

The Network  
for Religious  
& Traditional  
Peacemakers



Finn Church Aid



Ministry for Foreign  
Affairs of Finland

# Beyond the Margins: Centering Disability-Inclusion in the Architecture of Peace

*Framing the Global Disability Toolkit*



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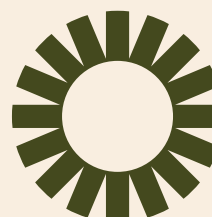
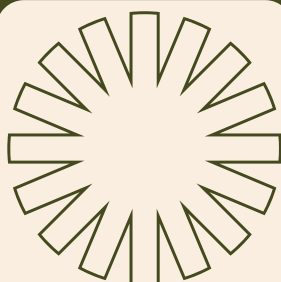
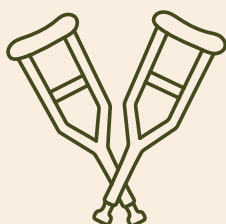
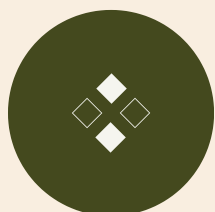
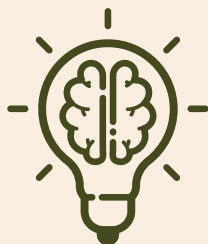
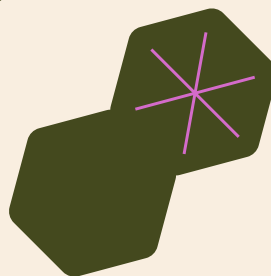
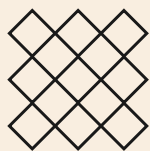
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**Cover image:** Abilis' community-based work empowering persons with disabilities in Ethiopia. 2025. Photo: Abilis Foundation.

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# Introduction to this Guide

Persons with disabilities are often marginalized and excluded in peacebuilding efforts, despite being deeply affected by violence and actively working to promote peace within their communities. This framing guide accompanies, **“Beyond the Margins: Centering Disability-Inclusion in the Architecture of Peace,”** a global toolkit for advancing persons with disabilities in peacebuilding. The global toolkit offers practical guidance for peacebuilding organizations and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) on how to partner and mainstream the inclusion of persons with disabilities across peacebuilding processes, institutions and agendas.

The framing guide supports the toolkit in providing further key historical and current information and sources on the progression of disability inclusion in peacebuilding, such as current examples of disability inclusion in peace-related National Action Plans and their significance, as well as answers to key frequently asked questions working in this cross-cutting space.

The framing guide also provides more background information on the case study in focus in the global toolkit, **the STRONG project in Somalia**, as a way to help other contexts think about strategies of engagement in embedding disability rights in peace processes. Lastly, this framing guide offers online resources and frameworks that those seeking to work in this area can utilize to further strengthen their knowledge and expertise. As the global community strives for sustainable and equitable peace, centering the leadership and participation of persons with disabilities is no longer optional—it is imperative.

**Use the QR code below to access the global toolkit.**



# Framing the Toolkit

## UN Security Council Resolution 2475

UN Security Council Resolution 2475 (UNSCR 2475), adopted unanimously in June 2019, represents the first resolution by the Security Council to explicitly address the rights, protection, and participation of persons with disabilities in conflict and post-conflict settings. The resolution affirms that all actors must ensure persons with disabilities have equal access to humanitarian assistance, justice, and participation in peacebuilding processes, emphasizing the importance of sustained dialogue with persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.<sup>1 2</sup>

While the resolution marked a milestone in global recognition of the rights of persons with disabilities in conflict settings, its implementation remains inconsistent across national, regional, and global levels. The resolution is non-binding, and without mechanisms for accountability or funding, lacks the enforcement tools necessary to drive inclusion. Still, its adoption has opened new entry points for persons with disabilities to be acknowledged not only as vulnerable populations, but as **active agents of change** within peacebuilding processes with unique knowledge, skills, and priorities.<sup>3 4</sup>

Despite these commitments, no country to date has adopted a dedicated National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UNSCR 2475, and few current Women, Peace and Security (WPS) or Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) NAPs include references to disability at all. Most peace and security frameworks continue to overlook the structural and social barriers faced by persons with disabilities in conflict environments. This lack of integration is particularly visible in post-conflict policy and planning, where disability inclusion is often limited to health or protection services rather than full political participation or leadership roles.

