

# STUDY GUIDE



PELOTAS

**MUN**

## TOPIC A GENDER VIOLENCE

## **Letter from the Chair**

Fellow Delegates,

With a great pleasure we welcome you to the PelotasMUN United Nations Human Rights Council. You are soon to become part of an amazing experience, which will provide the highest level of debate on one of the most important matters discussed within the United Nations.

We have chosen carefully the topics, making them as accessible as possible, and also with the best flow of the discussion in mind. By following this guide, we believe that you are going to have better understanding on the topics that are going to be discussed, and as such we recommend the fellow delegates to read it before further studies, exploring more carefully your nation's position within the following topics and also within the Human Rights Council.

After the proper care and study, it is time to prepare your position papers and send them to us. In case of any doubt or uncertainty regarding the preparation, do not hesitate to contact us, as we will gladly help you as much as possible.

We look forward to work with all of you, and we look forward to make the best PelotasMUN possible!

Warm regards,

**Ariane Casanova Dorneles, Camila Schwonke Zanatta, & Joana Gastal**

**UNHRC Directors.**



## TOPIC A: GENDER VIOLENCE

*[...] Across the world, violence against women and girls remains one of the most serious—and the most tolerated—human rights violations, both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality and discrimination.*

*Its continued presence is one of the clearest markers of societies out of balance and we are determined to change that.*

*On this International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women we say again:*

*It is not acceptable.*

*It is not inevitable.*

*It can be prevented.*

*[...] We believe that, through concerted action by everyone involved, from governments to individuals, we can tackle the unequal power relations and structures between men and women and highlight the necessary attitudinal, practice and institutional changes.*

*Imagine how different the world would be for girls growing up now if we could prevent early marriage, female genital mutilation, the turning of a blind eye to domestic violence, abusive text messages, the impunity of rapists, the enslavement of women in conflict areas, the killing of women human rights defenders, or the hostility of police stations or courtrooms to women's testimony of violence experienced.*

*[...] Community mobilization, group interventions for both women and men, educational programmes and empowerment of women are some of the interventions that have impact, when they are put together with other legal, behavioural and social changes.*

*[...] We now have, for the first time, explicit targets to eliminate violence against women in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These demands accelerated action.*

*[...] It is indeed a priority.*

*I believe that if we all work together: governments, civil society organizations, the UN system, businesses, schools, and individuals mobilizing through new solidarity movements, we will eventually achieve a more equal world—a Planet 50-50—where women and girls can and will live free from violence. (Emphasis added. MLAMBO-NGCUKA, 2015)*

### Introduction

Violence against women is a grave violation of basic human rights: It intersects with and impacts on their well-being and their enjoyment of human rights, participating in society. According to UN figures, the estimative is up to 7 in 10 women globally will be beaten, raped, abused, or mutilated in their lifetimes (UN News Center, 2013). Furthermore, while 125 countries have laws that penalize domestic violence, there are still 603 million women that live in countries where it is not a crime (UN Women, 2016).

In all parts of the world, women suffer violence and discrimination. They are under-represented in political and economic decision-making processes. In many countries, women



do not have the same legal rights as men: they lack access to decent work and face occupational segregation and gender wage gaps. Women are treated as lower citizens in Police Stations and Courts and, consequently, undergo a sense of impotence. This situation cannot be overlooked, the effects of violence can remain with women and children for a lifetime.

Even though the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women have created the commitment from the States to guarantee a life without violence to women, according to UN Women (2016), 1 in 3 women and girls worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime.

An explicit example of gender violence is the female genital mutilation (FGM) that is deeply entrenched in social, economic and political structures from many societies. According to the World Health Organization (2008), between 100 million and 140 million women and girls are thought to be living with the consequences of this act/procedure, which is known to be very harmful and traumatic. Moreover, this practice reflects deep-rooted inequality between the sexes, and constitutes an extreme form of discrimination against women.

Especially, the practice also violates the rights to health, security and physical integrity of the person, the right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and the right to life when the procedure results in death (WHO, 2008).

In addition, many men expect to marry only women who have undergone the practice of genital mutilation. “The desire for a proper marriage, which is often essential for economic and social security as well as for fulfilling local ideals of womanhood and femininity, may account for the persistence of the practice.” (OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WHO, 2008). Also, FGM is related to cultural ideas, for example, considering girls purer after removing these parts.

In compliance with UNICEF (2016), FGM aims to ensure premarital virginity and marital fidelity. This is because, in many communities, it is believed to reduce a woman’s libido, which helps her to resist extramarital sexual acts.

