



Meeting Note: 1325 Anniversary Year – Strategy Meeting of the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediators Networks

“Indispensable architects of lasting peace”

Executive Summary

The **Global Alliance (GA) of Regional Women Mediator Networks** convened a strategy meeting in Brussels on 25-27 March 2025 to develop priorities and a work plan for the 25th anniversary year of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The meeting highlighted the urgent need and potential ways to enhance women’s participation in peace processes.

In a changing peace and security context, marked by increased conflicts, pushback on women’s rights and a weakening of multilateral systems, the GA, a collective of around 300 women mediators, engaged in focused internal and external discussions that included exchanges with EU officials, Member States, and civil society. These dialogues explored ways to strengthen support and recognition for women mediator networks, amplify their visibility, and foster stronger collaboration.

Looking ahead, the GA identified concrete actions to promote the visibility of regional women mediator networks in the year 2025: build new and reinforce existing partnerships, secure essential funding, and ensure women’s expertise plays a central role in shaping effective peace and security strategies. The meeting underscored the importance of addressing barriers to women’s participation and promoting gender-responsive approaches in peace processes.



Introduction

As we are entering the 25th anniversary year of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), celebrations of this important milestone are overshadowed by the lack of overall progress on women’s full, equal, and meaningful participation in peace processes as well as backlashes against women’s rights in several countries.

A growing body of research shows that when women participate in peace processes, the agreement is more durable and better implemented¹. Accordingly, action is needed to leverage the participation of women in peace processes as mediators and negotiators in a consistent, adequate manner – also via partnerships. The launch of the UN Common Pledge for Women’s Full, Equal and Meaningful Participation in Peace Processes in 2024, recently signed also by the European Union, incentivises an important commitment in this direction.

Against this backdrop, on 25-27 March 2025, members of the Global Alliance (GA) of Regional Women Mediator Networks² convened in Brussels for a “1325 Anniversary Year – Strategy Meeting”. The meeting was conceptualised and implemented with support of the European External Action Service - PCM.2 Peace Mediation Support Team, in close collaboration with Conciliation Resources, currently supporting the Women Mediators across the Commonwealth.

The main objectives of the meeting were:

- Develop **priorities and a work plan** of the GA for the **25th anniversary year of UNSCR 1325**;
- Exchange with EU officials and EU Members States on:
 - **Experiences, good practices and lessons** of women mediators **in different conflict resolution settings** and **approaches to multi-track mediation** challenges;
 - Roles of women mediators and **the approaches of EU Institutions and Member States** towards the regional networks;
 - **Opportunities for collaboration** and deepened engagement of women mediators in **EU-supported peace mediation actions**, in strategic discussions with the EU on peace and security-relevant key aspects, capacity building of partners et al.

¹ Council on Foreign Relations: <https://www.cfr.org/womens-participation-in-peace-processes/> (accessed on 8 April 2025).

² The GA is a collective of six Regional Women Mediator Networks: The Arab Women Mediators Network (AWMN), FemWise-Africa, The Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN), The Women Mediators Across the Commonwealth (WMC), The Nordic Women Mediators (NWM), and Southeast Asian Women Peace Mediators (SEAWPM)

The meeting also built on an EEAS-commissioned study (2023) on Regional Women Mediator Networks and the GA³, which, on the one hand, carved out the existing potential of these networks and the engagement of their members in peace processes and in advisory spaces, and, on the other hand, the main barriers they face to fully leverage their expertise.

In internal sessions, the participants – 12 highly-experienced women mediators from different world regions – devised a strategy and a work plan for the year 2025, which notably reflected the need for more visibility and sharing examples of peace mediation engagements.

In exchanges with EU officials and EU Member States, the mutual interest in leveraging the role of women mediators was underlined. In addition to sharing examples of the contextual engagements, the women mediators highlighted thematic issues and the variety of actors they engage with on different mediation track levels. Suggestions for more in-depth discussions and collaboration on peace mediation as well as security issues and actors were made. The meeting concluded with a reiteration of continued exchanges with women mediators as experts with an evident added value for current peace and security interests of the EU.

