

## Concept Note

### **CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19 - Launch Event**

On 14 July 2017, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) adopted General Recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating General Recommendation 19.

General Recommendation 19 from 1992 was historic as it clearly framed violence against women as a form and manifestation of gender-based discrimination, used to subordinate and oppress women. It unequivocally brought violence outside of the private sphere and into the realm of human rights.

25 years later, General Recommendation 35 elaborates on the gender-based nature of this form of violence, building on the work of the Committee and other international human rights mechanisms, as well as developments at national, regional and international levels.

General Recommendation 35 is also a milestone:

- It recognizes that the prohibition of gender-based violence has become a norm of international customary law.
- It expands the understanding of violence to include violations of sexual and reproductive health rights.
- It stresses the need to change social norms and stereotypes that support violence, in the context of a resurgence of narratives threatening the concept of gender equality in the name of culture, tradition or religion,
- It clearly defines different levels of liability of the State for acts and omissions committed by its agents or those acting under its authority - in the territory of the State or abroad- and for failing to act with due diligence to prevent violence at the hands of private individuals and companies, protect women and girls from it, and ensure access to remedies for survivors.
- It unequivocally calls for the repeal of all laws and policies that directly and indirectly excuse, condone and facilitate violence,
- It emphasizes the need for approaches that promote and respect women's autonomy and decision-making in all spheres of life.

#### **Focus and Objective**

With a view to disseminating the content of General Recommendation 35 and discussing how it can be promoted as a tool for accelerated implementation of regional and international obligations to eliminate gender-based violence against women, the Committee will hold a high-level panel discussion in a public meeting during its 68th session, on 14th November 2017, from 15:00 to 17:00 at the Palais des Nations (A building, conference room XVI) in Geneva.

The specific objectives of the event, which will be webcasted live, will be to:

- Highlight the most important and innovative elements of the General Recommendation and identify the main “shifts” that are required in States Parties’ efforts to address gender-based violence against women

### **Format**

Several experts will be invited to share their views in a panel discussion followed by an interaction with Committee Members and other participants, including Member States, Civil Society Organizations, national human rights institutions, academics, and other stakeholders.

### **Panel**

- **Moderator:** Ms Kate Gilmore, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights
  - **Opening remarks:** Ms Dalia Leinarte, Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
  - **Introduction of the CEDAW general recommendation no. 35:** Ms Feride Acar, Member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
  - **Panellists:**
    - Ms Hina Jilani, the Elders
    - Ms Shilan Shah-Davis, University of West of England
    - Mr Anthony Keedi, Masculinities Technical Adviser, ABAAD Resource Center for Gender Equality
    - Ms Carmen Barroso, Co-chair, Independent Accountability Panel, Every Woman Every Child,
    - Ms Dubravka Šimonović, Special Rapporteur on VAW
    - Ms Jane Connors, UN Victims’ Rights Advocate
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