

10 Steps to Ensure Gender Responsive Processes & Ceasefire Agreements

A ceasefire is a negotiated, binding agreement to stop violent conflict. It contains specific instructions – military and tactical – and timelines for halting and avoiding violence. Historically, women have rarely been included in the drafting processes, and gendered perspectives on standard components, such as monitoring mechanisms, are often absent. Yet local women peacemakers have been initiators of truces and ceasefire agreements in many conflicts. Governments, international organizations, and civil society facilitating local, national and regional ceasefire negotiations must consider the roles women play and their expertise in negotiating, drafting and implementing ceasefire agreements. This is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and the broader women, peace and security agenda. Here are 10 steps to do so:

1. **Ensure equal inclusion of women leaders and gender experts.** Advise mediation teams to involve women in dialogue and to ensure that a gender and mediation expert is included on their team.
2. **Ensure an inclusive definition of a ceasefire reflecting different types of violence and those that impact women and men differently.** This can include conflict related sexual violence, gender-based violence, summary executions, torture, harassment, arbitrary detention & persecution of civilians on the basis of ethnic origin, religion, or political affiliations, incitement of ethnic hatred, use of child soldiers, training of terrorists, genocide & bombing of the civilian population.
3. Ensure agreements contain a **timeline** to stop the fighting and provisions for a **humanitarian corridor** that consider the different needs of men and women – especially those who are non-combatants.
4. **Set a 50% quota for women's inclusion in drafting** ceasefire agreements and where needed, provide them with technical training. Also ensure that security personnel involved in negotiations are informed about the gendered aspects of ceasefires.
5. **Ensure women's participation in monitoring ceasefire agreements** and preventing relapse into conflict:
 - a. Engage women in documentation of and dialogue with government and other stakeholders on violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and reconciliation processes.
 - b. Engage media in public awareness, and in addressing historical injustices and ensure women's perspectives are highlighted.
 - c. Engage women in oversight of check posts, and management of weapons storage.
6. Where ceasefires include cantonment as an initial step in the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration (DDR) process, ensure provisions for the **collection and analysis of disaggregated data** (by gender and age) of participation in armed groups, and **include women as registrars** in the DDR processes to ensure the safety of women and girls.
7. **Consider the gendered effects** of a siege, acts of armed groups, and the impact of ceasefire agreements on different populations including women, children, people with disabilities, refugees, IDPs, ethnic, religious, and other social groups.
8. **Conduct local consultations with the public, including women, concerning** the types of violence experienced or witnessed, curfews, mine mapping, early warning signs, creation of safe zones, and protection of homes and property. Ensure that consultations and public information sessions are held during hours most of the population (particularly women) can attend and in accessible locations.
9. **Include women as members of de-escalation committees** to prevent violence. They can use their authority locally to set security priorities, reconcile conflicts, and influence others to abide by ceasefire agreements.
10. **Provide financial resources to women led groups** so they can participate in a sustainable way in all stages of the ceasefire process.

Language of a Ceasefire Agreement

COLOMBIA (2016)*

Guiding Principles:

Gender-based approach: special emphasis will be placed on the protection of women, children and adolescents, who have been affected by the criminal organizations that are the subject of this agreement. This approach will take account of the specific risks faced by women against their life, freedom, integrity and safety and will be appropriate for those risks. (p. 81)

Regarding implementation, verification and public endorsement:

Gender-based approach: In this Agreement, the approach to gender means recognition of equal rights for men and women and the special circumstances of each person, especially those of women, regardless of their marital status, life cycle and family and community relationships, as enjoying rights and special constitutional protection. In particular, it implies the need to guarantee affirmative measures to promote that equality, active participation by women and their organizations in peacebuilding and recognition of the victimization of women as a result of the conflict. To guarantee true equality, it is necessary to put forward affirmative measures which respond to the disproportionate impact which the armed conflict has had on women, in particular sexual violence. With regard to the rights of victims, their protection includes differential treatment, which recognizes the causes and the disproportionate effects, which the armed conflict has had on women. Moreover, differential action must be taken to enable women to access the plans and programmes contained in this Agreement on equal terms. Participation by women and their organizations and the equitable representation of women in the different areas of participation must be guaranteed. The gender-based approach must be understood and applied in a cross-cutting manner in implementing the whole of the Agreement. (p. 204)

Women as Local Ceasefire Monitors

In Mindanao, the Philippines, Mary Ann Arnado formed a volunteer civilian monitoring group called Bantay Ceasefire. Arnado realized that all female units would increase the organization's ability to engage with women and to sensitize male counterparts to the different impacts of war on men, women, boys, and girls. The group was later asked to join the International Monitoring Team.†

UN Guidance for Mediators Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ceasefire and Peace Agreements ‡

Key Principles: It is important that agreements, where necessary and appropriate, recognize conflict-related sexual violence as a method or tactic of warfare and include it in the framing of security and justice-related provisions. To this end, addressing conflict-related sexual violence can be seen as part of a continuum: from facilitating security, to dealing with the past, to breaking the cycle of impunity and ensuring reconciliation and rehabilitation. (p.6)

* Colombia peace agreement: <http://especiales.presidencia.gov.co/Documents/20170620-dejacion-armas/acuerdos/acuerdo-final-ingles.pdf>

† Holt-Ivry, O. (2018, August 24) Women Make Peace Stick. When only men sit at the negotiating table, cease-fires fall apart. Foreign Policy, Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/08/24/women-make-peace-stick/>

‡ UN Guidance for Mediators Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ceasefire and Peace Agreements: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/GuidanceAddressingConflictRelatedSexualViolence_UNDPA%28English%29_1.pdf