



GENEVA CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND GLOBAL DIALOGUE

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls, its Causes and Consequences

#HRC59 • 25 June 2025



PRESENTATION OF THE THEMATIC REPORT

Ms. Reem ALSALEM, Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls, its Causes and Consequences

The SR introduces her new thematic report dedicated to **sex-based violence against women and girls**. She never imagined the day would come where her mandate would deem it necessary to prepare a report affirming that the words *women and girls* refer to distinct biological and legal categories, and that their female sex is central, not only to the definition as categories of humans, but also **central to the understanding of the discrimination and violence** that they experience as subordinated class. The consequences of this blatant disregard of the material reality of sex have been devastating.

The **erosion of women and sex-specific language**, the conflation of sex, gender and gender identity have produced flawed data, overall weakened protections for motherhood, women and girls, including lesbians, as well as women who do not identify as women, and girls who may be experiencing gender dysphoria. It has also obscured the correct understanding of current and emerging forms of violence against women and girls, and exposed women and girls to more violence, and undermined the ability to provide targeted and relevant services and assistance to



all victims. Simply put, you cannot protect what you cannot define. To make this point clear, the SR included in the report **emerging or overlooked forms of violence** that women and girls specifically experience because of their female biological sex. These include the hidden scourge of suicides linked to domestic violence, sex selection before birth, the use of femicide and reproductive violence as tools of genocide, and digitally facilitated forms of violence.

The **visceral reaction** the SR received from some corners in response to this work single-handedly proved the necessity of this report. Several influential actors actively lobbied others not to engage with a call for input for this report. Some international and regional organisations, influence groups, and governments have called the SR regressive, racist, colonial, transphobic, fascist, and Nazi for this and other positions that she has had. Though these attacks have been relentless, the SR is aware that they represent only a fraction of what many other women and girls go through, often at great personal costs.

In recent years, the SR has received concerning reports from countless women and girls and their allies in which they detail how they have been vilified, ostracised, threatened, and attacked for arguing that **sex and sex-related data matter** in the **analysis of discrimination and inequality**. They have lost their jobs, positions, and support for defending language for or about women. Scientists and biologists have been attacked for asserting what science tells us, that sex is as binary as it gets, and that it is real. Medical doctors, politicians, whistleblowers, and women human rights defenders have received death threats for pointing out the harms of socially and medically transitioning vulnerable children, including girls, who have a right to the highest standards of physical and mental health and whose care must always be guided by the best interest, by their best interest, and the best available evidence.

Those that felt scandalised by what they read in the report, claiming that the **recognition of biological differences** between males and females is a mere belief or an outdated regressive stereotype that has no place in 2025, must be reminded that international law recognises that women and girls are female and that they are protected against discrimination based on their female sex. They must be reminded that **sex underpins the very definition of gender-based violence**, as gender is a social meaning given to biological sex differences, which in turn results in the subordination of women to men in most contexts. To combat sexism and other stereotypes, we must recognise that **sex differences exist** and that **subordination based on gender** must be eliminated.

Erasing women and women's specific language and needs based on their sex is not only wrong, it is demeaning, it is regressive, and constitutes one of the worst forms of violence against women and girls that they can experience. It is the final nail in the coffin and a brutal culmination of the global push to subjugate, control, and commodify women and girls under the false pretence that they can consent to their own exploitation and abuse.

Nothing exemplifies the total disregard for the lives of half of the earth's population as the situation of **women and girls in times of war and occupation**. The total collapse of the protections they are entitled to under international humanitarian and human rights law is alarming, and so is the apathy of the international community. The scale, depravity, and intensity of these crimes that are being committed against women and girls is so immense. It is so



unprecedented, particularly in Palestine, that the current vocabulary that we have at our disposal to define these crimes does not do justice to them.

The proposal outlined in the SR's report is very simple, yet necessary, namely that we go back to basics, that we reclaim the meaning and relevance of sex, that we **stop conflating terminologies such as sex, gender, and gender identity**, that we acknowledge the centrality of sex in shaping the experiences of women and girls, men and boys, and that we ensure that states and non-state actors, including institutions, fulfil their duties towards the female half of the world's population, namely that they can enjoy safety, equality, and dignity.

In her short addendum, the SR also proposes that states **clarify and standardise** the application of the concept of consent in context of violence against women to better protect victims and ensure accountability under international human rights law. The **divergent interpretation and application of consent** in national legislations plus limitations and concerns the SR has found deserve a closer analysis. The SR will be providing that detailed report with policy recommendations to support states in developing robust legal standards on the application of consent before the end of 2025.

To conclude, after overcoming the initial disbelief that a report of this nature was needed, the SR's only regret is that she did not write this report sooner. Far too much time has been spent by women defending their existence. That time could and should have been invested in advancing their rights, participation, and access to resources available to them to achieve equality. Enough is enough.

PRESENTATION OF COUNTRY VISIT REPORTS

Presenting the report on her visit to the **United Arab Emirates** conducted in December 2024, the SR is grateful to the government for the invitation and for accommodating the SR's specific interests and requests. The SR acknowledges that the UAE has made **remarkable advancement in promoting equality** between men and women and providing violence against women and girls. Such progress has been possible in large parts due to the strong political commitment at the highest level and significant **progress in women's political and economic participation**, with gender parity in parliament and increased female leadership in government. It also earmarked significant funds towards meeting the needs of women and children in crisis settings and humanitarian settings. To consolidate these gains and address persisting gaps, the SR has recommended to the UAE that it ratify remaining key international treaties, expressly criminalise femicide, female genital mutilation, child marriage and marital rape, and remove reconciliation requirements in domestic violence cases. The SR has also advised the UAE to expand protection and support services to all women, regardless of nationality, strengthen data collection and accountability mechanism, reform personal status law and nationality laws to ensure full equality, and adopt an abolitionist model on prostitution to protect and support exploited women and girls.

Turning to the report on her visit to the **United Kingdom** conducted in 2024, the SR is grateful to the government for the invitation and their constructive engagement. The UK has been a **pioneer in its attempts to address different and emerging forms of violence** against women and girls as they arise, such as on coercive control and online violence. The SR very much welcomes the



commitment of the current government to have violence against women and the recent Supreme Court's decision on affirming the **biological definition of sex for legal purposes**, which must be implemented in full. However, the UK's efforts are prevented from reaching their full potential by systemic fragmentation of policies on prevention and response, severe underfunding of frontline services, chronic court delays, and an immigration regime that does not sufficiently protect migrant and refugee women. To address these gaps, the SR has recommended that the UK adopt a unified, adequately resourced national **strategy grounded in rights and intersectionality**, ensuring the most vulnerable and marginalised women and girls are not left behind, such as women with disability, minoritized women, and migrant and refugee women. Women and other frontline organisations must continue to be adequately funded, must be able to participate in all processes that affect them. I urge also specific action to protect girls by expanding protections against grooming and online exploitation, and ensuring justice systems respond swiftly and sensitively to the violence they face.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

On the **recognition of gender-based violence** (GBV), the SR deeply regrets the misrepresentation of the report's position on GBV. Neither the report nor the mandate claim that discrimination of women and girls experienced by them is only sex-based or that it should be understood as biologically determined. On the contrary, the report acknowledges the importance of understanding **violence against women as a social phenomenon** whose existence depends on socially constructed expectations, roles, stereotypes and socially determined distribution of power and resources between women and men. The **socially constructed gender** plays a key role in the perpetuation and justification of violence directed at women and girls because they are women and girls and affecting women and girls disproportionately, clearly articulated in international treaties and regional instruments.

This is also what **sex-based violence** means. This is what the report highlights, calling for a recognition, not exclusion, of sex-based considerations. Gender and gender-based cannot exist independently of sex as it is **sex that constitutes the ground for discrimination** in international law to which gender considerations were added to help us understand how discrimination and violence operate in a society. This is also the case for men and boys and not only women and girls.

For the record, the resolution establishing the SR's mandate while referring to the need to end violence against women including gender-based violence, it underlined very clearly that ending sex-based discrimination is integral to eliminating violence against women. Neither does her mandate claim that violence and discrimination against women and girls is only sex-based. It acknowledges intersectionality, emphasising that any **intersectional approach must include sex-based considerations** but not erase them and not exclusively.

