



The Gender Tool Box gathers knowledge material and method support on gender equality in the form of Tools, Briefs and Thematic Overviews.

Gender equality is achieved when women and men, and girls and boys, have equal rights, life prospects and opportunities, and the power to shape their own lives and contribute to society.

## [ BRIEF ]

# Gender-Based Violence Online

**Gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the most widespread violations of human rights and an obvious expression of unequal gender relations in a society. GBV is a serious hindrance to sustainable development and ending GBV is a specific target in the 2030 Agenda. Ending GBV is also a priority for the Swedish government, reflected in development cooperation. GBV occurs all over the world and takes many forms at different arenas.**

**This brief gives attention to GBV online.<sup>1</sup> During the last years, concerns about GBV online have gained wide recognition as a growing and alarming phenomenon. It is used to attack, oppress and silence women and girls and LGBTI persons in private and public spaces. GBV online particularly targets women human rights defenders, for whom the Internet is a key tool. The brief focuses on the nexus of GBV, information and communication technologies (ICT) and the rights to freedom of expression.**

## DEFINING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ONLINE

Gender-based violence (GBV) is recognized as one of the most severe and prevalent human rights violations in the world. Women and girls are statistically by far the most targeted; global estimates indicate that one in three women experience physical and/or sexual violence during her life.<sup>2</sup> Also other communities at risk are exposed and within them men and boys are included, and all over the world LGBTI persons are especially targeted. The intersection of multiple forms of discrimination – based on for example sex, age, gender identity/expression, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion etc – must be taken into account when making visible and addressing GBV.

GBV is addressed in national legislation and a large number of UN and other international and regional agreements. It is a specific target under Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda.<sup>3</sup> However, as GBV reveals unequal and discriminatory patterns, making this violence visible often evokes resistance at a personal as well as societal level. There are still significant gaps in policy and legislation, and at all levels the implementation is far from sufficient. Most cases go unreported and the impunity for GBV is widespread and alarming.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the references specified in the text and listed at the end as "further readings", the following material has been used in this brief: a) interviews with 11 activists and experts from Africa, Latin America, South-East Asia, MENA, and Europe during, and in connection to, Stockholm Internet Forum (SIF) 2019, b) the panel "The shifting terrain of gender-based violence online" at SIF 2019, c) experiences from previous Sida-discussions on GBV online (Director General's round-table discussion 2015, SIF 2015 and 2017, Development Talk 2016, Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality 2018)

<sup>2</sup> WHO Fact sheet: Violence Against Women (<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>)

<sup>3</sup> For continuous update, see the website of UN Women (<http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women>)

<sup>4</sup> EIGE Data Collection on Violence Against Women (<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/data-collection>) .

### Gender-Based Violence Online

Sida defines gender-based violence as any harm or suffering that is perpetrated against a woman or girl, man or boy, and that has a negative impact on the physical, sexual or psychological health, development or identity of the person. The cause of the violence is founded in gender-based power inequalities and gender-based discrimination.<sup>5</sup>

**Gender-Based Violence Online**, as defined by the Association for Progressive Communication (APC), encompasses “acts of gender-based violence that are committed, abetted or aggravated, in part or fully, by the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), such as mobile phones, the internet, social media platforms, and email”.<sup>6</sup>

As GBV in general is difficult to recognize and name, and there are significant gaps in access to justice for survivors, this is even more true when this violence occurs online. Even though the personal (physical and psychological) as well as social, political and even economic effects and consequences of GBV online may be as severe as GBV offline, it is often not recognized as violence.

*“Women who are exposed to GBV online are neglecting it, saying that they are not afraid and that what is happening online is not violence.*

*But still, later, it hits them.”*

*Interview with activist from Europe*

*“Many people think that because it is online it is not real. As if you can just turn it off.”*

*Interview with activist from MENA*

The internet is used for widespread and systematic discrimination against women and girls and LGBTI persons, and it is an arena for multiple, recurring and interrelated forms of gender-based violence.<sup>7</sup>

GBV online should be taken into consideration in all types of gender equality work to achieve sustainable development, in gender mainstreaming as well as in targeted work for gender equality. This includes for example in education, women’s economic empowerment, sexual and reproductive health and rights, in conflict and migration and not the least in political participation. This brief acknowledges this broad context, and focuses on the nexus between GBV, ICT, and the right to freedom of expression.

