

Kofi Annan
FOUNDATION

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS

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Executive summary

Electoral integrity refers to elections based on the principles of universal suffrage and political equality. However, these principles are not adhered to by newer and older democracies across the world, with various barriers to equal and universal political participation.

For a long time, women's interests, voices and opinions were not represented. This started to change with the advent of women's suffrage, affirmative measures (such as quotas and reserved seats) and parity, measures needed for progress in constructing more egalitarian and truly democratic societies.

Although women make up just over half of the world's population, they often lack access to public office. To highlight the extent of this problem, only 25% of the 35,127 global parliamentary constituency seats are held by women. In addition, 85 of the 153 countries covered by the 2020 Global Gender Gap report, have not had a female head of state, head of government or president at any time in the past 50 years. Despite almost unanimous recognition of women's right to vote and affirmative action, many societies still lack equal opportunities and outcomes regarding female participation in politics. Women face various electoral and political barriers including deciding to run for public office, campaigning and holding public office on equal terms with men, as well as holding political positions in spaces free of violence. Even with the increase of female participation in politics since women's suffrage, this has, unfortunately, been met with an increase in gender-based violence.

The aim of this paper is to make visible the various hindrances women face in their attempts to access political spaces and challenges faced once they have made it into public office. Through extensive research and case study examples, this paper sheds light on the serious problem of violence against women in politics and, identifies the dynamics and complexities women face when participating in the political sphere. These major findings draw attention to the extent of psychological, sexual and physical violence women face. Thus, the logical next step is to make concrete recommendations aimed at resolving this issue.

Key recommendations

Based on the findings, the following key recommendations need to be actioned by various groups including international organizations, nation states, political parties and civil society to effectively address violence against women in politics.

- **The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee of Experts should issue a specific recommendation regarding violence against women in politics.**
- **That states design a comprehensive model of access to justice (electoral, administrative and criminal).**
- **Formally legislate and recognize violence against women in politics.**
- **Regulate and hold political parties accountable.**
- **Address cases of violence against women in politics from a gender perspective.**
- **Inform, educate and empower women on their political rights.**
- **Consolidate women's leadership.**
- **Support civil society organizations and activists to address violent cases.**
- **Generate statistics to identify victims and perpetrators to adequately address the issue.**
- **Undertake further qualitative studies.**
- **Create communications campaigns that are free of stereotypes.**
- **Develop international protocols.**

These recommendations should be consolidated with current international, regional, national and local efforts in addressing violence against women in politics. This is the only way to achieve electorally integral communities as well as equitable and truly democratic societies.

Introduction

We cannot speak of “electoral integrity” if states do not create conditions whereby everyone with the right to participate in public affairs can do so freely and on equal terms.

For the Kofi Annan Foundation, the term “elections with integrity” means elections based on the principles of universal suffrage and political equality, among other principles. Unfortunately, in newer and older democracies alike, there are still barriers to equal and universal political participation. In many countries, women, minorities and other population segments find their participation in democratic processes hampered. If elections are to be held with integrity, obstacles must be removed (Kofi Annan, 2012).

Barriers to participation among women, young people, minorities, people with disabilities and other traditionally marginalized groups should also be removed, equality rules adopted, and affirmative action taken to promote women’s leadership and widespread participation, including the reasonable use of quotas.

Civil society organizations should track government performance in addressing electoral integrity issues through impartial and systematic monitoring in accordance with the following: international principles, measures to prevent electoral violence, media, diversity and independence monitoring, and measures to ensure political parties meet citizens’ needs.

One of the recommendations made by the Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security to help nations promote and protect the integrity of elections is that governments should build a rule of law system ensuring that all citizens, including political opponents and the opposition, have legal remedies to protect their electoral rights, create institutions, processes and networks that discourage violence, and, if deterrence fails, punish perpetrators.

Women make up just over half of the world’s population, yet they still have marginal access to public office. For a long time, democracies “worked” without considering whether women’s interests, voices and opinions were represented. With the advent of women’s suffrage, affirmative measures (such as quotas and reserved seats) and parity, there has been progress in constructing more egalitarian and truly democratic societies.

The concept of citizenship has transformed over time. The very notion of “political rights” evolved as a result of tensions between liberalism and democracy, and women’s citizenship being recognized. However, this has not led to equal opportunities regarding female participation in politics. Today, despite almost unanimous legal recognition of

women’s right to vote and affirmative action against inequality in many countries, there are still barriers preventing women from exercising their electoral and political rights, which include the decision to run for office, campaigning and holding public office, on equal terms with men and in spaces free of violence.

It is inconceivable to believe that women fully enjoy their political rights, even in regimes now considered democratic, if half of the world’s population continue to face difficulties in exercising their human right to vote, running for election, or holding public office.

Unfortunately, as women’s access to and participation in public decision-making spaces have increased, gender-based violence has become more prevalent. The violence that some women have experienced in politics sends a powerful message on an individual level, but also on a collective level, because it aims to exclude women from spaces where they have gained ground. This situation is unacceptable for any democratic and lawful state. Historical gaps in representation must be closed if we aspire to have consolidated and democratic states.

Administrative and jurisdictional electoral institutions, political parties and governments have a great responsibility to ensure they are running functional parity democracies where women, like any other population group, can participate in decision-making in their communities, parliaments and countries without having to suffer gender-based discrimination.

This paper aims to raise awareness regarding the serious phenomenon of violence against women in politics as well as identify the dynamics and complexities of women’s participation in the public sphere that threaten representative and participatory democracy. The origins of violence against women in politics and unequal power relations will be explained. The legal and regulatory frameworks acknowledging the right of women to participate in this sphere will be identified. Examples of violent behavior, already recognized by legal systems and certain courts, will be defined, and recommendations for their eradication will be described.

This document raises three key questions:



This paper concludes with recommendations to help build political systems with integrity and parity, where women can access and hold public office on equal terms and in safe spaces.

I. Equality, inclusion and access to justice

Analyzing electoral integrity from the perspective of women's participation in public affairs include the following key principles: equality, inclusion and access to justice.

Equality is no longer an ideological principle, but a scheme of rights and rules based on an acknowledgment that human beings are diverse.

This idea can be better understood by turning to the legal expert and academic Luigi Ferrajoli (2012): "The principle of equality is sanctioned in all advanced legal systems as a constitutional rule because we are unequal in the sense of diversity of material and social conditions. In short, equality is stipulated because we are different and unequal: it is needed to protect differences and oppose inequalities."

The post-war period showed that democratic regimes' additional priorities require that different people are adequately included in the public decision-making process. Hence the importance of creating constitutions, treaties and regulatory bodies that recognize equality, but, above all, suggest how to achieve it, given that obvious inequalities make this complex.

Today, we can argue that there is good reason to believe that, while not yet in the "age of inclusion", this is where we are heading:

1. Equality is already recognized in 172 constitutions around the world.
2. Political rights are increasingly acknowledged as human rights.
3. International treaties recognize that there are political rights associated with specific social groups.

Some significant treaties and conventions with relevance in this context:

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which obliges states parties to guarantee women an equal right to vote, participate in policy formulation and implementation, and join organizations.

The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará Convention) requires that women be recognized as having an equal right to access public functions in their country and to participate in public affairs.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

obliges states parties to guarantee disabled people political rights on an equal footing with others – both to vote and be elected (UN, 2008). It also obliges countries to provide the technology and materials required for voting and to promote environments where disabled people can participate in a nation's affairs without discrimination.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

recognizes the right of indigenous peoples and African communities to self-determination and autonomy. It identifies a series of rights relating to indigenous peoples' political, economic, social and legal decision-making spheres. These rights must be respected in order to guarantee that these groups can express their identity. The right to be consulted, also stipulated in the International Labour Organization's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (C169), is worth mentioning, as it establishes the right to self-classification, whereby individuals may define themselves as ethnic communities or not, regardless of the language used.

Finally, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

recognizes migrants' right to vote and to be voted for in their countries of origin as well as being given the means to exercise this right. The right to vote in their host countries is also recognized, provided that such rights are afforded them under domestic legislation.

We have then seen the innovative approach taken by international human rights treaties, which consider the inequalities affecting certain people and social groups, whether or not they

are minorities.

By incorporating the principle of equality into the political and electoral arena, equal participation schemes can be drawn up. But how can this be achieved? The instruments themselves suggest four alternatives.

1. Non-Discrimination:

according to the American Convention on Human Rights (OAS, 1969), this concept is understood in two ways: as individuals' right not to suffer discrimination; and as the state's obligation to guarantee substantive equality that avoids discrimination.

2. Affirmative Action:

note that not all differential treatment generates discrimination. Doctrine and jurisprudence have established rules to identify when certain compensatory measures are justifiable and can, therefore, be implemented without being considered discriminatory: a) they must involve people in different situations; b) they must be based on a specific objective; c) they must be related to the desired objective; and, d) they must be proportional to the objective for which states are taking affirmative action to reduce differences among social groups.

3. Collective Rights:

the theory differentiates among three categories of collective rights for the inclusion of minority groups who, like indigenous peoples, have suffered inequalities within their societies (Kymlicka, 1996).

4. Access to Justice

and judging mechanisms as a means of restoring rights.

What else can the Universal Declaration of Human Rights mean when it calls for an “effective remedy”, but the removal of barriers and obstacles that prevent access to justice for groups and individuals living in inequality?

Alda Facio (2000), an important analyst who considers law from a gender perspective, has defined this obligation. Effective remedy can only mean redressing oppressive situations caused by particular conduct or contributing to eliminating discrimination as a form of gender relations. This implies that, when coming to a decision, judges should decide whether the concrete application of a law will result in the unjustified, differentiated treatment between men and women due to the gender roles assigned to each. If so, permitted compensation mechanisms should be applied.

The Brasilia Regulations Regarding Access to Justice for Vulnerable People stipulates that all judicial systems must be designed to provide an effective defense for the rights of vulnerable people given that the latter face greater barriers to exercising their rights. Hence, it includes recommendations for public bodies and for those serving in the judicial system, not only promoting public policies that guarantee access to justice, but also the daily efforts of all those serving and running the judicial system.

