UNWOMEN

STUDY GUIDE

Agenda Item:

Agenda Item I:

Strengthening International Action to Prevent and Respond to Femicide

Agenda Item II:

Discussion on gender-responsive measures to support women's protection and participation in recovery after the peacebuilding process in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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1. **Letter From Secretary General**

Esteemed Participants and Honored Guests,

It is a profound honor to extend my most formal welcome to you as we convene for the 13th edition of the Bilkent University Model United Nations Conference, MUNBU'26. My name is Zehra Yıldırım, and I'm a senior year law student at İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University. As the Secretary-General of MUNBU 2026, I welcome you not only to a forum of debate but to a tradition of academic and diplomatic excellence that has defined our institution for over a decade.

The art of diplomacy is one of patience, precision, and profound responsibility. My own commitment to this discipline has been forged over nine years of active engagement within the international circuit—a journey that has evolved alongside my formal education in the Faculty of Law. These years have instilled in me a steadfast belief that the resolution of global conflict lies in the mastery of legal frameworks and the cultivation of refined statesmanship. It is this standard of rigor and intellectual integrity that I am committed to upholding throughout our deliberations.

Bilkent University stands as a bastion of higher learning, dedicated to the pursuit of truth and the development of future leaders. It is our distinct privilege to host you within an environment that reflects the visionary principles of the founder of our Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who declared: *"Peace at Home, Peace in the World."* Guided by this transcendent ideal, we are committed to providing you with the highest level of hospitality, ensuring that your experience is marked by the grace, professionalism, and mutual respect that our University and the Republic of Türkiye represent on the international stage.

MUNBU Conferences remain a premier platform where the complexities of the global order are met with the sharpest minds of our generation. As we embark on this 13th session, I invite you to embrace the gravity of your roles. Let us ensure that our discourse remains as sophisticated as the challenges we face, and that our hospitality remains as enduring as our commitment to justice.

I wish you all fruitful debates and a joyful conference. Should you have any inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me via my email, zehray@ug.bilkent.edu.tr

Best Regards,

Zehra YILDIRIM

Secretary General of MUNBU'26

2. Letter from Under Secretaries-General

Dear Delegates,

Firstly, we welcome you all to the UN WOMEN committee which will take place in MUNBU'26. We are all brought together in this UN WOMEN committee to discuss problems that are defining the lives of many women worldwide. It is recognized that women play an pivotal part in society, yet they are also subjected to violence and exclusion.

The first item that is on our agenda is enhancing global efforts for preventing and reacting to femicide, a serious violation of one of the most basic rights that everybody has – that is, the right to life.

Our second agenda item considers gender-sensitive approaches to ensure women's protection and participation in recovery initiatives after a conflict and will focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Peace cannot be achieved in the context where women are not involved in peace-making initiatives.

These discussions you will engage in extend beyond diplomacy. They have the power to bring about just and inclusive outcomes. We urge you to approach this committee with a sense of responsibility, cooperation, and human dignity.

We also would like to thank Secretary-General Zehra Yıldırım and Academic Advisor Bora Bulan for their hospitality and invitation.

We wish you for a productive and meaningful conference.

Under Secretaries-General of UNWOMEN

Doğa İNCE & Barış YAVAŞ

3. Introduction to the Committee: UN WOMEN

The United Nations General Assembly established UN Women in 2010 through Resolution 64/289. The official name for UN Women is the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. It is the main UN body that works to promote gender equality and empower women all over the world. The creation of this group was a major change in the UN system, with the goal of making it more consistent, effective, and accountable when it comes to women's rights and gender equality. UN Women works under the authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is supported by a multi-tiered intergovernmental governance structure that includes the Commission on the Status of Women. UN Women provides both normative policy support and operational guidance to Member States. It also strengthens the integration of gender equality as a core priority of the United Nations' broader economic, social, and development agenda.[1]

This institutional reform in the way the United Nations works was made possible by bringing together several existing UN bodies that were working on gender equality. Before 2010, four different groups worked on women's rights issues at the UN: the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). The goal of merging these institutions into one was to solve problems with duplication, limited resources, and poor coordination. This would create a stronger and more coherent institutional framework for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment within the United Nations system.[2]

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[1] United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 64/289: System-wide coherence*, July 2, 2010, paras. 49–57, https://undocs.org/A/RES/64/289.

[2] United Nations General Assembly, *Resolution 64/289*, paras. 49–53; United Nations, *UN Creates New Structure for Empowerment of Women*, Press Release, July 2, 2010.

3.1 Members of UN Women

UN Women does not have a universal state membership structure like the Economic and Social Council and other main bodies. Instead, it is overseen by several different levels of government, including the United Nations General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and the Executive Board of UN Women. [3] All member states must contribute to the guidance of UN Women via the General Assembly and CSW; however, direct membership in the operational governance structure is restricted to the Executive Board.

According to rules about geographic representation and contributions, ECOSOC elects forty-one Member States to the Executive Board of UN Women for three-year terms.[4] There are ten members from African States, ten from Asian States, four from Eastern European States, six from Latin American and Caribbean States, and five from Western European and Other States. There are also six seats for countries that make contributions, four of which are the biggest providers of voluntary core contributions and two of which are developing countries that make significant contributions.[5] This structure is for to make sure that everyone is fairly represented from all over the world. The Executive Board oversees UN Women's day-to-day operations on behalf of the governments and reports to the General Assembly once a year through ECOSOC. This makes the UN system more accountable.[6]

3.2 Functions and Powers of UN Women

In Resolution 64/289, the main authority for defining the functions, and powers of UN Women is the United Nations General Assembly. This resolution defines and explains the role

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[3] *Ibid.*, para. 57.
[4] *Ibid.*, paras. 60–64.
[5] *Ibid.*, paras. 60–61.
[6] *Ibid.*, para. 65.

of UN Women within the UN system in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.[7]

3.2.1 Normative Functions

When it comes to normative capacity, UN Women is required to lend its support to intergovernmental initiatives addressing gender equality, most notably the CSW's efforts.[8] The entity contributes to the development, strengthening, and implementation of global norms, standards, and policies on women's rights by providing policy advice, research, and technical expertise to Member States.[9] In this context, UN Women also promotes the effective implementation of internationally agreed frameworks related to gender equality, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, while ensuring coherence between normative guidance and operational activities across the United Nations system.[10]

3.2.2 Operational Functions

In addition to its normative role, UN Women is authorized to carry out operational activities at the global, regional, and country levels in support of gender equality and the empowerment of women.[11] These operational functions include providing technical assistance, capacity-building, and programmatic support to governments, upon request, in order to accelerate progress in areas such as women's political participation, economic empowerment, education, health, and the elimination of gender-based violence.[12] At the country level, UN Women operates as part of the United Nations resident coordinator system and leads and coordinates the work of UN country teams on gender equality and women's empowerment.[13]

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[7] *Ibid.*, paras. 49, 51–53.
[8] *Ibid.*, paras. 51, 57.
[9] *Ibid.*, paras. 51–53.
[10] *Ibid.*, paras. 52–53.
[11] *Ibid.*, paras. 52–53.
[12] *Ibid.*, para. 68.
[13] *Ibid.*, para. 56.

3.2.3 Coordination, Accountability, and Oversight

UN Women is further mandated to lead, coordinate, and promote accountability of the United Nations system in its work on gender equality and gender mainstreaming.[14] This function includes monitoring system-wide progress, supporting coherence among UN entities, and ensuring that gender perspectives are systematically integrated into UN policies and programmes. In carrying out its functions, UN Women operates under the overall authority of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), while its operational activities are subject to intergovernmental oversight through its Executive Board, which reports annually to the General Assembly through ECOSOC.[15]

4. Introduction to the Agenda Item: *Strengthening International Action to Prevent and Respond to Femicide*

Strengthening international action to prevent and respond to femicide has become an urgent global priority as gender-related killings of women and girls remain persistent across all regions. Violence against women on the most brutal level, femicide, is characterized by a typical course of controlling actions, threats, and the like, with the involvement of the intimate partner in most of the cases. Worldwide figures show that the number of women killed yearly is in the tens of thousands, which is in spite of the fact that for years there were made promises to put an end to such violence against girls and women. Thus, it is good to point out that there are major deficiencies in the areas of prevention, protection, and punishment. The international community is to treat femicide as a global problem and only together will they be able to go beyond the mere condemnations of the crime. This would involve not only the strengthening of due diligence requirements and legal frameworks but also the creation of new and more effective risk assessment and early warning systems, and service provision

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[14] *Ibid.*, para. 53.
[15] *Ibid.*, paras. 57, 65.

facing the survivors. The power to investigate and prosecute crimes would also have to be increased. Moreover, it is important to implement trustworthy and uniform data systems that would not only record but also assess every single case so that evidence-based policies and customized interventions could be created. To fight gender-based violence, protect the at-risk populations, and create an environment where girls and women are not abused, Member States and other stakeholders are thus encouraged to international collaboration, sharing of successful approaches, and resource mobilization under this agenda item.

4.1 Definition of Femicide and Its Manifestation

Femicide, by definition, is the deliberate killing of females - women and girls - based solely on their gender and is universally acknowledged as the most severe and brutal form of violence inflicted on the female sex. The feminicides are not the same as homicides, which are gender-neutral, for they are deeply rooted in the social fabric of the nation where there are gender-based discriminations, patriarchal attitudes, and socio-cultural practices that lower women's worth and lives to trifling. Global bodies such as UN Women and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) classify femicide as a gender-related murder taking place amid power and control struggles, and systemic injustice against women and girls.[16] The differentiation that is made here is crucial because it shows that femicide is not a one-off or personal incident of violence but rather a foreseen and avoidable result of the ongoing gender violence. The leading type of femicide, on a worldwide scale, is that coming from an intimate relationship or family. Recent UN estimates suggest that out of all the women who are killed with intent globally, over 50% die at the hands of either current or former intimate partners or other family members.[17] Murder cases like these regularly have a background of domestic violence which often involves a combination of physical abuse, rape, and other sexual

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[16] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN Women, *Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide): Global estimates*, 2022.
[17] UNODC and UN Women, *Femicides in 2023: Global estimates of intimate partner and family member femicides*, 2024.

violence, coercive control, stalking, and threats to kill. In most situations, the signs of the impending murder are there but they are not properly dealt with because of various factors like ineffective protection mechanisms, lack of access to support services, or problems with law enforcement and the judicial system responding. On the other hand, the femicide of intimate partners highlights the urgent need for intervention, risk assessment, and the effective implementation of protection orders. Another major type of femicide is that of family-related killings which might not depict intimate partner murder, like the so-called "honor killings." The murders are committed because the victims are perceived to have violated the social, cultural, or familial norms regarding women's behavior, sexuality, or autonomy. Human rights law has always declared such acts as extreme violations of women's rights and fundamental freedoms regardless of how they are sometimes portrayed as culture-specific.[18] Honor-related femicides reflect deeply entrenched patriarchal values and collective complicity, where families or communities may tolerate or even endorse lethal violence against women.

Femicide, however, is not limited to the private sphere. Non-intimate femicide represents the murders committed by strangers or acquaintances, which are often connected with the sexual violence, trafficking, organized crime, or misogynistic hate crimes. Women who are in marginalized or high-risk situations, like migrants, sex workers, indigenous women, and women defenders of human rights, suffer more from these types of violence.[19] In some situations, femicide is associated with a large-scale environment of insecurity, armed conflicts, and poor law enforcement, where violence against women is accepted as a norm and very few mechanisms exist to hold people accountable.

A further manifestation of femicide includes gender-related killings facilitated or exacerbated by harmful practices, such as dowry-related deaths and forced suicide following

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[18] United Nations General Assembly, *Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls*, A/RES/77/193, 2022.
[19] UN Women, *Five essential facts to know about femicide*, 2024.

sustained abuse. While these cases may be recorded under different legal categories, international bodies increasingly emphasize the need to recognize their gendered nature in order to ensure appropriate investigation and prevention.[20] The failure to properly classify such deaths as femicide often leads to underreporting and obscures the true scale of the problem.

