

Press Release

First Regional Forum “Advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA)” under the patronage of H.E. Wafaa Bani Mostafa, Jordan’s Minister of Social Development and Head of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Women’s Empowerment

7th of May 2025 Amman

EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI), under the patronage of H.E. Ms. Wafaa Bani Mostafa, Jordan’s Minister of Social Development and the Head of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Women’s Empowerment, held the first Regional Forum, “Advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA),” on 6-7 May 2025 in Amman, Jordan. The event was organised within the framework of the regional project “Strengthening Feminist CSOs for the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine,” funded by the Support Fund for Feminist Organisations of the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. The project is implemented in partnership with EFI member organisations in the four countries.

The Forum marked a key step in advancing regional collaboration among feminist civil society organisations (CSOs) and women-led community-based organisations (CBOs). It aimed to follow up on progress made in the implementation of the WPSA, identify existing gaps and barriers, and address both country-specific and shared regional challenges, particularly regarding the role and engagement of women-led CSOs in the implementation and monitoring processes. The 2024 Regional Index on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and the Regional Guidelines on the implementation of the WPSA served as tools to assess achievements and inform recommendations for concrete actions.

At the opening session, Ms. Lilian Halls-French, political advisor to EFI, highlighted the importance of implementing the WPSA and the long-standing work of EFI in advocating for women’s participation and leadership in peacebuilding and policy-making processes. “From the multi-year regional campaign on Zero Tolerance for VAWG, to the Regional Index documenting laws and public services, and the first National Action Plan (NAP) on United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in the MENA region, EFI has remained fully and consistently engaged in combating all forms of violence against women. The Regional Guidelines on the implementation of the WPSA, developed through wide national and regional consultations, reaffirm that the participation of women’s rights organisations is essential at all levels and in all stages of the process.”

H.E. Mr. Alexis Le Cour Grandmaison, French Ambassador to Jordan, emphasised France’s firm commitment to women’s rights and to supporting the role of feminist CSOs in advancing the implementation of the WPSA across the region. He stated: “France remains resolute in its support for the full and equal participation of women in all stages of peace processes, conflict prevention, and reconstruction. Gender equality is not only a goal—it is a prerequisite for lasting peace. This Forum aligns closely with France’s feminist diplomacy strategy, which places gender equality at the heart of our foreign policy and development cooperation, particularly through the AFD. France will continue to stand by feminist CSOs and national partners, especially in contexts marked by grave human rights violations, such as those affecting women and girls in Gaza and the West Bank.”

In his remarks, delivered on behalf of H.E. Ms. Wafaa Bani Mostafa, Dr. Ahmad Abu Haidar, Assistant Secretary General at the Ministry of Social Development, expressed deep appreciation for the resilience of Palestinian women in the face of ongoing war crimes and collective punishment in Gaza and the West Bank. He commended EFI for its long-standing commitment to advancing the WPSA and for its leadership in coordinating regional and national efforts. He stated: “This Forum highlights the critical role of women in building peace and stability, and the importance of enabling their active participation in leadership, policymaking, and development. The WPSA is not only a global commitment but also a national priority in Jordan, and our government has taken concrete steps to advance women's rights, including constitutional reforms, legislative amendments, and economic empowerment programmes. We welcome the continued partnership with feminist civil society to push this agenda forward and ensure that peace and security efforts are inclusive, equitable, and grounded in human rights.”

The following high-level panel, “Progress Made in the Implementation of the WPSA in the Current Context and Stakeholders’ Commitments,” provided the space for stakeholders and policymakers to reflect on and evaluate the process of developing, implementing and monitoring the NAPs for UNSCR 1325, as well as other tools supporting the implementation of WPSA, such as the Regional Index on VAWG, in which all countries involved in the project participate. Main challenges faced, lessons learned, and best practices from each context were shared, along with key recommendations for advancing the WPSA at both national and regional levels.

