

SAI Model United Nations 2025

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women

SAI International School, Bhubaneswar, Odisha



Background Guide

Agenda: *Women's rights under the Taliban and Global Repercussions.*

Dates: 25th-26th July 2025

Executive Board:

Chairperson- *Mr. Sanat H. Puri*

Vice-Chairperson- *Ms. Sushree Subhrasweta Hota*

Note: The present document intends to make you aware of the background of the agenda put forward for the discussion. It does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of SAIMUN 2025

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Delegates,

We welcome you to this simulation of the UNWOMEN at SAIMUN 2025. From the off, it is our hope that you have begun your initial and most basic research into the agenda and related topics. On the outset, we must be aware of the Mandate of the Committee and understand that though general debate can happen on this agenda, the resolutions made during council cannot pertain to matters beyond the ambit of our mandate.

We hope that the following study guide can provide an insight into the nature and functionality of the committee. However, we must also warn you that this guide is merely an assistive document, and should by no means encompass the entire scope of your research into the agenda. We, the members of the Executive Board, do indeed expect the debate in committee to follow a certain direction that shall be made clear by this guide, however, we would highly appreciate delegates to find different viewpoints and angles to the issues put forward by the agenda. Your Executive Board is here to guide debate, and will be taking part in substantive debate only through the updates and questions to you. Regarding Rules of Procedure, we would ask you to be conversant in them but not regard them as strict and unbreakable.

We urge you to use this background guide only as a starting point for your research. At no point are you supposed to rely completely on it. Only when you research beyond the guide can we ensure healthy debate. What this Executive Board expects is that you to express an analysis of the information you have, not to just read out that information. This will be a fast paced committee, and despite the tremendous pressure, it will be a refreshing experience from the usual pace of debate in MUNs. Never be afraid to suggest something out of the box, because it is going to be discussed by your peers if you can lobby. We expect the delegates to perform well by striking the right balance between Substantive and Procedural knowledge.

Lastly, we would request all the delegates to put sincere efforts in preparation and research for the simulation and work hard to make it a fruitful learning experience for all. Feel free to contact us if you have any queries or doubt.

Best Regards

Executive Board- UNWOMEN

EVIDENCE OR PROOF ACCEPTED

Following sources will be accepted as credible in the committee:

1) News Sources

- a. REUTERS – Any Reuters' article which clearly makes mention of the fact stated or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by another delegate in council can be used to substantiate arguments in the committee. (<http://www.reuters.com>)
- b. State operated News Agencies – These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are, RIA Novosti (Russia) <http://en.rian.ru/> IRNA (Iran) <http://www.irna.ir/ENIndex.html>

2) Government Reports

These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a nuance is that the Executive Board as credible information can still accept a report that is being denied by a certain country. Some examples are Government Websites like the State Department of the United States of America <http://www.state.gov/index.htm> or the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation <http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/index.htm>. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of various nations like India (<http://www.mea.gov.in/>) or People's Republic of China (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>). Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Reports <http://www.un.org/en/members/> Multilateral Organizations like the NATO, ASEAN, OPEC, etc.

3) UN Reports

All UN Reports are considered credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of this joint session. UN Bodies like the UNSC (<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/>) or UNGA (<http://www.un.org/en/ga/>). UN Affiliated bodies like the International Atomic Energy Agency (<http://www.iaea.org/>), World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org/>), International Monetary Fund (<http://www.imf.org/external/index.html>), International Committee of the RedCross (<http://www.icrc.org/eng/index.jsp>), etc.

UNITED NATIONS ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Introduction & History

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, short UN Women, is dedicated to empowering women, eliminating discrimination against women and girls, and achieving equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. The following chapter will provide a brief overview of this body's origins, its membership and its mandate.

