

Women, Peace and Security

March 2025

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

Afghanistan

Afghanistan remains the most serious women's rights crisis in the world as the Taliban [continue to impose](#) systematic [policies of gender-based discrimination](#) and segregation intended to [erase](#) women and girls from [public life](#), including through the law on "[Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice](#)." The Taliban's [escalating enforcement](#) of bans on women working for NGOs and the UN is severely hindering humanitarian providers' ability to deliver aid, especially to women and girls, in a country where almost half the [population](#) requires humanitarian assistance. 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 and [arbitrarily detain](#) women [activists](#), [journalists](#), [human rights defenders](#) (WHRDs) and [protestors](#), as well as women and girls who [allegedly violate](#) the Taliban's [dress code](#); they face serious [abuses in custody](#) including [torture](#) and [sexual violence](#). Women and girls from minority [ethnic](#) and [religious](#) groups; [lesbian, bisexual and queer \(LBQ\) women](#); and women and girls with [disabilities](#) also 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 [call](#) for its [codification](#) as a crime against humanity.

The Security Council should:

- Renew in full the current [mandate](#) of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and call for its full implementation, in particular: advocating for the protection and promotion of women's rights; monitoring and reporting on human rights, including violations, abuses and reprisals against WHRDs and all forms of GBV; and ensuring meaningful engagement with diverse Afghan women's rights organizations.
- Demand that the Taliban immediately reverse all policies and practices that prevent the full enjoyment of all women's human rights, including the [ban](#) on Afghan women [working](#) for the UN and NGOs, 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](#).
- Prioritize the protection of women's rights and the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of diverse Afghan women and LGBTIQ people, especially WHRDs and peacebuilders, in all international discussions and outcomes about Afghanistan's future, including the "[Doha Process](#)."
- Support all efforts to seek [accountability](#) for all international crimes, including gender-based crimes, such as a [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 of international crimes committed in Afghanistan.
- Call on the Taliban to ensure that all UN agencies, mechanisms and experts can fully discharge their mandates without hindrance.
- 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. Urge donors to fully fund the [humanitarian response](#) and allocate increased flexible and direct funding to Afghan women-led civil society and humanitarian organizations.
- Call on the Taliban to immediately stop targeting human rights defenders (HRDs), peacebuilders and [journalists](#), and release all who have been arbitrarily arrested and detained.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Escalating violence since January 2025 in eastern DRC, including the M23 militia's takeover of Goma and Bukavu and [dismantling of IDP camps](#), has displaced over [a million people](#) and damaged essential civilian infrastructure. INGOs, the UN and humanitarian providers have been forced to scale back or [suspend operations](#) amid [targeting of humanitarian actors](#) and [supply routes](#) and [disruptions to US funding](#). Renewed conflict, displacement and suspension of basic services threaten to [exacerbate food insecurity](#), [increase maternal mortality](#) and multiply the [risk of infectious diseases](#) including cholera and mpox. In addition, disruption of protection networks and [proliferation of weapons](#) have greatly compounded the [already acute risks](#) of GBV for women and girls, including conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). Services for [survivors](#), including [sexual and reproductive health \(SRH\) care](#), are [further restricted](#) by [attacks on providers](#) and looting of supplies. Even before the recent escalation, limited humanitarian assistance and livelihood opportunities [pushed](#) many women and girls to resort to [transactional sex](#), and also increased rates of [child marriage](#). [HRDs](#), [journalists](#), activists and members of civil society, including women and LGBTIQ people, face [serious protection risks](#) as a result of their essential work.

The Security Council should:

- Demand all parties immediately cease hostilities and ensure protection of civilians, including by issuing clear orders to refrain from violence, including sexual violence, against civilians and to ensure accountability for such actions. Call on both

the DRC and Rwanda to cease support to their respective allied militias, and call on the Rwandan Defense Forces to immediately withdraw from the DRC [without preconditions](#).

