



PeaceWomen Across the Globe  
FRIEDENSFRAUEN WELTWEIT  
نساء من أجل السلام عبر العالم  
Femmes de Paix Autour du Monde  
Женщины мира за мир на земле  
MUJERES DE PAZ EN EL MUNDO  
Mulheres pela Paz ao redor do Mundo  
DONNE DI PACE NEL MONDO  
ピースウーマン—国境を越え平和をつくる女たち  
全球和平妇女

## Newsletter 1/2017

## FOCUS COLOMBIAN PEACE MAKERS

Dear Readers,

How can a country find peace when violence and loss has been part of everyday reality for half a century? At the end of last year the seemingly impossible happened: the Colombian government and the FARC guerrilla fighters signed a far-reaching peace agreement – a process in which women played a significant role.

The Colombian peace process is considered an important test case for substantial involvement of women in peace and transformation negotiations. But now we are witnessing a serious stress test: how to move this peace deal forward to its implementation. Read how Alejandra Miller Restrepo, board member of PeaceWomen Across the Globe (PWAG) and State Secretary responsible for the realisation of the peace agreement, experiences this process.

PWAG promotes women's effective participation and an active role in peace negotiations and reconstruction as well as the exchange of experience as peace experts. These exchanges allow women to develop common strategies. They are active in Afghanistan, Mali, DR Congo, Colombia, Brazil, Palestine and many other countries in which, in 2017, PeaceTables will again be organised. Because without women there can be no peace!

Wishing you a stimulating read.

Best wishes, FLURINA DERUNGS  
DIRECTOR PWAG

# No Peace without Women – The Peace Process in Colombia

More than 220,000 deaths, six million people internally displaced, eight million registered victims, these are some of the bleak figures of the armed conflict in Colombia, one of the most violent and most drawn-out conflicts worldwide. A variety of peace negotiations over the last fifty years have failed to bring peace. Colombian women, pioneers who have been lobbying, acting as witnesses, fighting and participating in negotiations, have been working towards a lasting peace accord for decades. But it is only the most recent negotiations that have allowed women to take a truly effective position at the negotiating table.

Above:  
PWAG board member and peace expert Alejandra Miller Restrepo

What began as a peaceful struggle for political participation and fair access to resources in the middle of the last century has long developed into a bloody armed conflict. Over the decades, this conflict has become increasingly complex and the number of parties has increased, not least because of the attendant drug trafficking. Based on the figures alone, one can only make a guess at the **impact on civil society**, but they remain hard to grasp in their totality and scope. They differ markedly depending on gender, living conditions, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity and socio-economic status. Structural violence is widespread.

### The Long Road to Peace

Colombia has a decade-long history of peace negotiations with various guerrilla organisations. With the most important among them, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), the first but ineffective ceasefire was negotiated in 1984. A second round of talks came to an end in 2002 without significant concessions from either side. Up to this point, all attempts at **negotiating peace had been conducted without the involvement of women**. This changed in October 2012 with the start of the most recent round of peace talks.

### Substantial Participation of Women

Up to now Colombia has not had a UN Security Council Resolution 1325 National Action Plan. This resolution, adopted in 2000, is intended to protect women against violence in conflict and to promote their participation in peace negotiations and reconstruction. Despite there being no National Action Plan, it was possible in the most



Colombian women at the Peace Table in Cauca Province discuss how to bring about gender-responsive peace.

## FOCUS COLOMBIAN PEACE MAKERS

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recent Colombian peace process to fulfil the main demands of “women, peace and security”. Women’s organisations applied considerable pressure, which led to the Colombian government and the FARC instituting a **Gender Subcommittee**. This was meant to ensure a peace treaty that included the demands of women and consulted numerous civil society organisations. “The committee was a very effective force in bringing about the participation of women. Despite tenacious resistance on the part of clerical and conservative circles to a gender-responsive approach, the concerns of the committee are represented in the current peace treaty”, asserts PWAG board member and peace expert Alejandra Miller Restrepo.

The number of women at the decision-making level in the peace negotiations sadly however, remained small: in the ten-member negotiation team of the government, there were two women, on the side of the FARC, there was only one. In other words, despite the initiative towards an approach for fair gender representation, it was **men who dominated the four-year negotiations in Havana, Cuba**.

