

Women, Peace and Security

May 2025

For May, in which Greece has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the situations in [Iraq](#), [Myanmar](#) and [Syria](#).

Iraq

In Iraq, diverse women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and women's groups are at increasing risk of [targeted violence](#) and [hate campaigns](#) by a growing anti-gender movement. Mirroring [trends](#) of anti-gender and anti-rights measures in other countries, the NGO Directorate continues to target civil society organizations that work on women's rights and gender issues, and to enforce the Communications and Media Commission (CMC) [directive](#) banning the use of the term "gender" and ordering all media outlets to replace the term "homosexuality" with "sexual deviance." Council members should express strong support for diverse civil society and urge the reversal of the CMC directive. Council members must call for robust legal frameworks criminalizing all forms of [gender-based violence](#) (GBV), including against [lesbian and transgender women](#) and other minorities; the establishment of gender-responsive justice institutions; access to multi-sectoral, survivor-centered services in order to address widespread [impunity](#); and for the Government of Iraq to enact the Family Violence Protection Law with a provision that ensures civil society engagement and [legally recognizes](#) civil society-run safe homes. Regarding the Yazidi Survivors Law, Council members should call on the General Directorate for Survivors Affairs to [clarify eligibility parameters](#), lift the [requirement](#) that a criminal suit be filed in order to be eligible for reparations and expand coverage to include children born in captivity to Yazidi parents. Council members should also condemn and urge the reversal of recent [amendments to the Personal Status Law](#) which, inter alia, legalized child and unregistered marriages. They should also condemn and urge the repeal of the April 2024 "Law on Combating Prostitution and Homosexuality" which [criminalizes](#) consensual same-sex intimacy and gender nonconformity, with sentences including a maximum of 15 years in prison. Finally, as UNAMI prepares to draw down by the end of 2025, Council members should continue to support the mission's work to ensure women's full, equal, meaningful and safe participation in line with [Resolution 2732](#) (2024), including in [Iraq's upcoming elections](#).

Myanmar

Over four years since the military coup, the crisis in Myanmar continues to escalate. [Over a third](#) of the population requires humanitarian assistance, including as a result of displacement and escalating protection concerns, [food insecurity](#) and malnutrition and inadequate access to health care, [including sexual and reproductive health \(SRH\) services](#) and [support for survivors](#) of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). However, fluid conflict lines, violence and [administrative restrictions](#) imposed by the military junta continue to [hinder humanitarian access](#). The [March 2025 earthquake](#) has only compounded the [humanitarian crisis](#). Prior to the earthquake, more than [10 million women and girls](#) were already in need of humanitarian assistance; now, many women and girls have lost [access to critical SRH services](#) and face additional health risks without [access to clean water and hygiene facilities](#), as well as [heightened risk](#) of SGBV in displacement sites. Despite the [announcement](#) of a temporary ceasefire following the earthquake, the military junta has [continued attacks on civilians](#) while also [obstructing humanitarian relief efforts](#), including [blocking access to opposition-controlled areas](#) and [denying visas](#) to aid workers. Against this backdrop, the junta has reiterated its [commitment to hold an election in December 2025](#).

Women, girls and [LGBTIQ individuals](#), particularly those from ethnic and religious minorities, face [heightened risk](#) of SGBV and other gender-related harms, perpetrated largely by the junta and its allies but also by [resistance forces](#). Women and [LGBTIQ](#) protestors, activists, [journalists](#), politicians and [human rights defenders](#) face violations and reprisals as a result of their essential work, including [arbitrary arrest and detention](#); [torture](#), [rape](#) and [sexual violence](#), including in detention; and [executions](#) and extrajudicial killing. The junta's forced conscription, including its [mandatory conscription law](#) has had [devastating effects at the community level](#) and prompted many women to take [extreme measures to avoid forcible recruitment](#) into an organization responsible for widespread atrocities including gender-based crimes; however, doing so often [increases risks of GBV](#) including trafficking and sexual exploitation. The junta continues to [verify Rohingya for return](#) despite continued conflict in Rakhine State causing widespread civilian suffering and presenting a [renewed risk](#) of [genocide and other atrocities](#).

The Security Council should:

- Demand full adherence to international human rights and humanitarian law and the full implementation of [Resolution 2669](#) (2022), including an immediate end to all forms of violence; respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law; and the immediate release of all arbitrarily detained prisoners.
- Impose an embargo and targeted sanctions to stop the sale and transfer of [arms](#), munitions, [surveillance](#) and dual use technology, other military equipment and [aviation fuel](#) that facilitate attacks on civilians and violations of international law.
- Hold an open, emergency meeting to discuss the situation in Myanmar; consider inviting the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar to brief the Security Council; and add the situation in Myanmar to the Council's regular reporting cycle.
- Condemn and refrain from supporting military efforts to legitimize control through [elections](#).

- Support and expand all efforts to seek accountability for all international crimes, including gender-based crimes, committed or originating in Myanmar, including but not limited to the [case against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice \(ICJ\)](#), [universal jurisdiction](#) proceedings or the creation of an ad hoc tribunal. Demand Myanmar's compliance with the [provisional measures](#) ordered by the ICJ.
- Demand the [immediate reversal of all measures](#) that interfere with unfettered, safe and sustained humanitarian access to all parts of Myanmar, and demand all actors facilitate access and protect medical and humanitarian personnel. Call on Member States to fully fund the [humanitarian response](#) and [flash addendum](#), and provide direct, flexible and consistent funding to local women-led and [LGBTIQ-led](#) organizations already working in target areas.
- Prioritize engagement with diverse civil society, including women, youth, LGBTIQ people and all ethnic minorities, including the Rohingya, and explicitly communicate this as a priority to all relevant stakeholders including the National Unity Government, ASEAN and its Member States, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar.
- Call for safe pathways to asylum in neighboring countries and beyond, particularly for women, LGBTIQ and ethnic and religious minorities, and reiterate that any return of refugees to Myanmar must meet international standards and be safe, informed, dignified, voluntary and durable.
- Demand the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of diverse women in all political, peace and transitional justice processes.

Syria

Since the fall of the Assad regime in December 2024, many challenges remain to ensure peace, stability and respect for human rights in Syria. The Assad regime was responsible for [war crimes and crimes against humanity](#) including [SGBV](#), arbitrary arrest and detention and [torture](#). Enforced disappearance, primarily perpetrated by the Assad regime, was also a pervasive feature of the conflict, with [wide-ranging gendered impacts](#) on victims and [their families](#). [Women relatives of disappeared persons](#) have been at the forefront of activism to seek answers about the fate of missing persons in Syria, at great risk to their own safety. Non-state armed groups have also committed international law violations, including violations of women's human rights such as [movement restrictions](#) and [repression of WHRDs and women's civil society](#). In order to ensure an inclusive and sustainable transition, it is essential to address these violations, as well as the wider context of [entrenched social and legal discrimination](#) against women and girls in Syria. Despite [commitments in the new constitutional declaration](#) to protect women's social, economic and political rights, women's participation in the interim government is limited, with [only one woman](#) in the cabinet. Ethnic and religious minorities also remain at risk since the fall of the Assad regime, as demonstrated by recent [attacks on Alawite communities](#).

Syria continues to face a [significant humanitarian crisis](#), compounded by ongoing conflict, [limited funding](#) and international aid cuts and the ongoing impacts of [international sanctions](#). More than [400,000 refugees and 1 million IDPs](#) have returned to Syria since December 2024. However, significant obstacles remain to their [safe, voluntary and dignified return](#), including continued hostilities across Syria, damaged or destroyed infrastructure, [landmines and explosive remnants of war](#), lack of access to basic services, economic decline, lack of livelihood opportunities and [continued food insecurity](#). Women-led and women's rights organizations are [instrumental](#) in the humanitarian response, but they continue to face chronic underfunding and operating restrictions.

The Security Council should:

- Call on all parties to immediately cease hostilities, protect civilians and civilian infrastructure, and ensure full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access into and throughout Syria, including freedom of movement for women aid workers.
- Prioritize and ensure the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of diverse women at all stages and levels of a [Syrian-owned and Syrian-led](#) political transition, and demand respect by all parties for the human rights of diverse women and girls. The Security Council, UN and Member States must not endorse, facilitate, participate in or otherwise support any process where women are excluded or their rights undermined.
- Call on Member States to fully fund the [humanitarian response](#) and provide direct, flexible and consistent funding to local women-led organizations.
- Call on transitional authorities to urgently [secure and preserve](#) evidence of atrocities and [cooperate with and facilitate access](#) for accountability mechanisms such as the [International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism](#), [UN Commission of Inquiry](#) and the [Independent Institution on Missing Persons](#). All justice and accountability efforts should be human rights-based, non-discriminatory, gender-sensitive, designed and implemented in partnership with survivors and must adequately account for sexual and gender-based crimes.
- [Continue](#) to call for independent and impartial investigations of all atrocity crimes committed since the fall of the Assad regime, without discrimination.
- Encourage the transitional authorities to align Syria's national legislation with international standards, especially in relation to international human rights, humanitarian and criminal law.
- Call on Member States to [maintain temporary protection or refugee status](#) for Syrian refugees and [refrain from deportations or refoulement](#).

NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security members are: Amnesty International; CARE International; Center for Reproductive Rights; Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights; Global Justice Center; Global Network of Women Peacebuilders; Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict; Human Rights Watch; International Alert; MADRE; Nobel Women's Initiative; Outright International; Oxfam; Refugees International; Women Enabled International; Women for Women International; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; and Women's Refugee Commission. The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security is a project of Tides Center.