

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY IN LIBYA - HOW CAN SWEDEN MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The following recommendations have been developed by Operation 1325 and Libyan civil society organization Elidia.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

- Since the outbreak of the Libyan war in 2011, women have been systematically excluded from both formal and informal peace negotiations.
- During the war, violence and harassment against women, both online and offline, has increased and several prominent women's rights activists have been assassinated.
- Women migrants and refugees in Libya are being held in detention centers where they risk being subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN SHORT

- Advocate for women's full and meaningful participation in all peace negotiations
- Ensure the protection of women against violence, including military and gender-based violence, online and offline
- Safeguard the protection of women migrants and refugees in Libya

ENSURE WOMEN'S FULL AND MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN ALL PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

Since the outbreak of conflict in 2011, there have been multiple on-going peace negotiations, however, women have been systematically excluded in formal negotiations, including negotiations led by the UN. There is furthermore a gap between the support provided by the international community to women activists to become influential peace actors, and the lack of real opportunities provided to them to utilize these capacities in formal peace initiatives. Women are also hindered from partaking in formal peace negotiations due to logistical barriers such as travel restrictions and inadequate finances. The lack of women's participation sends an explicit message to Libyan decision-makers that women's participation in decision making and the peace process is not necessary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sweden should advocate that the UN Security Council actively works to ensure the full, effective, and meaningful participation of women in all Libyan dialogue tracks. Women, Peace and Security should thereby be a recurring agenda point in all briefings and reports on the situation in Libya.
- Sweden should support women activists to partake in formal and informal peace negotiations, both by demanding that they are included and by providing logistical support in regard to travel arrangements including visa procedures.
- Sweden should ensure that its humanitarian assistance to Libya is programmed in cooperation with local women's civil society organizations and advocate that other major donors, such as UN agencies and the EU do the same.



Operation 1325 is a Swedish civil society organization working for the implementation of UN Resolution 1325. Founded by several Swedish women's and peace organizations in 2003, the organizations objective is to increase women's influence at all levels of peace processes and in conflict resolution.

Elidia is a non-profit organization working for the empowerment of Libyan youth and women by providing a safe environment and capacity building for political participation and sustainable development.

ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE, INCLUDING MILITARY AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, ONLINE AND OFFLINE

Sexual and gender-based violence in Libya during the war, including mass rape, has yet to be investigated, and women's rights have continued to decline as different Islamic groups strive to curtail freedoms throughout the country. Violence against women remains common, but reporting remains low. Meanwhile women's political and civic participation, reporting and activism is deterred due to threats of violence or death. Libyan women's organizations have, furthermore, pointed out that the absence of gender disaggregated data on conflict casualties and sexual and gender-based violence among women serves to further their marginalization and the erasure of the gendered impact of armed conflict. The assassination of prominent women human rights defenders and widespread harassment of women activists online and offline, hinders women from voicing their opinions and taking an active role in political and peacebuilding processes due to threats of intimidation and violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sweden should work to ensure the protection and support of women in Libya to participate actively in the public spaces without the fear of reprisals.
- Sweden should advocate that key UN agencies tasked with data provision, provide gender disaggregated data on conflict casualties and sexual and gender-based violence.
- Sweden should advocate that the EU makes women's safety and protection a key priority in its external relations and involvement with Libya.

ENSURE THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN LIBYA

The war in Libya has resulted in the displacement of nearly 200 000 girls and women. Meanwhile, as Libya is an important transit country for European bound migration, approximately 18 000 women and girls have been confirmed as refugees and asylum seekers, and thousands of women migrants remain permanently threatened with mistreatment. There are detention centers where female migrants are detained that lack female guards and where women and girl migrants and refugees are subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation. The EU's Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission in Libya, which is currently working to fight against smuggling and trafficking in Libya, and the UN Support Mission In Libya (UNSMIL), attempts to implement gender mainstreaming in their operations, but do not sufficiently address gender specific requirements in regard to women migrants and refugees' vulnerability to sexual abuse and exploitation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Sweden should request that the UN Security Council mandates UNSMIL to report on detention centers where women and girl migrants and refugees are detained and subjected to gender-based violence.
- Sweden should advocate that the EU ensures that women migrants and refugees in Libya receive humane treatment and are offered adequate health services and protection, in line with the Geneva Convention.
- Sweden should advocate that the EU's Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission in Libya includes gender advisors and works actively to ensure that women migrants and refugees are protected from sexual abuse and exploitation.



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