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Violence Against Women in Elections

An Excerpt from IFES' Framework



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Authors' Note

The findings and recommendations in this paper are an excerpt from a larger project on violence against women in elections. As such, the findings from this excerpt may be amended pending further research and revision as the project proceeds. The Violence Against Women in Elections Framework will be available on IFES.org.

About IFES

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) supports citizens' right to participate in free and fair elections. Our independent expertise strengthens electoral systems and builds local capacity to deliver sustainable solutions.

As the global leader in democracy promotion, we advance good governance and democratic rights by:

- Providing technical assistance to election officials
- Empowering the under-represented to participate in the political process
- Applying field-based research to improve the electoral cycle

Since 1987, IFES has worked in 145 countries – from developing democracies, to mature democracies.

For more information, visit www.IFES.org.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary: Framework Introduction	1
1. Summary of Research Findings	4
2. VAWIE Typology	4
3: VAWIE Assessment Tool	7
Methodology.....	7
Information Dissemination	8
4. VAWIE Monitoring Tool	8
Types of Monitoring Activities	9
5. VAWIE Program Recommendations	10
VAWIE Response and Prevention Programming	11
VAWIE Research and Evidence	12
VAWIE and Related Issues	13
6. Conclusion: Providing a Way Forward Through the VAWIE Framework	14

Executive Summary: Framework Introduction

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) recognizes that violence against women in elections is a threat to the integrity of the electoral process – it can affect women's participation as voters, candidates, election officials, activists, and political party leaders, and it undermines the free, fair, and inclusive democratic process. Through increased attention to women's participation and women's voices in democracy assistance, narratives of violence against women in elections in their homes, political arenas, and public spaces have become more visible.

In 2011, Carter Center observer teams in Egypt reported that in several areas of the country, women were threatened with divorce if they did not vote as their husbands ordered.¹ In interviews conducted in 2010 by International Alert, women who had stood as candidates in Sierra Leone reported unequal access to political party support, verbal and physical violence, and threats to themselves, their supporters, and their husbands.² In 2013, focus group participants for this project in Bangladesh told IFES that verbal sexual harassment, as well as physical violence, is commonly directed at women in public at demonstrations and perpetrators have included police officers providing security. Online harassment is cited by many women as a serious threat; Kenyan focus group participants in 2015 noted that a female County Assembly candidate lost a race because of cyber-bullying in which she was depicted as a lesbian in doctored photos. In late 2009, months before elections, members of the paramilitary police under the ruling military junta in Guinea publicly raped scores of women inside the national soccer stadium as part of an attack on a pro-democracy demonstration that also killed at least 150.³ These examples are only cases that have been shared anecdotally with researchers or journalists; it is likely that many more incidents go unreported to service providers, let alone to the authorities, leaving survivors⁴ without any access to the services they need nor venue in which to hold perpetrators accountable. The threat of public and private violence, as well as the lack of safety in reporting, discourages and possibly prevents many women from participating in the electoral process.

As this short list of examples demonstrates, women are targeted while occupying a variety of stakeholder roles. In some cases, they are targeted because of their political actions or affiliations, and in others, they are targeted because they are women participating in politics. These examples involve many circumstances found in globally-accepted definitions of violence against women (VAW) or gender-based violence (GBV) against women, including verbal or physical sexual violence, violence by intimate partners and community leaders, gender-based

¹ *Final Report of the Carter Center Mission to Witness the 2011–2012 Parliamentary Elections in Egypt*. (2012). The Carter Center. Retrieved from http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/election_reports/egypt-2011-2012-final-rpt.pdf.

² *Women, Elections and Violence in West Africa: Assessing Women's Political Participation in Liberia and Sierra Leone*. (2010). International Alert. Retrieved from https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/women_elections_and_violence_in_west_africa.pdf.

³ *Women and Political Violence: An Update*. (2011, July) Research and Advocacy Unit. July 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/RAU.pdf>.

⁴ IFES has made a calculated shift away from the term "victim" to use the terms "survivor" and "perpetrators" of VAWIE, consistent with GBV practitioners' use of these terms to describe the parties to the violent act and to empower those who have experienced violence.

discrimination against women in professional circles, and violence in private spaces.⁵ The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank and others further underscore that GBV impacts women and girls more than other populations and that women with disabilities, as well as lesbian, bisexual and transgendered women suffer violence at even higher rates.⁶

The experiences of these women also reflect circumstances commonly found in globally-accepted definitions and patterns of electoral violence, including public intimidation of opposition supporters and physical and psychological violence against voters.⁷ Yet, neither the current VAW nor the current electoral violence framework is currently able to capture violence against women in elections, and women's perspectives on electoral violence remain inadequately studied, both within the literature on conflict, violence, and women, or in the literature on democratization and electoral violence.

