

THIRD GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM ON TECHNOLOGY-FACILITATED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: KEY TAKEAWAYS



"Our aim is to build bridges between digital rights, feminist and GBV movements, technologists and regulators to develop common language, common concerns and common solutions to address TFGBV."

Diene Keita United Nations Assistant Secretary-General Acting Executive Director, UNFPA

The Third Global Symposium on Technology-facilitated Gender-based Violence (TFGBV), co-hosted by UNFPA, Global Affairs Canada and the Association for Progressive Communications (APC), took place in the lead up to the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women on 6–7 March 2025 in New York. Under the theme "Intersectional Challenges and Collective

Action in a Shifting Digital Age," the Symposium explored how TFGBV manifests and impacts diverse populations, situating the discussions within the context of rising anti-gender discourse and shrinking civic space globally.

Key takeaways from the Third Global Symposium on TFGBV are highlighted below.



PARTICIPANTS AT THE THIRD GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM ON TFGBV IN THE ORANGE CAFE, UNFPA HQ, NEW YORK.

THIRD GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM KEY TAKEAWAYS

- As TFGBV grows in scale and complexity, there is an urgent need to respond with innovative strategies that reflect the broader global context – including rising anti-rights movements, political instability and rapid technological change.
- Despite significant policy advancements, including the recognition of TFGBV in international and regional normative standards and policy, the global movement to address TFGBV faces ongoing and increasing challenges across political, economic and security sectors.
- Rising anti-rights movements are weaponizing digital technologies to undermine hard-won progress, making unified, cross-sectoral action more urgent than ever.
- The Symposium provided an opportunity to build collective resilience and drive forward action to protect digital spaces for all.

"We know that the moment now is a moment of backlash... a time of expanding influence of anti-rights movements, too often aligned with authoritarian governments and unethical business models."

Paula Martins, Policy Lead and Programme Manager, Association for Progressive Communications

NAVIGATING THE PRESENT AND SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE TFGBV MOVEMENT

- TFGBV legislation should address both prevention and response to drive structural change, avoiding an over-reliance on punitive measures through criminal laws that may be weaponized against survivors.
- Future research should focus on context-specific solutions, address data gaps in lower- and middle-income countries and support locally driven approaches over top-down solutions.
- Strategies to sustain TFGBV advocacy in hostile political environments and anti-gender movements include depoliticizing the issue, making it a bipartisan concern and collaborating closely with tech companies where there is political will.
- Strengthening cross-movement alliances and deepening collaboration between feminist, GBV, and digital rights actors will be essential for sustaining the TFGBV movement in the face of ongoing political and funding challenges.



UNPACKING THE ANTI-GENDER BACKLASH

- Anti-gender narratives, rooted in systems of oppression and patriarchy, are being rapidly amplified by platform algorithms that prioritize sensationalist content to drive engagement. This current business model is monetizing hate speech and entrenching misogynistic ideologies and disinformation at scale.
- The anti-gender backlash is growing increasingly transnational, coordinated and well-resourced, requiring those working to address TFGBV to strengthen coalitions and develop adaptable, collective strategies in response.
- To counter the anti-gender backlash, it is critical to strategically control the narrative by understanding the metapolitics and promoting a counter-narrative to disrupt disinformation.
- Feminist and LGBTQI+ movements need to build a vision of a “better world” that offers an alternative to the fear and hatred promoted by anti-gender movements, building on histories of resistance.

“To effectively counteract anti-gender fundamentalist and fascist power, world-building is key... What is the world we want to build, and how are we building it together?”

