



**ABAAD at the
63rd Session of the
Commission on the Status of Women
(CSW63)**

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Throughout the two weeks of CSW, ABAAD's delegation participated and contributed to several panels and events highlighting the work of ABAAD in promoting women's and girls' voices in Lebanon and the MENA region.



As an NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC, ABAAD delivered an oral statement during the general discussion on Monday 18th of March. ABAAD's representative, **Amal Farhat**, addressed the Commission and highlighted the challenges faced in the region such as the lack of funds in response to Gender Based Violence & Child Protection directed towards the humanitarian response inside Syria and the neighboring countries. **"It compromises the quality, inclusivity, and sustainability of the activities and services available for women and children"**, she stated. She talked about how the shortfall in UNRWA's funding is putting Palestinians, especially those from Syria, in high risk since they

continue to suffer from waves of displacement. **Farhat** also stressed on the need to ensure funding for law reforms that will benefit both refugees and host communities, and the need to increase investing in building the capacities of public staff and institutions and building national mechanisms and standard operating procedures that will make the response more sustainable in the future. **Farhat** ended her speech by **calling upon member states to engage civil society, specifically women's organizations, as equal partners so as to ensure the integration and progress of the gender equality agenda.**

On March 19th, ABAAD Founder & Director, **Ghida Anani**, joined as a panelist during the side event on "Empowering in Emergencies", hosted by the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations in collaboration with the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence (ICGBV). The discussion highlighted the themes that came out of the research on GBV response services in humanitarian settings, conducted by ICGBV, with a case study on Lebanon. The side event aimed to explore the following questions: Can there be lessons learned from Lebanon GBV response services? What are the common challenges to GBV response services, both in emergencies and in development contexts? How do you ensure that services provided in humanitarian response become sustainable in the long term?



Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason kicked off the side event, welcoming the large audience. In her speech, she claimed that GBV is an abuse of power and that essential services are often disrupted. She emphasized on the importance of access to public service, especially for the vulnerable and, as Chair of CSW, she ensured that this is reflected in the outcome of the negotiations. **Amb. Byrne Nason** also stressed on the need to educate young people, policy makers and men in particular, **"it is through education that we can prevent and end GBV"** she stated. **Ghida Anani** highlighted the importance of working together with men to address GBV as a public health problem and tackle its root causes. **"Patriarchy does not mean men, it is a system!"**, she claimed. **Chikumbutso Ngosi**, Women's Rights Theme Manager at ActionAid Malawi was among the panelists. She stated: **"The problem of GBV is exacerbated in certain contexts - poverty, war, instability - but the root cause is always the same - patriarchy"**. The Interactive discussion was moderated by **Dominic MacSorley** CEO of Concern Worldwide and Chair of ICGBV. During the side event, the **ICGBV report on GBV Prevention and Response in Emergency** was officially launched.





On March 20th, ABAAD, in partnership with the Women's International League of Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and MenEngage Alliance, organized a side event under the title "Patriarchal Masculinity, Militarism, and the WPS Agenda", which brought together around 40 participants from diverse backgrounds including the United Nations system, country delegates attending the CSW63, civil society organizations, activists and researchers. The event included an expert panel discussion that explored the concept of security on the international level and the patriarchal ideals that it retains. The topic of the day aimed to answer the question:

How is addressing masculinities connected to institutional change and what does this mean for the WPS agenda?

Anthony Keedi, Masculinities Technical Advisor at ABAAD, emphasized that at the international level, the concept of security retains patriarchal ideas of what it means to be secure in all decision making, from arms trade to investments, and that sense of power is linked to violence. **Abigail Ruane**, PeaceWomen Programme Director, talked about the need to revisit the transformative goal of the UNSCR 1325, which is to end the war and not add women to the war, and asses where we are at based on a higher standard. **Henry Myrtilinen**, Head of Gender and Peacebuilding at International Alert, talked about the need to integrate gender perspective in peace building programs to start brining men and masculinities into our world. **"To address patriarchy, we must address masculinity"**, he stated.



Panelists concluded by reiterating the importance to push for higher standards when it comes to the WPS agenda that would bring a feminist lens, which must be more realistic and correspond to realities on the ground.

The side event report is available at this [link](#)

On March 21st, ABAAD Founder & Director, Ghida Anani joined as a panelist at the side event on the "Empowerment, Engagement and Leadership through Civil Society", hosted by the UN Democracy Fund. The discussion was about UNDEF's work on women's empowerment and its projects around the world including Lebanon, Sudan, Columbia and Uganda. **Annika Savill**, Executive Head of UNDEF, welcomed the large number of attendees and introduced the panelists which included: **Rehmah Kasule**, President of Century Entrepreneurship Development Agency, **Alejandro Bonil Vaca**, Adviser of Corporación Opción Legal and **Hala Al-Karib**, Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa Network.

Ghida Anani described the complex situation in Lebanon, where talking about the protection of survivors from sexual abuse is considered shameful and a taboo. **"Patriarchy is putting us in boxes, forcing us to remain silent and not to exercise our rights"**, she said. She informed the audience that UNDEF was one of the very few UN organizations, alongside UN Women, that believed and accepted to invest in an advocacy legal reform campaign to abolish one of the most shameful legislations against women and girls, which was "marrying your rapist" law. **"This kind of support, which contributed to the success of this campaign, paved the way for Lebanon to start the journey of reforming all sexual violence related legislations! The appreciation from UNDEF was tremendously encouraging and motivating, allowing us to continue our journey and daily fight"**. Anani highlighted that the real sense of partnership with UNDEF reinforces ABAAD's sense of responsibility to grow internally even more as an organization and continue to tackle such challenging societal issues in Lebanon and the MENA region.



The 63rd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women ended by adopting Agreed Conclusions, reaffirming access to social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure for women and girls as key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. ABAAD congratulates Ambassador Byrne Nason for chairing a successful CSW.

ABAAD will continue to grow and leverage its presence at the global level to voice the challenges that women and girls face in Lebanon and the MENA region!

