Understanding Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) in the Philippines:

A feminist review of Philippine laws addressing gender-based violence (GBV) in the digital age

APRIL 2026

PRESENTED BY

Foundation for Media Alternatives.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Methodology

Findings

- Experience of TFGBV is characterized by the particular identities of the survivor
- TFGBV in the Philippines spans various platforms and takes on evolving forms
- TFGBV is largely underreported

Overview of Existing Legal Framework

- Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act (R.A. 9262)
- Magna Carta of Women (R.A. 9710)
- Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act (R.A. 9995)
- Cybercrime Prevention Act (R.A. 10175)
- Safe Spaces Act (R.A. 11313)
- Expanded Anti Trafficking in Persons Act (R.A. 11862)
- Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act (R.A. 11930)

Gaps and Recommendations

- Access to and effectiveness of reporting mechanisms
- Knowledge of and capacity to address TFGBV by various sectors
- Patriarchal norms and behaviors as barriers to justice

References

Appendix

ACRONYMS

BPO – Barangay Protection Order
CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHR – Commission on Human Rights
CSAEM – Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials
CSO – Civil Society Organization
DICT – Department of Information and Communications Technology
DILG – Department of the Interior and Local Government
DOJ – Department of Justice
DPA – Data Privacy Act
FGD – Focus Group Discussion
FMA – Foundation for Media Alternatives
FST – Feminist Standpoint Theory
GBOSH – Gender-Based Online Sexual Harassment
GBV – Gender-Based Violence
ICT – Information and Communications Technology
IRR – Implementing Rules and Regulations
KII – Key Informant Interview
LGU – Local Government Unit
LBT – Lesbian, Bisexual, and Trans
MCW – Magna Carta of Women
NCIP – National Commission on Indigenous Peoples
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
OSAEC – Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children
PNP – Philippine National Police
PNP-ACG – Philippine National Police–Anti-Cybercrime Group
RA – Republic Act
TFGBV – Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence
VAW – Violence Against Women
VAWC – Violence Against Women and Children

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Since 2012, the Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA) has documented 738 cases of Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) in the Philippines in its ongoing mapping effort. These cases were sourced from media reports, online correspondences from individuals, and personal narratives of victim-survivors across different communities, revealing how gender-based violence is not only mirrored but also intensified by the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). While public awareness of TFGBV has steadily increased, efforts to effectively address it remain hindered by limitations in existing legal definitions and frameworks, particularly in cases involving individuals who face intersecting vulnerabilities related to their gender, class, geography, age, disability, culture, and educational attainment.

The Philippines has no law that mentions or uses the term TFGBV. This absence of a dedicated law, however, does not mean that acts that comprise TFGBV are entirely unaddressed. On the contrary, the Philippines has a robust, albeit fragmented, legal framework that covers many of the forms and consequences of such violence. Laws such as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act (RA 9262), the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313), the Cybercrime Prevention Act (RA 10175), and the Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act (RA 9995) provide mechanisms to protect victims-survivors and prosecute offenders whose actions involve technology-related abuses such as online sexual harassment, non-consensual sharing of images, doxing, and online stalking, among others.

However, while these laws touch on behaviors that fall under the umbrella of TFGBV, they do so without naming it as a distinct or systemic issue. This legal gap limits the state's ability to craft targeted interventions and recognize the evolving nature of gender-based violence in digital spaces. Furthermore, legal remedies often focus on punitive action rather than preventive and systemic approaches.

This research report presents a cursory understanding of TFGBV in different communities of women across the Philippines, as an attempt to contribute to policy discussions towards comprehensive and effective mechanisms addressing TFGBV.

While this endeavor was initially designed as a simple policy review to serve as a baseline for policymakers, much wider and more systemic problems surfaced during the research and validation process. Hence, the report now takes on a more grounded experiential approach – instead of beginning with an inventory of laws and mechanisms for addressing TFGBV, the report takes a step back and starts by describing what TFGBV looks like in the Philippine context.

The United Nations defines gender-based violence (GBV) as “harmful acts directed towards an individual or a group of individuals based on their gender.” This includes sexual, physical and emotional assault, abuse, and violence, often rooted in unequal power relations and harmful gender norms. This can occur in both public and private spaces including homes, workplaces, communities and even in online spaces, which disproportionately affects women and other vulnerable groups.

Throughout this paper, the term TFGBV will be used. It will follow the UN definition to mean “any act that is committed, assisted, aggravated, or amplified by the use of information communication technologies or other digital tools, that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological, social, political, or economic harm, or other infringements of rights and freedoms” that disproportionately affects women and girls. In this regard, TFGBV will include but not limited to abuses such as cyberstalking, online sexual harassment, doxxing, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, threats of violence through messaging platforms, and coordinated online attacks targeting women in public life. Importantly, TFGBV is not limited to acts that happen solely online. It also covers harm that is facilitated through digital means but has real-world implications such as emotional distress, reputational damage, social isolation, or threats to personal safety.

The research will also consider online gender-based violence (OGBV) as a subset of TFGBV, which refers specifically to acts of gender-based violence that occur within digital platforms and online spaces such as social media, forums, or messaging apps. However, TFGBV more broadly includes any gender-based harm where technology plays a role, whether through communication platforms, surveillance tools, data breaches, or other digital mechanisms.

What this paper aims to arrive at is not an exhaustive definition of what TFGBV is, but rather a picture of what TFBGV looks like in the specific context of the Philippines, based on the actual experiences of women and sexual minorities. This picture includes not just the acts of violence themselves, but the participants’ overall experience with finding redress and seeking justice after experiencing such violence.

Problem Statement

Despite the enactment of various Philippine laws addressing GBV, such as the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act (RA 9262) and the Safe Spaces Act (RA 11313), these legal frameworks remain inadequate in addressing the complex, evolving nature of TFGBV. As digital platforms become integral to daily life, emergent forms of violence such as online harassment, non-consensual sharing of intimate images, cyberstalking, doxing, and other technology-facilitated abuses have increasingly targeted women and marginalized groups.

However, currently existing legislation often lacks clear, comprehensive definitions and provisions that explicitly cover TFGBV. Enforcement mechanisms are weak, and legal remedies are frequently inaccessible due to factors such as the lack of understanding of the nuances of TFGBV, the anonymity of perpetrators, jurisdictional challenges, low levels of digital literacy among stakeholders, and the persistence of victim-blaming attitudes in Filipino society. This results in significant gaps in the protection of and access to justice by survivors of TFGBV.

