

Women, Peace and Security

December 2024

Afghanistan

Already the most serious women's rights crisis in the world, the situation in Afghanistan is steadily worsening. The Taliban [continue to impose](#) systematic policies of escalating [gender-based discrimination](#) and segregation intended to [erase](#) women and girls from [public life](#), including through the enactment of the law on "[Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice](#)." Women and girls are also unsafe at home, as the Taliban have [dismantled all systems to respond to gender-based violence](#) (GBV) and have [compelled](#) men to [police the conduct of their female relatives](#). The Taliban continue to target [activists](#), [journalists](#), [human rights defenders](#) (HRDs) and [women protestors](#), as well as women and girls who [allegedly violate](#) the Taliban's [dress code](#), [arbitrarily detaining](#) them without charge or access to legal representation. Women and girls face serious [abuses in custody](#), including [torture](#) and [sexual violence](#). Women and girls from minority ethnic and religious groups, including the [Hazara](#) community, and [LBQ women](#) face additional violence and discrimination; and women and girls with disabilities, or who support others with disabilities, face [intersecting forms](#) of discrimination. [Experts](#) warn that these widespread, systematic and grave violations of the rights of women, girls and LGBTIQ and [gender-diverse](#) people may amount to [gender persecution](#), a crime against humanity. [Afghan women](#) and [international experts](#) increasingly [describe](#) the situation as [gender apartheid](#) and have [called](#) for its [codification](#) as a crime against humanity.

[23.7 million people](#), almost 80% of whom are women and children, require gender-responsive humanitarian aid; [13.3 million](#) people need services for GBV; and [one-third](#) of Afghans currently face acute food insecurity. Taliban restrictions [continue to hinder](#) the work of women-led organizations and women working in the aid sector, further reducing access to assistance for women, girls and women-headed households.

In discussing the situation in Afghanistan, Security Council members should:

- Demand that the Taliban immediately reverse all policies and practices that prevent the full enjoyment of all women's human rights, in accordance with Afghanistan's international obligations, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and [relevant Security Council resolutions](#).
- Ensure that protection of women's rights and the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of diverse Afghan women and LGBTIQ people, especially women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and peacebuilders, are prioritized in all international discussions and outcomes about Afghanistan's future, including the "[Doha Process](#)."
- Call for [accountability](#) for all international crimes, including those committed against women, girls and LGBTIQ people, and support measures to [investigate](#) and prosecute those responsible, including through the [International Criminal Court investigation](#), a [potential case against Afghanistan for violations of CEDAW](#) at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the [creation of a UN accountability mechanism](#) to document and preserve evidence.
- [Ensure](#) that the UN Special Envoy on Afghanistan, due to be appointed, and their team have deep expertise on human rights and women's rights, and that they regularly and meaningfully engage with diverse Afghan women and LGBTIQ civil society, including WHRDs, to ensure that their views inform all aspects of the Envoy's work.
- Call on the Taliban to ensure that all UN agencies, mechanisms and experts are able to fully discharge their mandates without hindrance. Continue to demand the [immediate reversal](#) of the [ban](#) on Afghan women [working](#) for the UN and NGOs, which violates both the UN Charter and CEDAW.
- Urge all humanitarian actors and donors to ensure safe, gender-responsive and non-discriminatory humanitarian delivery to all Afghans in need. Support women's full and equal participation and leadership in humanitarian action and decision-making. Allocate increased flexible and direct funding to women-led local and national civil society and humanitarian organizations, ensure that intersectional gender analysis grounded in meaningful consultation with women and girls informs the crisis response and adequately fund protection and GBV response.
- Call for all parties, including the Taliban and other armed groups, to respect international human rights and humanitarian law; immediately stop targeting HRDs, peacebuilders and [journalists](#), and release all who have been arbitrarily arrested and detained.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) remains one of serious concern. More than [25 million](#) people, [half](#) of whom are women and girls, require humanitarian assistance. More than [6.9 million](#) people have been displaced, primarily in eastern DRC, due to violence and [insecurity](#), including attacks on [IDP camps](#), [medical facilities](#) and [aid workers](#). Conflict and displacement have also [aggravated](#) the spread of [infectious diseases](#) such as [measles](#), [cholera](#) and [mpox](#).

For December, in which the United States is president of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the situations in **Afghanistan**, **Democratic Republic of the Congo** and **Israel/Palestine**.

