

#MATI2024



MenEngage Alliance  
working with men and boys for gender equality



# MenEngage Africa Training Institute 2024 (MATI) Meeting Report

12-16 AUGUST 2024

Institute on Gender, Peace and Security  
Nairobi, Kenya



## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

**DRC** - Democratic Republic of Congo

**CAR** - Central African Republic

**FGM** - Female Genital Mutilation

**GBV** - Gender Based Violence

**MEA** - MenEngage Africa

**LGBTQI** - Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex

**WPS** - Women Peace & Security

**YPS** - Youth Peace & Security

**CEDAW** - Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

**NAP** - National Action Plan

**IMF** - International Monetary Fund

**WB** - World Bank

**COP** - Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

**TPLF** - Tigray People's Liberation Front

**TAC** - Treatment Action Campaign

**UNSCR** - United Nations Security Council Resolution

**UNSC** - United Nations Security Council

**AU** - African Union

**UDHR** - Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**GA** - General Assembly

**CSO** - Civil Society Organisation



## INTRODUCTION

The MenEngage Africa Training Institute (MATI) 2024, focusing on **Gender, Peace and Security - Building Feminist Peace in Africa**, was held in Nairobi - Kenya, by partnering institutions; WILPF, MEA, Sonke Gender Justice and the Gender Equality Studies & Training Programme (GRO GEST).

The training had participants from several countries including **Zimbabwe, Zambia, Togo, Tanzania, Swaziland, South Sudan, Rwanda, Nigeria, Malawi, Kenya, DRC, Cameroon, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Central African Republic (CAR) and Kenya** who were the hosts of the meeting.

The participants were a blend of activists from WILPF Africa sections, MEA & Sonke Gender Justice. For better understanding, the French speaking participants were aided by a team of interpreters.



## Welcome Remarks

### Tabitha Kiragu, Chairperson of MenEngage Kenya

The chairperson MenEngage Kenya welcomed the participants to Nairobi and invited them to reminisce over the famous Swahili statement, 'Hakuna Matata', which means 'All is right: No worries'.

She reassured them that even with reports in the media about recent protests and unrest, Kenya was peaceful and safe. She thanked WILPF and the MATI organising committee for choosing Kenya as the host for this meeting.

She commended SONKE Gender Justice for the support to the MenEngage Network in Kenya.

*"SONKE is the reason we've been able to continue with our mandate to support Gender justice. And we look forward to learning so many things out of the training that we are going to have throughout this week".*

Tabitha expressed gratitude to WILPF for allowing her to delegate her subsequent attendance to a youth. She said the youth need to be positioned to take up leadership roles to understand how things work in the world of activism.

*"As the Kenya hosts, we pledge to make your stay as pleasant as we possibly can. I wish you a wonderful week,"* she ended her remarks.

## Remarks on Behalf of WILPF AFRICA- Edwick Madzimure

### WILPF Zimbabwe and Alternate Regional Representative

Edwick said she was excited to speak on behalf of the WILPF African region and thanked the participants for completing the online course and making time for the in-person course.

She expressed confidence in the work that was going to be accomplished over the week and its contribution to the development of not only the African continent, but of the globe to ensure feminist peace and gender equality. She called on all the participants to embrace the opportunities to share experiences from their respective countries and learn from each other.

On WILPF in Zimbabwe she said, *"I understand we were told that we are supposed to be having collaborations at national level, as much as WILPF has had this collaboration at continental level. I am happy to share that WILPF Zimbabwe is part of the MenEngage Zimbabwe Network and is also on the steering committee. And we are also glad to announce that we were elected to be the vice chair for the next coming two years".*

She explained that the presentations would allow the participants to gain understanding of the causes and key drivers to conflicts, to enable a discussion on practical approaches to attain feminist peace and gender equality. *"It is important for us to interrogate why in most cultures violence is associated with men and boys more than women and girls, why socially constructed gender norms often associate masculinity with power and violence and control. This understanding will then enable us to see how best you can solve the problems that we are facing. So, this is important because such notions of masculinity can play a pivotal role in driving conflict and insecurity. Thinking about men and masculinities is central to gender sensitive peace building and applying a gender perspective approach in conflict prevention. We are also supposed to examine the roles and experience of men and boys in conflict prevention and peace building. Hence, understanding male vulnerabilities is key, which is going to be the key concept of most of the presentations that we are going to be having here".*

Edwick concluded by telling the participants to candidly question the methods that are being used by the respective countries and to perform a self - assessment to be able to apply the lessons learnt.

## Remarks

### Inta Klotins, Second Secretary at the High Commission of Canada to Kenya

After a vibrant greeting and self-introduction to the participants, the Second Secretary, re-echoed Canada's commitment to the global women, peace and security agenda. She noted that sustainable peace is only possible when women are fully involved in the resolution of conflict, and peace and security efforts. She recognized that this in-person training was a continuation of the online training which was completed and applauded the participants for having completed it. She reaffirmed that Canada knows that sustainable peace is only possible when women are fully involved in the resolution of conflict yet women and girls around the world face discrimination based on their gender. Displaced women and refugees are especially vulnerable to conflict-related sexual violence. At the same time, women and girls play a key role in preserving their communities. They often act as agents of peace, leading movements that eventually bring the warring parties to the negotiation table. Women often address the root causes of a conflict and increase community buy-in. Yet, conflict resolution processes frequently exclude women.

Inta concluded with a reminder of the support being rendered to Feminist peace through Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy, which includes the Feminist International Assistance Policy and Defence Policy. She closed by wishing the meeting fruitful deliberations.

## Sonke Gender Justice Remarks

### Mabel Sengendo, Regional Unit Manager

Mabel delivered her remarks on behalf of Bafana Khumalo, Co-Ed Sonke Gender Justice and member of the board of MenEngage Alliance. She reaffirmed SONKE and MEA's commitment to gender equality. She reminded the participants that the collaboration with WILPF is a long-standing one, but COVID interfered with the opportunity for a physical meeting for MATI until this year.

On accountability, she said WILPF is an accountability partner for the MenEngage causes. *"And we need to be held accountable in how we are programming, how we are doing our advocacy, and that for us was what made it critical to invite you all into this space. So, I think that as we do this programming, we have a partner who is checking on us all the time. And that's why WILPF is our partner in that space"*.

She called on the participants from both MenEngage & WILPF to foster discussions at the regional and country level to be intentional with the collaboration that the meeting sought to achieve. *"Let's begin that collaboration at the country level so that when we are doing this advocacy at a regional level, there is already a country level collaboration"*.

She mentioned that she was looking forward to building stronger partnerships and relationships.

## Participants' Introduction

### Roberta Nardi, Associate WILPF Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Initiative

Roberta invited the participants to take part in an introduction exercise where they were required to draw something that relates to them, against other details on their place cards. Introductions were made and drawings explained by all the participants.

## Expectations and Ground rules For a Safe Space

### Zaituni Nabaterregga, MenEngage Africa Training Initiative

#### Expectations

1. Learning and sharing experiences on conflict management
2. Learning on how different cultural values influence masculinity.
3. To get a better understanding of Masculinities
4. Learn more on the relationship between conflict and masculinity
5. To see how we can mobilise men to become feminists
6. Increase knowledge and understanding of the gender, GBV, sexuality and conflict within the context of different countries and to collectively find synergies in addressing them.
7. Networking and interaction
8. Knowledge on gender relations

9. Strengthen my abilities in activism
10. Learning the new vocabulary in the activism space.
11. To know how to better carry the feminist voice for peace and security.
12. Strategies to combat masculinity and violence of all kinds
13. To understand GBV dynamics Awareness of how legal frameworks play out in different countries.

## ■ Community Agreements/Ground Rules

The participants, together, outlined the rules they wanted to guide them throughout the days of training. These were: respect time, participate actively, deep listening, discipline, Honest Open Transparent (HOT), Value Other People's Opinions (VOO), Keep It Short & Simple (KISS) and mutual harmony.

## Online Course Post - Training Assessment

### Angelica Pino, WILPF Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Initiative Coordinator

Angelica invited the participants to take part in an online assessment to measure satisfaction of the July online MATI training that was completed. The range of responses to the questions in the assessment showed that most of the participants were satisfied with how the online course was conducted.

### How Can We Improve the Online Experience?

It was good.The content was engaging.	The MATI courses must be easily identified and better still placed on one folder	Simplifier le processus d acces et surtout traduire systématiquement en francais	An amazing online course but I wish it can be translated to more language so lot of people can have deeper understand in their native languages.
By translating ALL the documents please	I was happy on the overall content, the support was provided to us.	C'était difficile au début mais c'était une belle expérience d'apprentissage	A part la lourdeur des cours où 3h de temps ont été insuffisant, la participation en ligne fut une expérience très instructive
The online session has to be live either through Google meet or zoom as we had difficulties especially on the last part	. Une bonne opportunité de s'instruire sans se déplacer. Mati Courses est à encourager.	The course was good	Edx est meilleur car les cours restent longtemps en ligne et permet au participant de revenir faire des révisions.
It is perfect because you can do the module at your own convinience unlike other virtual timed courses if you have internet challenges you miss out and you can plan your time effectively	The courses are so interesting and engaging. However the time is insufficient. Give more time to learners to fully access the courses content before proceeding.	Le contenu était itrès ntéressant; mais tous les documents n'étaient pas traduits en français	Me former encore plus à l'utilisation des applicationsMais les organisateurs doivent prendre en compte le fait que les conditions ne sont pas toujours reunies pour l'ussge des technologies dans nos

## Overview of The Programme

**Day 1** – Knowing each other and why we have convened.

Why are we in MATI?

**Day 2** – Have deeper conversations on the root causes and drivers of structural violence.

**Day 3** – Women, Peace and Security agenda and international human rights instruments.

**Day 4** - Mobilising Men for feminist peace. Examples of how this work is being done in different countries.

**Day 5** – Joint advocacy plans. How to move our work forward. Also, colleagues from Kenya shall share insights on the recent uprisings in Kenya and local activism.

She said that agendas can be adopted and changed based on the meeting expectations and participants needs. Angelica guided the participants through the expected outcomes of the in-person meeting and asked them to be keen on ensuring they achieved them. The expected outcomes include:

## Expected Outcomes

1. Increased understanding of key concepts on conflict, conflict transformation, resolution and peacebuilding.
2. Increased skills and understanding of conflict causes, drivers and analysis from a gendered lens.
3. Better understanding of WPS mechanisms from the national to international levels and how to engage with them to promote the WPS agenda and advocate for women's participation and leadership in peace processes.
4. Increased capacity to mainstream peace & security in MEA's work and to address conflict from a gendered lens.
5. Increased capacity of MEA partners to counter militarised masculinities & mobilise men for feminist peace.

## Gender Values Clarification Exercise How Do These Values Play out in Conflict Contexts

Zaituni Nabaterregga

This dialogue session was curated in such a way that with each statement read, participants were asked to select from the options Agree, Disagree & Neutral. They were asked to dig deep and give their opinion of the statement that would be read by the facilitator and say why they selected that option.

**Statement 1: “Women are better caretakers than men”.**

**Agree**

**Why?**

- Because African nurturing starts from when girls are young. My husband is also not very patient when the young child cries.
- Women are the mothers of humanity. Women are more affectionate. When a woman dies, the man thinks of remarrying which does not happen with a woman.

**Disagree**

**Why?**

- Gender is a social construct. It's based on the role the society has put on the female child and the male child. It's not about being man or woman, it's about humanity in general.
- I was raised by my father from when I was 3 months old. My experience makes me come to this conclusion.

**Neutral**

**Why?**

- If the training or raising is different, then one will be a better caretaker than the other.
- I realised that my son takes care of everything. The trend is changing lately. Boys are showing more concern. That's why I am neutral.

**Statement 2: “Men are naturally more violent than women”.**

**Agree  
Why?**

- Violence is not gender inherent. It is a stereotype.
- Violence is not a natural phenomenon. It's a choice. No man is born violent by nature.
- Violence is physical and verbal. Both females and male can be violent. I actually believe that women often incite violence.

**Disagree  
Why?**

- Males often find it easier to express themselves with violence.
- Males have testosterone which predisposes them to violence even before their socialisation.
- We have nurtured our males into being violent with the belief that they are 'MEN' hence they should not cry or be cowardly.
- My experience & statistics have shown that it's the man that is a perpetrator during cases where violence has been registered.

**Neutral  
Why?**

- I believe your environment; circumstances and one's experience contribute to one being violent whether man or woman.
- Violence is a learned behaviour, and not inherited at birth.

**Statement 3: "Women in the military get more respect than men".**

**Agree  
Why?**

- It's always been believed that it's a domain for men. So, they are respected because women have broken into that domain.
- Most of the requirements for entry into the military are physical attributes that men naturally have. So, when a woman is in the army, then it's an achievement.

**Disagree  
Why?**

- Women are raped even if they are in the same profession. The patriarchy plays a big role in this.
- When a woman finds herself in a place where men are, it's thought that she is trying to make herself equal to me. Our society also thinks the military is for men. She is harassed as a result
- If she was respected, we would have many women in the higher ranks like Generals. In DRC we had to put up an open fight for a deserving woman before she could be awarded her military title as was due to her.

**Neutral  
Why?**

There is a natural advantage by being male or female in the military.

**Statement 4: "Men who refuse to fight in wars are not regarded as being manly"**

**Agree  
Why?**

- Once one is chosen for the frontline, it's already clear they are more manly.
- The men who do not go to war are called feminine men. It's a cultural standing and as such I believe it. A man is seen as a strong person who should always be available to go to war.
- A man, in the context of the patriarchy, who does not go to war is weak.
- Masculinity is a social construct that dictates that if a male cannot go out and defend your country/family, he is not manly.

## **Disagree**

### **Why?**

- If they are military people, they defend their country via other means, especially the nonviolent ones which then does not make one not manly.
- If the reason for the war is not clear, they are right to not go to war.
- It's not a sign of weakness if one stays away from a war. It's actually more about self-preservation

## **Neutral**

### **Why?**

- I lived 10 years amongst military people. The people who worked behind the scenes in logistics were looked down upon. Yet a war is run by both frontline persons and back end 'logistics' people.

Zaituni probed the participants further and asked for their opinions with the question:

- **How do the opinions above affect you in your day-to-day life?**

## **Responses**

“As a woman who is strong and a go-getter I am referred to as a man. It makes me feel not enough as a woman”.

“The stereotypes make it difficult to place the gender roles in perspective”.

“These conversations present me with an opportunity to change mindsets and to get them to understand what gender really is”.

“When I see women in leadership, at the back of my mind I am wondering how she is managing the backlash that comes with her senior position. Women in leadership need support.”

“What I admire most is when the youth look at us as role models. This I admire and gives us more courage to continue our advocacy work”.

“I have been a member of a think tank since 2022 to see how we can influence women to rise in leadership. We put pressure on government with courage to include women in government and they listened”

“We need to look out for the men also, in as much as we are working to have more women in leadership”.

## **Conclusion**

Having shared their opinions and views, Zaituni brought the exercise to a close by telling the participants that their attitudes, beliefs and opinions are going to affect the way they work. She emphasised that walking through a transformation is a journey. Lastly, she advised that, before they as activists could begin thinking of changing others, they needed to start by embracing change themselves.

## **TASK FOR THE DAY - Communications team (Reem & Eucharia)**

They explained that they were developing communications output. And as such asked the participants to answer the question:

***How do you want to communicate some of the things you have learnt in the training?***

They gave further instructions and requested the participants to find a creative way to present it, by the end of the meeting.

## River of life describing the life trajectories of participants and how they ended up at MATI

Angelica & Roberta

The activity was done on the map of Africa and its environs. Participants were asked to chart their journey from where they were born and how they came to be a part of the MATI in person meeting in Nairobi, Kenya. They connected their journey using string.

### Participants Views about the Exercise

A lot of activity is in the East and Central African region, and not much in Northern Africa. At least one participant had not travelled out of his original home before he came to the MATI gathering.

There was a realisation from one participant that he was in the room with seasoned and great activists which strengthened his resolve to continue activism.

### Conclusion

The stories about each one's life as an activist is a reflection of a journey which has had impact in both the short and long run. Angelica brought to light that as activists, there is a need to appreciate each one's journey and the important milestones to build stronger networks.



## The Gendered Impact of Conflict, Violence and War in Africa

Mpiwa Mangwiro, Sonke Gender Justice, Policy, Development and Advocacy Manager

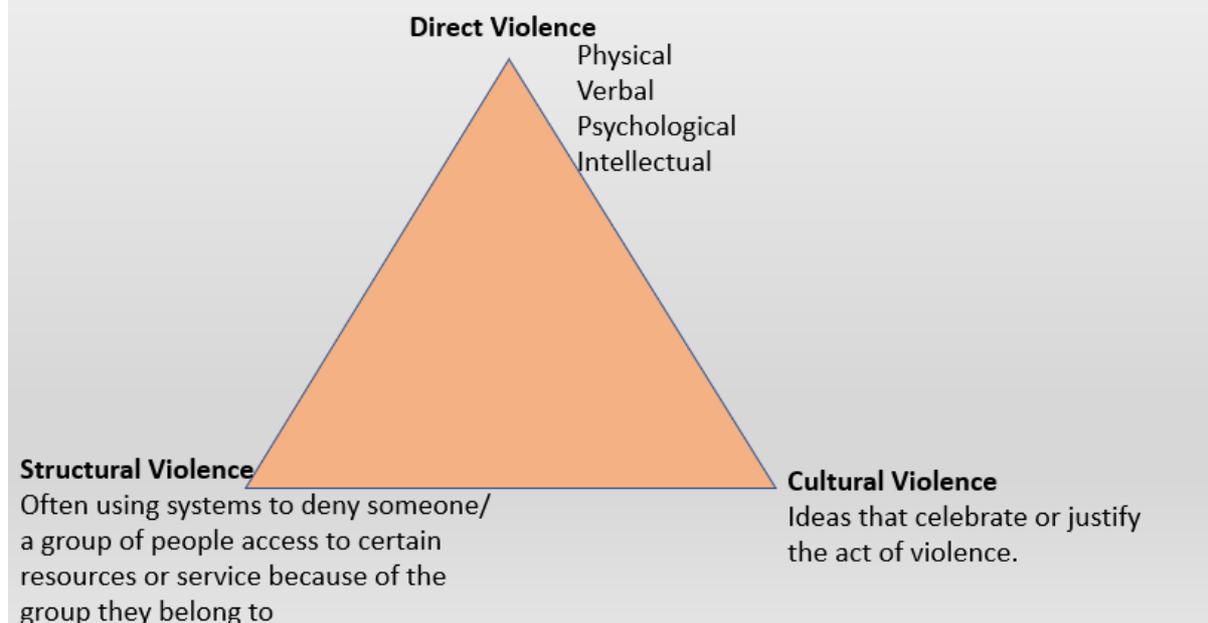
### Framing Remarks

She kicked off her remarks by posing a question to the meeting; **What do you think of when you hear the words 'gendered conflict' to which participants responded:** The role of women and men in conflict, Sexual violence, Inequality towards women, Unequal Impact of conflict on men and women. With these contributions from the meeting, Mpiwa elaborated that her mandate was to illustrate the relationship between gender & conflict. She delved into the definition of conflict and reminded the meeting that *"Conflict goes beyond shooting and killing to when, there's a clash of interests between various groups and there is a failure to come up with means to resolve it"*.

She then expanded on the various forms of conflict which she listed as direct violence, cultural violence and structural violence. Her emphasis was on structural violence. She said that in contrast to direct violence, structural violence is indirect in the sense that *"there may not be any person who directly harms another person in the structure. The violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances"*.

She used the shape of a triangle to illustrate this.

# Various forms of Conflict



On the gendered Impact of conflict, Mpiwa reminded the meeting that:

Conflict is not gender neutral, that women and girls contend most with structural gender inequality especially in conflict, that women and girls generally have fewer financial resources, less access to essential services and less representation in decision-making bodies, and that women experience physical and sexual violence in military groups and in armed conflict, verbal and physical abuse from extended family members, and from intimate partners. She went further to say that while women and girls are more likely to be victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), SGBV against men and boys is also widespread during conflict. She informed the meeting that stereotypes surrounding masculinity and a culturally permissive approach towards violence against men may lead to under-reporting and reduced health-seeking behaviour amongst sexual and gender minorities, i.e. lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (LGBTI) may also be targeted.

*“And also, when we're talking about the gender impacts of conflict, it's also about who is dying on the front line? Who is being displaced from their home? Who is facing the challenges of raising a family on their own? There are all those nuances that when we're talking about the gender impact of a conflict, we need to think and say here is a conflict. Here is an armed conflict that is fighting. When we are now saying a country has gone to war, what does it mean for men for the country to go to war? What does it mean for women and girls for a country to go to war? What does it mean for gender minorities for a country to go to war? All those effects that happen in a war, be it the dying, be it the displacement, be it the raping, let's think about them and think what does it mean for the women?”*

*What does it mean for the girls? What does it mean for the boys? What does it mean for the men? What does it mean for the gender minority? That's what we talk about when we're saying we're looking at the gender impact of conflict”. - Mpiwa*

To further illustrate the gendered impact of conflict, Mpiwa invited a colleague to share their country's experience in this regard.

## The Gendered Impact of Conflict in the DRC

### Lisette Mavungu Thamba, president WILPF DRC

Lisette opened her presentation by stating that the conflict in the DR Congo has changed a lot of things. Conflict has affected boys, girls, women and men albeit differently. In as much as the girls and women are raped, the boys are not being spared

either. She told of how it was noticed there was a high dropout rate of boys from school because of violence. Men have also been raped but it has not been documented. Because men are not ready to speak out and culturally, they are bound. Men have been enrolled in armed groups. Women who have gotten pregnant as a result of rape are not accepted back in the community upon their return. Behavioural disorders have risen with children born out of rape asking to see their fathers. She said there is a need for activists to support the mental health challenges that such victims have experienced. *“Today, our biggest duty is to save the mind. Because an image like this, it doesn’t go away overnight. Even worse, we have noticed people who have lost their sanity because every time we talk about it and ask the question on how they were violated, the person becomes disoriented and unresponsive which means it’s all over. They cannot be helped”.*

Lisette told of how Kinshasha was known as the capital of rape which tainted the name of women who come from DRC and that’s why she took up advocacy for women. She acknowledged that as a country DRC made significant changes:

- The definition of rape had been confined to a man using his sexual organ. But we have learnt that they used bottles, guns, etc. So, the penal code was reviewed to expand the definition.
- We changed our strategy on GBV to cater for men and all the other categories of people.
- We are also championing positive masculinity.

She agreed that the impact of conflict had reached a bad level, and that activism was necessary to ensure that rape is no longer used as a weapon of war and that organizations need to provide psychosocial support to these people who are not in a position to live a decent life anymore. *“And so, the impact of these conflicts has reached such a level that we must work hard enough so that this idea of violence, to use rape more so, that it can be eradicated. Because these cases are recurring. And it has increased with the conflicts.*

*Rape is now being used as a test e.g. When a boy is forced to rape his mother, or the sister, in front of the father and the brothers for him to be treated as a part of an armed group”.*

Lisette spoke of the impact of pregnancies born out of rape and how the child will always ask for their father, which only increases the mental torture of the woman. She agreed that women have been impacted more by conflict. She told the meeting that the biggest undoing is that men do not want to talk about rape as a form of violence that they are experiencing and as such end up using violence to communicate their plight. *“I am a lawyer but there are hardly any cases where a man reports that he has been raped. Women seem to have support, but we are working amidst a culture which gags the men. So, we need to start documenting the issues so that we can see how to help both men and women”.*

On a positive note, she revealed that the current minister for gender in DRC is supporting the cause on how to help with the issue of gendered conflict which has led to violence and rape. And as activists it provides a platform of resources that will allow exchange on many elements around gender and conflict. And above all, the positive masculinity task force is housed within the Ministry of Gender. In conclusion, she re-emphasized that the impact of violence and conflict was not the same for all categories of people. She called on all advocacy partners to undertake a study of this impact to see how to help victims to live a life of respect and thrive as human beings. She confirmed that there has been war for the last 30 years in DRC and that it’s going to take time to support the people. Lisette reassured the participants that they are ready to give it their all with different strategies.



## ■ **Group work to discuss concrete examples of the gendered impact of conflict- Mpiwa Mangwiro**

Participants were divided in 2 groups, read the scenarios below and answered the question.

### **Conflict Scenario 1**

Country A recently held elections to elect new leaders. The election period was marred with threats of violence from the ruling party as well as the opposition. In the run up to the elections, the army commander declared that he would never salute a president with no war credentials, supposedly referring to an opposition leader who is considered young and to have been born after the war of liberation. The ruling party recruited young people to be part of the militia group with unfettered powers to threaten people and ensure they 'voted right'. On election day violence broke out in various parts of the country, with young people from the opposition and ruling party threatening to reject the election results if they did not favour their side. As a result, normal services have been disrupted in various parts of the country, the internet has been cut off and a 6pm curfew has been imposed on the whole country.

