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# The Role of the Diaspora in Peace- building in Yemen

## Potentials and Opportunities, Challenges and Constraints

by Marie-Christine Heinze and Ewa K. Strzelecka

### Introduction

Recent research has shown that diasporas have significant influence at the social, economic, cultural and political level in both their countries of origin and their countries of residency.<sup>1</sup> In the context of war-induced migration, diaspora communities are often divided in ways that mirror the conflicts in

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Moss, Dana M. (2022): *The Arab Spring Abroad. Diaspora Activism against Authoritarian Regimes*, Cambridge; Krawatzek, Félix and Lea Müller-Funk (eds). (2020): "Two centuries of flows between 'here' and 'there'. Political remittances and their transformative potential", in: *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46/6, pp. 1003–1024.

### Executive Summary

On 12 June 2022, FES Yemen and CARPO, in collaboration with the EU-funded Peace Women project, convened a one-day workshop in Amman, Jordan. The aim of this workshop was to discuss with researchers as well as female and male diaspora representatives challenges and constraints as well as potentials and opportunities of Yemeni diaspora communities to contribute to peace in their home country, and to particularly highlight the role of female members of the diaspora community in such efforts. This publication is a summary of the most important workshop findings. Some of these are:

- Many members of the Yemeni diaspora are not 'outsiders', but regularly travel back to Yemen. They are also often in daily and even hourly contact with families, friends, colleagues and business partners back home.
- In contrast to the often-held perception by Yemenis based inside the country that those who have left "are fine", Yemeni refugees and other members of the diaspora face a multitude of challenges that limit their ability to actively contribute to peacebuilding in Yemen.
- When these challenges can be overcome, the opportunities afforded to Yemenis based abroad can equip them as peacebuilders, who are able to build bridges and help identify new ideas and pathways for conflict mediation and post-conflict reconstruction in Yemen.

their homelands.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, numerous studies have documented the successful efforts and relevant roles of diasporas as agents of change and often also as peacebuilders.<sup>3</sup> If constructive and value-based, the diasporas' capacity to act and influence homeland politics and social change may ensure the durability of peace and the implementation of values of equality, inclusivity, justice, human rights, freedoms, and diversity in their countries of origin. Influential diaspora leaders and exiled activists may increase public representation and bring innovative social knowledge and expertise to the negotiation table, thus improving the legitimacy of the agreements reached and increasing chances for a more inclusive and equitable culture of peace.

There are more than 10 million Yemenis living in almost 40 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe and North America.<sup>4</sup> In the context of the ongoing war in Yemen, Yemeni diasporas have been growing and their transnational networks expanding. Since the outbreak of war in 2014/2015, many activists, politicians and talented professionals fled the country to

continue their activities from abroad. For example, the number of Yemenis in a refugee-like situation in Europe doubled between 2014 and 2019 to a little over 11,000.<sup>5</sup> The majority live in Germany, Sweden, Netherlands, United Kingdom, France, Greece, Austria and Switzerland.<sup>6</sup> Outside of Europe, some of the largest Yemeni diaspora communities can be found in Africa (Somalia, Djibouti<sup>7</sup>, Ethiopia, Sudan); the MENA region (Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Gulf countries); South-East Asia (Malaysia, Singapore, India); Canada and the USA.<sup>8</sup> Independently of whether Yemenis' migration has been driven by war or other reasons, the current conflict in Yemen has played a crucial role in the development of their transnational identity. Many Yemenis living abroad not only remain deeply connected to Yemen, but also have been able to build strong links between their country of origin and their host country. A number of them have mobilized and created transnational networks in support of Yemen-related causes.

