



WPS BULLETIN

Welcome to the March 2025 Issue of the WPS Bulletin

A Message from the Editor

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the March 2025 edition of our WPS Bulletin, where we bring you timely updates, critical reflections, and feminist perspectives on peace, conflict, and gender equality across Africa. This issue comes at a pivotal moment marking the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the recently concluded 69th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), where global leaders reaffirmed their commitment to gender equality. Yet, as conflicts intensify in the region, the Sahel, in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, we are

reminded that the promises of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda remain fragile and unevenly implemented.

This edition celebrates the historic election of Namibia's first female president, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, and Zimbabwe's Kirsty Coventry's appointment as the first African woman to lead the International Olympic Committee two powerful milestones in feminist leadership. But we also spotlight sobering realities: political reprisals against women leaders in Nigeria, humanitarian funding cuts that threaten the safety of displaced women, and rising tensions across the Horn of Africa. These stories underscore the urgent need for solidarity, action, and accountability.

As you read through, we invite you to reflect, engage, and act. Feminist peace is not just a goal it is a daily commitment. Let us continue to amplify women's voices, uphold their rights, and ensure that transformative and sustainable peace is a reality for all.

Thank you to the team at REWiB – Victoria Kunihiro and Susan Asio for compiling this Issue.

In solidarity,
Helen Kezie-Nwoha
Editor



Acronyms

CRSV	Conflict- Related Sexual Violence
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IWD	International Women's Day
NAPs	National Action Plans
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive and Health Rights
SSPDF	South Sudan People's Defence Forces
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WPS	Women, Peace, and Security

EAC-SADC Summit Expands Eastern DRC Mediation Panel

The second joint summit of the East African Community (EAC) and the South African Development Community (SADC) was recently held in Nairobi to address the escalating conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The joint summit has appointed an expanded panel to lead peace efforts in the DRC, following Angola's formal withdrawal as a mediator in the conflict. The new panel includes former Ethiopian president Sahle-Work Zewde, who was Ethiopia's first female president and Catherine Samba- Panza, the former President of Central African Republic; alongside former President of Kenya Uhuru Kenyatta, Olusengun Obasanjo (Nigeria) and Kgalema Motlanthe (South Africa). The appointment of two women on the panel is a significant advancement for the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda in Africa. One of the main pillars of WPS as outlined in the UN Security Council Resolution-1325 is ensuring women's meaningful participation in peace negotiations. Their inclusion not only challenges the traditionally male-dominated architecture of conflict mediation but also reflects growing political will within African regional bodies, in this case, the EAC and SADC to prioritize gender equality in peace building.

From a WPS perspective, this move carries important implications, it sets a precedent for women's leadership in high-stakes, regional security matters; it reaffirms African Union (AU) and regional bodies commitment to gender-responsive peace processes; and it increases the likelihood that the peace negotiations will reflect the needs and rights of women and other marginalized groups affected by the conflict in eastern DRC. However, the real test lies ahead, that is ensuring that these women leaders are not relegated to symbolic roles, but are empowered with genuine authority, influence, and resources to shape decisions and outcomes. Their success will serve as a model for feminist peace building in Africa, reinforcing the message that sustainable peace is only possible when women are not just present but are leaders at the table. <https://x.com/jumuiya/status>

International Women's Day-What It Really Means



International Women's Day (IWD), observed annually on March 8, is a global day for recognition of women's achievements and a call to action for gender equality. Beyond celebrating progress, IWD serves as a crucial moment to reflect on the ongoing struggles women face, particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings. The theme for this year, "Accelerate Action" highlighted the need for swift and decisive measures to eliminate systemic barriers and biases hindering women's progress cross-

sectionally. According to data from the World Economic Forum, at the current rate of progress, achieving full gender parity could take until 2158, underscoring the critical need to expedite efforts towards gender equality.

In alignment with this, the United Nations commemorated IWD 2025 with the theme “For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.” This theme reiterated the importance of inclusive actions that promote equal rights, opportunities, and empowerment for every woman and girl globally. These two themes of IWD 2025 collectively hold profound significance for the Women, Peace, and Security agenda. They reinforce the urgent need to move beyond commitments and move toward concrete and accelerated action in promoting women’s participation, protection, and leadership in peace and security efforts, while reiterating these fundamental calls to action;

- **Urgency in Implementing WPS Commitments:** The WPS agenda, whose foundation has been laid firmly in the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the subsequent resolutions to achieve gender-responsive peace and security policies, has seen slight improvements but the progress has been slow. Women remain underrepresented in peace negotiations, and gender-based violence continues to be exacerbated in conflict zones, and in post-conflict situations. Therefore, the theme “Accelerate Action” aligns with the need to move from policy commitments to tangible implementation by ensuring women’s participation in peace processes and their protection during conflicts.
- **Strengthen the implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs):** Many countries on paper have adopted NAPs on WPS but implementation often lacks political will, drive and funding. Acceleration requires more financing, monitoring mechanisms and accountability frameworks to track progress.
- **Mainstreaming Gender in Security Institutions:** Women remain underrepresented in military and police forces hence fast-tracking gender inclusion in security structures will create more gender-responsive security sector reforms and humanitarian efforts.
- **Inclusive Security:** The call for Rights, Equality, and Empowerment aligns with the WPS’s agenda on intersectionality. Women’s experiences in conflict differ based on their ethnicity, economic status, disability, or displacement status, and policies to help them must be tailored to their needs. Refugee and displaced women for instance face risks of increased gender-based violence, trafficking and other forms of sexual violence and therefore require stronger protections in these humanitarian settings, ensuring that women are not viewed just as victims but as potential decision-makers in aid distribution and conflict resolution. Furthermore, conflict-related violence remains a war tactic in many conflicts - accelerated action means prioritizing justice mechanisms for survivors of conflict related sexual violence, ensuring reparations, and holding perpetrators accountable.
- **Gender Equality as a Prerequisite for Peace:** WPS is rooted in the belief that there can be no sustainable peace without gender equality. Therefore, the 2025 IWD theme emphasizes this by advocating for women’s economic empowerment, equal legal rights, and political participation, all of which contribute to peace building. Women’s economic stability and participation in livelihood programs, entrepreneurship and land ownership are crucial in post-conflict reconstruction and must be accelerated to prevent economic disparities that further fuel conflict.
- **Advance and strengthen Legal Frameworks for Gender Equality, and Political Participation:** Many post-conflict societies lack legal protections for women’s rights. Strengthening gender-sensitive legal systems - from land and property rights to protection against GBV is key to preventing cycles of violence. Politically, women remain underrepresented in peacekeeping missions, in the defense sectors and in political leadership. Without women’s political

empowerment, peace processes will remain an all-male affair and will fail to address gendered security concerns.

There is an urgent need to turn rhetoric into action by governments, civil society and international organizations to fast-track responsive security reforms, enhance funding for women-led peace initiatives, and ensure legal protections for all women and girls. The IWD 2025 theme and WPS agenda share a common demand which is urgent and meaningful action. Without accelerated action, gender equality in peace and security will remain a distant goal and an unfulfilled promise. <https://unwomen.org>

Amplifying Feminist Voices Worldwide – 69th Commission on the Status of Women Meetings



The 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) convened from March 10 to 21, 2025, at the United Nations headquarters in New York. This session also marked the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing+30), serving as a critical moment to evaluate global progress on gender equality since 1995, culminating in the adoption of a Political Declaration that reaffirmed global commitments to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. This declaration was achieved despite the growing resistance posed by anti-rights groups, who seek to dilute and reverse existing gains.

In line with the WPS agenda, the political declaration recognized the critical role of women in peace building and the broader peace and security agenda. This inclusion underscores the necessity of integrating gender perspectives into peace processes and ensuring women's participation in conflict prevention, resolution, and post-conflict recovery. While the declaration marked progress in several areas, it faced gaps and shortcomings in Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) for women and girls, and a regression in commitments related to climate change. These shortcomings highlight the ongoing challenges in achieving a comprehensive, collective and inclusive approach to achieving gender equality. <https://unwomen.org>

Beijing+30 Report Highlights: Focus on Women and Conflict

In March 2025, the United Nations convened the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, providing a comprehensive review of global progress and challenges in achieving gender equality through the publication of a report. A pivotal session within the report focused on the intersection of women and conflict, especially in light of the upcoming 25th anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.