The recent international efforts have also brought to light the technology-facilitated violence as a major factor in femicide. Online harassment, cyberstalking, and digital surveillance may reinforce coercive control and lead to violence, including the femicide.[21] The changing aspect indicates that femicide should be linked to the current social and technological settings, thus needing revised policies and interprofessional cooperation.

All types and forms of the femicide still have the same root causes: the gender inequality, discriminatory norms, lack of institutional responses, and the acceptance of violence against women as a way of life. More and more, the world seems to agree that if the states fulfill their due diligence obligations to prevent violence, protect the vulnerable, prosecute the guilty, and provide reparations to the victims and their families, then femicide is going to be unavoidable.[22] Thus, enhancing international action requires not only acknowledging the different forms femicide can take but also confronting the systemic failures that enable such violence to endure.

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[20] UNODC and UN Women, *Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killings of women and girls*, 2022.
[21] United Nations General Assembly, *Preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls in digital contexts*, A/RES/78/198, 2023.
[22] Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls on femicide*, A/76/132, 2021.

4.2 Root Causes of Femicide

4.2.1 Structural Gender Inequality, Harmful Norms, and the Continuum of Violence

One of the main reasons for femicide is structural gender inequality, which puts women at a disadvantage in terms of money, social status, and politics. In many places, women face barriers in education, a job, owning property, and getting justice. This makes it harder for women to leave abusive relationships or seek help. There is a clear link between weak legal protections for women and higher levels of deadly violence around the world. Recent data from the United Nations shows that countries with less gender equality tend to have higher rates of gender-based violence, including femicide.[23] Because of gender inequality, women living in rural areas, employed informally or in migration situations are faced with being affected from violence and being less visible to institutions.

Recent researches and discussions have highlighted that femicide cannot be addressed without underlining these sort of structural inequalities. In 2024, UN Women emphasized that stagnation in gender equality progress under the Sustainable Development Goals has contributed to the persistence of extreme violence against women.[24] Economic dependency remains as a vital factor: women who lack independent income or housing are significantly less able to get away from violent environments, even when they recognize risks.

Harmful and undermining gender norms and patriarchal behaviour patterns that legitimize gender inequality also normalize violence against women and femicide. Cultural beliefs framing women as subordinate, property of male relatives, or responsible for preserving family honor contribute directly to lethal outcomes. While often associated with so-called "honor killings," in some cultures, these such norms also form the foundation of

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[23] UN Women, *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: Gender Snapshot 2023* (New York: United Nations, 2023).
[24] UN Women, *Gender equality: The unfinished business of our time* (Policy Brief, 2024).

intimate partner femicides worldwide, where perpetrators perceive women's autonomy as a threat. UN human rights bodies have stressed that these norms are not only cultural justifications for some societies but also violations of women's fundamental rights who live in these societies.[25]

Today, it can be seen that these attitudes are creating reactions and leading to debates within societies. In protests held in France, Italy, and different regions of Latin America following high-profile femicide cases, demonstrators strongly condemned institutional tolerance for misogyny and all forms of gender discrimination, from minor to major, through victim-blaming rhetoric. UN officials responding to these cases emphasized that femicide is sustained not only by individual perpetrators but also by social environments that excuse or minimize violence against women.[26] Harmful norms have continued to find their place in digital environments. Harmful and misogynistic hate speech, found on social media platforms and chat rooms, increasingly intersected with violence in the real world, reinforcing a culture where discriminatory language against women is normalized.

A third, critically important root cause is the continuum of gender-based violence, within which femicide represents the final and most extreme stage. Research consistently shows that femicide is rarely an isolated act; rather, it is preceded by a pattern of abuse, including psychological violence, coercive control, stalking, sexual violence, and repeated physical assaults. UNODC and UN Women data indicate that a significant proportion of femicide victims had previously experienced violence by the same perpetrator, and many had sought help from authorities or support services prior to their deaths.[27]

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[25] Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls on femicide*, UN Doc. A/76/132 (2021).
[26] United Nations, *UN officials call for urgent action following femicide cases worldwide*, UN News, 2024.
[27] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN Women, *Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide): Global estimates* (2022).

Sadly, this persistence of discrimination highlights the systemic failures in preventing and early intervening in these discriminatory practices, both verbal and physical. Warning signs such as death threats, physical violence, or breaches of protection orders are frequently present but not adequately addressed. In many of the recent cases reported globally, women were murdered shortly after complaining or reporting abuse, or during the process of separating from an abusive partner; this period is considered one of the highest-risk times for femicide. [28] These tragedies demonstrate the urgent need for tools that can identify risks at an early stage, as well as intervention mechanisms where police, judicial authorities, and social services work together in harmony, in order to protect women's lives.

Also, the COVID-19 pandemic further exposed the dangers of this situation. Lockdowns and economic strain intensified domestic violence worldwide, while access to support services was often reduced. UN Women described this phenomenon as a "shadow pandemic," warning that prolonged exposure to violence during crises increases the risk of lethal outcomes.[29] Although femicide rates did not spike uniformly across all regions, the persistence of high numbers during and after the pandemic demonstrated how unresolved patterns of abuse can culminate in fatal violence when structural and institutional protections fail.

4.2.2 Institutional Failures, Access to Lethal Means, and Socioeconomic Marginalization

A. Institutional Failures and Weak Justice Systems

One of the main reasons why femicides cannot be prevented is the failure of institutions, including law enforcement, the judicial system, and social services, to protect women, respond effectively to any signs of violence, and take necessary precautions. This is

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[28] UNODC and UN Women, *Femicides in 2023: Global estimates of intimate partner and family member femicides* (2024).

[29] UN Women, *Measuring the shadow pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19* (2021).

because femicides rarely occur in isolation; rather, they are often part of a broader spectrum of gender-based violence that includes coercive control, threats, and repeated abuse. [30] When authorities fail to take early reports of violence seriously, perpetrators are emboldened, and the violence can lead to fatal consequences. Poor enforcement of protection orders, inadequate police response to domestic violence complaints, and delays and impunity in judicial processes all encourage perpetrators and are fundamental causes of gender-based violence against women.In many regions, a significant proportion of femicide cases remain uninvestigated or unresolved. Latin America, for instance, continues to record some of the highest femicide rates globally, often within a broader context of institutional indifference and weak accountability mechanisms.[31] Survivors and advocacy groups frequently report experiences of victim-blaming, where women are discouraged from pursuing legal action or urged to reconcile with abusive partners. Such practices not only undermine trust in institutions but also violate states' due diligence obligations under international human rights law.[32]

Recognizing these systemic failures in institutions, international mechanisms have increasingly emphasized the importance of accountability and prevention. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women has called for the establishment of *Femicide Watch* mechanisms to systematically review gender-related killings and identify institutional shortcomings.[33] UNODC and UN Women similarly stress that strengthening criminal justice responses through specialized units, and gender-sensitive training is essential to preventing femicide.[34] Without institutional reforms and an end to impunity, commitments to eliminate

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[30] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN Women, *Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide): Global estimates* (Vienna: UNODC, 2022).
[31] UN Women, *Five essential facts to know about femicide* (New York: United Nations, 2024).
[32] Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls on femicide*, UN Doc. A/76/132 (2021).
[33] Ibid.
[34] UNODC and UN Women, *Femicides in 2023: Global estimates of intimate partner and family member femicides* (Vienna: UNODC, 2024).

violence against women unfortunately remain only symbolic.

B. Access to Lethal Means, Particularly Firearms

Access to lethal means, especially firearms, significantly increases the likelihood that gender-based violence will result in death. Evidence consistently demonstrates that the presence of a firearm in the household dramatically elevates the risk of intimate partner femicide. The World Health Organization has highlighted that firearm availability not only increases the severity of violence but also the probability of fatal outcomes.[35]

Research shows that behind these statistics lie real lives and irreversible losses. Studies spanning multiple countries reveal that, even when all other risks are considered, access to firearms increases the deadly danger for women. In the United States, more than half of women killed by their husbands or ex-partners lose their lives to firearms. In Brazil, in the majority of femicides, weapons escalate an argument or threat to a fatal outcome. Similarly, in parts of Latin America and South Africa where gun control is weak and illegal weapons are widespread, women's right to life is more fragile and more easily violated by perpetrators. These examples demonstrate that beyond individual moments of anger, access to weapons constitutes a constant and invisible threat to women. [36] [37] [38] Internationally, arms regulation has increasingly been framed as a gender issue. The Arms Trade Treaty requires States Parties to evaluate the possibility of the exported weapons being used to commit or support gender-based violence and to refuse the transfers in case of considerable risks.[39] Nonetheless, the application is still fluctuating and several countries do not have efficient ways of

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[35] World Health Organization, *RESPECT Women: Preventing violence against women* (Geneva: WHO, 2019).

[36] Jacquelyn C. Campbell et al., "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships," *American Journal of Public Health* 93, no. 7 (2003): 1089–1097.

[37] UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide: Gender-related killing of women and girls* (Vienna: UNODC, 2019).

[38] UN Women and UNODC, *Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killings of women and girls* (Vienna: UNODC, 2022).

[39] United Nations, *Arms Trade Treaty*, April 2, 2013, art. 7(4).

disarming people who have been violent in their relationships. Thus, limiting the availability of lethal means is an essential part of the strategies that aim to prevent femicide and should be included in the global measures against gender-based violence.

C. Socioeconomic Stressors and Marginalization

Socioeconomic stressors like poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion intensify the risk of femicide by making women more vulnerable and restricting their access to means of escaping the abusive environment. Among these stressors, financial dependence is the major reason that keeps women in violent relationships especially in situations where social safety nets are not strong. The research data reveal that the abuser's job loss or financial precariousness greatly raises the risk of murdering by attacking.[40]

Crisis periods like economic recessions, pandemics, and wars usually lead to a rise in these risks. As mentioned in previous chapters, while in the COVID-19 pandemic, UN Women reported a worldwide rise in domestic violence cases, calling it a "shadow pandemic."[41] Even though the regional differences in femicide rates existed, the fact that victims were continuously subjected to violence coupled with the lack of accessible help made the risk of killing even more serious. In war and post-war areas, the cessation of legal norms and the indiscriminate distribution of guns aggravate the already existing violence against women further.[42]

Due to intersectional discrimination, many marginalized populations endure particularly high degrees of risk exposure. When compared to other socio-ethnic groups, Indigenous and migrant women, women with disabilities, and racial and ethnic minorities have a higher risk of dying from femicide due to structural inequalities, racism, deficient

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[40] Campbell et al., "Risk Factors for Femicide," 1092.
[41] UN Women, *Measuring the shadow pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19* (New York: United Nations, 2021).
[42] UNODC, *Global Study on Homicide.*

poverty, and inadequate access to justice. For instance, Indigenous women and girls in Canada suffer higher rates of femicide in comparison to their non-Indigenous counterparts due to a legacy of colonial and institutional discrimination.[43] Similar patterns have been documented among Afro-descendant women in Brazil and migrant women in Europe.[44]

4.2.3 Crisis, Conflict, and Fragile Settings as Drivers of Femicide

As has been said many times before, things like armed conflict, humanitarian crises, and weak governments make gender inequalities worse by either getting rid of protective institutions or making them less effective. This rise in inequality makes the risk of femicide much higher. In these kinds of situations, violence becomes normal, weapons become more common, and systems for holding people accountable become weaker or break down completely. The United Nations has said many times that instability caused by conflict not only makes everyone less safe, but also puts women and girls at greater risk of extreme forms of gender-based violence, which is femicide. [45]

Armed conflict makes many connections that lead to femicide. First, as already said, the fact that so many people have small guns makes violence between people, including domestic violence, more deadly. Second, wars make it harder for police, the courts, and social services to do their jobs, which means that women can't get the protection or help they need. Third, women are more likely to be victims of violence in refugee camps, informal settlements, and transit zones where there isn't much oversight and offenders are often not punished. [46] These circumstances make it more likely for both intimate partner homicides and non-intimate partner homicides to happen. Recent conflicts clearly show how these things work. UN studies in Ukraine, Sudan, and some parts of the Middle East show that

[43] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *Reclaiming Power and Place* (Ottawa, 2019).
[44] UN Women, *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: Gender Snapshot 2023* (New York: United Nations, 2023).
[45] UN Women, *Gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict settings* (New York: United Nations, 2023).
[46] Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Women's human rights in conflict and humanitarian crises* (Geneva: OHCHR, 2022).

gender-based violence goes up a lot after people are forced to leave their homes, families are separated, and the economy falls apart. [47] In these kinds of situations, women are at greater risk not only from armed groups but also from close partners who have been through trauma, militarization, and financial stress. After a war, societies are especially weak: Studies show that the rates of femicide stay high long after wars are over because societies are still dealing with trauma, weak institutions, and a lot of people owning guns.[48]

Climate change-related displacement, food insecurity, and lack of resources put even more stress on families and communities, which makes domestic violence more likely and can even lead to death. The UN Environment Programme has said that climate shocks can make things worse by acting as "threat multipliers," making gender inequality and violence against women worse.[49] In places where there are droughts, floods, or other extreme weather events, women are often forced to live in unsafe conditions or in relationships that take advantage of women, which makes women more likely to be the victims of femicide.

