Gender and Conflict: Making Elite Bargaining Processes More Inclusive

Policy Brief

Key Points

- Conflict and violence are profoundly gendered. Armed conflict is experienced differently by women and men because conflict takes place in societies that are fundamentally shaped by gender. Furthermore, discriminatory gender norms and gendered forms of violence underpin, fuel and exacerbate violence and armed conflict.

- If they are to be effective and sustainable, efforts to end armed conflict must therefore be sensitive to, and work to address, gender inequalities and differences.

- Elite bargaining processes often provide the first steps out of armed conflict. Yet they are likely to be male dominated, exclude women's voices and experiences, and ignore the gendered causes and impacts of armed conflict.

- Unless women influence and inform elite bargaining processes stability and resilience will be limited and apply to only certain spaces, types of violence and particular groups, undermining conditions for sustainable peace.

- It is possible to pursue inclusive processes even within fragile elite bargaining process. There are different elite and non-elite entry points that can facilitate inclusion and influence a gender perspective. Efforts to increase inclusion therefore should not be left 'until later'.

Background

The Stabilisation Unit's (SU) Elite Bargains and Political Deals (EBPD) research project aimed to improve our understanding of externally supported efforts to reduce violence and build sustainable transitions out of conflict. Based on 21 case studies, the research outlines how peace will fail unless elite politics and the power relations underlying inter-group conflict are sufficiently understood and considered in efforts to broker an end to violent conflict. The EBPD research, alongside the wider political settlements literature[i], outlines the difficult tensions and trade-offs between short-term stabilisation of conflict and long-term inclusive peace. It provides an important part of the evidence base that underpins the new UK Government's Approach to Stabilisation aimed at policy makers and programme managers operating on or in conflict contexts.

The key findings of the project highlight how:

- Elite bargains play a vital role in reducing violence, building support for formal peace agreements and successful transitions out of conflict.

- Externally driven transformative peace processes and agreements that are not underpinned by supporting bargains are likely to fail. Proposed or existing peace agreements that do not reflect the underlying distribution of power and resources are very likely to collapse and there is a high risk of continued violence.

Recognising limitations in the integration of a gender perspective in the original EBPD analysis, the SU commissioned a gender-sensitive analysis of the EBPD research by Professor Jacqui True, Director of Monash University's Gender, Peace and Security Centre. The gender analysis was based on the broad literature on gender, peace processes and post-conflict transitions and sought to challenge and identify gaps in the EBPD analysis from a gender-perspective and consider elite and non-elite entry points for a gender-responsive approach to elite bargaining processes. This policy brief outlines key findings from this gender analysis.

Gendered Analysis of Elite Bargains – Gaps and Challenges

Conflict and violence are profoundly gendered. Armed conflict is experienced differently by women and men because conflict takes place in societies that are fundamentally shaped by gender; different roles and values are assigned to men and women which have distinct consequences for their lives. Furthermore, discriminatory gender norms and **gendered forms of violence underpin, fuel and exacerbate violence and armed conflict**.

The EBPD research recognises that ending war is not the same as ending violence, and that a political agreement to resolve an armed conflict may still expose populations to significant levels of embedded and permissive violence, such as gender-based violence (GBV). It does not, however, examine how **GBV, and underlying discriminatory gender norms, fuel political violence** and armed conflict.

GBV[ii] intends to denigrate and silence the victims and, by association, their families or communities. It both exploits and reinforces stereotypes and oppression based on gender, ethnicity, class, caste, sexuality, or other identities. As such, GBV may fuel and/or exacerbate inter-group political violence and conflict. The symbolism and stigma of GBV can have a specific, catalytic effect on intrastate conflict - See Box 1.

If such forms of gendered violence and discriminatory norms are not addressed as factors in the conflict, then the conditions will be present for the recurrence of violence and armed conflict.

GBV as part of the dynamics of political violence

In Myanmar, Tatmadaw soldiers have immunity from civil prosecution, and perpetrate GBV with impunity. That threat is very real to Myanmar's ethnic minorities[1], as sexual violence against women and girls has been perpetrated by the Tatmadaw with the aim of oppressing and shaming entire ethnic groups. This has been used by Ethnic Armed Organisations to mobilize group members to fight against the Tatmadaw in the subnational conflict with the Myanmar state.