Key Highlights from the Women and Conflict Report Session:

- **Escalation of Conflict-Related Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** The session highlighted a 50% increase in conflict related sexual violence in 2022, emphasizing the urgent need for enhanced protective measures for women and girls in conflict.
- **Underrepresentation in Peace Processes:** Despite international and regional frameworks women's participation in peace negotiations remains disproportionately low. The session further called for actionable strategies to ensure full, equal, and meaningful involvement of women in peace-building and conflict resolution.
- **Impact of Forced Displacement:** The report underscored the vulnerabilities faced by displaced women, including heightened risks of exploitation and abuse. The need for gender-responsive humanitarian interventions was emphasized to address the specific needs of women displaced by crisis.
- **Recognition of Women's Roles in Peace and Security:** The report acknowledged the critical contributions of women in peacekeeping and security sectors. Advocacy for policies that promote women's leadership in these areas was highlighted as essential for sustainable peace.
- **Call for Comprehensive Legal Frameworks on Peace:** The importance of implementing and enforcing laws that protect women in conflict zones was stressed in the report. Addressing impunity for perpetrators of GBV, and ensuring justice for survivors were identified as priorities.

The report concluded with a strong Call to Action, urging member states and stakeholders to accelerate the implementation of the WPS agenda by fully integrating gender perspectives into all peace and security efforts. It called for increased resource allocation to prevent gender-based violence and support survivors in conflict-affected areas, as well as strengthened partnerships with women's organizations and civil society to enhance grassroots peace building. <https://unwomen.org>

Focus on Sudan

Sudan has been embroiled in a devastating civil conflict since April 2023. We explore more about the conflict, its effects and possible resolutions in the story below:

There have been troubling reports of escalating violence against civilians in Khartoum amid continued intense hostilities. Dozens of civilians, including humanitarian volunteers, have been killed by artillery shelling and aerial bombardment by the SAF and RSF in Eastern Khartoum and North Omdurman since 12 March. Credible reports have implicated the RSF and allied militia as the responsible parties in home raids in Eastern Khartoum, looting of community kitchens and medical clinics and in the killings of civilians. There has been growing concern about allegations of sexual violence in the Al Giraif Gharb neighborhood. The SAF and affiliated fighters have also been reported to be part of looting and other criminal activities in the areas they control in Khartoum North (Bahri) and East Nile. The UN Human Rights Office Spokesperson, Seif Magango has called on both parties and all states with influence, to take concrete steps to ensure the effective protection of civilians and to bring an end to the continuing lawlessness and impunity.

If this lawlessness, impunity and conflict are not curbed and put under control, women and girls will continue to suffer. Reports indicate widespread sexual violence, including rape which is used as a weapon of war, particularly in conflict zones like Darfur and Khartoum. Limited access to healthcare and psychosocial support for survivors worsens this crisis. Additionally, the massive displacement of millions forced to flee due to the worsen conditions. Refugee camps and shelters suffer overcrowding, food shortages, and inadequate sanitation putting women at heightened risk of disease and violence. Women's participation in peace negotiations is almost nonexistent despite their role in previous Sudanese uprisings and grassroots efforts. Female led Civil Society Organizations face threats, funding cuts, and suppression, limiting their ability to advocate for peace.

The ongoing conflict in Sudan presents a challenge to the WPS agenda, as women and girls face escalating sexual violence, displacement, and exclusion from peace processes. The widespread use of rape as a weapon of war, the lack of access to essential services for survivors, and the marginalization of women-led civil society in peace negotiations starkly contradict the provisions of UNSCR 1325. Urgent action is needed to protect women's rights, ensure their safety, and support their meaningful participation in peace building, or the crisis risks further entrenching gendered violence and silencing women's voices in Sudan's future. <https://www.ohcr.org>

Germany Closes its Embassy in Fear of a Civil War Breakout in South Sudan.

