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Summary

“Enough of the ineffective peace pendulum. Enough of the paper talk. We must arise and march. For the time has come for the African woman to be seen and heard as the flagbearer of peace. We need not wait for war, while we work for peace. It is time for us women to rise and act […]. Arise, fellow women. Arise in every corner of the world, and in Africa in particular, for peace.”

– Joanna Odzoa Opare
Executive Director at Gender Planning, Ghana

On 18 August 2018, WILPF hosted a forum on the Feminist Peace Movement in Africa at the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), University of Ghana (Legon), Ghana. 250 participants attended, including women from 16 African countries – Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, DRC, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe – and many international participants from WILPF National Sections and Groups. This forum took place as a pre-meeting to WILPF’s 32nd International Congress, the first WILPF Congress hosted in Africa in WILPF’s 103-year-long history.

The resonating message was that the feminist peace movement in Africa is strong, diverse, active and growing. The work being done in communities across Africa and the rich history of African women should be amplified to expand women’s influence, participation and rights and to build toward just and sustainable peace. Solidarity and alliances are essential to strengthen the movement. As one participant underlined, “Africa has a very diverse context and different realities. As we work on the ground, we need to acknowledge that diversity and listen carefully to what is happening with regard to the promotion of gender justice and peace.”

Forum participants reminded states in Africa of the commitments made, included in the African Agenda 2063, which was adopted by the African Union in 2015. The Agenda recognised, among other things, that “a prosperous, integrated and united Africa, based on good governance, democracy, social inclusion and respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law are the necessary pre-conditions for a peaceful and conflict-free continent.” Forum participants demanded all state and non-state actors stop exporting violence and exploiting Africa and called on the international community to work to abolish the causes of war.

The forum brought together women’s peace activists and women’s rights advocates to critically discuss the root causes of violence, women’s role in social transformation, economic justice, and peacebuilding with a focus on the African continent. The participants explored challenges and opportunities through different themes and diverse contexts. The agenda included three interconnected plenary sessions on the root causes of violence, women’s roles and impacts in various processes towards achieving sustainable peace, and synergies between the global and the African feminist peace movement. Group discussions explored seven different topics and the links with feminism, women and gender.
Mediation from a feminist perspective was explored. Without inclusion, peace processes tend to merely redistribute territory, power and resources between warring factions and exclude the need to address root causes, including the political economy, gender inequality, militarism, and social and economic rights, and to secure legal frameworks to ensure justice and accountability. Despite the resolutions on and commitment to the full and equal participation of women and inclusion of gender perspectives, women are systematically excluded in conflict prevention and security discussions. Furthermore, formal peace processes are too often disconnected from grassroots peace processes. The meeting gravitated towards a different model of mediation in which the work of local women and women’s organisations would be put at the core of mediation. This has the potential to reflect better the local knowledge of what is really happening and what is needed to bring peace from different perspectives. Several examples of local mediation were shared from countries across Africa, including Libya, Liberia, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We live, work and advocate within patriarchal structures that have been many times militarised.

“You cannot dismantle the master’s house by using the master’s tools,” Nozizwe Madlala Routledge, former politician and founder of Embrace Dignity, reminded the participants. Women must, therefore, challenge and transform the structures from within and without. Participants shared many examples of informal work for peace being done by women in homes and communities, and when knitted together, these examples offer alternatives for social transformation.

This Forum Report captures the discussions that took place and the recommendations that were made during the one-day forum. It should be seen as exploratory and informative, and not exhaustive.
Agenda

08:00-09:00  REGISTRATION, COFFEE & WELCOME

09:00  WELCOME ADDRESS
Ayo Ayoola-Amale, President, WILPF Ghana
Special Guests and Representatives

09:20-10:45  SESSION 1: CRITICAL ANALYSIS & FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON ROOT CAUSES OF VIOLENCE
A deeper look at violent masculinities, patriarchy, militarism, colonialism, economic exploitation, and corruption.
Moderator:
Joy Onyesoh, Vice-President WILPF, and President WILPF Nigeria
Speakers:
Addo-Adeku, Professor, University of Ghana
Dean Peacock, Co-founder and Co-executive Director, Sonke Gender Justice

