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WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AND DISPLACEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Zeynep Kaya & Hannah Bond

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Abstract

This policy report is the result of extensive discussions with national and international experts on the gendered impacts of displacement and how the Women, Peace and Security agenda can be used to address the issue of conflict-related displacement better. The discussions highlighted that the existing National Action Plans in the Middle East to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda remain limited in addressing conflict-related displacement and its long-term gendered implications. The policy report offers insights from discussions with experts. It provides recommendations to make responses to displacement gender-sensitive, and to integrate displacement and Women, Peace and Security agendas through addressing rights, needs and experiences of displaced women, girls, and men and boys.

Executive Summary

This policy report is the result of extensive discussions with national and international experts on the gendered impacts of displacement and on how the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda can be used to better address the issue of conflict-related displacement. The discussions revealed that existing National Action Plans (NAPs) in the Middle East to implement this agenda remain limited in addressing conflict-related displacement and its long-term, gendered implications. There is a need for gendered responses to displacement and for better integrating the WPS and displacement agendas through a women and girls' rights framework which addresses the rights, needs and experiences of displaced women, girls, and men and boys.

Using the WPS agenda to address conflict-related displacement is necessary, but meaningful implementation of this agenda in responses to displacement is missing. Displaced women and girls disproportionately experience the impacts of displacement and conflict. Responses need to take into account the long-term and gendered dimensions of conflict and displacement, address the root causes of gender inequality and seek to bridge humanitarian and development programme interventions. This will better ensure that structural gender inequalities, which are the actual causes of gender discrimination and gendered vulnerabilities in displacement, are addressed. Peace, women and girls' rights, gender inequality and displacement are related in multi-faceted ways, therefore displaced communities and displaced women and girls should be included in peacebuilding efforts. The WPS agenda can help achieve this if it is used more inclusively to include displaced communities. This is crucial for women and girls' rights as well as for achieving the goals for sustainable peace.

The increased use of the WPS agenda for addressing 'national security' issues as well as the lack of accountability for its implementation leads to the neglect of issues that are seen as marginal or not related to security. Displacement is not a marginal issue and it is directly related to women and girls' rights, peace and conflict. This report makes recommendations for creating synergies between WPS and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), between civil society and governments, and between humanitarian and development programming. It argues that these can not only help better support displaced women and girls through creating accountability mechanisms but also put women and girls' rights at the centre of the WPS agenda and of responses to displacement.

Structural gender inequalities underpin displaced women and girls' experiences, sexual and gender-based violence and gender discrimination in legal, political and socio-economic spheres. There are no easy fixes to structural inequalities. All programming requires extensive contextual understanding, working directly with national civil society, particularly Women's Rights Organisations (WROs), as equal partners and going beyond short-term responses shaped by donors' security concerns and interests.

Recommendations

Policy Development:

- 1. Gender and conflict analysis:** It is essential that all international actors undertake participatory gender-conflict analysis in the design of any WPS or displacement policy programme, or diplomatic work. This should result in transformative programmatic approaches that are based on displaced women and girls', and men and boys' rights, needs and experiences, rather than donor priorities.
- 2. Meaningful consultation:** Donors, governments, multilateral agencies and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) should undertake meaningful consultation with displaced women, girls, and civil society organisations when developing policy and programmes in fragile and conflict affected states.¹
- 3. Civil society space and protection of women human rights defenders:** The international community should support a vibrant civil society and space. It should also recognise the risks posed to women, girls, LGBTQI people and organisations working on gender equality in displacement contexts in fragile and conflict affected areas. The international community must be prepared to support their partner organisations when their safety risks are exacerbated. Policies and programmes to support women human rights defenders should be co-designed with defenders themselves, rather than for them.

Programmes and Policy Implementation:

- 4. Funding to women's rights organisations:** Funding to local civil society organisations, specifically WROs, is essential for women and girls' rights, advocacy and peacebuilding. The international community needs to systemically fund WROs. This funding should be long-term, flexible, and should allow organisations to implement their self-defined priorities.
- 5. Long-term gender-transformational approaches:** All displacement and WPS programmes should maximise the opportunity to address harmful gendered practices and aim to transform gender norms. This should ensure holistic programmes across participation, sexual and gender-based violence and conflict prevention and must recognise women and girls' right to participate in all decisions that affect their lives. In order to develop these approaches, the international community must undertake, at least, recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- 6. National Action Plans (NAPs):** Countries in the Middle East and donors should fund, develop, implement, monitor and evaluate WPS National Action Plans. These plans should integrate an analysis of displacement that is based on meaningful systematic, consultation with civil society and women and girls affected by conflict (see recommendation 1).

¹ Please see GAPS and partners' Beyond Consultations Toolkit, a self-assessment tool for governments and the international community to undertake meaningful, participatory consultation with women in conflict-affected states. The Toolkit is available at <https://www.beyondconsultations.org/>

Policy Frameworks:

7. **Accountability:** The international community must recognise the convergence of the WPS and displacement agendas and implement them in their entirety. Robust accountability mechanisms must be in place to ensure their effective implementation.
8. **Internal capacity:** Governments, donors, multilateral agencies and INGOs should ensure they have the resources, staff and structure to effectively analyse and implement gendered-displacement policies and programmes. They must also ensure that WPS and displacement agendas are implemented internally, within their organisations' programming, policy and diplomatic work.
9. **Maximise 2020:** 2020 marks the anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the international community should use this opportunity to better integrate displacement into WPS policies and programmes. Such efforts should not be done through additional Security Council Resolutions, but by acting upon commitments already made.

