



# **NO PARTY TO VIOLENCE: ANALYZING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICAL PARTIES**

*Compendium Report of Country Pilots in Côte d'Ivoire,  
Honduras, Tanzania, and Tunisia*



NATIONAL  
DEMOCRATIC  
INSTITUTE

© National Democratic Institute (NDI)

**Website:** [www.ndi.org](http://www.ndi.org)

**Design and Printing:** Dana Sulit, 2018

Copyright © National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) 2018. All rights reserved.

Portions of this work may be reproduced and/or translated for non-commercial purposes with the *prior written permission* of NDI provided NDI is acknowledged as the source of the material and is sent copies of any translation. Send publication permission requests to [legal@ndi.org](mailto:legal@ndi.org).

# **NO PARTY TO VIOLENCE: ANALYZING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICAL PARTIES**

*Compendium Report of Country Pilots in Côte d'Ivoire,  
Honduras, Tanzania, and Tunisia*

Compiled and Analyzed by:

Dr. Mona Lena Krook

Technical Lead:

Caroline Hubbard, NDI Senior Gender Advisor

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This compendium report represents the commitment and collaboration of many people dedicated to promoting gender equality and women's political participation. It was written by Dr. Mona Lena Krook, with technical inputs and guidance from Caroline Hubbard, NDI's Senior Gender Advisor, and important contributions from Julia Canney (NDI), Liberal International's Tamara Dancheva, and Crystal Rosario. The report benefited from the overall guidance of GWD Director, Sandra Pepera. Recognition is also due to colleagues on NDI teams supporting the pilot programs in Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, Tanzania, and Tunisia— in Washington, DC, and in-country.

The data analyzed in this compendium report was collected through programming that NDI implemented in four countries over the course of a year. The piloting was conducted in collaboration with NDI offices and external consultants in Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, Tanzania, and Tunisia, including: Gbadi Brighith, Yasmina Chouakri, Dr. Isabel Torres Garcia, and Dr. Alexander Makulilo.

This report has benefited from a committed production team, including our copy editor, Ana Canning and graphic designer, Dana Sulit.

Finally, the Institute gratefully acknowledges the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for providing the funding for this toolkit and pilot programming.

---

## About the National Democratic Institute

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization that responds to the aspirations of people around the world to live in democratic societies that recognize and promote basic human rights. Since its founding in 1983, NDI and its local partners have worked to support and strengthen democratic institutions and practices by strengthening political parties, civic organizations and parliaments; safeguarding elections; and promoting citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

NDI is a leading organization working to advance women's political participation around the world. The Institute empowers women to participate, compete and lead as equal and active partners in democratic change. Mobilizing its global networks and drawing on three decades of experience in 132 countries, NDI supports women's aspirations for gender equality, and for inclusive and responsive government. NDI's multinational approach reinforces the message that while there is no single democratic model, certain core principles are shared by all democracies.

# Table of Contents

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1:</b> Introduction	<b>7</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2:</b> Research Findings	<b>10</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3:</b> Conclusions	<b>28</b>
<b>ANNEX A:</b> Methodology	<b>31</b>
<b>ANNEX B:</b> Action plans for VAW-PP	<b>33</b>

## **LIST OF TABLES AND GRAPHICS**

**Table 1:** Have you found barriers or challenges to your ability to move up in the leadership hierarchy within your party?

**Table 2:** Have you ever experienced any of the following types of violence while carrying out your political party functions?

**Table 3:** If yes, at what territorial level of government were you/the perpetrator working at the time of the incident?

**Table 4:** If yes, where did you experience the incident?

**Table 5:** If you ever experienced violence related to your political activism or political life, how willing would you be to...

**Table 6:** If you did not choose to report or tell anyone about the incident you experienced, what was your main reason for not reporting?

**Table 7:** Did experiencing any of the incidents affect your motivation for participating in political life?

## LIST OF FIGURES

**Figure 1:** How do women generally get promoted or gain leadership positions in the party?

**Figure 2:** Have you ever witnessed someone in your party using violence or the threat of violence against another member of your political party to control or persuade them?

**Figure 3:** Do you believe it is acceptable for party members or leaders to engage in the following behavior in certain situations?

**Figure 4:** Do you think that men or women are more likely to be the victims of violence in the party?

**Figure 5:** Have you ever experienced any of the following types of violence while carrying out your political party functions?

**Figure 6:** Since you entered politics, how many times have you experienced any of these situations?

**Figure 7:** If yes, which of the following positions or roles were you holding when the incident occurred?

**Figure 8:** If yes, who committed the incident against you?

**Figure 9:** If yes, when did you experience the incident?

**Figure 10:** If yes, who did you tell or report the incident to?

**Figure 11:** If you chose to report the incident you experienced, were there any consequences for the perpetrator(s)?

**Figure 12:** If you chose to report the incident you experienced, were there any consequences for you because you reported it?

# Executive Summary

Political parties play a crucial role in democratic politics, providing citizens with a means to exercise their fundamental rights to inform policy debates and become political decision-makers. Yet parties are also “protected” public spaces, with many interactions taking place away from public view and pressures not to disclose any information that might reflect negatively on the party. This creates incentives for abuse and impunity, especially against groups historically excluded from participating in the political process.

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) defines violence against women in politics in relation to three characteristics: it targets women because of their gender, its form can be gendered, and its impact is to discourage women in particular from being or becoming politically active. While often dismissed as the “cost of doing politics,” these acts violate women’s human rights, undermine democratic processes, and present serious obstacles to achieving egalitarian and non-discriminatory societies.

In 2017, NDI updated its long-standing party assessment tool, Win with Women Global Action Plan, to add guidance on measuring levels of and dealing with violence faced by women inside political parties. The resulting conceptual framework, No Party to Violence: Analyzing Violence Against Women in Political Parties, is part of a suite of tools developed by NDI to identify and address violence against politically active women around the world.



NDI piloted this framework in Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, Tanzania, and Tunisia between 2017 and 2018. The research produced detailed case studies of trends within major political parties in each country, using surveys administered to men and women within each party, in-depth interviews with leaders of each party, and focus groups with female party members. This report brings together the findings from these four studies, using the larger dataset to establish that violence against women is a widespread problem inside parties across the political spectrum and in all regions of the world.

Analysis of the combined quantitative and qualitative data from the four countries reveals significant and pervasive gendered patterns in perceptions, experiences, and outcomes of violence with parties. Specifically, the research found that:

- Women are more likely than men to be victims of violence, to witness violence against others in the party, and to perceive a climate of violence within the party itself. Although both men and women in political parties reported experiencing and witnessing physical violence, women reported much higher rates of psychological and sexual violence.
- More than half of the women surveyed had personally experienced some form of violence in the course of their party work, most commonly at the municipal level. Almost all of the women felt that the party leadership should do more to address this violence.
- A significant and troubling share responded that violence negatively affected women's willingness to continue participating in politics. They not only became less inclined to share their political views, but they turned down leadership opportunities and considered very seriously leaving their political parties.

These findings suggest that parties should be concerned for both normative and strategic reasons about tackling violence perpetrated against the women in their ranks and cultivating a more inclusive environment for all their members.

## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

Political parties are the foundation of democracies. They serve as a primary avenue for citizens to participate in democratic processes and exercise their fundamental rights to shape the decisions and direction of their country. In addition to providing mechanisms for civic engagement, parties are often the doorway to elected office. In most countries, it is political parties that provide the “training ground” for young or new politicians, as well as parties that recruit, select, and support candidates for elections. As such, parties can be especially important avenues for groups, like women, who have historically been excluded from the political process. As a key gateway to policy creation and political office, parties can foster women’s ability to enter and participate equally in political life.

At the same time, however, political parties can also be “protected” public spaces. Despite their democratic political purposes, interactions between members often take place behind closed doors. The dynamics of party competition – together with ties of loyalty and a sense of common cause and identity – create pressures, not to disclose any behaviors that might cast the party in an unfavorable light. This resulting environment can allow and enable violence against women within party ranks, while obscuring such behaviors from public view – and, in many cases, permitting perpetrators to act with impunity. This violence is not restricted to physical harm. It encompasses a spectrum of acts committed in person and, increasingly, online, that are designed to control, limit, or prevent women’s full and equal political participation.

In 2017, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) developed a conceptual framework to identify and address this understudied problem through its initiative, *No Party to Violence: Analyzing Violence Against Women in Political Parties*.<sup>1</sup> This project forms part of a broader suite of tools created by NDI to draw attention to violence against politically active women around the world, starting in 2016 with the launch of the #NotTheCost campaign to stop violence against women in politics.<sup>2</sup> Consistent with NDI’s mission to support and strengthen democratic institutions and practices, this campaign recognizes and seeks to counteract violence as an impediment to women’s meaningful and equal political participation, arguing that violence should not be accepted as the “cost of doing politics.”

In its 2017 publication, *#NotTheCost: Stopping Violence Against Women in Politics – Program Guidance*,<sup>3</sup> NDI defines violence against women in politics in terms of three distinct characteristics:

- It targets women because of their gender;
- Its very *form* can be gendered, as exemplified by sexist threats and sexual violence; and
- Its impact is to discourage women in particular from being or becoming politically active.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ndi.org/publications/no-party-violence-analyzing-violence-against-women-political-parties>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ndi.org/not-the-cost>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/not-the-cost-program-guidance-final.pdf>



**PHYSICAL VIOLENCE** involves bodily injuries inflicted on women and, in some cases, against their relatives, with the motive of deterring women's political participation. Examples include murders, kidnappings, beatings, and domestic abuse.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE** entails hostile behaviors and abuse designed to cause fear and/or emotional harm, seeking to undermine women's confidence to participate in politics. It often includes efforts to delegitimize women as political actors through negative portrayals of their character or competence, as well as by reducing their visibility in the political sphere. These acts may involve threats of physical violence, coercion, defamation, sexual harassment, social boycott, and impairing the social status and image of women.

While political violence can be experienced by anyone involved at any level of the political process, this particular type of violence targets women specifically, using domination and control to exclude women from politics. As such, these acts violate women's human rights, undermine democratic processes, and present serious obstacles to achieving egalitarian and non-discriminatory societies.

