**Human Rights Council 45th session**

**Item 3 General Debate, 22 September 2020**

**Joint statement on family violence**

I have the pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of Australia, Indonesia and 34[[1]](#footnote-1) countries from all regional groups.

We are gravely concerned that violence against women and girls, particularly domestic violence, has intensified since the outbreak of COVID-19[[2]](#footnote-2). The pandemic has exacerbated long-standing and unacceptable rates of gender-based violence.

It is particularly concerning that much of this violence is occurring within families.

Family is the basic unit of society. They can and should play an important role in enabling individuals to realise their rights and to reach their full potential.

However, we must also recognise that not all families provide this; families can be a setting where human rights abuses and violations occur. Family violence exists in many forms that target children, older persons and persons with disabilities, but mostly women and girls. Even before the pandemic, it was estimated that 137 women across the world were killed by a member of their own family every day[[3]](#footnote-3).

Family violence occurs in all countries and cultures – it is a shared problem. While it does not discriminate by country, it often discriminates on the basis of gender, with women and girls disproportionately affected. Family violence is often a symptom of gender inequality in society and within our families, where power relations are often gendered and rooted in patriarchal norms. The consequences of such violence can be far reaching, impacting on the rights to life, liberty and security of person, education and work, and many other human rights.

The fear, secrecy and stigma surrounding human rights abuses and violations within the private sphere can make it particularly difficult for victims and survivors of family violence to seek redress. States must therefore be proactive and deliberate - in their policies and laws, and their actions – to both prevent and respond to family violence, and hold perpetrators to account.

We are committed to achieving gender equality, including within family settings. Achieving this will require supporting respectful and equal family relationships, including preventing and addressing gender-based violence in all circumstances, including in family settings.

We reiterate that family violence is not a private matter. Human rights don’t just apply when we walk out our front door; they apply in our homes and in our families.

1. Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Fiji, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Myanmar, Namibia, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Republic of North Macedonia, Switzerland, Thailand, The Bahamas, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. UN Women Issue Brief: COVID-19 and Ending Violence Against Women and Girls <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/issue-brief-covid-19-and-ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5006> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)