

ASSOCIATION OF WAR AFFECTED WOMEN WOMEN

ANNUAL REPORT - 2025



Marking 25 years of
UNSCR 1325

The Association of War Affected Women (AWAW) was established in the year 2000 to create a space for war affected women, specifically mothers and wives, of those who are missing to come together across the divide to work for peace. Today, AWAW operates at the national and international level while continuing to work towards sustainable peace, strengthening democracy and supporting the advancement and participation of women in the social and political aspects of Sri Lanka.

VISION

Peaceful prosperous Sri Lanka where all its people are living with dignity enjoying equal rights.

MISSION

Work towards strengthening democracy, women's advancement and equal participation in order to achieve sustainable development and permanent peace in Sri Lanka.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of AWAW:

- i. To achieve sustainable peace in Sri Lanka through socio-economic development with the active participation of war-affected women.
- ii. Women's advancement, empowerment, development and participation.

Active Citizens for Elections and Democracy (ACED)

Funded by European Union through National Peace Council, Sri Lanka

Nine provincial-level, two-day workshops were conducted for 25 selected women political leaders in each province. Participants were drawn from all major political parties and represented diverse ethnic, religious, and demographic backgrounds. Workshops were successfully held in the North-Western, Central, North Central, Uva, Sabaragamuwa, Western, Eastern, Southern, and Northern provinces. These workshops commenced in 2024. During that year, workshops were successfully conducted in the North-Western, Central, North Central, Uva, and Sabaragamuwa provinces. In 2025, the workshops were completed in the Western, Eastern, Southern, and Northern provinces.

The sessions were facilitated by Ms. Sarah Arumugam, Attorney-at-Law. Key topics covered included democracy, good governance, human rights, UNSCR 1325, and advocacy, contributing to strengthened leadership capacities and enhanced cross-party collaboration among women in politics.

The Western province workshop took place at the Janaki Hotel, Colombo, with 26 women political leaders participating from Colombo, Gampaha & Kalutara.



The Eastern province workshop was held at the Riveira Resort in Batticaloa, with 27 women political leaders attending from Batticaloa, Ampara and Trincomalee.



The Southern province workshop was held at the Ganga Addara Hotel in Matara, with 30 women political leaders attending from Matara, Galle & Hambantota.



One day workshop in Colombo to develop an advocacy road map for strengthening democratic institutions

A one-day workshop to develop an Advocacy Roadmap for strengthening democratic institutions was held in Colombo, with the participation of 47 women political leaders from diverse backgrounds. The discussions highlighted the importance of women's meaningful participation in governance and emphasized the need to integrate the principles of UNSCR 1325 into national democratic processes. Participants noted that despite its significance, implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Sri Lanka remains limited.

The workshop produced a set of key advocacy strategies focused on promoting women's political participation and increasing awareness of UNSCR 1325:

Awareness-Raising:

- Conduct discussions on UNSCR 1325 across local authorities in October 2025, supported by AWAW materials.
- Engage national leaders, including the Prime Minister and Minister of Women, to promote political dialogue on UNSCR 1325.
- Launch a social media campaign and raise awareness through media, schools, universities, and security institutions.

Use of Tools:

- Develop a documentary highlighting global comparisons of women's political participation, links to economic growth, post-conflict success stories, and achievements of Sri Lankan women in local government.

Lobbying:

- Engage political party leadership and the Election Commission.
- Assign a legal team to review gender-quota legislation and propose reforms.

Collaboration:

- Strengthen partnerships with like-minded organizations and initiate national-level dialogues with key ministries.





Visit to the parliament to study the process of tabling and passing bills which are important to strengthen democratic institutions of the country

Support with the PAFREL and the National Peace Council, we took 47 women political leaders, representing every district of Sri Lanka, to the Parliament for a very special awareness program. The visit was designed to encourage women in politics, inspire their leadership journeys, and give them a rare opportunity to witness parliamentary processes first-hand. The group was given a guided tour of the Parliament Complex and the public gallery of the Parliament Chamber. This was followed by a series of highly informative sessions delivered by senior parliamentary officials.





