



## **International Center on Conflict and Negotiation**

### **Statement**

#### **to Georgia's Peace Process Stakeholders**

13 November, 2022

Tbilisi, Georgia

On Friday, November 11, 2022, at 09:30-10:45, a meeting of women representatives of the civil sector with the Co-Chairs of the Geneva International Discussions (GID) was held at the UN House Tbilisi office.

According to the agenda, in the introductory speech, the Co-Chairs had to evaluate the last Round of Geneva International Discussions, which took place on October 5 in Geneva.

The meeting was attended by Mrs. Cihan Sultanoglu, UN representative in Geneva International Discussions; Viorel Moshanu, Special Representative of the OSCE Chairmanship in the South Caucasus and their advisors. 7 women participated from the civil sector.

At the meeting, during my 3 min. intervention, I addressed the Co-Chairs and criticized the WPS AGENDA implementation. I said that there is NO implementation of WPS Agenda in Georgia. I expressed my concerns about the last 56<sup>th</sup> Round of GID, which took place on October 5, 2022.

I mentioned that the Round was held without any prior communication (or even an attempt thereof) with the Civil Society, women. 11 months after the 55<sup>th</sup> Round of December 2021, and almost a month and a half after the 56<sup>th</sup> Round ended, they finally managed to organize this meeting with a few women with a strict and limited timeframe (1,15 hours according to the agenda of the meeting).

I was hoping to receive some information and to hear from the Co-Chairs about their assessment of the GID Round 56, as it was stated in the agenda provided. Instead, the Co-Chairs indicated that they would rather listen to us and invited us to provide information on what we are doing.

During my intervention, I criticized the WPS AGENDA implementation for Georgia's conflicts. In particular, I stated that women in Georgia's peace process are highly underrepresented.

I spoke about the non-implementation of WPS AGENDA's **4 fundamental pillars**, where there is no women-friendly approach established and exercised in and for Georgia:

Review of 4 pillars of WPS AGENDA implementation:

1. **Participation** in peace and security decision-making processes at national, local and international levels – this does **not** include the appointment of more women, including negotiators, mediators, monitors, and humanitarian personnel. There is a very limited and perforated support to local women's peace initiatives. These are the reasons this Pillar of Participation has zero impact.

In fact, local women's opportunities to make an impact are substantially limited without procedures explicitly enabling them to influence the decision-making process.

**Proper Decision-making procedures** would differentiate nominal and meaningful participation. Women are only able to exercise meaningful influence when gender-sensitive procedures are already in place for the selection of participants. However, here, there are no **selection criteria** (e.g. Women's quotas, as a part of selection criteria for negotiation delegations) and **identified procedures** to determine the groups that will be included in the process and to identify group members that will be able to influence negotiation outcomes.

**There are no Support structures** established prior to, during, and after GID Rounds that would allow women to make more effective and higher quality contributions to the process. Support structures would lift women's roles and influence during GID and IPRM meetings and in the subsequent reaching, signing and implementing agreements.

**Inclusion-friendly Co-Chairs, mediators, facilitators** shall provide strong and supportive leadership in peace negotiations, and are a major enabling factor ensuring women's meaningful inclusion. Strong and supportive guidance by GID Co-Chairs and related stakeholders has to play a decisive role in supporting women during the peace process, to strengthen women's **Direct representation at the negotiation table** (e.g. to strategically assist women across parties in order to advance common interests, such as by formulating joint positions on key issues and/or by forming unified women's coalitions across formal and informal representatives); to assist in promotion of **Observer status** during GID/IPRM meetings (e.g. when national mediators, CSO women are granted observer status to influence the process, thus women are able to influence context-specific factors); to **Consult with SCOs, women:** formal (e.g. officially to be endorsed by the GID Co-Chairs) and informal consultative forums to identify key issues, demands, and proposals made by women — before, in parallel and after ongoing GID Rounds/IPRM meetings.

Today's seldom, **re-active** "consultations with women" (i.e. the GID Co-Chairs meetings with civil society women reps) are anticipated by us to become systematic, **pro-active**, and establish clear and effective **transfer strategies** that systematically communicate agendas and results of the GID Rounds and IPRM meetings to negotiators, mediators, facilitators, parties. Tangible consultations with women would formulate women's joint positions on key issues, that would be outlined in united documents, presenting women's demands to the GID Round, thus making its participants formally obliged to consider said demands in all stages of their decisions.

2. **Protection** - not in place to ensure women's and girls' rights protection and promotion of conflict-affected inhabitants, there is no focus determined on women and their needs in order to safely participate in peace process, thus lacking societal-wide safe participation in peace process.

**With no monitoring**, we are missing a key activity before and during the implementation of any peace measure. Monitoring and consequent recognition of the implementation and achievements, respectively, are not conducted. Thus, all opportunities for women for visibility and recognition are cancelled.

3. **Prevention** - no integrated gender considerations into conflict early-warning systems. There is no involvement of women and their specific needs in conflict prevention and disarmament activities. There is no conflict prevention mechanism. And, frankly speaking, the absence of mechanism of early-warning causes the absence of women in it.

**No early inclusion in the peace process**, which would guarantee the continuous involvement of women's groups, thus ensuring their increased abilities to make meaningful contributions. Early women's involvement - preferably in the pre-GID Round phase - would become the way for sustained women's inclusion throughout subsequent negotiations and agreement implementation processes.

