



Security Council Committee Background Guide 2022

Written by Katie Conti and Hoki Matsuo





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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2022 National Model United Nations Japan Conference (NMUN • Japan)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the Security Council (SC). Katie Conti is the Director and Hoki Matsuo is the Assistant Director. Katie holds a B.A. in International Relations, Public Communication, and Geography from Syracuse University and recently finished her M.Sc. in Global Media and Communication from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Hoki is completing his major in International Relations at Kobe City University of Foreign Studies.

The topics under discussion for the Security Council are:

1. The Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
2. Strengthening Women's Role in Peacebuilding

The Security Council is the international community's most powerful institution dedicated to maintaining peace and security. The Council may issue both binding and non-binding resolutions, release presidential statements, commission reports by the Secretary-General, and authorize peacekeeping or humanitarian missions, among other actions. The Council's unique legal authority and broad reach makes it the leader of the international community's efforts to maintain international peace and security.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 November 2022 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN • Japan Position Papers](#) page.

Two resources, available to download from the [NMUN website](#), serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#) - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact Marleen Schreier at dsg.japan@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Sincerely,

Katie Conti, Director
Hoki Matsuo, Assistant Director

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Committee Overview

Introduction

The Security Council is one of the main bodies of the United Nations (UN) ensuring international peace and security, and overseeing the admission of new members to the UN General Assembly and changes to the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945).¹ As the Council is the only UN body that can create legally binding decisions that all Member States are required to comply under Chapter VII of the Charter, it has a unique and impactful mandate to set norms and govern state actions.² Traditionally, the Security Council discusses issues related to peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions, as well as the protection of human rights, disarmament, and humanitarian crises.³ With the adoption of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* by the UN General Assembly in 2015, the Security Council has begun to increasingly focus on the intersection between sustainability, peace, and security.⁴

The Security Council held its first session on 17 January 1946 at Church House in London.⁵ After its first meeting, the Council relocated to its permanent residence at the UN Headquarters in New York City.⁶ At that time, five permanent members and six non-permanent members were part of the Council.⁷ In 1965, the number of non-permanent members was increased to 10.⁸ However, as the body's structure has remained largely unchanged, debates over the Security Council's efficacy and authority as a mediator on issues of international security continue.⁹

Mandate, Functions, and Powers

The mandate of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security and to take action whenever peace and security are threatened.¹⁰ The Council's authority is particularly relevant with respect to the UN's four primary purposes, as specified in the Charter: maintaining international peace and security; developing friendly relations among nations; cooperating in solving international problems; and promoting respect for human rights.¹¹ The capabilities of the Security Council are highlighted in Chapters V–VIII.¹² Chapter V establishes the structure, membership, functions, and powers of the Security Council.¹³ Chapters VI and VII specifically concern the range of actions that the Security Council can take when settling disputes.¹⁴ Chapter VI by itself aims to settle disputes through peaceful means, such as negotiation and judicial settlement.¹⁵ Chapter VII explores further actions that can be taken regarding threats to peace, breaches of peace, and acts of aggression.¹⁶ This chapter also authorizes the Security Council to implement provisional measures aimed at de-escalating conflict situations.¹⁷ Chapter VIII allows the Security Council to call upon other regional agencies or arrangements to enforce appropriate operations and intervene if necessary.¹⁸

¹ United Nations, Security Council. *What is the Security Council?* n.d.

² *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. Ch. VII.

³ Council on Foreign Relations. *The UN Security Council*. 2021.; Encyclopedia Britannica. *United Nations Security Council*. 2022.

⁴ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

⁵ United Nations, Security Council. *What is the Security Council?* n.d.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ United Nations, Security Council. *Voting System*. n.d.

⁸ Global Policy Forum. *Background on Security Council Reform*. 2021.

⁹ Council on Foreign Relations. *The UN Security Council*. 2021.

¹⁰ United Nations, Security Council. *What is the Security Council?* n.d.

¹¹ *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. Art. 1.

¹² *Ibid.* Ch. V–VIII.

¹³ *Ibid.* Ch. V.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* Ch. VI–VII.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* Ch. VI.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Ch. VII.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* Ch. VII.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* VIII.

- The Security Council **will generally**: call on members to apply economic sanctions and measures not involving the use of force; call for arms embargos, enforce disarmament, and call upon international criminal mechanisms to become active; use diplomatic tools to investigate situations that might lead to aggression (between states, non-state groups, and within state territories); and take military action against states or entities threatening international peace and security.¹⁹
- The Security Council **will not generally**: intervene in situations and enact enforcement measures unless it is determined that there has been a threat to international peace and security.²⁰ Furthermore, the Council will not encourage the use of force unless it considers that non-military measures, which have already been taken, are proven to be inadequate.²¹

Governance, Structure, and Membership

The Security Council is the only UN body that has the power to adopt legally binding resolutions, which place an obligation on Member States to accept and carry out the Council's decisions under Article 25 of the Charter.²² The Security Council also has a variety of other tools to address issues on its agenda.²³ For example, the President of the Security Council may issue press statements or presidential statements to communicate the Council's position.²⁴ Although not legally binding, such statements are used to bring attention to important issues and to recommend solutions to ongoing conflicts.²⁵

The five permanent members of the Security Council are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, often colloquially referred to as the "P5."²⁶ Every year, the General Assembly elects five of the 10 non-permanent members for a two-year term.²⁷ Member States elected to serve on the Security Council are expected to represent the interests of their region, and they usually have influence at the international level and demonstrate leadership in specific areas of interest to their foreign policy.²⁸

Every Member State of the Security Council has one vote.²⁹ Votes on all matters require a supermajority of nine Member States.³⁰ However, if one of the five permanent members of the Security Council votes "no" on a matter of substance, such as a draft resolution, it does not pass.³¹ This is known as "veto power."³² In the 1950s, Security Council Member States made frequent use of their veto power, but its usage declined in the 1960s, rising again in the 1970s and 1980s.³³ In the last decades, the use of the veto power has been comparatively rare.³⁴ In recent years, the Council has adopted many resolutions by consensus and has only been divided in a very limited number of issues.³⁵

¹⁹ United Nations, Security Council. *Functions and Powers*. n.d.

²⁰ United Nations, Security Council. *Actions with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression*. n.d.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. Art. 25; United Nations, Security Council. *What is the Security Council?* n.d.

²³ Security Council Report. *The UN Security Council Handbook: A User's Guide to Practice and Procedure*. 2019. pp. 36-38.

²⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 36-38.

²⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 36-38.

²⁶ United Nations, Security Council. *Current Members*. n.d.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Global Policy Forum. *Background on Security Council Reform*. 2021.

²⁹ *Charter of the United Nations*. 1945. Art. 27.

³⁰ United Nations, Security Council. *Voting System*. n.d.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Security Council Report. *In Hindsight: The Veto*. 2013.; Security Council Report. *The Permanent Members and the Use of the Veto: An Abridged History*. 2013.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Annotated Bibliography

Charter of the United Nations. 1945. Retrieved 4 August 2022 from: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

The Charter of the United Nations provides a thorough explanation of the powers, and functions authorized to the Security Council. For instance, the Charter outlines where the use of force is acceptable and how the council is structured to combat threats to international peace and security. As the fundamental principles of the Security Council are written down in the Charter, this document should be the first resource for delegates to consider to fully understand the mandate of the committee. Articles 27-32 outline the voting procedures of the committee and the structure of how the committee conducts its business. Article 23, which sets the membership structure, and Articles 23–26, which discuss basic functions and powers, are important to understand both the structure and functioning of the Security Council. The Charter can also be particularly helpful for delegates in understanding the powers and limitations of the body. Delegates will find Chapters VI and VII particularly helpful when researching the mandate of the Security Council and proposing actions and solutions.

Security Council Report. *The UN Security Council Handbook: A User's Guide to Practice and Procedure*. 2019. Retrieved 4 August 2022 from: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/the-un-security-council-handbook-by-scr-1.pdf>

This source outlines the key aspects of the UN Charter and how it is applied to the work of the Security Council. It describes the rules that are specific to the Security Council, how the Council votes, how the Council functions, and how the Council works with other bodies within the UN system. This source aims to be a handbook for members of the Security Council and for anyone that is trying to learn how it functions internally. Delegates will find this source useful while they are writing their Position Papers and are in committee since it is a detailed guide for how the Council functions and how to apply the rules to the topics being discussed.

United Nations, Security Council. *Functions and Powers*. n.d. Retrieved 4 August 2022 from: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/functions-and-powers>

This resource provides delegates with a comprehensive overview of the mandate and functions of the Security Council. Created by the Security Council itself, it provides official guidance on the powers of the Security Council and actions that can be taken through resolutions and statements. Delegates will find this resource useful when determining options available to respond to international issues or crises at hand.

