



WPS BULLETIN

Message from the Editor



Dear Readers,

Each time I sit down to write this column, I am reminded that our Bulletin is more than a collection of headlines. It is a window into the lived realities of our continent, the pain, the resilience, the courage, and the victories, however fragile, that women and communities carve out every day. This August edition carries stories that weigh heavily on our hearts, but also ignite our determination to keep resisting and reimagining.

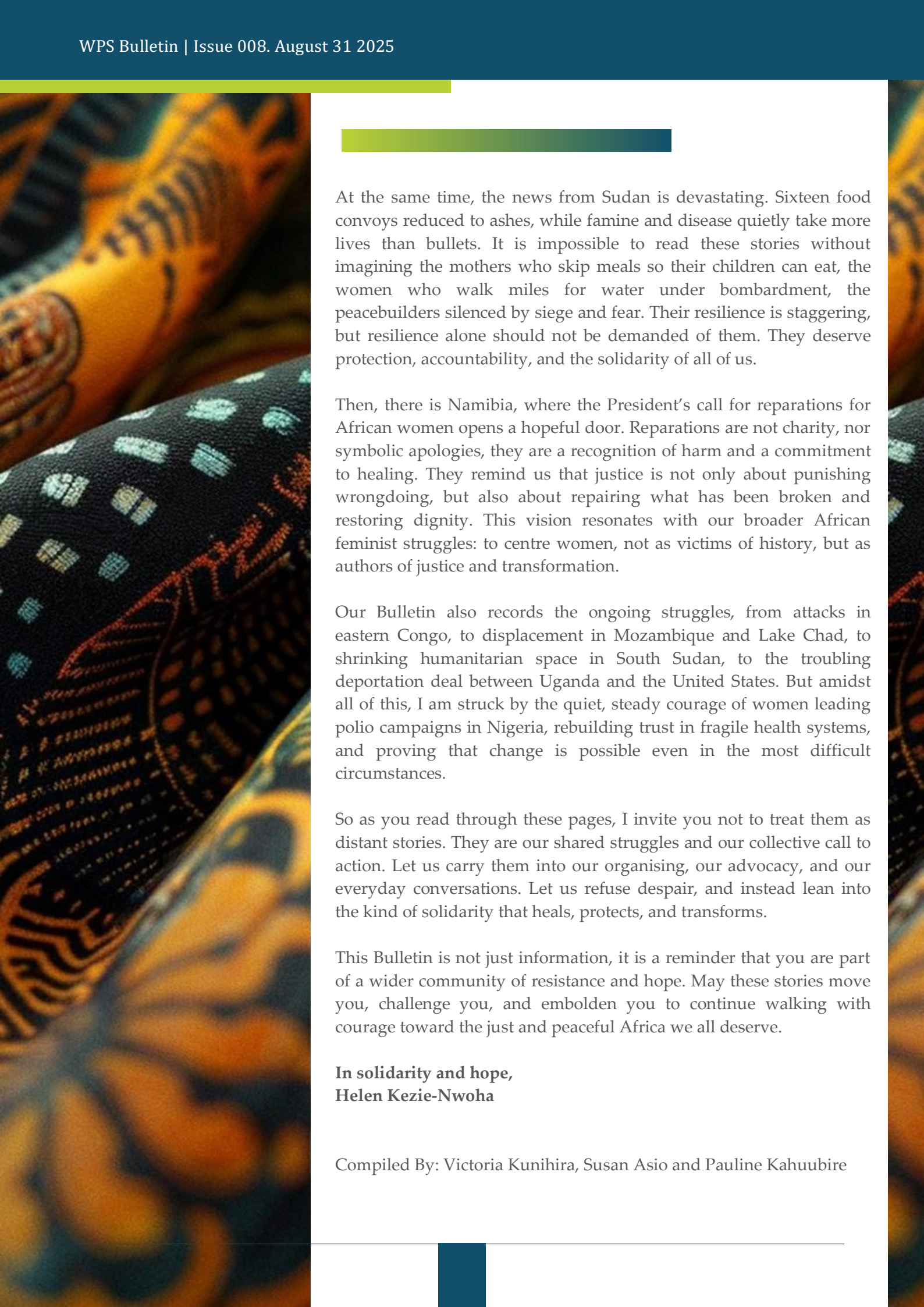
In Sierra Leone, the ruling that Female Genital Mutilation amounts to torture is a moment of vindication for survivors and activists who have fought tirelessly against a practice long normalised as “tradition.” Their courage has shifted the narrative from silence to justice. And yet, I cannot help but think of the work that still lies ahead, laws must be enacted, communities must be engaged, and survivors must be supported. This is not only about ending a harmful practice; it is about reclaiming dignity and securing freedom for generations of women and girls.