Violence against politically active women – including elected and appointed officials, candidates, party members, and voters, among others – takes a variety of different forms.

**SEXUAL VIOLENCE** includes sexual acts and attempted sexual acts by coercion. Examples encompass sexual harassment, sexual assault, unwanted sexual comments, and sexual innuendo. In some countries, it may also involve "sextortion," forcing women to perform sexual favors in order to win a nomination or gain party funding.

**ECONOMIC VIOLENCE** is comprised of coercive behavior to control access to economic resources. This may entail threats to deny funds to which citizens are entitled as a means to coerce their vote or to prevent them from voting. Women may also be denied access to funds for political training to which they are legally entitled, or to salary and expense claims not denied to their male counterparts.

**THREATS AND COERCION** constitute the final category of violence. Threats are verbal or physical indications of intent to cause harm or commit violence. Coercion is the practice of persuading or forcing a person to do something using threats or violence.

The prevalence of specific forms of violence across countries depends on the broader political and socio-cultural context, which shapes levels of impunity and as well as cultural resources for perpetrating these kinds of attacks. Acts may occur in both the public and private spheres. Women may be well-acquainted with their attackers, but perpetrators may also be unknown – even anonymous or acting across national borders in the case of online violence. Women who are marginalized in other ways – along lines of race, age, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity – may face increased hostility while also possessing fewer means to counter these acts of violence.

While global attention to the problem of violence against women in politics is on the rise, relatively little is known about women’s experiences with violence inside political parties. This is despite the fact that available anecdotal evidence suggests that parties may be a primary – if not the principle – location of violent behaviors against politically active women.<sup>4</sup> NDI’s *No Party to Violence* initiative seeks to fill this information gap by providing the first systematic data on violence against women in political parties and using this data to identify strategies to end violence against women in political parties. To this end, NDI conducted four pilot studies in Côte d’Ivoire, Honduras, Tanzania, and Tunisia in 2017 and 2018. This report brings together and compares the findings from the four countries.

Chapter 2 presents the summary findings. After mapping the challenges faced by women seeking party leadership positions, it uncovers important gendered patterns in perceptions about the prevalence and nature of violence inside political parties. While men and women agreed that women were more likely than men to be victims of violence, a far greater share of female respondents reported having witnessed acts of violence of all types. They were also far more likely than men to perceive a climate of violence in their party.

The findings then delve more deeply into women’s own personal experiences of violence, exploring the nature and details surrounding these events, women’s decisions to report or not report these acts to the party, and the impact of this violence on women’s political engagement. The most widespread form of violence experienced by women was psychological violence, followed by threats and coercion, economic violence, and sexual violence. Physical violence occurred, but was the least prevalent. The plurality of women reported having experienced violence “sometimes” or “many times.” They faced violence most often when serving in positions of responsibility inside the party, or as party candidates. Most violence occurred at the municipal level, during the nomination or campaign period, or during internal party meetings. Party members and party leaders were the most common perpetrators.

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.voteswithoutviolence.org/sites/voteswithoutviolence.demcloud.org/files/Votes-Without-Violence-Toolkit.pdf>

Most respondents felt that the party leadership is responsible for addressing violence. However, nearly one-third said that they did not report the incident to anyone, they did not recognize the act was a form of violence, because they did not think the incident violated any party rules, or they believed the behavior was part of “normal politics” within the party. Yet women also stated that, if they experienced violence related to their political activism, they would be most willing to ask for support from a party authority; conversely, they were least willing to go to the media to report it. For those who did report the incident, the majority noted that there were no consequences for the perpetrator – although many also responded that they themselves faced no political consequences for doing so either. When asked how these incidents affected their motivation to continue participating in politics, the largest share replied that it discouraged them from expressing their viewpoints in public and led them to discourage other women from participating.

Chapter 3 highlights the implications of these findings and calls on parties to create a more inclusive enabling environment for all members by addressing the problem of violence against women in their ranks.

The study methodology is based on NDI’s *Win with Women Global Action Plan* political party assessment tool,<sup>5</sup> and the *No Party to Violence: Political Party Assessment*,<sup>6</sup> which adds guidance on measuring levels of and dealing with the violence that female members face within their parties. Assessment activities in the four pilot countries included surveys administered to men and women within each party, in-depth interviews with leaders of each party, and focus groups with female party members. Details describing the methodology can be found in the report Annex (Annex A).

- 
- 5 <https://www.ndi.org/WinWithWomen/GlobalActionPlan>
  - 6 <https://www.ndi.org/publications/no-party-violence-analyzing-violence-against-women-political-parties>

CHAPTER 1

# Research Findings

The findings are organized under five categories: perceptions regarding women’s access to party leadership positions, the climate of violence inside political parties, women’s experiences with violence inside political parties, women’s reporting of violence inside political parties, and the impact of violence against women in political parties.

### 3.1 Perceptions regarding women’s access to party leadership positions

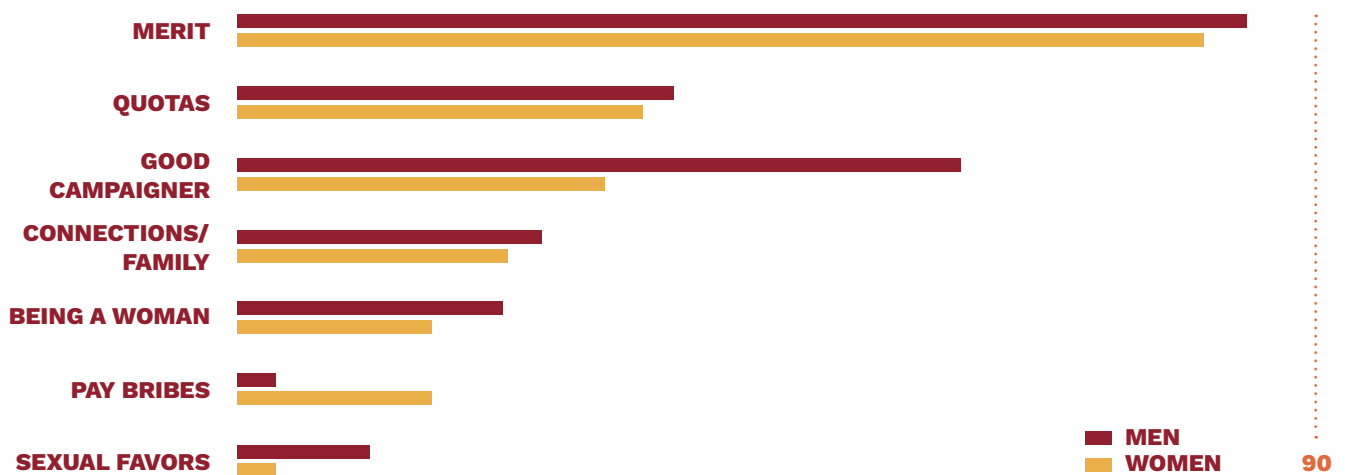
To set the context for the study, male and female survey respondents were asked how women generally got promoted or gained leadership positions within their parties. Figure 1 reveals large-scale agreement on the factors shaping women’s leadership opportunities. More than 80% of both men and women believed that women’s advancement in political parties was due to merit.

Men and women also broadly agreed on the importance of quotas and personal and family connections in attaining leadership positions. However, men were far more likely than women to attribute a woman’s promotion to good campaign skills, to the virtue of being a woman, or to performing sexual favors as a way to get ahead. Women, in contrast, were more likely than men to attribute advancement to the payment of bribes.

*“Positions of leadership are based on merit, motivation, and engagement, but for certain posts one must also have a good intellectual level as well.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN CÔTE  
D’IVOIRE**

**FIGURE 1** How do women generally get promoted or gain leadership positions within the party?



In the survey administered to women, respondents were asked if they had experienced barriers or challenges in their ability to move up the party leadership hierarchy. As shown in Table 1, more than half of the women answered affirmatively. The biggest barriers they identified included the lack of time or financial resources, followed by the lack of support from party leaders or other party members.

They were far less likely to point to a lack of family support and deficiencies in their capacity and preparation to be leaders. These findings indicate that women are willing to serve in leadership positions, but parties must do more to actively recruit and support them to be leaders.

*“With regard to women in political parties, women are not given many opportunities. A woman has to engage in battle. And, if she reaches a position, they make things difficult so that she does not succeed.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TUNISIA**

*“I had confidence and passion about leadership yet I was voted out simply because I am a woman – not because I did not have confidence or capacity to deliver.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TANZANIA**

**TABLE 1** Have you found barriers or challenges to your ability to move up in the leadership hierarchy within your party? If so, what?

<b>YES, THERE ARE BARRIERS OR CHALLENGES.</b>	<b>53.1%</b>
<i>If so, what?</i>	
Lack of time or financial resources.	37.5%
Lack of support from party leaders or other party members.	29.7%
I don't have enough capacity, training, or education.	10.9%
Lack of family support.	9.4%

The data indicates that male party members do not necessarily recognize the additional barriers women face to having their merit recognized. The fact that only 10.9% of women said it was a capacity issue versus 29.7% saying it was lack of support from (male) members and leaders points to a disconnect between how men perceive the terrain versus the reality women face in terms of rising through the party ranks, even when they are fully and potentially more qualified. This disjuncture can lead to a lack of political will to overcome the additional hurdles women face, even when it is within the power of party elites to address them.

### 3.2 Climate of violence inside political parties

To understand how common violence is inside political parties, male and female survey respondents were asked whether they had witnessed any acts of violence by one party member against another. Figure 2 shows the responses, disaggregated by sex. Notably, women were more likely than their male colleagues to report having witnessed such an act in every category except physical violence, where the difference – 29.9% of men and 29.7% of women – is negligible.

Strikingly, the gender differences are greatest for psychological attacks, threats and coercion, and sexual harassment, with women being far more likely than men to report having witnessed such behaviors. The focus group and interview data provide insight into some of the reasons for this difference, with women stating that violence against women is only discussed among women and not talked about openly in the party at large. indicate an unwillingness among wmale members to admit to or discuss certain behaviors. The relative silence among men may also reflect a lack of knowledge or recognition of all the acts that constitute gender based violence. This may also be the result of an environment normalizing sexual and psychological aggression against women.

