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OHCHR's
Information sheet



TECHNOLOGY FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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Digital technology offers unprecedented opportunities and can be an enabler for gender equality and women's equal enjoyment of human rights. Digital connectivity has delivered tremendous tools for women and girls' greater information, education, expression and mobilization. When open, secure, affordable and of high-quality, Internet access has opened space for women and girls, including those with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics¹ to connect, share, mobilize, organize, advocate, build solidarity, engage in public and democratic life and drive social change.

However, new technologies are increasingly being misused to fuel and perpetrate gender-based violence. Technology facilitated gender-based violence is one of the fastest-growing forms of violence against women and girls.

- > Perpetrators increasingly exploit digital tools, platforms, and emerging technologies to inflict gender-based harm, including sexual exploitation, harassment, hate speech, stalking, and image-based abuse. Digital surveillance technology can also be used for stalking and facilitate gender-based attacks.
- > The spread of misogynistic content reinforces harmful masculinities and discriminatory norms that fuel both online and offline violence against women and girls, including femicide.
- > The rapid expansion of generative AI is intensifying these trends by normalizing misogyny, amplifying harmful content, and potentially creating new forms of violence.

¹ Such as lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women and girls. In this paper, the term "women and girls" refers to women and girls in all their diversity, including their diversity in sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics.

Technology facilitated gender-based violence refers to gender-based violence occurring in digital spaces as well as offline gender-based violence facilitated by the use of technology².

What is it?

- **Throughout their life, women and girls face multiple, recurring and interrelated forms of violence, in both offline and online spaces³.**

Technology facilitated gender-based violence is driven and enabled by the same structural factors that drive gender-based violence, such as gender inequality, harmful social and gender norms, systemic discrimination and unequal power relations between women and men linked to patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes.

- Technology facilitated gender-based violence is a **rapidly spreading and evolving** form of violence that can affect a large number of individuals in a short period and on a large scale. It often involves multiple national and international actors including States, internet providers, social media platforms, content creators, each bearing distinct responsibilities.

- **Forms⁴:**

It can take many forms and keeps evolving. Examples include:

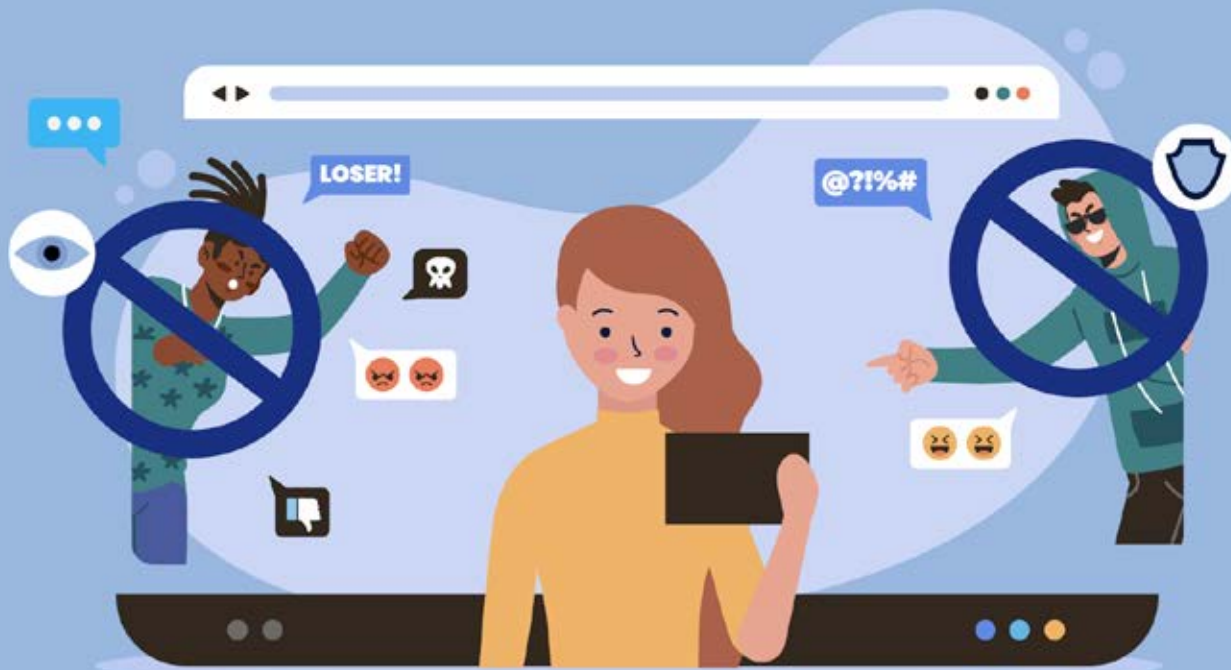
- Online harassment, stalking, misogynist hate speech, cyberbullying.
- Non-consensual taking and sharing of private images, videos (“revenge porn”) or information⁵;
- Blackmail, sexual extortion, impersonation, deepfakes;
- AI use for spreading gender-based violence including harmful gender stereotypes, including AI-powered bots programmed for automated harassment, threats etc.;
- Tech-enabled offline abuse, like using GPS trackers for stalking, or filming without consent (for ex. “upskirting”).

