

Message from the Editor



Dear Readers,

Conflict dynamics continue to evolve and remain fluid in contemporary times. So also, responses to these conflicts have failed to adapt to this changing nature. The lack of effective response has contributed to protracted conflicts that continue to impact the lives of populations, particularly women and girls. Even though the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is entering its third decade, the understanding and practice of peacebuilding remains securitized, with a primary focus on military and state-centred responses. Adopting a broader understanding of peace that include human security provides a more comprehensive framework for addressing the root causes of conflict and responding to its social, economic, political and environmental dimensions. Such an approach is more likely to produce effective, inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding outcomes

The WPS agenda continues to remind us that peace is not only defined by the absence of conflict, but by the presence of justice, inclusion, accountability, and the meaningful participation of all people in shaping their societies.

This edition of the REWiB WPS Bulletin reflects the interconnected challenges affecting peace and security across Africa and beyond. From the continued impacts of conflict and displacement in Sudan, Chad, and Nigeria, to the effects of climate change in the Lake Chad Basin, shrinking civic spaces and human rights concerns in Zimbabwe, xenophobic violence and displacement in South Africa, and women's rights challenges in Sierra Leone.

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Across these challenges, a common message emerges: sustainable peace requires inclusive approaches that recognise communities not only as those affected by crises, but as active contributors to solutions. Women continue to lead peacebuilding efforts at the local level, support communities during crises, and advocate for justice and accountability, yet barriers to their meaningful participation remain.

This month's stories highlight the complexity of today's peace and security landscape, and the importance of protecting human rights as a foundation for peace. Whether addressing violence, discrimination, harmful practices, or unequal access to justice, protecting dignity and ensuring accountability remain central to building peaceful and democratic societies.

As we continue to engage with developments shaping the WPS agenda, this Bulletin seeks to highlight both the challenges that persist and the leadership, resilience, and action that continue to drive progress towards more inclusive peace.

In Solidarity

Helen Kezie-Nwoha

Acronyms

AU	African Union
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HRD	Human Rights Defender
NAP	National Action Plan
RSF	Rapid Support Forces
SAF	Sudanese Armed Forces
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UWM	Uganda Women's Movement
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Chad's Border Closure Highlights the Regional Impact of Sudan's Conflict

The conflict in Sudan continues to have consequences beyond its borders, affecting regional stability, humanitarian conditions, and communities already facing the effects of prolonged insecurity. Chad's decision to close its border with Sudan following deadly clashes along the frontier highlights the growing challenges neighbouring countries face as the conflict continues to spread beyond Sudan's territory.

The closure followed clashes in the border area of Tine, where violence resulted in the deaths of Chadian soldiers and civilians. The decision was taken as a security measure to protect Chad's territory and prevent further escalation, reflecting the increasing pressure placed on countries neighbouring Sudan.

Since the outbreak of war in Sudan in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), millions of people have been displaced, with many seeking safety in neighbouring countries, including Chad. The continued violence has created a complex humanitarian situation, with communities facing displacement, limited access to basic services, and increased protection concerns.

The impact of the conflict extends beyond immediate security concerns. Women and girls affected by conflict and displacement often face heightened risks, including gender-based violence, economic insecurity, and barriers to accessing healthcare and protection services. At the same time, women continue to play critical roles in supporting families, strengthening communities, and responding to humanitarian needs despite being largely excluded from formal peace and security processes.

The situation along the Chad-Sudan border demonstrates the importance of ensuring that women's experiences and leadership are integrated into conflict prevention, response, and peacebuilding efforts. Women-led organisations and community networks remain essential actors in addressing the realities of conflict-affected populations and promoting resilience in times of crisis.

As Sudan's conflict continues to affect the wider region, responses must go beyond security measures and prioritise inclusive peacebuilding approaches. Meaningful participation of women in decision-making, mediation, and recovery efforts remains critical to building sustainable peace and addressing the root causes of conflict.

The ongoing crisis serves as a reminder that peace and security are interconnected across borders, and that lasting solutions require the voices and leadership of those most affected, including women and communities on the frontlines of conflict.



<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/23/chad-shuts-border-with-sudan-after-clashes-from-conflict-kills-five-troops>



Women, Peace and Security: Open Debate on Women's Participation in Peace Processes

For decades, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has emphasised a simple but transformative principle: peace is more sustainable when women are meaningfully involved in shaping it. Yet, despite global commitments and recognition of women's roles as peacebuilders, women continue to face barriers that limit their participation in formal peace negotiations and decision-making spaces.

