

**Heroes of October 7th and beyond**  
**Women as Agents of Change in Times of Conflict**  
**CSW68 Side Event, 11 March 2024, 11:30am – 1:00pm, CR-12**  
**Concept Note**

As the world is facing global intersecting and overlapping challenges the fight for gender equality in more crucial than ever.

The October 7 attack was the biggest terror attack in the history of the Israeli society, during which women and girls were tortured, mutilated, raped and murdered – and more than 250 Israelis, including women and girls, were abducted by Hamas and other Palestinian terror groups to Gaza.

The attack bears far-reaching implications for women and girls, but is also an example of the key role women play in society in times of conflict. This side event will explore the implications of the terror attack on women and girls in all their diversity, the significance of women empowerment in times of crisis, and the role women have as agents of change in building back from trauma. Furthermore, the event will bring together the voices of women in all their diversity, who are united in their message of peace.

Objectives:

- Emphasize the urgency of releasing the hostages
- Discuss the implications of conflict and terrorism on women's empowerment and gender equality
- Deepen the understanding of a survivor-centered approach when building back from trauma, from a gender perspective

**Welcome remarks**

- **H.E. Gilad Erdan**, Israel Ambassador to the United Nations
- **Ms. May Golan**, Minister for Social Equality and the Advancement of the Status of Women

**Keynote Speaker: Keren Munder, released hostage**

Keren Munder (54) came with her son Ohad (9) to visit her parents Avraham (79) and Ruti (79) in kibbutz Nir Oz for the weekend of October 7. The four of them were taken hostage by Hamas. Her brother Roei was murdered on October 7<sup>th</sup>. Keren, Ohad and her mother were released after 49 days. Keren continues to call for the release of her father and every remaining hostage.

**Guest speaker and Panel moderator Jackeline Cacho**, Humanitarian Journalist and The Global Initiative INSPIRE – launch and introduction

**Panel – Implications of Conflict and Terrorism on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality**

- **Merav Stern**, Director General, Ministry for Social Equality and Advancement of the Status of Women, *Promoting a gender perspective in times of conflict*
- **Or Cohen**, Board Member of "Forum Dvora" and an active reserve Naval officer in the Israeli Navy, *women's participation in post-conflict rehabilitation and decision making*
- **Tamar Shwartz**, CSO of "Women's Spirit", *the unique effects of crisis on women in vulnerable situations and how to build back better*
- **Anila Ali**, American Muslim and Multifaith Women's Empowerment Council, *raising a brave and bold voice against shared concerns*