



HM Government



Wilton Park



Report

**Tackling online gendered harms**

Tuesday 9 November 2021 | WP1984V



## Report

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In association with the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and the Home Office

“The online space has created a context for VAWG to take place and had facilitated new forms of gendered abuse”

### Executive summary

1. Online Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is part of a continuum of offline abuse against women and girls; with evidence suggesting that 85% of women globally have witnessed or experienced online VAWG. There are multiple forms of online VAWG, which impact significantly on the realisation of individual rights and wellbeing; and undermine global gender equality goals and open, peaceful, democratic societies. Online VAWG intersects with other forms of discrimination; and is compounded by and overlaps with misogynistic discourse and gendered disinformation.
2. Whilst there are a variety of international and national commitments in place to stem the tide of online VAWG, more needs to be done to meet these commitments and translate them into real action.
3. Interventions to prevent online VAWG were identified, with a strong focus on the need for multi-disciplinary collaboration, approaches and tools; and recognising the different starting points legally, culturally and politically for countries. Opportunities for the technology sector, private and public actors; and governments to engage were identified. Entry points to support female politicians, journalists and activists; gender equality and women’s organisations; youth civil society; and communities were outlined.
4. There is also a need for more systematic and wide ranging interventions to respond to online VAWG, including ensuring and implementing a strong legislative and regulatory framework (noting the risks); recognising and responding to the role of malign states; building on pilot initiatives by technology platforms; and providing comprehensive, accessible survivor-centred, trauma-informed support to survivors.
5. As online VAWG is a global and transnational threat, there was high appetite for improving international collaboration (including with youth movements) and resource sharing; and for developing joint programming and advocacy strategies.

### Introduction

“Online violence is not a digital experience, it is a holistic experience with significant and debilitating harms”

6. Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) affects one third of all women globally in their lifetime; and this abuse is increasingly moving online. A study covering 51 countries found that **85% of women globally have witnessed or experienced online VAWG<sup>1</sup>**, which is defined as *‘legal and illegal violence, harassment and abuse committed online which disproportionately affects women and girls and includes any act of harm that is committed, assisted or aggravated in part or fully by the use of the internet and mobile phones, computers or connected devices.’<sup>2</sup>*
7. **Types of Online VAWG** include gendered hate speech, trolling and disinformation

against prominent women<sup>3</sup>; circulating deep-fakes of women that depict non-consensual porn<sup>4</sup>; hacking into private computer systems to access sensitive information like home addresses; sharing private information with malicious intent including personal photos or phone numbers; impersonating women, for example creating a fake profile for social networking sites; using GPS tracking to stalk someone; monitoring someone's web browsing behaviour; using smart home devices for control, like locking women out of their homes or changing their lighting and heating; and harassing women through continuous online contact to threaten and/or scare. Online VAWG also includes human traffickers duping women and girls through fraudulent job adverts or dating sites for sexual exploitation<sup>5</sup>. It includes adult and child sexual abuse like the sharing of non-consensual intimate images or livestreaming abuse<sup>6</sup>.

