



SRMUN ATLANTA 2023
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Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to SRMUN Atlanta 2023 and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). My name is Kathryn Caudill and I have the pleasure of serving as your Director for the CSW. After attending five SRMUN conferences as a delegate and serving as Assistant Director in the General Assembly Plenary at SRMUN Charlotte, I am excited to join you all for my first time on SRMUN Atlanta staff. I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Spanish Applied Language, a minor in Criminal Justice, and a certification in Business Spanish in 2022. I am now pursuing a Juris Doctor. Our committee's Assistant Director is Aspen Andersson. After attending five SRMUN conferences as a delegate and serving as a Chair/Rapporteur for General Assembly Plenary at SRMUN Charlotte 2023, Aspen is thrilled to join us for her first time on SRMUN Atlanta staff. Aspen is a senior majoring in Political Science with a Pre-law concentration and double minoring in Spanish and English. She hopes to pursue her Juris Doctor after graduating this spring.

The CSW is one of the United Nations' (UN) main organs whose mission focuses on promoting gender parity and empowering women throughout its actions and projects. The CSW is also committed to meeting women's needs worldwide with the goal of ending gender inequality. Each year, 45 Member States gather for two weeks, monitoring, assessing, and reviewing gaps in implementing gender equity in UN policy.

Focusing on the mission of CSW, we have developed the following topics for the delegates to discuss come conference:

- I. Addressing the Effects of Forced Displacement on Women
- II. Evaluating the Role of Women in the Conduct of Organized Crime

This background guide will serve as the foundation for your research, yet it should not be the extent of the research. Preparation is given to each topic to help guide delegates in their initial research, and to serve as a starting place for more in-depth studies. It is expected that delegates go beyond this background guide in preparation for their position paper and to better prepare themselves for contribution within the committee in November. Further, each delegation is required to submit a position paper for consideration. Position papers should be no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and demonstrate your Member State's position, policies, and recommendations on each of the two topics. For more detailed information about formatting and how to write position papers, delegates can visit srmun.org. **All position papers MUST be submitted no later than Friday, October 27th, by 11:59pm EST via the SRMUN website to be eligible for Outstanding Position Paper Awards.**

Both Kathryn and I are excited for the opportunity to serve as your dais for CSW. I wish you all the best of luck in your conference preparation and look forward to meeting and working with each of you. Should questions arise as you begin to prepare for this conference, contacting those on your dais is always encouraged.

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History of the Commission on the Status of Women

On October 24, 1945, the United Nations (UN) was founded to promote the principles of peace and justice, and equality, regardless of gender.¹ The UN Charter affirms, “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small” and “promotes social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.”² Four of the 160 government officials (Bertha Lutz of Brazil, Wu Yi-Fang of China, Minerva Bernardino of the Dominican Republic, and Virginia Gildersleeve of the United States of America) succeeded in inscribing women’s rights in the founding document of the UN.³

Shortly after its establishment, women’s rights were at the forefront of discussion.⁴ During its inaugural meetings in February 1946, Eleanor Roosevelt, the first chairperson of the UN Commission on Human Rights, read an open letter wherein she called upon, “the governments of the world to encourage women everywhere to take a more active part in national and international affairs.”⁵ A few days later a sub-commission, dedicated to the Status of Women, was created under the auspices of the Commission on Human Rights.⁶ This body later evolved into the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution II of June 21, 1946.⁷ Thus, CSW is a specialized agency that reports directly to ECOSOC on the political, social, and economic development and advancement of women around the world.⁸ Further, the CSW alerts ECOSOC of any and all urgent or immediate concerns surrounding the issue of women’s rights in and among Member States.⁹

In 1987, ECOSOC passed E/1987/22 to expand the terms of reference of the CSW to include: promoting the objectives of equality, development, and peace; monitoring and implementing measures for the advancement of women; and reviewing and appraising progress made at the national, sub-regional, regional, sectoral and global level.¹⁰ Additionally, E/1996/6 followed up the Fourth World Conference on Women and mandated that the Platform for Action should be implemented through the work of all bodies and organizations of the UN and further defined identification methods regarding trends and issues affecting gender equality.¹¹ The Platform for Action is an overarching agenda included within CSW’s calls for action that lays out the steps necessary for removing every and any obstacle that prevents women from actively participating in both public and private spheres.¹²

Today, the CSW is a functional commission for ECOSOC, with membership consisting of 45 Member States. Each Member State of ECOSOC sends one representative to the annual session and serves a four-year term as the delegate of the CSW.¹³ The CSW consists of 13 Member States from Africa, 11 from Asia-Pacific, nine from Latin America and the Caribbean, eight from western Europe and other states, and four from Eastern Europe.¹⁴ In

¹ “History of the United Nations,” The United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un>, (accessed March 1, 2023).

² United Nations, Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice, p. iii, iv, and 3, <https://www.icj-cij.org/charter-of-the-united-nations>, (accessed March 1, 2023.)

³ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, “Short History of the Commission on the Status of Women,” 2006, p.1, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/02/a-short-history-of-the-commission-on-the-status-of-women>, (accessed March 1, 2023).

⁴ “Gender Equality,” The United Nations, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/02/a-short-history-of-the-commission-on-the-status-of-women>, (accessed March 1, 2023).

⁵ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, (accessed March 1, 2023), p.1

⁶ “Commission on the Status of Women,” UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>, (accessed March 1, 2023).

⁷ “Commission on the Status of Women,” UN Women.

⁸ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, (accessed March 1, 2023), p.1.

⁹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, (accessed March 1, 2023), p.1.

¹⁰ United Nations, Economic and Social Council, “Resolution 1987-22: Measures to Strengthen the Role and Functions of the Commission on the Status of Women. 26 May 1987,” <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/pdf/E-1987-24.pdf>, (accessed March 1, 2023).

¹¹ United Nations, Economic and Social Council, “Resolution 1996/6: Follow Up to the Fourth World Conference on Women,” Resolutions and Decisions of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, <https://undocs.org/en/E/1996/96>, (accessed March 1, 2023), p.20-22.

¹² United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, “Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Beijing +5 Political Declaration and Outcome,” <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/01/beijing-declaration#view>, (accessed March 1, 2023).

¹³ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, “Member States,” <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/member-states>, (accessed March 1, 2023).

¹⁴ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, “Member States.”

addition, each CSW Member State elects a representative by region to serve on the CSW Bureau for two years.¹⁵ The CSW Bureau is responsible for setting the agenda of the annual session.¹⁶ As of 2023, the current five representatives are: H.E. Ms. Mathu Joyinin of South Africa, Chair of African States Group; H.E. Ms. Antje Leendertse of Germany, Vice-Chair of Western European and Other States Group; Ms. Maris Burbergs of Latvia, Vice-Chair of Eastern European States Group; H.E. Ms. Maria del Carmen Squeff of Argentina, Vice-Chair designate of Latin American and Caribbean States Group; and Ms. Chinguundari of Mongolia, Vice-Chair designate of Asia and Pacific States Group.¹⁷ This commission meets annually for a two-week session at UN Headquarters in New York to discuss topics most pertinent to women around the world.¹⁸

Among the CSW's landmark successes are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action.¹⁹ The CEDAW is the primary document resembling an international bill of rights for women.²⁰ The CEDAW sets out three categories for the situation of women: civil rights and legal status, reproductive rights, and cultural influences of gendered human rights.²¹ Member States that have ratified or acceded to the Convention are legally bound to its provisions, as well as commit to submitting reports at least every four years regarding measures they have taken that comply with the treaty.²² In an annual session, committee members review these reports and provide guidance to the Member State based on that review.²³ Most notably, the CEDAW provides the first definition of discrimination against women:

“...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”²⁴

Since 1975, the CSW has successfully sponsored the international World Conference on Women.²⁵ In 1995, the CSW held its fourth conference in Beijing, which created the Beijing Platform for Action.²⁶ The mission of the Beijing Platform for Action is to emphasize a working partnership between men and women, thus creating equality, and a peaceful, just, and humane world based on human rights and fundamental freedoms.²⁷ There are 12 critical concerns listed into the Beijing Platform.²⁸ Some pertinent topics for this committee listed in the Platform for Actions include poverty, education and training, women and the economy, institutional mechanisms for the

¹⁵ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, “Member States,” <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/member-states>, (accessed March 1, 2023).

¹⁶ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, “Member States.”

¹⁷ United Nations Women, “CSW64 / Beijing+25 (2020): The Bureau,” <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw64-2020>, (accessed March 1, 2023).

¹⁸ UN Women, “Commission on the Status of Women,” <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>, (accessed March 1, 2023).

¹⁹ The Beijing Platform for Action Turns 20,” UN Women, <https://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/about>, (accessed April 11, 2023); “Short History of CEDAW Convention,” UN Women, <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/history.htm>, (accessed April 11, 2023).

²⁰ UNHCR, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, A/RES/34/180, December 18 1979, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/cedaw.pdf>.

²¹ UNHCR, “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.”

²² UNHCR, “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.”

²³ UNHCR, “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.”

²⁴ UNHCR, “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.”

²⁵ “World Conferences on Women,” UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/world-conferences-on-women>, (accessed April 11, 2023).

²⁶ UN Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome*, “Chapter III: Critical Areas of Concern,” *Commission on the Status of Women*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf?la=en&vs=800, (accessed April 11, 2023), p.30-31.

²⁷ UN Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome*.

