

BRIDGING THE GAP: INTEGRATING WOMEN-LED INITIATIVES INTO PEACE NEGOTIATION AND MEDIATION IN THE IGAD REGION

Nimo Jirdeh | Dr. Fatuma Ali | Ali Ibrahim



Bridging the Gap: Integrating Women-Led Initiatives into Peace Negotiation and Mediation in the IGAD region

BRIDGING THE GAP: INTEGRATING WOMEN-LED INITIATIVES INTO PEACE NEGOTIATION AND MEDIATION IN THE IGAD REGION

Abstract

In the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region, women have consistently led transformative efforts, uniting communities, promoting inclusive dialogue, and addressing the root causes of conflict. Despite their critical role in conflict prevention, post-conflict peacebuilding, and fostering long-term development, women's meaningful participation in formal peace processes remains largely limited to the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS). Progress toward expanding women's representation in peace processes at national and continental levels has been insufficient, not due to a lack of activism, but because of the exclusionary nature of formal platforms.

Grassroots women-led initiatives play a vital role in conflict prevention and resolution through community-focused dialogues, advocacy, and calls for ceasefires. However, these efforts are often excluded from formal (track 1) peace processes, which lack the flexibility and tools to effectively engage local women's movements. As a result, women's contributions at the grassroots level fail to influence policy and decision-making in formal regional peace and security settings.

A particularly striking absence is seen in peace negotiations and mediation, where women's involvement remains minimal despite their extensive experience in the field. This policy paper explores the reasons behind the exclusion of women-led initiatives from formal peace negotiations and mediation processes in the Horn of Africa, even after 24 years of recognizing their vital role. The paper provides recommendations to promote a more inclusive, localized peace process that integrates women's lived experiences and leadership.

Introduction

The Horn of Africa, particularly the IGAD region, has always been among the persistent regions of conflict, instability, and socio-political turmoil.¹ Despite these disparate situations, women in this region have played active roles in conflict mediation, social cohesiveness, and peacemaking within and across their borders. Traditionally, their peacebuilding work was confined to the community, where they spearheaded grassroots efforts by trying to lessen tensions, speak up for dialogue, and contribute toward securing social justice. Women have played key roles in mobilizing communities, negotiating ceasefires, and rebuilding societies in the immediate aftermath of conflict.² These contributions have generally been invisible in official settings, as women have remained largely shut out of formal negotiations populated by political and military actors.

Research and practice have shown that the inclusion of women in peace processes brings better outcomes with greater durability. Their ability to forge coalitions, bridge societal divides, and foster community-based trust makes their participation a prerequisite for effective peacebuilding and conflict resolution in the Horn of Africa. Moreover, the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security in 2000 calls for equal participation and full involvement of women in all efforts concerning the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.³ This includes engaging women in the processes of decision-making, protecting their rights in both conflict and post-conflict periods, and a gender perspective included in the mandates of peacekeeping missions. Despite its adoption, the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in the Horn of Africa, particularly among the IGAD member states, has faced many challenges, especially with regard to ensuring the meaningful participation of women in formal peace negotiations and mediation processes.⁴ Women's role often gets confined to informal or grassroots contributions, whereas formal peace processes remain fully men-dominated, which significantly reduces the impact and visibility of the implementation of women-led initiatives for attaining sustainable peace.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the reasons behind the exclusion of women-led initiatives from formal negotiation and mediation processes and to examine the strategies that can integrate them to promote an inclusive, localized peace framework that captures their lived experience and leadership in the IGAD region. It also aims to analyze the impact of the inclusion of women in peace processes to promote gender-responsive rules-based cooperation among the IGAD member states. This policy paper employed a qualitative research method, and data was collected using a desk review of existing literature.

¹ Birhan, "Conflict Dynamics in the Horn of Africa."

² Odary, Komba, and Nyamato, "Reviewing the Role of Women Pastoralist in Conflicts in the Horn of Africa."

³ United Nations, "United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), S/RES/1325 (2000) | She Stands For Peace."

