THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
Committee: The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)
Topic B: Protection of Women and Families in Conflict Zones and Operations
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I. Committee Background

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), was established on June of 1946 by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Its principal objective, and most important topic, is to protect and promote gender equality and advancement of women; as well as different issues including the defense of women’s rights, ensuring their protection and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for women and girls everywhere. Every year, representatives of the UN Member States gather at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, where CSW is headquartered. They work with various groups on different topics and ask for new perspectives and general discussions to evaluate the progress made as well as to set new goals and standards for the empowerment of women globally.

II. Topic Information

A) History of Topic

The protection of women and families in conflict zones and operations means the stability and security for women and families in dangerous sectors. Historically, this has been an ongoing issue, but only recently has it increased in significance during more recent conflicts. Even though some
women do not participate in wars, they still suffer the major consequences that the wars present. Abductions, rape, military recruitment, murder, maiming and exploitation are some of the main ways woman and children are affected by war.

These unsafe scenarios can vary, such as from communal conflicts, environmental disasters, to the most common domestic violence for vulnerable people. Based on the World Health Organization, approximately 40% of all homicides of women are caused by their intimate partner. Every year in the United States 1.3 million women are abused by their consensual partner, relying on The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) statistics. A World Health Organization (WHO) study in 11 countries found that the percentage of women who had been subjected to sexual violence by an intimate partner ranged from 6% in Japan to 59% in Ethiopia.

Women aged 15-44 are at more risk of rape and domestic violence than cancer, car accidents, war and malaria, based on the World Bank’s data. A recent statistic of the United Nations shows that in the Democratic Republic of Congo, approximately 1,100 rapes are being reported each month, with an average of 36 women and girls raped every day. It is believed that over 200,000 women have suffered from sexual violence in that country since a civil conflict began in 1998.

Around 603 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not yet considered a crime. According to the United Nation’s Secretary-General’s campaign UNiTE, only a few countries have made changes, preventing violence against girls and women, however, the problem still
remains in too many countries. Algeria, Congo, Haiti, Iran, Kenya, and Pakistan are examples of where domestic violence is not a crime. On average, two Guatemalan women are murdered on a daily basis. In Australia, Canada, and Israel, 40 to 70 percent of every female murder is related to abuse by their partner. (World Health Organization).

Human trafficking is the trade of humans for the purpose of prostitution, slavery or forced labor. About 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked into the U.S. each year. Annually, 2.5 people are victims of trafficking daily and it is estimated that 80% of people who are trafficked are girls and women. These victims are primarily subjected to sexual exploitation according to UNITE. It is very common that women become targets of the enemies. According to the United Nations, female fatalities in conflict zones have increased by 40% since 2000. Countries such as Syria, Liberia, Israel and Egypt are some of the nations most affected by war. Women in those countries die daily because of the war and conflicts occurring in or near them.

**B) Current Issues**

**Afghanistan:**

Afghanistan is one of the countries that suffers from this issue in an alarming manner. The most common form of violence reported inside the country is purely physical, which consists of violent acts, comparable with burning, beating, amputating and other painful actions against
women. However, Afghan authorities are taking all necessary measures to implement the elimination of violence against women through the creation of new laws in the country, according to Amnesty International.

**Egypt:**

Over the past years, women and girls in Egypt have been victims of violence on a disturbing scale, both at home and in public. Around 99 percent of women and girls in Egypt interviewed for a survey published by UN Women in 2013, reported that they had experienced some form of sexual harassment. Based on a Ministry of Health survey, half of all women who took the survey said that they had experienced some form of domestic violence in their life. A group of people at a protest on January 27, 2015, said that Egypt is failing to protect its women from widespread violence. They also criticized the government because it has not changed laws related to this violence. In Egypt’s prisons, female inmates receive cruel treatment. "All women in police custody or in prison must be protected from violence, torture and ill-treatment, including rape and corporal punishment.,” said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Deputy Director of the Middle East and North Africa Programme, describing the plight of many women.

