

*CFS Women's Forum Intervention 25 Sep. 17*

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While we talk about women's rights a discussion about conflict, war and occupation is extremely pertinent.

War, occupation and imperialism are products of our neoliberal and capitalistic societies that favour profit and the advancement of political agendas over the sustainability of our natural resources. As such, war and occupation are undeniable drivers of food insecurity and hunger. Yemen is on the brink of famine. Gaza is suffocating. Our brothers and sisters across Africa, across Asia witness similar fates. And for several reasons, women are unfortunately at the core of this inflicted suffering.

First, the livelihoods of a large proportion of women, although most often unrecognized, depends on agriculture and food systems. So how can we talk about the promotion of land legislation that favours women, when agricultural land is bombed or confiscated? How can we talk about seed sovereignty, when seed banks are deliberately targeted and destroyed? When post-conflict, imperialist forces change seed laws to suit agrochemical corporations? How can we talk about women's economic independence when food and commodity markets are destabilized and disintegrated? How can we expect women to form collaborative grassroots organizations when millions must flee their homes and farms in order to survive?

Second, is the fact that war and occupation reinforce and perpetuate regressive and destructive patriarchal norms and practices that are inherently discriminatory and debilitating. In times of conflict, individual and state violence, abuse, and exploitation against women are all heightened, and are direct impediments to women's rights to self-determination. And when we try to speak out and denounce this obvious discrimination we are often criminalized – a special mention of solidarity to women human rights activists in central America who have witnessed such injustice.

We are here today to push for the realization of women's rights. We wonder, will CFS provide the space to hold warmongers accountable for their deplorable attacks on women and innocent civilians? Will CFS provide the space to dismantle oppressive political systems and promote holistic solutions to global food security such as agroecology with women at the frontline?