

Danaan Women's Unity League – President (F)

Background

You are the daughter of Michelle Aboko, the former head of the Danaan Women's Unity League (DWUL), and your father is a former Finance Minister. Like many Tarim families, your family fled the civil war in Danaan and settled in the United States. Your mother has been a strong figure in your life and has told you many stories about how she was once the leader of the most successful women's group in the country.

Two years ago after finishing your master's degree, you decided to return to your home country of Danaan. Your mother long encouraged you to return to Danaan, so when you heard that the government and Alliance for Freedom and Democracy (AFD) were considering peace talks, you moved back to be a part of that process.

For the eighteen months, you've been working on reviving what is left of the Danaan Women's Unity League by working with your mother's former contacts. Your ultimate goal is to reunite the regional branches under a national umbrella and to restore the organization's former prominence. You've connected with several heads of the regional branches that have continued to provide services throughout the civil war. But, you've received some mixed feedback from the regional leadership about unifying under a national umbrella. If you can accomplish this task, DWUL could become a major player in the peace negotiations, bolstered by its reputation as the most prominent women's rights group in Danaan.

What you hope to accomplish

Your primary agenda is to promote women's inclusion in the peace process. You also want to secure women and girl's access to education and ensure that women are provided with economic opportunities after the conflict is over. Many women and girls have also been victims of rape and sexual violence; you want to make sure that their needs are addressed as well. Moreover, you want displaced Tarim communities, like your family, to be able to return home. You believe the AFD is the main perpetrator of violence against civilians in Danaan and that they need to be held accountable for their crimes. As a Tarim woman, you want the peace talks to hold the AFD accountable for their attacks on Tarim civilians.

To achieve these goals you have attended many of the civil society meetings hosted by the ROEI Commission on Gender, and hope to develop a close relationship with the Commission and other international NGOs. You believe their expertise, connections, and potential funding opportunities will make an impact on women's inclusion in the talks and could also help DWUL regain its footing as a leading women's organization. You currently have a small pot of funds that were raised by your mother and other Danaanian diaspora; these funds are covering your expenses, but will run out soon.

You've also considered engaging IDP and refugee communities in an effort to broaden your network. However you heard from some of the DWUL branch leaders that Warod and Nurul IDPs and refugees are mostly agents of the AFD; they collect food, water, medicine, etc. from the camps and send them directly to the AFD. The camps are also a breeding ground for AFD recruitment, which is why there are only women, children, and elderly left in the camps.

You are aware that the organization 4Peace is currently seen as the country's leading women's rights organization and receives strong support from the international NGO Women United International. 4Peace representatives have also attended the Commission's convenings, so you know they're also advocating for women's inclusion. You heard that the Executive Director of 4Peace is famous around the world for her work, which is intriguing. 4Peace could be a powerful partner and someone to learn from, but there are a few warning signs. First, you've heard that the government doesn't fully trust 4Peace because of its suspected ties to the AFD. And, second, if the 4Peace Executive Director is indeed famous and 4Peace is the leading women's rights organization in Danaan, why have they made such little progress on the women's inclusion? You want to learn more about 4Peace and to critically assess whether being linked to them would hurt or help your cause.

You want to travel to Abayo to meet the US Special Envoy to see if he would be willing to support DWUL and pass along your demands to the Joint Mediation Team and negotiating parties. Having a partner like the US would add legitimacy to your organization's work and help to restore DWUL's reputation. You know it is also very important to get buy-in from the government in order for your work to succeed. You are scheduled to meet with the Minister of Defense, an old family friend, in Abayo later today.

Capacity to create change

You know that DWUL is a shell of its former self, but you believe it still has the capacity to make a significant impact. DWUL's regional branches have been operating in local communities for decades and there are many women within this network that could be great representatives in the peace process. You are also very tech savvy and know how to run a successful social media campaign. You've used Facebook and Twitter to get across the message of the DWUL and have received a large youth following over the past two years.

You know that your youth takes away from your legitimacy to some degree. You are trying to counteract this by making your connections with DWUL regional leaders well known. You also see your youthfulness as an asset in other ways, as you want to use your position to engage young women and raise awareness of the issues being discussed throughout the process. You are one of the future leaders of Danaan and you are determined to be a positive role model.

Relationships with other roles

You have a close relationship with the DWUL Vice President, whom you hired two months ago. You met her in grad school and were immediately impressed by her intelligence and wit.

You know the ROEI Commission on Gender representative from attending her consultations. From the consultations you're also familiar with 4Peace, although you haven't directly met their representatives. You also met the Women United International representative at an earlier set of consultations.

Your father, who previously served as Minister of Finance, has a very close relationship with the Minister of Defense. Your families are very close and he is like an uncle to you. You scheduled a meeting with him today and hope to convince him that women's inclusion in the peace process is important. This will likely be a difficult conversation, because he holds a very traditional view of gender roles and will probably disapprove of your work with DWUL.