Introduction

The WPS² agenda has transformative potential and puts the gendered impacts of conflict at the centre of peace and security. It calls for including women and girls in peacebuilding and conflict-resolution processes, decision-making, and ensuring the protection of their rights, and addressing their specific needs and experiences. Despite this, the gender dimensions of conflict-related displacement are either neglected or treated as subjects of marginal concern in WPS policies and discourse globally and in the Middle East. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are especially overlooked.

In WPS programming, displaced women and girls are lumped together in one category. Their varying experiences of displacement are overlooked, including factors such as: their migration status (e.g. internally displaced person or refugee), age, marital status, level of education, ethnicity, race, disability, employment history, sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as factors related to their living conditions (e.g. whether they live in a female-led household, in a camp space, in an urban or rural setting, and so forth).

WPS resolutions show the lack of realisation of the significance, scale and impact of displacement on peace and development. Despite its global scale (as of 2016, 68.5 million people³ were forcibly displaced worldwide and 45 million of these were internally displaced) and long duration (26 years on average⁴), responses to displacement in general usually focus on short-term solutions.⁵

Cycles of conflict and violence have resulted in waves of displacement over decades in the Middle East and communities and individuals are displaced multiple times. This has been the case in Palestine due to occupation and conflict, in Iraq due to sectarian conflict and extremist violence since the mid-2000s, in Syria due to the civil war that started in 2012, as well as in Yemen due to civil war since 2015.

Except for Jordan's⁶ recently launched National Action Plan (NAP) to implement WPS, other countries in the Middle East with NAPs, such as Iraq⁷ and Palestine,⁸ have not integrated displacement meaningfully into their plans, despite having large numbers of IDPs and refugee populations. The UK-NAP,⁹ which has Iraq and Syria among its focus coun-

² 'The Resolutions', Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Available at <https://www.peacewomen.org/why-WPS/solutions/resolutions>

³ 'Figures at a Glance', UNHCR (2019). Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

⁴ 'Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015', UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 20 June 2016. Available at <https://www.refworld.org/docid/57678f3d4.html>

⁵ According to UNHCR, nearly one person is forcibly displaced every two seconds as a result of conflict or persecution. UNHCR, 'Figures at a Glance'.

⁶ Jordanian NAP. Available at <http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20jordan/images/publications/2018/jonap%202018-2021%20unscr%201325.pdf?la=en&vs=5624>

⁷ Iraqi NAP. Available at https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/final_draft_Iraq-_nap_1325_eng.pdf

⁸ Palestinian NAP. Available at https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/170515Pln_MoWA_e.pdf

⁹ UK NAP. Available at <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/>

tries, has also not integrated displacement into its strategic outcomes (although there are some recent examples of UK programming on displacement). Such omissions are unsurprising due to the disconnect that exists between the WPS agenda and conflict-related displacement globally.¹⁰ This is despite the increase in expert research emphasising the situation of women and girls in the context of displacement.

At an expert workshop in Jordan, organised by the LSE Middle East Centre in September 2018, civil society organisations (CSOs), UN agencies and governments from Europe and across the Middle East explored the gendered dimensions of conflict-related displacement and made recommendations for improving responses that better cater to the needs of women and girls. This report outlines the issues discussed at the event and the recommendations made by its participants, rather than evidence gathered from the field.¹¹

attachment_data/file/677586/FCO1215-NAP-Women-Peace-Security-ONLINE_V2.pdf

¹⁰ Aiko Holvikivi and Audrey Reeves, 'The WPS Agenda and the 'Refugee Crisis': Missing Connections and Missed Opportunities in Europe', *WPS Working Paper Series 6* (LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security, 2017). Available at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/85989/1/WP6_2017.pdf

¹¹ GAPS Beyond Consultations Toolkit.

Why Integrate WPS into Responses to Conflict-Related Displacement, and Why Address Displacement More Explicitly in WPS Policies?

Participants at the workshop emphasised that women and girls displaced by conflict should be afforded the benefits that come from the implementation of the WPS agenda. This agenda can be used to shape humanitarian and development responses to displacement. Protracted crises that cause displacement require responses with a long-term view taking into account all stages of displacement (flight, settlement and return). The voices of displaced women and girls should be included in shaping the broader commitments to women and girls' rights. Gender intersects with their marginalised position as displaced people and increases their exclusion from these processes.

Implementing the WPS agenda in situations of displacement can encourage a better understanding of the needs of displaced women and girls. This would enable them to have a meaningful impact on the design of the protection provisions, the development of support systems in and outside camps, and the decision-making that affects them and their communities. Displacement responses should integrate the principles of WPS into their programming and WPS policies should address displacement because this would help address gendered impacts of displacement more effectively. Doing this would also help bridge humanitarian and development work and facilitate inclusive peacebuilding processes.

Gendered Impacts of Displacement

Conflict and displacement have specific gendered impacts based on the place of displacement, gender social norms (generally meaning the socially expected behaviours associated with being a woman or man), socio-economic status, marital status, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age and health. Unless we start with this essential premise, our protection and relief responses will not be as impactful as they could be.