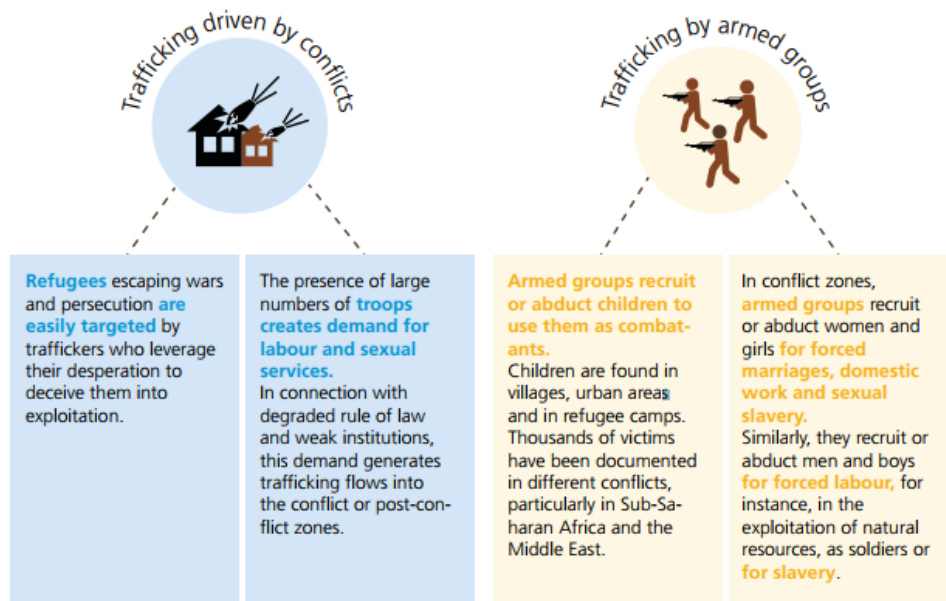
Furthermore, it is a fact that the majority of human trafficking victims are women and girls. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Executive Director (2016), they tend to be trafficked for sexual exploitation, such as forced or sham marriages, sexual slavery, and pornography production. Therefore, is a constant coercion for all women, because



it exposes them to irreversible consequences: sexually transmitted diseases, physical aggressions and constant threats and coercions.

This matter needs an especial attention. In the 2016 UNODC Global Report, it was emphasized the link between armed groups and human trafficking, because of the vulnerability.

Figure 1<sup>1</sup>



Finally, another important matter that cannot be out of discussion is the peacekeepers actions. Peacekeeping was created to be an important tool to assist host countries, helping them to create lasting peace conditions. Even if the United Nations shows their commitment to ensure that its personnel are going to serve with courtesy and dignity, there are many denunciations of sexual abuse by the troops.

The United Nations has a zero tolerance policy with respect to sexual exploitation and abuse by the peacekeeping personnel. However, the efforts are undermined by a lack of information about allegations and suspects, as well as political obstacles. This year, the General Secretary affirmed that the United Nations will not tolerate commitment on sexual exploitation and abuse, not even coverage of these crimes in the UN. “Every victim deserves justice and our full support”, he said.

<sup>1</sup> UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2016. P. 10.

Regarding the fact that violence against women remains one of the most pervasive global human rights violations, the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development includes the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls as a specific target.

Morrison, Ellsberg and Bott (2007) said that women and girls are at great risk of being sexually assaulted or exploited by men, in childhood, adolescence or adulthood. Mainly because it can take place anywhere, even within the family and community, and also it can be perpetrated or condoned by governments or social structures. Therefore, it is an urgent and important matter to be examined, discussed to find solutions and put them in practice.



## Historical background

In many ancient traditions, male domination caused by the view of male superiority was considered natural, and violence against women was seen as a natural expression of this dominance. The justification of dominance began to be institutionalized in law, custom and practice. The law in the west played an important role in reinforcing male superiority. Under the common law established in England, wives were often treated as property of their husbands. Traditionally, positions of authority were not occupied by women, which prevented them of deciding the actions that should be taken in order to undermine violence.

Scholars and activists in the United States used to examine the forms of violence against women as a criminal justice problem, and aimed to reform criminal codes, to make them more responsive to women's needs. One of the problems of this perspective is that it does not include acts that are injurious but not illegal (such as psychological or emotional abuse), or acts that are injurious but tolerated by some governments (such as genital mutilation). In the 1970s, effective action to undermine violence against women was achieved, with the contribution of the feminist movement, and laws and agencies were created in England and the United States to provide more assistance to women. In the 1990s, owing in part to the concern that violence was a major cause of death for American women, the subject was seen by a public health perspective, according to which the emphasis should be on violence perpetrated against women by intimate partners. (TJADEN, 2005)

The efforts to codify international legal standards for women were evidenced by the adoption in 1979, by the General Assembly, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women, which entered into force faster than any previous human rights instrument. In the 1980s, the Commission on the Status of Women brought violence against women for the most important position of international debates for the first time. As a consequence of these efforts, in 1993, the General Assembly adopted the first international instrument that explicitly addressed violence against women: The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women.

