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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS

Mona Lena Krook

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Recent years have seen significant advances by women in democratic political life around the globe. They have doubled their presence in national parliaments, become more visible as social and political activists, and gained recognition as a key voting demographic.¹ Many have welcomed such strides, noting that they bring more attention to a wider range of policy issues, including those beneficial to women; inspire greater interest and engagement in politics, particularly among younger women; and erode historical associations between men and politics, generating broader transformations in gender roles.²

Yet a growing number of sources worldwide report physical attacks, intimidation, and harassment aimed at female politicians, activists, and voters. Reflecting attempts to restrict women's policy contributions, deter women's electoral participation, and reinforce prevailing gender norms, such acts pose a serious threat to democracy and raise questions about the progress that has been made globally toward incorporating women as full political actors.

Efforts to impede women's political participation are not new. Many societies around the world have long associated men with the "public sphere" of politics and the economy and women with the "private sphere" of home and family. Women are thus often regarded as interlopers in the "male" space of politics, giving rise to various forms of hostility toward female leaders.³

Although some female politicians have been inclined to treat sexism and misogyny in the political world as simply a "cost of doing business," that attitude has begun to change. A growing body of documentation is casting light on the diverse, creative, and nefarious obstacles

to women's political participation that can be found around the world.⁴ This evidence suggests that female politicians, activists, and voters face difficulties that their male counterparts do not, instigated by male and female opponents of women's participation.

In the name of traditional gender norms, relatives and party colleagues may sabotage women's political campaigns; feminist activists may become targets of online bullying, ridicule, and rape or murder threats from often-anonymous sources; and female citizens may be barred from voting or coerced to vote in a particular way by religious or traditional leaders or their own husbands. These dynamics of intimidation and harassment are often intertwined with threats and acts of physical violence up to and including murder. Restricting the participation of women *as women* in these ways is meant to send a broader and unambiguous message that women *as a group* should have no part in political life.

Efforts to harm, intimidate, and harass women should thus be seen as a serious threat and affront to democracy, rather than dismissed as an unfortunate feature of "politics as usual." Attempts to stop women as a group from participating in politics are attacks on the rights of half the world's people. Sabotaging the campaigns of female candidates or inhibiting female officeholders from fulfilling their duties strikes at the integrity of the electoral process and violates the rights to vote and to see democratic choices respected. Such actions, moreover, deprive citizens of exposure to full debate and to the contributions that women can make to solving society's problems. Recognizing and combatting such abuses is an emerging global priority, essential both to a just equality between women and men and to the development of robust democracies.

Identifying the Problem

Violence against women in politics is a global problem. In recent years, elected women, journalists, judges, academics, activists, and practitioners have begun to illuminate women's experiences with assault, intimidation, and harassment at all stages of the political process. The result has been a series of normative declarations, action plans, training programs, and studies at the national, regional, and global levels. In 2011, a UN General Assembly resolution recommended a "zero-tolerance" approach to violence against female candidates and elected officials. In 2013, a UN Human Rights Council working group noted that "stigmatization, harassment and outright attacks have been used to silence and discredit women who are outspoken as leaders, community workers, human rights defenders, and politicians." UN Women (the UN's official body for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women) is developing indicators to measure violence against women during elections, while the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) recently published an issue brief on violence against women who serve in parliaments, based on interviews with fe-

THE CASE OF ZIMBABWE

Nayaradzo Mashayamombe

Zimbabwe is far from being a real democracy, and the majority of its people suffer oppression of various kinds. Yet the situation is even worse for the women of Zimbabwe—both ordinary citizens and those in leadership positions. As a woman and an activist working in Zimbabwe to promote women's participation in politics, I am keenly aware of the obstacles and violence that all women face when trying to exercise their democratic rights.