But, as always, there are still big gaps in implementation. Humanitarian budgets often don't have enough money for programs that stop violence against women and girls, and peacekeeping or post-conflict reconstruction processes almost never include early warning systems for the risk of femicide. So, to stop femicide in fragile places, we need to move from reactive measures to proactive ones like gun control, victim-centered services, and holding perpetrators accountable during and after conflict.

4.2.4 Data Gaps, Underreporting, and the Invisibility of Femicide

An additional structural factor contributing to femicide is the lack of available data. Underreporting and misattribution conceal the magnitude of gender-related killings. Femicides are often simply labeled as homicides, suicides, or accidents without any

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[47] United Nations, *Gender-based violence surges in conflict-affected regions*, UN News, 2024.
[48] United Nations Development Programme, *Gender, conflict, and violence: Policy insights* (New York: UNDP, 2022).
[49] United Nations Environment Programme, *Gender, climate change and security* (Nairobi: UNEP, 2023).

acknowledgment concerning gender-related dynamics that resulted in killings, particularly because they occur across various regions worldwide.[50]

International organizations have also emphasized that the lack of common definitions of these statistics and an appropriate means of collecting them renders comparison extremely difficult.[51] Without disaggregated data on who is a victim of violence according to their sex, relationship to the perpetrator of violence, reports of violence prior to homicide, and weapons used, nations are not able to respond to risk factors to prevent killings before they occur.

The role of civil society organizations in revealing the scope of this gap cannot be overstated. In many nations, feminist observatories, as well as NGOs, document femicides at rates well above those recorded by national governments.[52] Such disparities are the result of both technological failures, as well as a lack of political will to recognize femicides as a specific and preventable type of violence when they are not formally defined in national legislation. In the absence of such definition, a gender approach in investigations appears weak in prosecutions, ensuring impunity.

There are current global efforts to satisfy this need. The UNODC-UN Women Statistical Framework for Measuring Femicide is one example of a globally accepted system of finding and recording gender-related deaths. [53] In a similar vein, Femicide Watch Systems are being implemented in various nations to systematically analyze cases and uncover risk factors and failures in a manner that goes beyond mere totals to a form of analysis that is prevention-focused.

The use of digital technology also faces challenges and opportunities. While technology that enables abuse, stalking, and surveillance can result in lethal violence, better

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[50] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Study on Homicide: Gender-related killing of women and girls* (Vienna: UNODC, 2019).

[51] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN Women, *Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killings of women and girls* (Vienna: UNODC, 2022).

[52] Amnesty International, *Deadly silence: Femicide and state accountability* (London: Amnesty International, 2023).

[53] UNODC and UN Women, *Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killings of women and girls* (Vienna: UNODC, 2022).

data systems can improve early warning and case management if proper protections lie at their foundation.[54] International experts note that data must be collected in a manner that protects the survivor rather than doing unintended harm.

Finally, the lack of measurement on femicide is itself a manifestation of structural violence. The lack of attention to it means it continues to be a lower priority with regard to agendas on local, as well as international, platforms. Data, thus, is more than a technical requirement, but it is fundamental to providing attention to the lives of women.

Women and Girls Disproportionately Affected by Femicide

As discussed in the previous sections, femicide does not emerge solely from individual acts of violence, but from a convergence of structural gender inequality, harmful social norms, institutional failures, socioeconomic marginalization, and crisis conditions. These drivers do not affect all women equally. Rather, femicide disproportionately impacts certain groups of women and girls whose vulnerability is intensified by intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion. Recognizing these disparities is essential for moving beyond generalized prevention strategies and toward targeted, effective international responses.[55]

Indigenous women and women of racial and ethnic minority groups have been some of the most adversely impacted segments. As already discussed with respect to structural inequality and inadequate institutional response to such inequality, the perpetuation of inequality for long periods of time can lead to a situation where justice and protection are denied and neglect persists. In some nations, femicide amongst indigenous women has been occurring at a rate disproportionate to that of the total female population. The UN has identified colonialism, exclusion and biased policing practices amongst the factors for such an occurrence when dealing with human rights agencies.[56] There are also parallel issues faced by

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[54] European Institute for Gender Equality, *Technology-facilitated violence against women* (Vilnius: EIGE, 2022).
[55] UN Women, *Intersectionality in gender equality and the empowerment of women* (New York: United Nations, 2022).
[56] United Nations Human Rights Council, *Violence against indigenous women and girls*, A/HRC/50/54 (2022).

women of African descent in Latin America, where femicide has been accompanied by racist poverty, urban violence, and the widespread availability of guns, which have also been discussed above with respect to access to lethal means.[57]

Refugee, migrant, and displaced women may also find themselves vulnerable to violence, as has been highlighted in previous sections on conflict and fragile settings. Visa status can often act as a barrier that does not allow women access to protection structures or justice systems. The fear of deportation, lack of understanding of the language of communication, and dependence on employers or partners can often lead to a minimal reporting of violence even in scenarios that can potentially lead to violence of a life-threatening nature.[58] Due to conflict and displacement in conflict and post-conflict operations, women can often become vulnerable to violence in camps and migration routes that lack structural surveillance and accountability.

Economic marginalization is also an important consideration underlying vulnerability. As already discussed while addressing socioeconomic factors acting as vulnerabilizers, such women who are either poor or find themselves in vulnerable economic conditions may not always have the means to leave abusive relationships. Globally, evidence shows that the incidence of femicide is higher in countries with higher inequality between income levels, higher levels of unemployment, and a weaker social protection system. [59] Economic vulnerability not only confines women to abusive surroundings but also hinders their ability to seek any remedy available to escape such situations and ensure safe shelter. During economic downturns due to either pandemics and climate change extremes, evidence shows that the incidence of violence and femicide is likely to enhance such structural vulnerability.

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[57] Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA), *Atlas da Violência 2023* (Brasília, 2023).
[58] UN Women and International Organization for Migration, *Addressing violence against migrant women* (2022).
[59] World Bank, *Gender-based violence and poverty* (Washington, DC, 2022).

Women with disabilities experience especially extreme and invisible risks. Being dependent on caregivers, social isolation, communication impairments, and institutional bias all contribute to extreme risks of violence that are prolonged and extreme. According to the section on data gaps and overlapping classifications, femicides of women with disabilities remain often underreported or incorrectly reported as an accident or a medical complication. [60] Additionally, the inability to easily submit reports and the untrained parties in law enforcement or justice systems add to impunity. According to international disability bodies, failure to safeguard women with disabilities against violence is both intersecting gender and disability discrimination.[61]

Age can also influence risk patterns. The risk of vulnerability in young girls and women can be found in the practices of child marriage, forced unions, and early pregnancy in countries that follow the gender construct mentioned before. In these scenarios, deadly violence can be ignited by demands that assault freedoms of sexuality and autonomy.[62] Contrary to this pattern of femicide discussion that includes victims of all ages, older women remain ignored in femicide discussions when data indicates that they are vulnerable in terms of dependency and abuse that perpetuates through caregiving. The risk associated with victims of femicide includes financial manipulation in relation to inheritance when carried out by relatives.[63]

There is emerging evidence too of the extreme vulnerability of the LGBTQI+ community, especially transgender women. Transfemicide is especially prevalent among transgender women who may be migrants or racial minorities or living in poverty; again, it illustrates the cumulative nature of interlocking deficits or inequalities.[64] As mentioned above,

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[60] World Health Organization, *Violence against women with disabilities* (Geneva, 2021).
[61] Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, *General Comment No. 3* (2016).
[62] UNICEF, *Child marriage and violence against girls* (New York, 2023).
[63] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN Women, *Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide): Global estimates* (Vienna, 2022).
[64] Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity* (2022).

in much the same way as other marginalized communities, the absence of data or legal recognition means that this type of femicide frequently falls outside the ambit of protection against femicide or becomes invisible once moreç.

Lastly, women human rights defenders and journalists are also at greater risk because of their activism and because they defy established power structures. Women in various regions have fought for gender equity and land rights or environmental issues.[65] These incidents demonstrate how misogyny and political repression are linked because they demonstrate that femicide needs to be viewed from two perspectives: as private issues between the genders but also as forms of gender-based violence.

Together, these trends reiterate a key finding of the previous analysis: that femicide is inextricably tied to and enacted through intersecting frameworks of inequality and exclusion. In this sense, effective action at a transnational level must reflect an intersectional, data-informed, and bespoke strategy focused particularly upon women and girls who are at most risk. Otherwise, efforts to counter femicide will remain uneven and incomplete, and most vulnerable women will remain unprotected.

5. International Efforts to Address Femicide

5.1 The Role of United Nations

As the main multilateral body in the international community, the United Nations is the central actor shaping global action on femicide. Based on the foundations established in human rights, gender equality, development, and international peace and security, a broad framework has been constructed by the United Nations that targets femicide in a comprehensive way through normative frameworks, institutional arrangements, data projects, and accountability measures. This action rests on understanding that femicide has been

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[65] Front Line Defenders, *Global Analysis 2023: Women human rights defenders at risk*.

defined in the preceding sections of this background guide as a preventable human rights violation that finds roots in structural inequalities of gender.[66]

From a normative perspective, the role of the United Nations General Assembly has been instrumental in establishing norms on the issue of violence against women and girls. Starting from a series of resolutions that confirmed that there is a due diligence obligation on the part of states towards the prevention and repression of gender-based violence and gender-related deaths[67], more recent resolutions have widened the scope of the matter towards more contemporary scenarios that concern technology-facilitated violence, because it is likely that online abuse could ultimately lead to physical harm and consequent death if it is neglected.

Within the UN system, UN Women is the lead agency on gender equality and the empowerment of women and has been playing a major role in advancing the international agenda on femicide. UN Women has been playing an important role in identifying femicide as a new category of gender-based violence and promoting prevention and survivor-centered strategies. Along with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UN Women has published major reports on gender-related killings of women and girls, thus improving the evidence base on femicide comprehensively at the global level.[68] All these steps are aimed at addressing the evidence gaps and challenges of underreporting mentioned earlier in this resource guide.

On the one hand, the UNODC contributes to this endeavor by concentrating on the criminal justice aspects of femicide. Its focus on research and technical cooperation stresses the need to make "policing, prosecution, sentencing, and gun control" contribute to the "prevention of lethal violence." With the establishment of the Statistical Framework on the

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[66] UN Women, *Gender equality: The unfinished business of our time* (New York: United Nations, 2024).

[67] UN Women. *Gender equality: The unfinished business of our time*. New York: United Nations, 2024.

[68] United Nations General Assembly. *Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls*. A/RES/77/193. New York: United Nations, 2022.

Measurement of Gender-related Killing of Women and Girls, the UN has been successful in creating a standardization of data collection, making cross-country comparisons possible.[69] This serves to identify areas of risk, such as intimate partner violence and gun-related femicides, again implicating institutional failures in femicide, as has been established in the earlier sections.

