

Women Wage Peace: Goals, Strategies, Action Plan for 2017

WOMEN WAGE PEACE is an inclusive non-partisan grass-roots movement in Israel, whose goal is to our neighbors. We are therefore working diligently to build broad public support and to demand that our leaders take bold steps that will lead to the signing of a political agreement.

In just two years of operation, WWP HAS BECOME THE LARGEST WOMEN'S GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT EVER in Israel with more than 8,000 members and over 20,000 supporters worldwide.

WOMEN WAGE PEACE was launched in the summer of 2014, following Operation Protective Edge, the last war with Gaza. Our more than 8,000 members hold diverse political views and come from the center, left and right. We are Jewish, Arab and Druze; religious and secular; veteran Israelis and immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia; residents from the center of the country and from the periphery. Together, we have succeeded in creating a dialogue based on what we have in common, as opposed to what divides us, a dialogue that unites us as women, citizens, mothers, sisters, spouses, indeed as human beings.

In our 22 months of existence, we have built a network now including 17 regional coordinators, 21 teams (work groups) and an organizational infrastructure. Our all-volunteer activists carry out multiple local and regional activities along with creative national projects that have attracted international media attention. Our non-hierarchical movement has a rotating steering committee and a 100-member supervisory committee.

Surveys in both Israel and the West Bank show that both populations wish to cease the endless rounds of violence that have led them to lose hope for any future change. **WWP** refuses to surrender to such despair. Just as other seemingly insolvable conflicts in the world have been resolved, we are convinced that our conflict, too, can end.

Goals and Objectives

WWP has one over-riding goal – **to reach a non-violent, honorable and bilaterally or regionally acceptable political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict** – and 3 objectives:

- > grow our numbers and diversity significantly to reach a critical mass which the government cannot ignore

- > influence the Israeli government to make a diplomatic agreement its top priority

> increase the number of women involved in the peace process [As mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 1325, to which Israel was the first signatory. Signatories now number close to 50 countries and several regional organizations, including the EU and NATO.]

Action Plan to Reach our Objectives

1. recruiting women from a broad political spectrum via parlor meetings, lectures, public events, screenings of *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*, about the success of Liberian women to end a protracted civil war

2. training women to become peace activists via ***Building a Shared Future: Women Leading the Way to Peace and Security***, a 2-year EU grant to **WWP** in partnership with the Adam Institute and Itach-Maki to train 500 women from diverse groups throughout the country who will, in turn, recruit women in their respective communities. The training introduces women gender perspectives on peace and security for the purpose of widening the circles of women ready to speak out and make decisions in these areas.

3. enlisting public personas, local leaders, speakers and media outlets to our cause

4. spreading our message through on-going events in the public domain (on main roads in cities, Friday markets, traffic intersections, in front of cabinet ministers' homes)

5. meeting with politicians of all political orientations (for example, following our 50-day shared fast last summer, PM Benjamin Netanyahu and President Abu Mazen each invited us to meet)

6. publishing articles, reports, and op-eds

7. organizing round tables to promote reconciliation, mutual listening, understanding and partnership among women of differing affiliations

8. establishing strong relationships with Palestinian women leaders

9. generating a strong internet presence via YouTube clips, Facebook activity, our website, Twitter, etc.

10. carrying out large-scale events in the public domain:

while Prime Minister Netanyahu spoke to the US Congress in March 2015, 3,000 **WWP** members marched to the Knesset, where movement representatives made an alternative speech of hope hundreds of our members greeted Members of Knesset outside the swearing-in ceremony of the newly-elected government with a personal message to each and every

MK: "Peace is in your hands" to mark the one-year anniversary of the last war in Gaza, **WWP** held a 50-day fast in 2015 in front of the Prime Minister's residence attended by thousands, gaining us broad media coverage

The MARCH OF HOPE: Stepping up the Public Struggle for Peace

WWP's next mega-activity is our **March of Hope**. From **4 –19 Oct 2016** many thousands will march to Jerusalem from across the country demanding a safe future for us, our children and our grandchildren. With our feet, we will awaken hope in a better future, which we know is possible.