<sup>5</sup> Apart from gender-based violence online, the forms of GBV that Sida addresses include, but are not limited to, domestic violence, sexual violence, conflict related GBV, violence against LGBTI persons, human trafficking for sexual purposes, exploitation of persons in prostitution, and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage, honour-related violence and oppression, and female genital mutilation. For an elaboration, see Sida (2015) *Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence. Expressions and Strategies* ([https://www.apc.org/sites/default/files/APC\\_submission\\_Providing\\_a\\_gender\\_lens\\_in\\_the\\_digital\\_age.pdf](https://www.apc.org/sites/default/files/APC_submission_Providing_a_gender_lens_in_the_digital_age.pdf))

<sup>6</sup> APC (2018) *Providing a gender lens in the digital age: APCs submission to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ Working Group on Business and Human Rights*. (<https://www.apc.org/en/pubs/providing-gender-lens-digital-age-apc-submission-of-fice-high-commissioner-human-rights-working>)

<sup>7</sup> *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective*. A/HRC/38/47 (<https://documents.un.org/>)

### GENDERED INTERNET, POVERTY AND A SHRINKING DEMOCRATIC SPACE

All aspects of human interaction online are gendered. The gap, the “digital divide” between women and men that determine who benefits from and shapes the content, development, access to and use of ICT reflects existing power relations in society.<sup>8</sup> The online space concerns all dimensions of poverty; lack of *resources, opportunities and choice, power and voice, and human security*.<sup>9</sup> This space must be taken into consideration when asking the overall questions that cut across all dimensions of poverty: *who is poor, how and why*.<sup>10</sup>

Human rights, including women’s rights, are as important online as they are offline.<sup>11</sup> If gender dimensions of ICT are identified and addressed, ICT can be a powerful catalyst for political, social and economic empowerment of women, and a tool to promote gender equality. ICT has the potential to alleviate some of the barriers faced by women and girls, including illiteracy, poverty, time scarcity, hindrances of mobility and cultural and religious taboos. ICT also have the potential of providing tools that may break constraints on voice, particularly public voice, and social control. Access to ICT can increase women’s and girls’ visibility and mobility in the public space and strengthen their public as well as private agency. It can be a tool to reach groups of women and girls who for different reasons are not participating in public or social life.<sup>12</sup>

*“GBV online is also about access. In my country, women’s access to internet often means that they go to cyber cafés. These can be dangerous, dominated by men, with sexist atmosphere and harassments. Going to these places may give women a bad reputation; a ‘good girl’ does not go to cyber cafés.”*

*Interview with activist from Africa*

At the same time, women are particularly targeted in the worrying global trend of shrinking democratic space offline as well as online, with repressive measures against all kinds of democratic actors.<sup>13</sup> The online space, which has provided freedom and opportunity to gather and share information, collaborate and organise, are now in many places increasingly circumscribed. This tendency is visible in authoritarian as well as in non-authoritarian contexts. Women’s rights and the rights for LGBTI persons are at the core of this shrinking democratic space offline and

<sup>8</sup> SmKee, Jac (2005) *Cultivating violence through technology? Exploring the Connections between Information Communication Technologies (ICT) and Violence Against Women (VAW)* ([https://www.apc.org/sites/default/files/VAW\\_ICT\\_EN\\_0.pdf](https://www.apc.org/sites/default/files/VAW_ICT_EN_0.pdf))

<sup>9</sup> Sida (2019) *Dimensions of Poverty*. (<https://www.sida.se/Svenska/publikationer/165771/dimensions-of-poverty/>)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> See for example the 2018 Human Rights Council’s adoption of the *Promotion, protection and enjoyment of the Human Rights on the Internet* ([https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/\\_dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A%2FHRC%2FRES%2F38%2F7](https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/_dpage_e.aspx?si=A%2FHRC%2FRES%2F38%2F7))

<sup>12</sup> For elaboration, see Sida (2015) *Gender and ICT* (<https://www.sida.se/Svenska/publikationer/159429/gender-and-ict/>)

<sup>13</sup> For elaboration, see Sida (2019) *Democracy in the digital age – challenges and opportunities for development cooperation*. Document no: 021699/19. (<https://www.sida.se/Svenska/publikationer/164536/democracy-in-the-digital-age/>)

online.<sup>14</sup> It has particularly worsened the situation for women human rights defenders<sup>15</sup>, and for journalists and politicians, for whom the internet and technology are important organising, solidarity and political tools.

