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PROBLEMS.UZ

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Актуальные проблемы социальных и гуманитарных наук

**Ijtimoiy-gumanitar
fanlarning dolzarb
muammolari**

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SCIENCEPROBLEMS.UZ

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№ S/1 (5) - 2025

АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ СОЦИАЛЬНО- ГУМАНИТАРНЫХ НАУК

ACTUAL PROBLEMS OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

TOSHKENT-2025

BOSH MUHARRIR:

Isanova Feruza Tulqinovna

TAHRIR HAY'ATI:

07.00.00- TARIX FANLARI:

Yuldashev Anvar Ergashevich – tarix fanlari doktori, siyosiy fanlar nomzodi, professor, O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti huzuridagi Davlat boshqaruvi akademiyasi;

Mavlanov Uktam Maxmasabirovich – tarix fanlari doktori, professor, O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti huzuridagi Davlat boshqaruvi akademiyasi;

Xazratkulov Abror – tarix fanlari doktori, dotsent, O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti.

Tursunov Ravshan Normuratovich – tarix fanlari doktori, O'zbekiston Milliy Universiteti;

Xolikulov Axmadjon Boymahammadovich – tarix fanlari doktori, O'zbekiston Milliy Universiteti;

Gabrielyan Sofya Ivanovna – tarix fanlari doktori, dotsent, O'zbekiston Milliy Universiteti.

Saidov Sarvar Atabullo o'g'li – katta ilmiy xodim, Imom Termiziy xalqaro ilmiy-tadqiqot markazi, ilmiy tadqiqotlar bo'limi.

08.00.00- IQTISODIYOT FANLARI:

Karlibayeva Raya Xojabayevna – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, professor, Toshkent davlat iqtisodiyot universiteti;

Nasirxodjayeva Dilafuz Sabitxanovna – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, professor, Toshkent davlat iqtisodiyot universiteti;

Ostonokulov Azamat Abdukarimovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, professor, Toshkent moliya instituti;

Arabov Nurali Uralovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, professor, Samarqand davlat universiteti;

Xudoyqulov Sadirdin Karimovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, dotsent, Toshkent davlat iqtisodiyot universiteti;

Azizov Sherzod O'ktamovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, dotsent, O'zbekiston Respublikasi Bojxona instituti;

Xojayev Azizxon Saidaloxonovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari doktori, dotsent, Farg'ona politexnika instituti

Xolov Aktam Xatamovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari bo'yicha falsafa doktori (PhD), dotsent, O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti huzuridagi Davlat boshqaruvi akademiyasi;

Shadiyeva Dildora Xamidovna – iqtisodiyot fanlari bo'yicha falsafa doktori (PhD), dotsent v.b, Toshkent moliya instituti;

Shakarov Qulmat Ashirovich – iqtisodiyot fanlari

nomzodi, dotsent, Toshkent axborot texnologiyalari universiteti

09.00.00- FALSAFA FANLARI:

Hakimov Nazar Hakimovich – falsafa fanlari doktori, professor, Toshkent davlat iqtisodiyot universiteti;

Yaxshilikov Jo'raboy – falsafa fanlari doktori, professor, Samarqand davlat universiteti;

G'aybullayev Otabek Muhammadiyevich – falsafa fanlari doktori, professor, Samarqand davlat chet tillar instituti;

Saidova Kamola Uskanbayevna – falsafa fanlari doktori, "Tashkent International University of Education" xalqaro universiteti;

Hoshimxonov Mo'min – falsafa fanlari doktori, dotsent, Jizzax pedagogika instituti;

O'roqova Oysuluv Jamoliddinovna – falsafa fanlari doktori, dotsent, Andijon davlat tibbiyot instituti, Ijtimoiy-gumanitar fanlar kafedrasini mudiri;

Nosirxodjayeva Gulnora Abdukaxxarovna – falsafa fanlari nomzodi, dotsent, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Turdiyev Bexruz Sobirovich – falsafa fanlari bo'yicha falsafa doktori (PhD), dotsent, Buxoro davlat universiteti.

