



Statement from the Conference in Matera

October 4-6, 2024

Women Without Violence International Foundation

Pangea Foundation

We *women*, the participants of the Conference organised by Women Without Violence International Foundation (WWVIF) and Pangea Foundation, convened in Matera alongside the G7 Ministerial conference on gender equality, urge global leaders to take immediate, coordinated action against sexual violence and uphold the fundamental human rights of women and girls, in all their diversity, worldwide.

Sexual violence continues to be a structural, global scourge that affects women across all borders, cultures, and socio-economic backgrounds. We call upon G7, G20, and United Nations leaders to recognize the severity of this issue and to act decisively.

We also recognise that, at a global level, war and conflict are part of the root causes of Violence Against Women and Gender Based Violence, and that the sale of weapons further fuels wars and conflicts.

We further recognise the extent to which every day sexism, with its stereotypes and sexist actions, is the breeding ground for sexual violence, and we emphasise the importance of communication, prevention and awareness campaigns, in particular among youth.

Our Recommendations:

1. Universal Ratification and Implementation of Key Conventions

We urge G7, G20, and United Nations member states to ratify and implement the provisions of the key international conventions, including the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence Convention, also known as Istanbul Convention, the Belém do Pará Convention, the Maputo Protocol and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

We stress that while relevant legislation may be in place, it is often inadequately implemented. States must fulfill their duty to implement the recommendations of experts, establish national plans to combat sexist violence, prevent sexist behaviour and stereotypes, protect victims/survivors, and prosecute perpetrators in collaboration with law enforcement, social and health institutions, and women's human rights civil society organisations.

Given the widespread nature of sexual violence, all states must commit to improving the access to the judicial process for survivors and ensure that perpetrators face justice.



2. Recognise Gender¹-based Apartheid as a Crime Against Humanity

We support the demand of Afghan women and other activists for the recognition of gender-based apartheid as a crime against humanity in the upcoming United Nations convention on crimes against humanity. Specific resources must be allocated to support all women in conflict areas, both inside and outside their countries, by funding NGOs that support them. Similarly, resources should be directed towards finding all women and girls experiencing conflict related violence and missing, and supporting their rehabilitation, while ensuring perpetrators of genocide and crimes against humanity face international justice.

3. Include Rape, Sexual Violence and Consent in European Legislation

Rape and sexual violence must be explicitly included in the European Directive on violence against women and domestic violence. This should encompass consent along with considerations such as situations of vulnerability, hierarchical positions, the surrounding circumstances and the victim's context.

4. Direct Resources to Prevention and Education

The cost of gender-based violence is always high - for example, in the European Union it is estimated to be €366 billion annually². Directing funds, in all states, to prevent violence at its roots by combating sexist stereotypes (especially among youth), training professionals, and protecting and empowering the victims would result in less money being spent to deal with the negative consequences of gender based violence. So it is a question of making a real financial investment to avoid the exorbitant cost of gender-based violence.

5. Ensure gender parity at decision making level, and independent experts on monitoring international mechanism

States must ensure gender parity at all political levels, both national and local, and ensure that perpetrators of gender-based violence are ineligible for political and public office. Furthermore, states must appoint independent experts to international monitoring bodies rather than individuals with political affiliations, ensuring unbiased oversight and a genuine commitment to gender equality and justice.

¹ Sex-based apartheid

² "The costs of gender-based violence in the European Union", EIGE, 2021



6. Align G7/G20 Objectives with Sustainable Development Goals on Women's Rights

Transform the objectives of the G7 and G20 into sustainable development goals with a specific focus on women's rights, making the cost of gender-based violence measurable and calculating its impact on each country's GDP.

7. Support Feminist NGOs and Human Rights Defenders

Feminist NGOs and human rights defenders are the driving force behind change. They must be protected, financially supported, actively involved in public policies—including action plans and evaluations—and empowered to sustain their advocacy. Human rights defenders from the global South should have access to events in the global North facilitated.

8. Promote Women's Empowerment

States should promote inclusive and holistic empowerment for women, considering tailored programmes based on victims/survivors needs and wishes. Obstacles of secondary victimisation and multiple discriminations should also be removed since these make survivors' lives difficult, stigmatising them, and not allowing them a life free from violence.

9. Combat Technology-Facilitated Violence against women and girls

We call for international cooperation to ban the production and dissemination of sexist, violent content, particularly videos and online materials involving sexual violence and rapes against minors and women. Technology-Facilitated Violence must be tackled with robust legislation and preventive measures.