In an effort to better understand and address the ways in which electoral violence creates a barrier to women's participation, IFES has developed the Violence Against Women in Elections (VAWIE) Framework to specifically identify and address the unique issues related to gender-based election violence. USAID provided IFES with a grant to conduct primary and desk research for the VAWIE Framework, as well as pilot the implementation of tools designed to address issues related to gender-based election violence.

The guiding definition of VAWIE is at the core of the framework, and draws upon definitions of electoral violence, violence against women, and examples from IFES' research of the acts of violence that women face on the ground:

Any harm or threat of harm committed against women with the intent and/or impact of interfering with their free and equal participation in the electoral process during the electoral period. It includes harassment, intimidation, physical harm or coercion, threats, and financial pressures, and it may be committed in the home or other private spaces, or in public spaces. These acts may be directed at women in any of their roles as electoral stakeholders (e.g., voters, media, political actors, state actors, community leaders, or electoral officials).

With this definition at its core, the VAWIE Framework flows from the project's research findings and includes the following elements:

- **Typology of Electoral Violence/VAWIE:** The typology includes the VAWIE definition above, as well as a more nuanced and complete range of categorizations for electoral violence to better understand which

⁵ USAID has defined an act of GBV as one that "results in physical, sexual and psychological harm to both men and women and includes any form of violence or abuse that targets men or women on the basis of their sex, although women and girls are usually the primary victims ..." and includes a list of types of violence such as "battery, marital rape, sexual violence, dowry-related violence, female infanticide, honor crimes, early marriage, forced marriage, female genital cutting, sexual harassment in the workplace and educational institutions, commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking of girls and women, and violence perpetrated against domestic workers."

⁶ See *United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally*. (2012, August). U.S. Agency for International Development. p. 6. Retrieved from <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/196468.pdf>.

⁷ IFES defines electoral violence as: "any harm or threat of harm to persons or property involved in the electoral process, or the process itself." This includes physical and psychological harm, as well as property damage; the UNDP *Guide to Elections and Conflict Prevention* defined electoral violence primarily as "acts or threats of coercion, intimidation, or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process, or that arise in the context of electoral competition..." and USAID's 2010 *Electoral Security Framework* concludes that "electoral violence refers to physical violence and coercive intimidation directly tied to an impending electoral contest or to an announced electoral result." These definitions are fully cited in Section 1 and 2.

types/forms/circumstances are unique to VAWIE and which are shared across gender. This typology expands the traditional categories of electoral violence monitoring and research efforts to encompass the nuances presented by women's experiences, many of which are reflected in the examples above. The Typology is not intended to list all forms and elements of VAWIE possible, but to highlight categories and subcategories of common types and manifestations of VAWIE. It draws from categorizations of electoral violence used within IFES' Electoral Violence Education and Resolution (EVER) program (which builds civil society capacity to monitor, report, and mitigate electoral violence), as well as the those used in the Gender-based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) classification tool designed by the United Nations (UN) Population Fund, the International Rescue Committee, and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.⁸ It also provides a method of categorizing barriers to women's participation that do not rise to the level of violence. In both the desk and field research, barriers were mentioned repeatedly, in addition to violence, when women were asked to share experiences with violence, safety, and electoral participation.

- **Assessment Methodology:** The VAWIE assessment methodology will allow for practitioners to assess, map, and program in response to the risk and/or presence of VAWIE. The assessment can stand alone or be integrated with any electoral or gender assessment. It draws upon USAID's Electoral Security Framework (ESF), Care's Gender Analysis Framework (GAF), and IFES' Gender and Elections Analysis (GEA).⁹ Accurate assessments of the nature of the violence against women in elections and challenges in a particular electoral context will help drive better programming aimed at mitigation and prevention.
- **Monitoring Methodology:** The monitoring methodology suggests new ways to gather trend information and incident-specific information to better document and analyze VAWIE. Monitoring can help deter and raise awareness of VAWIE in the short-term while collecting data for broader analysis and understanding of the issue in the long-run. The monitoring methodology can stand alone or function within electoral or political violence monitoring. It draws from IFES' Electoral Violence Education and Resolution (EVER) program, which has collected data through community-based monitoring in 14 countries between 2004 and 2014, as well as best practices used in methodologies to monitor and track VAW.¹⁰
- **Program Recommendations:** The recommendations section addresses both using the VAWIE Framework, and improving other ways to reduce VAWIE in general. The recommendations include tips for incorporating VAWIE's assessment and monitoring methodologies in existing electoral conflict and security frameworks and programming, as well as using it to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment programming for political and electoral systems. The recommendations also suggest ways to address VAWIE and notes linkages that can be made with related organizations and programming.