- **Victims:**

Anyone can be a victim, but **women and girls** especially those experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination such as racialized women, women with disabilities, migrants, women from national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, older women, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer women, face higher risks.

Women in politics, journalists and women human rights defenders are also frequent

² Report of the Secretary-General on technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, A/79/500 (2024). ³ Report of the Secretary-General on technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, A/79/500 (2024). ⁴ For a definition of some forms, see UNFPA Glossary of digital violence terms, <https://www.unfpa.org/thevirtualisreal-background#glossary>. ⁵ See for example: <https://chinadigitaltimes.net/2025/08/maskpark-cyber-abuse-scandal-censored-women-say-silence-will-only-make-it-worse/>



targets because of their work, in conjunction with being perceived as infringing gender roles stepping out in public spaces.

- **Perpetrators:**

They can be **strangers**, individuals who remain **anonymous** online, or persons **known and close to the victim** (partners/ex-partners, coworkers, classmates, as well as political actors and trolls⁶ or bots⁷).

For a comprehensive analysis of technology facilitated gender-based violence, its manifestations and the human rights violations it may entail, consult the [CEDAW Committee working group on gender based violence initial position paper on technology facilitated gender-based violence against women](#).

Prevalence of technology facilitated gender-based violence

Some key statistics

- 58% of young women and girls globally have experienced online harassment on social media platforms⁸. All regions are affected: nearly all women in the Arab States, 9 out of 10 women in Latin America and Africa, 8 out of 10 women in the Asia Pacific region, and 7 out of 10 women in North America and Europe have encountered instances of technology facilitated gender-based violence⁹.
- 67 per cent of women and girls victims have experienced it as under various forms of defamation¹⁰.

⁶ Someone who leaves an intentionally annoying or offensive message on the internet, in order to upset someone or to get attention or cause trouble. (Cambridge dictionary). ⁷ A computer program that works automatically, especially one that searches for and finds information on the internet. (Cambridge dictionary). ⁸ UNESCO ⁹ <https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/An%20Infographic%20Guide%20to%20An%20Infographic%20Guide%20to%20TFGBV.pdf> ¹⁰ Report of the Secretary-General on Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, A/79/500 (2024).

- Women active in public life, including women politicians, women human rights defenders, journalists are groups facing increasing TFGBV. 82% of women parliamentarians have experienced some form of psychological violence, which mostly occurs online¹¹ and [73% of women journalists](#) have experienced online violence in the course of their work¹².

- 98 per cent of deepfakes online are pornographic, with 99 per cent targeting women and girls¹³.

- Only 46 countries¹⁴ have adopted legislative measures to address technology facilitated gender-based violence against women and girls.

Technology facilitated gender-based violence is often underreported due to the inexistence of reporting mechanisms and support services. Victims may also not understand that technology facilitated gender-based violence is prohibited violence, or fear reprisals, and lack trust in authorities.

Additionally, most States have not yet put in place an efficient and systematic data collection on technology facilitated gender-based violence, which leads to significant gaps in the availability of substantive data to understand and analyze the scale of the problem, and address it effectively.



International human rights law

- **Technology facilitated gender-based violence is a form of gender-based violence.** The international human rights framework applicable to gender-based violence applies to technology facilitated gender-based violence¹⁵.

The CEDAW Committee defines gender-based violence as “Violence directed toward, or disproportionately affecting someone because of their gender or sex as well as perceived transgression of the gender norms in their community or society. Such violence takes multiple forms, including acts or omissions intended or likely to cause or result in death or physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering, threats of such acts, harassment, coercion and arbitrary deprivation of liberty”¹⁶

¹¹ Inter-Parliamentary Union, [Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians](#), (2016). ¹² UNESCO ¹³ Security Hero. 2023. “2023 State of Deepfakes.” <https://www.securityhero.io/state-of-deepfakes/> ¹⁴ <https://data.unwomen.org/global-database-on-violence-against-women> ¹⁵ See UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women, General Recommendation 35: the Committee made clear that the Convention is fully applicable to technology-mediated environments, such as the Internet and digital spaces and [CEDAW Committee working group on gender based violence initial position paper on technology facilitated gender-based violence against women](#). ¹⁶ UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women, General Recommendation 35.

