

**Center for Research on Gender and Women  
University of Wisconsin-Madison**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Madison, Wisconsin, USA** — The Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently awarded an international consortium of scholars and women’s rights activists with a collaborative research grant of \$961,600 to study women and peacebuilding in Africa. The consortium includes the Center for Research on Gender and Women of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) in Bergen, Norway, and Isis-Women’s International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE), in Kampala, Uganda. Nine seasoned researchers affiliated with the project will be working in Algeria, northern Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan.

The two-year project, which starts July 1, 2016, looks at the cost of women’s exclusion and the possibilities for their inclusion in peace talks, peacebuilding, and political institutions in countries affected by war in Africa. The study includes regions with predominantly Muslim populations, with the exception of South Sudan.

Project coordinator and University of Wisconsin-Madison professor Aili Tripp explained in an interview that “Such questions of political inclusion have not been extensively researched in predominantly Muslim countries that have suffered from extremist violence. Yet women and advocates of women’s rights have not only been among the first attacked by extremists, but they have also been among the most ardent opponents of this type of extremism. Women’s rights activists are often the staunchest advocates not only for women’s rights but also for broader democratic, legal and social reforms.”

The three themes that make up the project include: 1) Inclusion and Exclusion of Women in Postconflict Governance (Somalia and Algeria), 2) Women Activists’ Informal Peacebuilding Strategies (South Sudan and Northern Nigeria) and 3) Women’s Legal Rights as a Site of Contestation in North Africa (Sudan and Algeria).

The project will examine the struggle for women’s rights legal reform and political representation as important arenas for stemming the tide of extremism related to violence in Africa. It looks at women’s informal peacebuilding strategies and prospects for their inclusion in formal peace processes. The study will examine the policy implications for ongoing conflict elsewhere in Africa and in the Middle East.

As Professor Tripp explained: “We plan on using our findings and policy recommendations to engage policymakers at the international and national level in these countries as well as to provide opportunities for women’s rights activists and scholars to interact around these issues with one another.”

Dr. Hauwa Bui, Professor of Education and Dean of Faculty of Education, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria, and Dr. Ayesha Imam, an independent scholar based in Senegal, will be conducting research in northern Nigeria. Professor Ladan Affi from Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, will carry out research in Somalia. Dr. Samia El Nagar, an independent researcher, together with Dr. Liv Tønnessen, Senior Researcher at CMI, will be conducting

research in Sudan. The South Sudan research component will involve Ugandan researchers from Isis-WICCE, including its interim director Helen Kezie-Nwoha, Ruth Ojiambo Ochieng, and Juliet Were. And finally, the Algeria study will be conducted by Aili Mari Tripp, Professor of Political Science and Gender and Women's Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA.

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