

Implementation of the UN Security Council Resolutions on the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda in Asia and the Pacific



DEVELOPED BY

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

IN COLLABORATION WITH

The Peace Operations Training Institute (POTI)

SERIES EDITOR

Harvey J. Langholtz, Ph.D.



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A scene from community discussions at the massive gathering in Pesantren Annuqayah — one of the oldest Islamic boarding schools in the country — on how women contribute to peace in their communities. The discussions were in the lead up to the International Peace Day commemoration in Madura island, East Java, with the President of Indonesia, co-hosted by UN Women and the Wahid Foundation as part of the UN Women's new regional programme on preventing violent extremism in Asia. 7 October 2017. Photo by UN Women/Ryan Brown.

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UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing 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; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.

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UN e-Learning Programme, WPS-Asia Foreword



The historic adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) culminated in one revolutionary idea: that peace is inextricably linked with equality between men and women, and that women are an untapped resource for building peace. It called on national and international actors to fully involve women in preventing, resolving and recovering from conflict, and to ensure that all peacebuilding efforts are consistent with the principles of gender equality. Since its adoption in 2000, the core principles of resolution 1325 have been reinforced by nine other resolutions which build on its provisions for protection of women's rights during and after conflict, and for addressing their needs during and after peacebuilding. These resolutions provide an essential framework for women's full participation in conflict resolution and gender equality in all aspects of building peace and security.

The faces of armed conflict in Asia vary by region and are driven by diverse factors, such as climate change, poverty, organised crime, unjust political representation, and the insecurities and disparities caused by economic inequality. These are but a few elements that foster conditions conducive to armed conflict in Asia. Depending on the nature and drivers of a conflict, its impact is felt differently by men and women, boys and girls. Yet, in all cases, whether they are direct or indirect victims, women and girls tend to be disproportionately affected by conflict.

Understanding the gender-sensitive dynamics of conflict and developing corresponding gendered responses and policies is essential. Increasing evidence shows that the larger the gender gap between women and men in a society, the more likely that society is to engage in armed conflict and to resort to high levels of violence. Reshaping traditional and cultural norms to place equal value on the role of women in decision-making processes and governance, and empowering women and ensuring their active role in prevention of conflict is therefore crucial for sustainable peace.

UN Women (the Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) is dedicated to providing continued support and assistance in these processes and to increase awareness and implementation of the UN resolutions on women, peace and security at all levels. One of UN Women's contributions in this regard is this e-learning programme. The course is a practical tool for policy decision makers, practitioners and civil society to understand the impact of conflict on women, and women's role as agents of change in peace and security efforts. It should inspire commitment and innovation and help a wide range of peace and security actors to integrate this perspective in their daily work. This e-learning experience similarly ought to support governments, regional and international stakeholders and civil society in promoting gender-responsive peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery. At UN Women we are committed to a vision where women play an equal role with men in building peace for all.

Until women and women's needs, priorities and concerns are identified, addressed and resourced in a timely and systematic way in conflict and post-conflict contexts, peace processes and peacebuilding will continue to fall far short of delivering effective and sustainable peace dividends. This course should offer the ingredients for critical thinking on these issues and the guidance to reshape and modernise policies, so as to effectively engage women – in all their roles – in conflict prevention, resolution and recovery. I hope that recipients of this training will feel inspired and determined to strive for what is achievable: peaceful equality between women and men.

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Ása Regnér: Deputy Executive Director of UN Women



To view this video introduction by Ása Regnér, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, visit the [course page](#).

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UN Women thanks Lt Colonel Jesus Gil Ruiz and Jennifer Wittwer, CSM, for updating the course. Furthermore, gratitude is due to Lesli Davis for reviewing the manuscripts.

Introduction

Aim

The purposes of this course are to raise awareness about Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019); to mobilize governments and civil society to mainstream a gender perspective into all areas of peace and security; and to build national and regional capacities for mainstreaming the women, peace, and security agenda.

Scope

The course provides information about intergovernmental processes, including in the area of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, which led to the adoption of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019). It will describe the efforts of various United Nations entities towards the implementation of the resolutions.

The course will analyse the efforts of Member States, civil society, and the UN system in general with a focus on Asia and the Pacific to mainstream a gender perspective into the area of peace and security. It will explain the gender dimensions of armed conflict and peace processes in the region and provide evidence of the important role women play in ensuring a sustainable and lasting peace.

Approach

The course will identify national and regional priorities and challenges in Asia and the Pacific in the areas of women, peace, and security and will provide practical information about how to address them, including through the development of National/Regional Action Plans and strategies for the implementation of SCRs on women, peace, and security.

Audience

This course was designed as an accessible resource for decision makers, government officials, civil servants and members of parliament, practitioners, and civil society who are involved in policy development, planning, and programming in the area of peace and security.

Method of Study

This self-paced course aims to give students flexibility in their approach to learning. The following steps are meant to provide motivation and guidance about some possible strategies and minimum expectations for completing this course successfully:

- Before you begin studying, first browse through the entire course. Notice the lesson and section titles to get an overall idea of what will be involved as you proceed.
 - The material is meant to be relevant and practical. Instead of memorizing individual details, strive to understand concepts and overall perspectives in regard to the United Nations system.
 - Set personal guidelines and benchmarks regarding how you want to schedule your time.
 - Study the lesson content and the learning objectives. At the beginning of each lesson, orient yourself to the main points. If possible, read the material twice to ensure maximum understanding and retention, and let time elapse between readings.
 - At the end of each lesson, take the End-of-Lesson Quiz. Clarify any missed questions by rereading the appropriate sections, and focus on retaining the correct information.
 - After you complete all of the lessons, prepare for the End-of-Course Examination by taking time to review the main points of each lesson. Then, when ready, log into your online student classroom and take the End-of-Course Examination in one sitting.
- » ***Access your online classroom at***
<www.peaceopstraining.org/users/user_login>
from virtually anywhere in the world.
- Your exam will be scored electronically. If you achieve a passing grade of 75 per cent or higher on the exam, you will be awarded a Certificate of Completion. If you score below 75 per cent, you will be given one opportunity to take a second version of the End-of-Course Examination.
 - A note about language: This course uses English spelling according to the standards of the Oxford English Dictionary (United Kingdom) and the United Nations Editorial Manual.

Key Features of Your Online Classroom »

- Access to all of your courses;
- A secure testing environment in which to complete your training;
- Access to additional training resources, including multimedia course supplements;
- The ability to download your Certificate of Completion for any completed course; and
- Forums where you can discuss relevant topics with the POTI community.

LESSON

1

The United Nations and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda



UN Photo by Evan Schneider.

This lesson provides a brief history of the United Nations (UN) and an overview of its work on international peace and security.

In this lesson »

- Section 1.1 Overview of the United Nations
- Section 1.2 The UN Security Council and Peacekeeping Operations
- Section 1.3 Defining Gender and Important Related Concepts
- Section 1.4 Navigating the Gender Equality Regime within the United Nations
- Annex A UNSCRs on Women, Peace, and Security

Lesson Objectives »

- Have a working knowledge of the UN system, especially in the area of peace and security.
- Understand how approaches to peace and security adapt over time in response to critical changes in contemporary conflict: the shift from “conventional” military battles to complex internal and cross-border wars with high levels of civilian casualties.
- Understand how peacekeeping operations have changed, including their goals and challenges.
- Understand the importance of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.
- Fully grasp key concepts related to gender and gender mainstreaming.
- Identify the UN system's main documents and decisions affirming the equal rights of men and women as they relate to international peace and security.



The UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) hosted an Open Day on Security Council resolution 1325, the landmark resolution dealing with women, peace, and security, in Maliana. 12 September 2012. UN Photo by Martine Perret.

More specifically, this lesson introduces how the UN addresses the issues of women, peace, and security (WPS) as one component of the broader agenda aimed at achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The lesson will cover the fundamental documents and decisions that constitute the framework for the work of the UN in this area. This lesson also discusses key developments in legal and procedural trends in UN peacekeeping operations, particularly as they relate to women's and gender issues, with increasing focus on civilian protection and conflict prevention.

Introduction

This lesson consists of four sections:

- An introduction to the origins and basic functions of the United Nations in relation to promoting international peace and security.
- An overview of the purpose of the UN Security Council and its multidimensional peace operations.
- An introduction to concepts critical to understanding WPS and the UN's broader commitment to gender equality.
- An overview of legal documents and organizational structures as the institutional framework guiding policymaking and programme implementation in this area.

Section 1.1 Overview of the United Nations

Replacing the League of Nations, the United Nations was established in 1945 in the aftermath of the Second World War. Its primary purpose was and continues to be conflict prevention and the promotion and protection of international peace and security. By providing a platform for dialogue between Member States, the UN seeks to end existing wars and prevent future armed conflict between both State and non-State actors.

The Charter of the UN was signed on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco at the conclusion of the UN Conference on International Organization. The Charter came into force on 24 October 1945.

Article 1 of Chapter 1 of the Charter states that the purposes of the UN are as follows:

- » "1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;
- » 2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;
- » 3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and
- » 4. To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends."¹

1) United Nations, "Chapter 1: Purposes and Principles", in Charter of the United Nations, 26 June 1945. Available from: <<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>>.

The Charter defines six main organs within the UN: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the Secretariat.² While all six organs have been important to the overall mission of the UN, the Security Council is the centre of UN power and acts as the primary decision-making body in the area of international peace and security.

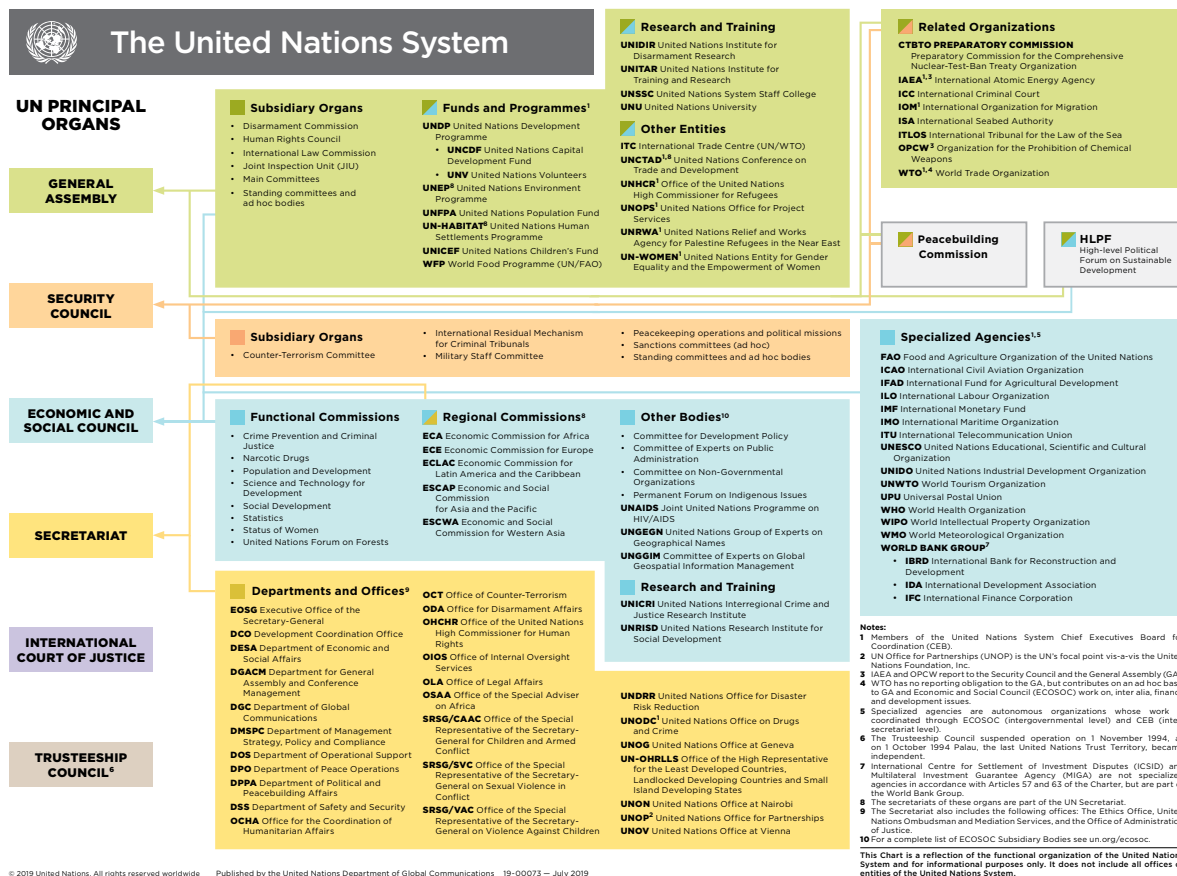


Figure 1-1: UN System Chart³

Section 1.2 The UN Security Council and Peacekeeping Operations

According to the UN Charter, the mandate of the Security Council is to “maintain international peace and security”. Thus, it is the UN organ committed specifically to the central mission of the UN. Its mandate is also the most challenging to implement, given that the second article in the UN Charter affirms that “the Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members”. Tension can thus emerge between the obligation of UN Member States to take collective measures to defend international peace and security, including the use of force, and the sovereign rights of State actors.

The UN Charter grants the Security Council significant power by stating that “In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf” (Article 24). In other words, the Security Council is in charge of these responsibilities and acting accordingly. Furthermore, according to Article 25, UN Member States are legally obligated to “accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the present Charter”. The Security Council passes decisions through resolutions that should then be formally adopted and implemented by Member States.

2) The Trusteeship Council suspended operation on 1 November 1994, as on 1 October 1994, Palau, the last UN trust territory, became independent. See: United Nations, “Trusteeship Council”. Available from: <<https://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/trusteeship-council/>>.

3) United Nations, “The United Nations System”, July 2019. Available from: <https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/un_system_chart.pdf>.

The activity of the Security Council is greatly influenced by its members. The Security Council comprises 15 members, five of which are permanent: China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These five permanent members have the power to veto Security Council resolutions unilaterally. They represent the great powers that emerged as victors in the Second World War and were central to the founding of the UN. The 10 non-permanent members are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms and reflect the regional diversity of the world.

The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or an act of aggression. In the case of conflict, it calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of a settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security. The Security Council has a presidency which rotates every month.