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Security Council Report. *The UN Security Council Handbook: A User's Guide to Practice and Procedure*. 2019. Retrieved 4 August 2022 from: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/the-un-security-council-handbook-by-scr-1.pdf>

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United Nations, Security Council. *Actions with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression*. n.d. Retrieved 4 August 2022 from: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/repertoire/actions>

United Nations, Security Council. *Current Members*. n.d. Retrieved 4 August 2022 from: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/current-members>

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1. The Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Introduction

Situated in the center of Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is endowed with natural resources, from large reserves of minerals such as gold, diamonds, cobalt, copper, zinc, and coltan to swaths of arable land and significant hydropower potential.³⁶ The DRC is also home to a large part of one of the world's largest and most biodiverse rainforests, the Congo Basin, which includes over 10,000 species of tropical plants and many endangered species.³⁷ It provides fresh water, shelter, and food to more than 75 million people today.³⁸ Despite its wealth in resources, the World Bank considers the DRC among the five poorest countries in the world.³⁹ On the 2021 United Nations (UN) Human Development Index, the DRC ranks 175 of 189 countries, as an estimated 73% of its population lives in extreme poverty, i.e. living on less than \$1.90 USD per day.⁴⁰ The DRC currently faces an ongoing humanitarian crisis, exacerbated by COVID-19 and sporadic outbreaks of diseases such as Ebola, measles, and cholera.⁴¹ In 2021, the UN estimated that over 19.6 million people in the DRC, half of whom were children, were in severe need of humanitarian assistance and more than 26 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity.⁴² Despite the situation's severity, the UN humanitarian coordinator reported that in 2021 they received funding only to the level of about one quarter of total funds that would be needed.⁴³

Additionally, recent escalations of hostilities within the DRC's provinces of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu contribute to insecurity in eastern Congo.⁴⁴ The violence in this vast region stems from feelings of marginalization from Kinshasa that is over 1,500 km away and grievances over the allocation of local resources such as land, representation in the central government, and the delivery of social services.⁴⁵ There have been deadly attacks on civilians, intercommunal violence, and clashes between armed groups.⁴⁶ The conflict in Ituri has already displaced 1.9 million people within its borders out of a total population of 5.7 million.⁴⁷ North and South Kivu are home to a large portion of the region's 70 armed groups who continue to fight for control over the regions' rich mineral deposits along the border with Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.⁴⁸ Much of the recent fighting has been caused by the March 23 Movement (M23), which emerged out of three armed movements from the 1994 Rwandan genocide and ensuing cross-border conflict: Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL), the Rally for Congolese Democracy, and the National Congress for the Defence of the People.⁴⁹ The UN previously found that M23 received the backing of DRC's foreign competitors such as Rwanda and Uganda to

³⁶ Concern Worldwide. *The DRC crisis, explained*. 2021; The World Bank Group. *The World Bank in DRC*. 2022.

³⁷ World Wildlife Fund. *Congo Basin*. 2022.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ The World Bank Group. *The World Bank in DRC*. 2022.

⁴⁰ Concern Worldwide. *The DRC crisis, explained*. 2021; United Nations Development Programme. *Human Development Insights*. 2022.

⁴¹ The World Bank Group. *The World Bank in DRC*. 2022.

⁴² Amnesty International. *Democratic Republic of the Congo*. 2022.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Tsongo. Al Jazeera. *What is the latest conflict in the DR Congo about?* 2022.

⁴⁵ Nantulya. *Africa Center for Strategic Studies. A Medley of Armed Groups Play on Congo's Crisis*. 2017.

⁴⁶ Tsongo. Al Jazeera. *What is the latest conflict in the DR Congo about?* 2022.

⁴⁷ European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. *Democratic Republic of Congo – Insecurity and displacement (DG ECHO, UNOCHA) (ECHO Daily Flash of 12 May 2022)*. 2022.

⁴⁸ Nantulya. *Africa Center for Strategic Studies. A Medley of Armed Groups Play on Congo's Crisis*. 2017; Chêne. Transparency International. *Overview of corruption and anti-corruption efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)*. 2014.

⁴⁹ Africa Center for Strategic Studies. *Rwanda and the DRC at risk of war as new M23 rebellion emerges: an explainer*. 2022.

conduct operations in the regions; their contemporary resurgence has significant implications for regional stability.⁵⁰

Historical Context: DRC through Colonialism and the Cold War

The current situation in the DRC can be traced to a long history of conflict and exploitation of both humans and natural resources by colonial powers, as well as recent decades of authoritarian rule and political upheaval.⁵¹ European powers partitioned boundaries and organized colonial rule of the continent in 1884-1885 recognizing King Leopold of Belgium's claim to the Congo Basin and the establishment of the Congo Free State.⁵² The following decades brought the Congolese people into an era of brutal oppression and forced labor, in which an estimated 10 million people perished from famine and disease or were killed, worked to death, and exploited for the purpose of cultivating and trading rubber, ivory, and minerals.⁵³ After the regime's atrocities were exposed to the international community in 1908, the Belgian parliament took control of the region away from the king and ruled until the DRC gained its independence in 1960.⁵⁴ Shortly thereafter in September 1960, the new Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba was arrested and removed from power in a military coup d'état led by Colonel Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, and assassinated in January 1961.⁵⁵ In a second coup d'état in 1965, Mobutu removed the President, cracked down on political opposition, and assumed the powers of the presidency himself.⁵⁶ He forced out foreign investment and nationalized the mining industry, exploiting DRC's natural resources and embezzling billions of dollars enriching himself and close allies.⁵⁷ Mobutu renamed the country Zaire and remained in power for 32 years, largely with the backing of the Cold War government of the United States, who provided significant financial assistance in exchange for the ability to hold presence in DRC to launch operations that sought to counter Soviet-backed Angola.⁵⁸

At the end of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, more than one million Rwandan Hutu people, including some of the leaders who directed the genocide against the Tutsi people, fled across the border into refugee camps in eastern DRC, increasing instability in the region.⁵⁹ In 1996, the ADFL, a coalition of Rwandan, Ugandan and Congolese opposition to Mobutu, invaded eastern DRC.⁶⁰ This sparked the First Congo War, in which the coalition aimed to kill remaining perpetrators of the Rwanda genocide and overthrow the Mobutu regime.⁶¹ The coalition defeated Mobutu, and opposition leader Laurent Desire Kabila assumed power in May 1997, renaming Zaire to the Democratic Republic of Congo.⁶² Kabila's government ordered Rwandan and Ugandan forces to leave eastern DRC in 1998 with military support from Angola, Zimbabwe, and other regional partners and sparked the Second Congo War, which further involved Namibia, Burundi, Sudan, and Chad and a host of rebel groups fighting each other.⁶³ All factions committed crimes against humanity, including using child soldiers, perpetrating sexual violence against women and girls as a weapon of war, mistreating prisoners, pillaging local communities, and killing civilians.⁶⁴ The International Rescue Committee (IRC) stated that this war held the highest mortality since

⁵⁰ Africa Center for Strategic Studies. *Rwanda and the DRC at risk of war as new M23 rebellion emerges: an explainer*. 2022; Peyton et al. Reuters. *U.N. experts: Rwanda has intervened militarily in eastern Congo*. 2022.

⁵¹ The World Bank Group. *The World Bank in DRC*. 2022.

⁵² Gathara. Al Jazeera. *Berlin 1884: Remembering the conference that divided Africa*. 2019; British Broadcasting Corporation. *Democratic Republic of Congo Profile – Timeline*. 2019.

⁵³ Rannard et al. British Broadcasting Corporation. *Leopold II: Belgium 'wakes up' to its bloody colonial past*. 2020.

⁵⁴ British Broadcasting Corporation. *Democratic Republic of Congo Profile – Timeline*. 2019.

⁵⁵ Human Rights Watch. *DR Congo: Chronology*. 2009.

⁵⁶ British Broadcasting Corporation. *Democratic Republic of Congo Profile – Timeline*. 2019.

⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch. *DR Congo: Chronology*. 2009.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Eastern Congo Initiative. *History of the Conflict*. n.d.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Human Rights Watch. *DR Congo: Chronology*. 2009; Eastern Congo Initiative. *History of the Conflict*. n.d.

⁶⁴ International Rescue Committee. *Conflict in DR Congo deadliest since World War II, says the IRC*. 2003; Reyntjens. African Affairs. *Briefing: The Second Congo War: More than a Remake*. 1999; Human Rights Watch. *DR Congo: UN Report Exposes Grave Crimes*. 2010.