10.00.00- FILOLOGIYA FANLARI:

Axmedov Oybek Saporbayevich – filologiya fanlari doktori, professor, O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti;

Ko'chimov Shuxrat Norqizilovich – filologiya fanlari doktori, dotsent, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Hasanov Shavkat Ahadovich – filologiya fanlari doktori, professor, Samarqand davlat universiteti;

Baxronova Dilrabo Keldiyorovna – filologiya fanlari doktori, professor, O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti;

Mirsanov G'aybullo Qulmurodovich – filologiya fanlari doktori, professor, Samarqand davlat chet tillar instituti;

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Kuchkarov Raxman Urmanovich – filologiya fanlari nomzodi, dotsent v/b, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Yunusov Mansur Abdullayevich – filologiya fanlari nomzodi, O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti huzuridagi Davlat boshqaruvi akademiyasi;

Saidov Ulugbek Aripovich – filologiya fanlari nomzodi, dotsent, O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti huzuridagi Davlat boshqaruvi akademiyasi.

12.00.00- YURIDIK FANLAR:

Axmedshayeva Mavlyuda Axatovna – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Muxitdinova Firyuza Abdurashidovna – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Esanova Zamira Normurotovna – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor, O'zbekiston Respublikasida xizmat ko'rsatgan yurist, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Hamroqulov Bahodir Mamasharifovich – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor v.b., Jahon iqtisodiyoti va diplomatiya universiteti;

Zulfiqorov Sherzod Xurramovich – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor, O'zbekiston Respublikasi Jamoat xavfsizligi universiteti;

Xayitov Xushvaqt Saparbayevich – yuridik fanlar doktori, professor, O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti huzuridagi Davlat boshqaruvi akademiyasi;

Asadov Shavkat G'aybullayevich – yuridik fanlar doktori, dotsent, O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti huzuridagi Davlat boshqaruvi akademiyasi;

Ergashev Ikrom Abdurasulovich – yuridik fanlari doktori, professor, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Utemuratov Maxmut Ajimuratovich – yuridik fanlar nomzodi, professor, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Saydullayev Shaxzod Alixanovich – yuridik fanlar nomzodi, professor, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Hakimov Komil Baxtiyarovich – yuridik fanlar doktori, dotsent, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Yusupov Sardorbek Baxodirovich – yuridik fanlar doktori, dotsent, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Amirov Zafar Aktamovich – yuridik fanlar doktori (PhD), O'zbekiston Respublikasi Sudyalar oliy kengashi huzuridagi Sudyalar oliy maktabi;

Jo'rayev Sherzod Yuldashevich – yuridik fanlar nomzodi, dotsent, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Babadjanov Atabek Davronbekovich – yuridik fanlar nomzodi, dotsent, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Normatov Bekzod Akrom o'g'li — yuridik fanlar bo'yicha falsafa doktori, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Rahmatov Elyor Jumaboyevich — yuridik fanlar nomzodi, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

13.00.00- PEDAGOGIKA FANLARI:

Xashimova Dildarxon Urinboyevna – pedagogika fanlari doktori, professor, Toshkent davlat yuridik universiteti;

Ibragimova Gulnora Xavazmatovna – pedagogika fanlari doktori, professor, Toshkent davlat iqtisodiyot universiteti;

Zakirova Feruza Maxmudovna – pedagogika fanlari doktori, Toshkent axborot texnologiyalari universiteti huzuridagi pedagogik kadrlarni qayta tayyorlash va ularning malakasini oshirish tarmoq markazi;

Kayumova Nasiba Ashurovna – pedagogika fanlari doktori, professor, Qarshi davlat universiteti;

Taylanova Shoxida Zayniyevna – pedagogika fanlari doktori, dotsent;

Jumaniyozova Muhayyo Tojiyevna – pedagogika fanlari doktori, dotsent, O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti;

Ibraximov Sanjar Urunbayevich – pedagogika fanlari doktori, Iqtisodiyot va pedagogika universiteti;

Javliyeva Shaxnoza Baxodirovna – pedagogika fanlari bo'yicha falsafa doktori (PhD), Samarqand davlat universiteti;

Bobomurotova Latofat Elmurodovna — pedagogika fanlari bo'yicha falsafa doktori (PhD), Samarqand davlat universiteti.

