



UNITED NATIONS ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

STUDY GUIDE

TOPIC I

**PROMOTING A HOLISTIC AND
ETHICAL REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH EDUCATION**

TOPIC II

**THE IMPACT OF THE RUSSIA-
UKRAINIAN WAR ON
WOMEN'S RIGHTS**



GMUN 2023
GENIUS MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE



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INTRODUCTION

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Elliott Azli

Chair of UNWOMEN

My name is Elliott, and I am the Chair for UNWOMEN in GMUN23.

Over the past five years, I have actively participated in Model United Nations, honing my skills and gaining valuable experience. I have had the honor of participating as a chair, delegate, secretariat in various conferences, both internationally and locally and I am currently a member of the Malaysian Youth Association for Diplomacy and Policy (MYADP) as their MUN Affairs Associate. Throughout my MUN journey, I have created cherished memories and it is my sincere desire to share that same sense of joy and camaraderie with all of you during this conference.



Outside of my MUN Background, I am 16 years old at the time I am writing this. My future plans involve pursuing a degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) after completing my A levels. I have a deep-rooted passion for reading DC comics and novels, immersing myself in the captivating world of animals through documentaries, and engaging in the strategic game of solitaire.

I have complete confidence that you will excel in your roles as delegates. While I acknowledge that the challenges ahead may not be easy, I urge you to believe in yourselves just as much as I believe in you. Remember, I am here to support you every step of the way. If you have any thoughts, questions, or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I will be more than happy to assist you!

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Chrismond Heng Hao Yin

Co-Chair of UNWOMEN

Hi there! My name is Chrismond, but since that's a long name, just call me Chris! I am the Co-Chair for UNWOMEN in GMUN 2023.

My MUN career started back in 2022, and I have been active in that field ever since then. I'm also 16 as of writing this, and I am in love with video games, mostly because imagination is not limited in a video game and sky's the limit. I came to the realization that I really find joy and pride in defending a person's rights, and for the past year, I have had the honor of attending multiple MUN conferences, physical or online, local or international. My plan after I finish high school is to further my studies in being a lawyer, and hopefully get enrolled in a good university that provides me with the pathway to the future I want. To me, what matters the most in a MUN conference is not the awards, but the precious friends and memories that we made throughout the way, which I will forever cherish and remember. I sincerely hope that I will be able to bring you the same excitement and fun that I experienced in MUN, and make it one of the most memorable MUN experiences you'll ever have!



Though MUN might seem intimidating at first, but when you get into it, you can see that everyone is super chilled and relaxed, all fighting for the same cause, which is promoting peace around the world. Remember, everyone has their first time, and if this is your first time in a MUN, allow us to kickstart your thrilling MUN journey. Me and Elliott are looking forward to meeting all of you, and like he said, we're always here to support you, so if you have any difficulties or questions, feel free to contact us, as it will be my pleasure to help you!

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNCIL



The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, or UNWOMEN in short, is an entity serving to provide and ensure gender equality globally as well as women empowerment.

UNWOMEN works to create and uphold an environment in which all females alike have their own rights under no oppression whatsoever. This entity was formed on July 2, 2010 and was the merging of 4 separate entities that also worked on gender equality and women's empowerment.

UNWOMEN's priorities for female's rights and empowerment include:

- 1) Ensuring women's role in participation and leadership for governance system
- 2) Securing income, work opportunities and economic autonomy for women and girls
- 3) Providing safety and freedom from all and any sorts of violence
- 4) Women and girls having influence and contribution to building sustainable peace and resilience

The jurisdictions that UNWOMEN follows are under the UN Charter, in which the concept of gender equality is one of the core guiding principles of the United Nations (UN). It reflects the commitment to the equality of both men and women in all rights and aspects of human endeavour.

Some actions established by UNWOMEN and United Nations include:

- 1) **Charter of the United Nations (Article 8 and 101):** The article states that there shall be no restrictions on the eligibility of both men and women to participate in any and every capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs.



- 2) **The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995:** A global agreement adopted in 1995 at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, aiming to achieve gender equality and empowering women, with a few key points such providing equal access education and training to women, promoting women’s rights and encouraging women’s participation in the political field. It serves to provide a roadmap for governments, organisations and individuals to work towards gender equality.
- 3) **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):**
SDG 5: Gender Equality looks to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women, acting as a framework to guide policies, programmes and actions meant for advancing gender equality.



TOPIC 1: PROMOTING A HOLISTIC AND ETHICAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION

TOPIC BACKGROUND

KEY TERMS

Abortion: When a fetus is removed from the uterus before it has reached the viable stage (in humans, this usually occurs around week 20 of gestation). An abortion can happen naturally, which is referred to as a miscarriage, or it can be intentionally caused, in which it is referred to as an induced abortion.

Antenatal Care: Often referred to as ‘Prenatal Care’ or ‘Maternity Care’, it is the care that pregnant individuals receive from medical professionals while they are pregnant.

Contraception: The prevention of pregnancy through the use of chemical or mechanical barriers, such as drugs, devices, or surgery. Chemical barriers are referred to as sperm-killing agents or spermicides, whilst mechanical barriers are objects that create a physical barrier between the sperm and the egg.

Female genital mutilation (FGM): Procedures where the external female genitalia are partially or completely removed, or where the female genital organs are impaired for non-medical reasons.

Intrapartum: The time frame covering childbirth, starting with the onset of labour and ending with placenta delivery. Both the pregnant individual and the fetus are included in the definition of intrapartum.

Postnatal Care: A service offered to people in the postpartum period to aid in postpartum recovery and repair after intrapartum.

Reproductive rights: Reproductive rights are based on the recognition of the fundamental rights of all couples and individuals to make decisions about the number, spacing, and timing of their children in a free and responsible manner and to have the knowledge and resources necessary to do so, as well as the right to the best possible sexual and reproductive health.

They also include the freedom from violence, coercion, and discrimination for everyone to make reproductive decisions.

Sex Education: The teaching of topics pertaining to human sexuality, such as human sexual anatomy, sexual activity, sexual reproduction, safe sex and birth control, sexual health, reproductive health, emotional relations and responsibilities, age of consent, and reproductive rights, is known as sex education.

Sexually transmitted infections (STI): Infections that spread from one individual to another through typically sexual intercourse. Some STIs can be transmitted from the mother to the fetus during pregnancy or during childbirth, blood transfusions and sharing of needles.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Recognising the increase in unsafe birth-giving as well as abortion, these matters have significant implications for individuals, communities and societies, with the root causes being the severe lack in reproductive education among the people. When these unwanted incidents happen, it could bring health risks, economic consequences and discrimination to the victims, which increases the harm it could bring to the already crumbling gender inequality.

In order to tackle this issue, the World Health Organization (WHO), has been working hard in order to provide access to reproductive education worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO), is an organisation founded on April 7, 1948, with its aim being to expand universal health coverage as well as coordinate the world's response to health emergencies.

1974 - A WHO meeting on education and treatment in human sexuality is held, with professionals with expertise in human sexuality defining sexual health as: “the integration of the somatic, emotional, intellectual, and social aspects of sexual being, in ways that are positively enriching and that enhance personality, communication, and love.” The report also indicated that attention to pleasure and the right to sexual information were fundamental to this definition.

1994 - In the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), sexual health was included in the definition of reproductive health: “Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes.” Implicit in the definition was the ability of people to reproduce if desired. The

ICPD report also stated the purpose of sexual health was to enhance life and personal relations and not merely for counselling and care related to reproduction and STD's.

2002 - There was a significant advances in the global understanding of human sexuality and behaviour, as well as recognition of the immense global health burden (including extensive mortality and morbidity) associated with a wide range of sexual and reproductive health conditions, including HIV and STDs, such as unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortion, etc. Along with that only came the growing awareness about the impact of discrimination and poor quality of health care on people's sexual and reproductive health.

2004 - WHO's global *Reproductive health strategy to accelerate progress towards the attainment of international development goals and targets* was endorsed by the World Health Assembly and named five core aspects of reproductive and sexual health, one specifically mentioned: "promoting sexual health".

2010 - In order to define sexual health more clearly, WHO assigned a group of global experts to take on the task in 2002, and published the resulting definition for "sexual health" as well as for the related concept of "sex", "sexuality" and "sexual rights" in 2006, with updates to the latter in 2010. A framework for designing sexual health programmes was also published in the same year, identifying and contextualising five multisectoral factors that influence sexual health:

- 1) Laws, policies and human rights
- 2) Education
- 3) Society and culture
- 4) Economics
- 5) Health systems

2015 - A report on *Sexual health, human rights and the law* was published to assist governments and policy-makers improve sexual health by aligning relevant laws and policies with national and international health and human rights obligation. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) was set by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, with SDG 3 specifically mentioning "ensure healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages", with the goal having a specific target to achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services by 2030. (target 3.7)



MAJOR ISSUES WITHIN THE TOPIC

Gender-based Violence and Reproductive Health:

- 1) ***Sexual assault or coerced sex*** are examples of gender-based violence that can result in unplanned pregnancies. Survivors may need to make challenging reproductive decisions, such as whether to continue the pregnancy or get an abortion. It is essential to guarantee survivors' assistance and access to comprehensive reproductive healthcare services.
- 2) ***Reproductive coercion*** is a common component of gender-based violence, where victims are coerced into having unintended pregnancies or compelled to use or not use contraception. This may restrict people's freedom and control over their reproductive decisions.
- 3) ***Gender-based violence can raise the risk of STIs***, including HIV/AIDS. Unprotected intercourse or contact with infected partners may result from coerced or non-consensual sexual interactions. It is crucial to offer survivors STI testing, preventive information, and support services.
- 4) ***Survivors of gender-based violence may face physical and mental trauma that might have an effect on their reproductive health.*** Gynaecological complications, STDs, difficulties getting pregnant, or mental health problems could all affect them. Access to care and support that is trauma aware is essential.
- 5) ***Gender-based violence can make it difficult to get reproductive support and medical care.*** Survivors may be unable to get the appropriate medical care, such as post-assault care, emergency contraception, or testing for STIs, due to fear, stigma, and a lack of support.