So while elite bargaining processes often provide the first steps out of an armed conflict, they are by their nature exclusive, and are very likely to be **male dominated**, exclude women's voices and experiences, and **ignore the gendered causes and impacts** of armed conflict. Unless the international community identifies opportunities to support greater inclusion, the **stability achieved by an elite bargain will be limited** and may only apply to certain spaces, types of violence and particular groups; men more than women, groups with access to arms and political representation rather than those without them. Although supporting greater inclusion may run contrary to the exclusionary nature of the initial elite bargaining processes, as outlined below there are elite and non-elite entry points to making elite bargains more inclusive.

Engaging with elite bargaining processes without supporting women's participation equally ignores the potential **contribution women's meaningful participation can make to the durability and quality of peace agreements**. An increasing body of qualitative and quantitative academic research has revealed this link; recent analysis argues that the positive impact of women's participation in peace negotiations can be explained by linkages between female signatories and women civil society groups. Such linkages broaden societal support for the peace process and increase the quality of the peace accord and accord provision implementation rates[iii].

Making Elite Bargains More Inclusive - Guiding Principles

Noting the above challenges, the following section outlines guiding principles for how external actors should operate to positively affect elite bargaining processes and can seek to increase inclusivity and promote a gender-responsive approach:

1. **Recognise that elite bargains dominated by men that exclude women will do harm** - Symbolically, to the perception of women's public participation, and because issues, forms of violence and reforms most affecting women are less likely to be put on the table by men. A conflict party seeking to exclude women's participation and reduce women's rights will undermine a major source of resilience in society, the potential for more peaceful social relations as well as the future economic viability of the post-conflict society. Therefore, international actors must work to ensure that major trade-offs with women's rights are not made in the desire to end a conflict.

2. **Support (alternate) spaces for women's participation in conflict transitions and pathways for influencing elite processes.** Although there are entry points to support women's direct participation in elite bargaining processes (outlined below), it is imperative that other locally-meaningful spaces for women's influence in transitions are made available and supported through both programming and wider advocacy of the international community. This applies to both when women are excluded from elite bargaining processes and peace talks, and when they are included, to ensure that diverse, and not only elite women's voices and experiences are heard.

3. **Do not pick winners.** External actors must not align with any one set of actors/organisations to promote women's meaningful participation as a pathway to transforming elite bargaining processes. In seeking to be gender-sensitive international actors should also be conflict sensitive. Women operate in different elite and non-elite groups so international actors need to recognise the local dynamics that affect women and women's organisations. Supporting a range of women's networks and groups, and advocating for others to do so as well, will enable different entry points for change and greater inclusion of a diverse range of women with respect to age, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI), ethnicity, regional location, and (dis)ability.

Elite and Non-Elite Entry Points for Making Elite Bargains More Inclusive

Scrutinizing the *trade-offs* between elite bargains to reduce conflict and more inclusive peace outcomes, the gender analysis of the EBPD project argues that **it is possible to challenge underlying gender power structures and gendered forms of violence.** There are entry points that can facilitate the inclusion and influence of a gender perspective reflecting the different experiences and impacts of conflict on women and men.

Crucially, **inclusion cannot be left 'until later'.** The reality is that systemic gender discrimination and gendered violence persist and even increase after a formal cessation to armed conflict. Attempting to support inclusion at a later stage **risks it not happening at all** as power structures and the opportunities for transformation are closed.

The following tables outline **entry points for increasing inclusivity at the elites and non-elite levels** and at all stages of a conflict transition (divided here for simplicity into what we describe as the 'initial', 'consolidating' and 'transforming' phases). As noted below, focusing only on elites risks obscuring the importance and influence on non-elite spaces, where women are more likely to be present and influential. Identifying entry points at different levels is therefore crucial.

