



**MENOR
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HANDBOOK OF UN-WOMEN

MENORMUN 2025



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SAMBORONDÓN, 2025

Letter from the Presidency

Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the Chairs of this UN Women committee, it is our honor to welcome you to this session. We gather today to address one of the most urgent, persistent and painful realities in our region: the femicide of women and girls in Latin America, a violation that strips away human dignity, undermines justice and exposes the fragility of our institutions.

Our expectation is clear: this room must rise above rhetoric and deliver substance. We encourage each delegation to debate at a high level with evidence, clarity and integrity, and to present proposals that are feasible, measurable and compatible with the frameworks and capacities of UN Women.

Prevention of femicide cannot be reduced to emotional appeals or symbolic language. It requires the strengthening of institutions, harmonization of legislation, accountability in justice systems and public policies that do not react only after a death but act before it occurs. In this committee we invite you to confront realities without fear, to question entrenched norms and to negotiate constructively with diplomacy and discipline.

As Chairs, we trust your preparation and your ability to engage critically, to listen, to compromise and to lead responsibly. Use this space not only to defend your national positions, but to build solutions that reflect the shared responsibility of protecting the lives of women and girls.

We thank you for being part of this committee and we wish you a rigorous, respectful and impactful debate.

Respectfully,

The Chairs

Giovanna Del Castro, Isabella Zamora





Committee Introduction

History of the committee

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) was created in 2010 by the UN General Assembly Resolution 64/289 to make the UN's work on gender equality more coordinated and effective. Before UN Women existed, four smaller organizations worked separately on women's issues — UNIFEM, DAW, OSAGI, and INSTRAW. UN Women is led by an Under-Secretary-General, has its headquarters in New York, and is governed by an Executive Board of 41 countries that represent different regions of the world.

Functions

UN Women was given what's known as a “triple mandate”, which means it has three main jobs. First, its normative role is to support international discussions and help countries agree on global standards and laws for gender equality, such as through the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the General Assembly. Second, its coordination role is to make sure all parts of the UN system work together and take gender equality seriously in everything they do. UN Women leads this effort through a UN-wide plan called the System-Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP). Third, its operational role is to help countries put these global standards into action by giving technical support, sharing expertise, and helping create national policies and programs that promote women's rights and empowerment.

Capacities

UN Women works at three main levels: global, regional, and national. At the global level, it supports international policymaking and advocates for gender equality in major UN agreements and frameworks. Regional offices adapt these global goals to local contexts and encourage cooperation among countries. Country offices, meanwhile, work directly with governments, local organizations, and UN Country Teams to create laws, programs, and policies that improve women's rights and opportunities. UN Women is also part of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), which ensures that all UN programs in a country include gender equality as a core goal. Note: UN Women Does not have coercive Power.

UN Women works closely with other UN bodies to make sure gender equality is part of all areas of the UN's work. It collaborates with agencies such as UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, and FAO, and it is an active member of the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) and the Chief Executives Board (CEB).



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UN Women also advises the UN Security Council on women, peace, and security issues, and works with ECOSOC and the General Assembly on global policy and resource mobilization.

Monitoring

To make sure its work has real impact, UN Women uses a system of monitoring, evaluation, and accountability. It tracks its progress using a Results-Based Management (RBM) approach, which measures how well its activities achieve their goals. Its Results Management System (RMS) collects data to track results, and the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) reviews the organization's performance.

Accountability

UN Women's funding comes mainly from voluntary contributions from governments and donors. It has two types of resources: core (regular) funding, which is flexible and supports its main priorities, and non-core (earmarked) funding, which supports specific projects. The organization also partners with governments, the private sector, and international institutions to raise funds for gender equality programs around the world.

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Topic A: Prevention of Femicide in Latin America: Public Policies, Effective Justice, and Institutional Strengthening

-- Introduction --

Femicide is the gender-based killing of women and girls, is a grave violation of human rights and a manifestation of deep-rooted gender inequality. Latin America consistently records some of the world's highest femicide rates, particularly in countries such as Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. While awareness of gender violence has increased, systemic failures in justice systems and institutional fragility perpetuate impunity. In response to this, many countries have adopted specific femicide legislation to combat this deeply rooted issue.

Femicide occurs due to deeply entrenched societal norms of gender inequality, misogyny, and power imbalances, which manifest as the intentional killing of a woman or girl because of her gender. These killings are the most extreme form of gender-based violence and are fueled by factors like discrimination, harmful stereotypes, coercive control in relationships, and cultural justifications such as "honor" killings.

