

**Delegation From the Republic of France**  
***Position Paper for the Human Rights Council***

The topics before the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) are Safeguarding Human Rights in Times of Conflict and Addressing Gender-Based Violence against Women in Public and Political Life. The Republic of France recognizes the need to ensure that human rights are at the forefront of international conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts, while also addressing harassment and violence against women in public and political life and looks forward to actively contributing to the discussions on these topics at the upcoming conference.

**1. Safeguarding Human Rights in Times of Conflict**

In times of war and conflict it is often observed that human rights violations escalate, particularly against civilians, minorities, and the non-fighting majority. According to the UN Statistics Division, during 2022 there was a more than 50% increase in conflict-related civilian deaths. France is determined to ensure that human rights are at the center of conflict resolution and prevention. Proudly embodying the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the principles outlined in the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789), France has remained true to its values and approach to human rights. The formal proclamation of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) at the Palais de Chaillot in 1948 marked a turning point in modern international law regarding the protection of human rights, providing a framework that continues to guide France's international human rights advocacy. With the conviction that more effective measures are needed to ensure compliance with these principles, France is dedicated to working with the international community to protect these fundamental rights.

France's commitment to human rights is reflected in its full compliance with the robust legal frameworks established by international agreements. France fully adheres to the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966), the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966), and all Council of Europe conventions, including the *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (1950). These covenants, along with the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951) and the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979), form the foundation of France's legal obligations to protect human rights both domestically and globally. Through its commitment to other significant international agreements, such as the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), the *Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* (1984), and the *International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance* (2006), France aligns with the UN's comprehensive approach to safeguarding human dignity. France's 2023-2027 Humanitarian Strategy prioritizes gender equality and the rights of women and girls, aiming to ensure that 85% of French humanitarian funding is integrated into this matter by 2027. Additionally, with humanitarian aid funding set to reach €1 billion per year by 2025, France will be positioned as the second leading European donor and the fourth worldwide. As part of its commitment to the UN 2030 Agenda, France emphasizes support of SDG 16 and continues to lead efforts toward its objective of building peaceful and inclusive societies. By promoting good governance, upholding the rule of law, and fostering strong institutions, France remains dedicated to addressing the root causes of conflict, including inequality and governance failures that often lead to human rights violations.

France advocates for a comprehensive resolution focused on strengthening the international framework for safeguarding human rights during conflict, as outlined in the UN's *New Agenda for Peace* (2023). France advocates for an expanded and more representative UN Security Council, the suspension of veto power in cases of mass atrocities, and the modernization of peacekeeping operations through stronger capabilities and clear mandates. By promoting clearer frameworks and enhanced enforcement mechanisms, France emphasizes the need for collaboration with bodies like the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to document violations and hold perpetrators accountable. France seeks to address both traditional and emerging threats to global peace and security by promoting collaboration with regional organizations, improving humanitarian access, and reinforcing nuclear disarmament and cybersecurity. France further supports multilateral cooperation through frameworks like the Global Compact on Refugees and emphasizes the

role of technology in developing real-time conflict monitoring platforms to report rights violations. France also calls for increased protection for women, children, and refugees, and advocates for expanding safe zones and improving refugee resettlement. France also emphasizes the critical importance of human rights and good governance in achieving lasting peace, calling for their integration into all peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts. Through financial contributions to the UN Peacebuilding Fund and a proactive approach to international cooperation, we can create a more just, stable, and peaceful world for all. Together, the world can move closer to a future where human dignity is upheld, even during war.

## **2. Addressing Gender-Based Violence against Women in Public and Political Life**

Gender-based violence (GBV) against women in public and political life remains a pressing global issue. Article 1 of the 1993 United Nations (UN) *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women* (DEVAW) established that violence against women consists of any form of GBV that causes or is likely to cause sexual, psychological, or physical harm or suffering. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in three women between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced some form of GBV. Globally, women face harassment, threats, and violence for participating in public life. The ever-expanding and evolving technological environment online has created a new forum in which women are exposed to GBV. All forms of GBV are significant violations of human rights and pose a significant barrier to gender equality, political participation, and the role of women in democratic governance. France views this issue through the lens of human rights, gender equality, and democratic integrity and is dedicated to addressing GBV against women, both domestically and internationally.

The UN has adopted multiple resolutions intended to eliminate GBV against women in both public and political spheres. These initiatives recognize GBV to be an obstacle to equality, democracy, development, and peace. The 1979 *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) is often described as an international bill of rights for women. In 1995, the *Beijing Platform for Action* was adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women. It remains as one of the most comprehensive policies for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. UN Women: The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women operates several programs aimed at ending GBV. France is the leading Member State in terms of funding UN Women, having committed to allocating €250 million over the period 2023-2027. Domestically, France has implemented strong legal frameworks to combat gender-based violence. Policies such as the 2010 Law on Violence Against Women, Domestic Violence and the Effects of Such Violence on Children (Law 2010-769) and the 2018 Article L. 1153-5 of the French Labor Code established legal protections for women, especially in workplaces and political environments. Globally, as a member of the European Union (EU), France adheres to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), reinforcing its commitment to eliminating gender-based violence. This convention aligns with many UN initiatives to resolve this issue. The *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with specific targets related to gender equality and combating GBV. Two goals in particular focus on gender equality and violence prevention: SDG 5 (Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls) and SDG 16 (Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Developments).

France believes addressing GBV against women requires a multi-faceted approach comprising not only statutory reforms but also a systemic cultural shift. France urges all Member States enact and enforce legal protections for women in public and political life, establishing clear legal frameworks on online abuse and sexual harassment. Enforcement of these legal provisions must incorporate adequate monitoring and reporting systems which do not further instill any fear in women. France believes that the promotion of gender equality through the establishment of safe political environments with a zero-tolerance policy towards harassment and violence will ultimately break the cycle of GBV. France supports initiatives that involve civil society, such as domestic women's rights groups, and the implementation of public education campaigns in the media, schools, and the workplace. France calls for a collaboration between the UN and major tech companies to develop international standards for online platforms to ensure these environments are safe for women. France reaffirms its commitment to combating all forms of GBV against women in public and political life. By ensuring women's equal participation and achieving gender equality we can strengthen democratic values across all Member States.