

# Women, Peace and Security

## March 2026

For March, in which the United States is president of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the situations in Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Israel/Palestine.

### Afghanistan

The situation of women's rights in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate as the Taliban intensify their widespread, systematic [policies of gender-based discrimination](#) intended to erase women and girls from public life, including through the January 2026 [criminal code](#). Taliban [restrictions](#) on women, including on [women aid workers](#), combined with [severe funding shortages](#), have [seriously hindered](#) women's and girls' access to humanitarian assistance, including [sexual and reproductive health \(SRH\) services](#). Afghanistan has one of the world's [highest maternal mortality rates](#), yet access to healthcare has become even more challenging due to the [closure of hundreds of health clinics](#). [Bans on contraception](#) also seriously threaten women's health. Women and girls are unsafe at home, as the Taliban have [dismantled systems to respond to gender-based violence](#) (GBV), and the new criminal code has [legitimized domestic violence](#) and [criminalized women leaving home without their husbands' permission](#). The Taliban continue to surveil, target and [arbitrarily detain](#) women [activists](#), [journalists](#), [human rights defenders](#) (WHRDs) and [protestors](#), and women and girls accused of violating the Taliban's [morality laws](#); they frequently face [torture](#) and [sexual violence](#) in detention. Women, girls and [LGBTIQ people](#) also face intersecting forms of discrimination based on [ethnic](#) and/or [religious](#) identity, age, [displacement](#) and [disability](#), among others. The rights to freedom of expression and access to information, including women and girls' ability to access online education, have also been restricted through [telecommunications shutdowns](#) and [restrictions on internet access](#). Meanwhile, Afghan refugees continue to face [forced returns](#) despite [ongoing persecution and discrimination](#) targeting Afghan women and girls. These grave violations of the rights of women, girls and [LGBTIQ people](#) [likely amount to gender persecution](#), a crime against humanity for which the International Criminal Court (ICC) has [issued arrest warrants](#) against senior Taliban leaders. [Afghan women](#) and [international experts](#) also [describe](#) the situation as [gender apartheid](#), and [call for codification](#) of gender apartheid as a crime against humanity and as a [violation of protections guaranteed by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (CEDAW).

The Security Council should:

- Renew in full the current [mandate](#) of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and call for its full implementation, in particular: improving women's access to humanitarian and development activities; promoting gender equality and the full protection of women's human rights; monitoring and reporting on human rights, including all forms of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and violations, abuses and reprisals against women including WHRDs; facilitating political dialogue without discrimination based on gender, and with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women; and integrating gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting issue throughout implementation of the mandate.
- Demand that the Taliban immediately reverse all policies and practices that prevent the full enjoyment of all women's human rights in accordance with Afghanistan's international obligations, including [CEDAW](#) and [relevant Security Council resolutions](#). In particular, condemn and call for the immediate repeal of the Taliban's new [criminal code](#).
- Demand the protection of women's rights and the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of diverse Afghan women and LGBTIQ people, especially WHRDs, peacebuilders and victims and survivors of gender-based crimes, in all international fora concerning Afghanistan's future, including all aspects of the "[Doha Process](#)."
- Support all efforts to seek accountability for all international crimes, including gender-based crimes, such as a [case against Afghanistan for violations of CEDAW](#) at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the [independent investigative mechanism](#) created by the Human Rights Council.
- Call on the Taliban to ensure that all UN entities can enter the country and fully discharge their mandates without hindrance, and to immediately reverse the ban on Afghan women working for the UN and INGOs.
- Urge donors to fully fund the [humanitarian response](#) and allocate increased flexible, long-term and direct funding to Afghan women-led and LGBTIQ-led civil society and humanitarian organizations. Urge all actors to ensure safe, gender-responsive and non-discriminatory humanitarian delivery, with [women's full and equal participation and leadership](#).
- Call on the Taliban to immediately stop targeting human rights defenders (HRDs), peacebuilders and journalists, and release all arbitrarily detained individuals.
- Urge all Member States to recognize gender-based persecution against Afghan women and girls as grounds for asylum; refrain from [forcibly returning](#) any refugees and asylum seekers to Afghanistan; and create and expand pathways to safe resettlement for Afghans who are experiencing persecution in Afghanistan, including WHRDs.

### Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Despite [ongoing mediation efforts](#), [violence continues](#) in eastern DRC, where [over 5.7 million people](#) remain internally displaced. The conflict has greatly compounded the [already acute risks](#) of SGBV for women and girls, including widespread and systematic [conflict-related sexual violence](#) (CRSV), with [displaced women and girls](#) particularly at risk. Humanitarian access remains limited as providers have been forced to scale back or [suspend operations](#) amid [ongoing fighting](#), [targeted attacks](#), [disrupted supply routes](#), [bureaucratic and administrative impediments](#) and [severe funding cuts](#). Services for [survivors](#), including [SRH care](#), are similarly restricted, including due to a [shortage of post-exposure prophylaxis \(PEP\) kits](#). Ongoing conflict, [displacement](#), the destruction of IDP camps, and suspension of basic services have also multiplied the [risk of infectious diseases](#) such as [cholera](#), led to a [collapse of protection services](#) and further [exacerbated food insecurity](#), forcing women and girls to adopt [high-risk coping mechanisms](#) such as transactional sex. [HRDs](#), [journalists](#), activists and

members of [civil society](#), including [women](#) and [LGBTIQ people](#), face [serious protection risks](#) as a result of their essential work and on the basis of their identities, particularly [in AFC/M23-controlled areas](#).