A feminist review of Philippine laws is therefore necessary to examine how these existing frameworks fall short in recognizing, preventing, and redressing TFGBV. Understanding these legal and systemic gaps is crucial to ensuring that the rights and safety of women and vulnerable populations are upheld in the digital age.

The definition and concepts of TFGBV is imperative as this Report intends to guide the victim-survivors of similarly situated circumstances surrounding them be afforded by laws of protecting their rights. This Report provides a feminist analysis of the lived realities of women and sexual minorities and, reviews laws, processes and institutions to ensure victim-survivors this framework necessitates an interrogation on whether these current mechanisms are aligned with the lived realities of the people seeking redress.

This research therefore inquires, what is TFGBV as lived by Filipino women and sexual minorities? How do we make sure that existing mechanisms (i.e., laws, standard processes, and institutions) are aligned with this standpoint and offer victim-survivors access to the kind of justice that they need?

Objectives

- To describe the experiences of Filipino women, including Lesbian, Bisexual, and Trans persons on cases of gender-based violence facilitated by technology;
- To provide an overview of Philippine laws that relate to such technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV);
- To assess the effectiveness of laws vis-à-vis the experiences recounted by TFGBV survivors and identify gaps; and
- To offer recommendations to address TFGBV.

METHODOLOGY

The research employs a combination of desk review and qualitative key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). The first component is policy review, in which selected laws that are used to prevent and respond to GBV were listed and analyzed based on the project's key objectives. The second component of the research involved the conduct of qualitative KIIs and FGDs with identified target communities, which were conducted in accordance with feminist research ethics that prioritize reflexivity, participant agency, and power-sensitive engagement.

Findings are then analyzed guided by the feminist standpoint theory (FST), which is a theoretical framework that challenges conventional, male-centered methods of inquiry that exclude or marginalize women by downplaying their experiences. Sandra Harding (2010) states that standpoints intend to "produce the kinds of knowledge that oppressed people need and want in order to flourish, or even just to live another day." Gurung (2020) notes that in FST, the term "standpoint" refers not simply to perspective, but is rather something that is collectively arrived at through complex conversations and knowledge production by oppressed groups. More succinctly, "it is a way for [us] to understand and explain the social world from the vantage point of women's lives." FST is used in this report to ensure that research and analysis is grounded in the lived realities of the women and sexual minorities interviewed, which includes not just their personal experiences but also the bigger social environment and institutions alongside which they exist. As Harding (2010) notes, the purpose of FST research is not to undertake an ethnography of women's lives, but rather "to examine critically the dominant institutions and their policies, cultures and practices that affect women's lives." In this context, this examination includes that of existing laws and policies, mechanisms, and practices around TFGBV response.

Research Participants

A total of six (6) FGDs were conducted from May to December 2024, through a mixture of online and in-person modes. FGDs were conducted for the following sectors:

- Women survivors of GBV
- Youth
- Indigenous peoples
- Lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons
- Women from the labor sector
- Filipino Migrant Returnees

Six (6) Key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with the following experts:

- VAWC Desk Officer of a Barangay in Central Luzon
- Assistant Professor and Office of Anti-Sexual Harassment Coordinator at a State university in the Visayas
- Board Member of a civil society network engaged in education reform
- Two officers of the Women and Children Cybercrime Protection Unit of the PNP-ACG
- A woman journalist
- A TFGBV survivor

These KIIs were pursued since these individuals are often the first line of support for victims/survivors. They usually help or deal with access to government and other stakeholders' resources and remedies. CSOs' responses drew on their institutional recollections and experiences working with victims-survivors; conducting outreach and instructional programs, either in collaboration with the state or independently; and interacting with other stakeholders.

The semi-structured FGDs and KIIs revolved around the respondents' awareness and understanding of TFGBV-related laws, their experiences in using these laws to exercise their rights, and their recommendations in both the policy and implementation aspects of countering TFGBV. Wherever possible, FGDs and interviews were recorded and transcribed. The topics were then identified, categorized, and analyzed. It also provides an opportunity to gather new data and study complex issues that are difficult to determine.

A follow-up KII was conducted with the professor from a state university in the Visayas to delve deeper into her policy recommendations based on previous research projects on approaches to justice for violence against women and children and human trafficking. A list of the base questions used for the FGDs and KIIs is attached as an annex in this report. Lastly, the initial findings from the KIIs and FGDs were validated through a discussion forum with selected participants who are involved in responding to GBV. The discussion forum was also utilized to gather insights from sectors that were not represented in the KIIs and FGDs, such as women with disabilities.

Limitations

This report is not meant to be an exhaustive and in-depth analysis of the legal framework surrounding TFGBV. The study also does not attempt to propose a definition of TFGBV. Rather, it offers a focused, gender-responsive exploration of how laws are understood, experienced and accessed by particular marginalized sectors. While the study engages with existing legal instruments and identifies key gaps and challenges, it does not attempt to formulate a new or universal definition of TFGBV. The conceptualization of TFGBV remains fluid and evolving, and this report respects the multiplicity of experiences and understandings that inform it.

Moreover, the findings presented here are drawn from the perspectives of selected groups such as women survivors of GBV, youth, Indigenous peoples, LBT individuals, women workers, and migrant returnees who participated in the study. As such, the insights reflect the lived realities and situated knowledge of these sectors, and may not fully capture the experiences of other communities and identities who are also affected by TFGBV. Additional intersectional research is necessary to illuminate how TFGBV manifests in the lives of other populations such as women in geographically isolated or conflict-affected areas, platform-based or gig economy workers, and public-facing women like politicians, journalists, and celebrities whose vulnerabilities and modes of resistance may differ significantly. A more inclusive and diversified understanding of TFGBV requires continued inquiry that embraces the full complexity of gender, class, geographic, and occupational differences across the Philippine context.

FINDINGS

The KIIs and FGDs showed that women's experiences of TFGBV are highly influenced by their identities, environments, and the particular kinds of technologies that they use. Hence, intersectionality should be a key factor in the analysis of these experiences, as well as in the development of responses to TFGBV.

Experience of TFGBV is characterized by the particular identities of the survivor

GBV is defined as "harmful acts directed towards an individual or a group of individuals based on their gender." However, gender is not an isolated experience; it intersects with other aspects of women's identity such as their sexual orientation (i.e., lesbian and bisexual women) and their profession (i.e., women journalists and women human rights defenders).

