



UN WOMEN

Topic 1: The question of ensuring the political, economic, and bodily rights of women amid rampant extremism

Committee Overview

Purpose of the Committee

UN Women (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) is dedicated to promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls worldwide. Within a Model United Nations (MUN) setting, this committee focuses on addressing issues such as gender-based violence, economic inequality, political underrepresentation, access to education and healthcare, and the protection of women's rights in conflict and humanitarian settings. Delegates work collaboratively to draft resolutions that propose policies, frameworks, and international cooperation strategies to eliminate discrimination and achieve gender equality in line with global commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5.

Relevance to Global Governance

UN Women plays a critical role in global governance by shaping international norms, supporting member states in implementing gender-responsive policies, and ensuring that women's rights remain central to the international agenda. Gender equality is not only a human rights issue but also a prerequisite for sustainable development, peace, and economic growth. Through advocacy, research, technical assistance, and coordination across the UN system, UN Women strengthens accountability and promotes inclusive governance structures worldwide. In MUN, this committee reflects the importance of multilateral cooperation in addressing systemic inequalities and advancing global justice.

1. Introduction to the topic

a. The rise of extremist ideologies and movements across various regions of the world has posed a severe threat to the political, economic, and bodily rights of women. Extremist groups, whether religious, political, or ideological, often impose rigid gender norms that restrict women's participation in public life, deny access to education and employment, and undermine bodily autonomy.

b. For UN Women, this issue directly challenges the global commitment to gender equality under Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5). In contexts where extremist actors influence governance structures, social norms, or armed conflict, women frequently face systemic discrimination, exclusion, and violence.

c. This committee must examine how international frameworks, multilateral cooperation, and gender-responsive policy mechanisms can protect and promote women's rights in such environments.

2. Background on the topic

- a. Historical background and events

Taliban Rule in Afghanistan (1996–2001; 2021–Present)

1. Under Taliban governance, women have faced severe restrictions on education, employment, healthcare access, and public participation. Since 2021, women have been barred from universities and many workplaces, significantly limiting political and economic engagement. ii.

ISIS in Iraq and Syria (2014–2019)

1. ISIS systematically violated women's rights, including forced marriage, sexual slavery, and public punishment. Sexual violence was used as a weapon of terror and control, demonstrating how extremist governance can institutionalize gender oppression. iii.

Boko Haram in Nigeria

1. The 2014 abduction of 276 schoolgirls from Chibok highlighted extremist targeting of girls' education. Boko Haram has consistently attacked educational institutions and restricted female mobility in affected regions.

iv.

Broader Regional Trends

1. Extremist influence in parts of the Sahel, South Asia, and the Middle East has led to:

- Declines in girls' school attendance
- Increased child marriage
- Reduced female political participation
- Escalation of gender-based violence

- b. Current international framework and response

United Nations Security Council Resolutions

1. UNSCR 1325 (2000) – Women, Peace, and Security

Emphasizes women's participation in peacebuilding and protection during conflict.

2. Subsequent resolutions expand protections against sexual violence in conflict. ii.

CEDAW (1979)

1. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women obligates states to eliminate discrimination and uphold women's civil, political, and economic rights. iii.

Sustainable development goals

1. SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and

girls.

2. Strong linkages to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). iv.

Humanitarian development efforts

1. International actors provide:

- Gender-sensitive humanitarian aid
- Education access programs for girls
- Economic empowerment initiatives
- Legal accountability mechanisms for gender-based crimes

c. Key data and trends

i. Conflict-affected regions report significantly higher levels of gender-based violence. ii. Countries experiencing extremism often rank lower on global gender equality indices. iii. Post-2021 Afghanistan saw dramatic reductions in girls' secondary and tertiary education access. iv. Regions under extremist influence frequently demonstrate widened gender gaps in workforce participation. (Delegates are encouraged to consult UN Women, World Bank, and WEF reports for updated statistics.)

3. Definitions of key terms

a. Extremism

i. Ideologies or movements that reject pluralism, democracy, and human rights, often using coercion or violence to impose rigid political, social, or religious systems

b. Bodily rights

i. The right of individuals to autonomy and self-determination over their own bodies, including protection from sexual violence, forced marriage, and reproductive coercion

c. Political rights

i. The right to vote, participate in governance, hold public office, and engage in civic life without discrimination

d. Economic rights

i. The right to work, own property, access financial resources, and participate equally in economic systems.

