



WPS BULLETIN

Welcome to the June 2025 Issue of the WPS Bulletin



A Message from the Editor

Dear Readers,

As conflict, climate shocks, and humanitarian crises deepen across Africa, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda remains more urgent, and more fragile, than ever. In this edition of our bulletin, we commemorate World Refugee Day and the International Day for the Elimination of Conflict Related Sexual Violence, with a renewed commitment to center African voices and amplify the stories of women, who although often overlooked, navigate, resist and reshape the continent's humanitarian crises and peacebuilding landscapes.

While global headlines continue to spotlight crises in Yemen, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Iran, Gaza, Ukraine Venezuela, with valid concern, we must question why the suffering, displacement, and resistance of millions across Africa remains so invisible in global narratives.

From protracted displacements in the Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan and South Sudan, to the climate induced fragilities in the Horn of Africa, Africa's refugee and displacement crises, driven by militarization, extractivism, and authoritarianism are deepening. Conflict-related sexual violence continues to be systematically used as a weapon of war and control, yet the perpetrators are not held accountable as African crises are consistently marginalised in policy spaces, media discourse and humanitarian funding streams. The silence is political, and it must end.

Our coverage this month highlights the peace talks between DRC and Rwanda held in Washington, D.C, with significant implications for regional stability and the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda and questions whether the root causes of the conflict, like resource extraction, colonial borders and regional power imbalances are being addressed and whether the needs of women and girls are taken into consideration.

As borders reopen along the Ethiopia-Eritrea border, we witness communities embracing healing after years of hostility, reminding us that reconciliation is possible.

In South Africa, women are at the forefront of social cohesion, building bridges across racial, national and gendered lines while advancing climate resilience in their communities. Their work is a bold reminder that peace is not just negotiated in boardrooms but nurtured in everyday acts of solidarity and care. And in Uganda, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is working with women parliamentarians to champion land rights and climate resilience, proving that local leadership is central to driving inclusive policy and sustainable post-conflict recovery.

Africa is not a continent in perpetual crisis. These stories reflect not only Africa's challenges but its capacity for transformation, especially when women lead, refugees are protected, and peace is pursued with justice and inclusion at its core. Therefore, calls for inclusive and gender-responsive humanitarian response, peace processes, and development initiatives. Addressing structural inequalities, ensuring safe access to services, and promoting women's meaningful participation in decision-making are not just moral imperatives, they are prerequisites for sustainable peace and security.

Thank you for reading and for standing with Africa's displaced, its peacebuilders, and its unsung champions.

In Solidarity,
Helen-Kezie Nwoha
Editor

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AU	African Union
AUSSOM	African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia
CRSV	Conflict- Related Sexual Violence
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
GIMAC	Gender Is My Agenda Campaign
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
M23	March 23 Movement
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
PDM	Parish Development Model
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
SANBI	South African National Biodiversity Institute
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
UWOPA	Uganda Women Parliamentary Association
WFP	World Food Programme
WPS	Women Peace and Security

Recent Kenya Deadly Protests Expose State Violence, Gendered Repression and the Urgent Need for the Protection of Women's Rights



Photo Credit: The Africa Daily Post

Widespread protests across Kenya-driven by demands for economic justice and political accountability over the signed Finance Bill, have escalated into a national crisis - resulting in the deaths of several protestors and injuries to at least 400 others. These demonstrations, predominantly led by youth and civil society activists, were met with violent crackdowns by security forces. Beyond fatalities, disturbing accounts have emerged of sexual violence, with at least 14 women

raped during the protests. Survivors cite both police and civilian perpetrators, and many are afraid of reporting the violations due to pervasive stigma and a lack of institutional trust to protect women's rights. The use of excessive force and gender-based violence raises urgent concerns, particularly around women's safety, civic participation, and access to justice in conflict and crisis settings. Human rights defenders are calling for independent investigations into deaths and sexual violence, accountability for excessive police force, protection of the right to peaceful protest, and gender-sensitive reforms in law enforcement. The situation remains volatile, with continued calls for justice and accountability.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/6/26/at-least-eight-killed-in-deadly-kenya-protests-what-we-know>

Mokwa Flood Disaster in Nigeria-A Climate and Gender Crisis

Severe flooding in Mokwa in Niger State in Nigeria has claimed over 200 lives, with more than 500 people still missing and presumed dead. Triggered by days of heavy rainfall, potential dam failure, and poor drainage infrastructure, this is the deadliest flooding incident in Nigeria in recent decades. At least 121 people were injured, over 3000 displaced, and thousands of homes and farmlands destroyed. Roads and two major bridges collapsed, cutting off communities and hindering timely rescue and relief operations.

