

# Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Defence Institutions

Responses and Leadership  
in the Global South



Mazzotta, Cecilia; Donadio, Marcela.

Copyright © 2026 Latin American Security and Defence Network - RESDAL International

*Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Defence Institutions. Responses and Leadership in the Global South*

RESDAL International – 1st ed.

Montevideo, Uruguay: RESDAL International, 2026

PDF, 77 p.

ISBN 978-9915-9912-1-4

---

■ *Prepared by*

Marcela Donadio and Cecilia Mazzotta

---

■ *Project Associates*

Renata Avelar Giannini

Dolores Bermeo

Ana Isabel Lorenzo Vázquez

Cecilia Lucas Huguet

María Lorena Merizalde

Elisa Rial

Rosario Rodríguez Cuitiño

Rodrigo Andrés Sánchez

María Teresa Vera

---

■ *Project Contributors*

*Regional and Thematic Contributors*

Niloy Biswas

María Covarrubias Fosado

Cecil Griffiths

Dainzú López de Lara Espinoza

Gerardo Rodríguez Sánchez Lara

Hala Salem

Rabha Allam

Roxana Arroyo

Rosita Chacón

Eduarda Hamann

Barbara Maigari

Jean Carlo Mejía Azuero

Nathalie Pabón Ayala

*Country Contributors*

Zeynep Alemdar (*Türkiye*)

Lucia Alvarez Casanova (*Uruguay*)

Namondo Sylvia Ezukwu (*Cameroon*)

Thalys Freire (*Brazil*)

Tishya Khillare (*India*)

Igor Novaes Lins (*Brazil*)

Nouran Ahmed (*Egypt*)

Hadiza Usman (*Nigeria*)

Wajid Zahid (*Pakistan*)

---

■ *Graphic Design*

Rubén Longas

---

Original version in Spanish. English translation and editorial refinement prepared with the assistance of OpenAI's ChatGPT.

---

RESDAL International  
Latin American Security and Defence Network  
<http://www.resdal.org>  
Executive Secretariat  
Juan Benito Blanco 780 - Montevideo,  
Uruguay  
Tel: (598) 2712-0660  
[secretaria@resdal.org](mailto:secretaria@resdal.org)

---

Copyright RESDAL

Deposit made according to copyright law

This publication received support from Global Affairs Canada, within the framework of the Elsie Initiative.



---

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

# Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Defence Institutions

## Responses and Leadership in the Global South

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Preface ..... | 4 |
|---------------|---|

### Section I

|                                                                                          |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Atlas of Institutional Practices in Response to Sexual Harassment and Abuse .....</b> | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>1. The National Framework .....</b>                                                   | <b>7</b>  |
| • Workplace Harassment .....                                                             | 7         |
| • The Penal Codes .....                                                                  | 9         |
| • Prevention, Sanction and Elimination of Violence Against Women .....                   | 30        |
| • General Legislation on Equality, Protection and Gender .....                           | 36        |
| • National Policies and Plans .....                                                      | 43        |
| <b>2. The Defence Institutions .....</b>                                                 | <b>45</b> |
| • Justice and Discipline .....                                                           | 45        |
| • Institutional Protocols and Procedures .....                                           | 57        |

### Section II

|                                                                                         |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>From the Duty to Report to the Commitment to Respond</b>                             |           |
| <b>Transformative Leadership in Addressing Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse .....</b> | <b>61</b> |
| <b>1. Creating Safe Work Environments in Defence Institutions .....</b>                 | <b>62</b> |
| • Recognizing the Armed Forces as Workplaces .....                                      | 62        |
| • Focusing on Key Definitions .....                                                     | 64        |
| • Fostering Positive Leadership .....                                                   | 65        |
| • Sharing and Contributing Global South Experience .....                                | 68        |
| <b>2. Concluding Reflections: Toward a Multifaceted Approach .....</b>                  | <b>71</b> |
| • Building Trust in the System .....                                                    | 71        |
| • Generating Knowledge for Action .....                                                 | 73        |

|                                     |           |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Consolidated Proposals .....</b> | <b>76</b> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|

|                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Additional Resources .....</b> | <b>77</b> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|

---

## Preface

This publication is the result of a project that, for nearly three years, was dedicated to mapping knowledge, legislation, experiences, debates, initiatives, capacities, trends and practices related to an emerging issue: sexual harassment and abuse within defence institutions, including the military. It was based on the premise that the potential increase in the participation of women in UN-led peace operations is also linked to the military work environment in countries, with particular attention to sexual harassment and abuse.

There are various ways to approach this phenomenon. The focus can be placed on the issue itself—regardless of the sector—on analytical and theoretical frameworks, or on developing diagnoses and recommendations, among other approaches. In our case, the overall objective was to position this topic on the defence agenda. This is because it is a phenomenon that needs to be understood both from human rights and gender perspectives, as well as through its implications for the functioning of the Armed Forces. Its existence within military institutions challenges core aspects of the military ethos and organization, particularly those associated with cohesion, trust, and the integrity of professional relationships.

That being said, positioning an issue can also adopt various strategies. The project's main criteria focused on the need to conduct a rigorous and sensitive approach, respect each country's own diversity, seek to build knowledge collaboratively on a little-explored topic, provide a space where experiences and practices could be shared, and—almost fundamentally—be guided by information and inputs as a starting point, rather than prior assumptions.

Since 2007, when a pioneering project on the integration of women into military and police institutions began, RESDAL has maintained the women, peace, and security agenda as one of its core areas of work. As an organization, it has had the privilege of observing and accompanying change processes within military institutions. While starting its work in the Latin American region, the organization quickly recognized the high potential and value of cooperation among regions of the Global South, and particularly the wealth of experiences and practices that countries develop. These defence institutions, which are key allies of the agenda today, demonstrate how changes that might be perceived as slow are also a reflection of institutional processes characterized by a steady pace and a long-term strategy.

This process was encouraged by the support of actors whose response reflected the value of the criteria mentioned above. We would like to express our gratitude for the trust of Global Affairs Canada, which made

this project possible through the Elsie Initiative, and especially for the contribution it has consistently made in our regions to addressing issues with the utmost respect. We also thank the defence institutions of the countries whose cases were included in this project for their openness, willingness to collaborate, the input and experiences they provided, and for honoring us with their trust. We are likewise grateful to the UN-related offices that supported activities and encouraged our work, particularly the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and the Conduct and Discipline Service, and the Elsie Initiative Fund. These first acknowledgments, as sincere as they are well deserved, serve to illustrate how important collaboration is in achieving results such as those obtained by this project.

This report presents what we observed throughout this work and does so from the perspective that when a topic needs to be considered on the agenda—especially in an age of abundant but often fragmented or unreliable information—the best approach is to identify, organize, and make sense of the basic. From there, people can take further steps. It is far from exhaustive and does not claim to cover every area. It constitutes a first step in the development of the policies and reflections that this phenomenon deserves. It provides a foundation for analysis, debate, and for drawing experiences or ideas that may be useful in specific local contexts. All primary documentation is directly accessible in a [Database](#); we highly recommend consulting it, as space constraints make it impossible to fully reflect certain data in tables or graphs (such as additional content and documents). This database will continue to be updated, and other materials can also be found on the project [website](#).

Considering the value of diverse experiences and their exchange, information was collected from four different regions of the Global South: Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the MENA region. The twenty cases considered are Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Türkiye, and Uruguay. Information was collected using guidelines specifically designed for this purpose, and in addition to the project team, local and regional experts and researchers contributed both data and analysis. We are also deeply grateful to all those individuals who took on the challenge.

The publication is organized into two sections to better benefit those who will use it. The first section—titled *Atlas of Institutional Practices in Response to Sexual Harassment and Abuse*—systematizes institutional norms, regulations, policies, plans, and practices from the different countries. It begins with the general framework of the countries, a chapter that stands out for the sheer force of the ongoing legal construction it conveys. It compiles definitions and evolutions in penal codes, showing how they have expanded legal definitions and strengthened sanctions to close legal gaps and respond to technological and social transformations. It also reflects the emergence of legal categories addressing new forms of violence—digital, psychological, and symbolic— as well as the broader context of gender legislation and national prevention and response policies.

The report then moves from national frameworks to the defence sector. This section compiles legislation applicable to defence institutions, military justice and disciplinary codes, regulations on conduct, and codes of ethics. The information in this chapter is also striking, considering how ample the normative and regulatory

action of the sector has been regarding human rights, gender, and —more recently, in a process observable over the years—sexual harassment and abuse. The instruments presented include manuals, guidelines, and plans, as well as criminal and disciplinary regulations.

The second section—entitled “From the Duty to Report to the Commitment to Respond: Transformative Leadership in Addressing Sexual Harassment and Abuse”—offers an initial assessment of the main situations and challenges observed. It provides key themes for analysis and reflection: recognizing that the Armed Forces are also a workplace, paying attention to definitions, addressing the issue of leadership, and strengthening cooperation among regions. It invites consideration of key questions regarding approaches to sexual harassment and abuse, presents proposals for action, and concludes by introducing two initial lines of work related to institutional systems. This section and conclusion serve as a starting point for future developments.

The experience of our regions is enriching, perhaps even more so than we realize, and deserves to be shared. It also shows that efforts to address this issue are still at an early stage, that many questions remain to be resolved and developed, and that interregional collaborative spaces and the mapping of experiences contribute to the broader effort to create safe working environments. We hope that this contribution will help foster such spaces.

**Andrea Chiappini**  
*President*

**Marcela Donadio**  
*Project Lead*

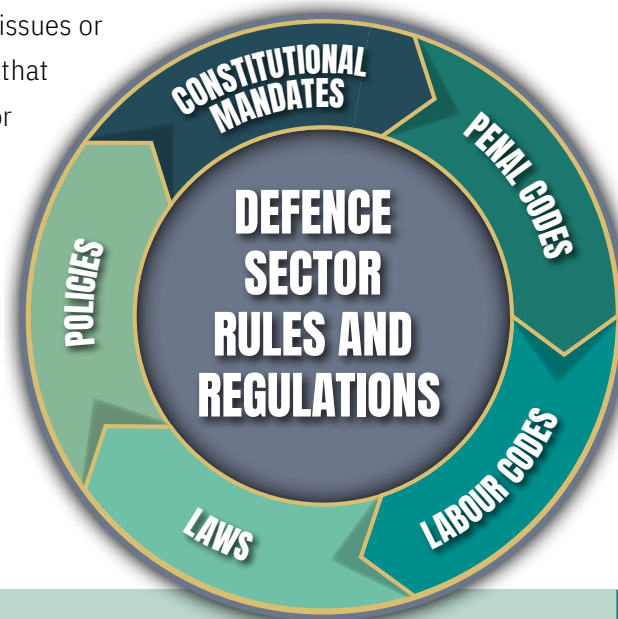
# Section I

## **Atlas of Institutional Practices in Response to Sexual Harassment and Abuse**

# 1 THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The defence sector operates within a broader system of national laws and public policies, of which it forms a part. In both the institutional framework and the practice of our countries, the regulations and practices of defence institutions—and, within them, military institutions—are informed by an overarching national framework that guides and mandates them. This also applies in the case of sexual harassment and sexual abuse.

Thus, constitutional provisions that address these issues or matters related to women or gender; penal codes that may or may not classify such conduct as a crime; labor codes; laws; and public policies, together constitute the general national framework to be observed. In the cases considered in this study, this framework is extensive and has undergone significant transformations over the past decades.



## Workplace Harassment

In addition to constituting a criminal matter in most cases, sexual harassment and abuse are also workplace issues. Research conducted around the world has examined their impact on the work environment: a phenomenon with adverse consequences for both individuals and organizations.

### The ILO Violence and Harassment Convention

The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Convention No. 190 focuses on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work. It seeks to ensure that countries create safe and respectful working environments for workers.

It was adopted in 2019 and entered into force in 2021.

It establishes that countries must:

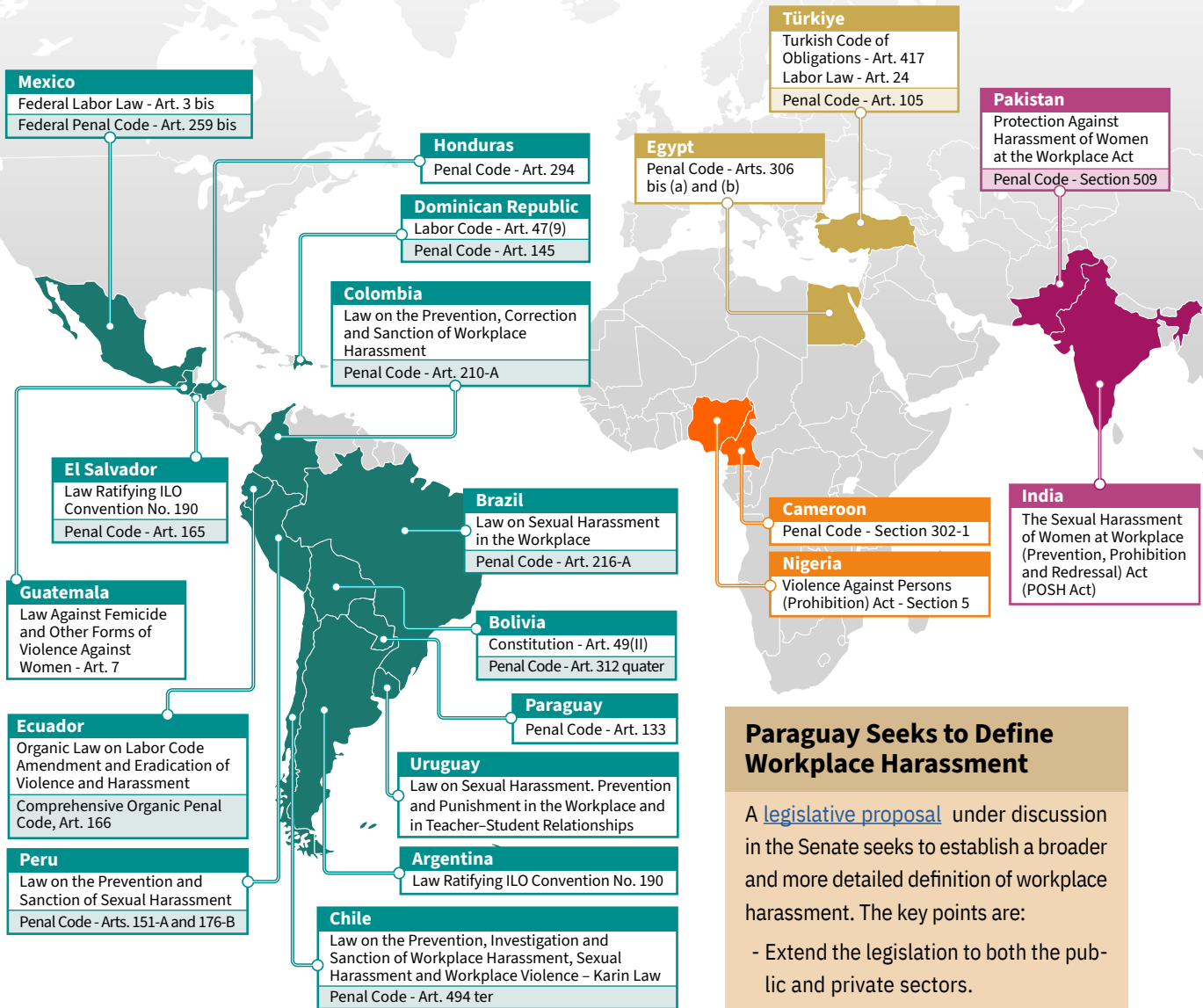
- Prevent and eliminate workplace violence and harassment.
- Protect workers.
- Establish policies and procedures to address such cases.
- Sanction those responsible.

**25%** of the countries included in this study have ratified it

Argentina  
Ecuador  
El Salvador  
Peru  
Uruguay

## Laws Defining Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Practice shows two predominant trends in most cases: the enactment of specific legislation addressing workplace sexual harassment, and the incorporation of sexual harassment offences into penal codes.



### Paraguay Seeks to Define Workplace Harassment

A [legislative proposal](#) under discussion in the Senate seeks to establish a broader and more detailed definition of workplace harassment. The key points are:

- Extend the legislation to both the public and private sectors.
- Establish different types of harassment, such as sexual harassment, cyberbullying, and workplace violence.
- Imposing sanctions and penalties on those responsible for hostile comments, including the possibility of dismissal and fines.

In March 2026, the Guidelines for the Prevention, Handling, Investigation, and Response to Situations of Discrimination, Violence, and Harassment in the Workplace in the Private Sector were approved (Resolution MTESS 195/2026 (2026)).

### The Turkish Code of Obligations

This body of law, in force since 2012, governs contractual relationships under Turkish private law, including labor-related obligations such as contracts, civil liability, and labor relations. Article 417 provides that: “The employer is obligated to protect and respect the dignity of the employee in the employment relationship and to maintain order in the workplace in accordance with the principles of good faith; in particular, the employer must take the necessary measures to prevent psychological and sexual harassment of employees and to prevent those who have suffered such harassment from suffering further harm.”

(*Türk Borçlar Kanunu*. Art. 417. Unofficial translation.)

## The Penal Codes

The continuous updates to general penal codes regarding gender, femicide, and harassment have become a clear trend across countries. These are very important, progressive changes that demonstrate how legal instruments in the Global South have evolved in response to social demands. When we refer to crimes committed by military personnel—and in light of a global legal shift toward transferring jurisdiction over such crimes to ordinary courts—it is essential to look at each country's legal framework, since the absence of similar provisions in military codes or regulations does not necessarily exempt military personnel from legal liability.

A look at historical developments shows how penal codes have been updated to address new forms of crime, particularly online harassment and the protection of children, women, and adolescents.

### Amendments to Penal Codes: Key Moments

The largest number of reforms and new criminal definitions regarding workplace and sexual harassment occurred between 2010 and 2025. During this period, most countries amended their penal codes and expanded definitions, incorporating new aggravating factors and provisions, including the use of digital technology.

Some of these criminal law reforms were introduced through amendments to primary laws that define violence against women and the various forms in which it can be perpetrated, including sexual harassment.

#### Argentina

- **1999**
  - Law 25087. Establishes crimes against sexual integrity.
- **2012**
  - Law 26791. Incorporates femicide, increases penalties for gender-based violence, and updates criminal offences regarding sexual integrity, digital violence, and domestic violence.
- **2013**
  - Law 26904. Establishes grooming as a criminal offence.
- **2015**
  - Law 27206. Modifies the statute of limitations for sexual offences.
- **2017**
  - Law 27352. Defines the specific actions constituting sexual abuse.
- **2018**
  - Law 27455. Classifies crimes against sexual integrity as private action offences.

**Bolivia**• **1999**

- Law 2033. Redefines protections for psychological and sexual integrity.

• **2013**

- Law 348. Expands criminal offences against women, adding sexual harassment, economic, domestic, and forced sterilization violence. Establishes femicide as an autonomous offence.

• **2019**

- Law 1173. Establishes a position of dependency or authority as an aggravating circumstance.
- Law 1226. Streamlines proceedings.

**Brazil**• **2001**

- Law 10224. Criminalizes sexual harassment.

• **2006**

- Law 11340. (*Maria da Penha Law*). Prevents and curbs domestic and family violence against women

• **2009**

- Law 12015. Redefines offences against sexual liberty and dignity.

• **2012**

- Law 12650. (*Joana Maranhão Law*). Eliminates the statute of limitations for offences against children and adolescents.

• **2015**

- Law 13104. Establishes femicide as an aggravating circumstance of homicide.

• **2018**

- Law 13718. Criminalizes non-consensual sexual touching.
- Law 13772. Criminalizes the unauthorized sharing of intimate sexual content.

• **2021**

- Law 14132. Incorporates stalking as a crime.
- Law 14188. Criminalizes psychological violence against women.
- Law 14245. (*Mariana Ferrer Law*). Protection for victims and witnesses; criminalization of coercion.

• **2024**

- Law 14994. Femicide as an autonomous offence. Increased penalties.

• **2025**

- Law 15123. Increases penalties for psychological violence against women involving AI or technology.
- Law 15280. Increases penalties for offences against the sexual dignity of vulnerable individuals.

• **2026**

- Law 15353. Establishes the absolute presumption of vulnerability for statutory rape victims.
- Law 15384. Vicarious violence as a distinct criminal offence

**Cameroon**• **2016**

- Law 2016/007. Penal Code update: Criminalization of sexual harassment. Increased penalties for sexual offences. Public prosecution of crimes. No private settlements allowed.

**Chile**• **1999**

- Law 19617. Amends provisions regarding the crime of rape.

• **2005**

- Law 20066. Domestic violence as a criminal offence

• **2010**

- Law 20480. Femicide as an aggravating circumstance of homicide.

• **2019**

- Law 21153. Criminalizes sexual harassment in public spaces.

• **2020**

- Law 21212. Refinement and expansion of the definition of femicide.

• **2022**

- Law 21523 (*Antonia Law*). Protection for the rights of sexual offence victims and prevention of re-victimization.

• **2024**

- Law 21675. Criminalizes the unauthorized sharing of intimate sexual images or audio.

**Colombia**• **2002**

- Law 747. Human trafficking as a distinct criminal offence.

• **2008**

- Law 1236. Modifies offences against sexual liberty, integrity, and development.
- Law 1257. Criminalizes sexual harassment.

• **2014**

- Law 1719. Access to justice for victims of sexual violence.

• **2015**

- Law 1761. (*Rosa Elvira Cely Law*). Femicide as an autonomous offence.

• **2021**

- Law 2081. (*No More Silence Law*). No statute of limitations for sexual offences.

**The Violence Against Persons Act in Nigeria**

The *Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act* (VAPP Act), enacted in 2015, introduced into Nigerian law the criminalization of domestic violence, female genital mutilation, sexual harassment, and psychological abuse. The Act was also positively received for modernizing the legal framework on gender-based violence and strengthening protections for victims.

## Dominican Republic

### • In 2025

through Law 74-25, the Dominican Republic enacted a new Penal Code. Its enactment is considered historic, with entry into force in August 2026.

- New offences defined:
  - Femicide and gender-based violence.
  - Economic violence against women.
  - Rape within marriage or in intimate relationships, with enhanced penalties.
  - Cyberbullying, dissemination of fake news used for blackmail, pyramid schemes, and unregulated financial intermediation.
  - Crimes against humanity, genocide, and enforced disappearance.
- Protection of affected persons: strengthening fundamental rights, along with comprehensive reparations and penalties for serious crimes against women and vulnerable groups.
- Criminal liability of legal entities: companies can be held liable for crimes.

## Ecuador

### • 2014

- RO 180. New Comprehensive Organic Penal Code.

### • 2019

- RO 175. Amendments on violence against women
- RO 107. Increased penalties; criminalization of harassment.

### • 2021

- RO 526. Criminalizes digital sexual violence, cyberbullying, and grooming.

### • 2023

- RO 279. Criminalizes the recruitment of children and adolescents for criminal purposes, including offences against sexual integrity.

## Egypt

### • 2014

- Law 50. Criminalizes sexual harassment.

### • 2016

- Law 78. Female genital mutilation classified as a felony.

### • 2020

- Law 189. Establishes penalties for verbal gestures or sexual or pornographic acts; criminalizes bullying.

### • 2021

- Law 10. Increases penalties for female genital mutilation.
- Law 141. Increases penalties for sexual harassment and reclassifies it as a felony.

### • 2023

- Law 185. Aggravating circumstances for the use of technology and electronic media.