The SR further points out that in over **300 communications** she has sent to states and the numerous thematic and country reports she has presented in her capacity as mandate holder shows a strong track record of her principled approach to addressing violence against women and girls in an intersectional manner. But as a mandate holder, it is also her responsibility to **identify blind spots in both law and policy** and to hold state and non-state actors accountable when they fail to meet their due diligence obligations. It is also plainly evident from the report that



she recognises and refers to the concept of gender-based violence. However, for the sake of clarity, international law does not consider sex-based considerations as regressive nor is the term **biological sex** a taboo or an outdated concept. It is an innate, immutable and fundamental aspect of human existence for women and for men alike. This is because unlike what one speaker mentioned, **sex is actually not a social construct. Gender is.**

On the issue of **inclusion versus exclusion**, the SR fully agrees with the principle that human rights are indivisible and interrelated. However, it is also recognised that we cannot reduce human rights to a zero-sum game. We often see a **tension between the rights and interests** of different rights holders. We see these tensions in the areas of freedom of belief, freedom of expression and also in the domain of non-discrimination, including based on sex and other grounds. States and others work through these tensions all the time. Courts, civil society organisations (CSOs) and Special Procedures try to provide them with support while they work on these issues. What the report highlights is the specific and growing tension between **rights based on sex** and **rights based on gender identity**. What the report clearly states is that international law does not allow anyone to automatically subordinate the rights of women and girls, which have based on their sex, to other considerations or grounds.

Furthermore, the SR must also address the claim that the **report is gender neutral**. The SR would differ on this issue. It speaks specifically about the overlooked needs of specific groups of transgender persons, namely women who do not identify as women. Their needs are invisibilized as they are often left in a limbo that turns them into **de facto legal orphans**. It also highlights the needs and harms done to same-sex attracted women, otherwise known as lesbians, and those women and girls who have transitioned. An approach that ignores how their gender identity or not intersects with sex regrettably contributes to this invisibility and results in lasting harms for them. By ignoring how their **sex intersects with gender identity**, we get **gender blind measures**. The SR expresses her disappointment that the interventions focused on whether the report's focus was appropriate, but did not engage on the many substantive points and examples of the violence the SR mentioned in the report and which are under-recognised and under-appreciated.

On **sex-related data**, the most human rights-centred and compassionate approach is one that recognises and records the sex of the person alongside **other intersecting factors**, including gender identity. This is especially critical in health care, including for persons who have de-transitioned and require specific medical services. There is clearly a problem in how states record sex-related data. Often the data they collect or record reflects the gender identity of the person concerned, not their sex. This **conflation** happens in particular in countries that recognise **self-identification of gender identity**. In the context of violence against women, such a conflation can result in a misleading rise in the number of women being recorded as perpetrators of gender-based violence, since the data ends up including males who identify as women. As Canada mentioned, one of the solutions would be to very conscientiously record both sex and gender identity data separately.

Turning to the **transitioning of children**, the SR shares the concern that no UN agency that have a mandate on human rights, nor the rights of children, have spoken out about the documented long-term harms of so-called 'paediatric gender transitions' and how they violate the fundamental human rights of children. No treaty body and no Special Procedure other than the



SR herself has expressed concern about this, nor have states addressed that either, including states that have restricted or outright banned access to such procedures on minors. This is an issue that requires further reflection.

On **stereotypes**, the current application of gender-based violence in a number of states is that it has come to include the various stereotypes they should eliminate. Rather than combating sexist and harmful stereotypes about being females, policies have at times achieved the contrary. They have cemented these stereotypes and relied heavily on dress codes and outer appearances that have been harmful to women and girls, which should be eliminated, not enshrined through surgeries, biomedical and beauty industries, while dismissing the recognition of how traditions, customs, religion, and now gender identity have returned to harmful stereotypes that maintain women and even transgender persons in subordinate positions to men.

With regard to **conflict situations**, the SR believes states need to stop exporting arms to actors that engage in heinous crimes against women and girls. To conclude on a note on **femicide**, the SR considers the Belgian law on femicide as is a very good example of policy intervention.

VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM AS CONCERNED COUNTRIES

The delegation of the **United Arab Emirates** reiterates its full commitment towards protecting and promoting human rights and willingness to cooperate with the UN system, including UNHRC mechanisms. The UAE was pleased to welcome the SR on her country visit in December 2024, during which they actively and positively engaged and cooperated with her mandate. The UAE government provided the SR with all available means to ensure a successful and productive visit. The UAE organised field visits and facilitated meetings with state officials and organisations, as well as civil society. During her visit, she exchanged views on the best ways for UAE to fulfil obligations in accordance with international human rights standards, and provided important recommendations on how to combat violence against women and girls with available resources.

The SR's report addresses many of the national measures taken by the UAE government to promote and protect women's rights through enactment or amendment of legislative procedures, or through provision of support and assistance. The UAE has also shown determination in further promoting the role of women in ranking seventh globally and first regionally in the UNDP Gender Inequality Index for 2024. In addition, representation of women in leadership positions in private sector increased by 30 percent during 2024 to 2025. On the political level, and with the aim of achieving gender parity in parliament in 2019, women are now holding 50 percent of the seats in the UAE Federal National Council.

The UAE has introduced several legal reforms to enhance women's rights under personal status and criminal laws to fulfil its international obligations. Federal Law No. 3 of 2016 on Children's Rights, provides comprehensive legal safeguards for all children in the UAE against all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, and ill treatment. Moreover, provisions that allowed lenient sentences for honour killings were abolished. Harassment was criminalised, and stronger penalties have been introduced for sexual violence, and provisions that allowed for disciplinary actions against wives and children were removed.



In addition, the Federal Decree Law No. 33 of 2021 was issued to eliminate workplace discrimination against women and gender-based violence, expand women's access to employment, and establish the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. As for domestic work violence, the Federal Decree Law No. 13 of 2024 provides protection and other support measures for victims. With regard to protecting labour rights, Federal Decree Law No. 9 of 2022 was issued to protect domestic workers against exploitation, and Federal Decree Law No. 24 of 2023 was adopted to criminalise human trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation. The 2022 Federal Decree on Domestic Workers introduced significant enhancements to the working conditions of domestic workers, including a rest period of 12 hours per day with a minimum of eight consecutive hours.

The UAE has established multiple communication channels to help workers file complaints and resolve issues. In addition, in 2022, the UAE launched an amnesty initiative allowing foreign nationals to regularise their legal status without penalties to provide a safe pathway for individuals in irregular migratory status to regularise their residence status, seek lawful employment, or exit the country. In addition, the UAE has adopted many policies and strategies to empower women, enhance and develop the social protection system, public service, and sustainable infrastructure that contribute to empowering women. The most important of these policies are the National Policy for Women's Empowerment in UAE 2023-2031 and Gender Balance Strategy 2026 adopted by the Cabinet. Promoting women's rights is at the core of the UAE's foreign policy. The UAE shares with the SR the importance of continuing dialogue and cooperation, and looks forward to continuing the dialogue. The UAE will pursue its efforts to promote and protect women's rights and implement the SR's recommendations and all recommendations received from other human rights mechanisms.

The delegation of the [United Kingdom](#) states that tackling violence against women and girls, both domestically and internationally, is a top priority for the country and its government. The SR highlighted several positive elements of the UK's current domestic response, including robust legislation covering sexual violence, domestic abuse, modern slavery and human trafficking, criminal offences covering female genital mutilation and forced marriage, measures taken to prevent and improve employers' response to workplace harassment, an expansive definition of domestic abuse, which includes emotional abuse, coercive or controlling behaviour, and economic abuse, and recognises that children can be victims of domestic abuse. Measures to tackle technology-facilitated violence, particularly the Online Safety Act, and the strength of UK's civil society organisations.

