

# UN Women



## Background Guide

# Letter from the Secretary-General and Director-General

Hello delegates, advisors, parents, and teachers,

On behalf of us, your Secretary-General Isabella Balbi Masso and Director-General Alexandria Cerini, and all of our Secretariat, we would like to welcome you all to the 37th iteration of the Florida International Model United Nations Conference! This upcoming FIMUN will continue to be held at Florida International University's beautiful Modesto A. Maidique Campus from March 14th to 16th, 2025.

This year we have selected the theme of "Diplomacy in a Divided World," where delegates will be prompted to show diplomacy during challenging and engaging scenarios in a wide variety of General Assembly, Specialized, and Crisis Committees. Both of us originate from opposite sides of the ocean and have seen the division of the world, especially in our modern day. We are strong believers that every person, even young students, have the ability to show diplomacy and change the world. Being able to act with diplomacy in cases of adversity, disadvantage, and injustice is a skill that every person should learn and harness to make the world a better place, not just for themselves but for everyone.

We are working hard to provide every delegate with a committee that they will love, and an unforgettable experience where they will make new friends, learn new skills, and discover the amazing world of Model UN! This year we will be hosting 15 committees each one focusing on a different current, historical, or fantasy issue, with an amazing staff who are prepared to make this FIMUN the best one yet!

We are incredibly honored and excited to welcome you all to our amazing campus and conference this March, and cannot wait to see each and every one of you succeed!

See you soon,

Isabella Balbi Masso and Alexandria Cerini  
Secretary-General and Director-General for FIMUN 37  
[ibalb007@fiu.edu](mailto:ibalb007@fiu.edu) and [aceri008@fiu.edu](mailto:aceri008@fiu.edu)

# Letter from the Under-Secretary General

Hello delegates,

My name is Carmen Ordonez and I will be serving as FIMUN 37's Under Secretary-General for General Assembly Committees! Having competed in General Assembly Committees (also known as GAs) throughout highschool and college, I genuinely believe that these type of committees are the most impactful, challenging, and exhilarating not only to become more informed as a global citizen, but to develop your analytical and leadership skills, which in turn provides many lessons overall for personal growth. Most of my growth as a delegate and person has come from doing Model UN, especially through GAs as I strongly believe it teaches you to push yourself and find your values including authenticity and leading (not just yourself) but others to success.

A couple of fun facts about me: I am a senior double majoring in International Relations and Political Science with a certificate in Latin American & Caribbean Studies. I have previously lived in Washington DC and Taiwan, I am involved in the Sigma Iota Rho Honor Society, and am a proud sister of Sigma Kappa. This year would be my fourth and final year staffing at FIMUN and it could not be more bittersweet, especially having competed at FIMUN throughout all my years in highschool, so this team has truly become my home.

It is important to note that although each committee has a competitive environment, remember that FIMUN is a place for cooperation, diplomacy, and growth. With that being said, it is expected that every person allows each delegate to be heard, and to act equitably and honestly amongst your peers. The FIU team has worked hard to make this conference a memorable experience for every delegate and I hope it makes a deep impact and helps you find your passion as it has for me. If you ever have any questions, comments, or concerns about your committee please feel free to reach out as I want each of you to have the best experience at FIMUN 37!

Best,  
Carmen Ordonez  
Under Secretary-General for General Assembly Committees  
cordo022@fiu.edu

# Letter from the Director

Dear Delegates,

Hello! My name is Loren Vincent, and I am so thrilled to serve as your director for UN Women. I am a sophomore here at FIU studying International Relations and looking to complete a Pre-Law certificate. My hobbies consist mostly of listening to music (both on Spotify and vinyl), collecting stationery, and hand lettering. Although I live, work, and go to school here in Miami, I was born and raised in St. Petersburg, which is a tiny peninsula located in the Tampa Bay Area. I graduated from Gibbs High School in 2023, and like you, I was also a delegate attending MUN conferences. (Not FIMUN sadly.) Although I acted as a director in last year's iteration of FIMUN in the African Union 2009 committee, this is my first time writing a background guide and preparing a committee. To me, this topic of women's rights in wartime is one that is of the utmost importance but often thrown to the back burner.

I hope while preparing and competing that you not only challenge yourself to come up with creative and innovative solutions, but also remain open to diverse opinions and worldviews. By doing so, you'll leave each committee session at the end of the day with new knowledge gained and exchanged between your peers. I understand that navigating preparation for Model UN can be difficult and overwhelming at times, so if any questions arise, please feel free to contact me through my student email, which is [lvinc014@fiu.edu](mailto:lvinc014@fiu.edu). I will try my best to send a response as quickly as possible! I cannot wait to meet everyone; I am beyond excited!

