



## Digital Harassment of Women Leaders: A review of the evidence

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**Query:** An annotated bibliography of the evidence on digital harassment of women leaders (MPs, civic activists etc) – the scale of the issue, the impact it has at individual and collective levels and the effectiveness of interventions to address the issue. Please include a summary and analysis for each individual source listed, and a quality assessment for each source listed

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#### 1. Overview

Digital harassment of women leaders can encompass 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. New forms of online violence are committed in a continuum and/or interaction between online or digital space; it is often difficult to distinguish the consequences of actions that are initiated in digital environments from offline realities, and vice versa. Social media has become a significant arena for the perpetration of psychological violence against women parliamentarians and activists. The most common forms of violence are sexist and misogynistic remarks, humiliating images, mobbing, intimidation and threats. These acts – whether directed at women as civil society leaders, voters, political party members, candidates, elected representatives or appointed officials – can restrict the political participation of women as a group.<sup>1</sup>

This report looks at the evidence currently available on digital harassment of women leaders under the headings ‘scale of the issue’, ‘impact’, and ‘effectiveness of interventions’, and makes a light-touch assessment of the quality of that evidence, or where non-academic evidence is included a rationale is given for its inclusion. A parallel query (Q210) will summarise the key points or lessons from the evidence.

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<sup>1</sup> S. O’Connell and G. Ramshaw (2018), *Violence Against Women in Politics: Global Perspectives of a Global Issue*. London: Westminster Foundation for Democracy

Overall, there is very limited research directly on digital harassment of women leaders, and none assessing the effectiveness of interventions to address the issue (see table below for further details). Most of the studies were empirical studies with relatively small sample sizes, or desk reviews. Since many of these materials do not fit the criteria for scoring the evidence quality of conventional research materials highlighted in Section 2, a rationale is given for their inclusion.

<b>Evaluating the overall strength of the evidence base on digital harassment of women leaders</b> (using DFID's 2014 How to Note on Assessing the Strength of Evidence)	
Scale of the issue	<b>Limited:</b> Moderate-to-low quality studies, medium size evidence body, low levels of consistency due to different methods used. Some contextually relevant studies (e.g. from India and multi-country study). No primary research directly assessing the proportion or number of women leaders affected by digital harassment.
Impact it has at individual and collective levels	<b>Limited:</b> Moderate-to-low quality studies, medium size evidence body, with some evidence on the impact of the issue, for example reducing women leaders' credibility and legitimacy, distracting female leaders, instilling fear for women leaders' safety, and dissuading women from running for offices. Studies largely from high-income countries and not always contextually relevant.
Effectiveness of interventions to address the issue	<b>No evidence:</b> Some studies outlining interventions, with some recommendations given, but limited assessment of the effectiveness of specific interventions. No evaluations found. No studies directly assessing the effectiveness of interventions that address digital harassment of women leaders. Any available studies are of low quality, and are contextually irrelevant.

## 2. Methodology

**Searches:** For existing systematic reviews or evidence reviews on VAW in politics, digital harassment, female activists and digital security, online VAW, women human rights defenders and online violence were all used. In addition, searches using Google, Google Scholar, PubMed, Web of Science and other relevant electronic databases using key search terms including: 'violence', 'abuse', 'harass', 'women', 'female', 'digital', 'online', 'social media', 'politicians', 'activists', 'human rights defenders', 'MP', 'parliamentarians'.

Given the strong role played by civil society organisations in this space the search also extended to sites hosted by these organisations such as <https://www.genderit.org/indepth>, and <https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/work/research/> and grey literature. This is necessary in light of the fact that this is a very rapidly evolving issue, with the latest reports not always available in journals.

Details of the searches carried out are in the table below. The database searches were filtered for relevance with only the most relevant studies chosen.

Search records:

Site	Terms	Results
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY ( 'violence' AND 'politician' AND 'women' AND 'digital' ) AND PUBYEAR > 2012	0
	TITLE-ABS-KEY ( 'violence' AND 'women' AND 'digital' ) AND PUBYEAR > 2012	62
	TITLE-ABS-KEY ( 'women' AND 'human AND rights' AND 'digital' AND 'violence' )	2
Google scholar	violence women digital politician anywhere in title	17,100
Web of science	You searched for: TOPIC:(women political digital violence) Timespan: Last 5 years. Indexes: SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC.	8

Inclusion Criteria: To be eligible for inclusion in this rapid mapping, reports will have to fulfil the following criteria:

- Geographical focus: Global
- Language: English
- Time period: 5 year time period, completed between January 2013 and September 2018, extending to 10 years if insufficient literature is found
- Format: Evaluation, journal article, research studies
- Study design: All study types, designs, and methodologies including primary and secondary studies
- Quality: High-quality studies

Exclusion Criteria: Reports were excluded on the following basis:

- Literature that is only about concepts or theories.
- References with no citations of references, or too few references cited (exception would be if the reference is entirely based on original field work or under Chatham House rules but from an established source.)

