

SRMUN'23

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UN WOMEN

Addressing the violence against women and gender minorities with special emphasis on women in conflict areas

BACKGROUND GUIDE

EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Letter From the Chair

Dear Delegate,

The Executive Board of the United Nations Women aka Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; welcomes you to “SR-MUN 2023 ”. The following background guide has been formulated keeping in mind various aspects of the agenda to be discussed in the committee. Though this background guide lists out the broad facets of the agenda that we would like to see being debated upon in committee, let us highlight the fact that this piece of document is not exhaustive and that further reading on part of the delegates is essential in order to steer the assembly in the right direction. Delegates are expected to build their research upon the topics highlighted in the following pages, though further research would also be appreciated.

The major aim of this document is to serve as a course of your understanding and further research, but it is not restricting the creation of new horizons and expanding the scope of the debate. This agenda seeks theoretical as well as logical attention and we request you to sincerely read the document so that all delegates at least have a common grounds of understanding. Further, we request you all not to treat this guide as a source of citations in the committee as the guide is a mixture of arguments and facts at times constructed to ease up the understanding.\

We are most looking forward to seeing what you, the delegates, can bring to the table, both in terms of your ideas in committee and your creativity in crafting solutions. We fully expect impressive levels of effort, enthusiasm, and engagement from you all. We hope you're looking forward to this committee as much as your Executive Board are, and that you'll go back satisfied with the the learning experience you pick up.

Regards,

The Executive Board

(Domil Antony Johnson)

Committee Overview

Introduction Up to this day, no country has achieved complete gender equality. With current rates of progress, it will take the international community 170 years to fully close the economic gender gap. To advance efforts at an international level, the General Assembly established the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in July 2010 with the universal directive “to achieve gender equality, women’s empowerment, and upholding women’s rights.” In 2010, civil society organizations (CSOs) and activists celebrated the decision of the General Assembly to consolidate the resources and mandates of the four existing gender equality-focused UN programs into one entity, in General Assembly resolution 64/289 titled “System-wide coherence.”

The work of UN-Women is guided by the principles established in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women and Peace and Security, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), which contains the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other norms related to women’s rights and gender equality. CEDAW and the BPfA are the cornerstones of the activity of UN-Women and provide the overall guiding principles for its work. Over the past 15 years, UN Member States have also gained greater awareness and understanding regarding the role women play in peace and security due in part to the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on “Women and Peace and Security,” and subsequent resolutions: 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), and 2242 (2015). These resolutions establish a foundation for improving the lives of women and girls in areas affected by armed conflict, and guide efforts at the international, regional, national and local levels. Supporting efforts to mainstream implementation of these global norms, as well as the principle of gender equality is central to UN Women’s mandate and at the heart of the organization’s mission.

Governance, Structure, and Membership

UN-Women is governed by an Executive Board, which is responsible for intergovernmental support and supervision of all operational activities. The Board consists of 41 members that are elected by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for a term of three years and are allocated by regions as follows: 10 from the group of African states, 10 from the group of Asian states, four from the group of Eastern European states, six from the group of Latin American and Caribbean states, and five from the group of Western European and Other states. The final six seats are allocated to contributing countries, from which four seats go to the countries that provide the highest voluntary contribution to UN-Women and two seats to developing countries.

UN-Women is headed by an Executive Director. The current Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, was appointed in 2013. The Directorate performs the administrative functions of UN-Women and is responsible for human resources, including employment in operational activities. The Executive Director also reports to the Secretary-General and works to improve system-wide coordination by seeking exchange with other agencies and programs both inside and outside the UN system. The normative processes of UN-Women are funded by the regular budget of the UN. However, its operational activities depend on voluntary contributions from its members. In 2017, voluntary contributions from governments and member organizations to UN-Women added up to a total budget of \$296.8 million.

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The mandate for UN-Women, articulated in General Assembly resolution 64/289, is to provide “guidance and technical support to all Member States, across all levels of development and in all regions, at their request, on gender equality, the empowerment and rights of women and gender mainstreaming.” The mandate is separated into policy and norm-setting activities, and operational activities in cooperation with UN Member States. The work of UN-Women is a combination of four formerly separate UN agencies: the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), the Division for the

Advancement of Women of the Secretariat (DAW), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).

