Ending Violence Against Women in Politics
A side event convened by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences, UN Women and OHCHR on the occasion of the 73rd General Assembly
New York, 8 October 2018
15:00 – 18:00, Room 6
Draft Concept Note

Violence against women in politics is a worldwide phenomenon. From polls to parliaments, the range of experiences of women in public life is rife with psychological, physical and sexual violence, both online and offline. These attacks are not simply part of the “rough and tumble” of political life; they are intentional ploys perpetrated by institutions, society and States, in some cases, to keep women from tipping the balance of power. The fundamental rights of women and men to live a life free of violence and to equally participate in and influence public affairs are enshrined in international and national law. Violence against women in politics is a violation of those rights.

Recognizing the gravity of this global scourge, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its causes and consequences, Dr. Dubravka Šimonović, has made violence against women in politics a thematic priority for the mandate. For the first time, a thematic report (A/73/301)1 of the mandate has been presented to the 73rd UN General Assembly on violence against women in politics. The report sheds light on the manifestations of violence in the world today, calls attention to examples of how Member States, national institutions, civil society and brave, individual women are fighting back, and makes concrete recommendations for prevention and response.

The report draws on information collected through official submissions to the Special Rapporteur, as well as the findings from a March 2018 Expert Group Meeting co-organized with UN Women, OHCHR and the office of the Special Rapporteur, in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. More than 40 experts attended the meeting, including Members of Parliament and Local Government, academics, and representatives of regional human and women’s rights mechanisms, electoral management bodies, UN Agencies and civil society organizations. The EGM built on ongoing policy and programming work of these and other inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations to collect information, raise awareness about violence against women in politics, develop measures to end it, and support the Special Rapporteur’s preparation of the thematic report to the 73rd UN General Assembly.

Join Special Rapporteur Šimonović, OHCHR, and UN Women, in launching the Report and discussing its findings and recommendations alongside the UN General Assembly. Individual interventions by victims of political violence will be presented during the event. A report of the related Expert Group Meeting will also be presented and available for distribution.

Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences

Objectives

The meeting intends to:

1. Provide the Special Rapporteur with a forum to launch her thematic report on violence against women in politics;
2. Discuss the overall daily challenges faced by women in politics in terms of dealing with harassment, sexual abuse, threats, and in some cases killings sheds light on the manifestations of violence in the world today;
3. Hear the testimonies of individual women who have been victims of violence in their political life.
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Draft Agenda

15:00 – 15:15 Opening:
Mr. Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, OHCHR (TBC)
Ms. Dubravka Simonovic, Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences

15:15 – 16:15 Panel discussion on the disproportionate impact that violence has on women in politics, and the challenges going forward in terms of addressing the chilling impact that violence against women has on the political ambition of young women; the panel will gather experts representing:

- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women);
- UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR);
- The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- The National Democratic Institute (NDI);
- The International Parliamentary Union (IPU).

16:15 – 17:15 Individual testimonies from women Members of Parliament, representatives from Permanent Missions and grassroots women politicians on their experiences of violence against women in the political sphere.

Concluding remarks by Ms. Dubravka Simonovic,
Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences