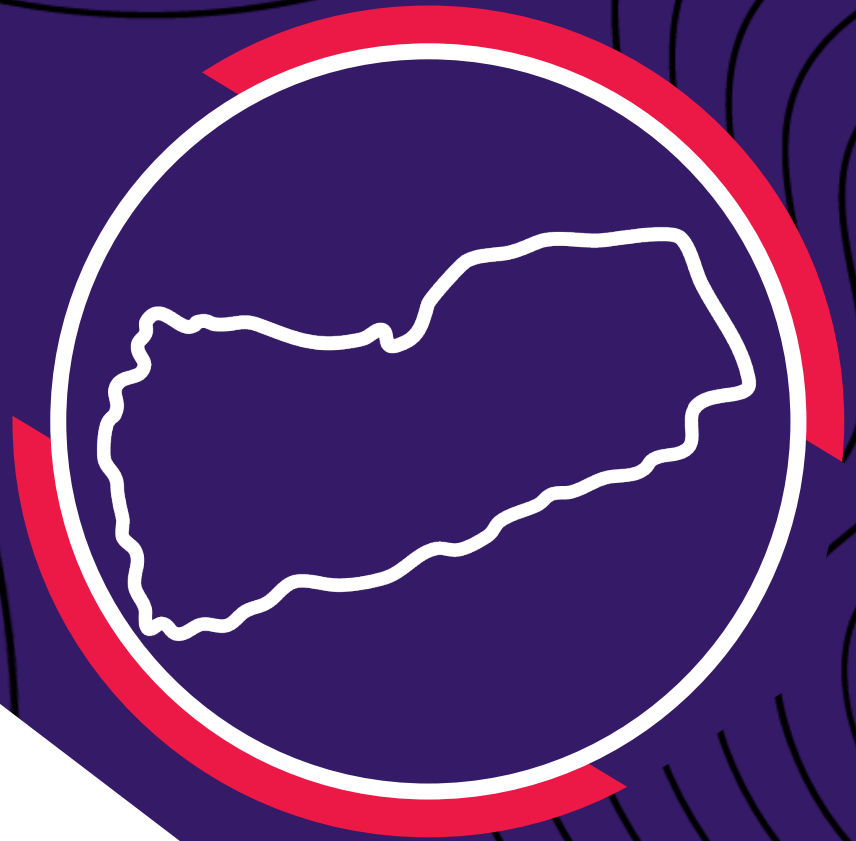


Context-Specific Mapping of Peacebuilding Policies, Initiatives, and Actors

Yemen

2023



gnwp

Global Network of
Women Peacebuilders



مؤسسة أكسون للحقوق والحرريات
TO BE Foundation For Rights & Freedoms

PEACE TRACK
initiative



مسار السلام



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This mapping serves as a comprehensive report on peacebuilding policies, initiatives and actors, including local and international civil society organizations and participating government entities in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

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1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this mapping aims to review the status of the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda in four selected governorates: namely, the capital city of Aden, Abyan, Hadhramaut and Shabwah. It aims to comprehensively examine the participation of women in the public sphere, particularly their political involvement. Additionally, it evaluates the state of women's protection in conflict-affected areas which continue to be affected by repercussions of the conflict till now and continue to endure economic, social, security, and environmental risks. This situation broadly reflects the challenges and priorities that women face in relation to peace and security in these regions. Thus, this mapping seeks to map and analyze peacebuilding initiatives in the targeted governorates.

Historically, women, including girls and marginalized groups, have actively played a role in preventing and resolving conflicts, crises, and extremism, as well as in achieving gender equality and recovery. However, their contributions are often unrecognized and lack the necessary support, particularly at the local level. Continuous threats of violence and the lack of adequate protection mechanisms and accountability for perpetrators further diminish the leadership role of women in peacebuilding in Yemen.

Amidst the ongoing armed conflict, local women and civil society suffer from repression, insecurity, backlash, and limited or nonexistent funding to sustain their work. Nevertheless, women and civil society are at the forefront of addressing conflict within local communities, providing assistance,

and preventing child recruitment. However, their efforts are largely unacknowledged, and their access to opportunities remains limited.

Nine years have passed since the beginning of the conflict in Yemen, yet peace remains elusive. The official discourse on the political process and negotiations (in the first track) is largely confined to the internationally recognized government and the Houthi group (the de facto authority) and other armed groups. This process often marginalizes the key actors within Yemen, particularly women, who remain underrepresented in these negotiations.

The consequences of women's limited participation in formal peace negotiations are more significant than one can imagine. Both the warring parties and the international community have overlooked the needs and contributions of women, further reinforcing the toxic masculinity that dominates the design of the peace process.

Women play a fundamental role in peace-making at the local, national and international levels, from evacuating civilians from conflict-affected areas to negotiating humanitarian access, opening roads and crossings, releasing prisoners, facilitating exchange operations, and advocating for nationwide ceasefires. These essential contributions by women are added to their foundational roles in ensuring the continuity of their families and communities amidst the collapse or destruction of vital services and infrastructure due to the war.

There is a noticeable absence of women at the decision-making table, as they make

up only 4.1 per cent of administrative and decision-making positions in Yemen¹. Women's participation in the peace process has been limited to the activities of the second and third tracks. The consultations of the second track involve unofficial dialogues between political actors in their personal capacities, civil society organizations, youth groups, religious groups, labor unions, women's organizations, and others. However, the actors in this track do not possess the genuine power to influence the course of peace negotiations/consultations, as this authority ultimately remains in the hands of the parties engaged in the official first-track talks.

According to the humanitarian response of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Yemen, approximately 7.1 million women and girls are in need of protection and treatment services from various forms of violence throughout the year 2023. However, these services are being depleted in various parts of Yemen and are completely absent in some hard-to-reach areas. Data on violence against women and girls remains scarce and unreliable due to fear of reporting, social stigma, the absence of legal mechanisms for redress, among other factors.

Despite the severity of the conflict and its direct impact on women's lives in all its facets, the direct obstinacy of political forces to represent and include women in the political process, and the absence of political will to involve women in official peacebuilding processes, considering women's participation as a non-priority,² women have continued their relentless

efforts to make their voices heard and carve out a space in the representation and participation in peacebuilding processes at different levels. For example; the "Feminist Summit" was held whereby 200 women from across different Yemeni provinces addressed numerous issues concerning women as well as general issues concerning the nation and society. The humanitarian security organization Wajd supervised the Feminist Summit, and it was prepared by a coordinating committee of 7 women, which increased to 9 women in the sixth summit. Preliminary studies indicate that these efforts still require field presence for documentation purposes and to leverage them in establishing a strategic vision framework and a national plan for enhancing women's participation and representation in line with Resolution 1325³.

Lack of coordination between all programs and efforts with the aim of enhancing women's role in peacebuilding and placing them within a framework will undermine the outcomes of these efforts and programs. It will cast a shadow on weakening or sidelining women's issues and roles in the post-conflict agenda, recovery, and reconstruction phase. There is a need to strengthen the work within the framework of women, peace, and security, which requires the implementation of a planning, monitoring, and accountability system that includes clear indicators. There is still room for improvement in this regard in Yemen.⁴ It is worth noting that many initiatives and women's organizations involved in peacebuilding at all levels have come to a halt

1 Zena Ali Ahmad (2023). Yemeni Women: Leading into the Future, UNDP, 16 March 2023.

2 All the interviews conducted have confirmed that political will is one of the most important challenges that hinder women's participation.

3 Oxfam, Awam Foundation (2017, March). Oxfam's partnership activities with the Young Leadership Development Foundation and Awam Foundation in March 2017, "Women, Security, and Peace" creating a database of all peace initiatives, particularly those involving women, during times of conflict and war.

4 Wameedh Shaker. (2015). "Women and Decision-Making in Yemen: A Mapping of Facts", Crisis Management Initiative (CMI), pp.26-27.

due to the lack of financial support allocated to enhancing women's participation in peacebuilding and the difficulty faced by women in accessing financial resources or organizations dedicated to supporting peace in Yemen.

2

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the mapping is to align the women, peace, and security agenda to support the sustainability of peace and empower women, especially in the four targeted governorates, which include the capital city of Aden, Abyan, Hadhramaut and Shabwah. The mapping also aims to identify the relevant actors involved in implementing women, peace and security resolutions and local peacebuilding initiatives in the targeted governorates. Furthermore, it aims to establish the baseline for the indicators necessary to monitor and track the progress in implementing the women, peace and security agenda.

The mapping methodology has been designed using qualitative analysis through research tools that have been conducted in the four governorates. These tools include focus group sessions, personal interviews, and desk review. The desk review involved reviewing the institutional and legal framework for gender equality in Yemen and women's participation in peacebuilding at the national and local levels. It also included a review of current policies related to women and peace issues, understanding the effective efforts in implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 at the national and local levels, and the outcomes related to the stakeholders involved in the implementation. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) collabo-

rated to provide documents to enrich the desk review.

From July to September 2023, data was collected from the mapping sample, which included personal interviews and focus group sessions. Eight individuals representing governorate leadership, two women representing civil society, and one woman representing international civil society were interviewed. Five focus group sessions were held, with a total of 47 participants, in which women were represented at a rate of 74 per cent. Specifically, 16 individuals (87 per cent women) participated in two focus group sessions in the capital city of Aden, 11 individuals (81 per cent women) in Abyan governorate, nine individuals (77 per cent women) in Hadhramaut governorate, and 11 individuals (54 per cent women) in Shabwah governorate. Members of the national and local teams implementing the national plan, consultants, representatives of local councils, security, women's development departments, productive families, the Handicapped Fund, local community leaders, civil society, and war-affected groups such as displaced women were targeted for participation. Furthermore, special consideration was given to the representation of women from ethnic and religious minorities, young and elderly women, and marginalized age groups between 18 and 65.