Nevertheless, the delegation recognises that there are several areas for improvement that are relevant to the SR's remarks, whether that be ensuring the sustainable provision of services for women affected by violence and abuse, ensuring that children under the age of 16 receive effective safeguarding and support when they experience teenage relationship abuse, ensuring that more comprehensive and richer data is collected about these crimes and the individuals who commit and experience them. The UK must also ensure sustainable and long-term resources for the implementation of policies and legislation across the four nations of the country. Three devolution settlements, one each for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland,



stipulate matters that are the responsibility of the UK parliament and those others that are the responsibility of the devolved legislatures. It is right that approaches can be tailored to the specific needs of each of the nations. The four governments can and will work together to ensure a coherent and effective framework for the safety and security of people across the United Kingdom. The manifesto in which the current government was elected last summer included the ambition to halve levels of violence against women and girls in a decade, as the SR noted. It is an ambitious aim that requires a transformative approach across government, public services, the private sector and charities.

Since last year's election, the UK government has introduced several important measures to improve protection for victims of violence against women and girls and to ensure that the perpetrators of that violence are held accountable. Those include the roll-out of domestic abuse protection orders in selected areas and the introduction of Raneem's law, strengthening the police's response to domestic abuse by embedding specialists in emergency service control rooms in specific areas.

A new package of measures to tackle stalking, including a review of legislation and introducing statutory guidance to set out the process by which the police should release information identifying online stalkers to their victims, and £13 million for a new National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection to improve the policing response. This year, the UK government will publish a new strategy which will set the strategic direction and concrete actions to deliver on that manifesto pledge to halve levels of violence against women and girls in a decade. This will be underpinned by an evidence-based theory of change to ensure that our approach is informed by the best available evidence.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Views Expressed by State Delegations

Australia is steadfast in its commitment to end violence against women and girls. Its second 10-year National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children, developed in partnership with civil society, outlines its sustained efforts to address all forms of gender-based violence. The Plan is informed by its evolving understanding of the ways in which violence can be perpetrated and its impact on victim-survivors. It describes gender-based violence as rooted in gender-based power inequalities, rigid gender norms and gender-based discrimination. Acknowledging the role of gender does not erase the role of sex, sexual and gender-based violence not only violates individual human rights, it hinders social and economic development, costing the global economy an estimated 1.5 trillion US dollars annually. To realise gender equality and the benefits it brings to all, we must recognise and include the diverse experiences of all survivors. Australia is committed to ending gender-based violence and embracing the diverse experiences of all women and girls.

Benin congratulates the SR for her high-quality report and explains that since the adoption in 2011 of its first specific law on gender-based violence, the country has integrated the biological sex of women as an important element in our actions to combat gender-based violence. To illustrate this, article 180 of the 2015 Children's Code provides for the criminalisation of impregnating any girl under the age of 18 with a prison sentence and a fine for the person



responsible for said pregnancy. Following his election in 2016, the President of the Republic, H.E. Mr. Patrice Talon, gave a further boost to legislation cracking down on violence against women. The revised version of the Criminal Code enshrines an entire article 520 to the specific criminalisation and punishment of the beating of pregnant women and any injury to her. Moreover, the President supported the adoption of a new law promulgated in 2021, which entitles law with specific provisions to crack down on violence committed on the basis of sex of the individual and to protect women. In the same year, the President created National Women's Institute, intended to enshrine the recognition that women's body is the first target of violence and the protection of women's bodies is a national priority.

Bulgaria notes with concern the report's finding that today violence against women and girls persists at epidemic levels with new emerging forms and manifestations. The most prominent forms of such violence are physical, psychological and sexual. It is horrifying that throughout the world, femicide remains a global emergency, with its rates increasing. Bulgaria is alarmed that technology-facilitated violence against women and girls often remains underrated and unreported. Many female Internet users admit to having been victims of online violence, including harassment, cyber-bullying and sexual blackmailing. Bulgaria recalls that states have the legal obligation to eliminate violence against women and girls through comprehensive, preventive, protective and remedial measures. Such measures should be supported by timely collection of relevant data. In Bulgaria, an automated information system on domestic violence and gender-based violence is now operational.

Burkina Faso congratulates the SR on her report, which calls into question the way in which we approach established and emerging forms of gender-based violence targeting women and girls. Describing the report as necessary to be able to identify a way forward that will enable more sustained action to eradicate this phenomenon, Burkina Faso agrees with the SR that the issue of sex understood in its ordinary form as biological sex is a key element in discrimination and violence against women and girls. In Burkina Faso, biological sex is a decisive factor in the distinction between men and women. Gender-based violence, particularly femicides and reproductive violence, are punished by the Criminal Code. Moreover, the adoption of Law No. 61 of 2015 provides for the prevention of violence against women, as well as care and assistance and remedy for the victims thereof. The punishment of the perpetrators has reinforced its legal framework to tackle violence against women and girls. The 2020-2024 strategy has enabled the country to strengthen and bolster women's and girls' access to education, healthcare and employment, and to promote women as a key actor in development. Burkina Faso calls for enhanced cooperation at the international level in order to enable the country to meet and overcome challenges in terms of violence against women and girls.

Canada recalls that the concepts of gender and gender-based violence have been central to international human rights obligations for over three decades. Gender is a social construct not confined to anatomy and vital for understanding how discrimination and violence operate in diverse contexts. Canada is therefore proud to be recognised in the SR's report as a country that disaggregates data both by sex and by gender. Canada is committed to robust understanding of the intersectional experiences of individuals in the federal penal system and across federal government policies. Beyond statistics, gender-responsive and intersectional approaches to violence prevention lead to more effective programming and practises. They expose systemic



structures of inequality that underpin sexual and gender-based violence and ensure the services are targeted to the needs of those who have long been most marginalised. Gender-based discrimination and violence impact women regardless of sex characteristics. To effectively prevent and eliminate these harms, we must acknowledge and address the structural conditions that facilitate them. We must also address the gender stereotypes, negative social norms and unequal power relations that allow and sustain such violence and discrimination. Canada urges all mandate holders to uphold international human rights standards.

Chile recognises the SR's unwavering commitment to render visible emerging forms of violence against women and girls and shares her sense of urgency with regard to the need to strengthen state responses to such a persistent and devastating reality. Nonetheless, Chile voices its concern at the fact that the SR's report is focused almost exclusively on the category of biological sex to analyse causes of violence. On the basis of its feminist foreign policy, Chile is of the view that to understand and transform this reality there is a need to look at it through the lens of gender, gender being a set of norms, expectations and hierarchies which are imposed upon us from birth. Violence against women is not just a question of bodies and anatomy but also power. Reducing violence to merely a direct consequence of biological sex runs the risk of rendering invisible the multiple and complex forms of structural inequalities in the way in which they operate. Gender violence is not just based on biological differences but rather on historical power and relationships and cultural systems which have subjugated women, girls and LGBTQI+ persons. Chile invites the SR to approach this issue through a more inclusive focus, one which is more humane, which recognises all forms in which inequality and violence can manifest itself. Only by doing that will we make progress towards a life free of violence for all.

Colombia on behalf of a cross-regional group of 37 countries states that the concepts of gender and gender-based violence have been central to international obligations in terms of human rights for more than three decades now. The 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPA) adopted by more than 180 countries is the formal definition of gender in international frameworks and conventions. Since then, instruments such as ILO Convention No. 169, CEDAW Recommendation No. 35, and UNHRC Resolution 56/19 have explicitly recognised gender-based violence as a critical concern in the field of human rights, particularly in relation to women and girls. Gender-based violence reflects structural inequalities that are deeply entrenched, including patriarchy and gender-based social norms. They are based not just on biological sex, but on gender expectations. The CEDAW framework recognise that gender is a social construction that is not limited to biology, and it's important to understand that in order to be able to eradicate discrimination. No treaty body or human rights mechanism or resolution of the United Nations makes a reference to sex-based violence as a legal or normative category. To do so would be a clear step backwards in protection of human rights to restrict it to biological sex. It is important that all reports reflect duly the established standards. References to merely sex-based violence would mean the inability to truly identify and eradicate gender-based issues.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the SR's report, which highlights the persisting and emerging forms of gender-based violence. Violence against women is a tragic, persistent reality, further exacerbated by new insidious forms of such violence, particularly online or in crisis contexts, which further exacerbate women's vulnerability in all areas of their lives. Faced with such a concerning situation, Côte d'Ivoire underscores the urgent need to bolster prevention mechanisms as well



as protection and care mechanisms, whilst effectively integrating sex specificity as a criterion for exposure to vulnerability. Côte d'Ivoire, which has been a state party to CEDAW since 1995, has made the fight against violence against women one of its national priorities. The country has pursued several reforms to deliver on that goal, particularly the overhaul of the criminal code, which took place in 2021. The criminal code now explicitly criminalises all forms of violence against women. Despite this programme, violence persists, so there is a need to go beyond mere reactivity to violence against women and rather establish prevention over the long term as an approach.