Elite Entry Points at Different Stages of Conflict Transition

Initial Transition from Conflict

In an initial transition from conflict women may be completely excluded from participating in elite bargaining processes. Indeed, their presence may be 'a red line' for at least one of the conflict parties. However, there are entry points in the initial phase that can facilitate the inclusion of women and the influence of a gender perspective that reflects the different experiences and impacts of conflict on women and men

Mediator role:
The role of the mediator can be key to building a process that represents and empowers women's voices even when they are excluded from direct participation. Mediators can also bring in other actors, such as women, and assist them to devise a common platform which can influence an elite bargaining process. **For example,** in Kenya, Graça Machel, a member of the African Union Panel of Eminent African Personalities led by Kofi Annan, used her position to request that each party to the mediation include a woman representative. Machel was a critical advocate for non-elite women's participation, and as a member of the mediation team, chose to directly engage with non-elite women and suggested a process where women came together to find common ground and overcome their ethnic and party affiliation. These became known as 'spitting sessions'. As a product of these sessions, the women's groups drafted a memorandum of demands that were presented to the mediation team, which then shaped the subsequent dialogue.

In cases were there have been no women members of the mediation team, male mediators have also been able to advocate for women's perspectives and presence. **For example,** the (male) chief mediator to the Burundi peace process (1996-2013), Julius Nyerere, negotiated for a women's group to hold observer status, having been unable to secure their direct participation. **For example,** in Syria the (male) former UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, established a Women's Advisory Board as a way to bring women into the peace process. The board is composed of twelve women civil society representatives, who advised the Special Envoy when formal talks were in session. The current UN Special Envoy, Geir O. Pedersen sought to ensure the constitutional conference included one third women participants.

Participation of elite women in elite bargaining processes as part of negotiating teams:
Peace agreements are more likely to be signed, implemented and sustained when women have some form of influence on the process, rather than simply being present[iv]. When women are included in the peace process as part of negotiating parties, the deal is more durable and includes a greater number of provisions related to political reform, such as, constitutional, electoral/political party, decentralization/federation, civil service, judiciary reforms. One explanation for this is that "[c]ollaboration between women delegates and women civil society groups broadens the civilian support base

for peace and results in networks that can persistently advocate for the adoption of policies that empower women". **For example,** one of the two female delegates in the Guatemalan peace process, Luz Mendez, a member of the rebel group Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), engaged with women's civil society organisations who were not allowed direct access to the process, with the outcome that the final agreement included "unprecedented commitments to gender equality" and helped to establish networks between a diverse range of women activists, which supported provision implementation with regard to women's security and their political, social, and economic rights.

Women's participation in elite negotiations holds symbolic importance – especially where conservative, patriarchal norms characterise at least one of the parties to conflict – as well as its impact on the negotiation outcomes. **For example,** Coronel Ferrer described the impact of her presence, as a woman, on the negotiation process with the MILF. In the initial talks the MILF representatives refused to sit beside her. In time, using various methods, two women from the Government were able to sit alongside MILF representatives, which in turn had a symbolic as well material impact, with women's rights became integral to the Bangsamoro agreement.

However, the inclusion of women as participants in formal peace processes does not guarantee that women's rights will be incorporated into the final agreement or that those women will act as advocates for women and gender. Empirical evidence suggests that women are more influential when they are represented through a women's only delegation or have built cross party women's coalitions to influence women in negotiating teams. **For example,** In the peace negotiations in El Salvador, women civil society groups with ties to the rebel group, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), publicly advocated for the parties to address their concerns. There was a comparatively high number of women present at the negotiations, 12 per cent of the signatories and 13 per cent of the negotiating teams. However, the women participants from the FMLN did not advocate for women's rights. The final accord (Chapultepec Peace Agreement) contains only one reference to women. Further dialogue between civil society and women negotiators during the implementation phase did result though in the inclusion of female ex-combatants and women civilians in the reintegration process.