This tragedy is a stark example of how climate change is worsening extreme weather events in West Africa and magnifying the vulnerabilities of already marginalised communities. Poor adaptation



Photo Credit: The Daily Trust

infrastructure, environmental degradation, for example deforestation, and unregulated development exacerbate the destruction. Despite significant allocations for flood control at 2.2 billion Naira (approximately \$1,430,120) in 2024, implementation gaps and weak governance have left communities dangerously exposed to climate shocks.

This is also a gendered crisis. There is heightened vulnerability as women and girls face increased gender-based violence in overcrowded displacement camps

because many have lost their homes, livelihoods and access to education, healthcare and sanitation. Women are always disproportionately affected with pregnant women, widows and female-headed households losing access to menstrual hygiene facilities and products, sexual and reproductive care and limited safe shelter. Climate change is accelerating, and without urgent, inclusive action,

women and girls will continue to bear the brunt of avoidable tragedies.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/unicef-nigeria-humanitarian-situation-report-mokwa-floods-10-june-2025>

How South African Women are building social cohesion and advancing gender equality and climate resilience.

In the rural hills of Vhembe, Limpopo, women gather under the shade of acacia trees not merely to talk, but to mobilise collective action. Together, they share water during dry spells, organise prayer circles during floods, and pool money into small savings clubs to help one another survive worsening climate shocks. These acts may seem simple to some-but they are revolutionary.

Across South Africa, women are stepping into leadership as climate responders, community protectors, and social glue in a country grappling with inequality and environmental upheaval. Initiatives like the South African National Biodiversity Institute's Adaptation Fund (SANBI), have empowered over 56% of women recipients and with 91% engaged in community gardening and water management projects. In cities like Durban and Beira, local women are shaping municipal climate plans through programs led by ICLEI Africa, ensuring their voices are no longer afterthoughts.

But progress does come with barriers. Many of these women do not own land, lack access to affordable credit, and face a \$49 billion financing gap in the business sector. While South Africa's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement mention gender equity, implementation on the ground still lags far behind. Yet, women persist and lead. Their informal networks provide social safety during disaster, shielding the most vulnerable. Women-centered adaptation grants rebuild livelihoods and dignity after crises. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2025-06-11-sas-rural-women-who-save-driving-social-cohesion-gender-equality-and-climate-resilience/>

Hunger Crisis deepens in global hotspots as famine risk rises, UN warns



Photo Credit: Africanews

Extreme hunger is intensifying in 13 global hot spots including Sudan, South Sudan and Mali and other parts of Africa; with immediate risk of famine without urgent humanitarian intervention. The United Nations has issued a stark warning as acute food insecurity intensifies in several global hotspots. Armed conflict, climate shocks, and economic instability are driving a rapid rise in hunger, with famine like conditions looming in these parts of Africa.

The report further indicates a risk of widespread starvation and loss of life. This crisis, like any other prominent crises with devastating side effects-disproportionately affects women, girls and children-and other marginalised groups, worsening their already fragile conditions in displacement settings. Women and girls are at greater risk of gender-based violence, early marriage, and exploitation. Food scarcity undermines women's participation in peacebuilding and decision-making, while increasing their caregiving burdens. Without gender-responsive humanitarian and recovery efforts, the crisis will erode gains in women's rights, protection, and leadership in fragile contexts. The WPS Agenda must and should be integral in crisis response and recovery planning.

<https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/hunger-crisis-deepens-global->

[hotspots-famine-risk-rises-un-warns-2025-06-16/](#)

UN fact-finding mission says Sudan conflict is escalating and aid is weaponised

The UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan has warned that both sides in the country's civil war have escalated the use of heavy weaponry in populated areas while weaponizing humanitarian relief, amid devastating consequences for civilians. Mohamed Chande Othman, chair of the Fact-Finding Mission, which presented its latest findings to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, says that the conflict in Sudan is far from over. The mission further highlighted how humanitarian aid, meant to save lives, is being deliberately obstructed or manipulated by parties to the conflict, turning lifesaving relief into a tool of war.