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At the same time, the news from Sudan is devastating. Sixteen food convoys reduced to ashes, while famine and disease quietly take more lives than bullets. It is impossible to read these stories without imagining the mothers who skip meals so their children can eat, the women who walk miles for water under bombardment, the peacebuilders silenced by siege and fear. Their resilience is staggering, but resilience alone should not be demanded of them. They deserve protection, accountability, and the solidarity of all of us.

Then, there is Namibia, where the President's call for reparations for African women opens a hopeful door. Reparations are not charity, nor symbolic apologies, they are a recognition of harm and a commitment to healing. They remind us that justice is not only about punishing wrongdoing, but also about repairing what has been broken and restoring dignity. This vision resonates with our broader African feminist struggles: to centre women, not as victims of history, but as authors of justice and transformation.

Our Bulletin also records the ongoing struggles, from attacks in eastern Congo, to displacement in Mozambique and Lake Chad, to shrinking humanitarian space in South Sudan, to the troubling deportation deal between Uganda and the United States. But amidst all of this, I am struck by the quiet, steady courage of women leading polio campaigns in Nigeria, rebuilding trust in fragile health systems, and proving that change is possible even in the most difficult circumstances.

So as you read through these pages, I invite you not to treat them as distant stories. They are our shared struggles and our collective call to action. Let us carry them into our organising, our advocacy, and our everyday conversations. Let us refuse despair, and instead lean into the kind of solidarity that heals, protects, and transforms.

This Bulletin is not just information, it is a reminder that you are part of a wider community of resistance and hope. May these stories move you, challenge you, and embolden you to continue walking with courage toward the just and peaceful Africa we all deserve.

**In solidarity and hope,
Helen Kezie-Nwoha**

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Acronyms

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
AU	African Union
CEVAWG	Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
cVDPV	Circulating Vaccine-Derived Poliovirus
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
MSF	Medecins Sans Frontieres
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
UN	United Nations
WFP	World Food Programme
WPS	Women Peace and Security





President of Sierra Leone urged to ban FGM as court rules it tantamount to torture - a turning point in the fight against FGM

In a landmark decision, the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) court of justice has ruled that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) amounts to torture, marking a historic step in Sierra Leone's struggle against the practice. The ruling has intensified calls on President Julius Maada Bio to take decisive action by criminalising FGM and imposing a national ban.

This milestone reflects more than just a legal victory-it is the result of years of survivor-led activism, the feminist movement, and radical action that have kept FGM on the national and global agenda led by Forum Against Harmful Practices (FAHP), We Are Purposeful and Allieu. Together, these voices are challenging entrenched cultural norms and demanding accountability, showing the collective power of women and allies in shaping a future free from violence.

ECOWAS court of justice ruling resonates far beyond its borders. By framing FGM as torture, it sets a precedent that could inspire stronger legal and policy action across Africa, where millions of girls remain at risk. This ruling is significant for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. It highlights how eliminating harmful practices like FGM is central to women's safety, their bodily autonomy, and protection of their human dignity. Without freedom from violence, women cannot fully engage in public life and in decision making. This ruling, strengthens the case for integrating the fight against gender-based violence into national and regional WPS commitments and aligns with the provisions of the African Union Convention of Ending Violence Against Women and Girls in Africa (CEVAWG).

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/jul/28/the-matter-is-in-his-hands-alone-president-of-sierra-leone-urged-to-ban-fgm-as-court-rules-it-tantamount-to-torture>

Drone Attack destroys 16 trucks carrying UN food to Sudan's famine-hit Darfur Region

A drone strike destroyed 16 United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) trucks carrying lifesaving food aid to famine-stricken communities in North Darfur, Sudan. This is the second attack on humanitarian convoys in three months, following a June assault that killed five people and injured several others en route to el-Fasher.