²⁸ “12 critical areas,” UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories>, (accessed April 11, 2023).

advancement of women, and the girl child.”²⁹ These concerns have defined how the CSW assessed the needs of women around the world in the various Beijing+ sessions.³⁰

In 2000, the CSW acted as the Ad-hoc Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 23rd special session of the General Assembly, also known as Beijing+5.³¹ The outcome of the 44th session of the CSW and the third session of the CSW acting as PrepCom resulted in the GA Special Session resolution titled “Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century.”³² In 2005, the CSW began its ten-year review also known as the Beijing+10 of the Beijing Platform for Action, where the CSW adopted a Declaration on the occasion of the ten-year review.³³ Member States reaffirmed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the Commission on the Status of Women’s General Assembly and pledged to ensure their full and accelerated implementation.³⁴ Beijing+15, the fifteen-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action, took place during the fifty-fourth session of the CSW in 2010, where emphasis was placed on the sharing of experiences and good practices and an emphasis on overcoming remaining obstacles and new challenges, including those related to the completion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015.³⁵

Opening statements for Beijing+25 were hosted on March 9, 2020 however the remainder of the conference was postponed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.³⁶ Finishing its 64th Session in 2020, the CSW has solidified its status among UN committees as the only committee to address the breadth of issues associated with women’s rights and gender equality.³⁷ The CSW’s 66th session in 2022 focused on climate change and environmental disaster risk reduction, taking a hybrid format due to COVID-19.³⁸ Member States adopted conclusions negotiated and agreed upon by consensus, which aim to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls through programs tackling climate change and environmental and disaster risk reduction.³⁹ The 2023 CSW session held in March 2023, focused on innovation and technological education in the digital age as a way to progress in gender equality.⁴⁰ CSW-67 released several reports, notably E/CN.6/2023/3, a Secretary General report on achieving gender equality and empowerment through technological innovation and change, making recommendations for UN Member States to mainstream gender perspectives in national digital policies.⁴¹

²⁹ UN Women, *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Beijing+5 Political Declaration and Outcome*, “Chapter III: Critical Areas of Concern,” *Commission on the Status of Women*, https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf?la=en&vs=800, (accessed April 11, 2023)..

³⁰ “12 critical areas,” UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories>, (accessed April 11, 2023).

³¹ UN Women, “Five-year Review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing + 5) held in the General Assembly, 5-9 June 2000,” <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/beijing+5.htm>, (accessed April 11, 2023).

³² UN Women, “Five-year Review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing + 5) held in the General Assembly, 5 - 9 June 2000.”

³³ “Beijing + 10,” United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, <https://www.unecce.org/gender/beijing10.html>, (accessed April 11, 2023).

³⁴ UN Women, “Ten-year Review and Appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly held during the forty-ninth session of the CSW, from 28 February to 11 March 2005,” <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/english/49sess.htm>, (accessed April 11, 2023).

³⁵ UN Women, “Global 15-year review process in the 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women,” <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/overview.html>, (accessed April 11, 2023).

³⁶ UN Women, “CSW64 / Beijing+25 (2020),” UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw64-2020>, (accessed April 11, 2023).

³⁷ UN Women, “CSW64/Beijing+25 (2020).”

³⁸ UN Women, “CSW66 (2022),” UN Women – Headquarters, 2022, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw66-2022>, (accessed April 11, 2023).

³⁹ UN Women, “CSW66 (2022).”

⁴⁰ UN Women, “CSW67 (2023),” UN Women – Headquarters, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw67-2023>, (accessed April 11, 2023).

⁴¹ UN Commission on the Status of Women, “Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls: Report of the Secretary-General.” E/CN.6/2023/3, March 17, 2023, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/771/55/PDF/N2277155.pdf?OpenElement>.

I. Addressing the Effects of Forced Displacement on Women

Introduction

Forced displacement is the massive, unwilling shift of people from their homes, either internally or externally, due to conflict, violence, fear of persecution, or other human rights violations.¹ The United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) is the main UN body focused on migration, forced displacement, and statelessness. The UNHCR works closely with other UN bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and peacekeeping missions, to assist in the protection of displaced persons and those fleeing conflict.² According to the UNHCR, by the end of 2021, around 89 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced from their homes, the largest number of people forcibly displaced since World War II.³ However, there are disparities in how displaced people are affected by forced displacement, with women and children facing worse consequences, including greater risk of violence and decreased financial opportunities.⁴ Worldwide, women and children account for 48 percent of all displaced peoples.⁵ Women and children are placed in vulnerable positions, as they are left behind in unstable locations and often face gender discrimination, including increased physical and sexual violence and lack of access to adequate reproductive health care services in the areas they are displaced.⁶ For women and girls, forced displacement reinforces pre-existing gender discrimination, making seeking an education and shelter more difficult.⁷

History

Although displacement has long been a part of human history, the international response to forced displacement would be seen most prominently in the aftermath of World War II – the largest forced displacement of persons in modern history.⁸ As a result of World War II, more than 12 million people became the responsibility of the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA).⁹ The UNRRA was created to plan, coordinate, and administer food, fuel, clothing, and other basic necessities to those that were forcibly displaced due to the war.¹⁰ Following the UNRRA, the UN Relief Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNWRA) was established to aid the displaced people of Palestine.¹¹ The UNWRA’s camp-based approach would become a pivotal part of future humanitarian responses.¹²

The latter half of the 20th century saw a spread of forced displacements as international conflicts arose.¹³ In the 1970s, conflict and economic distress in southeast Asia caused a mass expulsion of people from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos into neighboring Member States, making displaced women a primary target for human

¹ UN High Commissioner for Refugees, “Global Trends Report 2021,” UNHCR, 2021, <https://www.unhcr.org/62a9d1494/global-trends-report-2021>, (accessed April 19, 2023).

² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “About UNHCR,” United Nations, 2023, <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr>, (accessed April 30, 2023).

³ UN High Commissioner for Refugees, “Global Trends Report 2021.

⁴ Lucia, C. Hanmer, Jeni Klugman, & Elena Judith Ortiz, *Poverty, Gender, and Displacement: A Policy Brief (English)*, Gender Dimensions of Forced Displacement Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/371441644957327657/Poverty-Gender-and-Displacement-A-Policy-Brief>, (accessed April 19, 2023).

⁵ UN High Commissioner for Refugees, “Five Takeaways from the 2021 UNHCR Global Trends Report,” 2021, <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/five-takeaways-from-the-2021-unhcr-global-trends-report/>, (accessed April 19, 2023).

⁶ Lucia, C. Hanmer, Jeni Klugman, & Elena Judith Ortiz, *Poverty, Gender, and Displacement: A Policy Brief (English)*.

⁷ Lucia, C. Hanmer, Jeni Klugman, & Elena Judith Ortiz, *Poverty, Gender, and Displacement: A Policy Brief (English)*.

⁸ Are John Knudsen, “Displacement,” In *Humanitarianism: Keywords*.

⁹ Are John Knudsen, “Displacement,” In *Humanitarianism: Keywords*.

¹⁰ United Nations, *Agreement for UNRRA: Agreement for United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, United Nations, November 9, 1943, <https://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1943/431109a.html>.

¹¹ Are John Knudsen, “Displacement,” In *Humanitarianism: Keywords*.

¹² Are John Knudsen, “Displacement,” In *Humanitarianism: Keywords*.

¹³ Encyclopedia.com, “Forced Migration.” *Encyclopedia of Population. Encyclopedia.com*. (May 25, 2023). <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/forced-migration>, (accessed June 18, 2023).

trafficking.¹⁴ Additionally, the end of the Cold War and the breakdown of the former Yugoslavia provided a catalyst for war based on ethnic tensions in the eastern European region, further exacerbating women's vulnerability to physical and sexual violence.¹⁵ In 1995, women and children made up an estimated 80 percent of the displaced population in former Yugoslavia, spurring the creation of various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), many of them women's groups.¹⁶ Between 1992 and 1995, in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone, the conflicts forced an estimated two million people – half of the population – to leave their homes in fear of persecution.¹⁷ Bosnian women were violently and systematically assaulted throughout the conflict.¹⁸ Notably, the women and children of Srebrenica, Bosnia were forcibly removed from the town as Bosnian Muslim males were killed in an act of genocide.¹⁹

Current Situation

In 2011, the UN declared the 21st century to be the “Century of People on the Move,” highlighting the vast displacement of persons throughout the world.²⁰ Displacement patterns changed following the turn of the century due to rising population growth, urbanization, climate change, and food and water insecurity.²¹ These causes combined created compounding insecurity and conflicts, in turn further changing forced displacement patterns.²² Forced displacement in high-conflict areas, such as central Asia and the Horn of Africa, have created issues in offering intervention for the protection of women.²³ The UNHCR reported women who have been forcibly displaced continue to be exposed to sexual violence, human rights abuses, and other physical and mental health damages.²⁴ A study of displaced women in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo found displaced women are around ten percent more likely than non-displaced women to experience sexual violence at some point in their life.²⁵ Additionally, a 2019 study of internally displaced persons in Ukraine found displaced women were significantly more likely than displaced men to report experiencing severe anxiety and depression.²⁶

¹⁴ Kirsten McConahie, “Forced Migration in South-East Asia and East Asia,” *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*, August 4, 2014, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199652433.013.0048>, (accessed April 19, 2023).

