



AGENCY FOR  
PEACEBUILDING

April 2026

# WOMEN IN SUDAN'S PEACE PROCESS

THE NEED FOR A NEW  
PUSH

Manal Taha

AP Policy Papers  
Issue 1 / 2026 ISSN 3103-1668

## ABOUT THE AGENCY FOR PEACEBUILDING

The Agency for Peacebuilding (AP) is a think-and-do organisation committed to bridging the gap between research and practice in peacebuilding.

AP aims to contribute to more peaceful and just societies by preventing and transforming violent conflict and creating spaces for dialogue and cooperation across sectors and divides. AP's vision is of a world where conflicts can be transformed without violence and where peace can be promoted through inclusive, innovative sustainable means.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The lead author of the paper is Manal Taha, an independent peacebuilding expert and security analyst. Support was provided by Bernardo Monzani and Alexa Marsh from the Agency for Peacebuilding, and from Yemisrach Kebede and Rabel Desalegn from the Horn Center for Democracy.

This policy paper was produced as part of AP's work to support women mediators and peacebuilders in the Horn of Africa, which has been ongoing since 2024. AP's work aims to strengthen women's participation in peace and security processes across the Horn of Africa, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia (and Somaliland), Sudan, and South Sudan. Its specific objectives are to identify and support women mediators, provide targeted capacity-building and training, and facilitate cross-border and regional networks that connect local actors to formal peace processes.

Ap's efforts also aim to amplify women's perspectives in policy discussions by creating platforms for engagement with national, regional, and international stakeholders. By addressing structural barriers to women's participation, the project seeks to advance more representative and inclusive peacebuilding processes, helping ensure that women are not only present in decision-making but actively involved in shaping sustainable peace outcomes.

AP's work is aligned with, and contributes to, the first objective of Italy's National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS).

## INDEX

SUMMARY .....	4
SUDANESE WOMEN'S SUCCESSES PRIOR TO THE 2023 CIVIL WAR.....	5
AN HISTORICAL BREAKTHROUGH IN JPA'S EASTERN SUDAN TRACK .....	6
THE ROLLBACK OF GAINS MADE BY SUDANESE WOMEN .....	8
THE ROLE OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIATORS.....	10
THE CONTINUED CHALLENGES OF FACING THE INTEGRATION OF THE WPS IN MEDIATION EFFORTS.....	12
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	13

## SUMMARY

The outbreak of war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in April 2023 has triggered a severe and protracted humanitarian and governance crisis. This crisis is, to this day, deeply and negatively affecting the lives of millions of Sudanese people.

While international and regional actors have intervened to mediate, peace initiatives have remained largely elite-driven, dominated by male decision-makers and armed actors. Women, by contrast, have been largely excluded from meaningful participation in peace processes. This policy paper examines the persistent exclusion of women from formal peace mediation processes in Sudan. It considers the implications of this exclusion for the effectiveness, legitimacy, and sustainability of future peace efforts.

Despite formal commitments to women's participation made in the post-revolution period, many aligned with the Women, Peace and Security

(WPS) agenda, implementation has remained limited and often symbolic. The ongoing conflict has further rolled back those commitments, with women entirely absent from official, or Track I, negotiations and gender-responsive measures largely missing from ceasefire and political frameworks.

Yet, Sudanese women are playing central roles in political mobilisation, community mediation, humanitarian response, and advocacy against conflict-related sexual violence. Evidence from comparative peace processes demonstrates that women's meaningful participation broadens negotiation agendas, strengthens accountability, and improves the durability of peace agreements.

In the context of Sudan's protracted and devastating war, sidelining women's participation risks producing narrow, militarised settlements that fail to address civilian protection, gender-responsive needs, social justice, and long-term stability.

## SUDANESE WOMEN'S SUCCESSSES PRIOR TO THE 2023 CIVIL WAR

Sudan's December 2018–April 2019 popular revolution led to the removal of long-time President Omar al-Bashir and the establishment of a transitional political framework between civilian and military actors. Strong commitments to women's inclusion were articulated during this transitional period, reflecting both domestic demands and international normative frameworks. The Constitutional Declaration, signed in August 2019, set out the primary legal framework for a civilian-led transition and included provisions for democratic reform, peacebuilding, and greater inclusion of women in governance. Given the central role that Sudanese women played in the revolution and mobilisation of the protest movement, activists, civil society groups, and international observers expected that the transition and subsequent peace processes would meaningfully integrate WPS commitments, including women's participation in political institutions and peace negotiations.

The Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) was signed on October 3rd, 2020 by the newly established Transitional Government of Sudan, most Darfur-based rebel groups, and key factions of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North (SPLM-N). The JPA became the primary peace framework referenced in all subsequent mediation efforts. The agreement contained commitments to women's participation, including a provision for 40% representation of women in legislative bodies, as well as broader commitments to gender equality. However, implementation of these provisions remained limited and uneven prior to the outbreak of the 2023 conflict. The Transitional Government did not effectively translate WPS commitments beyond those formally enshrined in the 2019 Constitutional Declaration and related transitional agreements adopted following the December 2019 Sudanese revolution.

The WPS agenda was, as such, primarily reflected in the JPA through commitments to include women in political institutions and peace implementation bodies. The agreement recognised the importance of women's participation and called for a minimum representation of women in governance structures. However, in practice, women were not fully included in the main negotiation process.

Safe for a single exception (see below), women were altogether absent from Track I processes. And while UN Women did convene women's groups in separate Track II discussions (i.e., unofficial negotiations involving the representatives of conflict parties), these operated alongside, rather than being integrated within, Track I processes. As a result, the JPA had major gaps in addressing conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and in creating clear mechanisms to protect women. Commitments to the WPS agenda remained stronger on paper than in practice, and the agreement failed to establish the operational frameworks, accountability mechanisms, or political commitment needed to ensure effective implementation.

This represents a missed opportunity. Many of the Darfurian rebel groups who signed the JPA had, in part, originally taken up arms in response to widespread rape and sexual violence in Darfur, particularly during the genocide that began in 2003, as well as violence in areas such as the Nuba Mountains. Despite this history, and the importance of CRSV as an issue, the JPA did not adequately address sexual violence or provide clear accountability mechanisms.

The gaps in the JPA are a direct result of the lack of participation of women in high-level negotiations. The Track I process was not sufficiently gender-sensitive and did not ensure

strong protections against sexual violence or accountability for perpetrators. In addition, many of the signatories to the agreement came from the same armed actors involved in the conflict, including the SAF and Darfurian armed groups, some of whom had been implicated in these violations. Because of this, issues of sexual

violence and accountability were largely sidelined in favour of reaching a political settlement. This reflects a repeated pattern in Sudan's peace processes, where justice and accountability are often sacrificed for the sake of achieving peace agreements.

## AN HISTORICAL BREAKTHROUGH IN JPA'S EASTERN SUDAN TRACK

The JPA of a general agreement addressing national issues and six supplementary agreements negotiated through parallel tracks. Each track targeted a distinct regional conflict and involved different armed movements and factions. These parallel tracks aimed to respond to the diverse and long-standing sources of instability that have shaped Sudan's political landscape in recent decades.<sup>1</sup> One such sub-agreement was the Eastern Sudan Track, which focused on long-standing marginalisation, political exclusion, and uneven development specific to Eastern Sudan.

What made this track historically unique was that it was signed by a female delegate, Setana Mahmoud Nour, who had taken part in the Eastern Sudan negotiations. While separate from the general negotiations, it nevertheless represented an official process. The signature marked an unprecedented moment in Sudan's peace process history: for the first time, a

woman signed a chapter within a Track I formal peace negotiation framework.

In an interview with her for this report<sup>2</sup>, she reflected on the factors that enabled her participation at such a high political level, a space traditionally dominated by male political and armed actors.

She identified two decisive elements. First, unlike many women who struggle for recognition within male-dominated political structures, she received backing from tribal leaders in her region. Their endorsement gave her political legitimacy within a highly traditional social order. In Sudan's conflict landscape where customary authority remains deeply influential, this support functioned as a critical gate-opening mechanism.

The second element she mentioned was that her inclusion was not symbolic. It was rooted in years of sustained political activism and advocacy on behalf of marginalised communities in Eastern Sudan. Her work created both credibility and

<sup>1</sup> Amoroso, Alessandro Mario. "A Legal Analysis of the Juba Agreement for Peace in Sudan and its Darfur Component." *African Conflict & Peacebuilding Review*, vol. 12 no. 2, 2022, p. 23-48.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Setana Nour, Sudanese women activist and politician, 2026.

constituency. She was not only representing women but representing a region.

Nour's signature is significant because it challenges two common assumptions about women's participation in Sudan's peace processes. First, it challenges the notion that women enter peace negotiations primarily through international pressure or donor-driven gender agendas. Second, it questions the assumption that traditional political and social structures in Sudan inevitably prevent women from advancing into formal political negotiation spaces.