The United Nations Security Council's June 2026 open debate on Women, Peace and Security placed renewed attention on the importance of women's full, equal, meaningful, and safe participation in peace processes. Held under the theme "Peace is decided with women: Emerging from conflict by enhancing their participation," the discussion highlighted the continued need to move beyond commitments and strengthen practical pathways for women's inclusion.

Women's participation in peace processes is not only a matter of representation; it is central to building legitimate and lasting peace. Across conflict and post-conflict settings, women bring experiences and perspectives that shape more inclusive approaches to security, recovery, and reconciliation. However, structural barriers including limited access to political power, inadequate resources, and insecurity continue to prevent many women from participating fully in peace and political processes.

The discussion also reflects a wider challenge within the implementation of the WPS agenda. While international frameworks have established the importance of women's participation, many peace processes continue to exclude women from negotiation tables where decisions about their communities and futures are made. This gap between recognition and action highlights the need for stronger accountability and investment in women-led peacebuilding efforts.

Across Africa and other conflict-affected regions, women's organisations have continued to demonstrate their role as key actors in preventing violence, supporting communities, and contributing to peace efforts. However, their work often takes place outside formal structures, with limited access to funding, protection, and decision-making spaces.

The WPS agenda challenges the idea that women are only victims of conflict. Instead, it recognises women as leaders, negotiators, mediators, and agents of change. Ensuring their meaningful participation requires creating environments where women can influence decisions before, during, and after conflicts.

As peace processes continue to evolve, the question is no longer whether women should be included, but whether global actors are willing to create the conditions that allow women to lead.



Sustainable peace requires more than women's presence at the table — it requires their voices to shape the decisions being made.

<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2026/06/women-peace-and-security-open-debate-on-womens-participation-in-peace-processes.php>

A new wave of xenophobia is sweeping through South Africa, with migrants murdered, homes destroyed and thousands displaced

A new wave of xenophobic violence in South Africa has raised renewed concerns about the safety of migrants, social cohesion, and the challenges facing communities affected by insecurity and displacement. Reports of African migrants being killed, homes and businesses destroyed, and thousands of people forced to flee their communities highlight the ongoing consequences of exclusion and violence within society.

The attacks come amid growing tensions linked to economic challenges, unemployment, and frustration over access to resources. However, migrants from across the African continent have increasingly become targets of blame, with harmful narratives contributing to discrimination, fear, and violence against communities that have long been part of South Africa's social and economic landscape.

For many affected families, the impact of xenophobic attacks goes beyond the immediate loss of property and livelihoods. Displacement creates additional vulnerabilities, particularly for women and children who may face increased risks during periods of insecurity. The loss of income, separation from support networks, and limited access to essential services can deepen the challenges faced by those forced to leave their homes.

The situation reflects the importance of understanding security through a broader lens. Violence and insecurity are not only experienced through armed conflict but also through discrimination, exclusion, and threats within communities. Women, especially those affected by displacement, often carry significant responsibilities in protecting families, rebuilding livelihoods, and maintaining community resilience during crises.

At the same time, women and community organisations continue to play important roles in promoting social cohesion, supporting affected populations, and advocating for peaceful responses to tensions. Their efforts demonstrate the importance of community-led approaches in addressing the root causes of violence and strengthening inclusive societies.

The xenophobia crisis also highlights the need to address the deeper challenges that fuel division. Sustainable peace requires responses that move beyond blaming vulnerable groups and instead focus on tackling inequality, promoting accountability, and creating spaces where diverse communities can coexist safely.



As South Africa continues to respond to these challenges, the protection of migrants and the inclusion of affected communities remain essential to building peaceful and resilient societies. The WPS agenda reminds us that lasting peace depends on ensuring that everyone, regardless of nationality or background, can live with dignity, security, and equal participation in society.

<https://english.elpais.com/international/2026-06-26/a-new-wave-of-xenophobia-is-sweeping-through-south-africa-with-migrants-murdered-homes-destroyed-and-thousands-displaced.html>

Women Leading the Way: Peacebuilding Lessons from Colombia, Lebanon and Malawi

Across different regions and conflict contexts, women continue to demonstrate that peacebuilding is not only shaped at negotiation tables but also built within communities. From supporting reconciliation efforts to strengthening local resilience, women peacebuilders are challenging traditional approaches to security and proving the importance of inclusive leadership in creating lasting peace.

