



AFFPC AUSTRALIAN
FEMINIST FOREIGN
POLICY COALITION

Advancing Feminist Foreign Policy in Australia

AUSTRALIAN FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY COALITION

Welcome to the September newsletter of the Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition!

Thank you for being involved in this growing community advancing feminist foreign policy in Australia.

In this bi-monthly newsletter, we share updates from the Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition (AFFPC) and the global Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) space.

Please direct all enquiries, suggestions and feedback to Liz Gill-Atkinson at research@iwda.org.au.

FOCUS:

Gender Apartheid and Feminist Foreign Policy

One year ago, the world watched in awe as Iranians stood up in resistance to harsh laws imposed on women following the extrajudicial killing of Mahsa Amini, but the crackdown has continued with protesters still being arrested and killed. In the past year we have also

seen the continued attack of women's rights in Afghanistan. All women, but particularly female protesters, women associated with the previous government, and ethnic-minority and diverse women have been subjected to systemic and wide-spread human rights violations and pervasive gender-based violence.

These events have led to increasing calls and pressure from civil society and within the UN to formally recognise the state sanctioned gender-based violence occurring in these contexts as a system of "gender-apartheid". In July, UN human rights experts described the Taliban's treatment of women in Afghanistan as a "crime against humanity" and called for the codification of "gender apartheid." In September, UN experts stated that the Islamic Republic authorities "appear to be governing through systemic discrimination with the intention of suppressing women and girls into total submission."

The two most recent AFFPC Issues Papers, focused on [Afghanistan](#) and [Iran](#), delve deeply into the concept of "gender apartheid". In the most recent paper, authors Jacqui True, Amir Ahmadi and Alison Ross explain how "gender apartheid" is a political concept that refers to the *"creation of a system that institutionalises gender oppression and segregation and is synonymous with impunity for gendered violence. Gender apartheid, per se, is not yet recognised under international law"*.

These events have also informed critical debates and questions about the shape and implementation of feminist foreign policies. The authors make the case that governments employing a feminist foreign policy approach – as well as those who claim to prioritise gender equality – must use the term "gender apartheid" to signal their condemnation of the systemic abuse of women in these settings in the strongest terms.

AFFPC UPDATES:

What we are up to

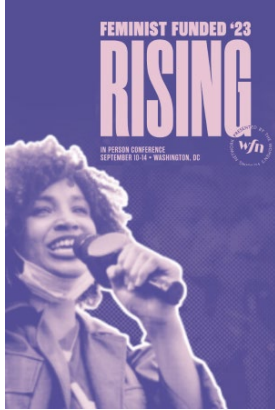
September AFFPC Issues Paper

Gender Apartheid in Iran: Foreign Policy Responses

One year after the "Women, Life, Liberty" protests in Iran following the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, Iranian women's rights activists and international human rights experts have united to denounce the brutal Islamic Republic and call for the international recognition of "gender apartheid". In their paper, Professor Jacqui True, Dr Amir Ahmadi and Professor Alison Ross call for all states to implement practical foreign policy options, including codify gender-apartheid as a crime against humanity through resolutions of the UN General Assembly and other multilateral bodies, as tools to hold the Islamic Republic accountable for crimes against women.

[Download Paper](#)

Do you want to join the AFFPC Core Group? Let us know! The AFFPC is seeking expressions of interest for new members to join the Core Group (a smaller grouping within the broader AFFPC membership who hold responsibility for driving progress of the AFFPC). Expressions of interest close Sunday 15th October. For more information, or to submit an EOI, visit this link: bit.ly/AFFPCcoregroup



Feminist Funded 23: RISING: Jo Pradela (IWDA) attended the annual conference of the Women Funders Network in Washington DC from 11th – 14th September. For the first time, the conference had a dedicated convening on [Feminist Foreign Policy](#). IWDA has been part of the organising committee, and has hosted two panel discussions **focused on showcasing Equality Insights (IWDA’s flagship gender data program) and pushing for governments with feminist foreign policies to drive accountability for gender data.** Our sessions featured incredible speakers including ‘Ofa Guttenbeil-Likiliki (Tonga Women and Children Crisis Centre) and Michelle Reddy (Pacific Feminist Fund) from the Pacific region, as well as Jeni Klugman (The Brookings Institution and Equality Insights Global Advisory Group member), Fleur Newman (UNFCCC Gender Focal Point) Lisa Tatu Hey (Fair Share of Women Leaders) and Paulette Senior (Canadian Women’s Fund).

International Peace Institute – Feminist Foreign Policy and Multilateralism: On July 24 and 25, AFFPC member Dr Elise Stephenson (ANU) attended a two-day retreat with other academic, civil society and member state representatives with FFP expertise. The retreat aimed to foster an understanding of FFP amongst UN member representatives whose countries have already adopted, or are considering adopting, an FFP, explore opportunities for FFP to be a tool to build bridges between majority and minority world countries and discuss ideas for how advocates for FFP can integrate feminist ideas and practices into the UN system and into member states’ relationships with each other and with civil society. Elise advocated for FFP states to integrate a stronger focus on LGBTIQ+ rights, decolonisation and First Nations Justice into their efforts, including through collaboration with countries like Australia.