Women and young women with disabilities, in particular, continue to be rendered invisible in peace and security policy. Their perspectives are rarely reflected in consultations, and most WPS documents do not address disability at all, despite the disproportionate risks they face and their significant contributions to building community resilience.<sup>5 6</sup>

1 United Nations Security Council. (2019). Resolution 2475 on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Armed Conflict (S/RES/2475). [https://docs.un.org/en/s/res/2475\(2019\)](https://docs.un.org/en/s/res/2475(2019))

2 United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). UN Global Advocate for Persons with Disabilities in Conflict and Peacebuilding Situations. <https://www.unmas.org/en/un-global-advocate-persons-with-disabilities-conflict-and-peacebuilding-situations>

3 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). (2025). National Action Plan (NAP) Database. <https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/nap-overview/>

4 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). (2022). Advancing toward inclusive peace and security for persons with disabilities through SC Resolution 2475. <https://international-review.icrc.org/articles/advancing-towards-inclusive-peace-and-security-persons-with-disabilities-sc-resolution-2475-922>

5 United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). (2025). Global Disability Inclusion Report. [https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GIP03351-UNICEF-GDIR-Full-report\\_Proof-4.pdf](https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GIP03351-UNICEF-GDIR-Full-report_Proof-4.pdf)

6 Ortoleva, S. (2010). Women with Disabilities: The Forgotten Peacebuilders. Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Review. <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1660&context=ilr>



The 2015–2020 WPS NAP of South Sudan remains a notable exception, reflecting sustained consultation with women with disabilities and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), and embedding references to disability throughout its goals and activities.<sup>7</sup> Other frameworks, such as the Gambia's YPS NAP (2025–2030), integrate youth with disabilities into their inclusion strategies. Further, Kyrgyzstan's Disability-Inclusive Employment Roadmap addresses post-conflict economic reintegration through a disability lens, demonstrating the potential of sectoral action plans to advance UNSCR 2475 even in the absence of formal NAPs.<sup>8,9</sup>

UNSCR 2475 provides a normative foundation for disability-inclusive peacebuilding, but must be connected to local realities and co-implemented with OPDs to fulfill its potential. Translating its language into action requires not only awareness and political will, but also resources, mechanisms for accountability, and sustained collaboration with persons with disabilities in all of their diversities. As this toolkit demonstrates, mainstreaming disability inclusion across the peacebuilding cycle, from prevention to recovery, builds more just and resilient systems for all.



## Examples of Disability Inclusion in Peace-Related National Action Plans

There is a slowly growing body of NAPs that reference persons with disabilities within peace and security frameworks.

**As of 2025, only a small number of WPS or YPS NAPs explicitly mention persons with disabilities, and no Member State has adopted a dedicated plan to implement UNSCR 2475 on the protection and participation of persons with disabilities in conflict settings.<sup>10 11</sup>**

While most NAPs still treat disability as peripheral, if it is acknowledged at all, some recent examples signal a shift toward more intentional inclusion. **Countries such as South Sudan, Liberia, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the Gambia have taken early steps toward integrating disability into their WPS and YPS commitments, either through specific references, inclusive consultation processes, or cross-cutting data and accessibility strategies.**

*Sylvain Obedi, Executive Director of Enable the Disable Action, speaks at a capacity building workshop on Positive Masculinity to promote Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights for Persons with Disabilities through the Makoki ya Mwasi project, funded by the Embassy of Sweden.*  
Photo: Enable the Disable Action.

7 Government of South Sudan. (2015). *National Action Plan 2015–2020*. <https://wpsfocalpointsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/South-Sudan-2015-2020.pdf>

8 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2025). *Gambia Youth, Peace and Security National Action Plan (2025–2030)*. <https://www.undp.org/gambia/publications/national-action-plan-youth-peace-and-security-2025-2030>

9 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Kyrgyz Republic. (2024). *Disability-Inclusive Employment Roadmap*. [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-08/eng\\_0.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-08/eng_0.pdf)

10 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). (2025). *National Action Plan (NAP) Database*. <https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/nap-overview/>

11 United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). (2025). *Global Disability Inclusion Report*. <https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GIP03351-UNICEF-GDIR-Full-report-Proof-4.pdf>

### **South Sudan (2015–2020 WPS NAP):**

South Sudan's WPS NAP makes repeated and direct reference to women and girls with disabilities across multiple thematic pillars. The plan commits to ensuring their protection, equal access to justice, and inclusion in conflict prevention and peacebuilding programs. Notably, the NAP was developed through consultation with women with disabilities and national OPDs and includes commitments to remove stigma and provide accessible services. It remains one of the most disability-explicit WPS NAPs globally.<sup>12</sup>

