PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN ELECTIONS:

A Programming Guide

UNDP
Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FOREWORD

Equality of participation by women and men in politics, and opportunities for women's leadership at all levels of decision-making, have been globally acknowledged as vital contributors to more prosperous and stable societies in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There has been progress: more women than ever hold public office and engage in electoral processes as staff, voters, candidates or campaigners. With increased representation and voice, women are better able raise the profile of physical concerns, including reproductive rights and physical safety; as well as social issues such as childcare, equal pay, parental leave and pensions; and broader development issues such as the alleviation of poverty, and delivery of services.

Yet violence against women remains one of the most serious obstacles to the realization of women's political rights today. It can virtually disenfranchise women in elections, with effects on society that multiply from the resulting democratic deficit. This is emerging as a concern for policymakers and practitioners across the political spectrum. Until recently, lack of data and the stigma attached to gender-based violence in many societies have kept violence against women in elections (VAWE) on the margins of study. Yet it is a barrier to women that exists in every country, with cumulative layers of discrimination on the basis of race, age, class, disability, education, ethnicity and gender. This is an outrage that demands action to measure VAWE, respond to it and ultimately prevent it.

UN Women and the United Nations Development Programme have been actively investigating this global phenomenon, working together and with partners to break the silence on this very real issue, and advance a new field of research programming. In this Programming Guide, we offer a comprehensive review of current knowledge on VAWE, and provide a definition of VAWE in order to help align and focus future mitigation and prevention efforts. We provide an overview of the specific forms of VAWE, including scope, types, victims, perpetrators, and consequences, and set out the range of actions that can be taken at each phase of the electoral cycle.

This Guide highlights the often-shocking examples of VAWE around the world, and showcases the innovative prevention and response measures being tested. It is intended for those best positioned to act to prevent and mitigate VAWE, including international organizations and those providing programming support on electoral assistance, women's political participation, human rights monitoring and ending violence against women. It will also be a resource for members of political parties, particularly the leadership of those parties, electoral management bodies, civil society organizations, women's groups and gender equality activists. Ending violence against women in elections is a responsibility shared by all actors at all levels across the political and electoral spectrum and will bring rewards for all.

We hope it will be a useful resource for practitioners in this field, and that, by encouraging actions to mitigate VAWE across the electoral cycle, it will also help to bring about a future that is fully inclusive of women's participation in elections and in politics, and more balanced societies that are better able to achieve peace and prosperity.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka   Achim Steiner

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ACRONYMS

ACOBOL	Association of Women Municipal Councilors (Bolivia)
BRIDGE	Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CONAPRED	National Council for the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination (Mexico)
CPRW	Convention on the Political Rights of Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSW	United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
DFS	Department of Field Support
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ECLAC	UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EMBs	Election Management Bodies
EOM	Electoral Observation Mission
ERM	Electoral Risk Management
EU	European Union
EVAW	Eliminating Violence Against Women
EVER	Electoral Violence Education and Resolution
EWS	Early Warning System
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GPECS	UNDP Global Programme on Electoral Cycle Support
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICCPR	International Convention on Civil and Political Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in Africa
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
INE	National Electoral Institute (Mexico)
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IRI	International Republic Institute

LTO	Long-Term Observer	
MP	Member of Parliament	
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly (Zimbabwe)	
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs	
OAS	Organization of American States	
OAU	Organization of African Unity	
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe	
POECI	Platform of Civil Society Organizations Observing Elections (Côte d'Ivoire)	
RSS	Regional Surveillance System	
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation	
SAP	South Asia Partnership	
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals	
TSMs	Temporary Special Measures	
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights	
UN	United Nations	
UN DESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs	
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women	
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme	
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization	
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund	
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly	
UNIFEM	See UN Women	
UNSC	United Nations Security Council	
USAID	United States Agency for International Development	
VAW	Violence against Women	
VAWE	Violence against Women in Elections	
VAWP	Violence against Women in Politics	
WHO	World Health Organization	
WSR	Women's Situation Room	

INTRODUCTION

Today there are more women in public office than in any other point in history. More than 10,500 women serve as national parliamentarians in 2017, accounting for over 23 percent of total parliamentarians worldwide.[1] There are millions of women politicians serving at sub-national levels, and many more women candidates who vie for political office in each election. Women voters are also registered in high numbers in most countries, oftentimes turning out on Election Day at the same rates as men. Increasing numbers of women are active in the field of electoral management, including as election staff and poll workers.

Despite these encouraging advances, the international target of 'gender balance' in public positions established in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 is still far from being realized. Women continue to face multiple challenges in taking up positions in political and public life.[2] Few women are elected as governors, mayors or to other decision-making positions at the local level. Women served as Heads of State and/or Government in just 16 countries in 2017.[3]

Although many factors constrain women's political participation, perhaps most alarming is the perceived increase in violence against women (VAW) targeting women in political life. The growing presence of women in politics is viewed by some as being at odds with women's traditional gender roles, constituting a threat to traditional power relations and the status quo. Almost universally, the increase in women's political representation has been accompanied by a rise in violence against women in politics (VAWP). This is visible in different ways: in the escalation of harassment and aggression in various media, the intimidation and sexual and physical violence against women in public life, in forcing political women to resign, and in the public scrutiny of women candidates where commentary examines their appearance, rather than their experience and policies. In the most extreme form of VAWP, women politicians have been assassinated for exercising their political rights. VAWP is one of the most serious obstacles to the realization of women's political rights today.[4]

Political violence can emerge in many contexts, but it has unique and adverse impacts on women during an electoral period. Political tensions and fierce competition during elections can create vulnerabilities for women's political participation, which in many cases is already disadvantaged compared to men, and can result in women's exclusion from the process.[5] Tactics such as physical assault, intimidation and psychological abuse affect both men and women, but have differential gender impacts on each, and some gender-based forms of violence are specific to women.[6] Responses to prevent and mitigate political violence during elections must reflect these important gender dimensions.

I. OVERVIEW OF THE GUIDE

This Guide seeks to provide assistance to those working to increase the participation of women in electoral processes and mitigate the prevalence of

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1 IPU, 2016. *PARLINE Database.*; IPU and UN Women. 2017. *Map on Women in Politics.*
2 See for example http://www.undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2015/3 and A/HRC/23/50
3 UN Women calculation based on information provided by Permanent Missions to the United Nations.
4 Adapted from UNW/Purna Sen, 2016. "Global Perspectives on Violence against Women in Politics." Presentation at *"#NotTheCost: Stopping Violence against Women in Politics"* Conference, organized by NDI, March, New York.
5 Adapted from UNDP, 2012. Background paper on Political Violence against Women, prepared by Jeff Fischer, unpublished.
6 Gabrielle Bardall/IFES, 2011. *Breaking the Mold: Understanding Gender and Electoral Violence* Washington, D.C., IFES.

VAWE. It seeks to identify the specific components of VAWE, including types, tactics, victims and perpetrators, and offers various options to prevent and mitigate it based on current good practices. The Guide presents some existing practices and options for policy and programming responses that may support technical assistance providers such as UNDP, UN Women and other UN agencies in their work. It provides examples of definitions and methods from all regions. The Guide does not attempt to prescribe a particular approach and recognizes that the issues and solutions will vary according to each country's national context. What has worked well in one place and time may not be appropriate in all countries, but may prompt ideas for other actions within a specific context.

The Guide is divided into two main parts. Part A introduces the basic concepts of VAWE and aims to define the forms VAWE takes and illustrate the victims and the perpetrators. It seeks to provide a gendered definition of election-related violence and identifies those actions which are most specifically targeted at women in electoral processes. Part B is dedicated to examining current policy and programming responses to mitigate VAWE. Drawing on current good practices, Part B offers policy and programming guidance with detailed action points for policymakers and practitioners to be able to identify, prevent and respond to VAWE throughout the electoral cycle.

II. WHY ADDRESS VAWE?

Elections are the means by which representative institutions are constituted, and voting rights are realized. They are hugely political and essential to democratic development, and supporting inclusive elections is an important element of governance work.

In a given year, national parliamentary elections will be held in 40 to 55 countries, on average. During electoral processes, social and political differences in society are often exposed, and the risk for violence increases. While elections may be viewed as a means to mediate ideological conflict between parties, they can also spark different types of violence, at times devastating, thereby destabilizing democratic processes and the political and economic development of a country as a whole. Indeed, electoral conflict remains an obstacle to the consolidation of democratic institutions in many countries.[7] If strategies and programming are not implemented to prevent and manage conflict, then electoral processes risk becoming venues for violence and intimidation, where conflict is employed as a political tactic to influence an electoral outcome, which in turn affects the legitimacy of the resulting government.[8] This is particularly relevant in transitional and conflict-affected countries, although electoral violence is not limited to these contexts.

VAWE thus requires investigation and action. The high-stakes nature of elections and the subsequent potential for violent conflict can have severe consequences for a country's citizens. Despite the fact that women comprise over half of most country's eligible voters, studies and research into electoral violence have tended to be gender-blind, without considering the distinct forms, nature and consequences of violence that women face in electoral and political processes, compared with men. VAWE is particularly destructive to the women concerned, as it often occurs as a result of inherent social and cultural norms and biases, and discrimination. The compounding effects of race, age, class, disability,[9] education, ethnicity and gender can create conditions for overlapping layers of discrimination, creating conditions for certain women to become targets for VAWE.

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7 USAID, 2010. *Electoral Security Framework, Technical Guidance Handbook for Democracy and Governance Officers*. July. P. 2.
8 Idem.
9 Some studies find that women with disabilities are more at risk and experience additional layers of violence compared to women without disabilities. See Ingrid van der Heijden, Naeemah Abrahams & Jane Harries, 2016. Additional Layers of Violence: The Intersections of Gender and Disability in the Violence Experiences of Women with Physical Disabilities in South Africa. Journal of Interpersonal Violence.

A human rights and development concern

It is widely acknowledged that violence against women constitutes a violation of women's human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as a sustainable development issue, as reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 16.[10] Recognizing that addressing the pandemic of VAW is central to sustainable development, UNDP, UN Women and their partners have for many years worked on this issue at country, regional and global levels, achieving concrete results on the ground, as well as generating lessons learned and good practices. However, much remains to be done from the measurement, reporting, prevention and response perspectives.

There are many reasons for acknowledging, defining, tracking, raising awareness of and developing policy and programming responses to VAWE. Violence affecting any citizen's right to vote, stand for office, or express and defend political opinion and belief is a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Worldwide, violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive human rights violations, with as many as one in three women worldwide experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or sexual violence by a non-partner at some point in their lifetime.[11] In crisis and post-crisis settings, many forms of gender-based violence (GBV), especially sexual violence, continue to be among the most important and challenging human rights, security, public health, recovery, and development concerns.[12] Violence has a detrimental impact on a nation's advancement as a whole and is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace.[13]

Women are also under-represented in elected office worldwide and political violence represents a significant barrier to entry. Women's exclusion in practice means that democratic development is stunted. Research has shown that women's inclusion in politics brings new issues to the political agenda, particularly when women "emphasize social issues, such as childcare, equal pay, parental leave and pensions; physical concerns, including reproductive rights, physical safety and gender-based violence; and development, which includes human development, the alleviation of poverty, and delivery of services."[14] Including women in decision-making processes improves these processes, and ensuring their participation contributes to gender equality, inclusive democracy and sustainable development. The under-representation of women in political life constitutes a democratic deficit, which is evident in "the lack of capacity by States to address perpetual insecurity in all its different dimensions, including militarism and the culture of violence, especially, but not only, in situations of conflict and transition, in which women are primary victims."[15]

III. THE NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

Political and electoral participation

The normative framework in relation to women's political and electoral participation is well-established in human and political rights declarations, covenants and conventions, United Nations (UN) reports, resolutions and action plans and existing UN electoral assistance policies.[16] Women's full and effective participation in political and electoral processes has its origins in the principles of non-discrimination and equal enjoyment of political rights enshrined in the *Universal Declaration*

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10 SDG 5, "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls," provides a firm foundation for states to eliminate violence in political and public life. See UN DESA. *Sustainable Development Goal Knowledge Platform.*

11 WHO Dept. of Reproductive Health and Research, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and South African Medical Research Council, 2013. *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence.*

12 UNDP, 2009b. *Guidance Note: Gender-Based Violence in Crisis and Post-Crisis Settings*, November.

13 UN, 1995. *Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action*, adopted at the *Fourth World Conference on Women.*

14 Julie Ballington/IPU, 2008. *Equality in Politics: A Survey of Women and Men in Parliaments,* Geneva.

15 §52 A/HRC/23/50.

16 UN/DPA, 2013. *Promoting Women's Electoral and Political Participation through UN Electoral Assistance.* Policy Directive. 24 December. P. 3.

UN Women/Ryan Brown

High Level Women Leaders Forum for Africa's Transformation, 2017.

of *Human Rights* (UDHR) adopted in 1948. Article 3 states that, "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." Election-related violence is a threat to these rights. Violence can also restrict citizens' access to other fundamental freedoms identified in the UDHR, such as limiting the opportunity to take part in elections as a candidate or a voter (Article 21), or restricting freedoms such as those of expression (Article 19), movement (Article 13) or peaceful assembly and association (Article 20).[17] By severely restricting these rights, violence can undermine trust in the process and, in some instances, the outcome of an election and its overall credibility and acceptance.[18]

The *Convention on the Political Rights of Women* (CPRW, 1952) and other regional conventions explicitly state that the enjoyment of political rights shall be without distinction of any kind, including sex.[19] The *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, reiterates the right of women "to hold public office and perform all public functions

at all levels of government." More specifically, Article 7 stipulates that:

State Parties shall take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

a) *To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;*

b) *To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.*[20]

CEDAW places a further, positive obligation on States parties to take appropriate measures to eliminate any such discrimination, including through the use of temporary special measures (TSMs). While this is often thought of in terms of measures to increase the number of women in elected office, TSMs can also be used to give

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17 Adapted from UN/DPA, 2016. *Policy Directive on Preventing and Mitigating Election-related Violence.*
18 Idem.
19 This section is drawn largely from UNDP/UNW, 2015. *Inclusive Electoral Processes: A Guide for Electoral Management Bodies on Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Participation,* New York.
20 UNGA, 1979. A/RES/34/180. *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).*
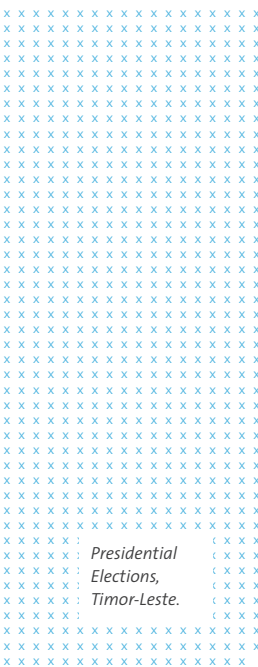
Presidential Elections, Timor-Leste.

full effect to Article 7 in terms of putting in place special programmes or actions to address the obstacles that women face in the electoral process, including those that may stem from discrimination, violence or intimidation.

Women's right to participate fully in all facets of public life has continued to be a cornerstone of UN resolutions and declarations. From the *UN Economic and Social Council Resolution* 1990/15 (E/RES/1990/15), to the *Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action* (1995), the *Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions* 2006 (E/2006/27-E/CN.6/2006/15), *Security Council Resolution (*2000*)* 1325 *on Women, Peace and Security* and General Assembly Resolution (2011) on *Women and Political Participation (*66*/*130), governments have consistently been urged to implement measures to substantially increase the number of women in elective and appointive public offices and functions at all levels, with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, including through positive action, if necessary.[21] Security Council

Resolution 1325 specifically calls on all parties to take special measures to protect women and girls from GBV in situations of armed conflict.[22]

More specifically, UN General Assembly Resolution 66/130 (2012) on women and political participation *urges* all States to act and encourages the United Nations system and other organizations to enhance their assistance to States in their national efforts:

(i) 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.

The 2013 report of the UN Working Group on discrimination against women in law and in practice to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/23/50) "stresses the need to accelerate efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls

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21 UNDP/UNW, 2015.

22 UNSC, 2000, S/RES/1325. *Resolution* 1325 *on women, peace and security*.

in political and public life, including by working towards a comprehensive national legal framework to combat impunity and by guaranteeing access to appropriate civil remedies and redress, and taking into account multiple, intersecting and aggravated forms of discrimination."

In its 2013 General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, the CEDAW Committee stated that "[s]ubstantive progress towards the equal participation of women as candidates and voters as well as the holding of free and fair elections will not be possible unless a number of appropriate measures are taken," including ensuring that women voters and female political candidates are not subject to violence either by State or private actors (para 72). The Committee also recommends that States parties "[a]dopt a policy of zero tolerance towards all forms of violence that undermine women's participation, including targeted violence by State and non-State groups against women campaigning for public office or women exercising their right to vote (para 73-f).[23]

The adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in 2015 provides further impetus for states to address and combat gender discrimination and violence against women, globally.[24] Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls," includes target 5.5., "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life."

Violence against women

An extensive human rights-based framework demonstrates the commitment of the international community to prevent, respond to and eliminate VAW. The framework is underpinned by several instruments. CEDAW does not explicitly mention violence against women and girls, but General Recommendations 12 and 19 clarify that the Convention includes violence against women and makes detailed recommendations to States parties. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights recognized violence against women as a violation of human rights and called for the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women in the Vienna Declaration and Platform for Action.[25] This also contributed to the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, which became the first international instrument explicitly addressing violence against women, providing a framework for national and international action.[26] The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action includes the elimination of violence as one of its twelve critical areas of concern. The *Commission on the Status of Women* issued agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls in 2013, on violence against women in 1998, and on the elimination of discrimination and violence against the girl child in 2007. Within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDG target 5.2 specifically addresses the elimination of "all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation." Violence against women and girls is also addressed under SDG 11, to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable," and SDG 16, to "promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

A series of Security Council, General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions that are focused on the issue of violence against women clearly outline the obligations of States in addressing this issue, and call for an environment of zero tolerance for violence

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23 CEDAW General Recommendation 30. 2013. http://www.ohchr.org/documents/hrbodies/cedaw/gcomments/cedaw.c.cg.30.pdf
24 See UNGA, 2015, A/RES/70/1. *Transforming our world: The* 2030 *Agenda for Sustainable Development,* 25 September.
25 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/CONF.157/2 3
26 UNGA, 1993. A/RES/48/104. *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.* 20 December. http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm

against women elected officials and candidates for public office. In addition to the biannual resolutions on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women (A/C.3/69/L.19), resolutions have been passed on a number of thematic issues, such as trafficking in women and girls, violence against women migrant workers, intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations, rape and other forms of sexual violence, crimes committed in the name of honour, traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls, and domestic violence.

At the regional level, there have been many efforts to have comprehensive, consistent and coherent approaches to responding to VAW, some being particularly notable for being legally binding instruments. These include the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women* (Belem do Para), the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* (the Maputo Protocol) and the *Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence* (the Istanbul Convention), which came into force in August 2014 (see Action Point 2 for additional information).

IV. THE UN POLICY FRAMEWORK

Supporting Member States' national efforts in ensuring inclusive political processes and promoting women's political participation is high on the agenda of the United Nations system. UN entities and personnel are obliged to respect, and aim to further, the rights and standards enshrined in the UN's normative framework on gender equality. Several parts of the UN system have a role in preventing violence against women, promoting gender equality and women's political participation, providing electoral assistance and mitigating election-related violence.

In 1997, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted the strategy of "mainstreaming a

gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system" (gender mainstreaming) by "assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels."[27] A *UN System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women* was endorsed by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination in 2012 as a means of furthering the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment within the policies and programmes of the UN system and implementing the ECOSOC agreed conclusions 1997/2. In practice, all policies and programmes of the UN are to include an assessment of the impact on women and men, including in electoral assistance and inclusive political participation.

All countries who are signatories to, or have agreed to adopt, these agreements and commitments have an obligation to implement them, and much work is done at the regional and country level to assist countries to do this. This includes assisting countries with reports on the implementation of CEDAW. The 2006 *Study of the Secretary General on Ending Violence against Women – From words to action* provides detailed findings and recommendations for governments to assist in implementing their international obligations on eliminating violence against women. More recently, the agreed conclusions of the Commission for the Status of Women (2013) on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls provides a clear roadmap for implementation.

UN electoral assistance is governed by a policy framework that is developed, issued and disseminated by the UN Focal Point for Electoral Assistance, the Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs (in the Department of Political Affairs). Before the United Nations provides any type of electoral assistance two preconditions must be met: first, all UN electoral assistance must be based on a Security Council or General Assembly mandate or an official request from a member state or territory and,

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27 http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/main.htm

second, a needs assessment must be carried out by the Focal Point in consultation with relevant UN entities. This policy framework is grounded in the UN's normative framework and provides guidance to all UN entities providing electoral assistance. The UN system is guided by the adoption of the following policy directives and guidelines:

- *Policy Directive on Preventing and Mitigating Election-related Violence (2016),* which aims to improve understanding of the causes of election-related violence and provides a framework for UN entities to engage in activities around election-related violence.

- *Policy Directive on Promoting Women's Electoral and Political Participation through UN Electoral Assistance* (2013), which provides clear strategies and entry points for gender mainstreaming in electoral assistance (see section 2.1.5 on the range of interventions).[28]

- *Policy Directive on Principles and Types of UN Electoral Assistance* (2012), which not only highlights the importance of "the participation and representation of traditionally marginalized groups, in particular women and minorities," but suggests that following an assessment of the potential benefit of gender sensitive measures in a particular country context, UN assistance will include, *inter alia*, measures "specific to electoral events, temporary special measures, and longer term programs."

- *Guideline on United Nations Electoral Needs Assessment* (2012), which serves as the framework for determining whether, and how, the UN will provide electoral assistance. These assessments should include analysis and recommendations "to ensure gender mainstreaming in all UN electoral assistance activities and that priority is given to the promotion of the participation and representation of women" (e.g., a gender checklist is used to collect data that will inform the recommendations).

In line with the UN system-wide practice, these policies provide a framework for UN engagement to ensure that UN programmes, where requested and approved, sufficiently recognize and address any violence against women in elections aimed to prevent their equal participation with men in their engagement with national stakeholders. Electoral assistance is provided with the understanding that there is no "one size fits all" model or solution. A comprehensive analysis of the national social, economic and political context combined with a thorough analysis of needs should guide the type of advice that is provided. To the extent possible, options and the consequences of each should be presented for consideration. While the UN should generally not be prescriptive, this does not prevent the UN from advising the requesting state on the implementation of its own international and regional commitments, norms and principles with respect to elections and on the need for transparency and inclusiveness, which are likely to increase the credibility of the electoral process.

Both UNDP and UN Women are guided by Strategic Plans which include the achievement of results on both promoting women's participation in elections and combating violence against women. UNDP supports an election somewhere in the world every two weeks, on average; addressing VAW in electoral processes and assistance means not only ensuring that women candidates and voters are free from violations, as well as the fear of violence, but also that political parties are encouraged to take up the issue of VAW as part of a platform for promoting human and women's rights.

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28 See also DPKO/DFS-DPA, 2007. *Joint guidelines on enhancing the role of women in post-conflict electoral processes*. October, which specifically outlines the need to integrate a gender equality perspective in electoral assistance in post-conflict settings.

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PART A:
An Overview of VAWE

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THE CHALLENGE OF ADDRESSING VAWE

Despite its importance, VAWE has remained in the margins of study and policy due to a lack of reporting and data, as well as a lack of understanding about the issue and stigma attached to gender-based violence in many societies. Efforts to develop a framework for VAWE analysis and prevention are confronted with several obstacles:

Lack of clear definitions of VAWE, combined with the absence of standard indicators. There are currently no commonly agreed definitions and indicators to measure the extent of VAWE, even though VAWE is becoming increasingly visible as more women become engaged in elections and the political arena. Electoral violence, as it has traditionally been understood, has tended to be gender-blind, omitting the reality of women's unique experiences, such as intimidation and psychological abuse.[29] Because these forms of violence are subtler and often more private, they are not a part of the mainstream understanding of election-related violence. However, without understanding the full scope of election-related violence, the definition of the problem of VAWE remains incomplete and indicators to measure prevalence, incidence and impact of mitigation strategies cannot be established. Without these, it is difficult to advance solutions.

Lack of data collected to measure prevalence and incidence. Due to the lack of standard indicators, there has been no systematic collection of data regarding incidents of VAWE and proportion of women who experience it on a global scale. Efforts that document election violence at the national level[30] are generally gender-neutral. These datasets do not yet incorporate or recognize gender-specific forms of violence, meaning that data on incidents of VAWE are not systematically collected, and knowledge on the topic remains incomplete.

Standard VAW definitions and programming responses have neglected the political dimension. Just as the gender dimension has not been fully recognized in the election-related violence field, the political dimension has been under-recognized in the study of violence against women. Quantitative approaches to collecting data on VAW have very specific methodological and ethical requirements, often challenging to meet. Adding a political dimension to this has obvious practical and conceptual challenges.

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29 Bardall/IFES, 2011.
30 See, for example, election observation and monitoring, and Election Violence Education and Resolution Project (EVER) of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. *Incident Data for* 13 *elections worldwide,* 2002-2012. www.ifes.org
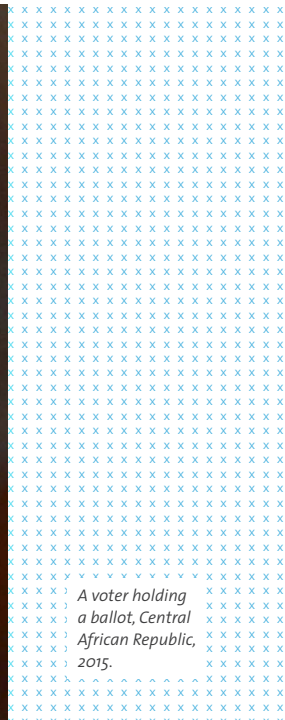
A voter holding a ballot, Central African Republic, 2015.

Under-reporting by victims of both VAW and election-related violence. The information gap on incidence is also caused by the under-reporting by victims when incidents occur. Underreporting of all forms of violence against women is a well-known problem and extends to VAWE. The culture of silence is also the result of a culture of impunity associated with VAW in many cases. In addition to all the reasons that keep women from reporting other forms of VAW, women candidates may conceal threats and even physical assaults made against them in order to avoid appearing 'weak' or unfit for the world of politics.

Biases in the media and coverage. Public awareness and actions to mitigate VAWE are constrained by gender-based stereotypes perpetuated in the media. The general lack of awareness of, and reporting about, VAWE means it is not well reported or investigated by the media, or it is eclipsed by reporting on physical electoral violence which is more readily

verifiable. In addition, women are generally under-represented as assignment editors, producers and managers in news media, and thus it is mostly men who set the agenda as to what constitutes news and how news are reported in everyday production.

Lack of political will to address and combat violence. The lack of political will to address the issue is a fundamental problem both in identifying and defining VAWE as well as in responding to it. "Lack of political will is reflected in inadequate resources devoted to tackling violence against women and a failure to create and maintain a political and social environment where violence against women is not tolerated."[31] Lack of will to address the issue creates a self-reinforcing problem where the lack of information on VAWE results in failure to act, and the lack of will to address VAWE perpetrates the culture of silence and lack of information.

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31 UNGA, 2006. A/61/122/Add.1. *In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence against Women: Report of the Secretary General*. 6 July.

2

DEFINITIONS

In defining VAWE, our starting point is to recognize that (a) GBV and VAW have an impact upon women in the political sphere, but measurements in this area have thus far neglected the political sphere;[32] and (b) the field of political and election-related violence study and programming has largely been gender-blind in its understanding, analysis and collection of data, and that there are very specific forms of electoral-related violence which are gender-based. Overlaying a gender perspective on the standard electoral-related violence definitions, and considering the specific forms, nature and consequences of VAW compared to violence experienced by men, provide a solid basis for identifying and defining VAWE.

2.1. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is the manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women in private and public life. It is characterized by the use and abuse of power and control over women, and it is a form of discrimination that seriously violates and impairs the enjoyment by women and girls of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.[33] The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, resolution 48/104 of December 20, 1993, defined VAW as "any act of *gender-based violence* that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life." [34]

Gender-based violence refers to violence directed against a person because of his or her gender and expectations of his or her role in a society or culture.[35] Although GBV is considered by some to be a more complete term for looking at the range of violations that can occur because of gender-based inequalities and discrimination, in the context of political and electoral violence, we use VAW rather than the broader area of GBV because GBV includes violations that are not necessarily relevant (such as child marriage and childhood sexual abuse).[36]

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32 Additional details on the set of nine *core VAW indicators* is provided in Part B, section 1.2.

33 UN CSW, 2013. *Report on the fifty-seventh session*. Supplement No. 7, 4 – 15 March.

34 Emphasis added. UNGA, 1993. Article 1.

35 UNW. *Global Database on Violence against Women*. http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/about

36 In addition, the focus of VAWE is on female candidates, voters, observers, office holders, etc. who are, for the most part, adults. GBV takes as its starting point violations that include boys and girls who are not direct targets of VAWE, whereas VAW is defined by its focus on women.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN TAKES PLACE IN THREE CONTEXTS: THE FAMILY, THE COMMUNITY AND THE STATE

The **family** is the most common context where VAW occurs. It is where physical, psychological and sexual abuses take place (including physical violence, sexual abuse, marital rape, and control, such as economic control, isolation and confinement, threats and insults). There is now evidence that the most common form of violence experienced by women globally is intimate partner violence.[37] The family "prepares its members for social life, forms gender stereotypes and perceptions of divisions of labour between the sexes" and can either perpetuate or transform gender relations that form the root causes of violence.[38]

The **community** is also an important arena of VAW. Like the family, when communities share aspects of harmful social and cultural norms and practices, they may perpetuate power inequalities in society and condone, tolerate and/or perpetuate VAW. Social and cultural norms and practices should never be used to justify violence against women and girls. Examples of violence and discriminatory practices against women that include the broader community are: non-partner sexual violence; physical, psychological or sexual harassment and intimidation at the workplace, educational and religious institutions; sexual harassment in other public spaces such as streets, markets and public transportation; social exclusion such as being outcast or disowned; as well as harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and early, child and forced marriage.[39]

The **state** is also a critical actor in perpetrating VAW. The state can perpetrate physical, sexual and psychological violence against women through its agents, and/or through discriminatory public policy and laws or ineffective implementation of laws.[40] It may engage in VAW directly, such as national armed forces or police that engage in or perpetrate VAW. It can also perpetrate VAW indirectly by tolerating GBV on an unofficial level (i.e. in the family and in the community). Insofar as it is the state's role to sanction certain norms that protect individual life and dignity, so too should the state develop and implement measures that redress GBV.[41] This category may also include criminals, rebels, and militias; in certain contexts, VAW is a form of warfare and ethnic domination.

