



Oral Statement for the Crime Congress

Agenda 6b: Emerging Crimes

Cyber-violence in Times of Covid-19

During the lockdowns and restrictions due to the Covid pandemic, the importance of internet use and virtual communication has augmented, which also provided an opportunity for (organized) crime to adapt criminal activities to the new reality, as well as cyberviolence and online hate speech. Politicians, journalists, academics and human rights defenders, particularly female ones, are at risk. Cyberviolence denies the victims' political, civil and human rights; deprives them of freedom of assembly, association and expression; and impacts their physical and mental health, dignity, equality, and social and financial development.

In particular the voices and full participation as digital citizens of women and minorities are censored by online harassment and violence, with costly social and economic implications.

The HRC Resolution on human rights on the internet affirms that rights people have off-line must be protected online; extends the concept of gender-based violence in public life to virtual public spaces; and condemns gender-based violence on the Internet. ILO Convention 190 on violence in the workplace calls for the adoption of laws to prevent gender-based violence and harassment enabled by information and communication technologies.

We therefore urge the UN Member States to:

Implement and enforce legislation to ensure criminal justice for victims of cyber-violence and harassment;

Ratify and implement ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work;

Set standards on online gender-based violence and hold social media platforms accountable for removal of abusive, sexist and misogynist content;

Invest in education and training to enhance safe use of the internet for all societal groups;

Provide safety advice, resources and reporting procedures for online gender-based violence, and helplines to support victims of online harassment;

Support the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative to combat online abuses that threaten civil liberties;

Implement post-pandemic recovery strategies respecting human rights, achieving the SDGs and creating a future of equal opportunities for women and men.

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