

ICAN

International
Civil Society
Action
Network

For women's rights, peace and security



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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LETTER • FROM • THE • CEO



2023: By year's end, the world was in the throes of a geopolitical tsunami, as international laws and basic norms of decency and dignity were ripped to shreds.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban's persecution of women and girls was normalized. In Sudan, war erupted, causing hundreds of thousands of people to flee. In Gaza, Israel's retaliation against the October 7th Hamas attacks led to two million people being forcibly displaced, starvation, maiming, and cesareans and amputations for women and children without anesthesia. For the first time in history, children are 44 percent of the war dead.

Meanwhile, many of the world's most powerful states have abrogated their responsibilities. In supporting the genocidal violence in Gaza, the violent repression of Myanmar's democracy movement, and the normalization of the Taliban—all while profiting from wars on Ukraine, Sudan, and elsewhere—they have done untold damage to multilateralism and the rules-based order.

The effect of their actions and inaction are stark. 363 million people globally need emergency assistance. The UN struggled to raise \$50 billion for humanitarian aid, but the weapons industry had a bumper year. Global military spending topped a record \$2 trillion.

Who picks up the pieces and takes on the responsibility to protect those most at risk? Who prevents further violence and imagines and rolls up their sleeves to build a peaceful future?

At ICAN in 2023, we saw, again, how local women peacebuilders like our partners in the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) were among the first, and continued, responders and problem solvers. We are proud to support them. Some of the year's achievements included:

- **Turkey and Syria:** Following the earthquakes in February, despite losing family and friends, homes and livelihoods, our partners mobilized to help others. At ICAN we did the same. Within days, we raised and disbursed \$13,000 to two partners. Our small but rapid response enabled them to mobilize 500 volunteer engineers to survey buildings and guide people to shelter and leverage additional funds to help hundreds of Syrian families in areas inaccessible to international aid workers.

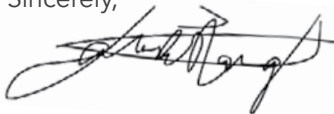
- **Afghanistan:** International presence waned, but ICAN increased its funding and outreach to existing and new women-led organizations providing livelihood and psychosocial support to their communities. We facilitated spaces for Afghan women leaders to strategize for their country's future and advocate for themselves.
- **Sudan:** ICAN secured high-level meetings with American, British, and European policymakers to advocate for a ceasefire and women peacebuilders' inclusion in negotiations.
- **Palestine:** Following the October 7th attacks and Israel's war on Gaza, we advocated for urgent preventive action, issued the [WASL statement and 7-point action plan](#) and fundraised to support WASL member Wi'am: The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center. Despite many risks, Wi'am is providing humanitarian relief and mental healthcare, including support for victims of violence.
- **Localized financing:** Through the ICAN Innovative Peace Fund (IPF), we disbursed \$1.7 million in 25 grants to WASL partners in 10 countries.
- **Policy Advocacy and Peace Process Accompaniment:** Our team contributed to over 50 bilateral and public events, co-organized with the EU, the UN, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, the Alliance for Peacebuilding, and others. We accompanied and advised our partners as they navigated peace processes for their countries' futures.
- **Awards and Recognition:** We nominated and celebrated six partners for winning international awards.

Our partners live and work at the frontlines of the world's most complex crises. Neither they, nor we, will let warfare and oppression dictate our lives or darken our future. As the author Edith Wharton wrote, "There are two ways of spreading light, to be a candle or the mirror that reflects it."

Our work is only possible because of the trust and generosity of those who support us. I am grateful to my team, board of trustees, donors—institutional and individual—and international community of practice. A special thanks to our WASL partners. Their courage, creativity, and tireless care inspires us daily.

Wars and crises bring out the worst and the best in humanity. Our WASL partners are among the very best.

Sincerely,



Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE
Founder and CEO, ICAN

OUR • MISSION

Recognizing the gendered impact of conflict and the critical role of women peacebuilders, we:

Shape and **guide** peace and security policies through thought leadership, strategic advice, and gender-responsive analysis;

Foster a global movement of locally rooted women peacebuilders to have voice and influence in matters of peace, conflict, rights, and human security; and

Bring the word and spirit of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda to life.



ICAN promotes
inclusive and
sustainable peace
globally.



Wars and crises bring out the worst and best of humanity. At ICAN, our partners in WASL are among the very best. When they step up to respond, so do we.”

- Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE, Founder and CEO, ICAN

GUIDING • PRINCIPLES

To foster positive, peaceful, socio-political change, our guiding principles at ICAN are as follows:

We trust that our partners have the expertise and understanding their communities' needs. We invest in that trust.

Investing in trust

We help sustain and build our partners' existing capacities and provide tailored assistance as they need.

Strengthening existing capacities and gains

We encourage synergy and complementarity based on comparative strengths between our partners and like-minded organizations to avoid duplication and build a global peace movement.

Coordination and complementarity

We continuously innovate by tackling new emerging issues and by providing alternative perspectives on existing topics.

Imagining and enabling innovations in policy and practice

Not limited by the tyranny of "or": inspired by the genius of "and"

We take a holistic and integrated approach in our work, avoiding silos and embracing practical actions and a long-term vision.

Helping to build clocks, not just tell time

Guiding Principles

Reframing ideas, using words to enable action

We believe that words and information are integral to prompting action. We are committed to producing high-quality analysis and evidence to inform effective action.

We are not gatekeepers — we share our knowledge, resources, and privileged access with our partners so they can fulfill their own potential and impact.

NETWORK • AND • MOVEMENT BUILDING

ICAN initiated the formation of the Women’s Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) in 2015 as the first global women’s network to embrace women’s leadership in addressing violent extremism and conflicts and promoting peace, resilience, equal rights, and pluralism.

In spearheading WASL, we aim to bring synergy and greater coherence to the existing collective efforts of women-led peacebuilding organizations, based on each entity’s comparative advantages.

Our network strategy is rooted on three levels of support:

- Personal solidarity and emotional support to and among partners
- Professional development and opportunities for partners
- Institutional support that strengthens the financial and managerial structures of partner organizations

We focus on scaling across and localization to deepen reach within countries and across the globe, fostering a healthy ecosystem of civic activism for peace. With multilateralism in crisis, our network of locally rooted, globally connected civil society is ever more necessary for crisis prevention and response.

In 2023, WASL expanded to include members from three new countries—Brazil, Germany, and South Africa—alongside six new members from Afghanistan, Colombia, Myanmar, and South Sudan.

By December 2023, the network comprised 74 independent, locally rooted women-led peacebuilding organizations, associations, and networks, active in 43 countries.



Despite the cruelty of wars, despite the devastation they lead to, there are still people that are engaged in giving peace a chance to prevail. It is not always easy to speak about peace to people who are mourning their deaths, but we are still doing it, never losing hope of doing something for the good of humanity.”

- Dr. Khedija Arfaoui, Founder, Dali and Senda Association for Peace, Tunisia





WASL IN THE WORLD: KEY HIGHLIGHTS 2023

USA

United Nations, New York

Hamsatu Allamin, Allamin Foundation (Nigeria)
Civil Society Reflections on the 2023 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Dr. Neelam Raina; Visaka Dharmadasa, AWAW (Sri Lanka); Mossarat Qadeem, PAIMAN (Pakistan); Ashima Kaul, Yakjah Reconciliation & Development Network (India); and Quhramaana Kakar, WPP (Afghanistan)
Craft as a Medium for Peacebuilding, Commission on the Status of Women Side Event

United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Washington, D.C.

Rosa Emilia Salamanca, CIASE (Colombia); Robinah Rubimbwa, CoACT (Uganda); and Wai Wai Nu, Women's Peace Network (Myanmar)

Missing Peace Global Symposium on Conflict Related Sexual Violence

Canada

Ontario

Zarqa Yaftali (Afghanistan); Nargis Nehan, Equality for Peace and Development Organization (Afghanistan); WCLRF (Afghanistan); Wazhma Frogh, WPSO (Afghanistan); and Humaira Saqib, AWNAO (Afghanistan)
WCRAN Global Alliance in Support of Afghanistan Women

Ottawa

Salma Yusuf (Sri Lanka)
Ottawa Dialogue - Locally-Driven Peace Processes

Colombia

Bogotá

Ruby Dwi Kholifah, AMAN (Indonesia); Wendy Toro, CIASE (Colombia); Sawssan Abou-Zahr (Lebanon); and Maya Kavaler, ICAN
Shift the Power Summit

Ashima Kaul, Yakjah Reconciliation & Development Network (India)
Gender, Justice, and Security Hub Convention

AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS

Esther Omam, Reach Out (Cameroon)

Global Centre for Pluralism, Global Pluralism Award
1st National Women's Peace Convention - German Africa Foundation, German Africa Prize

Deeyah Khan, ICAN Board Member, Award-Winning Documentary Filmmaker and Human Rights Activist

Global Centre for Pluralism, Global Pluralism Award Finalist

Muna Luqman, Food4Humanity (Yemen)

Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security Hillary Rodham Clinton Award

QATAR

Doha

Mary Akrami, AWN (Afghanistan);
Quhramanna Kakar, WPP
(Afghanistan); Mahbouba Seraj,
AWSDC (Afghanistan); Habiba
Sarabi (Afghanistan), Zahra
Yagana (Afghanistan); and Sima
Samar (Afghanistan)
*Meeting with Afghan Women
and Special Envoys attending
Afghanistan meeting in Doha –
Together Stronger*

UK

London

Zarqa Yaftali, WCLRF (Afghanistan) and Sanam
Naraghi Anderlini (ICAN)
*All Party Parliamentary Working Group on
Women, Peace and Security: The future of
Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan-
supporting women's participation in the socio-
political and humanitarian processes*

ICELAND

Reykjavík

Mahbouba Seraj, AWSDC (Afghanistan) and
Sanam Naraghi Anderlini (ICAN)
*The Imagine Forum 2023 - Nordic Solidarity for
Peace*

JAPAN

Tokyo

Dr. Amina Rasul, PCID
(The Philippines)
*"Why Do We Need Women's
Perspectives" The Sasakawa Peace
Foundation*

JORDAN

Amman

Maya Yamout, Rescue Me (Lebanon)
*Global Counterterrorism Fund Good
Practices on Addressing the Challenge
of Returning Families of Foreign Terrorist
Fighters: Workshop to Integrate Policy
and Practice*

YEMEN

Abductees Mothers' Association (Yemen) and Peace Track Initiative (Yemen)

Featured in "A seat at the negotiating
table: How women are building peace in
Yemen (Abductees Mothers Associations,
Peace Track Initiative)" (Lowry Institute)

Enass Muzamel, Madaniya (Sudan)
Vital Voices Global Leadership Award

Abir Haj Ibrahim, Mobaderoon (Syria)
USIP Women Building Peace Award -
Runner-Up and Finalist

**Mahbouba Seraj, Afghan Women Skills
Development Center (Afghanistan)**
Finland's Gender Equality Prize



COMMUNITY CALLS

In 2023, we held 22 WASL community calls, to create space for solidarity, collective analysis, and sharing good practices among members of WASL and invited guests. Our 22 calls featured topics including:

- Funding Advocacy
- The New Agenda for Peace
- Community-Based Early Warning Systems to Build Resilience Against Extremism
- Theatre and Peacebuilding
- Digital Security
- Culture and Conflict: Generating Sustainable Livelihoods through Traditional Crafts
- The Israel-Palestine Conflict
- The Role of Religious Leaders and Religion in Countering Violent Extremism

We also hosted guests, including the United Nations Department for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA), UN Office on Counter-Terrorism (OCT), UN Women, Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Edinburgh, AnomalousCo, The Elders, Access Now, and OffGridBox.



WASL's regular online gatherings are essential for sharing tools, updates, and advocacy."

- Rajaa Altalli, Co-Founder, Centre for Civil Society and Democracy (CCSD), Syria



Looking at Women, Peace, and Security ten years from now, what future is there for us as women peacebuilders and mediators? The future is bleak if we don't take drastic actions now to make sure our voices are included in all policy decisions."

