TOYO MODEL UNITED NATIONS

東洋大学模擬国連

STUDY GUIDE

Addressing the Challenges Faced by Women in Conflict Zones

UN WOMEN

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Welcome Letter

こんにちは！

We are delighted to welcome you to the 2025 edition of Toyo Model United Nations, organized virtually from the beautiful Hakusan campus. As one of the most accessible English-speaking conferences in the Japanese circuit, we are proud to host delegates from all around the world to our humble event. The establishment of Toyo University in 1887 was built on the idea that each individual should be guided by their own values and philosophy. We believe that these principles remain just as important in the modern era, especially during times of uncertainty.

The first iteration of Toyo Model United Nations occurred at the start of the pandemic, and while many things have changed since then, we believe that maintaining the virtual format of the conference will allow delegates to reap the benefits of Model United Nations without worrying about geographical or financial restrictions. In the status quo, there is a perception that Model United Nations is an event that is only for the privileged few; we hope that this can change in the future through accessible conferences such as ours.

As a side note, please be aware that we will be utilizing a modified version of the Harvard Rules of Procedure for the council. This means that delegates should make the resolutions *during* the conference as opposed to bringing pre-drafted articles. Furthermore, international delegates should note that the Japanese circuit does not recognize the use of 'chits' as a factor in substantive marking; delegates may still communicate with each other via the private chat function on ZOOM, but they will not receive additional points for doing so.

We hope that this study guide will serve as a useful starting point for understanding the topic. Please do not forget to use other resources to understand your respective allocations. Good luck and see you soon!

Best Regards,
UN Women Board of Dais

Chair Introduction

Ken Eguchi (江口賢)

Hi everyone! My name is Ken and I am currently an M1 student at Kyushu University's Graduate School of Integrated Sciences for Global Society. I did my first MUN conference in 2016, and while I have since scaled back my involvement in the circuit, I am excited to come back and support Toyo MUN. I hope that we can make fun memories together during the conference! Feel free to message me with any questions related to the contents of the study guide through eguchi.ken.624@s.kyushu-u.ac.jp.

Nayuko Iden (伊傳菜友子)

Hello everyone! My name is Nayuko and I am a third-year student at Okayama University, although I am currently studying abroad at the University of Kent. My MUN career started in 2022, and since then I have participated in several conferences as a delegate and chair. I am also serving as the President of Okayama University MUN Club. This will be my first time supporting Toyo MUN and I cannot wait for the conference to see you all! I hope that you can enjoy the conference and make new friends! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us! Here is my email address: nayu.2t2@gmail.com.

Emilie Sasha Yap (ヤップ・エミリー・サシャ)

Hi, my name is Sasha! Though I haven't been in the circuit for long, I'm excited to see what everyone can bring to this year's Toyo MUN. I mostly participate in offline MUNs, but online conferences definitely come with their own merits! The last online MUN I joined was unforgettable, with a perfect amount of chaos and friendship all in one, so I hope this too will be a memorable experience for everyone. I wish you all the best in preparations, and for any inquiries, don't be afraid to contact me via my email: 1sasha.yap@gmail.com.

Introduction to the Council

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, commonly known as UN Women, was established in July 2010 through the UN General Assembly Resolution 64/289. This new entity merged four previously distinct parts of the UN system: the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

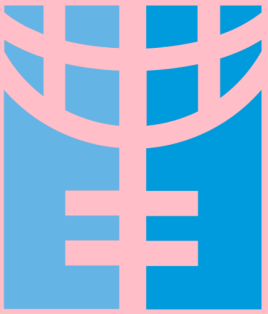

Figure 1. The logo of UN Women: a globe, the women's symbol, and the equal sign (Source: UNDP Procurement Notices, 2013).

In terms of operational presence, UN Women maintains headquarters in New York and operates through regional, multi-country, and country offices worldwide. The organization works through a 'triple mandate' approach: normative support to inter-governmental bodies, operational activities, and coordination of the UN system's gender equality work (UN Women, 2021b).

Traditionally, the UN Women Executive Board consists of 41 Member States which are elected on three-year terms by the UN Economic and Social Council. However, there is a chance that the UN Women committee will utilize the full membership of the UN General Assembly for this MUN to encourage diverse perspectives. There is also a high possibility for some delegates to be allocated as non-government entities, noting the nature of the topic. Should this occur, **all** delegates will receive full voting rights, which will allow them to sponsor draft resolutions, make amendments, and participate in the voting process.