- **Key international and regional instruments:**

- [United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#)
- [Inter- American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women “Convention of Belém do Pará”](#)
- [Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence \(“Istanbul Convention”\)](#)
- [Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa \(the “Maputo Protocol”\)](#)
- [Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court](#)
- [Geneva Conventions](#)

- **Interpretation of norms and principles**

by the UN Treaty Bodies:

- [CEDAW General recommendations 19](#) and [35](#) of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on gender-based violence against women explicitly recognizes tech-based violence as a new form of gender-based violence under CEDAW’s mandate.
- [CEDAW General Recommendation 33](#) on women’s access to justice highlights technology’s role in women’s empowerment and access to justice.
- [CEDAW General Recommendation 36](#) on the right of girls and women to education focuses on girls’ vulnerability to cyberbullying
- [CEDAW General Recommendation 40](#)

on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems explicitly addresses technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, acknowledging its various manifestations (structural, emotional, economic) and urging states to adopt legislative and regulatory measures for a gender-equal digital future, including addressing biases in artificial intelligence.

- [Committee on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\), General Comment 25](#) on children’s rights in relation to the digital environment notes the applicability of all rights within the CRC to the digital environment and explicitly notes the responsibility of States to protect children from violence in the digital environment.

Note: The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography also directly addresses severe forms of child exploitation that frequently occur online.

What are States’ obligations?

“We need stronger laws to protect survivors and have tech companies regulate their content on platforms. And society also needs to create better and more ethical digital citizens.” Hera Hussain, feminist activist. UK.

International human rights law requests States to act with due diligence and **prevent the occurrence of GBV, protect** all persons against it, as well as **investigate, prosecute and punish** all acts of gender-based violence.

- **PREVENTION:** for example, adopting laws, policies and regulations to address TFGBV, designed in close collaboration with survivors, internet providers, and social media platforms; implementing awareness raising campaigns and promoting digital education.

- **RESPECT:** for example, refrain from conducting, supporting, or encouraging technology facilitated gender-based violence themselves (e.g., state-sponsored harassment, unlawful surveillance, or arbitrary internet shutdowns that hinder the ability of victims to seek help), and ensure and enable a safe and inclusive digital space for women and girls.

- **PROTECTION:** for example, fostering a policy of zero tolerance to online violence against women and girls; providing avenues for survivors to seek redress and remedies and ensuring legal and psychological support services for survivors.

- **ACCESS TO JUSTICE:** for example, ensuring cases are investigated, perpetrators are punished, and victims receive justice and reparations; training law enforcement officials on how to address technology facilitated gender-based violence.

- **DATA COLLECTION:** for example, collecting and publishing reliable statistics about different forms of TFGBV, to understand their drivers and impact, disaggregated by sex, gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other factors, in

line with a human-rights based approach to data including in relation to privacy and safety.¹⁷

- States should **work closely with survivors, civil society organizations, and technology companies** to design and implement efficient prevention and response measures, in line with international human rights norms.

- **Technology companies including social media and messaging platforms have a responsibility to respect human rights, as outlined in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.** This includes ensuring that their products, services or business practices do not contribute to or amplify gender-based violence.

What is the impact on victims?

“Every “like” to those publications is an aggression, every “like” is a blow. Every time someone shares intimate content of a person who did not allow it is like a rape.” Olimpia Coral Melo, survivor from Mexico.

Technology facilitated gender-based violence can have many **serious and long-lasting consequences**, depending on the characteristics of the victim and of the violence.

- **Physical:** it can be a prelude of physical violence and in extreme cases, femicide, or instigate suicide.

¹⁷ OHCHR, A Human Rights Based Approach to Data, 2018 <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/HRIndicators/GuidanceNoteonApproachtoData.pdf>



Illustrator: Freepick

- **Psychological:** Victims may feel shame, guilt, or isolation, often worsened by stigma from their family or community.
- **Social consequences:** Victims may lose/be excluded from their social circle/communities/families and be exposed to further violence by the family or community.
- **Political consequences:** Online harassment, misogynist or gendered hate speech discourages women and girls from speaking up, running for office or participating in political and public life, including online.

- **Economic consequences:** Victims may drop school, lose jobs, or face discrimination at work.
- Technology facilitated gender-based violence harms **not only the victims but it also affects their family, community, and society as a whole**¹⁸.

"People called for my killing (...), and (...) that I should be lynched. I have three sisters who look like me, and some people actually confuse us (...). One of them has had to make her cover her face completely, because of harassment she has been subjected to publicly. Another was once attacked in the market." Aisha, survivor from Nigeria.