## El Salvador

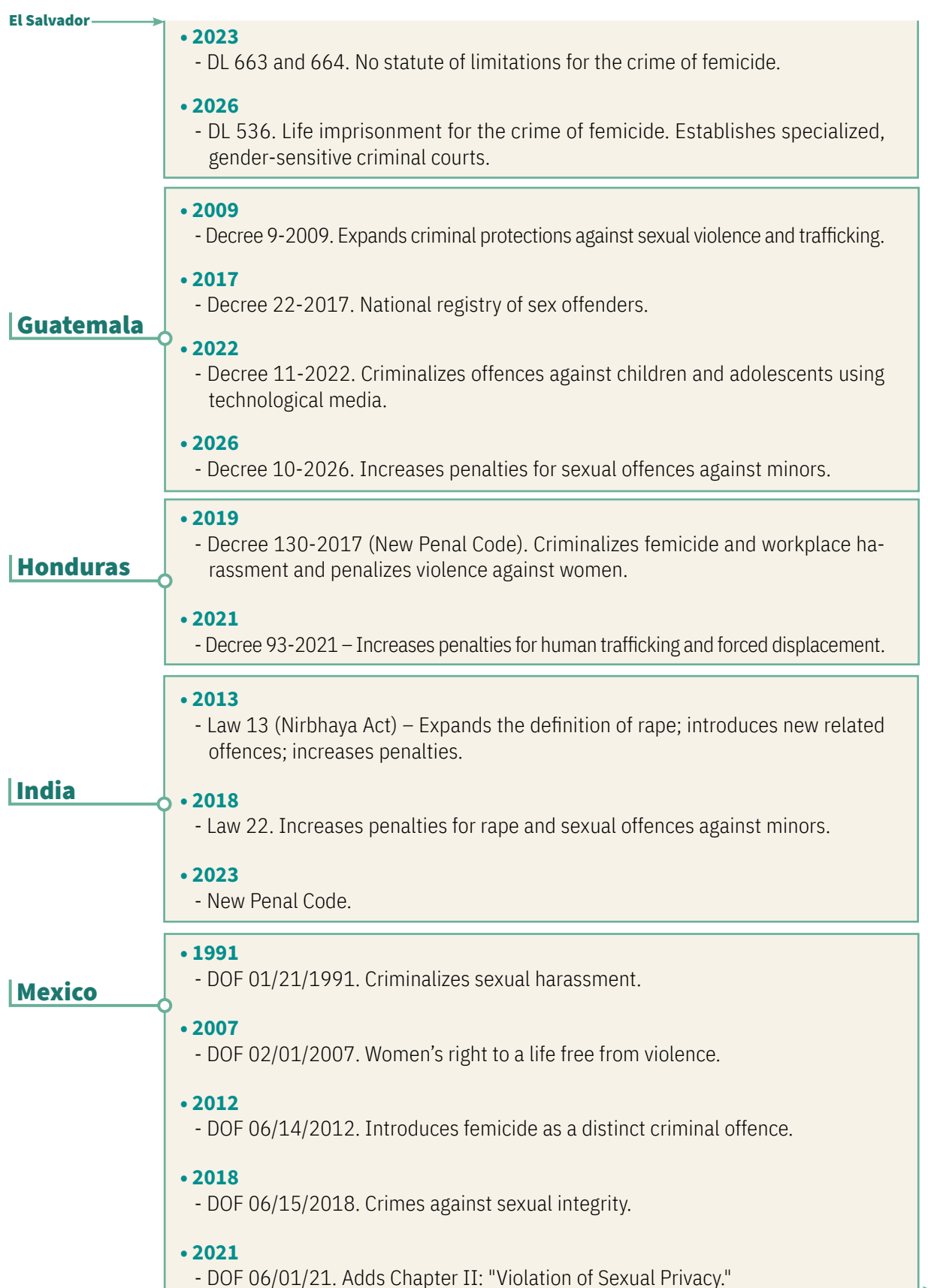
### • 2003

- DL 210. Enhanced protection for children and adolescents.

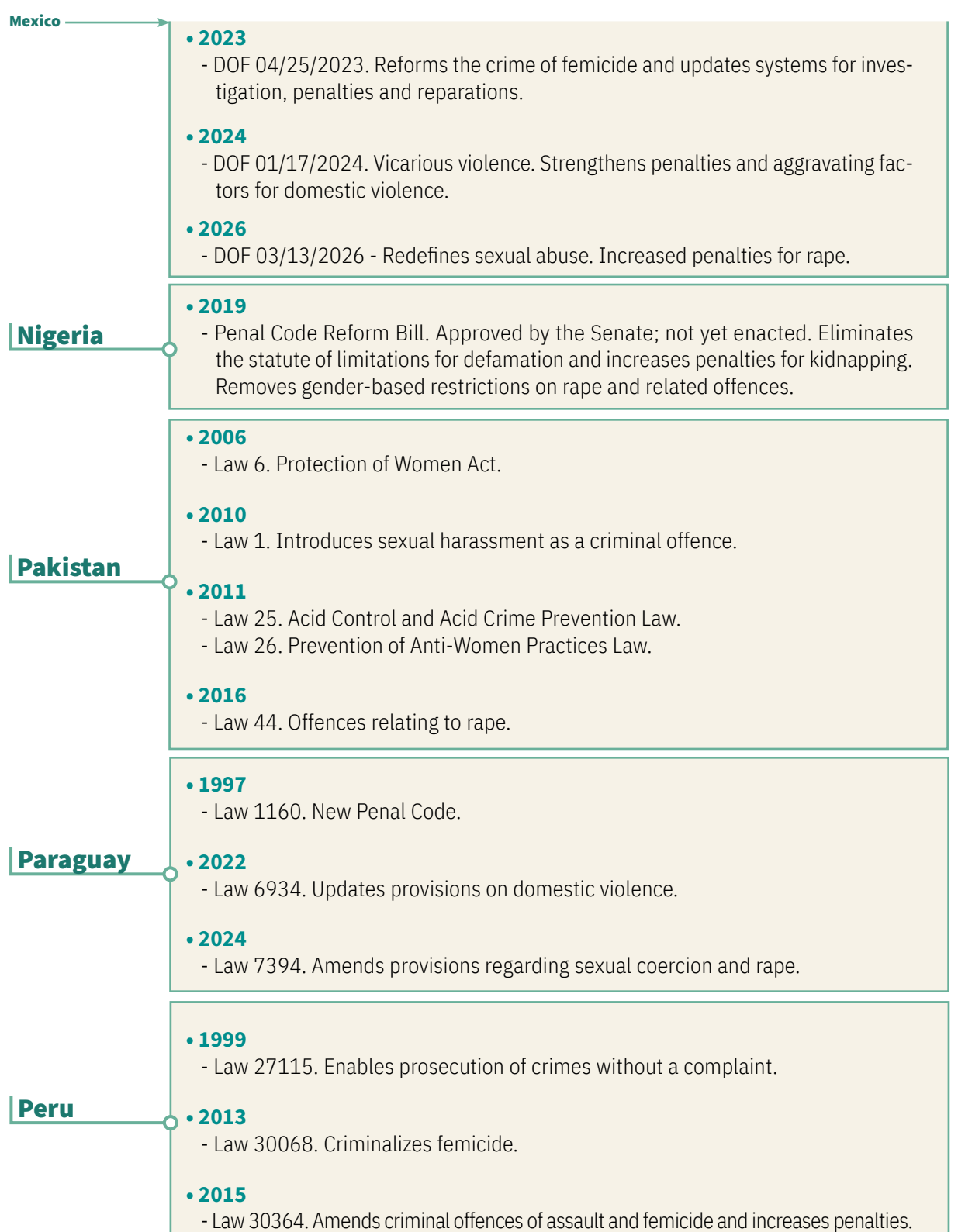
### • 2022

- DL 374. Increases penalties for rape and sexual assault.

**Note:** RO refers to the Official Gazette (*Registro Oficial*, Ecuador) and DL to Legislative Decree (*Decreto Legislativo*, El Salvador).



**Note:** DOF refers to the Official Gazette (*Diario Oficial de la Federación*, Mexico).



### El Salvador Strengthens Penalties for Femicide and Sexual Violence

In 2026, the Legislative Assembly approved a constitutional amendment establishing life imprisonment for those convicted of femicide or rape, consolidating a policy of stricter criminal penalties for gender-based violence.

## Peru

## • 2017

- Decree-Law 1323. Introduces reforms on femicide, domestic violence, and gender-based violence.

## • 2018

- Decree-Law 1410. Criminalizes harassment, sexual blackmail, and the unauthorized sharing of intimate content.
- Law 30819. Expands criminal protection.

## • 2019

- Law 30963. Includes penalties for sexual exploitation offences.

## • 2025

- Law 32258. Prohibits suspended sentences for offenders.
- Law 32314. Establishes aggravating circumstances for the use of AI technologies, including deepfakes.

## Türkiye

## • 2004

- Law 5237 (New Penal Code). Criminalizes sexual harassment; redefines consent; eliminates penalty reductions or dismissal in cases of marriage to the victim.

## • 2021

- Law 7331 (4th Judicial Package). Strengthens aggravating circumstances related to violence against women.

## • 2022

- Law 7406. Criminalizes stalking.

## Uruguay

## • 1995

- Law 16707. Public Safety Law. Introduces the offence of domestic violence into the Penal Code.

## • 2017

- Law 19538. Criminalizes discrimination and femicide.
- Law 19580. New categories and aggravating factors for sexual offences.

## • 2020

- Law 19889. Establishes femicide as an aggravating circumstance in homicide. Revises the definitions of rape and sexual abuse.

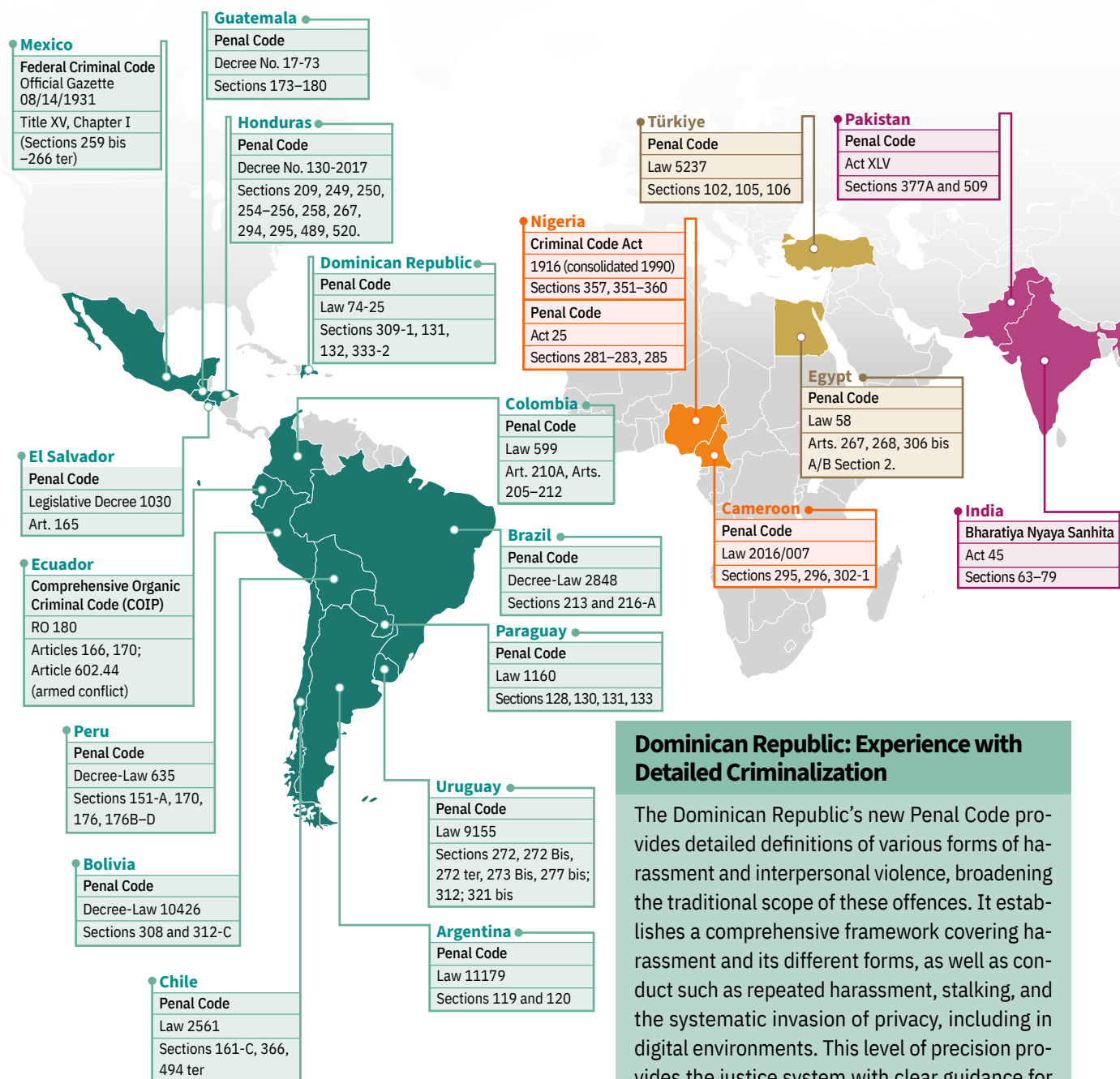
**Note:** DL refers to Legislative Decree (*Decreto Legislativo*, Peru).

**Source:** Own compilation based on legislation retrieved for each case. Available at: <https://www.resdal.org/instituciones-wps/eng/database/>

### Proposal to Tighten Criminal Penalties for Femicide in Honduras

The National Defence and Security Council (CNDS), under the direction of the Presidency of the Republic and in coordination with the three branches of government, announced in 2026 a draft reform of the Penal Code aimed at increasing the current penalties for the crime of femicide, which currently range between 20 and 25 years in prison. The proposal also includes the creation of a National Registry of Offenders and the strengthening of the investigative capacities of the Public Prosecutor's Office.

## Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Penal Codes



Source: Own compilation based on legislation retrieved for each case.

## Dominican Republic: Experience with Detailed Criminalization

The Dominican Republic's new Penal Code provides detailed definitions of various forms of harassment and interpersonal violence, broadening the traditional scope of these offences. It establishes a comprehensive framework covering harassment and its different forms, as well as conduct such as repeated harassment, stalking, and the systematic invasion of privacy, including in digital environments. This level of precision provides the justice system with clear guidance for classifying conduct as criminal offences, thereby reducing ambiguities in the application of the law.

## Egypt and Its Path of Penal Reform to Address Sexual Harassment

Egypt has pursued a gradual process of penal reform to address sexual harassment. In 2014, Decree-Law No. 50 criminalized sexual harassment as a distinct offence in the Penal Code for the first time, broadening its definition and introducing penalties of imprisonment and fines. Subsequently, Law No. 141 of 2021 substantially increased the penalties and introduced aggravating circumstances for offences committed in public spaces and workplaces, while Law No. 185 of 2023 further strengthened the penalties and extended protection to children and other vulnerable persons. This progression reflects a consistent reform trajectory in response to growing social demands.

## Sexual Harassment in Penal Codes: Definitions

Where conduct is classified as a criminal offence, its definition is set out in the relevant Penal Code. While sexual abuse is included in all Penal Codes, the criminalization of sexual harassment is a more recent development. As a result, a clearer distinction between these two offences remains, in some cases, an outstanding issue in legislative practice. The tendency to regard the criminalization of sexual abuse as sufficient to address the issue is one area where awareness-raising initiatives and legislative capacity-building could make a valuable contribution.

The importance of criminalizing specific conduct in the Penal Code is closely linked to the enforcement of the law: defining an offence in legislation enables justice officials to classify cases more quickly and consistently.

**Among the countries examined  
3 out of 4 explicitly  
criminalize sexual harassment  
in their Penal Code.**

### Sexual Harassment

“is a form of harassment and is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that has or that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation.”

UNDP (2018). *Harassment, Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Abuse of Authority Policy*.

### Sexual Abuse

“the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.”

United Nations. Secretary-General’s Bulletin (2003). *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse*. ST/SGB/2003/13

## Bolivia

To take advantage of a hierarchical position or power of any kind to harass, pursue, demand, coerce, threaten to cause any harm or detriment, make the granting of a benefit conditional upon, or compel another person by any means to engage in a relationship, perform acts, or engage in conduct of a sexual nature that would not otherwise be consensual, for the benefit of oneself or a third person.

(Penal Code, Art. 312 quater).

## Brazil

To exert pressure on another person to obtain a sexual advantage or favour by taking advantage of a position of hierarchical superiority or authority in the workplace or in the performance of official duties.

(Penal Code, Art. 216-A).

## Cameroon

Sexual Harassment: To take advantage of the authority conferred on him by his position to harass another using orders, threats, constraints or pressure in order to obtain sexual favours.

(Penal Code, Section 302-1).

## Chile

A person commits sexual harassment if they, in public places or places with public access, and without the consent of the victim, engage in an act of a sexual nature capable of creating an objectively intimidating, hostile, or humiliating situation, and which does not constitute a misdemeanour or offence punishable by a more severe penalty, consisting of:

1. Verbal acts or acts carried out through gestures.
2. Conduct consisting of approaches or pursuits, or acts of obscene exhibitionism or of explicit sexual content.

(Penal Code, Art. 494 ter.)

## Colombia

Sexual harassment: whoever, for their own benefit or that of a third party, and taking advantage of their manifest superiority or relationships of authority or power, age, sex, employment, social, family, or economic position, harasses, pursues, intimidates, or stalks another person, physically or verbally, for non-consensual sexual purposes.

Aggravating circumstance: if the offender holds any status, position, or office that gives them particular authority over the victim or leads the victim to place their trust in them.

(Penal Code, Art. 210A).

Violence: for the purposes of the conduct described (...), violence shall be understood as: the use of force; the threat of the use of force; physical or psychological coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence or intimidation; unlawful detention; psychological oppression; abuse of power; the use of coercive environments and similar circumstances that prevent the victim from giving free consent.

(Penal Code, Art. 212 A).

## Dominican Republic

Harassment: whoever, by any means and repeatedly, pursues, intimidates, or stalks another person in a manner that disrupts the normal course of their daily life.

Sexual harassment: whoever monitors, pursues, intimidates, or stalks a person in order to carry out acts of a sexual nature.

Paragraph I. If the harassment is carried out through electronic means, social media, or digital platforms, a penalty of two to three years of minor imprisonment shall apply, and the court may additionally order the restriction or blocking of the offender's use of technological means.

Paragraph II. [Aggravating circumstance] When the conduct occurs within the framework of a relationship of power, authority, trust, or subordination, such as in workplace, academic, religious, or family settings.

Paragraph III. Sexual harassment in the workplace constitutes just cause for resignation in accordance with the provisions of the applicable labour legislation, without prejudice to any other actions that may be brought by the victim.

(Penal Code, Arts. 143, 145 and 146).

## Pakistan and an Early Law Addressing Digital Violence

An important early precedent in the regulation of conduct such as harassment and the non-consensual dissemination of intimate content in digital environments was Pakistan's Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016. Although its primary focus was cybersecurity and the criminalization of unauthorized access to systems, it was noteworthy for its time because it also covered behaviours that would today be recognized as forms of digital violence, including the non-consensual sharing of intimate content, online harassment, image manipulation, and similar conduct.

## Ecuador

To request an act of a sexual nature, for themselves or for a third party, taking advantage of a position of workplace, educational, religious, or similar authority, whether as a guardian, curator, minister of religion, education or health professional, personnel responsible for the care and treatment of a patient, or a person maintaining a family relationship, or through any other form implying the victim's subordination, while threatening to cause harm to the victim or a third party in relation to the legitimate expectations the victim may have in the context of that relationship of subordination.

(Comprehensive Organic Penal Code, Art. 166).

## Egypt

Exposing others in a public, private or frequented place to sexual or pornographic acts or insinuations, whether by gestures, words, actions or any means, including wired or wireless communication methods.

Sexual harassment shall be considered when the crime referred to in Article 306 bis (a) is committed with the intention of obtaining sexual benefit from the victim.

If the offender is a person with authority over the victim (professional, familial, educational or otherwise), or if the crime is committed by two or more persons, or if any of them carries a weapon, the penalty shall be imprisonment for not less than two years and not exceeding five years and a fine not less than 20,000 Egyptian pounds and not exceeding 50,000 Egyptian pounds.

(Penal Code, Art. 306 bis a and b.).

## El Salvador

To engage in sexual conduct that is unwanted by the recipient, involving remarks, touching, gestures, or any other unequivocal conduct of a sexual nature or content, and which does not in itself constitute a more serious offence.

(Penal Code, Art. 165).

## Peru: Protection of Complainants' Identity

Peru's recent reform, consolidated through Legislative Decree 1739 of 2026, criminalizes breaches of complainant confidentiality through the introduction of Article 409-C into the Penal Code. Under this provision, liability is increased when the disclosure of a complainant's identity creates a concrete risk to the victim's life or physical integrity. The reform is particularly stringent in cases involving public officials, penalizing those who misuse confidential information for personal gain or financial benefit. It also establishes severe penalties for the disclosure of a victim's identity, with the aim of ensuring that protection mechanisms do not themselves become an additional source of risk for those who report offences.

## Honduras

Vertical workplace harassment: whoever, within the context of any employment relationship and taking advantage of a position of superiority, repeatedly carries out hostile or contemptuous acts against another person which, although not individually constituting degrading treatment, place the victim in an objectively and seriously humiliating situation within the corresponding sphere of the relationship.

Violence against women: whoever, within the framework of unequal power relations between men and women based on gender, exercises physical or psychological violence against a woman.

Sexual harassment: whoever, within the context of an organization or within the framework of an ongoing or habitual employment, educational, service-provision, sports, or religious relationship, repeatedly requests sexual favours for themselves or for a third party and, through such conduct, objectively places the victim in a seriously intimidating, hostile, or humiliating situation within the corresponding sphere of the relationship.

(Penal Code. Arts. 294, 209 y 256).

## India

Sexual Harassment [men]: A man committing any of the following acts: —(i) physical contact and advances involving unwelcome and explicit sexual overtures; or (ii) a demand or request for sexual favours; or (iii) showing pornography against the will of a woman; or (iv) making sexually coloured remarks, shall be guilty of the offence of sexual harassment.

(*Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita*. Section 75 (1)).

## Mexico

Whoever, for lascivious purposes, repeatedly harasses a person of any sex, taking advantage of a hierarchical position arising from employment, educational, domestic, or any other relationship involving subordination. If the harasser is a public servant and uses the means or circumstances provided by their position, in addition to the prescribed penalties, they shall be removed from office and may be disqualified from holding any other public office for up to one year.

(Federal Penal Code, Art. 259 bis).

## Bolivia Debates the Brisa Law

The so-called Brisa Law was under debate in Bolivia's Chamber of Deputies in 2026. It seeks to introduce five amendments to the Penal Code aimed at reducing impunity for sexual offences against minors. Among its main provisions are the elimination of statutes of limitations for such offences, the repeal of the offence of *estupro*, and the criminalization of incestuous rape. The bill also extends legal protection to all persons under the age of 18 and places consent at the centre of judicial investigations.

## Pakistan

Insulting modesty or causing sexual harassment. It is committed by whoever:

(i) (...).

(ii) conduct sexual advances, or demand sexual favours or uses verbal or non-verbal communication or physical conduct of a sexual nature which intends to annoy, insult, intimidate or threaten the other person or commits such acts at the premises of workplace, or makes submission to such conduct either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or makes submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual a basis for employment decision affecting such individual, or retaliates because of rejection of such behaviour, or conducts such behaviour with the intention of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment;

Explanation 2. \_\_ Workplace means, the place of work or the premises where an organization or employer operates, this may be a specific building, factory, open area or a larger geographical area where the activities of the organization are carried out. Sexual advances may occur after working hours and outside workplace. It is the access that perpetrator has to the person being harassed by virtue of a job situation or job-related functions and activities.

(Penal Code, Section 509).

## Mexico: New Legal Responses to Gender-Based Violence

In Mexico, legal developments related to gender-based violence reflect a gradual process of expanding legal categories and strengthening institutional responses. Examples include:

- The **Olimpia Law**, a series of reforms introduced from 2018 onward and consolidated at the federal level between 2020 and 2021. Widely regarded as pioneering, these reforms recognized digital violence as a form of violence, particularly within the broader framework of gender-based violence. They criminalize the recording, distribution, or commercialization of intimate images, audio recordings, or videos without consent, as well as other violations of privacy in digital environments, with penalties ranging from fines to imprisonment depending on the circumstances and aggravating factors.
- **The 3 of 3 Law**, a constitutional reform approved in May 2023. It established that individuals seeking or holding public office must meet three requirements:
  1. They must not have a final conviction for sexual violence.
  2. They must not have a final conviction for gender-based violence, including family or domestic violence.
  3. They must not have a final conviction for failure to comply with child support obligations.
- **The Valeria Law**, a legislative initiative that would amend the Federal Penal Code to establish stalking as a standalone criminal offence, seeking to address existing legal gaps in responding to stalking. Following its unanimous approval by the Chamber of Deputies in February 2026, the bill remained pending debate and a vote in the Senate.

## Paraguay

Whoever, for sexual purposes, intimidates another person by abusing the authority or influence conferred by their functions.

(Penal Code, Art. 133).

## Peru

Harassment: whoever, repeatedly, continuously, or habitually, and by any means, monitors, pursues, intimidates, stalks, or seeks to establish contact or closeness with a person without their consent, in a manner that may alter the normal course of their daily life. Whoever, by any means, monitors, pursues, intimidates, stalks, or seeks to establish contact or closeness with a person without their consent, in a manner that alters the normal course of their daily life, even where the conduct has not been repeated, continuous, or habitual.

The same penalty shall apply to whoever engages in the same conduct through the use of any information or communication technology.

Sexual harassment: whoever, in any manner, monitors, pursues, intimidates, stalks, or seeks to establish contact or closeness with a person, without that person's consent, in order to carry out acts of a sexual nature (...). The same penalty shall apply to whoever engages in the same conduct through the use of any information or communication technology.

Aggravating circumstances (both offences):

4. The victim is in a position of dependency or subordination with respect to the offender.
5. The conduct is carried out within the framework of the victim's employment, educational, or training relationship.

(Penal Code, Arts. 151 A and 176 B).

## Türkiye

A person who sexually harasses another for sexual purposes shall, upon the victim's complaint, be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of three months to two years or a fine; if the act is committed against a child, the sentence shall be imprisonment for a term of six months to three years.