This Framework represents the culmination of intensive research and fieldwork and is intended to improve the capacity of international and domestic practitioners to understand and reduce VAWIE. As a continuation of these efforts, IFES will pilot the assessment and monitoring tools in electoral events in 2016. These pilots will further inform the issues addressed in this document and allow IFES to fine-tune the Framework.

⁸ Information about the GBVIMS and IFES' EVER program and methodology can be found in Section 2 and 3, as well as in Annex 4.

⁹ Information about these assessment tools can be found in Section 3.

¹⁰ Information about IFES' EVER program and methodology can be found in Section 2 and 3, as well as in Annex 4.

1. Summary of Research Findings

The hypothesis guiding the research phase of this project was that prevailing data and analyses of electoral violence, as well as the existing strategies to respond to it, do not reflect experiential gender differences. That is, current frameworks, studies, and programming do not recognize that electoral violence may impact men and women differently as a consequence of their roles in society, as it is manifested in a given country context. Desk research on women, violence, and elections, as well as primary field research (focus groups and interviews in Bangladesh and Kenya) on contextual and societal factors impacting violence against women in the election process were conducted to test this hypothesis, and to examine these and other guiding questions:

- How do existing frameworks and research on electoral violence address gender?
- Are there significant patterns of substantive differences between women and men in their experiences with electoral violence?
- What are the implications of increasing levels of women's political participation when it comes to the use of electoral violence specifically targeting women?
- What specific forms of electoral violence target women who attempt to participate in formal political processes as political party candidates and party activists?
- What specific forms of electoral violence do women experience in their private spheres during election cycles?
- How can familial or social intimidation or pressures in private spaces (or that committed in less visible or overt ways in public spaces) be captured?
- Based on the findings of the study, what specific forms of intervention may be developed to reduce electoral violence directed specifically at women both in the public and in the private spheres?

The completed desk and field research answered many of these questions, and confirmed IFES' starting hypothesis. The findings can be summarized in the following five key insights that helped guide the Framework's development:

1. There is a lack of knowledge and data about VAWIE.
2. There is a gender bias in current data collection, research, and programming efforts related to electoral violence.
3. Women experience different types of violence in different spaces than men.
4. There is often an existing relationship (e.g., familial, social, hierarchical) between perpetrator and survivor when women experience violence in elections.
5. There is a lack of programming to address VAWIE specifically.

As of October 2016, a summary of findings can be found in the complete VAWIE Framework located on [IFES.org](https://www.ifes.org).

2. VAWIE Typology

Current typologies of electoral violence originate in definitional frameworks that tend to privilege public acts of violence and violence between stakeholders playing public, distinct roles.¹¹ This ignores personal relationships

¹¹ IFES defines electoral violence as: "any harm or threat of harm to persons or property involved in the electoral process, or the process itself." This includes physical and psychological harm, as well as property damage. In 2009, the UNDP *Guide to Elections and Conflict Prevention* defined electoral violence primarily as "acts or threats of coercion, intimidation, or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process, or that arise in the context of electoral competition...." USAID's 2010 *Electoral Security Framework* concludes that "electoral violence refers to physical violence and coercive intimidation directly tied to an impending electoral contest or to an announced electoral result." The IFES definition was developed in the field as part of IFES's Electoral Violence Education and Resolution (EVER) programs around the world. Further discussion

between perpetrators and survivors, the variation in spaces where violence might occur, and nuances within types of potential violence – all of which have been highlighted by VAWIE's findings as essential for understanding VAWIE. The broad categories for physical and psychological abuse in the existing definitions also tend to conflate a variety of acts of VAWIE. The new VAWIE typology provides an expansion and revision of the forms, actors, and spaces of violence, and weaves them into existing and frequently used forms of categorizing electoral violence. Additionally, this typology suggests a way of identifying and categorizing barriers to women's participation that, while stemming from the same root causes as VAWIE, do not rise to the level of violence.¹² At the heart of the new typology is the VAWIE definition:

Any harm or threat of harm committed against women with the intent and/or impact of interfering with their free and equal participation in the electoral process during the electoral period. It includes harassment, intimidation, physical harm or coercion, threats, and financial pressures, and it may be committed in the home or other private spaces, or in public spaces. These acts may be directed at women in any of their roles as electoral stakeholders (e.g., voters, media, political actors, state actors, community leaders, electoral officials).