Within this framework, there are proposals that require using a lens of “interculturality” when reaching a judgment so that a dialogue between statutory law and indigenous systems (customary law) can be generated when considering cases involving indigenous peoples or individuals. The purpose of these proposals is to build a multicultural society.

We have not yet reached the age of inclusion, since the dominant majorities still prevail in decision-making bodies around the world. Women, indigenous people, African communities, migrants and people with disabilities, to cite a few examples, are under-represented in decision-making due to the discriminatory systems in place.

In light of this reality, we now have international treaties and public policy instruments that can solve the problem of exclusion from exercising political rights. It is true that affirmative action has already proved to be effective in resolving discriminatory situations and leveling the playing field.

Recently, however, other types of interventions in the judicial sphere have become more powerful. Fortunately, judicial bodies in several countries have taken it upon themselves to rethink the law, and, thus, stop its apparent neutrality, which merely reproduces social inequalities.

The results are already beginning to show. If courts and tribunals manage to make their commitment to equality clear, groups and individuals will have more of an incentive to come forward and ask for their rights to be protected.

However, justice also needs to become more approachable for victims and defendants. If it is seen as distant, costly or insensitive to inequalities, its ability to restore rights will be diminished.

II. Women: political rights and gender mandates

Power relations and gender hierarchies have resulted in women being excluded from public office. Gender mandates confined them to the reproductive sphere (domestic and care work, in sum, work associated with emotions and femininity), while men occupied the productive sphere (paid work, related to rationality and masculinity) (Carrasco, 2001).

These differences, which are socially constructed rather than natural (Rubin, 1975), have meant less recognition of women’s rights, including political rights, and have created significant gaps between men and women in spaces of representation.

The (natural) sexual difference between genders was used to justify excluding women from elected office and from performing public tasks. A glass ceiling was built (Heller, 2008)². It can be defined as an invisible barrier that prevents women from accessing political and representative spaces on equal footing.

² Metaphor used to refer to the fact that although there are no established laws, rules or regulations that prevent women from advancing in their professional careers, there is an invisible ceiling that appears in women's working careers and limits their ability to hold the managerial and higher-level positions commonly occupied by men.



To understand the problem, it is worth asking ourselves about the origins of discrimination against women in public functions. The Mexican anthropologist and feminist Marcela Lagarde suggests that sexism is based on androcentrism: a viewpoint that considers men and the masculine to be superior, better, more adequate, more capable and more useful than women, which is why it is considered legitimate for men to have a monopoly on power, control and violence. The most significant forms of sexism are machismo and misogyny (Lagarde, 2012).

Misogyny is one of the keys to understanding the segregation of women in public life. It is found in situations where it is accepted as natural for women to be damaged, marginalized and mistreated and where hostile, aggressive and sexist actions and behaviors towards women are encouraged. Women are discriminated against and excluded because they are women. "In short, misogyny is a consensual power resource that oppresses women before they act or express themselves, and even before they exist, just because of their gender" (op. cit.).

Today, is it increasingly clear that gender roles are being questioned around the world. Gender roles refer to the tasks or functions performed in various spaces and that correspond to gender assignment and their male or female identity. For example, the disproportionate amount of time women spend on unpaid care work and domestic chores compared with that spent by men on these activities has been revealed. The gender gap when it comes to pay, management positions and, of course, political participation has also been exposed. The mass mobilization of women around the world annually on 8 March for International Women's Day is proof that these roles are being questioned. From Argentina to Australia, Canada, Norway, Russia and South Africa, women have taken to the streets en masse to demand their rights and to be considered as equals.

For a long time, the role of women in political parties has been limited to subordinate positions. Traditionally, they serve in as members in the lower echelons of the party, galvanizing voters and acting as community managers.

Generally, they have not participated in decision-making bodies or held the most important elected positions (Arboleda, 1993) (Barrera & Suárez, 2012) (Massolo, 2007) (Tello, 2009). So-called "female characteristics" are not regarded as appropriate for the political and decision-making sphere. Thus, when women enter politics, they have to make more of an effort to be accepted and "fight" to stay in office.

Indigenous women face no less of a challenge since in indigenous regulatory systems (customs and practices), machismo and patriarchal structures also prevail. This has created barriers, especially locally, to women's participation in Community Assemblies and their election as public officials (Alanís, pending publication).

In many indigenous and African communities, women are not only discriminated against on the basis of their sex, but also due to their class, race and social status. Therefore, any analysis of political participation among indigenous peoples and communities must be carried out from a perspective of intersectionality, which is an analytical gender studies tool that provides a deeper understanding of the various ways in which gender intersects and combines with other identities potentially giving rise to oppressive experiences or privilege.

Internationally, there has been notable progress in formal equality, with legal recognition of women's suffrage and growing female participation in parliament with women becoming heads of state, government and local government (Alanís, 2019). However, women's abilities to make decisions in the public arena continues to be questioned and there is still resistance in political parties and party systems to nominating women as candidates and to the idea of women holding office. This limits a women's human rights to enjoy equal access to their country's decision-making bodies.

This resistance manifests itself as violence, which for many years was brushed under the carpet and simply thought of as being natural in politics. Even today, despite the fact that the issue receives more attention and monitoring, mostly because of academia and activism, only four countries (Bolivia, Mexico, Argentina and Ecuador) have approved legal reforms. However, only the first two countries have regulated behavior, put into place sanctions, established procedures, and defined the competent authorities to deal with violence against women in politics, despite the fact that electoral integrity has been strongly affected by the discrimination women face when participating in politics worldwide.

III. Legal developments in recognizing women's political rights

The work of civil society organizations, academics and feminist activists, as well as electoral reforms and judicial interpretation, have all contributed to the recognition and exercise of women's political and electoral rights.

This has led to international conventions and treaties that have become landmarks when it comes to defending these rights.

The mandate of at least ten international treaties include women's participation in the political sphere, among them: the Inter-American Convention on the Granting of Political Rights to Women (1948), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Charter of the Organization of American States (1948), the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (1948), the American Convention on Human Rights (1969), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1981), the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (1994), the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952) and the Istanbul Convention (2014). All of them determine that women should have the opportunity to participate in public life. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives" and "everyone

has the right of equal access to public service in their country".

Governments are obliged to fully honor the commitments made in international treaties that carry the same weight, hierarchically speaking, as national laws. These treaties are fundamental because they have served as the basis and foundation of pioneering public policies and rulings. It is, therefore, essential to continue working from an international perspective with treaties, conventions and recommendations that ensure respect for human rights, since these are tools used by the defense in cases of violence against women and can be extremely helpful, especially when considering that only two countries in the world have legislated for gender-based violence to be eradicated.

Of the instruments mentioned above, two are extremely significant in terms of the importance and validity of their content: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará Convention). Both identify discrimination against women and the temporary measures that should be taken to eradicate it and define

the concept of violence and states' obligations about honoring their commitments. More details are provided in the following section.

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

This instrument defines discrimination against women as: "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field" (UN, 1981).

It also sets out special, temporary measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women that shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality, opportunity and treatment have been achieved. These are objective and reasonable measures with a specific purpose. Some of the obligations this instrument creates for signatory states are:

- to embody the principle of equality and ensure its realization in practice;
- to prohibit and punish any discrimination against women;
- to protect women's rights through the courts;
- to refrain from any discriminatory practices;
- to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;
- to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women (CEDAW, 1981).

Just as importantly, it also obliges states to tackle stereotypes by modifying the social and cultural patterns of men and women's behavior with a view to eliminating prejudice and customs as well as all other practices based on supposed inferiority or superiority of either sex or on stereotyped roles for men and women. Finally, it establishes specific provisions, including political and public life, for representation and equality before the law.

INTER-AMERICAN CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION, PUNISHMENT, AND ERADICATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (BELÉM DO PARÁ CONVENTION)

This instrument is relevant because it defines violence against women as any act or conduct, based on gender, which causes death or physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or the private sphere. It includes physical, sexual and psychological violence that occurs within the family or domestic unit, or within any other interpersonal relationship, in the community, educational institutions, health facilities or any other place (OAS, Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, 1994).

It expressly states that women have the right to live free of violence, which includes the right not to be discriminated against, to be valued and educated free of stereotyped patterns of behavior and social and cultural practices based on concepts of inferiority or subordination, and to freely and fully exercise their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

It establishes the concept of intersectionality, which is currently a useful way of better understanding structural discrimination and addressing it with transformative measures that have an impact on the structures that generate exclusion.

“...States Parties shall take special account of the vulnerability of women to violence by reason of, among others, their race or ethnic background or their status as migrants, refugees or displaced persons. Similar consideration shall be given to women subjected to violence while pregnant or who are disabled, of minor age, elderly, socioeconomically disadvantaged, affected by armed conflict or deprived of their freedom” (Belém do Pará Convention, 1994).

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONVENTION ON PREVENTING AND COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (ISTANBUL CONVENTION)

After 20 years of the Belém do Pará Convention in the Americas, in 2014 the Council of Europe adopted the “Istanbul Convention” to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence. Although it does not explicitly include the issue of political participation, it has broad scope as it protects all fundamental rights.

The contribution of the Belém do Pará Convention is explicitly recognized: not just in its formal content, but also in the recommendations made by its Committee of Experts, who have suggested consolidating elements such as budgets, accountability and access to justice.

One important aspect of this Convention is that it considered the problems experienced in the Americas and provided a pioneering definition. The instrument emphatically prohibits the use of culture, custom, religion, tradition or “honor” as justification for any acts of violence covered by its scope (Council of Europe, 2011).

AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES’ RIGHTS (BANJUL CHARTER)

This instrument is relevant because it establishes that civil and political rights cannot be dissociated from economic, social and cultural rights in their conception or universality. It also emphasizes the eradication of discrimination based on race, ethnic group, color, sex, language, religion, politics or alternative opinions, national and social origin, fortune, birth or other status (UNHCR, 1981).

Unlike the other treaties, the Banjul Charter mentions peoples’ rights. For example, it considers people’s right to existence and self-determination, to freely determine their political status, to free themselves from the bonds of domination and to be free from foreign domination, be it political, economic or cultural.

This self-determination is necessary if people are to survive. In these spaces women must participate in community life. Hence, native communities must themselves design mechanisms to incorporate women into decision-making spaces with the support of governments within a framework that respects human rights, but also recognizes their autonomy.