10:45-12:30  SESSION 2: WOMEN’S ROLES & IMPACTS IN PREVENTION, PEACEFUL ELECTIONS, LEADERSHIP & PEACE PROCESSES
Voices of leaders, survivors and advocates sharing examples of peacemaking work, peaceful elections, and how women can challenge and change power dynamics to transform social and cultural norms in different processes.
Moderator:
Barbara Sangare, International Coordinator, Women’s Situation Room
Speakers:
Sylvie Ndongmo, President, WILPF Cameroon
Mpiwa Mangwiro, Regional Campaigns Specialist, Men Engage Alliance Africa Network
Edwick Madzimure, WILPF Zimbabwe
Nozizwe Madlala Routledge, Founder, Embrace Dignity

12:30-13:30  LUNCH

13:30-15:00  SESSION 3: GROUP DISCUSSIONS
Feminism, gender, women and…
1. Facteurs de conflit (led by WILPF DRC) [en français] Conflict drivers Session held In French
2. Elections and Political Participation (led by WILPF Nigeria)
3. Disarmament and Conflict Prevention (led by WILPF Cameroon)
4. Mediation (led by WILPF Ghana)
5. Political Economy and Peace (led by WILPF Zimbabwe)
6. Masculinities and Engaging Men (led by WILPF South Africa and Men Engage Alliance Africa)
7. Migration and Displacement (led by WILPF Chad)
Participants are invited to choose a breakout session to attend. Members of WILPF African Sections/Groups will facilitate each session on key thematic issues.

15:00-15:30  COFFEE BREAK

15:30-16:30  SESSION 4: SYNERGIES BETWEEN AFRICA & THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT & MEDIATION
A conversation looking at the synergies between African and Global feminist peace movements and also include a particular focus on mediation efforts and peace processes.
Moderator:
Madeleine Rees, Secretary General, WILPF
Speakers:
Kozue Akibayashi, President, WILPF
Annie Amat Mbambi, President, WILPF DRC
Rida Altubuly, Co-founder and Director, Together We Build It, Libya

16:30-17:00  CLOSING
Wrapping up the day, we aim to pull together all we’ve heard from the different plenaries and sessions of the Forum, and outline paths forward.
Speakers:
Joy Onyesoh, WILPF Nigeria
Micheline Minani Muzaneza, Senior Trainer, Sonke Gender Justice
Welcome Address

Welcome remarks: Ayo Ayoola-Amale, President of WILPF Ghana, and Joy Onyesoh, WILPF Vice-President, WILPF Nigeria

Special Guests and Representatives: Joanna Odzoa Opare, Executive Director at Gender Planning; Kozue Akibayashi, WILPF President; Madeleine Rees, WILPF Secretary-General

““The bigger we are, the more united we are, the more networked we are, the greater the possibilities are to bring peace to the planet that we so desperately need.”

– Madeleine Rees
WILPF Secretary-General

At the opening session, Joanna Odzoa Opare, Executive Director at Gender Planning, a guest of honour from Ghana, called for action and shared experience from work across Africa. She emphasised that we should leverage what has been done and not replicate. Ayo Ayoola-Amale, the President of WILPF Ghana, welcomed all the participants, reiterating that peace was needed more than ever. WILPF President Kozue Akibayashi and WILPF Secretary-General Madeleine Rees stressed the importance of the forum taking place in Ghana at that very moment. The forum was an opportunity to demonstrate the pace and strength at which WILPF was growing in Africa and the difference it was making, not just on the African continent but to WILPF’s vision of building a global feminist peace movement.

