

STUDY GUIDE



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UNITED NATIONS

COMMISSION ON STATUS OF WOMEN

Addressing sexual and gender based violence against refugees, returnees and internally displaced women in conflict zones.

Introduction

The issue in brief

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against refugees, returnees, and internally displaced women in conflict zones constitutes a grave humanitarian crisis, representing a violation of basic human rights and a stark manifestation of the vulnerabilities faced by those forcibly displaced by conflict. In every community in the world there are people who have been affected by acts of brutality. Furthermore, while atrocities committed by armed groups in conflict situations are often well publicized, abuses committed behind closed doors in the confines of one's own home often remain completely hidden. Refugees and internally displaced people, who do not enjoy the protection of their own governments, are among those most vulnerable to acts of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence.

Conflict zones present an environment where individuals, particularly women and girls, are exposed to heightened risks of sexual violence, exploitation, and abuse. Refugees, returnees, and internally displaced women face unique challenges, including overcrowded living conditions, limited access to essential services, and the breakdown of traditional protective mechanisms. The consequences of SGBV extend far beyond the immediate physical harm, encompassing long-term psychological trauma, social stigma, and disruption of community cohesion.

The tactics of sexual violence are often employed as deliberate strategies of war, with armed groups using these heinous acts to instill fear, demoralize communities, and exert control. Displaced populations, living in makeshift shelters or refugee camps, encounter increased vulnerabilities due to the lack of privacy and security. The prevalence of SGBV in conflict zones is further compounded by the breakdown of law and order, weak legal frameworks, and a culture of impunity that often shields perpetrators from accountability.

In combating SGBV against refugees, returnees, and internally displaced women, a comprehensive approach is imperative. Addressing the root causes, providing support for survivors, and fostering a protective environment are essential components of an effective response. This necessitates collaboration between governments, international organizations, non-governmental entities, and local communities to implement preventative measures, ensure access to justice, and promote the empowerment and resilience of those affected. Ultimately, addressing SGBV in conflict zones is integral not only to the well-being of survivors but also to the broader pursuit of peace, stability, and the realization of human rights in these challenging environments.

Possible Solutions

Preventing and mitigating sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against refugees, returnees, and internally displaced women in conflict zones requires comprehensive and effective solutions on multiple fronts:

- Firstly, Nations must ensure that both national and international legal frameworks address SGBV as a punishable crime, including during armed conflicts.
- Nations must prioritize the establishment and maintenance of safe spaces for women and children where they can access essential services, including healthcare, psychosocial support, and legal assistance within refugee camps and displacement settings.
- Nations must prioritize and enhance security in refugee camps and displaced communities in order to better prevent and respond to incidents of SGBV against women and children.
- Nations must prioritize the Provision of proper training for humanitarian workers in refugee camps and displaced communities on recognizing and responding to SGBV, including culturally sensitive approaches.

Points to Consider:

Cultural Sensitivity:

- Understand and respect the cultural context, norms, and practices of the affected communities to ensure that interventions are culturally sensitive and well-received with minimal conflict.

Prevention Education:

- Implement specialized education programs to raise awareness about SGBV, its consequences, and ways to prevent it.

Healthcare Services:

- Ensure seamless access to quality healthcare services for survivors of SGBV.

Legal Support:

- Providing assistance in navigating legal processes and seeking justice for survivors of SGBV.

Role of Humanitarian Organizations:

- Humanitarian organizations play a crucial role in responding to SGBV in conflict zones by providing medical care, counseling, legal support, and work to create safe spaces for women.

Impunity and Lack of Accountability:

- Conflict settings often present challenges in terms of holding perpetrators accountable for SGBV. Weak legal frameworks, a lack of law enforcement, and a culture of impunity can contribute to ongoing cycles of violence.

References and Further Reading:

- <https://gbvmigration.cnrs.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/rhm-article.pdf>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4012695/>
- <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2019/iris-working-papers-28-2019.pdf>
- https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/sites/default/files/documents/CRRF_working_document_updated_June_5.pdf

What do we expect?

1. Exemplary understanding of the topic that is to be discussed in the committee.
2. Absolute understanding of the foreign policy of the nation that the delegate will be representing.
3. Identification of the key areas of discussion.
4. Presenting creative and innovative solutions with regard to the problems that need to be addressed within the committee.
5. Diplomacy.

We are expecting delegates to embody and represent all of the above requirements in order to distinguish themselves as talented individuals in the eyes of the chairs of this committee. Successfully fulfilling these requirements would undoubtedly be instrumental in helping you achieve the various awards within the committee.