

BACKGROUND GUIDES



WESMUN
2026

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Letter from the DIAS

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)'s DIAS, composed of Qurratulian Azza, Emaan Mubashir, and Maryam Jandali, welcomes you to WESMUN 2026 and looks forward to having a great time holding a group of delegates who will participate in useful and excellent discussions regarding the many difficult issues confronting post-conflict societies today.

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is not a committee of short-term or simple solutions; it provides a group for representatives to deal with the long-term realities of post-conflict rehabilitation, many of which are painful. This conference will require participants to examine not only the short-term but also to analyze the structural, political, social, and economic elements that shape whether peace is able to be sustained or deteriorate. Delegates will need to develop a well-thought-out strategy for negotiating with the PBC, and they will also need to develop the appropriate solutions to the issues on the PBC's agenda. The solutions must be sustainable and practical.

During this session, you will have the opportunity to enhance your diplomatic abilities as well as improve your skills in writing policy documents, as well as interact and communicate positively with other delegates who hold a variety of opinions and perspectives. Although the debate process in the PBC often is highly charged and complex, it is also heavily based upon cooperation between delegates, and to achieve success requires both consensus-building and compromise, based upon a true shared vision for long-lasting peace.

We are confident that the outcome of your participation in this conference will result in improved diplomatic abilities, the creation of lasting friendships, and a greater understanding of the many facts involved in creating peace within the global system.

We look forward to seeing the ideas, leadership, and diplomacy you will bring to the Peacebuilding Commission. Let us work together to make WESMUN 2026 a conference defined by thoughtful debate, impactful solutions, and memorable experiences.

Warm regards,
The DAIS of the Peacebuilding Commission
Qurratulian Azza, Emaan Mubashir, and Maryam Jandali

Introduction to committee

The UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) serves groups of countries to provide advice and assistance to governments in recovery from armed conflicts. The Commission also seeks to support and encourage the development of a world community dedicated to promoting peace and the development of peaceful societies. The Commission is at the intersection of three sectors: peacekeeping, development, and political stability. Its primary function is to ensure that the international commitment to assist a nation does not cease or reduce in intensity just because there is no longer an active armed conflict.

The PBC comprises 31 states, elected from the General Assembly, Security Council, and Economic and Social Council, thus creating a broad spectrum of political, economic, and regional views. The PBC works closely with these principal organs of the United Nations while also engaging with member states, regional organizations, civil society bodies, and international financial institutions.

As opposed to conventional security organizations that focus primarily on achieving temporary solutions through ceasefires and peace agreements, the PBC focuses on a more holistic and preventative approach to creating sustainable peace by addressing some of the root causes of conflict. It includes weak governmental structures, economic disparity, social disintegration, violation of human rights, absence of the rule of law, etc. Additionally, the PBC promotes an inclusive political process, as well as strategic long-term development initiatives, to prevent societies emerging from conflict from reverting to cycles of violence.

Introduction to committee

The challenge for delegates in this committee will be to deal with the complexities involved in rebuilding after conflict has ended, in an environment where peace has been secured but is still unstable and progress is sporadic. In addition to confronting and reconciling competing national interests and global collective responsibilities, delegates will need to weigh the demands of both short-term stabilization and long-term resilience, as well as political pragmatism versus humanitarian principles. Further, it is essential that the delegates of the PBC think creatively and be open to working across borders and blending ideas that may differ from one another. As such, peacebuilding will not happen in one formulaic way.

The Peacebuilding Commission members must be prepared to participate in high-level policy discussions and offer viable options for achieving peace in a sustainable and contextually appropriate manner. Delegates should have a high level of understanding of the skills necessary to negotiate diplomatically. The success of this Committee will depend not only on how well delegations and delegates advocate for their positions but also on how well they work collaboratively with each other, make compromises, and produce resolutions that reflect the interrelationships of peace, development, and security.

