

Violence against Women in Politics: IFES Submission to the OHCHR Special Rapporteur

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*IFES Submission to Dr. Dubravka Šimonović,
the OHCHR Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women,
its causes and consequences*

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Preface

For over three decades, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has worked to advance good governance and support *all* citizens' rights to participate in credible elections. We recognize that violence against women in politics is a substantial threat to the integrity of the electoral process – it can affect women's participation as voters, candidates, election officials, activists, and political party leaders, and it undermines the free, fair, and inclusive democratic processes.

IFES works to document, prevent, and end violence against women in politics through our projects on four continents and through our cutting-edge research. We share this commitment across the world, and both men and women at IFES work to increase awareness about the issue and to instigate action to address it.

This submission in response to the call issued by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its Causes and Consequences demonstrates our commitment to combat violence against women in politics. It identifies the many forms of violence against women worldwide and understand how this violence – be it physical or other – contributes to the under-representation and political disempowerment of women worldwide. The SRVAW may also gain insight into the many routes national and international partners can take to support women and reduce the obstacles they face to access justice and effect political change. With our work on gender inclusiveness around the world, IFES prioritizes the empowerment of women and girls as a crucial component of healthy and resilient democracies.



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Methodology

The present submission was assembled through a survey of IFES' field offices in over two dozen countries worldwide. In all, responses were received from a dozen offices. Responses varied in content and format, based on each country office's unique work on this issue. IFES recognizes that VAWE is a nearly universal problem that is not tied to any specific level of socio-economic advancement or 'degree' of democracy, but that it is also a problem that has unique manifestations in each country where it occurs. We work with a common definition and understanding of the problem of VAWE (as presented below) to develop and implement adapted responses in each country where we work. Thus the responses received in response to the institutional survey varied substantially in form and content, and have been assembled in the present format consistent with the specific questions.

Responses to survey questions are compiled in the present document. In addition, IFES conducts in-depth, field based VAWE assessments. These more lengthy reports are included in annex and individual responses are not included in the present compiled document. Finally, at the time of writing, IFES is mid-course in producing five additional VAWE assessments, which will become available in the coming months:

- Lebanon ('real-world' VAWE)
- Papua New Guinea (real-world VAWE)
- Sri Lanka (online VAWE)
- Ukraine (online VAWE)
- Zimbabwe (online and real-world VAWE)

A brief note on the use of acronyms: As one of the earliest groups to publish on this topic, IFES' initial publications adapted the acronym "VAWIE". In the intervening years, a plethora of other acronyms have emerged around the topic from authors worldwide. At the time of present submission, IFES is in the process of transitioning to adapt harmonized acronyms, VAWE and VAWP, consistent with the United Nations programming guidance.¹ Thus, both terms appear across the following content and should be understood to refer to the same phenomenon.

¹ Julie. Ballington, G. Bardall & G. Borovsky. "Preventing violence against women in Elections: A programming guide". UNDP – UN Women. 2017. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/11/preventing-violence-against-women-in-elections>

Definition

Violence against women in elections and politics (VAWE/P) refers to types of violence that exist in the exercise of political competition and governance in (at least nominally) democratic states and during democratization processes.²

Although it has some characteristics in common with the gendered dimensions of conflict and civil war as well as with domestic gender-based violence, it is different in its distinct political nature as well as in its material manifestations including its forms, perpetrators and common victims. Most importantly, it is distinct from wartime and/or domestic violence in terms of its impacts: VAWE/P is not only a manifestation of inequality but also, significantly, a mechanism that formally institutionalizes women's subordinate position in society by coercively excluding them from state governance.³

IFES understands the term “violence against women in elections/politics” (VAWE/P) to be an umbrella for several distinct but related issues. Violence against women in politics is understood as the supra-category encompassing violence that takes place outside the direct electoral process but within the context of peace-time politics. VAWE is, as the name suggests, restricted to violence directly connected to an electoral process.

IFES defines the broad umbrella of violence against women in elections (VAWE) as “Any harm or threat of harm committed against women with the intent and/or impact of interfering with their free and equal participation in the electoral process during the electoral period. It includes harassment, intimidation, physical harm or coercion, threats, and financial pressures, and it may be committed in the home or other private spaces, or in public spaces. These acts may be directed at women in any of their roles as electoral stakeholders (e.g. voters, media, political actors, state actors, community leaders, or electoral officials).”⁴

Within this umbrella, there are two types of VAWE/P: gender motivated political violence and gender-differentiated political violence. These reflect distinct but equal components of gender-based violence against women as defined by the Council of Europe: “Violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately[.]”⁵

- **“...Because she is a woman”**: Gender-motivated political violence (GMPV) is harm that violates an individual's or groups' political rights on the basis of their gender identity. This distinct form of violence is motivated by a desire to repress, deter, control, or otherwise coerce the political rights of the victims because of the victim's gender. Where GMPV specifically targets women in order to enforce patriarchal control of democratic institutions, it may be described as *violence against women in politics*.
- **“...That affects women disproportionately”**: The second key concept is gender differentiation in the manifestations of politically motivated violence (gender-differentiated political violence,

² Bardall, G. “Violence, Politics and Gender”. *Contentious Politics and Political Violence*. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics. Feb. 2018.

³ *ibid*

⁴ IFES. “VAWIE: A Framework for Assessment, Monitoring, and Response” 2017.
<http://www.ifes.org/publications/violence-against-women-elections>

⁵ Art. 3 d, Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

GDPV). Simply put, women experience political violence in different ways and frequencies than men do. The most notable differences are in the types of political violence that women experience more frequently than men (e.g., sexual, psychological, economic), the locations where political violence occurs (including in domestic and cyber spheres) and the perpetrators involved (including community, family, and intimate partners). As with

These distinctions are vital because different types of violence call for different types of responses, as discussed below. They are important to distinguish because overextending the concept or arbitrarily attributing motives poses a risk of diluting the issue beyond usefulness or even of compounding harm. For example, we recognize the damaging impact of everyday sexism and symbolic forms of repression as contributing or contextual factors to VAWE/P, but IFES intentionally excludes them when quantifying acts of VAWE/P. Likewise, in order to best support law enforcement and security management around political processes, we believe it is important to avoid reductionist or essentialist approaches that view any violent act where woman is harmed as an act of gender-motivated violence. Instead, by understanding patterns of violence disproportionately experienced by women in political spaces as well as acts clearly directed at women *because* they are women, IFES adapts targeted responses to help protect, prevent and prosecute acts of VAWP/E.