Comprehensive Approach vs. Abstinence-Only Education:

Comprehensive sex education and abstinence-only education are two approaches to teaching about sexual health. Comprehensive sex education provides information about various aspects of sexuality, including abstinence, contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), healthy relationships, and communication skills. It aims to empower individuals with accurate information to make informed decisions about their sexual health.

On the other hand, abstinence-only education focuses solely on promoting abstinence from sexual activity until marriage, often excluding information about contraception and safe sex practices. This approach typically emphasises the potential risks and consequences of premarital sexual activity.

Cultural and Religious Sensitivities:

- 1) ***Taboos and stigma:*** Discussions about reproductive health, particularly those involving themes like contraception, abortion, or sexuality, may be stigmatised

according to cultural or religious beliefs. This could obstruct honest communication and prevent the spread of reliable information.

- 2) ***Moral and Ethical Issues:*** Some cultural or religious viewpoints may consider particular reproductive health practices to be immoral or unethical. This may result in opposition or resistance to thorough education about reproductive health that addresses a variety of subjects.
- 3) ***Gender Roles and Power Dynamics:*** In relationships and civilizations, gender roles and power dynamics are frequently greatly influenced by cultural and religious standards. Resistance may be encountered while advocating for gender equality and challenging conventional gender roles in the context of reproductive health education.
- 4) ***Parental and Community Involvement:*** Some cultures place a high value on parental or community input when making decisions on reproductive health, which might restrict the autonomy of people, especially young people. It might be difficult to strike a balance between the requirement for a thorough education and respect for cultural norms.

Socioeconomic Disparities:

Socioeconomic disparities can impact access to reproductive healthcare and education. Promoting policies that address these disparities and ensure equal opportunities for all is essential.

- 1) ***Limited access to healthcare:*** People from low-income backgrounds may find it difficult to afford or access services, especially reproductive healthcare. Reduced access to reproductive healthcare services, such as prenatal care, contraception, or tests for sexually transmitted infections, can be caused by a variety of factors, including lack of insurance coverage, a lack of nearby clinics, or expensive out-of-pocket expenses.
- 2) ***Educational disparities:*** Socioeconomic inequality and educational discrepancies frequently go hand in hand. There might not always be comprehensive sexual education programmes available, particularly in poor schools or areas with few resources. This can result in people being uneducated about sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, and reproductive health, which increases risk.
- 3) ***Contraceptive affordability:*** Accessibility to contraceptives is hampered by the high cost of some methods. Even if reproductive healthcare services are offered, persons with minimal financial resources may not be able to afford birth control options like tablets, implants, or intrauterine devices due to their high cost. This can limit people's capacity to make wise family planning decisions and therefore increase the likelihood of unwanted pregnancies.

Inadequate Curriculum and Resources:

Addressing ethical reproductive health education can present substantial obstacles due to inadequate curriculum and resources. Comprehensive knowledge about reproductive health, including subjects like contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), consent, and reproductive rights, may not be covered insufficiently in the curriculum. Without a strong curriculum, students might not have the information and abilities needed to make wise choices regarding their reproductive health.

Limited resources may make the issue tougher. Inadequate funding may lead to a lack of comprehensive sexuality education programmes, restricted access to healthcare professionals for guest lectures, and obsolete or inadequate teaching materials. These restrictions make it difficult for students to get the precise and current knowledge about reproductive health that is essential for their general wellbeing.

STATUS QUO

Though the need for sexual and reproductive education is a widely discussed topic among the people. It has become the debate for centuries past and for centuries to come, the importance of it still yet to be truly discovered. Sexual and reproductive health are topics brought up by the United Nations multiple times, yet it is still failing to be established as a global need for schools around the world. The latest meeting of the United Nations, on 14 April 2023, has seen progress with some countries supporting the need for comprehensive sexual education. Unfortunately, as always, most countries do not support the idea of prioritizing the idea of providing sexual education.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)'s Commission on Population and Development had its fifty-sixth (56th) session on 14 April 2023, discussing the agenda item on population, education and sustainable development. While the plan was partially agreed and supported by quite the amount of delegates, the committee ultimately ended with delegates failing to adopt draft resolution that contained consultation of references to comprehensive sexual education, as multiple countries are strongly against that idea, reasons being:

- 1) ***Different social standpoints, beliefs and cultures:*** The representative of Senegal mentioned that every country comes from “different horizons and realities”, and reminded all members that it is important to respect all cultures. Noting that certain delegations refused to yield even one comma, he stated that the Commission should learn from this experience and avoid disunity in the future, which were all caused by this topic.



