



UN Volunteer Kazuaki Tsujii during a workshop on gender-responsive peacebuilding in Istanbul.  
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## Paving the way to peace with women in Lebanon

Lebanon endured a devastating 15-year civil war and has often been caught in the crossfire of regional conflicts. The country currently hosts more than 450,000 Palestinian refugees and close to one million Syrian refugees, three-fourths of them women and children. Despite the fact that women in Lebanon bore the brunt of the war over generations, they have been excluded from conflict prevention activities and the peace-making process. Nonetheless, they are advancing for change.

UN Volunteer Kazuaki Tsujii joined UN Women in Lebanon in 2018 as a Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Officer. He served through the Global Human Resource Development Programme for Peacebuilding and Development (HRD) of the Government of Japan from April 2018 for one year.

Through his assignment, Kazuaki focused on developing the Lebanon's first National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security, which is based on UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

“ Resolution 1325 commits to ensuring that women and girls are more systematically and sustainably integrated into peace and security. It affirms that peace and security efforts are more sustainable when women are equal partners and decision-makers in the prevention of violent conflict, the delivery of relief and recovery efforts and in the forging of lasting peace.

During his assignment, Kazuaki supported the national government, particularly the National Commission for Lebanese Women, in identifying the priorities and targets of the NAP.

To that end, Kazuaki and his colleague organized six thematic consultation meetings where a wide range of stakeholders, including relevant ministries, local non-governmental organizations, religious and political leaders identified priorities and produced recommendations. Kazuaki also arranged a costing workshop, exposing representatives from each ministry to methodologies to cost activities.

As UN Women was at the lead of the NAP development and implementation, Kazuaki coordinated with five other UN partner entities: the UN *Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)*, Office the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). Accordingly, he provided regular updates about the process and produced a joint communication strategy.

“ Through my volunteer assignment, I was directly supporting women in Lebanon to gain more leadership and participation in decision-making at all levels. --Kazuaki Tsuji, UN Volunteer  
Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Officer

"During my assignment I also designed and initiated the Conflict Prevention and Peace Mediation training for women in South Lebanon with my UN Women colleagues. In partnership with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the Centre for Mediation, of the University of Saint Joseph, the pilot project was launched in February 2019. In line with the NAP, the project aimed to provide women with conflict prevention and management skills. These skills have enabled women to take more leadership role and address issues in their communities after the project," he shares.

Kazuaki also organized an international conference on Violence Against Women in Political and Public Life which took place in Beirut in February 2019. Such violence deters women from engaging with peace negotiations and the decision-making process. The conference highlighted Violence Against Women in Political and Public Life for the first time in the country and marked the beginning of discussions on the issue. The conference brought together over 80 participants from a wide range of institutions and professionals and received extensive attention and interest from the media, donors, national government and non-governmental organizations.

Kazuaki's supervisor Begona Lasagabaster said his strong analytical skills helped him to quickly understand the evolving political, social and economic situation of Lebanon and effectively deliver on his achievements. "Kazuaki did not hesitate to go the extra mile when needed and was committed to finding solutions to challenging situations. He showed excellent team spirit, sound work ethic and professional attitude, which would make him an asset to any team," Begona said.

Kazuaki continues to work for Gender Equality, building on his experiences as a UN Volunteer in Lebanon.

*Kazuaki's assignment contributed to SDG Goal 5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.*

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