

HUMANITY MUST WIN

AND IT DOES WHEN WE STAND TOGETHER FOR GENDER JUSTICE

A CALL TO COLLECTIVE ACTION TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIVE,
SURVIVOR-CENTERED AND INTERSECTIONAL JUSTICE
GROUNDED IN HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS,
AHEAD OF THE 70TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON
THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW70)



AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



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FOR GENDER JUSTICE

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USEFUL TERMS

Access to justice: Access to justice refers to the ability of individuals to seek and obtain remedies through formal or informal institutions of justice, in conformity with human rights standards. It requires justice systems that are accessible, effective, impartial, and responsive, particularly for those facing discrimination and marginalisation.

Bodily autonomy: Bodily autonomy is the entitlement to decide what we do with our bodies, what we allow, desire and/or forbid others to do with our bodies, and to make essential decisions about our bodies. While not a single, standalone human right, it is grounded in the realisation of a wide range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Caste-based discrimination: Caste-based discrimination is a form of discrimination based on work and descent, including inherited status such as caste, present or ancestral occupation, family or community origin. It nullifies or impairs equal enjoyment of human rights and is often associated with notions of purity, pollution and practices of untouchability.

Collective action: Collective action refers to people acting together, often through movements, organisations or informal groups, to defend rights, resist injustice or demand accountability. In Amnesty International's work, collective action is central to challenging structural discrimination and advancing human rights where institutions fail.

Discrimination: Discrimination occurs when a person is unable to enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with others because of an unjustified distinction made on prohibited grounds such as sex, gender, race, caste, disability, sexual orientation or other status. Discrimination may be direct, indirect, multiple or intersectional.

Intersectional discrimination: Intersectional discrimination occurs when discrimination on multiple grounds operates together to produce a distinct or compounded disadvantage. The harm experienced cannot be understood by looking at each ground separately, as it arises from their interaction. Intersectionality is not a catch-all term and should be used precisely.

Feminist movements: Feminist movements are collective efforts that challenge gender-based discrimination and inequality, including laws, policies, practices and social norms. In Amnesty International's work, feminist movements are recognised as key drivers of social change and access to justice, particularly when grounded in intersectional and survivor-centred approaches.

Gender justice: Gender justice refers to the full realisation of human rights for women, girls and gender-diverse people through the dismantling of structural discrimination, accountability for violations, and the redistribution of power. It requires justice systems that are inclusive, equitable and responsive to lived realities.

Human rights defender: Human rights defenders are individuals or groups who act, peacefully, to promote or protect human rights. Women human rights defenders often face gender-specific risks, including sexualised attacks, criminalisation and threats to family members.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Intersex (LGBTI): An expression encompassing the wide variety of terms used to refer to people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics.

Non-discrimination: Non-discrimination is a core human rights principle requiring that all people enjoy their rights equally, without distinction based on prohibited grounds. States must prevent, prohibit and remedy discrimination in law, policy and practice.

Sexual and reproductive rights: Sexual and reproductive rights are grounded in multiple human rights, including the rights to health, privacy, information, equality and bodily autonomy. They include access to contraception, safe abortion, maternal healthcare and freedom from coercion or violence.

Social justice: Social justice is based on the concept of equal enjoyment of rights for all peoples and the possibility for everyone, without discrimination, to benefit from economic and social progress around the world. Social justice flourishes when discriminatory barriers, including those based on gender, age, race, ethnicity, class, religion, culture or disability, are removed and/or overcome. It is often treated as synonymous with distributive justice.

Structural discrimination: Structural discrimination refers to patterns of inequality embedded in laws, institutions and social systems that systematically disadvantage certain groups, even without explicit intent. Addressing it requires structural and transformative remedies, not only individual redress.

Technology-facilitated Gender-Based Violence: Technology-facilitated gender-based violence refers to any act of violence, or threats thereof, that is committed, assisted, aggravated and amplified in whole or in part by the use of information and communication technologies or digital media and disproportionately impacts women, girls and other people based on their real and/or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression. It may be perpetrated by one or more individuals. It causes physical, psychological, economic or sexual harm.

Transformative justice: Transformative justice goes beyond procedural or transactional remedies to address the root causes of harm, restore agency, dismantle discriminatory systems and redistribute power. Feminist movements insist that access to justice must be transformative to be meaningful.

Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs): WHRDs are women who engage in the defence of human rights, and people of all genders who engage in the defence of women's rights and rights related to gender and sexuality.

WHY THIS DIGEST MATTERS

Governments are failing to provide access to justice to all women and girls – it's only through our collective power that we can demand that they do.

As the global community convenes at the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women¹ (CSW70) under the priority theme of ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, this call takes on renewed urgency.

Across the world, governments are rolling back decades of progress on gender equality. We enter CSW70 at a moment when some states are openly attempting to hollow out international norms, weaponise 'morality' and shrink civic space. [The Trump administration's expansion of the Global Gag Rule](#) in January 2026 is a disastrous example of an assault on human – and in particular - women, girls' and LGBTI people's rights.

It is now incumbent upon all of us more than ever to gather, to act, and to resist. History has shown us time and time again, that *when states fail, the collective power of activists, students, and communities rises. It is this very collective power that can demand that States act; and hold them responsible when they don't.*

Amnesty International's slogan "**Humanity Must Win**" is an affirmation. It's an urgent and necessary reminder that people power – especially in collectives - has always pushed principles of humanity forward, even under repression, conflict, and authoritarianism. Amnesty International's work with partners on the ground demonstrates that solidarity is not an abstract value. It is a force that sheds light on violations, centres resistance, and opens pathways to accountability, justice, and progress.

This digest captures the same spirit across Amnesty International's gender work today: communities supporting each other, collectives of people from different walks of life refusing to accept pushbacks, and activists insisting that another world is possible.

It also celebrates the power we build together – and the future we can only win together. Amnesty International's gender justice work is inseparable from the leadership of partners, feminist movements, survivors, community organisers and local advocates. Because this digest is necessarily brief, we have not been able to name all the organisations and collectives who make this work possible. Nothing we do is done alone. This digest is, above all, a celebration of shared struggle, shared courage, and shared victories.

¹ The main UN intergovernmental forum focused on gender equality and women's and girls' rights.

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S WORK ON GENDER JUSTICE

Amnesty International's gender justice work is grounded in intersectional feminist, decolonial and anti-racist principles. Across contexts, it confronts structural discrimination, amplifies survivor and movement voices, and challenges the political, legal, and economic systems that perpetuate inequalities.

In this context, three core trends emerge that closely reflect the CSW70 priority theme, which calls for justice systems that are inclusive, equitable, survivor-centred, intersectional, and capable of dismantling structural barriers rather than reproducing them:

I. States are weaponising gender as part of broader authoritarian practices, using punitive laws, moral panic, surveillance, and shrinking civic space to control bodies, silence dissent, and entrench power, with women, girls, LGBTI people, and human rights defenders disproportionately targeted.

II. Feminist movements, women human rights defenders, including LGBTI activists, are responding through collective resistance and solidarity, building intersectional alliances across borders, identities, and struggles to defend rights, reclaim public space, and challenge narratives that seek to isolate, stigmatise, and repress them.