In the following conferences such as 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, violence against women started to be framed as a human rights issue rather than merely an issue of criminal justice or public health. Women's groups have placed women's rights in the international human rights agenda through their advocacy. The human rights perspective



focused attention on state-tolerated and state-sponsored discrimination against women, recognizing the restrictions to their freedom, access to education and jobs, among others, that happen in many countries. The broadest definition of violence against women is provided by this perspective, which includes all types of violent crimes and harmful practices.

In 2008, the UN secretary-general at the time, Ban-Ki Moon launched “The Secretary-General’s Global Campaign UNiTE to End Violence Against Women”, which have several goals, such as adopting and enforcing national laws to address and punish all forms of violence against women and girls, and increasing public awareness about this issue. Many countries have adopted new legislation on violence against women, which constitutes a significant progress.

The creation of these instruments demonstrates the increased efforts that have been made by the international community to undermine violence against women and ensure that their human rights are protected. However, violence against women still remains worldwide, and points to the need of strengthened investigation and penalization of perpetrators, as well as a stronger international legal framework.

In 2012, the international community was horrified by an attack, that constituted a grave violation of women's rights. Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist for women and girls' right to education, was shot, as well as 2 other girls, by the Taliban group inside the school bus in the city of Mingora. The United Nations strongly condemned the attack and called for the perpetrators to be brought promptly to justice, and several human rights experts urged the Government to take action to protect school children, specially girls (BAN KI-MOON, 2012).

This attack evidenced that women and girls worldwide still face violence when trying to exercise their basic rights, such as the right to education. The Special rapporteur on the right to education, Kishore Singh, stated that “Education is also a crucial means of empowering women and girls to participate in the economic, social and political life of their societies.” (SEKAGGYA, 2012).

Even in the countries that have laws prohibiting violence against women, there are currently practices, gender-based stereotypes and social norms that often reinforce gender inequality and discrimination against women.



### At the present time

Although the United Nations and other international actors have condemned violence against women and have taken actions to undermine it, it still happens nowadays in an alarming rate. This is evidenced by the fact that the United Nations offices around the world receive everyday reports of violence against women, in many forms. <sup>2</sup>

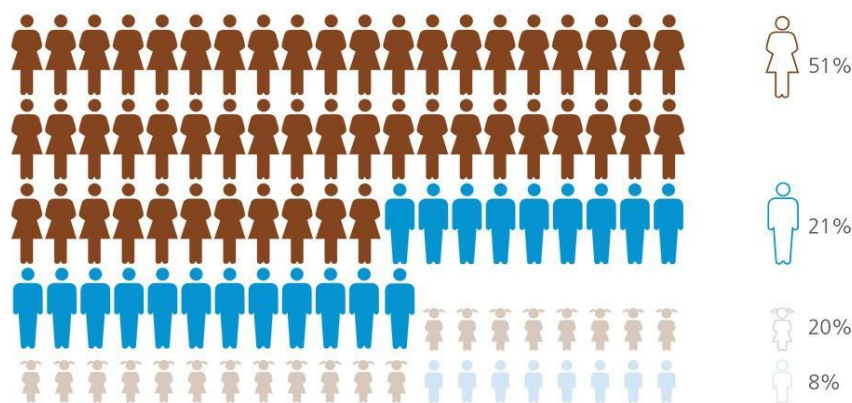
Some of the frequent forms of violence are:

#### 1. Human trafficking:

Thousands of women are trafficked every year, in their countries and across international borders, for different exploitative purposes. The most frequent ones are trafficking for sexual exploitation and for forced labour (UNODC, 2016). Some of the other purposes are forced marriage, forced begging and production of pornography. According to the 2016 UNODC Global Report On Trafficking In Persons, 79% of the detected human trafficking victims are women and children.

Figure 2<sup>3</sup>

Trafficking victims can be women, men, boys and girls



Source: UNODC elaboration of national data.

Trafficking for sham or forced marriage targets only female victims and accounts for 1.4% of the number of detected victims (UNODC, 2016). Some of them, after marriage, are treated as property of their husbands.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/Pages/VaW.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> UNODC Global Report On Trafficking In Persons, 2016. P.7.

Nowadays, within the largest migrant crisis since World War II, there are some factors that make persons more vulnerable to be exploited by traffickers, such as isolation, trauma, and the presence of transnational organized crime in their country of origin. Some international migration flows are reflected in human trafficking flows. The citizenships of human trafficking victims in a country during a period is often correlated with the citizenships of regular migrants in that country.

A large number of migrants and refugees have experienced practices that amount to human trafficking. The International Organization for Migration estimates that 80% of the Nigerian women who arrived in Italy in 2016 were trafficked. (IOM, 2016) Many of them are unaccompanied minors, who were unaware of the higher risk of being trafficked.

