

Women, Peace and Security

February 2022

For February, in which Russia has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the situations in **Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.**

Iraq

In its forthcoming discussion on the situation in Iraq, gender-sensitive analysis of the political, economic, and security situation should be integrated throughout any briefing, including in any updates on the humanitarian situation and climate crisis. Unfortunately, past briefings to the Security Council have been devoid of gender-sensitive analysis and included minimal updates on women, peace and security overall, preventing the Council from getting a comprehensive picture of the current situation.

Political violence continues to increase, placing diverse women activists, peacebuilders and human rights defenders at risk of [targeted violence](#) due to their leadership and participation in public processes. This increase can be directly linked to impunity for past crimes committed before 2019 and the failure of the justice system to ensure accountability. Violence targeting women, including from the LGBTIQ+ community and minority groups, in public life is part of a continuum of violence women experience throughout their lives, necessitating robust legal frameworks criminalizing all forms of gender-based violence (GBV), addressing widespread [impunity](#) through gender-responsive justice institutions, and ensuring access to multi-sectoral, survivor-centered services. In this context, Council members should emphasize the importance of strengthening protection mechanisms for diverse women by leveraging the momentum surrounding the adoption of the Yezidi Female Survivor Law to enact the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence with a provision that ensures civil society engagement and legally recognizes civil society-run safe homes ([UNFPA](#), [HRW](#), [UNFPA](#), [OHCHR](#), [UNICEF](#), [UN Women](#), [CEDAW](#), [MADRE](#)). Further, [diverse women and girls](#) must be actively involved in implementing any legislation, including GBV prevention and response. The Council should call on the Government to ensure its response to the COVID-19 pandemic is gender-responsive, grounded in [gender-sensitive analysis](#), and inclusive of diverse women's perspectives.

There should be a strong emphasis in any briefing on the importance of ensuring women's inclusion and meaningful participation and leadership in all peace, security, political, and electoral processes, including in the digital space, and details regarding UNAMI's successes and challenges, with analysis regarding particular barriers facing women in public life. Finally, it is imperative that there is an update on UNAMI's support for the forthcoming second National Action Plan (NAP) on [Resolution 1325 \(2000\)](#), including ensuring [necessary financial resources](#) for implementation and the establishment of accountability mechanisms to track and measure progress and impact, including through the creation of required government [structures to ensure oversight](#).

Syria

In its discussion on the situation in Syria, Security Council members must continue to emphasize the importance of the cross-border mechanism that remains a lifeline for millions of people in north-west Syria, the majority of whom are women and children. The Security Council must ensure that the mechanism continues to be renewed and, preferably, is expanded so aid can keep pace with humanitarian needs that continue to intensify with the combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, winterization, drought, and ongoing conflict that targets civilians and civilian infrastructure. Security Council members must call for rights-based, survivor-centered humanitarian action that is age and gender-responsive, disability-inclusive, and provides immediate and non-discriminatory aid and quality healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services and GBV prevention, mitigation, and response services. To minimize the continuing spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in the context of an already [weakened healthcare system](#), testing equipment and vaccines must be adequately [available to civilians](#) without discrimination. Women are [particularly affected](#) by the weakened healthcare system and resulting reduction of access to sexual and reproductive health services, including maternity care.

The Council should also call on its members and parties in Syria to uphold the ceasefire in the north-west and call for a complete and nationwide ceasefire, in line with resolution [2532 \(2020\)](#), to allow the country to address its ongoing health and humanitarian crises, including growing food insecurity, which has affected at least [60% of the population](#). Further, past briefings have been inconsistent in providing a clear picture of the gender dimensions of the situation; in line with expectations, briefings should include gender, age and disability-sensitive conflict analysis regarding the situation for diverse women, including women in public life, displaced women, and women and girls with disabilities ([CEDAW/C/SYR/CO/2](#), [OCHA](#), [UNFPA](#), [HNAP](#)).

Finally, accountability, justice, including reparations, and equal rights must be the foundation of any political solution. However, this foundation is undermined by the ongoing impunity for past and current violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. In this context, gender equality and international human rights law must be priorities in the outcome of any process ([CEDAW/C/SYR/CO/2](#)), including a gender-sensitive constitution, and women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership should be a norm at every stage.

Yemen

The [humanitarian situation](#) in Yemen continues to deteriorate, disproportionately affecting [women and girls](#) due to escalating [violence](#), the impact of the [climate crisis, ongoing blockages](#) and seizure of oil, food, medical supplies and equipment, and the worsening [economic situation](#). Additionally, 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](#). The range of violations targeting women in Yemen has been well articulated and documented by civil society, treaty bodies, including [CEDAW](#), and the Human Rights Council. Women and girls continue to be affected by the Houthi regulations governing [freedom of movement](#), which infringe on women's right to work and access 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). Despite numerous calls to cease this violence, human rights defenders, peacebuilders, journalists, politically active women, 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](#), and the ongoing arbitrary detention of journalist [Hala Badawi](#). The Security Council should urgently call for an immediate end to hostilities, in line with resolution [2532 \(2020\)](#), which would support viable conditions for protecting civilians, including women, and lead to a resumption of peace negotiations.

Accountability, justice, and human rights must be at the core of all efforts to seek a political solution and end the current conflict. Council members must condemn the ongoing culture of impunity and call for accountability for the widespread and systematic abuses carried out by all parties to the conflict and their supporters that have killed and injured tens of thousands of civilians. 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 civil society, especially diverse women's groups, which should be supported through [core, flexible and long-term funding](#). A core driver of the conflict in Yemen is the proliferation of weapons. Thus, the Council should consider the recommendations made by civil society briefers and the Panel of Experts, which includes a call for all States 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). Finally, Council members should call for updates on the work of the UN system in supporting the implementation of the NAP on [Resolution 1325 \(2000\)](#) for Yemen in partnership with women-led organizations.