¹⁵ International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, “The Conflicts,” International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, *United Nations*, 2023, <https://www.icty.org/en/about/what-former-yugoslavia/conflicts>, (accessed April 19, 2023).

¹⁶ Jovanka Stojisavljevic. “Women, Conflict, and Culture in Former Yugoslavia.” *Gender and Development* 3, no. 1 (1995): 36–41, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4030423>, (accessed June 20, 2023).

¹⁷ International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, “The Conflicts.”

¹⁸ International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, “The Conflicts.”

¹⁹ International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, “The Conflicts.”

²⁰ UN Third Committee, “21st Century Proving to Be ‘Century of People on the Move’, Innovative Approaches Needed to Address New Patterns of Forced Displacement, Third Committee Told,” UN News, November 1, 2011, <https://press.un.org/en/2011/gashc4024.doc.htm>, (accessed April 27, 2023).

²¹ UN Third Committee, “21st Century Proving to Be ‘Century of People on the Move’, Innovative Approaches Needed to Address New Patterns of Forced Displacement, Third Committee Told.”

²² UN Third Committee, “21st Century Proving to Be ‘Century of People on the Move’, Innovative Approaches Needed to Address New Patterns of Forced Displacement, Third Committee Told.”

²³ UN Third Committee, “21st Century Proving to Be ‘Century of People on the Move’, Innovative Approaches Needed to Address New Patterns of Forced Displacement, Third Committee Told.”

²⁴ UN Third Committee, “21st Century Proving to Be ‘Century of People on the Move’, Innovative Approaches Needed to Address New Patterns of Forced Displacement, Third Committee Told.”

²⁵ Jocelyn Kelly, et al., “Conflict, Displacement and Overlapping Vulnerabilities: Understanding Risk Factors for Gender Based Violence Among Displaced Women in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.” Joint Data Center, 2021. https://www.jointdatacenter.org/literature_review/conflict-displacement-and-overlapping-vulnerabilities-understanding-risk-factors-for-gender-based-violence-among-displaced-women-in-eastern-democratic-republic-of-congo/#:~:text=in%20their%20community-,Displacement%20is%20significantly%20associated%20with%20both%20lifetime%20and%20past%20year,experience%20past%20year%20sexual%20violence, (accessed June 19, 2023).

²⁶ Irina Kuznetsova, et al., “The Mental Health of Internally Displaced People and the General Population in Ukraine,” University of Birmingham, January 2019, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/mental_health_of_idps_and_general_population_in_ukraine.pdf, (accessed June 20, 2023).

In 2020, during the height of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, over 160 Member States closed their borders, with 99 Member States making no exception for people seeking asylum.²⁷ This outright lack of exception, in many ways, violated the UNHCR's 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, which includes a right to housing, work, and education for refugees while they are displaced.²⁸ Despite international calls for a concerted global ceasefire of all conflict to allow Member States to shift focus to combatting the virus, forced displacement continued to occur – and even grow – during the global pandemic.²⁹ COVID-19 disproportionately affected displaced peoples, increasing food and economic insecurity, and creating new challenges for those attempting to access health and protection services.³⁰ From the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, many health experts noted a majority of displaced persons were located in Member States with under-resourced healthcare systems unlikely to effectively handle the scale of the COVID-19 crisis, placing displaced persons at a higher risk for contracting and spreading the virus.³¹ As a result of these ill-equipped systems, the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing healthcare inequalities for displaced women and children.³² Often living in cramped quarters and dictated by cultural and societal norms, displaced women and girls were at an even higher risk of getting sick while caring for children and elderly family members.³³ In addition, many Member States exclude refugees and displaced peoples from their healthcare systems, making it difficult to identify and treat COVID-19 infections, thus further risking the health and safety of displaced persons.³⁴

By May 2022, more than 100 million people – roughly one in every 78 people globally – were forcibly displaced due to violence, persecution, and human rights violations.³⁵ Of those displaced, over half are women and girls.³⁶ The rise of violent conflict since 2010 has led to historically high numbers of forcibly displaced persons.³⁷ As of 2022, 76 percent of refugees hailed from Syria, Venezuela, Ukraine, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Myanmar, with 69 percent seeking refuge in neighboring Member States.³⁸ Of the 6.1 million people who fled Venezuela, 3 million are now in Colombia and Peru, and over 50 percent of those refugees are women and girls – many who arrived pregnant or with children and family.³⁹ Additionally, the current war in Ukraine has resulted in the fastest displacement of people since World War II, with an estimated 90 percent of displaced persons being women and children.⁴⁰ In addition, externally and internally displaced populations present varying challenges, as internally displaced populations can be more difficult to reach within their own Member State due to the armed conflicts, generalized violence, and human rights violations that continue to drive the displacement of these groups.⁴¹

²⁷ UNHCR, “Forced Displacement at Record Level, despite Covid Shutdowns,” UN News, June 18, 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/06/1094292>, (accessed May 9, 2023).

²⁸ “The 1951 Refugee Convention.” UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/1951-refugee-convention>, (accessed June 21, 2023).

²⁹ UNHCR, “Forced Displacement at Record Level, despite Covid Shutdowns.”

³⁰ UNHCR, “Forced Displacement at Record Level, despite Covid Shutdowns.”

³¹ Devon Cone, “Gender Matters: COVID-19’s Outsized Impact on Displaced Women and Girls,” Refugees International, May 18, 2020, <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2020/5/4/gender-matters-covid-19s-outsized-impact-on-displaced-women-and-girls>, (accessed May 10, 2023).

³² Devon Cone, “Gender Matters: COVID-19’s Outsized Impact on Displaced Women and Girls.”

³³ Devon Cone, “Gender Matters: COVID-19’s Outsized Impact on Displaced Women and Girls.”

³⁴ Devon Cone, “Gender Matters: COVID-19’s Outsized Impact on Displaced Women and Girls.”

³⁵ UNHCR, “UNHCR: Global displacement hits another record, capping decade-long rising trend,” UNHCR, June 16, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/press/2022/6/62a9d2b04/unhcr-global-displacement-hits-record-capping-decade-long-rising-trend.html>, (accessed April 27, 2023).

³⁶ Women for Women International, “5 Facts About What Refugee Women Face.” Women for Women International, June 9, 2022. <https://www.womenforwomen.org/blogs/5-facts-about-what-refugee-women-face>, (accessed June 22, 2023).

³⁷ World Bank, “Forced Displacement,” World Bank, September 30, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/forced-displacement>, (accessed April 19, 2023).

³⁸ UN High Commissioner of Refugees, “Mid-Year Trends 2022,” UNHCR, 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/mid-year-trends.html#:~:text=As%20of%20mid%2D2022%20an,the%20remainder%20of%20the%20year>, (accessed March 12, 2023).

³⁹ Clara del Campo. “Constant Violence and Absent Governments: The Twofold Lack of Protection Faced by Venezuelan Refugees.” Amnesty International, August 12, 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/07/twofold-lack-faced-by-venezuelan-refugees/>, (accessed June 20, 2023).

⁴⁰ UN High Commissioner of Refugees, “Mid-Year Trends.”; UNHCR. “Ukraine Situation.” Global Focus. <https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/situations/ukraine-situation#:~:text=An%20estimated%2090%25%20of%20the,other%20countries%20in%20the%20region>, (accessed June 22, 2023).

⁴¹ UNHCR, “Global Trends Report,” UNHCR, June 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends>, (accessed May 10, 2023).

Actions Taken by the United Nations

The UN addressed migration as a whole in 2013 in A/RES/68/4(2013).⁴² The General Assembly passed A/RES/68/4(2013), *Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development*, creating a forum for discussion on the various international effects of migration.⁴³ Clauses 10-13 of this resolution highlight the disproportionate effects of displacement on women, girls, and children, and specify a distinct approach to address gender-based violence and the educational needs of these vulnerable populations.⁴⁴ The UNHCR has also been aiding the General Assembly in this mission for decades.⁴⁵

The CSW discussed prevalent issues relating to the displacement of women in a 1998 report, encouraging Member States to increase the participation of women in the committees responsible for managing refugee camps and to provide gender-sensitive legal, medical, and social services in camps.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the CSW highlighted how easy access to small arms by Non-State actors heightens civilian insecurity and risk, particularly for internally displaced women and children in refugee camps.⁴⁷ The CSW also discussed the increased risk of abuse displaced women face during flight, in refugee camps, and in states of refuge, by the military, other refugees, and gangs.⁴⁸ Displaced women and refugees in camps also face a lack of suitable income-generating opportunities, a lack of physical safety and privacy, and difficulties relating to health.⁴⁹ In 2019, the 63rd session of the CSW partnered with the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) to hold an event to explore the existing frameworks and initiatives aimed at improving the lives and rights of displaced women and girls.⁵⁰ Additionally, the WRC has called on the CSW to renew their commitment to protecting displaced women in rural areas to ensure access to educational opportunities and reproductive healthcare.⁵¹ More recently, the CSW has discussed displacement as a consequence of climate disasters and risk management in E/CN.6/2022/L.7,⁵² recognizing that 80 percent of people displaced by climate change are women.

In coordination with the Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster, the UN International Organization for Migration and the Women's Refugee Commission developed The Women's Participation Project (WPP) to empower displaced women while simultaneously respecting the displaced population's cultural norms and customary traditions.⁵³ This initiative incorporates traditional cultural knowledge and social norms while promoting the inclusion of women in decision-making processes and increasing their participation in livelihood activities, two

⁴² United Nations General Assembly, *Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development*, A/RES/68/4, October 3, 2013, https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_68_4.pdf

⁴³ United Nations General Assembly, *Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development*.

