

International Network to End Violence Against Women and Girls

INEVAWG



STATEMENT ON THE 61ST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (UN CSW 61)

7 March 2017

For immediate release

The International Network to End Violence Against Women and Girls (INEVAWG) will not participate in the 61st Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UN CSW 61).

INEVAWG was founded in 2014 in South Africa as a response to heightened global concerns about violence against women and girls, and increasing levels of impunity and poor state accountability therein. INEVAWG's approach is rooted in strong intersectional feminist analyses that recognize and seek to address the multiple and intersecting forms of oppressions faced by individuals and groups of women worldwide.

INEVAWG is concerned that the recent spate of executive orders serves to demonize and criminalize specific communities in the United States of America and abroad, and further jeopardize the lives and livelihoods of women. In particular, the rise of populism and the erosion of multilateralism pose many challenges to the realization of women's rights. Across all regions, states are working to control the media, attack democratic institutions including the judiciary, undermine the rule of law, and increase militarization and state surveillance. They also favour corporations by relaxing regulations that facilitate the depletion of natural resources and the destruction of the environment, while land grabbing, unhindered extraction of natural resources, and the privatization of social services, such as education and health care, are facilitated.

Among the first attacks on women's bodies and their lives by populist states include the erosion of women's reproductive rights and facilitation of cuts in social services. We are witnessing increased legislation that reduces accountability for the perpetration of domestic violence and the rape of women and girls. We also note that some states are developing policies and changing their development aid programmes to prohibit women's access to education and services that promote their health and wellbeing. These developments are backward steps with respect to compliance with CEDAW, CERD, ICESCR, and the SDG's.

A very significant aspect of these shifts is that all women are affected to varying degrees, but it is particularly women of colour who are most affected by the various and growing forms of violence. Within this context INEVAWG, in solidarity with sister organisations, will not normalize populist states. INEVAWG will work instead to expose the ways in which their policies serve to undermine the human rights of women and girls, while advocating for, and demanding that, states respect, protect, and fulfil their human rights obligations, and end all forms of discrimination and impunity.

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