Access to aid is increasingly restricted along ethnic, regional, or political lines, with reports of blockades, looting of humanitarian convoys, and the use of starvation as a method of warfare. This weaponisation of aid has dire implications for women and girls, who are already disproportionately affected by conflict and are being denied critical health services, food, and protection. It also limits the safe access of women peacebuilders and human rights defenders to conflict-affected communities, undermining their ability to participate in humanitarian response, peacebuilding, and recovery efforts. Furthermore, the manipulation exacerbates gender-based violence, as scarcity and displacement increase women's vulnerability to exploitation and abuse.

Urgent regional and international action is needed not only to ensure unimpeded humanitarian access but also to create women's protection and leadership in the response to the Sudan crisis, in line with WPS commitments. <https://share.google/5P0rMetdI66bLfgC0>

IGAD Mobilizes Uganda Women Parliamentarians to Champion Land Rights and Climate Resilience



Photo Credit: IGAD

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), through its land and governance programme, convened a high-level national dialogue with women parliamentarians in Uganda, aimed at advancing women's leadership in land governance and climate resilience. The dialogue forms a broader IGAD regional initiative to equip women parliamentarians across its member states with the skills and tools needed to influence laws, budgets, and policies at the intersection of gender, land rights, and climate change.

The two-day forum, held in Kampala, brought together lawmakers, land experts, and key government stakeholders to drive gender-responsive policies and action. Hon. Sarah Opendi, Chairperson of the Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA), emphasized, "As women leaders, we must be at the forefront of driving policies that secure land rights for women and protect our communities from the impacts of climate change." She further mentioned that this was not about fairness, but about survival, dignity, and sustainability. The forum comes at a critical time, as climate change continues to deepen gender inequalities, particularly in rural communities where women bear the greatest burden of climate impacts, yet remain marginalised in land ownership and decision-making processes.

By centering women in land and climate governance, IGAD is not only advancing sustainable development but also consolidating pathways for peace and stability across the region.

<https://share.google/KjVOnBKxwuUHGtUcu>

Centering Gender and Reparative Justice: Advancing Women's Leadership in Africa's Journey Toward Justice for Africans and People of African Descent.

On 18th June, Researchers Without Borders (REWiB) participated in the Pre-Consultation Meeting ahead of the 7th GIMAC/RECs and Partners gathering. Held under the African Union's 2025 Theme of the Year, Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations, this meeting brought together stakeholders across Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs), civil society, and advocacy partners to align strategies and collectively amplify voices.

Panelists emphasized that gender must be central to all reparations discourse, and that without it, reparative justice will remain a distant dream. It was also noted that women remain underrepresented in leadership spaces, despite their crucial roles and undeniable contributions they make in all the spaces they occupy. The meeting served as a critical platform to reaffirm collective commitments toward redressing historical injustices and promoting equitable development for communities of African descent. Participants engaged deeply on the imperative of reparations, not merely as financial or symbolic gestures, but as pillars for restorative justice, inclusive policy reform, and long-term socio-economic empowerment.

Key outcomes of the pre-consultation included a strengthened coalition among grassroots organizations, RECs, and AU representatives and a preliminary roadmap for 2025–2026 interventions focused on reparative justice, with special attention to gender equity, climate resilience, and youth engagement.

We look forward to carrying these insights into the 7th GIMAC/RECs and Partners Meeting and beyond, standing in solidarity, and walking toward justice with intention for sustainable change.

World Refugee Day 2025: Solidarity with Refugees - Advancing Education and Dignity for Displaced Learners

On World Refugee Day 2025, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) convened a timely and powerful webinar to honour the resilience, rights, and potential of displaced communities, particularly women and girls. Held under the theme "Solidarity with Refugees—Advancing Education and Dignity for Refugees and Displaced Learners," the event powerfully echoed the urgency of ensuring inclusive, equitable education for all. The discussion brought together educators, policymakers, youth leaders, and refugee advocates from across the continent to discuss issues of education and the challenges faced by both primary and secondary school-students, especially girls and young women.

The event involved moving personal testimonies from some refugee learners who shared their educational journeys amidst adversity. A young lady shared her story on relocating from Rwanda with her family to Kenya to acquire a semblance of a normal life and an education. Their courage and aspirations reaffirmed the need for responsive, inclusive, and sustained support systems.