### The Commitment of Women

Successful lobbying of women’s organisations for a gender subcommittee is only one example of how women involve themselves in the Colombian peace process. Miller Restrepo has this to say about the involvement of women: “Despite women being side-lined in the actual peace negotiations, they remained anything but passive, and concentrated on other aspects.” For decades during the conflict, women acted as mediators in regional ceasefires, took down testimonies of victims, set up solidarity networks and, alongside the official negotiations, organised civil-society run regional and local events, during which the peace process was discussed. These are just some examples of **Colombian women’s engagement for peace**. In addition they convinced leaders and decision makers how crucial it is to involve women in negotiations and to keep in mind the particular vulnerabilities of women in conflict. This is vital because it is not only indigenous women in agriculturally exploited regions, but also women FARC fighters being re-integrated in society who are affected most directly, and in so many different ways, by the conflict.

### No peace without women!

The example of Colombia illustrates forcefully how vital the **participation of women in peace processes** is, in preparing the ground, in the actual negotiations but also during the most difficult phase, the implementation of the peace accords and reconstruction. Miller Restrepo makes the point that “in order to be part of the implementation of the peace accords, it is imperative that Colombian women organise themselves!” Women’s participation prevents structural violence against women being dropped from the agenda and ensures that the demands of women are respected on all levels. Because there is no peace without women!

#### Further reading

- > International Alert (2014): Re-examining Identities and Power. Gender in Peacebuilding in Colombia.
- > Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (2016): Innovations in the Colombian Peace Process.
- > Swisspeace (2017): Colombia - Challenges ahead.
- > UN Women Background Paper (2016): Gender and the Role of Women in Colombia’s Peace Process.

### “We women want neither war that kills nor peace that oppresses us”

PWAG Board Member **Alejandra Miller Restrepo** is an economist and political scientist at the University of Cauca, where her research focuses on the effects of armed conflict on women. She coordinates the women’s organisation *Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres* and is Government Secretary for the Department of Cauca in the South East of Colombia.

*PWAG: As Government Secretary you are responsible for the implementation of the terms of the Peace Agreement. Where do you see your greatest challenges?*

Alejandra Miller Restrepo: The post-conflict phase is extremely complex because the various regions of Colombia



## FOCUS WIKIPEACEWOMEN

### Peacemakers made visible

have to reorganise themselves socially and politically. After 53 years of conflict it is a real challenge for the state to adjust to the new, peaceful reality. Until recently, state structures were geared to armed conflict, but now the state budgets have to be brought into line with the social needs of the various parties involved. Even the remotest areas, mainly inhabited by indigenous peoples and agricultural labourers, where for 50 years no government official would have ventured, are now to get schools, hospitals and roads. The government has to enact the details of the peace agreement in spite of financial constraints. All of us should work tirelessly towards an all-inclusive democracy to ensure lasting peace. It is our task to transform the culture of violence, which has shaped us for 53 years, to a culture of peace. And this means, for example, an acceptance of our differences and to resolve the resulting conflicts by peaceful means.

#### *Which specific task can or should women take on for the implementation of the peace agreement?*

Women have to organise themselves locally in order to involve themselves in the implementation of the treaty. Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres, for example, the organisation for which I have worked since 2003, cooperates with various grassroots organisations. “We women neither want war that kills nor peace that oppresses us” is the motto of Ruta Pacífica. We promote women’s awareness of the peace treaty and with their cooperation develop scenarios for its effective implementation locally. In addition, women’s movements need to involve themselves actively in the official truth committee, ensuring that the voices of women affected by sexual violence, forced displacement and recruitment become a part of history.

#### *How would you assess the progress of the peace agreement’s implementation from the perspective of women?*

This process has only just started. Our hopes lie with the feminist peace movement, on our common efforts and on the cooperation with women of the grassroots organisations. To be part of the implementation, Colombian women have to be organised – and that is precisely what we are promoting!

*Thank you very much, Alejandra!*

The ambitious goal of WikiPeaceWomen is to make the peace work of a million women visible. The project is the continuation of the 2005 “1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize” initiative and it moves into the international limelight a **broad range of women’s efforts for peace**. “It is thanks to millions of women that our world, as violent as it unfortunately still can be, has not collapsed yet,” says PWAG board member and project manager of WikiPeaceWomen, Kin Chi Lau from Hongkong. WikiPeaceWomen wants to increase the visibility of these hitherto little-known women and to make their immense combined knowledge about peace work generally accessible. Lau comments on the first **achievements of the project**: “We are bringing the biographies of the original 1000 PeaceWomen up to date. At present around 800 new peacemakers have been documented. Because of our severely limited resources, we rely on the initiative and input of volunteers worldwide.” WikiPeaceWomen not only raises the visibility of women internationally; a **valuable database** for women to use for networking and to exchange knowledge and experiences is emerging. In addition, the younger generation should be inspired by the project, says Lau. “My wish is that young people look critically at their world and identify remarkable peacemakers, a process by which they multiply their own love for other human beings and the courage to stand up against violence.”