### **Liberia (2019–2023 WPS NAP):**

Liberia's second WPS NAP integrates disability inclusion into its protection and empowerment pillars. The plan recognizes women and girls with disabilities as a group facing heightened risks in conflict and post-conflict settings. It includes commitments to improve access to justice, increase representation in leadership roles, and provide tailored psychosocial support. While it does not outline detailed implementation strategies specific to disability, the inclusion of women with disabilities in the NAP's narrative marks a significant step toward visibility and recognition.<sup>13</sup>



### **United Kingdom (2023–2027 WPS NAP):**

The United Kingdom's fifth WPS NAP embeds disability through its monitoring and evaluation framework. Under the plan's "Inclusive Governance" pillar, progress on participation and leadership is measured using data disaggregated by sex, age, disability, and population group. While persons with disabilities are not addressed as a focus group in the narrative of the plan, the inclusion of disability in outcome indicators offers a structural accountability tool.<sup>14</sup>

### **Canada (2023–2029 WPS NAP: "Foundations for Peace"):**

Canada's third WPS National Action Plan embeds disability within its intersectional vision for inclusive peace. It explicitly commits to advancing the leadership of women "in all their diversity," listing women with disabilities alongside Indigenous, racialized, and gender-diverse women. While disability is not treated as a stand-alone objective, it is integrated throughout the plan's guiding principles, and its implementation is supported by consultations with civil society. However, the plan does not set specific indicators or targets to measure disability inclusion.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Gambia (2025–2030 YPS NAP):**

The Gambia's YPS Action Plan is among the few YPS frameworks to explicitly address the rights and participation of youth with disabilities. The plan identifies exclusion from decision-making, education, and livelihoods as specific barriers and outlines strategies to ensure accessibility and inclusion across reintegration, leadership, and social cohesion programs. The drafting process included OPDs, including the Gambia Federation of the Disabled, with the plan recognizing accessibility as central to YPS implementation.<sup>16</sup>

12 Government of South Sudan. (2015). National Action Plan 2015–2020. <https://wpsfocalpointsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/South-Sudan-2015-2020.pdf>

13 Government of Liberia. (2019). WPS National Action Plan 2019–2023. <https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Liberia-NAP-2019-2023.pdf>

14 UK Government. (2023). UK Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan 2023–2027. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-women-peace-and-security-national-action-plan-2023-to-2027>

15 Government of Canada. (2023). Canada's National Action Plan on WPS (2023–2029). <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.934269/publication.html>

16 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2025). Gambia Youth, Peace and Security National Action Plan (2025–2030). <https://www.undp.org/gambia/publications/national-action-plan-youth-peace-and-security-2025-2030>



# Why Disability Inclusion in NAPs Matter

**When persons with disabilities are excluded from NAPs, they are effectively excluded from peacebuilding systems. The diversity within the disability community brings valuable perspectives to peacebuilding, and reveals how intersectional marginalization can compound exclusion.** Persons with disabilities who also identify as women, youth, LGBTQ+ individuals, or Indigenous Peoples often face additional layers of discrimination that remain unaddressed by peacebuilding institutions. Women with disabilities, for example, have been systematically excluded from the WPS Agenda and other formal peacebuilding processes.<sup>17</sup> Despite limited data, existing research shows that they are often absent from decision-making spaces at all stages of conflict, with barriers rooted in both sexism and ableism.<sup>18</sup>

These challenges become more pronounced when considering Indigenous women and Indigenous youth with disabilities, who often face compounded discrimination, limited access to education and healthcare, and heightened exposure to violence. Without intentional inclusion strategies that prioritize intersectionality, peacebuilding systems risk reinforcing the very exclusion they aim to redress. The peacebuilding sector must address these blind spots by actively tracking the representation of marginalized disability communities and working with OPDs to identify and dismantle barriers to participation.