- Demand that all actors allow and facilitate full, safe, unhindered and immediate humanitarian access to all affected populations and restore basic services in line with [Resolution 2773](#) (2025).
- Urge Rwanda and the DRC to resume diplomatic negotiations and call for the full, equal, meaningful and safe [participation](#) of diverse women throughout. Any peace process or ceasefire negotiation should be human rights-focused and center accountability of all parties who engaged in, facilitated or enabled CRSV.
- Support efforts to investigate and hold accountable all parties responsible for atrocity crimes, including gender-based crimes, such as the ongoing [ICC investigation](#) and newly-created Human Rights Council [fact-finding mission](#).
- Condemn threats and attacks against HRDs, journalists and civil society, and provide necessary support to those at risk. Call for the protection and promotion of civic space and condemn the spread of mis- and disinformation.
- Urge donors to provide increased, sustainable, direct and flexible funding to local women-led and women's rights organizations, and organizations providing SRH care and CRSV response; and support their meaningful participation in humanitarian coordination and response.
- Call on MONUSCO and the DRC authorities to consult regularly and meaningfully with diverse women's civil society organizations in order to [protect civilians and safeguard women's human rights](#).

Israel/Palestine

Israel's military offensive in Gaza since October 2023 — [described](#) by some [international experts](#) as [constituting genocide](#) — has killed over [48,000](#) Palestinians (likely a [severe undercount](#)), injured over [111,000](#), and [forcibly displaced 90%](#) of Gaza's population multiple times, including [1 million](#) women and girls. While the ceasefire announced in January 2025 is a welcome step, Palestinians in Gaza still face a humanitarian catastrophe. [Bombardment](#) of hospitals and the ongoing blockade of Gaza have [decimated](#) the healthcare system, especially in [northern Gaza](#), putting [pregnant and postpartum women](#) at particular risk and violating Palestinian women's [sexual and reproductive health and rights](#) and [rights to life, health, human dignity and non-discrimination](#). [92%](#) of housing units are damaged or destroyed, heightening [GBV risks](#) for women and girls, [including in IDP sites and aid distribution points](#); further, they are largely unable to access [menstrual products, clean water](#) and hygiene facilities. Acute food insecurity persists across Gaza, creating additional health consequences and protection risks for women, girls and marginalized groups. Israeli laws [banning the operations of UNRWA](#), as well as [systematic denial](#) of visas for international NGOs, [further threaten](#) recovery efforts. While the ceasefire appears to hold in Gaza, violence is [escalating](#) in the occupied West Bank, where Israeli forces' operations have [displaced 40,000 Palestinians](#) and [damaged critical infrastructure](#). Since October 2023, at least [870](#) Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank and [over 5,700](#) displaced by Israeli authorities' demolition or confiscation of their homes. Arrests of Palestinians have [surged](#), and Palestinian detainees, including women and girls, face [torture, including sexual violence](#), in detention.

The Security Council must:

- Demand an immediate, full and complete ceasefire in accordance with Resolution [2735](#) (2024), and an immediate cessation of hostilities in the occupied West Bank.
- Demand all parties [comply with their obligations](#) under international law, including protecting and immediately stopping all attacks on civilians, civilian infrastructure and humanitarian actors.
- Ensure full, immediate, safe and unhindered humanitarian [access](#) into Gaza and to all affected populations, as required by Resolutions [2728](#) (2024) and [2720](#) (2023). Call on the Israeli government to repeal legislation [banning UNRWA](#). All donors should urgently restore and scale up funding for 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 prevent acts of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza, including by 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 and 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 and the OPT; 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.
- Call on all Member States to take measures to [implement](#) the recommendations of the [July 2024 ICJ advisory opinion](#) on the legal consequences of Israel's occupation.
- Demand respect for the rights of diverse Palestinian women, including WHRDs, peace activists and journalists, and demand their full, equal, meaningful and safe participation in all efforts to build peace and shape post-conflict recovery.

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.