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| Consolidated Response on Prevention and Mitigation of Electoral and Political Violence Targeted at Women |
| What are some practical examples of ways in which electoral violence, before, during and after elections as well as political violence targeted at women candidates, activists, voters and women in political office have been prevented or mitigated in the past? |
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Gender mainstreaming in politics cannot be assessed based on numerical analysis of representation alone. There are a myriad of issues to be addressed upon examining progress in women’s political participation – electoral and political violence represent but one of these matters.

**Views expressed in this work are not those of the iKNOW Politics partner organizations.**

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## Introduction:

Based on a question received by iKNOW Politics on how violence against women can be prevented, the following question was formulated.

***What are some practical examples of ways in which electoral violence, before, during and after elections as well as political violence targeted at women candidates, activists, voters and women in political office have been prevented or mitigated in the past?***

This consolidated response is based on research conducted by iKNOW Politics staff and expert contributions from Erika Brockmann Quiroga, former Bolivian Parliamentarian (1997-2005), specialist in Democracy and Gender Issues and iKNOW Politics expert; Sonja Lokar, Executive Director of the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) Network for Gender Issues and Chair of the Gender Task Force, Slovenia; María Eugenia Rojas Valverde, specialist on issues of democracy and women's rights, and  iKNOW Politics expert, Bolivia; and Rachel Wareham,  Senior Program Manager, Women in Politics & Governance Program, National Democratic Institute (NDI) Afghanistan.

## 1. Defining electoral and political violence against women

### Electoral violence

Electoral processes are perhaps one of the most vulnerable moments in a country’s domestic political life. Uncertainty and tension due to anticipated power transfers often breed anger and violence during an electoral period. Violence is sometimes used as a tactic in order to ensure outcomes in favor of one side or another.  The involvement of women and the type or impact of violence against them varies across contexts. Electoral violence has been defined as “any harm, or threat of harm, to any persons or property involved in the election process, or the election process itself, during the election period”[[1]](#footnote-1); “any random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail or abuse a political stakeholder in seeking to determine, delay or to otherwise influence an electoral process”[[2]](#footnote-2). Electoral violence undermines the fundamental principle of elections as a peaceful mechanism for determining government and diminishes the legitimacy of any election where it takes place. Electoral violence can be of physical, economic or social/psychological nature.

### Political violence

Political violence encompasses a broader array of issues. On 14 May, 2012 Bolivia's Legislative Assembly finally gave the green light to the Law against Harassment and Political Violence against Women, a ground-breaking law to protect women and their political participation. It responds to an urgent need: in the past eight years Bolivian police have received more than 4,000 complaints of harassment from women participating in politics; many more incidents are likely to have gone unreported.[[3]](#footnote-3)Erika Brockmann Quiroga, IKP expert, Former Bolivian Parliamentarian (1997-2005) and Specialist in Democracy and Gender, provides the following definition for political violence and harassment as per the 2012 Bill against Political Harassment and Violence toward Women in Bolivia:

“Political harassment refers to the act or group of acts involving pressure, persecution, harassment or threats committed by one or more people directly or through third parties against (women) candidates, elected and designated officials or those exercising a political or public role, or against their families, in order to impede, induce or force them to disregard their functions, thus relinquishing the legitimate exercise of their political rights.  Violence refers to physical, psychological or sexual aggressions taken to shorten, suspend, impede or restrict the exercise of their office, or force a woman to make decisions against her will”.

Political violence can be perpetrated by state and non-state actors alike and is not limited to violence against politicians. It refers to any kind of coercion or impeding of any person’s capacity to exercise their political rights and participate fully in public life.  Victims of political violence include candidates, elected officials, activists and voters.

### Electoral and political violence against women

The evolution of women’s roles in democratic political processes has diversified the ways in which women become victims of electoral violence. Forms and counts of gendered EPV are numerable and sadly, even the discourse of women’s vulnerability is sometimes used as a way to reclaim public space for men and to dissuade and deter women from involvement in the public sphere. However, awareness of the gender dimensions of political violence is often limited to wartime rape and retaining women as second-class citizens even in countries supporting gender equity[[4]](#footnote-4). The manifestations of political violence are nevertheless innumerable and range from hate speech to physical attacks. While electoral violence occurs during a specific time and with the particular aim of influencing election results, political violence occurs across different political contexts and takes on different forms according to these contexts.

