



SharkMUN | June 12th – June 13th, 2026

Mitigating political violence in electoral seasons towards female candidates

Welcome delegates to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) of SharkMUN 2026.

In this committee, delegates will address the growing issue of political violence against women during electoral periods. Although women have made significant progress in political representation worldwide, many continue to face threats, harassment, intimidation, discrimination, and violence when seeking public office. These attacks not only violate the rights of individual candidates but also undermine democratic participation, gender equality, and inclusive governance.

Political violence against women can take many forms, including physical attacks, online harassment, sexual violence, threats against family members, economic coercion, and disinformation campaigns designed to discourage women from participating in politics.

Delegates must examine the causes, consequences, and global prevalence of this issue while developing strategies to protect female candidates and strengthen women's political participation worldwide.

Introduction

Women's participation in politics is a fundamental component of democratic governance and gender equality. Over recent decades, international efforts have encouraged greater representation of women in political institutions through electoral reforms, quotas, leadership programs, and legal protections.

Despite these advances, women continue to face significant barriers when entering political life. One of the most serious challenges is political violence directed at female candidates and elected officials. Such



violence is often motivated by gender-based discrimination and aims to discourage women from exercising political leadership.

Electoral periods frequently see increased levels of hostility toward women in politics. Female candidates may become targets of harassment, intimidation, hate speech, cyberbullying, disinformation campaigns, threats, and physical violence. These attacks often focus on gender stereotypes, personal lives, appearance, or family roles rather than political positions.

The rise of social media has created new opportunities for political participation but has also expanded avenues for abuse. Online platforms are increasingly used to spread misogynistic content, coordinate harassment campaigns, and disseminate false information targeting women candidates.

Political violence against women has consequences beyond individual victims. It discourages women from seeking office, reduces political diversity, weakens democratic institutions, and limits progress toward gender equality.

The international community must therefore examine how governments, political parties, civil society organizations, and international institutions can work together to ensure safe and inclusive political participation for women.

Timeline of Key Events

Year	Event
1979	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted.
1995	The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action recognizes violence against women as an obstacle to political participation.
2000	UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security was adopted.



Year	Event
2010	UN Women was established to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.
2012	First major global study on violence against women in politics published by the IPU
2016	Mexico becomes the first country to criminalize political violence against women (General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence)
2018	Bolivia adopts a specific law against political violence and harassment of women.
2020	Online harassment of women politicians increases significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2021	UN General Assembly adopts resolution on violence against women in politics (A/RES/75/162)
2022	Multiple Latin American countries strengthen legal frameworks addressing gender-based political violence.
2023	The global report indicates 80% of women parliamentarians have experienced psychological violence.
2024	Social media platforms face increased pressure to address coordinated harassment campaigns.
2025	First binding regional treaty on political violence against women adopted in Latin America (Escazú-related protocol)
2026	CSW prioritizes electoral violence against women as a thematic focus



Key Terms

Political Violence Against Women

Any act or threat of violence, intimidation, coercion, or harassment directed at women because they participated in political life.

Gender-Based Violence

Violence directed at an individual based on their gender or gender identity.

Electoral Violence

Acts of intimidation, coercion, harassment, or physical violence occurring before, during, or after elections.

Online Harassment

Abusive, threatening, or discriminatory behavior conducted through digital platforms and social media.

Political Participation

The involvement of individuals in political processes, including voting, campaigning, advocacy, and holding public office.



Current Situation

Political violence against women has become a growing concern across both developed and developing countries. Research conducted by international organizations shows that women in politics experience significantly higher levels of harassment and abuse than their male counterparts.

Online violence has emerged as one of the most common forms of political intimidation. Female candidates frequently face coordinated campaigns involving threats, misogynistic language, disinformation, and attacks on their personal lives. These actions often intensify during election periods when political tensions are highest.

In some countries, women candidates also face physical violence, including assault, property destruction, kidnapping, and even assassination. Such attacks are particularly prevalent in regions affected by political instability, organized crime, or weak rule of law.

Young women, women from minority groups, indigenous women, and women advocating for controversial issues often face disproportionate levels of hostility.

The underrepresentation of women in political leadership remains a global challenge. According to international data, women continue to hold significantly fewer elected positions than men in many national legislatures and executive offices.

Political violence creates a cycle in which fewer women choose to participate in politics, reducing representation and limiting opportunities for future generations of female leaders.

As democratic processes increasingly rely on digital platforms, governments and international organizations face new challenges in protecting candidates from both physical and online threats.



Main Countries and Regions Involved

Mexico

Mexico has been a major focus of discussions on political violence against women due to numerous attacks targeting female candidates and elected officials. The country has introduced specific legal frameworks addressing political violence based on gender.



Brazil

Women politicians in Brazil have reported increasing levels of online harassment, threats, and political intimidation, particularly during election campaigns.



