

Vienna Declaration on Femicide

We, the participants of the Vienna Symposium on Femicide, held on 26 November 2012 at the United Nations Office at Vienna,

Alarmed by the fact that femicide is increasing all over the world and often remains unpunished, which not only intensifies the subordination and powerlessness of women and girls, but also sends the negative message to society that violence against females may be both acceptable and inevitable,

Recognizing that femicide is the killing of women and girls because of their gender, which can take the form of, inter alia: 1) the murder of women as a result of intimate partner violence; 2) the torture and misogynist slaying of women 3) killing of women and girls in the name of “honour”; 4) targeted killing of women and girls in the context of armed conflict; 5) dowry-related killings of women; 6) killing of women and girls because of their sexual orientation and gender identity; 7) the killing of aboriginal and indigenous women and girls because of their gender; 8) female infanticide and gender-based sex selection foeticide; 9) genital mutilation related femicide; 10) accusations of witchcraft and 11) other femicides connected with gangs, organized crime, drug dealers, human trafficking, and the proliferation of small arms,

Emphasizing that traditions and culture cannot be used as justifications for the violation of women’s human rights, in particular the right to life and the right to be free from violence,

Recognizing that femicide requires efforts on all levels of society to achieve its eradication,

Reaffirming the commitment to work together towards putting an end to femicide, in full compliance with national and international legal instruments,

Recalling the Human Rights Council’s Resolution on Accelerating Efforts to Eliminate all Forms of Violence against Women: Remedies for Women Who Have Been Subjected to Violence (A/HRC/20/L.10), which welcomed the recent report of the Special Rapporteur on gender-related killings, and invited Member States to submit relevant information and remedies,

Taking note of the General Assembly’s Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (A/RES/65/228, Annex), and the research presented on the killing of women by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (Global Study on Homicide 2011),

1. *Urge* Member States, in respect of their due diligence obligation to protect women as well as to prevent and prosecute femicide, to undertake institutional initiatives to improve the prevention of femicide and the provision of legal protection, remedies and reparation to women survivors of violence against women, in accordance with international treaties and to consider adopting and implementing legislation to investigate, prosecute, punish and redress femicide in line with the effective experience of some countries;

2. *Call upon* Member States to design, implement and evaluate comprehensive strategies and programmes aimed at removing obstacles that prevent women and girls from enjoying their full rights, including public education programmes and interventions aimed at empowering women and girls as well as sensitizing men and boys, in order to change the mindset of societies, as well as to conduct research on the role of gender-related causes (or motives) of femicide, including misogyny, to inform the above-mentioned strategies and programmes;
3. *Urge* Member States to support the introduction of a goal on ending violence against women in the post-2015 development agenda with a specific target of reducing by half the number of femicides by 2025;
4. *Invite* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and other relevant United Nations agencies and programmes to assist and support Member States in developing and adapting measures and strategies to prevent and respond to femicide as a grave and unacceptable violation of women's and girls' most basic human right to life;
5. *Encourage* the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UN Women, and other relevant United Nations entities, the institutes of the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme Network, and research institutions to conduct relevant research on femicide, including in particular data collection, analysis, evaluation of programs set up to combat femicide, and the role of policies to facilitate efforts to eradicate femicide;
6. *Recognize* the indispensable work of civil society organizations in fighting femicide worldwide and encourage Member States and donors to support and finance their efforts;
7. *Invite* the UNODC to identify relevant civil society organizations and facilitate Member States' cooperation with civil society organizations in order to create synergies and make use of all available resources to design implement, and evaluate programs to end femicide;
8. *Encourage* collaboration between the Human Rights Council, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as well as regional human rights mechanisms;
9. *Call* for the creation of a platform where lawyers, prosecutors, judges, law enforcement officials, academics, feminists, non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies, governmental and inter-governmental institutions, and other relevant actors could share their expertise and good practices, in order to transfer knowledge across regions.