Quality assessment: Reports were anecdotally assessed out of 10 for quality. Each piece was also categorised according to:

- 1) Type of report e.g. Systematic review, peer reviewed journal article, an in-house evaluation report, academic working paper, Policy paper, UN special rapporteur report etc.
- 2) Name of the organisation
- 3) Scope of the report (e.g. single country case study, comparative study across three countries, systematic review, etc.)
- 4) Methodology used (statistical analysis, household surveys, key informant interviews etc).

The quality assessment was rapid and anecdotal to give a rough assessment of the quality of the literature and **the quality assessment should therefore be treated with caution**. Section 3 provides a detailed assessment of quality and key findings.

Section 3: Evidence						
Citation	Type of report	Organisation	Scope of the report or study	Research methodology/design	Quality assessment (out of 10) with rationale for inclusion	Summary / analysis
<b>Scale of the Issue</b>						
Inter-Parliamentary Union (2016) <b><u>Sexism, Harassment and Violence against Women Parliamentarians</u></b>	Issues Brief	Inter-parliamentary Union	Comparative study across 39 countries	The study is based on quantitative and qualitative data provided voluntarily by 55 women parliamentarians from 39 countries spread over five regions of the world: 18 in Africa, 15 in Europe, 10 in Asia-Pacific, 8 in the Americas and 4 in Arab countries..	5 - Short issues brief with good regional spread, providing interesting insights into women parliamentarian's experiences of sexism, harassment and violence. The study does not, however, compare women's and men's experience, nor does it compare violence against women in politics with that of violence against women in general.	First study specifically devoted to the subject of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament. It seeks to clarify what this phenomenon consists of, where, why and in what forms it occurs, who are the perpetrators and what is its prevalence.

<p>Amnesty (2018) <b><u>Toxic Twitter</u></b> report</p>	<p>Online report</p>	<p>Amnesty International</p>	<p>Comparative study across two countries (UK and US) and drawing on wider data</p>	<p>Based on interviews as well as surveys and analysis of Tweets commissioned by Amnesty International</p>	<p>5 – Includes analysis of 900,223 tweets in run-up to 2017 UK election to explore abuse of women politicians. Also draws on online poll with Ipsos MORI about women’s broader experiences (n = 4,009) of abuse and harassment on social media platforms across eight countries (UK, USA, Spain, Denmark, Italy, Sweden, Poland and New Zealand).</p>	<p>The report notes that women who speak out about certain (often feminist) issues and/or are public figures are at high risk of online abuse and harassment, including journalists, politicians and women’s rights activists. Analysis of tweets before UK election found that online abuse targets different identities, with Diane Abbott, the Shadow Home Secretary and first black female MP in the UK - alone - receiving almost half (45.14%) of all abuse against women MPs active on Twitter in the UK during this period. Violence is often intersectional - Scottish Parliamentarian and Leader of the Opposition Ruth Davidson told Amnesty International that the abuse she faces is both misogynistic and homophobic.</p>
<p>Anderson, S. (2015) <b><u>‘India’s Gender Digital Divide: Women and Politics on Twitter’</u></b>, ORF Issue Brief.</p>	<p>Issue Brief</p>	<p>Observer Research Foundation (ORF)</p>	<p>Single country case study - focuses on India</p>	<p>Analysis of 23,350 tweets over an eight-day period.</p>	<p>4 - Shows a significant underrepresentation of women in Twitter’s political conversations, which mirrors a real-world marginalization of women. Limited time period could affect validity of findings.</p>	<p>The report highlights how women who take up space online, particularly when it involves politically charged issues, are often treated as trespassers in a male space. In response to gender-based abuse and harassment, some prominent female bloggers and activists have chosen to delete their accounts.</p>