Among the sectors represented by the key informants and FGD participants, three groups emerged as particularly vulnerable to TFGBV:

Women journalists face heightened risks due to their public visibility and online presence. They are frequent targets of coordinated harassment campaigns, threats, and doxing, tactics aimed at silencing their professional work, discrediting their reporting, and undermining their credibility in the public sphere.

Women in communities, especially survivors of offline gender-based violence, are similarly exposed to online abuse. However, their vulnerability often stems from limited digital literacy, lack of awareness of legal protections, and minimal access to support systems. This leaves them particularly susceptible to forms of abuse such as cyberstalking, image-based sexual abuse, and online intimidation, which often amplify existing offline violence.

Students and employees in higher education institutions are also at significant risk, particularly from cyber-harassment and sexual extortion. In many cases, they encounter institutional gaps in prevention, redress, and accountability, making them more exposed to harm in both academic and digital environments.

These distinctions underscore the urgent need for targeted policy interventions, strengthening legal protections for women in media and public life, expanding digital literacy and survivor-centered support at the community level, and mandating that academic institutions adopt comprehensive, responsive protocols to address TFGBV.

While some educational institutions have taken steps to implement policies and programs addressing sexual harassment and online abuse, young women still encounter additional layer of bureaucracy and accountability mechanisms in educational institutions. For example, youth respondents lament that girls who become targets of non-consensual sharing of intimate photos and/or videos or of sexual harassment are often victim-blamed or even reprimanded by teachers or by the school's guidance office. The youth respondents also recounted several cases where the perpetrator is a man in a position of power (e.g., the survivor's teacher, or a police officer), which becomes a barrier in the pursuit of redress. These experiences highlight persistent gaps in institutional accountability and underscore the need for consistent, survivor-centered responses across all schools.

Participants from the LBT community share a common experience of receiving sexist and misogynistic comments online. This usually includes reproach and hate speech using religious rhetoric, or dismissal of the legitimacy of same-sex partnerships. However, the group is not able to respond directly to these comments because they feel they are not yet capable of handling such conversations as an organization.

A certain level of political engagement and activism also make women targets of GBV. Some participants reported that their Facebook accounts were duplicated during politically tense periods, such as during election campaigns. These incidents, which often target politically active women, lead to distress and require massive reporting and takedown efforts – which are also challenging due to the lack of responsiveness by social media platforms. Women involved in labor organizing and political activism, especially in urban poor communities, are also commonly subjected to red-tagging or being labeled as communists or subversives. This involves visits from law enforcement, being monitored during events, and receiving anonymous threats. While not always gender-specific, this form of state harassment intersects with GBV when targeting women activists.

Women with disabilities face a heightened risk of experiencing TFGBV. This increased vulnerability stems from multiple, intersecting factors such as limited access to digital literacy education, reduced awareness of their rights, communication barriers, and social stigma. These factors often hinder their ability to recognize, report, or seek help for online abuse.

The situation is further aggravated by the lack of readiness among responders to handle cases involving persons with disabilities. For example, a woman residing in a rural area in the Visayas reported experiencing sexual harassment on Facebook. She went to the police station accompanied by her father to file a complaint. Initially, she was approached and interviewed by a female police officer but was later referred to a male officer. Unfortunately, the male officer did not respond appropriately to her statements and appeared to disregard her complaint because no one at the station was trained or available to provide sign language interpretation, which further hindered her ability to communicate and seek proper assistance. In this current state, many women with disabilities have experience of feeling excluded, ignored or misheard during formal reporting and support processes. Moreover, harmful stereotypes such as the misconception that women with disabilities are often seen as asexual beings prevents recognition of the fact that they are among the most at-risk groups for TFGBV. This underscores the urgent need for inclusive, disability-responsive mechanisms across all levels of prevention and response.

TFGBV in the Philippines spans various platforms and takes on evolving forms

While most experiences recounted by the research participants occur in Facebook, the particular modus operandi used to perpetrate TFGBV vary depending on the platforms that are frequently used by the targets. Women journalists are often targeted on social media where they usually keep a high profile. Migrant workers - frequent users of remittance and banking apps- are usual targets of “love scams”, other money-related scams and other cybercrimes Women who participate in online selling – which became prominent during the COVID-19 lockdown – are frequent targets of various types of scams such as fake sellers or suppliers that exploit their economic vulnerability.

Assistive technologies commonly used by women with disabilities, particularly with visual impairment such as screen readers or voice-over tools, can support them in recognizing harmful or abusive content by making digital messages more accessible and easier to process. While not designed for content moderation, these tools play a critical role in enabling users to detect online violence and seek support.

TFGBV is also closely linked to other forms of violence that remain unaddressed by existing Philippine laws, such as red-tagging and gendered disinformation. Both the indigenous and labor sectors interviewed reflect that community stigma against activists/human rights defenders and security risks intersect with gender, as women face harassment, fear, and restricted mobility. However, beyond Supreme Court rulings that declare red-tagging as a threat to life and liberty, red-tagging is not explicitly criminalized in Philippine law, making it a challenge and even a risk for women activists to seek redress for fear that it will further make them targets of attacks.

Similarly, disinformation remains to be an unregulated domain in the country, and women leaders bear the brunt of attacks stemming from disinformation and misinformation, especially during elections. When developing policy frameworks, it is crucial to recognize both red-tagging and gendered disinformation as forms of TFGBV and ensure that any law that aims to protect women also protects their freedom of expression and political participation.

TFGBV is largely underreported

One key insight that emerged during the discussion with women survivors of GBV is the erosion of trust in law enforcement following their first-hand experiences with police officers. GBV survivors reported their cases were not treated seriously, with two survivors disclosing incidents of sexual assault by police officers. In the case of indigenous women, such hostility is exacerbated by an additional layer of discrimination and social stigma. They recounted that reporting to institutions like the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) often result in harassment and death threats, both from authority figures and even from their own communities, which deters them from pursuing justice in the first place.

TFGBV cases are underreported among journalists, particularly among women and gender-diverse media workers. This stems largely from the normalization of abuse in the profession, where online harassment is often dismissed as an unavoidable consequence of being public-facing media workers. Women journalists who speak out about their TFGBV experiences are often dismissed as being “too sensitive” and are told to toughen up. Those who are more high-profile and public-facing are generally more likely to access redress or accountability mechanisms because their experiences are often visible in the news network’s official accounts, as opposed to media workers who work off-camera and would have to report to their superiors and go through the standard protocols and processes to have their experiences heard.

