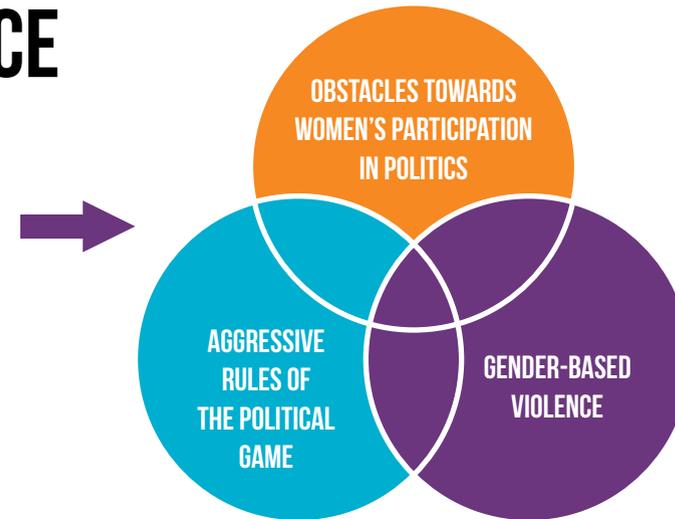




QUICK GUIDE – WHAT IS VIOLENCE AGAINST FEMALE POLITICIANS?

Violence against female politicians stands at the intersection of gender-based violence, barriers against women’s political participation, and the brutality of the political game. There are various forms of violence perpetrated against women holding elected public offices, running for office, or politically active in the public sphere.



PSYCHOLOGICAL

- sexist comments
- harassment
- threats and mobbing

SYMBOLIC

Forced voting against a woman’s will regarding issues connected to female integrity, e.g. the prosecution of rapes, sexual health and reproductive rights

PHYSICAL

- abuse of physical integrity
- threats to physical integrity

ECONOMIC

- physical damage to political office space
- physical damage to private property
- inequality in access to party funding

SEXUAL

- unwanted sexual advances or sexual harassment, including demanding sex in return for favours
- rape
- other violent acts against sexual integrity, e.g. placing a hand on a woman’s knee

17% OF WOMEN IN POLAND HAVE EXPERIENCED CYBERVIOLENCE*

VIOLENCE AGAINST FEMALE POLITICIANS ON THE WEB – HOW IS IT MANIFESTED?

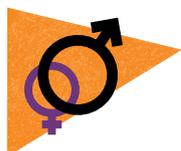
- Threatening and condoning physical violence
- References to private life
- References to intimate issues
- Diminutive forms of first names
- Sexist insults
- References to sex life
- References to appearance
- Questioning femininity
- Reference to emotionality
- Propagating the view that women are not fit for politics

*Data: IPSOS MORI and Amnesty International Poll, 2017

VIOLENCE AGAINST FEMALE POLITICIANS: ACCELERATORS – WHICH FACTORS REINFORCE VIOLENCE AGAINST FEMALE POLITICIANS?



**SHORTAGE OF WOMEN IN
DECISION-MAKING BODIES**



**ACCEPTANCE OF SEXIST CULTURE
AND BEHAVIOUR**



**LACK OF AWARENESS ON EXISTING
MECHANISMS FOR PROSECUTING
PERPETRATORS**



**LIMITED SUPPORT NETWORK WITHIN
POLITICAL PARTIES**



**BRUTALISATION OF PUBLIC LIFE,
ESPECIALLY IN SOCIAL MEDIA**

HELPFUL LINKS AND TOOLS



DATA AND ANALYSIS

- [Institute of Public Affairs: Report on Violence Against Female Politicians in Poland](#)
- [Inter-Parliamentary Union: Issue Brief on Sexism, Harassment and Violence Against Women Parliamentarians](#)
- [National Democratic Institute: Report on Online Violence Against Women in Politics](#)
- [National Democratic Institute: Report on Violence Against Women in Political Parties](#)
- [Westminster Foundation for Democracy: Paper on Violence Against Women in Politics in a Global Perspective](#)

PRACTICAL TOOLS

- [Institute of Public Affairs: Recommendations on Combating Violence Against Female Politicians](#)
- [UN Women: A Programming Guide on Preventing Violence Against Women in Elections](#)
- [International Foundation for Electoral Systems: A Social Media Analysis Tool on Violence Against Women in Elections Online](#)

ACTION POINTS – HOW TO PREVENT AND COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST FEMALE POLITICIANS?



MONITORING AND MEASURING

- Find allies among female politicians and build a cross-party coalition to build pressure on reforming the Parliamentary Ethics Committee: make it immune to the current balance of political power in Parliament and introduce the notion of gender-based violence into documents regulating the functioning of this committee.
- Together with your colleagues, create an internal mechanism for reporting acts of violence within the party, in order to regularly collect data on such acts. Ask for help in designing such a mechanism: the Commissioner for Human Rights office and NGOs supporting victims of domestic violence in Poland are your natural allies and source of knowledge. Share your tool with members of other parties – be an inspiration! The more we know, the better we can prevent violence against women in politics!
- Find female leaders in your party and lobby for their candidatures in such internal structures as peer tribunals or ethics councils. Make sure female politicians are present where discriminatory practices and acts of violence are being monitored and punished.



RAISING AWARENESS AND CHANGING NORMS

- Contact an NGO dealing with hate speech and online violence and ask for help in organising training for members of your party on how to function online in order to avoid and deal with cyber hate.
- Together with your colleagues, ask your party leadership to provide all party members with anti-discrimination training. Make sure – and build support around this project within your party – that there are clear anti-discrimination procedures included in your party statute! Get inspiration from other political parties – parties' statutes are available online and they can serve as a great source of good practices.
- Create your own spaces for women: develop your female cross-party networks and women's clubs, meet other female politicians, get inspired, ask for advice. You can also play your part by becoming a mentor to younger and less experienced female politicians. By supporting each other, you can build pressure to promote bottom-up changes, to create a violence-free political scene. If we work together, we can move closer to parity!



REACTING TO VIOLENCE AGAINST FEMALE POLITICIANS

- Find allies among female politicians and build a cross-party coalition to build pressure on developing a code of conduct against all acts of discrimination and violence, common to all groups. Use existing cross-party structures to work on such a document together with female politicians from different sides of the political spectrum.
- Together with your female colleagues, create “safe spaces” for women who have experienced acts of violence in their political career. Create support groups for victims, where they are offered legal and psychological support. Put pressure on party leadership to make it happen!
- Use the Parliamentary Women's Group to lobby for the inclusion of a provision on “zero tolerance for violence” in documents regulating the work of the Sejm and the Senate

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