<p>Bardall, G. (2013) <b><u>'Gender-Specific Election Violence: The Role of Information and Communication Technologies'</u></b>, Stability: International Journal of Security and Development</p>	<p>Journal article</p>	<p>Author works at Trudeau Foundation (independent Canadian charity)</p>	<p>Review article with global focus.</p>	<p>Desk review - no primary data</p>	<p>4 - Shows both use of technology as tool for abuse and as a means of redressing the issue.</p>	<p>For women entering political life or holding public positions, new ICTs are frequently used as tools of gender-specific electoral and political violence. There is evidence of ICTs being used to perpetrate a broad range of violent acts against women during elections, especially acts inflicting fear and psychological harm. Specific characteristics of ICTs are particularly adapted to misuse in this manner. Despite these significant challenges, ICTs also offer groundbreaking solutions for preventing and mitigating violence against women in elections (VAWE). Notably, ICTs combat VAWE through monitoring and documenting violence, via education and awareness-raising platforms and through empowerment and advocacy initiatives.</p>
<p>Krook, M.L. (2017) <b><u>'Violence Against Women in Politics'</u></b>, Journal of Democracy, 28.1: 74–88</p>	<p>Journal article</p>	<p>Rutgers University</p>	<p>Global study</p>	<p>Drawing on quantitative and qualitative data, academic research on gendered and political violence</p>	<p>4 – Desk review which frames the issue as a broader political issue for democracies and also includes a range of state and political party-led redress mechanisms. Includes some examples of digital harassment.</p>	<p>Notes that reports of physical attacks, intimidation, and harassment aimed at female politicians, activists, and voters have grown as women have become more politically engaged around the world, including digital harassment.</p> <p>Includes examples of online sexist hostility and intimidation driving female politicians out of politics, or putting off potential leaders. For example, nearly all participants in a program for aspiring women leaders in the UK stated that they had witnessed sexist abuse of female politicians online, and over 75% said that it weighed on their decision about whether to seek a role in public life.</p> <p>Also highlights the example of the 2016 “Reclaim the Internet” campaign, which brought together current and former female British MPs who were concerned that online harassment and bullying truncate public debate.</p>

<p>Lokot, T. (2018) <b><u>#IAmNotAfraidToSayIt : stories of sexual violence as everyday political speech on Facebook</u></b>, <i>Information, Communication &amp; Society</i>, 21.6, SI: 802–817,</p>	<p>Journal article</p>	<p>Dublin City University</p>	<p>Single country case study - focuses on Ukraine</p>	<p>This paper analyses around 3,500 Facebook posts stemming from the #ЯНеБоюсьСказать (Ukrainian for #IAmNotAfraidToSayIt) online campaign that was started in the Ukrainian segment of Facebook in July 2016 by a local female activist to raise awareness of how widespread sexual violence and sexual harassment are in the Ukrainian society.</p>	<p>4 – Interesting methodology using qualitative coding and analysis of Facebook posts. Little discussion of limitations in the article. Whilst geographically limited it shows how the social media platforms can be a means to document violence and simultaneously enabled networked activism.</p>	<p>The qualitative coding and analysis revealed recurring patterns around the themes of violence against women, the power of taboo topics and silences, the role of everyday political speech and online resistance narratives, and the power of affective networked storytelling.</p> <p>Networked conversations about everyday rights and affective stories about shared experiences of injustice, underpinned by the affordances of social media platforms for sharing and discussing information and participating in everyday politics, can emerge as viable forms of networked feminist activism and can have real impact on the discursive status quo of an issue, both in the digital sphere and beyond it.</p> <p>Although the hashtag campaign did not directly generate any legislative reform, it shifted the tone of public debate about sexual harassment from abstract and shameful to personal and persistent.</p>
<p>Barlow, C and Awan, A (2016), <b><u>“You Need to Be Sorted Out With a Knife”: The Attempted Online Silencing of Women and People of Muslim Faith within Academia</u></b>, <i>Social Media and Society</i>, October-December 2016: 1–11</p>	<p>Journal article</p>	<p>Lancaster University, Birmingham City University, UK</p>	<p>Single country case study - focuses on UK</p>	<p>Desk review and auto-ethnographic accounts (of the two authors' experiences as feminist researchers)</p>	<p>3 – not 'objective' in a scientific sense as based on authors' personal experiences, but useful in locating within wider context with broader literature</p>	<p>Discusses high-profile examples of online hate, trolling, and violence against women (e.g. Caroline Criado-Perez, Laurie Penny). Describes different experiences (Charlotte received rape threats and Yusaf received death threats) but with the same purpose — the attempted silencing of their voices and perspectives.</p> <p>Describes lack of response and support provided by Twitter to both gender-based hate and Islamophobia, both within and beyond the academic sphere.</p>