While VAW can occur in either private or public spaces, most of the data available to date shows that violence against women takes place within the private sphere. Globally, three out of ten women who have been in a relationship report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lifetime; in some countries, this rate can be as high as seven-in-ten women.[42] Intimate partner and domestic violence, as well as some aspects of community-related violence, have historically rendered VAW invisible in society.

2.2. ELECTION-RELATED VIOLENCE

The United Nations Policy Directive on *Preventing and Mitigating Election-related Violence* (2016) understands election violence to be a form of political violence, "which is often designed to influence an electoral outcome and therefore the distribution of political power." It notes that election violence can manifest as physical violence or other forms of aggression, including coercion or intimidation, and can take place in different phases of the electoral cycle, including prior to or during

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37 Winrock International, 2001. *Prevention of Domestic Violence and Trafficking in Humans, Training Manual*. Kyiv, Ukraine.
38 Idem.
39 For more information, see UN. 2006. *Ending violence against women: From words to action. Study of the Secretary-General*. P. 47.
40 Idem. P. 52.
41 Winrock, 2001.
42 WHO et al., 2013.

polling, and following counting and publication of results. Whilst focused on the electoral process, the existence of such violence often signifies that the political order does not adequately address or balance competing political interests.[43]

Similarly, UNDP defines electoral violence as acts or threats of coercion or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process, or that arise in the context of electoral competition. When perpetrated to affect an electoral process, violence may be employed to influence the process of election, such as efforts to delay, disrupt, or derail a poll, and to influence the outcomes, i.e. the determining of winners in competitive races for political office, or to secure approval or disapproval of referendum questions.[44]

2.3. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS AND ELECTIONS

The right of women to participate in political and public life is established in a comprehensive normative framework, and can be summed up by CEDAW Article 7b, which requires that State Parties take measures to ensure that women have the right to participate in the formulation of government policy (and its implementation) and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government. 'Women in political life' is broadly defined to include women who directly or indirectly participate in different forms of political activity, including as elected or appointed politicians at national and local levels, members of political parties, candidates for election, voters, election staff, and political campaigners, activists and organizers.[47] Women in public life may also include appointed officials such as government ministers, bureaucrats (municipal, provincial/ regional/national), and members of public boards,

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FIVE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE MUST BE UNDERSCORED:

1. Electoral violence has a broad range of manifestations, ranging from disruptions or delays in the polling process to coercive intimidation and threats of physical, psychological or sexual harm against voters, political supporters and polling officials.

2. Electoral violence is employed to achieve a political objective that may vary depending upon the type of perpetrator – agents of the state, political parties, or other groups with vested interests in the outcome of a political process.[45]

3. Electoral violence can occur during any phase of the electoral cycle: from voter registration, political campaigning and polling day, to the announcement of results and formation of government.[46]

4. Standard definitions of electoral violence are gender-neutral. Although electoral violence does not deliberately exclude women or consideration of gendered motivations, common reporting of political stakeholders and types of violence have generally led to a male-oriented or gender-blind understanding and analysis.

5. Most analysis of electoral-related violence focuses on the public sphere, and largely overlooks potential private or family-related forms of violence. The gendered nature of public violence has been overlooked and the political nature of VAW that takes place in the family and community is largely invisible.

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43 UN/DPA, 2016. P. 4.
44 UNDP, 2009a. *Elections and Conflict Prevention: A Guide to Analysis, Planning, and Programming*. P. 4; and UNDP, 2012.
45 UNDP, 2012.
46 Idem
47 See for example, UN Women/Derrick Marco. 2011. *A Toolkit for Managing and Preventing Political Violence against Women (PVAW) in Africa*. Unpublished.

VAWE may prevent women from standing as candidates, winning competitive races for political office, discouraging women from voting or punishing them for being active in the electoral process. Such acts can be psychological, physical and sexual in nature, and include the loss of livelihood, intimidation, physical or sexual assault, residential displacement, and murder.[51] Acts of VAWE may take place in the context of the family, community, or state, in public or private spheres. In any of these contexts, acts of VAW become acts of electoral violence when they negatively impact women's participation in an electoral process and the realization of women's political rights.

institutions, commissions, union members, community grassroots leaders, and advocates.

There is no internationally agreed definition of what constitutes 'violence against women in politics'; however, different organizations and academics have started working on this issue.[48] As violence against women in politics (VAWP) prevents the realization of political rights, UN Women's definition is rooted in a human rights-based approach:

Violence against women in political life is any act of, or threat of, gender-based violence, resulting in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women, that prevents them from exercising and realizing their political rights, whether in public or private spaces, including the right to vote and hold public office, to vote in secret and to freely campaign, to associate and assemble, and to enjoy freedom of opinion and expression. Such violence can be perpetrated by a family member, community member and or by the State.[49]

It remains the duty of the State to prevent and appropriately and effectively respond to all forms of violence against women in political life, regardless of whether such violence is perpetrated by a family member, community member, member of the same or a different political party, stranger, or representative of the state.[50]

Following this definition of violence against women in politics, **violence against women in elections (VAWE), then, is a form of violence against women intended to impact the realization of women's political rights in an electoral context.** This includes women's participation as candidates, voters, activists, party supporters, observers, election workers, or public officials.

VAWE must be examined in its own right because it features: distinct victims who are targeted for their electoral participation on the basis of their sex and/or gender; distinct perpetrators with specific motivations for their attacks; distinct forms and methods of violence; specific locations, both public and private, and specific consequences.

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48 See for example, NDI's Not the Cost campaign: https://www.ndi.org/not-the-cost

49 Julie Ballington, 2016. "Turning the Tide on Violence against Women in Politics: How Are We Measuring Up?" presented at the 24*th International Political Science Association World Congress.* Poznań, Poland, 23-28 July.

50 Suki Beavers, 2016. Correspondence with author (Ballington), June.

51 UN, 2006.

3

TYPES OF VAWE

When physical violence, sexual attacks, or psychological harm are inflicted on a woman to prevent and/or punish her for exercising electoral rights, VAWE is taking place. Women may be victims of VAWE in many roles including as candidates, party supporters, voters and family members of candidates. Perpetrators may be either political, societal or individual. Each of these dimensions will be addressed in this section.

3.1. PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

Psychological abuse and intimidation are the most frequent forms of violence used against women in elections, according to available data (see for example Table 1). Psychological violence may be defined as "behaviour that is intended to intimidate and persecute, and takes the form of threats of abandonment or abuse, confinement to the home, surveillance, threats to take away custody of children, destruction of objects, isolation, verbal aggression and constant humiliation."[52]

What forms does psychological VAWE take?

Of all the forms of VAWE, psychological violence is the most diverse and subtle. It includes overt threats of physical harm and harassment of all groups, including candidates, party supporters, voters and elections officials. Implicit and explicit threats of social exclusion, divorce, and rejection

can deter women from considering seeking office, voting in general or voting against a clan/family's preferred candidate. Psychological harm degrades, demoralizes or shames the victim. Threats often precede physical violence.

As with other forms of violence against women, psychological violence can happen in the home, the community and in public, including online. While there are no figures about prevalence and incidence, anecdotal evidence and existing research suggest that most psychological violence takes place in domestic settings. Increasingly, much psychological abuse takes place in online settings and public forums, including through social media like Facebook and Twitter, and via cell phones. Virtually all perpetrators of VAWE commit psychological violence. A woman may be closely acquainted with the perpetrator of psychological harm, such as when family, religious and community members use it to deter or coerce a woman's participation. Actors that the victim does not know personally, such as the state, political parties and armed groups, may also perpetrate psychological harm.

For example, in Pakistan, during parliamentary by-elections in the Lower Dir District in May 2015, none of the 53,000 eligible women voters turned out to vote.[53] It was reported that "mosques broadcast warnings to women, and polling stations were

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52 UN Women. "Glossary of Terms from Programming Essentials and Monitoring and Evaluation Sections," *Virtual Knowledge Center to End Violence against Women and Girls*.

53 UN Women Pakistan, 2016. *Creating an Enabling Environment for Women's Political Participation: Ending violence against women in political and electoral processes*. Unpublished.

Target	Type of Psychological VAWE	Potential Perpetrators
Candidates and aspirants	• Verbal harassment and assault • Threats of harm, coercion and intimidation to drop out of race • Character assassination • Threat of divorce or economic coercion • Economic coercion or threat of withdrawal of financial support • Social ostracism and marginalization • Rumour campaigns and fearmongering • Threats against family, campaign team and business • Negative media portrayals • Online harassment and cyber bullying • Blackmail, threats or moral sanction by employer or religious leader	• Family members • Intimate partner/ spouse • Communities and voters • Traditional and/or religious leaders • Youth groups • Political party members and supporters • State security actors • Non-State armed groups • Militias • Candidates • Voters • Electoral officials • Election observers • Media and journalists
Voters	• Verbal harassment and assault • Threats of harm, coercion and intimidation about exercising political rights • Spousal or parental pressure regarding political choices • Forced voter preference/family voting • Refusal of permission to leave house to vote • Refusal of relatives to watch children for women to vote • Economic coercion or punishment	
Political supporters and activists	• Verbal harassment over political preferences • Threats of harm and intimidation • Rumour mongering and character assassination • Moral sanction by employer or religious leader	
Election workers, observers and public officials	• Threats of harm and intimidation • Threat of sanction by employer/economic coercion • Ridicule and shaming • Moral sanction by and elder or religious leader	

guarded by 'baton-wielding men' who blocked the few women who did try to vote."[54] Women reported that male family members did not allow them to attend political gatherings, refused to discuss elections or politics in the home, or allow them to vote.[55]

3.2. PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Another common form of VAWE is physical violence. It includes intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, injury or harm. It includes, but is not limited to, pushing, shoving, throwing, grabbing, choking, shaking, slapping, punching, hitting, burning, the use of restraints or one's body size or strength against another person, and the use of or threat to use, a weapon or object.[56] It may also include kidnapping and arbitrary detention, beating, stoning, and physical abandonment or displacement.

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54 Jon Boone, 2015. "Women Barred from Voting in Parts of Pakistan," *The Guardian*, 29 May.
55 Sirajuddin, 2015. "PK-95: A Short-Lived Victory for Hopeful Female Voters in Lower Dir." *Dawn*, 18 June.
56 UN Women. "Glossary of Terms from Programming Essentials and Monitoring and Evaluation Sections."

What forms does physical VAWE take?

Physical violence targets women as candidates, voters, activists and election workers. Both state actors and political actors may use physical violence to repress voters or rival parties and candidates. Voters also use physical violence, as do regular citizens, including spouses and family members who seek to repress women's engagement in elections.

Physical violence happens at all levels, including the home, the community and in public, but it is most visible in public settings: campaign rallies, meetings, trainings, and when candidates embark on door-to-door campaigning. It can also take place in institutional settings, such as political party offices, Electoral Management Bodies

(EMBs), in polling stations and other civic spaces. Physical violence is common to all perpetrators, although it is often most marked between rival political parties. The extent of election related domestic violence in all its forms, including physical violence, is currently undocumented but believed to be substantial. The most extreme form of VAWE is murder and assassination.

In Libya, in 2014, Salwa Bugaighis, a women's movement leader, was assassinated when she went to vote in the country's general elections.[57] In Iraq in 2015, the United Nations warned that "educated, professional women, particularly women who have run as candidates in elections for public office" are particularly at risk for being executed by militants.[58]

Target	Type of Physical VAWE	Potential Perpetrator
Candidates and aspirants	• Murder and attempted murder • Beatings, attacks, assault and bodily harm • Physical harm and intimidation to drop out of race or politics • Arbitrary detention or kidnapping • Abuse and torture • Theft of property • Harm or abuse against family and campaign team	• Family members; • Intimate partner, spouse • Communities and voters • Youth groups and militia • Political party members and supporters • Non-state armed groups • State security actors • Candidates • Voters • Electoral officials • Election observers
Voters	• Physical attacks on targeted groups • Arbitrary arrest and detention • Physical abuse over voter choice • Beatings, attacks, assault and bodily harm • Physically prevented from accessing registration or voting places	
Political party supporters and activists	• Group clashes • Violent dispersion of protests • Inter- and intra-party violence • Beatings, attacks, assault and bodily harm • Arbitrary detention	
Election workers, observers and public officials	• Physical attacks • Threats of harm and intimidation • Theft of property	

3.3. SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Although infrequently recognized and often difficult to document, sexual violence is explicitly employed in VAWE.[59] Sexual violence includes any non-consensual sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work.[60]

What forms does sexual VAWE take?

Sexual violence includes sexual assault, abuse, harassment and rape. Sexual threats and assault may occur both in public and private settings. In private space, sexual abuse may occur when a woman differs in political opinion from her husband or clan, or when she attempts to break traditional roles by seeking public office. Indeed, in some contexts of extreme gender inequality and significant GBV, the tensions and passions of an electoral period in general may trigger more sexual violence, independent of the woman's political opinions or participation. Rape has been employed as a weapon of VAWE. Sexual violence can be opportunistic, "related to the general breakdown of law and order and the upsurge of criminality of all kinds,"[61] during election-related upheaval, or instrumental, intended to degrade or weaken the opponent.

Rape and other manifestations of sexual violence by intimate partners almost always take place in the home as a means of controlling women's political choice or participation. Sexual violence by strangers (militia, police, etc.), on the other hand, often occurs in public. It may happen in farming fields, meeting places, polling stations, in the street or on public transportation, and includes assault, harassment and even rape during public political events. In this case, sexual violence acts as a major deterrent to women from participating in rallies and voicing their opinions. [62]

Sexual violence in public is often attributed to military, police and attendees at political events, as are inter-party and extra-party sexual harassment. For example, in Kenya in 2009, an estimated 35,000 Kenyans were displaced by the post-election violence and reports emerged of displaced girls and women engaging in transactional sex with volunteer relief workers and formal security workers in exchange for supplies and security, as well as other sexual violence among internally displaced persons in the camps.[63] The Nairobi Women's Hospital reported up to three times the normal intake in cases of sexual violence, especially rape, during the post-election violence.[64] And in Zimbabwe in 2008-2009, "...women of all ages, targeted for their political affiliation, were abducted from their workplaces and homes, raped and tortured, and beaten in secret torture centres. It is estimated that from May to July 2008, state-sanctioned groups raped over 2,000 women and girls."[65]

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57 Chris Stephen, 2014. "Libya in shock after murder of human rights activist Salwa Bugaighis." *The Guardian,* June 26.
58 Samuel Smith, 2015. "UN: ISIS Killing Educated Women, Especially Politicians." *Christian Post.*
59 UNDP, 2012.
60 UN Women. "Glossary of Terms from Programming Essentials and Monitoring and Evaluation Sections."
61   Muthoni Wanyeki, 2008. "Lessons from Kenya: Women and the Post-Election Violence." *Feminist Africa.*
62 SG Bulletin.
63 Wanyeki, 2008.
64 Idem.
65 RAU, 2009. "Hear Us – Zimbabwean Women Affected by Political Violence Speak Out." *The Hub*, 4 May, quoted in UNDP, 2012.

Target	Type of Sexual VAWE	Potential Perpetrators
Candidates and aspirants	• Unwelcome sexual advance or request for sexual favour in a political setting • Verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature • Sexual assault and rape (family or public actor) • Sexual harassment • Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that affects one's ability to participate politically (e.g. running for office, participating in campaigning) • Behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or perceived to cause offence or humiliation to women exercising political rights • Sexual exploitation, such as actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily or politically from the sexual exploitation of another[62]	• Family members • Intimate partners, spouses • Communities and voters • Traditional and/or religious leaders • Youth groups • Political party members and supporters • Non-state armed groups • Security actors • Electoral officials
Voters	• Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favours that affects a voter's ability to freely participate in political activity • Sexual assault or harassment, including at polling stations or registration offices • Politically motivated rape used as a tool for controlling, intimidating, humiliating and disenfranchising the voter • Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that affects a voter's ability to participate politically	
Political supporters & activists	• Sexual assault or harassment at rallies or campaign venues • Any unwelcome sexual advance or request for sexual favour in a political setting	
Election workers, observers and public officials	• Any unwelcome sexual advance or request for sexual favour in a political setting • Sexual assault or harassment of poll workers • Sexual exploitation or sexual contact of any kind between a helping professional, such as a poll worker or registration agent, and a client, such as a voter or candidate	

4

THE SCOPE OF VAWE

This section looks at the different types of VAWE, discusses its prevalence and incidence, and identifies common victims and perpetrators of this distinct form of violence.

4.1. AVAILABLE DATA

Standard datasets on electoral violence are largely gender-blind, and are therefore not able to provide much data on VAWE. This means that a large portion of the election-related violence that women experience has not been documented. In addition, the absence of a widely agreed definition of VAWE and indicators to measure it, means that there is no systematic data collected on a national, regional or global scale.

Despite the limitations in data, research suggests that VAWE is widespread across countries and regions of the world. The sex-disaggregated findings of the only cross-country study available to date, which compared over 2,000 acts of election violence in six countries between 2006 and 2010, estimated that women are victims in almost 40 percent of all acts of election violence.[66] However, prevalence is presumed to be substantially higher than 40 percent because the study did not collect data on the full range of forms of violence that women experience, including violence in the private sphere (such as being prevented by a partner or other family member from leaving the home to vote), politically motivated sexual assault or gender-specific psychological abuse.

A recent study on the related topic of violence against women parliamentarians found troubling levels of psychological violence, the most widespread form, which was affecting 81.8 percent of the survey respondents from all countries and regions. Of the psychological violence reported, 44.4 percent of those surveyed said they had received threats of death, rape, beatings or abduction during their parliamentary term.[67]

The types of election violence experienced by women and the frequency with which certain types of violence are experienced are fundamentally different from those faced by men. While physical violence against women in elections is certainly present, most often political violence against women is psychological or sexual in nature.[68] Research has found that women experienced one-third the number of direct physical attacks that men experienced, but were three times as likely to experience psychological violence.[69] This demonstrates that women confront a very different experience of election-related violence than men. Women are more likely to face insidious violence based on fear: fear for their personal security

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66 Bardall/IFES, 2011. Incidents of violence were identified according to a gender-neutral definition of election violence: therefore, sexual forms of violence and other gender-specific violence were not identified.

67 IPU, 2016b. *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians.* http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/issuesbrief-e.pdf

68 Bardall/IFES, 2011.

69 Idem. According to the study data, 32 percent of all acts of election violence committed against women are acts of psychological violence, compared to only 9 percent for men. In contrast, 34 percent of violent acts against men involved physical harm, compared to only 9 percent for women.

and the security of their loved ones, fear of social ostracism, and attacks on their moral character and self-confidence. In addition, they are more likely to face sexual harassment within their own political parties, or be demeaned in a sexualised way, for example, by being expected to perform sexual favours. This is one particularity of VAWE.

To fully grasp the extent of VAWE, we must look beyond public reports and also consider incidents that take place within the home and community and which are not formally reported. Based on data available, the largest share of VAW in general (i.e. non-specific to elections) is estimated to take place in the home. Rarely documented by formal means, acts of VAWE taking place in the home are more often shared verbally and recorded by election observers, electoral agents and community sources rather than official police and hospital reports or media.[71] VAWE also takes place in distinct locations, such as in closely contested electoral constituencies involving female and male candidates, women campaigning in traditional or conservative areas, or where there is a presence of armed groups, among other factors.[72]

Table 1: Proportional Distribution of Different Forms of Election Violence in Men and Women (2006-2010)[70]

TYPES OF ELECTION VIOLENCE

Distribution of Incidents of Violence in Men and Women
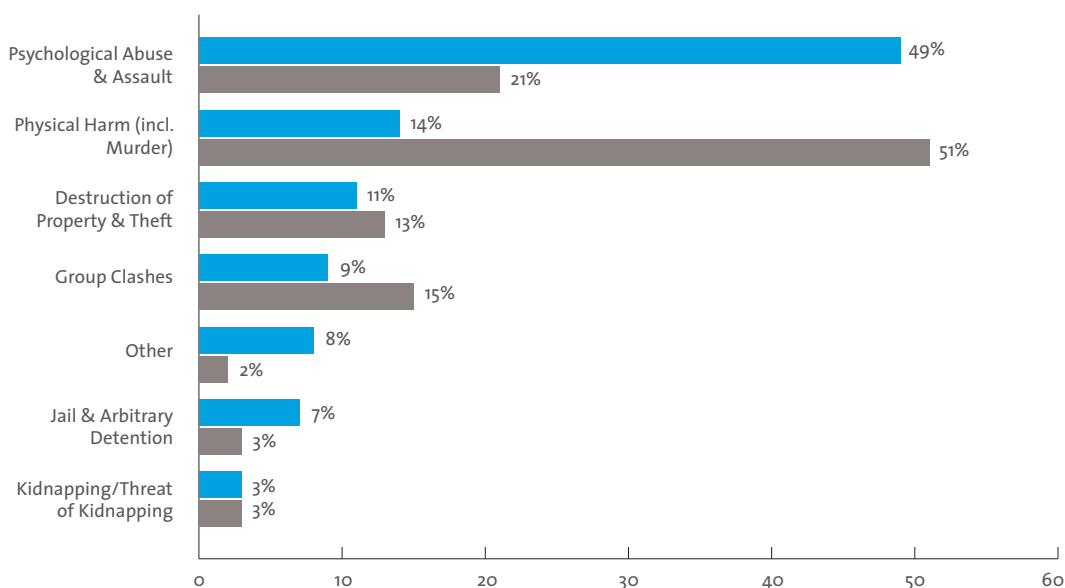
Note: Table presents the proportional distribution of incidents of different forms of election violence as experienced by men and women. Information on sexual assault was not distinguished from other forms of physical harm. Countries include Guyana 2006; Bangladesh 2006-07; Timor-Leste 2007; Nepal 2007-08; 2008; Burundi 2010; and Guinea 2010.

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70 Idem. The Table presents the proportional distribution of incidents of different forms of election violence in men and women. Information on sexual assault was not distinguished from other forms of physical harm.

71 Idem.

72 UNDP, 2012.

4.2. WHO ARE THE VICTIMS OF VAWE?

Potential victims of VAWE are all women who are stakeholders in elections, namely voters, candidates, political party supporters, campaign workers, election staff, elected officials and media officials. As there are no reliable data on the number of victims and perpetrators of VAWE, this section draws heavily on the use of anecdotal evidence to provide illustrations of the points under discussion.

Women can be victims of electoral violence by means of chance or deliberate intent. Upheaval, riots, attacks with explosive devices in public places, large-scale displacement and general increases in violent crime and instability related to elections sometimes impact both women and men indiscriminately. These are *indirect forms* of VAWE, in that they do not target women explicitly because of their sex or for gender-motivated reasons in relation to politics. They are important to recognize, though, because they affect women in different ways and at different rates than men, and have the ultimate effect of impeding women's political rights. This is sometimes described as "gender-differentiated electoral violence."[73]

Direct forms of VAWE include attacks that single out women to intentionally impede or manipulate their participation and/or perpetuate their subordination. This is sometimes defined as gender-based or gender motivated political violence.[74] In this Guide, we are concerned with the latter direct forms.

Women voters

Women voters, who constitute over half of the electorate in most countries, are common targets of election-related violence. Violence targeting women voters – whether during registration periods, at polling places, in the home or connected to other civic engagement activities – is designed to dissuade them from registering to vote, casting their own ballots, participating in rallies or political events, turning out on polling day or influencing their voting choice, or punishing them afterwards for having done so (which is also designed to prevent their further political participation). In Pakistan, for example, a 2016 study noted that VAWE was one of the key factors for the low registration rates of women compared to men.[75] The threat of physical violence against women and the dangerous security situation in many parts of the country have limited women's access to polling stations. Statistics from the Electoral Commission of Pakistan show that in the 2013 elections, there were nearly 800 polling stations where women's voter turnout was less than 10 percent, and in some parts of Balochistan province, women's voter turnout was as low as 2.9 percent.[76] In Afghanistan, during the 2009 elections, women became targets of extremist violence, with over 650 women's polling stations failing to open, especially in the southern and southeastern regions. The Taliban distributed so-called "night letters" threatening to cut off the fingers of anyone observed with an electoral stain (evidence that this person had voted). Women were the targets of this violence.[77]

Women may also be coerced into voting against their personal convictions through family voting. Broadly, family voting refers to the situation in which the heads of family (most often male) influence other family members in how they cast a vote. It is commonly practiced in areas that have a tradition of customary family structures.[78] Family voting may prevent a woman from casting a vote of her own choice, or she may be under a strong cultural expectation to obey her husband or father and vote for the candidate or party for which she has been instructed to vote. Family voting may

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73 Gabrielle Bardall, 2016. "Gender-Based Distinctions and Motivations in Political Violence." In *Voices, Votes and Violence: Essays on Selected Dynamics of Electoral Authoritarianism*. Univ. of Montreal. See also Gabrielle Bardall, Elin Bjarnegård and Jennifer Piscopo, forthcoming 2017.
74 Idem.
75 UN Women Pakistan, 2016.
76 Idem.
77 Ms. Magazine, 2009. "Women's Fingers Cut Off in Afghan Election Violence." *Feminist Wire*, 24 August, cited in UNDP, 2012.
78 Extracted from UNDP/UN Women, 2015.
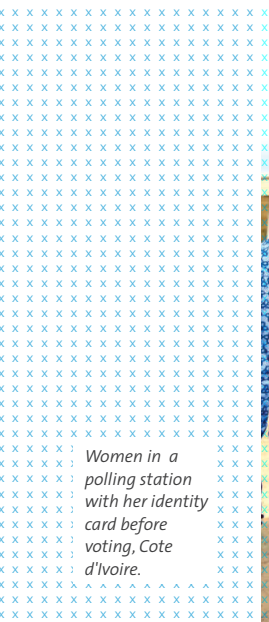
Women in a polling station with her identity card before voting, Cote d'Ivoire.

be enforced through coercion and intimidation, including threatening women with divorce. In Tanzania, a 2015 report noted that several men threatened women voters when they saw them going to the polls, causing some women to become too afraid to exercise their right to vote.[79] A report released by the Tanzania Women Cross Party Platform (TWCP) which monitored VAWE in the same year confirmed incidents of violence perpetrated against women for having different political opinions from spouses, families and/or communities: some women informed monitors that their voter cards were confiscated by family members; others reported having been beaten by their husbands for supporting candidates not preferred by the husbands; some reported having been pressured by their husbands, brothers and sons to vote for a particular candidate; and, in some cases, husbands voted for their wives alleging their illiteracy.[80]

Another situation in which family voting arises is in cultures where there is a belief that a man would be shamed if the women in his family voted for a candidate whom he did not approve. It may also be the case that women are informed that to act against such instructions would be a sin or grounds for corporal punishment, divorce, social exclusion and possible loss of their rights as a parent.[81] For example, the Pakistan 2016 study found that women were often constrained by tradition, tribal and family bindings and by being economically dependent on male family members.[82] As such, they were likely to vote according to the preference of male clan and household heads (family voting).[83] For many Pakistani women, the decision for whom to vote is already taken by the male family and/or community members. For many low income families, the male members may be offered benefits, or receive threats of retaliation, to ensure that the whole family votes for a particular party or candidate.[84] Additionally, in many contexts, women (and men) may not trust in the secrecy of the ballot, and therefore do not dare to vote other than instructed.

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79 IRI, 2015. *Tanzania National Elections Gender Assessment*, 25 October. P. 14.

80 Negrao, Sara, 2017. "Monitoring, Mitigating and Responding to Violence Against Women during Elections (VAWE) Experience of UN Women Tanzania in the 2015 General Elections." Presented at the Rutgers University Eagleton Institute conference on Resisting Women's Political Leadership: Theories, Data, Solutions, New Brunswick, New Jersey, USA, 22-26 May 2017.

81 UNDP/UN Women, 2015.

82 UN Women Pakistan, 2016.

83 Xavier Gine. "Evidence from a Voter Awareness Campaign in Pakistan." *World Bank*, presented at the *Impact and Policy Conference*, Bangkok.

84 UN Women Pakistan, 2016.

EXAMPLES OF VIOLENCE TARGETING WOMEN CANDIDATES:

- In **Kenya**, women candidates often fall victim to VAWE. A woman Member of Parliament noted that "the greatest expense for women running for parliament in Kenya is around-the-clock security, which is necessary because of the danger of rape, a common intimidation tactic."[86] Another woman candidate noted that she was beaten up when she stood for election, and that she "routinely carried concealed knives and wore two sets of tights under their dresses in order to buy more time to scream during an attempted rape," and that "for women political aspirants the violence also includes foul verbal abuse, beatings, abduction, and death threats."[87]

- In **Mexico,** the 2015 elections brought the issue of VAWE to the forefront. Civil organizations documented cases of rape, blackmail, sexual harassment and assault, murder, beatings and torture of women candidates. The rising numbers of complaints of violence and discrimination against women candidates led to a Senate call for action, which urged the National Electoral Institute (INE) and National Council for the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination (CONAPRED) to intervene. An appeal for urgent action was launched and the INE and CONAPRED developed a "Guide for public action: Elections without discrimination."[88]

- In **Pakistan**, several women elected officials and candidates interviewed after the 2013 elections reported experiencing intimidation, defamation, character assassination, and false announcements that a woman candidate had withdrawn from election in favour of a male candidate. They also mentioned that the male members of the family of the woman candidate received threats or were offered money for the woman to withdraw. The interviews suggested that one of the most widespread forms of violence against women candidates and politicians was the expectation of sexual service and threats of physical violence and death.[89]

- In **Zimbabwe**, a 2015 Policy Brief produced by the Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network noted that women candidates mentioned fear of violence and victimization as a major impediment to their electoral participation. In addition, women engaged in political were demonized as "loose, coarse and lacking in the refinement expected of respectable women." Several women noted that they were constantly subjected to sexual harassment in their political and electoral endeavours.[90]

Women candidates and aspirants

VAWE frequently targets women as electoral candidates or those aspiring to run for office. Women candidates are often vulnerable to violence because, compared with men, they generally have fewer supportive social networks and political finance systems backing their candidacies,[85] and they are more likely to face gender-based discrimination. They may have fewer influential contacts in positions of power or access to decision-makers to protect them from potential harm. State security forces or legal apparatuses may not recognize the forms of violence to which they are subject, or be unable or unwilling to respond. Women candidates may often feel isolated in dealing with election violence. According to a 2008 study in Nepal, women candidates are unlikely to be aware of violence experienced by other women in politics. The study finds that 82 percent of the 117 women candidates interviewed conceded ignorance

85 Julie Ballington and Muriel Kahane, 2014. "Women in Politics: Financing for Gender Equality." In International IDEA, *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns: A Handbook on Political Finance*. Stockholm.

