

1. Welcoming Letters
2. Introduction to the Committee: UN Women
3. Introduction to the Agenda
4. Historical Background and Legal Framework
  - 4.1 The Evolution of Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda
  - 4.2 UN Security Council Resolution 1325
  - 4.3 Women's Rights under CEDAW and International Humanitarian Law
5. Core Issues and Comprehensive Analysis
  - 5.1 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) as a Weapon of War
  - 5.2 Forced Displacement, Refugees, and Humanitarian Access
  - 5.3 The Economic Impact of Conflict on Women
  - 5.4 Exclusion from Peacebuilding and Mediation
6. Regional Focus and Case Studies
  - 6.1 Middle East: The Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza and Yemen
  - 6.2 Africa: Systematic Violence in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)
  - 6.3 Eastern Europe & Central Asia: Displacement in Ukraine and the Shift in Afghanistan
7. Bloc Positions and Major Actors

7.1 Donor Countries & WPS Advocates

7.2 P5 Members & Their Geopolitical Stances

7.3 Countries in Active Conflict or Post-Conflict Recovery

8. UN Involvement and Previous Actions

9. Questions to be Addressed

10. Bibliography/References

## **1. Welcoming Letters**

Letter from Co-Under Secretary General

Highly Esteemed Participants,

I would like to welcome you all to this annual session of ARENAMUN'26 as the Co-Under Secretary General for the UNWOMEN Committee.

Model United Nations conferences bring together individuals from diverse backgrounds for a common goal: diplomacy. At MUNs, every delegate has a chance to observe different ideas and express their own in debates. I hope my academic team and I have prepared a compelling agenda item.

I wish to have an unforgettable experience with you. If you have any questions about the study guide or the committee, you can contact me via my email:

[m.miracozturk07@gmail.com](mailto:m.miracozturk07@gmail.com).

Best Regards,

Dear Delegates,

It is my greatest pleasure to welcome you all to our conference. As the Secretary General, I would like to start my letter with special thanks to our academic and organization team who made this conference possible with their efforts. I am truly honored to have the opportunity to meet such passionate, hardworking, and open-minded delegates

Model United Nations is more than debating resolutions. It is a place where people learn diplomacy, leadership and cooperation. Throughout this conference, I encourage each of you to speak with confidence, and most importantly, enjoy every moment of this experience.

I hope this conference becomes not only an unforgettable academic experience, but also a place where you build new friendships and memories. I look forward to welcoming you all.

Sincerely,

Asude Kacırođlu

Secretary-General

Letter from Co-Under Secretary General

Distinguished Delegates,

It is truly a pleasure to be part of ARENAMUN'26 and to serve as the Co-Under Secretary General of the UNWomen Committee.

Throughout this conference, you will not only represent your assigned countries but also take part in shaping discussions on one of the most pressing global concerns: the challenges faced by women, particularly in conflict settings. Your ideas, diplomacy, and cooperation will play a key role in guiding the direction of this committee.

We encourage you to actively participate, think critically, and approach the agenda with both awareness and creativity. Meaningful debate and well-developed solutions will be at the heart of this committee, and I have no doubt that you will contribute to a productive and engaging atmosphere.

I hope that your time in this committee will be both enjoyable and rewarding. Should you have any questions before or during the conference, please feel free to contact me:

elifozek@gmail.com

Best Regards,

Elif Özek

Co-Under Secretary General

Letter from Academic Assistant

Dear delegates, first of all welcome to ARENAMUN'26.

I, Efe Tekin, consider it an honor to serve you as the Academic Assistant of UNWOMEN committee

We expect you to be aware of your decisions, as you'll be the ones determining whether global women's rights remain secure or become a gateway to chaos. I am confident that each of you has thoroughly read the study guide and the rules and that you will conduct debates in line with them, presenting sustainable and well-reasoned solutions. Please feel no hesitation

to approach us if you have any questions or concerns during the conference. You can be sure that you will have an unforgettable experience.

