peace & Security Open Debate.

Speakers:

- **Sawsan Al-Refaei**, Yemini Women's PACT
- **Suha Basharen**, Gender Specialist CARE Yemen, Yemini Women's PACT (video connection)
- **Rasha Jarhum**, Founding Director Peace Track Initiative, human rights activist (video connection)
- **Nadia Carine Fornel Poutou**, Executive Chair, l'Association des Femmes Juristes de Centrafrique
- **Radwa Nour**, Senior Peace and Security Advisor, Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General for Yemen, UNDPA (video connection)
- **Sarah Douglas**, Deputy Chief Peace and Security, UN Women
- **Sanam Naraghi Anderlini**, Founder and Executive Director, International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)
- Moderator: **H.E. Karel van Oosterom**, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations

Conclusions:

- Member States, UN bodies and representatives, such as special envoys, and civil society need to ensure that women are sitting at the negotiation table at all levels, whilst ensuring broad and diverse representation. In Yemen, this requires the full implementation of the 30% quota as established during the National Dialogue. In practice, this not only refers to representation, rather it inhabits meaningful participation of women conveying grassroots voices.
- Women, in particular young women, are currently missing out on opportunities to participate in civil society initiatives as they need to focus on providing livelihood to their families. In Yemen, the majority of events and meetings that feed into track II peacebuilding currently occur outside the country. Stakeholders in peace processes should therefore strive to invest in capacity building for women to be included in peace processes. Correspondingly, the implementation and distribution of humanitarian aid requires a particular emphasis on the role of women.

- The fact that several speakers at the event were only able to participate via video connection demonstrates the travel barriers civil society representatives face to partake in briefings, gatherings, (in)formal peace processes and negotiations. Member States need to continue their support to civil society in facilitating access to such events via visa and travel arrangements to guarantee meaningful participation of women.
- Local organizations, such as 'listening centers' and 'legal clinics', provide services aimed at the protection of women from violence. These services include counselling, psycho-social support, legal aid and economic empowerment aimed at survivors of gender based violence. Such local organizations need more structural, long-term funding from donors.
- The international community should create protection mechanisms to tackle sexual and gender based violence and provide rapid assistance. This includes supporting state structures that work on these aspects. Direct engagement with survivors is a crucial precondition in order to design appropriate protection mechanisms. The international community should act firmly against sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by UN peacekeepers and create a support mechanism for victims of SEA.
- There is an overall increase in the use of WPS language and rhetoric. However, a lack of full implementation remains while funding has not materialized in all areas. This requires greater concerted support for women human rights defenders, economic empowerment and the implementation of gender analysis. Hence, international partners and special envoys should ensure to consistently include WPS language and rhetoric in briefings, reports and mandates to achieve women's meaningful participation in peace processes.

Quotes

Men-made crises, such as in Yemen and CAR, call for women-made solutions. - H.E. Karel van Oosterom

The fact that women are absent in peace processes is not a matter of culture, rather, it is about power. So we should stop talking about power sharing and talk about responsibility sharing. - Sanam Naraghi Anderlini

Women are not an add-ons, they should be sitting at the negotiation table. - Sawsan al-Refaei

Support for Women, Peace and Security has never been greater, yet the threats have also never been greater.
- Sarah Douglas