

Concept Note

Webinar: Women's Testimonies from Suwayda: Between Violations, Siege, and Sumoud

Organized by: The Arab CSOs and Feminist Network in partnership with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom – Lebanon

Context and Rationale

Since mid-2025, *Suwayda* Governorate, a majority Druze area in southern Syria, has witnessed a dangerous escalation of violence, leading to civilian casualties, large-scale displacement, overcrowded hospitals, and deep gendered impacts, including the abduction of women, threats to girls' education, and the deterioration of food, water, and health security. All this has taken place amid clear failures in early warning systems and weak regional solidarity.

Women's voices remain largely absent from formal processes, and as Syria approaches the recovery phase, it is critical to integrate women not only as beneficiaries but as active agents in shaping public policy, local governance, and state rebuilding.

Objectives

This 90-minute virtual webinar aims to:

- Highlight women's testimonies from *Suwayda* on abduction, stigmatization of Druze women, disruption of education, collapse of basic services, and the failure of early warning systems.
- Document the gendered impacts of food, water, and health insecurity, and the absence of preventive protection.
- Amplify Syrian women's political vision for reconstruction, including demands for active participation in state rebuilding, engagement with international frameworks, and transitional justice.
- Develop practical recommendations from a Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) perspective directed towards:
 - The International Commission of Inquiry (integration of gendered testimonies in reports)
 - UN agencies and donors (funding for protection, psychosocial support, emergency education, and food/water assistance)
 - Regional feminist networks (enhancing solidarity and supporting women's political participation)
- Launch **Redesigning of the WPS agenda** in Syria by activating the principles of protection, prevention, participation, and inclusion in decision-making.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased awareness of developments in Sweida and women's roles in armed conflict and crisis response.
- Strengthened solidarity with women in Sweida through focused attention on women in conflict contexts.
- Integration of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda within crisis response frameworks.
- Creation of a cross-border platform for women.