Cyprus notes that violence against women and girls remains a persistent and continually evolving phenomenon that blatantly disregards values, norms, rights and laws. Structural inequalities, cultural biases, institutional complicities and a culture of fear and non-reporting have facilitated the emergence of new forms of violence that are taking place both in the physical and the digital realms. Technology-facilitated violence including cyber-stalking, cyber-bullying, image-based abuse such as deepfakes and the non-consensual sharing of personal information or content creates a continuum of harm that begins online and can escalate into physical violence, abuse and even death. Age, disability, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender identity exacerbate this trend. In Cyprus, a comprehensive legal framework regarding violence against women that also includes digital and technology-facilitated violence as well as the criminalisation of image-based sexual abuse was elaborated in 2021. National action plans and dedicated support services have also been set up to assist victims to this effect. More needs to be done not only on a national but also an international level if such new and emerging forms of violence against women and girls are to be curbed. Implementing international conventions including SDG 5 and 16 constitute a crucial step in this direction.

Czechia commends the SR's efforts to highlight unreported forms of violence. However, Czechia diverges from the central framing of the report, namely the emphasis on sex as the primary lens through which discrimination and violence against women and girls are understood. In Czechia's view, this approach does not reflect the complex and intersecting realities that shape the experiences of women and girls today. Czechia believes that gender as a social construct remains a critical factor in understanding and addressing violence. Structural, social, and economic inequalities rooted in gender expectations and power imbalances are often the driving forces behind such violence. By focussing predominantly on sex, the report overlooks these broader dynamics and the diverse identities of those affected.

Djibouti thanks the SR for presenting her report, which explores the new forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, which are often disregarded or under-recognised. Djibouti recognises that it is fundamental to tackle discrimination against women and girls with practical measures by dealing with the root causes of those violations. Djibouti shares the SR's conclusion of the importance of taking biological sex into account in order to understand, prevent and respond to violence and discrimination against women and girls. Moreover, Djibouti recognises that legal progress has not yet allowed to work against the ubiquity of gender-based violence or to tackle the new forms of violence which are by digital technologies. Neither have we been able to tackle sexist stereotypes.



The **Dominican Republic** reiterates its unwavering commitment to the promotion and protection of the human rights of all women and girls. Said commitment takes the guise of concrete actions to guarantee the full participation of women and girls, as well as their effective protection and their access to specialised and high-quality services. With a view to institutionalising the gender focus in public administration, the Ministry of Women and the Ministry of Public Administration have signed an inter-institutional agreement aimed at identifying, measuring, and reducing gender gaps in the public sector. In the context of this agreement, the country has established gender units intended to promote more equitable working conditions and equal access to workplace opportunities. These gender units also contribute to the strengthening of women's participation in decision-making fora; to the implementation of gender-sensitive budgeting; and to the design and roll-out of public policies which transform power relationships within institutions. One of the core pillars of this initiative is the production and use of sex-disaggregated data, which strengthens transparency and accountability when it comes to equality and parity. Finally, the delegation draws attention to its national innovative initiative which promotes gender equality, economic empowerment, and social empowerment of women, committing public and private bodies to the construction of a more equitable society. The Dominican Republic is firmly convinced that making progress in terms of women's rights is the best driver towards a more fair and equitable nation.

Egypt welcomes the approach of the SR's report with regard to reaffirming the centrality of biological sex as a key factor in understanding the forms of discrimination and violence that women and girls are subject to. It also appreciates the call not to obscure women's identities or to dilute this approach, which may harm women's enjoyment of their rights. In this regard, Egypt highlights the importance of international approaches being based on clear, specific concepts, which avoid any approaches which may be harmful and which may infringe on the rights of women. Egypt shares the SR's concerns over the escalating risks of digital violence. It is important that technology be not used for such harmful practises and that there should be full respect for human rights in the digital sphere as well. Egypt supports all actions to strengthen legal frameworks and believes that the rights of women are central to general progress.

El Salvador insists on the principle that all forms of violence against women and girls are unacceptable if this constitutes a serious violation of human rights. The country has implemented a comprehensive strategy which brings together security, access to justice, healthcare, education and cultural transformation as its watchwords to prevent, punish and eradicate all forms of gender-based violence. This coordinated vision has allowed El Salvador to make robust progress in the significant unsustained reduction of cases of violence against women, reducing between 2015 and 2020 the rate of femicides by 89%. Such progress has been possible thanks to the strengthening of response mechanisms, including the creation of specialised courts and tribunals dealing with cases of violence against women. The specialised and differentiated attention provided to victims and institutional work with bodies such as the Public Prosecutor's Office, civil society organisations and the Salvadoran Institute for Women's Empowerment, Development and Ministry of Health have also allowed us to make progress. El Salvador reiterates that eradication of violence against women and girls must be a global priority, thereby underscoring the need for robust and respectful international cooperation and particularly sustained technical cooperation to boost national capacities.

Gabon revised its penal code to robustly punish all forms of violence, including sexual violence. Law 6-2021 of the 6th of September 2021 aims to eliminate violence against women. On this basis, marital rape is criminalised and punishable by a 15-year prison sentence and a 50 million fine in CFA francs. A number of measures have been implemented to support victims to ensure that they have psychological and medical help. A free of charge anonymous hotline, 1404, has been created as well as an observatory of women's rights. Gabon has created workshops for capacity-building and regular awareness-raising campaigns are conducted to inform members of the judiciary and law professionals as well as civil society. In conclusion, Gabon supports the SR's recommendations and reaffirms its commitment to fight against gender-based violence.

Georgia fully concurs with her that violence against women and girls takes place because of social and cultural norms pertaining to sex. To properly address this challenge, a strong legislative and policy framework is needed. Therefore, the Constitution of Georgia recognises the right to equality before the law and prohibits any discrimination, including on the grounds of sex. Georgia's commitment to the advancement of women's rights is well reflected in the new comprehensive National Human Rights Strategy 2020-2030 that dedicates a separate chapter to the promotion of the rights of women, and its action plan also serves as an effective tool to this end. The government also strives to create a policy ecosystem that promotes women's empowerment by implementing different interventions in support of women in terms of social policy and employment. In closing, it stresses that due to Russia's occupation of the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali, Georgia is deprived of the possibility to implement the above measures on the ground where conflict-affected women and girls are unable to enjoy their human rights and have to endure infringements of their freedoms.

Germany underlines that gender-based violence is shaped by structural inequality, social norms and power dynamics that differ across contexts. These dynamics do not affect all women equally. An intersectional approach allows us to understand how factors such as ethnicity, migration status, disability, socio-economic position, health and sexual orientation shape both the risk of violence as well as access to protection. Binary classifications and exclusionary terminology can marginalise groups such as LGBTIQ+ persons, sex workers, people with disabilities and those experiencing homelessness. Groups disproportionately exposed to gender-based violence get often overlooked by policy. Germany is committed to inclusive, intersectional and rights-based approaches and has therefore recently enacted a National Violence Assistance Act, which establishes a legal right to free access to protection and counselling services for those affected by gender-based violence. Germany has also adopted a strategy on the protection against violence based on the Istanbul Convention.