### Digital Resilience among Women Human Rights Defenders

Interviews with women human rights defenders in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro show that attacks on the internet are more and more frequent and move between online and offline spaces.<sup>16</sup> In response, the Alternative Girl's Center in Serbia together with One World Platform in Bosnia and Herzegovina organise trainings for women's organisations and women human rights defenders, building capacity on digital security. Simultaneously, they advocate for legal recognition and the implementation of existing legal tools in cases of GBV online.

In her report on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women states that in spite of benefits and an empowering potential of the Internet and ICT, women and girls have increasingly voiced their concern of harmful, sexist and violent content and behaviour online. The Internet is being used in systematic discrimination, and ICTs have facilitated new forms of gender-based violence that are increasingly violating human rights.<sup>17</sup>

### FORMS AND CONSEQUENCES

GBV may be interpreted as a continuum<sup>18</sup>, where different forms of violence are interconnected with and made possible through each other. Also violence taking place at different arenas, including offline and online violence, should be seen as interconnected. The relationship between violence offline and online can be described as fluid. For example, when sexual abuse is filmed and spread on social media, the violence does not only take place offline, but repeatedly online. Or when women's activists receive online threats, followed by attacks on the street, and the attacks are supported and spread online, the violence simultaneously takes place both offline and online.

GBV online take multiple forms. It includes, but is not limited to, verbal and graphic threats, abusive comments and harassments; sexual assault and rape photos/videos;

### Manifestations of GBV online

Together with APC's Take back the tech! project, the Mexican campaigners Luchadoras, #SeguridadDigital and SocialTIC, have developed a typology of 13 manifestations of GBV online. These are based on case documentation and are used by feminists in their work and activism.<sup>19</sup>

distribution of photos and videos without consent; accessing, sharing, faking and deleting private data; stealing of identity, money or property; blackmailing/extortion.<sup>20</sup> It also takes the form of surveillance – by intimate partners, by states or as social control.<sup>21</sup>

The consequences of GBV online are the same as for GBV in general. It effects the everyday life at all levels of those who are exposed: emotional, physical, psychological and has effects in social, economic and political life.<sup>22</sup>

*"We internalize what they write, and it drains us. And threats do not only involve you, but also your family. This is toxic, and many withdraw. But if I do that: what am I teaching my daughter?"*

*Interview with activist from Africa*

It may also lead to lost self-esteem, health problems including depression and even suicide, economic harm and social isolation. An overall effect is that women and other discriminated groups are silenced; withdrawing from democratic discussions online, or even from the Internet and the public sphere at large.<sup>23</sup>

### Harassmap

In the Harassmap project in Egypt, women anonymously report incidences of sexual harassment by using text messaging from their mobile.<sup>24</sup> By mapping SMS reports on a public website, displaying location and details provided by the survivors of violence, the extent of the problem is documented. The project's Assistance Information and Referral System provides victims with a list of services to turn to. Another part of the project, Police Response, pinpoints hotspots aiming to increase police presence in high harassment areas. In addition, community outreach activities, social media awareness and blogging campaigns are included. Harassmap acts as an advocacy, prevention, and response tool, highlighting the severity of the problem and offering proactive responses.

<sup>14</sup> See for example Kvinna till kvinna (2018) *Suffocating the movement – Shrinking Space for Women's Rights* (<https://kvinna.tillkvinna.org/2018/10/05/suffocating-the-movement/>)

<sup>15</sup> According to the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition this term includes women's activists; men who defend women's rights; lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender (LGBT) human rights defenders; other groups committed to the advancement of women's human and sexual rights (<https://www.defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/our-work/>)

<sup>16</sup> Memet, Jelena (2019) *Who is threatened by women? Gender-based violence in Serbia* ([http://www.masina.rs/eng/hindered-women-gender-based-violence-serbia/?fbclid=IwAR-2cOW7MTuMIGjr-Cg7XHO\\_XCrxbt4R3kaRORloWZpIX-uVTxWSJiwIY-k](http://www.masina.rs/eng/hindered-women-gender-based-violence-serbia/?fbclid=IwAR-2cOW7MTuMIGjr-Cg7XHO_XCrxbt4R3kaRORloWZpIX-uVTxWSJiwIY-k))