Overview of Existing Legal Framework

The Philippines does not have a single law explicitly addressing TFGBV. Instead, several laws indirectly regulate behaviors that fall under this category. This section reviews key legal instruments that are commonly invoked in addressing technology-facilitated violence.

Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act (R.A. 9262)

Under Republic Act No. 9262 or the Anti-Violence against Women and their Children (Anti-VAWC) Act of 2004, violence is classified not as a personal or a private offense but a public crime against women and their children. It fosters safety by empowering and protecting women and their children from all forms of violence and abuse, whether physical, psychological, emotional, economic, or verbal. However, its scope only covers cases where the penalized act is committed against a person that the perpetrator has a form of relationship with, such as their wife, former wife, a woman with whom they have or had a sexual or dating relationship or with whom they have a common child, or against the woman's child.

Although enacted before the digital age, the law can be applied to TFGBV, including online harassment, threats, stalking, and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images—when committed by a partner or ex-partner. RA 9262 provides legal remedies such as protection orders, criminal charges, and access to support services like shelter and counseling. TFGBV may be recognized as psychological or emotional violence under this law, especially when it causes distress and reflects patterns of control and abuse.

Magna Carta of Women (R.A. 9710)

The Magna Carta of Women operationalizes the Philippines' commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). One of the primary women's rights laid down by the MCW is protection from violence, providing that government agencies shall give priority towards protection of women against gender-based offenses "and help women attain justice and healing." For this purpose, the MCW mandated the establishment of a VAW Desk in every barangay that will address VAW cases in a gender-responsive manner. The implementing rules and regulations for the MCW provide the detailed mandates of barangay VAW desks, namely:

- Assist victims of VAW in securing Barangay Protection Orders (BPO) and access necessary services;
- Develop the barangay's gender-responsive plan in addressing gender-based violence, including support services, capacity building and referral system;
- Respond to gender-based violence cases brought to the barangay;
- Record the number of gender-based violence cases handled by the barangay and submit a quarterly report on all cases of VAW to the DILG and the City/Municipal Social Welfare Development Office;
- Coordinate with and refer cases to government agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs), institutions, and other service providers as necessary;
- Address other forms of abuse committed against women, especially senior citizens, women with disabilities, and other marginalized groups; and
- Lead advocacies on the elimination of VAW in the community.

Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act (R.A. 9995)

Republic Act No. 9995 or the Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act was passed on 15 February 2010. It penalizes the act of taking intimate photos and videos without the subject's consent. It defines photo and video voyeurism as:

"the act of taking photo or video coverage of a person or group of persons performing sexual act or any similar activity or of capturing an image of the private area of a person or persons without the latter's consent, under circumstances in which such person/s has/have a reasonable expectation of privacy [...]"

The concept of a "reasonable expectation of privacy" is key to this legislation and is an established legal concept that is used in other cases related to the right to privacy, such as when determining whether a search and seizure is warranted. In Philippine jurisprudence, this concept is ascertained through a two-part test introduced in Ople v. Torres: (1) whether by his conduct, the individual has exhibited an expectation of privacy; and (2) whether this expectation is one that society recognizes as reasonable.

Data Privacy Act (R.A. 10173)

The Data Privacy Act (DPA), is the law that governs data protection in the country. It was passed on 15 August 2012, one month before the Philippines' cybercrime law was passed. The DPA penalizes acts such as unauthorized processing of personal information and sensitive personal information, unauthorized access (to personal information) or intentional breach, malicious disclosure, and unauthorized disclosure, all of which are frequently seen in conjunction with or in aid of GBV. In the 2023 Year-end Report on Online Gender-based Violence in the Philippines released by the Foundation for Media Alternatives, the most common forms of documented TFGBV cases include: non-consensual production and/or dissemination of intimate images or videos (41.7%), spying, surveillance, or device-facilitated violence (2.8%), and control and manipulation of accounts and information (1.8%), among others. All of these forms of TFGBV involve some sort of unauthorized and non-consensual use of or access to personal information, which means that most TFGBV cases could also be violations of the DPA.

Cybercrime Prevention Act (R.A. 10175)

The Philippines' cybercrime law was passed in 2012 amidst much opposition due to several provisions that pose a risk to privacy and free speech online. A landmark Supreme Court decision scrapped some of these provisions, including those that allow for real-time collection of traffic data and the restriction or blockage of access to computer data without a court order. Despite these amendments, the Cybercrime Prevention Act remains as a powerful law. Section 6 of the law provides that all crimes under the Revised Penal Code and under special laws, when committed with the use of information and communications technologies, will be penalized with a penalty one (1) degree higher than that provided for under the original law – hence, R.A. 10175 is usually invoked in conjunction with other offenses to push for a heavier punishment for the perpetrator.

This makes the law especially relevant in addressing TFGBV, as it includes offenses such as cyberstalking, online harassment, cybersex, identity theft, and the non-consensual distribution of intimate content, crimes that often disproportionately impact women and children. Although RA 10175 is a broad cybercrime law, it is frequently used in conjunction with other protective legislation, such as RA 9262 (Anti-VAWC) and RA 9995 (Anti-Voyeurism), to ensure accountability and offer legal remedies for victims of online abuse.

Safe Spaces Act (R.A. 11313)

Republic Act No. 11313, or the Safe Spaces Act, is a recent law that was passed on 17 April 2019. It penalizes gender-based sexual harassment in streets and public spaces, in the workplace, in educational and training institutions, and in online spaces. The Safe Spaces Act represents a milestone as it is the first republic act that specifically defines the crime of gender-based online sexual harassment GBOSH, which it describes as “acts that use information and communications technology in terrorizing and intimidating victims through physical, psychological, and emotional threats, unwanted sexual misogynistic, transphobic, homophobic and sexist remarks and comments online.”

Expanded Anti Trafficking in Persons Act (R.A. 11862)

Republic Act No. 11862 expanded the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act to include Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) in the list of offenses. The expanded law also added duties and responsibilities of internet intermediaries whose infrastructure are used for trafficking in persons. These intermediaries include internet cafes and establishments offering public Wi-Fi and financial intermediaries such as banks. The law also provides exemptions for law enforcement officers investigating cases of trafficking in persons that involve the use of the internet and other digital platforms to allow them to be able to intercept communications without violating the anti-wiretapping law.

Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act (R.A. 11930)

The Anti-OSAEC and Anti-CSAEM Act, which was passed in 2022 along with the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, amends the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001 and repeals the Ant-Child Pornography Act of 2022. Like the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, the Anti-OSAEC and Anti-CSAEM Act provides duties and responsibilities for internet intermediaries – including Internet Service Providers, e-commerce providers, and social media platforms – to make sure that OSAEC and CSAEM are not accessible in and through their platforms.

Gaps and Recommendations

Access to and effectiveness of reporting mechanisms

The issue of access to relevant information about laws and to reporting mechanisms involves many layers of accessibility. Indigenous women face unique and compounded vulnerabilities to TFGBV due to intersecting barriers rooted in cultural, geographic, and systemic factors. In many indigenous communities, traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms limit women's access to information, education, and participation in legal decision-making. These dynamics often create environments where experiences of online abuse are minimized, silenced or overlooked. Additionally, the long-standing history of marginalization contributes to prejudice and distrust of legal institutions, further discouraging them from reporting GBV in general or obtaining legal help. Their remote locations also exacerbate these challenges, as they often lack internet access. They may also struggle to access legal health, and social support services, including culturally sensitive interventions. These structural and sociocultural barriers render indigenous women less visible in national data on TFGBV and highlight the urgent need for inclusive, localized, and culturally respectful prevention and response mechanisms.

Women from the labor sector shed light on the reality that reporting and utilizing legal mechanisms takes a lot of time and resources, which working-class women usually cannot afford. For example, pursuing legal action would require the complainant to miss work days, which is a deterrent for those who are in a "no-work, no-pay" arrangement. Another respondent from the migrant sector recounted that she was unable to report an offense to the online platform because she did not have a reliable internet connection. As a result, she asked her relatives to submit a report on her behalf. This demonstrates that in the context of TFGBV, "access to justice" does not only pertain to access to courts and to legal processes – it also necessitates meaningful and reliable access to the internet.

Because of the slow and inefficient handling of GBV cases, victim-survivors are left with no choice but to handle threats and actual instances of violence on their own – from repeated reporting and blocking, to documenting and monitoring – which could result in retraumatization and effectively silence and discourage the survivors from further pursuing justice. The withdrawal of TFGBV survivors from communication platforms where they experienced violence prevents them from communicating with others and fully exercising their rights and freedoms in the digital space.

A survey of the current landscape shows that there is no streamlined process for TFGBV law enforcement. Several government agencies have different processes and overlapping mandates, which makes the process both ineffective and burdensome for TFGBV survivors seeking redress. Duplicative processes across different agencies means that survivors have to go through recounting their experience several times over, which could be highly retraumatizing. The tendency of these sectors to work in silos result in a fragmented approach to addressing GBV. Hence, to fully maximize the impact of TFGBV-related laws and initiatives, stakeholders should pursue closer cooperation and collaboration with one another. Government gender programs should be regularly evaluated and assessed. As not all laws come with sunset provisions that require their review after a set period of time, this initiative must come from the implementing agencies. It is worth noting that under the MCW IRR, barangay VAW desks are supposed to be evaluated by the DILG, City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices, City/Municipal Health Offices, PNP, and representative/s from LGU-accredited CSOs.

Some laws such as the Safe Spaces Act have built-in oversight and audit mechanisms that need to be maximized to assess its implementation. The law's implementing rules and regulations specifically require local governments to conduct safety audits every three years to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the law within their jurisdiction. The rules also require that these audits be made in consultation with other stakeholders such as schools and civil society organizations.

Knowledge of and capacity to address TFGBV by various sectors

By victim-survivors and the public

A common observation that surfaced in almost all FGDs and KIIs is that even without considering implementation issues, women are not able to fully utilize existing TFGBV-related laws either because they are not aware that such laws exist, or they have insufficient or flawed understanding of the purpose of such laws. There is a persisting lack of even a basic understanding on what TFGBV or GBV, in general, entails. Another notable observation by the researcher who conducted the FGDs is that the women respondents usually don't label or recognize their experiences as TFGBV. To be able to extract their accounts of these experiences, the use of other terms or provide concrete examples that the women could relate to more easily was resorted to. This shows that although TFGBV exists and is experienced by many women in various communities, they do not articulate it as such as the term does not exist in their everyday vocabulary. This may also contribute to the underreporting of TFGBV cases.

Indigenous women also reported that they often have little knowledge of laws protecting their rights due to a variety of factors such as low literacy rates, underrepresentation of indigenous languages in laws and official documents, systemic discrimination, geographic isolation, and patriarchal structures within their communities.

Apart from the need to understand the laws themselves, women also expressed bearing the additional burden of educating their children, especially their daughters, on laws and mechanisms that protect women. This shows that because of gaps in awareness-raising and public education initiatives by the government, it is the women who assume the burden of educating themselves and their families and communities about existing laws. The government must institutionalize targeted and accessible public education campaigns on TFGBV and women's rights. These campaigns should prioritize reaching mothers, young girls, and out-of-school youth, groups often overlooked by traditional information channels but who bear significant vulnerability or responsibility in their communities. Educational materials should be culturally sensitive, translated into local languages, and tailored to different age and literacy levels. The Department of Education should integrate TFGBV, digital safety, and legal rights into the curriculum at appropriate grade levels, while local government units and relevant agencies should lead community-based outreach for those outside the formal school system. By making legal and digital safety education widely accessible, the state can ease the burden currently carried by women and help build a more informed and empowered public.

By TFGBV responders

Additionally, the group of women GBV survivors expressed that the Data Privacy Act makes it more difficult for women to file GBV cases and obtain justice. This sentiment stems from the fact that it is common practice for authorities to use the DPA as an excuse to deny any kind of information request – which, in turn, is also a result of poor or insufficient understanding by law enforcement of what is and what is not covered by the DPA. Hence, this lack of clear understanding of the existing laws – by both women-survivors and authorities – becomes a barrier for women being able to use them to seek justice.

Another common sentiment among participants is the unequal distribution of resources and capacity in addressing TFGBV. Rural areas and smaller municipalities do not receive the same depth of training and attention as those in metropolitan areas, and informational resources are often in English or Tagalog, and resources for local translations are scarce. To address these gaps, TFGBV-related training and information on relevant laws, protocols, and survivor-centered approaches must be standardized and implemented consistently across all levels of government. This means that national agencies responsible for gender-based related violence prevention and response should take the lead in developing clear, culturally-sensitive and language-accessible training modules and materials on TFGBV.