Statistics show that Yemeni international migration is male dominated.<sup>9</sup> However, the current prominent participation of female

- 2 See, for example, Féron, Élise (2017): "Transporting and re-inventing conflicts. Conflict-generated diasporas and conflict autonomisation", in: *Cooperation and Conflict* 52/3, pp. 360–376; Baser, Bahar (2015): *Diasporas and Homeland Conflicts. A Comparative Perspective*, Farnham.
- 3 E.g. Horst, Cindy et al. (2010): *Participation of Diasporas in Peacebuilding and Development. A Handbook for Practitioners and Policymakers*, PRIO Report 2. Oslo; Warnecke, Andrea (ed.) (2010): *Diasporas and Peace: A Comparative Assessment of Somali and Ethiopian Communities in Europe*, BICC Brief 42, Bonn. Available at <https://www.bicc.de/publications/publicationpage/publication/diasporas-and-peace-a-comparative-assessment-of-somali-and-ethiopian-communities-in-europe-146/> (04.09.2022).
- 4 Shuja al-Deen, Maysaa (April 2021): *The Long Shadow of War. Mobilization Dynamics of the Yemeni Diaspora Since 2011*, Arab Reform Initiative – The New Arab Diaspora Series. Available at [https://s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/storage.arab-reform.net/ari/2021/07/26151446/2021-07-26-EN-Diaposra\\_YEMEN\\_FINAL.pdf](https://s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/storage.arab-reform.net/ari/2021/07/26151446/2021-07-26-EN-Diaposra_YEMEN_FINAL.pdf) (24.08.2022), p. 2.
- 5 Sydney, Chloe and Bina Desai (June 2020): *Yemen. The Implications of Forced Immobility*, iDMC/MAGYC Policy Paper. Available at <https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/202006-yemen-policy-paper.pdf> (24.08.2022), p. 2.
- 6 UNHCR (2021): *Refugee Data Finder*, Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=j4wR2Z> (15.10.2022).
- 7 Al-Hadheri, Samaher and Morgann Barbara Pernot (April 2022): *The Evolution of Yemeni Migration to Djibouti*, Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies. Available at <https://sanaacenter.org/publications/main-publications/17445> (11.10.2022).
- 8 Personal interviews with experts from the UN agencies and Yemen's embassies and ministries. See also: *Migration Profile Yemen 2020*. Available at <https://migrants-refugees.va/country-profile/yemen/> (15.10.2022).
- 9 *Migration Profile Yemen 2020*.

leaders in peace-building activities and transnational networks has made women stand out, partially also due to international focus on their involvement. These women, like male activists and leaders, are not a homogenous group and may come from different political backgrounds, hold diverse understandings of peace, and pursue distinct priorities and political goals. Independently of their differences and diverse perspectives, most of them claim their agency to bring about peace, shape homeland transnational politics and contribute to positive change in Yemen.

Despite the above-mentioned potential of diaspora communities in peace-building processes and the fact that the war in Yemen is now already in its eighth year, no attention has been paid to the role of the diasporas in peacebuilding in Yemen. In order to address this gap, to discuss challenges and constraints as well as potentials and opportunities of Yemeni diaspora communities to contribute to peace in their home country, and to particularly highlight the role of female members of the diaspora community in such efforts, FES Yemen and CARPO convened a one-day workshop with researchers as well as a significant number of female and male diaspora representatives on 12 June 2022 in Amman, Jordan.<sup>10</sup> The workshop was designed and implemented in collaboration with 'The Peace Women Research Project' funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie

grant agreement n° 101024992. This publication is a summary of the most important workshop findings.

## Mapping the Yemeni Diaspora

*Yemen's diaspora community is difficult to map*, for various reasons: a) Many Yemeni communities worldwide have grown over decades, if not centuries, due to historical links between Yemen and the host country. For example, there are large Yemeni communities in Malaysia, Singapore and India due to trader's networks that have existed for centuries across the Indian Ocean. In the UK, we also find a large Yemeni community that dates back to the British colonial history in Aden. Egypt, too, has long been a destination for Yemenis, be it for those seeking medical care, education or political refuge.<sup>11</sup> As one speaker pointed out, the term 'diaspora' is rarely used, as the Yemeni community in many countries has historically grown over many years and waves, with constant mobility between home and host countries. b) This regular mobility also concerns more recent waves of Yemeni immigration into new host countries. The heterogeneous nature of this migration has also been shaped by the diverse asylum policies of the host countries. While a very limited number of Yemenis have been able to make it to EU countries, most asylum seekers in Europe were eventually able to receive a positive decision on their applications. In non-European