UN-Women serves as the secretariat to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). CSW is overall responsible for the formulation of standard-setting policies, while UN-Women is responsible for carrying out these policies in its operational activities in the field. UN-Women also provides substantive policy support to the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and the Security Council in their efforts to advance the global agenda on gender equality. UN-Women is also mandated to hold the UN system accountable for its efforts to mainstream gender across all aspects of its work, including coordinating the UN's work for gender equality under the 2030 Agenda.

UN-Women's areas of activity include ensuring gender equality in leadership and political participation, economic empowerment, ending gender-based violence, issues of peace and security, humanitarian response, youth and girls, the response to HIV/AIDS, governance and national planning, and supporting the 2030 Agenda. To fulfill part of its mandate as a normative body, UN-Women works closely with other UN bodies, programs, and funds, as well as CSOs and Member States, in designing adequate policies, laws, programs, and services. Within the UN system, UN-Women supports CSW in setting global standards and norms. It supports the work of CSW by submitting an annual report to the Commission informing it about the implementation of the Commission's policy guidance, and submits a second annual report to the General Assembly through ECOSOC on UN-Women's operational activities, as well as research, policy analysis, and recommendations for further action. The chairperson of CSW can also be invited to address the Executive Board of UN-Women directly.

The General Assembly and ECOSOC can also request UN-Women to hold additional sessions when deemed necessary on specific issues. On an operational level, UN-Women facilitates regional conferences and meetings with CSOs and national policymakers and provides training for Member States to help them implement standards through technical and financial support. This includes support in formulating new laws or strategies, working on national educational programs, training women to run more efficient political campaigns, or assisting CSOs in becoming national advocates for gender equality. Depending on the area of action, UN Women works together with other programs and funds, among them the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The results of UN Women operational programs help drive the development of evidence-based normative standards and policies by CSW

Since 2011, UN-Women has played a pivotal role in leading and coordinating the UN system in actions to achieve gender equality. UN-Women's three-part mandate of strengthening normative policy frameworks, assisting Member States in operational activities, and coordinating the UN system on issues related to gender equality positions UN-Women to have substantial impact on achieving gender equality globally. Upcoming priorities for UN-Women include: work related to the SDGs, and more particularly SDG 5 and ensuring that women and girls are safe and free from violence, have access to decent work and economic autonomy, play a greater role in peace-building, and benefit equally from humanitarian responses. While UN Women takes action in a number of important areas, their work relies on cooperation from the international community and commitments from Member States to implement policies and frameworks that support gender equality. (United Nations)

Gender Equality

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. There has been progress over the last decades, but the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. The social and economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic has made the situation even bleaker. Progress in many areas, including time spent on unpaid care and domestic work, decision-making regarding sexual and reproductive health, and gender-responsive budgeting, is falling behind. Women's health services, already poorly funded, have faced major disruptions. Violence against women remains endemic. And despite women's leadership in responding to COVID-19, they still trail men in securing the decision-making positions they deserve. Commitment and bold action are needed to accelerate progress, including through the promotion of laws, policies, budgets and institutions that advance gender equality. Greater investment in gender statistics is vital, since less than half of the data required to monitor Goal 5 are currently available.