4. Relevant UN bodies and resolutions

a. Major UN bodies involved

UN WOMEN

1. UN Women is the primary UN entity responsible for gender equality and the empowerment of women. It:

a. Supports Member States in implementing gender-responsive laws and policies

b. Coordinates the UN system's work on gender equality

c. Leads initiatives addressing violence against women in conflict settings

d. Promotes women's participation in peace processes and governance

2. UN Women plays a central role in ensuring that counter-extremism strategies do not undermine women's rights and instead strengthen their protection. ii.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

1. The UNSC addresses women's rights within conflict and extremist

settings through the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda.

It:

a. Recognizes sexual violence as a tactic of war

b. Calls for women's participation in peace negotiations

c. Encourages protection of women in conflict zones iii.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

1. OHCHR monitors state compliance with international human rights law, including violations against women under extremist governance. iv.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

1. UNDP addresses:

a. Gender inequality in fragile states

b. Economic empowerment programs for women

c. Governance reforms to promote inclusive political participation

UNICEF

1. UNICEF focuses on:

- a. Girls' access to education
- b. Prevention of child marriage
- c. Protection of girls from extremist recruitment and exploitation
- b. Key UN resolutions

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)

1. Established the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda
2. Calls for increased participation of women in peace and security decision-making
3. Urges protection of women and girls in conflict ii.

UNSCR 1820 (2008)

1. Recognizes sexual violence as a tactic of war
2. Calls for accountability for perpetrators iii.

UNSCR 1888 & 1960

1. Strengthen mechanisms to combat sexual violence in armed conflict iv.

UNSCR 2242 (2015)

1. Links counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts with women's participation and protection
- c. International treaties and conventions

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

Against Women (CEDAW) – 1979

1. Often described as the international bill of rights for women
2. Legally binds ratifying states to eliminate discrimination
3. Requires protection of political, economic, and bodily rights ii.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

1. Protects political participation and freedom from discrimination iii.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

1. Guarantees rights to work, education, and healthcare iv.

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

1. Protects girls from forced marriage, exploitation, and denial of education
- d. Current UN Initiatives and Action Plans

Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda

1. Encourages Member States to adopt National Action Plans (NAPs)
2. Promotes women's participation in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction ii.

UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2015)

1. Calls for gender-sensitive approaches
2. Emphasizes inclusion of women in preventing radicalization iii.

Spotlight Initiative (EU–UN Partnership)

1. Focuses on eliminating violence against women and girls
2. Targets regions with high instability and conflict iv.

Gender-Responsive Humanitarian Action

1. Ensures aid programs integrate protection against gender-based violence
2. Promotes safe access to education and healthcare in extremist-affected areas

UN Women's Gender Equality in Fragile Settings Programs

1. Supports women-led civil society organizations
2. Promotes economic resilience for women in conflict zones
3. Advocates against discriminatory laws imposed by extremist authorities
5. Major actors and their relevance

a. Key countries

i. Afghanistan - Under Taliban rule, women face severe restrictions on education, employment, and public life. It is the clearest modern example of systemic rights erosion under extremist governance and central to UN debates. ii. Nigeria - Affected by Boko Haram insurgency. While the government supports gender equality legally, extremist violence has targeted girls' education and women's safety, highlighting implementation challenges. iii. United States of America - Promotes the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda and funds gender equality initiatives globally. It plays a key role in sanctions, diplomacy, and UN Security Council discussions.

b. Non state actors

i. NGO's

1. Document abuses, provide services to survivors, and advocate for accountability and international action.

ii. Private sector

1. Tech companies combat extremist propaganda online; corporations influence women's economic empowerment in fragile states.

iii. Regional Organizations

1. African Union (AU): Addresses extremism in Africa; promotes gender equality through regional frameworks.

2. European Union (EU): Funds gender programs and applies sanctions.

3. Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC): Influences dialogue in Muslim-majority states.

6. Guiding questions

a. How can the international community protect women's rights in territories controlled or influenced by extremist groups?

b. How can counter-terrorism and counter-extremism strategies be made gender-responsive?

c. What mechanisms can ensure accountability for gender-based violence committed by extremist actors?

d. How can humanitarian aid be delivered to women and girls without legitimizing extremist regimes?

e. What role should sanctions or diplomatic pressure play in responding to systemic violations of women's rights?

f. How can women be meaningfully included in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction?

g. What strategies can strengthen women's economic independence in conflict-affected regions?

h. How can international law (CEDAW, UNSCR 1325, etc.) be better enforced in fragile states?

i. What partnerships between governments, NGOs, and regional organizations are most effective in protecting women's rights?