World War II, and criticized the international community's inattention and lack of support for humanitarian emergency assistance and reconstruction.⁶⁵ During the First and Second Congo Wars, more than 3.3 million people died from treatable diseases, malnutrition, or lack of basic health care as a result of the collapsed economy, extreme poverty, and displacement.⁶⁶

Following the cessation of hostilities in 2003, the country moved from "intense war to a system of power sharing between the former government, former armed forces, opposition parties, and civil society."⁶⁷ In 2006, DRC held its first multi-party democratic election, however, the elected regime continued to repress dissent and pro-democracy protests.⁶⁸ In the decade that followed, the DRC saw many clashes between armed groups, which left eastern DRC in a state of emergency and militarized instability.⁶⁹ In 2016, the DRC suffered a political and electoral crisis when Kabila further extended his term in office, undermining the electoral calendar in what was criticized by the international community as an attempt to hold onto power.⁷⁰ His refusal to step down led to civil unrest and significant protests, which emboldened armed groups in eastern DRC (North and South Kivu, Ituri Provinces) to take matters into their own hands and resulted in widespread violence, especially towards women, girls, and children, and extortion, kidnapping, and forced work.⁷¹ In 2018, Joseph Kabila stepped down after 18 years in power, and the DRC held a democratic election transferring power to the opposition, current President Felix Tshisekedi.⁷² Despite having signed peace accords in 2013, the DRC is seeing a resurgence of the M23 armed group, who is likely receiving support from the Rwandan government, according to recent reports of the Security Council Group of Experts on the DRC.⁷³

International and Regional Framework

As a Member State of the UN and State party to several international treaties, the DRC formally agreed to uphold human rights standards of the international community and ensuring the well-being of its citizens as outlined in the following.⁷⁴ The 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) enshrines the basic principles and freedoms that are the "inalienable entitlements of all people, at all times, and in all places," and which "underpin a life free from want and fear."⁷⁵ Most relevant to the situation in the DRC are the "right to life, liberty, and security of person," the right to take part in the government and vote in free, fair, and genuine elections, and the rights to adequate standard of living, health, food, housing, medical care, and social services.⁷⁶ In 1966, the UN General Assembly adopted the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights*, which further introduced legally-binding commitments to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights.⁷⁷ In 1981, the *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) outlined the rights of all women and established a CEDAW Committee to support and monitor these rights among States parties.⁷⁸ The CEDAW Committee published General Recommendation 19 highlighting that gender-based violence, which has been recurring in DRC's conflict, is a form of discrimination that negatively impacts

⁶⁵ International Rescue Committee. *Conflict in DR Congo deadliest since World War II, says the IRC*. 2003.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *DRC Holds First Elections in 40 Years*. n.d.

⁶⁸ Carayannis. United States Institute of Peace. *Special Report: Elections in the DRC*. 2008; Mohamed. Al Jazeera. *DRC: What is Joseph Kabila's legacy after 18 years in power?* 2018.

⁶⁹ Perera. London School of Economics and Political Science. *#DRCongo: where a decade of failed democracy has exposed the electoral fallacy*. 2016.

⁷⁰ Klobucista. Council on Foreign Relations. *DRC's Election: What to Know*. 2018.

⁷¹ International Rescue Committee. *Legacy of violence: Democratic Republic of Congo*. 2022.

⁷² Paravicini. Reuters. *New Congo president Tshisekedi calls for unity after divisive election*. 2019.

⁷³ Gouby. Foreign Policy. *The Rebirth of Congo's Rebellion*. 2022; Peyton et al. Reuters. *U.N. experts: Rwanda has intervened militarily in eastern Congo*. 2022.

⁷⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *UN Treaty Ratification Status for Democratic Republic of the Congo*. n.d.

⁷⁵ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217(III))*. 1948.

⁷⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (A/RES/217(III))*. 1948.

⁷⁷ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *International Bill of Human Rights*. n.d.

⁷⁸ United Nations, General Assembly. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/34/180)*. 1979.

women on a global level.⁷⁹ The African continent's legally-binding normative framework for human rights is the *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*, which was adopted in 1986 by the Organization of African Unity, the predecessor to the African Union (AU), and has been ratified by all AU Member States including the DRC.⁸⁰

Each Member State of the AU committed to prioritize inclusive social and economic development, democratic governance, and peace and security when the *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* was established in 2013.⁸¹ Agenda 2063 served as Africa's contribution to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.⁸² Related to the fragile governance situation in the DRC, SDG 16, "access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels," focuses on improving governance of systems that underpin the realization of the 2030 Agenda.⁸³

Regionally, the *Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region* was signed by representatives of 11 countries in the region, the Chairs of the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community and the United Nations Secretary-General in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2013.⁸⁴ The signatories declared their mutual concern over the persistent violence in the eastern DRC, but determined principles of engagement on national, regional, and international levels to address the root causes of the conflict.⁸⁵ Due to the history of regional involvement in the conflict in the DRC, the document took particular care to outline commitments to state sovereignty, regional cooperation for the administration of justice, and standards for the prosecution of war crimes, as well as regional oversight mechanisms to review progress in implementation of such commitments.⁸⁶ The Security Council passed resolution 2612 (2021) in which the Council requested the Secretary-General report every six months on the implementation of the commitments under this regional framework, as well as its linkages with the broader security situation in the region.⁸⁷

Role of the International System

Since DRC's independence and its following periods of tumult, the international community has taken various actions to support the Congolese people and ensure peace and security. In 1960, the Security Council authorized the United Nations Operation in the Congo (ONUC), which was one of the first peacekeeping missions in Africa and had up to 20,000 peacekeepers at its peak.⁸⁸ ONUC withdrew in 1964 after completing its primary mandate, however it set the foundation for future peacekeeping missions in the DRC.⁸⁹ In 1999, in line with Member States' request for disarmament and peacekeeping support to uphold the *Agreement for a Cease-fire in the DRC* in the wake of the Second Congo War, the Security Council established the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) by passing resolution 1279 (1999).⁹⁰ MONUC initially served to observe the ceasefire,

⁷⁹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. *General Recommendation No. 19 on violence against women*. 1992.

⁸⁰ Kuwonu. United Nations Africa Renewal. *Africa's freedom struggles and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. 2019.

⁸¹ African Union. *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*. n.d.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. *Sustainable Development Goals and Public Governance*. n.d.

⁸⁴ United Nations, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. *Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region*. 2013.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ United Nations, Security Council. *Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region (S/2022/276)*. 2022.

⁸⁸ Human Rights Watch. *DR Congo: Chronology*. 2009.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. *Background*. 2022; United Nations Peacekeeping. *MONUSCO Fact Sheet*. n.d.

support the disengagement of forces, and act as a coordinating liaison between all parties to the agreement.⁹¹ In resolution 1925 (2010), the Security Council established the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).⁹² By changing the name and mandate of the peacekeeping operation, the Council sought to adapt the mission to focus on stabilization efforts that would support new efforts at democratic governance amidst ongoing tensions, such as “protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders under imminent threat of physical violence and to support the Government of the DRC in its stabilization and peace consolidation efforts.”⁹³

In recent years, the Security Council has extended and expanded the mandate of MONUSCO.⁹⁴ It is based on several strategic priorities set forth in paragraph 29 of Security Council resolution 2556 (2020), which include a) ensuring the protection of civilians, and b) supporting stabilization via governance and security reforms of state institutions.⁹⁵ The Security Council receives periodic overviews from the UN Secretary-General on the situation in the DRC and is frequently briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of MONUSCO.⁹⁶ Pursuant to the Council’s request in resolution 2502 (2019), the Secretary-General engaged with the government of the DRC to develop the “Joint strategy on the progressive and phased drawdown of MONUSCO”.⁹⁷ The joint strategy aims to provide for a gradual, peaceful, and sustainable drawdown process to remove MONUSCO peacekeeping troops and build the capacity of the Congolese government to carry forward the mission’s remaining tasks to address the root causes of conflict, develop a framework for national community-based disarmament, and conduct peaceful and democratic political governance.⁹⁸ The Security Council endorsed the mission’s eventual drawdown, however, it remains concerned about the deteriorating security situation in eastern DRC, especially the protection of civilians in the face of increasing attacks against camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the use of improvised explosive devices.⁹⁹

In addition to peacekeeping efforts, the Security Council employs a regime of economic sanctions to address the situation in the DRC.¹⁰⁰ In 2004, the Security Council passed resolution 1533 and 1553, which inter alia imposed an arms embargo against all foreign and Congolese armed groups and militias operating in North and South Kivu and Ituri, and set up a Committee on the matter.¹⁰¹ The sanctions regime has been amended and expanded since 2004 to include travel bans for individuals designated by the Committee having violated the arms embargo or recruiting children in armed conflict, among others, as well as an asset freeze for perpetrators of serious violations of international law.¹⁰² In June 2022, the Security Council adopted resolution 2641 to renew sanctions measures related to the arms embargo, travel ban, and asset freeze requiring all Member States to refrain from providing weapons to non-governmental entities operating in the DRC, among other things.¹⁰³

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ United Nations, Security Council. *Resolution 2556 (S/RES/2556 (2020))*. 2020.

⁹⁶ Security Council Report. *What’s In Blue: Democratic Republic of the Congo: Briefing and Consultations*. 2022.

⁹⁷ United Nations Secretary-General. *Joint strategy on the progressive and phased drawdown of MONUSCO, October 2020 (S/2020/1041)*. 2020.

⁹⁸ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. *Mission drawdowns: Financing a sustainable peace*. 2020; United Nations Secretary-General. *Joint strategy on the progressive and phased drawdown of MONUSCO, October 2020 (S/2020/1041)*. 2020.

⁹⁹ Security Council Report. *June 2022 Monthly Forecast – Democratic Republic of the Congo*. 2022.

¹⁰⁰ United Nations, Security Council. *Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. n.d.

¹⁰¹ United Nations, Security Council. *Resolution 1533 (2004) (S/RES/1533)*. 2004.

¹⁰² United Nations, Security Council. *Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. n.d.

¹⁰³ United Nations, Security Council. *Resolution 2641 (2022) (S/RES/2641)*. 2022.