8. **Online VAWG is compounded by and overlaps with two other technology-facilitated phenomena: misogynistic discourse and gendered disinformation.** Gender norms and roles are greatly influenced by the mass media<sup>7</sup> and there is a strong link between the status of women in and through media and the way society treats women, including in relation to VAWG<sup>8</sup>, e.g. Misogynistic discourse in the media validates and normalises the harmful gender norms and attitudes that drive VAWG. Gendered disinformation is a subset of online VAWG aimed at deterring women from participating in the public sphere by using false or misleading gender and sex-based narratives against women, often with some degree of coordination<sup>9</sup>.
9. **Online VAWG impacts on the realisation of individual rights and wellbeing** and causes physical, psychological, social, political and economic harm for women and girls. Online VAWG also excludes women from the digital world, furthering the gender digital divide and excluding women and girls from the opportunities it provides them for economic, social and political empowerment. It facilitates the rollback of women's rights and undermines progress towards gender equality goals.
10. **Online VAWG also undermines progress towards achieving global gender equality goals; and open, peaceful, democratic societies.** The 'chilling effect' on women and girl's meaningful participation<sup>10</sup>, equality and agency was consistently noted throughout the event, as women and girls self-censor or withdraw themselves completely from the digital space due to the threats, or experiences of online VAWG. As such, online VAWG goes beyond individual harm to threaten the values and well-being of our societies.
11. **Online VAWG is part of a continuum of offline abuse against women and girls.** Whilst online VAWG is a global phenomenon, women in countries with long-standing or institutionalised gender inequality tend to experience online violence at higher rates<sup>11</sup>. Online VAWG also intersects with other forms of discrimination, with younger women and adolescent girls, racial and ethnic minority groups, women of colour, people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identities, and persons with disabilities being most at risk<sup>12</sup>.
12. **A variety of international commitments** have been outlined to stem the tide of online VAWG, including the G7 Roadmap for a Gender-Responsive Economic Environment (2017); the Charlevoix Commitment to End Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Abuse and Harassment in a Digital Context (2018); the Declaration on Gender Equality (2018); and recommendations of the Gender Equality Advisory Council to the Leaders of the G7 (2021). The UN has passed various resolutions and decisions to condemn specific attacks on women journalists and media workers including online VAWG<sup>13</sup>. In the UK, the Tackling VAWG strategy<sup>14</sup> and the Ending Child Sexual Abuse strategy<sup>15</sup> highlight the need to tackle online gendered harms. In the US, the National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality<sup>16</sup> identifies online - VAWG as a priority for action. Nevertheless, more needs to be done to make significant progress towards meeting these national and global commitments and translating them into real action.

"There is strong evidence that online abuse and gendered misinformation attacks keep women out of the public sphere"

"Online VAWG is a threat to democracy and freedom itself"

"There is a false binary between online and offline VAWG, in reality the two are intertwined"

"UN resolutions should leave no doubt that women journalists and other women publishing online in the public interest or participating in digital debate, should be protected from misogynistic and sexist abuse, attacks and harassment that inhibit their freedom of expression rights"

“Technical and digital aspects will keep changing, so we will need to keep adapting. Most important is the cultural backdrop about what is and isn’t culturally acceptable.”

13. This online meeting brought together 39 senior government representatives and subject experts from academia, business, civil society, international and regional bodies, for an open discussion on prospects for increased international action to tackle online VAWG. Based on sharing opportunities, good practice and challenges, the meeting considered the legal and judicial context; platforms and services; and public and political profiles to identify:
  - Priority areas for intervention
  - Gaps in the knowledge base, research, data and policy
  - Opportunities for improving collaboration and sharing resources
14. This report draws together the discussions from the plenary and breakout sessions and offers a summary of the key outcomes and next steps from the half-day virtual dialogue. A variety of useful resources were also shared by meeting participants and these are listed throughout and at the end of the report.

### Priority areas for intervention

15. **Prevention:** Interventions to prevent online VAWG were identified. There was a strong focus on the need for multi-disciplinary collaboration, approaches and tools to respond to the cross-cutting nature of the issue. There was also a clear acknowledgement that online VAWG is an extension of VAWG offline and therefore has similar drivers (such as patriarchal norms) and challenges (such as lack of political will and dedicated resources) in ensuring it is sufficiently recognised and tackled:

#### Take urgent action within the technology sector:

- Ensure safety by design – engage with the technology sector, and platform engineers in particular, so that the initial design of technology platforms ensures that everyone has a safe experience online.
- Improve women and girls’ digital skills and participation in the technology industry to help remove the current algorithmic bias, created by the industry being dominated by too many men of a certain demographic, that can reinforce and perpetuate gender bias and online VAWG, such as driving consumers of pornography to more and more abusive material<sup>17</sup>; and/or giving more prevalence to content that is divisive and instils fear to improve profits<sup>18</sup>.
- Work with gaming studios to combat harmful gender stereotypes and the normalisation of VAWG through computer games<sup>19</sup>.
- Promote the role of tech companies in reaching out specifically to women and girls to give them a voice and safe opportunities to participate online; to actively campaign for an end to online VAWG; to sensitise women and girls to online risks; and to direct platform users to online VAWG services and support. E.g. the Gurls Out Loud online campaign<sup>20</sup>.
- Promote collaboration between technology platforms, civil society and academia, e.g. TikTok’s European Safety Advisory Council brings together leaders from academia and civil society to support them to develop forward-looking policies and identify emerging issues.
- Ensure tech companies have clear risk assessments; codes of practice<sup>21</sup>; definitions of VAWG and related tactics and abuse; and policies and rules on their platforms to provide a safe environment, including clear escalating reporting processes.
- Enforce transparency and accountability mechanisms on online VAWG, including producing statistics on complaints received and related actions, removed content etc.
- Set up a publicly accessible ranking table/index of tech companies that evaluates how they are responding to online VAWG to reward those taking action; and shame those who aren’t, e.g. similar to the Ranking Digital Rights

database<sup>22</sup>; or the new Ultra Violet Report Card, which grades social media platforms on handling of harassment, hate speech, misogyny and disinformation<sup>23</sup>.

- Ensure that staff of tech platforms have the training and minority language skills to spot abuse in non-English and in diverse cultural contexts; to understand the country context in which they engage; and to translate policies for community safety standards and rules into different languages, e.g. it was noted that Facebook has poor coverage of varieties of Arabic; and that their account manager for Ukraine is unhelpfully based in Moscow.
  - Ensure that automated tools, such as AI filters, can respond to abuse in multiple languages and contexts.
  - Technology companies should take mandatory risk assessments about the types of potential abuse on their platforms; put in place risk mitigation measures to prevent the abuse; and enable a quick and effective response, e.g. de-platforming perpetrators.
  - Fundamentally challenge the business model that allows technology platforms to profit from hate, violence and disinformation.
- **Close the digital gender divide** by enhancing the digital inclusion of women and girls (noting that there are 250 million fewer women online globally); and build government capacity to decrease gendered cybersecurity risks and harms to women, girls and marginalised groups. E.g. FCDO and DCMS have co-designed and are implementing the Digital Access Programme across five countries (Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Brazil and Indonesia). This intervention supports digital inclusion of underserved communities, while building the capacity of government and industry to prevent and respond to cybersecurity risks and harms for vulnerable groups, particularly women and girls.
  - **Build the capacity of female politicians, journalists and activists** to engage online safely; and provide advice on how to deal with gendered disinformation and online VAWG. This was noted as being particularly important for women's political participation, as most electoral and political campaigns now take place online.
  - **Private and public sectors actors (including media organisations and political parties) should strengthen the Duty of Care** for employees to ensure they have adequate mechanisms in place to prevent and respond to online VAWG.
  - **Gender equality and women's organisations**, including those who tackle offline VAWG, should be supported to build their capacity respond to online VAWG, e.g. to collect data on online abuse, provide support for survivors, engage communities, empower women and girls to know their digital rights etc.
  - **Strengthen youth civil society** for collaboration, to ensure minimum duplication of efforts; and to develop user-led solutions, e.g. The Youth Collective<sup>24</sup> movement connects youth civil society around the world.
  - **Build and strengthen multi-sectoral coalitions** of those both capable and prepared to demand change on this agenda, including creating online and offline spaces where they can organise for joint advocacy. E.g. through engaging and building upon existing networks such as the International Media Women's Foundation Coalition against Online Violence<sup>25</sup>.
  - **Engage and mobilise communities**, including:
    - Community leaders, with opportunities to create new youth leaders to galvanise the conversation and action on online VAWG.
    - The next generation of digital citizens, through gender-sensitive education and online citizenship training, can help promote behaviour change and tackle harmful behaviours online. For example, the UK DCMS Media Literacy Strategy<sup>26</sup> and Action Plan aims to improve understandings of the nature, characteristics, operations, consequences and impact of electronic

"There are significant opportunities to pilot best practice approaches for preventing and responding to VAWG offline to tackle online VAWG"

"We need to disable the enabling environment that gives people 'the right' to act in abusive ways online"

media; and to develop awareness of how to protect personal information and critically analyse the reliability and accuracy of media information.