Civil society participants at the workshop stated that displaced women and girls disproportionately suffer from the indirect impacts of displacement and conflict. Displacement compounds the gendered inequalities and vulnerabilities. They reported that women and girls are the most likely victims of conflict-related sexual violence and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence and that intimate partner violence increases in displacement. They also reported that, in most contexts, women and girls are more vulnerable to sex trafficking, sexual exploitation and early forced marriage. Attention was drawn to the secondary impacts of militarisation and displacement on women and girls as well. For instance, when healthcare facilities are attacked or their functional capacity is reduced due to conflict, maternal and reproductive health services are usually one of the first to be dropped.

Participants reported on the ways in which refugees are demonised in a gendered way. For example, depictions of men as hyper-masculine, and women as sexualised, affect the experiences of displaced people. Displaced women and girls often face stigma in their

place of settlement due to community perceptions of them. For instance, participants outlined how displaced Syrian women in Jordan and Iraq are cast as a threat to social values and morality, based on fears that they will engage in sexual activities with local men or become second wives. Widowed or divorced women are particularly vulnerable due to stigma and financial deprivation. Women and girls from rural areas are further marginalised by their illiteracy and linguistic barriers.

The displaced women and girls' lack of documentation was also discussed as a significant cause of vulnerability. In Iraq, the documentation system registers families under male household heads, which inhibits women and girls' mobility, as well as their ability to obtain official permission to stay in a particular place or move elsewhere.¹² When they cannot register themselves and their children as IDPs or refugees due to documentation issues, they are denied access to humanitarian support. In some contexts, women have different nationalities from their children and cannot pass through borders together. The international community often reproduces these gendered hierarchies through their response mechanisms and methodologies used for assessments and research, such as speaking to heads of households and 'assuming' vulnerability criteria that might not necessarily be accurate.

Workshop participants also addressed the gendered effects of arms and militarisation on communities after conflict and displacement. Male family members' affiliation with a particular armed group can undermine their ability to continue living in their residence or seek safety and support even after conflict. Another continued impact of militarisation is the use of small arms that are taken home by fighters after conflict. This significantly increases femicide by intimate partners or family members, which means there is little accountability due to limited reporting.¹³ Furthermore, the use of arms on residential areas and infrastructure, such as hospitals, have significant gendered impacts. For example, explosive weapons used during daytime affect women and girls more because they are more likely to be home. Also, women and girls receive less health support because the treatment of fighters is prioritised over that of civilians.

LGBTQI communities' experience of displacement was also discussed at the workshop. Members of this community experience gendered forms of violence, similar to those which the WPS agenda aims to address,¹⁴ including sexual violence, humiliation and murder by armed groups as well as by security forces during conflict, in detention, refugee camps, and through forced public 'outing' by these groups.¹⁵ Participants discussed that

¹² Julia St. Thomas King and Dennis Ardis, 'Identity Crisis? Documentation for the Displaced in Iraq', *Humanitarian Exchange* 65 (2015), pp. 9–12.

¹³ Mirelle Widmer and Irene Pavesi, 'Research Note: A Gendered Analysis of Violent Deaths', *Small Arms Survey* 63 (2016). Available at http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/H-Research_Notes/SAS-Research-Note-63.pdf

¹⁴ Jamie J. Hagen, 'Queering Women, Peace and Security', *International Affairs* 92/2 (2016), pp. 313–32.

¹⁵ Henri Myrtilinen and Megan Daigle, 'When Merely Existing Is a Risk', *International Alert* (2017). Available at https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Gender_SexualAndGenderMinorities_EN_2017.pdf

being perceived and self-identifying as LGBTQI exacerbates vulnerability, marginalisation and exclusion. Lesbian, bisexual and trans women are at particular risk;¹⁶ either experiencing targeted sexual violence to ‘correct’ their gender and enforced heterosexual behaviour, or being forcefully married. Trans refugees are exposed to humiliating examinations to ascertain their ‘actual’ sexual orientation and gender identity. Participants reported that NGOs that work with displaced communities are not sensitive to the specific needs of LGBTQI individuals, who risk being targets of violence.

Humanitarian-Development Nexus

In the face of protracted displacement, short-term and humanitarian responses are important, but not the sole answer to addressing gendered challenges. The WPS agenda offers an opportunity to address the long-term gendered aspects of displacement from participation, representation and socio-economic empowerment to playing active, acknowledged roles in peacebuilding, conflict resolution, transitional justice and ending sexual and gender-based violence. Bridging the humanitarian and development work could support displaced women and girls better in the relief-to-development transition.

Workshop discussions highlighted that policy responses to protracted crises, such as displacement, generally fail to capture the long-term and structural gender inequalities that lead to or perpetuate discrimination and violence. This issue, combined with the security-driven concerns of the donors and the limited WPS expertise on displacement, lead to ineffective strategies for improving displaced women and girls’ lives. There is a continuum between different phases of displacement that must be acknowledged. Therefore, the work with displaced women should continue during and after their return to ensure the long-term needs of vulnerable groups, such as women-headed households, are addressed.