The working definition of barriers to participation is:

An act, circumstance, social norm, regulation, law, or systemic bias that has been directly linked (through anecdotal evidence, published analysis, or self-reporting) to interfering with women's full participation in some part of the electoral process. Barriers to participation include obstacles to accessing information, resources, or opportunities, and can stem from cultural/social/religious practices and beliefs, and may manifest in social, political, economic, or legal systems.

Drawing on the basic categories of information that IFES' EVER project has used in its monitoring and analysis methodology, this typology provides detailed categories and subcategories of perpetrators, survivors, types of violence, impact of violence, and locations of violence.¹³

of the evolution of the definition and the EVER methodology can be found in Lisa Kammerud, "Managing Election Violence: The IFES EVER Program" (IFES October 2009) and online at www.ifes.org.

¹² For more details on the development of the VAWIE typology, please see Annex 3.

¹³ Notably, in its Burundi programming in 2014/15, IFES did introduce questions regarding VAWIE in its monitoring initiative, including types and public/private space categories. Monitors used these questions to note trends in their communities overall, but not to track individual incidents.

Perpetrators and Survivors

Public stakeholder role	Private/social role	Relationship: perpetrator and survivor	Gender	Number of people involved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political party candidate, supporter Election official Election observer Government official Police Media Voter Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious leader Village elder Community leader Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spouse Other family (specify) Professional (specify) Community (specify) None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each perpetrator Each survivor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note if perpetrator and survivor were alone Count of perpetrators, survivors

Type of violence

Physical harm	Intimidation	Verbal harassment	Interference with voting	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Murder Attempted murder Physical harm / torture Sexual assault 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-home shaming/act of shunning from activities Threat to livelihood (economic threats) Denial of resources/services Economic harm Threat of physical harm Threat of divorce Threat to family members Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General insult Attack on political belief Attack on competence Slur regarding sexuality/purity Religious slur Attack on family/gender role Attack on honor Racial/ethnic slur Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family voting Proxy voting Community edict against women voting Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arbitrary detention Property damage

Place of violence

Public space	Private space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polling station • Election office/facility • Political party office/facility • State property/building • Street/public area • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survivor's home • Perpetrator's home • Other familial space • Community center • Religious center • Office/place of work • Other

3: VAWIE Assessment Tool

The VAWIE assessment tool is a comprehensive methodology for identifying potential challenges that create and exacerbate the occasion of violence against women in the electoral process, as well as opportunities for programming and monitoring interventions that can address these challenges. The assessment tool makes use of the expanded typology elaborated by VAWIE, and acknowledges that the complex mix of relationships, violence types, and spaces that sets violence against women in elections apart from general patterns of election violence and makes it difficult to assess and track, which in turn makes such targeted violence potentially quite effective in deterring women's full political participation. The assessment tool uses this understanding to broaden the set of issues which practitioners must address in addressing violence against women in elections, and does so by including elements of several existing assessment tools related to gender, conflict, and elections.

Methodology

The VAWIE assessment tool is based on the recognition that in order to effectively address violence against women in elections, practitioners must not only understand historical trends of this type of violence in a country and the factors which precipitate the violence. They also should develop an understanding of the cultural and socio-political norms that impact status of women in society as well as their participation in the electoral process, and societal and institutional responses to address the issue. To address this need, the assessment tool is organized around the analysis of four key factors which influence the incidence and extent of VAWIE.

Assessment Factors ¹⁴	
Status of Women	Address broad concerns related to the status of women in their local and national communities.
Women's Access to Election Process	Examine gender dynamics specifically related to political and electoral processes, as well as democracy, rights, and governance issues more broadly. Categories of this analysis explore the gender dynamics related to the electoral legal framework,

¹⁴ These assessment factors are inspired by CARE's Gender Analysis Framework (available at <http://gendertoolkit.care.org/Pages/Gender%20Areas%20of%20Inquiry.aspx>), IFES' Gender Elections Analysis tool, original VAWIE research, and USAID's Economic Support Fund and Best Practices in Electoral Security.

	election administration, voter registration, women's political participation, and political parties.
Trends in Violence Against Women in Elections	Identify incidents and trends of violence against women that occur within the context of the electoral cycle; examine the root causes for gender-based violence against women in elections.
Responses to VAWIE	Explore responses to VAWIE being implemented by official actors, civil society including political parties and media. Identify strategies to reduce or prevent violence against women during the electoral cycle.