Created only in 2010, UN Women is the youngest entity in the UN System. However, efforts to promote and coordinate gender equality worldwide under UN auspices date back much further. Prior to its foundation, four UN sub-organizations focused exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment: the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, established in 1976), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW, established in 1979), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI, established in 1997), and the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW). In order to direct UN activities on gender equality issues more efficiently, UN Women was established as part of the UN reform agenda. In 2009, the General Assembly adopted resolution 63/311, thus laying the foundation for the creation of this new entity. In response to this resolution, Ban Ki-moon specified the details for the composite entity, the mission statement, and the organizational arrangements in the report A/64/588, entitled Comprehensive Proposal for the Composite Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. With the General Assembly adopting resolution 64/289 unanimously in July 2010, UN Women was created and became operational as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly at the beginning of 2011. First executive director and thus Under-Secretary-General became the former Chilean president Michelle Bachelet. Current executive director is former Deputy President of South Africa Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

Mandate

The mandate of UN Women consists of the consolidated mandates of the four predecessor entities. In sum, UN Women acts on three fronts:

1. On a normative front, UN Women determines global standards for gender equality and assists inter-governmental bodies, e.g. the Commission on the Status of Women, and international political negotiations on formulating policies and programmes to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide.
2. At an operational level, UN Women helps Member States upon their request to implement these standards, policies and programmes by providing technical and financial support, as well as advice and expertise. In this process, it is the Member States that determine their own needs and priorities.

3. Within the UN system, UN Women promotes, leads and coordinates all efforts on gender equality and women empowerment. On this account, UN Women collaborates closely with other UN entities, such as the UNDP, UNICEF and the WFP. Exercising this triple mandate, UN Women focuses on five priority areas:
- increasing women's leadership and participation;
 - ending violence against women;
 - engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes;
 - enhancing women's economic empowerment;
 - making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting.

These efforts are embedded in a framework consisting of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, including its twelve critical areas of concern, the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, as well as further applicable United Nations instruments, standards and resolutions that support, address and contribute to gender equality and the empowerment and the advancement of women.

In order to reach its objectives, UN Women cooperates with governments and civil society. It provides support for international political negotiations as well as expertise and financial aid for the implementation of agreed standards in UN Member States. These efforts are supplemented by a series of flagship programme initiatives that seek to remove structural barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment in a variety of fields.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA

Historical Context of Women's Rights in Afghanistan

The trajectory of women's rights in Afghanistan is inseparable from the nation's volatile political history, which has seen repeated cycles of reform, regression, and resistance. Afghan women have navigated a shifting landscape of rights and restrictions shaped by monarchs, communists, mujahideen warlords, theocratic regimes, and foreign interventions. Each era has left a distinct mark on the social, legal, and political fabric of Afghan womanhood.

In the early 20th century, King Amanullah Khan sought to modernize Afghanistan by introducing progressive reforms, including the expansion of education and public roles for women. Influenced by reformist currents in Turkey and Egypt, Amanullah and Queen Soraya Tarzi advocated for unveiling and girls' education—measures that met fierce opposition from conservative tribal leaders and clerics. By 1929, Amanullah was deposed, and his reforms were largely reversed.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Afghan monarchy adopted a constitutional framework that granted women the right to vote and to run for office. The 1964 Constitution marked a turning point in legal equality, and Kabul became a hub of cultural liberalization where women could pursue higher education and careers. However, these developments were unevenly distributed, with rural women continuing to live under rigid patriarchal structures.

The Soviet-backed regime of the 1980s further promoted women's participation in education, the military, and the civil service. Yet, these reforms were viewed by many as externally imposed, intensifying resistance among Islamist factions. Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, Afghanistan descended into civil war, and women's rights became collateral damage amid the chaos. The most severe reversal occurred under Taliban rule from 1996 to 2001. The Taliban enforced an extreme interpretation of Sharia, barring women from education, employment, and appearing in public without a male guardian. Violations of these edicts were met with floggings, stonings, and public executions. Afghan society under Taliban rule was marked by what scholars and international bodies have termed *gender apartheid*—the institutionalized segregation and oppression of women.

The U.S.-led intervention in 2001 led to the re-establishment of a democratic framework where women reclaimed space in public life. By 2021, women held over a quarter of parliamentary seats and participated robustly in education, entrepreneurship, and civil society. Despite these gains, progress was fragile and urban-centric, with many women in rural provinces remaining excluded from formal empowerment.

The return of the Taliban in August 2021 once again extinguished hard-won rights. The regime swiftly barred girls from secondary education, banned women from working in most sectors including NGOs and imposed strict mobility and dress codes. These actions not only violated international legal commitments under CEDAW but also triggered a broader humanitarian crisis with global implications. Understanding this historical context is critical to formulating effective international responses. Afghan women have consistently demonstrated resilience and agency amid systemic oppression. Their struggle is not only a domestic human rights issue but a litmus test for global commitments to gender equality and justice.