Workshop participants emphasised that community-level consultations for needs assessment are often poorly designed and exclude certain groups such as adolescent girls and older women. Participants noted that commitments in the programmes are usually haphazardly reflected and implemented. They do not sufficiently account for the differential needs and miss the opportunity to promote gender equality.¹⁷ For instance, in Palestine, studies on occupation, displacement and violence rarely take a gender perspective, even though gender-specific humanitarian responses are slowly growing.

Livelihoods, economic empowerment and justice are essential issues that were extensively discussed during the workshop with regards to the humanitarian-development nexus. Livelihood programmes and state employment policies targeting displaced communities should consider the protracted nature of displacement. Such programmes must

¹⁶ Human Rights Council, ‘Discriminatory laws and practices and acts of violence against individuals based on their sexual orientation and gender identity’ (2011), Para. 21. Available at https://www.ohchr.org/documents/issues/discrimination/a.hrc.19.41_english.pdf

¹⁷ ‘Stabilisation Facility for Libya’, Annual Report, UNDP Libya (2017). Available at <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/libya/docs/STABILIZATION%20FACILITY%20FOR%20LIBYA%20ANNUAL%20REPORT%202017.pdf>

be sensitive to displaced women's specific needs during displacement and after their return. Their design should have transformational goals and be inclusive.¹⁸

With regards to livelihoods, a new approach adopted by the Jordanian government in 2017 on the economic inclusion of Syrian refugees was mentioned at the workshop. The government agreed to provide, cumulatively since 2016, 138,000 work permits for men and 14,500 for women in agriculture, construction and manufacturing (in exchange for greater investment in Jordan through the opening of the EU markets for trade and investment).¹⁹ At the time of the workshop, 20,000 work permits had been issued for Syrian refugees, with fewer than 5 percent of these issued to women. The participants said that there is interest among refugee women to work from home, especially those with IT skills. The Jordan Resilience Plan included provisions to support Syrian women working from home. However, home-based businesses are not regulated or formalised in Jordan therefore there are ambiguities about licencing. The Jordanian NAP (J-NAP) could have been used to push an agenda for the long-term needs of displaced women as well, for instance by suggesting a more inclusive gender perspective in the government's refugee work permit policy.

Peacebuilding and Displacement

Another issue is the implications of displacement on social cohesion. Participants highlighted how conflict-related displacement and its haphazard management (including the lack of transitional justice processes) disrupts social cohesion. This creates community tensions and grievances that sow the seeds for future conflict. Successful peacebuilding, a core aim of the WPS agenda, needs to focus on displacement processes to understand and resolve community tensions, as well as to identify future drivers of conflict. The management of displacement and return can be used as an opportunity for conflict resolution, community dialogue and peacebuilding, and for including women or for acknowledging the role already played by women in these processes.

Iraq is a good example that illustrates the need for community dialogue and conflict resolution among displaced communities. The conflict has been marked by populist ideas about identity and religious norms, which in turn advances an 'us versus them' mentality within and between communities. In such a context, wide scale material destruction and the lack of justice and rule of law fuel motivations for revenge.²⁰ As a result, thousands of families and individuals have been either ousted from their homes or have fled for

¹⁸ Zeynep Kaya and Kyra Luchtenberg, 'Displacement and Women's Economic Empowerment: Voices of Displaced Women in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq', *Women for Women International* (2018). Available at <http://www.lse.ac.uk/women-peace-security/assets/documents/2018/LSE-WPS-DisplacementEcoEmpowerment-Report.pdf>

¹⁹ Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC).

²⁰ Omer Karasapan, 'The Internally Displaced in the Middle East and North Africa: Harbingers of Future Conflict?' *Future Development Blog*, Brookings Institution (5 July 2017). Available at <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2017/07/05/the-internally-displaced-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa-harbingers-of-future-conflict/>

their safety. Such tensions and grievances further increase during displacement and after return. Iraqi participants at the workshop stated that the tension between alleged ISIL supporters and other community members have led to stigmatisation and revenge-motivated targeting within communities. They emphasised that localised and carefully planned community peacebuilding initiatives in displacement and upon return are essential, and women should be part of such processes, to prevent future conflicts.

Participants also discussed the importance of understanding the role of social gender norms for peacebuilding. They emphasised that localised and carefully planned community peacebuilding initiatives in displacement and upon return are essential to prevent future conflicts, and women should be part of such processes. Gender norms shape the push and pull factors for joining armed groups among displaced communities.²¹ Participants outlined that men can recover masculinity through increased decision-making power, protecting families and having authority over their own social and political affairs, whereas these options are often more restricted for women.²²

²¹ Lana Khattab and Henri Myrntinen, “‘Most of the Men Want to Leave’: Armed Groups, Displacement and the Gendered Webs of Vulnerability in Syria”, *International Alert* (2017). Available at https://www.international-alert.org/sites/default/files/Gender_VulnerabilitySyria_EN_2017.pdf

²² Many men also decide not to join armed groups to protect their family and this is also a dimension of masculinised agency.

Two Sides of the Same Coin: Why Displacement is Marginalised in WPS, and Why Responses to Displacement Lack a WPS Perspective

Workshop participants identified specific underlying factors that lead to a disconnect between WPS and displacement: securitisation, an accountability deficit, lack of synergy between policy frames and structural gender inequalities. Participants also proposed suggestions to tackle these factors, as explained in this section.