Loren Vincent  
[lvinc014@fiu.edu](mailto:lvinc014@fiu.edu)  
UN Women Director  
Florida International Model United Nations 37

# Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Hello everyone! My name is Liz'Angela Tillias, and I am excited to serve as your Chair for the UN Women committee at FIMUN 37. I'm currently a senior at FIU, pursuing a double major in International Relations and Political Science, with a Certificate in Pre-Law Skills and Professional Values. Originally from Haiti, I have witnessed firsthand the disproportionate impact of war and conflict has on women; gang violence in particular in the case of Haiti.

We are coming together to acknowledge and discuss that throughout history, conflicts have not only resulted in loss of life and infrastructure but have also exacerbated inequalities, particularly for women. They often face unique challenges before, during and after conflicts, including abuse and harassment, displacement, violence, limited access to resources and support systems, and even see their freedom completely stripped away at the hands of oppressive regimes, human and sex trafficking and more.

In our discussions, I encourage you to think critically about these issues and to explore innovative solutions that address the needs of women affected by war in realistic ways both that pertain to each of your individual countries but also prioritizes impacted civilians and not governmental or credential profit of your positions. Your ability to empathize and advocate for these voices while showing true understanding of their plight is crucial. As we navigate our sessions, I urge everyone to maintain a spirit of collaboration and respect required of all diplomats with one another but also smooth understanding and clear cohesion with your partners. The goal of this committee is not only to propose solutions but also to foster an inclusive environment where all perspectives are heard, respected, and valued. Let's work together to make a meaningful impact and ensure that women's voices are heard in the dialogue surrounding conflict and peace.

I look forward to witnessing your creativity and passion as we tackle these pressing issues!

Liz'Angela Tillias

ltill008@fiu.edu.

UN Women Chair

Florida International Model United Nations 37

# Sensitivity Statement

FIMUN 37 has a zero tolerance policy on racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and transphobia. If delegates are found to be engaging in any such actions or rhetoric are open to disqualification from awards.

We ask all delegates to be conscious of the histories and context of their countries or characters for their committees. While these committees are simulations, the histories behind them are real, and disrespect towards the histories and existences of people represented in our committees will not be tolerated.

On our website, we have an anonymous report form if delegates encounter such actions. While we hope to avoid the need for such, this form will be checked regularly by our Secretariat to ensure that all delegates at FIMUN 37 can enjoy their weekend comfortably.

# Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that our university is located on the ancestral homelands of sovereign Native nations, including the Tequesta, the Calusa, and today, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. We pay our respects to the traditional custodians, the Elders past and present, by fully recognizing Indigenous sovereignty as well as the historical and contemporary relationship between Indigenous peoples and their traditional homelands. It is within our responsibility as an academic institution to uphold knowledge about the history of our institution with the original stewards of this land that we live, learn, and work on. We encourage our delegates to read and learn about ways to support our local Indigenous communities in their efforts to preserve Seminole and Miccosukee land and water rights, cultural practices, and the conservation of the environment.

Consistent with our University's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, FIU is working towards creating an academic environment that is inclusive of Indigenous students, faculty, and staff who have often been rendered invisible due to structural discriminatory practices. At FIU, we hold ourselves accountable to serving local, regional and worldwide Indigenous communities through academic policy-oriented research, education, partnerships, community service, as well as enrollment initiatives to overcome the effects of Indigenous exclusion and erasure in our own academic institution. It is our hope that acknowledging the land helps us to better understand that harm has been done and address the legacies of violence in our communities in order to create a pathway to true healing

# Rules of Procedure

## Motions

### Motion to Open/Resume Debate

Opens the floor for debate. Delegates may now begin to provide further motions.

### Motion to Open Speakers List

Opens the Speakers List, wherein delegates can deliver speeches without a set topic.

### Motion for a Moderated Caucus

Opens a set speakers list for debate on a specified topic. Total time and speaking time must be specified within the motion.

### Motion for an Unmoderated Caucus

Opens time for unregulated working time for delegates to work within their blocs on working papers/draft resolutions/directives.

### Motion for a Round Robin

Opens a Round Robin, where every delegate in the room delivers a speech for a set time without a designated topic. Will start from the delegate that motioned and will either go clockwise or counterclockwise at delegate's discretion.

### Motion for a Gentlemen's Unmoderated/Consultation of the Whole

Similar rules as to a normal Unmoderated Caucus, however all delegates must remain in their seats.