In this case, her participation emerged from locally rooted political legitimacy, as she served as a representative and negotiator for the Eastern Sudan Track and led her delegation during negotiations. This demonstrates that women's entry into formal mediation spaces can also occur through domestic political leadership and constituency-based representation, rather than exclusively through externally facilitated inclusion mechanisms.

The Eastern Sudan sub-agreement ended up being different from other regional sub-agreements. It addresses, in fact, longstanding grievances related to political marginalisation, underdevelopment, and unequal access to resources and services. The provisions emphasise development priorities such as improving education, addressing poverty and unemployment, strengthening local governance, and promoting social inclusion. The track also includes commitments related to women's advancement and participation in development and governance processes.

Her presence in Track I processes therefore has broader implications for women's inclusion in Sudan's peace processes. It highlights how locally grounded representation can open pathways for women's leadership in formal negotiations, while also demonstrating that meaningful participation may depend not only on international advocacy for gender inclusion but also on political legitimacy within local constituencies and negotiation structures.

## THE ROLLBACK OF GAINS MADE BY SUDANESE WOMEN

Efforts to halt the civil war started almost as soon as the war itself. One of the first efforts to bring the SFA and the RSF to the negotiation table was represented by the Jeddah Talks, which began in May 2023 (after the war broke out in April of the same year). They were organised by Saudi Arabia and the United States. The talk's main result was the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect Civilians signed on May 11, 2023<sup>3</sup>. This declaration called for a ceasefire for humanitarian access, civilians protection, and work towards a permanent ceasefire. Women were not included in the Jeddah talks, however, and the document neglected to address gender-specific needs and concerns. The agreement lasted only seven days, after which the two parties began fighting again.

WPS commitments were not reflected in the Jeddah Talks. This happened even though the US has remained committed to the various United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) that make up the WPS Agenda (including UNSCR 1325). Yet, as a mediator and sponsor of the Jeddah Talks, the US mostly failed to honour these commitments. Women have, in fact, remained excluded from high-level talks, which were dominated by the military elite and armed groups, nor were they consulted in parallel processes. This occurred despite strong advocacy from Sudanese women's groups and other actors working on the WPS agenda. The main push came from Women Advancing Citizens Security in Sudan (WASS), a platform of Sudanese women's groups. WASS managed to connect with official delegations through online meetings. They raised concerns about conflict-related sexual

violence (CRSV) and proposed language and tools to be included in the ceasefire and negotiation documents.

Advocates from WASS also proposed specific language and mechanisms to be incorporated into ongoing ceasefire and negotiation documents. The key concerns and recommendations raised by WASS included:

- Recognition of CRSV in Ceasefire Agreements. Women emphasised that conflict-related sexual violence must be explicitly acknowledged in ceasefire documents as a violation that requires immediate prevention, monitoring, and response mechanisms.
- Establishment of a Survivor Support and Healing Committee. WASS proposed the creation of a dedicated committee composed of women-led NGOs, trauma and psychosocial experts, legal experts, and representatives from both warring parties. This committee would focus on supporting survivors of sexual violence, coordinating trauma healing services, and ensuring access to legal, system and psychosocial and medical care.
- Women's Participation in Ceasefire Monitoring Mechanisms. The women recommended establishing a ceasefire monitoring mechanism that would include women representatives from both sides of the conflict, ensuring that violations affecting civilians—particularly women and girls—are documented and addressed.

<sup>3</sup> [Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan, 2023.](#)

- **Accountability for Perpetrators of Sexual Violence.** Participants stressed the need for clear accountability mechanisms for individuals responsible for sexual violence during the conflict. They called for (i) legal processes to prosecute perpetrators, and (ii) Responsibility extending beyond direct perpetrators to command-level leadership, which, in their views, would ensure that leaders of armed groups are held accountable for violations committed by their forces.
- **Immediate and Unconditional Humanitarian Access.** WASS also called for immediate, safe, and unconditional access for humanitarian assistance, particularly for survivors of violence and displaced communities who require urgent medical, psychosocial, and protection services.

While WASS provided input that no other actors were providing, and advocated for greater inclusion of gender concerns, their role remained informal and limited. As a result of this exclusion, women's security needs and WPS commitments were not meaningfully reflected in the signed document, and the agreement did not provide concrete protection for women on the ground. Neither the Jeddah Declaration nor the subsequent short-term ceasefire agreement included gender sensitive pillars like protection from sexual violence or, safe passage from war zone for women and children.