President Robert Mugabe, now 92 years old, and his ZANU-PF party have been in power since Zimbabwe won independence from the United Kingdom in 1980. Once known as the "breadbasket of Africa," Zimbabwe has been in economic crisis for much of the last sixteen years—first sparked by the government's poorly planned redistribution of white commercial farms in 2000 and then exacerbated by drought, falling commodity prices, poor economic and monetary-policy decisions, and corruption. Zimbabwe's economic plight has forced more than three-million people into exile, and has taken an especially high toll on women. To cite but one example, more than two-hundred young women seeking relief from poverty were recently trafficked from Zimbabwe to Kuwait, where they were held hostage and abused.

Amid the economic turmoil, political opposition to Mugabe and ZANU-PF has been growing. In response, the ruling party, aided by the military and war veterans, has used violence (including rape and abductions) and intimidation to quell opposition and ensure its electoral victories. In between elections, the party harshly represses journalists as well as human-rights, prodemocracy, and political activists, sometimes even using torture.

In 2016, as Zimbabwe's economy verged on total collapse, social and political unrest began to rise. In April, Zimbabweans took to the streets and to social media to protest President Mugabe and his government's corruption and mismanagement. These protests have continued steadily ever since. Women such as Linda Masarira have been on the frontlines of the demonstrations, and they have not been spared from the assaults and repression doled out by the pro-ZANU-PF police. In late September, for example, a number of women who were demonstrating in Harare as part of the National Electoral Reform Agenda were arrested, detained, and badly beaten by police officers.

The political violence and coercive tactics target women as much as and perhaps even more than men. Women have been forcibly bused to political rallies for the ruling party and made to spend the day carrying their children on their backs while listening to corrupt male politicians give speeches. They have been arrested and detained. They have been threatened with death, forced from their homes, kidnapped, assaulted, raped, and even murdered. Women have struggled within political parties to run for office and have sometimes been blocked, yet still forced to cast their votes.

When women do manage to assume leadership positions in political parties or the government, they often face hostility from their male counterparts. A recent shocking incident in Nigeria's Senate captures the misogyny that women politicians in Africa often confront: In July, during a disagreement in the Senate chamber, male senator Dino Melaye threatened female senator Remi Tinubu, saying, "I will beat you up . . . impregnate you and nothing will happen."

This is a glimpse of what the women of Zimbabwe too must confront in order to exercise their rights as citizens. But before they even reach this point, they must first make it through childhood without being forced to marry. When very young girls marry, they drop out of school and their opportunities for political participation and civic engagement dwindle.

Moreover, they become vulnerable to political exploitation due to their lack of education. In order to participate in politics, women in Zimbabwe must find the courage to withstand the powerful influence of some Apostolic churches and traditions, which encourage women to stay out of public life. And finally, Zimbabwean women must overcome their upbringing in a patriarchal system that encourages women to support men while tearing each other down.

This last obstacle is especially salient with regard to women in or aspiring to political leadership. Female political leaders, rather than being one another's allies, often become adversaries. For example, in 2014 Joyce Mujuru, one of Zimbabwe's two vice-presidents, was unceremoniously ousted from the ruling party. Prior to this, Mujuru and the other vice-president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, had been the top two contenders to succeed Mugabe. It is widely thought that the lack of a clear succession plan to replace the elderly president gave rise to factionalism within the ruling party, which resulted in Mujuru's removal. To do the dirty work, a woman, First Lady Grace Mugabe, had to be used to remove her. Women leaders elsewhere in Africa also have experienced difficulties at the hands of other women. Former Malawian president Joyce Banda, for example, has said that her female colleagues undermined her more than her male colleagues did.

Violence and corruption make for a political environment that is fraught for women across Africa. As Hope Chigudu, one of Zimbabwe's veteran defenders of women's rights, once said, "Women politicians will always be mauled and mangled in their homes, [on the] street, or [in] parliament" if misogynistic norms are not destroyed. This applies not just to women politicians, however. Governments must take steps to ensure that women can safely participate in politics at all levels, not just as officeholders but also as activists and as voters.

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male parliamentarians from around the world. In October 2016, the IPU Assembly joined these efforts by unanimously passing a resolution condemning this intimidation and harassment.

