Four years into the deadly Syrian conflict, civil society in Syria continues to exist and remain active in the midst of severe oppression and increased violence. Despite being actively targeted by the regime government, militias and extremist groups, civil society groups continue to undertake crucial work countering military, political, and economic challenges in addition to offering much needed services to civilians.

What are the needs and the challenges facing Syrian civil society, particularly those of women’s grassroots organisations? How can the international community empower civil society in Syria?

Join the discussion with Syrian civil society activists and hear their recommendations for strengthening civil society in Syria in order to increase their capacity to stem the violence and establish democratic structures.

**SPEAKERS:**
Oula Ramadan  
Syrian civil society activist and founder and director of Badael.

Rana Khalaf  
Co-author of the "Activism in Difficult Times" Badael report and Research Fellow with the Centre for Syrian Studies at the University of St. Andrews.

Thania Paffenholz  
Senior Researcher at the Graduate Institute’s Centre on Conflict, Peacebuilding and Development.

**MODERATOR:**
Barbro Svedberg  
Project Manager of MENA 1325 Agenda (WILPF).

**SIDE EVENT AT THE 28TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**  
organised by Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

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