



ONLINE VIOLENCE



Digital violence



ACCELERATING EFFORTS TO TACKLE ONLINE AND TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG)

SUMMARY

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) in digital contexts is not a new phenomenon, however, it has rapidly escalated in the shadows of the COVID-19 pandemic as women's lives shifted online for work, education, access to services and social activities. While there continue to be significant gaps in data, one global report suggests that prevalence ranges from 16% to 58%.¹ Online VAWG occurs as part of a continuum that is often connected to offline violence and can encompass many forms including sexual harassment, stalking, zoom bombing,² and these continue to multiply in a context of rapidly expanding digitalization. The impact of online VAWG can be as harmful as offline violence with negative effects on the health and wellbeing of women and girls as well as serious economic, social and political impacts.

Online and technology facilitated VAWG share the same root causes and many of the drivers of offline forms of VAWG reflecting systematic structural gender inequality, deep seated cultural and social norms as well as patterns of harmful masculinities. However, there are specific features of digital spaces that create a conducive context for VAWG. Existing laws, policies, and frameworks to prevent and respond to VAWG have not kept pace with technological developments and there are significant gaps in knowledge and evidence of what works in preventing online VAWG which is crucial to inform evidence-based prevention and response frameworks and interventions.

As highlighted in the [Secretary General's report to UNGA77](#), more needs to be done to effectively prevent and respond to new and escalating forms of online violence including by governments and technology intermediaries. The forthcoming resolution on VAW of the UN General Assembly and the [67th Commission on the Status of Women focusing on innovation and technology](#) in the context of gender equality³ present important opportunities for strengthening normative standards on violence against women and girls in digital contexts.

This paper provides a brief overview of the existing data and evidence on online, and technology facilitated VAWG, outlines some of the key developments, gaps, challenges and emerging promising practices and makes recommendations to be considered by governments, international organizations, civil society organizations and the technology sector.

online VAWG

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16% to 58%

Online & Technology Facilitated Violence against women and girls (VAWG)

Online VAWG occurs as part of a continuum that is connected to offline violence and can take many forms including sexual harassment, stalking, zoom bombing, intimate image abuse, misogynistic hate speech amongst others.



Globally the prevalence of **online and ICT facilitated VAWG** ranges

from 16% to 58%.⁴



One global study found that **38 percent of women** have personal experiences of online violence, and **85 percent of women** who are online have witnessed digital violence against other women.⁵



In the Arab States



60 percent of women

internet users had been exposed to online violence in the past year.⁶



A study of 5 countries in sub-Saharan Africa found that



28 percent of women

had experienced online VAW.⁷

Women and girls at heightened risk

- Women in public life
- Women journalists
- Women's rights activists/Women human rights defenders
- Young women and girls
- Women with intersecting identities (Indigenous, migrant, and ethnic minority women; lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and women with disabilities)



Most girls report their first experience of social media harassment between the ages

of 14 and 16.⁸



73 percent of women journalists

have experienced online violence in the course of their work.⁹



58 percent of women parliamentarians

in Europe said they had been subject to online attacks.¹⁰

- Online VAW can be as harmful as offline violence with serious impacts on health and wellbeing as well as serious economic, social and political impacts as it can affect women's professional lives.



In the Arab States, **44% of women** who experienced online violence in the past year reported that this incident moved offline.¹¹

DEFINING ONLINE AND TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG)



Photo: UN Women/Christopher Herwig

There is currently no internationally agreed definition of VAWG in digital contexts, also known interchangeably as “ICT-facilitated violence”, “online violence”, “tech-facilitated or related” violence, “digital violence” or “cyberviolence”.

The reviewed evidence for this policy paper captures a wide range of forms of VAWG in digital contexts which can be clustered as **online violence** which takes place in the digital world e.g. on social media platforms, virtual reality platforms, workplace platforms, gaming, dating, chat rooms and other digital platforms and **technology facilitated VAWG** which is facilitated through different digital tools e.g. GPS/location based technologies, AI, transportation apps, communication tools such as mobile phones, etc.

