



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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146<sup>TH</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY  
المنامة، البحرين  
MANAMA, BAHRAIN  
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## 146th IPU Assembly Manama (11–15 March 2023)

Assembly  
Item 2

A/146/2-P.1-rev  
10 March 2023

### Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda

#### Updated request for the inclusion of an emergency item in the agenda of the 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union submitted by the delegation of Argentina

On 6 March 2023, the IPU Secretary General received from the delegation of Argentina a request and accompanying documents for the inclusion in the agenda of the 146th Assembly of an emergency item entitled:

“The urgent need to combat violence against women in politics, particularly in light of the proliferation of hate speech, fake news and violent incidents”.

On 10 March 2023, the IPU Secretary General received from the delegation of Argentina an updated version of the request and accompanying documents.

Delegates to the 146th Assembly will find attached the text of the communication submitting the request ([Annex I](#)), as well as an updated explanatory memorandum ([Annex II](#)) and an updated draft resolution ([Annex III](#)) in support thereof.

The 146th Assembly will be required to take a decision on the request of the delegation of Argentina on Sunday, 12 March 2023.

Under the terms of Assembly Rule 11.1, any Member of the IPU may request the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. Such a request must be accompanied by a brief explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution, which clearly define the scope of the subject covered by the request. The IPU Secretariat shall communicate the request and any such documents immediately to all Members.

Furthermore, Assembly Rule 11.2 stipulates that:

- (a) A request for the inclusion of an emergency item must relate to a recent major situation of international concern on which urgent action by the international community is required and on which it is appropriate for the IPU to express its opinion and mobilize a parliamentary response. Such a request must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in order to be accepted.
- (b) The Assembly may place only one emergency item on its agenda. Should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted.
- (c) The authors of two or more requests for the inclusion of an emergency item may combine their proposals to present a joint one, provided that each of the original proposals relates to the same subject.
- (d) The subject of a proposal that has been withdrawn by its authors or rejected by the Assembly cannot be included in the draft resolution submitted on the emergency item, unless it is clearly referred to in the request and title of the subject adopted by the Assembly.

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#IPU146

**COMMUNICATION ADDRESSED TO THE IPU SECRETARY GENERAL  
BY MS. SILVIA SAPAG, SENATOR**

Buenos Aires, 23 February 2023

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

I have the honour to write to you, in my capacity as representative of the delegation of the Senate of Argentina, in order to request the inclusion in the agenda of the 146th IPU Assembly of the following emergency item:

“The urgent need to combat violence against women in politics, particularly in light of the proliferation of hate speech, fake news and violent incidents”.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

Silvia SAPAG (Ms.)  
Senator

**THE URGENT NEED TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS,  
PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE PROLIFERATION OF HATE SPEECH,  
FAKE NEWS AND VIOLENT INCIDENTS**

***Explanatory memorandum submitted by the delegation of Argentina***

Hate speech and the remarkable spread of fake news are undermining the foundations of democracy, as a political system and as a form of participation, as well as weakening the functioning of institutions and their relationship with civil society. The damage caused is of such magnitude that it is affecting governments and institutions. Moreover, hate speech has increased exponentially in recent years and is mainly directed against women – and against women who exercise parliamentary or political functions in particular.

This manifestation is occurring within a framework that indicates that hate speech is fuelled by disinformation and fake news, which are used in particular to manipulate, to create mistrust and to obtain political advantage. Disinformation polarizes democratic societies by deepening divisions and hostilities.

There is no acceptable reason or excuse for men or women to violate the democratically elected authorities, who express the will of the people – the governing principle of the forms of government adopted by the countries whose parliaments are Members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). We must not forget that article 13 (5) of the American Convention on Human Rights, also known as the “Pact of San José, Costa Rica”, places the following obligation upon States: “Any propaganda for war and any advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitute incitements to lawless violence or to any other similar action against any person or group of persons on any grounds including those of race, color, religion, language, or national origin shall be considered as offenses punishable by law”.