“To maintain international peace and security in conformity with the purposes and principles of the UN”, the Security Council does the following:

- Investigates any dispute or situation that may cause international tension or conflict;
- Recommends methods or conditions for the settlement of disputes;
- Formulates plans for the establishment of a system to regulate armaments;
- Determines whether a threat to the peace or an act of aggression exists and recommends appropriate measures;
- Encourages members to apply economic sanctions and other measures that do not involve the use of force in order to prevent or stop aggression;
- Employs military action against aggressors;
- Recommends the incorporation of new members;
- Exercises UN trusteeship functions in “strategic zones”; and
- Recommends the appointment of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and, in conjunction with the Assembly, appoints the magistrates of the International Court of Justice.

Chapter VI, “Pacific Settlement of Disputes”, stipulates that parties to a dispute should use peaceful methods, such as mediation and negotiation, for resolving disputes and authorizes the Security Council to make recommendations which are generally advisory and not binding.

Chapter VII, “Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression”, authorizes more direct influence through measures such as economic coercion (sanctions) and severance of diplomatic relations. In extreme cases, the Security Council may “take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security”.

Informally, the term “Chapter Six and a Half” refers to peacekeeping that falls between the two. Chapter VIII deals with regional arrangements and authorizes regional organizations, such as the African Union (AU) or North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to resolve disputes through their good offices or intervention (with Security Council authorization) to maintain international peace and security.

Although this is not an exhaustive list, it is clear the Security Council engages in a range of actions in fulfilling its mission. Preventive and provisional measures, such as requesting a ceasefire or sending observers to supervise a truce, take place under Chapter VI of the UN Charter. Coercive measures (with or without the use of force), such as

an economic blockade or military intervention, occur under Chapter VII. Chapter VII on peacekeeping operations not only allows but requires peacekeepers to use all necessary means to protect civilians, prevent violence against UN staff and personnel, and deter armed elements from ignoring peace agreements. Chapter VII provisions have also led the Security Council to establish ad hoc war crimes tribunals in the aftermath of certain horrific instances of armed conflict, such as those in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Because of how peacekeeping missions have evolved, and because they have begun to encompass both preventive and coercive approaches, Chapter Six and a Half came into existence.

Despite these mandated functions and activities, the term *peacekeeping* does not appear in the UN Charter. This omission is not surprising, given that the Charter was designed to provide mechanisms that could prevent the sort of border aggression and violence between nations that triggered World War II. The concept of peacekeeping did not emerge until the late 1940s, in a series of ad hoc interventions that began in the Middle East with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) in 1948 and along the border between India and Pakistan with the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) in 1949. As the nature of armed conflict has changed since then, so too has the response of the UN.

UN peacekeeping operations between 1945 and 1988 involved the “inter-positioning” of forces between formerly warring parties, with their consent, to monitor ceasefire agreements. The close of the Cold War in 1989 witnessed the emergence of increasingly complex and extremely violent conflicts that demonstrated the need for multidimensional peace operations. The Security Council authorized missions with mandates to reduce armed tensions, implement peace accords, and prevent atrocities against civilians in States ravaged by conflict.

The United Nations Charter and the Resolution of Disputes »

Article 33

1. The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.
2. The Security Council shall, when it deems necessary, call upon the parties to settle their dispute by such means.

Article 34

The Security Council may investigate any dispute, or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.

Article 35

1. Any Member of the United Nations may bring any dispute, or any situation of the nature referred to in Article 34, to the attention of the Security Council or of the General Assembly.
2. A state which is not a Member of the United Nations may bring to the attention of the Security Council or of the General Assembly any dispute to which it is a party if it accepts in advance, for the purposes of the dispute, the obligations of pacific settlement provided in the present Charter.
3. The proceedings of the General Assembly in respect of matters brought to its attention under this Article will be subject to the provisions of Articles 11 and 12.

The transition away from two dominant “power blocs” (led by the Soviet Union and the United States) created new challenges for international peace and security. In response to these changes, then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali formulated *An Agenda for Peace* (1992), which called for the UN to play a more proactive role in peace missions by going beyond peacekeeping and engaging in both peacebuilding and peace enforcement over the long term.⁴ He asserted that “the sources of conflict and war are pervasive and deep” and asked that peace missions be enhanced in size, scope, and complexity to better address the needs of the changing world. As a result, peacekeeping operations expanded in terms of nature, scope, and frequency. Of the 71 operations that deployed between 1948 and August 2019, 13 were established between 1948 and 1989, while 58 were established from 1990 to 2019.

The evolution is often referred to as second- and third-generation peacekeeping. The functions of these multidimensional missions go far beyond merely monitoring ceasefires and include the following:

- Truce supervision and military observation;
- Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR);
- Humanitarian aid;
- Electoral assistance;
- Human rights protection;
- Mine action;
- Use of UN Police (UNPOL); and
- Cooperation with local and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

See Table 1-1 for a summary of the shifting trends in UN peacekeeping activity.

Article 36

1. The Security Council may, at any stage of a dispute of the nature referred to in Article 33 or of a situation of like nature, recommend appropriate procedures or methods of adjustment.
2. The Security Council should take into consideration any procedures for the settlement of the dispute which have already been adopted by the parties.
3. In making recommendations under this Article the Security Council should also take into consideration that legal disputes should as a general rule be referred by the parties to the International Court of Justice in accordance with the provisions of the Statute of the Court.

Article 37

1. Should the parties to a dispute of the nature referred to in Article 33 fail to settle it by the means indicated in that Article, they shall refer it to the Security Council.
2. If the Security Council deems that the continuance of the dispute is in fact likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, it shall decide whether to take action under Article 36 or to recommend such terms of settlement as it may consider appropriate.

Article 38

Without prejudice to the provisions of Articles 33 to 37, the Security Council may, if all the parties to any dispute so request, make recommendations to the parties with a view to a pacific settlement of the dispute.

4) *An Agenda for Peace*, written by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, served as a blueprint for post-Cold War peacekeeping missions. People who study this document recognize that it called for an expansion in the size, scope, and complexity of UN peacekeeping missions. See: Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peace-keeping*: report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992, [ST/]DPI/1247, 1992. Available from: <<https://digitalibrary.un.org/record/145749>>.

Table 1-1: Trends in UN Peacekeeping Activity

Type	Action	Actors	Examples
Traditional peacekeeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original form of UN Peacekeeping operations Observing ceasefires Separating forces 	Military personnel under the UN mandate only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights, Syria UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) UN Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS)
Multidimensional peacekeeping operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of comprehensive peace agreements DDR of ex-combatants Electoral assistance Rule of law Human rights monitoring Security sector reform (SSR) 	Military and civilian UN personnel plus NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) United Nations – African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (MONUSCO) UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)
Transitional authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer of authority Establishment of transitional administration 	Military and civilian UN personnel plus NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia (UNTAG) UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) UN Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET) UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)

Peacekeeping missions have become a vital UN instrument. The Security Council resolutions that establish peacekeeping mandates obligate UN Member States to act. The UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO) manages and coordinates these missions, which operate on a separate budget from the UN system. See Table 1-2 below for global peacekeeping data.

