

# Scholar applauds African women's resilience

It is clear that militarism has vast effects on people-centered development, democratization and gender equality says Prof. Amina Mama during a public lecture at the University of Nairobi.

In the lecture, the tension between global investments in militarism and commitments to gender equitable development were explored in detail. Prof. Mama who is the Director of Women and Gender Studies Programme, University of California, made a presentation on the role of women during war, how women have survived times of unrest and what their direct involvement is. Specifically, Prof. Mama looked the global militarism and the resilience of women in Africa.

Prof. Mama noted that for Africa, "the real security need is not military security but social security- security against poverty and violence. African women define security beyond the absence of war. The real security is about development. Unfortunately, militarism has underdeveloped the continent. There are no longer local cultures and value systems. These have been replaced with a culture of violence that relies on gendered and ethicized violence against the dehumanized "others." Interestingly, through pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict, women have positioned themselves to exist despite the gender lines."

She observed that in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century alone, more people have died in declared wars than any other misfortune. The challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is how to make a difference in this century by reducing militarism and global military expenditure. African women's military involvement in post-colonial conflicts has dramatically increased between mid-20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The public lecture was organized by the University of Nairobi's [Institute for Development Studies](#) (IDS) and the African Leadership Centre (ALC), in collaboration with the African Peace building Network of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) of New York. Prof. Mama is a widely published scholar-activist and the founding Editor of *Feminist Africa*, published by the African Gender Institute in Cape Town.