



**STATEMENT UPR**  
**Pre-session on NORWAY**  
**Geneva, August 30. 2024**  
**Delivered by: NORWEGIAN WOMEN'S LOBBY**

1. This statement is delivered on behalf of the Norwegian Women's Lobby, an umbrella organization that brings together nine women's rights NGOs and experts on women's human rights in Norway. NWL works on the basis of the CEDAW Convention and other human rights instruments and policy frameworks concerning women's human rights and gender equality. NWL monitors the implementation of the CEDAW Convention in Norway and works to promote the convention's visibility and relevance in society.

2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated the preparation of the National Report. The Ministry held consultations with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) by arranging open meetings and inviting written input. However, no women's rights organizations were directly invited or consulted.

3. Our statement addresses the following issues: (1) violence against women, (2) use of gender-neutral language in legislation and (3) financing of women's rights advocates.

**Statement:**

**(1) Violence against women**

**A. Follow-up to the last review**

In the last review, several delegations addressed the need to strengthen protection of women's rights, including against violence.

**B. New developments since the last review**

Since the last review, new national prevalence studies document that violence against women, including rape, has increased. Almost every fifth woman (19%, up from 9 % in 2014) has been subject to rape at least once in her lifetime. One in ten women has experienced intimate partner violence. Currently, Norway is revising the law governing the provision of shelters/crisis centers. Each municipality has a duty to provide shelter and support for victims of violence, within "reasonable" travel distance. The quality and accessibility of the shelters vary greatly among municipalities. Today, some have to travel almost 500 km to reach a shelter. While the State is the main duty bearer, the responsibility to provide shelter is outsourced to municipalities with no earmarked funding.

**C. Recommendation**

- Norway must, as the main duty bearer, ensure that funding of and access to shelters, and the quality of other support services for victims of violence remain a national responsibility and not be subject to local budgetary priorities.

**(2) Use of gender-neutral language in legislation**

**A. Follow-up to the last review**

Not previously reviewed.

#### B. Points of concern

As a general rule, Norwegian legislation is intentionally framed in a gender-neutral manner. In its concluding observations in 2017 and 2023, the CEDAW Committee was critical of Norway's gender-neutral framing of legislation and programmes, calling for information and documentation to substantiate that this practice does not result in an inadequate protection of women against direct and indirect discrimination and hinder the achievement of substantive equality between women and men, as explained in paragraph 5 of the Committee's general recommendation No. 28 (2010) on the core obligations of States parties under article 2 of the Convention.

NWL is concerned that while certain laws and policies identify, in a gender-neutral manner, the problems faced particularly by women and aim to address them, gender-neutrality may nonetheless distract from women's disproportionate exposure to such problems and consequently fail to address them adequately.

#### C. Recommendations:

- Norway must investigate whether gender-neutral legislation has an adverse effect on women's rights.
- Norway must introduce gender-sensitive legislation as needed to achieve genuine equality.

### (3) Financing of women's rights advocates

#### A. Follow-up to the last review

Not previously reviewed

#### B. Points of concern

Norway's Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act covers several grounds for discrimination: sex, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity among them. The women's movement has an important role to play in advocating for legislative measures and monitoring how Norway upholds its obligations towards women's rights, non-discrimination and gender equality. While the State is not obliged to financially support CSOs that work to promote anti-discrimination and equality, Norway does so, and financial support for civil society is broadly considered fair and necessary to enable democratic representation and to enable rights holders to claim their rights. The Equality and Discrimination Ombud has expressed its grave concern that women's rights organizations in Norway are severely underfunded compared to organizations representing other grounds for discrimination. While several of these organizations receive sufficient financial support to have secretariats with relevant expertise and administration, the women's rights organizations are in general run as 100% voluntary organizations due to lack of funding. Only after ten years of existence did the NWL get core funding - enough to hire one staff member, which is hardly adequate. On average, the women's rights organizations receive less than 25 % of the government support granted per member to the other organizations covered by the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act.

#### C. Recommendation

Norway must ensure that to the extent it does provide funding for civil society organizations representing right holders under the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, it must not financially discriminate against women's rights organizations (or other specific mandates).