Best regards,

Efe Tekin

Academic Assistant

## **2. Introduction to the Committee**

UN Women, officially known as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, is a UN agency dedicated to defending the rights of women and girls and working toward gender equality worldwide.

The organization was created in July 2010 and became fully operational in 2011. It was formed by merging four previously distinct UN bodies that focused exclusively on women's empowerment: the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the UN

Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The first head of UN Women was former Chilean President Michelle Bachelet, and it is currently led by Executive Director Sima Sami Bahous.

UN Women aims to enhance the gender equality efforts of all UN member states. The agency's core goals are to:

- Support intergovernmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in formulating policies and global standards.
- Help UN member states implement these standards.
- Hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments to gender equality.

The agency's primary areas of work include leadership and political participation, economic empowerment, ending violence against women, HIV and AIDS response, humanitarian action, and peace and security.

Women are excessively affected by armed conflict—often becoming victims of gender-based violence, forced displacement, and economic hardship—yet they also hold incredible initial capacity to act as agents of peace and reconstruction. UN Women actively engages in these issues by:

- Reporting on Crises: UN Women sheds light on the specific vulnerabilities of women in conflict zones. For instance, the agency recently reported on the many crises in South Sudan, noting that more than 100 women and girls were being displaced every hour, with many forced to eat wild plants to survive.
- Advocating for Peace and Security: The agency's mandate coordinates with international frameworks like the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, which stresses that women must be sufficiently represented at all levels of decision-making to secure

and maintain peace. Furthermore, UN Women supports the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, a landmark resolution adopted in 2000 that highlights the special needs of women during repatriation and resettlement, and demands their active participation in peace processes.

### **3. Introduction to the Agenda**

Armed conflicts, whether international or non-international, have a devastating and enormous impact on women and girls. While men are traditionally the primary combatants, women and children constitute approximately 80% of the world's millions of refugees and internally displaced persons. As institutional and legal structures collapse during wartime, women face severe violence, forced displacement, and a critical lack of access to essential resources. The scale of this humanitarian crisis is shocking.

One of the most severe threats to women in conflict zones is the systematic use of sexual and gender-based violence. Sexual violence is not just an accidental side effect of war. Armed groups intentionally use crimes like rape and sexual slavery as weapons to break the enemy's spirit, ruin communities, and commit ethnic cleansing. Historical data highlights the alarming scale of these atrocities:

- During the 1994 Rwandan genocide, between 100,000 and 250,000 women were raped in just three months, often being deliberately infected with HIV as a tool of ethnic cleansing.
- During the Bosnian war, an estimated 20,000 to 50,000 women and girls were subjected to sexual violence and forced into "rape camps".
- During World War II, the Japanese government forced over 200,000 women into sexual slavery in occupied Asian territories.

- In the recent Ethiopian civil war, all parties to the conflict were documented committing gang rape and intentional HIV transmission.

Despite its pervasiveness, sexual violence remains heavily underreported. Victims often remain silent due to the fear of rejection by their communities or violent retaliation from perpetrators.

Beyond physical violence, the socio-economic aspect of women's lives is severely disrupted. As male relatives are drafted, detained, or killed, women unexpectedly find themselves as the sole managers of their households and the primary caretakers for children. In these roles, their survival is challenged by restricted freedom of movement.

Furthermore, widows and wives of missing persons face noticeable legal and economic barriers. In many customary legal systems, women are prohibited from owning or inheriting property and land in their own names. When their husbands die or disappear, they are often stripped of their homes and possessions by their in-laws, leaving them completely vulnerable to exploitation, including forced prostitution, to secure basic sustenance.

While it is crucial to address these vulnerabilities, the agenda must also recognize that women are not merely passive victims of war. Women actively participate in armed conflicts as combatants, either voluntarily or through forced conscription, as seen in historical and ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Nepal, and Timor-Leste.