The UN system's human rights bodies further enhance international actions against femicide. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), especially under the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls, has repeatedly categorized femicide as a violation of women's rights to life, equality, and non-discrimination. The country reports under this mandate further state that "femicide often takes place when States do not meet their due diligence obligation," mirroring earlier debates about impunity and poor justice systems.[70] OHCHR has further advocated for the establishment of "Femicide Watch" bodies that entail case analyses for improving future situations.

Another important intergovernmental body is the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which is a forum for states to examine progress and make commitments to policy change affecting violence against women. Femicide has increasingly been brought up at the agreed conclusions and at sideline events at the CSW, particularly insofar as it affects marginalized groups.[71] Again, this is consistent with an intersectional analysis put forward earlier in this background note.

Concerning the UN's work on femicide, it also involves peace and security frameworks. With the agenda on Women, Peace, and Security based on resolution of the Security Council Resolution 1325 of UN resolutions, the UN agrees that conflict areas as well as post-conflict areas increase risks of violence against women, which include violence of

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[69] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN Women. *Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide): Global estimates*. Vienna: UNODC, 2022.
[70] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN Women. *Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killings of women and girls*. Vienna: UNODC, 2022.
[71] United Nations Security Council. *Women, Peace and Security*. S/RES/1325 (2000).

femicide.[72] It is now a requirement for peacekeeping forces to safeguard women against violence with mechanisms for accountability for conflict causes of violence of femicide discussed above.

Despite the fact that this normative-institutional framework is so comprehensive, the UN still encounters challenges in its efforts to combat femicide. One of the biggest challenges is the fact that most of these resolutions are non-binding, relying on the voluntary implementation of the measures by states. Consequently, it is difficult to enforce them, especially in scenarios where the institutional capacity, impunity, or political will to respond to gender-violence is lacking.[73] Today, the UN still has standards on due diligence, but it does not have tools to enforce them.

There is also the question of the coordination of actions within the UN system as a whole. While various components of the UN system deal with different aspects of the issue of femicide (whether in the context of monitoring human rights abuses, the administration of justice, and peace-building efforts) there is the lack of coordination of efforts.[74] Such lack of coordination may lead to overlap in efforts, coverage gaps, or lack of follow-through in recommendations made by various components of the UN system.

The question of data availability and comparability also continues to present a challenge. Though there have been efforts by UNODC-UN Women to facilitate this, a number of nations continue to have neither the capacity nor the political will to gather disaggregated data with respect to gender-related killing of individuals.[75] Expanding technical assistance and embedding data collection more firmly within UN reporting processes could substantially strengthen global monitoring efforts.

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[72] United Nations General Assembly. *Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women.* A/RES/77/182 (2022).
[73] Joint Inspection Unit. *Review of the United Nations system support for gender equality and the empowerment of women.* JIU/REP/2021/5.
[74] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UN Women. *Statistical framework for measuring the gender-related killings of women and girls.* Vienna: UNODC, 2022.
[75] UN Women. *Funding gaps in preventing violence against women.* Policy Brief. New York: United Nations, 2023

Lastly, it is important to note that resource limitations have been a persistent challenge to UN activities. UN resource funding to prevent violence against women has been inadequate and relies heavily on voluntary funding and has meant a pilot/short term-based response rather than a structural one.[76] Moreover, although UN frameworks have become adept at recognizing the contribution of femicide to vulnerable populations in a disproportionate manner, the application of an intersectionality framework has not yet reached the pertinent areas in UN programming and procedures.[77] Closing this gap would not imply the need for a completely different structure but a reinforcement of a structure in place and would allow the UN to have a stronger capacity to improve global efforts to prevent and respond to femicide.

5.2 Regional Human Rights Instruments

While the United Nations provides the overarching global normative framework for efforts to address femicide, regional human rights instruments have been playing a complementary role in translating international standards into legally binding obligations and mechanisms for implementation specific to each context. As has been demonstrated in earlier sections, femicide bears the strong imprint of structural inequality, institutional failures, and socio-cultural norms that vary considerably between regions. Regional systems are thus peculiarly positioned to respond to such dynamics through treaties, jurisprudence, monitoring bodies, and regionally framed policy guidance.[78]

5.2.1 The Inter-American Human Rights System

The Inter-American human rights system is considered the most progressive regional framework in terms of directly addressing femicide. Central to this system is the Belém do Pará Convention, adopted in 1994 under the auspices of the Organization of American States. This Convention was the first legally binding international instrument to recognize violence

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[76] UN Women, *Funding gaps in preventing violence against women*, Policy Brief, 2023.
[77] UN Women, *Intersectionality in gender equality and the empowerment of women* (New York: United Nations, 2022).
[78] UN Women, *Global accountability frameworks for ending violence against women* (New York: United Nations, 2022).

against women as a violation of human rights and to impose clear state obligations to prevent, investigate, punish, and eradicate such violence.[79]

Beyond the Convention itself, the case-law developed by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights has been revolutionary. In González et al. ("Cotton Field") v. Mexico, the Court declared the Mexican state internationally responsible for the genderbased homicides of women in Ciudad Juárez, based on systemic failures in prevention and investigation.[80] The judgment set a precedent that structural discrimination, institutional neglect, and tolerance of violence can also amount to violations of the right to life and equality. This judgment became a global reference and contributed to legal reforms far beyond Latin America.

It is the product of regional pressure and jurisprudence that a few Latin American states have legislated femicide or feminicide as a specific criminal offense. Nevertheless, as previously touched upon regarding institutional failures and data gaps, practices are uneven. Impunity remains high, which underlines that legal recognition does not necessarily equate to reality without enforcement and institutional reform.

5.2.2 The European Human Rights Framework

In the European context, the most comprehensive regional instrument related to femicide is the Istanbul Convention adopted by the Council of Europe in 2011. Though the Convention itself does not refer explicitly to femicide, it covers the root drivers identified above in this background guide, such as violence inflicted by an intimate partner, coercive control, and stalking, including institutional protection and prosecution failures.[81]

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[79] Organization of American States, *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará)*, 1994.
[80] Council of Europe. *Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*. 2011
[81] Council of Europe, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). *Baseline Evaluation Reports*. 2019–2023.

A key characteristic of the Istanbul Convention, GREVIO is an independent monitoring mechanism that undertakes country evaluations and provides binding recommendations. Reports by GREVIO have consistently pointed to lacunas regarding risk assessment, protection orders, and support services, all of which are factors particularly associated with femicide.[82] Equally significant, the Convention places great stress on adopting an integrated and intersectional approach, addressing the disparate impact of violence on migrant women, women with disabilities, and other groups at risk of marginalization.

Notwithstanding these strengths, the European framework has equally received a strong political backlash. Withdrawals and resistance from some states are illustrative of the continuing vulnerability of regional commitments to gender equality to politicization. This backlash has echoes in the challenges identified within the UN system, where normative progress is all too often undercut by a lack of political will at the national level.

5.2.3 The African Human Rights System

In Africa, the main regional instrument relating to VAW is the Maputo Protocol by the African Union in 2003. The Protocol unmistakably guarantees for women their rights to life, dignity, and integrity of their person, including an obligation of states to eliminate practices and conducts harmful to women.[83] While it does not use the term femicide explicitly, the Protocol gives a good legal basis for lethal violence against women, especially in situations involving domestic violence, conflict, and harmful traditional practices.

In recent years, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has increasingly called for state accountability regarding violence against women, especially in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. However, enforcement remains partial, with limited resources, generally weak judiciaries, and ongoing instability in swathes of the continent. As

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[82] African Union. *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol).* 2003.
[83] African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. *General Comment No. 2 on Article 14 of the Maputo Protocol.* 2014.

noted above, both conflict and displacement dramatically increase the risks of femicide, and thus effective regional implementation is particularly pressing in the African context.[84]

5.2.4 Asia-Pacific and Other Regional Approaches

In contrast to Europe, Africa, or the Americas, the Asia-Pacific region does not have a multisectoral, binding regional treaty that solely deals with violence against women. Regional efforts in this respect depend on political declarations and frameworks of cooperation, for instance, ASEAN instruments or UN regional initiatives. These approaches stimulate dialogue and best practice, yet their non-legally binding nature inhibits enforcement and accountability.[85]

This clearly presumes huge implications within the region's diverse legal systems and the persistence of harmful practices, intimate partner violence, and conflict-related violence that are ongoing in certain contexts. The absence of a strong regional human rights court or monitoring body for implementation usually rests with national political will alone reinforces much of what has already been identified as the limitations within a global UN framework.

5.2.5 Strengths and Limitations of Regional Instruments

Regional mechanisms for human rights have several advantages over international frameworks. Many are legally binding, backed by judicial or quasi-judicial bodies, and more sensitive to regional particularities. Within regions like Latin America and Europe, courts and mechanisms of monitoring have served in a very critical role in elucidating state accountability for femicides and the breakdown of public institutions.

Meanwhile, regional systems also suffer problems parallel to those besetting the United Nations. Political obstruction, denial of resources, loss of quorum due to lack of

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[84] United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). *Violence against women in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: United Nations, 2021.

[85] Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Strengthening regional human rights mechanisms*. Geneva: OHCHR, 2021.

representatives, and political backlash against the development of gender equality norms continue to hamper implementation. In addition, many differences among regions afford varying degrees of protection, leaving women in some regions of the world without effective regional remedies.

Taken together, regional human rights instruments provide a very important bridge between global UN standards and national implementation. Strengthening coordination between UN mechanisms and regional systems, in which especially with regard to data collection, monitoring, and technical assistance would significantly enhance international efforts at the prevention of and response to femicide.

7. Questions to be Addressed for Agenda Item 1:

1. *How should femicide be defined from an international legal standpoint, and should the United Nations establish a single definition of femicide different from homicide?*

2. *Which are the more significant structural issues, such as gender inequalities, economic dependency, conflict, or social mores, impacting femicide, and how can governments address the source instead of the individual?*

3. *To what extent does the normalization of violence against women, such as online misogyny and blaming the victim, factor into femicide, and what is the role of the state regarding these social forces?*

4. *In what ways does armed conflict, militarization, and a post-conflict situation pose a threat to femicide, and how should gender-responsive strategies of prevention be applied in a humanitarian peace-building response?*

5. *In what ways might risk assessment technology, early warning signs, and coordinated law enforcement, legal, and social sector response play in preventing femicide?*

6. *In what ways can access to lethal weapons, especially firearms, be properly controlled as part of efforts to eliminate femicide, and what are the operational requirements for states under current frameworks governing weapons?*

7. *Which groups of women are disproportionately impacted by femicide (displaced women, indigenous women, women with disabilities, or women living under occupation), and how can policies designed to support the prevention of femicide be refined to account for the intersectionality involved?*

8. *What steps would member states need to take to ensure a higher quality of collection, classification, and reporting of femicide data in order to address the under-reporting issue and provide the basis for evidence-based policies?*

9. *What is the role of international bodies, such as UN Women, in helping countries to develop national action plans related to the prevention of femicide, and how should accountability be ensured?*

10. *Can approaches focusing on the protection, justice, and long-term support of families affected by femicide find a place in the current national and international arenas?*

8. Introduction to the Agenda Item 2: Discussion on Gender-Responsive Measures to Support Women's Protection and Participation in Recovery After the Peacebuilding Process in The Context of The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not only a conflict that is defined by borders on the map and shifts in power-balances at the Levant district; it is also a profound humanitarian crisis shaping daily lives, hopes, and future expectations. Of course, in any civil conflict, all civilians bear the brunt of the burden, but unfortunately, women and girls often bear this burden more heavily, more silently, and more invisibly. Displacement, impoverishment, inadequate healthcare, and gender-based violence have a severe impact on women, while their opportunities to have a say in transforming these conflicts into peace processes remain extremely limited. According to United Nations data[86], women negotiators constitute only 13% of all negotiators and 6% of all mediators in peace negotiations worldwide. This example clearly demonstrates that women, who bear the heavier burdens in conflicts, are systematically excluded from peace processes.