– Esther Omam, Executive Director, Reach Out Cameroon, Cameroon



WASL Call with HRH the Duchess of Edinburgh; April 2023



WASL Call with AnamolousCo, a Feminist Theatre Collective; May 2023

SHE BUILDS PEACE CAMPAIGN

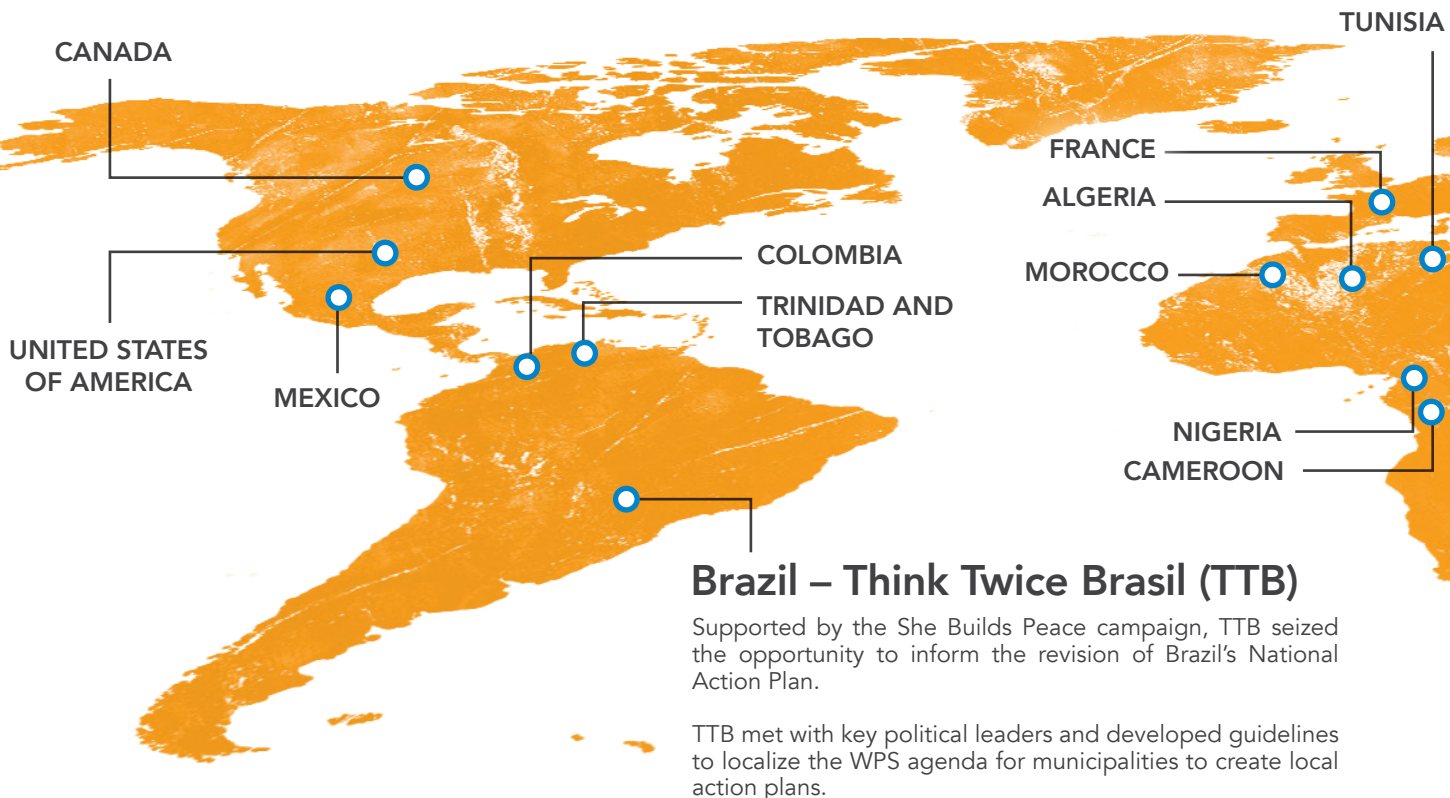
SHE BUILDS PEACE: AROUND THE WORLD

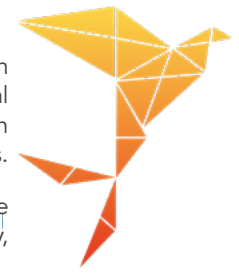
She Builds Peace (SBP) is a collaborative campaign and a global call to action to stand with women peacebuilders. Our goal is to ensure that women peacebuilders are safe and protected, that governments fulfill their obligations to include them in peace and security decision-making, and that women peacebuilders are appreciated and resourced to continue their critical work.

In 2023, 7 WASL partners from 6 countries were supported as campaign coordinators in their local contexts. With two new campaigns launched in Brazil and South Sudan, a total of 49 partners from 34 countries are implementing the campaign to date.

Throughout 2023, WASL members reached over 1,700 stakeholders through the SBP campaign, including over 700 community members, 200 small businesses or entrepreneurs, and 180 government officials. WASL members fostered horizontal collaboration with youth networks and traditional leaders at the grassroots level and vertical linkages with parliament and county assembly members to influence legislation.

Their persistent advocacy strengthens the global movement of women peacebuilders and increases their visibility and recognition at the heart of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda.



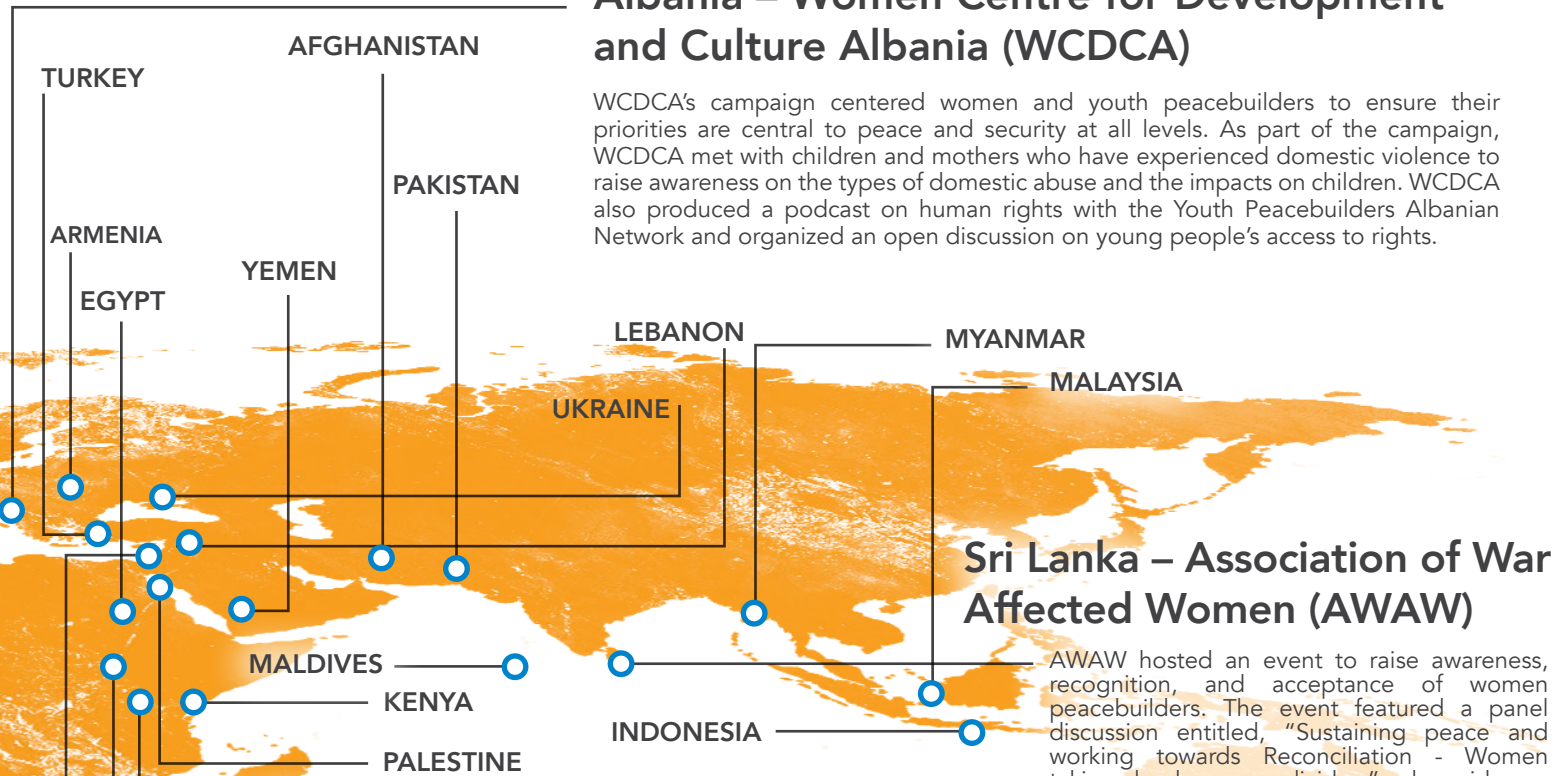


In September, ICAN briefed the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) on the She Builds Peace Protection Framework, which they committed to implement in the UK 2023-27 National Action Plan on WPS. The briefing explored the particular risks and threats that exacerbate the insecurity of women peacebuilders and introduced the practical guidance for states to enhance the protection of women peacebuilders.

In November, ICAN briefed the Women, Peace, and Security Steering Committee at the U.S. Department of State on the She Builds Peace Frameworks for Action. The briefing, which followed the launch of the U.S. WPS Strategy, identified ways the Committee might leverage ICAN's work as U.S. agencies implement the new WPS Strategy.

Albania – Women Centre for Development and Culture Albania (WCDCA)

WCDCA's campaign centered women and youth peacebuilders to ensure their priorities are central to peace and security at all levels. As part of the campaign, WCDCA met with children and mothers who have experienced domestic violence to raise awareness on the types of domestic abuse and the impacts on children. WCDCA also produced a podcast on human rights with the Youth Peacebuilders Albanian Network and organized an open discussion on young people's access to rights.



Sri Lanka – Association of War Affected Women (AWAW)

AWAW hosted an event to raise awareness, recognition, and acceptance of women peacebuilders. The event featured a panel discussion entitled, "Sustaining peace and working towards Reconciliation - Women taking lead across divides," alongside an exhibition and a sale showcasing a diversity of handmade products in Sri Lanka. Members of peer committees highlighted their impactful work as women peacebuilders in their districts and the enhanced livelihood opportunities they achieved. The former President of Sri Lanka, alongside the U.S. and Canadian Ambassadors, and other dignitaries, attended.

South Sudan – Women Relief Aid (WRA)

WRA convened a multistakeholder event to promote women peacebuilders' participation in peacebuilding and security decision-making at the grassroots level. Over 100 women gathered at a peace debate to share their experiences and develop recommendations.

WRA also reached over 5,000 women through a radio show, which raised awareness about their role in bringing peace to their communities. As local leaders committed to supporting the work of women peacebuilders, one female chief created an informal by-law to address negative cultural norms that deny WPBs opportunities to participation in peace processes.

