



An Oxfam Community Health Volunteer speaks at a public health promotion event to celebrate Global Handwashing Day in Taiz.  
Photo: Oxfam

# WE WON'T WAIT

As war ravages Yemen, its women strive to build peace

Conflict in Yemen has left thousands dead, millions homeless or hungry, and an economy in ruins. But hopes for peace talks are fading and a new approach is needed. Women and girls are particularly affected by the conflict and have a crucial role to play in building peace at the local level. Despite some efforts to assist them, women are not receiving enough practical support and diplomatic commitment. Such backing is necessary to bridge the gap between local, national and international peace talks. This is essential for a viable and inclusive peace process that yields lasting results.

# SUMMARY

'I hope my children are able to return home and complete their schooling. I don't want them to become soldiers to kill other people, even if they are their enemies,' says Asmaa, a mother of three forced from her home due to intense cross-border fighting between Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

The current conflict between the internationally recognized government (supported by a coalition of Arabian Gulf states led by Saudi Arabia), and opposition forces known as the Houthis (supported by the General People's Council, or GPC, which is affiliated with the previous president Ali Abdullah Saleh), has resulted in a humanitarian catastrophe that will be felt for decades. More than 10 million Yemenis are in acute need of humanitarian aid. Human rights violations and abuses, including gender-based violence, have been widely reported. Mothers are struggling to feed over 1.5 million malnourished children, almost one third of whom are severely malnourished. In the words of social activist Samira Balah in Al Hudaydah, 'we need to save our future generations before it's too late'.

None feel the failure to secure peace more acutely than those who continue to be displaced from their homes as the country plunges towards social, economic and institutional collapse.<sup>1</sup> In their pursuit of military victory, parties to the conflict are exacerbating the humanitarian situation when they target essential services, infrastructure and block access to aid. Aid alone cannot address these catastrophic effects; only an end to the violence can. Peace is essential for the survival of over 10 million Yemenis in acute need of immediate humanitarian aid, including many like Asmaa's family.<sup>2</sup>

There is a phrase in Yemen – *almar'a nesf almujtama* – which means 'women are half of society'. In 2011, Yemeni women successfully challenged a system that initially excluded them, to achieve representation in the National Dialogue Conference, the six-month peace talks that followed the uprising. Despite the odds, Yemeni women act as informal peacemakers and peacekeepers, even though they are often marginalized from national and international peace talks and lack the resources to maximize the positive impact of their role. Today, there are hundreds of women-led initiatives to address the effects of the conflict. Oxfam and Saferworld staff frequently see Yemeni women taking on leadership roles and their associated risks. Take Samira for example: she is part of a group of women in Al Hudaydah who are monitoring the destruction of civilian infrastructure and helping vulnerable people to earn an income.

The international community is both praised and blamed for the war in Yemen. Many of the Western countries, particularly the United Kingdom, the United States and some European countries, are accused of fuelling this war by selling arms to the Saudis and its coalition, putting their profit ahead of their moral obligation towards Yemeni people. On the other hand, many governments, including some Western and Arabian Gulf donors, have contributed significant funding to the Yemen humanitarian response. Several governments and the UN have pursued diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict, including some initiatives to include women's perspectives and concerns.

But much more needs to be done, not only to increase the responsiveness of the humanitarian response to women and girls, but also to ensure peacebuilding efforts are effective and represent all of Yemeni society.

However, the participation of women in the peace process must be broadened at local, national and international levels – backed by accessible financial, technical and political support that enhances the scale and effectiveness of their contributions. It must allow opportunities for women from a diverse range of backgrounds, and from beyond Sana'a, to voice their concerns and ideas for the future. Increasing women's participation by encouraging locally led initiatives will help develop a stronger

collective voice on issues of common concern, not only those related to women, but the broader recovery and reconstruction process.

There is growing global evidence highlighting the effectiveness of women's participation in supporting the peace processes, and the significant contributions they have made to peacemaking and the implementation of final agreements.<sup>3</sup> The following recommendations outline how Yemeni, regional, international, and civil society actors can support this process.

Saferworld has been working in Yemen to support women's participation in politics, security and peacebuilding since 2011, publishing research, organizing debates and workshops with Yemeni civil society and government, and providing training and support to women's organizations. Working with partners across Yemen, Saferworld Yemen's current Gender Peace and Security Programme is focused on enhancing women's participation in peacebuilding at a local level.