Topic Introduction

In the advent of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001, then-US President George Bush Jr. firmly announced that "[y]ou are with us or against us", signalling a new geopolitical dynamic where countries who are not aligned with American interests are effectively working *against* them. While this statement did not originate from the former President, his statements were indicative of a new status quo of increasingly black-and-white alliances among nations. These sentiments, inevitably, have also signalled shifts in the operational mandates of humanitarian organizations, with Rieffer-Flanagan (2009) noting that "[s]ome have suggested that neutral humanitarianism is dead in the aftermath of the cold war and 9/11" (p. 888).

In the past, humanitarian organizations have played a crucial role in the provision of aid to conflict zones, with their political neutrality providing them access to places that are otherwise unreachable. During the Biafra crisis, for instance, aid organizations such as UNICEF coordinated with the Nigerian government to distribute relief to affected areas in the country. This changed in 1968 when Nigeria withdrew permission to airlift humanitarian supplies to Biafra in an attempt to pressure the rebels to capitulate (Allen & Styan, 2000).

Despite the Nigerian government's lack of permission and ignorance from Western governments, humanitarian NGOs mobilized in Biafra and supported civilians within the conflict zone (Chandler, 2001). As a precondition to its operations in Biafra, the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) adopted a code of silence to not publicize the situation in the area, which has seen widespread starvation due to the Nigerian government's blockade (Higashizawa, 2016). Horrified by what he saw in Biafra, the French doctor Bernard Kouchner wrote that he "did not want to repeat the mistake of the ICRC" and soon established *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) — also known as Doctors Without Borders — upon returning to France (Kouchner, 1986, p. 217).

While Kouchner's actions are often portrayed as inherently just, the reality is considerably more nuanced. Numerous humanitarian organizations encounter substantial obstacles in securing access to conflict zones, particularly when perceived as threats to the authority of hostile political actors. In such

circumstances, the ICRC's policy of neutrality, however ethically problematic, may appear to be a necessary compromise to reach and assist vulnerable populations. In fact, Smith (1998) noted that the ICRC has access to more prisoners of war (POWs) and detainees than any other organization in the world, with access to some of the world's brutal regimes. When Greece was under a military regime between 1967 to 1974, for instance, the ICRC refused to provide evidence for human rights violations in Greek prisons to the Council of Europe in order to not jeopardise its working relationship with the military authorities in Greece (Smith, 1998).

Why are these pieces of information important in the context of this UN Women study guide? The reality is that the areas in which women face disproportionate risks to their fundamental rights are in places where humanitarian organizations have minimal access. A recent 2024 ruling by the Taliban government in Afghanistan, for instance, declared that any NGOs that were found to be employing women would have their license to operate in the country revoked (Al Jazeera, 2024). Such restrictions present major dilemmas for humanitarian organizations, who have to decide between compromising their values to comply with these restrictions or to stand against them and risk having their access revoked by the Taliban authorities.

In most MUN conferences, delegates participating in women-centred topics often present their humanitarian solutions with a shiny pink bow; a neat package of well-intentioned interventions. They envision a seamless deployment of aid, a swift empowerment of women, and a triumphant march towards gender equality. Yet, the choices for humanitarian operations on the ground are often not between right or wrong, but between bad or worse; maintain access with compromised principles, or uphold principles at the cost of reaching vulnerable populations.

In 2023, the UN verified over 3,000 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, with the actual numbers estimated to be significantly higher due to underreporting and access limitations (UNHCR, 2024). As women's rights continue to be trampled upon in conflict zones, alongside recent announcements of funding cuts to international humanitarian organizations by the new administration of the United States, delegates in this council are encouraged to discuss the path forward to best support women in conflict zones.

Past Actions

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security)

Adopted in 2000, Resolution 1325 marked the first time the Security Council addressed the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women. The resolution calls for increased participation of women in conflict prevention, peace negotiations, and post-conflict reconstruction, alongside protection from sexual and gender-based violence (UN Women, n.d.). While groundbreaking in recognizing women's role in peace and security, the resolution does not have mandatory reporting mechanisms and concrete enforcement measures, essentially making compliance voluntary. The resolution also did not specify minimum requirements for women's participation in peace processes, which can lead to token rather than meaningful representation. Furthermore, the absence of dedicated funding mechanisms has left many national action plans under-resourced and ineffective.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

CEDAW, adopted in 1979, provides an international framework for women's rights protection, including during conflict. The convention requires state parties to take measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political, economic, social, and cultural spheres. However, its effectiveness is undermined by widespread reservations from member states, particularly to Article 2 which addresses discriminatory laws. In conflict situations, CEDAW's impact is limited by its lack of specific enforcement mechanisms and the tendency of states to suspend obligations during emergencies. The convention also struggles with implementation monitoring, as its reporting system relies heavily on state cooperation and lacks independent verification mechanisms.

