



# Topic: Addressing Systemic Impunity in Gender-based Violence in Latin America

UN WOMEN



OLINMUN

- I. INTRODUCTION
- II. OVERVIEW
  - A. COMMITTEE'S BACKGROUND
  - B. COMMITTEE'S ACHIEVEMENTS
- III. ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC IMPUNITY IN GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN  
LATIN AMERICA
- IV. KEY POINTS FOR DEBATE
- V. ANNEXES
  - A. LIST OF COUNTRIES
  - B. REFERENCES

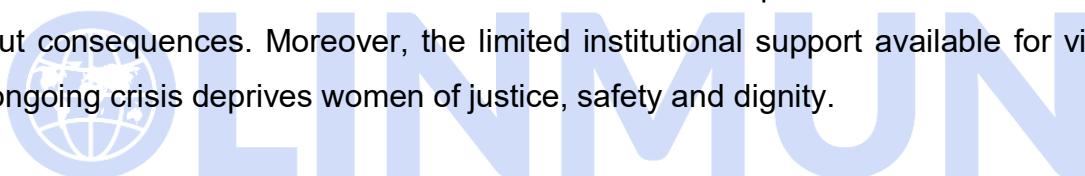


## I. INTRODUCTION

**Dear delegates of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN),**

During this debate, you will discuss the current topic: **Addressing Systemic Impunity in Gender-based Violence in Latin America.**

In Latin America women suffer gender-based and systematic impunity due to the lack of justice in the legal system. This situation places women in a constant danger, as victims range from young girls to elderly women who experience everything from sexual abuse to femicide. The normalization of such violence enables predators to continue acting without consequences. Moreover, the limited institutional support available for victims. The ongoing crisis deprives women of justice, safety and dignity.



UN WOMEN is deeply concerned about this topic and expects great outcomes from this debate.

Welcome to the Olinca Model United Nations (OLINMUN) 2026.

Yours sincerely,

**Sarah San Pedro Ramírez**

Head of Committee of UN WOMEN

**Andrea Patricia Solano Maldonado**

Chair of UN WOMEN

**María José Melo Michel**

Moderator of UN WOMEN

**Natalia Díaz Solís**

Deputy Chair of UN WOMEN

**NOTE: We highly recommend you thoroughly read the following document and the Delegate Handbook. We expect they will provide an overview of the topics discussed and allow you to acquire crucial information about the rules of procedure.**

## II. OVERVIEW

### A. COMMITTEE'S BACKGROUND

UN Women is an entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. All around the world, women and girls are denied basic human rights, such as education and healthcare. Also, in many countries, women still lack representation in political and economic organisms, leaving them out of decision-making processes. UN Women was created with the specific goal of accelerating the fulfillment of women's needs worldwide.

UN Women was created in 2010 by the General Assembly with the complete name of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. By creating this organism, UN member states took a great leap in furthering the organization's goals on gender equality and the empowerment of women. It merged from 4 different organisms that focused on gender equality and women's empowerment:

- Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW).
- International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW).
- Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI).
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

The main roles of UN Women are:

- To support inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms.
- To help Member States implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society.
- To hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress.

## B. COMMITTEE'S ACHIEVEMENTS

UN Women has achieved significant progress in advancing gender equality, specifically the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) pronouncement. Thereafter, the CEDAW defended the idea that women had the right to exert their rights fully and freely, including the right to live without gender violence. Therefore, it was the first international framework to address violence against women in a comprehensive manner and included prevention as a key strategy and the transformation of social norms as a specific area of work.

Moreover, the Platform for Action recognized the unique and important functions that women and girls have as connoisseurs, managers, producers, and caregivers of the environment, as well as educators in this field. It promised to guarantee opportunities for women, including indigenous women, to participate in environmental decision-making at all levels; for instance, the Beijing+20 campaign, in partnership with the Government of Chile, to bring together in Santiago 300 leaders, including heads of state, ministers, legislators, UN executive officials, Nobel laureates, representatives of companies and activists. Additionally, in more than 60 countries, UN Women supported measures to promote women's leadership and political participation, including strengthening a team of aspiring political leaders.

As recent achievements, in 2020, UN Women propelled improvements in women's income, access to decent work and economic autonomy, helping over 114,000 women in 33 countries develop skills to gain a stronger footing in the economy, including close to 70,000 rural women entrepreneurs. In addition, 35 countries extended services to women living with HIV.

### III. ADDRESSING SYSTEMIC IMPUNITY IN GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN LATIN AMERICA

Gender-based killings of women and girls—commonly known as *femicides*—represent one of the most urgent and persistent human rights crises in Latin America. Each year, thousands of women are murdered because of their gender, and their families face justice systems that frequently fail to protect victims or hold perpetrators accountable. Femicides are often linked to domestic violence, sexual assault, organized crime, and deeply entrenched gender inequalities. Despite the severity of the issue, institutional weaknesses and widespread impunity continue to prevail, reinforcing a cycle in which aggressors face minimal consequences while victims and their families are left without justice.