⁴⁴ United Nations General Assembly, *Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development*.

⁴⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "About UNHCR," United Nations, 2023, <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr>, (accessed April 30, 2023).

⁴⁶ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Report on the Forty-Second Session*. New York, NY: UN Headquarters, 1998, <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw97.htm>, (accessed June 21, 2023).

⁴⁷ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Report on the Forty-Second Session*.

⁴⁸ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Report on the Forty-Second Session*.

⁴⁹ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women. *Report on the Forty-Second Session*.

⁵⁰ Women's Refugee Commission, "Women's Refugee Commission at the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women," Women's Refugee Commission, February 25, 2019, <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/research-resources/women-s-refugee-commission-at-the-63rd-commission-on-the-status-of-women/>, (accessed June 21, 2023).

⁵¹ Sarah Costa, "Prioritizing Reproductive Health, Empowering Women and Girls," The Huffington Post, April 25, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sarah-costa/prioritizing-reproductive_b_1300121.html, (accessed June 21, 2023).

⁵² United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes*, E/CN.6/2022/L.7, March 29, 2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3956348?ln=en>; United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes*, E/CN.6/2022/L.7, March 29, 2022, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3956348?ln=en>.

⁵³ UN High Commissioner of Refugees, "Empowering Displaced Women, Girls and Persons with Disabilities in North-East Nigeria," UNHCR, 2022, <https://nigeria.un.org/en/179048-empowering-displaced-women-girls-and-persons-disabilities-north-east-nigeria>, (accessed March 12, 2023).

areas in which displaced women and girls are often excluded or alienated from.⁵⁴ The WPP has nine camps, serving an estimated 10,000 people and continues to focus on training women in activities such as cooking and crafts, while building their leadership and decision-making skills to diminish their risk of gender-based violence.⁵⁵

The Syrian Conflict caused one of the largest refugee displacements in the last century, with women bearing the consequences disproportionately based on historical and structural marginalization and gender-based discrimination.⁵⁶ It is estimated that nearly 70 percent of the 6.9 million internally displaced people in Syria are women and children.⁵⁷ However, the response to this conflict demonstrates the powerful impact of regional bodies are working closely with the UN on the gendered issues of forced displacement.⁵⁸ In partnership with UN Women, in 2020, the League of Arab States (LAS) launched the Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access, and Protection (LEAP) program, a one-year program that took place in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and neighboring Member States.⁵⁹ Created to address the devastating impacts of the conflict in Syria, the LEAP program aimed to increase access to recovery opportunities and provide protective services in violent areas in LAS Member States, enabling women and fortifying pre-existing national justice structures as a way to hold perpetrators of violence accountable.⁶⁰ As a result of this program, policies and plans in Syria in particular have created results that are gender-focused, through increased productive and financial skills, decent labor standards for women's employment opportunities, and working with national governments to hold perpetrators of violence against women accountable.⁶¹

Case Study

Colombia and Women's Displacement

Since the 1950s, Colombia has experienced multiple waves of large-scale forced displacement due to internal territorial, economic, and political conflicts.⁶² Colombia's nearly 50-year-old armed conflict between the government and far left-wing guerilla groups has led to the forced internal displacement of roughly 6.7 million people, with women and children, Indigenous, Afro-Colombian, and rural communities at heightened risk.⁶³ Despite ongoing peace negotiations, forced displacement and confinement persist in areas that are controlled or disputed by armed insurgent groups.⁶⁴ Colombia's Indigenous peoples are often forced to flee their homes and ancestral lands as they are caught in the fighting between the Colombian Army and guerilla groups from the Revolutionary Armed Forces.⁶⁵ These Indigenous communities suffer irreversible damage from forcible displacement as their culture, language, and lifestyle are closely tied to their ancestral lands.⁶⁶ Additionally, forcible displacement drastically

⁵⁴ UN High Commissioner of Refugees, "Empowering Displaced Women, Girls and Persons with Disabilities in North-East Nigeria," UNHCR, 2022, <https://nigeria.un.org/en/179048-empowering-displaced-women-girls-and-persons-disabilities-north-east-nigeria>, (accessed March 12, 2023).

⁵⁵ UN High Commissioner of Refugees, "Empowering Displaced Women, Girls and Persons with Disabilities in North-East Nigeria."

⁵⁶ UN Women, "What Is at Stake?" United Nations, March 2021, <https://iraq.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Iraq/Attachments/Publications/2020/12/Project%20Brief%20-%20LEAP%20Iraq-SamirB-compressed.pdf>, (accessed March 12, 2023)

⁵⁷ Women for Women International, "5 Facts About What Refugee Women Face." Women for Women International, June 9, 2022. <https://www.womenforwomen.org/blogs/5-facts-about-what-refugee-women-face>, (accessed June 22, 2023).

⁵⁸ UN Women, "Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) – Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Regional Component (in Partnership with the Arab Women Organization and the League of Arab States)," UN Women – Iraq, 2020, <https://iraq.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/12/project-brief-leap>, (accessed April 19, 2023).

⁵⁹ UN Women, "Women's Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection (LEAP) – Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Regional Component (in Partnership with the Arab Women Organization and the League of Arab States)."

⁶⁰ UN Women, "What Is at Stake?"

⁶¹ UN Women, "What Is at Stake?"

⁶² Elizabeth Kerr. "Forced Displacement in Colombia: A Crime and a Humanitarian Tragedy," *PBI Colombia* no. 14, January 2010, https://www.peacebrigades.org/fileadmin/user_files/projects/colombia/files/colomPBIa/100210_boletin_desplazamiento_2010_ENGLISH.pdf.

⁶³ UNHCR, "Colombia Situation," *Global Focus*, 2023, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/colombiasituation>, (accessed May 9, 2023).

⁶⁴ UNHCR, "Colombia Situation."

⁶⁵ UNHCR, "Colombia: Growing Impact of Forced Displacement," UNHCR, April 22, 2005, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing-notes/colombia-growing-impact-forced-displacement>, (accessed May 9, 2023).

⁶⁶ UNHCR, "Colombia Situation."

impacts Indigenous women as they are forced to leave their homes and flee to the cities due to violence and persecution, further threatening their culture, as women are often responsible for passing down tribal traditions, including, singing, art, music, and making traditional jewelry.⁶⁷ Moreover, the mass assassination of men and breaking up of family structures has forced displaced women to assume social and economic responsibility for their families.⁶⁸ Women make up over 50 percent of displaced peoples in Colombia and over 40 percent of those women are heading households.⁶⁹ Many women are also abandoned after their family is displaced and roughly 30 percent of displaced women in Colombia are victims of sexual violence.⁷⁰

The UNHCR has worked to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples and promote the inclusion and participation of Indigenous women in their communities' decision-making processes by helping Indigenous peoples obtain official identification documents, training teachers, hosting recreational activities for Indigenous children, providing human rights training, and helping Indigenous communities document their traditions and culture.⁷¹ In particular, the UNHCR, UN Women, and UNICEF partnered to boost women's political participation by involving men as allies of gender equity through a training school initiative.⁷² In 2020, the training school was occupied by 94 Indigenous women and farmers as they learned to strengthen their leadership roles in the community and prevent gender-based violence by learning about their rights and starting a Women's Roundtable.⁷³ The UNHCR has also worked with government institutions to empower communities to identify risks, implement protective measures, and address structural risk factors that contribute to internal displacement.⁷⁴ Many women's organizations in Colombia also receive assistance and support for the UNHCR to provide help to women victims of violence and promote and protect the rights of displaced women.⁷⁵

In a 2012 speech to the CSW, a Colombian UN Representative shared the Member State's renewed dedication to guarantee displaced women integral attention and a life free from violence.⁷⁶ The representative cited specific plans of action and legislation protecting displaced women, including Law 1434 – dedicated to enticing the political participation of women – and Law 1448 – also known as the Victims' Law.⁷⁷ The Victims' Law is dedicated to gender justice and armed conflict related land restitution for displaced populations.⁷⁸ However, Colombia has struggled to provide relief to the roughly 8.6 million individuals who registered as victims through this

⁶⁷ Diana Diaz, "Colombia's Indigenous Pushed to Find Safety in Cities," UNHCR, October 18, 2012, <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/colombias-indigenous-pushed-find-safety-cities>, (accessed June 21, 2023).

⁶⁸ Donny Meertens, "Forced Displacement and Gender Justice in Colombia," *Transitional Justice and Displacement Project*, 2012, http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/disp_forced_displacement_and_gender_justice_in_colombia-between_disproportional_effects_of_violence_and_historical_injustice.pdf.

⁶⁹ Elizabeth Kerr. "Forced Displacement in Colombia: A Crime and a Humanitarian Tragedy," *PBI Colombia* no. 14, January 2010, https://www.peacebrigades.org/fileadmin/user_files/projects/colombia/files/colomPBIa/100210_boletin_desplazamiento_2010_ENGLISH.pdf.

⁷⁰ Elizabeth Kerr. "Forced Displacement in Colombia: A Crime and a Humanitarian Tragedy."

⁷¹ Ron Redmund, "Colombia: Growing Impact of Forced Displacement," UNHCR, April 22, 2005, <https://www.unhcr.org/us/news/briefing-notes/colombia-growing-impact-forced-displacement>, (accessed May 9, 2023).