86 According to Kenyan MP, Phoebe Asiyo. Quoted in Swanee Hunt, 2007. "Let Women Rule," *Politics and Society, May/June*

87 According to Mary Okumu, quoted in Hunt, 2007.

88 For more information, see INE et al., 2016. "Protocolo para Atender la Violencia Política Contra las Mujeres." Ciudad de México; and SEGOB/CONAPRED, 2016. *Guía para la Acción Pública: Elecciones sin discriminación*. Ciudad de México.

89 UN Women Pakistan, 2016.

90 ZESN, 2015. *Policy Brief: Challenges in Attaining Gender Balance in Elections in Zimbabwe*. http://www.zesn.org.zw/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/policybrief.pdf

about other women candidates facing any form of violence.[91] This was especially true for women candidates with less than one year of political experience. This is attributed to the fact that "in most cases, women are persuaded to suppress their feelings to serve the 'better good' and 'save their families' faces."[92] There is also a dearth of media coverage of VAWE in Nepal and general lack of public awareness of the problem. Altogether, these trends reinforce the isolation and culture of silence surrounding women candidates' experiences of VAWE, which in turn exacerbates the potential for intimidation and sense of fear.

Political Supporters and Campaign Workers

Political party supporters and campaign workers are also targets for VAWE.[93] Women party supporters can be targeted in public settings, such as rallies, marches and campaign meetings, but may also be targeted in private settings for campaigning for women candidates and defending political opinions that differ from those of their intimate partners, families or clans. For example, during the 2010 parliamentary elections in Afghanistan, ten campaign workers for a woman candidate and incumbent parliamentarian were abducted in an unsuccessful effort to coerce her withdrawal from the race. Five of the workers were released, but the other five were shot and killed.[94]

Election officials and polling staff

The perpetuation of a culture of sexism and violence through acts of sexual harassment and/or other gender-based attacks against women in public life may generally discourage women from presenting themselves for office or civil service positions (such as in an EMB or ministry) during elections. This includes women staff employed by EMBs, poll workers, members of the commission of the EMB, government bureaucrats or civil servants (municipal, provincial or national levels) and even election observers. Workplace culture should not allow for

the discrimination of any staff member, especially gender discrimination, or threats and harassment. In 2008, the former head of the Central Election Commission in Kyrgyzstan, resigned her position after receiving threats to her safety and enduring a power dynamic with the son of the President at the time. In her statements she mentioned that he swore at her and threatened her safety.[95]

The EMB may need to take action to protect poll workers as they fulfil their tasks, particularly those engaged in actively registering voters or working on polling day, especially in traditional or conservative areas where women may have limited mobility. For example, in Afghanistan in 2004, the Taliban bombed a bus carrying Afghan women to register to vote in 2004, killing two women working for the UN-Afghan electoral body, and injuring nine female poll workers and two children.[96]

Women in political office

VAW occurs in all phases of the electoral cycle and in different spheres, including in the post-election period, once elected women take up their seats in the legislature. This dimension is also referred to as violence against women in politics (VAWP). Such violence seeks to silence women's voices in decision-making bodies by preventing them from exercising their political mandates, preventing them from seeking leadership positions in the legislature, forcing them to resign before the end of a full term of office, discouraging attendance in parliamentary sessions, enforcing exclusion and marginalization within parliament and committee and compelling them to not seek re-election. It can also impact women in associated political roles, such as the parliamentary staff and interns. Violence against women political figures often occurs because women are viewed as potential threats to the traditional male power base and status quo.[97]

91 SAPI/International IDEA, 2008. *Women, Representation and Violence: Exploring Constituent Assembly Election in Nepal*. August.
92 Idem.
93 UNDP, 2012.
94 BBC News, 2010. "Kidnapped Workers for Afghan Female MP Found Dead." 29 August.
95 GenderStan, 2008. *Female head of Kyrgyz Central Election Commission resigns over threats.* September.
96 Dawood Wafa, 2004. "Blast Kills 2 Female Poll Workers in Afghanistan." *Reuters*, 27 June.
97 For more information on VAWP, see Ballington, 2016; Elin Bjarnegard, 2016; Mona Lena Krook, 2017; Jennifer Piscopo, 2016.

EXAMPLES OF VIOLENCE TARGETING WOMEN POLITICIANS:

- In **Australia,** the experiences of former Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard, have come to symbolize the sexist abuse that women in public life routinely suffer. In her speech on "sexism and misogyny" in the parliament in 2012, Gillard highlighted the sexism that confronts women in public life, warning that they "may expect" threats of violence or rape "almost daily." In 2016, Gillard reflected that, "I do think that this issue about sexism – and, particularly, sexism as it confronts women leaders – is now one of the issues in global conversations of our time. I don't over-claim the role of my speech in that – I think it's a small, little bit."[98]

- In **Bolivia,** in April 2010, Juana Quispe was elected Councilor of the municipality of Ancoraimes (Department of La Paz) and assumed her position on 31 May. However, from the beginning of her term she stated that she suffered ill-treatment by members of her council. She filed several appeals denouncing the physical and verbal abuse she received, stating they did not allow her to exercise her political rights and was removed from office. On March 13, 2012, 32 days after recovering her political right as Councilor, Juana Quispe was found murdered. The case of Councilor Quispe, along with many other complaints of women in public office, gave rise to the adoption of the Law against Harassment and Political Violence towards Women (No. 243), on May 28, 2012.

- Also in **Bolivia,** a survey conducted by the Bolivian Association of Women Municipal Councilors (ACOBOL) showed that "36 percent of all cases of harassment and abuse [that were registered with the association] were aimed at forcing women councilors to resign and leave their seat to a male candidate or alternate. Twenty percent of complaints were for physical violence and another 19 percent for harassment and pressures to keep women away from municipal government oversight and supervision functions. [As a result,] women councillors don't usually run for a second term."[99]

- In **Italy**, the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, Laura Boldrini, has spoken out about receiving thousands of misogynistic insults, threats and debasing images when she stood as a candidate for election, and has also publicly denounced perpetrators of gender-based violence.[100]

- In **Peru,** according to a 2015 study by the Flora Tristán Center, two out of five elected women were politically harassed in municipalities and regional governments by male mayors, councillors and regional presidents. Several cases included incidents of physical attacks, death threats, loss of economic livelihood, and verbal and psychological abuse.[101]

- In **Tunisia,** a study of women elected to the Constituent Assembly noted that several women MPs have experienced harassment: "While deputies describe their relationships as generally respectful, both female and male MPs report negative stereotyping and comments, verbal harassment, and aggressive behaviour toward women deputies. In addition, women MPs of all political backgrounds report that their clothing choices or style of dress are openly disparaged. Other members have commented that media have posted doctored photos of them and published other criticisms."[102]

- In **Zimbabwe,** women elected through the reserved seats adopted in the 2013 constitutional reform have been subjected to verbal harassment and public ridicule.[103]

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98   John Morgan, 2016. "Julia Gillard on tackling sexism against female leaders." *Times Higher Education*.

99   Franz Chavez, 2009. "BOLIVIA: Politics, a Risky Business for Women," *Inter Press Service*, 27 October.

100 Lizzy Davies, 2014. "Laura Boldrini: The Italian politician rising above the rape threats." *The Guardian*, 9 February.

101 Flora Tristan: Centro de la Mujer Peruana, 2015. "Las Mujeres Rurales Dijeron NO a la Violencia de Genero," 27 November.

102 NDI, 2012. *Tunisia's National Constituent Assembly Gender Assessment*. P. 9

103 Information provided by Maureen Shonge, UN Women Country Office in Zimbabwe.

4.3. WHO ARE THE PERPETRATORS OF VAWE?

Identifying and understanding the agents who commit acts of VAWE is key to preventing and mitigating violence.

Perpetrators of VAWE can be classified as political, societal or state actors. The state and political party entities are largely the political-level perpetrators, while societal-level perpetrators are family and community members, traditional and religious leaders, gangs or other social networks, as well as the media. Perpetrators may be of either sex, although the vast majority of perpetrators of VAWE are men.[104] Indeed, according to a cross-national study, women alone committed only four percent of acts of election violence; women and men acting together committed 20 percent.[105] Perpetrators may belong to more than one category, such as when a party member is also a state actor or a family member.

Regardless of the perpetrator, the State bears responsibility for protecting against all forms of violence against women, punishing instigators of violence and providing recourse and services to victims. This is a crosscutting responsibility involving all sectors of government, including the legislature, judiciary and civil service. VAWE is a human rights violation and, as such, States bear the responsibility to carry out human rights due diligence, including assessing actual and potential human rights impacts, integrating and acting upon the findings, tracking responses, and communicating how impacts are addressed.

Political Actors

Within political parties, leaders, candidates, members, supporters and campaign workers are the most common perpetrators of VAWE. In most countries, political parties are the primary gateway to elected office, and many actively choose to promote and support women candidates. However, in many instances, political parties (and their leaders or members) are in fact the greatest barrier to women's political advancement. Incidents of VAW in political parties increase during elections, with the intent to hold women back and prevent them from realizing their political aspirations. This violence can be perpetrated within the political party (i.e. intraparty violence) or by rival political parties (i.e. interparty violence).

Intraparty VAWE is where political parties may commit violence against women candidates and

Political Actors	Societal Actors	State Actors
• Political party leaders • Election candidates • Political party members • Political supporters • Campaign workers • Party militia	• Voters • Family members • Intimate partners, spouses • Community members or groups • Religious or traditional leaders • The media • Employers and work colleagues • Criminal elements, including non-state armed groups • Youth groups or youth cadres	• State security actors (police, armed forces) • Government institutions (executive, justice sector, legislature) • Election officials, workers, and security • State proxies (militia, gangs, insurgents, private security)

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104 Bardall/IFES, 2011.
105 Idem.

EXAMPLES OF POLITICAL PERPETRATORS OF VAWE:

- In **Nepal**, "women candidates were victimized by cadres of opposition parties. There were incidents of physical violence as well as threats against these women candidates during the electoral process. ...There were several incidents where women candidates alongside their security personnel were attacked by cadres of other parties."[106]

- In **Pakistan**, prominent leaders of five major political parties signed formal agreements to declare that they would not allow women to file candidate nomination papers or cast their votes in elections, based on local traditions. The signatories also threatened to launch a campaign to force women candidates who did file their nomination papers to withdraw and warned civil society organizations to stop mobilizing and supporting women to participate in elections. They also issued a number of decrees and religious edicts from mosques, claiming that women's participation is un- Islamic and declaring that they would stop women by force from going to polling stations. As a result, female candidates and their family members were harassed and pressured into withdrawing from contesting the elections.[107]

- In **Paraguay**, a woman member of an opposition party noted that she had to resign from the party because of insults she received from fellow party members when she did not accept placement on the electoral list as an alternate candidate. When joining a different faction of her party to pursue a place on the candidate list, she was called a traitor by her former colleagues, and prevented from becoming a candidate.[108]

- In **Zambia**, political parties engage "cadres" (organized gangs of male youths) to assault and intimidate opponents. In recent years, cadres have repeatedly threatened to "gang rape" opposition leader Edith Nawakwi. In rural townships, the cadres targeted women stallholders at local markets by threatening them with loss of their livelihood unless they voted for a specific party.[109]

members of their own parties. This may be the result of deep-seated resistance to women's equality generally, or their introduction into a party as a candidate specifically. It may be pronounced where gender quotas have been imposed or where there is intraparty competition for limited seats, such as during primary elections, or when determining the position of women candidates on party lists. Political party militias may also target women candidates and voters. Interparty VAWE is usually perpetrated by leaders or members of political parties against their rivals. It is often directed against female candidates of opposition parties. In addition to physical acts of violence, it commonly includes threats against candidates' children or threats of other loss or personal harm.

Societal Actors

Societal perpetrators of VAWE can be either people closely connected to a woman candidate - such as her husband, father or other family members – or voters or party supporters, male religious leaders, or village or tribe. These actors commit targeted acts of violence that are often highly personal in nature, such as rape, social exclusion or being prohibited from leaving the house. Religious or traditional leaders, or other members of a woman's local community, may commit acts of violence to prevent participation or coerce political choices.

106 SAPI/IDEA, 2008.
107 Idem.
108 Queremos Paridad, 2015. "Three Historias de Mujeres que Han Luchado por Espacios en sus Propios Partidos." 11 August.
109 Chatula Kampo, 2012. "Zambia: I Live in Fear of Being Raped." *Times of Zambia*, 14 November, quoted in UNDP, 2012.

EXAMPLES OF SOCIETAL PERPETRATORS OF VAWE:

- In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, a presidential candidate testified to experiencing intimidation and physical assault from her husband, religious leader and extended family in retaliation for her candidacy. The family and religious leader accused her of being a 'prostitute' for exposing herself to a public campaign and forced her "to choose between [her] marriage and children or [her] political ambition." Threats to her family forced her to send her children abroad and she no longer has contact with her family or ex-husband.[110]

- In **El Salvador**, women candidates have spoken about VAWE perpetrated by family members and/or intimate partners when they decided to run and were selected as candidates for election. Several noted that they received threats and were discouraged or openly prohibited from participating.[111]

- In **Moldova,** in 2016, presidential candidate Maia Sandu's credibility was called into question by a leader of the Moldovan Orthodox Church, who cast doubts on Sandu's morality because at age 44, she was neither married nor a mother.[112]

- In **Pakistan,** women who do vote may suffer violence at the hands of their community. During a municipal election in November 2015, only a single woman came to vote in a polling station in the northwest, apparently the first woman to vote in over 70 years due to local pacts to bar women's vote. She described "becoming a social outcast overnight." In an interview with National Public Radio, the voter stated that when she first told villagers she was considering voting, they advised her to "shut up and never talk about it again."[113]

- In the **USA**, multiple studies over the past 40 years have consistently demonstrated that "women candidates frequently receive more [media] coverage of their appearance, personality, and families and less coverage of their positions on issues than do male candidates. These differences, which go beyond mere sexist language, can erode a woman candidate's credibility."[114]

Other forms of VAWE by societal actors are less intimate but no less harmful. Media and journalists can attack women's participation through defamation and libel.[115] Underreporting by the media contributes to the culture of impunity and silence that often accompanies VAWE. Misrepresentations and/or attempts to tarnish the reputations of women candidates (character assassination) can also trigger violence against them.[116] The media can also set the stage and tone for VAWE by degrading or humiliating a female candidate or elected officials based on their dress, appearance, lifestyle choices, etc. By framing women candidates in these terms, the media lays the groundwork for VAWE, spurring negativity, bias and aggression against women holding both public and elected positions. In addition, new social media and communication technologies, including networks like Facebook and Twitter, present additional platforms and opportunities for attacking women, and are emerging as a global problem with serious implications.[117] One report found that women are 27 times more likely to be abused online than men.[118] Recently, several women

110 Queremos Paridad, 2015. "Three Historias de Mujeres que Han Luchado por Espacios en sus Propios Partidos." 11 August.

111 Morena Herrera, Mitzy Arias and Sara García, 2012. *Hostilidad y violencia política: DevelandoDevelandoDesvelando realidades de mujeres autoridades municipales. Sistematización de experiencias de violencia política que viven mujeres electas en gobiernos municipales en El Salvador.* ONU Mujeres, Santo Domingo.

112 Charles Recknagel, 2016. "In Moldova, Smears, Orthodox Church Target Pro-EU Candidate Ahead Of Runoff." RadioFreeEurope. https://www.rferl.org/a/moldova-sandu-smears-orthodox-church-pro-eu-candidate-russia/28108474.html

113 Extract from UN Women Pakistan, 2016.

114 Rachel Joy Larris and Rosalie Maggio, 2012. "The Women's Media Center Media Guide to Gender Neutral Coverage of Women Candidates and Politicians."

115 UNDP, 2012.

116 Idem.

117 UN Women, UNDP and ITU, 2015. *Cyber Violence against Women and Girls: A World-Wide Wake-Up Call*. Report by *The UN Broadband Commission for Digital Development Working Group*.

118 Idem, p. 15.

UN Photo/Logan Abassi

politicians have spoken out about the abuse and harassment they receive online, including in the United Kingdom and USA.[119]

State Actors

State-based perpetrators can be prominent perpetrators of VAWE. They include security forces, such as the national armed forces, police and intelligence agencies. Around elections, electoral officials, poll workers and electoral security professionals may also contribute to VAWE. After elections, perpetrators may also include political office holders and elected members of parliament. All parts of government, including the executive, legislative and judicial branches, may be actively or passively involved in perpetrating VAWE. State perpetrators of VAWE may have an explicit discriminatory agenda, or their acts may be targeted at generally undermining a process by employing gender-specific violence.

The tactics of security forces can harm women and men alike; for example, women protesters may be victims of police brutality during the suppression of a political march. However, women are also frequently directly targeted as participants at rallies or political demonstrations, and can be victims of heinous forms of sexual and gender-based political violence. For example, in Guinea, during violence that took place in Conakry on 28 September 2009, 167 persons were killed or disappeared, of whom at least 109 women were prior victims of rape, other sexual violence acts and sexual mutilations and sexual slavery.[120]

While it is a broad human rights concern and often connected to larger patterns of violence against women, VAWE is also a basic electoral security issue. Violence against women voters is often due to a failure of electoral administrators and security providers to protect women from the specific threats they may face in voting. It can also be the result of direct assaults and intimidation perpetrated by these electoral actors. Crowded polling conditions, long lines of mixed female and male voters, high tensions in tight races and other

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119 See for example, iKNOW Politics, 2016. "Women in politics and cyber abuse in the United Kingdom" and Jessie Opoien, 2016. "Handling hate: Women in politics face a remarkable amount of sexist vitriol." *The Capital Times*, 11 May.

120 UN, 2009. "Report of the International Commission of Inquiry Mandated to Establish the Facts and Circumstances of the Events of 28 September 2009 in Guinea." UN doc. S/2009/693, Annex.

Election Day conditions can contribute to women voters becoming victims of sexual assault and attacks at polling stations. Poorly trained poll workers with sensitive responsibilities, such as verifying the identity of veiled women voters or inking fingers (which may require physical contact) may make women voters feel threatened or intimidated. Abuses of this authority may also result in direct exploitation.

Post-election, state institutions and those who serve in them may indirectly or directly contribute to violence through inaction or allowing enabling behavior. Women may be targeted by peers in the institutions in which they serve, from parliaments to local councils and other public offices. A culture of sexism, sexual harassment and/or gender-based character attacks in parliament against women MPs discourages participation and attendance, can provoke early resignation and may discourage women from seeking a second term in office. In several countries, male parliamentarians have engaged in the public shaming of women political leaders, forcing the resignation of women parliamentarians, and undertook physical and psychological threats to women in public positions.

Examples of state perpetrators of violence in political institutions:

- In **Canada**, in 2016, a woman parliamentarian, Michelle Rempel, spoke out about every instance of sexism she had experienced. Rempel noted that the biased treatment included being talked down by male colleagues, being described as emotional and receiving unwanted sexual advances and comments.[121]

- In **France**, in 2016, 17 female former French government ministers issued a joint statement to say that they would no longer remain silent about sexual harassment in French politics and vowed to publicize "all sexist remarks," as well as "inappropriate gestures and behavior" from contemporaries in the halls of French political power.[122] Other women politicians have spoken out against "the everyday groping, harassment, sexist comments and sexual assault that women are still subjected to in parliament by male politicians."[123]

- In **Israel**, in 2016, at least two women members of parliament reported that they had been sexually harassed or assaulted in the Knesset. A women MP, Merav Ben Ari, stated that "the fact that I'm a single woman in the Knesset puts me in unpleasant situations... sometimes people make comments... and there was a situation recently in the Knesset.[124]

- In **Scotland,** a 2016 report noted that six women members of the Glasgow council expressed their intention to resign, complaining of a macho culture and an unpleasant environment to work in. One woman councillor described the council "as like entering a time warp to the 1970s."[125]

- In **Peru**, Susana Villarán, a former mayor of the capital Lima, has spoken out about experiencing brutal and harmful attacks and threats while holding office, which she noted were designed to diminish my image and make it clear it was not a place for a woman like me to try and disrupt that male world of politics and power. [126]

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121 Michelle Rempel, 2016. "Confront your Sexism." National Post, 18 April.

122 Lou Lorscheider, 2016. "French Ex-ministers take on Sexual Misconduct in Politics." *Voice of America*, 15 May.

123 Angelique Chrisafis, 2016. "'We can no longer stay silent': Fury erupts over sexism in French politics." *The Guardian*, 13 May.

124 Max Bearak, 2016. "Almost all of Israel's 32 women in parliament have been sexually harasses or assaulted." *Washington Post*, 31 May.

125 2016. "Half of Labour's female councillors in Glasgow to quit 'macho' council." *iKNOW Politics*, 16 June.

126 Liz Ford, 2016. "From Peru to Kosovo, female MPs aim to end abuse of women in politics." *The Guardian*, 24 March.

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CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF VAWE

Traditionally, incidents of VAWE have largely been associated with women being targeted for their associations with male politicians (as wives, mothers and children) and as proxy victims used to intimidate and deter their husbands/fathers/sons/brothers from their political pursuits.[127] However, this perspective is outdated, as will be described in this section.

5.1. WHY DOES VAWE OCCUR?

VAWE is a growing global phenomenon which attempts to hold women back and prevent their autonomous/independent political participation. It prevents women from exercising and realizing their *political rights*, both in public or private spaces. It is driven by gender-specific motivations and discrimination, especially as women challenge traditional roles and engage in politics. One Canadian legislator summed it up as follows: "The reality is that women engaged in public life across the globe are constantly intimidated, threatened, sanctioned, silenced, ridiculed and in some cases tortured, raped and murdered. *These threatening and lethal actions are generationally rooted in the legislation, regulation and marginalization of women's space and agency*.

The command of public service, discourse and governance is not the exclusive domain of men."[128] VAWE is another form of GBV intended to subordinate women.

Women experience gender-motivated political violence because their participation in the electoral process threatens the dominance of a male power structure and as a form of punishment for not conforming to gender roles assigned to women. Some forms of VAWE can therefore be seen as a "backlash" against women's rise in public life.[129] Some of these gender-specific motivations include stopping women from voting independently, deterring female candidates or compelling the resignation of elected women. It prevents women from holding public office, campaigning freely or expressing a political opinion without fear of retaliation or being challenged in their own homes, communities and in the public realm.[130] As women become more visible in politics and their numbers increase, there is a correlating increase in VAWE. For example, in a study of VAWE in Nepal, researchers found that highly experienced and educated women faced more violent incidents compared to other groups, suggesting "the nature of the violence is interrelated with the profile of the women candidates."[131]

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127 Bardall/IFES, 2011.
128 Emphasis added. Nahanni Fontaine, Member of Manitoba Legislative Assembly paying tribute to Jo Cox in a speech to the Assembly. Quoted in Laura Glowacki, 2016. "Manitoba MLA speaks out about violence against women in politics." *CBS News*, 20 June.
129 See also Krook, 2017.
130 Adapted from UNW/Purna Sen, 2016.
131 SAPI/International IDEA, 2008.

VIOLENT BACKLASH TO CONSTITUTIONAL PARITY IN MEXICO'S LOCAL ELECTIONS

For some perpetrators, the motive is to deter women from becoming candidates or provoke the withdrawal of their candidacies in order to maintain patriarchal control of the political domain. Ahead of Mexico's 2015 local elections, women from across a range of sectors (politicians, feminist organizations, networks, CSOs, experts and academics) denounced the surge in violence against women candidates, which they perceived to be a reaction to the constitutional provisions requiring parity among candidates (50 percent women). The costs for women who decided to run for office in the male dominated political arena was an extreme upsurge of violence.[132]

Elections took place in 17 states across Mexico, and women candidates reported experiencing a range of violence, including verbal abuse and physical violence, sexist comments made during campaigning and in the media, and receiving threats of physical violence, sexual violence, kidnapping, and assassination, including on social media. Some women noted that they were defamed in the media with false accusations of fraud and corruption to force them to withdraw their candidacies. Amongst the perpetrators mentioned were male incumbents and candidates, armed groups of men affiliated with male contenders, community leaders, and fellow members of political parties.[133]

Some countries have seen increases in VAWE attributable to the adoption and implementation of quota laws, which aim to increase the representation of women as candidates on electoral lists or in the legislature through reserved seats. One report notes that in Kenya, male party leaders and candidates "have subverted the principle of affirmative action set out in the 2010 constitution by dissuading women from standing for election through quiet non-compliance with the quota to test enforcement, by ridiculing women candidates, and through violence and intimidation. Women nominated to the County Assembly through the quota are called 'Bonga Points' (i.e. top-up points) and not accorded the same respect in meetings as other members."[134] Moreover, women who are elected through quotas or reserved seats often face higher levels of scrutiny about their method of election than those elected to 'open' seats. They are more likely to face sexism and ridicule,[135] and to be verbally abused and judged more harshly by the public and in the media, undermining their legitimacy as elected leaders. While acts of direct, gender-motivated violence are rooted in misogyny, indirect VAWE is also frequently caused by gender-based inequality in societies. Indirect VAWE (i.e. different types of election violence that affect men and women differently) often occurs because men and women tend to occupy different spaces in the economic and political life of their countries. These spaces and roles result in gender differences in the type of election violence and in the category of victims.[136] For example, where there are none or few women candidates, there can be few women-candidate victims of election violence. However, where political violence targets public spaces such as markets or schools that are predominantly frequented by women, women become disproportionately significant victims. Likewise, women are more likely to be victims of sexualized attacks and acts of intimidation because of the power position they occupy in their societies. For example, a study of the Maldives[137] shows that sexually degrading attacks on women during elections were aimed to provoke and intimidate opponents, not to drive women from the political sphere. However, the fact that the perpetrators chose to use sexual assault, rather than a different type of violence, reflects the gender-based difference of the violence.

132 Anayeli García Martínez, 2015. "Reportaje - Reacción violenta del patriarcado contra la paridad." Cimacnoticias, México, 3 August.
133 Idem.
134 Tam O'Neil and Pilar Domingo , 2016. *Women and power: Overcoming barriers to leadership and influence*. Report, *ODI*.
135 Idem.
136 Bjarnegard, 2016; Krook, 2017; Piscopo, 2016.
137 Bjarnegard, 2016.

5.2. WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF VAWE?

Specific impacts of VAWE on the political and electoral process need to be considered, in addition to the psychological and physical short and long-term consequences for victims of VAWE and the broader impacts on their families and communities. In general, the most common immediate impacts of election violence are recognized as:

COMMON IMPACTS OF VAWE:

- Reduction in the number of women contesting elections or aspiring for political office
- Prevention of political campaigning in certain areas
- Limited visibility of women in political party campaigns
- Women rely on competing for reserved seats, rather than open seats, in relevant countries
- Possible reduction in number of women elected
- Forced resignation of elected women
- Fewer women consider political careers or end careers early
- Difficulty in recruiting female election or polling staff
- Reduced number of women registered to vote compared to men
- Lower voter turnout among women than men
- The closure of polling stations
- Suspension of political party campaign rallies
- Reduced political activism
- Reduced voter turnout
- Change in voter preferences or voting patterns
- The postponement of elections
- Population displacement

Part A has sought to define and describe VAWE and highlight its negative consequences, including the toll VAWE takes on women seeking to exercise their political rights. Targeted attacks on women candidates play a significant role in deterring women from running for office and/or encouraging them to drop out during their campaign or after being elected. In countries with already low rates of women in politics, VAWE may severely discourage women from entering politics. Violence at polling stations and against electoral staff may discourage women from engaging in these vital areas of electoral administration, which in turn may further reduce women's turnout and ease with the election process. Violence at the community and family level results in coercing women's political choices and violating civil liberties. Economic loss, displacement and intimidation create barriers to participation for women and further increase the distance between women and meaningful democratic decision-making processes. Part B of this Guide offers guidance and good practices for mitigating these detrimental impacts VAWE has on women's political participation.

कह दो सब डंके की चोट
महिलाओं को दें वोट

अपन...