<sup>10</sup> Next to the CARPO and FES representatives, who acted as moderators, there were three international researchers and 15 members of the Yemeni diaspora with different professional backgrounds (researchers, activists, journalists, and a Yemeni refugee representative) attending. A large number of them are involved in transnational networks aiming to improve the situation in Yemen and contribute to the peace-building process. Moreover, two civil society activists usually based in Yemen were present as well.

<sup>11</sup> For more recent studies on Yemeni political elites in Egypt, see Poirier, Marine (July 2022): *Politics Despite the War. Yemeni Political Elites in Cairo*, Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies. Available at <https://sanaacenter.org/publications/analysis/18228> (11.10.2022).

countries, the asylum procedure often resulted in a longer wait time, and recognition as a refugee has rarely been granted even after many years of waiting. In recent years, the asylum policies have changed in some host countries, such as Jordan, making it more difficult for Yemenis to apply for asylum.<sup>12</sup> As a result, only a limited number of Yemenis are being recognized as refugees. The majority are registered as asylum seekers, have residency permits as students, tourists or reside via work permits and business visas. Some Yemenis were able to apply for naturalization in their host countries and gain dual citizenship. Many undocumented Yemeni migrants have been forced to move back to Yemen or to another host country. In Egypt, for example, the war in Yemen has led to an increase of Yemeni residents from around 70,000 before the war to a current estimated community of 500,000–700,000 residents. However, in 2021 only 9,735 Yemenis in Egypt were registered as asylum seekers and 156 as refugees.<sup>13</sup>

***Yemen's diaspora community is socially diverse***, but the range of diversity varies from host country to host country. Whereas Yemenis reaching Western countries are usually – though of course not exclusively – from among the elites, who come as businessmen, students or intellectuals, the diaspora communities in Arab countries tend to be more diverse, adding much poorer families to the overall social mix.

***Yemen's diaspora community is politically diverse*** and at times, certain host countries become the basis for Yemenis affiliated

with certain parties in Yemen. One of the most prominent cases, also addressed in the workshop, is Turkey, which has become a destination for Islah-affiliated politicians, intellectuals and journalists fleeing violence and repression by the Houthis (also known as Ansar Allah) in Northern areas of Yemen or by other groups in the South. While there are also Yemenis not affiliated with Islah in Turkey, a dominant part of the community is connected with this party in one way or another, and all three Yemeni media channels linked to Islah are based here. Political activism within this diaspora community also manifests in recruitment and indoctrination, including the targeting of university students, children and women. This strong political domination of one distinct party to the conflict remarkably contrasts with the much more politically diverse diaspora communities in most other countries.

***Political diversity can but does not always result in antagonisms within the diaspora community.*** One of the most striking findings from this workshop was the observation that a diversity of political affiliations within the diaspora community of a certain host country does not necessarily always result in adversity among the different factions. In Germany, for example, Yemenis often organize themselves in registered non-governmental organizations (*Vereine*) based on political affiliations with high levels of distrust between some groups that mirror the current political fault lines in Yemen. One workshop participant reported that she prefers not to include other members of the Yemeni diaspora in Germany in her humanitarian activities for

<sup>12</sup> Al Majali, Solenn (2022): *A Precarious Refuge. Yemeni Asylum-Seekers in Jordan*, Sana'a Center for Strategic Studies. Available at <https://sanaacenter.org/publications/main-publications/16557> (04.09.2022).

<sup>13</sup> UNHCR 2021.

