



Committee: UNCSW

Topic: Eliminating Honor Killing

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The Commission on the Status of Women was created on June 21st, 1946 by ECOSOC's resolution 11. It is the principal international organization dedicated exclusively to women's empowerment and gender equality. CSW documents women's lives all around the world. An annual two-week session is held in New York with representatives of UN member states and civilian organizations to discuss advancements and cracks in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which is considered the blueprint for improving women's rights, as well as concerns affecting gender equality and women's empowerment.

The Commission has a multi-year program of work, consisting of setting themes to be talked about based on the resolutions obtained years prior, to accelerate the implementation of the Platform for Action. With this method of work, CSW:

- Reaffirms and reinforces political commitment to the awareness of gender equality and empowerment;
- Discusses goals achieved, attempts to close the gaps on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and challenges to meet;
- Assess advancement in passed conclusions from previous sessions;
- Sympathizes with actions for the promotion of gender equality by adopting agreed conclusions and resolutions.

Honor killings are murders committed within a family or social group to maintain or give back honor. A part of these killings involve cases in which women are murdered by family members or members of their social groups because they are seen as failures in their values and culture for doing/not doing things that change this status, such as: refusing arranged marriages and having sexual activities that are prohibited by their cultures and norms. A man who committed an honor killing said "When one's daughter or sister runs away from home, a man's mind can't see beyond that betrayal of trust by the woman".

In Europe and North, America murders have been made towards women that adopt Western behaviors that go against moral and behavioral norms, in which some cases include having relationships with people from other cultures/religions. Honor-violence

has also been linked to performing homosexual behavior which goes against some beliefs.

The practice of honor killings is linked to misogyny and conservative members of religious groups, such as Christians, Hindi, and Muslims.

Honor killings include stabbing, beheading, burning, and hanging, among others. These are many times done in public to warn women of their community about what can happen to them if they engage in behavior that is banned by their behavioral cultures and norms. Sometimes young children are asked to perform honor-based violence to be “taught” what to do or not to do.

To have a little bit more context about the topic is important to learn about its origins, in this way people can understand that honor killing has been around since even before religion. During the Roman period, the male of the family was allowed to kill their single daughters who were sexually active or, in case, their adulterous woman; in Europe, during medieval times honor killing was related to the same situations. Now, it's important to mention that not only sexual matters are the only action that could damage a woman's honor. On occasions with the only hesitation that she may have fallen, their family wouldn't have social acceptance. To avoid any further damage they'd go against the woman; not even giving the female the opportunity to defend themselves.

But when did honor killing become a worldwide thing? Well, there exist some examples like Henry VIII with his fifth wife, who was decapitated just because of suspicious infidelity. Also, not only in real life but in literature honor killing can be seen, in *Romeo and Juliet*— a novel written by Shakespeare—, it's noticeable that honor was a key in their families. Similarities of these situations can be seen in Latin America since “machismo” is known as the honor code in that region.

Talking about statistics, the United Nations Population Fund has stated that approximately around 5000 women are annually killed because of honor reasons around the world, all these crimes are not related to any specific religion; data taken of registered cases. Studies have shown that honor killings have been increasing during the past years, as the recorded cases rose rapidly from 1989 to 2009; talking in a worldwide context.

There are reasons why honor killing hasn't been eliminated, all because of the injustice managed during the past years since honor killing is completely illegal around the world. The most common problems for solving this issue are:

- The insufficiency that the government has in protecting the victims. Even if most of these crimes happen during the female's period in which she lives with her

parents, others happen when they leave. Assassins are forgiven by the woman's family, and at the same time most of them give a certain amount of money as compensation, in this way no further procedure is asked by anyone;

- Unbending and sexist ways of thinking are another important factor, more in countries such as India, Brazil, Albania, and Pakistan. But being real, the Middle East and South Asia, some parts of Latin America, and foreigners who arrive in Europe are regions that still maintain those old-class ideas;
- Victims not being able to protect themselves since their own families are trying to get them killed. Not even the possibility of jail is considered, and in some cases family would think about forgiving the woman, but the possibility of the female getting killed always stays there;
- The existing evidence that the “National Crime Records Bureau”, doesn't recognize honor killings as a violation of human rights since they are categorized as a discrete crime;
- And finally, the fact that honor killings aren't only happening to women but also members of the LGBTQ+ community; even when the reported cases are minimal.