- Raising awareness in communities about the unacceptability of online hate, e.g. a Brazilian billboard 'Virtual Racism, Real Consequences' campaign shamed online trolls by emblazoning the racist abuse they post on giant public posters<sup>27</sup>.

16. **Response:** A variety of priority areas for interventions to respond to online VAWG were identified, with a clear need to shift the responsibility from women and girls taking individual actions to ensuring more systemic and coordinated interventions across sectors:

"We must apply a handbrake to the relentless pace of carelessness that drives the tech industry"

- **A strong legislative and regulatory framework** is needed to ensure action is taken by technology platforms to ensure stringent transparency and reporting mechanisms are in place; harmful material is removed; people are protected from harmful and appropriate content; and there is support and restitution for survivors.
  - Legal restitution for survivors could include the survivor receiving financial compensation, as well as trauma support and counselling.
  - The importance of platforms paying financially for the harm they cause was highlighted as a particular incentive for them to improve, e.g. in Germany, following legislation in 2017 that introduced hefty fines of up to €50 million for failing to remove manifestly unlawful posts, Facebook reacted by hiring thousands of German-speaking moderators, so that one in six of their moderators now works in Germany – evidence that legislation can work.
  - The UK's draft Online Safety Bill<sup>28</sup> was cited as a ground-breaking piece of legislation that will require technology platforms to change policies to better protect users; remove illegal content (including illegal sexual abuse, harassment, sharing of explicit images, and deepfake pornography); take swift and effective action against abuse of public figures; and sanction perpetrators. Failure to do this could result in investigations, large fines and cessation of UK operations for the technology platform. However, concerns were raised that there was no explicit mention of risks to women and girls or gender issues within the draft Bill. In addition, whilst the Bill deals also with 'legal, but harmful content', a main focus on the removal of illegal content would be problematic, as misogyny is not currently seen as a hate crime, and is therefore not illegal under UK law.
  - The need to balance freedom of expressions with ensuring safety online was noted. A model of legislation taken from the global north, for example, wouldn't work well in authoritarian and illiberal contexts.
  - The challenge of adapting laws as technology evolved was recognised.
  - There are possibilities to map relevant policies, regulations and legislation globally to provide a 'menu' of options, or a 'roadmap' for countries to take. States could then be supported and enabled to develop legislation in line with their contextual needs and markets, with the UK, EU and US being possible frontrunners in offering support in this area.
  - CSOs can also play key roles building government capacity to respond to online VAWG, e.g. Center for Countering Digital Hate works with governments to improve the transparency and accountability of social media companies.
  - Stress testing any new legal frameworks is important, including modelling laws in different environments and contexts; and empowering and including communities to assess and improve legislative frameworks.
  - It was noted that women politicians do not always benefit from the same protections online due to their public role, e.g. some female politicians were not allowed to block their harassers on Twitter, as this was seen as undermining citizen freedom of expression. As such, it is important to

ensure that female politicians are also guaranteed their rights to the same level of online protection that others are granted.

“If its ok to become extreme online, and nothing happens, you are creating a cultural norm”