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<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1J3dzmRWFg/>

CEYLON TODAY

Women leaders visit Parliament

By Ceylon Today · August 9, 2025 2:03am

Women need to play a more decisive role in governance and politics in Sri Lanka if it is to develop in a manner that improves the lives of all people, said Visaka Dharmadasa, Founder and Chair of the Association of War Affected Women (AWAW), at a meeting with officials in Parliament.

A group of 47 women leaders representing every district in Sri Lanka visited the Parliament Complex for an awareness programme recently. Dharmadasa noted that this timely visit took place at a time when Sri Lanka urgently needs more diverse and representative leadership, and initiatives like these are vital.

The event was a highlight of the 'Active Citizens for Elections and Democracy' (ACED) project funded by the European Union and implemented by the National Peace Council (NPC) in partnership with PAFFREL, AWAW, Centre for Communication Training (CCT), and Women & Democracy (W&D) in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. This initiative aimed to give women politicians encouragement and inspiration in their political journeys, offering them a rare opportunity to learn first-hand about parliamentary processes and deepen their understanding of governance systems.

<https://ceylontoday.lk/2025/08/09/women-leaders-visit-parliament/>

NEWS

Women politicians visit Parliament in empowering initiative

Published 4 months ago on 2025/08/12



A section of the participants (Pic courtesy NPC)

Women need to play a more decisive role in governance and politics in Sri Lanka if it is to develop in a manner that improves the lives of all people, said Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa, Founder and Chair of the Association of War Affected Women (AWAW) at a meeting with

<https://island.lk/women-politicians-visit-parliament-in-empowering-initiative/>

Bridging the Gap Between Tracks - Women Taking Leadership - Operationalizing UNSCR 1325**Developing the Roadmap/Strategy for the Framework Including Local Knowledge Sharing*****Funded by Women Mediators Across the Commonwealth***

Conducted a three-day workshop in Kandy, guided by a conflict resolution expert, where we developed a framework for capturing and integrating local knowledge from women and traditional mediators into formal peace processes, with the primary goal of ensuring an uninterrupted flow of information between different tracks. This approach was designed not only to ensure the success of peace negotiations but also to facilitate the implementation of the decisions made, allowing communities to benefit from peace dividends and ultimately contributing to the sustainability of peace. Since each one of us had our own experience by being involved in our peace processes, we were able to bring to the table very rich experiences and the challenges that our peace processes had to face due to the lack of an uninterrupted communication flow. Our experienced and abled facilitator guided us through this process very effectively.

The participants were Ms. Mossarat Qadim, Ms. Ezabir Ali, Ms. Sumona DasGupta, Ms. Bebhinn McKinley, Ms. Visaka Dharmadasa and Ms. Sarah Arumugam and Dr. Dayani Panagoda facilitated the workshop.



Road to Reconciliation, Justice, Hope, Dignity in Sri Lanka – Celebrating the Pluralistic and Diverse Nature of the Republic

Funded by International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)

A key finding from the study we carried out in 2021 on "Access to Services, Identity Politics, and Challenges for Social Harmony in the Sri Lankan Periphery" revealed that archaeological sites, particularly in Eastern Sri Lanka, have become a significant point of conflict among different communities. The tension was also fueled by identity politics where Sinhala nationalist scholars and politicians present archeological sites in eastern Sri Lanka as evidence of existence of old Sinhala settlements in this currently minority held areas and see minority presence in these areas as a threat to conservation of these perceived pure Buddhist archeological heritage.

Therefore, we carried out a study from 2024 to 2025 for this project, through which we hope to use evidence-based findings to create harmony among communities not only those living near the archaeological sites, but also the wider population of the Northern and Eastern provinces.

As planned during the training with the research team, we carried out three four-day visits to Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Vavuniya successfully.

The field research visit with the research team including academia and archaeological experts from University of Peradeniya. During the visit, we explored various archaeological sites and met with higher officials of the district secretariat, academics, and other eminent personnel in the area and villagers to gather the required information.