In the Americas, Europe and Africa, we find valuable contributions that defend women’s political rights. These treaties became necessary due to an international context of inequality and widespread violence against women. The under-representation of women in political and decision-making spaces is shown by the data and statistics review in the following section.

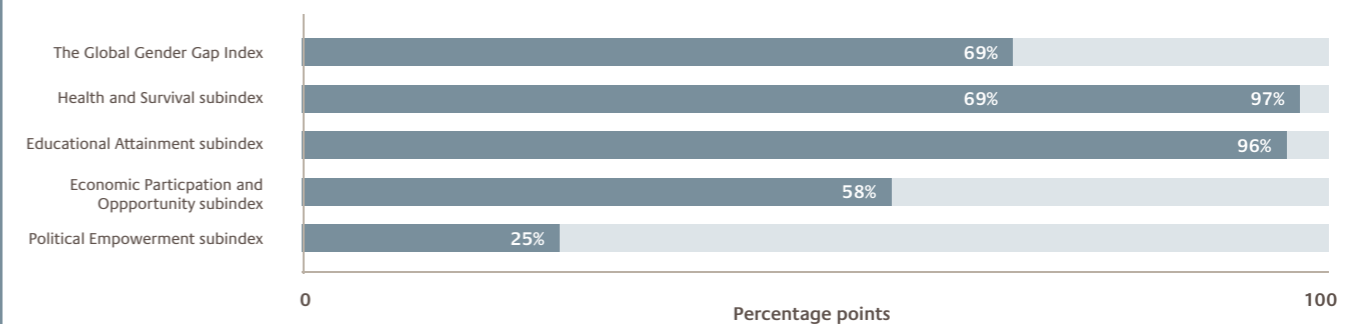
IV. Gender gap size in political representation

According to data from the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report 2020, the Political Empowerment subindex continues to reflect the greatest gender disparity³, despite progress being made.

The study, which covers 153 countries in East Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, North America, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Western Europe, shows that the gap has only closed by 25 percent, compared with 96 percent in education and 97 percent in health (WEF, 2019).

Figure 1. Gender Gap

Percentage of the gender gap closed to date, 2020



Source: World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2020.

Because the same study was carried out in different years, the advances and setbacks in each area can be compared. The 2020 report shows that overall Political Empowerment scores have improved, due to a significant increase in the number of women in parliament. In countries such as Latvia, Spain, Mexico and Thailand, the number of women in parliament has increased substantially.

Data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) show that, in 2020, some countries have significantly increased the percentage of women in parliament. They include Rwanda, Cuba, Bolivia, the United Arab Emirates, Mexico, Nicaragua, Sweden, Grenada, Andorra and South Africa. Twenty-five years ago, in 1995, the maximum percentage of women in these representative bodies was 40 percent. Today the maximum is 61 percent (IPU, *Mujeres en el parlamento: 1995–2020* [Women in Parliament: 1995–2020], 2020).

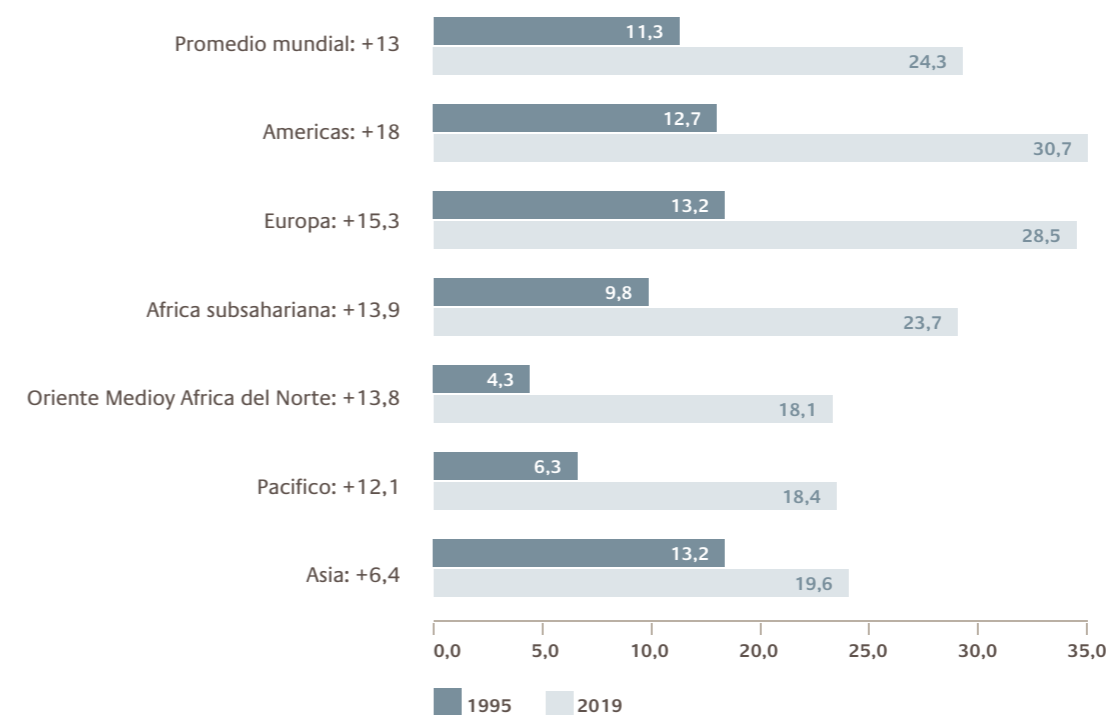
Figure 2. Ten Countries with the Greatest Female Participation in Unicameral Parliaments

1995		2020	
Country	% women	Country	% women
Sweden	40.4	Rwanda	61.3
Norway	39.4	Cuba	53.2
Denmark	33.5	Bolivia	53.1
Finland	33.5	United Arab Emirates	50.0
Netherlands	32.7	Mexico	48.2
Seychelles	27.3	Nicaragua	47.3
Austria	26.8	Sweden	47.0
Germany	26.3	Grenada	46.7
Iceland	25.4	Andorra	46.4
Argentina	25.3	South Africa	46.4

Source: Data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) for unicameral parliaments and lower houses.

³ The four subindexes are: Health and Survival, Educational Attainment, Economic Participation and Opportunity, and Political Empowerment.

Figure 3. Global and Regional Averages of Women in Parliament: 1995 and 1 January 2019



Source: Data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Despite progress being made, women hold just 25 percent of the world’s 35,127 parliamentary seats and 21 percent of the world’s 3,343 ministerial positions. In some countries, women are not represented at all. Moreover, in 85 of the 153 countries included in the report, there has never been a female head of state, head of government or president in the last 50 years (WEF, 2019).

One revealing piece of data in the World Economic Forum report is the estimated number of years it will take to close the political empowerment gaps. The estimate is 94.5 years at the current rate if progressive and significant advances continue to be made. So far, no countries have completely closed this gap. However, Iceland has made the most progress with a 70 percent gap closure with women involved in the country’s parliament, ministries and at the head of state level.

There are still some countries whose parliaments do not include women (Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea), and where increasingly fewer women have senior roles. Just 21 percent of the world’s 3,343 ministers are women, and there are 32 countries where under 10 percent of ministers in office are women. Belize, Saudi Arabia and Azerbaijan have no female ministers. Other nations such as Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and the United States have never elected a female president or head of state (op. cit.).



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

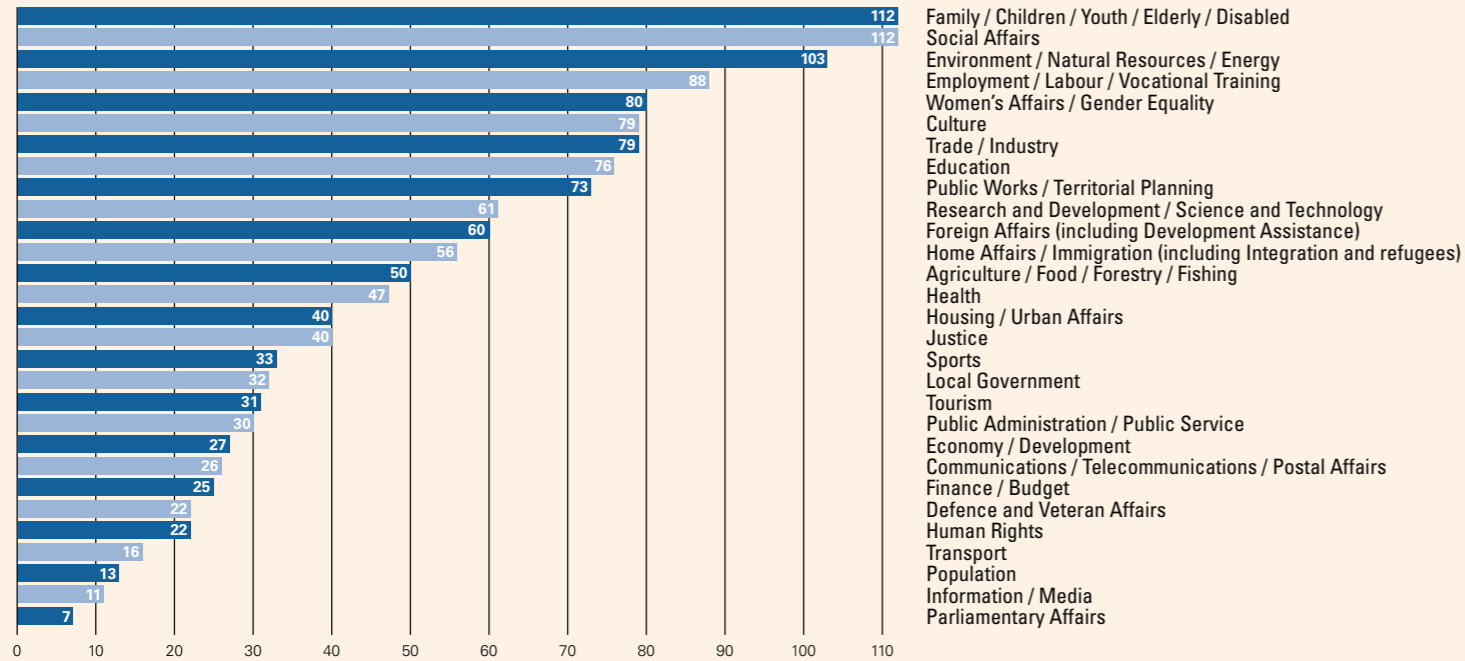
Women in Politics: 2020



Situation on 1 January 2020

Portfolios held by Women Ministers

(1451 portfolios in 190 countries)



World and regional averages of women in parliament

	Single house or lower house	Upper house or Senate	Both houses combined
World averages	24.9%	24.7%	24.9%
Regional averages			
Regions* are classified by descending order of the percentage of women in unicameral parliaments or the lower house of parliament.			
Nordic countries	43.9%	—	—
Americas	31.1%	32.1%	31.3%
Europe (Nordic countries included)	30.1%	29.1%	29.9%
Europe (Nordic countries not included)	28.7%	29.1%	28.8%
Sub-Saharan Africa	24.4%	24.1%	24.4%
Asia	20.5%	16.7%	20.0%
Middle East and North Africa	17.5%	10.8%	16.6%
Pacific	16.6%	43.8%	19.4%

* The composition of IPU regional groupings may be consulted at <https://data.ipu.org/content/regional-groupings>.