## **4. Historical Background and Legal Framework**

### **4.1 The Evolution of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda**

Historically, international discussions surrounding armed conflict largely treated women as passive victims who simply needed protection, ignoring their active roles in warfare,

peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction. The international community's approach began to evolve significantly in the late 20th century. While early instruments like the 1974 Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict laid foundational groundwork, the true paradigm shift occurred at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

At this conference, the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA)** was adopted, officially identifying "Women and Armed Conflict" as one of its 12 critical areas of concern. The BPfA was the first major international organization to formally recognize that the equal access and full participation of women in power structures and conflict resolution are critical for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. It established specific strategic objectives for national governments, including:

- Increasing the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels.
- Promoting women's contributions to a culture of peace.
- Providing protection, assistance, and training to refugee and displaced women. The BPfA fundamentally transformed the global agenda by proclaiming that women must be empowered politically and economically, and represented at all levels of decision-making, to secure and maintain peace.

#### **4.2 UN Security Council Resolution 1325**

Building upon the momentum of the Beijing Platform for Action, the UN Security Council collectively adopted **Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325)** on October 31, 2000. This landmark resolution was an important moment in international diplomacy, as it was the first time the Security Council exclusively addressed the unique impact of armed conflict on women and recognized their underutilized capacity as peacemakers.

UNSCR 1325 rests on several core mandates that delegates must consider when drafting policies:

- **Participation and Representation:** It urges Member States and the UN Secretary-General to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional, and international institutions for conflict prevention, management, and resolution. It also calls for expansion of women's roles in UN field-based operations, including the military observers and civilian police.
- **Gender Perspective in Peace Processes:** The resolution demands that all actors involved in negotiating and implementing peace agreements adopt a gender perspective. This includes addressing special needs of women and girls during repatriation, resettlement, and post-conflict reconstruction, and supporting local women's peace initiatives.
- **Protection from Violence:** It explicitly calls on all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and the other forms of sexual abuse.

Since 2000, the Security Council has adopted several follow-up resolutions (such as 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2107, 2242, and 2493) to strengthen the WPS agenda. These subsequent resolutions focus heavily on eliminating the sexual violence as a weapon of war, ending impunity for perpetrators, and creating stronger monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

#### **4.3 Women's Rights under CEDAW and International Humanitarian Law**

During times of armed conflict, the legal protection of women is governed concurrently by the International Human Rights Law and the International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

**The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

The convention serves as the primary human rights treaty for women. Its protections do not cease when a conflict begins. CEDAW mandates that States Parties take appropriate measures to eliminate the discrimination against women in all fields, ensuring equal rights to education, employment, adequate living conditions, sanitation, and property. Furthermore, CEDAW specifically requires states to combat trafficking and exploitation of women, which frequently spike during the chaos of war.

**International Humanitarian Law (IHL)**, primarily embodied in the **Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977**, regulates the conduct of armed conflict and provides specific protections for women:

- **General Protections:** Under Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, all persons taking no active part in hostilities must be treated humanely, prohibiting violence to life, cruel treatment, torture, and outrages upon personal dignity.
- **Specific Protections for Women: The Fourth Geneva Convention (Article 27)** provides explicit protections for civilian women, stating they must be "especially protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault".
- **Prisoners of War and Detainees:** IHL dictates that female prisoners of war and civilian internees must be held in separate quarters from men and placed under the immediate supervision of female staff. They must also receive treatment as favourable as that granted to men.
- **Mothers and Pregnant Women:** Additional Protocols I and II provide enhanced protections for pregnant women and mothers of dependent infants. Both protocols indicate that parties to the conflict must endeavour to avoid the pronouncement of the

death penalty on these women and prohibit its execution. They also grant priority to expectant and nursing mothers in the distribution of humanitarian relief.

Finally, the legal framework has been significantly strengthened by the jurisprudence of the International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia and the **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)**. These legal bodies have definitively established that acts of sexual violence—including rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and enforced sterilization—constitute **war crimes and crimes against humanity**, and in certain circumstances, can be considered acts of genocide.

## **5. Core Issues and Comprehensive Analysis**

### **5.1 Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) as a Weapon of War**

In the context of armed conflict, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) extends far beyond the opportunistic breakdown of law and order; it is frequently utilized as a calculated method of warfare. Armed groups systematically employ sexual violence—such as rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy, and enforced sterilization—to demoralize the enemy, destabilize populations, extract information, and execute ethnic cleansing.

