

# Women, Peace and Security

## September 2022

For September, in which the France has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the situations in **Afghanistan, South Sudan, Ukraine, and Yemen.**

### Afghanistan

Since taking power in August 2021, the Taliban has continued to [undermine women's human rights](#) in both policy and practice by codifying systematic [gender-based discrimination](#) through the imposition of dozens of restrictions, directly impacting nearly every aspect of women's lives. The range of policies implemented, often inconsistently, including notably the requirement that women travel with a [mahram](#), has caused a situation in which nearly [100% of women-headed households](#) cannot [access sufficient food](#), only [10%](#) of women can cover basic health needs, and more than [75%](#) of women's organizations have ceased operations. As the Security Council discusses the situation, it is critical that gender equality and women's rights are prioritized, and the Council proactively responds to threats to undermine these critical elements of sustainable peace. During forthcoming meetings, all participants must:

- State their unequivocal support for the protection and promotion of the full range of women's human rights in accordance with international human rights law; swiftly and publicly condemn the adoption of regressive policies that undermine those rights whenever they occur; and express unwavering solidarity and support for the work of human rights defenders, peacebuilders, journalists, and civil society representatives, and hold perpetrators accountable.
- Call for all parties, including the Taliban and other armed groups, to respect international human rights and humanitarian law and immediately end the continued targeting, threats, and killings of human rights defenders, peacebuilders, journalists, all civil society representatives, as well as individuals affiliated with the previous government, including prosecutors and judges, former military and police and other security sector, and civil servants.
- Provide a clear and factual assessment of the operationalization of UNAMA's mandate that reflects the realities on the ground and the outcomes of consultations with women's civil society representatives, as well as any challenges to fully carrying out its mandate, including to protect and promote women's human rights and advance an inclusive political process.
- Ground their briefings in gender-sensitive conflict analysis by providing details on the current situation for women and girls, including women and girls with disabilities, displaced women, women from ethnic minorities, and women of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, in order to highlight the gender dimensions of challenges in access to essential services, humanitarian response, peace and political processes, and the economic crisis.

Finally, the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General should provide a comprehensive and detailed update on UNAMA's progress implementing its robust women, peace and security mandate, with information on barriers to implementation and the ways in which the mission is supporting women's rights groups.

### South Sudan

In its discussion on the situation in South Sudan, Security Council members and senior UN officials must mainstream gender-sensitive conflict analysis, including of the drivers of both the drivers and impacts of intercommunal violence and the climate crisis. Further, the barriers to advancing women's meaningful participation in the peace and political process must be highlighted as particular priorities for the UN in its efforts to advance the process. The situation in South Sudan continues to erode in the face of [documented violations and abuses](#) of international human rights and humanitarian law, glacial progress in implementing the peace agreement, and a complex humanitarian crisis encompassing floods, [famine](#) and displacement, putting humanitarian needs at the [highest level](#) since 2011. Over the last three months, [60% of civilian deaths](#) can be attributed to community-based militias and self-defense groups formed in response to raids on cattle herds; the [militarization](#) of cattle raiding, bolstered by proliferation of weapons, erosion of institutions, lack of accountability, and exacerbated by the climate crisis means that violence at the local level, including gender-based violence, has increased. At the same time, humanitarian access is constrained by [attacks](#) against humanitarian workers, and security forces in South Sudan pose increasing [restrictions](#) against civil society leaders, human rights defenders and journalists. As civil society briefers ([March 2022](#), [September 2021](#), [June 2021](#), [April 2021](#), [March 2021](#), [September 2020](#), [June 2019](#), [March 2019](#), [September 2018](#), [May 2018](#)) have emphasized, since the signing of the [R-ARCSS](#) over three years ago, there has been limited to no progress in implementing crucial provisions on security sector reform, constitutional and electoral reform, and transitional justice. Although major towns – including the capital Juba – remain calm, violence in rural areas has increased, partially due to the exclusionary nature of political and peace efforts. Meanwhile, [impunity](#) prevails, communities do not feel represented by officials, and there is a lack of accountability for misuse of authority. Increased efforts must be made to ensure the inclusion of diverse voices, including women from diverse communities, in the peace process and their representation in the government, national ministries and as state governors. However, women's involvement in these institutions falls short of the 35% quota required in the [R-ARCSS](#).