In addition, article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that the exercise of freedom of expression “carries with it special duties and responsibilities”, for which reason it may be subject to restrictions. Specifically, article 20 of the Covenant establishes restrictions on freedom of expression by prohibiting any “propaganda for war”, as well as any “advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred” that constitutes an “incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence”. In this regard, the United Nations Human Rights Committee noted in its General Comments that advocacy of these kinds of hatred falls under article 20, whether its aims are “internal or external to the State concerned”.<sup>1</sup>

The renowned jurist and former member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Víctor Abramovich, maintains that “the measures to restrict violent hate speech find a solid additional foundation in the State obligation to prevent the violation of the right to life and physical integrity, which in turn entails the specific duty to act with due diligence to avoid the materialization of risks of violence, which includes, in a more comprehensive sense, the duty to act to reverse widespread patterns and practices of violence carried out by State bodies and by individuals.”<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights holds as follows: “This violence, fuelled by hate speech, can give rise to hate crimes”. In other cases, the Court has examined how some practices of institutional violence – such as arrests based on profiles – are closely related to the social construction of racial and xenophobic stereotypes. It has also observed that, in a circular logic, these violent practices reaffirm stigmatization and conditions of inequality.

Unfortunately, despite the validity of international human rights treaties such as the Pact of San José, Costa Rica and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, hate speech in the region has not stopped. Indeed, it has even increased and intensified, along with the advance of neoliberalism and the extreme radical right. An example of this is the attempt on the life of the current President of the Senate of Argentina, Ms. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, on

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Human Rights Committee, General Comments, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1.

<sup>2</sup> Víctor Abramovich, “Dilemas jurídicos en la restricción de los discursos de odio”, *Seminario: “Los Derechos Humanos y las políticas públicas para enfrentar la pobreza y la desigualdad”*, (Buenos Aires: UNESCO, 2006).

1 September 2022. She was the victim of an assassination attempt as she was about to enter her private home after finishing her workday in parliament. At this point, it is important to mention that the IPU President, Mr. Duarte Pacheco, referred to this abhorrent act at the 14th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliaments in the following terms: “Violence against women in politics is one of the most important issues for the IPU. We must always condemn any type of attack against a parliamentarian – because if one of us is attacked, it is not just a person who is attacked. All the people we represent are also attacked. It is therefore impossible not to strongly condemn the attack on Ms. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, President of the Senate and Vice-President of Argentina, who faced an assassination attempt last week. I believe that all of you will join me in condemning this attack, since it is not possible to accept an attack on a parliamentarian, especially against a woman Speaker of parliament. We should condemn violence against women in politics. And we must work to build a better, more gender-sensitive world.”

It is opportune to point out that unanimous expressions of condemnation have also come from regional and international parliamentary organizations. The Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EuroLat) expressed the strongest possible condemnation of this assassination attempt. The Latin American and Caribbean Parliament formally issued a statement of repudiation against the assassination attempt against the Vice-President of Argentina, Ms. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. Meanwhile, ParlAmericas, the organization that brings together the parliaments associated within the Organization of American States (OAS), published a statement that condemned this brutal act. The IPU Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), in its pre-Assembly session on 10 October 2021, unanimously issued a statement of absolute repudiation of this assassination attempt. Likewise, the Mercosur Parliament published communiqués and declarations of solidarity with the Vice-President of Argentina, Ms. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, repudiating this assassination attempt against her.

This assassination attempt echoes other manifestations of violence against women in politics around the world, including the assassination of women parliamentarians such as Ms. Joe Cox in the United Kingdom in 2016, and Ms. Mursal Nabizada in Afghanistan in 2023. Three IPU studies carried out between 2016 and 2021 also confirmed that sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament was commonplace, and that it existed, to varying degrees, in all parts of the world. The studies revealed that 82% of women parliamentarians surveyed worldwide had been subject to psychological violence, whether in the form of sexist remarks, threats or harassment, and that 15–25% had faced physical violence.