International norms:
There is now an international protocol that calls on states to not supply arms to countries where sexual and gender based violence is widespread, and that introduces sanctions against militaries that do not investigate crimes (at a minimum) committed by their forces. Cases of sexual and gender-based violence have yet to be considered on the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee. However, in elite bargaining process these are 'sticks' that could be used to ensure legal redress for these crimes in the post-conflict period and to prevent impunity or immunity for them. Advocating for no impunity and protection of women's rights will be more persuasive when the external actors (i.e. mediators, external experts, donors) display that same level of equality in their representation. **International actors are in no position to advocate for women's participation and protection of rights if delegations are all male.**

Local practices to put pressure on elites:
The evidence on women's participation and sustainable peace processes highlights the power of women outside of elite processes to shame elite men using informal, cultural practices into ending the fighting and agreeing to a peaceful transition of power. These dynamics can be readily gleaned from gender analysis that pays attention to women's collective action. There are different **examples** of these practices across Africa and Asia. In Liberia and Somaliland women demonstrators made threats to undress as a way to put pressure on negotiators and parties to the peace process. In another example from the Sri Lankan conflict, Sinhalese women used their identities as mothers of missing Sri Lankan army soldiers in 2000 to build trust and press for a ceasefire with Tamil commanders. Their informal negotiations on neutral territory set in motion a process for an eventual ceasefire brokered by Norway in 2002 (which did not hold). Other examples from the Philippines show the effectiveness of all female voluntary civilian monitoring of ceasefires, which increased reporting of incidents, due to the perceived legitimacy and neutrality of the women monitors.

Educating elites:
Providing elites engaged in negotiations with training and gender-sensitive information, research and analysis that connects gender dynamics to key conflict dynamics can reveal new issues that affect their bargaining positions and legitimacy. In a past example, female delegates to the 2001-2003 Inter-Congolese Dialogue for the Democratic Republic of Congo were provided with training in a pre-negotiation workshop. An expert group of women advised these delegates to the negotiations on constitutional law and security sector reform. As a result, the final agreement (the Global and Inclusive Agreement, reached in Pretoria in late 2002) include gender-related recommendations.

Decision rules matter:
In elite group deliberations women hold less authority than men, as they are less likely to speak and to influence others. Mendelberg and Karpowitz term this an "authority deficit" which means that unless something proactive is done to equalise authority for women, women will speak less and be listened to less than men. To correct for this imbalance and promote elite women's influence, other decision rules can be used to shift these unequal dynamics, enabling women's voice(s) and/or gender perspectives to be heard. These could include formal turn-taking, a set allocation of equal floor time to each person, the strategy of amplification referenced above and the requirement that each member speak at least once.

Consolidating Post-Conflict Transition

The consolidating stage of a conflict transition is characterised by relative political stability, within which there may be further mechanisms to influence elites to increase their legitimacy and ensure a more inclusive peace dividend.

Economic incentives:

Participation of women in fragile and conflict-affected economies is crucial if these economies are to fully recover from conflict. Gender-sensitive protection of human rights and gender-inclusive economic reforms and recovery are a necessary foundation for that participation. The role of international financial institutions (IFIs) in fragile and conflict-affected contexts is critical for building peaceful and inclusive societies. Through their lending and development programs IFIs have significant, gender-specific impacts on post-conflict societies. One way to influence a consolidating post-conflict transition and make it more inclusive is via loans and investments by IFIs, their conditions and supporting country strategies. Financing priorities as part of elite bargaining processes could include incentives for additional lending/investment tagged to women's economic participation and even to transitional justice mechanisms. Women's participation in peacebuilding could be explicitly targeted, for instance, as a loan indicator of stability and peace.

Male champions:

Third-party elites such as mediators or international observers may be able to persuade certain elites to become champions of inclusive peace by rewarding them with status and a positive international reputation. This is the counterpoint to the local and global practices of shaming and being placed on sanctions lists. Elites are often very mindful of their broader reputation; especially given the exposure and criticism they may receive in the wider international media. Thus, there may be opportunities to include elites in a conflict situation within an international initiative that normatively binds them to certain commitments in the bargain. While there is no clear-cut example of this, the UK's PSVI campaign is a good example of how traction can be gained with recalcitrant countries through the prestige of an international campaign and personal network with a powerful third-party elite.

