

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**STATEMENT**

**UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN, ITS CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

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*Excellences,  
Distinguished delegates,*

As the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, I am honored to participate, with this statement in the 14th Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice taking place in Kyoto, Japan.

From the beginning of my tenure I have focused on the role of the criminal justice system in the prevention of gender based violence against women and girls.

As a result of such efforts, since 2017 my mandate was expanded to include participation in the work of the UN Crime Commission. Since then I have concentrated on the establishment of femicide prevention watches as a tool for implementing the General Assembly resolution on gender-related killings of women and girls.

I have called for the establishment of Femicide Watches or observatories in each State. In my report of 2016 to the General Assembly I outlined the modalities for their establishment and suggested that they be mandated to:

- collect and publish data annually on femicide or gender related killings of women within comparable categories;
- analyze all cases of femicide from a human rights perspective;
- recommend measures for their prevention.

Each year on the International Day on the elimination of violence against women I have been calling on States to provide me with data on femicides, and on the establishment of Femicide watches. Data collected over the past 3 years **corroborates** the homicide data collected by the UNODC and **reveals** that among the victims of intimate partner homicide, more than 80% of victims are women. Many of these femicides are preventable.

Let me also mention that my forthcoming report to the UN Human Rights Council will address the prevention of rape as a human rights violation, a crime and a manifestation of gender-based violence against women and girls, and the responsibility of States to eradicate and prevent it.

For example, today there are a number of UN States that have exemptions to the criminalization of marital rape which is contrary to international human right standards and I call on all those States to repeal such provisions.

I also call on States to **harmonise definitions of rape** with international human rights and criminal law standards and to explicitly include lack of consent at its centre and to specify that **consent must be given freely, as the result of the person's free will and assessed in the context of surrounding** circumstances. Sexual intercourse without consent should be criminalised as rape in all definitions in all States.

In this regard, I urge all States to harmonize their criminal law provisions on rape with international legal standards and in line with recommendations from my report.

Thank you