

Women and peace

New Internationalist
Intermediate Ready
Lesson



Fill the gaps:

....1..... in war zones are the best peace-makers, but they almost never have a place at negotiations. It is mostly2..... in negotiations.

Women in war zones are the best peace-makers, but they almost never have a place at negotiations. It is mostly *men* in negotiations.*Why?*

Discuss:

Why do we need women in peace negotiations?



a) Fill the gaps with: **women / men**

Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini is an Iranian gender activist and senior adviser to the UN. She and her International Alert colleagues decided to start a campaign called '...1... Building Peace from the Village Council to the Negotiating Table'. The plan was to include ...2... in peace-making in the UN Security Council, the EU Parliament, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Sanam's job was 'to get a Security Council resolution'. She started with young optimism: "Honestly, I think it helped not to know what it actually meant.'

She was strong and very positive. 'I wanted to say that the situation is not that wars happen and terrible things happen to ...3..., because wars happen and terrible things happen to everybody. I wanted to say that wars happen and wars have changed; we have civil wars now. You, the Security Council, cannot do much about civil wars. You cannot because of sovereignty issues. So, hey, look at who can help. And look at who's doing the work.'

It worked. The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1325 on ...4... in peace-making on 31 October 2000.

The UN asked Sanam to do a study on violent masculinity, with a tour of 10 countries including Kingston, Jamaica, where she met gang members. 'There were about 40 ...5... around us. Some of them didn't have shirts on and I could see the bullet wounds. They were smoking their joints. Their little kids came and sat on their laps.' So she asked the gangsters what they wanted for their children. The answer – 'I want my children to be polite, to speak well, and to go to school and have good lives.' This is what she wanted for her children. And when she was looking at the problem of young ...6... involved in violence in Somalia, a village leader told her that gender-based violence was their main concern, too. Sanam says, 'People think this is something for ...7...'s rights organizations and nobody else wants to talk about it. But I found that ...8... do care about what is happening where they live.'

b) Fill the gaps: **women / men / peace / war**

Very often, Sanam saw that involving **...1...** leads to better results in **...2...-** making. For example, the UN in Yemen had to help negotiate freeing prisoners, but it was doing very little. A group of local Yemeni **...3...**, the mothers of prisoners, helped to free over 600 prisoners. 'These **...4...** care because it's their kids and their husbands. How do you say 'no' to a mum? And they're going to try hard day after day.'

But **...5...** are often not involved in negotiations. It's the militia leaders. They often live abroad and they are invited to the negotiations.

She feels very strongly about this. 'If you think about Yemen right now, who is suffering? Is it the Saudis? Is it the Americans? Is it the UAE? Is it the Yemeni government? They're sitting in a hotel in Riyadh. Who is paying for the war they are fighting amongst themselves? It's Yemeni **...6...** and children and old **...7...** We must have them and their voices at the **...8...** talks. We must not give the Saudi government and the Yemeni government, sitting in Riyadh, more power than **...9...** risking their lives to do Covid relief, risking their lives to negotiate a ceasefire or safe passage for sick people. It's completely wrong.'

c) Fill the gaps with : **women / men / men / peace / war**

She also disagrees with the technical approaches to **...1...**-making that do not think about emotion. 'I think that negotiations must touch people's hearts to get to their heads. I don't think that you start with a head and go to the heart. When the emotions of **...2...** are involved in negotiations, it makes a very big difference in the talks.'

She gives the example of Colombia's 2012-16 **...3...** talks. The talks included victims and the families of the disappeared. They spoke directly of their personal experiences to the people around the negotiating table.

Since 2006, Sanam has been the CEO of the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN), an NGO that she started to fund, support, and bring together **...4... ...5...**-makers.

'**...6...**s bring out the worst in people and they bring out the best. The **...7...** I work with are extraordinary. I want the world to know them. I want the world to listen to them.'

The **...8...** of ICAN meet every year. During the pandemic the meetings were on weekly Zoom calls.

'When we are all together, I see much more **...9...** than **...10...** in human nature. But we allow psychopaths to tell us how to understand Yemen or Syria.'

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Easy English version:

[https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=Peace talks need women](https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=Peace_talks_need_women)

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