

# UN Women

Strengthening Women's Rights and Gender Equality  
in Afghanistan



## Message from the Dais:

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My name is Fatima Massoud, and I'm a second-year law student at Université La Sagesse. Over the years, I've had the chance to grow within the MUN community—as a delegate, secretary-general, secretary, dais member, and head of training. This time, I'm truly honored to serve as one of the Chairs of the UN Women committee. I know how intimidating it can feel at first, but trust me—every voice matters. So speak up, ask questions, and do not be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. You're here for a reason, and I cannot wait to see the incredible ideas you'll bring to the table.

–Fatima Massoud, Chair

My name is Dana Al Hachem, a Political Studies major at the AUB with a minor in International Law. For over seven years, I've been actively engaged in Model United Nations, serving as a delegate, Chair, secretary, and secretary-general across both national and international conferences. My work has consistently focused on women's rights and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, particularly its adaptation to the Arab world. I've even collaborated with UN Women on tailoring this resolution to better serve women in the region. In line with this commitment, I'm honored to be chairing the UN Women committee at the upcoming conference, an opportunity that aligns perfectly with my passion for multilateral diplomacy and inclusive global policy-making.

–Dana Al Hachem, Chair

My name is Marilyn Maatouk, and I'm honored to serve as your Co-Chair for this committee. I'm currently a senior at Antonine International School, and my journey with Model United Nations began back in middle school. Over the years, I've had the privilege of receiving several awards—including Best Delegate in Diplomacy and Best Position Paper—and I've also served as an advisor in various MUN programs. For me, MUN is far more than an extracurricular activity, it has become a lifestyle. I'm truly excited to be working with all of you. We have high expectations for this year's conference, and I am confident that, with dedication and teamwork, we can create a truly exceptional experience.

-Marilyn Maatouk, Co-Chair

My name is Lamar Khalil, and I am currently a senior in the IB2 program at Brummana High School. I have been involved in Model United Nations for nearly six years, taking on various roles such as delegate, trainer, and member of the dais. It is a pleasure to serve as your Co-Chair for this committee, and I look forward to a productive and engaging experience together.

-Lamar Khalil, Co-Chair

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## **Introduction to The Committee**



UN Women is a United Nations organization established in 2010 dedicated to promoting gender equality and empowering women. This entity was created to help accelerate progress in meeting the needs of women and girls around the world.

UN Women supports Member States (countries that are officially part of the United Nations) in setting global standards for gender equality and collaborates with governments and civil society to create and

implement laws, policies, and programs that effectively support women and girls. Its global work aims to make the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls worldwide.



The organization focuses on four key priorities:

- Ensuring that women can lead, participate in, and benefit equally from governance.
- Promoting income security, decent work, and economic independence for women.
- Guaranteeing a life free from all forms of violence for women and girls.
- Enabling women and girls to play a greater role in building peace, responding to crises, and benefiting equally from disaster and conflict prevention efforts.

## Rules of Procedure

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This committee will operate on the basis of the regular BEYMUN rules of procedure. Delegates are required to use the following motions:

### 1. Setting the Agenda

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to set the agenda in favor of Topic A/B. "

Yet, this motion will not be used in the conference since there is 1 topic.

## **2. Speaker's List**

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to open the Speaker's List with a speaker's time of [Y] seconds. "

## **3. Moderated Caucus**

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to suspend the debate and move into a moderated caucus to discuss '[Subtopic Y]' for a total time of [Z] minutes, with a speaker's time of [W] seconds. "

## **4. Unmoderated Caucus**

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to suspend the debate and move into an unmoderated caucus to [form blocs and alliances / discuss resolutions/work on the working paper or draft resolution / discuss the crisis] for a total time of [Y] minutes. "

## **5. Consultation of the Whole**

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to suspend the debate and move into a consultation of the whole to discuss [the recommendations elaborated in the previous unmoderated caucus / the crisis] for a total time of [Y] minutes. "

## **6. Adjourn the Meeting**

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to adjourn the meeting for [Y] minutes for the purpose of [a lunch break / a coffee break]. "

## **7. Solicit a Third Party**

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to solicit [Third Party Y], as they possess relevant information or expertise regarding [Subtopic Z / the crisis]. "

## **8. Press Conference**

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to suspend the debate and move into a press conference to discuss [a resolution related to Y / the crisis] for a total time of [Z] minutes. "

## **9. Extend the Time of the Unmoderated Caucus**

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to extend the duration of the current unmoderated caucus by [Y] minutes. "

## 10. Introduce the Draft Resolution

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to introduce the draft resolutions with a speaker's time of [Y] seconds per author or co-sponsor. "

## 11. Close Debate and Move into Voting Procedure

"The delegate of [Country X] motions to close the debate and move directly into voting procedure. "

(Note: This motion requires a two-thirds majority to pass.

