

GDMUN'23

UNCSW

BACKGROUND GUIDE



INTRODUCTION

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LETTERS FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Respected Delegates,

It is an honour to welcome you all to GD MUN 2023 and to the committee, United Nations Commission on status of women. The agenda concerning the committee for this year is “The Global Crisis of Femicide with special emphasis on using Women as Weapons during conflicts”. My name is Aasmi Abrol, and I am a proud alumnus of the KC International School. I started Mun Journey when I was in 8th grade, JKMUN, 2016 edition being my very first. From that time to now, there has been no looking back when it comes to conferences and conclaves. I am a law student by profession and the world of debating has always fascinated me and encouraged me towards creative thinking and a positive mindset. Talking about the word feminism let me remind you all that feminism on a logical and apparent terms means giving equal opportunities to men and women, both. However, rather than saying that individual men oppressed women, we see that oppression of women came from underlying bias of patriarchal society.

I would like to conclude by saying that we hope to provide you with a hospitable platform where you, with your skills, vast knowledge, and diplomatic courtesies and the zeal to stand and fight for a cause, take an experience with you that doesn't just restrict to the committee room or a particular aspect but enhance and add up to your overall personality, enhancing your skills while you undergo the never ending process of learning. Let's enhance the skill to “Débat.Discuter.Décider”.

In case of any queries please feel free to reach out at below provided email address-
aasmi14abrol@gmail.com

Regards

Aasmi Abrol

Chairperson (UNCSW)

Greetings Delegates,

I, Sehajpal Singh, proudly welcome you all to GDMUN 2023. I will be serving you as the Vice Chairperson in the committee, United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. I have a keen passion for diplomacy and public speaking. I am a student of Human Behaviour Psychology, Economics, History, Social Sciences and Business. I love engaging in speeches and thought-provoking discussions.

I am a pass out from Banyan International School. I am the founder of WILL MODEL UNITED NATIONS and I have successfully organised several MUN Conferences in J&K since 2021.

I believe that the concept of Gender Equality and Feminism is truly about mindset development and process of thinking. It's the ability of an individual to break the walls of limitation around him and reach a stage of self-made success.

I wish you all good luck for your research journey filled with lots of information, facts, figures and astonishing conclusions.

In case of any query feel free to reach out at below provided email address-
sehajsinghhhh@gmail.com

Regards

Sehajpal Singh

Vice Chairperson

HISTORY OF THE COMMITTEE

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the world's main policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the advancement of women.

It is part of the United Nations, and works to promote women's political, economic, civil, social and educational rights.

The CSW also works for equality, development and peace, monitors whether measures are being implemented, and makes sure that gender issues are considered across the UN.

It can also highlight urgent problems, such as the situation of women and girls affected by conflict.

The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In 1996, ECOSOC in resolution expanded the Commission's mandate and decided that it should take a leading role in monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities.

During the Commission's annual two-week session, representatives of UN Member States, civil society organisations and UN entities gather at UN headquarters in New York.

They discuss progress and gaps in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the key global policy document on gender equality, and the 23rd special session of the General Assembly held in 2000, as well as emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Member States agree on further actions to accelerate progress and promote women's enjoyment of their rights in political, economic, and social fields.

ABOUT THE AGENDA

1. WOMEN ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE KILLED BY SOMEONE CLOSEST TO THEM-

In 2021, around 45,000 women and girls worldwide were killed by their intimate partners or other family members (including fathers, mothers, uncles and brothers).

This means that, on average, more than five women or girls are killed every hour by someone in their own family. Current and former intimate partners are by far the most likely perpetrators of femicide, accounting for an average of 65 percent of all intimate partner and family related killings.

The numbers of intimate partner and family related killings have remained relatively stable over time—indicating that the world is failing to stop deaths that could be prevented through early intervention, gender responsive policing and justice, and access to survivor centred support and protection.

2. FEMICIDE IS A UNIVERSAL PROBLEM -

Like all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, femicide is a problem that affects every country and territory across the globe.

According to the new report, in 2021, Asia recorded the largest number of female intimate partner and family related killings with an estimated 17,800 victims; followed by 17,200 in Africa; 7,500 in the Americas; 2,500 in Europe; and 300 in Oceania.