<p>Strickland, P. and Dent, J. (2017), <b><u>Online harassment and cyber bullying</u></b>, Parliamentary Briefing Paper Number 07967, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017:</p>	<p>Parliamentary Briefing Paper</p>	<p>House of Commons Library</p>	<p>Single country case study - focuses on UK</p>	<p>Desk Review and analysis of written answers to relevant parliamentary questions.</p>	<p>3 – Highlights some useful UK-specific evidence of online harassment and cyber bullying, including specifically of politicians (Section 7)</p>	<p>The Home Affairs Committee highlighted racist, sexist and anti-Semitic abuse of MPs on Twitter in April 2017. In the UK 2017 election, parliamentary candidates reported high levels of online abuse. Prominent politicians accounted for the majority of abuse. Male Conservative candidates received the highest percentage of abuse at almost 6%; however this may be because more prominent politicians are male.</p>
<p>Gardiner, B. (2018) <b><u>'It's a terrible way to go to work: what 70 million readers' comments on the Guardian revealed about hostility to women and minorities online'</u></b>, Feminist Media Studies 18.4: 592–608</p>	<p>Journal article</p>	<p>Goldsmiths College, University of London</p>	<p>Single country case study - focuses on UK</p>	<p>Uses Guardian data - analysis of the block rate patterns in the 70 million comments left on the Guardian site was carried out in March 2016, assessing two variables: (1) the gender of the author of the article, and (2) the proportion of comments blocked. Also staff survey of Guardian journalists - 183 (49%) responded</p>	<p>3 - Some limitations in the analysis of the blocked comments (e.g. may be blocked due to being off-topic, or abuse aimed at other commenters, not the writer). Women and BAME people are over-represented in the responses to the staff survey; this self-selection limits the reliability of the results.</p>	<p>Female and BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) journalists in particular complained that they were subject to more abuse than their male, white counterparts. It was found that articles written by women did attract a higher percentage of blocked comments than those written by men, regardless of the subject of the article also evidence that articles written by BAME writers attracted disproportionate levels of blocked comments</p>



<p>Funk, M and Coker, C (2016) <b><u>'She's Hot, for a Politician': The Impact of Objectifying Commentary on Perceived Credibility of Female Candidates.</u></b> Communication Studies: Vol 67, No 4'</p>	<p>Journal article</p>	<p>University of Missouri</p>	<p>Single country case study - focuses on US</p>	<p>Researchers created two Facebook feeds discussing a hypothetical female candidate. For both feeds, the discussion focused on the candidate's policy credentials, with one feed containing commentary on the female candidate's body.</p>	<p>3 - Only looks at one platform (Facebook) in one particular political context (US). The sample, comprised of university students, is not representative of the population in terms of demographic data, or, more importantly, political opinions. No disaggregation by sex.</p>	<p>Respondents in the control condition (policy-only feed) rated the female candidate as significantly more appealing than those in the treatment condition (where they also received derogatory commentary on the female candidate's body) who found the candidate less competent and less serious. Males were more likely to report the candidate as being less suited for office than females. Results show the "subtle yet consequential" effects of exposure to objectifying Facebook conversation, and the need for further research to understand the impact of objectification on candidate evaluation.</p>
<p>UN Broadband Commission for Digital Development Working Group on Broadband and Gender (2016) <b><u>Combatting Online Violence Against Women &amp; Girls: A Worldwide Wake-Up Call</u></b></p>	<p>Report</p>	<p>Broadband Commission</p>	<p>Global study</p>	<p>Draws on other studies rather than original empirical research.</p>	<p>2 - Controversial report which received considerable criticism about the quality of the report and in particular the referencing. The original report was retracted and a revised version was produced.</p>	<p>Provides background information on scale of digital harassment on VAWG, but not political leaders/activists. Women in the age range of 18 to 24 are uniquely likely to experience stalking and sexual harassment in addition to physical threats. One in five female Internet users live in countries where harassment and abuse of women online is extremely unlikely to be punished. In many countries women are reluctant to report their victimization for fear of social repercussions. Cyber VAWG puts a premium on emotional bandwidth, personal and workplace time, financial resources and missed wages</p>