Important Statistics

- Globally, 26 per cent of ever-partnered women aged 15 and older (641 million) have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a husband or intimate partner at least once in their lifetime.
- In a 2021 survey in 13 countries, 45 per cent of women reported that they or a woman they know has experienced some form of violence since COVID-19.
- In 2021, nearly one in five young women were married before the age of 18.
- 35 per cent and 28 per cent of young women were married in childhood, respectively in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia,
- The global prevalence of child marriage has declined by about 10 per cent in the past five years.
- Up to 10 million more girls are likely to become child brides by 2030 due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the 100 million girls projected to be at risk before the pandemic.
- At least 200 million girls and women today have been subjected to female genital mutilation, mainly in 31 countries.
- As of 1 January 2022, the global share of women in lower and single houses of national parliaments reached 26.2 per cent, up from 22.4 per cent in 2015.
- At this pace, it would take another 40 years for women and men to be represented equally in national parliaments.
- Women's share is slightly over one third in local governments.
- In 2019, before the pandemic, women accounted for 39.4 per cent of total employment. In 2020, women represented nearly 45 per cent of global employment losses. The share of women in managerial positions worldwide increased from 27.2 to 28.3 per cent from 2015 to 2019, but remained unchanged from 2019 to 2020, the first year without an increase since 2013.
- Between 2007 and 2021, 57 per cent of women aged 15 to 49 who are married or in a union made their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care.
- In the first year of the pandemic, an estimated 1.4 million additional unintended pregnancies occurred in lower- and middle-income countries.
- Only 15 out of 52 reporting countries included sufficient provisions in their legal frameworks to protect women's rights to land.
- Between 2018 and 2021, only 26 per cent of countries have comprehensive systems in place to track public allocations for gender equality, 59 per cent have some features of such a system, and 15 per cent do not have the minimum elements of such a system

Sustainable Development Goal - 5

5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation

5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decisionmaking in political, economic and public life

5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

5.A Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

5.B Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

5.C Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels. (UN Women)

Violence Against Women

- Violence against women – particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence – is a major public health problem and a violation of women's human rights.
- Estimates published by WHO indicate that globally about 1 in 3 (30%) of women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.
- Most of this violence is intimate partner violence. Worldwide, almost one third (27%) of women aged 15-49 years who have been in a relationship report that they have been subjected to some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner.
- Violence can negatively affect women's physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health, and may increase the risk of acquiring HIV in some settings.
- Violence against women is preventable. The health sector has an important role to play to provide comprehensive health care to women subjected to violence, and as an entry point for referring women to other support services they may need.

Introduction to Violence Against Women

The United Nations defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life." (1)

Intimate partner violence refers to behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours.

Sexual violence is "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. It includes rape, defined as the physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration of the vulva or anus with a penis, other body part or object, attempted rape, unwanted sexual touching and other non-contact forms".

Scope of the problem

Population-level surveys based on reports from survivors provide the most accurate estimates of the prevalence of intimate partner violence and sexual violence. A 2018 analysis of prevalence data from 2000-2018 across 161 countries and areas, conducted by WHO on behalf of the UN Interagency working group on violence against women, found that worldwide, nearly 1 in 3, or 30%, of women have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner sexual violence or both.

Over a quarter of women aged 15-49 years who have been in a relationship have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner at least once in their lifetime (since age 15). The prevalence estimates of lifetime intimate partner violence range from 20% in the Western Pacific, 22% in high-income countries and Europe and 25% in the WHO Regions of the Americas to 33% in the WHO African region, 31% in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean region, and 33% in the WHO South-East Asia region.

Globally as many as 38% of all murders of women are committed by intimate partners. In addition to intimate partner violence, globally 6% of women report having been sexually assaulted by someone other than a partner, although data for non-partner sexual violence are more limited. Intimate partner and sexual violence are mostly perpetrated by men against women.

Lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic impacts have increased the exposure of women to abusive partners and known risk factors, while limiting their access to services. Situations of humanitarian crises and displacement may exacerbate existing violence, such as by intimate partners, as well as non-partner sexual violence, and may also lead to new forms of violence against women.

Factors associated with intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women

Intimate partner and sexual violence is the result of factors occurring at individual, family, community and wider society levels that interact with each other to increase or reduce risk (protective). Some are associated with being a perpetrator of violence, some are associated with experiencing violence and some are associated with both.