Field Visit to Batticaloa

Kusalanamalai (Chenkalady DS Division), This site has been reported during the British Colonial period by the First commissioner of Archaeology in Ceylon H C P Bell



Kovilkulam Statue of Hemamala Kumari and a Shivalingam



Santhamalai (Manmunai DS Division), It is an old Hindu Temple Complex (Lord Murugan) which has small temples which are constructed with stone pillars.



Large Buddhist Monastery Complex, Archeological Reserve, Pulkunava is made in the form of a pabbatha vihara architecture, Stupa, Chapter House, Bodhigara, Image House, Drip ledge caves, Largest Asanagara in Sri Lanka

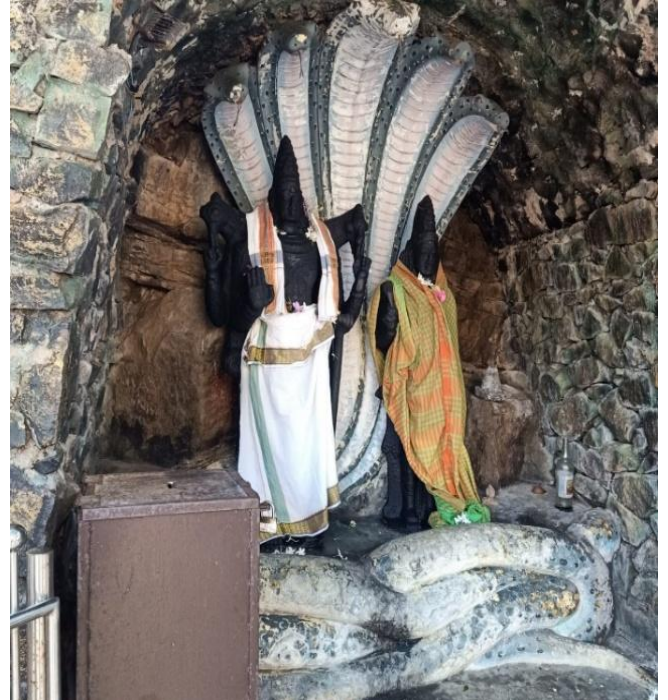


Field Visit to Trincomalee

Thiriyaya, Girihadusaya



Koneshwar Temple and Kinniya Hot water wells



Boralukanda Viharaya, Pulikandikulama Vihara and Archaeological site





Field Visit to Vavuniya

Vedikkunari, situated within the Nainamadhu Forest Reserve, in Nadunkerni Pradeshiya Sabha of Vavuniya North DS Division