Ghana on behalf of the African group remains deeply concerned by the persistence of violence against women and girls, including in the context of custody, disputes, and family court systems, as highlighted in their reports. The African group recognises the legal and judicial system must do more to protect survivors and to ensure that best interests of both women and children are upheld. At a regional level, the African Union (AU) has taken a clear and consistent position on these issues. The Maputo Protocol obliges states to protect women from all forms of violence, including in private life, and ensure access to justice and effective remedies, particularly in family and custody-related matters. The AU's strategy for gender equality and women empowerment further underscores the need to reform justice systems to be more responsive and to acclimatise



structural barriers to equality. The African group supports the report's call for a survivor-centred, child-sensitive approach to custody and family proceedings. Strengthening legal protection, investing in judicial training, and confronting harmful social norms are all crucial to ensuring that no woman or child is re-traumatised by their system meant to protect them. The African group remains committed to working with all partners to end violence against women and girls, promote accountability, and uphold the rights of survivors.

Ghana remains committed to eliminating violence against women and girls through its robust legal and policy frameworks. Its Domestic Violence Act 2027, Criminal Offences Act 1960, and the Human Trafficking Act of 2005 provide strong legal foundations for addressing gender-based violence. Through the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit and one-stop centres, Ghana is improving access to justice and support services for survivors. However, significant challenges persist. Under-reporting of cases due to stigma, weak enforcement mechanism, and emerging threats like technology-facilitated violence continue to hinder progress. Rural women and girls face particular barriers in accessing protection services.

Greece takes note of the SR's report, especially when it comes to new and emerging challenges ranging from cyber violence and non-conceptual image sharing to harmful AI-driven tools, physical and psychological harm isn't testified. Online violence technology facilitated abuse and the risks faced by women and girls in both digital and conflict-related environments are persistent. These threats demand urgent, coordinated responses, legal, institutional and educational. Gender-based violence reflects the systemic, sexual and societal dimensions of violence. Greece remains strongly committed to eliminating all forms of gender-based violence online and offline and to supporting survivor-centred approaches, accountability mechanisms and prevention through education and empowerment. As a current non-permanent member of the UNSC and with the Women, Peace and Security Agenda as a top priority, Greece also advocates for the integration of responses to gender-based violence in all humanitarian, peace-building and conflict prevention frameworks. Greece stands ready to engage constructively in efforts to combat gender-based violence in all its forms and in all settings.

The **Holy See** is concerned by the increasing exploitation and violence against women and girls. This includes femicide and rape, female genital mutilation and sex selection, as well as practises that commodify the female body, such as surrogacy, prostitution and pornography. These issues cannot be satisfactorily resolved or ended without clearly defining and recognising the specific vulnerabilities that women face due to their innate biological differences from men. Only by affirming and accepting the biological distinction between women and men can we truly respect the dignity of women and ensure that their rights are effectively realised and protected. We cannot separate the masculine and the feminine from God's work of creation, which is prior to all decisions and experiences. When these objective realities are ignored and sexual difference is obscured or deprioritised in law and culture, it is often women and girls who suffer the most, sometimes facing traumatic lifelong consequences. Pope Leo XIV recently denounced all those cases where relationships are marked by unhealthy desire for domination, an attitude that often leads to violence, as is shown tragically by numerous recent cases of femicides. It is imperative to unequivocally condemn not only physical but also psychological violence. This kind of violence can also lead to suicide.



Iran briefly portrays the story of only one of more than 600 other heartbreaking stories, including 50 women who were martyred during the blind and indiscriminate attacks of occupier Israel on Iran on 13 June - *'We were in the car going to the hospital when we reached God's Square. A missile hit on the wall and the building collapsed on us. My two sons and I were able to get out of the rubble quickly, but my pregnant wife died.'* Traumatized women and girls of Iran that for 12 consequent days were under attacks, including those reckless attacks to nuclear facilities with their high life-threatening risk, will never forget how their lives and rights were misused on November 2022 and ignored on June 2025. The silence of European countries, especially those who mustered their efforts to hold the 35th UNHRC Special Session, is utterly repugnant. Iran appreciates the SR's vocal support for women and girls in Palestine.

Italy notes with concern that violence, especially sexual violence against women and girls, is still an issue of deepest concern worldwide. Italy remains steadfast in its commitment to ensure the safety of all everywhere, in particular in the context of armed conflict. Italy actively promotes international campaigns against outrageous practises such as female genital mutilation and child early and forced marriage. Physical and psychological abuse at all levels of society is still a westerly wind spring. Mistreatment and humiliation of women is still prevalent, requiring a more effective action to prevent violence in all its forms. Italy expresses deep concern over newly emerging forms of violence highlighted in the SR's report, including technology-facilitated violence, which often remains unrecognised and unreported. International community must work together to remove all obstacles that prevent women and girls from enjoying the rights to their very existence.

Japan stresses that the elimination of violence against women and girls is a top priority for the Government of Japan. Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously impairs women's ability to enjoy their rights and freedom on an equal basis with men, constituting a grave violation of their human rights. Furthermore, such violence hinders their full, equal, and meaningful participation in decision-making processes and public life. Addressing this issue is essential in building a society where diversity is respected, human dignity is upheld, and all individuals can lead a fulfilling and vibrant life. Japan recalls that women's right to live free from violence is upheld in CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 as well as in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. To ensure the realisation of the rights, it is important to take a gender-transformative approach with the active engagement of everyone, especially men and boys. Japan reaffirms its unwavering dedication to working closely with all stakeholders, including civil society, to create a world free from violence against all people, especially women and girls.

Kenya remains firmly committed to the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls guided by its national constitution and international obligations. Kenya has undertaken a range of policy and legal interventions to address both entrenched and emerging forms of violence including the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act, the Sexual Offences Act and the Prohibition of Genital Mutilation Act. These laws provide clear definitions, criminalise a wide range of harmful practises and offer protection and redress for survivors. Kenya is reviewing its legislative frameworks to ensure they remain responsive to new and evolving forms of violence as highlighted in the SR's report. Kenya has expanded access to legal aid, psychosocial support and safe shelters for survivors. The country is also working to strengthen the capacity of law



enforcement and judicial officers to handle cases with sensitivity and urgency. In recognition of the importance of accurate data, Kenya has prioritised the collection and analysis of sex disaggregated data in national surveys and administrative records. This informs evidence-based policy making and enables targeted interventions including addressing compounded vulnerabilities faced by women and girls with disabilities, those living in rural areas and other marginalised groups. Kenya reaffirms its commitment to working with all stakeholders to eradicate violence against women and girls and to uphold their rights, dignity and full participation in society.

Kuwait on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) welcomes the SR's successful visit to the UAE, where she highlighted the protection of women and girls from violence. The GCC looks forward to welcoming her to Kuwait next September. With regard to the thematic report, the GCC commends the focus on forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, and emphasises the importance of integrating the biological sex of women and girls into public policy, ensuring that they continue to enjoy their rights under international conventions. The GCC is deeply concerned at the grave violations suffered by Palestinian women and girls in the Gaza Strip. As detailed in the report, the GCC notes the systematic destruction of health facilities and denial of health care to women during pregnancy and childbirth. The GCC expresses its full support to the SR and calls for redoubled efforts to develop international frameworks which place biological sex as a centre of the protection of women and girls.

Latvia on behalf the Nordic-Baltic countries highlights the importance of building on the well-established international legal framework that recognises gender-based violence. They believe that retaining this gender-based framework is key to addressing all forms of violence and to ensuring inclusive and effective responses. The Nordic-Baltic countries share the concern about the surge in evolving forms of gender-based violence, including technology-facilitated gender-based violence affecting millions of women and girls around the world, exacerbating offline violence and posing serious threats to their safety and well-being. It is of utmost importance that all relevant stakeholders take the responsibility to effectively prevent and eradicate all forms of gender-based violence and to ensure justice for women and girls and accountability for violations of their human rights. The Nordic-Baltic countries remain fully committed to preventing, combating, and eliminating all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls.