III. Access to justice remains the central demand running through these struggles, and feminist movements insist that it be transformative rather than transactional, dismantling structural barriers, restoring agency, and addressing intersecting forms of discrimination rather than delivering piecemeal remedies.

Together, these themes frame Amnesty International's gender justice work as both responsive and strategic, with a focus on long-term transformation.

Amnesty International's intersectional feminist and anti-racist principles demand that we confront these structural and systemic barriers at every layer of our human rights work. Our greatest strength is the power of our movements and the ability to work in partnership with a wide network of activists by centring survivors' voices and being led by our partners' expertise and localised knowledge.

This digest, published in the lead up to CSW70 and International Women's Day 2026, celebrates a selection of some of the wins, breakthroughs and acts of resistance that continue to advance gender justice. It also offers a moment of reflection. Progress is real, but it is uneven and often contested, unfolding alongside backlash and shrinking civic space. Even so, feminist activists and collectives across regions continue to organise, innovate and support one another, showing that change is already happening. In these everyday acts of leadership and solidarity, humanity is already winning.

1.1. Countering authoritarian practices: Weaponising gender

The weaponisation of gender refers to the deliberate use of ideas about gender and sexuality as political tools to divide society and consolidate power. It is a defining feature of many contemporary authoritarian practices. Across regions, states are using punitive laws, the withdrawal of state funding, moral panic, surveillance, and the shrinking of civic space to control bodies, suppress dissent, and entrench authority. Women, girls, LGBTI people, and those who defend their rights are disproportionately targeted by these strategies.

Amnesty International's work on countering authoritarian practices focuses on [exposing these patterns](#) and supporting resistance to them. From the criminalisation of gender and sexuality to the targeting of protest, organising, and expression, the cases in this digest show how gender is used as a political tool to undermine rights and suppress dissent. They also demonstrate why gender justice has become central to broader struggles against authoritarianism.

1.2. LGBTI rights and intersectionality: Collective resistance & feminist solidarity

Feminist movements and women human rights defenders are resisting these attacks through collective action and solidarity, building alliances across borders, identities, and struggles. Amnesty International's work on LGBTI rights and intersectionality reflects this resistance, recognising that struggles for gender justice are inseparable from struggles against discrimination based on sexuality, gender identity, race, class, caste, disability, and migration status.

Across contexts, LGBTI movements respond to repression through visibility, organising, and coalition-building, often under conditions of heightened risk. Pride marches, community mobilisation, and legal challenges become acts of resistance in environments where public space is increasingly restricted. These forms of collective resistance demonstrate how solidarity functions not only as a value, but as a strategy for survival and change.

An intersectional approach makes visible how systems of oppression overlap and reinforce one another, and why justice cannot be selective. Amnesty International's gender justice work therefore centres collective resistance as a core force in challenging exclusion, stigma, and violence.

1.3. Access to justice: Transformative, not transactional

Access to justice remains a central demand running through Amnesty International's gender justice work, and feminist movements insist that it must be transformative rather than transactional. Justice systems often reflect the same power structures that enable discrimination and violence, denying redress to those most affected.

Feminist perspectives on access to justice focus on dismantling these structural barriers. The cases in this digest show how justice is denied through restrictive laws, impunity, and institutional discrimination, but also how sustained advocacy can force openings, even in restrictive contexts. Court rulings, legal reforms, and accountability mechanisms matter, but only when implemented can they contribute to broader social and structural change.

The stories below reaffirm that justice must restore agency, address intersecting oppressions, and redistribute power. Without this transformation, access to justice remains partial and exclusionary.

Feminist Perspectives: Access to justice as intersectional transformation, not transaction

The feminist perspective envisioned with partners of the Women's Rights Caucus², reframes access to justice beyond procedural entry points like courts or legal complaints, to a transformative process that dismantles systems of exclusion and redistributes power, centring the lived realities of women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

Justice cannot be measured solely by prosecutions or judgments; it must be assessed by how it restores agency, prevents harm, and addresses structural conditions that perpetuate inequality. This means embedding survivor-centred, intersectional, and trauma-informed approaches into justice systems, ensuring they respond to the ways gender intersects with race, class, disability, sexuality, and other identities. Without this shift, justice remains transactional and exclusionary, reinforcing rather than remedying discrimination.

The barriers to justice are not uniform, they multiply for those at the intersections of oppression. Patriarchy, racism, colonial legacies, heteronormativity, and ableism converge to create compounded injustice for Indigenous women, women with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ persons, refugees, and those living in poverty. Discriminatory laws, such as those criminalising same-sex relations or restricting reproductive autonomy, codify inequality and silence marginalised voices.

Feminist movements insist that access to justice must therefore be holistic: combining legal reform with social transformation, economic empowerment, and cultural change. This requires dismantling discriminatory laws, strengthening gender-responsive legal systems, and ensuring meaningful participation of women and girls in shaping the rules that govern their lives.

² The Women's Rights Caucus (WRC) is a global coalition of over 200 organisations which Amnesty International is part of, working to advance women's human rights in their communities and together at the United Nations. It is co-convened by FEMNET, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), Outright International, Young Feminist Caucus, and Fos Feminista.

STORIES OF IMPACT & SOLIDARITY

Across regions, communities have continued pushing for accountability, dignity and rights, even when institutions failed them. These real-life stories of resistance and solidarity outlined below do not gloss over the backlash we face, they show how people resist it. They also reflect Amnesty International's commitment to working with partners across the world to centre the demand for justice, the importance of solidarity, and the power of collective action. Each example is a reminder that progress continues to be made, often under the hardest conditions, because people refuse to give up on one another – and on the hope for a better world.

2.1. Access to justice, bodily autonomy & accountability

Access to justice is often treated as a technical or procedural issue, but for women, girls and marginalised communities, it is deeply political and profoundly unequal. Across contexts shaped by conflict, discrimination and entrenched power imbalances, justice systems frequently fail to protect bodily autonomy, deliver accountability or respond to lived realities. Laws may exist on paper, yet remain inaccessible, selectively applied or actively undermined by discriminatory frameworks and institutional bias.

This section reflects the core CSW70 call to dismantle structural barriers to justice by examining how access to justice is experienced in practice. The stories that follow span very different contexts, from hard-won legal reforms and landmark court rulings, to situations where justice systems have collapsed entirely under mass atrocity. Together, they show that progress is neither linear nor guaranteed. Gains in one area can coexist with new forms of exclusion, and formal legal access does not automatically translate into dignity, safety or redress.

From marriage law reform in Burkina Faso and reproductive justice in Malawi, to caste-based discrimination in Nepal and the demand for accountability for gendered atrocities in Gaza, these cases illustrate that access to justice for women and girls requires confronting discrimination, restoring agency and ensuring accountability.

MALAWI: A LANDMARK RULING FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

In [2025](#), Malawi's High Court delivered a landmark judgment affirming that denying a 14-year-old rape survivor access to a safe abortion violated her rights under the Gender Equality Act. The case was brought with the support of the Nyale Institute, which assisted the survivor in seeking justice. The court awarded damages to the survivor and affirmed that access to safe abortion care is essential to protecting the lives, health and dignity of women and girls. Amnesty International reacting to the ruling, noted:

“This landmark ruling sets an important precedent.