Securitisation of WPS and Displacement

Participants stated that ‘national security’ concerns and political divisions can take priority at national level too and this leads to the use of displacement as a political tool by actors during and after conflict. This is compounded by the perception that displacement is a temporary problem. As a result, the issue of displacement becomes marginalised at the political level. Consequently, grievances that lead to displacement and result from it are overlooked. Political actors, both governments and armed groups, can use the management of displacement and return as a strategic and political tool.²³ In these contexts, women and girls’ needs, experiences and rights are particularly neglected – seen as irrelevant or of little importance. This impedes women and girls’ ability to influence the decisions that affect their lives and communities.

Civil society participants at the workshop stated that donor driven agendas with security priorities and national interests can significantly influence programming and discourage focus on the underlying causes of violence and conflict. They emphasised that such approaches can instrumentalise the WPS and displacement agendas. Securitisation mostly focuses on short-term deliverables for donor countries and overlooks the importance of addressing structural inequalities. For instance, the political attention to the issue of refugees in ‘the West’ because of the perceived threat to national security leads to overlooking the difficulties faced by regional countries in hosting large refugee populations (as well as much larger numbers of IDPs than refugees) in Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

Therefore, it is important that the needs, rights and experiences of displaced women and girls are addressed in their own right, rather than being addressed because of donor priorities. This requires meaningful consultation with women and girls (see recommendation 2).

Accountability Deficit

The participants agreed that lack of accountability is a key problem that hinders the implementation of the WPS and displacement agendas. Lack of accountability means that gender equality, discrimination and human rights commitments are not systematically funded, implemented, monitored or evaluated. This can be in part attributed to the

²³ Adam G. Lichtenheld, ‘The Identity Politics of Displacement in the Middle East’, *The Washington Post* (4 March 2015). Available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/03/04/the-identity-politics-of-displacement-in-the-middle-east/>

lack of measures and legal obligations in international frameworks on gender equality and displacement, such as the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and CEDAW. Governments and other actors are not bound to implement the Guiding Principles. In the case of CEDAW, despite being a binding international document, governments do not universally integrate its principles into their legal system. Moreover, these international frameworks are not enforced by all actors, including INGOs, multi-mandates and private contractors.

Participants highlighted that although refugees have access to international protection mechanisms to some extent, IDPs can lack such international access. IDPs are harder to identify and reach, which in turn increases their vulnerability. They are dependent on their governments for humanitarian support and on international actors (if the latter are permitted to operate in a country). Already marginalised groups, such as ethnic or religious minorities, women and girls and LGBTQI people, experience further discrimination and violence, and may have limited access to protection and assistance.²⁴

Participants also emphasised that not all NAP consultations in the Middle East consider displaced populations. This is partly because displacement is seen as transitory. Due to the nature of displacement and responses to it, displaced people often do not have coherent representation, not even at the civil society level. Another important issue that was raised was that these NAPs do not have accountability measures and do not include civil society at all levels. Sometimes, NAPs are not even implemented due to a lack of political will and funding, as is the case with Iraq's NAP (I-NAP). The Palestinian NAP (P-NAP) has very little funding, and consequent issues emerge regarding its implementation, although 55 percent of the outcomes are in progress or being achieved thanks to the work of the CSOs. The J-NAP, only recently launched in 2018, has secured funding for most of its implementation.

The neglect of displacement in the WPS agenda prevents developing accountability measures for displaced women and girls. For instance, civil society advocated for the inclusion of UK-based women and girl refugees and asylum seekers in the UK-NAP. However, the Plan neither extends to women and girl refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, nor makes specific reference to IDPs in focus countries. The P-NAP does not push women's participation in internal reconciliation, which is a central issue in Palestine. It also does not address the differential impact of conflict and internal divisions amongst different groups of women. The I-NAP, for instance, acknowledges the differential impact of displacement on different groups including the internally displaced. However, it does not explicitly deal with displacement and the gendered impacts of conflict, despite the prevalence of displacement as a long-term issue in Iraq.²⁵

Participants at the workshop emphasised the crucial role of civil society in holding states accountable for their policies. Governments and WPS committees working on NAPs

²⁴ Erin Mooney, 'Realizing National Responsibility for Internally Displaced Persons', *Brookings Institution* (9 December 2004). Available at <https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/realizing-national-responsibility-for-internally-displaced-persons/>

²⁵ I-NAP, p. 12.

should include CSOs at every stage of the NAP – development, implementation and monitoring. CSOs must therefore lead a clear and ongoing feedback mechanism for review and follow-up processes, which in turn should be incorporated in the NAPs.²⁶ UN agencies and INGOs have to advocate for space for civil society to undertake this work. In the absence of accountability measures, standards provided in CEDAW and WPS are commitments on paper only. Funded, implemented, monitored, evaluated and consulted-on NAPs are a central solution to accountability (see recommendations 6 and 7).

Lack of Synergies between Frameworks and Actors

There is a lack of connections and synergies between different frameworks and actors in global policy. This issue is an important underlying cause for the disconnect that exists between responses to displacement and WPS. Moreover, WPS is a highly structured agenda and displacement does not fit neatly into any single WPS pillar. Given that most governments structure their WPS approaches through the pillars, it then becomes unclear where the responses to displacement should fit. This lack of synergy also hinders inter-sectional conversation that should take place at the global level. Approaches to WPS and displacement should be undertaken to deliver for women and girls in all their diversity.