In 2015, in the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, goals on trafficking in persons were established, such as the elimination of all forms of violence against and exploitation of women and girls. In 2003, only 33 countries had statutes that criminalize most forms of human trafficking in line with the definition by the UN Trafficking In Persons Protocol. In 2016, this number increased to 158. (UNODC, 2016) Although the legislations that criminalize human trafficking have been improving, some of them are very recent, and are not efficient enough to successfully prosecute the cases, which makes a lot of crimes remain unpunished.

## 2. Sexual abuse by peacekeepers

The United Nations standards of conduct, which apply to all categories of personnel deployed in UN missions, are based in 3 key principles:

1. *Highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity;*
2. *Zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse;*
3. *Accountability of those in command and/or leadership who fail to enforce the standards of conduct.<sup>4</sup>*

Besides that, all the staff have the responsibility to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights in peace operations. However, there are allegations of sexual violence and abuse perpetrated by peacekeeping personnel. In response, the United Nations addresses the forms of misconduct, by prevention, enforcement of UN standards of conduct and remedial action.

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<sup>4</sup> Conduct in UN field missions. Available in: <<https://conduct.unmissions.org/documents-standards>>.



In 2014, allegations arose that French international military troops that were working in a peacekeeping mission in Central African Republic had sexually abused children in exchange for food or money. These troops were operating under authorization of the Security Council, but not under UN command. After the allegations, the UN Secretary-General at the time, Ban-Ki Moon, fired the head of the peacekeeping mission and announced several measures to be implemented, such as including strict timelines to complete investigations.

The UN is committed to ensure that all its personnel are accountable to their conduct during missions. The Organization, after receiving a report of a human rights violation, has a duty to investigate the violation, and take steps to end abuses and to hold perpetrators accountable.

In the Secretary-General's report, in February 2017, it was defined a victim-centered strategy to combat sexual exploitation and abuse, and ensure justice. The document focused on the rights and dignity of the victims and noted that exploitation is rooted in gender inequality and discrimination. Therefore, promoting gender equality would help to undermine incidents of abuse.

*Let us declare in one voice: We will not tolerate anyone committing or condoning sexual exploitation and abuse. We will not let anyone cover up these crimes with the UN flag. Every victim deserves justice and our full support. Together, let us deliver on that promise. (GUTÉRRES, 2017)*

### 3. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

It is a practice that consists in altering or injuring female genitalia for non-medical reasons, and it causes health issues, such as infections, increased risks of HIV infection and complications of childbirth. It is most carried out on girls between infancy and 15 years old (WHO, 2017). Even though it is forbidden by law in several countries, this form of violence persists nowadays for many sociocultural reasons, and it is a manifestation of gender inequalities.

*It is often motivated by beliefs about what is considered acceptable sexual behaviour. It aims to ensure premarital virginity and marital fidelity. FGM is in many communities believed to reduce a woman's libido and therefore believed to help her resist extramarital sexual acts. (WHO, 2017)*

It is estimated that 200 million girls have undergone the practice of FGM, and half of them live in 3 countries: Indonesia, Egypt and Ethiopia (UNICEF, 2016). In Nigeria, despite the practice has been banned since 2015, its abandonment was not achieved. "Although



FGM is not required by any religious script, 15% of women and 23.6% of men believe it is required by their religion." (The Guardian, 2016).

The practice of FGM has been declining over the last decades. "Around 1 in 3 girls aged 15 to 19 today have undergone the practice versus 1 in 2 in the mid-1980s." (UNICEF, 2016). However, this progress did not happen in all countries. Considering the increasing population growth, the number of girls and women undergoing FGM tend to increase.

The goal to eliminate FGM is included in the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in 2015, which shows the efforts of the international community to end this practice by 2030.

### UN Actions

Due to the urgent need for equal treatments, since its creation, the United Nations has been promoting human rights, such as gender equality, through several means of protection: Conventions, Treaties and Resolutions. This way, an international process of codification of women's rights was beginning.

Firstly, the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 emphasized the faith "in the equal rights of men and women". Both were important instruments to protect the world population from the hate and intolerance persuaded in the Second World War, looking for the improvement of the human rights.

Secondly, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, is considered an international bill of rights for women. It defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an important agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

*The Convention is the only human rights treaty which affirms the reproductive rights of women and targets culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. It affirms women's rights to acquire, change or retain their nationality and the nationality of their children. States parties also agree to take appropriate measures against all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of women. (UN, 2008)*

Furthermore, the States Parties of the Convention agreed to:

*Article 2. (a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle; [...] (c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination; [...] (f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish*



*existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women.*

CEDAW has 99 signatures and 189 States Parties. However, the United States of America, Iran and Sudan are part of a minority that have not ratified the convention. The Amnesty International has recommended to American people to pressure the senators to support the ratification of the treaty. However, until now, the US is not a party of the treaty. Regarding Iran and Sudan, countries with high levels of violence against women, it would be a great advance for women society.

However, there have been many feminist critiques of international law in general and of CEDAW in particular (RADAY, 2012). Firstly, that international law is at best silent on many of the issues important to women and at worst androcentric. Secondly, that the normative structure of international law, with its retention of state prerogative not to ratify treaties or to make reservations to them, is inadequate to bring about the enforcement of human rights (CHARLESWORTH, CHINKIN, WRIGHT, 1991). Thirdly, that emphasis of international law on rights as such, on the public rather than the private sphere and on political and civil rights in particular does not serve or recognize the interests of women (TUSHNET, 1984).

On 25 June 1993, the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights (VDPA) presented to the international community a common plan for the strengthening of human rights work around the world. It was stated that “the human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights” (paragraph 18) and placed heavy emphasis on eliminating all forms of gender-based violence, including Female Genital Mutilation.

In this aspect, it is essential to the UN Human Rights Council to uphold the principles of the VDPA, in order to defend the women and girls, the civil society organizations and human rights defenders from attack, at international and national levels.

Furthermore, in this same year, on 20 December 1993 the General Assembly, by the Resolution 48/104, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women was adopted. “Concerned that violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace”, was the first international instrument to explicitly address violence against women.

*Article 1. [...] For the purposes of this Declaration, the term "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result*



*in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.*

The main importance of this declaration is that it covers physical, sexual and psychological violence at home and elsewhere in society. According to WHO (1997), “accurate and comparable data on violence are needed at the community, national and international levels to strengthen advocacy efforts, help policy makers understand the problem and guide the design of interventions.”

Consequently, the Commission on Human Rights adopted the Resolution 1994/45, appointing a Special Rapporteur which creates an integrated system to protect women rights into the United Nations mechanisms for human rights. Also, it appoints causes and consequences of violence against women. The mandate was extended in 2003 by the Commission on Human Rights by the Resolution 2003/45 (OHCHR, 2016).

In a regional scope, the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention, Punishment and Elimination of Violence against Women, also known as Belém do Pará Convention, was adopted in 1995.

*Article 2. Violence against women shall be understood to include physical, sexual and psychological violence: a. that occurs within the family or domestic unit or within any other interpersonal relationship, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the woman, including, among others, rape, battery and sexual abuse; b. that occurs in the community and is perpetrated by any person, including, among others, rape, sexual abuse, torture, trafficking in persons, forced prostitution, kidnapping and sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as in educational institutions, health facilities or any other place; and c. that is perpetrated or condoned by the state or its agents regardless of where it occurs.*

Symbolically, through the resolution 54/134 of 17 December 1999, the United Nations General Assembly designated 25 November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and invited governments, international organizations and NGOs to organize activities to raise public awareness of the problem.

In 2000, the United Nations Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee approved a resolution<sup>5</sup> that calls upon States to implement national legislation and policies that prohibit traditional or customary practices that damage the health of women and girls, including FGM.

In December 2006, recognizing that “violence against women and girls persists in every country in the world as a pervasive violation of the enjoyment of human rights and a

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<sup>5</sup> A/RES/54/133.

major impediment to achieving gender equality, development and peace”, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Resolution on “intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women”<sup>6</sup>.

*Paragraph 8. Urges States to take action to eliminate all forms of violence against women by means of a more systematic, comprehensive, multisectoral and sustained approach, adequately supported and facilitated by strong institutional mechanisms and financing, through national action plans, including those supported by international cooperation and, where appropriate, national development plans, including poverty eradication strategies and programme-based and sector-wide approaches [...]*