It affirms that forcing a woman or girl to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term is a violation of their rights.”

The decision comes at a time when abortion in Malawi remains largely criminalised, leaving many survivors of sexual violence and adolescents with no safe options. The judgment reinforced the urgent need for Malawi to reform its restrictive abortion laws so that survivors of rape, young people, and those facing life-threatening pregnancies can access timely, safe care without fear or stigma.

This ruling reflects the CSW70 call to ensure justice systems dismantle structural barriers, restore agency, and respond to the lived realities of women and girls, particularly survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. As such, the ruling marks a meaningful step toward recognising sexual and reproductive health as a fundamental human right; and toward protecting the lives and dignity of women and girls across the country.



NEPAL: ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR DESCENT-BASED DISCRIMINATION AGAINST DALITS

In Nepal, systemic caste-based discrimination continues to deny Dalit women access to justice. In 2024 Amnesty International launched [“No One Cares”: Descent-Based Discrimination against Dalits](#) – a report documenting systemic caste-based discrimination experienced by Dalit women in accessing justice. Existing legal and protective measures in Nepal prove insufficient and fail to secure their right to dignity and human rights.

“The authorities in Nepal are not doing enough to counteract the culture of impunity for human rights violations related to descent-based discrimination in Nepal. Efforts made by the authorities are still inadequate and insufficient, and they seem to exist only on paper but do not translate into real changes in the lives and the human rights of Dalits, Dalit women and girls in particular.”

Despite laws to prohibit caste-based discrimination, Amnesty International has documented lived realities of everyday life in Nepali society which is divided and operates based on the caste system, where discrimination and violence is pervasive for Dalits. They continue to face multiple barriers in access to justice and have no recourse to judicial redress due to institutional discrimination, including in the police force.



“Nepal has obligations under international law, to take effective measures to prevent and address all forms of caste-based violence and discrimination. The government of Nepal must continue to take immediate action to protect the right to life and dignity of the Dalits and end impunity for caste-based crimes.”

Alongside Dalit families and activists, [Amnesty International continues to lobby the Nepali government](#) to put in place effective protections for Dalit communities. A historic court verdict awarding life imprisonment for the caste-based violence and murder of Nabaraj BK and five others was a welcome step in ensuring judicial redress and accountability.

GAZA: ACCOUNTABILITY FOR GENDERED IMPACTS OF THE GENOCIDE

In March 2025, the [UN Commission of Inquiry](#) concluded that Israel has systematically used sexual, reproductive, and other gender-based violence against Palestinians and carried out “genocidal acts” by destroying women’s healthcare and reproductive health facilities and blocking access to essential care. In September 2025, it found that Israel had committed genocide in Gaza, including through the imposition of measures intended to prevent births. These findings followed Amnesty International’s [own December 2024 report](#) “You Feel Like You Are Subhuman’: Israel’s Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza”, which documented killings, serious bodily and mental harm, and conditions of life deliberately imposed to destroy Palestinians in Gaza, “in whole or in part,” including gendered harms resulting from the assault.

Taken together, this research underscores a critical truth – the genocide has had a disproportionate impact on women and girls in Gaza. It has caused damage and destruction of homes, medical facilities including maternity wards, maternal care clinics and other life-sustaining infrastructure as well as shelters protecting women and girls from gender-based violence. Even now, hundreds of thousands of women and girls continue to live in dire conditions in tents or crowded schools, exposed to violence

and with scarce access to clean water contributing to a hygiene crisis. Further, in the West Bank, home demolitions, restrictions on family unification, forcible transfer - including through state-backed settler attacks or ongoing military operations - alongside escalating arbitrary restrictions on freedom of movement, have also disproportionately impacted Palestinian women and their access to basic rights, including the right to healthcare, education, housing and family life.

The CSW70 theme on ensuring and strengthening access to justice for women and girls demands attention to contexts where justice remains desperately needed, like in Gaza. In such contexts, injustice is systemic and gendered, requiring international accountability and sustained feminist solidarity. The continued documentation, advocacy, and mobilisation by Palestinian women, feminist movements, and global allies affirms that even in the face of devastation, demands for justice persist. This struggle is not only about exposing harm, but about insisting on accountability, dignity, and the conditions necessary for women and girls to survive and rebuild.

GIRLS NOT MOTHERS: A CRUCIAL STEP TOWARDS JUSTICE & NON-REPETITION



During 2025, the [UN Human Rights Committee](#) (UN HRC) finally decided on the remaining four cases of the campaign [“Girls Not Mothers”](#), of which Amnesty International is one of the founding and active members, which urges justice and reparation for five girls forced to carry pregnancies to term after experiencing sexual violence. The Committee found that forcing girls into motherhood violates their rights to a dignified life, bodily autonomy, access to information, and equality and non-discrimination. It emphasised that forced motherhood disrupts girls’ personal development and educational and

professional trajectories, and constitutes a severe restriction on their ability to live with dignity.

The landmark decisions came because of years of campaigning and set a precedent that all signing States of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights must observe. Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) [remains](#) the region with the second highest birth rates to girls under 15 years old in the world. Thus, the decisions are a step towards justice for Norma, Fátima, Camila, Susana and Lucía, the five stories presented before the UN HRC, and represent an urgent call to eradicate sexual violence against girls across the globe.

The Girls Not Mothers coalition now works on the implementation of the decisions at the domestic level in Ecuador, Guatemala and Perú while sharing the learning of the victories to other pressing contexts in the Americas.

FRANCE: BARRIERS TO JUSTICE FOR SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

In 2024, Amnesty International published [“Go Home. It’ll Blow Over”](#), documenting the lived experiences of migrant women, transgender women and sex workers attempting to report sexual violence in France.

The report exposes how structural discrimination, stigma and institutional failures routinely prevent survivors from accessing justice, even within a legal system that formally guarantees their rights.

Drawing on interviews with civil society organisations supporting survivors, the research found widespread refusals by police to register complaints, discriminatory treatment, lack of interpreters, inadequate support services and harmful gendered and racialised stereotypes. For

undocumented migrant women and sex workers in particular, reporting sexual violence can result in detention, deportation, or further abuse, creating a chilling effect that pushes survivors away from justice altogether.

The findings underscore a core CSW70 concern: access to justice is not only about laws on paper, but about whether institutions respond with dignity, care and non-discrimination. Amnesty International is calling on the French authorities to remove structural barriers to reporting, ensure survivor-centred procedures, strengthen training for law enforcement, and guarantee equal access to justice for all women, including those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

BURKINA FASO: EQUAL MARRIAGE AGE MARKED A LONG-AWAITED STEP FORWARD

After years of [advocacy](#) by the human rights movement on early and forced marriage, in 2025, Burkina Faso [adopted](#) long-awaited reforms setting the minimum age of marriage at 18 for both boys and girls and establishing consent between the two parties as the basis for any marriage. These changes represent an important protection for children who have long been exposed to harmful practices that undermine their health, education and well-being. The new provisions on inheritance rights, which eliminate gender discrimination, also mark meaningful progress for women and girls. Amnesty International, [reacting](#) to these legislative changes noted:

“This move protects children from early and forced marriage, a deeply harmful practice that has long violated their rights and hindered their education, health and well-being.”