The attack comes amid Sudan's spiralling humanitarian crisis. Since conflict erupted in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), nearly 40,000 people have been killed, 13 million displaced, and 25 million pushed into acute hunger. Famine, first identified in the Zamzam displacement camp, has now spread across 17 regions in Darfur and Kordofan, leaving millions at risk of starvation. With el-Fasher-the only Darfur state capital outside RSF control under siege, humanitarian corridors have become lifelines, yet they are increasingly under threat. The destruction of these food supplies deepens already catastrophic hunger, disrupts aid delivery, and erodes trust in the safety of humanitarian operations.

From a WPS perspective, the consequences are particularly grave especially for women and girls who often bear the brunt of famine and conflict but are also leading the humanitarian response. Food scarcity exposes them to heightened risks of exploitation and gender-based violence, while shrinking the civic space limits women leaders and grassroots organisations from mobilising relief and advocacy. The international community, on the other hand faces an urgent call to demand an immediate ceasefire, secure humanitarian corridors, scale up famine response, and support women-led initiatives that bolster resilience and community protection.

<https://apnews.com/article/un-sudan-convoy-attack-darfur-0c8f6772e934683145960040b53b6488>

Namibian President Calls for Reparations to Address Historical Injustices Against African Women

Namibian President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah has called for reparative justice to address the historical injustices faced by African women. Speaking at the 63rd Pan-African Women's Day Celebrations in Windhoek, she emphasised the need for frameworks that confront the enduring legacies of colonialism, slavery, apartheid, and imperialist exploitation, which have disproportionately affected African women and communities. President Nandi-Ndaitwah highlighted that Namibia initiated its reparations process 19 years ago when parliament passed a motion calling on Germany to acknowledge its colonial-era genocide and provide reparations. She further reiterated the importance of reparative justice in confronting these historical injustices and ensuring that African women receive recognition and redress for the wrongs they have suffered.

This call for reparative justice aligns with the African Union's designation of 2025 as the "Year of Reparations and African Heritage", marking the beginning of a coordinated decade long campaign to address historical injustices stemming from slavery, colonialism, and systemic inequities in global governance. President Nandi-Ndaitwah's remarks underscore the urgency of addressing historical injustices through reparative justice frameworks to promote healing, recognition, and empowerment for African women.

<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/southern-africa/namibian-president-historical-injustices-african-women-5142678>



Rebels armed with machetes kill at least 52 in eastern DRC

At least 52 civilians were killed in a series of brutal attacks by the Islamic State-aligned Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The massacre took place in the Beni and Lubero territories of North Kivu province, where assailants armed with machetes and hoes targeted entire villages. According to Congolese military officials, the attackers forced residents from their homes, bound them with ropes, and slaughtered them with bladed weapons. In one of the deadliest incidents, around 30 civilians were murdered in the village of Melia with women and children among the victims. Several homes were also set ablaze, compounding the devastation for survivors. Authorities believe the ADF carried out the killings in revenge for recent battlefield losses.

The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) condemned the atrocities in the strongest terms, warning that the death toll could rise further as more bodies are discovered. These attacks underscore the continued impunity of ADF and its capacity to terrorise communities, the persistent insecurity and humanitarian crisis in eastern Congo.

The massacre carries particularly severe implications for the WPS agenda. Women and girls already disproportionately affected by displacement and hunger, remain highly vulnerable to such targeted violence. The destruction of homes and livelihoods, deepens economic insecurity for women, while trauma of these attacks heightens risks of gender-based violence, exploitation, and long-term psychological harm. Furthermore, persistent insecurity shrinks the leadership spaces for local women peacebuilders, limiting their ability to advocate for protection, justice and community resilience. Upholding humanitarian law and reinforcing WPS commitments in conflict-affected regions like eastern Congo are essential to breaking cycles of violence and safeguarding vulnerable populations.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/rebels-armed-with-machetes-kill-least-52-eastern-congo-2025-08-18/>

Death by starvation, diseases in Sudan, as the world watches

Sudan's civil war has unleashed one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, where starvation and disease now kill more people than bullets and bombs on the battlefield. More than 25 million people—over half the population—are in acute food insecurity, with famine already taking hold in Darfur, Kordofan, and other conflict-hit regions. In besieged towns and displacement camps, families survive on wild plants, animal feed, or thin porridge, while malnutrition claims lives daily. The collapse of Sudan's health system has turned hunger into a deadly cycle. With up to 80% of facilities nonfunctional, outbreaks of cholera, measles, malaria and dengue have spread unchecked in crowded camps. Malnourished children are especially vulnerable to diseases and infections.

