



A Letter on Feminist Peace¹:

Dear Member States of the UN,

It has come to our attention that on Peace Day 2020 you, Member States of the United Nations, adopted a Declaration to mark the 75th birthday of the Organization.²

As with you, it has not escaped our attention that the promises your forefathers made so very many decades ago have not been delivered. Over a century ago, our sisters demanded two simple things: equality and peace.³ Instead, they endured two world wars before they were heard by your forefathers. Peace and equality together with development were integrated into the Charter forming the core pillars of the UN. And we tried to work with you to deliver, and we were often silenced. Silenced by the violence you have continued to use, condoned or tolerated to feed your desires for political, economic and social power that permeates and rips apart our environment, our communities, our homes.

Twenty years ago, we thought you remembered the promises made by your forefathers. And we thought that you had heard us when the Security Council adopted resolution 1325. But instead you have spent the last two decades stripping the Women Peace and Security agenda of its transformative vision and remoulding it to suit your interests. Where is that peace? Where is that equality? We demand that you immediately take action to rectify this situation.

Inspired by the feminist manifestos, declarations, human rights and alternative formulations of human rights, artistic interventions and protests, which challenge the prevailing dominant assumptions of the human as “western, white, heterosexual, male owners of assets”,⁴ we have set out some basic steps to assist you in delivering on peace and equality founded on an inclusive and intersectional concept of humanity and peaceful existence for all peoples.⁵

You need to cast aside your preconceptions, mindsets and your self-interests and reimagine your – and our - world. All of our lives and the Earth itself depend on it:

1. Re-centre your work around peace and equality and, in doing so, set aside your obsession with militarised conceptions of security and embrace human security;

¹ The inspiration for this format comes from the art piece “Dearest Art Collector”, Guerrilla Girls, 1986, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/guerrilla-girls-dearest-art-collector-p78802>

² UN General Assembly, “Declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations”, September 16, 2020, <https://undocs.org/A/75/L.1>

³ For example see Resolutions from Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom Triennial Conferences, <https://www.wilpf.org/resolutions-from-wilpfs-triennial-congresses/>

⁴ Committee of Latin American and the Caribbean for the Defense of Women's Rights, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights from a Gender Perspective”, <https://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/1349>. This declaration was proposed to the General Assembly in its 53rd session for consideration and, like the Maputo Protocol, the draft includes a substantive right to peace and a violence free life in both public and private life.

⁵ The right that all peoples have to existence set out in Article 20 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (“Banjul Charter”), June 27, 1981, <https://www.achpr.org/legalinstruments/detail?id=49>

2. Reconceptualise the Security Council as the Peace Council and recraft its mandate to advancing peace and equality for all;
3. Adopt and implement all existing international human rights treaties, without reservations and limitations, and ensure that law and policy are implemented to transform gender relations and to guarantee equality in fact;
4. Adopt and implement the Right to Peace as recognised in the Maputo Protocol; recognise women's rights as human rights and respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all women and girls;
5. Eradicate patriarchy, misogyny, colonial domination, oppression, totalitarianism, violence and exploitation in all their forms; reject so-called 'gender ideology' which seeks to reinstate gender hierarchy;⁶
6. Celebrate the legacy of struggles for equality and peace advanced by feminists and other social movements throughout time and across the globe, and their insight that neither peace nor security whether among states, among or within communities or within the home is possible without addressing the structural oppressions of racism, sexism, colonialism, patriarchy, homophobia, transphobia and ableism and recourse to violence to maintain that power;
7. Realise universal and total disarmament at international, national, local and personal levels, including the cessation of the arms race and the discontinuance of the manufacture, sale, transfer and stockpiling of all weapons, the prohibition and eradication of weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons and the closure of all military bases;
8. Immediately eradicate poverty and redistribute wealth and resources to enable everyone to access adequate, appropriate and affordable sanitation, clean water, food, shelter, education, health services and social supports thus removing economic insecurity that denies personal and community peace;
9. Ensure all peoples have the opportunity to create their own visions of peace unconstrained by racist neoliberal patriarchy and harmful stereotypes and are able to exercise genuine choices in their lives;
10. Guarantee access to and delivery of justice: gender justice, racial justice, economic justice and environmental justice;
11. Ensure clean air, clean rivers, lakes, seas, the protection of species, biodiversity, equilibrium, restoration and regeneration of our planet and pollution-free living;
12. Welcome all who seek protection including, but not limited to, those forcibly displaced, asylum seekers and migrants and protect their rights; ensure that protection is interpreted and applied through a gender lens; reject the practice of making people stateless; and end the violence of borders and of making people illegal for crossing a border.

Sincerely,
FILPS & Gendered Peace projects
24 September 2020

⁶ Judith Butler, "The backlash against 'gender ideology' must stop", *New Statesman*, January 21, 2019, <https://www.newstatesman.com/2019/01/judith-butler-backlash-against-gender-ideology-must-stop>