The Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel

**Regarding:** Call for submissions to all stakeholders regarding the gap in incorporating and implementing the international and regional standards related to violence against women

***1.    Do you consider that there is a need for a separate legally binding treaty on violence against women with its separate monitoring body?***

Yes. Unfortunately there is no specific international legally binding document that addresses the gross violation of rights that is violence against women and girls so there it is very important to have a separate monitoring body focused on VAW that will ensure all countries are upholding their due diligence and a global standard to protect women and girls from violence.

***2.    Do you consider that there is an incorporation gap of the international or regional human rights norms and standards?***

Yes. Because there is no specific global legislation or ‘hard law’ on violence against women and girls, it is up to individual governments to incorporate international ‘soft law’ or recommendations. In my country there there are no regional mechanisms in Oceania, Asia or the Middle East

***3.    Do you believe that there is a lack of implementation of the international and regional legislation into the domestic law?***

Yes. Because due to the situation today governments must have the political will and drive to implement general recommendations and comments but they are not legally bound to uphold these obligations. Individual countries implement domestic policies in a piecemeal fashion dependent on current funding trends and political will. If there would be a legally binding document it would be a lot easier for us NGOs to push for implementation of national policies.

***4.    Do you think that there is a fragmentation of policies and legislation to address gender-based violence?***

Yes. Countries must be progressive enough or driven by a strong civil society to enact strong domestic law on violence against women and girls, and this kind of situation does not exist in Israel. Therefore a country’s domestic policies may be strongly influenced by religion, tradition and socio-cultural practices that may prevent effective protection of women

***5.    Could you also provide your views on measures needed to address this normative and implementation gap and to accelerate prevention and elimination of violence against women?***

* There is a need to develop a Global Treaty on Violence against Women and Girls, with its own monitoring body, because it would help a lot us local NGOs to push our government to confirm to global standards. There is an urgent need for a global and also a national recognition that violence against women and girls is endemic and systematic violation of the rights of women and girls to bodily integrity and life.
* In Israel there is need to develop proper mechanisms to deal with the epidemic of sexual harassment in that occurs in the workplace. The law against sexual harassment in the workplace that exists in Israel does not give proper tools for women to complain because once they file a complaint they can suffer a lot informally from colleagues in their workplace and even from their boss. One example that portrays the incompetency of the existing mechanism is the Israeli civil service: 180,000 people work in the Israeli government but every year there is an average of only about 150 cases of women that file a complaint.

This is due to the fact that women feel it is useless or even dangerous to complain to the commissioner against sexual harassment because they will receive no real help, their identity will be exposed, they might suffer from their boss or their colleagues and after their case will be dealt with there will be a slight probability that the harasser will be punished properly and a larger probability that they will suffer a lot.

In the Israel civil service there are women workers who's job (on top of their professional job) is to be a commissioner against sexual harassment and today these women are not strong enough to be able to help other women and sometimes they themselves suffer from helping women who are harassed.

* In Israel, there is no formal comprehensive and obligatory program that every child must study during his school years that deals with healthy sexuality and protection against sexual assault. What exists is very partial and many times dependent on a teachers will or interest and therefore kids do not get education that will help raising awareness and minimizing this epidemic.
* In Israel it is not part on the university curriculum in fields of social work, education, medicine, dentistry studies, psychology, and nursing studies to have obligatory courses that will teach these future professionals about sexual abuse of children and how to discover, treat and deal with these phenomena in their specific professions. This is why all these professionals come to the workplace without knowledge and therefore cannot give the proper treatment or even do not have enough knowledge to identify the victims.
* There is no state law that gives compensation and rehabilitation for victims of sexual assault but there is a law that promises compensation and fuding for rehabilitation to victims of terror. We see sexual assault as terror against women and therefore believe that they must get funding for rehabilitation and compensation due to the violence they suffered.