⁴ Ilesanmi, "UNSCR 1325 and African Women in Conflict and Peace."

2. Contextualizing Women's Role and Contributions in Peace Processes in the IGAD region

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) plays a pivotal role in promoting peace, prosperity, and regional integration among its eight member states: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. Since its inception, IGAD has been committed to advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) through its Gender Strategy 2016-2020 (Volume 1) and the Gender Strategy Implementation Plan 2016-2020 (Volume 2). These strategies recognize the critical role women play in economic growth, poverty reduction, and development effectiveness, emphasizing that gender equality is essential for the socio-economic and political transformation of both the region and Africa as a whole. However, the region has been characterized by protracted conflicts in Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Somalia sustained through years of betrayal, ethnic divides, and tussles of several political forces as well as competition for resources.⁵ Power struggle in Sudan and conflict in the Tigray Region of Ethiopia have devastated the region and displaced thousands. Although peace treaties were made, South Sudan is still wracked with violence due to power-sharing differences, intercommunal conflicts, and incomplete implementations of peace processes. Generalized insecurity, extremist groups, an internal breakdown in the political domain, and clan conflicts are all contributing negatively to peacebuilding processes in Somalia.

While women from across the IGAD region have, over the years, developed significant work in the grassroots for peace, their contributions have been systematically excluded from the formal peace process dominated by the male political and military elites.⁶ In Ethiopia, women-led organizations have mediated community reconciliations; in South Sudan, they have organized campaigns for cease-fires, facilitated local dialogues, and supported humanitarian needs. In this respect, women in Somalia tried to interfere in clan conflicts and protect civilians. Their grassroots activities are very important but such contribution at the official level of peace negotiations remains practically invisible, not being inclusive enough to actively mobilize local women's movements.⁷

Women are de facto excluded from formal peace processes and, therefore, undermine efforts toward sustainable peace in the IGAD region. These biases run so deep within political structures that women's contributions and views are sidetracked as irrelevant to conflict resolutions. For genuinely durable peace, women need full participation, their leadership at the helm of decision-making, and recognition of their grassroots efforts at national and regional levels. Secondly, the expansion and localization of the peace process will ensure that no corner is left unheard, and the voices of the women will lead to a resilient IGAD region.

⁵ Abebe, Adamtey, and Owusu-Ansah, "UNDERSTANDING PROTRACTED RESOURCE-BASED CONFLICTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA."

⁶ African Union, "Women Play Significant Roles in Peacebuilding Efforts Bringing Communities Together. | African Union."

⁷ AFSC, "Inclusion of Women in Peacebuilding Processes (Negotiation and Mediation): Women's Peace and Security Agenda."

2.1 The Role of Women in Peace Processes

Throughout the IGAD region, women have been instrumental in facilitating grassroots peace processes through leading roles in community-based dialogues, peace advocacy, and calls for ceasefires. Grassroots initiatives by women are integral to conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict recovery. Women in the respective conflict-affected communities are demonstrating remarkable leadership and resilience in organizing activities that foster social cohesion and address the causes of violence.

For example, in Ethiopia, women themselves have facilitated community dialogues as part of efforts to reconcile different ethnic groups. This can be a dialogue where different ethnic or conflicted divides come together, understand each other, de-escalate tensions, and try to coexist.⁸ They have also played influential roles in mobilizing calls for ceasefires when formal actors are unable or unwilling to declare them, such as in South Sudan. Women have also relentlessly been working in South Sudan to provide support to survivors with counseling, protection, and advocacy for justice.⁹ In Somalia, the women have mediated clan disputes, one of the major sources of conflict in the country.¹⁰

These women-initiated programs were also involved in peace education amongst the youth and other vulnerable groups to prevent them from being recruited into extremist groups like al-Shabaab. By emphasizing community-based solutions and capitalizing on their social networks, women have been in a position to mobilize grassroots support for peace while ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable in the population are met. While excluded from most of the formal processes that brought peace, women-led initiatives have played an instrumental role in the building of trust and reconciliation, reduction of tensions between communities, and addressing the root causes of the conflict. Quite often, it is inclusive and community-based, with attention to the everyday needs of people suffering conflict, and hence, indispensable actors in the wider panorama of peacebuilding.