Malta recalls that violence against women and girls remains one of the most widespread and entrenched human rights violations globally, which transcends cultures and boundaries, impacting almost one in three women in their lifetime. This violence stems from deeply rooted structural inequalities and discriminatory social norms, among others. In humanitarian crises and conflicts, women and girls are often the first targets of violence, including conflict-related sexual violence and trafficking. Malta welcomes the continued focus by the UNHRC and Special Procedures on these issues, and stresses the need for states to uphold their obligations under international human rights law. Paragraph 25 of the SR's report implies that Malta and other states employ statistical methodologies that skew data to the detriment of women and girls, with the SR's conclusion implying that only women are affected. Malta does not share the SR's assessment on this point and reminds that all state structures and entities have an obligation to act in line with SOGI legislation without any discrimination between genders. Additionally,

affirming the self-identified gender of individuals does not inherently undermine the recognition or prevention of sex-based violence against women and girls.

The **Marshall Islands** notes that new and evolving forms of gender-based violence against women and girls remains insufficiently recognised in the international community. As a maternally male society, Marshallese women and girls play a central role in land management, family life, and are pillars of their communities. When such gender-based violence occurs, including domestic violence, particularly by intimate partners, it strikes at the core of the Marshallese values. It not only silences voices and creates unhealthy outcomes, but also severely undermines the well-being of communities. Recognising the need to be proactive in addressing these concerns, the Marshall Islands has enacted several key legislative measures, including the 2011 Domestic Violence Prevention Act and the 2019 Gender Equality Act, which include strategies to prevent gender-based violence. Further strengthening this commitment, the Council of Chiefs, actively contributes to the prevention of violence through structured community-based dialogues. Developing informed government policies requires the consideration of the distinct experiences and needs of women and girls. Eradicating gender-based violence requires a whole-of-society approach and to truly listen to the voices of survivors and let them guide us on how to collectively do better in the prevention of gender-based violence.

Mexico recalls that gender-based violence targeting women is a serious violation of human rights, duly recognised as such in instruments such as the Belém do Pará Convention, the Istanbul Convention, and CEDAW General Recommendations No. 19 and 35. Mexico also recognises this serious violation in its national legislation. The CEDAW Committee established that this violence has its roots in unequal power relationships between genders, further perpetuated by socially discriminatory stereotypes and standards, which are often structural in nature. More limited concepts in approaching this phenomenon, such as sex-based violence, will not allow us to cover and address these social and cultural factors. International law is not set in stone so that it is relevant and effective. Its interpretation needs to be evolutive and to change, to address various forms of discrimination and violence as they emerge. Multilateralism is a tool to seek out the common good and to guarantee that all persons are equal in dignity and rights, as duly established in the UDHR. Against that backdrop, Mexico reiterates its commitment to continue constructing and moving forward progressive standards that allow for no woman, no girl, no person to be left behind.

Montenegro notes with concern that violence against women and girls remains one of the most prevalent and pervasive human rights violations globally that is evolving in the face of humanity. It is a manifestation of deeply rooted causes, including structural impurities, gender stereotypes, discriminatory social norms and cultural patterns of conduct, sociopolitical and economic disparities, impunity and harmful practises. This is a global phenomenon that takes many forms, including femicide, the intentional killing of women and girls because of their gender, as the most extreme manifestation of violence against women and girls. The scale is unparalleled and frightening. As the data shows, every 10 minutes one woman is killed while every third woman has experienced some form of physical and or sexual violence during their lifetime. In the face of these alarming trends, Montenegro reiterates the importance of upholding norm-setting landmark documents, such as the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the BDPA, the widely endorsed Global Agenda for Gender Equality and Women's and



Girls' Human Rights, as well as subsequent legal instruments, such as CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 and ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment, that have further substantiated gender-based violence as a clear human rights violation. Yet, to end violence against women and girls, we must address causes, strengthen laws and policies specifically targeting gender-based discrimination and violence and ensure accountability for violation.

The **Netherlands** recalls that for decades, the international community has worked tirelessly to establish clear standards that recognise gender-based violence as a clear violation of human rights. It is the collective responsibility of the UNHRC to uphold these standards – it cannot and will not take a step backward. The Netherlands remains fully committed to ending sexual and gender-based violence wherever it exists. To uproot this injustice, we must challenge harmful gender stereotypes, discriminatory norms and structural inequalities that feed the cycle of violence. But true transformation requires more than this. It calls on all men and boys to step forward as allies and changemakers. Their voices and actions are not just welcome, they are essential pillars in building a future free from violence. The Netherlands urges the SR to amplify the voices and experiences of those in most vulnerable and marginalised groups. Women and girls in all their diversity, including LGBTQI+ individuals, must be recognised as having the right to live free from discrimination, intimidation and violence.

Peru reiterates its unwavering commitment to the eradication of all forms of violence against women and girls. This is a national priority that Peru has pursued with determination, a sense of responsibility and via a gender and intercultural lens. Peru robustly defends the right of all women and girls to live lives free of violence, particularly those women who are in the most vulnerable categories, Indigenous women, women with disabilities and the victims of trafficking or sexual violence. The Peruvian law to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women and members of family groups establishes holistic mechanisms for the protection of victims as well as various services which are free of charge, such as the Network of Emergency Shelters for Women, which provides holistic care to contribute to the protection, recovery and access to justice for persons who are the victims of violence. Peru also has Helpline 100, which is free of charges, confidential and accessible 24 hours from any landline or from any mobile phone. The helpline provides guidance, advice and emotional support. While recognizing remaining challenges, Peru urges states to strengthen international cooperation, to engage in the exchange of good practises and to maintain this issue at the centre of the human rights agenda. The fight against ending violence against women is not one we can afford to lose.

Saudi Arabia is committed to protect women and girls and highlights the importance of the recommendations in the report, in particular policies which aim to broaden the definition of gender. Saudi Arabia has protected women and girls by establishing a Vision for 2030, creating a legal and institutional framework to protect women and girls. Saudi Arabia has enacted several laws in this regard which aim to ensure full protection of women and girls in all sectors by ensuring their participation in society. Committed to protecting women and girls from all forms of prejudice, Saudi Arabia calls on the international community to double efforts to ensure the future of women and girls.

Senegal expresses its strong concern over persisting violence against women and girls despite the existence of an international legal corpus on this which prohibits sexual and gender-based



violence and ensuring that women have equal rights and the right to a life without violence. Senegal is ever more concerned given that there are emerging forms of gender-based violence linked to digital technologies which threaten the capacities of states to ensure effective public policy. In this context, we need to strengthen international efforts given the grave need to ensure that we have norms to fight against gender-based violence in order to better protect women. Senegal adopted in January 2020 a law which criminalises rape and paedophilia. This has become a standard in Africa in the fight against gender-based violence against women and minors. Senegal also has an anonymous system for reporting gender-based violence created in November 2021. Commending the SR's efforts, Senegal reiterates its commitment to the rights of women and children and vulnerable categories as under the SR's mandate.

Sierra Leone welcomes the report's emphasis on preserving sex-specific terminology in law, policy and data, which is a vital step in accurately identifying and addressing distinct vulnerabilities faced by women and girls. However, Sierra Leone is concerned by the report's caution regarding the erasure of sex differentiation as this would undermine protections for women. The call to protect female-only spaces, especially for survivors, is both timely and essential. Sierra Leone is firmly committed to promoting the rights of women and girls and to tackle all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination. Sierra Leone recognises that sexist stereotypes, both traditional and emerging, continue to hinder progress towards gender equality. As a country with a female population of 52 percent, Sierra Leone has taken concrete steps to protect women's rights, notably the enactment of the 2022 Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act, which aims to eliminate gender-based violence and discrimination. Sierra Leone believes that laws which prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex should be implemented and that mechanisms to oversee the application should be set up to ensure that those responsible can be held to account.

Sudan takes note of the report on gender-based violence against women and girls, which highlights reproductive violence which was committed by the Rapid Support Forces in Sudan in order to displace people and to conduct ethnic cleansing and to commit genocide. The report's conclusions are dovetailing with the results that Sudan ushered in investigations. International reports and Sudan's internal reports have documented these crimes. Sudan seizes this opportunity to remind the countries providing various kinds of support to this terrorist group, this criminal report, to shoulder their moral and legal responsibility vis-à-vis the genocide in Sudan. The latter agrees with the recommendations which underscore the legal recognition of women as having special biological traits, laws, and rights, while highlighting the need to be careful of definitions which conflate those with other rights of women. Reproductive violence should be documented and relief to survivors guaranteed.

