



WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR
PEACE & FREEDOM



OPEN LETTER
WILPF International
Together We Build It
19 September 2017

Open Letter to Ghassan Salama, United Nations Special Envoy on Libya

Letter from a Group of Women Civil Society Organisations in Libya

Dear Mr. Special Envoy,

We congratulate you on your appointment as the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and the Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). Considering your expressed commitment to work closely with all Libyans on facilitating a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process, we call on you to ensure full implementation of a recently-adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution 2376 (2017), as well as strengthening meaningful participation of local women-led civil society in the implementation of this mandate.

As women peace activists from Libya, we have witnessed the important role that Libyan women play in bringing about positive change in the country by forging a new solidarity with women and men of all ages and backgrounds and strengthening reconstruction efforts across the country, often at considerable personal risk to themselves and their families. Civil society groups and organisations are the actors which best understand the concerns and opportunities on the ground and can identify, design and implement practical strategies to overcome the challenges facing Libya.

These positive practices are however significantly challenged by several factors, including localised insecurity, the climate of hegemonic masculinity and international military engagement in the country. The security situation has now degraded to the point where military dominions have left a very limited space for women to participate in peacebuilding, reconciliation and peace processes, despite them constituting forces for effective change. This deliberate exclusion has engendered a significant lack of narrative and input from



grassroots women on the topic of women, peace and security, which in turn brings forth an incomplete analysis of both the root causes of the conflicts and the peace and security concerns.

Adopted on 14 September 2017, United Nations Security Council Resolution 2376 (2017) requests UNSMIL to take fully into account a gender perspective throughout its mandate and to assist the Government of National Accord (GNA) in ensuring the full and effective participation of women in the democratic transition, reconciliation efforts, the security sector and in national institutions in line with resolution 1325 (2000) (OP 4). This commitment, if fully implemented, has a full potential to ensure sustainable and feminist peace in Libya.

Today, therefore, it is important than ever for the Office of the Special Envoy to work in partnership with local women peace activists to ensure full implementation of this resolution by addressing key peace and security priorities in Libya, including by strengthening efforts for women's meaningful engagement in the Libyan peace process, ensuring effective conflict prevention and addressing a widespread presence and use of arms in the country.

As such, stemming from our faith in the United Nations and its principles, and based on our belief in feminist peace based on equality, justice, demilitarised security and nonviolent inclusive social transformation, we urge you to:

1. Undertake consultations with women-led civil society organisations on a regular basis as part of the establishment of a consultative mechanism for all activities, including conflict resolution, peacebuilding and counterterrorism efforts. Women peace activists from diverse backgrounds and those who have proven themselves able to represent bigger women's groups and voice must be included in developing local security plans, which contribute to national and regional security.
2. Develop concrete steps to ensure financial support and strengthen capacity building for local women-led civil society organisations in Libya. Transformative change requires cultivating flourishing and resilient communities aimed at gendered inclusion and justice.
3. Build all UNSMIL actions on the comprehensive analysis of the disproportionate impact of the conflict on women's lives and freedoms. These policies should prioritise addressing such impact in a holistic and comprehensive manner.
4. Ensure that UNSMIL works collaboratively with and in support of women's



grassroots associations on the implementation of the 2017-2018 UNSMIL national strategy on women and peace and security, while providing effective and timely monitoring mechanisms for its effective implementation.

5. Strengthen UNSMIL's disarmament work, as disarmament is a key element for preventing further escalation of the conflict and promote the full and effective participation of women in all discussions on disarmament and arms control. Violence-free society is a healthy society for all: women, children and men.
6. Ensure investigation and monitoring of human rights violations, including SGBV. The safety, dignity and longer-term needs of survivors and their families should be at the heart of such efforts; and grassroots civil society, including local women's groups, should be supported to advocate such an approach.
7. Address ongoing threats to Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) and civil society leaders. As the 2015 Global Study on UNSCR 1325 (2000) shows women-led civil society should always be taken seriously as agents of change.

We stand ready to work together with the Office of the Special Envoy to ensure full implementation of a recently-adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution 2376 (2017) based on the principles of equality, justice, demilitarised security and nonviolent inclusive social transformation for sustainable and feminist peace.

Yours, in respect and solidarity,

1325 Network in Libya
Together We Build It
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