The institutional and legal framework for gender equality and women's participation in peacebuilding at both the national and local levels:

Gender Equality

Yemen ranks last for the sixteenth consecutive year on the Global Gender Gap Index, which has been developed by the World Economic Forum since its launch in 2006. Women in Yemen have suffered greatly from deeply rooted gender inequality in a society where patriarchal tendencies prevail and rigid gender roles are enforced. Despite the conflict in Yemen having had a devastating impact on all civilians in general, women and girls have been affected differently and more severely. Negative stereotypes regarding the roles of women and men, masculine attitudes, discrimination prevail within the legal and institutional systems, and economic inequality have exacerbated the precarious situation for women, particularly in terms of women's vulnerability to violence. The fighting has increased the suffering due to the intensity of the economic crisis, damage to infrastructure, and collapse of services. However, women face an additional challenge of being constrained by limited mobility due to prevailing cultural norms and expectations. Moreover, as women bear the responsibility of providing food and caregiving in their homes, they have had to contend with challenges related to limited or lack of access to food, water, sanitation, and healthcare services, which have significantly deteriorated due to the

ongoing conflict. Furthermore, among the many forms of gender inequality in Yemen, women are subjected to restrictions on their movement due to the imposition of the "mahram" (male guardian) system. Some girls also experience female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriages during their childhood, in addition to various forms of violence and discrimination against them.

Due to women's inclination to enhance socially agreed upon standards regarding gender roles, official and unofficial systems do not provide sufficient protection for women. Socially, women detainees are considered legally guilty and they are held without trial or access to legal counsel. It is likely that women prisoners may be supervised by male guards and may face numerous human rights violations. In addition, it is common for the families of women prisoners to abandon them, particularly those who have committed "moral" crimes. Furthermore, women face similar discrimination from healthcare providers and often cannot receive medical treatment for violence-related injuries.

The conflict has exacerbated social and economic disparities, depleted resources, and allowed for negative coping strategies. While child marriage is not a new phenomenon, rates have increased from 32 per cent to 66 per cent in 2017 alone.⁵ The con-

⁵ Sabriyya Al-Thawr, 2016. Early marriage mapping, for "Collective Action for Secure Peace," Youth Leadership Development Foundation, UNICEF p. 16 (The United Nations Population Fund also confirmed the assessment in 6 southern governorates and 5 northern governorates of the same information, showing a noticeable increase in the marriage of young girls during the conflict in July 2016).

flict can strain personal relationships, and reporting violence is socially unacceptable. However, reports have increased by 36 per cent in 2016 compared to 2017, according to a recent mapping conducted on women in nine governorates in Yemen. In this mapping, family members, particularly spouses, were identified as potential perpetrators.⁶

Despite the varying ways in which women have been affected and the different sufferings they endure as a result of the conflict, and despite the active role that women play in campaigns and efforts to gain support, including rights related to male relatives who are detained, women remain inadequately represented in peace talks.

The Panel of Experts⁷ Supporting the Sanctions Committee of the United Nations Security Council has included crimes of sexual violence, gender-based violence, and crimes of child recruitment, and recommended the establishment of a specialized fund to support survivors.

Decisions by the United Nations Security Council, such as Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions, reaffirm the importance of women's participation in peace talks and the peacebuilding process. Other resolutions, such as Resolution 2216, call for an end to violence in Yemen, but explicitly exclude the call to include women in the talks and limit women's participation to political dialogue processes only.

Legal Provisions⁸ Dedicated to Discrimination Against Women in the Yemeni

⁶ UNDP Program (March 2019). Previous reference Sabriyya Al-Thawr 2016.

⁷ Panel of Experts, P 48

⁸ Constitution of the Republic of Yemen(1990). Articles No. 27, 1, 2, and 3.

Constitution:

In 1990, a new political era began with the announcement of Yemeni unity and the selection of the most appropriate laws for the newly unified state. This resulted from a blend of inclusive systems and the integration of the socialist orientation in South Yemen with the capitalist orientation in North Yemen.

This political reality was accompanied by a division within the legal framework. After the formation of the state and the election of the first legislative council in unified Yemen, it is worth noting that there were initiatives to pass legislation and national laws. However, this initiative was distorted, as there was no comprehensive vision for the legislative process by the legislators, in terms of building a legal system based on the interaction and support between national laws and international law for human rights. The justification for this approach is that all rights, whether civil, political, social, or cultural, are interconnected and cannot be fragmented.

The legislative authority continued to adopt prevailing laws derived from the cultural heritage. Oppressive laws against women emerged, despite the attempts of feminist movements and some human rights institutions to change them in a way that does not contradict international legitimacy and the constitution, and at the same time ensures equal rights for all individuals in Yemen without discrimination.⁹

The contradiction between the prevailing tribal system and the Yemeni law has created another challenge. For example, many legally punishable criminal acts are per-

⁹ Afraa Al-Hariri (n.d.) – master's degree dissertation. (n.d.) Gender in International Treaties and Challenges to Gender in Yemeni Legislation, pp. 159-160, Chapter Four.

missible under tribal law but considered criminal under the law. Similarly, the tribal judiciary may criminalize certain acts and reject them, despite their legality under the law. Some traditions in the tribal system are major obstacles to women obtaining their rights and protection, especially in cases of “family honor,” as they are resolved based on the best interest of male members of the family.

Central in the Yemeni legal provisions is their discriminatory attitude against women, particularly the Personal Status Law and Criminal Law effective in Yemen, in terms of treating women as second or even third-class citizens while making a comparison between what is stipulated in international references and the constitution as the primary legislative reference legislating minimum laws. Legislation serves as a reflection of the prevailing socio-cultural attitudes in society towards social roles. It is the mechanism that strengthens and regulates these roles within society with the goal of preserving the prevailing male culture and enhancing male power and authority in both the family and society. Legislation is a product of the socio-political and economic system and is not detached from it. Therefore, it is natural for laws and regulations to change based on the prevailing political, social, and economic conditions of each society. Thus, legal development is a reflection of social development.¹⁰

The constitution of the Republic of Yemen defines the nature of the state by linking it to the Islamic religion and the Arabic language, alongside provisions on sovereignty, governance, and the state’s relationship with its regional surroundings. It also

10 Afraa Al-Hariri (n.d.) – master’s degree dissertation. (n.d.) Gender in International Treaties and Challenges to Gender in Yemeni Legislation, pp. 159-160, Chapter Four.

underscores the relationship between the state and the global environment, particularly aspects related to human rights. The Yemeni constitution defines the Republic of Yemen in Article No. 1 as “an independent Arab Islamic state with sovereignty, which is an indivisible unit and cannot relinquish any part of it, and the Yemeni people are part of the Arab and Islamic nation.” Furthermore, “Islam is the religion of the state and the Arabic language is its official language,” as stated in Article No. 2. Article No. 3 states that “Islamic Sharia is the source of all legislation.” In this regard, it is important to highlight not only the mention of Islam or the Arabic language in defining the nature of the state, but also the implications of this determination. Specifically, the reference to Islamic Sharia as the sole source of legislation, either explicitly stated or implicit in other sources, at the state level and the resulting impact on the status of women in Yemeni society. One of the most dangerous areas in which the role of the state, especially an authoritarian state, and male interpretations of religion converge is the determination of citizenship and the traditional social structure. As a result of the effectiveness and intersection of these factors, women have become marginalized citizens in Yemeni society, which is not much different from Arab society when compared to men.

This leads us to shed light on the organic and traditional structures and their role in perpetuating the inferior status of women in relation to the state. The Yemeni constitution, as amended in 1994, demonstrates a positive stance towards international treaties and agreements. Article No. 6 states that “the state affirms its commitment to abide by the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

the Charter of the League of Arab States, and the generally recognized rules of international law.” However, it remains silent on the legal effect and legal implication of the provisions of international treaties and agreements.

Article No. 41 of the amended Constitution of the Republic of Yemen in 1994 enshrines the principle of the right to equality: “All citizens are equal in public rights and duties.” This article differs from Article No. 27 of the 1990 Unity Constitution, which stated, “All citizens are equal before the law, and they are equal in public rights and duties. There shall be no discrimination among them based on gender, origin, language, occupation, social status, or religion.” It is worth noting that the amended article in the 1994 constitution removed the part regarding the grounds on which discrimination is prohibited, despite its significance.

Consequently, the principle of equality stipulated in the constitution, as well as in Article No. 42, which grants “every citizen the right to contribute to political, economic, social, and cultural life, and the state guarantees freedom of thought and expression in speech and writing subject to the provisions of the law,” have been weakened. While it affirms equality before the law, it fails to guarantee equality in public rights and duties as stated in the Constitution.

Despite the constitutional provisions in the said article that aim to solidify the principle of equality, such provisions have failed to establish their authority over national legislation, which in many cases still contains discriminatory laws, such as Personal Status law and Criminal Law. These laws perpetuate stereotypes and blatantly disregard the humanity and dignity of women. A significant amendment to the constitution

in 1994 added Article No. 31, which states that “women are the sisters of men, and they have rights and duties as prescribed by the law based on Sharia.” The danger of this article lies in its categorization of women as sisters rather than citizens. Furthermore, Article No. 31 directly contradicts Article No. 41, which emphasizes the principle of equality among citizens in public rights before the law. Such legal inconsistencies leave many issues, covered by these two articles, susceptible to judicial selectivity and multiple interpretations by judges, contributing to discriminatory practices against women and hindering their access to justice.¹¹

In conclusion of this section, it is important to emphasize that recognizing fundamental rights and freedoms and affirming the principle of gender equality in the constitution does not mean that these principles are guaranteed and effectively implemented in political, social, and economic realities. There are laws that often restrict the exercise of these rights, and the socioeconomic and cultural framework often limits and constrains women, particularly in the realization of their constitutionally and legislatively guaranteed rights.

Phrases such as “without prejudice to the provisions of the law” and “as provided by law” in the constitution are usually used against women due to Yemeni culture’s multiple interpretations of these phrases. These interpretations reflect values, concepts, and customs that positively appreciate the roles of women, respect them, and glorify their history, but at the same time diminish their worth and perpetuate their inferior status. In the name of these

11 The amended Constitution of the Republic of Yemen (1994). Article No./41, Article No./31, Article No./42, Article No./43, Article No./64”, Pp 394, 395.

interpretations, women are forced into marriage, subjected to domestic violence by their husbands or guardians, deprived of education and employment. Therefore, clarity and precision regarding these concepts and provisions are crucial, and the beliefs, practices, and values that should be reflected in the constitution are those that respect and preserve the dignity of women and are not in conflict with human rights, including women's rights. The ambiguity and generalizations concerning women in Yemeni legislation facilitate discrimination and oppression against women in the name of religion and customs.

This ambiguity and vagueness in the constitution is not a coincidence, but rather a deliberate attempt to deceive and mislead the global public opinion. It aims to create an illusion that this regime or constitution guarantees full rights for women, acknowledges their equality before the law, and grants them the rights of citizenship. However, in practice, the regime contradicts itself on these provisions and rights whenever it has the opportunity to do so. This situation could be replicated under different regimes if women continue to be portrayed in the constitution in this vague manner.¹²

Discriminatory Provisions in the Law:

There are several discriminatory legislative provisions. They are as follows:

Criminal Laws: Law No. 12 of 1994, on Crimes and Penalties

- Abortion for rape survivors: Abortion is prohibited under Articles No. 239 and 240 of the law, with no exception for

¹² Afraa Al-Hariri – master's degree dissertation. Gender in International Treaties and Challenges to Gender in Yemeni Legislation, p 164, Chapter Four.

rape survivors.

- Sexual harassment: sexual harassment is not recognized as a crime. Some forms of harassment may fall under the framework of offenses against women's and girls' decency, punishable under Articles No. 273 and 275 of the law.
- Crimes of honor: The law (Article No. 232) stipulates a mitigated punishment for honor crimes committed against women who are caught in the act of adultery.
- Adultery: Adultery is recognized as a crime under Article No. 12 of the law.
- Combating sex work: Engagement in sex work is criminalized under Article No. 278 of the law and is punishable by imprisonment for up to three years or a fine. Sex workers may also face the risk of prosecution for the crime of adultery, which carries stricter penalties.
- Rape: Rape is prohibited by the law.

Law No. 20 of 1992 on Personal Status:

- Amendments were introduced to this law through Law No. 27 of 1998, Law No. 24 of 1999, and Law No. 34 of 2003.
- Minimum age of marriage: The Personal Status Law and its amendments do not define a minimum age for marriage.
- Male guardianship over women: The Personal Status Law requires the consent of the guardian for a woman's marriage and his signature on the marriage contract.
- The law emphasizes the necessity of the woman's consent and allows a woman, under Article 18, to resort to the judiciary if she refuses a marriage arranged by her guardian.

- Marriage and divorce: Women do not enjoy equal rights in marriage and divorce. A woman is obliged to obey her husband, and a man has the right to unilaterally divorce his wife by dissolving the contract without resorting to the courts. Women have limited access to certain types of divorce that can only be obtained through the courts.
- Polygamy: Polygamy is permitted under the Personal Status Law.

Laws Ensuring Gender Equality:

- Law No. 5 of 1995 on Labor, amended by Law No. 25 of 1997, Law No. 11 of 2001, and Law No. 25 of 2003.
- Right to equal pay for equal work: Women have the right to equal pay for equal work under Article No. 67.
- Domestic workers: Domestic workers are exempted from labor laws under Article No. 3, which means they do not benefit from the protective measures provided by the law.
- Termination of employment: Employers are prohibited from terminating a woman's employment during her maternity leave due to pregnancy, as stated in Article No. 45.
- Paid maternity leave: Article No. 45 grants women the right to a fully paid maternity leave of 70 days, which the employer directly covers. However, this falls below the International Labour Organization's recommended minimum duration of 14 weeks.
- Legal restrictions on women's work: Article No. 46 of the labor law prohibits employing women in certain occupations deemed dangerous, strenuous, or detrimental to health and social well-being. Women are only allowed to work at night during Ramadan or in occupations specified by ministerial decision.

- Law No. 19 of 1991 on Civil Service: In all its provisions.

Crimes Against Women not Criminalized by Law:

- Women genital mutilation: Ministerial decree issued in 2001 prohibits woman genital mutilation in hospitals and public or private clinics. However, the decree does not impose specific penalties for violating the ban.
- Human trafficking: There is no comprehensive law to combat human trafficking, criminalize all forms of trafficking, and stipulate preventive and protective measures. There is a minimum level of legal protection against human trafficking.
- Marital rape: Marital rape is not criminalized, and the Personal Status Law requires women to obey their husbands. Courts interpret this obligation to mean that a woman cannot refuse her husband's request for sexual intercourse.
- Acquittal of rapists through marriage (non-spouse): There is no specific provision in the law that acquits a rapist who marries his victim.

Review of Current Policies Relating to Women, Peace and Security:

The National Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (2020-2023)¹³

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MoSAL) was tasked with preparing the National Plan to lead the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.

¹³ The National Plan for the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (2020-2023), Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor.

The Council of Ministers, chaired by Prime Minister Maeen Abdul Malik, approved the draft resolution on implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in its session held on Sunday, 16 December 2018. The plan was launched in May 2020 under the name “The National Action Plan for the Implementation of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security,” presented by the then Minister of Social Affairs and Labor.¹⁴ The plan emphasized the significance of the resolution and the difficult situations faced by women and girls in conflict zones. Throughout Yemen’s history, wars and armed conflicts have had negative repercussions on development, infrastructure destruction, and increased displacement.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor appointed an advisor for the development of the National Action Plan in 2018. By December 2019, the Council of Ministers approved the National Action Plan, making Yemen the fifth country in the Middle East and North Africa to have a national action plan on Women, Peace, and Security. The drafts of the National Action Plan remained confidential and limited in circulation. The plan was officially launched in May 2020 on the official website of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, following delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor organized three workshops, the first focusing on planning, the second on review of the draft, and the last one on capacity building for staff. Sixteen government entities participated in the said workshops, including representatives from ministries and four United Nations agencies, namely the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Two international non-governmental organizations, CARE and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, took part alongside seven local non-governmental organizations, including four member organizations of the Yemeni Women’s Solidarity Network, such as the Yemeni Women’s Union, Wogood Foundation for Human Security, To Be Foundation for Rights and Freedoms, and Raseel Foundation for Development and Media, as well as Hand in Hand for Development, and Leaders for Development Network and Be Human Initiative.

The National Action Plan includes 45 outcomes categorized within thematic areas including: 1) Participation, 2) The prevention of conflict, sexual violence, gender-based violence, and terrorism, 3) Protection, and 4) Gender-sensitive humanitarian aid. The proposed activities could be described as focusing on capacity-building for women and government personnel, the development of databases, guidelines, research, and documentation of women’s rights issues, awareness campaigns, and the provision of limited services specifically to support female refugees.

The National Action Plan emphasizes the enhancement of participation by increasing the involvement of women at the legislative, executive, and judicial levels, in security and military roles, and in both local and international mechanisms overseeing the implementation of international human rights treaties, in diplomatic services, and in conflict resolution and peacekeeping operations. Prevention has been supported through the establishment of gender-sen-

¹⁴ Ex-Minister, Dr. Ibtihaj Al-Kamal.

sitive early warning mechanisms, increasing women's participation in preventing extremism and violence, the enforcement of laws and legislation, and the training of police and military personnel in the prevention of violence against women. Protection improvements have been made by offering health, psychological, and legal support services to women and girls who are victims of violations and violence, developing manuals for service providers, the implementation of empowerment programs for women during and post-conflict, and providing education for girls, as well as the establishment of rehabilitation centers for women and girls who experience violence. Relief and recovery efforts address the needs of vulnerable displaced women and girls, refugees who are victims of violence for relief, and care services, involving women in disarmament plans and in relief and humanitarian efforts, and implementing immediate programs for women's empowerment to integrate into their host communities.

The National Plan includes as its references the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (of 2000) on Women, Peace, and Security, and, specifically, subsequent Resolution 2242 (of 2015), which focuses on convening informal Security Council meetings on Women, Peace, and Security, and integrating the agenda with efforts to counter extremism. Additionally, Resolution 2250 (of 2015) on Youth, Peace, and Security was added as a foundational reference in formulating the National Plan for Women, Peace, and Security in Yemen. The Security Council resolutions concerning Women, Peace, and Security comprise 15 resolutions (as of 2019), emphasizing the active participation of women and their protection from sexual and gender-based

violence. The plan has also integrated International Humanitarian Law as an international reference; however, it neglects to mention international frameworks specific to gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) or the Beijing Platform for Action, and other international covenants on economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention Against Torture, and other international treaties to which Yemen is committed.

The Comprehensive National Dialogue Conference has yielded 135 outcomes pertaining to women's rights. The National Action Plan mentioned only a subset of these concerning participation, focusing exclusively on elected bodies, despite the Conference's call for women's involvement across all decision-making spheres, stipulating a minimum representation quota of 30 per cent. A selective application of this quota is evident, for instance, in the Plan's primary objective of "enhancing women's participation at all levels in decision-making positions," there is an explicit and tangible reference to increasing women's participation to 30 per cent in negotiation-related outcomes. However, in outcomes discussing women's general participation such as "presence of women in decision-making positions," there is no clear mention of any specific representation percentage to be achieved.

Subsequently, the institutional structure of the Plan was addressed, identifying several legal references for its implementation. These included references not mentioned in the initial Plan and comprised the specification of Council of Ministers' Resolution No. 20 of 2014 regarding women's 30 per

cent and youth's 20 per cent representation in leadership positions within the state, as outlined by the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference. This includes the same representation quota for women, youth, and people from the southern regions of 50 per cent in various negotiation tracks and in decision-making positions. Generally speaking, it includes the international references comprising international conventions related to human rights and the rights of women and girls ratified by the Yemeni government, including Security Council Resolution 1325 (of 2000) and its nine subsequent resolutions (noting that the Women, Peace, and Security agenda includes 15 resolutions as of 2019), the Geneva Convention of 1949 concerning the protection of civilians during wars—a part of the International Humanitarian Law, the Refugee Convention of 1951, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, along with its Optional Protocol and the Beijing Platform for Action.

Regarding the National Plan, it also failed to address the various groups of women and reflect their priorities and needs in the National Action Plan such as underage girls, mothers of child soldiers, women with disabilities, rural women, women heads of households, and internally displaced women within the national action plan. Moreover, the National Action Plan lacked a mechanism for protecting female human rights defenders and women detainees because of their public work or opinions opposing armed groups. Although the Plan includes an objective of “enhancing protection of women from all forms of violence,” it lacks programs to provide assistance to female victims.

Stakeholders and Institutions Involved in Peacebuilding and Security at the National and Local Levels:

Institutional Structure of the National Plan:¹⁵

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor has established a comprehensive institutional structure on three levels for operation, consisting of the Consultative Committee chaired by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, the National Team for Planning, Coordination, and Monitoring, and the Local Working Groups (currently, only the Aden Working Group has been formed), as follows:

1. The National Action Plan's Advisory Committee: This is an advisory unit comprising 19 members (14 women and five men) representing the principal ministries (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Human Rights and Legal Affairs, and Ministry of Local Administration), the National Women's Committee, two judges from the Public Prosecutor's Office, and leading figures from civil society organizations, private sector, and academic institutions. The National Advisory Committee is responsible for offering counsel and guidance to the executive units of the National Action Plan, resource mobilization, and communication at the national, regional, and

¹⁵ Institutional structure and its terms of reference (2022), p. 3-7.

