

Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences

1. As we look to the future, please indicate what are the main challenges to addressing violence against women in its various forms; eg. the institutional and substantive disconnect between the different international instruments; a lack of understanding of the provisions in international law that link gender equality and violence against women; inadequate judicial protocol or resource and/or legal framework; impunity of perpetrators; stereotypes and the social stigma associated with reporting etc.?

- Not enough awareness on the fact that gender inequality and the historical imbalance between women and men are main root causes of violence against women
- Institutional and substantive disconnect between the different national mechanisms instruments
- Economic dependence of victims
- Lack of harmonised gender disaggregated data and definitions
- Lack of a holistic approach when addressing violence against women
- Insufficient regular training to police, judiciary and other stakeholders, including educators at all levels of the education system

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 mandate has contributed to the empowerment of women in addressing gender based violence.

The mandate of the Special Rapporteur is valuable to strengthen the work and commitments towards the elimination of violence against women in view of its standing and broad remit.

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

- The mandate of the Special Rapporteur should ensure that gender is adequately mainstreamed in all policies and programmes related to violence against women
- Gender equality should be a top priority in the mandate of the Special Rapporteur
- In view that violence against women is still very widespread across the Member States, the mandate can include the monitoring of the effective implementation of legislation that prohibits violence against women to ensure that short, medium and long term measures are in place to effectively address respective challenges
- Continue working to address the challenges delineated in reply to question 1
- Enhance the visibility of the mandate and work carried out by the Special Rapporteur

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 of the elimination of violence against women.

A platform for discussion for all entities working in the sphere of violence against women can be established to strengthen institutional coordination to further support the current practice of having a representative addressing other entities during their regular meetings. Such a platform would ensure that all stakeholders can actively engage in constructive discussions and mutual exchange of knowledge and experiences.

5. Please specify what measures should be taken to support my initiative to encourage States to establish femicide watch and/or observatories.

Femicide watch and/or observatories act as an advocacy tool for stronger commitment at political level in order to strengthen legislation and policy formulation, implementation and resources.

Hence, highlighting the scourge of violence and its cost, including financial cost, to all members of society, through the Observatory, can be used to emphasise the need for allocating adequate resources for prevention. This recommendation can be reiterated during the monitoring visits.

Malta hosts the European Observatory on Femicide.

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 Special Rapporteur has a strong mandate and standing within the UN framework. In the context of the 40th anniversary of CEDAW the Special Rapporteur can enhance the visibility of the mandate and further raise awareness on the link between gender equality and the elimination of violence against women.