



The Commission on the Status of Women

Letter from the Executive Board

Greetings Delegates!

Welcome to the Commission on the Status of Women at Premia MUN 2023. We are glad to have you here and hope to give you a positive learning experience in an entertaining and fun manner. Our main focus is the delegates, making sure they are heard and every concern is addressed from our end.

We would like to emphasise that there are certain positive actions that we expect from every delegate. These include participating in the committee, reading the background thoroughly and understanding the agenda. For success in anything, hard work is key, and this committee is not going to be any different. We expect every delegate to research appropriately on the agenda and about their country's position and foreign policy.

This guide exists solely, as the name states, to give you some basic information about the agenda. This cannot suffice as your only source of information. Delegates will need to reach far beyond the surface as the agendas that have been presented to you are quite expansive in nature. We would still recommend that you are thorough with the content in the guide, as it acts as a springboard for further research.

If you are a first-timer, we would like to reiterate - research goes a long way. MUNs can be a great learning experience and we will do our best to make sure you have an amazing time and experience.

Hoping to see you guys soon and happy researching!

Regards,

Executive Board of Commission on the Status of Women

About the Committee

The United Nations was founded in 1945 after the Second World War by 51 countries that were committed to achieving success in terms of four goals while promoting social progress, better living standards, and human rights.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it was established by ECOSOC resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946.

The Commission adopts multi-year programmes of work to appraise progress and make further recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the Platform for Action. These recommendations take the form of negotiated agreed conclusions on a priority theme. The Commission also contributes to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development so as to accelerate the realisation of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In 1994, in its resolution 1994/45, the UN Human Rights Council (formerly the Human Rights Commission) decided to appoint a Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences. The mandate was extended by the then Commission on Human Rights in 2003, at its 59th session in resolution 2003/45.

CSW's mandate is to:

- Seek and receive information on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences from Governments, treaty bodies, specialised agencies, other special rapporteurs responsible for various human rights questions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, including women's organisations, and to respond effectively to such information;
- Recommend measures, ways and means at the local, national, regional and international levels to eliminate all forms of violence against women and its causes, and to remedy its consequences;
- Work closely with all special procedures and other human rights mechanisms of the Human Rights Council and with the treaty bodies, taking into account the request of the Council that they regularly and systematically integrate the human rights of women and a gender perspective into their work, and cooperate closely with the Commission on the Status of Women in the discharge of its functions;
- Continue to adopt a comprehensive and universal approach to the elimination of violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, including causes of violence against women relating to the civil, cultural, economic, political and social spheres.

The Special Rapporteur also does the following to carry out the mandate:

- Transmits urgent appeals and communications to States regarding alleged cases of violence against women and girls.
- Undertakes country visits

- Submits annual thematic reports
- Consultations with civil society have become an integral part of the work of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences. Some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been facilitating consultations with the Special Rapporteur since the inception of the mandate in 1994.
- Regional and national consultations provide important input into the work of the Special Rapporteur by highlighting regional and national specificities, and provide an opportunity for women's groups from a specific region/country to inform the Special Rapporteur of the violations of women's rights occurring in their region/country.
- In addition, some consultations have focused on discussions around the elected topic of the Special Rapporteur's annual report to the UN Human Rights Council (and previously to the Commission on Human Rights) or to the General Assembly.
- Consultations with civil society also allow NGOs to become familiarised with opportunities the Special Rapporteur's mandate offers in advancing their national and regional initiatives. The Special Rapporteur encourages NGOs to make use of such consultations and is grateful to those NGOs taking the lead in organising them.

The CSW is one of the commissions of the UN that do not limit participation to states only. For example, NGOs are also allowed to participate in sessions of the CSW, attending caucuses and panels and organising their own parallel events through the NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York (NGO CSW/NY).^[4] This is particularly important for contested territories such as Taiwan, which is not a member of the UN. In the past few years, NGOs from Taiwan (such as the National Alliance of Taiwan Women's Associations) have been able to participate in the CSW sessions.

In December 2022, the Islamic Republic of Iran was expelled from membership of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, following the death of Mahsa Amini and the violent crackdown against human rights protesters in Iran. This was the first time a member had been expelled over its treatment of women in the history of the commission

Agenda: 'Protecting women's status in conflict regions with emphasis on the MENA region'

The CSW plays an important role in promoting women's rights, recording the realities of women's lives around the world, and defining worldwide standards on gender equality and

women's empowerment. Conflicts and unstable conditions enhance pre-existing patterns of discrimination against women and girls, exposing them to increased risks of human rights violations. Hence, it is imperative to understand the implications of war and conflict on women's rights and find realistic short and long term resolutions.

What is the MENA region?

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region covers an enormous area extending from the Atlantic coast of Africa to the borders of Pakistan and Afghanistan in Central Asia and from the Mediterranean littoral to the southern boundaries of the Sahara Desert. The MENA region is prone to conflict due the following reasons and more -

- Political instability
- Ethnic and religious diversity
- Economic disparities
- Territorial disputes
- Ideological extremism
- Environmental instability

Understanding Heightened gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict zones

Higher levels of gender-based violence against women and girls can emerge from conflict, including arbitrary executions, torture, sexual abuse, and forced marriage. Women and girls are primarily and increasingly targeted by sexual assault, especially as a military tactic. Gender-based violence is also on the rise in post-conflict nations, due to the overall breakdown of the rule of law, the availability of small firearms, the collapse of social and familial structures, and the "normalisation" of gender-based violence as an addition to pre-existing prejudice.