In Colombia, Lebanon, and Malawi, women are leading initiatives that address the realities of conflict, inequality, and community recovery. Their experiences highlight a central message of the WPS agenda: women are not only affected by conflict but are also key actors in preventing violence, rebuilding communities, and shaping pathways toward peace.

In Colombia, women's participation has been central to efforts to sustain peace following decades of armed conflict. Women peacebuilders and community leaders have contributed to reconciliation, advocacy, and efforts to ensure that peace processes reflect the experiences of those most affected by violence. Their involvement

demonstrates how women's voices can strengthen peace agreements and support long-term recovery.

In Lebanon, women continue to play important roles in responding to political instability, humanitarian challenges, and social tensions. Through community initiatives and local leadership, women are helping to strengthen social cohesion and support communities navigating complex crises. Their work reflects the often-overlooked contributions of women who maintain peace at the grassroots level.

Meanwhile, in Malawi, women's leadership in peacebuilding highlights the importance of community-driven approaches to preventing conflict and strengthening resilience. Women leaders continue to support dialogue, inclusion, and peaceful community engagement, demonstrating that peacebuilding begins long before conflict escalates.

Despite these contributions, women peacebuilders around the world continue to face barriers, including limited access to resources, decision-making spaces, and formal peace processes. While women are frequently at the forefront of responding to crises, they remain underrepresented in many spaces where decisions about peace and security are made.

The experiences of women in Colombia, Lebanon, and Malawi reinforce the need to move beyond viewing women as participants in peace processes and recognise them as leaders shaping solutions. Supporting women's leadership requires investment, protection, and meaningful inclusion in every stage of peacebuilding.

As conflicts and crises continue to evolve, the lessons from women peacebuilders across different contexts remain clear: sustainable peace is built through inclusion, and women's leadership is essential to creating societies that are more peaceful, resilient, and just.

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/feature-story/2026/06/women-lead-peacebuilding-efforts-in-colombia-lebanon-and-malawi>

Shrinking Civic Space in Zimbabwe Threatening to Human Rights, Democracy and Inclusive Peace

The protection of human rights and the strength of democratic institutions remain central to building peaceful and inclusive societies. However, concerns around shrinking civic space, restrictions on fundamental freedoms, and growing pressure on civil society continue to raise questions about the state of democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe.

Recent developments highlighted by human rights organisations have drawn attention to challenges affecting freedom of expression, association, and political participation. Restrictions that limit the ability of citizens, activists, journalists, and civil society organisations to freely engage in public life undermine the principles of accountability and inclusive governance that are essential in a democratic society.

Human rights are not only legal protections; they are the foundation of peaceful and resilient societies. When individuals are prevented from expressing their views, organising peacefully, or participating meaningfully in decisions that affect their communities, democratic processes are weakened. Such restrictions create an environment where fear and exclusion can replace dialogue and accountability.

From a Women, Peace and Security perspective, the shrinking of civic space has particular implications for women's participation in peacebuilding, governance, and decision-making. Women human rights defenders, activists, and community leaders often rely on safe and open spaces to advocate for equality, justice, and the

protection of communities. When these spaces become restricted, women's ability to influence policies and contribute to peace processes is also affected.

Inclusive peace requires more than the absence of violence; it requires societies where people can participate freely, hold leaders accountable, and have their voices recognised. Democratic principles such as freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and equal participation are essential for preventing conflict and addressing grievances before they escalate.

Across Africa, women and civil society actors continue to demonstrate the importance of community engagement in strengthening democracy and promoting peace. Protecting their ability to operate safely is critical to advancing the WPS agenda and ensuring that peace efforts are shaped by diverse voices.

The situation in Zimbabwe serves as a reminder that human rights and democracy are interconnected with peace and security. Sustainable peace cannot be built where citizens are excluded from decision-making or where fundamental freedoms are restricted. Strengthening democratic institutions and protecting civic space remain essential steps towards creating societies that are inclusive, accountable, and peaceful.

<https://hrf.org/social-post/africa-zimbabwe-june-23-2026/>

Arrest of Dr. Miria Matembe Raises Renewed Concerns Over Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Uganda

The arrest of veteran politician, women's rights advocate, and human rights defender Dr. Miria Matembe has sparked widespread concern among women's rights organisations, legal professionals, and civil society in Uganda. The incident has reignited debate over the protection of fundamental rights, the shrinking civic space, and the increasing challenges faced by individuals who speak out on issues of governance and accountability.