**Liberia:**

Both children and women are being harmed by conflicts all around the country. According to CNN news, since 2012, violence against women has increased by an alarming 30 percent. Civilians in Liberia have asked for the protection of women, but they say that the country does not care about
what will happen to them. “We need to do something immediately and urgently about maternal mortality,” John Agbor, head of child survival for the UN Children’s Fund, said.

**Sudan:**

In Sudan little to no help is provided if a woman or child is in harm during a conflict. War has changed women and children’s lives over the past years. They are the most vulnerable, but at the same time, they are the ones who receive the worst punishments. They are not able to complain if they are harmed during war because their government will not do save them. Based on Peace Direct, 8 out of 10 women in Sudan die in war, even though they do not participate. Women and children are not just affected physically by war, during a war, some women are widowed and children are orphaned. Moreover, women struggle to sustain livelihoods for their children after conflict, increasing poverty in the nation.

**Somalia:**

Somalia is known as a “failed country” since it has many problems that makes the civilians in the country feel unprotected. The civil war has affected many locations inside Somalia leaving many people dead or harmed. This has resulted in many children being kidnapped, separated from their families, or even killed. Today, there are about 12.4 million of people which need humanitarian assistance but just a few of them receive it since many aid organizations do not operate in the nation due to instability.
Botswana:

In Botswana, women suffer in silence, many from domestic violence. Based on an analysis of gender equality in Botswana, men dominated women through acts of violence. This dominance is born and reinforced from their beliefs and culture. Originally in 2003, a sequence of brutal acts against women started, and were called “passion murders”. Perhaps the key aspect discussed lead to the topic that women abandoned or cheated their other half with another that could provide them materialistic tendencies such as cash, cellphones, cars, etc. The reactions and the big impact on the change of the status of women seeming for independence cause the main violence against women in Botswana.

Syria:

Syria is one of the most affected countries in the world. It has been estimated by the United Nations that in Syria more than 250,000 people have died in the civil war, which has been ongoing since 2011. This problem is especially affecting women and small children, who have been forced to move into more traditional male roles within Syrian society to support their families due to the use of forced recruitment and detention of males aged 16-45. Moreover, sexual assault and torture is used by government and rebel groups as a tactic to humiliate and degrade women. Non-Muslim women have also been forced into slavery or used as hostages by rebel groups. As a result, a significant amount of women have made the dangerous journey to Europe either across land through Turkey or in boats across the Aegean Sea where they also face the threat of sexual assault or enslavement.
C) UN Action

Since 1946, the United Nations has been supporting women all around the world by establishing The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The goal of this committee in 2016 is to eliminate and prevent any type of violence against women. During war, many children are separated from their families and the International Committee of the Red Cross’ (ICRC) goal is to reunite these families. The United Nations and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are currently acting to solve the dilemma by promoting gender equality, empowering women, eliminating gender disparity in education and by preventing and eliminating any type of violence against women and children.

III. Conclusion

Violence against women in conflict zones is an issue that affects multiple nations, cultures and religions worldwide. The United Nations and the Sustainable Development Goals are currently acting on solving the dilemma by promoting gender equality, empowering women and eliminating gender disparity in education by preventing and eliminating any type of violence against women. This topic is of major significance due to its effects on global health and social concern that several countries continue to accept as normal behaviour. NGO’s such as the Society for Nutrition, Education & Health Action (SNEHA) work with the guidance and cooperation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to prevent violence against women and children, by building a gender-sensitive society that speaks out and puts an end to gender-based violence.
IV. Essential Questions

1. How is your country being affected by this issue?
2. Does your country promote gender equality? If so, in which way?
3. How do women and children inside conflict zones affect your country?
4. Are women’s rights in your country being followed?
5. What is your government’s opinion on the topic?
6. How is your delegation planning on solving this issue?
7. Have any solutions been applied by your delegation? What have been their outcomes?
8. How is violence against women an alarming issue in your country? If not, how is your country planning to support other nations?

V. Resources


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