Mr. Hanna Nakhleh, Advisor to the Minister of Women’s Affairs for the National Observatory on VAWG, Palestine, provided a general evaluation of the process of developing and implementing the two NAPs in Palestine, and highlighted key lessons learned and best practices from the Palestinian context.

Ms. Hana Gorgis, Director General of the Department of Women's Affairs in the Presidency of the Republic of Iraq, emphasised how Iraq’s inclusion in the Regional Index on VAWG has served as a tool to support the implementation of the WPSA in the country. It has enabled data collection and facilitated coordinated action among stakeholders and women’s rights organisations. She emphasised the importance of combating VAWG as central to the implementation of the WPSA.

Dr. Khanzad Ahmed, Secretary-General of the High Council of Women Development in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I), elaborated on the lessons learned from the development, implementation and monitoring of the WPSA in the KR-I, noting that Iraq is a leading country in this regard.

Dr. Huda Ayash, Director of the Policies and Observation Unit at the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), provided her evaluation of the process of developing and implementing the two NAPs in Jordan, including key lessons learned.

During the two days of the Forum, participants identified gaps and challenges in the implementation of the WPSA and raised specific concerns related to their national contexts. They discussed the critical role civil society can play in shaping legislation and policymaking, with a focus on best practices and lessons learned from across the region. Drawing on concrete examples, the discussion highlighted how women-led organisations have successfully mobilised grassroots movements and diverse actors to influence policy agendas, as in Lebanon, engage decision-makers, and drive reforms in favour of women’s rights as in Jordan.

Panellists reflected on several key shared challenges—such as conservative resistance, co-optation, and the limited civic space available to civil society— and shared strategies for overcoming these and continuing effective advocacy. Among these strategies were coalition-building, coordinated advocacy efforts, solidarity actions and support, raising awareness and engaging broader human rights and peace movements in WPSA-related advocacy.

Moreover, academics and researchers, alongside civil society actors and other stakeholders, explored how evidence, data collection and research can inform advocacy efforts, shape policy development and promote the implementation of the WPSA. From strengthening women’s participation in peacebuilding in the Palestinian context, to enhancing women’s economic participation in Jordan, addressing VAWG in Iraq, and fostering strategic collaboration between civil society, academia, and policymakers in Lebanon, participants discussed examples of local and national initiatives that have contributed to advancing the WPSA.

The role of feminist CSOs was highlighted, and mutual learning was strengthened through regional and cross-regional exchanges of experience. Key lessons learned and best practices from the development, implementation and monitoring of the WPSA in West and Central Africa were shared.

Using a participatory approach and group work, participants identified concrete recommendations to advance the implementation of the WPSA, with a focus on the important role of civil society in implementing and monitoring the WPSA at local, national and international levels.

In her closing remarks, Boriana Jonsson, Executive Director of EFI, summarised key recommendations from the two days of deliberations. She emphasised the importance of reinforcing solidarity, collective action, and mutual learning across countries and regions to accelerate the implementation of the WPSA at the national level and to enhance policy development. Among the main outcomes of the discussions, she highlighted the value of cross-border exchange of experiences and joint advocacy efforts, which can help amplify women’s voices, strengthen accountability mechanisms, and ensure a more coordinated and impactful implementation of WPSA commitments.

Participants unanimously agreed on the important role that women-led CSOs play in developing awareness-raising and media campaigns to promote the meaningful engagement of women in peacebuilding processes at all levels and in decision-making. They issued key recommendations, including:

- Strengthen dialogue between civil society, governments and decision-makers, academics, and experts to work together to advance the WPSA.
- Enhance mutual learning and exchange of experiences at national, regional and cross-regional levels to identify common challenges, lessons learned and best practices.
- Provide solidarity and strengthen coordination and collective advocacy among feminist CSOs, women-led CBOs, networks, experts, academia and others.



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About EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI):

EuroMed Feminist Initiative is a policy platform that provides expertise in the field of equality between women and men and women's rights as inseparable from democracy building and citizenship, and advocates for political solutions to all conflicts, and for the right of peoples to self-determination.