The German government has made the choice to temporarily close their embassy in Juba, due to the threats of an eruption of another civil war in South Sudan following years of fragile peace. South Sudan President Salva Kiir and his rival Vice President Riek Machar, are plunging the country into a spiral of violence. They have a responsibility to stop the senseless violence and implement the peace agreement. The political rivalry between the two men is widely seen as a major obstacle to peace in South Sudan, with Kiir suspicious of his deputy's ambitions and Machar calling Kiir a dictator.

The unending conflict and Germany's decision to temporarily close its embassy in South Sudan has significant WPS implications particularly in terms of women's rights, humanitarian aid, and conflict resolution efforts. Germany has been a strong advocate for the WPS agenda, supporting women's political participation and rights globally. Women activists and civil society organizations may have fewer international allies to push for reforms. The embassy closure will risk weakening support for women's rights, GBV response, and female participation in peace building and mediation. To mitigate these effects, international actors-such as the European Union (EU), UN Women, and regional organizations like IGAD need to step in and ensure continued WPS engagement in South Sudan. <https://apnews.com/article/germany-south-sudan-war-embassy>

Security Council Press Statement on Attack against United Nations Mission (UNMISS) In South Sudan.

On March 7, 2025, two United Nations helicopters conducting an evacuation mission in Nasir, Upper Nile State, South Sudan, came under attack by the White Army. This assault resulted in the death of a UN crew member and caused serious injuries to two others. Additionally, several members of the South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF), including General Majur Dak, were killed during this evacuation attempt. The mission aimed to extract these individuals following recent clashes between the SSPDF and armed youth in the area. Nicholas Haysom, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMISS, strongly condemned the attack as "utterly abhorrent", and suggested it might constitute a war crime under international law. He called for an investigation to identify and hold those responsible accountable. The members of the Security Council further expressed their deepest condolences to all the families affected including those of the UN personnel; UNMISS in Sudan, families of the deceased and the people of South Sudan for the lives lost.

The members of the Security Council and UNMISS urged all parties to refrain from further violence and emphasized the need for South Sudanese leaders to resolve tensions through dialogues to prevent further deterioration of the security situation in Nasir and the broader region. They underscored that dialogue and negotiation remain the only means for resolving differences, calling upon all leadership of all parties to the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity to immediately de-escalate tensions.

The attack on UN personnel underscores the fragile security environment in South Sudan and highlights the urgent need to safeguard peace efforts and uphold international law. For the WPS agenda, the incident reinforces the critical importance of protecting civilians especially women and girls during conflict, and ensuring that peace and security processes are inclusive, community-driven, and rooted in accountability. As violence escalates, women face heightened risks of displacement, gender-based violence, and exclusion from decision-making spaces. Strengthening women's participation in dialogue and conflict resolution is essential to building sustainable peace and preventing further cycles of violence. <https://x.com/usmissionjuba>

Vice President Riek Machar's Arrest Ends South Sudan Peace Deal

The detention of South Sudan's First Vice-President Riek Machar has effectively collapsed the 2018 peace deal that ended the country's five-year civil war. The Vice President, alongside his wife, Interior Minister Angelina Teny, were on March 26, 2025, detained by heavily armed security forces at the couple's residence in Juba, the nation's capital. Both local and international communities have expressed alarm and concern over these developments, with the United Nations warning that Machar's arrest could bring South Sudan closer to a renewed civil war, and therefore urged political leaders to prioritize the nation's interests. President Salva Kiir addressed religious leaders saying that he would never return the country to a state of war. The two leaders agreed in August 2018 to end the civil war between their forces that nearly killed 400,000 people. However, over the last seven years, their relationship has become increasingly strained amid ethnic tensions and sporadic violence. If in the event war broke out again in the nation, women and girls as always will face the brunt consequences facing sexual violence, displacement, trafficking and increased gender-based violence. The opportunities for leadership in peace processes will additionally be watered down, and peace will be harder to attain and/or sustain.