The Jeddah Declaration was nevertheless broadly praised and supported as it was approved. After it was signed, several regional and international organisations issued statements welcoming the Jeddah process and calling for the implementation of its commitments. These organisations included the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and the European Union (EU).<sup>4</sup>

However, despite their strong commitments to the WPS agenda under UNSCR 1325, their statements did not address the gender gap in the Jeddah Declaration. They did not clearly recognise the specific needs of women affected by the conflict, nor did they call for the meaningful participation of Sudanese women and women's civil society in the Jeddah negotiations. This reflects a broader pattern in peace processes where negotiations led by the international community focus mainly on armed actors, while women's participation and gender considerations are often ignored.

A second early attempt to resolve the conflict was launched by IGAD in April 2023. The regional organisation proposed a roadmap<sup>5</sup> to help end the fighting in Sudan. IGAD suggested a ceasefire, a meeting of regional leaders, and a political dialogue process that would lead to a civilian-led transition. The roadmap aimed to bring both SAF and RSF to negotiations and restart a political process to return Sudan to civilian rule.

The IGAD roadmap did not include WPS principles. There was no clear mention of women's participation or tools to ensure women were included in the political dialogue, nor were gender-sensitive protection measures built into the framework. There were no specific measures to prevent or respond to CRSV. IGAD did not present gender-sensitive plans for humanitarian response or recovery for displaced women and survivors.

Ultimately, the roadmap presented the same gaps as the Jeddah Declaration. It discussed ceasefire and political transition, but it did not explain how women would be included or protected. Without clear WPS-informed tools—such as women's representation requirements, gender advisors, monitoring systems for sexual violence, and accountability mechanisms—the plan risked repeating the same pattern of male-

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance: "[The Third Meeting of the Expanded Mechanism for the Resolution of the Sudan Conflict](#)", African Union; "[Sudan: Statement by the Spokesperson on the Declaration of Commitment to protect civilians](#)", European Union; "[Joint Statement of Commitments from Jeddah Talks Between Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces](#)", IGAD.

<sup>5</sup> IGAD, "[Communiqué of the 40th Extraordinary Assembly of IGAD Heads of State and Government](#)", 2023.

dominated, military-focused negotiations seen in previous efforts (including the JPA).

July 2023 saw the launch of a third attempt at conflict resolution: the Cairo Summit of Neighbouring States. Convened by Egypt, the summit aimed to coordinate regional approaches to ceasefire efforts and political stabilization. Attendees included Egypt (who hosted the event), Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, the AU, and the League of Arab States.

Sudanese conflicting parties were not themselves direct signatories to the summit's outcome statement, as the meeting primarily involved regional leaders.<sup>6</sup> No Sudanese women representatives were included in the proceedings. The absence of gender language and Sudanese civil society actors highlights a state-centric mediation model that prioritized

regional security coordination over inclusive political dialogue.

In January 2024, the so-called Manana process was launched. The Vice President of the Sovereignty Council, Lieutenant General Kabashi, represented SAF in an informal meeting with RSF representatives in Manama, Bahrain.<sup>7</sup> The meeting was the first in nine months of conflict, and it focused on confidence-building and potential ceasefire frameworks. It was founded and led by a high-level official from SAF, who was, however, later rejected by the chain of command in SAF. The secret nature of Manama rendered it untransparent and exclusionary for civil society and women groups. The talks were not accompanied by an official statement, and no documented outcomes were made public.

## THE ROLE OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIATORS

If the first attempts at mediation left little to no space for ensuring the participation of Sudanese women in peace negotiations (at any level), the outlook began to change in 2024, with the Geneva peace talks.

The Geneva peace talks commenced with a call for ceasefire and a start to a political process, but it evolved into a fragmented mediation process in which SAF declined to attend the talks in Geneva while RSF sent a delegation. The US government, which was leading the initiative,

engaged with SAF in hybrid talks in an effort to secure their participation. Unfortunately, none of these efforts proved successful. They instead resulted in an asymmetrical mediation format. To maintain neutrality, the mediators refrained from engaging formally with RSF in the absence of SAF. They established the Aligned for Advancing Lifesaving and Peace in Sudan (ALPS) group, a forum composed of the US, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, the UN, Switzerland and Saudi Arabia, which aimed to

<sup>6</sup> *Final Communiqué of Sudan's Neighbouring States Summit*, 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Reuters, "[Sudanese warring parties hold first high-level talks in Bahrain](#)", 2024.

facilitate humanitarian coordination despite the stalled ceasefire negotiations.