*“This topic has yet to be addressed because it has stayed a taboo. A woman can’t go up to a man and confront him for sexual harassment. As women in the political party, we talk amongst ourselves.”*

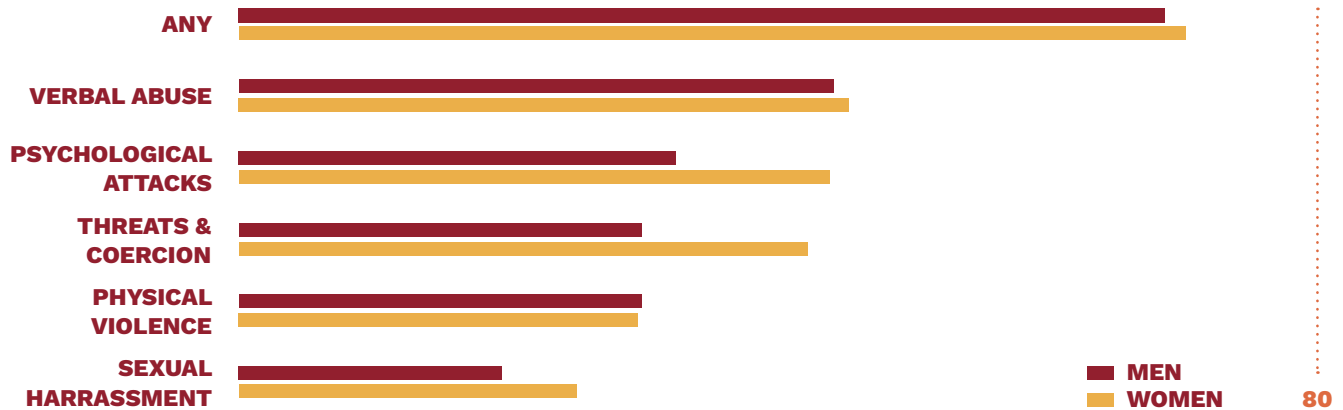
**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TUNISIA**

*“The topic is discussed among women. It has not been addressed in the party.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
INTERVIEW IN HONDURAS**



**FIGURE 2** Have you ever witnessed someone in your party using violence or the threat of violence against another member of your political party to control or persuade them?



In an optional follow-up question, women were invited to indicate why they thought such violence had occurred. Their answers fall into four categories: lack of understanding or familiarity with party rules; lack of integrity or bad character; political differences; and gender abuse, sexual abuse, and patriarchy.

While these reasons are diverse, at least some women who took the survey viewed these behaviors as efforts to undermine gender equality or as a tool for maintaining differential gendered power structures within the party. This may affirm findings from other research indicating that men are more likely to feel threatened by women from the same party competing with them for power, than they are by their male colleagues<sup>7</sup>. This view came out more clearly in focus group discussions with female party members, who stated that many men – and some women – appeared threatened by women’s pursuit of political leadership roles and were willing to use violence to prevent it.

*“I think that violence can happen in any political party. The principal reason is that a man feels threatened by the competence of a woman. If he feels threatened, then he takes a position of defense and we reach violence.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TUNISIA**

*“Between us, it’s not always easy. Men fight against women’s candidacies. It’s not the party that gives the order, but men who think that politics is their affair.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE**

*“It is not only men. There is also sexism and misogyny on the part of women. Some are like cannibals who eat members of their own species.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN HONDURAS**

<sup>7</sup> Elin Bjarnregard [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QMkhKNXeoANgYcTg8jrp1Y\\_k5-EaTTQJ](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QMkhKNXeoANgYcTg8jrp1Y_k5-EaTTQJ)

To capture the degree to which different forms of violence are normalized and thus permitted, respondents were asked to gauge the level of acceptability of particular behaviors committed by members within their own political parties. Data indicates that behaviors men and women perceive as acceptable, vary substantially (see Figure 3). The patterns suggest significant differences in both the behaviors that men and women perceive to be occurring in their party, as well as how tolerated these behaviors appear to be.

Both men and women believe that party members are regularly sanctioned by disqualification from positions on the basis of their appearance. However, men viewed turning off a person's microphone and withholding resources to be a common behavior in their parties and not one that violates the victim, whereas women who experienced having their ability to speak barred perceive it as a form of violence. Comments in the focus groups shed light on women's experiences in being denied their voice in political meetings.

*"I had an opportunity to travel to attend an important party event which was attended by top leaders. However, my rivals started spreading rumors that I got the chance to participate in the respective event because I have love affairs with a top leader who has been ensuring that I get such opportunities."*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TANZANIA**



*"In political meetings with all the pre-candidates, they said 'let her speak last' and they prevented me from taking the microphone."*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN HONDURAS**

*"When we women want to speak, they do not give us the floor."*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

Women are far more likely than men to notice other troubling behaviors like defaming opponents, sidelining people because of their gender, spreading altered images of an opponent, harassing people on social media, and requesting sexual favors.

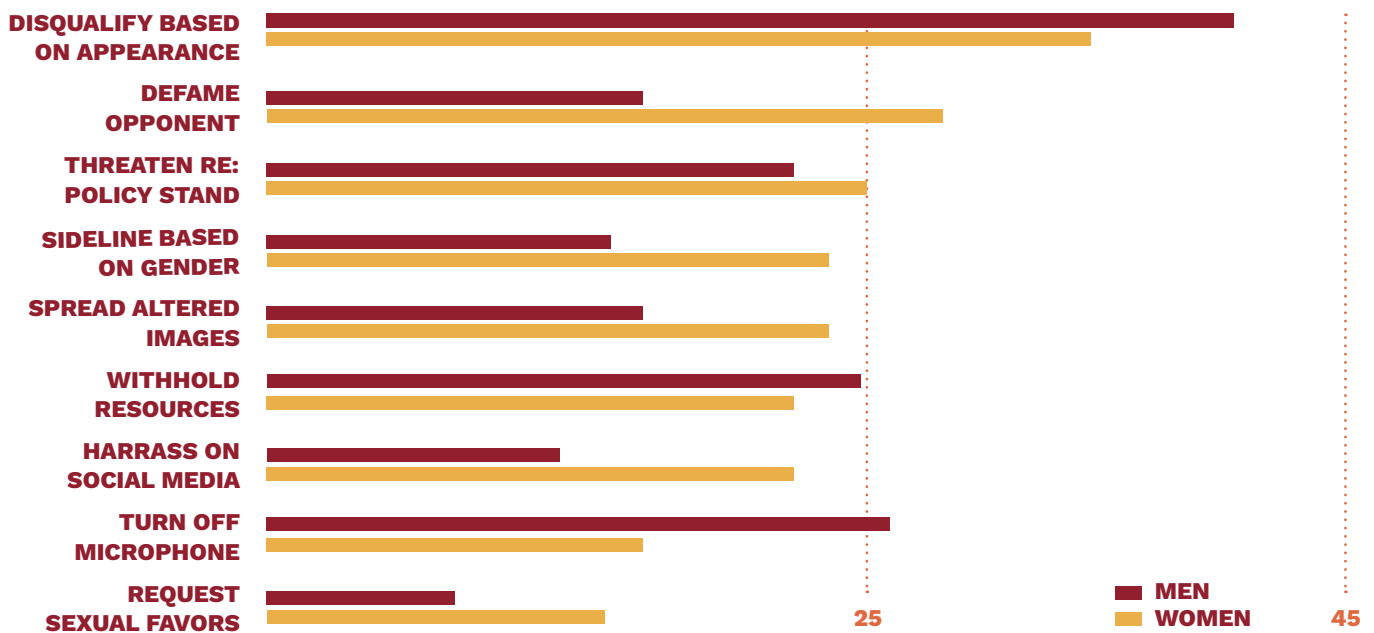
*“Because of his fear as a result of women’s presence and success, he employs violence. He starts with Facebook, messages, phone calls.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TUNISIA**

*“I was not fully aware of sexual exploitation practices in party politics. Three party leaders asked me for sex for them to help me win the nomination contest. I refused and I lost. Later on I learned from one of the party leaders, who is also my brother, the winner slept with him to win the nomination contest.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TANZANIA**

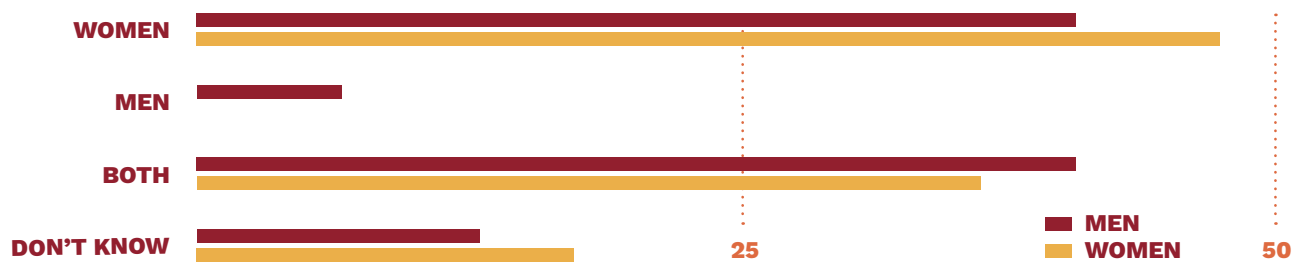
**FIGURE 3** Do you believe it is acceptable for party members or leaders to engage in the following behavior in certain situations? (Percentage answering ‘acceptable’ or ‘sometimes acceptable’)



Asked whether they thought that men or women were more likely to be victims of violence inside the party, most respondents – combined – believed that women were more likely than men to be victims of violence. The next largest share believed that men and women were equally affected (see Figure 4). Interestingly, an equal percentage of men believed that women, as well as both men and women were likely to be victims of violence. However, there

was a sizeable gap in women’s views, with 46.9% saying “women” and 35.9% saying “both.” Only 6.5% of men and 0% of women believed that men were more likely to be targeted. The divergence between men’s and women’s responses may be due to differences in awareness of the broad spectrum of violent acts -- especially non-physical forms of violence -- occurring inside the parties.

