



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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Forum of Women Parliamentarians  
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## Panel discussion *Women in Politics: To stay or not to stay?*

**36th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians**

**Monday, 23 October 2023, 14:30–16:00**  
**Sala Nobre, Palace of the National Assembly**

In a challenging political world marked by gender-based discrimination, online and offline violence against women in politics, and increased levels of incivility, how can women, in all their diversity and in parity with men, engage in politics and pursue a political life and career?

Despite the high prevalence of sexism, harassment and violence against women in politics in all corners of the world, women politicians continue to display resilience and determination. IPU's research shows that more than 90% of the surveyed women MPs who had experienced gender-based violence in politics, confirmed their determination to continue their parliamentary work. However, at some point, women at the highest levels of leadership can no longer deal with the danger, exhaustion and pressure, and decide to quit politics. As a result, the future of women's participation and leadership in political decision-making is at stake.

What challenges do women face when entering and remaining in political leadership? Is the situation improving? How can we ensure that women can lead a political life and career free from danger, overwhelming pressure and exhaustion? How far have we come in making zero tolerance to violence against women in politics a reality?

Through the panel discussion, the Forum will examine these important questions, draw conclusions and lessons learned, and discuss possible ways to better support and sustain women in political office. It will do so in two parts, as follows:

- (1) The first part will focus on taking stock of the challenges that women face not only in accessing but also in staying in a position of political leadership. Panellists will provide real-life experiences as well as findings from studies. Contributions by panellists will be followed by:

**Interventions from the floor in which participants will be invited to contribute two-minute interventions focused on challenges that may lead women politicians to leave their political careers, and on whether such challenges are old and persistent, or have emerged recently.**

- (2) The second part of the panel discussion will turn its attention to solutions that enable women to lead a political life and career without danger, overwhelming pressure or exhaustion. Panellists will share lessons learned and recommended good practices. Panellists' contributions will be followed by:

**Interventions from the floor in which participants will be invited to contribute two-minute interventions focused on good practices and solutions advanced through legislation and policymaking to protect women and their political careers from gender-based violence and harassment, exhaustion and intolerable pressure.**

Panellists will include women parliamentarians and experts.

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