Aggravating circumstances:

- a) By taking advantage of the ease afforded by a public office, a service relationship, or a family relationship.
- c) By taking advantage of the facilitation provided by working at the same workplace.

(Penal Code, Art.105).

## Uruguay. Bill on Femicide-Induced Suicide

Uruguay's Parliament is debating a bill introduced in 2026 that seeks to establish femicide-induced suicide as a standalone offence. The concept refers to cases in which women who are victims of gender-based violence take their own lives as a direct consequence of that violence.

The proposal would amend the Penal Code by introducing Article 315 bis, including the following provision: "Whoever induces, causes, or assists another person (...) and where the death is preceded by any form of gender-based violence or sexual violence committed by the offender against the victim shall be punished with four to twelve years of imprisonment."

### Guatemala and a Comprehensive Criminal Law Reform

Decree No. 9-2009 represented a comprehensive reform of Guatemala's criminal law framework aimed at modernizing the response to sexual violence. It replaced and introduced numerous offences within the Penal Code, providing more precise criminal definitions for conduct that had previously been fragmented across different provisions or treated as minor offences.

The reform established a Secretariat against Sexual Violence attached to the Office of the Vice President, with an initial budget allocation and a Compensation Fund for victims, and set deadlines for the adoption of implementing regulations. Its innovations also included procedural measures to protect victims' identities and mechanisms designed to facilitate the investigation and prosecution of sexual offences.

### Cameroon and the Penal Code

Cameroon's Penal Code underwent a significant reform in 2016. The reform introduced a number of important provisions relating to sexual offences, including workplace sexual harassment. One notable change was the removal of a provision that allowed criminal liability for rape to be extinguished through marriage to the victim, a measure that had previously been criticized, particularly by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Amid public concern over judicial decisions perceived as inadequate, discussions on further reform gained momentum in 2026. Among the proposed measures is the creation of a standalone offence of femicide.

### Brazil and Its Extensive Legislative Development

Brazil has developed a broad and progressively expanding legal framework addressing harassment, sexual violence, and the protection of privacy. Over time, it has incorporated a range of offences and protective measures into both criminal law and the broader human rights framework, expanding the scope of punishable conduct and strengthening protections against different forms of interpersonal violence.

Key milestones in this process include the *Lei Maria da Penha*, which provides the foundation for addressing domestic and gender-based violence; the introduction of Article 216-A into the Penal Code through Law 10224 in 2001, which criminalized *assédio sexual* as the abuse of a hierarchical position or authority; and Law 13718 of 2018, which expanded the framework of offences against sexual dignity and introduced the offence of *importunação sexual*. Together, these reforms reflect a gradual and sustained expansion of legal protections and a strengthening of the criminal justice response to different forms of sexual violence.

### A Continued Process of Reform in Chile

Recent legislative developments on gender-based violence in Chile reflect a gradual expansion of the areas covered by legal protection. In 2019, Law 21153 criminalized sexual harassment in public spaces, incorporating conduct such as verbal harassment, following, exhibitionism, and the non-consensual capture or dissemination of intimate images, while also establishing preventive measures in public transportation and other shared spaces.

Subsequent reforms with significant public impact, such as the “Karin Law”, which strengthened the regulation of harassment and violence in the workplace, and the “Antonia Law”, which introduced criminal responses to severe forms of sexual violence and their consequences in interpersonal contexts, continued this broader process of expanding protections against gender-based violence across different settings, particularly in relation to sexual harassment and sexual abuse.

## Key Laws Amending Penal Codes

An overview of the main laws that amended Penal Codes in relation to sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and violence against women, children and adolescents.

### Argentina

- Sexual offences (Law No. 25087 – 05/14/1999).
- Incorporates femicide, increases penalties for gender-based violence, and amends offences related to sexual integrity, digital violence and family violence (Law No. 26791 – 12/14/2012).
- Incorporates the offence of grooming (Law No. 26904 – 11/13/2013).
- Statute of limitations for sexual offences (Law No. 27206 – 11/10/2015).
- Clarifies acts constituting the offence of sexual abuse (Law No. 27352 – 05/17/2017).
- Private complaint requirements

### Bolivia

- Law on the protection of victims of offences against sexual freedom (No. 2033 – 10/29/1999).
- Law against harassment and political violence against women (No. 243 – 05/28/2012. Last amendment: No. 915 – 03/22/2017).
- Law guaranteeing women a life free from violence (No. 348 – 03/09/2013. Last amendment: No. 1153 – 02/25/2019).
- Law on criminal procedure reform and strengthening the comprehensive response to violence against girls, boys, adolescents and women (No. 1173 – 05/03/2019. Last amendment: No. 1226 – 09/18/2019).

### Brazil

- Law criminalizing sexual harassment (No. 10224 – 05/15/2001).
- Maria da Penha Law, on the prevention, punishment and eradication of violence against women (No. 11340 – 08/07/2006. Last amendment: No. 14450 – 04/19/2023).
- Carolina Dieckmann Law. Cybercrime offences (No. 12737 – 11/30/2012).
- Law increasing penalties for offences against sexual dignity (No. 12015 – 08/07/2009).
- Joana Maranhão Law. Establishes the non-applicability of statutes of limitations for offences against the sexual dignity of children and adolescents (No. 12650 – 05/17/2012).
- Femicide Law (No. 13104 – 03/09/2015).
- Law criminalizing unwanted sexual contact and the disclosure of rape scenes (No. 13718 – 09/24/2018).
- Violation of women's privacy (No. 13772 – 12/19/2018).
- Law reforming criminal and criminal procedure legislation (No. 13964 – 12/24/2019).
- Law incorporating the offence of stalking (No. 14132 – 03/31/2021).
- Law criminalizing psychological violence against women and establishing the Red Signal Against Domestic Violence cooperation programme (No. 14188 – 07/28/2021).
- Mariana Ferrer Law. Restricts practices that violate the dignity of victims and witnesses and increases penalties for coercion offences (No. 14245 – 11/22/2021).

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| →<br>Brazil | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law establishing femicide as a standalone offence, increasing penalties, and addressing other offences against women (No. 14994 – 10/09/2024).</li> <li>- Law allowing public access to the registry of persons convicted of offences against sexual dignity (No. 15035 – 11/27/2024).</li> <li>- Law increasing penalties for psychological violence against women committed through artificial intelligence or other technological means (No. 15123 – 04/24/2025).</li> <li>- Law modifying mitigating circumstances and prohibiting reductions in limitation periods for offences involving sexual violence against women (No. 15160 – 07/03/2025).</li> <li>- Law increasing penalties for offences against the sexual dignity of vulnerable persons (No. 15280 – 12/05/2025).</li> <li>- Absolute presumption of victim vulnerability in statutory rape offences (Law No. 15353 – 03/08/2026).</li> <li>- Law defining vicaricide as a criminal offence (No. 15384 – 04/09/2026).</li> </ul>                                                                                              |
| Cameroon    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law Relating to the Penal Code (No. 2016/007 – 07/12/2016).</li> <li>- Law To Amend and Supplement Some Provisions of Law No. 2016/7 Relating to the Penal Code (No. 2019/020 - 12/24/2019).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Chile       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law amending the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and other legislation concerning the offence of rape (No. 19617 – 07/02/1999).</li> <li>- Domestic Violence Law (No. 20066 – 05/22/2005. Last amendment: No. 21675 – 06/14/2024).</li> <li>- Introduces the offence of femicide (Law No. 20480 – 12/14/2010).</li> <li>- Sexual abuse against minors (Law No. 20526 – 07/12/2011).</li> <li>- Respect in Public Spaces Law. Criminalizes sexual harassment in public spaces (No. 21153 – 05/03/2019).</li> <li>- Amends the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure. Establishes femicide offences (Law No. 21212 – 03/04/2020).</li> <li>- Antonia Law. Strengthens procedural guarantees, protects the rights of victims of sexual offences and prevents revictimization (No. 21523 – 12/19/2022).</li> <li>- Criminalizes offences against the sexual integrity of children and adolescents and sexual exploitation (Law No. 21522 – 12/20/2022).</li> <li>- Law on measures to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women (No. 21675 – 06/14/2024).</li> </ul> |

### Colombia: Latin America's First Criminalization of Sexual Harassment

In Colombia, sexual harassment was recognized as a standalone criminal offence as early as Law 599 of 2000 (the Penal Code), which introduced Article 210A and distinguished it from other offences against sexual freedom. This pioneering provision in the region defined sexual harassment as conduct carried out for sexual purposes, even in the absence of physical contact, and established specific criminal penalties. Law 1257 of 2008 subsequently strengthened this framework as part of a broader policy aimed at preventing, addressing, and sanctioning violence against women.

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Colombia           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law establishing the offence of trafficking in persons (No. 747 – 07/19/2002).</li> <li>- Law amending provisions relating to sexual abuse offences (No. 1236 – 07/23/2008).</li> <li>- Law on awareness-raising, prevention and punishment of violence and discrimination against women (No. 1257 – 12/04/2008. Last amendment: No. 2166 – 08/04/2021).</li> <li>- Law guaranteeing access to justice for victims of sexual violence, particularly in the context of armed conflict (No. 1719 – 06/18/2014).</li> <li>- Rosa Elvira Cely Law. Establishes the offence of femicide (No. 1761 – 07/06/2015).</li> <li>- Law on protection against acts of racism and discrimination (No. 1482 – 11/30/2011. Last amendment: No. 1752 – 06/03/2015).</li> <li>- No Más Silencio Law. Eliminates statutes of limitations for criminal prosecution of offences against sexual freedom, integrity and development, and the offence of incest, when committed against persons under 18 years of age (No. 2081 – 02/03/2021).</li> </ul> |
| Dominican Republic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law on violence against women. Amends the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (No. 24-97 – 01/27/1997).</li> <li>- New Penal Code (No. 74-25 – 08/20/2025).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Ecuador            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comprehensive Organic law on the prevention and eradication of violence against women (Official Register No. 175 – 02/05/2018).</li> <li>- Organic law amending the Comprehensive Organic Penal Code (Official Register No. 107 – 12/24/2019).</li> <li>- Organic law amending the Comprehensive Organic Penal Code. Digital sexual violence, cyberharassment and grooming (Official Register No. 526 – 08/30/2021).</li> <li>- Organic law amending various legal instruments, including the Penal Code, to strengthen institutional capacities and comprehensive security (Official Register No. 279 – 03/29/2023).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Egypt              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law adding Article 306 bis (a) to the Penal Code, defining and criminalizing sexual harassment (No. 50 – 06/05/2014).</li> <li>- Law establishing female genital mutilation as a felony offence (No. 78 – 09/26/2016).</li> <li>- Law increasing penalties for female genital mutilation (No. 10 – 04/28/2021).</li> <li>- Law strengthening penalties for sexual harassment by classifying it as a felony offence (No. 141 – 08/19/2021).</li> <li>- Law increasing penalties for sexual harassment in the Penal Code and introducing aggravating circumstances (No. 185 – 12/04/2023).</li> <li>- Law establishing the offence of bullying (No. 189 – 09/05/2020).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

### India's New Criminal Codes

In 2023, India enacted a major reform of its criminal justice framework, which entered into force in 2024. The reform aimed to create a more effective system with a stronger focus on victims' rights and protection. Three new laws now govern substantive criminal law, criminal procedure, and the rules of evidence, replacing legislation that dated back to the colonial era:

- *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)* – replaces the Indian Penal Code of 1860.
- *Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS)* – replaces the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1973.
- *Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA)* – replaces the Indian Evidence Act of 1872.

|              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| El Salvador* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creation of specialized courts and tribunals to ensure a life free from violence and discrimination for women (Legislative Decree No. 286 – 02/25/2016).</li> <li>- Law regulating the use of electronic monitoring devices in criminal matters (Legislative Decree No. 924 – 02/04/2015. Last amendment: No. 663 – 06/18/2020).</li> <li>- Amends the Penal Code. Revises definitions to strengthen the protection of children and adolescents (Legislative Decree No. 210 – 11/25/2003).</li> <li>- Amends the Penal Code. Establishes life imprisonment for femicide and creates gender-sensitive and specialized criminal jurisdiction (Legislative Decree No. 537 – 03/26/2026).</li> <li>- Amends the Penal Code. Increases penalties for the offence of rape (Legislative Decree No. 374 – 06/14/2022).</li> </ul> |
| Guatemala    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law against sexual violence, exploitation and trafficking in persons (Decree No. 9-2009 – 03/16/2009).</li> <li>- Law on the Genetic Database for forensic use (Decree No. 22-2017 – 12/21/2017).</li> <li>- Amends the Penal Code. Offences committed against children and adolescents through technological means (Decree No. 11-2022 – 03/01/2022).</li> <li>- Amends the Penal Code. Increases penalties for sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse prevention law (Decree No. 10-2026 – 07/16/2026).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Honduras     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Penal Code (Decree No. 130-2017 – 05/10/2019).</li> <li>- Amends the Penal Code. Trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation (Decree No. 93-2021 – 11/01/2021).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| India        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Criminal Law (Amendment) Act (<i>Nirbhaya</i> Act) (04/02/2013).</li> <li>- Criminal Law (Amendment) Act (No. 22 – 08/11/2018).</li> <li>- <i>The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita</i>. New Penal Code (No. 45 – 12/25/2023).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

\*The amendments and/or reforms introduced by Legislative Decree No. 520 – Special Comprehensive Law for a Life Free from Violence for Women – are subject to criminal prosecution.

## Argentina: Intersection of Legal Frameworks and Training

Within Argentina's legal framework, different forms of violence—physical, psychological, sexual, economic, symbolic, political, media-related, and digital—intersect with the settings in which they occur, including domestic, institutional, workplace, reproductive, obstetric, media-related, and public-political contexts, as defined by Law 26485 on the Comprehensive Protection of Women. This legal framework recognizes that issues such as workplace harassment are not isolated incidents but rather a specific form of violence addressed by legislation and further reinforced following the ratification of the International Labour Organization's Convention No. 190.

Within this broader framework, the Micaela Law serves as a key training instrument, requiring mandatory education on gender issues and violence against women for officials and employees of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches at both the national and provincial levels. Since its entry into force in 2019, the initiative has helped transform public administration, reaching more than 230,730 officials and public employees during the first three years.

|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mexico   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decree introducing sexual harassment into the Federal Penal Code (DOF 01/21/1991).</li> <li>- General Law on women's access to a life free from violence (DOF 02/01/2007. Last amendment: DOF 01/15/2026).</li> <li>- General Law to prevent, punish and eradicate offences related to trafficking in persons and to protect and assist victims of these offences (DOF 06/14/2012. Last amendment: DOF 11/14/2025).</li> <li>- Law on the protection of persons involved in criminal proceedings (DOF 06/08/2012. Last amendment: DOF 05/20/2021).</li> <li>- General Law on enforced disappearance of persons, disappearance committed by private individuals and the National Search System for Persons (DOF 11/17/2017. Last amendment: DOF 07/16/2025).</li> <li>- Decree amending Article 259 bis. Offences against sexual privacy and integrity (DOF 06/15/2018).</li> <li>- Decree adding various provisions to the General Law on women's access to a life free from violence and the Federal Penal Code (DOF 06/01/2021).</li> <li>- Decree amending, adding and repealing various provisions on the investigation, punishment and comprehensive reparation of the offence of femicide (DOF 04/25/2023).</li> <li>- General Law to prevent, investigate and punish extortion offences (DOF 11/28/2025).</li> </ul> |
| Nigeria  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Criminal Code Amendment Bill (SB 02 – 07/14/2020).*</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Pakistan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protection of Women Act (No. 6 - 12/01/2006).</li> <li>- Act amending Penal and Penal Procedures Codes; Insulting Modesty or Causing Sexual Harassment (No. 1 - 02/02/2010)</li> <li>- Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Act (No. 26 – 12/28/2011).</li> <li>- Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act (No. 25 - 12/26/2011).</li> <li>- Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences Relating to Rape) Act (No. 44 - 10/22/2016).</li> <li>- Prevention of Trafficking In Persons Act (No. - 06/02/2018. Last amendment: No. 9 – 03/22/2025).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Paraguay | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduces a new Penal Code (Law No. 1997 – 11/26/1997).</li> <li>- Penal Code reform. Domestic violence (Law No. 6934 – 06/28/2022).</li> <li>- Penal Code reform. Introduces new forms of offences against sexual autonomy and the abuse of children through technological means (Law No. 7394 – 11/20/2024).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

\* Approved by the Senate; not yet enacted.

## Ecuador's Constitutional Approach

In 2008, Ecuador adopted a new Constitution grounded in a rights-based approach. The Constitution recognizes the right to personal integrity and requires the State to adopt measures to prevent and eradicate gender-based violence. Its adoption was followed by a series of legislative reforms, including amendments to the Penal Code.

## Peru

- Law amending provisions of the Penal Code to strengthen the prevention and punishment of offences against freedom (No. 26293 – 02/14/1994).
- Law establishing public criminal prosecution for offences against sexual freedom (No. 27115 – 05/15/1999).
- Law amending the Penal Code. Prevention, punishment and eradication of femicide (No. 30068 – 07/18/2013).
- Law to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women and members of the family group (No. 30364 – 11/22/2015. Last amendment: No. 32351 – 05/27/2025).
- Legislative Decree strengthening efforts to combat femicide, domestic violence and gender-based violence (No. 1323 – 01/06/2017).
- Law amending the Penal Code and the Code of Penal Enforcement concerning offences against sexual freedom and sexual integrity (No. 30838 – 08/04/2018).
- Expands criminal protection in cases of violence against women and members of the family group (Law No. 30819 – 07/13/2018).
- Incorporates the offences of stalking, sexual harassment, sexual blackmail, and the dissemination of images, audiovisual material or audio recordings with sexual content (Legislative Decree No. 1410 – 09/12/2018).
- Law on penalties for the offence of sexual exploitation, with special protection for children, adolescents and women (No. 30963 – 06/18/2019).
- Safeguards the sexual integrity of minors (Law No. 32169 – 11/21/2024).
- Partial reduction of penalties for attempted offences, except in convictions involving violence against women and other offences (Law No. 32258 – 03/14/2025).
- Law amending the Penal Code to include the use of artificial intelligence in the commission of offences (No. 32314 – 04/29/2025).

## Türkiye

- New Penal Code (No. 5237 – 09/26/2004).
- Amends the Penal Code. Law No. 7331 (Fourth Judicial Package). Strengthens aggravating circumstances related to violence against women (07/16/2021).
- Amends the Penal Code. Introduces the offence of stalking (No. 7406 – 05/12/2022).

## Uruguay

- Law on the obligation to prosecute international crimes (No. 18026 – 09/25/2006).
- Law introducing femicide and acts of discrimination (No. 19538 – 10/18/2017).
- Law on gender-based violence against women (No. 19580 – 12/22/2017).
- Law on the prevention of and fight against trafficking in persons (No. 19643 – 07/20/2018).
- Urgent Consideration Law. Amends Law No. 19580 and establishes more severe penalties for sexual abuse offences (No. 19889 – 07/09/2020).

## Prevention, Sanction and Elimination of Violence Against Women

The enactment of laws establishing specific regulatory frameworks for the prevention, sanction, and elimination of violence against women, children, or adolescents, and related matters, without amending the Penal Code, is a relatively common practice in several of the cases considered.

Legislative models also vary. In Latin American cases, there is a tendency toward more extensive legislation, although this does not necessarily equate to greater action on these issues. Some countries consolidate legislation within a smaller number of legal instruments, while others tend to enact separate laws.

### Argentina

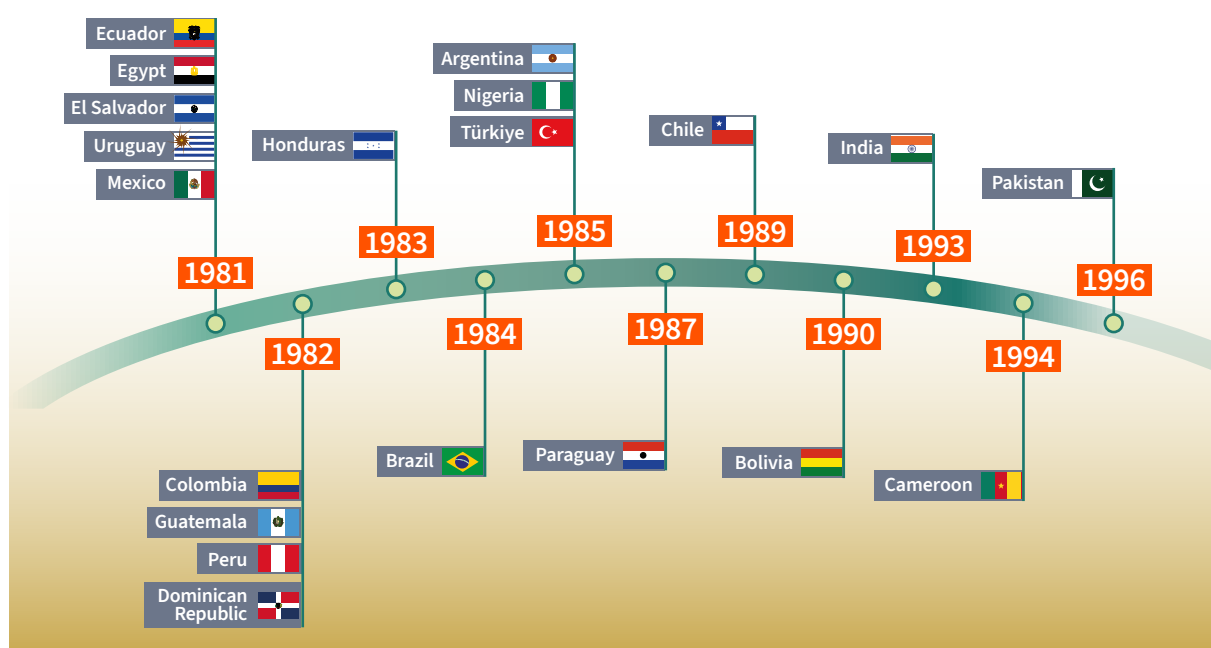
- Law on protection against family violence (No. 24417 – 01/03/1995).
- Law on the prevention and sanction of trafficking in persons and assistance to its victims (No. 26364 – 04/30/2008. Last amendment: No. 26842 – 12/19/2012).
- Comprehensive protection law to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women in areas where they develop their interpersonal relationships (No. 26485 – 04/14/2009. Last amendment: No. 27736 – 10/23/2023).
- Law on the rights and guarantees of victims of crime (No. 27372 – 07/12/2017).
- Law on awareness-raising regarding gender-based violence (No. 27410 – 11/29/2017).
- Law on sexual harassment in public spaces (No. 27501 – 04/16/2019).
- Law on comprehensive protection for women (No. 27533 – 12/20/2019).
- Brisa Law. Financial compensation for children and adolescents whose parent was a victim of femicide (No. 27452 – 26/07/2018).
- Law approving ILO Convention No. 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work (No. 27580 – 12/15/2020).
- Mica Ortega Law. Establishes a national programme for the prevention of and awareness-raising about grooming or cyber-harassment against children and adolescents (No. 27590 – 12/16/2020).
- Law on the comprehensive approach to victims of gender-based violence (No. 27696 – 11/10/2022).
- Olimpia Law. Incorporates digital violence into Law No. 26485 (No. 27736 – 10/23/2023).

### Brazil

- Law on mandatory and comprehensive care for persons in situations of sexual violence (No. 12845 – 08/01/2013).
- Law on enhanced protection against gender-based violence (No. 13892 – 04/02/2020).
- Law requiring the inclusion of content on the prevention of violence against women in basic education curricula (No. 14164 – 06/10/2021).
- Law establishing the National Policy on Data and Information on Violence against Women (No. 14232 – 10/28/2021).
- Law establishing rules to prevent, suppress and combat political violence against women (No. 14192 – 08/04/2021).

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Brazil | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law on sexual harassment and other forms of violence in the workplace (No. 14557 – 09/21/2022).</li> <li>- Law creating Specialized Police Stations (No. 14541 – 04/03/2023).</li> <li>- Law amending Law No. 11340 to strengthen protection for women victims of violence (No. 14550 – 04/19/2023).</li> <li>- Law establishing a special pension for children orphaned by femicide (No. 14717 – 10/31/2023).</li> <li>- No Means No Law. Protocol to prevent embarrassment and violence against women and protect victims (No. 14786 – 12/28/2023).</li> </ul>                                                    |
| Chile  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law amending the Labour Code and establishing workplace sexual harassment as a serious offence (No. 20005 – 03/08/2005).</li> <li>- Law on sexual harassment, violence and gender discrimination in higher education (No. 21369 – 09/15/2021).</li> <li>- Law establishing a protection and comprehensive reparation regime for victims of femicide and their families (No. 21565 – 04/19/2023).</li> <li>- Karin Law. Prevention, investigation and sanction of workplace harassment, sexual harassment and violence in the workplace (No. 21643 – 01/05/2024. Last amendment: No. 21724 – 01/03/2025).</li> </ul> |

### Ratifications/Accessions to the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979)*



In Latin America, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (*Convention of Belém do Pará, 1994*) has been ratified by all countries considered in this study.