For a full presentation of terminology please refer to “Violence, Politics and Gender”. *Contentious Politics and Political Violence*. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics. Feb. 2018. G. Bardall.

For a full discussion of gender-motivated v. gender-differentiated violence please refer to “How Gender Shapes Political Violence: Disentangling Context, Motives, Cultural Scripts, and Social Structures”. 2017. G. Bardall, Elin Bjarnegård & Jennifer M. Piscopo.

For a discussion about symbolic VAWP please refer to “Is ‘symbolic’ violence form Violence against Women in Politics?”. 2018. G. Bardall.

Examples

*Please provide **examples** of violence against women in politics? These may be acts committed against any category of politically active women (e.g. women candidates, aspirants, elected/appointed officials, public servants...) impeding women's political participation, on equal terms with men, at all levels of decision-making.*

VAWP is deeply rooted in culture, tradition and the status of women

Nepal: “Nepal has a long history of trying to address violence against women in all sectors, including politics but the situation has not changed. Its roots are patriarchal attitudes, laws, practices, religions, cultures and educational systems, as well as economic inequality between men and women and the prevalence of violence against women, among other factors.

On the one hand, women don't get an opportunity to participate in policy making even though they are as capable as men. Women in executive bodies such as ministries is yet to be accepted. On the other hand, there are less women who can compete with male colleagues and traditional mindsets towards women have not changed yet. Out of 45 central committee members of the newly formed joint communist party in power, only three are women.”

Pakistan: The reasons behind violence against women in politics may vary again, like many in Pakistan think that politics is a male domain only. They quote purdah as one of the main impediments to women participating in politics. A large percentage feel that a supportive husband is needed to prevent VAWIP and most feel that women should not ignore their domestic responsibilities even after being elected.

There are different reasons behind violence against women in politics such as cultural resistance, discrimination patriarchy, weak legal framework, impunity of criminals, religious extremism and religious misconceptions and unequal social power structures. Religious, cultural, and social norms and beliefs are largely the causal factors for harmful practices resulting in violence against women. Women face substantial, systemic challenges in Pakistan.

Afghanistan: “There are challenges which Afghan women are particularly facing at the time of using their right of citizenship in political participation. Hindrances may come from multiple side for example in term of inadequate Education, Cultural and Structural limitations, Ideological factor, Political and Economic factor, Practice of proxy voting, Violence against women”

Macedonia: According to the OSCE/ODIHR report of the Local elections 2017 in Macedonia⁶ “The promotion of women's participation in public life did not prominently feature in campaigns. During rallies, female candidates were often on the main stage, but rarely spoke. On average 23 per cent of attendees

⁶ <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/fyrom/367246?download=true>

at rallies observed were women; a lower women's participation rate was noted at rallies in ethnic Albanian areas. Within campaign management teams, women did not hold prominent leadership positions."

VAWP is tied to domestic violence and perceived marital/family obligations

Nepal: "Domestic violence is the major challenge facing women in Nepal, even for elected women/political leaders. As in most patriarchal society, women in Nepal are not getting the chance to work freely and have to take approval from their husband/father in law/father/brother for each meeting, discussion. For instance, there are some news of Terai, elected women have not attending the meetings of council, instead of their presence their husband are taking part of it. A recent incident happened with vice chair (deputy mayor) of Godavari Village municipality; she was beaten by her husband and the news says that she has been beaten in this way for two decades."

Sri Lanka: In the most recent elections, "Women's suitability as a candidate was framed on the grounds of her husband's conduct, her family credentials and the like, all of which contributes to the narrative of purity.

- While campaigning, women were more likely to be questioned about their husbands and families. Women reported feeling "psychologically affected" by the focus on their families (i.e. concerns about how their campaign affected their children and husbands)
- Women candidates noted that their husbands faced humiliating comments because their wives were contesting the election. Questions like "did you sell your wife to the head of the party" and "how much cash did you receive by allowing your wife to contest the election" are two examples.

Papua New Guinea: Family voting is a large problem, particularly in the Highlands, where men instruct their wives to vote a certain way. A 2007 election observer in the Highlands reported a group of men chanting "we do not support women's rights to vote separately from men as we have already paid the bride price of pigs and money, they are ours" in response to reports of separate polling lines for women.

Further, PNG has among the highest rates of domestic violence in the world. Much of the violence in PNG occurs in the home, and limits women's ability to express themselves politically. Domestic violence was not criminalized until 2013, and the law not implemented until 2017. There is an overall lack of resources addressing domestic violence including law enforcement, safe houses, counseling and medical services, and legal recourse. A general lack of safety in public areas renders it difficult for women to engage politically. Cultural practices such as "bride price" give men a sense of ownership over their wives and are used in part to reinforce traditional gender roles. Rufina Peter, a female candidate in the 2017 national election, noted that this culture creates the "perception [among] many Papua New Guineans that politics is a man's world and women are ill-equipped to be political leaders."

VAWP is often tied to general patterns and degrees political violence in a country

Pakistan: "Ever since its inception, Pakistan has been the victim of massive violence in its political area. Notable women politicians have lost their lives in this cycle of violence, including former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and minister as well as activist Ms. Zille Huma Usman. Both were assassinated in full public view."

VAWP takes many forms within a single country and varies in intensity and over time

Pakistan: “The kinds of violence may vary from mere threats to character assassination and to physical attacks.”

VAWP includes verbal and physical violence directed at female candidates and elected women

Sri Lanka: during the most recent elections, we witnessed:

- A potential female candidate was assaulted and kept under house arrest to prevent her from signing the nomination paper in the Northern Province.
- Cases of cyberbullying in which a candidate’s sexual purity was targeted with vulgar comments.
- Male candidates scolded female candidates when they had to juggle political aspirations along with family responsibilities.
- Sexual objectification of and sexual slurs against female candidates were rampant.
- Character assassination of female political candidates on moral grounds, i.e calling a woman a prostitute. Note the gender discrepancy as people more often use allegations of corruptions to undermine men, but for female politicians it is generally against her “purity”, and are sexual in nature.