PART B:
Taking Action for the Prevention and Elimination of VAWE

MATRIX 1:
Action Points for Mitigating and Preventing

ACTION POINT	PRE-ELECTION PHASE
1. Mapping and Measuring VAWE *(e.g. international and regional organizations, CSOs, national programmes, violence monitoring programmes)*	• Conduct country-level and regional-level mapping of VAWE • Include VAWE in EMB and electoral security assessments • Develop and define indicators • Adjust or build upon existing VAW indicators and measurement tools • Consider including VAWE in relevant SDGs monitoring • Consider using crowd-sourcing and data visualization tools
2. Integrating VAWE into Election Observation and Violence Monitoring *(e.g. international and regional organizations, CSOs, election observers, Women's Situation Room partners)*	• Adapt and integrate VAWE into international and domestic election observation • Integrate VAWE into electoral violence early warning systems • Integrate a gender perspective into existing election violence monitoring tools • Identify indicators to be measured • Include gender sensitivity in observer trainings • Ensure VAWE is monitored and reported in Women's Situation Rooms and other civil society monitoring programmes (i.e. election and human rights) • Develop harmonized data collection and reporting tools
3. Legal and Policy Reform to Prevent and Respond to VAWE *(e.g. legislatures and lawmakers, electoral management bodies, international and regional organizations, courts, political parties)*	• Adoption of laws and policies which define and protect against VAWE • Adapt existing Eliminating VAW (EVAW) legislation to explicitly provide measures on protecting against VAWE • Protocols and regulations adopted by EMBs to prevent VAWE in the electoral process • Election and political party codes of conduct address VAWE • Provide gender-sensitivity training to the police, adjudicators, judges, lawyers, CSOs etc. who may handle reported cases of VAWE
4. Preventing and Mitigating VAWE through Electoral Arrangements *(e.g. EMBs, relevant line ministries, security sector/police)*	• EMBs ensure any violence monitoring or risk assessments include consideration of VAWE • Train EMB staff on VAWE and responses • Adopt measures to reduce family voting as needed • Integrate VAWE into voter education, including raising awareness about ballot secrecy and family voting • Relevant unit within EMB tasked with addressing VAWE and gender concerns • Provide protection for women candidates • Training of police and security forces on VAWE • Increase numbers of women in police forces, including in leadership positions
5. Working with Political Parties to Prevent and Reduce VAWE	• Reach out to all political parties to carry out advocacy work • Comply with legislated codes of conduct and sensitize party members • Adopt own code of conduct as needed • Update party regulations and statutes to address VAWE • Monitoring and enforcement of party policy and practices on VAWE • Ensure transparent candidate selection rules and access to political finance • Introduce issue of VAWE to trainings and voter outreach materials and efforts • Encourage adoption of a public joint statement by political parties committing to comply with codes of conduct and human rights • Train party agents/observers to monitor VAWE
6. Raising Awareness and Changing Norms *(e.g. legislators and parliamentary networks, CSOs, media, men, international and regional organizations)*	• Awareness raising campaigns to prevent VAWE • Adapt training programmes to introduce VAWE • Civic outreach materials are adapted to the issues of VAWE • Commitment to report on VAWE in the media • Capacity building for media on VAWE

VAWE

ELECTION PHASE	POST-ELECTION PHASE
• Data collection and verification • Adapt and integrate VAWE into monitoring tools	• Analyse results of collection efforts • Ensure data aggregation and reporting • Identify gaps and refine indicators as needed • Include VAWE in post-election reports and findings
• Adapt and integrate VAWE into observation tools • Aim for gender balance in election observer teams • Streamline reporting across Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) groups	• Ensure aggregation and reporting • Identify gaps and make recommendations • Include gender dimension and human rights-based approach in observation report and findings
• Access to electoral justice for women, and pursue justice for victims • Establish methods to safely/confidentially report cases of VAWE	• Ensure implementation of laws and policies on VAWE • Review laws and policies and make adjustments as needed • Adjudication of electoral disputes involving VAWE • Ensure investigation and prosecution of human rights violations and abuses against women in politics • Adapt and integrate new victim resources into existing services for VAW
• Consider arrangements for ballot secrecy for voters • Election day logistics planning sensitive to VAWE (gender segregated polling stations, female security guards/sensitized police forces in high risk areas, poll workers sensitized to VAWE) • Gender-segregated polling stations if required to reduce violence or family voting pressures • Deploy female police officers at women-only polling stations • Ensure protection of election workers	• Post-election review includes gender dimension • Enforcement of violations of gender-related offences
• Recruit and deploy more women as political party agents	• Ensure women elected representatives are supported in their functions • Ensure no women forced to resign seats in favour of men
• Capacity building for media on VAWE • Media monitoring for gender bias • Engage with men as allies and influential advocates	• Identification of lessons learned • Adopt civic education to inform the public and opinion-makers about VAWE • Penalties and sanctions for media violations • Engage with legislators and parliamentary networks

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UN WOMEN

Part B reviews the documented good practices that have been developed to date to address VAWE. It suggests targeted programmes and policies that can be implemented at specific points in the electoral cycle to prevent or eliminate VAWE. These suggestions are offered to inform the work of UNDP and UN Women or other UN agencies engaged in this work, as well as those partners engaged in electoral support, the promotion of women's political empowerment or ending violence against women.

To that end, we introduce the VAWE Prevention and Elimination Matrix, a tool that identifies six main action points for preventing and eliminating VAWE based upon the phases of the electoral cycle and the role of various actors that may be involved in implementing these strategies. The Matrix presents a diverse menu of programming options to draw from in identifying VAWE and taking context-appropriate action to prevent it.

Drawing upon the definition of VAWE and the background information presented in Part A, Part B reviews good practices and provides suggested programmes and policies under the following six action points:

1. Mapping and measuring VAWE;

2. Integrating VAWE into election observation and violence monitoring;

3. Legal and policy reform to prevent and respond to VAWE;

4. Preventing and mitigating VAWE through electoral arrangements;

5. Working with political parties to prevent and reduce VAWE;

6. Raising awareness and changing norms.

Polling Centre, Afghanistan.

UN Photo/Fardin Waezi

ACTION POINT 1:
MAPPING AND MEASURING VAWE

While VAWE remains difficult to define and measure, there is an emerging consensus among practitioners, researchers and stakeholders that VAWE must be named, monitored and eliminated.[138] Mapping and collecting data about VAWE is the critical first step in mitigating and preventing VAWE, because it enables the problem to be identified and measured, its pattern and associations to be understood, and relevant responses to be adopted. Until now, VAWE has remained unseen primarily because it has rarely been systematically documented. Information on prevalence and incidence serves as a valuable guide to inform the programming responses outlined in the matrix above. In any context, indicators for measuring VAWE should ideally be selected or used with a longitudinal view to measure for both incidence (i.e. number of events during specific periods of time, such as election periods) and prevalence (i.e. proportion of the population experiencing acts of VAWE).[139]

This section offers options to measure and monitor VAWE, including:

• Using targeted mapping to identify potential hotspots and patterns of VAWE, including through country and regional profiles, mapping by electoral management bodies (EMBs) and general security assessments;

• Establishing VAWE measurements and indicators; and

• Harnessing opportunities for collecting VAWE data through existing initiatives, including VAW monitoring and measurements, the Sustainable Development Goals and crowdsourcing.

1.1. MAPPING VAWE

Mapping VAWE provides a foundation for targeting and developing evidence-informed interventions. A VAWE mapping aims to examine the situation for women's electoral participation, assist with the identification of hotspots, identify patterns of violence, and enable relevant prevention and response measures to be put in place.

Mapping efforts should seek to identify how VAWE is being or has been used to discourage, suppress or prevent women from exercising their electoral rights as voters, candidates, party supporters, election workers, observers, journalists, or public officials. Any such mapping should seek to examine the current situation for women's electoral participation and potential for VAWE, and it may also be accompanied by consideration of how best to mitigate it. A VAWE mapping should cover all phases of the electoral cycle – pre-, during and post-election – as forms of VAWE may be distinct depending on when violence occurs. Key questions to consider in a VAWE mapping are:

Past and/or current incidents of VAWE:

• **What?** Were the VAWE acts of a psychological, physical or sexual nature? What form(s) does it take, such as assault, intimidation, harassment, or murder?

• **Where?** Where did VAWE take place - in the context of family, community or state, in the public or private sphere? What is the current political context in view of upcoming elections?

• **Who?** Who were the main perpetrators of VAWE? What were their motivations?

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138 Ballington, 2016.
139 Idem.

- **Against whom?** Who were the victims of VAWE?

- **Action taken?** Were there any complaints, sanctions, prosecutions?

Legal, policy and institutional framework:

- What are the State's duties? Have international human rights treaties been ratified (i.e. CEDAW and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights - ICCPR)? What laws and policies are in place to protect from and prevent violence against women and VAWE? What institutions are in place? EMBs, electoral tribunals, line ministries?

- Are there codes of conducts in place for political parties, for defense and security forces and/or for electoral staff?

- What rights were/have been/are being violated through the acts of VAWE?

Monitoring:

- Is VAWE monitored at all? By whom?

- Are there specific groups of women who experience violence in greater proportion? What are their characteristics? Is there a specific pattern of violence experienced by these groups?

- Are there already commonly agreed indicators for measuring VAWE in the national context?

- Are there any organizations already involved in collecting data and monitoring VAWE? Which ones? Did they receive a gender-sensitive training?

- What are the lessons learned from the monitoring from previous elections?

- Have measures been used to prevent VAWE from happening?

- Have measures been taken to provide support to those women experiencing VAWE?

- Is media monitoring in place to assess the election coverage from a gender perspective?

a. Country and regional VAWE mapping

One promising source for mapping the scope of VAWE consists of country case studies and regional studies, which seek to capture qualitative and quantitative information. Methodologies for these mapping studies vary (including development-organization-commissioned research and academic analyses), and there are a variety of data points used, but the studies provide rich information on identifying the nature, causes and consequences of VAWE.[140]

Examples of country and regional VAWE mapping

- **UN Women's** Pakistan Country Office published a 2016 study on the challenges to women's political participation in Pakistan, specifically examining the issue of violence against women during electoral processes. The study aims to identify the types of VAWE in Pakistan to encourage appropriate policy measures through legislative reforms by the Election Commission of Pakistan and other key stakeholders.

- **UNDP** conducted country case studies in 2011 to examine electoral violence in Asia, specifically in India, Nepal and Pakistan.[141] The case studies demonstrate how violence becomes perpetuated by and embodied within varying social and political contexts within the Asia region.

- **UN Women's** Training Centre in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, developed a research project focusing on violence against women in politics, to support the implementation of the Quito Consensus (2007) for women's empowerment, where governments committed to take action to "*adopt legislative measures and institutional reforms to prevent, sanction and eradicate political and administrative harassment of women who reach decision-making positions through electoral means or by appointment at national and local levels, as well as in political parties and movements.*" The project involved four empirical

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140 Idem.
141 The study included research from the Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, and Thailand. See UNDP, 2011. "Understanding Electoral Violence in Asia."

studies and mapping of political violence and harassment in Costa Rica (2011),[142] El Salvador (2012),[143] Ecuador (2012),[144] and Bolivia (2012), with an emphasis on enriching the theoretical and methodological frameworks for addressing the issue.[145]

- **UN Women and the Centre for Social Research** (India) undertook a regional study on violence against women in politics in 2014 (conducted in India, Nepal and Pakistan) to understand the nature, extent and reasons for violence against women in political life and, in particular, VAWE and the motivations for this violence. It also sought to raise awareness by identifying and disseminating good practices for mitigation through a consultative workshop.[146]

- **ParlAmericas** has launched a video project called "Mapping Gender-Based Political Harassment: Parliamentarians speak out." The website provides an interactive space to feature testimonies of women parliamentarians from across the Americas and the Caribbean on the topic of VAWP, as "gender based political violence and harassment are prevalent challenges faced by women parliamentarians across the hemisphere."[147]

b. VAWE mapping by EMBs

An EMB may undertake a VAWE mapping to identify hotspot areas and design appropriate mitigation and monitoring mechanisms. For example, the **Election Commission of India** has conducted a Vulnerability Mapping in order to identify individuals and areas at risk for violence. It is intended to reveal "the susceptibility of any voter or section of voters, whether or not living in a geographically identifiable area, to being wrongfully prevented from or influenced upon in relation to the exercise of [his/her] right to vote in a free and fair manner, through intimidation or use of undue influence or force of any kind on [him/her]."[148] The mapping covers areas such as vulnerable households and families, summary of the vulnerability and actions to be taken. The mapping survey is then certified by the Sector Officer or Sector Magistrate and signed by the District Election Officer.[149] By identifying vulnerable sectors, the survey can obtain information on women at risk in the elections and provide the EMB with necessary information about effective ways to protect potentially vulnerable populations.[150]

c. General security assessments

Those undertaking general electoral security assessments may integrate a VAWE mapping into their approach, as it is important to consider and map VAWE within broader analysis of electoral violence risks.[151]

International and local organizations and CSOs may be involved in electoral security assessments.[152] For example, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) produced a 2013 guide on

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142 Ana Cecilia Escalante and Nineth Méndez, 2011. *Sistematización de experiencias de acoso político que viven o han vivido las mujeres que ocupan puestos de elección popular en el nivel local*. ONU Mujeres- INAMU -SOLIDAR.

143 Herrera, Arias and García, 2012.

144 Maria Arboleda, 2012. *Levantado el velo: Estudio sobre acoso y violencia política en contra de las mujeres autoridades públicas electas a nivel local en Ecuador*. ONU Mujeres-AMUNE.

145 Maria Eugenia Rojas, 2012. *Acoso y violencia política en contra de mujeres autoridades públicas electas en los gobiernos locales - municipales en Bolivia*. ONU Mujeres-ACOBOL-AECID.

146 UN Women and Centre for Social Research, 2014. *Violence against Women in Politics: A study conducted in India, Nepal and Pakistan*. India.

147 ParlAmericas, 2017. *Mapping gender-based political harassment: Parliamentarians speak out*. http://www.parlamericas.org/en/group-of-women/political-harassment-map.aspx

148 Adapted from UNDP/UN Women, 2015.

149 Election Commission of India, 2011. *No. 464/Instructions/ EPS/ 2011*. New Delhi, 5 March.

150 UNDP/UN Women, 2015.

151 For example, see UN Policy Directive on Preventing and Mitigating Election-related Violence and attached tools for electoral risk analysis.

152 Adapted from UNDP, 2012.

"Best Practices in Electoral Security," which serves as a companion document to its "Electoral Security Framework;" it sets forth a methodology for an initial analysis of the context, historical conflict factors, and stakeholders of four countries.[153] These country security assessments were then used to identify best practices for political, security, civil society, media, and non-profit organizations to engage in electoral security programming throughout the election cycle. The USAID guide identified preventing political violence against women in elections (PVAWE) as a primary security concern:

"The objective of identifying best practices in PVAWE prevention is to recognize that women in elections may possess special vulnerabilities for violence, and programming should reflect these vulnerabilities. While previous analysis of violence against women discusses such violence occurring in the contexts of home, community, and state, this Guide supports the view that elections can *be considered as a fourth context because of the potentially conflictive nature of elections and the vulnerabilities of women in them."[154]*

The USAID guide identified that women may be targeted not only as candidates for office, but also as "public officials, election officials...or voters."[155] A separate USAID security assessment of elections identified that women were at a higher risk of experiencing violence in Colombia and Bangladesh than men.[156] These findings led USAID to recommend the increased presence of female police officers at polling stations in these countries "to be responsive to gender-based conflict issues."[157]

Thus, as a result of VAWE-informed electoral security assessments, countries may be better able to identify the various capacities in which women may be targets of violence. In doing so, countries and communities may be better able to develop programming to prevent and mitigate incidents of VAWE throughout the election cycle.

Quantitative measurements	Qualitative measurements
Methods: • Surveys • Statistical analysis of data collected through mapping tools	Methods: • Interviews/focus groups • Surveys containing open-ended questions • Oral histories • Ethnographies • Participatory action research • Perception survey
Indicators: • Frequency of individual incidents • Frequency of different types of attacks (e.g. physical harm, threat of harm or sexual assault) • Type of victim (e.g. voter, candidate, poll worker, etc.)	Indicators: • Opinions on barriers to voting within a given context • Attitudes and feelings of men and women surrounding new VAWE legislation • Women's experiences with VAWE before, during or after campaigning

153 Afghanistan, Guatemala, Mexico, and the Philippines. See USAID, January 2013. "Best Practices in Electoral Security: A Guide for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Programming." P. 9.

154 USAID, 2013. P. 6.

155 Ibid., p. 34.

156 USAID, March 2010. "Electoral Security Assessment: Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, and Colombia."

157 Ibid., p. 31.

1.2. ESTABLISHING VAWE MEASUREMENTS

To effectively monitor VAWE, accurate and widely agreed measurements or indicators need to be established. Indicators are criteria or measures — pointers, facts, numbers, opinions, or perceptions — against which changes can be assessed consistently over time.[158] Establishing indicators on VAWE is a critical first step because the statistics derived from such indicators "raise consciousness and provide an impetus for change, to provide a foundation for policies, programmes and projects and to monitor and evaluate such policies and measures."[159] Indicators also help identify priority areas for intervention, enable better planning, help hold institutions accountable to their commitments, and stimulate change through data collection.[160]

The nature of VAWE varies between countries and regions and over time. Therefore, measurements need to consider the national context and nature of gender inequalities experienced. Measurements should ideally take into account:

• VAWE prevalence, i.e. proportion of victims out of the measured population;

• VAWE incidence, i.e. number of incidents/events which occur within a particular period of time;

• Targeted periods, such as a specific part of the election cycle, or over a prolonged period of time.[161]

Tunisia Elections, Voting Day.

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158 Imp-Act, 2005. "Choosing and Using Indicators for Effective Social Performance Management." In *Imp-Act Practice Notes*, No. 5. Brighton: IDS.

159 Birgitta Hedman, Francesca Perucci, and Pehr Sundström, 1996. "Engendering statistics: A Tool for Change," Orebro, Statistics Sweden. P. 9.

160 Justina Demetriades, 2007. "Gender Indicators: What, Why, How?"

161 Ballington, 2016.

Indicators can be both quantitative or qualitative and measured at different levels (local, national, regional, global) and across different time periods (e.g. a specific phase in the electoral cycle). Quantitative indicators can include frequencies of individual incidents, or frequency of different types of attacks (e.g. physical harm, threat of harm or sexual assault) for various victims (voters or candidates), from different groups (based on age, ethnicity, sexual orientation or gender identity), among others. Qualitative indicators and research methods may compliment quantitative studies and provide a more complete portrayal of the situation. Once appropriate VAWE indicators are established, consideration may be given as to how they might be integrated into existing measurements to monitor political or electoral violence, or pre-existing VAW indicators.

Table 2 below summarizes the key types of violence and indicators that were discussed in Part A of this Guide. As there are several possible indicators that can be measured at different phases in the electoral cycle, measures must be prioritized based on the national context. Consideration also needs to be given to identifying the perpetrator involved in each instance as well as to specific groups of women who are at greater risk of experiencing violence.

Table 2: Sample data points or indicators to measure and monitor VAWE

Pre-electoral period*	Electoral period*	Post-electoral/intra-election period*
# incidents of physical violence/abuse # women prevented from registering # attempted murders of women candidates, voters etc. # women candidates, voters etc. murdered # incidents of verbal intimidation, harassment or bullying # women raped, sexually assaulted or harassed # women targeted by slanderous rumours/character assassination # women candidates forced to withdraw from the election # women arbitrarily detained, and how long # women kidnapped # posts of online harassment targeting women # media articles and reports negatively portraying women # incidents of women candidates' family members killed or physically attacked # incidents of women candidates' campaign/support staff physically attacked	# incidents of family voting/coerced voting # women prevented from voting # decrees issued by traditional or religious leaders to prevent women from voting # women harassed or assaulted on Election Day # women intimidated or threatened	# women forced to resign their seats # women facing sexual harassment # women facing gender-based attacks and abuse # media articles and reports negatively portraying women leaders # postings with online harassment and bullying against women elected officials # elected women pressured or coerced by their own party into a subordinate political role

*Include information on the victim (e.g. voters, candidates, poll officials, media, etc.) and the perpetrator

1.3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLECTING VAWE DATA THROUGH EXISTING INITIATIVES

VAWE monitoring and data provide evidence that can be used to document, deter and denounce the problem.[162] A data collection methodology and a monitoring system are therefore necessary to fully map and assess VAWE. Although monitoring of election violence in general has developed over the course of a decade and experienced a major upsurge in interest with the introduction of information communication technology (ICT) solutions, monitoring VAWE is challenging because, "it falls between two parallel areas of research and monitoring: on one hand, a lack of understanding, reporting and monitoring of violence against women in political and public spheres, and, on the other, a lack of understanding and knowledge about the gender dimension of political and electoral violence more broadly."[163] Many existing models of monitoring rely on publicly verifiable data (such as police and hospital reports, etc.) and first-hand witnesses, which makes VAWE particularly challenging to monitor given its sensitive and often intimate nature.

There are some monitoring models which hold potential for practitioners to develop a dataset to track VAWE in a given country. Current data collection practices that hold potential to monitor VAWE include:

a. EVAW measurements and data collection (i.e. through surveys or through administrative records from services) which are undertaken by governments and national statistical offices working closely with civil society, academia and other relevant stakeholders;

b. Opportunities in the SDGs;

c. Crowdsourcing and data visualization tools; and

d. Violence against women in politics pilot studies.

(Election monitoring, including Election Observation Missions and Women's Situation Rooms, are covered in the following section, Action Point 2).

a. EVAW measurements and monitoring

The elimination of violence against women is an international priority. For the past 20 years, international declarations and agreements have heightened visibility of the issue,[164] and led to the development of standardized measurements and data collection tools for VAW. However, as outlined in Part A, EVAW monitoring has omitted the political and electoral spheres. Integrating VAWE-targeted measurements into pre-existing VAW data collection tools could offer one way in which VAWE may be monitored. This may be more efficient and met with less resistance than introducing new tools—a tactic that may increase monitoring while maximizing already available data collection resources.

In 2011, nine *core VAW indicators* were identified and approved by the Statistical Commission, followed by the development of guidelines for producing these statistics in 2014 by the UN Statistics Division.[165] The development of these core indicators and guidelines is essential for ensuring consistency of measurement across countries, as well as for addressing the methodological and ethical considerations of such measurement In 2015, the 20-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action called for States to increase their efforts to collect and report data in accordance with the *core VAW indicators*.[166]

Unfortunately, none of the agreed *core VAW indicators* makes provision for measuring violence against women in a political context in general, or electoral context in particular, highlighting the lack of visibility and mobilization around this particular issue.[167] It may be the case that the scope of violence against women in politics and elections was less when the indicators were agreed on than it is today, or that

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162 UNDP, 2012.
163 Ballington, 2016.
164 See UNGA, 1993; UN, 1995; UN CSW, 2013; and most recently the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, 2015.
165 Referenced in Ballington, 2016. P. 8. See also UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2014. ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/110. *Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women: Statistical surveys*.
166 Idem. See also UN Women, 2015. *Summary Report: The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Turns* 20.
167 Ballington, 2016.

there was less public acknowledgement.[168] Consideration could be given to adding VAWE-relevant questions or options in the response to questions around "perpetrator" or "place of occurrence" in existing VAW prevalence surveys to broaden the measurement. However, this may be too challenging given the specificity of the VAW indicators.[169]

There are useful insights to be gleaned from the development of the VAW measurements and indicators, which could help inform the development of VAWE measurements. First, there was a strong call for data collection and research which was established through international resolutions agreed by member States. Second, a minimum set of agreed indicators, with clear methods and ethical requirements for measurement, were established, which is important for improving reliability and comparability of data across countries.[170]

b. Gender-based violence monitoring tools

Existing tools to monitor gender-based violence may also pr ovide the foundation for monitoring VAWE. For example, the multi-partner *Gender-Based Violence Information Management System* is a "multi-faceted initiative that enables humanitarian actors responding to incidents of GBV to effectively and safely collect, store, analyze and share data reported by GBV survivors."[171] The system includes a tool to classify violence according to six types of GBV so as to standardize GBV definitions, two forms used for collecting GBV data, and an incident recorder database designed to simplify and improve data collection, compilation and analysis. Well-designed tools such as these provide good examples for how to collect data on VAWE.

c. Opportunities in the Sustainable Development Goals

The SDGs recognize the threat that VAW poses to achieving gender equality and sustainable development, in particular through target 5.2. "*Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in private and public spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation*" and other related targets under other goals.[172] Monitoring efforts will require reliable and comparable prevalence data, to be collected in line with existing globally agreed standards, as provided for in the SDGs global indicator framework.[173] It is important to note that efforts have been made to ensure alignment between the VAW related indicators under the SDG framework and the *core VAW indicators* previously adopted in 2011.

The SDGs global indicator framework includes two indicators on the prevalence of physical, sexual and psychological violence by an intimate partner, as well as of sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months. These indicators are intended to monitor progress of the specific target to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls (target 5.2). Other indicators related to violence against women and girls—i.e. prevalence of physical and sexual harassment by sex and place of occurrence (target 11.7), number of victims of intentional homicide by sex (target 16.1) and proportion of young women and men who experienced sexual violence by age 18 (target 16.2)—are also part of the framework, and will allow to assess other forms of violence, including violence in public spaces.[174]

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168 Idem.

169 Ibid., p. 9.

170 Idem.

171 UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF et al. *Gender-Based Violence Information Management System.* http://www.gbvims.com/what-is-gbvims/

172 UN DESA. *Sustainable Development Goal Knowledge Platform.* See SDGs 11 (target 11.7) and 16 (targets 16.1 and 16.2) of the agenda at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

173 Ballington, 2016. A global indicator framework was developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and agreed to, as a practical starting point, at the 47th session of the UN Statistical Commission held in March 2016. The report of the Commission, which included the global indicator framework, was then taken note of by ECOSOC at its 70th session in June 2016. See UN ECOSOC, 2016. E/CN.3/2016/2/Rev.1. *Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators.* Statistical Commission 47th session, 8-11 March.

174 Ballington, 2016.

A woman casts her vote during Spanish general elections.

As with the *core VAW indicators*, none of the proposed SDG indicators provide explicitly for monitoring VAWE, although there is certainly scope to do so. For example, targets 5.2 and 11.7 allow for obtaining data on violence in public spaces. Indicators 5.2.2 on sexual violence by a non-partner, and 11.7.2 on physical and sexual harassment, require data to be disaggregated by place of occurrence, which could include the political sphere. In addition, indicator 5.1.1 on intimate partner violence requires reporting the form of violence (i.e. physical, sexual and psychological), which could potentially be broadened to include controlling behaviors targeting women in political and public life.[175] This could include, for example, incidents where women are being prevented by a partner to vote or persuaded to vote a particular way.

d. Crowdsourcing and data visualization

For the purposes of measuring VAWE, crowd-sourced data and open-source data visualization tools could provide a platform for visually tracking the incidents of VAWE – a first step to collecting data in order to understand the magnitude of the problem and address it.

The most widely recognized election violence visualization tool is the open-source mapping platform Ushahidi, meaning "witness" or "testimony" in Swahili, which was first created in Kenya in 2008. It relies on "crowd-sourced" data gathered from the public at large sent via SMS text messages, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, phone calls, email, etc. This data is transmitted to a web-platform and plotted onto publicly accessible maps, such as Google Maps. The platform provides crucial data-based evidence and allows participation by ordinary citizens who may not have other outlets to denounce violence and injustice. For example, it was used in the United States in 2016 to monitor voter intimidation allegations surrounding the 58th presidential election, including instances of voter suppression on Election Day.[176] This crowd-sourced data holds the potential to monitor instances of VAWE, especially if the data is reported by sex, or if specific types of VAWE are tracked during the electoral period.

In Egypt, data on VAW in general has been collected through crowd-sourcing. Crowd-sourced data on sexual harassment is tracked via Harassmap,

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175 Juncal Plazaola Castano, July 2016, personal interview.
176 Nat Manning, 2016. "USA Election Monitor: Of the People, By the People," *Ushahidi*, 1 November; UNDP, 2012. P. 38.

Example of Harassmap incident data reporting and visualization

Source: http://harassmap.org/en/what-we-do/the-map/
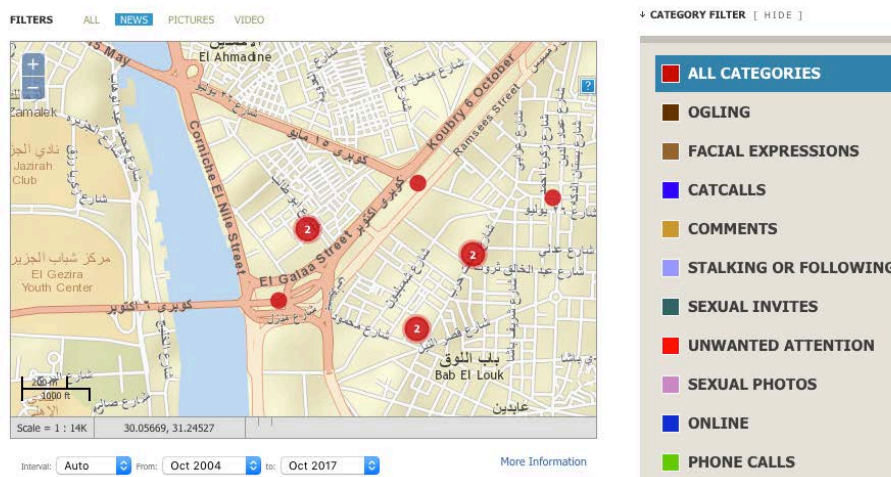
which utilizes the same visual mapping platform as Ushahidi, and provides insight into a widespread problem. Incidents of sexual harassment can be reported via an online report, SMS, e-mail, Twitter, or Facebook. Once a report is verified, it is reflected in the form of a red dot which is placed on a map of Egypt, giving the problem a clear visual picture.[177] The public can click any of the dots on the easily accessible website and see the transcripts of each report. Further projects include community partnership activities, social media awareness and blogging campaigns advocating against sexual harassment.

Similarly, as of August 2016, a group in Lebanon is beta testing a map entitled HarassTracker, which collects voluntary reports of sexual harassment and assault throughout the country.[178] The platform is also an online reporting tool where people who have witnessed or experienced sexual harassment can mark the location on a map and provide information on the type of sexual harassment that they encountered.[179]

To date, however, neither Ushahidi, Harassmap nor HarassTracker explicitly track incidents of VAWE. While these models hold promise for monitoring VAWE, they are not without challenges. For instance, crowd-sourced data is not verifiable without a backup system in place and can be open to fraud, manipulation or human error, which impacts the quality of the monitoring methodology. Reporting samples may be uneven because they depend on users' awareness of the programme as well as on mobile phone coverage and/or internet access. Poorly understood issues like VAWE thus may require civic education and sensitization before citizens will report on them in a systematic way. Technical limitations pose additional challenges. The Ushahidi platform, for example, does not disaggregate data by sex nor add variables specifically related to VAWE.

This is perhaps why organizations, such as Take Back the Tech! are critical in developing ways to build upon existing ICT platforms for VAWE-specific

177 Hina Ansari, 2013. "Could Mobile Technology Combat Sexual Harassment?" *Huffington Post: The Blog*, 11 February.
178 See http://harasstracker.org/
179 Jack Moore, 2016. "Female Entrepreneurs Launch Online Sexual Harassment Tracker in Beirut." *Newsweek*, 25 February.

monitoring.[180] Created in 2006 by the Association for Progressive Communications' Women's Rights Programme, Take Back the Tech! seeks to encourage women and girls to develop innovative solutions to VAW using ICT. In addition to their annual "16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence," they also manage their own data visualization mapping tool, which plots incidents of technology-based VAW reported from around the world.

e. Violence against women in politics pilot studies

Over the past decade, several documented pilot projects have sought to collect data on VAWP and VAWE through multi-partner initiatives, relying on the engagement of CSOs for monitoring. While the methodologies and data collection points vary – and do not focus squarely on elections – they provide interesting examples of attempts to gain further insights into the nature, causes and consequences of VAWP.

