

COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN



AGENDA

Protecting Women's Rights in
Conflict areas with Special
Emphasis on the Mena region

Letter from the Executive Board

Greetings delegates,

We are extremely delighted to serve as the members of the executive board of CSW in BVBARRS MUN. We would like to inform you that we are always approachable and ready to help anyone. So, please be free to approach us.

The following background guide is to provide you with a background of the agenda. It merely has facts about what is happening currently which we have to take into concern. We want you to go through this document carefully and go ahead with further research.

The current agenda extremely vast and has a lot of aspects. We want you to understand what these aspects are and how we can improve the situation in all of these aspects. The agenda is still open to interpretations.

**Thanking you
Executive Board**

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Accepted sources of proofs:

- 1. Reuters*
- 2. Government documents*
- 3. Press releases*
- 4. Presidential statements*
- 5. UN documents and resolutions*

Background of CSW

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it was established by Council resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946.

The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In 1996, ECOSOC in resolution 1996/6 expanded the Commission's mandate and decided that it should take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities. Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, the Commission now also contributes to the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development so as to accelerate the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women (ECOSOC resolution 2015/6).

During the Commission's annual two-week session, representatives of UN Member States, civil society organizations and UN entities gather at UN headquarters in New York. They discuss progress and gaps in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the key global policy document on gender equality, and the 23rd special session of the General Assembly held in 2000 (Beijing+5), as well as emerging issues that affect gender

equality and the empowerment of women. Member States agree on further actions to accelerate progress and promote women's enjoyment of their rights in political, economic and social fields. The outcomes and recommendations of each session are forwarded to ECOSOC for follow-up.

Methods of Work

The Commission adopts multi-year work programmes to appraise progress and make further recommendations to accelerate the implementation of the Platform for Action. These recommendations take the form of negotiated agreed conclusions on a priority theme.

Under its current methods of work, established by ECOSOC resolution 2015/6, at each session the Commission:

- Holds a ministerial segment to reaffirm and strengthen political commitment to the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as well as their human rights and to ensure high-level engagement and the visibility of the deliberations of the Commission;
- Engages in general discussion on the status of gender equality, identifying goals attained, achievements made and efforts under way to close gaps and meet challenges in relation to the priority theme and the review theme;
- Considers one priority theme, based on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly and possible linkages to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Evaluates progress in implementing agreed conclusions from previous sessions as a review theme;
- Addresses emerging issues, trends, focus areas and new approaches to questions affecting the situation of women, that require timely consideration;
- Plays a catalytic role for gender mainstreaming in the United Nations system and contributes gender perspectives to the work of other intergovernmental processes and functional commissions;
- Considers in closed meeting the report of its Working Group on Communications;
- Agrees on further actions for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women by adopting agreed conclusions and resolutions; and Sets aside time for the observation of International Women's Day on 8 March, when it falls within its session.

Agenda: Protecting Women's Rights in Conflict areas with Special Emphasis on the Mena region

MENA – MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

- **International Framework made for the protection on Human Rights**
- **UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)**
- **INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS (ICCPR)**
- **INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (ICESCR)**
- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW (1979) and Optional Protocol to the Convention (1999)**
- **Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2003)**
- **Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)**
- **Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952)**
- **Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949)**

All these conventions, covenants, protocols and declarations are essential documents for the protection of human rights.

Middle East has one of the biggest conflicts in the world. In this situation many men, women and children are losing their lives and are being denied of their rights. These rights which they are being denied are supposed to be universal and are supposed to be protected by their country's government.

Amongst the ones who are suffering, women suffer the most because of religious prejudices, customs and inequality.

During the conflict situations, it is assumed that fundamental rights are suspended and rule of law is irrelevant.

Sexual violence against women and girls is widespread in conflict and used as a war tactic. Reports from the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the extent of conflict-related sexual violence range from 18 to 40 per cent among women and girls and between 4 and 24 per cent among men and boys. Domestic violence, trafficking, child marriage, are also exacerbated during conflict.

The UN has adopted international commitments to address gender-related violence in conflict, including UN Security Council resolution 1960, which provides an accountability system for conflict-related sexual violence; stipulates coordinated and timely collection of information on such violence; and calls for countries to establish specific time-bound commitments. Meanwhile, Security Council resolution 2122 sets out the need for humanitarian aid to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services, including for pregnancies resulting from rape.

UN Women's programmes on women, peace and security support women's engagement in all aspects of peace building, towards more inclusive, egalitarian societies that can end gender discrimination and resolve conflicts without violence. They train peacekeepers to detect, address and stop conflict-related sexual violence. Other initiatives back justice and security institutions that protect women and girls from violence and discrimination and public services that are fully responsive to women's needs

In spite of these international conventions, the denial of women's basic human rights is persistent and widespread. For instance:

- Over half a million women continue to die each year from pregnancy and childbirth-related causes.
- Rates of HIV infection among women are rapidly increasing. Among those 15-24 years of age, young women now constitute the majority of those newly infected, in part because of their economic and social vulnerability.
- Gender-based violence kills and disables as many women between the ages of 15 and 44 as cancer. More often than not, perpetrators go unpunished.

- Worldwide, women are twice as likely as men to be illiterate.
- As a consequence of their working conditions and characteristics, a disproportionate number of women are impoverished in both developing and developed countries. Despite some progress in women's wages in the 1990s, women still earn less than men, even for similar kinds of work.
- Many of the countries that have ratified CEDAW still have discriminatory laws governing marriage, land, property and inheritance.

The struggle of women's rights movements successfully led to the amendment of laws that had entrenched discrimination and violence against women in some countries. However, systematic discrimination remained in law and practice across the region and women were still inadequately protected against gender-based violence. Authorities arrested and prosecuted people for their real or perceived sexual orientation in some countries, and consensual same-sex sexual relations were still criminalized in many, in a handful of cases punishable by death. There were severe restrictions on trade unions in some countries, and migrant workers continued to face exploitation and abuse.

Despite the positive developments, entrenched discrimination against women in law and in practice, notably in matters of marriage and divorce, inheritance and child custody, remained in these and many other countries in the region. Women were inadequately protected against sexual and other gender-based violence, as well as forced and early marriage.

Questions to consider

1. What legislation has your country passed in order to protect women's rights during armed conflicts?
2. What can be done to improve the present situation?
3. Is the present international framework enough to curb the violations?
4. Can government militias be held liable for their actions?

Reference:

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/end-violence-against-women/2014/conflict>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/report-middle-east-and-north-africa/>

<https://www.unfpa.org/resources/human-rights-women>

<https://research.un.org/en/CSW62>

<https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/field-newsletter/2013/india-e-newsletter/legal-opinion-05-2013.htm>

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/session/presskit/fs5.htm>