For the peacebuilding sector to be truly inclusive, it must move beyond minimal accommodations and invest in an actionable, comprehensive accessibility framework. This includes providing interpretation and alternative communication formats, ensuring access to assistive devices, offering transportation and medical support, and selecting or designing physically accessible meeting locations. While the scope of support required may seem expansive, these interventions are critical to ensuring peacebuilding spaces are inclusive and reflective of all stakeholders. **Moreover, expanding accessibility measures contributes to broader social resilience and benefits a wide range of excluded groups beyond persons with disabilities.**

Meaningful engagement to advance persons with disabilities in peacebuilding work can help dismantle attitudinal, environmental, communication, and institutional barriers. Inclusion is not simply about naming or counting the number of persons with disabilities, **it requires co-designing plans with OPDs, resourcing their participation, and embedding accessibility into goals, budgets, and monitoring systems.** These opportunities reflect a broader shift towards a participatory, whole-of-society approach to peacebuilding.

17 Ortoleva, S. (2010). *Women with Disabilities: The Forgotten Peacebuilders*. Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Review. <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1660&context=ilr>

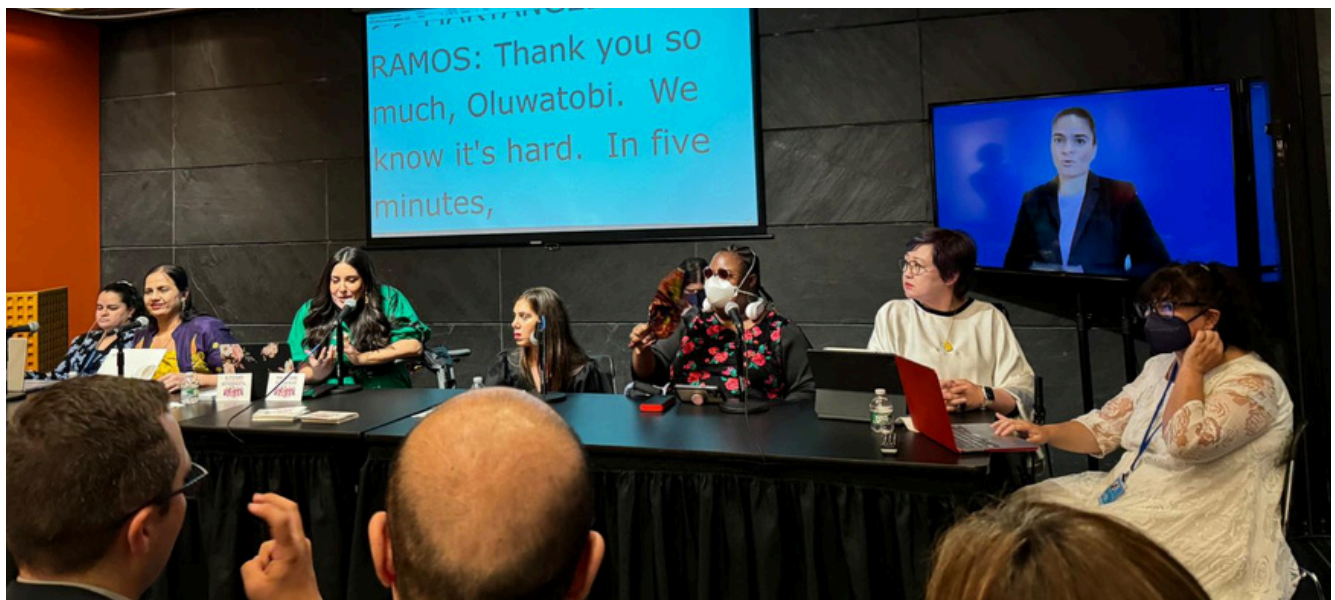
18 United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). (2025). *Global Disability Inclusion Report*. <https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GIP03351-UNICEF-GDIR-Full-report-Proof-4.pdf>

A persistent challenge across peacebuilding systems is the lack of cohesive and practical guidance for implementing disability inclusion in a coordinated and accountable way. **The 2025 Global Disability Inclusion Report highlights fragmentation across national coordination mechanisms, where systems tasked with supporting disability inclusion often work in isolation or without alignment, resulting in overlaps, inefficiencies, and gaps in accountability.**<sup>19</sup> These issues are particularly acute in decentralized or crisis-affected settings, where existing infrastructure may be disrupted or deprioritized.