**FIGURE 4** Do you think that men or women are more likely to be the victims of violence in the party?



### 3.3 Women’s experiences with violence inside political parties

A substantial part of the survey administered to women was dedicated to their own experiences of violence within their parties. Figure 5 tracks their responses with regard to the types of violence they may have encountered. More than half of women (54.7%) report having experienced at least one form of violence while carrying out their political party functions. The largest share suffered some

form of psychological violence (48.4%), followed by threats and coercion (37.5%) and economic violence (35.9%). Sexual violence (23.4%) and physical violence (20.3%) were far less common. These patterns suggest that, when prevention focuses only on physical acts of violence, this does not prevent violence.

**FIGURE 5** Have you ever experienced any of the following types of violence while carrying out your political party functions?

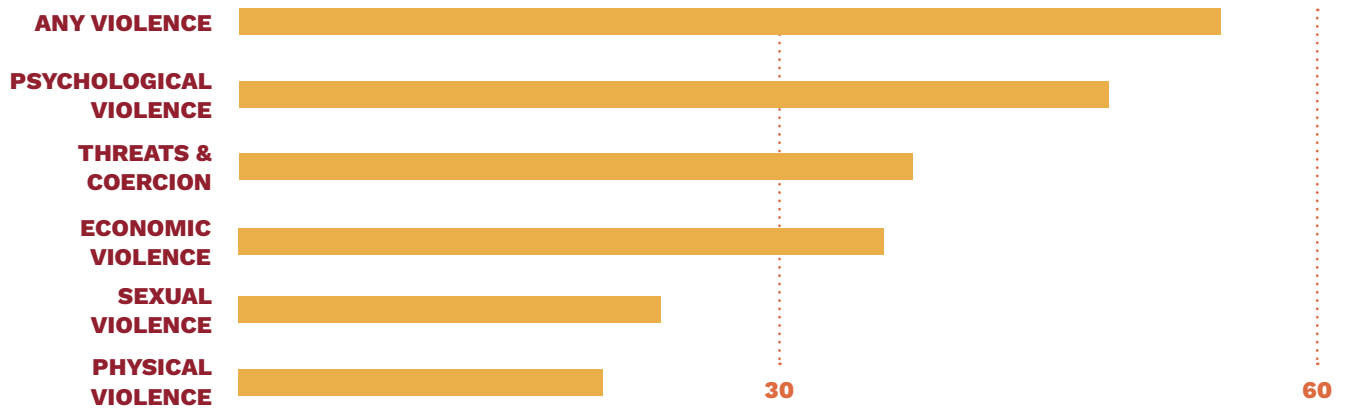


Table 2 provides further details on women’s responses, identifying the particular acts of violence they experienced in the course of their political work. These results illustrate the diverse forms of violence women may be subjected to when they decide to engage in politics, ranging from hate speech and false accusations to denial of resources and unwanted sexual contact. While disquieting on their own, the presence – and prevalence – of such behaviors are particularly shocking given that

they were perpetrated not by strangers or partisan political opponents, but by the women’s own party colleagues, with whom they share broad political goals. At the same time, viewed together with the results in Figure 2, the most prevalent forms of violence experienced by women do not appear on the radar of their male colleagues, either for reasons of ignorance or normalization of these behaviors.

**TABLE 2** Have you ever experienced any of the following types of violence while carrying out your political party functions?

<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE</b>	
<i>Any psychological violence</i>	48.4%
Hate speech	31.3%
Defamation/slander/character attacks	29.7%
Insults equating women’s political participation with immoral practices	23.4%
Harassment by the media	23.4%
Harassment online/social media	18.8%
<b>THREATS &amp; COERCION</b>	
<i>Any threats or coercion</i>	37.5%
False accusations	23.4%
False assessment of the environment (saying it was safe/unsafe when it was not)	20.3%
Threats	14.1%
Intimidation or blackmail	14.1%
Threats sent online/via social media	14.1%
<b>ECONOMIC VIOLENCE</b>	
<i>Any economic violence</i>	35.9%
Denial or delay in providing financial resources available to men	26.6%
Using money or other resources to control women party members	23.4%
Damage to personal property	3.1%
<b>SEXUAL VIOLENCE</b>	
<i>Any sexual violence</i>	23.4%
Unwanted sexual contact	14.1%
Sexual harassment	7.8%
Sexual exploitation	6.3%
Rape/unwanted sex	3.1%
<b>PHYSICAL VIOLENCE</b>	
<i>Any physical violence</i>	20.3%

The focus groups provide greater details on specific instances of violence faced by party women. Many of the examples given in relation to psychological violence involved different forms of character assassination. This indicates a particularly strong backlash against women perceived as strong or aggressive, characteristics often considered outside of acceptable gender norms for women.

*“If a woman appears competent, they play with her dignity, they lower her reputation, and they implicate her in strange business deals.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN HONDURAS**

*“In Tunisia’s political arena, there are certain women... who are aggressive. What they do to them is another type of harassment. They investigate her. They take her picture smoking. They find things to undermine her reputation.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TUNISIA**

*“It does not have to be physical violence... This is because he knows that a woman enters politics with fear of her family’s reaction, her father, her brother, her husband, her kids. So, he does this so that her family tells her to stop her involvement.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TUNISIA**

Women were also subjected to threats of physical and economic violence to coerce them into ceasing their political activities.

*“I received a death threat... One night at 4:30 in the morning, someone knocked on my door. I opened it and it was a young man. I thought he had an illness as my husband is a doctor. I asked if he was sick. He responded, ‘No, I have come to ask you to stop your political activity. Do not do it. Your children are still young. Don’t give me a dirty look, and do not forget what I’m telling you. If you’re going to [take part in the political protest], you and the others, the one who will have more luck is the one who stays at home and asks her friends what is outside.’”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE**

*“During the campaign one man told me that if I win, my house and everything in it will be set on fire. I was frightened to the point that I thought of withdrawing my candidature. However, I decided to report the issue to the police. Later on we held the meeting with parents of the perpetrator to settle the issues. In the end the issue was solved.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TANZANIA**

Women’s experiences with economic violence included denial of resources for their campaigns, or their salaries once they were elected, as well as damage to their personal property.

*“The political party does not give me money. I spend my own money on events and activities. When I was a candidate, the party decided to support a man instead of me.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TUNISIA**



*“When they hadn’t supported certain initiatives in the National Congress, on various occasions the salaries of their alternates (men and women or only women) were suspended because ‘they had behaved badly.’”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN HONDURAS**

*“My house has been attacked several times. My husband left and I was fired from my job. My only hope is the party; otherwise I no longer have anything. I continue to hope.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE**

Participants in the focus groups also recounted instances of sexual assault and harassment, most often in the context of being expected to perform sexual favors for male party members.

*“We were traveling with my party’s Chief Election Officer, a male, for campaign. In the middle of our journey he suddenly started touching my thighs and squeezing my private parts. When I tried to stop him he persisted. I had to open the door and throw myself out of the car. My decision to jump out of the moving car was the only option I had, to avoid shame of being raped at old age.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TANZANIA**

*“If a woman is intelligent, is prepared, is trained, and is also beautiful, it is problematic. During the campaign, I received invitations from men in the party to go out at night because ‘they wanted to get to know me.’ When I told them, ‘Okay, I’ll come with my husband,’ they responded, ‘No, that is not the way to get votes.’”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN HONDURAS**

*“My case is truly humiliating. The leader was used to having a girlfriend and wanted it to be me. He therefore said to me: ‘If you want to be head of your section, we must go to bed together (make love).’ I asked: ‘Are you proposing that I sleep with you?’ He said: ‘Yes, if you want to do politics!’”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE**

Cases of physical violence mentioned included acts of attempted and successful physical aggression.

*“The perpetrator in an acid attack was a man sent by... my rival. We were in the party meeting and suddenly meeting attendees started shouting claiming they did not agree with what was presented... There was a man who used that chaotic moment to open the bottle with acid ready to throw it to pour it to my face. Luckily to me, but unfortunately for him, he opened the bottle wrongly and the acid poured all over his body.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TANZANIA**

Figure 6 shows how often women have faced these various forms of violence within their parties. Less than one-quarter of women (23.4%) said they had never experienced any form of violence. The largest share stated that they sometimes experienced these situations (26.6%). An alarming number revealed that they had faced such situations many times (14.1%).

*“In the National Congress, there is physical aggression for having contrary ideas – disguised, but it occurs. Pushing when one walks by a group of deputies, once is an accident, but several times and after having political differences it becomes violence.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN HONDURAS**



**FIGURE 6** Since you entered politics, how many times have you experienced any of these situations?



Women most often faced violence when serving in positions of responsibility inside the party, or after they had been nominated as party candidates (see Figure 7). In contrast, women appeared to be targeted less when acting as a volunteer or participating in the women’s wing of the party. This pattern provides some support for the notion

that women may be increasingly targeted as they attain higher levels of political power. However, respondents themselves were ambivalent as to whether holding a position of more power would make them less vulnerable to violence: 34.4% said yes, 29.7% answered no, and 26.6% did not know.

