

Promoting the Silencing of Guns in Africa and addressing militarised masculinities

In global relations, the stigma of a 'continent at war with itself' had long been attached to Africa (Francis 2006). Admittedly, the continent has hosted, and continues to be home to, a number of deadly conflicts that jeopardise human, national and international security and defy efforts to resolve them. This quagmire, as well as other concerns, prompted the AU Assembly to take steps to stem the persistent fights and address cases of relapse into violence in some parts of Africa. Thus, in the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration, African leaders resolved 'not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans and undertake to end all wars in Africa by 2020. In this regard, 2020 was set as a deadline for 'silencing the guns' in Africa.

Silencing guns requires addressing the root causes of conflict and its impact, which includes challenging militarised masculinities. In this regard work with men and boys to address conflict needs to address conditions in which boys and men become violent and work towards transforming these conditions.

Purpose of the panel discussion

The purpose of the panel discussion is to discuss opportunities for MEA and WILPF to support the AU campaign on silencing the guns, and promoting peace and security on the continent as well as strategies on how to hold the AU accountable in implementing the campaign and ending the burden of conflict on the Continent. The discussion will also highlight strategies and work on addressing militarised masculinities. Different country insights, experiences, strategies and innovations will be shared.

Specific Goals

- Discuss opportunities and initiatives on how to build on the 'Silencing the guns' campaign to promote peace and security in conflict and post conflict countries
- Discuss strategies on engaging with the AU and regional economic blocs (RECs) to address conflict and promote sustainable peace
- Discuss and reflect on male engagement in addressing militarised masculinities and the role of men and boys in peace building and conflict resolution

Expected outcomes

- A nuanced understanding of how MEA and WILPF can support silencing of guns, and strengthen conflict resolution initiatives on the continent
- An understanding of the role of men and boys in addressing militarised masculinities, promoting peacebuilding and conflict resolution in line with feminist principles
- Shared strategies and innovations on how to engage with AU and RECs in addressing conflict and peace building initiatives

Format of the discussion

This will be conducted in the form of a panel discussion, and different panellists from MEA and WILPF will share presentations on militarised masculinity, silencing of guns in Africa and on the different ways through which civil society can contribute to peacebuilding in Africa. After the presentations, participants will be given an opportunity to share their own reflections, including country specific experiences and strategies.