**No support structures** (e.g. Inclusive commissions, ceasefire monitoring groups, permanent commissions, and post-agreement commissions, as a mechanism of participation for women in all peace process phases). Once they are established, prior to, during, and after GID Rounds and IPRM meetings, they will allow women to make more effective and higher quality contributions to a process. Support structures would lift women's roles and influence during meetings and in the subsequent implementation of any agreements.

Securing women's participation in all aforementioned commissions across all phases of a peace process requires explicit gender equality provisions to be introduced as early as possible, in order to be present in the language of a final peace agreement.

4. **Relief and recovery**: there is a very limited support for CSOs and a very low reinforcement to women's capacities, to act as agents in relief and recovery processes in conflict and post-conflict in and for repatriation and resettlement, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs (DDR), support to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

**Coalition-building** is not supported widely. Strong and systematic support would allow women, under a collective umbrella, to mobilize around common issues and negotiate as a unified, representative cluster, which guarantees them being heard. In fact, the creation of a joint position paper or common policy document would be especially useful for transferring it to stakeholders.

**Transfer strategies** would ensure that the inputs given from stakeholders outside of the GID and IPRM find way into the agreement and the peace process as a whole. Again, unfortunately, in practice, there is no established clear and effective **transfer strategy** that would systematically communicate results of the national mediators, CSOs, women, to third party negotiators, mediators, facilitators.

## I would like to stop here and ask you: what is wrong with us? What is wrong with Georgia?

I wonder, who is there, any/somebody to spend additional resources for everything mentioned above, to foster peace here?

- Do not worry, there is no need for that. Informational vacuum and a zero impact are to be continued... for the next certain years. As we already passed through 14 years and 56 Rounds of GID, 14 years of 6 Point Plan, and more than 30 years of armed conflicts of Georgia... with creeping occupation still actively going on right now.

We, locals, have to **manage our expectations**.

By the way, at the end of my constructively critical 3 min. intervention during the meeting (attempting to draw attention and trying not to use up time allotted for others...), I was told back to **manage my expectations**...

As a result of the criticism, the meeting was granted with additional 15 minutes by the organizers. Thank you for that.

When I think about those 15 minutes added to the meeting, I wonder, how many people are bombed during additional 15 minutes of the UWar and what is the essence of the glossy publications of WPS Agenda compared to that.

Do we need a power of friendly Co-Chairs to encourage, empower, and recognize local people, local women, local mediators, attempts of local CSOs to be engaged, to participate, to influence, to reach and remain impact?

And last, what is the GID<sup>1</sup> in reality and why it shall be reformed, reorganized, reconstructed:

1. RF is signing the six-point plan/agreement of 12 August 2008 as **a mediator** (Cf. [https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/GE\\_080812\\_Protocol%20d%27accord.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/GE_080812_Protocol%20d%27accord.pdf)) and not as a party of the conflict. So, we are forced to manage our expectations...
2. The agenda of the GID represents a minimal list of issues that needed to be tackled in the aftermath of the conflict, namely, agreement on the **non-use or threat of force** and the **return of IDPs/refugees**. None on them have a prospect yet... We have to manage our expectations...
3. The GID have been convened in an informal setting. **Each participant is present in his/her personal capacity, there are no name plates around the table and as such there are no official delegations to the discussions**. No observers, or anyone under any status is allowed to attend... Managing our expectations, just thinking about glossy publications of WPS Agenda implementation.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Geneva International Discussions were launched in the aftermath of the August 2008 Russia-Georgia War on the basis of the Six-Point Agreement of 12 August 2008 and the subsequent Implementing Measures agreed on 8 September 2008. These documents contributed to the end of hostilities on the ground, withdrawal of RF forces beyond Abkhazia and South Ossetia and to the subsequent establishment of the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia and the opening of the Geneva International Discussions on 15 October 2008. N.T.K.

4. Discussions are held behind closed doors<sup>2</sup>. What emerges as an informal outcome of the meetings is the press communiqué of the Co-Chairs. It's always better to keep information in vacuum rather be obliged with transparency and accountability... Be sure, we are to manage our expectations.
5. As part of the process, the Co-Chairs prepare the discussions during their preparatory visits to Tbilisi, Tskhinvali, Sukhumi and Moscow a few weeks before the actual convening of each Geneva round. There is a good momentum to meet few women locally, they seem to be "less aggressive" and "sensitive", managing expectations...
6. The major achievement of the Discussions so far has been the 2009 agreement on the establishment of two Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms, one for Abkhazia (Gali) and another for South Ossetia (Ergneti). Although, IPRM Gali Rounds have been suspended from 2018. Anyway, we did it so far. Expectations are managed.

To sum it up, I assume that GID is a continuation of the zero-sum game, participants are jumping in different roles with a null accountability in an empty political calendar and calm war-affected societies that are managing their expectations to kindly accept the continuation of GID.

Thank you.

Nina Tsikhistavi-Khutsishvili,  
Director,  
International Center on Conflict and Negotiation (ICCN)

*P.S. You might like to explore our website [www.iccn.ge](http://www.iccn.ge), we are archiving all the historical documents.*

---

<sup>2</sup> *In practice, two days, the first day being devoted to informal bilateral consultations between Co-Chairs and the participants and the second day to the actual discussion on the agenda points in the two Working Groups. N.T.K.*