Switzerland takes note of the report and commends the attention that has been placed on emerging forms of violence, including digitally facilitated violence. However, Switzerland is concerned that the report is promoting a return to the notion of sex-based violence and is abandoning terminology of gender-based violence. This would represent a significant regression, which is unacceptable of international standards. It is therefore necessary to tackle violence against women and girls by taking full account of the deep root causes of it, as well as social, cultural and structural factors. Switzerland recalls that CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 states that sexist or gender-based violence is a more precise term which makes the causes

and effects of sex-specific impact of violence more explicit. Switzerland also notes the intersectional approach adopted to fight against gender-based violence, including against LGBTI people. The prohibition of gender-based violence and violence against women is a principle of customary international law which is binding upon all states. Gender-based violence against women being one of the most widespread human rights violations, Switzerland calls on states to respect their obligation to engage in prevention, protection and fighting against impunity.

Thailand believes that a meaningful response must address the root causes of violence against women and girls as well as harmful gender stereotypes and social norms that reinforce inequality. Thailand takes note of the SR's efforts to address new frontier and emerging issues affecting women's rights and gender equality, especially technology-facilitated gender-based violence, which has disproportionate effects on women and girls. This demands comprehensive legislation and enhanced collaboration among relevant actors in developing appropriate responses to address the wide-ranging forms of violence, including transnational cyber-enabled crimes, such as trafficking in persons, growing threats of telecommunication fraud and online scams. These crimes, which are on the rise in Southeast Asia, continue to jeopardise the safety and security of the peoples and undermine regional stability and development. Thailand is willing to contribute to regional efforts to combat online scams and encourages countries concerned to cooperate on this issue of common interest, as recently underlined by the Thai Prime Minister. Thailand also stresses the importance of a gender-sensitive approach to protecting and assisting victims, in particular women and girls, who are victims of online scams.

Ukraine on behalf of the Lublin group comprising Lithuania, Poland, and Ukraine shares the view that gender-based violence remains one of the most pervasive and devastating forms of human rights violations. It requires urgent, coordinated, and multidimensional responses. The Lublin group strongly supports the recommendation to fully integrate gender-based factors into the prevention, documentation, and prosecution of such crimes. Since 2022, Russia has systematically used sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war against Ukraine. The UN Commission of Inquiry found credible evidence of rape and other forms of sexual violence committed by Russian forces against women and girls aged 15 to 83. Thousands of Ukrainians remain imprisoned in the Russian Federation or in temporarily occupied territories. Many were captured even before 2022. They continue to face torture, degrading treatment, and conflict-related sexual violence. The group calls for full compliance with international law, including the Geneva Conventions, the Nelson Mandela rules, and the Bangkok rules, which set critical standards, especially for the treatment of women in detention.

Uruguay states that gender-based violence is a manifestation and expression of unequal power relationships and of persisting patterns of discrimination which require a comprehensive and holistic response that is human rights-based but also intersectional and gender-based. Recognising the diverse identities and experiences of women and girls, including those who are confronted with forms of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or migratory status, requires a response via public policies which address their specific needs effectively. From that perspective, Uruguay believes it is indispensable that to continue to preserve and uphold the internationally agreed language when addressing this topic, given that restricting analysis to violence based purely on biological sex would be a retrograde step to losing the ground that we have achieved over decades of progress, both conceptually and normatively.

Uruguay also believes it is vital to promote an open and respectful dialogue with all affected groups and continue to work from a perspective that recognises and protects and upholds the dignity and rights of all women and girls without distinction.

Views Expressed by Intergovernmental Organizations and UN Entities

The **European Union** emphasises that the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were landmark moments in integrating a gender perspective into international human rights frameworks. Since then, numerous legal instruments, CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35, and various UNHRC resolutions have explicitly identified gender-based violence as a violation of human rights. The EU stresses the urgent need to uphold these international legal standards. To eradicate sexual and gender-based violence, we must address its deep-rooted causes, discriminatory social norms, gender stereotypes, impunity, insufficient legal protections, socioeconomic exclusion, structural inequalities, and harmful practises that sustain violence and abuse. Tackling these root causes is not optional but a binding obligation under international human rights law. Eliminating violence against all women and girls cannot rest on the shoulders of women alone. All men and boys must be actively engaged to break the silence and foster a culture where opposing violence is a shared duty. The EU reiterates its strong commitment to building societies where all women and girls live free from fear, discrimination, and violence.

UN Women jointly with WHO, UNFPA, UNDP, UNAIDS and UNICEF appreciate the intention to address entrenched and emerging forms of violence against women and girls. These UN entities jointly take this opportunity to recall, reiterate, and support international and regional human rights standards and frameworks such as the CEDAW; the Declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women; the Istanbul, Belém do Pará, and African Union Conventions on Ending Violence against Women and Girls; and the BDPA, all of which elaborate on the gender-based nature of violence against women, its causes and impact. The Beijing Declaration defines violence against women as an act of gender-based violence. Nearly one in three women globally have experienced physical and sexual or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner. Decades of evidence-based research have identified key drivers, including unequal gender norms, women's limited power in relationships, unequal inheritance laws, limited employment and educational opportunities. Knowing that gender-blind approaches are detrimental to the elimination of violence against women and girls, these UN entities jointly emphasise that adopting a gender-based framework is critical as it recognises intersecting forms of discrimination, such as ethnicity, race, disability, HIV, civil status, SOGI or any other factor that contravenes the principles of non-discrimination and equal rights of women and men, of girls and boys and set out in the UN Charter, the UDHR and the CRC. This approach is essential to address and prevent violence against all women and girls, support survivors need now.

Views Expressed by National Human Rights Institutions

The **Independent Human Rights Commission of Burundi** expresses its satisfaction towards the adoption of specific law on gender in 2016. The Commission commends the legal proceedings that have been conducted against perpetrators in special chambers at High Courts and Appeals Courts. It also commends the implementation of judicial assistance committees. In general, the

Commission would state that criminal sentencing is conducted in line with the Criminal Code. However, the Commission deplores the insolvency of many of the perpetrators. There are still many cases that need to be tackled. The Commission would recommend to the government the following: revise the specific text on criminal provisions so that they can be effectively applied; create a public fund to support the victims of gender-based violence; and bolster social education with regard to human dignity and the fight against harmful practises.

Views Expressed by Non-Governmental Organizations

The **Association for Women's Rights in Development** raises its deep concern over the rigid and essentialist conceptions of womanhood in the SR's report. Not only does this deviate from a feminist and scientific understanding of sex as being socially constructed, it reduces women to their sexual and reproductive capacities, treating them as victims that need protection from arbitrarily defined dangers without autonomy and agency. In reality, this protectionist approach creates a hierarchy of rights between the deserving and those people seen as disposable, as economic and social outcasts who are not eligible to claim their own rights. In a previous report, the SR has systematically rejected and invisibilized the voices of sex workers whose inputs and demands for decriminalisation had been misrepresented. In the current report, the SR has effectively pitted the safety and rights of cis women against the bodily autonomy of trans people. Protectionist policies, just like colonial policies, have allowed many states to undermine the rights of marginalised people and curtail the autonomy of individuals. In a colonial context, these policies were put in place to protect populations from dangers underpinned by racist and patriarchal conceptions of the inferior other. The progress in rights under international human rights law as known them is a result of decades of struggle and hard work of feminists, women's rights, sex workers and queer movements. The Association calls for an approach to human rights that truly, in conceptual terms and in practise, treats them as indivisible and that recognises the agency and right to self-determination of every person and people.

