



Women On Action

Issue 01

January 2026



“My income depends on the products I make and sell. Thank God, I feel inner peace and stability because I can rely on myself”
A Syrian woman from Raqqa, 2025

Women, Peace and Security Newsletter

Marking 25 Years

of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

(WPS)

Semi-annual Publication

A Peacebuilder's Diary

Fatima Faris's Story: The Empowering Smile That Changed My Path

In the winter of 2014, I was standing at a bus stop in the Douila'a area of Damascus, watching the rain as I waited. A young woman with Down syndrome stood beside me. She smiled, a smile that filled my heart with warmth and tenderness

When we boarded the bus, no one chose to sit next to her. I moved and took the empty seat by her side

As the bus moved through the city, she laughed and looked at me, trying to communicate. Her words were not clear, but her heart spoke more clearly than any language. In that moment, I asked myself: How can I help her? I had no answer. At the time, I knew nothing about Down syndrome

Time passed. I graduated and moved on with my life, but I never forgot her innocent face. Later, I began volunteering with an association for persons with disabilities. There, I started learning about speech therapy and developmental disorders, including autism, Down syndrome, learning difficulties, and speech impairments. With every passing day, my passion for training and working with children and young people with disabilities grew stronger

That smile on that winter day was not a passing moment. It was a turning point, the beginning of a new path that would shape my professional life and fill my heart with a profound humanitarian purpose: a belief that empowering women and ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities are essential foundations for building sustainable social peace

As I immersed myself in this field, I would see her face in every session, as if she were gently reminding me, "I am the beginning." With every child's smile, and with every small step they made in speaking or learning, I felt myself moving closer to the answer I had once searched for on that bus

One day, the mother of a young girl with Down syndrome asked me a question:

"What is next? What will happen to them?"

That question became a turning point. I decided to step forward and lead. I tried teaching candle-making, but working with fire and gas proved too dangerous, and the experiment had to stop. Still, the dream did not

Years passed. I moved between training sessions and youth programmes, learning from them as much as, if not more than, I taught them



When I moved to Homs, I started again, but this time with greater motivation and a strong desire to create something special for them. On the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, in December 2023, my project was launched:

Down Syndrome Cookies

A small bakery in Homs became the starting point. There, young men and women experienced their first day of work, kneading dough by hand, shaping cookies, baking them, and carefully placing them into boxes. The rules were simple: a safe space where they could take part fully in the production process

Their joy that day was indescribable, vast and boundless, as if they were telling the world: We are capable. We can produce. We deserve to be active partners in rebuilding our society

After the journey with cookies and muffins, I felt ready to open a new door. This time, I chose chocolate

My new project, Coca Joy, expands beyond Down syndrome to include deaf youth, reaffirming a core principle of inclusion: leaving no one behind in community recovery efforts. Because dreams and hope know no boundaries

Coca Joy is not just about chocolate. It is a message, one that says: We are capable of creating, sharing, and belonging fully to life. Through this journey, I have learned that dreams do not fade and paths do not end. Whenever I stumbled, I found their hands reaching for mine, gently saying: It is okay. We are with you

A Peacebuilder's Diary

The Story of Nurse Dareen: A Bandage of Peace in a Time of Wounds

In a remote rural village, scarred by armed conflict and divided by fear and doubt, Dareen works as a nurse. In such harsh times, **her profession became a daily message of peace**

Dareen treated the wounded from her village and from beyond it, without asking their name, background, or stance. She chose to see only the human being. She chose to be a bandage, not a knife, in a time filled with wounds. Dareen says:

"I reassured people despite my own fear, children, women, elderly men. I told them: "It is just a cloud, and it will pass"

At the height of the tension, when people were afraid even to leave their homes, Dareen went every morning to the medical point. She carried no weapon and had no guarantees of safety. She had only a first-aid kit and a smile that faced fear with quiet defiance.

Dareen adds:

"We countered rumours with kind words. When they saw me standing there, they believed there was hope"

As the days passed, fear began to ease, not because of an agreement or a decision, but because someone stood in the middle every day, healing instead of taking sides, listening instead of judging.

Today, after the storm has passed, Dareen believes that peace begins in the heart. **It is accepting the other, seeing them as a human being living beside you without bloodshed or hatred. That is true peace**

She concludes her story with a quiet smile, carrying traces of both pain and hope.