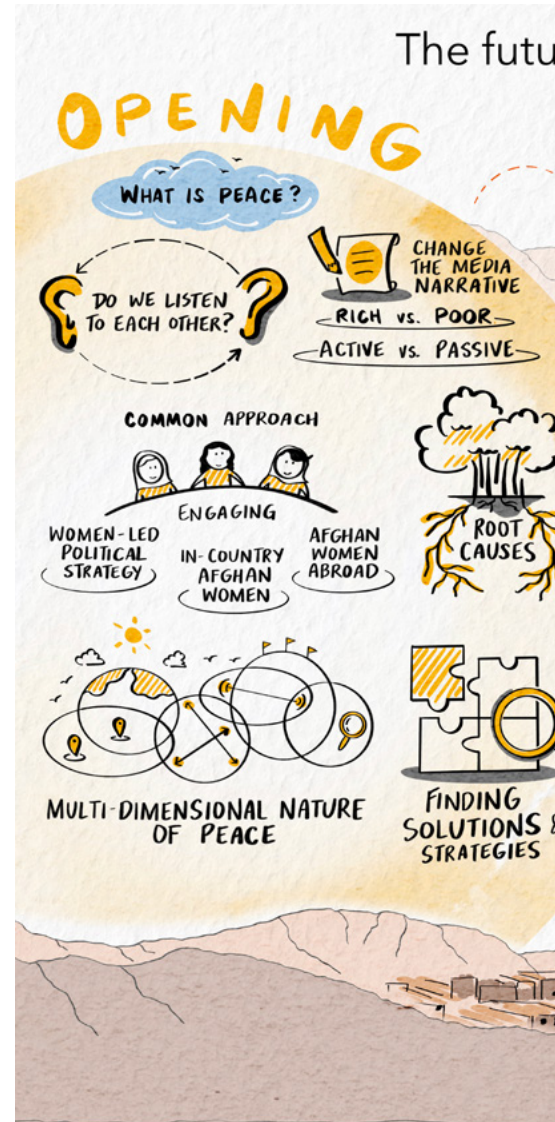
THOUGHT • LEADERSHIP

ICAN's expertise in gendered security and peace analysis offers fresh perspectives on many of the most pressing issues of our times. We draw attention to the human dimensions and impacts of conflict. Our approach is to let the future guide the strategies of the present, instead of letting the past determine the future. We always highlight the agency and strategic approaches of local women peacebuilders in conflict mitigation and security. These perspectives enable new solutions helping to broaden and improve the discourse and practice of peace, the resolution of wars, and the prevention of violent extremism.

ICAN bridges divides. We connect women peacebuilders across countries to break their isolation and learn from each other's experiences. We connect them to the policy community so they can speak directly to inform and improve policymaking and programming.

In 2023, we conducted targeted bilateral dialogues with key governments, delivered two keynote speeches, and over 30 panel presentations to policy and academic audiences. We organized 10 advocacy events with our partners and contributed to over 50 events throughout the year.

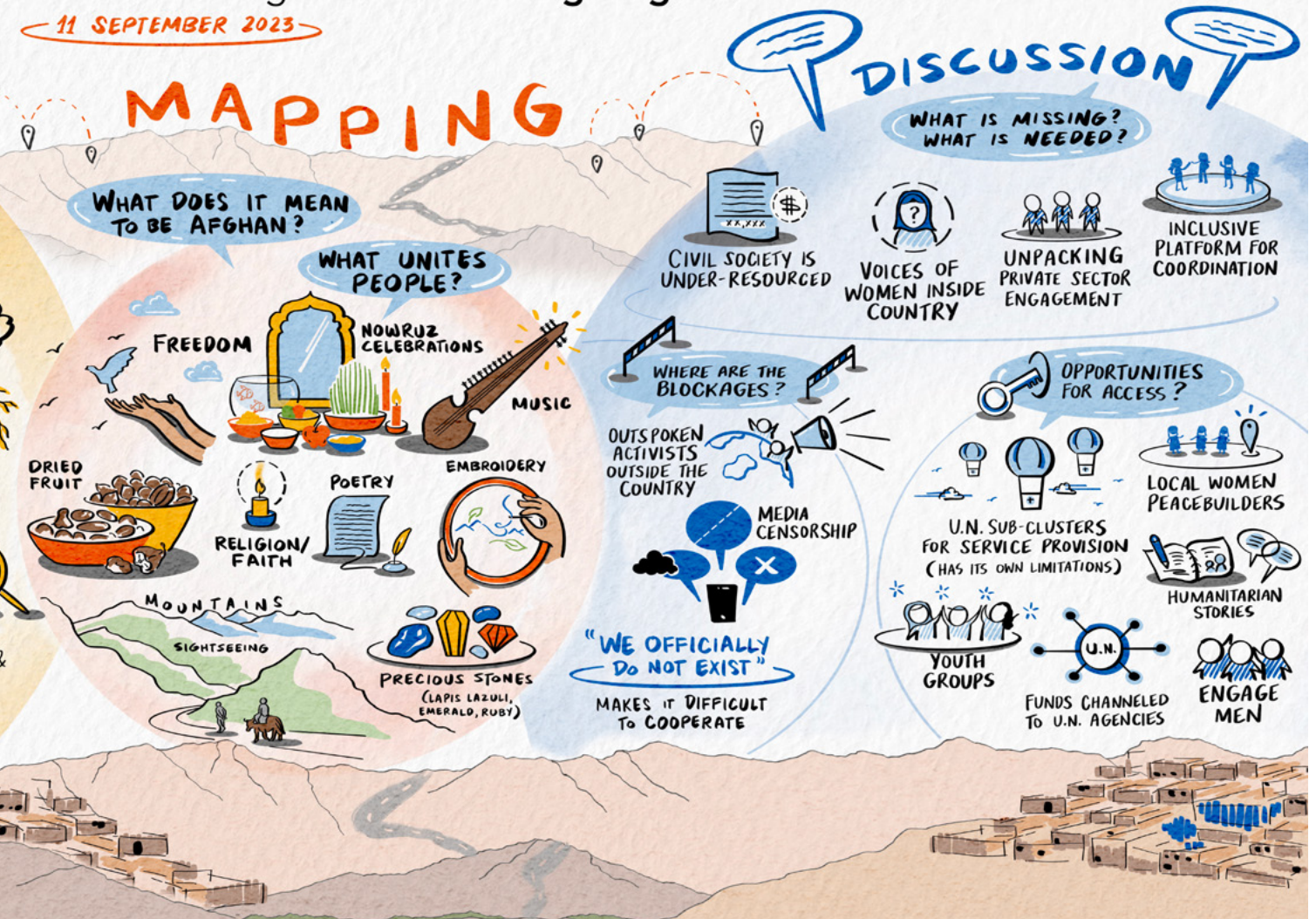
Many events also provided our WASL partners opportunities to engage in global policymaking spaces.



• AND • INFLUENCING • POLICY

Future of WPS in Afghanistan: Strategizing a seat at the table

11 SEPTEMBER 2023



Mapping the Future of WPS in Afghanistan, "For a Seat at the Table," London; September 2023

INCLUSIVE AND GENDER RESPONSIVE PEACEMAKING



I still believe that all people in this world want to live in peace. But sometimes, I don't know why, they think that we can reach peace through war. This is the main mistake, it's impossible to go through war to reach peace...Everywhere in the world, people are saying that to protect ourselves, we have to use power."

- Nina Potarska, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Ukraine



March

"Women, Peace, and Security in Military Operations" ICAN Founder and CEO Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE authored a framing chapter for the publication and spoke at the Sandhurst Military Academy's book launch in the UK.



May

"Women's Full, Equal, and Meaningful Participation and Inclusion of Gender-Related Provisions in Peace Processes" ICAN Program Director Helena Gronberg spoke at a Thematic Learning Session hosted by the Secretariat of the Women, Peace, and Security-Humanitarian Action Compact. WASL Member Clotilda Andiansa Waah (Reach Out, Cameroon) attended.



July

Women, Peace, and Security at the British Embassy, Washington, D.C. The British Embassy and the NewLines Institute organized this event, ahead of the launch of the United Kingdom's WPS National Action Plan. The UK's 2023-25 NAP commits to the implementation of the ICAN Protection Framework for Women Peacebuilders, which was developed with FCDO support. Naraghi Anderlini offered specific examples of the practical guidance offered in the framework and emphasized the urgency for the full inclusion of women in the Sudanese and Afghan peace processes.



My message is to governments to please engage multi-stakeholders, in particularly women's groups, peacebuilders, women's human rights defenders, because they're the first responders in our society. If you engaged all women's groups, they'll show you the correct path. They understand the communities. When governments engage women, it will also open lots of doors to engage marginalized groups."

- Ruby Kholifa, Country Representative, Asian Muslim Action Network (AMAN), Indonesia



October

"The Role of Women Mediators in Negotiating Ceasefires and Security Arrangements" To mark the 23rd anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325, the Global Alliance of Women's Mediator Networks hosted a panel on the experiences of women mediators in ceasefire negotiations and security arrangements. Naraghi Anderlini shared her experiences of leading a mission into Maoist cantonments in Nepal in the aftermath of the war in 2008. She recalled specific actions how simple actions, such as ensuring female and male registrars and gathering gender disaggregated data, informed and improved the disarmament and demobilization program.

"Women's Participation in Ceasefire Negotiations" Gronberg contributed to a roundtable organized by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in collaboration with the International Crisis Group. The discussions explored pathways to enhance the participation of women in ceasefire negotiations, drawing insights from practical examples in Colombia, South Sudan, and Yemen.



Naraghi Anderlini speaks at the Women, Peace, and Security Event at the British Embassy, Washington, D.C.; July 2023

TRANSFORMING EXTREMISMS



We need more projects that focus on the economy, that focus only on livelihoods. This will prevent more violence. Why do people get into cycles of violence? It's mainly because they're in need. These warlords mobilize them to fight instead of building the state and the community. That's the role we're trying to fill and it's not an easy role, because we're trying to step into the role of the state and the government."

- Muna Luqman, Founder, Food4Humanity, Yemen



January

Entry Points for Gender-Responsive Intervention to Deliver Positive Alternatives to Violent Extremism in Iraq ICAN and UNDP Iraq conducted a gender-responsive needs assessment and mapping in the three governorates of Basra, Diyala and Thi Qar. The needs assessment report gives an overview of the key findings from the needs assessment data collection—identifying current dividers and connectors around conflict and violent extremism in Iraqi society—and provides recommendations for programming.



February

Munich Security Conference: "War, Oppression, and Strongmen: Rethinking the Role of Anti-Feminism in Autocratic Regimes" WASL Member Mahbouba Seraj (Afghanistan) and ICAN CEO and Founder Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE spoke at a side event at the MSC, co-hosted by ICAN, the Center for Feminist Foreign Policy, and the German Council on Foreign Relations.



The essence of extremism is weaponizing and separating us around singular identities, but we're living in extreme pluralism. Instead of thinking about diversity as leading to division, we should be thinking about how diversity leads to common values, common sense, and social cohesion. And how do you foster that?"

- Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE
Founder and CEO, ICAN



Seraj and Naraghi Anderlini speak at "War, Oppression, and Strongmen: Rethinking the Role of Anti-Feminism in Autocratic Regimes," Munich; February 2023



I believe in peace; we shouldn't face violence with violence or fighting with fighting—when we speak of peace we need to believe in it and carry it—that is how peace will succeed.”

- Fatima Al-Bahadly, Director, Al Firdaws Society, Iraq



Allamin delivers remarks at Civil Society Reflections on the 2023 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, United Nations, New York; March 2023



March

Civil Society Reflections on the 2023 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy WASL partner Hamsatu Allamin, Founder of the Allamin Foundation for Peace and Development in Nigeria, delivered remarks that drew from her own work in preventing violent extremism and fostering social cohesion during the reintegration process of former fighters. Allamin urged negotiating parties present to pay immediate attention to the concerns of women and girls who have been impacted by violent extremism, and to consider their distinct experiences when crafting global counter-terrorism strategies.



June

“Bridging the gap: connecting research, policy and practice on masculinities to more effectively prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism” Hosted as part of the UN's 2023 Counter-Terrorism Week, Naraghi Andelrini spoke at this side event, which examined the significance of integrating masculinities in CT/PCVE work. Naraghi Anderlini shared a number of practical examples from the WASL network of addressing structural factors and shaping positive alternatives to extremism.

PROTECTION

The protection of women peacebuilders was a key programming area in 2023.

Advocacy: The UK National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security calls for the implementation of the ICAN Protection of Women Peacebuilders guidance. In 2023 we conducted two seminars with UK government counterparts to introduce the tool and the guidance, and offered our recommendations on actions that embassies could undertake and prioritize to provide greater safety to local women peacebuilders.

Resource Development: We continued support to our Colombian partner, Corporación de Investigación y Acción Social y Económica (CIASE), in the development of their **self-assessment security and wellness tool, *Secure, Here and Now***.