In Africa, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (*Maputo Protocol, 2003*) has been ratified by Cameroon and Nigeria.

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Colombia           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law adopting measures against trafficking in persons (No. 985 – 08/26/2005. Last amendment: No. 2136 – 08/04/2021).</li> <li>- Law reforming the Code of Criminal Procedure to guarantee protection and due diligence by authorities in the investigation of alleged offences involving violence against women (No. 1542 – 07/05/2012).</li> <li>- Law strengthening measures to protect the physical integrity of victims of acid attacks (No. 1639 – 07/02/2013).</li> <li>- Law on awareness-raising, prevention and sanction of forms of violence and discrimination against women (No. 1257 – 12/04/2008. Last amendment: No. 2166 – 08/04/2021).</li> <li>- Law regulating the creation, composition and functioning of Specialized Police Stations (No. 2126 – 08/04/2021. Last amendment: No. 2197 – 01/25/2022).</li> <li>- Law adopting measures to prevent, address and sanction workplace harassment and other forms of harassment in employment relations (No. 1010 – 01/23/2006. Last amendment: No. 2209 – 05/23/2022).</li> <li>- Law establishing measures for the care, assistance and comprehensive reparation of victims of the internal armed conflict (No. 1448 – 06/10/2011. Last amendment: No. 2421 – 08/22/2024).</li> <li>- Law granting priority access to housing programmes for women victims of extreme gender-based violence (No. 2172 – 12/29/2021).</li> <li>- National Development Plan 2022–2026 Law. Establishes the National System for the Registration, Assistance, Follow-up and Monitoring of Gender-Based Violence (No. 2294 – 05/19/2023).</li> </ul> |
| Dominican Republic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law establishing shelters for women, children and adolescents who are victims of domestic or family violence (No. 88-03 – 05/15/2003).</li> <li>- Law amending the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Organic Law of the Public Prosecutor's Office to facilitate access to justice for women victims of violence (No. 88-03 – 07/01/2003).</li> <li>- Law on the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons (No. 137-03 – 08/07/2003).</li> <li>- Law introducing amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure (No. 10-15 – 02/10/2015).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Ecuador            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constitution (Article 66, paragraph 3).</li> <li>- Organic Law against trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants (RO 252 – 02/16/2023).</li> <li>- Organic Law amending the Labour Code. Eradication of violence and harassment in all forms of work (RO 559 – 05/16/2024).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

**Note:** RO: Official Gazette (*Registro Oficial*, Ecuador).

**Egypt**

- Law amending the Code of Criminal Procedure to guarantee anonymity for women reporting sexual harassment or sexual assault (No. 177 – 09/05/2020).
- Law on combating trafficking in persons (No. 64 – 05/09/2010).

**El Salvador**

- Special Comprehensive Law for a Life Free from Violence for Women (Legislative Decree No. 520 – 01/04/2011. Last amendment: Legislative Decree No. 536 – 03/26/2026).
- Law approving ILO Convention No. 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work (Legislative Decree No. 385 – 05/16/2022).
- Creation of specialized courts and tribunals for a life free from violence and discrimination against women (Legislative Decree No. 286 – 02/25/2016).
- Special Law against trafficking in persons (Legislative Decree No. 824 – 10/16/2014).
- Law against domestic violence (Legislative Decree No. 902 – 12/05/1996. Last amendment: Legislative Decree No. 546 – 12/13/2016).
- Reform of the Code of Criminal Procedure. No statute of limitations for femicide, aggravated femicide and other offences (Legislative Decree No. 663 – 03/13/2023).

**Guatemala**

- Law to prevent, sanction and eradicate domestic violence (Decree No. 97 – 11/28/1996).
- Law against femicide and other forms of violence against women (Decree No. 22 – 04/09/2008).
- Law on criminal jurisdiction in high-risk proceedings (Decree No. 21 – 09/03/2009).
- Law on the immediate search for missing women (Decree No. 9 – 03/01/2016).
- Organic Law of the Institute for Assistance and Support to Victims of Crime (Decree No. 21 – 04/06/2016).

**Honduras**

- Law against domestic violence (Decree No. 132-97 – 11/15/1997. Last amendment: No. 29-2024 – 04/18/2024).
- Law on the National Preventive Mechanism against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (Decree No. 136-2008 – 10/31/2008).
- Law against trafficking in persons (Decree No. 59-2012 – 07/06/2012).
- AMBER Early Warning Law for the location and protection of missing or abducted children and adolescents (Decree No. 119-2015 – 12/30/2016).
- Law on the protection of women in humanitarian crises, natural disasters and emergency situations (Decree No. 9-2023 – 05/02/2023).
- Law on shelters [Casas Refugio] for women survivors of violence in Honduras (Decree No. 28-2024 – 04/29/2024).

**India**

- Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (No. 104 – 12/30/1956. Last amendment: No. 44 – 01/26/1987).
- Indecent Representation of Women Prohibition Act (No. 60 – 12/22/1986. Last amendment: No. 34 – 10/31/2019).
- Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act (No. 3 – 01/03/1988).
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (No. 43 – 09/13/2005).
- Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (No. 32 – 06/19/2012).
- Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (POSH) Act (No. 14 – 04/22/2013. Last amendment: No. 23 – 05/06/2016).

**Mexico**

- Federal Labour Law (DOF 04/01/1970. Last amendment: DOF 01/15/2026).
- Federal Law to prevent and eliminate discrimination (DOF 07/11/2003. Last amendment: DOF 11/14/2025).
- General Law on Victims (DOF 01/09/2013. Last amendment: DOF 04/01/2024).

**Nigeria**

- Trafficking In Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act (07/14/2003, LFN 2004).
- Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAAP, 05/21/2015).

**Note:** DOF: Official Gazette (*Diario Oficial de la Federación*, Mexico).

## Constitutional Mandate

In several of the cases analyzed, the right to a life free from violence and the right to physical, mental, and sexual integrity stem directly from the Constitution itself:

### Bolivia

- I. Every person has the right to life and to physical, psychological, and sexual integrity. (...).
- II. All persons, particularly women, have the right not to suffer physical, sexual, or psychological violence, both within the family and in society.
- III. The State shall adopt the necessary measures to prevent, eliminate, and punish gender-based and age-based violence, as well as any action or omission aimed at degrading human dignity, cause death, or inflict physical, sexual, or psychological pain and suffering, in both the public and private spheres.

### Ecuador

The following rights are recognized and guaranteed to all persons:

3. The right to personal integrity, which includes:
  - a) Physical, mental, moral, and sexual integrity.
  - b) A life free from violence in both the public and private spheres. The State shall adopt the necessary measures to prevent, eliminate, and punish all forms of violence, particularly that perpetrated against women, girls, boys, and adolescents, older adults, persons with disabilities, and any person in a situation of disadvantage or vulnerability; the same measures shall be taken against violence, slavery, and sexual exploitation. (...)

### Mexico

Every person has the right to live a life free from violence. The State has a heightened duty to protect women, adolescents, and children.

In April 2026, a constitutional amendment was approved that authorizes Congress to enact a comprehensive law on femicide.

**Sources:** Bolivia: Political Constitution of the State (2009). Article 15. Ecuador: Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador (2008). Article 66. Mexico: Political Constitution of the United Mexican States (1917). Articles 4 and 73.

|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pakistan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Protection against Harassment at Workplace Act (No. 4 – 03/06/2010. Last amendment: No. 1 – 01/29/2022).</li> <li>- Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (No. 40 – 08/18/2016. Last amendment: No. 1 – 01/29/2025).</li> <li>- Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act (No. 13 – 12/30/2020. Last amendment: No. 10 – 01/26/2026).</li> <li>- Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act (No. 30 – 12/01/2021).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Paraguay | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law against domestic violence (No. 1600 – 10/06/2000. Last amendment: No. 7239 – 04/15/2024).</li> <li>- Comprehensive law against trafficking in persons (No. 4788 – 12/13/2012).</li> <li>- Comprehensive law on the protection of women against all forms of violence (No. 5777 – 12/29/2016. Last amendment: No. 7239 – 04/15/2024).</li> <li>- Law establishing the National Registry of Missing Persons and the Immediate Alert System (No. 7605 – 12/16/2025).</li> <li>- Law declaring a social emergency in response to violence against women, girls, boys and adolescents (No. 7239 – 04/15/2024).</li> <li>- Law declaring a national emergency due to femicides (No. 6806 – 09/23/2021. Last amendment: No. 7183 – 10/16/2023).</li> </ul> |
| Peru     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law on the prevention and sanction of sexual harassment (No. 27942 – 02/27/2003. Last amendment: Legislative Decree No. 1410 – 09/12/2018).</li> <li>- Law to prevent and sanction sexual harassment in public spaces (No. 30314 – 03/26/2015).</li> <li>- Law promoting temporary protection services for victims of domestic and sexual violence (No. 31621 – 11/15/2022).</li> <li>- Law promoting access to housing for women victims of violence (No. 31613 – 11/11/2022).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Türkiye  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law on protecting the family and on prevention of violence against women (No. 6284 – 03/08/2012).</li> <li>- Turkish Code of Obligations (No. 6098 – 01/11/2011. Last amendment: No. 7409 – 06/11/2022)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Uruguay  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law on the eradication of domestic violence (No. 17514 – 07/02/2002. Last amendment: No. 19670 – 10/15/2018).</li> <li>- Law authorizing the Supreme Court to establish courts of first instance specialized in domestic violence (No. 17707 – 11/19/2003).</li> <li>- Law on sexual violence against children, adolescents and persons lacking legal capacity (No. 17815 – 09/14/2004).</li> <li>- Law on sexual harassment. Prevention and sanction in the workplace and in teacher–student relationships (No. 18561 – 09/11/2009).</li> <li>- Law establishing a monthly pension and special family allowance for children of victims who died as a result of domestic violence (No. 18850 – 12/16/2011).</li> </ul>                                 |

Source: Own compilation based on legislation retrieved for each case. Treaties: United Nations Treaty Collection. Capitalization has been preserved only for official English titles.

## General Legislation on Equality, Protection and Gender

Changes within institutions respond to broader cultural and social transformations that take place over time. As these transformations become consolidated, they are incorporated into legislative systems and translated into laws that regulate rights, expand protections, or reshape social relationships.

In our countries, experience in this field is extensive and diverse, and is reflected in reforms to both penal and institutional frameworks. Here too, different legislative models can be identified across regions: some countries concentrate these issues within codes or central legislative frameworks, while others tend to address them through specific laws dedicated to individual subjects.

### Argentina

- Employment Contract Law (No. 20744 – 05/13/1976. Last amendment: No. 27802 – 02/27/2026).
- Law establishing measures against discriminatory acts (No. 23592 – 08/03/1988. Last amendment: No. 24782 – 04/03/1997).
- Law on the comprehensive protection of the rights of children and adolescents (No. 26061 – 10/26/2005. Last amendment: No. 25576 – 11/26/2020).
- Law establishing the National Sexual Education Programme (No. 26150 – 10/24/2006).
- Law on marriage equality (No. 26618 – 07/22/2010).
- Gender Identity Law (No. 26743 – 05/24/2012. Last amendment: Decree No. 62 – 02/06/2025).
- Law on medically assisted reproduction (No. 26862 – 06/26/2013).
- Law on the promotion of and public awareness about breastfeeding (No. 26873 – 08/07/2013).
- Law on gender parity in political representation (No. 27412 – 11/22/2017).
- Micaela Law. Mandatory gender training for all persons serving in the three branches of government (No. 27499 – 01/10/2019).
- Law on comprehensive protection for women (No. 27533 – 12/20/2019).
- Law on access to voluntary termination of pregnancy (No. 27610 – 01/15/2021).
- Law on comprehensive health care during pregnancy and early childhood (No. 27611 – 01/15/2021).
- Law on medical procedures and care for women and pregnant persons facing perinatal loss (No. 27733 – 12/12/2023).

### Bolivia

- General Labour Law (08/12/1942).
- Law on the Plurinational Victim Assistance Service (No. 464 – 12/19/2013. Last amendment: No. 915 – 03/22/2017).
- Gender Identity Law (No. 807 – 05/21/2016).
- Truth Commission Law (No. 879 – 12/23/2016).

## Brazil

- Law prohibiting discriminatory practices in the labour market on the grounds of pregnancy (No. 9029 – 04/13/1995).
- Family Planning Law (No. 9263 – 01/12/1996).
- Law incorporating provisions on women's access to the labour market into the Consolidation of Labour Laws (No. 9799 – 05/26/1999).
- Resolution of the National Council of Justice authorizing civil marriage between persons of the same sex (No. 175 – 05/14/2013).
- Law establishing principles and guidelines for public policies on early childhood (No. 13257 – 03/08/2016).
- Law on awareness-raising and information on the importance of breastfeeding (No. 13435 – 04/12/2017).
- Law establishing equal pay criteria for women and men (No. 14611 – 07/06/2023).
- Law establishing a special pension for children orphaned by femicide (No. 14717 – 10/31/2023).
- Law creating the Women-Friendly Company Seal (No. 14682 – 09/20/2023).
- Law prohibiting discrimination in education and research (No. 15124 – 04/24/2025).
- Law on women's representation on corporate boards of directors (No. 15177 – 07/23/2025).

## Cameroon

- Labour Code (No. 92-007 – 08/14/1992).

## Chile

- Law establishing legal equality between men and women (No. 19611 – 06/09/1999. Last amendment: Decree No. 100 – 09/22/2005).
- Decree with force of law establishing the text of the Labour Code (DFL No. 1 – 07/31/2002. Last amendment: Law No. 21797 – 02/07/2026).
- Law regulating information, guidance and services on fertility (No. 20418 – 10/18/2010).
- Law establishing measures against discrimination (No. 20609 – 07/12/2012. Last amendment: No. 21675 – 06/14/2024).
- Law regulating the decriminalization of voluntary termination of pregnancy under three grounds (No. 21030 – 09/23/2017).
- Law recognizing and guaranteeing the right to gender identity (No. 21120 – 11/28/2018. Last amendment: No. 21515 – 12/28/2022).
- Law establishing measures for the protection and promotion of breastfeeding (No. 21155 – 02/05/2019).
- Law regulating marriage between persons of the same sex (No. 21400 – 10/12/2021).

**Chile**

- Law amending the Constitution to establish gender parity in the Constitutional Council (No. 21574 – 04/28/2023).
- Law establishing a protection framework for complainants (No. 21592 – 08/10/2023).
- Law regulating remote work and telework. Protection of motherhood and caregivers (No. 21645 – 12/22/2023).
- Law establishing a mechanism to increase women's participation on the boards of publicly traded and special corporations (No. 21757 – 08/11/2025).

**Colombia**

- Substantive Labour Code (No. 2663 – 06/07/1951. Last amendment: 04/30/2026).
- Law on women's participation in public-sector decision-making (No. 585 – 05/31/2000. Last amendment: No. 2424 – 09/06/2024).
- Law establishing measures in support of rural women (No. 731 – 01/14/2002. Last amendment: No. 2462 – 06/18/2025).
- Law establishing rules on equal opportunities for women (No. 823 – 07/11/2003. Last amendment: No. 2117 – 07/29/2021).
- Law establishing rules on the organization and functioning of political parties, including women's participation in electoral lists (No. 1475 – 07/14/2011. Last amendment: No. 2424 – 09/06/2024).
- Law on equal pay and labour remuneration between women and men (No. 1496 – 12/29/2011).
- Fundamental Right to Health Law. Persons subject to special constitutional protection (No. 1751 – 02/16/2015).
- Law to strengthen and promote women's equality in access to employment and education (No. 2117 – 07/29/2021).
- Law establishing guidelines for public policy on the prevention, early diagnosis and comprehensive treatment of endometriosis (No. 2338 – 10/12/2023).

**Dominican Republic**

- Labour Code (No. 16-92 – 05/29/1992).
- Law declaring the promotion and encouragement of breastfeeding a national priority (No. 8-95 – 09/19/1995).
- Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Children and Adolescents (No. 136-03 – 08/07/2003).

**Ecuador**

- Law on the promotion, support and protection of breastfeeding (RO No. 814 – 11/01/1995).
- Law on labour protection for women (RO No. 124 – 06/02/1997).
- Labour Code (RO No. 167 – 12/16/2005).
- Organic Law on Public Service (RO No. 294 – 10/06/2010).
- Law on free maternity care and child care (RO No. 349 – 09/05/2006. Last amendment: 09/12/2014).

**Note:** RO: Official Gazette (Registro Oficial, Ecuador).

**Ecuador**

- Organic Law on the National Councils for Equality (RO No. 283 – 07/07/2014).
- Organic Law on labour justice and the recognition of domestic work (RO No. 483 – 04/20/2015).
- Organic Law on equal pay between women and men (RO No. 475 – 01/19/2024).
- Organic Law amending the Labour Code to recognize and dignify domestic work (RO No. 94 – 08/01/2025).

**Egypt**

- Law amending personal status legislation (No. 100 – 07/03/1985).
- Child Law (No. 12 – 03/25/1996. Amendment: No. 126 – 06/15/2008).
- Law regulating certain aspects of personal status (No. 1 – 01/29/2000).
- Labour Law (No. 142 – 05/15/2025).

**El Salvador**

- Law on equality, equity and the eradication of discrimination against women (Legislative Decree No. 645 – 04/08/2011. Last amendment: No. 553 – 01/23/2020).
- Reform of the Labour Code to give effect to the principle of gender equality in the workplace (Legislative Decree No. 900 – 01/30/2018).
- Growing Together Law. Comprehensive protection of early childhood, children and adolescents (Legislative Decree No. 431 – 06/22/2022. Last amendment: No. 927 – 01/03/2024).
- Law on the promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding (Legislative Decree No. 510 – 10/14/2022).

**Guatemala**

- Labour Code (Decree No. 1441 – 05/05/1961. Last amendment: No. 13-2022 – 02/23/2022).
- Law on the dignity and comprehensive advancement of women (Decree No. 7-99 – 03/09/1999).
- Law on promoting education against against discrimination (Decree No. 81-02 – 12/24/2002).
- Law on healthy motherhood (Decree No. 32 – 09/09/2010).

**Honduras**

- Labour Code (Decree No. 189-59 – 06/01/1959. Last amendment: No. 45-2026 – 03/28/2026).
- Special Law on responsible motherhood and fatherhood (Decree No. 92-2013 – 11/08/2013. Last amendment: Decree No. 51-2016 – 10/15/2016).
- Law on the National Solidarity Credit Programme for Rural Women (Decree No. 80-2019 – 10/18/2019).
- Equal Opportunities for Women Law (Decree No. 34-2000 – 05/25/2000).
- Law on comprehensive education for the prevention of adolescent pregnancy in Honduras (Decree No. 8-2023 – 01/22/2026).
- Law on childcare centres and daycare facilities to support working mothers (Decree No. 33-2025 – 01/23/2026).

## India

- Dowry Prohibition Act (No. 28 – 05/20/1961. Last amendment: No. 43 – 11/19/1986).
- Maternity Benefit Act No. 53 – 12/12/1961. Last amendment: No. 6 – 05/27/2017).
- Equal Remuneration Act (No. 25 – 02/11/1976).
- Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act (No. 40 – 12/05/2019).
- Code on Social Security (Act No. 36 – 09/28/2020).

## Mexico

- Federal Labour Law (DOF 04/01/1970. Last amendment: DOF 01/15/2026).
- General Health Law (DOF 02/07/1984. Last amendment: DOF 01/15/2026).
- Law on the National Human Rights Commission (DOF 06/29/1992. Last amendment: DOF 04/01/2024).
- General Law on substantive equality between women and men (DOF 08/02/2006. Last amendment: DOF 01/15/2026).
- General Law on women's access to a life free from violence (DOF 02/01/2007. Last amendment: DOF 01/15/2026).
- General Law on the rights of children and adolescents (DOF 12/04/2014. Last amendment: DOF 01/15/2026).
- General Law to prevent, investigate and sanction torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or sanction (DOF 06/26/2017. Last amendment: DOF 04/28/2022).
- Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation Judgment. *Amparo en Revisión* 1317/2017. Right to Gender Identity (10/17/2018).
- 3 of 3 Law. Constitutional amendment on the suspension of eligibility for public office, employment or appointments in public service (DOF 05/29/2023).

## Nigeria

- Marriage Act (12/31/1914, LFN 2004).
- Matrimonial Causes Act (03/17/1970, LFN 2004).
- Labour Act (01/08/1971, LFN 2004).
- National Centre for Women Development Act (06/15/1995, LFN 2004).
- Child's Rights Act (07/31/2003, LFN 2004).
- Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act (01/23/2019).

## Pakistan

- Industrial and Commercial Employment (Standing Orders) Ordinance (No. 6 – 05/08/1968).
- Protection of Breastfeeding and Child Nutrition Ordinance (No. 93 – 10/26/2002).
- Transgender Persons (Protection and Rights) Act (No. 13 – 05/22/2018).
- Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act (No. 12 – 02/20/2020. Last amendment: No. 10 – 07/29/2021).
- Maternity and Paternity Leave Act (No. 31 – 06/20/2023).

## Paraguay

- Law on the civil rights of women (No. 236 – 09/06/1954).
- Law establishing the Labour Code (No. 231 – 06/29/1993).
- Law on public policies for rural women (No. 5446 – 07/20/2015).
- Law on the promotion and protection of motherhood and support for breastfeeding (No. 5508 – 10/28/2015. Last amendment: No. 7534 – 09/19/2025).
- Law eliminating discrimination on the grounds of motherhood and fatherhood and guaranteeing equal conditions (No. 6634 – 11/18/2020).

## Peru

- Law on prenatal and postnatal leave for pregnant workers (No. 26644 – 06/27/1996. Last amendment: No. 29992 – 02/06/2013).
- Consolidated Text of Legislative Decree No. 728. Law on Labour Productivity and Competitiveness (Supreme Decree No. 003-97-TR – 03/27/1997).
- Law granting breastfeeding leave (No. 27240 – 12/23/1999).
- Law establishing lactation rooms in public and private sector institutions to promote breastfeeding (No. 29896 – 07/07/2012).
- Law granting paternity leave to public and private sector workers (No. 29409 – 09/19/2009. Last amendment: No. 30807 – 07/05/2018).
- Law protecting working mothers against arbitrary dismissal and extending maternity leave (No. 30367 – 11/24/2015).
- Law establishing and developing human milk banks (No. 31633 – 12/02/2022).
- Law on the protection of women heads of household living in poverty or extreme poverty (No. 31754 – 05/30/2023).
- Law on the protection of pregnancy, the unborn child and the family environment (No. 32000 – 04/12/2024).
- Law promoting comprehensive and multidisciplinary care for mothers experiencing gestational or neonatal loss and bereavement (No. 32132 – 10/10/2024).
- Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Law (No. 32535 – 12/24/2025).

## Türkiye

- Labour Law (No. 4857 – 05/22/2003. Last amendment: No. 635 – 07/24/2025).
- Municipality Law establishing shelters (No. 5393 – 07/03/2005).
- Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Committee Law (No. 5840 – 02/24/2009).
- Law amending the Tax Procedure Law and other laws, extending maternity leave (No. 6663 – 01/29/2016).
- Law amending the Social Services Law, extending maternity leave (No. 7518 – 05/01/2026).