Panelists explored the intersections of gender, displacement, and education, emphasizing the urgent need for policies that not only grant access to schooling but also ensure safety, dignity, and opportunity for displaced girls and young women.

FAWE spotlighted several grassroots and digital learning initiatives that are transforming refugee

education through community-led mentorship, technology integration, and psychosocial support.

The webinar appealed to governments, regional bodies, and educational institutions to reaffirm their commitments to the right to education for all, regardless of status or origin.

Honouring survivors, closing justice gaps, and advancing the WPS agenda across the continent.

On June 19, African governments, civil society and regional bodies commemorated the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict with renewed urgency. From South Sudan to the DRC, Sudan, Mali, Ethiopia, and Mozambique, conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) remains a devastating and under-addressed reality. Across the continent, commemorations took the form of community dialogues, policy panels, and advocacy campaigns demanding justice, reparations, and protection for women and girls.

While challenges persist, there have been some encouraging steps, like survivor-led advocacy movements that have gained traction, pushing for legal and policy reforms in countries like South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The African Union through its, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, continued to elevate CRSV on the continental peace and security agenda. Despite these steps, there are challenges and gaps where there is still widespread impunity as CRSV remains rampant in conflict zones such as eastern DRC, Darfur, and parts of Central African Republic, with little to no legal consequences for perpetrators.

Conflict-related sexual violence is a direct threat to peace, security, and justice and addressing it is central to realising Africa's WPS agenda. This year's commemorations called for more than symbolic gestures. Africa's women peacebuilders demand for full accountability for CRSV crimes, increased funding for women-led organisations and inclusion of survivors and women in all peace and security processes, from ceasefires to reconstruction. As Africa reflects on progress and setbacks, ending sexual violence in conflict is non-negotiable. Peace without justice for women and girls is incomplete. This is a true and defining test for political will, individual reflection, our leadership and our shared humanity.

UN convoy attacked on the way to Sudan's al-Fashir- UNICEF

A UN food convoy was attacked en route to Al-Fashir in Sudan, highlighting the deteriorating security situation in the region, amid the intensifying conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces. The attack left five dead and prevented food deliveries to children and families who face starvation in North Darfur's al-Fashir. Multiple trucks were burned, and critical humanitarian supplies were destroyed. This incident not only endangers humanitarian operations but also severely promotes instability that restricts women's access to aid, limits their participation in peace processes, and increases the risk of gender-based violence. The attack is a stark reminder of the urgent need for an immediate ceasefire, enhanced protection for humanitarian and peacebuilding personnel, protection of humanitarian corridors that ensure aid reaches women and vulnerable populations, and also push for further commitments from all actors to uphold international humanitarian law and the WPS pillars, particularly protection and participation. <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/un-convoy-attacked-way-sudan-al-fashir-unicef-says-2025-06-03/>

Why Africa's Humanitarian Crises Remain in the Shadows



Photo Credit: The Nile Post

African countries have again topped the list of the world's most ignored crises, with nearly all of the worst funded humanitarian challenges located in the continent in 2024. A report by the non-profit Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) lists Cameroon, Mozambique and a host of other African nations as some of the most burdened by violence and displacement, but also the most invisible to donors. A powerful new piece from Al Jazeera explores why humanitarian emergencies in African countries consistently fall off the global radar. It uncovers a troubling pattern of media

neglect, insufficient funding, and political inattention that keeps millions of people's suffering in a state of "out of sight, out of mind."

Media apathy and cost-cutting are some of the reasons highlighted as key contributors to this situation. African humanitarian crises are underreported due to a dangerous combination of media disinterest, donor fatigue, and geopolitical apathy. Media neglect and underfunding aren't just failures of coverage—they are failures of protection, participation, and accountability. Without visibility and support, the WPS agenda cannot be realized in crisis-affected African contexts. There is an urgent need to center African women's voices, fund locally led responses, and demand that humanitarian assistance reflects the realities and needs of women and girls in crisis, and not media trends. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/6/3/why-are-humanitarian-crises-in-african-countries-so-ignored>

M23 rebels execute at least 21 civilians in Goma-DRC

At least 21 civilians were executed by the M23 rebels near Goma in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, in the latest wave of violence that has displaced thousands and deepened the region's humanitarian crisis. Victims included women and children, with bodies discovered in mass graves, raising urgent concerns about violations of international humanitarian law. This atrocity strikes at the core of the women, peace and security agenda because these killings underscore the urgent need to protect civilians, especially women and girls who face heightened risks of sexual violence, exploitation, trauma, and displacement during conflict.

