



**A PLAN OF ACTION FOR  
WOMEN IN COMMUNITIES  
TO COUNTER HATE SPEECH  
AND  
PREVENT INCITEMENT TO  
VIOLENCE  
THAT COULD LEAD  
TO GENOCIDE AND RELATED  
ATROCITY CRIMES**

**THE NAPOLI  
WOMEN IN COMMUNITIES  
PLAN OF ACTION**



**Plan of Action for  
Women in Communities to Counter Hate Speech and Prevent Incitement to Violence  
that Could Lead to Genocide and related Atrocity Crimes**

Adopted 14 July 2022, Napoli, Italy



**United Nations**  
Office on Genocide Prevention  
and the Responsibility to Protect

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## Overview

Deliberations on the *Plan of Action for Women in Communities to Counter Hate Speech and Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Genocide and related Atrocity Crimes* (The Napoli Women in Communities Plan of Action) brought together women leaders from communities around the world. The women represented a cross section of governments, civil society, academic institutions, traditional institutions, multilateral and donor partners convened by the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, on 13 and 14 June 2022 in Napoli, Italy.

The *Napoli Women in Communities Plan of Action* was officially launched on 12 June 2023, ahead of the second International Day for Countering Hate Speech, at the event co-organized by the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations.

The launch event was opened by Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Under-Secretary-General and United Nations Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, with remarks by:

E. Courtenay Rattray, Chef de Cabinet, Executive Office of the Secretary-General (EOSG), on behalf of the UN Secretary-General

H.E. Ambassador Maurizio Massari, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations

H.E. Dame Pauline Tallen, Former-Minister for Women Affairs and Social Development of Nigeria

H.E. Jacqueline O'Neill, Canada's Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security

# Remarks by United Nations Secretary-General

## António Guterres

*as delivered by the Chef de Cabinet, launching the Napoli Women in Communities Plan of Action*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to join you today on behalf of the Secretary-General for the launch of the Napoli Plan of Action to Advance the Role of Community Women in Preventing Atrocity Crimes and to deliver this message on his behalf.

The Napoli Plan of Action is a critical initiative for two reasons:

First, the prevention of atrocity crimes – genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity – remains an enduring challenge. It is at the heart of the mission of the United Nations.

Second, atrocity crimes have a gendered dimension, so efforts to prevent and respond to them must also take gender into account.

This year marks 75 years since the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted by the General Assembly on 9 December 1948. It is a landmark treaty, based on the commitment of ‘never again’. This commitment can only become a reality when we live up to the aspirations of the Convention. I urge all States that have yet to do so to ratify the Convention. And I encourage all States that have ratified the Convention to take the necessary steps to fully implement it, by ensuring national legislation is in line with the Convention and to put in place adequate mechanisms for prevention at national level. However, even non-signatory States have a responsibility to prevent the crime of genocide.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has repeatedly stated that the Genocide Convention embodies principles that are part of general customary international law. Turning to the UN’s work on the prevention of atrocity crimes: The Secretariat, and in particular my Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, work closely with Member States to prevent and end such crimes and to pursue accountability. The entire UN system is engaged on addressing and preventing risk factors, such as hate speech and incitement to violence, a well-known precursor to atrocity crimes, including genocide, as seen in Cambodia, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

and Rwanda. Our humanitarian, development and communications initiatives include measures to reduce the risk of such crimes and respond to their impact. However -- and this brings me to my second point -- there is an enduring blind spot in international efforts: women and girls.

Genocide and other atrocity crimes often begin with the harassment and abuse of women and girls.

Rape is used as a tactic to terrorize entire communities. Thus, women survivors are not only victims but also the repositories of important information on recognizing and preventing atrocity crimes from the start. Women's leadership and participation on an equal footing are fundamental throughout the entire cycle of atrocity prevention, from early warning information; to resolving tensions among communities; to promoting tolerance, non-discrimination, and friendship between communities; and to countering hate speech and incitement to violence.

More broadly, there is ample evidence that women's full participation in peace efforts, including the prevention of atrocity crimes, makes those efforts more sustainable and resilient. This is not an opinion. It's a fact. And it is a question of justice. Women have a right to be at decision-making tables. Women should be leading prevention initiatives and implementing education programmes on the warning signs of atrocity crimes. And women mediators should be leading efforts to heal communities.