The war between Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) troops has devastated livelihoods, destroyed crops and also seen aid convoys regularly blocked, looted and attacked. International appeals for funding also remain chronically under-resourced. The result is a famine that is not only man-made but preventable, yet global action remains slow, leaving millions to die in silence. Women, as primary caregivers are on the frontlines of hunger, often sacrificing their meals to their children. They face heightened risks of gender-based violence in displacement camps and struggle to sustain families with collapsing access to food, health, and sanitation.

At the same time, the space for women leaders and local peacebuilders to organise and advocate is shrinking under siege conditions and insecurity.

<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/north-africa/death-by-starvation-diseases-in-sudan-as-the-world-watches-5157374>

Violence in northern Mozambique forces thousands to flee, straining aid efforts

Recent armed attacks in Cabo Delgado province have displaced over 46,000 people, from late July to date- pushing total displacement this year beyond 95,000. The hardest-hit district, Chiúre, saw more than 42,000 flee, half of them children. Families are sheltering in overcrowded areas with urgent needs for food, shelter, and civil documentation. The violence has not only uprooted lives but systematically undermined local infrastructure-homes, schools, clinics and community centres have all been destroyed or damaged-deepening socio-economic distress.

Women and children remain disproportionately affected, with children making up nearly 60% of those displaced, many are unaccompanied, heightening risks of exploitation, abuse, and disrupted education. Continuous violence also undermines women's participation in leadership roles, community rebuilding, and crisis response-all key pillars of the WPS agenda. The intensified violence in northern Mozambique is displacing tens of thousands, further stretching straining aid resources. Humanitarian access is increasingly fragile, and protection risks are rising due to insecurity, involuntary relocations, and underfunding. Legal experts warn that Mozambique may be falling short of its obligations under international law to protect internally displaced persons. The crisis underscores the urgent need for international support and coordinated protection efforts. Furthermore, a WPS focused response is vital to ensure that the most vulnerable receive protection and support that they urgently need.

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/08/1165560>

MSF suspends activities in southern South Sudan following abductions

Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) has suspended medical operations in Yei River and Morobo counties, Central Equatoria, in South Sudan after two abductions in less than a week, including the brief kidnapping of an MSF team leader. The suspension leaves thousands without critical healthcare in an area already devastated by conflict and repeated attacks on aid workers. MSF had been one of the few providers offering outpatient care, maternal services, and child health support-conducting over 14,000 consultations and assisting nearly 450 births in the first half of 2025 alone. Its withdrawal drastically reduces access to lifesaving services for already isolated communities.

The impact of these attacks is severe-as women and children who make up the majority of patients, now face heightened risks of maternal mortality, preventable diseases, and gender-based violence amid insecurity and displacement. The shrinking humanitarian space also undermines women-led health and community initiatives, eroding resilience at the local level.

MSF has called for accountability and security guarantees before resuming operations, stressing that attacks on humanitarian staff violate international law and deepen the crisis for South Sudan's most vulnerable population.

<https://www.msf.org/msf-suspends-activities-southern-south-sudan-following-abductions>





Photo Credit Joris Bolomey

Lake Chad residents caught between Boko Haram and rising waters

Residents of the Lake Chad region face a dual crisis of escalating violence from Boko Haram and the encroachment of rising floodwaters. Once a thriving area for fishing and agriculture, the region is now marked by instability and environmental stress. Boko Haram's presence has disrupted local economies, leading to widespread insecurity and displacement. Simultaneously, climate change has caused Lake Chad to expand, inundating homes and farmland, exacerbating food insecurity, and displacing communities. This convergence of violence and environmental degradation has left residents struggling to survive, with limited access to humanitarian aid and resources.

Displacement due to Boko Haram attacks and flooding increases women's and girls' vulnerability to sexual exploitation, domestic violence, and trafficking.

Furthermore, flooded communities and security concerns disrupt maternal and reproductive healthcare, as well as education for girls, deepening long-term inequalities. Women may be underrepresented in local decision-making on conflict resolution, disaster response, and climate adaptation, limiting inclusive recovery strategies.

