



Community
of Democracies



Summary Report

Women: A Powerful Force for Preventing and
Countering Violent Extremism

Policy session at the Women Political Leaders Summit 2018

This publication was prepared by the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies, in coordination with the Working Group of the Community of Democracies with contributions from Mr. Thomas E. Garrett, Ms. Audra Čiapienė, H.E. Ms. Mara Marinaki, Ms. Fauziya Abdi Ali, Ms. Amarsanaa Darisuren, Ms. Cheryl Frank, and Ms. Clare Hutchinson.

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Introduction

The gender aspect of violent extremism has been largely understood through awareness about how women and girls uniquely suffer from its impact. What is less understood is the important role that women can, and should, play in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). Viewing women's strengths solely through their traditional roles as wives and mothers is to significantly undervalue their contribution. UNSCR 2242 (2015) has urged states "to ensure the leadership of women in developing strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism", yet women's participation remains elusive.

Additionally, the policy brief on Gender Equality and Violent Extremism, developed by Institute for Security Studies (ISS) under the **Democracy and Security Dialogue (DSD)** initiative of the **Community of Democracies (CoD)**, highlights:

An increase in female empowerment and gender equality has a positive effect on the success, impact, and sustainability of countering violent extremism programming, as it does similarly in the peacebuilding and conflict prevention realm.

Facilitating a continued discussion on the DSD findings and building-up on the **Advancing Women's Political Participation** policy recommendations, the CoD held the policy session on "Women: A Powerful Force for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism" at the **Women Political Leaders (WPL) Summit** on June 8, 2018 in Vilnius, Lithuania.¹

The session addressed:

- The role of women in P/CVE: existing stereotypes and evidence-based reality;
- Gaps remaining in the international legal framework on P/CVE;
- Importance of women's inclusion in national law enforcement and security agencies, as part of the framework on violent extremism prevention and response;
- Good practices on promoting inclusion, women's political participation, leadership and empowerment across society, including in the governmental, security sector, and civil society institutions for P/CVE;
- Correlation between improvement of women's participation in policy making and actual development of gender sensitive P/CVE policies.

The WPL Summit is a high-level conference of women political leaders which brings together more than 400 female political leaders from all over the world. This year's edition was co-hosted with the Seimas, the parliament of Lithuania and took place in Vilnius on 6-8 June 2018.

¹See page 13, 'The CoD's Past Initiatives.'

Speakers

Mr. Thomas E. Garrett, Secretary General of the Community of Democracies. Most recently, Mr. Garrett supported reformers and democrats across the world with his work at the International Republican Institute (IRI). He joined IRI in November 1994 as Ukraine country director, progressively assuming more responsibilities over 23 years and eventually becoming vice president for programs, in which capacity he oversaw a global portfolio of more than 200 staff in 32 countries.

Ms. Audra Čiapienė, Counsellor of the Transatlantic Cooperation and Security Policy Department at the MFA of Lithuania. Ms. Čiapienė has over twenty years of experience in diplomacy. Her field of responsibility is crisis management. Moreover, in July 2017, Ms. Čiapienė was designated a national focal point for the Community of Democracies and took over the chairmanship of the Working Group on Women and Democracy.

H.E. Ms. Mara Marinaki is the EEAS Principal Advisor on Gender and UNSCR 1325. Ambassador Marinaki has worked for the EEAS since 2011, and was previously the Coordinator on Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism where she focused on the role of women in combatting radicalisation. Prior to this, she was the Permanent Representative of Greece to the OSCE and built a successful career in the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ms. Fauziya Abdi Ali, President of WIIS Kenya and Chair of Sisters Without Borders. Ms. Abdi Ali is a dedicated advocate for women's engagement in peace and security, having developed one of the first projects on CVE in East Africa.

Ms. Amarsanaa Darisuren, Senior Advisor on Gender Issues from the OSCE. Formerly a Human Rights Specialist and Programme Manager for the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Ms. Darisuren provided technical advisory services to both governments and inter-governmental bodies, and supported the advocacy of civil society organizations on a broad range of development issues, with a focus on capacity development and implementing the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Ms. Cheryl Frank, Programme Head of the Transnational Threats and International Crime Programme at the ISS. In this role, she was a key contributor to research for the Democracy and Security Dialogue (DSD). Ms. Frank has previously held directorial positions at the Pretoria Office of the ISS, child rights organisation RAPCAN, and the Criminal Justice Initiative at the Open Society Foundation for South Africa.

