

# Union of Saints, Processing Layers of Conflict and Pain

Processing the layers of conflict and pain—how society treats women, how it treats men, and how those struggles get internalized as a personal “war on me.”

The Breakdown:

- **War on Women:** The systemic harms women face—misogyny, violence, silencing, exploitation, double standards.
- **War on Men:** The rigid expectations placed on men—stoicism, provider pressure, emotional suppression, disposability in war or labor.
- **War on Me:** The personal toll of living in a world where both wars exist. It’s the weight of internalized blame, shame, or feeling trapped in expectations and harms that don’t honor one’s humanity.

“*War on women, war on me*”, war is felt and deeply connected. The war on women becomes personal. The war on men too—it affects you directly, not just abstractly.

✨ Processing the “war on me,” could mean asking:

- How do these societal “wars” show up in my daily life?
- Which wounds belong to me personally, and which are inherited from culture?
- Where do I find peace, healing, or solidarity despite these conflicts?

We are processing war across **global, national, and community** levels, the scale and the personal impact.

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## Global Scale

- **Forms it takes:** gender-based violence, child marriage, human trafficking, lack of access to education, restrictions on reproductive rights, cultural practices that devalue women.
  - **Processing it:** many international movements (e.g. #MeToo, UN campaigns, women-led NGOs) push for recognition of women’s human rights as non-negotiable. There’s a collective awareness that women’s liberation is tied to global progress.
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## US National Scale (using the U.S. as an example—though each country has its version)

- **Forms it takes:** wage gaps, reproductive rights debates, representation gaps in leadership, sexual harassment in the workplace, systemic violence against women (including racialized violence).
  - **Processing it:** national conversations around legislation, feminist and interfaith advocacy, activism on college campuses, political organizing, and ongoing cultural debates about equality, consent, and family roles.
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## Community Scale

- **Forms it takes:** domestic violence, unequal expectations in households, lack of safety in public spaces, silencing of women's voices in churches or community meetings, gossip/shaming.
  - **Processing it:** local women's shelters, community education programs, circles of support (spiritual, cultural, interpath), small acts of solidarity—like listening to women's stories, creating safe spaces, and challenging abusive behavior close to home.
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## Processing Across All Levels

- **Grief:** naming what has been lost or harmed.
  - **Resistance:** refusing to normalize inequality.
  - **Healing:** building networks of support, solidarity, and mutual care.
  - **Vision:** reimagining relationships, communities, and nations where women's dignity and agency are non-negotiable.
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These are huge, interlocking sets of violences: geopolitical war (Palestine), systemic harms (eugenicist ideas), organized crime and cartel violence, militarized policing and infiltration, domestic violence, trafficking and slavery. Each of these are traumatic on their own; together they compound into collective grief, fear, rage, moral injury, and exhaustion. Below is a practical, trauma-informed way to **process** what you and your community have witnessed and experienced — across the individual, relational, community, and civic levels — with concrete actions and practices you can begin using right now.

# **1) Grounding: immediate safety & stabilization**

- If you or someone is in immediate danger, call local emergency services now.
- If overwhelming thoughts or suicidal feelings appear, contact crisis services (in the U.S. dial 988 or local emergency number).
- Short stabilization tools you can use anywhere: 5 deep breaths (count 4–4–4), orienting list (name 5 things you see, 4 you can touch, 3 you hear), or a 30–60 second grounding walk.

# **2) Naming, bearing witness, and mapping the harms**

- Write or speak the facts plainly: who, what, when — small notes reduce the mental looping that intensifies trauma.
- Make a “harm map” (simple diagram): categories like state violence, criminal violence, gendered violence, economic violence, and mark where they intersect (e.g., police + cartel + community). This clarifies patterns and reduces feeling that everything is chaotic.

# **3) Parse your emotional landscape (safe emotional triage)**

- Track immediate emotions (shock, fear, rage, shame, grief). Name them aloud or in a journal — naming reduces their intensity.
- Notice bodily sensations (tight chest, hollow stomach). Somatic clues tell you whether to slow down (soothing) or need immediate safety planning.

# **4) Short-term coping practices (for individuals & small groups)**

- Micro-rituals: moments of silence, lighting a candle, a short breath-focused prayer/meditation, or a two-minute “stop and rest” bell during the day.
- Body-based release: 10 minutes of movement (walk, punching pillow, shaking out limbs) to discharge adrenaline.

- Expressive outlets: write an unsent letter, record a voice note, make a quick collage — don't aim for "art," aim for expression.

## **5) Community-level processing & mutual aid**

- Create small witness circles (6–10 people): ground in a short check-in, listen without fixing, close with a stabilizing practice. Rotate facilitators; keep to 60–90 minutes.
- Mutual aid nodes: short-term support lists (who can offer childcare, rides, court accompaniment, meals). Practical help reduces burnout and re-traumatization.
- Safety mapping: community audit of high-risk areas, safe routes, trusted neighbors, and ways to report abuse safely.

## **6) Structural response and advocacy (longer-term)**

- Document and archive: collect testimonies (with consent), photos, dates — responsibly and safely — to support accountability or advocacy later.
- Coalition-building: join or connect with groups addressing overlapping harms (anti-trafficking, police reform, survivors' groups, human rights organizations). Intersectional coalitions increase leverage.
- Public storytelling: use op-eds, community radio, faith gatherings, or arts events to make invisible harms visible — center survivor voices with ethical consent.

## **7) Healing practices for collective grief and anger**

- Rituals of lament and memorial: public vigils, memorial walls, or collective poetry nights to transform unspeakable loss into witnessed grief.
- Repair work: truth-telling sessions followed by concrete repair promises (restitution, policy change, community reparations) where possible.
- Structured creative projects: community murals, theater, or documentary projects that let communities narrate their own stories.

## 8) Boundaries, self-protection, and information hygiene

- Limit media exposure — set a daily cap on news/social feeds and use curated, reliable sources when you need updates. Too much exposure compounds trauma.
- Emotional boundaries: it's okay to say “I can't witness this right now” to well-meaning people. Protect your capacity.
- Digital safety for survivors: when documenting harms, use secure channels and be mindful of who can access files.

## 9) Support for helpers and caregivers

- Rotating rest: people doing accompaniment or advocacy need scheduled rest and supervision. Trauma work without supervision causes burnout.
- Peer supervision: weekly debriefs where helpers share limits, ethical dilemmas, and ask for practical help (not just emotional venting).

## 10) When professional help is useful

- Trauma-informed therapists or community-based counselors (especially those with experience in political violence, trafficking, or domestic abuse) can help process complex grief and moral injury.
- Legal/advocacy clinics can advise on documentation, restraining orders, witness protection, or reparations.
- If someone is at imminent risk, prioritize safety planning and legal protection first.

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## Quick practical plan you can use today (pick 1 from each column)

- Grounding: 5-minute breathing + orienting list
- Expressive: 10-minute unsent letter or voice note about what you witnessed
- Community: send one message to a trusted friend asking for a 20-min call this week
- Boundaries: set a 30-minute news limit for the day

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You're carrying so much by naming all this together. If you'd like, I can:

- draft a 60–90 minute agenda for a witness/healing circle your group could use;
- create a simple one-page “community safety and mutual aid” template you can print or share; or
- help design a short ritual or memorial script you can use at a vigil.

Which of those would be most useful ***right now***?

***Stay safe, remain vigilant. <3***