Gender Apartheid: A Framework of Analysis

The term "gender apartheid" is gaining growing recognition among international legal scholars, human rights bodies, and women's rights advocates as the most accurate description of the Taliban's systemic repression of women and girls in Afghanistan. Unlike isolated violations of rights, gender apartheid constitutes a deliberate, institutionalized regime of segregation and subjugation based on gender, designed to erase women from public life entirely.

Under the Taliban's rule, women in Afghanistan are subjected to a separate and unequal existence. They are banned from secondary and higher education, prohibited from most employment outside the health and humanitarian sectors, restricted from traveling without a male guardian, and excluded from political participation. Public spaces such as parks, gyms, and even bathhouses have been closed to women. These measures are not random or circumstantial; they are interconnected, coherent, and enforced through a normative framework that mirrors apartheid systems of the past, including racial apartheid in South Africa.

The term "gender apartheid" is not yet explicitly codified in international criminal law, but its conceptual development is deeply informed by existing legal instruments. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination against women, whether by law or custom. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court identifies gender persecution as a crime against humanity when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population. Article 7(1)(h) of the Rome Statute defines persecution as "the intentional and severe deprivation of fundamental rights contrary to international law by reason of the identity of the group."

These legal foundations are increasingly being interpreted to encompass situations of gender apartheid. In 2023, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan and the Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls jointly stated that the Taliban's actions "may amount to gender persecution and potentially to gender apartheid." This marks a crucial step toward the international recognition of gender apartheid not merely as a political descriptor but as a legal framework with enforceable consequences.

Furthermore, the apartheid analogy is supported by the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973), which defines apartheid as inhuman acts committed to establish and maintain domination by one group over another and systematically oppressing them. Although the original context of this Convention was racial domination, the logic of systemic suppression of a distinct group based on immutable characteristics applies with equal force to the situation in Afghanistan.

The adoption of a gender apartheid framework has significant implications. It moves the conversation beyond individual violations of rights toward a recognition of the Taliban regime as a system of oppression that must be dismantled in its entirety. It reframes the legal and diplomatic obligations of the international community, urging states not only to condemn isolated abuses but to reject the Taliban's legitimacy until structural reforms are made. This approach aligns with state responsibilities under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine and under international human rights law, which obliges states and international institutions to prevent and punish crimes against humanity.

Gender apartheid also highlights the inadequacy of traditional humanitarian responses that treat women's rights as a peripheral issue. Instead, it calls for women's rights to be placed at the center of all negotiations, aid strategies, and accountability mechanisms. The framework provides a powerful lens through which to understand the Taliban's policies not as aberrations of religious practice, but as a system of political control and exclusion that must be addressed through legal, diplomatic, and institutional mechanisms.

In recognizing and confronting gender apartheid, the international community affirms the indivisibility and universality of human rights. Afghanistan must not become a precedent for the normalization of gender-based tyranny. Establishing gender apartheid as a prosecutable international crime is an urgent step toward ensuring that systemic gender oppression, wherever it occurs, is neither ignored nor tolerated.

Taliban Ideology and Gender Policy

The Taliban's gender policy is rooted in an ultraconservative interpretation of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence, one that enshrines patriarchal dominance and the complete subordination of women in public and private life. While the group frames its policies as rooted in Islamic values, its governance model reflects a politicized and distorted implementation of Sharia law, widely condemned by Muslim scholars and international observers alike.

The Taliban's ideological framework stems from a Deobandi interpretation of Islam fused with the Pashtun tribal code, known as *Pashtunwali*. This hybrid construct is deeply patriarchal and has been weaponized to justify severe restrictions on women's rights. Under Taliban rule, gender is not just a matter of social identity, it is a mechanism of state control. Women are seen as bearers of family and community honor, necessitating confinement, surveillance, and submission in the name of virtue and morality.

During their first regime (1996–2001), the Taliban implemented one of the world's most repressive systems of gender apartheid. Women were banned from attending school, working outside the home, or appearing in public without a male guardian (*mahram*). Burqas became compulsory, and violations of these rules were met with brutal punishments floggings, imprisonment, and executions. Health services for women were restricted to female professionals, who themselves had been banned from working, leading to catastrophic consequences in maternal health and access to care.

