



## 4<sup>th</sup> Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

**FORUM:** United Nations Women (UNW)

**TOPIC:** Ensuring human rights for women in states under authoritarian regimes

**STUDENT OFFICERS:** Maria Nefeli Theodoni, Ioanna Kalogeropoulou

**POSITION:** Co-Chairs

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### PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Hello everyone!

My name is Maria Nefeli Theodoni and I will be the deputy president in this year's United Nations Women committee in AMLMUN. I am in my last year of high school. I am very thrilled to work with you and observe you debating on such interesting topics. If you have any questions I will be happy to help, so have no fear contacting me. My email is [mariานefelytheodoni@gmail.com](mailto:mariานefelytheodoni@gmail.com) and is open for anything you may need. I am waiting to meet you all!

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Ioanna Kalogeropoulou, I am a second-year student at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, in the faculty of law and I have the great honor of serving as your Deputy President in the United Nations Women committee. Due to my studies but most importantly my deep interest in the field of human rights the UN Women is a committee that without doubt speaks to my heart. Gender inequality and human rights -especially those of women- are subjects of great significance that should deeply concern all of us international citizens.

I look forward to observing your diplomacy, cooperation, and innovative ideas throughout our sessions. You are highly encouraged to read our study guide meticulously and reach out to me or my fellow chairs, shall any problems arise.

Be bold in your ideas and driven by genuine interest for our topics, to make this not only a simulation but a space of true impact and diplomacy.

I am looking forward to meeting all of you and making this experience not only intellectually enriching but also truly unforgettable.

Sincerely,

Ioanna Kalogeropoulou

[jokalog05@gmail.com](mailto:jokalog05@gmail.com)

### TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Ensuring women's rights is an issue that has concerned the global community for a long period of time, especially when it comes to the support of women living in authoritarian regimes which often suppress feminist activism and, sometimes, define it as a criminal act. Women in those regions face patriarchal norms, state-sanctioned discrimination, dogmatic religious beliefs and limited access to justice or redress. Moreover, gender-based violence, both physical and



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psychological, may be overlooked or even encouraged by the state. All those combined, create an extremely hostile environment for women, leading to them being afraid to stand up for themselves or even fleeing to other countries, endangering their lives, as they may become victims of human trafficking or exploitation.

This calls for immediate action from both the UN and non-profit organizations in order to help those women ensure their well-being. However, this is a delicate matter, because it is important to respect cultural and religious differences, while also integrating women rights into those societies. Previous attempts by international organizations to expand women rights in the global south have been by many saying that they are biased by western standards. Maintaining balance between the country's beliefs and the balance between the two genders, is crucial for the changes to be accepted by the masses.

The status of women's rights under authoritarian regimes is shaped significantly by each country's unique historical, political, social, and cultural background. It goes without saying that to fully understand women's rights in authoritarian contexts, one must explore power structures, gender inequality, and social change. This leads to the problem being very complex and requiring a multifaceted approach in order to tackle economic, political, societal and religious challenges, which in themselves change from country to country.

An effective solution to this problem is that the women themselves guide the approaches to incorporating women rights in their home-countries, as they know what are the local risks and how to acknowledge local realities and cultural sensitivities. Therefore, international organizations must provide support to those women rather than taking immediate action themselves.

The problem specifically in authoritarian regimes is that due to fear of the local regime being toppled by political actions, any active attempts to shape societal norms (protests, activism) are cracked down by the use of brute force and the participants face criminal charges, that often come with a very strict punishment, thus making it extremely difficult for meaningful change to happen in a short period of time. Rather in such regimes, change needs to happen slowly through the course of many years, with roundabout means (positive propaganda trails and influence of higher officials).

Despite the circumstances women in authoritarian regions fight for their rights consistently. Many have found innovative ways of raising awareness within their country (underground meetings, social media use), and have also tried to ally with international organizations, in order to enable their aid. Unfortunately, these actions come with a great risk, as they are viewed by the state as a defiance act and they are violently punished.

In conclusion, declarations of solidarity on their own are insufficient to protect women's rights under authoritarian governments. It calls for long-term, strategic efforts that cut across borders and industries. International collaboration can create support networks that go beyond censorship, violence, and fear, even though authoritarian regimes may aim to isolate and repress women. Even in the most repressive systems, women's lives can be saved, their rights are within reach, and their autonomy can be restored with the correct resources and collaborations.

#### DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS



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### Apartheid

“The former political system in South Africa in which only white people had full political rights and other people, especially black people, were forced to live away from white people, go to separate schools<sup>1</sup>” and generally avoid black people at any social gathering. It is now used in a metaphoric way to describe a discriminating environment.