Impact at individual and collective levels						
Atalanta (2018) <b><u>(Anti)Social Media The benefits and pitfalls of digital for female politicians</u></b>	Report	Atalanta – social enterprise	Comparative study across three countries (UK, South Africa, Chile)	In-depth analysis of 27,952 tweets related to high-profile male and female political leaders in the UK, South Africa and Chile, including Jeremy Corbyn vs Theresa May in the UK (Sept – Nov 2017). Innovative methodology - each tweet was coded and verified by multiple Crowd members <sup>2</sup> , who assessed the sentiment of the tweet on a five-point scale	6 – Useful for understanding the scale and impact of digital harassment against female politicians. Innovative crowd-sourcing methodology; provides interesting contrast between male vs. female politicians, as well as geographic spread (UK, South Africa and Chile).	The study found that male and female politicians received similar levels of derogatory comments overall, but women were three times more likely to see derogatory or sexist comments directly related to their gender. Women leaders experienced a significantly larger volume of conversation about their physical appearance and family life. Comments about their appearance and relationship status are also considerably more negative than those towards their male counterparts. Online abuse has various negative impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegitimising women as leaders and questioning their right to take political roles</li> <li>• Depersonalising female leaders, by raising the cost of sharing personal information;</li> <li>• Intentionally distracting female leaders from focusing on substantive work;</li> <li>• Instilling fear for their physical safety and the safety of their families, and compelling them to implement new security measures; and</li> <li>• Dissuading women from running for office.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Algorithms do not always accurately interpret the nuances of online conversation; this study also uses human verifiers to review the sentiment contained in individual social media posts, thereby achieving accuracy levels of 95%.

<p>Henry, N. and Powell, A. (2018) <b><u>Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence (TFSV): A Literature Review of Empirical Research</u></b>, Trauma, Violence, and Abuse 19.2: 195–208</p>	<p>Journal article</p>	<p>La Trobe University and RMIT University in Australia</p>	<p>Literature review (global)</p>	<p>Literature review of empirical research-sought to explore the gendered prevalence, nature, and impacts of TFSV.</p>	<p>5 - This is a valuable paper in that it is the only broad ranging (although not systematic) review of the literature in this field and it showed that there is a clear lack of research into diverse forms of TFSV against adults – useful background framing (but no information on harassment of women politicians/activists.</p>	<p>Technology-facilitated sexual violence (TFSV) refers to a range of behaviors where digital technologies are used to facilitate both virtual and face-to-face sexually based harms. While there is a growing body of research into technology-facilitated harms perpetrated against children and adolescents, there is a dearth of qualitative and quantitative research on TFSV against adults. Preliminary studies, however, indicate that some harms, much like sexual violence more broadly, may be predominantly gender-, sexuality-, and age-based, with young women being overrepresented as victims in some categories.</p>
<p>Sobieraj, S. (2018) <b><u>'Bitch, slut, skank, cunt: patterned resistance to women's visibility in digital publics'</u></b>, Information Communication &amp; Society 21.11: 1700–1714.</p>	<p>Journal article</p>	<p>Tufts University, USA</p>	<p>Single country case study - focuses on US</p>	<p>Two years of in-depth interviews with women who have been on the receiving end of gender-based digital abuse (<i>n</i> = 38), conversations with industry professionals working in content moderation and digital safety, the extant literature, and news stories about digital attacks against women,</p>	<p>4 - Useful typology of digital sexism showing that aggressors draw upon three overlapping strategies – intimidating, shaming, and discrediting – to limit women's impact in digital publics.</p>	<p>When digital sexism succeeds in pressing women out of digital spaces, constrains the topics they address publicly, or limits the ways they address them, we must consider the democratic costs of gender-based harassment, in addition to the personal ones. Internet misogyny parallels gendered harassment in physical spaces, suggesting that the heart of men's aggression toward women is a 'generalized offense at women's public presence in 'men's' spaces – in politics, at law schools, online' Abuse that distorts political discourse such that the most visible representatives of key constituencies withdraw from fatigue, free speech is raced, classed, and gendered, the range of issues open for public discussion shrinks for fear of retaliation, and 'high-risk' perspectives go unspoken thwarts not only those who opt to avoid risk, but democratic discourse writ large.</p>