Ms. Clare Hutchinson, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security. Ms. Hutchinson facilitates coordination and consistency in NATO's policies and activities related to the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. Previously, she was a Senior Gender Advisor at the UN for over a decade and has long been a champion of women's issues.

Message from Thomas E. Garrett

Secretary General of the Community of Democracies

The Community of Democracies is committed to the stance that there can be no true democracy without the full and equal participation of women in all areas of public decision-making. I also wish to extend my thanks to the Women Political Leaders Forum for organizing this summit, and to the Seimas of Lithuania for hosting it.

Today, the panel discussion will seek to address the importance of gender inclusion in preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) and to discuss strategies for improving women's participation in such programs. This is an issue in which the Community has been closely involved. Under the Democracy and Security Dialogue (DSD), co-chaired by Madeleine Albright and Mehdi Jomaa, a range of policy briefs were commissioned by the CoD from the Institute of Security Studies (ISS) and the Brookings Institution. The DSD reiterated and demonstrated that liberal democracy is the best path towards achieving domestic and international peace especially in the face of democratic backsliding and concerns that democracy is inherently unstable.

The policy brief on gender and countering violent extremism rejected the traditional narrative of women as mediators and inherently calming influences. Instead, it has urged us to recognize the wide variety of roles that women play: they are security agents, victims of security operations, citizens with a stake in the results of these operations, human rights defenders, civil society leaders, and even perpetrators of extremist violence. It also warns against instrumentalising women's rights as a tool for furthering P/CVE operations: women's empowerment is a crucial end in itself. A gendered analysis of violent extremism must also recognize that men are gendered beings – and that they can have significant influence in the domestic sphere so often ascribed to women.

There can be no true democracy without the full and equal participation of women in all areas of public decision-making.

The policy brief offered a number of recommendations, which I will summarize here:

- Firstly, we should support continued research into how gender constructs and structural inequalities drive radicalization and violent extremism.
- We should assist regional organizations and member states to ensure that they integrate gender as a key component in P/CVE policy frameworks, and that these institutions monitor the progress of the implementation.
- We should focus on some of the underlying reasons for the lack of women in P/CVE and enhance women's leadership and participation in decision-making in these areas.
- Community consultations should be integrated into P/CVE programs as they can increase the trust and support of local people and ensure that actions are context-based.



Thomas E. Garrett

Opening Remarks from Audra Čiapienė

Chair of the CoD's Working Group on Women and Democracy

Distinguished guests and panelists, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the Community of Democracies' Working Group on Women and Democracy, to this policy session named "Women: A Powerful Force in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism".

I would also like to express my special thanks to the Women Political Leaders Forum and Seimas of Lithuania for organizing and hosting this remarkable Summit that brings together more than 400 female political leaders from all over the world.

From the moment of its inception in 2000, the CoD has been actively supporting activities dedicated to women's empowerment and gender equality. The most recent example of its commitment to these topics is the project on "Advancing Women's Political Participation", which was implemented by the Permanent Secretariat of the Community of Democracies (PSCD) in close cooperation with the Working Group on Women and Democracy.

As an integral part of the project, five regional consultations provided an opportunity for participants from all over the world to discuss and compare the challenges and successes that women face in politics exploring recommendations aimed in promoting and advancing of women's political participation.

The participants, coming from Asia, Africa, Europe, Americas and the Middle East, underlined that convening forums and conferences to identify and share success stories can help strengthen adherence to international commitments by transferring practical knowledge on how these global accords might be translated effectively into national laws and policies. The "Women Political Leaders Summit" serves as an outstanding example of the realization of this specific recommendation.

Women are not just victims. They are policy-makers, mediators, and stakeholders.

Another example of the CoD's commitment to this subject matter is the project on "Engaging Women in Sustaining Peace" that will seek to identify a set of good practices, on how to successfully involve women in activities and strategies aimed at sustaining peace, because women should not only be perceived as wives, mothers and victims. They are policymakers, mediators and economic stakeholders.

The Community's assessment will take a global perspective, examining women's roles in sustaining peace in Asia, Eurasia, Latin America, and Africa. This is a response to the need for monitoring, tracking and reporting the achievements of women and women's organizations in sustaining peace, highlighted in Security Council Resolution 2282 (2016), on the Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture.