Table 1-2: Global Peacekeeping Data (As of 31 March 2021)⁵

Statistics	
Peacekeeping operations since 1948	71 ⁶
Current peacekeeping operations	12
Personnel	
Uniformed personnel (64,510 troops, 7,135 police, 1,979 staff officers, and 1,088 military experts on mission)	74,712
Countries contributing uniformed personnel	121
Civilian personnel	11,956
UN volunteers	1,221
Total number of personnel serving in peacekeeping operations	87,889
Total number of fatalities among peace operations personnel in peace operations since 1948	4,077
Total number of peace operations personnel fatalities in current operations	1,428
Financial Aspects	
Approved resources for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021	Approx. \$6.58 billion

As the nature of armed conflict transformed, its profound effects on civilian populations necessitated changes in response from the UN system. The protection of civilians became increasingly highlighted. For example, the Security Council first used the wording “to afford protection to civilians under imminent threat of physical violence” in October 1999 in resolution 1270, which established the UN Mission in Sierra Leone. Peacekeeping operations are meant to operate impartially and with a proportionate and minimum use of force. This impartiality and minimum use of force are part of a legacy passed down from peacekeeping origins based in “inter-positioning” between hostile parties to assist in stabilizing situations and holding (keeping) the peace. The consent of the main conflict parties is also a necessary condition to deploy a mission in a conflict area.

5) United Nations Peacekeeping, “Data”, 31 March 2021. Available From: <<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/data>>.

6) For more information on peacekeeping operations from 1948-2019, see: United Nations Peacekeeping, “List of Peacekeeping Operations 1948-2019”, 2019. Available from: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/unpeacekeeping-operationlist_3_1_0.pdf>.

A set of norms has evolved to address the need for increased protection of the civilian population. The creation of the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP or R2P) framework reflects the idea that sovereignty is not a right, but a responsibility.⁷ A State has a responsibility to protect its population from mass atrocities. This approach holds that the international community has a responsibility to assist a State in fulfilling its primary responsibility to protect its citizens. On 28 April 2006, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1674 on the *Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (POC)*. Resolution 1674 contains the first official Security Council reference to the Responsibility to Protect. It demonstrates the Council's readiness to address gross violations of human rights, as genocide and mass crimes against humanity may constitute threats to international peace and security.

The Three Pillars of the Responsibility to Protect »

1. The State carries the primary responsibility for protecting populations from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing, and their incitement;
2. The international community has a responsibility to encourage and assist States in fulfilling this responsibility; and
3. The international community has a responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian, and other means to protect populations from these crimes. If a State is manifestly failing to protect its populations, the international community must be prepared to take collective action to protect populations, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Section 1.3 Defining Gender and Important Related Concepts

Before we can begin to understand the United Nations approach to women, peace, and security and its many obstacles and challenges, it is important to define several key gender-related terms. Although discussed here, the 2020 UN DPO *Gender Equality and Women, Peace and Security Resource Package* contains comprehensive definitions of these terms for further reading.⁸

Sex and gender

Although often used interchangeably, the words *sex* and *gender* do not mean the same thing. They refer to two different, albeit interconnected, aspects of our world. *Sex* has an exclusively biological connotation, whereas *gender* refers to socially constructed notions about masculine and feminine roles that may or may not coincide with notions of a person's sex.

More specifically, *gender* refers to the social attributes, roles, and responsibilities associated with being male or female. It also refers to the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relationships between women and those between men. It also includes expectations about the characteristics, aptitudes, and likely or appropriate behaviours of both women and men, including what it means to be masculine or feminine. Gender roles and expectations attributed to being male or female are learned. Gender is a broad social and political issue that determines men's and women's rights, participation, access to power, and social and political status.

7) The United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, "Responsibility to Protect". Available from: <<https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.shtml>>. See also: United Nations General Assembly, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 14 September 2009, A/RES/63/308, 7 October 2009. Available from: <<https://undocs.org/A/RES/63/308>>.

8) Department of Peace Operations, *DPO Gender Equality and Women, Peace, and Security Resource Package*, 1 January 2020. Available from: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/gewps19_respack_v7_eng_digital.pdf>.

The concept of gender is vital to examining systems of subordination and domination and understanding how such systems are socially constructed. Gender roles, responsibilities, norms, expectations, and stereotypes that are accorded to men and women in different ways directly affect power relationships in society, such as division of labour and decision-making structures. Gender is relational because it does not exclusively refer to women or men but rather to relations between them. Gender defines certain roles that men and women play in society; socialization and stereotypes teach and reinforce these ideas and expectations. Gender roles are not fixed but can and do change over time.

Other definitions of sex and gender

Is it possible to be neither or both male and female? In many cultures of the world, there are three (or more) sexes/genders. Before considering gender within the context of culture in the remainder of this lesson, here are a few terms that one should learn.

Intersex

Intersex refers to the physical condition of having both female and male sexual organs or characteristics.⁹ The term *hermaphrodite* is sometimes used for this condition but has fallen out of fashion; in any case, it was often limited to the description of cases in which the external genitalia has both female and male characteristics. Studies have shown that approximately two per cent of live births — approximately 80,000 births per year — are to children with some degree of sex ambiguity in external genitalia, internal reproductive organs, or both.¹⁰ There may be mixtures of genetic and hormonal sex indicators as well. In these cases, male chromosomes may be present with female sex organs, or vice versa.¹¹ With few exceptions, standard medical practice in most places has been to surgically “correct” infants who are visibly intersex at birth. Recently, however, there have been social movements to change this practice — either to permit the child to choose her or his sex when old enough to do so, or to allow the child to live an intersexed life.

Transgender¹²

Transgender (or “trans”) is an umbrella term used to describe a wide range of identities whose appearance and characteristics are perceived as gender atypical. Transwomen identify as women but were classified as males when they were born, transmen identify as men but were classified female when they were born, and some trans people do not identify with the gender binary at all. Some transgender people seek surgery or take hormones to align their body with their gender identity; others do not.

Gender Identity

Gender identity is a term describing the gender one perceives oneself to be and the gender category with which one personally identifies (i.e., whether one experiences oneself as female, male, or in another less conventional way).

Distinction between Sex and Gender »

A person's *sex* is a biological category.

A person's *gender* is socially constructed, reflecting learned behaviours. It can change over time and within and between cultures.

9) The Arabic word “khuntha” (literally “hermaphrodite”) refers to physically intersexed human beings.

10) Anne Fausto-Sterling, “The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female are not Enough”, *The Sciences*, March/April 1993, 20-24. See also: Karen Rosenblum, and Toni-Michelle Travis, *The Meaning of Difference: American Constructions of Race, Sex and Gender, Social Class, and Sexual Orientation* (St. Louis: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 87-91.

11) To read more about the science of sex differentiation, see: Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

12) Free and Equal United Nations, “Definitions”. Available from: <<https://www.unfe.org/definitions/>>.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to the direction of an individual's sexual attraction, usually in terms of the sex or gender of those towards whom one feels attraction. The most commonly described sexual orientations are towards members of the opposite gender (heterosexual), same gender (gay or lesbian), both/any gender (bisexual/pansexual), or no gender (asexual). "Sexual identity", like "gender identity", is personal; it says more about personal identity than outside perceptions.

It is perhaps an oversimplification to lump fundamentally different gender identities and sexual orientations together in one category. Still, the term "LGBTQI+" for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex people is common. While this course is on protecting women's rights and preventing violence against them in conflict, it can be considered more broadly to include the prevention of violence against anyone based on their sexuality or gender; this certainly includes violence against LGBTQI+ people. Most notably, this comes into play when mainstreaming gender (in all its forms) into and across peacekeeping functions, particularly in conducting gender analysis of human terrain and gathering intelligence.¹³

Gender equality

Gender equality refers to the equal rights and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are considered, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue; it should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is both a human rights issue and a precondition for — and indicator of — sustainable, people-centred development and security.