Recent developments, particularly in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories, have worsened gender-based inequalities. UNFPA data shows that[87] approximately 50,000 pregnant women in the region are struggling to survive under conditions of active conflict. At the same time, thousands of women face the risk of being denied access to childbirth services due to hospitals and clinics being rendered dysfunctional by bombing. Bombardments and infrastructure destruction have made childbirth a life-threatening endangerment: motherhood has become not only a test of resilience but also a struggle for survival for women in conflict zones. UN Women's field data further reveals that the unseen burdens of the conflict fall

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[86] UN Women and United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, *Women's Participation in Peace Processes* (New York: United Nations, 2020).
[87] United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), *Gaza Emergency Situation Report: Women and Girls at Risk* (New York: UNFPA, 2023), https://www.unfpa.org/resources/gaza-emergency-situation-report-women-and-girls-risk

largely on women. Women bear more than 70% of the care work in households[88]; their responsibility for the wounded, the elderly, and children is further aggravated by the increasing poverty and insecurity caused by the conflict. It has also been reported that more than 70% of women and girls affected by the conflict show symptoms of acute stress, anxiety, and trauma[89]. The collapse of psychosocial support mechanisms under conflict conditions also silently contributes to the deepening of these traumas.

In the midst of this systemic-exclusion dilemma, the only thing that exists is this: the experiences women gain from daily life, from the traumatic events they face, from community-level solidarity practices, and their potential alternative perspectives on peace, are in no way reflected in the official processes of this peacebuilding process, which keeps women at only 13% or 6%.

However, in our world where everything touched by women's hands becomes even more beautiful, peacebuilding processes in which women are seriously involved are naturally more inclusive and more lasting. Analyses by UN Women and UNDP have shown that peace agreements in which women participate significantly remain in effect at least 20% longer and have higher social acceptance[90]. In contrast, peace arrangements without women are often nothing more than fragile, exclusionary and short-lived. Their short lifespan also prepares the ground for the resumption of the conflict cycle.

The United Nations has already acknowledged this reality. The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda aims to protect women and place them at the very heart of international peace efforts. Security Council Resolution 1325 laid the groundwork for this approach by explicitly emphasizing that women are not only victims of conflict but also

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[88] UN Women, Gender Alert on the Impact of the Gaza Crisis (New York: United Nations, 2023), https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/10/gender-alert-on-the-impact-of-the-gaza-crisis.
[89] UN Women, Gender Alert, 2023.
[90] UN Women and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Women's Participation in Peace Processes: What Matters?* (New York: United Nations, 2020), https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/03/womens-participation-in-peace-processes.

active architects of peace[91]. Unfortunately, despite the numerous warnings, particularly in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, women's participation in peace negotiations and official decision-making processes has remained quite low, keeping the principles expressed in the WPS agenda only on paper.

Although the WPS agenda and related international commitments often remain on paper, women continue to create their own peace spaces on the ground, defying everyone. Excluded from formal negotiating tables, Palestinian and Israeli women try to make their voices heard in the peacebuilding process through workshops[92], dialogue meetings[93], and community-based solidarity networks[94] that they organize at the local level. In these processes, women often focus not on producing grand political goals or diplomatic texts, but on healing the wounds created by the conflict in daily life, sharing trauma, and seeing the other side again as human beings rather than as "enemies." Through psychosocial support workshops, initiatives that collectivize care work, and local peace education, women create and keep open their own dialogue channels even in the absence of formal processes. The invisible labor of women at diplomatic tables shows that peace is built not only at negotiating tables, but also in the most fragile areas of social life.

9. Protection Mechanisms for Women in Post-Conflict

Armed conflicts are generally considered to have ended with the declaration of ceasefires or the signing of peace agreements. However, for women, the post-conflict period is not a return to security, but rather a challenging transition process filled with uncertainty,

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[91] United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security*, S/RES/1325 (New York: United Nations, 2000), https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325(2000).
[92] The Guardian. "Grief, fear and fury: the Israeli and Palestinian mothers still standing united against bloodshed." January 2, 2024.
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/02/israeli-palestinian-women-peace-protest
[93] BBC News. "Israeli and Palestinian women demand peace amid war." November 2023.
https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67486319
[94]
https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-palestinian-women-revive-joint-peace-campaign-2023-12-04/

fragility, and new risks. This is because international peacebuilding efforts often focus on political stability, institutional restructuring, and security, while neglecting processes aimed at improving the safety and conditions of women. United Nations data also reveals that in the post-conflict period, violence against women is not a period of end, but rather a period in which it continues in different forms and variations.

UN Women's analyses indicate that cases of violence against women increase by 25 to 40 percent in post-conflict societies[95]. Violence often shifts from the public to the private sphere, taking on more invisible but more persistent and traumatic forms such as domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and non-consensual control. The weakened justice system, impunity, and social stigma in post-conflict societies limit women's ability to report violence and seek protection. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, such situations show us that peace does not mean security for women, but rather creates new vulnerabilities and problems.

The protection of women in the post-conflict period cannot be considered solely in terms of physical safety. Protection can be described as a multidimensional concept encompassing access to justice, healthcare, psychosocial support, economic security, and inclusion. In post-conflict environments where health systems are destroyed and social services are inadequate, women pay a very heavy price, both physically and mentally. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 60% of women living in conflict-affected areas show symptoms of acute stress, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder[96]. Despite this, mental health and psychosocial support services are often treated as a secondary priority in post-conflict recovery plans. Indeed, according to WHO data, resources

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[95] UN Women, *Preventing Violence Against Women in Post-Conflict Settings* (New York: United Nations, 2018), https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/02/preventing-violence-against-women-in-post-conflict-settings
[96] World Health Organization (WHO), *Mental Health in Emergencies* (Geneva: WHO, 2019), https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-MSD-MER-19.4

allocated to mental health services in conflict-affected countries constitute only about 2% of humanitarian aid budgets[97].

UNFPA's reports on humanitarian crises show that women's access to reproductive health services is severely restricted in the post-conflict period, also UNFPA data shows that approximately 60% of women affected from humanitarian crisis and post-conflict situations do not have regular access to basic reproductive health services[98]. Under these conditions, restricted access to hygiene products and clean water makes it impossible for women and girls to manage their menstrual cycles safely, severely negatively impacting both their physical and psychological health.

Another critical, yet often overlooked, area of women's protection is property and inheritance rights. In post-conflict communities, displacement, home destruction, and the disintegration of family structures deprive women of housing and economic rights. According to UN-Habitat data[99], more than half of women suffering from post-conflict periods are unable to access their property rights due to legal or "de facto" actions. Discriminatory practices and traditional norms in inheritance law leave woman and female-led households particularly vulnerable to economic dependence and exploitation, and undermine economic inclusion.

In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, these problems naturally worsened. The effects of the conflict and the inadequate response to these effects lead to women not being adequately protected in the post-conflict period. Chapter 10 is written on three fundamental issues concerning the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on women: combating gender-based violence, addressing the inadequacy of psychosocial support and health services, and finally, combating the abuse of women's property and inheritance rights.

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[97] WHO, *Mental Health in Emergencies*, 2019.

[98] United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), *Women and Girls in Crisis: Reproductive Health Needs in Humanitarian Settings* (New York: UNFPA, 2022), https://www.unfpa.org/resources/women-and-girls-crisis-reproductive-health-needs-humanitarian-settings.

[99] UN-Habitat, *Housing, Land and Property Rights in Post-Conflict Settings* (Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2019), https://unhabitat.org/housing-land-and-property-rights-in-post-conflict-settings

9.1 Addressing Gender Based Violence

The understanding of gender-based violence in Gaza cannot be limited to it occurring during times of active hostilities. To fully understand this issue, we must also consider all the structural realities associated with prolonged occupation, repeated military escalations (or violence), forced displacement(s) of civilians, and chronic economic deprivation. Whilst media attention tends to focus on the number of airstrikes, civilian casualties, and the amount of humanitarian access, we tend to overlook the considerable amount of violence experienced by all women who live in homes, refugee shelters, or informal settlements, and therefore are subjected to violence within these spaces.

Research has shown that in armed conflict situations or prolonged crises, the incidence of gender-based violence increases. As mentioned many times, UN Women has stated that in post-conflict areas and conflict-affected countries, incidents of violence against women have increased between 25 and 40 percent[100], which is a pattern that we've seen repeatedly in the Gaza Strip since the escalation of violence. Humanitarian assessments conducted in 2023 indicated a surge in the number of reports of domestic violence throughout the Gaza Strip due to stigma, fear of retribution, and limited access to support services. Women's organisations are confident that we are underreporting the true extent of this issue.

The blockade and the severity of the ongoing violence in Gaza also directly contribute to the number of incidents of domestic violence in the region. The UN estimates that Gaza has one of the worst unemployment rates in the world, with overall unemployment exceeding 45% and youth unemployment exceeding 60%[101]. The economic collapse has destroyed homes and livelihoods, and this destruction contributes to significant stress on families. Research from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) has shown that among the households experiencing both extreme financial stress and displacement, there is an increased risk of

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[100] UN Women, *Preventing Violence Against Women in Conflict and Post-Conflict Contexts*, 2018.
[101] OCHA, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Occupied Palestinian Territory*, 2023

domestic violence by intimate partners[102].

Displacement has compounded this risk; due to the escalation that began in late 2023, more than 1.7 million people in Gaza have been internally displaced, many of whom have been displaced multiple times[103]. Women and girls living in overcrowded shelters like schools or makeshift shelters are exposed to an increased risk of harassment, sexual assault, or exploitation. According to UNFPA assessments, over 70% of women who are displaced report that they feel unsafe in shelters, especially at night, due to the lack of privacy, adequate lighting, and secure sanitary facilities[104]. Gender-based violence in these situations is rarely reported due to fear of retaliation, social stigma, or lack of meaningful follow-up.

The most prevalent form of Gender Based Violence in Gaza is Domestic Violence. According to women's organizations in Gaza that receive support from UN Women, calls to Domestic Violence Hotlines increased by almost thirty per cent after large scale hostilities[105]. However, in-person reports dropped significantly because of the restriction of movement as well as an end to social services to assist them. The current situation indicates that while women need assistance, their means for obtaining help are also reducing. For many women, they are isolated in their homes with their abusers and cannot gain the benefits of emergency shelters, etc. Additionally, another large aspect of Gender Based Violence in Gaza is Sexual Violence/Exploitation. UNFPA has warned that the potential for Sexual Violence associated with armed conflict increases significantly in areas that are experiencing displacement, poverty and a weakened legal system[106]. Although it is difficult to compile all the facts surrounding Sexual Violence in Gaza, there are currently many claims of Sexual Exploitation related to receiving aid, early/forced marriages due to economic necessity, and coercive relationship(s) for reasons of survival. Because of this lack of confidentiality in reporting

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[102] UNFPA, *Gender-Based Violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, 2022.
[103] UNRWA, *Gaza Situation Report*, 2024.
[104] UNFPA, *Protection Risks and Gender-Based Violence in Gaza*, 2024.
[105] UN Women, *Gender Alert: Impact of the Gaza Crisis on Women and Girls*, 2023.
[106] UNFPA, *Humanitarian Response to Gender-Based Violence in Gaza*, 2023.

mechanisms, as well as no services support for survivors, the reality of these violations is very much hidden.

The collapse of institutions can help to create a culture of gender-based violence that continues. Gaza's policing, judicial systems, and social support systems do not function well or are very limited in their effectiveness. UN human rights bodies have recognized that violence against women often prevents them from seeking justice due to obstacles preventing them from accessing legal assistance, fear of retaliation for reporting, and lack of accountability for perpetrators[107]. The lack of institutions leads to a culture of impunity for perpetrators, meaning that they typically do not face consequences for their actions, and survivors do not have access to support and help when they are subject to gender-based violence. Therefore, gender-based violence is more than a personal tragedy; rather, it is a structural failure[108] resulting from prolonged conflict and occupation.

The chronic health impacts of gender-based violence are potentially devastating. As mentioned in the previous chapter, according to the WHO, 60% of women living in conflict zones have experienced either chronic depression, anxiety, or post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Since over 70% of health facilities in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed, access to treatment for survivors of gender-based violence is severely limited[109]. Women experiencing physical injuries from gender-based violence, reproductive health issues, and traumatic psychological injuries generally do not receive any form of specialized treatment, which only increases their degree of suffering and their risk of suffering long-term consequences.