- international levels. It is chaired by the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor.
2. The National Team for Planning, Coordination, and Monitoring serves as the executive component of the National Action Plan, responsible for coordinating, planning, monitoring, and evaluating the implementation of the National Action Plan, as well as reporting progress levels in executing the National Action Plan to national and international bodies. The team consists of 12 women: seven representing women's departments in the principal ministries (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Local Administration, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, Ministry of Legal Affairs and Human Rights, and Ministry of Justice), one from the National Women's Committee, and four representing women's and youth civil society organizations. The National Team for Planning, Coordination, and Monitoring is chaired by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor.
 3. The Local Working Groups are the operational units responsible for planning and implementing the activities of the National Action Plan at the local level (one group in every governorate), and the group consists of 12 members from the women's heads of departments in the local executive units of the principal ministries, local security committee, and civil society organizations. The governor chairs the Local Working Group. To date, the Aden Working Group has been established by the governor, comprising 13 members, with the General Director for Women's Development serving as the acting chair.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor is the designated entity tasked with developing the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the National Action Plan, which includes involving all relevant government authorities and civil society organizations engaged in implementing the plan's activities. This reference body is tasked with oversight, tracking, and assessment responsibilities, in addition to defining its functions and competencies. Additionally, the Ministry is responsible for coordination between various sectors. Efforts are made by the Ministry to evaluate and enhance the programs and activities listed in the plan to achieve the desired goals in light of changing circumstances. To ensure the objectives of the plan are met, performance indicators for each activity will be established to measure the level of progress (Activity Plan, 2023). The Ministry has also developed a policy on coordination and oversight for Yemen's National Action Plan to implement programs related to women, peace, and security¹⁶, to synchronize efforts across all institutions involved in executing the plan.

Women's Active Efforts in Peacebuilding at the National Level:

Women's networks and alliances have emerged, endeavoring to engage women in negotiations and the peace-building process and prompting their voice in national, regional, and international forums. These collectives work to combat violence against women and girls, alleviate civilian suffering, support prisoners and detainees, and provide humanitarian relief. During the

¹⁶ Coordination and oversight policy for the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (2022) in Yemen, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor.

war, women in Yemen have established initiatives, organizations, and foundations with the aim of promoting peace and providing support to their local communities. These initiatives have contributed to building solidarity and reducing the risks faced by women, particularly human rights defenders, as well as sustaining women's public roles across Yemen. Prominent among such Women's initiatives are the following:

1. **Yemen Feminist Peace Group:** This group was formed by the Peace Track Initiative with the membership of 30 leading women who regularly work together to convene second-track meetings and connect women to national, regional, and international communities. Together they have developed a Feminist Peace Roadmap¹⁷, which included key references for the peace process, proposals to improve participation at all stages of the peace process, recommendations for ceasefires, trust-building measures, economic and humanitarian arrangements, and mechanisms for involving women in decision-making positions. More than a thousand individuals from local and national leaderships (74 per cent of whom are women) participated in developing the roadmap. It was launched at a Feminist Peace Conference held regularly by the Peace Track Initiative and distributed during the Yemeni-Yemeni consultations sponsored by the Gulf Cooperation Council in Riyadh in April 2022. Some of the roadmap's recommendations were reflected in the outcomes, and it was also shared with the Security Council, resulting in resolutions calling for diverse participation

¹⁷ Feminist Peace Roadmap: <https://peacetrackinitiative.org/feminist-peace-roadmap/>

in the peace process and improving women and youth representation.

2. **Women's Solidarity Network¹⁸:** This network seeks to coordinate efforts towards achieving peace and maintaining and protecting women's rights. It is composed of 200 women both inside and outside the country. As a technical secretariat, the network supports the Peace Track Initiative and its members have provided briefings to the Security Council on women's rights. Recently, a Steering Committee was established with the membership of seven women leaders working to improve institutionalization and collective action, among the most significant achievements is the establishment of a database of women's expertise to support their participation.¹⁹
3. **Feminist Summit:** The Feminist Summit was founded by Wogood Foundation for Human Security and includes over 200 women from various governorates in Yemen.
4. It aims to hold an annual national summit in the capital city of Aden, to discuss women's rights on International Human Rights Day, regularly focusing on the Women, Peace, and Security agenda including the National Plan and affirming the outcomes of the Feminist Peace Roadmap. International and national institutions participate in this Feminist Summit.

¹⁸ Women's Solidarity Network: <https://www.womensolidaritynetwork.org/>

¹⁹ Women Experts Database: <https://www.womensolidaritynetwork.org/women-experts>

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda (2016)

In 2016, seventy-six distinguished women leaders, representing civil society organizations and government institutions, undertook the formulation of the national Women, Peace, and Security agenda²⁰. Civil society primarily led the efforts towards this initiative through virtual meetings organized by the Peace Track Initiative Foundation. The national agenda was shared in November 2016 with stakeholders at the national level, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the UN Special Envoy to Yemen, ambassadors of the 19 states sponsoring the peace process in Yemen, as well as members of the UN Security Council. The national agenda established priorities and recommendations to advance the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in Yemen and specifically called for developing a national action plan. The national document was formally acknowledged and cited by the then Swedish Foreign Minister, Her Excellency Margot Wallström, during the United Nations Security Council's Informal Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security in March 2017, organized by UN Women in New York. The international community's response culminated with a presidential statement by the UN Security Council in June 2017, which featured strong gender-sensitive language and called upon national parties and the UN Envoy to enhance the representation of women in peace negotiations.

20 قندن جآلآ (2016) The national Women, Peace, and Security agenda (2016) <https://peacetrackinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/wps-national-agenda-en.pdf>

5. The Technical Advisory Group: In the year 2017, the then UN Envoy formed a Technical Advisory Group consisting of seven women to participate on the sidelines of the consultations that were held. They played an active role in providing technical papers.
6. The Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security: One of the most prominent women's components working in the field of peacebuilding in Yemen, established with the support of UN Women, its inception served as an impetus for the emergence of additional initiatives that based their work on Resolution 1325. The Women's Pact was formed in October 2015 during a conference held in Larnaca, Cyprus, attended by 30 participants from various political spectra and different parts of Yemen. A number of alliances, networks, and women's initiatives in the field of peacebuilding during the war have also been established, the most prominent of which is Women's Solidarity Network. Often, female activists have distanced themselves from individual work—and known organizations that may be subject to threat—seeking to join such alliances in pursuit of collective protection. These groups aimed to create new entities comprising women from all political and partisan backgrounds—including parties to the conflict—and involved prominent activists from all regions of Yemen to enhance diversity and solidarity.
7. The Feminist Group of Nine: UN Women supported the formation of a new group named the Feminist Group of Nine. In March 2019, the members of the Feminist Group of Nine convened the "Women Mediators for Peace" conference in

Amman, Jordan. The group includes: The Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security; the Yemeni Feminist Summit; the Peace Partners Alliance; and Marib Girls Foundation—currently represented in the group by peacebuilders; the Youth Leaders Foundation represented by the Youth Advisory Council; Southern Women for Peace; the Feminist Voices for Peace Network; Women for Yemen Network; and the Women's Solidarity Network, which withdrew in April 2020 due to its reservations on the joint action document that imposes consensus and neutrality, replaced by the Youth Wa3i Platform. These initiatives represent either a single network like the Women's Pact, Voices for Peace, and Women for Yemen, or a group of networks like the Peace Partners Alliance and the Feminist Summit. However, there are several women's alliances not part of the Feminist Group of Nine, such as the Association of Abductees' Mothers, Women of Hadhramaut for Peace, Future Generations, among others. All these components agree on the objective of ending the war in Yemen and advocate for peace and women's participation in peace negotiations and peacebuilding.

Degree of Progress

In November 2021, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NORCAP), with funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, supported an agreement with the UNDP country office in Yemen. This arrangement included the provision of technical assistance to the government for the implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) pertaining to Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), particularly in areas concerning the establishment of a framework for the plan's

execution, capacity-building of relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions, fostering partnerships, and supporting resource mobilization. Two experts—both international and national—specializing in women, peace, and security were appointed.

The implementation plan for operationalizing the National Action Plan in Yemen regarding Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) for January - December 2022²¹ was developed, based on a local approach to operationalizing the National Action Plan, a briefing on gender, and activities focused on capacity-building for institutional work.

The first annual report on the degree of progress²² indicated that the one-year experience of operationalizing the National Action Plan in Yemen provided ample opportunities for developing human capacities related to the implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. However, it also highlighted structural constraints that impede progress in achieving the objectives of the National Action Plan in Yemen, including enhancing the participation of women in peace negotiations and decision-making positions, providing the necessary measures for the protection of women and the reduction of gender-based violence, supporting the social and economic recovery of women affected by conflict, and strengthening their resilience.

The report illuminated the opportunities and key lessons learned, particularly the increase in national ownership, the shared responsibility towards implementation amongst various governmental and civil

21 Executive plan to activate the National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) in Yemen, January - December 2022, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor.

22 The first annual report on the events of the National Plan for the Implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, 1 January - 31 December 2022, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor.

society sectors led by the Ministry of Social Affairs, aligning the plan through understanding the needs and priorities of women and girls hailing from diverse groups such as the displaced, marginalized, and those with disabilities. Guided by elements of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, the emphasis was placed on the quality of women's participation over merely increasing the quantity of women's participation. Additionally, the capacities of the personnel were developed in flexible and locally consistent planning, and a group of male and female allies in senior leadership positions was established to support the plan.

The report also reflected a number of challenges manifested by the lack of sufficient human resources within the Ministry of Social Affairs, the lack of financial resources that could be directed to partners of the Plan in various ministries, as well as a continuation of operations through the United Nations and civil society organizations. A significant division between security forces was a primary reason for the inclusion of representatives from the Ministry of the Interior and the Security Belt (established post-war) in the institutional structure of the Plan.