Regional organizations such as the Inter-American Commission on Women and the Organization of American States have been active in these discussions.⁵ So have such global-reach practitioner organizations as International IDEA and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES). The National Democratic Institute (NDI) has launched a “Votes Without Violence” toolkit to help citizen observers monitor election-related violence against women. To highlight the problem and promote cross-regional dialogue, NDI further convened a March 2016 event in New York City to launch a global call to action, “*#NotTheCost: Stopping Violence Against Women in Politics*,” identifying steps that actors from different sectors might take to end violence against women in politics.⁶

Despite varied terminology and attention to distinct sets of politically active women, most definitions of violence against women highlight the same three elements. The problem is one of: 1) aggressive acts aimed largely or solely at women in politics; 2) because they are women, often using gendered means of attack; and 3) with the goal of deterring their participation in order to preserve traditional gender roles and undermine democratic institutions. It is worth noting that the understanding of “violence” is not limited to physical manifestations, although words such as “harassment,” “intimidation,” “abuse,” and “discrimination” may be used in conjunction with “violence” to draw attention to nonphysical acts of resistance to women’s participation. Researchers and activists tend to use “violence” in this context as an umbrella concept that includes all these things as well as acts of physical coercion.⁷

Variations in social and political settings, however, may affect the content and prevalence of acts meant to deter women’s political participation. As with violence against women more generally, arguments about “culture” are often mobilized to justify harms perpetrated against women. For instance, in the Lower Dir District of Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, fifty-thousand women were eligible to vote in 2015, yet not one cast a ballot in that year’s election. A leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, an Islamist party belonging to the province’s ruling coalition, argued that the women of Lower Dir had “merely chosen to respect local traditions by not voting.” Yet the article noting his stance also cited a report that mosques had broadcast warnings to women, while “baton-wielding men” stood at polling stations to stop them from voting.⁸

Another culture-based resource is to question the sexual identity or morality of politically active women. Charges that a woman is a bad wife, mother, or daughter may be spread as rumors or posted online, harming not only political prospects but also personal lives. Naz Shah, a Labour MP in the United Kingdom, recounted how rivals within her own party circulated doctored photos of her in her largely Muslim con-

stituency, asking “Do you want your daughters to be like her?”⁹ Such defamation may devastate women’s reputations in communities where a woman’s “honor” is seen as intertwined with that of her family.

State capacity can also play a role in shaping which forms of violence are most prevalent. Physical force is likely to be more common in countries where violence is routine and there is widespread criminal impunity. Against a background of “general insecurity,” perpetrators can reasonably expect that their violent acts will evade punishment. Conversely, in countries where such forms of violence are highly condemned and the state has the means to punish perpetrators, forms of violence that stop short of actual physical coercion and are often harder to prove may be preferred. Perpetrators may even justify such acts as being protected by “free speech” guarantees, even when they lead women to fear for their safety, for example by divulging personal information or inciting anger that can precipitate physical attacks. A narrow definition of “violence” thus risks ignoring certain behaviors, such as online bullying and sexual harassment, although these may operate in ways analogous to physical violence in excluding women from political life.

Categorizing the Problem

Taking into account national laws, international declarations, and research on gender-based violence, we can identify five forms of violence against politically active women: physical, sexual, psychological, economic, and symbolic. While taking different forms, these various types of violence can be considered part of the same “field” of behaviors, given that they share the same goal: to keep women *as women* out of public life. Further, individual acts may fall into multiple categories; some incidents may involve several of these acts simultaneously; and, if targets do not respond to one form of violence, perpetrators may escalate by resorting to other types.

Physical violence involves bodily injuries inflicted on female political actors or their family members. This may include domestic abuse, beating, abduction, and even assassination. In early 2016, Gisela Mota was gunned down in her home in Mexico less than a day after being sworn in as her town’s first female mayor. In Kenya, Asha Ali, a women’s-rights activist, was severely beaten in 2007 in front of her children and elderly mother by three men who told her not to stand as a candidate. During the 2004 elections in Afghanistan, women were intimidated so as to prevent them from registering to vote; a bus carrying female election workers was bombed; and threats were made against polling stations that had been set up to accommodate female voters.