Lumsden, K and Morgan, H (2016) <b><u>Media framing of trolling and online abuse: silencing strategies, symbolic violence, and victim blaming</u></b> , Feminist Media Studies.17.6: 926–940	Book chapter	University of Aberdeen / University of Leicester	Single country case study - focuses on UK	Literature review and ethnographic content analysis of 175 British newspaper reports on trolling	4 - Based on large scale study and explores silencing effects of trolling.	Trolling can be viewed as a ‘silencing strategy’. Trolling leaves its victims in a powerless position as freedom of expression for perpetrators is defended via social media ideologies. The initial promise of social media – to provide democratizing spaces – in practice creates space for the percolation of misogynist, sexist, racist, and/or homophobic attitudes.
Bernardi, C.L. (2017) <b><u>‘HarassMap: The silent revolution for women’s rights in Egypt’</u></b> , in Arab Women and the Media in Changing Landscapes (pp. 215–227)	Book chapter	University of Stirling	Single country case study - focuses on Egypt	Unable to access.	3 - Whilst not directly relevant this addresses a significant, groundbreaking digital initiative in that it was the first initiative of its kind to use digital technologies to map sexual harassment.	Bernardi analyses the role played by independent organization HarassMap, run by Egyptian men and women, with the aim to “put an end to social acceptance of sexual harassment” instances of sexual harassment in Egypt acquires a new visibility that emerges on the digital layer through the combination of activism, digital technologies and women’s consistent fight for their rights. Book chapter – unable to access.
Williams, S. (2016) <b><u>#SayHerName: using digital activism to document violence against black women’</u></b> , Feminist Media Studies16.5: 922–925	Journal article	Wake Forest University	Commentary piece	Commentary piece – no primary data.	3 – Shows the potential for ‘hashtag’ activism.	The social media hashtag #SayHerName made visible the deaths of black transgender women and urged the press and the public to pay attention to the violence black women experience at the hands of police. With #SayHerName, black women aimed not only to bring attention to the women’s deaths but also to gain justice for them.

Effectiveness of interventions						
<p>Digital Rights Foundation Pakistan (2017) <b><u>Online Violence Against Women In Pakistan Submission To UNSR on violence against women</u></b></p>	<p><b>Report</b></p>	<p>Digital Rights Foundation Pakistan</p>	<p>Single country case study - focuses on Pakistan</p>	<p>Based on data provided by the Pakistan government, law enforcement agencies and collected by DRF. A legal analysis of the legislation is accompanied by an appraisal of the implementation of the laws and the functioning of institutions on the ground. Reported judgments are also analysed to gauge jurisprudence (interpretations of the laws) as well as legal principles developed by local courts. Women's experience is elucidated through case studies as well as analysis done by DRF's cyber harassment helpline team.</p>	<p>5 – Interesting case study on the effectiveness of legislation in a developing, and key DFID country. Not specific to VAWP.</p>	<p>Report on the laws and institutions that are in place within Pakistan to deal with issues of online violence against women. The report notes that although legislative developments have taken place to address online violence against women, it remains to be seen if there have been effective and gender-sensitive implementation at an institutional level. Notes that the effectiveness of legislation is limited by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Response Center for Cyber Crime (NR3C) being “criminally understaffed” leading to severe backlogs (p.10)</li> <li>• Procedures of the NR3C also raise several concerns in terms of evidentiary requirements, gender-sensitisation and confidentiality</li> <li>• Not enough judges in the “cybercrime” courts</li> <li>• The organisation responsible for regulating online crime (Pakistan Telecommunications Authority) lacks the capacity to act on individual cases and is notoriously non-transparent in its content removal processes</li> <li>• Social media companies based in foreign jurisdictions are not subject to Pakistani laws and are not accountable to citizens who use their services</li> </ul> <p>Very few reported judgments interpreting the law regarding online harassment.</p>