The Napoli Plan of Action emphasizes the significance of gender-inclusive national prevention strategies. It seeks to ensure that women contribute to countering hate speech and preventing incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes by convening, supporting, and building capacities for women living in communities where risk factors, indicators, and triggers point to a possibility of atrocity crimes. And it recommends actions to Member States, multilateral partners, civil society, academia and traditional institutions on "re-shaping and strengthening communities" to create both local and a global, inclusive community of women experts on the prevention of atrocity crimes. I welcome the inclusion in the Napoli Plan of Action of recommendations to strengthen the protection of women so that they can make their full and equal contribution.

These include measures to condemn and end gender-based violence and discrimination -- a prerequisite for women's full and equal participation and leadership. Likewise, I welcome efforts to provide women in key roles in communities with the skills they need to recognize and prevent atrocity crimes, and to connect women's grassroots networks with regional and international stakeholders. The

Plan also recommends building up the resources available to women working to prevent atrocity crimes using data, and by bringing women's networks together to share experiences and best practices. Across all these proposals, the United Nations stands ready to provide support, in the first instance through our country teams around the world.

Our world is going through troubled times. Violence and conflict have displaced 100 million people. Human rights are under attack.

Inequalities and divisions are deepening; hate speech, incitement, exclusion, and discrimination are growing. The need to recognize the warning signs of atrocity crimes, including genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, is greater than ever. I urge all Member States to take immediate action to protect their people – which can only be achieved with women at the front and centre of their efforts. I hope all Member States will take the recommendations of the Napoli Plan of Action to heart, and act on them immediately. Thank you.

# Remarks by Alice Wairimu Nderitu, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide

Excellency, distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations for co-sponsoring this event, and in particular the Permanent Representative, Ambassador Maurizio Massari and for the kind support of the Italian Government for this Plan of Action. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Chef de Cabinet, Courtenay Rattray for being with us today and for representing the Secretary General of the United Nations António Guterres. I am grateful to all speakers and participants, my sisters Jacqueline O'Neill, Canada's Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security and Dame Pauline Tallen, Nigeria's immediate former Minister for Women Affairs and Social Development. I thank those who joined in person or connected virtually. Most of all I thank my sisters, from far flung parts of the world, sisters I have walked with for much of my life building bridges among divided people, underlining our important role as women in peace, security and human rights, sisters who gathered in Napoli to draft this plan we launch today. Some of you are here today, many of you could not come but today is your day and indeed even in your absence, I feel your presence.

Ladies and gentlemen,

When I previously mediated armed conflict, it was the women, more than anyone else who demonstrated daily, what bringing peace in societies torn apart by violence, healing the wounds of war, rebuilding trust and reconciling groups after traumatic events looked like in practice. As Under Secretary General and United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, I have continued engaging with women, especially in the field of the genocide and related atrocity crimes such as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Despite the milestones set by the Beijing conference on equal rights and opportunities for all women and girls and by Security Council Resolution 1325 on women's role in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security the gap of women participation in the prevention of genocide and related atrocity crimes and their incitement is yet to be realized. And yet, women and girls are a frequent target of



genocide and related atrocity crimes and their incitement. Women are also often silenced, raped, enslaved, tortured, and killed.

We must address this gap urgently, redouble our efforts to advance the role of women, in particular women in communities in prevention mechanisms and processes. We must make prevention of genocide and related atrocity crimes a reality, as divisions along identity lines are deepening and the number of conflicts and crises are growing globally.

So today, I introduce the Plan of Action for Women in Communities to Counter Hate Speech and Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Genocide and Related Atrocity Crimes, the Napoli Plan of Action, a tool my office developed with women who live and have worked on prevention in communities for most of their lives.

There is overwhelming evidence that women are absent from decision-making roles in the context of preventing genocide and related atrocity crimes and their incitement, despite being key stakeholders and having agency and capabilities to respond meaningfully. At the same time, it is well documented that group-based differences and inequalities increase the risk of genocide and related atrocity crimes in society. Hence, if we enhance their role in a prevention, the statistical probability to succeed in increases. For this reason, women must be at the forefront of genocide and related atrocity crimes prevention, at the center of our policies, strategies, and programmatic action more so as they play a key role in enhancing mitigating risks factors.

As we enter the third decade of the Women Peace and Security Agenda (WPS-Agenda), we need to rethink how we approach prevention, starting by acknowledging that we have failed at including women and supporting their role in the prevention of genocide and other atrocity crimes. But how can we make peace and prevention a reality if we continue to exclude half of the world population? Women deserve and demand a seat at the decision table of genocide and related atrocity crimes prevention. Excluding them is doing us a disservice and only increases the risk of atrocity crimes, with obvious impacts on human life and dignity.

