

Questionnaire

25 Year Anniversary- Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women

Ireland's Response

March 2019

Ireland's approach to tackling gender based violence is outlined in the Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016 – 2021. This strategy aims to change societal attitudes to support a reduction in domestic and sexual violence, improve supports available to victims and survivors and hold perpetrators to account in order to create a safer Ireland. Please see below responses to questions 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the questionnaire from the Special Rapporteur.

2. As the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women enters its 25th year, please provide a brief analysis of what your perceptions of the mandate are, highlighting any particular instances where you believe the Special Rapporteur has contributed to the empowerment of women in addressing gender based violence.

The promotion of gender equality, the protection of the rights of women and girls and the elimination of gender-based violence are some of Ireland's key foreign policy priorities and commitments. Ireland greatly values the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against women and commends her work in advancing the rights of women worldwide.

Ireland wishes to highlight the SR's most recent thematic report on online violence against women and girls for shedding a light on an increasingly widespread form of discrimination against women and girls and welcomes her recommendations to States and other entities. Ireland would like to thank the SR for recognising the impact of intersectional forms of discrimination on women and their right to access the technology, as well as the chilling effect that online violence can have on the work of women human rights defenders and democratic exercise more broadly.

Ireland also welcomes the SR's engagement with civil society actors and encourages her to continue to participate in consultations at a national and regional level with a view to empowering local actors to share information about violations against women and girls in their region.

3. Given the changed landscape of women's rights and the current global challenges in this regard, please indicate what specific measures should be taken to further strengthen

the role of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur to accelerate prevention and elimination of violence against women

Intersectional forms of discrimination are a significant obstacle to the equal enjoyment of human rights by women and girls and require further attention and discussion. The Special Rapporteur's mandate would benefit from an in-depth exploration of intersectionality, including with regard to gender identity, sexual orientation, race, disability and religion or belief.

4. Please indicate what steps should be taken to ensure that the mandate of the Special Rapporteur can effectively contribute to ensuring better institutional coordination across the various international and regional violence against women and gender equality mechanisms for the elimination of violence against women

Ireland strongly supports the close integration of the UN's human rights work across all UN pillars. The elimination of violence against women is a core focus of much of the UN's work including peace and security, peacebuilding, humanitarian, development and country specific initiatives. The elimination of violence against women is an important target in the SDG framework as well as in the context of CEDAW reporting.

Ireland welcomes any initiatives to further integrate the work of the UN human rights mechanisms with these broader mechanisms and encourages the Special Rapporteur to avail of opportunities to strengthen linkages with her work and these other mechanisms where possible. There also remain a range of regional instruments dedicated to elimination of violence against women and Ireland further supports strengthened synergies between the UN human rights mechanisms and these regional mechanisms where possible.

6. Please indicate what are the opportunities and challenges for strengthening and using the mandate of the Special Rapporteur under the international and regional frameworks to eradicate violence against women and girls, and to accelerate that elimination.

The continuing violations and abuses against human rights defenders and the shrinking civil society space threaten multilateralism and pose a challenge to the work of all Special Procedures mandate holders. In particular in the context of violence against women, the most recent report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders highlights the violence, including sexual violence, that women human rights defenders continue to face for their efforts to promote human rights. Individuals who seek to cooperate with the UN mechanisms and report human rights violations are also victimised and face reprisals.