At the same time, the reforms were overshadowed by a troubling development. The new Code introduces the criminalisation of consensual same-sex relations between adults, a move that violates the right to equality and stands in clear contradiction to regional and international human rights standards.

Despite [calls](#) from civil society actors to revise these provisions, the Code was enacted without modification. This has raised serious concerns that measures framed as advancing the rights of children and women may simultaneously entrench new forms of discrimination, underscoring the importance of CSW discussions on non-discrimination, equality before the law, and the need for rights-based approaches that leave no one behind.



REPRODUCTIVE VIOLENCE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Given the crisis in Haiti, Amnesty International maintains that every Haitian on the move must be considered a person in need of international protection. States are therefore obliged to recognise and respect the principle of non-refoulement. However, the situation in the Dominican Republic has rapidly worsened.

In April 2025, President Abinader implemented a protocol in public healthcare centres in the Dominican Republic, many of them maternal care facilities, requiring the processing of undocumented people seeking healthcare. This punitive measure has had a severe impact on pregnant women, both Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent. Undocumented women are deterred from seeking maternal care during and after pregnancy, placing their lives at risk and resulting in reported maternal deaths.

Between January and November 2025, the *Groupe d'appui aux rapatriés et réfugiés* (GARR)

documented the deportation of more than 900 pregnant women and nearly 3,000 breastfeeding women to Haiti, where healthcare infrastructure remains extremely limited.

The protocol is a clear example of how racism, xenophobia and gender-based violence intersect to oppress those most at risk. Amnesty International [published a report](#) exposing the false government narrative used to justify the crackdown on hospitals and called for the repeal of the protocol, as well as the suspension of arbitrary detention and deportation of Haitians, particularly pregnant women and children.

Amnesty International has also highlighted the broader context of patriarchal policies in the Dominican Republic that undermine bodily autonomy and access to justice, including the total criminalisation of abortion in the [Penal Code](#) and persistent failures to ensure accountability for sexual violence.

GANG VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS IN HAITI

During 2025, Amnesty International sustained and deepened its work to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Haiti and on the Dominican Republic's side, underlining the impact on girls and women. The organisation [documented](#) the gang violence against girls and women in Port-au-Prince and other communities.

Girls and young women are targets of different forms of sexual violence, including rape in a context where sexual and reproductive care is strictly limited, exposing them to diseases and unwanted pregnancies. Amnesty International urges the Haitian government to protect girls from violence and has also asked donors and the international community to support and fund a comprehensive and inclusive child protection plan, guided by the principle of the best interests of the child.

As CSW70 focuses on dismantling structural barriers to justice for women and girls, the situation in Haiti underscores how the absence of protection, accountability and access to essential health services leaves girls exposed to extreme violence with no meaningful pathways to justice.

TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED REPRESSION: MAKE IT SAFE ONLINE

Over the past few years, Amnesty International has documented how technology-facilitated gender-based violence has become a central tool of repression in contexts including [Thailand](#), [Uganda](#), [Yemen](#), [Poland](#) and the [Philippines](#). Our research shows how digital surveillance, spyware, doxxing, online harassment and coordinated online attacks are used to target women, girls and LGBTI people, particularly human rights defenders, journalists and activists. These practices are not isolated abuses, but part of wider authoritarian strategies designed to silence dissent, deter participation in public life and fracture movements.



Amnesty International's work highlights how online violence frequently translates into offline harm, exposing those targeted to arrest, physical attacks, intimidation and exclusion from civic and political spaces. The gendered nature of this repression deepens existing inequalities and creates additional barriers to justice, especially in contexts where legal protections and accountability mechanisms are weak or absent. Women, girls and LGBTI people seeking to report TfGBV and receive support from the state, face barriers such as inadequate policies to tackle TfGBV, limited knowledge about redress for TfGBV among survivors, misconceptions about TfGBV among law enforcement officials, gender-based bias and prejudice among law enforcement officials, burdensome legal processes, and social stigma that can deter people from reporting. Criminalisation of identities and behaviours further impedes access to justice for TfGBV.

While TfGBV impacts all women, girls and LGBTI people, those facing intersectional forms of discrimination and systemic marginalisation, including on the basis of race, disability, religion, caste, ethnicity, migration status, age, class, rural and urban setting, among others, may face both unique and compounded forms of TfGBV.

As CSW70 focuses on strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, these findings and our [#MakeItSafeOnline](#) campaign underline the urgent need to address technology-facilitated violence and its emerging forms holistically and to ensure that digital spaces can flourish as critical spaces for intersectional gender justice, accountability and upholding human rights.



2.2. Defending rights under fire

These legal and policy breakthroughs, from Malawi's landmark ruling to Burkina Faso's reforms, show that progress is possible even under restrictive systems. Yet they also reveal a deeper truth: laws alone cannot guarantee justice. Legal victories and policy reforms remain fragile without those willing to implement and defend them. Across regions, women human rights defenders and LGBTI activists are confronting surveillance, criminalisation, smear campaigns, and violence, often at great personal risk. They are the backbone of this struggle, ensuring that gains on paper translate into safety and dignity on the ground. Whether marching in Budapest, defending abortion care, or sustaining community-level organising against gender-based violence, their resistance is organised, collective, and deeply political, turning principles into lived realities.

THE 2025 WHRDS ADVOCACY WEEK: WOMEN DEFENDERS RAISING THEIR VOICES IN CRISIS

Indigenous [women human rights defenders](#) from ten countries came together for the 2025 WHRD Advocacy Week, giving powerful testimony about what it means to defend rights in the midst of conflict, repression and deepening backlash.

Their stories, shared at HRC60, highlighted both the courage and the heavy burden of speaking out. *"We are stigmatised, criminalised and our land rights attacked,"* María from Guatemala explained, describing how Indigenous women resisting extractive industries face intimidation and reprisals. Another defender from Karakalpakstan said she continues despite risks because *"staying silent means they win."*

They spoke of surveillance, arbitrary detention, smear campaigns, gender-based attacks and the toll these threats take on their families and communities.

Throughout the week, the defenders also affirmed the solidarity that sustains their work across borders and movements. Their collective presence at HRC60 was a powerful reminder that, even in the face of conflict, repression and intensifying backlash, women human rights defenders continue to raise their voices and defend their communities.

As the international community looks ahead to CSW, their testimonies underscore the urgent need to prioritise access to justice for WHRDs, including protection from reprisals, accountability for violations, and remedies for gender- and identity-based harms and to ensure that global commitments translate into concrete protection and support on the ground. Their collective presence was a reminder that even in the most challenging contexts, WHRDs continue to raise their voices, protect their communities and insist on dignity and rights for all.