The Taliban's return to power in August 2021 has seen a reinstatement and in many cases, an intensification of these policies. Girls have been barred from secondary schools and universities, women banned from working in NGOs and most government sectors, and severe restrictions imposed on travel and dress codes. Even female television presenters are now required to veil their faces on screen. These policies have been enforced not merely through religious clerics, but through the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, a feared institution responsible for moral policing.

These gender policies are not isolated edicts but part of a coherent governance strategy that seeks to erase women from public life. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have documented how these rules contribute to a system of *gender persecution* potentially amounting to crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute. Moreover, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan has characterized the

Taliban's treatment of women as institutionalized discrimination that may constitute *gender apartheid*.

Importantly, these policies diverge sharply from Islamic jurisprudential traditions across much of the Muslim world. In countries like Indonesia, Morocco, and Egypt, female education and workforce participation are not only permitted but encouraged within Islamic frameworks. The Taliban's use of religion to justify oppression thus represents an outlier, not a norm.

The Taliban's gender policy is not a passive reflection of cultural tradition it is a strategic doctrine to consolidate power through control of women's bodies, voices, and agency. For the international community, especially actors like UN Women, this underscores the urgency of not only humanitarian aid but normative and diplomatic pressure. Failing to contest these policies risks validating a gender regime that fundamentally contradicts international human rights law and the core values of the United Nations.

IMPACT OF THE TALIBAN REGIME ON WOMEN AND GIRLS (2021–PRESENT)

Since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, the lives of Afghan women and girls have been subjected to systemic oppression that amounts to gender-based persecution. What has unfolded is not a temporary rollback of rights but a deliberate campaign to erase women from all spheres of public life social, economic, political, and educational. These actions not only devastate Afghanistan's national development but also violate a wide spectrum of binding international legal frameworks.

The most visible and egregious policy has been the ban on girls' secondary and tertiary education. Afghanistan now stands alone globally in prohibiting girls from attending school beyond grade six. This sweeping denial violates multiple pillars of international law, including Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Articles 10 and 13 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), all of which guarantee equal access to education.

The Taliban's restrictions extend deeply into the economic domain. Women have been barred from most employment in government institutions and NGOs, severely curtailing their right to work. These edicts breach Article 11 of CEDAW and Article 23 of the UDHR, both of which recognize women's right to employment without discrimination. Moreover, the prohibition against women aid workers has paralyzed essential humanitarian services, especially in maternal health and food security, disproportionately impacting women-headed households.

Women's freedom of movement and participation in public life have been similarly targeted. Decrees requiring a male guardian (*mahram*) to accompany women beyond 72 kilometers, the closure of parks and public baths to women, and restrictions on travel and dress—enforced by the so-called morality police violate Articles 12 and 15 of CEDAW, Article 13 of the UDHR, and Articles 9 and 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

What makes these policies particularly alarming is that they form part of a widespread and systematic campaign of gender-based persecution. Under Article 7(1)(h) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, gender persecution qualifies as a crime against humanity. Numerous human rights observers have asserted that the Taliban's coordinated actions—

denying education, restricting movement, silencing protest, banning employment—may meet this legal threshold.

Furthermore, these measures violate the principles enshrined in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and its subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security. These international commitments affirm the necessity of including women in post-conflict governance and protecting their rights during transitions. The complete exclusion of Afghan women from governmental decision-making and the targeting of women's rights activists directly undermine these global norms.

Domestically, the Taliban's actions stand in contradiction to the spirit of Afghanistan's 2004 Constitution, which, though currently suspended, guaranteed equality before the law and committed the state to uphold the rights of women as per international treaties to which Afghanistan is a signatory.

The cumulative effect of these violations has been devastating: increased rates of suicide among women, the collapse of women-led institutions, the erasure of female voices in civic spaces, and a humanitarian crisis disproportionately affecting women and girls. Mental health is in freefall, and Afghan women, stripped of legal recourse and personal agency, face isolation, abuse, and poverty.

