



Supporting  
Arab Women  
at the Table



## Peace Building Initiatives and Alternative Forms of Women's Political Participation in Syria

### SYRIA

- ① What local peacebuilding initiatives exist in Syria and to what degree have they been represented in high-level peace discussions?
- ② What alternative forms of participation have emerged in Syria? And to what degree have these been informing official negotiations and peacebuilding tracks?
- ③ How can alternative and local forms of political engagement inform the implementation of international resolutions such as UNSCR 1325? How can these be used to ensure diversity and representation of different women's activist movements and groups in mainstream politics?



#### CONTEXT

There is a need to understand the different types of challenges and barriers Syrian women face due to their gender, race, location, and other political factors from an intersectional perspective. The humanitarian disaster, destruction, and fragmentation affecting Syria as the revolution turned into an armed conflict have all contributed to creating barriers and problems for Syrian women including: displacement; poverty; and physical, mental, psychological, and emotional problems. To understand these different aspects of women's lives, it is important to acknowledge that women's experiences are diverse, and their perspectives unique; thus, their visions of women's political participation in peacebuilding and security are also diverse.



#### GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

The study was conducted in Damascus (Jaramana, Douma, al-Hameh), Al-Suwayda, Al-Raqqa, Homs, Salamiyah, Idlib, Qamishli, Dayr al-Zour, and Aleppo (Afrin and Qabasin).



#### METHODOLOGY

The research primarily used in-depth individual interviews and group discussions with 196 women from across Syria. An intersectional feminist analytical framework was utilized in order to understand women's experiences in politics, security, and peace processes from a broader perspective and make sense of the varied challenges and barriers they face due to different sociocultural factors.

## Takeaways on Women's Role in Peacebuilding in Syria

- Syrian women are actively challenging political structural oppression and stereotypes by engaging in grassroots activism.
- There is necessity for Syrian women to engage democratically and formally in order to bypass the impediments posed by the regime and de facto authorities in different regions.
- Syrian women's definitions of peace generally represents a positive and just state beyond the cessation of conflict.

#### PRODUCED BY

Centre for Transnational Development and Collaboration (CTDC): An intersectional multi- and interdisciplinary feminist consultancy, with a transnational social justice agenda.  
Release Me: A civil society organization seeking to achieve inclusive, feminist justice and peace in Syria.

# Policy Recommendations



## Strategic Collaboration

Syrian feminist and human rights organizations should work towards a unified strategy for implementing the WPS agenda and UNSCR 1325.



## Support and Visibility

Women-led civil peace initiatives in Syria should be supported and highlighted through local and international media, fostering experience exchange with women from other conflict-affected countries.



## Sustainable Peace Agreements

Future peace agreements should be sensitive to gender, regional and sectarian differences, abilities, age, and location. Advocacy should focus on ending violence, including gender-based violence, and constitutional reform reflecting these demographic differences.

“We achieved a lot politically, economically, and socially since the beginning of the revolution, despite the armed conflict and our circumstances, including forced migration and displacement. However, our impact remains weak, although there are women nowadays in leadership, decision-making positions and, in the media, women still confront attacks and marginalization and are still blamed for shortcomings.”

“Political work needs women to be interested in the public sphere, and to participate in planning policies in high positions, in a way that pushes for equality between all citizens and guarantees women’s rights.”