



**ANNUAL REPORT 2019**

**NORDIC WOMEN MEDIATORS** NORWAY



Photo: NOREF

## Nordic Women Mediators – Norway: Annual Report 2019

At the end of 2019 Nordic Women Mediators – Norway (NWM-N) had 60 members. These network members have expertise on a variety of issues relevant to all phases of peace processes, including mediation, ceasefire arrangements, constitutional reform, civil-military relations, international humanitarian law, human rights, communications and inclusive strategies.

NWM-N is advised by a Steering Group that meets monthly. The Steering Group is made up of four members and the two operational partners (NOREF and PRIO GPS), as well as a dedicated Ministry of Foreign Affairs contact person. The operational partners are responsible for the organization and administration of the network's activities.

NWM-N's objectives are to:

- 1) Strengthen women's participation in peace processes at all levels.
- 2) Strengthen Norwegian women actively involved in international peace-making efforts.

A new National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security (2019-2022) was launched in January 2019.

## Focus area: Middle East



Photo: NOREF

This was the first year in which NWM-N had chosen a specific focus area for the year. The network decided to pay particular attention to the Middle East in its work to contribute to enhancing women's participation in peace and reconciliation processes. Many long-standing conflicts are taking place in the region, and several network members are currently located there. Innovative work has been done to implement inclusive processes in several countries, and there is a great deal of relevant activity at Norwegian embassies in the region that can be viewed in this context. Choosing the Middle East as a focus area was reflected throughout the year through a women mediators' retreat in Beirut, through a particular focus on Libya and Yemen at the annual meeting of the Nordic Women Mediators network, and through discussions and presentations at

members' meetings and as part of members' activities.

### Women mediators' meeting in Beirut

An NWM-N delegation travelled to Beirut in March to share experiences with members of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN) and to team up with international actors and stakeholders working to place women's inclusion in peace processes high on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. Network members took part in a strategic gathering of representatives of all Norwegian embassies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region with the aim of identifying synergies and possible activities to enhance the focus on WPS in the region. The aim was also to expose the various

Norwegian embassies in the region to NWM-N and its activities.

The delegation of network members engaged with women mediators from the MWMN during the visit to Beirut. The two networks work under very different conditions, but towards the same overall goal – the increased inclusion of women in peace processes. The meeting gave the participants an opportunity to engage in a focused discussion on how the two networks can contribute to strengthening women's involvement in peace processes and the role of women mediators in such processes. Comparing and contrasting the two networks' strengths and challenges inspired greater insight into and acknowledgement of the complementarity and potential areas of cooperation between the Nordic and Mediterranean networks.

The visit to Beirut included participation in and contribution to a high-level event on women's participation in peace and security in the MENA region organized by the Norwegian embassy in Lebanon. Norwegian mediator and



Photo: NOREF

Special Envoy to the Philippines Idun Tvedt took part in a panel discussion together with experts and MWMN members from Lebanon and Algeria, as well as UN Special Envoy to Syria Geir O. Pedersen. Sanam Anderlini from the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) moderated the discussion. The debate focused on the barriers facing women mediators/peacemakers and ways forward for women's meaningful participation in peace processes.

## 2019 MEMBERS HIGHLIGHTS

On October 24th **Major General Kristin Lund** was awarded the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olav for her extraordinary efforts to enhance gender equality in the Norwegian armed forces. Lund was the first female Force Commander in UN history (UNFICYP Cyprus) and first ever female Head of Mission and Chief of Staff of the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO) in the Middle East.



Photo: Slåttum

# Nordic Women Mediators annual meeting



Photo: NOREF

Every year the Nordic Women Mediators (NWM) meets in one of the five Nordic capitals to discuss relevant issues and exchange experiences. The meeting is hosted on a rotational basis, and in 2019 it was NWM-N's turn to act as host. The gathering took place in Oslo on May 9th and 10th and brought together more than 50 participants for a two-day meeting. In addition to the members, seven prominent women from Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen were invited to provide insights into the status of women's engagement and influence in the peace processes in their respective countries.

The annual meeting started off with the public event "Turning the Tables: Women's Multiple Roles in Peace Processes: A Conversation with Prominent Women from Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen". The Norwegian foreign minister gave the keynote address, following a panel discussion designed to shed light on the fact that despite women's contributions to

preventing and resolving conflicts, they are often excluded from formal peace processes. In this panel discussion prominent women from Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen provided insight into the main obstacles facing women's participation in peace processes and explored ways forward in their respective countries.



Photo: NOREF

The annual meeting in Oslo provided a good opportunity for NWM members and the prominent invitees to enhance their knowledge, exchange experiences and explore a variety of ways to strengthen women's involvement in the peace processes in Afghanistan, Libya and Yemen. It was concluded that four geographical resource groups would be set up

after the annual meeting to focus on Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan and Libya, and a fifth focusing on NWM's internal strategy.