- 2) ***Priorities should be given to subjects with more importance:*** Approximately 263 million children around the world are deprived of any proper education, and while comprehensive sexual education might be a priority to certain *More Economically Developed Countries* (MEDC), it is more important that proper education given to children who need it should be more of a priority compared to promoting priority for sexual education as if there are no more children who are lacking education.
- 3) ***Ethical and moral considerations:*** Sexual and reproductive education for children are widely unacceptable within certain countries, especially Islamic countries as sexual education is only given after marriage. As matters related to sexual topics are considered taboos in multiple countries, having sexual and reproductive education be given to everyone, is indirectly violating the moral and religious education. Providing sexual and reproductive education also plays a big part in disrupting the supposed social stigma of women's and girls' role in a family household.

MAJOR BLOCS, COUNTRIES, OR STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

The International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO): FIGO is committed to developing the knowledge and practice of obstetrics and gynaecology, as well as to improving the health and rights of women. It also strives to reduce healthcare inequities for women and babies.

Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR): The Centre for Reproductive Rights (CRR) is an international legal organisation that advances reproductive rights as essential human rights by using the force of the law. These rights include, among others, access to safe and legal abortion, birth control, high-quality care for pregnant individuals, and information.

Women's Global Empowerment Fund: Women's Global Empowerment Fund's goal is to empower women through political, social, and economic programmes, opening doors while tackling inequality, and enhancing families and communities.

RELEVANCE TO THE UN

In order to ensure thorough sexual and reproductive education is properly given to students all around the world, the United Nations has multiple committees that are working together to make sure that their goals are achieved with acceptance by societies and beliefs all around the

world, hence establishing Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), which aims to give young people accurate, age-appropriate information about sexuality and more importantly, sexual and reproductive health.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA):

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), is an organisation dedicated to ensure sexual and reproductive rights and choices for all, with special emphasis on women. UNFPA works with governments to implement CSE, both in schools and outside of schools and outside of schools through community-based training and outreach. This organisation also promotes policies for, and investment in sexuality education programmes that meet internationally agreed upon standards. All of these serve the purpose to engage health and education ministries to share lessons and global guidelines to generate acceptance for school-based CSE.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):

UNESCO believes that with CSE, young people will be able to learn how to treat each other with respect and dignity from an early age and gain skills for better decision making, communications, and critical analysis. Through CSE, it would transform the mindset of young people's concept on the confusing and conflicting information about sexual health-related matters such as puberty, relationships, sexual activities as well as transition from childhood to adulthood. With that being said, UNESCO has made significant progress in trying to establish CSE as a school-based subject, by partnering with other UN partners and laying out pathways for quality CSE to be provided. An [online toolkit](#) was developed in order to facilitate the design and implementation of CSE programmes at national level. With the toolkit and its [flagship programme](#), UNESCO has successfully reached over 30 millions learners in 33 countries across sub-Saharan Africa, proving it to be a success.

World Health Organization (WHO):

WHO is part of the organisations that are working together in order to promote school-based CSE, recommending that these programmes should be based on an established curriculum; scientifically accurate; tailored for different ages; and comprehensive, meaning that schools should cover a range of topics on sexuality and reproductive, throughout childhood and adolescence. WHO describes that topics covered by CSE include those such as life skills, family life education, consent and bodily autonomy; anatomy, etc.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR):

OHCHR states that in accordance with international human rights law standards, the provision of comprehensive sexuality education inclusive of all individuals, should be supported by countries in order to promote human rights, gender equality, healthy and respectful relationships as well as gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.



CSE plays a significant role in empowering adolescents, enabling them to exercise their sexual and reproductive health rights, allowing adolescents and young people to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, and that the right to sexual and reproductive health is an integral part of the right to health. All of these, in turn, could prevent early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, promote respect in relationships and improve the rights of women and girls, all for the sake of making for a better generation with more awareness of reproductive information.

PAST ACTIONS OR PAST PRECEDENCE

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE):

CSE programmes enable young people to protect and advocate for their health, well-being, and dignity by providing them with a necessary toolkit of knowledge, attitudes and skills. It assists the students in exercising full bodily autonomy, which requires not only the correct choices to be made by young people, but the information to make the choices in a meaningful way. Since these programmes are based on human rights principles, they advance gender equality, women's and girls' rights for young people and future generations. While CSE programmes will be different everywhere, the [United Nations' technical guidance](#), developed by UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, UNAIDS and WHO recommends that CSE programmes should be based on established curriculum and scientifically accurate as well as tailored for different ages.