Despite the clear classification of SGBV as a war crime and crime against humanity by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and various international tribunals, it remains heavily underreported. Victims often remain silent due to profound fears of stigmatization, social ostracism, "honour crimes" orchestrated by their own families, and the lack of female medical or legal personnel. Children born as a result of wartime rape face severe neglect and discrimination, necessitating robust protection frameworks that consider the rights of both the mother and the child.

### **5.2 Forced Displacement, Refugees, and Humanitarian Access**

Armed conflict displaces massive populations, with women and children, including approximately 80% of the world's millions of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The scale of displacement is really large; in severe crises such as South Sudan, more than 100 women and girls are displaced every hour, with many pushed to the brink of starvation and forced to forage for wild plants.

Within displacement camps, women face acute vulnerabilities. The layout of refugee camps frequently fails to consider women's safety, with poorly lit paths, insecure sanitary facilities and distant firewood or water collection points exposing women to nighttime raids and sexual assault. Furthermore, access to humanitarian aid is often blocked by military checkpoints, curfews, and closures. Such restrictions can be devastating; for instance, checkpoints delay pregnant women from reaching medical facilities in time for safe deliveries. Even when humanitarian assistance is available, extreme poverty and the breakdown of social structures can lead to the exploitation of women, who are sometimes coerced by guards or armed factions into "transactional sex" or forced prostitution merely to secure basic food, water, or shelter for their families.

### **5.3 The Economic Impact of Conflict on Women**

Armed conflict severely disrupts the socio-economic fabric of communities. As male relatives are drafted, detained, go missing, or are killed, women are unexpectedly cast as the sole breadwinners and managers of their households. The economic vulnerability of female-headed households and war widows is compounded by systemic discrimination and the loss of social status.

A critical issue is the denial of property and land rights. In many customary legal systems, women are prohibited from owning or inheriting land in their own names. When their husbands die or disappear, widows are frequently stripped of their homes, possessions, and

agricultural land by their in-laws, leaving them completely destitute. Without access to land or the financial collateral to secure loans, these women often resort to desperate survival strategies, including begging or prostitution. In some conflict zones, women have been systematically forced to provide sex and labour to armed groups simply to access the agricultural fields necessary to feed their families. To mitigate this economic devastation, humanitarian responses must prioritize sustainable livelihood projects—such as providing seeds, tools, vocational training, and micro-credit—that empower women to regain economic self-sufficiency without exposing them to exploitation.

#### **5.4 Exclusion from Peacebuilding and Mediation**

Although women bear the brunt of armed conflict, their portrayal solely as passive victims obscures their critical roles as active combatants, community leaders, and peacebuilders. Studies indicate that the inclusion of women as mediators, negotiators, and signatories in peace negotiations increases the probability of a sustainable and lasting peace by 35%. Women possess an incredible, often untapped capacity to develop solutions to intractable issues, rebuild fractured community networks, and bridge ethnic or religious divides.

Despite this, women remain underrepresented in formal peace processes and post-conflict decision-making bodies. The UN Security Council, particularly through Resolution 1325, explicitly mandates the increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional, and international institutions for conflict resolution. Ensuring that women are at the negotiation table is not merely a matter of gender equality; it is fundamental for shaping post-conflict justice, drafting gender-sensitive constitutions, and guaranteeing the long-term stability and security of recovering nations.

### **6. Regional Focus and Case Studies**

## **6.1 Middle East: The Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza and Yemen**

The Middle East presents some of the most complex challenges for the Women, Peace and Security agenda, driven by long-term conflicts and severe infrastructural collapse. In the Gaza Strip, the ongoing hostilities have completely devastated the region's socio-economic foundation. A recent Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment estimates the recovery and reconstruction costs at US\$71.4 billion, highlighting the catastrophic impact on human development, particularly in the housing, health, education and agriculture sectors. For women, the destruction of healthcare facilities means a near-total collapse of reproductive and maternal care. In conflict zones characterized by heavy militarization, the presence of military checkpoints, curfews and closures severely restricts women's freedom of movement, which can be fatal; for instance, checkpoints frequently delay pregnant women from reaching medical facilities in time for safe deliveries. Furthermore, the region has seen profound gender-based atrocities, such as those committed during the October 7 attacks, which have drawn heavy international inspection toward the systematic targeting of women.