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

As noted by UN Women directly, the Rome Statute represents a significant advancement in addressing gender-based violence in conflict by recognizing sexual

violence as a war crime and crime against humanity (UN Women, 2021a). The statute established the first permanent international criminal court with jurisdiction over these crimes. However, several limitations hinder its effectiveness. The court's jurisdiction is restricted to states that have ratified the statute. Notable states that have not ratified the Rome Statute include China, North Korea, and Pakistan; these countries can essentially claim that they are not under obligation to follow through with the stipulations of the Statute. Furthermore, evidence gathering in conflict zones proves exceptionally challenging, and the prosecution process often takes years before cases reach trial (UN Women, 2021a).

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, this framework outlines objectives for protecting women during conflict and increasing their participation in conflict resolution. However, the declaration lacks binding enforcement mechanisms, relying instead on voluntary state action. Additionally, its broad scope, while comprehensive, has led to diluted focus and resources across multiple priorities. The review process has revealed persistent gaps between commitments and actual implementation, particularly in conflict-affected regions where institutional capacity is often weakest (UN Women, 2020).

Areas of Debate

Engagement With Restrictive Regimes

Is it more effective to prioritize long-term justice and accountability, potentially leveraging the threat of future prosecution to pressure regimes into compliance with international norms? Or is it better to engage with restrictive regimes to secure access and deliver essential services, even if it means delaying or compromising on justice? On one hand, the unfortunate reality for many organizations is that pursuing immediate justice for women could obstruct efforts to negotiate humanitarian access. Military leaders who fear prosecution have historically refused to engage in meaningful negotiations. Of the 279 leaders of failed coups in Africa between 1995 and 2003, 35% were executed, murdered, or died in prison, 22% were imprisoned, 16% were arrested without any clear outcomes, and 5% were exiled or tried in absentia (Ku & Nzelibe, 2006). More crucially, there were no such consequences for successful coup leaders. Hence, many authoritarian regimes do not see benefits to engaging with organizations such as UN Women, possibly fearing international repercussions once evidence of wrongdoing is collected on the ground.

On the other hand, the explicit recognition of gender as grounds for persecution in crimes against humanity cases by the Rome Statute in 1998 has pushed many activists into demanding stronger actions against gender-based violence in conflict zones. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), in its Nahimana case, noted how Tutsi women were viewed as ‘femmes fatales’ and ‘seductive agents of the enemy’, which represented one of the earliest cases of an international tribunal recognizing gender as a factor behind the crimes against humanity committed against them (UNICTR, 2003). Despite this, gender persecution is still rarely conducted, which “is compounded by the lack of enumeration of gender persecution as a crime against humanity in the statutes of international criminal tribunals, other than that of the ICC, and in national penal codes” (UN Women, 2021a). In 2022, UN Women assisted the ICC in the drafting of the Policy on Gender Persecution to better prosecute gender-based rights violations, although it remains to be seen whether meaningful actions will be taken or not (Kenney, 2023).

Mandate Uncertainty in Conflict Zones

Many delegates, and perhaps even some UN staff members themselves, often have distorted understandings of what UN Women actually does as an agency — sure, the UN Women deals with issues relating to women, but *how*? The question becomes urgent in conflict zones: if the UNSC authorizes peacekeeping missions and the WHO coordinates health crises, what space remains for UN Women to operate without redundancy? When UN Women was established to consolidate four smaller UN gender entities, it was tasked with both normative work (such as by advocating for gender equality resolutions) and operational programming (such as by deploying experts to provide gender perspectives in conflict negotiations). In Jordan, UN Women operates the cash-for-work programme in the Za'atari refugee camp, which is set up under the auspices of the Syrian Refugee Affairs Directorate (SRAD) and the UNHCR. In Yemen, UN Women shares an office with UNDP, OCHA, ILO, UNOPS and the UN Resident Coordinator of the country.

However, while UN Women operates in many sectors, it rarely becomes the main actor in important legislation. For instance, while the UNSC's Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) mandates gender considerations in peace processes, women constituted only 13% of negotiators and 6% of mediators in major peace processes globally between 1992 and 2019 (UN Women, 2021). Compared to the UNSC's Chapter VII authority, the UN Women's mandate to support gender-specific resolutions seems much smaller in comparison. Similarly, UN Women does not directly deploy medical aid to women in conflict zones — these things are done by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Figure 2. Satirical political cartoon on the overlap between international health organizations (Source: Lee et al., 1996).