### Written Motions:

1. **Right of Reply:** Delegates can request the right of reply to another delegate who has offended their country. There is no right of reply to a right of reply.
2. **Appeal to the Chair's Decision:** If the delegates feel that the chair has made an unfair decision, the delegates can send it as a note to the Chair.

### Points:

- **Point of Order:** Used to correct a procedural or factual mistake. Interruptive, but do not overuse it.
- **Point of Personal Privilege:** Request to leave or adjust comfort (e. g. , temperature). Interruptive.
- **Point of Inquiry:** Ask about the rules or current stage. Interruptive.
- **Point of Information:** Ask a question when the floor is open. Not interruptive.
- **Point to Instigate a Debate:** Challenge another delegate's resolution stance. Interruptive and subject to chair's approval.

## UN Women's Roles:

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1) **Setting International Laws and Standards:** UN Women helps Member States create and adopt global norms and policies that support gender equality.

2) **Empowering Women and Girls:** UN Women promotes women's leadership, economic independence, protection from violence, and involvement in peacebuilding and crisis response.

3) **Monitoring Progress:** It tracks and reports on global progress toward gender equality and encourages continuous improvement.

4) **Managing UN Efforts:** UN Women leads and coordinates the work of the entire UN system on gender equality, ensuring a more unified and effective approach.

In short, UN Women acts as a global advocate, advisor, and partner to make sure women and girls everywhere can enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and dignity.

## Mapping to the Sustainable Development Goals

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The topic at hand addresses a critical issue that is deeply intertwined with the core principles of the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Several of these goals are directly relevant and serve as foundational pillars for achieving sustainability in the context of this matter.

**Core SDG: Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.**

Intertwined with the ongoing struggle of women in Afghanistan for equality and against gender discrimination, this SDG underscores the critical importance of advancing such initiatives in today's context.

## **Relevant SDGs:**

### ***Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being***

Ensure healthy lives, promote well-being, and medical accessibility for all genders and all ages.

### ***Goal 4: Quality Education***

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

### ***Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth***

Promote sustainable economic growth that allows inclusive and accessible employment opportunities for all genders.

### ***Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities***

Provide equal access to justice with reliable institutions that allow the protection of women globally.

### ***Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions***

Provide proper judicial and institutional systems that guarantee accountability and justice for all.

### ***Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals***

Allows the proper implementation of equality measures and holds non-compliant countries accountable.



## **Introduction to The Topic**



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The struggle for women's rights and gender equality in Afghanistan is one of the most pressing human rights issues of our time. After decades of conflict and instability, Afghan women have faced repeated cycles of progress and regression. While there were notable advancements in education, employment, and political participation in the early 2000s, recent developments—particularly following the Taliban's return to power in August 2021—have led to a severe rollback of those hard-won rights.



Under the current regime, Afghan women and girls are being systematically excluded from public life. Bans on secondary and higher education, restrictions on employment opportunities, limitations on movement without a male guardian, and the dissolution of institutions dedicated to protecting women's rights have not only violated international human rights norms but have also triggered global concern.

## Topic in Depth

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- **The 2021 Taliban Takeover and the Reversal of Women's Rights:**

Since the the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, Afghan women and girls have been subjected to severe limitations on their basic freedoms. The group has reinstated many of the restrictive policies that were in place during their previous rule from 1996 to 2001, curbing access to education, healthcare, and employment. Women are no longer allowed to travel without a male guardian and must adhere to a strict dress code. These measures have drawn widespread



condemnation from the international community. Human Rights Watch has described the situation as one of the most serious crises for women's rights globally [5].

- **Ban on Girls' Secondary and University Education:**

Under Taliban rule, girls in Afghanistan have been prohibited from attending school beyond the sixth grade, and women have been barred from pursuing higher education. As a result, more than 2.2 million Afghan girls have been denied the fundamental right to learn and prepare for their futures. In December 2022, these restrictions were extended to include both public and private universities. This move sparked widespread protests from female students and drew strong condemnation from the international community. The right to education for girls remains one of the most urgent and deeply concerning human rights issues in Afghanistan today <sup>[6]</sup>.