International technical guidance on sexuality education:

A document developed to assist education, health and other relevant authorities in the development and implementation of school-based and out-of-school comprehensive sexuality education programmes and materials. This document has been shown to be relevant for a country's government education ministers and their professional staff, including curriculum developers. Even non-governmental organisations, youth workers and young people can use the document as an advocacy or accountability tool. Ultimately, this document is useful for anyone involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of sexuality education programmes both in and out of school, including stakeholders working to promote quality education, sexual and reproductive health, adolescent health and gender equality.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Promoting comprehensive and ethical reproductive health education necessitates a thorough strategy. Here are a few potential solutions discussed in **“Day of general discussion on the right to sexual and reproductive rights”**.



Available

at:

<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/CESCR/Discussions/2010/ProgrammeDGD2010.pdf>

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER (QARMAS)

How should consent, sexual violence and personal boundaries be addressed?

How should inclusivity and diversity be incorporated?

How can reproductive health education address the intersectionality of social issues?

What resources and support systems should be implemented to better support youths and pregnant individuals?

How should the privacy and confidentiality of students be protected when being taught reproductive health education?

How can the impact and effectiveness of education be assessed?

FURTHER RESEARCH MATERIALS

- 1) WHO recommendations on maternal and newborn care for a positive postnatal experience. <https://apps.who.int/iris/rest/bitstreams/1415406/retrieve>
- 2) Reproductive rights are human rights. <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/NHRIHandbook.pdf>
- 3) A Holistic Approach to Reproductive Health <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/TB/HRTD/CoFacilitationProcess/OtherStakeholders/WomenattheTable.docx>
- 4) Abortion Policies and Reproductive Health around the World. <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/policy/AbortionPoliciesReproductiveHealth.pdf>
- 5) A compendium on comprehensive sexuality education. <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/health/sr/Compendium-Comprehensive-Sexuality-Education-March-2023.pdf>



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- 6) Disagreeing over References for Comprehensive Sexual Education, Delegates Fails to Adopt Draft Resolution
<https://press.un.org/en/2023/pop1109.doc.htm>
- 7) List of Articles in Charter of United Nations
<https://legal.un.org/repertory>
- 8) Official website of UNWOMEN
<https://www.unwomen.org/en>



TOPIC 2: THE IMPACT OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINIAN WAR ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

TOPIC BACKGROUND

KEY TERMS

Arbitrary detention: Arbitrary or unlawful detention happens when someone is taken into custody by the government without being given a fair trial or due process, or when someone is imprisoned without a valid reason to restrict their freedom.

Displacement: The situation where people are forced to abandon their usual place of living.

Human trafficking: The use of coercion, fraud, or deception to obtain, transport, transfer, harbour, or receive individuals with the intent to profit from their exploitation.

Humanitarian crisis: A single occurrence or a string of events that pose a risk to the health, safety, or well-being of a neighborhood or a sizable population. It typically spreads across an expansive land area and could be either an internal or external conflict. In such situations, local, national, and international actions are required.

Sexual and gender-based violence: Act of violence that are perpetrated against individuals based on their sex or gender, often with the intent to control, dominate, or harm them.

Internally displaced persons: A person or groups of persons who, without crossing an internationally recognised border, have been compelled to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, particularly due to or in order to avoid the effects of an armed conflict, situations of widespread violence, human rights violations, or natural or man-made disasters.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

The Russo-Ukrainian War, previously known as the Ukrainian crisis in its early stages in 2014, is an ongoing military and political conflict between Russian, alongside its backed separatists, and Ukraine. Following Ukraine's Revolution of Dignity, Russia took control of Crimea away from Ukraine, and provided military support to pro-Russian separatists fighting the Ukrainian military in the Donbas War. Over the course of 8 years, there has been navy clashes, cyberwarfares and heightened political tensions between the two countries.

In February 2022, Russia officially launched a full-scale invasion to Ukraine, starting from the Kherson region including the regional capital, planning to forward their army and take control of Ukraine. As the invasion of Ukraine kept prolonging, the war is taking a devastating toll on the well-being of millions of women, girls and young people.

Common accessibility to livelihood opportunities and basic services, including life-saving sexual and reproductive health care and information, has been severely disrupted. Gender-based violence including sexual assault has been seen everywhere, but is still heavily under-reported. Throughout history, it has repeatedly shown that the outbreak of conflict and war increases the exposure of women and girls to war crimes, arbitrary killings, rape and trafficking. Accountability has yet to be given to those who commit such atrocious act, despise the amount of work that is being put into developing a safe environment for victims of war, especially women and girls.