During the last eight years, WILPF has grown from two to 16 African Sections and emerging groups, which clearly demonstrates the need for and dedication to peace, as well as the strength and leadership of African women, despite the many obstacles and challenges they face.
Critical Analysis and Feminist Perspective on Root Causes of Violence

**Moderator:** Joy Onyesoh, WILPF Vice-President, WILPF Nigeria  
**Speaker:** Kate Addo-Adeku, Professor, University of Ghana

“The session focused on critical analysis and feminist perspectives of root causes of violence, including violent masculinities, patriarchy, exploitation and corruption. Professor Kate Addo-Adeku of the University of Ghana recalled the importance of building social consciousness about the underprivileged and the excluded in the 1960s and the prominent space feminists took in the Civil Rights Movement. Women’s contributions to peacebuilding and their leadership and dedication to equality and justice throughout history and across the globe have been shunted aside through selective, male-oriented history. Women have lead peacebuilding efforts from Burundi to Nigeria to Rwanda. Their work to prevent conflicts has stretched across many different spheres – at home, in communities and at national and regional levels. As recognised in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and elsewhere, peace, gender equality and development are closely interlinked.

“To enhance peace processes, more women peace leaders, like you, should participate. We need a society where there is social justice, democratic participation, that includes women who have an equal role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding,” said Professor Addo-Adeku.

She then emphasised that there was a variety of different understandings of the main sources of women’s oppression among feminists but that they all shared one common goal: fighting injustice, discrimination, segregation and inequality.

**International politics is a man’s world – women are excluded**

Women continue to be excluded from platforms where solutions to conflicts are being discussed. The added value of women’s engagement is pushed aside. Patriarchal norms work to exclude women during peace negotiations, disarmament and post-conflict reconstruction processes.

“Peace is inextricably linked to the equality between women and men.”

– Addo-Adeku  
Professor, University of Ghana
Women’s contribution to peace, many times transformative, remains in the informal sphere. “It has been observed that international politics is a man’s world, inhabited by diplomats, soldiers, and international civil servants, the majority of whom are men,” said Professor Addo-Adeku.

Challenging bias and the status-quo

Women’s informal contribution to peacebuilding in different conflicts around Africa and elsewhere has been instrumental. In Burundi and Liberia, for example, women’s coalitions were formed across warring parties, and in Nigeria, women played an active role in developing coalitions across fighting groups. Many feminists around Africa are challenging gender bias, demanding an inclusion of women’s experiences and voices that are reflective of the women’s overall situations. They are demanding equal playing fields for men and women, in the social, economic and political sense.

Gendered post-conflict reconstruction processes

The fact that post-conflict reconstruction processes are biased towards men means that women’s lives can be additionally negatively affected by initiatives that are supposed to help the country recover. As Professor Addo-Adeku pointed out, the social, political and economic lives of women are affected in negative ways because women are not only neglected in the peace negotiations but also excluded from demobilisation programmes and post-conflict reconstruction interventions. Furthermore, macroeconomic stabilisation reforms are gender-blind, and, in addition to that, women often face limited formal sector employment. Vocational training as part of post-conflict recovery is often biased towards men, consequently limiting women’s employment opportunities.

Engaging men in Africa

Participants spoke up to share support for feminist strategies. Among the participants, there was recognition that the feminist movement needs to ally with men as partners in social justice and develop inclusive strategies where synergies can be found. Engaging with men and boys around gender norms, roles and responsibilities should start in the home.

Call for adequate funding for innovative strategies for change

Participants shared concrete initiatives including organising women traditional leaders in local mediation processes; strategic litigation to regional mechanisms such as ECOWAS; and communication campaigns such as
#bringbackourgirls and #MeToo, which has been a useful mobilising tool which women need to use across borders and across sectors (academics, activists, parliamentarians). A non-violent approach is a very important dimension in feminist peace initiatives and social transformation. Peaceful protests and media-covered peaceful rallies have benefited the peace movement initiatives. In Nigeria, the peaceful protest and rallies by the Bring Back Our Girls feminist group galvanised the federal government into action to negotiate and secure the release of some of the schoolgirls kidnapped in Chibok, North Eastern Nigeria, in 2014 by the Boko Haram terrorists.