So, we gathered in Napoli as women from around the world, in July 2022 discussing, based on practice, the role and contribution of women in communities in preventing genocide and related atrocity crimes and their incitement as well as on the thought leadership from practice across the world.

Our meeting resulted in the *Plan of Action for Women in Communities to Counter Hate Speech and Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Genocide and Related Atrocity Crimes* (the Napoli Women in Communities Plan of Action), a policy document urging all relevant stakeholders and influencers across governments, civil society, academic institutions, traditional institutions, multilateral partners, and donor partners to implement three main recommendations:

1. Ensure that while contributing in countering hate speech and preventing incitement to violence that could lead to genocide or related atrocity crimes, women are;
  - Engaged, or
  - Have the opportunity to engage, or
  - Have an increasing capacity to engage.
2. Explore and systematically pursue practical strategies for facilitating the engagement of women to counter hate speech and prevent incitement to violence that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes.
3. Build capacity, globally and as needed within the United Nations and its partners to ensure that there is:
  - Sufficient understanding on hate speech and prevention of incitement that could lead to atrocity crimes to ensure the proficiency in implementation of projects involving *The Napoli Women in Communities Plan of Action*.
  - Incorporate interventions by women countering hate speech and preventing incitement to violence that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes into policy and programming.

Each recommendations details specific sets of measures, urging stakeholders to take action.

This initiative seeks to convene and build sustainable support systems around the work of women in communities preventing genocide and related atrocity crimes and their incitement. It recognizes the crucial and central role women have in preventing genocide and related atrocity crimes and restoring the social fabric after the crimes have been committed. It further anchors the empowerment of communities at the center of prevention of genocide and related atrocity crimes, a priority for my mandate.

On 18 June we will celebrate the second International Day on Countering Hate Speech. This is an important milestone for the international community, for the UN system and for my mandate, as I am also the UN global Focal Point on Hate Speech. Hence, today's event is a reminder that all our efforts towards prevention, including in countering hate speech and preventing incitement to violence, need the inclusion of women front and center.

Today, we have an opportunity to commit to and support Plan of Action. We will have a panel discussion on how to best implement this initiative and foster support with all stakeholders, from government to community leaders, from civil society to the media and beyond.

I believe that your presence today is a testimony of your commitment to empower women and enhance their participation in genocide and related atrocity crimes prevention.

I call on all of you to support these very complementary agendas and contribute to the implementation of the *Plan of Action for Women in Communities to Counter Hate Speech and Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Genocide and Related Atrocity Crimes*.

## Remarks by Ambassador Maurizio Massari, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations

It is an honor for me to participate to the launch of the Plan of Action for Women in Communities to Counter Hate Speech and Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes.

Allow me to thank the Under-Secretary General and Special Adviser of the Secretary General on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Nderitu, for convening this meeting. I have already expressed in other occasions my appreciation for her wise inputs and vision, and today I am particularly glad that other distinguished partners and colleagues have joined for this first presentation of a new project of her Office.

Allow me to spend a few words on the background of this pilot initiative and to explain why my Country, Italy, is endorsing and co-hosting this event.

The designation of the Plan of Action is self-explanatory: this Plan is the result of the joint work carried out by a group of community women leaders who met in Naples in July 2022. They were coming from different countries and regions of the world, and from a variety of social and professional backgrounds, and some of them are with us today. I am particular glad to salute H.E. Dame Pauline Tallen from Nigeria for her leading role in this process.

In Naples, these amazing women have discussed new ways to protect, support and empower those women who are at the forefront of atrocity prevention. Their joint work has resulted in the drafting of a series of recommendations aimed at advancing this very ambitious and challenging agenda.

Indeed, women and girls are amongst the most vulnerable targets of atrocity crimes. Yet, at the same time, they remain crucial actors to restore the social fabric and cohesion.

Last January, in this Chamber, ECOSOC has explored the linkages between peace, inclusion, human rights and sustainable development that are needed when we examine the heinous phenomenon of atrocity crimes. This has shown that in order to make prevention and early warning effective, we must look at their root causes to gain a comprehensive understanding of the risk factors.

Incitement to discrimination and violence and all kind of narratives aimed at nurturing hate speech are major triggers on this dangerous path.

This reflection is even more meaningful as it takes place at the eve of the International Day on Countering Hate Speech, aimed at spreading awareness and better understanding of the phenomenon. The international community bears the responsibility to communicate clearly the rejection of all forms of discrimination. Education and communication are the best tools at our disposal, and communities are at the core of these effort - as are the women who can effectively act at that level as natural builders of peace.