<p>Association for Progressive Communications (2015)  <u><b>From impunity to justice: Domestic legal remedies for cases of technology-related violence against women</b></u></p>	<p><b>Report</b></p>	<p>Association for Progressive Communications (APC)</p>	<p>Comparative study across seven countries</p>	<p>Mapping domestic legal remedies across the seven countries through desk research and interviews. 24 in-depth case studies on women's and girls' experiences of technology-related VAW and their attempts to access justice, included interviewing survivors, lawyers, police officers and service providers.</p>	<p>4 - Redress mechanisms across multiple countries; not specific to VAWP. Limitations include: all the laws were reviewed in English; and some of the interview respondents were not survivors themselves.</p>	<p>Mapping of the effectiveness of domestic legal remedies for cases of technology-related violence against women, including improving legislation, allocating budgets and resources, and capacity building, and case studies on women's and girls' experiences of attempts to access justice for technology-related VAW offences.</p> <p>Key lessons include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus must be on redress rather than criminalisation, and particular attention must be paid to the provision of effective protective orders and the availability of support services</li> <li>• Comprehensive capacity building – including rights-based education – should be undertaken by all institutions</li> <li>• Laws should include a comprehensive definition of VAW that includes psychological violence</li> <li>• It is crucial to develop a technology-related VAW law that takes into account the gendered nature of the violation and addresses it as a social phenomenon</li> <li>• Adequate budgets and resources should be allocated by states to address VAW.</li> </ul> <p>A strong network of and cooperation between women's groups and organisations can lead to meaningful exchanges and discussions on strategies to employ around technology-related VAW.</p>
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<p>IGF (2015) <b><u>Best Practice Forum on Online Abuse and Gender-Based Violence Against Women</u></b>, Internet Governance Forum (IGF)</p>	<p>Report</p>	<p>Internet Governance Forum ( a global multi-stakeholder platform that facilitates the discussion of public policy issues pertaining to the Internet)</p>	<p>Global review</p>	<p>Open, iterative and bottom-up process where online stakeholders completed a survey, attended frequent virtual meetings, and commented on report drafts</p>	<p>4 – Collaborative process</p>	<p>Provides useful discussion of a range of interventions, although no evidence of effectiveness, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public sector initiatives</li> <li>• Multi-stakeholder and intergovernmental initiatives</li> <li>• Private sector approaches</li> <li>• Community-led initiatives</li> </ul>
<p>Association for Progressive Communications (APC) (2017) <b><u>Online gender-based violence: to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences</u></b></p>	<p>Thematic report</p>	<p>Association for Progressive Communications</p>	<p>Global review</p>	<p>Analysis of 1,126 cases reported via the Take Back the Tech online mapping platform and 24 in- depth case studies Draws on experience from APC and global partners.</p>	<p>4 - Useful overview from a CSO that has been doing important work on this space for many years and is well connected to many grassroots organisations in the global South. Does not solely focus on women leaders.</p>	<p>A civil society report covering definitions of online violence, impacts, who is affected and how states are responding. It does not, however, assess the effectiveness of these interventions. Makes recommendations for responses by state and non-state actors, including training for law enforcement, judiciary and other response actors; clear and specific delineations of legal and illegal gender-based hate speech; and the need for internet intermediaries to protect women.</p>

<p>Ballington, J and Bardall, G (2015) <b><u>Violence Against Women in Elections</u></b>, New York: UNDP/UNWomen</p>	<p>Report</p>	<p>UNDP/UNWomen</p>	<p>Global review with case studies</p>	<p>Draws largely on secondary evidence. It cites key studies (e.g. IPU's 2016 study included above).</p>	<p>4 – Useful in situating digital harassment of women in elections within broader spectrum of violence faced by women leaders. Provides case studies of online election violence visualisation tools: Ushahidi and Harassmap in Egypt and Lebanon, and NDI's Votes Without Violence in Myanmar, Nigeria, Guatemala, Tanzania, Burma, and Côte d'Ivoire</p>	<p>UNDP and UN Women programming guide to prevent violence against women in elections. Includes evidence on digital harassment of women leaders and notes that much psychological abuse of women in elections takes place in online settings and public forums, including through social media, and via cell phones. Makes suggestions of indicators to measure in pre-election phase ( # posts of online harassment targeting women) and post-electoral period ( # postings with online harassment and bullying against women elected officials).</p>
<p>Association for Progressive Communications (2015) <b><u>From impunity to justice: Improving corporate policies to end technology-related violence against women</u></b></p>	<p>Report</p>	<p>Association for Progressive Communications</p>	<p>Comparative study across seven countries</p>	<p>In-depth case studies on women's and girls' experiences of technology-related VAW, and their attempts to access justice either through domestic legal remedies or by reporting the violation to corporate grievance mechanisms. 24 case studies were documented across seven countries. The policies of 22 companies were reviewed. Interviews with public policy representatives of the same internet intermediaries were conducted.</p>	<p>4 - Redress mechanisms in corporate actors; not specific to VAWP</p>	<p>Report on the availability and effectiveness of corporate policies in facilitating women's and girls' access to justice when they experience gender-based violence – including sexual harassment, sexualised abuse, stalking, threats, coercion, blackmail and/or extortion – through the use of ICT services.</p>



