



Statement by His Excellency Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, Permanent Observer of the Holy See  
to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva  
at the 38<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council  
Item 3 – Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women

*Geneva, 20 June 2018*

Mr. President,

The Delegation of the Holy See takes note of the report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, an issue that continues to be one of the greatest human rights concerns of our time. Despite the progress achieved, violence against women and girls, in its different forms and various contexts, remains a grave scourge at every level of society. It often causes deep wounds and long-lasting consequences that may profoundly disrupt their lives as young girls, wives, mothers, or workers.

Mr. President,

It is particularly alarming to note that, in today's digital age, the mistreatment of women is exacerbated by the improper use of modern means of communication and that new technologies remain powerless to protect adequately the dignity of women, as well as their privacy and freedom of expression. It is high time to stop violence against women that is facilitated, in particular, by the daily use of insufficiently protected social networks and various online applications<sup>1</sup>.

It is very unfortunate that, instead of representing a momentous tool for the eradication of every form of discrimination, as well as structural inequities and violence against women, digitalization has actually become an instrument to perpetrate new forms of violence and abuse against women, which result in strongly compromising their fundamental human rights, inducing severe psychological illnesses and ending up isolating them from the benefits of Information and Communications Technology (ICTs). Pope Francis, last January, reiterated that every form of “violence against women cannot be treated as ‘normal’, maintaining a culture of machismo blind to the leading role that women play in our communities. It is not right [...] (to) let the dignity of so many women, especially young women, be trampled upon.”<sup>2</sup>

Mr. President,

Achieving full respect for women involves more than simply condemning violence, it also requires strong efforts to promote and educate respect for the other, to raise awareness, especially among new generations on the value of an authentic dialogue, where the proper understanding of the human person and of her own dignity is a precondition to truly human and effective communication.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/32/42.

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, Meeting with the population, Jorge Basadre Institute (Puerto Maldonado, Peru), 19 January 2018.