

**Draft Press Statement**

**25 November 2019**

## **Violence against women is an affront to human dignity**

**Statement by Maria Arena, Chair of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights, to mark the annual International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November.**

“Violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in our world today but is still largely unreported due to the impunity, silence, stigma and shame surrounding it. It is therefore of the utmost importance that states collect and utilize data on violence against women, as is prescribed by law. This is a key pillar of the strategy to counter violence against women.

No matter the circumstances, violence against women is a scourge and a barrier to the realization of other rights. On this day, it is important to recognize that this is a moral affront to all women and girls and a mark of shame on our societies. It is unacceptable that victims are forced to carry the stigma of these crimes. Instead, the blame rests squarely on the shoulders of the perpetrators. They must face justice. Nonetheless, a societal affliction demands a societal response. Every human being deserves dignity. Women and girls have an unalienable right to live free from violence and abuse.

It is, once again, worth recalling that women, who are already marginalised by society, are more likely to experience violence and to face difficulties in accessing support. For this reason, it is critical that we call attention to incidences of violence against indigenous women, refugee and migrant women, women living in rural or remote communities, women in detention, girls, women with disabilities, elderly women, and women in situations of armed conflict. It is imperative that we listen to these women’s stories and provide tailored support.

This is also the moment to focus on the ratification and implementation of key international and regional instruments related to the topic. I wish to strongly encourage partner countries to do so, as well as EU Member States, to ratify the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe that provides the most sophisticated framework preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

The Subcommittee on Human Rights will continue to actively condemn violence against women in its many forms across the world.”

### **More information**

Profile of EP Subcommittee on Human Rights Chair Maria Arena (S&D, BE)

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