**FIGURE 7** If yes, which of the following positions or roles were you holding when the incident occurred?

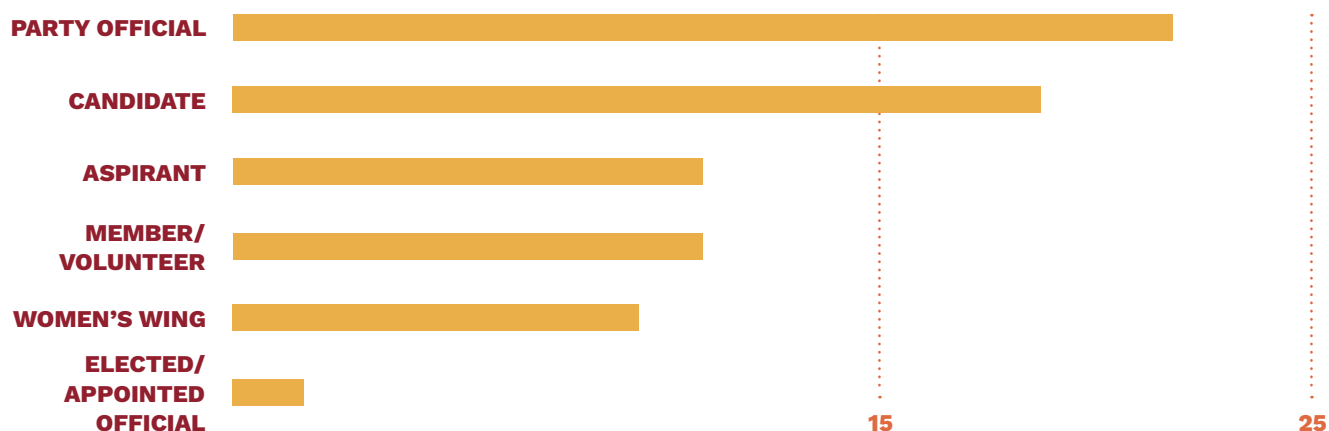


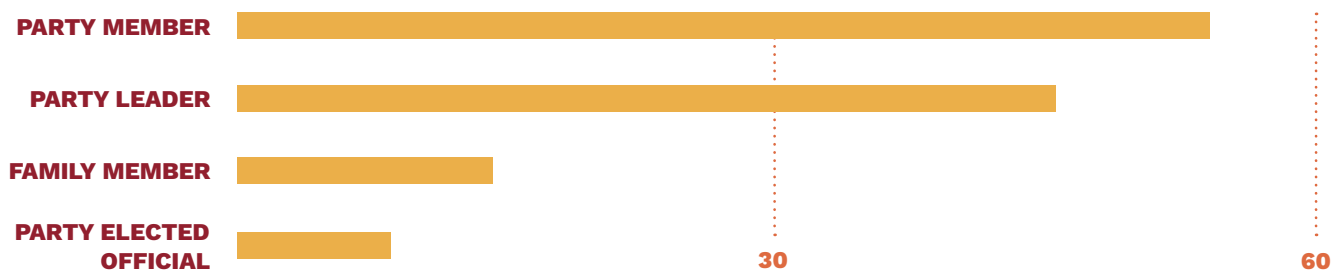
Figure 8 provides information on the perpetrators of violence. The majority were rank-and-file party members, followed somewhat closely by party leaders. At least one participant in the focus groups, however, felt that party members often acted with the implicit support of party leaders.

Family members, in contrast, committed only a small proportion (14.3%) of these acts.

*“I experienced physical violence from my former political party. It was an awful experience. But, for me, the most important thing is why it happened. Physical violence would not happen if it were not condoned by leaders.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TUNISIA**

**FIGURE 8** If yes, who committed the incident against you?



Approximately two-thirds of the incidents reported by women in the survey took place at the municipal level (see Table 3). The majority occurred in the local party or municipal government offices. Nearly one-third of the acts also occurred in the national party headquarters (see Table 4).

**TABLE 3** If yes, at what territorial level of government were you/the perpetrator working at the time of the incident?

VICTIM		PERPETRATOR	
Municipal	66.7%	Municipal	69.6%
Regional	22.2%	Regional	30.4%
National	11.1%	National	0%

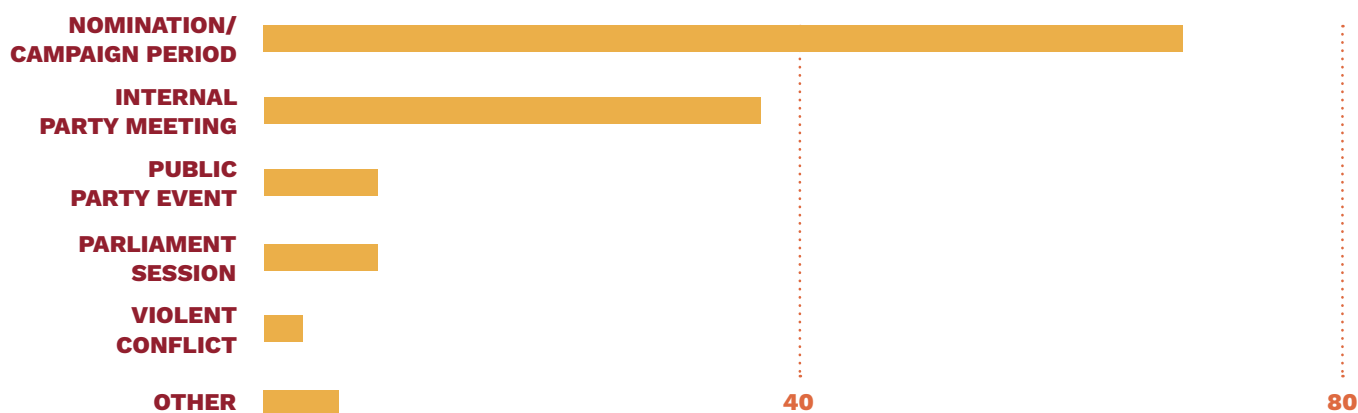
**TABLE 4** If yes, at what territorial level of government were you/the perpetrator working at the time of the incident?

Regional/Local Party or Municipal Offices	59.3%
National Party Headquarters	29.6%
Other	7.4%
Parliament/Municipal Sessions	3.7%

The vast majority of incidents took place during the nomination or campaign period, suggesting that elections heighten women’s vulnerability to incidents of violence. A notable proportion of women (37.1%) reported that they also occurred during internal party meetings. In comparison, less than 10% mentioned the incidents took place

in more visible settings, like public party events or parliamentary sessions (see Figure 9). Women appear to be more vulnerable to violence “behind closed doors,” which helps render these behaviors less visible -- in turn, decreasing awareness of while increasing impunity for these acts.

**FIGURE 9** If yes, when did you experience the incident?

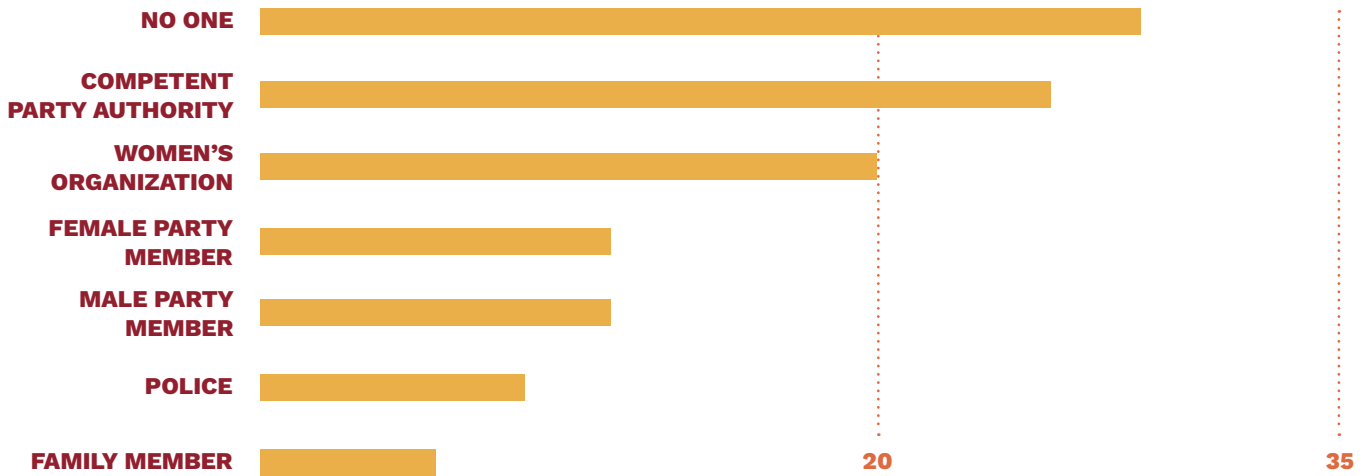


### 3.4 Women’s reporting of violence inside political parties

The next series of questions addressed issues of reporting violence. The vast majority of both men (83.1%) and women (87.5%) believed that party leaders had a responsibility to address any violence occurring within their ranks. In the women’s version of the survey, most respondents stated that party mechanisms of various kinds existed to deal with violence: 67.2% mentioned party guidelines, 50% pointed to party rules and by-laws, and 48.4% alluded to party codes of conduct. Yet nearly half (48.4%) said that these mechanisms were used only occasionally, and only slightly more than one-third (37.5%) found them to be moderately accessible, useful, and effective.

Asked whether they had reported the incident to anyone, nearly one-third (28.6%) stated that they had told no one. Figure 10 shows how this figure compares to the share of women reporting incidents to other actors. Among those who chose to tell someone, most went to the competent party authority, followed by the party’s women’s organization. Women were far less likely to tell their family members or to go to the police with their claims.

**FIGURE 9** If yes, who did you tell or report the incident to?



One focus group participant suggested that women decided to report or not report based on the nature of the incident itself.

*“Women who experience violence report the perpetrator. They don’t stay silent. It’s very rare, except if it is sexual harassment due to shame.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TUNISIA**

Others reported the incident, but said that they were urged to stay quiet and tell no one else. As a result, such behaviors continue to occur more broadly within the party.

*“The party has not proposed or taken measures in response to cases of violence against politically active women. This does not provide security, it contributes to impunity.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN HONDURAS**

*“I went and reported the matter to the local party chairperson... I left the village disappointed and on arrival to the office HQ, I reported and the only response was that I forgive them and keep quiet for the sake of our party. Since that day I decided not to continue with the post, and till now, when I recount the event, I feel as if it happened yesterday. I still ask myself, is this happening to other women?”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TANZANIA**

A second version of this question asked about reporting future incidents (see Table 5). Again, women preferred to handle the issue within the party itself: 73.2% were very or somewhat willing to ask for support from a party authority; only 4.7% were not at all willing. Conversely, they were least willing to report the case to the media: 34.4% were

very or somewhat willing, while 29.7% were not at all willing. Taken together, these responses indicate that women would like to handle these incidents within the confines of their own political parties, if possible, but that current mechanisms are far from robust enough to inspire women's full confidence.