#### Physical violence

As mentioned earlier political violence can be perpetrated by both government and non-state actors. Common situations of state perpetrated physical violence against women in the political sphere include informal repression whereby governments covertly employ surrogate agencies, such as ethnic or religious militias, to attack supporters of opposition or government critics, or direct state violence (killings, beatings, arbitrary arrests, use of torture and mistreatment by police and intelligence officials, destruction or appropriation of property, violent dispersion of protests, political manipulation and direct incitement and organization of ethnic violence)[[5]](#footnote-5). While both genders are victims of this, it presents particular barriers to women’s engagement and political participation. Sexual terrorism is another prominent type of physical violence committed especially against women and includes politically motivated rape as a tool of terror and intimidation, marital rape as a tool of repression, sexual harassment, assault and abuse with the objective of controlling, intimidating, humiliating and disenfranchising. While this type of violence against women has been prevalent throughout history and particularly in contexts of war and strife, it has become a particularly visible phenomenon in recent contexts of political unrest where women’s political participation is more pronounced.

Sexual terrorism during political transition, Egypt

The political unrest which prevailed across the Middle East since the end of 2010 has not only had devastating socio-economic impacts on women but has also meant the breakdown of law and order and the weakening of justice systems and social norms, which, at the best of times, secured minimum protection for women.

One phenomenon that has made international headlines over the past years is the epidemic of sexual harassment, which is spreading and becoming increasingly violent. Harassment has always been a problem in Egypt but was not accorded much attention. A 2010 survey of 2020 men and women conducted by the Egyptian Centre for Women’s rights (ECWR) said that a staggering 83% of Egyptian females who responded had been exposed to some form of sexual harassment. Nearly half said they were hassled on a daily basis and almost two-thirds of men polled actually admitted that they harassed women[[6]](#footnote-6).

UN Women in Cairo released a study in May 2013 on sexual harassment in Egypt, concluding that 99.6% of women have been subject to some form of harassment based on their gender. The data presented in the report is based on interviews and surveys of 3,000 men and women between the ages of 10 and 35. Many of the statistics included in the study are shocking. For instance, 73.3% of males and 49.2% of females said harassment was a daily occurrence. In 73.6% of cases, women said that bystanders either did nothing or did not notice that abuse or harassment was happening. Perhaps most significantly, the report found that 82.6% of surveyed women do not feel safe or secure on Egypt’s streets. The report cites growing insecurity in Egypt since the 2011 revolution and the correspondingly heightened visibility of sexual harassment and makes recommendations on reducing harassment in the country[[7]](#footnote-7).

Sexual harassment has become a more explicit phenomenon afflicting the Egyptian society after the country's 2011 upheaval due to deteriorating security. However, the collapse of security does not alone explain the violent political assaults that have been taking place in Egypt. The phenomenon of political use of sexual violence is perhaps a plausible explanation. While women were comfortably part of the demonstrations which overthrew the former regime, the scene for women’s political participation began changing soon after that. In March 2011, 17 women were taken by military officers to a military prison and subjected to sexual assault under the guise of “virginity tests”.

As party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, Egypt is obliged to protect women from cruel and inhuman treatment and discrimination, and to ensure their right to privacy. Coercive virginity tests violate all three of those obligations. The virginity tests also violate guarantees of freedom from discrimination in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was reflected in the Constitutional Declaration of March 30, 2011, that acted as Egypt’s transitional constitution at the time.

Using sexual violence against women to deter women’s participation in protests increased under the Muslim Brotherhood dominated regime. Reports of sexual assault during protests have become common place and the incidents are increasing in violence. In 2013, during the second anniversary of the January 25th Revolution’s in Tahrir Square, at least 19 cases of sexual assault were reported. Large numbers of “thugs” flocked into the square, spreading panic and fear as acts of systematic sexual assault and gang rape proliferated. Volunteers in anti-harassment campaigns were specifically targeted during such attacks. There appears to be a trend of organized mass assault against women in protests. Activists say that the practice is indoctrinated and not individual and meant to break the protesters’ will and reduce the opposition’s momentum. This became particularly evident when protests against harassment were broken up by waves of regime supporters attacking and sexually assaulting the demonstrators. Assaults against women have compelled female activists to form rescue groups to consolidate protection of women who want to participate in protests and take to the streets. But the women rescue groups were targeted too. This represents a violation of both UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820 which address the issue of widespread sexual violence in conflict, either when used systematically to achieve military or political ends, or when used opportunistically and arising from impunity.