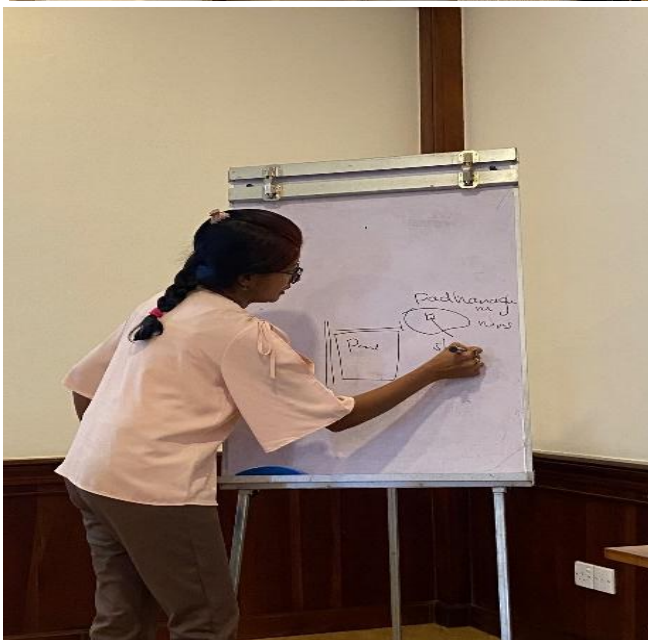


Kurundi Vihara



Three-day workshop to draft the preliminary observations Report and Presentation

A three-day workshop was held at Amaya Hills Hotel in Kandy. The workshop brought together six participants including Prof. Kalinga Tudor Silva, Emeritus Professor, Dr. Aruna Rajapaksha and Dr. Uditha Jinasena, archaeological experts from the University of Peradeniya. During the workshop, we developed a report outline, presentation and compiled a summary table of the visited sites, detailing the site name, description, nature of contestation, involved stakeholders, and potential mitigation strategies. We also came up with a title for the preliminary observations report in three languages, and it was suggested to create a website, The website serve as a valuable resource for researchers and social activists, including photographs of cultural heritage sites in the North and East of Sri Lanka. These visuals aim to raise awareness about the current state of the sites and inspire discussion on possible solutions to the challenges they face.



Discussion with the research team and validation workshop

The research team, guided by Prof. Tudor, Dr. Aruna Rajapaksha, Dr. Uditha Jinasena, and Dr. Upali Weerakoon from University of Peradeniya, visited Vavuniya to carry out discussions and a validation workshop related to the study. A validation workshop was held with the participation of key stakeholders, including Buddhist monks and representatives from the Hindu community. During the workshop, the team presented the research objectives, methodology, data collection methods, heritage sites studied, key findings, findings related to economic development potential, and a set of recommendations and suggestions.



A preliminary report was prepared in three languages (Sinhala, Tamil, and English).

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2025

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முறையிலும், இலங்கையில்
சமாதானத்துக்கான ஒரு பாலம் என்ற
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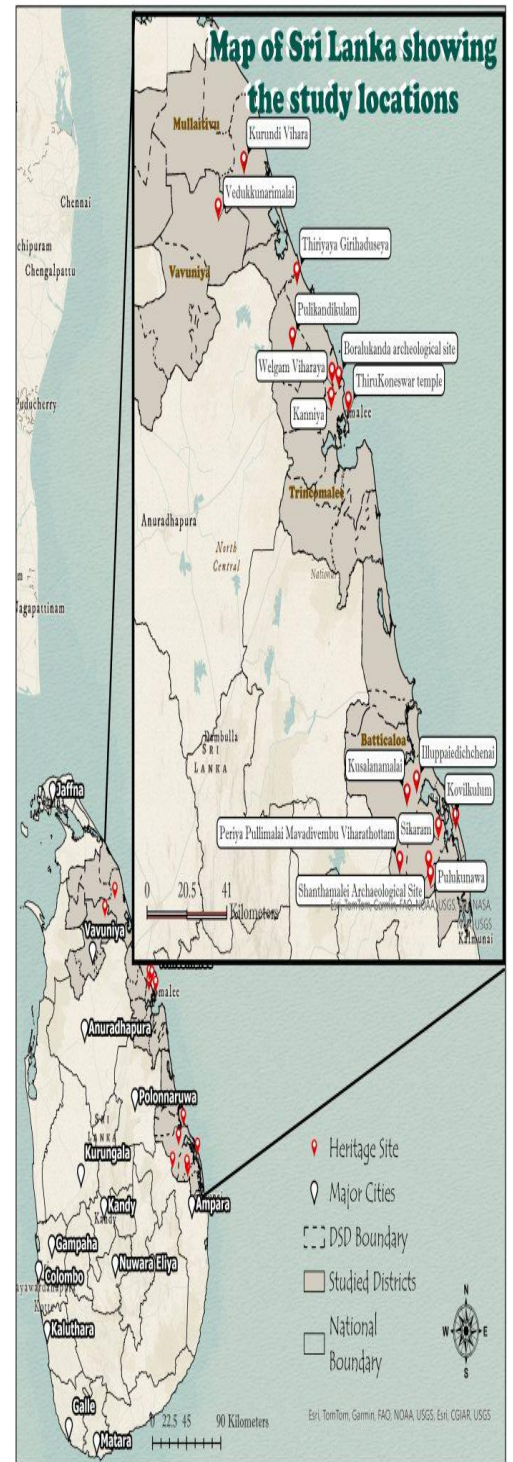
போரினால் பாதிக்கப்பட்ட பெண்கள் அமைப்பு, இலங்கை
2025

HERITAGE SITES AS A CULTURAL
CORIDOR AND A BRIDGE FOR
PEACE IN SRI LANKA



ASSOCIATION OF WAR-AFFECTED WOMEN IN SRI LANKA
2025

Photos of the ruins and religious and cultural activities are available on website.