The DRC made its formal accession into the East African Community (EAC) on 8 March 2022.¹⁰⁴ The EAC held a series of mini-summits to discuss peace and security in the region, and adopted a two-track approach (political and military) to respond to the security situation in the eastern DRC and implement the *Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region*.¹⁰⁵ The African Union additionally supported two sessions of the Heads of State Conclave on the DRC, most recently on 21 April 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya.¹⁰⁶ The meeting of regional leaders resulted in deploying a regional force to restore peace and stability in the DRC as part of the efforts of finding a sustainable solution for peace in the Great Lakes region as a whole.¹⁰⁷

The wider UN system's efforts in the DRC focus on sustainable development and humanitarian assistance to address the underlying causes of conflict that exacerbate insecurity.¹⁰⁸ The UN Country Team consists of a partnership between 21 UN programs, funds, and specialized agencies working together to provide inter alia shelter, health, education, and food security assistance.¹⁰⁹ The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights partners with the MONUSCO Human Rights Division to form the UN Joint Human Rights Office, which provides technical advice on human rights to national authorities and leads initiatives to increase access to justice for victims of human rights abuses.¹¹⁰

Several NGOs provide essential services for peacebuilding and human security, such as the Eastern Congo Initiative which advocates for effective foreign policy and connects community-based organizations with public-private partnerships to strengthen local approaches to ethical and sustainable farming and market practices to build the grounds for resilient peace.¹¹¹ The Catholic Church is a major actor in civic engagement, having posted over 40,000 observers to monitor the 2019 presidential elections.¹¹² The Church was able to gain access to remote and conflict-affected areas and promote peace during the long-delayed elections, in large part due to the community trust by citizen-devotees from both the ruling party and opposition.¹¹³

Ensuring the Protection of Civilians

In June 2022, the Norwegian Refugee Council declared the situation in the DRC as “the world’s most neglected refugee crisis” for the second year in a row.¹¹⁴ The DRC has the largest displaced population in Africa, which included 3.44 million children in 2020.¹¹⁵ In May 2022, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) increased their estimated total number of IDPs from 5.5 million in 2020 to nearly 6 million people.¹¹⁶ OCHA estimates that over 355,000 Congolese have fled their homes since the beginning of 2022 alone, blaming ongoing violence and conflict for almost all of the displacement.¹¹⁷

¹⁰⁴ Holland. Reuters. *East African Community agrees on regional force to try to end Congo unrest*. 2022.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ African Union. *AUC Chairperson welcomes decision of East African Leaders to deploy a regional force to restore stability in the DRC*. 2022.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ United Nations, Sustainable Development Group. *UN in Action: Democratic Republic of the Congo*. 2022.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Overview: Democratic Republic of the Congo*. 2022; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *OHCHR in Democratic Republic of the Congo*. n.d.

¹¹¹ Eastern Congo Initiative. *2020-2021 Annual Report*. 2021.

¹¹² British Broadcasting Corporation. *DR Congo election: Church finds clear winner*. 2019.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Al Jazeera. *NRC: World's 10 'most neglected' refugee crises all in Africa*. 2022.

¹¹⁵ International Rescue Committee. *Legacy of violence: Democratic Republic of Congo*. 2022.

¹¹⁶ European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. *Democratic Republic of Congo – Insecurity and displacement (DG ECHO, UNOCHA) (ECHO Daily Flash of 12 May 2022)*. 2022.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Recent clashes between the armed forces of the DRC and armed groups in the conflict-affected areas of North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri provinces present significant danger to civilians.¹¹⁸ In May 2021, President Felix Tshisekedi declared a “state of siege” following the insecurity in eastern Congo provinces of North and South Kivu and Ituri, and appointed military governors to monitor the rule of law.¹¹⁹ Between May and June 2022, hostilities between M23 and DRC’s armed forces led to at least 23 civilians killed and 16 injured, including three children who were killed when their school was shelled by fighters from M23.¹²⁰ To support the protection of civilians, MONUSCO is upgrading early warning and response mechanisms such as the Mission’s community alert network system, which received an average of 330 alerts between March and June 2022, 45% of which originated from North Kivu, 36% from South Kivu and 15% from Ituri.¹²¹

At the 49th session of the Human Rights Council, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Nada Al-Nashif stated that the human rights situation in the DRC “continued to be compounded by increased and persistent attacks by armed groups against civilians, notably in the eastern provinces” and expressed particular concern over “the shrinking humanitarian space throughout conflict-affected provinces.”¹²² The UN Secretary-General reported 126 incidents affecting humanitarian access since the beginning of 2022, including killing or abducting aid workers, as well as recurrent criminal activities and administrative constraints by armed groups.¹²³ The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet and UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide Alice Nderitu expressed additional concern over reports from North Kivu province that M23 were looting and ransacking official buildings and private businesses, restricting freedom of movement of civilians.¹²⁴ The UN has documented several cases of escalating hate speech and incitement to discrimination, especially against Kinyarwanda speakers, after the DRC government accused Rwanda of supporting M23 operating in eastern DRC.¹²⁵ The potential for regional spillover conflict and rise in hate speech pose a significant threat, as such rhetoric exacerbates mistrust among communities and could quell peacebuilding efforts promoting social cohesion.¹²⁶

Strengthening of State Institutions

The challenges of strengthening democracy and building strong governance institutions in the DRC are tied to its 20th century history of authoritarian rule and the years of regional war, on top of economic and political decline throughout the early 2000s, which left the DRC without significant state infrastructure to provide for the welfare of its people.¹²⁷ The IRC estimates that over 20% of the population struggle and warns of a possible famine.¹²⁸ The UN has contributed significant resources towards the approximately 20 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in the DRC, however, the DRC currently struggles from an increasingly severe health crisis on top of weak human security infrastructure.¹²⁹ The IRC reports that

¹¹⁸ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *UN Human Rights Chief and Special Adviser on Prevention of Genocide disturbed by increase in violence and hate speech in eastern DRC*. 2022.

¹¹⁹ Tsongo. Al Jazeera. *What is the latest conflict in the DR Congo about?* 2022.

¹²⁰ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *UN Human Rights Chief and Special Adviser on Prevention of Genocide disturbed by increase in violence and hate speech in eastern DRC*. 2022.

¹²¹ United Nations, Security Council. *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2022/503)*. 2022.

¹²² Security Council Report. *June 2022 Monthly Forecast – Democratic Republic of the Congo*. 2022.

¹²³ United Nations, Security Council. *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2022/503)*. 2022.

¹²⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *UN Human Rights Chief and Special Adviser on Prevention of Genocide disturbed by increase in violence and hate speech in eastern DRC*. 2022.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Human Rights Watch. *DR Congo: Chronology*. 2009; Costa. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Op-Ed: United Nations Convention against Corruption*. 2005; International Rescue Committee. *Legacy of violence: Democratic Republic of Congo*. 2022.

¹²⁸ International Rescue Committee. *Legacy of violence: Democratic Republic of Congo*. 2022.

¹²⁹ European Commission’s Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. *Democratic Republic of Congo – Insecurity and displacement (DG ECHO, UNOCHA) (ECHO Daily Flash of 12 May 2022)*. 2022.

“the health system is poorly staffed, organized, funded, and supplied” and few people are vaccinated against preventable diseases.¹³⁰ Insufficient governmental systems that provide social protection to their citizens is a main reason why around 27 million Congolese people are food insecure, according to OCHA.¹³¹ MONUSCO’s efforts have traditionally focused on maintaining security through military means, however, in recent years there has been a significant shift towards using peacebuilding tools to build the DRC government’s capacity to reform public services and improve governance structures to better tend to the human security needs (health, food, shelter) of its people.¹³²

The DRC is preparing for another general election expected in 2023.¹³³ The Security Council recently received a report from the Secretary-General on the political situation in the country, mentioning that revisions of the electoral law and appointment of members of the constitutional court took place without the input and participation of the opposition party and civil society.¹³⁴ Former President Joseph Kabila publicized his position that “he considers it impossible to organize the election in the current context” and threatened intervention if additional reform does not take place in advance of the elections.¹³⁵ Through its strategic priority to strengthen state institutions and support governance reform, MONUSCO is attempting to play a role in easing these political tensions and create the grounds for democratic elections.¹³⁶ However, the ability to conduct such initiatives is under significant risk due to not only the resurgence of armed groups, but also public discontent over MONUSCO’s prolonged presence.¹³⁷ Tensions recently escalated to mass anti-UN protests in eastern Congo in July and August 2022, resulting in the death of at least 36 people and, in turn, the expulsion of MONUSCO spokesperson by the government of DRC.¹³⁸

Conclusion

The history of the DRC, related atrocities and international interventions directly laid the foundations for conflict and trauma.¹³⁹ Colonial policies drew rifts between communities that sewed generations of distrust and intercommunal conflict, and administrative policies that were rooted in extraction of resources rather than providing for the public good still inhibit sustainable development today.¹⁴⁰ Embezzlement, nepotism, and financial mismanagement from decades of authoritarian regimes set the stage for fragility within the country’s governance structures, underdeveloped physical infrastructure, poor economic and social conditions, and eventually widespread disease and famine throughout the DRC.¹⁴¹ The situation in the DRC reaches beyond the conflict in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri provinces – the fragile conditions contribute gravely to threats toward safety and wellbeing for all persons, including the nearly 6 million IDPs.¹⁴² The humanitarian crisis and increased danger for aid workers and UN personnel is thwarting the humanitarian response plan of the UN Country Team and MONUSCO that aims to stabilize the DRC and provide grounds for peace, prosperity, and sustainable development.¹⁴³ In forthcoming actions, the UN Security Council will need to contend with regional economic and security interests, prioritize

¹³⁰ International Rescue Committee. *Legacy of violence: Democratic Republic of Congo*. 2022.

