

Women, Peace and Security

January 2022

Women, peace and security

In the forthcoming open debate on women, peace and security entitled “Protecting Participation: Addressing Violence Targeting Women in Peace and Security Processes,” the Security Council should focus on strengthening prevention and response to threats, attacks and reprisals against women human rights defenders and peacebuilders, and enabling their full, equal, and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security. In their statements, Member States are urged to consider the [following recommendations](#):

For January, in which Norway has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the situations in **Libya, Syria, and Yemen**, as well as the thematic agenda item **women, peace and security**.

- Demand the immediate cessation of intimidation, attacks, and reprisals against all women human rights defenders, peacebuilders and civil society leaders, including Indigenous and LGBTIQ+ people, and ensure accountability of perpetrators when such acts occur.
- In line with Security Council resolutions 2222 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019), States must develop and put in place measures to protect women leaders, peacebuilders, journalists, and human rights defenders and create safe and enabling environments for them to carry out their work independently, without undue interference, and free of threats, harassment and violence, including in situations of armed conflict.
- Support and resource relevant UN entities to provide all necessary protection and support to women human rights defenders and peacebuilders at risk of harm, including reprisals, by providing rapid, flexible and targeted funding for their protection and to enable their participation developing and implementing clear response protocols and processes for UN entities in partnership with civil society; issuing strong, public statements condemning all attacks against civil society, including reprisals, and providing context-specific updates in briefings to the Security Council and other intergovernmental fora.
- Call on the Security Council to ensure that all peace operations have a mandate to monitor, report on and provide practical, gender-responsive support to all human rights defenders and peacebuilders at risk, including individuals at risk of reprisal related to engagement with the UN system.
- Support the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of peace and security, including by calling for the UN to prioritize direct and equal participation of women in peace processes it supports
- Ensure the regular and safe participation of diverse women civil society representatives, selected and supported by civil society, during all relevant Security Council thematic and country-specific meetings, including by following up on specific recommendations.

Libya

In its renewal of the mandate of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), the Council should strengthen WPS-related provisions, in line with the recommendations of the independent strategic review ([S/2021/716](#)) by:

- Strengthening language related to women’s full, equal, and meaningful participation and leadership, including by specifying that participation should be safe and inclusive of a diverse range of groups, calling on UNSMIL to support the establishment of measures to ensure non-discrimination and equal rights to participate in political and public life and in particular [ensuring the inclusion of young women](#), as well as ensuring candidates and voters are protected from reprisals, violence, coercion and intimidation, and ensuring follow-up in periodic reports and briefings.
- Emphasizing that security sector reform (SSR), disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes, rule of law efforts, elections, and governance institutions should be gender-responsive, rights-based and attentive to the needs of [youth](#) affected by conflict, including by ensuring human rights vetting for members of armed groups.
- Include a new provision calling on UNSMIL to monitor and document violence targeting women in public life, including women human rights defenders, peacebuilders, civil society representatives, and politicians; take concrete steps to ensure their protection; follow-up with the Government to ensure investigation and prosecution of human rights violations; and include information and analysis in periodic reports of the Secretary-General.
- Call on the new UN Special Envoy for Libya to strengthen accountability mechanisms for UNSMIL’s obligations with regards to ensuring the meaningful participation of diverse women, including young women.

Finally, the Security Council should express its support for the [Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya](#) as a step towards justice and accountability and act on its findings. Widespread violations and abuse against [migrants, refugees and asylum seekers](#) have been reported in Libya, including detentions. The Council should call on authorities in Libya and the European Union to protect and uphold the human rights of migrants and refugees, including those [forcibly returned](#) from sea, and call on authorities in Libya to ensure that the recently [postponed](#) presidential and parliamentary elections take place [as soon as possible](#) and in a safe and transparent manner.

Syria

In its discussion on Syria, the Security Council should expand cross border access across northern Syria to enable humanitarian assistance to meet growing needs. Further, the Council 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 health care, including sexual and reproductive health services and GBV prevention, mitigation, and response services. With COVID-19 cases on the rise in Syria and the [healthcare system weakened](#), testing equipment and vaccines must be adequately [available to civilians](#) without discrimination to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. Women are at [particular risk](#) from the impacts of the pandemic on the health system, which affects their 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](#). The Security Council should reinforce that the Secretary-General should include gender, age and disability-sensitive conflict analysis regarding the situation of displaced women ([CEDAW/C/SYR/CO/2](#), [OCHA](#), [UNFPA](#), [HNAP](#)). The Office of the Special Envoy (OSE) should prioritize the meaningful participation, dialogue and inclusion of women activists, peacebuilders and WHRDs in its work, and further ensure that gender equality and international human rights law are priorities in the outcomes of any processes ([CEDAW/C/SYR/CO/2](#)). Further, the Council should reinforce and support the OSE's call for the release of all those detained unlawfully or forcibly disappeared and call for an immediate end to [deportations and forced returns](#) to Syria.

Yemen

Over the last several months, [violence](#) between different groups in Yemen [intensified](#), resulting in a new wave of [displacement](#) and undermining humanitarian assistance, while extreme constraints on [humanitarian access](#), the impact of the [climate crisis](#), [ongoing blockages](#) of oil, food and other vital supplies as well as the worsening [economic situation](#) pose further challenges. 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](#). 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](#). 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 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 its full support to the Special Envoy in consulting regularly and transparently with civil society, especially diverse women's groups, who should be supported through [core, flexible and long-term funding](#). A core driver of the conflict in Yemen being the proliferation of weapons, 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).