Similarly, despite the current crisis, Oxfam is continuing to work with Yemeni women on mainstreaming programmes and on specific projects such as Women's Peace and Security and Women's Access to Justice. In general, throughout the region, Oxfam aims through different approaches to ensure gender equality. It delivers gender programmes through partnerships with local and national organizations, and focuses on building the capacity of local partners to ensure the sustainability of their work. Furthermore, when possible, Oxfam support the participation of Yemeni women activists in national and international forums, to allow them to express their concerns for their country and to lobby directly to office bearers.

## Recommendations

**Yemen's government, the Houthis and the GPC, the Saudi-led coalition, and other warring parties and groups at all levels should implement and abide by an immediate and comprehensive nationwide ceasefire, and support efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace agreement, including through the meaningful participation of women at all levels. They can do this by:**

- Committing to and upholding international human rights laws and standards, and ensuring that women and children are protected and have access to humanitarian assistance (including access to food, water and shelter).
- Directly including women in discussions taking their concerns into account, and linking talks to localized consultations and peacebuilding initiatives, by committing to international human rights laws and standards.
- Ensuring protection and facilitating freedom of movement for women activists inside and outside of Yemen.

**Governments, including donors to Yemen, should support women's participation in peace processes by:**

- Taking immediate actions to support a political solution to the conflict, using all points of leverage on the conflict parties to stop the fighting.
- Ensuring that at least 30% of participants in Yemen peace talks are women, including members of conflict party delegations and independent civil society delegations.
- Providing multi-year core funding and grants sufficient to sustain Yemeni women's organizations' engagement in local-level peacebuilding.
- Supporting women's meaningful participation in donor conferences (including in their preparation and design) to ensure interventions appropriately target the needs of women affected by conflict.
- Advancing the protection of women's rights activists and women human rights defenders from the personal risks and threats they may face as a consequence of their increased visibility, by increasing

their access to legal support and establishing a national monitoring and reporting mechanism that enables women activists to report any concerns they have about their safety and security.

**UN agencies and the Office of the Special Envoy should address the political isolation of Yemeni women by:**

- Actively facilitating their access to local, national and international forums and meetings, and giving them practical support to ensure the voices and experiences of women from diverse backgrounds are heard.

**Humanitarian agencies should work towards greater involvement of women in line with World Humanitarian Summit commitments on women and girls by:**

- Ensuring women's participation across all phases of the design and implementation of humanitarian programming.
- Ensuring that at least 40 percent of leadership positions in humanitarian contexts are held by women by 2020.
- Ensuring that at least 30 percent of staff at all levels are women by 2020, and 40 percent of staff at all levels are women by 2025.
- Advocating the Global Acceleration Instrument on Women, Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action (GAI) and other actors/donors to provide funding to local actors and to seek partnerships with Yemeni organizations led by and/or representing women at all levels.

**International and Yemeni civil society should:**

- Create channels to bring Yemeni women together from across conflict divides to identify key issues, demands and proposals for local, national and international peace talks.
- Explore and celebrate good practices on women's engagement at local and national levels.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the conflict in early 2015, Yemeni civilians have borne the brunt of almost daily attacks by all sides. A two-year bombing campaign and ground fighting has destroyed schools, homes, factories and markets. A devastated economy and continued violence has deepened the suffering of Yemeni women and girls, who already confronted systemic discrimination and marginalization before the conflict.

Peace talks have repeatedly failed to meaningfully include women or their concerns, under the exclusionary system of elite-male Yemeni politics. In areas of ongoing hostilities, like Taiz, Al Jawf, Sa'ada, Marib, Lahj, Hajjah and Al Hudaydah, it remains difficult for over two million people to return home, over half of whom are women and girls. More than one million people have returned home to be met by shattered basic infrastructure, a defunct economy and few social services. For households headed by women or children, there is an acute need for basic necessities like clean water and shelter. Since the escalation of hostilities, women have faced increased gender-based violence, while young girls are being married off as part of their families' desperate attempts to survive.<sup>4</sup>

The world must look to the examples of local women leaders around the world who are guiding efforts towards peace in their communities. Worldwide studies of numerous contexts have shown that there is a positive correlation between the strength of women's influence within peace negotiations and agreements being reached and implemented.<sup>5</sup> Women's involvement need not be limited to direct participation at the negotiating table, but can take place through consultations, problem-solving workshops or community mobilization activities, etc. Therefore, in order to increase the prospects of achieving a sustainable peace agreement for Yemen that enjoys widespread popular support, UN agencies and international donor governments should prioritize supporting women's roles and influence in the peace process by putting in place additional support structures and providing the financial resources they require to act flexibly and independently.

