COMMITTEE: Youth Assembly

QUESTION : To what extent can governments and digital platforms fight online sexual and gender-based violence while still ensuring freedom of expression and protecting personal data?

PRESIDENTS : Ishani PETITJEAN, Octave NESME JACOLINO, Pablo Alonso OCOTITLA

PRESIDENTS' PRESENTATIONS



Dear delegates, my name is Ishani PETITJEAN, I am 15 years old and I am Franco-Indian. I am in the English and German excellence track at the International High School of Ferney-Voltaire.

What I enjoy doing on a daily basis is running, dancing, and above all, listening to music! I also have a passion for traveling around the world. I have been part of the MUN program for a year. During FerMUN 2026, I was a multilingualism admin and had the honor of playing the guitar at the opening ceremony.

During FerMUN 2027, we will focus on an issue that is increasingly present in our daily lives: the fight againstsexual and sexist violence online. Digital platforms have become essential spaces for communication and freedom,but they can also encourage harassment, threats, or the spread of content without consent.

Faced with this violence, how can we protect users while respecting their freedom of expression and privacy? This issue invites us to think about the balance between safety, freedom, and protecting fundamental rights, and to imagine concrete solutions together to build a safer Internet.

picture taken during the opening ceremony in January at FerMUN 2026



"My warmest greetings to whom it may concern. As you read the following text, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Pablo Alonso Ocotitla López. I am currently 17 years old and I am completing my final year of high school at Crecer Plantel Preparatoria. I am originally from the state of Tlaxcala, Mexico.

It is a pleasure to introduce myself as a member of this committee's chair, it represents an opportunity to develop within a different diplomatic environment, with its respective challenges, which will allow me to refine my skills in leadership, research, understanding, problem-solving, and more, alongside my committee of colleagues.

My experience with Model United Nations includes participation in eight such conferences, where I have taken on various roles—ranging from delegate, to English-to-Spanish interpreter (at FERMUN 2026, in the topic of working conditions) to chair of the International Labour Organization committee at the 4th edition of the Centro Educativo Crecer Model United Nations. Currently, I serve as Secretary-General for the 5th edition of the Centro Educativo Crecer Model United Nations. This reflects my commitment not only to diplomacy, but also to the belief that teamwork and a multilateral approach to conflict resolution are essential for ensuring respect for human dignity.

On a personal note, I have a particular interest and affinity for the exact sciences and scientific and technological development across multiple fields. I devote my free time to researching these subjects and to applying my mathematical knowledge, with the aim of developing them so that one day, I may use them for the benefit of society. I firmly believe that science and technology should serve the well-being of humanity. Nevertheless, I have other interests, such as science fiction and baseball, as these are activities I enjoy and that help clear my mind.

It will be an honor to be part of the presiding board of this committee, and I hold high expectations for our performance as chairs and for the delegates we will have the opportunity to meet.

I remain at your service and look forward to meeting you soon, delegates. If you have any questions, I am at your complete disposal.

Sincerely:

- Pablo Alonso Ocotitla López"

KEY WORDS

Violence (general definition): The deliberate use or threat of physical force or power against oneself, another person, a group or a community, which results in or is highly likely to result in trauma, death, psychological harm, impaired development or deprivation.

Online sexual and gender-based violence (OSGBV): According to the United Nations, this refers to any form of gender-based violence committed, facilitated or amplified through the use of digital technologies (social media, messaging platforms, online games). It includes cyberbullying, the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, pornographic deepfakes and sextortion.

Cyberbullying: Repeated hostile acts (insults, threats, rumours) carried out through digital platforms, often made worse by the "mob effect" when several perpetrators act together. (Source: Council of Europe, Istanbul Convention, 2011; UNICEF)

Online hate speech: Content that attacks a person or a group based on characteristics such as gender, exposing women, journalists and activists to increased risks. (Source: United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, 2019; UNESCO)

Responsibility of hosting providers / digital platforms: Legal obligations imposed on social media networks and search engines to moderate illegal content hosted on their services, even though they are not its authors.

