

3rd EDITION | 2022



# FEMINIST PEACE SERIES

## **Writers**

Bridget Ankunda, Pauline Kahuubire, Thuleleni Msomi, Esther Wasagali, Patricia Peace Ejang, Vania Umenjoh

## **Editor**

Helen Kezie-Nwoha

## **Editorial Support**

Patience Nakiranda

ISSN 2788-5593

© Women's International Peace Centre 2022

All Rights Reserved

Please direct all correspondence to:

Executive Director

Women's International Peace Centre

Plot 1, Martyrs Garden Road B, Ministers' Village, Ntinda

P.O Box 4934, Kampala, Uganda

Tel: +256 41 4698684

Email: [program@wipc.org](mailto:program@wipc.org)

Web: [www.wipc.org](http://www.wipc.org)

# CONTENTS

FEMINIST  
PEACE  
SERIES

- 2** EDITORIAL by Helen Kezie-Nwoha
- 6** AUTHORS' PROFILES
- 8** PEACES by Bridget Ankunda
- 9** WHY INTERSECTIONALITY MUST BE CENTRAL TO FEMINIST PEACEBUILDING  
by Pauline Kahuubire
- 15** UNSHACKLED by Thuleleni Msomi
- 16** TRAVERSING THE INTERSECTIONAL CORRIDORS by Esther Wasagali
- 20** GIVE BACK OUR BODY, WHAT PEACE MEANS FOR US by Patricia Peace Ejang
- 21** BUILDING FEMINIST PEACE FROM AN INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE  
by Umenjoh Vania Andoumbeni
- 25** END NOTES
- 26** REFERENCES

# EDITORIAL

FEMINIST  
PEACE  
SERIES



**Helen Kezie-Nwoha**

Editor

We are excited to bring you the 3rd edition of the Feminist Peace Series (FPS). The FPS was born out of the desire to provide a coherent and in-depth understanding of the practice of Feminist Peace. FPS relies on the everyday practice of peacebuilding from the perspective of practitioners. In this edition, we interrogate why intersectionality is important for peacebuilding.

Kimberle Crenshaw<sup>1</sup> coined the term intersectionality in the 1990s to broaden and strengthen feminist analysis by exploring sites where gender congregates with other characteristics such as ethnicity, class, religion, identity, sexual orientation, disability, and age to produce crisscrossing structures of subordination.

**“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.”**

**- Audre Lorde.**

Intersectionality describes the difficulty of intertwined associations between identity, socio-economic status, and systems of power that make up how we fit into the world around us. Intersectionality depicts how systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, class, and other forms of discrimination navigate to produce distinctive nuances and outcomes. These inequalities are mutually reinforcing and impact all aspects of social interactions, which require to be analyzed and addressed concurrently to achieve equality.

The understanding of intersectionality enables us to analyze how different women are impacted by conflict based on their identities, economic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability. Sometimes these different characteristics intersect to make the impact of war more distinct for certain categories of women. For example, in some conflicts women have been deliberately targeted and raped because of their ethnicity or religion; this is not the same for women who share the same ethnicity or religion with the attackers. However, women from the different sides of the conflict experience gendered war impact in addition to other features which they possess. This requires an intersectional approach not only to peacebuilding but in addressing the impact of war.



Countries and communities around the world are facing multiple, compounding threats. The need for an intersectional approach to peacebuilding is apparent in conflict and fragile contexts and is easily identifiable within contexts such as conflict-related displacement and sexual violence. In conflict-affected societies, intersectionality helps in understanding not only the kinds of violence people might suffer but also the varied interests, needs, agencies, and views toward what constitutes inclusive and sustainable peace. The importance of adopting an intersectional lens in peacebuilding has been highlighted by authors in this edition of the Feminist Peace Series.

For this edition, we invited authors to reflect on how to build peace using an intersectional approach. Authors have written based on their personal and professional experience in building peace grounded in feminist peace understanding. Each article shares experience of how intersectionality operates in conflict and post conflict settings; they reflect what feminist researchers have observed in other settings and argue for the need for the application of intersectionality in peacebuilding. This becomes important as conflict dynamics change and several emerging trends are observed in a world that continues to experience various forms of conflict and crisis.