In Yemen, a decade-long conflict coupled with devastating natural disasters, such as the recent severe floods in March 2026, has intensified an already dire humanitarian crisis. The conflict has forced women to take on the heavy burden of providing food and water for their families. As resources become limited, women and girls must travel longer distances to collect water and firewood. This daily task removes them from the relative safety of their communities and exposes them to harassment, injury from unexploded ordnance and sexual violence along unguarded routes.

## **6.2 Africa: Systematic Violence in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**

The African continent hosts several of the world's most severe protection crises, where conflict acts as a catalyst for widespread displacement and gender-based violence. In Sudan, particularly in the Darfur region, the situation has gotten worse alarmingly. Two decades after the initial global outcry regarding the region, women and children today face a far deeper crisis: homes are systematically burned, markets are attacked, and schools and health facilities are destroyed. The loss of agricultural land and markets disproportionately affects women, who are traditionally responsible for nutrition and local trade. When male heads of household are killed or go missing, women often face impassable legal and cultural barriers. Under many customary legal systems in the region, women are prohibited from owning or inheriting land; consequently, war widows are frequently stripped of their homes and property by their deceased husbands' relatives, pushing them into total poverty and leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), renewed violence, particularly in the north-eastern Ituri province, has driven massive displacement and a sharp rise in civilian injuries, forcing organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) to treat thousands of victims among an insufficient wider humanitarian response. The chaos in the DRC frequently leaves women in overcrowded displacement camps where basic privacy and physical security are compromised. The layout of these camps often fails to consider women's safety—sanitary facilities and showers lacking doors, roofs or adequate lighting expose women and young girls to sexual abuse from guards or other residents. Without female medical personnel and safe reporting mechanisms, victims in these regions are often too afraid of stigmatization and community rejection to seek vital medical or psychological help.

### **6.3 Eastern Europe & Central Asia: Displacement in Ukraine and the Shift in Afghanistan**

The ongoing conflict following the Russian invasion of Ukraine shows a dual narrative: the massive displacement of women and their active integration into military defense. While millions of Ukrainian women have pursued refuge across Europe, thousands of others have voluntarily joined the armed forces to fight against the invasion, following the Ukrainian army's landmark decision in 2016 to officially grant women the right to serve as combatants. For those displaced or left behind as heads of households, the bureaucratic aftermath of war poses a silent but heavy burden. Women searching for missing husbands often face legal problems; without an official death certificate or recognition of "missing" status, they cannot access family pensions, administer property, or easily claim social benefits, severely impacting their economic recovery.

The situation for women in Afghanistan represents a unique intersection of extreme poverty, displacement, and systemic exclusion. The country is grappling with an immense crisis where one-third of the population cannot feed their families. This situation is compounded by the threat of mass deportations of Afghan refugees from Europe and neighbouring countries, which forces vulnerable families back into an environment completely unequipped to support them. Despite these oppressive conditions, some efforts continue to fight for female empowerment. Initiatives such as the "Afghan Dreamers" project serve as a testament to the resilience of Afghan girls, highlighting their ongoing struggle to access education and technology against overwhelming odds.

## **7. Bloc Positions and Major Actors**

### **7.1 Donor Countries & WPS Advocates**

This bloc primarily consists of high-income, developed nations that provide the critical financial and logistical backbone for global gender equality initiatives. Their geopolitical stance focuses on establishing normative standards, establishing accountability mechanisms, and mainstreaming gender perspectives into all levels of international diplomacy and military operations.