As a matter of fact, this brings us back to the fundamental issue of participation. If we want to fully include a women's perspective and promote women-led initiatives aimed at countering hate speech, we must ensure that their voices are heard, and even more so, that their voices count at the table where decisions are taken.

Participation is one of the pillars of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and is a pre-condition for the full implementation of Resolution 1325. In this context, Italy reiterates its strong support for this landmark text and for the implementation of the WPS agenda, and commends UN Women work to support women's full and equal representation and participation in all levels of peace processes and security efforts

Peacebuilding, peacekeeping and mediation are sectors in which women have proven to be particularly effective. We welcome the increasing success of the regional networks of women mediators and the rising interest for this model across the regions of the world. Italy is a proud supporter of the Mediterranean Women Mediators' Network launched in October 2017 to promote gender equality and foster women's inclusion in peace processes, mediation efforts and peacebuilding in the Mediterranean region.

Over the years, the network has led to the establishment of a Global Alliance of Regional Women Mediators Networks, uniting the voices from 6 different regions of the world in a call to accelerate the implementation of the WPS agenda on the ground. This year, the torch of the coordination of the Global Alliance has passed from the Mediterranean to Africa and we look forward to strengthen the linkages

and the synergies between these already existing initiatives and other pilot projects as the one that we are celebrating today.

In order to do so, we must listen to the call for action, accountability and participation coming from the communities, from the grassroots, women-led organizations of the civil society and embed this call in our collective vision and cross-regional action.

I hope that the Napoli Plan of Action be a step in this direction.

# **Plan of Action for Women in Communities to Counter Hate Speech and Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Genocide and related Atrocity Crimes**

## **A Plan of Action for Women, by Women**

The *Napoli Women in Communities Plan of Action* was drafted from women's perspectives which contributed to mainstreaming women's voices and experiences in its entirety. The plan recognises and welcomes the several existing mechanisms to address women's inclusion and protection as well as their meaningful role in peace and security efforts globally. These efforts have however not translated into women led initiatives aimed at countering hate speech and prevention of incitement to atrocity crimes in a mainly militarized and male-dominated field. The State has the primary responsibility to protect populations, however many other actors with influence in society such as women, play important roles. Women have strong influences on society and their messaging has wide reaching impact. Women can also use this influence negatively; however, many have used it positively and been responsible for taking action to reduce tensions within communities by countering hate speech and preventing incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes.

The Women Peace and Security Agenda is now its third decade amid indications of inadequate attention to enhancing the decision-making roles of women in countering hate speech and preventing incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes. It is of paramount importance for women to be systematically incorporated into these roles. Women are key stakeholders and have agency and capabilities to respond meaningfully, especially since group-based differences and inequalities continue to increase the risk of hate speech and atrocity crimes globally.

The deliberation in Napoli invited the addressing of the big question, "What roles women can play - despite contestation - in achieving communities that are fair, accountable, responsible, and cohesive by countering hate speech and preventing incitement that could lead to atrocity crimes?" The women discussed this question while considering the rapidly changing shape of the global political landscape which has created uncertainties on social, economic, demographic, and climatological futures. They

also discussed the need to link the framing of objectives and practices on countering hate speech and prevention of incitement of atrocity crimes in ways that are identifiable in local conditions to regional and international agendas. The *Napoli Women in Communities Plan of Action* is built on the foundation of credible data of the absence of women in the roles of countering hate speech and prevention of incitement atrocity crimes. It is also built on the pressing need to link this absence with broader policy objectives with evidence that an application of resources and attention can make a substantial improvement.

This plan therefore seeks to convene, support, and build on experiences globally, capacities for women living in communities where risk factors, indicators, and triggers such as hate speech and incitement to violence point to a possibility of atrocity crimes. The plan addresses narratives on the supposed women's lack of agency in countering and addressing hate speech and preventing incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes, based on stereotypical gender roles. The plan, in its implementation, will reference a wide range of women scholars, as sources, and as researchers, to ensure full inclusion of women's voices and experiences. By tackling hate speech in full respect of international human rights law the women will help prevent incitement that could lead to atrocity crimes.