2.2 The Contribution of Women-Led Initiatives to the Peace Process

Women have led several grassroots peace initiatives in the IGAD region through community-based dialogue, peace rallies, and ceasefire calls. Indeed, such women's initiatives can play a great role in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict recovery. Women of the affected communities demonstrate leadership in marshaling the activities that ensure social cohesion and help resolve the root causes of violence.

In this respect, women in Ethiopia serve as leading players throughout the process of community dialogue through which the varied ethnic groups come together. In such dialogue, mutual understanding, reducing tensions, and coexistence in communities torn apart by conflict would be the aim.

⁸ Eyayu, "Gender and Conflict Management."

⁹ Buchanan, No Simple Solutions.

¹⁰ Rayale, "Transitional Justice, Peace and Everyday Reality: Somaliland's Experience with Justice and Security-Sector Reform."

Indeed, their call for a ceasefire has been heard in South Sudan, where more formal actors have not. They have been acting side by side in South Sudan with the survivors of violence, through counseling, protection, and in pursuit of justice. They have been at the fore of the reconciliation process of clan disputes, arguably considered the most fundamental sources of conflict in Somalia. Other women-led initiatives address peace education, primarily targeting the youth and other vulnerable groups as a means of preventing recruitment by extremist groups such as al-Shabaab.

By using social networks to focus on the solution level of communities, through this way, women can call for grassroots support for peace, and they will be better assured that the needs of vulnerable populations are served. As a rule, completely excluded from the peacemaking process, women-led initiatives were making telling contributions to the processes of confidence building, reconciliation efforts, and the deeply entrenched causes of conflict. In practical terms, this has meant that their work often took on quite participant qualities, usually community-based, focused on day-to-day human needs; for such reasons, they can play an integral part in the wider peacebuilding context.

2.3 Barriers to Women's Participation in Formal Peace Processes

Different factors still impede the inclusion of women into formal peace processes in conflict settings where women make immense contributions at the grassroots level. Indeed, among the most significant is the structural barrier: formal peace negotiations generally include political elites, military leaders, and armed actors, a makeup that typically excludes women. In general, such negotiation platforms have no sets of mechanisms that would integrate voices, especially those of grassroots actors like women, into the Track 1 peace processes.

Social and cultural norms further alienate women in peacemaking processes. Traditional gender roles in large parts of the Horn of Africa have restricted the places within which women can participate in public life, including political and peacemaking spaces. This births the belief within the structures of the patriarchy that women cannot lead a formal negotiation; thus, it sidelines the women for men who can represent them.¹¹ Women's contributions are therefore minimized or outright rejected, limiting their influence on formal peacemaking.

The lack of political will and institutional support also hinders the inclusion of women into formal peace negotiations, which needs to be dealt with. Most governments and parties to the conflict seldom make it a priority, considering it is usually secondary to more "pressing" political or security concerns. This is manifested in the shallow application of provisions dealing with gender, including those under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. Lastly, logistical, security and even financial barriers add another layer to problems keeping women from joining the formal talks in peace, hence the need for a process that is more accessible and inclusive of a contributory role of grassroots women.¹²

¹¹ Alemu, "Trans-Border Trajectories of Violence."
¹² United Nations, "Stronger Government Action, Financing Key to Better Protect Women during Armed Conflict, Involve Them in Peace Processes, Speakers Tell Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases."

3. Women and Rules-Based Cooperation in the IGAD Region

In terms of women's participation and regional stability, they are being called upon to provide their experience in the peace process that is urgently needed for rules-based cooperation in ensuring regional stability in the Horn of Africa. "Rules-based cooperation" means acting in concert with mutually agreed norms, principles, and laws in the resolution of disputes, peace, and development. Having emerged from the cutting edge of grassroots peacebuilding, they would bring into such cooperation emphases on inclusivity, social justice, and community well-being.