## Uruguay

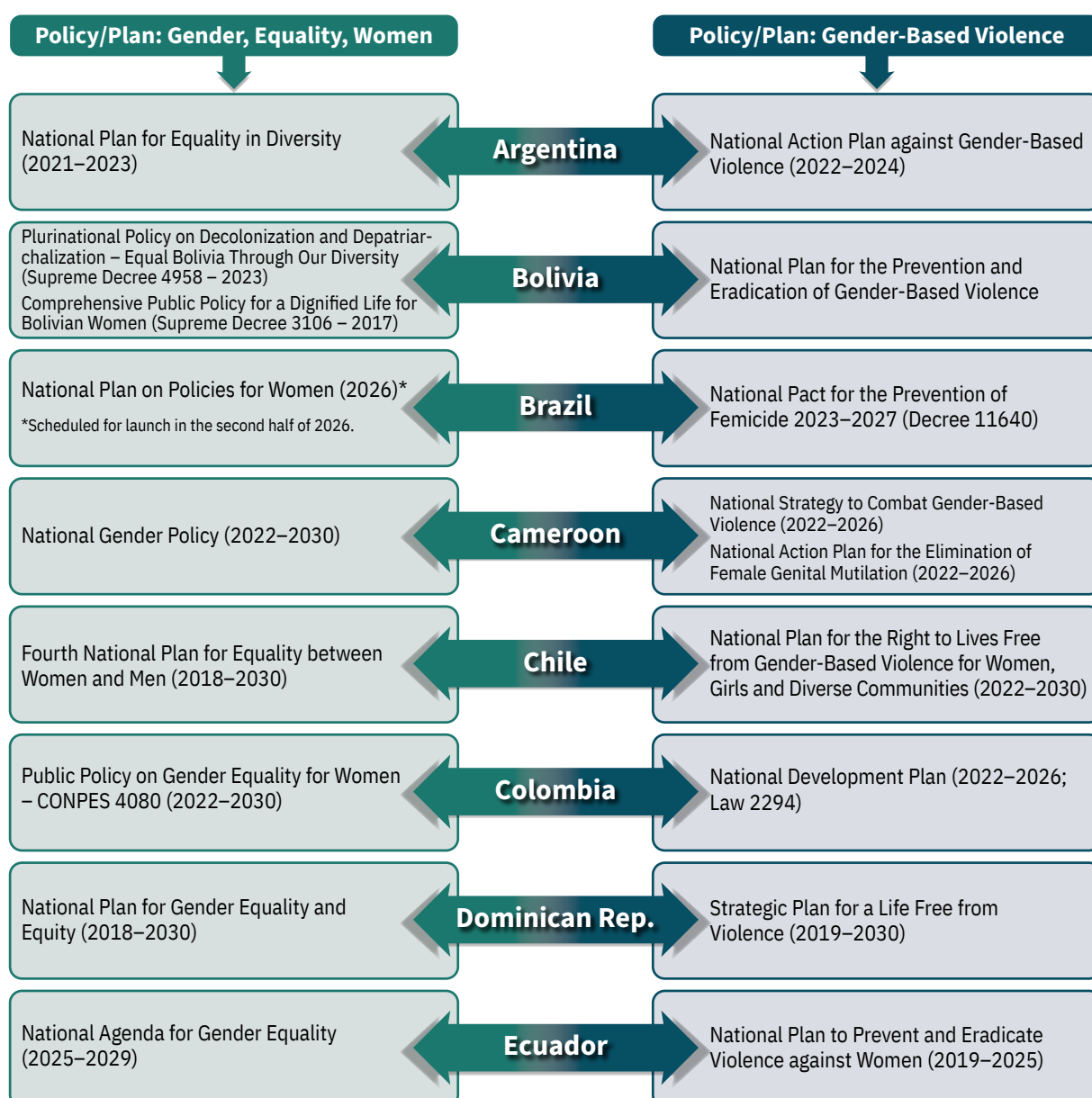
- Law regulating leave during pregnancy (No. 11577 – 10/14/1950. Last amendment: No. 18065 – 11/27/2006).
- Law on equal treatment and opportunities for both sexes in employment (No. 16045 – 06/02/1989).
- Law on the right to temporary reassignment of duties for public and private sector workers during pregnancy or breastfeeding (No. 17215 – 09/24/1999).
- Childhood and Adolescence Code (No. 17823 – 09/07/2004. Last amendment: No. 20266 – 05/15/2024).
- Law on sexual and reproductive health (No. 18426 – 12/01/2008).
- Law establishing rules regarding the right to gender identity (No. 18620 – 11/17/2009).
- Law prohibiting the requirement of pregnancy tests or medical certificates confirming the absence of pregnancy in the workplace (No. 18868 – 12/23/2011).
- Law on voluntary termination of pregnancy (No. 18987 – 10/22/2012).
- Law on marriage equality (No. 19075 – 09/05/2013).
- Law on maternity and paternity benefits (No. 19161 – 11/01/2013. Last amendment: No. 20312 – 08/02/2024).
- Law establishing the National Integrated Care System (No. 19353 – 11/27/2015).
- Law on the establishment of breastfeeding rooms (No. 19530 – 08/24/2017).
- Law on equality and non-discrimination between women and men (No. 19846 – 12/19/2019).

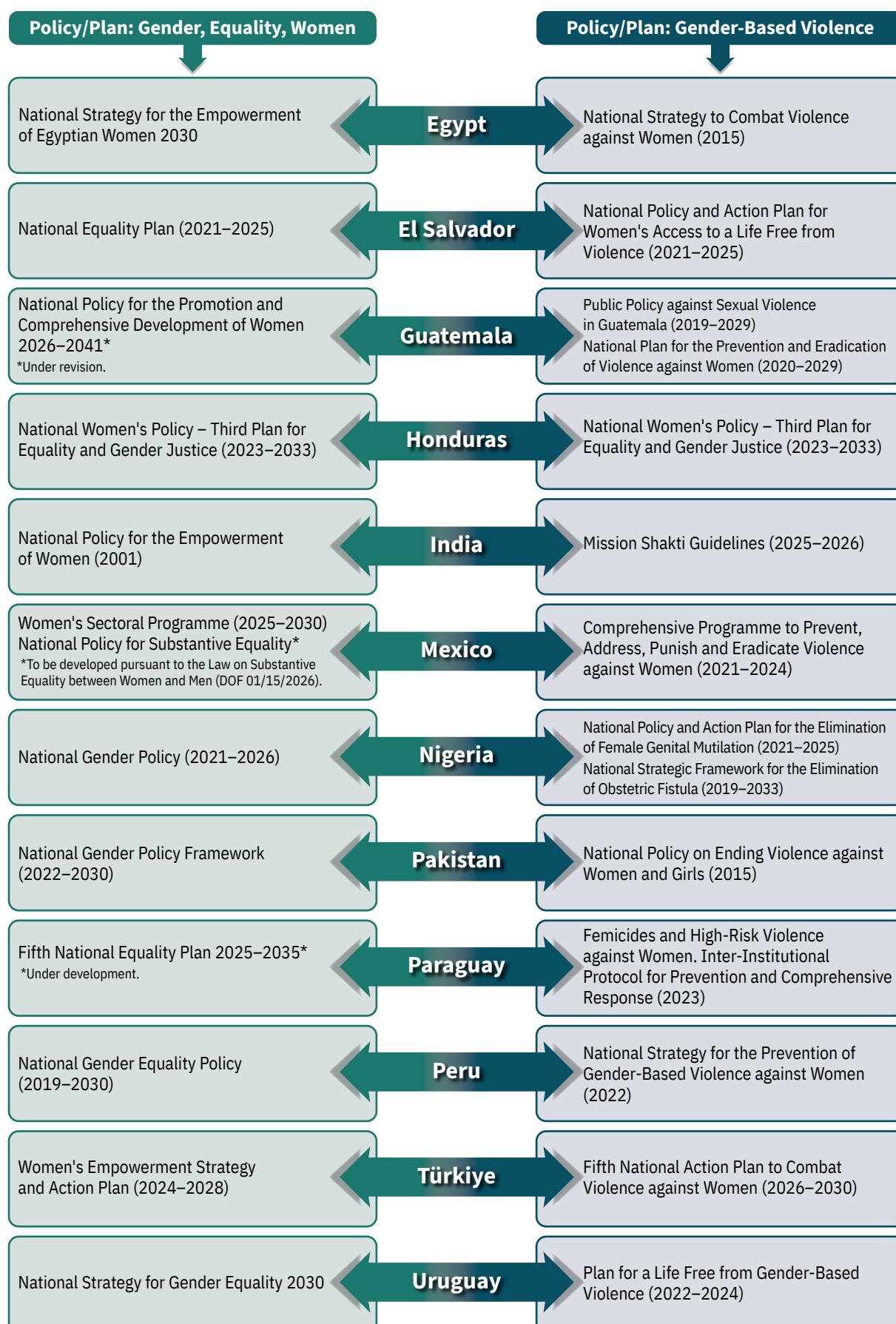
Source: Own compilation based on legislation retrieved for each case. Capitalization has been preserved only for official English titles.

## National Policies and Plans

States organize their institutional response to gender-based violence through strategic policies and action plans. While the former establish the guiding principles, the latter translate those principles into goals and operational programmes.

Depending on the country, this may take the form of a single instrument or of separate mechanisms that strategically link equality and violence-related issues. This flexible approach allows public institutions to design actions tailored to their respective mandates within a common national framework. As a result, some countries have developed separate policies and/or plans addressing issues such as women, gender-based violence, or equality, while others incorporate these matters into broader gender policies or even into national development plans.





Source: Own compilation based on the abovementioned documents.

## 2 THE DEFENCE INSTITUTIONS

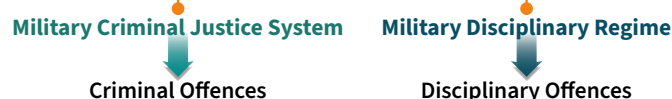
The regulations governing the defence sector—and the Armed Forces in particular—provide the framework for analyzing how sexual harassment and abuse are addressed within its ranks. Alongside the regulations on justice and discipline, there are general laws and other rules governing conduct. Among the latter are specific codes of ethics and conduct, as well as various regulatory and policy reforms related to the integration of women into the Armed Forces.

### Justice and Discipline

The institutional response to misconduct within the Armed Forces generally is structured around two complementary systems: military criminal justice, which addresses criminal offences, and the disciplinary regime, which governs professional conduct and the maintenance of discipline.

In international practice, military criminal justice is generally understood as the specialized judicial system responsible for addressing criminal conduct committed by members of the Armed Forces, generally while on active duty and in the performance of their duties. It deals with offences related to military service and, in most cases—in line with the prevailing international approach—does not extend to ordinary crimes punishable under national law.

Alongside military criminal justice, military institutions operate under a disciplinary regime designed to uphold fundamental principles such as discipline, hierarchy, and cohesion. It consists of a set of rules establishing the values and standards of conduct expected of military personnel, defining disciplinary offences, and setting out the corresponding sanctions. As in most public institutions, this framework also includes laws, regulatory decrees, and internal regulations.



### Main Laws on Military Criminal Justice and Discipline

|           | Military Criminal Justice System                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Military Disciplinary Regime                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Argentina | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law Repealing the Code of Military Justice (No. 26394 – 08/06/2008). Includes the following annexes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criminal Procedure for Wartime and Other Armed Conflicts.</li> <li>• Instructions for the Civilian Population in Wartime and Other Armed Conflicts.</li> <li>• Organization of the Joint Armed Forces Justice System.</li> <li>• Code of Military Discipline.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Code of Military Discipline (Law N.º 26394-08/06/2008).</li> </ul>                                                       |
| Bolivia   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Penal Code (Decree-Law No. 13321 – 01/22/1976. Last amendment: Political Constitution of the State – 02/07/2009).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organic Law of the Armed Forces of the Nation (No. 1405 – 12/30/1992. Last amendment: No. 1474 – 04/01/1993).</li> </ul> |

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Brazil</b>             | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Penal Code (Decree-Law No. 1001 – 10/21/1969. Last amendment: Law No. 14588 – 06/13/2023).</li> <li>- Code of Military Criminal Procedure (Decree-Law No. 1002 – 10/21/1969. Last amendment: Law No. 14588 – 06/13/2023).</li> <li>- Code of Military Justice (Decree-Law No. 925 – 02/12/1938. Last amendment: Law No. 4163 – 04/12/1962).</li> <li>- Law on the Organization of the Union Military Justice System (No. 8457 – 09/04/1992. Last amendment: No. 13874 – 06/20/2019).</li> </ul> | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Statute of Military Personnel (N.º 6880 – 12/09/1980. Last amendment: Decree 10750 – 07/19/2021).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Cameroon</b>           | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Code of Military Justice (Law No. 2017/012 – 07/12/2017).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General Statute of Military Personnel (Law No. 80/12 – 07/14/1980. Last amendment: No. 87/023 – 12/17/1987).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Chile</b>              | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Code of Military Justice (Decree No. 2226 – 12/19/1944. Last amendment: Law No. 21560 – 04/10/2023).</li> <li>- Law on the Jurisdiction of Military Courts (Law No. 20477 – 12/10/2010. Last amendment: Law No. 20968 – 11/22/2016).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constitutional Organic Law of the Armed Forces (No. 18948 – 02/22/1990. Last amendment: No. 21174 – 09/26/2019).</li> <li>- Law Extending Protection to Armed Forces Personnel Reporting Breaches of Probity and Other Offences (No. 21480 – 09/23/2022).</li> </ul> |
| <b>Colombia</b>           | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Penal Code (Law No. 1407 – 08/17/2010).</li> <li>- Law Restructuring the Military and Police Criminal Justice System and Establishing Provisions on Jurisdiction for the Transition to the Adversarial Criminal Justice System (Law No. 1765 – 07/23/2015).</li> <li>- Law Establishing Requirements for Holding Positions within the Military Criminal Jurisdiction (No. 940 – 01/05/2005. Last amendment: No. 1765 – 07/23/2015).</li> </ul>                                                  | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Disciplinary Code; Establishes Standards of Conduct for Colombian Military Personnel (Law No. 1862 – 08/04/2017).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Dominican Republic</b> | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Code of Justice of the Armed Forces (Law No. 3483 – 03/05/1953).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organic Law of the Armed Forces (Law No. 139-13 – 09/13/2013).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Ecuador</b>            | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law Amending the Penal Code to Criminalize Offences Committed in Military and Police Service (Official Register No. 196 – 05/19/2010).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organic Law on Armed Forces Personnel and Discipline (Official Register No. 236 – 01/24/2023).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Egypt</b>              | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Justice Law (No. 25 – 06/01/1966. Last amendment: No. 3 – 01/31/2024).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law on the Conditions of Service and Promotion of Armed Forces Officers (No. 232 – 10/06/1959. Last amendment: No. 134 – 07/15/2021).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                     |

|                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>El Salvador</b> | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Code of Military Justice (Legislative Decree No. 562 – 05/05/1964. Last amendment: Supreme Court of Justice Judgment No. 176-2016 – 11/22/2021).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Career Law (Legislative Decree No. 476 – 11/30/1995. Last amendment: Legislative Decree No. 182 – 12/20/2024).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Guatemala</b>   | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Code (Decree No. 214 – 09/15/1878. Last amendment: Decree No. 41-96 – 07/15/1996).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constitutive Law of the Guatemalan Army (Decree No. 72-90 – 12/13/1990. Last amendment: Decree No. 14-22 – 03/18/2022).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Honduras</b>    | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Penal Code (Decree No. 76 – 03/01/1906. Last amendment: No. 47 – 01/22/1937).</li> <li>- Constitutive Law of the Armed Forces (Decree No. 39-2001 – 10/29/2001. Last amendment: No. 230-2012 – 02/27/2013).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Personnel Law (Decree No. 231-2005 – 10/11/2005).</li> <li>- Constitutive Law of the Armed Forces (Decree No. 39-2001 – 10/29/2001. Last amendment: No. 230-2012 – 02/27/2013).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>India</b>       | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Army Act (No. 46 – 05/20/1950. Last amendment: 07/21/2025).</li> <li>- Air Force Act (No. 45 – 05/18/1950. Last amendment: No. 4 – 05/15/1986).</li> <li>- Navy Act (No. 62 – 12/27/1957. Last amendment: No. 23 – 06/23/2005).</li> <li>- The Armed Forces Tribunal Act (N° 55 – 12/25/2007. Last amendment: N° 3 – 07/28/2021).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                            | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Inter-Services Organisations (Command, Control and Discipline) Act (No. 28 – 08/15/2023).</li> <li>- Army Act (No. 46 – 05/20/1950. Last amendment: 07/21/2025).</li> <li>- Air Force Act (No. 45 – 05/18/1950. Last amendment: No. 4 – 05/15/1986).</li> <li>- Navy Act (No. 62 – 12/27/1957. Last amendment: No. 23 – 06/23/2005).</li> </ul> |
| <b>Mexico</b>      | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Code of Military Justice (Official Gazette – 08/31/1933. Last amendment: Official Gazette – 07/16/2025).</li> <li>- Code of Military Criminal Procedure (Official Gazette – 05/16/2016. Last amendment: Official Gazette – 11/14/2025).</li> <li>- Organic Law of the Mexican Navy (Official Gazette – 10/14/2021).</li> <li>- Organic Law of the Mexican Army and Air Force (Official Gazette – 12/26/1986. Last amendment: Official Gazette – 07/16/2025).</li> </ul> | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disciplinary Law of the Army, Air Force and National Guard (Official Gazette – 03/15/1926. Last amendment: Official Gazette – 07/16/2025).</li> <li>- Disciplinary Law for Mexican Navy Personnel (Official Gazette – 12/13/2002).</li> </ul>                                                                                                       |
| <b>Nigeria</b>     | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Armed Forces Act (LFN 2004- 07/06/1994).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Armed Forces (Disciplinary Proceedings) (Special Provisions) Act (LFN 2004 - 07/29/1975).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

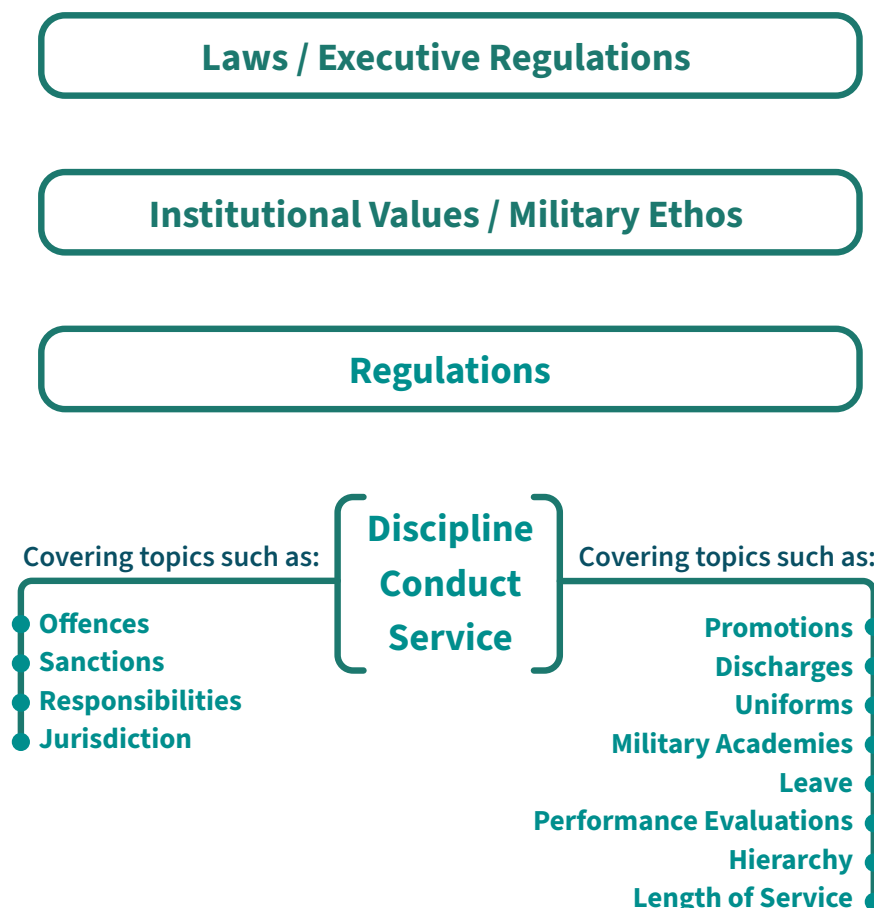
|                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Pakistan</b> | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Pakistan Army Act (No. 39 – 05/13/1952. Last amendment: No. 33 – 11/04/2024).</li> <li>- The Pakistan Navy Ordinance (No. 35 – 09/08/1961).</li> <li>- The Pakistan Air Force Act (No. – 04/13/1953).</li> <li>- Criminal Procedure (Military Offenders) Rules - 10/22/1958. Authorized by Code of Criminal Procedure (Act No. 5 - 03/22/1898. Last amendment: No. 1 - 08/26/2023).</li> </ul> | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Pakistan Army Act (No. 39 – 05/13/1952. Last amendment: No. 33 – 11/04/2024).</li> <li>- The Pakistan Navy Ordinance (No. 35 – 09/08/1961).</li> <li>- The Pakistan Air Force Act (No. – 04/13/1953).</li> </ul>                                                               |
| <b>Paraguay</b> | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Penal Code (Law No. 843 – 12/19/1980).</li> <li>- Code of Military Criminal Procedure in Times of Peace and War (Law No. 844 – 12/19/1980).</li> <li>- Military Courts Law (Law No. 840 – 12/19/1980).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Personnel Statute Law (Law No. 1115 – 08/27/1997. Last amendment: No. 4221 – 12/14/2010).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Peru</b>     | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law on the Organization and Functions of the Military and Police Jurisdiction (No. 29182 – 01/11/2008. Last amendment: No. 31927 – 11/11/2023).</li> <li>- Military and Police Code of Justice (Legislative Decree No. 1094 – 09/01/2010).</li> <li>- Law on the Military Status of Armed Forces Officers (No. 28359 – 10/13/2004. Last amendment: No. 32361 – 05/31/2025).</li> </ul>             | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Law on the Disciplinary Regime of the Armed Forces (No. 29131 – 11/09/2007. Last amendment: Legislative Decree No. 1145 – 12/11/2012).</li> <li>- Law on the Military Status of Armed Forces Officers (No. 28359 – 10/13/2004. Last amendment: No. 32361 – 05/31/2025).</li> </ul> |
| <b>Türkiye</b>  | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Penal Code (Law No. 1632 – 05/22/1930. Last amendment: No. 7329 – 06/30/2021).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Armed Forces Disciplinary Law (No. 6413 – 01/31/2013).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Uruguay</b>  | <b>Military Criminal Justice System</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Penal Code, Code of Military Criminal Procedure, and Code on the Organization of Military Courts (Decree-Law No. 10326 – 04/16/1943. Last amendment: Law No. 20075 – 10/20/2022).</li> <li>- Military Organic Law (Decree-Law No. 14157 – 03/05/1974).</li> <li>- Organic Law of the Armed Forces (Law No. 19775 – 07/26/2019).</li> </ul>                                                | <b>Military Disciplinary Regime</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Military Organic Law (Decree-Law No. 14157 – 03/05/1974).</li> <li>- Organic Law of the Armed Forces (Law No. 19775 – 07/26/2019).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                      |

**Source:** Own compilation based on legislation retrieved for each case. Capitalization has been preserved only for official English titles.

## Other Laws and Regulations

Military personnel are far from operating autonomously or independently of the legal and institutional frameworks that govern their conduct. Military institutions are characterized by a set of organizational rules and standards of conduct designed to prepare personnel for the professional use of armed force. These are embedded in a body of national legislation—including both laws enacted by the legislature and regulations issued by the executive branch—and in a system of values that constitutes the institutional ethos.

In their daily professional lives, military personnel are therefore governed by this framework of rules and values, and virtually every aspect of institutional life is regulated. The scope and structure of these regulations vary across countries according to their legal traditions and institutional practices. Regulatory frameworks range from relatively concise sets of regulations, in which one or two instruments cover most matters, to extensive bodies of regulations. These regulations constitute an important part of the documentation relevant to the analysis of military institutional frameworks. They establish specific standards of conduct covering various aspects of institutional life, from the wearing of uniforms and leave regulations to the classification of disciplinary offences.



## Other Laws and Regulations

An additional list of selected regulations on military personnel, discipline, service organization, and career management.



Source: Own compilation based on the abovementioned information. For the case of Latin America, general defence regulations can be consulted in RESDAL (2024).  
[Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and the Caribbean.](#)

## Definitions in Codes, Laws and Internal Regulations

What do military justice codes, laws, and military regulations say about the definition of military offences and the jurisdiction responsible for dealing with them? Do disciplinary regulations classify sexual harassment and sexual abuse as disciplinary offences? Here again, different approaches can be observed. In some countries, these matters are also addressed in internal military regulations, helping to embed them in institutional practice and culture beyond the framework established by national legislation.

### Argentina

When offences are committed by persons holding military status, within military establishments or in places under military control, the senior military authority shall notify the competent judicial authority (...).

(Law Repealing the Code of Military Justice. Art. 24).

Serious offence: A member of the military who makes a sexual request for themselves or for a third party, under the threat of causing the victim harm related to their service or career.

Very serious offence: Sexual harassment by a superior. A member of the military who, taking advantage of a position of superiority, makes a sexual request for themselves or for a third party, under the threat of causing the victim harm related to their service or career.

(Armed Forces Disciplinary Code. Arts. 10-9 and 13-26).

### Bolivia

Military personnel who use armed force or the influence derived from their command or position to violate the dignity, health, liberty, or property of any person for private purposes shall be punished by imprisonment for six months to one year.

(Military Penal Code. Art. 200).

The ordinary jurisdiction shall recognize neither special jurisdictions, privileges, nor extraordinary courts. Military jurisdiction shall adjudicate military offences as provided by law.

(Political Constitution of the State. Art. 180(III)).

### Brazil

Compelling a person, by means of violence or serious threat, to engage in sexual intercourse or to perform or allow another libidinous act to be performed with them. Performing, or allowing a soldier to perform, a libidinous act with them in a place under military administration or in the exercise of a military function.

(Military Penal Code. Arts. 232, 235, 238, 239, 407 and 408).

### Cameroon

The Penal Code shall remain applicable for acts not specifically criminalized under this Code.