Today's session is focused on a specific area of women's involvement in sustaining peace - policy making and programming to prevent and counter violent extremism.

As we all know, there has been a growing awareness on how women and girls uniquely suffer from the impact of the increasing number of attacks carried out by violent extremists. However, the importance of women's roles in countering and preventing violent extremism is much less understood.

According to the policy brief on "Gender Equality and Violent Extremism," developed under the Community's Democracy and Security Dialogue by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS),

Practitioners involved in gender, peace and security efforts have noted that the exclusion of women from the formulation and implementation of "preventing violent extremism" (PVE) and "countering terrorism" (CT) measures undermines the success and sustainability of such efforts and threatens to undercut their democratic gains.

Preventing violent extremism and counter-terrorism frameworks and strategies also recognize the importance of a gendered approach and the role of women. Some examples include the UN's Plan of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism and UN Security Council Resolutions, such as UNSCR 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security and, UNSCR 2242 (2015) which recognizes the differential role and impact of terrorism and violent extremism on the rights of women.

Despite the significant progress achieved regarding the development of gender-responsive policies, some gaps remain in terms of their implementation. UNSCR 2242 (2015) has urged states "to ensure the leadership of women in developing strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism," yet women's participation remains limited. This explains why active participation and equality are heavily promoted, as the progress of these aspects would allow women to increase their influence regarding decision-making initiatives. This is a priority of the government of Lithuania, and has been since its presidency in the Community of Democracies in 2010 when it founded the "Working Group on Women and Democracy."

Today, the policy session will seek to address the importance of gender inclusion in preventing violent extremism and counter-terrorism as well as practices to improve women's political participation in this regard.

Dialogue, sharing of good practices, and targeted actions are the democratic means to facilitate change. Today we will put this in practice.

I strongly believe, that governments, international organizations, civil society and individuals should use all available soft means to motivate and inspire both men and women and, to spread the message that democracy without women's participation in society is only half a democracy.

Finally, let me assure you that the Working Group on Women and Democracy, as a part of the Community of Democracies, will continue to work on how to better advance the political empowerment of women through dialogue with governments and civil society.

Panel Summary

Participants in the policy session discussed the role of women in preventing and countering violent extremism policymaking and programming, stereotypes women face in a society, and women's motivation for joining extremist organizations. They also highlighted the importance of constructing gender sensitive P/CVE policies and proposed a set of recommendations for promoting women's political participation, leadership, and empowerment.

The session began with an evaluation of women's motivations for joining extremist organizations. The speakers underlined that traditional constructs of masculinity, often linked to dominance, power and violence, all greatly contribute to the association of males to extremist groups which offer a sense of belonging and justice, and to the oppression of women. Additionally, the lack of education for women diminishes opportunities for female empowerment through knowledge and notions of an equal society.

The participants stressed that socioeconomic factors contribute to the challenges that women experience, which increase the likelihood of women joining terrorist or extremist groups. When a woman has no access to financial means, the likelihood of joining such groups for support increases. This also creates a sense of loyalty to that particular network, and contributes to the increasing number of women taking part in extremist or terrorist activities. Additionally, when women's needs are ignored, they often necessitate a sense of connection and community. Therefore, online community building often stems from socioeconomic factors. By increasing women's involvement in policy-making, they could potentially address some socioeconomic factors which contribute to women joining terrorist or extremist groups. Such elements include the lack of access to water, food, electricity and safe places for children.

To this end, members of the panel stressed that any comprehensive strategy for involving women in P/CVE efforts must appreciate the effects of globalization on women's national and social identities. Policymakers must be more sensitive to the challenges they face when historically homogenous societies experience an influx of migrants and turn inwards as a consequence. Typical problems include restrictions on clothing and job discrimination, both of which marginalize women and their needs. Policymakers must work on dismantling the popular "us against them" narrative in order to reduce social polarization and xenophobia, thereby reducing the risk of radicalization.

A related point, mentioned by all members of the panel, was that policymakers must invest in soft P/CVE measures, including access to education and capacity-building. In some cases, education is the key tool for revising gender constructs and promoting gender equality. In other cases, the law must be complemented with gendered operational responses. These include developing training courses for women and youth, as well as actively enrolling women as community leaders. The public security sector has often implemented such programs as a way of defanging potential threats. Furthermore, the transnational nature of violent extremism requires a transnational response; countries must share best practices to improve their capacity-building programs.