Adjusted for total population size, the available data shows that, in 2021, 2.5 women and girls per 100,000 were killed by an intimate partner or family member in Africa; compared with 1.4 in the Americas; 1.2 in Oceania; 0.8 in Asia; and 0.6 in Europe.

3. THE TRUE SCALE OF FEMICIDE IS LIKELY MUCH HIGHER -

While the numbers presented in the report are alarmingly high, they are the tip of the iceberg.

Too many victims of femicide still go uncounted: for roughly four in ten intentional murders of women and girls in 2021, there is not enough information to identify them as gender-related killings because of national variation in criminal justice recording and investigation practices.

In many cases, only gender related killings perpetrated by an intimate partner or family member are counted as femicides—yet we know that gender-related killings take place in many contexts beyond the private sphere.

They can be related to rape or sexual violence by someone unknown to the victim; linked to harmful practices such as female genital mutilation or so-called “honor”-based violence; a result of hate crimes linked to sexual orientation or gender identity; or connected with armed conflict, gangs, human trafficking and other forms of organized crime.

4. MARGINALISED WOMEN AND GIRLS FACE HIGHER RISK-

There continue to be significant limitations in data and information on gender-related killings of marginalised groups. For instance, the women’s rights organisation MundoSur analysed data portals of 12 Latin American countries and found that only one country collects information on whether the victim had a disability or was pregnant; two countries collect data on the victim’s ethnic identity; and three countries record whether the victim was a migrant.

Despite data limitations, the available evidence from Canada and Australia suggest that indigenous women are disproportionately affected by gender related killings. At 4.3 per 100,000 women (about the seating capacity of the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum) and girls, the rate of female homicide in Canada was five times higher among indigenous than among non-indigenous women and girls in 2021.

FEMICIDE IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES

Regardless of regional trends, it is widely recognized that femicide violence constitutes a global public health crisis that requires a preventative response (WHO, 2013; Toprak & Ersoy, 2017).

Femicide against girls is evidenced in cases of female infanticide, which is the killing of female babies in India and China, and in cases of sexual abuse of girl children in the armed conflict situations of Rwanda, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Guatemala, where rape was used as a war tactic by both combatants and government agents (Henry, 2014; Godoy-Paiz, 2012).

Cases of forced pregnancy and marriage used by armed groups as military strategies in the Rwanda and Darfur conflicts are further examples, where such crimes were committed to alter the ethnic makeup of the population (Henry, 2014).

Femicide also takes on the gender-based acts of forced abduction and forced disappearances, mutilation and the beating, burning and poisoning of women and girls (Oliveria and Furio, 2006; Livingston, 2004; Schmidt, 2005).

The rates of homicidal acts carried out against women and girls is not well-documented.

It is challenging to pinpoint exact figures because of data collection issues and the underreporting of female homicidal deaths to police authorities and emergency services (WHO, 2012).

Existing research has primarily focused on non-fatal violence between intimate partners (Toprak & Ersoy, 2017). In cases where there is data collection on homicidal deaths, for example in Turkey, informational sources are limited (Toprak & Ersoy, 2017).

Globally, patterns of femicidal acts vary significantly, depending on the specific region, country, relevant cultural factors and social groups (i.e. women with children living in armed conflict, migrant women and young women) (Shalhoub-Kervorkian & Daher-Nasif, 2013).

For example, in specific Indian regions, arguments between family members in the home and dowries are the main contributing factors in the planned murders of young brides when dowry demands are unmet (Toprak & Ersoy, 2017).

CENTRAL AMERICA

In her work on homicidal violence in Guatemala, Godoy-Paiz (2012) highlights that violent, gender-based crimes against women are at an all-time high in the Central American region.

Numerous reasons can be linked to current rates of increasing violence against women and girls, but most notably among these reasons is the wave of widespread

democratic and judicial reform in Latin America in recent decades, which has resulted in increasing levels of political violence, paralleled by high homicide rates, violent gang activity, organised crime and murders carried out directly against women and children (Godoy-Paiz, 2012; Otero, 2008).