Online and technology facilitated VAWG takes many forms - sexual harassment, stalking, zoom bombing,¹³ intimate image abuse, trolling¹², doxing,¹³ misogynistic or gendered hate speech amongst others. Some forms of VAWG such as intimate partner or domestic violence and trafficking are also facilitated through different digital tools including mobile phones, GPS and tracking devices amongst others. For instance, abusive partners or ex-partners use tracking devices or other digital tools to monitor, track, threaten and perpetrate violence.¹⁴ Traffickers use technology to profile, recruit, control and exploit their victims and such trends have increased during the pandemic.¹⁵

The forms and patterns of online VAWG are ever-evolving and continue to multiply as technology and its usages advance in a context of rapidly expanding digitalization accelerated by COVID-19. Virtual reality and the metaverse have created new digital spaces for the same forms of misogyny and sexual violence that occur offline and Artificial Intelligence has led to the growth of new forms of violence such as deepfake pornographic videos.¹⁶

Traffickers



use technology to profile, recruit, control and exploit their victims and such trends have increased during the pandemic.

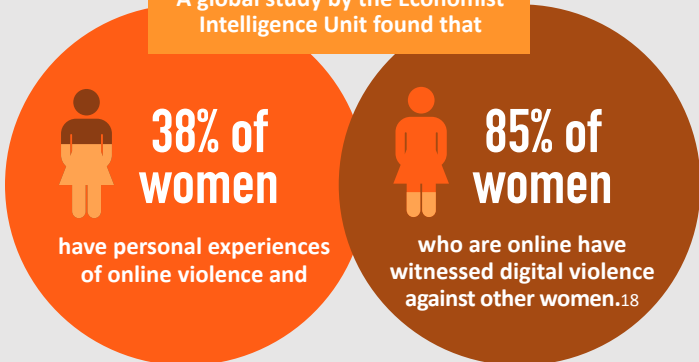
HOW WIDESPREAD IS ONLINE AND TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED VAWG?



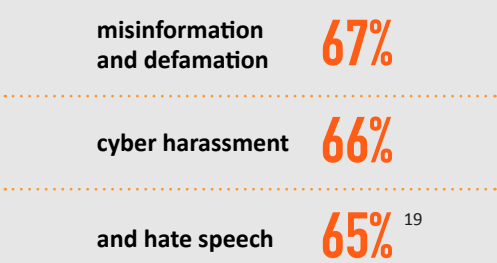
Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

The absence of agreed definitions and methodologies for measurement coupled with widespread underreporting make it a challenge to understand the true extent of the problem globally as well as to identify any regional variations. Many countries are yet to include questions related to online and technology facilitated VAWG in their VAW prevalence surveys and those that do use different definitions and methodologies, so the available data is not comparable and there are significant ranges in the estimated prevalence rates. A global report which synthesized results from surveys on online VAWG, from 2018 onwards showed a prevalence ranging from 16% to 58% depending on the question asked, and the demographic features of respondents such as age and gender.¹⁷

A global study by the Economist Intelligence Unit found that



The most common forms of online violence included



Furthermore, nearly three-quarters of women surveyed expressed concern about online abuse escalating to offline threats.²⁰

COVID-19 and Online VAWG

COVID-19 led to an intensification of the different forms of violence against women. As demonstrated through the findings of UN Women’s Rapid Gender Assessment on the impact of COVID-19 on violence against women, 45% of women reported that they or a woman they know experienced violence since COVID-19 started; 7 in 10 women said they think that verbal or physical abuse by a partner has become more common and 6 in 10 said sexual harassment in public worsened.²¹ Online and ICT-facilitated VAW also escalated in the shadows of the pandemic as women and girls’ lives shifted online for work, school, access to services and social activities reports emerged of a surge in VAWG in digital contexts.²² COVID-19 changed the way people use digital technology and increased the frequency of internet usage among women and girls. In Australia, the reliance on digital communication during COVID-19 has likely led to a 210 per cent increase in image-based abuse reported to the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner.²³

One online survey implemented by an advocacy organization in the UK found that 38% of respondents experienced online abuse in the months preceding COVID-19. Of these, 27% reported increased online abuse during the pandemic. These statistics were even greater for Black and minoritised women: with 50% reporting online abuse before the pandemic, and 38% saying it increased during COVID-19 (Glitch UK & EAW Coalition 2021).