Yemen, to avoid the appearance of affiliation with any political factions. In contrast, a workshop participant reported that the Yemeni community in Egypt regularly comes together across political divides, and there are also occasional meetings among those who are politically active that bring together activists from all parties to the conflict, including supporters of the Houthis. While the atmosphere at such meetings was often tense, with sporadic walkouts by certain factions dissatisfied with the direction a current discussion, this overall “spirit of community across conflict lines”, as the workshop participant put it, can be used as inspiration for other diaspora communities; and – with respective caution – could be mobilized for conversations in the framework of a broader peace-making and peace-building process.

## Challenges and Constraints to Activism in the Diaspora

Given that this was the first workshop addressing the Yemeni diaspora since the beginning of the war, the challenges and constraints the members of the diaspora present at this workshop have faced ever since leaving Yemen took center stage in most of the presentations and in almost all inputs from the audience. The limitations and struggles faced ranged from issues related to residency and travel, psychological burdens and backlash from the Yemeni community. Some of the issues voiced were gendered, constraining only female activists. As a more general observation, it was pointed out that expectations of Yemenis abroad have changed over the course of the war. While many left Yemen initially with the hope of returning soon, the duration of the conflict has resulted in a shift

of the priorities of many families to giving their children better opportunities, particularly in regard to education, which ultimately means committing to a longer duration of stay in the host country. It was also pointed out, however, that in some host countries good education opportunities are only available for those with financial resources.

**Issues related to residency and travel:** The formal challenges regarding one’s legal status in the host country is something that all Yemenis in the diaspora have to deal with. The experiences of insecurity, of constantly being in limbo or afraid of losing one’s permission to stay are in themselves traumatic and clearly limit the ability to focus on activism (see also the next section on psychological burdens). Apart from these psychological impacts, (non-) recognition of the legal status has a large impact on real-life opportunities: The ability to work for a living and to access education and healthcare for oneself and one’s family all rest on one’s legal status. The processes of legal recognition vary strongly from host country to host country. In Europe, Germany’s bureaucracy regarding immigration was described as particularly slow and limiting in regard to opportunities for Yemeni refugees to learn the language and become independent from state support. In the Arab world, Jordan was described as a particularly difficult place for Yemenis with limited financial means to be granted a legal status. Here, many Yemenis were forced to apply for asylum with the UNHCR due to the lack of other affordable options for legalizing their status after the national migration policies changed. Residence permits in Jordan have become very expensive and are conditioned on obtaining a work permit that cost between US\$600–1000 per year, a fee

that the majority of Yemeni refugees could not afford.<sup>14</sup> While the number of Yemenis applying for asylum in Jordan increased to 14,059 in 2019, only 715 were granted refugee status in the same year.<sup>15</sup> Since 2020, moreover, Yemenis in Jordan are not allowed to hold both work permits and asylum-seekers' documents from the UNHCR. New regulations have increased their vulnerability and led to an increase of exploitation at work and deportations. Without formal registration as refugees, large numbers of Yemenis in Jordan thus have to seek an income by subjecting themselves to the *kafala* system<sup>16</sup>, putting themselves at the mercy of their sponsors with no legal protection. Their families, too, are in an extremely precarious situation, as Yemenis with no legal status face difficulties of registering their children in school or accessing healthcare facilities. "Yemenis try to make themselves invisible in [the capital city] so they won't even visit friends out of fear of being caught," one workshop participant remarked.

Alongside this issue, restrictions on travel for Yemenis, including those with refugee status, were also seen as particularly constraining when it came to activism. This was unfortunately also experienced by a workshop participant, who was refused at the airport in France when trying to board the flight to Amman. This participant had to participate remotely, having lost a day due to the rejected travel attempt as well as the opportunity to network with colleagues. For many

activists in the diaspora, their unresolved residency status limits their ability to travel and thus their ability to network, share ideas and build new alliances.