The Lake Chad crisis amplifies the intersection between conflict and climate change and the need for WPS-informed interventions that prioritize women's protection, participation, and access to essential services during conflict and environmental crises including in climate smart adaptation initiatives.

https://www.lemonde.fr/en/le-monde-africa/article/2025/08/06/lake-chad-residents-caught-between-boko-haram-and-rising-waters_6744111_104.html

Health champions: Local women lead the fight against polio in Nigeria

In Nigeria, local women have become pivotal in the battle against polio, particularly in areas where male health workers face restrictions. In communities like Kado LifeCamp on the outskirts of Abuja, women such as 29-year-old Eucharía Josphe lead vaccination teams, reaching hundreds of children daily. Their efforts are crucial in combating circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV), a strain that emerges in under-immunised areas. In regions like Borno State, where mistrust towards outsiders is high due to ongoing conflicts, female vaccinators have gained acceptance and trust within communities, facilitating better outreach and vaccination coverage.

On the WPS scope, there has been enhanced access and trust. In conservative and conflict-affected areas, female health workers are often more readily accepted, allowing them to reach women and children who might otherwise be inaccessible to male counterparts. By taking on leadership roles in health initiatives, women challenge traditional gender norms, showcasing their capability in public health and community leadership. Additionally, the active involvement of women in vaccination drives contributes to improved health outcomes, particularly for children, thereby fostering community resilience and well-being. The success of these women underscores the importance of integrating gender-sensitive approaches in public health strategies, ensuring that women are not only beneficiaries but also leaders in health interventions.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/8/13/health-champions-local-women-lead-the-fight-against-polio-in-nigeria>

Cameroon's conflict is part of a bigger trend: negotiations are losing ground to military solutions

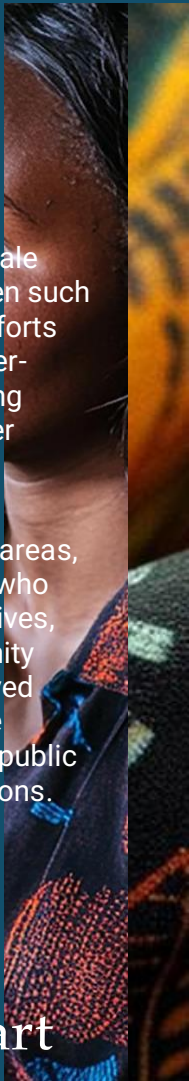
Cameroon's ongoing Anglophone Crisis, which began in 2016 with peaceful protests against marginalisation of English-speaking regions, has escalated into a protracted civil war. This conflict exemplifies a troubling trend in Central Africa, where diplomatic efforts are increasingly sidelined in favour of military responses. Despite international calls for dialogue, the Cameroonian government has largely resisted negotiations, opting instead for a heavy-handed military approach.

The intensification of military operations exacerbates the risks of gender-based violence, displacement, and loss of access to essential services for women and children. There has also been exclusion of women from peace processes.

Furthermore, protracted conflicts fuelled by military solutions can deepen societal divisions, making it more challenging to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation.

Overall, the situation in Cameroon underscores the urgent need to reinvigorate diplomatic initiatives and ensure that women are actively involved in peace negotiations to achieve a sustainable resolution to the conflict.

<https://theconversation.com/cameroons-conflict-is-part-of-a-bigger-trend-negotiations-are-losing-ground-to-military-solutions-261697>



Localization of UNSCR 1325 and Women, Peace and Security in Lagos State, Nigeria



The localization of the WPS agenda over the years has been led by the Global network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP). The Lagos State Localization Workshop on UNSCR 1325 with support from Global affairs Canada and implemented by the West African Network for Peacebuilding Nigeria (WANEP-Nigeria), held from 15–17 July 2025, brought together 46 stakeholders including government ministries, civil society, security agencies, traditional leaders, and international partners. The meeting deepened understanding of gender, human security, and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, while laying the foundation for developing a Lagos State Action Plan (SAP). Discussions highlighted the urgent need to integrate gender perspectives into state-level peacebuilding structures, address barriers to women's participation, and strengthen institutional accountability for WPS commitments.