The M23 massacre comes amid a glaring absence of women's protection, participation and leadership in the peace process. These killings underscore the urgent need for mechanisms specifically to safeguard women and girls in active conflict zones. Without sustained regional and international attention, local women's protection and leadership will remain sidelined in one of Africa's longest running conflicts. <https://www.africannews.com/amp/2025/06/03/drc-m23-rebels-executed-atleast-21-civilians-in-goma-human-rights-watch-says/>

Sudanese Army accuses Libya's Haftar forces of border attack

The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) withdrew from the Egypt-Libya-Sudan border triangle after accusing eastern Libyan commander Khalifa Haftar's forces of jointly attacking their positions alongside the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), including alleged weapons smuggling via UAE-backed supply lines. SAF described the move as defensive arrangement, while both Haftar and the UAE denied the claims. Egypt supports Haftar adding regional complexity. The RSF went further to claim control of the strategic zone, a critical route near al-Fashir, part of their broader campaign across Darfur and Kordofan. The conflict continues to fuel Sudan's humanitarian crisis-24,000 dead

and 13 million displaced, per UN estimates-marked by mass atrocities and widespread violence.

This broader offensive by Haftar-linked forces deepens Sudan's conflict, aggravating threats to women's safety, agency, and well-being. It highlights how regional escalations, beyond just media headlines, directly impinge on the WPS agenda. Cross-border militarisation exacerbates gender-based violence and deepens the risk of exploitation and abuse for displaced women and girls, particularly those in refugee camps or besieged areas. As regional actors intensify the conflict, Sudanese women's voices are further drowned out in political and peace negotiations and regional interference without accountability destabilizes any opportunity for conflict prevention, especially gender-responsive early warning systems and women-led mediation. Sudan's peace and recovery efforts must re-center women's rights and involvement amid this widening crisis. Sudan women peace activists have continued to call for transformative and intersectional peace processes. <https://share.google/0d20f8YaSWOlhJBAQ>

Congolese Rebels signal willingness for peace talks, UN Reports

The United Nations has announced that Congolese rebels are expressing openness to a peaceful resolution to the ongoing conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, that has led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians in the last few months, and left thousands dead. This development comes amid intensified regional and international efforts to de-escalate violence and foster dialogue. Yet, questions persist about the meaningful inclusion of Congolese women, particularly grassroots activists, survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and displaced women, in peace processes that have historically excluded them.

UN Special Representative Bintou Keita has played a key role in these efforts, underlining the importance of inclusive peacebuilding, stating that she had brought "a spirit of listening and exchange" to the discussions that were held in Goma recently. While her leadership reinforces the critical role women play in conflict resolution, high-level diplomacy must be matched with the active, direct participation of local women's movements, peacebuilders, and survivors at the negotiation table. Keita's involvement signifies a growing recognition of women's contributions to mediation, diplomacy, and sustainable peace in complex conflict zones in the DRC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3e5gxllwjd0>

Wars, weather and waning aid: Africa facing its worst humanitarian crisis



Photo Credit: The East African

Africa is experiencing its worst humanitarian crisis in decades. Wars, climate-change events, and aid reductions are converging to erode protections and rights, especially for women and girls. Without urgent action that embeds the principles of the WPS Agenda, women's protection, participation and leadership, as well as women's lived realities and agency, both immediate survival; and long-term peace are at risk.

A recent UN-FAO-WFP report warns that 13 global hotspots, especially in Africa are facing worsening hunger emergency driven conflict, climate extremes and shrinking aid. South Sudan edges toward famine, with 32,000 people already in catastrophic conditions and over half its population acutely food insecure. Flooding and conflict are disrupting farming and aid delivery. Humanitarian funding, especially from major donors, is dwindling rapidly. For instance, the UN's global aid shortfall threatens operations across regions like South Sudan, Sudan and DRC which are already in precarious situations, plagued by conflict.



