

Women, Peace and Security

August 2023

Lebanon

For August, in which the **United States** has the presidency of the UN Security Council, the MAP provides recommendations on the situations in **Lebanon, Libya, Syria, and Yemen**.

Lebanon's interconnected economic, political, [climate](#), and social [crises](#) are structural, multi-faceted and mutually reinforcing, with distinct gendered impacts on people with [disabilities](#), LGBTIQ+ individuals, refugees, and migrants, requiring holistic, rights-based and gender-sensitive policy responses. Corruption, impunity and inequality, which are driving the current crises, have led to, and are reinforced by, ongoing [election](#) delays, deterioration of the rule of law, inflation and [extreme poverty](#), an economic crisis, inequalities in the labor market, [discriminatory](#) legal frameworks and norms, a rise in domestic violence, lack of access to [education](#), [electricity](#), and [medicine](#), abuse of migrant workers under the [Kafala](#) system, and [forced](#) and summary deportations of Syrian [refugees](#), all of which undermine people's access to basic rights and essential [services](#). Failure to address past abuses and crimes through [transitional justice](#) efforts, such as the [widespread](#) gender-based violence perpetrated during the Lebanese Civil War, is one of the root causes of the failure of the justice system to advance accountability for more recent [crimes](#), such as the [Beirut Port explosion](#), [politically sensitive murders](#) or the [unlawful and excessive use of force](#) against protestors since 2019, and is [emblematic](#) of the culture of impunity that prevails. In its renewal of the mandate of the peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, the Council should maintain existing WPS provisions, and further call on UNIFIL to:

- Actively promote the safe, full, equal, and meaningful participation of women in elections, including as candidates, in the mission's efforts to support implementation of Lebanon's National Action Plan on 1325, and further collaborate with women mediators in southern Lebanon to foster an inclusive and sustainable peace process.
- Consult with women's, feminist, and other diverse civil society groups as part of its mandate to mainstream gender, and further strengthen partnerships in implementing activities related to humanitarian support and political processes.
- Support efforts to remove the barriers to women's meaningful participation and leadership, including through the repeal of all discriminatory laws and adoption of a unified personal status law.
- Adopt a survivor-centered approach in efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence.
- Ensure enhanced reporting on WPS includes details regarding barriers to the realization of women's human rights; threats and reprisals against women human rights defenders and peacebuilders; and intersectional analysis of the way in which the current crises impact diverse women, including LGBTIQ+ individuals and persons with disabilities.
- Carry out all humanitarian support activities without discrimination, in a gender-, age-, and disability-sensitive manner in accordance with existing obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and ensure access to the full range of livelihood, legal, psychosocial and medical services, including sexual and reproductive health services.

Libya

In its discussion of the situation in Libya, Council members must forcefully condemn recent efforts to undermine women's human rights, notably [freedom of movement](#), and also condemn efforts to undermine the work of women's civil society groups and women human rights defenders and peacebuilders. As of April 2023, the Tripoli Internal Security Agency (ISA), an armed group linked with the Tripoli Government of National Unity (GNU) has required women and girls traveling from Tripoli airport to provide a justification for travelling without a male relative as of April 2023. There are some reports that civil society, including women's rights groups and women human rights defenders and peacebuilders who have spoken against the policy have been targeted by security forces in attempts to intimidate; these efforts occur in the context of the severe crackdown on civil society more broadly by authorities and armed groups that was intensified after a [March-issued legal opinion](#) by the Supreme Judicial Council effectively declared all NGOs as "illegal." These actions seek to not only prevent women's groups from carrying out their work, including provision of basic services in humanitarian contexts, but further undermine women's safe, full, equal, and meaningful participation. Council members should explicitly reinforce the necessity of ensuring women's meaningful and safe participation in formal, substantive, and specific roles at every level of the peace process and in provincial councils, including through adoption of a quota for women of no less than 30%. Further, in all briefings and statements, speakers must draw attention to the risk women peacebuilders, human rights defenders, politicians, activists and civil society leaders face, and request that the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) support inclusive and consultative mechanisms to enable women of all backgrounds to participate safely and meaningfully without fear of reprisal.

Members of the Council are also encouraged to financially and politically support the establishment of a viable independent follow-up mechanism to continue documenting and reporting on the human rights and impunity crisis in Libya and to monitor the [implementation](#) of the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, whose mandate ended in March 2023. This should be seen as

Women, Peace and Security

separate from the day-to-day monitoring and reporting carried out by the human rights component of UNSMIL, so as not to detract or interfere with UNSMIL's political mandate, and in order to ensure independence of the follow-up work as a step towards justice and [accountability](#) for victims of serious crimes in Libya.