Women's initiatives of cooperation follow the rules, insert inclusive dialogues, and address root causes of conflicts that formal negotiations under the strong presence of political and military actors often bypass. Issues that women generally discuss relate directly to the community, such as the distribution of resources, education, health care, and human rights, very bases for lasting peace and cooperation. Their inclusion principle makes the peace agreement holistic; hence, it touches on concerns pertinent in every section, even usually marginalized cross-sections of society, which in effect cements adherence to the set rules and agreements.

Including women engenders trust among conflict-affected communities and promotes social cohesion. In the absence of community-authority trust, several grassroots initiatives taken up by women often break the gaps of mistrust between them and often build an environment that may foster negotiations and mutual cooperation. Women are active participants in the mainstreaming process; hence, they determine the setting of local norms of non-violence and mutual respect that may influence the creation of stable conditions supporting regional cooperation.

This kind of inclusion is one aspect of commitment to international frameworks on UNSCR 1325 and the African Union's Agenda 2063, in which women's contribution becomes indispensable for durable and lasting development with peace. The member states of IGAD will go further in underlining its pledge for rules-based regional cooperation by giving space and voice to women in peacebuilding and governance, setting a very good example to others in matters concerning inclusivity and accountability. Examples from the IGAD region show how far-reaching women-led initiatives impact regional and sub-regional cooperation as a means of inspiring stability to a rules-based framework.

3.1 Ethiopia's Peace Dialogues

The different women's organizations have been contributing to peace and creating dialogue between conflicting ethnic groups in Ethiopia, especially during the Tigray conflict. In many places, women's groups have invited elders, youths, and leaders of the two conflicting sides for community dialogues on reconciliation and understanding. Such activities for example, through the Gambella Women Inter-Religious Peacebuilding Council, dampen tensions at the local level and create a foundation for more formal peace negotiations.¹³ This is where the concentration is on inclusive dialogue that has helped many local communities resolve disputes without violence, hence contributing to stability, and showing that women-led mediations push forward rules-based approaches.

3.2 Community Reconciliation in South Sudan

Women groups in South Sudan have been at the forefront, agitating for the implementation of peace agreements and community reconciliation. It is in the wake of this present conflict that the women have been organizing peace caravans-movements that round up the different ethnic communities together to talk about the consequences of violence and the ability to live peacefully. The impact created by such caravans has reduced localized violence and increased a shared sense of ownership among members of the communities.¹⁴ Taken together, women have entrenched local systems of governance that are consonant with reconciliation and supported rules-based collaboration, underpinning a wider stabilization of the region.

3.3 Somali Clan Dispute Mediation

In Somalia, too, the role of women in mediation, particularly regarding clan conflicts, which is one of the major causes of conflict and instability in the country, is very strong. Most clan-based conflicts impede consensus at a national level and divide into fragments that foster a lack of cooperation at the local and national levels.¹⁵ In such disputes, women have been instrumental in mediating and facilitating the processes of dialogue and persuading the clans to stand by agreements. These female mediators have enabled the fashioning of local agreements by local communities in harmony with their traditional norms, conforming to and serving the needs of national laws, building them up into a rules-based order.

These case studies show the difference women-led initiatives are making in their contributions toward the development of local and regional cooperation. Emphasizing inclusive, root cause, and reconciliatory aspects, women contribute to an enabling environment in which rules-based cooperation can thrive. Availing themselves of the opportunities for peacebuilding, they make peace agreements more holistic, durable, and sensitive to the needs of all members of the community that may be ignored within formal processes. These initiatives might just reach and realize the fruits spoken about above if the women are formally recognized and absorbed by the IGAD member states into their respective national peace frameworks. Recognition gives more reason to these peace processes, but what will lay the bedrock for durable and cooperative relations between states, reaching long-term regional stability, will be substantive inclusion.

¹³ Reliefweb, "Transforming Women's Cultural Roles into Bridges for Peacebuilding."