Information Dissemination

The information collected during the assessment will be compiled into a comprehensive report, which will offer an evaluation of the assessment factors based on the assessment scoring scales. As a result of findings in the Assessment report, next steps in and priorities for programming will be recommended, including strategies for stakeholder engagement, trainings, monitoring, survivor referrals and reporting, as well as other program recommendations. The reliable data and analysis collected during the Assessment can be used as trend identification information to support education and public information, advocacy, networking, security coordination, GBV response and prevention programming, conflict mitigation and resolution, and electoral reform.

4. VAWIE Monitoring Tool

Monitoring electoral violence can be an important, proactive programming strategy in many country contexts and can be done with various goals in mind. Monitoring that informs public reporting and advocacy can increase public accountability for perpetrators, create momentum for peacebuilding activities, help authorities direct resources to potential or escalating violence, and serve as a deterrent to perpetrators who do not want to be named.

Monitoring is a crucial part of programming to potentially mitigate and prevent electoral violence against women, especially given the lack of existing data on gendered experiences of electoral violence and the lack of self-reporting associated with a huge range of private space violence. Stakeholders currently tracking electoral violence, such as election management bodies (EMBs), media, and political parties are not likely to capture a great share of gender-based electoral violence unless their efforts are tailored to meet the realities of how women experience and are likely to share information about electoral violence.

Monitoring violence against women in elections could take place in any phase of the electoral cycle. While monitoring activities would be tailored to country context and partner needs/skills, as well as assessment results, each electoral period would contain certain core features:

- **Pre-election Monitoring** will begin several weeks or months in advance of elections as stakeholders are building relationships, such as during the party and candidate filing period just prior to the campaign period, to determine which actors may have information about incidents of violence against women in elections; may be able to draw a causal link between incidents of private violence and political activity; anticipate potential hot zones and events, incidents of political party or government statements or actions that discourage women from participating in political activities; and establish prevention and response strategies in advance of the elections.

- **Election Day Monitoring** will deploy monitors to polling stations and other key elections sites to monitor election activities of candidates, voters, election management officials, media, and the public. The systems described above will continue to be utilized, but additional means of urgent reporting of information will need to be in place to capture fast-moving events on Election Day. Electoral, civil society, and security resources will likely be stretched thin, and strategies for response will need to be carefully planned, and tested if possible.
- **Post-election Monitoring** covers a phase of the electoral cycle that is extremely prone to violence. In addition to activities similar to those in the pre-election period, monitoring in this phase will also include a review of Election Day activity for trends that might indicate acts of private violence not well captured in the data gathered on specific acts of violence, such as low female voter turnout or high incidents of family or proxy voting. Monitors will check in with contacts and stakeholders to capture their reflections on Election Day, observe vote tabulation processes, and attend post-election events and rallies. Anonymous outlets, such as the incident registry line and collection boxes, will remain available.

Types of Monitoring Activities

1. **Research and Information Gathering:** Monitors will have been briefed on the VAWIE assessment conducted prior to their deployment in order to understand the context and potential trends and themes related to violence against women in elections in their local communities. In addition to this information, they will collect updates and supplemental information leading up to, during, and immediately after the election.
2. **Site Visits:** In the lead up to elections, monitors will attend campaign events, visit voter registration centers, women's centers, polling centers, and other potential sites of election violence or peacebuilding. Monitors will look for and report any relevant incidents.
3. **Meetings/Key Informant Interviews/Focus Group Discussions:** Prior to elections, it is important to develop relationships with stakeholders who may help report, verify and/or respond to incidents of violence against women in elections. Monitors will proactively meet with identified relevant stakeholders and collect pertinent information, including meeting with election officials, GBV service providers,¹⁵ women candidates and party activists, and leaders from all parties in the local community.
4. **Public Outreach:** At the onset of the election period and once monitors have been trained, monitors will produce information to highlight the issues related to violence against women in elections, including the various methods of capturing incidents and ensuring services for survivors of election violence. Press releases and reports will be generated from the VAWIE Assessment and distributed through traditional and social media sites to raise awareness of the issue. Workshops and community dialogues will be held on the issue of VAWIE. Information regarding when and how incidents can be reported, including information on

¹⁵ A note on GBV service providers: To the extent possible, a monitoring organization could develop a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with organizations collecting GBV information. Such a MOU could indicate if and how GBV organizations are willing to share confidential and unidentifiable data that may be related to the electoral process. GBV organizations may also agree to include "elections" as part of their survivor intake form. Such a relationship would need to be carefully cultivated with clarity on standard operating procedures for both parties.

collection box locations and the incident registry call line, will be disseminated. When possible, electoral stakeholders will provide micro-grants to support local responses to VAWIE incidents.