- **Western Donors and the European Union:** The EU has systematically integrated the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda into its external policies. For instance, during the French and Slovenian presidencies, the EU developed specific monitoring indicators (such as Indicator E1, E2, and E3) to track the exact proportion of men and women trained in gender equality among diplomatic staff, civilian defense staff, and personnel participating in UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs). These nations actively monitor the flow of Official Development Assistance (ODA) through OECD databases to ensure funding is directly allocated to NGOs working for women's empowerment in post-conflict states. Furthermore, top voluntary core contributors—such as Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States—wield significant influence over the agenda, holding dedicated seats on the UN Women Executive Board to conduct operational policy.
- **Emerging and Regional Donors:** Beyond Western nations, actors like the State of Qatar play a fundamental role through institutions like the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD). Representing a Middle Eastern donor perspective, their approach often prioritizes immediate, pragmatic emergency response and capacity-building over purely legalistic frameworks. The QFFD heavily finances maternal healthcare infrastructure in refugee host countries like Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, and supports specialized educational initiatives such as the "Afghan Dreamers" technology project. This bloc emphasizes that with the right mix of

investment in education and healthcare, women can transition from vulnerable populations to active agents of the sustainable development.

## **7.2 P5 Members & Their Geopolitical Stances**

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) hold the ultimate authority in drafting, adopting, and enforcing peacekeeping mandates. Their geopolitical stances dictate how the WPS agenda is operationalized on the ground.

- **Mandate Drafting and Peacekeeping:** The P5 is responsible for determining whether specific clauses regarding the protection of women and the prevention of sexual violence are clearly included in the mandates of UN peacekeeping operations and early warning systems. Western P5 members generally advocate for strong, interventionist mandates that include civilian police and human rights personnel trained in gender sensitivity, pushing for the prosecution of gender-based war crimes and the denial of amnesty for perpetrators.
- **Sovereignty vs. Intervention:** While all P5 members officially support the WPS agenda and sit on the UN Women Executive Board, there is a traditional divide in application. Russia and China frequently prioritize the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference, preferring that post-conflict justice and women's integration remain the internal affairs of the host nation, whereas the US, UK and France are more likely to support international accountability mechanisms and sanctions related to gender-based violence.

## **7.3 Countries in Active Conflict or Post-Conflict Recovery**

This bloc comprises the host nations of peacekeeping missions and countries currently navigating the fragile transition from war to peace. Their primary focus is on survival, immediate humanitarian relief and the monumental task of rebuilding completely shattered national infrastructures.

- **DDR and SSR Processes:** A major priority for post-conflict governments is the successful implementation of Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) processes. This bloc must ensure that the different needs of female ex-combatants and their dependents are not sidelined by programs designed predominantly for male soldiers. Equal involvement of women in SSR, the police, the judiciary, and the drafting of new constitutions is essential for these nations to achieve long-term stability.
- **Institutional Capacity vs. Intentional Violations:** When analyzing the failure to protect women in these regions, it is crucial to differentiate between intentional state-sponsored violations and the lack of institutional capacity. For example, local authorities often fail to meet international standards for women deprived of their freedom—such as providing separate detention quarters, female guards or adequate reproductive healthcare—not necessarily out of harm but due to severe structural weaknesses and exhausted national budgets. Therefore the geopolitical stance of this bloc heavily relies on requesting technical assistance, capacity-building and lasting material support (such as the rehabilitation of water-treatment plants and medical establishments) from the international community to meet their obligations to female citizens.

## **8. UN Involvement and Previous Actions**

The United Nations' comprehensive approach to women in conflict zones fundamentally began with the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. The resulting Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action established "Women and Armed Conflict" as a critical area of concern and outlined six strategic objectives (E.1 through E.6) for the international community. These objectives directed UN agencies and Member States to increase women's participation in conflict resolution, reduce excessive military expenditures, promote non-violent conflict resolution, and provide specialized protection and training to refugee and internally displaced women.