Sexual violence comprises sexual acts and attempts at sexual acts by coercion, including unwelcome sexual comments or advances. This includes sexual harassment, rape, and sexual exploitation. In South Af-

rica in 2006, sexual-harassment allegations led Mbulelo Goniwe, the chief whip of the ruling African National Congress, to be expelled from his party. Similar charges led Israeli interior minister Silvan Shalom to resign his cabinet post in 2015. In early 2016, a 14-year-old girl was kidnapped from her bed late at night and raped as revenge for her mother's victory in local elections in India. In Sudan, female human-rights defenders have been sexually assaulted and told that they will be raped again if they continue their activities. In Tanzania, female judges and activists have exposed widespread practices of "sextortion," or forcing women to perform sexual favors, as a condition for women to advance in the public service and political parties.

Psychological violence entails hostile behavior and abuse intended to cause emotional damage. Death and rape threats, stalking, character assassination, and social boycotts are all examples. In early 2016, Muslim Women's Network U.K. alleged that Muslim male local councilors had systematically sabotaged female candidates by smearing their reputations and intimidating their family members. Physical assaults, of course, also involve psychological violence. In Uganda, police stripped a female opposition activist naked at a party rally in 2015, leaving her shocked and humiliated in front of male colleagues. That same year, nearly fifty women in Zanzibar, Tanzania, were divorced by their husbands for voting, while in Bangladesh, men reportedly confiscated their wives' identity cards and went with them to the polls.

Economic violence refers to degradation and coercion through control over access to economic resources. Campaign-finance patterns indicate that parties in Brazil systematically denied women—but not men—the funds needed to wage successful campaigns.¹⁰ Islamic fundamentalists in Libya and Pakistan tore down posters showing female—but not male—candidates' photos. Local officials in Bolivia denied female—but not male—officeholders their salaries and expense reimbursements. In Mexico, officials within all the major parties deprived female party activists of state-provided funds that they were entitled to by law to support women's leadership development. In Guatemala, politicians told women that they would lose social benefits unless they filed party registrations as instructed and pledged to vote for a certain candidate.

Symbolic violence captures abuse and aggression at the level of portrayals that seek to deny women's competence as political actors. Highly sexualized images of female politicians are found easily via Google.¹¹ In Sudan, security officers used physical assault to commit symbolic violence; after forcing female human-rights defenders to undress, they photographed them and threatened to use the photos as blackmail. A woman in Haiti who questioned President Michel Martelly at a party rally was told to "go get a man and go into the bushes." In the United States, the Bernie Sanders presidential campaign felt compelled in early 2016 to condemn the online misogyny and vitriol that some of the sena-

tor's younger male followers (the so-called Bernie Bros) were directing at female supporters of Hillary Clinton.

A Problem for Democracy

Despite such examples, violence against women in politics remains a largely hidden problem. As a result, many women do not recognize what has happened to them as a form of violence. Moreover, many are at a loss as to how to respond to sexist comments and sexual advances. As a result, too many women stay quiet even when they are sure that the behavior in question is unacceptable. As former French politician Monique Pelletier castigated herself on Twitter in May 2016, "Minister of women in 1979, I was harassed by a senator . . . shame on me for my silence!"¹² As she pointed out in a subsequent interview, power dynamics between men and women in parliaments and parties conspire to keep these behaviors hidden, treated as an unfortunate but common "behind the scenes" aspect of political life.

Dismissing violence as a routine "cost" of exercising basic democratic rights is unacceptable. It validates an unfair status quo; places the onus on victims, not structures, to change; and perpetuates inequalities. Victim-blaming is common when it comes to violence against women, suggesting that a woman herself is ultimately responsible for acts perpetrated against her, stemming from what she wore, what she said, or what she did.¹³ At a 1913 suffrage parade in Washington, D.C., for example, a mob attacked and injured more than three-hundred marchers while police stood by, telling the women: "There would be nothing like this happen [*sic*] if you would stay at home."¹⁴