The National Plan's activities for implementing the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in Yemen from January to December 2023 were further developed²³. The work included four main axes: coordination and monitoring activities which involved the development of a monitoring system to measure the impact of the Plan's activities on the situation of women and girls; pivotal activities targeting the security and justice sector in Aden Governorate which included assessing security needs and

the self-evaluation of security institutions regarding their gender-responsive policies, encouraging women to report violence directed against them, and qualifying the police center in Dar Saad as a pilot phase; parallel activities for members of the National Team to mainstream and integrate the National Plan into the action plans of various institutions; and evaluating the implementation process of the Plan and determining future trajectories.

²³ Activities of the National Plan for Implementing the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Yemen, January - December 2023.

The Outcomes of Focus Group Sessions and Indicators Achieved for Stakeholders (Aden):

The field outcomes are based on the data gathered from the mapping's targeted demographics and thus reflect the opinions that were presented:

National Plan: The Field Mapping has Validated the Following with Respect to the Implementation of the National Plan

1. **Financial Challenges:** According to the focus group sessions, there was a confirmation of the limitations on funding, and the government's reluctance, represented by the Prime Minister's Office, to allocate the necessary budget for the Plan's implementation. Funding was predominantly limited to technical aspects only and frequently failed to cover participation costs of members from outside Aden Governorate for the Consultative Committee and the National Team. As a result, virtual participation was supported. The Plan primarily relied on funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which provided support through civil society, also reflecting a lack of UN confidence in the government. These challenges had a general impact on sustainability, alignment of the Plan, and the formation of local working groups, with the formation of the Aden group being delayed

and the initialization of groups in Hadhramaut and Taiz being postponed.

2. **Programming Challenges:** It was confirmed that the Plan focuses intensively on security-related work [for the 2023 activities], and initial outcomes from the mapping indicated a public distrust of security institutions, with people preferring not to turn to police stations or courts. The Plan was also significantly concerned with building capacities in the field of gender. Nevertheless, the Advisory Committee refrained from participation, despite interest from some of its members. It was communicated that the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation would start working on a national recovery plan [supported by ESCWA].
3. **Institutional Challenges:** When forming the institutional structure, different government sectors and civil society were represented. Initially, the number was limited due to scant technical support, which was subsequently increased. There were inquiries about the absence of some members from attending meetings, especially representatives of the security sector. The Yemeni Women Union objected to their lack of representation in the Advisory Committee, despite being among the institutions that contributed to the Plan's preparation.

The Status of Women's Participation

Political Participation of Women:

There is a need to advocate for the representation of women in the current government, which is completely devoid of female members. There is a paramount necessity to operationalize women's representation quotas and to leverage proportional lists to pressure parties and political components to nominate their female members, with emphasis on the significance of advancing the participation of independent women as well.

Marginalization of Southern Women:

There exists a sense of grievance among female representatives in the South, and particularly women in Aden, who have been deprived of opportunities and resources. Many women in the North have managed to reach international leadership levels, whereas women in the South have been confined to traditional roles and the expectation to "stay at home to raise children." There is a perceived genuine challenge when requesting the nomination of Southern women [for leadership positions in the state or for executing the plan].

Enhancing Women's Participation in the Judiciary:

The importance of supporting women's participation in the judicial sector was underscored, citing appointments such as Judge Sabah Alwani to the Supreme Judicial Council, among others. One participant noted that the database at the Higher Judicial Institute in Sana'a lacks representation of Southern women. Furthermore, employ-

ment is affected by nepotism and favoritism, resulting in the hiring of unqualified individuals (offsprings), adversely impacting the judiciary—which is a pervasive issue in most state sectors. Nevertheless, there is also a tendency toward employment based on equal opportunity, which has resulted in enhancing women's roles in the judiciary at large. Additionally, there were complaints that a judge frowned upon the referral of abuse cases to the court for women seeking divorce, and there was astonishment at the Ministry of Justice not confronting this judge.

Marginalization of Internally-Displaced and Marginalized Women:

Generally, it was affirmed that the situation of marginalized women in the peace participation process is non-existent, and that any participation could be facilitated via civil society organizations. Regarding violence against marginalized women, it was described as "marginalized women taking action because their men are unruly and often create problems to expedite their cases swiftly." A proposal was made to alter the term from 'marginalized groups' to 'less fortunate groups.' With regard to internally displaced women, there is a perception that funding for displaced women in Aden exceeds that directed toward host women, particularly widows and divorcees, amid dire economic conditions of price hikes and living expenses. One participant also referred to the use of the term "IDP- salaries" applied to ministry employees hailing from other areas.

Participation of Women at the Local-Level:

There is a tendency to seek women's help

at the local level. For instance, one woman, Fikriyah Khaled—a neighborhood leader working with the Productive Families Program in Seerah—is called upon by the community to resolve issues. There are also initiatives of local mediators working in districts who assist in resolving cases alongside police stations. On the other hand, the largest conflicts at the level of Dar Saad District, Eastern Region, between IDP's and the host community—with four camps present—were resolved. Organizations and local health authorities directed assistance towards IDP's, leaving the host community, who are among the marginalized, without aid, although they were involved in a cash-for-work project. Moreover, an extensive training program was launched in facilities and institutions, involving women's studies master's graduates from the Women's Research and Training Center at the University of Aden, as part of gender equality enhancement and the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, and was implemented across five governorates.

Initiatives for Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

It has been affirmed that organizational programs were directed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, which entailed economic, social, and psychological effects that were particularly detrimental to women.

- In Abyan: There were interventions by health-related organizations, whether designated for COVID-19 response or in the field of awareness in environmental sanitation, supported by UNICEF efforts. The National Women's Committee and the Media Office, in collaboration with the Yemeni Women's Union and local civil society organiza-

tions, developed brochures and the team visited targeted villages and areas. Moreover, there were youth efforts to distribute these brochures, hang them up, distribute masks, and build partnerships with the Health Office.

- In Aden: The role of volunteers in health centers was prominent; graduates of medical colleges and those from medical institutes worked bravely during the COVID-19 period, with little concern for their lives. Many doctors outside Yemen assisted through communications with hospitals to support clinical cases. The Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Cluster also provided virtual family counseling services, yet the incidence of violence against women increased, necessitating working with centers offering services to women survivors.

Local Initiatives for Peace Promotion

An Initiative to End the Conflict in Abyan Governorate:

Within the Abyan Governorate, independent and humanitarian initiatives were primarily developed for conflict resolution and achieving peace toward what is now referred to as the "safe environment." Given that Abyan had been a focal point for conflicts especially between feuding brothers (those affiliated with legitimacy and those affiliated with the Southern Transitional Council), the National Women's Committee conducted field visits to conflict zones, including the Sheikh Salem area, where complete displacement occurred. Women from the area sent out distress calls, and the National Women's Committee—coordinating with partisan women and political

components including the Socialist Party and Transitional Council—arranged meetings with the people to encourage their return. However, these efforts were rejected due to a lack of guarantees against conflict resurgence. Coordination with the Kuwaiti Association was made to support and motivate people's return by distributing food baskets and small amounts of money, following earlier initiatives that included peaceful rallies outside the governorate, the release of peace doves, the raising of white flags, and the promotion that Abyan is the pulsating heart of the South.

Access to Justice for Juveniles and Women:

A committee for Legal Awareness and Rule of Law No. 36 of 2023 was established to raise legal awareness across most ministries and in centers, forums, and networks among them, as well as to raise awareness about the prevalence of drug abuse. The Juvenile Justice project, supported by UNICEF, has been launched, through which a strategic plan was developed to protect children in touch with the law, offering judicial aid to children. Through it, 29 lawyers were hired, with 15 lawyers providing legal aid to children involved with the law at police stations and prosecution offices across seven governorates, including Aden, Lahj, and Abyan. For juveniles, programs related to security were offered as the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor is responsible for the care of juveniles.

Moreover, the operationalization of specialized units dealing with the services for litigant women in appellate and first-degree courts was decreed under No. 15 of 2022. Currently, coordination is underway with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) concerning the legal em-

powerment of impoverished and indigent women. A psychological support program has been launched, offering psychological support to female prisoners and raising awareness of their rights – including legal support programs and the cancellation of their debts – as well as providing enlightenment on rights and delivering social justice for marginalized women. Additionally, several judges and lawyers in Hadhramaut were trained on considering women's psychological well-being during detention. The University of Aden has played an influential role through the Women, Peace, and Security program, going to facilities to educate women about gender concepts.

The Outcomes of Focus Group Sessions and Achieved Indicators for the Governorate of Aden:

Women participated in conflict resolution initiatives at the local level, acting as mediators between parties to the conflict (enabling the repair of damaged electricity and allowing workers to make repairs, transferring water and food to the resistance). Less fortunate women are involved in mediating traditional conflicts within their neighborhoods or areas through community committees. In initiatives concerning peace and security issues, participation tends to be limited to elite women, those with strong personalities and standing, or tribal affiliations, or based on connections through a minister, governor, or being the daughter of a particular individual (favoritism). For example, there was advocacy for an issue regarding individuals with disabilities, in solidarity with a disabled student who applied to study medicine and was rejected by the medical faculty due to their disability, stemming from the viewpoint that disabled individuals could not partici-

pate.

This group confirmed that the local authority lacks written plans or documents for resolving conflicts and issues at the community level, both during peace and war. There are no plans to include women from every group, and existing plans are implemented by international organizations in cooperation with local civil society organizations. Initiatives carried out by the local authority are executed due to influence and pressure from citizens who take to the streets in demonstrations demanding services—unless these demonstrations are confronted with live ammunition.

The same group mentioned responses to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on both the economic and health aspects, such as livelihood initiatives and cash-for-work programs offered by international organizations, with local authorities participating in their implementation. In addition to preventive measures for internally displaced women through providing them with job opportunities and opening small income-generating projects to address their economic and health crises, which created conflicts with the host community (specifically the less fortunate) that were left without assistance in the Dar Saad area. The situation was addressed by involving the marginalized group by 30 per cent as opposed to 70 per cent for the internally displaced population, and gender was mainstreamed into some initiatives; in some, women participated at a rate of half, and in others, they did not participate at all.

The group agreed that the local authority is aware of the resolutions related to Women, Peace, and Security and international charters; despite their mandatory nature, they are not enforced, and there are no formal

mechanisms for implementation, nor is there women's participation or alignment. Women's participation from the elite in power is confined to only three women in some districts, and some lack participation altogether. They have little to no influence except perhaps on changing internal regulations, and some believe they are incapable of change even at the level of internal regulations.