**Discuss the gendered impact of this conflict.**

### **Group 1 Participants' Responses**

1. Increase in GBV against women and young girls.
2. Disruption of normal health services with women mostly affected.
3. Interruption of economic services because of a cut-off of communication.
4. Increased mental health impact caused by the big shift in gender roles.
5. An increase in human insecurity and displacement especially the for the LGBTQI+ community.
6. Militarised masculinities like recruitment of young boys and violence inciting speech to the youths.
7. Increase of household conflicts because of strain on mental health for both men and women.

### **Conflict Scenario 2:**

In country B, the government announced a major price hike in fuel and basic commodities. This sparked violent protests from citizens against these hikes. The government deployed the military to quell the violence. Unfortunately, this led to an escalation of conflict as armed opposition groups attacked military officers deployed by the government, demanding that the president and his ruling party resign. This led to a fully-fledged armed conflict which has resulted in destruction of infrastructure and social services while it has made areas deemed conflict hotspots inhabitable.

**Discuss the gendered impact of this conflict.**

### **Group 2 Participants' Responses**

A gender analysis was conducted and categories of the affected were done; men, women, Children, LGBTQI+ & the elderly

#### **Men**

1. Psychological depression because men are used to going out and cannot do it anymore.
2. Physical violence suffered by men. Some are raped, killed, etc.
3. Forced enrolment in the army.
4. Forced eviction because they are not in position to be gainfully employed.

#### **Women**

1. Increase in GBV or domestic violence.
2. Change of roles: women go out because now they are the head of the household when exposed to conflict.
3. As the women go out, they are raped or forced to leave their homes in search of security.

#### **Children**

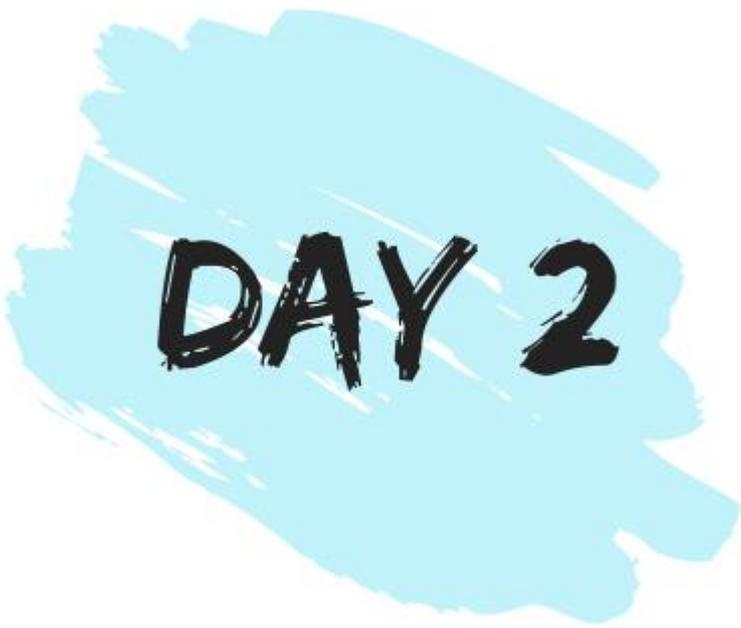
1. High school dropout leading to juvenile crime, drug abuse, prostitution and early childhood pregnancies.
2. Child trafficking for sex and manual labour.
3. Enrolment in armed groups to run errands.

#### **LGBTQI+**

1. Experience a lot of violence because of discrimination and a lack of acceptance.

#### **Elderly**

1. They are also vulnerable and suffer because they may not be able to get items for daily sustenance.

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**DAY 2**

# ROOT CAUSES AND STRUCTURAL DRIVERS OF CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

**Recap of the previous day's activities and learnings - Bernice Ouango-Ndackalla, CAR WILPF President**

**Seeing The Forest for The Trees: The case for a more structural approach to addressing militarised masculinities and possible pathways to peace- Dean Peacock, WILPF Director Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Initiative**



After giving a brief background on how the idea to have global leaders converge to exchange ideas on the agenda of peace and security in 2008, Dean told of WILPF's vision for feminist peace which strongly advocates for feminism as the ultimate antidote to patriarchy, militarism, and neoliberalism which are causes that push people towards conflict. He advanced that the undeniable reality is that the perpetrators and participants of war are predominantly men and prevailing notions of masculinities interact with many structural forces that generate and perpetuate armed conflict. So, to end all forms of men's violence and to increase men's commitment to gender equality, activists need to effectively mobilise men for feminist peace. Dean stressed that attempts to prevent men's violence must address the multitude of structural factors that fuel and sustain men's spread of violence and conflict. Also, there are volatile conflicts in a growing number of countries and regions e.g. Kenya, Nigeria, Ukraine each threatening to drag others into a cycle with disastrous consequences. Nevertheless, where there is war, people—including men—continue to resist, demanding peace, equality and the recognition of the rights, dignity, and humanity of every person.

He then listed types of conflict as: Intrapersonal conflict, Intergroup conflict, Intragroup Conflict. He invited the participants to share their views on whether these types of conflict have the same causes. Having shared different reasons for these types of conflict, there was agreement that the causes were largely the same. There were listed as below:

- Abuse of power acquired either religiously, socially or politically.
- Social constructions of masculinities.
- Gender norms.
- Frustration and poverty.
- Poor governance: leaders not living up to their promises, no accountability.
- Scramble for natural resources.
- Trauma from upbringing.
- Unequal distribution of power, opportunity and resources.
- Not sharing the same beliefs & ideologies.

To further understand the factors associated with men's use of violence, Dean shared findings from research done in Diepsloot, a densely populated township in Gauteng, South Africa. The results showed how men were disadvantaged in socio-economic terms, and the challenges associated with housing & migration. Most noticeable were the results on childhood trauma which showed that only 15.4% of men surveyed had an abuse free childhood. This has an impact on adult trauma and risk factors for VAW perpetration. He also spoke about the effect of gender beliefs and behaviours amongst the men in Diepsloot.

The results showed that the strongest predictor that leads to violence against women was childhood trauma. Dean shared that men who reported probable PTSD had up to 75% higher odds of also reporting recent violence against women.

He shared that - even with these baseline results - their intervention focused on gender norms change neglected a whole range of other socio-economic factors because it was important not to be seen as an organisation that defends men's violence.

Generally speaking, he listed the strongest predictors of men's involvement in armed conflict as:

1. Unequal access to opportunities.
2. Repression at the hands of state security forces.
3. Corruption and loss of confidence in government.
4. Lack of mechanisms for redress.

### The case of Kenya' social uprising

Dean opened the discussion on the violence in the recent protests in Kenya by "GenZ" where they demanded for change in government accountability.

A Kenyan participant offered an explanation on why the protests were happening which was to reject the unfair Finance Bill at the time and demand to stop government wastage of resources. He further explained that the major player in their plight is the IMF who seems to dictate policy changes that were hurting the ordinary Kenyans. In response, other participants contributed to their understanding on the role of the World Bank and IMF in creating austerity measures for African countries in debt e.g. privatising government resources. They expressed their frustration of over taxation and wondered what they were to do to thrive in their respective countries. Because militarised masculinities increase violence and insecurity, Dean delved into the way they are produced and recreated. He displayed the visual militarised marketing of masculinity which depicted males in violent postures or even holding arms which are images that create the foundation for males to continuously be violent in nature. The marketing campaigns have been detrimental as they keep on showing masculinity associated with violence.

*"The rhetoric that men show their manliness through violence should be stopped. Egos and gender are important. We just need to put them in context. We need to openly name the actors who perpetrate armed conflict. We need to get to a point where we are comfortable talking about gender norms, as well as about debt in countries". - Dean*

In relation to drivers of conflict, Ayo shared that structural violence in Africa manifested itself politically, socially, culturally, and even individually amongst each other.

*"When you look at ethnicity, there is violence related to a lot of conflicts that are based on ethnicity. Starting from Nigeria, I'll use Modakeke and Ife. From there, I'll use a good example of the ongoing war in the north, terrorism. It started with Boko Haram. Right now, we have the Metasini in those days, in Kan who even wasn't arrested. And then we have Boko Haram now, tied to social inequalities. Social inequalities, gender inequalities, environmental degradation. You find cattle herders moving from the north to Greece, down south, bringing in a lot of violence". - Ayo*

She said there is so much poverty that no one is even thinking of any other thing other than how to put bread on their table and that explains why there are many youths involved in perpetrating structural violence as well as being used as tools of violence. She told of how structural violence has deprived citizens of developing themselves and their goals which makes them perfect candidates for violence perpetration. An example is in Nigeria where a bag of rice is handed out to the poor for them to fuel ethnic animosities. This is a clear example of poverty being weaponized. Also, inequalities and corruption are major drivers of structural violence which have led the rich to get richer and the poor continue to languish in utter poverty because they are fighting to survive. She called on the activists to realise that until the endemic corruption is curtailed in Africa, there shall never be peace. And so, it was up to all activists to be agents of change through advocacy.



## The relationship between inequality, extractive industries, armed violence, conflict and gender in Zimbabwe - Edwick Madzimure, WILPF Zimbabwe

Edwick highlighted that her presentation was based on two pieces of research that were conducted in Zimbabwe. She reminded the participants that she comes from the Midlands province, a mining community which means this research was also informed by her lived experience. Desktop research was also conducted which focused on how natural resources that are being extracted from the African region are contributing to militarism and conflict. This research also informed the advocacy in a rural setting leading to COP 27.

### What are the factors that are contributing to inequality that are contributing to conflicts in the Midlands province?

The major driving force is the economic crisis. The economic crisis that has been faced by Zimbabwe for the past two decades has led to mass retrenchments nationwide.

*“Why am I talking about retrenchments? These retrenchments are mainly in the mining firms that were in our province. So, most of the people that were retrenched from these mining areas have only one skill that they know. What is that skill? Mining. So, if they moved into the areas that are around our city, especially Kwe Kwe, they had to settle in gold-rich areas, and then they started artisanal mining”.*

She added that there were many inequalities discovered in the artisanal mining sector. Patriarchy was the biggest contributing factor to these inequalities that saw women not benefiting from the profitable proceeds of the artisanal mining activities because their duties were reserved for the less profitable activities crushing stones with a mortar and pestle where after they are paid \$1 or \$2. Edwick highlighted that, for a woman to be able to get into these mining spaces, a lot of sexual violence is happening which is going unreported because women fear being stigmatized. Women are forced to offer sexual favours to the male miners to simply be allowed into the mines.



Because of the armed violence that is rife in this area, most women are not comfortable in embarking on artisanal mining activities, yet they have got the capacity to be running these mines even if it is considered as very risky business.

She elaborated that they discovered many unlicensed guns that are in the mining communities. Gun violence is common in these areas although spears and machetes are also used. The guns are getting into the country through the porous borders as well as from the security forces themselves which fuels armed violence in the area.

The research also found out that there are a lot of school dropouts & early teen marriages, which are increasing the gender inequality dynamic. In her submission, Edwick told of how the patriarchy and traditional norms also contribute to violence and gender inequality. Professional women are most affected. Even with a qualification in geology, it's very difficult for them to get a job as a woman in mining communities. An example of a traditional taboo is that if a woman goes to the mines during her menstrual cycle, they will not get a good result. And because of that belief, it's very difficult for most women that have got mining qualifications to get employment in this sector.

A part of the research that was carried out was on how natural resources are also contributing to conflicts, including at the local level; the extraction of diamonds and lithium is now in high demand globally because of the transition to clean energy. From the onset it was discovered that many villages are now being displaced to pave way for Chinese lithium miners without any compensation.

She cited the example of a community in Chiadzwa, where they were displaced and the government promised that it would build schools and ensure they got sources of livelihood. Presently the people in this community are crying foul because none of the promises were honoured, yet it is believed that more than \$15 billion was realised from diamond extraction in that area. This kind of dishonesty eventually leads to internal strife and revolts.

To sum up her presentation Edwick spoke about the climate crisis and environmental degradation that has led to a sharp rise in malaria cases due to poor environmental management practices. The company has over the years left numerous unreclaimed pits and slime dams. She says this has also contributed to violence in the area. Although the resources to manage this have been provided, they have been squandered and misused with no accountability. *“And in Dean's presentation, I was happy to hear him talking about creating spaces where we can really have honest dialogues on how resources are being distributed. We don't have those spaces where honest dialogues are held. So, we are sitting on time bombs, not just in Zimbabwe but in most African countries this is happening. We need to stop crying and find practical approaches to this crisis”.*

## WAY FORWARD

*“From October 2024, in partnership with Plan International, we are going to be conducting a project where we want to ensure that more girls attain secondary education, because we realise that the baseline survey that we carried out in these mining communities, girls from primary school are failing to go to secondary school because of early teen marriages”.*

Edwick related that most of them are getting married to artisanal miners because of the poverty levels that are in these communities. The main emphasis of the project will be on positive parenting and engaging men, particularly from the mining communities, so that they will stop marrying these very young girls.

## Online Spaces, Hate Speech and Conflict

Reem Abaas, WILPF Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Communications Coordinator



Reem kicked off her presentation by sharing statistics pertaining to the Internet in Africa. In 2022, there were approximately 570 million internet users of which Nigeria alone has 100 million, followed by 82 million in Egypt and 41 million in South Africa. However, the internet penetration rate stood at around 43% in 2021, below the global average of 66%. Yet in Africa, 40 percent of the population is aged 15 years and younger, compared to a global average of 25 percent. Social media use includes business, entertainment, education, as a tool of mobilisation and activism, as well as a tool of conflict.

### Social Media in Africa

With that background she shared more specific statistics about social media. There are around 384 million social media users in Africa as of 2022. Social media penetration is considerably higher in Northern and Southern Africa than in other regions. Facebook is most popular in Africa with a

staggering 170 million users due to its constant addition of new languages and accessibility, followed by TikTok (60%) and then Instagram (54%) and then twitter (56%) and then LinkedIn (28%) *“So this is just to give you an idea and think about the social media you want to use for your organisation. When you think about the social media work that you want to do for your organisations, I think it's important to take this into consideration”.* - Reem

## Terminology

On social media terminology Reem highlighted the reason it was important for the participants to get conversant with them. She said learning the terminology would help them understand why things are happening and why we're seeing more hateful content. Using answers from some participants she was able to make the distinction between misinformation and disinformation.

Misinformation is false or inaccurate information while disinformation is deliberately misleading or biased information; manipulated narrative or facts; propaganda. Both misinformation and disinformation refer to types of wrong or false information, though only disinformation is wrong on purpose and has bigger goals (to create social tension, political instability, contribute to polarisation) She added that intention is what finally distinguishes these two terms and went on to

give an example of disinformation where information coming out of the war in Gaza was that hundreds of babies had been killed. No one came out to verify the information and it was only legitimised by continuing to send it around the world.

She then introduced the term Algorithm and explained that in social media, algorithms are rules, signals and data that govern the platform's operation. These algorithms determine how content is filtered, ranked, selected and recommended to users hence they influence our choices and what we see on social media. Due to advertising and the way platforms make money, a lot of what we see is often controlled and even manipulated. She reminded the participants that a lot of these apps are really based on surveillance of communications of the subscribers.

About Clickbait she explained that it is a headline that is designed to make readers want to click on a hyperlink especially when the link leads to content of dubious value or interest. Clickbait is the online version of yellow papers that would use manipulative titles to sell the papers. To conclude on terminology, Reem told the participants about content moderation and defined it as the process of reviewing and monitoring user-generated content on online platforms to ensure that it meets certain standards and guidelines.

To further illustrate how to view the information ecosystem, she introduced the participants to a quote by Maria Ressa *“I think about the information ecosystem as a polluted river. **“So, here’s this river. And what we tend to do is we take a glass of water from the river. We clean it up, and then we throw it back into the river. We have to go up to the pollution from the factory of lies and shut that down.”** Maria Ressa, Nobel Prize winner.*

Simply put, Reem said *“If you don't really look at the policies and how content is managed and governed and information is governed, then we're not going to really kind of clean this pollution that is happening in the information ecosystem”.*

## **Social media -A tool for activism A tool for learning A tool for mobilisation (for violence and also for peace) Case study- Ethiopia**

Reem gave a background of how the war in Ethiopia started in 2020 because of a constitutional dispute and social media networks and Facebook were especially critical in promoting hate violence and hate speech which led to people dying as a result. The prime minister of Ethiopia himself is shown using words such as terrorist, killers, cancerists, and weeds that at some point Facebook even took down one of his posts, where he was telling people to take up arms against the rebel groups that were fighting the TPLF.

Parties of the conflict along with civilians continued to use social media to incite violence, which led to assassination and killing sprees. In 2020, a dedicated disinformation campaign was used to vilify prominent Ethiopian musician Hachalu Hundessa, who was later assassinated. The campaign was left unchecked and following his death, hate speech and incitement to violence led to hundreds of deaths. This just goes to show that the impact of social media is direct and immediate on the lives of people, and as such there is loss of life because of such campaigns.

### **How this happened**

Reem went to great lengths to explain that according to Facebook’s current policies regarding violence and incitement, the platform removes content containing language that “incites or facilitates serious violence.” Additionally, users are not permitted to post “threats that could lead to death (and other forms of high-severity violence) targeting people or places.” This includes “aspirational or conditional statements to commit high-severity violence.” However, many posts in local languages are unchecked because they have one moderator per 60k people in Ethiopia. Many times, the company doesn’t follow the context and the explanations given by the moderators. Moreover, the way the site works is that content which, receives engagement such as comments and likes, would still be prioritised for amplification and thus, people would find it on their timeline. Amnesty’s report on this noted that *“the rapid dissemination of these messages was made possible due to Meta’s surveillance-based business model, which is predicated on harvesting, analysing and profiting from people’s data, and privileges engagement’ at all costs”.*

### **Responses of platforms**

Meta, Facebook's parent company, says it has carried out an internal audit on the operation of its algorithm in Ethiopia, but cannot publish its findings. However, Facebook updated its security protocols for protecting people in-country and curbing the spread of hate speech on November 9, 2021. Amnesty International reported that *“internal documents revealed as part of the Facebook Papers, a series of documents released by a former Meta employee in 2021, demonstrate that during the conflict Meta had knowledge that the company risked contributing to human rights harms in the country but was failing to adequately mitigate these risks, despite the country being designated a priority by the company”.* In response to a recent proliferation of hate speech on social media platforms, Twitter announced on November 5, 2021, that it had disabled its trends list for Ethiopia to *“reduce the risks of coordination that could incite violence or cause harm.”*

## Reactions

As a positive development, Reem explained that governments have taken up the responsibility of curbing the spread of violence and hate speech by banning social media platforms. E.g. Nigeria banned Twitter between June 2021 and January 2022. Somalia banned Tik Tok and last year, Ethiopia blocked access to Facebook, TikTok, Telegram and YouTube nationwide. Also, human rights groups have done advocacy. In December 2022, several people including the son of slain Ethiopian professor Meareg Amare Abrha was among those who filed a lawsuit against Meta, the owner of Facebook at the Milimani Law Courts in Nairobi. Furthermore, content moderators in Kenya and South Africa have sued Meta for "inhumane" working conditions including lack of mental health support and this raises questions on the pressures on content moderators and their ability to make sound decisions on content they deem as inciteful.

## Way Forward

In as much as social media had played a role in advancing violence, Reem also noted that there needs to be more accountability for these platforms by: changing the business model of Meta that allows un-checked algorithm harvesting and unauthorised collection of private data and delink advertising from personal users experience; decolonising online spaces; conduct solid political analysis to update the list of countries internally identified as being "at risk"; social media companies to shape their business with a human rights lens and advocacy for international and regional laws to regulate social media companies in line with human rights standards.

## Wrapping up

- Research on several conflicts has shown that when you search for videos or information on a certain conflict, you are led to inflammatory content. This is largely connected to disinformation, but also clickbait and algorithms, you are more likely to keep searching and thus stay on the platform.
- Content moderation will never address all the drivers of violence, but it could be inclusive of people who understand the context and could also help people understand the actors inciting violence. It also must be connected to other peacebuilding efforts such as early warning mechanisms.
- The way algorithms work needs to be examined. Algorithms that "measure attention, via clicks, shares, and time spent, learn that fear grabs attention and then incentivise this content." There needs to be under scrutiny as conflict actors learn how to manipulate/ work the algorithms and present a narrative that suits their interest.
- AI needs to be part of the solution and not part of the problem. Better AI translation could help overcome communication barriers and they could support more efficient

## ■ Participants comments



*“On the use of social media, in reference to our country Kenya, based on the recent protests it's safe to say the use of social media has both positive and negative results. I can say the biggest protest in Kenya was not the physical protest. It was an online protest. And especially on the TikTok and X spaces. The protests in Kenya started on the online platform before it accelerated to the physical protest in the specific towns in Kenya. So, in Kenya, at some point they used it in a way that was positive, to a point where even social influencers, the biggest influencers in Kenya, had to take a stand and pick a side. So, in Kenya, we used it in a very positive way.*

*If some of you witnessed, a point where even the president himself had to come on the X space to make sure he engages with the Kenyan people. So, if we use it correctly, it can give us some good and positive feedback. Because I remember the X space when we were having a conversation with the president, we had more than 150,000 Kenyans who were tuned in and having a one-on-one conversation with the president asking their questions and being answered”.*

*“I want to make a comment regarding the first presentation. In our country DRC, we don't allow women to enter mining sites, especially during the menstruation period, because we say that they will make the miners run away. And so, all those who want to go work there can't. The majority of those who work there are called **Twangas**. I think I can explain what I mean. It means that they have to break the stones. That's the work they do, naturally. And every day, before leaving the site, they have to be searched.*

*Because at some point in the DRC, men swallowed the stones from the mine and every time they came to the site, they had to be operated on to be able to recover the stones. As for women, they introduced those stones into their private parts. Which means that they were subjected to violence every day because they were supposed to be searched. And to refuse to be searched, they had to give sexual favours to the head of the site. What we were able to do as an activity in the Forum of Women for the Governance of the National Association, is to support women who want to leave mining sites, because mining sites pose more danger by exposing them to other activities. However, we noticed that women refused to leave the sites because being in mining sites or around mining sites gives more money than being in agriculture. And unfortunately, mining companies that come to work don't give young people enough opportunities to be able to train themselves to do other things that won't harm the community”.*

*“I would like to say that governments really understand the power that social media has, and they know what it means for any advocacy or activism to go on social media.*

*I'll just take the example of Cameroon. When there was an internet shutdown for months in the northwest and southwest regions, it's because of what has really been happening in the social media landscape. I.e.: e the proliferation of hate speech and the disinformation, especially around the Anglophone crisis.*

*Oone of the reasons why the Anglophone crisis really spiralled was also linked to social media. A lot of people who were afraid to go to the streets now started using their media platforms. And then most of the diaspora activists who are unable to be on the ground started doing the activism through their social media handles.*

*And somehow, some of the people who were labelled as separatists were also using it to propagate or to promote the anti-separatist agenda.*

*Lately, the government has changed tactics and is no longer shutting down the internet. What the government is doing now is they allow the internet, but there are certain things you cannot do. So, they make the bandwidth very low. It's either they take away electricity for that period and make sure there's enough blackouts, or they leave you with the internet, but the bandwidth is low. There are certain things you cannot do. You cannot access media as easily as you would normally access. So, these are the things that are happening. Because we are entering the election period, a young activist who went on TikTok talking about elections and the state of things in Cameroon was arrested. This just shows that the government is also using the media to repress, to hold people, to reduce freedom of speech, to monitor people, and to victimise them for the things they do. But as well, the civil society space is also trying now to use the media to talk back, to counter the backlash on what is happening. But I'll say our governments have understood this a lot, and they are really politicising these things”.*

*Sylvie – “I want us to remember that we are activists and peace activists, and because of that, one of the things we must do is be very responsible as we are using these social media spaces, think before you share. I just wanted to give two concrete examples.*

*So, we started a project a few years back that we call Youth Influencers for Peace.*

*We wanted to start training a different category of influencers. Those who are trained to use social media to combat hate speech, which starts with themselves.*

*The minute they are trained, they can't share something without verifying. Even if you verify and you see that it can create more danger than good, you don't need to share it. So, this is the category of youth that are now organising social media campaigns on a regular basis to sensitise their peers. But also, they do a kind of watch on social media to see what their peers are publishing, and then they respond to the comment by also sensitising them on the dangers of the actions they are taking.*

*The last example I want to share. Because we know what the election looks like in Cameroon and in many parts of Africa, we are working on a project on social cohesion, trying to build social cohesion, and we have elaborated two guides.*

*The first is on political education. This guide has been through consultation in the 10 regions of Cameroon to see how the political leaders, all the people involved in politics in one way or the other, at the community level, can use the guide to train the people ahead of the election so that the elections are violence-free. The second guide is an education guide, for schools, for training of youth everywhere. So, this is a guide that has been used for training of trainers, people who are in charge of the youth, to help them understand the importance of building and promoting social cohesion.*

*These two guides have just been published, and they are now being used by trainers, teachers and by the parents, at different levels. As we are heading towards the election, we are more conscious of the dangers of the action that we take”.*

*“I was trying to raise another communication tool. You know, in my country Togo, for instance, there are some groups, WhatsApp groups, that political leaders created. And you will find all the youth in those groups. And they are brainwashing them every day. I'm in a group. I entered that group just to see what is going on in the group. If they knew I was in that group, they would remove me. But I'm there just to see what is being done in the group.*

*They are brainwashing young people daily. In the morning, when you wake up, you see a message that is sent. And that message, sometimes is false information while telling them to be loyal. And they will never understand. They will never listen to you.*

*These youths are the ones who are given 2,000 francs per day to propagate such campaigns. They themselves don't know what they are doing, where they are going, and for what reason they are following these politicians”.*

*“We are in a political transition in Guinea. The new constitution has been published. A sham constitution has also been reproduced and shared on social media. I am worried that because of this we are going to go back to a period of prolonged violence. I don't know if activists know that they should never involve themselves in conflict and violence. I want you all to understand that many people in Guinea want normalcy back”.*

*“Online violence in Cameroon is rampant. Many politicians are encouraging the youth not to relent with this kind of violence. We are using a new term for people in the opposition and themes to designate people or the ruling party. This is a sign that things are not good because there's violence breeding in the 250 ethnic groups in the North & South. This violence*

has lasted since 2018 and as such there is a new penal code although there is barely any implementation. The laws on hate speech are there and they are good, but no one wants to use them”.