Such logic infringes on women's political rights, as in 2007 when many women in Pakistan refrained or were discouraged from voting by village elders or their husbands after former premier Benazir Bhutto was assassinated. Teaching women coping strategies, moreover, fails to strike the problem at its root. It would be far better if men and women would work together to tackle sexism itself. In France, more than five-hundred politicians and activists, male and female, launched a petition calling for an end to impunity for sexual violence and harassment against women in politics. Their action followed the 10 May 2016 resignation of Denis Baupin from his post as deputy speaker of the National Assembly after sexual-harassment allegations were made against him.¹⁵ Exposing and condemning such harassment can help to correct the misperception that sexualizing women is an expression of sexual desire rather than a conscious strategy to put women "back in their place" and reinforce male dominance.¹⁶

Existing literature on political and electoral violence overlooks these dynamics, even though prevailing frameworks do recognize physical, psychological, and economic forms of violence, focusing on the rise of

violent incidents between ethnic and communal groups around election times, as well as efforts to commit electoral fraud through vote buying, ballot rigging, and interfering with voter- and candidate-registration processes.¹⁷ Yet violence of all types

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harms democracy, and remaining blind to gendered experiences can obscure, for example, the way women were targeted for rape and other forms of sexual violence during the election-related crises that rocked Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire in 2007 and 2011, respectively. Threats and abuses aimed at female candidates, activists, and voters *as women* should be seen as what they are, and not subsumed into some larger category of general political violence.

Violence in politics occurs in public spaces and emanates from political opponents and, in some countries, criminal elements. At election time, the aim is to tamper with electoral outcomes. Between elections, politicians often face intrusive or aggressive behavior from the public. A comparative study of four countries found this to be the case for nearly 80 percent of members of parliament.¹⁸ Such behaviors include physical attacks; threats; unwanted approaches; stalking and loitering; property interference; spurious legal action; distribution of malicious materials; and inappropriate letters, emails, phone calls, or social-media contacts. Most of these acts, however, are committed by loners who are mentally ill or fixated on highly personal grievances.

Violence against women in politics, by contrast, takes place in public and private spaces. In addition to political opponents and criminals, potential perpetrators include community and religious leaders; state-security forces and police; and media and social-media commentators. Many if not most perpetrators are women's own party colleagues and family members, as corroborated by a recent UN Women study on India, Pakistan, and Nepal.¹⁹ In addition to facing attacks in insecure environments, politically active women may thus face danger in spaces that are generally safe for men, such as political assemblies, party meetings, and even their own offices and homes. The drive to preserve traditional gender roles by preventing women *as women* from exercising their political rights means that while violent acts may be experienced at a very personal level, even between a husband and wife, their implications are much broader, communicating the general message that *women as a group* should not take part in politics.

That female politicians who speak and act from a feminist perspective appear more likely to be attacked further supports this interpretation, given that they challenge male dominance in multiple ways. With-

in a year of assuming office in the United Kingdom, self-proclaimed feminist MP Jess Phillips received numerous waves of rape and death threats, mainly via Twitter. In a single night in May 2016, she received more than six-hundred tweets threatening rape after she joined other MPs in launching a campaign to end sexist bullying online.

Awareness of this problem has grown as opportunities have expanded globally for women to run for office, take part in social and political movements, and vote. The causal connection, however, is unclear. At least three explanations seem possible: 1) more politically active women may simply mean more targets to attack; 2) women's higher political profile may exacerbate the violent tendencies of those who feel most heavily invested in stopping change; and 3) increased discussion of women's participation may be casting new light on dynamics that have been occurring unremarked for many years.

Whatever the reason, both quantitative and qualitative data indicate that violence against politically active women is prevalent and has a devastating impact on democratic institutions and practices. In Afghanistan's 2010 elections, women were the targets of 90 percent of the threats made against candidates. In Peru, studies by the Jurado Nacional de Elecciones revealed that nearly half of elected women in 2011 and more than a quarter of female candidates in regional and local elections in 2014 experienced violence or harassment. Data on election violence collected by IFES in Bangladesh, Burundi, Guinea, Guyana, Nepal, and Timor-Leste showed that female voters were four times more likely than male voters to be victims of such violence, with nearly three-quarters of such cases occurring in rural areas.²⁰