<sup>17</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective. A/HCR/38/47 (<https://documents.un.org/>)

<sup>18</sup> See for example Ibid, and Kelly, Liz (1998) *Surviving sexual violence*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

<sup>19</sup> GenderIT.org: 13 manifestations of gender-based violence online (<https://www.genderit.org/resources/13-manifestations-gender-based-violence-using-technology>)

<sup>20</sup> See for example *Recognising and Responding to Online Gender-Based Violence* (APC online course) (<https://advocacyassembly.org/en/courses/34/#/chapter/1/lesson/1>)

<sup>21</sup> See for example this case from Tanzania, where surveillance via apps is used to track down LGBTI persons (<https://www.genderit.org/feminist-talk/melt-down-protections-data-and-privacy-tanzania-lgbtqia-and-others>)

<sup>22</sup> See for example data on GBV from WHO ([https://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/sexual/en/](https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/sexual/en/)) and UNFPA (<https://www.unfpa.org/gender-based-violence>)

<sup>23</sup> See for example Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective. A/HCR/38/47 (<https://documents.un.org/>)

<sup>24</sup> <https://harassmap.org/en>

## POLICY RECOGNITION – AND LEGAL GAPS

Over the last years, concerns about GBV online has gained wide recognition in global discussions. Several of Sida's partners, in particular the Women's Rights Programme of the Association of Progressive Communication (APC), have actively been pushing for policy changes during a decade. These advocacy efforts have translated into concrete results. Here are some examples:

- In 2020, the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy addressed the gendered dimension of privacy and emphasised the need for remedial actions at the international, regional, and national levels. The Report on the Right to Privacy provides ample recommendations for protecting against gender-based infringements of privacy.<sup>25</sup>
- The 2019 report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders focuses on women human rights defenders and points at how they are often subjected to "online harassment, violence and attacks" and makes the link between online and offline assault.<sup>26</sup>
- In 2018, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on "Accelerating efforts to eliminate violence against women and girls: preventing and responding to violence against women and girls in digital contexts".<sup>27</sup>
- The 2018 annual report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women focuses on online violence against women and girls. The Special Rapporteur states that it is "important to acknowledge that the Internet is being used in a broader environment of widespread and systemic structural discrimination and gender-based violence against women and girls", which is a grave hindrance for human rights.<sup>28</sup>
- On the 8th of March 2017, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression made a joint statement. They urged states and companies to address online gender-based abuse, while at the same time warned against censorship to safeguard freedom of expression.<sup>29</sup>
- The updated CEDAW General Recommendation 35 2017 makes reference to 'contemporary forms of violence occurring on the internet and digital spaces' when talking about the fact that gender-based violence against women occurs in all spaces and spheres of human interaction, whether public or private.<sup>30</sup>

## Gendered Dimensions of Privacy

The Association of Women in Development (AWID) and APC has pushed for policy recognition of the critical issue of the gendered dimension of privacy. They point at how the collection and exploitation of data by state and non-state actors are not gender neutral, and how misogyny, heteropatriarchy and gendered injustices are exacerbated in the digital age, including through GBV online.<sup>31</sup>

The gaps between international agreements and national recognition, as well as legal and implementation gaps at country level are still huge. Reports from various countries show similar obstacles and challenges.<sup>32</sup> GBV online is falling between chairs – neither fitting laws addressing GBV nor cybercrimes. There are also contexts where laws are non-existent and where there is a lack of access to and trust in the legal system at large. Some governments also use GBV online as an excuse to implement protectionist regulations that tends to criminalise or regulate free speech.