Content moderation: The set of processes (human and algorithmic) through which a platform detects, reports and removes content that violates the law or its terms of service. (Source: European Commission, Shaping Europe's Digital Future)

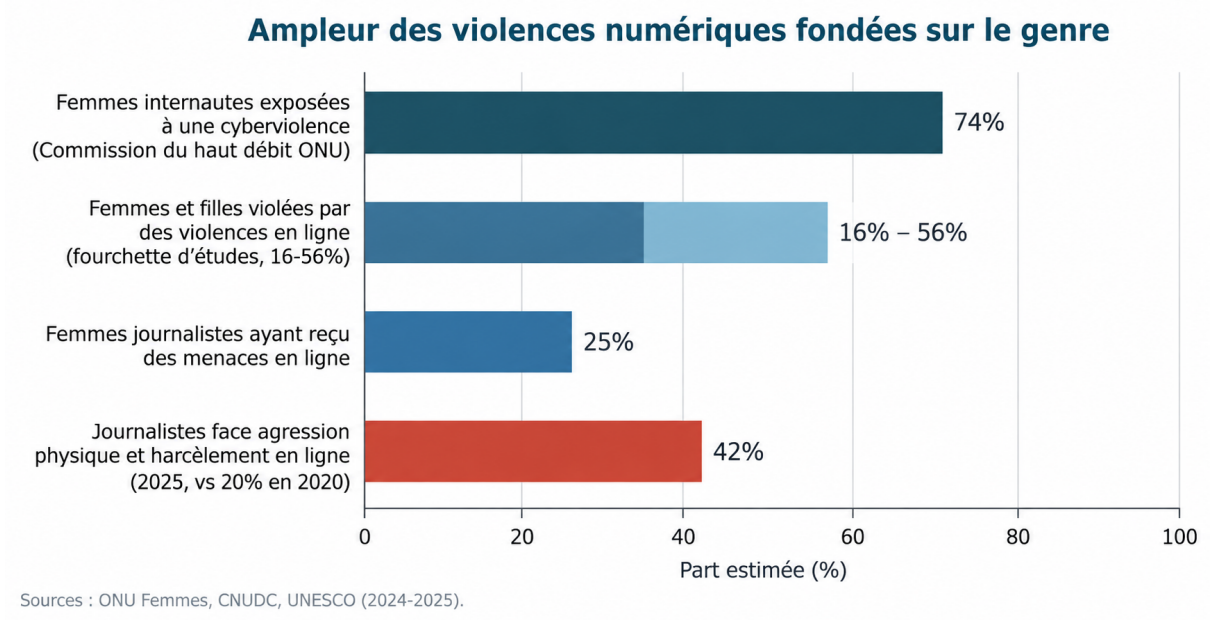
Freedom of expression: According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, this is a fundamental right that may only be restricted by law, in a manner that is necessary and proportionate in a democratic society.

Personal data protection: The legal framework governing the collection, processing and storage of any information relating to an identified or identifiable person.

GLOBAL OVERVIEW

On the victims' side, the current situation is worrying because aggressors go unpunished (thanks to anonymity) and due to how fast things spread on social media. On the platforms' side, there is some automatic moderation (AI), but it's still ineffective, often mistakenly deleting feminist accounts or victims' testimonies.

Digital spaces, meant to be places of empowerment, have become for many women and girls areas of exposure to violence. According to a study by the Commission of the High UN, relayed by "ONU Femmes[1]", near three quarters of the women using Internet said facing cyberviolence, and some studies from different countries say that between 16% and 56% women and girls had already faced online violences. The most public exposed people, like journalists and politicians, are personally touched: One in four journalists worldwide, and up to one in three or four female politicians depending on the region, report having received online threats, including death threats.