¹³¹ European Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. *Democratic Republic of Congo – Insecurity and displacement (DG ECHO, UNOCHA) (ECHO Daily Flash of 12 May 2022)*. 2022.

¹³² Bachmann et al. The Royal Institute of International Affairs. *Concrete approaches to peace: infrastructure as peacebuilding*. 2018.

¹³³ Security Council Report. *What's In Blue: Democratic Republic of the Congo: Briefing and Consultations*. 2022.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Afrique. The Africa Report. *DRC: Joseph Kabila's plans for the 2023 presidential election*. 2022.

¹³⁶ United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. *Background*. 2022.

¹³⁷ Radio France Internationale. *DRC expels MONUSCO spokesman over deadly anti-UN protests in eastern Kivu provinces*. 2022.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Rannard et al. British Broadcasting Corporation. *Leopold II: Belgium 'wakes up' to its bloody colonial past*. 2020.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Human Rights Watch. *DR Congo: Chronology*. 2009.

¹⁴² Tsongo. Al Jazeera. *What is the latest conflict in the DR Congo about?* 2022.

¹⁴³ United Nations, Security Council. *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2022/503)*. 2022.

humanitarian concerns amidst uncertainties in the security situation, as well as keep the international community seized of the matter.¹⁴⁴

Further Research

In continuing their research on this topic, delegates should consider the following questions: What actions must the Security Council and UN partners take to assure both peace and security as well as conditions for social and economic development in the DRC, in line with the SDGs? Which actions can be taken by the Security Council to support the protection of civilians, and to ensure all peoples basic needs are met, including refugees and IDPs? What processes should be put into place to ensure post-conflict resilience in the DRC following the eventual withdrawal of MONUSCO forces? How can the Security Council provide additional support for vulnerable persons in conflict-affected areas (especially women and children)? What can be done to prevent regional conflict in light of the developing situation with the M23 armed group and its potential support by neighboring countries of the DRC?

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Security Council Report publishes weekly and monthly reports on all proceedings of the Security Council. Delegates will find this readout useful, as it summarizes the most recent meeting of the Security Council (at time of publication) that was dedicated to the situation in the DRC. It provides a description and debrief of each of the major components of the conflict in Eastern DRC as well as summarizes recent developments and other related meetings to this issue.

Tsongo. Al Jazeera. *What is the latest conflict in the DR Congo about?* 2022. Retrieved 28 July 2022 from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2022/6/21/explainer-what-is-the-latest-conflict-in-the-drc#:~:text=On%20May%206%2C%202021%2C%20DRC,civilian%20areas%20are%20being%20targeted>.

This resource, published by international news outlet Al Jazeera, provides a detailed “explainer” of the recent evolutions of the conflict in the DRC as of June 2022. Delegates will find the article’s succinct summary of the conflict in North and South Kivu and Ituri, useful which ties together reporting from several UN agencies and provides insight on “how did we get here?” Delegates should pay attention to the article’s section that outlines the various armed groups who are key players in the conflict as well as follow the included links to learn more about the recent involvement by neighboring regional powers.

United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. *Background*. 2022. Retrieved 3 July 2022 from: <https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/background>

Delegates will find the MONUSCO website to be an essential resource to understand the current and historical activities of the Security Council and its authorized UN Peacekeeping Operation in the DRC. The background page provides a comprehensive background from the 1999 Ceasefire Agreement and creation of MONUC to its evolution into MONUSCO, and recent expansions to its mandate. This should serve as a point of first reference for delegates to do further research into both the intricacies of the actual peacekeeping activities as well as involvement by regional state actors.

United Nations Peacekeeping. *MONUSCO Fact Sheet*. n.d. Retrieved 3 July 2022 from: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/monusco>

United Nations Peacekeeping compiles a series of Fact Sheets to provide an overview of each of the active UN Peacekeeping missions. This resource will help delegates

¹⁴⁴ Security Council Report. *What’s In Blue: Democratic Republic of the Congo: Briefing and Consultations*. 2022.

understand the key components of the MONUSCO mandate and how it has changed over time. The fact sheet provides up-to-date statistics on mission troop numbers, contributing countries, funding, and fatalities.

United Nations Secretary-General. *Joint strategy on the progressive and phased drawdown of MONUSCO, October 2020 (S/2020/1041)*. 2020. Retrieved 13 August 2022 from: <https://undocs.org/en/S/2020/1041>

In 2020, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2502 (2019), the Secretary-General of the United Nations worked with the government of the DRC to develop a joint strategy to drawdown (exit) MONUSCO from the country and transfer its mission tasks to the DRC. The document outlines a number of priority areas for MONUSCO to focus its efforts to build the capacity of the government and security forces of the DRC to one day take over the mission, such as protection of civilians, addressing the root causes of conflict, and reducing the threat of domestic and foreign armed groups in areas of protracted conflict, such as eastern DRC. Delegates will find it useful to read this strategy in full to learn about the benchmarks for progress towards sustainable peace and development that have been set out, as well as to understand the coordination mechanisms existing between the government of the DRC and bodies of the UN that are related to or under the mandate of the Security Council.

United Nations, Security Council. *Resolution 2556 (S/RES/2556 (2020))*. 2020. Retrieved 3 July 2022 from: [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2556\(2020\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2556(2020))

This resolution contains the full text of the Security Council resolution that established the current mandate of MONUSCO. Delegates will find this resolution a particularly helpful resource as it reiterates the principles of peacebuilding and support for strengthening institutions that the mandate of MONUSCO is based upon. Additionally, it outlines the Security Council's stance on humanitarian and political situations as well as the situation with armed groups, and actions to be taken to support human rights, protection of civilians, and stabilization and strengthening of state institutions through governance and security reforms.

United Nations, Security Council. *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2022/503)*. 2022. Retrieved 20 July 2022 from: <https://undocs.org/en/S/2022/503>

This document is a recent report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 17 March 2022 to 16 June 2022. It describes political developments, official UN reports of the security situation in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, and Tanganyika Provinces, including the actions taken by MONUSCO in line with its' peacekeeping mandate. Delegates will find this report particularly enlightening to understand the human rights and humanitarian situations in the DRC, as it combines data from the UN Country Team. Delegates should carefully read the report's findings on the MONUSCO mission goals for protection of civilians and stabilization and the strengthening of state institutions that will provide a comprehensive understanding of the UN involvement in the current situation along these lines. The document also features reporting on the current status of women, peace, and security in the DRC, as well as efforts for disarmament, child protection, and conflict-related sexual violence.

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United Nations, Security Council. *Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2022/503)*. 2022. Retrieved 20 July 2022 from: <https://undocs.org/en/S/2022/503>

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2. Strengthening Women's Role in Peacebuilding

Introduction

Promoting inclusive peace and security in all forms across the globe is a key concern to the United Nations (UN), and especially to the Security Council.¹⁴⁵ In addition to the 12 peacekeeping missions currently authorized under the Council's mandate, the Security Council uses peacebuilding to promote sustainable peace and long-term security.¹⁴⁶ Peacebuilding is an intricate process that aims to strengthen a country's capacities at all levels of government for conflict resolution and prevention attending to underlying causes of conflict that could lead to a renewed outbreak of violence, and create the necessary conditions for sustainable peace.¹⁴⁷ Peacebuilding is one aspect of the peace process, which further includes peacekeeping, peacemaking or peace negotiation, and peace enforcement.¹⁴⁸ It involves the collaboration between the UN and other international actors, civil society groups, and the affected Member State's government focusing on political as well as economic and social issues to build back society and promote reconciliation.¹⁴⁹

The UN considers women to have essential roles in peacebuilding, as their active political, social, and economic participation in society is often key to ensuring a successful peace process.¹⁵⁰ Women are at the core of many communities as caretakers of children, the elderly, and the family, and tend to be active participants in local social networks.¹⁵¹ Women can be effective leaders in peacebuilding and conflict resolution as they hold knowledge of topics such as the local status of women and can weigh in on the ways certain public and traditional systems might marginalize women.¹⁵² Women's experiences during conflict are unique and their voices critical in addressing issues such as gender-based violence, its prevention and seeking justice and support for victims which is a common priority of local peacebuilding programs led by women.¹⁵³ Women have participated in peacebuilding initiatives as peace-process negotiators, mediators, government officials, representatives of local community voices, and many more.¹⁵⁴ Women peacekeepers, for instance, bring nuanced skills and perspectives to peacekeeping missions and have demonstrated unique access to populations served, even becoming role models for other women and girls to participate in community development.¹⁵⁵

Despite the benefits of women's involvement, statistics show that gender-sensitive peace agreements declined from 37.1% in 2015 to 28.6% in 2020.¹⁵⁶ Without equal representation of women in post-conflict peace processes, countries may fail to shift to gender-responsive governance and overlook the

¹⁴⁵ United Nations. *Maintain International Peace and Security*. n.d.