For the peacebuilding sector, embedding disability inclusion must involve investing in coordinated structures for implementation and monitoring, designed to be adaptable to local contexts and resilient across conflict cycles. A whole-of-society approach recognizes that peace is a collective effort and must be grounded in shared responsibility, structural accountability, and inclusive values. **This requires challenging existing hierarchies and power structures that have historically excluded persons with disabilities from decision-making, protection, and participation.**

Peacebuilding actors must move beyond siloed programming and treat disability inclusion as central to advancing broader goals of social cohesion, justice, and democratic resilience. When persons with disabilities are engaged as co-leaders rather than beneficiaries, peacebuilding becomes more representative, legitimate, and responsive to everyone's needs. The 2025 Global Disability Inclusion Report underscores that investing in inclusive systems creates ripple effects that benefit not only persons with disabilities but all communities facing exclusion and marginalization.<sup>20</sup> Efforts to operationalize this approach are growing, including the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations guidance for humanitarian actors to partner directly with OPDs, and the African Union's Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities outlining obligations for inclusive governance and participation in peace and security systems.<sup>21 22</sup> These examples demonstrate that institutional shifts are possible, but require political will, resourcing, and alignment across sectors.

*The Future of Disability Rights is Feminist event - a Conference of States Parties (CoSP 17) Side Event hosted by Women Enabled, UN Women, and the CPRD Committee. 2024.*



19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 European Commission. (2019). *Guidance Note: Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in EU-funded Humanitarian Aid Operations*. [https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-06/dg\\_op\\_guidance\\_inclusion\\_gb\\_liens\\_hr.pdf](https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-06/dg_op_guidance_inclusion_gb_liens_hr.pdf)

22 African Union. (2018). *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa*. [https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36440-treaty-protocol-to-the-achpr-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-africa\\_e.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36440-treaty-protocol-to-the-achpr-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-africa_e.pdf)

The peacebuilding sector is uniquely positioned to enhance existing multilateral frameworks, including by operationalizing UNSCR 2475, the WPS and YPS Agendas, through fully integrating disability perspectives. In its technical paper on disability in the WPS Agenda, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia identifies strong entry points to link UNSCR 2475, the CRPD, and other normative standards into gender-sensitive peacebuilding policy.<sup>23</sup>

In parallel, while UNSCR 2250 on YPS references the CRPD, it does not explicitly integrate the role of youth with disabilities in peacebuilding efforts.<sup>24</sup> United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) YPS guide calls for enhanced representation of marginalized youth, including persons with disabilities, and emphasizes the need for intersectional participation in development and peace efforts.<sup>25</sup>

While no country has developed a standalone NAP for UNSCR 2475, integrating its commitments into existing frameworks can help shift disability inclusion from aspiration to accountability. Doing so reinforces that persons with disabilities are not passive recipients of protection, but essential peacebuilders in their own right.



*Capacity building workshop on Positive Masculinity to promote Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights for Persons with Disabilities through the Makoki ya Mwasi project, funded by the Embassy of Sweden. 2023. Photo: Enable the Disable Action.*

23 United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA). (2024). Disability Inclusion in the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in the Arab Region. <https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/pubs/pdf/disability-inclusion-women-peace-security-agenda-arab-region-english.pdf>

24 Conciliation Resources. (2021). Untapped Peacebuilders: Including Persons with Disabilities in Building Peace. [https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Untapped\\_peacebuilders\\_including\\_persons\\_with\\_disabilities\\_in\\_building\\_peace.pdf](https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Untapped_peacebuilders_including_persons_with_disabilities_in_building_peace.pdf)

25 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2024). Youth, Peace and Security: Fostering Youth-Inclusive Political Processes. [https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-02/undp-youth-peace-and-security-fostering-youth-inclusive-political\\_processes-2.pdf](https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2024-02/undp-youth-peace-and-security-fostering-youth-inclusive-political_processes-2.pdf)



Somalia presents one of the most complex peacebuilding challenges in the world. With decades of civil war, political fragmentation, and recurrent humanitarian crises, this has severely weakened state institutions, undermined social cohesion and left millions displaced.<sup>26</sup> The protracted conflict, beginning in the late 1980s, dismantled the central government and gave rise to alternative governance systems grounded in clan affiliations, customary law, and localized authority structures.<sup>27</sup> Despite ongoing efforts for national reconciliation and federal state formation since 2012, Somalia remains mired in insecurity, political tensions, and uneven development.<sup>28</sup> The interplay of armed violence, natural disasters, and chronic poverty continues to burden already fragile communities and governance mechanisms.

Against this backdrop, peacebuilding efforts have emerged both from within Somalia's rich traditions of mediation and through support from international actors. Yet, these initiatives have often overlooked one critical dimension of inclusivity: the rights and participation of persons with disabilities. In a country where approximately **11.7 percent of the adult population lives with some form of disability**, the intersection of disability and peace processes remains largely unexplored and under-addressed.