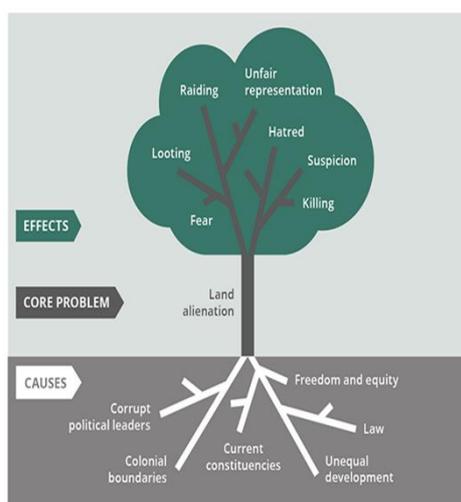
## Conflict Tree Exercise to Explore Root Causes of Conflicts in Participants' Home Contexts

Mpiwa Mangwi, Sonke Gender Justice, Policy, Development and Advocacy Manager

Mpiwa began this session by stressing that this was the practical aspect of the factors that cause structural conflict and that if one is to do something about a conflict, they need to understand everything about the conflict.

### What is the Conflict Tree?

She highlighted that it is a tool that is used to analyse the core problems in a conflict and that it offers a method for a team, organisation, group or community to identify the issues that each of them sees as important and then sort these into three categories; core problem(s), causes and effects. She added that the Conflict Tree analysis helps to provide a deeper understanding of the underlying issues in a conflict and assist in developing strategies to meaningfully address the conflict through tackling its root causes and not only its effects



Source: Fisher, et al. (2000: 29)

With this information she went ahead to define and categorise the factors on the conflict tree. **Exercise: Break into groups that represent the region you come from. Identify a conflict. Discuss what you think are the Core problems, causes and effects.** give examples of how to

## ■ Plenary presentation and discussion on conflict trees

### Central Africa – CAR, DRC & Cameroon

#### Context: Colonisation

In 1961, in a referendum, a part of Cameroon joined Nigeria, under British rule, and the other part joined France. This is after being colonised in the 1800s.

However, in favour of the reunification in 1972, the two parties, Anglophone and Francophone, respectively British and French, were reunited to form a single state until 2016, when conflict completely broke out. There were already frustrations in the Anglophone party, with claims that it had been marginalised by the state in general. Yet this same part of Cameroon had abundant oil resources which were now being managed by the United States. The Anglophone regions considered themselves isolated but still were unable to see any gain from the management of these resources and so the conflict began. They demonstrated peacefully for better conditions, but violent repression of the demonstrators followed, which led to coups and created an opening for armed groups to infiltrate them and take advantage.

### **Causes:**

Cameroon was colonised in the 1800s and as such it speaks French and English. The English-speaking part of Cameroon was marginalised, yet they had oil in their state. Violence broke out because of this, and even armed groups joined in.

### **Effects**

- Civil space reduced drastically
- Civil organisations could not participate in the peace process.
- Murder & killings especially in the English-speaking regions
- Infrastructure was destroyed
- Displacement of humanity who mostly found refuge in Nigeria
- Abductions of citizens especially in the English regions.
- Proliferation of illicit arms.

### **South of Africa – Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi & Eswatini**

**Context: Colonisation** - There was realisation that all 4 countries in this group had been colonised, and because of that, most of the conflicts are a result of scramble for the countries' wealth and resources which is still ongoing to date which means the conflict is still being faced. It was identified that the core problem is unequal distribution of wealth from minerals/resources.

### **Causes**

These were listed as no service delivery, no education, no transparency and accountability from govt, mistrust between public & private sector, corruption among the govt sector.

### **Effects**

- Social fragmentation where some of the communities are benefiting and some are not in terms of development.
- Looting from anger and desperation.
- Xenophobic acts resulting into killing.
- Hatred from social fragmentation in the villages near the mines especially.
- Arrest of activists.
- High crime rate e.g. robbery and ambushes.
- Injustices in terms of distribution of wealth.

### **West of Africa – Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Togo, Senegal**

**Context:** Election Violence



There was unanimous agreement that the common area of conflict was during elections hence election violence.

### Causes

It was reported that election violence always occurs when the elections are approaching, and the marginalised groups position themselves. E.g. Nigeria ethnic groups always demand that a particular ethnicity should be in power. Also, the belief that it's okay for a father to pass on power to a son irrespective of the choice of the people, electoral process not being transparent and bad governance, marginalisation, poverty, inequality of income and political parties advancing hate speech amongst the voters.

### Effects

- Post election violence at demonstrations.
- Destruction of public infrastructures.
- Death and injuries.
- Intolerance, hatred.
- Nepotism & favouritism.
- Theft, rape, forced displacement of people, kidnappings.

## East Africa – Kenya, South Sudan, Rwanda & Tanzania

### Context: Economic Instability

As an example, this was a major factor that affected Kenya and brought about the recent incidents of violence and social unrest. The key contributors to economic instability, political leaders, international financial institutions, natural disasters, ethnicity, government systems where citizens do not get the actual leaders that they choose by voting.

### Causes

Causes of conflict in the East Africa region were listed as: Inequality in resource distribution, unskilled leadership which may not necessarily have the skill to execute their mandates, corruption, high rate of unemployment, pressures from global funders e.g. IMF, loss of business because of the political unrest, inflation which leads to high prices of goods & services & unfavourable laws e.g. Kenya's finance bill 2024.

### Effects

- Riots.
- Mental health breakdowns.
- Killings and loss of life.
- Starvation and death.
- Food insecurity.
- Widespread poverty.
- Increase in GBV.
- Domestic violence.
- Increase in crime rate.

### Reactions from Presentations

As part of her closing remarks, Mpiwa said she noticed economic instability is a cause and a core problem that cuts across all regions however there are historical divides which have further caused instability and are country specific.

She noted that undermined civil rights and diminished trust in governance is a major cause of instability that should cut across all regions.

About colonisation, she mentioned that there is a tendency to make it look like the root cause yet at the end of the day it's the poor leaders that citizens elect. *“They know how to change the rhetoric of the countries they lead but they refuse to take a first step in changing the narrative. We are shallow when it comes to some topics/areas which is one of the biggest causes of conflict. Hegemony still exists from colonialism, and we need a concerted effort to change this. It's important to remember that our own African leaders were allowed to be used by the colonialists, and we are still paying the price”.*

Finally, she advised the participants that when doing a conflict analysis, one needs to dig quite deep and avoid making a blanket analysis that the conflict drivers will be the same and try to be as specific as possible when talking about the actual causes of the conflict.

### **Reflections from the day – Dean**

As a point of reflection Dean said the participants had gone down a difficult road to discuss causes of conflict. He urged them to identify the risks and challenges ahead, even if they seemed overwhelmed. As activists he concurred that it is difficult to deal with these large companies to help them open their lenses to capitalism and neo-colonialism.

He encouraged the participants to write down one or two things on how this conflict analysis can change how they work or deliver on their obligations.



# DAY 3

# THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA AND INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL MECHANISMS AND COMMITMENTS TO FURTHER ITS IMPLEMENTATION

## Recap - Mphatso Kapito, MenEngage Malawi

Mphatso used the 'catch-ball' game to recap issues around the room by asking the question:

**What actions can you take, now that you know the causes of structural violence?**

### Participants' Responses

1. I will encourage my colleagues to find out the actual root cause before solutions are decided on.
2. We need to do advocacy to sensitise our leaders for better root cause understanding.
3. I will use film, under Sensi Africa, to create awareness of the issues that surround violence, peace and inequalities especially amongst women.
4. I plan to promote comprehensive education on gender and inclusivity through community engagements, round table discussions etc. It requires a multi sectoral approach.
5. I think it's important to start with community sensitization so that they understand the root causes at that level, on what is causing conflict and violence.
6. We need to build alliances at the community level to make our advocacy stronger. We need allies at that level.
7. We need to be committed to sincere leadership as a continent, have even distribution of resources, promote rule of law, protection of fundamental human rights and addressing the structural violence with structural changes which can only be done by sincere leadership.
8. We look at solutions on a bigger spectrum and we forget the younger cohort which is a mistake. I will ensure that information is trickled down to the younger ones.

Dean weighed in on the recap with information on the power of working as a team. He narrated that during the 90s when the epidemic of HIV was spreading rapidly through Europe, a racist statement was made that antiretrovirals would not work in Africa because of Africans inherent lack of sense of time. Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) was formed in SA and helped bring the cost of HIV drugs down after a lawsuit against pharmaceutical giants however, distribution was not done. Protests were launched through TAC until the government listened to their demands to have a distribution solution. To date, there are millions of HIV+ people in South Africa living positively because of this action. Dean asked the participants to consider what the education work is that they need to do to change the ideas around gender. Also, be aware of what politics are involved.

Secondly, he told the meeting to always know the people who are doing this work in their respective countries and reach out to them. *"I want to remind everyone that there is hard work to do and the best way to do this is by connecting with people already doing the work"*.

## The Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA) - History of the WPS agenda and Implementation in Africa - Sylvie Ndongmo, founder of WILPF Cameroon and international president of WILPF

### Global Overview of the WPS agenda



In October 2000, at the call of civil society, the Security Council recognized that it must acknowledge and address the impact of conflict on women which in turn gave birth to the United Nations Security Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), which is regarded as a groundbreaking and historical document.

It is the first resolution adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) which “dealt specifically with gender issues and women’s experiences in ‘conflict’ and ‘post-conflict’ situations” and the central role of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding and it is for this reason, UNSCR 1325 is considered the pinnacle of the global WPS agenda. Sylvie added that UNSCR 1325 and its follow-up resolutions, together with the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), constitute the global Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda.

The WPS agenda provides a holistic approach to security and consists of four main pillars: Participation, Conflict Prevention, Protection and Relief and Recovery. She emphasised that addressing all four pillars is critical to respecting human rights and dignity and in tackling the root causes/ structural drivers of conflict to create sustainable peace. On the resolutions, she explained that the first group of five resolutions promotes women's active and effective participation in peace-making and peacebuilding. And the second group, beginning with the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1820 and 2008, aims to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence. She stressed that

all the other resolutions that came after 1325 are simply complementary to it and that when there is a resolution or any policy that is adopted, it is implemented and can be assessed to see the gaps.

And true to their word, some gaps were identified, that's why other resolutions came up to complement those gaps. She then broke down the different resolutions and the years they were adopted.

### Africa Overview of WPS Agenda

Sylvie explained that the WPS agenda is firmly rooted in Africa and several AU member states played an important role in advancing the adoption of relevant resolutions at the UN. Namibia was president of the UN Security Council when it adopted UNSCR 1325, while South Africa co-sponsored the follow-up resolution 1820 and since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, the AU has adopted several policies and strategies to promote the global WPS agenda and gender equality agenda.

She informed them that the WPS agenda enjoys high visibility among AU member states and many countries have adopted NAPs to promote UN Security Council resolution 1325. She pointed out however, that the African Union Commission does not have a clear strategy on how to implement the WPS agenda, despite the efforts of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security. The recently launched AU Strategy on Gender and Women's Empowerment could complement efforts to promote the WPS agenda and eventually improve the implementation across the AU. The gaps are mainly because the strategy is still lacking at the level of AU.

## Implementation in Africa

Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe have drawn up NAPs.

Around a third of the world's NAPs (36 NAPs) are in Africa by 2024, in various sub-regions.

- Twenty (20) countries are in their first NAP,
- Thirteen (13) are in their second NAP and
- Three are in their third NAP.

Sylvie invited the participants to applaud advances made in women's political representation and participation across Africa which showed a sign of improvement. In countries such as Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa, female representation in parliaments has increased. In October 2018, Ethiopia appointed a new gender-balanced cabinet, including a female minister of national defence and a minister of peace, as well as a female president. African governments and regional institutions have adopted a long list of policies aligned with the WPS agenda and several regional and sub-regional organisations in Africa have also adopted an extensive gender equality policy framework. This suggests the normative framework of the WPS agenda, and the principle of gender equality enjoy significant visibility, both at the level of regional organisations and the AU. The agenda is gaining enough ground.

She ended her presentation stating: *"However, it is important to acknowledge the lack of an effective strategy for implementation of these policy commitments and the rather narrow, security-focused conceptualisation of the WPS agenda. This gathering is supposed to help us learn the implementation strategies".*

### ■ What is the experience with Resolution 1325 in your country?

#### Zimbabwe

*"I will speak from our all-Zimbabwean perspective. I'm happy to share that we recently launched the NAP for Resolution 1325. So now the government has a strategic document on how it's going to be implemented. And I also want to add that the launch by the government also made it easy for us as a civil society organisation to really do community awareness without fear from the security sector. Before the government showed its support for resolution 1325, we were having a hard time with the local security forces because they were always asking us, "What peace and security are you talking about?" For a long time, we had challenges. Every time we went to the communities and when we came back, we were called to the security offices because they wanted us to explain more about it. So, we really had to narrow it down and make them understand. And I'm also happy to share that now we are also like a resource base for our local security forces because there was another civil society organisation that wanted to carry out activities. And they had to call us to tell them about the pillars of Resolution 1325. They said they wanted to implement it. So now we are in good books. But before it was scary for us to say we are going to carry out this resolution"*

## **DRC**

*"In 2007, the resolution was presented to the authorities. We had our first National Action Plan (NAP) in 2010 and in practice, NAP was supposed to be planned four years thereafter but unfortunately, we were not able to follow it. In 2017, we had to evaluate the plan. We went to different provinces and in 2020, we produced the second NAP and in May of this year, we went to the provinces. This is where we did an assessment of the second version. I'm part of the people who worked on the development of the second version of this NAP. We set up a secretariat for the implementation of this resolution and this secretariat is found within the Gender Ministry. And it's the one that brings together different activities regarding this resolution 1325. And within the 26 provinces, we have already set up 23 offices to help implement resolution 1325. We have gone up to the local level to see how we can facilitate the implementation of this resolution. WILPF DRC is a member of the secretariat. And this helps us to moderate the different activities. But the major challenge we have is effective implementation to ensure that the authorities fund the operational plans that support the NAP that we developed. And we hope that with this new enthusiasm within the ministry of gender, we'll be in a position to implement the resolution within our country".*

## **TOGO**

*"When we talk about the resolution 1325 in Africa, I don't want to be pessimistic. But we just talk about it. Just theoretically speaking about it. We talk about participation of women in decision-making bodies. But in reality, does this take place? Remember too, women participate a lot in armed conflicts. Whenever we have armed conflicts, women also participate actively. But what results do we have? What documentation has been done regarding the participation of women in armed conflicts? I know women, during conflicts, they participate both positively and negatively. But mostly positively. But has this been documented? Has this been documented? Do we recognize the participation of these women in conflicts? In Africa, this has not yet been done".*

## **GHANA**

*"I'm going to talk about the localization, the context in Ghana now, as you rightly said. All I want to say is that 1325 is supposed to be a localised resolution. It's there, raw, it's international, but you need to localise it to suit your own context. And as far as I know, we've done that in Ghana".*

## **NIGERIA**

*"By the time we get to the 29th assembly now, or the current assembly, we just have three women out of 109 senators. So, you can see that the number of women that are on that table will not really bring out many results because it's still the men that are taking that decision. For instance, the Gender and Equality opportunity bill that was pushed for by a woman senator in 2016, passed the second reading. But after the second reading, it was thrown out. Why? Because there are no more women that will push for it. That's why I would feel that, okay, we have some men that will be speaking for the women, but how many of the men are really speaking for the women? So active participation of women should be one of the key things that we'll be pushing for. Because once we're able to, okay, we're talking about peace and security. How many women are chief security officers? How many women are the ones that will say, oh, we have a problem here, so we're going to take action? It's still the men that will determine whether action should be taken or not. So, if we have women participate, like we have in Rwanda, we have more women in the parliament. It's not just about domesticating the resolution, which Nigeria has done with a lot of policies, a lot of laws that they have domesticated in the country but are not being implemented. So that comes back to us as civil society organisations. We really need a lot of advocacy, and it should be targeted. Because while we are just setting up women committees there, we must focus on bringing women on the decision table. That is what matters first. Because if we're able to put ourselves there, we'll be able to, you know, push for things that will favour the women".*

## **CAMEROON**

*"Once again, I would like to focus on participation. Participation should not focus on figures. We also need to talk about the quality of participation, which is part of the education that we give to women and girls, to ensure that they have the necessary resources to defend their rights and participate in decision-making processes. In Cameroon, we just developed*

*our second-generation NAP. We introduced in this new plan the localization agenda. The plan should not only remain at the national level but should be localised to be better implemented to ensure that people really understand this plan to enable us to have positive change. It's important to strengthen the capacities of the women at the local level regarding negotiation, mediation, as well as other levels.*

*In Cameroon also, the government has added a new pillar, which is not actually very new, the pillar for promotion. So, we have another pillar on promotion because the other plan was only focusing on the four pillars, but we've added another pillar, a fifth pillar on promotion because we noticed that the first plan was not well disseminated. Even civil society organisations do not know much about this plan.*

*That's why the government decided to add this pillar to ensure that we also work on dissemination of the plan in Cameroon”.*

## **CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

*“On political participation, I was a chair on one of the platforms and I urge us all not to be confused because political participation requires expertise.*

*For instance, when you have ten aircraft, you must have ten pilots. Therefore, you need to talk about competent people. And while in political participation, you must have some skills in management.*

*For instance, do we need to have a doctorate for you to understand the needs of your population? I think political participation, when people normally say women don't have skills, don't have intellectual quality, intellectual skill, I think it's not true. Which skill do we have to participate fully in politics? For instance, we had a prime minister who was a woman who was not educated as such. But the outcome of that government was wonderful for the people.*

*Therefore, I would say it's not an issue of technical skills or technical competency. No. The problem that we have here is about women's participation, and I think it's more about ourselves, women.*

*We fear going into politics. In my country, CAR, when, for instance, a woman was in politics and the government where she was working is no longer there, people don't want to talk to that woman again. So, I think there is another thing.*

*Whenever a government is no longer in power, people fear to talk to the people who used to work in that government. And women fear that”.*

## **TOGO**

*“For Togo we have a NAP that was adopted in 2018 which then came to an end in 2022. We are actualizing and updating the plan and are working on resolution 1325 and resolution 1820 on sexual violence.*

*In Togo, it was proven that sexual violence is used as a weapon during war. So, we use that resolution to sensitise more for us to fight that evil. We also work with the resolution 2242 on women participation in the political process. We also have the resolution 2250. We said we cannot talk about women without talking about youth. That's why we wanted to link women and youth. Because among the youth, we also have young girls. On participation, Togo has made some advance in representation in the decision-making process.*

*We have a lot of women who are ministers, the speaker of the national assembly, we have in the army, women who are assigned in missions, women in NGOs that work on prevention and sensitization on protection in the local community. These NGOs assist local leaders, to find solutions on how to protect women wholesomely. We need to work in synergy to coordinate our actions with all other NGOs that are catering to women”.*

## **BURKINA FASO**

*“We started much earlier with Resolution 1325. Currently, we have done two NAPs. For the first one, the country was experiencing a lot of problems, therefore we could not implement our first two NAPs. Now the third one is under the Ministry of Humanitarian Actions and it keeps changing in relation to the situation in the country. But we are working in coalition with many actors, many state and non-state organisations. Now, because we had the budget problem for the implementation of our action plan, the strategy that we worked on was to focus ourselves on activities where the budget is there. And we identified those ones that already have a budget.*

*For the ones that don't have a budget, we look for money. We've been a member of the Technical Committee for the Development and Implementation of Action Plans, and we have been participating and sensitising women on matters of peace and security. As our sister from Nigeria said, women participate, but we don't see the result. We are confident that with this new action plan there will be a lot of change”.*

## **KENYA**

*“The first NAP was implemented in the year 2016 and lasted up to 2020. We are currently on the second NAP, to run from the year 2020 to 2024. So, it focused on four main pillars, which are prevention, protection, participation, and relief and recovery. We've had some notable successes of this action plan in Kenya. We've had increased women's political participation.*

*In the last election in Kenya, we had several women leaders elected in different political positions as well as governors and MPs. Also, it has led to the establishment of the Women's Situation Rooms, as we've had in Nigeria, also in Kenya we have one.*

*And its presence has helped ensure a more peaceful electoral process, whereby they do monitor and ensure that everything is going on well. Also, another notable success is that we've had the integration of gender perspectives in counter-terrorism. Lastly, we've also seen the women's leadership in the revolution”.*

## **SOUTH AFRICA**

*“So, in our strategic context, there are visible strides with the government trying to integrate or integrating global women's security strategies. However, there are challenges that are also visible. So, post-apartheid in 1994, women's democracy took effect.*

*The government adopted the National Development Plan, which emphasised gender equality and tackling other issues in South Africa. There was also the gender-based violence and femicide initiative that took effect in 2020. So, it's a framework that was developed by women and civil society organisations that address issues of gender-based violence and femicide.*

*However, there are also challenges. The NSP is not well-funded. It is not localised.*

*Most of the people that come together do not know about the NSP. However, in the internet society, they have adopted the rapid response strategy. So, I always had an issue with the rapid response strategy.*

*What is the rapid response in terms of gender-based violence? You will need to have resources and funding for it to be effective and for it to be called the rapid response strategy.*

*The localisation of the NSP is well-funded and amplifies the participation of women at local level so that we are able to participate at multi levels”.*

## **DRC**

*“I think we need, first, to congratulate the civil society. If the Resolution 1325 is known, people can speak about it. It means that it's the result of the work of civil society. Thank you to the civil society. For DRC, if now we are developing the third plan, it's thanks to the funding received by the civil society. Government has done nothing yet in terms of contribution. When we talk about women participation, in Congo, for the first time, we had a woman prime minister. I think we need to give time to women to work.*

*Let's assist them to work. At the Ministry of Gender, we have a member of WILPF. This means that there is goodwill however we need to assist other members of the leadership to understand. We need, first, to support ourselves. But whenever there is a woman nominated at a position, we want to know, is she married? Does she have children? We should not do that. The same unfair questions are asked when women stand for elections which is unfortunate because these questions are not asked about men”.*

## **GHANA**

*“The truth is that when the 1325 came to Ghana, as we tried to localise it, we started with the National Action Plan (NAP) by outlining objectives and activities, both at the domestic level and at the international level, and we made sure that the human rights of women and girls are protected. To start with, what we did was that there was poor understanding of what gender mainstreaming was, and we had to do a lot of training on women, peace and security. What we've achieved is that we have gender desks in most of the ministries. We have gender desks even in the police, and we even have some of the police women in our network. As a result, we have gender desks in the military, police, the forces, and key institutions. For me, that is a plus. And then we also undertook training on gender, but the main problems that we have are funding and implementation. We are also making a serious effort to ensure that we have an inter-ministerial steering committee that will coordinate the implementation of the localization that we have done.*

*Because we have NAP 1, we have NAP 2, and why we have NAP 2 is just the same thing that you have internationally, looking at the gaps and ensuring that you fill it in. So, we have that for the GANAP2. Then the good news, again, is that some of our members have been included into the peace architecture in Ghana called the National Peace Council. And to us, that's a big one. So, we're trying, but there's still a lot to be achieved”.*

## GUINEA

*“We have had a NAP since 2019 even if we don't have WILPF yet in Guinea. We are doing our best with the concerned ministry to integrate the work group on peace and security. Yes, we have some achievements although sometimes we don't understand why civil society organisations think that they work in opposition with the ministry.*

*What they did in Guinea is unbelievable. They have a gender desk in all institutions.*

*Also, they have developed a lot of tools to guide the work being done at these gender desks. Lastly, when the military took power in our country, they established a commission for national reconciliation. For the first time, three women are heading the body as mediators. For us, it was a good thing, even though we think we should have more women. But it's already okay. Ladies and gentlemen, if there is no communication, someone will communicate, but unfortunately, it will be against you.*

*We must make sure that whichever action we undertake, we must make noise about it for all to hear”.*

## MALAWI

*“We developed a NAP for 2021 – 2025. And there is a task force for it and a ministry was constituted called the Department of Peace and National Unity. The leader of MEA Malawi is on this task force”.*

## ZAMBIA

*“I also wanted to speak to the issue of participation. I'm speaking from the context of my country, where a case study was done in the northern part of Zambia as to why women are not engaging in participation. And one of them was issues of misconceptions or mythical understandings. Self-confidence is an issue, or why women themselves don't believe enough in themselves to be able to sit on the platform where men are seated. And, generally, issues of men looking at women as not having enough muscle, for lack of a better word, I don't know what word to use, enough muscle to sit in this platform and be able to deliberate some of these issues. And then now, something strikes me interestingly, is that WILPF does not exist in Zambia. So, I was having a conversation with Edwick, and she told me there's a lady that has studied the process. So, for me, I'm lobbying that we are speaking of women's participation, and we are speaking of peace and security, and we have an organisation like WILPF, and my country doesn't have an existing organisation there. You need to give us enough room to humble ourselves by supporting us. There is a need for a powerful existence of WILPF in Zambia”.*

## Question:

About the Women's Situation Room, is it just focused on monitoring the elections? After monitoring the elections, do you publish the findings? Do you make recommendations? And if you do that, where do you publish them? Because the findings and recommendations need to come out plainly, like she said. If there is no visibility of your findings and your recommendations, because in Nigeria, instead of the space for women to increase, it's shrinking, it's coming down. So, are you really publicising, and bringing out these issues?