**“The need for an intersectional approach to peacebuilding is apparent in conflict and fragile contexts and is easily identifiable within contexts such as conflict-related displacement and sexual violence.”**

Bridget Ankunda’s poem ‘PEACES’ portrays the different definitions of peace for different categories of women. While mainstream understanding of peace defines peace as the absence of war, Bridget brings in poetry the feminist understanding of peace and impact of war on different categories of women. It is these differences among women and how they intersect to multiply marginalization that intersectional peacebuilding seeks to address. The poem awakens our consciousness that peace means different things to different women, and the need to consider this for sustainable peace.



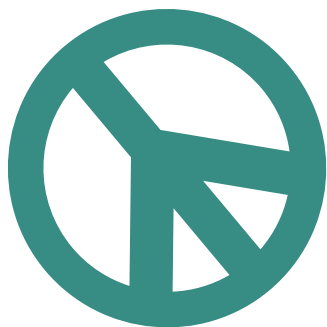


Pauline Kahuubire writes from her field experience and interviews with women in conflict and post conflict settings. Her article depicts the disproportionate impact of war on women including the intersectionality that combines to make the impact more pronounced. She argues that an approach to peacebuilding that does not include other dimensions such as age, ethnicity, religion, class, socio-economic status, immigration status, and other inequalities is likely to reinforce injustices among women and girls; these nuances pose a challenge for women's participation in peacebuilding. She recommends that adequate data that highlights the intersectional nature of inequalities will help in both humanitarian response and sustainable peace building; and the need to address systemic and structural inequalities that most times contribute to the root causes of conflicts.

Thuleleni Msomi's poem is an indirect confrontation of how the environments we participate in are often designed to give out the idea that they cater for everyone, however certain experiences are not recognized. This refers to the peacebuilding process in the context of intersectionality and the need to ensure the different experiences of women are recognized. She points that there is no one to answer to the different experiences of women, it is important to take into consideration that not everything will be met with open arms, there is the need to ensure the inclusion of the different needs of women in peace agreements. She concludes that to set in motion the bigger course, it is important to learn from what has worked and plan to allow sustainable change. Thuleleni concludes that the journey to achieving intersectional peacebuilding is not always a smooth sail.

Esther Wasagali's article reflected on how the different identities held by women could be an advantage or disadvantage depending on the context. The issue of context is important in discussing intersectionality. Using the conflict in Uganda, she shares examples of the intersecting nature of women's marginalization and how this affects their participation in peacebuilding. She points to the need to apply intersectional approaches in such situations. Despite the low representation of women in formal peace tables and the disadvantages women face, Esther highlights the agency exhibited by women and the need for peacebuilding institutions to consider the differences among women for inclusive and intersectional peacebuilding.

Patricia Ejang writes from the perspective of refugees; her poem reflects the insensitivity of peacebuilding actors in defining and responding to the needs of women affected by conflict, particularly refugees. The insensitivity in naming and labeling women without recognition of their differences ignores the intersectionality among them and their issues. She calls for an approach to peacebuilding that considers the kind of peace different categories of women desire. She calls for peacebuilding approaches that adopt empathy, respect the dignity of women, and recognize the agency of women in peacebuilding.



## **“The insensitivity in naming and labeling women without recognition of their differences ignores the intersectionality among them and their issues”**

Vania Umenjoh in her article highlights the gendered nature of conflict and its impact on women and peacebuilding. She writes from her experience as a Cameroonian Peace Activist, she discusses ways of building feminist peace from an intersectional perspective using examples from her country. Vania’s article reflects the different forms of discrimination and marginalization women with disabilities, rural and poor women experience that prevents them from participating in peace building. She argues that sustainable peace can only be achieved when the multidimensional aspect of women experiences of everyday conflict is considered and mainstreamed in peace building.

In all, the articles reflect what intersectionality means for peacebuilding, they provide examples of how intersectionality could be mainstreamed in peacebuilding and make concrete recommendations on how best to adopt an intersectional approach to peacebuilding. It is our hope that you find this latest edition enriching and valuable in your understanding of everyday practice of intersectional approaches to peacebuilding.

