

# Women, Peace and Security

## December 2021

For December, in which Niger has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the situations in the **DRC**, **Ethiopia**, and **Yemen**.

### Democratic Republic of Congo

The situation in the DRC – particularly in eastern provinces – continues to be characterized by insecurity and the targeting of civilians. Humanitarian assistance is impacted by access constraints and ongoing violence, with the highest number of people experiencing [severe hunger](#) ever recorded. At [13% of demonstrations](#) in the country, state actors used lethal force against protestors, and hate speech has been fuelling intercommunal conflict in some regions. Due to fighting in eastern provinces in November, widespread [displacement](#) and many Congolese – primarily women and children – fled the country. In its renewal of the mandate of MONUSCO, the Security Council should:

- Maintain all existing WPS-related provisions in MONUSCO’s mandate ([S/RES/2556 \(2020\)](#)), OPs 29(i)(a), 29(i)(c), 29(i)(g), 29(i)(h), 29(ii)(b), 29(ii)(c), 29(ii)(f), 29(ii)(g), 29(ii)(i), 32, 33, 34, 43).
- Include language in the protection of civilians mandate explicitly noting that community engagement efforts and human rights monitoring must be gender-responsive and inclusive of women activists, leaders and civil society organizations ([S/RES/2556 \(2020\)](#), OP 29(i)(d)).
- Include language strengthening the mission’s mandate related to early to include threats and reprisals targeting women politicians, journalists, peacebuilders, and human rights defenders as an indicator of potential violence, alongside sexual violence ([S/RES/2556 \(2020\)](#), OP 29(i)(h)).
- In line with the [joint strategy on the progressive and phased drawdown of MONUSCO](#) and the related [transition plan and proposed benchmarks](#), add language calling on efforts related to mining and natural resources governance and broader economic development, security sector reform, and justice and rule of law to be gender-responsive, inclusive, people-centered and grounded in consultations with diverse communities, including women’s civil society. In addition, the Council should call for a consistent strategy to ensure the representation of diverse civil society organizations, including women, youth and from different ethnic backgrounds, in strategic analysis, planning, and decision-making regarding the transferring of MONUSCO’s tasks.

### Ethiopia

The humanitarian situation in Tigray is increasingly dire, with [400,000 people](#) living in [famine-like conditions](#) and more than [two million people](#) displaced; the need for humanitarian assistance is urgent. The conflict has spread into the neighboring regions of Amhara and Afar, triggering mass displacement of civilians, increasing humanitarian needs. Tigrayan forces have also been accused of serious abuses against Amhara civilians, including summary executions and sexual violence. [Restrictions on humanitarian assistance flows into Tigray](#) and the Ethiopian government’s shutdown of essential services in the region such as banking and telecommunications, along with inadequate funding, means that relief agencies cannot proceed with planned activities, and in many cases are downsizing operations instead of being able to expand their reach to meet the growing needs of a population experiencing the combined impact of violence, hunger, [climate-related hazards](#), and the COVID-19 pandemic. [Civilian infrastructure](#), including water systems and [health facilities](#) have been looted and damaged, and humanitarian workers face violence; to date [23 aid workers](#) have been killed. Hateful rhetoric and increased government hostility towards aid agencies also threaten to curtail an adequate response to growing humanitarian needs in the country. There have been credible allegations of widespread use of gender-based violence by all sides to the conflict, often in the form of [gang rape](#), resulting in pregnancy, and in some instances, deliberate infection with HIV. The presence of multiple armed actors and obstruction of aid into Tigray has had a particularly devastating impact on survivors, [denying them access to critical medical and psychosocial support](#). All parties to the conflict stand accused of [human rights abuses](#), including [sexual violence](#) and [killings](#) of unarmed civilians. The [report of OHCHR and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission](#) found reasonable grounds to believe violations of international human rights,