Mapping and Measuring VAWE in Tanzania's 2015 Elections

Tanzania's 2015 General Elections presented an opportunity to conduct the country's first-ever data collection exercise on VAWE, carried out chiefly by the CSO, Tanzania Women Cross Party Platform (TWCP), and supported by UN Women as part of a broader set of activities for a gender-sensitive and inclusive electoral process. These included awareness-raising VAWE among women candidates and aspirants, trainings for police and security forces, domestic election observers and the National Electoral Commission (NEC) on VAWE, and support for relevant policy and legal framework review.

Using a variety of methods, TWCP oversaw VAWE monitoring before, during and after the October 2015 elections, between July and November 2015. More than 50 trained VAWE monitors, aided by Regional Election Coordinators from the NEC and equipped with monitoring checklists and targeted questionnaires, were deployed to 14 regions throughout the country to directly attend two election-related events per day (e.g. campaign rallies, internal party meetings and public discussion forums), observing people's behavior, VAWE occurrence and women's political participation generally at a total of 530 events. Monitors also held structured interviews for a total of 1,532 respondents who were selected using purposeful and random encounter sampling, largely depending on their availability and willingness to respond. These included: women (647) and men (540) voters; local opinion leaders, such as religious leaders, local government leaders and influential community members (204); and women candidates for parliamentary and local elections (141).

Findings included:

- **69 percent** of women candidate respondents reported abusive language, such as verbal harassment and insults.

- **17 percent** of women candidate respondents reported physical attacks, which included beatings, stones being thrown at them or their clothes torn apart.

- **13 percent** of women candidate respondents reported demands for sexual favours.

- **53 percent** of the women interviewed after elections said they did not vote due to several factors which included fear of violence, lacking voter registration cards, pressure from their spouse.

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180 See https://www.takebackthetech.net/

- **Family voting and family-based violence** featured in many testimonies: some women reported that their voter cards were confiscated by family members; others were prevented from voting after having been beaten by their husbands, causing severe body injuries for supporting candidates not preferred by spouses; husbands, brothers and sons reportedly controlled women's voting choices in some cases; and some women reported that their husbands voted for them, claiming their wives were illiterate.

- **Times and locations for campaign team meetings**, which typically take place late in the night, were also found to be inappropriate for women's effective participation.

The findings of this first VAWE mapping and measuring exercise in Tanzania confirmed the occurrence of psychological, physical and sexual – with psychological violence featuring predominately – and that in the context of the 2015 elections, perpetrators of VAWE were largely family members, male candidates, political party supporters as well as party officials. The exercise also demonstrated some positive findings: for example, there were women who reported having supportive men in their lives who encouraged them to participate in politics; however, the private nature of VAWE, particularly in a family context and the shame often associated with it, created challenges for monitoring and responding to VAWE using traditional data collection and electoral observation methods. Drawing on the lessons from 2015, future improvements in VAWE monitoring will include: increasing monitoring coverage and linkages with traditional electoral observation mechanisms; better linkages with response mechanisms via the police, judiciary, EMBs and others; more training and sensitization of women aspirants and candidates; and wide dissemination of the 2015 and future VAWE reports via political parties, EMBs, the national registrar of political parties, CSOs and other relevant stakeholders.[181]

Violence against Women in Politics in Africa

In 2011, UN Women and the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) piloted a project dedicated to monitoring violence against women in politics. The multi-partner model aimed at stimulating evidence-based, systematic and institutionalized response mechanisms to VAWP. The model was first piloted during the February 2011 elections in Uganda, and later in Nigeria and Zimbabwe. In all three cases, the study was implemented by a coalition of national CSOs, activists and volunteers, with the support of UN Women in collaboration with UNDP and IDASA. The programme's methodology drew data from a sample of sites in each country using two questionnaires, which captured different aspects of VAWP during the campaign period and on Election Day. The data was recorded by data analysts in various programme "hubs" and analysed using quantitative statistical analysis. The analysis was then used for public advocacy and statements by partner organizations. The data collection did yield some relevant information in areas where the questionnaire was fielded, but the results were not representative enough to collect good incidence reports. [182]

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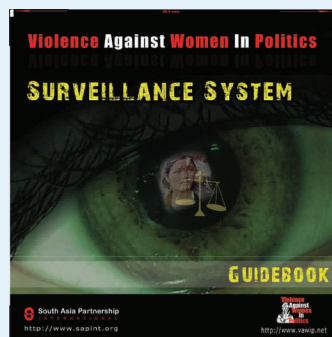
181 Negrao, 2017.
182 The monitoring tool and questionnaires and the pilot studies were not published.

Women in Politics Surveillance System in South Asia

In 2006, the South Asia Partnership (SAP), a regional network of political women and community watch groups in five countries of South Asia, introduced one of the first monitoring projects through Violence against Women in Politics Regional Surveillance System (RSS). The RSS was to collect and disseminate information relating to violence against women in politics from the grassroots to the regional level. Primary information about incidents of violence was to be collected and disseminated by Community and National Watch Groups when incidents occurred, and then be disseminated to Communication Service Centers and to other stakeholders including police, relevant government authorities, and SAP national office.[183] The system also ensured that a referral framework was in place to support victims. The system aimed to collect four types of data: 1) information on incidents of VAWP, 2) information on the mitigation strategies and/or best practices adopted by women politicians, 3) information on referred cases, and 4) information on court cases.

While the RSS aimed to cover violence against women in politics broadly, one of the unique innovations of the programme was a questionnaire covering a broad set of indicators specifically devised to address VAWE. For example, data collected includes the occurrence of violence 'while contesting election,' 'during nomination,' 'during election,' and 'after election.'[184]

Summary of VAWE mapping and monitoring initiatives:

Pre-Election Phase	Election Phase	Post-Election Phase
• Conduct country-level and regional-level mapping of VAWE • Include VAWE in EMB and electoral security assessments • Develop and define indicators • Adjust or build upon existing VAW indicators and measurement tools • Consider including VAWE in relevant SDGs monitoring • Consider using crowd-sourcing and data visualization tools	• Data collection and verification • Adapt and integrate VAWE into monitoring tools	• Analyse results of collection efforts • Ensure data aggregation and reporting • Identify gaps and refine indicators as needed • Include VAWE in post-election reports and findings

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183 South Asia Partnership International, December 2006. *Violence Against Women in Politics Surveillance System Guidebook.*
184 For more information, see: http://peacewomen.org/sites/default/files/PartPol-VAW_Surveillance_SAPI-VAWP_2007_0. pdf

ACTION POINT 2:
INTEGRATING VAWE INTO ELECTION OBSERVATION AND VIOLENCE MONITORING

Election observation and violence monitoring programmes hold great potential to provide information on women's participation in elections, including on VAWE, and can contribute to reducing violence. Election observation missions and monitoring initiatives can adopt a gender dimension in their reporting, and can collect important information to understand overall patterns and, subsequently, build a profile for VAWE.

These programmes often have several benefits, including:

• Extensive outreach throughout the country and linkages to diverse communities;[185]

• The use of standardized data collection methods, documentation and reports;

• Trained monitors, including in gender-sensitive data collection methods; and

• The possibility of comparing VAWE trends across regions and between countries.

Until recently, the absence of common methods of data collection on VAWE created challenges where it has been attempted. This would be greatly aided by the adoption of common indicators, allowing cross-national comparisons and tracking over time.

2.1. ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSIONS

Domestic and international electoral observation missions (EOMs), which deploy short and long term observers, could provide a source of information on VAWE. EOMs can engage with communities to identify a variety of types of conflict and violence that otherwise do not receive national (or international) attention. While several organizations that support electoral observation have recently made efforts to ensure that data collection forms are not gender-blind, and to train observers in gender-sensitive research methods, there is scope to improve monitoring of VAWE. Special consideration also needs to be given to monitoring the nomination and campaign periods, as this is when many incidents of VAWE take place. For example, the Coalition on Election Monitoring and Observation in Tanzania (CEMOT) provided training for its Long-Term Observers (LTOs) on how to capture and document information related to participation of women, youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups in the electoral process. A gender advisor within CEMOT ensured gender-sensitive observation of the legal framework, electoral system (including the existence and implementation of TSMs for special groups), election administration, political parties, the media and VAWE.[186]

In recent years, organizations like the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union (EU), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Carter Center have sought to integrate gender considerations into their election observation by disaggregating data, increasing the use of long-term observers, employing dedicated gender advisors as part of their observation core teams, and developing specific guidelines

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185 Caroline Hubbard and Claire DeSoi/NDI, 2016. *Votes without Violence: A Citizen Observer's Guide to Addressing Violence against Women in Elections.* Washington, D.C. National Democratic Institute.
186 Negrao, Sara, 2017.

for monitoring women's political participation in elections. Indeed, gender-aware observation allows for the inclusion of "principles of gender equality throughout its structure and organizational principles, maintaining gender balance in its observation force and leadership positions."[187]

In 2004, OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights produced basic guidance for all of their EOMs on areas related to monitoring women's participation in electoral processes.[188] While the guidance provides a wealth of ideas for integrating gender analysis into observation missions, it does not include reporting on incidents of violence against women in politics or elections. In 2013, the OAS published its *Manual for Incorporating a Gender Perspective into OAS Electoral Observation Missions*.[189] The Manual aims to provide OAS electoral observation teams with the technical tools to allow for a careful examination of equal participation by men and women throughout the electoral process. It usefully identifies a matrix of 'gender indicators' and variables to monitor as a means of assessing women's inclusion in electoral processes, as well as data and sources of information for measuring the variables. Other guidance is provided on ensuring gender expertise within missions, training of observers, and data collection and reporting.

The user-friendly Manual provides guidance on how to assess compliance with the commitments made by OAS member States, in both national and international legislation, including the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, 1994. The Manual includes several indicators relevant to monitoring VAWE, such as "integrity in the recording of voter preferences," which involves observing "potential restrictions on the exercise of the right to a free and secret ballot, as well as external pressures exerted through violence of any type." Instructive tools are provided to guide election observers to incorporate gender equality analysis, and specific questions on VAWE are included in the Election Day observation questionnaire, including, "how many cases did you observe of violence or manipulation to keep registered women from casting ballots" and "did you observe any situations of 'family,' 'delegate' or proxy voting that affected women voters?"[190]

These advances are all positive innovations which could facilitate the integration of VAWE into election observation. To achieve this, EOMs would need to invest in mainstreaming gender across their missions – in addition to ensuring the involvement of dedicated gender analysts – by educating observers on the issue, requiring consistent standards of reporting across all areas of deployment and election phases, and prioritizing gender concerns along with other electoral operations issues.

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187 Hubbard and DeSoi, 2016.
188 OSCE/ODIHR, 2014. *Handbook for Monitoring Women's Participation in Elections.*
189 OAS, 2013. *Manual for Incorporating a Gender Perspective into OAS Electoral Observation Missions.*
190 Ibid., p. 60.

## 2.2. DOMESTIC OBSERVATION AND EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Domestic observation groups, which deploy short and long term observers to monitor elections, provide an additional source of information on VAWE. These groups are able to engage with communities over a period of time to identify a variety of types of conflict and violence that otherwise go unreported and do not make headlines.[191] As with international EOMs, efforts have been made recently to ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective in monitoring efforts, including training observers in gender-sensitive research methods and covering violence that occurs in private and public spaces. There is also scope to scale up the inclusion of VAWE monitoring. Special consideration also needs to be given to monitoring the nomination and campaign periods, as that is where many incidents of VAWE take place.

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) launched a comprehensive guide for addressing VAWE in 2016, *Votes without Violence: A citizen observer's guide to addressing violence against women in elections*. The toolkit provides guidance for citizen observer groups (particularly long-term observers) with gender-sensitive assessment tools and training on how to identify and record incidents of VAWE, which can contribute to VAWE mitigation and prevention in the long term.[192] It is intended

Partnering with EOMs to promote "Votes Without Violence"

NDI's project and toolkit entitled *Votes Without Violence* was informed by multi-country EOM efforts in collaboration with CSOs from Myanmar, Nigeria, Guatemala, Tanzania, Burma, and Côte d'Ivoire, where NDI has been working since 2015 to implement gender-sensitivity into observer mission trainings and overall structures. In doing so, NDI hopes to increase the recognition and reporting of incidences of VAWE before, during and after election periods. All disaggregated data will be channelled into an online visualization tool in order to increase public understanding of how VAWE "prevents women from participating actively in public life."
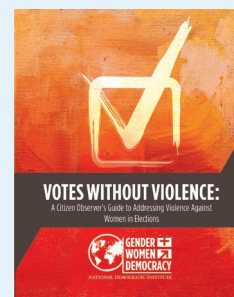
In **Guatemala** in 2015, for instance, NDI partnered with Acción Ciudadana (Citizen Action) to monitor campaign finance and electoral violence with a focus on VAWE. The programme included training for the mission's leadership on women's participation in elections and discussion sessions with stakeholders to understand the electoral context. One of the identified areas of concern was the use of violence to influence voting choices, especially of women. These discussions helped identify the key issues that needed to be observed.[193]

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the programme partnered with the county-based Plateforme des organisations de la société civile pour l'observation des élections (Platform of Civil Society Organizations Observing Elections or POECI) to increase the number of women observers present within its ranks during the October 2015 elections. The programme drew on lessons learned from previous research about VAWE around the 2010 elections, including that women did not want to talk about the violence they faced for fear of rejection by male family members or the community.[194] Specific questions were included on POECI's observation forms to identify and enable reporting on VAWE.

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191 Bardall/IFES, 2011.
192 Hubbard and DeSoi, 2016.
193 Ibid. p. 34.
194 Ibid. p. 46.

asa companion piece to existing guidance on citizen election observation and gender-aware election observation, providing key information observers will need to conduct gender-aware observation that seeks to monitor and mitigate VAWE. It is important to note that the guide also seeks to incorporate all phases of the electoral cycle into its monitoring practices.

The NDI toolkit highlights the value of electoral violence *early warning systems* (EWS) as a means to mitigate VAWE. Citizen observers are well situated to communicate incidents of violence to election stakeholders, thereby enabling rapid response mechanisms to address and mitigate the violence early on.[195] Several organizations have deployed early warning system tools to monitor violence in elections generally; however, more efforts are needed to ensure a gender perspective is integrated into conflict prevention strategies.[196] The NDI toolkit aims to address this deficit by identifying how EWS can systematically address gender issues, including by ensuring the equal participation of women and men in observation teams, developing gender-sensitive indicators of electoral violence and documenting early warning signs. Some key steps outlined in the toolkit include:

• Identifying **gender sensitive indicators**, with an understanding of the context and root causes of violence and the diversity of the experience of women. These should be developed in consultation with women's organizations and observers with sound knowledge of the local context. A list of key pointers to understand the root causes of VAWE is included, together with a list of potential indicators to document incidents of VAWE. Guidance is provided to include EWS and VAWE in reporting forms, critical incident reporting forms and checklists used by observers.

• It highlights the need for **widespread understanding** of VAWE through training among election observers and stakeholders: "Often, stopping gender-based violence such as rape or sexual harassment is not considered relevant for promoting electoral integrity. Initial outreach will require targeted education and awareness-raising on what VAW-E is and why it is relevant for democratic elections. This outreach should include discussions on the appropriate response by individuals and institutions to prevent, mitigate and treat victims."[197]

• The toolkit notes the importance of establishing a **rapid response platform**, which enables observers to communicate incidents to appropriate stakeholders, who will in turn be able to attempt to resolve incidents or mitigate risk, and to refer victims to services they may need. The stakeholder list includes security actors (including the police), political actors (such as political parties), CSOs, the media, and victim service providers (including legal and medical services) who may collaborate in establishing a referral system.[198]

• Guidance is provided on how to **document and store data,** methods of transmitting data (including text messages, phone calls, specialized apps, and hardcopy hand delivery) and protecting data and victims.[199]

The toolkit offers valuable guidance for any monitoring effort, including ensuring that any VAWE monitoring examines how women and men are targeted or affected differently, paying attention to specific kinds of violence that women may face and ensuring that information is shared widely as a mitigation measure.[200] It also notes that different observation methodologies may be needed depending on the period under observation.

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195 Ibid., p. 47.
196 Idem.
197 Hubbard and DeSoi, 2016. P. 56.
198 Ibid., p. 59.
199 Ibid., p. 74.
200 Idem

2.3. ELECTORAL VIOLENCE MONITORING TOOLS

Specialized violence monitoring and mitigation tools may offer an additional resource for monitoring political and election violence against women, but consideration needs to be given as to how a gender perspective has been integrated.[201] In the case of the Tanzanian observation led by CEMOT, for example, despite provision of extensive training to observers on observing VAWE, LTOs found that the traditional electoral observation tools at their disposal did not allow for thorough data collection on VAWE.[202] As the issues of electoral integrity and electoral risk gain attention in practitioner circles, it is necessary to redefine electoral risk to comprise "[a]ny situation that jeopardizes the integrity of an electoral process, including situations that threaten, limit or otherwise undermine women's participation as voters, candidates and in other electoral roles."[203] In so doing, better data on VAWE will become available.

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems' (IFES) **Election Violence Education and Resolution program (EVER)** is a primary example of a specific violence collection micro-data tool. EVER relies on publicly-verifiable data and a network of community-based monitors to track and record incidents of election-related violence according to a series of variables (place, perpetrator, victim, type, method, impact, source). The programme has monitored 15 elections in 13 countries since 2003, but only has gender-disaggregated data in six reporting cases. Basic disaggregation on non-gender specific data conducted during a 2011 study revealed significant differences in the experience of electoral violence between men and women.[204] Recent adaptions to the methodology have enhanced

the gender-specificity of the tool and increased the potential for it to become a reliable source of cross-national quantitative data on VAWE.

In 2016, IFES published a typology and series of methodologies for assessing and monitoring VAWE. These tools draw upon the methodology of the EVER Project in addition to findings from the data it has collected, including the findings presented in its 2011 publication.[205]

The typology defines 'barriers to participation' as:

"An act, circumstance, social norm, regulation, law, or systemic bias that has been directly linked (through anecdotal evidence, published analysis, or self-reporting) to interfering with women's full participation in some part of the electoral process. Barriers to participation include obstacles to accessing information, resources, or opportunities, and can stem from cultural/social/religious practices and beliefs, and may manifest in social, political, economic, or legal systems."[206]

These barriers serve as the basis for IFES's methodologies, including an assessment methodology that draws upon gender and electoral security risk assessment tools created by USAID and Care.[207] The assessment mechanism focuses on examining these 'barriers to participation,' including: the relationship between the perpetrator and victim; the location where the incident occurred; the status of women within local and national contexts; and forms of experienced violence as they occur throughout the electoral process. By understanding these barriers, IFES hopes to provide a means of understanding the risks and complex factors that may exacerbate VAWE in order to support responsive prevention and mitigation efforts.

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201 Idem

202 Negrao, 2017.

203 Gabrielle Bardall, quoted in International IDEA, 2016. "Electoral risk management through a gender lens," 29 March.

204 International IDEA, 2016.

205 IFES, August 2016. "Violence Against Women in Elections: An Excerpt from IFES' Framework." Arlington, VA. USAID, p. 2.

206 Ibid., p. 5.

207 See USAID's Electoral Security Risk Framework here: https://www.usaid.gov/documents/2496/best-practices-electoral-security-guide-democracy-human-rights-and-governance. See Care's Gender Analysis Framework here: http://gendertoolkit.care.org/Pages/Gender%20Areas%20of%20Inquiry.aspx

The monitoring tool, subsequently, compliments the assessment methodology by providing a means for tracking VAWE throughout all phases of the electoral cycle. As detailed in IFES's "Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWiE)" excerpt published in August 2016, the monitoring tool encompasses eight types of "monitoring activities," such as site visits, public outreach, collection boxes, and observation.[208] Through assessment and monitoring activities, as well as findings from the EVER data, the publication concludes with comprehensive programming recommendations that may be useful in addressing VAWiE across various country and regional contexts. These recommendations incorporate a variety of electoral stakeholders and focus on promoting data-informed programming and further research/monitoring efforts for VAWiE. However, these tools and typology have yet to be tested in the field; thus, future analysis of their potential for data collection will be needed to fully analyse the efficacy and impact of IFES's presented methodologies within electoral contexts in real-time.

2.4. WOMEN'S SITUATION ROOMS AND ELECTION CONFLICT PREVENTION

Women's situation rooms (WSR) are one type of women-led civil-society initiatives which monitor conflict-prone elections in Africa. The WSR aims "to promote peaceful and transparent elections, prevent electoral violence, and increase democratic participation. As a result, it puts in practice strategies that employ women's experiences as bottom-up peacebuilders while training, engaging, and empowering them as active political agents."[209] The WSR first played a role in the 2011 Presidential and Legislative Elections in Liberia, and has been rolled out in several countries across Africa.

WSRs focus on providing advocacy, rapid response, trainings, monitoring, and mediation during election periods, and rely on a team of 'monitors' deployed on Election Day. In doing so, WSRs partner with community and regional organizations and stakeholders—especially women and youth—in order to monitor elections and report and mediate incidents of electoral violence. A physical situation room is established before Election Day, which serves as a central command station to receive reports from monitors in the field. Information is dispatched to relevant authorities, including the EMB and security forces, who may respond rapidly to incident reports.

WSRs provide an important opportunity to collect data on incidents of gender-based violence during elections. Being close the ground, WSRs may contribute to tracking occurrences of violence that may otherwise go unreported by the media or the victims themselves. While a situation room collects information about incidents and complaints from the public through a dedicated hotline, data collection forms tend to omit explicitly collecting incidents of VAWE or gender-based violence, although some data is disaggregated by sex.[210] Standardizing a method of monitoring VAWE, as well as a methodological framework for instituting WSRs, would assist in creating a foundation of data on VAWE, while also making strides to call attention to issues of VAWE through evidence collected by WSRs.

Indeed, the tools outlined in this section all point to positive innovations which could facilitate the integration of VAWE into election observation and violence monitoring programmes. In order to contribute to filling the VAWE data gap, it would be useful to consider common indicators or approaches in collection methodologies and questions used in report forms. Consistent standards of reporting across areas of deployment and election phases will significantly aid in providing incident reports and evidence on types and forms of VAWE.

208 IFES, 2016. Pp. 9-10.
209 Paula Drumond, 2015. "Promoting Democracy in Preventing Electoral Violence: The Women's Situation Room." *Sustainable Development Solutions Network*, 1 June. Pp. 7-8.
210 Ballington, 2016.

WSR examples from civil society monitoring programs

To promote peace **in Nigeria**'s 2015 elections, UN Women partnered with the Angie Brooks International Centre and the Economic Community of West African States, with UNDP support, to convene a civil society-led electoral violence monitoring mechanism. Representatives of the Independent National Electoral Commission and the Nigerian Police Force worked closely with members of the "Nigerian Women's Platform for Peaceful Elections" to mitigate reported cases of electoral violence and provide a timely response. UN Women received an award for its contribution towards the peaceful elections.

In Mali in 2013, peace platforms were established in collaboration with local authorities, providing a space where Malian women voters could exchange views and information on the election. Every day, speakers came and debated side-by-side on a series of crucial issues, such as the importance of women's vote, the impact of electoral violence on their vote, the role of young people in elections, the role of the media in preserving peace, etc. The practical aspects of voting were also covered, such as the distribution of National Identification Number voter cards as well as the different stages of vote-counting. As part of the project of psychosocial and economic assistance to displaced women and girls due to armed conflict in the Northern Malian regions, 18 spaces for dialogue and exchange were created and animated in Bamako, Mopti and Timbuktu.

Summary of election observation and violence monitoring initiatives:

Pre-Election Phase	Election Phase	Post-Election Phase
• Adapt and integrate VAWE into international and domestic election observation • Integrate VAWE into electoral violence early warning systems • Integrate a gender perspective into existing election violence monitoring tools • Identify indicators to be measured • Ensure VAWE is monitored and reported in Women's Situation Rooms and other civil society monitoring programmes • Develop harmonized data collection and reporting tools	• Adapt and integrate VAWE into observation tools • Include gender sensitivity in observer trainings • Aim for gender balance in election observer teams • Streamline reporting across EOM groups	• Ensure aggregation and reporting • Identify gaps and make recommendations • Include gender dimension in observation report and findings

ACTION POINT 3:
LEGAL AND POLICY REFORM TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO VAWE

Violence against women is a violation of human rights. As such, VAWE prevention requires a comprehensive, multi-tiered legal and policy framework based on human rights conventions and international normative frameworks.[211] VAWE legal and policy reforms are intended to enhance the security for women's participation in elections in all areas (e.g. candidates, voters, poll workers, or journalists) by codifying legislation that strengthens the protections against and penalties surrounding VAWE into national electoral initiatives and rule of law programming.

This section examines legal and policy frameworks which can help to prevent VAWE, including:

• Using the existing international normative framework;

• Adopting new legislation or reform existing laws;

• Implementation of laws that prevent VAWE;

• Issuing relevant protocols or regulations by EMBs; and

• Adoption of codes of conduct related to political parties and electoral processes.

3.1. USING THE INTERNATIONAL NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

There is a vast normative framework establishing women's political rights in declarations, covenants and conventions. In addition to numerous international and regional treaties and policy instruments previously outlined (see Introduction), several entry points for VAWE prevention and response exist within the normative framework (see Table 3).

Regional declarations and communiqués, for example, have successfully pushed the issues of VAWE and VAWP onto the policy agenda by expressing commitments by participating states and relevant stakeholders to act to eliminate violence in politics. In an early example, the 2007 "Kathmandu Declaration" adopted by a conference sponsored by South-Asia Partnership International, International IDEA and UN Women, put forward the following guiding principles:

• All relevant international human rights treaty bodies, such as the CEDAW Committee and the Human Rights Commission, should recognize and act upon Violence against Women in Politics as a form of discrimination against women and the violation of women's human rights;

• National laws and policies should be harmonized with existing international instruments, mechanisms and standards to specifically address VAWP;

• Pertinent regional and national bodies should incorporate statistics, information and data on the levels of women's political participation and VAWP into existing databases;

• Special electoral laws should be framed to address the issue of VAWP;

• Election commissions should be empowered to administer and implement these laws during election periods;

• Heads of state should make formal commitments to address VAWP domestically and in international/regional forums.[212]

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211 UNDP, 2012.
212 Adapted from SAP International, et al., 2007.

Table 3: Normative Framework for VAWE Prevention and Response

Normative Framework	
International Human Rights Treaties and Policy Instruments	Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948[213]
	Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1952[214]
	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966[215]
	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979[216]
	Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, Article 4, 1993[217]
International Policy Instruments	Beijing Platform for Action, 1995[218]
	Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, 2000[219]
	General Assembly Resolution 66/130 on Women and Political Participation, 2012[220]
	Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/23/7 on Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development[221]
	Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015 (A/RES/70/1)
Regional Policy Instruments, Declarations and Communiqués	Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará), 1994[222]
	Convention on Preventing and Combatting the Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution (SAARC region), 1997[223]
	Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of Women in Africa, 2003[224]
	Kathmandu Declaration on Invisible Faces of Violence on Women in Politics, 2007[225]
	Quito Consensus, 2007 (10th Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean)[226]
	Council of Europe, Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, 2011[227]
	Santo Domingo Consensus, ECLAC, 2013[228]
	MESECVI Declaration on Political Harassment and Violence Against Women, 2015[229]
	ParlAmericas Declaration of Commitment on Diversifying Political Powers to Build Inclusive Societies, 2016[230]

213 UNGA, 1948. 217 A (III). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December.

214 UNGA, 1952. A/RES/640(VII). *Convention on the Political Rights of Women*, 20 December.

215 UNGA, 1966. *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. In the *United Nations, Treaty Series*, Vol. 999, 16 December. P. 171.

216 UNGA, 1979.

217 UNGA, 1993.

218 UN, 1995.

219 UNSC, 2000 October.

220 UNGA, 2011. A/66/130. *Resolution on Women and Political Participation*, 19 December.

221 https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G13/149/58/PDF/G1314958.pdf?OpenElement

222 *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belém do Pará)*, 1994.

223 SAARC, May 1997. *Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution*.

224 OAU, June 1995. *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*. Presented at the Thirty-first Ordinary meeting of the Organization of African Unity.

225 SAP International, International IDEA, and UN Women, 2007. *Declaration of the South Asian Regional Conference on the Invisible Faces of Violence on Women in Politics: Breaking the Silence (Kathmandu Declaration)*. Kathmandu, Nepal, 18 – 20 September.

226 ECLAC, 2007. *Quito Consensus* at the *Tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Quito, Ecuador.

227 Council of Europe, 2011. *Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*.

228 ECLAC, 2013b. *Santo Domingo Consensus* at the *Twelfth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 15 – 18 October.

229 MESECVI, 2015. *Declaration on Political Harassment and Violence Against Women*. Lima, Peru, 15-16 October.

230 ParlAmericas, 2016. *Declaration of Commitment* at the *Eighth Annual Gathering on Diversifying Political Power to Build Inclusive Societie*s. Quito, Ecuador, 2-3 June.

The "Quito Consensus" of 2007, to which 33 Latin American and Caribbean governments are party, explicitly rejects "structural violence, which is a form of discrimination against women and acts as an obstacle to the achievement of equality and parity in economic, labour, political, social, family and cultural relations, and which impedes women's autonomy and their full participation in decision-making."[231] Governments committed specifically to:

(x) *"adopt legislative measures and institutional reforms to prevent, sanction and eradicate political and administrative harassment of women who reach decision-making positions through electoral means or by appointment at national and local levels, as well as in political parties and movements."*

Since 1994, "MESECVI," the Follow-up Mechanism to the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women* (also referred to as the *Belém do Pará Convention*), has focused on eradicating violence against women in the Latin American region. MESECVI works to track the implementation of the commitment made by State parties at the *Belém do Pará Convention*, including recognition that:

• "Violence against women '...constitutes a violation of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, and impairs or nullifies the observance, enjoyment and exercise of such rights and freedoms...'"[232]

• Women experience physical, sexual and psychological violence in private and public spheres and at the hands of State actors.[233]

The 1994 declaration set out a list of recognized rights and State obligations, which include a variety of commitments focusing on legal and justice reforms related to supporting survivors and preventing all forms of VAW. At its second meeting of experts in 2016, MESECVI worked in collaboration with regional actors to create a draft model law on violence against women in politics.[234] The forthcoming model legislation would provide a reference point for Latin American countries to build upon the 1994 *Belém do Pará Convention* by encouraging committed States to enact laws that specifically address the issue of VAWP.