Photo Credit: CNN

Women and girls are under threat because they currently represent 80% of those displaced by conflict and are significantly more vulnerable to gender-based violence, exploitation, and lack of reproductive health services. In Sudan, conflict and hunger have spiked sexual violence and, maternal mortality, disrupting basic health and maternal care. Yet, despite these threats, women's peace networks and community responders continue to organize, mediate local ceasefires, distribute aid, and document rights violations, often at great personal risk. Due to this global crisis, the UN and civil society must press donors and governments for sustained, flexible funding that prioritizes women-focused aid, aligns with WPS priorities, and sustains peace dividends in crisis zones.

<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/africa-facing-its-worst-humanitarian-crisis-5081014>

Mozambique: Polluted Rivers in Manica Force Farmers to Abandon Agriculture.

In Mozambique's Manica Province, communities are facing a deepening livelihood crisis as river pollution-largely caused by illegal and disorderly gold mining contaminates water sources critical for farming. Once fertile and productive, the land is becoming unusable, forcing many smallholder



Photo Credit: Club of Mozambique

farmers to abandon agriculture altogether. This extractivist crisis, rooted in profit-driven exploitation and weak state regulation is hitting women hard, as they make up the majority of subsistence farmers and are primary caregivers in rural households.

The breakdown of agricultural livelihoods has ripple effects on food security, household income, and access to clean water. Women and girls are disproportionately affected-spending longer hours searching for alternative water sources, dropping out of school, or taking on exploitative work to support their families. The situation increases their exposure to gender-based violence and economic exploitation, including cross-border trafficking. Furthermore, this environmental degradation is not only a development and humanitarian issue, it is a security issue. The loss of livelihoods, rising displacement, and growing vulnerabilities among women and girls undermine their safety, participation, and rights in peacebuilding and recovery processes. For the WPS Agenda to be advanced, environmental threats and resource-driven conflicts must be addressed as part of efforts to protect and empower women in crisis-affected regions.

<https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-hard-times-in-manica-as-polluted-rivers->

[force-farmers-to-abandon-agriculture-284915/](#)

UNICEF seeks urgent funding as over 136,000 Flee DR Congo to Burundi, Uganda.

Uganda has received an additional influx of 67,000 new arrivals from the eastern DRC, which now constitutes one of the largest humanitarian emergencies, while Burundi has taken in over 70,000, most of whom are women and children. Many of the new refugees are in dire need of clean water, food, medical care and protection, UNICEF said in a new report; warning that transit centers in both countries are severely stretched. The situation is worsening as the rainy season raises the risk of flooding, disease outbreaks and further displacement. UNICEF further highlighted critical health concerns, including high rates of malnutrition, cholera and measles among children.

UNICEF is appealing for \$22 million to scale up life-saving support, stressing that without additional funding, its ability to provide essential services will be severely constrained. This continued crisis is deeply concerning as there are heightened protection risks of especially women and girls, because gender-based violence often spikes during displacement. Overcrowded transit centers with limited security increase risks of sexual assault, exploitation, and trafficking-especially for women and girls. It is noteworthy that displacements of this magnitude often deepen social fractures and embedded trauma. Without addressing root causes-like the resurgence of the M23 rebel group, militarized extractivism, and weak regional accountability, the crisis risks become cyclical.

This crisis is not just a displacement issue; it's a stark example of how conflict and forced migration uniquely threaten women's safety, dignity, and agency. Prioritizing WPS principles in funding and programming is essential to both saving lives and building foundations for lasting peace. The requested \$22 million must explicitly support these gender-responsive interventions. https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/news/unicef-seeks-urgent-funding-as-over-136000-fl-NV_213209

Rising Cross-Border Political Tensions Involving Eritrea Spark regional Concern

Tensions are mounting once again around Eritrea's borders, as diplomatic strain and alleged cross-border military activities deepen divisions in the Horn of Africa. Reports point to increased troop movements, border militarization, and rhetorical escalations between Eritrea and its neighbours particularly Ethiopia and Sudan. In recent months, Eritrea has been accused of supporting armed actors in border regions and refusing to engage in regional de-escalation talks. The situation threatens to reignite instability in a region already burdened by armed conflict, mass displacement and food insecurity.

The escalating tensions are creating protection risks for border communities and hindering humanitarian access. Cross-border insecurity has led to new waves of displacement, increased the risk of human trafficking and smuggling, threatened regional efforts to address drought, food shortages and climate shocks, especially in areas hosting refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). As these regional dynamics deteriorate, women and girls are bearing the brunt of this insecurity that carries various challenges of GBV, sexual exploitation and lack of access to reproductive healthcare. Women peacebuilders and civil society groups face severe repression in Eritrea and shrinking space for cross-border cooperation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

In a nutshell, the Horn of Africa stands at a critical crossroad. Eritrea's cross-border posture threatens to reverse fragile peace gains and deepen instability. A renewed commitment to dialogue, de-escalation, and the inclusion of women in peace processes is essential to prevent another crisis. <https://martinplaut.com/2025/06/23/eeepa-situation-report-horn-of-africa-no-641-23-june-2025/>

Ethiopia-Eritrea People embrace at the border: Demand for Peace and Resolution

After two decades of hostility following Eritrea's secession in 1993 and a bloody border war (1998-2000), Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki formally reopened border crossings and embraced each other in peaceful solidarity. Crowds of Ethiopians and Eritreans reunited-hugging, weeping, sharing coffee, dancing, and celebrating the end of a "state of war". Equally, trade, transport, flights, and communications resumed rapidly, reviving local markets and cross-border movement.



Photo Credit: BBC

It is paramount to note that women at the grassroots played visible roles in welcoming and rebuilding community ties-operating markets, cafes, health clinics, and more. Their leadership in these public-facing roles demonstrates the essential contribution of women in post-conflict social rebuilding. At the border

clinics, many Eritrean women sought reproductive health services-evidence of women actively seeking agency over their health and family planning. However, despite these visible contributions, women's involvement in official peace negotiations and planning remains limited-echoing a common gap between informal leadership and formal participation. The border embrace marks a hopeful turning point-but to fully realize its promise, a gendered perspective must be embedded in long term peace acquisition. The celebration of unity must translate into structural inclusion. When women lead in peacebuilding and governance, reconciliation gains depth-protecting communities and nurturing resilience across borders. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c15wz415pddo>

Cash Transfer Lifeline for Displaced Families in DR Congo

Families displaced by violence in eastern DRC are rebuilding their lives with support from UNICEF through a cash transfer program. Forced from their homes with few belongings, parents are using assistance to pay for food, rent and pay school fees for their children-determined to keep their children safe and learning as they look toward a more stable future. The cash assistance further enables vulnerable households, especially women-headed families to meet urgent these urgent needs while preserving dignity and choice. This intervention is part of UNICEF's broader humanitarian response to the crisis in eastern DRC, aiming to strengthen resilience amid continued insecurity. This cash assistance in the DRC is not just a humanitarian tool-it is a WPS intervention as well, advancing women's protection, economic dignity, and resilience in a conflict-affected context. It helps operationalize the WPS agenda in crisis response by putting resources directly in the hands of displaced women. While such interventions are vital, they must be accompanied by sustained efforts to address the structural drivers of displacement, poverty, and exclusion that perpetuate cycles of crisis. Meaningful WPS implementation requires not just targeted aid, but investment in women-led peacebuilding initiatives, economic justice, and gender-responsive governance in conflict-affected regions like eastern DRC.

<https://share.google/eTrGL1vMfmLPhUM6K>

Somalia Mission Faces Funding Cliff Despite Gains: Despite its recent successes against al-Shabaab, the African Union peace mission in Somalia is on the brink.

The successes on the ground so far-show that Al-Shabaab has been driven back from several towns thanks to coordinated offensives by Somalia forces, African Union troops, and U.S. airstrikes. The newly launched African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) built on these gains, though it's now grappling with internal challenges and regional politics. Furthermore, AUSSOM urgently needs \$96 M to cover its operations for January-June 2025, yet only \$16.7 M has been committed, leaving a critical funding gap.

Donor fatigue and shifting geopolitical priorities have also left the mission at risk of collapse, just as Al-Shabaab is regrouping and reclaiming territory. The AU troop-contributing nations urged the UN to trigger Resolution 2719-(adopted on 21 December 2023 creates a landmark mechanism for predictable, sustainable funding of African Union (AU) led peace support operations under chapter VIII of the UN Charter), warning that the mission's collapse could reverse hard-won stability.

The funding cliff threatens not just the mission's sustainability, but the entire WPS framework in Somalia, from protecting women and girls' rights to ensuring they shape and benefit from peace. The looming financial crisis endangers these hard-won gains by reducing protection services for women and girls, curtailing support for women's leadership in peacebuilding, and increasing vulnerabilities in communities already destabilized by conflict.

<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/july-1-reckoning-somalia-mission-faces-funding-cliff-5096660>

Peace Agreement Between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Rwanda

A Peace Agreement was signed recently in Washington D. C between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Rwanda, aimed at ending decades of conflict and instability in the mineral-rich eastern DRC. The agreement, mediated by the United States and Qatar, includes several key



Photo Credit: Euronews.com

provisions on Territorial Integrity and Prohibition of Hostilities, Disengagement, Disarmament, and Integration of Armed Groups, Joint Security Coordination Mechanism, Regional Economic Integration, and Refugees and Humanitarian Considerations.

However, what remains conspicuously absent is a clear, public commitment to gender equality, women's participation, and protection of women and girls from conflict-related violence, the omission is

alarming. Peace agreements brokered without the meaningful inclusion of women's voices, experiences, and leadership risk perpetuating the same power dynamics that fuel conflict. There should be a call for transparency and accountability on whether women-led civil society organisations were consulted during the drafting of the peace agreement and how it intends to address the specific security, justice and economic needs of women affected by the DRC-Rwanda conflict.

While lauded as a turning point, both Congolese and Rwandan Officials acknowledged that significant work remains to be done to fully implement the agreement and ensure enduring peace on the ground. The success of the accord will also depend on ongoing parallel talks between the DRC government and the M23 rebel group, mediated by Qatar.

<https://www.state.gov/peace-agreement-between-the-democratic-republic-of-the-congo-and-the-republic-of-rwanda/>

Trump administration weighs adding 36 countries to travel ban

The Trump administration is considering expanding its travel ban-currently affecting 12 countries, to include 36 more, with 25 new entries from Africa such as Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Uganda and Tanzania. Governments now face a 60-day deadline to meet U.S. benchmarks on documentation, vetting processes, visa compliance, anti-terror cooperation-or risk full or partial bans.

In line with foreign policy and securitisation trends, this deepens securitisation of migration, strains bilateral relations, as African governments are pressured to overhaul civil registry and repatriation systems quickly. This ban offers up WPS agenda impacts as well, as it risks women's mobility and rights. Many African women and girls are living in conflict and fragile states. Visa restrictions may hinder their ability to flee from harm or even death as we are seeing in Sudan and DRC and limit access to critical opportunities to education, healthcare and business that disproportionately impact women, particularly from developing nations. Many African female leaders and civil society actors rely on travel for capacity building, UN engagements or peace mission participation. Barriers to travel could weaken network and global advocacy on promoting the effective implementation of the WPS agenda.

The proposed travel bans expansion moves U.S. immigration policy further into securitisation, potentially limiting mobility and curtailing vital roles women from affected countries play in peacebuilding, diplomacy, and education. It raises flagging concerns over governance, equity, and partnership values at the heart of U.S.-Africa relations. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/trump-administration-weighs-adding-36-countries-travel-ban-memo-says-2025-06-15/>



Image Credit by: The New York Times

Conclusion

In this edition, we reflect on a collection of powerful stories that highlight both the urgent challenges and the inspiring resilience across Africa. From the Washington-hosted peace talks between the DRC and Rwanda, to South African women leading social cohesion and climate resilience, to IGAD's engagement with Ugandan women parliamentarians on land rights, each story underscores a critical truth: peace is not sustainable without a transformative approach.

The commemoration of World Refugee Day reminded us of the silent crises still unfolding across the continent-and the essential role of women and girls in rebuilding communities on the move. And the International Day for the Elimination of Conflict Related Sexual Violence reiterates that the disarmament and peace processes exclude women, failing to address sexual violence as a core security issue or to involve survivors in negotiations and reintegration efforts. We spotlighted how UNICEF's cash assistance in the DRC supports displaced families, and how efforts like the Shs 59 billion Adjumani water project can be transformational in refugee and host communities-especially for women and girls responsible for water collection and household care.

In parallel, we explored the foreign policy landscape with the Trump administration's proposed travel ban expansion, raising concerns around securitisation and its chilling effects on women's mobility, peacebuilding, and diplomatic engagement. All these stories are interconnected through the lens of the WPS agenda - reminding us that women's leadership, protection, participation, and rights are not secondary, but central to peace, resilience, and justice. As conflict evolves, borders shift, and communities adapt, the WPS agenda must remain our guiding framework, for Africa, and for the world.