Even more complicatedly, there are at least five other agencies that have overlapping mandates when it comes to health, which include UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, and even the World Bank (Lee et al., 1996). In South Sudan, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the WHO held a five-day training on the Mental Health Gap Action Programme (mhGAP) to support mental health issues (IOM, 2024). Furthermore, the Women and Girls Friendly Spaces (WGFS) initiative at the Bentiu camp (also in South Sudan) was established by the UNFPA and the State Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare (UNFPA, 2022). Many MUN delegates often utilize the idea of inter-agency collaboration to support the establishment of joint programmes, but the following examples demonstrate that UN Women are often rendered irrelevant in these programmes, despite having a physical presence in South Sudan as well. Admittedly, as an advisory body, UN Women is hamstrung by its reliance on voluntary funding. Hence, it would be irresponsible to advocate for the agency to unilaterally take over the duties held by other, better-funded organizations. Nevertheless, delegates are likely to be split on how UN Women can better support women in conflict zones. This area of debate will be elaborated on in the next section on bloc positions.

Bloc Positions

Humanitarian-Focused Mandate

Delegates within this bloc are likely to emphasize that UN Women should maintain strict political neutrality to effectively coordinate the delivery of targeted assistance to women in conflict zones, even if UN Women may not be the one directly delivering this aid. They typically argue that involving the organization in political advocacy or justice-seeking missions could compromise its ability to access vulnerable populations and deliver critical aid. Their position often centers on two main arguments: (1) that UN Women's primary value lies in its capacity to advocate for targeted, life-saving assistance to women regardless of political circumstances, and/or (2) that political neutrality is essential for maintaining the trust necessary to operate in sensitive conflict zones. This bloc tends to prioritize practical assistance such as establishing women's health clinics, providing emergency supplies, and maintaining safe spaces for women and girls. They often clash with justice-seeking

approaches, arguing that pursuing accountability could jeopardize humanitarian access and put aid workers at risk. Delegates in this bloc might typically oppose UN Women's involvement in documenting war crimes or supporting international tribunals, viewing such activities as beyond the organization's humanitarian mandate.

Justice and Advocacy Mandate

Within this bloc, delegates are likely to argue that UN Women has a fundamental responsibility to advocate for justice and accountability for crimes against women in conflict zones. These nations typically view the organization not just as a humanitarian actor, but as a powerful voice for women's rights and justice on the international stage. Their solutions often focus on two key priorities: (1) systematic documentation of sexual violence and gender-based crimes to support future prosecution, and/or (2) using UN Women's platform to pressure governments and armed groups to address women's rights violations. This bloc supports expanding UN Women's mandate to include evidence collection, witness protection programs, and cooperation with international criminal courts. They often clash with the humanitarian-focused bloc, arguing that political neutrality in the face of systematic violence against women amounts to complicity. Delegates in this bloc typically criticize purely humanitarian approaches as treating symptoms while ignoring root causes, emphasizing that UN Women must take a strong stance against impunity to fulfil its mandate of protecting women's rights.

Guiding Questions

This section is intended for delegates to identify the topics of discussion that should be prioritized during the conference. Delegates are welcome to bring up other issues that are not explicitly addressed here but should be mindful of time limitations.

1. In restrictive countries such as Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, should UN Women adopt a more conciliatory position to establish better working relations with these regimes?
2. Noting the existence of international organizations with similar mandates on this topic, such as the UN Security Council (UNSC) to deal with conflict zones as well as the World Health Organization (WHO) to address health issues, what role can UN Women play in the grand scheme of things?
3. How can UN Women support the UN Security Council (UNSC) in implementing their resolutions on Women, Peace and Security?
    - ★ What about during instances when UNSC peacekeeping forces are absent in conflict zones due to veto(s) or a lack of interest from the international community?
4. What concrete steps can be taken to increase women's meaningful participation in peace negotiations beyond advisory roles?
5. How can post-conflict programs better incorporate women's needs?

Further Readings

Please send an email to one of the chairs if you are unable to access any of the documents outlined below!