(<https://srilankanculturalcorridor.lk/>)

Marking 25 Years of UNSCR 1325: A Call to Action for the Full Implementation of the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda

Funded by International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) and She Build Peace (SBP)

An event, Marking 25 years of UNSCR 1325- A call to action for the Full Implementation of Women Peace and Security Agenda. The event was held at Sri Lanka Foundation Institute. The event was graced by Dr. Deepika Udagama as the chief guest and Emeritus Professor Savithri Goonasekara as the guest of honor, Mr. Vijitha Herath, Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs as a special guest , H.E. South African High commissioner Mr. Sandile Schalk as a special guest, Mr. Patrick McCarthy Peace and Development Advisor UN, diplomatic representatives, Hon. Dr. Rajitha Senarathne, Hon. Mrs. Rosy Senanayaka, Hon. Mrs. Ferial Ashraff , Defense Secretary, DIG Padmini Weerasuriya, Army and Navy officers, members of National Peace Council (NPC), members Of People’s Action for Free and Fair Elections (PAFFREL), members of Awakened citizens, members of Sri Lanka Collective for Consensus (SLCC), Team 1325 from all districts and women leaders of Sri Lanka. Media representatives were also present to cover the event. A duet discussion was held titled “WPS Agenda: The Past, Present, and the Future.” The discussion explored both the achievements and the continuing challenges in fully implementing UNSCR 1325 in Sri Lanka. Speakers highlighted the positive advancements made over the past 25 years particularly in advocacy, policy development, and awareness-raising while candidly addressing remaining gaps in representation, protection, and participation of women in peacebuilding and security processes. The event also featured a presentation on women’s political participation from the past to the present, as well as a sharing of the 1325 journey, showcasing progress. A tri-language (Sinhala, Tamil, and English) ICAN statement was read aloud at the beginning of the event. To support wider dissemination, we printed and distributed Sinhala, Tamil and English copies, of the statement. Before the vote of thanks all women and some men including the minister got on to the stage to sing “We shall overcome”, event concluded with release of balloons printed “1325,” representing a renewed commitment to advancing the WPS agenda.





Reading of the ICAN statement in three languages—Sinhala, Tamil, and English.









Minister Herath

Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath's participation at a civil society organised event to mark the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 indicated a willingness on the part of the government to work with civil society. So far the government has not been engaging proactively with civil society organisations and actively seeking their inputs. His speech at the event suggested a rethinking by the government of its relationship with civil

<https://island.lk/new-opening-for-partnership-between-govtand-civil-society/>



https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ozrEcAcJk3C11t42_pep_KR_gny812y_/view?usp=drive-link



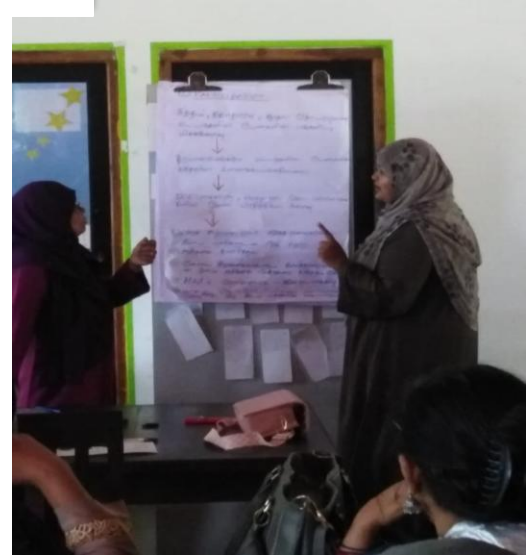
Enhancing Awareness Among Women and Local Level Government Officials on Pathways to Sustainable Peace – Localizing UNSCR1325

Funded by Global Affairs Canada and implemented by Alinea International Ltd

Activity one is conducting 7 one-day district-level workshops on UNSCR1325 for women leaders from diverse ethnic, religious, and demographic backgrounds in Jaffna, Vavuniya, Trincomalee, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Galle, and Puttalam.