Agenda 1: Addressing the Militarization of Humanitarian Aid in Active and Post-Conflict Zones and Its Implications for Peacebuilding

Introduction to the Agenda

Humanitarian assistance is at its core intended to be a neutral, impartial, and human suffering alleviation act. However, in several active and post-conflict areas today, the assistance of the humanitarian sector has become a political, military, and strategic issue. The militarization of aid happens when relief operations are deployed in such a way that a security goal is met. Often, the distinction between humanitarian workers and military forces becomes so thin; one can see this trend in the conflicts where the humanitarian aid delivery is either restricted or weaponized by the states in order to win over opponents or justify their military presence. Even when framed as necessary for stability or counterterrorism, these methods effectively weaken the humanitarian sector's essential principles of neutrality and independence, placing both aid workers and civilian populations at heightened risk. Trust, access to the needy, and safety of the staff are all diminishing as humanitarian actors are seen as one with the political or military agenda. Thus, human suffering is being further aggravated in the already fragile and vulnerable areas.

The implications of militarized humanitarian aid extend well beyond immediate relief, determining the trajectory of post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery through aid distribution controlled by military authorization. It can also facilitate the emergence of social trust, democratic governance, and civilian institutions, which are very critical for the establishment of lasting peace. A.J. Kadyrov points out that when humanitarian aid helps to entrench divisions, it can also create a situation where the actors holding the guns are seen as legitimate, and the local civil society is weakened, which happens when grievances are deepened and instability extends over time, rather than getting resolved.

Introduction to the Agenda

Giving such a vital role to humanitarian assistance in post-conflict situations where there are military and anti-military approaches coalescing could normalize and slow down the progress towards reconciliation and the development of places that eventually could become peaceful ones. Tackling this issue necessitates a critical evaluation of existing practices in the planning, delivery, and coordination of aid in conflict-affected areas, thereby reframing the issue from a wartime perspective to one grounded in peace.

This proposal is particularly compelling, as it clearly defines not only the roles of delegates and other stakeholders but also the skills and attitudes required to effectively fulfill those roles. The delegates will be called upon to scrutinize the ethical, political, and operational complications brought about by the critical militarization of humanitarian aid and to advance viable solutions that will be both fruitful for the humanitarian cause and for the attempts to make peace permanent and inclusive.

Key Terms

Humanitarian Aid: Humanitarian assistance comes from many different sources non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, and even governments. It is planned that those who have been affected by a crisis such as an armed conflict or natural disaster, may receive the form of food, medicine, shelter, clean water, sanitation, or other essential services that help relieve suffering and preserve human dignity.

Militarization of Humanitarian Aid: The participation of the armed forces in the planning, delivery, or giving out of humanitarian aid, as well as the use of humanitarian assistance to further military, political, or strategic objectives, puts humanitarian values such as neutrality, independence, and impartiality at risk.

Active and Post-Conflict Zones: Active conflict areas continue to experience enemies as well as very close threats to civilians' safety and availability of basic services while areas that have finished experiencing active conflict are now in post-conflict status and still have a major number of problems such as a lack of government stability, humanitarian issues, and recovery and rebuilding obstacles.

Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoord): Military and civilian humanitarian actors work together and interact in both active and post-conflict environments. Coordination can improve access and safety. However, there are cases when the boundaries become unclear and the positions of the military and civilian humanitarian actors can come together, causing wrong information and loss of trust for humanitarian actors.

Humanitarian Principles: Guided by UNHRC principles the foundational values leading humanitarian action in PBC are as follows, humanity (addressing suffering wherever it is found), neutrality (not taking sides in hostilities), impartiality (assistance based solely on need), and independence (autonomy from political or military objectives).

Peacebuilding: Long-term efforts aimed at addressing the main problem causing these conflicts, strengthening institutions, promoting peace, and preventing the recurrence of violence in post-conflict societies.