June

Secure, Here and Now Workshop, Colombia: Nine WASL members from across Africa and Asia participated in a weeklong workshop with Colombian WASL member, CIASE, to pilot test their *Secure, Here and Now* tool. The gathering was an opportunity to input into the tool, making it relevant for multiple contexts. It was also a time for partners to reflect on the rising threats and new strategies needed to protect women peacebuilders in their respective contexts. CIASE's protection tool aims to strengthen the safety, security, and wellbeing of women peacebuilders.



Salamanca leads a session during the Secure, Here and Now Workshop in Colombia; June 2023



I have learned acceptance, solidarity, and the importance of self-care at many levels and dimensions as a peacebuilder. I learned new ways of protection in my organization. The Colombian context has inspired me a lot and gave me ideas that can be worked on in my country. I learned the difference in the meaning of security for women according to different contexts and experiences."

- *Secure, Here and Now* Workshop Participant



September

Women PeaceMakers Report Launch: Building Holistic Security ICAN Program Director Helena Gronberg delivered remarks at the Women PeaceMakers Report Launch, hosted by the Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice. WASL Member Muna Luqman (Food4 Humanity, Yemen) shared her experiences as a woman peacebuilder in Yemen, and the need to center the voices of women on the ground.



Luqman and Gronberg speak at Women PeaceMakers Report Launch; September 2023



Women peacebuilders challenge existing power structures, systems of governance, control of resources, and notions of security. They face targeted threats to their physical, emotional, political, economic, and spiritual health, and safety, which are always gendered.”

- Helena Gronberg, Program Director, ICAN

FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

Throughout 2023, ICAN's approach to the rising Feminist Foreign Policy discourse was to practice its principles and provide specific, actionable, and measurable recommendations for putting the policies into practice. Four key themes characterized our advocacy and work:

- Recognition and inclusion of women peacebuilders in peace negotiations
- Gender Responsiveness in crisis prevention and response;
- Protection of women peacebuilders; and
- Effective financing for women-led peacebuilding organizations.

March

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Berlin: Launch of the German Guidelines for Feminist Foreign Policy ICAN CEO and Founder Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE was invited to join a public event and conversation with the German Federal Foreign Minister, Annalena Baerbock, on the occasion of the launch of Germany's feminist foreign policy guidelines.

November

The Hague: "No Feminist Foreign Policy Without Feminist Funding" ICAN co-hosted a panel discussion at the Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy Conference, organized by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In partnership with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), ICAN's interactive session highlighted key recommendations to increase financial support for women-led peacebuilding organizations and establish more equitable funding practices. The panel featured members of WASL—Esther Omam (ReachOut, Cameroon), Abir Haj Ibrahim (Mobadeeroon, Syria), and Mossarat Qadeem (Paiman Alumni Trust, Pakistan)—alongside ICAN's Naraghi Anderlini and France Bognon. Mirjam Horstmeier from the Dutch MFA, Johanna Hilbert from GPPAC, and Sophie Giscard d'Estaing from Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) also brought their perspectives and experiences to the discussion. ICAN provided four key recommendations for effective and feminist financing.

Institutional support

Grantmaking based on partnership and trust

Flexibility of funding in emergencies

Direct funding to local women peacebuilders

ICAN's key recommendations from "No Feminist Foreign Policy Without Feminist Funding," The Hague; November 2023



*Omam, Ibrahim, Qadeem, Bognon, and Naraghi Anderlini speak at “No Feminist Foreign Policy Without Feminist Funding,”
The Hague; November 2023*



Women are the ones who take the front row of going into their communities to rebuild them and to mend the wounds...before international organizations or governments come in, women are there. Why? Because we do not only act with our heads, but equally we use our hearts.”

– Esther Omam, Executive Director, Reach Out Cameroon, Cameroon

FEMINIST FINANCING

In 2023, ICAN continued its practice of localization and feminist financing through its Innovative Peace Fund (IPF). Building on our experience and our analysis in our **Funding Women Peacebuilders** publication, we prioritized our targeted and public advocacy to inform and improve funding practices.

May

PeaceCon, Washington DC: “The Tea on the Material Support Ban to Terrorist Organizations: It Undermines Peacebuilding—Time for a New Approach to Prevent Conflict and Address Violent Extremism” ICAN, in partnership with the Alliance for Peacebuilding and the Charity and Security Network, led a session at PeaceCon on the U.S. material support statute pertaining to terrorist financing, and the unintended harm it poses for peacebuilders. The panel discussants included WASL partners Abir Haj Ibrahim (Mobaderoon, Syria), Halima Mohamed (COEC, Kenya), and Zarqa Yaftali (WCLRF, Afghanistan) alongside ICAN Program Director France Bognon.



Ibrahim, Mohamed, Yaftali, and Bognon speak at “The Tea on the Material Support Ban to Terrorist Organizations: It Undermines Peacebuilding—Time for a New Approach to Prevent Conflict and Address Violent Extremism,” PeaceCon, Washington, D.C.; May 2023



We want to ensure that when donor governments look at the resourcing portion of their feminist foreign policy, that they are going to consult the women leading organizations that are directly impacted by this work.”

- France Bognon, Program Director, ICAN

Key recommendations for the U.S. government included:

- **Redefining the burden of risk.** It is women peacebuilders themselves who bear the risk, not donors. Funding regulations should reflect this and should not impose more risks on women peace builders.
- **Funding regulations shouldn't prevent engagement.** Peacebuilding isn't possible without engaging entire communities, including those touched by extremism.

June

Risk Appetite Hackathon at Global Affairs Canada
WASL Member Rosa Emilia Salamanca and ICAN Founder and CEO Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE delivered TED-x style presentations on localization and donor funding, and decolonization, respectively at GAC's Hackathon. The event aimed to co-design GAC's future risk appetite approach to managing grants and contributions.



For me, my tag line is 'fund the organization, not the project only' [...] Institutional support for us is crucial because first we really need to build the capacity of our organizations...Local organizations, particularly the women-led local organizations, the peacebuilding organizations, we need this funding to strengthen our internal systems so that we can respond to emergencies, crises, and critical situations."

- Mossarat Qadeem, Co-Founder, PAIMAN Alumni Trust, Pakistan



August

The Global Public Policy Institute published **"Building Peace, the Feminist Foreign Policy Way: Good Practices"** citing ICAN's Innovative Peace Fund as an example of good practice for feminist peacebuilding.



By providing indigenous, women-led peacebuilding initiatives with otherwise unattainable financial resources and ideational support, the IPF counterbalances the often top down character of traditional peacebuilding funding structures."

- Global Public Policy Institute, "Building Peace, the Feminist Foreign Policy Way: Good Practices"



Bognon speaks at "Resourcing Feminist Movements: A Key Component of Feminist Foreign Policy," Feminist Funded '23: Rising, Washington, D.C.; September 2023



September

"Resourcing Feminist Movements: A Key Component of Feminist Foreign Policy"

Bognon spoke at Feminist Funded '23: Rising, a conference presented by the Women's Funding Network. Alongside representatives from the Ford Foundation, Bognon shared actionable steps for funders and evidence for its effectiveness from ICAN's partners in the Innovative Peace Fund.

AFGHAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS

After two years of emergency response, including providing resettlement support and rapid response grants, ICAN has shifted to ongoing programmatic and advocacy support for Afghan partners. ICAN initiated a new Afghanistan program, *Not About Them, Without Them: Afghan Women's Voice and Vision Shaping the Future*, to expand and strengthen our support to Afghan women-led organizations working in Afghanistan. In 2023, we focused on grantmaking; institutional support for partners; advocacy for, with, and by partners; and training and capacity development for emerging activists.

By engaging in coordination groups and joint letters and statements, ICAN aims to preserve the legacy of Afghanistan's women-led civil society, document and build on their efforts, and prevent the erosion of their position internationally. ICAN's 2023 advocacy included meetings with policymakers from the U.S., UK, and UN, including Richard Bennett, the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Afghanistan.

April

"How Should the UN Respond to the Taliban's Prohibition on Afghan Women Working for the UN?" ICAN Founder and CEO Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE spoke on a panel hosted by the Kroc Institute at the University of Notre Dame.

"The Role of Muslim-Majority Countries in Supporting the Rights of Afghan Women" ICAN Program Officer Malalai Habibi spoke at the Roundtable Discussion and Iftar Dinner with Chief of Protocol of the United States, Rufus Gifford, and Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights, Rina Amiri, at the U.S. Department of State. She joined ambassadors and officials from Muslim-majority countries.

"The Future of Women, Peace and Security in Afghanistan—Supporting Women's Participation in the Socio-Political and Humanitarian Processes"

Naraghi Anderlini and WASL Member Zarqa Yaftali (Afghanistan) spoke at a meeting of the APPG on Women, Peace, and Security in London.

CGTN America: World Today Naraghi Anderlini discussed the Taliban ban on women working for the UN and the impact on humanitarian aid.



ICAN has been a huge ally to us in difficult times, when we didn't have anyone to call on, it was ICAN who stood by us and created spaces to convene and raise our voices."

- Wazhma Frogh, Founder, WPSO, Afghanistan



Afghan women thought leaders and allies, in "For a Seat at the Table,"

August

"Afghanistan: Lessons from America's Failed Negotiations with the Taliban" Naraghi Anderlini published an article with the International Centre for Dialogue Initiatives analyzing mediation efforts in Afghanistan.

CGTN America: The Heat Naraghi Anderlini appeared on CGTN America: The Heat to share reflections two years after the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

September

"For a Seat at the Table" With Women for Peace and Participation (WPP), ICAN co-organized a two-day event at the London School of Economics that convened more than 40 Afghan women thought leaders and allies to strategize to ensure Afghan women's voices and vision are present and effective in relevant decision-making spaces. The group mapped regional and global advocacy space for interventions and developed targeted recommendations to reach key stakeholders. WASL Members Quhramaana Kakar, Zarqa Yaftali, and Nargis Nehan participated, alongside ICAN's Naraghi Anderlini and Habibi.

October

"WPS Agenda and the Situation of Afghan Women: Women's Absence in the Taliban-controlled Political Arena and its Consequences" Naraghi Anderlini participated in a high-level side event during the UN WPS Week, organized by UN Women, Women in International Security Italy, and the Permanent Missions of Italy, Canada, Ukraine, the UK, Tunisia, and Greece to the UN.



including Naraghi Anderlini and Habibi, attend London; September 2023



Naraghi Anderlini facilitates a session at "For a Seat at the Table," London; September 2023

SUDAN

Since 2020, ICAN has financially and strategically supported WASL partners Enass Muzamel and Adla Abubakar, co-founders of Madaniya, in their engagement around the transition process in Sudan. In January 2023, ICAN's CEO and Founder Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE traveled to Khartoum to accompany Madaniya in meetings with national and international stakeholders related to the implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement and ensuring women's inclusion.

Since the start of the war on April 15, 2023, between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), ICAN has continued to support Madaniya in their international

advocacy as well as in their relocation to neighboring countries. Throughout 2023, ICAN and Madaniya regularly met with entities engaged in peace efforts and monitoring war crimes and violations, including governments, joint working groups, and UN agencies, such as OHCHR Independent Expert on Human Rights in Sudan, Mr. Radhouane Nouicer. Between May and December, Madaniya and ICAN advised the governments of Canada, Norway, the United States, and the United Kingdom on the situation inside the country, including humanitarian needs, the targeting of women and girls, and the imperative of an inclusive and gender responsive peace process.



We need your support, and we need you to listen to us as you are listening to those tearing our country apart. Temporary solutions such as ceasefires are important but must be discussed as part of larger negotiations. The inclusion and the role of women and civil society must be clear—not an afterthought—and part of all discussions from the beginning. If not, any agreements will fail, and we will see a repetition of the transitional period.”

- Adla Boubakar, Co-Founder, Madaniya, in a briefing to the government of the United States



May

Action Points to Guarantee Gender Responsive Humanitarian Aid and Protection for Sudanese Women, Men, Girls, and Boys Following the signing of the Short-Term Ceasefire and Humanitarian Arrangements agreement between the SAF and RSF, ICAN published actionable steps to ensure gender responsive humanitarian aid and protection.