# AUTHORS' PROFILES

FEMINIST  
PEACE  
SERIES



**BRIDGET ANKUNDA**

Bridget Ankunda is a student and poet. She studies at the Makerere University School of Law. Her debut poetry collection, 'Don't Love Me In English' was published in 2020 by Kitara Nation. She wrote the winning drama skits for the SWAS Convention in 2017 and 2018. She won the award Best Recitation at the ACDEG Poetry Award in 2019. She was the author of the month of March 2021 at FEMRITE (Uganda Women Writers' Association). She has been published in anthologies including Rhymes and Metaphors (2020); I Promise This Song Is Not About Politics (2022); Griots of Ubuntu (2022).



**PATRICIA PEACE EJANG**

Patricia is a feminist and a writer, majoring in poetry and children's literature. She is a law student at Makerere University and writes under the group Stubborn Poetry. Her writings have been published with the Writers' Space Africa monthly magazines. She is an activist and a seasoned debater, having represented the University at several tournaments including Jumuiya and National Pre Dialogue Tournament. She was listed for the African Writers Awards 2021 for her poem UBUNTU and for the 2022 Wakini Kuria Children's awards.



**ESTHER WASAGALI**

Esther Wasagali is a Human Rights and Governance expert. She is a women and child rights activist who is passionate about working with marginalized communities. She is currently serving at the Women's International Peace Centre.



PAULINE KAHUUBIRE

Pauline is an African Feminist who believes that feminist documentation and consciousness raising are a tool for dismantling oppressive power structures and building inclusive, intersectional, and peaceful societies.

Her work revolves around: amplifying the voices of and increasing the visibility of structurally silenced women and girls through impactful storytelling; reviewing and influencing policies in the advancement of women's autonomy; convening and coordinating reflection spaces on topical discussions around Women, Peace and Security, and Women's Leadership; and the development of knowledge advocacy tools.

Pauline is committed to harnessing the intersections of technology and media to highlight the lived experiences of women and advance policy and social justice. She has experience in content development, website, and social media management as well as the development and implementation of communication and advocacy strategies and campaigns. She has worked with the Women's Situation Room (WSR) Uganda for peaceful elections and Akina Mama wa Afrika.

When she is not at her desk, Pauline gets lost in books; dreams and solves crossword puzzles.



VANIA UMENJOH

Umenjoh Vania Andoumbeni is a Cameroonian. She is a passionate advocate for gender equity, women empowerment, inclusive education, disability rights and social inclusion. She is an author and has published articles in International and local journals and magazines.

Umenjoh is currently the Vice National Coordinator of the Cameroon Inclusive Special Education Teachers' Training and Empowerment Programme (CISETTEP) and the principal of Special Educational Needs Teachers' Training Institute Inclusive Bilingual Evening (SENTTII-IBES) in Yaoundé-Cameroon. She is the founder of the Association for the Promotion of Gender and Disability Issues (APGDI) Cameroon.



THULELENI MSOMI

Thuleleni is a poet and student, currently enrolled at the University of South Africa pursuing a Bachelor of Law degree.

## PEACES

In one girl,  
Peace is a name,  
given in the hope that one day she will find it.  
In another, it is the weight of a wedding ring.  
Hefty and reassuring,  
like the man who presents it.

In one girl,  
Peace is the way women preserve themselves.  
In another, peace is what remains after disruption.  
It is a prize of war.

In one girl,  
Peace is ten minutes of quiet hair combing.  
In another, peace is a rainy afternoon spent entangled in  
her lover's braids.

And then there are people  
who think peace is the stillness of a sleeping house,  
But peace is a movement.  
It is when under her breast,  
A woman's heart beats however she wants.

BRIDGET ANKUNDA





# WHY INTERSECTIONALITY MUST BE CENTRAL TO FEMINIST PEACEBUILDING

PAULINE KAHUUBIRE



Feminist peacebuilding acknowledges that women, men, girls, and boys in society experience conflict differently and recognizes the key roles that women and other marginalized groups play in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Intersectionality points to the ways systems of inequality based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, class, and other forms of discrimination mutually reinforce one another to create unique dynamics and effects of conflict on vulnerable persons.

This article argues that an approach to peacebuilding that does not include other dimensions such as socio-economic status, immigration status and other inequalities is likely to reinforce injustices among women and girls. It explores the disproportionate impact of conflict on women, highlights challenges to their participation in peacebuilding and offers recommendations for prioritizing the needs of women and other groups of people who face structural barriers in society.