(1) Any serviceman or person considered as such who uses the authority conferred on him by his position to harass another by issuing orders, uttering threats, imposing constraints or exerting pressure in order to obtain sexual favours, shall be punished with imprisonment for from 6 (six) months to 2 (two) years and fine of from CFAF 200 000 (two hundred thousand) to 1 000 000 (one million). (2) Where the offence is committed within the framework of military training or a military course, the penalties shall be doubled.

(Code of Military Justice. Sec. 30 and 49).

### Chile

Personnel assigned to services and guard duties shall be required to detain persons in the following cases, provided that the act occurs within the jurisdictional limits of the Unit: (a) persons, whether or not members of the Armed Forces, who are caught in the commission of an offence or in a situation of flagrante delicto. A person shall be deemed to have been caught in flagrante delicto when the circumstances set out in Article 263 of the Code of Criminal Procedure apply, and a situation of flagrante delicto shall be understood as those circumstances provided for in Article 130 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

(Armed Forces Garrison Service Regulations. DNL 912-2006. Art. 33).

### Colombia

In matters not expressly regulated by this Code, the provisions of the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Civil Code, and the Code of Civil Procedure shall apply.

(Military Penal Code. Art. 14).

Serious offence: Using one's position or rank to request intimacy with subordinate personnel.

Criminal offences: If the acts under disciplinary investigation could constitute criminal offences prosecutable *ex officio*, they shall be brought to the attention of the competent authority, together with the corresponding evidence.

(Regulations on the Disciplinary Regime for the Military Forces. Arts. 59 and 110).

### Dominican Republic

Any conduct by a member of the military which, in interpersonal relations, involves or tends to involve situations of sexual or workplace harassment, domestic violence, rape, or any other offence against personal integrity, although falling outside the scope of military disciplinary law, shall receive the greatest possible attention upon receipt of the corresponding complaint. Whoever receives such complaint shall be required to act in accordance with the applicable legal procedures.

Paragraph I: Any member of the military who is the victim of sexual assault or who becomes aware of such an assault shall report it to the Legal Adviser of the unit where the incident occurred, the Legal Adviser of the corresponding General Staff Headquarters, the Legal Adviser of the Secretariat of State for the Armed Forces, or the competent military authority.

Paragraph II: Sexual assault is any sexual act committed through violence, coercion, threat, surprise, or deception. Accordingly, every member of the Armed Forces has the duty to report it to the competent authority through the appropriate channels.

(Military Disciplinary Regulations of the Armed Forces. Art. 26).

### Ecuador

Military or police service offences are the acts or omissions defined in this Code, committed by a member of the military or police on active duty, that are directly, concretely, closely, and specifically related to their function and legal status, in accordance with the mission established by the Constitution and other applicable laws, and that affect persons, property, or the operations of the Armed Forces or the National Police. Service offences may be committed in peacetime or during an international or non-international armed conflict.

Offence against the sexual and reproductive integrity of a protected person. A member of the military shall be punished by special rigorous imprisonment for sixteen to twenty-five years if, in the context of and during an armed conflict, they injure or impair the sexual or reproductive integrity of a protected person. This offence includes rape and the other acts which, under this Code, affect sexual or reproductive integrity.

(Law Amending the Penal Code to Criminalize Offences Committed in Military and Police Service. Arts. 114.1 and 602.44).

The requirement to submit a request through the regular chain of command shall not apply in the following cases: (...) 4. In cases of gender-based violence, abuse, or sexual or workplace harassment within the Military Institution.

Duty to report: Military personnel who become aware of, or have indications of, gender-based violence, abuse, sexual or workplace harassment, or criminal offences committed by military personnel in the performance of, or in connection with, military service, shall report them to the competent authorities.

Serious offences: 38: Engaging in acts constituting workplace harassment against military personnel or employees of the Military Institution, where duly established. 66. Making remarks with sexual connotations, provided they do not constitute sexual harassment.

Very serious offences: 14: Engaging in acts constituting sexual harassment or sexual abuse against military personnel or employees of the Military Institution, where duly established.

(Organic Law on Armed Forces Personnel and Discipline. Arts. 155, 189, 195 and 196).

### Egypt

Military offences are offences committed by persons subject to this Law when they are related to military service, military duties, military institutions, weapons, ammunition, documents, orders, or military secrets.

(Military Justice Law. Art. 4).

### El Salvador

THE PROVISIONS OF THIS CODE SHALL APPLY EXCLUSIVELY TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES ON ACTIVE DUTY IN RESPECT OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES AND DISCIPLINARY OFFENCES OF A PURELY MILITARY NATURE [capital letters in the original].

(Military Justice Code. Art. 1).

### Guatemala

Jurisdiction over offences or disciplinary offences of an essentially military nature shall correspond exclusively to the courts designated by this law. In cases involving ordinary or related offences committed by military personnel, the Code of Criminal Procedure shall apply, and such cases shall be adjudicated by the ordinary courts referred to in the Law on the Judicial Branch.

(Military Code. Art. 2).

### Honduras

A member of the military who, abusing the advantage or opportunity afforded by the performance of military duties, commits, under the Common Penal Code, the offences of rape, statutory rape, or abduction shall, following dismissal from the service, be punished by major imprisonment in its medium to maximum degrees.

(Military Penal Code. Art. 220).

Military jurisdiction is recognized for military offences and disciplinary offences.

(Constitution of the Republic. Art. 90).

### India

Dismissal or removal of officers for misconduct: (1) An officer may be dismissed or removed from service for misconduct by the Central Government but before doing so and subject to the provisions of sub-rule (2) he shall be given an opportunity to show cause against such action.

(2) Where the dismissal or removal of an officer is proposed on ground of misconduct which has led to his conviction by a criminal court, or where the Central Government is satisfied that for reasons to be recorded in writing, it is not expedient or reasonably practicable to do so, it shall not be necessary to give an opportunity to the officer of showing cause against his dismissal or removal.

(Air Force Rules. Art. 16). [The Army and Navy establish similar provisions].

Whoever

(c) being a member of the armed forces deployed in an area by the Central Government or a State Government commits rape in such area;

(j) being in a position of control or dominance over a woman, commits rape on such woman; shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than ten years, but which may extend to imprisonment for life, which shall mean imprisonment for the remainder of that person's natural life, and shall also be liable to fine.

(*The Bharatiya Sanhita*. Art. 64-2).

### Mexico

Ordinary offences that require a complaint shall not fall within the jurisdiction of the military courts, except in the cases provided for in subparagraph (e) of section II [Where the offence is committed by military personnel in connection with one of the offences referred to in section I—military offences specified in the Code].

(Code of Military Justice. Art. 57).

### Nigeria

A person subject to service law under this Act who has unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman or girl without her consent or with her consent if obtained (a) by force or by means of threat or intimidation of any kind; or (b) by fear of harm; or (c) by means of fake and fraudulent representation as to the nature of the act; or (d) in the case of a married woman, by personating her husband, is guilty of an offence under this section and liable, on conviction by a court-martial, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years or any less punishment provided by this Act.

(Armed Forces Act. Art. 77).

### Pakistan

Certain forms of disgraceful conduct. Any person subject to this Act who commits any of the following offences this is to say: (...) (c) is guilty of any disgraceful conduct of a cruel, indecent or unnatural kind; shall, on conviction by court martial, be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to ten years or with such less punishment as is in this Act mentioned.

Civil offences. (...) any person subject to this Act who at any place in or beyond Pakistan commits any civil offence shall be deemed to be guilty of an offence against this Act and, if charged therewith under this section, shall be liable to be [dealt with under this Act] (...).

(The Pakistan Army Act. Arts. 41 and 59).

Whoever being a public servant including a police officer, medical officer or jailor, taking advantage of his official position, commits rape shall be punished with death or imprisonment for life and fine.

“Public servant”. The words “public servant” denote a person falling under any of the descriptions hereinafter following, namely: (...) every Commissioned Officer in the Military [Naval or Air] Forces of [Pakistan] while serving under [the Federal Government or any Provincial Government];

(Pakistan Penal Code. Arts. 376-4 and 21).

### Paraguay

All acts or omissions committed by military personnel that are contrary to military order, honour, and duty, and that do not constitute an offence, shall be considered disciplinary offences against military discipline.

Making improper insinuations shall be punishable by fifteen to thirty days of arrest, provided that they do not constitute an offence.

(Regulations on Offences and Sanctions of the Armed Forces of the Nation. Arts. 21 and 74).

Offences provided for and punishable under the Civil Penal Code are excluded from this Code. Where an act is provided for and punishable under both this Code and the Civil Penal Code, it shall not be considered a military offence unless it has been committed by a member of the military on active duty and in that capacity.

(Military Penal Code. Art. 5).

### Peru

The Military and Police Jurisdiction (...) shall have jurisdiction exclusively over service offences.

(Law on the Organization and Functions of the Military and Police Jurisdiction. Arts. 1 and 2).

A service offence is any unlawful conduct committed by a member of the military or the police on active duty, in the performance of military or police service or on the occasion thereof, that infringes legal interests related to the existence, organization, operational capacity, or functions of the Armed Forces or the National Police.

(Military and Police Code of Justice. Art. 2).

Where the Judiciary or the Military and Police Jurisdiction assumes jurisdiction over acts involving alleged criminal offences, military disciplinary proceedings shall be suspended pending the conclusion of the judicial proceedings.

Among the very serious offences: 2. Making indecorous insinuations, propositions, obscene gestures, and/or using terms of a sexual nature or connotation (whether verbal or written) that are intolerable and offensive to the aggrieved person. 4. Using one's position or rank to grant, implicitly or explicitly, preferential treatment or benefits in exchange for sexual favours.

(Law on the Disciplinary Regime of the Armed Forces. Art. 61 and Annex III, Section III-14).

Typical sexual harassment, or sexual blackmail, consists of repeated physical or verbal conduct of an unwanted and/or rejected sexual nature, carried out by one or more persons who take advantage of a position of authority or hierarchy, or any other advantageous situation, against one or more persons who reject such conduct because they consider that it affects their dignity and fundamental rights.

Its scope of application [National Law No. 27942] extends to the various Units and Branches of the Army (...). Sanctions: Army personnel who engage in acts of sexual harassment shall, depending on the seriousness of the acts and following a decision by the corresponding Council or Board of Inquiry, be transferred to the Availability

Peru

Status or Retirement Status as a disciplinary measure, as appropriate and in accordance with the procedure established by the Institution's regulations.

Personnel subjected to sexual harassment who have exhausted the internal procedure within the military institution shall have the right to bring summary civil proceedings to claim the corresponding compensation.

Army personnel responsible for ordering administrative investigations shall be jointly liable for such compensation if they were aware of acts of sexual harassment and failed to order the measures necessary to investigate and sanction such conduct.

(Common Procedures Regulations. Internal Service. Army. RE 31-44. Section IV. Regulations for the Implementation of Law No. 27942 on the Prevention and Punishment of Sexual Harassment in the Army. Arts. 11-18 and 11-19)

### Türkiye

For non-military offenses committed by military persons, the provisions of the Turkish Penal Code shall apply.

Military persons who commit sexual assault shall be punished with the penalties in the eighth chapter of the Turkish Penal Code.

(Military Penal Code. Arts. 2 and 152).

### Uruguay

(Duty to report suspected offences). Where the facts appear to constitute a criminal offence, they shall be reported within forty-eight hours, always through the chain of command—following compliance with the first paragraph of Article 142—to the Higher Command of the Armed Forces, which shall inform the competent criminal authority. Failure to comply with this obligation constitutes a serious offence.

(Discharge following penalties imposed by the criminal courts). Principal or ancillary penalties imposed by the competent criminal courts, including disqualification from public office, public employment, political, commercial or industrial rights, and/or loss of military status, shall automatically result in the discharge of the member of the military. The Executive Branch or the corresponding Commander-in-Chief, depending on whether the person belongs to the Senior or Junior Personnel, respectively, shall issue the declaratory administrative act ordering the member's discharge.

(Organic Law of the Armed Forces. Arts. 143 and 159).

## Codes of Ethics and Integrity: The Latin American Experience

The adoption of codes of ethics and integrity within the defence sector has become a recent trend across Latin American countries, influenced in part by the adoption of broader codes at the level of public administration.

### ARGENTINA

- Code of Ethics of the Armed Forces (EMCO Resolution PC 19-01 – 2019).

### BOLIVIA

- Code of Ethics of the Ministry of Defence (updated 2026).
- Army Code of Ethics (2006).

### BRAZIL

- Integrity Plan of the Brazilian Navy – "Naval Integrity" (Latest edition: 2025).
- Integrity Plan of the Brazilian Army (Latest edition: 2025).
- Integrity Plan of the Brazilian Air Force (2018).
- Professional Ethics and Military Leadership Policy of the Brazilian Army 2024–2027 (Ordinance No. 1429 – 28/10/2024).

### CHILE

- Code of Ethics of the Undersecretariat for the Armed Forces (2016).
- Army Ethos Manual (2018/2024 edition).

### COLOMBIA

- Institutional Code of Ethics of the Army (Latest edition: 2025).
- Navy Code of Ethics (2019).
- Air Force Military Code of Ethics (CETMA) (2024).
- Ethics, Integrity and Transparency Manual for the National Navy (2024).
- Manual 1-5. Ethical Foundations of the Military Profession (2022).

### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

- Code of Morality and Ethics of the Armed Forces (2013).

### ECUADOR

- Standards of Ethical Conduct for Personnel of the Ministry of National Defence and the Armed Forces (2023).
- Joint Command. Code of Ethics Manual for Members of the Armed Forces (2014).

### GUATEMALA

- Code of Ethics of the Ministry of National Defence (2022).

### HONDURAS

- Code of Ethical Conduct for Public Servants (2007).
- SEDENA Agreement on Institutional Policies to Promote Ethics, Transparency, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Economy in Comprehensive Management (2025).

### MEXICO

- Code of Conduct of the Secretariat of National Defence (2023).
- Code of Conduct of the Secretariat of the Navy (2023).
- Code of Conduct of the National Guard (2024).

### PARAGUAY

- Code of Ethics of the Ministry of National Defence (Ministerial Resolution No. 696 – 2022).
- Ethics Manual of the Armed Forces of the Nation (2026).

### PERU

- Code of Conduct of the Ministry of Defence (2021).
- Professional Ethics Manual for Military Personnel of the Armed Forces of Peru (2024).

### URUGUAY

- Code of Military Ethics and Conduct (2021).

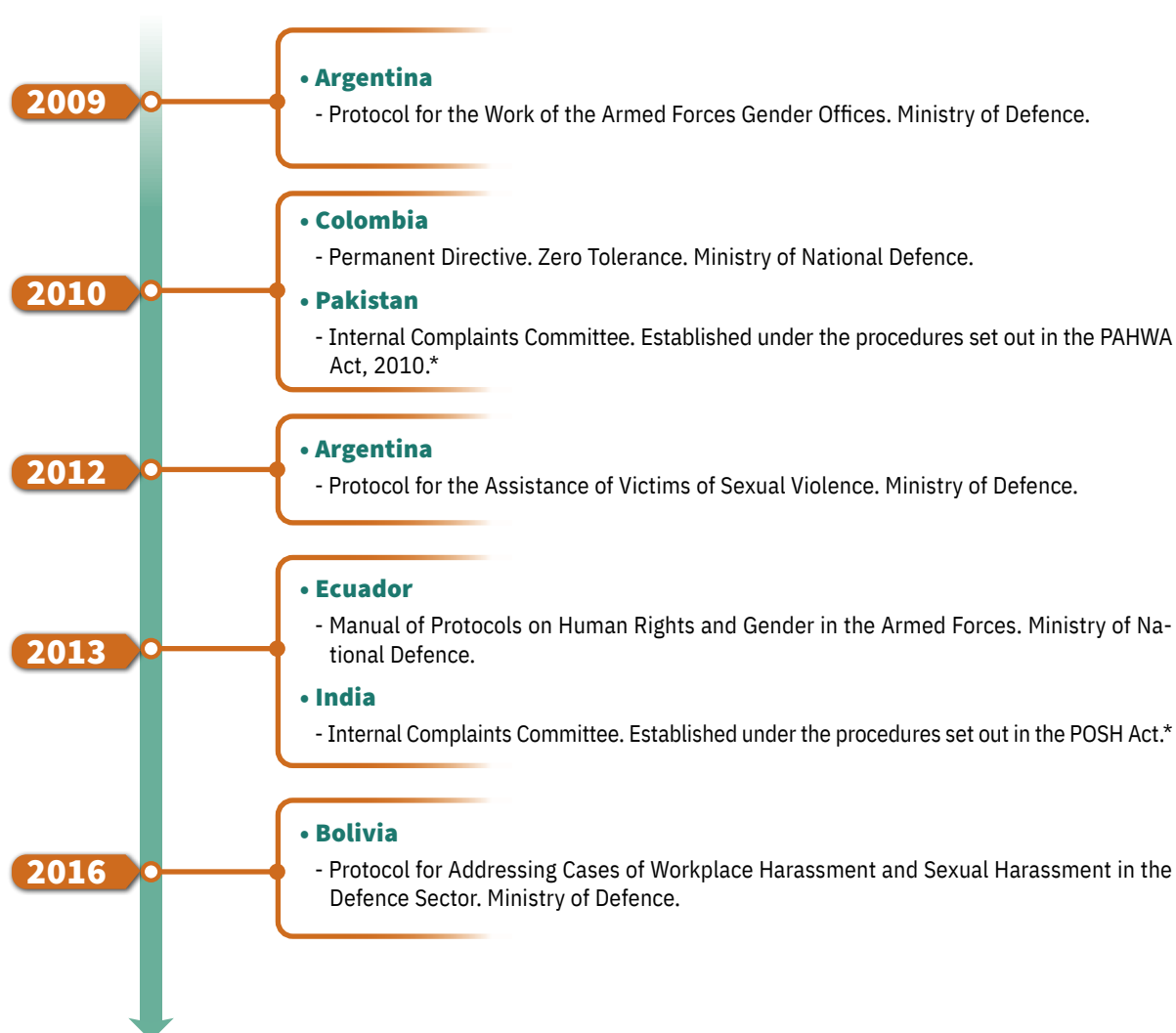
**Source:** Own compilation based on the aforementioned documents.

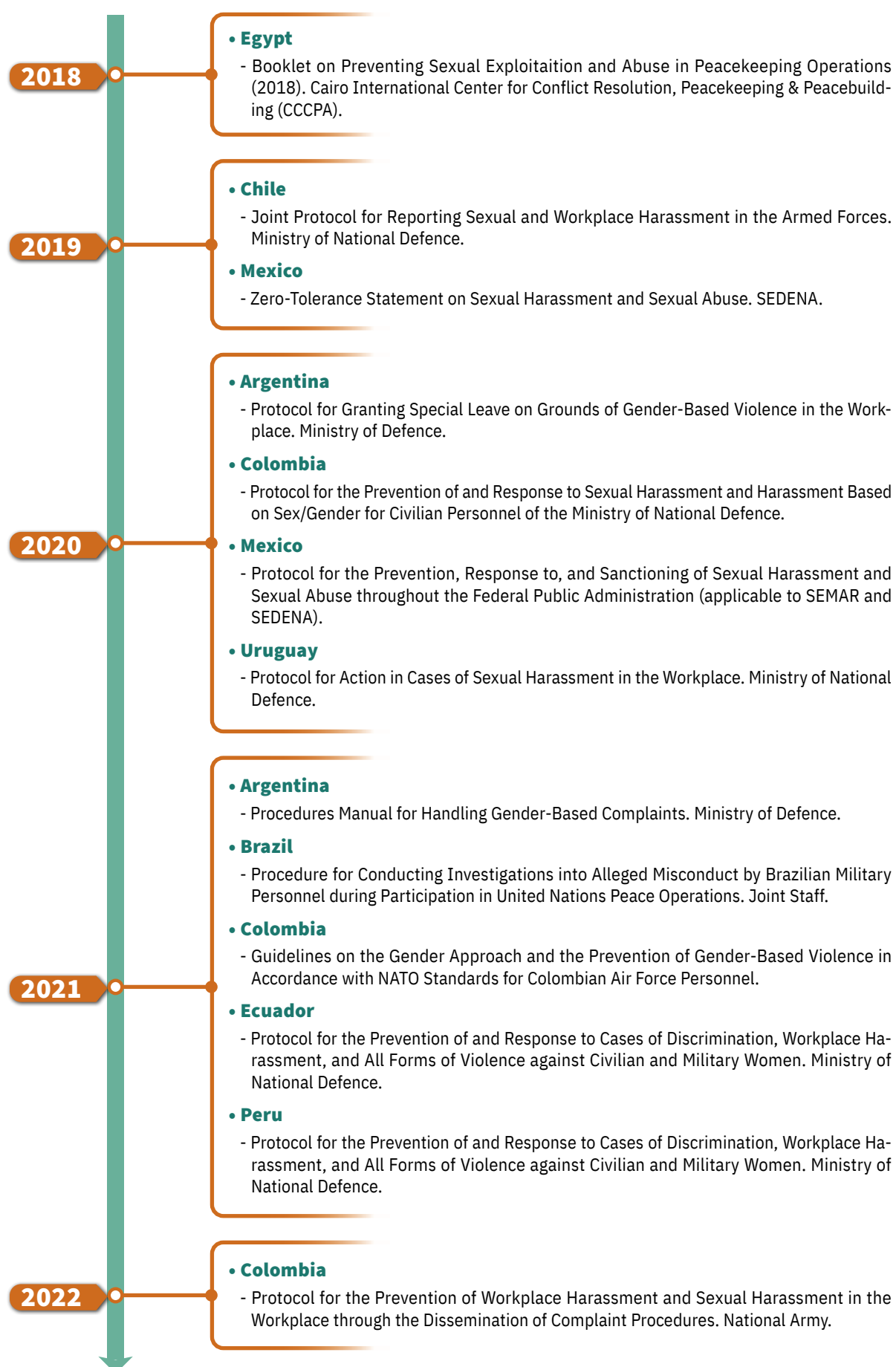
## The Institutional Protocols

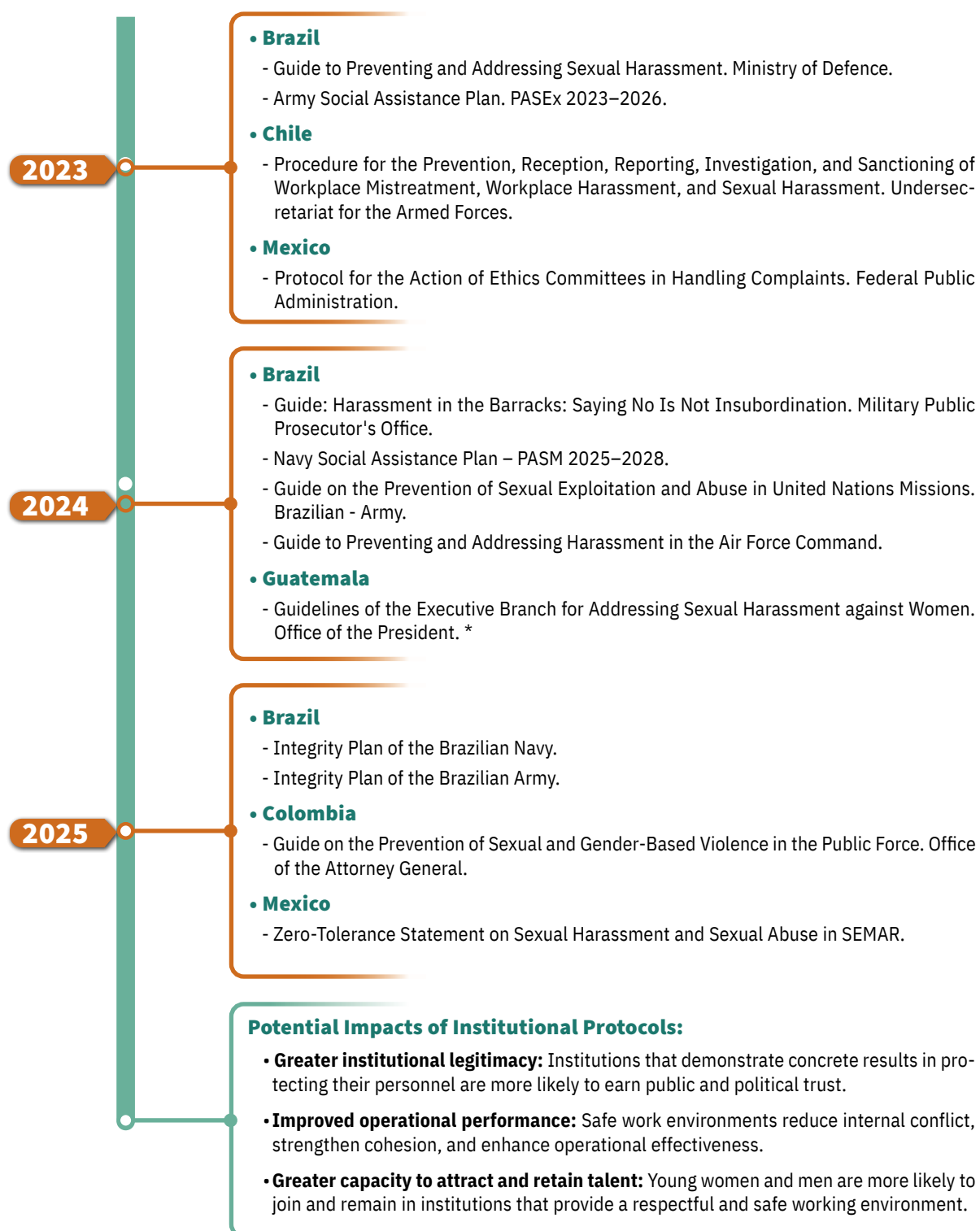
In institutional settings, protocols are formal procedures that establish how complaints should be submitted and handled. Their purpose is to standardize responses so that all units act consistently and effectively. They generally seek to:

- Protect those who report misconduct.
- Promote safe and violence-free working environments.
- Ensure that complaints are handled seriously, transparently, and promptly.
- Strengthen an institutional culture based on equality and respect.

