

# Women, Peace and Security

## April 2024

For April, in which Malta has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the situations in **Colombia**, **Sudan** and **Yemen**, as well as on **Women, Peace and Security**.

### Colombia

Despite developments in the ongoing negotiations with armed groups in Colombia, civilians in both [rural](#) and [urban](#) areas are experiencing increasing levels of violence at the hands of armed forces, armed groups and police, including [femicide](#), abductions, disappearances, extortion, [sexual violence](#) and displacement. In forthcoming discussions of the situation, Council members must prioritize the situation of [human rights defenders](#) and [peacebuilders](#) in particular, who continue to face [killings](#) despite the "[total peace](#)" policy. The Security Council must:

- Call for cessation of the use of violence, including [sexual and gender-based violence](#), targeting of women, [Afro-descendant](#), [Indigenous](#) and LGBTIQ+ individuals and prioritize protection of civilians.
- Reiterate the need for a negotiated solution to conflicts with all armed actors, in line with the intentions of "total peace" discussions, and that women's rights, and the meaningful participation of diverse women, youth, LGBTIQ+, Afro-descendant, Indigenous and rural communities are ensured in all negotiations.
- Call for an end to all intimidation, attacks and reprisals against human rights defenders, peacebuilders and civil society leaders, and for all perpetrators to be held accountable. Urge full implementation of the Comprehensive Programme of Safeguards for Women Leaders and Human Rights Defenders and integration of a robust gender perspective in the work of the National Protection Unit. Call on the UN Verification Mission in Colombia to regularly report on the situation of all human rights defenders to the Security Council.
- Call for all briefings and updates by senior UN officials to integrate gender-sensitive conflict analysis and data disaggregated by gender, sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, and disability, including in the context of information related to violence against former combatants, social leaders, and Indigenous, Afro-descendant, rural and LGBTIQ+ communities.
- Continue overseeing the work of the [Special Jurisdiction for Peace](#), including in light of the recent decision to open Macro-Case 11 on conflict-related sexual and reproductive violence, as well as follow-up to the recommendations of the Truth Commission's final report.
- Call on the UN Verification Mission to prioritize support for [implementation](#) of those provisions of the peace agreement that are particularly [outstanding](#), notably gender provisions and the Ethnic Chapter.

### Sudan

The Security Council must ensure compliance with [Resolution 2724](#) (2024) demanding an immediate cessation of hostilities in Sudan, continue to condemn the [ongoing fighting](#), and call on all parties to respect international humanitarian and human rights law. Belligerents have used sexual violence as a [weapon of war](#) since the beginning of the conflict. UN experts warn that current abuses could amount to [war crimes](#) and [crimes against humanity](#), and further warn of a [high risk of genocide](#) if mass killings continue. Protection of civilians and the expansion of unhindered [access](#) for humanitarian assistance must be the highest priority, with [24.8 million](#) people in need, [18 million](#) people facing acute hunger, and more than [9 million](#) displaced.

Women are experiencing the impact of the current conflict [most acutely](#) and face a range of [risks, such as widespread and escalating](#) conflict-related sexual violence, including kidnapping, rape and sexual exploitation, and the targeting of women due to their ethnicity. Women are being [abducted, detained, forcibly married](#) and harassed. Women [activists](#), peacebuilders and human rights defenders, including those [documenting](#) gender-based violence (GBV) carried out by armed actors, have been [targeted](#) and [intimidated](#). Further, Sudan's [maternal mortality rate](#), already one of the highest in the world, has risen as a result of the conflict. Nearly [230,000](#) pregnant women, new mothers and children are at risk of dying due to hunger in the coming months. Scarcity of resources has associated [risks](#) for GBV, sexual exploitation and abuse for women, girls and marginalized groups, particularly those who have been displaced, including adoption of harmful coping strategies to meet basic needs, such as reducing quality and quantity of food intake, selling or exchanging sex, or entering into early, child and forced marriage. With the [near collapse of health services](#), survivors have limited access to [health care](#), including sexual and reproductive services and [psychosocial support](#).

Council members should ensure all discussions are informed by gender-sensitive conflict analysis. With the [closure](#) of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), it is crucial that the UN Country Team's capacity to monitor, document and report on human rights violations, particularly against women and human rights defenders, is sustained and strengthened. Further, the Security Council should:

- Ensure compliance with, and regular reporting on, full implementation of Resolution 2724 demanding an immediate cessation of hostilities and targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, and call on all parties to respect international human rights and humanitarian law, including by immediately ceasing all acts of sexual and gender-based violence.
- Call for accountability of all parties for any acts of sexual violence, and strengthen the existing sanctions regime to include sexual and gender-based violence as a stand-alone designation criteria.

