



**El Salvador's Compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:
Gender-based Violence, Gang Violence, Trafficking, and Police Corruption**

Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights

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The Advocates for Human Rights (The Advocates) is a volunteer-based nongovernmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. Established in 1983, The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publications. The Advocates has published 23 reports on violence against women as a human rights issue, provides consultation and commentary on draft laws on domestic violence, and trains lawyers, police, prosecutors, and judges to effectively implement new and existing laws on domestic violence. Since 2014, a growing number of individuals fleeing gender-based violence and related human rights violations in El Salvador have requested legal assistance from The Advocates in applying for asylum in the United States.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report focuses on El Salvador's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (the "Covenant"). Specifically, it addresses issues related to violence against women, including domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as discrimination against LGBTI persons, gang violence, and police corruption.
2. Despite the implementation of certain legislative and societal reforms, violence against women remains a severe problem in El Salvador. Gender-based violence includes domestic violence, sexual assault, and even femicide. Moreover, law enforcement in El Salvador consistently fails to adequately protect women victims of violence, in part due to police corruption.
3. LGBTI persons in El Salvador also continue to face threats and assaults based upon their sexual orientation. With respect to this issue as well, police in El Salvador have failed to take adequate steps to protect those at risk.
4. Gang-related violence also continues to be an issue of grave concern in El Salvador. Gangs frequently target women, those who refuse to make payments to the gangs, and persons with relatives in the United States. Despite the efforts of El Salvador to address its gang problem, victims of gang violence do not receive adequate protection and support from law enforcement. As a result of gang violence, victims are frequently forced to flee El Salvador.
5. Finally, police corruption is endemic in El Salvador. Police and gangs often collaborate, facilitating and perpetuating impunity for gang-based violence.

El Salvador fails to uphold its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

I. Violence Against Women (List of Issues Paragraph 7)

6. The Committee in its List of Issues asked the El Salvadoran Government to report on measures taken to address violence against women and the impact of the measures, specifically the implementation of the Special Act for a Life Free of Violence for Women.¹ The Committee sought statistical data on complaints, investigations, and remedies and rehabilitation available to victims, and specifically the lack of rape reporting. The Committee also requested information regarding punishment of violence against women, inclusion of the gender perspective in state programs, resources available to handle women's violence issues, and institutional departmental coordination.² The committee also sought information regarding elimination of societal gender stereotypes.³
7. **Violence against women is still prevalent in El Salvador, in both institutional and societal contexts.** The Committee's 2010 Concluding Observations cited concern regarding gender stereotypes, high rates of domestic violence and femicide, lack of statistical data on violence against women, inadequate departmental coordination to handle domestic violence

¹ Human Rights Committee, *List of issues prior to submission of the seventh periodic report of El Salvador*, August 18, 2015, UNDOC CCPR/C/SLV/QPR/7, ¶7 (hereinafter referred to as "2015 List of Issues").

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

cases, and lack of representation of women in governmental positions.⁴ The Committee recommended judicial and departmental reforms to effectively investigate, prosecute, and punish perpetrators of violence against women and requested better statistical data to for gender violence reporting.⁵ The Committee also recommended societal reforms, including the implementation of programs to eliminate societal stereotypes and increase the participation of women in governmental positions.

8. **Since its last review by the Committee in 2010, El Salvador has taken some steps toward combating domestic violence through legal reforms.** Specifically, in 2012, El Salvador enacted the *Ley Especial Integral para una Vida Libre de Violencia para las Mujeres* (the “2012 Law”).⁶ The 2012 Law criminalizes domestic violence, sexual assault, psychological abuse and financial abuse and provides jail or prison sentences for violations.⁷ However, many serious problems remain with El Salvador’s domestic violence legislation and its implementation, resulting in a systemic failure to protect victims and promote offender accountability.
9. **El Salvador has made some progress in creating institutional solutions to the pervasive problem of violence against women in the country.** El Salvador’s Periodic Report said the state had made progress in the areas of legislation, policies, regulations to combat violence against women. In 2013, El Salvador adopted a National Policy on Access to a Violence-Free Life for Women and created a Five-Year Development Plan for 2014–2019 to guide implementation of the policy.⁸ Some measures include the creation of special courts to handle crimes against women, institutional gender units, and specialized support units.⁹ Since their creation, the specialized support units have handled 1,600 cases of violence and aided in therapy and rehabilitation.¹⁰ In addition, inclusive language is now required in all internal work regulations of the Labour Directorate of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.¹¹ The State Party Report did not provide any additional statistics to demonstrate the efficacy of the legislation, but it states that “the Gender Unit has developed technical guidelines on the inclusion of a gender and intersectoral focus that, among other things, provides guidance on adapting statistical records to take account of the comments made to the State party by the

