

Red- where there should be more information

Blue- the person's feedback on my draft to add in

Green- rewrite

Black- don't change anything

(Cite all of the source in APA 7th)

1. Accordingly, international human rights law became a feature of the new order. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) made a shared standard of rights and was the inspiration of subsequent binding documents (United Nations, 2021; OHCHR, n.d.-i). Over time, nine core human rights treaties have been adopted by the UN, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CEDAW) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Concisely, the combination of the nine treaties addresses equality and non-discrimination (ICERD and CEDAW), civil and political freedoms (ICCPR), socio-economic rights (ICESCR), protection against torture (CAT), special protections of children (CRC), rights of migrant workers (ICRMW), equality and accessibility of persons with disabilities (CRPD), and protection against forced disappearance (CPE). Each of the treaties has monitoring processes (OHCHR, n.d.-a). The monitoring uses either treaty-based (treaty bodies) or charter-based (Human Rights Council, Universal Periodic Review, Special Procedures, and independent investigations) mechanisms (OHCHR, n.d.-b). Moreover, monitoring is supported by practical tools. According to OHCHR, the United Nations human rights mechanisms give recommendations through review and investigation processes other than complaints; they aim to ensure that these abuses are prevented, stopped, investigated, or remedied; a person making a complaint use Special Procedures, treaty bodies, or the Human Rights Council complaint procedure according to certain requirements (OHCHR, n.d.-b). It also identifies indicators and the Universal Human Rights Index as tools to monitor implementation and to follow up on recommendations within mechanisms (OHCHR, n.d.-b). When it comes to the issue of human rights of women, the unification of women's rights as a human right raises the question of whether universality was substantial. This essay maintains that the CEDAW and its treaty body ensure and safeguard women's rights, whereas systematic breaches of women's rights are observed by charter-based mechanisms, as seen in the cases of Afghanistan and Ukraine. **(ADD this HERE be specific, as per the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine)**

- The sources to use for this paragraph 1 :

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d.-j)

Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-afghanistan>

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d.-k)

Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/iicihr-ukraine/index>

2. Additionally, women's rights required a specialized treaty because general human rights guarantees did not dismantle structural discrimination. CEDAW operationalizes the concept of equality as a duty rather than as a policy option by establishing that discrimination against women can be construed as any distinction or limitation of sex that limits women's enjoyment of rights (OHCHR, n.d.-d). Hence, CEDAW can be the legal basis for arguing that women's human rights are recognized within the UN framework. **(HERE ADD the three principles of CEDAW - we reviewed them with the videos at the beginning of the semester)**

- **Use the YouTube videos to ADD ON in paragraph 2:**

- **Equality**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rl8INB-XMIk>
- **Non-discrimination**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBdDB5PKrmk>
- **State obligation**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV-hC0uFEyo>

3. **Moreover, the effectiveness of CEDAW relies on the monitoring by the CEDAW and associated processes. (consolidate these arguments so they flow well)** According to OHCHR, the treaty bodies are committees of independent experts that oversee the implementation of the core treaties, and it states that the CEDAW Committee comprises 23 experts and that States parties must report on implementation (OHCHR, n.d.-e; OHCHR, n.d.-a). The documentation of the sessions illustrates the Committee's working practice: in the 92nd session (220 February 2026), there were schedules for dialogues and the adoption of concluding observations (OHCHR, 2026). **Often, domestic institutions and social norms are difficult to identify. Furthermore, the use of the "Optional Protocol" increases accountability because it provides an avenue for individuals or groups to communicate domestic remedies. (ADD MORE INFORMATION ON THE OPIONAL PROTOCOL LIKE HOW AND WHY DOES IT MATTER)**

- **Use this source TO ADD more information on paragraph 3:**

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d.-f) *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/optional-protocol-convention-elimination-all-forms>

4. CEDAW empowers women in practice by addressing gender-based violence and women's participation in decision-making, two areas that reflect both bodily integrity and structural power. **(Add here the work of the CEDAW committee in reviewing the application of the Convention, and explain what general recommendations are, and be more specific)** General Recommendation No. 35 also specifies that gender-based violence against women is a type of discrimination, which takes a serious toll in enabling women to enjoy their rights and establishes due diligence expectations concerning prevention, investigation, punishment, and reparation (CEDAW Committee, 2017). This understanding makes violence a state issue when it is condoned, rather than a private issue, when the authorities deny services or allow impunity, which formulates the human rights principle of the indivisibility and interdependence of rights (OHCHR, n.d.-c). **Therefore, CEDAW defends women by ensuring that non-violence is not linked to freedom, but demands an institutional response, not just criminal prohibition.** **(REWRITE WHOLE SENTENCE AND MAKE SURE IT IS NON-DISCRIMINATORY)**