Read the entire interview with Kin Chi Lau on our website. There is more to discover about Kin Chi Lau and her work on 25 June 2017 on the broadcast “mitenand” (19.20 o’clock on Swiss television SRF and also available as a podcast).

[www.wikipeacewomen.org](http://www.wikipeacewomen.org)

[www.1000peacewomen.org](http://www.1000peacewomen.org)

[www.srf.ch/sendungen/mitenand](http://www.srf.ch/sendungen/mitenand)

Photos above, left to right, upper row: Swechhya Sangroula (Nepal), Immaculée Ilibagiza (Rwanda), Cristina Vasiloiu (Romania), Sawdat Troicher Tagirova (Chechnya), Madeleine Hamsétou Ouédraogno (Burkina Faso), Elizabeth Tuma (Argentina)  
Lower row: Leila de Lima (Philippines), Huang Chang Ju (China), Clara Charf (Brazil), Sandhaya Roy (Bangladesh), Eliana Apaza (Peru), Lui Lai Hung (Hong Kong)



## News

### Women's Peace Tables 2017

In 2017, Women's Peace Tables will again be held all over the world. Women use these local platforms to discuss their (often unheard) concerns and to share their experiences. Together, they formulate concrete recommendations for the participation of women in the promotion of peace. Thirty Women's Peace Tables will be held in September and October this year, in cooperation with local partner organisations and PeaceWomen. You can read more in the next newsletter about the peace tables in Afghanistan, Colombia, DR Congo, Palestine, Kashmir, Mali, Sri Lanka, Burundi and many other countries. And you can learn about the results at the Switzerland Peace Table on 2 November 2017.

### Tributes

Indonesian peace-maker **Aleta Baun** has been awarded the Yap Thiam Hien Prize in Jakarta for her tireless commitment to environmental protection. She has been fighting for years for the preservation of biodiversity and against deforestation by mining companies.

The co-president of PWAG, **Kamla Bhasin**, has been awarded two prizes. She received the Shero of Courage Award for decades of commitment to feminist peace work. She has also received the Laadli Lifetime Achievement Award for her pioneering work in the field of visibility of women in the media and gender equality.

PWAG Board Member **Alejandra Miller Restrepo** has received the 2017 PRIX MUJERES AVENIR for her great commitment to women's rights and the Colombian peace process.

Our warm congratulations to all three women!

### Save the Date

#### Meet the 15 Members of PWAG's International Board

The annual meeting of the PWAG International Board will take place from 11 to 13 September 2017 in Berne. On **Tuesday, 12 September 2017**, we cordially invite you to an after work aperitif in Berne. Make the most of this opportunity to exchange views with committed women about their peace work worldwide.

#### Speaking Tour with Miriam Coronel Ferrer

The Philippine peace expert Miriam Coronel Ferrer was the first woman to sign a peace treaty with a rebel group. At the invitation of PWAG, she will be in Switzerland from **30 October to 3 November 2017** and will be speaking about her experience as the chief negotiator of the peace agreement with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

#### Peace Table in Switzerland

The number of women who, like our main speaker, Miriam Coronel Ferrer, participate in peace negotiations, is only slowly increasing. But do women's concerns get a fair hearing? Is their participation substantial or merely numeric? This is the theme of this year's peace table in Switzerland on **Thursday, 2 November 2017, at 5 pm in Bern**. We shall also be reporting on the 30 peace tables around the world, will make the concrete recommendations of women's peace tables visible, and will discuss them with various decision-makers. Please also note this date!

Further information on all the events will follow.

Top picture: Exhibition in memory of deceased peace and human rights activists, 2016 Women's Peace Table in Colombia

## In Solidarity

**Peace needs us.  
We need you.  
Please support us with a donation.**

Many thanks.

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## Impressum

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You will find more information about our events and projects on our website, where we also present our Peace Woman of the Month:  
**www.1000peacewomen.org**



See our Facebook page too!  
**PeaceWomen Across the Globe**