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Women, Peace and Security Working Group Led by AUB and UN Women Concludes Abu Dhabi Dialogue with White Policy Paper Ahead of UN Security Council Debate

The Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy (AGDA) and the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR), in collaboration with key regional and global partners, concluded the fourth meeting of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Working Group for the Arab States region. Held this September in Abu Dhabi, the dialogue brought together over twenty women peace actors, policy experts, and practitioners from across the region. The convening advanced efforts to align Arab priorities with the global WPS agenda ahead of its 25th anniversary at the United Nations in 2025.

The WPS Working Group is led by the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and UN Women, with support from regional and international partners including the Swedish Dialogue Institute for the Middle East and North Africa (SDI), the Arab Reform Initiative (ARI), the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung MENA (FES), the Middle East Council on Global Affairs (ME Council), and Inclusive Peace. The working group benefits from funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

This dialogue marked another vital step in strengthening regional ownership of the WPS agenda and contributed to representing the diverse perspectives and priorities of the Arab world in the global discourse on women, peace, and security.

One of the key outcomes of the meeting was the finalization of a regional white policy paper. Developed through a series of consultations held throughout 2024 and 2025, the document outlines shared priorities and practical recommendations to strengthen the implementation of the WPS agenda. It is set to be presented during the United Nations Security Council Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security in October 2025.

"This meeting ensured Arab women's voices are central to peacebuilding efforts," said Dr. Mohammed Al Dhaheri, deputy director general of the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy (AGDA). "The Arab region brings a wealth of lived experiences and hard-won lessons to global peacebuilding, and our region's collective insights can help shape more grounded, effective, and lasting solutions. AGDA is committed to being at the heart of these conversations, which is why we co-hosted the working group's fourth meeting on our campus this week."

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"The region offers many positive examples of women empowerment in the field of peace, with the United Arab Emirates standing out as a model in enabling women to play an active and constructive role within their society and beyond," added Dr. Ebtesam Al Teneiji, advisor for strategic affairs at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR).

The white paper assesses the current landscape of WPS implementation in the region. It acknowledges progress, including the adoption of national action plans and growing visibility of women in peacebuilding. However, it also identifies gaps, areas requiring urgent attention, such as the underrepresentation of women in decision-making roles, limited accountability for policy implementation, and the need for locally relevant approaches to address the impact of conflict and occupation on women and girls.

"The adoption of this white policy paper is a landmark achievement for the Arab region. It reflects the voices of women peacebuilders and policy leaders who are charting a path toward more inclusive and locally grounded peace processes," said Dr. Moez Doraid, regional director for UN Women in Arab States. "As we approach the 25th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, this collective vision from the region will be essential in informing global debates and ensuring that commitments translate into real impact for women and girls affected by conflict."

"By centering women's leadership and forging regional partnerships, the WPS Regional Hub is working to ensure the Women, Peace and Security agenda remains dynamic, responsive and grounded in the realities of our region," added Karma Ekmekji, lead advisor for the WPS Regional Hub at the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at AUB.

With the adoption of the white policy paper, the working group now turns to global advocacy ahead of key forums in October 2025 and throughout the WPS agenda's anniversary year, aiming to influence high-level discussions and policy directions for a more effective, regionally tailored implementation of the WPS agenda.

ENDS

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 790 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 9000 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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