--History of the Topic--

The term 'femicide' was popularized in the 1970s by feminist scholars and gained prominence in Latin America during the 1990s, especially after the mass killings of women in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Despite numerous legal reforms, including the 1994 Inter-American Convention of Belém do Pará enforcement remains inconsistent. Patriarchal norms, weak institutions, and insufficient public investment in gender equality programs have hindered progress.

Femicide has developed from an unrecognized concept to a recognized political, public health, and legal issue, with its modern usage gaining traction in the late 1970s through second wave feminist to draw attention to gendered violence. While the phenomenon is ancient, legislative responses are recent, with the first legal recognition of femicide as a specific crime occurring in Spain in 1996, followed by a significant surge in comprehensive legal frameworks between 2012 and 2023. Femicide remains a global challenge, recognized by the UN as the most extreme form of violence against women and highlighting persistent gaps in legal and policy responses.



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—Scope of the Problem—

Femicide occurs globally, but its prevalence is highest in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), over 4,500 women were victims of femicide in 2023. Countries such as El Salvador and Jamaica frequently report the highest rates per 100,000 women, while Africa records the largest absolute numbers of female intimate partner and family-related killings (ECLAC, 2015; UN Women, 2024). In 2023, an estimated 85,000 women and girls were intentionally killed worldwide, 60% of these deaths perpetrated by intimate partners or close relatives, equating to approximately 140 women killed every day, or one every ten minutes (UN Women, 2024). These statistics illustrate the magnitude of femicide as a public health and human rights crisis. However, inconsistencies in data collection, underreporting, and varying definitions make it challenging to achieve precise regional and global comparisons (CDC, 2024; Organization, World Health, n.d.).

Despite the enactment of laws criminalizing femicide, many countries in Latin America face persistent challenges in effective enforcement. Weak investigative capacities, delayed judicial processes, structural biases within law enforcement and judicial systems, and insufficient forensic resources result in widespread impunity (Elefante & Wang, 2025; UN Women, 2024). Budgetary constraints limit the availability of shelters, hotlines, legal aid, and psychological services, even in countries where legislation exists; only about 40% of nations allocate dedicated funds for programs addressing violence against women (ECLAC, 2015). Furthermore, the lack of standardized and transparent monitoring and data collection hampers evidence-based policymaking and prevents accurate evaluation of interventions (Women, UN, 2018). Fragmented coordination between justice, law enforcement, and social services also reduces the overall effectiveness of institutional responses.

— Past Actions —

The UN Women Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has implemented programs like 'Spotlight Initiative,' launched in partnership with the EU, to strengthen institutions, promote accountability, and improve survivor services. Countries such as Argentina and Mexico have enacted femicide laws, but enforcement



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remains a challenge. Strengthening data collection, cross-border cooperation, and institutional capacity is essential for long-term change.

These mechanisms offer standardized investigative protocols, policy guidance, training for justice and law enforcement officials, and tools for monitoring and evaluating progress. Regional and global initiatives facilitate inter-country cooperation and knowledge exchange, ensuring national policies align with international human rights standards (UN Women, 2024; Women, UN, 2018). These efforts also support data standardization and transparency, allowing countries to better understand the scope of femicide and measure the effectiveness of interventions. Overall, international support complements national policies by fostering accountability, building institutional capacity, and promoting coordinated action to prevent femicide and protect women's rights across the region (Elefante & Wang, 2025; Spotlight Initiative, 2022).

Governments across Latin America have adopted a variety of interventions to prevent and respond to femicide. Legal frameworks include the criminalization of femicide or the introduction of aggravated homicide for gender reasons, as seen in Mexico's General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence and Argentina's 2012 penal code reform (Elefante & Wang, 2025; Women, UN, 2018). Specialized investigative mechanisms and protocols have been introduced to standardize procedures and improve accountability; Ecuador's National Protocol for Investigating Femicides guides prosecutors and law enforcement in conducting thorough, gender-sensitive investigations (Spotlight Initiative, 2022). Early-warning systems, such as Mexico's AVGM alert program, mobilize authorities and civil society to respond to imminent threats, demonstrating that operational tools complement legal frameworks effectively (UN, Women, 2019). Integrated service centers, like Ciudad Mujer in El Salvador, provide women with medical, psychological, and legal support under a single roof, offering a holistic approach to protection and empowerment. Regional and international frameworks, including the Inter-American Convention of Belém do Pará and initiatives supported by multilateral partnerships, provide technical assistance, monitoring tools, and capacity-building to strengthen national responses.