WEST AFRICA: FIVE WOMEN LEADING THE FIGHT AGAINST GBV

[Across](#) Burkina Faso, Senegal and Sierra Leone, activists are confronting early and forced marriage, FGM, domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence that shape daily life for many women and girls. Their work, often rooted in their own lived experience, shows what leadership looks like at the community level. Many of these activists are part of, or have been involved with, Amnesty International's long-running Human Rights Education (HRE) project in West Africa, which for nearly a decade has supported communities to understand, prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

In southern Senegal, 17-year-old Mariama Seydi has been involved in Amnesty International's human rights clubs since childhood. A survivor of FGM, she speaks openly about why she advocates:

"I was cut... it hurts me to know that I was cut and that there will still be girls who will go through this too." Her dream is to become a lawyer so she can defend others. "I regret that some people think that change is impossible. But I don't let that get me down."

Djénébou Assé Kandé, a survivor of severe domestic violence, now raises awareness in schools and villages across Sédhiou. *"I don't want other girls to go through what I went through,"* she said, describing how sharing her story helps girls ask questions and seek help. She has seen attitudes shift:

"Men have changed thanks to discussions about gender-based violence... their perspective is beginning to change."

Together with other activists across the region, their work demonstrates that community-led organising is transforming norms, opening conversations once considered taboo and setting, in Mariama's words, *"an example"* for others to follow.



BUDAPEST & PÉCS PRIDES

Over the last decade, the Hungarian government has conducted a campaign against LGBTI rights using stigmatising rhetoric and targeting those in civil society who stand up for equality. In 2025, Hungarian authorities banned the 30th anniversary of Budapest Pride, scheduled for June, under new legislation that allows authorities to ban any assemblies advocating for LGBTI+ rights and depicting LGBTI themes, fine participants, criminalise organisers and identify marchers through facial recognition technology.

The law, which entered into force in April, makes it a crime to hold or organise, and a petty offence to attend, events deemed to violate Hungary's [Propaganda Law](#), which prohibits the "depiction or promotion" of homosexuality and diverse gender identities to under-18s. Under the new provisions, individuals who attend a banned Pride event face fines of up to 200,000 HUF (approximately EUR 500), while those who hold or organise such assemblies risk criminal charges and up to one year of imprisonment under the existing Criminal Code. The ban enacted in 2025 showed how far the government was willing to go to restrict advocacy for equality and to silence dissent. As Amnesty International Secretary General Agnès Callamard said,

"The ban on Budapest Pride has exposed the depths to which the Hungarian authorities will sink to try and roll back fundamental rights. But it has also shown the heights that can be achieved when we come together to resist."

Around 300,000 [defied](#) the restrictions and stood up for LGBTI rights and marched on the streets of Budapest, joined by more than 200 Amnesty International delegates from 17 countries and backed by a [global petition](#) of over 120,000



signatures, formally delivered by Amnesty International Hungary to the Chief of Police in Budapest. The message was clear: *"The world is watching."* The Pride was transformed into a visible act of collective resistance against discriminatory laws that criminalise assemblies, allow invasive surveillance, and threaten organisers with imprisonment.

As Callamard told marchers,

"We will not be intimidated by bans, threats and strong-arm tactics... ultimately, humanity will win."

The determination of Hungary's LGBTI community and allies showed an important truth: when states try to suppress visibility and joy, solidarity becomes its own form of power.

The mobilisation in Budapest was not an isolated moment. In October 2025, despite a ban issued by authorities under Hungary's anti-Pride law, thousands of people also marched at Pécs Pride, the second Pride organised in Hungary. While the demonstration went ahead peacefully without a crackdown, the Pride's organiser is facing criminal charges brought against him in February 2026. If convicted, he could face up to one year of imprisonment. This marks a troubling escalation in the criminalisation of LGBTI expression and peaceful assembly in the country.

Amnesty International Hungary supported a powerful national campaign in support of the Pécs Pride, which gathered more than 26,000 signatures, underscoring that resistance to repression continues beyond the capital and that solidarity remains essential as authorities seek to criminalise those who organise for equality.

IRAN: REPRISALS FOR DEMANDING GENDER EQUALITY & CHALLENGING COMPULSORY VEILING

The [Iranian](#) authorities have continued their crackdown on women's rights in the wake of 2022's Woman Life Freedom uprising, treating the demands of women and girls for equality and bodily autonomy as a threat to state power. Since International Women's Day 2025, women human rights defenders, journalists, artists as well as women and girls exercising their rights to freedom of expression and bodily autonomy have been subjected to arbitrary arrest, unjust prosecution, flogging and, in some cases, *death* sentences, in an attempt to stifle Iran's women's rights movement. As Amnesty International observed,

"In the wake of the Woman Life Freedom uprising of 2022, the Iranian authorities consider the widespread defiance of women and girls demanding their rights as an existential threat to the political and security establishment. Instead of addressing systemic discrimination and violence against women and girls, they are attempting to crush Iran's women's rights movement."

Amnesty International has documented how women's rights activists were targeted for participating in International Women's Day events in 2025, speaking out against compulsory veiling or engaging in peaceful cultural expression. Widespread resistance by women and girls to compulsory veiling, together with a sustained domestic and global outcry over violence against them, forced authorities in 2025 to retreat from the violent mass arrests and assaults of previous years. However, Iranian authorities have continued to use existing laws and regulations to enforce compulsory veiling in workplaces, universities and other public sector institutions, leaving women and girls who resist at risk of facing harassment, assault, arbitrary arrest, fines and expulsion from employment and education. Perpetrators include both state agents and vigilantes acting with state endorsement.

These violations are fuelled by systemic and ongoing impunity for the repeated commission of crimes under international law by the Iranian authorities to eradicate dissent; including through the use of unlawful lethal force and mass arrests to suppress the Woman Life Freedom uprising. During the [latest round](#)

[of protests](#) which erupted on 28 December 2025 and quickly evolved into a national uprising calling for the end to the Islamic Republic system, security forces carried out unprecedented massacres of thousands of protesters. Security forces used unlawful force, firearms and other prohibited weapons, against protesters, which resulted in mass killings and serious injuries under a nationwide internet shutdown authorities imposed on 8 January 2026 to conceal their crimes. Women's rights activists were among the thousands arrested in the clampdown.

As the international community engages in CSW discussions, the Woman Life Freedom movement and beyond underlines the urgent need to prioritise protection for women human rights defenders, and the rights of women and girls and access to international justice mechanisms because no effective domestic remedy to justice is available in Iran.



PROTECTING ABORTION CARE PROVIDERS AS HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In 2024 Amnesty International launched a [principles-based framework](#) recognising abortion care providers as human rights defenders, an essential narrative shift at a moment of global backlash. As health care workers and abortion companions are being attacked, criminalised, silenced and stigmatised around the world, this framework supports their demands for recognition and protection with a human rights-based approach.

The Key principles and actions to safeguard abortion care providers as human rights defenders highlight the essential role these defenders play as well as the obligations for states and other actors to enable and protect them. This is why throughout 2025, Amnesty International together with partners FIGO, IPPF, MSI Reproductive Choices, Centre ODAS, International Confederation of Midwives, and Ipas continued [promoting](#) this framework amongst practitioners and activists, including at the International Conference on Family Planning, the Regional Conference of the Latin American Consortium Against Unsafe Abortion and other forums.