## 2 THE COLLAPSE AROUND US

*‘Children beg for vegetables from the market, and women go to the village to beg for flour and other food. Most people here eat only bread and tea.’*

Female participant in a discussion with marginalized groups in Taiz, as part of Oxfam’s gender assessment.<sup>6</sup>

Pictures of severely malnourished children in Yemen have shocked many people around the world.<sup>7</sup> However, such images only provide a glimpse of the untold and largely man-made suffering of more than 10 million Yemenis in need of immediate aid.<sup>8</sup> Over 800,000 girls are unable to access education;<sup>9</sup> around 500,000 pregnant women may be unable to find safe and affordable medical services;<sup>10</sup> and mothers are struggling to feed over 1.5 million malnourished children – almost one third of whom are suffering from severe acute malnutrition.<sup>11</sup> Violations of human rights and international humanitarian law have been perpetrated by all parties to the conflict, including through indiscriminate shelling and airstrikes on civilians and civilian infrastructure.

The slow progress in socio-economic and political development gained during the pre-crisis era has evaporated in an instant. Poverty rates are estimated to have doubled to 62 percent since the beginning of the conflict. This will only increase amid the failure to pay the salaries of 1.25 million public sector employees, which is depriving 30 percent of the population of their main household income.<sup>12</sup> This is exacerbated by the collapse of social safety nets, and the fact that prices of basic commodities have risen by around 26 percent.<sup>13</sup>

While the war continues unabated, the majority of the population bear the cost of the continued stalemate. Malnutrition and preventable diseases are likely to spread, killing even more Yemeni civilians. Over 14 million people do not have access to clean water or sanitation. In the face of the increasing threat of cholera, a health system operating on less than half of its previous capacity and lacking medicines, equipment and staff seems unlikely to be able cope.<sup>14</sup>

As the country races towards complete social, economic and institutional collapse, none feel the failure to secure peace more acutely than those who continue to be displaced from their homes.<sup>15</sup> Parties to the conflict are worsening the humanitarian situation through their pursuit of military victory, by destroying essential infrastructure and services, and blocking access for aid. Aid alone cannot address these catastrophic effects; only an end to the violence can.

### **Box 1: Caught between the warring parties**

The border areas between Yemen and Saudi Arabia have seen intense conflict. The majority of the population of Haradh district in Yemen was trapped between the warring parties, with most of its civilian infrastructure flattened. Asmaa lived here with her husband and three children. She was forced from her home into Abs district. This is an area where Oxfam supports a high number of displaced people, and has also been subjected to airstrikes.

Asmaa conveyed her concerns to Oxfam that, although her children had so far survived the conflict, they were unable to go to school. They face an uncertain future, because they left their essential documents at home in the rush to safety. She said, ‘I hope they are able to return home and complete their schooling. I don’t want them to become soldiers to kill other people, even if they are their enemies.’

When Oxfam surveyed displaced women across the north and south of Yemen, their priorities were for social services and educational opportunities for their children.<sup>16</sup> However, with the non-payment of government salaries, the few services that remained have now collapsed.



Asmaa and her family are unable to return to Haradh, which remains on the frontline of the conflict. Oxfam has closed operations there since February 2016, as it is now a no-go zone for humanitarians. Photo credit: Moayed Al-Shaibani/Oxfam

## Promoting peace and justice

Recent research by Oxfam outlined the continued role of women leaders within extended families and the broader community. It found that women consult with and provide representation to women as part of existing practices, in front of men in the family or community leaders – in contrast to the conservative belief held by many Yemenis that women do not play a role in tribal mediation.<sup>17</sup>

‘Women in the community here play an active role in promoting peace, solving day-to-day problems,’ said Noor Mohammad, a former teacher and Oxfam Community Mobilizer who was displaced from Haradh.<sup>18</sup> Going down to the fields, she often advocates the equitable distribution of firewood, particularly when displaced women and girls do much of the gathering. She enlists the help of women from the host community in dividing the wood evenly, as they also see ‘the fatigue and effort of displaced women’. Noor’s advocacy for the rights of displaced women like herself continues, particularly in the planting season when women go to work on the farms, where men ‘are giving them less than their fair reward’.



