

E-discussion on Violence against Women in Politics

Concept Note

August 2016

Background

Recently, elected women from [France](#), [Canada](#), [Scotland](#) and [Israel](#), to name a few examples, publicly condemned misogynist and violent political cultures. Not only did they expose acts of harassment and violence in politics, they made the case that violence should [not be the price](#) of participating in politics.

Violence against *women in politics* (VAWP) limits women's political opportunities and discourages or prevents them from exercising their political rights, including their rights as voters, candidates, party supporters or public officials¹. VAWP can occur during electoral campaigns, but not only: as women assume various political positions, they may, for example, be pressured to resign from their posts on the basis of gender, or verbally threatened or intimidated because they are women in politics; and VAWP may take many other forms, including in sexist stereotypes and images portrayed in the media, which, particularly in the digital age, focus on women's bodies, sexuality and traditional social roles, rather than their competence, capacity and contributions as leaders.

International actors are increasingly raising awareness and responding to the issue of VAWP. [UN Women](#) is driving the global process to define and measure the phenomenon. [UNDP](#) and UN Women are jointly developing a guidebook on violence against women in elections. The [International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance](#) (IDEA) addresses violence against women in initiatives that focus on strengthening political parties, conducting trends analysis on VAWP and ensuring that the topic is addressed in regional and global interventions. The [Inter-Parliamentary Union](#) (IPU) is preparing an Issue Brief and a resolution on the subject. Other organizations are taking up the issue, such as the [National Democratic Institute](#) (NDI), which recently launched the Global Call to Action [#NotTheCost](#), and academics are working to further define this field.

Objective of the e-Discussion

This e-Discussion seeks to bring the experiences of the iKNOW Politics community into this growing dialogue on VAWP. Please join us in the e-Discussion from **22 August to 30 September 2016**.

Questions

1. What is violence against women in politics, and what forms does it take? What are its key drivers? Is VAWP particular to specific countries, regions, cultures, or institutions?
2. Who are the perpetrators of VAWP, and what are their motives?
3. What are the consequences of VAWP on women, society and democracy?
4. Are there any successful mechanisms/instruments to expose acts of VAWP (e.g. reporting, services for victims, rules of conduct)?
5. Who has responsibility to address VAWP, and what types of partnerships are necessary to do so successfully?

¹ Report of the Secretary-General at the Sixty-eight session (2013), Item 28 of the provisional agenda, Advancement of women, Measures taken and progress achieved in the promotion of women and political participation http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/184&Lang=E

6. Can you identify any specific legislation, programs, trainings, studies, and awareness-raising campaigns, which help prevent punish and sanction political violence against women?