¹⁴ Balogun, "Women's Meaningful Participation in Peacebuilding."

¹⁵ UNDP, "Assessment on the Role of Women in Peace and Reconciliation in Oromia and Somali Regional States."

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Current Situation Analysis: Participation of Women in Peace Negotiation

Notwithstanding the reality of UNSCR 1325, which availed the much-needed emphasis on women's participation in peace processes, their actual involvement in formal peace negotiations in the IGAD region has barely taken off. Several reasons exist and interlink to one another for this palpable absence in their participation. First, the persistent structural barriers exist that limit the possibility of women entering the formal peace process. In most cases, formal peacemaking processes remain confined to political elites, the military, and representatives of armed groups, which are highly male-dominated and traditionally powerful actors in conflict settings. Structures also fail to provide the mechanisms that ensure the inclusion of women is maintained; therefore, no provision is made for the participation of women or inclusion in token positions where their effective participation is limited. This is worsened by a general lack of gender quotas or requirements for the inclusion of women in most formal negotiations.

The other limitation to women's participation is cultural and social norms. Most societies within the IGAD region have classically been imposing cultural norms on themselves that require the role of men in decision-making and leadership, while the main expectations from women are to involve themselves in housekeeping duties. These cultural perceptions make them consider involvement by women in formal peace processes as undervaluing and inappropriate. Because these societies are usually patriarchal, such biases also regard women as incapable of negotiation or leadership, hence excluding them from the ambit of formal platforms.

Thirdly, there has not been sufficient political will to take forward national and regional implementation of UNSCR 1325. Most countries in the IGAD region have drafted National Action Plans (NAPs) in relation to putting UNSCR 1325 into practice; nearly all these remain either unimplemented or underfunded. Whereas the governments and armed parties might be aware on paper of the importance of the participation of women, in practice, they do not take actual steps toward ensuring such participation. Such a gap between policy and implementation indicates the challenges in translating international commitments into concrete action.

4.2 Disconnection of Grassroots and Formal Processes

A huge gap still exists between the grassroots initiatives developed by women in the area of peace in the IGAD region and formal peace negotiations. While contributions from women in the community were mobilized for peace negotiations, they were absent in conflict prevention, advocacy, and dialogue led inclusively from the local level. This is mostly because of the nature of exclusion embedded in formal peace processes. Such high-level negotiations are often held in far-flung locations, and the inability of the women from the local communities to access such negotiations due to lack of economic, logistical, and security resources acts as a barrier.

Technical and bureaucratic terminologies in formal negotiations exclude grassroots actors that have acquired experience over years in solving conflicts. This, too, emanates from a lack of institutional support, whereby most often, formal peace structures fail to make room for contributions from one of these informal actors-the women's groups. This leads to the loss of precious local knowledge that adds value to peace agreements and leaves voices unintelligible in decision-making at the grassroots among women.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Women's lived experiences integrated into formal peace processes

This will ensure that when trying to integrate the lived experiences of women into the formal peace process, their voice is not only heard but also assisted in shaping decisions. Ensuring reserved seats for women in every negotiation delegation will be recommended, guaranteeing at least a minimum representation quota. The women will come from various sectors, even down to grassroots leaders, and will have firsthand experience with the conflict, knowing the pulse of the people.

Meanwhile, capacity-building programs are urgently equipping them with negotiation skills and building their confidence in any formality. Grassroots women leaders trained in diplomacy and negotiation prepare them for peacemaking when the time comes and open a seat at the table. Furthermore, a mentorship relationship system between experienced women negotiators and emerging leaders will develop a network of better-informed peace advocates.

Another key recommendation is that a consultative mechanism should be established, where the formal negotiators will regularly consult women-led grassroots groups. The consultations might be done in the preparatory phases before the negotiations begin and during the actual negotiations to keep the women's input at the community level into the peace agreements inclusive and comprehensive.