Ukrainian women have been fighting hard at the forefront too advocate for humanitarian response and the restoration of collective human rights and fundamental freedoms, despite being neglected from the negotiation between both the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Fortunately, top priorities in Ukraine today remains to be providing aid to the nearly 18 million Ukrainians suffering, women and girls not excluded. As women continue to bear different important decisions of their household and the additional burdens of conflict, they must be fully represented in all decision-making platforms on de-escalation, conflict prevention, mitigation and other processes in pursuit of peace and security for all the Ukrainians.



MAJOR ISSUES WITHIN THE TOPIC

The Russia-Ukrainian War has caused the Ukrainian people enormous hardship over the past 12 months, with thousands of people losing their lives, millions being displaced, and vital civilian infrastructure being completely destroyed.

Women and girls in Ukraine are suffering significant effects, such as increased gender-based violence and human trafficking, as well as the loss of essential livelihoods and rising levels of poverty. The widespread devastation of infrastructure has made it difficult for many people to access healthcare, survivor services, and other essential types of support.

Protecting civilians and helping the roughly 18 million in need Ukrainians must continue to be the primary priority. According to a Rapid Gender Analysis conducted by UN Women and its collaborators, women were also disproportionately impacted by the crisis in different ways. In response to persistent security challenges, gender-based violence against women and girls has escalated. This includes intimate partner abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual assault resulting from armed conflict. As socioeconomic conditions deteriorate, the risk of sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and other forms of violence increases. Support services still fall short of survivors' needs after a year.

1) Pre-existing gender and intersectional inequality and discrimination are mostly being made worse by the crisis.

- a) Although Ukraine has made significant strides in the direction of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE), there are still many obstacles standing in the way of women's full, equal, and meaningful involvement in society.
- b) Numerous disparities between men and women, such as the gender wage gap, the disparity in formal employment participation, and alarming allegations of domestic abuse, were made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. Gender disparities are becoming even more pronounced as a result of the protracted crisis, particularly for women who are subjected to numerous sorts of discrimination.

2) The multi-sectoral and compounded effects of the crisis are disproportionately felt by women.

- a) The lack of access to educational institutions due to security dangers, women's participation in volunteer work, and men's absence due to service in the armed forces have all contributed to a large increase in the caregiving burden placed on women.



- b) All demographic groups will see rising unemployment rates as a result of the war, and women will likely continue to be pushed into the unregulated informal sectors of the economy. It is anticipated that poverty and reliance on social assistance will rise, particularly among households headed by women.
- c) The need to travel to bigger cities for cash access in rural communities raises security threats, especially for women.
- d) For those with limited mobility or the elderly, accessing cash frequently necessitates standing in queue for long periods of time.
- e) Women are more dependent on social support, which is difficult to access, especially in occupied and conflict-affected areas.

3) *The crisis's gender-specific needs must be given special attention in some sectors. Regarding these, it is necessary to address the following:*

- a) Limited access to and availability of safe, sex- and family-segregated housing.
- b) Variable access to adequate WASH, including menstrual health and hygiene requirements.
- c) Limited access to sufficient food, especially food deliveries that meet the dietary requirements of expectant or nursing mothers and newborns.
- d) Needs for health care that are particular to gender, such as access to mental health services, sexual and reproductive health (SH), and maternity, neonatal, and child health (MNCH).
- e) Women and children who have been forcibly relocated frequently have to rely on unofficial, unverified sources of refuge, which could be dangerous.
- f) Men who have been displaced struggle to secure housing since women and children are frequently given preference.
- g) The protection risks for women and children in particular are increased by the absence of sex-segregated public restrooms and WASH facilities in IDP centres.
- h) When attempting to enter bomb shelters and/or move to safer regions and homes, people with physical impairments and individuals with limited mobility, as well as their carers, are in a particularly vulnerable situation.



4) *Health, including sexual and reproductive health services are being greatly affected due to the Russia-Ukrainian War.*

- a) Women make up the bulk of the healthcare workforce in Ukraine, where they shoulder a greater share of the caregiving duties while serving as critical first responders.
- b) It is difficult to get access to gynaecological and other sexual and reproductive health care.
- c) Pregnancy births take place in dangerous circumstances in areas devastated by war.
- d) Many new mothers and their babies reside in basements and other locations without enough medical equipment. People with chronic illnesses and impairments, particularly those with HIV, sometimes struggle to get the necessary medications. Due to a lack of hormone therapy, transgender people are also impacted.
- e) The needs for infant food and formula, dietary requirements for people with various chronic illnesses or impairments, as well as those for pregnant and nursing mothers, are not fully being met by food handouts.
- f) Vulnerable groups and women who have been displaced are aware of ways to make nutrition and food assistance programmes better. It is essential that they take part in the creation and dissemination of programming.