### Asylums

“Protection that a government gives to people who have left their own country, usually but not necessarily because they were in danger for political reasons, while it can also mean a hospital where people who were mentally ill could be cared for, often for a long time.”<sup>2</sup>

### Authoritarian

“Believing that people should obey authority and rules, even when these are unfair, and even if it means that they lose their personal freedom.”<sup>3</sup>

### Burqa

“A long loose piece of clothing that covers the whole body, including the head and face, worn in public by some Muslim women.”<sup>4</sup>

### Censor

“To remove the parts of a book, film, etc. that are considered to be offensive or a political threat.”<sup>5</sup>

### Convention

“An official agreement between countries or leaders, which is similar to the word treaty.”<sup>6</sup>

### Declaration

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<sup>1</sup> Apartheid Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.Com,

[www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/apartheid](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/apartheid) . Accessed 30 July 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Asylum Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.Com, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/asylum](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/asylum) . Accessed 30 July 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Authoritarian Adjective- Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at [Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.Com](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/authoritarian_1?q=Authoritarian), [https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/authoritarian\\_1?q=Authoritarian](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/authoritarian_1?q=Authoritarian)

<sup>4</sup> Burqa Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.Com, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/burqa?q=burqa>

<sup>5</sup> Censor Verb- Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.Com, [https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/censor\\_2?q=+censoring](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/censor_2?q=+censoring)

<sup>6</sup> Convention Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.Com, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/convention](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/convention) . Accessed 30 July 2025.



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“An official or formal statement, especially about the plans of a government or an organization; the act of making such a statement.”<sup>7</sup>

### Gender-Based Violence

Any type of harm that is perpetrated against a person or group of people because of their factual or perceived sex, gender, sexual orientation and/or gender identity.<sup>8</sup>

### Hijab

“A piece of clothing that covers the head, worn in public by some Muslim women.”<sup>9</sup>

### Jurisdiction

“The authority that an official organization has to make legal decisions about something.”<sup>10</sup>

### Morality Police

The morality police is a law enforcing body that has been established in Iran since 2005. Their main purpose is implementing modesty especially regarding women and them wearing the hijab. The organs of the morality police in order to enforce the “moral laws” usually exceed their role and tend to violate the fundamental rights of women.<sup>11</sup>

### Patriarchy

“A society, system or country that is ruled or controlled by men.”<sup>12</sup>

### Propaganda

“Ideas or statements that may be false or present only one side of an argument that are used in order to gain support for a political leader, party, etc.”<sup>13</sup>

### Rapporteur

“A person officially chosen by an organization, especially the UN, to investigate a problem and report on it.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Declaration Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.Com, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/declaration](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/declaration) . Accessed 30 July 2025.

<sup>8</sup> Gender-Based Violence, Council of Europe, [www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/what-is-gender-based-violence](https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/what-is-gender-based-violence)

<sup>9</sup> Hijab Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.Com, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/hijab?q=hijab>

<sup>10</sup> Jurisdiction Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.Com, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/jurisdiction](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/jurisdiction) . Accessed 07 Aug. 2025.

<sup>11</sup> “Morality Police.” Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., [www.britannica.com/topic/morality-police](https://www.britannica.com/topic/morality-police) . Accessed 30 July 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Patriarchy Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.Com, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/patriarchy?q=patriarchies>

<sup>13</sup> Propaganda Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.Com, <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/propaganda?q=propaganda>

<sup>14</sup> Rapporteur Noun - Definition, Pictures, Pronunciation and Usage Notes | Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary at Oxfordlearnersdictionaries.Com, [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/rapporteur](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/english/rapporteur) . Accessed 30 July 2025.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### The nature of Authoritarian states (characteristics and patterns)

Authoritarian political systems are characterised by centralized authority, little to no political pluralism, and severe limitations on individual liberties. These regimes frequently use extreme methods to stay in power that often violate human rights. Authoritarianism can take many different forms, such as one-party states, military juntas, and personalist dictatorships, but they are all characterized by a basic disrespect for democratic institutions and norms. To solve the problem of authoritarian regimes' persistence and to combat the threats they pose to international democratic values, it is essential to understand their traits, control mechanisms, and ideological defenses.

### Ideological Background (military, theocratic, single-party rule)

Authoritarian states typically work around a strong central authority to uphold the status quo and reject political pluralism. In order to maintain control, they limit civil liberties, the rule of law, democracy, and the separation of powers. Although they come from different ideological backgrounds, many authoritarian governments use similar means of justification for their actions such as populism, nationalism, and religious or traditional appeals. Additionally, some people create a "cult of personality" around the leader, portraying them as the only source of stability and order.

These ideologies may arise from nationalism, communism, fascism, religious fundamentalism, or even technocratic rationalism. While the specific beliefs and goals vary, the common aspect of all those ideologies is the importance of order, unity, and the suppression of individual freedoms in maintaining power. In many cases, ideology serves both as a tool of mobilization and a means of control, shaping public perception, guiding state policy, and reinforcing the power structure.

### Suppression of civil liberties

Authoritarian states suppress civil liberties, as they prioritize maintaining power over democratic freedoms and individual rights. Basic human rights like the right to a fair trial, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech are limited or completely denied under these regimes. Several types of methods are used by those governments in order to suppress opposition, stop political mobilization, and enforce obscurity. Some of them are censorship, surveillance, deprivation of a person's liberties, and intimidation. Instead of upholding justice or protecting citizens, the legal system works under the regime's intentions.

