

Committee Guide

UN Women 2023

Our World at a Turning Point

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BREAKING OLD PATTERNS

*Securing Women's
Rights by
Preventing the
Abuse of Religion*



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1. Personal Introduction

1.1. Vivien Kok

Hi 😊,



My name is Vivien and I am 18 years old. This is my final year in school, and I aspire to work for Emirates, but for now I want to study in a university. 2019 marked the beginning of my OLMUN journey and since then I attended as a delegate, but this year I decided to apply as the position of chair. During my free time I love to listen to music and to travel around the world, especially in Asia.

1.2. Sina Otholt

Hi :)



My name is Sina and I am 19 years old. I do not live directly in Oldenburg but nearby. Right now, I am in my final year of school and will probably attend university in September. My first OLMUN was in 2019 and I never skipped a year since. In my free time I like to spend my evenings in the gym, and I really enjoy romance novels and books regarding feminism and equality.

2. UN Women

UN Women is working to develop and uphold standards and create an environment where every woman and girl can practice her human rights and live in a society that is not patriarchally constructed. Furthermore, it is instrumental in documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world. The entity establishes guidelines to eliminate discrimination against women and try to protect their human rights in every member state.



Established by the ECOSOC resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946.



Establishing gender equality and empowering women & girls around the world.



Every woman has the right to live a life free from violence, poverty, and discrimination.



UN Women cooperates with civil organisations to enforce laws, policies, programs, and supports.



All agreements should work towards achieving the goals of the Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3. Religion & Women

Religion and its relationship with women is a complex and often controversial topic. Throughout history, various religions have had different attitudes and beliefs about the role of women in society and in religion practices.

Some religions have traditionally marginalized women, limiting their participation in religious leadership roles and denying them certain rights and freedoms. Others have empowered women and celebrated their contributions to spirituality and society.

In recent years, many religions have begun to re-examine their attitudes towards women, and there has been a growing movement towards greater gender equality and inclusivity in religious institutions.

However, there are still many challenges that women face within religious contexts, including discriminations, misogyny, and patriarchal power structures. It is important for religious leaders and communities to continue to work towards creating more inclusive and supportive spaces for women to practice their faith and contribute to their communities.

4. The Development of Women Rights

The development of women's rights in the context of religion has been a complex and ongoing process throughout history. Many religious traditions have long been associated with patriarchal structures and practices that limit women's opportunities for leadership and participation in religious life.

In recent decades, however, there have been efforts to challenge and reform these traditions to be more inclusive and equitable for women. This has taken many forms, from women's leadership in religious institutions to reinterpreting religious texts and teachings to promote gender equality.

For example, in some Christian denominations, women have been ordained as clergy and have assumed leadership roles within their churches. Similarly, in some branches of Judaism, women have taken on new roles in prayer and ritual, such as serving as rabbis or leading prayer services.

In Islam, women have been advocating for their rights through a movement called Islamic

5 Freedom of Religion and Belief

feminism, which seeks to reinterpret religious texts and practices to promote gender equality. Some Muslim women have also taken on leadership roles within their communities, such as leading prayer services or serving as scholars of Islam.

However, there is still much work to be done to fully realize gender equality in religious contexts. Many religious traditions still have significant gender-based restrictions, and women continue to face barriers in religious leadership and participation. It's essential to continue the work of challenging and reforming these traditions to create more inclusive and equitable religious communities for all.

5. Freedom of Religion and Belief

Freedom of religion and belief is a fundamental human right that allows individuals to hold, express, and practice their own religious or non-religious beliefs without fear of persecution or discrimination. This right is enshrined in international human rights law and is protected by numerous national and regional legal frameworks.

The freedom of religion and belief includes the right to choose one's religion or belief system, to change it, or to have no religion or belief at all. It also encompasses the freedom of worship, to practice religious rituals, and to express one's beliefs through speech, dress, and other forms of expression.

In spite of these arguments, the freedom of religion and belief is not absolute and may be subject to certain limitations, such as when the exercise of this right interferes with the right of others or when it poses a threat to public safety, order, health or morals.

It is important for governments, religious institutions, and civil society to work together to protect and promote the freedom of religion and belief for all individuals, regardless of their affiliations to religion. This includes combatting religious discrimination and intolerance, promoting interfaith dialogue, and understanding and respecting the diversity of beliefs and practices within communities.

6. Stereotypes Related to Religion and Women

Stereotypes related to religion and women have been pervasive in society for centuries. These stereotypes often take on many forms, from limiting beliefs about women's roles and capabilities within religious communities to negative generalizations about entire religious groups based on gender.

One common stereotype is the idea that women are subordinate to men within religious traditions. This stereotype is often perpetuated by religious texts and teachings that promote gender-based hierarchies, leading to practices such as limiting women's participation in religious leadership or excluding them from certain religious rites and rituals.

Another stereotype is the belief that women of certain religions are oppressed or lack agency. This stereotype is particularly prevalent in the West, where Muslim women, in particular, are often depicted as oppressed and in need of rescue from their patriarchal societies. Such portrayals ignore the diversity of experiences among women of different religious backgrounds and often perpetuate harmful stereotypes.