Because of the breakdown of political, economic, and social systems, high levels of violence, and heightened militarization, trafficking is also intensified during and after war. The failure to provide essential amenities to the society during conflict and times of tensions and instability can have a disproportionate impact on various groups of people increasing discrimination in small regional groups

Displacement and refugee crisis due to conflict

People are on the move all around the world at present. They are fleeing poverty, seeking better chances, or fleeing violence and catastrophe in their own countries. Women account for over half of the 244 million migrants and half of the 19.6 million refugees globally. For example, Over one million women and men requested refuge in Western Europe in 2015. They passed via Turkey, Greece, and the Western Balkans on their way to destinations farther north. For the Western Balkan nations, particularly the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia, this was the first time they had faced such a significant refugee influx since the Yugoslav wars. Women and children make up up to 42% of Balkan refugees and migrants.

Education & Healthcare

Girls may encounter significant barriers to their education. These obstacles stem from girls' apprehension regarding targeted attacks and threats, as well as the increased caregiving and domestic tasks that they are frequently forced to take on. Women are also driven to seek alternate means of income as family survival becomes increasingly dependent on them.



Access to essential services such as health care, including sexual and reproductive health services can be disrupted, with women and girls being at a greater risk of unplanned pregnancy, maternal

mortality and morbidity, severe sexual and reproductive injuries and contracting sexually transmitted infections, including as a result of conflict-related sexual violence.

Ongoing conflicts -

1. Ukraine

Ukraine's conflict is the most recent to erupt. Over a million people have fled the nation, resulting in a new humanitarian crisis in Europe. Ukrainians, on the other hand, are all too accustomed with conflict. Russia attacked and occupied Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014. The move sparked an eight-year feud that erupted into violence only last week. Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022, resulting in devastation, fatalities, and hundreds of thousands of displaced people. Women and girls in Ukraine are suffering as a result of increased trafficking and gender-based violence, as well as the loss of critical livelihoods and growing poverty levels. Because to the widespread devastation of infrastructure, survivor services, healthcare, and other important types of assistance are no longer accessible.

2. Afghanistan

Afghans have endured a great deal, including decades of civil conflict, foreign interventions, insurgency, a rapidly changing environment, and widespread political and economic instability. Here's a brief rundown of an extremely sophisticated and complex situation: Afghans endured a terrible fallout from local guerilla organisations opposing government forces in the 1980s. Following the withdrawal of Soviet forces in 1991, a horrific civil war ensued, resulting in the foundation of the Taliban and its increasing power.

Following 9/11, a Western alliance waged a 20-year battle against the Taliban and al-Qaeda. When the United States withdrew its soldiers from Afghanistan in August 2021, the government swiftly fell apart and the Taliban reclaimed power. This current change has once

again thrown Afghan families' life into disarray and uncertainty. Decades of violence, along with the effects of climate change, gender inequality, economic insecurity, and the COVID-19 epidemic, have resulted in widespread starvation and misery in Afghan communities.

Conflict has cut off entire communities from livelihoods and access to services. And on top of the millions of refugees, hundreds of thousands of people have been internally displaced within their country's borders and have nowhere to turn.

3. South Sudan

South Sudan became the world's newest nation after declaring independence from Sudan in 2011. It also started a period of violence that is still going on now. The South Sudanese Civil War, a multi-sided battle between government and rebel groups, left people in the grip of violence, poverty, and starvation for over a decade. Despite many internationally endorsed ceasefires and peace deals, violence against people persists.

Sexual violence survivors have detailed “staggeringly brutal and prolonged gang rapes” perpetrated against them by multiple men, often while their husbands, parents or children have been forced to watch, helpless to intervene.

Women of all ages recounted being raped multiple times while other women were also being raped around them, and a woman raped by six men said she was even forced to tell her assailants that the rape had been “good”, threatening to rape her again if she refused.

Topics to be discussed in the committee

- 1) Understanding the flaws in the Human Rights Mechanism with respect to Refugees and ways to tackle them.
- 2) Different sub-regions of conflict within the Middle East, and the treatment of women in said regions.
- 3) Development of technology and infrastructure to help combat the increasing unemployment and illiteracy rates of women in the MENA Region.
- 4) Discussing the role of women in politics and their access to governmental positions.
- 5) Reflecting upon the role of religion in said conflicts and how women practising minority religions are treated in the MENA Region.

Resources –

- 1) <https://research.un.org/en/CSW>
- 2) [Commission on the Status of Women \(CSW\) | OHCHR](#)

- 3) https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/UN_W_CSW61_Brochure_EN.pdf
- 4) <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>
- 5)
- 6) <https://www.wfpusa.org/articles/current-conflicts-world-today-their-effects-global-hunger/>
- 7) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114312>