September

Briefing with the UK Foreign Secretary Naraghi Anderlini met with UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly to discuss the situation in Sudan, the impact of the conflict on women, and the critical role of women peacebuilders in ensuring a just and sustainable peace. Sudanese WASL Members Enass Muzamel and Adla Boubakar provided vital insights and recommendations through virtual participation, including a request to develop a platform for pre-discussions to prepare the ground for women to engage in peace talks.





People should find ways to work together to overcome challenges and disagreements...

This is really important in countries like Sudan where there is instability, because enemies invest a lot of effort and time in making divisions."

- Enass Muzamel, Co-Founder, Madaniya, Sudan

On February 4, 2024, our dear friend, partner, and colleague, Enass Muzamel, Co-Founder of the Sudanese peacebuilding organization Madaniya, passed away due to a sudden illness.

Enass was courageous, generous with her love for others, and deeply committed to peace, justice, and dignity for her compatriots. She dedicated her short, bright life to working for her country and community. She was an extraordinary peacebuilder who was willing to speak truth to power, while also reaching across divisions to find shared solutions and taking on the responsibility to protect those in need. Her commitment to Sudan's youth and women was unswerving.

Enass played a key role in the 2018-19 pro-democracy revolution in Sudan, raising funds, mobilizing women, and protesting. Following the revolution, Enass continued to advocate at the local and international levels in support of the rights of women, the survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, and a democratic vision for the future of Sudan.

In April 2023 when the war broke out in Sudan, Enass and her family left Sudan to find safety. She persisted with her peacebuilding work, even in exile, and despite the risks it posed to herself.

May Enass' dream and vision for peace, justice, and prosperity in Sudan live on and become her legacy. She was a Sudanese hero. A leader. A peacebuilder.

IRAN

Following the October 2022 arrest and murder of Mahsa (Jina) Amini in Iran, nationwide protests under the banner of “Women, Life, Freedom” (WLF) captured the world’s imagination. The WLF movement was the first in history where a feminist message was the uniting force across gender, ethnic, class, generational, and geographic divides. The regime’s reaction was brutal, with hundreds killed, thousands arrested, and countless tortured with

allegations of sexual violence in detention. Nonetheless in 2023, the spirit of the movement persisted and across Iran, women of all ages, continue to fight for equality and rights.

Throughout the year, ICAN’s Founder and CEO, Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE spoke in a series of events, and published analysis on the significance of the events unfolding in Iran.



*Naraghi Anderlini with Christiane Amanpour on Amanpour;
January 2023*

January

CNN Amanpour Naraghi Anderlini appeared on CNN with Christiane Amanpour.



For the first time in history, we’re seeing a revolution that is not only led by women, but with the message of women’s rights. Women, Life, Freedom is the clarion call for everybody.”

- Sanam Naraghi Anderlini,
CNN Amanpour, January

March

“Hijab. Hair. Hate. And State: Feminist Churn within Islam” Naraghi Anderlini was a panelist at the India Today Conclave in New Delhi, India.

BBC World Service Naraghi Anderlini was interviewed by Julian Worricker from the BBC World Service.

April

“Free Speech at the Crossroads: International Dialogues – Can Iran Recover its Democracy?” Naraghi Anderlini spoke on a panel hosted by Georgetown University’s Free Speech Project and Future of the Humanities Project.

“Iran Feminism and the Media” Naraghi Anderlini spoke on a panel hosted by the Media Diversity Institute.

September

“Women’s Lives and Freedom in Iran: Gains, Losses and Lessons One Year On” Naraghi Anderlini authored an opinion piece published in Inter Press Service News.

ISRAEL/PALESTINE

ICAN's response in the aftermath of the October 7 Hamas attacks in Israel, and Israel's siege and bombing of Gaza, centered on public advocacy and direct support to our Palestinian partner and WASL member, Wi'am, the Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center.

Supporting Wi'am's work: ICAN led a fundraising drive to generate resources directly for Wi'am's crucial work. Despite the risks, Wi'am works day and night to provide humanitarian relief

and mental healthcare, including through their hotline for victims of gender-based violence.

Public advocacy: In October 2023, following consultations with all WASL members, we authored and published "**An Urgent 7-Point Plan to End the Killings and Violence in Palestine and Israel.**" We have continued to call for an end to the genocidal violence and have drawn attention to the gendered impact of the violence.



An Urgent 7-Point Plan to End the Killings and Violence in Palestine and Israel

As members of the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) and as peacebuilders, mediators, human rights activists, and community leaders living and working at the frontlines of many of today's devastating wars, we offer our condolences to all who have lost loved ones in Palestine and in Israel. We, too, live with the pain and loss of war, and our hearts break with yours.

We also know that when violence begets more violence, and extremism begets more extremism, it is the innocent people who pay the highest price. Thousands of civilians—men, women, and children—have already been killed and maimed.

Why?

How many more have to die before you all realize that war and violence are never the answer?

This has to stop.

To our political leaders, we ask that you have the moral courage to collectively:

1. Demand a ceasefire now by all parties to stop this unfolding genocidal violence;
2. Ensure urgent and immediate delivery of aid to all Gazans to break the siege;
3. Halt the violence of settlers and the Israeli Defense Forces in the West Bank against Palestinians;
4. Immediately release all Israeli civilians being held hostage in Gaza and all Palestinian civilians incarcerated in Israel, especially women and children;
5. Be fair, factual, and balanced in the analysis and language you use. The words you choose can help mitigate and heal our trauma, or they can inflame and harm us all;
6. Engage in direct high level conflict prevention by visiting Israel and Palestine (Gaza and the West Bank) to pay condolences to grieving families and to prompt an immediate ceasefire; and
7. Initiate a new process of radical inclusive diplomacy and bi-national dialogues ensuring the full inclusion of Palestinian and Israeli peacebuilding organizations. These groups have sought and found humanity in each other and built bridges, engaged in difficult dialogues and found shared solutions without resorting to violence. Their experience is essential for a future of equal coexistence.

We need you to act with urgency and purpose. As peacebuilders and as individuals fighting for peace every day, we stand ready to support, advise, and enable a pathway to a future that is peaceful and just for Palestinians and Israelis.

Please do not let inaction be your legacy at this pivotal moment in history.

We as peacebuilders are ready to support in any possible way.

Signed,

Members of the Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL)



In the end, extremism looks like a call to action—we each have the choice to either walk forward into a future in which we follow our humanity, or into a time of pain and despair, where fear, greed, and intolerance lead. At Wi'am, we choose to follow our humanity and have hope in the path which it paves."

- Lucy Talgieh, Women's Project Coordinator, Wi'am and Municipal Representative of the City of Bethlehem, Palestine

KNOWLEDGE SHARING • BUILDING SKILLS • AND • EXPERTISE

Throughout the year, we provided a range of support, including strategic accompaniment, capacity building, and rapid response grants to WASL members engaged in peace and political transition processes. We also facilitated peer-to-peer, multi-stakeholder, and cross-country exchanges tailored to our partners' distinct needs, such as integrating livelihoods into peacebuilding programming.



As an organization that wants to build a network of women peacebuilders in our country, we learn from ICAN in their own building of a successful international network."

- Abir Haj Ibrahim, Co-Founder, Mobaderoon, Syria



Jamila Afghani, WILPF, Afghanistan and Jan Egeland, Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, Oslo; November 2023

STRATEGIC CONVENINGS

In November, ICAN and the Norwegian Development Agency (Norad) co-hosted the first annual coordination meeting of Norad's international partners implementing projects related to the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. The meeting enabled an exchange of experiences, best practices, and guidance to collectively advance

women's inclusion in peace and decision-making processes and recognize their leadership at the nexus of humanitarian, development, and conflict responses. The meeting was also an opportunity to engage Norwegian non-governmental organizations, and other key actors and institutions in Norway.



Phil Evans (Karama), Rola Al-Masri (WILPF), Hibaq Osman (Karama), Camille Delbourgo (LAW), Jamila Afghani (WILPF), Stacey Schamber (ICAN), Helena Gronberg (ICAN), Sanam Naraghi Anderlini (ICAN), Kari Thorsen (Norad), Sara Dominguez (WILPF), Jill Engen (Norad) Oslo; November 2023.

Photo credit: Phil Evans

The gathering included a high-level discussion co-hosted in partnership with Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), Legal Action Worldwide (LAW), and Karama.

ICAN's CEO Sanam Naraghi Anderlini delivered keynote remarks followed by a dialogue focused on reimagining partnerships and coordination between women peacebuilders, international mediation, humanitarian, and development actors in crises and conflict settings.



“We can give up and turn our back to the crises, or step in and face the new reality. Multilateralism may be waning, but interconnectivity remains. We must salvage the ideas, policies, and laws that we have already and build from them. We can build genuine equitable partnerships in a global ecosystem of civil society, governments, the UN, local and international organizations; each stakeholder has a strength to bring to the table.

We must not forget the urgency of the need for ceasefires now. Wars are entirely in our human control. While some profit from war, most do not. We cannot let might become right and wars become the norm.”

- Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE
Founder and CEO, ICAN



STRATEGIC ACCOMPANIMENT: 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

ICAN provides strategic and technical advisory services to women peacebuilders to engage effectively in real-time peace processes.



CAMEROON

ICAN accompanied and offered guidance to Cameroonian partners as they participated in the implementation and monitoring of the Cameroon Major National Dialogue. This included preparations for briefing the Prime Minister of Cameroon, diplomatic missions, the UN, EU, and World Bank in February and March. In September and October, ICAN and WASL members provided coalition-building support and advice on messaging as Cameroonian women prepared to engage in the Southern Cameroon People's Conference in Canada.

SUDAN

Following the outbreak of war in April, ICAN worked closely with WASL member Madaniya, advocating for gender-responsive ceasefires and an inclusive peace process to guarantee sustainable peace for all. ICAN held briefings, developed guidance, and supported relocation efforts. For more information, see page 30.

SYRIA

Through ICAN's partnership with WPHF (see page 39), we provided strategic accompaniment to the Center for Civil Society and Democracy (CCSD) during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York in September. We supported their advocacy for women's inclusion (30%) in all political meetings, committees, consultations, and decision-making bodies, ensuring a gender-responsive constitutional process and increased funding to support Syrian and women-led civil society to identify community needs and design and implement programs. CCSD participated in public events focused on Syria; the Women, Peace, and Security agenda; and sustainable development. CCSD's delegation also met bilaterally with UN agencies, the UN Special Envoy's office, and Swiss, Canadian, Irish, UK, and US government representatives.



PHILIPPINES

ICAN supported the Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy (PCID) in developing a WPS curriculum and diploma program designed and contextualized to the realities in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). The aim is to institutionalize WPS implementation within Mindanao State University (MSU) to ensure increased participation of women in decision-making and peacebuilding, and the protection of human rights. ICAN provided teaching materials and guidance for the program.



CoAct and ICAN at Community Baraza in Katwe, Uganda

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

January

Uganda Training: Gender-Sensitive Mediation Strategies

ICAN and Ugandan WASL partner Coalition for Action on 1325 (CoAct1325) conducted two trainings on gender sensitive mediation strategies for two groups of women peacebuilders. The first training targeted a cohort of high-level women peacebuilders at the national level, while the second training brought together local women mediators in Kasese district in western Uganda.

In Kasese, CoAct and ICAN staff met with district leaders to assess CoAct programs and evaluate the progress made by women and youth in mediating conflicts at the grassroots level, including efforts to mobilize more women and youth to become involved in peacebuilding work.



Robinah Rubimbwa, CoAct Executive Director, Gronberg lead exercises in Kasese District, Uganda

Meeting with youth group in Kasese

In Kasese, CoAct and ICAN staff met with district leaders to assess CoAct programs and evaluate the progress made by women and youth in mediating conflicts at the grassroots level, including efforts to mobilize more women and youth to become involved in peacebuilding work.

ICAN also had an opportunity to hear from youth beneficiaries of

CoAct programming. Trained through CoAct's one-week bootcamps in leadership, UNSCR 1325 (WPS) and 2250 (YPS) several of the youth were part of CoAct's elections observer team to prevent and respond to election related violence during the 2022 elections. Many have gone on to become peace ambassadors and started their own community-based organizations (CBOs) to promote peacebuilding, environmental awareness, and youth leadership.