¹⁴⁶ United Nations, Peacekeeping. *Terminology*. n.d.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Strengthening women's meaningful participation in peace processes*. 2021; United Nations, Security Council. *Women's participation in peacebuilding: Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/354-S/2010/466)*. 2010; United Nations, Peacekeeping. *Terminology*. n.d.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Strengthening women's meaningful participation in peace processes*. 2021; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Gender and Post-Conflict Governance: Understanding the Challenges*. 2012.

¹⁵¹ Global Volunteers. *The global role of women - caretakers, conscience, farmers, educators, and entrepreneurs*. 2019.

¹⁵² United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *The power of women peacebuilders*. 2019; International Association for Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research. *Empowerment: Women & Gender Issues: Women, Gender & Peacebuilding Processes*. 2008; World Bank Group. *Can gender equality prevent violent conflict?* 2018.

¹⁵³ Alliance for Peacebuilding. *Local peacebuilding What works and why*. 2019.

¹⁵⁴ Haq. United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *The Role of Women in Making and Building Peace*. n.d.

¹⁵⁵ United Nations Peacekeeping. *Women in peacekeeping*. n.d.

¹⁵⁶ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Facts and figures: Women, peace, and security*. 2021.

importance of improving the lives of women and girls, enabling their participation at all levels, providing resources for sustainable development, and guaranteeing equal access to justice.¹⁵⁷ Women hold just 19% of parliamentary seats in conflict and post-conflict countries, compared with 24% worldwide limiting their ability for formal participation in post-conflict reconstruction of society.¹⁵⁸ Security situations in communities recovering from conflict might be unstable without enough women taking active roles, which could possibly result in the failure of the peacebuilding process and a relapse into conflict.¹⁵⁹

International and Regional Framework

There have been several milestones in international efforts towards strengthening women and women's role in peacebuilding.¹⁶⁰ In 1979, the international community adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) which set an international agenda to ensure that women enjoy the same rights and fundamental freedoms as men and have the ability to serve society in roles beyond traditional gender roles.¹⁶¹ The Optional Protocol to CEDAW (1999) further set procedures for individuals or groups of individuals to seek recourse and denounce violations against the principles of CEDAW.¹⁶² In 2013, the CEDAW Committee published the General Recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict, and post-conflict situations.¹⁶³ It supports the implementation of CEDAW by introducing measures that Member States should take to ensure women's rights are protected in all stages of conflict, in line with the core components of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda established by the Security Council in 2000.¹⁶⁴ Further noteworthy, is CEDAW General Recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice addressing obstacles that inhibit women from gaining access to justice.¹⁶⁵ These General Recommendations highlight key concerns for women in fragile post-conflict environments and provide inter alia recommendations on addressing conflict-related sexual violence against women and girls.¹⁶⁶

Another landmark document for the advancement of women is the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA).¹⁶⁷ Adopted in 1995 as the outcome document of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the BPfA outlines women's rights and the necessary steps the international community must take for their full empowerment.¹⁶⁸ It established a series of goals to obtain gender equality, such as encouraging Member States to promote active participation of women in peace processes through national or community-based infrastructures considering that "peace (...) is inextricably linked with the advancement of women, who are a fundamental force for leadership, conflict resolution and the promotion of lasting

¹⁵⁷ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Gender and Post-Conflict Governance: Understanding the Challenges*. 2012.

¹⁵⁸ Christien et al. Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. *Advancing Women's Participation in Post-Conflict Reconstruction*. 2020. p. 14.

¹⁵⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Gender and Post-Conflict Governance: Understanding the Challenges*. 2012.

¹⁶⁰ Conciliation Resources. *Women building peace*. 2013.

¹⁶¹ United Nations, General Assembly. *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/54/4)*. 1999.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. *General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (CEDAW/C/GC/30)*. 2013.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *UN Women Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security*. 2012.

¹⁶⁵ United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. *General recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice (CEDAW/C/GC/33)*. 2015.

¹⁶⁶ United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. *General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations (CEDAW/C/GC/30)*. 2013; United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. *General recommendation No. 33 on women's access to justice (CEDAW/C/GC/33)*. 2015; United Nations, UN75 Office. *A New Era of Conflict and Violence*. n.d.

¹⁶⁷ United Nations, Fourth World Conference on Women. *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. 1995.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

peace at all levels.”¹⁶⁹

In 2000, the Security Council adopted resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, which serves as the core of the international WPS agenda.¹⁷⁰ The WPS agenda is a framework of the UN that sets the foundations for including gendered perspectives in all peace processes through 4 pillars: Participation, Conflict Prevention, Protection, and Relief and Recovery.¹⁷¹ The WPS agenda consists of 10 Security Council resolutions, beginning with resolution 1325 (2000), and subsequently resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2008), 1889 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2122 (2013), 2242 (2015), 2467 (2019), and 2493 (2019).¹⁷² Emphasized in resolutions 1820, 1888, 1960, 2106, and 2467, a longstanding issue in the WPS resolutions is CRSV against civilians, especially against women and girls.¹⁷³ The UN defines CRSV as “rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage, and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict.”¹⁷⁴ Resolution 2467 (2019) highlights the actions Member States, the UN, and civil society must take to prevent CRSV such as instituting gender focal points, reporting and persecution mechanisms for those responsible for CRSV, and justice sector reforms.¹⁷⁵

As successful peacebuilding is linked to sustainable development of conflict-affected states, actions taken are also guided by the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.¹⁷⁶ The fulfilment of the SDGs is a cornerstone of long-term prevention of conflict and addressing drivers of vulnerability and insecurity.¹⁷⁷ For instance, progress on SDG target 5.5 on ensuring women’s participation and “leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life” also promotes a strengthened role in peacebuilding.¹⁷⁸ Additionally, SDG target 16.7 on improving governance highlights “responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.”¹⁷⁹

Regional bodies such as the African Union (AU) are also working on solutions for post-conflict recovery through peacebuilding.¹⁸⁰ In 2003, the AU adopted the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa highlighting women’s rights “to participate in the promotion and maintenance of peace” and calling upon States parties to ensure the condition to exercise this right in Article X.¹⁸¹ Additionally, AU’s 2021 Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development

¹⁶⁹ United Nations, Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women. *Excerpts from the Beijing process documents relating to women in decision-making and gender balance*. n.d.; United Nations, Fourth World Conference on Women. *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. 1995.

¹⁷⁰ United Nations, Security Council. *Women, peace and security (S/RES/1325)*. 2000.

¹⁷¹ Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. *Women, Peace and Security National Action Plan Development Toolkit*. 2013.

¹⁷² Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. *About Women, Peace and Security in the Security Council*. n.d.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ United Nations, Peacekeeping. *Conflict-related Sexual Violence*. n.d.

¹⁷⁵ United Nations, Security Council. *Women, peace and security (S/RES/2467)*. 2019.

¹⁷⁶ United Nations, General Assembly. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*. 2015.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*. 2022.

¹⁷⁹ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels*. 2022.

¹⁸⁰ African Union. *Conflict Resolution, Peace & Security*. n.d.

¹⁸¹ African Union. *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*. 2003. Art X.

emphasizes the need for an increase in women's participation in governance.¹⁸² It aims to produce a responsive post-conflict governmental system and underlines the need to address poverty and inequality caused by conflict.¹⁸³ The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has also committed to advancing the WPS agenda regionally: adopting a Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace And Security in ASEAN in 2017; establishing the ASEAN Women for Peace Registry in 2018 mobilize resource and technical expertise for capacity building and advocacy on a gendered approach to peace and conflict in the region; and convening for the ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Strengthening Women's role for Sustainable Peace and Security in 2020.¹⁸⁴

Role of the International System

The Security Council in the main body ensuring international peace and security, including peacebuilding efforts in (post-)conflict situations.¹⁸⁵ The Council inter alia convenes regular meetings on WPS in which country level efforts and shortcomings around peacebuilding are being discussed.¹⁸⁶ An additional avenue are resolutions adopted by the Council, such as in 2020, resolution 2558 on the 15-year review of UN peacebuilding assessing progress made and further efforts and actions needed to promote peacebuilding.¹⁸⁷ In relation to the advancement of women in peacebuilding, the resolution takes note of the WPS agenda and stresses "importance of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and youth in peacebuilding."¹⁸⁸ More often the Security Council addresses peacebuilding in the context of specific (post-)conflict situations, as has been the case for country deliberations on Cyprus in resolution 2646 (2022), on Yemen in resolution 2643 (2022), and on Somalia in resolution 2628 (2022) all recognizing women's role in sustainable peace and emphasizing the support for women-led peace initiatives.¹⁸⁹ The UN Secretary-General presents annual reports on the progress of peacebuilding and sustaining peace to the Security Council.¹⁹⁰ The 2022 report highlights several barriers to strengthening women's involvement in peacebuilding, such as the emergence of COVID-19 and the influence of lockdowns on workforce structures and global economies.¹⁹¹ The report also focuses on financing for peacebuilding, a crucial aspect of supporting women in peacebuilding by allocating sufficient resources to women-led initiatives.¹⁹²

The Security Council is furthermore responsible for establishing UN peace operations which are deployed on the basis of mandates from the Council.¹⁹³ UN peacekeeping missions also play a vital role in peacebuilding today.¹⁹⁴ While peacekeeping is traditionally grounded in military support to maintain cease fires and security, operations in the last 20 years have begun to put more focus on the root causes of

¹⁸² African Union, Conflict Management Division, Peace and Security Department. *Policy on Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD)*. 2006.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *Chairman's Press Statement of the ASEAN Ministerial Dialogue on Strengthening Women's role for Sustainable Peace and Security*. 2020; Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *Overview*. 2020; Association of Southeast Asian Nations. *Joint Statement on Promoting Women, Peace and Security in AESAN*. 2021.