According to reports, Dr. Matembe was arrested following a raid on her home and later charged with promoting sectarianism. Her arrest prompted strong reactions from the Uganda Women's Movement (UWM), which condemned what it described as continued harassment and intimidation of women leaders, political actors, and civil society members. The movement called on state authorities to respect the rule of law, uphold constitutional rights, and ensure that any allegations against citizens are handled through due process rather than intimidation or arbitrary action.

The Uganda Law Society also condemned the circumstances surrounding Dr. Matembe's arrest, arguing that the process raised serious concerns regarding constitutional safeguards, due process, and Uganda's obligations under regional and international human rights instruments. The Society called for the immediate withdrawal of the charges and an independent investigation into the circumstances of her arrest and detention.

Dr. Matembe has long been recognised as one of Uganda's most prominent advocates for women's rights, democratic governance, and accountability. Her arrest has therefore been viewed by many civil society actors not only as a legal matter concerning one individual but also as part of broader concerns about the treatment of human rights defenders, opposition voices, and citizens who exercise their right to freedom of expression and civic participation.

The protection of women human rights defenders is fundamental to building peaceful and democratic societies. Women who advocate for justice, accountability, and good governance play a critical role in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and strengthening democratic institutions. When they are subjected to intimidation, arbitrary arrest, or judicial processes perceived as targeting legitimate dissent, it can create fear among other women seeking to participate in public life and weaken efforts to advance inclusive governance.

Respect for the rule of law requires that all individuals are treated equally before the law and that state institutions operate transparently, independently, and in accordance with constitutional and international human rights standards. The protection of civic space—including the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association—is essential for democratic governance and for ensuring that citizens can engage in public affairs without fear of reprisals.

The concerns raised by the Uganda Women's Movement and the Uganda Law Society reflect broader questions about the state of civic freedoms in Uganda. Recent reports from national and international organisations have pointed to increasing pressure on activists, independent media, and civil society, highlighting the importance of safeguarding democratic institutions and protecting those who peacefully advocate for justice and accountability.



As Uganda continues to navigate its democratic and governance challenges, the protection of women human rights defenders remains essential to advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Ensuring that women can participate freely in public life without intimidation or harassment is not only a matter of individual rights but also a prerequisite for inclusive governance, sustainable peace, and respect for the rule of law.

<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/uganda-women-s-movement-demands-end-to-harassment-of-veteran-activist-miria-matembe-5510386>

https://ugandaradionetwork.net/story/uls-condemns-matembes-arrest-calls-for-charges-to-be-dropped#google_vignette

Climate Pressures and Peacebuilding Challenges in the Lake Chad Basin

The Lake Chad Basin continues to face interconnected challenges of climate change, insecurity, and humanitarian pressures, highlighting the growing relationship between environmental changes and peace and security. Communities across the region are experiencing the effects of changing weather patterns, resource pressures, and ongoing instability, creating complex challenges for livelihoods and social cohesion.

The Lake Chad region, which includes parts of Chad, Cameroon, Niger, and Nigeria, is home to millions of people who depend on farming, fishing, livestock, and other natural resource-based livelihoods. However, increasing climate pressures, including droughts, flooding, and unpredictable rainfall, are disrupting these livelihoods and placing additional strain on communities that are already affected by insecurity.

Climate change is not the sole cause of conflict in the region, but it can intensify existing vulnerabilities. Competition over access to land, water, and food resources can increase tensions between communities, while displacement caused by both insecurity and environmental pressures places additional demands on already fragile systems. These challenges demonstrate how climate-related risks can become peace and security concerns when communities lack adequate support and resources.

Climate-related insecurity has significant implications for women and girls. As environmental pressures affect food production, livelihoods, and access to resources, women often experience increased responsibilities within households and communities. Women are frequently at the forefront of adapting to crises, managing household needs, supporting vulnerable groups, and maintaining community resilience, yet their voices remain underrepresented in climate and security decision-making spaces.

Women's participation is essential in developing responses that address the realities faced by communities affected by climate change and conflict. Local women leaders, civil society actors, and community networks contribute to peacebuilding by strengthening cooperation, supporting livelihoods, and promoting solutions that reflect community needs.

The challenges facing the Lake Chad Basin show that peacebuilding must consider the broader factors that shape insecurity. Addressing conflict requires more than responding to violence; it requires investment in climate adaptation, sustainable livelihoods, inclusive governance, and community resilience.

As climate change continues to reshape security challenges across Africa, integrating women's leadership into climate and peacebuilding efforts will be critical. The future of sustainable peace depends on recognising that environmental security, human security, and inclusive decision-making are deeply connected.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/chad/climate-peace-and-security-fact-sheet-lake-chad-june-2026>

Seeking Justice Through Reparations: Kenya's Compensation of Protest Victims and the Importance of Accountability

The protection of human rights and accountability for violations are essential foundations of peaceful and democratic societies. In Kenya, the beginning of a compensation process for victims of protest-related human rights violations marks an important moment in addressing harm experienced by citizens during periods of public demonstrations and unrest.

The Panel of Experts on Compensation of Victims of Human Rights Violations has begun the first phase of a reparations programme, with 348 verified victims receiving a total of Ksh448.7 million. The compensation covers different categories of harm, including fatalities, severe and moderate injuries, sexual violence, and economic losses linked to protests and demonstrations between 2013 and 2025.

The process represents an effort to recognise the experiences of individuals and families affected by violence and violations during public demonstrations. Beyond financial compensation, reparations are an important part of restoring dignity, acknowledging harm, and strengthening trust between citizens and institutions.

Accountability and protection of human rights are closely connected to building inclusive and secure societies. Women and other vulnerable groups are often disproportionately affected during periods of political tension and insecurity, facing risks such as violence, economic disruption, and limited access to justice. Ensuring that justice processes are inclusive and responsive to different experiences is critical in addressing the full impact of human rights violations.

The right to peaceful participation, freedom of expression, and civic engagement are key elements of democratic societies. When citizens face violence or violations while exercising these rights, it weakens public trust and undermines the principles of accountability and good governance. Reparations processes can therefore play a role not only in supporting victims but also in strengthening democratic institutions.

Across Africa, demands for justice, accountability, and meaningful participation continue to shape conversations around peace and security. Communities are increasingly recognising that sustainable peace requires addressing grievances, protecting rights, and ensuring that those affected by violations have pathways to justice.

Kenya's compensation process highlights the importance of placing victims at the centre of recovery efforts. While reparations cannot undo the harm experienced, they represent a step towards recognition, accountability, and rebuilding trust — all of which are essential for creating societies where human rights are respected and peace is sustained.

<https://citizen.digital/article/348-protest-victims-to-receive-ksh4487m-in-first-compensation-phase-n385086>

Protecting Women's Rights: The Urgent Need to End Female Genital Mutilation in Sierra Leone

The continued debate around female genital mutilation (FGM) in Sierra Leone has renewed conversations about women's rights, protection from harmful practices, and the responsibility of leaders to uphold human rights. Recent comments by Sierra Leone's First Lady, Fatima Maada Bio, regarding the need for reliable data before condemning FGM have sparked concern among health professionals, survivors, activists, and human rights advocates.

FGM remains a deeply concerning human rights issue affecting women and girls across several communities. The practice is recognised internationally as a violation of the rights of women and girls, with serious physical, psychological, and social consequences.

In Sierra Leone, where FGM remains widely practised, advocates have continued to call for stronger legal protections and greater commitment to ending the practice. Concerns have been raised that public statements that appear to question the harms of FGM risk weakening years of advocacy efforts and undermining progress made by survivors, activists, and organisations working to protect girls and women.

Protecting women and girls from violence and harmful practices is central to building safe and inclusive societies. Violence against women is not only a human rights issue but also a peace and security concern, as it reflects broader inequalities and systems that limit women's autonomy, participation, and ability to fully exercise their rights.

The responsibility to address FGM extends beyond individual experiences and reflects the importance of leadership, accountability, and institutions that protect the dignity and safety of women and girls. Ending harmful practices requires meaningful engagement with communities, support for survivors, education, and policies that place women's rights at the centre of decision-making.

Across Africa, women's rights advocates and grassroots organisations continue to challenge harmful norms while working with communities to promote change. Their efforts demonstrate that ending practices that harm women and girls requires both protection and empowerment — ensuring that women and girls are recognised as rights holders and active participants in shaping their futures.