Over three days, participants examined issues ranging from women's underrepresentation in governance and security, to the prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking, cultism, drug abuse, cyber-violence, and environmental hazards. Group work sessions identified gaps in existing interventions, recommended strategies such as women's political empowerment, community sensitization, and policy reforms, and mapped traditional, state, and religious structures relevant to peacebuilding. The workshop also underscored the importance of human security—centering dignity, livelihoods, and freedoms—over narrow state security approaches, while emphasizing the urgency for Lagos to institutionalize WPS frameworks as a model for other states.

The workshop concluded with the drafting of a Lagos State Action Matrix (2025–2029), structured around Nigeria's National Action Plan pillars of participation, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery. Proposed interventions included legal reforms on land grabbing and organ harvesting, increased women's representation in decision-making, youth peace ambassador programs, expanded shelters for survivors, and stronger monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems. Stakeholders committed to sustaining political will, inter-agency collaboration, and grassroots advocacy to ensure that Lagos becomes a pioneer in gender-responsive peace and security governance in Nigeria.

At the same time, the space for women leaders and local peacebuilders to organise and advocate is shrinking under siege conditions and insecurity.



US strikes deportation deals with Honduras and Uganda

The US has reached bilateral deportation agreements with Honduras and Uganda as part of its crackdown on illegal immigration, according to documents obtained by the BBC's US partner CBS. Uganda has agreed to take an unclear number of African and Asian migrants who had claimed asylum on the US-Mexico border, while Honduras will receive several hundred deported people from Spanish-speaking countries, CBS reports. The move is part of an attempt by Donald Trump's administration to get more countries to accept deported migrants who are not their own citizens.

Uganda's agreement comes at a time when the country is already hosting nearly two million refugees, mostly from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan. While Uganda's progressive refugee policy has been widely praised, it remains heavily underfunded, and services in refugee-hosting districts are stretched to breaking point. Bringing in deported migrants with no prior ties to Uganda risks overburdening already fragile systems, particularly as the agreement provides little clarity on the numbers involved, the legal status of deportees, or the resources that will accompany them. The deal also raises serious human rights and protection concerns, especially for women and girls. Unlike refugees who cross into Uganda

seeking safety, deported migrants are being placed in the country through political arrangements, undermining their agency and contravening principles of international law such as non-refoulement. In settlements where sexual and gender-based violence and resource scarcity are already pressing challenges, the arrival of deportees without adequate safeguards or support structures could deepen vulnerabilities, fuel exploitation, and increase tensions between host and displaced communities.

From a Women, Peace and Security perspective, this agreement undermines Uganda's commitments to protection, participation, and peacebuilding. Deported migrants have no say in decisions about their relocation, and local women's groups and communities are excluded from shaping the policy. This risks eroding trust, exacerbating inequality, and placing additional burdens on civil society to respond. A feminist response demands transparency on the terms of the agreement, gender-sensitive protections for deported women and children, and meaningful involvement of Ugandan women's organizations in planning and oversight. Without these measures, the deal threatens to compromise both Uganda's humanitarian reputation and its commitments under the WPS agenda.

[https://bbc.com/news/articles/cn02eezlykdo?
at_ptr_name=twitter&at_campaign=Social_Flow](https://bbc.com/news/articles/cn02eezlykdo?at_ptr_name=twitter&at_campaign=Social_Flow)

Conclusion

In this August edition of the WPS Bulletin, the threads that run through our stories are: the struggle for justice, the urgency of peace, and the courage of women who refuse to be silenced. From Sierra Leone's legal victory against FGM, to the cries of hunger and devastation in Sudan and Congo, to Namibia's bold call for reparations, the message is clear, our continent stands at a crossroads where feminist voices must not only be heard but must shape the path forward.

What we have witnessed this month is both a warning and a reminder. A warning that violence, famine, climate change, and militarism continue to exact the highest price on women and girls. But also a reminder that across Africa, women are leading from vaccination campaigns in Nigeria, to the persistent advocacy for inclusive governance. Their work is proof that transformation is not only possible, but already underway.

As we enter the last quarter of the year, let us carry the spirit of these stories into our own spaces of influence. May this Bulletin not be the end of the conversation, but a spark for deeper reflection, stronger solidarity, and bolder action. Together, we can transform grief into resistance, resistance into policy, and policy into justice. The struggle continues, but so too does our collective hope.