Conflict and its impact on women’s human rights in Africa

There was recognition that women must be enabled to enjoy their full and equal human rights. In war and conflict, violations of women’s human rights include discrimination, gender-based violence, rape, intimidation, sexual abuses and harassment in various forms. Different forms of violence as experienced by the women were highlighted:

- In Rwanda, girls were sexually mutilated after being subjected to rape, as well as abducted as army wives.
- In Sierra Leone, girls who tried to escape rebel captivity were carved with the rebel name (RuF) across their breasts. In addition, 94% of displaced households during the conflict suffered serious sexual assaults.
- In Angola and Mozambique, the conflict ended with widows accounting for half of the female population. Unfortunately, a significant percentage resorted to prostitution to sustain the livelihood of their families.
- There has been the incidence of HIV and AIDS among some women in conflict areas.

In addition, women and children suffer through relocation due to conflicts, and many of them become refugees, with all its negative implications.
Women’s Roles and Impacts in Prevention, Peaceful Elections, Leadership and PeaceProcesses

Moderator: Barbara Sangare, International Coordinator, Women’s Situation Room (Cote D’Ivoire)
Speakers: Edwick Madzimure, President of WILPF Zimbabwe; Mpiwa Mangwire-Tsanga, Men Engage African Alliance; Sylvie Ndongmo, President of WILPF Cameroon; Nozizwe Madlala Routledge, founder of Embrace Dignity

“The elections can be a source of empowerment but also a source of conflict.”

– Edwick Madzimure
WILPF Zimbabwe

The speakers of the second session shared examples of peacebuilding in difficult circumstances, working with violent election processes, and how women can challenge and change power dynamics to transform social and cultural norms in different processes.

Peace and democracy

The link between peace and democracy was examined. It was argued that elections could be a source of empowerment but also a source of conflict. Edwick Madzimure of WILPF Zimbabwe, discussed how, for African women, elections and politics brought fear of victimisation and violence. Women contemplating participation in elections 1) worry about the safety of their families; 2) frequently face insufficient financial resources when running against male counterparts; 3) are faced with cultural norms of certain spaces (such as elections) being closed to women; and 4) struggle to reconcile their responsibilities and duties as primary caregivers, activists and professionals and running an electoral campaign. The challenges they face, compared to their male counterparts, do not enable them to compete on equal ground with male candidates. It was noted that many African countries needed electoral reform, and an assessment of what kind of electoral system worked best for women should be performed. For some countries, this may be proportional representation, but there may be other systems that work even better to ensure equality. Civil society should demand more transparency and examination of the funding systems of political parties. Good women often lose elections because the male candidates have more money or are funded by powerful entities.
Toxic masculinities lead to war and gender-based violence

The importance of working with men and boys, as well as women, to impact patriarchal cultural norms that dictate gender relations and roles was underlined by the participants. Mpiwa Mangwiro-Tsanga of the Men Engage Africa Alliance, argued that how a man was defined had implications for conflict, and suggested that toxic masculinities led to war and gender-based violence, urging men and boys to work with women to address behaviour that led to violence. She explained how essential it was to start challenging these norms at home, where even if women were educated and employed, they were still often expected to take on the household and child-raising chores. A number of participants stated that cultural norms with respect to women’s roles and the prevalence of sexual harassment presented challenges to the political participation of women.

“In African culture, women are expected to be mediators, so we try to maximise this, we take it out of the home and into communities,” said Edwick Madzimure of WILPF Zimbabwe.

Structural patriarchy in our political institutions

Nozizwe Madlala Routledge of Embrace Dignity examined challenges at the structural level. She talked about how women in Africa were affected by apartheid, but also how the end of apartheid changed the role of women in society in many ways – particularly because women were an active part of the resistance, which opened up space for women’s participation in politics after apartheid. Yet the women entering parliament did not have the same power or authority as men, and the political institutions remained patriarchal. Women in politics were entering patriarchal structures that had been many times militarised. “You cannot dismantle the master’s house by using the master’s tools,” said Routledge. Women of South Africa had to challenge the patriarchal structures within the formal political institutions: parliaments, parties, decision-making bodies and more. They needed to rebuild and revive the women’s movement, as, more than 25 years after Mandela left prison, South Africa had huge problems...
affecting women, including high and rising levels of gender-based violence, high rates of HIV, unemployment among women, economic and gender inequality, and vulnerability to trafficking and forced prostitution. Feminists had to take a closer look at political institutions and strategies, including political parties, in terms of how to transform them.