The ongoing discussions in Sierra Leone highlight the need for continued commitment to advancing gender equality and protecting human rights. Sustainable peace cannot be achieved where women and girls are denied bodily autonomy, safety, and dignity. Protecting their rights remains essential to building societies that are just, inclusive, and peaceful.

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2026/jun/17/sierra-leones-first-lady-refuses-to-condemn-fgm-without-reliable-data-on-harms>

Nigeria's Abduction Crisis: When Some Victims Receive Urgent Attention While Others Remain Forgotten

The continued abduction of students in Nigeria highlights a growing security and human rights crisis, but it also raises difficult questions about whose suffering receives attention and whose voices remain unheard. The attack on a secondary school in Borno State, where gunmen abducted students during examinations, is the latest reminder of the insecurity facing communities affected by armed violence.

The attack on Lassa Day Secondary School in northeastern Nigeria occurred as students were sitting for examinations, with authorities confirming that some victims were rescued while efforts continued to account for those still missing. The incident adds to years of insecurity in the region, where schools and communities have repeatedly been targeted by armed groups.

While high-profile abductions often attract national and international attention, many other victims of violence experience prolonged periods of uncertainty with limited visibility or response. Communities affected by repeated kidnappings, especially in rural and conflict-affected areas, continue to face the reality that not all victims receive the same level of urgency, resources, or public attention.

This disparity raises broader concerns about equality, protection, and the value placed on every life affected by insecurity. Every abduction represents a violation of human rights — disrupting education, separating families, creating trauma, and exposing victims to further risks. The protection of citizens should not depend on the political significance of an area, the public profile of victims, or the level of media attention an incident receives.

The impact of abductions extends beyond immediate security concerns. Women and girls in affected communities often experience increased vulnerabilities during periods of insecurity, including fear of violence, displacement, economic hardship, and the burden of supporting families while loved ones remain missing. At the same time, women-led community networks frequently play critical roles in supporting survivors, demanding accountability, and advocating for safer communities.

The targeting of schools also threatens the right to education and reinforces cycles of insecurity. When children cannot access education safely, communities lose opportunities for development, and young people are denied pathways that contribute to long-term peace and stability. Protecting education spaces is therefore not only a security responsibility but also a commitment to human rights.

Nigeria's ongoing abduction crisis demonstrates the need for responses that recognise all victims equally and address insecurity at its roots. Sustainable peace requires more than responding to cases that gain public attention; it requires systems that protect every community, uphold every person's rights, and ensure that no victim is forgotten.

As governments and institutions respond to insecurity, the measure of progress must be whether all people — regardless of location, status, or visibility — are protected and able to live with dignity and safety.

<https://abcnews.com/International/wireStory/gunmen-storm-nigerian-school-kidnap-students-exams-police-134321617>

Conclusion

The stories highlighted in this edition of the REWiB WPS Bulletin demonstrate that peace and security are shaped by a wide range of interconnected challenges. From armed conflict and displacement to climate pressures, human rights violations, shrinking civic spaces, and violence against vulnerable communities, the realities facing societies today require responses that go beyond traditional understandings of security.

Across these contexts, one message remains clear: peace cannot be sustainable without inclusion, accountability, and respect for human rights. Communities affected by conflict and insecurity are not simply recipients of protection; they are active contributors to peacebuilding, resilience, and recovery. Women, in particular, continue to demonstrate leadership in preventing violence, supporting communities, advocating for justice, and shaping solutions despite persistent barriers to their participation.

The stories in this bulletin also highlight the importance of recognising the unequal ways in which crises affect different groups. Women and girls often experience heightened risks during conflict, displacement, and instability, while also carrying significant responsibilities in sustaining families and communities. Ensuring their protection and meaningful participation is not only a commitment under the WPS agenda but a necessary step towards addressing the root causes of insecurity.

At the same time, accountability remains central to building trust and strengthening societies. Whether addressing violations of human rights, restrictions on civic freedoms, harmful practices, or failures to protect communities from violence, justice and transparency are essential foundations for lasting peace.

As Africa and the global community continue to navigate complex peace and security challenges, advancing the WPS agenda requires more than commitments on paper. It requires investment in women's leadership, protection of human rights, support for grassroots peacebuilders, and inclusive decision-making processes that recognise the voices of those most affected.

Sustainable peace is built when every community has the opportunity to participate, every individual's rights are protected, and every effort towards peace is rooted in dignity, equality, and justice.

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