**“Feminist peacebuilding acknowledges that women, men, girls, and boys in society experience conflict differently and recognizes the key roles that women and other marginalized groups play in peacebuilding and conflict resolution”**





By their nature, and because of the patriarchal societies that we live in, conflicts disproportionately affect women and girls. Last year, rape and other forms of violence against women in conflict settings increased<sup>2</sup> by 20%, globally. In Goma, the Democratic Republic of Congo where the government is currently fighting M23 rebels, the face<sup>3</sup> of displacement is female - a baby in one hand, a mattress in the other.

Moreover, conflicts are unpredictable, especially in the absence of adequate early warning and response systems, where it is difficult to anticipate when conflicts will end. As a result, the immediate and short-term responses usually focus on dealing with the impact. When the guns are blazing, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of the response.

It is only when the guns go silent and grievous harm has been done that actors realize two crucial things. First, women and girls bear the brunt of the conflict, considering other structural violence suffered based on class, sexual orientation, or ethnic background. Secondly, women are essential to responding to conflict situations for recovery efforts to be effective and sustainable.

Conflict resolution and response interventions are beginning to involve women - although at a much slower pace than desired. According to the 2021 United Nations Secretary General's Report on Women, Peace and Security, only 8 out of 25 peace agreements in 2021 referenced women. Most recently, during the handshake that affirmed the Ethiopia-Tigray truce, only male hands were seen - although history shows that peace agreements that excluded women have failed, as observed with the first Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan in 2015.

For young women, traditional structures, customs, and values prevent their effective participation in formal peacebuilding. The lack of access to information, threats, violence, lack of access to economic resources and opportunities, as well as unpredictable and inadequate funding, especially for grassroots women and youth organizations prevent their participation in decision-making and peacebuilding.

Furthermore, when women are included in peacebuilding interventions, oftentimes they are engaged as a homogenous group, with similar experiences and concerns. That a younger woman faces the same challenges as an older woman, that a woman with a disability lives the same reality as an abled woman refugee, that a woman living in an urban refugee settlement has the same concerns as one in a rural internally displaced peoples' camp and that the individual needs of all these women should not be independently examined when creating solutions to crises.

Intersectional feminist peacebuilding asserts that when taken as a whole, without considering the individual needs of all women and girls, there are bound to be unresolved issues and with unresolved issues, conflicts are likely to reoccur. The cycle ends in increased vulnerability of women to discrimination, sexual violence, and violent extremism in some instances. Feminist peacebuilding also recognizes the intersections between patriarchy and other systems of oppression such as capitalism, ageism, classism, authoritarianism, and colonialism and how they exacerbate inequalities against women and girls during conflicts and crises. It suggests that there should not be a 'one-size fits all' humanitarian response.

For instance, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, global response measures involved the use of quarantines and lockdowns to contain the spread of the virus. This measure did not consider how confinement would affect women and girls in their varied diversities. Women working in markets in Uganda were forced to sleep in the markets to continue earning a living and yet their safety was not guaranteed. If women had been consulted, they would have proposed alternatives that worked for them.

*"Sometimes we are discriminated against because of the assumption that we do not know anything. As a young person, and especially a young woman, I am one of the most affected by war and conflict. Our presence in decision-making and peacebuilding is important because interventions will be influenced by our experiences"*

**Elizabeth Yuol, a young woman South Sudanese refugee living in Uganda**

Therefore, for future crises, women must be engaged to ensure they have an opportunity to highlight solutions that will not leave them adversely affected. Deliberate action must be taken to ensure that all categories of women are included in terms of class, sexuality, ethnicity, and disability as recognized by the Women and Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, the Youth and Peace and Security (YPS) agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Secondly, in most communities, women are the glue that hold the social fabric together. This makes them critical actors in rebuilding societies that have experienced conflict. They participate in door-to-door peacebuilding campaigns and mediate conflict situations at family and communal level, which exposes them to the risk of being attacked. Across the globe, women human rights defenders have increasingly been targeted with attacks that silence their advocacy and prevent them from participating in public life.

**“In most communities, women are the glue that hold the social fabric together.”**

In Uganda, Sarah\*, a middle-aged South Sudanese woman living in a refugee settlement in Adjumani district was trained by Women’s International Peace Centre as a peace mediator. She told me about an incident where she felt that her life was in danger. Using the skills acquired from the previously mentioned training, she would approach families that appeared to be experiencing domestic disputes and where violence was evident and attempt to intervene. On one occasion, the male perpetrator threatened to attack her too citing her interference in domestic matters.