Workshop participants suggested ways to address the lack of synergy between policy frames. First, potential impacts of humanitarian work on development work, and vice versa, should be better considered to effectively address the long-term impacts of displacement and to generate transformative change in gender equality. Developing humanitarian and development policies and programmes in a complementary way would lead to better use of resources, generate sustainable outcomes, and avoid replication of actions. Such a strategy can positively influence donor priorities, pushing them to consider long-term objectives and support initiatives that go beyond emergency needs and their own national security objectives.

Second, aligning processes related to CEDAW, WPS and sexual and gender-based violence in conflict (SGBV) could lead to more coherent gender policies in conflict and displacement. This would help avoid repetition of actions and allow for a more holistic and feminist approach to tackling discrimination against women and gender inequality.²⁷ For instance, CEDAW's General Recommendation 30 should be closely connected to WPS work.²⁸ Therefore, a mapping of structures, frameworks and international treaties could provide a coordinated and integrated understanding of the overlaps and divergences between different policy frameworks. This would lead to the development of WPS policies that are sensitive to gender-based discrimination and sexual violence, and their impacts on displaced communities. Moreover, more alignment between these frameworks

²⁶ PeaceWomen, 'Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan Development Toolkit' (2013). Available at https://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/national_action_plan_development_toolkit.pdf

²⁷ Susan Harris Rimmer, 'When WPS Met CEDAW (and Broke Up with R2P?)', *E-International Relations* (13 March 2014).

²⁸ Governments are now required to report on their WPS implementation in their CEDAW reporting – a step in the right direction.

could create opportunities for governments to take WPS more seriously.²⁹

Third, the presence of different international agendas can divide civil society's work. When CSOs do not link their work to NAPs (for which there are many legitimate reasons, such as alignment with a national government strategy), they may be unable to access funding. In other cases, such as in Iraq, multiple coalitions of women's rights' organisations and CSOs can emerge and compete for funding and access to resources, which in turn makes it hard for the WPS agenda to influence government policy.

Fourth, participants emphasised that civil society can help bridge WPS and CEDAW policies. Incorporating all relevant civil society actors into the development, implementation and monitoring of NAPs through an inclusive mechanism is a prerequisite for a NAP to be successful. CSOs in the regional states with a NAP, or in the process of developing one, could collectively identify specific strategies that connect WPS and CEDAW. CSOs can also play an important role in bringing the issue of displacement into WPS because they work directly with displaced communities and are able to understand the challenges and opportunities at each stage of displacement.

A cautionary note is necessary with regards to risk that come with aligning certain security agendas, such as Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) to WPS. The CVE work on de-radicalisation can do harm to communities and increase the vulnerability of certain communities or individuals. For instance, in Iraq, segments of the IDP population are often targeted or persecuted due to their potential connection to violent extremist groups. As a result, many community members have been subject to unfair treatment. CVE work can lead to the stigmatisation of individuals and families, which can further increase the vulnerabilities of women and girls.³⁰ Finally, the financing of CVE comes with significant costs to organisations that focus on women's rights and gender equality.³¹

Workshop participants recommended incorporating conflict-related displacement and its implications on gender and peace, in the WPS agenda, by outlining clear and tangible synergies, alignments and dialogues between:

- Humanitarian and development programming
- CEDAW, WPS and policies on tackling SGBV
- Civil society and governments

²⁹ Agnieszka Fal-Dutra Santos and Kelly Yzique Zea, 'Strengthening Synergies between CEDAW and Women, Peace and Security Resolutions', Policy Brief, *Global Network of Women Peacebuilders* (2018). Available at https://gnwp.org/wp-content/uploads/PolicyBriefGNWP-2018_13Sept_2018-1.pdf

³⁰ Zeynep Kaya, 'Resilience Policy and Internally Displaced Women in Iraq: An Unintentionally Flawed Approach', *WPS Working Paper Series* 13 (LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security, 2018). Available at <http://www.lse.ac.uk/women-peace-security/assets/documents/2018/wps13Kaya.pdf>

³¹ Duke Law International Human Rights Clinic and Women Peacemakers Program, 'Tightening the Purse Strings: What Countering Terrorism Financing Costs Gender Equality and Security' (2017). Available at <https://law.duke.edu/sites/default/files/humanrights/tighteningpursestrings.pdf>

Limited Understanding of Structural Gender Inequalities

Displacement compounds existing gender inequalities in society. Whilst focus on women and girls in displacement is increasing, responses typically frame displaced women and girls as victims and focus on their urgent relief needs. However, such responses can lack genuine long-term gender analysis which would lead to transformational programmes. Even mid-term programming in livelihoods targeting displaced women can reinforce gender stereotypes, further entrenching the structures of inequality.

The limited or lack of focus on structural and long-term challenges means that gender social norms and structures are not being challenged. As a result, governments and donors often treat WROs as if the issues they raise are not a priority in the context of more ‘urgent’ and ‘important’ challenges relating to security and the political situation. Taking into account wider structures of inequality could help correct priorities, through understanding and appreciating the urgency of the issues raised by rights organisations.

