**Addressing gaps and limitations in legal frameworks on online VAWG, and in law enforcement, including on such issues as non-consensual distribution of intimate images, deepfakes, etc**
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**Summary of text:**
Despite the widespread nature of online gender-based violence (OGBV), many victims struggle to access adequate support. Content moderation practices of social media platforms are not accessible or effective, and friends and family are often under-educated in how to respond in a supportive manner. There is a clear need for governments and law makers to respond to OGBV through the establishment and enforcement of appropriate criminal and civil laws. Some forms of OGBV are already prohibited by existing legislation, such as stalking or harassment. In other cases, legal frameworks need to be expanded and amended to ensure they account for the distinct specificities of online violence. For example, existing privacy laws may not be comprehensive enough to capture certain forms of online abuse, such as the dissemination of sexual deepfake images. Other regulation may be overly comprehensive or vague and inadvertently lead to content removal, undermining critical discussions including those around sexuality, gender and reproductive health.

Many victims of offline gender-based violence report being discredited when reporting incidents to police and experiencing inappropriate discriminatory treatment during legal proceedings. Addressing systemic bias in the legal system is critical to ensuring just legal outcomes for victims of OGBV. Some victims from marginalized communities may have legitimate distrust in the effectiveness of the criminal justice system, due to a range of factors including pervasive discrimination against their communities by legal authorities, historic and ongoing police brutality, or the financial inaccessibility of legal remedies. Victims of OGBV such as these could benefit from access to alternative legal avenues, which do not require interaction with judicial authorities, such as administrative bodies or civil torts.

**Key recommendations:**
- Existing legislation must be reexamined to ensure it captures the specific nature of online gender-based violence. Any new legislation on OGBV should be grounded in a victim-centered, trauma informed approach which addresses the intersectional nature of OGBV.
- Addressing sexist and other discriminatory bias in the legal system is critical to ensuring a just response for all victims of OGBV. Governments must ensure that actors in the legal system have the appropriate technical knowledge to collect and understand evidence related to technology-based offences.
- In cases where personal information or intimate images have been distributed without consent, the swift removal of content is critical to limiting the associated harms. The introduction of fast-track legal processes, which circumvent lengthy court proceedings, would enable incidents such as these to be addressed without delay.
- To eliminate OGBV, a societal shift in online behavior is necessary. To better evaluate progress, governments must invest in research which focuses on understanding and tracking patterns of OGBV, and which measures the efficacy of existing prevention initiatives.