Amnesty International also released a [Europe](#) regional briefing featuring reflections from abortion rights activists and organisations who are challenging

barriers to abortion access and resisting regressive political agendas and authoritarian practices across the region. Despite hard-won progress, harmful and dangerous obstacles continue to undermine access to abortion care. The briefing stressed the increasingly challenging environment for abortion-rights activists in the region, where anti rights groups are stepping up their efforts to push for further restrictions on access to abortion and gender equality more broadly. Anti-abortion initiatives are not restricted to policies, laws or constitutional reforms. They are happening on the streets, in traditional media and digital spaces, and through well-resourced campaigns that spread division, false fears and misinformation with marginalised groups bearing the brunt.

Despite the constant backlash, the abortion rights movement has had many wins over the years and managed to reach many new audiences. Continuing our work in broad coalition with all those involved in defending abortion rights remains central to achieving gender justice.



AFGHANISTAN: VOICES THAT REFUSE ERASURE

[Zahra Joya](#), an award-winning journalist and founder of *Rukhshana Media*, has become a powerful chronicler of Afghan women's lives under Taliban rule. Growing up disguised as a boy in order to attend school, she later dedicated herself to journalism because, as she said, *"I realised there was a bigger issue among Afghan women and that we had to do something."* Her newsroom, named in memory of a young woman killed after fleeing a forced marriage, now operates largely in secret, with women journalists reporting at great personal risk.

Since 2021, the Taliban's sweeping restrictions have erased women from public life, but Zahra and her colleagues continue to document what is happening on the ground. *"Working as a woman journalist is basically a crime in many parts of Afghanistan,"* she explained.

"My colleagues are in hiding... but they are brave, determined, and resisting at a time when the Taliban wants to remove women from society."

Their reporting gives visibility to women who cannot speak openly, from protesters writing messages of resistance on walls in Kabul to survivors of violence whose stories rarely reach the outside world.

For Zahra, this work is both a responsibility and a form of collective defiance. *"This is the time for the women of Afghanistan to raise their voices,"* she said. The recent ICC arrest warrants for senior Taliban officials offered a moment of hope. *"After more than three years of punishment and violence, women finally heard some good news."* She continues to call for accountability and for gender apartheid to be recognised in international law, insisting that the world cannot look away. She added:

"The women of Afghanistan are paying a heavy price. The situation is not sustainable."



SEARCHING WITHOUT FEAR IN THE AMERICAS

Women in Latin America lead the search for forcibly disappeared loved ones. Their efforts not only drive the response to a crisis of thousands of victims of enforced disappearance across the region, but also expose them to unique dangers because they are women, because they are human rights defenders, and because they are also survivors. Amnesty International's report [Searching without fear](#) highlights these intersecting risks and highlights the international obligations that states in the Americas have to recognise and protect women searchers.

In Colombia, women searchers face multiple forms of violence, including stigmatisation, threats, physical attacks, surveillance, impoverishment, and impunity - often intensified by gender-based violence, as shown by Amnesty International through the report [Transforming Pain into Rights](#), which also documents the women searchers activism to author and push through the Colombian Congress [Law 2364 of 2024](#), recognising their rights. Most legal protections remain unfulfilled, and Amnesty International actively [campaigns](#) side by side with Colombian women searchers to highlight the urgent need for this law's implementation.

In Mexico, women search for their loved ones among the more than 128,000 people officially registered as disappeared and missing persons, facing a growing number of impacts and violence which have so far claimed the lives of at least 16 of these women. Amnesty International's report [Disappearing again](#) reflects the experiences of 600 women searchers from all around Mexico and neighbouring countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, looking for their loved ones - the victims of enforced disappearance in Mexico.

Through the campaign [#SearchingWithoutFear](#) ([#BuscarSinMiedo](#)) Amnesty International calls for specific actions from the authorities to protect women searchers in the Americas, and provides human rights education modules to increase understanding of these issues with a wider public.

As CSW70 addresses how to strengthen access to justice for women and girls, the experiences of women searchers in Latin America underline a core reality: justice is meaningless if those who seek it are left unprotected.



2.3. Solidarity against authoritarianism

The struggles described in the previous section do not occur in a vacuum. The targeting of women human rights defenders including LGBTI activists, journalists and abortion care providers is part of a wider political project that seeks to suppress dissent and consolidate power. Across regions, governments are increasingly deploying authoritarian tactics that weaponise gender and sexuality by blocking funding, using laws, surveillance and intimidation to roll back rights and shrink civic space.

In 2025, this pattern became more visible and more coordinated. Authoritarian tactics continued to intensify, from the criminalisation of protest to surveillance, censorship, digital attacks, and the targeting of women, girls, LGBTI people, and human rights defenders. These practices are designed to silence dissent and shrink the spaces where people can organise. The stories in this section highlight how Amnesty International and local civil society organisations and activists challenged these systems of control, supported those most at risk, and mobilised against laws and policies aimed at entrenching repression.

AFGHANISTAN: A CRITICAL STEP TOWARD ACCOUNTABILITY FOR GENDER PERSECUTION

In [2024](#), Australia, Canada, Germany and the Netherlands announced a significant international legal initiative that could lead to action before the International Court of Justice for Afghanistan's violations of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The move comes as the Taliban's severe restrictions on women and girls continue to amount to one of the most sweeping systems of gender-based oppression in the world.



Amnesty International's [reporting](#) on Afghanistan has documented the scale and severity of these abuses, underscoring the urgency of accountability and access to justice as global discussions advance towards CSW70. As Amnesty International's Secretary General Agnès Callamard stated,

“The Taliban have made life for Afghan women and girls intolerable. They have erased them from all spheres of life and systematically stripped away their rights and dignity.”

Amnesty International welcomed the initiative as an important step towards justice for patterns of abuse that likely amount to the crime against humanity of gender persecution. *“This is a vital step toward securing justice,”* Callamard said, urging states to pursue all available avenues to address both past and ongoing violations. She emphasised that accountability efforts must be comprehensive, covering the full range of atrocities women and girls have endured over decades of conflict.

The announcement also reinforced the responsibility of states to protect Afghans fleeing systematic discrimination and violence. As Callamard noted, *“The world must act in solidarity with the courageous women and girls of Afghanistan... States have a responsibility to provide international protection.”*

In a year marked by growing authoritarian practices globally, this initiative signalled that the rights of Afghan women and girls remain a matter of urgent international concern.

CHINA: FEMINIST RESISTANCE UNDER REPRESSION

In [China](#), feminist activism has long been met with criminalisation and surveillance, particularly when it challenges state narratives around gender and social order. In 2015, ahead of International Women's Day, activist Li Tingting and four other feminists, later known as the *Feminist Five*, were arrested and detained for planning a public awareness campaign on sexual harassment.

Reflecting a decade later, Li Tingting described how feminism was increasingly framed by the authorities as a political threat, stigmatised as a “Western ideology” and subject to censorship and repression. Despite these constraints, feminist organising in China has continued to evolve. Activists have turned to forms of “micro-advocacy,” using everyday actions, social media and cultural expression to challenge gender-based discrimination, confront sexual harassment and violence, and demand accountability.