Syria

During ongoing discussions on the situation in Syria, it is imperative that all parties explore all options to secure long-term, sustainable and safe humanitarian access and a UN presence in northwest Syria in order to provide principled, predictable, and lifesaving assistance to the [4.1](#) million people currently in urgent need. Humanitarian principles must be central to any agreements regarding cross-border assistance in order to ensure the aid reaches those who need it, wherever they are situated, without interference. Against the backdrop of ongoing [politicization](#) of humanitarian aid in Syria, the population faces [multiple](#) complex crisis, all of which have acute [gendered](#) impacts, including [ongoing](#) armed [violence](#), a [cholera](#) outbreak, and [food insecurity](#), all of which has been [exacerbated](#) by the 7.8 magnitude [earthquake](#) that left thousands dead and injured, as well as tens of thousands in need of [shelter](#). In forthcoming discussions on the situation, Council members must call for rights-based, survivor-centered [humanitarian action](#) that is age and gender-responsive, disability-inclusive, and provides immediate and non-discriminatory aid and quality healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention, mitigation, and response services, and access to quality mental health and psychosocial support. The Security Council should reinforce that the Secretary-General should include gender, age and disability-sensitive conflict analysis regarding the situation of displaced women. Further, the Council should also call for a ceasefire and end to violence to allow the country to address its ongoing health and humanitarian crises, none of which can be achieved without a political solution that is built on a foundation of accountability, justice, including reparations, and equal rights. This foundation is undermined, however, by the ongoing impunity for past, and current violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including the anti-torture law that fails to address the crimes carried out over the past decade. In this context, gender equality and international human rights and humanitarian law must be priorities in each stage of the conflict resolution, peacebuilding and recovery process, including a gender-inclusive constitution that protects all citizens from discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, and other markers of identity and social status. All Member States should provide political, technical, and financial [support](#) to the [newly established](#) mechanism on missing persons so that it has the resources necessary to implement its [mandate](#) fully in a gender-sensitive and survivor-centered manner. Finally, women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership should be a norm at every stage of the political process. The ceasefire process must ensure the active participation of women for a more inclusive and effective peacebuilding effort. The Office of the Special Envoy (OSE) should prioritize the meaningful participation, dialogue and inclusion of women activists, peacebuilders and WHRDs in its work, and all briefers should provide updates on barriers to women's meaningful participation, as well as recommendations communicated by civil society leaders during consultations.

Yemen

During any forthcoming discussions of the situation in Yemen, members of the Security Council should articulate their unwavering support for inclusive Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political process with the full, equal and meaningful participation of [diverse women](#), youth and civil society of all political backgrounds from all regions of Yemen, including in the truce and ceasefire negotiations, as well as broader political and peace processes. Relatedly, Council members should demand that all UN-supported peace committees include women, including the Prisoners' Exchange, the Taiz, and the Security and Military Committees, as well as in any committees formed in the future. In the most recent prisoner exchange process, only one woman was exchanged out of 887 total individuals; this underlines the urgency of ensuring that women not only are part of the committee and process, but that the process itself mainstreams gender as a cross-cutting issue. Council members should demand all parties to conflict, and their allies, uphold international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law, and emphasize that women's human rights should be non-negotiable in any peace and political process. Ongoing human rights violations [targeting](#) marginalized communities, including diverse women, persons with [disabilities](#), lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, [displaced](#) persons, [migrants](#) and ethnic and religious minorities continue to be documented. In particular, [women and girls](#) face [restrictions](#) on their [freedom of movement](#) resulting from the requirement that women are accompanied by a mahram (male guardian), lack of [access](#) to basic services, including [sexual and reproductive](#) health [services](#), and [threats](#) and risks, including arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, hate speech, and even targeted killings, particularly for women peacebuilders, human rights defenders, political leaders, activists, artists, and journalists. In recent months, new government-led restrictions on the operations of women-led and civil society organizations have created a shrinking space for women's social and political participation. Further, Council members should reinforce the unacceptability of the increase in [cyber-attacks and violence](#) targeting women, which is threatening their [safety](#) and security and preventing their participation in public life. Alongside these concerning developments, there are further indications that policies could be enacted which result in discrimination against women in other aspects of their life, such as higher education; the gradual adoption of policies that facilitate the undermining of women's human rights signals the importance of ensuring the international community places women's rights and gender equality at the heart of its efforts in Yemen.

NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security members are: Amnesty International; CARE International; Center for Reproductive Rights; Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights; Global Justice Center; Global Network of Women Peacebuilders; Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict; Human Rights Watch; International Alert; MADRE; Nobel Women's Initiative; OutRight Action International; Oxfam; Refugees International; Women Enabled International; Women for Women International; Women's Refugee Commission; and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security is a project of Tides Center.