The **Centre for Reproductive Rights** notes that violence against women and girls is pervasive, evolving and requires an all-tools approach by the UNHRC if it is to be ended. Excluding a gender analysis from efforts to address violence against women and girls, an established standard in international law, is legally and substantively insufficient. It risks excluding historically marginalised populations from essential protections, including rights to non-discrimination, bodily autonomy and freedom from torture. It undermines efforts to address the root causes of gender-based violence. The term gender was adopted by women's movements, human rights bodies and the UN for a reason. The necessity of clarity for naming and addressing the specificity of rights violations driven by discriminatory stereotypes, norms and beliefs associated with gender roles. This framework achieves transformative outcomes that have a real impact on people. The doctrine of non-retrogression prohibits deliberate steps that reduce the enjoyment of rights. Abandoning a gender framework to address violence against women is a clear example of this. At a time when hard-fought and hard-won gains in women's rights are under increasing threat, it is imperative that the UNHRC stand against rollbacks in language and principles that have a real impact on people. Human rights are indivisible and universal. The Centre calls on the SR to recommit to ensure inclusive evidence-based and intersectional approaches to human rights. We cannot disregard how sex and gender intersect in the lived realities of those facing



violence and discrimination if we are to address gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.

AKAHATÁ gives the floor to a speaker from the Sex Workers' Rights Advocacy Network with members in more than 20 countries. The title of the report itself is exclusionary. Sex-based violence does not reflect the diverse realities of those affected by violence. The Network calls for inclusion instead of exclusion. The term that reflects the realities of all affected is gender-based violence. By focussing on protective approaches rooted in the moral frameworks, the report reinforces harmful narratives that view sex workers primarily as victims or even ignore the existence of sex workers' work. The digital frontier is not new for the sex workers. The network has data on cyber-bullying, online harassment, cyber-monitoring and platform discrimination. Punitive laws and anti-sex work policies continue to expose sex workers to violence both online and offline and restrict access to digital tools that can be used for safety. Without listening to sex workers' rights and voices, the risk is replicating all patterns of exclusion. The Network calls for right-based approaches including decriminalisation, digital empowerment, platform accountability and tech-inclusive policies. The Network will not close the digital frontier of violence by building walls but by ensuring full inclusion, agency and protection for all women and girls, including sex workers.

Action Canada for Population and Development states that the SR's reports reveal a worrying pattern of positions that, under the guise of protecting women, erode fundamental human rights. Both in her analysis of violence based on biological sex and her criticism of the concept of consent, the SR promotes regressive approaches that paradoxically weaken the rights she claims to protect. The report on consent presents overly broad generalisations without clear alternatives, grouping diverse industries under uniform criticism. Her paternalistic analysis denies the decision-making autonomy for women, effectively denying their agency under the guise of protection. This protectionist analysis, which is reflected in the SR's work, scapegoats trans and gender diverse people, creating an artificial hierarchy of rights. The report reinforces and reflects the rising conservatism in which governments instrumentalise dubious claims of security to undermine their human rights obligations. Evidence overwhelmingly confirms that inclusive policies do not pose security risks. The reports reinforce patriarchal systems by reducing women to their reproductive roles and denying their autonomy. Truly rights-based policies require inclusion and recognition of universality, not exclusions based on obsolete essentialisms.

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) welcomes the SR's bold and principled report on sex-based violence, including its groundbreaking call to ban both the social and legal transitioning of children struggling with gender dysphoria as well as their subjection to irreversible and experimental medical interventions masked as gender affirmation. ADF fully concurs with the report's conclusion that such prohibitions are imperative to uphold the rights of children to be free from violence and to the highest attainable standard of health. In this regard, ADF urges all states, UN entities and other stakeholders to implement the report's recommendations. Across the globe, we are witnessing a growing shift away from the discredited gender-affirming model of care. Yet, disturbingly, the UN continues to ignore overwhelming evidence of lasting harm from social, legal and medical interventions, especially related to surgeries, puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones, instead championing so-called gender transition as a human right.



Sveriges Kvinnolobby is grateful to the SR for her analysis of sex-based violence, a violence committed against women because they are female, and GBV persists despite many laws criminalising it. The SR's report presents well-documented evidence of the multidimensional violence against women based on sex, grounded in a real feminist analysis of power structures, the root causes, and long-term harm it inflicts on women and girls. The SR's report provides an impartial and objective overview, rooted in human rights, of what it means to be a woman. In a world where rape, torture, degradation, and objectification are the risks women face simply because they are born female. But it also goes further. It demonstrates how ignoring the sex-based reality of 50% of the global population serves to hide this violence and help perpetrators avoid justice; how the ratio of sex-specific terms, services, and spaces facilitates this violence; and what steps must urgently be taken to put an end to the pandemic of sex-based violence. Today the world lacks 150 million women and girls, not because of how they identified. They are missing as a consequence of being born female.

PRATYK states that Australia is facing a national crisis of family and domestic violence against women and children. In 2024, 103 women and 16 children were killed. The 2025 toll currently stands at 14 women and 4 children. This violence is deeply rooted in systemic gender inequality, power imbalances, and cultural attitudes that tolerate or minimise abuse. This catastrophe is particularly dire for First Nations women, who are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised due to family violence than non-Indigenous women. The scale and persistence of domestic, family and gender-based violence places Australia in breach of its human rights obligations under the CEDAW and the Convention on the Right to the Child (CRC). The State has failed to provide adequate protection, prevention and support for survivors, undermining the right to live free from violence and fear. PRATYK the Australian Government to adopt gender-responsive budgeting across all government departments, requiring spending proposals to include clear gender impact statements; adopt explicit legislation that prioritises respectful and consent education across all schools, beginning in early childhood; and promote accurate and contextual reporting on family and domestic violence, highlighting its systemic nature and the role of male violence in gender discrimination. Australia must act urgently. Ending violence against women and children is not optional.

The **Lutheran World Federation** congratulates the SR on her important report and we thank her for her work in addressing the structural and intersectional nature of violence experienced by women and girls. As faith-based organisations, the Federation affirms the report's recognition that such violence must not be seen as private or isolated. It is a systemic human rights violation, intensified in contexts of conflict, displacement and marginalisation. The Federation echoes the report's call for strong legal and policy frameworks, survivor-led trauma-informed services, faith and community leadership that promotes gender justice and sustained investment in women's rights organisations. The Federation seizes this opportunity to call for clear, harmonised and inclusive language across UN bodies to ensure coherence and effectiveness in addressing violence experienced by women and girls. It believes that it is important to make a critical distinction between sex and gender, two separate yet interconnected concepts that are too often used interchangeably. Recognising this distinction is essential to fully understanding the dynamics that drive violence against women and girls. It helps us address not only the act of violence itself, but also the socially constructed norms and hierarchies that enable and



perpetuate such violence. The Federation therefore cautions against positioning women's biological sex as the primary determinant for violence, as this may lead to simplistic and misleading analysis. Instead, the Federation urges a more comprehensive approach that situates violence within broader power structure and social norms.

The **Global Network of Sex Work Projects** acknowledges the SR's analysis of femicide as a global emergency. As sex workers, GBV and femicide is part of their struggle. In 2024, 170 women were killed in Kenya, a 79% increase in femicide cases from 2023. One third of these cases were sex workers. These killings cannot be regarded in isolation. They are not by chance. They are deeply rooted in structural inequalities, patriarchal norms and state neglect. For sex workers, this means the criminalisation of our work and stigmatisation, which is a direct result of patriarchal norms in the Kenyan society. Sex workers have a right to a safe working environment, they are women. They are mothers. They are workers. But due to criminalisation and discrimination, going back home alive every day is not assured. Sex workers demand respect for their consent when they say we choose sex work and when they demand for full decriminalisation of their work for their rights, health, safety.

Rutgers expresses its deepest concern at the report's focus on a binary concept of sex and the suggestion that an inclusive approach to sex and gender equality and gender identity would be a cause of violence against cisgender women and girls. This false narrative not only undermines the human rights of trans and gender diverse people, it also deflects from the true root causes of violence against women. The human rights framework promotes safety and well-being for all. If we are truly serious about eliminating violence against women and girls, we will have to address the persistent patriarchal norms that promote harmful gender stereotypes. Rutgers urges all states to develop and implement measures that address these harmful stereotypes through a gender transformative approach and to meaningfully include men, women and gender diverse people alike, especially youth and adolescents, to ensure that women and girls in all their diversity can be happy, healthy and safe.

FACTS & FIGURES ON ID PARTICIPATION

41 State Delegations

2 Inter-Governmental Organizations and UN Entities

1 National Human Rights Institution

10 Non-Governmental Organizations