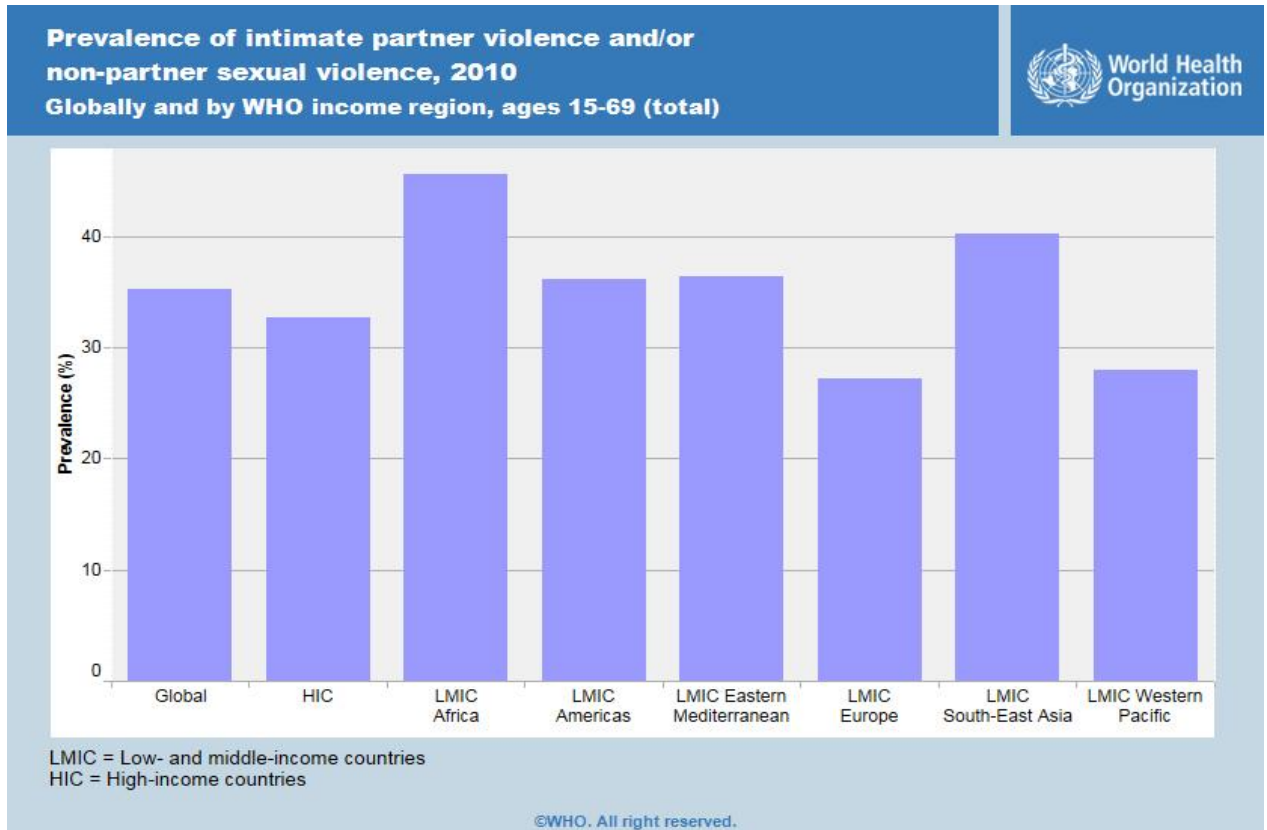
In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. In doing so, UN Member States took an historic step in accelerating the Organization’s goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The creation of UN Women came about as part of the UN reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact. It merges and builds on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system, which focused exclusively on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Furthermore, the United Nations is constantly realizing resources in its system to base the discussions in the agency, and also to perceive and understand the needs.

*Violence against women is a global public health problem that has serious adverse effects on women’s physical, mental, and reproductive health. It is increasingly recognized as a public health issue because of the expanding evidence base and growth of research documenting the magnitude and health effects of violence against women. For the first time, global prevalence estimates have been calculated based on all existing data from population-based studies showing that worldwide, 35% of women have experienced either intimate partner violence (physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner) or non-partner sexual violence or both in their lifetime. Multi-sectoral efforts are needed to combat this deep-rooted problem. (WHO, 2010)*

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<sup>6</sup> A/RES/61/143

Figure 3<sup>7</sup>

### Questions to ponder

Considering that all human rights and fundamental freedoms should be promoted and implemented in a fair and equitable manner, without prejudice to the implementation of each of those rights and freedoms, gender violence promotes inequality and constitutes a barrier to the fulfilment of women's rights.

Among the questions that emerge about violence against women, there are some that should be pondered in order to write an effective resolution:

- Based in the past UN Actions, what measures could be taken to undermine female genital mutilation, women and children traffic and sexual abuse by peacekeepers?
- Bearing in mind the several legal mechanisms of protection, such as Conventions, Treaties, Resolutions, what can States do to make them effective in practice?

<sup>7</sup> Available at: <[http://www.who.int/gho/women\\_and\\_health/violence/gho\\_vaw\\_001.jpg?ua=1](http://www.who.int/gho/women_and_health/violence/gho_vaw_001.jpg?ua=1)>.

- Acknowledging the important role of international cooperation, how can potential states help to reduce gender-based violence in the poorer countries?
- Considering the need for States, the United Nations and civil society to adopt measures to undermine violence against women, how can they implement a gender-sensitive approach to ensure respect and gender equality?
- Are participation quotas for women a possible solution?

## Positions

### Republic of Albania

According to Albanian Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) and United Nations Development (2013), 25% of Albanian women aged 18-55 years experience intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.