### Patriarchal ideologies in law and governance

Most Authoritarian states' systems are based on patriarchal ideologies, which limit the rights and roles of women and other overlooked gender groups and reinforce male dominance. Governance in these systems typically relies on conservative or traditional ideas that value male authority in both public and private matters. These beliefs are ingrained in laws, government regulations, and institutional procedures, which leads to the restriction of women's access to legal safeguards, work opportunities, education, and involvement in politics. Authoritarian



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governments use different arguments that justify women's oppression, but they all argue that gender inequality is necessary for maintaining social stability and order. Furthermore, since opposition to patriarchy is often seen as defiance to the regime's control, feminist movements and gender-based advocacy are usually considered a crime and are strictly punished.



Female Arab cartoonists challenge authority<sup>15</sup>

#### Suppression of women's rights in authoritarian regimes

Suppression of women's rights is a tactic used by authoritarian governments to maintain power and strengthen their control over people, through patriarchal ideologies. These governments restrict women's access to political participation, work, education, and their personal freedoms, presenting customs, religion, or the law as justifications for inequality. Because state institutions enforce gender norms that limit women to subordinate roles, feminist movements are often silenced. In addition to gaining social control by limiting women's rights, authoritarian governments constrain broader calls for justice and reform to ensure their influence on people.

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<sup>15</sup> Dieudonne, Severine, and Naomi Scherbel-Ball. "100 Women 2016: Female Arab Cartoonists Challenge Authority." BBC News, 28 Nov. 2016, [www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38103902](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-38103902)



The protagonist problem in cartoons<sup>16</sup>

### **Denial of access to Education, Employment, Health**

Denying women access to healthcare, work, and education in authoritarian countries is a control mechanism and not a result of underdevelopment. When educational opportunities are restricted, Women's intellectual and political agency is limited, making it more difficult for them to question patriarchal norms or governmental authority. Regimes ensure the inferiority of women by controlling their job opportunities and decreasing their public profile. With restricted healthcare, particularly reproductive rights, the state gains control over women's bodies and choices. This happens in order to support ideological objectives like population control or traditional family structures. These actions are presented as upholding religious or cultural traditions, but their main purpose is to maintain authoritarian rule by constraining a big percentage of the population and preventing collective resistance.

### **Gender based violence**

In authoritarian governments, gender-based violence (GBV) often serves as a weapon to suppress dissent and strengthen patriarchal control. GBV, which includes sexual assault, domestic abuse, state-sanctioned harassment, and violence against female activists, is not only common in these environments, but the state usually overlooks or even encourages it. Laws fail to criminalize such violence as they are usually selective and biased. As a result, GBV turns into a tool for both private and political ends as it silences opposition, disciplines women into submission, and maintains a social structure in which men who support the regime continue to keep power. Authoritarian governments send a message that women's bodies are disposable in the service of

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<sup>16</sup>Royaards, Tjeerd. "The Protagonist Problem in Cartoons." Cartoon Movement, 10 May 2024, [blog.cartoonmovement.com/2024/05/the-protagonist-problem-in-cartoons.html](http://blog.cartoonmovement.com/2024/05/the-protagonist-problem-in-cartoons.html)



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their interests by ignoring or actively supporting gender-based violence, which implants fear in the people.

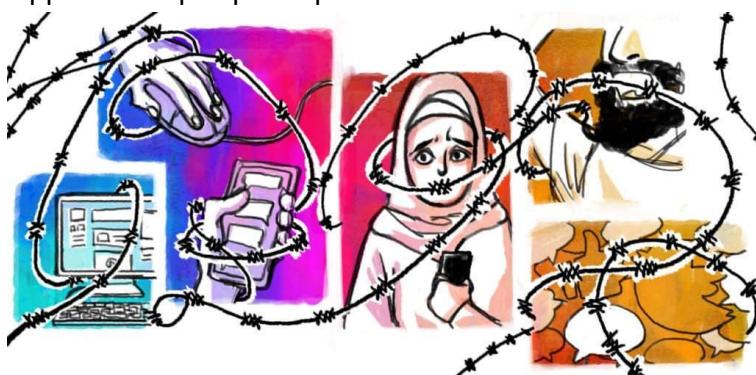
### Legal restrictions (dress code, travel bans, disenfranchisement, marital rape law...)

To keep control over women authoritarian governments use patriarchal ideals enforced by the law. These legal restrictions ensure that a great part of the population stays dependent, silent, and excluded from power structures, which serves both strategic political goals and certain cultural or ideological ends.

One of the most discussed forms of gender control is dress codes. Women are legally obligated to wear certain types of modest clothing, like the hijab or burqa. Noncompliance may result in arrests, harassment, or worse. These laws limit women's participation in public life, making it illegal to express oneself through clothing choice and strengthening state power through intimidation and monitoring.

Another means of control is the restrictions on travel that further reduces autonomy. For example, prior to recent changes, women in Saudi Arabia had to legally get consent from a male guardian before they could travel overseas. These laws reinforce economic dependence and social isolation by preventing women from accessing healthcare, work, and education outside their country, as well as making them completely dependent on a male relative.