STATUS QUO

As the war keeps on progressing, changes are being made, yet women remain where they have always been in this conflict: at its center. Amid the hypermasulinity and extreme levels of violence of the Russo-Ukraine War, 85% of the armies from both parties are made up of men enrolling, and while 15% of the Ukrain's armed forces are women, they are allowed to leave the country at any age, instead of men who are forbidden from leaving the country due to the "fighting age".

In the current situation, Ukrainian women have mobilized, providing vital logistics and non-combat support, being described as the "rear front line". Other than that, the absence of men in households transformed women across the country becoming the heads of households overnight, as men leave to fight and defend their nation.

This genderization of the conflict extends to Russia's treatment of Ukraine as a hold, painting Russia as a man, who is shown to be more dominant, compared to Ukraine which is depleted as a women, being subservient and without agency; a damsel in distress. It leads to the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin himself putting pride on himself on exemplifying masculinity.

As women are unable to defend their households, the brutality of the conflict translates into gender-based violence, whether it is on Ukrainian women on the battlefield, or Ukrainian women in households. Raping, discrimination, human trafficking, are all actions not excluded committed by Russian army onto Ukrainian women, yet it is being blindsided by the law, even though people with the highest of powers, such as Vladmir Putin himself, have relied on women's support throughout his 22 years being in power and has, albeit selectively, listened to them in the past. With all the actions being taken by the United Nations, it is with great hope that not only the war, but the impact of it on women and girls will be removed, eventually leading into real peace.

MAJOR BLOCS, COUNTRIES, OR STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED

Russia: As one of the key actors involved in the conflict, Russia's actions and policies have a significant impact on the situation in Ukraine and the consequences for women's rights.

Ukraine: The conflict directly affects Ukraine and its government, which plays a crucial role in addressing the impact on women's rights and implementing relevant policies and measures.

European Union (EU): The EU has been actively engaged in efforts to address the conflict, support Ukraine, and promote human rights, including women's rights, in the region.

United Nations (UN): The UN, through various agencies and bodies, plays a significant role in monitoring and addressing the impact of the conflict on women's rights. This includes promoting women's participation in peace processes, providing humanitarian aid, and advocating for accountability for human rights violations.

International NGOs and Human Rights Organizations: Organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Women's Rights Organizations are involved in documenting human rights violations, advocating for women's rights, and providing support and assistance to affected individuals.



National and Local NGOs: Various local and national non-governmental organizations in Ukraine and other countries are actively engaged in addressing the impact of the conflict on women's rights, providing support services, and advocating for policy changes.

Women's Rights Activists and Advocates: Individuals and groups advocating for women's rights and gender equality play a crucial role in raising awareness, demanding accountability, and pushing for policies and actions to protect and promote women's rights in the context of the conflict.

RELEVANCE TO THE UN

Security, safety, and acknowledgement on the rights of women in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine is one of the top priorities of committees in the United Nations that are proactively fighting for empowerment of women and ensuring peace and justice for women and girls alike.

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and The Empowerment of Women (UNWOMEN)

UNWOMEN has been working non-stop in order to protect the women and girls of Russia from human rights abuses - such as acts of sexual violence and murder. Over the course of the war, the conflict has untold suffering on the Ukrainians, with thousands of lives claimed, millions displaced and crucial civilian infrastructure decimated. UNWOMEN remains committed to continue delivering results across strategic priorities in Ukraine, exercising its triple mandate encompassing normative support, UN system coordination, and operational activities, in order to achieve sustained action to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, as well as a safe environment for females to be in.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

As the humanitarian needs continue to grow, UNFPA is working with its partners to scale-up the delivery of essential needs and services for women and girls. Mobile clinics as well as psychosocial support teams are providing reproductive health services have been deployed in order to provide health services and psychosocial support in hard-to-reach areas in the country. Safe spaces and online services are being expanded in order to support survivors of gender-based violence. Basic needs, medical and hygiene supplies are also being distributed to health facilities across the country. UNFPA is also actively participating in other neighbouring countries in response to the protection and health need of refugees, including women and girls.



Office of The High Commissioner for Human Rights (OCHRC)

Delegates and UN human rights experts of OCHRC heavily urges the importance for effective measures to be put in place to protect women's and girls' right and from gender-based violence. According to OCHRC, both the Russian Federation and Ukraine are signatories of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). All parties to any conflict, whether State or non-State, are bound by the laws of war, in which civilians and civilians installation should all be given protection. Collectively, they include a commitment to ensure that women and girls are protected against all forms of discrimination and violence.

PAST ACTIONS OR PAST PRECEDENCE

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women:

A body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. The CEDAW treaty is a tool that helps women around the world bring change to their daily lives. Countries that are part of the signatories or have ratified the treaty, are bound to opposing discrimination, which includes violence, poverty, and lack of legal protections, as well as protect women from all sorts of violence. Russia and Ukraine are both signatories on CEDAW, though Russia has been steadily failing to uphold its commitment of CEDAW, proven by the reported and under-reported cases of discrimination and sexual violence on Ukrainian Women.