The escalating political tensions in South Sudan, marked by the detention of Vice President Riek Machar and Interior Minister Angelina Teny, risk reigniting civil conflict and undoing years of fragile peace. For women and girls, this threatens to intensify already dire vulnerabilities, including exposure to sexual violence, displacement, human trafficking, and gender-based violence. It also jeopardizes their hard-won gains in leadership and participation in peace processes, as renewed instability often sidelines women's voices. Without urgent de-escalation and inclusive dialogue, the country risks plunging back into conflict where women will once again bear the heaviest burden. <https://www.bbc.com>



DRC and Rwanda Call for Ceasefire in Qatar Talks

On March 18th, 2025, DRC President Felix Tshisekedi and Rwandan President Paul Kagame met in Doha, Qatar, for their first direct talks since the M23 rebels, reportedly backed by Rwanda, and intensified their offensive in Eastern DRC earlier this year, leading to the death of over 7,000 people, according to reports by authorities. The meeting, mediated by Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, resulted in a joint statement calling for an "Immediate and unconditional" ceasefire in the region. Both leaders agreed to continue discussions to establish lasting peace, although it was not clear how that would be implemented or monitored. This comes after peace talks brokered last December by Angola collapsed after Rwanda demanded that the DRC government talk directly to the M23 rebels. While confirming the talks in the Qatari capital, the Rwandan presidency insisted in a separate statement that direct talks between DRC and M23 were key to addressing the root cause of the conflict. On the other hand, in a presidential statement, the Congolese government said the meeting marked the first step towards a basis for lasting peace in the volatile east, hinting at further talks. The international community, including the African Union, has welcomed the Doha talks, urging all parties to maintain the momentum toward peace. However, the path to durable resolution remains complex and unclear, requiring sustained dialogue and concrete actions from all stakeholders.

The Qatar-hosted talks highlight both the promise and complexity of the "African solutions to African problems" principle. While the Doha meeting signifies a positive step toward dialogue, the need for mediation by an external actor Qatar, reflects ongoing limitations in Africa's own regional mechanisms to fully address and contain intra-African conflicts. Despite prior efforts by Angola and the African Union, the breakdown of earlier talks underscores the challenges of intra-African diplomacy in resolving deeply rooted, cross-border tensions. This development signals the importance of stronger, more unified continental peace infrastructure, and also raises concerns about the growing role of non-African states in shaping conflict resolution on the continent. While external mediation can bring neutrality and resources, it also risks shifting ownership of peace processes away from African institutions and undermining long-term, locally led solutions. For sustainable peace, African-led peace initiatives must be resourced, respected, and prioritized, with international actors playing a complementary, not central, role in the process. <https://www.bbc.com/news>

The Geopolitical Tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea Revealed

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has affirmed that Ethiopia has no intention of going to war with Eritrea over access to a seaport, despite previous statements in 2023 suggesting it was an "existential issue" that might warrant force. Acknowledging Ethiopia's status as the world's most populous landlocked nation, Abiy emphasized that the matter should be addressed through diplomacy and mutual benefit. His remarks come amid growing concerns of a possible resurgence of conflict in the Tigray region, with fears of Eritrean involvement. A renewed war would undermine regional recovery, destabilize communities, and hinder development, following the devastating two-year civil war that ended in 2022 and claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.



Upholding peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea is crucial, as renewed conflict would have consequences for the WPS agenda both regionally and globally. Past conflicts, such as the Tigray war (2020–2022), were marked by widespread conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), and another war could escalate the use of rape as a weapon of war, human trafficking, and gender-based violence linked to displacement.

With weak accountability mechanisms in the region, justice for survivors remains elusive. Additionally, war would further marginalize women from peace processes, fuel humanitarian crises, and undermine fragile WPS commitments from both Ethiopia and Eritrea, despite their signatory status to the African Union Protocol on Women’s Rights. On a global scale, conflict would shift the focus of international actors from gender-sensitive peace building to crisis response stalling progress on long-term WPS priorities.

<https://www.bbc.com>

The Plight of Women in Nigerian Politics



Nigerian Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan has publicly accused Senate President Godswill Akpabio of sexual harassment, alleging inappropriate behavior and sexist remarks during a visit to his home. She further criticized the Nigerian Senate as operating like a "cult" where dissent is silenced, and the Senate President rules with an iron grip. Her petition was dismissed on technical grounds, and on March 6, 2025, she was handed a six-month suspension without pay, officially for “unruly behavior” a move many view as retaliation for speaking out.