Overall, factors that hinder meaningful female participation in public life and the enhancement of peace and security include patriarchal perspectives, which often result in opposition from family members such as husbands, fathers, brothers, imposed due to male guardianship, and restrictions due to customs, traditions, and negative stereotypes. Often the women themselves and their fears are also barriers. Some believe that women can participate in any area of life, except in security and criminal investigation, as these are deemed unsuitable for them as women. There is a belief (by men) that a woman's place is in her home and that she should prioritize her domestic responsibilities.

Regarding opportunities, there exists a significant imperative for the enactment of laws that bolster women's support and enhance their engagement in public life. The COVID-19 pandemic has had adverse impacts on women's capacity for participation due to its financial and psychological effects, compounded by the isolation and restriction from leaving homes.

The Outcomes of the focus group sessions and achieved indicators for Abyan Governorate:

Historically, women have played a substantial role during the armed struggle and

have been partners to men in the political, social, military, and civil domains. Even amid conflicts, they assumed familial responsibilities, even in the presence of men, and contributed to the economy through the labor market and active participation in social media such as the Women's Union Organization and associations operating in Abyan Governorate.

Although their contemporary involvement in mediating tribal disputes is scant, when women intervene in conflict resolution according to tribal customs, their influence is robust in tribal and social reconciliation. Politically, however, their participation is marginalized.

Certain initiatives for conflict resolution are in place, such as the Youth Foundation of Abyan's initiative and involvement of the residents of Al-Harur village regarding water tanks and water distribution. The provision of potable water to all the villages is another part of the initiative. Moreover, there is an initiative led by a representative of the displaced persons' camp in addressing sexual harassment disputes in the dark Wadi Qarn'ah. The dispute existed between the host community and the displaced, where displaced women, lacking lavatories, had to go to the valley, rendering them vulnerable to harassment. The installation of lighting poles along the women's path from the valley to the camps eradicated the sexual harassment against the displaced women.

Another initiative pertains to the missing prisoners, where women from Abyan participated in marches and demonstrations and formed a women's initiative for the mothers of the missing named the "Association of Mothers of the Missing." Additionally, the Yemeni Women's Union initiated prevention of child marriage as a means to settle debts.

The majority of female participants in political initiatives are predominantly from elite and activist circles, while women from less fortunate backgrounds, those with disabilities, and displaced women have been marginalized. In an initiative associated with the demonstrations for the killing of a woman, women from all social strata, as well as men, contributed.

The report also denotes the resurgence of the caste system (slaves and masters) in Abyan, institutionally embodied in the Tribal Alliance of the Sons of Abyan (Sheikhs), which is regulated by tribal references rather than law. Embedded in the organizational structure of the alliance is a department for 'Reform of Disputes Amongst People' through mediation, arbitration, and reconciliatory means to resolve conflicts at the local level. Within this alliance, there is no integration of gender perspectives, nor participation of the less fortunate or women.

There have been remedial actions addressing the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on economic initiatives, with some associations assisting housewives by training them in handicrafts, benefiting from their marketing efforts. Addressing the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on health aspects, vaccines were mentioned. Six women and seven men, their ages ranging between 40 and 50 years, participated in this aspect, along with various women, including the marginalized and displaced, who contributed to the psychological support efforts. However, inclusion of all groups, especially those with disabilities, does not always occur.

It should be noted that in two districts of Abyan out of a total of 11, women's participation is considered acceptable,

with treatment of marginalized groups being non-discriminatory. However, in the central regions, comprising 9 districts such as Lawder, Mudiya, Jayshan, and Ahwar, participation is restricted to men only, with social stratification based on class.

Local peacebuilding actors lack awareness of Resolution 1325 and its implementation mechanism (the National Plan), with no ongoing efforts to align with this agenda in the governorate. Most groups are uninformed about the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, except for three individuals within the targeted group who have information about Resolution 1325.

Regarding women's representation in the current local governance councils, there are five women in districts within Abyan governorate, with one at the governorate level, all of whom are considered elite and therefore not among the less fortunate women. Their impact is relegated solely to the execution of internal regulations. In the local council of Zinjibar, there are two women. Selection of participants in the local council is discriminatory, chosen based on tribal affiliation or political patronage. While women in Abyan engage in traditional conflict mediation within the region, they do not partake in official dispute resolutions or peace negotiations and mediations.

The outcomes also clarified that factors impeding purposeful participation of women in public life and the enhancement of peace and security include societal shame, customs, traditions in a male-dominated society that refuses to accept women's authority, especially at formal levels like presidency. Religious and Islamic law are also cited as deterrents, along with their extensive social responsibilities towards home and children. The absence of security

for holding directorial or official roles within the governorate also poses an obstacle. On the other hand, the factors hindering women's participation differ across groups; marginalized or disabled women may work on farms—customarily associated with the less fortunate—while such labor impacts the elite women's status, with some suggesting that these differences existed before the 2015 war. Given the current situation, even tribal women are compelled to work in agriculture, reflecting variations in the impact based on the woman's location or area of residence.

Concerning the facilitators promoting women's participation in public life, especially in central Abyan, support from authorities and provision of security are crucial, as is familial support (particularly from men). The findings indicate that recent crises, including COVID-19, have affected women, burdening them with financial family responsibilities, obliging them to work and earn income. The closures of several workplaces that employed women continue to have adverse effects. Women have lost their income sources, turning to agriculture or sheep herding. Socially, within domestic frameworks, women have faced heightened domestic violence resulting from husbands losing their waged employment, leading to discord and family violence. Despite these impediments varying between groups, marginalized women from the aforementioned factors do not see them as barriers and can work anywhere without deeming it shameful, unlike women from tribal backgrounds or a sheikh's daughter.

As for religious and Islamic law, some areas strictly adhere to these precepts, while

others approach them with more flexibility.

The Outcomes of Focus Group Sessions and the Achieved Indicators for Shabwah Governorate:

The targeted group outcomes in Shabwah Governorate revealed existing initiatives and efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict and building peace. Historically in Shabwah, women, predominantly housewives, held a role in mediation and conflict resolution, bringing disputing parties closer—whether familial or tribal. Women would intervene in cases of kinship or blood feud, particularly if they were elderly and held in high regard. Currently, their role has diminished, becoming very weak, with no presence of women resolving tribal disputes, instead resolving only familial issues. Most conflict resolution initiatives are tribal in nature and involve males from the sheikhs and tribes.

Women participate in traditional conflict mediation efforts related to resolving familial problems, but they do not engage in formal dispute resolution or in peace negotiations and mediations. The outcomes indicate a marginalization of women, even if they attempt to participate in courses or workshops. This marginalization extends to the Women's Union of Yemen, which has been relegated to a name without a physical presence in the governorate for over four years, despite support from international organizations. Additionally, the family and society in Shabwah Governorate have confined women's roles to the health and educational sectors.

Regarding current initiatives that aim to address the effects of intersecting crises (economic, political, health including COVID-19, and humanitarian) in the region,

there is a youth association initiative in which only young men participated, spreading awareness about the dangers of carrying weapons and renouncing blood feuds, which had a strong impact. The initiative to stop carrying weapons and tribal initiatives do not include women. The Bridge of Peace initiative, stretching to the neighboring areas of Abyan and Aden, and the initiatives in water and electric power were resolved only by men's participation, as women are not present in decision-making or in planning the public electricity corporation. According to traditions, some of the targeted individuals claim unintentional killing of a woman does not constitute an issue and does not enter into blood feud matters.

The outcomes showed that initiatives have addressed the aftereffects of the war's economic crises and because of COVID-19. There were safe space initiatives for women and children, who were breadwinners during the war in many districts. About 30 families in three districts were targeted, including disabled persons or mothers of disabled individuals with limited income, who were trained in skills such as sewing, which are needed in the labor market. Alongside the training, they were provided complete work tools like sewing machines and fabric. In these economic-related initiatives overseen by international organizations with assistance from the executive offices, the organizations require female involvement, such as the safe spaces initiative for abused women, which had equal participation (six women and six men), and gender inclusion was also integrated. In the health sector, initiatives for psychological support treated the impact caused by COVID-19. The kidney dialysis initiative addressed a crisis resulting from travel logistics from Shabwah to Aden, resolved by

establishing a dialysis center in Shabwah, thereby solving the problem. The provision of a physiotherapy center, complete with equipment and specialists, enabled patients to receive treatment and avoid travel hardships to Mukalla for therapy, thus resolving a significant issue in the southern districts of Shabwah.

Initiatives by Al-Hikma Association in partnership with the Yemeni Women's Union included social and awareness-raising initiatives about inheritance from husbands, fathers, etc., where women unwittingly signed away their inheritance rights during mourning rituals.

This practice led to crises for many women deprived of their inheritance rights by male members of their families. The denial of women's inheritance is a prevalent practice in many parts of Shabwah. In this initiative, the participation of less fortunate women was very minimal. The elite or tribal class does not engage in initiatives or respond to crisis effects, even at levels of local positions or authority; going outside the home would be considered shameful and against their customs, representing a return to the caste system (slaves and masters). Others believe that this class division was pertinent in the past and not currently, as there are many other initiatives such as the tribal covenant in the Al-Saeed district to reduce conflicts, expand the peace circle, Peace Ambassadors, promising signs, raising community awareness to mitigate drug prevalence in the governorate, Shabwah tribal alliance and societal peace, the opposing case, breast cancer awareness, Warm Winter, Amidst the Suffering, Peace Incubator platform, Disadvantages of Khat, Youth Imprint, A Tree in Every Home, A Paramedic in Every Home, opening medical facilities in all districts of Shabwah Governorate, and a

Blood Bank.

Moreover, the outcomes showed that Shabwah is the only governorate, among the four where sessions were conducted, without any roles for women in the police; there are no female police officers because the Ministry of Interior has not responded to demands for providing female officers. Despite the existence of two rooms (juvenile detention and women's prison), they are manned by men. In a particular case of physical violence where a woman was abused by her husband through burning and her condition escalated to criminal investigation, the absence of female police meant they had to call the president of the Yemeni Women's Union – may she rest in peace – who then attended, took the abused woman, and facilitated her transfer to the hospital.