5. **Incident Registry:** A live women's election incident registry can be set up with phone and SMS lines to focus on non-emergency documentation of incidents of violence against women in elections in the lead up and immediate aftermath of national and local elections. This information will be recorded confidentially and used, with consent, for analysis and action to be taken by election officials and other stakeholders (including medical, legal, and security services) to mitigate or prevent future incidents of violence against women in elections.¹⁶
6. **Collection Boxes:** Clearly demarcated collection boxes will be placed in strategic locations to allow women to report incidents of violence they experienced or witnessed without direct contact with a monitor. The individual whose contact information was provided will be contacted to review the incident intake form that will capture the incident and be confidentially recorded for analysis and reporting, as well as to provide information about response services if they are requested. The collection boxes will be located in women's health centers, community health and family centers, political party offices, and local election sites, including polling stations and local EMB offices. The information collected will be shared, as other incidents are shared, without revealing any identifying information about the individual reporting the incident.
7. **Social Media, SMS, and Other Online Technology:** Social media monitoring, or use of social media to provide survivors with alternate ways of reporting and seeking assistance, can also be utilized. Social media and online tools may increase the occasion for self-reporting by survivors of election violence against women. Conversely, incidents of social media, SMS or online harassment or intimidation can be reported as well.
8. **Observation:** Monitors will be deployed on Election Day and at electoral and political events leading up to and immediately after elections. Should the monitors observe first-hand incidents of violence against women in elections, they will record the information while ensuring their own personal safety.

5. VAWIE Program Recommendations

The elements that form the VAWIE Framework represent a comprehensive approach to research, analysis, and monitoring of violence against women in the electoral process consistent with an expanded and gender-responsive typology. This approach is meant to inform effective programming that reduces or prevents incidents of VAWIE and enhances women's participation in the electoral process. Programming strategies should incorporate the key lessons identified in the VAWIE assessment and respond to the key dynamics that characterize VAWIE. Programming should also incorporate broader issues related to violence against women in society and tailor that programming to the unique elements of democracy and governance work. IFES recommends a long-term view and investment in addressing VAWIE by identifying and responding to both

¹⁶ Limitations of the Incident Registry: This call line is not an emergency hotline. Its primary focus is the policies and practices that election officials and other stakeholders can take to address the systemic problem of VAWIE. Please note that active emergencies involving survivors of violence against women in elections should contact emergency services directly. Survivors of GBV need immediate assistance in order to receive counselling and be referred to medical, legal, and protective services for further help. This call line complements but does not replace case management processes for survivors of GBV.

potentially predictive trends and documented incidents of violence as the most effective approach to addressing this challenging issue, especially given the relationship and trust building work that is needed.

VAWIE Response and Prevention Programming

VAWIE Trainings for Non-election Stakeholders: In addition to outreach, trainings on the electoral process and the issue of violence against women in elections can be offered to development and community stakeholders typically outside the electoral process. This should include GBV prevention and response organizations, women's health and civil society groups, and security, health, and legal service providers. These trainings would include an overview of gender equality and women's empowerment in the electoral process.

VAWIE Trainings for Election/Political/Security Stakeholders: In addition to public outreach, trainings for EMBs, security and judicial personnel, political parties, and other electoral stakeholders on awareness and response to violence against women in elections should be a standard part of the toolkit used to address VAWIE and ensure that it is mainstreamed throughout all election programming. As with non-electoral stakeholders, this would include an overview of gender equality and women's empowerment in the electoral process, women's rights more generally, and GBV more specifically.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) with Referral Pathway Service Providers: With new relationships established between electoral stakeholders and GBV service providers as a result of incorporation of expanded typologies, it may make sense to establish SOPs between elections stakeholders and GBV service providers. For example, in advance of elections and in anticipation of a survivor's needs, an EMB or civil society organization monitoring VAWIE can have a referral pathway in place and SOPs with health services providers, security officials, and legal services providers in proximity to sites where monitoring will take place. The SOPs will also help reinforce roles and responsibilities of electoral stakeholders and GBV service providers in the moment a VAWIE incident occurs.

GBV Prevention and Response to VAWIE: Organizations working specifically on GBV prevention and response should develop an understanding of why and how to respond to the specific threat of violence against women in politics and elections. GBV organizations should reach out to election stakeholders to understand the electoral calendar and the potential for flare ups in violence against women related to politics and elections. This will improve their ability and preparation for response and prevention strategies aimed at survivors and the broader community.

