CSW65 NGO CSW Advocacy Research Group on **Informal Spaces**

Consider:

What is the biggest impediment to women/ women's organizations working outside of formal structures to solve human rights?

A Key Critical Issue:

Unregulated Public Spaces (particularly social media) that Allow Abuse and Violence against Women's Human Rights Defenders

Advocate for Action:

Ensure Member States adopt, implement and enforce legislation preventing abuse and exploitation of women and girls by use of technology (particularly cyberviolence on social media) to ensure women's human rights online.

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Evidence

Pass Blue, 14 May 2019, by Sonah Lee, *The Case of Harassing a UN Diplomat Via 1,000s of Text Messages*
Koki Muli Grignon, working as the facilitator in 2019 during the most intense week of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York, received an email demanding that she "stand against abortion and same-sex families, criticized her conduct as a facilitator and said she was being watched…. just a few hours later following the email, still during the negotiations at the end of March, her smartphone was flooded with hundreds of text messages, so frequent that she shut down her phone, concerned it might crash. When she tried to use her phone hours later, the messages were still being received in the same frequency and quantity, hundreds in many languages."

CSW65, March 2021, E/CN.6/2021/4 Report of the Secretary-General, *Review of the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women* "Between 2015 and 2019, 225 women human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists were reported killed, according to available data across 81 countries."(p 14/17, section E. 45)

CSW65, March 2021, E/CN.6/2021/4 Report of the Secretary-General, *Review of the implementation of the agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women* "…Decreasing support for women's civil society organizations has weakened the mobilization and active participation of women worldwide and may put women human rights defenders further at risk..."(p 17/17, section 57)

Milica Pejanovic-Durisic, the ambassador of Montenegro to the UN and an expert on telecommunications engineering, 7 May 2019 "Women are 27 times more likely to be harassed online and almost 47 percent of them are female politicians," (Pass Blue, 14 May 2019, by Sonah Lee)

Supporting UN Documents

OHCHR, 2016, *Tackling the challenges faced by women human rights defenders through a gender lens* "The networks of women defenders gave recommendations to strengthen protection networks for women human rights defenders to combat discrimination, including: * Encouraging States to critically assess their progress in implementing resolutions related to women, gender discrimination and violence, and women defenders, including the 2013 GA Resolution on WHRD, especially in situations where non-state actors are perpetrators; * Asking States to provide and guarantee an enabling environment for women human rights defenders and their organizations, so that they may exercise their legitimate rights to freedom of association, expression and assembly, and continue defending their rights and those of their constituents; * Allocating political and economic resources to reinforce and legitimize the work of women human rights defenders;"

Good Practices

OHCHR 2016, *Tackling the challenges faced by women human rights defenders through a gender lens* Some of the key recommendations for States:" * Holding public officials, media, religious, cultural, community and business leaders accountable for attacking, defaming, inciting violence and stigmatizing women * Strengthen the implementation by States of their human rights obligations * Improve the coherence among international instruments * Ensure a safe space for CSOs at the UN, and denounce all acts of reprisals at the highest level * Urge private companies to improve how they identify, address and prevent violence and abuse against HRDs.

UNWomen, 2017, *Executive Director's blog series: Cyberviolence,* "Media and the internet reflect the power structures of the society we live in. At its best, the power of online media puts us on the fast-track to changing those structures to a more equal world for all."