¹⁸⁵ United Nations, Security Council. *Thematic Items: Peacebuilding*. n.d.

¹⁸⁶ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *With Conflicts Destroying Hard-Won Gains, Regional Organizations Must Include Women in Peace Talks, Political Negotiations, Speakers Tell Security Council*. 2022.

¹⁸⁷ United Nations, Security Council. *Resolution 2558 (2020) (S/RES/2558 (2020))*. 2020.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ United Nations, Security Council. *Resolutions adopted by the Security Council in 2022*. 2022.

¹⁹⁰ United Nations, Security Council. *Peacebuilding and sustaining peace Report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/66)*. 2022.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ United Nations Peacekeeping. *Mandates and the Legal Basis for Peacekeeping*. n.d.

¹⁹⁴ United Nations, Peacekeeping. *What is peacekeeping?* n.d.; United Nations, Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations Department of Field Support. *Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding: Clarifying the Nexus*. 2010.

conflict.¹⁹⁵ The Security Council has recently authorized several peacekeeping operations to build into their mandates the use of peacebuilding techniques to prompt societal transformations, such as through supporting elections, promoting human rights, and building national institutions to better support the needs of citizens.¹⁹⁶ In these cases, peacekeeping forces can act as “early peacebuilders” by supporting communication and coordination among local, national, and international actors, engaging in civil-military dialogue, providing a “security umbrella” for actors engaged in peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts, and implementing peacebuilding tasks through their roles as policing personnel.¹⁹⁷ Considering peacekeeping missions’ role in peacebuilding, strengthening women’s representation in such missions is crucial.¹⁹⁸ Despite some progress, peacekeeping operations are far from reaching equal gender representation, as only 7.8% of peacekeepers participating in current UN field missions are women.¹⁹⁹ A recent action taken by the UN to involve more women in peace processes, is the establishment of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System (CPAS).²⁰⁰ CPAS seeks to enhance the effectiveness of channeling women’s voices directly within the planning stage of peace operations with civilians, military, and police.²⁰¹

The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is an advisory body established by and reporting to both the Security Council and the UN General Assembly that assists in conflict-related situation analysis and recovery.²⁰² As an intergovernmental platform, the PBC convenes civil society, financial and regional institutions, alongside UN actors to address challenges surrounding UN peacebuilding endeavors.²⁰³ The PBC specializes in developing peacebuilding strategies and plays a valuable role working with the Security Council to integrate peacebuilding into global peace and security initiatives.²⁰⁴ PBC regularly works to increase opportunities of women to contribute to peacebuilding and advises on possible areas where women can play a larger role, such as through community level warning mechanisms, steps for community security and disarmament, and rehabilitation talks.²⁰⁵ In 2016, the PBC introduced a gender strategy that systematically and structurally includes gender considerations into all aspects of its operations.²⁰⁶ It takes an intersectional approach to peacebuilding which recognizes that different women represent different interests and have different needs based on factors such as age, rural or urban housing, disability, or socio-economic status.²⁰⁷

In the wider UN system, the Security Council collaborates with other entities on the WPS agenda, such as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women).²⁰⁸ UN-Women leads the annual report of the Secretary-General on WPS, and provides support, capacity building, and analysis via state-specific briefings on WPS for the Security Council.²⁰⁹ UN-Women directly

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.; United Nations, Peacekeeping, United Nations Department of Field Support. *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*. 2008.

¹⁹⁸ United Nations Peacekeeping. *Women in Peacekeeping*. n.d.

¹⁹⁹ United Nations, Peacekeeping. *Uniformed Women in Peace Operations*. 2021.

²⁰⁰ United Nations, Peacekeeping. *CPAS*. n.d.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² United Nations, Peacebuilding Commission. *Mandate*. n.d.

²⁰³ Security Council Report. *The Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council: From Cynicism to Synergy?* 2017.

²⁰⁴ United Nations, Department of Global Communications. *Peacebuilding and sustaining peace - Security Council, 9101st meeting*. 2022; United Nations, Department of Global Communications. ‘Good strides’ being made towards inclusive peacebuilding, Security Council hears. 2022.

²⁰⁵ United Nations, Peacebuilding Commission. *Peacebuilding Commission’s Gender Strategy*. 2016; Security Council Report. *Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace: Presentation of the Peacebuilding Commission’s Annual Report*. 2022.

²⁰⁶ United Nations, Peacebuilding Commission. *PBC Gender Strategy Action Plan*. 2016.

²⁰⁷ United Nations, Peacebuilding Commission. *Peacebuilding Commission’s Gender Strategy*. 2016.

²⁰⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *UN Women*. n.d.

²⁰⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women, peace, and security in the work of the UN Security Council*. n.d.

contributes its gender expertise to peacebuilding efforts such as community programs empowering local women, and also convenes stakeholders to determine best practices for encouraging women's participation in peace processes and navigating social dynamics surrounding women in conflict-affected areas.²¹⁰ Other UN bodies that work on development issues such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also come together with the Security Council on issues related to peacebuilding.²¹¹ UNDP especially focuses on post-conflict effective governance, rule of law, strengthening public institutions and services, and digital resource and transformation support, which have strategic contributions to ongoing peacebuilding initiatives.²¹² Local civil society including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based groups, professional groups, religious, cultural, and tribal organizations, social media communities, and academic institutions are also important actors in peacebuilding working in tandem with the UN and the international community and assume different functions in peacebuilding, including protection, human rights monitoring, advocacy, socialization and social cohesion, mediation and reconciliation processes, and service delivery.²¹³

Overcoming barriers to serve as grassroots actors in peacebuilding

Although post-conflict reconstruction requires participation of all members of society regardless of gender, women face several barriers to full participation in local peacebuilding.²¹⁴ They are responsible for an outsized share of household work and care for children and the elderly confining them to the home.²¹⁵ The undue burden of domestic responsibilities and care work can lead to the exclusion of women and girls from education, the formal workforce, and other aspects of daily life discouraging them from an active role in community peacebuilding initiatives.²¹⁶ In addition, they face an increased security risk in conflict which inhibits their mobility; and have limited access to resources such as peacebuilding funds for even local political participation or capacity-building and training opportunities.²¹⁷

An example of a highly successful women-led grassroots peacebuilding initiative is the "Peace Huts" mechanism in Liberia.²¹⁸ Following the 2003 civil war, local women gathered people in 38 unused traditional housing structures called "Peace Huts," which served as grounds to establish community bonds, promote national reconciliation, and provide grassroots police and justice services to monitor tensions and prevent further instances of conflict eruption.²¹⁹ Despite denials of support by many male traditional leaders, strong collaboration between the women organizers and local town leaders elevated societal respect for the Peace Huts as legitimate conflict resolution institutions.²²⁰ The Peace Huts also served as centers for economic empowerment through literacy and numerical trainings, as well as safe

²¹⁰ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Gender-inclusive peace processes: Strengthening women's meaningful participation through constituency building*. 2021.

²¹¹ United Nations Development Programme. *Preventing conflict and building peace is now more important than ever*. 2022.

²¹² United Nations Development Programme. *Governance and Peacebuilding*. 2022.

²¹³ United Nations, Peacebuilding Support Office of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. *UN Community Engagement Guidelines on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace*. 2020. Paffenholz. *Civil society and peacebuilding*. 2015.

²¹⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Gender stereotyping*. n.d.; Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. *Opinion: The role of women's empowerment in post-conflict reconstruction*. n.d.; United Nations, Security Council. *Women Too Often Omitted from Peace Processes, Despite Key Role in Preventing Conflict, Forging Peace, Secretary-General Tells Security Council (SC/12561)*. 2016.

²¹⁵ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women's Participation and a Better Understanding of the Political*. 2015.