The outcomes uniformly indicated that there are no plans, strategies, or documents related to conflict resolution and ensuring peace and security in the country and local areas, nor is there integration from a gender perspective. There are no action plans for active women in local authority or governance regarding integrating women in initiatives and public life participation in Shabwah that have been raised to the governor's office, nor have there been any plans, strategies, or conceptualizations regarding the need for a shelter for abused displaced women or the necessity for female police officers. Some also mentioned the Shabwah Vision 2025 and the strategic project matrix for the governorate, as well as subsidiary plans for executive offices (local authority).

On the other hand, in Shabwah, there are plans, strategies, or documents for the Women's Development Association related to

economically and politically empowering women. These include programs and projects with participation from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, and the governor created a safe space for women and a child-friendly area. Women belonging to less fortunate groups (marginalized) participated. Within the plan and strategy, there were endeavors for women to participate in local authority, which is still under consideration.

There are strategic plans with the local authority and Sana'a center to resolve road disputes severed after the war, especially the road leading from Shabwah to Bayhan, Marib, and Al-Jawf. In conjunction with the local authority, the center undertook a project to establish Shabwah University, which has been operational for over four years. Following that was a plan to allocate free seats for individuals with disabilities in postgraduate studies at Shabwah University, addressing the needs of a male-dominated society as enrollees at this university are men. Generally, participation in the aforementioned plans was male dominated.

Plans to solve the midwifery crisis in the villages, in which the organization FMF contributed with coordination from the Ministry of Health, enabled 30 midwives in a two-month training course along with providing them with midwifery kits and tools. Subsequently, they were able to open clinics as midwives in villages across all Shabwah's districts, where participation was female focused.

Moreover, the targeted demographic noted that due to the absence of women's prisons in some cases, files concerning women who have committed criminal acts are archived or the women are released on bail with non-incarceration sentences, as there is

no women's prison available. Additionally, the majority of those in session viewed Shabwah society as a male-dominated tribal society that does not accept the concept of female police officers, military women, or women's roles in dispute resolution. This nullifies the existence of women's roles in Shabwah, where most teachers in the governorate are from other governorates such as Aden and Abyan. When registration for female police was considered with an age criterion (20-35 years), and specifically for daughters of Shabwah, the applicants were young women from outside Shabwah. Since the conditions stated that only daughters from Shabwah were eligible, the recruitment process could not be completed. In contrast, less fortunate women, known as "marginalized," were sought to aid in police raids and tasks typically performed by female officers.

The outcomes highlighted that local actors in peace-building—the local authorities included—are unaware of UN Resolution 1325 concerning Women, Peace, and Security, and have no knowledge of the national plan. Efforts to align with the Women, Peace, and Security resolutions at the level of Shabwah governorate are non-existent. One participant noted attending several workshops organized by the Sana'a Center in Ataq, where the local authority participated, discussing the UN resolution. Recommendations were made to adopt this resolution and strategic plans to activate it, with proposals raised to the UN envoy, but these initiatives concluded when the workshops ended.

Regarding women's participation in the current local governance councils and municipal governments, there are representations of four women in Shabwah in decision-making roles: the Executive Office,

the Yemeni Women's Union, Women's Development, and the National Committee. There is no general female participation in local authorities in Shabwah, and women in the Executive Office are not involved in traditional conflict resolution, such as mediation, nor do they participate in peace negotiations. Some perceive their selection as influenced by party standards or intermediation. Generally, this representation of the four women does not reach the level of decision-making or influence.

The outcomes clarified that factors hindering purposeful female participation in public life include: shame, custom, and traditions to a significant extent, alongside the geographical nature of the governorate, meaning Shabwah's extensive geographic areas are rural, isolated villages, and mountainous regions where there are no schools for girls and no education due to the distance from the governorate center and their location at the tops of mountains and valleys. Girls' education usually ceases at the third or fifth grade. In these rural areas, women in Shabwah are generally unaware of peace issues. Additionally, women themselves, conditioned by customs and traditions, even if educated, are unlikely to seek employment, whether in governmental or educational positions, with few searching for jobs.

Another barrier is the conservative messaging women receive from mosques, which do not advocate for women's rights to inheritance equal to men, the right to education, and more. Moreover, Shabwah society is male dominated, viewing women as inferior beings created to be housewives, and if they do work, they are confined to the realms of education or healthcare. While some see Shabwah society evolving into an open-minded community towards

women and their work, the lack of job opportunities or cessation of employment has prevented women of Shabwah from obtaining work, leading them to seek alternatives or remain at home.

The outcomes also indicated that recent crises, including COVID-19, have impacted women's capacity for meaningful participation in public life. The war, displacement, and economic conditions have forced women into the labor market, which has been an opportunity for many. Previously, women's roles were limited to agriculture and herding. Two years ago, a market for women was opened; they began trading in stores, buying and selling, and due to empowerment, many women started working as hairdressers, tailors, pastry chefs, and cooks, opening many shops and utilizing online marketing, thus adapting to circumstances and managing their lives more effectively than before. As for achieving peace and resolving conflicts, women's participation was confined to raising awareness through workshops organized by international organizations.

Some men from the targeted group in Shabwah believe that previous factors such as customs, traditions, inferior views, male dominance, and illiteracy affect all women in general, being the main reasons that obstruct women's participation in public life across all groups and classes. For example, when jobs in the female police force were advertised, no women from the Shabwah area applied, and thus those jobs were canceled because the applicants were from other governorates.

The targeted female group believes that the impact of these factors does not extend to all women across all sections and classes. Less fortunate groups such as displaced

and marginalized women (who are not originally from the governorate) compelled by necessity, ventured out to work. There are breadwinning women and widows who were forced into the labor market. Yet today, material needs have compelled some of the poorer women from Shabwah Governorate, who were previously self-sufficient, to seek work, participation in public life, within organizations, institutions, or even self-employment such as promoting merchandise on WhatsApp. However, according to one participant's opinion, even if the situation changes, society's view of women remains the same, stigmatizing women who step out of their homes to work or pursue other activities.

The Outcomes of Focus Group Sessions and Achieved Indicators for Hadhramaut Governorate:

In Hadhramaut Governorate, eight women formed the Hadhramaut Women for Peace group following their successful efforts to reopen a local airport and a main road, after attending capacity-building training, conflict analysis, communications, negotiations, and planning in February 2018. The women organized four focal sessions to discuss and analyze key local issues such as the reopening of Al Rayan Airport and Al-Shihr to Al Mukalla road. The latter was closed due to armed conflicts, compelling citizens to take a rough, alternative route that was costly, exhausting, and took two and a half hours instead of 45 minutes. Due to the road's closure, some university students were unable to attend their classes, and patients in need of medical care in Al Mukalla passed away en route due to the prolonged travel time. As a result of the women's efforts, the road was temporarily opened to allow small cars to pass from

six in the morning until six in the evening and was later fully reopened by July 2019. The women also succeeded in temporarily reopening Al Rayan Airport; two international flights landed in 2019 and early 2020, in addition to weekly United Nations flights. They were also involved in numerous initiatives, including, for example: (Hadhramaut Women for Peace, legal aid to support women and the establishment of a support unit to receive women's complaints "Yemeni Women's Union Coast and Valley," advocacy and mobilization for constructing a women's checkpoint at the governorate's prison in Al Mukalla, Hadhramaut for the implementation of women's conference outcomes and establishing Women's Development Departments at the coast and valley, formation of women's committees in neighborhoods for Seyoun district, youth initiatives as makers to compensate for the absence of the state, initiative to rehabilitate Shibam city and protect historical libraries... among other initiatives).

The local authority is not genuinely engaged in women's participation in public life, and if there are instances of participation, they take place through intermediation, as societal awareness continues to reject such involvement. Despite women entering the workforce due to economic conditions, those engaged in agricultural work receive lower wages than men, even if their labor is twice as hard, yet they do not object, seeing it as the man's rightful due. As for initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict and building peace, women participate in community popular committees that intervene in resolving disputes, with 20 committees involving women among them.

The local authority lacks any strategy or plan related to resolving conflicts and ensuring peace and security in the region

or at the community level, both in peacetime and war. However, some point out that there are some plans, such as: (the security plan in Al Mukalla Governorate, the emergency humanitarian response plan for Hadhramaut 2019, along with Hadhramaut's 2040 strategic vision in partnership with Hadhramaut University). The impact resulting from COVID-19 was addressed through mutual aid within the community and youth distributing food and milk to children, with some organizations providing psychological support.

The local authority does not possess any local plans, strategies, or documents related to crisis response and recovery. The actors in local-level peace-building - including local authorities - are unaware of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda and the national plan.

Women in authority and current local governance in Hadhramaut Governorate are represented by four women holding key roles: a General Director at the radio station, a General Director for Women's Development at the Governor's office, a General Director at Bashraheel Hospital, and a General Director at the Healing Support Fund. They all belong to the middle social class and are seniors in age. These women do not participate in all topics relevant to the local authority and are unable to influence decision-making, leading to a lack of targeted involvement in their roles. Furthermore, there is a woman in the position of Deputy Governor who oversees women occupying leadership positions such as general directors in Al Mukalla, as detailed below:

1. General Director of Pensions, Al Mukalla.
2. General Director of Radio, Al Mukalla.

3. General Director of Culture, Al Mukalla.
4. General Director of the Environmental Protection Authority, Al Mukalla.
5. Chairwoman of the National Women's Committee, Coast.
6. Chairwoman of the National Women's Committee, Valley.
7. Director of Women's Development Department, Coast.
8. Director of Women's Development Department, Valley.
9. Director of Research and Administrative Development, Al Mukalla.
10. General Director of the Youth Support Fund, Al Mukalla.
11. General Director of Al Mukalla Hospital, Al Mukalla.
12. In the Executive Office, the actual attendees are:
13. Chairwoman of the National Women's Committee, Coast.
14. Director of the Al Mukalla Radio.
15. Director of Culture, Al Mukalla.
16. Director of Environmental Protection, Al Mukalla.
17. Director of Pensions, Al Mukalla.
18. Women's Development Department, Valley.

As for the factors that hinder women's participation in public life and promote peace and security, they include negative customs and traditions, a patriarchal view of women, women themselves not taking advantage of available opportunities, conflicts among women, and the concept of shame and prohibition, which is more prevalent in valley regions than coastal regions.

COVID-19 has had an impact on women's participation, as they have taken up unconventional professions, especially in Hadramawt, such as selling in commercial stores, working in fields like tailoring, starting projects and taking loans, cooking and selling pastries in the market.