Women in the highest positions of State



Women heads of state¹ (10/152 = 6.6%) and women heads of government (12/193 = 6.2%)

Bangladesh (HG), Barbados (HG), Belgium (HG), Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (HS/HG), Denmark (HG), Estonia (HS), Ethiopia (HS), Finland (HG), Georgia (HS), Germany (HG), Iceland (HG), Nepal (HS), New Zealand (HG), Norway (HG), San Marino (HS), Serbia (HG), Singapore (HS), Slovakia (HS), Switzerland (HS/HG), Trinidad and Tobago (HS)



Women speakers of parliament* (57/278 = 20.5%)

Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominica, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia (The), Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mexico (2 chambers), Mozambique, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Serbia, South Africa, Spain (2 chambers), Suriname, Switzerland, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago (2 chambers), Turkmenistan, Uganda, United States of America, Uruguay (2 chambers), Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe.

Women deputy speakers of parliament (147/582 = 25.3%)

Of the 220 chambers in 166 countries for which information is available, 94 have at least one woman deputy speaker.

Note: (HS/HG) = The head of state is also the head of government.

¹ Only elected heads of state have been taken into account.

* Out of a total of 271 parliamentary chambers, two have 2 additional speakers and three have 1 additional speaker, for a total of 278 speakers.

While for some decades there has been an increasing demand for equality between men and women, policies seriously aiming to achieve substantive equality have only been designed and discussed in the last 25 years. In different countries, compensatory measures have been designed to reduce these representation gaps, the most common being gender quotas.

The Political Science Professor Drude Dehlerup says there are three types of quotas: constitutional, legislative and political party quotas (IDEA, 2004). In 1991, Argentina was the first country to implement this kind of measure and 81 countries currently have some type of quota (UN, 2020). Quotas are an extremely effective way to increase women's presence in spaces from which they have been excluded historically. However, they are often understood as participatory ceilings rather than minimums which, in the long run, can mean that the percentage of female representation will stagnate.

One iconic case is that of Rwanda, where gender quotas resulted in a parliament with more women than men. This promoted gender-focused policies and an exemplary Supreme Court where women are also in the majority.

One recent significant advance is the principle of gender parity, whereby 50 percent of decision-making spaces are occupied by women. This has been approved in 13 countries, mostly in Latin America: France, Belgium, Spain, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Bolivia, Senegal, Tunisia, Nicaragua, Mexico, Honduras, Argentina and Peru (REPOL, 2020) (Alanís, 2019).

The doctrinal basis of parity is political representation, understood as a mechanism through which the decisional link between the governors and the governed is formed, and has to do with the basic opposition within a representative political regime. Under the principle of political representation, social groups with some level of presence in society should be represented in government in a similar proportion in order to protect their interests. Indeed, the main proposal of the 1992 Athens Declaration was that if approximately half of the world's population are women, then they should be represented in this proportion in decision-making bodies.

Parity is a strategic process that tackles the male monopoly on political power. It seeks an equitable power balance between men and women and proposes that all areas of society be transformed, including the economic, social, cultural and private spheres (Cobo, 2002). Unlike quotas, parity is not temporary: it is a definitive measure that implies a new social contract whereby women can participate effectively, thus paving the way for substantive equality. This means that beyond the recognition of laws, it eliminates any gender-based distinction, exclusion or restriction that could nullify individual enjoyment and exercise of rights.

Unfortunately, women's arrival in politics has taken place against the backdrop of increased incidents of violence, reflecting the discrimination, roles and stereotypes that exist around how women are, should be and should behave due to the sexism and misogyny that prevail in contemporary societies.

V. What is violence against women in politics?

There is an interesting debate about whether violence against women in politics should be analyzed as a separate type (Krook, 2017) (Piscopo, 2017), or whether this kind of violence is simply a subcategory of violence in general, which is a product of the weakness of the state and judicial systems (Piscopo, 2016).

Political violence should be understood as an independent kind of violence against women, because it involves violating their political rights to vote, to be elected, to form political associations and to hold public office, and which can manifest itself through different types of universally recognized violence including femicide, sexual, psychological and moral violence (Alanís, 2017).

In reality, the definition and formal classification (crime or offense) in national law of violence against women in politics has not advanced, nor has it progressed in formal recommendations at the international level. There is enormous resistance worldwide.

In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/130 (UN, 2011) on women's political participation. This called on all states to act and asked the United Nations system and other organizations to consolidate

state assistance in their national efforts to “investigate allegations of violence, assault or harassment of women elected officials and candidates for political office, create an environment of zero tolerance for such offences and, to ensure accountability, take all appropriate steps to prosecute those responsible” (UN, 2018).

Hence, the initial major global effort must focus on formally recognizing it in international treaties and national laws as a form of violence, identifying the types of behavior that constitute violence, putting exemplary sanctions in place, identifying the proper authorities for dealing with and punishing violent behavior, punishing offenders and providing mechanisms to protect women and restore their violated rights.

The most significant conceptual advance has been the thematic report presented by Dr Dubravka Šimonović — UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences — on violence against women in politics to the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly (September 2018):

“Men and women can both experience violence in politics.

Such acts of violence against women, however, target them because of their gender and take gender-based forms, such as sexist threats or sexual harassment and violence. Their aim is to discourage women from being politically active and exercising their human rights and to influence, restrict or prevent the political participation of individual women and women as a group. Such violence, including in and beyond elections, consists of any act of gender-based violence, or threat of such acts, that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering and is directed against a woman in politics because she is a woman, or affects women disproportionately.”

There are very few international instruments to identify violence against women in politics:

- **The “Declaration on Political Harassment and Violence against Women” adopted at the Sixth Conference of the States Parties to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women (CIM-MESECVI, 2015)**
- **The Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women in Political Life from the Organization of American States (OAS, 2017)**

- **Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on violence against women in politics, Ms. Dubravka Šimonović (UN, 2018).**

- **The recommendations made by the CEDAW Committee of Experts have become references for states parties. However, to date, no specific recommendations have been made regarding violence against women in politics. Recommendations 19 (violence against women) and 35 (gender-based violence against women, updating General Recommendation No. 19) do mention crimes committed against women, female human rights defenders, female politicians, female activists and female journalists, but do not make any specific recommendations regarding violence against women in politics, despite referring to violence in the public sphere.**

The adoption of the Declaration on Political Violence and Harassment against Women is evidence of the relevance that this issue has acquired at the regional level where, despite the fact that political violence is a serious problem, only Bolivia, Mexico, Argentina and Ecuador have approved legal reforms.

According to Article 2 of the Belém do Pará Convention, violence against women and, therefore, political violence, can be physical, sexual or psychological, and can take place in both the public and private spheres.

The Convention recognizes that violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women and constitutes a human rights violation, therefore making it an assault on human dignity. It also points out that violence against women

cuts across all sectors of society regardless of class, race or ethnicity, education or income, culture, age or religion.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has recognized that gender-based violence is a form of discrimination against women.

In Recommendation 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women it points out that violence against women contributes to maintaining their subordination, restricts them to a lower level of education, affords them fewer opportunities and limits their political participation.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights has stated that “in cases of violence perpetrated against women, apart from their generic obligations under the American Convention, States also have a heightened obligation under the Belém do Pará Convention”.

Mexico’s obligations when it comes to political violence are clear.

In general terms, it must prevent, promote, respect, protect, guarantee and, when necessary, redress the right to political participation on equal terms. This is based on articles 1, 4 and 41 of the Mexican Constitution, and on the obligations accepted by the country when signing international treaties such as the American Convention on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Specifically, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará Convention) set out the actions and measures required to prevent and address discrimination and violence against women.

As already mentioned, one of the most accepted definitions of violence against

women in politics can be found in the United Nations Special Rapporteur’s report. It defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence, or threat of such acts, that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering and is directed against a woman in politics because she is a woman, or affects women disproportionately”. The aim of violence against women in politics is to preserve traditional gender roles and stereotypes and to maintain structural and gender inequalities. It can take many forms, from misogynist and sexist verbal attacks to the more frequent acts of sexual harassment that are increasingly perpetrated online, or even femicide (UN, 2018).

The report also contains tools to identify who can be affected by this violence and when it can occur, since it goes beyond electoral processes. According to the report, “women in politics” includes “all women involved in political activities, those elected at the national or local levels, members and candidates of political parties, government and State officials at the local, national and international levels, civil servants, ministers, ambassadors and other positions in the diplomatic corps” (UN, 2018). In other words, institutional and legal protection should not be limited to women who are elected and participate in electoral processes; this protection must be much broader.

There is a long list of people who may engage in this type of violence

including political party leaders, parliamentarians, the media, religious leaders, community assemblies and leaders, candidates and party members, family members and hierarchical superiors. It mostly occurs in the public sphere, but can also be found in the private sphere. For example,

women in various countries still have to ask their husbands’ permission to be able to run for office or hold elected office.

V.I How does this type of violence manifest?