We trained on the YPS agenda [in booth camp] and made commitments to become peacebuilders and youth peace ambassadors and support dissemination of the YPS agenda. We designed an action plan, formalized a group and registered as a CBO – the Coalition for Peaceful Youth.”

-ShadrackENZAMA, Youth, Peace Ambassador, Program Assistant, CoAct 1325 and Coalition for Peaceful Youth

In addition, ICAN conducted a training for CoAct staff on gender and preventing violent extremism. The training was designed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the causes, drivers, and impact of violent extremism on women, girls, men, and boys in Uganda. It also involved discussions on how to develop and implement appropriate interventions.



Naraghi Anderlini leads session in Kampala, Uganda



Gorett Komurembe, Director of Programs CoAct, Naraghi Anderlini, Rubimbwa, and Gronberg during training in Kampala, Uganda



ICAN team, SSWC, and INGO partners at R-ARCSS workshop



June

South Sudan Workshop

In June, ICAN Program Directors Helena Gronberg and France Bognon traveled to South Sudan for a workshop with the South Sudanese Women's Coalition (SSWC) and other INGO partners (Inclusive Peace and Cordaid) of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund's (WPHF) Rapid Response Window (RRW). The workshop brought SSWC together with other women's organizations to identify the successes, lessons, and gaps in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), as well as support their efforts for joint initiatives and actions. Their initiatives include engaging youth women, women living with disabilities, women living in refugee camps, and other minority groups

A joint outcome document from the workshop outlined key areas for collaboration: 1) Creating inclusive and meaningful peacemaking processes at the community and sub-national level; 2) Reviving the R-ARCSS implementation process and enhancing inclusivity; 3) Identifying allies to support inclusive peacemaking in South Sudan; and 4) Ensuring effective transfer mechanisms between community, sub-national, and national peacemaking efforts and initiatives.



Gronberg facilitating at R-ARCSS workshop

Spotlight: UN Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)

In 2022, ICAN partnered with the WPHF Rapid Response Window to deliver short-term grants and strategic advice to women's civil society organizations that address barriers to women's influence and participation in Track 1 or Track 2 peace processes, or the implementation and monitoring of a peace agreement. Through this partnership, in 2023, we supported Center for Civil Society and Democracy (CCSD), Syria; Corporación Conciudadanía, Colombia; Reach Out Cameroon; and Women Relief Aid (WRA), South Sudan. In addition, we provided logistical and strategic support to a coalition of Cameroonian women peacebuilders to carry out joint advocacy for women's representation in the Cameroon Major National Dialogue and to take part in the Southern Cameroon People's Conference in Canada.



Bognon and Concy Dianah, Program Coordinator, WRA at WRA offices

Gronberg and Bognon also visited ICAN-WPHF partner Women Relief Aid (WRA) to assess the impact of their work. With funding from ICAN and WPHF, WRA is strengthening the capacity of young women leaders and groups from marginalized communities to actively contribute to peacebuilding initiatives that reinforce the values of the R-ARCSS. Their team used the grant to train 40 young women in peacebuilding and 50 young women in peace mediation from across all 10 states of South Sudan. Training topics included conflict resolution, conflict management, and community mediation. For more information, see pages 46-47.

The team also visited UN agencies and embassy representatives.



We learned how to be peaceful members of our communities—you cannot build peace when you do not have peace...Peace starts with a person."

– Anna, WRA Project Beneficiary

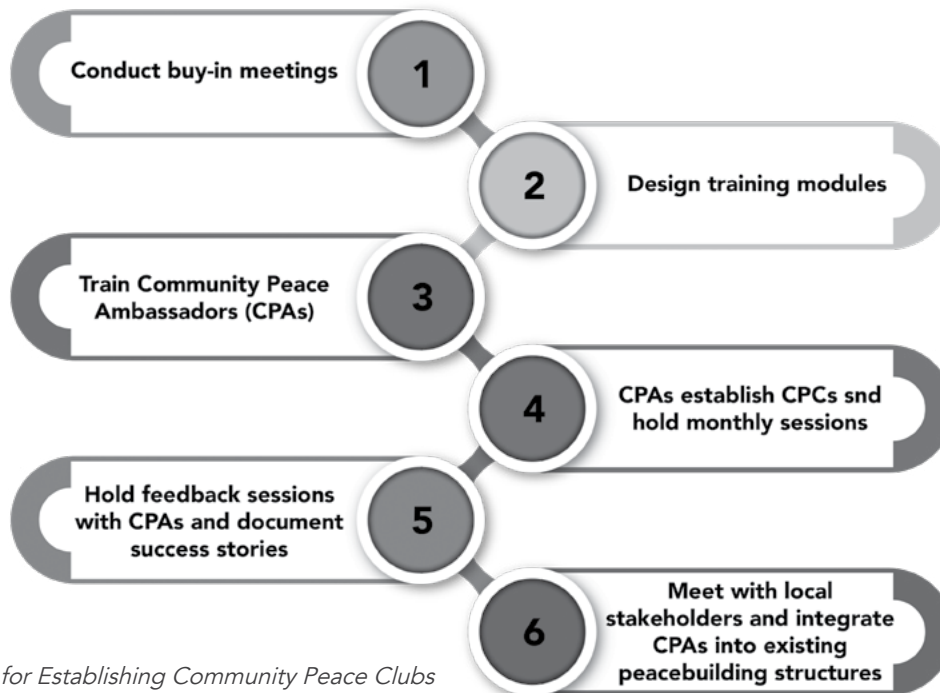
PEER-TO-PEER EXCHANGES

ICAN facilitates peer-to-peer exchanges, enabling our partners to learn from each other's peacebuilding techniques across diverse contexts, share common solutions, deepen solidarities, and strengthen their impact.

In 2023, we hosted three peer-to-peer exchanges with over 30 partners from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Pakistan, Nigeria, and South Sudan.

September

ICAN hosted a peer-to-peer exchange about the role that community and school peace clubs play in fostering pluralism, peacebuilding, and countering violent extremism. ICAN partners Center for Advocacy in Gender Equality and Action for Development (CAGEAD) from Cameroon, PAIMAN, Allamin Foundation from Pakistan, and Women Relief Aid (WRA) from South Sudan participated in this exchange, sharing methodologies, lessons learned, and risk mitigation tactics for employing peace clubs in their communities.



CAGEAD's Model for Establishing Community Peace Clubs

Throughout autumn 2023, ICAN hosted two peer-to-peer exchanges between 25 partner organizations from across Afghanistan and diaspora communities on the topic of integrating livelihoods into peacebuilding programming. The exchanges fostered a community of practice dedicated to advancing economic security as a core component of sustainable peace. Partners shared, learned, and collaborated on tangible strategies, challenges, and successes.

Livelihood and income generating projects can help shift the gender dynamics by strengthening the financial independence of women. Livelihood support also sustains women peacebuilders, journalists and civil society leaders, who may not have alternative sources of income for their work.

In the peer-to-peer sessions, partners shared strategies related to income-generation skills development for female heads of households, multi-purpose cash assistance to female-headed households, rehabilitation of small-scale irrigation infrastructure, rehabilitation of potable water and hand pumps, cash for work to support day laborers, and stipends or food packages for workshop participants.

December

As part of ICAN's partnership with the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), GPPAC delivered an online peer-to-peer session on Policy and Advocacy Engagement for ICAN and GPPAC partners. The session discussed the why/what/how of advocacy, including stakeholder mapping, SMART objectives, and advocacy tactics. Due to high demand and partner feedback, ICAN and GPPAC will develop this work further.



Overall, initiatives like project development clinics and peer-to-peer exchange sessions play a crucial role in empowering women-led CSOs in Afghanistan and advancing gender equality and peacebuilding efforts in the region. It reflects a holistic approach to development that considers the unique contexts and needs of conflict-affected communities.”

- Asadullah Haidari, New Development and Relief Organization, Afghanistan

RESEARCH, ANALYSIS, AND DOCUMENTING

ICAN conducts cutting-edge research and analysis on inclusive peacemaking, gender and extremism, the protection of peacebuilders, and other interrelated subjects. Governments, multilateral organizations, academics, and civil society internationally use our resources to train staff and guide the development of gender-responsive policies.

We practice knowledge transfer by ensuring that our materials are accessible in various formats and languages.

In 2023, our work included the translation of the three-part **ICAN She Builds Peace Frameworks for Action** into Spanish.

- 1. Recognizing Women Peacebuilders** offers analysis of **who** women peacebuilders are, what they do, **why** their participation in peace and security negotiations is imperative to create lasting peace, and **how** diplomats and mediators can ensure inclusive and gender responsive processes;
- 2. Protecting Women Peacebuilders** outlines the threats they face and actions that governments and international actors can take to support their work; and
- 3. Funding Women Peacebuilders** offers analysis of effective and harmful funding practices, and practical recommendations for donors to improve the impact of their funding, while ensuring the safety, sustainability, and success of women peacebuilders and their work.



Financiando el trabajo de mujeres constructoras de paz DESMANTELANDO LAS BARRERAS DE LA PAZ

France Bagnan, Esq.
Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE



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Autora principal: Melinda Holmes
Con contribuciones de:
Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE y Stacey Schamber



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Reconociendo mujeres constructoras de paz:

ACTORAS CRÍTICAS EN EL ESTABLECIMIENTO EFECTIVO DE PAZ

Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE



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We conducted and released six video interviews with members of our Women's Alliance for Security Leadership (WASL) network, discussing their work and strategies:



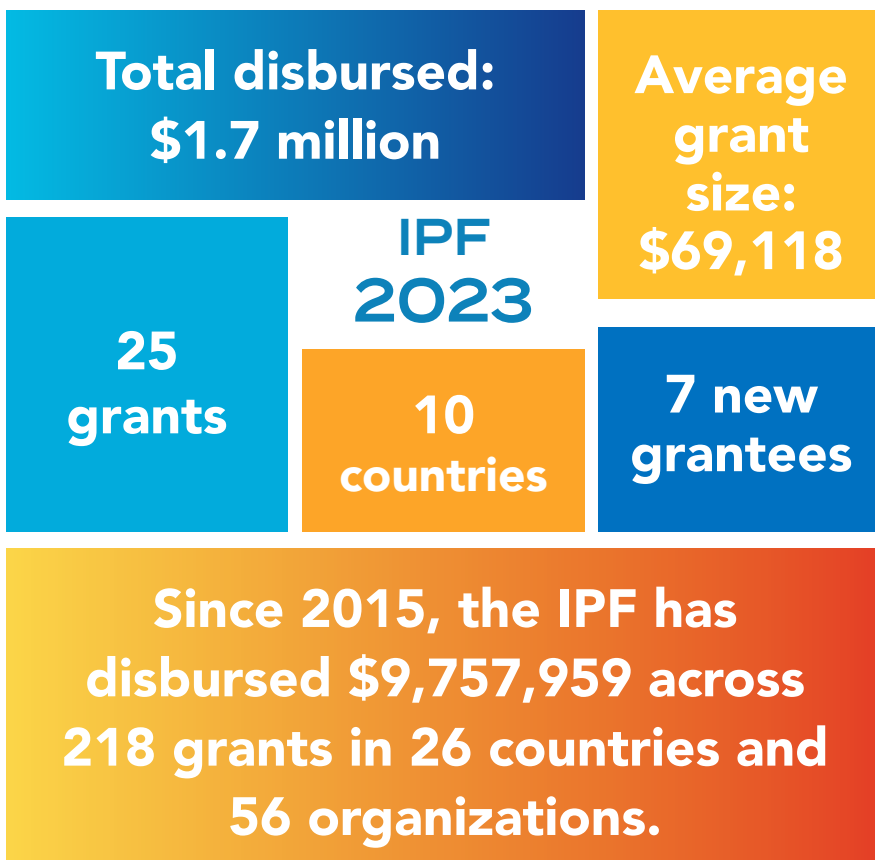
As a peacebuilder, I bridge the differences between communities, between people, trying to search for the common ground between them such as bread, water, and humanitarian aid—things that bring them together.”

