



## CSW58 Event Bosnia to Syria: Women & Conflict: Sharing Lessons and Strategy

13 March 2014, 6 – 7.30 pm

**Organized by:** CUNY School of Law, WILPF, MADRE, Rutgers Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), Kvinna till Kvinna

**Participants:** Madeleine Rees (WILPF Secretary General), Barbro Svedberg (WILPF MENA Project Manager) Abigail Disney (Filmmaker) Radhika Balakrishnan (Center for Women's Global Leadership), Liesl Gerntholtz (Human Rights Watch)

On the evening of Thursday March 14 WILPF's Secretary General Madeleine Rees was awarded the 2014 CUNY School of Law Dean's Social Justice Award in recognition of her leading legacy of advocating for women's human rights in the context of conflict. The event started with a video documentary of women

peacemakers from around the world thanking Rees for her courage, leadership, and inspiration. It then provided space for an acclaimed panel to reflect on Madeleine's impact on their own work for gender justice, equality, and peace.



All of the speakers honored and thanked Rees for the work she has done for women all over the world. Human Rights Watch Executive Director of the Women's Rights Division Liesl

Gerntholtz appreciated Rees for always creating space for women to talk to other women, from the grassroots level to diplomats and everywhere inbetween. Acclaimed filmmaker Abigail Disney said that she knew that Madeleine was a visionary and a genius when she met her. Center for Women's Global

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Leadership (CWGL) Executive Director Radhika Balakrishnan affirmed Madeleine's and WILPF as "radical partners" for peace.

After the reflections, CUNY School of Law Dean Michelle Anderson invited Rees to the stage and presented her with the Social Justice Award. Anderson asked her about her experience and recommendations for moving peace processes forward in Syria. Rees highlighted how women are not only victims of war but have a vital role to include their knowledge in peace processes and should be the architects of peace. She described the exclusion of women



in Bosnia peace processes as an archetypical example of how excluding women closes the space for women's participation and rights through a victim narrative that is extraordinarily difficult to take back. Rees said it is critical to build on lessons from Bosnia in Syria, including by pushing for Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi to have a high level gender advisor on his team -- a gap until now that has most likely contributed to the exclusion of women in the peace talks.

Following the celebratory video, panel, and discussion, was a reception attended by many friends and colleagues.