

Women, Peace and Security

December 2022

For December, in which India has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the situations in **Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Israel / Palestine, and Syria.**

Afghanistan

Since taking power in August 2021, the Taliban has continued to [undermine women's human rights](#) in both policy and practice by codifying [systematic gender-based discrimination](#) through the imposition of dozens of restrictions, impacting nearly every aspect of women's lives. As recently reinforced by [UN human rights experts](#), these violations potentially amount to [gender persecution](#), a crime against humanity. Gender-based violence against diverse women and girls has continued, and the Taliban has all but [eliminated](#) protections for victims. Women [protestors](#), [human rights defenders](#) (HRDs), and peacebuilders continue to be at the [forefront](#) of resistance against the Taliban, risking arbitrary detention, [enforced disappearance](#), [torture and ill-treatment](#), and [denial of due process and fair trial rights](#). As the Security Council discusses the situation, it is critical that gender equality, women's autonomy, agency and inclusion, and the full range of women's rights are prioritized and addressed as a fundamental means to achieve sustainable peace in the country. During forthcoming meetings, Council members should:

- State their unequivocal support for the protection and promotion of the full range of women's human rights in accordance with international human rights law; swiftly and publicly condemn the adoption of regressive policies that undermine those rights and call for their reversal; and express unwavering solidarity and support for the work of human rights defenders, peacebuilders, journalists, and civil society representatives.
- Call for accountability for all human rights violations and support measures to investigate and prosecute those responsible for all violations of human rights, including gender persecution and attacks on human rights defenders and journalists.
- Call for all parties, including the Taliban and other armed groups, to respect international human rights and humanitarian law and immediately end the continued targeting, threats, and killings of human rights defenders, peacebuilders, journalists, protestors, and all other civil society representatives, as well as individuals affiliated with the previous government, including prosecutors and judges, former military and police and other security sector, and civil servants.
- Call for UNAMA's mandate to be fully implemented, particularly those aspects related to: advocating for the protection and promotion of women's rights, including by calling for the Taliban to uphold their obligations under CEDAW; monitoring and reporting on human rights, including violations, abuses and reprisals against women, human rights defenders, journalists and humanitarian workers and all forms of gender-based violence; meaningful engagement with diverse Afghan women's organizations and networks; and ensuring the transparent, non-discriminatory and equitable distribution of humanitarian aid.

Finally, senior UN officials should ensure their briefings provide gender-sensitive conflict analysis by providing details on the current situation for women and girls, including women and girls with disabilities, displaced women, women from diverse ethnic groups, and women of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, in order to highlight the gender-specific challenges related to distribution of humanitarian assistance, inclusion in peace and political processes, impact of the economic crisis, and access to essential services.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

In its discussion of the situation in the DRC, the Security Council should ensure that the civilians continuing to live in areas affected by daily violence are prioritized in the transition process by ensuring that the timeline for withdrawal is driven by meeting clear benchmarks, including on human rights and protection of civilians, as set out in the transition plan. In its renewal of the mandate for MONUSCO, the Council must:

- Include the requirement that MONUSCO actively engage with civil society, including women's groups, in all transition planning and discussions related to the conditions necessary for the mission's departure, including through the creation of formal structures to facilitate ongoing participation and engagement, integration of reflections and insight from diverse women's groups in the transition process, and frank reporting on the perspectives of women's civil society in the periodic reports of the Secretary-General.
- Reinforce that to effectively carry out its mandate to protect civilians, MONUSCO must ensure that its early warning and response rapid systems are informed by gender-sensitive data collected, in part, through regular engagement with women's civil society; violations of women's rights, including targeting of women human rights defenders and

peacebuilders, as well as displaced women and girls, should be at the heart of threat analysis; and mission-driven early warning efforts must be linked to existing crisis management mechanisms at the State, provincial, and local levels.

- Explicitly request the mission actively contribute gender-sensitive analysis as part of its support to the development of equitable natural resources management structures, and further, emphasize that the mission's contributions should be influenced by insight and reflections from women's civil society.
- Make it clear that MONUSCO is required to provide updates on the extent to which gender-sensitive conflict analysis, which adopts an intersectional lens, is the basis for planning processes, and call for updates, in future periodic reports and briefings by senior UN officials, of the ways in which this analysis is informed by insights from women's groups.

Israel / Palestine

The stalled peace process, ongoing occupation, and increasing economic and governance challenges in the occupied Palestinian Territory (oPT) serves as the [backdrop](#) for increased violence targeting civilians in recent months, exacerbating an already untenable situation. The protracted occupation, which encompasses efforts to [limit movement](#), [seize property](#), and impose barriers to gaining [citizenship or residency status](#), contributes to discrimination against diverse women and girls and directly undermines their safety and security, including by [forcibly displacing](#) women and girls, exacerbating [gender-based violence](#) and preventing [access](#) to life-saving sexual and reproductive health care. In Council discussions on the situation, women's rights and meaningful participation must be made central to all discussions. Council members must concretely address legitimate barriers to inclusion and violence faced by women living under Israeli occupation. Palestinian women, including activists, peacebuilders and HRDs, regularly face violence, threats, arrest, intimidation, restriction on movement and discrimination as a result of Israeli policies that violate international humanitarian and human rights law. Finally, forced displacement continues [unabated](#) throughout the oPT. The Council must call for an end to the continued expansion of settlements, settler violence and forcible transfers, house demolitions, residency revocation, movement restrictions, arbitrary detention and targeting of human right defenders.

Syria

The Security Council must reauthorize the cross-border mechanism for at least 12 months as it remains a lifeline for millions of people in northwest Syria. Its renewal is essential so that aid can keep pace with humanitarian needs that are exacerbated by the combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, winterization, drought, skyrocketing food prices, [cholera outbreak](#), and ongoing conflict that targets civilians and civilian infrastructure. The decision to shorten the length of the mandate of the Syria cross-border mechanism from [12 months to 6 months](#) has resulted in an unacceptable level of instability for the more than 4.1 million people in need in northwest Syria, the majority of whom are women and children. In forthcoming discussions on the situation in Syria, Council members must call for rights-based, survivor-centered humanitarian action that is age and gender-responsive, disability-inclusive, and provides immediate and non-discriminatory aid and quality healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, mitigation, and response services. The emergency of another threat to public health in the form of cholera, is particularly alarming in the context of an already [weakened healthcare system](#) that has been significantly impacted by the combined impact of the conflict and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Women are [particularly affected](#) by the weakened healthcare system and the resulting reduction of access to sexual and reproductive health services, including maternity care, which continues to be [exacerbated](#) by considerable [funding shortfalls](#).

The Council should also call for reduction in violence to allow the country to address its ongoing health and humanitarian crises, including growing food insecurity, which has affected around [80%](#) of the population. Further, past briefings have been inconsistent in providing a clear picture of the gender dimensions of the situation; in line with expectations, briefings should include gender, age and disability-sensitive conflict analysis regarding the situation for diverse women, including [women in public life](#), displaced women, women and girls with disabilities, and the way in which women and girls' rights are at the [center](#) of humanitarian, early recovery and peacebuilding efforts. This analysis should further focus on ways to eliminate structural barriers to women's participation and move beyond advisory roles and numerical inclusion, in order to advance women's meaningful and equal participation.

Finally, accountability, justice, including reparations, and equal rights must be the foundation of any political solution. However, this foundation is undermined by the [ongoing impunity](#) for past, and current violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including the [anti-torture](#) law that fails to address the [crimes](#) carried out over the past decade. In this context, gender equality and international human rights law must be priorities in the [outcome of any process](#), including a gender-sensitive constitution, and women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership should be a norm at every stage.