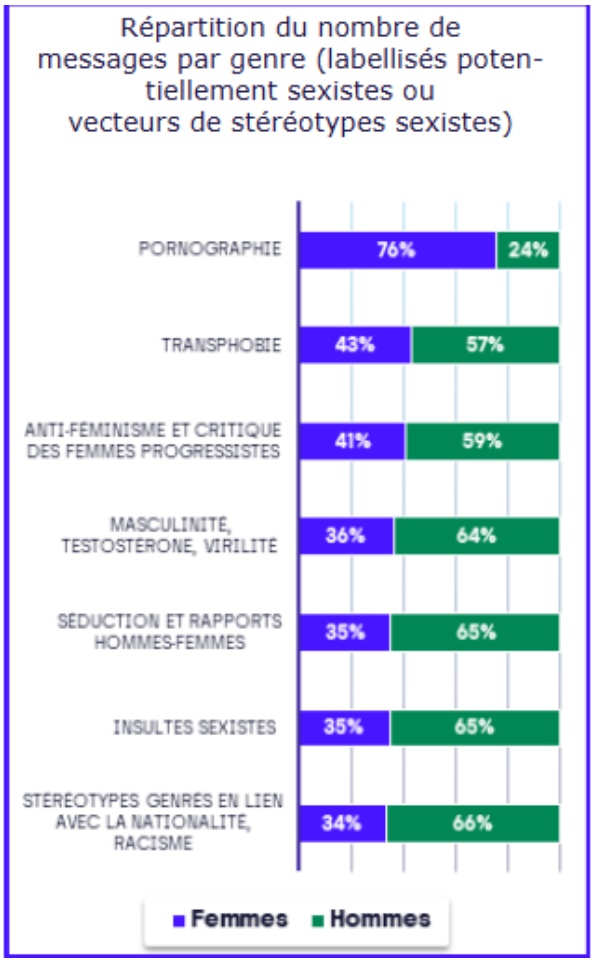


A joint survey by UNESCO and UN Women conducted in 2025 with women journalists and human rights defenders also shows that the proportion of those linking a physical attack they suffered to an online harassment campaign has more than doubled since 2020, rising from around 20% to 42%. This finding confirms that the boundary between "virtual" violence and physical violence is becoming increasingly porous: according to a joint report by UNODC and

[1] ONU Femmes — Rapport sur les violences en ligne

UN Women published at the end of 2024, a significant number of women killed by an intimate partner had previously been monitored or harassed online.

So, the question is, how can we investigate illegal private messages without monitoring all confidential conversations?



Faced with this finding from the same source, states are caught between three tough imperatives to reconcile.

- On one hand, the need to protect victims requires acting quickly on content that spreads widely and across borders.
- On the other hand, any obligation to remove or monitor content poses a risk to freedom of expression, since platforms, under the threat of financial penalties, may be prompted to take down legitimate content out of an excess of caution.
- Finally, identifying the perpetrators of online violence and handling Some reports involve collecting personal data (IP addresses, metadata, reported content), which must remain compatible with the right to privacy. -Arcom, Sexism on Online Platforms, 2026

According to Arcom, women are the main targets of sexist messages on digital platforms. As shown in the chart next to it, 76% of messages related to pornography target women, compared to 24% targeting men. These numbers highlight the extent of online gender-based violence and show the need for joint action by governments and platforms to better protect users, while ensuring freedom of expression and respect for fundamental rights.

However, the fight against this violence raises significant international tensions. State responses still vary greatly depending on the country: according to a United Nations report published in November 2025, 117 countries say they have implemented measures against

digital violence, but these efforts are still fragmented. Regulations are struggling to keep up with rapidly evolving technologies, especially with the rise of AI-generated content, like deepfakes. This is a technique based on artificial intelligence that allows for creating ultra-realistic (or hyper-realistic) manipulations of images, videos, and sounds, for purposes of fraud, disinformation, and cyberbullying; content created with this technique.

Moreover, since big platforms are often based in multiple countries, differences between national laws can make content removal requests and legal actions tricky. For example, a French woman is being harassed on Instagram by an anonymous account based in Spain, while the platform (Meta) has its European headquarters in Ireland. To identify the perpetrator and get the messages taken down, French police have to go through several countries with different laws, which takes months while the harassment continues.

In addition to these legal tensions, there are ideological differences. Some platforms are regularly accused of promoting sexist content or male-centric rhetoric. In January 2025, Mark Zuckerberg notably called for more 'masculine energy,' and Meta announced changes regarding its diversity policies. This fuels the debate about the role of platforms: should they simply guarantee freedom of speech, or should they also act when they help spread content that could reinforce discrimination and sexist violence?

