

MAY 24 ACTION BRIEF

In this May 24 Action brief, you will find more information about the history of May 24, May 24 during 2015, and an update on how you can join the May 24 celebrations.

Call for Participation International Women's Day for Peace & Disarmament May 24, 2015

Women have often been at the forefront of peace and disarmament initiatives. With their own unique experience and analysis of armed conflict, they have been dedicated to building a culture of peace within their communities, countries and on an international level. Women are working for peace in many ways, but this rarely gets the attention and focus it deserves.

On International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament, we celebrate the historic and current efforts of women for peacebuilding and disarmament. The message is clear: we refuse violence as a solution to the world's challenges. We are working for a just and peaceful world, one that meets human needs, not military ones!

Everybody can join this celebration! We kindly invite you to join us in this worldwide celebration by organizing your own event/action/initiative to raise awareness on women's dedication and contributions to building cultures of peace!

Let us know if and how you will be celebrating May 24 - are you writing an article, will you organize a workshop, film screening, panel discussion, peace march or will you be raising awareness online? You can also look into activities already taking place around May 24, and add a May 24 component to it.

WPP can support your May 24 initiative by providing ideas, resource materials (publications, DVDs) and coordination in the outreach of the initiative. You will be mentioned in WPP's communication activities around May 24; by mentioning your initiative, organization and organizational logo. Please contact us via sophie@womenpeacemakersprogram.org and intern@womenpeacemakersprogram.org.

Unfortunately, we cannot provide financial support for May 24 initiatives.



History of International Women’s Day for Peace and Disarmament

May 24 - International Women’s Day for Peace and Disarmament - began in Europe in the early 1980s. Women activists came together on the streets, protesting the deadly threat of the arms race, leading the way forward to peace through solidarity. With the focus on action in local communities, connecting the problems of the world to each city, town or village, hundreds of thousands of women organized against nuclear weapons and the arms race.

At the 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, women peace activists were calling for a special day to highlight their work for peace, specifically their efforts to address militarization and the causes of armed conflict in order to build sustainable peace. The World Conference led to the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), celebrating this year its 20th anniversary.

As a response to the calls at the Women’s Conference, the Women Peacemakers Program (WPP) has been celebrating May 24 to raise awareness and increase support for women’s peace initiatives. In 1996, the first “May 24 Pack” was published, highlighting women’s leadership and efforts for peace. In 2015, WPP will be publishing the 20th edition of the May 24 Pack!

Since its establishment, WPP and network partners worldwide celebrate the historic efforts of women for peacebuilding and disarmament on May 24. With these initiatives, we call for the incorporation of women’s voices and leadership in peace processes; the need to analyze militarism through a holistic gender lens; and the importance of investing in conflict prevention, nonviolent conflict resolution, and disarmament.



May 24 in 2015 - Anniversary of UNSCR 1325 and Beijing Platform for Action

2015 is an important year for the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

This year we celebrate the 15th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, the first ever “Women, Peace & Security” (WPS) Resolution, calling for the recognition of women as agents of change in conflict prevention and resolution; acknowledgement of the different impacts of conflict on men and women and the necessity of taking appropriate protection measures; and underlining the need to include women in all aspects of peace processes as a prerequisite to the attainment of sustainable peace.

UNSCR 1325 was a direct result of women’s lobbying and advocacy efforts in the aftermath of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), which has its 20th anniversary this year. The BPfA underlined that gender equality and women’s participation are inseparable from peace and development. Complete disarmament; prevention of policies of aggression; diverting excessive military expenditures to social development and recognizing the role of women - whose leadership is crucial - were mentioned as vital components to establish a culture of peace. It also included a goal of promoting “*nonviolent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations*”.

This year’s May 24 celebration provides a unique opportunity to recall these commitments and advance women’s transformative agenda behind the BPfA and UNSCR 1325.

May 24 Inspiration - Inspiring Examples of Worldwide Celebration 2014

Last year, worldwide, over 10 events took place to celebrate International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament. From organizing a film festival in India; moderating a Tweetathon online on Gender & Militarism; producing a video on Gender-Sensitive Active Nonviolence in Sri Lanka and publishing an interview with a prominent woman activist in Nepal online, to giving a training on UNSCR 1325 in the Philippines, people engaged in many ways to celebrate this important day.



Here are some highlights of last year:

Serbia: Theatre Play “Kaži NE! - Say NO!” by *Žene Juga* (supported by the Ecumenical Women's Initiative)

Within this interactive play, the public was directly involved in a provocative and creative way by pointing to the connection between money, war and their consequences, with a particular focus on the situation of women in and after war. [Click here to watch the video.](#)



Bangladesh: Workshop “Ending Violence & Women Empowerment through Peacebuilding” by *ANTAR Society for Development*

During the workshop, more than 50 women and men, including representatives of local NGOs, discussed topics such as peace, conflict transformation and ending violence against women. [Click here to view the pictures.](#)

Democratic Republic of Congo: Film Screening and Panel Discussion by *Congo Men's Network*

After viewing the film “Pray the Devil Back to Hell”, participants were able to discuss several issues related to Women, Peace and Security, such as rape during conflict, impunity and prosecution, as well as the need for gender-sensitive peacebuilding and the role of both men and women in this.

[Click here to see the invitation.](#)

For a complete overview of the events that took place in 2014, [click here.](#)

May 24 celebrations in 2015:

For 2015, several May 24 celebrations are already on the agenda. There will be another film screening in DRC (by COMEN), and a film festival in India (SAMYAK), both organized by WPP partners.

We also received news of a great initiative taking place on the occasion of May 24 in North and South Korea! Women's organizations will be organizing an international women's walk across the De-Militarized Zone to open a new dialogue on peace marked by mutual understanding. Thirty international and national women peacemakers will walk for peace, including Nobel Laureates Mairead Maguire and Leymah Gbowee. To read the article about this inspiring initiative, [click here](#)

2015 WPP May 24 Pack - ‘Women, Peace & Security - Business as Usual?’

As every year, WPP will be publishing its annual May 24 pack on a theme related to the Women, Peace and Security agenda. WPP finds it important to organize its May 24 publications and events around critical issues, affecting the realities of peacebuilding on the ground. A good example of this is the May 24 Pack of 2014, “*Gender & Militarism: Analyzing the Links to Strategize for Peace*”, which features 23 articles written by leading academics, pioneering women peace activists and civil society representatives from all over the world, critically reflecting on the links between gender & militarism from multiple perspectives. [Click here to read the 2014 May 24 Pack.](#)

The 2015 May 24 Pack will focus on the theme “*Women, Peace & Security: Business as Usual?*”, highlighting the impact of the ‘private’ sector on the implementation of the Women, Peace & Security agenda.

This year, the May 24 publication will not be launched during May, but during October 2015, to coincide with the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325. On May 24 itself, we will be publishing teaser articles from the pack via WPP’s website and social media!

Please contact us if you would like more information about the publication.