

**Summary of Key Recommendations for Action**  
**from the Syrian Participants at the *Negotiating a Better Peace* Symposium**  
**& International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)**  
June 26, 2014

As the international community and the United Nations contemplate the latest developments in Syria, and in the aftermath of the Geneva 2 negotiations efforts and Lakhdar Brahimi's resignation, ICAN and a delegation of Syrian women peace and human rights activists— living inside and outside the country and representing a range of Syrian networks and organizations, including Syrian Women's Initiative for Peace and Democracy (SWIPD), Center for Civil Society and Democracy in Syria (CCSDS), and Madani Organization— take this opportunity to offer the following recommendations based on a dual strategy:

- Pursuing an inclusive peace and mediation process in Track 1/high level negotiations;
- Supporting and shoring up the truly moderate and non-violent local civil society supportive of peace and human rights.

The group condemns the use of violence by all sides and the flow of weapons to all parties to the conflict.

### **I. Regarding the high level mediation/negotiations efforts**

1. Appoint **two or more senior co-mediators (at least one male and one female)** as Envoys to Syria, with at least one based inside Syria, and at least one demonstrating a track record in engaging women and civil society as well as a commitment to UNSCR 1325. *Precedence: The UN and AU appointed Kofi Annan and Graca Machal as co-mediators to the Kenyan crisis. They engaged with Kenyan civil society and were effective in reaching out and engaging women from civil society as well as senior women politicians who exerted enormous influence. The Annan-Machal team also served as a role model for the negotiating parties as each appointed women to their delegations.*
2. Ensure that the new envoys' **mandate** specifically includes:
  - a. Implementation of the 1325 agenda - inclusive of the seven resolutions as they relate to the mediation process - with emphasis on systematic and structured engagement with and inclusion of civil society, particularly women's rights and women-led peace organizations, from the very beginning and as part of an ongoing process, in addition to regular reporting on the topics;
  - b. The robust presence of the envoys' representatives in Syria, who have the ability to engage with local communities and government, and, where possible, to support the mediation of local ceasefires in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian norms;
  - c. The presence of international observers in key areas of Syria to monitor local ceasefire agreements and facilitate humanitarian access (*in 2012 the presence of a limited number of international observers in Syria contributed to a 25% reduction of violence and casualties*);
  - d. A fully gendered analysis and approach to key issues of security, governance, transitional justice and humanitarian access, including regular gendered situation analyses and briefings by Syrian women civil society representatives at the Security Council (per UNSCR 2122).
3. Appoint to the envoys' **technical team** advisors who are mandated to (a) integrate gender perspectives in their thematic areas and (b) regularly consult with actively involved Syrian women and not just international gender experts. In addition, appoint the following:
  - a. A senior gender and social inclusion advisor(s) (per the Secretary-General's 7-Point Action Plan);
  - b. An economic advisor with expertise in sanctions and war economies.

4. Guarantee that all **international meetings, conferences, and other gatherings** pertaining to the security, humanitarian or political situation in Syria include:
  - a. The attendance, meaningful inclusion, and engagement of women's organizations and civil society representatives committed to non-violence and supporting human rights, democracy, citizenship and gender equality;
  - b. Gendered analysis of the core agenda themes (e.g. security, humanitarian per SCR 2122). If the UN or member states lack the capacity to undertake such analysis, they should partner with Syrian and international organizations that have the capacities to assist them/provide the requisite information.

## **II. Regarding the local capacities & civil society/women's organizations**

Despite increased levels of violence, un-armed, non-violent moderate Syrian organizations are actively engaged in peace building in Syria, including the provision of humanitarian assistance, economic recovery, education, and psychosocial support. They also support human rights-based ceasefires and reconciliation efforts. Helping to shore up these efforts will increase the chances of recovery and opportunities for community-based peace or national dialogue efforts. The international community should:

1. Acknowledge these efforts and **provide direct financial and technical assistance** to strengthen their institutions and enable them to strategize, plan and provide services for a longer period of time. The support can be provided either directly to the organization or via international partners.
2. Work in partnership with Syrian civil society networks to **develop strategies that offer alternative educational and economic opportunities** to Syrian youth at risk of taking up arms and/or joining extremist groups. This could include improving the situation and condition of schools and supporting programs that encourage active citizenship and reduce dropout rates and illiteracy.
3. **Support Syrian civil society organizations** that promote peace, women's and human rights and are active in advocacy, service provision, and training in a systematic, ongoing manner in order to:
  - a. Determine the most effective ways of providing technical, financial and political support;
  - b. Inform them of ongoing developments vis-a-vis Track 1 efforts; invite them to international gatherings, ensuring they have timely access to technical capacity building expertise;
  - c. Strategize a solution to the conflict together so that Track 1 mediation processes are linked to community-based efforts which can mutually reinforce and widen space for moderate voices and a multi-stakeholder process;
  - d. Guarantee protection of women's rights and peace activists, including those who are willing to engage both sides of the conflict (in line with UNSCR 1325).
4. **Ensure access to psychosocial support** and systematically include it as part of the healing process for individuals and communities.
5. Commission a gendered humanitarian impact assessment of sanctions and, based on the findings, **review and revise sanctions policies** to limit the negative effects on the Syrian population.