Contribution from Ms. Cheryl Frank

We live in a violent world, where terrorism is but one form of violence we need to address. Currently, our primary tools are force and securitised actions. Yet, the rule of law is core to global counter-terrorist policy. Many terrorist acts are criminalized internationally, but few terrorists are actually brought to justice. Unless we ensure that there is accountability for criminal actions, we will not be able to achieve sustainable peace. In conflict zones, this is very difficult to achieve, and we often default to the use of force. There is strong evidence that

violent or abusive counter-terrorism tactics increase grievances, and can result in radicalization and recruitment to extremist organizations. We are learning that violent and repressive counter-terrorism measures have become part of the problem.

Policy-makers such as yourselves are uniquely placed to adopt evidence-based approaches which appreciate the drivers of the problem. Researchers across the globe can support you in accessing and sharing evidence. Your role also enables you to oversee the actions of security agents and the implementation of counter-terrorism policies.

We are in the process of evidence building. We are trying to learn more about the drivers of violent extremism and what we should do about them. We still need to learn much about our theories and about the solutions which work in practice. We need to draw lessons from past successes. This needs to be done by making our learning as public as possible.

Current evidence indicates that women are not afforded consistent opportunities to contribute to policy-making, and continue to be relegated to community-based actors' roles. We need to elevate their voices into policy spaces.

While PVE and its many related preventive actions might be considered benign, we need to watch out for human rights abuses that might take place in this realm. For example, the targeting of religious or ethnic groups; community-policing using communities for intelligence-gathering; or limiting certain forms of speech may also serve to feed the grievances associated with extremism.

There was a general sentiment that even in liberal democracies, inclusion is not always present. Once national identity feelings increase, the mentality of 'us versus them' often contributes to the discrimination and, eventually, the marginalization of women first. Women, as previously mentioned, are therefore more prone to join an online community in order to develop a sense of connection and loyalty. Additionally, some national PVE programs are not allowed to take place, due to human rights abuses; certain plans target religious minorities, which does not contribute to the prevention of violent extremism and countering terrorism. These sometimes further alienate marginalized people, such as women.

All participants also stressed that women continue to be pushed to community-based actor roles, and do not have the opportunities to take part in policy-based roles which could create significant changes in PVE/CT measures. Women can take part in operational responses regarding security sectors to prevent and counter violent extremism. For example, women can have roles in training courses for youth, community leadership, activism, and policy-making. Regarding the latter, women activists, researchers and academics can have more success in policy-making agendas, when grouped together to bring ideas forward. Also, another way in which women's role in P/CVE can be effective, is through an increased cooperation with the community's police by scenario training and counter-ideology narratives.

Contribution from Ms. Fauziya Abdi Ali

Women are critical stakeholders. For violent extremism (VE) groups, harnessing women's and girls' support is central in progressing its agenda and its ability to carry out terrorist activities. The Europol's 2016 EU Terrorism Situation and Trend report found that the share of women arrested on terrorism charges rose from 18 to 25 percent between 2015 and 2016. Another 2016 study found that 20 percent of all Western recruits to the Islamic State are women.

In Africa, Researchers at the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point and Yale University analyzed 434 suicide bombings carried out by Boko Haram since 2011, and found that at least 244 of the 338 attacks in which the bomber's gender could be identified were carried out by women. In Somalia, the group Al Shabab uses the subjugation and commodification of women and girls as a strategy to achieve control and domination of the population.

Currently there are a growing number of studies focusing on women as violent actors, their pathways to radicalization, and operational roles within violent extremist groups. While some women in violent extremist groups are kidnapped, such as the famous case of the Chibok schoolgirls in Nigeria, or trafficked Yazidis in Iraq, many join for the same reasons men do, including family or personal ties, desire for revenge, lack of opportunity, a feeling of isolation, or ideology. In some situations, women who were first victims can then become perpetrators, either to better their situation, through personal relationships, or due to indoctrination to radical ideas. There is not a simple binary between victim and perpetrator, and women engage in extremist violence in complicated ways. Responses to women's participation tend to overlook this nuance, however, assuming instead that women have been coerced into extremism. Where women are active participants in extremist groups, prisons and rehabilitation programs for women returnees face myriad of gendered challenges.