Papua New Guinea: Female candidates in 2017 reported physical attacks by rival candidates’ supporters and threats of property damage or physical harm. Note that just 5% of all candidates in 2017 were women and none were elected to Parliament.

Macedonia: According to the daily bulletin of the Ministry of Interior⁷ on March 15, 2018, unknown perpetrators burned a car, after breaking the glass next to the passenger’s front seat. The vehicle was property of a female Member of the Parliament, Slavica Shumanska-Miteva, representing the ruling party SDSM. Regarding this incident, Ms. Shumanska-Miteva stated that this act was politically motivated and set up by the opposition party VMRO-DPMNE who tried to prevent her from voting the new Law on the Use of Languages.⁸

Also, on April 13, 2014, the vice-president of the political party SDSM, Radmila Shekerinska was physically attacked by a Member of the Parliament (part of the ruling party coalition that time), Mr. Amdi Bajram and his son. According to Ms. Shekerinska’s statement for the media, she was physically attacked during the monitoring of the election process in the municipality of Shuto Orizari.⁹

Character assassination is a common strategy in VAWP

Pakistan: “The characters of women politicians in Pakistan, namely Hina Rabbani Khar, Sherry Rehman and Nilofar Bakhtyar, have been questioned.”

This finding is upheld by virtually all of IFES’ global experience in this area.

⁷ <http://moi.gov.mk/dneven-bilten/1065>),

⁸ <http://www.zlostorstvaodomraza.mk/reports/view/452>

⁹ NovaTv <http://novatv.mk/index.php?navig=8&cat=23&vest=13232>.

Women voters experience direct, violent suppression and manipulation

Pakistan: “There are several other cases of suppressing women’s participation in politics such as barring women from voting or expressing threats especially in the province of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).”

Papua New Guinea: 49% of female voters in Southern Highlands Province in 2007 reported some form of intimidation and 45% of TI observers reported that women were “sometimes or never” able to vote without interference in the Highlands in 2012.

Guatemala: “In Guatemala we have witness something that is very peculiar... it is clear manipulation of woman, to influence their decision making around the time of the elections.

Guatemala’s voter role has since the 2011 General Elections, woman surpassing man who are eligible to vote. Although this seems positive, unfortunately it is not the result of a growth in civic participation, inclusiveness or a more mature democratic culture. Instead, it is the result of so called “social programs” or subsidiary programs, which have been implemented in Guatemala since the last two previous administrations of the UNE Party and followed by the PP Party, these programs consisted basically to hand out basic needs goody bags, which contained: cooking oil, beans, rice, flour and maybe sugar. The direct beneficiaries of these were woman, mostly unemployed or woman heads of households, and even if the idea sounds noble, it is not, these woman were forced to hand over their voter registration certificate copies (which are handed out by the EMB after each person registers), in order to generate fear in them, and putting a wrong idea in their heads, that now since the have that certificate, they will know how they vote and if they don’t vote in favor of the ruling party, they will lose the benefit of the program.

I personally saw how party delegates were waiting outside the registration offices, waiting for woman, particularly indigenous ones, just to take from them their certificates. This has been documented in various UNDP post elections reports, particularly the ones from the 2011 Election.”

Challenges

*What are the main **challenges** to addressing violence against women in politics; e.g. impunity of perpetrators, absence of internal complaint procedures (in Parliaments or Local Governments), lack of awareness, inadequate or missing judicial protocol or recourse and/or legal framework, lack of data, etc.? How is this impacted by the different spaces - private, public, online, protected public spaces etc. - where the violence takes place?*

Legal Gaps

Nepal: Legal gaps are hindering women's equal participation in politics in Nepal, without a shift in the patriarchal attitudes and culture in Nepal, the PR quota cannot be implemented effectively: The PR quota for women in Nepal is only implemented by the political parties because it is mandatory.

Psychological gender-based violence is rife in Nepali politics, but is not a punishable offence: Almost 96% of female politicians interviewed were victims of psychological violence (IDEA, 2013). While the implications of psychological violence on women in politics are real and far reaching, the perpetrators of such violence enjoy impunity as it is not a punishable offence in Nepal, unlike other forms of violence. Most female politicians vanish after losing an election: political parties provide no support to retain women in politics and they tend to disappear from the political scene after losing an election and there is not mentoring mechanisms and support for new female politicians.

A majority of incidents registered at the police office are settled through an agreement. As per the provision of reconciliation stated in Domestic Violence Control and Punishment Act, almost all the cases of domestic violence are settled according to the police. Abusers simply apologize for their actions and walk away without punishment.

Macedonia: Although national legislation (Electoral Code¹⁰, Law on equal opportunities for women and men¹¹, Law on prevention, combating and protection against domestic violence¹²) addresses to a limited extent the issues around equal opportunities and gender equality, violence against women in politics is not clearly defined and sanctioned. According to the report of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights "Despite the amendments to the legislative regulations, the Republic of Macedonia shows no visible progress or improvement in the prevention and protection of women who are victims of violence, nor there are appropriate prosecution and processing of perpetrators of violence".¹³ Moreover, and

¹⁰ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8ZpCwro9h-zM2lkMkZERFo0NXc/view>

¹¹ http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/zakoni/2017/precisten%20tekst%202015%20na%20ZEM_nov.pdf

¹² <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/zakoni/Zakon%20za%20prevencija%20semejno.pdf>

¹³ <http://mhc.org.mk/announcements/489?locale=en#.Wv2VSlIFPIV>

according to the civil society representatives¹⁴ women do not take advantage of the existing legal mechanisms in the Macedonian legislative framework to enforce and protect their rights, which is partly due to limited public outreach and partly due to the poor functioning of institutions and mechanisms intended to further women's rights.

Pakistan: One of the key problems is that there is a very fragmented legal framework for violence against women. Moreover, there are no proper mechanisms on the ground for proper enforcement. There is no serious commitment to implement the good laws that do exist because of the environment that has been created around the whole question of women's rights.