## Hate Speech

One of the warning signs and powerful triggers of violence that can lead to genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity ("atrocity crimes") is hate speech. In 2019, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, launched the **United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, with the office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide as the Focal Point** in its implementation. While there is no universal legal definition of "hate speech", the United Nations working definition of hate speech is "any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that denigrates a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race or other identity factor." While all incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence is hate speech, not all hate speech constitutes incitement. Incitement to discrimination, hostility and violence is both an early warning indicator and a trigger of genocide and related atrocity crimes.

Hate speech and the dehumanization of 'the other' was present during, after and long before violence broke out and genocide and related atrocity crimes were committed in the Holocaust, and the genocides against the Tutsi in Rwanda and in Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina. One of the warning



signs and powerful triggers of violence that can lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes are messages in public discourse and media spreading hostility and hate, encouraging or inciting populations to commit violence against groups based on nationality, ethnicity, race, or religion. Genocides and crimes against humanity are planned processes, not isolated or spontaneous events. Increased hate speech targeting communities or individuals, based on their identity contributes to enabling or preparing genocide and related atrocity crimes and is an indicator that those crimes may be committed.

Online and offline hate speech continues to thrive and it's important to find the means to defuse incitement to violence, often propagated through hate speech, and prevent it from reaching or being acted upon by its intended audience. This can prevent and curb the violence that leads to genocide and related atrocity crimes.

***In societies divided along identity lines, addressing hate speech contributes to early warning and prevention efforts.***

## **Incitement to Violence**

The term “incitement to violence” is included in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which in article 20 (2) prohibits “any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.” Acts that constitute incitement to violence can include any communication that encourages violence against an individual or group. Incitement can take various forms, including political speeches and flyers, media articles, social media communications and visual arts products. For acts of incitement to result in violence, specific elements need to be present, including a context conducive to violence, an influential speaker, a speech that is widely disseminated, a receptive audience and a target.<sup>1</sup> In order for an act to constitute incitement to violence, there must be intent<sup>2</sup> on the part of the speaker to engage in advocacy and cause violence. There also needs to be a certain degree of likelihood that the act may result in the violence that it calls for.

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<sup>1</sup> Prohibiting Incitement to Discrimination, Hostility and Violence <https://www.article19.org/data/files/medialibrary/3572/12-12-01-PO-incitement-WEB.pdf> , and Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence, A/HRC/22/17/Add .4, appendix, para. 29.

<sup>2</sup> “A person has intent where: (a) In relation to conduct, that person means to engage in the conduct; (b) In relation to a consequence, that person means to cause that consequence or is aware that it will occur in the ordinary course of events.”, The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, art. 30(2, a,b), <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/RS-Eng.pdf>

The prevention of incitement to violence is rooted in international human rights standards, including the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 3 of the Genocide Convention includes “direct and public incitement to commit genocide” as one of the acts punishable under this Convention. Article 4 of ICERD requires States parties to “declare an offence punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or incitement to such acts against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities, including the financing thereof”.

The jurisprudence of ad hoc international tribunals, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, also include definitions of incitement to genocide and related atrocity crimes. The Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit linked the prevention of incitement to violence to the prevention of atrocity crimes. In paragraphs 138 and 139, all heads of State and Government committed to “protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” and agreed that this responsibility “entails the prevention of such crimes, including their incitement.”<sup>3</sup>

Given this context, the consultation in Napoli, Italy, led by the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, created a platform and forum for participants to exchange experiences and good practices on the role and contribution of women in preventing genocide and related atrocity crimes and their incitement. Immense women’s thought leadership from practices across the world contributed to this plan.

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<sup>3</sup> 2005 World Summit Outcome document, para. 138 and 139, A/RES/60/1, [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_RES\\_60\\_1.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf)

## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of *The Napoli Women in Communities Plan of Action* is to ensure that women contribute more systematically and significantly, to countering hate speech and preventing incitement to violence that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes.

### The Objectives of the Plan are to:

1. Ensure that while contributing to countering hate speech and preventing incitement to Violence that could Lead to Genocide and related Atrocity Crimes, women are:
  - Engaged, or
  - Have the opportunity to engage, and
  - Have an increasing capacity to engage.
  
2. Explore and systematically pursue practical strategies for facilitating the engagement of women to counter hate speech and prevent incitement to violence that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes.
  
3. Build capacity, globally and as needed within the United Nations and its partners to ensure that there is:
  - Sufficient understanding on hate speech and prevention of incitement that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes to ensure the meaningful implementation of projects involving *The Napoli Women in Communities Plan of Action*.
  - Incorporate interventions into policy and programming by women countering hate speech and preventing incitement to violence that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes.