**Psychological burdens:** Survivor's guilt is certainly a factor that drives activism in the diaspora, but it is often coupled with trauma, PTSD and sheer exhaustion of dealing with the challenges in the new host country, trying to adapt to a new life in a new society, and constantly worrying about family and friends back in Yemen. "My body is here, but my heart and soul are in Yemen," a female activist based in Germany was quoted in the workshop. These psychological burdens have led to the cessation of activism among diaspora members as they seek to regain their footing, focus and mental well-being. Some return to activism after a break, some do not.

**Political constraints:** Political constraints in regard to activism in the diaspora can be imposed by the host country, but it is also exerted at times by the Yemeni diaspora community. For example, social media in Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates are closely monitored and public criticism regarding the country's involvement in Yemen can be dangerous. Activism in certain countries can only take place within clearly delimited boundaries of what is permissible to say and what is not, thus limiting certain types of activism. But constraints can also be imposed by the Yemeni community or the Yemeni Embassy. A participant from the diaspora community

<sup>14</sup> Al Majali 2022.

<sup>15</sup> UNHCR 2021.

<sup>16</sup> Under the *kafala* system, migrant workers are required to have a sponsor from their host country, usually their employer, who is responsible for (renewing) their visa and legal status. The system is criticized for creating opportunities for exploitation as well as the monitoring of migrant workers.



in the UK stated that she often felt excluded from Yemeni groups in the UK due to her Southern background, ultimately being doubly marginalized as a person from the South and as a woman. Another participant, based in Jordan but regularly traveling to other countries, said he was shocked by the political struggles he encountered among Yemenis in some host countries, wondering: “Why do you fight like this, we don’t even fight like this in Yemen!” Also, the Yemeni Embassy in one Arab host country – not named here for the safety of workshop participants based in this country – was reported to regularly denounce Yemenis of inconvenient political affiliations to the political security forces of said country. The Yemeni Embassy in that country was seen as ultimately regulating who could be there and who must leave. One workshop participant based in this country stated that she had ceased her initial activism on behalf of Yemen as she felt that it would be too dangerous.

**Limitations specific to women:** Smear campaigns in (social) media against female activists in the diaspora, who sought to make something out of the opportunities provided to them outside of Yemen, are among the factors particularly limiting women’s activism in the diaspora. Female activists present at the workshop also reported that their work was constantly being de-legitimized by other Yemenis (and some members of the international community) with the argument that their engagement was the work of “elite, rich diaspora women”. The accusation that these women were de-coupled from women inside Yemen due to their wealth and education was on top of the general argument often leveraged against Yemenis in the diaspora that their work was not “legitimate” as they

did not suffer the same as Yemenis based in Yemen. Out of fear for their reputation and that of their families, some female activists have chosen to cease activism as a result of such targeted campaigns. This is an issue that almost exclusively concerns women activists, as they are attacked on the basis of their gender and accused of violating the norms and values of what is considered acceptable behavior for a Yemeni woman.

From the Yemeni diaspora in Turkey, which – as mentioned above – is dominated by supporters of Islah, it was also reported that while there is strong solidarity among female members of the diaspora when it comes to social issues, these tight networks also serve as a means of political and social control. Conservative norms are upheld, a workshop member reported, and serve to limit women’s engagement. This experience is most likely not limited to Turkey alone, but also to other diaspora communities elsewhere linked to conservative interpretations of Islam. As in other host countries, however, the workshop participant speaking on Turkey also commented on an increasing gap in regard to these norms and values between generations: Children were learning Turkish and being exposed to secularist thinking in Turkish schools, while many of their parents, particularly their mothers, continued to have only limited knowledge of Turkish and remained attached to the conservative Yemeni traditions and norms of a particular interpretation of Islam. As elsewhere, women of the Yemeni diaspora in Turkey thus faced a dual challenge: the restrictions of not being able to speak the language of their host country and the limitations imposed on their freedoms by the Yemeni community.

Other workshop participants spoke about issues such as domestic violence facing Yemeni women in the diaspora. For those women, it is often difficult to escape an abusive relationship, particularly when children are involved, as the Yemeni embassies (all except three are headed by men) are reported to often side with the men when it came to providing the necessary documentation relevant for divorce, obtaining custody of children, or travel. There is usually no support available for women to address and overcome this issue.