- **Implementing both new and existing legislation** will be challenging in contexts that are patriarchal and misogynistic. Sensitising and training law enforcement agencies and the judiciary, who may not understand the complexities of online abuse, to prevent secondary victimisation of online VAWG survivors is therefore crucial. Civil society and women’s organisations can play a key role in providing the perspective of survivors; and in providing guidance both for the public and for law enforcement bodies, e.g. SAFENET has produced two guidebooks on online VAWG for survivors, police and victim-support agencies<sup>29</sup> that elaborate on the existing legislation; and the police’s authority to track down the perpetrator by requesting the information needed from the Digital Platform, including Facebook, Instagram, Google, Tik Tok, Twitter and WhatsApp.
- **Recognise and respond to the role of malign states in peddling gendered disinformation**, noting that the same states are also active in rolling back gender equality and undermining the rights of women and girls.
- **Map and respond to early warning indicators to protect women under attack.** E.g. One such effort involves an FCDO-ICFJ project in partnership with the University of Sheffield, which is investigating development of an early warning system for online violence against women journalists in five high-risk contexts. The effort is designed to help predict and prevent online violence at key points of escalation.
- **Build on pilot initiatives by technology platforms**, such as Twitter, to enable users to feel safer, such as a new ‘Safety Mode’ feature that temporarily blocks accounts for seven days for using harmful language (such as insults or hateful remarks), or sending repetitive and uninvited replies or mentions. Authors of Tweets found by the technology to be harmful or uninvited will be autoblocked, meaning they’ll be unable to follow the targeted account, see their Tweets, or send Direct Messages.
- **Provide comprehensive survivor-centred trauma-informed support to survivors** of online VAWG, including:
  - Online VAWG Helplines, such as the Digital Rights Foundation’s Cyber Harassment Helpline in Pakistan<sup>30</sup>.
  - Support for reputational defense firms to reduce damage to high-profile women in public life.
  - Trauma and psycho-social support, e.g. as part of platforms’ product packages.
  - Mapping and tapping into existing support structures for survivors of VAWG was highlighted as a significant opportunity, though there may be a need to build capacity specifically on responding to online forms of violence.
  - It was noted that there were significant geographical differences both within and between countries in terms of how services are set up and how they interact with law enforcement bodies, which makes it challenging to scale up support interventions.

“Services have not kept pace with the reality and systemic harms of online VAWG”

17. The need for **dedicated funding and resources for women’s organisations** in both the global north and global south Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to enable them to use local solutions to address online VAWG was noted as a significant gap. It was stressed that funding needed to be medium to long-term to enable interventions that can really drive cultural change; and that short term interventions (such as a one-off public awareness campaigns) would not be sufficient.

## Gaps in the knowledge base, research, data and policy

18. There has been **significant progress in gathering research and data** on online-VAWG over the last five years, with an increasing level of knowledge on the forms, perpetrators and impacts of online-VAWG across multiple sectors.

19. However, there remain significant **gaps in our knowledge base**:

- More analysis and research on perpetrators is needed to explore their numbers, demographic profiles, personal characteristics, motivations and tactics. This can be done through documenting and monitoring patterns from social media accounts linked to perpetrators who systematically abuse women and girls online.
- Further research and pilot projects on how to engage men and boys to mobilise against (rather than be bystanders of) online VAWG, including exploring which reference groups and individuals influence behaviour change and norms.
- Further research on how to change abusive behaviour online, noting that de-platforming of perpetrators is not working.
- Develop a shared definition of intersectionality, that explores the differing relationships of power that people who share some identities have with the dominant group.
- Further research the extent of online VAWG in low and middle-income countries, including on the Africa continent, through qualitative and quantitative research<sup>31</sup>.
- Further analysis and shared agreement on rights and responsibilities online and 'what good looks like', i.e. what individual online empowerment and well-being means; and what is good practice in responding to online VAWG.

20. **Gaps in policy** include:

- Ensuring that any VAWG policies include a focus on online VAWG.
- There are notable global gaps in a shared definition of hate speech; and in developing hate speech legislation at national levels, which tends not to cover gendered abuse or online-VAWG. There is a need to ensure that hate speech legislation includes online VAWG and sexual and gendered based discrimination; and that this is also integrated into the legal mandates and work of electoral bodies. E.g. the Finnish Government is considering adding gender as an aggravating factor in the criminal code for hate speech.
- Holding those in public office to account: It is becoming increasingly clear that online VAWG against women in politics has become part of the playbook of illiberal and authoritarians; and the need to hold those in public office to account was identified as a key gap in tackling online VAWG, e.g. through rules and regulations; and monitoring of elected officials.
- There were calls for general investment in public policy to tackle the underlying gender discrimination and misogyny that fuels VAWG, including online VAWG.