### Ukraine

The scale and severity of the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine continues to grow, with hundreds of thousands of individuals [newly displaced](#) over the last month, and potentially up to [500,000 more](#) before winter. [Gender-based violence](#) of all forms, including [sexual violence](#), [domestic violence](#), and trafficking, continues to increase for all women and girls due to the [multiple and intersecting impacts](#) of the conflict, including lack of access to services, livelihoods, increased caregiving obligations, and lack of access to adequate shelter. In its discussions on the situation in Ukraine, the Security Council should:

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- Demand an immediate cessation of hostilities; end to civilian harm caused by the use of banned weapons such as cluster munitions and explosive weapons in populated areas, hitting hospitals, homes, schools, and other civilian infrastructure; respect for international humanitarian and human rights law; and all investigations of violations, including alleged [war crimes](#) and crimes against humanity, fully encompass and address the gendered and intersectional elements of these crimes.
- Urgently pursue a diplomatic way to peace negotiations and facilitate such a path and support measures to promote the inclusive and meaningful participation and leadership of women from diverse communities at all levels of peace and political processes and humanitarian response, including in-country coordination mechanisms, and further liaise, partner, and consult with diverse women leaders, women's rights and peacebuilding groups, persons with disabilities, [LGBTIQ+ people](#), stateless people, non-Ukrainians, and members of the Roma community and other minority groups.
- Emphasize the importance of addressing the conditions and factors that heighten the risk of all forms of [GBV](#) by ensuring all aspects of the response are inclusive, non-discriminatory, and transparent, and further ensure that sex, age, gender, nationality, and [disability-sensitive](#) data and intersectional gender-sensitive analysis informs all facets of the humanitarian response, including at border crossings and reception centers, to ensure that individuals fleeing violence do not face additional gender-specific risks, such as sexual exploitation and abuse and trafficking, and accelerate efforts to support local organizations including diverse women's rights, humanitarian, peacebuilding and LGBTIQ+ groups, in their efforts to provide necessary, frontline support to [displaced populations](#).
- Reinforce that the rights of all individuals fleeing violence must be upheld, including the right to [conscientious objection](#) and ensure equal application of temporary protection for all people wishing to cross a border, provision of opportunities for livelihoods for displaced people that include social support, such as child care, and access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, including maternal, newborn and child health and GBV response services, and early medical abortion for displaced populations, safe abortion and post-abortion care, and a range of contraceptive options including emergency contraceptive and long-acting methods for displaced populations, and mental health and psychosocial support for adults and children.
- Promote and protect civil society space and ensure a safe and enabling environment for civil society, journalists, peacebuilders and all human rights defenders, including diverse women and LGBTIQ+ people, in both [Ukraine](#) and [Russia](#), in order to fulfill obligations under international human rights law, and actively push back against disinformation, stigmatization, [reprisals](#), and persecution of civil society actors engaged in criticizing warring parties, providing and disseminating information, defending human rights, providing basic services, promoting dialogue, and peacebuilding.

### Yemen

In its discussion of the situation in Yemen, the Security Council must emphasize its unwavering support for the ongoing truce and remind all parties to the conflict and their allies of the importance of upholding international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law. Since the truce came into effect on 2 April 2022, there has been an overall [reduction in violence against civilians](#) and some [limited improvements](#) in humanitarian space. However, against the [backdrop](#) of the ongoing health, [economic, environmental](#), and [climate crises](#), the humanitarian situation will continue to be dire. An estimated 23.4 million Yemenis are in need of assistance, an increase since August 2021, when ERC Griffiths reported to the “[astonishing](#)” figure of “[more than 20 million people](#)” or two-thirds of the Yemeni population being in humanitarian need. More than [80%](#) of Yemenis now live below the poverty line, some on less than 50 cents a day. This is particularly evident among the marginalized Muhamasheen community and internally displaced persons (IDPs) and in districts heavily [impacted](#) by frontline fighting. Yet, delivery of humanitarian assistance, including notably to the estimated [4 million](#) persons with [disabilities](#) in Yemen, continues to be undermined by ongoing constraints on humanitarian access (specifically in the context of access to services, restrictions on movement – [particularly of female aid workers](#) – and interference with humanitarian activities), lack of sufficient donor funding to meet growing humanitarian needs, and [ongoing restrictions](#) on imports of oil, food and other vital supplies. At the same time, conditions in camps for IDPs, particularly women and girls, often fail to meet fundamental needs, with women unable to [access essential services](#), such as clean water and health care. Further, [human rights](#) violations [targeting](#) marginalized communities, including diverse women, persons with [disabilities](#), [displaced](#) persons, [migrants](#) and ethnic and religious minorities continue to be documented. In particular, [women and girls](#) face restrictions on their [freedom of movement](#), lack of [access](#) to basic services, including [sexual and reproductive health services](#), and [threats](#) and risks, including arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, hate speech, and even targeted killings, particularly for women peacebuilders, human rights defenders, political leaders, activists, artists, and journalists. Council members must continue to emphasize the necessity 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, and offer their full support to the Special Envoy in consulting regularly and transparently with diverse women's groups.