As mentioned above, political violence against women is a problem that ranges from the family environment, which often makes it difficult for women to vote and be voted for, to the public environment, where women systematically face barriers that prevent them from reaching and holding public office. It can even manifest itself in sexual or physical violence, including murder. The behaviors behind political violence can have an impact on the three fundamental stages of the electoral cycle: the pre-election period, the election period and the post-election period.

One of the great challenges in this area is to understand that while violence against women in politics occurs in countries with democracies under construction, it also happens in consolidated democracies such as Canada, France, the United States and Great Britain. Therefore, it is not merely a weakness of states.

Another key point is that while violence in politics may be experienced by both men and women,

when it is directed at the latter, it is done differently, and it is based on gender. This type of violence must, therefore, be defined so it can be identified, addressed and eradicated.

A study by the electoral expert Gabrielle Bardall for the Election Violence Education and Resolution program run by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) examined over 2000 incidents of election violence in six countries (Bangladesh, Burundi, Guinea, Guyana, Nepal and East Timor)

between 2006 and 2010, showing that men and women have different experiences with political violence (2017). Women are up to three times more likely to be sexually and non-physically attacked, while men are up to three times more likely to experience more public forms of violence, such as political assassination and violence in the streets.

“Women reported being beaten, raped, burned and mutilated by men who wanted to punish or coerce their political choices or prevent them from participating in a political activity like voting or running for office, because they are female. When general political violence occurred against both men and women, women were much more likely to experience sexualized forms of violence, including rape, sexual assault and ‘virginity tests’” (Bardall, 2017).

The document adds that finding information about electoral violence against men in public records, such as police and hospital reports as well as media coverage, is ten times more likely than finding details about a similar type of violence against women. These reports are almost always produced because a community member reports an incident verbally. In politics, women are more commonly threatened than men and are subject to sanctions such as having their children taken away from them or being morally condemned by their church leaders because they tried to vote, work on a political campaign or seek public office.

In Latin America and some other regions,

there there is a significant debate about how much influence electoral institutions have on the internal life of political parties. In recent years, court rulings have been passed that make it possible to influence political parties as long as human rights are respected, for example, by monitoring their obligations to comply with quotas, parity and

internal democratic processes that do not exclude women.

It has also been confirmed that political parties still have mechanisms that hinder the participation of women activists. For example, they may not inform women of calls for elections, or remunerate them for their campaigns, or force them to sign blank resignation letters so they can be used at any time, or register male family members or spouses in second place on the lists so men can hold public office in their place even though the women were the ones elected, etc.

Although respect for party self-determination has prevailed,

especially in Europe, and issues are resolved as private matters, if the second wave of feminism has made anything clear, it is the importance of influencing both the personal and private spheres, since these are the spaces where women experience discrimination. The feminist Carol Hanisch expressed this in the phrase “the personal is political” (Hanisch, 1970).

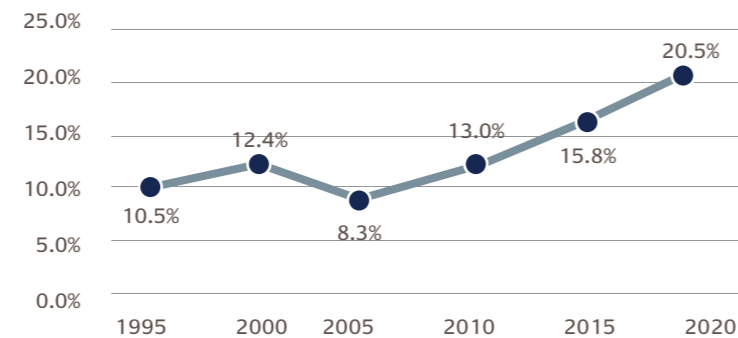
Just as there is concern about the resurgence of extremist parties that advocate hate speech, it should be seen as a matter of concern that some political parties continue to impede women’s political participation with obvious barriers. In both cases, democratic systems are clearly under attack. Hence, there is an urgent need to regulate aspects of internal affairs. In Latin America, this is already starting to be done through the electoral bodies.

Violence from political parties is also experienced by female delegates. There is an evident bias when it comes to presidencies, which are mostly held by men. According to IPU data, just 20 percent of parliaments are led by women. In addition to this bias, women often do not have offices, are not invited to working group meetings, are not given a voice on the podium

and are not allowed to put items on the agenda. Party discipline works differently for women than it does for men because it limits women’s political careers because of their gender.

Figure 4. Female presidents in parliaments

Progress of women speakers, 1995-2020



Source: Data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

VIOLENCE IN POLITICS EXPERIENCED BY FEMALE ACTIVISTS

Women have always been involved in political parties, either as activists, community managers, vote mobilizers, or campaign supporters. However, they have been excluded from political party leadership structures and from spaces of representation, as is evident from the gaps shown above.

Political party structures, and in particular the bodies responsible for registering candidates, are spaces where political violence occurs. Women are denied the right to register as candidates, even when they meet the necessary requirements and have the relevant membership. Candidate nomination is a key moment in their participation journey, and one of the most significant obstacles they have to overcome.

Women activists have less information about timeframes and procedures for “fighting” for candidates, and if a candidate is rejected, they



do not have the necessary resources, staff or networks to initiate legal proceedings to defend their rights. What’s more, in a study conducted in a Mexican indigenous community, women reported that political parties preferred mestizo women to run as candidates, to the detriment of indigenous women (Alanís, pending publication).

Informal rules in candidate selection also work against women.

Even with quotas or parity in place, political parties design strategies to ensure spaces continue to be occupied by men, hampering mechanisms working towards equality (Vázquez, 2020). Some of these strategies are: meeting quotas for women with substitutes, putting women at the bottom of proportional representation lists, nominating women mostly in regions where they are sure to lose, meeting quotas by averaging out proportional representation and relative majority, always putting men at the top of proportional representation lists, using men as substitutes for women so the former take up

the position on the women’s behalf, and misusing the allocated budget for women (Hevia & Aparicio, 2015).

Some countries, such as Mexico, Colombia and Brazil, have allocated resources specifically to promoting women’s political leadership. These are often misused, for example to purchase items that do not contribute towards this goal in any way, such as cosmetics, aprons, bracelets and fuel, as seen in Mexico when the Electoral Institute made political party spending reports public (Arteta, 2019).

No less relevant is the fact that women often do not realize they are victims

of political violence. This behavior is so normalized that women are led to believe that politics is this way by nature and, so, they must endure being treated differently.

VIOLENCE IN POLITICS EXPERIENCED BY FEMALE CANDIDATES

Women who become candidates face situations that put them at a disadvantage. Often, they are denied campaign resources or propped up as candidates in regions where they are sure to lose either because few votes were won there by their political party in previous elections, or where they have no stronghold or previous experience.

Having less experience in the political arena, fewer support networks and generally less material and human resources make it more difficult for women to campaign effectively with a serious chance of winning. A lack of financial resources affects women disproportionately.

Women are often unaware of the amount of money they should receive for their campaigns, and they always receive less than men.

Female candidates also experience violence during campaigns. The attacks almost always question their ability to carry out the roles, while campaign advertisement tends to strengthen gender stereotypes reinforcing beliefs that women can be easily manipulated and, therefore, make bad leaders. Women's honor is also called into question through references to their "sexual behavior".

VIOLENCE IN PUBLIC OFFICE

Once in office, women also face violence and concerted attempts to limit or undermine their authority as legislators. For example, simulation is often used as a tactic. When a woman is elected, the person who actually holds office is someone else, usually a man, either her

husband, brother or another family member, or a recognized leader in the political party. In some cases, this is covered up by government authorities that have agreements in place with men and not the women who have been elected into office.

Other tactics used to hamper women's progress include:

a failure to disclose information, not summoning women to council sessions or parliamentary committees; a refusal to pay for expenses and material resources such as offices, human resources, staff to help them perform their duties, internet, official vehicles; intimidation; pressure to sign blank documents; a failure to disclose public accounts; being demoted; threats; attacks; and sexual violence (Vázquez & Enríquez, 2019) (UN, 2020).

Political rights should be understood as rights in a broad sense beyond elections and the positions they entail, as the Special Rapporteur's report says: "Some women in politics may be more exposed to risks of gender-based violence than others, including: human rights defenders; young, indigenous, lesbian, bisexual and transgender and intersex activists; members of opposition or minority groups; and those voicing minority, dissenting or 'controversial' views" (UN, 2018). Hence, political rights should not be interpreted in a way that always restricts the right to be elected, but, rather, guarantee comprehensive protection in all public functions.

DIGITAL AND MEDIA VIOLENCE

The Report of the Kofi Annan Commission on Elections and Democracy in the Digital Age asks a key question: what is the potential of digital technologies to both strengthen and undermine the integrity of the electoral environment? (Annan, 2020) When it comes to women's political participation, the new public

arena, comprising social networks, has unfortunately, become a hostile space where, through anonymity or sometimes directly, women are attacked by those questioning their leadership in posts about their physical appearance or queries into their ability to hold public office.

Attacks and threats are received via email, telephone, direct messages, WhatsApp, web pages and blogs, and through more popular social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. Women often do not know where they can turn to report this behavior. The abusive content, thus, remains online for some time, meaning it is widely shared and reaches more people.

Different reports, especially from electoral institutions, reveal another problem: biases in radio and television appearances, with women always receiving less exposure than men. There are fewer interviews, advertisements and appearances involving female pre-candidates, candidates and leaders than there are ones for males. When they do involve women, they often resort to gender stereotypes, with females being asked about their personal life or physical appearance rather than their political projects, thereby downplaying their opinions about what they have to offer the electorate.

Unfortunately, these behaviours are widespread

and therefore often goes unnoticed. Also, it may be so common that it is not questioned. This leads to serious violent incidents and the minimization of their consequences. Victims are then held responsible and not believing women who report is legitimized. All this is based on the premise: "if women want to enter the public sphere, they need to adapt to the rules of the game".

