# The Missing Ingredient:
# Women Peacebuilders as Critical Allies
# in Strengthening a Fragile Peace

## Federal Foreign Office, Lesehof/library, 25 June 2019, 1.30pm – 5pm

It is widely acknowledged within the peacebuilding community, and established through research, that only an inclusive peace is likely to be a sustainable one. The importance of including civil society (particularly women) and local actors at the peace table to bring about a sustainable peace – in addition to the warring parties – is also proven.[1] Yet current global practices of peacemaking and statebuilding in transitions or the aftermath of a peace agreement, offer limited political acknowledgement or inclusion of this sector in implementing peace. Civil society is often locked out of funding and resource mechanisms, even though organizations – particularly women-led entities – are often providing key services, engaging in critical peacebuilding, trust building and social cohesion initiatives that states are unable to undertake.

Considered even less frequently, are the risks peacebuilders face when undertaking critical but often dangerous mediation and peacebuilding work, as well as when they are highlighting the needs of marginalized groups and the importance of adhering to human rights standards universally. As events in Colombia, Libya and elsewhere demonstrate, the threats do not stop just because a peace agreement has been signed or a dictator has been removed. In Colombia, the 2016 peace agreement is renowned for its commitment to gender issues and women's rights. But this has prompted a mobilization of conservative forces resulting in attacks against women peacebuilders (WPB) and human rights defenders (WHRD).  As of 2018, more than 200 human rights leaders (women and men) had been assassinated since signing of the peace agreement.[2]

In every conflict and post conflict scenario, civil society actors face similar issues of threat and intimidation at local and national levels. The threats include spikes in violence and increased physical vulnerability enabled by lack of governance, security and social support systems, as well as actions of state and non-state actors. The vulnerability is further heightened by a shrinking of the political space and legal restrictions on the sector, and compounded when donors divert funding[3] during transition periods away from CSOs into statebuilding. Peacebuilders must be included in the design and delivery of implementation efforts and ensured protection in the post agreement phase.

Drawing on a range of cases, and building on the outcomes of the International Civil Society Action Network's (ICAN) Better Peace Symposium II, the German Foreign Office, together with ICAN will at its 5th exchange at technical and operational level pursuant to the German Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security focus on a) the specific added value and role/contributions of WPBs to seeking and sustaining peace; b) current threats and challenges faced by women peacebuilders, and c) effective strategies that

---

[1] Jana Krause, Werner Krause & Piia Bränfors (2018) Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace, International Interactions, 44:6, 985-1016, DOI: https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2018.1492386

[2] WILPF (2018). Defending the implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia. Retrieved from https://reliefweb.int/report/colombia/defending-implementation-peace-agreement-colombia

[3] United Nations. Security Council. Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security. S/2018/900 (9 October 2018). Retrieved from http://undocs.org/S/2018/900.

state, bilateral and multilateral entities must adopt to support, enable and protect the sector including financial, political and legal, sociocultural, and physical protection measures.

**Objectives:**

- Bring attention to why women peacebuilders are critical allies to states in peacebuilding;
- Raise awareness among the participants about the threats that civic leaders/women peacebuilders face in times of transition and fragility;
- Identify key action points for civil society, multilateral institutions and states, based on comparative case studies, as part of a wider exercise to develop effective and context-specific strategies to support and stand with women peacebuilders.

# Agenda

**13:30 – 13:40   Welcome and introduction**
- **Susanne Baumann**, Head of the Directorate-General for International Order, the United Nations and Arms Control, Federal Foreign Office

**13:40 – 14:40 Panel discussion: Women peacebuilders at different stages of the conflict cycle – risks and current state of discussion**
- **Sanam Naraghi Anderlini**, Founder and Executive Director, International Civil Society Action Network
- Syrian Civil Society Leader
- **Rosa Emilia Salamanca**, Director, Institute for Social and Economic Research and Action, Colombia
- **Mary Akrami,** Director, Afghan Women's Network, Afghanistan

Chair: **Vanessa Prinz**, Division on Human Rights and Gender Issues, Federal Foreign Office

**14:40 – 14:55 Coffee Break;** Participants proceed to breakout rooms, coffee break in breakout rooms

**15:00 – 16:10 Working group sessions**

**Working Group 1**: Room 4.0.55
   **Support and protection by civil society, media, religious and cultural institutions**
   Impulse by **Christine Schweitzer**, Executive Director of the Federation for Social Defence

**Working Group 2**: Room 2.2.42
   **Support and protection by states on a national and bilateral level**
   Impulse by **Dinah Abd El Aziz**, Division on Human Rights and Gender Issues, Federal Foreign Office

**Working Group 3**: Room 1.1.32
   **Support and protection by multilateral institutions, including regional organisations, United Nations, World Bank and others**
   Impulse by **Nicola Popovic**, Director of Gender Associations, and **Nina Bernarding**, Co-Director of the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy

The three working groups will discuss **strategies for protection**, including sociocultural, financial, political, legal and physical protection, and **effective support** by the different stakeholders **throughout all phases of peacebuilding**, including during conflict prevention, peace negotiations, post-conflict and implementation of peace agreements.

**16:15 – 16:55 Wrap-up session: working group outcomes**

**16:55 – 17:00 Closing**