### Motion to Introduce Working Papers/Draft Resolutions/Directives

Opens the floor to begin formal procedure on papers. Order of address if not specified will default to order in which each paper was introduced.

### Authors Panel

Generally motioned for alongside the introduction of Working Papers/Draft Resolutions. Involves a Reading Period for Delegates to read papers, an Introduction where a panel of Delegates present the paper, and a Question and Answer portion, where sponsors of the paper are asked questions by fellow delegates about the paper.

### Motions for For and Against Speeches

Opens a short speakers list where (generally speaking) 2 delegates are called to speak for and against a given working paper/draft resolution/directive.

### Motions to Enter Voting Procedure and Voting Methods

Goes alongside a motion to end debate when in General Assembly and certain Specialized Agencies. Delegates will vote on papers on the floor. If no voting method is specified, committee will default to placard vote.

Placard vote operates the same way as votes for procedural matters. Delegates raise their placards to vote For, Against, or to Abstain if they stated they were Present.

Roll Call vote will have the chair call Roll Call once more, and when delegates are called they will state whether they vote For, Against, or if they Abstain.

Votes by Acclimation involves calling for general consensus, where the paper will pass unless anyone votes Against. Then placard vote is in order.

## Points

### Point of Inquiry

General question regarding committee or the conference

### Point of Order

Question or correction regarding parliamentary procedures

### Point of Personal Privilege

Personal request unrelated to committee. (e.g temperature in the room or seating issue)



# Introduction

Although war presents many different conflicts and hardships, one that is often overlooked is the state of women's health and rights in nations affected by war. While all people struggle to a high degree in a state of war, women suffer unique consequences and challenges which include gender-based and sexual violence. The deterioration of infrastructure including hospitals and other healthcare centers makes access to proper care much harder. In addition to struggling with physical health, specifically reproductive health, war also causes many mental health issues which are usually ignored. Even if nations have worked to create legal frameworks protecting women's rights, conflict can undermine the importance and significance of these strides. Hopefully this guide can provide a starting point to the research needed to address these issues effectively in committee.

## UN Women

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) is a multi-tiered United Nations body which deals with issues of gender equality and uplifting women internationally. It includes 41 member-states who are elected and serve three-year terms on the council. Each continent has a proportional number of representatives. The organization was established in 2010 to address the challenges and struggles presented internationally by situations where women's rights have been undermined. The organization uses methods of international political diplomacy to achieve women's rights advancements and goals in each member state. This was established as a part of the UN's reform agenda which also called for more diversity, transparency, and focuses on human rights.

According to the framework of UN Women, they strive to:

- Eliminate discrimination against women and girls
- Empower all women and girls
- Achieve equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security

The mission of UN Women calls to assure that women and girls are included and uplifted in all parts of life and are not undermined by governments or society. Some landmark achievements made by UN Women between 2018 and 2022 include:

- 35,000 women gained political leadership skills
- 41 countries implemented gender action plans and budgets
- 57 countries tackled discriminatory norms
- 1.9 million girls and women benefited from lifesaving humanitarian services

The UN Women body has many powers that can be utilized to tackle certain issues, such as the one that this committee will be focusing on: **“Women's Rights in Wartime.”** To possibly spark some inspiration for action, the UN Women has the power of influence over policy, which means that the

UN Women's position on the global stage can influence nations' policies and push governments to enact change. Another power is dispersing information and education. The UN Women uses its platform to raise awareness on issues and launches global campaigns.

Another type of education used is the financing and operation of international trainings, and events where leaders can come together to learn how to enact change in their own countries. These kinds of events are key to global cooperation between nations on advancing women's rights. Make sure to utilize these powers while creating solutions and understand the bandwidth of power that the UN Women has.

## The Fight Against Gender Based Violence

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is defined by the World Bank as a "global pandemic that affects 1 in 3 women in their lifetime." (World Bank) Because of the panic and deterioration of legal systems in wartime, the act of gender-based violence becomes harder to combat and even becomes more frequent. Governments, military groups, and armies often use rape or sexual assault as a weapon. While not only women are affected by sexual violence, the vast majority of victims of this crime are women and girls. Gender-based violence includes, according to the Council of Europe: "sexual, physical, verbal, psychological (emotional), or socio-economic" abuse. Gender-based violence can occur privately at home, or in the public eye. In times of war, this becomes ignored as the focus of many governments and organizations is to provide immediate need and relief such as housing, water, food, and shelter, and allocate more funds towards military operations. The violent and horrific acts that occur to women in these situations is both under-reported and overlooked. In the midst of conflict and war, there is an immediate disruption to the life that many women and girls used to know. Even if the conditions of women's rights in times of peace were already bad, war amplifies these inequalities. This topic is one that is not easy to discuss and solve because there are so many aspects and dynamics to war that would cause this issue to never be addressed. As a delegate, you are encouraged to research these situations and brainstorm how governments and the international community can react to this and solve it within the framework of the UN Women.