“We came in to change the parliament, but instead the parliament changed us. We need to address the structural patriarchy in our institutions,” said Nozizwe Madlala Routledge of Embrace Dignity

Women’s Situation Room

We need to create opportunities to train women and provide networking opportunities, for example, through initiatives such as the Women’s Situation Room (WSR). Here women can connect with mediators, peacemakers and community leaders across the continent to reduce electoral violence and promote women’s participation in elections and politics. Barbara Sangare, the International Coordinator of the Women’s Situation Room and the moderator of the session, briefly described the WSR as a non-partisan process set up in order to mitigate conflict before and after elections in different parts of Africa. As an institutionalised structure, the WSR has various types of personnel – coordinators, animators, trainers, facilitators, advocates, lobbyists and peace monitors. They all play a different role within the process, including doing assessments of the country’s situation, capacity-building and training for election observers, and early warning responses to perceived security threats. The Security Sector Desk plays a crucial role, and today they even have women police officers manning the desks. The process empowers women, including young women, to learn about elections and to engage through the many roles the WSR offers. The WSR has been able to demonstrate real effects on reducing and preventing electoral violence across the continent. In Kenya in 2013, for example, the WSR was able to negotiate legal redress for those who had experienced violence during the elections; in Liberia in 2017, the WSR had lawyers providing education and explanations to communities regarding the elections; during the election in Uganda in 2016, the WSR was asked to lead the mediation when tensions were high. “Those are just some of the examples women have done, women are doing, and can do better,” said Barbara Sangare.
WILPF’s Movement for Feminist Peace in Africa

WILPF has National Sections in Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. WILPF has Groups in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, Niger, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and an emerging group in South Africa.
What Feminists are Saying on Key Issues in the Group Discussions

Participants broke into thematic discussions on a variety of key issues, led by representatives of WILPF Africa Sections and Groups.

Breakout sessions discussed “feminism, gender and women” and the following topics:

1. Conflict drivers
2. Elections and political participation
3. Disarmament and conflict prevention
4. Mediation
5. Political economy and peace
6. Masculinities and engaging men
7. Migration and displacement
DISCUSSION 1

Conflict Drivers

Facilitator: Lisette Mavungu, WILPF DRC

Rapporteur: Tessa Cerisier, WILPF Human Rights Programme

The group discussed root causes and how they manifest differently in different contexts. As an example, WILPF DRC presented a study on artisanal mining, which showed the harmful impacts of uncontrolled natural resource extraction on communities, particularly on women. Mavungu told how the mining industry has huge impacts on the right to water, as well as large hydropower projects which leads to displacement of the population. Women often take the lead in opposing such projects and protecting the environment.

Glimpse of the discussion
“The unequal sharing of resources and wealth is one of the major root causes of conflict.”

– Participant during group discussion on Conflict Drivers

What needs to be done

- Strengthen advocacy for disarmament and the ratification and/or implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.
- Give local communities a deeper understanding of the dynamics of arms proliferation.
- Work for the regulation of multinational companies and the protection of natural resources.
- Consider calling for outright bans of mining operations.
- Raise awareness at local level, including in the family and through means adapted to the local contexts (videos, social media) to transform violent masculinities.
DISCUSSION 2

Elections and Political Participation

Facilitator: Olivia Oseji, WILPF Nigeria
Rapporteur: Gabriella Irsten, WILPF Sweden

The group identified challenges and opportunities in political processes and systems. Elections are an important space for strengthening democratic political participation and conflict prevention. However, violence too often increases around these periods, and women’s voices, expertise and early warnings are too often ignored. The group discussion explored how to build partnerships between women peace leaders and local authorities to address gendered early warnings and strengthen accountable institutions, women’s political participation, and peace.

Glimpse of the discussion
What needs to be done

- Women’s right activists need to develop a game plan for how to tackle the patriarchal party structure in order to guarantee women candidates successful entry into politics, and also their survival within the party once elected.