⁴ Human Rights Committee, *Concluding observations on the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of El Salvador*, November 18 2010, UNDOC CCPR/C/SLV/CO/6, ¶9 (hereinafter referred to as “2010 Concluding Observations”).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Ley No. 520, 4 January 2011, *Ley Especial Integral para una Vida Libre de Violencia para las Mujeres* [Law for a Life Free of Violence Against Women] tit. II, ch. 390. <http://www.asamblea.gob.sv/eparlamento/indice-legislativo/buscador-de-documentos-legislativos/ley-especial-integral-para-una-vida-libre-de-violencia-para-las-mujeres> (accessed April 16, 2015).

⁷ Ley No. 520, , 4 January 2011 , *Ley Especial Integral para una Vida Libre de Violencia para las Mujeres* [Law for a Life Free of Violence Against Women] tit. II, ch. 390. <http://www.asamblea.gob.sv/eparlamento/indice-legislativo/buscador-de-documentos-legislativos/ley-especial-integral-para-una-vida-libre-de-violencia-para-las-mujeres> (accessed April 16, 2015).

⁸ Human Rights Committee, *Seventh periodic reports of States parties due in 2016: El Salvador*, December 23, 2016, UNDOC CCPR/C/SLV/7, ¶63 (hereinafter referred to as “2016 State Party Report”).

⁹ 2016 State Party Report, ¶¶66, 70.

¹⁰ 2016 State Party Report, ¶76.

¹¹ 2016 State Party Report, ¶67.

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC).”¹²

10. **Individuals continue to commit acts of gender-based violence with impunity.** Widespread acceptance of domestic violence and rape is an obstacle to reporting of violence against women despite the criminalization of rape.¹³ This societal perception creates an obstacle to victims seeking justice when laws are not enforced and cases are inadequately investigated and prosecuted.¹⁴ Data on violence against women collected by the Salvadoran Institute for the Development of Women reports 3,070 cases of domestic violence, “21 cases of femicide, 458 cases of physical abuse, 385 cases of sexual violence, and 2,259 cases of psychological abuse” from January to July 2016 and 385 cases of rape as of March 2016.¹⁵
11. **Persistent stereotypes and prejudices regarding the role of women in society perpetuate violence against women in El Salvador, contributing to underreporting of violence and sexual assault against women.** Domestic violence is considered socially acceptable by a large portion of the population.¹⁶ Human rights reports document that domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crimes of violence against women in El Salvador are underreported due to a number of factors: 1) societal and cultural pressures on victims; 2) fear of reprisal; 3) ineffective and unsupportive responses by authorities toward victims; 4) fear of publicity; and 5) a belief among victims that the laws will not be enforced.¹⁷
12. **The Advocates has received information from women survivors who fled gender-based violence about their experiences in El Salvador.**¹⁸ Each case is different, but their experiences confirm that the legal system and policies in place in El Salvador are not protecting women from gender-based violence or providing victims with the necessary support and services. Moreover, the legal system and policies fail to hold perpetrators accountable.
13. Many women report violence and sexual assault against them by their intimate partners.¹⁹ One young woman, who left El Salvador in 2014 when she was 17, described years of physical and sexual abuse inflicted upon her by her boyfriend, who was a gang member. He hit her until she had bruises all over her body, kicked her in the head, and threw her into the wall. She has scars on her arms and head because of the abuse, as well as a scar on her shoulder from when he pushed her onto the ground so hard that a mirror broke and cut her. One time he choked her and beat her to the point where her “white pants became all red with blood.” He forced her to move in with him when she was 15. She missed many days of school because he often prevented her from going to school. He raped her repeatedly, telling

¹² 2016 State Party Report, ¶78.

¹³ El Salvador 2016 Human Rights Report, United States Department of State, p. 21 (hereinafter referred to as “2016 Department of State Human Rights Report”) (last accessed January 5, 2017).

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.* at p. 22.

¹⁶ 2013 Department of State Human Rights Report at p. 15.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ The case information presented in this submission is compiled from intake and other interviews conducted by The Advocates for Human Rights with asylum seekers from El Salvador between January 2014 and September 2017 (hereinafter referred to as “Interviews conducted by The Advocates (January 2014-September 2017)”). Some details of the cases have been removed to maintain confidentiality and to protect the identities of the women and their families.