Thus, this issue goes far beyond the question of social media moderation: it pits different visions of freedom of speech, individual protection, and the responsibility of digital companies against each other. For the delegates of FerMUN 2027, the challenge will therefore be to think about international cooperation capable of protecting the victims without turning the Internet into a space for surveillance or censorship.

ITU TREATIES AND MAJOR EVENTS



ONU women— strategic plan 2026–2029

November 2011 — Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe)

First legally binding European convention on preventing and combating violence against women; it set a framework that has since been used in several texts specifically dealing with digitally facilitated violence.

May 25, 2018 — Implementation of the GDPR (EU)

The General Data Protection Regulation governs the processing of personal data in the European Union. It's a bit of a double-edged sword when it comes to tackling online abuse: it lets victims request the removal of content about them through the right to erasure (Article 17), but it also requires platforms to limit data collection when moderating content, like only analyzing reported messages instead of all exchanges.[2]

October 19, 2022 — Adoption of the Digital Services Regulation, effective since February 2024

The DSA requires large platforms to assess and mitigate systemic risks related to their services, explicitly mentioning gender-based violence among the risks to be addressed, while also requiring an assessment of the impact of these measures on freedom of expression. It also sets

[2] https://france.representation.ec.europa.eu/informations/non-le-dsa-ne-vise-pas-censurer-les-reseaux-sociaux-et-restreindre-la-liberte-dexpression-2024-05-16_pl

up a 'notice and action' system that lets any user report illegal content, with a right for the content creator to appeal if their content is taken down.[3]

May 7, 2024 — EU Directive 2024 on combating violence against women

First European text to make certain forms of cyber violence an offense (non-consensual sharing of intimate images, cyberbullying, online incitement to violence or hatred), with a deadline for EU member states to implement it by June 2027 at the latest.

November 25 – December 10, 2025 — United Nations '16 Days of Activism' Campaign

This annual campaign, led by UN Women, has chosen for 2025 to dedicate its edition to fighting digital violence against women and girls, reflecting the growing importance of this issue on the international agenda.

[3] https://france.representation.ec.europa.eu/informations/non-le-dsa-ne-vise-pas-censurer-les-reseaux-sociaux-et-restreindre-la-liberte-dexpression-2024-05-16_pl

POSSIBLES QUESTIONS

1. How can we set up simplified reporting mechanisms and 'trusted third parties' whose alerts would be treated as a priority by platforms?
2. How can we require platforms to be transparent about the number of moderated contents and the criteria used?
3. How can we combine artificial intelligence and human verification in moderation to limit both over-censorship and under-detection?
4. How can we strengthen international judicial cooperation when the author or the platform is outside the victim's country?
5. How can we develop helplines and national reporting platforms, while protecting the reporter's data?

POSSIBLES SOLUTIONS

1- Act without censoring

- Laws and obligations for social networks: Force platforms to act quickly under the threat of heavy fines (e.g., European regulations).

2- Better tools for users: Give victims control over their messages and have reports handled as a priority by humans.

3- Justice and evidence: Allow the police to obtain targeted evidence without invading everyone's privacy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Reports and internationals organisations

- UN Women / UNESCO, Survey on Online Violence (2025): Online violence against women human rights defenders, activists and journalists

- ARCOM, Sexism on Online Platforms: Sexism on Online Platforms

- UNODC / UN Women, Global Report on Femicide (November 2025): Femicides in 2024: Global Estimates of Intimate Partner and Family Member Femicides

- European Commission, Digital Services Act (DSA): Digital Services Act Package

- International Telecommunication Union (ITU), World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2025: WSIS Forum 2025 – Session 344

Legal texts

- Règlement (UE) 2022/2065 (DSA) : https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022R2065
- Règlement (UE) 2016/679 (RGPD) : https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32016R0679

Tools

- Claude (Anthropic)
- TF1 Info “They target women 90% of the time: a law wants to better punish creators of pornographic deepfakes”
- Le Monde “On X, the ‘communities,’ a tool that amplifies harassers' content”

LIST OF THE MAIN ACTORS:

Internationals organisations

European Union

UN Women

UNESCO

Council of Europe

Industries / numerical platforms

Meta (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp)

X

Alphabet (Google, YouTube)

TikTok / ByteDance

Microsoft

ARCOM