Local marches and related events will take place all over the country, including a festive event at *Neve Shalom* with Liberian Nobel Peace Prize laureate Leymah Gbowee.

Through our partnership with **Forward Global Women**, solidarity events will be held in *Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco*. To date, other partnerships will bring our message to Jordan, France, and the United States. A joint march with Palestinian women will reach the Dead Sea, starting in Jericho and at the Allenby Bridge crossing. On **Oct 19** all the women, men, and children marching for peace will meet at Sacher Park in central Jerusalem and march to the residences of the President and Prime Minister to voice the following specific demands:

1. establishment of a government office of Peace and Reconciliation
2. establishment of a Peace Cabinet tasked with developing a strategic plan for peace that will report publicly, on a monthly basis, steps taken to advance the peace process
3. establishment of a Peace Department in the Prime Minister's Office responsible for resolving security crises through political means when possible
4. significant integration of women in all relevant governmental bodies and negotiation teams, as mandated by UNSC Resolution 1325 and Israel's National Action Plan for implementation of SCR 1325

The YEAR AFTER: an Action Plan for the Year Following the March of Hope

Our strategy involves using the momentum created by the **March of Hope** to launch a well-coordinated action plan aimed at achieving our above goals. This plan includes

1. organizing monitoring committees who will exert ongoing pressure to promote the implementation of our demands

2. enhancing our media/PR team to initiate sophisticated media and communication campaigns promoting the above, including via social networks
3. creating highly visible field actions aimed at keeping our demands front and center before the Israeli public, including an ongoing presence in public spaces as well as various symbolic displays in central locations (e.g., children's peace-themed artwork, mothers singing for peace), "peace guards" at strategic locations (ministers' residences, army recruiting offices, etc.)
4. forming alliances with other social protest groups sharing our vision
5. holding conferences on peace-related issues such as economic/social/educational development following implementation of a peace agreement
6. generating out-of-the-box actions such as the movement's launch on a 'Peace Train' to Sderot

WWP's Unique Approach

While veteran peace organizations adopt and lobby for a particular political solution, we have purposely adopted the strategy of not backing a specific peace plan. By calling upon the government to negotiate a non-violent, honorable and bilaterally or regionally acceptable political solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we increase the likelihood of recruiting members from a broad political spectrum.

We understand that Israel is a thoroughly militarized society. Many decision makers are retired (male) generals whose background heavily influences their decisions and their views of national security as military security. (Women are more inclined to define human security in broader terms.) We are giving voice to a cultural shift that replaces the tired paradigm of relying on war to bring about peace with a paradigm relying on negotiation, not war, to bring about political agreements providing true security. Significant work is required to ensure that this voice becomes integral in national decision-making processes. Fortunately, nearly 15 years ago the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1325 calling for increased participation of women in peace-making and peace-building as well as greater involvement in strengthening civil society. **WWP** has begun to train women for these tasks, including women from communities not traditionally represented in peace initiatives. We believe a strong women's movement has the power to break current dichotomies in Israeli society – right/ left; secular/religious; Ashkenazi/Mizrachi; veteran citizens/new immigrants – and bring together a large group of women and men inspired by a different voice with a fresh perspective.

We are inspired by the "Four Mothers" movement that arose in the late 1990s to push the Israeli government to withdraw from Lebanon as well as by

<http://womenwagepeace.org.il/en/goals-strategies-action-plan-2017/>

women who have ended long-standing conflicts in countries around the world such as in Ireland, Uganda, the Philippines, Liberia, and Sri Lanka. As is true of women in other high conflict zones, we have agreed to cooperate with all relevant existing initiatives on the ground.

Our diverse membership is well-equipped to promote our objectives, with teams of committed volunteers addressing specific facets of our mission. While a number of women are leaders from different sectors of Israeli society, including business, academia, the arts, and the civic sector, *all* members contribute added value in different ways, including expertise in conflict resolution, education, philosophy, corporate responsibility, public relations, management, etc. **And we are determined: we will not rest until an agreement is reached.**