¹⁸ For ex., see the story of Aisha: <https://webfoundation.org/2022/12/online-gender-based-violence-story-aisha-nigeria/>

Technology facilitated gender-based violence is gender-based violence in the digital age. It's a human rights issue, and governments, communities, and technology companies all share responsibility for preventing it and protecting victims.

Engaging men and boys is key! Boys and men can be human rights advocates, allies and changemakers. When men and boys speak up against online abuse, challenge harmful norms, and promote respect for human rights, they help dismantle a patriarchal system that enables violence against those who do not or are perceived not to conform with traditional gender roles, including men and boys, women and girls and LGBTIQ+ persons and non-binary persons.

- However, there is a **high level of impunity** for perpetrators of technology facilitated gender-based violence, due to several concurring factors such as: the absence of regulations for tech companies and social media spaces, the inexistence of or inadequacy of legal frameworks for accountability, the lack of reporting mechanisms for victims, among others. Victims also often refrain from reporting technology facilitated gender-based violence due to fear of reprisal or social stigma and consequences.

TFGBV in numbers

TFGBV is often **underreported** due to the inexistence of reporting mechanisms and support services. Victims may also not understand that TFGBV is prohibited violence, or fear reprisals, and lack trust in authorities.

Additionally, most States have not yet put in place an **efficient and systematic data collection** on TFGBV, which leads to significant gaps in the availability of substantive data to understand and analyze the scale of the problem, and address it effectively.

ANNEX - Relevant Resources

1. OHCHR reports

- Rights of **persons with disabilities** and digital technologies and devices, including assis-

tive technologies¹⁹ (2025).

- Mapping report on **human rights and new and emerging digital technologies**²⁰ (2024).
- Solutions to promote **digital education for young people** and to ensure their protection from online threats (2024)²¹.
- Reports on the right to **privacy** in the digital age (2025, 2022, 2021)²².
- Report on technologies on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of **assemblies**, including peaceful protest (2020)²³.
- Report on promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet: ways to bridge the **gender digital divide** from a human rights perspective (2017)²⁴.
- Report on a human rights approach to meaningful connectivity and to **overcoming digital divides** including by addressing threats to individuals' access to the Internet²⁵. (June 2026)

2. Human Rights Council Advisory Committee

- Report of the Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council on **technology facilitated gender-based violence and its impact on women and girls** (September 2026)²⁶.

3. UN Special Procedures

- Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against women and girls on **online violence against women and girls** from a human rights perspective (2018)²⁷.
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against women and girls on **combating violence against women journalists** (2020)²⁸.
- Report of the Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls on **girls' and young women's activism** (2022)²⁹.
- Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism on racial **discrimination and emerging digital technologies: a human rights analysis** (2020)³⁰.
- Report of the Working Group on Discrimination against women and girls on **artificial intelligence** (June 2026).

4. UN treaty bodies

- CEDAW Initial Position Paper on Tech-facilitated gender-based violence Against Women³¹.

5. UN Secretary General

- Report of the Secretary-General on Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: technology-facilitated violence against women and girls (2024) .³².

²³ [A/HRC/44/24](#). ²⁴ [A/HRC/35/9](#). ²⁵ Report requested by Human Rights Council [resolution 57/29](#) ²⁶ Report requested by Human Rights Council [resolution 56/19](#) ²⁷ [A/HRC/38/47](#). ²⁸ [A/HRC/44/52](#). ²⁹ [A/HRC/50/25](#). ³⁰ [A/HRC/44/57](#). ³¹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/position-papers/cedaw-working-group-gender-based-violence-initial-position-paper-tech> ³² [A/79/500](#) ³³ [E/2023/27-E/CN.6/2023/14](#)

6. UN Commission on the Status of Women

- Report on the sixty-seventh session, priority theme on “Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (2023)³³.

7. UN Agencies

- UNFPA, [Digital violence terms](#)
- UNFPA, An Infographic Guide to Technology-facilitated Gender-based Violence (2025)
- UNFPA, Second Global Symposium on Technology-facilitated Gender-based Violence: Key takeaways (2025)
- UNFPA, What is technology facilitated gender-based violence? (2023).
- UNFPA, A Framework for TFGBV Programming (2024)
- UNFPA, Technology-facilitated Gender-based Violence: Making All Spaces Safe (2021)
- UNESCO, “Your opinion doesn’t matter anyway”: Exposing Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in an Era of Generative AI (2023).
- UNESCO, [How to combat online gendered disinformation](#) (2024)
- UN Women
 - Repository of UN Women’s work on technol-

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