The consultation in Napoli concluded by strongly recommending actions to be taken in fulfilment of these objectives. It was agreed that under the stewardship of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, this Plan of Action is implemented at community levels with support from national, regional, and international levels. Implementing this plan of action will strengthen existing initiatives and enhance the respect, protection, and promotion of human rights.

The call referred to as the Plan of Action for Women in Communities to Counter Hate Speech and Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Genocide and related Atrocity Crimes strongly urges all relevant stakeholders and influencers across governments, civil society, academic institutions, traditional institutions, multilateral partners, and donor partners to take the following actions.

# **SPECIFIC MEASURES RECOMMENDED FOR WOMEN TO COUNTER HATE SPEECH AND PREVENT INCITEMENT TO VIOLENCE THAT COULD LEAD TO GENOCIDE AND RELATED ATROCITY CRIMES**

## **1. Navigating Communities – Select the Right Women.**

- Conduct a mapping exercise across coalitions, social movements from the Women Peace and Security context, women unionists, religious leaders, and from divided communities, refugees and/or parties at conflict and identify formal and informal women community leaders.
- To ensure a broad and inclusive pool, design an outreach program publicizing the OSAPG mandate emphasizing where community expertise is essential and how women can contribute.
- Establish focal groups across national, ethnic, racial, and religious groups in regions with a high number of risk factors for atrocity crimes.
- Establish digital platforms that respect the do-no-harm principle and uphold rule of law and accountability for interaction, knowledge-and exchange sharing of the focus groups.
- Create a code of conduct and organize a briefing to review standards and expectations. Require focal groups to sign agreements not to engage in hate speech or incitement to violence that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes.

## **2. Re-Shaping Communities - Create a global, inclusive, community of women experts' ecosystem on the prevention of atrocity crimes.**

- Provide knowledge, skills, learning space, online and in-person to share evidence, approaches, and expertise to women already mobilizing in communities and build on their existing momentum.
- Create a core team of women trainers, connected to learning spaces to share, and access knowledge, co-design solutions, develop curricula, review existing curricula to ensure gender sensitivity, contribute and share high-quality, field-tested resources for impactful prevention including early warning analysis for genocide and related atrocity crimes.
- Build an evidence base to measure online and offline hate speech, misogynistic attitudes and practices and violence against women including risk and protective factors.
- Create awareness and contribute towards the creation of a normative framework on gender based online hate.
- Work with women and reflect women's experiences in anticipating, reporting, preventing and responding through information gathering and action programmes with applications for

tracking, reporting and retrieving evidence of hate speech, incitement, and other forms of violence in text, images, voice, or video.

- Produce women led content (including guidelines for information collection, its management and preliminary analysis) on countering hate speech and preventing incitement to violence that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes for policy research, cutting edge commentary, case studies, in-depth analysis, and create a forum for debate through an electronic newsletter.
- Document female experiences of genocidal violence and contribute to ideas to protect women and girls from hate speech and incitement that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes.
- Create a global inclusive community of experts' ecosystem led by women countering hate speech and prevention of incitement to atrocity crimes that values peer-to-peer learning, local knowledge and leveraging technology.
- Engage existing governmental, non-governmental, and intergovernmental platforms at the local, national, regional, and global levels to promote knowledge-exchange sharing opportunities at all levels.
- Build vibrant advocacy communities to facilitate national, regional, and international cooperation and coordination.
- Explore programs to:
  - Establish or strengthen existing online or physical Women's Situation Rooms to counter hate speech and prevent incitement to violence that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes and provide access and support to women.
  - Build the capacities of women professionals in judicial processes, including investigations, in situations at risk of genocide and related atrocity crimes or where these crimes have been committed.
  - Build and support capacities for women's leadership in community trauma healing.
  - Promote cross border joint programming on hate speech and prevention of incitement that could lead to atrocity crimes.
  - Advocate for and develop benchmarks to measure progress of women's inclusion in countering hate speech and prevention of genocide and related atrocity crimes programming and prevention mechanisms and platforms at local, national, regional, and international levels.
  - Strengthen the role of community women in early warning mechanisms and traditional dispute resolution bodies to provide rapid response and assistance in contexts at risk of genocide and related atrocity crimes.
  - Introduce women quotas including for women from vulnerable groups for inter-ethnic and inter-religious community dialogues and projects.
  - Establish safe spaces for women to meet, discuss social issues and challenges in relation to countering hate speech and prevention of genocide and related atrocity crimes.

