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UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women Calls on All Member States to Establish a “Femicide Watch”

GENEVA (25 November 2015) – The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović, urged today, on this International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women, for all Member States to focus on prevention of gender-related killing of women by establishing a 'Femicide Watch'.

Speaking ahead of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Ms.Šimonović stressed that States must commit to prevent gender-related killing of women.

“Violence against women is the most atrocious manifestation of the systematic and widespread discrimination and inequality that women and girls around the world continue to face. Women and their children continue to die as victims of gender related killing, often in cruel ways.

The weaknesses of national prevention systems, lack of proper risk assessment and the scarcity or poor quality of data are major barriers in preventing gender-related killing of women and developing meaningful prevention strategies. These weaknesses result in misidentification, concealment and underreporting of gender-motivated killings thus perpetuating impunity for such killings.

For that reason, I call all States to establish a ‘Femicide Watch’ or a ‘Gender-Related Killing of Women Watch’ and to publish on each 25 November – International Day on the Elimination of violence against Women – the number of femicides or gender related killing of women per year, disaggregated by age and sex of the perpetrators, as well as the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim or victims. Information concerning the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators should also be collected and published.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence should be used to present such data and discuss actions needed for prevention of those preventable deaths of women.

Most importantly, each case of gender-related killing should be carefully analysed to identify any failure of protection in view of improving and developing further preventive measures. In the collection, analysis and publication of such data, States should co-operate with NGOs and independent human rights institutions working in this field, academia, victims’ representatives, as well as relevant international organizations and other stakeholders.

Such data should be made publicly available at the national level, while the UN and other organizations should ensure the global and regional publication of such data.”

Ms. Dubravka Šimonović (Croatia) was appointed as Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2015, to recommend measures, ways and means, at the national, regional and international levels, to eliminate violence against women and its causes, and to remedy its consequences. Ms.

Šimonović has been member of the CEDAW Committee from 2002 to 2014. She headed the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia and was the Minister Plenipotentiary at the Permanent Mission of Croatia to the UN in New York. She was also Ambassador to the OSCE and UN in Vienna. She co-chaired the Ad hoc Committee (CAHVIO) of the Council of Europe that elaborated the Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). She has a PhD in Family Law and published books and articles on human rights and women's rights.

The Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures' experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.

Website of UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/SRWomen/Pages/SRWomenIndex.aspx>

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16796&LangID=E>