Participation of women through associated mechanisms:

When a post-conflict transition is in a consolidating phase there may be venues through which to influence negotiated outcomes. Commissions may be established to set reform agendas and have been a successful mechanism for women's participation in past post-conflict transitions. **For example,** the Belfast Agreement for Northern Ireland established several temporary commissions, including the Independent Commission on Policing (Patten Commission) and the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning. Two of the eight members of the Patten Commission were women and the process itself was inclusive. Women advocates and gender experts may be able to influence elite bargaining processes when they present a joint position to the elite parties as part of such Commissions. **For example,** in the Colombian peace process, a Gender Sub-Commission (GSC) was established in 2013 to review the agreement being negotiated to ensure it incorporated a gender focus. But this was only after a joint platform was forged through two National Summits by diverse

women's movements. These movements engaged both the government and FARC through their women members. Their mobilisation ultimately led to the strong representation of women inside the peace process, including rural, indigenous, Afro-descendent women.

Targeted international training/support:
International or non-governmental organisations can educate elite parties on approaches to protecting and promoting women's rights by advocating and gaining the support of the mediator. In the Burundian peace process, UNIFEM convened a Gender Experts Team, which included three women and one man who had participated in peace processes in South Africa, Uganda, Eritrea and Guatemala. The parties responded to this advocacy by establishing an All-Party Burundi Women's Peace Conference for the next round of negotiations, which presented a common platform to the lead mediator, Nelson Mandela. The final accord included all but one of the demands included in the platform.

The New Zealand government played a key role in facilitating local women's peacebuilders to influence an end to the conflict in Bougainville. That gender-sensitive external intervention lead to the successful 2002 Papua New Guinea — Bougainville Peace Agreement. During that process and over a number of years, New Zealand funded gender-inclusive peacebuilding initiatives in Bougainville including convening several talks where official delegations of leaders from women's organisations travelled to New Zealand. The objective was to forge a united voice and to enable their greater inclusion in peace processes at home. Bougainville is a matriarchal culture but despite having important roles in that society, women had struggled to participate in the male dominated elite peace process. With New Zealand as a strong facilitator and advocate for women's political influence, women's groups and individual women leaders emerged as an important influence on the peace agreement.

Transforming Post-Conflict Transition
A transforming post-conflict transition in which stability has been achieved should be able to enable more inclusive bargaining processes and access to political and economic resources. There is usually greater space to introduce gender justice and equality measures at this stage.

Transitional Justice:
Transitional justice mechanisms can shift the balance of power by representing groups previously marginalized by conflict. The Colombian agreement includes several strong transitional justice mechanisms such as a Truth Commission (CEV) with a dedicated thematic area on gender-based violence. The agreement provides that no amnesty can be granted to those accused of conflict-based sexual violence. A Special Investigation Team on Sexual Violence was also set up within the Investigation and Accusation Unit of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP). Since the signing of the peace agreement in 2016, however, there has nonetheless been an increase in reporting of gender-based violence, which may not be a sign of the increase in actual violence but a sign rather of the breaking of silence on these crimes and of improved institutional response.

Transformative justice mechanisms such as collective reparations should be considered at this stage because they address the underlying root causes of a conflict in particular group oppressions at the micro-level of society. Reparations "shift attention away from the perpetrators towards the victims and survivors of violence and the opportunities through gender-just development interventions to reclaim their lives and capabilities". To make transitional justice mechanisms effective for women, and to work towards achieving greater gender equality, reparations should be awarded to collective groups. Allocated as part of a widespread and systematic program for all victims of violence, reparations have greater potential for reaching women. In this way some of the major barriers to reporting and providing sufficient evidence for the occurrence of sexual and gender-based violence are removed. Recent programs in Guatemala, Peru, Sierra Leone and Timor Leste included sexual violence in the list of violations that trigger reparations, showing modest progress in this area.

Inclusion of non-elites

While there is empirical evidence that having women participate in peace deals as negotiators and mediators increases the likelihood of an enduring peace settlement, elite women are more likely to advocate for gender equality and women's rights, and peace is more likely to be sustainable, when non-elite women influence bargaining processes from the outside. Unintentionally, a **focus on elite bargaining processes may obscure the importance of the influence of these non-elite spaces, where women are also more likely to present and influential.** As key actors in civil society movements, "women often provide the grassroots networking and social support structures that are relied upon by local and international elites to embed peace processes".