Key Issues

- **Militarization of Humanitarian Aid in Conflict and Post-Conflict Zones:** In several civil war-related crisis contexts, military actors have taken on a direct role in delivering or overseeing humanitarian assistance to affected communities, including in situations of ongoing conflict. Humanitarian assistance has become a means by which military actors may pursue their own political and strategic objectives. This close association between military action and civilian humanitarian action results in the undermining of the principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence that are fundamental to the delivery of assistance as a humanitarian action. As a result, when humanitarian assistance is provided as a form of retaliation for military actions or in support of military objectives, the local population may view aid organizations as lacking credibility and become less able to engage with them. Furthermore, the perception that humanitarian organizations support military or political objectives restricts humanitarian access and significantly heightens the risk of direct violence against aid workers. Thus, delivering humanitarian assistance within the context of military involvement makes it significantly more difficult to build sustainable peace in crisis/negotiation areas.
- **Erosion of Trust Between Civilian Populations and Aid Providers:** When people see the connection between humanitarian aid and the military, they might not trust the organizations giving them help, and it reduces their interest in wanting to engage with their communities, which limits their chances of successfully delivering humanitarian assistance. Additionally, it impacts the ability of the local population to exercise ownership of the peace process in the post-conflict recovery period.

Major Parties

Russia: Russia has been widely accused by international organizations of using humanitarian aid to bolster its military presence in areas affected by conflict or post-conflict. Russia has vetoed 17 resolutions in the UN Security Council, all related to the delivery of humanitarian assistance from 2011 to 2023, including a 9-month extension of authorization in 2023, to limit the number of humanitarian deliveries to Syria. During the Ukraine conflict, Russia has continued to limit the flow of humanitarian assistance into Ukraine by limiting the number of entrances to the country through which aid could be delivered and by using food and other necessities as pressure against the local population. These actions have impeded the success of building peace by preventing Russia from establishing itself as a political power rather than providing humanitarian assistance, further dividing the population, and reducing any level of trust required for permanent peace in Ukraine.

- **China:** China is supporting the militarization of humanitarian aid, mainly through its use of vetoing many UN Security Council Resolutions to blame the blockades of humanitarian aid in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and Myanmar, among others, and by delaying famine declarations and limiting the number of humanitarian cross-border operations through its vetoing power. In addition, China has also deployed its People's Liberation Army (PLA) for humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) missions, such as following the 2015 Nepal earthquake and the Ebola epidemic in Africa. However, the PLA missions are often where China will not cooperate with other (international) military forces for political reasons, for example related to Taiwan, and as a result, this reduces the principled neutrality and effectiveness of humanitarian aid operations, and also negatively impacts the peacebuilding operations.

- **USA:** The United States has been a significant contributor to the militarization of humanitarian assistance in conflict areas. The most notable example being led by the provisional reconstruction teams (PRT) in Afghanistan where the Department of Defense (DOD) became the largest distributor. Provisional Reconstruction Teams blurred the line between aid and combat. Consequently, Non-governmental organizations faced a 20-30% reduction in access in PRT zones, limiting the aid reach in certain zones. This confusion undermined peacebuilding efforts as it only heightened tensions between the parties in the conflict zone. The United States continues to be heavily involved in the militarization of humanitarian aid, through its prioritization of political interests over global security initiatives.