- **Suspension of the Ministry of Women's Affairs:**

In September 2021, one of the Taliban's earliest actions was the dissolution of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. It was replaced by the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, an entity focused on enforcing strict interpretations of Islamic codes. This shift marked the removal of institutional support for women's rights within the Afghan government. The Ministry of Women's Affairs had previously championed gender equality, legal protection, and educational opportunities for women. Its dismantling left Afghan women without formal representation or advocacy at the governmental level <sup>[7]</sup>.

- **Enforcement of Ethical Regulations in Everyday Life:**

The Taliban's morality police, operating under the Ministry for Virtue and Vice, oversee public behavior according to their interpretation of Islamic law. Men have been detained for having hairstyles deemed "un-Islamic" or for failing to attend mosque prayers, while women have been arrested for not adhering to strict dress codes or for traveling alone. These regulations severely limit the freedoms of movement, speech, and expression for all Afghans. The pervasive threat of punishment has fostered an environment of continuous surveillance and intimidation <sup>[8]</sup>.



- **Global Organizations Defend Women's Rights:**

Despite the Taliban's restrictive measures, international organizations such as UN Women persist in advocating for the rights of Afghan women. These organizations offer humanitarian assistance, support covert educational initiatives, and work to amplify the voices of Afghan women on the global stage. Their efforts play a critical role in holding the Taliban accountable for human rights violations and exerting diplomatic pressure to reverse discriminatory policies. The rights of Afghan women continue to be a key issue in ongoing UN human rights discussions <sup>[9]</sup>.

- **Financial Effects of Gender Inequality:**

Excluding women from the workforce has had a devastating impact on Afghanistan's economy. Prior to 2021, women accounted for more than 20% of the workforce, particularly in essential sectors such as healthcare and education. The current restrictions have deepened poverty and made it increasingly difficult for families to make ends meet. Economic experts, including the World Bank, have warned that gender-based exclusion will significantly hinder long-term recovery. Achieving gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but it is also crucial for economic stability<sup>[8]</sup>.

## **International Actions**



### **A) United Nations Security Council Resolutions and Humanitarian Funding:**

The United Nations has condemned the Taliban's actions and called for Afghan women's full participation in public life. In 2022, it launched a \$5 billion appeal to address Afghanistan's crisis, with targeted support for women's health, education, and safety. UN Women continues to advocate for women's rights in Security Council briefings<sup>[10]</sup>.

### **B) G7 Joint Statements on Gender Equality in Afghanistan:**

The G7 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States) have jointly called on the Taliban to respect the rights of Afghan women. In August 2021, their foreign ministers affirmed that access to education, work, and freedom of movement is essential. They also advocated for linking future aid to human rights commitments<sup>[11]</sup>.

### **C) EU Human Rights Actions and Aid Initiatives:**

Since 2021, the EU has allocated over €300 million in humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, focusing on women-led households, women's

healthcare, and safe education. It has also considered sanctions against Taliban leaders responsible for human rights abuses. The European Parliament continues to highlight women's rights violations in Afghanistan through regular debates <sup>[12]</sup>.

#### **D) US State Department: Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights:**

In 2022, the U.S. established the position of Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights to spearhead diplomatic efforts on gender equality in Afghanistan. The envoy collaborates with allies, Afghan women activists, and international organizations to monitor conditions and advocate for policy changes. The U.S. also supports underground schools for girls and funds NGOs assisting Afghan women <sup>[13]</sup>.



#### **Questions to consider**

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1. How can global actors promote gender equality in Afghanistan without overstepping national sovereignty or cultural norms?
2. What initiatives has your country taken to aid in the advancement of women's rights in Afghanistan?
3. Who are the primary stakeholders and who are the main victims of discrimination based on gender in Afghanistan?

4. How can the international community pressure the Taliban to lift restrictions on women's rights in Afghanistan?
5. What role can neighbouring countries play in supporting gender equality in Afghanistan?

## Recommendations

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- Delegates are recommended to research the history of Afghanistan from the 1960s to 2021, including the civil war, reforms, and the rise of the Taliban.
- Delegates are strongly advised to investigate the structure of the Taliban and its relation to the abuse of Sharia law against women.
- Delegates are encouraged to look into the contrast between the legal framework of Afghanistan and the restrictions imposed by the Taliban that contradict national legislation.
- Delegates are recommended to research treaties and conventions, as well as review the international community's responses, including UN resolutions and foreign aid strategies.
- Delegates are encouraged to research similar successful case studies and initiatives from other post-conflict or conservative regions and the impact of foreign aid, sanctions, and international diplomacy on gender rights.
- Delegates should have a basic understanding of gender mainstreaming, intersectionality, and cultural relativism vs. universalism.

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