5.2 Structural Reforms for Inclusion

These changes in structure need to be effected in creating an enabling environment in which grassroots women's movements can make meaningful engagements in the formal processes of peace. In this regard, it involves decentering venues of peace negotiations from political and international capitals to local levels where a conflict occurs. This will enable grassroots actors, particularly women to participate in peace negotiations with little economic and logistical costs that appear not to be affordable.

Other reformist propositions involve community liaisons or representatives in peacemaking. A liaison would serve as an interface between track 1 negotiations and localized initiatives to ensure that the concerns and needs of grassroots actors are represented. It would be a far more institutionalized linkage from top-tier negotiations to community-based peace processes, serving to better align national peace agreements to be closer to the realities at the local level.

Additionally, formal peace processes would employ inclusive languages and procedures rather than bureaucratic and technical ones that cut out grassroots actors. It would be possible to pave the way for the participation of grassroots women if negotiation procedures were simplified and the sessions accessible in terms of the language used and the format followed.

5.3 The Role of Regional and International Actors

It is envisioned that the participation of women in the peace processes will go a long way to occur with much support from the AU, IGAD, UN, and INGOs. Attachment issues of women's participation can be used to questions of providing support and funding to these actors for the peace process. For instance, setting pre-disbursal benchmarks for the inclusion of women incentivizes conflict parties to ensure the involvement of women in formal negotiations.

The international community needs to make a corresponding scale-up in financial and technical support available to women-led grassroots organizations, including funding to offset the travel, accommodation, and security costs for grassroots women participating in formal peace processes. Indeed, the latter would go a great deal toward repairing many of the practical impediments to participation.

Additionally, international organizations should offer space for the grassroots, from the women's groups to the formal peace platforms for direct communication and dialogue. For example, regional bodies such as IGAD can plan regular forums where the voices of the grassroots themselves can air out before the negotiating teams. This will ensure that the grassroots experiences find expression in the official peace agenda. Lastly, international actors have to ensure that women form part of the bodies overseeing the implementation of peace agreements. Putting women in oversight over the execution of peace deals ensures that adherence to the gender provisions within them is taken seriously, and the peace deals reached would benefit all people. Monitoring mechanisms will also have to be sensitive to gender issues, including indicators tracking the impact of peace initiatives on women and other vulnerable groups.

This policy paper demonstrates how impactful yet invisible the role that women-led actions have played in peacemaking within the IGAD region has been. Women consistently facilitate dialogue, promote reconciliation, and call upon the signing of ceasefires. However, these are barely recognized at the level of formulating policies due to structural obstacles, socio-cultural norms, and lack of institutional support. These exclusionary tendencies of women from Track 1 peace processes have repercussions on the efficacy of peace agreements in bringing about inclusive and sustainable peace.

5.4 Promote Awareness and Advocacy

Raise awareness among policymakers and other stakeholders on the importance of women's roles in peace processes. This could be guaranteed through advocacy campaigns showcasing the success of various case studies of women-led initiatives. Systematically document successful women-led initiatives for conflict prevention and resolution, thereby sharing best practices to showcase the effectiveness of women's involvement in influencing policy changes. Foster networks at the regional level within IGAD among the women's organizations and movements. This may strengthen their advocacy and create a united front to increase women's participation in peace negotiations.

6. Conclusion

The findings showed that large gaps existed between women's grassroots work and the formal peacemaking process. Track 1 negotiations, due to their nature, remain inaccessible in location, through language, and last but not least, without any institutionalized support as to involvement by informal actors. The role of international and regional bodies in this direction has also been very desultory. It is more coordinated and justiciable steps that will make the contribution of women to peace negotiation and mediation processes relevant.

The full inclusion of women-driven initiatives in peace processes will be an indispensable ingredient in meeting regional stability in the IGAD region. The contribution of women brings variable perspectives on conflict causality, creates social cohesion, and provides a means to make peace processes representative of their diverse communities. This should not be an issue of equity but also a strategic necessity in pursuing long-term peace and rules-based cooperation within the region.