19.00.00- PSIXOLOGIYA FANLARI:

Karimova Vasila Mamanosirovna – psixologiya fanlari doktori, professor, Nizomiy nomidagi Toshkent davlat pedagogika universiteti;

Hayitov Oybek Eshboyevich – Jismoniy tarbiya va sport bo'yicha mutaxassislarni qayta tayyorlash va malakasini oshirish instituti, psixologiya fanlari doktori, professor

Umarova Navbahor Shokirovna– psixologiya fanlari doktori, dotsent, Nizomiy nomidagi Toshkent davlat pedagogika universiteti, Amaliy psixologiyasi kafedrasi mudiri;

Atabayeva Nargis Batirovna – psixologiya fanlari doktori, dotsent, Nizomiy nomidagi Toshkent davlat pedagogika universiteti;

Shamshetova Anjim Karamaddinovna – psixologiya fanlari doktori, dotsent, O‘zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti;

Qodirov Obid Safarovich – psixologiya fanlari doktori (PhD), Samarkand viloyat IIB Tibbiyot bo‘limi psixologik xizmat boshlig‘i.

22.00.00- SOTSILOGIYA FANLARI:

Latipova Nodira Muxtarjanovna – sotsiologiya fanlari doktori, professor, O‘zbekiston milliy universiteti kafedra mudiri;

Seitov Azamat Po‘latovich – sotsiologiya fanlari doktori, professor, O‘zbekiston milliy universiteti;

Sodiqova Shohida Marxaboyevna – sotsiologiya fanlari doktori, professor, O‘zbekiston xalqaro islom akademiyasi.

23.00.00- SIYOSIY FANLAR

Nazarov Nasriddin Ataqulovich –siyosiy fanlar doktori, falsafa fanlari doktori, professor, Toshkent arxitektura qurilish instituti;

Bo‘tayeov Usmonjon Xayrullayevich –siyosiy fanlar doktori, dotsent, O‘zbekiston milliy universiteti kafedra mudiri.

OAK Ro‘yxati

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MUNDARIJA

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ONLINE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN UZBEKISTAN: GAPS IN LEGISLATION AND THE PATH FORWARD

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Abstract. This article examines the legal and institutional gaps in addressing online gender-based violence in Uzbekistan and highlights the urgent need for legislative and policy reforms. Despite the increasing prevalence of cyberstalking, online harassment, doxxing and image-based abuse, Uzbekistan's legal framework lacks explicit definitions and enforcement mechanisms for such offenses. The article analyzes the challenges victims face in accessing justice, compares national legislation with international standards, and proposes concrete measures to strengthen protections. These include legal reforms, improved law enforcement training, victim support mechanisms, and digital platform regulation. Strengthening the legal and institutional response will help ensure safer online spaces and protect women from digital violence.

Keywords: online gender-based violence, cyberstalking, digital harassment, legal gaps, gender equality, legislative reforms, Uzbekistan.

O'ZBEKISTONDA ONLAYN GENDER ZO'RAVONLIGI: QONUNCHILIKDAGI BO'SHLIQLAR VA ULARNI BARTARAF ETISH YO'LLARI

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Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada O'zbekistonda onlayn gender zo'ravonligiga qarshi huquqiy va institutsional choralar yetishmovchiligi tahlil qilinib, qonunchilik va siyosiy islohotlarni tezlashtirish zarurligi ta'kidlanadi. Kiberta'qib, onlayn tazyiq, doksing, va rasmiy asosda zo'ravonlikning ortib borayotganiga qaramay, O'zbekiston qonunchiligida ushbu huquqbuzarliklar uchun aniq ta'rif va ijro mexanizmlari mavjud emas. Maqolada jabrlanuvchilarning adolatga erishishda duch keladigan qiyinchiliklari, milliy qonunchilikning xalqaro standartlar bilan solishtirilishi va himoyani kuchaytirish uchun aniq choralar taklif etiladi. Tavsiyalar qatoriga huquqiy islohotlar, huquqni muhofaza qilish organlari malakasini oshirish, jabrlanuvchilarni qo'llab-quvvatlash mexanizmlari va raqamli platformalarni tartibga solish kiradi. Huquqiy va institutsional choralarni mustahkamlash orqali ayollar uchun xavfsiz onlayn muhitni yaratish mumkin bo'ladi.

Kalit so'zlar: onlayn gender zo'ravonligi, kiberta'qib, raqamli tazyiq, huquqiy bo'shliqlar, gender tengligi, qonunchilik islohotlari, O'zbekiston.

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I. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed communication, yet it has also created new forms of gender-based violence, known as online gender-based violence (OGBV). This phenomenon encompasses various forms of abuse, including cyberstalking, online harassment, image-based abuse, doxxing, sextortion, and hate speech, which

disproportionately target women and girls [1; p.8]. These digital manifestations of violence pose serious threats to women's safety, dignity, and digital rights, highlighting the urgent need for stronger legal frameworks and protections to combat this evolving issue.