²¹⁶ United Nations Development Programme. *Promoting peace through women's leadership and political participation: evidence from the Sahel*. 2022; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women's Participation and a Better Understanding of the Political*. 2015.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *National Peace Huts Women of Liberia*. 2019.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid.

havens to provide physical and social protection for women suffering from domestic violence or CRSV.²²¹ These women-led spaces built resilience among local women, encouraging them to be safely involved in peacebuilding and leadership of local society.²²² Another recent example of using digital and online tools to foster women's participation in peacebuilding is the MAUJ for Development initiative in Syria.²²³ MAUJ has four strategic priorities: "supporting pluralism and community cohesion, promoting women participation in public life, producing gender-sensitive media content, and ensuring sustainable resources."²²⁴ Starting as a radio program in 2014 and bringing women together in talk shows, it offered a platform to voice concerns about common issues affecting women, such as honor killings and sexual harassment.²²⁵ Broadcasting disruptions forced the initiative to shift to social media which ultimately increased its reach country-wide and allowed the incorporation of new media formats.²²⁶ The founder also stated that "women are more likely to participate in online discussions because they can do so anonymously and flexibly, balancing their care burdens."²²⁷

Despite this progress on women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives, various conditions can impede their long-term viability, such as a lack of funds and training, safe spaces, or safe and reliable transportation.²²⁸ Furthermore, discrimination, traditional gender roles, and a general lack of political will locally or at the national level to proactively include women in decision-making on peacebuilding efforts hamper women's contributions to peacebuilding.²²⁹

Addressing violence against women and girls and access to justice

The WPS agenda brought attention to the gendered experiences of conflict-affected communities, for instance the disproportionate victimization of women and sexual violence committed against them.²³⁰ The High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in 2008, as well as General Assembly resolution 70/262 explain that ensuring gender-equal access to security and transitional justice are key components of effective peacebuilding.²³¹ Ensuring security and justice in post-conflict situations can be a preliminary steps to build back a society in need of rehabilitation, and, in many cases, reconciliation.²³² Women must be ensured safety and recourse for human rights violations during post-conflict transitional periods to encourage and strengthen their roles as active participants and leaders in peacebuilding.²³³

Historically, sexual violence is one of the greatest factors that has hindered women's access to security and justice in conflict-affected societal structures.²³⁴ Many women and girls that witness or experience CRSV have not been able to participate in peacebuilding due to lasting traumatic impacts and

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Strengthening women's meaningful participation in peace processes*. 2021.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *Women's Participation and a Better Understanding of the Political*. 2015.

²²⁹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. *National Peace Huts Women of Liberia*. 2019.

²³⁰ Schulz et al. *Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*. 2022.

²³¹ United Nations, Peacekeeping. *High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Financing for Peacebuilding*. 2022; United Nations, General Assembly. *Review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262)*. 2016.

²³² Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Peacebuilding, sustaining peace and transitional justice*. 2020.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ International Association for Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research. *Access to Justice: Access to Justice & Peacebuilding Processes*. 2008.

stigmatization by their community.²³⁵ Many survivors of CRSV and their children are ostracized from communal or family relations and are sometimes barred from social resources such as healthcare and inheritance, separating them further from society and eroding social cohesion.²³⁶ Survivors of CRSV often do not receive the necessary care and lack the resources to seek legal recourse while the risk of stigmatization or re-traumatization, including by police and judiciaries, who are not sufficiently trained to address this sensitive topic, exacerbates women's exclusion.²³⁷

UN Security Council resolutions 1960 (2010) and 2106 (2013) have emphasized ending impunity for CRSV "through justice systems and legal frameworks as the foremost preventative measure."²³⁸ The Council notes that persecuting such crimes strengthen deterrence and prevention of CRSV.²³⁹ The UN Special Representative on sexual violence has urged the international community to hold those responsible for CRSV accountable and not grant amnesty to perpetrators of sexual violence during reconciliation processes otherwise threatening peacebuilding efforts.²⁴⁰ The democratic transition in 2011 in Tunisia is a flagship example of a state in transitional justice showing accountability to building societal stability such as through 50,000 individual private hearings and creating over 30,000 reparations for victims of human rights abuses.²⁴¹ The creation of national Specialized Criminal Chambers solely to prosecute and adjudicate hundreds of security officials of former regimes committing these serious abuses, depict Tunisia's efforts to incorporating human rights into peacebuilding towards democracy.²⁴²

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated gender inequalities and caused an increase in violence against women globally, posing a particular threat to the stability and social cohesion of post-conflict countries and requires concerted efforts together with women-led organizations to prevent further violence and offer support to victims.²⁴³ In Kyrgyzstan, in response to the surge in gender-based violence, the country's Council on Women's Rights and Prevention of Gender Based Violence successfully advocated for legislative amendments to improve access to justice for victims of domestic violence.²⁴⁴ In Iraq, the government revised the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2020–2024 to include the COVID-19 impact and set forth peacebuilding-related strategic priorities, such as social cohesion, protection and inclusion to also strengthen women's role in peacebuilding.²⁴⁵ Despite the overall decrease of funding for peacebuilding during the pandemic, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund grew to disperse funding to "local women peacebuilders and first responders to prevent conflict and end sexual and gender-based" in a flexible and efficient manner.²⁴⁶

Conclusion

To strengthen women's role in peacebuilding, further assessments of post-conflict situations and the barriers that women face in post-conflict societies is needed.²⁴⁷ Women's contribution to peacebuilding and the synergy that local women can create through grassroots initiatives should be highlighted.²⁴⁸ The

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Woldetsadik et. al. BioMed Central. *The enduring consequences of conflict-related sexual violence: a qualitative study of women survivors in northern Uganda*. 2022.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Binningsbø et al. *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and the Perils of Impunity*. 2022.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Peacebuilding, sustaining peace and transitional justice*. 2020.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ United Nations, Security Council. *Peacebuilding and sustaining peace Report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/66)*. 2022.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ United Nations, Peacebuilding Support Office of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. *UN Peacebuilding: an Orientation*. 2010.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. p.5.

wide-spread occurrence of CRSV and patriarchal governmental structures are among the main factors of society that limits women's access to their full rights and security in post-conflict situations.²⁴⁹ The Security Council and PBC lead peacebuilding efforts with close cooperation for capacity building with other UN bodies such as UNDP and civil society including community-based networks.²⁵⁰ Introducing measures to strengthen women's role in peacebuilding by the Security Council are an integral part of the Council's mission to maintain peace and security.²⁵¹

Further Research

Delegates in their research should consider further questions such as: How should the UN improve its approach in strengthen the role of women in peacebuilding? In which areas can the Security Council lead efforts for gender-responsive peacebuilding within the UN system, utilizing its mandate and unique relationship with the UN and international entities? What risks or barriers exist that prevent women from being able to fully and meaningfully participate in peacebuilding? In what ways can peacebuilding be carried out to fully address the needs of women in conflict-affected societies, including those who suffer from CRSV?

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Referencing the previous Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000); 1820 (2008); 1888 (2009); 1889(2009) and 1960 (2010) on WPS, this sourcebook functions as a database of methods and policy directions that parties can consider when tackling the agenda on WPS. In the area of Women in Peacebuilding, the resource documents post-conflict theory and case studies that will help delegates recognize the inequalities of non-inclusive social structures. Delegates will also find this resource beneficial to observe the tone and writing style of how policies are planned by international bodies.

United Nations, General Assembly. *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (A/RES/54/4)*. 1999. Retrieved 20 July 2022 from: <http://undocs.org/en/A/RES/54/4>

This document is specifically designed to provide authoritative guidance on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women to ratifying member states. Delegates will grasp an understanding of methods to consider women's status and rights for peacebuilding that occur pre, post, and during conflict. This Protocol is also helpful to delegates as it defines human rights related to this topic and the possible ways to ensure them within the scope of security solutions.

United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. *UN Peacebuilding: an Orientation*. 2010. Retrieved 20 July 2022 from: https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/peacebuilding_orientation.pdf

This document covers many dimensions of peacebuilding initiatives throughout the UN system. The report explains relevant Security Council resolutions on the WPS agenda and discusses the overall landscape of peacebuilding such as priorities, budget, and planning. The timeline of the evolution of the peacebuilding concept will be useful for

²⁴⁹ International Association for Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research. *Empowerment: Women & Gender Issues: Women, Gender & Peacebuilding Processes*. 2008.

²⁵⁰ United Nations, Peacebuilding Support Office of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. *UN Peacebuilding: an Orientation*. 2010.

²⁵¹ United Nations. *Peace and Security*. n.d.

delegates to understand what must be done in the future for women's roles to be strengthened.

United Nations, Security Council. *Women, Peace, and Security (S/RES/1325)*. 2000. Retrieved 20 July 2022 from: [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1325\(2000\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1325(2000))

The Security Council Resolution 1325 is a significant and historical starting point for all issues concerning women's rights and involvement in peace and security. Acknowledged by the United Nations as the foundational document to WPS and cited frequently, it highlights women in peacebuilding, peacekeeping, pre and post conflict resolution as well as women and girls' protection measures from sexual and gender-based violence. Delegates will be able to understand the mainstream tone and an insight of the frameworks crossing gender and conflict prevention that the Security Council is striving to achieve.

United Nations, Security Council. *Peacebuilding and sustaining peace Report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/66)*. 2022. Retrieved 31 August 2022 from: <https://undocs.org/en/S/2022/66>

Aware of the connection between post conflict situations and women and girls' efforts in peacebuilding, this report focuses on individuals' challenges to prevent, resolve, and recover from conflict. When assessing the role of women in peacebuilding, delegates should not mistake the role of peacebuilding from peacekeeping, and this document will build their understanding of the difference. Additionally, delegates will find this resource useful to understand recent barriers to women and girls' political and economic participation in post-conflict environments, such as discrimination and sexual harassment.

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