According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the region continues to register one of the highest femicide rates in the world, with particularly alarming levels in countries such as Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador. In 2023 alone, at least 3,897 women were killed because of their gender across 27 countries and territories—equivalent to 11 women murdered every day. Among the 18 countries that reported data, 11 recorded more than one femicide per 100,000 women. Even though many nations have enacted laws addressing gender-based violence, there has been little measurable reduction in femicide rates. In 2022, regional rates ranged from 0.4 to 6.0

women killed per 100,000—reflecting both limited institutional capacity and the magnitude of the crisis.

Femicides across Latin America are not isolated incidents but the result of deep structural inequalities rooted in discrimination, machismo, socioeconomic disparities, and the normalization of violence within communities. Although most countries have national legislation addressing gender-based violence, large sectors of society still dismiss harassment, domestic abuse, and threats as private matters, discouraging victims from seeking help and contributing to a culture of silence. Persistent stereotypes, weak gender education, and the trivialization of violence further reinforce harmful social attitudes. At the same time, state protection mechanisms often fail: shelters are limited, restraining orders are difficult to obtain, and emergency response systems are inconsistent and frequently ineffective.



Despite progress in integrating femicide as a legal category in national legislation, definitions remain inconsistent and often lack autonomy. Several countries still classify these crimes under the broad category of “violent deaths of women,” making it difficult to determine gender-motivated killings. This lack of standardization leads to chronic underreporting and obscures the true scale of the problem. Weak investigative procedures—often lacking a gender perspective—combined with inconsistent application of protocols and insufficient follow-up from prosecutors, result in high rates of impunity. Furthermore, national data systems are fragmented, unstandardized, and frequently outdated, limiting public access to reliable information about investigations, trials, and sentencing outcomes. The absence of transparency fuels mistrust in state institutions and hinders accountability.

In response to this rising crisis, UN Women has strengthened its efforts to support governments across the region in developing comprehensive legal frameworks that recognize and criminalize femicide effectively. The organization works closely with

policymakers to design gender-sensitive investigative protocols, enhance prosecutorial capacity, and provide specialized training for law enforcement and forensic teams. UN Women also advocates for holistic approaches that ensure psychological, social, and legal support for victims and their families throughout the judicial process. These efforts aim not only to punish perpetrators, but also to build long-term systems capable of preventing gender-based violence and dismantling the structures that allow femicide to persist.

## IV. KEY POINTS FOR DEBATE

1. Root causes
  - a. Addressing the normalization of gender-based violence within communities.
2. Systemic impunity
  - a. Inadequate investigation processes
  - b. Addressing the corruption and negligence within the justice system.
  - c. Discuss the legal consequences for the aggressors.
3. State protection and victim support
  - a. Lack of accessible protection mechanisms for women.
  - b. Poor response from authorities to reports.
4. Causes
  - a. Lack of gender education and social awareness.
  - b. Discuss the influence of machismo culture on both aggressors and institutions.
5. Legal framework
  - a. Promoting legal recognition of femicide as a distinct criminal offense.
  - b. What judicial procedures can be implemented to be more effective?
6. Data collection
  - a. Weak national data system on femicide cases.
  - b. Lack of standardized methods for documenting gender-based killings.

7. Institutional transparency
  - a. Limited public access to information on investigation and outcomes.
  - b. Need for stronger accountability in justice institutions.
8. Prevention strategies and community interventions
  - a. Lack of early warning systems and programs for women at risk.
  - b. Need of safe reporting channels, and support networks.

## IV. ANNEXES

### A. LIST OF COUNTRIES

1. Argentina
2. Brazil
3. Canada
4. Chile
5. Colombia
6. Costa Rica
7. Dominican Republic
8. El Salvador
9. Finland
10. France
11. Guatemala
12. Honduras
13. Jamaica
14. Mexico
15. Nicaragua
16. Panama
17. Peru
18. Sweden
19. Trinidad and Tobago
20. United States of America
21. Uruguay

## 22. Venezuela

### B. REFERENCES

Battistessa, D. (2025, June 4). *La herramienta que intenta desvelar los feminicidios en Latinoamérica que las estadísticas oficiales no muestran*. El País.

<https://elpais.com/planeta-futuro/2025-06-04/la-herramienta-que-intenta-desvelar-los-feminicidios-en-latinoamerica-que-las-estadisticas-oficiales-no-muestran.html>

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (n.d.). *Femicidio*. Retrieved December 9, 2025, from <https://www.cepal.org/es/infografias/femicidio>

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2024, November 22). *At Least 11 Women Are Victims of Femicide Every Day in Latin America and the Caribbean*. <https://www.cepal.org/en/pressreleases/least-11-women-are-victims-femicide-every-day-latin-america-and-caribbean>

Sabatini, C., & Galindo, J. (2017, July 25). Why Is Latin America the Most Dangerous Region in the World for Women? *World Politics Review*.

<https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/why-are-femicide-rates-so-high-in-latin-america/>

UN WOMEN. (2019). *Violencia Feminicida en México*. ONU Mujeres – México.  
<https://mexico.unwomen.org/es/digiteca/publicaciones/2019/05/infografia-violencia-feminicida-en-mexico>