The women of Gaza continue to respond to violence by supporting and facilitating one another through informal community-based self-help networks. The women's organizations

[107] OHCHR, *Situation of Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, 2023.
[108] WHO, *Mental Health in Emergencies*, 2019.
[109] WHO, *Health Conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Gaza*, 2024.

and initiatives that provide peer support, psychosocial first aid, safe places for women, and other resources are often only intermittently supported by humanitarian workers and organizations due to lack of their resources. Although these women's cooperative self-help and care systems are remarkably strong, they cannot substitute for adequate and comprehensive protection systems. By using the unpaid and informal work of the women to provide support to mitigate the violence against women, this demonstrates an ongoing failure to develop an organized and institutionalized response to gender-based violence in conflict situations.

A comprehensive response to gender-based violence in Gaza must recognize the scale, complexity, and the ingrained nature of the issue in structural factors, and must centre upon these issues. It is not adequate to see gender-based violence as a secondary issue to the humanitarian crises of the conflict or an offshoot of war. Gender-based violence is one of the most chronic forms of violence against women that takes place throughout and after conflict, affecting their physical safety, mental health, and social participation. The degree to which gender-based violence and the interests of women in Gaza are taken seriously as part of a concerted recovery and peace effort represents the reality of the challenges facing women in this situation.

The ongoing cycles of destruction and fragile recovery from Gaza show yet again the reality of gender-based violence; specifically, that an absence of bombs does not necessarily mean safety for women's lives. Protection must, therefore, encompass much more than ceasefires and humanitarian assistance; it should also address the day-to-day violence that is going on within the confines of homes and is hidden from view by the bombardment. This leads us quite naturally to the next area that is critical to ensuring that all women in post-conflict situations will be protected, the urgent need for providing psychosocial support

and facilities that can assist women in overcoming the long-term psychological and other types of trauma resulting from gender-based violence.

9.2 Psychosocial Support and Healthcare

Consequences of gender-based violence in the Gaza Strip extend long after the initial act of violence occurs and deeply impact women's physical health, mental health and ability to recover from the effects of war. Women affected by war in a country where multiple wars have resulted in loss of home and many families having no source of income will experience social disruption due to loss of home. As such, one of the most pervasive and least understood aspects of women's suffering is the psychosocial distress that has occurred from years of repeated instances of abuse in the context of conflict. For many women in Gaza, the mere fact that they have not died does not equate to recovery, but instead represents a new beginning with regard to the long-term negative consequences of their experiences and the lack of adequate support for them.

Women's mental health needs are enormous, with more than 60% of women living[110] under war-torn conditions reported having experienced acute stress, anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder, according to the World Health Organization. Gaza is a special case in that over 80% of the population is dependent upon international humanitarian assistance[111], yet the incidence of violence against women is ongoing and therefore, the need for help for women is chronic, as opposed to episodic. Women who have been victims of domestic and sexual violence, as well as those who have been forcibly controlled, are at the greatest risk of experiencing psychological distress from traumas related to those forms of violence. Unfortunately, there continues to be a severe shortage of mental health services capable of responding to trauma that is experienced by women in Gaza.

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[110] World Health Organization (WHO), *Mental Health in Emergencies* (Geneva: WHO, 2019).
[111] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Occupied Palestinian Territory* (New York: United Nations, 2023).

The healthcare system in Gaza is structurally incapable of providing care that meets the level of need created by current circumstances. Years of blockade and recurring hostilities have caused considerable damage to the healthcare infrastructure, leading to chronic shortages of electricity, staff, medicine, and other medical supplies and equipment. Recently released reports indicate that more than 70 per cent of healthcare facilities in Gaza have been damaged[112], either totally or partially incapable of functioning. Therefore, for those who are survivors of gender-based violence, there is generally difficulty in receiving timely access to medical examinations, post-intervention care, reproductive healthcare services, and trauma-based treatment.

Psychosocial Mental Health services remain particularly underserved when it comes to funding. Although it is clear that the long-term physical and psychological impact of conflict-related violence has a direct correlation with mental health, as mentioned, WHO research demonstrates that mental health care services will only be allocated about 2% of the total humanitarian health funding within a conflict area[113]. In the case of Gaza, this means that there are few trained mental health professionals, very limited access to counseling services, and no dedicated services for those who have been survivors of violence. Consequently, many women are left alone to manage their trauma without appropriate support and relying solely on informal networks for limited assistance related to complex psychological issues.

The everyday health issues faced by women in the menstrual cycle, therefore, are indicative of how women's dignity and autonomy are stripped away as a result of conflict. For example, UNFPA estimates that more than 50% of women and girls in humanitarian settings do not have access to menstrual hygiene products on a consistent basis[114]. In the Gaza Strip, the unavailability of clean water, toilets, and sanitary supplies means that women and girls are

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[112] World Health Organization (WHO), *Health Conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Gaza* (Geneva: WHO, 2024).
[113] WHO, *Mental Health in Emergencies*, 2019.
[114] UNFPA, *Women and Girls in Crisis*, 2022.

forced to manage their periods in hazardous and humiliating situations. This increases the likelihood of developing infection and reproductive health complications, as well as increasing the degree of stress, anxiety, and social isolation women and girls experience, particularly in overcrowded conditions where they have little to no access to privacy.

There is a cyclical relationship between gender based violence, lack of proper health care, and psychosocial distress. After a woman suffers from violence, the likely outcome will be that she develops a mental health condition. Because of the above-mentioned trauma, many women are predisposed to future abuse. This cycle continues with women avoiding reporting to their local hospitals and clinics, due to lack of adequate and available healthcare and resources. The result is that women continue to remain silent about violence in a community that is already burdened with immense strain.

Despite this continued lack of services and resources available for women in Gaza, many women are nonetheless seeking assistance and care through informal and community-based support. Local organizations and peer support networks are creating a limited space for women to come together, discuss issues, and form solidarity with one another. However, while these are extremely valuable forms of resilience and self-determination, they can never replace systematic, full access to comprehensive, rights-based health care services. This places women in a precarious position of requiring use of their own emotional support and unpaid labor to fill the gaps created by the lack of institutional support, which only serves to further perpetuate gender-based inequalities. Therefore, having access to psychosocial support and health care is a basic building block of a woman's protection in post-conflict Gaza and not just a secondary issue. Continued investing in mental health services, reproductive health care, and survivor-centered health care will ensure that the ongoing impacts of gender-based violence continue to have an impact long

after the end of a period of active hostilities. Healing both individually and collectively is necessary to break cycles of violence and create the opportunity for meaningful recovery.

This reality leads into the next area of women's post-conflict protection: their economic security and legal independence. Women will be limited in their ability to recover physically and mentally without having the ability to attain stable housing, land and inheritance and lose their economic independence, which leads to the inability to succeed on an economic basis.

9.3 Protecting Women's Property and Inheritance Rights

The experiences of women following the founding of settlements in post-conflict environments due to the loss of Housing, Land and/or Property constitute one of the most profound and persistent damaging effects of armed conflict. Women's Rights to Property and Inheritance are inseparably linked to Women's Security, Economic Security and Psychological Well-Being in these settings. While it is common to hear the destruction of homes and other physical structures described in humanitarian terms, the distinct negative gender implications are seldom recognized.

According to United Nations estimates, over 70% of the housing units in Gaza have been destroyed as a result of ongoing military aggression and other escalating cycles of displacement[115]. Women suffer disproportionatively because they bear the brunt of this destruction during periods of instability by ensuring shelter, support the family and provide for dependent children during extreme periods of disruption, dislocation, and conflict. Displacement for many women is not about losing a structure but wholly losing the social and economic basis to achieve Security.

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[115] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel – Reported Impact* (New York: United Nations, 2024), https://www.ochaopt.org.

The acute challenges faced by women headed households are supported by UNRWA data estimates that approximately 20% of all households in Gaza are headed by a woman[116]. The growing number of women headed households in Gaza is largely due to grieving over the loss of their husbands or sons due to war, injury to either due to the death of their father/son or the male's detained by Israeli Forces. These households are at a higher risk of poverty, food insecurity, and housing instability than male headed households. Additionally, to be a woman who heads a household, these women will often encounter barriers to claiming property, access to compensation, and securing alternative housing due to both administrative and legal constraints put upon her as a female. Inheritance Rights constitute a second fault line in the area of post-conflict protection for women. As in other conflict-affected communities in the Middle East and elsewhere, legal frameworks for inheritance co-exist with a series of cultural norms supporting male inheritance. UN-Habitat's reports indicate that more than half of Women living in the post-conflict Neighbourhood's do not have access to Housing, Land, or Property due to Legal Discrimination, Lack of Documentation or due to Cultural Pressure to remain dependent on Male family members (Father, Husband, Son)[117]. Women with disabilities and widows are especially at risk of being dispossessed by their Extended Family thus leaving them Economically Dependent upon Male Family Members or Socially Isolated from their Community due to an inability to Live Independently.

When a woman loses her home, it loses its value and creates a bird's-eye view of the impact on her safety and overall quality of life. The disadvantage of being homeless has an even greater disadvantage than just living in a crowded, unsafe environment that places her in an increased level of risk of experiencing sexual violence and harassment. Research and studies done by international humanitarian organizations show that women who have no

[116] United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), *Gaza Situation Report* (Amman: UNRWA, 2024), https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/gaza-situation-report.

[117] UN-Habitat, *Housing, Land and Property Rights in Post-Conflict Settings* (Nairobi: United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2019), https://unhabitat.org/housing-land-and-property-rights-in-post-conflict-settings.

secure legal property rights have a much higher incidence of obtaining or experiencing coercion and violence against them because they are dependent on others and therefore cannot exercise their right to refuse an unsafe place to live or maintain a relationship with someone who has abused them[118].

In addition to economic hardship, women who are denied the opportunity to own property or enjoy inheritance rights are placed at a higher risk than women who do have these rights. Women without these rights will be forced to seek out alternative means of survival, such as being married off to someone who may be abusive or engaging in unsafe sexual relationships[119]. Women denied the rights to property and/or inheritance rights will continue to live in poverty and will find it even more difficult to escape.

Although legal redress is available, it seems to be primarily unavailable through any of the existing avenues. In Gaza, the administrative systems responsible for registering land (land registry), for handling inheritance claims, and for providing compensation for property loss, are routinely disrupted or do not currently operate at all. The overwhelming majority of land documents are lost due to the movements associated with having to flee or move. Furthermore, women's inability to get to court or to file an inheriting claim is largely due to restrictions on movement and fear of violence[120]. Many women's rights organizations have previously provided the evidence that women in Gaza have encountered many barriers when accessing legal support due to lack of awareness of their rights or fear of a severe social backlash if they attempt to assert their rights.

The long-term psychological consequences of dispossession cannot be overlooked. For women who have experienced violence, have been uprooted, and have lost significant

[118] World Bank, *Gender Dimensions of Land and Property Rights* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2020), https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/brief/gender-and-land.
[119] United Nations Development Programme, *Gender, Inequality and Conflict* (New York: UNDP, 2020), https://www.undp.org/publications/gender-inequality-and-conflict.
[120] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Access to Justice for Women in Conflict-Affected Areas* (Geneva: United Nations, 2021), https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents.

property (or at least have not been able to reclaim their homes and receive compensation under the inheritance system) the lack of possibility of recovering a house or obtaining their rightful share of properties through inheritance, strengthens the perception of being powerless and in an unstable situation. Without an adequate and stable housing solution, these women continue to struggle with stress, anxiety, and uncertainty in their recovery, especially like the woman who is the primary care-giver for her children and/or others dependent on her care. Therefore, the protection of property rights is not simply about providing economic justice; it is essential for the psychological and social healing process.

Despite the aforementioned obstacles, Women in Gaza continue to strive to survive and overcome being dispossessed by utilizing various informal coping strategies. These include the formation of community solidarity networks, the use of family members as mediators when negotiating property issues and disputing inheritance rights; and through informal grassroots advocacy, among others, these strategies provide the foundations for some limited ways to obtain housing and settle inheritance conflicts for women. However, these support networks may provide short term help, but do not serve as a substitute for formal or legal systems that provide basic rights for women in the community. Thus, as a result, there are often situations where women will be coerced into compliance through reliance on these informal support mechanisms, thus perpetuating unequal power dynamics within families and communities.