Still in Uganda, an election peace advocate trained by the Women’s Situation Room in Mityana district was violently attacked because her message of peace was construed as support for the ruling government. An intersectional approach to feminist peace must consider such risks and ensure that women in peacebuilding are protected, not stigmatized or subject to other forms of violence such as political violence. It guarantees an enabling and safe environment for women working on peace and security and ensures that they do not face reprisals for their work.

Next, the need for relevant data to inform policies on women's rights and participation cannot be stressed enough. In most of the evidence presented on conflict, women are invisible<sup>9</sup> which translates in their erasure from policy interventions. Thus, using feminist lenses to document and capture the lived realities of all women will generate evidence for policy response. Data must detect and question existing gender inequalities and systems of oppression, and how they intertwine to affect women and girls in fragile settings.

Relatedly, relevant information should be made available for women to participate in peace processes. Profile refugee women and how they are disconnected from their home countries. Because there are weak linkages between them and women in their home countries, they find it difficult to keep up with peace processes and influence their outcomes. Information should be made readily accessible for women to keep track of relevant events and circumvent the evolving tactics of conflict. It is important that critical information such as peace agreements should be translated into local languages that are easily understood by most women.

If peace tables prioritize the needs of warlords over women, that should be an indication to do away with the tables. Because peace is not built overnight, strengthening collective power, and taking collective action in peacebuilding needs to be promoted to ensure sustainability. An intersectional and non-discriminatory approach to feminist peacebuilding has the power to bridge movements and identities and kickstart change by dismantling unequal power structures while centering the needs and experiences of marginalised groups.

At the end of the day, feminist peace building must recognise and respond to the systemic drivers of inequality and use emergencies as catalysts to advance women and girls' rights. Even within itself, it must identify unjust formal and informal power relations by regularly critiquing the extent to which its structures and processes reinforce oppressive power relations through humanitarian action.

**“If peace tables prioritize the needs of warlords over women, that should be an indication to do away with the tables.”**

# UNSHACKLED

There is a lot of questions asked  
With many answers to paint  
Its mystic nature alludes greatness  
So do fall for it peddling screws

Put a man in four lines  
The previous stanza captures it all.  
It is the underlining conspiracies formulated  
To portray them as needed

A healing heart substantiates  
How crucifying the other is a need for it to breathe again  
For crooked lines to meet again  
For life to make sense again  
For peace to be found and love to be familiar again

A war is never encouraged due to its implications.  
This one must take place  
It is to restore balance that forever existed  
To redefine it with an experienced language

Kindness reconnected to self  
A life meaning once abolished to belong in a home not furnished for  
you.  
Erase all the questions  
What you have yearned to be clarified is not pivotal

Dance to the music  
The feet have found new love  
Not animated to perceive true form in its habitant.  
Meet yourself again.

THULELENI MSOMI





# TRAVERSING THE INTERSECTIONAL CORRIDORS

ESTHER WASAGALI



The above statement closely relates to my understanding of intersectional feminism, which is listening to and centering marginalized voices, acknowledging my privilege and being open to criticism, honoring the past, and being skeptical of what you want to know. It also means more equality, hope, humanity, acceptability, and inclusiveness of the most marginalized groups.

While intersectionality is understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination or privilege, it also identifies multiple factors of advantage or disadvantage such as gender, sex, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, disability, religion and physical appearance. These intersecting and overlapping identities may be empowering or oppressing.

For example, in Uganda in the conflict and post conflict areas where the Peace Centre works, some cultures and religious beliefs, and poverty allow early/child marriage thus limiting girls' right to access and complete education. There have been incidences of them being exchanged for money as low as 50,000 Ugandan Shillings (about \$13). This has been tributed to economic downturn due to COVID 19. In some communities, women cannot effectively participate in decision making processes due to cultures that relegate women to the private sphere. In addition, some women cannot speak in the presence of men or in public. If they are to speak, they must seek permission from their husbands, such practices limit their participation in decision-making and peace processes.