⁷² UN Women, "Indigenous Women in Colombia-Ecuador Border Are Leading Community Efforts to End Violence against Women," UN Women, October 13, 2020, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/10/feature-indigenous-women-lead-efforts-to-end-violence-against-women-in-colombia>, (accessed June 21, 2023).

⁷³ UN Women. "Indigenous Women in Colombia-Ecuador Border Are Leading Community Efforts to End Violence against Women."

⁷⁴ Ron Redmund, "Colombia: Growing Impact of Forced Displacement."

⁷⁵ Willaim Splinder, "International Women's Day: Colombia's Displaced Women Tell of Their Suffering," UNHCR India, March 8, 2005, <https://www.unhcr.org/in/news/news/international-womens-day-colombias-displaced-women-tell-their-suffering#:~:text=Hundreds%20of%20thousands%20of%20women,continuing%20struggle%20for%20their%20rights>, (accessed May 10, 2023).

⁷⁶ Miguel Camilo Ruiz, "Speech to the Commission on the Status of Women," CSW, United Nations, February 27-March 9, 2012. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw56/general-discussions/member-states/Colombia%20-%20E.PDF>, (accessed June 21, 2023).

⁷⁷ Miguel Camilo Ruiz. "Speech to the Commission on the Status of Women."

⁷⁸ Donny Meertens, "Forced Displacement and Gender Justice in Colombia," *Transitional Justice and Displacement Project*, 2012.

unprecedented reparations program.⁷⁹ As such, the Member State recently extended the Victims' Law until 2031 to provide the holistic benefits promised to victims, including access to education and healthcare, land restitution, and financial payments.⁸⁰

Conclusion

Over the years the CSW has increasingly called upon Member States to address climate change concerns as unsustainable depletion or deterioration of natural resources can displace communities, especially women, from income-generating activities and negatively impact the well-being, health, and quality of life for women and girls and the population at large.⁸¹ While forced displacement affects all involved, the effects on women and girls are disproportionate.⁸² Women who are forcibly displaced are more likely to experience sexual violence, financial instability, and poverty.⁸³ In addition, the CSW recognizes that women and girls face specific challenges in forced displacement, including reduced access to education, employment and essential health-care services, separation from support networks, homelessness, and increased risk of all forms of violence.⁸⁴ With forced displacement at an all-time high, its effects on women must be examined with a gendered approach to develop effective policies and programs.⁸⁵ The CSW has emphasized the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective by encouraging the participation of all women and girls in all forums and processes related to disaster risk reduction and the management of refugee camps.⁸⁶ As new conflicts and refugee situations continue to emerge and intensify, the UNHCR and the CSW have emphasized the importance of identifying and supporting durable solutions that will enable displaced peoples the opportunity to safely rebuild their lives.⁸⁷

Committee Directive

During committee, delegates should look at how the Member State is currently involved in the topic of forced displacement, whether directly within domestic and international foreign policies or indirectly through socioeconomic implications of other Member States' actions. Delegates should research the national, regional, and global practices on how their Member State plays a role in mitigating and preventing forced migration, with a particular interest in the gender-specific approach. Delegates should also seek information on what their Member State is doing nationally to address the issue and how those actions may affect other Member States both regionally and internationally. In doing so, delegates should ask themselves: What are some current national, regional, and international displacement prevention and aid policies that have seen positive improvements towards gender-specific issues? What can CSW do to incentivize Member States to proactively become involved in creating gender-specific solutions? What are the consequences of ignoring a gender-based approach to forced displacement, such as economic, security, and humanitarian effects? Overall, delegates should address these questions with realistic solutions for implementing their goals. Delegates should focus on building upon established CSW, UN, and other multilateral programs and initiatives rather than creating new bodies within CSW or the UN. Delegates should also focus on the issue as a whole and not specific situations.

⁷⁹ Julia Zulver, "Feasible Justice: Has Colombia Over-Promised and Under-Delivered Reparations for Its 8.6 Million Victims?" JusticeInfo, June 12, 2018, <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/37686-feasible-justice-has-colombia-over-promised-and-under-delivered-reparations-for-its-8-6-million-vic.html>, (accessed June 22, 2023).

⁸⁰ "Colombia Extends Victims' Law Until 2031," Justice for Colombia, November 19, 2020. <https://justiceforcolombia.org/news/colombia-extends-victims-law-until-2031/>, (accessed June 21, 2023).

⁸¹ United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes*, E/CN.6/2022/L.7, , <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3956348?ln=en>.

⁸² Lucia, C. Hanmer, Jeni Klugman, & Elena Judith Ortiz, *Poverty, Gender, and Displacement: A Policy Brief (English)*, Gender Dimensions of Forced Displacement Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/371441644957327657/Poverty-Gender-and-Displacement-A-Policy-Brief>.

⁸³ Lucia, C. Hanmer, Jeni Klugman, & Elena Judith Ortiz, *Poverty, Gender, and Displacement: A Policy Brief (English)*.

⁸⁴ United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes*, E/CN.6/2022/L.7.

⁸⁵ Lucia, C. Hanmer, Jeni Klugman, & Elena Judith Ortiz, *Poverty, Gender, and Displacement: A Policy Brief (English)*.

⁸⁶ United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes*, E/CN.6/2022/L.7.

⁸⁷ UNHCR, "Global Trends Report," UNHCR, June 2022, <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends>, (accessed May 10, 2023).

II. Evaluating the Role of Women in the Conduct of Organized Crime

Introduction

Organized crime functions as an illegal business that is spread across networks of criminals who profit from the distribution and supply of illegal goods.¹ These illegal goods range from the trafficking of firearms and drugs to human trafficking.² Organized crime is globally present and affects governmental, political, and legal processes.³ Recently, organized crime has begun to shift to online and virtual activity as well.⁴ Organized crime groups often exploit crisis situations such as COVID-19, natural disasters, or other conflicts to meet their goals.⁵ While the principal actors of these crimes are often men; however, women are equally likely to be principal actors, or leaders, in organized criminal activity.⁶ However, most literature and research on organized crime describes men as the leaders while women are only described as the wives, sisters, girlfriends, or daughters of organized crime leaders.⁷ This lack of diverse research and literature stems from gender norms, which stereotype men as aggressors and women as victims.⁸ Yet, women hold positions in organized crime beyond a familial connection as organizers, recruiters, and participants.⁹ Both men and women hold these positions and participate in organized crime as a means of income or opportunity that otherwise they would not be afforded.¹⁰ As the UN body tasked with addressing the social, economic, and political progress of women utilizing gendered perspectives into the solution, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) plays a role in addressing the rise in women within organized crime.¹¹

History

Organized crime is not limited to the bounds of a single Member State and extends transnationally.¹² Organized crime can be traced back thousands of years to pirates interfering with shipping and trade or groups that robbed travelers and merchants on the silk road.¹³ The most recognizable form of organized crime the mafia.¹⁴ Mafias first emerged from the negative effects of feudalism in the 1400s, such as power imbalances and lack of opportunities.¹⁵ Groups of farmers and artisans formed small groups of anti-clergy belief and would act against the hierarchy to protect local interests and advocate for themselves.¹⁶ These groups later developed into gangs that spread across Europe and would target travelers and aristocrats as victims of theft and robbery to accrue any type of profit.¹⁷ These gangs then transformed into the sophisticated, organized groups beginning on the 1800s.¹⁸ The early Italian Mafia,

¹ “Transnational organized crime: the globalized illegal economy,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2023, <https://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/organized-crime.html>, (accessed March 28, 2023).

² “Organized Crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2023, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

³ “Organized Crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁴ “Organized Crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁵ “Organized Crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁶ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, April 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-15/key-issues/gender-and-organized-crime.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

⁷ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁸ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁹ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

¹⁰ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

¹¹ “Commission on the Status of Women,” *UN Women*, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>, (accessed April 24, 2023).

¹² “We Are Family: Crime Organizations Around the World,” *Focus Features*, September 17, 2008, <https://www.focusfeatures.com/article/we-are-family-crime-organizations-around-the-world>, (accessed March 29, 2023).

¹³ “Organized crime,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bhaktipada>, (accessed March 29, 2023).

¹⁴ Heather Shore, “A Brief History of the Underworld and Organized Crime, c. 1750 – 1950,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Crime and Criminal Justice in Europe and North America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

¹⁵ Heather Shore, “A Brief History of the Underworld and Organized Crime.

¹⁶ Heather Shore, “A Brief History of the Underworld and Organized Crime.

¹⁷ Heather Shore, “A Brief History of the Underworld and Organized Crime.