Below are some of the reasons why there are so few documented cases of political violence:

- **There is no widespread knowledge in society about political violence, its scope and how to punish it.**
- **There is no legal framework to support victims who report it.**
- **Some people are unaware of this form of violence, what it involves and its sociocultural effects.**
- **Women do not realize they are experiencing this form of violence since they believe they must "put up with it" and what happens to them is "normal". This idea is often reinforced by the political environment and by colleagues.**
- **There is no clarity about legal remedies or the right authority to approach for help.**
- **There is little confidence in the authorities.**
- **There are fears that reporting violence will hamper a woman's political aspirations.**
- **When women do report violence, they are stigmatized as difficult and judged for not toeing the party line.**
- **Fear of reprisals, threats and increased harassment.**
- **Within parties, there are no bodies for dealing with this kind of violence.**
- **Support networks are insufficient.**
- **It is embarrassing to publicly declare oneself a victim and, in some cases, to talk about what happened.**

V.II International developments in specific legislation on violence against women in politics

Until 2020, only Bolivia and Mexico have approved laws and regulations on violence against women in politics. Argentina and Ecuador approved general provisions, but appropriate modifications have not been made in order to define conduct, sanctions and procedures. In countries such as Peru and Costa Rica, only draft laws were presented before Congress.

BOLIVIA

In May 2013, Bolivia approved Law 243 criminalizing political harassment and violence against women. This law was the result of work by the Bolivian Association of Women Councillors (ACOBOL), which for twelve years was responsible for keeping the issue on the public agenda. During this time, over 572 complaints of political harassment and violence against women were made and documented. Juana Quispe, a female councilor from the municipality of Ancoraimes, was murdered after reporting harassment from male councillors; she never had access to justice (ACOBOL, 2013).

The Bolivian model incorporated political harassment and violence against women into the country's penal code as crimes against public service. However, no cases have been settled and nobody has been persecuted for these crimes. According to data from UN Women, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal reported through the Democratic Parity Observatory that in the first four months of 2018 alone, it reviewed 65 cases of political harassment and violence against women (UN, 2020).

“Although our laws are cutting-edge, they are unfortunately not enforced, and despite the participation and presence of women in political spaces increasing in a real and concrete way, which represents an unquestionable step forward, this does not mean that a social, political, cultural and economic system has been achieved where women can assert their political rights on equal terms” (ACOBOL, 2013).

Bolivia is an advanced country

in terms of how it recognizes women's political rights, has approved parity and operates with the world's third highest proportion of women in a unicameral parliament (53 per cent). Despite seven years having passed since the law against political harassment and violence against women was adopted, resistance to women's participation in politics does not appear to have been reduced.

In 2016, Supreme Decree No. 2935 was issued, regulating Law 243, which provides for the creation of a “mechanism of prevention and immediate attention” for incidents of political harassment and/or violence that are clearly serious and/or represent a risk, putting the life or physical integrity of the affected person in imminent danger, in order to coordinate and organize immediate action between the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Government, the Bolivian Police, the Ministry of Autonomy, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Office of the Ombudsperson and the Plurinational Electoral Organ. It also created the regulations for processing elected women's resignations and processing political harassment and violence complaints (Observatory, 2017).

Katia Uriona, a specialist in women's political participation and former president of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, points out that despite these efforts, there are no effective

ways of guaranteeing access to justice and preventing the behavior from recurring; all these elements remain in the sphere of ordinary justice, which can take much longer to settle cases.

The Bolivian scenario should be taken into account by other countries in understanding the enormous scope of designing and implementing laws and public policies that effectively eradicate violence against women in politics.

MEXICO

In 2014, Mexico abandoned quotas and opted for parity in federal congress candidate nominations. However, the most significant reform occurred in 2019 when gender parity was constitutionally recognized across the board for candidate registration for all elected positions and in all areas of government, either by election or by appointment, as well as in autonomous bodies and indigenous municipalities.

As the expert Blanca Olivia Peña points out, by taking on these obligations, the Mexican State supported the entire regulatory framework, procedural rules, case law and jurisprudence in the administrative, legislative and jurisdictional spheres with the broadest protection for women's political and electoral rights (Peña, 2016).

Data from the Special

With this reform, Mexico became the only country to introduce the principle of constitutional parity in all formal spaces of public and political decision-making. However, as seen elsewhere, women's increased access to elected office has had the unintended effect of increasing violence against them.

Prosecutor's Office for Electoral Offenses (FEPADE) indicates that between 2012 and 2016, there were 156 incidents of political violence against women. Since 2012, there have been over 40 initiatives to reform various laws to recognize and combat gender-based political violence, but none have been successful (FEPADE, 2018).

As with other issues, it was at the local level that important advances were first made in recognizing violence against women in politics; incidents began to be documented and local electoral institutes and civil society organizations were indispensable in supporting the women affected. In the absence of a relevant federal law, the Protocol to Address Political Violence Against Women was published in March 2016 as part of the institutional framework for protecting women's political and electoral rights. The Protocol was created by the Federal Electoral Court, the National Electoral Institute, the Special Prosecutor's Office for Electoral Offenses and the National Women's Institute. It has been recognized internationally as good practice because it is the reference for dealing with cases in a legal vacuum (TEPJF, 2016).

This instrument defined gender-based political violence against women and made clear the elements of political violence and relevant situations, as well as the rights of the victims and the institutions able to assist. The Protocol became an extremely important tool for the courts and electoral institutes, since it was not until 2020 that the federal congress legislated to penalize such violence under a reform. This is the only reform globally that defines what violence against women in politics is. It identifies 22 types of behavior responsible for violence, sets out sanctions (including fines, reduced funding,

public apologies, candidate removal, election nullification and prison terms), and establishes measures for protection and redress.

Due to their relevance, and as an example, the 22 types of behavior recognized by Mexican legislation as political violence against women on the basis of gender are listed on the right:

- I. Failing to comply with national and international legal provisions that recognize the full exercise of women's political rights;**
- II. Restricting or nullifying women's right to a free and secret vote, or hindering their rights of association and affiliation to all types of political and civil organizations, on the basis of gender;**
- III. Failing to disclose information or call for candidates, or any other activity involving decision-making as part of their functions and activities;**
- IV. Providing women who aspire to hold or already hold elected office with false or incomplete information preventing them from registering as candidates or leading to the incorrect exercise of their powers;**
- V. Providing incomplete information or false data to administrative, electoral or jurisdictional authorities to undermine women's political rights and the guarantee of due process;**
- VI. Providing women in elected office with false, incomplete or inaccurate information to prevent them from carrying out their roles properly leading to the undue exercise of their powers;**
- VII. Obstructing campaigns to prevent electoral competition from taking place on equal footing;**
- VIII. Making or distributing political or electoral propaganda that slanders, degrades or disqualifies a female candidate based on gender stereotypes that reproduce relationships based on domination, inequality or discrimination against women, with the aim of undermining their public image or limiting their political and electoral rights;**
- IX. Defaming, slandering, insulting or making**

any expression that denigrates or disqualifies women in the exercise of their political functions, based on gender stereotypes, in order to damage or resulting in the damage of their public image or limiting or nullifying their rights;

X. Disseminating images, messages or private information involving a woman candidate or incumbent, by any physical or virtual means, for the purpose of discrediting, defaming, denigrating and questioning her capacity or abilities in politics, based on gender stereotypes;

XI. Threatening or intimidating one or more women or their family or collaborators to lead them to resign from the candidacy or office to which they were elected or appointed;

XII. Preventing, by any means, women elected or appointed to any public office or position from taking the oath for their role, attending ordinary or extraordinary sessions, or any other activity involving decision-making and the exercise of office by preventing or suppressing their right to speak and vote;

XIII. Restricting women's political rights based on the application of traditions, customs or internal or specific normative systems that violate human rights;

XIV. Imposing, based on gender stereotypes, activities other than those required as part of political representation, office or function;

XV. Discriminating against women in the exercise of their political rights during pregnancy, or before, during or after childbirth, or preventing or restricting their return to work after taking maternity leave

or any other leave provided for in legislation;
XVI. Inflicting physical, sexual, symbolic, psychological, economic or patrimonial violence on a woman in the exercise of her political rights;

XVII. Arbitrarily limiting or denying the use of any resource or power inherent to the position held by a woman, including the payment of wages, allowances or other benefits associated with the position, on an equal basis;

XVIII. Obliging a woman, through force, pressure or intimidation, to sign documents or endorse decisions contrary to her will or the law;

XIX. Obstructing or preventing women's access to justice to protect their political rights;

XX. Arbitrarily limiting or denying the use of any resource or attribute inherent to the political office held by a woman, preventing them from holding office on equal terms;

XXI. Imposing unjustified or abusive sanctions, preventing or restricting women asserting their political rights on an equal footing, or

XXII. Any other similar conduct that harms or is likely to negatively affect the dignity, integrity or freedom of women in a political, public, powerful or decision-making position that affects their political electoral rights

Each of these examples are based on real cases reported by women who have experienced political violence in campaigns or in the exercise of public office.

V.III Incidents of violence against women in politics

It is increasingly common to find documented cases of violence against women in politics. However, we know that like the other types of violence faced by women, they are under-recorded, either because women did not realize violence was taking place or because the lack of institutions as well as lack of justice and impunity for perpetrators mean they do not file complaints, so there are no official records.

BOLIVIA, 2020. THE FORCED RESIGNATION

Miriam Vargas, an assemblywoman from Potosi in Bolivia, was threatened by leaders in her own party, Movimiento Al Socialismo (Movement for Socialism), to make sure she voted in favour of the Governor. Despite voting in his favour, on 10 June 2020 she was the victim of an attack: her house was ransacked and burned down with her children present; they managed to escape minutes before the incident (García, 2020).

After the attack, in which she lost all her property, Vargas offered her resignation to the president of the Departmental Legislative Assembly and the Potosí Departmental Electoral Tribunal to protect herself and her family. The Office of the Ombudsperson asked the Potosi Departmental Legislative Assembly to declare the resignation illegal, since it occurred in a context of political harassment and violence and bullying and pressure on her and her family members.

Various civil organizations have demanded guaranteed protection for assemblywomen in line with the provisions of Law 243 against Political Violence and Harassment, approved seven years ago, and asked that the party implement the necessary

internal processes to punish the perpetrators. “It is not easy to be a woman in politics in Bolivia. Women are often subjected to political harassment and violence from their male colleagues, who are usually in the same party (Página Siete, 2020).