Feminist intersectional approaches broadened the scope of first-wave feminism which mainly focused on suffrage and overturning legal obstacles to gender equality (e.g. voting rights and property rights), and second-wave broadened the debate to include a wider range of issues: sexuality, family, domesticity, the workplace, reproductive rights, de facto inequalities, and official legal inequalities and largely focus on the different experiences of women who are poor, immigrant and other groups<sup>10</sup>. Intersectionality acknowledges women's different experiences and identities. Intersectionality critically analyzes how interlocking systems of power, ethnicity, gender identity, marital status, gender oppression, education, political affiliation, race, and culture affect those who are most marginalized in society.

**“If we aren’t intersectional, some of us, the most vulnerable are going to fall through the cracks ” - Kimberle Williams Crenshaw – Lawyer, Civil Rights Advocate and Intersectional Feminist**

## “Often, the effect of conflict on women is forgotten or not given the attention it deserves.”

Intersectional Feminist Peace requires that we apply an intersectional lens to peacebuilding by recognizing and addressing the ways in which systems, structures, and attitudes can lead to multiple and overlapping forms of structural discrimination and disadvantage. Marginalized women need to be part of the conflict resolution and peace agreement processes as well as sit at the peace tables to voice out pertinent issues affecting them.

Wars and conflict destroy lives, livelihoods, the economy, families, and much more but women are disproportionately affected by them. Existing inequalities and inequities get magnified and even decades after a conflict, women continue to bear the brunt. Wars make women more vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation as social networks break down along with institutions that prevent gender-based violence. Often, the effect of conflict on women is forgotten or not given the attention it deserves<sup>11</sup>. However, women in conflict and post-conflict areas have created support systems among themselves, especially victims of gender-based violence. Women have contributed to peacebuilding by mediating conflicts within their communities and spearheading peace initiatives.

According to UN Women, women constitute 10% of peace negotiators globally and only 3% of the signatories to peace agreements. For instance, in the 2018 South Sudan peace process, there was one female mediator, yet women constitute 25% of the official delegates. UN in Africa recognizes that women give in their time, careers, and lives in the search for peace and that women have meaningfully contributed to numerous peace processes. However, there is a need to consider intersectional feminism in our daily lives, and in peacebuilding. The Uganda National Action Plan III 2021-2025 highlights actions for tackling conflict and other problems that undermine women's participation in decision making processes; they include increasing women's participation in promoting peace and security by encouraging women's participation in dialogues on peace and security, support more women to participate in peace dialogues, implement programs that mentor and coach women in leadership and management. Women's participation in the labour sector creates new openings for women to influence social and political structures and as custodians of culture and nurturers of families, we need to allow women to be represented at the peace negotiating tables or in community reconstruction efforts.





As people that interact with the most vulnerable women that have been affected by war and conflicts, we need to practice intentional listening by attentively listening when women have something to say, this will enable a deeper understanding of their experiences and needs. Providing an enabling environment that allows different categories of women to express their views promotes their participation and contributes to peace and security.

Peacebuilding programs must consider the difference in women's economic status, location, education, low-income women, and women in the formal and informal sectors. It is vital to reorganize that women in conflict and post-conflict areas have varying experiences due to the impact of war that destroys their confidence and ability to speak, cause trauma and inequalities amongst them and the communities they live in, deprives them of social and cultural sense of belonging and hinders their ability to participate in the economy. Intersectional peacebuilding will help us understand the kinds of violence women suffer and appreciate the varied interests, needs, agencies, and views toward what constitutes inclusive and sustainable feminist peace.

**“No country can ever truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women and deprives itself of their contribution” - Michelle Obama**

I strongly believe that all women despite their differences should be involved in decision-making and peace processes and that key actors should recognize the critical role that women play in promoting intersectional peacebuilding at various levels because ‘no country can ever truly flourish if it stifles the potential of its women and deprives itself of their contribution’  
Michelle Obama- Former First Lady USA.