In light of the above and of the spread of violent acts, with extreme manifestations, the Senate of Argentina proposes this emergency item: *The urgent need to combat violence against women in politics, particularly in light of the proliferation of hate speech, fake news and violent incidents.*

**THE URGENT NEED TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS,  
PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE PROLIFERATION OF HATE SPEECH,  
FAKE NEWS AND VIOLENT INCIDENTS**

***Draft resolution submitted by the delegation of ARGENTINA***

The 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Recognizing* that gender equality and the fight against all forms of violence against women, including in politics and in parliament, must be a priority for both men and women, and a condition for genuine democracy,
- (2) *Deeply concerned* by the magnitude of violence against women in politics and in parliament globally, as demonstrated by IPU studies on this issue and by the testimonies of women political leaders around the world who have been targeted by psychological, economic, physical, and sexual and gender-based violence, both online and offline,
- (3) *Stressing* that such violations of the human and political rights of women are among the main obstacles to women's participation in politics and to their full contribution to political processes, and have long-lasting and harmful effects on those affected and their families, on political institutions, on the democratic process and on society in general,
- (4) *Acknowledging* that violence against women in politics and in parliament reinforces gender inequality, discrimination and negative stereotypes,
- (5) *Acknowledging also* that violence against women in politics and in parliament undermines the proper functioning of parliaments, as well as their capacity to be inclusive and representative, and to advance gender equality in society,
- (6) *Recalling the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979 and its Optional Protocol of 1999, CEDAW Committee general recommendations No. 23 on Political and public life and No. 35 on Gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, and the Inter-American Model Law on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women in Political Life of 2017,*
- (7) *Recalling also* the IPU resolution *The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective*, adopted by the 135th IPU Assembly in Geneva in 2016,
- (8) *Considering* the responsibility of governments and parliaments to prevent and address violence against women in politics and in parliament,
- (9) *Concerned about* the protection of inclusive and democratic institutions, which represent the interests of the majority without any type of hate speech or intimidation,
- (10) *Highlighting* the Inter-Parliamentary Union as one of the leading organizations in the world in terms of its work to strengthen democracy and equality,
- (11) *Cognizant of* the importance of strengthening political tolerance and dialogue in order to find solutions to the challenges facing society,
- (12) *Basing* the notion of democracy on the right of everyone to participate in public affairs, through representative institutions and parliaments that respect the will of the people as expressed in elections,
- (13) *Emphasizing* the relevance of the increase in the presence of women leaders within parliament, especially among Speakers of parliament, who reflect the empowerment of women in general at the political level,

1. *Strongly condemns* the assassination attempt against Ms. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, President of the Senate and Vice-President of Argentina, as well as all similar acts of extreme violence, taking into account that such acts are part of a framework of violence against women in politics, and of misogyny and incitement, and *calls for* an emergency situation to be declared on this issue;
2. *Calls upon* governments and parliaments to prevent, address and prohibit violence against women in politics, including through legislation and policies to prevent threats, hate speech and other violence, and to combat impunity by ensuring that those responsible for violations and abuses, including in digital contexts, are promptly brought to justice and held accountable through impartial investigations;
3. *Also calls upon* all parliaments to adopt and implement internal policies and codes of conduct to end sexism and gender-based violence in their own setting, including assistance and support services for victims, an independent complaints mechanism and disciplinary sanctions;
4. *Promotes* demonstrations of solidarity, support and awareness-raising on this issue;
5. *Calls for* urgent action in support of victims of violence against women in politics, including bullying and harassment, through the creation of the necessary bodies or procedures to deal with this emergency;
6. *Also calls for* the defence of democracy, emphasizing the seriousness of acts of violence against women in politics, which erode the foundations of democracy and go against the values espoused by the IPU, which are linked to respect for diversity and the fight for equality, as well as to dialogue, peace and the rule of law.