The means for providing women with legal property rights in the Gaza Strip cannot rely on just post-war rebuilding efforts that focused on only the rebuilding of the communities infrastructures. There are three main aspects to successfully protect women's legal property rights: first, developing legal frameworks that are gender sensitive; secondly, creating documentation processes to make them more accessible; and lastly, providing targeted assistance for women-led households. Without the ability to access the property or inherit the

property legally and securely, women are essentially in a never-ending cycle of dependency which creates a lack of personal security and dignity and their ability to recover from the effects of war.

In other words, the recovery from the effects of war must not be viewed as rebuilding the physical structure, but as ensuring that women have a place to reclaim their place in the community. Protecting women's Property and Inheritance Rights must not be considered a minor issue within Post-Conflict Recovery. Protecting women's legal rights to property and inheritance is a necessary element for the long-term rebuilding of Gaza's economy and, therefore, ensuring a lasting peace through sustainable economic resilience.

10. Enhancing Women's Participation in Peacebuilding and Governance

Although peacebuilding discussions frequently centre on ceasefires, territorial agreements and political power-sharing structures, women's meaningful involvement in these processes is routinely underrepresented in discussion and understanding of the issue. As a result, women's meaningful involvement is a critical component for the ongoing success of Peacebuilding and for sustaining peace in many conflict and post-conflict situations, particularly where women are disproportionately impacted upon by conflict, have faced high rates of violence and have experienced severe levels of displacement and societal breakdown but have been largely excluded from decision-making processes regarding peacebuilding and governance. The Israeli - Palestinian Conflict exemplifies this situation exceptionally well.

While many international agreements and treaties make commitments to ensuring women's participation in peace-building processes, women continue to be underrepresented in the formal and formalised aspects of peacebuilding across the globe. As mentioned earlier chapters according to information from the United Nations, women make up only an

estimated 13% of negotiators and 6% of mediators in peace negotiations globally[121]. In many protracted and highly militarised conflicts (e.g. Israel - Palestine), the number of women participating as negotiators or mediators is often much lower than the above percentages. As women fulfil a central and critical role in maintaining families, communities and humanitarian support, the perspectives and experiences of women are not adequately represented in official political discussions and agreements regarding security, and governance structures around the world.

This exclusion doesn't just impact how women are being represented or excluded in the negotiations; it also has a direct negative impact on future peace. Research by UN Women and UNDP show that peace agreements that include meaningful participation by women are at least 20% more likely to stand the test of time, and have significantly more social legitimacy than agreements that do not include women's meaningful participation[122]. Women also tend to expand the role that the communities they come from play in how their communities will recover and rebuild after war is over (ex. agenda items related to human security, social recovery, accountability, and reconciliation) than men do, who typically focus on political power and military arrangements.

10.1 Quotas and Representation in Decision-Making

To increase the number of women involved in peacebuilding and the ability to participate in governance processes, the most direct mechanism available is gender quotas and representation targets. In countries where gender quotas have been implemented through either legislative or voluntary initiatives, women's representation in political institutions has nearly doubled in the past 20 years compared to those countries without gender quotas[123]. In

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[121] UN Women and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Women's Participation and the Durability of Peace* (New York: UN Women and UNDP, 2015)

[122] UN Women and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Women's Participation and the Durability of Peace*

[123] Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), *Women in Parliament: 20 Years in Review* (Geneva: IPU, 2015), https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2015-03/women-parliament-20-years-review.

addition to providing increased access, quotas also provide a means to counteract the barriers to women's decisions during times following major conflict and in transition times.

However, during the course of formal peace negotiations in Israel-Palestine, there has been no adoption of gender-sensitive representation in political processes. The environment for negotiating peace talks has been dominated by elite political and military representatives, thus preventing representation from being available to women both on an institutional level as well as on a cultural level. Therefore, women's concerns and priorities, such as safety in the community, social healing, and safety while going about daily activities, are often not addressed through official negotiation processes.

Quotas alone do not guarantee that women will have a meaningful opportunity to participate. In fragile or conflict settings, women who come through quotas may be marginalized, lack access to information, and have limited ability to participate in informal networks of power where critical decision-making takes place. Tokenism has the potential to reinforce existing inequities instead of changing them. It is essential that political will and institutional backing are present, as well as some form of support to ensure that women have opportunities to affect outcomes, rather than simply holding positions.

In Israel-Palestine the difficulty of representation is both numeric and conceptual. Current dominant approaches to peacebuilding continue to favor military and state-centered views of security. Women's experience of violence, displacement and caregiving lead them to take a different view of what constitutes security defined through a lens of social dignity, social cohesion and human welfare. Without structural reforms aimed at creating political legitimacy for these views, women's representation may remain symbolic.

10.2 Supporting Women-Led NGOs and Local Peace Initiatives

Women are involved in finding ways to bring peace to the world in many ways outside of the formal process of negotiations that occur at the diplomatic level. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, many of the successful peace initiatives have come from women-led organisations or local (grassroots) efforts that have created long-lasting and powerful changes in their communities. Women's involvement in bringing peace to these two groups has focused primarily on addressing the challenges that both sides face in their everyday lives due to the impact of war and conflict; therefore, women's peacebuilding efforts provide a means for creating dialogue, mediation, and psychosocial support through community-based organisations, as well as advocating for human rights on behalf of the two groups.

Women's leadership and organisation have allowed them to act as 'essential conduits' between both sides of the conflict, especially in situations where no formal diplomatic efforts were being made or when diplomatic efforts had failed. Women's organisations have created many opportunities for local dialogue, as well as trauma healing and community mediation workshops that allow women to create 'safe spaces' where they are engaged in peacebuilding rather than negotiating. While many of these local initiatives do not receive international recognition or attention, many times they are the only ways in which women in truly divided societies engage in consistent and sustained peacebuilding efforts.

While significant progress has been made in supporting women's organisations to be involved in peacebuilding, the vast majority of funding for peacebuilding is not given to organisations whose missions primarily include promoting women and gender equality. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, most NGOs led by women are limited by the lack of financial resources available to them, and need to rely on volunteer work and short-term grants. These

organisations are financially unstable, which limits their ability to develop into larger organisations and have greater impacts on their communities[124].

The challenges women run organizations encounter go beyond funding, such as their political recognition[125]. Women-run organizations are generally described as "social" or "humanitarian" instead of political, which contributes to the notion that peacebuilding belongs only to those with power in society or those who provide security. However, many women-led organizations that operate at the grassroots level often counter the root causes of violence by developing trust, increasing accountability, and establishing coexistence among community members. Thus, recognizing women-led NGOs as legitimate peacebuilding entities is an essential step toward broadening the definition of peacebuilding beyond simply the formal diplomatic process.

10.3 Inclusion of Women in Security Sector Reform (SSR)

Women have traditionally remained absent and marginalised in security governance. Security institutions, which include the police, military and intelligence services, play an essential role in shaping how safe people are in their day-to-day lives and how governments govern those societies; however, these institutions remain predominantly male-dominated. The percentage of women in security sectors across the globe is less than 10%, and the number of women in leadership roles is even lower[126].

In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, security institutions are integral to the daily lives of both populations and the political power dynamics between both groups.

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[124] OECD, *Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2020), https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/aid-in-support-of-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment.htm.

[125] Inclusive Peace, *Women's Inclusion in Peace Processes: Israel–Palestine Case Study* (Geneva: Inclusive Peace, 2021), https://www.inclusivepeace.org/publications.

[126] UN Women, *Gender and Security Sector Reform* (New York: United Nations, 2018), https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/06/gender-and-security-sector-reform.

Decisions made in these institutions have a direct effect on civilian mobility, access to services provided by governments, and the protection of civilians. As there are few women represented within the security governance of these institutions, this results in the narrow and militaristically defined understanding of security; therefore, these definitions do not include and do not create any solutions for issues such as gender-based violence, the lack of trust between communities, and civilian casualties.

Research supports that when women are represented in security institutions, then the relationship between the community and the police is improved, there is an increase in reporting of violent crime and there is a higher level of responsiveness from these institutions towards the goals of the community and the needs of the citizens[127]. However, the integration of women alone into the security sectors of a country's government is not sufficient. Women entering these careers face discrimination and harassment while also having very limited opportunities for career advancement[128]. Therefore, in order for the inclusion of women in these institutions to be meaningful and impactful, they must ensure that there are institutional mechanisms, mentorship opportunities and accountability structures in place to provide support for these women.

Inclusive SSR requires addressing institutional culture, training, and oversight. Gender-sensitive reforms should also ensure that security institutions have the proper means to prevent and respond to violence against women, and that women have the ability to safely and meaningfully shape security policies. In a context such as that of Israel-Palestine, where security dynamics are very politically contested, Gender-sensitive reforms are also vital in building trust and legitimacy.

[127] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Gender Equality in Security Sector Reform* (New York: UNDP, 2019), https://www.undp.org/publications/gender-equality-security-sector-reform.
[128] Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), *Gender and Security Sector Reform Toolkit* (Geneva: DCAF, 2019), https://www.dcaf.ch/gender-and-security-sector-reform-toolkit.

Concluding Reflections

Women's involvement in peace building and governance must move away from the realm of goodwill or tokens of inclusion. Women's exclusion in peace means that the agenda is shrinking[129]. Women's involvement means that the agenda of peace can expand to include the definition of security. Women's involvement in peace means that peace can become part of daily reality. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, conflict is deeply rooted, and trust is still a fragile element. Women inclusion provides a new way of seeing peace negotiations move beyond elites' talks, not involving the military aspect of peace. The inclusion of decision-making space, encouraging women-empowered projects, as well as security sector transformation, do not exist as standalone objectives of peace creation processes. The discussion is no longer whether or how women should be involved in peace building or government, but whether peace itself can be maintained without the involvement of women. In all likelihood, the answer to the latter question is no. A lasting peace requires inclusive processes that are more properly aligned with the realities that conflict populations face and that is simply not possible without the voice of women.

11. Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment in conflict-recovery and sustainable peace remains one of the least prioritized but important building blocks. Economic insecurity among women in conflict zones not only results from the conflict but also contributes to the vulnerability of women to conflict triggers such as conflict-induced displacement and violence. In the Israeli and Palestinian conflict, the constant occupation, damaged infrastructure, and movements constraints have contributed to economic instability, in which women have largely suffered.

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[129] International Crisis Group, *Women and Peace in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict* (Brussels: ICG, 2020), https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/israelpalestine

In Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territory, the role that women play within the economy remains undermined by unemployment rates, the destruction of livelihoods, as well as the lack of markets and financial services. According to international assessments, the overall unemployment rates within the Gaza Strip are over 45 percent, while the rates at which women are participating within the labor force are below 20 percent, making this one of the lowest rates within the globe[130].

Economic empowerment is thus not secondary to development but rather its own protective strategy. In this way, economically empowered women can better withstand emergencies, be less vulnerable to exploitation, and be more able to support their communities in recovering from conflict. The negative impact of economic marginalization tends to raise vulnerability to early marriage, transactional sex, and other negative strategies for living with crisis. According to UN Women, women's economic empowerment in the post-conflict context remains irrevocably linked with the aim for gender equality, for resilience, for peace[131].

Reconstruction with a disregard for the differences in economic reality and, accordingly, a disregard for gender issues has a great risk of recreating pre-existing conditions, and, thus, economic empowerment has to be a matter of gender-responsive budgeting and recovery planning. In the Israeli and Palestinian scenario, this is a very urgent matter because economic marginalization affects Palestinian and Israeli women, firstly, in terms of conflict, and, secondly, in terms of political conditions that can be present even when a period of conflict has elapsed and active conflicts are forgotten.

[130] International Labour Organization, *Labour Market Assessment of the Occupied Palestinian Territory* (Geneva: ILO, 2022), https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/informal-economy/publications/WCMS_854512/lang--en/index.htm.