### 3. Strengthening Communities: Link the global, inclusive, community of women experts' ecosystem on the prevention of atrocity crimes with broader policy objectives and resources.

- Strengthen protection structures by recognizing and addressing the root causes of women's exclusion from atrocity prevention policies, strategies, and activities, and build the conditions necessary for women's participation.
- Identify women's organizations at the community level as local partners to mediate disputes, distributing humanitarian assistance. in places where there are risk factors for atrocity crimes.
- Foster creative and practical means for facilitating direct or indirect inclusion of women mediators or negotiators. Due to the militarization of peace processes, women - though many are capable of leading and participating - are still absent from the table in peace negotiations, including at the community level yet they often serve as arbiters and mediators of disputes as professional judges, magistrates, and teachers.
- Work with negotiating parties and mediators to integrate proposals by women on hate speech and prevention of genocide and related atrocity crimes on the agenda and deliberations
- Involve women countering hate speech and preventing incitement that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Rehabilitation (DDRR). The women have skills especially in reintegration processes that ensure the permanent disbanding of military formations and the formal purposeful inclusion of former fighters into their societies and rehabilitation that encompasses the psychological and emotional aspects of returning to civilian life.
- Involve women in countering hate speech and preventing incitement that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes in transitional justice measures, for both judicial and non-judicial mechanisms and processes to address legacies of conflict, human rights abuse, and other violence.
- Identify opportunities for strengthening support for women countering hate speech and preventing incitement that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes by the private sector.
- Leverage United Nations technical expertise and networks to support organizational development of women's organizations at the community level.
- Strengthen the inclusion of women's participation at local governance levels, at district levels, within local dialogues and local negotiations, and within decision-making structures.
- Support women to attain economic independence through micro-enterprise, skills training, and land ownership. Support existing national legal frameworks and policies that promote women's rights and condemn gender-based violence, gender-based discrimination, and domestic violence, and advocate for coherence with existing national legal frameworks.

- Strengthen national legislation to cover the specific impact on women of genocide and related atrocity crimes.
- Support the role of women in leadership positions in the public and private sectors to urge, lobby, and advocate for greater inclusion of women in countering hate speech and prevention of genocide and related atrocity crimes.
- Support women's community-level and international networks to make demands on the State to fulfill its obligation to protect women and hold accountable those who fuel genocide and related atrocity crimes and crises, including documenting systematic rape as a corollary to atrocity crimes.
- Support multi-track networks of women by connecting community level stakeholders to regional and international stakeholders with an emphasis on judicial response and reparations.
- Support education of women on genocide and related atrocity crimes and its prevention at all levels, including formal and informal levels.
- Strengthen community social contracts to include protective norms and structures that have existed to protect women and children for Millennia.
- Advance the protection of women by women and create safe spaces for women engaged in genocide and related atrocity crimes monitoring and prevention.

#### **4. Investing in Communities: Nurturing Legacies of Influence by Leveraging the Collective Power of Young Women**

- Build a coalition of partnerships across the United Nations, Governments, and civil society to create pathways through which young women can meaningfully engage to influence decision making.
- Survey a representative cross section of women, documenting their experiences in countering hate speech and preventing incitement to violence that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes.
- Invite key women to participate in dialogues about needs assessment and implementation review.
- Sustain the ecosystem of women countering hate speech and preventing incitement based on genocide and related atrocity prevention focused objectives by leveraging the collective power of young women through mentorship, building conceptual clarity, strategic visioning, training of trainers, amplifying voices, movement building, supportive networks and links to personal and professional development opportunities including through use of creative and performing arts.
- Empower women, including young women, in environment action and climate change resilience as tools for conflict transformation.

- Support gender sensitive and informed capacities in artificial intelligence, information and data management, and information and data analysis to develop skills in the use of digital tools to predict, prevent, and respond to genocide and related atrocity crimes.
- Understand, monitor, and document, in written and video form, the social, emotional, and cultural pathways to be charted by women working to counter hate speech and prevent incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes.
- Identify and widely disseminate good practices and lessons learned in the field on women preventing atrocity crimes and their incitement.
- Hold regional consultations with women in communities to contextualize the *Plan of Action for Women in Communities to Counter Hate Speech and Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Genocide and related Atrocity Crimes*.
- Establish scholarships for women who want to pursue academic studies in atrocity crimes prevention.
- Establish *The Napoli Women in Communities Plan of Action* awards and prizes for women and girls who counter hate speech and prevent incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes.
- Develop training resources with immersive learning experiences for women in communities to *counter hate speech and prevent incitement to violence that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes*.
- Communicate evaluation findings to outreach coordinators and disseminate reports to those seeking to replicate this program.