Photo: NOREF

## Members' activities

NWM-N holds quarterly members' meetings that provide an opportunity for members to network, share experiences and learn from one another, as well as to engage in thematic discussions. In 2019 the network held three regular members' meetings, and hosted the annual NWM meeting and a public event.

The network frequently receives requests to participate in various events, and the members travel all over the world to represent

NWM-N and to share their knowledge and expertise. In 2019 NWM-N members contributed to capacity building for young diplomats, both at a Junior Diplomat Initiative event in Paris on "Women in Diplomacy", in which Solfrid Lien participated, and at a gathering of young women diplomats from ASEAN, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste in Indonesia, where Hilde Salvesen represented NWM-N.

Our members contributed to research on and the development of tools for women's greater inclusion in peace processes. Laila Bokhari participated at the ICAN Better Peace Symposium Expert Group Meeting in New York, and Maria Sommardahl contributed as an expert practitioner at an OSCE focus group discussion in Vienna contributing to the development of a toolkit on the inclusion of women for more effective peace processes. NWM-N was also present in South Africa at the Gertrude Shope Annual Dialogue Forum on Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking, where Britt Brestrup shared some of the experiences of our network, and at the High Level Mediation and Negotiations Training in Africa, at which Elisabeth Slåttum gave a presentation on her mediation experiences to African women mediators undergoing training.

A priority for NWM-N is to connect with, support, and share experiences with new or emerging national and regional women mediator networks. In 2019 NWM-N members had the pleasure of attending the launch of the Turkish branch of the MWMN in Istanbul, as well as the Argentine Women Mediators Network with a Gender Perspective (AWMN) conference in Buenos Aires. The AWMN was launched in 2018, and is thus a new network, but is assessing the possible future establishment of a regional Southern Cone network. Hilde Frafjord Johnson, who is both an NWM-N member and advisor to the network, participated in the AWMN conference and shared with participants both her personal experiences of mediation processes and some NWM-N experiences and best practices.

In the last couple of years NWM-N has

focused on recruiting more women with relevant experience from the security sector, and is happy to report that this endeavour has been successful. Currently there are five members with armed forces or police backgrounds. During 2019 the network received invitations for experts in these fields to participate in international meetings. Kristin Lund gave a lecture in the Philippines on her peacekeeping experiences, while Ann Kristin Kvilekval drew on her vast experience in the field to participate in discussions on the participation of women in police missions during the UN Women Regional Training Conference organised by the Women's Network of the Southern Africa Development Community in Maputo, Mozambique.

It is worth mentioning that sometimes there will be NWM-N members' contributions that cannot be mentioned in the annual report due to the delicate nature and confidentiality of the processes in which they participated. It is also worth noting that most of the members work on peace and dialogue processes or WPS issues on a regular or even daily basis.



Photo: Argentinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship

# Advocacy: more women mediators and more inclusive processes

On September 25th-26th 2019 representatives from four regional women mediator networks – FemWise-Africa, NWM, Women Mediators across the Commonwealth and the MWMN – gathered in New York to launch the Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediator Networks. The purpose was to join forces to reach our common aim of increasing the participation and influence of women in peace processes at all levels, as well as to work for gender-sensitive peace agreements. During the public launch, which was held at UN Headquarters as a side event of the 74th General Assembly, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and representatives of several governments expressed their support for the Global Alliance. An important

step to advocate for more women mediators was taken when the Global Alliance handed over a list of qualified and deployable women to be considered for Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) or Deputy SRSG positions. The Global Alliance's main message to the UN Secretary-General was that no one can now claim that women qualified to take a seat at the negotiation table or in the mediator's chair are nowhere to be found. Two Norwegian members, Laila Bokhari and Hilde Frafjord Johnson, are included on the list.

NWM-N is committed to further support and participate in the development and expansion of the Global Alliance, and, whenever relevant,



Photo: UN





Photo: NOREF

to assist in the establishment of more networks in regions such as Latin America and Central Asia. The recently established Arab League's Arab Women Mediators has joined the Global Alliance and representatives from the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry were also present at the launch.

NWM-N continuously dialogues with Norwegian authorities on the issue of Norway's engagement in peace processes and the promotion of women's participation in these

processes. Representatives of the network met with Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Søreide in May to hand over a letter addressed to all five Nordic ministers of foreign affairs drawing their attention to NWM's recommendations for the implementation of effective ways to promote, support, and ensure women's participation in and the exercise of their influence throughout ongoing and increasingly complex worldwide peace negotiations, mediation processes, and peacebuilding efforts.

### 2019 MEMBERS HIGHLIGHTS

In 2019 NOREF's **Laura Mitchell** started working for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (OESGY) as Senior Gender Advisor to UN Special Envoy Martin Griffith and his team. Laura has vast experience of dialogue and mediation processes in the Gulf and Middle East, and has been instrumental in the process of establishing and developing the Nordic Women Mediators (Norway) since its founding in 2015.



Photo: UN

# **NORDIC WOMEN MEDIATORS** **NORWAY**

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