¹⁹ *Id.*

her “You are my property” and that she could never leave because “You are mine.” When she tried to leave him, he stalked her and told her he would “cut her up into pieces and throw her remains in the dirt ditch.”²⁰

14. Women interviewed by The Advocates frequently reported that they did not go to police to report the violence because of fear of retribution, as well as the lack of protection from the police. One woman reported that she feared that if she went to the police, her intimate partner would “have the gangs do something horrible to her.”²¹ Many of the interviewees reported that the police were connected with the gangs and that information reported to the police was not kept confidential. Other women interviewed reported that they did not go to the police because they believed that the police would do nothing to investigate the crime.²² Another woman described years of domestic abuse, noting that her partner threatened to kill her if she stepped outside the home, and that he knew authorities would not act because she had previously called the police but they did not do anything.²³ Yet another client experienced physical abuse as well as threats against her and her infant daughter’s life. Her partner strangled her and held a knife against her throat, and he later told her that if she wanted to leave she would have to leave her daughter with him. The police refused to intervene, stating that they did not get involved with marital relations.²⁴
15. **Domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other crimes of violence against women are widespread and are ineffectively investigated, prosecuted and adjudicated.** The Ministry of Health reported that 4,686 women were victims of violence in the first eleven months of 2015.²⁵ The Civil Chamber of the Supreme Court of El Salvador estimated that there were 5,007 reported cases of domestic violence in 2014.²⁶ Rape and other sexual crimes against women are widespread. A female victim’s statements are often given little credibility, resulting in a low conviction rate and impunity for offenders.²⁷ In the first eight months of 2014 alone, the Office of the Attorney General (FGR) of El Salvador reported 1,793 cases of alleged sexual crimes resulting in only 24 convictions.²⁸ Similarly, statistics from the first nine months of 2013 show that of 552 cases of alleged sexual harassment, only 33 resulted in convictions.²⁹ In addition to one of the highest femicide rates in the world, the rate of impunity for femicide crimes is estimated to be as high as 77 per cent in El Salvador.³⁰

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ 2015 Department of State Human Rights Report at p. 17.

²⁶ Corte Supreme de Justicia Sala de lo Civil, *Casos de Violencia Intrafamiliar por Departamento 2014*, <http://www.csj.gob.sv:88/?op=content&seccion=11&categoria=tru&id=95> (accessed June 13, 2016).

²⁷ Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, *Access to Justice for Women Victims of Sexual Violence: Education and Health*, December 28, 2011, OAS/Ser.L./V/II. doc 65, p. 50, para 150, <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/women/docs/pdf/SEXUALVIOLENCEEducHealth.pdf> (accessed June 13, 2016).

²⁸ United States Department of State, *El Salvador 2014 Human Rights Report* (hereinafter referred to as “2014 Department of State Human Rights Report”), p. 15 (accessed June 13, 2016).

²⁹ *Id.* at p. 16.

³⁰ UN Women, *Femicide in Latin America*, April 4, 2013, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/4/femicide-in-latin-america#sthash.WyDyzaZE.dpuf> (accessed June 13, 2016).

16. **The experiences of individuals interviewed by The Advocates corroborate the ineffectiveness of the police and judicial system in dealing with violence against women in El Salvador.**³¹ Of the women who suffered sexual assault and did report it to the police, many described to The Advocates how the police did not follow up on the investigation.³² Ineffective investigation and low conviction rates discourage victims of domestic violence to seek help from the state authorities since victims feel like they are not protected. Moreover, an ineffective court system puts the victim in more danger since the perpetrator is aware the victim went to the police and the perpetrator is free to extract revenge.

II. Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (List of Issues Paragraph 4)

17. The Committee requested information on measures “to prevent and to provide protection from violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity” and to provide information regarding complaints of violence against LGBTI individuals, resulting investigations, and available remedies.³³ The list of issues also requested information on the Permanent Committee on the Human Rights of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) Population.³⁴

18. **According to the State Party Report, El Salvador has adopted executive and legislative reforms to combat discrimination towards the LGBTI community.**³⁵ For example, an Intersectoral Panel on Security Issues was created in 2016 to monitor the implementation of both Executive Decree No. 56, which directs civil services to avoid discrimination based on sexual orientation, and amendments to the Criminal Code concerning crimes against LGBTI persons.³⁶ In addition, the Office of the Human Rights Advocate (the “Office”) established the Permanent Panel on the Rights of the LGBTI Community in an effort to eliminate stigma and discrimination based upon sexual orientation.³⁷ Furthermore, a sexual diversity helpline was established in 2013 to provide information on complaint procedures for sexual orientation based violence or discrimination and to offer support services to victims.³⁸

19. **Despite these reforms, the State Party Report detailed ongoing complaints of discrimination and violence against LGBTI individuals by police and security forces and other governmental and civil bodies.**³⁹ From January 2010 to 2011, there were 18 complaints to the Office alleging violations of the rights of LGBTI individuals by police and

³¹Interviews conducted by The Advocates (January 2014-September 2017).

³²*Id.*

³³ 2015 List of Issues, ¶4.

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ Human Rights Committee, *Seventh periodic reports of States parties due in 2016: El Salvador*, December 23, 2016, UNDOC CCPR/C/SLV/7, 28.

³⁶ Human Rights Committee, *Seventh periodic reports of States parties due in 2016: El Salvador*, December 23, 2016, UNDOC CCPR/C/SLV/7, ¶¶28-29, 31-32.

³⁷ Human Rights Committee, *Seventh periodic reports of States parties due in 2016: El Salvador*, December 23, 2016, UNDOC CCPR/C/SLV/7, ¶33.

³⁸ Human Rights Committee, *Seventh periodic reports of States parties due in 2016: El Salvador*, December 23, 2016, UNDOC CCPR/C/SLV/7, ¶30.

³⁹ Human Rights Committee, *Seventh periodic reports of States parties due in 2016: El Salvador*, December 23, 2016, UNDOC CCPR/C/SLV/7, ¶¶35, 38.

security forces. From 2015 to 2016, the Office received 31 complaints alleging discrimination based upon sexual orientation, including 14 alleged homicides.⁴⁰ In the time period from 2009 to early 2016, the Office received a total of 19 reports of LGBTI homicides from 2009 to early 2016.⁴¹

20. The U.S. State Department Report on El Salvador notes continuing unlawful discrimination against LGBTI individuals across society, including in the areas of government services, employment, and healthcare treatment.⁴² Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDDH) survey data reports 52 percent of LGBTI individuals have been the subject of death threats or violence, and the Secretariat for Social Inclusion reports 11 homicides.⁴³ The U.S. State Department Report also cites NGO reports of the lack of prosecutions of violence and human rights violations against LGBTI individuals.⁴⁴
21. **Impunity persists for violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity.** The LGBTI community is particularly vulnerable in El Salvador, where the endemic violence and impunity has a harsher toll on people who identify as LGBTI. Violence by private actors is not pursued by the police, as in the case of Bloody June of 2009, when a wave of murders and other violence (including rape, sexual assault, and evidence of torture and dismemberment) targeted LGBT persons. No one has been held accountable for this violence. Violence by public servants is common as well, with the police as the main perpetrators.⁴⁵
22. **The experiences of individuals interviewed by The Advocates demonstrate that LGBTI individuals often face discrimination and violence from gangs, the police, and other members of society.** A gang targeted one gay man for his sexual orientation, attacking him, cutting off his long hair, and threatening to kill him. The police took no action because of the victim's sexual orientation. Another young man perceived as gay faced bullying and physical violence from an early age. He later joined an LGBT group that received threats and violent attacks from gangs.⁴⁶

III. Gang Violence (List of Issues Paragraph 21)

23. The Committee requested information about measures taken to outlaw gangs and prevent proliferation of illegal weapons.⁴⁷
24. **Gang violence and a culture of impunity create an unsafe and violent environment for women.** The United States Department of State reported that women's rights NGOs claimed that many violent crimes against women occurred within the context of gang structures,

⁴⁰ Human Rights Committee, *Seventh periodic reports of States parties due in 2016: El Salvador*, December 23, 2016, UNDOC CCPR/C/SLV/7, ¶35.

⁴¹ Human Rights Committee, *Seventh periodic reports of States parties due in 2016: El Salvador*, December 23, 2016, UNDOC CCPR/C/SLV/7, ¶36.

⁴² 2016 Department of State Human Rights Report, p. 4, 27.

⁴³ 2016 Department of State Human Rights Report, p. 27-28.

⁴⁴ 2016 Department of State Human Rights Report, p. 28.