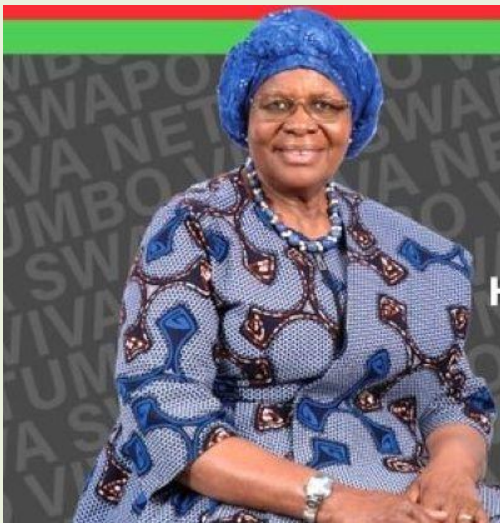
Nigeria, which has one of the lowest rates of female political representation in Africa, now faces widespread public backlash, with protests emerging under the slogan "We Are All Natasha". The case has reignited urgent conversations about gender inequality, misogyny, and the hostile environment faced by women in politics, with Senator Natasha expressing fears for her safety and that of her child. This incident underscores the systemic barriers and reprisals faced by women who challenge patriarchal power structures in Nigeria's political landscape.

The suspension of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan has sparked widespread concern among civil society groups, who are calling for a thorough and impartial investigation. Her treatment highlights the persistent gaps in women’s political emancipation and leadership in Nigeria and raises serious questions about the safety and protection of women in public office. Such actions risk



creating a chilling effect, deterring other women from participating in governance out of fear of retaliation or being silenced when speaking out against misconduct. This reflects broader patterns where security threats and gender-based violence against women in leadership are often dismissed, undermining efforts to promote gender equality in governance. The incident has direct implications for the WPS agenda, which emphasizes the equal and meaningful participation of women in peace, security, and political processes. Without addressing systemic misogyny and ensuring protective mechanisms for women leaders, the WPS agenda in Nigeria will continue to face significant setbacks. <https://www.bbc.com>

Namibia Swears in First Female President- Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah



Namibia's swearing-in of Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah as its first female president on March 21, 2025, marks a historic and powerful milestone for women's political leadership in Africa, coinciding with the country's 35th Independence Day celebrations. As Africa's second-ever directly elected female head of state, her presidency is not just a national achievement, but a continental breakthrough for gender equality and feminist leadership. Stepping into office amid complex challenges such as unemployment, poverty, and inequality, President Nandi-Ndaitwah brings with her a legacy of decades-long public service, having served as Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. A lifelong member of SWAPO, which led Namibia's liberation from apartheid rule, she has been

politically active since the age of 14.

In a recent interview with BBC Africa Daily, President Nandi-Ndaitwah candidly addressed the double standards women in leadership continue to face, noting that her presidency will be scrutinized not just on performance but as a litmus test for all women leaders. She highlighted how any perceived failure is often weaponized against women's capabilities, reinforcing patriarchal narratives, whereas male leaders rarely face such collective judgment. Emphasizing that she wants to be evaluated on her own merits, she asserted the fundamental truth that women, like men, are fully capable of leading and shaping nations. Her presidency stands as a symbol of resilience and possibility, sending a clear message across Africa: women's leadership is not an exception—it is essential.

President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah's election as Namibia's first female head of state is a significant boost to the WPS agenda in Africa, embodying the principle of women's full and meaningful participation in leadership and decision-making. Her presidency offers a powerful role model for women across the continent and creates an opportunity to advance gender-responsive governance, peace building, and inclusive policy-making. If aligned with WPS principles, her leadership could inspire broader continental action and shift the norm from symbolic to substantive representation of women in peace and security processes.

