
10th UNAOC Global Forum, Cascais, 25-27 November 2024

Thematic Panel 8: “Enhancing mediation through intercultural and interreligious dialogue and leveraging the role of women peacemakers”

27 November 2024, 16:00 - 17:30, Estoril Convention Centre

Draft

Women’s role in peacemaking and increased participation in international mediation has been encouraged since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325¹ in 2000 and the 2009 Report of the Secretary General stressing the need of an adequate representation of women among mediators and their effective participation at all levels of the peace process. Additionally, General Recommendation No. 30 of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women² emphasizes the importance of conflict prevention and violence reduction through early warning systems, diplomacy, mediation, and arms regulation, with a focus on addressing gender-based violence.

For over two decades, the critical role of women peacemakers in interreligious and intercultural conflicts has been recognized, emphasizing the need to amplify their voices and contributions across all levels of society and politics. Despite quantitative progress in women’s participation as peace mediators, the UN Secretary-General’s latest report³ underscores the importance of appointing women as expert mediators and integrating gender balance and expertise into mediation teams.

The 2017 Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations Activities in Support of Mediation⁴ raised the importance for inclusivity, local engagement and women’s participation drawing upon the United Nations Department of Political Affairs 2017 Guidance on Gender and Inclusive Mediation Strategies. In September 2019, the United Nations hosted the launch of the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Network.

In the 2023 New Agenda for Peace, the Secretary-General reaffirmed that “civil society actors, including women human rights defenders and women peacebuilders, play a crucial role in building trust in societies, by representing the most vulnerable or marginalized and those often

¹ Security Council resolution 1325. 2020. Available at:

https://www.un.org/shestandsforpeace/sites/www.un.org/shestandsforpeace/files/wps_sres1325.pdf

² General Recommendation No. 30 of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. CEDAW. 2013. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/GComments/CEDAW.C.CG.30.pdf>

³ Women and peace and security. Report of the Secretary General. 2023. Available at:

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/279/08/pdf/n2327908.pdf>

⁴ Report on ‘UN Activities in Support of Mediation’. 2017. Available at: <https://peacemaker.un.org/documents/a72115-report-un-activities-support-mediation>

unrepresented in political structures”. Reflecting this priority, the 2024 ‘Pact for the Future’⁵ recognized that full, equal, safe and meaningful participation of women in decision-making at all levels of peace and security, including conflict prevention and resolution, mediation and in peace operations, is essential to achieve sustainable peace. It was followed by the official launch in October 2024 of the UN Secretary General’s “Common Pledge for Women’s Full, Equal and Meaningful Participation in Peace Processes”.

Since 2020, UNAOC has pursued a strong commitment to promote the role of female mediators at the local and community level, especially in African countries via the establishment of the Women’s Alliance for Peace and regular activities such as capacity building workshops directed at women from Central African Republic, Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The session will showcase the many contributions of women peacemakers in the mediation of intercultural and interreligious dialogue and based on the direct engagement of its participants, it will identify venues for enhancing and supporting the role of women leaders as conflict mitigators.

The speakers will address the following guiding questions:

- How can the contributions of women peacemakers gain greater recognition from all relevant stakeholders?
- When violent crises arise, what strategies can be employed to incentivize the inclusion of women mediators in mitigation processes and negotiation efforts from the earliest stages?
- As we approach the 25th anniversary of the landmark UNSC Resolution 1325, what measures can strengthen the Women, Peace, and Security agenda?
- Women mediators operate across diverse “spaces” of mediation, either individually or through peace organizations and mediation networks. How can their efforts be better coordinated and articulated for greater impact?
- Can you provide specific examples where women have played a decisive role in negotiation or mediation processes, or in mitigating conflict? Could these cases serve as models for addressing other conflicts?
- What steps should the United Nations take to enhance women’s participation in creating the conditions necessary for lasting peace?

⁵ United Nations, The Pact for the Future, 2024. A/RES/79/1. Available at: <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/272/22/pdf/n2427222.pdf>