10. Address Sexual Violence During Migration and Conflict

States must address the surge of sexual violence during migration and conflicts, ensuring a coordinated response, implementing the women peace and security agenda together with all international instruments to fight GVB against women and girls. The right to asylum must be expanded and applied to recognise women experiencing violence as eligible for refugee status³ and by recognising women victims of sexual violence as a social group per se.⁴

Funds for support programmes run by specialised women NGOs and programmes for refugee survivors and asylum seekers must be expanded and strengthened.

³ Istanbul Convention article 60

⁴ As defined by the Geneva Convention



11. Bilateral and multilateral agreements

We call on states to consider respect for gender equality and human rights, including the rights of women defenders, as specific conditions for bilateral and multilateral agreements. States must support the work of NGOs defending fundamental rights, ensuring women rights activists can work without risking their safety.

12. Feminist Diplomacy

We also call for the promotion, in all political dialogues, of the fundamental rights and freedoms of women and girls, their participation at all levels (political, economic, social) and the renewed commitment to funding equality between women and men or gender equality.

13. Ensure Accountability for Rape and Sexual Violence in Detention

States must commit to using national legislation or universal jurisdiction to bring to justice torturers who commit rape and sexual violence in places of detention.

14. Expand Data Collection and Research

States must enhance data collection and research on all forms of violence, including economic violence, determine the true cost of the violence and acknowledge the importance of this to their society and economy. States should work with due diligence and ensuring their own accountability to assess the impact of the violence.

15. Training for Law Enforcement

Training for police, judicial, and other frontline professionals is critical. This training should not only cover technical aspects but also deconstruct preconceived harmful stereotypes and ensure dignified treatment of survivors\ victims and avoid revictimization.

Conclusion:

The time for action is now. The G7, G20, and United Nations leaders must champion these recommendations with the urgency they deserve. Every day that passes without action means more women and girls fall victim to violence that could have been prevented. We ask for your commitment to enforce international conventions, protect human rights, and empower women. Only through resolute leadership can we achieve a world free of sexual violence, discrimination, and oppression. Together, we can forge a path to equality, justice, peace and dignity for all.



First Signatories

Women Without Violence International Foundation (Fondation Internationale Femmes Sans Violences) (WWVIF), France, Italy, Portugal, Malta, Albania

Pangea Foundation, Italy

RAJA-Danièle Marcovici Foundation, (Fondation RAJA-Danièle Marcovici), France

Portuguese Women Jurists Association, (Associação Portuguesa de Mulheres Juristas) (APMJ) Portugal

The European Observatory on Femicide (EOF), Europe

Feminoteka Foundation, (Fundacja Feminoteka), Poland

Counselling Line for Women and Girls (CLWG), Albania

Gender Alliance for Development Center, Albania

Sampark - Bangalore, India

Shirakat - Partnership for Development, Pakistan

Alternative and Response Women Association (União de Mulheres Alternativa e Resposta) (UMAR), Portugal

We are NOT Weapons of War, (Nous ne sommes PAS des Armes de Guerre), Élimination des violences sexuelles liées aux conflits et aux crises, France

Women's Rights Advocates and Advisory Association, (WRAAA), Norway

Françoise Brié, President and founding member of WWVIF, former member of GREVIO 2015-2023 and of the High Council for Equality between women and men, France

Simona Lanzoni, Vice-president PANGEA foundation, founding member of WWVIF, former member of GREVIO 2015-2023, Italy

Helena Leitão, Prosecutor General of High Court of Lisbon, founding member of WWVIF, former member of GREVIO 2015-2023, Portugal

Prof Marceline Naudi, Academic (University of Malta) and activist, founding member of WWVIF, former member of GREVIO 2015-2023, Malta

Assoc. Prof. Iris Luarasi, Director CLWG, founding member of WWVIF, former member of GREVIO 2015-2023, Albania

Prof. Feride Acar, Former President of GREVIO and Former Chairperson of UN CEDAW, Turkey

Mirela Arqimandriti, Executive Director, Gender Alliance for Development Centre (GADC), Albania

Céline BARDET, Jurist and international criminal investigator, Specialist in war crimes and sexual violence linked to conflicts and crises, France

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Renata Gil de Alcantara Videira, Counsellor of the Brazilian National Council of Justice (CNJ), Brazil

Rachel Eapen Paul, Retired Policy director on gender based violence and domestic violence, Office of the Equality and Anti- discrimination, Former GREVIO member 2018-2022, Norway

Maria Edith Lopez Hernandez, Afro-Mexican feminist lawyer, Mexico

Luz Patricia Mejía Guerrero, CIM Principal Expert, MESECVI Technical Secretariat, Inter-American Commission of Women, Organization of American States, Venezuela

Dr. Nagham Nawsat Hasan, Gynaecologist, Human rights defender, Iraq

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Sophie Pouget, Gender Equality & Human Rights Senior Specialist, France

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Dr. Smita Premchander, Founder & Secretary of Sampark, India