Despite the ceasefire [announced](#) in July 2024 between Rwanda and the DRC, women and girls in the DRC continue to face protection risks. In addition to exacerbating displacement and [food insecurity](#), the conflict has also led to [record rates](#) of GBV. Limited humanitarian assistance and livelihood opportunities have [pushed](#) many women and girls to resort to [survival sex](#), and have also increased rates of child marriage: an estimated [37%](#) of girls in the DRC are forcibly married before age 18. [Sexual violence](#) remains [rampant](#) in conflict zones and [in detention](#), and healthcare services for [survivors](#), including [sexual and reproductive health care](#), are severely lacking for [IDP communities](#). At the same time, the DRC government continues to [violate human rights](#) and undermine [democracy](#) including through the [arbitrary detention of HRDs](#) and [reinstatement](#) of the death penalty.

Council members should urge the DRC authorities and all armed groups to cease all threats, violence and reprisals against [civilians](#), including IDPs, WHRDs and peacebuilders. Council members should also continue to [support](#) the ongoing Luanda Process; further, they should demand the full, equal, meaningful and safe [participation](#) of diverse women throughout. Following [MONUSCO's withdrawal from South Kivu](#), it is [imperative](#) to prioritize protection of civilians, [sustained humanitarian access](#), increased humanitarian funding including to women-led organizations and respect for international law. [Sustained consultation](#) with diverse women leaders, peacebuilders and HRDs is critical for informing policymaking in order to [protect civilians and safeguard women's human rights](#) during MONUSCO's transition.

Israel/Palestine

Continuing widespread violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) must be understood in the context of Israel's [unlawful occupation](#) of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, which impacts [diverse](#) Palestinian women and girls.

Israel's military offensive in Gaza since October 2023 has now killed over [44,000](#) Palestinians, injured over [104,000](#), and [forcibly displaced 90%](#) of Gaza's population. The constant [bombardment](#) of hospitals and ongoing blockade of Gaza have decimated the healthcare system, violating women's [sexual and reproductive health and rights](#) and putting [mothers and newborns](#) at risk of significant [physical](#) and [mental](#) harm. It also risks outbreaks of infectious diseases including [polio](#) and [hepatitis A](#). The risk of [famine](#) persists across Gaza, [especially in the north](#), [exposing](#) women and marginalized groups to additional health consequences and protection risks. This already catastrophic humanitarian situation is [further threatened](#) by Israel's recent adoption of two laws heavily restricting the [vital operations](#) of UNRWA. Violence has also escalated since 7 October in the West Bank, where at least [736](#) Palestinians have been killed, and [over 4,740](#) displaced by Israeli authorities' demolition or confiscation of their homes. Arrests of Palestinians have [surged](#), and Palestinian detainees, including women and girls, [reportedly](#) face [torture, including sexual violence](#), in detention.

The Security Council must:

- Demand an immediate, full and complete ceasefire in accordance with Resolution [2735](#) (2024).
- Demand all parties [comply with their obligations](#) under international law, including stopping all attacks on civilians, civilian infrastructure and humanitarian actors.
- Ensure full, immediate, safe and [unhindered](#) humanitarian [access](#) into Gaza, as required by Resolutions [2728](#) and [2720](#) (2023); and act to [prevent the implementation](#) of legislation restricting the operations of UNRWA.
- Demand an [immediate halt](#) to the transfer of weapons, parts and ammunition to Israel and Palestinian armed groups [while there is risk](#) that they are used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international law.
- [Demand](#) the humane treatment and immediate and unconditional [release](#) of all hostages and all forcibly detained and imprisoned without charge, in accordance with international humanitarian law.
- Call on the Government of Israel to immediately and fully comply with all [provisional measures](#) ordered by the ICJ to protect Palestinians in Gaza from acts of genocide, including lifting the blockade of Gaza. All Member States must uphold their obligation to prevent genocide.
- Demand an immediate end to the forcible transfer of civilians in violation of international humanitarian law and an immediate [end to all measures](#) aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of Palestinian territory, including [immediate cessation](#) of Israeli settlement activities.
- Urge all parties to cooperate with independent, impartial investigations, including the [Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel](#), to monitor, collect and verify evidence, and report on human rights violations and abuses, including GBV, committed by all parties on and since 7 October in Israel, the OPT and [Lebanon](#); further, ensure that all justice and accountability efforts are human rights-based, survivor-centered and non-discriminatory and designed and implemented in partnership with survivors.
- Demand respect for the rights of diverse Palestinian women, including WHRDs, peace activists and journalists, in line with international law, and demand their full, equal, meaningful and safe participation in all efforts to build peace.

NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security members are: Amnesty International; CARE International; Center for Reproductive Rights; Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights; Global Justice Center; Global Network of Women Peacebuilders; Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict; Human Rights Watch; International Alert; MADRE; Nobel Women's Initiative; Outright International; Oxfam; Refugees International; Women Enabled International; Women for Women International; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; and Women's Refugee Commission. The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security is a project of Tides Center.