Risk factors for both intimate partner and sexual violence include:

- lower levels of education (perpetration of sexual violence and experience of sexual violence);
- a history of exposure to child maltreatment (perpetration and experience);
- witnessing family violence (perpetration and experience);
- antisocial personality disorder (perpetration);
- harmful use of alcohol (perpetration and experience);
- harmful masculine behaviours, including having multiple partners or attitudes that condone violence (perpetration);
- community norms that privilege or ascribe higher status to men and lower status to women;
- low levels of women's access to paid employment; and
- low level of gender equality (discriminatory laws, etc.).

Factors specifically associated with intimate partner violence include:

- past history of exposure to violence;
- marital discord and dissatisfaction;
- difficulties in communicating between partners; and
- male controlling behaviours towards their partners.
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Factors specifically associated with sexual violence perpetration include:

- beliefs in family honour and sexual purity;
- ideologies of male sexual entitlement; and
- weak legal sanctions for sexual violence.

Gender inequality and norms on the acceptability of violence against women are a root cause of violence against women.

Health consequences

Intimate partner (physical, sexual and psychological) and sexual violence cause serious short- and long-term physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health problems for women. They also affect their children's health and wellbeing. This violence leads to high social and economic costs for women, their families and societies. Such violence can:

- Have fatal outcomes like homicide or suicide.
- Lead to injuries, with 42% of women who experience intimate partner violence reporting an injury as a consequence of this violence (3).
- Lead to unintended pregnancies, induced abortions, gynaecological problems, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. WHO's 2013 study on the health burden associated with violence against women found that women who had been physically or sexually abused were 1.5 times more likely to have a sexually transmitted infection and, in some regions, HIV, compared to women who had not experienced partner violence. They are also twice as likely to have an abortion (3).
- Intimate partner violence in pregnancy also increases the likelihood of miscarriage, stillbirth, pre-term delivery and low birth weight babies. The same 2013 study showed that women who experienced intimate partner violence were 16% more likely to suffer a miscarriage and 41% more likely to have a pre-term birth (3).
- These forms of violence can lead to depression, post-traumatic stress and other anxiety disorders, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, and suicide attempts. The 2013 analysis found that women who have experienced intimate partner violence were almost twice as likely to experience depression and problem drinking.

- Health effects can also include headaches, pain syndromes (back pain, abdominal pain, chronic pelvic pain) gastrointestinal disorders, limited mobility and poor overall health.
- Sexual violence, particularly during childhood, can lead to increased smoking, substance use, and risky sexual behaviours. It is also associated with perpetration of violence (for males) and being a victim of violence (for females). (World Health Organization)