## Supporting Factors, Potentials and Opportunities for Activism in the Diaspora

Supporting factors for activism in the diaspora identified in the workshop, as well as potentials and opportunities to engage in peacebuilding in Yemen, were manifold and linked to the context of the host country as well as the Yemeni community in that country.

A *cooperative environment* within the diaspora community in a certain country was mentioned as one of the enabling factors for activism. In Egypt, as stated above, a sense of solidarity across conflict lines and between newcomers and older members of the community seems to endure. Solidarity networks among Yemeni community members in Egypt also receive funding from Yemeni businessmen, some of whom have been based in Egypt for a long time. Representatives of the Yemeni community in Cairo, for instance, are keen to avoid politicization and division of the community.

*Opportunities created by the host country* came up repeatedly as an important

supporting factor in activism for Yemen. Structurally, and despite all the difficulties raised in the previous section, members of the diaspora were often seen as privileged when it comes to accessing education, language capabilities, access to the internet, access to the international community and travel opportunities. Particularly compared to the situation of women and girls in Yemen, the opportunities afforded to female members of the diaspora in the West are often significant and are leading to a new generation of well-educated women of Yemeni background. Many of those who will return to Yemen one day will return more educated, more experienced and often also wealthier than those who never left. Human rights discourse, critical education and cultural freedom in Western countries such as Germany and the Netherlands, for example, was found to encourage activism in general, and feminist activism in particular, not only among women but also among Yemeni men. Also, the ability to engage with political parties in Western democracies and become active within them to either influence policy making on Yemen or on the situation of refugees and immigrants was seen as empowering. One workshop participant from the diaspora community in the UK thus spoke on the experience of establishing the Labour Friends of Yemen, a forum within the Labour Party dedicated to discussions on matters related to Yemen. This forum successfully informs and influences Labour Party members' stance on the Yemen conflict and also encourages young Yemenis to become involved in host country politics, thus effectively training a new generation in political activism within a democratic framework. The same participant also presented efforts of the Yemeni diaspora to contribute to peacebuilding in Yemen through non-political activism, such as the arts. In the framework of



the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival, for example, the ‘Conflict in Yemen Project’ implemented poetry workshops to promote peace in Yemen and heal the divisions within the Yemeni communities in the UK.

Opportunities to travel and access the internet, as well as the increasing opportunities for virtual meetings since the beginning of COVID-19, have all supported the establishment of *transnational diaspora networks* that often span over 30 countries and include activists based in Yemen. These transnational networks, several of which were represented at the workshop and often set up by Yemen’s political, social, economic and intellectual elites, see themselves as being actively engaged: in supporting the peace-making and peace-building process in Yemen; supporting the inclusion of more women in these processes on all levels; or building expertise for post-conflict reconstruction. While members of the diaspora often felt accused of not knowing “what it’s really like in Yemen” and thus lacking legitimacy to speak on behalf of Yemen, they also believed that their presence in other countries provides them with opportunities to positively impact the situation in their home country due to their ability to influence decision makers working on Yemen in their host country. But words of caution were also spoken about diaspora activism, which one participant even viewed as being part of the problem rather than part of the solution: Some members of the diaspora act as representatives of the parties to the conflict, aiming to influence decision makers in the host country on those parties’ behalf. Others, it was argued by pointing to the fact that major political events in Yemen were shaped by other countries, become “agents of outside players”, acting on outside interests rather

than on behalf of ordinary Yemenis. As has been shown for diaspora networks of other countries in conflict, the diaspora can indeed contribute to peacebuilding, but also has the potential to aggravate the conflict.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

In the concluding session of the workshop, participants were asked to highlight some of the most central points they felt ought to be included in this workshop publication, as well to put forward recommendations to enhance the ability of the Yemeni diaspora to contribute to peacebuilding in Yemen.