The **OAS Declaration on Political Harassment and Violence Against Women** (2016) reaffirms MESECVI's commitment to eliminating VAWP, declaring that it will:

• "Promote and disseminate research that takes into account the nature and specificities of political violence and/or harassment against women, as well as generating statistical data on the issue…"

• "Promote that public policies are designed on political harassment and/or violence against women, and facilitate substantive equality and strengthen women's leadership and their presence in decision-making positions and their application at the national and subnational levels…"

• "Promote that electoral institutions and other public entities, as applicable, incorporate the issue of political harassment and/or violence against women in the framework of their functions related to the organization of elections, the protection of political-electoral citizenship rights, and the development of civic education policies, as well as in their work with political parties…"

• "Promote that political parties, political and social organizations and trade unions, create their own internal instruments and mechanisms to prevent, punish and eradicate political violence and/or harassment against women, and to conduct internal awareness-raising and training activities on this issue…"[235]

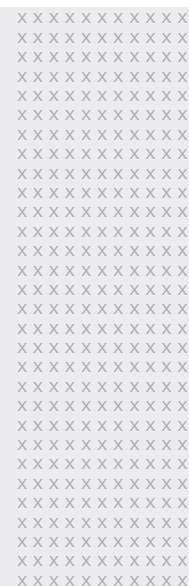
231 ECLAC, 2007. P. 3.
232 Idem.
233 OAS, 1994. *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women ("Convention of Belem do Para"*, 9 June. http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-61.html.
234 The model law provides a 'model text' should States wish to adopt legislation combating VAWE.
235 MESECVI, 2015. Pp. 8-11.

In 2013, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) convened the 12*th Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean* in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Issues of violence against women in the political and public spheres, as well as through technology and the media, were specifically addressed in the "Santo Domingo Consensus."[236] The document calls for all ECLAC member States and associate members[237] to recommit to activities that advance gender equality in the region, especially as it relates to the Conference's topical focus on ICT.[238] This includes:

• "Strengthen electoral observation and monitoring mechanisms with a gender perspective as instruments that ensure respect for women's rights to political representation..." (Article 104, p. 12)

• "Enact and implement legislation to prevent, punish and eradicate political and administrative violence against or harassment of women who reach decision-making positions of all levels..." (Article 105, p. 12)

• "Encourage the media to commit to the objectives of equality and parity between men and women, through agreements to carry out media actions linked to equality and women's rights in all spheres, including gender parity in participation in political processes and in running for office, and which cover the various forms of women's political participation and the issues that affect them..." (Article 107, p. 13)

In 2016, ECLAC published a position document, "Equality and Women's Autonomy in the Sustainable Development Agenda,"[239] and the "Montevideo Strategy"[240] (following ECLAC's 13*th Regional Conference on Women in LAC).* While ECLAC's position paper discusses the progress made since its first Regional Conference in 1977 and recommends potential "pro-equality policies"[241] for the region moving forward, the Montevideo Strategy puts forth a regional implementation plan for putting the 2030 Agenda commitments made by LAC member States into action.[242] Together, these documents reflect upon and reinvigorate agreements made in the Santo Domingo Consensus, Quito Consensus, and MESECVI's 2015 declaration.

The "Equality and Women's Autonomy in the Sustainable Development Agenda" document specifically acknowledges "political harassment" as a barrier to women's political participation that must be addressed:

> "Regional experience shows that the nature and severity of political harassment of women varies, ranging from assigning women to unwinnable districts, to failing to provide material or human support, and attacks or threats during campaign periods. In the case of elected women, it may entail being assigned to commissions or areas of minor importance, with little or no budget; discriminatory treatment by the media; greater demand for accountability compared with their peers; and intimidation, threats or physical violence against them or their families, which in extreme cases can include rape or murder (ECLAC, 2015*j*)." (p. 125)

Building on the position document, the Montevideo Strategy lays out a number of measures for ECLAC States to address the "public, symbolic, institution,

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236 ECLAC, 2013b.

237 For a full list of ECLAC member States and associate members see: http://www.cepal.org/en/estados-miembros

238 See ECLAC, 2013a. "Objective of the XII session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean."

239 ECLAC, 2016a. "Equality and Women's Autonomy in the Sustainable Development Agenda" at the *Thirteenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Montevideo, Uruguay, 25 – 28 October.

240 ECLAC, 2016b. *Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by* 2030 *(Montevideo Strategy)* at the *Thirteenth Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Montevideo, Uruguay, 25 – 28 October.

241 ECLAC, 2016a. "Equality and Women's Autonomy in the Sustainable Development Agenda." P. 9.

242 The plan includes both mandatory and voluntary follow-up reporting on an annual basis through the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development and Presiding Officers of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, respectively. (ECLAC, 2016b*.)*

cyber… [and] political" violence that women in the region may face.[243] In its introduction, the Strategy cites "parity-based, representative and participatory democracy" and freedom from violence as two of its five guiding approaches.[244] It also includes strategies targeting media and technology, legislative reforms, and programmatic efforts to increase monitoring of gender issues:

- "Adopt comprehensive and specific laws and regulations on gender equality and women's human rights, including legislation on the right to a life free of all forms of gender-based violence, and ensure their full and effective implementation." (Article 1.d, p. 13)

- "Adopt laws and norms to ensure women's equal access to political power, by fostering gender parity in participation throughout the public sphere." (Article 1.k, p. 14)

- "Design and carry out periodical ex ante and ex post assessments of the effects of technologies with respect to…harassment and violence through technological means…" (Article 7.a, p. 19)

- "Develop and strengthen instruments to measure gender inequalities, such as surveys on time use,

violence against women, sexual and reproductive health and use of public spaces, and ensure their funding and periodicity." (Article 9.c, p. 21)

- "Create or strengthen monitoring systems, according to agreed criteria, that comprehensively and periodically evaluate the level of implementation of laws, norms, policies, plans and programmes on gender equality and women's rights at the regional, national and subnational levels." (Article 10.a, p. 22).[245]

3.2. LEGAL REFORM AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Awareness of the gravity and extent of VAWE has grown rapidly—a shift which has brought with it an increasing demand for a legal response to prevent, protect against and punish acts of VAWE. There are three main ways that legal reform can be pursued:

a. Through the introduction of new legislation in the form of special, stand-alone laws to address VAWP (and VAWE);

b. By introducing VAWP (and VAWE) into existing elimination of violence against women laws; and

c. By introducing reforms or expanding electoral codes or penal codes.

Responding to violence in Latin America

Demands for a legal response to prevent, protect against and punish acts of violence in politics have featured mainly in Latin America. The discussion in Latin America almost exclusively centres on violence against women in politics rather than violence against women in elections. The focus on politics allows activists to emphasize the discriminatory and harmful acts that women experience both as candidates and as elected officials.[246] This focus also builds on Latin America's decades-long experience in adopting and implementing gender quota and parity laws. Women face ongoing discrimination and harassment during their candidacies *and* while in office, signalling that quotas and parity are not sufficient for guaranteeing women's equal exercise of their political-electoral rights. In Latin America, VAWP has been named and challenged by the same networks initially formed to ensure quota compliance, such as *Mujeres en Plural* in Mexico and ACOBOL in Bolivia.

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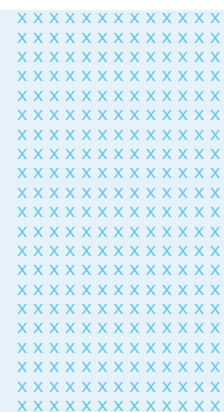
243 ECLAC, 2016b. P. 6.
244 Ibid., p. 5.
245 Idem.
246 Piscopo, 2016.

a. Stand-alone laws

One of the avenues Latin American countries have pursed is to adopt a special, stand-alone law that deals exclusively with VAWP. To date, Bolivia is the only Latin American country that has passed legislation to address VAWP, with Law 243 in 2012. The Mexican Senate passed legislation in 2013, but lawmakers in both chambers continue to deliberate among multiple proposals. The Ecuadorian congress rejected VAWP legislation in 2011, but the 2012 electoral code introduced a gender-neutral provision, which states that the systematic harassment of candidates or elected officials is subject to penal code sanctions. Female assembly members in Ecuador reintroduced VAWP legislation in 2016. Costa Rica, Peru, and Honduras, among others, also have considered VAWP laws.[247]

The Bolivian law defines 17 distinct acts of VAWP, and the law (indeed, most of the draft laws) also distinguishes between *acoso político* (political harassment) and *violencia política* (political violence). Typically, harassment is less serious and merits lighter penalties, and violence is more serious and merits stricter punishment. The Bolivian statute characterizes *acoso* as "pressure, persecution, harassment or threats" and *violencia* as "actions, conducts, and physical, psychological and emotional aggressions."[252] Clear minimum and maximum sentences for acts of differing severity are spelled out in the Bolivian law and the Costa Rican and Honduran proposals. Elsewhere, the draft laws specify sentence ranges (e.g., prison between three months and six years in one Mexican proposal), but do not tie minimum or maximum sentences to specific acts. Bolivia specifically prohibits conciliation between victims and aggressors in all instances of VAWP.[253]

Laws and proposed stand-alone laws
Bolivia, Law against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women, 2012[248]
Costa Rica, Draft Law Against Political Harassment/Violence Against Women, 2013[249] (draft)
Ecuador, Project for an Organic Law against Political Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence for Reasons of Gender, 2011 (draft);   Project for an Organic Law that would Reform the Organic Electoral Law, the Code of Democracy, to Prevent and Sanction Political Harassment for Reasons of Gender, 2016 (draft)
El Salvador, Special Comprehensive Law for Women's Life Free from Violence, 2011[250] (draft)
Peru, Draft Law Against Political Harassment Against Women, 2012[251] (draft)

247 Idem.

248 ALP, 2012. Ley Contra el Acoso y Violencia Politica Hacia Las Mujeres, No. 0026.

249 ALRCR, 2013. *Proyecto de Ley Contra Acoso y/o Violencia Politica Contra Las Mujeres*, No. 18.719.

250 In creating the law, the government of El Salvador recognized that violence against women prevents them from fulling exercising their "rights in the social, political, economic, cultural and family spheres." (ALES, 2011. *Ley Especial Integral Para Una Vida Libre De Violencia Para Las Mujeres*, No. 520.)

251 CRP, 2012. *Proyecto de Ley Contra el Acoso Politico Hacia Las Mujeres*, No. 1903.

252 ALP, Law 243/2012. Article 7.

253 Piscopo, 2016.

Evolution of the Law against the Harassment of and Political Violence against Women in Bolivia[254]

The legal reform process dates back to 2000, and started at a session of the Congress of the Republic's Commission for the People's Participation where "...together with the Vice-minister for Gender, Genera-tional and Family Affairs, councilwomen publicly denounced the harassment and political violence which was being carried out against them in different municipalities of the country."[255] In 2001, a first Draft Bill against Gender-based Harassment and Political Violence was elaborated.

During 2002-2004, the first Draft Bill was vetted with different institutions working in the field of gender equality, with the aim of systematizing and disseminating it through workshops nationally. This was followed by lobbying carried out at the National Congress's House of Senators in 2004. The Political Rights for Women Action Committee, made up of representatives from various institutions working on gender issues (including ACOBOL, Vice-ministry of Women, Vice-ministry of Justice, Vice-ministry of People Participation, Ombudsperson, Union of Women Parliamentarians, and the National Women's Political Forum) was an important support and catalyst for change in subsequent years. The Committee's work resulted in women in various public bodies becoming more aware of the importance of combating harassment and political violence.

With much media attention, and the awareness of political violence against women heightened following the assassination of Councilwoman Juana Quispe, the time was right to enact Law 243 on 28 May 2012. The law does not limit its application to women in public office, but it extends its scope to any woman desig-nated to or exercising a political/public role. The Law classifies acts of harassment and political violence, categorizing them as 'slight,' 'serious' and 'very serious,' and establishing the sanctions for each category, which makes it possible to clearly identify these acts and their corresponding sanctions.

In cases of harassment or political violence, a report may be made by the survivor herself, her family members or any 'physical or legal person,' orally or in writing before the competent authorities. There are three pathways for reports: administrative, criminal and constitutional. In the case of the criminal route, an important advance in this legislation has been the introduction of new categories of crime in the Bolivian Penal Code. This route forbids conciliation, in order to prevent further pressure on the victims of harass-ment and political violence.

The draft laws in **Costa Rica, Ecuador and Mexico** generally follow Bolivia's distinction between harassment and violence, with slight variations. Costa Rica's draft law builds on Bolivia's defini-tion of violence ("actions or conducts that cause physical, sexual, or psychological death, harm, and suffering") and divides harassment into three separate categories.[256] For Costa Rica, 'harassment' would consist of political harassment (using Bolivia's definition of the term); psychological harassment (adding a category of crimes related to the systematic humiliation or bullying of female politicians); and verbal political violence (including verbal attacks as a distinct category).[257] Regardless of the terms used, all proposed legislation focuses on physical, psychological and sexual assault, as well as systematic harassment and discrimination.

Nearly all legal frameworks adopted or under consideration in Latin America limit the class of

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254 Adapted from UNDP, et al. "Gender-Based Political Violence: Bolivia." In *Advancing Gender Equality: Promising Practices*.
255 2009. "Incidencia política para la Aprobación de ACOBOL." La Paz, Bolivia, p. 11.
256 Piscopo, 2016.
257 ALRCR, 2013. Article 5.

Meeting in Bolivia to discuss implementation of the Electoral Tribunal's Observatory to monitor VAWP.

victims to women participating in formal electoral politics or serving in formal office.[258] Bolivia's law covers "all female candidates, elected or designated officials, or those exercising a political-public function" as well as their family members.[259] The protections outlined in Law 243 do not mention women participating in informal politics, including women who participate in activist groups, labour unions and non-governmental organizations. Draft legislation in Costa Rica would extend protections to women participating in movement politics, social organizations and labour organizations.[260] Neither the Bolivian statute nor the proposed laws mention women as voters or as civil servants.[261]

By contrast, perpetrators are categorized broadly. The Bolivian statute refers to acts of political harassment or political violence conducted by "a person or group of persons, directly or through third parties."[262]

Because the draft Mexican legislation specifically states that VAWP may occur in electoral propaganda, this clause could include the news media and the political parties as perpetrators.[263] However, the Bolivian statute and the draft laws do not specifically name the political parties as among those responsible for VAWP. Law 243 in Bolivia mentions political parties only once: perpetrators who are also party directors will serve the maximum penalty.[264] Similarly, the draft bill in Costa Rica identifies specific penalties depending on the role the perpetrator occupies, proposing that members of party directorates who commit VAWP will experience penal sanctions and be removed from their post.[265]

b. Violence against women laws

Legal reform to address violence against women in politics and elections may also include introducing VAWP into EVAW laws, or enforcing broad provisions

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258 Piscopo, 2016.

259 ALP, Law 243/2012. Article 5.

260 As would have the 2011 Ecuadorian proposal, which failed to pass.

261 Extracted from Piscopo, 2016.

262 ALP, Law 243/2012. Article 5.

263 Laura Albaine, 2015. "Marcos normativos contra el acoso y/o violencia política en razón de género en América Latina." Presented at, *Violencia Política contra las mujeres en América Latina: diagnósticos, diálogos y estrategias*, Mexico City, as quoted in Piscopo, 2016.

264 ALP, Law 243/2012. Article 17.

265 ALRCR, 2013. Article 32.

against public or community violence already found in the EVAW laws. Again, Latin America provides illustrative examples.[266] The *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Wome*n (1994), to which all Latin American countries are party, includes women's right to access public service and take part in public affairs (Article 4) and entitles women to the free and full exercise of their political rights (Article 5). Subsequent to the convention, all Latin American countries reformed their EVAW laws. In new legislation written during the late 1990s and into the 2000s, most countries adopted specialized, standalone EVAW legislation, though some amended their penal codes to incorporate the specific crime of violence against women.[267]

These reforms largely followed the normative framework laid forth in the Convention. Nearly all legislation clarified that such violence could occur in public and in the workplace, and defined violence as physical, psychological, sexual, patrimonial, and symbolic.[268] Most also identified the state or its agents as perpetrators of violence against women. Mexico's 2007 General Law on Women's Life Free from Violence prohibits "community violence," which includes "individual or collective acts that violate women's fundamental rights and that lead to their denigration, discrimination, marginalization or exclusion from the public sphere."[269] The EVAW laws in El Salvador (2011) and Panama (2013) explicitly reference women's political participation and women's political rights. The Salvadoran statute forbids "impeding, limiting, or creating obstacles for the participation of women in processes of obtaining an education, participating in politics, joining the workforce, or seeking healthcare" as well as "joking, discrediting, degrading, or isolating" women in these spaces.[270]

The Panamanian statute includes *violencia política* as a form of VAW, defined as discrimination in access to the opportunities and the resources associated with occupying party, public, and elected posts.[271]

The region's expansive definitions of violence against women, codified in EVAW laws, suggest that countries can address VAWP without passing new legislation. The acknowledgment that violence occurs in public and in the workplace can protect not just female candidates and elected officials, but also female voters and female civil servants. The expansive definitions of VAW, which encompass physical and nonphysical attacks as well as systematic harassment in the public sphere, also provide avenues of redress for female politicians.

In May 2017, the Legislative Assembly of the City of Mexico passed an amendment of the Local Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence,[272] to add the definition of Gender Based Political Violence and 19 legal stipulations to prove political violence against women. Political violence is understood to include any action or omission that has the purpose or result to bias, impede, restrain, suspend, impair, nullify, obstruct, exclude or affect the recognition, access, enjoyment or exercise of political or electoral rights of a woman, as well as access to full exercise of the duties inherent to her position or function in public office. This amendment aims to protect and promote the political rights of women during the pre-election and campaign period, the election process and during the exercise of duties as public officials.[273]

c. Electoral laws

Electoral laws can set legal constraints on the use of violence in elections, as well as establish the security mandate and powers of election management

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266 Section is extracted from Piscopo, 2016.

267 Following the convention, only the Dominican Republic failed to adopt new EVAW legislation or reform its penal code. (Idem.)

268 OAS, 2014. "Informe Hemisférico 2014."

269 CGEUM, 2007. *Ley General de Acceso de las Mujeres a una Vida Libre de Violencia*. Article 16.

270 Law 520/ALES, 2011. Article 55.

271 LNRP, 2013. *Ley* 82. Article 4.

272 Government of the City of Mexico. Official Gazette No. 112, published on 17 July 2017.

273 Idem.

bodies. Such laws can also stipulate an electoral code of conduct, which can involve agreement on avoidance of hate speech and other activities that might spur violence and polarization.[274] Electoral codes may link to penal code provisions, such as in Pakistan where a review stipulated that punitive actions be mandated against anyone found guilty of stopping a woman from voting.[275] Likewise, women's voting rights, eligibility for candidacy and representation are defined in electoral laws. Although registration and candidacy laws do not directly legislate for acts of VAWE, they can assist to level the playing field for women candidates, especially in contexts with VAWE. For example, where women would otherwise face intimidation or violent resistance to running for office, legislated quotas or electoral systems favourable to electing women can help women gain access to public office.

Electoral laws can also target the prevention of family voting. Various international standards provide guidelines on this. The Council of Europe Venice Commission states that, "Voting must be individual. Family voting and any other form of control by one voter over the vote of another must be prohibited."[276] International IDEA's *Guidelines for Reviewing the Legal Framework of Elections* suggest that, "The practice of family voting – where the head of a family casts ballots on behalf of the other members of the family – should not be condoned."[277]

Amendments to electoral or penal codes are typically concise, however. While the Ecuadorian congress rejected VAWP legislation in 2011, the 2012 electoral code introduced a provision which states that the systematic harassment of candidates or elected officials is subject to penal code sanctions.[278] The gender-neutral clause included in the Ecuadorian electoral code is very succinct: "systematic actions of pressure, harassment, threats, or any other forceful actions against a person that aim to restrict or impede their access to popularly elected positions will be sanctioned according to the penal code."[279]

Because of the conciseness of such amendments to electoral codes, the amendments may pass more easily. The vast majority of Latin America's gender quota laws passed not as stand-alone legislation, but as part of broader electoral reforms. This strategy calls public attention to the larger issue, such as the overall need to improve the quality and fairness of elections. Amending existing legislation may also allow for mainstreaming VAWP. For example, a Mexican proposal would modify the electoral code to prohibit electoral propaganda that incites VAWP, while also modifying the 2007 EVAW law to include additional infractions (e.g., preventing women from returning to work after periods of leave).[280]

The choice between adopting stand-alone legislation or amending existing statutes involves several trade-offs. Specialized laws focus public attention on a specific problem. They can cover the problem in more depth, allowing countries to typify more acts as counting as VAWP.[281] For example, the stand-alone Bolivian statute typifies 17 distinct acts of VAWP, from the imposition of gender stereotypes to preventing women from speaking in meetings.

274 K. Höglund and A.K. Jarstad, 2010. "Strategies to Prevent and Manage Electoral Violence: Considerations for Policy." In *Policy and Practice Brief: Knowledge for Durable Peace*, No. 1, Uppsala University.
275 UN Women Pakistan, 2016.
276 Council of Europe Venice Commission, 2002. *Code of Good Practice in Electoral Matters: Guidelines and Explanatory Report*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
277 International IDEA, 2002. *International Electoral Standards: Guidelines for Reviewing the Legal Framework of Elections*. Stockholm.
278 Piscopo, 2016.
279 ALE, 2012. *Código de la Democracia*. Article 285.
280 Piscopo, 2016.
281 Albaine, 2015.

Legislating the Path Forward in Latin America[282]

Efforts to prevent and punish VAWP are proceeding apace in Latin America. Countries are passing stand-alone legislation, evaluating amendments to existing EVAW laws and electoral and penal codes, and developing protocols through their EMBs. In 2012, Bolivia passed the region's first—and so far only—specialized VAWP law. Yet the implementation of Law 243 has been uneven: in September 2016, the executive branch had not conducted the necessary rule-writing process, and the Public Ministry had not resolved any VAWP cases. Women's inability to rely on penal channels risks stretching administrative channels' jurisdiction beyond electoral matters and into criminal proceedings. Moreover, the small number of cases resolved further foments impunity.[283]

All strategies to address VAWP in Latin America must account for the related challenges of low state capacity and impunity. Law 243 in Bolivia lays out an ambitious agenda, but insufficient financial and human resources can limit implementation. To that end, pursuing VAWP under current or amended EVAW statutes would allow Latin American countries to take advantage of the criminal or administrative procedures already established to address violence against women. Though EVAW laws also suffer from under-implementation, many regulations, services, and programs (e.g., specialized courts or gender-sensitivity training) are already in place. Likewise, EMB protocols build on existing procedures, as electoral institutions already process and decide cases related to quotas and parity laws. Where new legislation has stalled, activists and policymakers still have tools at their disposal to confront violence against women in politics.

3.3. IMPLEMENTATION OF LAWS

Legislative options are available to policymakers seeking to protect against and punish acts of VAWE. Laws and initiatives, especially from Latin America, provide precedents and examples upon which other countries and diverse actors can build. While a regional normative framework is in place, the legislative environment addressing violence against women remains weak in most countries in Latin America. The challenges of documenting the occurrence of VAWE and sensitizing lawmakers to the need for legal protection are further barriers to developing targeted legislation. Thus, justice reforms and meaningful implementation of laws must go hand-in-hand with future efforts at legal and policy reform. The OAS *Declaration on Political Harassment and Violence against Women* (2016) includes an action point on the adoption of regulations and measures for the prevention and eradication of VAWP that allows for the "proper punishment and reparation of these actions, in the administrative, criminal, electoral norms sphere, taking into account the applicable international instruments."[284]

Justice-related programming is an essential component of policy implementation. The presence of women adjudicators, gender sensitivity of the adjudicating body, access to formal complaint processes, and enforcement of laws are all aspects of electoral justice that are critical for holding VAWE perpetrators accountable and providing services to VAWE victims.[285]

Ensuring implementation and achieving justice may be slowed or prevented by:

• Absence of a legal framework that formally recognizes and legislates against VAWE;

• Lack of a government agency with the authority or political will to enforce sanctions;

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282 Information provided by Jennifer Piscopo.
283 La Repúbica (Peru), 2016. "JNE atenderá actos de discriminación contra mujeres en elecciones." 3 March.
284 MESECVI, 2015. Pp. 8-9.
285 UNDP, 2012.

- A culture of impunity for perpetrators, which may manifest in a lack of prosecutions of perpetrators and/or a lack of compensation for victims;

- Lack of gender-sensitive training and female personnel within police and the justice system;

- A lag in judicial or police response following legal reforms, which may leave enforcement weak or non-existent;

- Lack of sensitization on the part of the adjudicating body. This may prevent women from formally reporting cases because of shame or fear of social rejection; and

- Women may not be aware of their rights or of complaint mechanisms and court systems available to them.

Legislation addressing VAWP or VAWE should also be supported by clear national action plans and other implementation tools. In Latin America, ParlAmericas' Group of Women Parliamentarians developed *Preventing Political Harassment and Violence against Women: An Action Plan for Parliamentarians*" in 2014, which provides recommendations for member States in various areas including:

- The use of sanctions and coordinated justice sector responses;

- Developing specific legislation based on international and regional commitments (e.g., CEDAW, Belém do Pará Convention) and measures to implement them;

- The opening of a combination of civil, penal, electoral and administrative avenues to receive, investigate and respond to complaints of political harassment/violence, as appropriate in the local context (e.g. through an ombudsperson's office or similar); and

- The prioritization of safe and straightforward processes for survivors who choose to file formal complaints.

Implementation of Bolivia Law 243

The Bolivian statute on VAWP assigns full responsibility for implementing Law 243 to the Public Ministry, equivalent to a justice ministry. Victims may appeal directly to law enforcement authorities, or in the first instance, may pursue an administrative route that appeals to the authorities of the state institution where the offense occurred.[286] For instance, female municipal councilors may first appeal to the council's leaders. Law 243 further instructs all state institutions to develop their own administrative channels for processing VAWP claims. The Public Ministry receives all complaints made directly to law enforcement authorities, as well as oversees appeals pursued through administrative channels. The Bolivian law also allows victims to bypass the Public Ministry by bringing their case directly before the constitutional court. Draft laws elsewhere in Latin America likewise assign primary responsibility to public ministries and related law enforcement authorities, though the administrative and constitutional channels appear unique to Bolivia.[287]

Law 243 gives the EMB two specific roles, showcasing another legal channel for redress. Resignations must be presented to the electoral institute. The institute must also "define public policies and intercultural strategies for democratic education on gender equality that would guarantee the political rights of all people, and particularly women and particularly equal opportunity between men and women."[288] While the legislation assigns the EMB no tasks related to receiving or resolving complaints, the EMB has assumed this role: between 2010 and 2014, all VAWP cases in Bolivia that received resolution (13 of 272, or 4.7%) were processed through administrative channels in the municipal councils, with evaluation from the electoral institute.[289] This use of EMBs to assist with cases suggests that justice ministries and law enforcement authorities are not yet prepared to implement Law 243.

286 Piscopo, 2016.
287 Idem.
288 ALP/Law 243, 2012. Article 10.
289 La Razón (Bolivia), 2015. "Sólo 13 casos de acoso político se resolvieron en cinco años," 4 January; ACOBOL, 2014. *Concejala,* No. 7, December.

Judicial and security sector workers must be trained in the content of reformed legislation. Adequate financial resources should be allocated through the national budget to implement reforms and appropriate penalties for violations of relevant legislation should be introduced in a timely manner.

In Kenya, working towards **reparations and perpetrator prosecutions** following the 2007-2008 electoral violence has been a long process, that began with the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry in the Post-Election Violence and the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC). Though the government provided some support immediately following 2008 to internally displaced persons, few efforts have been made to compensate or support victims of sexual violence, many of whom are women. In fact, a 2012 task force report found that only 23 perpetrators had been convicted for election-related sex crimes at the time. Hopes were raised in 2015 that efforts to continue the quest for justice for Kenyan women impacted by electoral violence would be reinvigorated following President Uhuru Kenyatta's commitment to dedicate 10 billion Kenyan Shillings towards restorative justice. This announcement followed the TJRC's findings that many victims, especially those impacted by sexual violence, had been ignored in previous reparation efforts.[293]

3.4. EMB PROTOCOLS FOR PREVENTION AND ENFORCEMENT

Electoral management bodies (and electoral tribunals) have also taken on prevention and enforcement roles. EMBs may use their authority over party practices and electoral processes to act. Mexico exemplifies this approach. The National Electoral Institute (Mexico's EMB), the Federal Electoral Tribunal, the Federal Prosecutor's Office for Electoral Crimes, the National Women's Institute, and other state agencies coordinated to publish a

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CSO engagement and advocacy for compliance

In Latin America, civil society organizations have played an important role in advocating for implementation of normative frameworks and national legislation. The following are examples of CSOs that have taken action in the LAC region to prevent and mitigate VAWE.

The **Latin American and Caribbean Network of Women Authorities Elected to Local Government** [*La Red Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Mujeres Autoridades Electas de Gobiernos Locales (RedLamugol)*], created in 2008, is one of the organizations that actively works to ensure the Quito Consensus is effectively implemented. One of RedLamugol's priorities is to advocate that statutes condemning harassment and political violence against women elected authorities at local level are incorporated into public policy agendas.[290]

Asociación de Concejalas de Bolivia (ACOBOL) is the only non-state organization involved in the passing and subsequent overseeing of reported cases of political violence filed under Bolivia's Law 243. They were instrumental in drafting the protocol for receiving, investigating and responding to reports of VAWE. For example, ACOBOL's research found that, despite the passing of Law 243, "272 complaints of violence against councilors were lodged in 170 municipalities" in 2014.[291] Additionally, ACOBOL has served as a member of the Political Rights for Women Action Committee since 2004.

The Asociación de Mujeres Municipalistas del Ecuador, has followed ACOBOL's example to condemn VAWE by supporting Ecuador's own proposed legislation on violence against women in politics and elections.[292]

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290 RedLamugol consists of associations from 11 countries: Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, El Salvador, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, and Argentina.
291 ECLAC, 2016a. P. 125.
292 ACOBOL. "Asociación de Mujeres Municipalistas del Ecuador (AMUME)."
293 HRW, 2016. "Summary." In '*I Just Sit and Wait to Die': Reparations for Survivors of Kenya's* 2007-2008 *Post-Election Sexual Violence*. Report, 15 February.

Saúl López/Cuartoscuro

Indigenous women from Mexico at the Electoral Management Body.

"**Protocol to Attend to Violence against Women in Politics**" in 2016.[294] This 81-page document defines VAWP as actions based in gender, in the process of women's exercise of their political-electoral rights, that aim to undermine or annul women's exercise of their rights or discharging of their public duties.[295] The document lays out victims' rights and establishes specific responsibilities for different state agencies: for instance, the National Electoral Institute must conduct educational campaigns, gather and publish data, ensure that party documents and practices do not promote VAWP, and oversee the fair distribution of party finances, among other tasks. The Federal Electoral Tribunal and the Federal Prosecutor's Office for Electoral Crimes may hear and adjudicate cases, and the latter will forward any cases outside its jurisdiction to the general public prosecutor's office.[296]

While the Mexico protocol stands out as the most comprehensive in Latin America, other EMBs have

taken action. In 2013, the Supreme Electoral Tribunal in El Salvador released a "**Guide for Equality and Non-Discrimination in Electoral Campaigns**," which focuses on eliminating violence against women in politics. The guide largely covers practices related to psychological, economic and symbolic violence, such as ensuring that female and male candidates have the same opportunities to conduct media interviews and avoiding the use of gender stereotypes in the distribution of responsibilities between men and women. For the 2016 elections in Peru, the National Elections Jury asked its Action-Education Coordinators—who work throughout the country—to report cases of VAWP back to the institute for possible litigation.[297]

In Europe, after family voting was recognized as a significant problem in Macedonia, the State Election Committee (SEC) issued practical guidelines for the work of Municipal Election Commissions (MECs) and Election Boards (EBs), which contained

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294 Piscopo, 2016.
295 INE et al., 2016. "Protocolo para Atender la Violencia Política hacia las Mujeres." P. 21.
296 Piscopo, 2016.
297 La República (Peru), 2016, quoted in Piscopo, 2016.

a strong directive to prevent family and proxy voting. The SEC also conducted additional training for the representatives of MECs and EBs.[298]

In all cases, it is important to establish procedures for reporting and handling of complaints made to the electoral institutions. Using EMBs to prevent and sanction VAWP constitutes an important strategy. Throughout Latin America, these institutions have jurisdiction over party conduct and electoral processes. EMBs played a significant role in implementing and enforcing gender quota laws. Networks of female activists, such as ACOBOL in Bolivia and Mujeres en Plural in Mexico, have strong relationships with electoral regulators, facilitating activists' access to these institutions. The authority to depose candidates and sanction party leaders and members rests with EMBs. However, EMBs cannot sanction VAWP when the perpetrators are outside the political party, meaning EMBs cannot be the sole state institutions empowered to adjudicate VAWP.[299]

3.5. LEGISLATED CODES OF CONDUCT

Many acts of VAWE are perpetrated by political party officials, candidates and supporters. Legislated Codes of Conduct can apply to a range of electoral stakeholders, including political parties, independent candidates, coalitions, and movements, as well as members of the media, to prohibit behaviours contributing to violence. Within political parties, Codes of Conduct seek to regulate the behaviours of party leadership, officials, candidates, members, agents, and other representatives. "The terms of these codes can be legally mandated and binding, and enforced using legal sanctions."[300] Codes of Conduct have been largely under-utilized in the specific promotion of women's political rights and freedoms and protection against violence; however, some international precedents have been set by of the OSCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1996) and Kosovo (2000), and the UN has made efforts to facilitate party code reforms in Iraq (2004), Afghanistan (2005), and Sierra Leone (2007).

Provisions in Election Codes of Conduct

The 2013 **Nigerian** Code of Conduct states that: "No political party shall engage in violent activities of any kind, as a way of demonstrating its strength. All political parties shall publicly condemn any form of political violence" (Article 6). In addition, Article 9 notes that: "Every political party shall ensure the promotion of active participation of women, youth and the physically challenged in the electoral processes. Consequently, every political party shall:

a. Respect the rights of women, youth and physically challenged to communicate freely with parties and candidates;

b. Facilitate the full and equal participation of women, youth and physically challenged in political activities;

c. Ensure the free access of women, youth and physically challenged to all public political meetings, marches, demonstrations, rallies and other public political events; and

d. Take all reasonable steps to ensure that women, youth and physically challenged are free to engage in any political activities."[301]

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298 iKNOW Politics, 2009. "Consolidated Response on the Prevention of Family Voting."
299 Piscopo, 2016
300 Paragraph adapted from UNDP, 2012.
301 INEC, 2013. "Political Parties Code of Conduct."

Nepal divides its Code of Conduct into regulations applying to four categories of electoral stakeholders:[302] 1) candidates, political parties and other "concerned persons," such as a member of a campaign or political party representative, 2) Nepali national and local governments and public institutions, 3) government/public employees, and 4) media, NGOs and electoral observers. Thus, rules regarding women in elections vary depending upon category affiliation:

- Category 1 members must not take part in an activity that "incites hatred or enmity amongst... genders..." (Article 4)

- Media members are obligated to disseminate information "in a non-biased manner," give "equal opportunities to political parties and candidates," and not disrupt "the relation and harmony amongst different... sex[es]" (Article 14).

- Observers are also instructed to respect "different... sexes..." and remain impartial during the election process (Article 16).

In **Chad,** Article 4 of the Code of Conduct states that the signatories forbid themselves to use violence in all its forms and denounce publicly and without any hesitation, any act of violence and intimidation. They commit not to maintain, finance or use militias, auto-defense and paramilitary groups for their own protection, threaten or commit acts of violence and harassment, show their strength and demonstrate their supremacy on others.

They commit to exercise restraint in their speeches, writings, attitudes, and behaviour throughout the election process. They reject the use of inflammatory and abusive comments inciting violence or racial, ethnic, religious, or gender-based hatred.[303]

In **South Africa**'s Electoral Code of Conduct, Article 9(1) specifies that gender discrimination by parties and candidates is prohibited. It further provides directives for active inclusion of women by stating, "parties and candidates must respect the right of women to communicate freely with parties and candidates, facilitate the full and equal participation of women in political activities, ensure the free access of women to all public political events and take all reasonable steps to ensure that women are free to engage in any political activities."[304]

Summary of legislative initiatives that can mitigate VAWE:

Pre-Election Phase	Election Phase	Post-Election Phase
• Adoption of laws and policies which define and protect against VAWE • Adapt existing EVAW legislation or amend penal code to explicitly delineate and provide measures on protecting against VAWE • Protocols and regulations adopted by EMBs to prevent VAWE in the electoral process • Election and political party codes of conduct address VAWE • Provide gender-sensitivity training to adjudicators, judges, lawyers, etc. who may handle reported cases of VAWE	• Access to electoral justice for women, and pursue justice for victims as well as prosecution of perpetrators • Establish methods of safely/confidentially reporting cases of VAWE	• Ensure implementation of laws and policies on VAWE • Review laws and policies and make adjustments as needed • Adjudication of electoral disputes involving VAWE • Prosecution of human rights abuses against women in politics • Adapt and integrate new victim resources into existing services for VAW

302 Election Commission of Nepal, 2015. "Election Code of Conduct."
303 *Chad Electoral Code of Conduct,* 2011. Available at https://www.eisa.org.za/pdf/chad2011code.pdf
304 Quoted in UNDP, 2012.

ACTION POINT 4:

PREVENTING AND MITIGATING VAWE THROUGH ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS

Election administration policies and procedures can affect mitigation of VAWE. The principal actor in electoral administration is the electoral management body, which may be an independent institution, a branch of the state administration (such as an Interior Ministry or justice department) or a mixed model. EMBs are the most important actors in determining the credibility and security of an election, as their decisions determine the context for women's political participation. For example, the procedures they establish for candidate registration may create an accessible environment or introduce additional obstacles for women aspirants and candidates. The training and guidance they provide to poll workers and security forces can protect vulnerable populations against specific threats or deepen a climate of insecurity and manipulation for voters.[305]

The role of the EMB in preventing and mitigating VAWE is nonetheless challenging due to timing (across all phases of the electoral cycle) and scope (covering national territory and as many as hundreds of thousands of poll worker staff). In particular, educating staff across all levels of the organization to understand the distinct forms and manifestations of VAWE can be complex. Regardless of the administrative model or the size of the organization, the EMB has a distinct role to play in preventing VAWE by being aware of the gender-specific threats across all areas of electoral participation and pro-actively addressing them.

The OAS *Declaration on Political Harassment and Violence against Women* (2016) includes an action point targeting EMBs, so that "electoral institutions and other public entities…incorporate the issues of [VAWP] in the framework of their functions related to the organization of elections, the protection of political-electoral citizenship rights, and the development of civic education policies, as well as in their work with political parties."[306]

While there are many areas in which electoral arrangements can protect women against VAWE, some of the most important strategies include:

• Undertaking VAWE risk assessment and mapping;

• Considering VAWE in voter and candidate registration procedures;

• Protecting women during the political campaign period;

• Including VAWE in training and outreach;

• Ensuring Election Day polling and security arrangements address VAWE; and

• Including VAWE in post-election analysis and reports.

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305 UNDP/UN Women, 2015.
306 MESECVI, 2015.

4.1. RISK ASSESSMENT AND MAPPING VAWE

As discussed in Action Point 1, a mapping or assessment may be needed in order to identify hotspot areas and design appropriate EMB mitigation and monitoring mechanisms. VAWE considerations can also be mainstreamed into general electoral security assessments and/or VAWE-specific assessment may be conducted. This may involve coordination with others. For example, EMBs may draw upon collaborative partnerships with international or non-governmental organizations to enhance risk assessments. For example, International IDEA has collaborated with several EMBs, including in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kenya, Nepal and Nigeria on an *Electoral Risk Management Tool (or ERM)*. The EMBs have adopted the Tool as part of their strategies for preventing electoral violence. The ERM Tool aims to build the capacity to understand, analyse, prevent and mitigate outbreaks of election-related violence, enabling the EMB and other bodies to respond as needed.[307] Such tools should ensure the inclusion of a gender equality perspective and consider the different types of violence that women and men may face during elections.

4.2. VOTER AND CANDIDATE REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

EMBs have the opportunity to analyse some of the potential factors that may prevent women from registering to vote prior to elections. EMBs should be cognizant of maintaining security for women before, during and after the registration process, especially in cases where women may have to travel long distances to reach a registration centre. In cases where an individual fears that public voting could potentially put her in danger, countries may implement 'anonymous' registration (also referred to as 'silent' or 'confidential').[310] Keeping voter names and identifying characteristics unpublished is especially important in cases of domestic violence.

Candidate nomination and registration procedures should be similarly examined for potential threats of VAWE from the public or within their respective party. Women might be unaware of the timeframe for presenting a candidacy or the timeframes might be short, which would disadvantage women in contexts where their financial resources, mobility or ability to travel is restricted. To mitigate

Examples of EMB violence mapping

India: The Election Commission of India conducts a Vulnerability Mapping to identify "the susceptibility of any voter or section of voters, whether or not living in a geographically identifiable area, to being wrongfully prevented from or influenced upon in relation to the exercise of [his/her] right to vote in a free and fair manner, through intimidation or use of undue influence or force of any kind on [him/her]." This includes data on vulnerable households/families and individuals/groups that have been identified as intimidating/misleading voters or instigating vulnerabilities, which can increase EMB knowledge on women at risk of experiencing VAWE.[308]

Afghanistan: Beyond the initial assessment, EMBs may also initiate ongoing monitoring and reporting on VAWE through their regional representation. Regional and local EMB offices could be called on to identify and report on VAWE trends in their areas so that appropriate measures can be adopted. In Afghanistan, a roundtable discussion organized by the EMB Gender Unit recommended that the EMB create a mechanism to collect and collate details of threats to women candidates and voters.[309]

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307 Leena Rikkila Tamang, 2012. "Elections in Nepal remain vulnerable to violence." *International IDEA*, 9 October.
308 UNDP/UN Women, 2015; UNDP, 2012.
309 Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan, 2010. "Getting the Grade? Lessons Learnt on Women's Participation in the 2010 Afghan Parliamentary Elections."
310 UNDP, 2012.

these risks, administrative requirements and the location, opening hours and security protocol of candidate registration offices should be adjusted in order to reduce the potential for conflict or violence against women candidates.

EMBs may also provide incentives to parties that commit to women's empowerment and take a strong position against VAWE and sanction violators. For example, in Liberia, the National Election Commission worked with political parties on a code of conduct. One of the aims was to avoid "the marginalisation of women through violence, intimidation and fraud." Parties agreed to "the principle of non-discrimination, not to use abusive language, and not to agitate on the basis of sex and gender."[311](Refer to Action Point 5 for more examples.)

4.3. POLITICAL CAMPAIGN PERIOD

In some countries, approximately 75 percent of VAWE incidents are perpetrated against women candidates or party supporters during the campaign period.[312] It is critical to develop methods for responding to VAWE by targeting spaces of heightened violence within political parties, such as adopting zero-tolerance policies against any person(s) who attempts to forcibly prevent a woman from running for political office. EMBs may also use gender focal points to collect data on potential security risk for women candidates.

EMBs have the unique advantage of being able to recognize and refer VAWE cases to the appropriate authorities, who may be able to impose criminal charges against perpetrators. Additionally, EMBs may distribute direct sanctions where applicable. "These may reflect sanctions imposed in cases of non-compliance with gender quotas (such as

financial penalties, censure and written/verbal sanction), incomplete nomination documentation or incomplete number of endorsements or signatures required to register."[313] (see Action Point 3 for more information)

To increase public awareness of VAWE, EMBs may partner with CSOs to promote education, especially at the community level. Additionally, EMBs can collaborate with media outlets to promote electoral transparency and gender-sensitivity in their coverage of women candidates prior to elections. Education partnerships may be reinforced by integrating gender sensitization and topics relating to women in politics or VAWE into an EMB's pre-existing civic and voter education programmes.

Finally, EMBs should ensure that they are leading in the area of VAWE prevention by integrating gender-sensitive practices and policies into their staffing and operational structures. Where explicit policies do not exist, EMBs can adopt codes of conduct that target harassment and violence against women employed by the EMB. Hiring designated gender advisors or creating gender units within the EMB may be needed for creating and continuing VAWE education, prevention and response. For example, as part of the Democratic Empowerment Project (DEP) in Tanzania – a joint programme implemented by UNDP with UN Women and UNESCO – the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) sought to curb potential for discrimination and VAW against persons with disabilities during the country's 2015 elections through several actions, including revising the Electoral Code of Conduct, developing gender-sensitive guidelines for both election observers and on voter education and the ZEC adopted an overall 'Gender and Social Inclusion Policy.'[314]

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311 DPKO/DFS-DPA, October 2007.
312 Bardall/IFES, 2011.
313 UNDP/UN Women, 2015.
314 UN Women, 2017

4.4. TRAINING AND OUTREACH

Information about the existence of VAWE, and actions to mitigate it, can be integrated into ongoing training programmes during the electoral cycle, in particular prior to the elections. For example, UNDP's Global Programme on Electoral Cycle Support (GPECS) introduced an activity on VAWE into the Gender and Elections Module of the BRIDGE (Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections) training curriculum, in order to familiarize electoral administrators and other BRIDGE participants about VAWE within the context of a broader elections training programme. The teaching module covers the causes, types and possible responses to VAWE, and assists participants to identify solutions to the issue in their communities. Groups in Pakistan, Burundi, Haiti, Nigeria, and other countries have participated in the VAWE module. It has also been adapted to contribute to training of election monitors and violence observers in Burundi and elsewhere.

Women voters are among the most frequent victims of VAWE. Educating women at the grassroots on this topic poses unique, context-specific challenges. Low levels of literacy, political sensitivities in traditional areas, cultural taboos, availability for women to attend educational activities between other duties, and fear/intimidation may all discourage outreach. Outreach strategies designed to reach large audiences with limited literacy can be adapted to the themes of VAWE, including radio and TV spots, billboards, poster campaigns, youth ambassador campaigns, community theatre, picture-box classroom sessions, etc. Given the close relation between VAWE and other forms of GBV, partnerships should be developed between service providers in the two fields to promote education. For example, health clinics serving victims of VAWE can incorporate information on VAWE into their educational materials, pamphlets and consultations.

Examples from the BRIDGE training program

In 2012, UNDP-GPECS developed a new unit for the **BRIDGE Gender and Elections** course to introduce actors to the issue of VAWE. The teaching unit covers the causes, types and consequences of VAWE and possible mitigation measures. UNDP and UN Women have collaborated in rolling out this course.

In **Haiti** in 2013, members of the Haitian election management body worked in teams to analyse the different forms of violence – physical, sexual and psychological – in their country and identify possible ways of responding to the problem in the framework of the EMB's mission.

In **Burundi** in 2014, members of the electoral commission disaggregated statistics from past elections to understand the specific nature of the problem in Burundi, to plan for prevention strategies in the 2015 elections, as well as to understand the opportunities and limits of statistical data in this area.

In **South Sudan and Sudan** in 2010, UN Women held sensitization sessions for members of the South Sudan Elections Committee, the state High Election Committees and in two conflict-sensitive regions of Sudan; including Gedaref, Red Sea, Kassala and South Darfur. In the latter, given the security conditions of the state, the training included information on the prevention of violence against women and protection of women candidates from potential electoral violence.[315]

In **Pakistan**, electoral commission members explored the gender-specific nature of some acts of violence through an insightful debate of recent events in Pakistan, including the 2007 assassination of former Prime Minister and political candidate, Benazir Bhutto. The course contributed to strategic planning for the creation of a gender unit in the EMB.

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315 UN Women. *Final Project Report*: *Support to Sudanese Women's Effective Participation in the* 2010 *Elections*.

4.5. ELECTION DAY AND POLLING ARRANGEMENTS

Studies have revealed that women voters have a higher chance of experiencing intimidation and violence on voting day than their male counterparts (especially in rural settings).[316] EMBs must pay careful attention to polling station placement, security and training of station employees in order to mitigate potential acts of VAWE. Especially in rural areas, polling stations should be placed such as to minimize travel time through recognized hotspots or "locations known to be politically sensitive due to ethnic or religious associations."[317] Poll workers and other security personnel are often some of the first responders to VAWE during elections. It is critical that EMB and polling station staff understand the various manifestations of VAWE as well as ways to mitigate and respond to it on Election Day.

Part of this training may involve recruiting more female EMB staff and preparing for the possibility of intervention by male and female police in sensitive situations. As a result of identified security risks during elections in Afghanistan, EMBs coordinated with regional and national actors to recruit and deploy more than 11,000 women agents to polling stations throughout the country. These women were responsible for conducting body searches of women wearing burqas—an effort that ensured the security of Afghan women voters and polling places on Election Day. Further information on the role of security forces in preventing and responding to VAWE is discussed in next section.

Other gender-sensitive security measures may include separate voting queues for men and women. Separating voting queues is especially important in areas where family voting is commonly practiced, or where cultural/religious norms restrict interaction between men and women. This separation helps to shield women from potential intimidation or violence and provide space for them to make their own voting decisions free from familial pressure. Vulnerable groups, including women with disabilities and the elderly, may be given priority in queuing to provide additional protection. Following voting, EMBs and other polling staff should take steps to ensure that all submitted votes remain confidential. Separate queues may be legally mandated within the electoral law, adopted systematically by the central electoral management body or implemented in an *ad hoc* manner at the discretion of the polling station president.

UN Women/Fatma Elzahraa Yassin

Women line up to vote in Egypt's 2011 parliamentary elections.

316 Bardall/IFES, 2011.
317 UNDP/UN Women, 2015.

Family voting

Family voting refers to the situation in which the heads of family (often extended or male heads of family) influence other family members in how they cast a vote. It is commonly practised in areas that have a tradition of extended and/or customary family structures that allow the dominant member of the family to take important decisions or carry out important activities affecting the family. Family voting can be a serious violation, especially when it is malicious and involves threats of violence, i.e., when it is carried out with the intent of influencing or removing the freedom of choice of a voter.[318] In these cases, family voting violates the central principle of voter secrecy. It may be enforced through coercion and intimidation, including threatening women with divorce if they do not follow the voting instructions of their family, tribe or clan.[319] Additionally, beliefs that a man would be shamed if his family members go against his voting preferences reinforce family voting norms. In some cases, women may feel that they need family permission to register and to cast a vote and accept direction on how to vote. It may also be the case that women are taught that acting against such instructions would be a sin or grounds for corporal punishment, divorce, social exclusion, and possible loss of their rights as a parent.[320]

When family voting is a cultural norm, the EMB may need to consider if polling staff recruited from the local area could also be under cultural pressure to allow family voting or could be concerned as to adverse consequences for the women if they do not allow the family to control their vote.[321] Following are actions that may be implemented in polling day management. These actions address a number of different issues, some of which may be country specific:

• Tightening the electoral code before the election or enacting clearly defined operational instructions to protect the secrecy of the vote, including prescribing specific measures for orderly operation of polling station, providing sufficient space and isolation booths in polling stations, only allowing one voter at a time in isolation booths, and issuing ballot papers one at a time;

• Prioritizing training of poll workers to comply with secrecy provisions;

• Conducting targeted public outreach to educate voters on their right to secrecy, especially among vulnerable populations such as women and illiterate voters;

• Promoting confidence and transparency by ensuring that, once a vote is cast, the EMB will protect the voters' secrecy and ensure their choice will never be revealed.[322]

For example, the **Macedonian State Election Commission** has developed and implemented a strategy to mitigate the practice of family voting. As part of a programme aimed at preventing family voting, the State Election Committee issued a directive to all staff that prevention of family and proxy voting was important.[323] It also published a strategy against family and proxy voting with the aim of ensuring a consistent framework for all government and donor projects created to address the problem. The framework acknowledges that the issue must be dealt with by using continuous activities throughout the electoral cycle.[324]

The Electoral Commission in **Papua New Guinea** found that women had become disadvantaged by "family" and "community" voting practices, wherein the male head of household or community leader would instruct the women how to vote. These practices were determined to compromise voter secrecy. In 2012, the Electoral Commission subsequently "instituted separate voting booths for men and women under the assumption that women would vote freely if their male counterparts were not present."[325]

318 Idem.
319 Bardall/IFES, 2011
320 Idem.
321 iKNOW Politics, 2009.
322 UNDP/UN Women, 2015.
323 Macedonia State Election Commission, 2010. *Strategy against Family and Proxy Voting of the State Election Commission.*
324 Section adapted from UNDP/UN Women, 2015.
325 UNDP, 2012; UNDP/UN Women, 2015.

Noeman AlSayyad/ UNDP

Electoral management bodies may use their authority over party practices and electoral processes to adopt **protocols or regulations** (see Action Point 3.4 for more information). In Mexico, several state agencies, including the National Electoral Institute and the Federal Electoral Tribunal, published a "Protocol to Attend to Violence against Women in Politics" in 2016. The document defines what VAWP is, lays out victims' rights and establishes specific responsibilities for different state agencies. Mexico's EMB must conduct educational campaigns, gather and publish data, ensure that party documents and practices do not promote VAWP, and oversee the fair distribution of party finances. The Federal Electoral Tribunal and the Federal Prosecutor's Office for Electoral Crimes may hear and adjudicate cases, and the latter will forward any cases outside its jurisdiction to the general public prosecutor's office.[326]

4.6. WORKING WITH THE POLICE AND SECURITY FORCES

The police and security forces may have key roles to play in ensuring public safety during the electoral cycle; however, their duties in relation to VAWE are most visible during the immediate electoral period. Operational planning for electoral security is necessary to assess and respond to any security risks that may impede the full participation of women in electoral processes, whether as voters or candidates. Assessing gender specific security risks, such as identifying security risks for women in rural areas, may also be a focus of police or military planning. As noted by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, "[t]he deployment of mixed militaryteams to provide electoral security can facilitate outreach to female voters, who may more readily approach female personnel with specific security concerns during the elections." Similarly, in countries where security threats to women candidates pose a risk, "security planning for elections should incorporate an assessment of security risks to both female and male candidates."[327]

Specific actions that police forces may take to address VAWE include:

• Adopting new operating practices and evaluation methods that take VAWE into account;

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326 La República (Peru), 2016.
327 DPKO, 2010. "DPKO/DFS Guidelines: Integrating a Gender Perspective into the Work of the United Nations Military Peacekeeping Operations."

- Recruiting more women officers and engaging women to report police behaviours against them;[328]

- Establishing gender focal points or gender desks, and referring the VAWE cases to them;

- Ensuring that a prompt, thorough and independent investigation is carried out into acts of VAWE;

- Providing training to the police to increase awareness on gender sensitivity, including VAWE issues;

- Ensuring that the identified perpetrator(s) are prosecuted and adequately sanctioned, and that defense and security forces involved in VAWE violations are dismissed;

- Providing the women experiencing violence with information and support services, including from the health, psychosocial, security/police and legal sectors;[329]

- Integrating a gender perspective into the research, policy and practice of defence and military institutions.[330]

Working with Police and Security Forces on VAWE Training Initiatives

Kenya: UN Women-Kenya, with support from UNDP, has developed a training facilitator's manual (draft 2017) to enhance the capacity of "duty bearers" – those with "a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights and to abstain from human rights violations" – to support survivors of VAWE using existing protocol and measures for reporting, responding, investigating and prosecuting VAW. Created in response to the GBV experienced by women and girls during Kenya's post-election violence in 2007, as well as part of broader EVAW initiatives in the country, the manual provides an overall training framework for (i) addressing gaps in "chain of evidence management", (ii) raising awareness on both the legal framework and access to justice for survivors and (iii) offering practical guidance on appropriate responses to VAWE by relevant agencies. Its survivor-centred approach covers complex issues such as how to handle disclosures of VAWE, and to provide direct support to those affected by it. The manual is also rich with information about Kenya's relevant legal framework, and provides details for health, security and justice sector responses to incidences of SGBV in elections.[331]

Tanzania: In partnership with the Network of Female Police Officers from the Tanzanian Police Force, and as part of the Democratic Empowerment Project (DEP) – a UNDP programme implemented jointly with UN Women and UNESCO – UN Women and UNDP developed a training manual on "Gender, Human Rights and the Role of the Police during Elections" ahead of the country's 2015 elections whose curriculum included components on the different forms of violence that may occur during electoral campaigns and how these affect men and women, and social groups differently. Training for police and security forces reinforced their legal obligation to take VAWE seriously, and provided guidance on how to appropriately respond. A training-of-trainers approach equipped 103 police officers who in turn trained another 6,000 police officers throughout the country. The programme also supported the Tanzania Police Force (TPF) in integrating VAW and vulnerable groups into the its Incidence Reporting and Response System (IRRS), an existing IT system that facilitates rapid responses to incidences of violence during the elections, based on VAWE typology and GBV checklists developed in partnership with the Network of Female Police Officers.[332]

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328 UNDP/UNIFEM, 2007. "Policy briefing paper: Gender Sensitive Police Reform in Post Conflict Societies"; UNDP, 2012.

329 The present publication does not cover the provision of essential services as there are comprehensive resources on this available elsewhere. See for example *Essential services package for women and girls subject to violence,* at http://www.unwomen. org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/12/essential-services-package-for-women-and-girls-subject-to-violence

330 UNDP, 2005. *Gender Mainstreaming in Practice: A Handbook.* 2nd ed. P. 125

331 UN Women et al. 2017. Electoral Gender Based Violence Training Facilitators Manual, adapted draft working manual.

332 Negrao, 2017.

4.7. POST-ELECTION PERIOD

Where they have the mandate, EMBs (and electoral tribunals) may be well positioned to continue VAWE prevention and mitigation efforts following the conclusion of elections. This may involve launching investigations and carrying out sanctions against perpetrators of VAWE (as allowed by their mandate). In court cases, EMBs can play a role by providing evidence or supporting conflict management and other electoral justice strategies.

In Zambia, for instance, the Electoral Commission has established Conflict Management Committees, including the National Conflict Management Committee (NCMC) and its affiliated District Conflict Management Committees.

The NCMC brings together 24 individuals, representing both state and non-state stakeholders, to hear complaints brought forward by women candidates and voters. Following the hearings, the Committees may decide to impose penalties against perpetrators in cases of VAWE or other electoral violations.[333]

In addition to post-election justice work, EMBs can ensure that VAWE issues are integrated into, and reported in, post-election reviews. EMBs may also continue projects to monitor and collect data on incidents of violence, which may be utilized in future education and training programmes. Part of this research should include a review of the EMB's past performance in the area of VAWE prevention as well as strategies for improvement.

Summary of electoral arrangements that can mitigate VAWE:

Pre-election Phase	Election Phase	Post-election Phase
• EMBs ensure violence monitoring or risk assessments include consideration of VAWE • Train EMB staff on VAWE and responses • Adopt measures to reduce family voting as needed • Integrate VAWE into voter education, including raising awareness about ballot secrecy and family voting • Relevant unit within EMB tasked with addressing VAWE and gender concerns • Provide protection for women candidates • Training of police and security forces on VAWE • Increase numbers of women in police forces, including in leadership positions	• Consider arrangements to ballot secrecy for voters • Election day logistics planning sensitive to VAWE (gender segregated polling stations, female security guards/sensitized police forces in high risk areas, poll workers sensitized to VAWE) • Gender-segregated polling stations if required to reduce violence or family voting pressures • Deploy female police officers at women-only polling stations • Ensure protection of election workers	• Post-election review includes gender dimension • Enforcement of sanctions against gender-related offences

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333 UNDP, 2012. See also http://www.elections.org.zm/conflict_management.php

ACTION POINT 5:

WORKING WITH POLITICAL PARTIES TO PREVENT AND REDUCE VAWE

One of the biggest challenges to women's political participation in many countries is the threats and violence women may face when becoming candidates and campaigning for election. As political parties are the most common perpetrators of violence against women in elections, they have a key role to play in reducing and preventing this type of violence.[334] As discussed in Part A, political parties may both perpetrate and protect against VAWE for women party members and women in opposition parties. There are many actions that political parties can take to address VAWE and promote women's empowerment.