The year of 2008 was proclaimed by the Prime Minister of Albania as the year against domestic violence. This way, a national awareness campaign was organized for increasing the awareness on measures against violence in domestic relations as well as on the prevention and fight against domestic violence.

In the Universal Periodic Review of 2014, Country accepted, in process of implementation:

*Strengthening of the measures on gender equality are focused on the integration of women into the labour market, in particular for women from vulnerable groups, through the implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality, Reduction of Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence 2011-2015 and the National Strategy for Employment 2014-2020, namely: Promoting equal work opportunities through effective policies in the labour market; Increasing the number of males and females by providing quality education and vocational training programs; Increasing their participation in vocational training, especially for women and their employment.<sup>8</sup>*

### People's Republic of Bangladesh

A new report by ActionAid says the atmospheres in public service-oriented places are not very women-friendly, no matter whether it is a police station, a hospital, or a public transport, different forms of harassment including rude behavior, inappropriate remarks,

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<sup>8</sup> Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review - Albania (A/HRC/27/4/Add.1)

touching, is an everyday struggle for women. Moreover, according with Girls not Brides campaign, Bangladesh has the highest rate of child marriage in Asia, and is the country number five of the world rank with 52 percent of the girls married before 18 years old. Recently legislators amended the country marriage law to let girls under 18 wedding in “special cases” which are not explicit defined, and with parental and court consent.

### **Brazil**

Brazil is the largest country in South America and it has a population of more than 200 million people. In 2006, a law called “Maria da Penha” was adopted. It aims to severity of punishments on domestic crimes. Also, in 2015 the country has adopted the femicide law, which typifies gender based homicide. The country is among the 10 countries with the largest number of victims of human trafficking and it has increased in the last two years.

### **People’s Republic of China**

People’s Republic of China has undertaken legislative reforms and improved policies to accelerate the elimination of discrimination against women and advance women’s rights in the last decade. In 2010, the country acceded to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. In 2015, China's parliament passed the first Domestic Violence Law. However, domestic violence is still seen as a private matter, and women are pressured by family to remain in abusive relationships. Domestic violence is often unreported, and it is estimated that almost 1 in 4 married women have experienced it.

### **Federal Republic Germany**

Germany is an European country, co-founder of the European Union. The country is a signatory of the main human rights international treaties, among them, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women. Germany is considered transit country and also final destination for trafficked women that comes from Oriental Europe and Africa. In 2002, the country has approved the “Prostitution Act”, which makes legal and professional the independent prostitution, what is controversial in the German society, regarding the possibility of the increase of traffic for sexual exploitation.



### **Republic of Indonesia**

The muslim country is a constant target of critics made by the human rights groups. The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), for example, is one of the central issues on discussion. The removal of genital sexual parts of women is being practiced by many generations in the country, which has difficulty on prohibiting. Although it is a secular nation, the government shelter the greatest Muslim population of the world and have been seen an increase of fundamentalism.

In this sense, the Sharia Law is the most intrusive and restrictive, especially against women. It prioritizes punishment over rehabilitation, and the penalties favor corporal and capital punishments over incarceration. In 2016 339 persons were whipped publicly as a punishment (Jakarta Globe, 2016). However, the country has ratified CEDAW in 1984.

### **Republic of India**

In 2006 October, the country has adopted the Women Protection Against Violence Against Women Act, however, according to the National Crime Records Bureau (2012), an average of 92 women are raped in India every day. In addition, the country suffers with Maoist attacks – there were 126 attacks practiced by this group in 2016 (BBC, 2017).

### **Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

It is the headquarter of the African Union, what is very important to the diplomacy, playing an important role in the peace processes in the continent (Itamaraty, 2017). According to UNICEF (2016), Ethiopia is among the three countries that concentrate half of the 200 million of women victims of genital mutilation in the world, same as Indonesia and Egypt.

### **Arab Republic of Egypt**

The country has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, in 1981, and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, in 2004. According to UNICEF, 87% of women and girls in Egypt have undergone Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting from 2004 to 2015. In 2016, the Egyptian People's Assembly approved an amendment of the Penal Code,



which criminalizes the act of female genital mutilation (FGM). Prior to this amendment, this practice was a misdemeanor.

### **Republic of El Salvador**

According to the Asociación Demográfica Salvadoreña (2009), 26% is the proportion of ever-partnered women aged 15-49 years experiencing intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. Since 2012, the country counts with ORMUSA, a feminist organization against Violence towards Women, which advocated for the Special Integrated Law for a Life Free of Violence against Women in El Salvador.

In addition, according to UN Women (2013), El Salvador is the country with the highest murder rate of women in the world. However, its legislation includes steps for identifying and preventing violence, including for the crime of femicide and establishes measures to protect and assist survivors and families of the victims.