Regional and country-based studies also demonstrate the pervasive nature of the problem. A 2017 multi-country survey of women aged 18 - 55 in Denmark, Italy, New Zealand, Poland, Spain, Sweden, the UK and USA found that nearly a quarter (23 percent) of the women surveyed said they had experienced online abuse or harassment at least once.²⁴



2021 UN Women study

from the Arab States found that **60 per cent of women internet users** in the region had been exposed to online violence in the past year.²⁵

The most common form of violence was receiving unwanted images or sexually explicit content (43%) followed by inappropriate or unwelcome communication (38%), receiving insulting or hateful messages (35%) and direct sexual blackmail (22%).²⁶ A 2020 study of women in five countries across sub-Saharan Africa found that 28 percent of women interviewed had experienced online gender-based violence, 36% had experienced sexual harassment; and 26.7% had experienced online stalking such as repeated contact or doxing.²⁷

While men can also experience online violence and abuse, women and girls are more likely to experience unique forms of gendered violence in digital contexts, reflecting a similar pattern to violence against women and girls in the physical world. In the US, 33 percent of women under 35 report they have been sexually harassed online, compared to 11 percent of men.²⁸ The same study found that 47% of women think they have encountered harassment because of their gender, whereas 18% of men who have been harassed online say the same. A study in India found that 31% of women had experienced online sexual harassment and revealed how online VAWG can jump from one platform to another as respondents reported that men who are turned down on dating platforms may harass women with repeated “friend requests” on platforms such as Facebook.²⁹

While all women and girls that have access to digital spaces are exposed to risks of online and technology facilitated VAWG, evidence highlights that there are sub-groups of women that are at heightened risk (see box below)

GROUPS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS AT GREATER RISK

Young women and girls

- The intersection of age and gender discrimination, alongside the higher level of ICT use amongst young women and girls for learning, accessing information and connecting to peers, increases their vulnerability to online violence.³⁰
- Young women and girls are particularly exposed to online violence. One study found that 58% of girls and young women surveyed globally have experienced some form of online harassment.³¹
- Most girls report their first experience of social media harassment between the ages of 14 and 16, and 47 percent of girls who have been harassed online have been threatened with physical or sexual violence.³²



Women in public life including women’s rights activists, women human rights defenders, women in politics, and women journalists.

- Research on online violence against women journalists found that 73 percent of women journalists have experienced online violence in the course of their work, including threats of physical and sexual violence, along with digital security attacks³³.
- A 2021 study of women in parliaments in Africa undertaken by the Inter-Parliamentary Union found that 46 percent of women parliamentarians had been the target of sexist attacks online.³⁴
- Women who are politically active online experience insults, hate speech, reputational risk, physical threats and sexualised misrepresentation.³⁵
- Women activists are targeted with forms of abuse intended to silence them, including, “pile-ons” where activists are targeted by coordinated waves of different forms of online abuse.³⁶
- There is evidence that women and girls experience higher rates and more severe online violence when engaging in advocacy, particularly related to gender justice.³⁷



Women with intersecting identities including women living with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ and black, minority and migrant women and girls.

- In the US, a Pew Research Center study has shown that lesbian, gay or bisexual people who have been targets for online harassment are more likely to report having encountered harassment online because of the intersection of their gender and sexual orientation.³⁸
- Women with intellectual or cognitive disability can be particularly susceptible to technology-facilitated violence.³⁹



THE IMPACTS OF ONLINE AND TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED VAWG

Health, wellbeing and safety impacts

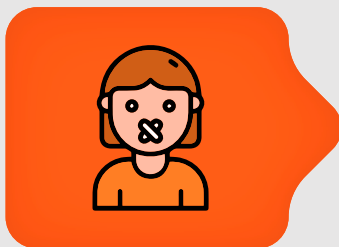


Evidence shows that the impacts of online and technology facilitated VAWG can be as serious as “offline” violence⁴⁰. Survivors can experience significant harm to their health and well-being including self-harm, depression, and suicide⁴¹ as well as symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, particularly when the abuse is frequent.⁴² Young women and girls also experience serious psychological impacts in response to online violence, including feeling physically unsafe, lower self-esteem or loss of confidence, mental or emotional stress and problems at school.⁴³

As services have increasingly moved online particularly since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, online and technology facilitated VAWG may restrict women’s and girls’ access to essential services which can be a lifeline to survivors.