¹⁸ Heather Shore, “A Brief History of the Underworld and Organized Crime.

known as the Cosa Nostra, functioned as a business acting as security for wealthy families.¹⁹ Globally, other common organized crime practices during this time included prostitution, gambling, drug operations, and theft.²⁰

Recently, the concept of organized crime has evolved from violent groups into predatory illicit businesses.²¹ In the 1920s in the United States of America, many women became active as organized crime leaders by opening their own brothels and acting as managers, with men still ultimately in charge of the central operation.²² Women in Latin America began as early as the 1930s aiding in the drug cartel business and running their own operations and laboratories.²³ In Japan, with the Yakuza organized crime group, which became most active in the 1990s, focused less on physical violence and turned to predatory business practice such as loan sharking, extortion, and fraud.²⁴ Women are specifically prohibited from assisting in the Yakuza, but many of the organizers wives are used as mediators between subordinates.²⁵ Similarly, in China, the Tongs organized crime group utilized extortion as well as drugs, prostitution, and human trafficking in order to gain power in the local community.²⁶ The Tongs used women as prostitutes or women were trafficked rather than then them acting as a form of leadership.²⁷ In 1957, there was discovered to be an international organized crime group in New York, United States where over 100 different accomplices were identified in a large-scale organized crime group.²⁸

Current Situation

Currently on a global scale, the participants involved in organized crime are often affected by the current situations and active crises in their respective Member States.²⁹ These situations and crises lead to the loss of agency, the control over one's livelihood, which is also affected by gender roles and norms.³⁰ Gender norms are societal constructions of expectations and behaviors of a specified gender.³¹ Not adhering to gender norms has historically

¹⁹ "We Are Family: Crime Organizations Around the World," *Focus Features*, September 17, 2008, https://www.focusfeatures.com/article/we_are_family_crime_organizations_around_the_world, (accessed March 29, 2023).

²⁰ Heather Shore, "A Brief History of the Underworld and Organized Crime, c. 1750 – 1950," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Crime and Criminal Justice in Europe and North America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

²¹ "We Are Family: Crime Organizations Around the World," *Focus Features*, September 17, 2008, https://www.focusfeatures.com/article/we_are_family_crime_organizations_around_the_world, (accessed March 29, 2023).

²² United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime. *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*. Vienna: United Nations Office of Vienna, 2022, https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/tools_and_publications/Issue_Paper_Organized_Crime_and_Gender_1.pdf.

²³ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime. *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*.

²⁴ "We Are Family: Crime Organizations Around the World," *Focus Features*, September 17, 2008, https://www.focusfeatures.com/article/we_are_family_crime_organizations_around_the_world, (accessed March 29, 2023).

²⁵ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime. *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*. Vienna: United Nations Office of Vienna, 2022, https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/tools_and_publications/Issue_Paper_Organized_Crime_and_Gender_1.pdf.

²⁶ "We Are Family: Crime Organizations Around the World," *Focus Features*, September 17, 2008, https://www.focusfeatures.com/article/we_are_family_crime_organizations_around_the_world, (accessed March 29, 2023).

²⁷ "We Are Family: Crime Organizations Around the World," *Focus Features*.

²⁸ "We Are Family: Crime Organizations Around the World," *Focus Features*.

²⁹ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime, *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*, Vienna: United Nations Office of Vienna, 2022, https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/tools_and_publications/Issue_Paper_Organized_Crime_and_Gender_1.pdf.

³⁰ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime, *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*.

³¹ "Gender and organized crime," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, April 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-15/key-issues/gender-and-organized-crime.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

caused social implications.³² As such, gender norms lead to the assumption that men are more likely to be in-charge of violent operations due to their masculinity, while women are more likely to be victims or only assistants due to their femininity.³³ However, women are not solely victims or assistants, but can also be the leaders of organized crime themselves as gender norms are not binary.³⁴ The involvement of women is only recently being explored due to gender norms, and there is currently no accurate available data on female rates of participation on an international scale.³⁵ In certain European Member States, including the United Kingdom, Italy, and the Netherlands, there are national female participation statistics that indicate a range from two-to-nine percent of those participating in organized crime are women.³⁶

Men and women who participate in organized crime often become involved as a means of supporting themselves and their families when no other opportunities are present.³⁷ Minority, indigenous, migrant, and low-income participants often use organized crime as a form of income in areas with a lack of employment and education opportunities.³⁸ People within any of the groups often overlap and are considered intersectional.³⁹ Intersectionality of these groups not only implicates gender norms within roles, but also stereotypes of one's economic and cultural background that they feel pressure to fulfill.⁴⁰ These overlaps directly impact interactions within law, policy, and incarceration.⁴¹ For example, intersectionality can be seen as women involved in organized crime being given tasks that are riskier and lower paid as they tend to be less educated and face poverty at higher rates.⁴²

Due to the exploitative nature of organized crime in attracting low-income participants, the women who join often face abuse, harassment, and discrimination.⁴³ Within organized crime, women often face sexual violence or threats of incarceration and family separation as means of duress.⁴⁴ For example, women who joined the organized crime group the Northern Triangle in Central America were forced to join under the pressures of sexual violence, child abuse, unemployment, and social inequality.⁴⁵ Women would then join the group primarily as care-takers of children, but women were also utilized as messengers, spies, and mules for trafficking due to the lack of suspicion by law enforcement.⁴⁶ Other groups utilized this lack of suspicion to allow women to act as interim leaders of the

³² "What is sex? What is gender? What is intersectionality? Why should we care?" *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, April 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-15/key-issues/what-is-sex--gender--intersectionality--why-should-we-care.html>, (accessed May 12, 2023).

³³ "Gender and organized crime," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, April 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-15/key-issues/gender-and-organized-crime.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

³⁴ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime, *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*, Vienna: United Nations Office of Vienna, 2022, https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/tools_and_publications/Issue_Paper_Organized_Crime_and_Gender_1.pdf.

³⁵ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime, *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*.

³⁶ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime, *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*.

³⁷ "Gender and organized crime," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, April 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-15/key-issues/gender-and-organized-crime.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

³⁸ "Gender and organized crime," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

³⁹ "What is sex? What is gender? What is intersectionality? Why should we care?" *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, April 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-15/key-issues/what-is-sex--gender--intersectionality--why-should-we-care.html>, (accessed May 12, 2023).

⁴⁰ "What is sex? What is gender? What is intersectionality? Why should we care?" *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁴¹ "What is sex? What is gender? What is intersectionality? Why should we care?" *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁴² "What is sex? What is gender? What is intersectionality? Why should we care?" *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁴³ "Gender and organized crime," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, April 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-15/key-issues/gender-and-organized-crime.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

⁴⁴ "Gender and organized crime," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁴⁵ "Gender and organized crime," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁴⁶ "Gender and organized crime," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

organization while their male counterparts were in prison, or women utilized the same lack of suspicion to run and operate their own organizations.⁴⁷

Actions Taken by the United Nations

The most significant action taken by the United Nations (UN) regarding human trafficking is the adoption of A/RES/55/25(2000), or the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, by the United Nations General Assembly in 2000.⁴⁸ The Convention addresses the negative social and economic conditions in relation to organized crime and advocates a gender-diverse and non-binary lens to understand and address the roles and goals of organized crime.⁴⁹ As Member States adopt the Convention, they implement legislation that suggests the protection of women from revictimization by reducing vulnerability through development and opportunity.⁵⁰ The Convention further establishes the criminality of participation of organized crime, laundering, corruption, and obstruction of justice.⁵¹

In 2018, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted E/RES/2018/17, which focused on mainstreaming gender in general crime prevention by addressing health, housing, technology, and security and even a specific focus on domestic violence to reduce instances of victimization and revictimization.⁵² Member States were urged to incorporate gender perspectives aimed at children into social and economic programs to prevent children from becoming victims or offenders.⁵³ E/RES/2018/17 offered a multitude of examples of programs based in education, health, civic participation, and safety that could utilize a gender mainstreaming approach to combat organized crime.⁵⁴ Additionally, E/RES/2018/17 encouraged the implementation of educational programs aimed at younger children with a gendered approach on the importance of the rule of law in preventing future offenses.⁵⁵

In 2021, the Commission on Crime Prevention Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) passed E/CN.15/2017/L.9/Rev.1, focused on mainstreaming a gender perspective into organized crime prevention policies and programs.⁵⁶ ECOSOC defines gender mainstreaming as “the process of assessing the implications for men, women, girls and boys of any planned action, including legislation, policies, programmes, in all areas and at all.”⁵⁷ E/CN.15/2017/L.9/Rev.1 called upon Member States to utilize gender mainstreaming in their efforts of combatting organized crime by considering the

⁴⁷ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, April 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-15/key-issues/gender-and-organized-crime.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

⁴⁸ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime, *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*, Vienna: United Nations Office of Vienna, 2022, https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/tools_and_publications/Issue_Paper_Organized_Crime_and_Gender_1.pdf.

⁴⁹ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime. *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*.

⁵⁰ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime. *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*.

⁵¹ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime. *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*.

⁵² “Overview of Gender in Resolutions,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2023, https://www.unodc.org/documents/Gender/Overview_of_Gender_in_Resolutions.pdf, (accessed June 25, 2023).

⁵³ Economic and Social Council resolution 2018/17, The rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, E/RES/2018/17, (July 2, 2018), https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/CCPCJ_Sessions/CCPCJ_27/CCPCJ_res2018/ECOSOC_Resolution_2018_17.pdf.

⁵⁴ Economic and Social Council resolution 2018/17.

⁵⁵ Economic and Social Council resolution 2018/17,

⁵⁶ “Overview of Gender in Resolutions,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2023, https://www.unodc.org/documents/Gender/Overview_of_Gender_in_Resolutions.pdf, (accessed June 25, 2023).