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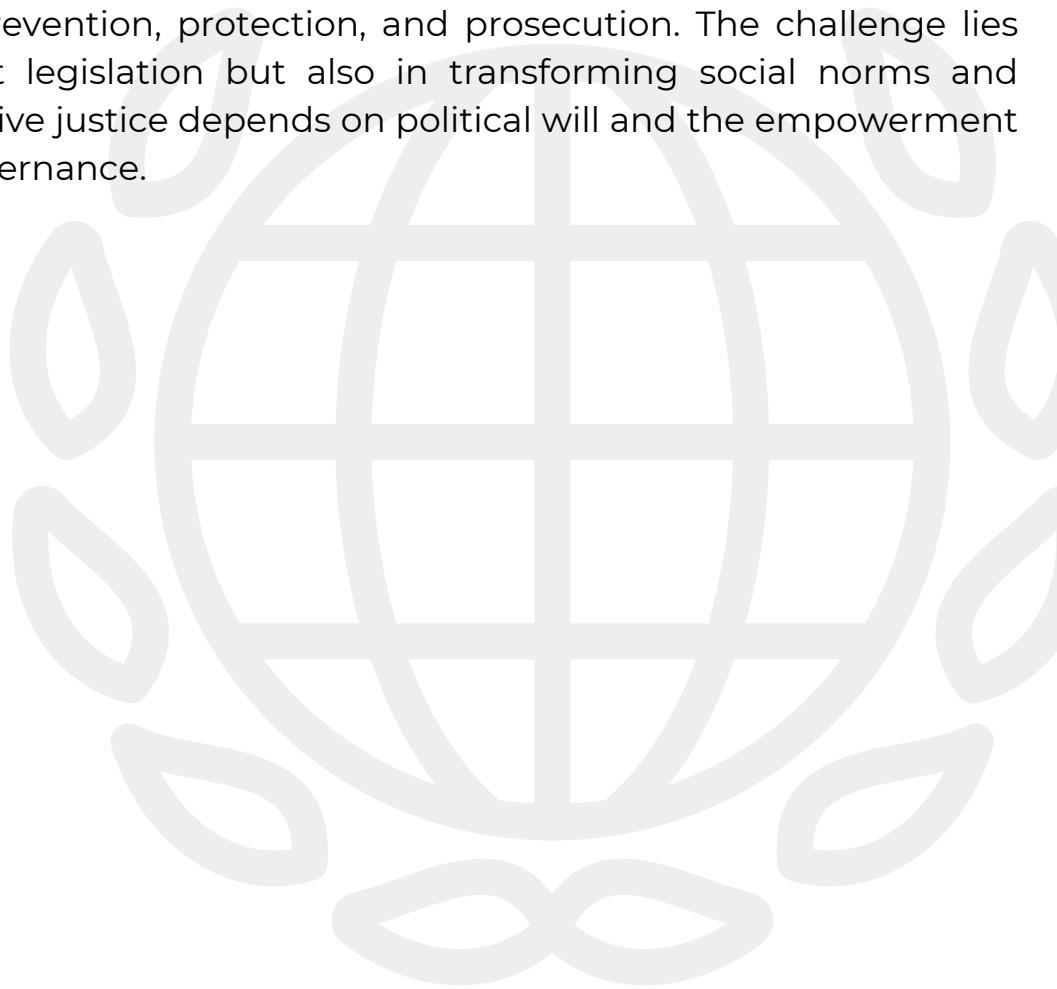
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—Remaining Gaps—

Although legislative and institutional measures have advanced, several gaps remain. Laws alone are insufficient without proper enforcement, resourcing, and capacity building. Many femicide cases remain uninvestigated or poorly investigated, and budgetary allocations for preventive and support services are often inadequate. Data collection remains inconsistent, undermining the ability to track trends, evaluate interventions, and hold institutions accountable (Women, UN, 2018; UN Women, 2024). Fragmented coordination across governmental agencies, law enforcement, judiciary, and civil society organizations continues to impede comprehensive, effective action. Cultural and social norms that perpetuate gender-based violence also persist, necessitating community-based interventions, awareness campaigns, and educational programs to foster long-term prevention.

Delegates must recognize that eliminating femicide requires an intersectional approach that combines prevention, protection, and prosecution. The challenge lies not only in crafting robust legislation but also in transforming social norms and institutional behavior. Effective justice depends on political will and the empowerment of women at all levels of governance.