#### Economic Violence

Economic harm, coercion or abuse comes in institutional as well as personal forms. It includes harm or threats to harm a business, termination or threat of termination of employment, or other threats or theft related to one’s livelihood. In families or between spouses, it may include situations where one member or spouse intentionally denies access to financial resources to another to enforce dependency and coerce her or his electoral decisions and/or participation[[8]](#footnote-8).

Women who are typically less economically independent are the primary victims of economic violence. They are also disproportionally impacted by increased social disorder resulting from electoral crises and heightened levels of insecurity, which increase the risk/prevent women from partaking in regular activities that may make them vulnerable to criminal attacks, such as working in isolated fields, protecting merchandise in market stalls, etc.

#### Social/Psychological violence

Intimidation is a widespread tool of political manipulation, and often associated with situations of power imbalance and control in household settings. Psychological/emotional abuse includes rejecting, degrading, terrorizing, isolating, corrupting/exploiting and denying emotional responsiveness in a sustained or repetitive manner. Some forms are most prevalent in the domestic context and may be sub-sets of domestic violence while others, such as terrorizing or degrading, may be perpetrated publically by public political actors[[9]](#footnote-9).

Familial pressures and domestic violence are widespread forms of political control of women. Familial pressure is a specific form of intimidation, control or forced disenfranchisement, which may include spousal or parental pressure on who to support in elections, refusal of permission to leave the house to vote, refusal of relatives to watch children to allow women time to vote. And finally domestic violence is often perpetrated for political reasons and takes the form of physical, emotional or sexual violence committed by an intimate partner in the home or in public to control electoral participation.

## 2. Incidence of electoral and political violence against women

As women’s political visibility rises, so does their vulnerability to electoral violence, targeted at political leaders, candidates, activists and public citizens. This risk is frequently amplified by anger against women’s rejection of traditional roles and values. iKNOW politics’ experts have reported cases of EPV against women from different regions across the globe. Sonja Lokar, Executive Director of the Central and Eastern Europe Network for Gender Issues and iKNOW Politics expert cites various examples of political violence perpetrated against women in Central and Eastern Europe:

* “Hate speech against progressive women activists and politicians in public space; –
* Denigration and open governmental attacks on women NGOs working for peace and women human rights – in Serbia under Milosevic and in Macedonia today;
* The use of rape as a weapon in the Balkan wars;
* The attempted assassination of the most prominent woman candidate of the Albanian democratic party a few years ago;
* Bombing homes of women NGO leaders after effective actions against corruption in Bihać, a city in the north-western part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 2008”.

Former Parliamentarian, Erika Brockmann Quiroga, reports the situation in Bolivia, which has tragically seen an elected councilor murdered as a result of her political standing:

“Following the elections on April 4, 2010, the Department Electoral Court of La Paz named Juana Quispe Apaza as primary councilor of the Ancoraimes municipality, Omasuyos province ... From the beginning, Councilor Quispe ... [was] a victim of sustained harassment and hostility. A few weeks ago, her body was found on a path from the Altiplano and, according to the police, the possibility that her death was the result of political revenge has not been ruled out”.

Quiroga goes on to explain that “for now, the Association of Bolivian Councilwomen (ACOBOL) has received up to 300 reports – just a fraction of the estimated 4,000 cases of violence against women in 12 years.” The chart below includes reports from over nine years and demonstrates the ample range of possible forms of harassment that have been registered based on analysis and review of the situations experienced by hundreds of women victims whose political rights were violated before and/or after the elections that turned them into political representatives nationally or locally.