This is not merely a domestic governance issue, it is an international legal crisis. The Taliban's policies breach foundational instruments of international human rights law, humanitarian law, and criminal law. For the international community, particularly for institutions like UN Women, this underscores the necessity of a multi-pronged approach: diplomatic pressure, legal accountability, documentation of abuses, and unwavering support for Afghan women-led civil society. In the face of a regime that seeks to render women invisible, the global response must be clear, coordinated, and grounded in international law: gender apartheid has no place in the 21st century.

THE ROLE OF UN WOMEN AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

In the face of the Taliban's sweeping erosion of women's rights since 2021, the role of UN Women and the broader international community has become indispensable. As Afghan women face a de facto regime that institutionalizes gender discrimination, the global system is confronted with a pressing mandate: to act decisively, coherently, and lawfully in defense of universal human rights and international legal obligations.

UN Women, as the principal United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, has taken a lead role in amplifying the voices of Afghan women and coordinating global advocacy efforts. UN Women's strategy has centered around four core objectives:

- a. ensuring the participation of Afghan women in all dialogues concerning Afghanistan's future,
- b. documenting gender-specific human rights violations,
- c. supporting Afghan women-led organizations through funding and technical support, and
- d. advising member states on applying pressure through legal, diplomatic, and financial mechanisms.

These efforts are grounded in legal mandates established by the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to which Afghanistan remains a signatory. CEDAW, in particular, obliges state parties to “take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs, and practices which constitute discrimination against women.” Though the Taliban is not recognized as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, its control of state functions places it in violation of these binding norms.

The international community has similarly been guided by UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions under the Women, Peace and Security agenda. These resolutions emphasize the critical role of women in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction, and demand that women's rights be upheld in all security and governance frameworks. The Taliban's policies, which exclude women from decision-making, education, and public life, flagrantly contradict the core tenets of this agenda.

UN Women has also coordinated with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan and with other UN agencies such as OHCHR and UNAMA to systematically document abuses, including those that may constitute gender persecution under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Through these efforts, the groundwork is being laid for potential legal accountability in international forums, especially if gender-based repression is found to rise to the level of crimes against humanity.

At a practical level, the international community has implemented a series of sanctions, funding freezes, and conditional aid mechanisms aimed at pressuring the Taliban to reverse its gender apartheid policies. However, the challenge remains complex: humanitarian aid must be delivered without legitimizing or enabling the Taliban's governance. To navigate this, organizations like UN Women have championed a localization approach, supporting Afghan women-led NGOs and networks that operate at grassroots levels, often in defiance of Taliban restrictions.

Simultaneously, global actors, such as the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and various UN member states, have called for the reinstatement of women's rights as a prerequisite for diplomatic engagement. Several countries have created Afghan Women Resettlement and Education Funds, while others have granted asylum to high-risk Afghan women activists. These actions, though commendable, are far from sufficient given the scale of the repression.

The international community must also pursue non-recognition of any government that systematically denies half its population the right to exist in public life, and must resist normalizing diplomatic ties with the Taliban until meaningful reforms are enacted. Continued silence or symbolic condemnation without enforcement mechanisms undermines the integrity of international law and the credibility of global institutions.

The Taliban's policies are not merely oppressive, they are a test of the international community's resolve to uphold the universality of human rights. UN Women and its partners must remain at the forefront, not only as advocates but as enforcers of global legal standards. Only through coordinated legal action, sustained diplomatic pressure, and unwavering support for Afghan women themselves can the world begin to reverse one of the most severe gender crises of the 21st century.

Humanitarian Crisis and Gendered Impacts

Afghanistan is now in the grip of one of the world's largest humanitarian emergencies. More than 23 million Afghans over half the population need life-saving assistance after the 2021 collapse of the economy and the withdrawal of most foreign funding. The crisis is acute and profoundly gendered: women, girls and female-headed households are hit first and hardest because Taliban edicts simultaneously strip them of livelihoods, freedom of movement and access to aid.

1. Conflict-Induced Hunger

- One Afghan in three ($\approx$ 14.8 million people) faces acute food insecurity, and 3.5 million children are malnourished.
- Two-thirds of female-headed families report they cannot afford basic nutrition.
- The bans on women working for NGOs and UN agencies mean food distributions often take place without female staff, preventing many women from collecting rations in accordance with Taliban "mahram" rules. This violates Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and UN Security Council Resolution 2417 (2018), which prohibits starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.