Women who are younger or who belong to racial or ethnic minorities seem to be particularly susceptible to attack. As Cheery Zahau, a 34-year-old candidate in Myanmar in 2015, remarked: "One thing about being young, single, and a woman is that I have to endure a lot of smears and attacks on my integrity." In India, more than half the respondents in a UN Women survey reported that lower-caste women in politics faced attacks from both upper- and lower-caste men. Cécile Kyenge, Italy's first black cabinet minister, had bananas thrown at her and faced comments from right-wing politicians that "she seems like a great housekeeper" but "not a government minister."²¹ Together, these trends indicate that backlash against women in politics is not limited to only a handful of women or individual perpetrators; moreover, it may further harm inclusion by exacerbating other forms of inequality.

There is evidence that sexist comments and the sexual objectification of women can harm female candidates' electoral fortunes. A 2010 survey of eight-hundred likely U.S. voters found that even very mild sexist language had an impact on their likelihood of voting for a woman. Another study found that priming respondents to focus on Sarah Palin's appearance weakened their intention to vote for the McCain-Palin ticket in the

2008 U.S. presidential election. As former Texas state senator Wendy Davis observed in relation to her experiences: “Photoshops of me in very suggestive sexual positions were inviting people to view me purely as a sexual being and not someone who had a lot to offer in terms of my policies.”²²

Further, sexist hostility and intimidation have driven female politicians out of politics. A third of female local politicians in Sweden said that such incidents had made them consider giving up their posts, while 48 percent of the women leaving office in Bolivia in 2010 stated that they had been victims of political harassment and violence. Young women appear to internalize these lessons in ways that reduce their own political ambitions. In Australia, 60 percent of women aged 18 to 21 and 80 percent of those over 31 said that they were less likely to run for office after misogynistic attacks against Prime Minister Julia Gillard (2010–13). Nearly all participants in a program for aspiring women leaders in the United Kingdom stated that they had witnessed sexist abuse of female politicians online, and over 75 percent said that it weighed on their decision about whether to seek a role in public life.²³

Women’s desire and ability to take part in politics can also decline following violent acts against female activists and voters. The sexual abuse of female human-rights defenders in Sudan, described above, has disparaged their reputations in ways that have caused lasting personal and professional harm and led many to abandon their activism or go into exile. One woman described the personal cost as “feeling bereft of ‘the momentum of working on issues that became part of my life.’” Women who stay may be beaten or detained by their families at home for months.²⁴ The systematic disenfranchisement of female voters, forced to stay home and away from the polls in Pakistan and Afghanistan, moreover, casts doubt on the legitimacy of elections in those countries.

The use of violence to deter women’s political participation, finally, constitutes a breach of international commitments such as Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979). Beyond its practical implications, violence against politically active women thus also has important normative dimensions. Grasping the true extent and gravity of attacks against women who take part in political life is therefore required to adequately defend democracy, human rights, and the principle of equality for all citizens.

From Problem to Solutions

How do we solve the problem of violence against women in politics? Any attempt must begin by breaking what St. Lucia MP Gale Rigobert calls the “violence of silence,” which occurs when these acts are dismissed as simply the “cost of doing politics.” Daring to speak out, as

hundreds of women are doing around the world, is a necessary first step toward discussing ways to make politics more inclusive. Calling out sexist attacks can also neutralize the damage caused by these remarks, leveling the playing field for women and men and returning the focus to substantive issues.²⁵

High-profile opinion pieces are one way to raise awareness. On International Women's Day in 2016, former U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright wrote a powerful article in advance of the *#NotTheCost* campaign launch, asserting that "when a woman participates in politics, she should be putting her hopes and dreams for the future on the line, not her dignity and not her life." In March 2016, women members of the Italian Parliament's Committee on Women, Law, and Equal Opportunities published a call in *La Repubblica*, saying "enough to sexist insults toward women in politics" and proposing a moratorium on inappropriate language of a sexist nature. After female city-council members in Seattle faced a misogynistic backlash following a May 2016 vote against building a new sports arena, they wrote in an op-ed that such rhetoric "communicate[d] a dangerous message." But they also proclaimed: "We will not be silenced with threats, not today, not tomorrow, and not ever."²⁶

