

# Civil Society Forum

## Concept Note

*1st June, 2026 – Madrid*

### ***Upholding Rights, Reimagining Power: A Feminist Agenda for Global Justice***

**Organizers:**  
Civil Society Committee

#### **Context**

On June 2nd and 3rd, 2026, Spain will host the 5th Ministerial Conference on Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP): Building Peace and Democracy, a high-level global summit. This Ministerial Conference comes at a crucial global moment. It can be difficult to hear feminist peacemakers amidst the growing beat of the drums of war. Concerns abound regarding the climate catastrophe, closing civic spaces, erosion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, authoritarianism and

religious fundamentalism rising, and increasing intersectional inequalities, particularly in regions of the Global Majority where climate impacts, conflict, and economic inequality intersect most sharply, and where feminist movements continue to lead frontline responses. Women human rights defenders, feminist land defenders, and LGBTIQ+ rights defenders particularly in the Global South where land dispossession, rising militarism and extractive industries intensify risks, face escalating attacks including in cyberspace, and even death. The number of displaced people is at an all-time high. A well-funded and increasingly organized group of anti-rights and fascists actors seeks to roll back feminist gains from the last 30 years, especially with regard to sexual and reproductive rights – in multilateral spaces and in national legislatures. Progress to deliver on gender equality commitments falters as politicians backtrack on promises. Alarm bells ring regarding the implications of rising debt

and cuts to official development assistance for women's rights organizations.

Yet there are also spaces of resistance, organization, solidarity, and gains. Progress on the rights of women, girls, and gender non-conforming people has always been led by movements and our movements continue to innovate and persevere. Across the world and especially in the Global South, feminist movements have developed powerful strategies of resistance, community protection, challenging structural inequalities, and cross-border solidarity. This has engendered new strategies and relationships including with governments committed to gender equality who seek to hold the line in multilateral spaces and promote gender-transformative policies and programmes at home.

On 1 June, the day before the official Ministerial Conference, civil society representatives will gather to discuss, share, and exchange insights and recommendations, including for advocacy during the Ministerial Conference and afterwards. There has been significant debate around feminist foreign policies – their potential and challenges. There is not always consensus among the diversity of

activists, policymakers, organizers, and analysts. As well, there is often a gap between the aspirations of activists and positions of governments. However our discussions yield rich insights, coalitions, recommendations, and ways forward.

Both the official Ministerial Conference and the Civil Society Forum provide opportunities for dialogue on how foreign policies can support feminist goals and processes, as well as fully integrate gender and climate justice perspectives across all dimensions from a policy coherence approach, including in ways that address the structural inequalities shaping North–South relations. Areas of exploration include, but are not limited to: security, militarism, diplomacy, cooperation, environment and climate justice, social and care policies and systems, refugee and migration policies, trade, debt and economic policies, engagement with multilateral institutions, women's participation in conflict and post conflict resolution talks, etc.

Three of the past FFP Ministerial Conferences have included a civil society forum, each with a different character. Our 2026 Civil Society Forum will build on the lessons of these previous gatherings and we are grateful

for the organizers of these past events. We acknowledge that we are building an imperfect space, however we aim to support a feminist, hopeful, and forward looking discussion.

### Objectives

The 2026 FFP Ministerial Civil Society Forum aims to:

- Provide a space for discussion and reflection amongst a diverse set of civil society representatives to strengthen intergenerational, intersectional and cross-regional feminist solidarity, on issues related to feminist foreign policy, including activists working at the local to global level, policy advocates, researchers, coalition builders, networks, and academics. Ideally, these reflections will help inform the discussions at the official Ministerial Conference and its follow up.
- Forge relationships and strengthen coalitions among those working on feminist foreign policy issues to share common demands and build synergies around advocacy positions, including to amplify

Global South and unified feminist perspectives.

- Ensure meaningful participation and leadership of Global South feminist organizations and activists, especially those working in otherwise marginalized contexts.
- Present a civil society declaration to representatives of the Governments, including the Spanish Government, host of the 5th Ministerial Conference.