India

Although women's political participation has increased, female candidates in India continue to face social barriers, harassment, and gender-based discrimination.





Kenya

Kenyan elections have highlighted concerns regarding violence against women candidates, including intimidation, harassment, and obstacles to political participation.



Afghanistan

Women seeking political participation in Afghanistan have faced severe security risks, restrictions, and threats, making it one of the most challenging environments for female political engagement.



Additional Stakeholder Positions

Entity	Position on Political Violence Against Women
UN Women	Leads global programming; provides technical assistance to governments; advocates for legal reforms and monitoring mechanisms
Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)	Conducts research; develops guidelines for parliaments; supports gender-sensitive parliamentary practices.
Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)	Monitors human rights violations; provides legal guidance; supports CEDAW implementation
CEDAW Committee	Reviews state party compliance; issues general recommendations on women's political participation

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Entity	Position on Political Violence Against Women
International IDEA	Provides technical assistance; develops frameworks for gender-sensitive electoral processes.
National Democratic Institute (NDI)	Supports women candidates; implements programs on combating political violence
International Republican Institute (IRI)	Provides campaign training; monitors electoral violence against women
Association of European Parliamentarians	Promotes regional standards; supports cross-border cooperation
Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM)	Leads regional efforts in the Americas; monitors compliance with the Inter-American Democratic Charter.
African Union (AU)	Promotes gender parity in political institutions through the African Charter on Democracy; supports member state reforms
European Union (EU)	Supports gender equality in political representation; funds protection programs for women candidates.
League of Arab States	The increasing focus on women's political participation varies significantly by member state.
Social Media Companies (Meta, X, TikTok, etc.)	Moderate online content; under pressure to improve reporting systems and rapid response for political harassment



Regional Legal Frameworks

Region	Key Instrument	Relevance to Political Violence Against Women
Americas	Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001) + General Assembly resolutions	Recognizes the right to violence-free political participation
Latin America	Specific national laws (Mexico 2016, Bolivia 2018, Costa Rica 2019, Peru 2020)	Criminalize political violence and harassment based on gender.
Africa	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007)	Commits to gender equality in political processes
Europe	Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011)	Addresses violence against women generally; the political context is not specifically covered
Global	CEDAW General Recommendation No. 23 (1997) + No. 35 (2017)	Addresses political participation; recognizes gender-based violence in public life

Countries with Specific Laws Criminalizing Political Violence Against Women

Country	Year Enacted	Key Provisions
Mexico	2016 (federal); earlier in some states	Defines political violence against women as a crime; protective measures
Bolivia	2018	Criminalizes harassment and political violence; sanctions include disqualification.

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SharkMUN | June 12th – June 13th, 2026

Country	Year Enacted	Key Provisions
Costa Rica	2019	Includes psychological and digital violence; institutional response protocols
Peru	2020	Establishes prevention, investigation, and punishment mechanisms
Argentina	2021 (pending implementation)	Expands the definition of gender-based violence to include political context
Ecuador	2021	Protects women candidates and elected officials from political violence

Previous Attempts to Address the Problem

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women has worked extensively to promote women's political participation and combat gender-based violence in politics.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has conducted research and developed recommendations regarding sexism, harassment, and violence against women in politics.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) provides a legal framework for advancing women's political rights and equal participation.

Several countries, including Mexico and Bolivia, have adopted legislation specifically criminalizing political violence against women. Election observation missions increasingly monitor gender-based electoral violence and recommend protective measures for female candidates.

Despite these efforts, enforcement remains inconsistent, and many incidents continue to go unreported.



Possible Solutions

Strengthening Legal Frameworks

Adopting and enforcing legislation that specifically criminalizes political violence against women and provides effective legal remedies.

Enhancing Candidate Protection

Providing security measures, emergency reporting mechanisms, and protective services for women candidates during electoral periods.

Combating Online Harassment

Working with technology companies to remove abusive content, improve reporting systems, and prevent coordinated harassment campaigns.

Promoting Political Party Accountability

Encouraging political parties to establish codes of conduct and internal mechanisms addressing gender-based violence.

Expanding Education and Awareness

Implementing public awareness campaigns challenging gender stereotypes and promoting respectful political participation.

Supporting Victims

Providing psychological, legal, and financial support for women who experience political violence.



Increasing International Monitoring

Encouraging election observation missions to include gender-based violence assessments within their monitoring frameworks.

Questions a Resolution Should Answer

1. How can governments better protect female candidates during election periods?
2. What measures can reduce online harassment and digital violence targeting women in politics?
3. How should political parties address gender-based violence within their organizations?
4. What role should social media companies play in combating political violence against women?
5. How can legal systems improve accountability for perpetrators?
6. How can women from marginalized communities be better protected?
7. What role should international organizations play in monitoring and preventing political violence against women?



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