This is an incident where intimidation based on gender is clear. The assemblywoman was pressured to vote in a certain way. When there was doubt as to whether she would comply, she was threatened and later the threats were carried out through the attack on her family. Her enemies achieved their goal of her leaving office as she ended up resigning for her own and her family’s safety. Her resignation was not accepted by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal because the law says that if the electoral body recognizes or acknowledges signs of political harassment and violence contributing to the resignation of an authority figure, it will not proceed with the appointment of a replacement until the facts are clarified.

While this may be good news, those who attacked Vargas say they will carry out more attacks if she does not resign. It is, therefore, essential that there are guarantees in place to enable women to hold office. While not accepting someone’s resignation is an important decision, it must go alongside additional measures to keep women safe.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2018. HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AMONG PARLIAMENTARIANS

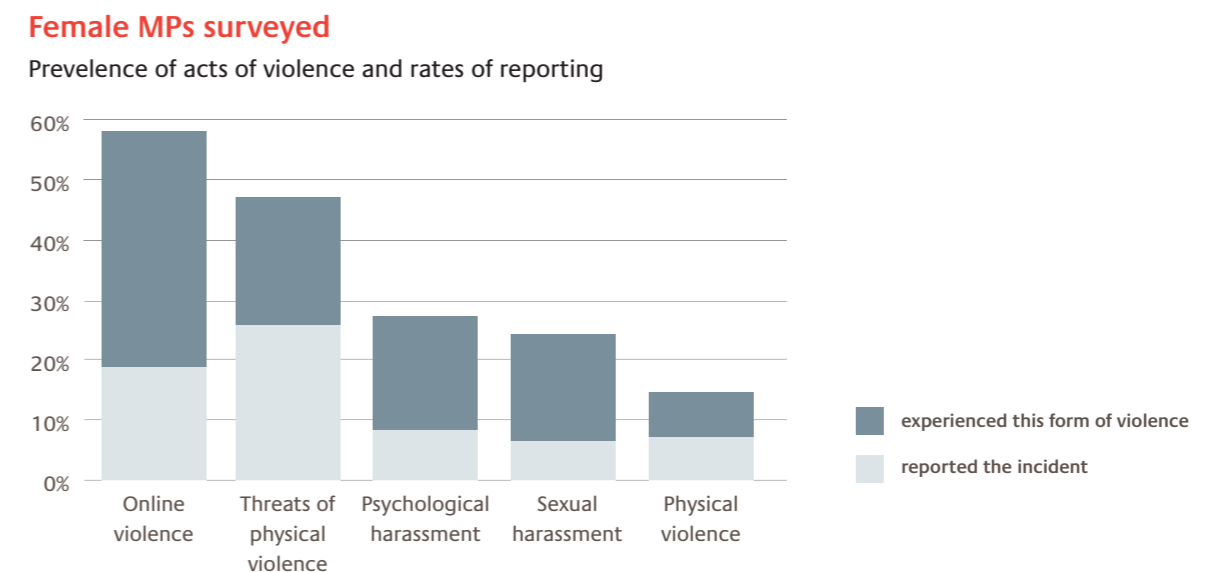
A study conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Parliamentary Assembly of

the Council of Europe (PACE) in 2018, which interviewed 123 women from 45 European countries, highlighted the sexism, abuse and violence against women in parliaments (IPU, 2018). Among the most important findings are the following:

- 85.2 percent of the female parliamentarians who took part in the study said they had experienced psychological violence during their term of office.
- 46.9 percent had received death threats or threats of rape or beatings.
- 58.2 percent had been targeted by online sexist attacks on social networks.
- 67.9 percent had been subject to comments about their physical

- appearance or based on gender stereotypes.
- 24.7 percent had experienced sexual violence.
- 14.8 percent had experienced physical violence.
- The perpetrators of this harassment and violence were political opponents, colleagues from the women’s own parties, and ordinary citizens.

Figure 5. Forms of violence experienced by female parliamentarians interviewed and rates of reporting



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), 2018

In 2017, the global #MeToo phenomenon began with an outcry over sexual abuse by the American film producer Harvey Weinstein. The movement then extended to other fields including politics. Since then, the hashtag has been used by millions of women around the world to condemn sexual harassment and abuse.

In October that same year, female Californian politicians publicly stated that they too faced these abusive situations. Over 140 women, including female legislators, signed a letter denouncing touching without consent, inappropriate comments and sexual advances. “Why didn’t we speak up? Sometimes out of fear. Sometimes out of shame ... Often these men hold our professional fates in their hands. They are bosses, gatekeepers, and contacts. Our relationships with them are crucial to our personal success” (Mason, 2017).

This type of statement shows how women in politics face different barriers when making complaints, since their political career often depends on the decisions of the very men who are abusive towards them, which discourages them from pursuing legal channels or making their complaints public.

MEXICO, 2018. ATTEMPTED MURDER

In 2014, the activist Elisa Zepeda Lagunas was ambushed and attacked in the municipality of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón, Oaxaca, Mexico. Her brother was killed, her mother was injured, and her house and car were set on fire. Eloxochitlán is an area that traditionally chooses authority figures according to customs and practices (customary law). The attack took place in the context of an assembly to elect a mayor, which could not take place due to the presence of armed groups (Commission, 2014).

Elisa, a human rights activist, had promoted women’s political participation in the region and fought for transparency and accountability locally. The attacks were masterminded by a local party boss who hoped to hold on to his political power in the community. The perpetrators left Elisa and her mother for dead in the public square.

When the authorities arrived, they managed to arrest the attackers and take Elisa to hospital, where she gradually recovered. As a precautionary measure, she was given an escort, a panic button and surveillance at home. A year after the attack, Elisa began working in her community again and was elected mayor of her municipality in 2016. Two years later, she was voted in as a local congresswoman. In this role, she has promoted reforms such as criminalizing political violence, decriminalizing abortion and criminalizing acid attacks on women (El Universal, 2019).

MEXICO, 2018. PLOYS TO PREVENT PARITY

Local elections were held in Mexico in 2018, including for councils in the State of Oaxaca, where the political participation of transgender people was recognized for the first time. However, some political parties used this affirmative measure to try and evade parity by taking places away from women and registering men who claimed to be transgender women as candidates.

During the registration period, 19 transgender-women candidates were nominated and publicized by the local electoral authority. However, once the lists were sent out, civil associations advocating for people of diverse sexual orientations filed a formal complaint with the authority about possible fraud in these nominations.

According to the complaint, 17 of the 19 candidates were men who wanted to claim transgender identity to avoid complying with the requirement for parity in nominations. The electoral institute decided to ban these 17 candidates, since it had been shown that they were not transgender women, but cisgender citizens intending to misuse affirmative action.

Gender adjustments were made for the city councils in these 19 municipalities with the next woman on the list being placed as the first councilor, going through all positions. It was also determined that candidates who attempted to defraud the law could not participate in the election. The candidates’ political parties also had 18 months of their running expenses withdrawn.

Political parties appealed the decision and the Federal Electoral Court reversed the decision of the administrative electoral authority by a majority of votes. It confirmed two transgender candidates who were ordered to register in second position thereby giving the first position to the first woman on the list of candidates.

By order of the Superior

Chamber, Susana Alvarado was registered as first on the list and Carlos Quevedo Fabián (who ran as a transgender woman and had previously been municipal president) was registered as a representative. After winning the election and shortly after taking office, Susana Alvarado reported that she was subjected to political violence by the municipal representative, Carlos Quevedo. In October 2019, she filed a lawsuit for the Protection of Citizens’ Political Rights, in which she stated that the Representative had created similar groups to generate political instability in the municipality and force her to resign so that he could serve as municipal president.

Other documented cases include the 2016 murder of the UK Labour Party MP Jo Cox, who was attacked by an individual who shot and stabbed her at the end of a campaign event. According to newspaper reports, witnesses claimed the killer shouted, “Britain first!” (El País, 2016).

V.IV A comprehensive model for protecting women as they exercise their political rights

Experience has taught us that increased female participation in politics also means more incidents of violence. This type of behavior seeks to reaffirm the gender mandates that impose uneven power relations on women instilled by sexism and to keep positions of power for men.

It is therefore necessary to introduce public policies that eradicate this type of behavior by designing models of access to justice that comply with international standards of prompt and expeditious justice, as well as the minimum standards of due diligence and due process.

States cannot acquiesce or fail to punish perpetrators in the face of violence against women in the political sphere, because this creates an environment of injustice and undermines the rule of law. When potential perpetrators know they will go unpunished, it encourages repeated and aggravated violent behavior. This and all types of violence must, therefore, be eradicated.

What is a comprehensive model of justice for women?

A definition of violence against women in politics was needed to understand how it works and the types of individuals who may perpetrate it, as well as to take appropriate action to address it.

When a woman experiences violence

(for example, domestic violence), one of the first things to do is to remove her from her home and take her to a safe place, usually a special shelter. In extreme cases, women have to change their place of residence. For women in politics, the situation is more complicated as their careers have been built where they live. The only people who would benefit from their removal would be those who want them out of the running, out of parties and away from their political capital.

This type of violence cuts women’s political careers short and reparation is often impossible. It is, therefore, necessary to design and introduce measures for protection, redress and non-repetition. Protective measures include providing women with private security, protecting them physically and restricting perpetrators.

Reparation measures attempt to make amends for previously violated rights. For example, in Mexico, the law on violence against women in politics established measures that include the following: public apologies, election nullification and more radio- and television-appearance time for the women affected, taken out of the perpetrators’ media time.

Administrative and jurisdictional redress measures are also needed to compel the state to act promptly and diligently. Trials can take months or years. During this time women will continue to face violent acts and their political performance will be affected. It is not possible for justice to be late when violent behavior evolves and worsens quickly, often starting on social networks.

Restorative justice implies reparation, which involves psychological support, security and financial compensation, among other elements. As a result, it is important to have male and female judges whose decisions take a gender perspective into account.

Exemplary sanctions are important for ensuring that offenses are not repeated. Strategies should go beyond the penal system. For example, Mexico has agreed that people responsible for this kind of violence should be disqualified from participating as candidates in future elections. The state can also impose significant economic sanctions on political parties and de-register a political party if there are repeated violations.

It tends to take much less time to resolve disputes in electoral processes than in other areas where the damage can be irreparable. This route should, therefore, be considered instead of civil or criminal routes, where it takes much longer to resolve disputes and the implications for women are negative. Such cases must be handled professionally, ethically and with a strong commitment to equality.