**TABLE 5** If you ever experienced violence related to your political activism or political life, how willing would you be to:

	VERY WILLING	SOMEWHAT WILLING	NOT AT ALL WILLING
Ask for support from an authority in your party?	43.5%	29.7%	4.7%
Ask for support from police or a municipal authority outside your party?	34.4%	18.8%	20.3%
Ask for support from another organization?	25%	20.3%	20.3%
Report the case to the media.	21.9%	12.5%	29.7%
Participate in judicial proceedings.	23.4%	17.2%	18.8%
Take another action not mentioned above.	32.8%	20.3%	9.4%



Supplementing these findings, a follow-up question asked about women's reasons for not reporting the incident, in cases where they chose not to tell anyone (see Table 6). The top reasons for not reporting incidents included not viewing the act as a form of violence, not thinking the incident violated any party rules, or believing it was a normal form of politics inside their political party.

A sizeable share also mentioned that they had been threatened against speaking out or lacked witnesses to backup their claims. In a separate set of questions regarding witnesses, 25% of respondents said that others had witnessed the incident but only 17.2% reported that these witnesses tried to intervene or assist them.

**TABLE 6** If you did not choose to report or tell anyone about the incident you experienced, what was your main reason for not reporting?

I did not think it was a form of violence.	38.9%
I did not think it was against any party rules/it is normal for my party.	33.3%
Because those responsible threatened me.	22.2%
Because I had no witnesses.	22.2%
Because other party members who have reported such incidents have been punished and not the perpetrator.	16.7%
Because I know or have kinship with those responsible.	11.1%
For fear of threats or reprisal against me and/or my family.	5.6%
Because it would be shameful for me if I reported it.	5.6%
Because I don't know of a way to report this type of behavior.	5.6%
Because the problem was solved.	5.6%
Other	5.6%
For fear those responsible would get punished.	0%

Among the women who reported the incident, nearly half (48%) stated that the perpetrators faced no consequences for their actions. Among those who were punished, most (32%) were required to apologize to the victim. Slightly more than 10% were issued a public reprimand for their actions (see Figure 11). None of the perpetrators faced negative media attention, were ostracized, or lost influence within the party. These patterns point to strong disincentives for women to report violence in the future.

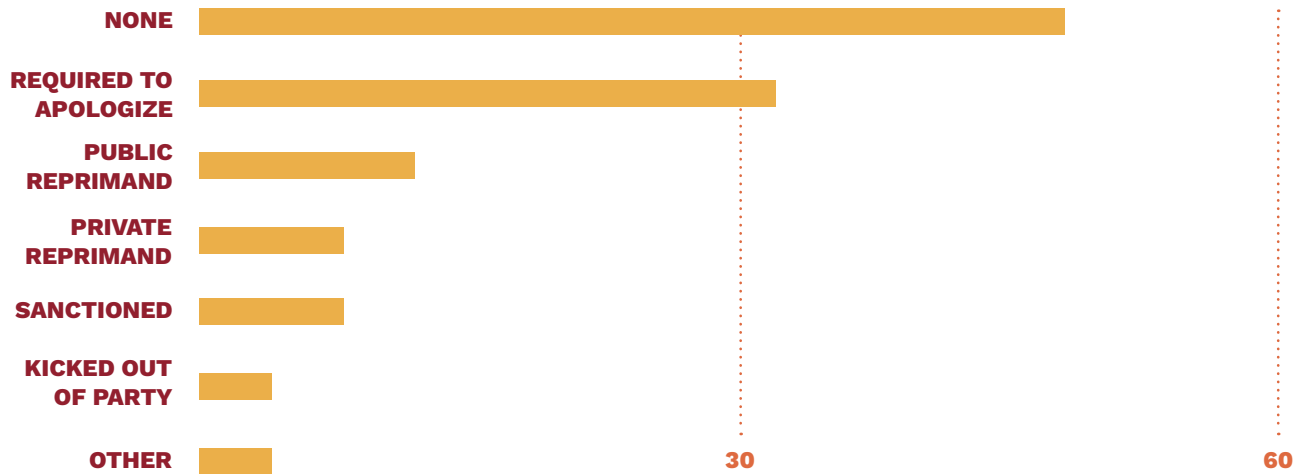
Women in the focus groups were frustrated that party leaders appeared unwilling to do more to punish perpetrators, despite the need for clear guidelines.

*“Once your case has been received, you and the perpetrator are called by the Ethics Committee but what they do is to warn the perpetrator, nothing more. No guideline that provides for termination of membership for perpetrators, they are only warned.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TANZANIA**



**FIGURE 11** If you chose to report the incident you experienced, were there any consequences for the perpetrator(s)?



### 3.5 The impact of violence against women in political parties

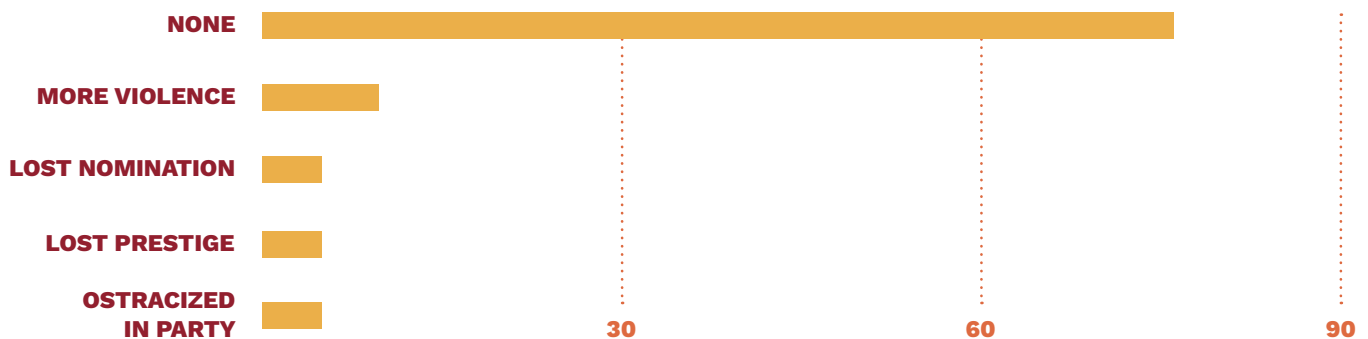
The remaining questions in the survey explored the impact of violent incidents on women themselves. The vast majority of respondents stated that they faced no personal consequences for reporting incidents of violence inside their political parties. However, others experienced relatively severe repercussions, including an escalation of violence directed against them, creating further victimization. Others lost their party nominations or their broader prestige within the party (see Figure 12).

Some women felt that they were ostracized, in particular, by men within the party.

*“There is solidarity among men when a woman reports something and says ‘This person did this and said this.’ All of the men turn against her and single her out.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TUNISIA**

**FIGURE 12** If you chose to report the incident you experienced, were there any consequences for you because you reported it?



Respondents were evenly divided in terms of how satisfied they were with the way in which their cases were addressed and resolved after they reported them: 47.4% were satisfied, while 52.6% were not. When asked how these incidents -- reported or not -- affected their motivation to continue participating in political life, a significant share replied that it discouraged them from expressing their political viewpoints in public and caused them to discourage other women from participating in politics (see Table 7).

**TABLE 7** Did experiencing any of the incidents affect your motivation for participating in political life? Mark all that apply.

It discouraged me from expressing my political viewpoint in public.	34.3%
It caused me to discourage other women from participating in politics.	31.4%
It has not affected me.	31.4%
It caused me to consider leaving politics or my political party.	22.9%
It caused me to turn down promotions, nominations, and/or leadership positions.	11.4%
It caused me to discourage other women from joining my party.	11.4%
It caused me to leave my political party.	2.9%
Other.	2.9%

Some women described withdrawing from political activity for a period after the incident, while others regretted having stood as a candidate.

*“I confess that this is my first time to disclose what happened to me, because I was not feeling comfortable to talk about it to avoid blame. After the incident I became inactive for some time and then picked up courage and continued.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TANZANIA**

*“Too much violence. If I could turn back time, I would not stand as a candidate for parliament.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN HONDURAS**

Although slightly less than one-third (31.4%) said that the incident had not affected them, more than 20% disclosed that the experience had caused them to consider leaving politics or their political party. Focus groups and interviews indicate that this is true both for women who have achieved high positions within the party, as well as relative newcomers to politics.

*“After reporting my case and finding that no one cared, I resigned from the post, and decided to work for the women’s organization of the party only.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TANZANIA**

One focus group participant provided insight into their rationale.

*“These incidents of violence often drive the victims to leave the party voluntarily or cause them to lose prestige or influence in the party.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE**

*“With regard to young women who are educated, they are especially likely to experience violence and, unfortunately, many of them left political parties. There are a lot of extraordinary women I know. They decided to leave.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TUNISIA**

*“At times demoralized, it is tiring to be fighting against the jokes, the disqualifications, the slander. It’s necessary to work more than 100% to insert oneself and be taken into account. It has strengthened my character, but the truth is that it’s exhausting.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN HONDURAS**

Other women explained, however, that they persisted despite the temptation to leave politics.

*“I felt bad after that rape attempt I could not continue with campaign, I stayed for five days without going to my constituency but I recovered and managed to continue with campaign.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TANZANIA**

*“To be in politics comes at a very high cost. If I had a weaker character I would have already resigned. It’s necessary to resist and persist.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN HONDURAS**

Viewed together, the focus group and survey data point to severe negative consequences for targets of violence, in comparison to perpetrators. he established processes, rules, and practices within the political parties discourage women from reporting such acts. Further,perpetrators are not punished or sanctioned in a way that would discourage them -- or other potential perpetrators witnessing these events -- from continuing to use such violence against women in the party.

## CHAPTER 3

# Conclusions

Political parties play a crucial role in democratic politics, providing an important gateway for citizens to inform policy debates and become political decision-makers themselves. Yet parties are also “protected” public spaces, with many interactions taking place behind closed doors. , political parties reflect and are made for the political environment in which they operate, a male-dominated/patriarchal environment in which violence is used against women to maintain power and control will likely be reflected in the way male party members maintain power dynamics in politics as well.