From the WPS perspective, the Geneva process demonstrated greater openness to gender consultation than several mediation efforts. The US Special Envoy at the time, who was leading the process, was keen to consult women prior to the official talks. With support from the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), he managed to meet over 500 women in hybrid town halls and discuss gender-sensitive peace processes.

Furthermore, the US Department of State and USIP supported 14 Sudanese women to participate in a structured consultation mechanism as part of this mediation space. This cohort of women formed consultation groups, in which they discussed CRSV and broader WPS concerns, and they met in-person with representatives of the ALPS group (including the US, UN, UAE, and Saudi Arabia). However, although the Geneva talks contributed to improved coordination and humanitarian dialogue among donors and stakeholders, they did not result in a ceasefire or a clear formal humanitarian access agreement between the two warring parties.

The inclusion of Sudanese women in consultative mechanisms linked to the Geneva talks illustrates the importance of mediator commitment in shaping participation. The proactive engagement of the lead mediator created space for structured consultations with women's groups, demonstrating that political will at the mediation leadership level can facilitate women's access to high level diplomatic processes. However, this participation remained largely consultative rather than decisional, limiting the extent to which women directly shaped formal ceasefire negotiations.

The US has, historically, played the biggest role in leading mediation processes in Sudan. The US led the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the Darfur Peace Agreement in 2005, the JPA in 2020, and the Geneva talks in 2024. Building on these engagements, the US helped to form the Quad initiative, a diplomatic effort

led, besides the US, also by, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt. The initiative's immediate objective has been to secure a humanitarian ceasefire and facilitate a broader political process aimed at restoring civilian governance.

The Quad operates in coordination with the AU and IGAD. However, progress has been slow due to continued hostilities, deep mistrust between the warring parties, and the diverse interests among regional actors and their influence over the conflict. While diplomatic meetings have produced statements of intent, implementation within Sudan has been constrained by ongoing military offensives and the absence of enforceable compliance mechanisms. Structurally, the Quad reflects a mediation model characterised by strong external leadership and elite bargaining between armed actors. Many Sudanese have concerns that too much focus on external diplomacy sidelines Sudanese civilian forces and civil society actors. This also relates to concerns of inclusivity and domestic legitimisation of the peace process risking enforceable steps toward peace.

In relation to the WPS agenda, there has been minimal visible progress in establishing mechanisms to ensure women's direct participation in peace processes, including ceasefire negotiations and political framework discussions. Discussions have primarily focused on military and political elites, with limited structured engagement of Sudanese women's groups in formal decision making spaces. This reflects a clear gap between international WPS commitments and how the mediation process has been structured and implemented in this high-level initiative.

Most recently, the current US administration has assumed a leading role in diplomacy, engaging regional governments and the warring parties to push for negotiations. However, these efforts have focused mainly on ceasefire arrangements and elite political talks. There is less emphasis on ensuring meaningful participation of Sudanese women's groups in the negotiation framework.

Exclusion of women in the current (US-led) peace efforts in Sudan has raised concerns among peace advocates and practitioners. They argue that with the limited integration of WPS principles into the core design of the Quad process, any political settlement would ignore gender protection issues and exclude women's leadership in Sudan's future transition. It also reflects a broader gap between international normative commitments to women's inclusion and the operational structure of high-level diplomacy in Sudan. As a result, a ceasefire or

peace agreement may not last. Research and comparative peace processes suggest that the meaningful participation of women can broaden negotiation agendas to incorporate community-level and human security perspectives. These factors make agreements more realistic, legitimate, and sustainable. In the absence of such inclusion, ceasefire arrangements risk remaining elite bargains that lack societal grounding and long-term durability.

## THE CONTINUED CHALLENGES OF FACING THE INTEGRATION OF THE WPS IN AGENDA IN MEDIATION EFFORTS

A clear pattern across Sudan's post-revolution peace efforts has been the fragmentation of initiatives. Between 2024 and 2026, mediation efforts remained disjointed, with limited institutionalization of women's participation across tracks. During this period, several regional and international initiatives sought to revive peace efforts in Sudan, reflecting the broader lack of coordination. The AU High-Level Dialogue (February 2025) convened African leaders to promote an African-led response and called for the inclusion of women and youth in political processes. The Quad Joint Statement (September 2025), issued by the UAE, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the US proposed a ceasefire framework and a pathway for political transition. At the same time, the IGAD Ministerial Initiative (September

2025), held on the margins of the UN General Assembly, sought to encourage de-escalation and support an inclusive civilian transition. In parallel, the Sudanese government presented its own proposal for a national ceasefire and political transition to the UN Security Council and the Arab League in 2025.