- Women’s rights activists need to built on prior successes and define what can be corrected for a more successful outcome in the future. This should also include analysis and cooperation between, and from, other regions and countries.

- Media representatives needs to be included in advocacy and training activities.

- Continue challenging the patriarchy by involving women, but also by challenging patriarchal rhetoric and power structures.

“It’s also a problem amongst women not supporting each other as we too are socialised, in that traditional manly trades are seen as leaders.”

– Participant during group discussion on Elections and Political Participation
DISCUSSION 3

Disarmament and Conflict Prevention

Facilitator: Guy Feugap, WILPF Cameroon  
Rapporteur: Ray Acheson, WILPF Disarmament Programme

Militarism as a way of thought affirms the idea that we live in a dangerous world and that the use of force or its threat is the most appropriate response to conflicts. However, military solutions have promoted spirals of violence, crises and suffering, rather than protection. The participants in this group explored the glorification of militarism and war as a key challenge to peace and disarmament, and discussed opportunities to use the language of human rights, humanitarianism, environmental protection and social progress to promote peace and disarmament.

Glimpse of the discussion
Some good practices/lessons learned

- The knowledge and popularisation of existing laws and instruments on the prohibition, manufacturing, trade and use of weapons is an entry point into disarmament.

- The presence of women in exchange fora/institutions/structures on conflict prevention is crucial because it reveals their capacity as agents of change and stops profiling women solely as victims.

- Building synergies between the different actors involved in disarmament and conflict prevention allows producers and users of weapons to be held accountable for the damage caused by their weapons.
What needs to be done

- Activists need to challenge war as the answer to conflict.
- Educational campaigns need to be developed about the intersections of militarism, climate change, poverty and human rights, including indigenous and women’s rights.
- WILPF Sections and Groups in arms-exporting countries should pressure politicians over arms production and export policies and practices, especially where governments are rhetorically committed to human rights and feminism.
- WILPF Sections and Groups in countries that import and export arms should do training and advocacy on the Arms Trade Treaty and other regional or international arms control treaties.
- Activists should advocate for the regulation of arms industries and fight the corporate profits generated by these industries.
- WILPF Sections and Groups should also work for youth education and empowerment to help prevent violence and conflict.
- WILPF Sections and Groups should create discussion spaces for youth to open their minds so that they do not fall into armed violence and do not follow extremist groups who recruit young people to perpetrate violence.
DISCUSSION 4

Mediation

Facilitator:  
Ayo Ayoola-Amale, WILPF Ghana

Rapporteur:  
Sarah Boukhary, WILPF MENA Project

There was agreement that women’s role and the gender perspective in mediation processes must be strengthened and links between formal and informal mediation processes fostered. Ayo Ayoola-Amale, underlined that “there is no one ‘remedy’ to ensure greater inclusion in any peace process; it is vital that constitutional reform processes, quotas and reserved seats should support greater representation of women […]”. More than ever before, we urgently need international frameworks and standards to leverage for inclusion, though there is a need for this to be accompanied by homegrown, bottom-up perspectives, methods and priorities. “A question then arose as to how to put this into effect. Discussions centred on two issues, how to reconcile the three-track approach currently favoured with feminism, and whether it was possible to be objective and neutral when dealing with injustice on the part of one or all of the parties.

Glimpse of the discussion

[Diagram depicting challenges in mediation]
What needs to be done

• Place more focus on mediation training and awareness at the local level.

• Value the work of civil society with communities, as trusted relationships and shared understanding can be vital in future work/collaborations with local communities in mediation.

• Promote mediation as a non-violent tool for conflict resolution.

• Using an intersectional approach to peacebuilding can help identify patterns of multidimensional insecurities and persistent gender discrimination.

• Use a restorative justice approach to mediation.

• Empower civil society to educate parties in conflict and work with the local population to solve the conflict.

• Increase support in the form of solidarity, funding, capacity and network building.