[131] UN Women, *Women's Economic Empowerment in Conflict and Post-Conflict Settings* (New York: United Nations, 2017), https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/09/womens-economic-empowerment-in-conflict-and-post-conflict-settings.

11.1 Gender-Responsive Budgeting for Reconstruction Projects

The reconstruction processes are extremely important as they provide key opportunities to transform economic systems in an inclusive manner. At the same time, if there is no gender-responsiveness in the reconstruction process, then it would mean continuation of the existing imbalances. Gender responsive budgeting is an effort to address the above challenge.

In conflict-scarred areas, women are often not taken into account in resource allocation decision-making, even though they are the main users of public services and play a critical role in the recovery of their families and communities. International research has shown that less than 30 percent of recovery plans established for post-conflict countries incorporate a gender strategy in budgeting plans[132]. In the Israeli-Palestinian arena, the funding allocated for reconstruction has primarily addressed the rebuilding of infrastructure, such as roads, housing, and energy infrastructure, without examining the influence of such spending on improving women's access to jobs, services, or security.

Gender-responsive budgeting offers a practical framework for addressing these shortcomings. By incorporating gender analysis into budget formulation, execution, and evaluation, GRB helps ensure that reconstruction projects create employment opportunities for women, support care infrastructure, and reduce unpaid labor burdens[133]. For example, investments in water, sanitation, healthcare, and childcare services have been shown to significantly increase women's ability to participate in paid work and public life.

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[132] UN Women, *Gender-Responsive Budgeting in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Contexts* (New York: United Nations, 2019),
https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/01/gender-responsive-budgeting-fragile-contexts.
[133] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2021),
https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development.

In Gaza, where women are systematically left out of the building sector, the gender-neutral approach to rebuilding may lock them out of the labor market, which is already dominated by men. According to information from the United Nations on international developments, fewer than 10 percent of the workers hired by the large-scale rebuilding programs that target conflict economies are women[134].

The United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank emphasize the importance of gender budgeting in ensuring that recovery efforts are more effective and sustainable. In situations such as the Israel and Palestine conflict, with limited budgets and numerous recovery requirements, it is important for the budgets to take into account the economic conditions of women. This is not only important for ensuring equity but also for efficiency.

11.2 Access to Financial Resources and Entrepreneurship Training

In addition to these budgeting considerations, the economic empowerment of women requires their access to funds and skills enhancement as well. In conflict zones, women are pitted against several obstacles simultaneously when accessing finance, which are their lack of collateral, poor legal documentation, restricted mobility, and discriminative treatment within financial institutions. These are more evident in a place like Gaza, where their isolation and destructive assets are more prominent and inhibiting towards business development.

According to international financial analysis, women-owned businesses are allocated less than 10 percent of credit in vulnerable and conflict-affected areas[135]. In the occupied Palestinian territory, women-owned business owners experience lower accessibility of loans,

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[134] World Bank, *Gender Dimensions of Post-Conflict Reconstruction* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2018), https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/gender/publication/gender-dimensions-of-post-conflict-reconstruction

[135] World Bank Group, *Access to Finance for Women-Owned Businesses in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2020), https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/financialinclusion/brief/women-and-financial-inclusion.

savings facilities, and business contacts in comparison with men. They make use of informal or family loans that pose vulnerability to economic shocks.

Training programs in entrepreneurship and financial literacy have already proven effective in overcoming some of the barriers. For example, research has shown that women in combined skills training and access-to-finance programs are up to 30 per cent more likely to sustain income-generating activities over time[136]. In Gaza, women-led micro-enterprises (home-based, because mobility is often limited) often provide vital benefits to household survival and include food production, handicrafts, education services, and digital work[137].

However, access to training and finance is not enough on its own without supportive enabling environments. Movement restrictions, border closures, and limited access to markets significantly restrain the profitability and scalability of women-owned businesses in the Israeli–Palestinian context. Digital entrepreneurship and remote work have emerged as partial coping strategies, yet these opportunities remain unequally accessible due to electricity shortages, internet disruptions, and limited digital skills.

Hence, targeted financial inclusion strategies become necessary. These include low-interest microfinance schemes, grants instead of loans for conflict-affected women, mobile banking solutions, and support given to women's cooperatives. Evidence within the development programs has shown that women reinvest a higher proportionate share of their incomes into household welfare, education, and health, which then amplifies the broader social impact of economic empowerment initiatives.Importantly, economic empowerment must be understood not only in terms of income, but also agency. Women with access to financial resources are better positioned to participate in household decision-making, resist

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[136] International Finance Corporation, *Women Entrepreneurs in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations* (Washington, DC: IFC, 2019), https://www.ifc.org/women-entrepreneurs-fcs.
[137] United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), *Economic Impact of the Gaza Blockade on Women* (Amman: UNRWA, 2021), https://www.unrwa.org/resources/reports/economic-impact-gaza-blockade-women.

exploitative relationships, and engage in community leadership. In contexts marked by prolonged conflict and instability, such as Gaza, economic autonomy can serve as a critical buffer against both violence and displacement.

12. Tracking Progress and Ensuring Transparency

Tracking progress and ensuring transparency are integral components of any meaningful effort at the advancement of women's rights in conflict and post-conflict settings. Without this reliable data, clear indicators, and accountable monitoring mechanisms, commitments to gender equality risk being rhetorical rather than transformative. The background of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, against which political fragmentation, limited access, and instability make governance transparently monitoring even more difficult and much more essential.

Their experiences of conflict, displacement, and recovery are often poorly recorded by traditional monitoring frameworks that tend to rely on military or macro-economic indicators. Consequently, gaps persist between policy commitments and realities on the ground. Tracking progress through gender-sensitive tools helps bridge this gap and makes women's needs and contributions visible. Transparency, in turn, strengthens trust among affected communities and international partners, ensuring that resources and interventions are truly aligned with stated objectives.

Effective tracking is not only a technical exercise, it is a political act. What gets measured is what gets prioritized. For women in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territory, such progress needs to be measured not just by ceasefires or reconstruction outputs but in actual increases in safety, access to services, participation, and dignity.

12.1 Gender-Sensitive Indicators

Gender-sensitive indicators: Gender-sensitive indicators are very important for tracking whether peace building, humanitarian intervention, and recovery processes are effectively addressing women's rights. Gender-sensitive indicators do not suffer from the same problems as gender-blind indicators since gender-sensitive indicators can disaggregate their information on the basis of gender, which can also measure agency, safety, etc.

HDR Handbooks and guidelines issued by UN Women, United Nations Development Programme, and OECD highlight the value of gender indicator integration across various sectors like health, education, economic recovery, governance, and security[138]. Examples of these are the tracking of women's representation among decision-making bodies, access to livelihood opportunities, vulnerability to gender-based violence, and access to gender-responsive services.

In an Israeli-Palestinian context, gender-sensitive indicators are especially valuable as they account for gender differences with regard to conflict. Aggregated data may mask gender discrepancies with regard to Palestinian women in Gaza, East Jerusalem, and West Bank with respect to experiences during conflict. For example, indicators measuring household food insecurity may not account for women's disproportionate contributions to family food and unpaid care.

Gender-sensitive indicators also have an important function within the evaluation of protection outcomes[139]. Tracking the rates of gender-based violence reporting, the availability of psychosocial support, or reproductive healthcare can offer evidence to what extent the

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[138] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Gender Equality Policy Marker* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2022), https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/dac-gender-equality-marker.htm.
[139] UN Women, *Making Women Count: An Annual Report on Gender and Evaluation* (New York: United Nations, 2018), https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2018/12/making-women-count-annual-report-gender-evaluation

interventions affect women's protection and well-being. In this regard, the increased reporting rates should not be viewed as increased violence but as an indicator of trust in the services.

Nevertheless, the application of such indicators is faced with many challenges. The collection of data in Gaza is hampered by insecurity, lack of infrastructure, as well as restricted accessibility by researchers and aid providers. Women may become deterred by social stigma and intimidation of repercussions, thus becoming less likely to submit information about violence and exclusion they may suffer. Consequently, the use of qualitative approaches may be essential in complementing the collection of data among women[140].

12.2 Role of International Stakeholders and NGOs

International actors and NGOs are crucial for monitoring progress and ensuring transparency, especially in situations where local institutional structures may be weakened and divided. In the Israeli-Palestinian situation, global entities are often the primary sources for data and information administration regarding women's rights and equality with regard to issues of accountability.

The United Nations has agencies, such as UN Women, United Nations Population Fund, and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which institutionalize conflict situations and give vital reports on how these situations affect each gender. The institutionalization of conflict and its reports helps in standardizing and promoting transparency, as processes and data are consistent and generated on a universal level[141].

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[140] United Nations Secretary-General, *The World's Women 2020: Trends and Statistics* (New York: United Nations, 2020), https://www.un.org/en/desa/worlds-women-2020

[141] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Humanitarian Needs Overview: Occupied Palestinian Territory* (New York: United Nations, 2023), https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-needs-overview-2023.

In addition to these, both internationals and national NGOs are also important actors on the ground. Grassroots organizations are sometimes the best situated to provide information on what is happening at the grassroots level, especially within regions that are restricted to internationals on the ground. On the other hand, internationals are useful because they are able to take the information from the grassroots organizations and blow it up into something that reaches the pertinent parties on the international scene.

However, power imbalances within the aid and monitoring ecosystem stand in the way of transparency. Data collected at the local level is often downplayed or filtered through international reporting frameworks that dilute the input from communities[142]. Ensuring, therefore, requires inclusive partnerships that recognize local women's organizations as equal knowledge producers and not data sources.

The donor governments and institutions also shape transparency through funding requirements and accountability mechanisms. Gender markers, reporting standards, and results-based frameworks may incentivize the collection of gender-disaggregated data. However, too rigid reporting systems risk prioritizing easily quantifiable outputs over meaningful outcomes. The need for flexibility and contextual sensitivity in this context is acute, given that in the Israeli–Palestinian context, progress often does not unfold as an even linear function.

Transparency is not just about publishing reports; it's about enabling learning and accountability. When international stakeholders and NGOs are committed to open data sharing, community engagement of those affected, and responding to findings themselves, monitoring becomes a tool of empowerment rather than one of control. In situations of

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[142] CARE International, *Women, Peace and Accountability: The Role of Local Women's Organizations* (Geneva: CARE, 2020), https://care.org/resources/women-peace-and-accountability.

protracted conflict, such transparency has been integral to ensuring that promises of protection, participation, and equality for women translate into real change on the ground.

13. Questions to be Addressed for Agenda Item 2:

1.   *How does the protracted nature of the Israel–Palestine conflict uniquely affect women and girls, particularly in terms of displacement, access to services, and exposure to gender-based violence?*

2.   *In what ways has the exclusion of women from formal peace negotiations undermined the inclusiveness, legitimacy, and sustainability of peace efforts in the Israel–Palestine context?*

3.   *How can the principles of the Women, Peace and Security agenda—particularly UN Security Council Resolution 1325—be meaningfully implemented in a highly militarized and politically fragmented conflict environment?*

4.   *What specific barriers prevent Palestinian and Israeli women from participating in peacebuilding, governance, and decision-making processes, and how can these barriers be addressed at the local, national, and international levels?*

5.   *How does the destruction of healthcare infrastructure and the collapse of psychosocial support systems disproportionately impact women, including pregnant women and survivors of violence, during and after periods of active hostilities?*

6.   *What role can women-led civil society organizations and grassroots peace initiatives play in sustaining dialogue and social cohesion when formal political processes are stalled or ineffective?*

7. *How can international actors ensure that humanitarian aid and reconstruction efforts in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territory are gender-responsive and do not reinforce existing inequalities?*

8. *In what ways do economic insecurity, unemployment, and restrictions on movement increase women's vulnerability to exploitation, early marriage, and other harmful coping mechanisms?*

9. *How can international monitoring mechanisms and gender-sensitive indicators be strengthened to ensure transparency, accountability, and evidence-based policy-making in the Israel–Palestine context?*

10. *What concrete steps can the international community take to ensure that women are recognized not only as victims of the conflict, but as essential agents of peace, recovery, and long-term stability?*

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