[English]

ICC. (2022, December 7). *Policy on the crime of gender persecution*. https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2022-12/2022-12-07-Policy-on-the-Crime-of-Gender-Persecution.pdf

This policy document, adopted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2022, highlighted the legal framework for prosecuting gender persecution as a crime against humanity under Article 7(1)(h) of the Rome Statute. The policy sets out evidentiary standards and procedural guidelines; notably, it mentioned that gender persecution — characterized by its intent to target individuals based solely on their gender — poses challenges in both legal interpretation and practical enforcement as discriminatory intent is required to be proven. Point 51 on page 18 notably mentioned that men can also be targeted for rape in times of conflict as a means to 'feminize' them and invoke the 'indignity' of being treated like a woman — the ICC states that these factors are also considered when determining gender persecution in international tribunals. Delegates in the second bloc may benefit from this resource as a way to lay down frameworks for justice through a gendered lens.

Rieffer-Flanagan, B. A. (2009). Is neutral humanitarianism dead? Red Cross neutrality: Walking the tightrope of neutral humanitarianism. *Human Rights Quarterly*, *31*(4), 888-915. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40389980

In this article, Rieffer-Flanagan interrogates whether the traditional commitment to impartiality remains viable in an era marked by increasingly politicized conflicts. Notably, they note that claims of neutrality are one thing, but being neutral on the ground or being perceived as such by international actors is an entirely different thing. For instance, can authoritarian regimes claim legitimacy on the basis of cooperation with the ICRC, knowing that the ICRC will not disclose evidence of human rights abuses to the international community due to its commitment to neutrality? At the same time, would the alternative — to have no humanitarian organizations operating at all in hostile areas — be better? The term 'neutral humanitarianism' addresses a key debate in this topic; delegates in the first bloc, as well as anyone who is allocated as a non-governmental entity, may benefit from a thorough read of this article. Delegates in the second bloc may also look into MSF's perspectives on this issue, which was also addressed in-depth by the author in the latter parts of the article. While UN Women is not strictly a humanitarian organization, it does not mean that it is entirely absent from field operations; delegates should also consider what future role the organization can play.

「日本語」

東澤靖. (2016). 人道的空間, 武力紛争と国際法のはざまで—企画の趣旨と問題の所在. PRIME, 39, 67-83.

https://meigaku.repo.nii.ac.jp/record/2507/files/PRIME_39_67-83.pdf

本稿は、武力紛争下におけるNGOの「中立性原則」と「表明活動（speaking out）」の根本的対立を分析したものである。著者は、赤十字国際委員会（ICRC）や国境なき医師団（MSF）の事例を取り上げ、国際法の枠組み内で中立性を維持することが時に倫理的ジレンマを引き起こすことを指摘する。具体的には、第二次世界大戦中にICRCが中立性を優先した結果、ユダヤ人救護に失敗した事例や、MSFがナイジェリア・ビアフラ戦争で初めて表明活動を行った経緯を詳述している。これらの事例は、現代の紛争下で女性の権利を擁護するUN Womenの活動にも深く関連する。特に、紛争地域や政治的に不安定な国々で女性の保護やエンパワーメントを推進する際、組織が中立性を維持すべきか、それとも人権侵害に対して声を上げるべきかというジレンマは避けられない。本稿は、UN Womenがこうした課題に直面した際の判断材料として有用であるだけでなく、国際人道活動における倫理的判断の複雑さを理解する上で貴重な視点を提供する。

本山央子. (2019). 武力紛争下の＜女性＞とは誰か—女性・平和・安全保障アジェンダにおける主体の生. ジェンダー研究: お茶の水女子大学ジェンダー研究所年報, 22, 27-45.

http://www2.igs.ocha.ac.jp/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/02-motoyama.pdf

本稿は、国連の「女性・平和・安全保障（WPS）」アジェンダを検証し、武力紛争下における女性の多様な役割と主体性を探る。著者は、WPSアジェンダが女性を「被害者」として一元的に捉える傾向があることを指摘しつつ、女性が戦闘員、平和構築者、生存者など多様な立場で紛争に関わっている現実を強調する。シリアやコロンビアの事例を通じて、女性が暴力の被害者であると同時に、平和プロセスにおいて積極的な役割を果たし得ることを示している。このような視点は、UN Womenが紛争地域で女性のエンパワーメントを推進する際、女性の多様な声と経験をどのように取り入れるかを考える上で極めて重要である。本稿は、WPSアジェンダの課題と可能性を考察し、ジェンダーに基づく暴力の防止や平和構築への女性の参加を促進するための貴重な洞察を提供する。UN Womenの活動をより包括的かつ効果的にするための理論的基盤として、ぜひ一読をお勧めしたい。

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