Political parties can also take a number of concrete steps to tackle this problem. One is by issuing declarations of principle and revising internal party regulations to introduce a zero-tolerance policy for perpetrators of sexual violence and harassment of women in politics. The ANC in South Africa and the Liberal Party in Canada have done this, in effect, by dismissing leaders—in one case, the party's chief whip, and in the other, two male MPs—who engaged in sexual harassment. Other initiatives include rules in the British Labour Party against sexism, racism, and bullying in party meetings, as well as brochures and handbooks produced and distributed by women's party organizations in Norway and Sweden that offer strategies for recognizing and counteracting "domination techniques" used against women in politics. International party federations can play a leading role. Juli Minoves, president of the Liberal International (LI), has pledged to call on LI members everywhere to speak up on this issue and endorse the *#NotTheCost* call to action. There are also plans to include a call to end violence against women in politics in the LI's manifesto.

Addressing the problem of violence against women in politics, however, must also go beyond individual parties. Recognizing that resistance can be found across the ideological spectrum, women's groups in Latin America have mobilized in recent years to pass legislation criminalizing political violence and harassment against women. In 2012, Bolivia became the first country to approve such a law, following a twelve-year effort by locally elected women. Similar bills have been proposed in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru. Although to date only a few perpetrators have been called to account via the legal route, many women in Bolivia value the law as a consciousness-raising tool that gives

them words to describe their experiences and supports their efforts to train and support female candidates and elected officials. In May 2016, the Justice Ministry bolstered the law by banning anyone with a record of violence against women from being eligible to run for office.

Other state-led initiatives include creating new policies and institutions for measuring and responding to acts of violence against women in politics. In 2015, Pakistan's National Commission on the Status of Women launched a new set of standardized indicators to measure violence against women, including one to gauge the incidence of violence against women in the political arena. In the Canadian House of Commons, an all-party committee developed a formal process for handling sexual-harassment complaints within Parliament, and called for all MPs to receive training on the new code of conduct and to take a pledge condemning sexual harassment. Alliances among parties, as well as between state and nonstate actors, can give further impetus to these efforts. In May 2016, current and former female British MPs joined forces to launch the "Reclaim the Internet" campaign, concerned that online harassment and bullying truncate public debate. In 2010 and 2011, Côte d'Ivoire's Organization of Active Women partnered with state and international organizations to collect data on gendered experiences of electoral violence, confirming the existence and extent of the problem in that country.

These ideas represent only a handful of potential solutions.²⁷ Actors at the global, national, and local levels can and should take steps—as each is best able—to prevent, treat, and punish violence against women in politics. Prevention will demand making violence unacceptable, as well as collecting data and exchanging best practices for addressing and ending violence. Treatment might entail developing services and protocols for assisting survivors, while punishment would involve seeking the imposition of sanctions, legal or otherwise, on perpetrators. Global momentum is building as women (and men) around the world recognize that violence against women in politics poses a serious threat to democracy. Mimoza Kusari-Lila, a female mayor in Kosovo, expresses a sentiment felt by growing numbers of politically active women around the world who are keen to transform their negative experiences for the greater good: "I tell my opponents, you keep throwing stones at me and I will keep paving roads."²⁸

NOTES

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3. Nirmal Puwar, *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies out of Place* (Oxford: Berg, 2004); Alice H. Eagly and Steven J. Karau, “Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders,” *Psychological Review* 109 (July 2002): 573–98.

4. For example, see www.ndi.org/votes-without-violence, www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2014/6/violence-against-women-in-politics, and www.parlamerica.org/en/group-of-women/political-violence.aspx.

5. For a more on Latin America, see Mona Lena Krook and Juliana Restrepo Sanín, “Gender and Political Violence in Latin America,” *Política y Gobierno* 23 (January 2016): 125–57.

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28. Quoted remarks by Rigobert, Minoves, and Kusari-Lila were made at the NDI #NotTheCost event in March 2016.