### Case Study 1: The Yugoslav Wars (1991-2001)

The Yugoslav Wars were the culmination of ethnic conflicts that occurred, all ending in the breakup of former Yugoslavia. The main actors involved were Serbia and Montenegro. (The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) These countries and their militant groups were dominant over the Balkan peninsula and sparked the conflicts that occurred over the course of these years. The countries that faced war

because of the separation include Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Kosovo. These wars were fought by Serbian forces to maintain influence over the Balkan peninsula. This war is a key example of how women's rights are consistently neglected in times of war. Although laws were in place in former Yugoslavia which prosecuted and addressed crimes against humanity, sexual and gender-based violence such as rape and sexual assault were not legally defined as a crime against humanity. The United Nations Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia accused and prosecuted Dragoljub Kunarac, Zoran Vuković and Radomir Kovač for committing crimes against humanity, which included systemic sexual violence, slavery, and rape against Bosnian Muslim girls.

Witness 87 (UNCTFY) was a Bosnian Muslim 15-year-old who lived near the border of Serbia during the Bosnian war. She testified to the pain and violence she endured in the Bosnian war in the case against the three, which will not be explained in detail in this background guide. The girls, including Witness 87, feared for their life every passing moment. While the crimes of these militants have come to light after the war, many women and girls were not able to testify. This is one of the biggest issues of addressing gender-based violence. Women and girls feel ashamed and unable to come out against their abusers, especially in war. Sadly, this has been the case for many women, notably women who lived in Croatia during the Yugoslav wars. According to Vuk Tesija, only "ten to 15% of survivors of sexual violence during the Croatian war have officially registered themselves as victims," meaning the estimated number of women impacted by sexual violence is much higher than the actual number of reports. Not only is this harmful because the perpetrators are never punished, but the women and girls carry with them every scar from the past. The trauma that follows them may never heal. The Serbian forces used this gender-based violence to ethnically cleanse non-Serb Balkans by forcing them to endure the trauma of sexual violence.



## Case Study 2: #BringBackOurGirls

One of the most notorious instances of gender-based violence is the Nigeria Chibok schoolgirls kidnapping. Boko Haram is an extremist terrorist militant group based in Nigeria. Their aim is to replace the current Nigerian government with one that follows Sharia Law. On the night of April 14, 2014, 276 girls were kidnapped at their all-girls school. This tragic event immediately caught the attention of the entire world, with #BringBackOurGirls trending on the international stage. Many notable people and international actors such as Michelle Obama, Malala Yousafzai, the United Nations, and the Human Rights Watch have posted under this campaign, drawing attention to this problem.

While some girls have escaped or have been found by Nigerian forces, about 98 are believed to still be missing 10 years later. Many organizations such as Amnesty International are calling upon Nigerian authorities to continue to attempt to rescue these girls. Terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram plan their attacks with thought, and choose symbolic targets. This group has used innocent civilians many times to convey a message, and the Chibok schoolgirls were a victim to this. Boko Haram's kidnapping of the schoolgirls was symbolic, as they believe that women should not receive an education and should live to serve men. It was reported that the girls kidnapped were forced into marrying members of Boko Haram and suffered greatly if they refused in any way.



Limited access to women's healthcare becomes an invisible weapon used in wars. Hospitals and healthcare centers are protected by international humanitarian law. Although this is true and the targeting of these centers is considered a war crime, these attacks occur, nevertheless. It would be incorrect to say that these attacks don't happen, as they are an often occurrence in places including Ukraine, Gaza, and Syria, which struggle with ongoing war and conflict.

Hospitals and Medical care centers should never be a target in war. Another large issue that should be address is access to menstrual care products, such as sanitary pads, tampons, cups, period underwear, contraceptives, and even over-the-counter drugs such as ibuprofen or naproxen sodium.

According to the World Bank, about 500 million women don't have proper access to these very necessary items. It is not only socially excluding and stressful to not have access to proper care products while menstruating, but it also puts women at risk for contracting urinary tract infections (UTI), rashes, contact dermatitis, and many other health issues. It hinders women from being able to work and exist in a social setting. Supply-chain issues, blockades, and any way that the movement of products is stopped is another way that women cannot access period products. It is very important that nations work together to eliminate any supply chain issues and ensure that people get access to the care they need.