Naureen Shameem, Executive Director and Founder, Noor

TIPS FOR PROTECTING YOURSELF ONLINE

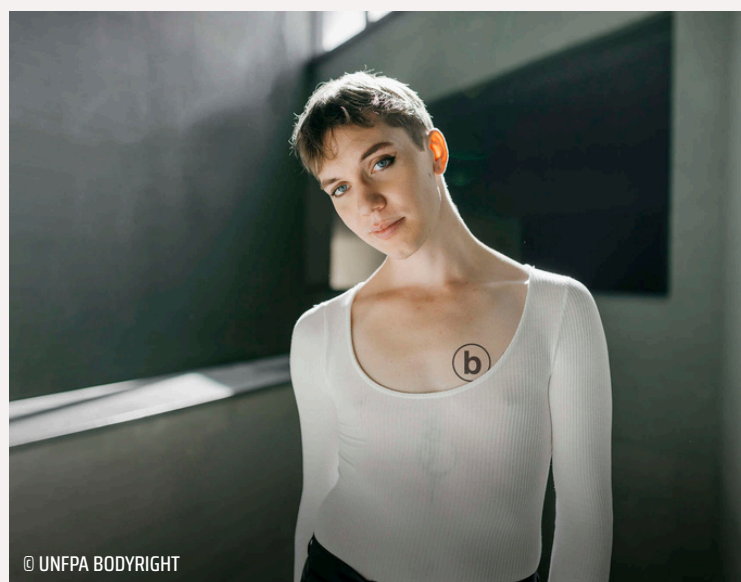
- Protection online requires first conducting a risk assessment, including identifying what data and accounts are most sensitive, who has access to them and a perpetrator’s potential methods. This threat modelling is unique to every person and situation and is essential for managing digital risks.
- Strong passwords and two-factor authentication provide critical account protection. Use a secure password manager to generate unique, complex passwords for each account, and avoid only SMS-based two-factor authentication when possible as attackers can possibly intercept messages. Instead, use app-based authentication or hardware security keys.
- End-to-end encryption minimizes the risk of third-party surveillance. Some mainstream messaging apps provide end-to-end encryption, but look for apps which are also not collecting metadata.
- Using disappearing messages and media can protect sensitive conversations from unauthorized access at device-level, but messages and media can still potentially be accessed by technology companies for the purpose of storing, selling or providing to governments.

UNDERSTANDING TFGBV THROUGH INTERSECTIONAL EXPERIENCES

- TFGBV does not impact all individuals equally - its forms and consequences can be shaped by the intersecting identities of survivors, including sexuality, disability, occupation and/or age.
- In politically oppressive environments, technology is being used to track, silence and target LGBTQI+ people, activists and human rights defenders through doxing, surveillance and police raids.
- Women human rights defenders, activists and public figures who speak out on issues such as war, occupation and genocide are increasingly being targeted with online harassment, doxing and censorship aimed at silencing their voices.
- Representation is not enough. Decision-making processes must actively ensure the participation of women with disabilities and LGBTQI+ advocates in policy, tech design and legislative reform.

"Technology has become a source of trauma for LGBTQI+ people. It's being used as a tool to control, manipulate and dismantle us— yet we depend on digital spaces for community building and advocacy."

Sophie Carol, Founder, Queer Women Leaders Uganda



TOWARDS A FEMINIST AI

- Feminist AI is intersectional, holistic, historically informed, participatory and culturally relevant, aiming to disrupt and transform existing power structures and inequalities.
- AI can both perpetuate and amplify gender inequalities, reflecting the bias of the individuals who build or train the models. Without intervention, AI typically reproduces these inequalities through its predictive models.
- As well as addressing bias and its role in content moderation, work to "fix" flawed AI models must challenge and reconfigure the underlying systems and power structures driving how AI is developed and deployed.
- Alternative narratives must be developed that highlight the commercial value of attracting women and girls as consumers of safe technologies, given that safe and ethical tech is often slower to build and therefore more costly.

"Embed feminist data practices that will fill data gaps, challenge unequal power structures, evaluate the different forms of knowledge and then synthesize them. They should be baked into systems in the first place, not retrofitted."

Rohini Lakshané, Independent Researcher and Technologist

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT AND MITIGATE TFGBV

- Digital literacy training, as a key prevention strategy, must be feminist, inclusive and community-led, ensuring long-term, trauma-informed approaches rather than one-off interventions.
- It is critical to ensure that digital security programmes are inclusive of marginalized communities, cater to linguistic and cultural diversity, and take into account financial and safety barriers to access.
- Women journalists and political candidates face persistent online harassment and disinformation, leading to self-censorship. Digital literacy is therefore essential to ensure their protection and continued engagement in public online spaces.
- Quality in content moderation, particularly in non-English speaking contexts, requires stronger policy advocacy and accountability measures from governments and civil society.



