

Appendix: Cases of Concern

1. Assembly offline and online:

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdowns enforced across the world, governments have placed restrictions on the right to protest. Many of the movements have featured strong women leadership, such as:

- The Hirak protest movement in Algeria or Ni Una Menos in Latin America, have been faced with hurdles to gathering since early 2020 - with many criminalized under lockdown restrictions used to curb freedom of assembly - a further escalation of restrictions in an already restrictive climate for protesters.
- In Kyrgyzstan, women were assaulted, detained and ill-treated during 8 March protests in recognition of International Women's Day in 2020. Furthermore, as COVID-19 resulted in innumerable job losses globally, women were most affected.
- In El Salvador, over 100 workers, led by women, staged a protest and hunger strike in February 2021 following being dismissed in June 2020 without compensation.
- Similarly in Poland in January 2021, following further clampdowns on access to abortion, peaceful protests erupted across the country and were met with police intimidation where protesters forced to show identification and consequently charged.
- In Myanmar, women [have been estimated to be 60% of total peaceful protesters](#) playing a critical role in leadership in the *2222 Spring Revolution* following a military coup in February 2021.

In response to violence and harassment of women and girls, greatly [exacerbated](#) by the pandemic, peaceful protests also erupted in Bangladesh, India, Colombia, Malawi, Nigeria, Algeria, South Africa and Costa Rica (to name a few). In many of these cases, women were harassed, detained or intimidated for their peaceful activities.

2. Online harassment and intimidation:

During the past year, as advocacy has moved online - women have also faced increased intimidation and harassment. Journalists have been targeted for simply doing their work - oftentimes, the use of social media platforms to target women has been pronounced. Journalists [Manira Chaudhary](#), Evgenija Carl, Fadwa Chtourou and [countless others](#) have been targeted for simply doing their work. Similarly, women journalists from Pakistan have faced ongoing cyber-attacks, online harassment and threats - including Gharida Farooki, [who experienced an attempted hacking](#) of her Twitter account. A [2020 study](#) by the International Center of Journalists and UNESCO found that 70% of women surveyed had been on the receiving end of harassment, threats or attacks in the past. Furthermore, the Coalition for Women in Journalism has found that in 2021 alone, [at least 48 women journalists](#) around the world are in prisons for their journalistic coverage.

For activists working in repressed or closed spaces, the online space remains one of the few spaces available to assemble and conduct effective advocacy for change. Algerian journalist, Abir Benrabah, [was hospitalised in November 2020](#) following online harassment targeting her for her advocacy exposing harassment women and children faced online. Egypt's #MeToo movement detailed cases of harassment, violence and rape online, prompting the passing of a new law to protect the identity of victims. Despite these gains, Egyptian women were [consequently detained on loaded morality charges](#) in September 2020 after responding to a call by the Egyptian authorities to come forward to lay charges. Egyptian journalist and woman human rights defender, Solafa Magdy, has faced sexual harassment and violence while detained.

3. Restrictions on association:

In the midst of these difficult civic space conditions, the work of women civil society actors across the world is needed now more than ever. In many instances civil society [has been on the frontline of responding to the COVID-19](#) pandemic and its associated crises. In Africa, [COVIDWATCH Africa](#) has documented the positive impact of civil society on the frontlines in the continent, at the same time as detailing the ways in which civil society actors have been targeted. Rather than positively responding to advocacy, research and policy recommendations from civil society, authorities have amped up use of complex surveillance technology and spyware, closure and criminalisation of civil society organizations and leaders.

- Climate activist, Disha Ravi, was arrested in February 2021 for editing a protest toolkit shared online in support for the farmers protests sweeping across India.
- In a series of ongoing attacks, in December 2020 the leadership of Tunisian NGO Damj was targeted through arbitrary arrests, assaults by plainclothes officers and kidnappings following a sit-in to condemn hateful comments by parliamentarian Mohamed al-Afas against the LGBTI community and feminist movements.
- In Pakistan, [four women human rights defenders](#) were killed in North Waziristan while conducting a vocational skills training in February 2021. The women were shot in a deserted village near the town of Mirali in North Waziristan.
- Egyptian women human rights defenders and their organisations continue to face severe reprisals. The murder of lawyer and political activist [Hanan al-Barassi](#) in broad daylight in Benghazi on 10 November 2020 also follows a disturbing pattern of violent attacks against prominent women activists in Libya, including [unchecked](#) online violence.