Azhar is nine years old and was forced with her family from Haradh. It is her task to collect wood so that the family can cook. However, firewood is a scarce resource for the host community. Photo credit: Moayed Al-Shaibani/Oxfam

As part of household visits, Noor learned about the issues faced by women who are displaced from their homes, especially around who should make decisions on how to spend limited household resources. This stems from a pervasive belief within the community that the voices and needs of women should not be prioritized. Noor encourages women ‘to not be fearful, to continue to raise [their] voice, because the men will get used to [their] being part of making family decisions’.

On her own initiative, Noor has also started a small school where girls are able to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills. She told Oxfam that 'girl's education is a key issue that will help women to defend themselves and protect their rights with no need for anyone else'. With increasing numbers of girls being married off as young as 13 due to their families' financial pressures, the need to keep them in school is urgent.<sup>19</sup>

There are many women like Noor, who must continue to be supported and empowered to actively participate in humanitarian relief efforts. Their needs and perspectives must be represented at local aid committees and at international donor conferences, resulting in interventions that are appropriate and sustainable. Aid efforts must advance gender equality and women's leadership, participation and protection, which will result not only in more effective humanitarian responses but also in peace dividends at the local level.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, women like Noor should be given a platform at national and international peace talks. This would imbue these talks with a dose of reality from the displaced people who are struggling to survive.

# 3 OUR COMMUNITIES, OUR VOICES

Under UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000),<sup>21</sup> it is recognized that women and children ‘account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons’. Wanton violence against civilians leads to deep grievances that can fuel further instability and conflict.

Political elites and armed actors have dragged Yemen into war and misery.<sup>22</sup> Yet, while women are excluded from talks by these elites, they are already seeking to realize positive change in Yemen.<sup>23</sup>

## Box 2: We need to be heard – we need to save future generations before it is too late

‘We are not the recipient of decisions; we are equal partners in making them,’ said Samira Balah, who through training and support was able to better understand, document and map local protection threats. Samira transferred her knowledge and determination to other women in her community in Al Hudaydah. Now the group is monitoring the destruction of civilian infrastructure, and helping vulnerable people earn an income within the shattered local economy.

Due to a lack of other opportunities to make a living, many young women are forced into petty crime to make ends meet. Samira’s group is helping to get detained women out of police stations and back home to their families, ensuring that they do not face harm in detention. The group also manages local conflicts that have flared up due to the intense financial pressures on families and communities.

Amid the continuing war, she and other women who spoke to Saferworld feel that ‘no one sees us, no one hears us’. When asked what message she would like to convey to those negotiating peace at the international level, Samira said: ‘Many families lost two generations to this war; we need to save our future generations before it is too late.’



Samira says that, despite their best efforts, the informal group of women peacebuilders are confronting a seemingly insurmountable wave of violence.

Photo credit: Samira Balah/Saferworld

Women's local peacebuilding efforts should be supported, as required under UN Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015),<sup>24</sup> which calls for member states to support women's involvement in 'mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflict'. By understanding the peacebuilding experience of women at the grassroots, governments and aid organizations alike can learn not only about their immediate needs, but will be able to identify how they can be supported to act as agents of even greater change.<sup>25</sup>

### Box 3: Light in the darkness

In the 'Light It Up' project within Saferworld's Communities Making Peace programme in Taiz,<sup>26</sup> Taghred is acting as a member of the local community action group identifying darkened paths that pose a threat to the safety of women and children in Al Muthafer. This is an area that hosts a large number of displaced people. Taghred was elected to guide a community-led initiative in which solar-powered lights were installed at various locations so that people could feel more comfortable moving around freely and safely. Together with the group, she was able to gain buy-in for the project from leaders of the Muthafer community, with whom installation and maintenance work has been shared.

## A place at the table

*'We had a dream to have a peaceful country, a country of law, but now we cannot work together. Civil society, women and youth should all be involved in decision making. We didn't reach the dream because people weren't included.'*

Dr Antelak Al-Mutawakel, co-founder of the Youth Leadership Development Foundation

Despite women and girls paying the highest price for the ongoing conflict, women's participation in the UN-led peace process has been extremely limited. This is primarily because the warring parties and their international supporters have failed to make meaningful concessions, and excluded not only women but other key elements of Yemeni society, such as youth. Such an approach has visibly failed to make progress, while heaping misery upon the population at large.

