

Recognition, inclusion, support: protecting the health and rights of women and girls in crises and beyond

At FIGO 2021 World Congress, women's health and rights leaders Dr Sima Samar and Dr Monika Hauser discuss the eroding health and wellbeing of women and girls.

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, October 19, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- At the XXIII FIGO World Congress, the [International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics](https://www.figo.org/) (FIGO) will bring together leading obstetrician gynaecologists (OBGYNs) with women's health and rights leaders Dr Sima Samar and Dr Monika Hauser to discuss the eroding health and wellbeing of women and girls in Afghanistan. Through a talk by Dr Samar and roundtable, they will explore the role OBGYNs and others can play in advocating for and empowering women and girls the world over – in crises and beyond.

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Gender inequality is the root cause of violence against women and girls. Unequal distribution of power, resources, opportunity and values between men and women positions boys above women in all areas”

Professor Kristina Gemzell-Danielsson

The overwhelming political power shift in Afghanistan has eroded the fragile status of women's health and rights in the country. Afghanistan has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, according to United Nations data: some 638 women die per 100,000 live births. Poverty, lack of access to health services and gender inequality contribute to these tragically high numbers, with fewer than 60% of births overseen by skilled health professionals.

Speaking out, Professor Kristina Gemzell-Peterson, said, “Gender inequality is the root cause of violence against

women and girls. It is a power demonstration and the effects are even more pronounced due to

FIGO STATEMENT

The health, rights and wellbeing of women and girls: global, equitable and inalienable

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FIGO's statement on the health and rights of women and girls

underlying inequalities. The unequal distribution of power, resources, opportunity and values between men and women positions boys above women in all areas of society.”

As part of the President’s Session at the FIGO World Congress on Thursday 21 October, FIGO President, Dr Carlos Fuchtnner, and President Elect, Dr Jeanne Conry, will speak with Dr Samar and Dr Hauser about the cultural barriers and unwritten norms that restrict the freedoms of women and girls around the world.

The session will highlight how, regardless of location, women and girls can only achieve their full potential – in terms of education, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), professional opportunities and personal wellbeing – when attention is paid to all aspects of their health and care, and to enhancing the status of women and girls.

“Women should be part of decision making for every policy and programme related to their country. For sustainable development and peace, women must be able to participate fully in the social, economic and political sectors. They must have autonomy over their bodies.” said Dr Samar.

Institutions that provide employment, lifelong skill acquisition, and learning and education opportunities for women and girls ultimately enhance communities, improve health outcomes, and serve to stabilise regions and countries.

Equitable and sustainable global development cannot be achieved while women are deprived of the power to make informed decisions on all aspects of their lives. This includes SRHR, maternal and newborn health, and the choice of whether to access non-judgemental and confidential health care services, education and work. Access to such comprehensive services is not only beneficial to the education, empowerment, health and wellbeing of women and girls, but is also beneficial to their families, communities and wider society – culturally, socially and



Dr Sima Samar



Dr Monika Hauser

economically.

The right to health holds true wherever women and girls live, regardless of their legal status – it cannot be sacrificed or compromised even when political turmoil places individuals at such risk. The [FIGO Committee on Human Rights, Refugees and Violence Against Women](#) aims to recognise, promote and protect the human rights of women and girls facing such situations.

Dr Monika Hauser said, “We call on Policy Makers and Decision Makers need to support the institutionalisation of stress and trauma sensitive services. We all need to recognize and acknowledge survivors of sexualised violence publicly and actively support the development of concrete prevention and response mechanisms.”

FIGO supports these ethical and human rights principles, and reminds all states, organisations and individuals that a [substantive framework exists](#) in the form of UN General Recommendation 30 – and must be applied – to ensure that gender equality becomes integral to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and accountability.

The rights of women and girls are particularly pertinent when they face turmoil from war and political unrest. FIGO highlights the following components that are essential to ensuring the continued ethical treatment of women and girls.

- Respect for individuals, where autonomy and protection of the vulnerable is important, particularly because women and girls are vulnerable to lack of access to education, as well as social, economic and political incapacities. Care must be taken to protect them from harm.
- Benefit and the avoidance of harm represents a clinician’s duty to improve a patient’s physical and mental wellbeing. Health care providers must be allowed the freedom and authority to care for women and girls subjected to harm in war-torn regions of the world.
- Justice – women and girls must receive fair, equitable and appropriate care, particularly with regard to their SRHR.
- Recognition, promotion and protection of the human rights of women and girls is critical, both globally and at country level.

– Ends –

Notes to editors

About the XXIII World Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics

The FIGO World Congress of Gynecology and Obstetrics is the largest and most comprehensive global event in gynaecology, obstetrics and other topics in women’s health and rights. For its XXIII World Congress, FIGO will be hosting the Congress online. Despite the challenges facing the gynaecology and obstetrics community from COVID-19, FIGO will continue to provide leadership by ensuring an inclusive, innovative and truly global, virtual World Congress.

On 21–28 October 2021, the FIGO World Congress will bring together obstetricians, gynaecologists, midwives, nurses, researchers and other specialists, alongside policy and decision makers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), patients and advocates. FIGO will provide a platform for colleagues worldwide to showcase clinical best practice, share the latest research, build alliances, and propose concrete solutions to the challenges in women's health and rights.

As the foremost global women's health meeting, the FIGO World Congress will attract more than 5,000 delegates from around the world. Delegates will represent FIGO's 130+ national member societies, and representatives of many other nationalities. FIGO is excited to welcome delegates on its cutting-edge virtual platform, which will use the latest in event technology to facilitate interactive sessions, networking opportunities and

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