While civic space has continued to shrink, these strategies have helped sustain feminist resistance and build solidarity across borders. As Li Tingting has reflected,

“Feminism is not just a movement, it is a way of life.”

As CSW discussions advance, the experiences of feminist activists in China illustrate the risks women human rights defenders face and the role collective action continues to play under sustained repression.

LATIDO COMÚN: DEFENDING GENDER JUSTICE THROUGH FEMINIST SOLIDARITY



Latido Común (Common Heartbeat) is a regional feminist campaign that responds directly to the rise of anti-rights groups and narratives amid shrinking civic space and growing authoritarianism by shifting how gender justice is imagined and communicated. Rooted in empathy, collective power and regional articulation, the campaign seeks to transform social and political narratives around gender, sexuality and diversity through broad-based mobilisation and alliance-building.

Rather than focusing only on legal reform, Latido Común works at the level of culture and narrative change. It challenges misinformation, stigma and hate speech by promoting accessible, empathetic and intersectional messaging on issues such as abortion, sexual and reproductive rights, and LGBTIQ+ rights. The campaign frames gender justice not as a niche concern, but as a shared social project grounded in dignity, safety and freedom from violence.

By bringing together movements, organisations and activists across the region, Latido Común strengthens collective resistance to ultra-conservative agendas and religious fundamentalism. It offers a people-powered response to hate speech and authoritarian practices that seek to divide communities, silence dissent and roll back hard-won rights. In a global context where backlash thrives on fear and fragmentation, Latido Común demonstrates how solidarity, imagination and shared narratives can become tools of resistance.

RESISTING THE BACKLASH ON BODILY AUTONOMY & DIVERSITY IN THE AMERICAS

From Yukon, through San Juan to Tierra del Fuego, Amnesty International has pushed for advancing reproductive justice in the Americas, especially amidst a regressive environment that challenges hard-won victories. Along with partners, Amnesty mobilises and advocates for decriminalisation of abortion in [El Salvador](#), the [Dominican Republic](#), [Chile](#) and [Perú](#), while denouncing the tactics that authoritarian governments have deployed in places like the [US](#), [Puerto Rico](#) and [Argentina](#) to roll back sexual and reproductive rights.

Simultaneously, Amnesty International fights the long-standing and increasing barriers for LGBTIQ+ people in the Americas, restrictions on the rights to health and identity for trans people in [Paraguay](#) and the [US](#) and denouncing the increasingly violent environment for LGBTIQ+ people in [Argentina](#), Colombia and Mexico.

In Guatemala, we work alongside LGBTIQ+ youth activists to strengthen their knowledge and skills in the defence of their rights, while recognising the conservative context they face - one in which hate speech, homophobic violence, and racism remain deeply entrenched. In settings like this, an approach grounded in anti-racism, diversity, the recognition of collective struggles, and the importance of collective care is not only relevant, but essential.

CUBA: RESISTING ENTRENCHED AUTHORITARIAN PRACTICES & STATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Amnesty International [documented](#) incidents between 2014 and 2025 involving entrenched authoritarian practices against women by state agents, which constitute gender-based state violence. These practices include forced nudity and invasive body searches, sexual harassment, stigmatisation based on gender, age, and sexual orientation, and the use of motherhood, caregiving roles, and surveillance and threats against family members as mechanisms of intimidation and control. As one woman told Amnesty International:

“The treatment I’ve received has been harsher because I’m a woman and a mother. They threaten me through my children, shout at me in public, and try to weaponise guilt. It’s a deliberate cruelty towards women who dare to speak up.”

Amnesty International launched a global petition demanding an immediate end to institutional gender-based violence against women defenders, journalists, and activists in Cuba. The organisation is also urging the adoption of a comprehensive law on gender-based violence, including specific protections for women human rights defenders, and calling for a sustained international commitment to monitor the situation of women defenders in the country.



2.4. Feminist solidarity & emerging issues

As authoritarian practices expand and civic space contracts in some settings, new interconnections are emerging across the gender justice landscape. Repression is no longer confined to overt crackdowns on protest or dissent; it is increasingly expressed through funding decisions, foreign policy shifts and legal frameworks that restrict bodily autonomy and undermine care systems. These dynamics deepen precarity for communities already facing discrimination and exclusion.

This section examines how feminist solidarity responds to the needs of the moment, through collective care, shared strategy and cross-movement organising. From global momentum on sex workers' rights to feminist interventions in treaty processes and coordinated responses to aid cuts, the stories that follow show how movements are linking issues often treated in isolation. They demonstrate that in a moment of backlash and constraint, collective care and intersectional solidarity are not abstract values, but practical tools for protecting rights, sustaining communities and shaping more just outcomes.

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY CONVENTION – ADVANCING GENDER JUSTICE

The United Nations has taken a significant step towards creating the world's first treaty on preventing and punishing crimes against humanity. The UN General Assembly passed a resolution in December 2024 to advance negotiations for a treaty and preparation work has officially begun. The outcome, once adopted, has great potential to strengthen the framework of international justice by providing new tools and better enabling states to cooperate with each other in combating impunity for crimes against humanity. In this context, gender justice, human rights groups and many others are mobilising globally to help ensure an inclusive and robust instrument that is, among other things, fully responsive to the needs of women and LGBTI people, including those facing intersectional discrimination, and addresses long-standing gaps in the protection against gender-based crimes.

Over 200 organisations and individuals have joined together to [call on states to advance gender justice](#) in the Crimes Against Humanity Convention through

comprehensive action, including by ensuring the convention addresses all gender-based harms that meet the crimes-against-humanity threshold, by recognising crimes such as forced marriage, reproductive violence, gender apartheid and the slave trade; by meaningfully engaging victims and survivors in treaty-related processes and ensuring their rights are robustly protected in it; and by embedding gender-competence across the convention including through ensuring gender-inclusive language and a strong non-discrimination and substantive equality clause in the text.

The call for the recognition of gender apartheid as a crime against humanity responds to the calls from Afghan and Iranian feminists, demanding that institutionalised regimes of systematic oppression and domination on the basis of gender are given a name and recognised as an atrocity crime.

AID CUTS AND THE GENDERED IMPACT OF AUSTERITY

In 2025, escalating reductions in foreign assistance by high-income countries, including abrupt cuts to aid by the US authorities, interrupted thousands of life-saving health and humanitarian programs in countries across the globe.

Amnesty International's research, [USA: Lives at risk: Chaotic and abrupt cuts to foreign aid put millions of lives at risk](#), found aid cuts disproportionately harmed women, girls, and LGBTI people, underscoring why funding justice is a feminist issue. Frontline programs in Guatemala, Haiti, Yemen, and South Africa, among others, faced cuts or interruptions for programs providing sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls, including survivors of sexual violence.

These cuts reveal how quickly progress on gender equality can be reversed when funding decisions

ignore their human rights consequences. As CSW70 calls for strengthening access to justice for women and girls, this moment highlights the need for states and donors to treat gender-responsive funding not as optional, but as essential to protecting lives, dignity and rights.