The conflict has silenced grassroots voices at a time when they could tell the real story of the Yemeni people – a story that is not often heard in Geneva, Riyadh or Kuwait City. UN-led talks are focused on establishing and maintaining a ceasefire, and the sequencing of political and security arrangements. However, it is also essential that they prepare a plan for a national peace process to be implemented as soon as possible. This must be inclusive and address local grievances, including those of women. Women's participation is crucial not only for the implementation of the peace process and reflecting of local grievances, but also to underscore the urgency of a ceasefire.

Efforts have been made by the UN to include women in the peace process through the creation of the 'Yemeni Women Pact for Peace and Security'.<sup>27</sup> Members of this group were invited to side-discussions in Kuwait. In October 2015, 45 Yemeni women from across the political spectrum came together to form a coalition for peace at a meeting convened by the UN in Larnaca, Cyprus. In May 2016, some of these women went to the peace talks being mediated by the UN in Kuwait to present common messages to the warring parties. However, despite the UN's efforts to meaningfully include women in the peace process, the seven women who participated were unsure about what their role as 'observers' entailed.<sup>28</sup>

The messages from the broader Pact coalition to the participating delegations at the Kuwait talks highlighted:

- The importance of reaching a fair and comprehensive peace, and a commitment to cease fighting and activate local truce committees.

- The need to engage women, youth and civil society in building peace and security, in part by allowing their full engagement in the committees (at all levels) created in a prospective peace deal.
- The effectiveness of mobilizing traditional methods of conflict resolution.
- The urgency of ensuring the continuation of education and health services.<sup>29</sup>

Rather than being involved in the strategic planning process of the 2016 formal peace talks, the few Yemeni women who were able to participate were relegated to unofficial discussions with minimal relevance to the main negotiations on political and security arrangements. If women and others who sit outside the political elite are not actively consulted on issues of substance, their perspective is unlikely to be included, and the resulting agreement (or impasse) will more likely serve the interests of the elite rather than the interests of the wider population. This will reinforce the dynamics that led to conflict in the first place.

Conversely, broad-based representation can help achieve a peace agreement and subsequent political and reconstruction processes that address the needs of a wider proportion of society – tackling structural gender and other inequalities, maximizing the impact of development aid investments, and laying the foundation of a widely supported and stable state.

The benefits of women's participation in peace talks are only realized when women can meaningfully participate at the centre of decision making, with real opportunities to influence the outcomes.

# 4 PEACE ‘DEAL’ OR REAL PEACE?

Yemen is a complex context. A ceasefire and a peaceful political process are the only solutions for the current conflict. Until belligerent parties stop putting their political and economic interests ahead of their interest in respecting their international obligations and protecting the lives of Yemeni people, Yemen will continue to be in turmoil. In addition, an elite male-dominated process has failed to deliver peace to Yemen. With the peace process stalled and violence continuing unabated, a change of approach that increases support for the active role of women in peace efforts has never been more important. Supporting local peacebuilding requires the resourcing of core support to women’s civil society organizations; national coordination and collaboration across conflict divides; developing links between female leaders and the wider network of female activists working at a local and community level; and access to international forums and processes for women.

## Yemen is our prison

When female Yemeni activists and leaders are invited to speak at international forums about the situation and their experience of war in Yemen, they are often unable to do so. This is partly because women frequently find themselves trapped, unable to move into, out of, or within the country. Barriers such as problems with transport infrastructure, bureaucratic restrictions and travel bans further restrict women’s movement and increase their isolation. Gender norms also restrict women’s freedom to move outside their homes, especially during periods of insecurity.<sup>30</sup> ‘When talking to women across the political spectrum they have told me: “Yemen is our prison”,’ said Awfa Al Naami, Gender Project Manager with Saferworld. An active and thriving civil society across the country is essential in order to propel women involved in local peacebuilding initiatives onto the international stage. The current political exclusion of Yemeni women must be addressed if future peace talks are to succeed.

## Bridging the gap

At the local level in Yemen, female activists speak of the need to bridge the gap between themselves and women leading peace efforts at the national and international level.

Women at the grassroots need a platform to be heard. There is clear potential for peace talks to extend beyond Sana’a to the governorate (regional) level. While the UN system has invested significant resources in some female Yemeni leaders, progress can be sustained and enhanced by developing greater linkages with peacebuilding initiatives led by local women.

At the national and international level, meaningful participation must go beyond just physical presence, to a situation in which women actively participate in planning agendas and take full part in discussions. This must include, but not be limited to, the sequencing of political and security arrangements at the core of the Yemen peace talks, in addition to a truly gender-responsive humanitarian programme.