## GIVE BACK OUR BODY, WHAT PEACE MEANS FOR US

*For the women and girls in Palabek Refugee Settlement.*

The world has wrapped our problems in pretty parcels  
One in four women, one in three girls  
We are numbers and digits on a graph  
Our pains and loss are documentaries on the tube  
At conference tables,  
'Victims' and 'survivors' are our labels  
Like vessels that carry stories  
Our solutions come with clear instructions  
**"Handle with care! Fragile humans ahead"**

The peace we want, the peace we seek  
Recognition of our humanity  
Beyond the numbers and digits on a graph  
Inclusion in reconciliatory endeavours  
Because our capacities and abilities extend  
Beyond the stories that tend to define us  
We are a people rebuilding, becoming  
Our solutions should come from our voices  
**It's the peace we want, the peace we seek.**

PATRICIA PEACE EJANG



# BUILDING FEMINIST PEACE FROM AN INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

UMENJOH VANIA ANDOUMBENI



Conflict and violence take place in various ways and different people experience its impact differently depending on their gender and context. In this article I discuss the multidimensional aspect of peace building. The article starts by defining key terms including peace, peace building, feminist peace and intersectional perspective, this is followed by a description of how to build feminist peace from an intersectional perspective. I conclude by providing recommendations on how feminist peace can be built using an intersectional perspective taking into account and addressing the various experiences of women in building peace.

Andoumbeni (2021) in her article titled the Influential Role of Women as the Game Changers in the Feminist Process: The Case of Cameroon, defined peace as an individual's ability to meet his or her needs or a nation's ability to meet the needs of her citizens without discrimination or prejudice. Peace denotes freedom from exploitation and all forms of violence including physical, psychological, economic or sexual violence.

Feminist peace is closely associated with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security that was adopted in October 2000. It calls for the active involvement of women in peace and security issues.

The Palgrave Encyclopaedia of Peace and Conflict Studies defines intersectionality as the process through which the multiple factors or systems of power and oppression such as gender, race, class, age, and sexuality intersect in defining the societal structures and people's lived experiences. An intersectional approach to the women, peace and security agenda identifies and builds on the capacity of existing community-led initiatives and spaces; and allows for critical analysis of barriers, challenges and social norms that prevent the meaningful participation of women (Bafo, 2019). Intersectionality in the context of this paper has to do with the multidimensional experiences of women and how these experiences affect how women experience violence or conflicts in unique and different ways. Thus, to ensure peace building these experiences need to be taken into consideration and appropriately addressed.

**“Peace denotes freedom from exploitation and all forms of violence including physical, psychological, economic or sexual violence.”**



## **“It is she/he that wears the shoes that knows where it pains”.**

Building feminist peace from an intersectional perspective demands that the various experiences, challenges and opportunities different women experience based on their respective contexts should be taken into consideration when deliberating on efforts to ensure peace. Women in different parts of the world and from different cultural backgrounds have diverse and unique challenges that affect the way they participate and benefit in peace negotiation processes and from peace in general.

Some categories of people who are often ignored in times of war and peace negotiation processes are persons with disabilities. In times of crisis, persons with disabilities are more likely to be victims especially women with disabilities who tend to face more discrimination due to their gender and disability status. War increases the likelihood of more people becoming persons with disabilities and increases the vulnerability of persons with disabilities especially women with disabilities of being abused and exploited because of their inability to flee easily from danger. Thus, feminist peace processes require the full participation of persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities so that they can share their views and experiences directly instead of relying on other people to speak on their behalf. It is often said that “it is she/he that wears the shoes that knows where it pains”. Women with disabilities frequently suffer sexual exploitation and abandonment and this becomes worse during war and armed conflict.

Inclusion of rural women: the unique experiences of rural women should be taken into consideration, and they should be involved in peace processes. Rural women are the main suppliers of food in Africa, but most often they are deprived of land ownership which is the main source for agriculture. Globally less than 15% of all landholders are women (FOA, 2018). When these women are deprived of landownership, they cannot make major decisions about the land on which they cultivate food. This restricts their yields and productivity. Rural women are more likely to be victims of conflicts with landowners and grazers. Farmer/grazer problems are common in the North-west Region of Cameroon. Women farmers usually suffer from attacks by herders who destroy their farms with impunity. As such rural women should be included when negotiating peace, there is the need to put in place laws and policies to regulate pastoralists activities in the region. The devastating impact of these activities is food insecurity, to increase the agricultural productivity of rural women; they must be granted the right to own land. This is because based on the Statutory law, backed by the 1974 Land Tenure Ordinance and the 1996 Constitution that prohibits discrimination on any grounds, women in Cameroon have the right to own land. It is instead the customary law that places women in bondage by considering women as property and restricting them from ownership of land.