Presenting the Role and Achievements of the Global Alliance (GA) of Regional Women Mediators Networks

The [Global Alliance \(GA\) of Regional Women Mediator Networks](#) was established in 2018 to demand policy and decision-makers to implement UNSCR 1325 (and ensuing UNSCRs) and to create meaningful spaces for women to influence global peace and security. As a collective of approximately 800 women mediators from across the globe, the GA can provide unique expertise and insights in their respective contexts. In addition, the GA facilitates sharing experiences and mentorship to young women and thereby an opportunity to connect the WPS and the Youth, Peace and Security agendas.

In past years, the GA highlighted and showcased the work of women mediators and has gained increasing attention of international organisations, countries with mediation as part of their foreign policies, as well as the wider mediation community of practice. This has also led to interest of new women mediator networks to join the GA, i.e., the Ibero-American Women Mediator Network and the Indo-Pacific Women Mediator Network.

The six member networks of the GA and their recent engagements are:

[The Arab Women Mediators Network \(AWMN\)](#) was established in 2020 by the League of Arab States (LAS) in partnership with UN Women regional office for Arab States aiming to implement the WPS agenda and promote women's active engagement in inclusive peace efforts. Nominated by LAS countries' Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the AWMN currently has 18 members. The network serves as a mechanism to promote women's equal representation in decision-making positions and negotiation, mediation, and conflict resolution processes. It

³ *Regional Women Mediator Networks: State of Play & Support Options*, a publication funded by the European Union (FWC EEAS/2020/OP/0068) and commissioned by EEAS PCM.2 Mediation Support Team.

also enables women with leadership potential to enhance their mediation capacity, preparing them to sit at negotiation tables and share their experiences. In 2022, the LAS council adopted and approved the strategy and action plan of the AWMN at Foreign Affairs Ministerial level. Currently, LAS and UN Women work on a pilot module aiming to provide guidance for the Arab countries in establishing their national women mediation networks. It intends to be flexible and adaptable in accordance with the specificity of each country. The module has been submitted to LAS Ministerial Council in April 2025 for adoption.

[FemWise-Africa](#) was established by the African Union (AU) Heads of State in July 2017 to advance the active and meaningful participation of women in preventive diplomacy, mediation, dialogue, and peace processes. It currently has 48 members in its second cohort at continental level. Since its operationalisation in 2018, the network has seen an improvement in gaining political will through annual briefings to the AU Peace and Security Council and continues to develop capacity building and training. Recently, FemWise started a decentralisation process aimed at establishing regional and national chapters to increase the number of actively engaged women mediators, promote their involvement in regional and national peace efforts, and leverage the comparative advantage of women mediators to intervene early in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and peace efforts. Three regional networks have been established by ECOWAS, ECCAS, and SADC while at the national level, four national chapters have been established in Uganda, Malawi, Ethiopia, and South Sudan. Additionally, FemWise will also have a high-level group of champions, comprising high-level African women, such as former Heads of State or Vice Presidents, former ministers, and former ambassadors, to champion the work of the network at the highest levels of influence.

[The Mediterranean Women Mediators Network \(MWMN\)](#) was established in 2017 by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with IAI (Istituto Affari Internazionali) and Women In International Security (WIIS) Italy. It gathers around 100 women mediators with diverse expertise from the four shores of the enlarged Mediterranean, including EU members states, candidate countries, and countries from the Southern Neighbourhood. It aims to strengthening the role of women as agents of peace and security, acting as a bridge between different spaces and actors. By leveraging its members' work, for instance, the facilitation of behind closed doors discussions in crisis situations, such as in Syria. Similarly, in Libya, Cyprus, and Lebanon, they have tabled and acted upon topics such as the inclusion of women in peace processes or the demobilisation and deradicalisation of ex-combatants. Further, the network has given visibility to efforts led by women at community level, like those promoted in Turkey in response to the Syrian refugee crisis or in Lebanon for reconciliation. Network members have also designed and executed programs for accompanying the post-conflict recovery in the Balkans, particularly in Kosovo, with reconciliation processes and depolarisation of public narratives. The MWMN is also engaged in mentorship and exchanges with other networks, including a group of young Afghan women and Ukrainian women.

[The Women Mediators Across the Commonwealth \(WMC\)](#) was established by the United Kingdom in 2018, accredited by the Commonwealth in 2022, and currently has 37 members. Its work includes global advocacy, peer learning and mentorship, capacity building, addressing barriers to women mediators, and facilitating the deployment of members. For example, after the coup in Niger and in the lead-up to Niger's strategic national consultative conference, the

WMC played a key role in empowering local women mediators. Through targeted trainings, on-the-ground accompaniment, and dialogue sessions with key stakeholders, the WMC contributed to fostering an environment of trust and inclusion. The WMC delegation travelled to Niger, providing direct support and attending the national cohesion conference as observers, continuing to back women leaders throughout the peacebuilding process. It has also connected women mediators from Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Northern Ireland, and Haiti around the common issue of divided communities on a shared island.

[The Nordic Women Mediators \(NWM\)](#) was established in 2015 by five Nordic Foreign Ministers and its membership currently includes over a hundred mediation and crisis management professionals. The NWM prioritizes the exchange of analysis, contacts, and knowledge on timely issues and specific country contexts relevant to mediation and peacebuilding. A fitting example is the partnership between the Nordic Women Mediators and Ukrainian Community of Dialogue Practitioners, which strengthened Ukrainian dialogue practitioners' policy advocacy through mutual expertise exchange and strategic connections with Nordic-Baltic policymakers.

[Southeast Asian Women Peace Mediators \(SEAWPM\)](#) was established in 2020 by the former Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi and currently has a membership of eight highly experienced women who actively contribute to peace and stability in Asia and beyond (contexts include Myanmar, Afghanistan, Deep South Thailand, Southern Cameroons (Ambazonia), Israel-Palestine, and Timor Leste). SEAWPM plays a critical role in addressing the Myanmar crisis by providing nuanced insights and analyses to special envoys (including from the EU), regional diplomatic leaders, and relevant ASEAN mechanisms, as well as by convening a Women Leaders Forum on Myanmar in Kuala Lumpur in February 2025. Their approach for 2025 includes continuing high-level briefings, creating safe dialogue spaces, and supporting the Rohingya community's alliance-building efforts.

Women Mediators in a Changing Peace and Security Context

The current global context is marked by an increase in violent conflicts, polarisation, new threats, and a change of conduct of conflict actors. Violence against women and children is on the rise, and the weakening of the UN and multilateral systems has led to more informal and local/community level conflict resolution efforts, further complicating the work of women mediators. The gains, which were made based on the WPS agenda, are being threatened by a global pushback on women's rights, and a widespread shift towards mainly militarised and defence-focussed approaches to crisis management and conflict resolution. Additionally, funding for (inclusive) peacebuilding is being decreased, with the risk of weakening peace mediation as a strategic foreign policy tool.

Finally, the current weakening of the UN and the global multilateral system affects global normative frameworks and leads to the erosion of value-based foreign policies, such as inclusive peacebuilding and WPS, making the work of women mediators more difficult.

The 25th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 presents a critical opportunity to reaffirm the commitment to women's meaningful participation in peace processes. By implementing UNSCR 1325, the UN Common Pledge's objectives, and by engaging the GA and the members of regional women mediator networks, the international community can harness the full potential of women mediators, enhance the effectiveness of peace efforts, and build more sustainable and inclusive peace.

GA Priorities in the UNSCR 1325 Anniversary Year:

While the environment will continue to be challenging for the work of women mediators, the GA and its members identified concrete steps to advance its mission in the UNSCR 1325 anniversary year. These include:

- Affirm allyships and broaden networks:
 - Maintain and reinforce relations with UN regional offices, EU Institutions, EU Member States, and other countries that have supported the networks in the past;
 - Build relations with a diverse range of mediation actors, including those playing increasingly prominent roles;
 - Forge new relationships (bilateral and multilateral) with regional organisations;
 - Engage UNDP/PA on the Peacebuilding Architecture;
- Increase visibility:
 - Share concrete experiences of members of the networks;
 - Participation in and organisation of panel discussions and side events at different fora (e.g., Doha Mediation Forum, EU Community of Practice on Peace Mediation, MED-dialogue in Rome, National Dialogue Conference Finland, AU event in Namibia for 25th anniversary, AU Annual High-Level retreat, Oslo Forum, Crans Montana Forum, etc.);
 - Explore possibilities to join the UN Common Pledge for Women's Full, Equal and Meaningful Participation in Peace Processes;
 - Publishing op-eds in diverse media outlets;
 - Drive a social media campaign in the run-up to the 1325 anniversary in October 2025;
- Strengthen the capacity of the GA as a collective and global network
 - Seek funding support for the GA secretariat to enhance its ability to effectively support activities around visibility, policy influence, fundraising and communications;
 - Create a mapping of strategic entry points to maximise the GA's impact and of primary funding opportunities to make the GA's work sustainable;

- Develop updated Terms of Reference and adapt the GA's strategy to the changing environment and the needs of contexts the networks work in;
- Create new synergies with national and other sub-regional women mediator networks;
- Identify joint mediation opportunities in contexts of mutual interest and expertise, and related funds to support them;
- Organise an annual meeting in October 2025.

Thematic and Contextual Exchanges

Opening remarks to the event were provided by the three main event organisers, **Quhramaana Kakar – Women Mediators Across the Commonwealth; Olivia Caemaex – Director of Conciliation-Resources EU; Janna Greve – EEAS PCM.2 Peace Mediation Support**. They highlighted the timeliness of the meeting, main objectives of the sessions, as well as general challenges and opportunities for women mediators in the current global peace and security context.

Exchange with EU officials with welcoming remarks by Julia Koch - de Biolley, Head of Task Force Gender & Diversity (EEAS): The discussion highlighted that the EU's global policy and political frameworks on gender and WPS continue to be some of the strongest in the world. The discussion explored how RWMNs can address the facts that the work of women mediators is becoming more respected but also more illegal while peace mediation and interstate conflicts are still highly male dominated fields with women less involved in Track 1 processes.

Meeting with Benedikta von Seherr-Thoß, Managing Director, Peace, Security and Defence (EEAS): During the exchange, the EEAS reiterated its commitment to WPS and peace mediation, and pointed to several recent actions confirming it, including the signature of the UN Secretary-General's "Common Pledge for Women's Full, Equal, and Meaningful Participation in Peace Processes". The discussion also addressed the difficulty of capitalising conflict prevention due to the challenge of quantifiable measurement systems. Mediation often requires discretion and confidentiality, which makes it less visible and harder to make the case for. Women have traditionally been perceived as having more of a role in 'soft security' but need to be further involved in what is perceived as 'hard security' as well.

Exchange with the EU Group of Friends of Peace Mediation, which included 15⁴ EU Member State representatives (CivCom and COHOM): The EEAS pointed to the importance of the nexus of WPS and peace mediation and highlighted how the annual EU Community of Practice on Peace Mediation has provided a platform for women mediators to share their expertise. The EEAS also mentioned the commissioned report, which looks at the state of play of RWMNs, and was followed up on, inter alia, by bringing the GA together with EU officials and Member States. The discussion covered activities in Afghanistan and

⁴ Romania, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Slovenia



Palestine as well as engagement with emerging regional women mediator networks such as in Latin America. It also addressed how to measure impact and ways to connect these networks to CSDP missions. Member State representatives expressed admiration for the work of women mediators and appreciation of this session exploring concrete examples.

Lunch discussion co-organised by Conciliation Resources, the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) and CMI-Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation: This exchange was a chance to discuss the strategic role of women mediators and their regional networks in addressing current peace and security challenges as well as priority setting for the UNSCR 1325 anniversary. It was highlighted that the space for women peacebuilders and mediators to engage in peace processes continues to shrink and approaches to transformational mediation, the impact of the backlash against value and norms-based peacebuilding for more transactional, securitised processes were explored. Beyond looking at challenges, the discussion explored how the EU and women mediator networks could join forces to increase their impact and how these partnerships could fill gaps left by others.