- **Sources to the ADD On in paragraph 4:**

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d.-e)
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cedaw>

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. (2017)
General Recommendation No. 35
<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n17/231/54/pdf/n1723154.pdf>

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. (2024)
General Recommendation No. 40
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FGC%2F40&Lang=en

5. Moreover, decentralization of decision-making is equally a focal point since powerlessness in one sector extends discrimination in others: education, work, justice, and health. (ADD HERE about the need to ensure women are not discriminated in the decision-making processes, go back to articles 7 and 8 of CEDAW) The General Recommendation No. 40 presents a direction on the right of women to equal and inclusive representation in the decision-making systems and makes parity a central concept of transformative equality (CEDAW Committee, 2024). Treaty body practice has interpreted equality provisions as requiring states to overcome structural impediments and to take steps that would render equality pragmatic rather than formal (Henrard, 2007). In addition, international standards can be made applicable locally through such initiatives as the Cities for CEDAW campaign, which makes use of local government commitment, education, and supervision in order to ensure that international obligations become a part of daily governance (Cities for CEDAW, n.d.).

- **Sources to ADD ON in paragraph 5:**

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d.-d)

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. (2024)

General Recommendation No. 40
https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FC%2FC%2F40&Lang=en

6. Moreover, charters may support the role of treaty-based mechanisms in a crisis, as witnessed in the CEDAW review of Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover. In June 2025, the CEDAW Committee will examine the compliance of Afghanistan, without consultation with de facto authorities, indicating that CEDAW is legally binding despite political leadership and making a public discussion on compliance with former officials and women's rights leaders in exile (OHCHR, 2025a; United Nations Digital Library, 2025; CEDAW Committee, 2025). (REWRITE THIS as the nexus is not clear, the review of Afghanistan by CEDAW last June is an example of how treaty-based mechanisms reinforce special procedures) The summary of the UN meeting in Geneva verifies that analysts had issues with discriminatory decrees and the prohibition of educational progress among girls, and the discussion was intended to uphold Afghanistan in the global mechanism (United Nations Office at Geneva, 2025). The response to this strategy minimizes accountability holes that arise due to non-cooperation and holds women accountable to their rights. The use of UN Web TV dialogue enhances

transparency and supports further advocacy (United Nations Web TV, 2025). These initiatives can reduce gaps in accountability from state non-cooperation and increase transparency by providing access to treaty dialogue (subsequently increasing further advocacy). (ADD this here, go back to the concluding observations of CEDAW and choose a couple of recommendations)

- **For the REWRITE, use these sources for paragraph 6 :**

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2025)

UN CEDAW committee breaks new ground with first treaty body review of Afghanistan since Taliban takeover in 2021

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/06/united-nations-cedaw-committee-breaks-new-ground-first-treaty-body-review>

United Nations Digital Library. (2025)

Fourth periodic report submitted by Afghanistan (CEDAW/C/AFG/4)

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4083514?v=pdf>

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. (2025)

Concluding observations on Afghanistan

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FAFG%2FCO%2F4&Lang=en

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (n.d.-b)

Instruments & mechanisms

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-and-mechanisms>

- **For the ADD ON, use these sources:**

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. (2025)

Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Afghanistan

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW%2FC%2FAFG%2FCO%2F4&Lang=en

7. An example of documenting the rights of women during war is the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine (OHCHR, n.d.-k). In 2026, the Commission reported to the Human Rights Council that there have been many acts of crime and violation such as sexual violence towards young girls without any prosecution for these crimes, which would cause the victim to suffer from physical and psychological trauma as well as being stigmatized, displaced from their home, and disrupted in their families (Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, 2026). Sexual violence is not by chance but a situation that is embedded in patterns of abuse, which impose international legal responsibility and demand justice for the survivor. In this way, the Commission contributes to the monitoring of the rights of women by generating evidence that can be utilized in accountability regulations. **(ADD HERE SOME OF THE VIOLATIONS AGAINST WOMEN'S RIGHTS)**

- **Source to ADD ON in paragraph 7:**

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. (2017)

General Recommendation No. 35

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n17/231/54/pdf/n1723154.pdf>