## Response

*“On the Women's Situation Room, right now, yes, there are recommendations. And the recommendations, there is a lot of follow-up going on. Maybe after now we'll have a personal discussion, and I'll put you through one of those things.*

*But the Women's Situation Room in Nigeria has a secretary, manned by the World National Director. I'll also give you the office address where you can get to the office and have a personal one-on-one discussion. I'll also link you up with the program's office so that you have more insight.*

*But really, yes, we monitor the elections, we monitor post-election violence and how women are participating. Yes, we may not have had a lot of women in this assembly right now, but I can categorically tell you that women participated more in the election process. We had a lot of women come out to decide the challenges we had in Nigeria.*

*We had a lot of women observers coming out to monitor the elections. So yes, the participation is increasing. We may not have women speaking in the assembly really because of the dynamics of the society we find ourselves in, especially in this present assembly that was more of an ethnic thing. So, you find that a lot of people withdrew at some point and a lot of women became threatened”. - Nigeria Participant*

Closing remarks - Dean

Dean thanked Sylvie for leading the plenary session so inspirationally and shared that he had written three things down that I wanted to interest the participants in. Firstly, he affirmed what Lisette was saying about the incredible work that has been done on WPS agenda which meant that everyone is conversant in these issues and understands the specifics of it.

*“I wanted to raise an issue which, in my head, having just come out of a discussion about root causes, I was wondering how much did the 10 WPS resolutions deal with root causes of conflict and violence? So, I did a little bit of analysis now, and I looked online to see what literature there was on the root causes. The analysis, and admittedly, it was very brief, but I think the authors that I came across are experts on this issue.*

*The analysis is that mostly the resolutions don't focus on root causes. And in as much as they focus on economic issues, they focus on economic issues in very traditional ways of women's access to loans and savings, to women's participation in the economy, but they don't focus on the questions we were exploring yesterday of how we transform our economy so that they're not exploited, so that they don't leave 70% of the population behind”.*

He added that he thought it's an issue the meeting would benefit to do a little bit of work on and to think about how much the respective NAPS deal with the economic drivers of conflict. *“How much do they deal with these colonial relations we were talking about yesterday? How much do they deal with the international financial institutions that are shaping economic policy?”* Dean said he wanted to leave that as a challenge to all the participants to try and understand a little bit more what language exists in the resolutions and then in the Africa-specific NAPS.

### **Closing remarks – Sylvie**

- On the gender conflict analysis, what analysis is available for the implementation of WPS in the African continent?
- Secondly, what are the key studies, best practices and strategies that can be shared as MenEngage Africa & WILPF for the WPS agenda?

## **The Youth, Peace and Security Agenda (YPSA) – challenges and opportunities - Why do we need a YPSA in Africa?**

**Eucharía Nkengafack, Regional Communications and Social Media Coordinator & Solange Ba, Young WILPF Senegal**

Eucharía opened this session by asking: Who has heard of the YPS agenda? Some participants affirmed that they had heard about it. She then gave a background to the resolution 2250. Young people were not being considered as a group that required special attention. Other resolutions were made to ensure there is sustainability for peace around the world. The UN only realised the need for youth to be a part of the agenda in 2015. Then the UN came up with pillars to use in peace building. So, pillars were created which have to do with YPS.

### **What are the YPS Pillars?**

- Participation - Ensure youth's participation and views are taken into account in decision-making processes, from negotiation and prevention of violence to peace agreements
- Protection - Ensure the protection of young civilians' lives and human rights and investigate and prosecute those responsible for crimes perpetrated against them.
- Prevention - Support young people in preventing violence and in promoting a culture of tolerance and intercultural dialogue
- Partnership - Engage young people during and after conflict when developing peacebuilding strategies along with community actors and United Nations bodies.
- Disengagement and reintegration - Invest in youth affected by armed conflict through employment opportunities, inclusive labour policies, and education promoting a culture of peace.

## ■ Plenary discussion on how to share information on the YPSA and mobilise young people for peace in Africa

**Are the youth well represented in your countries?**

### **Participants' Responses**

*“In my short analysis, the youths need to meet decision makers. Giving quotas without thought to it will only cause more problems. We want our children to first go to school yet politicians are calling them out to join politics. We need to think seriously about this quota system”.*

*“We need to stop thinking of the youth as children. We need to work with them. In Guinea we have delayed in implementing some of these strategies for the youth. We need to initiate them early from the local levels to take the reins. We should encourage them to express themselves”.*

*“In Ivory Coast, for the past 20 years we have had youth parliamentarians at different levels. They have organised themselves to have elections every 4 years. We now celebrate national Youth Day. We prepare those who finish studies to enter the job market. They are given vocational studies and youth are given chances to enter agriculture. But that does not mean that there are no youths doing wrong things”.*



*“In the DRC, we have the National Technical Secretariat regarding the resolution 2250 to bring together the youth activities. We already developed the first NAP and are assessing how things have been working since the development of this NAP. What we need to do, we need to prepare the youth to take over once we are no longer there. But there is a major issue. There is a war between the youth and the adults.*

*There is an intergenerational war. We need to see how to manage this. We have organised a session regarding the units working on resolution 1325 and 2250 to see how we can work together and try to define roles and responsibilities that can be led by the youth.*

*This is how we look at the Youth, Peace and Security agenda. I listened to the video, and it was interesting. We are talking about Anglophone countries, but you also need to see what is done in the Francophone countries to see how you can build this*

agenda. So, I would like to encourage the youth, don't work alone. See how you can work in collaboration with other stakeholders”.

“I want to share an experience about what we did this year in South Sudan. There is an organisation called the United Nations Association in South Sudan. It is a replica of the UN Youth Association, and it focuses on youth issues in South Sudan. About 20 youths were trained. And youth from regions were also taken to Juba, after which we picked up an outreach program that focuses on the pillars. So, when we conducted that project, there were questions that came like what was the actual age when someone is a youth? And why did it change when politicians needed to advance their causes? Why aren't the youth favoured like the women are who are given 5% representation in the agreement? How can we influence the national government to increase representation of young people in the peace building?”

Right now, the country is run by a document called Revitalised Agreements on the Solutions of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan as a way for the country to start healing from war. Right now, we have a woman who is a vice president. We also have a defence minister, a minister for interior and women at other levels even in the country coordination mechanism. Yet the youths have not been given a percentage representation. And youth is demanding representation. You find that youth in the village, and most likely because the illiteracy rate is very high, considering the long culture of war, youth have guns in their hands. And the politicians are taking advantage of this.

During the peace agreements the Ministry of Youth was created as well as the National South Sudan Youth Union, which is also a very vocal body and is influencing how things are done. So, we agreed on advocacy so that we influence the national governments to give a portion of the percentage representation”.

“In Burkina Faso, it's not the same. 60% of the population is youths. With the YPS agenda we have a Ministry of Youth, National Youth Council, and are represented at all levels. The Youth Council has been dominated by the government and cannot do anything not related to the government. But the conflict between the elders and the youth is continuous because of their need for instant gratification.

Youth are involved. But the youth are not involved in designing the programs e.g. the one of taking youths off the streets who are in prostitution. What happens is there is no ownership and even the interventions give short term solutions”.

“When I looked at the recent riots in Kenya, and at the youth peace and security pillars, I noticed that major of the things that are mentioned in the pillars are the major things that affected us, because they were not taken into consideration. Youth participation was so minimal in the drafting of the failed Finance Bill. So that brought about young people coming out to the streets to strike in protest. And then the other thing, we didn't have protection.

When we went to the streets to speak and show dissent and so many youths lost their lives because live bullets were used to disperse the protesters. The government did not take preventive measures to make sure that these young people are being protected, even as they speak out.

Another thing, the government did not give a listening ear. All the young people wanted was a listening ear. But the government denied the youth this up to the point where they had to go to the streets.

When the government noticed that the youth had forcefully entered the Parliament is when they decided to come and engage in dialogue with the youths at the last minute. And that is why, till today, we are having the small strikes, because we feel like, why are you coming to tell us you want to listen to us when already we have people who have lost lives? Why are you now coming to tell us now we want to listen to you? So I think this is a major thing, that if, as organisations, we are fighting and we are pushing for our freedoms and rights, it needs to be pushed even to the national level, where the government will take into consideration such things so that we prevent the loss of life of young people, because most of us are the ones who go out when such incidences occur”.

“So, I think one of the challenges that we are having on the African continent is that young people have been viewed as partners when it comes to the wrong thing to do, violence to be specific, political violence. In my country Zambia, young people only come on the table when politicians want to win an election and so they will go to young people, give them money, buy them alcohol so that the young people can give them the vote, because they will be needed specifically for that. But I liked it when I listened to the video and how it illustrates that there are bodies that are involving young people in decision-making. Do the young people in your home get a platform to speak concerning the things in your home? Because that is how you begin to empower these young people.

We must not always look at it on the higher, you know, platform. And usually what happens is young people are just told, go and speak about A, B, C, D, and G.

After they speak, what happens? Nothing. There's no implementation. There are no programs that are focused on engaging young people.

It is just a case of the UN wanting to look good that they're involving young people in their spaces and on the platforms. So, it must begin from our households, the young people that you are raising in your homes. A lot of us have got power in our

organisations, in our institutions. Do we have young people that are running departments? Do we have young people that are sitting on our boards? It's because we believe that young people have the capability to change the narratives if we give them the space, if we listen to them, if we engage them, if we partner with them”.

“In Cameroon on the YPS agenda the ministry concerned has established a national commission for youth, peace and security, whereby we also have the Ministry for Youth, civil society organisation for youth and youth groups, and even the League of Youth in Cameroon. We participated in the workshop with all the actors. We developed an action plan for the 2250 resolution in Cameroon. I want to say that I'm rather optimistic because in the meeting in December, we agreed that the action plan should be developed and submitted by June 2024. We are in August. We haven't received the plan. The process is still ongoing. We are hoping that we shall be able to have our own national plan”.

“I have just realised that all of us have the same problems. But there is a case in Togo. When they say youth, we have a national council for youth. When they say youth, youth in my country are over 35 years old. The places for young people are not occupied by young people yet at the national level, they will say we give this place to young people. In that council, the youngest are at least 38 years old. And then there is another case. When they want to include a young person in something, they will go and check who that young person is to gauge if they can influence them very easily. When they notice that they cannot influence you, they will leave you. They say that you young people, you don't know anything. You are not educated enough to take this place. But in fact, those 'old youths' they are including are not educated enough to take the place. So, these are the problems we are facing with trying to make youths participate in making decisions”.

“I would like to address that as much as we say good participation, we must make sure that we know which people we are referring to. What's the age range? I can't compete with someone who is 40. When I am in my 20s and they are 40, obviously one who is 40 is likely to be chosen over me who is much younger. And the misconception that youths are children has led to them not getting as much support as is needed. We were just thrown at the deep end. You are a youth, you must participate, you must be part of the decision-making table. So, because of that, I think there is no youth participation. And, in terms of attending events like the consultations and the age of consent, we are not capacitated enough, like what are we going to say when we get there? We are just going there, we are just going to sit and just listen to them speaking, but we don't know our role as youth or as young people”.

“I also just want to tap in on the context of South Africa and the challenges that we have, including youth participation. We do have policies and strategies that are looking to address various forms of inequalities, and the focus is on youth. We do have the national strategic plan in South Africa. It has six pillars, and one of the pillars is the fifth pillar that is focusing on economic power.

However, as the Masi pepe Network on Gender-Based Violence Response Program, we've been given an extension to implement the economic empowerment of young girls. Our target, the focus was on young girls because of the inequalities and gender-based violence that they experience. However, we also wanted to address the financial dependency of relapsing and going back to their perpetrators or abusers.

One of the key indicators that we had to implement was for us to link them into these institutions that were responsible to those kids. So, I found it very difficult for these institutions to affect the youth. There were stringent requirements that were already set in place. E.g. They need to register for these businesses and need to have financial audit statements.

Where do a young woman or a young person get a financial audit statement when they don't have the actual funds to pursue their businesses? So, there are already pre-set challenges for them to upscale themselves. I feel like our institutions need to be developed. They need to be youth responsive. And, looking at the socio-economic theme also tapped on the issue that institutions always focus on the traditional economic reform. But then they don't look at the inequalities that these young people exist in. So those are the challenges.

There are many structural barriers that need to be addressed at the youth level”.

“My contribution comes from the video that we watched. I remember how she was elaborating on the security issues for youth. I think those things are very important for youth to be upgraded in one way or another, because we know that they depend on the system that is set in certain countries.

But for instance, in my country, youth spaces are violated because they are not given chances to air out what really is in the background. They are prioritised when there is an election. But then again, the spaces where the government is making decisions, you cannot see their participation.

They are just being used. I think it's time that we really must put them into the spaces for them to talk and air out what they really want. We as youth don't want to be presented by other people.

We understand that you people have experiences and all that, but we also want to speak up and we also want to be included in the spaces. For instance, I just want to give an example. Here in this room, we have a few youths, but I think sometimes or the

*other time we can consider probably half of the participants in training, conferences, meetings should be youth, so that they can air out what they really want to say.*

*For instance, you can raise your issue, but looking at the people that you are with, you say I'm not well disciplined and all that, according to our African culture. But we really need to talk as youth and have our own spaces”.*

*“There is a need for the youth working on the way forward to find what can be done to increase youth participation in peace and security. The youth need to also compose themselves. What I mean is this. You need to change the narrative. Somebody just mentioned that some youth are seen as a tool for election violence and all other issues that come up during elections or anything that has to do with thuggery. You know, you protect the politicians.*

*Who protects the politicians? Youth. So now the youth need to think outside the box. What can we do to make sure that we are no longer used by these politicians but let's be the ones speaking? We had a discussion with Stephen yesterday about the Kenyan protest. There is something he mentioned. He said that the organisers of the protest were faceless.*

*That is why they achieved a good result. Now, because most times, like in the state where I reside in Nigeria, when a youth comes out and is speaking, especially on social media, what the politicians do is they call him behind the closed door and give him some money. And once that is done, that youth is shut up for life. He won't be able to speak again. Either they give him some money, or they give him a position. So, the youth themselves must maybe give themselves some form of sensitization. They orient themselves to the key positions they need to play in the country, in the state, in their community. For you to remain an activist that can really bring forth results, you need to reject political appointments, you need to reject political offers. Because once you don't reject that, how can you fight a system that you're already part of? It's not possible. So, the youth need some kind of reorientation and sensitization”.*

*“I've lectured youths for years, and I know the psychology of youths. The truth is that youths deserve their space.*

*I'm a key promoter of youth, and I know that youths have a vacuum. You need to get yourself well-trained so that you have what it takes. I'm not saying that there are no well-trained youths, but you need that capacity so that when you speak, you know what you're talking about, so that they take you seriously, and you must be of integrity.*

*If you don't have integrity, you can't go far. And if you have it, no one can stop you. That's just what I wanted to say as some advice”.*

*“What I've noticed, especially in Togo, is that there is some awakening that has taken place within the youth. We no longer have the youth who think that it's only the government that must do everything. We notice that we have creative, innovative youth who seek to provide their contribution which is different from what our parents did.*

*Only that it's true we have a lot of energy. Sometimes you don't know how to channel, to manage this energy. So that's why we have some intergenerational conflict between the youth and the adults.*

*So, if we could rethink how to work with the youth and see also how the youth can learn from the adults to see how we can better understand, come to understand regarding a certain number of points of view. It's not always easy, of course, to make ourselves understood by adults. It's true we give propositions but it's not easy to get them implemented.*

*That's why there is this intergenerational conflict between the youth and the adults. There are a lot of initiatives proposed by the government.*

*Each time they say they've done this and this for the youth, but we don't really see the youth participating in these kinds of initiatives. Simply because the youth have not been consulted and these kinds of initiatives are not aligned to their expectations and whenever we react, they find that we are exaggerating, that we don't want to take time to understand things. We need everything to be done quickly.*

*We want quick success, and, on our side, we have pressure. We don't have enough time to construct our lives and at the same time we're trying to see how to avoid the mistakes our parents made, and all this constitutes pressure on the youth”.*

*“In Cameroon we have a project to help the youth to help to empower the youth by setting up income generating activities including IDPs refugees. These are people affected by conflict given that some of these people are found in camps they have nothing to do. We have helped them set up income generating activities, and we have also bought them some startup kits to start their income generating activities. During the training we give we've also shown them how to sell their products through online platforms and social media and how to use social media to sell their products. We have a lot of IDPs refugees that are affected by conflict that have been empowered through the projects that we undertake. I'm sure it just helped to give them hope to know that displacement does not mean your life is ended”.*

*“I'm happy that we have two vibrant young women presenting. Yeah, this is a good testimony. Let's make sure we create spaces for youths, and we give them the space.*

*And I, for one, took the commitment when I became president, and I just want to share one example that I'm making. Apart from the Global Network for Youth Within WILPF, with their own programs, when I'm invited somewhere to make a speech, if I have 20 minutes, I request 12 for myself and 8 for the youth, because I don't want to speak for them.*

*I want them to come and take their space. So that's what I've been doing. I really encourage us to give them space, because they are us.*

*They are also learning, and we should be their mentors. We should mentor them the same way as we were also mentored. So, our responsibility is to mentor the youth and give them the space to make mistakes, because if they don't make mistakes, they won't learn, right?"*

Eucharia advised the participants to be age conscious when dealing with people in their organisations. If indeed they fall within the youth bracket, give them the chance to be able to have their own youth friendly spaces where they can speak up for themselves and share their ideas. If you respect one of the principles for the youth peace and security agenda and then you leave others out, you have not done the work.

## Using international law and human rights mechanisms to advance the WPS and YPS agendas - Overview of key mechanisms and instruments - Mpiwa Mangwiro

Mpiwa explained to the participants that her presentation was geared for them to understand how we link international and regional human rights to the national and to the local setting. *"The purpose why we want to understand this human rights system is to understand how we interface with it, how we use it to advance the women's peace and security agenda". - Mpiwa*

### **The UN Human Rights system**

She clarified that the UN Human Rights system is a charter based system that looks at the Universal declaration of Human rights. The main defender of Human rights is the Human Rights Council.

### **The Charter Based System**

The **UN Charter** (San Francisco 1945) and **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** (1948) are the foundation upon which the main bulk of the international human rights normative framework has been built. They have also been the inspiration of subsequent **regional human rights regimes** and national laws. The **Human Rights Council (HRC)** is the main UN organ in charge of promoting and protecting human rights.

### **The Treaty Based System**

There are **Nine** Core International Human Rights Treaties. The **UN Declaration of Human Rights**, the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (1966), and the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (1966) are often considered to be the "International Bill of Rights".

Other international instruments may contain additional human rights standards such as the **international humanitarian law** and **refugee law**, as well as the **ILO** and **UNESCO**, etc.

### **National Protection Systems**

States should make sure that their national constitutions and laws are consistent with the international and regional human rights regimes they are party to. Mpiwa gave a rundown of the HRC which is made of **47 elected UN member states** who serve for an initial period of 3 years and cannot be elected for more than two consecutive terms. Their mandate is to prevent and addresses human rights violations, responds to emergencies, it is an international forum for human rights dialogue, develops human rights law and periodically reviews country situations.

**Universal Peer Review** is a process under which every 4 - 4.5 years there are several states that are under review and as such must submit a report to the HRC about human rights issues and commitments in their countries. One of the challenges though that we have is that states sometimes don't adhere to this which gives civil society an opportunity to also prepare what is called a shadow report, when the state is reporting.

### **UN Human Rights Treaties and Obligation of the state party**

A State can become party to a treaty through ratification, accession or succession, which means the State voluntarily decides to be bound by its provisions. The State therefore becomes obligated under public international law to uphold and implement the provisions of the treaty.

## **Overview of International Human Rights Treaties**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December 1948) forms the basis of the two covenants—The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

The process of drafting a legally binding instrument enshrining the rights of the UDHR had started immediately after the declaration's adoption in 1948. Initially a single Covenant encompassing all human rights was envisaged. However, after a long discussion, the GA requested the CHR to elaborate two separate Covenants, which were ultimately adopted by the GA in December 1966 and entered into force in 1966.

Core Human Rights Treaties addressing specific phenomena

- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of **Racial Discrimination** (ICERD), 1965
- The Convention against **Torture** and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), 1984
  - Optional Protocol to CAT (establishment of the **Subcommittee on the Prevention** of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment → inspections of detention facilities)
- The Convention on **Enforced Disappearances** (ICCPED), 2006

## Reporting: Procedure & Purpose

The procedure involves the states submitting periodic reports as to how they apply the treaty provisions nationally: It's a legal obligation

- ★ It is an opportunity for critical self-assessment of states
- ★ Identify problems and shortcomings
- ★ Monitor progress in treaty implementation
- ★ Plan and develop policies to achieve goals.

*“Every four years, a country should report on CEDAW. Our countries are all bad at reporting. Some countries, all three periodic reports, they did not submit in 2010, they did not submit in 2014, they did not submit in 2018. So that also becomes an advocacy point, that sometimes the only way to hold our countries accountable, especially in international platforms, is through these reports. So, when we advocate and say, it's long overdue, you last reported in 2014, it's now ten years, two periodic reports are due, can you please submit your report? Then that gives us the opportunity, when they report, for us to be also able to develop our shadow report”. - Mpiwa*

## The African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR)

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) promotes and protects human rights in the 54 Member States of the African Union that have ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The Charter recognises the indivisibility of all rights: All 'generations' of rights are recognised. Socio-economic rights are justiciable. The African Charter does not contain a derogation clause. The **human rights treaty bodies** are committees of independent experts that monitor implementation of the core international human rights treaties.

**The African Court on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR)** is a regional human rights tribunal with advisory and contentious jurisdiction concerning the interpretation and application of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (“Banjul Charter”) and other instruments. Its jurisdiction extends to those States that have ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and

Peoples' Rights. The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Court) was established through a Protocol to the African Charter. Its decisions are final and binding on state parties to the Protocol. The Court's jurisdiction applies only to states that have ratified the Court's Protocol. The Court may entertain cases and disputes concerning the interpretation and application of the African Charter, the Court's Protocol and any other human rights treaty ratified by the state concerned. The Court is also empowered to promote amicable settlement of cases pending before it.

## Legal Framework To WPS

One of the major legal frameworks of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in Africa is the Maputo Protocol. It was adopted in 2003. It had 42 ratifications out of 54 member states. Botswana has continuously refused to ratify the Maputo Protocol among other states. It is a point of advocacy for people from Botswana. But it is arguably the best framework, even globally, that protects women's rights. And it focuses on elimination of discrimination against women and of harmful practices. It is the one framework that named FGM for what it is and named it as being a harmful practice. It also addresses the rights to health of women, including sexual and reproductive health rights. And it also addresses protection of women in armed conflict. The Maputo Protocol has its reporting mechanisms. It's every two years. But I think every country that has ratified the Maputo Protocol, see that you report every two years or every four years, you report on the charter and the Maputo Protocol. Countries are mandated to report on the charter and the Maputo Protocol.