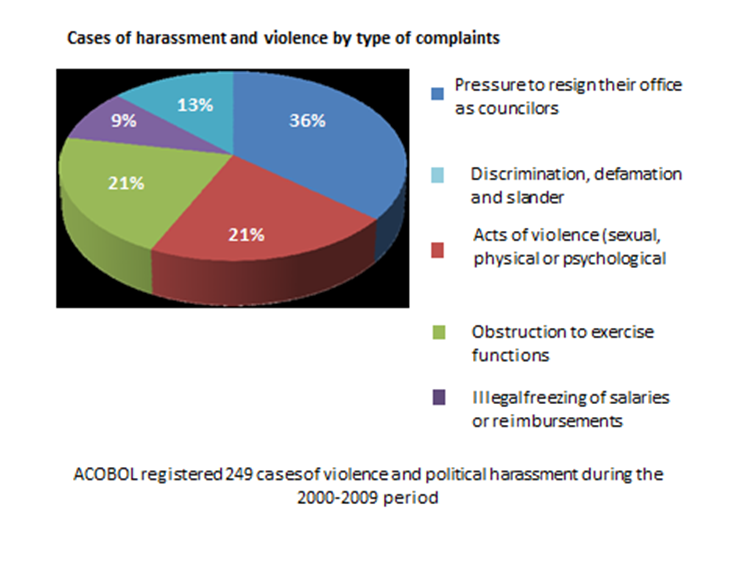


Figure 1: Cases of Harassment and Violence by Type of Report

There have been cases in which women were pressured from the very start of their political office to resign, thereby ensuring their replacement by a male proxy, in compliance with the principle of parity and alternating gender in force since 2009. María Eugenia Rojas Valverde, specialist on issues of democracy and women's rights and former Executive Director of ACOBOL, recounts one of the 168 testimonies gathered by ACOBOL: “They locked me in a room, hit me and later threatened me with a gun to get me to sign my resignation.”

Rachel Wareham, Senior Program Manager, Women in Politics & Governance Program, National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Afghanistan, cites that “in Afghanistan, there is no consolidated gender segregated data on electoral or political related violence [and] women are active as Members of Parliament, as provincial council members, as party members, as observers, election workers, and, in some cases, as candidate agents. Women’s rights activists and men in political parties…routinely say that the overall lack of security and stability in the country is a big obstacle for women’s involvement”. Wareham also points out that the trumpeting of the phenomenon of violence against women in politics is in itself a tool to deter women’s participation. She explains that although women in Afghanistan are under threat of political violence, the exaggerated rhetoric of violence against women in politics can be used as a deterrent for women entering the political sphere.

## 3. What factors lead to gendered EPV?

In order to adequately address possible recommendations for the mitigation/prevention of electoral and political violence against women, it is important to first examine the causal factors and contexts conducive to the perpetration of such acts. As women around the world are playing increasingly visible roles in the political processes of their countries as voters, candidates, representatives, activists, journalists and as civic educators in the home, the community and beyond, so is the incidence of gendered acts of political violence.

Certain contexts appear to be more conducive to the perpetration of EPV against women – particularly contexts which tolerate the impunity of offenders, where there is a systemic exclusion of women from political decision making, which makes this tolerance possible, and where politics of greed and economic and social inequality, which stimulates violations of women’s economic, social and personal rights, prevail. EPV often points to more insidious and deep-seated problems within the community. According to Sonja Lokar, Executive Director of the Central and Eastern Europe Network for Gender Issues and iKNOW Politics expert, factors that led to EPV targeted at women in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) include:

* Misogyny in public and political spaces promoted by extremely conservative political leaders;
* Male dominated undemocratic political parties and trade unions;
* The instrumentalisation of ethnic, religious and cultural differences in order to stay in power during the transition period are a strategy by politicians that can backfire into EPV.

EPV is particularly prevalent in situations of transition and political unrest where there is an ongoing struggle for power in a context of compromised security and crippled law enforcement. As emerging democracies struggle to consolidate, overcome violent pasts and address crippling poverty, they often falter and breed disillusionment. Religious and ethnic divisions may appear or intensify. In these complex contexts, electoral violence threatens women in new ways. According to a report by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) titled “An Integrated Approach to Elections and Conflict[[10]](#footnote-10)”, one factor that contributes to electoral violence is the occurrence of elections in fragile and transitional states amidst “an increasingly complex mix of conflict, identity politics, citizen action and ideals of a democratic peace”, often within a decade of one or more of the following:

* Large-scale civil strife, military or paramilitary conflicts;
* Transition away from authoritarian or military rule to multi-party competition;
* Political crisis (constitutional crises, elections following widespread political boycotts, popular demonstrations/protests, etc.);
* Other beginnings or re-starts in competitive electoral processes, but before the consolidation of regular, democratic institutional patterns, like consecutive free and fair elections.

Elaborating further, the IFES report states that during these highly charged electoral periods, complex domestic conflicts inherited from traditional tensions, civil war or insurgencies re-emerge. New identity lines become politicized and volatile expressions of dissatisfaction cross lines between peaceful advocacy and violent protest. The violence that takes place around elections in unconsolidated democracies can rock the foundation of a state and undo decades of democratic gains. Electoral violence poses a critical threat to peaceful development and there seems to be a growing trend of gender based political violence which must be addressed.