They serve as prevention and response tools that help build confidence among those affected and strengthen institutional credibility. In many cases, they have been introduced or reinforced through broader regulations applicable across the public sector. In addition, some institutions have developed practical guidance materials explaining sexual harassment and abuse, reporting procedures, or standards of conduct for personnel participating in United Nations peace operations. Together, these instruments reflect a recent and still evolving trend across the regions.







\* In India and Pakistan, respective laws establish the procedures and the creation of Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) with the authority to investigate allegations of sexual harassment and abuse. In Pakistan, the applicable regulation is the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 (PAHWA). In India, it is the POSH Act (Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act). Both the Ministry of Defence of Pakistan and that of India established these Committees following the enactment of said laws. In Guatemala, the recently enacted presidential guideline instructs all executive branch agencies, including the Ministry of National Defence, to develop a protocol.

**Note:** In Cameroon, Honduras, Nigeria, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, and Turkey, national laws against sexual harassment exist and apply to both public and workplace sectors. No specific public protocols or guidelines have been identified for the defence sector.

**Source:** Own compilation based on information retrieved and official websites of the defence institutions of the countries considered.

## Experiences and Practices

A data-based overview of country experiences in areas such as training, protocols, policies, and institutional initiatives.

**Reporting Protocol:** Gender Departments within the Armed Forces of **Argentina** operate under the General Directorates for Personnel and Welfare of each service branch and coordinate with the Ministry of Defence's Gender Policy Directorate. Complaints may be submitted by telephone, online, by email, in writing, or in person. All reports are channelled through the relevant Gender Department, where they are recorded for statistical purposes and reported to the Ministry of Defence.

The Gender Equity Programme within the Armed Forces of **Bolivia** has been in place since 2008. A **Gender Council**, led by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, regularly promotes national and international training activities and reviews institutional regulations to strengthen gender integration across the military.

A pioneering practice in the area of specialized training on sexual harassment and sexual abuse is being developed in **Brazil** at the Joint Centre for Peace Operations. The course, **Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment**, was developed nationally and is offered to both domestic and international participants. It has a duration of five days.

One of the initiatives developed by **Cameroon** in recent years in response to training needs is a **workshop on gender-based violence in conflict situations**. Launched in 2023, the three-day programme is delivered through the Peacekeeping Operations Training School.

Created in 2014, the **Inclusion Roundtable** in **Chile** serves as a coordination space bringing together the Armed Forces and civilian institutions linked to the Ministry of Defence. A Gender Focal Point Network brings together professionals from the Ministry's subsecretariats to develop concrete proposals and assess ministerial policies and practices through an inclusive lens.

**Colombia** has pursued a sustained process of institutional initiatives in this area. Examples include the **Permanent Directive on Zero Tolerance**, the **Gender Mainstreaming Strengthening Strategy** of the General Command of the Military Forces, and the **Sectoral Public Policy** for Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective for Uniformed Personnel of the Public Force (2018–2027).

In partnership with the Ministry of Women, the Ministry of Defence of the **Dominican Republic** regularly organizes the **International Course** on Public Policies and Masculinities for the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence. The eighth edition, held in 2024, lasted five days and brought together officers and non-commissioned officers. According to the organizers, the course contributes to strengthening the policy of zero tolerance towards gender-based violence.

The **Gender Policy** of the Armed Forces in **Ecuador** (2023) establishes an institutional framework to promote equal opportunities, prevent gender-based violence, and strengthen human rights within the defence sector. Its overarching objective is to mainstream a gender perspective across all military structures, fostering equity, inclusion, and zero tolerance for any form of discrimination or sexual violence.

In **Egypt**, LAWIO, the Liaison Agency with International Organizations of the Ministry of Defence, works with United Nations training modules, including those on conduct and discipline and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). In coordination with the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCCA), it organized a **Training of Trainers** programme on PSEA designed to integrate standards of conduct into personnel preparing for deployment.

One significant development in recent years in **El Salvador** has been the reform of the **Military Career Law**, aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for the professional advancement of women within the Armed Force. In terms of welfare and service conditions, investments have also been made in infrastructure and healthcare services that directly benefit female personnel.

The **Policy on Military Women** was adopted by the Army of **Guatemala** in 2024. One of its core pillars is the protection of military women from violence, discrimination, sexual harassment, workplace harassment, and other violations of their fundamental rights. Among other measures, the policy calls for the development of effective and accessible institutional mechanisms to facilitate the reporting of complaints.

According to 2025 **Annual Report** of the Ministry of Defence of **Honduras**, multiple training activities on gender and human rights have been carried out. These programmes have covered topics such as workplace ethics, gender equality, the promotion and protection of human rights, and the right to a life free from violence and discrimination.

The **graduation** of the first cohort of women cadets from the National Defence Academy (NDA) in **India** in 2025 was celebrated as a historic milestone. Women were first admitted to the Academy's career officer programme in 2021, and the graduation of this inaugural group of 17 cadets represents a landmark event in the institution's history and in the integration of women into officer training.

In **Mexico**, the role of leadership within institutional responses to sexual harassment and sexual abuse continues to receive increasing attention. Senior officials from the Secretariat of National Defence and the Secretariat of the Navy, which jointly organize the **Joint Senior Military Administration Course**, selected the analysis of recommendations on preventing sexual harassment and promoting gender equality in administration among the key themes of the 2025 edition.

The **Gender Mainstreaming Conference**, organized annually by the Defence Headquarters of **Nigeria**, is a flagship activity within the Armed Forces' gender agenda. The Presidency regularly participates, alongside actors from a range of sectors. In 2024, the conference focused on the relationship between gender mainstreaming and operational effectiveness. In 2025, held in the form of a symposium, it placed particular emphasis on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Training within the Armed Forces of **Pakistan** has increasingly emphasized the internationalization of female personnel's military education. According to a **report** by the US Department of State, the participation of Pakistani women officers in the International Military Education and Training Program (IMET) has increased by more than 100 percent over the past decade. The courses include modules on leadership, human rights, international humanitarian law, gender-responsive operations, and international cooperation.

The Ministry of National Defence of **Paraguay** is developing a **gender regulation** for the Armed Forces. As part of the process, led by the Ministry's Directorate of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, a series of outreach and consultation activities were conducted, including discussion sessions with personnel from the three services and the Logistics Command.

The Ministry of Defence of **Peru** has launched a **dedicated hotline** to receive reports of workplace sexual harassment within the defence sector, with the aim of promoting a safer environment for personnel working in the Ministry and the Armed Forces. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the service is intended to provide immediate support to those affected and clear guidance on reporting procedures.

Human rights **education** within the Armed Forces of **Türkiye** combines mandatory basic training for conscripts and newly commissioned officers with more specialized instruction. As part of initial training, one of the four core modules focuses on women's rights and gender equality.

In early 2025, as part of the **Compromisos de Estado** [Government Commitments], the Ministry of National Defence of **Uruguay** committed to strengthening the gender perspective across all areas of its work, promoting policies aimed at ensuring equal opportunities and removing barriers for women in both military and civilian settings. One of the priority areas will be the strengthening of gender commissions within the executive units.



Source: Own compilation based on project documentation, news monitoring system, and the online sources referenced.

## Section II

# **From the Duty to Report to the Commitment to Respond**

---

**Transformative Leadership in  
Addressing Sexual Harassment  
and Sexual Abuse**

# 1 CREATING SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENTS IN DEFENCE INSTITUTIONS

## Recognizing the Armed Forces as Workplaces

Research conducted in different parts of the world has examined the impact of sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace.<sup>1</sup> Studies focusing on military institutions have shown that this is a phenomenon with adverse consequences for both individuals and organizations, including disrupted career paths, lower productivity, reduced job satisfaction and motivation, damage to self-esteem, physical and mental health problems, and diminished commitment to the organization. Perhaps most importantly, they also undermine group cohesion, or *esprit de corps*, a fundamental element of military institutions.<sup>2</sup>

The nature of security and defence institutions differs from that of other public entities. They operate in contexts where national security and defence strategies intersect with the obligation to ensure transparency toward the public. They are organized according to their own models of personnel management and accountability, in which the maintenance of order, discipline, and hierarchical authority are central to their functioning.

Despite their unique characteristics, the Armed Forces *are* workplaces. They operate in distinctive work environments, often located in confined, isolated or remote settings. Personnel spend many hours a day in close proximity, living, working, and even sleeping side by side. In addition to the challenges inherent in any workplace, there are aspects specific to the organizational culture. A recent study argues that there are a number of precursors or facilitators of unacceptable behavior in the workplace that act as risk factors:<sup>3</sup>

- Cultural: such as a lack of diversity; a traditionally male-dominated culture; loyalty to the unit; tribalism; a culture of resilience that may encourage members to persevere and carry on despite injuries, illnesses, or grievances; unquestioning obedience to the chain of command (which limits personnel's ability to report abuse); and a lack of accountability.
- Behavioural drivers, such as alcohol consumption when it is encouraged as an integral and necessary part of building camaraderie and shared experiences, or as a way for new recruits or lower-ranking personnel to gain acceptance within the team.

1 A global survey commissioned by the International Labour Organization found that, worldwide, more than 1 in 5 people have experienced violence and harassment at work. International Labour Organization, Lloyd's Register Foundation, & Gallup International, Inc. (2022). *Experiences of violence and harassment at work: A global first survey*. ILO. <https://doi.org/10.54394/IOAX8567>

2 See, for example: Harries, R. J., et al. (2018). *Sexual harassment in the military: Individual experiences, demographics, and organizational contexts*. *Armed Forces & Society*, 44 (1), 25–43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X16687069>. Magsi, L., & Ariel, B. (2024). *Internal sexual harassment among police personnel: Insights from a Birmingham, UK cross-sectional survey*. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 18. <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/paae049>

3 Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. (2024). *Final report: Military sexual violence, unacceptable behavior, and military justice (Vol. 3)*. Commonwealth of Australia.

What characterizes the work environment at our institution?  
What adverse consequences do sexual harassment and abuse cause?

There are numerous reported cases where female personnel have been victims of violence, harassment, and abuse by colleagues, especially in locations far from major units.<sup>4</sup> Identifying these enabling conditions—or others that may exist—is an important step in designing effective prevention and response measures. It also reinforces the central role of institutional leadership throughout the organization. Approaches that seek to avoid the problem—for example, by limiting interaction between male and female staff—might not resolve institutional shortcomings. Instead, they could reinforce them, as they undermine staff cohesion<sup>5</sup> as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of resources allocated to staff.

Organizational characteristics must therefore be taken into account. Key aspects such as the gender context within workgroups (the gendered nature of job duties, or the ratio of men to women in the group), along with the perceived level of institutional tolerance for harassment, are among the strongest predictors of whether incidents occur or not.<sup>6</sup>

As discussed in Section I, the Global South countries included in this study have national legal frameworks addressing sexual harassment and abuse, together with internal regulations, policies, plans, and protocols within their defence institutions. Together, these instruments recognize—albeit implicitly—that the inclusion of women does not, on its own, resolve gender inequalities or structural paradigms that perpetuate cultural stereotypes.<sup>7</sup>

Are the policies and plans currently in place sufficient on their own? One recurring aspect is that most research on sexual violence focuses on victims, with little complementary research on the unique risk factors that give rise to these incidents. Institutional responses may also operate within systems whose underlying logic is more punitive than restorative.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the emotional impact and sense of belonging to the group for those affected may therefore experience what feels like a double betrayal: by the colleague who is supposed to be a support, and by superiors who ignore the situation or fail to activate support and containment mechanisms.<sup>9</sup> Once personnel have overcome the significant barrier of reporting misconduct, the burden should shift to the institution. It is the employer—not the person affected—who has the responsibility to investigate allegations of sexual harassment.

It is the organization's responsibility to promote a workplace free of sexual harassment and abuse. In addition to being a legal requirement, this is essential if the institution seeks to retain personnel and maintain a fully operational and cohesive workforce capable of carrying out its missions effectively. As

4 Numerous news reports on this topic can be found on websites and social media across all regions.

5 Based on the testimonies received, a study showed how “when the men in their units simply avoided them, they contributed to social isolation to the detriment of unit cohesion.” Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military. (2021). *Hard truths and the duty to change: Recommendations from the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military*. U.S. Department of Defense, p. 30.

6 Studies have found that harassment is more common when staff perceive that such behavior is tolerated and when work teams are not gender-balanced. Louise F. Fitzgerald, Drasgow, F., Hulin, C. L., Gelfand, M. J., & Magley, V. J. (1999). *Sexual harassment in the armed forces: A test of an integrated model*. *Military Psychology*, 11(3), 329–343. [https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327876MP1103\\_7](https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327876MP1103_7)

7 Latin American Security and Defence Network (RESDAL). (September 2025). *Practices and progress in addressing sexual harassment and abuse in security institutions in countries of the Global South*.

8 Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. (2024). *Final report: Military sexual violence, unacceptable behavior, and military justice (Vol. 3)*. Commonwealth of Australia.

9 Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military. (2021). *Hard truths and the duty to change: Recommendations from the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military*. U.S. Department of Defense, p. 10.

an integral part of this, it must provide appropriate support to its members and ensure a safe work environment—both physically and psychologically—while addressing the inherent challenges of military life.

Understanding motivations, risk factors, predictive behaviors, and the impact of prevention programs is a major challenge; some initiatives can even cause harm if not implemented carefully. Developing new policies -or revising existing ones- is not without challenges. If not carefully designed, reforms may further erode trust in both the system and the institution, while placing additional demands on leaders and on those affected. Institutions will benefit from a holistic approach that fosters an organizational culture in which everyone feels included and able to contribute.

### Proposal:

**Ground institutional action in a comprehensive assessment of the workplace environment.**

Further erode trust in both the system and the institution, while placing additional demands on leaders and on those affected. Institutions will benefit from a holistic approach that fosters an organizational culture in which everyone feels included and able to contribute.

## Focusing on Key Definitions

Defining sexual harassment and abuse is not straightforward. Although the concepts are generally understood, developing an institutional definition is more complex. The definition of these terms has evolved over time. Initially, it was more closely associated with unsolicited and repeated verbal, gestural, or physical acts of a sexual nature.<sup>10</sup> Over time, however, it has broadened considerably.

If we focus on sexual harassment, it has traditionally been understood in general terms as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, that is perceived as unwelcome, inappropriate or offensive, directed at another person in the workplace and capable of creating a hostile work environment. Some argue that this understanding is too broad. Others argue that it is closely related to perceptions of what would be inappropriate for a particular person. The way these concepts are understood may also vary across cultural contexts.

### What definitions are we using?

In our countries, there are differences in how sexual harassment is defined. For example, some institutions have adopted the concepts established in laws and other national regulatory frameworks. Others have adapted definitions issued by multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations. These definitions are often adapted to reflect each institution's own philosophy and operational structure. However, clear definitions are not always available. Having an explicit legal definition deserves particular attention, especially given that it will be applied within institutions that operate through hierarchical structures and a chain of command. It is also important to distinguish between shortcomings in the legal framework itself and difficulties arising from its implementation, such as institutional fragmentation.<sup>11</sup>

### Proposal:

**Adopt clear, simple, and practical definitions.**

It is also important to distinguish between shortcomings in the legal framework itself and difficulties arising from its implementation, such as institutional fragmentation.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Harries, R. J., et al. (2018). [Sexual harassment in the military: Individual experiences, demographics, and organizational contexts](#). *Armed Forces & Society*, 44 (1), 25–43, pp. 26–28.

<sup>11</sup> This appears to be most evident in contexts where national legislation is relatively weak. See Donnelly, P., & Papworth, E. (December 17, 2024). [Connecting sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in UN peace operations](#). International Peace Institute.

It is suggested that defence institutions adopt **clear and simple** definitions whose practical application is not open to conflicting interpretations. This will help eliminate any confusion among commanders when determining how an incident is classified, particularly given that in most cases the penal codes of the countries under consideration here establish sexual harassment as a crime. Classifying an incident as a crime or as a disciplinary offense (minor, serious, or very serious) is crucial, as its classification will determine the types

### Proposal:

**Unify criteria and definitions between the general national context and that of the defence sector.**

of administrative and disciplinary proceedings to be carried out within the institutions themselves. In turn, it will determine the sanctions to be applied, the interim protective measures to be implemented, and the type of support provided to the affected person.

The purpose of administrative action is to determine whether personnel remain fit for duty. In some situations, both administrative and disciplinary action may be appropriate and proceed in parallel.<sup>12</sup> At the

same time, insufficient information provided at the outset of a report or complaint can become an obstacle when assessing the nature of the reported incident. Clear terminology helps trigger an efficient and dynamic institutional response, both to protect and safeguard the affected individual and to enable managers to take action and clarify the facts.

## Fostering Positive Leadership

Every initiative aimed at creating safe work environments free from violence and sexual harassment begins with strengthening the role of leadership at all levels of the military system.

Most of the progress regarding the incorporation and implementation of a gender perspective within defence institutions in our countries has taken place -and continues to do so- under the renewed and persistent oversight of the leadership of the Ministries or Secretariats of Defence and the commanders of the Armed Forces. The existence of institutional units dedicated to issues related to the integration of women into the Armed Forces is intended to support the implementation of policies established by the highest levels of leadership.

Within the civilian leadership of the defence sector, some decision-makers may themselves have internalized many of the values and assumptions of military culture. Many senior officials and staff are current or former members of the Armed Forces.<sup>13</sup> When addressing sensitive issues such as sexual harassment and abuse, the absence of a genuinely civilian perspective may therefore become an additional challenge.

Without entering into the broader debate on civilian leadership in defence, this longstanding dilemma appears to remain relevant. On the one hand, there are experienced civilian professionals who may not fully understand the distinctive characteristics of the defence sector. On the other, there are highly trained military personnel who understand orders, regulations, and directives, but who may place less value on recommendations from civilians who have not developed professionally within the military institution.

<sup>12</sup> This typically occurs when an incident gives rise to both disciplinary proceedings and an administrative assessment of whether the individual remains fit for service.

<sup>13</sup> Louise Arbour. (2022). *Report of the Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces*. Department of National Defence, Government of Canada, p. 283.

### What internal capabilities do institutions have to address situations of sexual harassment and abuse specifically?

Many commanders may recognize that sexual harassment and abuse are corrosive to the effectiveness of the force they command, yet at the same time find themselves with little capacity to respond to it. The hierarchical position within a unit places these commanders in an apparent conflict: on the one hand, the duty to maintain what is still traditionally understood as cohesion and esprit de corps, and on the other, the urgency to manage these situations that, in fact, undermine it. There may be scenarios where insufficient legal training or resources are provided, or where adequate training for the initial support of affected individuals and the guarantees of a process that may not be specifically established are lacking. Specific protocols are still a recent development and do not exist in all cases. It may happen that support is sought from resources outside the unit. Ultimately, on occasion, the insufficient or flawed handling of these types of processes may be due more to a lack of capacity or a multiplicity of interpretations than to the absence of policies.

One of the aforementioned studies concluded that there is a negative correlation between trust in the chain of command when it comes to addressing complaints, and levels of unacceptable behavior.<sup>14</sup> In practice, this suggests that rates of unacceptable behavior tend to be lower in units where personnel trust that command will take action on complaints. In this regard, it is of the utmost importance that leadership foster an environment where sexual harassment and abuse are not tolerated. The referral of legal and technical decisions to independent military (or civilian) prosecutors cannot negate or diminish the commitment and concern that institutional leadership has for the personnel under their command.

### How does trust in leadership relate to the number of complaints filed and their outcomes within our institution?

Responsibility for the institutional response begins at the highest level, with the Ministry or Secretariat of Defence and the senior leadership of the Armed Forces, and extends throughout the chain of command. However, given the impact of sexual harassment and abuse, efforts must be comprehensive and extend well beyond the highest levels of authority. Everyone with leadership responsibilities—regardless of branch, service, rank, specialty, or function—has a part to play. Their unified, coordinated, and consistent action is essential to preventing and addressing sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace.

One useful conceptual framework classifies the degree of commitment demonstrated by leadership in responding to sexual harassment and abuse into three levels of effectiveness: high, medium, and low. Accordingly, three leadership models can be identified:

14 Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. (2024). *Final report: Military sexual violence, unacceptable behaviour and military justice (Vol. 3)*, Commonwealth of Australia, p. 178. Another study concurs with this correlation, arguing that in many contexts sexual harassment and abuse is closely linked to units operating within command climates that are unhealthy in terms of gender. See Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military. (2021). *Hard truths and the duty to change: Recommendations from the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military*. U.S. Department of Defence, p. 9.

## Leadership Models



**Source:** Own compilation based on Sadler, A. G., Lindsay, D. R., Hunter, S. T., & Day, D. V. (2018). [The impact of leadership on sexual harassment and sexual assault in the military](https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2017.1422948). *Military Psychology*, 30 (3), 252–263. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2017.1422948> They use, as a theoretical framework and among other things, transformational leadership derived from Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row. Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press.

The development of transformational leadership in key positions may be the cornerstone of meaningful institutional change. According to this model, four core elements define this leadership style. It creates idealized influence by serving as a positive role model. It provides inspirational motivation by articulating a compelling vision and fostering confidence that it can be achieved. In addressing sexual harassment and abuse, it promotes a workplace culture grounded in dignity and respect. Intellectual stimulation encourages personnel to think critically and develop creative solutions to institutional challenges. Finally, individualized consideration reflects a leadership style that listens to the needs of its personnel, provides guidance and mentoring, and supports both personal and professional development.

### Proposal:

#### Develop transformational leadership.

The practical implications of these leadership models in preventing and responding to sexual harassment and abuse in defence institutions can be illustrated through the following examples:

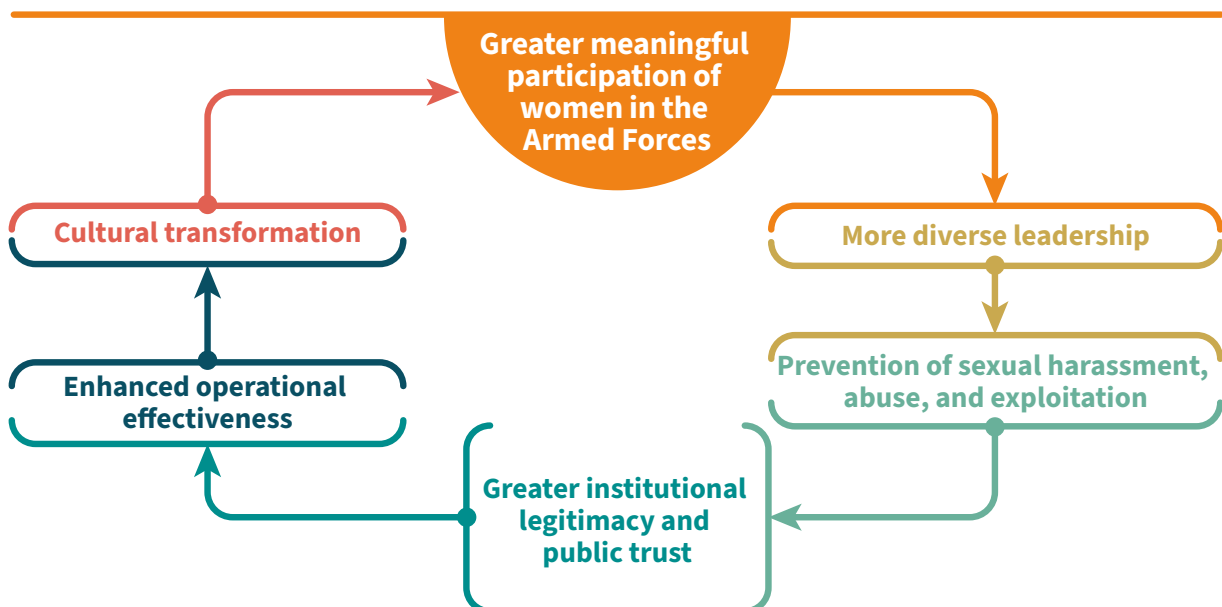
- *Transformational leadership*: encourages the integration of women into operational units, promotes innovation, and protects those who report abuse, creating an environment in which affected persons feel supported, heard, and protected.
- *Transactional leadership*: emphasizes discipline, rewards compliance, and sanctions misconduct. In this environment, affected persons may perceive that access to support depends on their place within these established dynamics.
- *Passive leadership*: ignores or delays complaint processes, contributing to impunity for perpetrators and fostering a culture of silence, discouragement, and mistrust.