Mpiwa concluded with a brief description of what was entailed in the normative frameworks to the WPS agenda like the Beijing Declaration and platform for Action, CEDAW, etc.

### Question

**Who is responsible for the state reporting? How can civil society come and be a part of it? Because now you're saying that we're supposed to pull it together. We have different organisations, NGOs, civil society, coalitions, networks. So how are we supposed to pull our reports together? And are we to submit our reports as civil society to the state now? Who now forwards it? What's the channel of reporting?**

### Response

*"The state should have a department where they say each treaty sits. For instance, for using the simple CEDAW, most countries have the Department of Women, Gender & Youths etc. That's supposed to be the department that takes initiative to say, we are about to what? To report. It's not supposed to be a secret. The government is supposed to extend its invitation to civil society organisations. In several instances, some civil society entities have contributed to the drafting of a state report because the state has reached out and said, can you come and contribute to the drafting of this report? But because it's a responsibility of the state, they must identify the relevant department, the state department that is then supposed to lead in the drafting of what will be recognized as the state report. Civil society has the responsibility to bring each other, to make peace with each other and work, collaborate". - Mpiwa*

## Participants' Reactions to The Presentation

### DRC

*"When we talk of ratification, it's the country that ratifies the instruments. In the DRC, what we do is send reminders to the civil society regarding CEDAW. It's within the Ministry of Gender. With regards to the peer review mechanism, it's at the Ministry of Human Rights. So, we work a lot in collaboration with these ministries to remind them that they need to submit reports. On our side, we come together. For instance, we've organised a coalition of civil societies that are working on these different issues. We come together to prepare a joint report for the civil society. We work a lot to bring together different CSOs working on the different treaties. It's in your interest to also make sure that your country has a good score and remind your government to send these reports. And sometimes, you can also provide your expertise to the government regarding the preparation of the report". - DRC participant*

### CAMEROON

*"In 2018 in Cameroon we participated in the preparation of the third and fourth report.*

*We wrote to the authorities that it was possible to prepare this report. We need to understand what the departments are and to remind them to put pressure on the government so that they act. If the government does not act and if we don't also remind them, things are not going to move forward. We have this duty.*

*In WILPF Cameroon, we prepare our own report because we work on women, peace and security issues. Each CSO works in their own field. But it's also important to see how we can support each other. We have also been asked to contribute to the development of the country report. We need to be flexible to follow up on the processes and to ensure that we participate fully whenever we have an opportunity. I also want to say that these processes enabled us within advocacy work to have some of our advocacy initiatives to be adopted by the government. We have managed to get our recommendations adopted in many policies and laws.”*

## **GUINEA**

*“What I would like to say to the different organisations that are working on WPS issues, we need to have partnerships with the competent ministries.*

*When you have a MOU, this is going to be a call upon you to support them on the preparation of different reports.*

*For instance, in Guinea, I've been working on issues regarding the condition of women for the past five years. For the past two years, I was thrown out, but we're still present there. All the different organisations that are working on the same issues came together as a coalition. We need to understand that there's some fear that we have and that's why we don't even think about sending shadow reports”.*

## **GHANA**

*“In Ghana, we don't stand alone. Yes, there's been times that WILPF will call on us to send a report. We have a coalition of key stakeholders within the system, so we submit reports as a group most times and there's always a reminder that is sent out. I advise the group to belong to coalitions that have shared the same interests because reports matter, as you rightly said. And that's how we work in Ghana”*

## **Question**

Please say something about the rights of the human rights defenders because most of the time we talk about human rights generally, but we don't think on how to protect human rights defenders.

## **Response**

*“Human rights defenders are often exposed to all various forms of harm. They are arrested, they are tortured, It becomes really an issue of having to advocate for a state to uphold its laws because its laws include the protection of every person, every citizen. There's supposed to be a specific mechanism internationally that is supposed to be for the protection of human rights defenders. But we know, like you are saying, human rights work comes with a lot of risks. But I have no one size fits all answer to say how do human rights defenders protect themselves because we know that many states violate them. If you know that a human rights defender is being persecuted, then making as much noise as possible, publicising that someone has been arrested, someone has been persecuted, demanding that the state uphold that person's human rights and human rights protections”. - Mpiwa*

## **Conclusion**

Mpiwa concluded her presentation with a reminder to the participants that even if these human rights mechanisms sit somewhere in the United Nations, they are supposed to apply to each one's context on the ground.

# **Situating Men, Boys, Masculinities & The Patriarchy within African Policy Frameworks**

Findings from joint WILPF and MenEngage Africa research

Genevieve Riccoboni, WILPF Women, Peace and Security Programme Coordinator (online)

## **Introduction**

As part of her introduction, Genevieve elaborated on how WILPF was very instrumental in the original passage of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and as such have been very active in advancing the WPS agenda and ensuring its grounded in human rights. She thanked all the participants who had been involved in the research in one way or another, for their time and knowledge. She added that her presentation was a discussion paper that was advocacy oriented and narrated its mandate. As the interviews and data were centred in Africa, the learnings are applicable outside the continent.

*“And another thing I wanted to sort of say at the outset is I think it's important to say that we don't want or need WPS NAPs or WPS policies to do everything.*

*We don't need them to cover every single issue possible. But what we do want to do is we want to make sure that we're looking at the gendered drivers and impacts of conflict and looking at those in a holistic manner, looking at those in a human rights' centric manner and centering conflict prevention, and peace because ultimately this is a peace agenda”.*

## Research Scope and Focus

Genevieve extended her gratitude to MenEngage Africa for the paper that inspired the one she was going to discuss. She told of a partnership between WILPF and MenEngage Africa. That as part of an ongoing collective work on mobilising men for feminist peace, WILPF's Women, Peace and Security Programme conducted research on the opportunities for incorporating language on men, boys, and masculinity into national and regional policies on WPS and gender in Africa. This research looks at all National Action Plans on WPS in Africa; regional policies; and relevant international frameworks to understand the major trends and patterns in how different WPS actors are understanding these issues thus far. She said it also identifies concrete recommendations for how decision makers can take this forward.

The paper aims to address the following questions:

- **How and to what extent have issues and language around men, boys, masculinity, patriarchy been incorporated thus far into these policy frameworks?**
- **How do the African feminists interviewed for the research believe that incorporating these elements could help strengthen the implementation of the WPS agenda and other peace agendas, gender equality agendas?**
- **How are patriarchal masculinities and structural drivers of conflict hindering peace?**
- **What are some of the key thematic areas that are priorities for feminists and women's rights advocates?**
- **What are some gaps and what things might be effective in mobilising men to work together with women for peace and women's rights?**

She told the participants that the main argument that is being made is the importance of addressing these gendered factors that cause and fuel the cycle of men's violence, both inside and outside of armed conflicts. It is about questioning also the peacetime, wartime binary that's often presented. This is something that WILPF has always done a really good job of doing, of calling into question that binary and pointing to the broader continuum of violence. She added that they also question some of the terminology that is used such as, “masculinities”, She told that they also argue that addressing some of these factors will contribute to the implementation of the WPS agenda and that it's important to strengthen men's investment in peace and gender equality and that it will help address the root causes of violence that are linked to more structural factors as well.

## Global Frameworks

She briefly tackled the main trends in the UNSC Resolutions on WPS and after which she called on the meeting to agree with her that references to men & boys are few and far in between and frame men not as perpetrators of violence or initiators of war but rather exclusively as victims or potential allies.

She spoke and said they went back to the resolutions to see what they're saying because they are the baseline that is available, but this is not to say that one can't go beyond them.

*“And so, I just want to say that while the resolutions are important and of course are critical for these discussions, we want to think beyond them, especially in a more contextual way. And this is not to say we don't need more resolutions, but we do need at a national level, on a regional level policy that are looking at these contextual factors and looking at structural factors that are relevant to the situations in each country”.* - Genevieve

Genevieve elaborated that after a few resolutions had already been adopted, there are some trends on men and boys realised. And these have to do with gender-based violence both in terms of men and boys as perpetrators of gender-based violence, but

also recognizing that men and boys can be victims and survivors of gender-based violence, the impact of men's violence on women's participation, the roles men and boys can play as allies in promoting women's participation, providing gender-responsive services for survivors, (including to male survivors) lifting stigma and challenging cultural assumptions, and strengthening reporting.

“And there's also a bit of a discussion in the global study of early warning indicators of armed conflict. And some of these include things that have to do with men and boys, like; increased harassment, arrest and interrogation of civilian men by security forces, training and weapons, increased numbers of meetings that men are the only ones who are participating in and gender specific movement of population. So, this was very interesting to go back and look at, when doing the research and hopefully it is also something that we can keep in mind as well”. Genevieve

## Regional Policies in Africa

Genevieve continued to tell of how they looked at regional policies on the continent, starting from, from the Maputo protocol in 2003. She said they also looked at some of the language on men, boys, masculinity in these, as well as, as well as some policies that might not have that aspect included, but where it's extremely relevant, such as the Silencing the Guns Campaign, which looks at root causes of instability and violence, such as colonisation, slavery and theft and exploitation of natural resources and the AU gender policy. Other policies looked at were Kinshasa Declaration, AU continental Results framework on WPS (2018 - 2028), AU strategy on Gender Equality and Women's empowerment, SADC policy on Gender & Development and agenda 2063.

## NAPs In Africa

**NAPs in Africa at a Glance**

As of July 2024, 110 countries have developed National Action Plans on WPS, with 36 in Africa

Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe have developed NAPs.

Approximately one third of NAPs globally (36 NAPs) are in Africa as of 2024, spanning across different sub-regions. Twenty (20) countries are on their 1st NAP; thirteen (13) are on their second NAP; and three are on their third NAP

In the NAPs, it was found that a lot of the ways that states are currently looking at these themes do match well. The participants were tasked to know what's in the resolutions because they use the resolutions as their guide for what they include in a NAP. They should also know what things are important to prioritise.

## NAPs patterns & Trends

About the patterns & trends, she mentioned that a lot of the references used are quite binary, like just men and women, for example but after looking into the language, they noticed some different terms that were used such as violent masculinity or positive masculinity, dominant masculinities, etc.

## Findings

“Essentially we are asking the question of where and in what ways should states incorporate a focus on men and boys”, said Genevieve.

She said that people felt that it was important to prioritise a few specific things. One being, challenging male dominated and militarised governments, the second is around addressing root causes of economic and structural drivers of violence and instability (including imperialism) looking at the factors perpetuating gender-based violence, as well as impunity for gender-

based violence, supporting the conflict affected communities and looking at how men and boys are also impacted by conflict and also understanding the reason why men are participating in conflicts and providing positive alternatives and mobilising men for peace. So, some of these are things that do align with current efforts.

Genevieve said it is important to view gender-based violence, including sexual violence and conflict within a broader continuum of violence, not just viewing it within a vacuum but look at contextual realities.

She brought to light the issue around challenging male dominated governance and militarised governance, as it aligns very well with one of the main pillars of the WPS agenda. It brought up the importance of men sharing and yielding power and looking at the importance of engaging with traditional and religious leaders, but then also the risks of potentially reinforcing their undemocratic power and the impact of reversals to gains on women's participation.

On the missing elements and gaps that require further attention, electoral violence was brought up specifically.

Intersectionality came up, securitization of the WPS agenda, health, bodily autonomy, sexual and reproductive health and rights among others. One important thing that was brought up by multiple people was looking at the causes and drivers of conscription and recruitment into armed groups as well as armed forces.

## Recommendations For Strengthening Implementation

Lastly Genevieve spoke about recommendations overall for strengthening implementation. Financing and resources, gaps in data, lack of monitoring and evaluation frameworks, anti-gender backlash, regional leadership and policy coherence were all brought up as important. The role of regional leadership was also brought up as being very important. Many people brought up that because the African Union is taking a strong stance in favour of addressing these issues, in terms of both WPS, as well as looking at men and boys that has been helpful for civil society at the national level because that regional leadership is showing that this is also an African agenda.

## Participants' Reactions

### Question

*"In a bid to make men allies in advancing the WPS agenda, has the document considered that men are also victims of conflict? Has it been incorporated in one way or another? Shouldn't it be a part of the list of the missing elements & gaps list?"*

### Response

Genevieve answered and said indeed it has been catered for in the document. She was confident that elements around men and boys as victims of violence and victims of armed conflict had been included and the Cameroon NAP, as well as the South African NAP had some language on it.

### Question

*Is there a resolution or a document from the UN on masculinity that will allow you to reach out to our authorities to be able to talk about it better*

### Response

Genevieve referred the participants to some of the other frameworks that were to be discussed in the week such as the Human Rights Council Resolution 3510. She affirmed that there are also pieces that are referenced in the paper with the intention to lay out some of the relevant language that could be used.

### Other Reactions

*"We need to use masculinities and femininity as a strategy for resisting militarism and include the relationship between masculinities and femininities and war into our policies. We have not done this in Ghana.*

*My key takeaway is to ensure that this is incorporated, because we just had a second NAP.*

*We have not had the privilege of working much on masculinities which makes this session an eye-opener for me and I am committed to run with it so that we carry men along. The truth is that men feel left behind. Because if you want someone to fight your battle, you need to understand it, and you also need to understand them". - Ghana participant*

*"I wanted to talk about language elements. Do we consider, for example, appropriate language elements in countries that are in a military transition? Because talking about the demilitarisation of masculinity in the context of a military transition, it's not that obvious. But in order not to hit a wall of rejection of what we propose, shouldn't we think about appropriate language elements in countries where there is a lot of military tension right now? You also mentioned in the recommendations the improvement of data. That is a real problem. If only on the national level, at the country level, we have a lot of problems with*

mapping. Often, in Guinea, when I'm looking for something on women I go to Google or the UNICEF & UNFPA portals, to be able to find reliable data.

We're on the ground all the time, but we don't have the possibility to do this monitoring, and mapping, and it's not an easy thing to do. But it's a real problem. You also mentioned in the recommendations to make policies coherent and to create a good coordination between the ministries of the different states.

I would also like to add that often, when we take these actions, most of the funding does not come from our states. This coordination should perhaps also be felt at the level of technical and financial partners. That is, when there is one who is talking about financing everything related to gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation, rapes, and everything, almost all other partners remain focused on the same things, while there are other segments that can be financed, supported, so that we can, in a sectoral way, address all the problems and be able to solve them everywhere". - **Guinea Participant**

"I just wanted to share a little bit of CAR's experience regarding the masculinity that we studied, since we are part of this project. During our research upcountry, we realised that there are two kinds of masculinity. There is the indigenous masculinity and there is the exogenous masculinity, which is the masculinity of the colonisers who brought us here. And all of that is mixed.

And today's population doesn't even know the difference between their culture and what was imported. I'll give you an example. People have told us that in the heritage, we honour the boys because they are the ones who pass on the family name. It is a case of transmission, of preservation of a family name, it wasn't part of our culture. We picked it and integrated it into our culture and said that the boy should be glorified in the heritage because it is the boy who passes on the family name. That's the first difficulty. This means that there is work to be done on masculinity. It's going to be a long process because first you must try to teach the population to distinguish what they have as their own culture and what they have learned from the outside to facilitate the decolonization in their heads.

Also, masculinity as a promotion of physical violence, in our country is getting serious as is seen with recent happenings". - **CAR participant**

"When we look at the African Union and the African continent in general, and the opportunity that we have so far at the level of the African Union, with our different countries, we need to take the bull by the horns regarding this question of masculinity. I want to refer to this meeting that happened two years ago in Kinshasa on positive masculinity.

There is room for us to take advantage of the fact that our states are putting the agenda on their tables which means we need to mainstream the issue into the NAP. That's for us is one of the best ways to not only work, but also to hold our states accountable. And that's what happened in Cameroon. Now that AU is taking the lead we have an opportunity to work on getting government support in favour of engaging more men and boys into all of this.

About the language, when we started this conversation, we had to be very strategic. Yes, and we also had to know our different contexts.

When you say militarised masculinity, there is a high chance they will start shooting you. So therefore, we also need to try and make sure that our objective is still the same, as we use 'acceptable' language for example, you have 'engaging men and boys'.

It's another way to challenge militarised masculinity". - **Cameroon Participant**

"The subject of masculinities is relatively recent in Burkina Faso, but the government has already integrated it into its initiatives. The Ministry in charge of Family, Social Action and Humanitarian Affairs already has a direction that deals with these issues. But when we entered the community, it was new.

So, when we brought the activity outside the capital, it was really welcomed. People were sensitive, and we found that it was a good initiative. We were encouraged to continue the initiatives in this regard and work with the Ministry. The only problem was financing which was inadequate". - **Burkina Faso Participant**

## **Conclusion**

Genevieve said the report does not have a super strong focus on financing although she was positive that it can be lifted and highlighted. She added that it was interesting to hear from multiple people about the difficulties with the terminology and about how difficult it is to speak about things like masculinity. She clarified that the report does not specifically recommend using the term militarised masculinity i.e. the report was not proposing a particular language. For the report to be relevant to all countries, she encouraged the participants to be open to customise its contents and be keen on picking out information that will help to drive advocacy strategically.



**DAY 4**

# MOBILISING MEN FOR FEMINIST PEACE IN AFRICA POLICIES AND PRACTICE

Facilitator: Olivia Ndidi WILPF Nigeria

Recap was done where participants spoke about pictures that portrays their thoughts on the training so far.



## The United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 35/10 on engaging men and boys in preventing and responding to violence against all women and girls - Dean Peacock, WILPF Director Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Initiative

Dean started his presentation by agreeing that lots of different language had been used in talking about engaging men and boys for gender equality.

### Exercise

When you think about positive masculinities, can you picture a person? Who comes to mind?

Take a pen and scribble it down on a piece of paper. Share your work with a neighbour or in a small group of threes.

- I want to see men start fetching water for domestic use especially in the villages. Why can't we have men using their power to help women.
- Caring, loving, family focused. Identify with their emotional side.
- Apologising when he is wrong does not make a man manless.
- Utilise their paternity leave to be involved in the life of his family.
- A non-violent and respectful man who listens to his wife, who has empathy and can motivate.
- A man should always be supportive of his wife and not be threatened by her success.
- Be a good listener, be available to assist others, share love & joy with others, and be ready to protect & defend, mobilise others to defend women's rights and can be trusted. Generous.
- A man who mentors other men or women.
- Be open to being loved and taken care of.

At the end of this exercise, Dean revealed that the reason the participants had done it was to help the meeting come up with things they want to see in a resolution on masculinity. He cautioned that positive masculinity is not any different from women's positive attributes. At the end of the day, it's about humanity.

### What is Resolution 35/10?

1. HRC 35/10 was adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on 22 June 2017 during its thirty-fifth session (HRC35).
2. Resolution 35/10 is significant in that it is a set of recommendations on the engagement of men and boys agreed by a UN intergovernmental body. It is the first resolution calling upon Member States to engage men and boys in addressing and preventing violence against women and girls.
3. Has great potential for domestic and international advocacy aimed at increasing member state commitments to engage men for gender equality and against GBV. He added further that one of the things that's significant about HRC resolution 3510 is that it is the first, and still to this day, only resolution that is focused on engaging men and boys to end violence against women in the UN language. *"This will be a tool that will help us understand that we should now start working with men in relation to the agenda, women, peace and security". - Dean*

### What we mean by the 'participation' or 'engagement' of men and boys

We **do NOT mean** men should be "protectors" of women and girls. This kind of language reinforces the idea that men must be invulnerable, and women are inherently in need of protection. This is harmful. We **DO mean** helping men see why people of all genders deserve equal treatment and building skills to take action to achieve this by increasing women and girls' participation in public life and economic activity. It calls on states to fulfil their obligations to prevent violations and abuse against all human rights defenders, fully engage men and boys, and again, their language around accountability, alongside women and girls. It's not saying men are responsible for this.

### What 'engaging men & boys' looks like in practice:

- Engage men in leadership. Men who hold influential positions to advance gender equality, address GBV and support the political priorities of women's rights organisations and movements.
- Men and boys can and should positively influence one another (e.g., peer, near-peer, role models, social networks, fathers, etc) and hold each other accountable.
- Engage men and boys as agents of change.
- Men & boys as humans (Ubuntu).



## **What is the Purpose of HRC resolutions & what can they do/not do?**

They are soft law – meaning they are not binding but they have considerable political force as they represent the formal expressions of the opinion or will of the main UN intergovernmental human rights body. They have symbolic impact; they help formulate and concretize international consensus; they help to formally condemn behaviours and practices of Member States. They can advance language and concepts into areas where law becomes codified into treaties and national laws, and therefore more enforceable. Taken together over time, the thematic resolutions build a web of understanding as to how human rights intersect and inform each other, slowly building and connecting elements from Treaties and Conventions, not just on human rights but on other areas of law, including on the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

### **Concrete commitments in 35/10**

Dean briefly talked about the commitments embedded in HRC 35/10. It shows what the states out to be doing to uphold the resolution, tell of policies and laws that need to be developed, fully engaging men and boys alongside women and girls, addressing the root causes of gender inequality, designing, implementing and regularly monitoring the impact of national policies, building on evidence-based research and policy initiatives and measuring the effectiveness of policies and programmes to prevent violence against women and girls.

### **Conclusion**

Resolution 35/10 has not been used to its full potential and is not well known by civil society, UN agencies and member states. Resolution 35/10 has not been directly quoted by any UN documents. BUT its language has been reused in several resolutions from the UN Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and from the CEDAW Committee.

*“What I want you to do is to please read through the slide deck. The resolution itself is short. It's available in many languages. And we have an analysis that we've written up in English and in French” . -*

[Use and impacts of UN HRC Resolution 35/10 - WILPF](#)

## **The Kinshasa Declaration and Call for Action of The African Union Heads of State on Positive Masculinity in Leadership to End Violence Against Women and Girls in Africa – Mabel Sengendo, Sonke Gender Justice, Regional Unit Manager**

### **Background**

Mabel opened by giving a background on when the declaration happened and the circumstances that led to it. She said it was aligned to the famous 16 days of activism by women activists against gender-based violence which was started in 1991 and is now an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day.

### **What is the Kinshasa Declaration**

It's a declaration, a formal statement and call to action issued by African Heads of State at the men's conference on positive masculinities in leadership to end violence against women and girls in Africa. And this was held in Kinshasa in DRC. She told of the progression of the declaration at 3 meetings and what each conference achieved. It is believed that these conferences are a consolidation of minds and many thought owners.



*“This is quite important for us even as we talk about advocacy. We know that AU Heads of State usually meet in February every year. So even as we do any other advocacy around the AU, that's an important date for us to look out for because we want to target that space and do interventions in that space.*

*I know UN Women usually hosts women's meetings around that time. But how do we tap into that space? Because also we're looking for collaborations here between Men Engage Africa and WILPF. So, this is really an important space for us, the AU Heads of State Summit that happens in February. When these conferences are happening, there are two things that happen. One is that there's a lot of consultation with civil society, with women's rights organisations and with the private sector. How do we engage in the pre-conferences?*

*What have we done since these conferences started happening? Where are the gaps? We all have expertise on the women's and security agenda, on women's rights, on ending violence against women and girls. How do we collaborate to build on these conferences? How do we build towards these conferences in a very strategic way? And that for me is the essence of our discussion today”. - Mabel*

### Commitments by African Leaders

<b>Condemning</b>	Condemning all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls.
<b>Launching</b>	Launching campaigns and policies aimed at ending violence in both conflict and post-conflict situations.
<b>Supporting</b>	Supporting the implementation of the Maputo Protocol Scorecard and Index to advance women's rights.
<b>Encouraging</b>	Encouraging the participation and leadership of women and girls in all spheres of life.
<b>Developing and implementing</b>	Developing and implementing an African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls.
<b>Engaging</b>	Engaging with various stakeholders, including youth, religious and traditional leaders, and the private sector, in a participatory approach.

Upon listing the commitments above, Mabel asked the participants if they can locate themselves and the work they do in any parts of the commitments. She pointed out that referencing the Maputo control was in all African activists' favour as it is considered as a guide when it comes to violence against women and girls. Also, the Women, Peace and Security Agenda is a part of the commitments as well as developing and implementing the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against

Women and Girls. And then finally, engaging various stakeholders, including youth, religious and regional leaders, and the private sector in a participatory approach.

*“We understand they're condemning all sorts of violence, but where I want us to put our focus is on the fact that we have our leaders passing declarations and calls to actions, but I think, clearly, resourcing for us is very important. If they're saying that they want to put their voices and their views behind any violence against women and girls, we need to see the resources at the country level and at regional level. So that for us is very critical. Completing the necessary resources and calling the private sector to support programs and advocacy”. - Mabel*

On the link between the declaration and the WPS agenda mentioned that indeed there is a link. She asked for the participants' opinions on where they see the linkages and what it meant.