Women are reluctant to report GBV in general and GBV online in particular, and they may face further violence when seeking help. Moreover, it is often hard to identify perpetrators, as the fluidity of offline and online spaces makes evidence and tracking difficult. There is often a lack of capacity and knowledge among legal and law enforcement professionals. In addition, national legal frameworks have a limited impact on – and governments are reluctant to address – crimes crossing national borders and/or corporate responsibility.<sup>33</sup>

In relation to GBV online, private companies have emerged as a new form of duty bearer. Insufficient reporting, response, and remedy mechanisms by private companies, when GBV is being exercised on social media platforms, is at the center of national and global discussions on legislation regarding responsibilities of the private sector. To avoid stricter legislation, which is likely to have adverse effects on human rights, civil society has put forward demands of self-regulatory bodies, similar to the ones within the media sector. This recommendation has also been put forward by the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression.<sup>34</sup>

25 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy: A/HRC/43/52 (<https://documents.un.org/>)

26 Situation of women human rights defenders. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders. A/HRC/40/60 (<https://documents.un.org/>)

27 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session38/Pages/ResDecStat.aspx>

28 Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective. A/HRC/38/47 (<https://documents.un.org/>)

29 UN experts urge States and companies to address online gender-based abuse but warns against censorship (<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21317>)

30 [https://tbineternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1\\_Global/CEDAW\\_C\\_GC\\_35\\_8267\\_E.pdf](https://tbineternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/CEDAW_C_GC_35_8267_E.pdf)

31 See for example the Oral statement Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy and the Special Rapporteur on cultural rights (<https://www.apc.org/en/pubs/hrc40-joint-oral-statement-gendered-dimensions-privacy>)

32 APC (2018) *From impunity to justice*. (<https://genderit.org/onlinevaw/about/>) Case studies from Bosnia Herzegovina, Colombia, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines (<https://www.genderit.org/onlinevaw/countries/>) See also a collection of different country reports (<https://www.apc.org/en/news/we-can-be-heroes-towards-public-and-legal-recognition-online-gender-based-violence>)

33 Ibid.

34 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression. A/HRC/38/35 (<https://documents.un.org/>)



## STRATEGIES TO COUNTER GBV ONLINE

Where GBV online occurs, there are also strategies to counter this violence. These can take different forms, occur to different extent and be found at all levels; global, regional, local and personal. The policy recognition described above of GBV online at a global level, would not have been possible without strategic advocacy, lobbying and awareness raising from women's rights activists.<sup>35</sup> These changes, creating an enabling environment at policy level, is a prerequisite for making a difference at all levels. They provide a foundation for states willing to find ways to respond to new forms of GBV, and for activists putting pressure on states to fulfil promises and make real change on the ground.

### Safety of Female Journalists Online

The Representative on Freedom of the Media at the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), has since many years put focus on GBV online targeting female journalists.<sup>36</sup> They have published a report on how to counter online abuse of female journalists, including recommendations to states. This include recognition of GBV online, strengthened capacity for law enforcement, support to collection of data and network building. For media organisations, they recommend industry-wide guidelines, comprehensive system to report, and support systems for female journalists.<sup>37</sup>

In her report, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women calls for action to *prevent* GBV online, to *protect* those who are exposed, and to *prosecute* perpetrators – all in line with strategies against all forms of GBV.<sup>38</sup> Along the same line, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders calls for protection of women human rights defenders in online spaces, including adopting policy protecting them from libel and hate speech.<sup>39</sup>

As GBV online is still a phenomenon that is largely unrecognized, an important counter strategy is to raise knowledge and awareness about the phenomenon as such, and about the consequences at personal and societal level, and for democracy at large. Capacity building on digital security among women human rights defenders is spreading. In this work, an important aspect is the

adaptation of resources to local languages, in order to make tools for digital security available for all. Young activists are often the most targeted, but they are also the ones that are aware of the risks and consequences, and knowledgeable of the online arena. Sometimes it is harder to reach and educate activists in older age-groups, although these are far from exempt from GBV online.<sup>40</sup>

### Research – Education – Influencers

7amleh, together with Kvinna till kvinna, conducted research on Palestinian women's experiences of GBV online.<sup>41</sup> The research shows that Palestinian women's freedom of expression is impacted by both the patriarchal society and the Israeli occupation. They have a lack of trust in institutions to deal with cases, leading to further dependence on patriarchal family structures. Building on this research, 7amleh has created an educational package on digital security for girls and boys in high schools. They also run a public awareness campaign together with Instagram influencers – feminists and journalists, but also fashionistas and food bloggers. In their own words, these influencers talk about GBV online, boundaries, protection and how to resist violent behaviour.

A key strategy is to get to know and understand the space, in order to make informed decisions; to have online agency.