**Disability in Somalia is a multifaceted issue influenced by various factors, including prolonged conflict, poverty, limited healthcare services, cultural perceptions, and limited infrastructure.** Decades of civil war, terrorist attacks, and armed conflicts have led to many people suffering from injuries that result in long-term disabilities, including amputations, spinal cord injuries, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Access to medical care, rehabilitation services, and assistive devices, such as wheelchairs and prosthetics, is extremely limited, especially in rural areas.

Many people with disabilities do not receive adequate medical attention or early intervention. Somalia has also experienced periodic outbreaks of polio, which can cause paralysis. Other diseases, such as tuberculosis and meningitis, can also lead to disabilities if not properly treated, while malnutrition during pregnancy and early childhood leads to developmental disabilities. People with disabilities also often face social stigma and exclusion. They may have difficulty accessing education, employment, and public services due to negative perceptions and a lack of inclusive policies.<sup>29</sup> Access to education for persons with disabilities in Somalia is notably limited. Barriers include an inaccessible physical environment, lack of awareness within communities, shortage of trained teachers and specialists, negative attitudes, and a severe shortage of assistive devices and mobility aids. Girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable, often receiving fewer opportunities compared to boys with disabilities due to prevailing patriarchal gender norms.

The history of disability inclusion in Somali law is relatively recent and still evolving. While the Provisional Federal Constitution of 2012 marked a foundational shift by explicitly prohibiting discrimination based on disability and guaranteeing equal rights for all citizens, implementation has been limited due to weak institutional capacity and prolonged political instability. In 2017, Somalia developed its, "Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities and Disability Rights in Governance and Development Processes Roadmap 2017 – 2019," which established a Somali persons with disabilities database disaggregated by gender, age, disability category, and region as a key result area.<sup>30</sup> However, this mechanism will require the promotion of representation of persons with disabilities in peace negotiation and reconciliation bodies; disaggregated peace-related data; integration of peace education and trauma healing programs; and alignment of national policies with the CRPD and UNSCR 2475, which has still not taken place due to lack of implementation.

26 Samatar, A. I. (2016). *Africa's first democrats: Somalia's Aden A. Osman and Abdirazak H. Hussen*. Indiana University Press. <https://iupress.org/9780253022301/africas-first-democrats/>

27 Life and Peace Institute. (2020). Building peace through inclusive community processes in Somalia. <https://life-peace.org/our-work/somalia/>

28 Höhne, M. V. (2021). Federalism in post-conflict Somalia: A critical review of its reception. and implementation. *Regional & Federal Studies*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13597566.2021.1998005>

29 Somalia National Bureau of Statistics. (2024). National Disability Report. <https://nbs.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/National-disability-report.pdf>

30 Global Disability Summit. (2025). Global Disability Summit. <https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/commitments/somalia-ministry-of-women-and-human-rights-development#:~:text=On%2017th%20November%202017%2C%20Somalia,as%20a%20Key%20Result%20Area>



*'Strengthening Democratic and Inclusive Local Governance in Somalia', funded by the Government of Sweden (SIDA). 2024-2025. Photo: Finn Church Aid.*



A significant milestone came in 2018 with the establishment of the National Disability Agency (NDA) under Law No. 134, which institutionalized the government's commitment to promoting the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The NDA's core functions include awareness raising on the rights of persons with disabilities and coordinating efforts among various stakeholders, developing national strategies, and providing technical advice. This was followed by Somalia's ratification of the CRPD in 2019, legally binding the country to uphold international standards on disability rights.<sup>31</sup> Most recently, Somalia's National Development Plan (2020–2024) identified persons with disabilities as among the most vulnerable groups in Somalia. It emphasized the need for inclusive economic growth and social development to reduce poverty and inequality, aiming to address the challenges faced by persons with disabilities.<sup>32</sup> Despite these advancements, legal and policy frameworks, such as national development plans and reconciliation strategies, have often failed to explicitly mainstream disability inclusion.<sup>33</sup>



To continue addressing the barriers and needs of persons with disabilities in Somalia, Finn Church Aid (FCA) launched the, 'Strengthening Democratic and Inclusive Local Governance' (STRONG) project, in 2024, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), in collaboration with Somalia's Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MOIFAR) and the Abilis Foundation in Mogadishu, Somalia. FCA supports peace and reconciliation in Somalia and the rebuilding of government structures. It is for this reason that FCA Somalia, with the technical expertise and support from the Abilis Foundation, an organization focused on advancing the leadership and participation of persons with disabilities, commissioned an assessment on the status of inclusion of persons with disabilities into peace processes across four Federal Member States of Somalia, through identifying systemic gaps and opportunities to foster meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in reconciliation and governance efforts.<sup>34</sup> The STRONG project also developed a toolkit to promote the mainstreaming of disability in future peace processes in Somalia.<sup>35</sup> This global toolkit utilizes the findings of this project as a case study example of how other contexts can begin to have broader conversations on embedding disability rights within peace processes.

