

# Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ligue Internationale de Femmes pour la Paix et la Liberté

Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad

رابطة النساء الدولية للسلام والحرية

*Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO; Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF*



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## UN Human Rights Council 37<sup>th</sup> session (26 February to 23 March 2018) ***Universal periodic review of Ukraine***

Strengthening women's representation in public life, promoting gender equality, preventing gender-based violence are among the issues addressed in commitments made and in recommendations supported by Ukraine in the UPR. Ukraine also supported a recommendation to provide for the effective participation of civil society in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.<sup>1</sup>

WILPF has been bringing to this Council's attention, including through the UPR, the human rights impact of austerity measures in Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> Today, we reiterate that violations of women's economic and social rights resulting from implementation of austerity measures are contributing to the feminization of poverty and the deepening of gender inequalities within the family and in the society. These violations pose significant obstacles to women's meaningful participation in Ukraine's peace efforts. Austerity measures hamper the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. They undermine initiatives to address gender-based violence.<sup>3</sup> They run against commitments to promote gender equality. It is, thus, essential that Ukraine address the negative effect of macro-economic reforms on human rights, and in particular their often disproportionate impact on women, in order to implement the recommendations mentioned earlier.

There is a fundamental need to change the dynamics of the economic reform agenda in Ukraine so that it actually addresses root causes rather than just looking at fiscal consolidation, which is the priority of the International Financial Institutions. This agenda must include all areas of the country, including eastern Ukraine. It needs to envisage funding to support a peace process.

It is essential to bring eastern Ukraine more closely into the discussion on what the post conflict in Ukraine is going to look like. This cannot be done without addressing the violations that are occurring at the moment and that are caused by at least two main factors: the humanitarian crisis as result of the conflict, and the deepening socio-economic deprivation in the east of the country.<sup>4</sup>

Violence against women, gender inequality, conflict and austerity are inherently linked. Addressing the impoverishment of communities and the gendered impact of austerity can and must be ameliorated. This would be a positive step towards ending the deterioration of gender relations and consequent violence, enabling peace building in communities and creating the environment where democracy and rule of law can function.

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendation 116.163.

<sup>2</sup> See for example, Ukraine: the Impact of Interventions by International Financial Institutions on Women, WILPF Written Statement to the 35th session of the Human Rights Council (UN index: A/HRC/35/NGO/68). Available at: [https://wilpf.org/wilpf\\_statements/ukraine-the-impact-of-interventions-by-international-financial-institutions-on-women/](https://wilpf.org/wilpf_statements/ukraine-the-impact-of-interventions-by-international-financial-institutions-on-women/)

<sup>3</sup> In its General Recommendation 35 on gender-based violence against women, the CEDAW Committee has stressed that austerity measures "further weaken the state responses" to gender-based violence adding that "in the context of shrinking democratic spaces and consequent deterioration of the rule of law, all these factors allow for the pervasiveness of gender-based violence against women and lead to a culture of impunity."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See press release: *Conflict in Ukraine enters its fourth year with no end in sight – UN report*, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21730&LangID=E>