Women’s access to political party positions alone cannot destroy long-held norms regarding men and women’s roles and male dominance. Societal prescriptions that dictate how women are generally seen and treated in private spaces inform dynamics in public places where power is contested, including political parties. The “protected” nature of parties coupled with entrenched patriarchy in society creates incentives for abuse and impunity, particularly for those with less power within the party itself. Illuminating and addressing the dynamics of inequality, corruption and impunity that result in violence is essential to promoting the political participation and empowerment of women, and increasing the overall inclusiveness of parties and politics within a country.

NDI developed the *No Party to Violence* framework to document and address violence against women in political parties. The framework is part of a larger suite of tools developed by NDI to stop violence against politically active women around the world. As institutions at the core of participatory democracy and democratic functions, political parties are essential in mitigating violence against women in politics. However, in order for

parties and their leaders to address this problem, they must believe and understand how violence manifests within their party and be willing and able to use this information to establish key actions for preventing, stopping and punishing it.

The four pilot studies undertaken in Côte d’Ivoire, Honduras, Tanzania, and Tunisia provide the first systematic attempt to show that violence against women is a widespread problem inside political parties – and that this problem exists in parties across the political spectrum in countries located in all regions of the world. This summary report presents and analyzes the quantitative and qualitative data collected in all four countries including from: 163 surveys, 142 focus group participants, and 32 in-depth interviews.

It points to significant and pervasive gendered patterns in perceptions, experiences, and outcomes of violence occurring inside political parties. Women are more likely than men to be targeted for violence, to witness violence, and to perceive a climate of violence within their parties. Men are more likely to perpetrate violence against women than men within the same party, and in some cases explicitly do so to prevent women from threatening their power and position.

More than half of the women surveyed reported having personally experienced some form of violence in the course of their party work, most commonly at the municipal level. Almost all of the women felt that the party leadership should do more to address this problem. Although many victims did not reported incidents, if they were to report them, they would prefer to go to party officials, if possible.

Those that did report the incidents experienced

a range of consequences within the party, and a significant and troubling share responded that these incidents negatively affected their willingness to continue participating in political life. They not only became less inclined to share their political views, but they turned down leadership opportunities and considered very seriously leaving their political parties. They also felt compelled to discourage other women from participating in politics, including from joining their party. Parties should thus be concerned for both normative and strategic reasons about tackling violence perpetrated against the women in their ranks.

A significant barrier to change lies in tendencies to normalize these behaviors as simply the “cost of doing politics.” Women who participated in the focus groups and interviews were open about viewing politics as a conflictual space, ridden with unexpected and often difficult challenges.

*“I am a woman and a politician so being both means to be asked for sex is a normal thing. That is why I never bothered to report.”*

**FEMALE PARTY LEADER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN TANZANIA**

Yet women were also aware that something needed to be done to counteract these attitudes, aware that accepting these behaviors as inevitable simply served to ensure that they continued in the future. While women appear to speak to each other at least about some of these experiences, participants in the research also believed that larger conversations were required to place the problem of violence against women in politics more squarely on the political agenda.

*“Of course women face obstacles on the political landscape. Because in politics there are always banana peels.”*

**FEMALE PARTY LEADER,  
INTERVIEW IN CÔTE D’IVOIRE**

*“We are not conscious of the distinct forms of violence against women in political parties; we view it as part of being in politics.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN HONDURAS**

Further, gender-based violence targeting women within the broader society, such as sexual violence, contributes to its normalization within the party. An understanding of the impact of such violence not only on women’s human rights, but also on the democratic integrity of the party, is necessary in order for both victims and perpetrators to begin to address it.

*“Violence against women in politics needs to be a theme in the political party. Sometimes not doing anything in the party to discuss it is a form of contributing to its continuation. The very fact that it is not talked about, the omission, contributes to the problem.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN HONDURAS**

Women and men have different perceptions of what constitutes violence and differ in their levels of awareness when these incidents occur. While men are more likely to perceive and witness physical and verbal violence, women are more acutely aware of and experience psychological and sexual violence and threats and coercion. Stopping violence against women in politics requires shifting these attitudes to recognize that violence should not be the cost of women’s political participation. It also highlights an important need to re-define what constitutes violence within a political party from a gender-based violence lens.

This report presents a sobering view of the realities faced by women as they seek to realize their democratic rights. Political parties, it suggests, must become more proactive about acknowledging and addressing this issue, given their central role in democratic political systems. New rules and mechanisms are needed in order to discourage this behavior, and encourage women to report incidents and persevere in politics. Ensuring that there are strong enough sanctions for those who commit such acts, and creating channels through which victims can report them, emerged as critical to increasing reporting and decreasing impunity for these crimes.

*“Violence against women in politics should not be something only spoken about between women.”*

**FEMALE PARTY MEMBER,  
FOCUS GROUP IN HONDURAS**

Broadening the definition of what constitutes acts of “violence” within a political party to include those that women are more likely to experience, such as sexual and psychological violence, is a necessary first step. Existing codes of conduct and party rules, in turn, should be leveraged to prevent and punish such behaviors, in addition to ensuring that both perpetrators and victims recognize the severity of such behaviors. This requires overcoming the lack of political will to tackle this problem by building awareness and facilitating a dialogue between male and female party members. Building commitment and support for gender equality among male leaders must be an integral aspect of any comprehensive effort to address violence against women within political parties.



## ANNEX A

# Political Party Action Plans for Violence Against Women in Political Parties

Violence against women in political parties (VAW-PP) continues to impede women's ability to be equal and active participants in the political realm. It takes away from all of us the benefits of the sustainable and responsive democratic governance that an inclusive political space can create.

As NDI's #NotTheCost campaign reports, this type of violence is not limited to physical threats or assaults. It encompasses a range of actions, policies and communications that are designed to prevent, limit, or control women's full and active political participation. Violence against women in politics is deeply rooted in cultural norms and women's unequal status relative to men within virtually all societies.

The below action items are drawn from NDI's assessments of 25 political parties in four countries: Cote d'Ivoire (six parties), Honduras (five parties), Tanzania (five parties) and Tunisia (nine parties). NDI conducted the assessments as part of its Win with Women: Global Action Plan and No Party to Violence: Analyzing Violence Against Women in Political Parties global initiatives.

The action items include steps that can be taken by different actors at the global, national, and local levels to combat this problem. The goal of this work is to foster political environments that encourage women's participation in all aspects of democratic politics - as civic leaders, voters, political party members, candidates, elected representatives and appointed officials - without fear of violence or the threat of reprisals, and to the benefit of us all.



**GOVERNMENT** The government has an important role to play as an arbiter and enforcer of regulations and penalties designed to steer political party behavior in a direction that is fair and inclusive of all citizens. To eradicate violence against women in politics NDI recommends governments:

1. Criminalize all forms of violence against women -including acts of political violence - and enforce appropriate penalties for those found guilty of breaking the law.
  - a. Bolivia's Electoral System Law (Law No. 26, 2010) recognizes political harassment as an electoral crime (Article 238) and defines it as: "The person harassing a female or male candidate during or after an electoral process, in order to force them to resign their candidacy or office against his or her will, shall be punished with a prison sentence of two (2) to five (5) years."
  - a. In Costa Rica, a 2009 law established "parity training opportunities" for women and men, "aiming to improve capacities and foster knowledge on Human Rights, Ideology, Gender equality, promoting leadership, political participation, empowerment, nomination [and] practice in decision making posts."
  - a. The Bolivian Law Against Harassment and Political Violence Against Women (Law No. 243, 2012) has as its objective (Article 2): "To establish mechanisms for the prevention, treatment, and punishment of individual and collective acts of harassment and/or political violence towards women, in order to guarantee the full exercise of their political rights."
2. Enact temporary special measures within political party laws and regulations designed to support the advancement of women within the party. Such measures include party quotas to increase women's representation in leadership at all levels, and financial support to women party members and women candidates in order to level the playing field with men. Quotas are most effective when designed as a

"zipper system" that allows for alternating men and women. Creating a separate list or pool of women should be avoided. Quotas must include adequate sanctions for non-application.

3. Create an anonymous channel where women can confidentially report acts of violence against them within their parties. This could be administered by an independent body or by the election commission, which would then investigate the claims and take appropriate action, such as fining the party or bringing criminal charges against the perpetrator.
4. Fund and promote civic education campaigns that would decrease the social stigma for women participating at all levels of political party activity.
5. Promote anti-corruption campaigns targeting political parties that include a strong gender perspective, encourage transparency, and promote parties as democratic institutions. Zero tolerance for VAW-PP should be a clear part of those campaigns.
6. Collect and publish reliable gender disaggregated data on party membership, party leadership, and acts of VAW-PP.
7. Pass and implement a Gender Equality Act, similar to the 1986 Gender Equality Act in Finland, which made significant improvements in addressing discrimination, harassment and lack of equal representation internally within the party.
8. Integrate laws prohibiting VAW-PP into existing laws, as per the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women recommends in her thematic reports. This could include training law enforcement officials on VAW-PP to ensure their ability to apply laws consistent with international human rights standards when investigating cases.