Furthermore, there is also growing evidence that shows that online VAWG facilitates offline violence and creates “climates of unsafety” within society.⁴⁴ Online VAWG often precedes violence carried out against women and girls offline. For instance, one in five women journalists reported that they have been abused and attacked offline in connection with online violence.⁴⁵ A study in the Arab States found that 44% of women who experienced online violence in the past year reported that this incident moved offline.⁴⁶

Political and societal impacts

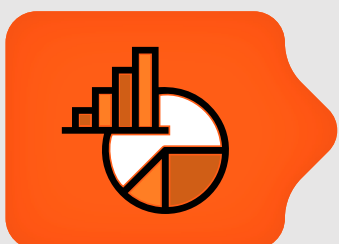


Online VAWG limits women’s public participation and leadership and can have a “chilling effect” as women’s voices are often silenced, discredited, and censored. One study found that 30% of women journalists interviewed self-censored on social media as a result of online gender-based violence.⁴⁷ Online VAWG can result in women and girls restricting their online activity, inhibiting their access to the Internet, increasing the digital gender divide⁴⁸ and restricting women’s voices as active digital citizens.⁴⁹

Studies have also shown that online VAWG can undermine democracy as women are frequently marginalized and attacked online in ways that their male counterparts are not⁵⁰. Gendered disinformation campaigns shift the discourse from policy issues to the personal and create barriers for women in politics to succeed. Some women who are interested in politics may reconsider their ambitions when they witness disinformation campaigns against women in politics⁵¹ and one study has highlighted that online VAWG is a cause of women not seeking re-election⁵².

There are also inter-generational impacts, as the online abuse of women in public life serves as an impediment to young women entering professions such as politics and journalism, due to fear of similar abuse. A study by Plan International on Girls’ and Young women’s experiences of online harassment, showed that girls who were activists and engaged on feminist and gender equality issues are particularly targeted, which shows that the discouragement of women to engage politically and on social issues starts early. 18% of girls who face very frequent harassment stop posting content that expresses their opinion. 16% of girls who face very frequent harassment change the way they express themselves in order to avoid harassment⁵³.

Economic impacts



One study prepared for the European Parliamentary Research Service has estimated that the economic costs of online VAWG to individuals and society among EU countries is between Euros 49 to 89.3 billion per year.⁵⁴ According to another study, online abuse of women in professional contexts is widespread, with fifty-one percent of women who experienced online abuse also reporting serious professional and work impacts because of the abuse. This demonstrates how online VAWG is exacerbating political and economic gender inequalities, with serious impacts on women’s professional lives. A UNESCO study of women journalists found that 11% of respondents missed work to recover from violence, 38% made themselves less visible, 4% quite their jobs and 2% abandoned journalism altogether.⁵⁵

DRIVERS OF ONLINE & TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED VAWG AND CHALLENGES

Although the patterns and forms of VAWG in digital spaces can be unique, they are part of the continuum of multiple, recurring, and interrelated forms of violence across online and off-line spaces. Many forms of violence occurring offline are often replicated and intensified in digital spaces.⁵⁶ Women’s and girls’ experiences of violence in digital contexts is reflective of the broader societal problem of unacceptably high levels of violence against women and girls across all contexts. The economic and social impacts of COVID-19 and responses to the pandemic have further exacerbated all forms of violence against women.

Digital spaces reflect, reinforce and exacerbate systemic structural gender inequality as well as patterns of harmful masculinities that drive all forms of VAWG. Deep seated cultural and social norms that reinforce male authority, entitlement, power and control over women, trivialize or excuse violence and stigmatize survivors contribute to the persistence of such violence. On the other hand, there are specific features of digital spaces that create a particularly conducive context for VAWG, including the scale, speed, and ease of Internet communication. Anonymity and pseudonymity combined with automation, affordability, and impunity to create an enabling environment for VAWG.⁵⁷

Current laws which address digital violence lack clear and consistent definitions and often have not kept pace with technological developments and different forms of VAWG in digital contexts.⁵⁸ Some states have started to update their legal frameworks but there remain significant gaps and inconsistencies in the forms of online VAWG that are covered and the remedies that may be accessed.⁵⁹ In this context, internet intermediaries are left responsible for preventing and detecting online VAWG with little independent oversight, unclear standards that differ between platforms and that are inconsistently enforced making it very difficult for women and girls who are victims of online VAWG to navigate and access support and protection. A significant challenge that needs to be addressed is that the internet is borderless and, in many cases, online VAWG encompasses multiple offenders, multiple victims across multiple platforms across different jurisdictions.⁶⁰

A key structural challenge is the significant under-representation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professions, and in technology in particular. The absence of women’s voices and perspectives in the sector impacts the design of technology and the extent to which it is gender responsive and inclusive of women. The embedding of inequalities and systematic biases into ICT technologies is evident in the deficiencies in technology company algorithms which promote online violence against women and content moderation algorithms which fail to detect violence against women.⁶¹