One of the most important means of control is the deprivation of women's political rights. In many authoritarian nations, legal or social barriers prevent women from voting, running for office, or engaging in political conversations. Women are frequently excluded in legal practice, even when they have the right to vote, because of social pressure, intimidation, or a lack of legal support for equal participation



The Legal Webs of Transnational Repression<sup>17</sup>

### Media control (surveillance, silencing...)

Controlling the media is an important part of authoritarian rule as it allows governments to shape public opinion, silence dissent, and stay in power. Authoritarian governments utilize numerous forms of censorship, state-run propaganda, and surveillance to shut down independent voices and keep people from getting precise data. When journalists, activists, or regular people

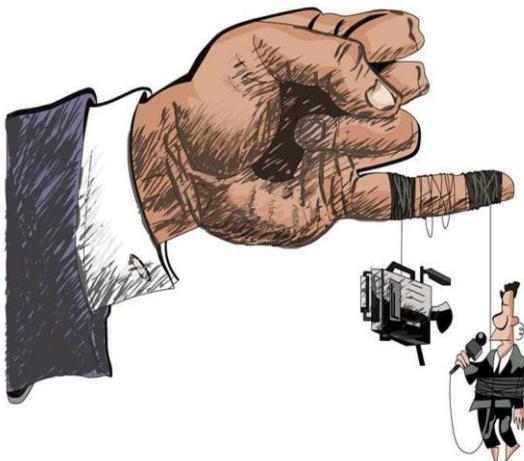
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<sup>17</sup>Edel, Mirjam. "The Legal Webs of Transnational Repression." Middle East Report, no. 307/308 (Summer/Fall 2023), Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), 2023, [merip.org/2023/09/transnational-repression/](http://merip.org/2023/09/transnational-repression/)



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speak up against the government, they often face harassment, jail time, or violence. Media outlets are also being shut down or taken over. Both traditional and digital platforms are monitored by surveillance technologies, leading to people being afraid while making them censor themselves. Authoritarian governments use media control not only to keep power but also to get people to agree with them and make it harder for citizens to fight back.



The corporate takeover of India's media<sup>18</sup>

## Intersectionality

### Ethnic minorities

As part of their plans to keep the country under control, Authoritarian governments try to create a single national identity by controlling or getting rid of ethnic diversity and thus they target ethnic minorities. These groups face systematic discrimination, cultural elimination, surveillance, and violence from the state, especially when their identities are seen as threats to the regime, both its ideologies and its power. Policies like forced assimilation, language bans, racial discrimination, and denying citizenship rights are designed to force minorities to the edges of society, politics, and the economy. In some cases this repression leads to widespread violations of human rights or ethnic cleansing.

### LGBTQ+ women

In authoritarian regimes both gender and sexual identity are tightly monitored to uphold traditional, patriarchal norms, and that leads to LGBTQ+ women facing unique and often extreme forms of repression. These governments often deny that LGBTQ+ identities exist. They use violence, censorship, surveillance, and criminalization to silence and erase queer women from public and legal recognition. LGBTQ+ women are especially at risk because they face multiple forms of discrimination, being targeted not only because of their gender but also because they don't fit into traditional gender roles. In a lot of cases,

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<sup>18</sup> Srinivasan, R. "The Corporate Takeover of India's Media." *GroundXero*, 3 May 2024, [www.groundxero.in/2024/05/03/the-corporate-takeover-of-indias-media/](http://www.groundxero.in/2024/05/03/the-corporate-takeover-of-indias-media/)



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the government allows them to be harassed, raped as a "correction" method, forced into marriage, or denied medical care and legal protection.

### Women with special needs

In authoritarian regimes gender and disability are frequently overlooked in laws, policies, and social practices. Disability rights are rarely upheld and social services are either nonexistent or inaccessible in systems where the state sets a priority on control. Without much social protection or legal redress, women with disabilities may experience neglect, forced sterilization, institutional abuse, or exclusion from public life. These women are further silenced by the combination of patriarchy and ableism in authoritarian settings, which makes them invisible in the eyes of the law.

### Consequences

#### Short-term impact

A result of authoritarian restrictions, in the short term, is that women's independence, well-being, and social participation are almost non-existent. Because of state repression and a loss of autonomy, women may be more vulnerable to mental health conditions and they become submissive and used to being controlled. Economically, their lack of access to education and employment causes them to become dependent on male family members, which furthers the imbalance of power. Socially, their exclusion from public life minimizes diversity in decision-making and undermines community resilience. In addition, the silence of women's voices also leaves authoritarian rule largely unchallenged in the near future, as the violation of human rights goes unpunished.

#### Long- term impact

Authoritarian policies have detrimental long-term effects on women that are difficult to undo. Women and girls continue to be economically and socially dependent on male relatives as a result of systemic exclusion from education and employment, which over time leads to generational cycles of poverty and inequality and the integration of patriarchal ideas in women's minds, thus justifying gender discrimination. The persistence of gender-based violence and the absence of legal protections normalize abuse and silence survivors. Politically, the lack of women in public life and leadership interferes with the advancement of human rights and undermines democratic development. All that result in it taking decades to repair the damage done to civil society and general trauma, even after the regime changes.