### **Participants' responses**

*“The WPS Agenda, we talked about the participation of women. While we are doing that, we are also advocating for the engagement of men as we do that.*

*Then I was also happy to notice that in the Kinshasa Declaration and in the Human Rights Council Resolution that there is also mention of women and girls, which means that these two are synergies in our advocacy, because they are not separated from each other. They are talking about the same thing, so we can utilise both the Kinshasa Declaration and the Resolution 1325 plus 35/10”.*

Another participant contributed, *“I can see the link between 1325 and 3510. As they said, 3510 is the only one that focuses on engaging men and a voice for this violence against women campaigns.*

*And I like that linkage. Because if you really want to stop violence against women, all you must do is change the gender of the men and the boys and the women as well. So, it's not it's not like men are excluded, but everyone is carried along so that we can ensure that there's this healthy gender relationship”.*

Mabel then detailed the linkages.

**Promotion of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment:** The Declaration reinforces the WPS agenda by focusing on gender equality and empowering women as key actors in peacebuilding and security. This includes promoting women's leadership in all spheres and supporting their active participation in political and economic life.

**Commitment to Ending Violence in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations:** The specific focus on ending violence against women in conflict and post-conflict situations directly supports the objectives of the WPS agenda, which aims to protect women from violence and ensure their participation in peace processes.

**Support for the Maputo Protocol and Other Legal Frameworks:** By committing to implement the Maputo Protocol and to develop an AU Convention on ending violence against women, the Declaration aligns with WPS goals of strengthening legal frameworks that protect women's rights and ensure justice.

**Annual Review and Accountability:** The commitment to annually evaluate the progress of these initiatives resonates with the WPS agenda's emphasis on accountability and monitoring to ensure that commitments to gender equality and women's protection are met.

## ■ What is Our Role?

To wind up, she delved into what the participants' role was considering this Kinshasa declaration. She mentioned that amongst the roles was to follow up on progress of implementation of commitments made by Heads of State and Government during the 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> AU Men's Conferences, take stock of actions by male leaders in EVAGW in line with the Kinshasa Declaration, identify and document best practices of men acting as allies with women leaders in ending VAWG across various sectors, strengthen collaboration with critical allies to promote gender equity and respect for women's rights and develop recommendations to the Heads of State and Government and other male leaders to include male engagement language into NSPs on WPS.

Dean clarified that The Human Rights Council resolution is not binding in the way that a Security Council resolution is. They come out of different bodies, and they have different obligations attached to them. Nonetheless, Human Rights Council resolutions that have been endorsed by member states place an obligation on member states, not in law, but symbolically". Then he asked **How far has implementation gone of Resolution 35/10 in your country?**



### Participants' Responses

*"In Cameroon, we are at the stage of understanding the resolution before we can make use of it. It has not been used and is waiting to be used. At any meeting you go to, please talk about it and how it was endorsed and needs to be used".*

*"We got funding for masculinity in CAR. We wanted people to understand what it was about. We placed it in context for them. We drew them back to what used to happen. They lived in forests and as such they needed both arms to defend themselves. But things have changed and cannot be used today. So, these are things we are trying to change to date".*

*"In Burkina Faso we used to apply 35/10 unknowingly. But now, I shall do it intentionally. There is a law that we call the Law that protects women. All types of sexual violence are banned. Unfortunately, it is not implemented even amongst the educated. That's the only challenge. The belief is that a woman's place is still under men. Because of such beliefs, it's impossible to make use of that law. However, we shall continue to sensitise people".*

*"In Malawi we have been using the 35/10 resolution. We also have an initiative with the secretariat called MenCare which is hinged on resolution 35/10. Also, the NAP for 2021 includes work around this resolution".*

### Further comments

*"When we talk about sociocultural context, the remark is that sometimes women are the ones holding on to those cultural things. For instance, there can be a revolutionary mind saying that women shouldn't be under the man. But there are other women who are going to say this is how this must be. Some women resist that change, that cultural mindset. There are women who still hold on to these practices. These are not 100% men. Even I can say that 60% of these holding on are from women. So, we should think about it too".*

*"This is exactly the patriarchy. We are seeing women being those who perpetrate. It is because they grew up knowing that that is the right thing to do. So that's why I can't blame women, because we are trying to challenge all this stereotype. They are doing it exactly because they were grown up to think that is the best way to go. That's why we are doing all this work. So, women are just trying to behave exactly what they think is right. It is not on purpose.*

*Just to say that that's why it's very important for us to understand why. Why are they behaving like that? Can you see a woman stand against her own rights? No.*

*Even when we were doing study in Cameroon on resolution 1325 on gender conflict analysis, women were telling us they had no role to play in peace and security. So just to say that this is patriarchy, and we should deconstruct all these systems. And what we must do is to support women through what we are already doing, education, sensitization, making them understand step by step. What I understand today, it will take maybe a longer time for another woman to understand. That is the importance of education.*

*That is the importance of engaging men and boys. That is the importance of all that we are doing. But I see how you are annoyed to see that some women are resistant, and yet they are victims in a way”.*

*“As someone has just said, when we talk about protection, and we say men tend to protect their wives, I don't think that it's in a negative way. But I also don't think that we choose to deconstruct everything in this case. I don't know.*

*But sometimes, women need to be protected, to be supported by their husband. Women also want their partner to intervene in protecting the family. So, when we say that women refuse, let's not give the impression that women don't want to be protected, I don't think it's true”.*

*“I don't think it was about rejecting men's protection. No, that was not what I wanted to say. I want just to say that some people, some men benefit from the fact that women are fragile, so they don't want their women to go out, for instance, to start working, because they say, I already have a good salary, I take care of the entire family, why should you go to work? That was the idea. I think that could go against women's development, because yes, we need to be protected, but the protection should not be in the sense that we should do nothing about our situations”.*

## Mobilising Men as Allies in The Struggle for Gender Equality and Peace in Africa - Enele Zulu, GBV advocate Masiphephe Network Project on GBV response in South Africa

Enele reminded the meeting that they have been speaking about masculinity, however they also need to look at what feminism means to both men and women. She stressed that it is not hating men but hating the patriarchy and practices that makes women inferior, however, involving men & boys helps to enhance efforts in achieving gender equality. On that note she invited Bafana to share his insights with the meeting.

## The MenEngage Alliance: An accountable and feminist approach to engaging men for gender equality and peace in Africa - Bafana Khumalo, Co-Ed Sonke Gender Justice and member of the board of MenEngage Alliance

Bafana said that the meeting was in session because everyone acknowledged that the existing conflict management approaches have failed to lead to sustainable peace in Africa due to their patriarchal nature and conceptualisation of peacebuilding. He believed the participants had mapped out, from the presentations, the challenges that are confronted in terms of how conflict is managed. He spoke of the invidious position that men are in where men start wars and then also want to sit around the table to negotiate peace after wars that they have created. So, they benefit twice, as it were. They benefit by starting the war because war is an enterprise in the arms industry and those in power get privileges. And women miss a seat at the table when discussions about peace and rebuilding are had.

### **How do we ensure that some of these international protocols are put to good use with us ensuring that we engage our duty bearers at home so that they implement those very productive resolutions and ensure that women are in the room in peace building and influence the agenda?**

He identified patriarchy as being pervasive in nature and perpetuating structures of hierarchy and inequality in the social, political, economic and cultural life of society. That it sustains the conditions of the unequal access of women and girls to the full measure of their rights at any given time, be it during times of conflict or negative peace and there is need to recognize therefore that men who continue to make decisions that shape the lives of women and girls are also profoundly shaped by rigid social and cultural expectations related to masculinity as well as by power imbalances which exist in society today. The conception therefore of masculinities in many places remains strongly tied to war, militarism, sexism, violence and aggression.

It's important that the WPS movement must make significant efforts to dismantle patriarchal tendencies through its recognition of the gendered nature of conflicts and its vicious impact on women and girls and through its call for women's participation and leadership in decision-making on peace and security and in peace processes. The aim therefore of the feminist agenda for peace is to dismantle harmful norms of patriarchy and its militaristic manifestations in everyday practice of war and conflict. He emphasised that a transformative agenda is one which ensures all forms of social, political and economic inequalities and exclusions are eliminated in the engagement and accountability is vital in underpinning all work for social change and transformation. On accountability he said it is an intentional process and just can't happen by mistake. It is a way of working and living rather than just an outcome. Accountability is not a reactive process holding people to account when they do something wrong but rather a proactive positive process of being an ally, supporting others and preventing problems.

Accountability therefore towards women's rights movement is seen as a fundamental aspect to the work of engaging men and boys in gender justice.

*“As MenEngage we know our work is built on the efforts of the groundbreaking work of the women's movement. And we make this point all the time because we think the work with men and boys should not just be seen as a novel work that is a new flavour of the market, fashionable but must be seen as part of the long continuum of the work that women have started many years ago. Acknowledging what women's movement has done and as organisations that are working with men and boys, we learn a lot from the women's movement and continue to draw aspiration from this work”. Bafana*

He broke down the various levels of accountability:

- Horizontal accountability that refers to the responsibility of different civil society actors and organisations that must act accountable to each other.
- Vertical accountability where the citizens and their associations play directly in the roles of holding the powerful to account for their actions. How do we ensure we hold duty bearers accountable?
- Personal accountability: how do we relate to each other; how do we conduct ourselves?
- Interpersonal or relational accountability which involves strategies to build gender equitable dynamics and processes of interaction.
- Institutional accountability.

*“As MenEngage Africa our understanding is that accountability is a commitment that activists and organisations working in the engaging of men and boys field must have towards women's rights groups and other social justice movements. It also involves the responsibility to listen to them, to consult, to partner equally with such groups making sure that the work of engaging men and boys makes a real contribution to social justice and gender equality. MEA believes in a transformative feminist vision for peace and security. We believe that we need to address power and privilege which is central to the work of transforming masculinities and promoting an equal world. We believe in the importance of representation and contributions of women which can never be overemphasised. The concept of empowerment refers to the expansion of capabilities especially for those whose agency has been systematically constrained. Accountability therefore applies to the need to ensure that the voices and agendas of women's groups are still being heard and centred and that the leadership of women as those who are most directly disadvantaged by the prevailing patriarchy is situated at the heart and at the centre of our work”. - Bafana*

Therefore, work with men and boys needs to be rooted in these feminist principles.

Bafana concluded by saying there is a need to change MEA approach from being too NGO-wise and getting too comfortable with just issuing statements of support and think that is enough to change the world. He agreed that statements are important in engaging in multilateral institutions, but MEA must be where the people are and when the people get to the streets because they believe in that agenda, accountability means MEA must also be part of that and march in step in solidarity with its partners.

# Programmatic interventions to mobilise men for gender equality and peace in Africa

## ■ Nathalie Foko- WILPF Cameroon

In Cameroon there are people who still believe that women and girls do not have the same rights as men and boys. That the education of young girls mostly is not really favoured, the roles are also differentiated between boys and girls, the girls are supposed to play the roles ascribed to them by religion and even by the culture.

With regards to the institutional and legal field, Natalie said there is equality of all citizens according to the Constitution, but there are some laws that are still discriminatory e.g. there is a law that says that it is the man that should administer the property of the family, and all these kinds of laws give power to the man. There are two legal systems: the contemporary law and the customary law that goes against women's rights. She mentioned that this discrimination results in non-participation of women in decision making bodies, in leadership positions, especially within big institutions in Cameroon. She noted several factors that could bring about conflict including bad governance, the lack of the rule of law, there is a rise in femicide, the killing of women, and all this of course strengthens militarised and negative masculinities.

### **What are the categories of men that we targeted with our strategies to promote the WPS agenda in our country?**

Traditional leaders, religious leaders, administrative authorities, civil society actors, media owners, the youth, politicians, armed groups, teachers, IDPs and refugees, judges and advocates. In choosing these target groups of men, it was clear that they carry strong influence and as such will be able to advance the WPS agenda message.

### **What are the different strategies that we used?**

- Research to be able to propose solutions to other challenges within society.
- Sensitization and education of the different actors at all levels. Networking with different groups of actors, as well as other CSOs working on this through advocacy.
- Strengthening capacity of different actors and creating alliances. It's through alliances that things are going to move.
- With regards to the traditional leaders, managed to create a pool of traditional leaders to fight for peace and fight against GBV.
- There's also advocacy sensitization of the authorities that led to the revision of a certain number of legal instruments, the penal code that was revised to help reduce FGM, early marriages.
- There is also a bill on GBV under development. It is thanks to our advocacy that the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Family Welfare started preparing a bill on the political spheres and we have made some progress. In 2013, there were 57 women in the National Assembly. now we have 61 while at Senate level it went up from 26 to 30. Thanks to the HeForShe campaign from UN Women, all these activities have been put in place. The Ministry of Women's Affairs and Family Welfare has prepared a national gender policy.
- There is also another initiative within different ministries and institutions to promote a quota of women representation.
- In the media, they continue to disseminate the 1325 Resolution and Resolution 3510. Also, strengthen their capacities on positive masculinity.
- For politicians, they already prepared a guide within the framework of a project we're undertaking called Promotion of Social Cohesion Against Hatred Speech and Preventing Political Violence in Cameroon. So, within the framework of this project, they have published this guide for political leaders, for the teachers.
- Guide for peace education: almost 400 teachers have already been trained using this guide also for judges and advocates.
- Some judges have already applied CEDAW and Maputo protocol.

In terms of challenges, we have the lack of implementation and the resistance to dismantling patriarchy. The expensive cost of living is also a challenge. In the future, they will multiply efforts in different activities for capacity strengthening, create alliances, and continue with solidarity dialogues.



## ● Gat’Pany Wuay Kherjok Liep – MenEngage South Sudan

### Background & Facts

South Sudan achieved independence in 2011 from Sudan after 50 years of struggle (1955-2005).

- In December 2013, a civil war began. The country is currently struggling to implement the peace agreement signed in 2018 (R-ARCSS). The current war in Sudan led to huge returnees of South Sudanese, refugees from Sudan and IDPs. The recent war and conflict in Ethiopia also affect South Sudanese refugees in Ethiopia.
- There are refugees in Kenya (Kakuma), Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, and the DRC.
- The inflation is at its peak.
- The oil pipeline has been stopped and because of corruption and fund embezzlement, the donors stopped donations. The World Bank and IMF halted giving loans to South Sudan citing the need for full commitment to R-TGoNU and R-ARCSS.
- Across the country, cattle raiding, and communal conflict and violence heightened because the locals possessed arms.
- Locals rely on foreign aid from NGOs, UN Agencies and donors. Protests are banned as the government said “NO Rubber bullet or teargas ” and the country is really divided behind ethnic lines.

MenEngage is present in all 10 states of Sudan. That MenEngage network was launched officially in December 2023 with the support of the Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare.

### Status of MEA Strategy Implementation

1. Built a strong relationship with the government ministries, e.g. Ministry of Gender, Child, and Social Welfare.
2. Engaged with several stakeholders to advocate for the rights of women, e.g. engaged with all the women led organisations to advocate for their rights during workshop organised by women for change in Juba, advocated for women's' rights during the women's' day celebration organised by the women media association supported by Sonke Gender Justice in Juba.
3. Supported youth to participate in the 16 Days Gender Activism commemoration in Juba.

### Plans

Build the capacity of the community and government structures already in place, work with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare closely to strengthen the grassroots community structures and build the capacity of the community-based organisations.

Amongst the challenges stalling implementation of the plans are cultural influence remains a challenge, high expectations from the stakeholders in terms of money, limited resources to enable network members reach out to the grassroots communities. Movement by road in South Sudan is also a challenge due to insecurity and poor road networks and the prevailing conflicts in the country.

Recommendations include: more resources to engage the youth, authorities, partners and stakeholders to address all forms of social ills through training, awareness and sensitization and providing capacity building opportunities for CSOs to deliver on the social justice activities.

## ● **Beatrice Kelechi Onoja - MenEngage Nigeria**

The MenEngage Nigeria is a network of non-governmental organisations dedicated to involving men and boys in efforts to reduce gender inequality and all types of gender-based violence. The work is done collectively and individually towards advancing gender justice, human rights and social justice, addressing the role of boys and men in child sexual abuse and trafficking, promote men's positive involvement on issues of GBV and peace building and pushing for change in policies that perpetuate gender inequalities.

### **Achievements**

- Successfully generated national awareness on gender transformative approaches through advocacy, sensitizations and capacity building.
- Encouraged state actors to enforce Nigeria's VAPP Act 2015, leading to a notable increase in states that has domesticated the VAPP Act, reaching a total of 30.
- Capacity building of Primary Health Care workers who usually have direct and constant contact with women.



### **Interventions to mobilise men for gender equality and peace**

- Culturally sensitive workshops and trainings that educate men and boys about gender equality, non-violent conflict resolution, and the importance of peace.
- Engage religious, traditional and influential leaders who can champion and reinforce gender equality and peace values from respected positions of authority challenging traditional notions of masculinity that are often linked to violence.
- Establish networks of men who are committed to promoting gender equality and peace. These groups can mentor other men, challenge harmful norms, and support each other in adopting non-violent behaviours (Leverage on existing men Networks; He4She -Nigeria).
- Train male police officers and security personnel to handle cases of GBV with sensitivity and encourage them to advocate for reforms within the justice system.
- Conduct research on masculinities and men's attitudes towards gender equality and peace, using the findings to inform program design, policy advocacy and references in capacity-building programs.
- Organise workshops for interfaith leaders to address and clarify the misinterpretation of scriptural texts that are believed to support or justify gender-based violence within religious contexts.

### **Reactions**

*"Mine is a contribution to Beatrice's presentation focusing on the biblical understandings which to a greater extent in Africa add greatly to some of these issues that we're discussing, the violence and all. There's nothing wrong with being religious. But when concepts are being used against others and to the benefit of others, then we begin to have a challenge. So, these are some of those things that are affecting the conversations that we're trying to bring across and advocate for".*

*"And I'm thinking of a situation and a place where we have empowered women, and we have men who've not been empowered to live with empowered women. What do we get in return? Domestic violence. But the main question is, why are our marriages not working that well as our parents' marriages used to work? Because if you can look at the statistics right now, there is a high rate of divorces because of issues like domestic violence. Some people remain silent in their marriages because they don't want to bring it out that they are facing things like domestic violence in their marriages. So, I think it is very important we continue engaging men as much as we are engaging women so that we are on the same page. Because, as we*

have said, some of these things are cultural factors. You see, you cannot just remove them that easily. They need a lot of time and education for both genders to understand”.

“There is one other programmatic intervention, that is key. Advocacy through media and film industries. Like in Nigeria, the portrayal of women in some of the films is terrible. A man will leave you for so many years, you raise up your children, and at the end, he comes back bleeding, then you accept him because you need to be under a man. We need to start, if possible, build the capacity of the film industry, so that they will understand these gender narratives and begin to bring them in their content.”

“I think we need to make and distinguish things. Regarding polygamy, for instance, do you know that a man can have three, four, five women, wives, and give them a good life in the same conditions even in countries where polygamy is accepted? There are not many men who are polygamous, so we need to undertake actions saying that if the culture says that polygamy is accepted, you need to make sure that all these women live in the same conditions. You see that not so many are not in a position to do that. There's a lot of adultery in the DRC. If a man brings their girlfriend to the marital home, it is a criminal act. But if he takes the girlfriend somewhere, it's not a criminal act. However, women are not allowed to have extramarital partners. Most of the time, this law is not respected. When there is infidelity, adultery, most of the women don't even go to complain about it. They suffer in silence”.

“In Cameroon, the penal code interprets adultery differently on the part of the man and the part of the woman. Before, it was saying that if the man is adulterous, to prove that he is adulterous, he must be caught in the act, in the marital bed. But if it's outside the marital bed, then it's not considered adultery. So, we did some advocacy to remove this from the penal code. So, both men and women, it's considered interpreted in the same manner. Now, about the policemen, it's the same behaviour, even in our country. I had forgotten to mention this, because we need to strengthen the capacities of these people. Otherwise, they are the ones who are going to perpetuate sexism, patriarchal systems, when women come to report rape at the police stations”. - Participant

## Conclusion

In his closing remarks, Dean pointed out that advocacy around the film industry is being done by colleagues in WILPF Nigeria. They are conducting a study related to gender representations in ‘Nollywood’. He mentioned that some work is done around the phenomenon called ‘militainment’, which is related to gender representations of the military in films. He highlighted that last presentations were such a great window into the important work that's happening in each of the countries.

## Small arms and Weapons, Conflict and Gender in Africa

Facilitator: Regina Outtara, WILPF Burkina Faso President



“We cannot talk about peace and security without talking about weapons, because they are being used to create insecurity” - Regina Outtara

There were 1 billion uncontrolled weapons worldwide by 2017:

- 85% - Owned by civilians
- 13% - Owned by the army
- 2% - Owned by police.

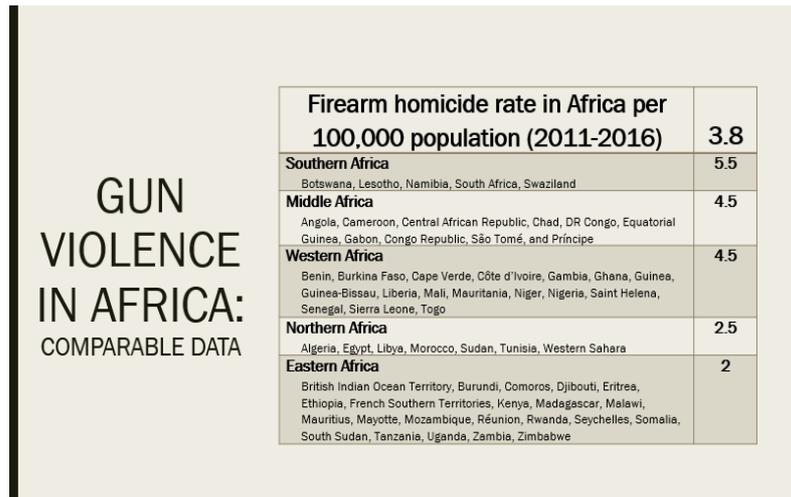
She said these statistics are the reason activists need to talk about weapons alongside peace and security. She explained the difference between light weapons and small arms.

# The African Union Silencing the Guns Campaign - Opportunities for Advocacy

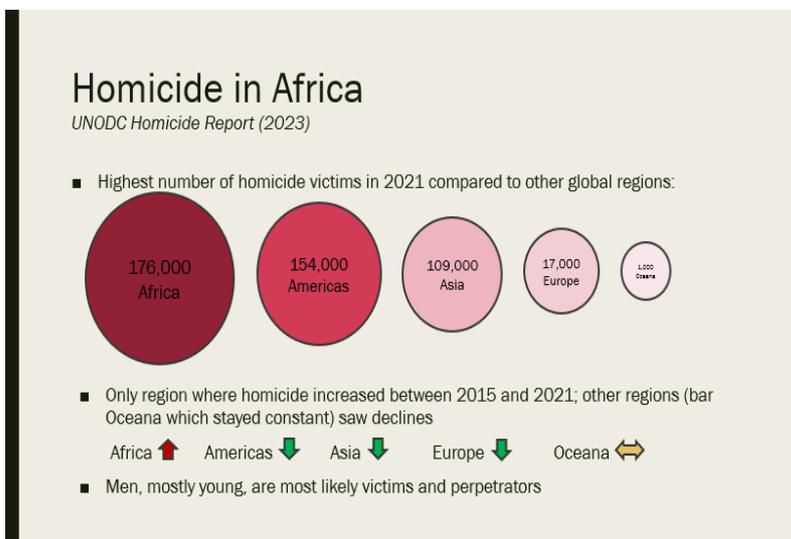
Claire Taylor, Researcher Gun Free South Africa (Online)

Claire’s virtual session opened with a reminder to the participants that her presentation was a continuation of a meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria in December 2023 where it was agreed to engage with the African Union’s Silencing the Guns initiative. To this end, WILPF MMFP Initiative proposed the development of Activism Tool to help Silence the Guns on the continent.

## ■ What Guns Look Like in Africa



She explained that the table shows that Southern Africa has incredibly high levels of gun violence in particular South Africa and Lesotho. This information also shows that guns are the leading weapon used in homicides in South Africa and Nigeria.



She amplified the fact that, while there was no updated information on **HOW** people are murdered in Africa, there was updated information on **HOW MANY** people are murdered. The slide shows information that the United Nations has collected from 2021, and Africa has the highest number of murder victims in the world, even higher than North and South America. It also shows that Africa is the only region in the world where homicides increased and that mostly young men, who are the most likely victims and perpetrators of violence, including gun violence.

The United Nations study also predicts that the situation in Africa is going to get worse and lists the reasons below:

1. Africa has a young population, and this is predicted to increase until 2035. And when there's a young population, there is an increased risk of violence.
2. The situation in Africa is predicted to get worse because of economic inequality, which persists. And this in and of itself is already a risk factor, but it contributes to other risk factors. And one of these is that people leave rural areas and move very quickly to urban areas. So, you see rapid and irregular urbanisation, which is also associated with increased levels of violence.
3. And then the third impact is the effect of climate change. Studies from countries, for example, the Sahel, Sudan, Kenya, showing how climate change is contributing to violence in those countries.