We successfully conducted four of the planned seven one-day district-level workshops on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325). Workshops were held in Puttalam, Galle, Kandy, and Nuwara Eliya, with the participation of women leaders representing diverse political, ethnic, religious, and demographic backgrounds. We will continue conducting the remaining workshops and implementing additional planned activities in 2025.

Puttalam Workshop



Galle Workshop



Kandy Workshop



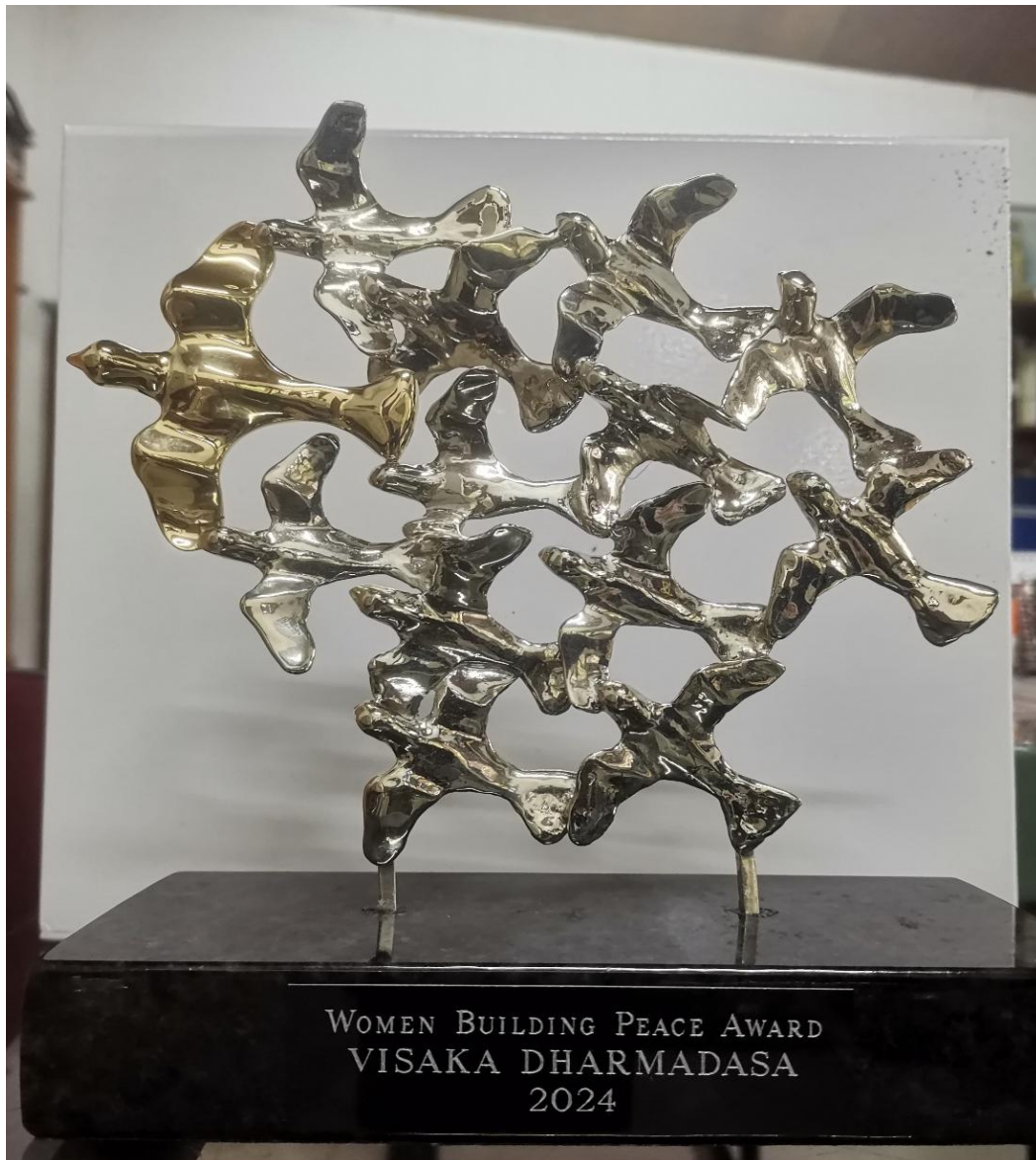


Nawara Eliya Workshop



OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR & GLOBAL INVOLVEMENTS

We are proud to announce that Visaka Dharmadasa, Chair & Chief Operating Officer of Association of War Affected Women (AWAW), was awarded USIP, Women Building Peace Award 2024





Visaka Dharmadasa, Chair & Chief Operating Officer of Association of War Affected Women (AWAW), was selected as a winner of the Women Peace Builder at the 15th Top50 Professional & Career Women Global Awards 2025

United Nations DPPA/ office of elections team Meeting Women leaders at AWAW