A significant impediment to progress is the absence of a uniform definition of online and technology facilitated VAWG and an established methodology to guide data collection. This makes it challenging to generate comparable data and evidence globally on the prevalence and nature of online VAWG as well as information on victims and perpetrators to better understand the impact, drivers, risk and protective factors as well as the responses to online VAWG by service providers. There is also a need for greater research and knowledge on perpetrators and their motivations for perpetrating online and technology facilitated VAWG including the role of organized men’s groups, incels and radical groups as well how they use different platforms to avoid detection. This information is critical to guide and strengthen policies and interventions to prevent and respond to online VAWG as well as to monitor trends over time.

WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS OF ONLINE VAWG?

Online and technology facilitated VAWG can be perpetrated both by men unknown to victim-survivors as well as men known to them including partners or ex-partners.⁶² A study in Africa found that in 57% of cases one specific person was responsible for the incidents and in 23% of cases multiple perpetrators were involved with evidence of an increase in organised attacks, especially against women with public-facing careers including journalists, activists and politicians⁶³.

Technology has also enabled the previously fractured movement of Incels⁶⁴ and men’s rights activists to flourish through the growing number of men engaging in the ‘manosphere’, to perpetrate targeted sexual harassment of women online and offline.⁶⁵

While there are still gaps in data on perpetrators’ motivations and drivers of online VAWG, one study that includes self-reporting from perpetrators identified a number of divergent, multifaceted and often over-lapping motivations including revenge, sexual gratification, social status building or financial gain with power and control as a key overarching theme across these different motivations.⁶⁶

A UN Women multi-country study in the Arab States found that younger men are more likely to report perpetrating online violence with over 1 in 3 men aged 18-24 saying that they have perpetrated some kind of online VAWG.⁶⁷



EXAMPLES OF PROMISING PRACTICES TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO ONLINE & TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED VAWG



Laws and Regulation



Prevention and Response



Data Collection



Laws and Regulation

eSafety Commissioner

Australia eSafety Commissioner (eSafety) is Australia’s independent regulator and educator for online safety – the first of its kind in the world. eSafety exercises its regulatory powers under the Online Safety Act 2015 within a holistic framework that comprises three pillars: Prevention, Protection, and Proactive and Systemic Change. Australia’s eSafety Commissioner delivers innovative mechanisms for online spaces, including through a new reporting scheme for adult cyber abuse, which gives adult victims of serious and harmful online abuse somewhere to turn to when online platforms fail to act. The powers of the Commissioner have recently been enhanced to address violence across all platforms, including video gaming platforms, dating websites and private messaging apps.

The ‘Olimpia Law’ Mexico

Mexico is one of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean with the highest number of legal reforms since 2021 to incorporate online forms of VAWG such as intimate image abuse into existing laws on violence against women. The Olimpia Law (named after Olimpia Coral Melo who was a victim of intimate image abuse in 2011) has been important in recognizing the gravity of online VAWG at the national level which has led to reform of the penal code to incorporate new crime types and has laid the foundations for the coordination and implementation of actions to prevent, respond and eliminate online VAWG in Mexico. To date this has resulted in 35 legal reforms across 28 local legislatures to include different forms of online violence and abuse in their principal laws on ending VAWG. This includes criminalization of sextortion, threats, cyber harassment, sexual harassment, and non-consensual image sharing⁶⁸.



Prevention and Response

The FTX: Safety Reboot'

Civil society organizations have been leading innovative approaches to safe online spaces including 'The FTX: Safety Reboot', which is a digital security training curriculum for trainers who work with women's rights and sexual rights activists. Modules include 'Embedding Digital Safety in Storytelling', which addresses digital identifiability and metadata considerations for activists.⁶⁹

StopNCII.org

The UK Revenge Porn Helpline (RPH) was established in 2015 and helps prevent individuals from becoming victims of non-consensual intimate image abuse. Since its creation, the RPH has supported thousands of victims, with an over 90% removal rate, successfully removing over 200,000 individual non-consensual intimate images from the internet. More recently, RPH has partnered with Meta to launch StopNCII.org, a free tool using innovative technology to support victims and potential victims of non-consensual intimate image abuse by creating a digital fingerprint of an image that can then be proactively detected and removed by participating platforms and tech companies to prevent the sharing of specific images.⁷⁰

Perspective API'

Jigsaw, a Google subsidiary, is undertaking research and developing products to reduce online abuse and toxicity, including a tool called 'Perspective API' which uses machine learning models to identify abusive comments. The tool can provide 'real time' content moderation, help moderators more easily review comments, and help readers to filter out 'toxic' language.⁷¹

Access Now Digital Security

Access Now's Digital Security Helpline provides technical assistance to civil society groups and activists, media personnel and human rights defenders, including rapid-response emergency assistance for digital security incidents.