Global gendered impacts of the Ukraine crisis on energy access and food security and nutrition:

A new UN policy paper, published by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meets on Ukraine, revealing how the war and its global impacts on food, energy and finance are affecting women and girls disproportionately, both inside Ukraine and globally, as well as the alarmingly increasing rates of gender-based violence, transactional sex for food and survival, sexual exploitation and trafficking as well as underage marriage. Among other recommendations, the policy paper calls for the international community to:

1. Prioritize women's and girls' voice, agency, participation and leadership in conflict response, recovery and peacebuilding
2. Enhance gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data to build the evidence base for gender-responsive policy, planning, and reconstruction measures to improve the infrastructure, as well as track and monitor gender-related impact of war crisis such as food insecurity
3. Promote and protect the right to food by targeting the specific nutrition needs of women and girls, and accelerate the transformation towards more equitable and gender-responsive food systems that are sustainable



4. Ensure equal access to affordable and sustainable energy by creating fiscal space to achieve energy access and renewable energy solutions for all women and girls in their communities, preventing women and girls and the communities from bearing the brunt of escalating fuel and energy prices through windfall taxes on some of the largest oil and gas companies.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- 1) ***Services for Protection and Support:*** Ensure the establishment and operation of refuges, safe spaces, and support groups for victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Services that might help survivors restore their lives should include medical attention, emotional support, legal assistance, and financial aid.
- 2) ***Implement legislation changes to strengthen the defense of women's rights and end impunity for those who commit sexual and gender-based violence.*** For those accountable for violating human rights, this involves ensuring efficient investigations, prosecutions, and fair trials.
- 3) ***Women's meaningful engagement in peace processes and decision-making should be encouraged as part of gender-sensitive peacebuilding initiatives.*** This includes making sure that women's perspectives and needs are taken into account in post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation initiatives.
- 4) ***Promote thorough, gender-responsive education about women's rights, gender equality, and respectful interpersonal relationships.*** Campaigns to raise awareness about harmful gender norms, stereotypes, and social attitudes that support violence against women should be a part of this.
- 5) ***Strengthen women affected by the conflict's access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive healthcare services, especially those related to sexual and reproductive health.*** Access to contraception, risk-free abortions, maternity healthcare, and addressing the effects of trauma and mental health conditions are all included in this.
- 6) ***Increase the economic opportunities for women by offering them microfinance assistance, job placement assistance, and vocational training.*** This will increase their level of stability and economic independence and lessen their vulnerability to violent crime.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER (QARMAS)

What measures can be implemented to ensure the protection and safety of women in conflict-affected areas?

How can legal frameworks be strengthened to combat impunity for perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence?

How can women's participation and inclusion in peacebuilding processes be promoted?

What educational initiatives can be implemented to challenge harmful gender norms and promote gender equality?

How can access to healthcare services, including sexual and reproductive health services, be improved for women affected by the conflict?

How can economic empowerment opportunities be enhanced for women affected by the conflict?

How can international support and cooperation be strengthened to address the impact of the conflict on women's rights?

FURTHER RESEARCH MATERIAL

- 1) Global Gendered Impacts of the Ukraine Crisis. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Policy-paper-Global-gendered-impacts-of-the-Ukraine-crisis-en.pdf>
- 2) Rapid gender analysis of ukraine. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/Rapid-Gender-Analysis-of-Ukraine-en.pdf>
- 3) Update on the human rights situation in Ukraine https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/HRMMU_Update_2022-03-26_EN.pdf
- 4) Ferris-Rotman, A. Gender Is Front and Center in Moscow's Invasion of Ukraine. New Lines Magazine. <https://newlinesmag.com/spotlight/russia-and-ukraines-battle-of-the-sexes/>



- 5) Ukraine: Protection and participation of women is essential, say UN human rights experts. OHCHR.

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- 2) Creating safe spaces for Women in Ukraine
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/feature-story/2023/02/creating-safe-spaces-for-women-in-ukraine>
- 3) Ukraine war-induced crisis affecting women and girls disproportionately
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1127391>
- 4) War in Ukraine: United Nations Development Programme
<https://www.undp.org/war-ukraine>
- 5) Press release: New UN policy paper shows the devastating impacts of the Ukraine war on women and girls
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/press-release/2022/09/press-release-new-un-policy-paper-shows-the-devastating-impacts-of-the-ukraine-war-on-women-and-girls>
- 6) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cedaw>
- 7) In Focus: War in Ukraine is a crisis for women and girls
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news-stories/in-focus/2022/03/in-focus-war-in-ukraine-is-a-crisis-for-women-and-girls>



Beyond Borders: Bridging the Divide

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