Two conferences were held in Hadhramaut on women and peace. One was held in 2019 by the National Women's Committee under the slogan "Women as Partners in Building, Development, Peace, and Stability," and the second one is scheduled for 2022 under the name "Women and Peace Conference," organized by the Peace Road Foundation.

The Outcomes of Interviews and Achieved Indicators:

In Shabwah Governorate:

- The situation of women in Shabwah has changed compared to the previous period. They are now working in the government and private sectors and have enrolled in different colleges such as medicine and economics, in addition to colleges that previously were restricted to them, such as the College of Education and the Health Institute. They pursue education both within and outside Shabwah, mainly at Aden University. However, their participation in workshops and work at internal and external institutions is still very limited. Some incidents occur where women become victims, especially in blood feud-related cases. This is not intentional but rather due to the tribal custom that views it as a disgrace to kill, harm, or commit violence against a woman. In the past, women in Shabwah played a significant role in resolving tribal conflicts. For example, in some areas, a woman would come out,

display her braid, and throw it between the feuding parties, thus resolving the conflict. However, currently, women rarely participate in conflict resolution. There is importance in women's political participation in Shabwah, but when nominations or selections are made, women often stand against each other. Currently, some women are appointed to positions and put under a testing period. At present, there are four women in local authorities representing different sectors in Shabwah Governorate, and they have an influence in their respective administrations. Fifty women from Shabwah have been recruited to work in the security sector. Shabwah is the only governorate where women are not working in the security sector, anticipation exists for their receipt of identification and a designated salary from the Ministry of Interior.

- In Shabwah, there is a lack of awareness about the women's agenda, peace, security, and the national plan. Women's participation is mainly limited to resolving family disputes such as divorce and other family conflicts. However, when local committees are formed to bridge the gap between conflicting parties, such as land disputes or neighbor clashes, women are involved. Women also participate in arbitration committees. There is a desire to employ women, as there are vacant positions in the Social Affairs and Labor Office, but there is a lack of financial incentives. Tribal customs hold a higher status than national laws and international treaties. When women intervene in conflict resolution, their opinions are heard and imposed on everyone.
- In Mif'ah area, a woman intervened and

resolved a conflict over an electricity transformer. She made a promise to herself in front of the male parties involved in the dispute and successfully resolved it. Here, customs came into play when this woman made a promise, as her word was accepted by men as a means of resolving the conflict. If international agreements and decisions align with customs, they will be accepted. Negative customs require a change in societal awareness and the authorities' mindset.

In Hadhramaut:

- In Hadhramaut, women participate extensively in conflict resolution through community-based popular committees, which have been established with the support of the Dutch project. Each committee consists of 6-7 women. Additionally, women's influence in decision-making in their workplaces, especially the five women in local authority positions, has become meaningful. The status of women in Mukalla has changed significantly, and they can now reach the highest positions, as some have even become deputy governors. They are no longer deprived of their rights and have the freedom to choose what they desire without suffering from any economic problems, among others. However, the situation may differ slightly in Wadi. As for the women's agenda and peace and security, a peace and security conference has been held here today, addressing the women's agenda in relation to peace and security.
- Two women from civil society organizations emphasize that this participation in conflict resolution is limited to resolving domestic disputes only. However, when it comes to security and peace issues, their participation at the official level is

rejected, and the issues are referred to men's councils. If a woman successfully resolves any issue through reconciliation, it is attributed to the man, and her name is not even mentioned. They believe that the five women in local authorities have no significant influence, as they are not invited to local authority meetings. Successful women who can reach managerial positions face resistance and abuse. Additionally, women in some families are deprived of their inheritance, and young girls are married off, denying them access to education. The Hadrami society still suffers from a racist perspective towards less fortunate groups, non-Hadramis, aristocrats, and slaves, especially in relation to marriage issues, where a woman from an aristocratic class cannot marry someone not belonging to her class. Moreover, there are no plans or strategies for crises or others within the local authority. As for international conventions and decisions, the local authority has no knowledge or specific understanding of UN Resolution 1325 and its executive mechanisms (national plan). Those who speak about these international conventions are labeled as infidels, and insults are directed at them by name in the Friday sermons at mosques.

4

RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

Recommendations:

There is a need to revise the National Plan in a more participatory manner, issuing the new phase with broad involvement from all relevant parties, civil society institutions, and various women's collectives in Yemen. A phased strategic plan for the National Plan should be prepared, spanning 3-5 years consecutively. Annual plans for sectoral agencies and institutions for the programs outlined in the National Plan should be developed according to their specialization.

It is important to develop a tool to measure the impact of activities or an indicator tool for the level of implementation of the National Plan to date. This point is noted in the 2023 plan activities, and there is potential for work on this, representing an opportunity for joint action. There is also importance in locally affirming the indicators set internationally for measuring impact and adapting them to the reality of Yemen.

There continues to be a need for raising awareness about the National Plan for the Women, Peace, and Security agenda among the plan's partners, including the local group in Aden, and in the governorates of Shabwah, Abyan, and Hadhramaut.

Exchange of expertise with countries close to Yemen's institutional and political situation that have successfully implemented the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in their government programs.

There is a need to work more sustainably with the institutional structure of the plan, as well as in the target governorates, to

absorb the special characteristics of each governorate, their needs, and understand their institutional and structural capabilities in implementing the National Plan, incorporating this into the general plan update.

The government should allocate specific financial resources from the state budget to implement the plan seriously and mobilize resources regionally and internationally to promote the plan's execution.

There is a necessity to support the recommendation for establishing a fund for survivors of sexual violence and gender-based violence, in accordance with the recommendations from the expert panel supporting the Sanctions Committee.

Inclusion of a representative from the Ministry of Finance in the composition of the advisory body due to its importance in supporting the National Plan. "Aden"

Operationalizing the role of the governorate committee for the Women, Peace, and Security agenda as soon as possible by:

Analyzing the reality of social marginalization and gender inequality in the governorate through systematic analysis to ensure the availability of analytical information and evidence about the living situation of women and girls.

Engaging all active parties in different districts by uniting youth in the process of analyzing social marginalization and gender inequality. "Abyan"

Adopting the plan by local communities in the liberated governorates. "Shabwah + Hadhramaut"

Operationalizing the role of the National Women's Committee at the central and local levels. "Shabwah"

Raising awareness of the local plan conveying community issues concerning the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. "Shabwah + Hadhramaut"

Discarding the National Plan as it does not address issues in local communities, and local communities have not benefited from the existence of the National Plan. "Shabwah"

Forming a special committee for the Wadi Hadhramaut to work on the local plan in areas distinct from the coastal region of Hadramawt, due to their differing issues. "Hadhramaut"

Reviewing the National Plan. "Hadhramaut"

The imperative need for a measuring tool for plan activities, implementation indicators, and the local plan. "Hadhramaut"

There is an urgent need to raise awareness of the agenda and the local plan. "Hadhramaut"

There is a necessity of exchanging experiences with countries that have worked on National/Local plans. "Hadhramaut"

There is a need to create a more sustainable local plan with the plan's institutional structures, allocate resources, and establish a fund to support survivors, etc. "Hadhramaut."

Conclusion:

This mapping reviewed the implementation status of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in Yemen across four governorates: the capital city of Aden, Abyan, Hadhramaut and Shabwah. It scrutinized the state of women's participation in the public

sphere, particularly in politics, and evaluated the protection status of women in areas that have experienced and continue to be affected by conflict. Women and girls consistently face economic, social, security, and environmental dangers. The mapping generally reflected the situation of challenges and priorities faced by women of various backgrounds in terms of peace and security in these regions, and it mapped and analyzed the peacebuilding initiatives in the targeted governorates. The research methodology employed was a desk review that examined the legal and constitutional gaps in gender discrimination and detailed the developmental stages of the National Plan to implement Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (2020-2023), led by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. It also listed the institutional structure for implementing the plan, which included the Advisory Committee for the National Plan, the National Planning, Coordination, and Monitoring Team, and local working groups, the first of which was established in the capital Aden as a pilot model.

The mapping added valuable information resulting from data collection through focal group discussions and interviews, elucidating major challenges related to patriarchal thinking that constricts women, along with funding, programmatic, and institutional challenges faced by the plan's implementation team. In the four targeted areas, there are calls for better representation of women in decision-making positions, and voices in support of women's representation in the judicial sector. However, particularly Southern women feel aggrieved due to their lack of access to opportunities and resources, criticizing their inability to nominate women for leadership positions because

of these barriers. Less fortunate and displaced women suffer systematic exclusion, and while women's participation at the local level is prominent, it remains limited. Women have played a significant role in initiatives aimed at combating the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, with multifaceted factors from insecurity preventing women's participation and representation.

The findings of this mapping highlighted various indicators regarding the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. Although the mapping covers all aspects related to prevention, protection, decision-making participation, relief and recovery, legislation, strategy, as well as the role of civil society, it remained somewhat vague in framing questions for the targeted group, especially since most of this group was unaware of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. Nevertheless, the outcomes provided deeper insight into the condition of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in Yemen. It enables us to create clear maps on aligning the Women, Peace, and Security agenda by providing global documents around it, assisting national and local decision-makers in crafting public policies for implementing the Women, Peace, and Security agenda that suit the social and cultural environment of each governorate with its specificities, which will reflect on expanding the National Plan and allowing participation from those governorates and others to establish decisions, plans, and use local tools, mechanisms, and resources for implementation.

The aim is to furnish local authorities with summaries of the maps that can support informed decisions and actions regarding women's roles in peacebuilding to implement the Women, Peace, and Security agenda in those governorates. In further

efforts, it is possible to organize briefings and workshops with relevant stakeholders and representatives and highlight the gaps and opportunities presented. Additionally, posting online summaries that could enhance outreach.

The mapping concluded with a number of recommendations to support the implementation of the National Plan, including its participatory review with relevant parties and civil institutions, the importance of linking it with plans for the executing agencies, supporting the creation of a tool to measure the plan's impact and adapting international indicators to the reality in Yemen. There is a significance in continuing to raise awareness among local teams about the National Plan and the importance of aligning it. There was also a recommendation on the importance of exchanging experiences akin to Yemen's situation. It is crucial to allocate necessary resources for executing the plan and mobilizing additional regional and international resources. Finally, there is an importance in advocating for the establishment of a special fund for survivors of sexual violence and gender-based violence as recommended by the expert committee supporting the Sanctions Committee.

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