⁵⁷ “Gender at UNOV/UNODC,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2023, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/gender/the-gender-strategy.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

impacts on men and women differ within their actions and policies.⁵⁸ The implementation of gender mainstreaming could be accomplished by developing and implementing standard national criminal justice legislation that considers the current roles of women and girls along with their needs in society as well as in the criminal justice system.⁵⁹ Further, E/CN.15/2017/L.9/Rev.1 encouraged the promotion of gender-specific needs within crime prevention, such as including women and girls within the legislation and policies as well as managerial and leadership roles.⁶⁰ Member States utilized a victim-centered approach to prevent organized crime and bring perpetrators forward by creating uniform approaches that respect the victim's safety and due process.⁶¹ Additionally, E/CN.15/2017/L.9/Rev.1 called for the collection of data on women and their roles either as victims or leaders within organized crime.⁶² However, this data is not considered accurate, as it is not gender-disaggregated data that accounts for social and cultural differences.⁶³ Without data that is gender-disaggregated, the data will be skewed and not accurately reflect that of women in organized crime.⁶⁴

In the 2030 Agenda, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 focuses on the empowerment of women and girls.⁶⁵ The UNODC is currently utilizing SDG 5 to focus on the interrelationship between gender and international organized crime.⁶⁶ To analyze this connection, the UNODC has begun incorporating gender perceptions and norms in their understandings of drugs, crime, and terrorism in Member States.⁶⁷ In December 2021, the Conference of the State Parties (CoSP) to the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) adopted CAC/COSP/2021/L.6/Rev.1 (2021) that encouraged the inclusion of gender mainstreaming in the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).⁶⁸ In December 2022, UNODC launched an educational module with UN Women to explain gender and its connection to organized crime, with the module to be used by criminal justice specialists and the public.⁶⁹ The UNODC explains this relationship as an illumination of true issues within organized crime and that addressing this connection in policy responses is crucial in developing efficient policies.⁷⁰ The data gathered for this module utilized the UNODC's knowledge management portal, Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC).⁷¹

Case Study

Women Involved in Organized Crime in Cape Town

⁵⁸ Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 26/3, *Mainstreaming a gender perspective into crime prevention and criminal justice policies and programmes and into efforts to prevent and combat transnational organized crime*, E/CN.15/2017/L.9/Rev.1, (May 22, 2017), https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/CCPCJ_Sessions/CCPCJ_26/CCCPJ_Res_Dec/CCPCJ-RES-26-3.pdf.

⁵⁹ Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 26/3.

⁶⁰ Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 26/3.

⁶¹ Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 26/3.

⁶² Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 26/3.

⁶³ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime, *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*, Vienna: United Nations Office of Vienna, 2022, https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/tools_and_publications/Issue_Paper_Organized_Crime_and_Gender_1.pdf.

⁶⁴ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime. *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*.

⁶⁵ "Gender at UNOV/UNODC," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2023, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/gender/the-gender-strategy.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

⁶⁶ "Gender at UNOV/UNODC," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁶⁷ "Gender at UNOV/UNODC," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁶⁸ "Overview of Gender in Resolutions," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2023, https://www.unodc.org/documents/Gender/Overview_of_Gender_in_Resolutions.pdf, (accessed June 25, 2023).

⁶⁹ "Launch of the UNODC/UN Women Gender and Organized Crime Module," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, December 2022, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/gender/news/launch-of-the-unodc-unwomen-gender-and-organized-crime-module.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

⁷⁰ "Launch of the UNODC/UN Women Gender and Organized Crime Module," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁷¹ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime. *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*. Vienna: United Nations Office of Vienna, 2022, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/UNTOC.html>.

In 2017, Cape Town, South Africa struggled with the impacts of organized crime groups that functioned similarly to that of street gangs.⁷² These organized crime groups dealt primarily in illicit firearm and drug trafficking.⁷³ The increase in organized crime groups has created a violent rivalry between groups for the illicit markets, leading to rates of over 100 homicides per 100,000 residents including innocent community members in 2016.⁷⁴ The Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) conducted a study based on interviews of women and girls who participated in organized crime within Cape Town.⁷⁵ The GI-TOC is an independent civil-society organization that has a centralized focus on combatting organized crime.⁷⁶ The GI-TOC is a frequent collaborator with the UN in a multitude of projects varying from environmental crime to drug trafficking.⁷⁷ However, the access to these women was impeded, as women are heavily protected by their male counterparts in their organized crime groups.⁷⁸ Neutral contacts were utilized in finding women who would be willing to talk in anonymity.⁷⁹

In these interviews, it was determined that female participants are excluded from leadership positions, yet they often face consequences of incarceration or familial separation more often than men.⁸⁰ The women indicated they joined the organization for a variety of reasons, one of which being a feeling of belonging and community.⁸¹ Many of the women associate the dysfunction and violence of organized crime groups with that of their biological families and are ultimately drawn in by revictimization.⁸² However, this “familial” organization also provides resources such as security and protection within their society.⁸³ Physical protection in areas prevalent with crime is important for women, especially those with children; however, these women were also victims of violence and sexual violence within the organization.⁸⁴ The women also received material luxuries, including jewelry, cars, clothing, money, and addictive substances.⁸⁵ Other women joined these organizations as they had a romantic partner already involved or joining the organization would insulate them from the outward effects of the organization onto the community.⁸⁶ Further, the organization provided many women with a higher income that took less hours to earn, compared to working at another job that would pay less for more hours.⁸⁷

The GI-TOC supplied suggestions based on the interviews of the Cape Town women of how to prevent women in Cape Town from joining organized crimes groups, as well as ideas to help dissolve them.⁸⁸ Short-term plans include

⁷² Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls: emerging themes and policy and programme options drawn from interviews with female gang members in Cape Town*, The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2017, [https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/TGIATOC-Gangs - violence-and-the-role-of-women-and-girls-1837-web.pdf](https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/TGIATOC-Gangs-violence-and-the-role-of-women-and-girls-1837-web.pdf).

⁷³ Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls...*

⁷⁴ Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls...*

⁷⁵ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, April 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-15/key-issues/gender-and-organized-crime.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

⁷⁶ “Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC),” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, June 2023, https://whatson.unodc.org/whatson/data/databases/ngo/public/g/global_initiative_against_transnational_organized_crime.html, (accessed June 24, 2023).

⁷⁷ “Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC),” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁷⁸ Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls: emerging themes and policy and programme options drawn from interviews with female gang members in Cape Town*, The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2017, [https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/TGIATOC-Gangs - violence-and-the-role-of-women-and-girls-1837-web.pdf](https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/TGIATOC-Gangs-violence-and-the-role-of-women-and-girls-1837-web.pdf).

⁷⁹ Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls...*

⁸⁰ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, April 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-15/key-issues/gender-and-organized-crime.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

⁸¹ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁸² “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁸³ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁸⁴ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁸⁵ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁸⁶ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁸⁷ “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*.

⁸⁸ Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls: emerging themes and policy and programme options drawn from interviews with female gang members in Cape Town*, The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2017, [https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/TGIATOC-Gangs - violence-and-the-role-of-women-and-girls-1837-web.pdf](https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/TGIATOC-Gangs-violence-and-the-role-of-women-and-girls-1837-web.pdf).

assisting women in leaving the organized crime groups and transitioning back into society.⁸⁹ Many women interviewed wish to leave organized crime groups but fear for their safety in leaving as they are constantly monitored.⁹⁰ To be able to escape monitoring, the implementation of “female-centered” activities such as girl-only sports teams, women’s groups, or churches may allow the women to find a new community for support and connection.⁹¹ Additionally, the creation of fair and sympathetic treatment for reporting abuse and seeking help after enduring abuse would help build trust with law enforcement as well as help in transitioning back into society.⁹² On an intermediate level is the prevention of recruitment by providing support systems for young girls early within schools, sports, and youth groups.⁹³ Additionally, is the implementation of drug addiction and sexual awareness education within schools.⁹⁴ Finally, on a long-term scale, it was recommended that there be international and national policy change overall aiding women as the women in Cape Town often joined organized crime as a result of systemic inadequacies.⁹⁵ Unfortunately, Cape Town is still seeing the effects of rampant organized crime and the involvement of women.⁹⁶ The suggestions by the GI-TOC were not implemented because of gender inequality demonstrated by the police in asking for help or reporting abuse as well as scarce resources provided in this issue within Cape Town.⁹⁷ Further, these suggestions could be implemented internationally across other Member States with alterations based on the regional cultural and economic necessities.⁹⁸

Conclusion

Organized crime constitutes a network of criminals acting in an illicit trade or action.⁹⁹ These networks have existed for thousands of years and have utilized women on all levels with an emergence of women leaders.¹⁰⁰ The UN has acted on organized crime as a whole and are more recently focusing on gender mainstreaming in combating organized crime.¹⁰¹ Recent studies have found women join organized crime due to a lack of opportunities and a need for physical and financial security.¹⁰² Member States are now faced with collecting and understanding accurate gender-disaggregated, international scale data on the amount of women acting as organized leaders or participants as previous attempts such as the data collected by the CCPCJ were inaccurate.¹⁰³ The CSW, as the intergovernmental

⁸⁹ Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls: emerging themes and policy and programme options drawn from interviews with female gang members in Cape Town*, The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2017, <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/TGIATOC-Gangs-violence-and-the-role-of-women-and-girls-1837-web.pdf>.

⁹⁰ Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls...*

⁹¹ Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls...*

⁹² Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls...*

⁹³ Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls...*

⁹⁴ Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls...*

⁹⁵ Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls...*

⁹⁶ Lucia Bird Ruiz-Benitez, *Rethinking Resilience: The role of women in community responses to organized crime*, The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2021, <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Rethinking-Resilience-The-role-of-women-in-community-responses-to-organized-crime-GITOC-Resilience-Fund.pdf>.