With available guns, the risk of deadly violence is increased because guns are four to seven times more lethal than any other weapon.

*“There are three maps here which are drawn from data from a Swiss-based research and policy institute called the Small Arms Survey. And they collect information on how many guns are held across the world. This data is also old. It's from 2018 as well. And the top slide shows the number of guns that are held by civilians in Africa. The dark purple countries are those countries that have got high levels of gun ownership. And the top five civilian gun-owning countries in Africa are Nigeria, South Africa, Angola, Ghana, and Mozambique.*

*And in the next two maps, again with the purple highlights showing the countries that have got high levels of the middle one is guns that are owned by the military. And the bottom map shows guns that are by law enforcement agencies, for example, the police. And the top military and law enforcement owning countries in Africa in 2018 were Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Africa, Nigeria, and South Sudan” - Claire*



Claire explained that one of the actions included in the tool is to keep tabs on what the Small Arms Survey is doing to understand gun stocks better in any country. The tool includes examples of guns that have been stolen or lent out from soldiers that are used, for example, in South Sudan cattle raiding, that are used in Cameroon to oppress populations that are resisting land being taken away. On the issue of trade in guns in Africa she spoke of how big South Africa's role in the gun trade in Africa is and that South Africa is the top exporter of guns having exported three times as many as the next four top exporters that year. She stressed the need for activists to focus on reducing the availability of guns and one of the ways to do this is to control the supply of guns. The activist toolkit includes a whole lot of protocols that are already in existence and are already being used. And these protocols focus very much on controlling the supply of guns. They look at ways to limit who can open what guns and how we can stop the leakage of guns from the military and from civilians into criminal hands.

*“What is also needed is to understand that gun availability isn't only about controlling the supply of guns, you have got to understand the demand for guns. And it's known that it is mainly boys and young men who want guns, so if guns are to be controlled if we want to silence the guns in Africa, we must understand why it is that boys and men want guns and why they try to acquire guns, why they use guns. And to help us understand that there's been some interesting work that was done in 2006*

*by a man called David Atwood, who did a whole lot of case studies in different countries, including countries in Africa, to understand why boys and men want guns. And he identified four main reasons". - Claire*

Atwood says that all of us have got what he calls **Deep Preferences**. And that these deep preferences, if they're not met in a country or in our community or in our family, that we can meet them with a gun. They are useful to understand why we want guns.

1. **The first deep preference that we have is to feel personally secure.** And this would be influenced by the levels of crime and levels of violence in the country or community that you live in, as well as how effective the criminal justice system is.
2. **Another deep preference that we all have is for social and economic security.** By, for example, whether we're able to access education and employment opportunities. And there's some interesting work that's been done in South America, looking at what would help gang members withdraw from gangs. One of the mid-level gang members who was interviewed as part of a demobilisation campaign said he would only consider leaving his gang if he were given a job as a bank manager. So that gives an idea of how he sees his position in a gang in relation to society and be accepted as a position in all society. And while this has got to do, of course, with status, it's also got to do with his economic security.
3. **The third deep preference that all of us have is to be recognized as individuals, to be affirmed as individuals.** And this is a really complicated deep preference because it relates to the interplay between us as individuals. Society understands and shapes how young men are expected to behave, and shapes how guns are understood in that community. And that's part of the picture. It is trying to understand what the history is, what the history of, say, colonialism and the impact of that has in terms of our understanding of how men must behave and how guns are perceived.
4. **Political tension.** This would be influenced by things like whether there are democratic institutions such as regular elections in your country, whether citizens have got access to state resources, for example, healthcare or education, to functional infrastructure like electricity and water and roads, and where those are absent or where there are abuses, if there is recourse to justice. Guns are being used to be able to access a political identity and representation. This is currently going in countries like Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, the DRC, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, etc. In all those cases, we could say that there is a lack of political identity and representation, and that armed violence is one way of trying to access that.

## **A Case for Silencing the Guns**

**Silencing the Guns** in Africa initiative was put forward as a way of trying to create a safer Africa for all people living on the continent. It is a flagship project of the African Union that was introduced in 2013, which was the AU's 50th anniversary. And its original aim was ending all wars, civil conflicts, gender-based violence, violent conflicts, and preventing genocide by 2020, but this has been extended to 2030.

It is guided in achieving this goal through the **Master Roadmap** practical steps to silence the guns.

This roadmap identifies a range of challenges; political, economic, social, environmental, and legal. And then it identifies steps that the AU, as well as member countries, need to take to overcome these various challenges.

*"If we are to assess the Silencing the Guns initiative of the AU, it is really a great document. It understands the importance of controlling the supply of guns. It understands how important it is to address the demand drivers for guns. It includes many of those deep preferences that were identified earlier. And it also recognizes the importance of gender advancement. So, it has a huge number of strengths, but it is also weak".*

Claire told the participants that this weakness is acknowledged by the Peace and Security Council of the AU. She referenced a quote:

*'The AU seems to be in the habit of assigning deadlines for overly ambitious goals and then struggling to meet them...It's important to popularise the Silencing the Guns agenda afresh and ensure buy-in from member states' AU's Peace and Security Council, 2022.*

She said this was an important insight from the Peace and Security Council which resonates so much with the work being done right now to engage the African Union in each of the participants' countries to silence the guns in Africa.

## **Weaknesses of the Silencing the Guns Initiative**

When African leaders talk about silencing guns on the continent, they very often refer to silencing guns that are used in socio-political violence and they don't recognize that, for example, in South Africa, the kinds of violence that is seen is criminal. There is a need to focus on the use of guns that are used in interpersonal violence, for example, domestic violence, as well as

killings between acquaintances, people who know each other through arguments, and organised crime. It needs to be looked at holistically and not just focus on socio-political violence.

Secondly the Silencing the Guns initiative is in no way binding. It's not legally binding, it's not politically binding, and it has no mechanisms to hold states accountable.

## Opportunities For Action

In as much as they may look like big weaknesses, Claire emphasised that they are such huge opportunities for the work that social activists are doing to help silence the guns and that's really where the activist toolkit comes in. She added further that the toolkit identifies these weaknesses as opportunities, and it looks at ways that activists can start lobbying and raising awareness on a range of issues.

In conclusion, Claire explained that *“The Silencing the Guns in Africa Activism Tool identifies 35 opportunities for action, these include ideas on where you can get more information to empower yourself and allies e.g. on Human Rights Council resolutions like 35/10 on engaging men and boys in preventing and responding to violence against all women and girls, as well as ideas on collecting evidence to be used in raising awareness and engaging decision makers to make meaningful changes to help Silence the Guns.”*

## Q&A Session

### Question

I will put the South Sudan case in context. After signing of the peace deal in 2006, war erupted. Right now, the government has decided to collect arms or disarmament. And they have been doing it by force. Many civilians rebelled against the government because of that. Yet we know that having many arms threatens the powers of the government. In the meantime, the civilians are killing themselves. What is the best strategy to control arms from getting in the hands of the locals without the involvement of violence?

### Response

*“What you have just said, it's true for each one of our countries, but it depends on how countries are organised. To protect the civilians, we must train them. We must give them enough information on this small arm, light weapon, to give the population information clearly, and the problem we can have in the family. Because your child can get that small arm that belongs to you, the father, and use it without knowing.*

*And can you imagine what will happen? It's not good to have, for instance, guns in the family. So, we need to train the community about the risk of having guns. But also, as a country, of course, we cannot say we will take arms from civilians. If we want to use force, people will not accept it. So, we must mark arms in countries. Just like for citizens, they have an identity card. We should identify each arm in circulation in a country. We need to undertake that activity. The country must make sure it's not easy to get arms by civilians. But we must understand that it's not easy”.* - Regina

## Other reactions

*“The presentation made it possible for me to understand the difference between small and light weapons. In DRC, we cannot differentiate between the types of arms. In Cameroon... Because of Boko Haram, we are experiencing many guns in circulation in countries. And the gender-based violence is being visible because the combatants used arms to kill militaries in the past. But as the war continues, now the civilians are being targeted. Women are being killed in Cameroon. We are doing advocacy to establish a national commission for small arms and light weapons although the disarmament one is there. It's a permanent commission to regulate circulation and the use of arms in the countries.*

*In West Africa, the national commissions have been created thanks to the ECOWAS. At the beginning, we were expecting the ECOWAS to take charge in vain. And the country must make sure they manage arms in circulation in their own territory. In DRC, we have the National Commission for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons. In that commission, civil society is a member. But we had to fight to become a member, so we came up with a national plan on arms management. Now, we have been working on the second-generation plan. But because of the policies that keep changing, we need to restart the work every time. In DRC, we have at least 8,000 arms in circulation per hour. And it is huge, as you can see, how dangerous the issue is. I would say for each country, each region, we should have a kind of guide through which you can develop your strategy as a country in relation to what is happening in the region”.*

*“I want to contribute on how to control artisanal weapons because in some countries, an arm can be official and in other countries, such an arm is not allowed. We need to understand the quantity of arms made from the country of origin. But also,*

*on the side of the state, it must make sure there is good management of arms. And this requires our state to train the forces of security on how to manage their arms. Because in some countries, we understand that some arms just disappear. Some people within the security forces, some people sell their arms to criminals. Therefore, we need to really strengthen the management of arms by the state. In relation to artisanal arms, as you know, given the security in Cameroon, the government banned artisanal arms in Cameroon. But in the past, people were using artisanal arms. In villages, during, for instance, a burial, to celebrate the person who has passed away.*

*But due to the security situation, people start using these artisanal arms to kill others. And therefore, the government banned the use of these arms. And that was a blow to the culture.*

*But for the government, it was a good thing, because such arms were used to create insecurity”.*

### **Question**

You said that there is an arms management commission in Burkina Faso. I want to understand how it works, particularly in relation to artisanal guns. What normally happens in a country in relation to artisanal guns that don't even have numbers?

### **Response**

*“So, you see the families that produce the guns, they make sure that their production always has a good price.*

*Secondly, we had a revolution in our countries where artisanal production of arms was really encouraged during that period of revolution. There was even a register to know how many arms were produced. Yes, we have a register under the Ministry of Security and are in control.*

*Even the players, the actors are really controlled. Even for imported guns, they are numbered. The marking is done at the country level. These are the things that you should be doing because it makes it possible to know who possesses this one and the numbering, the source, the year, etc. All the necessary information to identify guns.” - Regina*

### **Question**

My question is, when we talked about this topic, I thought we were going to tackle the subject of terrorism. Because we cannot talk about guns-free without mentioning terrorism. Is it that the scope of research has been limited or why didn't you tackle the idea, the subject of terrorism?

### **Response**

*“In fact, I focused on the difference between arm léger and arm de petit calibre. I focused on the difference, but at the end I say the gun problem has ramifications. And then I mentioned terrorism, I mentioned various conflicts. What I can say, terrorism contributed to complicating the weapons problem because terrorists use both small arms and light weapons. And it has become very complex because of technology”.* - Regina

### **Reaction**

*“I want to make a comment on arm transportation which is a lucrative business.*

*Women, for instance, in the Eastern part of Congo, women used to hide weapons for them to get money. Unfortunately, while they were doing the business of arms, they didn't know that they were making it possible for themselves and for their community to be killed. And therefore, during the campaign, we used to tell them, they can do this business, but they should know that they will be killed by these same arms they are doing business for”.*

### **Question**

The predictions you made about the situation showed that the gun issue is only getting worse. What can young people do? Or what can we do to prevent young people from owning guns?

### **Response**

*“The Toolkit is trying to look at different things that we as social activists can do to raise awareness about the risks of guns and gun violence in our countries and communities and regions, and to put pressure on policy makers and implementers to take meaningful action to prevent gun availability and gun violence.*

*Because now, ‘Silencing the Guns’ gets spoken about all the time by different leaders, but there's very little action that gets taken. Focusing on things like job creation, or education opportunities for young people, or educating young people about the risks of guns and gun violence, or challenging the way that guns are portrayed in popular media and TV games are all things that we as social activists can do. For example, one of the things that we've been doing in South Africa is we have been working with early childhood development centres and with shebeens and taverns and bars and restaurants to turn them into gun-free zones. So, no guns are allowed.*

*And we do this for two reasons. Firstly, to make these spaces safer. But secondly, to send a message to community members that we don't want guns in our spaces.*

*In the spaces in which we relax and enjoy, in which children are playing and children are learning, we don't want guns in those spaces. The toolkit identifies different activities like that. It also identifies key people to start lobbying, to start raising awareness with. And all ideas that you can raise awareness about". - Claire*

## **Reaction**

*"I want to share the experience of Togo in relation to the initiative **Silencing the Guns**. We had a project inviting people to surrender their guns voluntarily and so we sensitised and had training for some target groups.*

*In Togo, when a boy is born, the father gives the baby boy a gun. So, we sensitise these people so that they stop using guns. Other people inherited guns from the parents, i.e. a father who died. We are discouraging people from using guns because some people can come, steal the gun and use it to kill people.*

*So, we have been sensitising the community for them to voluntarily surrender arms. And we get arms that we burn, we destroy.*

## **Question**

I know that in South Africa you worked with an organisation called ADAPT, where you focused on the community of Alexandria. I wanted to know how that intervention went. I know they focused their interventions in taverns, in Alexandria township.

## **Response**

*"Gun-free South Africa has been working with ADAPT, particularly young women, to raise awareness about the risks of guns. And to educate young women around actions that they can take if they themselves are at risk of any kind of dangerous weapon, not just a gun. We have also been running self-defence classes with young women in Alexandria with ADAPT helping different spaces become gun-free zones.*

*And in Alexandria, we focus very much on areas where alcohol is sold. And this is because of the close association between alcohol and violence. The activist tool includes a link to recommendations that the World Health Organization has put forward to control alcohol as a way of reducing violence in communities and countries". - Claire*

## **Question**

In our regions, we have been facing terrorists who have been using small arms and light weapons. But when we get funding, it's on lethal arms. Now, what is your advice? Should we continue with this fight? Or should we target all types of arms? Or should we select some? What can be your advice?

## **Response**

*"We are fighting against all types of weapons so it will depend on your capacity as a country to select the kind of arms. To start with, with terrorism in our country, we felt threatened. But you can work from what you have locally. We just need to say here, we need to change strategy when things are hard on the ground". - Regina*

## **Question**

In Ghana, there are spots where weapons are produced privately. These weapons are used for so many things. Is there a way to curb this that can be effective, like arms control? Because when things are produced in-house, I think it's a bit difficult. It can get into anybody's hand. But this is becoming very rampant. In Ghana, you can buy guns that are non-licensed. They are used for a lot of criminal activities. What do you think can be done to control this? And law enforcement agents know this, but they are afraid of reprisals.

## **Response**

*"Ghana and Burkina Faso, we are rivalling in production of this kind of weapons. It is a really important issue. Now, regarding weapons control, there could be collaboration but about border management areas. It's true we have a strategy with regards to border control, but does it speak to the strategy of other countries? If you are not all on the same page then it's a problem, especially with the porous borders in our countries. They buy the weapons from there. Now, do we have any mechanisms between these two countries, Burkina Faso and Ghana, for instance?" - Regina*

## Question

In Nigeria, the state where I reside, there was a time that a particular village had a lot of arms in that village which most times they claim they use to defend themselves. They were encouraged to surrender the arms, they did so and by the next week they were attacked and the whole village was almost destroyed. So that now begins to make people have a different orientation about surrendering arms. So, I don't know, is there anything that is being done to handle that? Don't you think it discourages other people from surrendering their guns?

## Response

*“This is quite a complex issue, it's a dilemma. It's very hard to see how to resolve this kind of thing so we need a whole community security process to see how we can go around this to ensure that it's applied. If you don't have mechanisms to ensure community security, most of the time these things are not going to work but at your local level you need to organise this at the community level, this is a local strategy you need to put in place to see how to counter this” - Regina*

## Question

What is done to a country that violates an Arms' embargo? Also, if a country has been given an arms embargo, why is it okay for a country with veto powers to provide arms to such a country? What is the role of the United Nations in such a scenario?

## Response

*“We talked about corruption. The biggest weapons producers don't even sign the treaties and conventions. What they forbid everybody to do, they do it themselves. So, what is the solution? Either you accept or you refuse, and you'll be told that you're a rebel so it's a real problem. We talked about the national commissions for weapons control. We have a United Nations program to fight against arms proliferation. It is there but things are happening, and people don't say anything about international injustice” - Regina*

## Conclusion

*“I need to address WILPF members particularly. Generally, civil society organisations have not been doing much on this issue of arms and light weapons. This is an opportunity for you to start this fight. Of course it won't be easy, but you should at least be sure that ‘they’ will come for you. So, it is upon you to amass the necessary information around this topic. When you have the necessary information, you can take them to court and not the other way. It has been almost a decade that we have been working on this. People fear working in this sector, the arms sector. But with our partner for the West, for Europe, we were able to establish a network, and we had 40 associations. Therefore, we have extended our network to 80 associations. In 2024, we are at 250 associations working on small arms and light weapons under WILPF. It's a sector where I must invite you to work on because it's a part of our mission” - Regina.*

## Reflections Of The day - Mabel Sengendo, Sonke Gender Justice, Regional Unit Manager

**Learning**

**empowered**

Capacitated

wow!

disarm

guns

energised

advocacy

excited

equality

intensity

grateful

intrigued

inspired

amazing

unlearning

enlightened

**challenged**  
stirring

**motivated**

patience

interesting

**engaging**

**insightful**

**a lot**



**DAY 5**

MEA AND WILPF JOINT ADVOCACY TO BUILD FEMINIST PEACE IN AFRICA

## Engaging Alternative Masculinities in Peace Processes - Nyambura Mundia Peace, Security and Gender Specialist

Nyambura was invited to share lessons from the recent Kenya uprising. She said she intended to highlight the significant contributions of women in recent movements and discuss the continued challenges they face, as well as to share insights on the potential and pitfalls of digital platforms in political activism.

### Background

The Kenya protests started at the tail end of the End Femicide' march that attracted lots of local and international media coverage. Nyambura explained that the momentum around women's rights and all the other issues like high cost of living, corruption, unemployment, poor governance, extravagant government spending, police brutality and a general desire for change is why a lot of Kenyans went to the streets even though the spotlight was on the punitive Finance Bill.

### Facts

- According to the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, Kenya is losing an estimated KSh. 608 billion/= (7.8% of the country's GDP) to corruption annually.
- Although the overall unemployment in Kenya is at 12.7%, Youths (15 – 34-year-old), who form 35% of the Kenyan population, have the highest unemployment rate of 67%.
- In 2024, over 7.8 million people in Kenya lived in extreme poverty, the majority in rural areas.
- Those living on less than USD 2.15 a day in rural regions added up to around 10.6 million, while approximately 1.7 million extremely poor people resided in urban areas.



### Impact of The Protests

Positive	Negative
★ Increased Public Engagement	★ Economic Disruptions
★ Policy Revisions	★ Increased Harshness
★ Greater Accountability	★ Political Instability
★ Economic Adjustments	★ Damage and Loss

### The age digital prowess and social consciousness

There is a realisation all over the world that there is new digital prowess and social consciousness which means that while there's penetration on digital platforms, it's coming with an awareness of political issues.

### Statistics showing the increase in women's participation in recent demonstrations

### Demographics

Generally, protests will have a very male outlook. However, the recent protests showed 49% were females & 51% males, meaning the numbers almost went equal. Most of the protesters were college and degree holders, which talks to the level of unemployment. Most protesters were between 18 and 24 years, a new breed of young protesters.

## Grassroots and Global movements



a) Movements like **#MeToo** and **#TimesUp** have spotlighted women's issues, driving public discourse on gender equality.

b) Globally –**The Women's March** and **Black Lives Matter** in the case of Kenya **#endfemicide** and **#antibadgovernance** protests have also provided platforms for women's voices, emphasising intersectionality in activism.

*“Peace agreements overlook women's rights. Peace efforts often focus on ending violence, you know, neglecting specific protections for women's human rights”.* - Nyambura

She elaborated with an example of how the coverage of women who were abducted was different from the coverage of men who were abducted - It took other people to make the posters or the posters of the women who had been abducted came way later. Women are usually neglected by interim demonstrations. A government may prioritise stability over women's rights, leaving them under protected. Entrenched interest in settlements, political factions may focus on securing their power rather than ensuring women's inclusion in post-conflict uprising settlements, perpetuating gender equality.

## Reflections

- How does structural sexism manifest within political movements, including the dismissal of women's issues, gender-based violence, and underrepresentation in leadership roles?
- Misogyny: how it is perpetuated through media portrayal, legal systems, and intra-movement dynamics?
- The impact of social media and digital platforms on amplifying women's voices while also exposing them to new forms of misogyny and harassment.
- The importance of using a feminist lens to critically engage with and challenge the structural sexism and misogyny present in political movements.
- The need for intersectional approaches that consider the diverse experiences of women activists.

## Lessons Learned

**Opportunities:** Digital spaces offer unparalleled opportunities for organising, spreading awareness, and engaging diverse communities and provide platforms for marginalised voices and allow for global solidarity.

**Challenges:** these spaces also pose risks, including cyber harassment, misinformation, and the digital divide. Ensuring the safety and security of women in these spaces is critical to sustaining these movements.

## Post Demonstration: Sustaining Momentum through Digital Civic Education

## Sustained Engagement

After the physical protests, digital spaces have continued to serve as hubs for civic education and ongoing dialogue. These platforms help keep the movement alive by educating the public and engaging in continuous advocacy. Civic educators and activists have embraced Spaces to disseminate information and educate the public on important issues. From voter education to human rights awareness, X Spaces provide a platform for reaching a wide audience. The ability to record and share these discussions further amplifies their impact, ensuring that valuable information is accessible to those who could not attend live.

## Reactions

*“My name is Reem, I'm from Sudan. And I work for the WILPF. It is very interesting to listen to your presentation.*

*And I also had a good conversation with Lydia from WILPF Kenya to reflect also on our experience going through protests and then a revolution and then, of course, a war. I want to just kind of reflect on some of the things that happened to women in Sudan. Because it is a very interesting experience.*

*As you know, we were the majority in the protests, in the streets. And we were really the frontline and the backbone of the revolutionary movement. But then after that, this did not really reflect into any gains, political participation or even our social status.*

*And in fact, after that, it was almost a punishment campaign. So, we continued to be punished, and we were kind of blamed for this political instability. It is very important to note because you could start having a similar sentiment here. You will need to look out for a few things:*

*1. You' ae not going to get the same level of solidarity from activists and the political community. You' will be expected to do a lot of the work on the street on your own.*

*2. You are going to be completely disappointed and frustrated by your own activist community.*

*3. When it comes to the country, I think women are going to be demonised as kind of a source of this instability because of course, their voices are going to be highlighted more on social media and by the international media because they want this story to get out of women being on the frontlines.*

*My advice to you is to just really take that into consideration and be ready for this fight from all the sides that you're fighting with and against. And, to just understand that in the long term, this is going to be very difficult for women, so you need to prepare for it”.*

## Question

I would like your opinion on why there is a belief that women are becoming more feminist and how men are still very conservative. What do you think is responsible for that? Is it that we as feminists, we are not bringing men, carrying them along or getting them involved? Are we involving them in what we do? Is that the reason?

## Response

*“I think feminism has been sold as liberation for women and not everyone, yet we know feminism is a political framework and it is for everyone.*

*This means that there' is a need for us to keep engaging because no matter how women are liberated, no matter what our political stance is, we still interact with capitalism, we still interact with patriarchy, we still interact with very patriarchal institutions. There is a need to have the conversation and be deliberate in terms of extending the conversation to perhaps more male circles because we have spoken to ourselves, but the world outside us is not changing.*

*So, for me, when I introduce myself and say, I'm a feminist politically, it is because I want the question to be asked, what do you mean? Because I feel like it has been relegated to an 'us' versus 'them' conversation”. - Nyambura*

## Question

What is next after the protests?

## Response



*“What next? I do know that in terms of documentation for the lessons, we've done a wonderful job, whether it's the feminist organisation or generally the national protest. We have learned our lessons. The machinery of power is more complex than we the people understand. And that is also because it's usually also the infusion of foreign powers that we do not know how to handle. And so sometimes the will of the people is weakened. Does that offer a solution? No. Are we going to lose hope whether it's women's rights organisations or just citizens? No. But then I think, being aware of when to stop, even as a country, is paramount. I do not blame people when they stop to preserve life because as a country we are as many of us are alive. So, I'm sorry, I do not sell hope. I wish I did. But I'm sure the spirit remains”*. - Nyambura

## **Question**

My question is on resourcing for the movement. How has that gone? Are there any pools of funding that the movement has received? Or is the movement also thinking around those issues? You know, mostly when you look in terms of history, movements like this have just been sheer will-force and determination of the people, of the women who are on the streets. And even as we are talking in these circles, we recognize that there is need to invest in these movements because this is how history is made. This is how change comes.