⁴⁵ 2012 "Sexual Diversity in El Salvador: A Report on the Human Rights Situation of the LGBT Community", International HR Law Clinic, UC Berkeley School of Law

⁴⁶ Interviews conducted by The Advocates (January 2014-September 2017).

⁴⁷ 2015 List of Issues, ¶21.

where women were “corralled” and “disposed of at the whims of male gang members.”⁴⁸ Women interviewed by The Advocates corroborate these accounts. For example, interviewees reported that families are extorted and intimidated by gangs for various reasons, including money, the refusal of family members to join the gang, or and participation in opposition political parties.⁴⁹ Multiple women also reported that gang members used sexual assault and physical violence against women and girls as a means to extort money and silence political opposition.⁵⁰

25. **The Advocates’ clients report that gang violence includes gender-based violence, and impunity for such violence forces women and girls to flee the country.** Some women reported that gangs perpetrated acts of gender-based violence alongside general acts of gang violence, such as threats against the victim’s extended family, beatings, gun violence, theft, stalking, and threats against family and employers.⁵¹ One woman reported that three members of the MS-13 gang, including the local leader, demanded that the woman leave school, break up with her boyfriend, and become the leader’s girlfriend. The gang members threatened her brother at gunpoint and later physically assaulted him. She was forced to go into hiding to escape the threats and violence.⁵² A girl faced a similar situation, and after the gang member kept stalking and harassing her, eventually telling her that he knew where she lived and would kill her. She fled the country and later learned that the gang had begun harassing and threatening her pregnant sister. Gang members kidnapped a 15-year-old girl and her friend and kept them hostage for five months, during which time they were sexually abused and raped every day. The girl was released only after a family member found her and paid the gang for her release.⁵³ In many cases, gang members demand that young women and girls become their “girlfriends” and subject them and their family members to threats and violence if they refuse. One girl received threats from a gang member for months, and decided to flee the country because she knew of another girl who had refused the advances of a local gang member and who had been killed soon after her father filed a police complaint about the threats. One woman who faced threats from a gang for many years eventually went to the police after gang members killed her son. But after police arrested the murderer, the gang retaliated against her, threatening to kill her and her other children, prompting them to flee the country.
26. **As part of recruitment efforts, gangs threaten and attack young boys and their family members with impunity.** Several young men reported receiving threats and pressure from gangs. In one case, a gang killed a young man’s brother for refusing to join the gang, and then the gang threatened his younger brother, warning that if he didn’t give the gang money, he would be killed like his brother. Another boy was threatened for years, starting at the age of 12, to sell drugs for the gang. The threats extended to his family members. The gang had paid off the police so the boy and his family could not rely on them for protection. A boy in

⁴⁸ El Salvador 2016 Human Rights Report, United States Department of State, p. 22.

⁴⁹ Interviews conducted by The Advocates (January 2014-September 2017).

⁵⁰ Interviews conducted by The Advocates (January 2014-September 2017). See also University of California, Hastings School of Law, Thousands of Girls and Women are Fleeing Rape, Sexual Violence and Torture in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala, 2015. http://cgrs.uchastings.edu/talking_points_and_stories (accessed April 16, 2015) (collecting numerous reports of women from El Salvador who were sexually assaulted by gang members).

⁵¹ Interviews conducted by The Advocates (January 2014-September 2017).

⁵² Interviews conducted by The Advocates (January 2014-September 2017).

⁵³ Interviews conducted by The Advocates (January 2014-September 2017).

primary school faced threats from gang members hanging out outside the school, and after the boy's classmates joined the gang, they too harassed him and pressured him to join the gang. The gang members also threatened to kill the boy's parents.⁵⁴

27. **Individuals and families who oppose gang recruitment efforts are often targeted.** One family that worked with the church and the local community to help the children whom the gangs targeted for recruitment. Because of this work, the family faced repeated threats. The father fled the country, and the gang then killed the father-in-law while holding the mother and daughter at gunpoint. The gang members told the mother and daughter that they would be next, prompting them to flee the country. A political organizer and his family faced threats that left them confined to their home for months for fear of an attack.⁵⁵
28. **Law enforcement agencies in El Salvador fail to protect women from gang violence.** Women interviewed by The Advocates frequently reported that they did not go to the police to report the violence because of the fear of retribution, as well as the lack of protection from the police. One woman reported that she feared that if she went to the police, her intimate partner would "have the gangs do something horrible to her." Many of the interviewees reported that the police were connected with the gangs and that information reported to the police was not kept confidential. Other women reported that they did not go to the police because they believed that the police would do nothing to investigate alleged crimes against women.⁵⁶