Impunity and Weak Law Enforcement

Afghanistan: Rule of Law and mitigation mechanisms are a challenge. Afghanistan has adopted significant laws and regulations but the problem is rule of law and lack of crime mitigations mechanisms. The absence of complaints procedure is also a major challenge. The police and law enforcement departments are corrupted, there is no significant complaints procedures in place for VAWE. Harassment and intimidation are also problematic: in a country where police can be part of harassment and intimidation no one can protect a woman.

Nepal: The capacity of the Nepal Police (in terms of sensitization, training, systems and human resources, particular female officers) to deal with violence against women in politics is limited, particularly in relation to invisible and psychological violence.

Sri Lanka: There is widespread impunity due to the fact that VAWE perpetrators are often political party members/leaders, there is not a formalized and confidential complaints mechanism for VAWE, and there are a lack of intraparty codes of conduct to regulate the behavior of party members.

Women feel discouraged from filing complaints due in part to the stigma attached to VAW (especially if it's sexual in nature). Women candidates also don't like to report WAVIP during election period because such information can negatively affect their election campaign and their chances of winning.

Papua New Guinea: There is little information available regarding the legal recourse for electoral violence, including intimidation and bribery.

Ukraine: Despite the existence of specialized laws of Ukraine ("On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men", "On Principles of Prevention and Combating Discrimination in Ukraine", "On Prevention of Domestic Violence" etc.), their provisions are mainly declarative due to the following reasons:

- a) *lack of women's awareness* (especially in rural localities) of international standards in sphere of protection against gender discrimination. Women often do not understand that her rights have been violated, especially when it relates to discrimination. During almost 10 years of operation of the Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men" only 145 court decrees contain references to this law. Furthermore, cases are mainly initiated not only by

¹⁴ "Shadow Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women" (2012).

victims of discrimination, but by state supervising bodies (mostly – in cases of responding to the facts of specifying employee gender in vacancy notices);

- b) *inability of legal profession representatives, including judges, to identify incidents, when violation of women's rights and legitimate interests become result of operation of discriminative provisions of legislation and gender-neutral regulations, which have discriminative consequences in practice.*

Increasing insecurity in online spaces

Afghanistan: Women in politics and elections are facing more challenges in social media- since there are no control on fake accounts and hate speeches. In Social media all women particularly, women candidates are mostly attacked. The nature of violence is mostly hate speech and character assassinations that are used to undermine women's campaigns. Thus, ordinary women mostly prefer fake names and never use their own photos in their profiles. However, even public and protected spaces can't be counted as safe area for them.

General insecurity

Afghanistan: Security- it affects all but make women and children more vulnerable.

VAWP is difficult to document & underreported

Afghanistan: “[it was difficult to find] exact examples of violence against women in politics in such a short time [for this SRVAW submission]. It is maybe because of stigma on sharing such experiences.”

Sri Lanka: As a result of the continued siloing of VAWE as a form of violence against women only, but not electoral violence, few incidents get reported making it seem like an insignificant issue. Additionally, VAWE was not reported in the media or through other outlets, contributing to lack of awareness about the pervasiveness of the problem.

Macedonia: Many cases of violence take place in private spaces however these are not properly documented and/or reported.

Culture of political parties and power networks

Nepal: Lack of gender sensitivity and accountability among political parties is preventing women from participating in, and influencing, important political decisions within their parties and at the national level. The decision makers in politics are still mostly a few powerful men (the 'old boys' club). Similarly, The limited networks of, and support for, female politicians in Nepal is hampering their success and political survival: Female politicians have limited networks and support, although these are crucial for political success and survival.

Afghanistan: Money in politics is a growing problem. Female candidates facing problems have trouble to access to money resources and manage all up and down in a man dominated environment.

Sri Lanka: The macho culture of party politics made party leaders slow and reticent to act on the complaints made by female candidates. In the Sri Lankan culture “macho” culture, VAWE is seen as a heroic act to show male dominance.

Also, women candidates also reported that senior female politicians of the parties did not stand by them throughout their campaigns, discouraging them from continuing politics.

Ukraine: There is a need for more attentive attitude of highest officials to the signals, which they provide to society concerning role of women and men in society should be added to the abovementioned. For example, presenting a new head of Odesa Custom House, the President of Ukraine characterized her not in the context of professional skills, but as “young, beautiful and very active woman”.

Pakistan: At the level of decision making and power, religious groups have enjoyed a disproportionate influence ever since. Every time something comes up in terms of women’s rights, this lobby gets together and attacks and challenges new ideas or proposals.

Corruption, Sexual Bribery and Cultural norms against women in politics

Nepal: Character assassination and misogyny are used to undermine women in politics in Nepal both within their parties and by their political opponents. Many people in Nepal still consider women who participate in politics and run for election to be of bad character.

Afghanistan: Corruption makes it more difficult for women in politics. They are asked for different kinds of favors including monetary and sexual relations while asking for security services from government entities, fund raising from private businesses, and community leaders (warlords) for community support. (less documented due to cultural stigma).

There are double standards for women in politics in Afghanistan. Women are neither supported by families nor communities.

Politic women are marginalized, essentialized and objectified in media

Ukraine: Women are main characters of media materials three times less often than men — in average, only in 27% of cases¹⁵. The journalists engage women as experts even less — only in 19% of cases (that is, only in each fifth material). Most often women comment on social topics, act as main characters of crime report or «yellow» news, while men comment on political and economic topics.

Online media outlets are where women are represented the least (only in 13% of news, women acts as main characters, and in 15% — as experts), they are best represented in printed mass media (main characters of 35% of materials, and experts in 22% of materials involving experts).

According to the research, women are practically never invited as guests to the studios of social and political talk shows on central channels. In the period of monitoring, only two women were invited to

¹⁵ Institute of Mass Information. In the news of Ukrainian mass media, women are mentioned three times less compared to men – research. 19.11.2017. <http://imi.org.ua/en/news/in-the-news-of-ukrainian-mass-media-women-are-mentioned-three-times-less-compared-to-men-research/>

central channels studios, compared to 40 men. In addition, in the monitoring period, no woman was invited to a talk show as an expert.