Research indicates that women are significantly more likely to experience online harassment compared to men. A European study found that women are 27 times more likely to face harassment online than men, while another analysis revealed that 92% of women reported negative experiences in online spaces. The prevalence of OGBV is further evidenced by studies showing that 16 to 58% of women and girls have been targeted by violence online [2; p.1].

In Uzbekistan, cases of OGBV are becoming more frequent, yet legal protections remain inadequate. While existing laws provide some safeguards, they lack specificity in defining digital forms of violence, establishing clear legal remedies, and holding perpetrators accountable. This gap in legislation is not unique to Uzbekistan, as many countries struggle to adapt their legal frameworks to address the rapidly evolving landscape of technology-facilitated gender-based violence [3; p.43].

The challenges in combating OGBV are multifaceted. Law enforcement agencies face significant obstacles in investigating and prosecuting such crimes, often due to the anonymous nature of online interactions and the transnational character of digital platforms [3; p.32]. Additionally, social stigma and fear of repercussions often discourage victims from reporting abuse, further complicating efforts to address the issue [4; p.4].

This article examines Uzbekistan's current legal framework on OGBV, identifying key gaps and challenges. By comparing national legislation with international best practices and exploring case studies, we aim to highlight the real-life consequences of online violence. The analysis draws on the growing body of research on OGBV, including studies that emphasize the need for an intersectional approach to understanding and addressing this form of violence.

Furthermore, this study considers the continuum between online and offline violence, recognizing that OGBV can often lead to physical threats and acts of violence [5; p.11]. This perspective underscores the importance of comprehensive legal and policy responses that address both the digital and physical manifestations of gender-based violence.

Finally, the article offers recommendations for legal and policy reforms, aiming to strengthen protections for women and create a safer, more accountable digital environment. These recommendations are informed by international standards and successful interventions implemented in other jurisdictions, with the goal of developing a robust and effective framework to combat OGBV in Uzbekistan.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative legal analysis to examine Uzbekistan's legal framework on online gender-based violence (OGBV), using a comparative approach with international human rights standards. The research reviews national laws, assessing their applicability to digital abuse.

A case study approach highlights real-life examples of OGBV in Uzbekistan, illustrating legal gaps and enforcement challenges. Additionally, a policy analysis evaluates institutional responses and law enforcement practices. Recommendations are based on global best practices to strengthen legal protections and victim support mechanisms in Uzbekistan.

II. Concept of Online Gender-Based Violence

2.1. Definition and Forms

Technology-facilitated violence against women is defined as “**is any act that is committed, assisted, aggravated, or amplified by the use of information communication technologies or other digital tools, that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological, social, political, or economic harm, or other infringements of rights and freedoms.**” [6; p.4].

It takes multiple forms, including but not limited to:

- **Cyberstalking** – Persistent and unwanted digital surveillance or monitoring, leading to fear and distress.
- **Doxxing** – Unauthorized publication of private or personal information, often leading to harassment or real-world threats.
- **Sextortion** – Blackmailing individuals with threats to publish intimate content unless demands (often financial or sexual) are met.
- **Image-based abuse** – Sharing intimate images or videos without consent, including deepfake pornography.
- **Cyberbullying** – Repeated online harassment, intimidation, or humiliation targeted at an individual, often gendered in nature.
- **Online hate speech** – The spread of misogynistic or sexist content, often inciting violence or discrimination against women and girls.
- **Impersonation** – Creating fake profiles to defame, manipulate, or deceive victims.
- **Use of digital tools for tracking victims** – Technology-facilitated stalking, including GPS tracking, spyware, or location-based abuse.
- **Hacking** – Unauthorized access to personal data, often leading to exploitation or blackmail [3; p.15].

While these acts take place in the digital sphere, they often have **real-world consequences**, including **physical violence, social exclusion, reputational damage, and economic harm**. Additionally, digital tools can exacerbate existing offline gender-based violence, such as domestic violence, coercive control, and human trafficking.

2.2. Impact on Women and Society

The consequences of online gender-based violence are far-reaching, affecting victims at psychological, social, legal, and economic levels. Research has shown that OGBV can have profound and long-lasting effects on women's well-being and participation in digital spaces.

Psychological Impact

OGBV can have severe psychological consequences for victims. Studies have consistently shown that cyberstalking, online harassment, and image-based abuse are associated with increased rates of emotional distress, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD [7; p.4]. A study by Eckert and Metzger-Riftkin found that victims of doxxing experienced uncertainty, loss of control, and fear [8; p 1-2]. Furthermore, research indicates that cyberbullying victimization is significantly related to depressive affect, with higher levels of cyberbullying victimization corresponding to higher levels of depressive symptoms [9; p 12].

Many survivors develop self-censorship behaviors to avoid further harassment, limiting their online participation. This withdrawal from digital spaces can lead to social isolation and reduced access to information and opportunities.

Social and Professional Consequences

The impact of OGBV extends beyond the psychological realm, affecting women's social and professional lives. Women who face public humiliation or doxxing often withdraw from social and professional spaces, leading to isolation [8; p 5]. A study on the economic and career effects of sexual harassment found that harassment can significantly alter women's career attainment, often by precipitating job changes [10; p 2]. Journalists, activists, and female politicians subjected to digital abuse may face career limitations or self-censorship, hindering gender equality in leadership. Research has shown that online violence can have a muzzling effect on women's freedom of expression and affect their participation as active digital citizens [11; p 15].

Legal Challenges

The absence of explicit legal definitions for online gender-based violence (OGBV) in Uzbekistan creates significant barriers to prosecution, leading to legal inaction. Law enforcement agencies often lack specialized digital investigation skills, contributing to underreporting and impunity for perpetrators. As a result, victims are left without adequate legal protection, underscoring the need for comprehensive legal reforms and capacity-building measures to address this growing issue.

Economic Impact

The economic consequences of OGBV can be significant. Women facing sextortion, cyber blackmail, or revenge porn may experience job loss, financial strain, or economic dependency. A study on the economic and career effects of sexual harassment found that harassment increases financial stress, largely by precipitating job change [10; p 12].

Online harassment disproportionately affects women entrepreneurs, influencers, and small business owners, potentially damaging their reputation and income. Research has shown that online abuse can lead to collective and intergenerational harm, with direct and indirect costs on societies and economies.

The Need for Legal and Institutional Reform

Despite the growing prevalence of OGBV, Uzbekistan's legal framework remains insufficient in addressing digital gender-based violence. There is an urgent need for clear legal definitions, specialized investigative mechanisms, and stronger victim protection measures [12; p 12].

While the majority of research highlights the negative impacts of OGBV, some scholars argue for a more nuanced understanding of online interactions. For instance, some studies suggest that certain forms of online confrontation can serve positive purposes, such as improving community safety or challenging harmful ideologies [13; p13-17]. However, these perspectives remain in the minority, and the overwhelming evidence points to the serious and detrimental effects of OGBV on women and society as a whole.

III. International and National Legal Frameworks

3.1. International Standards

OGBV encompasses a wide range of actions, from threats, harassment, and cyberbullying to more severe violations such as personal data leaks and the dissemination of intimate images without consent. These actions have profound physical, psychological, and socio-economic consequences for victims, the overwhelming majority of whom are women.

International studies confirm the high prevalence of online violence against women, highlighting the need for stronger legislative measures to combat this phenomenon. A study by

the Economist Intelligence Unit found that 38% of women had personally experienced online violence, while 85% had witnessed digital violence directed at other women [14; p 9]. Similarly, a global survey by UNESCO revealed that 73% of women journalists had encountered various forms of online violence in their professional activities, significantly limiting their ability to perform their duties freely [15; p 6].

Moreover, a study conducted in nine countries, including Denmark, Italy, New Zealand, Poland, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States, found that nearly a quarter of the women surveyed (23%) had experienced online violence or harassment at least once.¹ The issue also manifests at the regional level. In the United States, for instance, 33% of women under the age of 35 reported having been subjected to sexual harassment online. In sub-Saharan Africa, a similar study found that 28% of women had encountered gender-motivated online violence, while in India, this figure stood at 31%.

Age also plays a significant role in the prevalence of online harassment. Globally, 58% of girls and young women report having experienced some form of harassment online. Notably, most girls first encounter this phenomenon between the ages of 14 and 16, underscoring the need for enhanced protection of minors from such threats.

Recognizing the growing impact of OGBV, international legal frameworks provide guidance on addressing digital gender-based violence. Several key instruments establish the foundation for legal and policy responses:

CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35 (2017)

This recommendation expands the definition of violence against women to include "technology-mediated environments", explicitly recognizing online and ICT-facilitated violence as a form of gender-based violence [16; p 2]. It emphasizes that OGBV must be included within the broader context of gender-based discrimination and violence.

Istanbul Convention

The Istanbul Convention provides a comprehensive framework for combating gender-based violence, including digital and online violence. It recognizes the continuum between offline and online violence and emphasizes the need for integrated responses. The convention also requests states to encourage the private sector to participate in preventing violence against women and promote educational programs on addressing abusive online content [17; p 20].

Budapest Convention on Cybercrime

While not specifically addressing gender-based digital violence, the Budapest Convention focuses on criminalizing offenses related to cybercrime, including unauthorized access to personal data, online threats, and computer-related fraud. Its provisions are often used to prosecute OGBV offenses, highlighting the need for adaptable legal frameworks.

These findings confirm that online violence is a global issue requiring a comprehensive approach and the development of effective legislation. Like other countries, Uzbekistan faces the challenge of adapting international experience to its realities to ensure a safe digital environment for all. However, addressing this issue requires more than just recognition—it demands concrete legal and institutional reforms.

¹ Accelerating efforts to tackle online and technology facilitated violence against women and girls. https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/Accelerating-efforts-to-tackle-online-and-technology-facilitated-violence-against-women-and-girls-en_0.pdf

International standards call on states to adopt clear legal definitions, strengthen investigative mechanisms, and provide effective remedies for victims of online gender-based violence. Yet, Uzbekistan has not ratified the Istanbul Convention or fully integrated these standards into its national legislation. While international legal frameworks provide valuable guidance, effective implementation requires context-specific strategies that address national legal, cultural, and technological realities. Uzbekistan, like many other countries, faces the challenge of integrating international best practices into its national framework to ensure a safe digital environment for all.

3.2. Uzbekistan's Legal Framework

Constitutional and Digital Rights Provisions

The **Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan** serves as the foundation for legal protection against gender-based online violence in Uzbekistan. The newly adopted **2023 Constitution** recognizes the supremacy of universally accepted norms of international law. **Article 15** of the Constitution establishes that the principles and norms of international law are an integral part of Uzbekistan's legal system. If an international treaty of Uzbekistan establishes rules different from those provided by national legislation, the provisions of the international treaty take precedence [18].

The **Constitution of Uzbekistan** declares that “**the state creates conditions to ensure access to the global information network, the Internet,**” which can be interpreted as a basis for the realization of human rights to Internet access as guaranteed by the state. Additionally, legislation includes protections against censorship, including online content. Online media outlets enjoy the same legal protections as print, radio, and television media.

Existing Laws and Their Limitations

Currently, Uzbekistan's legislation contains **partial provisions addressing certain aspects of OGBV**, but **lacks specific legal definitions** or comprehensive protections. Key relevant laws include:

1. **Law on the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence (2019)**

The **Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence"** [19] defines **stalking** as actions committed against the will of the victim, despite two or more instances of resistance or warnings from the victim. These actions include searching for the victim, communicating with them verbally or through telecommunication networks—including the **World Wide Web**—or by other means, visiting their workplace, place of study, and/or residence, and causing the victim to fear for their safety.

The **definition of violence** includes **threats of physical, psychological, sexual, or economic coercion**. Establishing **effective organizational and legal mechanisms** for the prevention, detection, and suppression of harassment and violence against women is prescribed as a key **state policy direction** for protecting women from harassment and violence.

This law defines **stalking** as repeated, unwanted pursuits, communication (including online), or visits to a victim's workplace **or home** that cause fear for personal safety. However, it does not explicitly mention cyberstalking, doxxing, or image-based abuse as forms of violence.

2. **Law on Informatization (2004, amended 2021)**

Establishes **regulations for online content** and defines the responsibilities of website owners and digital platforms in preventing the spread of harmful materials. Article 121

prohibits **spreading false information that threatens public order or safety**, but does not address gender-specific digital violence such as cyber harassment.

3. Criminal Code of Uzbekistan

The legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan includes administrative and criminal liability measures that partially address technology-facilitated violence, including in the context of **women's rights protection**. However, provisions in the **Administrative Offenses Code and the Criminal Code** reflect a **limited state approach** to preventing offenses committed through **information technologies**.

Several provisions in the **Criminal Code** [20] are applicable to **some forms of OGBV**, including:

- **Article 141-3 – Criminalizes the unauthorized dissemination of intimate images**, including threats to distribute them (i.e., sextortion).
- **Article 139 – Defamation**, which can apply to cases of online smear campaigns.
- **Article 140 – Insult and humiliation**, which may cover online harassment but **lacks gender-sensitive language**.
- **Article 165 – Extortion**, which can be applied in cases of blackmail involving digital content.

While these laws offer some level of protection, they fail to comprehensively address the various forms of OGBV, including cyberstalking, doxxing, and gender-based hate speech.

Main Gaps in Uzbekistan's Legal Framework on OGBV

Despite the existence of partial regulations, Uzbekistan's legal framework **remains inadequate** in effectively tackling **technology-facilitated gender-based violence**. The key legal gaps include:

1. No explicit legal definitions for OGBV crimes

Uzbekistan does not legally define cyberstalking, doxxing, sextortion, image-based abuse, or gendered hate speech as specific offenses. As a result, **many victims struggle to file complaints**, as law enforcement agencies lack clear legal grounds for prosecution.

2. Weak investigative and enforcement mechanisms

Law enforcement lacks specialized training in handling digital evidence and online crimes. There is no centralized database or reporting system to track cases of OGBV, making it difficult to assess the scale of the problem.

3. Lack of remedies for victims and tech platform accountability

No clear civil remedies (e.g., compensation, protective orders) exist for victims of online abuse. Technology companies are not held accountable for failing to remove harmful content or moderate abusive behavior.

Uzbekistan's legal framework provides **limited protection** against **online gender-based violence**. Although some existing laws can be applied to digital forms of harassment and abuse, there are no explicit legal definitions or strong enforcement mechanisms. To align with international standards, Uzbekistan must introduce comprehensive legal reforms, specialized law enforcement training, and stronger victim support mechanisms to combat OGBV effectively.

IV. Case Studies

4.1. Examples of Online Gender-Based Violence in Uzbekistan

Online gender-based violence (OGBV) is becoming an increasingly serious issue in Uzbekistan, particularly affecting **women in public and professional roles, including activists, journalists, and public officials**. The digital sphere has enabled new forms of harassment, including doxxing, cyberbullying, the unauthorized distribution of intimate images, and blackmail (sextortion). These incidents not only violate the privacy and dignity of victims but also deter women from participating in public life, digital spaces, and political discourse.

The following **high-profile cases** illustrate the **real-life consequences of OGBV in Uzbekistan**, as well as **the systemic legal and institutional challenges** victims face in seeking justice.

Case 1: Leaked Private Videos of a Female Deputy

In **November 2021**, **Feruza Babasheva**, a **deputy of the Urta-Chirchik district kengash**[21], became the target of a coordinated cyberbullying attack after private video recordings of her were leaked and circulated online. These materials, which were allegedly recorded without her consent, quickly spread across social media and messaging apps, leading to public humiliation and reputational damage.

- **Legal and Institutional Response:**

Instead of investigating how and by whom the **private recordings were obtained and leaked**, Babasheva faced pressure from law enforcement officials to remain silent. **No** criminal charges were filed against those responsible for violating her privacy and distributing intimate content without consent. The **lack of clear laws** criminalizing non-consensual image distribution meant that Babasheva was left without legal remedies.

- **Social and Professional Consequences:**

The scandal **jeopardized Babasheva's political career**, as **online harassment quickly escalated into offline social stigmatization**. Victim-blaming narratives circulated widely, discouraging other women from reporting similar abuses or seeking public office.

This case demonstrates the failure of existing laws in Uzbekistan to address **image-based abuse**. While some legal provisions criminalize defamation and privacy violations, there is no specific recognition of non-consensual pornography or deepfake abuse, leaving victims without clear legal protection.

Case 2: Cyberbullying and Harassment of a Female Journalist

In **August 2021**, **Feruza Najmiddinova**, a journalist for **Qalampir.uz**, became the target of a **defamation and harassment campaign** [22], after she published an article exposing quarantine violations in restaurants in Tashkent City.

- **Nature of Online Attacks:**

After the publication of her article, a **manipulated video** portraying her in a **negative and misleading manner** began circulating online. Anonymous accounts and coordinated trolls launched personal attacks against her, including misogynistic insults, sexist threats, and attempts to undermine her professional credibility.

- **Institutional Response and Challenges:**

Although **public support** for Najmiddinova emerged, including a statement from the Presidential Press Secretary condemning the attacks, no concrete legal action was taken against those responsible. Defamation and cyber harassment laws were not effectively applied,

demonstrating the lack of enforcement and legal accountability for online violence against women in journalism.