GLOBAL GAG RULE

In January 2026, the Trump administration [expanded](#) the Global Gag Rule, significantly widening its scope and impact. Amnesty International is responding by documenting the policy's gendered human rights consequences and supporting cross-movement advocacy. The expansion directly affects organisations working on sexual and reproductive health, as well as those supporting diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, LGBTQI+ rights and access to contraception.

The expanded Global Gag Rule is expected to apply to all non-military foreign assistance, including government-to-government aid, multilateral funding and US-based NGOs. In parallel, the US State Department has issued new instructions for the preparation of its Human Rights Reports, proposing the removal of sections addressing abuses against LGBTQI+ persons and requiring reporting on

transgender healthcare as an alleged human rights abuse involving the so-called "chemical or surgical mutilation of children."

Amnesty International will continue to monitor and respond to the implementation of the expanded policy, including through public advocacy and cross-movement mobilisation, given its far-reaching implications for bodily autonomy, access to healthcare and gender justice worldwide.

SEX WORKERS' RIGHTS: GLOBAL MOMENTUM

In 2024, a major shift occurred in global debates on sex workers' rights when UN human rights experts issued a landmark guidance to raise the visibility of violations of the human rights of sex workers under different policy regimes. In examining sex work from a human rights perspective, it is important to focus on a full range of issues including non-discrimination, access to justice, health and freedom from violence. [The Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls](#) proposed full decriminalisation of sex work from a human rights perspective, as it holds the greatest promise to address systemic discrimination, violence and impunity. Their position was grounded in extensive consultations with sex workers across regions, including those who have experienced violence, exploitation and police abuse under criminalised systems.

The development marks a milestone in the growing global consensus that punitive laws harm sex workers and can undermine efforts to combat trafficking and exploitation. The Working Group's recommendations echo long-standing calls from sex worker-led organisations and the [Sex Worker Inclusive Feminist Alliance](#), of which Amnesty International is a member, for policies grounded in dignity, autonomy and lived experience.

During a time marked by escalating anti-gender attacks, this development stands as a clear affirmation: protecting sex workers' rights is central to advancing gender justice, and meaningful change is possible when sex workers' voices are the ones that lead the conversation.

3

KEY TAKEAWAYS & CONCLUSION

The year 2025 demonstrated that even amid the growing influence of anti-rights actors, the deliberate erection of structural barriers, and a targeted rollback of gender equality in many parts of the world, feminist movements continue to resist, organise, and refuse narratives of hate and division. Across contexts, access to justice, understood not only as legal remedy but as dignity, safety, and accountability, remained a central site of struggle.

There were tangible gains alongside sustained resistance. Legal reforms, including the [legalisation of same-sex marriage in Thailand](#) and the vote in the United Kingdom to partially decriminalise abortion, showed that pressure on institutions can still open pathways to justice, even in restrictive political environments. These gains were neither inevitable nor isolated; they were the result of sustained advocacy and collective mobilisation.

Beyond formal legal change, solidarity continued to expand across borders. Global actions in support of women and girls in Gaza, Pride marches in Hungary, and digital mobilisation by Amnesty International's members and activists around the world demonstrated how public space, visibility, and collective action remain essential to contesting exclusion and repression. Sustained advocacy on the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, [Sudan](#), and the [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) further underscored that where justice systems fail or collapse, international attention, pressure, and solidarity become critical tools for demanding accountability.

Partnership has been paramount. All the stories in this digest exist because of partnership. Amnesty International works alongside feminist movements, survivors, LGBTI activists, community-led groups and frontline defenders across the world. This short document cannot do justice to every partner who shaped these achievements. But we want to be clear: every step forward is collective.

As CSW70 approaches, these experiences offer a clear message: access to justice is not delivered through institutions alone. It is defended, expanded, and made real through collective action. In the face of backlash and repression, feminist movements continue to insist on dignity, rights, and accountability, reminding us that humanity advances not by accident, but through organised, sustained solidarity.

As States convene at the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, Amnesty International is launching this urgent call to everyone to support collective resistance. This digest brings together inspiring stories of feminist people power – especially in collectives – which has pushed principles of humanity forward, even under repression, conflict, and authoritarianism. We can all play a role in supporting these movements, because:

Resistance is not passive. It is organised, collective, and deeply political.

Access to justice requires dismantling structural barriers.

Solidarity is resistance; resistance is how humanity wins.

Recommendations to Governments

To advance access to justice for women, girls, and gender-diverse people Amnesty International calls on governments to:

Remove discriminatory barriers to justice

- Repeal laws, policies and practices that discriminate on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sex characteristics, marital status, among others, or unjustly infringe on personal and bodily autonomy, including laws and policies criminalising abortion, same-sex relations, or gender expression.

Ensure access to justice is survivor-centred and transformative

- Guarantee free and accessible legal aid, timely and adequate remedies, and effective investigations and prosecutions for survivors of gender-based violence.
- Ensure justice processes are trauma-informed, gender-responsive, and accessible to those facing intersecting forms of discrimination.

Provide comprehensive support for survivors

- Establish and adequately fund localised, integrated support services for survivors of all forms of gender-based violence, including medical care, psychosocial support, legal assistance, and socio-economic support.
- Ensure services are accessible to all survivors, particularly those from marginalised groups including LGBTI people, migrants, persons with disabilities, and those living in poverty.

Protect feminist movements and human rights defenders

- Enact and enforce laws that protect women human rights defenders, including LGBTI activists.
- End the misuse of morality, security, and public order laws to suppress organising, protest, and expression.
- Provide protection measures, including safe spaces, emergency support, and digital security.

Safeguard bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive rights

- Guarantee access to safe abortion, contraception, and comprehensive sexuality education, and protect health workers providing these services from criminalisation or harassment.
- Ensure survivors of gender-based violence have immediate access to time-sensitive healthcare and remedies.

Finance feminist justice

- Allocate dedicated, sustained funding for gender justice, legal empowerment, and survivor support.
- Provide core, flexible funding to feminist and community-based organisations, particularly at grassroots level.

Uphold and strengthen international law and standards, and protect civilians in conflict

- Take immediate steps to protect civilians in conflict settings, including from gender-based harms.
- Ensure access to essential services without discrimination and pursue accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Advance gender justice in the Crimes Against Humanity Convention

- Take comprehensive action to advance gender justice in the Crimes Against Humanity Convention including by incorporating gender expertise in negotiating teams; ensuring the Convention addresses all gender-based harms that meet the crimes-against-humanity threshold; and by embedding gender-competence across the convention including gender-inclusive language and a strong non-discrimination and substantive equality clause.
- Ensure the meaningful engagement of victims and survivors of crimes against humanity in treaty-related processes and ensure their rights are robustly protected in it.
- Ensure broad civil society participation in the negotiations, with recognition of due geographical representation and gender parity.

When you raise your voice, you join a global movement

insisting on dignity, justice and accountability.

Progress is possible when we stand together.

Humanity must win – and with your voice, it will.



Amnesty International is a movement of 10 million people which mobilises the humanity in everyone and campaigns for change so we can all enjoy our human rights. Our vision is of a world where those in power keep their promises, respect international law and are held to account. We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and individual donations. We believe that acting in solidarity and compassion with people everywhere can change our societies for the better.

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