It's important to recognize and challenge these stereotypes, as they can have damaging consequences for women's empowerment and social equality. By actively working to dismantle harmful stereotypes and promote positive representations of women and religion, we can create a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

7. Does Religion Constrain Women?

The religious constraint of women is a pervasive issue that has affected women across many religious traditions throughout history. In many cases, religious texts and teachings have been used to justify gender-based restrictions on women's roles and behaviors.

These constraints can take many forms, such as limiting women's participation in religious leadership, restricting their access to education, or imposing strict dress codes and modesty requirements. In some cases, religious traditions have also perpetuated harmful practices such as female genital mutilation or forced marriages.

The religious constraint of women has often been used to maintain patriarchal power structures and reinforce gender inequality. However, in recent years, there have been efforts to challenge and reform these practices, with many religious leaders and communities

8 How did Religion Influence Women's Rights?

advocating for gender equality and women's empowerment.

It's essential to continue the work of challenging and reforming these religious constraints to create more inclusive and equitable communities for all. Women should have the freedom to practice their religion without facing unjust restrictions or discrimination based on their gender.

8. How did Religion Influence Women's Rights?

Religion has played a significant role in shaping women's rights throughout history. In many cases, religious traditions have been used to justify gender-based discrimination and constraints on women's roles and behaviors.

However, religion has also been a source of inspiration and motivation for women's rights activists, providing a framework for advocating for equality and social justice. Many religious texts and teachings contain messages of equality and respect for women, which have been used to challenge patriarchal power structures and promote women's empowerment.

Religious movements and leaders have played a vital role in advancing women's rights, such as the women's suffrage movement in the United States, which was led by women of faith. In recent years, there have been efforts within many religious traditions to reinterpret and reform traditional teachings to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

Despite these positive changes, there are still many religious traditions that maintain significant gender-based restrictions on women's roles and behaviors. It's essential to continue the work of challenging and reforming these traditions to create more inclusive and equitable communities for all. Religion can be a powerful force for positive change, but it must be used in a way that promotes equality and justice for all people, regardless of gender.

9. Sexual Abuse Linked to Religious Institutes

Sexual abuse of women in religious institutions is a deeply troubling issue that has been reported across various religious traditions. In many cases, women have been subjected to abuse by religious leaders or other members of the community, often with little or no accountability or justice.

10 Protection & Measures

The power dynamics within religious institutions can make it challenging for women to come forward and report abuse, as they may face retribution or be disbelieved. This can perpetuate a culture of silence and secrecy that allows abuse to continue unchecked.

However, in recent years, there have been efforts to address and prevent sexual abuse in religious institutions, such as implementing training and policies to recognize and respond to abuse, providing support and resources for survivors, and holding perpetrators accountable for their actions.

It's essential to continue the work of addressing and preventing sexual abuse in religious institutions to create safer and more just communities for all. Women should be able to practice their faith without fear of abuse or harm and should have access to resources and support if they do experience abuse. Religious institutions have a responsibility to ensure that all members of their communities are treated with dignity, respect, and safety.

10. Protection & Measures against the Abuse of Religion

The abuse of religion towards women is a concerning issue that requires a multifaceted approach to address effectively. There are several measures and protections that can be implemented to prevent and respond to this kind of abuse.

Education and awareness-raising are crucial in preventing abuse. Women should be educated about their rights within their religious communities and how to report abuse. Religious leaders and members should also be trained on how to recognize and respond to abuse. Reporting mechanisms should be put in place to encourage women to report abuse without fear of retaliation. These mechanisms should ensure that reports are taken seriously and responded to promptly and effectively.

Religious institutions should also implement policies and codes of conduct that explicitly prohibit and address sexual abuse and other forms of gender-based violence. These policies should include measures for accountability and consequences for perpetrators of abuse.

Support services for survivors of abuse, such as counseling and legal assistance, should be made available within religious communities. These services should be culturally sensitive and should take into account the unique challenges that women may face in reporting abuse within religious contexts.

11 Preparation

Overall, addressing and preventing the abuse of religion towards women requires a coordinated effort between religious institutions, government, and civil society organizations. By working together, we can create safer and more equitable religious communities for all.

11. Preparation

You should draft a **Draft Resolution** and a **Policy Statement**, outlining your delegation's position on the matter in advance of this year's conference. With a focus on the Operative Clauses, each draft resolution should be at least one page long. In general, policy statements should be no longer than 200 words and be more succinct. The [OLMUN Handbook](#), which can be downloaded for free from the website's download section ([olmun.org](#)), contains more details on the format and writing style of these kinds of documents. Please remember that you are not allowed to talk about a country that is not participating in our committee. We urge you to send us your policy statement **by May 28th** so that we can review all of your ideas and provide you with feedback and suggestions.

12. Deadlines

Please send us the following documents as a pdf!

unwomen@olmun.org

vivien.kok@olmun.org

sina.otholt@olmun.org

28th of May - Draft Resolution

28th of May - Policy Statement

13. Last Words

Please prepare yourself properly for the committee and especially about the procedures (motions, proper etiquette, dress code, etc.).

We are looking forward to all the fruitful debates and to meet you all <3

If you have any concerns or questions do not hesitate to contact us!





OLMUN 2023

**22nd International
Session**