This calls for commitment to inclusive peacebuilding practices: using quotas for women in negotiation teams, decentralizing the venue of peace negotiations, providing for financial and logistical support, and creating formal mechanisms to help integrate the grassroots perspective. Meaningful inclusion of women must be a premise by international actors in their support of peace processes, while direct support is availed to women-led grassroots organizations. That would call for a proactive effort by all concerned that, for the first time, women are not being assigned a place in the back but on the front rank of every endeavor toward peacemaking. Empowerment and taking their experiences into the formal negotiation process will help us create resilient and cooperating societies, thus laying a sound foundation for lasting peace and stability in the IGAD region.

Bibliography

- Abebe, F. G., Adamtey, R., & Owusu-Ansah, J. K. (Eds.). (2023). Understanding protracted resource-based conflicts in the Horn of Africa: The case of North Wollo Amhara and Zone 4 of Afar in Ethiopia. *African Journal of Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.22004/ag.econ.334624>
- AFSC. (2023). Inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes (negotiation and mediation): Women's peace and security agenda.
- Alemu, M. G. (2019). Trans-border trajectories of violence: Capabilities for peace and cooperative engagement in the Afar Horn. In *African borders, conflict, regional and continental integration*. Routledge.
- African Union. (2023, December 19). Women play significant roles in peacebuilding efforts bringing communities together [Press release]. <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20231219/women-play-significant-roles-peacebuilding-efforts-bringing-communities>
- Balogun, F. (2020, December 4). Women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding: Reflections from South Sudan. *African Feminism (AF)*. <https://africanfeminism.com/womens-meaningful-participation-in-peacebuilding-reflections-from-south-sudan/>
- Birhan, A. T. (2024). Conflict dynamics in the Horn of Africa: Causes, consequences, and the way forward. *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 9(1), 18–36.
- Braithwaite, J. M., Bruens, A., Campbell, S. P., & Zayed, H. (2023). Who keeps the peace? Reconceptualizing peacebuilding through networks of influence and support.
- Buchanan, E. (2019). No simple solutions: Women, displacement and durable solutions in South Sudan. Oxfam. <https://doi.org/10.21201/2019.4900>
- Eyayu, K. B. (2020). Gender and conflict management: The role of women's in indigenous conflict resolutions for peace building in Ethiopia: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Affairs and Global Strategy*. <https://doi.org/10.7176/IAGS/80-01>
- Ilesanmi, O. A. (2021). UNSCR 1325 and African women in conflict and peace. In O. Yacob-Haliso & T. Falola (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of African women's studies* (pp. 813–832). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28099-4_94
- Odary, K. V., Komba, E., & Nyamato, W. (2020). Reviewing the role of women pastoralist in conflicts in the Horn of Africa. *African Journal on Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences*, 3(5), 142–151. <https://doi.org/10.48346/IMIST.PRSM/AJLP-GS.V3I3.18665>
- Rayale, S. (2021). Transitional justice, peace and everyday reality: Somaliland's experience with justice and security-sector reform.
- ReliefWeb. (2024, March 6). Transforming women's cultural roles into bridges for peacebuilding: Recounting the journey of Mrs. Ariet Philip in the Gambella region of Ethiopia – Ethiopia. <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/transforming-womens-cultural-roles-bridges-peacebuilding-recounting-journey-mrs-ariet-philip-gambella-region-ethiopia>
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2020). Assessment on the role of women in peace and reconciliation in Oromia and Somali regional states. <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-08/Assesement%20Report-Role%20of%20Women%20in%20Peace%20and%20Reconcilitaion%20%20Clean%20V%2027-04-2021.pdf>
- United Nations. (2023, October 25). Stronger government action, financing key to better protect women during armed conflict, involve them in peace processes, speakers tell Security Council [Meetings coverage and press releases]. <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15463.doc.htm>
- United Nations Security Council. (2000). *Resolution 1325 (2000) / adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting, on 31 October 2000* (S/RES/1325(2000)). <https://www.un.org/shestandsforpeace/content/united-nations-security-council-resolution-1325-2000-sres1325-2000>