A further defining feature of post-April 2023 mediation efforts has been the proliferation of parallel tracks led by multiple actors. Initiatives in Jeddah, IGAD, Cairo, Manama, and Geneva, while aimed at halting the war and advancing peace, illustrate the fragmented nature of regional and international engagement in Sudan. These initiatives operated with limited coordination and, at times, in direct competition with one another. This fragmentation weakened international pressure, allowing the parties to

delay or manoeuvre between different platforms instead of committing to one serious peace process. The absence of a unified enforcement mechanism has further undermined compliance and hindered the structured inclusion of civilians, including women, across mediation tracks.

In recent peace initiatives such as the Jeddah talks, the Geneva discussions, and the Quad initiative, humanitarian issues, such as opening safe corridors for aid, protecting hospitals and civilians, and allowing humanitarian organisations to access affected areas, have operated as parallel tracks alongside security

and political negotiations. This approach was intended to build trust between the SAF and RSF and to create temporary humanitarian ceasefires so aid could reach millions of displaced people. While these humanitarian commitments helped bring the parties to the negotiating table and create short-term ceasefire arrangements, their impact has been limited because violations continued and the parties often used ceasefire periods to reposition militarily. As a result, humanitarian diplomacy has helped manage the humanitarian crisis and maintain dialogue, but it has not yet succeeded in securing a durable nationwide ceasefire in Sudan.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sudan's mediation processes between 2020 and 2026 demonstrate a consistent gap between formal commitments to the WPS agenda and its actual implementation in peace negotiations.

While the JPA included provisions for women's participation, women were largely excluded from high-level (Track 1) negotiations, and WPS commitments remained mostly symbolic, lacking operational frameworks, accountability mechanisms, and protection measures, particularly on conflict-related sexual violence.

Following the outbreak of war in 2023, mediation efforts (including Jeddah, IGAD, and other regional initiatives) further marginalised WPS principles. Women were excluded from formal negotiations, gender provisions were absent from key agreements, and there were no mechanisms to address protection, participation, or accountability. Even where women engaged informally, such as through WASS or

consultation platforms, their contributions were not integrated into official outcomes.

The Geneva process (2024) showed some progress through structured consultations with women, highlighting the importance of mediator commitment. However, women's participation remained largely consultative, limiting their influence on ceasefire and political outcomes.

Across all mediation tracks, a broader pattern emerges: externally driven, elite-focused negotiations dominate, with weak inclusion of Sudanese women and limited integration of gender-responsive design, protection measures, and accountability systems. Fragmentation of mediation initiatives and the absence of enforcement mechanisms further undermine WPS implementation.

Despite exclusion, Sudanese women continue to mobilise, advocating for inclusion, protection, and accountability and proposing concrete mechanisms to integrate WPS into ongoing

peace efforts. However, without structural reforms that ensure women's meaningful participation across all mediation stages, Sudan's peace processes risk remaining exclusionary, ineffective, and unsustainable.

While there are no easy solutions to Sudan's ongoing civil war, continued lack of engagement on key themes within the peace process will likely result in far-reaching and deeply negative consequences.

Women's participation is one such key theme. Not only is there widely accepted evidence that

inclusive peace agreements are more effective and last longer, but there is, today, a wide set of best practices and lessons learned, which can be used to inform successful strategies for conflict resolution. As such, while the focus of several of the ongoing efforts may be drawn away from the WPS agenda, those who remain involved in Sudan's ongoing mediation and negotiation efforts should continue to pay attention to the practical considerations, and likely benefits, that will result from ensuring that women are invited into relevant decision-making spaces.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**1) Make—and push for—explicit and formal references to WPS principles .**

International and regional actors working on peace and security should make formal references highlighting their commitments to WPS principles in Sudan's peacemaking efforts. These references should make it harder for conflict parties to evade considering inclusion of gender-specific commitments into temporary and final agreements. The AU and IGAD are particularly well positioned to do this, given their historically strong commitment to the WPS agenda, and the many policy commitments that they already have in place.

**2) Create multiple Track 1 tracks.**

International and regional actors shaping the format and pace of mediation processes—like the ALPS group or the Quad—should focus on bringing back the design used for the JPA, with its parallel yet coordinated regional tracks. Such a design could create multiple Track 1 spaces, and this, in turn, could favour the meaningful participation of women mediators.



[www.peacebuilding.org](http://www.peacebuilding.org)