Addressing VAWE must start with an internal party commitment at the core level of their founding documents and within their leadership. The legal framework and governing documents of political parties should firmly reject any form of VAWE against or by its members. Violations should be sanctioned in a timely and meaningful manner. Special units, like party women's wings, should be alert to the issue and review for it regularly. Party record-keeping should seek to document acts of VAWE to prevent it in the future and to protect women members. While there are many areas in which political parties can engage to protect women against VAWE, some of the most important include:

- Ensuring candidates and supporters comply with legislated codes of conduct;

- Addressing VAWE in internal party regulations and monitoring implementation;

- Preventing VAWE during candidate nomination processes;

- Ensuring women candidates have access to political finance;

- Providing VAWE training and sensitization to party members;

- Including VAWE in party monitoring activities;

- Supporting women in elected mandates and preventing forced resignations; and

- Providing those women experiencing violence with information about their rights as well as available national and local support resources and services, including from the health, psychosocial, security/police and legal sectors.

5.1. COMPLY WITH CODES OF CONDUCT

As discussed in Action Point 3, electoral Codes of Conduct are an important tool to regulate the behaviours of party leadership, officials, candidates, members, and agents during the campaign period. They can apply to a range of electoral stakeholders, including political parties, independent candidates, coalitions, and movements to prohibit political behaviours which contribute to VAWE.[335] The terms of the Code of Conduct represent a political agreement which can be mandated in legislation or voluntarily adopted.

International and regional organizations can also play an important role in brokering multi-party agreements on an electoral Code of Conduct. In

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334 Bardall/IFES, 2011.
335 UNDP, 2012.

southern Africa, the Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa has provided support to several countries by bring parties together to build consensus on a party code prior to elections. In 2008, NDI led discussions and development workshops in Guinea for the adoption of a party Code of Conduct that was eventually agreed to by 41 political parties. "This participatory approach to code development led nearly 87 percent of party representatives to express confidence that the code would be conducive to peaceful elections."[336]

Political party leaders can express their intent to comply with the provisions of the electoral code of conduct to reduce electoral violence and communicate this message to party members. If needed, parties may consider imposing sanctions on party supporters or candidates who do not comply with the requirements of the code of conduct.

For example, in **South Africa,** ahead of municipal elections in 2016, leaders and representatives of the 13 political parties represented in Parliament "committed themselves, their parties, candidates and members to abide by the provisions of the Electoral Code of Conduct during the 2016 Municipal Elections."[337] By signing the pledge, party leaders committed to, inter alia:

• Lead their parties in a manner that reinforces a culture of tolerance towards all other parties contesting elections;

• Counsel and advise all candidates on their party lists so that each candidate will in turn propagate a message of maximum tolerance;

• Desist from using speech or from participating in actions which will have the effect of provoking either parties' supporters or members of the general public to commit acts of intolerance or take other inflammatory actions.[340]

Codes of Conduct Examples

In **Liberia**, the National Election Commission worked with several political parties to prepare a Code of Conduct. One of the aims was to avoid "the marginalisation of women through violence, intimidation and fraud." Parties agreed to "the principle of non-discrimination, not to use abusive language, and not to agitate on the basis of sex and gender."[338]

In **Macedonia**, political parties agreed to a Code of Conduct in 2006 stating that parties would:

• "facilitate the full participation of citizens including women and other minority groups during elections

• ensure free access of citizens including women and other minority groups to all campaign events

• generally, refrain from forcing citizens to support a particular political party or candidate or to engage in, or refrain from engaging in, any political activity otherwise than in accordance with their free choice.

• support the universal concept of one-person-one-vote and discourage proxy voting."[339]

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336 Paragraph adapted from UNDP, 2012.
337 Government of South Africa, 2016. "Electoral Commission on signing of Electoral Code of Conduct by national political parties." 16 May.
338 DPKO/DFS-DPA, 2007.
339 NDI. "Republic of Macedonia: Code of Conduct of Political Parties for Free and Fair Parliamentary Elections."
340 Idem

5.2. ADDRESS VAWE IN INTERNAL PARTY REGULATIONS AND MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION

The internal functioning and operations of political parties are governed by legal regulations, such as the constitution, electoral law or a political party law, and, more commonly, by internal party regulations. The official documents and statements of a political party are important, not only for providing a vision of the party, but also establishing rules to entrench that vision, which may include enshrining a framework for gender equality.[341] An important step is for political parties to amend party rules to ensure a strong and clear statement of their intent to mitigate and address VAWE, including for party candidates and party supporters. Parties can also ensure internal rules are in line with provisions in electoral codes and national legislation to prevent VAWE, where they have been enacted.

While the adoption of a statement on VAWE in the parties' regulations is an important first step, it is essential that compliance by party members and candidates is monitored, and incidents of VAWE recorded. The OAS *Declaration on Political Harassment and Violence against Women* (2016) includes an action point directed at political parties, recommending that they "create their own internal instruments and mechanisms to prevent, punish and eradicate" VAWP, including by conducting training and awareness raising.[342]

This could be done by the party's women's wing or a similar body. Women's wings are internal party sections that aim to strengthen women's representation and participation within the party and in the political process in general, and also seek solutions to common problems on the party agenda.[343] Alongside with addressing gender equality in its statutes and regulations, the Citizens' Action Party in **Costa Rica** has established a Prosecutor's Office on Gender Equality, which is mandated to monitor, report and advise on how the relevant regulations are being implemented.[344]

5.3. PROHIBIT VAWE DURING CANDIDATE NOMINATION PROCESSES

The decision to run for elected office is one of the most important and difficult decisions for any political aspirant. For women particularly, the effects of VAWE can feature prominently in the candidate nomination process. Creating a safe, harassment-free environment for women to present themselves as candidates is essential, and every effort should be made to combat VAWE within political parties. One of the key factors affecting women's participation in elections is motivation to self-nominate in the candidate recruitment phase. Women may be harassed, insulted, intimidated, or threatened into not presenting themselves as candidates during the nomination period or eventually withdrawing their candidacies.

Some parties openly reject women candidates; in the North West Frontier Province of **Pakistan**, for example, women were forcibly obstructed from voting or contesting primary elections as candidates. The situation was so aggravated that five major political parties signed agreements on legal stamp papers declaring that they would not allow women to file nomination papers or cast their votes in elections. According to UNDP, "[t]he signatories further threatened to launch a campaign to force 25 women candidates who did file their nomination papers to withdraw and warned civil society organizations to stop mobilizing women and supporting their participation in elections...As a result, female candidates and their families were harassed and pressured into withdrawing from contesting the elections."[345]

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341 UNDP/NDI, 2012. *Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties: A Guide to Promote Women's Political Participation.*
342 MESECVI, 2015.
343 iKNOW Politics, 2007. *Consolidated Response on Establishing Women's Party Sections.*
344 Beatriz Llanos and Kristen Sample, 2009. *From Words to Action: Best Practices for Women's Participation in Latin American Political Parties*, International IDEA.
345 UN Women Pakistan, 2016.

Parties can reduce the opportunities for undue influence on women candidates by ensure that party rules clearly articulate the rules for candidate nomination. "For women, bureaucracy-based systems that have incorporated rules guaranteeing women's representation are a significant advantage. When the rules are unwritten, it becomes much harder to devise and implement a strategy to break into the inner circle of power, and there is no accountability when the rules are not implemented."[346] In political parties that have weak internal organization and unclear rules of recruitment, competition for party candidate slots can be fierce and can limit women's opportunities. Ideally, candidate nomination processes should be both formalized and transparent, which would allow for greater fairness in representation and competition.[347]

Political party leaders can also help mitigate violence and intimidation in the process of candidate selection or party primary elections by sending clear directives to party members that violence will not be tolerated, by adopting relevant sanctions and by ensuring their enforcement.

5.4. POLITICAL FINANCE

One of the greatest factors that ultimately deters women from entering politics is access to political finance. Lack of funds can prevent women from raising a deposit to secure their candidature within their political parties, as well as severely restrict campaign activities if they are indeed selected to run. This may be a particular challenge as women typically have an unequal and lower economic opportunities and status than men and gender socialization often discourages women from learning the skills to raise funds on their own behalf.[348] As political campaigns largely depend on the availability of funding, lack of access to finance or economic dependence on family and male heads-of-household may greatly restrict the ability for women aspirants to run—let alone be elected—for political office.

When such access is intentionally denied to women by their spouses or family members, or family members expressly withhold a woman's access to financial resources to enforce dependency or coercively prevent them from running for office, economic VAWE is occurring. To that end, "economic harm, coercion or abuse can be classified as electoral violence when it is used to influence electoral behaviour or choices."[349]

Economic forms of VAWE are especially prevalent during candidate nomination and recruitment. They may include theft, preventing a spouse from acquiring resources, forcibly limiting women's expenditure on essential goods, spending a spouse's resources without their consent/creating debt, or preventing a spouse from seeking employment to finance a campaign. "In traditional, patriarchal households, women's political participation, or even the expression of divergent political views, may be punished by increasing labour burdens, withholding financial allowances, diminished bride dowries or even reduction of food-rations within a household."[350]

Curbing economic forms of VAWE during candidate recruitment and campaigning must be done in both the public and private spheres. Publicly financing women aspirants and candidates through party coffers and publicly available funds is one approach; likewise, educating potential women candidates to understand the costs and options for financing their campaigns can help overcome this gap. In addition, the adoption of clear rules for candidate nomination and selection by political parties can contribute to reducing the influence of campaign finance on women candidates.

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346 UNDP/NDI, 2011.
347 Idem.
348 Ballington and Kahane, 2014.
349 Bardall/IFES, 2011.
350 Adams et al, 2008; Saunders, 2006 in Bardall/IFES, 2011.

Examples of levelling the financial field for women candidates

- In **Canada**, the Liberal Party established the Judy LaMarsh Fund, which is a party mechanism for money to be raised and spent on women candidates to help them get elected to parliament. The Liberal Party has direct control over how the money is spent and which women candidates are prioritized in receiving funds.[351]

- Some political parties in **Costa Rica and Panama** have mandated that financial resources be designated for women's activities, including training. Women's wings of parties also provide leadership in this area.[352]

- In **Nicaragua**, "the women's commission from the Partido Liberal Constitucionalista created a leadership school for women, and the Partido Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional also created mechanisms to work with women's organizations to train women and organize electoral activities. The party established that 30 percent of state subsidies must be allocated to women's political training."[353]

- In **Haiti**, political parties pay reduced candidate filing fees if at least 30 percent of their lists are women. The fees are also significantly lower for women candidates representing political parties, in order to redress the unequal economic status and access of women and men political aspirants.[354]

5.5. VAWE TRAINING AND SENSITIZATION

The campaign period must provide safe spaces for women to communicate with constituents, build their reputations, gain name recognition, and convene political events. Candidate training for women should integrate VAWE into the curriculum so that women candidates recognize the diverse forms VAWE takes and the tools that are available to combat it.

It is also in the interest of political parties to conduct voter education to ensure that their supporters register and turn out on Election Day.[355] Political parties invest large amounts of money and time into conducting voter information campaigns, which provides an opportunity to sensitize supporters about the existence and forms of VAWE, and to communicate that it will not be tolerated by the party. Voter information campaigns should highlight the importance of women's votes for society as a whole

and emphasize their right to participate equally as voters and candidates without fear of violence and intimidation. Such outreach may also highlight the existence of family voting practices, where applicable, and emphasize the secrecy of vote as a means to combat family voting pressures.

Political party outreach and trainings should adapt messages to fit the particular context, culture, literacy levels, and the political situation in each country. Ensuring a learning environment that is safe and where women do not feel intimidated is important. If necessary, women-only trainings may be considered. In some communities, women may be segregated from men and have different levels of freedom of movement and education.[356] All voter education teams should include women and, if necessary, could be comprised entirely of women.[357]

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351 UNDP/NDI, 2011.
352 Ballington and Kahane, 2014.
353 Idem.
354 Idem.
355 UNDP/NDI, 2011.
356 DPKO/DFS, 2007. p. 28. Quoted in UNDP/NDI, 2011.
357 Idem.

5.6. INCLUDE VAWE IN PARTY MONITORING ACTIVITIES

Political parties have the important task of undertaking a watchdog function by closely monitoring the voting process and checking for irregularities. Vote buying, intimidation of voters, ballot fraud, and poor organization undermine the integrity of elections. Poor security can affect women voters and candidates in different ways than men, especially in places where there is a high threat of gender-based violence, which may be prevalent particularly in post-conflict elections.[358]

Political parties usually keep a watchful eye through the presence of party agents or monitors during the registration and voting processes to ensure that voters are able to cast their ballots without intimidation.[359] This can certainly include monitoring for incidents of VAWE, together with ensuring a gender perspective in the monitoring practices employed, such as ensuring that checklists to be completed by monitors include questions related to family voting, violence and intimidation, or other violations that impact on women's free participation in the election.[360]

Political parties have the responsibility of recruiting and training party agents, and parties may actively seek to recruit women to fulfil this watchdog task. This is particularly important in polling stations allocated for women only. The presence of men in such polling stations may be prohibited, in cases where it might intimidate women voters. The presence of party monitors may also have other benefits; not only do they contribute through their visibility to ensuring women's safety while voting, but they may also keep their own party supporters in check, ensuring they do not engage in intimidation of voters or reporting such incidents.[361]

5.7. SUPPORTING ELECTED WOMEN

Ensuring secure political participation is not limited to the electoral process. Efforts need to be made to combat violence and intimidation that leads to high turnover rates and resignations of elected women and women holding political mandates. Political parties have a role to play in ensuring that the elected party caucus is aware of the potential for violence to affect women representatives, and ensuring that women are not pressured from within their ranks to resign their seats in favour of men.

Summary of actions political parties can take to mitigate VAWE:

Pre-election Phase	Election Phase	Post-election Phase
• Comply with legislated codes of conduct and sensitize party members • Update party regulations and statutes to address VAWE • Monitoring and enforcement of party policy and practices on VAWE • Ensure transparent candidate selection rules and access to political finance • Introduce issue of VAWE to trainings and voter outreach materials and efforts	• Train party agents/observers to monitor VAWE • Recruit and deploy more women as political party agents	• Ensure women elected representatives are supported in their functions • Ensure no women are forced to resign seats in favour of men

358 DPKO/DFS, 2007, p.31. Quoted in UNDP/NDI, 2011.
359 UNDP/NDI, 2011.
360 OSCE/ODIHR, 2004. p. 40.
361 Section appears in UNDP/NDI, 2011.

ACTION POINT 6:
RAISING AWARENESS AND CHANGING NORMS

Ultimately, VAWE cannot be eliminated unless the public – and individuals – understands how it impacts communities, diminishes' women's human rights and disrupts the democratic process. Various actors can play a part in raising awareness and disseminating information on VAWE. Doing so reinforces the objectives of the previous action points by contributing to a common and comprehensive understanding of VAWE's occurrence, forms and means of prevention.

It is important to note, however, that although awareness-raising is an important component of a VAW prevention strategy, this must be accompanied by other interventions aimed at addressing the gender stereotypes, social norms, attitudes, behaviours and practices that tolerate and condone such violence, and that are rooted in gender inequalities and unbalanced power relations between men and women. Evidence shows that effective interventions to prevent VAW employ multiple methods (media and awareness raising campaigns combined with group training on gender equality and with women's economic empowerment initiatives), at multiple levels (society, community, family/relationships and individual), in a complementing manner.[362] Although reviewing such interventions may be beyond the scope of this Guide, it is relevant to note that the elimination of VAWE will require prevention measures beyond the world of politics and elections and, to the extent possible, linkages to these VAW measures should be made.

Awareness-raising approaches may include, but are not limited to:

- Raising awareness through campaigns;

- Working with the media to raise awareness;

- Engaging legislators and parliamentary networks; and

- Including men in the efforts to prevent and respond to VAWE.

6.1. RAISING AWARENESS THROUGH CAMPAIGNS

Awareness-raising on the issue of VAWE is important for all stakeholders involved in the electoral process, from including aspirants and candidates, party members, elected leaders, and those involved in administering elections, like the EMB and its staff. It is also important for women who have experienced VAWE to speak out about their experiences as a means of raising awareness with other women leaders and candidates. Various organizations have been instrumental in spearheading campaigns and convening workshops to promote awareness of VAWE. The work of CSOs can be particularly important. There are several examples of both national and international organizations supporting campaigns against electoral violence.

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362 UN Women, 2015a. *A Framework to Underpin Action to Prevent Violence Against Women.* http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/11/prevention-framework

Examples of awareness-raising campaigns

- In **Bolivia** in 2014**,** UN Women, together with the Ministry for Autonomies and the National Confederation of Peasant Women Bartolina Sisa, conducted several awareness-raising and training workshops targeting municipal authorities and female leaders to strengthen the capacities to tackle political harassment and violence in the departments of Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. Proposals for the implementation of Law 243 were developed by the municipal authorities and women leaders who directly faced political harassment and violence.

- In **Burundi** in 2010**,** as the threat of violence increased over the course of the electoral period, women's associations took action to prevent and mitigate election-related violence. In particular, Le Collectif des Associations et ONGs Féminines du Burundi and Dushirehamwe launched the White Scarves for Peace campaign under the theme 'women count for peace in Burundi.' The campaign's objectives were to demonstrate Burundian women's rejection of violence and to invite the women of Burundi to prevent violence within their communities. UNDP coordinated with Panos Paris, the United Nations Office in Burundi and International Alert to support the campaign, including providing communications expertise and material support of 10,000 white scarves. The campaign received much media coverage on local television and radio stations, contributing to the prevention of violence during a tense time in the electoral period.[363]

- In **Ghana**, ahead of the 2016 presidential elections, the National Peace Council, a Ghanaian national body whose aim is to raise awareness surrounding the use of non-violent strategies in response to conflict through networking, coordination and campaigning, had the confidence of presidential candidates and the public to convene a peace accord at the Accra Declaration with UNDP's facilitation. Critical issues such as electoral violence and violence against women were addressed with UNDP's support.[364]

- In **Kenya** in 2012**,** UN Women worked to enhance awareness through multi-stakeholder initiatives such as a program with the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, the media, and two local civil society platforms (the UWIANO Platform for Peace and the USALAMA Platform) to educate and integrate mechanisms for responding to electoral-related VAW issues.[365]

- **In Sierra Leone**, in 2007, women's CSOs launched a violence-free election advocacy campaign, supported by UN Women, targeting political parties in response to the rise in political violence. The campaign was launched in the southern town of Bo amid violent outbreaks between rival political groups. The women's groups, accompanied by brass bands, marched through the town with peace messages and were addressed by the Mayor of the town. Peace messages were subsequently delivered to political party headquarters in the four provinces of Sierra Leone. In the capital Freetown, political party heads or their representatives committed to violence-free elections. This initiative was taken up by other stakeholders and up scaled by UNDP and UN Mission in Sierra Leone.[366]

- In **Zimbabwe**, ahead of the 2010 elections, the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA), a domestic organization, conducted a campaign "Act Now against Political Violence," a year-long project against political violence targeting women. As the NCA describes it, the "campaign…seeks among other things to tap into the regional experience to address the scourge of political violence as the country approaches yet another election by raising awareness, building support structures, naming and shaming perpetrators as well as building the capacity of women and communities at large to deal with VAWE.[367]

363 UN Security Council, 2010, S/2010/608. *Seventh report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi*, 30 November; UNDP, 2014. *Promoting Gender Equality in Electoral Assistance: Lessons Learned in Comparative Perspective. Country Report for Burundi.*

364 Example provided by Thomas Rossignol, UNDP, April 2017.

365 UN Women. *Kenya Annual Work Plan for* 2012. Unpublished.

366 Correspondence with Jebbeh Foster, UN Women Advisor on Peace and Security in ESA, 30 January 2017.

367 National Constitutional Assembly, 2010. "Campaign Against Violence Targeting Women Launched." December 14.
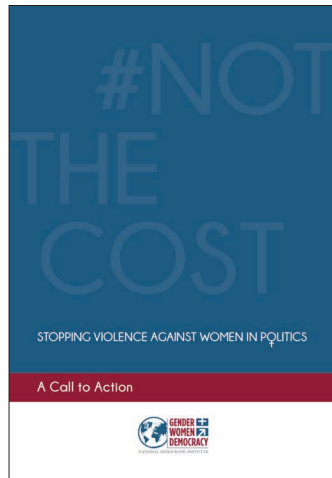
In March 2016, a global advocacy campaign was launched by the NDI called **#NotTheCost**. While not focusing on VAWE specifically, this Call to Action was aimed at building a common platform to start a global conversation about stopping violence against women in politics, including what it is and what solutions are available.[368] The Call to Action includes an action plan, which outlines key activities that can be undertaken by different stakeholders, including by global and regional institutions, governments and parliaments, political parties, civil society, justice and security sector and electoral observers and authorities. The NDI website (https://www.ndi.org/not-the-cost) includes a link where interested users can sign up to join the global call to action to stop violence against women in politics and to report any incidences of violence against politically active women.

6.2. WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

The OAS *Declaration on Political Harassment and Violence against Women* (2016) notes the importance of engaging in "awareness-raising campaigns on the problem of political harassment and/or violence against women for the general public," and outlines how the media, in particular,

can take action. This includes educating media professionals on VAWP, and encouraging the media, advertising companies and social networks to develop codes of ethics about VAWP, emphasizing the need to present women in a "fair, respectful, broad and varied manner...eliminating sexist stereotypes."[369] This provides a useful starting point for engaging media organizations.

A number of organizations have sought to work with the media to promote gender-sensitive reporting. For example, in Jordan in 2013, a training workshop was conducted by the Jordan Media Institute in partnership with UNESCO on gender-sensitive reporting on elections. The training aimed to "stimulate a dialogue on gender equality and engaging participants in a process tailored to their context and identifying feasible steps by journalists that could have positive practical implications on gender sensitive reporting."[370]

International IDEA and UN Women developed the publication *Election Coverage from a Gender Perspective: A Media Monitoring Manual* in 2011, which identifies how monitoring gender variables in media coverage of elections may inform the work of the EMB, and also includes issues of violence against women.[371] The media's role in preventing and reporting VAWE may be integrated into other elections trainings, such as the BRIDGE training programme for electoral administrators. However, these monitoring tactics must take into account the reality that reports of violence against women are significantly less likely to be picked up by the media compared to reports of violence against men.[372]

Additionally, the rise of VAWP through online and mobile media platforms has become a growing concern for women parliamentarians: "For example, the cases of British MP Stella Creasy (2013) and Jess Phillips (2016) mushroomed rapidly, with Creasy receiving up to 50 online threats per hour

368 NDI, 2016. *#NotTheCost: Action Plan*.
369 MESECVI, 2015.
370 UNESCO, July 2013. *Media and Elections Journal,* No. 1.
371 International IDEA and UN Women, 2011. *Election Coverage from a Gender Perspective. A Media Monitoring Manual.*
372 Bardall/IFES, 2011.

for a period of 12 hours, and Phillips, who reported receiving over 600 rape threats and was subjected to some 5,000 Twitter notifications of people discussing whether or not they would sexually assault her."[373] Campaigns such as "Take Back the Tech!" have attempted to place an emphasis on tracking forms of media harassment against women globally through visual mapping techniques.[374] While the website does not specifically categorize incidents of violence related to politics or elections, the map's focus on new media violence emphasizes the role of cyberspace and mobile platforms as a growing landscape for violence prevention.

6.3. ENGAGING LEGISLATORS AND PARLIAMENTARY NETWORKS

Parliamentarians have a leading role to play in breaking the silence on VAWE by sensitizing their constituents and fellow lawmakers and advocating for solutions and appropriate legislative responses. Networks of women parliamentarians are growing rapidly, both nationally and regionally. These networks offer a forum to bring the issue of VAWE to the forefront.

The **Inter-Parliamentary Union** (IPU) has been at the forefront of efforts to engage legislators by convening parliamentarians from different regions to discuss and debate the issues of VAWE and VAWP. For example, in 2012, the IPU and UN Women organized a parliamentary event on the occasion of the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women entitled, "Parliamentary Strategies for Tackling Violence against Women and Girls," in March 2012. The event brought together more than 100 parliamentarians from all regions countries to discuss how women legislators can fight VAW, including VAWE.

In 2016, the IPU launched the results of a global survey, "Sexism, Harassment and Violence against Women Parliamentarians," based on in-depth interviews with 55 women MPs from 39 countries. The study reveals that over 80 percent of participants experienced some form of psychological violence, and 44 percent said they had received threats of death, rape, beatings, or abduction during their parliamentary terms. At the IPU's 135th Assembly, October 2016, a resolution entitled "The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference" was unanimously adopted by parliamentarians. It calls on "men and women parliamentarians to work together on the development and effective implementation of legislation and policies on harassment and violence against women, including in politics, and to collaborate in this endeavour with the relevant government agencies, civil society and other stakeholders, including technology companies, on tackling online abuse."[375]

In December 2016, the 5th **Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians** Conference convened in London to discuss the issue of 'Political Violence against Women.' Parliamentarians from several Commonwealth countries discussed the parliament's role in raising awareness of VAWP, and examined how the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association could protect and promote women. Specific measures under consideration include establishing an Observer and Inquiry Commission under

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373 L. Döing, 2013. "British banknote prompts hazing on social media." *Deutsch Welle*. 4 August; Laura Hughes, 2016. "Labour MP Jess Phillips receives more than 600 rape threats in one night." *The Telegraph*.

374 See https://www.takebackthetech.net/mapit/

375 IPU, 2016a. "The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective." Resolution adopted at the 135*th IPU Assembly*, Geneva, 27 October.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians where women's grievances can be redressed, and creating parliamentary codes of conduct that address sexual harassment and associated complaint-settlement procedures. Parliaments were encouraged to establish women's parliamentary caucuses as a gateway to solidarity in ending gender-based political violence. The role of civil society and the media in denouncing unacceptable behaviour against women was also highlighted.[376]

In February 2015, the **OAS Inter-American Commission of Women** organized a roundtable discussion entitled "Political Violence Against Women: A Hemispheric Challenge," as part of the activities commemorating Women's Day of the Americas (18 February), and International Women's Day (8 March). The event brought together delegates from the 34 member states to review different legislative initiatives in the region to take the issues of VAWE from impunity to law, and from law to implementation.[377] **ParlAmericas**, the network of the national legislatures of OAS member States, has also actively addressed the issue of VAWP. Political harassment or violence was identified as a priority issue during a strategic planning session held by delegates of the Group of Women Parliamentarian's gathering in Mexico City in 2014.

6.4. INCLUDING MEN AND BOYS IN THE EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO VAWE

Finally, specific outreach must be directed towards men and boys. Evidence shows that working with men and boys together with women and girls to address violence and inequality has positive results.[378] Working with men as partners helps to identify these allies in the fight against this problem. According to the World Health Organization,

there is an ever-increasing number of men who are diligently working to end violence against women and promote gender equality. Leaving men and boys out of efforts to end violence separates them from the solutions to violence, reaffirms gender norms around male violence and leaves the burden of addressing violence on women's shoulders.[379]

Peace initiatives and platforms targeting youth constitute one way to positively engage those young men and boys who might otherwise be targeted by rival political factions, and cajoled with promises of money and gifts to foment violence during elections. The Women's Situation Room (WSR) in Uganda ahead of 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary elections is one such example of how a women-led initiative effectively convinced many young Ugandans – struggling to get by in context where youth unemployment is extremely high and growing – that a peaceful electoral process and transfer of democratic power was of more importance to their future prospects than the short-term gains of receiving money to carry out violent acts. Working with youth associations of informal workers, the WSR organizers conducted specific outreach to the most at-risk youth groups and gangs and offered an opportunity to

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376 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, 2016. 62nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference: Conference Concluding Statement, issued 21 December. P. 7.

377 OAS, 2015. "Commission of Women of the OAS Debated Political Violence Against Women in the Hemisphere." Press Release, 25 February.

378 WHO, 2009. "Why engage men in the fight to end violence against women and girls?"

379 Idem.

play a central role in shaping the future of their country, to be the harbingers of peace messages to their peers, and to gain skills by training and organizing others to that end. The youth were encouraged to contribute their own and unique ideas for how they could creatively disseminate peace messages by word of mouth and social media, including in harder-to-reach slum areas typically targeted for violence. This "snowball" effect helped reach more than 3,000 youth who, through their messages of peace, offered their peers alternatives to violence and a more hopeful vision of the future.[380]

Male parliamentarians can be especially influential advocates by working with their fellow members of parliament, and by engaging with constituents on the ground. The IPU resolution adopted in 2016, "The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference," calls for "political leaders and individual men and women parliamentarians to condemn acts of harassment, intimidation and violence against women candidates and parliamentarians, including online and in social media; and also calls on parliaments to adopt legal and practical measures to prevent and punish such acts."[381]

Finally, the "HeforShe" campaign is a solidarity movement for gender equality developed by UN Women to engage men and boys as advocates and agents of change for the achievement of gender equality and women's rights. The overall goal of the campaign is to spread awareness and spark action on the responsibility that men and boys have in eliminating discrimination and violence against women and girls. The "HeforShe Action Kit for Parliaments" provides guidance on how male parliamentarians can engage with the campaign and take action to reduce violence against women, including through introducing or co-sponsoring bills on gender equality, and using existing parliamentary mechanisms to engage with gender advocates, such as civil society representatives on issues such as VAWP and VAWE.

Summary of actions that can be taken to mitigate VAWE across the electoral cycle:

• Awareness raising campaigns to prevent VAWE

• Adapt training programmes to introduce VAWE

• Civic outreach materials are adapted to the issues of VAWE

• Commitment to report on VAWE in the media

• Capacity building for media on VAWE

• Media monitoring for gender bias

• Engage with legislators and parliamentary networks

• Engage with men as allies and influential advocates

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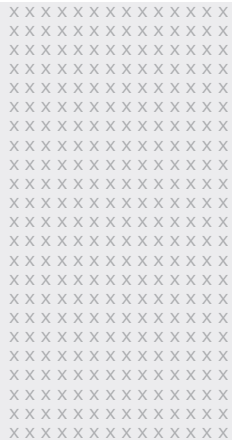
380 UN Women, 2016. "Case Study: Women Situation Room Uganda," unpublished internal report.
381 IPU, 2016.

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