Taking concrete steps to tackle poverty is another way to build feminist peace from an intersectional perspective. It is often said that “poverty has a female face” This is because women are more likely to be poor compared to men. This is due to the compounding and multiple discrimination women generally face in society that increases the rate of poverty amongst women. For example, a man is more likely to be educated compared to a woman. Even in situations where both men and women are highly educated, society prefers to give leadership positions to men. Generally, women are more likely to engage in professions (linked to their biological or caring roles) that yield lesser wages such as nursing and teaching. Thus, to ensure feminist peace, poverty among women needs to be tackled by giving women and girls opportunities that empower them economically.

This paper highlights the unique experiences of women regarding how they are affected by violence and proposed ways through which these experiences could be included in peace building processes. The experiences of women with disabilities, rural women, and poor women were used to buttress the marginalization of women in peace building. The paper concludes that sustainable peace can only be achieved when the multidimensional aspect of women experiences of everyday conflict is considered and mainstreamed in peace build-

**“Poverty among women needs to be tackled by giving women and girls opportunities that empower them economically.”**



# END NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Crenshaw, Kimberle, 1991. Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. Stanford Law Review, 43(6), 1991, pp. 1241-99.

<sup>2</sup> <https://undocs.org/en/S/2022/493>

<sup>3</sup> Sabiti, G and Makangara, J. (November 15, 2022). Hundreds flee as Congo's M23 rebels near key city of Goma <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/hundreds-flee-congos-m23-rebels-near-key-city-goma-2022-11-14/>

<sup>4</sup> United Nations. 2022. UN Secretary General Report on Women, Peace and Security to the Security Council. S/2022?740. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S-2022-740.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> BBC. November 2, 2022. Ethiopia's Tigray Conflict: Truce Agreed. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-63490546>

<sup>6</sup> Oxfam International (2023) 5 ways women and girls have been the hardest hit by Covid-19. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/5-ways-women-and-girls-have-been-hardest-hit-covid-19>

<sup>7</sup> The Independent. June 25, 2021. Women activists against women sleeping in the markets. <https://www.independent.co.ug/women-activists-against-women-sleeping-in-markets/>

<sup>8</sup> Name has been changed to protect identity

<sup>9</sup> UN Women. 2018. Making Women and Girls Visible: Gender data gaps and why they matter. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/12/issue-brief-making-women-and-girls-visible>

<sup>10</sup> MasterClass October 7, 2022. Waves of Feminism: The 4 Waves of Feminist Movement. <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/waves-of-feminism>

<sup>11</sup> Read more at: <https://www.deccanherald.com/specials/women-and-wars-how-conflict-affects-women-959646.html>



# REFERENCES

- Adeogun Jolaade Tolulope and Muthuki Janet Muthini(2018). Feminist perspective on peace building: The case of Women's organizations in South Sudan. Empowering women for gender equality. Volume 32, Issue 2.
- Bafo Sayal(2019). Three reasons why an intersectional approach to women's peace and security agenda is important Oxfam. \Gender /Peacekeeping and peace building Early childhood Peace Consortium (2022). What is peace?
- Elena B. Stavrevska and Sarah Smith (2020). Intersectionality and Peace. The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Peace and Conflict Studies, pp 1-8.
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation (FAO) 2018: The Gender gap in Land rights. International Alert (2022). What is peace building?
- Kezie-Nwoha Helen (2020). Feminist Peace and Security in Africa. OXFAM, Feminist Peace and Security.
- Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation (kvinnatillkvinna.org) retrieve date 14/09/2022). Women building feminist peace –the women, peace and security agenda in action.
- Medium.com/@UN\_Women
- Tripp Mari Aili (2020): UN Security Council Resolution 1325: Peace Building in Africa 20 years after its adoption. Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI Brief) page 6
- UN Women (2020), Intersectional feminism: What it means and why it matters right now. Wikipedia (September 2022). Peace.
- Andoumbeni Vania Umenjoh(2021) The Influential Role of Women as the Game Changers in the Feminist Peace Process: The Case of Cameoon. Feminist Peace Series, Crisis as an opportunity for Transformative Change





ISSN 2788-5593

© Women's International Peace Centre 2022  
All Rights Reserved