"Our goal is to move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach... Only by acknowledging how TFGBV affects different communities in different ways can we work toward meaningful and systemic change."

Taibat Hussain, PhD Researcher and Youth Champion for GBV Prevention

SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS

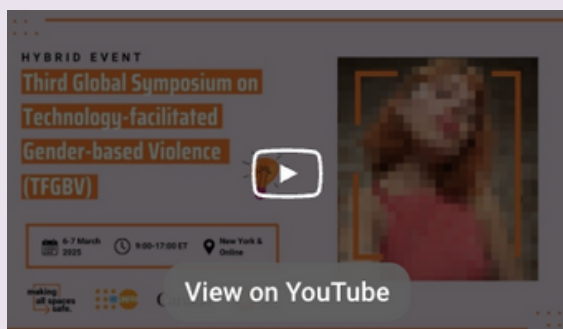
Special thanks to our esteemed speakers:

- Diene Keita, Deputy Executive Director, Programme (now Acting Executive Director), UNFPA
- Alicia Herbert OBE, UK's Special Envoy for Gender Equality
- Barbara Curran, Director-General for Social and Economic Development, Global Affairs Canada

We also thank, in order of appearance, our expert session speakers:

- Alexandra Robinson, GBV Technical Adviser, UNFPA
- Paula Martins, Policy Lead and Programme Manager, Association for Progressive Communications
- Paloma Lara-Castro, Policy Director, Derechos Digitales
- Ayesha Mago, Global Advocacy Director, Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI)
- Kathryn Kosmides, Founder, Garbo and Board Member, Chayn
- Adrian Di Giovanni, Team Leader for Democratic and Inclusive Governance, International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada
- Naureen Shameem, Executive Director and Founder, Noor
- Alex Argüelles, Holistic Security Lead, Access Now Digital Security Helpline
- Eva Galperin, Director of Cybersecurity, Electronic Frontier Foundation
- Helen N, Co-founder, Safe Sisters
- Taibat Hussain, PhD Researcher and Youth Champion for GBV Prevention
- Sophie Carol, Founder, Queer Women Leaders Uganda
- Tigist Hussen, Feminist Internet Research Network (FIRN) Lead and Coordinator, APC
- Maryangel Garcia-Ramos, Executive Director, Women Enabled International
- Emily Springer, CEO, TechnoSocio Advisory
- Luisa Franco Machado, Founder, Equilabs
- Rohini Lakshané, Independent Researcher and Technologist
- Tsitsi Matekaire, Global Lead – End Sexual Exploitation, Equality Now
- Irene Mwendwa, Executive Director, Pollicy
- Elodie Vialle, Independent Tech Policy Adviser
- Farhanah, Digital Protection Facilitator, Digital Defenders Partnership
- Dr Chay Brown, Managing Director, Her Story Consulting

RELEVANT RESOURCES



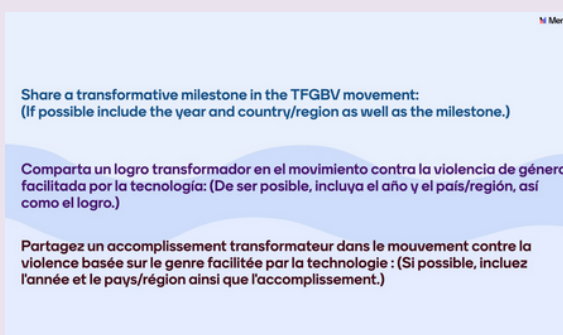
THIRD GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM ON TFGBV SESSION RECORDINGS



UNFPA RESOURCE COMPENDIUM ON TFGBV



APC TFGBV RESOURCE BROCHURE



TFGBV MOVEMENT MILESTONES: SESSION 2 MENTIMETER ANSWERS



SECOND GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM ON TFGBV: KEY TAKEAWAYS



2022 GLOBAL SYMPOSIUM ON TFGBV RESULTS: BUILDING A COMMON PATHWAY

Special thanks to our Advisory Group for helping shape the Third Global Symposium's agenda:

