

The Gendered Nature of PVE

Rubina Abu Zeinab*

The masculine image of violent extremism had a clear impact on the mental model of policymakers and researchers which have been often slanted toward men. It is until recently that this conviction started to change with evidence overwhelmingly proving that prioritizing women's inclusion increases the likelihood of peace; especially when women are involved in decision-making.

There is a plenty of research on the role that gender inequality plays in the proliferation of violent extremism which confirms its nature as a highly gendered issue: it is highly sensitive to the propensity of gender inequality in a given society. The inclusive security report on 2015 observed that «Fourteen out of the seventeen countries at the bottom of the OECD's index for gender discrimination also experienced conflict in the last two decades.»

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSC 1325) has been a major milestone in mainstreaming gender in peace and stability; and resolution 2242 which recognizes the need to engage with women on CVE/PVE and urges Member States and the UN «to ensure the participation and leadership of women and women's

organizations in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism.» Moreover, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the women, peace and security agenda have recognized the importance of prevention and the need for collective commitment to it. This approach was echoed by the United Nations Secretary General's Plan of Action for PVE which dedicated a specific pillar for women empowerment and called on all member states to ensure that efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism do not impact adversely on women's rights.

In Lebanon, the National Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism, which was endorsed by the Council of Ministers early 2018, started from a clear understanding to the gendered nature of violent extremism. In that sense the strategy dedicated one of its pillars to «gender equality and the empowerment of women». The pillar covers four areas of activities: a) women's awareness of their constitutional and legal rights and of the risks of violent extremism at the individual and family levels; b) legislative reform to achieve justice and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women; c) women's participation in social, cultural and development

activities; and d) women's participation in decision-making and policy-making processes.

The post-strategy phase is based on a «whole-of-society» approach to the development of an executive action plan. Women experts, representatives of entities and activists have been key stakeholders in the consultation process while gender sensitivity has been mainstreamed in all the discussions in order to be recognized in the monitoring and evaluation system.

The role of women, and the question of gender at large, have been rooted in the history of the socio-political thinking. Plato's 'Republic' stated clearly that in the 'just city' humans should not be defined by the material properties of their bodies but rather by their cognitive function. In that sense, the twenty first century shall correct course and ensure that the whole of humanity is equally empowered and involved.

* National Coordinator for Preventing Violent Extremism

Women's Engagement in Conflict Resolution Essential for Sustainable Peace

Nadya Khalife*

After the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1991 women were excluded from decision-making processes related to reconciliation, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction. Women did not take part in the Ta'if Accords that brought the civil war to a halt in 1991 or subsequent national dialogues. In 2010, the National Dialogue Committee, set up by then President Michel Suleiman, included 19 male representatives from the country's major political parties, and no women participated in the sessions of the national dialogue.

Today, Lebanon continues to face internal and external insecurities, economic instability and political turmoil contributing to the country's increased volatility. In an effort to promote women's roles in conflict resolution and prevention, UN Women recently formed two local women's mediation networks in Abbassiyeh and Tyre in South Lebanon that aim to promote women's leadership in decision-making processes to more effectively engage women to resolve community-level conflicts. Two additional mediators' networks will soon be established in Ain El Helweh and Shatila to ensure that women's roles in conflict resolution are also amplified within Palestinian

communities.

One of the participants from Tyre, Hanan Saleh, a university professor, says «peace is necessary for the renewal of society and its development and we, in Lebanon, are in need of internal peace before external peace. These trainings contribute to a culture of increased dialogue for more effective conflict resolution.» She further notes «to decrease tensions, [we need] to concentrate more on our collective energies and benefit from our diversity and different points of views so that our diverse thoughts are seen as richness [for our communities] and not as reasons for conflict.»

Women's mediation networks respond to the priorities set forth in Lebanon's first National Action Plan (NAP) on UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women's meaningful participation in peace and security issues. The NAP 1325 is pending endorsement by the Council of Ministers.

*Women's rights expert and researcher in the Middle East and North Africa region. Women, Peace and Security Specialist at UN Women Lebanon