Women's Leadership Training: IFES and other democracy stakeholders undertake gender equality mainstreaming and women's empowerment programming as part of their core mandate. These programs must integrate the concern for and challenge of addressing VAWIE. For instance, should a VAWIE assessment surface a trend where several women report feeling challenged to navigate specific issues related to their personal security or broader issues related to the electoral and political climate, additional training support to address these trends can be added to the curriculum.

Engaging Male Allies: Engaging men to address the culturally entrenched attitudes about women's involvement in political and electoral life that may potentially trigger election violence is a critical piece of the effort to address the full spectrum of VAWIE, which includes domestic and other kinds of private violence. Awareness-raising, coalition-building, mentoring, and other activities that make up IFES' Male Allies for Leadership Equality (MALE) program will support this effort.

Public Engagement, Education, and Campaigning: Efforts to prevent and mitigate violence against women in elections can be augmented by engaging a broader audience in the lead up to elections as part of civic and voter education campaigns. For example, IFES Bangladesh formed the Women Against Violence in Elections (WAVE) Advisory Group to bring together diverse groups of women to mitigate electoral and political violence against women, participate in innovative thinking on ways to engage their respective networks, and utilize their expertise to promote peaceful, violence-free elections. With IFES' technical and capacity building support, WAVE members have conducted their own nationwide peacebuilding events and targeted advocacy. These events increase awareness around the importance of stopping violence against women throughout the election cycle and safeguarding their right to vote.

Based on the VAWIE Monitoring tool, public education on where and how to report election violence against women should also be implemented.

VAWIE and Election Observation: The National Democratic Institute's (NDI) Gender, Women and Democracy team has undertaken an innovative new program to strengthen the capacity of election observers to monitor and mitigate VAWIE and promote a deeper understanding of the phenomenon worldwide.

Global Campaigns: Efforts to raise awareness of the impact that VAWIE has on the electoral and political processes, as well as its linkages to the broader violence against women campaign, are growing. In 2016, NDI and others created a Global Action Plan to address violence against women in politics – an action plan that can be used effectively by activists, politicians and policymakers in their own countries to raise awareness, mitigate violence, and increase the accountability of perpetrators. VAWIE programming should be tied to this global call to action.

VAWIE Research and Evidence

Quantitative VAWIE Data Collection: To supplement existing qualitative and anecdotal VAWIE data collection, comprehensive quantitative studies should be launched specifically to understand the makeup and frequency of VAWIE in various contexts around the world. Such data would be invaluable to inform VAWIE programming and the broader electoral process in general.

Election Violence Data and Analysis: Future efforts to collect and analyze data related to all types of election violence should be gender disaggregated (and include disaggregation by other demographics such as age, disability, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation) and analyzed using VAWIE's expanded and gender-responsive typology to ensure that all data related to election violence is collected, including incidents of private violence where possible, and all data is reviewed through a gender lens to reduce gender-biased analysis.

Assessments: The VAWIE assessment tool has been designed to deliver a comprehensive assessment of violence against women in elections using conflict, gender, and elections analysis tools. This tool can itself provide an extensive understanding of VAWIE in a particular context. It can also be used in combination with various pre-election technical assessments, conflict assessments, and other analyses that may occur in a particular country context in the lead up to an election or to more broadly gauge the political climate.

Monitoring: Electoral violence monitoring should incorporate elements of the VAWIE monitoring tool as appropriate. Whether the tool is incorporated or used as a standalone activity, it is important to integrate the actions of monitoring, reporting, and analysis with ongoing efforts by other stakeholders and to provide information back to the communities experiencing violence. Information and communications technology (ICT)

mapping platforms such as Ushahidi¹⁷ may play a role in ensuring that survivors and communities see the analysis of the data they provide, but civic education presentations, workshops, advocacy, and other public awareness activities should also be included in monitoring efforts. Providing recommendations and analysis to stakeholders and advocating action from relevant authorities is also crucial, but the feedback loop to communities is more often overlooked.

Mapping and Data Visualization: Mapping and data visualization could be a useful tool in analyzing VAWIE in several ways. In a monitoring program, data captured could be plotted by location, with different types of violence and other variables shown in the city/village in which they occurred. This could be part of a platform such as Ushahidi, which gathers information via direct data entry, SMS, Twitter, email, or online forms, and then maps the data using various types of mapping software, or it could be used in a more static display. A dynamic platform with the ability to receive data via social media and SMS could also be used to solicit reports from the public, allowing survivors of VAWIE to anonymously report incidents and see them mapped on a public site that shows the full range of incidents over time and by location.