The women most often mentioned in Ukrainian political news in the period of monitoring were MPs Iryna Herashchenko, Oksana Syroyid and Iryna Lutsenko.¹⁶

¹⁶ Experts of NGO «Institute of mass information» and «Detector media» evaluated the gender balance in the evening news at the channels «UA:First», «Inter», «Channel 5», «1+1», ICTV, TRC «Ukraina», «STB», «112 Ukraina»; in printed media outlets «Fakty i komentarii», «Segodnia», «KP v Ukrainie», «Den», «Hazeta po-Ukrayinski», «Vesti»; online media outlets «Ukrainska pravda», «Liga.net», UNIAN, «Ukrinform», «Korrespondent.net», 112.ua, «Strana.ua», «Obozrevatel», TSN.ua and «Censor.net» from October 2 to October 8, 2017. The methodology of the monitoring is available on IMI website at the link.

The monitoring was conducted under the framework of joint initiative by the Commission for Journalist Ethics, Institute of Mass Information, Institute for Development of Regional Press, campaign against sexism «Povaha», Detector Media, and the social project «50 percent», with support of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine.

Actions

*What **actions** could be taken to prevent, address, and/or sanction violence against women in politics and to ensure that women who experience gender-based violence in politics can obtain redress?*

End Impunity for VAWP

Globally, IFES has found in many countries where we work that women in public or political roles may experience violence, sexual and economic attacks, hate speech and intimidation, but few offenders are held to account, despite laws on the books and multiple punitive mechanisms that might exist across different institutions. This can make such offenses viable tactics both in campaigning and in post-election agitation. The issue of impunity for VAWP is particularly acute as women already face greater barriers to participation in public life and experience highly distinct forms of violence – especially forms that are often overlooked or hidden, including sexual assault, intimidation and threats. Overcoming violence against women in elections and ensuring perpetrators do not go unpunished is not just an issue of individual rights, but one of broader electoral justice and electoral integrity.

IFES' 'VAWE-Legal' approach helps ensure justice and facilitate change of attitude, beliefs and behaviors through targeted legal analysis, aid and advocacy. Ending impunity for VAWP ensures that victims are protected and obtain an effective remedy, while at the same time punishing perpetrators, deterring future crimes, forcing government action and investigation, driving legal reform, and compelling action by businesses and political parties to end or prevent abuses. Our VAWP-Legal approach provides:

- **Guidelines for VAWP Legal Analysis which** offer guidance for legal experts to review existing legal frameworks to identify how various legal codes apply to specific VAWP violations and crimes. This tool assists legal specialists to produce information about the application of existing laws as well as identify gaps and weaknesses in frameworks that may be used as a basis for advocacy and legal reform.

- **Guidelines for Survivors Seeking Justice.** The level of evidence necessary for a criminal conviction can make a criminal prosecution more time-consuming, and convicting a person of a crime requires a higher evidentiary standard (generally “beyond a reasonable doubt”), than to sanction a person for an electoral offense. Conversely, there are factors that make criminal prosecution more effective: greater resources for investigation; greater penalties; the power of arrest; and wide powers of search and seizure to obtain evidence. IFES helps survivors of VAWP/P pursue justice and meet necessary evidence requirements under national law.

- **Awareness and Education for Law Enforcement and Prosecutors.** IFES supports public prosecutors, police, local CSOs and legal associations to investigate, prosecute and end impunity for VAWP. Specifically, IFES tailors responses to:

- Assist to connect potential claimants with legal service providers.

- Train and capacitate prosecutors to bring perpetrators of VAWE to justice through the court systems.
 - Work with victims to develop their burden of proof
 - Raise awareness with at-risk women (such as candidates and women in prominent public roles) on how to respond in the event of a VAWE incident in order to both protect themselves and secure evidence for future prosecution.
 - Educate law enforcement officials on the local legal framework governing VAWE violations
 - Advise on shadow reporting submissions to international human rights bodies, including the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, on the issue of VAWE.
 - Advise on management of VAWE issues through the electoral dispute resolution process.
 - Mobilize evidence on trends and patterns and legal gap analysis to support local advocacy organizations in lobbying for change.
- **IFES' VAWE-Legal approach supports local advocacy to end impunity for VAWE by:**
- Highlighting the legal gaps and challenges that are specific to VAWE in elections
 - Explaining why impunity for VAWE has broader societal impact in terms of governance outcomes
 - Using trends, patterns and research to advocate for broader legal reform
 - Generating informed, demand-side pressure on prosecutorial bodies, the courts, and other institutions with a mandate to investigate and sanction VAWE
 - Injecting VAWE-Legal issues into rule of law initiatives

Address VAWE/P in online spaces

IFES has led the development of “**VAWE-Online**”, a globally-adaptable tool that uses sentiment analysis to measure VAWP in social media. Online spaces are the arena for many acts that violate individuals’ or groups’ political rights on the basis of their gender-identity. VAWE/P occurs across social media and adversely impacts a range of civic and political activities (candidates, civic activists, journalists, public administrators, etc.). Building on conceptual presentations of “VAWE-online” and growing recognition of gender-specific online forms of abuse¹⁷, IFES has developed a model for empirically measuring VAWE-online through a structured sentiment analysis. Translating VAWE theory into an operational framework, the model assesses the presence of VAWE-online across multiple dimensions and identifies patterns of abusive behavior distinct to online spaces. IFES’ VAWIE-Online tool (developed through CEPPS GEPT) uses sentiment analysis to identify and analyze patterns and trends of aggressive, abusive and harassing comments made towards women active in civic and political life

The model is currently being run for the 2018 local elections in Sri Lanka, the 2018 general elections in Zimbabwe as well as the 2013-pre election 2018 period in Zimbabwe; and for general VAWP in Ukraine. Reports from these four cases will be available during the summer of 2018.

IFES has also formed partnerships with tech activists to for **bystander intervention for VAWE-online**. Bystander intervention is recognized as a best practice for addressing all forms of violence. Through its tech collaborations, IFES creates a space where survivors can ask for exactly the kind of support they need, when they need it. After reporting an incident into a web-based platform, users can choose to make it public, in which case they will be able to choose from a menu of options on how they want bystanders to

¹⁷ Bardall 2013, 2017; Krook and Restrepo 2015; IFES 2017; Women’s Media Center, 2017

support them, take action, or intervene. They are also given extensive resources including: safety planning, materials on how to differentiate an empty threat from a real threat, online harassment laws and details on how to report their harassment to authorities (if requested), and referrals to other organizations that can provide counseling and legal services. Bystanders looking to provide support will receive public requests, along with chosen actions of support. These platforms are tailored to the local context and managed locally, with technical support and guidance from IFES and its partners.

Monitoring and Reporting to End Impunity for VAW

Documenting and reporting on VAW is essential to understanding the prevalence of this debilitating problem in any given time and place, and to identify appropriate responses to mitigate and prevent it. VAW is challenging to reliably document because of how it occurs (including non-physical threats and sexual violence), where it occurs (including on social media and in domestic spaces) and why it occurs (sometimes due to misogyny and other times ‘regular’ politically-motivated election violence occurs in gender-specific ways and with gender-specific impacts).

IFES believes that no single data collection approach can fully capture the phenomenon. Instead, we offer a comprehensive suite of tools dedicated to dependably and consistently documenting VAW. Our threefold approach reflects the importance of combining qualitative and quantitative research approaches alongside technology-based data collection and analysis in this specific field.

IFES’ Suite of tools for monitoring and reporting on VAW:

Action	Research Approach	Tool
1. Assessing for VAW	Structured Qualitative	VAWE Assessment Tool
2. Monitoring Gendered Election Violence	Quantitative (incident-based) & integrated qualitative investigation	VAWE-Monitoring Guidelines and Toolkit
3. Recording Online Harassment and Abuse	Interprets online sentiment Crowdsourced incident reports	Sentiment Analysis (“VAWE Online”) Interactive online communities

The VAW assessment tool is available online at <http://www.ifes.org/publications/violence-against-women-elections>. An updated version of the methodology is expected to be launched in 2018. In annex to the present submission, the SRVAW will find several country assessments that have employed this framework.

The VAW-Online framework will be made public at the conclusion of the current GEPT-funded project, in early 2019.

Working with Men and Boys

Despite a persistent call for “engaging male allies” in efforts to empower women in decision-making roles, alliances between men and women in mature and developing democratic societies continue to be infrequent or unpredictable. These challenges extend down to the household level, where women,

particularly from conservative societies, can be excluded from leadership training for basic reasons such as restrictions on freedom of movement or lack of childcare.

In order to achieve true gender equality the perspectives of men must be included. Working with political institutions and their generally male leaders, interventions that focus on men and women's perspectives can provide opportunities to promote change from within and can gradually alter traditional attitudes about the role of women and men in public and political life.

IFES has developed the Male Allies for Leadership Equality (MALE) training module, an addendum to IFES' women's leadership training curriculum. This module puts into practice a systemic and practical approach to work towards the understanding that gender equality and women's empowerment will only be achieved when women and men work together toward that goal. The MALE module works simultaneously to sensitize women and men to the importance of working together to lead political processes and democratic development and includes a practical approach on how to share power; it provides an organized approach to training men on women's rights and leadership, and demonstrates how to create opportunities for alliances and coalitions between men and women working on democracy and governance within their respective countries. Included in the module are 10 different training sessions, each with its own PowerPoint presentation and Facilitator Notes, and all of which should be tailored to country context and programming needs.

The MALE training focuses on two groups of male allies:

- At the household level: supportive household environments are vital for women's participation in leadership development. Engaging family and community members is critical to maximizing women's participation by eliminating basic barriers, such as household responsibilities and restrictions on the freedom of movement.
- At the institutional level: supportive government officials as well as men who may not have previously considered gender equality in the workplace or those who have obstructed women's leadership in a systematic way are also vital to leadership equality. Engaging men at the institutional level is important to women's participation in leadership because it encourages them to understand and address behaviors of officials and key interlocutors that may knowingly or unknowingly exclude women from key political decision-making roles.

Examples, reports and materials for IFES MALE training are included in annex.

Integrate VAWP into the Women, Peace and Security Agenda

IFES believe in extending the interpretation of the WPS agenda to include post-conflict democratization processes. The assertion is that women's leadership in conflict prevention, management, and resolution and in post-conflict relief and recovery efforts does not end with the signing of a peace treaty: democratization processes are equally vital for achieving the WPS objectives. The recommendation comes on the heels of the passage of WPS legislation into U.S. law; however, the message of the policy brief applies equally in global contexts and all states that have made commitments to women, peace and security.

For example, Canada's national action plan on WPS affirms that "The path to peace needs empowered women because where women are included in governance, states are more stable." The National Action Plan goes on to define women's and girls' empowerment as being about women and girls taking control over their lives: setting their own agendas, gaining skills, and developing self-reliance — including through their participation in political life, through political empowerment. Yet the story stops there. For the most part, WPS actions focus narrowly on protecting women as victims of gender-based violence, and of increasing women's participation in the policing and security sectors at home and abroad. They are generally silent on identifying or strategizing to prevent one of the most destructive barriers to women's participation in democratic spaces: violence against women in politics. We should work towards deepening women's empowerment in the WPS space through meaningful and secure political participation.

For specific recommendations on this, please see : <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/11th-US-CSWG-May-16-2018-Policy-Brief.pdf>

Country Recommendations on Other Actions

In addition to the global programs and approaches described above, IFES' country office surveys returned the following recommendations on actions to be taken:

Nepal:

- The government should enact legislation to make psychological violence a crime.
- The political parties should set a retirement age for politicians and limit the term for key positions in political parties to allow new talent, including women, to move up to leadership positions.
- The Nepal Police should receive capacity building to enable it to create a safe and secure environment for women in politics and the Nepal Police should be mobilized to raise awareness about violence against women in politics.
- Women should unite to act against violence against women in politics by involving the Inter-Party Women's Alliance, youth leaders, and female politicians.
- Women in politics should establish a mentoring mechanism to train, mentor and support women to stay in politics.
- The Election Commission of Nepal, civil society, the political parties, the media and women should join forces to empower women by addressing discrimination in the media, lobbying for change to the patriarchal mindset, supporting established female politicians, creating a positive image for women in politics, and ensuring women's visibility in election campaigns

Afghanistan:

- Special need for courts/Attorney and police department to handle the cases and rule of law
- Awareness campaigns such as "#MeToo" where female politicians share their stories as a success story.
- Building capacity of the current female politicians-self esteem/self confidence
- Quotas for village elections (yet not have such election but committed to have it)

Sri Lanka:

- Strengthening the financial capacity of women. There were incidents where women who went canvassing alone due to financial straits faced abuse, including women who reported being assaulted on the street.
- Encouraging party commitments and codes of conduct to specifically address VAWIE
- Capacity building of the EC, Election Observers and Police to identify, record and respond to VAWIE; and building capacity of GBV stakeholders to act as watchdogs during elections to prevent, identify, report and respond to VAWIE.
- Raising awareness among political candidates and public in general about the laws against VAWIE, as well as cyber bullying and how they can ensure their safety and where they can get help.

Papua New Guinea:

- Implementation of reserved seats for women in PNG National Parliament has been cited by numerous INGOs as a possible way forward.
- During the electoral cycle, separate polling lines to reinforce the secrecy of the vote were partially implemented by the PNGEC, though need stronger reinforcement.
- At this time, there does not appear to be any clear legal recourse for women who experience electoral violence and thus a more robust legal framework and stronger enforcement of the current framework is necessary.

Macedonia:

- Adaptation and harmonization of the national legislation with the international legislation, norms and standards should intensify. For example, in 2017, Macedonia ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention) which establishes legally binding standards for preventing violence against women, in order to protect victims and to punish offenders. However, there is limited progress in revising the national legislation and the system of protection in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.
- In addition, capacity development of the institutions in charge should take place in parallel to the outreach and awareness raising of the involved stakeholders.

Good Practices

*What are examples of **good practices**, legal and policy frameworks for addressing violence against women in politics at international, regional and/or national levels?*

Global good practices are documented in IFES' pertinent publications as well as various academic publications cited above. In addition to these, additional good practices were identified through the country office survey, as follows:

Kenya:

IFES' Kenya project developed an extensive awareness and prevention campaign including broad public outreach and a call in line in 2017. Detail on these actions are provided in annex.

Haiti:

IFES Haiti has worked extensively on preventing and ending VAWE, including an in-depth assessment (attached in annex), call in lines, and awareness raising. Further detail provided in annex.

Sri Lanka:

In addition to the VAWE assessment (in annex) and the ongoing VAWE-Online work, IFES' programs in Sri Lanka have trained police on how to deal with VAWE. The manual for training police about VAWE is in annex.

Zimbabwe:

IFES conducted a VAWE assessment and a VAWE online sentiment analysis in April-May 2018 (publications forthcoming) and expects to develop further work in this area around the 2018 elections.

Nepal:

The Constitution of Nepal, The Election Ordinance, The Gender and Inclusion Policy of the Election Commission, The Comprehensive Peace Accord, The National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence are the major legal and policy frameworks addressing for violence against women in politics. Here are some other good practices in these legal documents in Nepal:

- The constitution requires 33% women's representation in Parliament and institutionalized the Ministry of women children and social welfare and women development offices in the district
- Separate Laws have been made regarding the issue of domestic violence, sexual harassment at work place and harmful practices such as witchcraft.
- The punishment period for marital rape has been extended.

- Similarly, a mechanism has been formulated to address the issue of Violence against woman victims. In 21 districts, a one door crisis management center has been established with the objective of addressing the issues of violence against
- This year, 33 acts that codified discrimination against women were amended or nullified.
- The limitation of 35 days for lodging complaint against rape was extended to 6 months and in case the accused could not compensate the victim, the state has taken responsibility for compensation.
- In 77 districts, 17 district security shelters for women have been established for their protection. But, there are not funds to keep them for more than 45 days.
- In Nepal Police, there are 270 Women and Children Service centers. But, in most of the centers, there are no police women deployed and due to this in many places women victim cannot express their issues.

Pakistan:

- Different measures need to be taken to prevent violence against women. Legal systems and public policy frameworks have often overlooked the crisis of violence against women. In failing to protect the rights and well-being of survivors or punish perpetrators, many reflect social biases tolerating violence. While a historic number of laws and policies against violence are now in place, implementation is still lagging. Measures should be taken to strengthen effective implementation of national laws, policies and strategies.
- In a country like Pakistan, the role of mass media can be transformational. The power of mass media can be used for shifting patriarchal norms and having an equal and a violence free society.
- Women bring different views, talents and perspectives to politics which help shape the political agenda. Changes in how parliaments operate reflect the positive impact of the presence of women, such as an improvement in the language and behavior in parliaments; a different prioritization of issues and policies; gender sensitivity in all aspects of governing, including budgeting; and the introduction of new legislation and changes to existing laws.
- The role of religious leaders is very important in providing support and leadership on positive social change and can be used to end gender-based violence in all societies.

Afghanistan:

Some steps have been taken to support the political participation of women:

- The Afghanistan Constitution provides for reserved seats for women in parliament and provincial councils. In the Wolesi Jirga (House of the People), 27 percent of seats are reserved for women (two from each province) and in the Meshrano Jirga (House of Elders), approximately 17 percent of seats are reserved for women. The Electoral Law provides that 25 percent of seats in Provincial Councils must be reserved for women.
- For the protection of women's right and freedom with global community, Afghanistan acceded with CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination and Discrimination against Women) on March 2003, made a framework to ensuring women's full political participation.
- The Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) Law was first drafted in 2008 by Afghan civil society organizations, women leaders and activists, and with the support of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), then enacted by presidential decree in August 2009.
- The Afghanistan National Action Plan (NAP) on UNSCR 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) has a commitment to create "an enabling environment for women to safely run for elected offices,

register, vote and campaign.” Additionally, in October 2015, the Afghan government passed a regulation on Prohibition of Women’s Sexual Harassment. Despite these provisions, in practice progress on and enforcement of gender-focused laws and policies remains weak.

Sri Lanka:

- Setting up of a special hotline and a unit at the Police’s women’s and children’s bureau and dissemination of a police circular to provide guidance on handling VAWIE during the LGE 2018
- Election observers adopting VAWIE questions during the LGE 2018.
- Proactive role of the Election Commission to crack down election law violators, including against women candidates in particular.

Macedonia:

The Electoral Code sets gender balance requirements in the composition of election administration at all levels. 30% of gender quota is required in the composition of the State Election Commission, Municipal Election Commissions and Electoral Boards. Also, the Electoral Code sets gender quota of 40% on the candidates’ lists for the election of Members of Parliament and councilors in the municipalities. There is no empiric evidence on whether obligatory gender quota influences (positively or negatively) the violence against women in politics, however there is an evidence that quota ensures women participation in the electoral race and a number of seats in the parliament and municipal councils.

Guatemala:

- IFES conducted in 2015 a campaign targeting women for a “conscious vote” trying to mitigate the fear of manipulation away from them. For this we used not only tv, radio and internet advertising, but also a theater group, who created shows in public spaces, which was very creative.
- In 2015 we also worked closely with Transgender women and their political rights, which was ground breaking for the EMB in Guatemala.

Syria:

IFES has supported MALE allies in Syria in order to increase women’s empowerment and inclusion and combat VAW.

https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/ifes_2015_crisis_in_syria_now_is_the_time_to_seek_male_allies_for_leadership_equality.pdf

Georgia:

IFES Georgia highlights the “Antidiscrimination Manifest” which is a Manifest on attitudes and behaviors toward female voters and candidates during elections.

IFES partner Journalist’s Network for Gender Equality (JNGE) via IFES/CEPPS support issued special manifests (ahead local elections 2014, 2017 and parliamentary elections 2016) to prevent the violence against woman in elections and call upon the electoral subjects, the government, municipalities, candidates, population and media to be careful toward female voters and candidates not to discriminate them according to the gender; prevent violation of females rights in public speeches or media statements.

Manifest aimed to:

- Support active females to participate in the elections as candidates;
- Motivate female voters to participate in the elections and not allow man to control thier votes/choice andelectoral participation;
- Improve qulaity of elections campaigning and elections media reporting;

Text of manifests included notification, that JNGE is monitoring pre elections process and will publicly announce the names of those persons/party's/institutions who will use gender discrimination and sexist language or methods.

Manifest was published online and all interested persons/institutions had opportunity to sign it, as well as was printed and disseminated during the public events and campaigns.

First time, manifest was issued ahead 2014 local elections. 10 Members of the parliament, both male and female and parliamentary gender equality council supported and issued special statement in favor of the initiative.

Further Measures

*In your view, what further **measures** could be taken to address violence against women in politics, and more generally accelerate gender equality and the political empowerment of women?*

IFES' core global actions of reducing impunity, increasing awareness, improving the quality and amount of data, targeting online violence and working with male allies reflect the areas where we believe further action is most needed. In addition to these global areas of emphasis, the country office surveys returned the following additional recommendations:

Nepal

- Provide a clear legal framework for the mandatory proportional representation of women at all levels of politics.
- Political parties should commit to gender equality by formulating internal gender policies, implementing the mandatory proportional representation of women at all levels of political organization, and giving women leadership roles within the political parties.
- The political parties should create a safe space for women in politics by implementing a policy of zero tolerance of misogyny and gender-based violence, punishing the perpetrators, and encouraging women to report such incidents.
- The Election Commission should work to reduce violence against women in politics by bringing psychological violence with the purview of the electoral justice mechanism, punishing the perpetrators of violence against women in politics, and collecting election observation data on women in politics.

Pakistan:

- Earlier this year the Punjab Provincial Assembly passed the Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016, the first legislation of its kind in Pakistan and the region, with its own implementation structure - Violence Against Women Centres (VAWCs). The new law intends to criminalize all forms of violence against women, including domestic, emotional, psychological, economic, or sexual.
- A Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) was established in November 2008 with the Speaker of the National Assembly as its patron. Its main objective is to attain a broad-based consensus among women Parliamentarians on an agreed agenda for women's development, empowerment and freedom, enabling them to work beyond party lines for the uplift of the women of Pakistan. They committed themselves to work for the enhancement of the role of women parliamentarians in proposing gender sensitive legislation, reviewing and amending discriminatory laws and policies, and ensuring effective parliamentary oversight of implementation of international and regional commitments, national policies and programmes.
- The Senate unanimously passed two important bills, Prevention of Anti-Women Practices, 2011, Bill, and Acid Control and Acid Crimes Prevention, 2011, Bill on 12 December 2011.

- Pro-women legislation has been promoted and adopted by the Pakistan government in recent years, including, The Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010, Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Act, 2011, The Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act, 2010, The Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Act.
- Reforms to Pakistan's electoral laws making it mandatory for political parties to allot five percent of their tickets to women candidates were approved by the federal cabinet, the country's highest decision-making body.

Afghanistan:

- Political parties' internal policies and regulations should ensure women's representation
- Address the problem of suppressed turnout and female proxy voting
- Establish and strengthen women leader's networks
- Enhance awareness and capacity building of female leaders and candidates
- Positive discrimination such as lower eligibility criteria to be nominated
- Championship programs to recognize female activists to change public perceptions on women abilities.
- Rule of law and restricted measures to punish GBV perpetrators (Zero Tolerance) should be introduced and applied

Sri Lanka:

- Establish or empower an interparty committee, such as the parliamentary women's caucus, to address VAWIE. Any such committee should include men and women so that the issue of VAWIE is not siloed as "just" a women's issue
- Advocating for party codes of conduct
- Creating a supportive network among women politicians to facilitate the reporting and addressing of VAWIE. Again, this network should also engage male allies.
- Establish focal points in key (non-gender) ministries, local government authorities, or other government bodies to monitor VAWIE
- Integrate VAWIE into national policies, action plans, or protocols.
- Creating strong communication networks to report VAW and obtain redress.

Macedonia:

- Conduct comprehensive research (qualitative and quantitative) and find out the magnitude and the nature of violence against women in politics and in elections; based on the findings, develop and implement awareness raising and capacity development measures for both women and men to understand, recognize and address the violence;
- Democratization of the political parties and introduction of internal party gender quota (for those who don't have them);
- Further revise the Electoral Code to recognize and act upon gender violence in politics and electoral process in various aspects such as voter's registration, candidate registration, campaign environment and financing or the election dispute resolution process.



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