*"Sometimes online is even more dangerous.*

*Offline we know how to protect ourselves, we know about where not to go, signs of attacks to a demonstration, safe house etc. We have indicators and tools. But online we don't have that. We don't know what we've agreed to, or who's watching."*

*Interview with activist from MENA*

Activists talk about the necessity to sometimes create a shield, and to answer and argue but also allow oneself not to. Self-care online is described as a political act, part of being a sustainable activist and to preserve your mental health. The importance of mobilizing together, being a part of a network and not being alone is emphasized again and again as key counter strategies. However, as much as personal and collective digital security is necessary, this is only part of the solution. Change is not possible without responsibility taken by the states as duty bearers and by companies to follow guiding principles for sustainable business.

<sup>35</sup> See for example how the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) worked 2016-2019 against gender-based violence, resulting among other things in the first UN resolution on preventing and responding to violence against women and girls in digital contexts. (<https://www.apc.org/en/news/rights-what-did-we-achieve-2016-2019>)

<sup>36</sup> *Safety of female journalists online* (<https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/safety-female-journalists-online>)

<sup>37</sup> *Countering online abuse against female journalists* (<https://www.osce.org/fom/220411?download=true>)

<sup>38</sup> *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective*. A/HRC/38/47 (<https://documents.un.org>)

<sup>39</sup> *Situation of women human rights defenders. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders*. (<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SRHRDefenders/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx>)

<sup>40</sup> Interview with activist from Europe.

<sup>41</sup> *A Violent Network: Gender-Based Violence against Palestinian Women in Virtual Spaces*. ([https://7amleh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Report\\_GBv\\_-\\_KtK.pdf](https://7amleh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Report_GBv_-_KtK.pdf))

### ENTRY POINTS FOR SIDA

ICT can be a powerful catalyst for political, social and economic empowerment of women and girls and LGBTI persons. For women human rights defenders and others who raise their voice and exercise their rights to freedom of expression, the internet and ICTs are crucial political tools. Therefore, donor support to counter GBV online is key in achieving gender equality for sustainable development. This may include:

- Support to organisations and networks of women's rights activists, including rights online, to enable them to address gender-based violence online at national, regional and global level.
- Support efforts to increase digital security and awareness among women and LGBTI human rights defenders and organisations.
- Support research and capacity building on GBV online, including the phenomenon, prevalence, consequences, prevention and counter strategies. This includes work with men and boys, addressing violent masculinities.
- Sensitise policy makers and other donors to include the online arena when legally addressing GBV and include GBV in cybercrimes; always from a human rights-perspective, respecting international human rights law.
- Support initiatives that build awareness about the personal and societal impact of GBV online, accessible for all in local languages.
- Support freedom of expression advocates to build awareness of online violence as an inhibitor of women's free expression.
- Support efforts in understanding the most used platforms by women, girls, LGBTI persons and other individuals and communities at risk to create safe and secure online spaces.

### FURTHER READINGS AND RESOURCES

APC: Recognising and Responding to Online Gender-Based Violence (Online course)

<https://advocacyassembly.org/en/courses/34/#/chapter/1/lesson/1>

APC/GenderIT: Collection of research and resources on GBV online

<https://genderit.org/onlinevaw/>

Article 19: Speaking Out on Online Abuse Against Women

<https://www.article19.org/resources/iwd-2018-combatting-technology-related-violence-women/>

International Association of Women in Radio and Television: Safety Handbook for Women Journalists

<https://www.iawrt.org/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2017/11/IAWRT%20Safety%20Manual.Download.10112017.pdf>

OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media: Collection of resources on Safety of Female Journalists Online

<https://www.osce.org/representative-on-freedom-of-media/safety-female-journalists-online>

Plan International: GBV Online Against Girls and Children

<https://plan-international.org/node/15589/>

Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women: Report on Online Violence Against Women and Girls from a Human Rights Perspective. A/HCR/38/47

<https://documents.un.org>

Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy: Report on Right to Privacy. A/HRC/43/52

<https://documents.un.org/>

The Citizen Lab. (2020). Gender & Digital Security: Results from a Scoping Study

<https://citizenlab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/gender-report-v3.pdf>

UNESCO: Fostering Freedom of Expression, including several initiatives on GBV online

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/fostering-freedom-expression>

UNICEF: #ENDviolenceonline

<https://www.unicef.org/endviolence/endviolenceonline/>