Within the Central American region, research has shown that Peru, along with Mexico and Guatemala are countries with the highest levels of the most severe types of female violence (Hernandez, 2018; Godoy-Paiz, 2012). Within the context of Mexico, researchers and activists have found that acts of femicide are unique to Ciudad Juarez, a city in Mexico which has experienced a wave of socio-economic and cultural changes as a result of the North American Trade Agreement passed in 1994 (Weissman, 2005).

Combined with economic changes during this time, unequal socio-cultural relations led to conditions that give rise to violence against women (Pantaleo, 2010).

In comparison, high rates of targeted and systemic violence against women and girls in Guatemala has tripled over the past ten years, in a post-war society where internal armed conflict lasted for 36 years (Godoy-Paiz, 2012).

As a country with one of the highest per capita murder rates in the world, acts of female violence against women in Guatemala has been internationally recognized as a human rights crisis requiring legal intervention (Godoy-Paiz, 2012).

However due to a lack of judicial reform on the issue of gender violence, academic researchers such as Godoy-Paiz (2012) stress the importance of creating policy responses to eliminate gender-based violence in Guatemala.

FEMICIDE IN THE FORM OF HONOUR KILLINGS IN PALESTINE

Femicide, a fundamental violation of one's right to life, security and safety, is also a human rights issue that affects the lives of girls and women in Palestine.

Shalhoub-Kervorkian & Daher-Nasif (2013) recognize the term femicide to denote all violent acts carried out in the name of 'honour' against women and girls.

Honour-based violence is a practice where immediate or extended family members deliberately plan a violent response when there is a "[mere] perception that a woman, as wife or daughter, has violated the honour of her family by crossing a boundary of sexual appropriateness" (Korteweg, 2012, p. 136).

Although these acts of violence have been traced throughout regions in North Africa, South Asia, Latin American and the Middle East, they tend to differ in the manner in which they are carried out (Korteweg, 2012).

Honour-based systems are rooted in power relations whereby the male creates established rules in the social order of patriarchy, and patriarchal values are meant to maintain the reputation and status of his family in their community (Aujla & Gill, 2014).

In this way, honour crimes are a complex form of homicidal violence because they are carried out in specific contexts where behavioural norms are challenged.

Such crimes are carried out to serve as a forewarning to girls and women that they will be punished if they do not adhere to socially acceptable rules of behaviour.

ENDING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

The United Nations in South Africa strongly condemns the violent murders of 19-year-old student Uyinenene Mrwetyana, boxing champion Leighandre Jegels and many other women and girls who have become victims of gender-based violence in recent days.

These murders were unfortunately part of an unabating trend of intimate partner violence meted out against thousands of women in South Africa and across the

world: globally one in three women has experienced some form of sexual or gender-based violence.

South African women and civil society organisations are calling for a national state of emergency.

There is indeed a need to immediately reprioritize resources that will effectively deal with perpetrators of violence and offer prevention mechanisms. “This violence against women, particularly the murder of women by their intimate partners is a national and global crisis and our responses need to change and measure up to the destruction that is brought by each life lost.

And there must be accountability – men who are largely responsible for this violence – must be held to account,” said the Acting UN Resident Coordinator in South Africa, Ayodele Odusola. The UN is using the HeForShe Solidarity Movement as an avenue to actively involve men and boys as agents of change for the achievement of gender equality and women’s rights, by encouraging them to act against inequalities faced by women and girls.

HeForShe calls on men across society – from CEOs to students – to take responsibility by speaking out when they see any form of discrimination, whether interpersonal or institutional and critically challenging other men and boys if they see them acting or speaking in a way that is discriminatory, violent or harassing to women and girls. “To achieve a world where all, especially women and girls are safe and protected, men cannot be left out of the picture.

Negative cultural and social norms, particularly patriarchal privilege is at the heart of gender-based violence, therefore men have an integral role in breaking down these destructive norms and practices,” added Mr. Odusola. The results of the “HeForShe” movement is evident. In Klerksdorp, the Southern Africa Catholic Bishops Council uses taverns as sites for change in the fight against rape

culture and gender-based violence through monthly “HeForShe” community dialogues attended by over 5000 men. Gender-based violence is costly. It costs the lives of women and girls. It robs us of women who could contribute to South Africa’s development.

It costs the economy millions of rand – between at least R28.4-billion and R42.4-billion.