There should then be systematically cascaded down to local government units, including provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays, through coordinated and sustained capacity-building efforts. Standardization will ensure that all implementers, regardless of location or resources, operate from the same foundational knowledge and follow uniform protocols when handling TFGBV cases. In this aspect, this will reduce the risk of inconsistent or harmful responses that may re-traumatize survivors or hinder access to justice. Moreover, it reinforces accountability by aligning the expectations and responsibilities of frontline responders across the country, ultimately creating a more inclusive and responsive system of protection for women, children, and marginalized groups experiencing technology-facilitated violence.

Many Barangay Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) Desks lack the necessary knowledge and capacity to effectively address Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV). While these desks are mandated to respond to cases of violence against women and children, their training and protocols are often limited to offline forms of abuse, leaving a significant gap in understanding the digital dimensions of gender-based violence. This includes unfamiliarity with the different forms TFGBV can take as well as inadequate skills in documenting, reporting, or responding to such cases. As a result, survivors seeking help for online abuse may be met with confusion, minimization, or inaction, further compounding their trauma and discouraging them from seeking justice. Strengthening the digital literacy and gender-sensitive response capacity of Barangay VAWC Desk officers is therefore critical to ensuring comprehensive protection for women and marginalized groups in the digital age.

Proposed amendments to the Anti-VAWC Law (RA 9262) will explicitly recognize and address TFGBV. These proposed amendments include a clear definition of ICT-facilitated violence, provisions on digital evidence handling, and penalties that reflect the harm caused regardless of whether abuse is committed online or offline. The amendments will clarify jurisdiction and reporting mechanisms, particularly the role of the PNP-Anti-Cybercrime Group and expand the inter-agency council to include relevant bodies such as the DICT and DOJ Office of Cybercrime. These proposed reforms will ensure a more comprehensive, survivor-centered, and future-proof legal framework that responds to the evolving nature of gender-based violence in the digital age.

Patriarchal norms and behaviors as barriers to justice

A persisting feature of TFGBV is the constant refusal by those in positions of power to acknowledge it as violence, just because it may not immediately and directly result in physical harm. Even frontline responders struggle with defining TFGBV beyond broad categories like harassment or cybercrime. This lack of clarity leads to inconsistent handling of cases and inadequate responses. Lumping TFGBV cases along with all other forms of cybercrime, for instance, fails to account for the gendered aspect of such violence. To even label it as violence – despite patriarchal institutions refusing to recognize it as violence – is therefore an assertive act from the survivor. But for legal mechanisms to adequately respond to such violence, there needs to be clarity and consistency in the recognition of TFBGV and in the awareness of its nuances.

Another reason why existing mechanisms are not giving survivors of TFGBV the justice that they need is because the current justice system is punitive rather than restorative, and transactional rather than holistic. In a punitive approach, the focus is on punishing the perpetrator; hence, there is little to no attention given to the needs of the survivor. A punitive approach is patriarchal in that it centers the oppressor rather than the oppressed and treats incarceration as the be-all and end-all of the pursuit of justice. On the other hand, a feminist approach to justice is one that is not focused on individual retribution but rather on the transformation of society away from patriarchal domination and oppression.

The importance of providing psychosocial support for survivors of GBV is not a novel concept. In fact, the implementing rules and regulations for the MCW states that “[i]n cases of violence against women and children, women and children victims and survivors shall be provided with comprehensive health services that include psychosocial, therapeutic, medical, and legal interventions and assistance towards healing, recovery, and empowerment.” The implementing rules for the Safe Spaces Act provide for a similar remedy and state that any costs for the availment by the victim of psychological counseling and other appropriate remedy be borne by the perpetrator. However, as the respondents pointed out, this key aspect of justice and recovery is often left out in favor of more punitive approaches. A feminist and survivor-centered approach to a legal framework for TFGBV would necessitate meaningful consultation with various sectors of women, including women survivors whose lived experiences should become the basis of mechanisms responding to TFGBV.

Finally, the pursuit of justice against TFGBV is hampered by longstanding patriarchal cultural and social norms. For example, survivors are still frequently dismissed or even blamed for the abuse they experience, especially if it’s through the Internet or if it involves an intimate partner. Persisting social stigmas lead to self-censorship and underreporting of GBV cases. Addressing TFGBV should therefore move beyond short-term solutions and focus on long-term strategies to address such systemic problems. Dismantling structural violence necessitates disrupting and transforming long standing structures of patriarchy and misogyny. This involves setting higher standards for the level of gender sensitivity of those in leadership and positions of power, including school administrators, teachers, and institution heads.

REFERENCES

Foundation for Media Alternatives. (2023). Year-end report on online gender-based violence in the Philippines. Foundation for Media Alternatives.

Gurung, R. (2020). Feminist standpoint theory and the production of knowledge. Journal of International Women's Studies, 21(5), 1–12.

Harding, S. (2010).Standpoint methodologies and epistemologies: a logic of scientific inquiry for people. World Social Science Report: Knowledge Divides. Paris: UNESCO Publishing, pages 173-175.

Mitchell, D. (2023). "4: Feminist Theories of Justice". In Theorising Justice. Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press. Retrieved Jun 30, 2025, from https://doi.org/10.51952/9781529232233.ch004

Republic Act No. 9262, Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004 (Phil.).

Republic Act No. 9710, Magna Carta of Women (2009) (Phil.).

Republic Act No. 9995, Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act of 2009 (Phil.).

Republic Act No. 10173, Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Phil.).

Republic Act No. 10175, Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012 (Phil.).

Republic Act No. 11313, Safe Spaces Act (2019) (Phil.).

Republic Act No. 11862, Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2022 (Phil.).

Republic Act No. 11930, Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act of 2022 (Phil.).

United Nations. (n.d.). Gender-based violence. United Nations. https://www.un.org

UN Women. (October 2024). Repository of UN Women's work on technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/repository-of-un-womens-work-on-technology-facilitated-gender-based-violence-en.jpg?t=1729250306

UN Women. (17 November, 2025). FAQs: Types of violence against women and girls. Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/types-of-violence

Ople v. Torres, G.R. No. 127685 (Supreme Court of the Philippines, July 23, 1998).

APPENDIX A

Focus Group Discussion Questions with Women

Theme: Strengthening Women's Coalitions to Address GBV and Safeguard Freedom of Expression

Target Respondents: Women survivors of GBV, Youth, Indigenous peoples, Lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, Women from the labor sector and Filipino Migrant Returnees

A. Current Situation & Experiences

- How safe do you feel in your community and online spaces?
- Have you or people you know experienced harassment, GBV, or discrimination? In what ways?
- How do you access information online or offline, and are there barriers specific to your group?