Yemen is but one example among many that shows the failure to incorporate women’s voices into peace processes. A number of high-profile donor and diplomatic events about Yemen are scheduled in the coming months. Yemeni women from a diverse cross-section of society should not have to continue to wait for their chance to be heard. They should be included in these events, pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 2242.

## Women can deliver peace

When peace talks recommence, they must not be considered an end in themselves, but rather as one step in a peacebuilding process. The first step would be the preparation and design of the peace talks, in which women must be involved.

Women have made significant contributions to peacemaking and the implementation of final agreements across the world.<sup>31</sup> There are several ways in which women could be included in Yemen's peace process, beyond direct representation at the negotiating table or 'observer' status. These include consultations in which the peace process mediation team turn to local forums that can identify key issues, demands and proposals from women on the ground who confront the daily realities of conflict. With the national peace process stalled, engagement at this level becomes even more important.

Information from the grassroots can inform the joint positions of women pushing for peace at the national and international levels. Where disagreement exists, problem-solving workshops can help overcome the political tensions that exist as a result of an increasingly polarizing and deadly conflict. In order to take action to increase women's participation in the peace talks – such as by consultations of the mediation team with local forums – Yemeni women at local level require support structures and financial resources, such as those distributed by the Global Acceleration Instrument.<sup>32</sup>

Including more Yemeni women in the peace process at all levels and all phases would challenge the existing exclusionary power structures. Any agreement at the national level must translate and be accountable to those at the local level – women can play a role both in negotiating ceasefires at the national level and in ensuring that they are enforced at the community level. Their role in ensuring peace and security can engage the broader community, including local councils and tribal leaders.

An understanding must be built of what women exercising power and influence means in practical terms at the local level, including in de-escalation and coordination committees. In the potential process of recovery and reconstruction, women at the local level must be at the forefront of setting the priorities, once Yemen finds its way to peace.

# 5 CONCLUSION

In an increasingly localized conflict, the war has resulted in deep cleavages within Yemeni society. Local peacebuilding, reconciliation and the healing of these divisions will be needed once the guns finally fall silent. Women's groups have already started to work towards peace at the local level by engaging in discussions about possible peace processes and about their vision for the future of their country, and some have made important achievements.

The barriers to Yemeni women raising their voices and telling their stories to the world must be removed. There is an urgent need to bridge the gap between women leading peace efforts at the national and international levels, and those doing so at a local level. Women and women-led grassroots organizations need longer-term financial support, capacity building tailored to their needs, and platforms for women like Taghred and Noor to be heard. Such initiatives towards peace must extend beyond Sana'a to other parts of the country.

A meaningful peace cannot be predicated only on elites dividing up territory and the spoils of war.

# NOTES

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- 25 In order for national and international efforts towards peace to be successful, there must be a localization of inclusive and participatory processes. See R. Coomaraswamy (2015). *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325*. Commissioned by the UN Secretary General. Available at: <http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf?vs=323192435> p. 15

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- 27 UN Women. (2015). *Yemeni Women Call for their Inclusion in Peace Talks*. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/10/yemeni-women-call-for-their-inclusion-in-peace-efforts>
- 28 Observer status allows individuals limited engagement into diplomatic activities. This will vary depending on the process and methodology but essentially it means that the observer is unable to vote or propose resolutions.
- 29 Women's Messages to the Parties in Kuwait, May 2016.
- 30 Research by Saferworld found that gender norms restricting when women can move around limited their opportunities for political participation, such as attending political party meetings or taking part in gat chews. (Gat is a mild herbal stimulant popular in Yemen and the gat chews are used to reach community consensus. Business is often conducted and decisions are made in these meetings from which women are excluded). See: J. Rogers, H. Wright, S. Haddad, M. Baabad and B. Gaber. (2013). *It's dangerous to be the first*. Saferworld. Available at: <http://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/view-resource/768-its-dangerous-to-be-the-first>. p17.
- 31 T. Paffenholz et al. (2016). *Making Women Count*.
- 32 Launched in February 2016, the Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action was established to fill a critical funding gap and steer resources directly to women's civil society organizations at the forefront of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and recovery efforts. Further information available at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/2/global-acceleration-instrument-launch#sthash.e2JyK5c5.dpuf>

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For further information on the issues raised in this paper please email [advocacy@oxfaminternational.org](mailto:advocacy@oxfaminternational.org)

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