Workshop discussions led to specific recommendations in addressing gender inequalities and carrying out proper needs assessments.

Addressing gender inequalities in policy responses:

- Responses to displacement should take into account the root causes of inequalities and vulnerabilities and their manifestation. Existing inequalities before conflict and displacement affect the outcomes after displacement. Further analysis on these inequalities would be useful in developing programmes and policies that actually benefit displaced women and girls, leading to transformative change in participation, protection and empowerment (see recommendation 5).
- Policies and programmes should reflect diverse gendered experiences. For example, instead of narrowly focusing on sexual violence, donors and INGOs should conceptualise violence against women and girls in continuum; sexual violence in conflict is part of a spectrum of different types of violence ranging from intimate partner violence to institutional violence.³² This spectrum of violence exists in a continuum of patriarchal, discriminative and unequal structures. These structures that sanction physical, sexual and emotional aggression shape the everyday lives of women, girls, men and boys (see recommendations 1, 2 and 7).
- Policies should reflect an understanding of how conflict itself and its manifestations are compounded by gendered masculinities and femininities. In the making of WPS, there is need to think of gender as a broader concept, rather than an ‘add-on’ component that highlights the experience of women and girls. However, engaging men and boys in tackling gender inequality should not reinforce existing power structures and control over decision-making (see recommendations 1, 2, 4 and 5).
- Finally, responses should treat women and girls as agents of decision-making, peace-building and justice, not as victims. Women and girls’ inclusion can be used to push back against social norms and gendered roles. However, this should be done without creating a backlash (see recommendations 1, 2, 4 and 5).

³² The concept of ‘continuum of violence’ was first outlined by Liz Kelly in her *Surviving Sexual Violence* (Oxford: Policy Press, 1988).

Carrying out comprehensive and inclusive needs assessment:

- It is essential to amplify the voices of displaced women and push back against the tendency to merely hear women and girls' stories while resorting mainly to men for solutions. As things stand, donor-driven agendas that focus on security match community needs to donor interest. However, this should be the other way around; priorities should be identified through working with women, girls, men and boys and this should lead to funding (see recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4).
- This can be done through well-designed consultations and needs assessments³³ with displaced communities and other relevant actors. These should use the intersectional method to accurately identify indicators and causes of vulnerabilities and address them. A participatory and intersectional analysis would better reflect the lived experiences of displaced women and girls and lead to distinct approaches for different circumstances, avoiding a one-size-fits-all programming. Therefore, more time and funding should be allocated to consultation and needs assessment. This would lead to relevant and useful policy and programming and prevent funding and resources from being wasted (see recommendations 1 and 2).
- Local CSOs and WROs should be central to consultations and needs assessments because they are able to understand and identify needs, analyse which policies work and which policies are discriminative, divisive and stereotypical. They are first responders to crises and have contacts and wide networks on the ground. For instance, CSO work in Iraqi Kurdistan showed the importance of safe spaces inside and outside camps for displaced women and girls to have access to refuge, training and community support. Some of these safe spaces include specialist task forces working on SGBV and can offer a social support system for displaced women and girls. CSO work in Iraqi Kurdistan also showed the importance of healing after trauma. Offering sustainable psycho-social support for women and girls' experiences could lead to empowerment to contribute to peacebuilding in their communities (see recommendation, 3 and 4).
- Finally, undertaking proper consultation and analysis can ensure policy and programmatic responses to displacement do not accidentally perpetuate the structures of patriarchy and increase women and girls' vulnerabilities. Resulting programmes are more likely to be impactful in redressing power imbalances. For instance, expecting women to volunteer in camp management can increase gendered burdens, particularly when men are employed and paid in camps for similar/equal roles. Women's inclusion and work should be compensated; otherwise participation can become exploitative rather than empowering (see recommendations 1 and 2).

³³ GAPS Beyond Consultations Toolkit.

Examples of Good Practice

Identifying successes and best practices, assessing how much impact they have made and replicating them is a useful strategy. Below is a list of good practices identified by participants and their organisations/institutions that were outlined during workshop discussions.

Funding to WROs: Among other efforts to support the feminist movement in the MENA region, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) provides core funding to Syrian WROs to support and further their agendas. They support civil society at the local level, including paying for staff salaries and encouraging innovative feminist initiatives. WILPF's work shows that supporting a thriving feminist movement, which is central to the implementation of WPS, is possible and can be done with limited human and financial resources if feminist values of inclusivity, responsiveness and agency are adapted. WILPF also facilitates the establishment of networks through convening women activists and organisations from different countries in the MENA region and other conflict-affected contexts. This allows for the identification of best practices and lessons learnt, showing the benefits of cross- and intra-regional exchanges.

J-NAP: Unlike other NAPs in the Middle East, the J-NAP addresses displacement. This is the outcome of a collaboration between the Jordanian National Commission for Women, UN Women and UNHCR in developing the J-NAP. The J-NAP also has a strong implementation plans for gender-sensitive services that include UNHCR and UN Women. The Commission is currently working with UN Women to secure funding for the implementation of the J-NAP and 80 percent of the costing has been secured so far.