Civil society often provides women the first opportunity to (safely) campaign and participate in post-conflict institutions that can collectively represent women in spheres of power. Women's civil society groups may have a substantive informal influence because their organizing around common issues is not dependent on party affiliation, patronage, ethnicity, familial ties, which may be the case in other political networks. In conflict-affected environments, the **opportunity to safely participate in peace processes and represent women's security concerns may only be possible and viable through ensuring civil society organizations are able to flourish and advocate for women's human rights**. This finding concurs with other significant research on women's organizing.

Non-Elite Entry Points at Different Stages of Conflict Transition

Initial Transition from Conflict

In an initial transition from conflict or a fragmented political settlement where formal peace talks are stalemated, such as in Syria and in Yemen, women's civil society organisations continue to operate and organise. Even when elite bargaining processes have become ineffective, engaging with and supporting civil society organisations, especially women's networks that build on a common framework, can drive conflict resolution informally from below.

Mass action campaigns:

As an alternative when direct access to elite negotiations is barred, women have organised through mass action campaigns. Women in Peacebuilding Network in Liberia held mass action demonstrations outside the negotiations in Accra, preventing the elite delegates from exiting the venue until an accord had been reached. Women peace activists organised a Women's Peace Caravan in November 2006 that ended in Juba, Sudan where talks were being held between the Lord Resistance Army and the government. Women's political rights organisations also demanded inclusion in the process in Juba. In 1995 the Sierra Leone Women's Movement for Peace organised a demonstration in central Freetown which gave greater legitimacy to existing peace groups. Women took on a leadership role among civil society actors advocating for peace, as it was believed that the military would be more tolerant towards them because of their gender. Mass action campaigns can also be organised as a way of opposing a peace process. For example, demonstrations against negotiations led by women were organised in 2000 in Sri Lanka. These mass actions register the non-elite voice in a way that can resonate across a society and beyond its borders influencing the pressure on elites to broker peace.

Women's Situation Room (WSR):

This is a localised violence and conflict prevention initiative supported but not driven by external actors. It has been successfully used across Africa to monitor and report violence pre, during and post-elections but also in Nigeria in the context of civil conflict and violent extremism. By paying attention to all forms of violence including that directed against women and girls the intention is to pre-empt and warn about impending broader violence and conflict. The first WSR was established in 2011 in Liberia. Since then WSRs have set up in Senegal and Sierra Leone in 2012 and 2018, Kenya in 2013, Nigeria in 2015, Uganda and Ghana in 2016 and in Liberia again in 2017. In each context the WSR has taken different forms depending on the local situation. Women who are trained in peace advocacy are involved in a range of actions including the promotion of peaceful and fair elections, mediating to stop actual violence or prevent future violence, provide political and polling observation. A desk is also established for security sector actors in the physical space of the WSR to speed up the responses to the incident reports. In some cases, such as in Uganda and more recently in Sierra Leone, the Eminent Women involved in the WSRs continue to engage political leaders after the elections, to prevent the escalation of election results disputes into conflict. One of the challenges of the WSR is that is an ad-hoc intervention only, typically linked to elections where funding can be mobilized to support women's political participation. However, WSR rooms could be used in the initial phase of a conflict transition to provide information to elite parties and international actors on the range and location of violence being perpetrated that may not otherwise be visible but should inform the conditions for ceasefires and ending conflict.

Consolidating Post-Conflict Transition

As the post-conflict transition is consolidated there is still the possibility that civil society actors can influence its terms, especially where the mediation team supported by international actors is determined to enable the access of other actors.

Women as civil society observers, advisers and delegates:

Because the inclusion of women in peace processes is an emerging international norm there is significant pressure on international actors to facilitate women's participation and often, as in the case of Syria, this may only be possible for women as civil society observers, advisers and delegates.

In the course of the Syrian peace process, for example, the UN Office for the Special Envoy to Syria organised the Civil Society Support Room (CSSR) in January 2016 for civil society organisations to sit alongside the formal peace negotiations. The CSSR provided a space for Syrian civil society to engage with the UN Envoy, his team, the Women's Advisory Board and international NGOs, in the same location and time as formal negotiations are taking place.

Transforming Post-Conflict Transition

There is often a small window of opportunity to progress developmental peace in conflict transitions. As a conflict transition moves toward a peacebuilding phase, the role of non-elite actors in civil society becomes vital in advocating to address the root causes of the conflict.