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

### Afghanistan

Since the Taliban took control of the country in August 2021, women in Afghanistan have been facing brutal restrictions. The regime has reinstated strict interpretations of Sharia law, which forbids girls from attending secondary school or college and women from pursuing the majority of occupations apart from some jobs in healthcare and education. Women are no longer allowed in public places like parks and gyms without a male guardian and they must wear the burqa in public. Decades of advancement have been reversed by these policies, which have also



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left Afghan women excluded from society, jobless, and silent. The arrests, threats, and abuses of women who speak up show that the Taliban uses gender oppression as a tactic to keep power and impose ideological consistency.

### Iran

Iran saw a major shift after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, which led to the creation of the Islamic Republic. This change brought strict religious laws that reduced women's rights, including mandatory hijab, and restrictions in family law, marriage, and inheritance.

Despite these limits, Iranian women have made progress, especially in education and professional fields. Many are university graduates and are active in the workforce. However, they still face barriers to career advancement, leadership roles, and political representation.

While women can vote and run for office, few hold decision-making positions. Those who campaign for women's rights often face harassment, arrest, or censorship, showing how difficult it is to fight for gender equality in an authoritarian system.

In September 2022, Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish Iranian woman, died in police custody after being arrested by Iran's "morality police" for allegedly wearing her hijab improperly. Witnesses reported that she was beaten, though authorities denied this and claimed she died of a heart attack. Her death sparked nationwide protests demanding justice and the end of oppressive laws, especially mandatory hijab rules and broader restrictions on women's freedoms. The slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom" became the rallying cry of the movement. The protests were met with violent crackdowns, arrests, and internet blackouts. Mahsa Amini's case became a powerful symbol of resistance against gender-based oppression and the broader authoritarian nature of the Iranian regime.

### Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy that follows a strict interpretation of Sharia law, which has led to strong gender discrimination and male guardianship laws. These laws have long limited women's rights, keeping them dependent on male relatives for basic decisions like travel, work, or education. Historically, women were largely confined to the home, with little access to public life, education, or jobs. The male guardianship system treated adult women as legal minors, restricting their independence.

In recent years, the country has introduced some reforms. In 2018, women were allowed to drive, and Vision 2030 aims to increase women's role in the economy and society. However, many inequalities remain integrated into Saudi Arabia's society and women's rights activists are still punished for speaking up.<sup>19</sup>

### North Korea

North Korean women live under one of the most oppressive regimes in the world, where state control and gender inequality influence all aspects of daily life. Despite the nation's constitution's declarations of gender equality, women actually experience discrimination, have limited privileges, and are often tracked by the government. Despite being an important

<sup>19</sup> Roses in the Rubble: Exploring Women's Rights under Authoritarian Rule A Dual Case Study of Iran and Saudi Arabia , Ali I. AlMohammad, <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1879461/FULLTEXT01.pdf>



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percentage of the informal economy, women are often forced to take on traditional gender roles and have little legal or political influence. Women who try to leave the country find themselves especially at risk of being abused and imprisoned. Escapees have reported forced abortions, human trafficking, and abuse and that sexual violence, including that committed by state officials, often remains unpunished. Despite these obstacles, some women have emerged as important contributors to the economy and silent opponents in a system that is meant to keep them quiet.



Feminism Is Defined As “the Advocacy Of Women's Rights - Gender Equality Symbol<sup>20</sup>

### UN Women

Founded in July 2010, UN Women is the United Nations Body for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. It combines the work of several prior UN bodies such as United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) , and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), into a single organization dedicated to advancing women's rights globally

UN Women plays a vital role in documenting rights violations, amplifying women's voices, and supporting local civil society under extreme conditions. For example, its [Gender Country Profile](#) for Afghanistan revealed how the Taliban imposed over 70 decrees since 2021 to roll back women's rights—a process UN Women continues to resist by encouraging Afghan women to participate in policy consultations and advocacy.

### Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is a leading international, non-governmental organization founded in 1978. Its purpose is to investigate and expose human rights abuses globally. It operates independently, refusing government funding to maintain impartiality and credibility.

HRW actively monitors regimes worldwide even in tightly controlled societies where access is limited or blocked. Its 2025 [World Report](#) documents how authoritarian governments strengthened their grip through media, political repression, and legal instruments targeting dissent.

### Amnesty International

Founded in 1961 in London, Amnesty International (AI) is one of the world's largest and most influential human rights organizations. It operates independently—refusing government

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<sup>20</sup>Feminism Is Defined As “the Advocacy Of Women's Rights - Gender Equality Symbol, Feminist Women's Png Images, <https://www.freepik.com/free-photos-vectors/feminist-womens-png>



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funding—to maintain impartiality while shining light to abuses of human rights and advocating for justice worldwide.

In its [State of the World's Human Rights 2025](#) report, AI documents how gender-based repression increased globally, highlighting authoritarian governments disrespecting basic rights, especially those of women, girls, and LGBTQ+ populations across many contexts.

### TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT
1948	Declaration of Human rights (UDHR)
6th of September 1967	North Korean law restricts movement of women across borders, initiating decades of punishment for female defectors.
1979	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW)
11th of February 1979	Islamic Republic is declared
7th of July 1980	Compulsory hijab law officially enacted in Iran
1984	The establishment of UN special rapporteur in Iran
2000	UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
July 2013	Arrest of Loujain al-Hathloul for women's driving protest in Saudi Arabia
24th of April 2014	North Korean defector Shin Hye Sook testifies before the UN, detailing mass rape and forced abortions of women in political prison camps.
2015	Security Council's Resolution 2242 that formed the "Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security"
December 2015	Women in Saudi Arabia vote and run as candidates in municipal elections for the first time.
August 2021	The Taliban retake Afghanistan
16th of September 2022	Death of Mahsa Amini in Iran
24 November 2022	Fact-finding mission on Iran (UN Human Rights Council)
September 2022 - September 2023	"Women, Life, Freedom" Movement
2023	Richard Bennet submits a report at the Human Rights Council regarding the crimes of the Taliban in Afghanistan



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16th of April 2025	Murder of 17-year-old Fatemeh Soltani in Iran sparks media outrage over ongoing "honor killings" and lack of legal protection for adolescent girls
8th of July 2025	ICC issues arrest warrants for Taliban leadership (Akhundzada and Haqqani) over crimes against humanity, including rape and persecution of women and girls

## RELEVANT UN TREATIES, CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

### Declaration of Human rights (UDHR) (1948)

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, serves as the foundation of human rights at an international level and has been the key factor for most of the treaties regarding this subject. The UDHR was created with the belief that the horrors of WWII shall never occur again. H.V. Evatt, the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948 stated that : "millions of people, men, women and children all over the world, will turn for help and guidance and inspiration to this document".

This historic document is of great importance for social, political, cultural and economic rights, which are fundamental for the simultaneous empowerment of women's rights as a whole. First and foremost, Article 2 covers the freedom from discrimination, this does not only refer to discrimination of the sexes but also to that of different languages, colours, religions and in general to whatever makes a certain individual different from the rest.

Illustration 1: Article 2 <sup>21</sup>



Secondly, article 5 , especially in the context of women under authoritarian regimes, holds great value. People under no means and circumstances are to be subjected to degrading treatment. Lastly, Article 26, upholds the right to education, which is usually cruelly violated under repressive regimes.

For women that live under such dictatorships, these rights are crucial, due to the fact that they precisely address the specific vulnerabilities that women face when their fundamental rights are so brutally violated.

<sup>21</sup> Illustrated Universal Declaration of Human Rights | OHCHR, [www.ohchr.org/en/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/illustrated-universal-declaration-human-rights](http://www.ohchr.org/en/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/illustrated-universal-declaration-human-rights) . Accessed 20 July 2025.



## 4<sup>th</sup> Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

### Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) (1979)

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW) is an international document that was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and holds great value for the fight against systemic gender injustice. This Convention is often depicted as “The international bill of rights for women and girls” and is the main tool that is guiding the attempts of UN Women towards this matter. The CEDAW obliges member states to take appropriate measures - at times even temporary ones (Article 4) to continuously eliminate gender stereotypes, protect the dignity of women and girls, stand by and ensure their rights on education, public and political life, employment and healthcare while assuring equality between men and women against the Law , all of which are being relentlessly violated by authoritarian regimes.

To ensure that the objectives of the Convention are being enforced in the party-states, the CEDAW itself established the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Committee consists of 23 experts on the field of human and specifically women’s rights. Each of the countries that are members of this convention are inclined to submit regular reports to the Committee, whenever it may request one and analyse the state of women’s rights in the country and the measures that are being implemented to ensure them.

Some very vivid examples of the power that this Committee withholds are : establishing law for gender equality in Mongolia, for domestic violence in Turkey, Nepal, South Africa and the Republic of Korea and the criminalization of every form of violence against women in Burkina Faso and of femicide in Panama.

### UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000)

The Resolution 1325 was adopted unanimously by the UN Security Council on 31 October 2000 and linked the preservation of international peace and security to women’s rights and gender equality. This resolution became the beginning of a series of resolutions regarding the three-part structure of women, peace and security. This became the foundation for the protection of women and their rights to enter and hold a strong place in the global agenda.

Towards this goal the UN Women have taken initiative and with the Resolution 1325 in mind have deliberately initiated the yearly report of the Secretary General to the Security Council, have arranged for women from the equivalent social status to participate in meetings that are about their country. UN Women have, also, pushed for the continuous deliberations regarding “women, peace and security” at a monthly rate, while also working as the Secretariat for the “Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace and Security” of the UN Security Council.

The latter Group (IEG) was formed after the Security Council’s Resolution 2242 (2015). During the last decade the IEG has held crucial meetings about certain issues in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Iraq, Myanmar, Syria and other countries that accumulate urgent concerns about women’s rights.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> “Women, Peace, and Security in the Work of the UN Security Council.” *UN Women – Headquarters*, [www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/un-security-council](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/un-security-council) . Accessed 24 July 2025.



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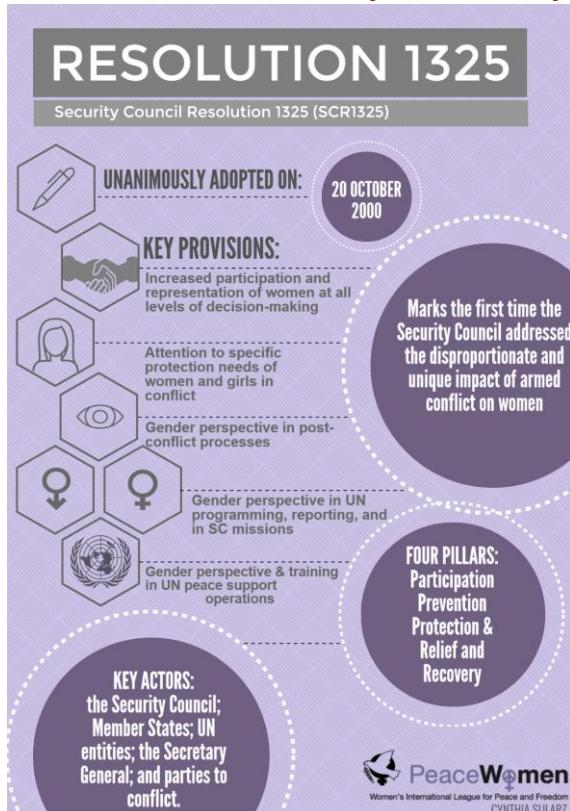


Illustration of the Resolution 1325<sup>23</sup>

## PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

### UN special Rapporteurs on Iran

UN Rapporteurs in Iran have been established since 1984 due to the extreme violation of human rights. There was a brief interruption in the presence of a rapporteur in the country during the presidency of Mohammad Khatami due to a relative progress on the field of Human Rights. Despite that, the Rapporteur in Iran was established again in 2011 after an incident with protestors.

One of the biggest incidents regarding the violation of women's rights was the death of Mahsa Amini on September 16th, after she was "reportedly" spotted wearing her hijab in a wrong way by the morality police of Iran. This tragic event caused a storm of outrage, reactions and many protests that demanded that someone take accountability publicly for Amini's death.

The experts, the rapporteurs are asking strong pressure to the Iranian authorities in order for change to be made. International organizations, individuals and the UN are trying with strong efforts to eliminate the persisting violation of women and girls' rights that has been chronically embedded into the society, legislation and the people's view, while also pushing for Iran to become a member of human rights treaties that it is not yet part of and take the necessary steps for their legislation to align with the international norms.

### UN special Rapporteurs on Afghanistan

<sup>23</sup> "UNSCR 1325." WILPF, 28 Mar. 2025, [www.wilpf.org/publications/unscr-1325/](http://www.wilpf.org/publications/unscr-1325/). Accessed 07 Aug. 2025.



#### 4<sup>th</sup> Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

The Taliban's return to power in August of 2021 has marked the beginning of an oppressive era and an environment full of terror and violation for women and girls. The Taliban have deconstructed all of the country's previous legal structures that gave women at least the comfort of a peaceful living that protected their fundamental rights and public freedom. This regime has eliminated women's liberties one by one; firstly by violating their right to education, to work, their right to travel and in December of 2022 they forced the cutting off all Afghan women from crucial positions of international interest thus creating a gender-based apartheid.

During these unsettling times the UN Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan, Richard Bennet, has brought attention to the inhuman crimes that are being committed in the country that most likely are crimes against humanity. In the report submitted to the Human Rights Council in 2023, Richard Bennett pointed out the repressive, institutionalised and systemic intentions and nature of the Taliban's regime.

The international community and specifically the UN have not stayed silent on the matter. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Women have relentlessly called out for the accountability from the de facto authorities and the establishment of their formal international obligations under international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW). The Taliban are relentless and show no intention of complying. Afghan women have shown extraordinary resilience to this regime, without stronger international pressure their fundamental rights will continue to be violated and their lives will be solely a subject to the Taliban.

#### Global Advocacy Campaigns: #WomenLifeFreedom [2022-2023], online activism

The death of Mahsa Amini in 2022 from the moral police of Iran marked the beginning of a plethora of protests in other countries but specifically in Iran. This protest and the whole movement was titled "Women, Life, Freedom". The protests resulted in more violations of human rights from the Iranian authorities, more than 50 other people died and thousands ended up severely injured for taking a part in the protests. Despite these events the #WomenLifeFreedom protests continued to ask for accountability and change in the foundations of the country.

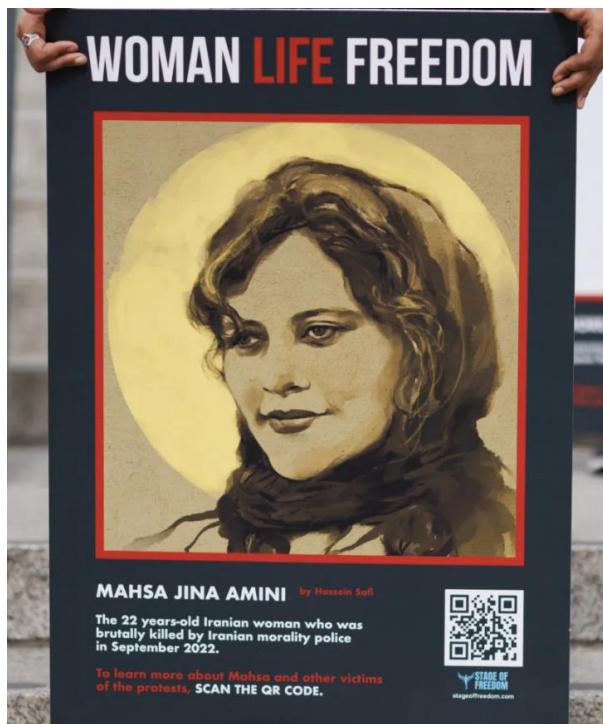
These incidents had taken place from September 2022 to September 2023 throughout the entirety of the "Women, Life, Freedom" Protests and resulted in the killing of more than half a thousand Iranian people. The main focus of the authorities were immediate to react with nothing but violence to suppress the protests. Although the repressive actions and crackdown measures were rather intense the protesters did not leave without a fight and managed to share their message with the international community through social media with the hashtags #WomenLifeFreedom and #زن زندگی آزادی and undoubtedly personal risk.



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“Women,Life,Freedom” protests in Tehran<sup>24</sup>



Placard from #WomenLifeFreedom<sup>25</sup>

The “Freedom House”, a Washington-based organization awarded the Women of Iran with the “Freedom Award” for their eye-opening and unyielding commitment to advocating for women’s rights and inherently freedom through activism. Their bravery was recognised on a global scale and it became the start of protests that had taken place in more than 100 cities worldwide.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

<sup>24</sup> Sinaia, Maryam, et al. “‘women, Life, Freedom’ Movement Wins 2023 Freedom House Award.” *Iran International*, 10 May 2023, [wwwiranintlcom/en/202305102647](http://wwwiranintlcom/en/202305102647). Accessed 29 July 2025.

<sup>25</sup> Jessica Peake, Nushin Sarkarati. “The Coalition That Preserved Content from Iran’s Protests.” Just Security, 20 June 2025, [wwwjustsecurityorg/114163/coalition-preserved-iran-protests-content/](http://wwwjustsecurityorg/114163/coalition-preserved-iran-protests-content/). Accessed 29 July 2025.



## 4<sup>th</sup> Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

### Strengthening international legal accountability Mechanisms

It is indeed a fact that International organizations have been established and have the majority of the countries in a global scale sign treaties regarding fundamental human rights and women and girls liberties in particular. Treaties like the CEDAW play a vital role by setting the legal foundations for women's rights but the reality calls for greater and concrete measures. However, the effectiveness of the conventions depends solely on whether or not the countries' authorities are willing to comply and make the international measures part of the country's reality.

In order for this to become a reality the international legal systems must take action into their hands and try to empower their jurisdiction, create investigative capacities and stronger systems that will monitor the implementation of international judicial decisions. By creating such mechanisms the accountability of such "criminal-states" will enter the spotlight and the consequences will be adequate and globally known.

### Stronger legal protection and asylums

The provision of legal protection and asylums are of great importance especially to women human rights defenders. The Women Human Rights Defenders are people of all genders that fight against gender based violations and work to promote women's rights, that role of theirs makes them vulnerable against authoritarian regimes. Despite this group of individuals, protection is also much needed for refugees and women who face harassment and violence under "dictatorships". Providing them with international fast-track legal protection mechanisms that will help with faster communication with the corresponding embassies and the countries in general and immediate accountability for the perpetrators , while also creating physical asylums that will provide safety, access to health care and on the long-term integration or relocating programs are some of the most corresponding measures, especially regarding the immediate threats on the women's rights.

### Expanding UN Monitoring and reporting missions focused on gender violations

Expanding the UN monitoring and reporting mechanisms will help bring to light the abuse of human rights against women. One mission that is outstanding as far as now is the Un Fact-Finding mission in Iran that was created in November of 2022 and has been decided to be extended twice since. These efforts should be multiplied in order to strengthen the preventative measures against repression of women under authoritarian regimes. These missions will result in increased reporting of violation, validate the experiences of these women and use their testimonies for the General Assembly resolution, in order for adequate measures to be decided.

### Hosting digital platforms for advocacy and safe networking

Under gender-based dictatorships, the freedom of speech is one of the first rights that is being brutally taken away from women. Due to the criminalization of free speech, the victims of such regimes are in need of digital platforms that provide them with anonymity and cybersecurity in order to communicate their stories with the rest of the world. These platforms can serve as means to accomplish the organization of protests, the documentation of state violence, circulation of banned documents and international reflection on the matter and thus offering protection and visibility to women and girls that live under authoritarian regimes.

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