

Women in Mediation

The Turkey antenna of the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN) has been founded on 29–30 June 2019, as the second antenna of the MWMN. It started its activities before the launch and continues to work for conflict resolution in Turkey since that day. Here we define the mediation concept and its meaning and context in our activities and actions to support women in mediation processes.

Mediation is a 3rd party conflict resolution method to settle disputes and conflicts. It is applied international, national and local conflicts in which assisted by one or more neutral third parties in their efforts towards resolution. Mediation can be applied in different forms depending on the role and responsibilities of the mediator and the expected outcome to reach by the parties. It is also the most commonly used method in conjunction with negotiation. According to International Crisis Behavior (ICB) data, of the 434 international crises that occurred between 1918 and 2001, 128 experienced some form of mediation. (Çelik, 2017) While this is only a 30 percent rate of incidence during the entire period, when focusing on the post-cold war era where it is observed that 46 percent of all crises were mediated. Generally, mediation means that a third party brings together conflicting parties to find a solution and/or to reach a settlement. In most of the cases, mediation process requires the consent of conflicting parties.

As the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, we know that the mediation supports the active and consent-based participation of the parties. Thus, it is also important to note that its constructive and facilitative characteristic are effective in supporting the parties to reach a resolution agreed and accepted by all parties.

We launched our network to ensure equal, active, effective, and full participation of women in all mediation processes (pre, during and post) as well as the pre-mediation preparation stages where the parties come together more non-formal settings. It is also equally important to ensure women participation during and after the mediation processes.

For us, mediation is a conflict resolution method that respects the principles set out in international agreements and frameworks (neutrality, honesty, equality, merit, non-coercive, consensual, etc.), supports the participation of women and women's organizations in equal, active, effective and complete conflict, and above all peace processes apply the principle of gender equality and gender-sensitive conflict resolution.

We, as the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, absolutely is against all forms of violence in the process of mediation and/or any non-compliance solution. In particular, we stand against all the visible and invisible forms of violence that women and other groups may face in mediation.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security:

United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security 31 October 2000. UNSCR 1325 specifically addresses the impact of war on women and the importance of women's full and equal participation in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response, and post-conflict reconstruction. The resolution also calls for special measures to protect women and girls from conflict-related sexual violence and outlines gender-related responsibilities of the United Nations in different political areas. UNSCR 1325 contains four pillars: participation, prevention, protection, and resolution-recovery.

Following the UNSCR 1325, many decisions have been taken that promote peacemaking and peacebuilding process in conflict and post-conflict situations. UNSCR 1325 also has uplifted and promoted active participation of women in all conflict resolution processes. Beyond, it has enabled many different decisions to be taken considering violence, harassment and abuse that women and girls in particular suffer before, during and after conflicts.

Following UNSCR 1325, the UN Security Council has adopted nine additional resolutions on Women Peace and Security, the most recent in October 2019. These resolutions are often referred to as belonging to two sets of categories. The first group promotes women's active and effective participation in peacemaking and peacebuilding: SCR 1325 (2000), SCR 1889 (2013), SCR 2122 (2013), SCR 2242 (2015), and SCR 2493 (2019). The second one, beginning with the adoption of SCR 1820 in 2008, aims to prevent and address conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV): S/RES/1820 (2008), S/RES/1888 (2009), S/RES/1960 (2010), S/RES/2106 (2013), and S/RES/2467 (2019).

As the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network, we are established to support the participation of women and all interested parties in the implementation and follow-up of aforementioned UN resolutions in peace and conflict processes on the basis of gender equality and gender-sensitive mediation. As Turkey Antenna, we furthermore aim to work for ensuring active participation of women in mediation processes and peace-making practices in the Mediterranean region in communication with women's organizations and networks in other countries.

Impact of Women's Participation in Mediation Process

Numerous institutions around the world study the impact on mediation and peace processes on women and women empowerment along with how the processes indeed strengthen gender equality or deepen gender inequalities. Indeed, UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. According to UN Women, Women's leadership contributes to creation of an effective and gender-responsive processes where the diverse needs and interests of groups in conflict are sustained fairly. With that evidently it has proved that women's participation has paved the way for gender-sensitive humanitarian response and peacebuilding. Therefore, it goes beyond just ending conflicts and crises while protecting the interests and needs of all parties, and strengthening post-conflict economic and social recovery. (UN Women, 2015)

A wide range of research is available on women's participation in mediation and peace processes. While most of these studies show that women are not actively involved in conflict resolution processes, some challenges are also noted as follows:

- from 1990 to 2000, only 11 percent of peace agreements (17 out of 664) included at least one reference to women
- out of the 504 agreements signed since the adoption of UNSCR 1325, only 138 (27 percent) included references to women
- between 1992 and 2011 only 4 percent of signatories and less than 10% of negotiators are women at the peace negotiations.

By taking all these figures into consideration, with UNSCR 1325 and subsequent initiatives, women have become more active, especially in mediation and peace processes. According to UNWOMEN, women's involvement and commitment to peace has proved its impact on the durability of peace by 33%.

Consequently, the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network continues to its activities at national and international levels to implement UNSCR 1325 on the basis of gender equality and human rights.

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