"I do not want to speak about theories. This is my story, a reality I lived. I hope my voice reaches others, because Syrians are good people. We all suffered in similar ways, and we need to believe in peace again"

Messages for the Mind and Soul

**"A smile can save a weary day.
You may not be able to change events,
but you can change the feelings around them.
A smile offered to a frightened child, a tired colleague,
or even to yourself in the mirror.
It is a silent message that says:
There is still space in this world
for tranquillity and peace."**

Reham Al-Lairi

Words from Women Who Made Peace

“A woman is not a victim.
A woman is a voice of resistance,
a voice that confronts and breaks the silence.
In every struggle, there has been a woman
fighting for freedom, dignity, and true peace”

A Syrian woman from Homs, 2025

“When we plant wheat in burned land,
we declare that life is stronger than war”

A Syrian woman from Raqqa, 2025

“Peace is not weakness.
Peace is the strength with which
we choose not to harm.
We choose to live and to let others live,
without violence and without hatred,
but with love and respect”

A Syrian woman from Lattakia, 2025

My Home Emanates Peace

The Story of Ramia Diab

Once, my home was, and still is, a warm and safe nest
 Its walls echoed the spiritual music of peace we seek in the small
 details of our lives
 Then time played a cruel game. My husband was suddenly taken
 from our home for nine years
 Darkness replaced the light, and cold crept into the corners, as if
 winter had arrived early
 With his absence. I became both man and woman, mother and
 father
 A book through which all four seasons rushed past in a single
 minute
 All the time, I felt like an empty vessel, a colourless painting
 I was unable to fill my home with a sense of security or even a
 whisper of peace
 I struggled as if facing a mountain with nothing but a small
 pickaxe
 I gathered time piece by piece to give my children the moments
 of calm they needed
 We were all searching for peace, trapped in a cycle only time
 could break
 Then I rose again



I asked myself: why not let them learn music, the food of the
 soul?
 Why not turn their childish scribbles into paintings?
 Why not play and run, letting time run with us toward wider
 doors?
 My daughter and I learned to play the piano when she was five.
 We drew together and learned ballet
 She became a butterfly, dancing with her smile and singing with
 her joy



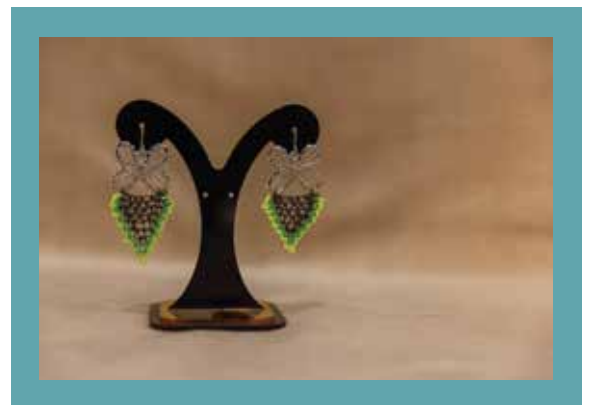
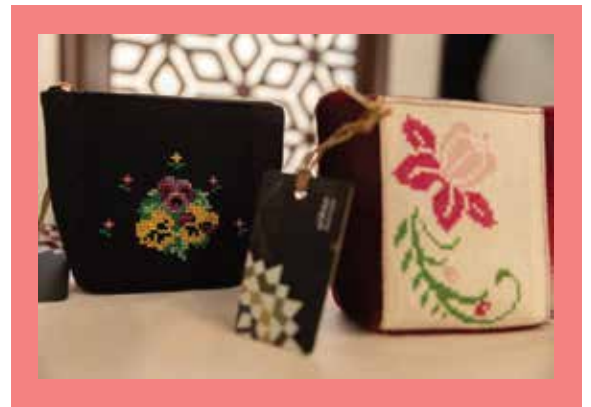
Fly and soar, O dove

My home is radiating peace again:
 with its paintings
 with the strings of its musical instruments,
 with its childish games.
 As if the sun had risen once again,
 gifting warmth to that house
 carried in the arms of a woman
 who knows neither weakness nor defeat.
 Today, my home is filled with my children's
 weapons:
 their drawings, their colours, their songs.
 Filled with love...
 and filled with peace.

Intangible Heritage and Peace

A Story of Creative Women: What Unites Us is Much Deeper than What Divides Us

We are creative women, Mobdia'at— Arabic for “Creators”—united above all by our heritage.
We come together from every neighbourhood of Aleppo, carrying with us our memories, our stories, and hands that have learned how to weave life despite everything that has passed
We transform threads of memory into products that express our shared identity
This identity is not a single colour, but a living mosaic
Its beauty grows as we come together in diversity, without exclusion
With every piece we create, we send a message of hope to a woman's heart
In every home it reaches, we plant a small seed of peace
We believe that heritage is not only what we preserve from the past,
It is what we revive today to protect our relationship with one another and with our place.
We believe that women are not only bearers of heritage,
but also, teachers of peace and builders of its bridges
Through working together, we rebuild trust and prove that what unites us runs far deeper than what divides us



A Day in the Life of a Peacebuilder

Diary: We Will Bring Back the Warmth of the City's Voice

“Every morning, I enter the classroom and see a familiar fear in the children’s eyes. I begin the lesson with a story about hope. Together, we draw a sun on the board, and by the end of the day, they leave with a smile. This is the peace I create, day after day”

A Teacher’s Diary, Aisha

“I was the first to take the initiative to bring together women from different backgrounds in small dialogue sessions. My only goal was to restore trust between neighbours separated by war. In my modest home, I would light a candle and say: We are the ones who will bring back the warmth of the city’s voice, not bullets”

A Civil Activist’s Diary, Ruba

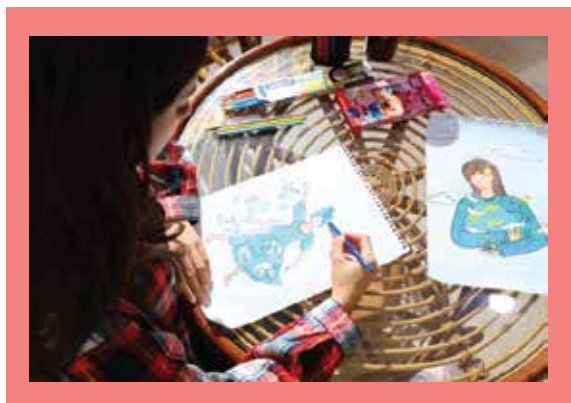
“I was their voice. I carried their message to international forums. I attended conferences in Geneva and Amman, speaking on behalf of Syrian women who could not travel or raise their voices. Because peace is not an agreement between leaders, but a promise between mothers that they will never lose their children again”

A Civil Activist’s Diary, Lamia

Art for Peace

The Story of Rand Muhammad: Peace as a Way of Life

In our culture, peace is not the opposite of war, but a way of life. We say no to a peace that keeps us on our knees. No to a peace that keeps us in chains. No to a false peace that shatters against the values and contributions of our people



Human Experiences

The Story of Ghazwa Marei Al-Juhani: Reconciliation and the Absence of Women's Voices

While working with one of the local reconciliation committees, I came to realize that effective participation is not a luxury, but a fundamental condition for building genuine peace that truly touches people's lives

The absence of women's voices was not a minor detail. It led to the neglect of critical issues, including securing the return of displaced families and ensuring the safety of women within their own communities

This absence made it clear to me that gender-based violence, as well as the lack of basic services, cannot be addressed through top-down decisions or partial solutions. They require the presence of women as partners in decision-making, not merely as subjects for discussion

Here lies the essence of the Women, Peace and Security agenda: **peace that does not protect and include women is not sustainable peace. The challenge, however, was not easy**

Convincing local councils of the importance of the women's perspective required continuous fieldwork, patient dialogue, and, above all, evidence and data demonstrating how women's participation directly affects economic stability, community security, and the rebuilding of trust

My constant source of hope was the women themselves

Their resilience, ingenuity, and ability to transform pain into practical solutions became a flame that pushed me to persevere. They proved that peace is not born behind closed doors alone, but in the field, when voices long overlooked are finally heard





Your Safety First

Digital Safety: Because Violence is Not Always Visible

At a time when much of our lives has moved into the digital space, safety is no longer limited to the body or to locations. Words, images, and messages can be tools for connection, or tools for harm.

The 16 Days of Activism remind us that gender-based violence also exists online, and that protecting women means protecting their digital presence. These steps may be simple, but they are effective.

1. Protect your accounts
2. Use strong, long passwords that include numbers and symbols
3. Do not use the same password for more than one account
4. Enable two-factor authentication whenever possible
5. Be mindful of what you share online
6. Do not post personal information (address, daily routine, location)
7. Think carefully before sharing photos especially personal ones
8. Remember that what is posted online may never be fully deleted
9. Stay alert to suspicious links and messages
10. Do not open unknown links
11. Do not download or open files from untrusted sources
12. Be cautious of messages designed to create fear or urgency
13. Do not stay silent about online harassment
14. Blocking abusive accounts is not a sign of weakness
15. Reporting abuse is a right
16. Keep evidence (screenshots) for protection



United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, adopted unanimously on 31 October 2000, urges the Security Council, the Secretary-General, Member States, and all other parties to take concrete measures to advance women's participation in decision-making and peace processes. It calls for the integration of gender perspectives in training and peacekeeping, the protection of women, and the mainstreaming of gender across all United Nations reporting systems and programme implementation mechanisms

[..... **The adoption of Resolution 1325 is widely regarded as a landmark in advancing the women, peace and security agenda.** It is the first formal and legally binding Security Council resolution to call on parties to conflict to respect women's rights and to support their meaningful participation in peace negotiations, post-conflict recovery, and development processes

[..... **The resolution calls for:**

- Increased participation of women at all levels of decision-making, including in conflict prevention and resolution and peace processes
- Improve gender training and capacity for peacekeeping personnel
- Addressing gender dimensions in peacebuilding and disarmament processes
- Respect for the rights of civilians, including refugees and internally displaced persons, with specific attention to women's needs
- Protection of women from violence, sexual violence, and all forms of discrimination
- An end to impunity for war crimes committed against women.....]