IV. Police Corruption (List of Issues Paragraph 12)

29. The Committee requested information on measures to address human rights violations by police, including training, investigations, and sanctions, as well as statistical data regarding complaints, proceedings, disciplinary actions, and victim reparations.⁵⁷
30. According to a June 2016 report by the PDDH (Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman), between June 2015 and May 2016, the office had received 1,883 complaints of human rights violations, 1,284 of which were reported to have been committed by the PNC (National Civilian Police) and the military.⁵⁸
31. One young man witnessed three police officers participating in a drug deal, and one week later a police car stopped next to the young man and three masked officers emerged and beat him. One month later, three police officers found the young man outside his school and pointed a gun to his face, threatening him not to say anything about the transaction he had witnessed or they would get him and his family. Another man interviewed by The Advocates witnessed three police officers forcing a relative of his into a car. When he subsequently inquired, the police denied all knowledge. After he filed an official complaint with the police, the man and other family members began receiving threatening telephone calls. Later, the man was shot at multiple times, finally forcing him to flee the country.⁵⁹

⁵⁴Interviews conducted by The Advocates (January 2014-September 2017).

⁵⁵Interviews conducted by The Advocates (January 2014-September 2017).

⁵⁶Interviews conducted by The Advocates (January 2014-September 2017).

⁵⁷ 2015 List of Issues, ¶12.

⁵⁸ 2016 Department of State Human Rights Report, p. 8.

⁵⁹Interviews conducted by The Advocates (January 2014-September 2017).

V. Suggested Recommendations

32. The Advocates for Human Rights suggests the following recommendations for the Government of El Salvador to address violence against women:

- Put into practice strategies aimed at eliminating gender stereotypes in society and take concrete steps to address the societal and cultural pressures on victims and increase the reporting of crimes of violence against women, including sexual assault and domestic violence
- Establish a comprehensive program to protect women from violence, including public education, effective prosecutions, and training for law enforcement, investigators, prosecutors, and judges. Ensure that all acts of domestic violence are effectively investigated, prosecuted, and perpetrators punished.
- Ensure that victim services, including shelters, helplines, crisis centers, and medical and legal aid, receive adequate and regular funding and are accessible to women and girls seeking assistance.
- Ensure that laws and budgets provide adequate reparation to victims and their families or dependents, as appropriate.
- Provide training on domestic violence for law enforcement officials, in consultation with or led by NGOs that serve victims of domestic violence, on the law, dynamics of domestic violence, and best practices in law enforcement response.
- Provide training on domestic violence for the judiciary, in consultation with or led by NGOs that serve victims of domestic violence, on the law, dynamics of domestic violence, and best practices for judicial responses to domestic violence.
- Strengthen the criminal justice response to gender-related killings of women and girls, in particular measures to support its capacity to investigate, prosecute, and punish all forms of such crimes and provide reparation and/or compensation to victims and their families or dependents, as appropriate.
- Monitor and review the performance of police, prosecutors, and judges relating to the adjudication of cases involving violence against women.

33. The Advocates for Human Rights suggests the following recommendations for the Government of El Salvador to address violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity:

- Compile and publish on an annual basis data about the number of calls to the sexual diversity helpline, as well as the type of help requested, assistance provided, and demographic information about the callers.
- Compile and publish on an annual basis data about all complaints received by the Office of the Human Rights Advocate alleging violations of the rights of LGBTI individuals, including the nature of the allegations, the response by the Office, and any follow-up or disciplinary action taken by the Office or other sectors.

- Ensure that law enforcement compiles and publishes data on an annual basis about all reported acts of violence and threats of violence allegedly based on sexual orientation or gender identity, as well as any action taken to investigate and prosecute such actions.
- Provide an annual report with information about all homicides allegedly based on sexual orientation or gender identity, whether such crimes have been investigated, whether offenders have been prosecuted and convicted for such crimes, and whether victims' families have received reparations for such crimes.
- Ensure that victims of violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity receive appropriate rehabilitative services and support.
- Establish a national referral mechanism to ensure that the sexual diversity helpline provides all callers with appropriate and timely referrals to governmental or non-governmental service providers and provide funding and logistical support to ensure that all mechanism participants are trained in best practices for responding to violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.