UN Women and the Grand Bargain Friends of Gender organized a consultation with women's organizations, co-hosted by Care International, Oxfam International, and OCHA. The workshop was entitled "Voice-Visibility-Influence: Promoting Women's Leadership in Humanitarian Settings through Partnerships with Women-Led and Women's Rights Organisations in Humanitarian Settings in Asia and the Pacific". 26 August 2019. Photo by Dyan Hananto Putra/UN Women.

13) Jennifer Wittwer, *Preventing Violence Against Women and Promoting Gender Equality in Peacekeeping* (Williamsburg: Peace Operations Training Institute, 2018).

Gender equality is not gender equity.

“Gender equity goes further than equality of opportunity to look at outcomes. Treating women and men, or girls and boys, equally does not automatically ensure that they obtain equal outcomes and benefits, since there are many structural factors that may militate against this. Work towards gender equity therefore looks at structural power relations in society as well as material resources, and may include taking positive or affirmative action to ensure that policies and programmes benefit women/girls and men/boys equally.”¹⁴

Within the UN system, gender equity is often associated with notions of justice and fairness and, therefore, requires a value judgment. Such judgments can, of course, be subjective, since factors like tradition, custom, religion, and culture weigh into what constitutes fairness. From a gender perspective, these factors can certainly be detrimental to women and girls, particularly in societies where gender relations have historically been asymmetrical and biased against them. From this perspective, it is necessary to first achieve gender equality before trying to define what gender-equitable policies and practices might look like in a society.

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is the central overarching concept in addressing issues of women, peace, and security. Gender mainstreaming is both a strategy to achieve gender equality and a goal in itself. It means bringing the perceptions, perspectives, experiences, knowledge, and interests of women and men to bear on policymaking, planning, and decision-making. Mainstreaming does not replace the need for targeted, women-specific policies, programmes, and positive legislation, nor does it do away with the need for gender units or focal points.

According to the UN ECOSOC (1997/2), mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making both women’s and men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.

This definition, which is drawn from the ECOSOC document cited above, points to five areas in which such gender mainstreaming efforts are critical:

1. The intergovernmental processes of the UN;
2. Institutional requirements for gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes;
3. The role of gender units and focal points in gender mainstreaming;
4. Capacity-building for gender mainstreaming; and
5. Gender mainstreaming in the integrated follow-up to global UN conferences.

Gender mainstreaming goes beyond a discussion of ending discrimination against women. It considers a number of other gender-relevant concepts as part of the process towards the goal of equality. Therefore, it is critical to define such concepts briefly, as they can enhance our understanding of the nature and scope of gender mainstreaming.

14) Commonwealth Secretariat, *The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015*, Commonwealth Women’s Affairs Ministers Meeting, 30 May – 2 June 2004. Available from: <https://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/103%20-%20CW%20Gender%20Plan%20of%20Action%202005-2015%20Evaluation%20Report_1.pdf>.

Gender mainstreaming “must be institutionalized through concrete steps, mechanisms and processes in all parts of the United Nations system”.¹⁵ This means that putting gender mainstreaming into practice requires system-wide change at the highest levels.

Examples of Gender Mainstreaming

The Gender Unit of the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB) took the lead on the critical task of including women associated with fighting forces in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process. This included women who would otherwise have been excluded by the DDR process. Furthermore, with support of the Political Section and the Force Commander’s Office, a broad advocacy campaign was initiated for the inclusion of women ex-combatants from the Armed Political Parties Movement (APPM) in the demobilization process so they could integrate into the new army and police force. By 16 August 2005, 16,491 former combatants of the Forces Armées Burundaises and the APPM had undergone the national demobilization.¹⁶

The significant accomplishments of Peru in the pursuit of gender equality in education constitute a vital step in realizing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 — to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.¹⁷ In 2019, Peru adopted its *National Gender Equality Policy*, and the country’s Supreme Court motioned to include gender in the National Basic Education Curriculum. Civil society in Peru has been key to the ongoing efforts towards gender equality, organizing under the Citizen Movement for Gender Equality and comprising more than 128 organizations, including the Peruvian Campaign for the Right to Education. Civil society has exerted significant pressure on the National Congress and the Ministry of Education to support a gender approach to education. Other organizations, such as the Citizen Movement, have facilitated learning campaigns designed to dispel the myths and fears surrounding the gender equality approach and assert the importance of comprehensive sexual education.¹⁸

Gender balance/parity

Gender balance or parity refers to the equal representation of women and men at all levels of an organization. Efforts that increase the number of women in decision-making positions constitute gender balancing. The goal of the UN is to achieve a 50-50 gender balance in all professional posts. While achieving a gender balance is certainly an important part of gender mainstreaming, it is only one component of a larger process.

Sex-disaggregated data

Effective gender mainstreaming requires the availability and use of sex-disaggregated data because such empirical evidence is critical to determining the differentiated impact of policies on women and men. Sex-disaggregated data are statistics that are usually collected and presented separately for men and women. Such data are extremely valuable because they provide insight into how given gender roles lead to the distinct needs that must be met in order to fulfil those roles effectively.

15) UN Economic and Social Council, *Gender Mainstreaming*, A/52/3, 18 September 1997. Available from: <<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF>>.

16) UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Gender Mainstreaming in Peacekeeping Operations Progress Report*, 2005. Available from: <https://www.peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/dpko_gmprogressreport_2005_0.pdf>.

17) SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, “Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4)”. Available from: <<https://sdg4education2030.org/the-goal/>>.

18) Fabíola Munhoz and Philani Ndebele, “Gender Equality in Education Vital to Achieving SDG 4”, Global Campaign for Education, 3 March 2020. Available from: <<https://www.campaignforeducation.org/en/2020/03/03/gender-equality-in-education-vital-to-achieving-sdg-4/>>.

Gender analysis

Gender analysis is a detailed examination used to understand the relationships between men and women, their access to resources, their activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other. It recognizes that gender and its intersection with race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, disability, or any other status are important in understanding the different patterns of involvement, behaviour, and activities that women and men have in economic, social, political, and legal structures.

At the local level, gender analysis reveals the varied roles women, men, girls, and boys play in the family and community and in social, economic, legal, and political structures. An analysis of gender relations can tell us who has access, who has control, who is likely to benefit from a new initiative, and who is likely to lose. Gender analysis asks questions about why a situation has developed the way it has. It explores assumptions about issues such as the distribution of resources and the impact of culture and tradition. It can provide information on the potential direct or indirect benefit of a development initiative on women and men, appropriate entry points for measures promoting equality in a particular context, and how a particular development initiative may challenge or maintain the existing gender division of labour. Implementing an effective gender analysis requires skilled professionals with adequate resources and the use of local expertise. The findings from a gender analysis must be used to shape the design of policies, programmes, and projects.