As it has been established, honor killings are not just a problem happening in the Middle East and Asia. The extensiveness of the problem is higher in India than it's in other parts of the world, and this is because of the widespread presence of “Khap Panchayats”— also known as the union between some villages in the northern part of the country, who punish based in regressive thoughts— inside the country. Other families decide not to have blood on their hands, but the honor-based crime exists, in that way they make the victim kill themselves thanks to the edging point they're reaching. That's why when these kinds of cases do proceed and get recorded the families just stay in their position that it was just an accident and was the woman's decision.

In some cases the woman who is going to get killed is told before “he caught me and tied me up, and then he started cutting my face. He never said a word except, 'This is your last night.' "This is something terrible because it is used to frighten the victim since they know there is no way of getting out of it by themselves.

As previously stated most honor killings happen in countries that have strong cultural and religious beliefs, in which they shelter themselves after committing murders. Penal systems are not enough to stop killings from happening, for example: in Pakistan, 2004, honor killings were illegalized, but to this day it is the country with the most honor killings recorded every year, going up to around 1000, and in the years 1998 and 1999 there were around 850 killings, which is less when it wasn't penalized, than when it became illegal.

In most countries, honor killing is forbidden, but it still happens. Freedom of expression, right to life, freedom from torture, and right to privacy are some of the basic human rights that are being violated when an honor killing happens. Honor shouldn't be an excuse for murder, we are living in the 21st century and women are being killed for not following norms established upon them, sometimes against their will, this is a serious topic and we encourage delegates to agree to find a solution to stop misogynistic excuses for murdering women.

Why should women be punished because of their sexual activities? Or even for disobeying their parents in something they don't like doing? Why does religion still have control over the government when laws were made for avoiding it? Honor codes are regressive, nowadays honor depends on each person's morality and ethics.

After all the research the conclusion is clear, the world needs a solution for stopping honor killings as soon as possible, since it's a worldwide problem, and the numbers are rising. That governments aren't doing enough to stop them, and even with UNCSW support, the patriarchy and regressive thoughts still exist even in the most developed countries. And even when solutions have been tried it seems like nothing has worked until this point because people haven't understood that it's not just about cultural matters; that's why it's considered a separate issue.

Women should have the right to live as any other human being, even when they have broken an honor code. LGBTQ+ community members should have the right not to worry if they'll get killed because of their sexuality. Yes, the world has to change how it works and give more importance to this kind of problem. What are we doing to eliminate honor killing?

Useful links:

<https://www.groupdiscussionideas.com/how-can-we-stop-honor-killings/>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2010/03/331422>

<https://www.rferl.org/a/explainer-why-hard-to-stop-honor-killings-religion/25404748.html>

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/515541>

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/487864>

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/04/03/how-end-honor-killings-jordan>

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/help-stop-honor-killing-through-awareness-program/>

<https://sites.uab.edu/humanrights/tag/honor-killings/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/oct/31/honour-based-offences-soared-by-81-in-last-five-years>

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<https://www.britannica.com/topic/honor-killing>

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<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/6/19/how-can-we-stop-honour-killings>

Frazier. L. (2018). *What country has the most honor killings? Who are the victims?*

<http://www.stophonourkillings.com/what-country-has-the-most-honor-killings-who-are-the-victims/>

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<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/human-rights#:~:text=Human%20rights%20include%20the%20right,to%20these%20rights%2C%20without%20discrimination>

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<https://www.ohchr.org/en/what-are-human-rights/international-bill-human-rights>

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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2000/05/08/in-pakistan-women-pay-the-price-of-honor/0a37735d-0f7e-4cf1-b230-2743e89a13af/>

Rectangle. C. (2014) *Explainer: Why is it so hard to stop 'Honor Killings'?*

<https://www.rferl.org/a/explainer-why-hard-to-stop-honor-killings-religion/25404748.html>

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<https://news.un.org/en/story/2010/03/331422>