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

- **UN Security Council Resolution 2286 (2016):** The resolution not only condemned the attacks on medical staff but also on humanitarian workers by warring parties. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also identified the issue of combining military and humanitarian functions and thereby putting humanitarian personnel at risk. By doing this, the ICRC called on all parties to the conflict to comply with their obligations under IHL specifically with respect to rules concerning the conduct of war.
- **UN Integrated Missions Policy (mid-2000s onward):** The UN opted for missions that were integrated and would consist of peacekeeping, political, and humanitarian elements (for instance, in Afghanistan, Mali, and South Sudan). While UN Peacekeeping was seen as a way to encourage effective coordination among humanitarian organizations; the UN subsequently found that too much integration could lead to aid appearing as militarized, and as a consequence, necessitated various review and modification processes in order to ensure that the benefits of humanitarian actors remained aid neutral.
- **Secretary-General Reports on Protection of Civilians:** There are multiple reports spanning from 2009 to the present that have unanimously warned that using the aid for counterterrorism or stabilization purposes not only undermines peacebuilding but also erodes the trust of the humanitarian actors.
- **UN Response to Afghanistan (Post-2001 & Post-2021):** Following the introduction of counter-terrorism and sanction measures which prevented access to humanitarian assistance, the United Nations has made strong statements supporting the separation of humanitarian assistance from military and political conditions.
- **Global Humanitarian Policy Review (2015–2016):** After the World Humanitarian Summit, the UN declared that the securitization of aid was detrimental to long-term peace and committed itself to the support of local ownership and principled aid delivery.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

1. How can humanitarian aid remain neutral and trusted when military forces are often the primary actors controlling access in conflict and post-conflict zones?
2. Where should the line be drawn between ensuring security for humanitarian operations and preventing the political or military manipulation of aid?
3. How can international parties involved rebuild civilian trust in humanitarian assistance once aid has been perceived as serving strategic or military interests?
4. What accountability measures should exist when states, armed groups, or international actors violate humanitarian principles?
5. Should international law be updated to more clearly restrict military involvement in humanitarian aid operations?

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Agenda 2:
Addressing how gender-based political violence and structural discrimination hinder women's role in peacebuilding.

Introduction to the Agenda

Gender-specific political violence, as well as structural discrimination, are the main barriers that prevent women's participation in peacebuilding and political processes in a meaningful way. Women's international peacekeeping role was acknowledged by the world but they are still the victims of political suppression, intimidation, harassment, sexual violence, and other such crimes in large numbers during and after the wars. Violence is not a one-time event but rather a systematic process that aims to silence women wanting to take over the leadership, engage in the community, or get involved in peace talks. The threats faced by women involved in government (such as female Parliament members, activists, etc.) all lead to an undermining of the democratic legitimacy of violence and thus result in an erosion of the already weak peace. The current situation is extremely difficult, but it has become exponentially worse because of strong societal structures supporting males in different ways (including patriarchal norms), ineffective forms of accountability for those who commit acts of violence against women, and a lack of safe forms of legislative protection for women, which has created an environment where women are less welcome in public life and gives rise to continued exclusion.

Introduction to the Agenda

Women's voices will always be the first to be silenced even though there is ample evidence that inclusive peace processes are lasting and viable, as conflicts get longer and political arenas are more polarized. Structural discrimination, among the various challenges confronting women, has an altogether greater negative impact by segregating them from the educational, economic, legal, and political opportunities that are the foundation of peace-building. Women are being systematically denied participation in the post-conflict areas of reconstruction and governance by unsympathetic laws, unequal property rights, limited access to capital, and a lack of representation in decision-making bodies. Even where the law treats men and women equally, the norms and biases of the institutions still work against implementation, thus exiling women from the formal peace processes yet continuing, to some, to suffer the greatest consequences of the war. The exclusion of women from peace negotiations is not just a violation of human rights, but it also leads to the signing of contracts that do not address the main social issues, the differences between the sexes on conflicts, and the community's long-term social tolerance. Hence, dealing with gender-related political violence and structural discrimination is an issue of protection, but more so of prevention and transformation. It is necessary for society to have the inclusion of women's voices in the peace-building process and for the rights of the minority to have a majority in the leadership and to be seen in the decision-making processes in a democratic and just manner. The agenda submitted to the Member States and the international organizations is not an easy one, as it requires them to transcend the realm of fashionable declarations and adopt real, multifaceted methods that put women squarely in the middle of peacebuilding activities.

