

ORAL STATEMENT
UN Human Rights Council, 59th session
16 June – 9 July

Item 3

Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls

Mr President,

Violence against women and girls is pervasive, evolving, and requires an all-tools approach by the Council if it is to be ended.

Excluding a gender analysis from efforts to addressing violence against women and girls – an established standard in international law – is legally and substantively insufficient. It risks excluding historically marginalised populations from essential protections, including rights to non-discrimination, bodily autonomy and freedom from torture or other ill-treatment. It undermines efforts to address the root causes perpetuating gender-based violence.

The term ‘gender’ was adopted by women’s movements, human rights bodies and the UN for a reason: the necessity of clarity for naming and addressing the specificity of rights violations driven by discriminatory stereotypes, norms, and beliefs associated with gender roles. This framework achieves more transformative outcomes that have a real impact on the risks and threats facing people today.

The doctrine of non-retrogression prohibits deliberate steps that reduce the enjoyment of rights. Abandoning a gender framework to address violence against women is a clear example of this. At a time when hard-fought and hard-won gains in women’s rights and their protection are under increasing threat, it is imperative that this Council stand against rollbacks in language and principles that have a real impact on those outside this room.

Human rights are indivisible and universal. We call on the Special Rapporteur to recommit to ensure inclusive, evidence-based, and intersectional approaches to human rights. We cannot disregard how sex and gender intersect in the lived realities of those facing violence and discrimination if we are to address gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity.

Thank you.

Signatories

- Amnesty International
- Center for Reproductive Rights
- Global Action for Trans Equality (GATE)
- Global Health Justice Partnership of the Yale Law and Public Health Schools
- Global Justice Center
- International Commission of Jurists
- International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA World)
- International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
- Just Futures Collaborative
- La Strada International
- Plan International
- TGEU – Trans Europe and Central Asia
- WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform
- Women Deliver
- Woodhull Freedom Foundation