## 4. Mitigating gendered electoral and political violence

Not many examples exist of gendered EPV mitigation and prevention efforts. iKNOW Politics has tried to compile feedback from our experts to synthesize a collection of best practices and possible recommendations to tackle the growing phenomenon of political violence against women. Throughout our research it has been clear that political violence against women is a product of a wide range of deeply rooted problems that include insufficient representation, stereotyping, ineffective legislation, compromised law enforcement and corruption.

iKNOW Politics’ expert, Sonja Lokar, suggests that having more women in politics does not necessarily lead to less political violence against women. This can be observed in the latest incident involving the French National Assembly, where women make up 27% but are faced with harassment and sexism from their male colleagues on a daily basis[[11]](#footnote-11). “Unfortunately, the connection between the growth of women’s presence in the parliaments and the diminishing of political violence against women is not automatic” Lokar says. Lokar believes that there is a need to go beyond increasing women’s participation levels in order to effectively address gendered EPV in Central and Eastern Europe. In this regard she cites the need for universal recognition of indivisible women’s human rights, a strategy to avoid the male dominated undemocratic political parties and trade unions and to strive for their democratization as well as a counter-strategy against the instrumentalisation of ethnic, religious and cultural differences rampant during periods of transition and overcoming prejudices and fear fanned by differences. Lokar further outlines some measures that have been successful in CEE in preventing gender-based EPV:

* Abandoning private strategies of survival
* Getting organized and globally connected to women peace and human rights’ NGOs
* Establishing regional networks for empowerment of women within parties in CEE (1994) and trade unions (1997)
* Women getting organized within political parties and trade unions
* Establishing a sub-regional gender mainstreaming mechanism within the stability pact for South East Europe in 1999-2008
* Developing a regional strategy for political empowerment of women with the goal of changing prevailing pattern of transition”

As yet, little has been done in terms of legislation to address gendered political violence. However, Erika Brockmann Quiroga describes the approval in 2012 of the Bill against Political Harassment and Violence toward Women in Bolivia as a step in the right direction. “Incidentally, [the death of the councilwoman of Ancoraimes municipality] coincided with the actions taken for the Bill which [the councilwoman] had staunchly promoted. … The initiative was born as a response to the first claims of violence made by elected women councilors in 1999. At that time, the Women’s Political Forum and the nascent Bolivian Association of Women Councilors (ACOBOL) proposed typifying and sanctioning these cases of political rights abuse towards women councilors. ...Eleven years later, the figures for political harassment and violence are higher than ever and women challenge and push us to take more concrete actions to prevent and punish these acts. In this sense, the approval of the law … is an important though inadequate step toward eradicating the machismo ingrained in society’s social and political customs. According to the law, harassment will be punished with two to five years in prison and express violence with three to eight years”.

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| Extract from iKNOW Politics interview with Erika Brockmann, Former Bolivian Parliamentarian (1997-2005), Specialist in Democracy and Gender Issues  *iKNOW Politics:* In May 2012, the Bolivian law on harassment and violence against women in politics was finally passed. What are the most important and positive aspects of this law? What challenges are there to achieving its implementation?  *Brockmann*: The Law against Political Harassment and Violence, Law No. 243, defines and sanctions acts of political harassment and violence against women as crimes and offenses. These include the following:   * Providing women candidates or authorities with inaccurate or imprecise information that leads to the inadequate exercise of their functions; * Using gender stereotypes to impose tasks unrelated to their office; * Preventing designated or elected principal or alternate female authorities from attending sessions where they will make important decisions; * Disclosing personal and private information of designated or elected women or women candidates with the purpose of undermining their dignity and getting them to resign against their will; * Pressuring or inducing women authorities to resign, or coercing them through force or intimidation to sign documents and/or back decisions against their will or political interest. Discriminating them for any reason such as pregnancy, language, dress, education level or appearance.   The Law against Political Harassment and Violence…establishes both an administrative and criminal course of action, depending on the gravity of the offense.   * In the administrative course of action, sanctions are laid out for minor, serious and very serious offenses. These range from a reprimand to salary reductions and the temporary suspension from office without pay for up to 30 days. * In the criminal course of action, the sanction includes a two to five year prison term for harassment cases and three to eight years for cases of political violence (physical and psychological aggression).   Furthermore, this law establishes the responsibilities that public agencies, as well as social and political organizations, have in preventing and sanctioning political harassment and violence against women, which have been codified.  Significantly, after 11 years of progress and setbacks in dealing with this law, we have learned a lot of lessons that should be taken into account in the future. The first is related to the stalling effect that political polarization and personal positioning have on advancing the minimum political agenda for women. Another lesson refers to the redundant consulting that make the legislative process and the law itself overcooked products, wasting energy that could have been used to socialize the law and lobby to consolidate its regulation and effective implementation. For this reason, it is necessary to refocus advocacy strategies, placing emphasis on the weak links of public administration and the group of institutions involved in its fulfillment, especially in the judiciary[[12]](#footnote-12). |