Key Terms

- **Gender-Based Political Violence (GBPV):** The violence that targets individuals based on their gender in the context of political conflict or unrest. This includes sexual violence, trafficking, torture, or any other form of abuse used as a tool for political control or intimidation.
- **Patriarchal Systems:** A social structure where men hold more power and authority than women. Men in such systems are primarily responsible for controlling most social institutions, such as government departments, whilst women occupy more subordinate roles within the same institutions.
- **Limited political participation:** Refers to the restricted or unequal ability of individuals to engage in political activities, such as running for office. This restriction can be imposed based on an individual's social characteristics, like being a woman.
- **Structural Discrimination:** The discriminatory systems and practices embedded in societal structures (e.g., laws, education, employment, or political systems) that perpetuate inequality based on social characteristics.
- **Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda:** A UN framework that highlights the importance of women's participation in peace and security efforts.

Key Issues

- **Gender-Based Political Violence in Conflict and Post-Conflict Settings:** The gendered impacts of GBV (gender-based violence) as a result of political violence and/or military conflict are magnified for women and girls. GBV is an inherent violation of an individual's rights. GBV is also a barrier to women's participation in political governance and civil society, and it prevents women's voices from being included in the development of sustainable peace solutions.
- **Structural Discrimination Limiting Women's Role in Peacebuilding:** In addition to the direct effects of violence, structural discrimination (such as unequal access to legal systems and education, economic disadvantage, and deep-rooted cultural norms) continues to exclude women from participating in a variety of decision-making processes. Although there has been a history of signing peace accords, many women have been marginalised by having limited participation in rebuilding processes after conflict, which hinders their contributions towards peace development and diminishes the effectiveness and sustainability of these efforts.
- **Insufficient Coordination Between Humanitarian, Security, and Gender-Focused Frameworks:** Much of the current international agenda is limited to humanitarian assistance and security issues or G.E.R. (Gender Equity and Responsiveness) as separate issues, resulting in a disparate approach to these topics. The lack of an integrated approach leads to an inconsistency in policy and reduces the success of all peacebuilding initiatives. If efforts to ensure the protection of the humanitarian space and to facilitate women's participation are uncoordinated, those efforts will be fragmented and deficient in their overall effectiveness.

Major Parties

South Africa: In recent elections, gendered electoral violence escalated, with anonymous online threats, physical assaults, and widespread sexism targeting female candidates. With multiple incidents being reported, many women were forced to withdraw. This violence normalizes male dominance in politics and deters up to 30% of potential female candidates. Despite the ANC's 50% gender quota, structural barriers like unequal party funding and institutional misogyny undermined the effectiveness of the quotas, preventing real progress and hindering peacebuilding efforts.

India: In India, women hold only a minority of the Lok Sabha seats, despite 33% quotas for local panchayats (village councils). Women face severe caste, religious, and family pressures, with upper-caste Hindu women facing less resistance compared to Dalit women. In recent years, multiple assaults on female politicians were reported, including extreme violence for example, acid attacks and doxxing (online harassment). The exclusion of Dalit women and violence against women in political positions hinders peacebuilding efforts.

Brazil: Despite women comprising over 50% of Brazil's population, they only occupy approximately 19% of senate seats, as of 2025. This underrepresentation leaves women as a minority within government sectors, increasing their vulnerability to discrimination and harassment. 79% of female senators report having experienced some sort of violence during their time in office; 90% of them believe that violence against women in politics is a key factor in deterring women from running for office. This major lack of representation is a core reason why Brazil ranks so low in gender equality, and why peace-building efforts are being undermined.

Morocco: Women in Morocco occupy approximately 24% of seats in the House of Representatives although this exceeds some MENA averages, women within the government experience extreme discrimination and harassment. For example, female Members of Parliament face smear campaigns and verbal abuse that stereotype them as unfit for leadership simply due to their gender. This clear bias towards male candidates deters women from political positions in Morocco, consequently impacting peace-building efforts.