First, the stigma of sexual violence often leads to alienation and social isolation of women returnees, even those who were kidnapped or trafficked. Many women return pregnant, or with young children. In some cases, even when women are accepted back into their old communities, their children are 'tainted' by terrorism. Additionally, few deradicalization and rehabilitation programs are equipped to deal with the additional step of reintegrating children. This can have significant implications for whether and how women exit extremist groups, since familial and social ties may be difficult to break.

We need to determine how communities accept former recruits back. We need to have programs that engage women in communities during reintegration. One way of doing this through a policy perspective is to develop inclusive National Action Plans (NAPs) on P/CVE. In 2015, the UN Secretary General released a Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism in response to the fourth review of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (a/RES/68/276) and Security Council resolution 2178 (2014). Under Goal 5, the UN Plan of Action on PVE recommends that countries mainstream gender perspectives in PVE work, include women in national law enforcement and security agencies, and build the capacity of women and civil society groups to engage in prevention and response efforts. This is yet to be fully realized!

In some instances, NAPs such as those of Kenya and Somalia outline the importance of gender equality and the necessity to consider gender as a dimension of addressing violent extremism. However, NAPs often fall short of providing targeted recommendations on re-integration. How can one have a holistic approach to P/CVE if women are left out? In Kenya, through WIIS and Sisters without Borders network, we have been able to have dialogues with the government and are proud to report on the revision of the national PVE strategy to incorporate a gender pillar focused on women, that ensures cross-cutting gender lens across each of its 9 pillars.

We are all becoming more conscious of our own multiple identities, stemming from gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, physical abilities, and so on. As women leaders, by example, we have to be careful with our words and our actions. We must think about promoting social cohesion, and unity, especially now as spaces which were liberal and diverse are being affected by a rhetoric of "us and them". This supports recruitment of people to violent movements. Political and global events fuel VE movements. So, let us be careful as custodians of peace with our words and actions even if pressured by political parties and movements!

Generally, panellists were united in their views of what needed to be done to pave the way forward for women's participation in P/CVE as well as what challenges women face. Some panellists focused on women's motivations for joining extremist groups, whilst others elaborated on previous success stories and encouraged policymakers to exchange best practices. Ultimately, all speakers agreed that lawmakers would benefit from adopting a more gendered perspective and incorporating more women in P/CVE efforts. Crucially, it was stated that lawmakers must identify women's needs, improve capacity-building programs and access to education, strengthen legal oversight of PVE programs, and work to mitigate the socioeconomic inequalities which often drive vulnerable women to join extremist organisations.

Proposed recommendations

on Increasing Women's Participation in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

Women must be more involved in policy-making. Women activists, researchers and academics should group together to improve PVE/CT approaches through a more gendered approach. This is essential in the development of national action plans. Such women could address women empowerment, engagement, reintegration and rehabilitation for example. Additionally, such action plans should not just be nationally implemented, but regionally to increase cooperation and the sharing of successful practices.

■ Educate

Expose extremist ideas through education: women become more empowered by their knowledge, and gender equality increases in communities. The traditional pattern of masculinity through dominance, oppression against women and violence, would be reconfigured. Also, terrorists' focus on male identity and masculinity to build their outreach through a sense of belonging and justice, would be greatly reduced.

■ Conduct P/CVE research

Not all research regarding women and PVE/CT is up to date: we need more work focusing on a gendered perspective. However, from a policy-making perspective, we must learn from other forms of violence prevention and apply these. Policies, past evidence and research regarding the integration of violent offenders and the roles of men and women as perpetrators of violence for example, can be used regarding to PVE/CT measures. We must learn from the past to find solutions.

■ Expand gendered capacity-building programs

Women must be seen as actors and not just peaceful agents. Programs (operational responses) relating to the security sector must continue to be developed and implemented in communities. For example,

there is a need to put in place more training courses for women and youth to counter violent extremism, and women should be involved in the community-police approach to counter threats and improve the cooperation between police officers and the marginalized (youth and women) through scenario training, counter-ideology classes and narratives.

■ Strengthen the rule of law

Terrorists must be brought to justice; however, unless we see proof of accountability for their actions, sustainable peace will not be built. Therefore, judicial accountability should be better implemented or/and developed. Restorative justice must be part of the discussion.