**POLITICAL PARTIES** Culture change is most effective when it is generated from within the party itself and is accompanied by true political will to affect behavioral and organizational change. To address the issue of VAW-PP, NDI recommends political parties:

1. Provide a framework to guide progress toward equality and inclusion by enshrining principles of human rights and gender equality, and ensuring gender-neutral language in all foundational documents, guidelines, and regulations that direct how the party is run and operated. Approve a party-wide resolution specifically defining and condemning all acts of VAW-PP. Make these documents easily accessible to all party members.
2. Include topics related to the party's work for equality, non-discrimination and the eradication of political violence in the issues discussed at party conventions. Integrate these topics into the general meetings, and conduct separate sessions specifically on VAW-PP.
3. Earnestly implement gender equality and quota measures to promote women's participation based on merit and promote women to leadership positions by mentoring promising women leaders, diversifying the portfolios which women work on in political parties, and offering more substantive tasks to women within political parties.
4. Develop and institute strong regulations and disciplinary policies which punish perpetrators who commit violent acts against women within political parties, in order to prevent such acts from being repeated and to encourage reporting behavior among victims. Create an objective and confidential committee tasked with protecting women from violence and punishing perpetrators.
5. Establish a code of conduct for all party members, particularly during electoral periods when violence can spike, that denounces all forms of VAW-PP. Make this a central part of the party's electoral strategy and an intra- or inter-party effort.
6. Introduce an obligatory ethical charter that all party members and elected party officials have to sign.
7. Conduct an internal awareness raising campaign using social media, posters, flyers, and workshops to explain what VAW-PP is and why it is harmful to the party. Provide mandatory training to all party members, both men and women, on violent behavior within the party. This training should include a definition and description of what constitutes VAW-PP, mechanisms for reporting incidents, and penalties levied against perpetrators found guilty. Separate trainings for women on how to prevent and mitigate acts of VAW-PP against them and their peers can be held as well. Separate sessions for men on their perceptions and behaviors related to VAW-PP can be conducted to introduce and secure new behavior patterns.
8. Introduce regular gender audits to assess and evaluate progress towards gender equality.
9. Proceed with internal party democratization through regulated and defined procedures, rather than a system of "influence" or "loyalty" to those in power. This principle extends to the selection of candidates and their placement on electoral lists.
10. Create a safe space for women within the party, such as a women's wing. It is appropriate to review and adapt the profile of these bodies into the party statutes, so that they are substantive organs for the promotion of party policies for equality, women's rights and non-violence in politics. Elevate their presence by granting voting power in the executive committee and during decision making processes, allocating a regular budget to carry out the aforementioned duties, and enable them to be led by women and operate freely without interference from

male party members.

11. It should be noted that the disclosure, announcement or contact methods used by parties (such as WhatsApp, Messenger, Google groups, etc.), should take measures to comply with national legislation on the protection of personal data. If this legislation does not exist or is insufficient, it is the responsibility of the parties to protect the personal information of their female members so as not to put them at risk of sexual harassment or other manifestations of violence.

**INDIVIDUAL PARTY MEMBERS** In conjunction with party-level reforms, individual party members can empower themselves to take steps to change the culture of VAW-PP. Specifically, individual party members can:

1. Document and report all incidents of VAW-PP experienced or witnessed within the party. Note when and where the incident occurred and if there are any witnesses that can corroborate the accusation.
2. Learn the party rules and regulations in order to identify coercion and how to report a party member who is behaving inappropriately.
3. Discuss these incidents with fellow women party members. It is likely that other women have experienced or witnessed VAW-PP, but may be too scared to speak up. This silence allows perpetrators to continue preying on women within the party.
4. Advocate for other women within the party. Believe women who come forward with accusations of VAW-PP.

**CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOS)** As independent actors CSOs can be an important outside lever to support government, party, and individual efforts to end VAW-PP. CSOs can:

1. Promote gender equality in society at large and within political parties, including the message that women belong in politics, and in all realms of society.
2. Implement sustained and systematic gender-awareness training and capacity development programs that explicitly include VAW-PP and targets both men and women at all levels and structures of the political parties.
3. Advocate for laws and regulations to protect women from VAW-PP, including laws outlawing all forms of VAW, changes to the political party law to include VAW-PP, quotas and other temporary special measures.
4. Compile and publish gender disaggregated data on party membership, participation, representation and influence on party decision making and programs.

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS** International organizations can play a critical role in supporting and encouraging increased inclusivity and gender equality within political parties and the political process. NDI recommends international organizations:

1. Create opportunities, standalone and incorporated into larger events, to bring VAW-PP to the forefront of party reform discussions. Provide international examples of how other parties have combated cultures of VAW-PP within their ranks. Party members can be introduced to VAW-PP, discuss their challenges, and learn from others' experiences.
2. Assist parties to develop rules against VAW-PP, mechanisms for reporting and punishing infractions, and training programs to inform party members.
3. Work with government agencies and CSOs on awareness and civic education campaigns to promote gender equality and women's participation in political parties.

4. Collect data and conduct gender-disaggregated research on party membership, party leadership, and influence on party decision making.
5. Promote inter-party cooperation to enshrine advancements into law, share best practices and change the political culture across parties.

**POLITICAL PARTY INTERNATIONALS** Political Party Internationals play an important role as they can encourage and facilitate change in political party behavior. Specifically, they can:

1. Introduce and adopt a public declaration/ resolution committing their party members to the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women in politics including its causes and consequences.
2. Facilitate an exchange of best-practices and capacity-building training on ending violence against women in politics among their political party membership during official statutory events.
3. Create a coalition of the willing among their members to monitor internal compliance with agreed VAW-PP action plans.

## ANNEX B

# Methodology

In 2017, NDI launched the 21st Century Parties' Party Renewal Initiative to identify areas of disconnect between political parties and citizens and, in turn, generate discussions on how parties are or should be responding to challenges presented in new political and technological contexts. Consultations resulted in a guide for political party strengthening, entitled *Reflect, Reform, Re-engage: A Blueprint for 21st Century Parties*.<sup>8</sup>

These discussions led NDI to revise its *Win with Women* party assessment tool, originally created in 2003 based on the experiences and advice of female party leaders from around the world. The *No Party to Violence* framework provides additional guidance on measuring levels of and dealing with violence faced by female members within their parties. It includes in-depth survey, focus group, and in-depth interview tools to be used with women and men in the party leadership and membership in order to develop action plans to root out the violence targeting women within their own political parties.

This approach was piloted with a number of the larger political parties and civil society organizations in Côte d'Ivoire, Honduras, Tanzania, and Tunisia between 2017 and 2018. NDI's four initial country reports are pioneering assessments of women's experiences of violence within political parties, and serve as a baseline for developing party- and country-specific recommendations to improve awareness, action, and accountability to end violence against women within political parties. This report aggregates NDI's findings to provide an overview of trends cross-nationally, identifying broader patterns emerging across the individual country studies. In total, this summary report analyzes data from 163 surveys, 142 focus group participants, and 32 in-depth interviews.

In the pilots, NDI designed and administered separate surveys to male and female party members. Researchers administered the surveys in person to ensure confidentiality and provide room for clarity in case participants misunderstood or did not understand the questions. Each survey consisted of a questionnaire of closed questions. The list of questions for men focused exclusively on their perceptions of violence within the party. The female version was far longer, adding questions related to women's own experiences with violence and its impact on their political participation.

Focus groups were carried out only with women from the political parties, selected based on their extensive prior experience in party work and/or positions as elected officials at the municipal or parliamentary levels. To facilitate candid conversations, each focus group included members of the same party or from the same coalition of parties, both for reasons of familiarity and to avoid the risk of negative commentary being aired in public or used by their competitors.

NDI also conducted in-depth interviews with male and female party leaders to generate additional insights into how political parties perceive violence against women. NDI conducted the interviews using a structured questionnaire with open-ended questions.

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ndi.org/publications/reflect-reform-reengage-blueprint-21st-century-parties>

<sup>9</sup> <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

The four countries selected for the pilot studies vary in terms of women's political representation and initiatives to enhance women's political participation. In terms of the share of women in parliament, Côte d'Ivoire (10.6%) and Honduras (21.1%) lag behind, while Tanzania (37.2%) and Tunisia (31.13%) exceed the world average (23.8%).<sup>9</sup> Of the four, Côte d'Ivoire is the only country without a legal provision for gender quotas, although at least one party, the Ivorian Popular Front, has a 30% party quota. In Honduras and Tunisia, parties are required by law to nominate at least 50% female candidates. In Tanzania, 30% of seats in parliament are reserved for women.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the study focused on the six parties in parliament: the Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI), Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), Parti Ivoirien des Travailleurs (PIT), Rassemblement des Républicains (RDR), Union pour la Côte d'Ivoire (UPCI), and Union pour la Démocratie et pour la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire (UDPCI). The research took place between February and August 2017. 33 men and 12 women across the six parties completed the survey, 33 female party members participated in focus groups and six male and female party leaders participated in the interviews.

In Honduras, five parties participated in the assessment including the Partido Anticorrupción (PAC), Partido Innovación y Unidad Social Demócrata (PINU-SD), Partido Liberal (PL), Partido Libertad y Refundación (LIBRE), and Partido Nacional (PN). The study was undertaken between March and July 2017. A total of 11 women and 9 men completed the survey, 57 women participated in five focus groups, and 13 male and female party leaders participated in the interviews.

In Tanzania, five parties participated in the research: the Alliance for Change Tanzania (ACT - Wazalendo), Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM), Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Chadema), the Civic United Front (CUF), and the National Convention for Constitution and Reconstruction-

Mageuzi (NCCR – Mageuzi). The research took place between July 2017 and January 2018. The research team received completed surveys from by 27 women and 29 men across the five parties; held six focus groups with 37 female party members; and conducted six interviews with men and women party leaders.

In Tunisia, nine parties agreed to participate: Al Jomhori, Al Massar, Al Qotb, Ennahda, Ettakatol, Harak Tounes-Al Irada, Machrou3 Tounes, Nidaa Tounes, and Parti des Travailleurs. Only four parties, however, contributed to all three sources of data collection: Al Jomhori, Ettakatol, Machrou3 Tounes, and Nida Tounes. Al Massar, Al Qotb, and Harak Tounes responded to the surveys; Ennahda participated in the surveys and interviews; and the Parti des Travailleurs took part in the interviews and focus groups. The investigation lasted between March and November 2017. Nineteen men and 23 women completed the surveys, 15 women participated in two focus groups, seven party leaders -- all female-- participated in the interviews.



The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization that responds to the aspirations of people around the world to live in democratic societies that recognize and promote human rights. Since its founding in 1983, NDI and its local partners have worked to support and strengthen democratic institutions and practices by strengthening political parties, civic organizations and parliaments, safeguarding elections and promoting citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

With three decades of experience in 132 countries, NDI is the leading organization working to advance women's political participation around the world. The Institute supports women's aspirations for inclusive and responsive government, by ensuring that they are able to participate, compete and lead as equal and active partners in democratic change whether as citizen activists, voters, political party workers, candidates or decision-makers.

Copyright © National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) 2018. All rights reserved. Portions of this work may be reproduced and/or translated for non-commercial purposes with the prior written permission of NDI provided NDI is acknowledged as the source of the material and is sent copies of any translation. Send publication permission requests to [legal@ndi.org](mailto:legal@ndi.org).