- Muna Luqman, Founder and Chairperson, Food4Humanity, Yemen

GRANTMAKING • AND • INSTITUTIONAL • SUPPORT

ICAN's Innovative Peace Fund (IPF) was the first and still only independent, multi-donor, global grantmaking mechanism wholly dedicated to providing financial support and technical assistance to women-led peacebuilding organizations in countries affected by violent conflict, extremism, and militarism.

The IPF funds a wide array of projects, including those that relate to local conflict mitigation and resolution; gender-based violence; advocacy for women's participation and inclusion in decision-making processes; economic empowerment; humanitarian response; and skills development and income generation.



Although the IPF aims to create trusting, lasting relations with its partners, its funding is not designed to be permanent. Instead, the IPF's goal is to equip initiatives with the knowledge and organizational structures to professionalize... that allows them to apply for funding elsewhere. Accordingly, the IPF supports its member far beyond their financial contributions."

– Global Public Policy Institute, "Building Peace, the Feminist Foreign Policy Way: Good Practices"



Processes of co-creation and participatory planning should be encouraged as standard practice so that funding is useful, transformative, addresses community-identified challenges, and contributes to more equitable and peaceful communities.”

- Maya Kavaler, ICAN Senior Program Officer



The ICAN team [through the WPHF partnership] has made WRA known to many other donors... It’s given us a big platform to have more partners and exposure inside South Sudan and outside.”

– Concy Dianah, Program Coordinator, Women Relief Aid (WRA), South Sudan

INNOVATIVE PEACE FUND: 2023 GRANT SPOTLIGHTS

Syria

Center for Civil Society and Democracy

CCSD's IPF-funded project aimed to keep Syrian women's representation in political and peace processes on the global agenda. CCSD crafted a recommendation paper, which serves as a comprehensive guide for the Syrian peace process. Its efforts garnered international attention at significant events, including during meetings around the UN General Assembly and WPS week, the Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy Conference. During the project, CCSD engaged 179 Syrian women and 45 Syrian men actively involved in civil society or peace processes, as well as 70 civil society organizations. Women joined impactful advisory boards and engaged in consultations directly with the UN and UN Special Envoy.

Pakistan

PAIMAN

PAIMAN used IPF funding to strengthen its TOLANAs—peace groups comprising mothers in communities and youth peace groups. PAIMAN trained over 100 women and girls in political leadership and mediation. With their skills and tools, the women educated their communities, registering people to vote and access government services. They also mediated community conflicts, implemented social action plans, and were first responders in remote areas hit by the floods.

Colombia

Afghanistan

Afghan Women Skills Development Center

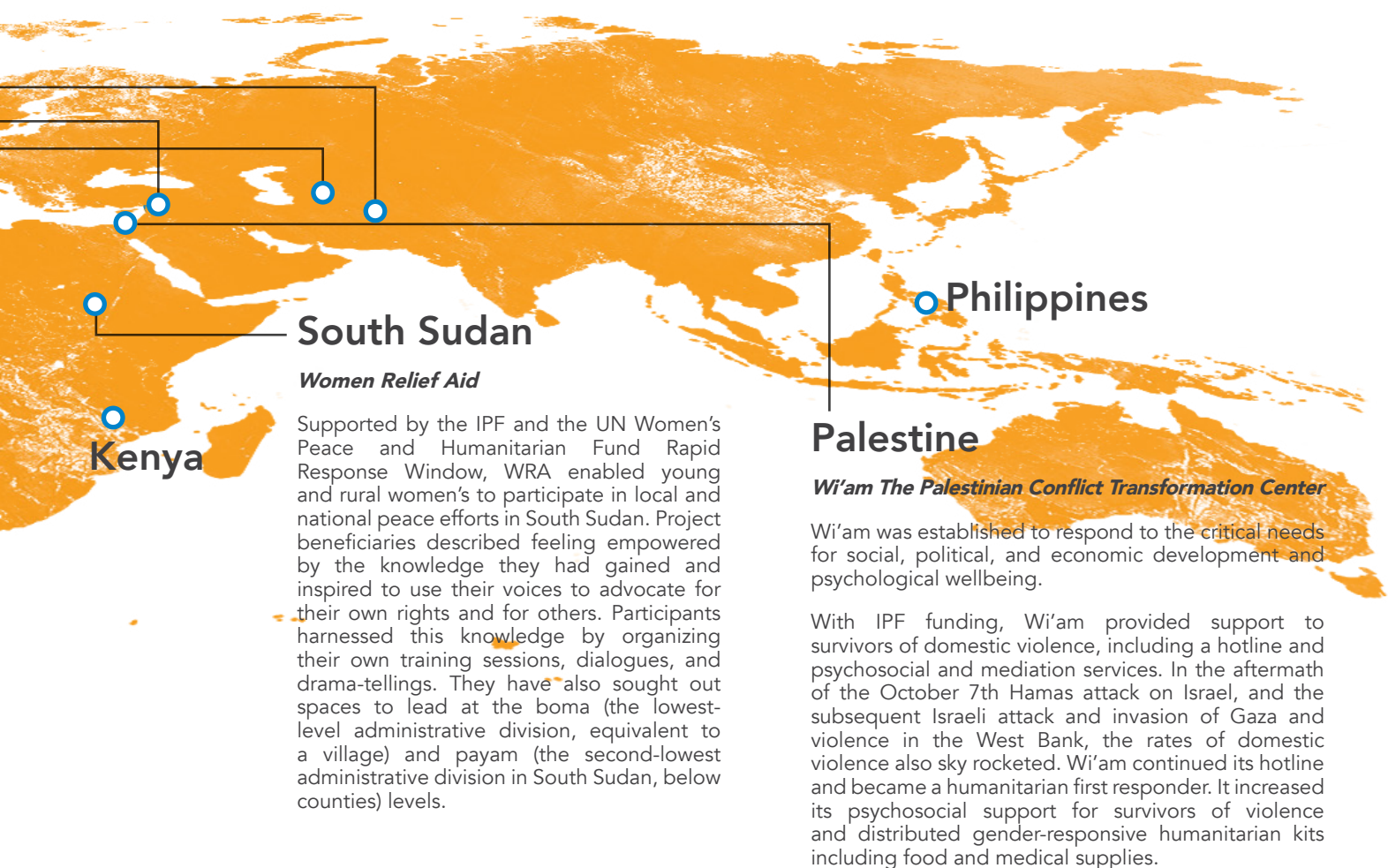
With funding from the IPF, AWSDC provided training and support to male and female community leaders who serve on community-based peacebuilding councils (Shuras) in the Pashtoonkot District of Faryab Province. Following trainings on conflict management, dialogue, and facilitation, Shuras are better able to engage with communities to prevent conflict, reduce violent incidents, and strengthen social cohesion and solidarity among various ethnic groups. AWSDC has also initiated a livelihood project in Paktya Province. The team has established a provincial office and trained their team on humanitarian response, conducting rapid need assessments, and selecting beneficiaries.

Cameroon

Nigeria

Allamin Foundation for Peace and Development

Through community-based deradicalization efforts, Allamin's IPF-funded project dispelled misconceptions and promoted understanding of Islamic religious teachings among radicalized women and girls. Allamin identified a cohort of 30 young women, who were former Boko Haram members, for the process of deradicalization. Through a combination of psycho-social support, exposure to the peaceful nature of Islamic messaging, and training for support in developing livelihoods, the Allamin team deradicalized these women and supported them in their new lives. In tandem, the Allamin Foundation has worked closely with the women's new communities to build trust with the returnees and support them by promoting peaceful coexistence.



Kenya

South Sudan

Women Relief Aid

Supported by the IPF and the UN Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund Rapid Response Window, WRA enabled young and rural women's to participate in local and national peace efforts in South Sudan. Project beneficiaries described feeling empowered by the knowledge they had gained and inspired to use their voices to advocate for their own rights and for others. Participants harnessed this knowledge by organizing their own training sessions, dialogues, and drama-tellings. They have also sought out spaces to lead at the boma (the lowest-level administrative division, equivalent to a village) and payam (the second-lowest administrative division in South Sudan, below counties) levels.

Philippines

Palestine

Wi'am The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center

Wi'am was established to respond to the critical needs for social, political, and economic development and psychological wellbeing.

With IPF funding, Wi'am provided support to survivors of domestic violence, including a hotline and psychosocial and mediation services. In the aftermath of the October 7th Hamas attack on Israel, and the subsequent Israeli attack and invasion of Gaza and violence in the West Bank, the rates of domestic violence also sky rocketed. Wi'am continued its hotline and became a humanitarian first responder. It increased its psychosocial support for survivors of violence and distributed gender-responsive humanitarian kits including food and medical supplies.

FUNDRAISING AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

In Turkey and Syria, after severe earthquakes in February, many of our partners and their communities lost their homes. ICAN raised and disbursed \$13,000 in emergency relief funds, disbursed within days of the earthquake. Our WASL partners, Mobaderoon, Kareemat, Center for Civil Society and Democracy (CCSD), DARB Syria, Hope Revival, and Zenobia Syrian Women's Association received support, enabling to ensure safety for their own staff, and organize rapid aid to their communities. Mobaderoon, a Syrian peacebuilding network, mobilized 500 volunteer engineers to survey buildings, determine their safety, and guide people to safe shelter. Kareemat used ICAN funds to ensure its staff's safety and they helped hundreds of families in areas of Syria that were inaccessible to international aid workers.



CCSD Earthquake Response

Hope Revival Earthquake Response

In Afghanistan, we continue to fund existing and new women-led organizations providing livelihood and psychosocial support to their communities, as well as create spaces for Afghan women leaders to strategize and advocate for themselves.



ICAN has been a shelter for us to be honest, especially during the past 16 to 17 months where we have had some really life-threatening situations.”

- Founder, Wellness Prosperity and Socio-Empowerment Organization (WPSO), Afghanistan

In Palestine, following our October WASL statement and action plan, we have focused ICAN's support to Wi'am: The Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center. Despite the risks, they are working day and night to provide humanitarian relief and mental healthcare, including through their hotline for victims of gender-based violence.



Because we are responsible for providing psychosocial support to so many in our community, we find these calls with you [ICAN] helpful for releasing our own stress and frustrations”.

- Lucy Talgieh & Zoughbi Zoughbi, Wi'am, Palestine

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

ICAN's staff conducted several training workshops for WASL partners throughout 2023.

12 of ICAN's Afghan partners received tailored support from ICAN Finance Director Olga Andrew on budget development and ICAN's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Expert Randa Yassir on developing M&E frameworks.

- Andrew's training ensured partners could conduct their planned activities with allotted funds, understand forms of expenditure, estimate activity-related costs, and dedicate funds to support their institutional development.
- Yassir worked with our partners to create activity plans that would not only allow them to achieve their desired impacts, but easily show how they measure their success.

ICAN also hosted a workshop on project development ideas for new Afghan partners. Our team, in conjunction with other peer organizations, provided new grantees guidance on ensuring that their activities and strategies were conflict and gender-responsive.

ICAN provided a communications training workshop for our Syrian partner Mobaderoon. This session included guidance on increasing Mobaderoon's outreach and media engagement; a review of Mobaderoon's communication strategy; and strategies to increase

Mobaderoon's outreach and impact through communications.

As part of our internal monitoring and evaluation of the IPF, ICAN also convened several focus group discussions. Twenty partners reflected on their experiences with the IPF, contributed ideas, and brainstormed several new methods of working. They prioritized innovative reporting models, cross-regional learning opportunities, and continuing the peer-to-peer organizational development learning and strengthening.