In some cases, the nature of the data, such as the address of private homes, is not appropriate for mapping. It may be possible to show clusters of such incidents that avoid revealing specific locations, or it may be more appropriate to visualize trends in these types of violence through another form of visualization.

Stakeholder Analysis: Given the intersectionality of issues related to VAWIE, it will be important for implementers of VAWIE to carry out a complete stakeholder analysis with electoral assistance, gender-based violence, and other potentially key actors. This will reinforce clear roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder and provide VAWIE implementers with ample time for outreach and engagement.

VAWIE and Related Issues

It may be important to integrate violence against women in elections into related work, such as:

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Programming in the Electoral Process: Election stakeholders must use evidence and technical leadership to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment activities into democracy and governance work. They must provide gender-sensitive technical assistance and analysis throughout the electoral cycle and in every aspect of programming to ensure barriers to women's participation and leadership are reduced. These programs are well positioned to include strategic references to preparing for and responding to challenges of election violence for women.

VAWIE and Multiple Marginalization: Specific programming is needed for women who have a disability, are a part of an ethnic or religious minority, are poor, are from the LGBTI community or have other barriers that generally challenge their participation in political and electoral activities, and, more specifically, may create greater risks for exposure to election violence. Research that captures multiple forms of marginalization can help strengthen programming that addresses the specific needs of women with multiple barriers to their participation, providing stronger, more sustainable solutions for VAWIE.

¹⁷ Ushahidi, which means “testimony” in Swahili, is a web platform for mapping and managing data coming in through SMS, Twitter, email, online forms, or its phone app. Generally used for conflict mapping, it began in Kenya as a tool to gather and map reports of violence during the post-election crisis in 2008. Currently a global company producing various products and software. To learn more, please visit <https://www.ushahidi.com/about>.

VAWIE and Political Finance: Research and subsequent programming on the relationship between political finance, election violence, and gender is needed to address concerns that women may be especially vulnerable to systemic manipulation related to electoral and political resources. Furthermore, as described by IFES' white paper "Political Finance and Gender Equality"¹⁸: while political finance is an important instrument for achieving gender equality in politics, the ongoing debates about political finance rarely consider the impact of money on the level of representation of both men and women in elected offices.

VAWIE and Impunity: Impunity in cases of VAWIE is an injustice, as well as a potential deterrent to women's participation in electoral and political processes. Research and subsequent programming that address how impunity could be reduced through systematic action on the part of all VAWIE stakeholders should be a priority of EMBs and other government officials responsible for election dispute resolution, as well as police and legal service providers for survivors of GBV.

VAWIE and ICT: ICT is generally considered an important tool to improve access for women to political and electoral processes. It warrants specific mention because its most critical benefit may be when self-reporting and other efforts to report public and private acts of violence against women in elections are needed. SMS technology, Ushahidi, mapping, social media, and other forms of ICT will play a critical role in real time and accurate reporting, information availability for survivors, as well as the broader community.

VAWIE and Freedom of Movement: Many women report that culture, religion, and security are reasons they are expected or forced to remain outside public life and often times homebound behind closed doors. Further research and subsequent programming will disclose the relationship between freedom of movement, women's rights, and the integrity of the electoral and political process.

VAWIE and Online Violence: Increasingly, cyber-bullying and cyber-threats are eclipsing acts of physical violence, but are no less fearsome to those in the direct line of attack.¹⁹ Women in public service face violent encounters, including death threats and threats to their families, sadly on a regular basis. Research on this topic, as well as effective strategies to counteract this growing, vicious trend are needed in order to reduce online violence against women in elections.

6. Conclusion: Providing a Way Forward Through the VAWIE Framework

While the VAWIE project has compiled extensive, detailed data through its desk and field studies, the five key insights in the summary of research findings above have informed the typology, assessment, and monitoring tools, as well as the program recommendations, contained in this Framework. As a whole, the VAWIE Framework provides a menu of options for anyone involved in electoral or GBV communities of practice to make a difference in their support of women facing violence in elections, and thus promote and ensure the safe, full participation of women in democratic processes.

¹⁸ Cigane, Lolita & Ohman, M. (2014, August 5). *Political Finance and Gender Equality*. International Foundation for Electoral Systems. Available at: http://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/political_finance_and_gender_equality.pdf.

¹⁹ Albright, Madeline. (2016, March 8). A hidden reality: Violence against women in politics." *CNN*. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2016/03/07/opinions/madelaine-albright-protect-women-in-politics/>.



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