



Resolution 2093 (2016)¹

Recent attacks against women: the need for honest reporting and a comprehensive response

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly condemns unreservedly all forms of violence against women. Recent attacks against women in several European cities have highlighted the urgent need to protect women from sexual violence. Their simultaneous occurrence, their scale, the late reporting by the media and the slow response of the authorities are of great concern.
2. Violence against women finds its origin in a profound inequality between women and men and will not be brought to an end unless there is a change of mindsets. In Europe, one woman in three is a victim of gender-based violence, most of the time behind closed doors, but harassment in the street is also common. Violence within crowds represents another dimension of violence against women.
3. According to witness accounts, the majority of perpetrators of the recent attacks were allegedly of foreign origin. These attacks have triggered debates on reception and integration policies in Europe. The Assembly stresses that violence against women is unfortunately one of the most pervasive and widespread human rights violations and should not be instrumentalised for other purposes.
4. There can be no impunity for violence and perpetrators of any form of violence against women must be brought to justice. The Assembly recalls that the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210) is a milestone for the protection of women and calls for its full implementation.
5. Violence against women is a manifestation of unequal power relations between women and men. Men therefore play an important role in preventing and combating this phenomenon.
6. The media also have an important responsibility to report objectively and truthfully on facts, without stigmatising a part of the population. They should not, in order to ensure political correctness, hide the truth from the general public. Partial, late or biased reporting on crimes can feed conspiracy theories, fuel hatred against a part of the population and contribute to mistrust of the authorities and the media.
7. These attacks against women call for a comprehensive response, since they require an official investigation into the facts and into the reasons for delaying official reporting to the public, as well as specific actions to protect women from violence.
8. In the light of these considerations, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member States to:
 - 8.1. engage in awareness-raising activities, with the active participation of men, and launch information campaigns on the need to prevent and combat violence against women and on gender equality;
 - 8.2. sign and ratify, if they have not already done so, and fully implement the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence;

1. *Assembly debate* on 28 January 2016 (7th Sitting) (see [Doc. 13961](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Mr Jonas Gunnarsson). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 28 January 2016 (7th Sitting).



- 8.3. protect women's right to physical integrity and the right not to be harassed in the public space and private sphere;
 - 8.4. ensure, by prosecuting perpetrators, that there is no impunity for violence against women;
 - 8.5. take measures to encourage women to report violence to the police and train police officers on how best to assist women victims of violence;
 - 8.6. allocate sufficient financial resources to organisations providing assistance to victims of violence;
 - 8.7. engage in a dialogue with the media about their responsibility to ensure timely and objective reporting on events, including crimes, and to combat hate speech;
 - 8.8. recognise the important role of education in preventing violence against women. A non-violent environment, free from gender discrimination among children, plays a vital role in fostering appropriate attitudes from an early age.
9. The Assembly calls on the relevant authorities to conduct an investigation into the attacks against women and to publish its results.
10. The Assembly urges parliamentarians to condemn all forms of violence against women, including harassment, sexism and hate speech, and to contribute actively to awareness-raising efforts.