I-NAP: The I-NAP allocates significant importance to CEDAW regulations and commitments and uses the WPS agenda as another pressure point on the Iraqi government to fulfil its CEDAW commitments and eliminate discrimination against women in the legal, political and institutional system in Iraq. This is a good example of tackling gendered and structural inequalities through aligning CEDAW with WPS. Al-Amal Association in Iraq played an important role in pushing this agenda.

P-NAP: The P-NAP has fulfilled a majority of its actions despite limited funding. Palestinian civil society has played a significant role in this. Oxfam in Palestine worked on an accountability agenda for WPS in Palestine and made recommendations on what Palestinian women can do to advance WPS and to hold relevant actors accountable, although this work could better represent the IDP perspective.

UK-NAP: The UK-NAP provides a framework to ensure that the provisions of UNSCR 1325 and associated Resolutions are incorporated into the government's defence, diplomacy and development work, centred around seven strategic outcomes. The NAP applies globally; annual reports reflect how it is being implemented in nine focus countries. Key government partners include civil society organisations with expertise in the development of programming related to gender equality, women and girls' rights policy, as well

as the elimination of gender-based discrimination and violence. The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office has funded extensive civil society consultations in the revision, development, implementation and monitoring of the UK-NAP, with GAPS as the lead implementing partner.

Institution and CSO Capacity Building: UNHCR uses a dual approach of humanitarian assistance and invests in institution-building and civil society capacity building. A key component of UNHCR's work with displaced people is participation and consultation with civil society and with displaced women and girls.

Humanitarian-Development Nexus, UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States: There are good examples within UNDP's 3Rs (Refugee, Resilience, Response) and UNHCR's Global Compact on Refugees of work that bridges humanitarian relief and development work. However, it is not clear how gender-sensitive these initiatives are.

Conclusion: Opportunities for Transformative Change in Displacement

Sustained, context-specific, gendered approaches to displacement offer opportunities to change gender norms, target gendered vulnerabilities and inequalities and to think about sustained transformative change. Through the WPS agenda, mechanisms can be developed to: enable the participation of women in camp committees; support displaced women to carry out non-gendered responsibilities; create platforms for displaced and returnee women and girls to communicate their needs and experiences and receive relevant support; remove everyday barriers (such as lack of safe and affordable transport) to support displaced women and girls' access to education and employment; and help develop gender-sensitive measures for protection against violence, exploitation and discrimination.

Displacement disrupts existing gender relations and norms. Research shows that men and women's conceptions of gender norms, especially with regards to their children, can change, or sometimes get further reinforced due to displacement.³⁴ This renders education as a good entry point for transformative change. Some of the displaced families, especially those with poor economic backgrounds, are more likely to want their daughters to access education – a desire that contrasts to their previous attitude back home. Moreover, displaced people usually reside in camps or areas inside or close to towns. As a result, they have more access to educational opportunities than in their rural places of origin.

Displacement also offers opportunities for women to enter non-traditional livelihood roles due to financial difficulties, as well as the absence or illness of men. This can allow women to gain new skills and extend their networks. However, this needs to be supported to ensure women can enter into safe, secure, protected employment. Conversely, working women and girls' burdens increase because they do not usually receive support for household and care responsibilities, which increase during conflict. Carefully designed economic livelihood programmes (that are relevant to the wider economic market needs, can generate meaningful income, provide transferrable skills, and are safe and secure) can lead to transformative change in the economic empowerment of women. Moreover, the implementation of WPS in displacement contexts can ensure establishing measures against the exploitation of women and girls in informal labour, trafficking, and domestic labour.

Perpetuated views on hyper masculinity and subservient femininity still determine national and international responses, and perceptions on displaced women and girls as victims rather than agents exacerbate this. This can be challenged through the incorporation of a WPS perspective into displacement programming and vice versa. Gender inclusive processes could create an enabling environment for gender equality that hopefully contribute to sustainable peace. In all this, creating space for civil society involvement and further support for the existing work of WROs and women human rights defenders would benefit social cohesion and peacebuilding.

³⁴ Luisa Dietrich and Simone E. Carter, 'Gender and Conflict analysis in ISIS Affected Communities of Iraq', OXFAM (2017). Available at <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/rr-gender-conflict-isis-affected-iraq-300517-en.pdf>

List of participant organisations and offices

Al-Amal Association, Iraq

British Embassy in Jordan

EMMA Organisation for Human Development, Kurdistan Region of Iraq

FCO (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), UK Government

GAPS (Gender Action for Peace and Security), UK

High Council of Women's Affairs, Kurdistan Regional Government

Jordanian National Commission for Women

MOSAIC, Lebanon

Oxfam, Palestine and MENA

Public Aid Organisation, Iraq UNHCR, Jordan

Saferworld, Yemen

UNDP, Jordan

UNDP, Regional Bureau for Arab States

UNHCR, Jordan

UNHCR, MENA

UN Women, Jordan Country Office

WILPF (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom)

Abbreviations

Term	Definition
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
GAPS	Gender Action for Peace and Security
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
I-NAP	Iraqi National Action Plan
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organisations
J-NAP	Jordanian National Action Plan
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NAP	National Action Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
P/CVE	Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism
P-NAP	Palestinian National Action Plan
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UK-NAP	United Kingdom National Action Plan
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WROs	Women's Rights Organisations

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Cover Image

IDP women and girls in Zaatari Camp, Jordan, in October 2018. Source: UN Women/Christopher Herwig

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