Gender impact assessment

Gender impact assessment (GIA) refers to the differential impact — intentional or unintentional — of various policy decisions on women, men, girls, and boys. It enables policymakers to more accurately picture the effects of a given policy and compare and assess the current situation and trends with the proposed policy's expected results. GIA can be applied to legislation, policy plans and programmes, budgets, reports, and existing policies. However, it is most successful when carried out at an early stage in the decision-making process so that changes and even the redirecting of policies can take place.



An accepted best-practice example of a GIA guide is the Gender Self-Assessment Guide for the Police, Armed Forces and Justice Sector, available at:
<https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/publications/documents/self_assessment_guide.pdf>.



Empowerment

A critical aspect of promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women, with a focus on redressing power imbalances and supporting women's autonomy and ability to manage their own lives. Women's empowerment is vital to peace and security, sustainable development, and the realization of human rights for all.

Empowerment is about men and women taking control of their lives: setting their own agendas, gaining skills (or having existing skills and knowledge recognized), building self-confidence, solving problems, and developing self-reliance. Empowerment is sometimes described as being about the ability to make choices, but it must also involve being able to shape what choices are available or seen as possibilities. The process of empowerment is as important as the goal. Empowerment is not a zero-sum game in which gains for women automatically imply losses for men.

In empowerment strategies, increasing women's power does not refer to power over others or controlling forms of power. Rather, it refers to alternative forms of power — power to, power with, and power from within — all of which focus on utilizing individual and collective strengths to work towards common goals without coercion or domination.¹⁹

Misunderstandings about the meaning of gender

It is important to understand some typical misconceptions about gender and its place in discussions of international peace and security:

- First, even though in many languages there is little or no linguistic distinction between the terms, “gender” and “sex” are not the same, and the difference is critical.
- Second, addressing gender is not the same as addressing women's issues. Women's issues are a part of gender issues, but gender also involves the relationship between women and men and girls and boys and the impact of ideas about femininity and masculinity within a given society.
- Third, gender concerns are not an “add-on”, but are central to working towards peace and security; they go to the heart of issues concerning power relations and society's well-being in general.

Section 1.4 Navigating the Gender Equality Regime Within the United Nations

When trying to understand the many institutions and complex legal frameworks that seek to promote gender equality within the UN system, thinking in terms of an “international regime of gender equality” is a useful starting point. The term *regime* refers to agreed-upon “principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given issue area”.²⁰ Such rules and procedures may be explicit, such as the codification of international law in the form of treaties, or they may be implicit or less formally binding. Whether or not these principles are formalized in a treaty or are informally part of international agencies and conferences, they constitute a regime because they come



Maria Helene Lefaucheu, French Representative on the Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. 12 February 1947. UN Photo.

together in a way that can influence State action. The gender equality regime, like other regimes, includes a web of organizations — from the global to the local, including governmental and non-governmental organizations. Many actors, organizations, and pieces of legislation make up the gender equality regime even beyond the UN. The following section highlights some of the key institutions, principles, and rules that contribute to establishing global normative standards for gender equality in the UN system.

19) Zoe Oxaal with Sally Baden, *Gender and Empowerment: Definitions, Approaches and Implications for Policy*, BRIDGE (development — gender), Report No. 40, Institute of Development Studies, October 1997. Available from: <<https://www.eldis.org/document/A23334>>. See also: S. Longwe, *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*, UNICEF, 1991.

20) Stephen D. Krasner, “Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables”, *International Organization*, vol. 36, No. 2, Spring 1982, 186.



Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, speaks at the fortieth-anniversary event commemorating the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the treaty on the human rights of women. 18 December 2019. UN Photo by Manuel Elias.

The UN Charter

The contribution of the UN to the international regime of gender equality begins with the UN Charter, discussed in Sections 1.2 and 1.3. This founding document commits the organization to ensure and protect equal rights for men and women. Specifically, the Preamble to the Charter reaffirms “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and ... to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom”. It also places special emphasis on non-discrimination against women and girls and the promotion of equality, balance, and gender equity in Chapters I, III, IX, and XII. However, a number of other key principles emerge in the Charter, including the sovereign equality of States, maintenance of peace and security, and non-intervention in the domestic affairs of States. These often operate in direct opposition to such gender-related goals and can ultimately override them.

The International Bill of Human Rights

Gender equality as a human rights issue received institutional reaffirmation within the UN in what is informally known as the International Bill of Human Rights: *the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948); *the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966); and *the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966). While these foundational documents were important in establishing a normative legal framework as substantial components of international law, their implementation often falls short. From a gender equality perspective, the approach to gender equality in the Declaration and two subsequent treaties is fairly narrow, often excluding certain issues from the human rights agenda, such as those that occur in the private realm. In this sense, their mandates are often criticized for not taking women’s and girls’ human rights seriously.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

The commitment of the UN to gender equality was also visible in the establishment of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in 1946. This is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council, dedicated exclusively to promoting gender equality and advancing women’s rights. Established originally with 15 members, CSW now has 45 members, elected by ECOSOC for a period of four years, that meet each year to evaluate and debate progress on achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. There are currently 13 Member States from Africa, 11 from Asia, nine from Latin America and the Caribbean, and 12 from Europe and other States.²¹

21) UN Women, “Member States”. Available from: <<https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/member-states>>.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol

There is no doubt that the CSW set the scene and contributed momentum towards the first legally binding document specifically devoted to the rights of women and girls as part of the gender equality regime. The UN General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) in 1979, the first international human rights instrument to explicitly define all forms of discrimination against women as fundamental human rights violations.²² The CSW drafted much of the text of this convention.

As of 2020, 189 of 194 countries (over 90 per cent of UN members) have ratified CEDAW. The Holy See, Iran, Somalia, Sudan, and Tonga are not signatories to CEDAW. The US and Palau are the only countries to have signed but not ratified the Convention.²³

Often referred to as the international bill of rights for women, CEDAW defines *discrimination* against women as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field”. By accepting CEDAW, States commit themselves to undertake a series of measures to end discrimination against women in all forms, including the following: “to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolish all discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women; to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and to ensure elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises”.²⁴

Human rights treaties are often followed by “Optional Protocols” that may either provide procedures regarding the treaty or address a particular issue related to the treaty. Optional Protocols to human rights treaties are treaties in their own right and are open to signature, accession, or ratification by countries who are party to the main treaty. *The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, which entered into force in 2000, further enhanced the gender equality regime by putting procedures and mechanisms in place that hold States accountable to the Convention. By ratifying the Optional Protocol, a State recognizes the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women — the body that monitors States parties’ compliance with the Convention — to receive and consider complaints from individuals or groups within its jurisdiction. More specifically, the Protocol contains two procedures:

1. A communications procedure allows individual women or groups of women to submit claims of violations of rights protected under the Convention to the Committee. The Committee will admit individual complaints for consideration if they satisfy a number of criteria; for example, domestic remedies must have been exhausted.
2. Another procedure enables the Committee to initiate inquiries into situations of grave or systematic violations of women’s rights.

In either case, States must be party to the Convention and the Protocol, which means they agree to be legally bound to it.²⁵

22) UN Women, “Commission on the Status of Women”. Available from: <<https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>>.

23) United Nations, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, 18 December 1979. Available from: <<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>>.

24) United Nations, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*.

25) United Nations General Assembly, *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, 6 October 1999. Available from: <<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPCEDAW.aspx>>.



Dubravka Šimonović, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, addresses the opening of the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. 15 March 2021. UN Photo by Eskinder Debebe.

“The United Nations human rights machinery has as a central element the mechanism of Special Procedures, which covers all human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political, and social. Independent human rights experts who are working within the scope of that mechanism are called Special Rapporteurs. (“Rapporteur” is a French-derived word for an investigator who reports to a deliberative body.) Their mandate is to report and advise on human rights from a thematic or country-specific perspective. As of 1 April 2013, there were 36 thematic and 13 country mandates.”²⁶

With the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Special Rapporteurs:

- Undertake country visits;
- Act on individual cases and concerns of a broader, structural nature by sending communications to States and others concerned with alleged violations or abuses;
- Conduct thematic studies and convene expert consultations;
- Contribute to the development of international human rights standards;
- Engage in advocacy;
- Raise public awareness; and
- Provide advice for technical cooperation.

Special Procedures, such as Rapporteurs, report annually to the Human Rights Council; most of the mandate holders also report to the General Assembly. Their tasks are defined in the resolutions creating or extending their mandates.

26) As of 1 August 2017, there are 44 Thematic and 12 Country Mandates. United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council”. Available from: <<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Welcompage.aspx>>.

In 1994, through resolution 1994/45, the UN (former Human Rights Commission and now Human Rights Council [HRC]) appointed a “Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its causes and consequences” for an initial period of three years (which was subsequently extended). This Special Rapporteur has a mandate to seek and receive information from State parties, treaty bodies, other Special Rapporteurs, and civil society and to respond to this information with recommendations to eliminate all forms of violence against women in comprehensive ways. The Rapporteur undertakes fact-finding country visits with reports of findings on issues of violence against women in these contexts and issues thematic reports to the UN Human Rights Council annually.²⁷

In 2004, another Special Rapporteur was appointed to deal with issues of trafficking in persons, especially in women and children.²⁸

World conferences on women

International discussion on gender equality norms was taken further at four world conferences on women, held between 1975 and 1995 in Mexico, Copenhagen, Nairobi, and Beijing. These conferences provided platforms for intergovernmental negotiations and gave women’s organizations an international arena for making their claims and networking. The first was convened in Mexico City to coincide with the 1975 International Women’s Year, observed to remind the international community that discrimination against women and girls continued to be a persistent problem in much of the world. The UN General Assembly called for this first conference to focus international attention on the need to develop goals, effective strategies, and plans of action for the advancement of women and girls. To this end, the General Assembly identified three key objectives that would become the basis for UN work on gender equality:

1. Full gender equality and the elimination of gender discrimination;
2. The integration and full participation of women in development; and
3. An increased contribution by women in the strengthening of world peace.

The conference, along with the United Nations Decade for Women (1976–1985), which was proclaimed by the General Assembly five months later at the conference’s urging, launched a new era in global efforts to promote women’s advancement. These efforts opened a worldwide dialogue on gender equality, and a learning process was set in motion that would involve deliberating, negotiating, setting objectives, identifying obstacles, and reviewing progress.

This process continued with the second world conference for women in Copenhagen in 1980, building upon the objectives laid out five years earlier. In terms of the UN’s work on peace and security, the report from this second conference specified the following: “In accordance with their obligations under the Charter to maintain peace and security and to achieve international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, bearing in mind, in this respect, the right to live in peace, States should help women to participate in promoting international cooperation for the sake of the preparation of societies for a life in peace” (paragraph 33). In this way, the UN began to frame women’s rights and gender equality as essential components of their peace and security work.

27) UN Commission on Human Rights, 1994/45. “Question of integrating the rights of women into the human rights mechanisms of the United Nations and the elimination of violence against women”, resolution 1994/45, 4 March 1994.

28) UN Commission on Human Rights, “Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially in women and children”, E/CN.4/DEC/2004/110, 21 April 2004. Available from: <https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/alldocs.aspx?doc_id=9780>.

The third world conference in 1985 adopted the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, with the goals of equality, development, and peace as a blueprint for action until 2000. This document clearly linked the promotion and maintenance of peace to the eradication of violence against women at all levels of society. Paragraph 13 states that the full and effective promotion of women’s rights can best occur in conditions of international peace and security. Peace includes not only the absence of war, violence, and hostilities at the national and international levels, but also the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality, and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within society. Peace cannot be realized under conditions of economic and sexual inequality, denial of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, deliberate exploitation of large sectors of the population, unequal development of countries, and exploitative economic relations. The document urges Member States to take constitutional and legal steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and tailor national strategies to facilitate the participation of women in efforts to promote peace and development. At the same time, it contains specific recommendations for women’s empowerment regarding health, education, and employment.

The fourth world conference on women, held in Beijing in 1995, produced the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. The Declaration committed governments to implement the strategies agreed to in Nairobi in 1985 before the end of the twentieth century and to mobilize resources for implementing the Platform for Action. The Platform is the most complete document produced by a UN conference on women’s rights. It incorporates achievements from earlier conferences and treaties, such as *the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, CEDAW, and *the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action*, which was produced at a global human rights conference in 1993. In terms of WPS, the *Beijing Platform for Action* was critical because it identified women and armed conflict as one of 12 critical areas of concern. Within this area, the Platform identified six strategic objectives:

1. Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation;
2. Reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments;
3. Promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations;
4. Promote women’s contributions to fostering a culture of peace;
5. Provide protection, assistance, and training to refugee women, internally displaced women, and other displaced women in need of international protection; and
6. Provide assistance to the women of colonies and non-self-governing territories.

Institutional development on gender equality and the empowerment of women

The UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) was formed and became operational in 2011 to promote and advance progress towards gender equality and women’s empowerment. This organization is dedicated to streamlining the work on gender equality. Four previously separate UN agencies — the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) — were brought together under the UN Women umbrella. The first appointed Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women was Ms. Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile.

Among its goals, UN Women aims to do the following:

- Support intergovernmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards, and norms;
- Help Member States to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society; and
- Hold the UN system accountable for its commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

UN Women works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities:

1. Women lead, participate in, and benefit equally from governance systems.
2. Women have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy.
3. All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence.
4. Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience and benefit equally from preventing natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action.²⁹

Gender regime relating to peace and security

Beyond these efforts specifically focused on gender issues, other areas within the UN system have shifted, creating space for gender issues to appear in new contexts, particularly international peace and security. For example, in the context of the horrific violence in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia in the late 1990s, the Security Council undertook a series of meetings to address the issue of responsibility to protect civilian populations during times of war.



On 7 December 2020, Viet Nam and the United Nations convened a global conference to accelerate action on global commitments on women, peace, and security. Over 400 delegates, including high-level dignitaries, diplomats, political leaders, and women organizations and peacebuilding practitioners from around the world, attended the High-level Opening of the International Conference on Women, Peace and Security, entitled “Strengthening Women’s Role in Building and Sustaining Peace: from Commitments to Results”. 7 December 2020. Photo by Nguyen Minh Duc/UN Women.

29) UN Women, “About UN Women”. Available from: <<https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women>>.

In this context, the UN Security Council adopted United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) on women, peace, and security, the focus of this course. As will be discussed in Lesson 2, the Council passed UNSCR 1325 (2000) unanimously on 31 October 2000. It was the first resolution the Security Council passed to specifically address the impact of war on women and girls and women's contributions to conflict resolution and the maintenance of peace and security. Although gender mainstreaming has been official UN policy since 1997, this resolution specifically emphasized the importance of gender mainstreaming in the armed conflict and security side of the UN.

Since adopting UNSCR 1325, the Security Council has adopted nine additional resolutions related to women, peace, and security. A matrix of the resolutions can be found in Annex A and will be discussed further in Lesson 2.

Summary and key learning

- The origins of the UN, grounded in the commitment to maintaining international peace and security, shaped the emergence and development of international peacekeeping operations that originally helped to supervise agreements and positioning between adversaries.
- The UN system has sought to adapt its peace and security capabilities in response to changes in conflict patterns that have emerged in the past decades, leading to greater focus on the protection of civilians in peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding.
- For social transformation (relevant to both conflict dynamics and building the peace), it is vital to understand and work with the difference between gender and sex; the process of gender mainstreaming; and the meanings of gender equality, gender balance, sex-disaggregated data, gender analysis, gender impact analysis, and gender empowerment.
- The key components of the international regime of gender equality include the UN Charter, human rights treaties (particularly CEDAW), the outcome documents of the four world conferences on women, and selected General Assembly Declarations and Security Council resolutions. UNSCR 1325 (2000) is the most comprehensive work to date linking the issues of gender equality with peace and security and has been further substantiated through sister resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019).

Annex A: UNSCRs on Women, Peace, and Security

UNSCR	DESCRIPTION
1325 (2000)	Affirms the importance of the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian planning, peacekeeping operations and post-conflict peacebuilding and governance.
1820 (2008)	Recognizes that sexual violence as a tactic of warfare is a matter of international peace and security and reinforces and complements UNSCR 1325 (2000) by urging all actors to incorporate gender perspectives in all UN peace and security efforts.
1888 (2009)	Strengthens efforts to end sexual violence in conflict by establishing a Special Representative of the Secretary-General and team of experts on rule of law and sexual violence in conflict, deploying expertise and improving coordination among stakeholders involved in addressing conflict-related sexual violence.
1889 (2009)	Stresses the need to strengthen implementation and establishes indicators for the monitoring of resolution 1325; calls for the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Security Council on women's participation and inclusion in peacebuilding.
1960 (2010)	Establishes a monitoring and reporting mechanism on sexual violence in conflict. Most closely strengthens SCR 1888 (2009) in working to protect women and children from sexual violence by deploying gender experts and by reminding States to prosecute those who commit sexual violence. This resolution specified the appointment of Women Protection Advisers (WPAs) and cross-cutting attention to sexual violence in political participation.
2106 (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence in conflict; stresses women's political and economic empowerment. The resolution sets out many provisions in this regard, including the following: • A focus on efforts to end impunity for sexual violence affecting not only large numbers of women and girls but also men and boys, while emphasizing the need for consistent and rigorous investigation and prosecution of sexual violence crimes as the main point of concern in prevention efforts; • Further deployment of Women Protection Advisers in accordance with UNSCR 1888 and the strengthening of data collection on sexual violence; • The need to ensure women's participation in all aspects of mediation, post-conflict recovery, and peacebuilding; and • The need to address sexual violence in conflict in the establishment of mandates, missions, and other relevant work of the Security Council.

2122 (2013)	Addresses persistent gaps in implementing the WPS agenda; positions gender equality and women's empowerment as critical to international peace and security; recognizes the differential impact of all violations in conflict on women and girls and calls for consistent application of WPS across the work of the Security Council.
2242 (2015)	Establishes the Informal Experts Group (IEG); addresses persistent obstacles to implementation, including financing and institutional reforms; focuses on greater integration of the agendas on WPS and counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism; calls for improved Security Council working methods on WPS.
2467 (2019)	Affirms that a survivor-centred approach is required to address conflict-related sexual violence in all UN peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding initiatives, including in the context of security and justice sector reform efforts and negotiations of peace agreements and ceasefire verification mechanisms.
2493 (2019)	Recommits to the WPS agenda by creating safe environments for women leaders, peacebuilders, human rights defenders, and political actors around the globe.

End-of-Lesson Quiz »

1. **Which of the following is a function of the UN Security Council?**
 - A. Determining whether there is a threat to the peace or an act of aggression and recommending which measures should be taken
 - B. Encouraging Member States to apply all necessary measures in order to prevent or stop aggression, including the employment of force
 - C. Considering and approving the United Nations budget and conducting financial assessments of Member States
 - D. Establishing UN-sanctioned governments in unstable States

2. **As of 2020, the Commission on the Status of Women has _____ members.**
 - A. 20
 - B. 100
 - C. 45
 - D. five

3. **How is traditional peacekeeping different from complex peacebuilding?**
 - A. Traditional peacekeeping allows the use of armed force, while complex peacebuilding employs only diplomacy and humanitarian assistance.
 - B. Traditional peacekeeping involves public opinion and protection of human rights, while complex peacebuilding deals only with the heads of nations and factions.
 - C. Traditional peacekeeping requires the separation of combat forces, while complex peacebuilding employs air, navy, and land forces to keep the peace.
 - D. Traditional peacekeeping emphasizes observation and monitoring, while complex peacebuilding involves protection of human rights and institution building.

4. **Why did peace missions change in nature and expand to encompass electoral assistance, protection of human rights, and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, among other functions?**
 - A. Traditional peacekeeping activities were no longer welcome in host States.
 - B. Conflicts ceased to exist.
 - C. Complex and violent conflicts emerged during the 1990s that have necessitated new responses and forms of engagement.
 - D. The traditional methods of peacekeeping were invalidated by a new interpretation of Chapter IV of the UN Charter.

5. **The Charter defines _____ main organs within the UN.**
 - A. six
 - B. nine
 - C. three
 - D. 11

6. **Gender equality _____.**
 - A. refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men where the interests, needs, and priorities of both are taken into consideration
 - B. is an issue that affects only women
 - C. is the same as gender equity
 - D. necessitates a special emphasis on non-discrimination against both men and women, with the exception of nations with a historical culture of prescribed and clearly delineated gender roles

Answer Key provided on the next page.

End-of-Lesson Quiz »

- 7. What is the goal of gender mainstreaming?**
- A. To remove gender from policy considerations
 - B. To reinforce gender stereotypes
 - C. To promote the concerns and experiences of women in political, economic, and social spheres so that women benefit more than men
 - D. To bring the perceptions, experiences, knowledge, and interests of women and men to bear on policymaking, planning, and decision-making
- 8. Which of the following documents is considered the first international treaty focused specifically on protecting and promoting women’s human rights?**
- A. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
 - B. *The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*
 - C. *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*
 - D. Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)
- 9. Systematic rape and sexual violence during armed conflict _____.**
- A. are crimes that are not covered by international law
 - B. constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity
 - C. are considered separate from the Security Council’s work on international peace and security
 - D. only affect women during war
- 10. Since adopting UNSCR 1325 (2000), the Security Council has adopted nine additional resolutions related to WPS, which are _____.**
- A. focused on entirely different themes
 - B. waiting to be formally ratified
 - C. exploratory documents
 - D. sister resolutions to SCR 1325 that build on its provisions

Answer Key »

- 1. A
- 2. C
- 3. D
- 4. C
- 5. A
- 6. A
- 7. D
- 8. C
- 9. B
- 10. D