

# WOMEN'S VOICES FROM LIBYA

## RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN ACTION PLAN

In September 2017, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) announced its Action Plan, which provides, among other things, for amending the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA), organizing a National Conference, preparing for elections, and providing humanitarian assistance. In March 2018 the UN Security Council is expected to receive a briefing from the Special Representative and head of the UNSMIL. The following policy brief includes recommendations from women civil society leaders<sup>1</sup> towards the implementation of the UN Action Plan in Libya to promote an inclusive and sustainable peace process.

Libya has undergone tremendous political, economic and social changes. More than seven years after Muammar Gaddafi's government was toppled in 2011, different parties are still fighting for control over the country. So far none has managed to form a stable or broadly recognized government. Instability and violence have escalated since 2014, when post-election violence led to civil war. Continuous armed hostilities caused an economic crisis across Libya. Armed groups deeply affect the daily lives of men, women and children throughout the country. At the onset of 2018, calls for elections led to further unrest and the destruction of electoral registration centres. The state's fragility further exacerbates existing gender disparities, resulting in substantial gaps in women's access to economic, social and political opportunities.

*“ We specifically request the UN SRSG to report back at regular intervals on the implementation of UNSCR 2367 and 1325 on the full, equal and effective participation of women. “*

**Dr. Rida Altubuly, Director, Together We Build It (TWBI)**

The security situation has now degraded to the point where military dominance leaves little to no space for women to participate in reconciliation and peace processes. This has negatively impacted on women's freedom of movement, freedom of association and freedom of public and political engagement. While 50% of Libyans are women and 60% are youth, both groups have been largely excluded from the institutions of power and political involvement in the reconciliation process. Strategies to engage with young people (men and women) and ensure their participation are still lacking.



Peace demonstration in Tripoli (Together We Build It Foundation)

Largely excluded are also civil society organizations (CSOs), despite being amongst the actors best placed to understand the concerns and opportunities on the ground. The exclusion of CSOs has resulted in short-sightedness in relation to the experiences and concerns of women and men at the grassroots level. Excluding these voices, results in incomplete analysis and a limited understanding of legitimate peace and security concerns of different groups. Indigenous people and minority groups also struggle to find their place in the political process, with very limited representation in decision-making spaces. Currently, stakeholders responsible for bringing sustainable peace do not reflect the demographic structure of the country.

According to UNSCR 2376, the announced UN Action Plan should take fully into account a gender perspective throughout its implementation. It should assist the Government of National Accord (GNA) to ensure the full and effective participation of women in the democratic transition, reconciliation efforts, the security sector and in national institutions in line with resolution 1325. This commitment, if fully implemented, has the potential to ensure sustainable peace in Libya.

<sup>1</sup> This policy brief has been prepared by the Together We Build It Foundation and Tamazight Women Movement as part of their advocacy mission in February / March 2018. Both organizations are supported by Cordaid and Human Security Collective under the National Action Plan 1325 of the Netherlands.

## Recommendations to UN Member states

### As representatives of Libyan civil society, we:

Fully endorse *the UNSCR 2367* urging for the full, equal and effective participation of women in all activities relating to the democratic transition, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It supports the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (UN SRSG) to facilitate the wider engagement and participation of women from across the spectrum of Libyan society in the political process and public institutions. Furthermore, it calls on the Libyan authorities to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict, including addressing impunity for sexual violence crimes.

Fully endorse *the UNSCR 1325*, adopted in 2000, which marks the formal recognition of the decisive role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and peace-building and stresses the importance of their equal participation in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

### Regarding the UNSMIL Action plan, we emphasize on the importance of an inclusive process.

Therefore, we:

- Call for *regular meetings between the UN SRSG and women and youth* to consult with them on all aspects of the UNSMIL Action Plan.
- Call for *regular consultations with women-led civil society organizations* as part of an ad-hoc consultative mechanism on matters of conflict resolution, peacebuilding and counterterrorism efforts. Women peace activists from diverse backgrounds, representing large women's groups and a multitude of voices, must be included in developing security plans to ensure local, national and regional security.
- Call for the *full political participation of Libyan women and youth*. It is important to ensure that the laws regulating the upcoming elections will provide women and youth with a fair chance to participate in elections. For this purpose, we ask for a minimum quota for women and a separate minimum quota for youth.
- Ask for the *allocation of human and financial resources* to ensure the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 and 2367.
- Ask to address the *ongoing threats to Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) and civil society leaders*.
- Ask for the *investigation and monitoring of human rights violations, including Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)*. The safety, dignity and long-term needs of survivors of human rights violations and their families should be at the heart of such efforts. CSOs, including local women's groups, should be supported to advocate such an approach and provide services.

### Regarding security and safety, we believe that disarmament and arms control are conditional to prevent further escalation of the conflict.

Therefore, we:

- Ask for the *prioritization of a comprehensive disarmament strategy, that includes local and gender perspectives*, strengthens UNSMIL's disarmament work and is crafted by both Libyan and international actors.
- Ask to develop and support local initiatives that promote *the reintegration and rehabilitation of militia and armed groups, prior and parallel to a comprehensive disarmament strategy*.
- Urge to invest in a comprehensive strategy to *develop a formal security sector in Libya*, instead of backing different armed groups.
- Ask the international community to *ensure better conditions in all detainment centres* with the support of civil society.

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*“ Without a coherent disarmament plan, democratic processes such as elections will fail.”*

Asma Khalifa, Co-founder Tamazight Women Movement.

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### Regarding the democratic process, we ask for a Libyan-led process, supported by the International Community, ensuring:

- *A more transparent democratic process*. In particular, we ask for important information about steps and milestones, such as the National Conference, to be widely disseminated and announced well ahead in time.
- *Increased representation and participation of women, youth, CSOs and minority groups* throughout the political process, including the upcoming National Conference.

*This policy brief has been developed by the Together We Build It Foundation and the Tamazight Women Movement, supported by Cordaid, as part of the program “Women and Youth as bridgebuilders: strengthening resilience in Libya” This program falls under the Dutch NAP 1325 and is implemented in partnership with Cordaid and Human Security Collective and a diverse network of Libyan civil society organizations.*

For more info: email: [Sabina.atzei@cordaid.org](mailto:Sabina.atzei@cordaid.org)  
Program manager Security & Justice