

2024 Global Women Leaders Summit
Bellagio, Italy

Conclusions on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

June 2024

Over the course of the week of June 24, 2024, the undersigned leaders met in Bellagio, Italy, under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security for the 2024 Global Women Leaders Summit. In addition to internal deliberations, we spoke extensively with women leaders from Afghanistan, Sudan, Ukraine, and Yemen, as well as with leaders of Palestinian and Israeli civil society organizations. The discussions were sobering, highlighting contextually unique challenges as well as common themes and concerns.

Intransigent conflicts are multiplying globally. A precipitous decline in democratic governance and growing corruption are evident. We are witnessing concerted pushback on the rules-based order that was put in place following World War II. At the same time, despite decades of effort, little progress has been made integrating a wider range of voices, especially those of women, into conflict resolution, security, and governance processes, despite clear evidence that women's participation adds enormous value. In fact, to the contrary, pushbacks on women's rights, abuse of women leaders, and attacks on civic participation are increasing.

Despite these negative trends, the global community is failing to alter its approaches to governance and peacebuilding. Efforts to resolve conflict and promote good governance around the world continue to empower bad actors, legitimize criminals, and ignore documented crimes against civilians, particularly women. There is irrefutable evidence that the international community continues to elevate, and give power and resources to groups and individuals who:

- De facto, often have little public support or local constituencies buttressing them
- Are devoid of legitimacy internationally or nationally
- Are guilty of – and often have been indicted for – terrible crimes against women and civilians
- Have chosen to take up arms solely to gain power and influence
- Have little incentive or inclination to restore peace and prosperity on the ground
- Are not invested in protecting or delivering for local populations
- Routinely violate the rights of and marginalize women and other vulnerable groups
- Are only sustained and funded by outside parties

The international community's failure to empower and invest in partners for peace has led to a worsening situation on the ground. In many countries, the local population is being displaced, starved, attacked, and violated with impunity. Insecurity and instability are being fueled. Authentic peaceful leaders with vast local constituencies are being systematically marginalized and sidelined, despite their critical knowledge and substantial contributions to well-being on the ground.

To stop the perpetuation of violent conflict and the slide toward autocracy and authoritarianism, the international community must change its approach.

There must be a concerted effort to shift power towards voices for peace and democracy, and away from stakeholders invested in war, and cooptation of power and resources. Women often lead efforts to resolve conflict, promote peace, and buttress democracies; far greater investments to increase their voice and influence are essential to progress.

Efforts to resolve conflict need to place a central focus on the safety and well-being of civilians and women.

Critical is a greater focus on transformative conflict resolution efforts that concretize democratic transitions, build strong institutions, and look beyond the simple conduct of elections as benchmarks for democratic consolidation.

Donors globally must support actors advancing conflict resolution and good governance, and to ensure accountability for results. Further, they must incentivize transparency and inclusion in negotiations, development, and governance efforts.

Institutions of global governance must reinforce, strengthen, and modernize the organizations and commitments that were made post-World War II, even as we strive to increase their inclusivity and transparency.

To end impunity, the concept of ceasefires must evolve to mandate halts in violence against civilians, especially sexual violence. Further, the international community must fulfill its commitments to accountability for perpetrators of atrocities and crimes.

To re-center the needs of local populations in efforts to end war, humanitarian access and civilian protection must be preconditions to the launch of any peace negotiations.

As we head towards the 25th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, women's voices and priorities simply need to be placed center stage in efforts to resolve the violent, intransigent conflicts that currently plague the global community. Further, we must elevate and reinforce the voices of democratic leaders, often women, who are striving to push back against autocracy and authoritarianism globally. The future depends upon action to advance these recommendations.