2. Health and Maternal Mortality: The dismantling of Afghanistan's female health-workforce, once the backbone of rural clinics has left millions without care. According to UN estimates, an Afghan woman now dies from pregnancy-related causes every two hours; nationwide bans on contraception sales announced in 2023 exacerbate the risk. These practices breach Article 12 of CEDAW, Articles 24 and 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and Geneva Convention IV, Article 16, which obliges parties to protect the wounded and the sick.

3. Nutrition of Women and Children: UN OCHA's 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan warns that 7.8 million children under five and women will require therapeutic feeding this year. Stunting already affects 41 percent of Afghan children, setting back human capital for a generation and violating CRC Article 27 on the child's right to an adequate standard of living.

4. Protection Risks: Child Marriage and Gender-Based Violence: Soaring poverty has pushed families to adopt negative coping mechanisms. Forced and child marriage already affecting one in three girls before 2021 has risen sharply as desperate parents exchange daughters for dowries or "protection". The practice contravenes CEDAW Article 16, CRC Article 32, and the Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

5. Mental-Health Emergency: Humanitarian agencies report a sharp spike in depression, anxiety and suicide attempts among women and adolescent girls confined to their homes, many of whom have lost education, employment and public identity. This silent crisis is compounded by the collapse of psychosocial services and by Taliban closures of safe-houses for survivors of violence. Under ICESCR Article 12 and WHO's Mental Health Gap Action Programme, the de facto authorities have a duty to ensure access to mental-health care, yet they actively obstruct it.

6. Humanitarian Access Constraints: From January–April 2025, 18 percent of all reported access incidents involved restrictions on female aid workers, including harassment, detention

or blanket bans on their participation. These constraints violate Fourth Geneva Convention, Article 59, which requires occupiers to permit free passage of relief, and they breach UN Security Council Resolution 2615 (2021), which demands unhindered humanitarian access in Afghanistan.

7. Climate Shocks and Displacement: Successive droughts, sudden flash floods and a severe 2024 winter have pushed rural households beyond coping capacity. Climate impacts intersect with gender norms: women have fewer land-tenure rights, cannot travel to seek day labour, and are last to eat when food is scarce. Internal displacement has risen, yet Taliban bans on women appearing unaccompanied in public hinder displaced women from registering for aid or securing shelter.

8. Legal Obligations and Accountability: The Taliban's policies contravene a lattice of international norms, including UDHR Article 25 (right to food, health and well-being), ICESCR Article 11, CEDAW, CRC, and obligations under International Humanitarian Law to facilitate impartial relief. Their systematic obstruction of aid and discriminatory deprivation of essentials may also constitute the war crime of "wilfully impeding relief supplies" under Rome Statute Article 8(2)(b)(xxv).

Regional and Global Security Implications

The Taliban's systematic repression of women's rights in Afghanistan extends beyond the immediate humanitarian and human rights crises; it poses serious and multifaceted security challenges for the region and the international community. The rollback of women's freedoms and the marginalization of half the population destabilize Afghanistan's social fabric, contribute to long-term insecurity, and have reverberating effects on global peace and security frameworks.

Regionally, Afghanistan shares porous borders with Pakistan, Iran, China, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. The insecurity generated by the Taliban's governance, characterized by gender-based repression and exclusion—has exacerbated existing ethnic, tribal, and political fault lines. The exclusion of women from social and economic participation has worsened poverty and unemployment, driving displacement and refugee flows into neighboring countries, particularly Pakistan and Iran. The large-scale migration of Afghan women and families seeking safety places pressure on host states' social services and heightens tensions around border security and resource allocation.

Furthermore, the Taliban's approach to women's rights reflects and reinforces extremist ideologies that can foster radicalization and recruitment into transnational militant groups. The suppression of women's voices and participation creates a vacuum in civil society, eliminating moderate and progressive elements that could counter extremist narratives. This ideological entrenchment threatens to destabilize not only Afghanistan but also adjacent regions susceptible to spillover violence and terrorism.