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

- **Key United Nations Actions on Women, Peace and Security:** Over the next few years, the Women, Peace, and Security agenda grew and was enhanced through several United Nations Security Council Resolutions based on the framework of Resolution 1325, which provides a foundation for WPS. The resolutions addressing sexual violence in accordance with international humanitarian law to hold perpetrators accountable include Resolutions 1820, 1888, and 1889, all of which define sexual violence as a weapon of war, identify the need for state responsibility and increased prevention strategies, and promote accountability mechanisms for perpetrators. Resolution 1889 also strengthened the implementation of Women, Peace, and Security through establishing measurable targets, indicators, and timeline measures to increase women's inclusion in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. The combination of these resolutions established a clearer framework for protecting women, empowering them to participate in peacebuilding, and systematically measuring their contributions to the Peace and Security agenda.
- **UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000):** Resolution 1325 initiated the Women, Peace, and Security agenda and officially recognized that women are critical in preventing conflicts, negotiating peace, keeping peace, and rebuilding after conflict. In addition, the resolution encourages all Member States to promote increased female participation in all levels of decision-making and emphasizes how important it is for women's views to be included in all peace processes. Moreover, it highlights the need to protect women and girls from gender-based violence throughout war; Resolution 1325 is the first UN Resolution that links the rights of women to international peace and security. Therefore, Resolution 1325 is the foundation of the WPS agenda and directs future efforts to create a structure that supports the establishment of peace that is equitable and sustained.
- **UN Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008):** The Resolution designated sexual violence utilized in war as a tactic to traumatisise a civilian population, destabilise a community, and extend the period of conflict. The Resolution explicitly condemns not only the act of rape, but also every other form of sexual violence associated with armed conflict, and insists on the immediate cessation of these acts by all parties to the conflict. Any person who commits acts of sexual violence during armed conflict must be held accountable under both national and international law, before and after the conclusion of armed conflict. The Resolution states that an end to impunity is vital for establishing peace and security. Resolution 1820 also requests that R.E.s and the U.N. enhance their efforts to create preventative strategies, improve the protection of civilian persons from acts of sexual violence, and assist sexual violence survivors.

Previous attempts to resolve the issue

- **UN Security Council Resolution 1889 (2009):** The Women, Peace and Security agenda was supported through an increase in participation by women in the decision-making process during every stage of post-conflict peacebuilding. The resolution recognizes the role of women's leadership in political processes, supporting the development and recovery of an economy as well as reconstructing nations, and indicates that without women's meaningful participation, there is no sustainable peace. In addition, the resolution encourages all Member States and the United Nations to establish clear goals, currently available indicators, and timelines to evaluate the status of Women's Participation and to address the barriers, which limit Women's inclusion in Post-Conflict environments; formulated by the Women, Peace and Security agenda as part of UNSCR 1325.
- **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995):** international commitment to promoting gender equality and empowering women as described in the Beijing Platform. The Platform provides a call-to-action to all Member States to remove the systemic and institutional barriers that have historically prevented women from fully participating in the political and public arenas. The Platform asserts that it is imperative that governments adopt legal, political, and social reforms to facilitate women's equal participation in all levels of political decision-making, including governance, peace processes, and all forms of public institutions. Furthermore, by specifically addressing discrimination against women, unequal access to resources, and discriminatory societal practices, the Beijing Platform laid the groundwork for future international initiatives, such as the Women, Peace, and Security agenda.
- **Adoption of National Action Plans on Women, Peace, and Security (ongoing):** The UN has played the role of the main engine driving this initiative which is aimed at the conversion of global commitments to national policies that can support and protect women.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

1. What concrete mechanisms can be implemented to prevent gender-based political violence from being used as a tool to silence women in peace negotiations and governance processes?
2. How can peacebuilding frameworks move beyond symbolic inclusion to guarantee women real decision-making power at local, national, and international levels?
3. What accountability measures should exist when states or international actors enable gender-based discrimination?
4. How does silencing women through political violence impact the long-term stability of post-conflict societies?
5. Can peacebuilding truly succeed if women are systematically excluded from political and social reconstruction efforts?

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