

FINLAND SUBMISSION TO THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION 118th session, 10 - 25 August 2026

*The National Council of Women of Finland submits this document in advance of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination's (the Committee) consideration of Finland's combined 24-26th periodic reports on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (the Convention) in August 2026.*

This submission raises the Council's observations about Finland's failure to live up to its obligations under the Convention.

The submission focuses especially on violence against women but mentions also other concerns related to the shrinking civil space in Finland.

We give our overall recommendations in the end of the document.

The National Council of Women of Finland is an NGO that advocates for gender equality and non-discrimination. It was founded in 1911. It is currently an umbrella for 73 NGOs that advance equality, non-discrimination and human rights.

Violence against women is one of the main areas of advocacy for the Council. The Council has a representative in several essential national networks monitoring VAW and basic and human rights more broadly.

Violence against women (articles 2 and 5)

Violence against women is a widespread problem in Finland. The figures of domestic violence and violence in close relationships are on the rise ([Pari- ja lähisuhdeväkivallan uhrien määrä nousi ennätykseen vuonna 2025 | Tilastokeskus](#))

When immigrant women and racialised women face violence, this is likely to remain invisible due to lack of information on reporting, lack of support networks, language barrier and lack of trust in authorities. There is a need to improve the services for victims of violence as well as for perpetrators from the point of view of language and cultural accessibility as well as from an anti-racism point of view.

There is a lack of segregated data on violence regarding different minority groups. Unfortunately, the austerity cuts are facing even the production of statistics. It seems currently that the publication of data on violence and crime will be reduced rather than broadened, due to cuts.

Honour-based violence is a largely hidden problem. Addressing it requires more awareness on the side of the authorities and more resources to specialised support systems.

Indigenous Sámi women are at risk of violence due to a complex set of cultural trauma, racism and lack of services especially in their own languages. The lack of services is particularly severe in areas with a scarce population and long distances.

Resources should be allocated to violence prevention and culture-sensitive services in indigenous and minority languages.

Services for victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence, as well as prevention programmes, are to a great extent run by NGOs. Currently, NGOs in the field of social and health care and advocacy face severe cuts by consecutive government decisions. There is a great risk that both the level of specialised services and preventive measures as well as advocacy efforts to reduce victims of violence against women will go down drastically. This will most likely affect marginalised communities the most due to the abovementioned obstacles to access to rights.

The drastic cuts in NGO funding and the increased government interference in the agenda of NGOs are also very concerning from the point of view of civic space in general.

Recommendations to Finland by the National Council of Women of Finland:

- 1) Recognise violence against women as a gender-based structural problem that violates human rights – not solely as individual crimes or matters of the legal procedure.
- 2) Guarantee the resources for services and procedures designed to support victims' rights and wellbeing both in the public sector and for NGOs.
- 3) Legislate on a responsibility for authorities to evaluate of the risk of escalation of violence. This should be supported by a comprehensive and gender sensitive model of risk evaluation, including training for professionals on intersectionality, accessibility and anti-racism.
- 4) Integrate gender impact assessment to all policy procedures that have an impact on the rate and severity of violence. Also the impacts of policy proposals and budgeting on discrimination and equity, childrens's rights, civic space and basic and human rights in general should be routinely assessed.
- 5) Introduce certain aggravating circumstances in the criminal code, including committing the violent crime when a child is present.
- 6) Guarantee that data on violence is available segregated by gender and minority status.
- 7) Guarantee culture sensitive services in all Sámi languages for victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence for the indigenous Sámi.
- 8) Evaluate and develop prevention and service models that target victims of domestic and gender-based violence with immigrant or ethnic minority background.
- 9) Develop the accessibility of services for victims of domestic and other gender-based violence to better allow access for people with disabilities.
- 10) Evaluate and develop prevention and service models that target victims of domestic and gender-based violence for better inclusion of people belonging to multiple minority groups, such as an ethnic minority and lgbtiq+ people.