Rachel Wareham highlighted the strategies that have been employed to mitigate attacks on women in Afghanistan, which have included:

* Extra allocation of armed body guards to female Parliamentary candidates in the 2010 elections. (This was a result of lobbying the Ministry of Interior by Afghan women’s groups, the Afghan Independent Election Commission and by international actors);
* Hotlines including one run by UN Women (then called UNIFEM) for women who suffered harassment, backed up with small amounts of cash assistance should women need to travel from their home to another place in order to get support;
* Afghan women already in public life remaining available for TV interviews and generally keeping themselves visible;
* Out of fear, the women candidates’ movement is often restricted. International agencies, including NDI (US based National Democratic Institute), have put in place programs to assist women MPs to travel to their provinces and link with women at the regional level.

“What protects women in the public sphere, as well as alliances with male political actors and the strong presence of the international community in Afghanistan, is the fact that there are quotas: both for women in Parliament and for women in provincial councils. This means that there is always reserved space for women – and so attacks on individual women will not decrease the presence of women in the public sphere. Retaining and protecting the quotas, and even perhaps extending them, is one of the most powerful ways of protecting women’s involvement in politics. There have been attempts to slightly rephrase the electoral law, which would mean that if a woman had to stand down her seat (or if she was killed or seriously disabled) it could be taken by a male candidate, and vice-versa. However, the Independent Election Commission’s Gender Unit saw this as a threat to women’s quotas and managed to prevent it becoming enshrined in law so far”.

Wareham continues to explain that the presence of the structures encouraged and supported by the international community and donors does make a difference to women in Afghanistan. The Gender Unit in the Independent Election Commission, the Women’s Rights Committees at Provincial Council level in Afghanistan and the Independent Human Rights Commission, as well as other donor funded electoral observation organizations potentially provide a space for the development and dissemination of information, support, strategies and the prevention of violence against women in politics. “Certainly if this Unit, Committees and Commissions did not exist, women active in politics (and until now most women are not affiliated with parties) would find it very hard to find any support if they receive threats”.

The IFES report, “Breaking the Mold: Understanding Gender and Electoral Violence,” puts forward a number of recommendations that can be integrated throughout the electoral cycle to address gaps in the understanding of women and electoral violence, to take into account specific risks women face, and to create disincentives for perpetrators of violence. “Key action areas include:

* Improved coordination and learning between development sectors [which] can provide better training for civil society organizations, legal aid offices, security forces and election workers regarding protection and services for politically active women, candidates and voters; Improved pre-election technical assessments (PETAs) and other analytical tools [which] can provide a roadmap to better violence prevention and victim assistance, as well as insight into motives for women perpetrators;
* Long-term projects in support of gender rights, conflict mitigation and civic education [which] are essential to build trust and open up spaces for peaceful changes in social and cultural norms, such as gender roles and the use of violence as a public or domestic strategy to pursue political aims.”

## Conclusion

While the growing number of women in politics has generally translated into better social, economic and political conditions for women, one phenomenon which does not seem to have improved correspondingly is political and electoral violence against women. In fact, according to iKNOW politics’ experts, there has been an increase in this phenomenon across the globe. As women’s participation in the political sphere becomes more pronounced and visible reports of political and electoral violence tend to increase.

The report cites various forms of violence against women documented in different parts of the world. While the manifestation and impact of this kind of violence seem to vary, there appears to be a general consensus among experts in this field on both the causes and possible remedies.

EPV in general, and particularly against women, appears to be particularly prominent in contexts of political transition and unrest where there is a breakdown in security, lack of rule of law as well as the intensification of religious and ethnic divisions and the instrumentalisation of these divisions for political gains. It also occurs in other situations where impunity is tolerated, women are systemically excluded from the decision making process and representative entities, such as trade unions and political parties, remain male dominated. Best practices and recommendations to curb and mitigate violence against women in the political sphere range from legislative reform to the continued strengthening of women’s role and visibility in the public sphere and the implementation of quotas and electoral support of international organizations.

The compiled input of specialists and practitioners from different regions around the world goes to demonstrate the universality of the phenomenon and their analysis also validates the multidimensional nature of the topic at hand. Gender mainstreaming in politics cannot be assessed based on numerical analysis of representation alone. There are a myriad of issues to be addressed upon examining progress in women’s political participation – electoral and political violence represent but one of these matters.

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