



## UNWOMEN

Topic:

**Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in  
Conflict and Post-Conflict Settings.**

Chairs:

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## Committee Background:

UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. Established in 2010, it unifies and builds on the work of earlier UN bodies addressing women's rights. UN Women is a leading voice in promoting women's leadership, ending violence against women, and ensuring their participation in peacebuilding and recovery efforts. It also works to integrate gender equality into global and national policies and governance structures.

This committee plays a crucial role in addressing the unique challenges women face, particularly in conflict and post-conflict settings, where they often bear the brunt of violence and instability. By empowering women and advocating for their rights, UN Women contributes to building inclusive, resilient communities and advancing sustainable development globally.

## Background information:

Gender equality in conflict and post-conflict settings refers to the equitable participation of women and men in all aspects of society during and after armed conflicts. This includes protection against gender-based violence, involvement in peace processes, and ensuring equal rights and opportunities in rebuilding and developing society.



The issue of gender equality in conflict and post-conflict settings has deep historical roots and remains a critical challenge. Women and girls have historically been disproportionately affected by the consequences of armed conflicts including sexual violence, displacement, and the breakdown of social structures. Despite this, their roles in peace-building and recovery efforts have often been overlooked. During wars, women have frequently taken on leadership roles in their communities stepping into positions of responsibility as men are mobilized for combat. However, they have also faced significant risks including targeted violence and exclusion from decision-making processes.

According to OHCHR, women and girls should not only be seen as victims of conflict and instability. They have historically had and continue to have a role as combatants, as part of organized civil society, as human rights defenders, as members of resistance movements, and as active agents in both formal and informal peacebuilding and recovery processes.

Additionally, armed groups, criminal networks, and terrorist organizations play a significant role in exacerbating violence against women and girls. These entities often use gender-based violence as a weapon of war employing tactics such as sexual slavery, forced recruitment, and human trafficking to exert control and instill fear. Women and girls in conflict zones are particularly vulnerable to these abuses, as weak institutional frameworks and the erosion of law and order create environments where perpetrators act with impunity. Furthermore, these groups frequently exploit existing gender inequalities using Corrine violence to undermine women's participation in political social, and economic life. Addressing these threats requires a concerted effort to strengthen legal protections, enhance accountability mechanisms, and empower women as key actors in conflict and peace-building.

The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 was a landmark moment, as it highlighted the importance of including women in peace negotiations



and post-conflict recovery plans. This resolution emphasized protecting women from gender-based violence during conflicts and ensuring their participation in creating lasting peace. Despite progress since its adoption, many challenges persist, such as the underrepresentation of women in formal peace processes and a lack of gender-sensitive approaches in rebuilding efforts. Addressing these issues is essential to creating more inclusive and sustainable peace.

## Causes:

- Pre-existing gender inequalities: Cultural and societal norms that perpetuate gender discrimination are often exacerbated during conflicts.
- Use of sexual violence as a war tactic: Armed groups employ sexual violence to intimidate and destabilize communities.
- Collapse of legal and social structures: Conflicts weaken institutions that protect women's rights, increasing their vulnerability.
- Harmful cultural practices and social norms: In many regions, entrenched practices such as early marriage, female genital mutilation, and restrictive gender roles further marginalize women and girls. These practices, often justified by tradition, contribute to systemic gender inequality, limiting women's access to education, economic independence, and political participation. The perpetuation of these norms is exacerbated in conflict settings, where weakened governance structures reduce the enforcement of protective laws.

## Current Challenges and Tensions:

Despite the gender equality that the nations are promoting and international commitments, several obstacles remain, such as the escalation of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), which include rape used as a weapon of war, the Democratic Republic of Congo is facing rape crisis, with displaced women frequently facing sexual assault when gathering food in unsafe areas.



Conflicts increase economic inequalities, with women being the most affected by poverty and unemployment, there is limited access to resources and economic opportunities that restrict women's ability to contribute to and benefit from post-conflict recovery. In conflict zones, economic structures collapse, and women struggle to access income-generating opportunities. They do not have economic independence, which is one of the main reasons why exploitation, including forced labor and human trafficking, is very common. This economic dependency on men is caused by laws that are implemented in societies where inheritance laws favor men, with this law women are denied ownership of land and property, especially in post-conflict settings. Dependency reinforces gender power imbalances and limits women's participation in rebuilding their communities.

There is political resistance when it comes to including women in leadership and decision-making, despite their leadership roles in communities, women are often sidelined in peace negotiations and reconstruction.