**If there is a gap in my organization's capacity,
I know ICAN is there to support."**

- Visaka Dharmadasa, Founder, Association of War Affected Women, Sri Lanka

OUR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

In August, we launched the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Mellon Liaison Fellowship at ICAN. Organized by the UMass-Amherst World Studies Interdisciplinary Project (WSIP) and funded by the Mellon Foundation and the UMass-Amherst Provost's Office, ICAN selected two distinguished UMass PhD Mellon Liaison Fellows in 2023:



Mariam Parvez Sheikh

Mariam's research focuses on how young students in Pakistan's higher education produce alternative knowledge as they articulate various struggles, including feminism, climate justice, and anti-capitalism. In doing so, her research examines how they expose gender, ethnic, and class inequities through their struggle for social justice. At ICAN, Mariam conducted research mapping Women, Peace, and Security curricula in higher education and analyzed opportunities for intervention.



Meenakshi Nair

Meenakshi will begin her fellowship with ICAN in 2024. Her research at UMass focuses on South Asian literature and postcolonial studies, with specific interests in cities and mobility, and multilingualism and literary translation.

ICAN offers UMass Mellon Fellows the opportunity to learn about both local women's peacebuilding practices and the workings of a global, coalition-building, peacebuilding organization. During their time at ICAN Fellows contribute their research skills, writing, collaborative conceptualization, and relation-building to our work.

The fellowship also enables UMass PhD students to build new networks, hone new skills, while exploring and experiencing options for their future careers in non-academic social-justice arenas.

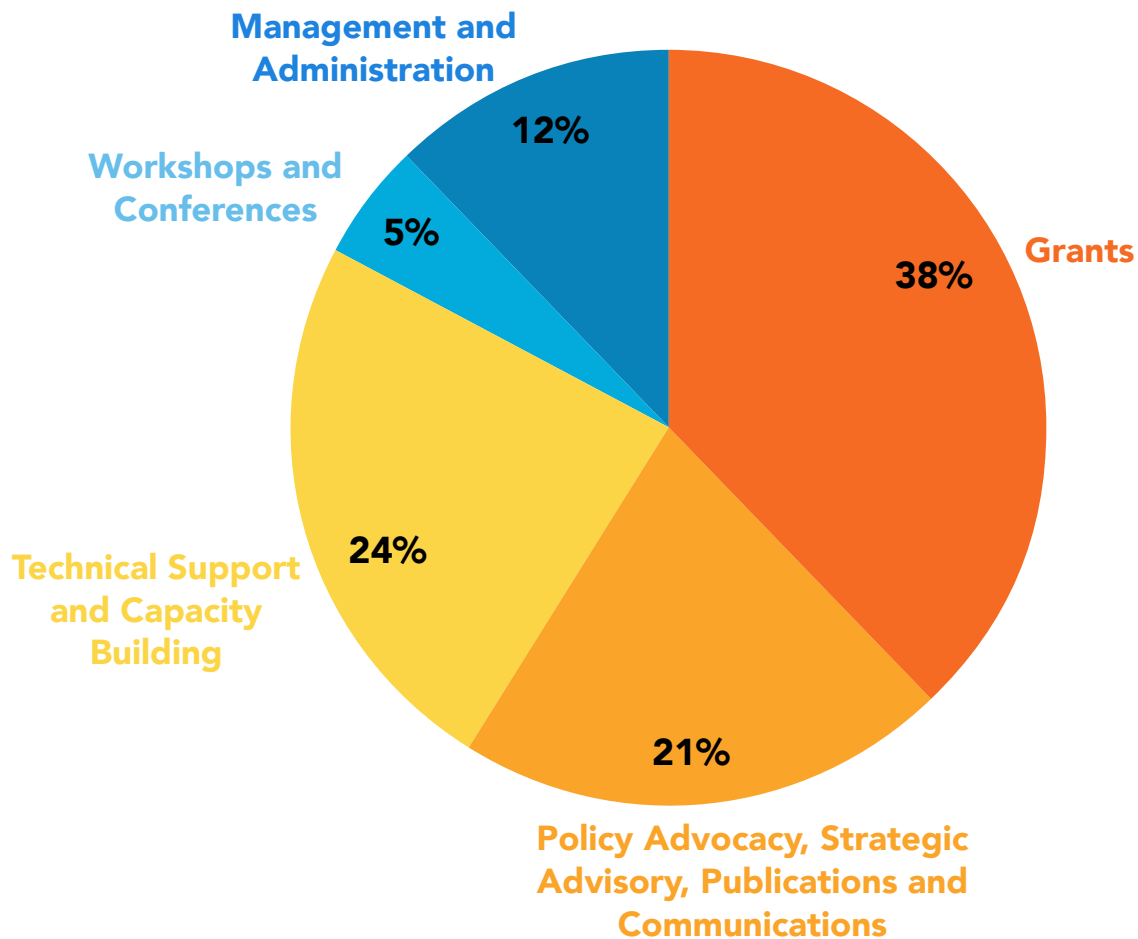
FINANCIALS

| Consolidated Statement in Numbers | | | | |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
| Income | | | | |
| Government/ NGO Grants | 2,557,238 | 2,690,179 | 2,615,247 | 2,654,902 |
| Foundations and Corporate Grants | 581,302 | 664,452 | 607,400 | 130,000 |
| Individual Contributions | 121,946 | 46,188 | 105,382 | 100,020 |
| Fees for Service | | 47,166 | 48,538 | 23,866 |
| Other (Miscellaneous) Revenue | 32,142 | 10,947 | 1,774 | 4,903 |
| Total Income | 3,292,628 | 3,458,933 | 3,378,340 | 2,913,691 |
| Expenses | | | | |
| Program Services | 2,757,641 | 3,581,594 | 3,070,779 | 2,425,894 |
| Management and General Operational | 328,798 | 352,770 | 358,562 | 284,526 |
| Fundraising | 52,274 | 79,331 | 14,795 | |
| Total Expenses | 3,138,713 | 4,013,695 | 3,444,136 | 2,710,420 |
| Change in Net Assets | 49,997 | (554,762) | (65,796) | 203,271 |

| Statement of Financial Position | | | | |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 |
| Assets | | | | |
| Cash, Investments, and Equivalents | 1,390,601 | 1,302,257 | 1,005,362 | 1,756,269 |
| Grants and Other Receivable | 223,409 | 173,993 | 129,932 | 87,403 |
| Prepaid Expenses | | 13,600 | 202,779 | 314,698 |
| Deposits | 3,332 | 3,332 | 4,452 | 6,832 |
| Total Assets | 1,617,342 | 1,493,182 | 1,342,525 | 1,763,101 |
| Liabilities and Net Assets | | | | |
| Liabilities | | | | |
| Accounts Payable | 89,509 | 225,743 | 70,044 | 129,484 |
| Deferred Revenue/ Accrued Expenses | 656,200 | 549,721 | | 295,340 |
| Total Liabilities | 745,709 | 775,464 | 70,044 | 424,824 |
| Net Assets | | | | |
| Unrestricted Net Assets | 363,754 | 313,757 | 293,077 | 278,930 |
| Restricted Net Assets | 507,879 | 403,961 | 979,404 | 1,059,347 |
| Total Net Assets | 871,633 | 717,718 | 1,272,481 | 1,338,277 |
| Total Liabilities & Net Assets | 1,617,342 | 1,493,182 | 1,342,525 | 1,763,101 |

ICAN allocates nearly 90% of its funding to program services: grants, capacity building and other forms of partner support, and advocacy. 38% of ICAN's total 2023 expenses was direct financial support to ICAN's partners.

EXPENDITURE BY ACTIVITY, 2023



2023 • SUPPORTERS

We extend our heartfelt thanks to institutional and individual donations and for all in-kind contributions.

Canada



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Women's Peace &
Humanitarian Fund

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PLOUGHSHARES FUND



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Meenakshi Nair**

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**Arden Farrow, Katha Ray, and
Jenna Shah**

Program Interns

Bailey Francom

Volunteer



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Founder and CEO, ICAN

DEEYAH KHAN

Award winning documentary Filmmaker and Human Rights Activist, Fuuse Founder, Sisterhood Magazine Founder, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador.

HAIDEH CHUBIN

Managing Director, Deloitte and Touche LLP

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Professor of Political Science and Director of the Research Network on Peace Operations Fellow, Centre for International Research and Studies, Université de Montréal. Former Senior Expert, Office of the Special Envoy of the United Nations for Syria.

ANDRÉ MUNDAL

Consultant at Boston Consulting Group, former diplomat with the Norwegian Foreign Service and Special Envoy for Women Peace and Security

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Tofu Creative

FACILITATION

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IT

District Creative

Elevation

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Mandi Mourad

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Randa Yassir

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Afghan Women News Agency
Organization (AWNAO)

Afghan Women Skills Development
Center (AWSDC)

Afghan Women's Organization for
Equality (AWOE)

Armanshahr/OPEN ASIA

Equality for Peace and Development
Organization (EPDO)

Kaaj Media Production

Wellness Prosperity and Socio-
Empowerment Organization (WPSO)

Women & Children Legal Research
Foundation (WCLRF)

Women for Peace and Participation
(WPP)

ALBANIA

Women Center for Development and
Culture Albania (WCDCA)

ALGERIA

Djazairouna Association of Families and
Victims of Islamist Terrorism

ARMENIA

Women for Development NGO

BRAZIL

Think Twice Brasil

CAMEROON

Center for Advocacy in Gender Equality
and Action for Development (CAGEAD)

Hope Advocates Africa

Pathways for Women's Empowerment
and Development (PaWED)

Reach Out Cameroon

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Women for Justice Foundation (WJF)

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Corporación de Investigación y Acción
Social y Económica (CIASE)

Corporación Conciudadanía

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Center for Egyptian Women's Legal
Assistance (CEWLA)

Ganoubia Hora

Women's Center for Guidance and Legal
Awareness (WCGLA)

GERMANY

Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy (CFFP)

INDIA

Yakjah Reconciliation & Development
Network

INDONESIA

Asia Muslim Action Network Indonesia
(AMAN)

Empatiku (My Empathy)

IRAQ

Iraqi Al Amal Association

Odessa Organization for Women's
Development

Women's Voice for Peacebuilding

KENYA

Advocacy for Women in Peace and
Security-Africa (AWAPSA)

Coast Education Center (COEC)

LEBANON

Rescue Me

Women Human Rights Defenders MENA
Coalition

LIBERIA

Women Education and Development
Organization of Liberia (WEDOL)

LIBYA

Libyan Women Forum (LWF)

MALAYSIA

IMAN Research

MALDIVES

Addu Women's Association (AWA)

MEXICO

Justice, Human Rights, and Gender Civil
Association (JHRG)

MOROCCO

Union de l'Action Feminine (UAF)

MYANMAR

Alliance for Gender Inclusion in Peace Process (AGIPP)

Gender Equality Network (GEN)

Women Peace Network – Arakan

NIGERIA

Allamin Foundation for Peace & Development

Neem Foundation

PAKISTAN

PAIMAN Alumni Trust

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Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy (PCID)

Women for Justice in the Bangsamoro

SOMALIA

Witness Somalia

SOUTH SUDAN

Women Relief Aid (WRA)

SRI LANKA

Association of War Affected Women (AWAW)

SUDAN

Madaniya

SYRIA

Center for Civil Society and Democracy (CCSD)

Deepening Awareness and Restoring Bridges (DARB)

Hope Revival Organization (HRO)

DemoS

International Supporting Woman Association (ISWA)

Kareemat Foundation

Mobaderoon: Active Citizens in Syria

Zenobia Syrian Women's Association

TUNISIA

Dali and Senda Association for Peace

Mobdi'un – Creative Youth

Young Leaders Entrepreneurs (YLE)

UGANDA

Coalition for Action on 1325 (CoACT)

Kitgum Women's Peace Initiative

UKRAINE

Women's Network for Inclusive Dialogue

YEMEN

Abductees' Mothers' Association (AMA)

Bridges to Peace and Solidarity

Food4Humanity Foundation

Peace Track Initiative (PTI)

Youth Leadership Development Foundation (YLDF)

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Cyprus Magda Zenon

Iraq Ala Ali

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When others ask 'is peace possible?'
Our response is a simple reminder:
Without peace,
Everything else is impossible."

Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, MBE
Founder and CEO, ICAN

*Reclaiming Power,
Restoring Peace*

ICAN International
Civil Society
Action
Network
For women's rights, peace and security