

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

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



22 June 2018

Statement by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

UN Human Rights Council 38th session (18 June to 6 July 2018)

Item 3: Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom welcomes the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty's report¹ on the impact of the International Monetary Fund on social protection and the report's focus on military spending and on economic and gender inequality, among other areas. We also welcome the report on his visit to the USA.² Due to the limited time available, we will focus on the latter.

The findings in the report on the USA illustrate the racial, class, gender, educational, and civil rights inequalities and violations, which continue to increase across the country. Under the current administration, funding of the inflated national defense budget and militarisation has increased. Meanwhile, funding for human rights, social and civil services that offer and protect access to nutrition, healthcare, education, financial security, legal representation, and environmental protection has been reduced. As Special Rapporteur highlighted, the ever-growing socioeconomic chasm further perpetuates the systemic oppression inflicted upon the most marginalised in the USA.

Democracy is undermined when criminalisation is used to conceal an underlying problem of poverty. There are disproportionate rates of minors and youth from marginalised communities being incarcerated. Many at privatised prisons, which profit off each prisoner.

Communities most affected by incarcerations are further challenged in their struggle to get out of poverty by having to choose between basic healthcare needs, medical debt, the cash bail system, and, at times, student debt.

The privatisation of education and healthcare, along with the poverty-dependent money bail system, feed the "school-to-prison pipeline".

Professor Alston,

We are extremely concerned that the US Administration has criticised your analysis rather than reflecting on the negative effects that policies and practices, such as voter identification laws, are having on the levels of inequalities.

Mr. President,

We regret that the US delegation is not present in this room. The way towards strengthening human rights, at home or internationally, is not through disengagement from the Human Rights Council or rejection of multilateralism.

WILPF calls on the people of the USA to reject "chauvinistic nationalism", militarisation, incarceration and immigration detention, and family separation practices. Social and civil protections must be prioritised to protect the most marginalised and to build communities based on dignity and rights.

¹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, UN index: A/HRC/38/33, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session38/Pages/ListReports.aspx>

² Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his mission to the United States of America, UN Index: A/HRC/38/33/Add.1, available at the link above.