• International solidarity and support is critical to achieving local forms of inclusion but must be done with an intersectional and contextual approach.
Government are struggling to meet human rights obligations and remove barriers to economic and political equality. Meanwhile, corporations are extracting natural, human and monetary resources at the expense of people and the planet. This group of participants explored the political and economic realities of women and men, and the challenges and opportunities stemming from these realities. The participants looked at the space for participation of ordinary citizens in political and economic decision-making and the current approaches of governments with respect to the enjoyment of human rights and peace-building processes.

Glimpse of the discussion
What needs to be done

- Adapt the strategies employed to each given context; there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution.
- Connect political and economic decision-making with building peace.
- Engage with governments and hold them accountable to their extraterritorial human rights obligations.
- Team up with organisations working on corruption issues in order to strengthen the anti-corruption work.
- Engage regional actors to influence the local politics and economics.

“There are financial difficulties in being an activist. For example, in Uganda, the government has imposed ‘social media taxes’. For each day of use of Viber or Whatsapp, taxes have to be paid, which makes it really difficult for people to use these tools.”

- Participant during group discussion on Political Economy and Peace
Gender inequality is a root cause of violence and conflict. Defining being a “real man” as dominance, masculinity and the justified use of violence also contributes to violence in the home, the community and the world. This group discussion affirmed the importance of addressing masculinities and engaging men for a variety of reasons, including the following: to ensure that the men who are part of the problem are part of the solution to gender inequality and violence; to create peace, since no one can do this alone; and to prevent other men from being forced into destructive norms that create violence and undermine peace, in situations ranging from the home to communities to the world.

Glimpse of the discussion
"We have to develop a model where women and men are working together to build peace."

– Participant during group discussion on Masculinities and Engaging Men

What needs to be done

- Do not force change – give people educated options to choose from.
- Do not do one-shot interventions – create an ongoing process that peels back one layer at a time.
- Do not let men take over or invade women’s spaces – men should support women’s leadership, not take the lead.
- Do not assume positive intent translates into effective changes – build in continual learning assessments to evaluate and improve efforts at equal partnerships.
Migration and Displacement

Facilitator:
Khadija Fadoul, WILPF Chad

Rapporteur:
Patrizia Scannella, WILPF Human Rights Programme

Migration and refugee flows today are at an unprecedented level, with particular risks for women. Militarisation contributes to migration and displacement, which often result in human trafficking, forced labour, forced prostitution and other sexual and gender-based violence.

The group discussion started with WILPF Chad’s brief presentation about current challenges in Africa, while other participants also added information from their particular context. In Ethiopia, for example, land confiscation and austerity policies enforced by the government are forcing people to leave and seek asylum in other countries, while the political crisis in Cameroon that began in 2016 has caused displacement and food insecurity. Due to the nature of the subject, the discussion went beyond the situation in Africa, covering the USA and Europe as well.

Glimpse of the discussion
“A secure world is possible if policymakers, security sectors and conflict-affected populations work together by implementing resolutions and human rights laws.”

– Participant during group discussion on Migration and Displacement
What needs to be done

• Focus on the need for more ratifications and greater implementation by states of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), including aligning with the first action plan for the implementation of the Convention adopted by the Ministerial Conference of State Parties to the Kampala Convention in Harare (Zimbabwe) in 2017.

• Focus on tackling socio-economic issues that can cause displacement; analyse the situation of women in those contexts; identify sustainable solutions, while being mindful that situations can be different in the various parts of the world; promote good governance and address corruption.

• Analyse the broader impact of displacement and migration, e.g., on food supplies.

• Encourage a culture that is welcoming and more altruistic; challenge the culture of fear that promotes hatred and divisions, e.g., through highlighting the positive impact of migration for receiving countries.

• Counter the misleading and inaccurate media reporting on migrants and conflict by spreading more accurate information at grassroots levels; increase public awareness through discussions at every level.

• Create more spaces where women can share their experiences, since relating to others can help create understanding, empathy and, hopefully, actions; educate women on how to make their voices heard; promote women's political participation.

• Use education to promote positive ideals, e.g., through a programme similar to the Erasmus University exchanges that would make it possible for young Africans to go to Europe for part of their studies.

• Undertake gendered analysis of the living realities of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, and advocate for gender-sensitive practices of providing international protection for refugees.