Peace Huts:

Prior to the Liberian civil war (1989-2003), traditional community conflict resolutions involving male village elders were conducted in Palava Huts, built in the form of a circle with low walls and a thatched roof. After the war, Liberian women peace activists adapted this concept into women-led Peace Huts. They mediated local disputes, monitored police and justice services, referred victims of violence to services, and raised awareness within communities regarding peacebuilding priorities, such as elections, decentralization, and natural resource concessions. Peace Huts are a cost-effective way of reducing and even preventing violence in the community because they defuse tensions and alert police to potential violent outbreaks. They provide a space for women's voices to be heard on priorities for peacebuilding, security, rule of law, and other issues. They have promoted women's economic empowerment by organizing savings and loans groups and supporting the political aspirations of women.

Land and property rights, access to justice and redistribution programmes:

At the later stage of a conflict transition, land and property rights, access to justice and redistribution programme are vital to build women's rights and gender justice. International actors must be able support a broader shift in gendered power relations, to enable opportunities for both women and men for livelihoods and for citizenship. The 2016 Colombian Final Peace Agreement, for example, has prioritised land rights and ownership, which included the establishment of the Land Fund to facilitate land redistribution. Rural women, female-headed households and displaced persons are given priority under the framework; and their participation in the governance of land redistribution programme was also assured. The implementation of these land reform provisions are at an early

stage. But this is the stage when financial and technical support is most needed from international actors. The commitment of some donor countries and the UN Peace Support Fund to ensure that 15 per cent of all their development aid to conflict and fragile countries be earmarked for gender equality and justice initiatives is crucial, given it can help address women's vulnerability to conflict-related violence by bolstering their economic rights and access.

Universal social protection and public provisioning to support gender-inclusive education and health:
The health and wellbeing of citizens are generally depleted as a result of conflict and human development should be a priority in the later, transforming stage of post-conflict. With the UN-World Bank updated mandate on conflict prevention, international organisations and donors have a unique opportunity to lessen the impact of the legacy of conflict on (global) economic development by aligning its strategies promoting inclusive economic participation with the rights-based principles of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Women's labour is integral to the recovery of communities from conflict, especially in displacement, and women's organizing is known to be one of the societal contributors to sustainable peace. However, without investment in social as well as physical infrastructure their capacities to contribute to recovery and to peace processes beyond the household at the community and national level will be severely constrained.

Further Reading & Resources

True, J (2019). 'Gender and Conflict: Making Elite Bargaining Processes More Inclusive'. Stabilisation Unit.

Political Settlements Research Programme Spotlight Series:

- Re-invigorating Stalled Peace Negotiations: Challenges and Opportunities for Women's Inclusion
- Women and the Renegotiation of Transitional Governance Arrangements
- Local Peace Processes: Opportunities and Challenges for Women's Engagement
- A Gender Analysis of Peace Agreements and Transitional Documents from the Libyan Transition, 2011-2018
- Gender Mainstreaming in Ceasefires: Comparative Data and Examples
- Humanitarian Assistance and Gender Perspectives in Peace Agreements

The Better Peace Tool (International Civil Society Action Network) outlines six barriers commonly presented to inclusion, such as 'This doesn't concern women', and suggested practical steps to overcome them.

For more information please contact Helen Lindley-Jones.

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[i] See the Political Settlements Research Project (Edinburgh University); and the Development Leadership Programme for examples along with the work of Mustaq Khan, Tim Kelsall and others.

[ii] GBV in conflict settings is not limited to acts of rape and sexual violence but includes increased intimate partner violence, enslavement, trafficking, forced marriage and pregnancy, detention and torture, kidnapping and forced disappearance of women activists and female family members of male activists, denial of basic services related to reproductive health, early marriage in refugee camps.

[iii] Krause, Jana, Werner Krause and Piia Braenfors (2018): Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace. *International Interactions,* 44:6, 985-1016.

[iv] Paffenholz, N Ross, S Dixon, AL Schluchter, J True, *Making women count-not just counting women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations.* New York: United Nations Women.