■ Combat marginalization

Counter-terrorist measures overwhelmingly use force and "hard" security measures as a policy choice: this is not good to build long-term sustainable peace. Such PVE tactics may be tied to human rights abuses and these often target certain communities (such as religious minorities). As a result, such populations become more marginalized from society, increasing the chances of radicalization. Alternative measures minimizing the use of force, should be developed for such populations to be part of the dynamic instead of the solution. Evidence and past research should be used or further developed by policy-makers to understand what factors are driving the problem and what solutions should be implemented. Based on this, oversight is then critical for PVE/CT measures to be successful.

■ Provide access to information

Make all the information regarding prevention measures as public as possible, for better solutions to be developed over time and for such information to be shared among societies which need to address P/CVE.



■ Rehabilitate and reintegrate women into society

It is essential to re-empower women who were forced to join terrorist or extremist organizations. Additionally, these women could become essential actors in creating and developing programs to expand prevention tactics, help other women who went through the same experiences, as well as diminishing the likelihood of a future generation partaking in violent extremism. Therefore, rehabilitation and reintegration programs should be further developed for such women to be part of the solution.

Rehabilitation: Women who come back to their communities often face trauma, and therefore, need mental health counselling and support groups. Mental health awareness should also be discussed in rural communities, as there still is a lot of stigma regarding mental health, and this makes the rehabilitation process more difficult for women.

Reintegration: the mentality in rural communities must be changed for such women to be able to suc-

cessfully reintegrate. Special training programs must be developed to understand what drives women to re-join extremist groups after coming back to their communities where they face rejections and to develop solutions. Elements such as domestic violence and the exclusion of women in politics must be addressed to increase full integration and de-radicalize such women. These women need additional means of empowerment, such as socioeconomic activities.

■ Tackle socioeconomic inequalities

Many women have and continue to join terrorist and extremist organizations due the lack of basic services such as the lack of water, security, electricity and food, and the lack of safe spaces for their children. Policy-makers should focus on the empowerment of rural communities. More in-depth discussions should be conducted with rural communities to better understand what women's needs really are. Also, socioeconomic activities should be developed by not just focusing on women who are part of the re-integration process as this might create additional societal divisions, but on rural communities in general.

The CoD's Past Initiatives

on Security and the Promotion of Democracy and Gender Equality

Community of Democracies (CoD)

is a global intergovernmental coalition comprised of the Governing Council Member States that support adherence to common democratic values and standards outlined in the Warsaw Declaration and represented in international fora by the elected Secretary General.

Advancing Women's Political Participation:

Gender equality and political empowerment of women are key elements for the consolidation of sustainable democracies worldwide. To support women's participation in politics, the Community of Democracies, in cooperation with International IDEA and the UNDP, organized regional consultations to advance women's political empowerment, held on the margins of large democracy-related international events.

Through dialogue, the project provided an opportunity for participants from all over the world to discuss and compare the challenges and successes that women face in politics and look for ways to propel the idea of women's political participation forward. It consisted of five regional consultations organized in 2016-2017 in Strasbourg (France), Johannesburg (South Africa), Tunis (Tunisia), Bali (Indonesia) and Mexico City (Mexico). The project aimed to produce global and regional policy recommendations and contribute to a policy guidebook based on input collected from the five regional consultations. The guidebook "Regional Organizations, Gender Equality and the Political Empowerment of Women" is a part of the Inter-Regional Dialogue on Democracy (IRDD) initiative of International IDEA and provides recommendations on how to efficiently advance women's political participation.

Democracy and Security Dialogue:

Under the leadership of former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former Tunisian Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa, the Community worked with governments and civil society organizations to identify effective long-term security policies that are based on rule of law and other core democratic principles.

The Democracy and Security Dialogue, a year-long research project gathering the empirical evidence on the relationship between democracy and security, found that liberal democracy, when allowed to consolidate and flourish, is the best option for achieving domestic and international peace and security.

The project's final report and a series of policy briefs covering a range of security-related issues from civil war to terrorism were commissioned by the Community of Democracies' Permanent Secretariat and prepared by researchers with the Brookings Institution's Foreign Policy program and the Institute for Security Studies. This research, which was complemented by consultations with policymakers, academic experts, and civil society in India, South Africa, Mexico, Brazil, Poland, Sweden, and the United States, examines these linkages in substantial detail and makes specific recommendations for strengthening security through democratic means.



Community of Democracies

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