*Somalia's Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre takes a selfie with wheelchair recipients at the handover ceremony on International Day for Persons with Disabilities in Mogadishu, Somalia. 2024. Photo: 'A Somalia for all,' National Disability Agency, Somalia/UNDP Somalia.*

31 United Nations. (2025). UN Treaty Body Database. [https://tbineternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?Treaty=CRPD](https://tbineternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?Treaty=CRPD)

32 Federal Government of Somalia. (2019). National Development Plan (NDP-9) 2020–2024. Mogadishu: Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development. <https://mop.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Somali-National-Development-Plan-9-2020-2024.pdf>

33 Rohwerder R. (2018). Institute of Development Studies and the UK Department for International Development. Disability in Somalia. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a744dbded915d0e8bf188ec/Disability\\_in\\_Somalia.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a744dbded915d0e8bf188ec/Disability_in_Somalia.pdf)

34 Finn Church Aid (FCA). (2025). An assessment on disability inclusion in the peace processes in target federal member states in Somalia, and development of disability inclusion toolkit under the project Strengthening Democratic and Inclusive Local Governance in Somalia (STRONG). Mogadishu: FCA Somalia Country Office.

35 Finn Church Aid (FCA). (2025). Toolkit for promoting disability inclusion in peace processes across Somalia under the Strengthening Democratic and Inclusive Local Governance in Somalia (STRONG) Project. Mogadishu: FCA Somalia Country Office.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What does it mean to include persons with disabilities in peacebuilding in a more meaningful way?

Inclusion must be more than representation. **Advancing the inclusion of persons with disabilities requires centering their agency, leadership, and lived expertise across all stages of peacebuilding.** This is not just during implementation, but also in agenda setting, mediation, transitional justice, and reconstruction. Too often, inclusion is treated as a downstream process limited to consultation or program access. Instead, persons with disabilities must be resourced as co-creators of peace, and inclusion must be embedded into the structural design of peace systems from the onset.

This means co-developing policies with OPDs, committing to full accessibility in physical, institutional, and digital spaces, and prioritizing intersectional engagement to reach those who are often excluded, including women and girls with disabilities, youth with disabilities, persons with psychosocial or intellectual disabilities, and displaced persons. These groups are often missing entirely from peace processes due to social stigma, inaccessible formats, or lack of resourcing. Meaningful inclusion must account for these layered forms of marginalization.<sup>36 37</sup>

## Why is inclusion of persons with disabilities essential to sustainable peacebuilding?

Conflict intensifies existing inequalities, and persons with disabilities are among those most affected. They face disproportionate rates of violence, displacement, and economic exclusion. In conflict settings, barriers to evacuation, accessible humanitarian assistance, and healthcare compound these risks. Despite these challenges, persons with disabilities have long been peacebuilders, mobilizing in communities, mediating conflicts, advocating for justice, and contributing to social recovery.<sup>38</sup> Yet, their roles remain under-recognized due to dominant peacebuilding paradigms, which often exclude non-traditional actors and prioritize elite participation.

Inclusion is not only as a human rights imperative, as affirmed in the CRPD, (Articles 4, 11, 29), but as a strategic imperative to build resilient and equitable peace.<sup>39</sup> Exclusion weakens peace processes by perpetuating marginalization and ignoring the structural causes of conflict. In contrast, inclusive peace processes strengthen community trust, respond to diverse needs, and foster social transformation.<sup>40 41</sup>

36 United Nations General Assembly. (2023). Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: A/78/174. <https://docs.un.org/en/A/78/174>

37 United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). (2025). *Global Disability Inclusion Report*. [https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GIP03351-UNICEF-GDIR-Full-report\\_Proof-4.pdf](https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GIP03351-UNICEF-GDIR-Full-report_Proof-4.pdf)

38 Ortoleva, S. (2010). *Women with Disabilities: The Forgotten Peacebuilders*. Loyola of Los Angeles International and Comparative Law Review. <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1660&context=ilr>

39 United Nations General Assembly. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*. <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

40 United Nations General Assembly. (2023). Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: A/78/174. <https://docs.un.org/en/A/78/174>

41 United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). (2025). *Global Disability Inclusion Report*. [https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GIP03351-UNICEF-GDIR-Full-report\\_Proof-4.pdf](https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GIP03351-UNICEF-GDIR-Full-report_Proof-4.pdf)

## How can peacebuilding organizations avoid ableist assumptions and practices?

Ableism in peacebuilding is often invisible but deeply embedded. It is exemplified in consultation processes that do not include OPDs, in reports that fail to disaggregate data by disability, and in the assumption that persons with disabilities are passive recipients rather than agents of change. Peacebuilding work must actively dismantle these norms by moving from a charity or vulnerability lens toward a human rights-based approach grounded in accessibility, autonomy, and accountability.

Organizations can start by budgeting for accommodations as core program costs, not add-ons, including interpretation, assistive technology, accessible transport, and personal support. OPDs must be included as equal partners in design, delivery, and evaluation. Policies and programming should reflect a full spectrum of disabilities, including psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, and use inclusive language that affirms agency and dignity. This requires internal transformation of peacebuilding institutions to embed intersectional inclusion at every level.<sup>42</sup>

## What global and regional frameworks support disability-inclusive peacebuilding?

The CRPD establishes binding obligations for Member States to ensure the participation and protection of persons with disabilities in emergencies and public life, including in peace and post-conflict settings (CRPD Articles 4, 11, 29).<sup>43</sup> These provisions require governments to legislate for access and inclusion and to recognize OPDs as rights-holders and implementation partners. The UN Disability Inclusion Strategy builds on this by committing all UN agencies to mainstream disability inclusion, including in political, humanitarian, and peace operations.<sup>44</sup>

Regionally, the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the African Model Disability Law lay out frameworks for inclusion across sectors, including justice, political participation, and security.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Enabling Masterplan 2025 outlines disability inclusion across the region's political, security, economic, and socio-cultural pillars, including commitments to inclusive disaster resilience and political participation.<sup>46</sup>

The European Commission's Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021-2030) affirms the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in political life, access justice, and be protected in crisis situations across the European Union (EU).<sup>47</sup>

42 International Disability Alliance. (2022). Not Just Ticking the Disability Box? Meaningful OPD Participation and the Risk of Tokenism. [https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/ida\\_executive\\_summary\\_v07.pdf](https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/ida_executive_summary_v07.pdf)

43 United Nations General Assembly. (2006). Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

44 United Nations. (2019). United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. <https://www.un.org/en/content/disabilitystrategy/>

45 African Union. (2018). Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa. [https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36440-treaty-protocol-to-the-achpr-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-africa\\_e.pdf](https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36440-treaty-protocol-to-the-achpr-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-in-africa_e.pdf)

46 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). (2019). ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025: Mainstreaming the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Publication-ASEAN-Enabling-Masterplan-2025-1.pdf>

47 European Commission. (2021). Union of Equality: Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030. [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/disability/union-equality-strategy-rights-persons-disabilities-2021-2030\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/disability/union-equality-strategy-rights-persons-disabilities-2021-2030_en)



Additionally, the Organization of American States (OAS) created the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2016-2026), which guides OAS Member States in advancing inclusion in justice, public participation, and emergency protection.<sup>48</sup>

Together, these frameworks provide critical tools to move from policy rhetoric to implementation. But they require operationalization. Peacebuilders must align their work with these instruments, resource inclusive practices, and measure progress through disability-inclusive indicators.<sup>49</sup>



*Southeast Asia regional women's peacebuilding gathering, 2023. Photo: [INEB](#).*

48 Organization of American States (OAS). (2015). Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2016–2026). <https://www.oas.org/ext/DesktopModules/MVC/OASDnnModules/Views/Item/Download.aspx?type=1&id=1048&lang=1>

49 United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). (2025). Global Disability Inclusion Report. [https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GIP03351-UNICEF-GDIR-Full-report\\_Proof-4.pdf](https://www.globaldisabilitysummit.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/GIP03351-UNICEF-GDIR-Full-report_Proof-4.pdf)

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## **Legal Frameworks Guiding Inclusive Humanitarian Action (Article 11 Reporting Guidance).**

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