

# HRC38: WILPF STATEMENT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSISTENT GENDER ANALYSIS IN SYRIA

June 28, 2018

Sexual and gender-based violence has been a persistent issue in Syria since the uprising in 2011 and it has been used to instill fear, humiliate and punish, with grave and disproportionate impact on women and girls. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom welcomes the Commission of Inquiry's report "[I lost my dignity": Sexual and gender-based violence in the Syrian Arab Republic](#) (A/HRC/37/CRP.3) released on 15 March 2018. WILPF Secretary General Madeleine Rees and London School of Economics and Political Science Emerita Professor of International Law Christine Chinkin described the report as ground-breaking and a significant departure from previous Commission's reports often lacking a more gender-sensitive analysis. More of their analysis can be found in a the [commentary](#) released in May 2018.

Despite the fact that the report showed consistent analysis on the profound and lasting impact of sexual and gender-based violence on those who endure it, two reports released by the Commission after this, namely the report [Sieges as weapons of war: Encircle, starve, surrender, evacuate](#) and the [update on Eastern Ghouta](#) (A/HRC/38/CRP.3), showed that a gender-sensitive approach has not been consistently applied.

In the occasion of the 38th session of the Human Rights Council, WILPF delivered a joint statement with SRI during the interactive dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry, urging the Commission to consistently apply a gender-sensitive approach to its work.

Download a PDF version of the statement [here](#)

You can listen to the statement at HRC38 [here](#) (minute: 00:52:55)

*UN Human Rights Council 38th session (18 June to 6 July 2018)*

## ***Item 4. Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Syria***

I speak on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Action Canada for Population and Development. The Sexual Rights Initiative supports this statement.

Sexual and gender-based violence has been a persistent issue in Syria since the uprising in 2011 and it has been used to instil fear, humiliate and punish, with grave and disproportionate impact on women and girls.

In March this year, the Commission of Inquiry released a report on sexual and gender-based violence. The report is ground-breaking and a significant departure from previous Commission's reports often lacking a more gender-sensitive analysis. The report brings to the forefront the complexities of such violence in conflict-affected areas over a drawn-out period of time. In so doing, it shows that all those who are made vulnerable by the conflict and the power dynamics within it are affected by such violence, and the differential way in which they are affected. Our organisations urge Human Rights Council members and observer States to ensure that Commission's findings and recommendations in that report be addressed fully in the resolutions and meaningful follow-up be given to them.

In this framework, we urge States to take holistic action to protect women and girls in Syria and in refugee hosting countries and to prevent the exacerbation of the ongoing violence committed against them. This should happen through addressing both individual criminal responsibility and state responsibility for the widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, as well as through targeted sanctions against all perpetrators listed in the Commission of Inquiry's report.

Despite the fact that the report on sexual and gender-based violence showed consistent analysis on the profound and lasting impact of sexual and gender-based violence on those who endure it, the two reports released afterwards, namely the 'Sieges as weapons of war' report and the update on Eastern Ghouta, show that a gender-sensitive approach has not been consistently applied. We urge the Commission to adopt a consistent gender-sensitive approach throughout its work, as this is a crucial element of documenting human rights violations and ensuring that the fulsome extent of those violations is captured.