The *Plan of Action for Women in Communities to Counter Hate Speech and Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Genocide and related Atrocity Crimes* provides a policy framework that will in turn provide opportunities to engage in all parts of the world including at regional and international levels and with male allies. This Plan emphasizes the space for horizontal sharing globally, across communities and for upward policy influencing.

A prevention approach that counters hate speech and prevents incitement to violence that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes, led by women, offers a new opportunity for prevention that considers diversity and group-based differences in the analysis. Many local efforts led by women in communities do not fit into external donor categories such as response, recovery or development initiatives and are therefore not eligible for external funding. The *Napoli Women in Communities Plan of Action* acknowledges women in communities as actors with significant influence to counter hate speech and prevent incitement to violence that could lead to genocide and related atrocity crimes.



## FROM THE LAUNCH

*"We desperately need women within communities, including young women. We need to see them as experts, as resources, as essential leaders in countering hate speech and preventing incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes."*

~ H.E. Jacqueline O'Neill, Canada's Ambassador for Women, Peace and Security

*"Hate speech, with its venomous branches, threatens the very fabric of our communities and has the potential to unleash violence and atrocities, as we have witnessed in countries that have witnessed genocide. It begins with little gossips and then escalates beyond the ordinary and before you know it, the society is on fire, causing destruction to lives and properties. Of course, women and girls become the worst victims. The Plan of Action we are unveiling today is a testament to our shared determination to address the root causes of hate speech and prevent the escalation of violence into unimaginable atrocities."*

~ H.E. Dame Pauline Tallen,

Former-Minister for Women Affairs and Social Development of Nigeria

Video recording of the launch event with the panel discussion, moderated by Prof. Azza Karam, Secretary General of Religions for Peace, [available here](#). Highlights from the panel:

*"It is my wish that women gathered here lay the groundwork on solutions to manage hate speech and attacks on female human rights defenders that has continued to discourage - and in worse case scenarios - prevent women from fully realizing their potential in participating in the fight against atrocity crimes and genocide. This initiative and platform gives us an opportunity to dismantle discriminative systems and symbols that lead to vulnerabilities that include but not limited to race, gender, ethnic and religion among other issues that can potentially result in atrocity crimes and or genocide."*

~ Ms. Mandiedza Parichi, Zimbabwe

*"There is an urgent need for creative and innovative strategies meant to deconstruct narratives that fuel hate speech and promote disintegration and division. We need to develop tools for tracking, analyzing and countering online hate speech; undertake continuous research on trends and triggers of hate speech*

so as to come up with targeted interventions (...) and encourage cross-learning. We also need to create links between Think Tanks and Research Institutions with Community Women mediators/peace builders that are mutually beneficial - community women should not be considered as data suppliers, but they should play a meaningful role in validating any research undertaken in their context. "

~ Ms. Leonie Abela Sendegeya, Rwanda

"Parallel to the empowerment of women, it is needed to support them to engage in peace studies, atrocity preventions studies, conflict transformation and other related studies. Our societies suffer from degradation of education, which is not anymore valued since it does not matter what kind of knowledge and skills one possesses, but how loyal he/she is to the ruling. But the time will come when education regains its power and again is among the most important social values. And then we will need educated and skilled women to make so desired social change."

~ Ms. Ivana Franović, Serbia

"To effectively prevent atrocity crimes, we must prioritize the responsibility to build over the responsibility to protect. This requires genuine political commitment from the part of international actors, to address root causes, promote accountability, stop instrumentalizing women, and end tokenism about women's empowerment."

~ Ms. Fatima El-Zahra Langhi, Libya

"This initiative is long-overdue and we cannot wait to hit the ground running, where women will be able to come to the table and have safe spaces to address these issues. Most often they're the subject of hate speech, yet they don't have a channel to reply or address it. This discourages women who even want to try, because of fear or shame that goes with hate speech or incitement. And this leaves perpetrators stronger. There is a lack of safe spaces for women for raise alarm or give information as early warning."

~Ms. Beatrice Gathoni Kamau, Kenya

**"Women need safe spaces and for their voices to be taken seriously."**

~ Concluding message from women leaders who participated in drafting of Napoli Women in Communities Plan of Action, sharing experiences from Serbia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Libya, & Kenya, at panel moderated by Prof. Azza Karam.

