



Child Marriage and Child Widows in the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and Humanitarian Response

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Child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) is known to increase during periods of armed conflict and humanitarian emergency, as has been documented amongst refugees displaced by the Syrian crisis and Rohingya refugees living in Cox's Bazar. The increase in CEFM during humanitarian crises is the result of the loss of livelihoods, real or perceived risk of sexual violence, and breakdown of social structures, among other factors.

Although the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda acknowledges the need to protect women and girls in conflict and other humanitarian situations, it is silent on specific measures to address CEFM, despite global efforts across UN entities and in UN conventions, declarations, documents and initiatives to eradicate the practice. CEFM is a violation of human rights, a public health and social development issue and a barrier to the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Gender inequality contributes to increased risk of instability and conflict and is thus also an impediment to achieving peace and security. Although there is growing recognition of risks of CEFM in humanitarian settings, there remains a critical gap in consolidating progress and guaranteeing that these efforts ultimately lead to a tangible impact on the ground. Including child marriage and child widows in the WPS agenda is an important step towards ensuring accountability for governments and humanitarian agencies and protecting girls in situations of armed conflict.

This resource guide prepared by Action on Child, Early and Forced marriage provides an overview of commitments by States Parties to prevent and respond to violations against the girl child and literature on best practices and policies by humanitarian and human rights groups. Taken together, this guide offers a basis for advocacy and action to support the inclusion of child brides and child widows in humanitarian response and the Women, Peace, and Security agenda and represents a significant step forward for this field.

The full report "Child Marriage and Child Widows in the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and Humanitarian Response" by Mohinder Watson, Action on Child, Early and Forced Marriage, Copyright 2021 can accessed here:

<http://actiononchildearlyandforcedmarriage.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CEFM-in-Humanitarian-Contexts-Advocacy-Brief-FINAL.pdf>

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