B. Awareness & Use of Legal Protections

- Are you aware of laws or policies that protect your rights online or offline?
- Have you ever tried to use these protections? If not, what prevented you?
- How effective do you think these protections are for people in your group?

C. Reporting Mechanisms & Support

- Do you know how to report incidents of harassment or GBV?
- Are reporting mechanisms accessible and safe for your group?
- What kind of support do you receive from family, peers, or organizations?

D. Challenges & Barriers

- What are the main obstacles to staying safe online or offline?
- How do social, cultural, or systemic barriers affect your ability to speak freely or report GBV?

E. Coalition-Building & Collective Action

- Are there groups, networks, or coalitions in your community that work on safety, GBV, or online rights?
- How can these coalitions better include your group and support your needs?
- What partnerships or resources would strengthen collective action for your group?

F. Recommendations & Solutions

- What changes in laws, policies, or community practices would improve safety and freedom of expression?
- How can coalitions, organizations, or governments better support your group?
- Are there programs or initiatives you would recommend for preventing GBV and promoting safe expression?

APPENDIX A

Focus Group Discussion Questions with Women

Contextual Adaptation Guidelines

- **Use inclusive language**
  - Replace “women” with group-specific terms when appropriate, e.g., “students,” “migrant women,” “women with disabilities.”
  - Ensure all questions are phrased to capture intersectional experiences (gender, age, disability, migration status, sexual orientation, indigenous identity).

- **Accessibility and Inclusion Checks**
  - PWD: “Are digital platforms, information channels, or reporting mechanisms accessible to you? If not, what barriers exist?”
  - LGBTQ+: “Do these online or community spaces respect your identity and protect you from harassment?”
  - Youth & Students: “Do you feel safe expressing yourself online and in school/community spaces?”
  - Migrants: “Are you able to access information and support services regardless of your legal or residency status?”
  - Rural Women / Indigenous Peoples (IP): “Are cultural norms, language, and community practices considered in addressing GBV or online harassment?”

- **Women Survivors**
  - Emphasize safety and confidentiality: “Would you feel safe sharing experiences of GBV or online harassment? What support would make you feel safer?”
  - Include questions about services and coalitions: “What support mechanisms have helped you, and what gaps still exist?”

APPENDIX B

Key Informant Interview Guide – Strengthening Women's Coalitions on GBV & Freedom of Expression

Target Respondents: VAWC Desk Officer of a Barangay in Central Luzon, Assistant Professor and Office of Anti-Sexual Harassment Coordinator at a State university in the Visayas, Board Member of a civil society network engaged in education reform, Two officers of the Women and Children Cybercrime Protection Unit of the PNP-ACG, A woman journalist, A TFGBV survivor

Objective:
To understand current practices, coordination, challenges, and opportunities in addressing technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) and safeguarding freedom of expression, focusing on women and vulnerable populations.]

Role and Organizational Mandate

- **Please describe your role and responsibilities within your organization/unit.**
- How does your organization/unit address TFGBV or related concerns? What makes your approach unique compared to other agencies or units?
- Are you involved in any inter-agency or multi-stakeholder initiatives? What is your organization/unit's role in these collaborations?

Training, Policies, and Guidelines

- What trainings, qualifications, or certifications are required for staff handling GBV, TFGBV, or online safety cases?
- Does your organization/unit have policies, protocols, or codes of conduct specifically addressing TFGBV? Are these publicly accessible?
- How do you ensure your team is prepared to respond to survivors safely and effectively, including online or digital cases?

Case Management and Reporting

- What types of cases do you commonly handle regarding TFGBV or GBV? Who are the most common perpetrators and survivors?
- What are the processes for filing complaints or cases (online, in-person, or other channels)?
- How do you track or report case outcomes, including official charges filed or not filed?
- What challenges do survivors face in filing complaints, and what alternative support options does your organization/unit provide?

APPENDIX B

Victim-Survivor Protection and Access to Justice

- Does your organization/unit have specific protection mechanisms for survivors? Are these mechanisms easily accessible, including online?
- How do you ensure survivors' confidentiality, safety, and rights throughout the reporting and investigation process?
- What indicators or standards exist to confirm that survivors have access to justice?
- Are there any gaps in protection for specific survivor groups (e.g., children, PWDs, LGBTQ+, migrant women, IPs)?

Coordination and Partnerships

- How does your organization/unit coordinate with other sectors such as law enforcement, civil society organizations, community leaders, or barangay VAW desks?
- What collaborations or partnerships have proven effective in preventing or responding to TFGBV?

Challenges and Lessons Learned

- What are the main challenges your organization/unit faces in addressing TFGBV or safeguarding freedom of expression?
- Can you share any good practices, innovative strategies, or lessons learned that could benefit other agencies or stakeholders?

Recommendations and Future Initiatives

- What additional activities, programs, or initiatives does your organization/unit need to strengthen responses to TFGBV and protect survivors?
- What support (e.g., resources, policy changes, capacity-building) is needed from partners, government, or civil society to improve outcomes for survivors?

Analytical Matrix of TFGBV Forms, Legal Coverage, and Implementation Gaps

TFGBV Form	Mentioned in	Applicable Laws	Analysis of Effectiveness	Gaps & Recommendations
Unsolicited explicit images	Survivors, Women with disability, labor	RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) RA 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act)	The law clearly prohibits sending lewd photos without consent, but survivors often deal with it informally (blocking) instead of reporting, due to shame or lack of faith in response.	IEC campaigns clarifying rights under SSA; fast, youth-friendly online reporting portals; counseling and peer support networks so survivors don't handle harassment alone.
Non-consensual sharing of images	Labor, youth, OFWs	RA 9995 (Anti-Photo/Video Voyeurism) RA 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act)	Enforcement slow; evidence gathering burdens victim.	Establish quick digital takedown systems in partnership with platforms
Sexual exploitation & harassment via dating apps	Survivors, labor	RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) RA 9995 (Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act) RA 10364 (Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act) RA 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act)	Laws exist against online exploitation and harassment, but enforcement in dating platforms is weak; normalization of "hook-up culture" blurs consent and risks youth exploitation.	Work with dating platforms to strengthen safeguards (age checks, abuse reporting); include dating app risks in digital literacy/sex education; campus guidance offices to offer safe discussion spaces for youth encountering online sexual pressure.
Retraumatization	Survivors	RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) RA 9262 (VAWC) RA 11036 (Mental Health Act)	Laws recognize harassment but not the secondary trauma (triggering PTSD-like responses); mental health support for survivors is weak.	Integrate psychosocial services into TFGBV response; train responders to recognize trauma triggers; provide community-based trauma healing and safe spaces for survivors.