## Opportunities for improving collaboration and sharing resources

21. Noting that online VAWG is a global and transnational threat with no borders, which requires a similar response, there was high appetite for increased opportunities for **improving collaboration and resource sharing** to tackle online VAWG, including:

- Providing more space for thinking, talking, joint advocacy and strategising amongst stakeholders, including involving smaller CSOs.
- Having dedicated events that involve youth civil society to better understand their needs and to help drive change.
- Improving collaboration with actors tackling offline VAWG to highlight the links between online and offline abuse; and to pilot and test the applicability of existing best practice approaches to combat online VAWG.
- Developing multilateral partnerships, including exploring opportunities to use existing initiatives, such as the Gender Equality Forum and GBV Action Coalition.
- Including the need for collaboration and partnership as part of donor funding Statements of Requirements.
- There was also high interest for a further Wilton Park event on online VAWG in 2022.

"The barrier between online and offline worlds is artificial, we must not neglect online VAWG"

"Online VAWG is a shared global challenge, we need opportunities to come together to engage with international partners, share promising practices and identify areas for collaboration"



## **Kathryn Lockett**

Wilton Park | November 2021

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### **Additional research and resources were shared by participants and are listed below:**

Australian Government eSafety Commissioner: Safety by Design initiative includes principles and tools to embed safety into the design, development and deployment of online services and products:

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/industry/safety-by-design>

Australian Government eSafety Commissioner: Women In The Spotlight: How online abuse impacts women in their working lives: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/research/how-online-abuse-impacts-women-working-lives>

Australian Government eSafety Commissioner: Technology-facilitated abuse among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/research/technology-facilitated-abuse-among-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-women>

Australian Government eSafety Commissioner: Technology-facilitated abuse of women with intellectual or cognitive disability: <https://www.esafety.gov.au/research/technology-facilitated-abuse-women-intellectual-or-cognitive-disability>

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<sup>1</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) completed a study of 51 countries with the largest number of persons online, based on internet penetration rates in 2020 on Online VAWG: <https://onlineviolencewomen.eiu.com/>. In a US study by Pew roughly half of women (47%) who have been harassed said they think they have encountered harassment online because of their gender, whereas only 18% of men who have been harassed online said the same: See Pew Research Center (2021) The State of Online Harassment <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2021/01/13/the-state-of-online-harassment/>

<sup>2</sup> United Nations (2018), Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective: <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/38/47>

<sup>3</sup> Nina Jankowicz (2017), 'How disinformation became a new threat to women', World Policy <http://worldpolicy.org/2017/12/20/how-disinformation-became-a-new-threat-to-women/>

<sup>4</sup> WEF (2021), 'Preventing Digital Harm: World Economic Forum Report Outlines How to Close the Legal and Judicial Gap: <https://www.weforum.org/press/2021/09/preventing-digital-harm-world-economic-forum-report-outlines-how-to-close-the-legal-and-judicial-gap/>

<sup>5</sup> Brittany Anthony et al (2021), 'On-Ramps, Intersections and Exit Routes: A Roadmap for Systems and industries to Prevent and Disrupt Human Trafficking', Polaris: <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/A-Roadmap-for-Systems-and-Industries-to-Prevent-and-Disrupt-Human-Trafficking.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Harriet Grant (2021) 'Online child abuse survey finds third of viewers attempt contact with children', The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/sep/27/online-child-abuse-survey-finds-third-of-viewers-attempt-contact-with-children>

<sup>7</sup> See Ward and Grower (2020), 'Media and the Development of Gender Role Stereotypes', Annual Review of Development Psychology 2:1, 177-199:

<sup>8</sup> See Haider, H (2020), 'Gender and media in the Western Balkans', K4D Helpdesk Report, UK: IDS

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<sup>9</sup> See Jankowicz et al (2021), 'Malign Creativity: How gender, sex and lies are weaponized against women online;', Wilson Center:

[https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/uploads/documents/Report%20Malign%20Creativity%20How%20Gender%2C%20Sex%2C%20and%20Lies%20are%20Weaponized%20Against%20Women%20Online\\_0.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/uploads/documents/Report%20Malign%20Creativity%20How%20Gender%2C%20Sex%2C%20and%20Lies%20are%20Weaponized%20Against%20Women%20Online_0.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> E.g. see <https://en.unesco.org/publications/thechilling>

<sup>11</sup> Prevalence rates of Online VAWG by region are: Middle East 98%; Latin America and Caribbean 91%; Africa 90%; Asia Pacific 88%; North America 76% and Europe 74%. See EIU (2021), Measuring the Prevalence of Online Violence Against Women, completed a study of 51 countries with the largest number of persons online, based on internet penetration rates in 2020 on Online VAWG: <https://onlineviolencewomen.eiu.com/>

<sup>12</sup> E.g. See The Alan Turing Institute: <https://www.turing.ac.uk/news/how-much-online-abuse-there>; Glitch UK and End Violence Against Women Coalition (2020) The Ripple Effect: COVID-19 and the Epidemic of Online Abuse: <https://fixtheglitch.org/covid19/>; and Amnesty International and Elemental AI (2017), 'Troll Patrol': [https://decoders.amnesty.org/projects/troll-patrol/findings#abusive\\_tweet](https://decoders.amnesty.org/projects/troll-patrol/findings#abusive_tweet)

<sup>13</sup> See <https://en.unesco.org/themes/safety-journalists/women-journalists/UN-resolutions-and-reports>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-strategy>

<sup>15</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/973236/Tackling\\_Child\\_Sexual\\_Abuse\\_Strategy\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/973236/Tackling_Child_Sexual_Abuse_Strategy_2021.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/National-Strategy-on-Gender-Equity-and-Equality.pdf> and <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/10/22/fact-sheet-national-strategy-on-gender-equity-and-equality>

<sup>17</sup> Wright P, Tokunaga, R and Kraus, A (2015) 'A Meta-Analysis of Pornography Consumption and Actual Acts of Sexual Aggression in General Population Studies', Journal of Communication, 66(1): 183-205 and UN and Bridges, A., & Wosnitzer, R. (2007). Aggression and sexual behavior in best-selling pornography: A content analysis update. International Communication Association.

<sup>18</sup> As noted by Facebook whistleblowers, e.g. see <https://www.theverge.com/2021/10/3/22707860/facebook-whistleblower-leaked-documents-files-regulation>

<sup>19</sup> See also: <https://feministfrequency.com>

<sup>20</sup> <https://gurloutloud.com>

<sup>21</sup> E.g. TikTok's policy on removing hate speech and hateful behaviour on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity; and prohibition of sexual harassment or exploitation. See: <https://www.tiktok.com/community-guidelines?lang=en>

<sup>22</sup> The RDR evaluates 26 of the world's most powerful digital platforms and telecommunication companies on their disclosed policies and practices affecting people's rights to freedom and expressions of privacy: See <https://rankingdigitalrights.org/index2020/>

<sup>23</sup> See 'Social Media Fails Women: The Report Card: <https://weareultraviolet.org/pressrel/new-report-card-grades-social-media-platforms-on-handling-of-harassment-hate-speech-misogyny-disinformation/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://youthcollective.restlessdevelopment.org>

<sup>25</sup> See: <https://www.iwmf.org/coalition-against-online-violence/>

<sup>26</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1004233/DCMS\\_Media\\_Literacy\\_Report\\_Roll\\_Out\\_Accessible\\_PDF.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1004233/DCMS_Media_Literacy_Report_Roll_Out_Accessible_PDF.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> See: [https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/11/30/virtual-racism-real-consequences\\_n\\_8680306.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/11/30/virtual-racism-real-consequences_n_8680306.html)

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-online-safety-bill>

<sup>29</sup> <https://awaskbgo.id/publikasi/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://digitalrightsfoundation.pk/cyber-harassment-helpline/>

<sup>31</sup> E.g. Findings from research conducted across five African countries by Pollicy (2020) showed that one in three women had experienced some form of online GBV: <https://ogbv.pollicy.org/report.pdf>