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—Guiding Questions—

1. What are the root causes and contributing factors behind the high rates of femicide in Latin America?
2. What public policies have been implemented in Latin American countries to prevent femicide, and how effective have they been?
3. How do weaknesses in the justice system (e.g., impunity, lack of investigation, underreporting) affect the prosecution and prevention of femicide?
4. What role do institutions (e.g., police, judiciary, health and social services) play in either perpetuating or combating femicide, and how can their capacity be strengthened?
5. What international frameworks, regional agreements, or best practices can be adapted or expanded to strengthen national responses to femicide in Latin?
6. What role should education and media campaigns play in changing cultural attitudes toward women?
7. How can data collection be standardized across Latin America to support policy evaluation?

Works





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Topic B: Impact of Migration Crises On Refugee Women: Protection Against Sexual Violence, Trafficking, and Exploitation

—Introduction—

Migration crises represent one of the most urgent humanitarian challenges of the twenty-first century, affecting millions of people worldwide due to armed conflict, climate change, natural disasters, political persecution, and economic instability. Within these populations, women face heightened vulnerabilities stemming from their gender. Refugee women are particularly exposed to sexual and gender-based violence, forced marriages, human trafficking, and exploitative labor during transit, in refugee camps, and even in host countries. The collapse of social protection systems during displacement further amplifies these risks, leaving women unprotected and vulnerable to abuse. These vulnerabilities are evident across multiple regions: in the Middle East, Syrian and Afghan women face early marriage and discrimination in neighboring countries; in Africa, women fleeing conflicts in South Sudan, Eritrea, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are at risk of sexual violence and exploitation by armed groups and camp authorities; and in Latin America, Venezuelan women face trafficking, sexual exploitation, and forced labor as they seek refuge in Colombia, Brazil, and beyond. The failure to address these issues not only endangers individual women but also undermines broader humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding objectives (UN-Women, 2022; UNHCR, 2023).

—Historical Context—

The feminization of migration has been a defining trend of the 21st century. Women now constitute nearly half of all international migrants. UNHCR's 1951 Refugee Convention laid the foundation for international protection, but it was not until the 1990s that gender-based persecution was recognized as grounds for asylum. Crises such as the Venezuelan displacement and the Northern Triangle exodus have underscored regional challenges in Latin America. The vulnerabilities of refugee women have deep historical roots, highlighting the intersection of displacement and gender-based violence. During the 1994 Rwandan genocide, tens of thousands of women fleeing to neighboring countries were subjected to sexual violence, often strategically used as a weapon of war. Similarly, the Balkan conflicts of the 1990s revealed widespread trafficking of displaced women across borders and their forced involvement in sexual exploitation.



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These historical events exposed major gaps in international protection mechanisms for displaced women and underscored the need for gender-sensitive humanitarian interventions. International legal frameworks have since emerged to address these gaps. The 1951 Refugee Convention established foundational rights for displaced persons but did not explicitly address gender-based persecution. CEDAW (1979) expanded protections for women broadly but lacked tailored mechanisms for refugee populations. It was not until UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) that the global community began formally recognizing the importance of women's protection in conflict and displacement contexts. Despite these milestones, migration crises persist, revealing the insufficiency of past legal and humanitarian measures in fully preventing exploitation, trafficking, and sexual violence against refugee women (Security Council Report, 2000; UN-Women, 2022).

—Scope of the Problem—

Human trafficking is another major dimension of the crisis. Criminal organizations exploit the desperation of refugee women, targeting them for forced labor, sexual slavery, or illegal adoption. According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), women and girls represent over 70% of detected victims of human trafficking worldwide. Many of these cases are directly linked to displacement caused by war or poverty. The lack of legal status often prevents refugee women from reporting abuses, as they fear deportation or retaliation. This silence allows traffickers to operate with relative impunity, further deepening the cycle of exploitation.

The socioeconomic vulnerabilities of refugee women cannot be overlooked. Many refugee women arrive in host countries with limited financial resources, language barriers, and few employment opportunities. Without access to stable income, they are more likely to fall into exploitative labor arrangements or transactional sex in order to survive. Education is another crucial challenge, as refugee girls are often pulled out of school due to cultural barriers, early marriages, or security concerns. This lack of education perpetuates dependency and prevents them from gaining the skills needed to rebuild their lives. The cumulative effect of these challenges means that refugee women often face not only immediate threats to their safety but also long-term barriers to empowerment.