At the review Meeting of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 Action Plan



Women in Security, Conflict, Management and Peace: WISCOMP Video



<https://youtu.be/0btKCHDfkW0?si=ORzFGpPJ9jw5TCBK>

Women Wagging Peace Conference, Nepal



GPPAC RSG in Kathmandu, Nepal





ICAN Writers Workshop, Lisbon





Peace Connect Conference, Nairobi, Kenya



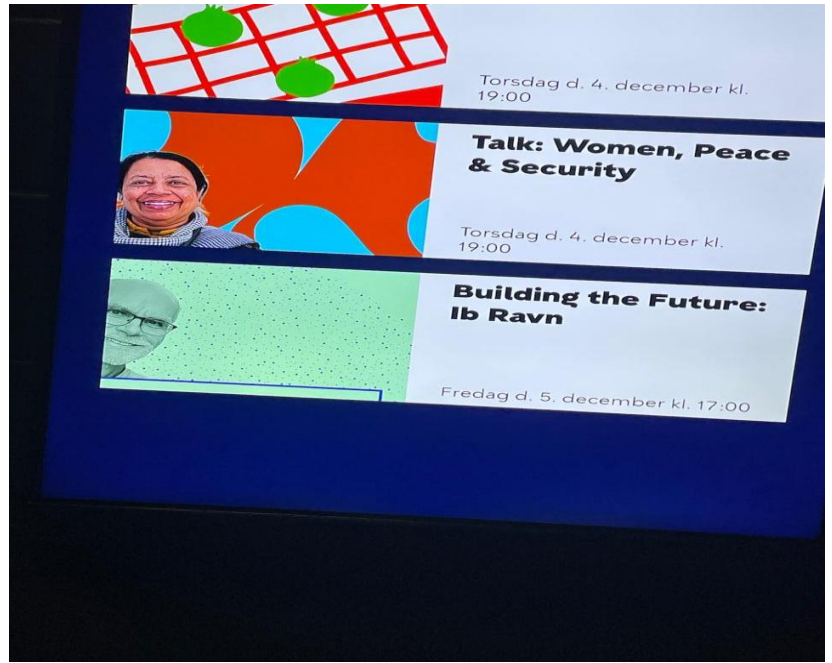
International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN) and International Peace Institute (IPI): Commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda UNSCR 1325, New York



Arab-Asia Regional Exchange and Interreligious Dialogue on Gendered Religious Peacebuilding, Amman, Jordan



1st -6th December 2025, Copenhagen, Denmark



Third Civil Society Organizations- United Nations Dialogue on Peacebuilding, 10th -11th December 2025, Geneva, Switzerland





Association of War Affected Women

*Special thanks to our
donors, for their
generosity without which
we would not have been
able to continue our
journey thus far*

Cheers!!!

**Association of War
Affected Women**