Analytical Matrix of TFGBV Forms, Legal Coverage, and Implementation Gaps

TFGBV Form	Mentioned in	Applicable Laws	Analysis of Effectiveness	Gaps & Recommendations
Online sexual harassment	Survivors, Women with disability, labor, youth, OFWs	RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) RA 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act) RA 9995 (Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism) RA 9262 (VAWC, if intimate partner)	Existing laws criminalize the acts, but enforcement is weak; survivors end up withdrawing (deleting accounts) rather than being protected; no real-time intervention.	Strengthen platform accountability to block repeat offenders and dummy accounts
Online–offline stalking	Survivors, Women with disability	RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) RA 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act) RA 9262 (VAWC, if intimate partner)	Law enforcement is weak for stalking that blends online and offline; survivors must repeatedly block/report with little systemic protection; survivors often left to self-confirm and document threats.	Improve PNP/ACG rapid response to stalking reports; provide school-level support to students facing online stalking; strengthen recognition of stalking (online-to-offline) as TFGBV; require police to treat “pattern recognition” by survivors as valid red flag; provide survivor-centered evidence collection (CCTV pulls, platform reporting, protective orders).
Self-censorship	Survivors, LBT	RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) RA 9710 (Magna Carta of Women)	Laws protect against harassment but do not explicitly address SOGIE-based harm; stigma against women with sex work associations silences survivors; survivors resort to self-censorship instead of formal reporting; laws cover harassment, but enforcement struggles with anonymous accounts and repeat offenders; survivors end up deleting their accounts, effectively silenced.	Pass SOGIE Equality Bill to strengthen protections for LBT persons; provide psychosocial services for queer survivors; create safe digital spaces for LBT advocates (closed networks, secure reporting); survivor-centered approaches that do not criminalize or stigmatize women linked to prostitution.

Analytical Matrix of TFGBV Forms, Legal Coverage, and Implementation Gaps

Barriers for visually impaired survivors in online reporting, legal/police processes, and referral systems	women with disabillity	RA 7277 (Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities) RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) RA 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act)	Accessibility is mandated by law, but compliance is low; digital TFGBV reporting assumes sighted user; may lead to loss of evidence or weaker testimony.	Require all reporting portals to meet WCAG accessibility standards; link PWD desks to TFGBV mechanisms; provide tactile/audio evidence alternatives; train law enforcement and court staff on disability-inclusive TFGBV protocols; integrate PWD desks into GBV/TFGBV referral pathways; train PWD focal persons on TFGBV.
Threats using digital platforms	Labor, OFWs	RA 9262 (VAWC, if by an intimate partner) RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act, when within a workplace or a public space)	Covered under law only in specific instances (e.g., when done by intimate partner, in a public space); workplace safety plans rarely in place.	Require employer-level safety planning for employees facing GBV threats; link with PNP/WCPD.
Identity theft	Labor	RA 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act) RA 10173 (Data Privacy Act)	Covered by law, but takedown and tracing are slow.	Fast-track fake account takedowns; partnership with platforms for verification and reporting.
Cyber bullying	Youth, LBT, OFWs	RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) RA 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act) DepEd Child Protection Policy	Often trivialized; rarely escalates to formal cases; social stigma hinders complaint filing; hard to act across jurisdictions	Ensure quick takedown protocols on platforms; admin training for group moderation; embassy-facilitated mediation (in cases of OFWs); reporting hotlines for community groups.
Blocking of communication channels (e.g., confiscation of device)	OFWs	RA 10364 (Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act) ILO Domestic Workers Convention (Convention 189)	Constitutes coercion and trafficking indicators; rarely monitored abroad; challenge in extraterritorial exercise of rights and filing of cases	Include freedom-of-communication clause in contracts; embassy welfare checks.

Analytical Matrix of TFGBV Forms, Legal Coverage, and Implementation Gaps

Red-tagging	IP, labor	RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) RA 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act) RA 9710 (Magna Carta of Women) RA 8371 (Indigenous People's Rights Act) Supreme Court rulings declaring red-tagging a threat to life and liberty	Red-tagging not explicitly criminalized; survivors left vulnerable; community stigma and security risk intersect with gender, as women face harassment, fear, and restricted mobility.	Criminalize red-tagging explicitly in law; require AFP/PNP to validate intelligence before public tagging; create rapid-response protection for red-tagged IP women; institutionalize protection programs for IP women human rights defenders (e.g., HRD law); ensure state accountability in protecting freedom of expression and political participation; recognize red-tagging as a form of TFGBV in policy frameworks
Online scams	Survivors, labor, OFWs	RA 10175 (Cybercrime Prevention Act) RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) RA 9710 (Magna Carta of Women)	Laws cover fraud and harassment but not the nuanced exploitation in online romance/dating apps; enforcement difficult in rural/IP areas; women often blamed.	Raise awareness on online romance scams in IP communities; integrate scam-prevention in digital literacy programs; partnerships with platforms to flag/report exploitative accounts; survivor support for those financially or emotionally exploited.
Disinformation	IP, women with disability	RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act) Election rules (for election-related gendered disinformation)	No explicit TFGBV coverage for gendered disinformation.	Integrate accessible election monitoring tools; amend Safe Spaces Act to cover gendered disinformation.
Issues during filiing of complaints: Retaliation and exclusion (lack of consultation, threats to silence women), victim blaming	IP, women with disability, OFWs	RA 8371 (Indigenous People's Rights Act) RA 9710 (Magna Carta of Women) UNDRIP (UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) RA 11313 (Safe Spaces Act)	Processes are captured by elites (IPMR, chieftains) and exclude grassroots voices, especially women; filing complaints results in intimidation, silencing survivors and advocates.	Create independent grievance redress mechanisms for IP women; provide witness protection & anti-retaliation safeguards for women complainants; CSOs to monitor and escalate unresolved cases.

Foundation for Media Alternatives.

Foundation for Media Alternatives, Inc (FMA) is a non-profit and non-governent organizatipon advocating for ICTS for democracy and sustainable development.

Contact us:
29-P Matimtiman Street, UP Teacher's Village,
Quezon City
T. (632) 7 356 7965
E. info@fma.ph