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- Demand the full, equal and meaningful participation of diverse women, human rights defenders and civil society in all efforts to build peace in Sudan.
- Call on all parties to ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access in line with international law. Urgently fund the [Humanitarian Response Plan](#) and the [Regional Refugee Response Plan for Sudan](#), and neighboring countries and host communities also enduring humanitarian crises. Ensure intersectional gender analysis, data disaggregated by gender, sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, and disability, and GBV risk mitigation assessment inform the crisis response.
- Urge the UN system and international donors to fund local and national civil society and humanitarian organizations, including women-led organizations, who provide life-saving assistance across the country. Support and strengthen the capacity of local actors to identify and respond to the needs of survivors with case management, medical assistance, psychosocial support and referral services.

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In the forthcoming Security Council open debate on conflict-related sexual violence, all Member States should commit to:

- Prevent and respond to all forms of GBV by protecting human rights at the national level through implementation of international human rights law, including [CEDAW](#); reaffirm that women's human rights and gender equality are central to the maintenance of international peace and security and prevention of conflict; and demand women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all aspects of peacemaking, including identifying and implementing solutions to GBV.
- Stop arms transfers when there is a substantial risk that they may be [used](#) to "commit or facilitate serious acts of GBV or serious acts of violence against women and children," in line with the [Arms Trade Treaty](#) (ATT), prioritize implementation of all relevant resolutions, treaties and protocols to stop the transfer and trade of weapons and ammunition, including the ATT, the [Firearms Protocol](#) and the [UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons](#), and take immediate steps to [reduce military expenditure](#) in line with the calls of the UN Secretary-General.
- Prioritize [survivor-centered](#) approaches to GBV prevention and response in partnership with survivors, by upholding their human rights, particularly the right to the highest standards of health care, including sexual and reproductive health care, psycho-social support, comprehensive legal services, reparations and access to justice, and social and financial support that is of acceptable quality, accessible and delivered without discrimination.
- Provide direct, flexible and core funding to local women-led, women's rights and LGBTIQ+ organizations working to prevent and respond to GBV in order to sustain their ability to reach those most marginalized.
- Ensure a safe and [enabling environment](#) for diverse women human rights defenders, peacebuilders and civil society, including by adopting and implementing legislation that protects their rights, safety and participation, and eliminating laws that restrict or criminalize their work and lives.
- Ensure accountability for GBV by upholding international humanitarian, human rights and criminal law, and prosecute those responsible for all forms of GBV.

### Yemen

[Nine](#) years into the conflict, the situation in Yemen continues to worsen amid multiple crises, including [climate change](#), the alarming increase in [cholera cases](#) and [other](#) preventable diseases, the [economic crisis](#) and poverty, the suspension of the General Food Assistance program—which will impact [9.5 million](#) people, especially women and women-headed households—and the ongoing violation of human rights, including the [right to water](#). An estimated 18.2 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, [49%](#) of whom are women and girls. Military action, such as airstrikes on Yemen's port facilities, is likely to have a disproportionate impact on women and girls and can [prevent aid](#) from reaching those most in need. Of the nearly [4.5 million](#) people who have been displaced, an estimated [80%](#) are women and children, and at least [26%](#) of displaced households are female-led. Households are resorting to extreme coping mechanisms, which exacerbates [protection](#) risks: with [4.5 million](#) children out of school, child, early and forced marriage is increasing, in a setting where [32%](#) of young women are married before they reach the age of 18. Women and girls face [restrictions](#) on their [freedom of movement](#) due to the mahram (male guardian) requirement, lack of [access](#) to basic services, including higher education and [sexual and reproductive health](#) services, and [threats](#) and risks, including arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, hate speech and targeted killings, particularly for [women human rights defenders](#) and [journalists](#). Ongoing [restrictions](#) on the operations of already underfunded women-led and civil society organizations have further restricted women's participation in public life. Any forthcoming discussions about the situation in Yemen should be based on gender-sensitive conflict analysis.

Security Council members should articulate their unwavering support for an inclusive 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, including in truce and ceasefire negotiations, as well as broader political and peace processes and the humanitarian response. Relatedly, Council members should demand that all UN-supported peace committees include women, including the Prisoners' Exchange, the Taiz Committee, and the Security and Military Committees, as well as any committees formed in the future. Council members should demand all parties to the conflict, and their allies, uphold international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, and emphasize that women's human rights should be non-negotiable in any peace and political process. Council members should prioritize diplomatic efforts to de-escalate [tensions](#) in the region and reiterate their full support for the efforts of the UN Special Envoy for Yemen to secure a sustainable settlement to Yemen's protracted conflict.