Korea's Digital Sex Crime Victim Support Center

Korea's Digital Sex Crime Victim Support Center offers comprehensive support and protection to victims of digital sex crimes. In addition to counseling, referrals for legal aid and medical care, one of the services provided is digital content deletion as well as investigative cooperation with foreign IT companies. Efforts are also being focused on technological solutions such as pre-emptive deletion support which detects digital violence in advance of its occurrence.



Data Collection

Big Data and early warning systems

The International Center for Journalists in partnership with computer scientists from the University of Sheffield and the Centre for Freedom of the Media is developing an early warning system to help detect, predict, and ultimately prevent violence against women journalists. Big data will be harnessed to identify key attack indicators and other metrics signaling escalation of online violence against women journalists derived from five new 'big data' case studies focused on women in India, Lebanon, Malta, Mexico and South Africa. The initiative will explore the two-way trajectory between online and offline attacks before developing open-source digital tools to detect, monitor and alert key responders to high-risk cases.⁷²

PARTNERSHIPS

The Generation Equality Forum, convened by UN Women is a multistakeholder initiative which has galvanized governments, international organizations, civil society, philanthropies, youth, and the private sector to launch a 5-year [Global Acceleration Plan](#) to achieve irreversible progress towards gender equality through 6 thematic Action Coalitions. The **Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation** for Gender Equality focuses on preventing and eliminating online and tech-facilitated gender-based violence and discrimination as part of its roadmap. To this end, Finland and Iceland have jointly committed to advocating for the integration of online gender-based violence in relevant international fora, processes and instruments. Four of the world’s largest tech companies have jointly committed, in partnership with the Web Foundation, to building better ways for women to curate their safety online and implement stronger reporting mechanisms. Many partners also committed to advocate to protect feminist movements and women human rights defenders, amplify voices and experiences of girls and adolescents or to push for action on the issue of the unlawful sharing of intimate images.

“The Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality focuses on preventing and eliminating online and tech-facilitated gender-based violence and discrimination as part of its roadmap.”



The US has convened a [Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse](#) that brings together governments, international organisations, civil society and the private sector to address gender-based online harassment and abuse. The Global Partnership has three strategic objectives: to develop and advance shared best practices and principles; to focus resources on preventing and responding to gender-based online harassment and abuse; to expand reliable, comparable data at the national, regional, and global levels on gender-based online harassment and abuse and its effects.⁷³

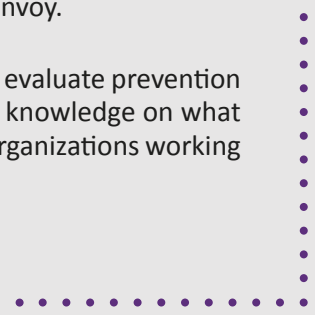
RECOMMENDATIONS TO DRIVE CHANGE



Photo: UN Women/Kennedy Okoth

UN system

- 1 Strengthen cooperation between states, the technology sector, civil society and women’s rights organizations to effectively address online VAWG through key partnerships such as the Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation and the US led Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse.
- 2 Convene and coordinate across sectors and in close collaboration with women’s rights and civil society organizations to develop international standards and frameworks for preventing and responding to VAWG in digital contexts, including standardized definitions, legal standards, roles and responsibilities, standards of accountability for internet intermediaries and technology sector.
- 3 Work with the UN Statistical Commission to develop a standard definition for measurement of online VAWG that can be integrated into regular surveys as well as Internationally agreed methodologies and ethical standards for measuring VAWG through alternative data sources including citizen-generated data, consistent transparency reporting and big data to address data and evidence gaps.
- 4 Ensure online VAWG is addressed under the Common Agenda, the Global Digital Compact that will be agreed at the Summit of the Future in September 2023 and other actions of the UN Technology Envoy.
- 5 Building on the existing evidence and practice-based knowledge, develop, adapt, pilot and evaluate prevention and response interventions to tackle online and technology facilitated VAWG to generate knowledge on what works in eliminating VAWG in digital contexts, in close collaboration with women’s rights organizations working on EAW and feminist technology experts.