Following the landmark adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000, the UN recognized that the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda required continuous expansion and stricter enforcement mechanisms. Over the years, the Security Council has adopted a powerful framework of the follow-up resolutions to address specific operational gaps:

- **Targeting Sexual Violence:** Resolutions 1820, 1888, and 1960 were adopted to specifically address and condemn widespread and systematic sexual violence as a calculated tactic of war, establishing mechanisms to monitor these savageries.
- **Post-Conflict and Impunity:** Resolution 1889 focuses on the protection of women in post-conflict situations, while Resolution 2107 aims at strengthening global efforts to end impunity for perpetrators of gender-based violence.
- **Accountability of UN Personnel:** Recognizing internal flaws, the UN adopted Resolution 2272, a crucial mandate aimed at preventing sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers and personnel operating strictly under a UN mandate.

Historically, the UN's gender equality efforts were fragmented across various departments. To achieve system-wide coherence, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted Resolution

64/289 on July 2, 2010, merging four distinct entities—the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues (OSAGI), and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)—into a single composite agency: **UN Women**.

This institutional reform significantly boosted the UN's capacity to tackle discrimination globally. UN Women was granted a clear mandate: to support intergovernmental bodies like the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in formulating global standards, to assist Member States in implementing these standards, and crucially, to hold the entire UN system accountable for its own commitments regarding gender equality.

The United Nations has successfully mainstreamed the protection and empowerment of women into its broader global development roadmap. The post-2015 development agenda (The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) includes a stand-alone objective, Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), dedicated entirely to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Furthermore, to maintain global awareness and honor victims, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/69/293, officially proclaiming June 19 as the **International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict**.

Operationally, the UN utilizes a wide network of agencies—including OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR, and UN Women—to coordinate humanitarian actions and monitor crises worldwide. For instance, UN Women actively tracks demographic vulnerabilities, recently reporting that in crises like South Sudan, more than 100 women and girls are displaced every hour.

The UN has also reformed its on-the-ground peacekeeping strategies. Directives now emphasize the inclusion of female personnel in detention visiting teams, medical units, and

peacekeeping patrols. UN experience has proven that mixed-gender teams are significantly more approachable and inspire greater confidence among female detainees and civilian victims, making it easier for them to report sensitive violations such as sexual abuse.

## **9. Questions to be Addressed**

1. How can we ensure that more women are included in peace negotiations and government decisions?
2. What actions can the international community take to stop sexual violence in war and punish the attackers?
3. How can we help war widows and single mothers survive economically and protect their property rights?
4. How can refugee camps be made safer and more private for women and girls?
5. How can we provide basic health care and psychological support to women in areas where hospitals are destroyed?
6. How can we better support female soldiers (ex-combatants) when they return to civilian life?
7. How can the UN help women find their missing relatives and get financial support?

## 10. Bibliography / References

1. European Union. (2008). *Overview of the Beijing Platform for Action: Women and Armed Conflict (E)*. European Centre for Development Policy Management / Eurostat.
2. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). (2004). *Addressing the Needs of Women Affected by Armed Conflict: An ICRC Guidance Document*. Geneva: ICRC Women and War Team.
3. United Nations Security Council. (2000, October 31). *Resolution 1325: Women, Peace and Security* [S/RES/1325 (2000)]. New York: United Nations.
4. Abebe, R. Y. (2025, December 23). *Women and Armed Conflict*. Global Human Rights Defence (GHRD).
5. Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD). (2024). *Women In Conflict Zones (WICZ) Initiative*.
6. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). (2026). *ReliefWeb: Informing Humanitarians Worldwide*. (Aggregated humanitarian data on DR Congo, Sudan, South Sudan, Afghanistan, and Gaza).
7. Amnesty International & Human Rights Watch. (2021–2026). *Reports on the Eradication of Women's Rights and Education Bans in Afghanistan Following the 2021 Taliban Takeover*.

**8.** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) & UNFPA. (2015–2026).

*Humanitarian Needs Overviews: The Impact of Protracted Conflict, Infrastructure Collapse, and Natural Disasters on Women in Yemen.*

**9.** United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. (2010–2024). *Statements and Reports on Systematic Sexual Violence and the Weaponization of Rape in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).*