### Conclusions

Given the current lack of attention paid to the situation of the Yemeni diaspora and the difficulties its members encounter when leaving Yemen, many workshop participants highlighted the need to shed more light on these issues and the fact that “without stability in your host country, activism is difficult.” This particularly relates to the formal questions around residency status and the ability to work and travel; but also key is the ability to engage in activism without threats from within the diaspora community, the Yemeni embassy or from the security institutions of the host country.

Participants also emphasized the issue of interconnectivity, highlighting the fact that many members of the diaspora regularly returned to Yemen and were thus “not really outside.” Due to a high level of global interconnectedness, through the increased speed of communication and mobility, Yemenis in

and outside the country are also, more than ever before, able to build strong links between their country of origin and their host countries. It was mentioned repeatedly that there is a lot of circulation and mobility within the diasporas and that the transnational networks connecting Yemenis inside and outside the country tended to obscure the knowledge and potential of the diaspora: “‘Inside’ and ‘outside’ are political categories about who is allowed to speak.” In regard to the often-referenced issue of a perceived lack of legitimacy of the Yemeni diaspora to contribute to peace and reconstruction in Yemen, it was suggested that workshop participants themselves should change the narrative; e.g. by telling personal stories via the media, to help people in Yemen understand Yemeni refugees’ hardships. They should also focus on ways to help rebuild their country via new opportunities open to them in the diaspora. Here, the ability of the diaspora to help build bridges across political divides was emphasized.

### **Recommendations**

Improving the situation of the diaspora in their host countries:

- Provide funding for projects aimed to support and protect women in the diaspora who seek to leave an abusive relationship.
- Establish digital protection programs to protect and support those who suffer from hate speech and slander.
- Establish more mental health programs for refugees and migrants affected by war, violence and integration issues.
- Move away from the discriminating focus on Ukrainian refugees in the West or Syrian refugees in Arab countries, de-marginalize support to Yemeni refugees and reframe

the needs of (Yemeni) refugees, who not only require financial support, but also access to education and healthcare opportunities. “International community embassies can do a better job in defending Yemeni refugee communities.”

- Implement more systematic studies on Yemeni diaspora communities across the globe.

Supporting the contributions of the diaspora to peacebuilding:

- Improve the means to transfer funds to Yemen to support humanitarian efforts by Yemeni diaspora networks.
- Consider the re-integration of Yemeni refugees and the broader diaspora in Yemen after the war as part of the peacebuilding process.
- Involve the diaspora in the peace-making and peace-building processes, as they can often speak and think more freely, can help build bridges across political divides, and will be – by way of their wealth and education – able to contribute to rebuilding Yemen.
- Enhance the cooperation between Yemeni organizations and networks inside and outside of Yemen for the sake of knowledge exchange, strategic thinking, the amplification of local voices and mutual empowerment.
- Reconsider feminist foreign policies to include those who speak about the suffering of the Yemeni people, and of women and girls in particular.
- Continue highlighting the situation of the Yemeni diaspora and its potentials to contribute to peacebuilding and reconstruction in Yemen by organizing a larger conference with specific working groups and inviting UNHCR and OSESGY as observers.

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## About CARPO

CARPO is a Germany-based think tank with a focus on the Orient that works at the nexus of research, consultancy and exchange. Our work is based on the principles of partnership, inclusivity and sustainability. We believe that a prosperous and peaceful future for the region can best be achieved by engaging the creative and resourceful potential of all relevant stakeholders. Therefore, CARPO opens enduring channels for trustful dialogue and interactive knowledge transfer.

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## About the Project

Peace Women is an academic postdoctoral research project funded by the European Commission under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship Programme. It is hosted by the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam (Netherlands) and by CARPO. The project aims for a full-length and multisite study of women, revolution, forced migration and peacebuilding in Yemen and beyond, focusing particularly, but not exclusively, on Yemeni activists based in the Netherlands, Germany and Jordan.

Project website: <https://www.peacewomenproject.com>

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