



WILPF STATEMENT
Geneva, Switzerland
17 September 2018

Statement to the UN Human Rights Council 39th session (10-28 September 2018)

Statement on the oral update of the Commission of Inquiry on Syria¹

Item 4: situations requiring the Council's attention.

Interactive Dialogue with Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic

WILPF welcomes the Commission of Inquiry's decision to focus its latest report on the escalating wave of displacement inside the country. We also welcome the Commission's emphasis on the forced nature of those movements and assessment that the so-called "evacuation agreements" are in fact war crimes of forced displacement.²

Displacement inflicts hardship on civilians; it disrupts their livelihoods and exposes them to a myriad of threats, with women and girls facing additional risks. Displacement pushes women to take a leading role in supporting their families while continuing their unpaid gendered roles of care and domestic work. Displaced women and girls are also disproportionately impacted due to exacerbated restrictions on their mobility and privacy and increased vulnerability to harassment and gender-based violence, including sexual violence. WILPF, together with several Syrian women organisations, highlighted the particular impacts of displacement on women and girls in the context of the UPR in 2016.³

Distinguished Commissioners,

WILPF welcomes the inclusion of a section on housing, land and property rights in your report and your drawing attention to the fact that female-headed households face additional difficulties when trying to claim those rights. This element needs to be developed in the future Commission's reports. Indeed, women disproportionately lack security of tenure because the property registration is often done under the name of a male relative.

¹ UN Index : A/HRC/39/65

² A/HRC/39/65, paragraph 78

³ See, "Violations against women in Syria and the disproportionate impact of the conflict on them: NGO summary report for the universal periodic review of Syria" (2016), available at: https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/WILPF_VAW_HC-2016_WEB-ONEPAGE.pdf



Discriminative laws and practices, including inheritance law, nationality law and civil documentation rules, limit women's full enjoyment of land and property rights, and this is exacerbated by situations when the male head of household is missing, killed, or detained.

We encourage the Commission to:

- investigate why and how women and girls face additional hurdles in claiming housing, land and property rights; and
- analyse how preexisting inequalities and discriminatory legislation in Syria negatively impact on women and girls' enjoyment of these rights.

Such a gender-sensitive analysis is fundamental to increase the prospects of establishing the gender-sensitive restitution processes recommended by the Commission.⁴

⁴ A/HRC/39/65, paragraph 101