⁹⁷ Lucia Bird Ruiz-Benitez, *Rethinking Resilience: The role of women in community responses to organized crime*.

⁹⁸ Mark Shaw and Luke Lee Skywalker, *Gangs, violence, and the role of women and girls: emerging themes and policy and programme options drawn from interviews with female gang members in Cape Town*, The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2017, <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/TGIATOC-Gangs-violence-and-the-role-of-women-and-girls-1837-web.pdf>.

⁹⁹ Transnational organized crime: the globalized illegal economy,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, 2023, <https://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/organized-crime.html>, (accessed March 28, 2023).

¹⁰⁰ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime. *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*. Vienna: United Nations Office of Vienna, 2022, https://www.unodc.org/documents/organized-crime/tools_and_publications/Issue_Paper_Organized_Crime_and_Gender_1.pdf.

¹⁰¹ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime. *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*.

¹⁰² “Gender and organized crime,” *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, April 2019, <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/organized-crime/module-15/key-issues/gender-and-organized-crime.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

¹⁰³ United Nations, Office on Drugs and Crime. *Organized Crime and Gender: Issues relating to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime*.

body dedicated to gender, is the most equipped body to address these issues of data and gender mainstreaming.¹⁰⁴ The CSW works diligently in promoting women's rights through accurate depictions of women's reality, mainstreaming global gender standards, and empowerment.¹⁰⁵ As the issue of women being involved in organized crime is one of recent emergence and not common, the CSW has only scratched the surface of the issue with their recent creation of a gender-mainstreaming module.¹⁰⁶

Committee Directive

Combatting organized crime has been traditionally centered in a male-focused understanding. Women are and can be participants and leaders in organized crime and the mainstream of gender must be utilized in understanding women and their roles. Delegates should be prepared to discuss: how can woman be empowered to prevent participation in organized crime? How can women be promoted into roles of organized crime prevention and justice? How can gender mainstreaming be integrated into these solutions? What improvements, if any, can be made to international cooperation and global data collection on organized crime between Member States? Are women in leadership positions within organized crime groups already empowered or is it a façade to true empowerment? Overall, delegates should address these questions with realistic solutions for implementing their goals. Delegates should focus on building upon established CSW, UN, and other multilateral programs and initiatives rather than creating new bodies within CSW or the UN. Delegates should also focus on the issue as a whole and not specific situations.

¹⁰⁴ "Commission on the Status of Women," *UN Women*, 2023, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw>, (accessed April 24, 2023).

¹⁰⁵ "Commission on the Status of Women," *UN Women*.

¹⁰⁶ "Launch of the UNODC/UN Women Gender and Organized Crime Module," *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, December 2022, <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/gender/news/launch-of-the-unodc-unwomen-gender-and-organized-crime-module.html>, (accessed March 4, 2023).

Annotated Bibliography

I. Addressing the Effects of Forced Displacement on Women

Vandana Asthana, "Forced Displacement: A Gendered Analysis of the Tehri Dam Project," *Economic and Political Weekly* 47, no. 47/48 (2012): 96–102, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41720414>.

Economic and Political Weekly is an India weekly publication specializing in research in social sciences and analysis in contemporary affairs. The article examines the way displacement affects women due to the gendered division of labor in the context of the Tehri Dam Project, a hydroelectric complex in northern India. As communities were displaced to build the dam, women in particular were not compensated for their resettlement, whereas the men were compensated for land loss, an insensitivity to the needs of women and children who made up a majority of the displaced population. Post-displace programs therefore have little effect on helping women out of impoverishment. The article emphasizes women's voices must be considered when creating policies toward gender justice in displacement.

Elizabeth Ferris and Kemal Kirisci, "The Context, Causes, and Consequences of Syrian Displacement," in *The Consequences of Chaos: Syria's Humanitarian Crisis and the Failure to Protect*, 1–32, Brookings Institution Press, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt1c2cqw.6>.

The Brookings Institution is a worldwide source for articles in foreign policy and global affairs, aiding in the distribution of research from scholars to a global audience. This chapter, "The Context, Causes, and Consequences of Syrian Displacement" sheds light on the roots of mass displacement in Syria and Iraq, highlighting displacement as not only a consequence of conflict but a deliberate strategy in war. Whereas men are arrested by the Syrian government and therefore removed from their homes, women and girls are targeted by both the government and opposition forces for detainment, assault, and impoverishment. As such, women are left with little to no means of supporting themselves in the Member States. This article, while focusing primarily on displacement and women in Syria, also provides a glimpse into the effects of displacement into neighboring Member States.

Mahlet Makonnen, "Land Grabs in Ethiopia: Effects Of Displacement on Women And Potential Remedies," *UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs* 22, no. 2 (2018): 155–87, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45302404>.

The *UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs* publishes articles by international scholars and professionals, focusing on issues such as immigration, gender and race discrimination, and other political themes. This article examines how Ethiopia's land-tenure system based on ownership has created a mass displacement of indigenous people, weakening the already vulnerable populations. The Ethiopian government sought to relocate rural populations to create empty land lots for foreign investors. The forced displacement of indigenous Ethiopian women has created widespread sexual and gender-based violence. The article argues for a collaborative approach between international actors to support displaced women using transnational activism, such as reproductive health programs to assist victims of sexual violence and exploitation. The article provides information on how state-sponsored policies can negatively affect vulnerable populations, such as indigenous women, when it comes to displacement.

Rita Manchanda, "Gender Conflict and Displacement: Contesting 'Infantilisation' of Forced Migrant Women," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 39, no. 37 (Sept. 11-17. 2004): 4179-4186, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4415535>.

Economic and Political Weekly is an India weekly publication specializing in research in social sciences and analysis in contemporary affairs. The article comments on the disenfranchising nature of forced displacement, particularly in reference to women. The article takes a gendered approach to the research of women in forced displacement. The article claims current research on women in forced displacement presumed women to be passive in the practice, often disregarding the autonomy of women's choices in their lives. Due to the patriarchal system of research in this area, a woman's status as a displaced person marginalizes her as a "victim" rather than an autonomous person. The article provides a base of feminist political theory's views on women in forced displacement.

II. Evaluating the Role of Women in the Conduct of Organized Crime

Jay S. Albanese, "Deciphering the Linkages Between Organized Crime and Transnational Crime," *Journal of International Affairs* 66, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2012): 1-16. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24388248>.

Journal of International Affairs is a periodical produced by Columbia University that examines a variety of international affairs issues. The article addresses the interconnectedness of organized crime and crime that occurs transnationally. To address organized crimes there must be an assessment of who is the solicitor and the solicitee of the crimes and what their motivations are. On both sides of the solicitation, the actors tend to be from a vulnerable population and typically commit crimes as a means of survival. This article explains how to address the issue of organized crime by focusing on both the solicitor and solicitee and alternative ways to meet their goals of survival.

Jarrett Blaustein, "Development as a historical component of the United Nations' crime policy agenda: From social defence to the Millennium Development Goals," *Criminology and Criminal Justice* 21, no. 4 (September 2019): 435-454, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895819877453>.

Criminology and Criminal Justice is a peer-reviewed journal that focuses broadly on criminal justice on an international scale. The article "Development as a historical component of the United Nations' crime policy agenda..." examines the circular connections between development and organized crime through the lens of the United Nations' (UN) actions. The UN has addressed organized crime through the utilization of UN bodies, research, and resolutions, but the UN has never explicitly made the combat of 'crime' a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), nor has the UN focused on combating crime through any specific lens such as vulnerable populations. This article explains that the UN's efforts on combating organized crime throughout history and addresses how making this an SDG may be beneficial to all Member States.

Sam Mullins and James K. Withers, "Terrorism and Organized Crime," *Connections* 15, no. 3 (Summer 2016): 65-82, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26326452>.

Connections is a peer-reviewed, scholarly journal that addresses a variety of issues concerning international security and defense. The article, "Terrorism and Organized Crime," focuses specifically on the differences between terrorism and organized crime. Terrorism and organized crime groups typically consist of vulnerable populations and are organized similarly; however, they have different overarching goals which result in the need for differing solutions. This article explores the different ways to approach terrorism and organized crime in order to address each topic individually.

Stathis N. Kalyvas, "How Civil Wars Help Explain Organized Crime - and How They Do Not," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 59, no. 1 (December 2015): 1117-1540, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24546352>.

The Journal of Conflict Resolution is an interdisciplinary journal that focuses on human conflicts. The article, "How Civil Wars Help Explain Organized Crime..." addresses the gray area between ordinary crimes and political violence and how they are interconnected. Organized crime can be formulated as a means of political violence to constitute a civil war or due to political violence, organized crime may be more rampant. In either scenario, vulnerable populations are more likely to be recruited and utilized. This article addresses how vulnerable people are utilized and how either movement may transform into the other.

Gilbert Geis, "Violence and Organized Crime," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 364, no. 1 (March 1966): 85-95, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1034756>.

The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science is a scholarly journal that focuses on a wide variety of political and social issues. The article, "Violence and Organized Crime," addresses the use of violence in recruiting and retaining members of organized crime groups. Violence and the threat of violence is typically directed at vulnerable populations who are not typically predisposed to crime. This article explores the use of violence and the transformation of violence from physicality to other forms of manipulation such as economic duress.