In conclusion, a successful model of access to justice must be comprehensive and guarantee that women can approach electoral, jurisdictional, administrative and, where appropriate, criminal prosecution authorities to report violations of political and electoral rights. Access to justice must be rapid and available before, during and after electoral

processes. This implies having complaint mechanisms, determining precautionary and protective measures, carrying out an investigation, and having exemplary sanctions for perpetrators and reparation measures to make amends for violated rights.

Diagram 1. Comprehensive protection for women facing violence in politics



Source: created by author.

It is important to study and address these types of cases as well as be aware of the advances that have been made at the international level, because that is where human rights issues have been discussed in depth, with landmark rulings on the rights of indigenous people, the rights of minorities, the rights of people with diverse backgrounds, and others. Indeed, this will help states consider the problem from different perspectives and design the necessary mechanisms to eradicate it.

VI. Recommendations

Addressing political violence is not just a task for administrative or jurisdictional electoral institutions: it is a commitment that states must make across the board. Therefore, these recommendations involve different institutions and provide specific, but not limiting, tasks. The aim is to eradicate gender gaps in political representation and defend women's human right to hold public office.

1. The CEDAW Committee of Experts should issue a specific recommendation regarding violence against women in politics.

The CEDAW Committee of Experts should issue a specific recommendation that includes the concept and standards for states parties, showing the importance of combating violence against women in politics and obliging states to take urgent action to eradicate it. It is worth remembering that these recommendations are binding and would be an excellent way to position the issue in countries where the individual and collective impact of this type of violence against women has not yet been assessed.

In recent decades, women's struggle to have their political rights recognized has been so intense that the violence they experience while in public office has been overlooked, although most countries have made progress towards descriptive and quantitative equality. Women must be able to access these spaces without becoming victims of violence.

2. Design a comprehensive model of access to justice (electoral, administrative and criminal)

Administrative and jurisdictional procedures must be structurally reformed to ensure that women can access administrative authorities and courts to report violence. As explained in this document, action can be taken in four main areas: I) access to justice, II) duties and functions, III) protection orders and risk assessments, and IV) preventative measures and reparations.

2.1 Access to justice:

- Introduce immediate actions and concrete policies to stop victims' rights from being violated.
- Empower authorities and equip them with legal tools to take immediate action on behalf of victims.
- Ensure investigative processes are subject to guarantees of due diligence in line with international standards.
- Stop the behavior from recurring.
- Redress the rights of the victims.
- Punish offenders.
- Protect the principles of equality, equity, non-discrimination and non-violence.
- Eradicate impunity.
- As with other types of violence against women, gender-based political violence is not just a matter for the criminal prosecution authorities.
- Violence against women in politics needs to be addressed comprehensively, taking into account the victims and the political and public nature of their activities.
- Violence against women in politics also generates different types of responsibilities including criminal, electoral, administrative, civil, occupational and international.
- All types of violence must be considered: symbolic, physical, sexual, psychological, occupational, economic and patrimonial.

2.2 Duties and functions:

- Each authority's duties and scope must be precisely defined and regulated.
- There is currently a complete lack of regulation. It needs to be clear what scope the competent authority has to order risk assessment for the victim, issue and execute protection orders and impose

sanctions, which should also be provided for in the law.

- Possible competent authorities: electoral courts, electoral institutes, special prosecutor's offices, women's institutes, victims' commissions, etc.

2.3 Protection orders and risk assessments:

- Protection orders are essential guarantees and must be provided for in the relevant general laws (electoral law, access law, violence against women and victims' law, etc.).
- Unfortunately, protection orders have not been developed in the context of politics and elections, where they are necessary.
- Laws should list the authorities able to issue protection orders.
- They must recognize and empower electoral (and other) authorities so they can request and, if necessary, implement

immediate protective measures to prevent victims, their families and related persons from being harmed as a precaution.

- The electoral authority should be able to order risk assessments.
- Plans should be developed for individual protection measures, as well as security measures for the victim (personal security, stopping the perpetrator accessing the victim's residence, party headquarters/ offices, campaign spaces or places visited by the victim) to stop the behavior from continuing, as well as intimidation or harassment.

2.4 Preventative measures and reparation :

- Exemplary penalties and sanctions are needed to ensure that violent behavior does not reoccur, thus having a transformative effect.
- Reparations for victims should be determined from a gender perspective, taking into consideration how illegal conduct has affected women's political careers.
- The political and electoral contexts should be taken into account.
- The incidents reported to the

authorities that stand out are those violating women's right to access politics and hold office.

- Unfortunately, in some cases, the authorities have unreasonably decided that reparations are impossible.
- The structural prevention measures set out in judgments are essential if similar incidents are to be avoided.
- Reparations must be implemented and designed to generate transformative solutions.

3. Formally recognize violence against women in politics

States need to legislate to recognize violence against women in politics, considering the international examples set by Bolivia and Mexico to develop better laws that are comprehensive and effectively protect women, as discussed above.

The resistance to recognizing this type of violence legally can be explained as follows: if behavior is not recognized in law; it cannot be punished. It is illegal to punish someone for a crime that is not legally recognized; it is illegal to punish someone if there is no specific penalty for this specific crime; it is illegal for an authority to sanction someone without an express duty to do so.

Male parliamentary legislators fear being punished by this violence, so they postpone discussions, maintain that no legal change is necessary and hinder any initiatives that are presented. The issue must therefore be promoted from within parliament itself with support from civil society organizations and political leaders.

4. Regulate and hold political parties accountable

Political parties are key to eradicating this kind of violence because they propose candidates and are obliged to maintain links with their members. They must also ensure they are properly representing citizens, including women, of course, who, for many years, they have tried to make invisible.

Political parties should create internal bodies to provide justice that incorporates the gender perspective, to which women activists can turn. Party leaders must be truly committed to parity democracy and develop effective sanctions to eradicate violence.

A political party's internal justice system should establish immediate measures to prevent further harm to victims and their families, ensure investigations are carried out under the principles of due diligence and in accordance with international standards, and redress the rights of victims. It should also impose penalties on offenders and prevent political violence from going unpunished.

5. Address cases of violence against women in politics using a "gender perspective"

Passing judgment by taking gender into account requires that authorities and judicial operators know about international instruments on women's human rights. It is also important to know what a "gender perspective" is and what it means. Knowledge and tools on the subject will avoid resolving issues of political violence in conventional ways used in areas such as family law. In discussions, commonly held opinions ideas like "I have daughters at home, so I know what rights they have" should be avoided as they do not help put an end to this kind of social problem.

The power of judicial rulings to provide legal and symbolic redress to women who suffer rights violations are fundamental. Conversely, rulings can also result in instruments that re-victimize women if their background is known and there is a limited understanding of women's role in society. In all cases, international treaties to protect women's rights should be considered and the pro-personae principle should always be used as much as possible.

6. Inform and educate women about their political rights

Institutions such as electoral authorities, political parties and equality bodies must run awareness campaigns on women's political rights so that females can assert and demand them.

Political parties should also be required to publish and disseminate among women activists information about the sums they receive for women's campaigns, training and development to encourage the appropriate use of these resources.

7. Consolidate women's leadership

Political parties should be encouraged to support women activists with workshops on specific topics such as how to campaign, how to hold public office, how to better carry out their role and, of course, how to detect and report violence against women in politics.

Universities can also be involved. By developing specific programs, they can support this training and encourage mobile facilities to be created so political training can be given to women in remote communities or rural areas where there is less access to this type of information.

8. Help civil society organizations and activists address cases of violence

Civil society plays a key role in reporting, handling and following up on violent incidents. They often come to light through civil organizations since women are afraid and hesitate to go to the appropriate authorities. When it comes to women's forced resignations from public office, civil organizations have played a fundamental role in making these known to both the media and the electoral authorities.

However, many of these organizations do not have enough of a budget to fund such activities, which limits their scope and longevity. Specific funds should be allocated to legal and psychological support projects for these organizations, which will allow them to carry out such activities.

9. Generate statistics

It is impossible to properly assess violence against women in politics without data that quantifies incident numbers, perpetrators, the stage in the electoral cycle when violence takes place, how it manifests itself, the institutions involved, sociodemographic data on the women affected, and legal proceedings among other aspects. These statistics should be publicly available for access by citizens, academics, political parties and civil society itself.

Creating data that takes gender perspective into account is required by different international instruments such as: the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (Article 4 (k)), the Special Rapporteur's contributions, the Beijing Platform for Action (Strategic Objective D.2 on Violence against Women), and the study by the office of the UN Secretary General on violence against women that contains a full chapter on the need for data collection.

Other relevant international instruments are: the UNiTE Campaign (one of its five objectives is data collection), the CSW Conclusions (Recommendation D), the Special Rapporteur's call for states parties to set up "femicide watches", the Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women in Political Life (2017. CIM/MESECVI/OAS), CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women (updating GR. No. 19) and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women's Concluding Observations on Mexico's Ninth Periodic Report.

As noted in the Special Rapporteur's report, the lack of general data and indicators to measure violence against women in politics and elections at all levels generates a belief that these are isolated incidents rather than manifestations of widespread and structural discrimination against women in political and public life.

10. Undertake qualitative studies

In addition to the quantitative studies that can be carried out to generate statistics, electoral institutions, political parties, academia and civil society organizations must carry out qualitative studies to provide more comprehensive tools to understand the dynamics that encourage this type of violence. There should be interviews with women who have experienced violence and with those who carry out this type of violence to identify risk factors associated with victims and perpetrators.

11. Create stereotype-free communications campaigns

State institutions must run ongoing communications campaigns explaining the importance of women's participation in political life. Girls have to see themselves reflected in these new figures as leaders, congresswomen, councilors, ministers or in any other relevant position to generate new narratives in children and young people.

12. Develop international protocols

International and technical assistance agencies should develop action protocols setting out concepts, international treaties, jurisprudence and case studies.

These materials will also be useful in training authorities, women in politics, women's political rights activists, the media and any other interested parties.

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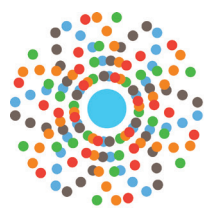
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