## **Response**

*“The question around resourcing, I'll go to the resourcing question before I go to the what now, because that is a hard question. We did see the government publish a list of organisations that were funded by the Ford Foundation and other people, other funders.*

*What that did was turn the community against benefactors because the community thought they had money. If you run a non-profit or do anything in a non-profit, you know how the non-profit money looks like. So, what is happening is that it's causing a lot of fractures within the community.*

*Resourcing, I think even the people who've resourced political education work in Kenya are now very afraid because of surveillance which, is making it very hard for this work to be done. But for both the protests, I must say that there has been a great resourcing that is called the people's will. But of course, in the face of death, as you saw, that is shaken because we lost a lot of young people, and it was on live television. So even our psyche is messed up”*. - Nyambura

## **Question:**

Is it easy to approach His Excellency Ruto on digital spaces like X without violating his immunity? It will be helpful for us to know how to approach the political persons in our countries without the violation of their immunities.

## **Response**

*“We are thankful the president came to the X space, but there were many things that happened prior to that. When you understand the complexity of power, you know how to play the game because I do know that there was a time when Kenyan youth did not want to have a conversation on X. And then there were leaders in the movement that were coerced, incentivized. We do not know the truth. And then they ended up being the hosts.*

*It was also co-hosted by the State House. We almost went unwillingly. Because it was on their terms, there was no immunity to preserve. I know the narrative internationally is, the president of Kenya was there. It was very curated. But is it a step forward?”* - Nyambura

*“I think there was no formula that we placed or maybe a procedure that we followed. It was more also of the pressure that he was receiving from the Kenyan people. You know, he went for interviews on TV stations and the Kenyans were like, no, that is not what we want.*

*We want you to come to the ground so that we'll be able to talk to you. But now, as she's saying, when we went to the X space, it was kind of, it's not what we expected. We wanted a free space where it's not about how educated, you know, even the less educated people have things and concerns they want to put on the table. Yeah, so when we went to the X space, it wasn't that clear because it was being controlled by them. The conversation was being controlled by them. So, we didn't have the opportunity to really express ourselves”*. - Kenyan participant

*“We didn't get the result we expected from that conversation. I think maybe most of us see that he had no other choice. He had no choice because the movement was leaderless, tribeless and we didn't have any actual faces of the actual persons holding the whole protests.*

*He just had to. That's what I wanted to say. He just had to find a way so that he could talk to the people and try to convince them and just calm the whole country down”*. - Kenyan participant

## Comments on self-protection as activists

1. *Avoid making links with politicians.*
2. *Be neutral. In 2020, a new armed group attacked the city. They were chased away by the army. I was hosted on TV to make a declaration. I fought to be neutral. I criticised the armed group and the government at the same time.*
3. *Ensure that when you do advocacy, you must do a sustained campaign.*

*A good leader is a leader who protects their members. If you know that people are going to be killed, why do you send people in the streets? Why do you send your people to your organisation in the streets if you know they are going to be killed? Why don't you write press releases? Why don't you have interviews with the journalists instead of sending people to the street? It's not a good strategy. So, we also need to ensure that we protect our members". - CAR participant*

*"I think I want to agree with my sister in terms of knowing when to self-preserve. But I think what stood out for me when you said it is how the government uses government appointments to either discredit the movement or just fracture it. Two things. I wouldn't say don't take a government job because you have your career goals. Secondly, like every other question I ask myself, if women and human rights defenders are not taking these jobs, is there any good that will be there? How do we influence the government from the outside? How do we balance these things? In terms of the question of sustaining the struggle in human life, I do not have straight answers, but I hope we can find more places to discuss these things". - Nyambura*

## Consolidating joint advocacy of MEA and WILPF on the WPS agenda and feminist peace in Africa - Facilitators: Rumbidzai Elizabeth Chidoori, Regional Policy and Advocacy Coordinator & Angelica Pino, WILPF Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Initiative Coordinator

This exercise is going to tap into all the knowledge and insights gotten over the 4 days. Looking at your context, looking at the information that you have, looking at what is out there;

- ★ What are the things that you can do as activists coming from your organisations?
- ★ What advocacy actions can be done?
- ★ What is possible right now?
- ★ What would you like to do if you had more resources?
- ★ Outline the steps that you intend to take to achieve your plan?
- ★ What timeline do you think you shall achieve this?

### Next Steps

REGION	WHAT	WHEN	WHO
<b>WEST AFRICA</b> (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana, and Togo)	Social Media Campaign on Positive Masculinity with a #tag	September -November 2024	MEA/WILPF West African Region (Mama Regina/Ayo)
	Desk Review Workshop on NAP/Resolution 13/25/& 35/10 and develop Communique, strategic plan on \implementation; also invite Ecowas Rep/UNDP and other key stakeholders and carry out Advocacy at the review (In-Person-Cote d'Ivoire)	September-December 2024	WILPF/MEA West African Region (Bintou/Olivia)

<b>EAST AFRICA</b> (Tanzania, Kenya, South Sudan, Rwanda)	Partnerships Development	3 months	East Africa Regional Task force
	Capacity building workshops(online)	3 months	East Africa Regional Task force
	Existing policies reviews and advocacy	3 months	East Africa Regional Task force
	Regional peace forums (long term)	3 months	East Africa Regional Task force
	Youth and Women leadership programs (long term)	3 months	East Africa Regional Task force
	Sustainable community Initiatives (long term)	3 months	East Africa Regional Task force
<b>SOUTHERN AFRICA</b> (Eswatini, Malawi, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia)	Regional campaign to sensitise CSOs on resolution 1325 & 3510 (3 online seminars)	October - December	All participants
	Prepare to participate in the pre-Kinshasa declaration meetings	October - December	All participants
	Exchange visits for stronger collaboration	October - December	All participants

**Note:** Central Africa Region's submissions centred around action plans for their respective countries i.e. CAR, Guinea, Cameroon

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>WHAT</b>	<b>WHEN</b>	<b>WHO</b>
<b>CAMEROON</b>	Revive the coordination with MEA networks through different capacity strengthening activities.	August - December 2024	WILPF & MEA
	Mapping to identify the different actors that are working on these issues to create synergy.	August - December 2024	WILPF & MEA
	Promotion of social cohesion amongst the youth. (target 40,000 students & 200 teachers and by the end of this year)	August - December 2024	WILPF & MEA
	Implementation of the second generation NAP to drive the WPS agenda application.	August - December 2024	WILPF & MEA
	Use the 16 days of activism to launch different activities e.g work with the traditional leaders and community leaders at the sub-regional level.	August - December 2024	WILPF & MEA
<b>CAR</b>	Take ownership and disseminate the MEA strategy.	August - December 2024	WILPF CAR

	Follow up the implementation of the sub-regional action plan.	August - December 2024	WILPF CAR
	Train different actors on arms control as well as the Kinshasa Declaration.	August - December 2024	WILPF CAR
<b>NIGERIA</b>	Capacity Building training for WILPF/MEA Members on Positive Masculinity (In Person training- Lagos/Abuja)	September 2024	MEA/WILPF- Beatrice/Olivia
	Workshop on Positive Masculinity for State House of Representatives in two states in Nigeria (Lagos and Benue States)-	November 2024	MEA/WILPF- Beatrice/Olivia
	Workshop for Secondary school Boys and Girls on Gender and Positive Masculinity (To mark the 16days of Activism)	November 2024	MEA/WILPF- Beatrice/Olivia
<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>	Kinshasa Declaration – Call to action involving men and boys, women and girls- How far is the government to implement the Kinshasa declaration. Involvement in preliminary meetings in preparation for the summit	November 2024	MEA SA and Masiphephe Network members
	The Human Rights Council resolution 35/10 and Declaration 13/25 Sensitization workshops (2 pillars)	September 2024 Network quarterly meeting	Enele Zulu & Masiphephe Network Forum-Alexandra
	Educational interviews throughout the National and community radio stations to raise awareness on silencing guns in our communities-	Oct-Dec 2024	Masiphephe Network
<b>SOUTH SUDAN</b>	Draft Policy Brief Written by Advocacy focal point. Send for feedback.	Within 3 months	Programmes team.
	Establishing WILPF in South Sudan Engage activities from CBOs, CSOs, and Youth and women associations, Youth –Led organisation, Women-led NGOs to have their bios and register it. Provide some training and develop some of the policies	Within 3 months	MEA South Sudan

	Awareness and sensitisation for communities, NGOs, policy developers, local authorities and NGOs ,and social media, U-TUBE .	Within 3 months	MEA South Sudan
	Conduct a session on this MATI training for Men Engage Africa South Sudan member organisations (Take them through all the sessions :Gender Justice, Masculinity, 10/35 Resolutions, WPS,YPSA)	20/08/2028/Youth coordinator election day –	MEA South Sudan
	Awareness creation at school on social justice Visit schools an request head teachers to provide time for the session.	25 th August,2024	MEA South Sudan
	Mainstream WILPF and MEA in ORBIT programming Include social justice content in our next week trauma policy session with our staff and trauma healing outreach as well as Radio talk show	August 2024	MEA South Sudan
	Share MATI/WILPF interventions on social justice, structural violence and masculinity with NGO Forums, LRPF,NASOSS ETC	August 2024	MEA South Sudan
<b>ESWATINI</b>	Conducting workshops for young boys and men. Sensitising them on gender equality and men`s involvement in positive masculinity.	Within 3 months	Eswatini Network Of Young Positive
	Sensitization on Human Rights Resolution 1325 and 35/10 involvement in the Legal Framework	Within 3 months	Eswatini Network Of Young Positives
	Capacity Building: providing training for relevant stakeholders, including community organisations and networks and peacebuilding actors, on the women`s participation in the peace and security process.	Within 6 months	Eswatini Network Of Young Positives and Young Women For Life

	Consultation with women's organisations: Engaging with and supporting women'S organisations and grassroots movements in peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts ensuring meaningful participation in decision-making processes.	Within 6 months	Eswatini Network Of Young Positives and Young Women For Life
<b>TOGO</b>	Workshop to share with them what we learned here at MATI.	August - December 2024	WILPF & MenEngage Togo
	Digital campaign on how to mobilise Men for the WPS agenda	August - December 2024	WILPF & MenEngage Togo
	Do a study on gender and gender equality in Togo and conduct a survey to understand the impact of gender equality promotion.	November 2024	WILPF & MenEngage Togo
	Advocacy, around resolution 35/10 for women's involvement in conflict and peace.	October 2024	WILPF & MenEngage Togo
<b>DRC</b>	Organise an online meeting with colleagues from MenEngage online to discuss how to work together.	September - December 2024	WILPF & MenEngage DRC
	Reactivate the platform on small arms and light weapons. Ensure there is representation on the National commission.	September - December 2024	WILPF & MenEngage DRC
	Capacity strengthening on MATI training themes.	September - December 2024	WILPF & MenEngage DRC
	Do advocacy in relation to the national strategy on positive masculinity.	September - December 2024	WILPF & MenEngage DRC
	Re-look at the strategy to see whether the Resolution 3510 has been included	September - December 2024	WILPF & MenEngage DRC
	Work together with the National Secretariat for the 2250 Resolution	September - December 2024	WILPF & MenEngage DRC
<b>GUINEA</b>	Organise a restitution workshop to share information about this training.	September - December 2024	WILPF & MenEngage Guinea
	Create a collaboration platform with MenEngage.	September - December 2024	WILPF & MenEngage Guinea
	Strengthen capacities on masculinity issues.	September - December 2024	WILPF & MenEngage Guinea

	Advocacy initiative to integrate masculinity in the gender national policy that needs to be reviewed before the Conference On Status of Women(CSW conference).	September - December 2024	WILPF & MenEngage Guinea
<b>BURKINA FASO</b>	Organise a workshop to share this with WILPF members, but also together to see the lessons learned and improve at the level of WILPF.	September - December 2024	WILPF Burkina Faso
	Strengthen WILPF action plan.	September - December 2024	WILPF Burkina Faso
	Organise different workshops for sensitization, for sharing information, and also to do capacity strengthening initiatives, not only for the CSOs, but also some targeted groups about resolutions 1325, 3510 & 2250	September - December 2024	WILPF Burkina Faso
	Organise a workshop to review the participation of women in peace building and security in partnership with The National Commission on Arms Control and DAGAP, a Swiss organisation that works on security issues and women participation.	September - December 2024	WILPF Burkina Faso
	Operationalize gender issues in the fight against small arms and light weapons.	September - December 2024	WILPF Burkina Faso
	Setup MenEngage Burkina Faso	September - December 2024	WILPF Burkina Faso
<b>KENYA</b>	Re-establishing the Young Whip in Kenya, and most especially in university campuses.	September - December 2024	WILPF Kenya
	Establishing a support centre for survivors of gender-based violence.	September - December 2024	WILPF Kenya
	Institutionalise gender-sensitivity and conflict-management training in the university campuses.	September - December 2024	WILPF Kenya

### **MATI Alumni Announcement - Zaituni Nabaterregga, MenEngage Africa Training Initiative Coordinator**

Zaituni made a call for the participants to join the MATI alumni group. All cohorts so far have created a platform where they exchange ideas, coordinate and touch base on gender justice. It's voluntary to be a part of this. She encouraged everyone to join the group and support one another to ground the work being done in defining the structural drivers.



participants extra skills to be able to play their own role in their respective communities. Finally, she called on the participants to keep in touch, to keep supporting one another, and to make good use of this training to be able to give the best for the future of our continent. “Let’s leave a legacy”.

## A Closing Call to Strengthen Collaboration

Bafana Khumalo, Co-Ed Sonke Gender Justice and member of the board of MenEngage Alliance

He thanked his and the WILPF colleagues. In his words, “this is a relationship made in heaven!” He said this collaboration was only made possible because of the mutual respect between the partner organisations and appreciation of the work being done. Bafana stated that as SONKE, they believe that collaboration can take one far because you will never walk alone. On this road, you do need others that can walk with you. He admitted that it seemed like an uphill task with the introduction of the digital & virtual MATI training the first time, but the commitment of the participants encouraged him to join and ‘feel the pain’. It was a very useful experience as well as being one of the courses where you don’t do just to get a certificate, you have a commitment to make the necessary change where you are coming from.

*“We do expect that when you go back, you obviously work with others, collaborate, and ensure that another Africa is possible. An Africa filled with our aspirations, an Africa that can be a record of hope for many communities, an Africa where we will silence the guns and ensure that we find alternatives to resolve the many challenges we have. But also, an Africa that will invest in young people. We are a youthful continent. But if we do not invest in our young people, there’s no future for us, because the young people are the future of this country. So do that for yourselves, for your stepping up and taking up this challenge” - Bafana*





## ANNEX 1: MATI AGENDA

Programme  
 Building Feminist Peace in Africa  
 MenEngage Africa and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom  
 Training Institute on Gender, Peace and Security

Nairobi, Kenya  
 12-16 August 2024

MONDAY 12 AUGUST - INTRODUCTION TO KEY CONCEPTS, OUR PATHS TO ACTIVISM FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND FEMINIST PEACE		
SESSION TIME	SESSION TITLE	PRESENTATIONS
08:30 – 09:15	Welcoming remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inta Klotins, Second Secretary at the <i>High Commission of Canada to Kenya</i></li> <li>• Bafana Khumalo, Co-Ed Sonke Gender Justice and member of the board of MenEngage Alliance</li> <li>• Tabitha Kiragu, chairperson of MenEngage Kenya</li> <li>• Edwick Madzimore, WILPF Zimbabwe and Alternate Regional Representative</li> </ul>
09:15 – 10:00	Participants Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roberta Nardi, Associate WILPF Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Initiative</li> </ul>
10:00 – 11:00	Overview of programme, expectations and ground rules for a safe learning space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zaituni Nabaterega, MenEngage Africa Training Initiative Coordinator</li> <li>• Angelica Pino, WILPF Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Initiative Coordinator</li> </ul>
11:00 – 11:30	<b>Coffee break and networking</b>	
11:30 – 13:00	Gender values clarification exercise - How do these values play out in conflict contexts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zaituni Nabaterega, MenEngage Africa Training Initiative Coordinator</li> </ul>

13:00 – 14:00	Lunch and networking	
14:00 – 15:30	Knitting our life trajectories - how participants ended up at MATI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roberta Nardi and Angelica Pino</li> </ul>
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee break and networking	
15:45 – 16:05	The gendered impact of conflict, violence and war in Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framing remarks - Mpiwa Mangwiro, Sonke Gender Justice, Policy, Development and Advocacy Manager</li> <li>The gendered impact of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo - Lisette Mavungu Thamba, president WILPF DRC</li> </ul>
16:05 – 16:45	The gendered impact of conflict, violence and war in Africa	World café exercise
16:45 – 17:00	Reflections from the day	Mabel Sengendo, Sonke Gender Justice, Regional Unit Manager

**TUESDAY 13 AUGUST – ROOT CAUSES AND STRUCTURAL DRIVERS OF CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE**

SESSION TIME	SESSION TITLE	PRESENTATIONS
09:00 – 09:30	Recap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bernice Ouango-Ndackalla, CAR WILPF President</li> </ul>
09:30 – 11:00	Root causes and structural drivers of conflict and violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeing the forest for the trees: The case for a more structural approach to addressing militarised masculinities and possible pathways to peace - Dean Peacock, WILPF Director Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Initiative</li> <li>Q&amp;A</li> </ul>
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break and networking	

11:30 – 13:00	Root causes and structural drivers of conflict and violence (continuation)	<p>Facilitator: Ayo Ayoola Amale, WILPF Ghana President</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The relationship between inequality, extractive industries, armed violence, conflict and gender in Zimbabwe - Edwick Madzimore, WILPF Zimbabwe</li> <li>Online spaces, hate speech and conflict – Reem Abaas, WILPF Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Communications Coordinator</li> <li>Plenary discussion</li> </ul>
13:00 – 14:00	<b>Lunch and networking</b>	
14:00 – 15:30	<p>Conflict tree exercise to explore root causes of conflicts in participants' home contexts</p> <p>Working coffee</p>	<p>Introduction to exercise - Mpiwa Mangwiro, Sonke Gender Justice, Policy, Development and Advocacy Manager</p> <p>Breakaway groups</p>
15:30 – 16:45	Plenary presentation and discussion on conflict trees	Moderation: Mpiwa Mangwiro, Sonke Gender Justice, Policy, Development and Advocacy Manager
16:45 – 17:00	Reflections from the day	Bafana Khumalo, Co-Ed Sonke Gender Justice and member of the board of MenEngage Alliance
19:00 – 21:30	<b>Official dinner</b>	
<b>WEDNESDAY 14 AUGUST: THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA AND INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL MECHANISMS AND COMMITMENTS TO FURTHER ITS IMPLEMENTATION</b>		
<b>SESSION TIME</b>	<b>SESSION TITLE</b>	<b>PRESENTATIONS</b>
09:00 – 09:30	Recap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mphatso Kapito, MenEngage Malawi</li> </ul>
09:30 – 10:00	The Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA) – challenges and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>History of the WPS agenda and its objectives - Sylvie Ndongmo, founder of WILPF Cameroon and international president of WILPF</li> </ul>

10:00 – 11:00	The Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA) – challenges and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plenary session sharing examples and discussing the implementation of the WPS agenda in Africa – led by Sylvie Ndongmo, founder of WILPF Cameroon and international president of WILPF</li> </ul>
11:00 – 11:30	<b>Coffee break and networking</b>	
11:30 – 13:00	The Youth, Peace and Security Agenda (YPSA) – challenges and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why do we need a YPSA in Africa? Eucharia Nkengafack, Regional Communications and Social Media Coordinator &amp; Solange Ba, Young WILPF Senegal</li> <li>Video: <a href="#">Including Young People for Peace &amp; Security: A Discussion with AU Youth Envoy Chido Mpemba (youtube.com)</a></li> <li>Plenary discussion on how to share information on the YPSA and mobilise young people for peace in Africa</li> </ul>
13:00 – 14:00	<b>Lunch and networking</b>	
14:00 – 15:30	Using international law and human rights mechanisms to advance the WPS and YPS agendas (CEDAW, UPR, the UN HRC, treaty bodies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of key mechanisms and instruments - Rumbidzai Elizabeth Chidoori, Regional Policy and Advocacy Coordinator &amp; Mpiwa Mangwiro, Sonke Gender Justice, Policy, Development and Advocacy Manager</li> <li>Breakaway groups sharing their experience and expertise on using the spaces and instruments to advance the WPS and YPS agendas.</li> </ul>
15:30 - 15:45	<b>Coffee break and networking</b>	
15:45 – 16:50	Using international law and human rights mechanisms to advance the WPS and YPS agendas (CEDAW, UPR, the UN HRC, treaty bodies)	<p>Facilitator: Angelica Pino, WILPF Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Initiative Coordinator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Situating Men, Boys, Masculinities, and Patriarchy within African Policy Frameworks: findings from joint WILPF and MenEngage Africa research - Genevieve Riccoboni, WILPF Women, Peace and Security Programme Coordinator (online)</li> <li>Plenary discussion</li> </ul>

16:50 – 17:00	Recap of the day	Eucharia Nkengafack, Sonke Gender Justice Regional Communications and Social Media Coordinator & Reem Abaas, WILPF Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Communications Coordinator
<b>THURSDAY 15 AUGUST – MOBILISING MEN FOR FEMINIST PEACE IN AFRICA – POLICIES AND PRACTICE</b>		
<b>SESSION TIME</b>	<b>SESSION TITLE</b>	<b>PRESENTATIONS</b>
09:00 – 09:30	Taking stock of the training institute thus far – a visual exploration	Eucharia Nkengafack, Regional Communications and Social Media Coordinator & Reem Abbas, WILPF Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Communications Coordinator
09:30 – 11:00	Using international instruments to engage men as allies for feminist peace in Africa	<p>Facilitator: Olivia Ndidi, WILPF Nigeria President</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 35/10 on engaging men and boys in preventing and responding to violence against all women and girls – Dean Peacock, WILPF Director Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Initiative</li> <li>• The Kinshasa Declaration and Call for Action of The African Union Heads of State on Positive Masculinity in Leadership to End Violence Against Women and Girls in Africa – Mabel Sengendo, Sonke Gender Justice, Regional Unit Manager</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">• Plenary discussion</p>
11:00 – 11:15	<b>Coffee break and networking</b>	
11:15 – 13:00	Mobilising men as allies in the struggle for gender equality and peace in Africa	<p>Facilitator: Enele Zulu, GBV advocate Masiphephe Network Project on GBV response in South Africa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MenEngage Alliance: an accountable and feminist approach to engaging men for gender equality and peace in Africa - Bafana Khumalo, Co-Ed Sonke Gender Justice and member of the board of MenEngage Alliance</li> <li>• Programmatic interventions to mobilise men for gender equality and peace in Africa: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nathalie Foko- WILPF Cameroon</li> <li>• Gat'Pany Wuay Kherjok Liep – MenEngage South Sudan</li> <li>• Beatrice Kelechi Onoja - MenEngage Nigeria</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">• Plenary discussion</p>

13:00 – 14:00	Lunch and networking	
14:00 – 15:00	Small arms and weapons, conflict and gender in Africa	<p>Facilitator: Regina Outtara, WILPF Burkina Faso President</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The African Union Silencing the Guns Campaign: opportunities for advocacy – Claire Taylor, Researcher Gun Free South Africa</li> <li>Q&amp;A</li> </ul>
15:00 – 15:30	Small arms and weapons, conflict and gender in Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breakaway groups – opportunities for advocacy</li> </ul>
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break and networking	
16:00 – 16:20	Reflections from the day	Mabel Sengendo, Sonke Gender Justice, Regional Unit Manager

**FRIDAY 16 AUGUST – MEA AND WILPF JOINT ADVOCACY TO BUILD FEMINIST PEACE IN AFRICA**

SESSION TIME	SESSION TITLE	PRESENTATIONS
09:00 – 09:30	Recap	Nccamiso Makhanya, MenEngage Swaziland
09:30 – 11:00	Consolidating joint advocacy of MEA and WILPF on the WPS agenda and feminist peace in Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitators: Rumbidzai Elizabeth Chidoori, Regional Policy and Advocacy Coordinator &amp; Angelica Pino, WILPF Mobilising Men for Feminist Peace Initiative Coordinator</li> </ul> <p>Breakaway groups</p>
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break and networking	
11:30 – 13:00	Consolidating joint advocacy of MEA and WILPF on the WPS agenda and feminist peace in Africa (continuation)	Breakaway groups
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break and networking	

14: 00 – 15:30	Consolidating joint advocacy of MEA and WILPF A on the WPS agenda	Report back from breakaway groups
<b>15:30 – 16:00</b>	<b>Coffee break and networking</b>	
16:00 – 16:30	Evaluation, handover of certificates and closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sylvie Ndongmo, founder of WILPF Cameroon and international president of WILPF &amp; Bafana Khumalo, Co-Ed Sonke Gender Justice and member of the board of MenEngage Alliance</li> </ul>