On a global scale, the gender-based repression in Afghanistan challenges the international community's collective security architecture. Women's exclusion from governance undermines prospects for inclusive peace and sustainable development, which are recognized by the United Nations Security Council as essential for preventing conflict relapse. The denial of education and employment for women stunts Afghanistan's human capital development,

fostering a generation vulnerable to poverty and disenfranchisement conditions often correlated with instability and violence.

Internationally, the Taliban's policies also impact diplomatic relations and global governance. Many states have conditioned diplomatic recognition and aid on the respect for human rights, particularly women's rights. The Taliban's refusal to comply risks Afghanistan's political isolation, complicating cooperation on counterterrorism, narcotics control, and refugee management issues of global concern.

Moreover, the systemic gender oppression contravenes fundamental norms enshrined in the United Nations Charter and various human rights treaties, challenging the international legal order's authority and effectiveness. This erosion undermines the principle that gender equality is foundational to peace and security, as articulated in Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1889, and 2242.

Failure to address these gendered dynamics risks the normalization of oppressive governance models, emboldening other authoritarian actors to replicate exclusionary policies. It also weakens multilateral mechanisms aimed at promoting human rights and gender equality as pillars of global peace.

In conclusion, the repression of women's rights under the Taliban is not an isolated social or cultural issue but a catalyst for broader regional instability and a challenge to the international security architecture. Addressing this crisis demands a comprehensive approach that integrates gender considerations into diplomatic strategy, conflict prevention, and security cooperation. Only through such a lens can the international community safeguard both human rights and peace in Afghanistan and beyond.

Pathways to Sustainable Solutions: Diplomatic, Legal, and Grassroots Approaches

Addressing the egregious violations of women's rights under the Taliban demands a multi-layered strategy that integrates diplomatic pressure, legal accountability, and empowerment of grassroots actors. Sustainable solutions must acknowledge the complexity of Afghanistan's political and social landscape while centering Afghan women's voices and leadership.

Diplomatic Engagement and Conditionality

The international community faces a difficult balancing act in engaging with the Taliban regime. While outright isolation risks further marginalization and humanitarian deterioration, unconditional recognition could legitimize and entrench gender apartheid policies. A calibrated diplomatic approach involves making the restoration of women's rights a non-negotiable precondition for any formal recognition or aid agreements. This aligns with existing international human rights obligations and reinforces the normative framework that gender equality is foundational to peace and stability. Regional powers, multilateral organizations, and major donors must coordinate to present a unified front that prioritizes women's rights in political dialogues and peace negotiations.

International Legal Mechanisms

The legal avenues for holding the Taliban accountable are evolving but remain constrained by geopolitical realities. Nonetheless, several mechanisms offer pathways to justice. International

courts, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), may have jurisdiction over crimes against humanity including gender persecution, if admissibility and state cooperation can be secured. UN human rights bodies continue to document abuses and issue condemnations, creating a robust evidentiary base for future accountability. Furthermore, targeted sanctions against Taliban leaders responsible for policies that violate women's rights serve both as punitive and deterrent measures. States must also consider universal jurisdiction laws that allow for prosecution of serious international crimes irrespective of where they occur.

Supporting Afghan Women's Civil Society

Perhaps the most critical and underutilized avenue for sustainable change is the empowerment of Afghan women-led civil society organizations. These groups are vital for maintaining educational programs, legal aid, health services, and advocacy at the community level—often operating under extraordinary risks. International donors and agencies, including UN Women, should prioritize flexible funding mechanisms that circumvent Taliban control and directly support these actors. Capacity-building initiatives that enhance women's leadership, legal literacy, and economic independence will strengthen resilience against systemic oppression.

Humanitarian Assistance with a Gender Lens

Humanitarian aid must be designed and implemented with a gender-sensitive approach that ensures women's access and participation. This includes employing female staff, facilitating women's safe movement to access services, and integrating protection measures against gender-based violence. Coordination among humanitarian actors should align with international frameworks such as the Women, Peace and Security agenda and uphold Afghanistan's treaty obligations.

Education and Digital Inclusion

Innovative solutions are required to circumvent Taliban-imposed restrictions on female education. Remote learning programs, digital literacy initiatives, and safe community learning centers can provide women and girls with opportunities to continue education and vocational training. Investment in technology and infrastructure, combined with secure platforms for learning, will mitigate the long-term damage of the Taliban's bans.