Member States

- 1 Recognize online and technology facilitated VAWG as a human rights violation and include it in laws to criminalize and prohibit all forms of violence in digital contexts and strengthen capacities of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute crimes effectively.
- 2 Address data gaps and regularly collect data on online and technology facilitated VAWG and invest in evidence and knowledge of what works in eliminating VAWG in digital contexts.
- 3 Invest in long-term comprehensive approaches to transform the harmful behaviours, social norms and toxic masculinities that drive VAWG in digital contexts as well as increasing investments in prevention to transform gender stereotypes and social norms at the broader societal level including through the empowerment of women and girls, addressing unequal gendered power relations, and community engagement.
- 4 Integrate content on violence against women and girls in digital contexts into education as a prevention strategy and develop standards for inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy educational spaces both online and offline.
- 5 Strengthen cooperation with the technology sector, women's rights organizations, civil society and national and regional human rights mechanisms to strengthen measures and policies to provide swift and effective remedies to online VAWG including greater accountability of perpetrators.
- 6 Enhance access to specialized survivor-centred support and protection for victim-survivors of online and ICT-facilitated VAWG through strengthening capacities of service providers to respond to the unique nature of online and technology facilitated VAWG.
- 7 Increase flexible and long-term funding to civil society and women's rights organizations to inform decision-making and policy on online VAWG and play a lead role in developing, designing and implementing effective prevention and response measures.

Technology Sector

- 1 Increase the participation of women in the technology sector and collaboration with feminist technology experts as well as with women's rights organizations and EAW practitioners to ensure gender-responsive design of products and safe online spaces. This includes ensuring the design features of technology enable safe and accessible reporting options as well as access to support.
- 2 Establish, communicate, and enforce strict codes of conduct for users on their platforms and develop consistent standards for content moderation that detect and respond to more subtle forms of online violence and ensure that they are responsive to diverse cultural and linguistic contexts.
- 3 Strengthen transparency reporting on the nature and extent of online and technology facilitated VAWG and the actions taken in response.

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ENDNOTES

1. Jacqueline Hicks (October 2021) Institute of Development Studies. [Global evidence on the prevalence and impact of online gender-based violence \(OGBV\)](#).
2. “Zoombombing” describes the practice of disrupting or infiltrating a video-conference call and showing racially charged or sexually explicit material to the unsuspecting participants. See Sexual Violence Research Initiative, “Online safety in a changing world – COVID-19 and cyber violence”, 2020.
3. Priority theme: Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls
4. Jacqueline Hicks (October 2021) Institute of Development Studies.
5. The Economist Intelligence Unit, “Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women”, 2021. Available at <https://onlineviolencewomen.eiu.com/> (accessed on 24 June 2022).
6. UN-Women, “Violence against women in the online space: Insights from a multi-country study in the Arab States”, 2021.
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8. Plan International, “Free to Be Online?”, 2020, p. 16-17.
9. UNESCO, “Online violence against women journalists: a global snapshot of incidence and impacts”, 2020, p. 2.
10. Inter-Parliamentary Union, “Sexism, Harassment and Violence against Women in Parliaments in Africa”, 2021, p. 2.
11. UN-Women, “Violence against women in the online space: Insights from a multi-country study in the Arab States”, 2021.
12. “Trolling” consists in the posting of messages, images or videos and the creation of hashtags for the purpose of provoking or inciting violence against women and girls. Many “trolls” are anonymous and use false accounts to generate hate speech. See A/HRC/38/47, para. 23.
13. Doxing involves the sharing of personal or identifying details. A/HRC/44/52.
14. Bridget Harris and Delanie Woodlock, “Spaceless violence: Women’s experiences of technology-facilitated domestic violence in regional, rural and remote areas”, Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice, No. 644 (Canberra, Australian Institute of Criminology, 2022).
15. Europol, “Exploiting isolation: Offenders and victims of online child sexual abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic”, 19 June 2020.
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18. The Economist Intelligence Unit, “Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women”, 2021. Available at <https://onlineviolencewomen.eiu.com/> (accessed on 24 June 2022).
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