Heartfelt congratulations to President, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah and the people of Namibia on this historic achievement. <https://www.bbc.com>

Women in Sports

Zimbabwe's Kirsty Coventry made history on March 20, 2025, by becoming the first woman, the youngest person, and the first African to be elected President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Her election marks a groundbreaking milestone for gender equality in sports, shattering long-standing glass ceilings in global sports leadership. Coventry's presidency is expected to inspire greater female participation in sports governance and promote inclusive policies that ensure equal opportunities for women and girls in all areas of sport. She has committed to serving with pride and upholding the IOC's core values, while championing diversity and inclusion on a global scale.



Kirsty Coventry's election as the first female and African President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) holds powerful significance for the WPS agenda, particularly in addressing gender-based violence, inequality, and exclusion in sports. Her leadership breaks barriers in a space historically dominated by men, reinforcing the WPS principle of women's meaningful participation in leadership and decision-making at global levels. It also presents an opportunity to tackle systemic issues in the sports

world, including GBV in athletic environments, unequal pay, and limited access to leadership roles for women and girls. Coventry is now uniquely positioned to drive reforms that promote safe, equitable, and empowering spaces in sports, ensuring accountability, protection, and equal opportunity core tenets of both the WPS agenda and broader gender justice efforts.

<https://www.dw.com/en/kirsty-coventry>

Rethinking Women's Economic Empowerment in Displacement: Gender, Land Rights, and Resilience

In North Central Nigeria, the increasing influx of pastoralists exacerbated by climate change has intensified conflicts over land use, grazing rights, and access to natural resources. These disputes often result in the displacement of farming communities, with women and children bearing the brunt of the consequences, including heightened risks of gender-based violence and economic insecurity. It is essential to examine the systemic inequities faced by displaced women and girls, particularly in relation to land rights and access to livelihoods, within predominantly patriarchal community structures. Their resilience in navigating these gendered norms must be acknowledged, and there is a pressing need for targeted, gender-responsive interventions that support their economic recovery, empowerment, and long-term security.



The pastoralist-farmer conflicts and resulting displacement in North Central Nigeria have serious implications for the WPS agenda. As women and girls face increased exposure to gender-based violence, loss of livelihoods, and limited access to land and resources, the crisis highlights persistent gendered vulnerabilities in conflict settings. These challenges undermine the provisions of the WPS agenda, particularly the protection of women's rights and their participation in peace building and recovery efforts. The situation calls for gender-responsive conflict resolution strategies, including the inclusion of women in peace negotiations, the protection of displaced women and girls, and support for their economic empowerment and land rights. Without addressing these issues, Nigeria risks deepening gender inequality and sidelining women's contributions to sustainable peace and community resilience. <https://frontiers.csls.ox.ac.uk>

The Social-Economic Implications of Funding Cuts on Africa's Political Stability



The humanitarian sector is facing severe strain due to significant funding cuts, placing millions of refugees at heightened risk, particularly women and children. The loss of critical protection services has led to increased exposure to rape, abuse, child labor, trafficking, and early marriage. Refugee communities are also grappling with reduced access to food, shelter, water, and education, exacerbating their vulnerability. UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, described the situation as

not just a funding gap, but a crisis of responsibility, warning that the cost of inaction will be measured in suffering, instability, and lost futures. Despite the challenges, he reaffirmed UNHCR's unwavering commitment to supporting the most vulnerable and rapidly responding to emerging

emergencies to stabilize fragile regions and support safe, voluntary returns.

Humanitarian funding cuts are undermining the WPS agenda, as women and girls in conflict-affected and displacement settings face heightened risks of GBV, sexual exploitation, and trafficking. The reduction in resources has weakened critical GBV prevention and response services, including access to safe shelters, healthcare, and legal support, while also limiting protection in refugee camps. Armed groups and traffickers are exploiting these gaps, further endangering women. Additionally, women-led peace building organizations, which play a vital role in advocating for gender-inclusive peace processes, are struggling to operate without international funding. Cuts to UN and NGO programs also mean fewer monitoring mechanisms and accountability structures, increasing the likelihood of abuse. Without urgent and sustained financial support, the WPS agenda risks being sidelined, exacerbating gender inequality, insecurity, and the prolongation of conflict. <https://www.unhcr.org>