<p>Human Rights Council (2018) <b><u>38th session of the Human Rights Council, Statement by Ms. Dubravka Šimonović, Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences</u></b></p>	<p>Report</p>	<p>UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women</p>	<p>Global review</p>	<p>Informed by inputs received from stakeholders and a meeting, held on 16 and 17 January 2018, on due diligence to eliminate online violence against women, organized by the Due Diligence Project and the Association for Progressive Communications and hosted by the Global Women’s Institute of the George Washington University.</p>	<p>4 - Very significant, draws on multiple submissions. Not specific to VAWP</p>	<p>Provides examples of national and international legal efforts to address online and ICT-facilitated VAWG, including examples of civil society-led initiatives. Although does not assess the effectiveness of these initiatives, the report provides a series of recommendations.</p>
<p>Citizen Lab (2017) <b><u>Submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, its Causes, and Consequences</u></b></p>	<p>Report</p>	<p>Citizen Lab</p>	<p>Desk review</p>	<p>Draws on secondary research and inputs from a range of actors.</p>	<p>4 - Useful set of recommendations and also makes important links with encryption and anonymity tools for the security of women online. Not specific to VAWP</p>	<p>Does not assess the effectiveness of individual interventions. Notes that although a range of tools and reporting mechanisms exist, there are often major institutional barriers within law enforcement agencies that limit their ability to effectively respond to complaints of gender-based violence, abuse, and harassment more generally— whether online or off.</p> <p>Offers recommendations around new legislative powers; encryption and anonymity tools; states understanding of the complex role of intermediaries in the removal of harmful content and identification of users; commercial spyware and “stalkerware”.</p>

<p>National Democratic Institute (NDI) (2018) <b><u>#Notthecost Programme guidance for stopping violence against women in politics</u></b></p>	<p>Report – guidance note</p>	<p>National Democratic Institute (NDI), United States</p>	<p>Programme guidance for activists working to address violence against politically active women</p>	<p>Methodology not clear, but based on #NotTheCost initiative</p>	<p>3 - Focused on violence against women in politics, with recommendations for programme design.</p>	<p>Good on the principles of programming around stopping violence against women in politics, but little specific data on digital interventions and their effectiveness. It highlights NDI's online form for reporting violence against women in politics, launched in November 2016, which allows women and men worldwide to submit electronic reports of violence against politically active women safely and securely.</p>
<p>Internet Democracy Project (2017) <b><u>Policing online abuse or policing women? Our submission to the United Nations on online violence against women</u></b></p>	<p>Report (submission to UN)</p>	<p>Internet Democracy Project (a not for profit initiative), India</p>	<p>Single country case study - focuses on India</p>	<p>No information on methodology.</p>	<p>3 – India-specific but some examples of redressal mechanisms (no evidence on effectiveness or methodology)</p>	<p>Discusses several initiatives, but no analysis of their effectiveness. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A helpline, known as 1090 or the Woman Power Helpline, created by the state government of Uttar Pradesh in 2012. Either a woman or her relatives can lodge a complaint using this helpline.</li> <li>• An online community and website 'Don't Let It Stand' for women who are on the receiving end of online abuse</li> </ul>
<p>Powell, A. and Henry, N. (2017) '<b><u>Sexual violence and harassment in the digital era</u></b>', in The Palgrave Handbook of Australian and New Zealand Criminology, Crime and Justice (pp. 205–220)</p>	<p>Book chapter</p>	<p>La Trobe University and RMIT University in Australia</p>	<p>2 country case study - focuses on Australia and New Zealand</p>	<p>Desk review - unable to access full chapter.</p>	<p>3 - Limited regionally as it focuses on Australasia, but potentially useful as it is from the field of criminology and also explores necessity of social/cultural change.</p>	<p>This chapter explores how digital communications and social media technologies are facilitating new forms of sexual violence and harassment. It discusses the nature of technology-facilitated sexual violence (TFSV), drawing on examples from across Australia and New Zealand, as well as internationally. While criminal law plays an important role in responding to TFSV, transformative social and cultural change is necessary to promote not only women's equal digital citizenship, but also to tackle the gender inequality that underpins gender-based violence more broadly (not able to access full chapter for details).</p>

**About Helpdesk reports:** The VAWG Helpdesk is funded by the UK Department for International Development, contracted through the Conflict Humanitarian and Security Department (CHASE). Helpdesk reports are based on 6 days of desk-based research per query and are designed to provide a brief overview of the key issues and expert thinking on VAWG issues.

VAWG Helpdesk services are provided by a consortium of leading organisations and individual experts on VAWG, including Social Development Direct, International Rescue Committee, ActionAid, Womankind, and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). Expert advice may be sought from this Group, as well as from the wider academic and practitioner community, and those able to provide input within the short time-frame are acknowledged. Any views or opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of DFID, the VAWG Helpdesk or any of the contributing organisations/experts.

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