

Women, Peace and Security

July 2023

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In the forthcoming Security Council open debate, all Member States should reflect the following recommendations in their statements:

For July, in which the United Kingdom has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the situations in **Haiti, Sudan, Syria**, and the thematic agenda item **women, peace and security**.

- All forms of gender-based violence (GBV), including online and technology-facilitated GBV, are a direct result of, and contribute to, discrimination and the deprivation of basic human rights in both public and private life. Preventing GBV requires the protection of human rights at the national level, including through the implementation of international human rights law, such as CEDAW, as well as preventing the emergence of situations in which GBV risk increases, such as conflict and crisis. Weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, fuel conflict and violence, and are also used to perpetrate acts of GBV, thus it is critical to prioritize the implementation of all relevant treaties and protocols to stop the transfer and trade of weapons to non-state actors, mercenary groups and individuals, including the full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, the Firearms Protocol and the UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.
- Survivor-centered approaches to GBV prevention and response must be prioritized. Policies and programmatic interventions can only be considered to be survivor-centered if they are comprehensive and designed in partnership with survivors themselves, in all their diversity. Their human rights must be protected, particularly the right to the highest standards of healthcare, including sexual and reproductive healthcare and psycho-social support; comprehensive legal services, reparations and access to justice; and social and financial support that is of acceptable quality, readily accessible and delivered without discrimination.
- National and local civil society groups, including women's rights organizations and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) organizations, play a critical role in GBV prevention and response – including in humanitarian settings, where they are often filling gaps in state-provided services. In emergency situations, it is critical that local women-led and women's rights organizations and organizations representing sexual and gender minorities receive direct, flexible and core funding to sustain their ability to provide the full suite of services; they are best placed to reach the most marginalized and at-risk groups, including in times of crisis.
- Sexual violence is also a deliberate and systematic tactic used to target diverse women peacebuilders, civil society leaders, politicians and human rights defenders (WHRDs) in order to punish them, not only for their work, but also for defying patriarchal norms. States have an obligation to ensure there is a safe and enabling environment for civil society in which WHRDs are protected, supported and their legitimacy is recognized. This requires States to adopt and implement legislation that affirms and protects the rights, safety, and participation of WHRDs, peacebuilders and humanitarian personnel, and eliminate laws that restrict and criminalize their work and lives.
- All States and humanitarian actors have an obligation to ensure accountability for GBV by upholding and reinforcing complementarity between international humanitarian, human rights, and criminal law, including by ending impunity and prosecuting those responsible for all forms of GBV. Equally, justice and accountability efforts, including reparations processes, must be human rights-based, survivor-centered, victim-informed, inclusive, non-discriminatory, and designed, implemented and monitored in partnership with survivors and victims in order to avoid replicating or exacerbating harm, minimize risk, promote recovery and address the drivers of GBV.
- All state and humanitarian actors must recognize and address the risks for GBV in acute emergencies, among internally displaced populations, and in migrant and refugee resettlement areas and shelters. State governments must ensure humanitarian access and coordinate with humanitarian actors in delivering timely, gender-responsive prevention, response and security measures to address GBV among forced migrants and displaced persons. Further, state governments and humanitarian actors must coordinate effectively in joint prevention and response measures for incidences of GBV, including exploitation and trafficking, of women and girls and other marginalized populations as they cross borders to flee violence.

Haiti

The complex and overlapping crisis in Haiti, which includes [violence](#) against civilians, [flooding](#) and a recent [earthquake](#), and multiple public health crises, continues to have a devastating impact on the population, resulting in displacement and lack of access to food, water, shelter or basic healthcare, with particular [impacts](#) on diverse women and girls, who already face pre-existing inequality and discrimination. [Human rights defenders](#), including women human rights defenders, are facing serious

risks as a result of their work. [Gender-based violence](#) (GBV), including [sexual violence](#), which is exacerbated by the widespread trafficking of firearms and ammunition, is currently [utilized](#) by [armed individuals and groups](#) to “[terrorize, subjugate and punish](#)” the [civilian population](#), including girls who have been [abducted](#) as a form of coercion as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people, especially transgender women, who are targeted because of their gender expression. It is critical that the Security Council’s response to the crisis is informed by gender-sensitive conflict analysis and a rights-based lens. Discussions within the Council, as well as any adopted outcomes, must reinforce the importance of grounding all responses in international humanitarian and human rights law, and express unambiguous support for human rights defenders and peacebuilders, who should be allowed to operate freely and without [fear](#) of threat or reprisal. 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 [GBV](#) prevention, mitigation, and response services. Finally, Council members must demand that all peace, security, political, and humanitarian processes, including transitional discussions or constitutional or electoral reform discussions, particularly those supported by the UN, require the full, equal, safe and meaningful participation and leadership of diverse women at all levels and throughout the process.

Sudan

In response to the 15 April outbreak of armed conflict in Sudan, the Security Council must condemn the ongoing fighting and demand an immediate cessation of hostilities and [respect](#) for international humanitarian and human rights law. Protection of civilians and the [resumption](#) of humanitarian assistance must be the highest priority. Civilians continue to be killed and injured indiscriminately as a result of the use of [heavy weaponry](#) and [explosive weapons](#) in densely populated areas, including Khartoum. In [West Darfur](#), violence targeting civilians increasingly follows a pattern of “large-scale” [ethnically-motivated](#) attacks, which, if verified, could amount to [crimes against humanity](#). There are also increasing [reports](#) of [sexual violence](#); diverse women and girls are being targeted in the midst of widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure, forced [eviction](#) and displacement. However, with the near collapse of health services, survivors have limited access to [health](#) services, and sexual and reproductive care in particular is often limited or non-existent. Women human rights defenders, peacebuilders, and women’s civil society groups, including those [documenting](#) GBV carried out by armed groups, have been [targeted](#) by security forces in attempts to [intimidate](#), including through interrogation and surveillance. Finally, all efforts must be made to support the participation of diverse women in crisis de-[escalation](#) and resolution efforts, including mediation and negotiation, at the local level and all parties should seek to meet the minimum quota for women’s participation in any transitional processes.

Syria

The Security Council must [reauthorize](#) the cross-border mechanism for at least 12 months in order to provide stable, lifesaving assistance to the [4.1](#) million people in need in northwest Syria. The population faces [multiple](#) complex crisis, all of which have acute [gendered](#) impacts, including [ongoing](#) armed [violence](#), a [cholera](#) outbreak, and [food insecurity](#), all of which has been [exacerbated](#) by the 7.8 magnitude [earthquake](#) that left thousands dead and injured, as well as tens of thousands in need of [shelter](#). In forthcoming discussions on the situation, 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, and access to quality mental health and psychosocial support. Further, the Council should also call for a ceasefire and end to violence to allow the country to address its ongoing health and humanitarian crises, none of which can be achieved without a political solution that is built on a foundation of accountability, justice, including reparations, and equal rights. This foundation is undermined, however, 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 and humanitarian law must be priorities in each stage of the conflict resolution, peacebuilding and recovery process, including a gender-inclusive constitution that protects all citizens from discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, and other markers of identity and social status. Women’s full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership should be a norm at every stage. Finally, all Member States should provide political, technical, and financial [support](#) to the [newly established](#) mechanism on missing persons so that it has the resources necessary to implement its [mandate](#) fully in a gender-sensitive and survivor-centered manner.