

Who are attacking WHRD?

The State continues to be the main aggressor against women defenders, given that 54% of the assailants identified are police, military personnel, public officials or authorities at different levels of government.

The fact that **28% of the attacks (607) were attributed to unknown persons** is related to high levels of impunity in the countries in this region and to the lack of investigation of the attacks. This, along with proof that the State is the main aggressor, also helps us understand why **only 38% of all attacks are taken to court by WHRD**.

In 13% of the cases, WHRD are attacked in private spaces: those of their own communities, organizations or families. **In 10% of the cases, business or security agents were involved.** Their aggression is related to the extractive development policy of countries in the region. As many as **5% of the aggressors come from religious and/or fundamentalist groups, medical personnel, and members of political parties who oppose defenders of sexual and reproductive rights and sexual diversity.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

TO THE STATE:

- Acknowledge and publicly address the criminal and social phenomenon and magnitude of violence against WHRD. This includes the establishment of official registries with a gender perspective, public recognition of responsibility regarding attacks against defenders perpetrated by State agents; recognition of the contributions made by WHRD; and the participation of trained, gender-sensitive officials in protection processes.
- Assume responsibility for the prevention, investigation, and diligence in dealing with attacks perpetrated by non-State actors; resolve with complete due diligence the cases of WHRD killed or attacked by aggressors who have been denounced yet remain unpunished; ensure that the intellectual authors of the attacks are tried and punished.
- Eradicate all legislation aimed at limiting, inhibiting or criminalizing the actions in defense of human rights carried out by WHRD. This includes legislation that penalizes women's sexual and reproductive rights, thereby fostering a lack of judicial security and placing WHRD and organizations at risk of criminalization.
- Abstain from making any statement that questions or delegitimizes the work of women defenders, or any statement or judgment that fosters the stigmatization, defamation, discrimination and sexism against a WHRD.

TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS:

- Construct better conditions for challenging violence through organizational strengthening and a heightened capacity of movements to resist and advance within agendas for change.
- Move from an individual focus to one of collective protection.
- Tackle those tensions, conflicts and reproduction of discriminatory practices inside organizations and movements that divide and increase vulnerability and risk.
- Strengthen the recognition, backing and respect for women's leadership, favoring participation in decision-making inside organizations and movements, particularly for those whose realities are less visible, such as Indigenous, rural and migrant women, and defenders of sexual and reproductive rights.
- Actively confront forms of violence against WHRD inside and outside their organizations. Coordinate responses among organizations to cope with the specific violence generated against WHRD in the home or private sphere and inside movements.

- Support networks for protection and secure self-care spaces among WHRD that allow them to be protagonists in protection. Construct comprehensive, collective protection processes. Place special emphasis on enabling WHRD to attend to their needs for self and mutual care in order to guarantee the sustainability of their activism.

TO REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS BODIES:

- Underscore and acknowledge the impact of gender-specific discrimination and violence confronted by women human rights defenders.
- Exhort and generate the creation of monitoring mechanisms so that governments can critically evaluate their progress and that of other governments in the adoption and application of resolutions related to women, discrimination and gender violence. This includes the Resolution on “Promotion of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: protecting women human rights defenders,” adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 18, 2013.²
- Allocate political and economic resources to reinforce and legitimize the work of networks for the protection of WHRD.
- Make human rights mechanisms accessible, including the 2013 Resolution on Women Human Rights Defenders, especially for those who experience interlinked forms of discrimination and violence.
- Urge governments to utilize the investigation and documentation done by WHRD and their networks analyzing gender specific components of the violence they face. This information should be considered while developing laws and protection policies.

TO INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE AND DONOR AGENCIES:

- Protect women human rights defenders, which implies, among other things, reinforcing their own strategies and protection capacities. This means devoting resources to the initiatives, networks and protection measures that the WHRD themselves are launching, coordinating and promoting.
- Pursue finance strategies that deal with spheres of violence specifically affecting WHRD: violence in family and community spaces, violence inside organizations and movements, and other forms of violence that stem from gender discrimination.
- Provide financial support as general, multi-annual funding for the work of WHRD in organizations and movements in order to allow for flexibility and security in establishing work and protection priorities.

² http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/181