Women In Conflict Areas

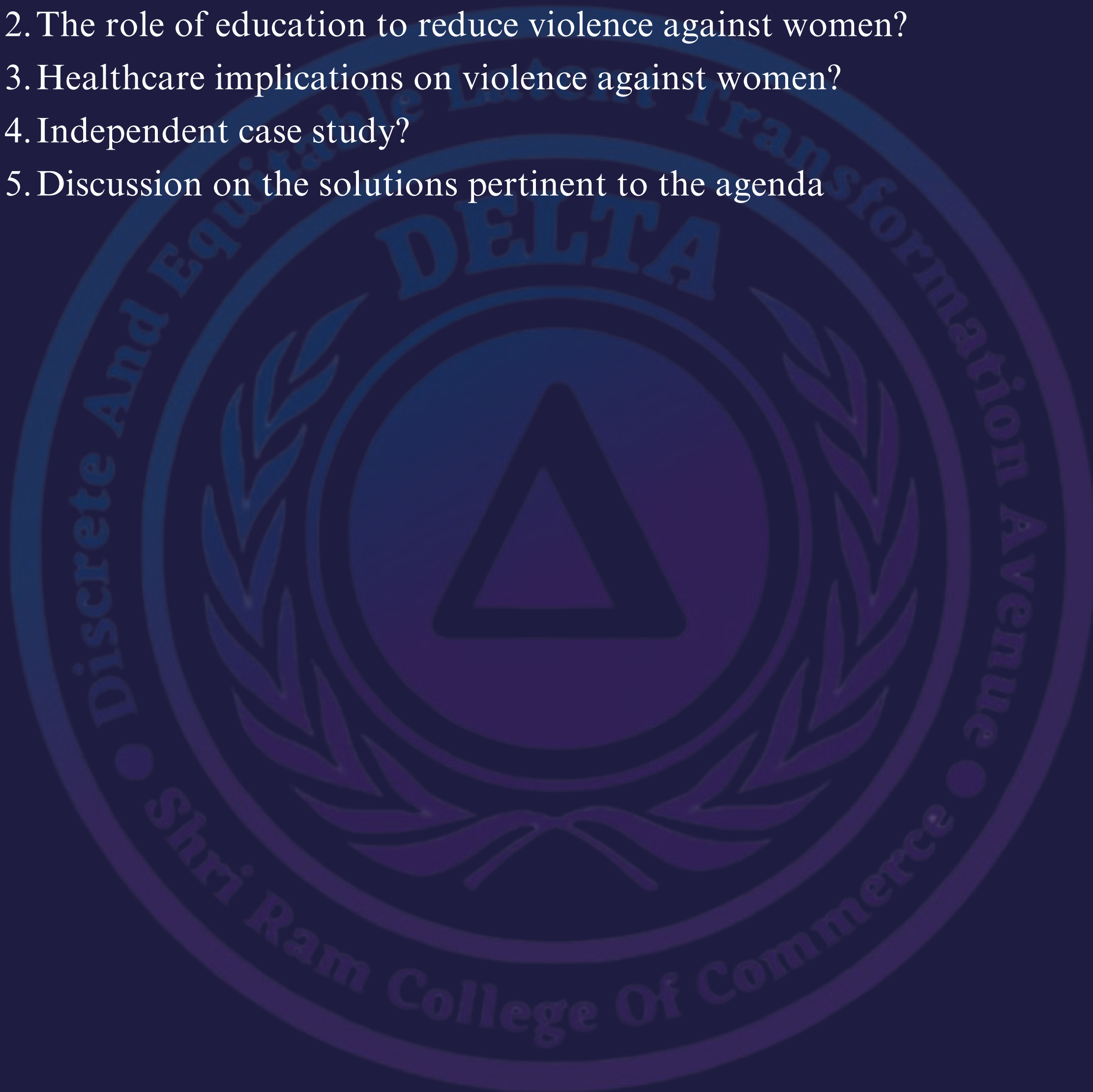
Although wars between countries have been declining, violence within states is on the increase. Over the last two decades, civil conflicts have more than doubled, jumping from 30 in 2001 to 70 in 2016. These wars are concentrated in poor countries with a toxic combination of fragile institutions, inequality, discrimination and social conflict. These factors, together with others such as the intensity of natural disasters, food crises, the increasing threats posed by climate change, terrorism and record numbers of displaced persons, are shaping a new international landscape.

A few decades ago, women and girls in conflict situations were forced to endure brutal incidents of sexual violence, had fewer resources for protection and survival, lost their loved ones and had to take responsibility for their families, were forced to join the combatants, or to flee leaving everything behind. Today, all of these risks are not only just as real, but they are compounded by the fact that the very nature of wars invades ever more private spaces, becoming a threat to their identity and their security. Added to this, many outbreaks of violence today are of religious or ethnic origin, linked to issues of identity, which play against women and women's rights. Many of these conflicts are marked by extreme violence and gender-based abuse.

Using case studies of three different conflicts – Iraq, a post-conflict situation, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, a prolonged conflict, and Yemen, an open conflict, this report aims to analyse the impact of armed violence and occupation on women and girls before, and during and after such events. The first section deals with the structural factors driving gender discrimination, while the second analyses the degree to which war and occupation affect the protection of women and girls and their participation in social and political life and looks at the mechanisms that have been put in place for prevention. Lastly, specific recommendations are provided to the Spanish Government with the aim of influencing the review process of the II National Action Plan 2017-2023 for the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

QARMA- QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER

1. What are the root causes of the violence against women?
2. The role of education to reduce violence against women?
3. Healthcare implications on violence against women?
4. Independent case study?
5. Discussion on the solutions pertinent to the agenda



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