humanitarian, and refugee law and potentially war crimes and crimes against humanity have been committed and require further independent investigation. Abuses by all warring parties show no signs of abating. Recently, security forces in Addis Ababa have been utilizing the cover of emergency powers to [target Tigrayans](#), with increasing reports of ethnic profiling, arbitrary arrest and mass detention, including national UN staff and their dependents, in Addis and other parts of the country. In western Tigray, thousands of Tigrayans have been forcibly displaced in recent weeks by Amhara forces. The Security Council must urgently demand all parties to the conflict allow full, rapid, safe, and unimpeded humanitarian access to all conflict-affected areas where civilians are in need of humanitarian assistance. Further, the Security Council should call for the urgent establishment of an independent international mechanism into human rights abuses and war crimes in conflict-affected areas of Tigray, Afar, and Amhara regions to ensure ongoing scrutiny, investigate and report on violations, collect and preserve evidence for future trials, and facilitate genuine accountability. The investigation should include all forms of gender-based violence, including rape as a weapon of war, attacks on health facilities, and obstruction of humanitarian assistance.

## Yemen

The Security Council's discussions on the situation in Yemen have historically failed to reflect critical gender dimensions, particularly in the context of humanitarian discussions, despite multiple meetings of the [IEG on WPS \(S/2019/253, S/2021/264\)](#) and [briefings by civil society \(2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021\)](#). Over the last several months, humanitarian needs in Yemen have continued to increase as [violence](#) between different groups intensifies, resulting in a new wave of [displacement](#). As the [economic situation](#) continues to worsen and costs of living increase, regular protests have broken out, to which security forces have responded with violence. Furthermore, women and girls have been affected by the Houthi regulations governing [freedom of movement](#), which aim to prevent women from working in public spaces, including through the ad-hoc and arbitrary enforcement of requirements for [national female humanitarian staff to travel with a mahram \(a male family member\)](#). Human rights defenders, peacebuilders, journalists, and leaders face increasing [threats and risks](#), including arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, and even targeted killings, as was most recently seen in the killing of journalist [Rasha Abdullah Al Harazi](#). Finally, humanitarian assistance in Yemen continues to be undermined by ongoing and [escalating violence](#) in multiple Governorates, the [impact of the climate crisis](#), [extreme constraints on humanitarian access](#) (particularly on access to services, restrictions on movement – [particularly of female aid workers](#) – and interference with humanitarian activities), humanitarian diversion, donors' failure to meet aid obligations, and [ongoing blockages](#) of oil, food and other vital supplies. At the same time, conditions in camps for internally displaced persons, particularly women and girls, often fail to meet fundamental needs, with women unable to acquire [essential hygiene products](#).

It is urgent that the Security Council calls for an immediate end to hostilities, in line with resolution [2532 \(2020\)](#), that would support viable conditions for protecting civilians, including women, and lead to a resumption of peace negotiations. The Council should also support [all efforts](#) to ensure [accountability](#) for widespread and systematic abuses carried out by all parties to the conflict that have killed and injured tens of thousands of civilians. Council members must continue to emphasize the necessity of women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership in peace and political processes, ensuring a minimum 30% quota of women in all processes [as a matter of urgency](#). The Special Envoy should receive the full support of the Council and the broader international community to ensure the realization of an inclusive Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process with the full, equal and meaningful participation of diverse women, youth and civil society – of all political backgrounds from all regions of Yemen, in all diplomatic tracks and stages of the peace process. To inform their work, the Special Envoy should consult regularly and transparently with civil society, especially diverse women's groups, and ensure that diverse women representatives directly participate throughout the entire peace process – from shaping the agenda to drafting a ceasefire agreement and engaging in negotiations. Therefore, the international community must ensure women's civil society organizations are supported by providing [core, flexible and long-term funding](#).

Finally, a core driver of the conflict in Yemen is the proliferation of weapons. Therefore, the Council should consider the recommendations made by civil society briefers, [the report of the Group of Eminent Experts \(GEE\)](#), and the [Panel of Experts](#), adding a list of sanctioned individuals and calling on states – including some Council members and their allies – to cease arms transfers and other support to the conflict parties and to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).