Introduction
The Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition (AFFPC) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of a new International Gender Equality Strategy.
The AFFPC is a network of more than 200 individuals and organisations committed to advancing transformative feminist foreign policy in Australia. It is governed by the International Women’s Development Agency (IWDA) and includes members from across Australia, including women’s rights, international development and other sectors.
The 2023 International Development Policy Institute (IDP) Australia’s commitment to advancing gender equality and the rights of people with disabilities, and the benefits of “pushing gender equality at the centre of development.”
AFFPC believes the draft strategy is a milestone, having “the most inclusive and gender-sensitive strategy” that also recognises growth and human development.
The International Gender Strategy provides the critical opportunity to address the vast of gender inequality via the systemic and transformative approaches required to get it there.
This submission outlines the case for Australia to make a landmark approach to the world’s sustainable gender equality through the International Gender Equality Strategy. It builds from the AFFPC submission on the International Development Policy Institute’s recommendations which have not yet been implemented to the context of the gender strategy. It also draws from the analysis and recommendations included in the AFFPC Issues Paper Series.

Why a feminist approach matters
Gender equality and human rights are under attack on every front.
One year ago, the world witnessed in awe as systems that are in resistance to both the progress on women following the successful signing of historic Agreements, the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis were revealed and faced in the past year we have also seen the continued attack on women’s rights in Afghanistan and Myanmar, violence against women’s rights and gender equality, gender-based violence, ongoing gender persecution, women associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and women’s rights.
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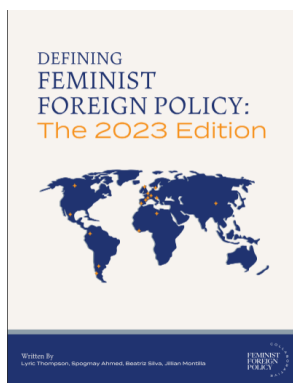
AFFPC Submission on the new International Gender Equality Strategy:

The AFFPC has sent our submission to DFAT on the new International Gender Equality Strategy. The submission outlines the case for Australia to name a feminist approach to its work to advance gender equality through the International Gender Strategy, and provides practical steps to embed a feminist approach against four outcome areas – capability, accountability, partnership and resourcing.

DFAT consultation on LGBTQIA+ strategy: On 13th September, Alice Ridge and Fhon Williams from IWDA attended a consultation for DFAT on the LGBTQI+ strategy, along with fellow AFFPC Core Group member Anila Aftab Schroers (Oxfam). IWDA highlighted the need for Australia to do more in countering anti-rights movements along side governments who have committed to feminist foreign policies, the weaponization of human rights language against LGBTQI+ people and the importance of movement strengthening and cross-movement solidarity between LGBTQI+ and feminist movements. These interventions drew on [AFFPC Issues Paper 5: Furthering LGBTQI+ Inclusion and Rights through Feminist Foreign Policy](#) by Dr Elise Stephenson, Jack Hayes, and Matcha Phorn-In.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD:

Key Feminist Foreign Policy Updates



2023 Edition of Defining Feminist Foreign Policy: On Friday 15th September, the Feminist Foreign Policy Collective launched the 2023 edition of the Defining Feminist Foreign Policy paper, which provides a global overview of developments in the FFP field since the last edition (published in 2021). At the launch keynote speakers, including government officials who are implementing FFPs and activists, discussed the main findings and trends.

WHAT WE'RE READING (AND WATCHING AND LISTENING):

A short list of books, articles, resources, videos and podcasts about feminist foreign policy

Event Overview

Feminist Foreign Policy and Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

Blog

Challenges to a coherent implementation of a Feminist Foreign Policy



On 1st August, the Vienna Centre for disarmament and nuclear proliferation (VCDNP) and the Permanent Mission of Germany to the International Organisations in Vienna hosted an event to explore how states with feminist foreign policies are operationalising their feminist strategies in the non-proliferation and disarmament space, and how feminist perspectives be championed in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) review process. An overview of the event, including panellists and key topics discussed is available on the webpage.

[Read More](#)



Feminist Foreign Policy is about more than giving women power - creating the space for intersectional understandings of power imbalances is at its core. In her blog, Sabine Dao discusses how whilst the concept of feminism has become mainstreamed in many societies, albeit in varying forms, the concept of FFP has yet to prove itself as a clear, sustainable, and inclusive movement. But, whilst feminist foreign policy approaches may seem idealistic, they are highly pragmatic for the longer-term future of global cooperation, peace, and security. Inclusive thinking – and doing – is crucial to such a future, and FFP offers an approach that works not only for all women but for all humanity.

[Read Blog](#)

Blog

Why the Australian Voice referendum matters globally



In her blog for the Interpreter, Ambika Vishwanath (Kubernein Initiative, India) writes about how the result of the upcoming Referendum for a First Nations Voice to

Report

Building Peace, the Feminist Foreign Policy Way: Good Practices



Commissioned by the German Federal Foreign Office, this report, authored by Niklas Balbon, Fennet Habte, Philipp Rotmann, Julia Friedrich and Younna Christiansen,

Parliament could influence how Australia is viewed by its partners in the region, including India. Whilst a 'Yes' vote would signal that Australia is working to live up to the values that it promotes on the world stage, including through its First Nations Foreign Policy; a no vote, and continuation of the status quo, would call into question the authenticity of Australia's word and actions abroad and would be viewed as a missed opportunity.

[Read More](#)

outlines how feminist foreign policy can translate into more feminist ways of funding and supporting conflict prevention, stabilization and peacebuilding. As Germany – the largest peacebuilding donor globally – joins the club of governments explicitly committed to implementing a feminist foreign policy, its ambition and success in mainstreaming a “feminist way of peacebuilding” will have important consequences for the field as a whole.

[Read Report](#)

The Australian Feminist Foreign Policy Coalition acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and live. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and the Aboriginal Elders of other communities.

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