Leadership is developed; it is not simply an innate quality. Whether exercised by military personnel or civilians, and whether in peacetime, conflict, or international deployments, these capacities should be strengthened throughout everyday institutional life. Within the defence sector, those responsible for defining policies must act consistently, communicate clear expectations throughout the chain of command, and actively support the development of future leaders. Likewise, officers, non-commissioned officers, enlisted personnel, and civilian staff all have a role to play. The complexity of these challenges requires broad, coordinated approaches that strengthen workplace environments while enhancing the institution's ability to fulfil its missions.

## Sharing and Contributing Global South Experience

The activities and research carried out throughout this project revealed numerous experiences and institutional developments that illustrate how countries have progressed and which factors appear to have contributed most to these advances.

The inclusion of women in middle and senior leadership positions brings new perspectives, encourages more inclusive leadership styles, and has a positive impact on institutional culture and operational effectiveness. Research also highlights women's additional strengths in mediation, communication, and conflict resolution during training and deployments. With regard to peace operations, there is broad agreement that women's participation enhances the legitimacy of missions by building trust with local communities, facilitating community engagement and information gathering, and helping prevent cases of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), which remain a major concern whenever United Nations peacekeepers are deployed.



**Source:** Own compilation based on presentations delivered at the International Seminar “Women in Uniform and Peace Operations: Progress and Challenges in Creating Safe and Inclusive Environments”, organized by RESDAL and REBRAPAZ, Brasília, October 2024.

## What changes and contributions has the meaningful participation of women brought to our institution?

With regard to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, although it is often perceived as a civilian or diplomatic initiative, the countries included in this study have made significant progress in fostering ownership within military institutions. Furthermore, the existence of a National Action Plan for United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 has generally supported the systematic integration of gender perspectives into military doctrine and planning.<sup>15</sup>

### Proposal: Reaffirm national and international commitment and cooperation.

To move forward, countries consistently highlighted a number of closely interconnected priorities based on their own experience.

## Key Priorities for Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment and Abuse According to Global South Experience

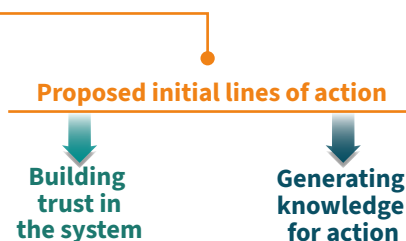
| Definitions and Understanding                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Legislation and Policies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Education and Training                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Justice and Discipline                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Cohesion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demystify the concept of gender.</li> <li>Address the issue within its broader social and cultural context.</li> <li>Recognize that sexual harassment and abuse exist and can occur at any time and in any setting.</li> <li>Examine the factors that contribute to their persistence.</li> <li>Recognize that this is not a struggle between women and men.</li> <li>Acknowledge that some actors have only a limited understanding of the issue.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Align national policies with international standards.</li> <li>Identify potential gaps in national legislation.</li> <li>Adapt internal regulations.</li> <li>Strengthen implementation mechanisms through clear objectives and regular monitoring.</li> <li>Strengthen accountability.</li> <li>Establish effective communication channels for institutional policies.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote exchanges between countries and regions to learn from shared experience.</li> <li>Place prevention at the centre of education and training.</li> <li>Integrate education and training into both academic and workplace settings.</li> <li>Reinforce training through continuous communication and awareness messages.</li> <li>Address intellectual, psychological, and professional dimensions.</li> <li>Strengthen leadership development.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain good discipline.</li> <li>Avoid blaming affected persons.</li> <li>Examine the causes of underreporting.</li> <li>Ensure independent investigations.</li> <li>Address the challenges of investigating these cases.</li> <li>Strengthen investigative capacity.</li> <li>Raise awareness and provide specialized training for justice personnel.</li> <li>Improve operational procedures.</li> <li>Promote more inclusive processes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen unit cohesion as a core institutional value.</li> <li>Develop targeted recruitment policies for women.</li> <li>Recognize that women are an integral part of the institution, not a separate group.</li> <li>Ensure equity in working conditions, treatment, resources, and equipment.</li> </ul> |

**Source:** Own compilation based on the presentations from the International Seminar *Women in Uniform and Peace Operations: Progress and Challenges in Creating Safe and Inclusive Environments*, organized by RESDAL and REBRAPAZ.

<sup>15</sup> Another issue identified in some contexts is the reliance on external funding for initiatives that promote gender policies and plans.

## 2 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS: TOWARD A MULTIFACETED APPROACH

The experience gained throughout the project, the valuable exchanges between countries during its various events, and the analysis of the primary information collected provide important insights and highlight challenges that point to possible courses of action. In this regard, we propose two initial lines of action that bring together key dimensions for strengthening institutional responses to sexual harassment and sexual abuse: building trust in the system and generating knowledge for action. Far from constituting a definitive framework, these lines are intended to open—and continue—a field of reflection and action that can be further developed in future initiatives.



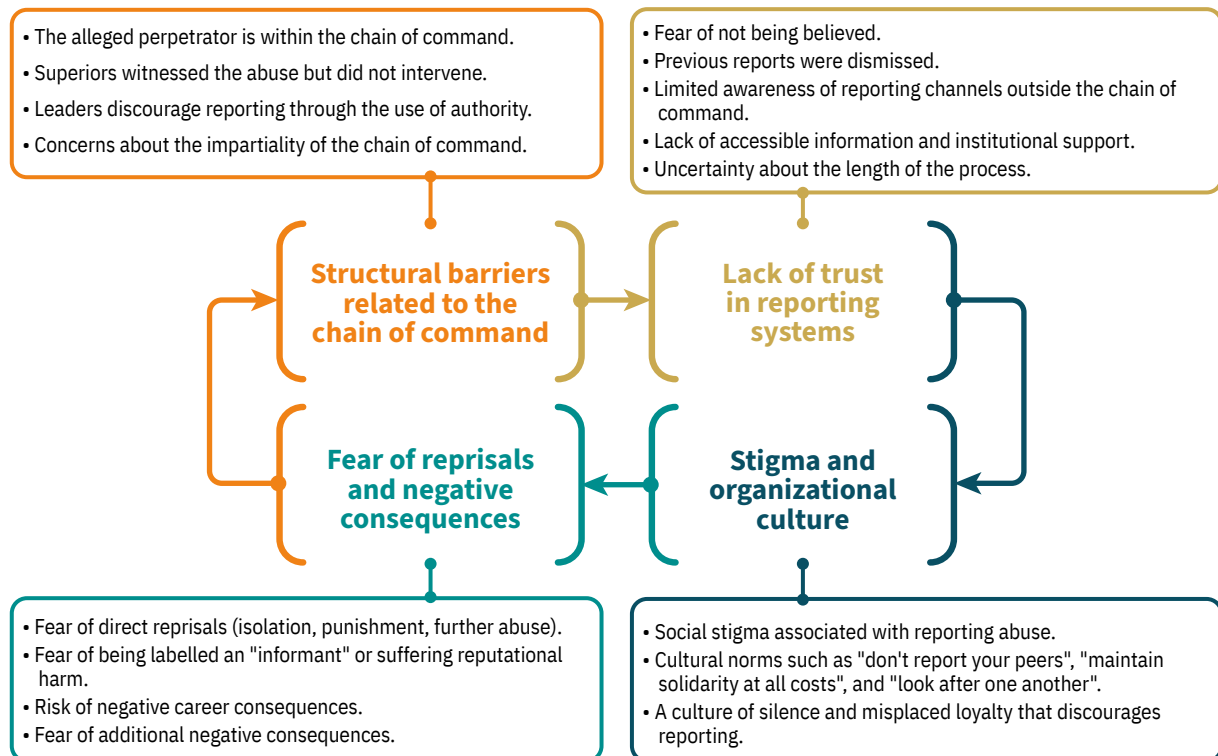
### Building Trust in the System

A key aspect on which the results of the project's various activities have converged concerns trust in institutional systems and operational procedures, and how this does or does not impact reports of misconduct. Compared with civilian workplaces, there are aspects of military life that may make the decision to report more difficult. For example, the characteristics of military units (many of which are small by design and located far from major decision-making centres), as well as the working conditions of those serving in them, may make reporting more difficult. Structural and cultural barriers, discussed in the previous section, also play an important role. Reporting may also be discouraged when institutional procedures are perceived as confusing, overly complex, or fragmented.

To improve policies and procedures, they should be easily accessible and easy to understand and navigate, both for those who wish to file a report and for those who are subsequently tasked with investigating. This requires considering not only the conduct that causes harm, but also the potential harm that the institutional response may cause to affected individuals—and to the institution itself.

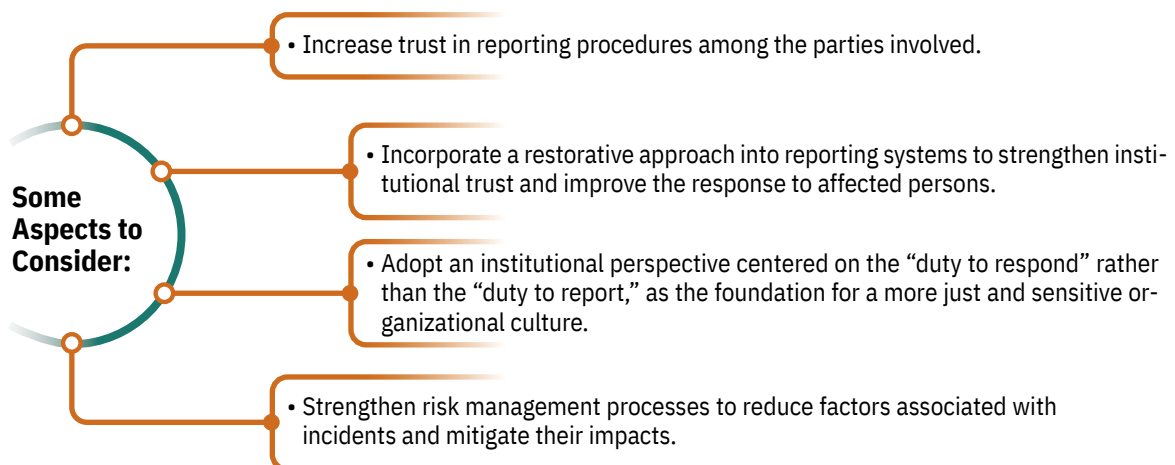
A lack of trust in the system or its procedures leads to a core challenge: incidents remain unreported. Many of the causes of underreporting are linked to the anticipation of the negative consequences that reporting will entail, and the doubts that this raises.

## Factors Associated with Underreporting



**Source:** Own compilation based on regional and national studies and project events; Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. (2024). [Final report: Military sexual violence, unacceptable behavior, and military justice \(Vol. 3\)](#). Commonwealth of Australia; Louise Arbour. (2022). [Report of the Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces](#). Department of National Defence.

Additionally, a significant number of the national regulations collected establish an obligation to report cases of which one is aware. In some interpretations, this obligation may apply to anyone from the affected person themselves to a colleague or member of the institution who has been a direct or indirect witness to the incident. There is ongoing debate surrounding the so-called duty to report. Although originally conceived as a mechanism for informing the chain of command, its effectiveness has yet to be clearly demonstrated.



## Generating Knowledge for Action

Given the commitment, efforts, and resources invested, and if these actions are to contribute to systemic change, it is important to take an analytical view of the current situation. Taking into account the different institutional contexts and dynamics, it is possible to analyze variables that, depending on how they evolve, either strengthen or weaken institutional systems. Developing knowledge in these areas can make a significant contribution to institutional progress in addressing sexual harassment and sexual abuse.

### Institutional Management Capacity

|                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Collection, recording and management of incidents and data</b>               | <b>Developed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Up-to-date systems with dynamic databases.</li> <li>- Qualitative and quantitative analyses are conducted.</li> <li>- New cases are used to continuously improve the system.</li> </ul>                                                                                                    | <b>Fragmented</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Information scattered across different levels and systems.</li> <li>- Lack of clear policies and specific funding.</li> <li>- Ad hoc initiatives by personnel to facilitate implementation.</li> <li>- General lack of coordination among processes.</li> </ul>                            | <b>Emerging</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of systematic mechanisms for data collection and recording.</li> <li>- No specific planning or resource allocation is observed.</li> </ul>                                                                                         |
| <b>Reporting mechanisms and transparency in investigations</b>                  | <b>Developed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessible and easy-to-use reporting channels for all personnel.</li> <li>- Multiple reporting channels available.</li> <li>- High level of confidentiality and protection for those affected.</li> <li>- Public information without compromising the safety of those involved.</li> </ul> | <b>Fragmented</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mixed mechanisms (within and outside the chain of command).</li> <li>- Persistent challenges in implementing procedures.</li> <li>- Shortage of trained personnel.</li> <li>- Lengthy processing times.</li> <li>- Variable outcomes depending on how the process is initiated.</li> </ul> | <b>Emerging</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of specific or formalized channels.</li> <li>- Reliance on the chain of command for case management.</li> <li>- Limitations in handling sensitive cases.</li> <li>- Omissions or inaction in case handling.</li> </ul>             |
| <b>Administration of justice and coordination with the civil justice system</b> | <b>Developed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Streamlined processes with guarantees of fairness and impartiality.</li> <li>- Coordination with the civilian justice system in accordance with the applicable legal framework.</li> <li>- External referral mechanisms established through clearly defined protocols.</li> </ul>          | <b>Fragmented</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inconsistent application of impartiality criteria.</li> <li>- Irregular coordination with the civil justice system, depending on the case and the chain of command.</li> <li>- Partial or variable activation of referral mechanisms.</li> </ul>                                           | <b>Emerging</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited or ineffective application of justice mechanisms.</li> <li>- Persistence of conditions that undermine institutional trust.</li> <li>- Risk of revictimization.</li> <li>- Absence or weakness of referral protocols.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Protection of affected persons</b>                                           | <b>Developed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Effective protective measures during and after the incident.</li> <li>- Sustained institutional support.</li> <li>- Low risk of affected personnel leaving the institution.</li> </ul>                                                                                                     | <b>Fragmented</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Time-limited measures.</li> <li>- Insufficient human and material resources.</li> <li>- Moderate risk of disengagement.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Emerging</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Absence of structured protection mechanisms.</li> <li>- Conditions that may contribute to isolation within the institution.</li> <li>- High risk of disengagement.</li> </ul>                                                           |

Source: Own compilation.

For example, turning first to the collection, recording, and management of incidents and data, the research conducted and the discussions held during the project events showed that institutions would greatly benefit from having an integrated and reliable database. Such a system would contribute to a better understanding of the issue, help assess the effectiveness of policies, and support more efficient decision-making. Without a comprehensive picture, efforts to improve institutional responses risk losing effectiveness—or even producing unintended consequences. Such information could help identify whether risk precursors associated with service cycles, separation from family, or service-related emotional pressures are linked to incidents of sexual harassment and sexual abuse. It could also provide valuable information on the distribution of cases within each service, differences by rank or speciality, locations where reports are more frequent, emerging trends, and groups that may be at greater risk.

With regard to reporting mechanisms for incidents of sexual harassment and sexual abuse, the way they are designed, implemented, and periodically reviewed is closely linked to staff perceptions of the institution's ability to provide protection and respond effectively. The way these mechanisms operate has a direct impact on institutional trust. Countries have adopted different models: from mechanisms that operate through ministerial offices (generally known as gender units or offices, or located within human rights or women's affairs departments). In other cases, reporting takes place through the chain of command. This also brings into focus issues of confidentiality, as well as the power dynamics that exist within institutions. Establishing secure and independent reporting channels is fundamental to building a strong and trusted system. If reports are handled objectively, the institution will have taken an important step towards providing an appropriate response within the workplace while demonstrating respect for affected personnel.

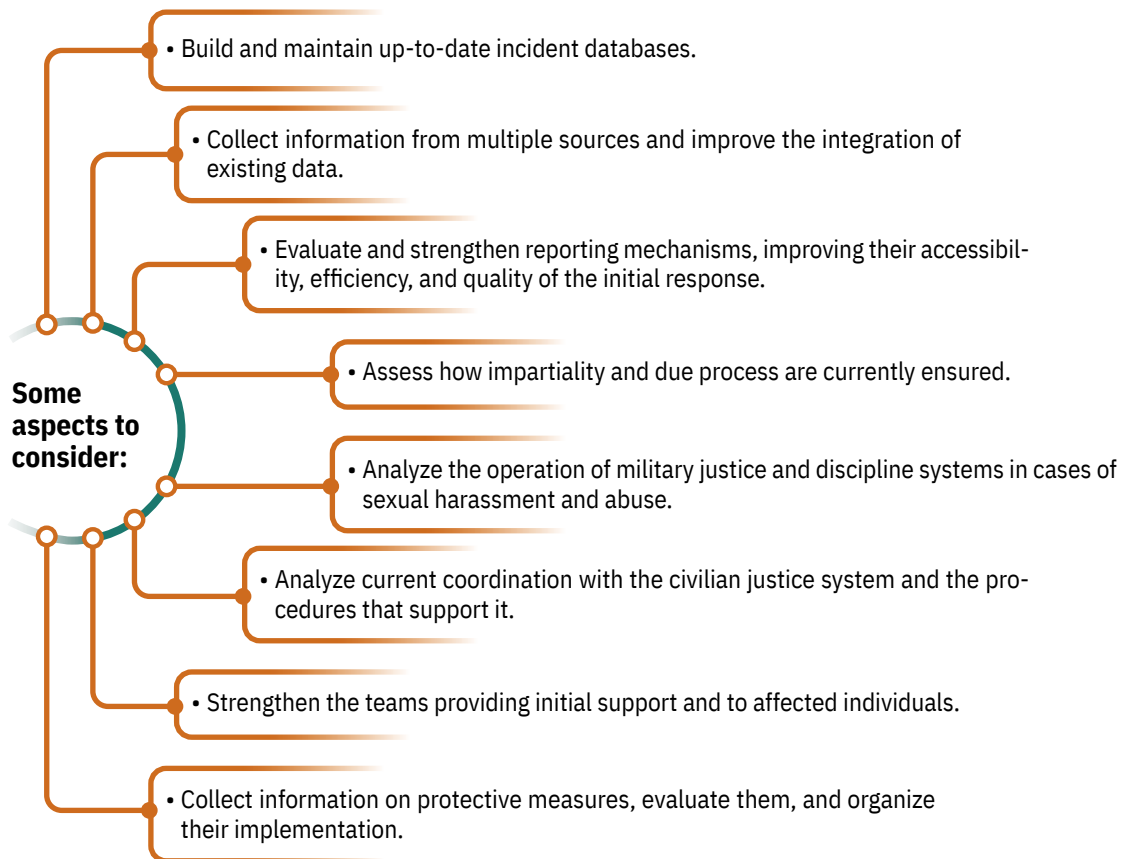
With regard to the administration of justice, it is also important to examine how it interfaces—or fails to interface—with the ordinary civilian justice system. The military justice system is a complex one, particularly for civilian and political authorities seeking to understand its scope and operation. Broadly speaking, it consists of a military disciplinary system, which addresses disciplinary offences, and a military criminal justice system, which deals with criminal offences. Both systems are subject to the requirement that their procedures and outcomes be clear, consistent, transparent, and respectful of due process, while ensuring appropriate support for both affected persons and defendants. At the same time, however, it is necessary to emphasize that national penal codes—or, where these do not do so, specific legislation—classify sexual harassment and sexual abuse as crimes under the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts. This requires reflection both on the coordination between jurisdictions and on the resistance that such coordination may generate, as well as on ways to address it.

For military leaders, leadership, these situations can be particularly challenging, as they require addressing multiple issues simultaneously, specifically: 1) responding to the alleged misconduct; 2) maintaining overall unit discipline; 3) providing assistance and support to the individuals involved; 4) coordination with the civilian justice system; and 5) the institutional preparedness necessary to make such coordination feasible in practice. The consequences of poor management of military disciplinary and justice systems can be severe and contribute to eroding trust in and support for the organization, in addition to affecting unity, cohesion, and operational effectiveness. From this perspective, the way justice is administered directly impacts the operational capacity of institutions.

Institutions also face the challenge of providing protection and support to individuals affected by situations of sexual harassment and abuse. Within the institutional framework, a central issue is the capacity

to support, assist, and even reintegrate affected personnel. At the same time, one of the recurring concerns for those going through these experiences relates to the impact they may have on their professional careers. The presence of implicit barriers—such as belonging to minority groups—adds additional challenges in this regard. Institutions’ recognition of these complexities, together with the development of inclusive and effective responses, is central to addressing the issue.

When developing institutional protection measures, it is important to ensure that they do not have punitive effects or allow situations to escalate. Transfers from one unit to another, temporary reassignments, and temporary leave to support recovery are some of the available alternatives that several countries have implemented. The system is strengthened when measures are implemented from the outset of the investigative process and are properly embedded in the policies and procedures that guide the actions of commanders and superiors.



Taken together, these lines of action form part of an ongoing process shaped by the experiences, lessons learned, and challenges shared by countries over the course of the project. Rather than offering definitive answers, they reflect the gradual development of shared tools, grounded in real-world practice, sustained dialogue, and evidence emerging from institutional contexts. In this sense, they build on a process that is already underway: strengthening, through cooperation and mutual learning, the capacity to prevent, respond to, and address sexual harassment and sexual abuse in institutions.

# CONSOLIDATED PROPOSALS

## Recognizing the Armed Forces as Workplaces

### Ground institutional action in a comprehensive assessment of the workplace environment:

- Collect data and information on the contexts in which sexual harassment and sexual abuse occur.
- Identify behavioural patterns that may lead to sexual harassment and sexual abuse.
- Conduct research on the factors that may contribute to such conduct.
- Assess the actual impact of prevention measures.

## Focusing on Key Definitions

### Adopt clear, simple, and practical definitions:

- Avoid overly broad "umbrella" definitions that conflate sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, sexual violence, gender discrimination, cyber harassment, and stalking.
- Use clear, operational definitions aligned with international standards (UN and ILO), distinguishing between criminal offences, disciplinary offences, and professional misconduct.
- Ensure that definitions are embedded in laws, codes, or regulations.
- Ensure that they are enforceable, operational, and widely understood by all personnel.
- Reduce grey areas that may create uncertainty or ambiguity within the chain of command.

### Unify criteria and definitions between the general national context and that of the defence sector:

- Align national legal frameworks with internal regulations to avoid gaps and inconsistencies.
- Review and update existing legislation and institutional regulations.

## Fostering Positive Leadership

### Develop transformational leadership:

- Prepare leaders to adapt to different organizational and operational contexts.
- Clearly communicate the importance of safe and respectful workplaces.
- Strengthen leaders' capacity to identify risks at an early stage.
- Incorporate training on diversity, equality, and healthy workplace cultures.
- Include organizational climate and harassment prevention indicators in leadership performance assessments.

## Sharing and Contributing Global South Experience

### Reaffirm national and international commitment and cooperation:

- Reaffirm commitment to the Women, Peace and Security agenda.
- Strengthen South–South and South–North cooperation through the exchange of experiences and lessons learned.
- Expand the digital dissemination of institutional policies and official documents, consistent with applicable confidentiality requirements.
- Explore the opportunities offered by digital platforms to strengthen exchanges with defence institutions, academia, and civil society actors across countries.

---

## Other Available Resources

---

### • Website:

[Protecting Those Who Serve: Sexual Harassment and Abuse in the Security Sector.](#)

---

### • Database:

[Publicly available database compiling legal frameworks, protocols, and institutional documents from 20 countries of the Global South.](#)

---

### • Publications:

[Military Justice: Exploring the Essentials.](#)

[Practices and Progress in Addressing Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Security Institutions across the Global South.](#)

[Women in uniform and peace operations: advances and challenges in the creation of safe and inclusive environments.](#)

[Special Chapter on Women, Peace and Security at the Comparative Atlas of Defence – 2024 Edition.](#)

[Sexual Harassment, Abuse and Exploitation in UN Missions. A Roadmap for the Global South.](#)

[The organizational culture in the military and the challenges of sexual harassment and abuse.](#)

[A Comparative Atlas of Defence in Latin America and Caribbean – 2024 Edition.](#)

---

### • Webinars:

[Challenges of the Military Organizational Culture.](#)

[The UN 'S Efforts to Address Sexual Abuse and Exploitation in Peacekeeping Operations: Challenges and Opportunities.](#)

[The Future of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda: A Crisis or an Opportunity?](#)

[Peace Operations: The Role of the UN Conduct and Discipline Service.](#)

[Supporting Those Affected by Sexual Misconduct: The Role of the SMSRC and Lessons Learned. A Practical Experience from Canada.](#)



# Sexual Harassment and Abuse in Defence Institutions

Responses and Leadership  
in the Global South