It directly and indirectly destroys our society. Workplaces which are sites of economic activity but also sites of violence must therefore play an integral part in establishing and sustaining mandatory programmes against all forms of violence and sexual harassment and where relevant must support victims and survivors of violence. The UN calls on South African men and boys in both public and private spaces: male leaders in corporate, political and religious spaces, law enforcement officers and others whose responsibility it is to protect society to urgently commit to ending violence against women and girls.

WOMEN AS A WEAPON OF WAR

While war and conflict inflict suffering on everyone, women are disproportionately affected by forced displacement, destruction of civilian infrastructures, rights violations and by sexual and gender-based violence.

The effects of this violence persist long after a peace agreement is signed.

It is estimated that close to 90 percent of current war casualties are civilians, the majority of whom are women and children.

In addition to murder and torture, sexual assault and exploitation including rape and sexual slavery are frequently employed as tools of war.

Sexual violence is used in war to shame and humiliate the enemy, as a reward to the conquering side, and to spread terror and to weaken morale. It may also be used to undermine women's ability to sustain their communities during times of conflict.

The rapes of more than 20,000 women (about the seating capacity of Madison Square Garden) during the war in former Yugoslavia brought rape to the fore as a war crime and the issue emerged as a serious agenda item of the international community.

During the Rwandan genocide, an estimated 250,000 to 500,000 women (about half the population of South Dakota) were raped.

Today, in the Democratic Republic of Congo the frequency and concentration of rape and other sexual violence as a weapon of war is described as the worst worldwide.

Communities struggle with the consequences of sexual violence during war even decades into time of peace.

According to a report by Amnesty International, most survivors of sexual violence experience severe health issues, including mental health problems, and have almost no access to medical or psychosocial services.

Contrary to the provisions of international humanitarian law, medical facilities have been deliberately targeted, and are occupied by armed groups.

Ambulances have been seized, and medical personnel have mostly fled out of fear.

Medicins Sans Frontiers (MSF) teams visited 106 medical facilities across the Tigray region and found that 87 percent of the medical facilities in the region were not fully functional, 73 percent had been looted, and 30 percent had been severely damaged.

As a result, most survivors of sexual assault have received little or no care.

For instance, anywhere between 200,000 and 400,000 Bengali women were systematically sexually assaulted during the Bangladesh Liberation Movement. More than 60,000 women were sexually assaulted during the civil war in Sierra Leone between 1991-2002, about 40,000 in Liberia during the 14-year civil war between 1989-2003, nearly 60,000 in former Yugoslavia during 1992-95, anywhere between 100,000 and 250,000 during the Rwandan genocide, and over 200,000 in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 1998.

GLOBAL SILENCE

Unfortunately, the issue of gender-based violence in conflicts has not received adequate attention in the discourse on gender equality and sustainable development.

Sexual violence in conflict zones has often been regarded as an inevitable by-product of war and the perpetrators of violence have seldom been punished.

The feeble efforts of rights groups and the United Nations (UN) have mostly failed in the Ethiopian context.

With weapons flowing in easily from China, Russia, Ukraine, and most importantly, the UAE, the Ethiopian government is determined for a military solution to the conflict in Tigray with no concern over human suffering.

The Ethiopian crisis raises some tough questions though, regarding the global goal of gender equality, SDG 5, which calls for “ending violence against women and

girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.”

Is it possible to eliminate violence against women if countries refuse to take a tough stance against sexual violence in conflict zones?

If respect for territorial integrity of a nation and non-interference in ‘internal’ matters override the need to condemn the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, then gender equality is a distant goal.

A world that has committed to the achievement of SDGs, cannot remain silent in the face of such a massive violation of women and girls and the use of sexual violence as a weapon in conflict.

There is an urgent need to mount pressure on the Ethiopian government to fulfill its obligations towards human rights and strongly condemn the sexual violence in Tigray.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED IN THE COMMITTEE?

1. What is the impact of sexual violence not only on the victims but on wider communities?
2. What are the long-term effects of sexual violence during wartime?
3. What can be done to address those long-term effects and how can the traumas inflicted on women, families and communities be overcome?
4. What needs to be done a local, national and international level to end and prevent the use of rape as a combat strategy?
5. Why does sexual violence in the context of war and conflict receive so little media attention?