International Solidarity and Advocacy

Global civil society and international organizations must sustain advocacy efforts that keep Afghan women's rights on the international agenda. Media, cultural diplomacy, and public campaigns can amplify Afghan women's voices and mobilize political will. Importantly, partnerships with Afghan diaspora communities can strengthen transnational networks of support and monitoring.

Long-term Vision: Inclusive Peacebuilding

Ultimately, the restoration of women's rights is inseparable from Afghanistan's peace and reconstruction. Inclusive governance that guarantees women's meaningful participation in political and social institutions is essential. The international community should insist on gender quotas, legal reforms, and protection mechanisms as integral components of any negotiated settlements. Only through inclusive peacebuilding can Afghanistan break the cycles of violence and exclusion. The multifaceted approach combining diplomatic leverage, legal

accountability, grassroots empowerment, and humanitarian sensitivity offers the best prospect for reversing the gender apartheid imposed by the Taliban. The international community's resolve and sustained engagement will determine whether Afghan women's rights are restored and protected for generations to come.

QUESTIONS THE COMMITTEE REPORT MUST ANSWER

Since UNWOMEN formulates a **Committee Report** as final document, consider answering the following and address the same:

1. What are the specific policies and practices implemented by the Taliban that have led to the systematic suppression of women's rights in Afghanistan?
2. How do these restrictions impact women's access to education, healthcare, employment, and political participation?
3. In what ways does the Taliban's treatment of women constitute gender apartheid or gender persecution under international law?
4. What are the immediate and long-term humanitarian consequences of these policies on Afghan women and girls, particularly in relation to food security, health, and protection from violence?
5. How does the repression of women's rights in Afghanistan affect regional stability, including refugee flows, radicalization, and cross-border security?
6. What role should international legal frameworks and institutions play in holding the Taliban accountable for violations against women's rights?
7. How can the international community balance the need for humanitarian access and assistance with the enforcement of human rights conditions on aid delivery?
8. What diplomatic strategies and multilateral mechanisms can be employed to pressure the Taliban regime toward restoring women's rights without exacerbating the humanitarian crisis?
9. How can Afghan civil society, especially women-led organizations, be supported and empowered despite restrictions and security risks?

IMPORTANT SOURCES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Women's Rights in Afghanistan Under Taliban Rule: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/02/14/afghanistan-women-rights-under-taliban>
2. Afghanistan: Taliban's Gender Apartheid Must End Now: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/01/afghanistan-taliban-gender-apartheid-must-end/>
3. The Taliban's Systematic Repression of Women: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2023/03/statement-afghanistan-womens-rights>
4. Gender Persecution and International Law: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/gender-persecution-crime-against-humanity>
5. The Impact of Taliban Policies on Regional Security: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/afghanistan>
6. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325\(2000\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325(2000))
7. Human Rights Watch Report on Afghanistan Women's Rights: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/afghanistan-women>
8. Afghanistan: Education Under Taliban: <https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/education>
9. International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-suppression-and-punishment-crime-apartheid>
10. UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325\(2000\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325(2000))
11. UN Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008) on Sexual Violence in Conflict: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/1820\(2008\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1820(2008))
12. UN Security Council Resolution 1889 (2009) on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/1889\(2009\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1889(2009))
13. UN Security Council Resolution 2122 (2013) on Gender Equality in Conflict Resolution: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2122\(2013\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2122(2013))
14. UN Security Council Resolution 2242 (2015) on Strengthening the Role of Women in Countering Violent Extremism: [https://undocs.org/S/RES/2242\(2015\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/2242(2015))
15. UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/76/225 (2021) on the Situation of Human Rights in Afghanistan: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/76/225>
16. UN Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/51/L.26 (2022) on the Deteriorating Situation of Women in Afghanistan: <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/51/L.26>
17. UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/77/229 (2022) on Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/77/229>
18. UN Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/47/1 (2021) on the Serious Human Rights Concerns and Situation in Afghanistan: <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/47/1>

The above mentioned Publications shall help you open up great avenues to clear your fundamentals on the agenda. Content in this background guide should solely be treated as a heads-up for your research and not just your only research. Some sections of the agenda are intentionally omitted leaving you an opportunity to independently deep dive in the research and put forward meaningful content on the table. All the best ☺