In 2014 “El Plan Quinquenal de Desarrollo” was established in the Country, foreseeing the effective prevention and combat delinquency, criminality, and social and gender violence. Furthermore, it has the objective of reducing the significant and progressive manner of violence levels and criminality in the national area.

### **Republic of Lithuania**

In 2011 was adopted in the country the Law on protection against domestic violence, which aims to define all forms of domestic violence more clearly and make it easier to prosecute as well as provide support to victims and preventative measures. Another positive development is the National Equal Opportunities Program, where includes: creating opportunities for older women to reenter the workforce; engaging more women in economic activity; reducing the disparity in pay between men and women; encouraging a more equal division of family/work responsibilities between men and women in the home; and including more women’s voices in policy making.

### **Republic of Nigeria**



The country suffers intensively with the actuation of the terrorist group of Boko Haram in its territories, which generates a great flux of migration, and also put women and girls lives at risk, once that 80% of Nigerian migrants that arrive on Europe, are potential victim of sexual traffic (IOM, 2017). Moreover, even that the country witness atrocities practiced by the terrorist groups to women in its territories, Muhammadu Buhari – elected president – reiterates the archaic position affirming “I don’t know to which party my wife belongs. Actually, her place is in my kitchen, my living room, and in the other rooms of its rooms” (Berlin, 2016) in a work visit to Berlin.

### **Republic of Côte d'Ivoire**

Women of this African country has a similar reality to her neighbours: an expressive discrimination provided by law that affects the civil, political and economic rights of women. The gender discriminations in this country can be perceived in the most basic activities of the society. For example, in education, just 13,7% of women have secondary education (UNDP, 2016). Furthermore, the Ivory Coast is one of the numerous countries that practice the Female Genital Mutilation (FMG). Due to the fragile political stability, women vulnerabilities are exposed in a country that has not a specific protection to this population.

### **The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 2000. However, the practice of male guardianship in the country poses obstacles to women's participation in society, limiting their autonomy, freedom of movement, the exercise of their legal capacity, education and employment. The country has taken some initiatives to respond to the problem of violence against women. One of them was the approval, in 2013, of a domestic violence law, which criminalizes domestic violence for the first time in the country, outlawing abuse at home or in the workplace.

### **Republic of South Africa**



Gender based violence is prevalent in South Africa. It has been dubiously labeled the “rape capital” of the world, however the country has been showing a legislative development with the Domestic Violence Act which allows Courts to provide protection. In addition, the Sexual Offences Act aimed to bring the outdated definition of rape and related offences in line with the rights in the Constitution. The South African constitutional experience on violence against women reflects some important successes, but without effective response and preventive interventions, women still suffer all kind of violence.

### **The United Kingdom**

It has in its legislation the 1988 Human Rights Act, which has the objective of incorporate into the UK legislation, the rights of the European Convention on Human Rights. It is signatory of the main international treaties on human rights, such as CEDAW.

### **The United States of America**

The United States is the only western country and the only industrialized democracy that has not ratified CEDAW.

According to Amnesty International (2017): “Disparities in women’s access to sexual and reproductive health care, including maternal care, continued. The maternal mortality ratio rose over the last six years; African-American women remained nearly four times more likely to die of pregnancy-related complications than white women.”

In a statement for the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the United States Ex-President, Barack Obama, recommitted his country to the basic principle affirmed in Beijing: “women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.”

In another view, in March 29 of 2017, at the Women's Empowerment Panel, the actual President, Donald Trump that his administration intends to “work every day to ensure that our economy is a place where women can work, succeed, and thrive like never before”, including “fighting to make sure that all mothers and all families have access to affordable childcare.” Also, he emphasized: “we want a country that celebrates family, that celebrates community, and that creates a safe and loving home for every child”.



### **International Amnesty**

The International Amnesty shares its researches with the United Nations in the policy-making process. Also, works directly with the UN Departments and Programs to assist in the implementation of solutions and, finally, amplifies the work of the UN by the dissemination of information.

For example, based on its researches, this year the NGO has submitted a report to CEDAW focusing on measures to be taken by Nigeria to ensure the protection of the rights of women and girls, considering gender based violence resulting from displacements and armed conflict, the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence by the police and others. This NGO is constantly doing so with many countries. In this form, it plays an important role in the international community.

### **Human Rights Watch**

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is a nonprofit, nongovernmental human rights organization made up of roughly 400 staff members around the globe. Its staff consists of human rights professionals including country experts, lawyers, journalists, and academics of diverse backgrounds and nationalities. The NGO publicizes reports about human rights situation in about 90 countries. For example, in June 2017, the HRW has published a report on violence against women in Brazil, which demonstrates that "there were 4.521 murder against women in Brazil in the year of 2015." A study of 2013 based on Brazilian Health Ministry has estimated that half of all those murders were "femicides", which means a homicide motivated by the gender of women.



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