- **Impact on Press Freedom and Gender Representation in Media:**

The targeting of women journalists in Uzbekistan discourages investigative reporting on **politically and socially sensitive issues**. The threat of online retaliation leads to self-censorship and prevents women from freely expressing opinions in public discourse.

This case underscores **the urgent need for strong anti-harassment laws, with clear definitions and legal protections for women in journalism and media**.

Case 3: Telegram Channels Selling and Sharing Intimate Images

One of the most disturbing cases of organized online abuse in Uzbekistan occurred in 2023, when **a group of individuals was arrested for operating Telegram channels "Hello Tashkent" and "Salam Tashkent" [23]**.

- **How the Online Abuse Operated:**

These channels **distributed non-consensual intimate images and videos of women**, often obtained through **hacking or coercion**. The perpetrators **blackmailed victims**—demanding money to remove the content. **Exclusive "VIP chats" were monetized**, requiring members to pay for access to explicit material.

- **Legal Consequences and Law Enforcement Response:**

After an investigation, **62 victims were identified, 55 of whom were women**. The perpetrators were **convicted and sentenced to prison terms ranging from 3 to 7 years** under various **articles of the Criminal Code**, including:

- **Article 130** – Distribution of pornographic materials.
- **Article 139** – Defamation.
- **Article 165** – Extortion.

Despite convictions, Uzbekistan's laws lack explicit provisions criminalizing non-consensual pornography, meaning future cases may still face **legal loopholes**. This case highlights the dangers of online spaces being used to exploit women and the need for stronger laws addressing technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

4.2. Challenges Faced by Victims in Accessing Justice

Victims of online gender-based violence in Uzbekistan face significant barriers to justice due to legal gaps, weak enforcement, social stigma, and lack of support services.

A key challenge is the absence of clear legal definitions for online crimes are not explicitly criminalized. Instead, cases are prosecuted under defamation or privacy laws, failing to address the gendered nature of digital violence. This legal ambiguity makes it difficult for victims to prove harm and for law enforcement to investigate cases effectively. Weak law enforcement and judicial response further hinder justice. Authorities lack specialized training in digital investigations, delaying cases and leading to inefficient prosecution. Even when cases reach court, lenient sentencing fails to deter offenders.

Social stigma and victim-blaming discourage women from reporting incidents, fearing public backlash and reputational harm. Online violence is often dismissed as a private matter rather than a serious crime requiring state intervention, reducing the urgency of legal responses. Victims also lack access to psychological, legal, and technical support. Uzbekistan provides no state-funded psychological assistance, and legal aid remains limited, leaving

survivors without necessary resources to seek justice. The absence of structured digital evidence collection further complicates prosecution.

Without legal reforms, improved investigative procedures, and dedicated victim support, perpetrators will continue to exploit legal loopholes, and survivors will remain without adequate protection.

V. Recommendations and Conclusion

The rise of online gender-based violence (OGBV) in Uzbekistan highlights critical gaps in legal protections, law enforcement capacity, and digital platform accountability. Addressing this issue requires comprehensive reforms to align national legislation with international human rights standards and ensure effective prevention, prosecution, and victim support mechanisms.

Legal reforms should explicitly define and criminalize cyberstalking, online harassment, and other forms of online violence within the Criminal Code of Uzbekistan. Strengthened penalties and civil remedies are essential to deter perpetrators and provide victims with legal recourse. Simultaneously, law enforcement and judicial authorities must receive specialized training in digital investigations, and a centralized reporting system should be established to improve case handling and victim access to justice. Beyond legal measures, victim support services must be expanded to provide psychological assistance, legal aid, and shelters for those affected by digital violence. Digital literacy programs should be integrated into education and public awareness campaigns to prevent abuse and promote responsible online behavior. Furthermore, social media and tech companies must be legally required to moderate harmful content, establish transparent complaint mechanisms, and ensure rapid removal of abusive material, following regulatory models adopted in Germany and the UK.

Additionally, hate speech and online harassment under the guise of freedom of expression remain major concerns, particularly regarding gender-based, racial, and religious discrimination. Clear legal distinctions must be drawn to prevent digital violence from fueling broader societal divisions.

Without urgent reforms, Uzbekistan risks falling behind global efforts to combat technology-facilitated gender-based violence, leaving victims without protection or justice. A coordinated effort by the government, civil society, and digital platforms is essential to establishing an accountable, safe, and rights-based digital environment.

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