## Case Study 3: Yemen and Period Poverty

Yemen is a country located on the Arabian Peninsula, bordering Saudi Arabia, Oman, and many bodies of water such as the Red Sea. It is known for its rich culture, as Yemen is home to one of the oldest civilizations on Earth, and this is apparent in its architecture which consists of tower-houses built with mud. Currently, Yemen is struggling with an ongoing civil war which began in 2014 and has continued to worsen. Many organizations have cited Yemen's situation as one of the worst in the world for women and access to proper women's care and period products. The Borgen Project states that some women in Yemen stand for prolonged periods of time just to not stain anything with blood. Many women use whatever they can find to absorb the blood, and this often includes dirty rags that could pose a risk of infections and guarantee poor hygiene.



# Adhering to Policies and Legal Framework

When nations are experiencing war or conflict, it usually causes advancements in minority rights to experience the “one step forward, two steps back” phenomenon. Some frameworks that are impacted and undermined by this are the International Humanitarian Law, which famously include the Geneva Convention, the International Criminal Law, and United Nations Resolutions which include Security Council Resolutions, which are often ignored without fear of international retaliation. Although many conventions and international organizations create frameworks and policies to protect women’s rights, they are often not upheld or enforced. In almost every single war, the Geneva Conventions are ignored, and innocent lives are lost. War crimes are committed daily by various nations and militant groups. How can the international community combat this and assure that women are protected in their home states? Some United Nations resolutions that have been passed are:

- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325: This resolution was established in 2000 and called upon member states to protect women from sexual and gender-based violence and include women in peace processes
- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820: Names sexual violence as a tactic of war and calls upon member states to respond to and prevent these instances of violence in war zones
- United Nations Security Council Resolution 1960: Calls upon member states to record and monitor instances of sexual violence in war and emphasizes the importance of legal justice

## Case Study 4: The Rwandan Genocide and International Law

The Rwandan Genocide was a catastrophe which unfolded in 1994, in the landlocked Central African nation of Rwanda. The full-blown genocide began as an ethnic conflict in Rwanda’s post-colonial period between the two ethnic groups, the Hutus (majority) and the Tutsi minority. The first massacres were cited by the UN to begin in the 1960s, where about 20,000 Tutsis were massacred. The genocide began on April 6, 1994, where a plane was shot down, killing both the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi. This was blamed on the Tutsi organization, giving the Hutu extremist-led Rwandan government a catalyst to begin the genocide. This genocide was a tragic and horrific instance where the perpetrators not only killed and massacred innocent civilians, but they also used sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon against Tutsi women.

Clearly, the Rwandan government did not adhere to the international laws and legal frameworks in place while waging war against their own civilians. As mentioned earlier, the United Nations Security

Council Resolution 1325 was particularly broken. This resolution calls upon nations to protect women from sexual and gender-based violence which was broken. Although there are no exact numbers reported by any international organizations or governments, many women have come forward and stated that rape was extremely widespread and used as a weapon against women.

Many women survived genital mutilation and the most gruesome forms of sexual violence. These scars, both physical and psychological, stay with these women for the rest of their lives. It leaves them sometimes unable to have children of their own, which furthered the genocide of the Tutsi people. If the legal framework that prevents this kind of violence was better upheld, could this war have turned out differently?

## Post-War and Beyond

Post-War reforms are integral to rebuilding a society after armed conflicts resolve. Some examples of post-war reforms to advance women's rights include prosecuting war criminals and helping victims seek justice through the International Criminal Court. In the case of the Rwanda Genocide and Yugoslav War, victims were able to seek justice through the International Criminal Tribunal. These are special courts created just to prosecute war criminals and they have been successful. These kinds of courts can give victims of sexual and gender violence closure. In this committee, it is expected that as a delegate, you will be able to use these earlier instances as examples and models for how to solve current and ongoing problems in the committee topic. Through research, you should examine which methodologies are effective.



## Questions to Consider

1. How can states work together to emphasize the importance of legal frameworks protecting Women's Rights in wartime?
2. How can governments, societies, and leaders assure that survivors of sexual and gender-based violence feel safe enough to come forward?
3. How can the international community address the lack of protection for women in their home countries?
4. What incentives can be provided that encourage nations to adhere to United Nations Resolutions and the Geneva Conventions?
5. How can the international community expand access to menstrual hygiene products and women's care?
6. How can we address mistakes made by the international community in preventing and addressing gender-based violence?



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