The Security Council should:

- Demand all parties immediately cease hostilities and ensure protection of civilians, including by issuing clear orders to refrain from violence against civilians, including SGBV, and to ensure accountability for such actions. Call on the DRC and Rwanda to cease support to their respective allied militias, and call on the Rwandan Defense Forces and its AFC/M23 proxies to immediately withdraw from the DRC [without preconditions](#).
- Demand that all actors allow and facilitate full, safe, unhindered and immediate humanitarian access to all affected populations and restore basic services in line with [Resolution 2773](#) (2025).
- Call for the full, equal, meaningful and safe [participation](#) of diverse women in all efforts to build peace. Any peace process or ceasefire negotiation should [center human rights](#) and [accountability](#) for all abuses against civilians, including SGBV.
- Support efforts to investigate and hold accountable all parties responsible for atrocity crimes, including gender-based crimes, such as the ongoing [ICC investigation](#) and the OHCHR [fact-finding mission](#). Call on all parties to facilitate unfettered access for international monitors and investigators.
- Condemn threats and attacks against HRDs, journalists and civil society. Call for the protection and promotion of civic space and condemn the spread of mis- and disinformation.
- Urge donors to provide increased, sustainable, direct and flexible funding to local women-led, women's rights and LGBTIQ organizations and organizations providing SRH care and interventions against GBV; and support their meaningful participation and leadership in humanitarian coordination and response.

## Israel/Palestine

Israel's military offensive in Gaza since October 2023 — which [Palestinian, Israeli, international](#) and [UN experts](#), including the [Independent International Commission of Inquiry \(COI\)](#) on the occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), have concluded amounts to [genocide](#) — has killed [over 72,000](#) Palestinians and injured [over 171,000](#). Despite the October 2025 ceasefire agreement, Israel [continues to inflict conditions calculated to bring about the physical destruction](#) of Palestinians in Gaza, including through [daily attacks](#) and [continued obstruction of humanitarian aid](#). Attacks on [healthcare facilities](#) and [providers](#) have [decimated health infrastructure](#), violating Palestinian women's [sexual and reproductive health and rights](#) — with [pregnant and postpartum women](#) at particular risk — and their [rights to life, health, human dignity and non-discrimination](#). [About 1.3 million](#) people in Gaza remain forcibly displaced, and SGBV risks are [heightened](#) for women and girls [in displacement sites](#), where they are largely unable to access [menstrual products, clean water or hygiene facilities](#). Israeli laws [banning the operations of UNRWA](#) and [restricting operations](#) of international NGOs [further threaten](#) relief and civil society efforts. In the occupied West Bank, [over 32,000](#) Palestinians remain [forcibly displaced as a result of Israeli military operations](#). Since 7 October 2023, [at least 1,054](#) Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank by Israeli state or settler violence, some of which may amount to [extrajudicial killings](#). Palestinian detainees, including women and girls, face [grave human rights violations](#), including [sexual violence](#), in detention. Meanwhile, discussions on Gaza's future are being negotiated largely by outsiders, with the exclusion of diverse Palestinians from positions of authority and the [near-total exclusion of women](#); this approach risks [entrenching impunity](#) and undermining the right to Palestinian self-determination.

The Security Council should:

- Demand all parties fully comply with the ceasefire, including by immediately stopping all attacks on civilians, civilian infrastructure and humanitarian actors.
- Demand Israel's immediate compliance with [all provisional measures](#) ordered by the ICJ to prevent genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. All Member States must [uphold their obligations](#) to prevent and punish genocide.
- Demand an immediate end to the forcible transfer of civilians and to [all measures](#) aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the OPT, including [immediate cessation](#) of Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank.
- Demand immediate, safe, unhindered and expanded humanitarian access into and throughout Gaza, in line with the ICJ's [November 2025 advisory opinion](#) and as required by Resolutions [2728](#) (2024) and [2720](#) (2023). Demand respect for core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality, and [reject any proposed aid modalities](#) that do not adhere to these principles.
- Call on Israel to repeal [legislation banning UNRWA](#) and to lift restrictions on NGOs and civil society organizations.
- Demand an [immediate halt](#) to [military assistance](#) and the [transfer of arms and other equipment or items, including jet fuel](#), to [Israel while there is risk](#) that they are used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international law.
- [Demand](#) the [humane treatment](#) and immediate and unconditional release of all arbitrarily detained individuals.
- Urge all parties to cooperate with independent, impartial investigations, including the [COI on the OPT](#), to monitor, collect and verify evidence, and report on human rights violations and abuses, including gender-based crimes, committed by all parties in Israel and the OPT. Call for all justice and accountability efforts to be human rights-based, survivor-centered and non-discriminatory and designed and implemented in partnership with survivors.
- Call on all Member States to take immediate measures to [implement](#) the findings of the [July 2024 ICJ advisory opinion](#) on the legal consequences of Israel's occupation.
- Demand respect for the rights of diverse Palestinian women, and demand their full, equal, meaningful and safe participation in building peace and shaping post-conflict recovery. Ensure that all negotiations and discussions on the future of Gaza uphold the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the right of return of Palestine refugees.