• Advocate for a broader definition of who is a refugee, as the one in the Refugee Convention is outdated and affects women seeking asylum differently, since it focuses on political persecution, which can make asylum claims harder for women, who are often fleeing due to persecution that isn’t necessarily political.

• Use UNSCR 1325 National Action Plan processes to push for greater attention to displacement, migration and refugee issues.
Synergies Between Africa and the Global Movement and Mediation

Moderator: Madeleine Rees, Secretary-General, WILPF
Speakers: Kozue Akibayashi, WILPF President; Annie Amat Mbambi, WILPF DRC President; Rida Altubuly, Co-founder and Director, Together We Build It (Libya)

“African feminist peace activists need to unite regionally and continue to connect with the progressive global women’s movement.”

– Joy Onyesoh
WILPF Nigeria

The session focused on how to connect local peace processes and mediation while moving away from the traditional thinking of tracks one, two and three. How can feminists work from the grassroots level to bring changes to mediation?

Mediation as a tool for transformation of conflicts

Madeleine Rees asked the participants to explore how feminists could redefine mediation so it moved away from traditional, divisive thinking and instead incorporated the wealth of knowledge and information grassroots activists possessed. This information never got to the negotiating tables. She asked the panellists to share their experience and activities that led to mediated outcomes in their respective countries, and invited the forum participants to discuss how the global feminist movement could be used to bring the work of grassroots feminists into the international fora in order to reframe the global mainstream understanding of peace. Participants shared examples and lessons from their work, including how mediation required “softening of edges toward healing of conflict.”

Building on the Group Discussion on Mediation (in Session 3), it was shared that although present at household and community level, women disappeared or were deliberately excluded when more formal processes started. This was particularly so when international bodies took over as the independent mediation body. There was a call for a different model in which the work of local women and women’s organisations would be put at the core of mediation. If the process was to succeed, then there had to be a transformation during the post-conflict moment, transformative justice. The role of the mediator had to be to ensure that those who could deliver
on that transformation were part of the process and had as much influence as those of warring factions, and that outcomes enabled a roadmap to be followed towards that transformation.

Impacts and realities of colonialism in different parts of the world today. She acknowledged the important contribution of WILPF in pushing a feminist perspective within global coalitions and networks, such as the Nobel Prize-winning ICAN.

Speaking truth to power

Annie Amat Mbambi discussed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), including the extractive industry, governance problems and the lack of rule of law. "It’s a country we think God has blessed because we have a lot of natural resources and we have become a market for all countries at the international level," said Mbambi. Speaking of past experiences with high-level UN officials, Mbambi continued: “Instead of doing strategies at the 37th floor of the UN, you need to come and check for yourself the reality of women at the grassroots level and on the field.” She shared how one high-level representative had visited the DRC and had actually changed her strategy. The role of transnational corporations in conflict and the violation of women’s rights was discussed, with examples from the DRC related to the extraction of mineral resources.

Challenging resistance through local and global strategies

Rida Altubuly shared a glimpse into the conflict in Libya, one of the gateways from Africa to the Mediterranean. She shared strategies and actions used to advance feminist perspectives on peace-making in Libya and how their work connected with the UN mediator office and peace process. Their engagements with UN and multilateral actors had also faced barriers and resistance, requiring local networks to advocate and challenge biased mandates and statements.

Realities and legacies of colonialism and militarism

Kozue Akibayashi provided an analysis of linkages between colonialism and militarism. Akibayashi shared an analysis from militarisation on the Korean peninsula and feminist work, which reflected themes relevant to colonialism across Africa. The struggles of non-violent actions against colonial and post-colonial manifestations were underlined, in addition to the continuing
During the closing session, Joy Onyesoh, WILPF Nigeria, and Micheline Minani Muzaneza, Senior Trainer, Sonke Gender Justice, wrapped up the day by summarising the different plenaries and sessions of the forum and outlining paths forward.

Based in Africa? Want to join us?

If you want to become part of WILPF’s movement for feminist peace in Africa, please contact us on membership@wilpf.org