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Refugee women face multifaceted vulnerabilities during migration crises, including sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), trafficking, and exploitation. These challenges are particularly acute in regions with ongoing conflicts and limited resources.

Middle East and North Africa (MENA): In Jordan, UN Women operates four centers within two refugee camps, offering daily cash-for-work opportunities and training to empower women economically. Similarly, in Lebanon, the organization has implemented programs focusing on women's economic empowerment and protection against SGBV.

Sub-Saharan Africa: In Uganda, UN Women provides a holistic support package for survivors of violence, integrating services like legal aid, psychosocial support, and economic empowerment initiatives. This approach aims to address the immediate needs of survivors while promoting long-term resilience.

Europe and Central Asia: In Moldova, UN Women has facilitated the launch of the "Female Support Force," a network of refugee women from Ukraine. This initiative focuses on economic empowerment and social integration, helping women rebuild their lives in the host country.

Asia-Pacific: In Bangladesh, UN Women has supported Rohingya refugee women by providing platforms for them to voice their concerns and needs, ensuring their participation in decision-making processes within refugee camps.





Topic B: Impact of Migration Crises On Refugee Women: Protection Against Sexual Violence, Trafficking, and Exploitation

—Past Actions—

UN Women, IOM, and UNHCR have developed joint frameworks such as the 'Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility' (GBV AoR) and the 'Safe from the Start' initiative. Several Latin American countries, including Colombia and Peru, have implemented protection protocols for migrant women, yet implementation gaps persist. Civil society organizations play a crucial role in filling these gaps through shelters, psychosocial support, and legal assistance. International agreements, such as the Palermo Protocol on trafficking and the Istanbul Convention on preventing violence against women, provide frameworks to protect refugee women from trafficking, sexual exploitation, and gender-based violence, though implementation varies across countries and regions. Humanitarian programs have incorporated gender-sensitive measures into emergency responses, including the creation of safe spaces, gender-focused aid distribution, and specialized training for staff to prevent sexual violence. National initiatives, such as Colombia's specialized centers for Venezuelan refugee women, combine legal, psychosocial, and medical services, offering integrated protection and support. Early-warning systems and monitoring mechanisms aim to detect and respond to imminent threats. These interventions demonstrate the potential effectiveness of coordinated, multi-level approaches, emphasizing the importance of combining legal frameworks, operational programs, and community-based initiatives (UN-Women, 2022; Council of Europe, 2011).

—Remaining Gaps—

Despite international and national measures, refugee women continue to experience significant protection gaps. Legal frameworks, while in place, are often poorly enforced or inconsistently applied, leaving women exposed to violence and exploitation. Resource limitations restrict the availability of gender-sensitive shelters, psychosocial support, legal aid, and protective services. Coordination challenges among humanitarian agencies, law enforcement, and judicial authorities reduce the effectiveness of interventions. Cultural and structural barriers, including entrenched gender norms and discrimination, further exacerbate vulnerabilities. Moreover, gaps in standardized data collection and monitoring hinder evidence-based policy development, making it difficult to track trends, evaluate program effectiveness, and hold responsible actors accountable (UN-Women, 2022; UNHCR, 2023).



Topic B: Impact of Migration Crises On Refugee Women: Protection Against Sexual Violence, Trafficking, and Exploitation

—Conclusion—


The protection of refugee and migrant women demands an integrated regional response that combines humanitarian aid with long-term development strategies. Empowerment must be central to migration governance. By addressing gender-based violence and ensuring access to justice, states can transform migration from a context of vulnerability into an opportunity for resilience and equality.





Topic B: Impact of Migration Crises On Refugee Women: Protection Against Sexual Violence, Trafficking, and Exploitation

—Guiding Questions—

- How can host countries be encouraged or supported to adopt gender-sensitive asylum and refugee policies?
 - What strategies can be developed to dismantle trafficking networks that specifically target refugee women?
 - How can humanitarian responses better guarantee safety and dignity in refugee camps?
 - What role can education and economic empowerment play in reducing the vulnerability of refugee women?
 - How should the UN-Women committee balance immediate protection with long-term structural reforms?
 - What mechanisms can ensure accountability for sexual violence in migration contexts?
 - What role should NGOs play in complementing state protection systems?
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Topic B: Impact of Migration Crises On Refugee Women: Protection Against Sexual Violence, Trafficking, and Exploitation

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