



**#TimeToDefine
#SexualViolence**

Statement to participants

who provide input to *Call it what it is* campaign and the Civil Society Declaration of the Concept of Sexual Violence

Acknowledgment of contribution

The *Call it what it is* campaign will lead to the creation of the Civil Society Declaration of the Concept of Sexual Violence. The Declaration will largely be shaped based on the input of survivors of sexual violence. Their courage in sharing input and their contribution to the Declaration is acknowledged with deep gratitude.

Use of input

Survivors, civil society actors and others share their views on what makes an act of violence 'sexual' to them through an online survey and through in person consultations. This input is used by Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice and international criminal law experts to shape the Declaration. In particular, the input is 'translated' in such language that can be used in a legal environment.

Aim of the Declaration

The Declaration will encourage people working in criminal justice (including practitioners such as investigators, prosecutors, counsel, and judges) to better understand sexual violence. It will help to explain that what makes an act of violence 'sexual' depends on many factors and views. As such, the Declaration will help to explain that there is a huge range of acts of sexual violence. The Declaration will help people to better recognize acts of sexual violence.

Only by better understanding and recognizing sexual violence and what it can mean to victims and survivors to call what happened to them 'sexual violence', can practitioners working in criminal justice make sure to include it in their work. Many survivors told us that qualifying what happened to them as sexual violence is very important.

Calling violence 'sexual' can also affect which crime is charged. For example, it can affect whether the charge is 'assault' or 'sexual assault'. Describing violence as 'sexual' may also affect the nature of reparations that are awarded by competent courts or other institutions.

The Declaration will serve as a reference point to help determine whether acts of sexual violence have been committed. But the Declaration is not law. Practitioners working in criminal justice will choose whether to use the Declaration. They will not be bound by it. The Declaration will not guarantee that those who commit acts of sexual violence will be investigated and prosecuted, nor that the victims will receive compensation or other reparations for these crimes.

More Information

Visit Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice at <https://4genderjustice.org/> or email them at info@iccwomen.org

