

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**STATEMENT**

**UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN, ITS CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES  
DUBRAVKA SIMONOVIC**

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*Excellences,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Chairperson,*

Let me begin by congratulating you and your Bureau on your election.

I am delighted to participate in the 28th session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) during its discussion on agenda item five “on the responsibility of effective, fair, humane and accountable criminal justice systems in preventing and countering crime motivated by intolerance or discrimination of any kind” and to share my expertise in the field of preventing and responding to violence against women and girls as a form of discrimination and violation of women’s human rights.

With 2019 marking the 25th anniversary of the creation of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, my forthcoming report to the Human Rights Council in June will contribute to next year’s review of the Beijing Platform for Action +25, and other relevant review processes, including the review of SDG Agenda 2030, and will reflect on the challenges now facing women in attaining their rights. I will also provide an analysis of the evolution of the mandate, current challenges and the way forward.

It should be noted that Human Rights Council resolution 32/19 of 2016, enabled my mandate to participate in the work of the CCPCJ and since 2017, I have been participating in its deliberations, each time under a different agenda item, but always with a main focus on the prevention of femicide or gender related killings of women, and on other issues of relevance to violence against women and the criminal justice system.

I hope that in line with SDG Agenda 2030 and its Goal 5, targets 2 and 16 on the reduction of all forms of violence and related deaths, that in the near future the CCPCJ will establish a separate agenda item, or sub-item, on the prevention of violence against women and the criminal justice system and that my mandate will have the possibility to engage in a constructive dialogue on the issue with delegates attending this Commission.

This would be also in line with the Doha Declaration article 5 (f), that called for mainstreaming of a gender perspective into our criminal justice systems by developing and implementing national strategies and plans to promote the full protection of women and girls from all acts of violence, including gender-related killing of women and girls; it would also be accordance with the obligations of States parties under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol, and take into account the updated Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and General Assembly resolutions on the gender-related killing of women and girls.

### *Excellences,*

The changing global context of women's rights over the last 25 years, including within the criminal justice system, has brought with it many positive changes, however it has also revealed the persistent and systematic discrimination and violence against women that is deeply rooted in the fabric of our society. As noted in the guide for this thematic discussion, certain cases of gender-based violence and gender-related killing may fall within the category of crime motivated by intolerance or discrimination.

In 2018, UNODC published an important Global Study on Homicide: Gender-related killing of women and girls, a report that I often refer to when addressing femicide. The study reveals that gender-related killings of women and girls remain a grave problem across regions, in countries rich and poor. While the vast majority of homicide victims are men, killed by strangers, women make up the vast majority of victims killed by an intimate partner, at 82 percent. Data that I have received from States parties reveals a similar pattern.

### *Ladies and Gentlemen,*

My mandate has identified the prevention of gender-related killings or femicide as a long term initiative. In my report to the General Assembly in 2016 (A/71/398), in which I address the topic of femicide, I also outlined the modalities required for the establishment of femicide or gender-related killings of women watches or observatories, as prevention mechanisms.

I proposed that data on the number of femicides should be published annually, on 25 November, along with information concerning the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators.

I have proposed the collection of administrative and comparable data on: i) intimate partner femicide ii) family related femicide based on the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim/s and iii) all other femicides based on the country context.

I have also called for a flexible model for the establishment of a national femicide watch or observatory on violence against women that should analyse cases in order to determine national shortcomings and focus on the prevention of such cases.

A Femicide Watch would be an important tool for the implementation of General Assembly resolutions of 2013 and 2015 (A/Res/70/176) on gender related killings of women initiated by the CCPCJ.

The CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation No. 35 of 2018 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, contends that the definition of discrimination against women under the terms of the Convention "includes gender-based violence; that is, violence directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately". The violence experienced by women is rooted in multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and inequalities, often reflected in patterns attributable to gender-based discrimination, whereby structural factors influencing such discrimination are encountered at the macro-level of social, economic and political systems (A/71/398). I was actively involved in the elaboration of this General Recommendation, which also calls for the "establishment or designation of gender-based killing of women

observatories to collect administrative data on gender related killings and attempted killings of women, also referred to as ‘femicide’ or ‘feminicide’.

Since the 2016 report, some progress has been made in developing national observatories and the collection of data on gender related killings, however much remains to be done. As a means of further encouraging States and other relevant stakeholders to accelerate efforts to prevent gender related killings of women, in October 2018, I issued a renewed call for data on femicide. I received submissions from a number of countries, including Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Georgia, Guatemala, Italy, Mexico, Nicaragua, Norway, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

On 16 and 17 January 2019, I attended a consultation meeting on femicide organised by the European Institute for Gender Equality and the European Observatory on Femicide, in Vilnius. The purpose of the meeting was to develop modalities for the collection of comparable data on femicide.

During the country visits that I have undertaken as Special Rapporteur I have recommended that Governments establish a “femicide watch/ VAW observatory ” and some of them have acted upon these recommendations. For example, in Georgia and Argentina a femicide observatory was established through the ombudsperson, while in Canada, an academic Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability was established and it published its first Report in 2018.

#### *Ladies and gentlemen*

While the use of information and communications technology has contributed to the empowerment of women and girls, its use has also generated new forms of online violence against women and girls. As a means of tackling this recent phenomena and initiating the debate between States and internet intermediaries, I chose to focus my last report to the Human Rights Council in 2018 on online violence against women (A/HRC/38/47). In my report I recommend that States, in accordance with the principle of due diligence, address new forms of online violence against women and girls as human rights violations that are interrelated with the broader framework of discrimination against women and girls, and that internet intermediaries uphold women’s human right standards.

#### *Distinguished delegates*

As noted previously, my forthcoming report to the Human Rights Council on 25 years of the mandate calls for a UN system wide approach to address violence against women. As such, it highlights the importance of maximizing efficient and effective use of existing structures and resources and to ensure coherence and coordination between relevant UN agencies, as well as UN and regional independent monitoring mechanisms on women’s human rights and violence against women. I believe that such collaboration would lead to the establishment of a more comprehensive, credible and coordinated response to violence against women.

In this regard, I am confident that the cooperation that has already been established between my mandate and the Commission on areas of mutual interest can effectively contribute to the

establishment of a UN system wide approach to eliminate violence against women, in which the CCPCJ has important role to play.

I thank you for your attention.