This instability and poor governance significantly hinder gender equality in conflict and post-conflict regions. As an example, in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, ongoing conflicts have led to an increase in the possibilities of abuse, with women frequently facing sexual assault when gathering food in unsafe areas. This situation is strongly related to weak governmental structures and systemic corruption, which expose women and limit their access to essential services and opportunities.

Moreover, despite comprising over half of the electorate, women in countries such as Sri Lanka are often excluded from political leadership roles. In a recent presidential election, all 38 candidates were male, highlighting the deep-rooted patriarchy and political resistance that prevent women from ascending to higher offices. This exclusion persists even though laws mandate a 25% quota for women in local councils, indicating a lack of political will to implement gender-inclusive policies effectively.



These examples underscore the urgent need for stronger governance reforms and genuine political commitment to address gender inequality. Empowering women through inclusive policies and ensuring their active participation in decision-making processes are essential steps toward achieving sustainable peace and development in these regions.

## **Immediate and Long-Term Consequences:**

The immediate consequences of gender inequality in conflict and post-conflict settings are the insecurity that they must live with during these processes, women suffer from displacement and loss of livelihood, and they are exposed to sexual violence because they are vulnerable at refugee camps, during the displacement they have limited access to food, water, and basic services.

Women who suffer from displacement are forced to leave behind their properties, lands, and financial resources, making it difficult to rebuild their economic stability.

The education of girls is commonly the first affected during conflict settings, as families prioritize the safety or financial contributions of male children. This generates a disadvantage in the lives of the girls, because without education they have fewer employment opportunities, and the opportunities that are found in a post-conflict setting have low payment and are informal or exploitative jobs. Poverty is one of the reasons why women work in unsafe conditions, including exploitative labor, forced prostitution, or human trafficking networks.

As a long-term consequence, poverty can generate a cycle of poverty for the next generations. Women who face an economic crisis may suffer from poor healthcare access, and lack of basic needs and services, such as food, and clean water, which causes higher mortality rates.

The reproductive health of women is affected during and post-conflict settings, there are outcomes such as an increase in STIs, including HIV/AIDS, increased rates of unsafe abortions, and increased morbidity due to high fertility rates and poor birth spacing. Women who are survivors of SGBV experience trauma, such as post-traumatic stress disorder and depression. There is an increased risk of HIV infection and the risk of unwanted pregnancy resulting from sexual violence.



## Importance:

Incorporating gender equality in conflict and post-conflict settings is essential for building inclusive and resilient societies. Active participation of women in peace processes increases the likelihood of achieving durable agreements and sustainable recovery. Ensuring women's rights is a cornerstone of human development and social justice.

## Key Events:

- 2000: Adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, recognizing the importance of women's participation in peace and security.
- 2008: Adoption of Resolution 1820, addressing sexual violence in conflicts.
- 2010: Establishment of UN Women to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.
- 2013: Adoption of Resolution 2106, strengthening commitments to combat sexual violence in conflict.
- 2015: High-level review of the implementation of Resolution 1325, highlighting achievements and persistent challenges.

## Key terms:

- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** Harmful acts directed at individuals based on their gender
- **Women's Empowerment:** The process of increasing women's participation in decision-making processes and access to resources.
- **UN Security Council Resolution 1325:** A landmark resolution emphasizing the importance of women's participation in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding.



- **Post-Conflict:** The period following the cessation of armed conflict, focused on rebuilding and reconciliation.
- **Feminist Foreign Policy:** A policy approach that prioritizes gender equality and women's empowerment in international relations.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)** is violence committed against a person because of his or her sex or gender. It is forcing another person to do something against his or her will through violence, coercion, threats, deception, cultural expectations, or economic means.

### Guiding questions:

1. What are the main barriers to women's participation in peace processes?
2. How can the international community better support gender equality in post-conflict settings?
3. What effective measures can prevent gender-based violence during and after conflicts?
4. How can national policies integrate gender-sensitive approaches in post-conflict reconstruction?
5. What successful examples exist of women's inclusion in peace processes, and what lessons can be learned?
6. How has your country implemented gender equality when it comes to the resolution of a conflict?
7. How can your country implement a security system for women in the rescue camps?



8. How does your country ensure the security of women during and after conflicts?
9. What policies can your country develop to support reproductive health needs?
10. How does gender equality evolve in your country, and what future regulation is your country going to take?
11. How is your country planning to help victims of SGBV?
12. About your topic, which nations does your country consider allies

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