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Stepping Forward:

Parliaments in the Fight Against Hate Speech

by Kevin Deveaux, Tim Baker, Mary O'Hagan and David Ennis under the guidance of Nika Saeedi, Agata Walczak, Heesu Chung and Charles Chauvel!

This brief provides an overview of the background, drivers, enablers and the impact of hate speech and identifies strategies to counter it, with a focus on the role of parliaments as a positive force for change. Of particular relevance are the concrete actions parliaments can take to address and mitigate the prevalence and impact of hate speech on those who are most vulnerable in society, including women, minorities and other underrepresented groups. The objective of this brief is to provide meaningful and practical guidance for parliaments and parliamentarians, as well as those who programmatically support them, on steps they can take to reduce and counter hate speech while fostering peace, constructive dialogue and trust.

Background

Hate speech is an enabler of conflict. It feeds off and reinforces societal division and exclusion. Its online manifestation leads to real-life violence. Hate speech is not a new phenomenon, but social and technological developments, including the pervasive spread of social media, malignant social and political discourse, political polarization and deepening economic inequality have driven both an increase in its incidence and the ease with which it spreads. This is a dangerous trend that is undermining democratic discourse, fuelling discrimination and igniting violence across the world.

Combined with the increasing prevalence and intentional use of disinformation – information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country – hate speech and its consequences are proving to be one of the key challenges to societal cohesion of our time.

Of specific concern is the role and facilitating function of online spaces when it comes to hate speech and disinformation, including particular challenges around regulating content and platforms that enable and amplify hateful rhetoric. Across the world efforts

have been made to address this issue, mostly unsuccessfully, and in some instances, they give licence to deliberate attempts to stifle free speech.

Not only does hate speech undermine the stability of entire societies, it poses a particular threat to underrepresented and vulnerable groups, such as women, youth, LGBTI people and religious minorities. Recent evidence of violence against politically active women shows that hate speech and harassment, amplified by technology and reinforcing harmful stereotypes, undermine their ability to fulfil their mandates. Evidence is emerging that the deluge of online hate speech and abuse – disproportionately and often strategically targeting women leaders – is driving them out of public and political life.

Now more than ever, diverse and inclusive participation, representation and leadership are key to leaving no one behind as countries build forward from the historic reversal of human development spurred on by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Hate speech undermines the collective effort required to do that.

This research seeks to build a better understanding of the institutional efforts that can be mounted to promote concrete actions to counter and address

hate speech, particularly looking at parliaments and their unique vantage points. Such understanding is critical to realizing UNDP’s development vision of an anticipatory, agile and adaptive approach to governance set out in its new Strategic Plan; and to attaining key elements of its new gender strategy concerning participation and representation.

The following issue brief summarizes the underlying causes and societal challenges of hate speech and identifies strategies to counter it, with a focus on the role of parliaments, acknowledging that in some instances political leaders in general and parliamentarians specifically are at the forefront of promulgating and perpetuating hate speech. It aims to provide practical guidance for parliaments and parliamentarians, as well as those who programmatically support them, on steps they can take to reduce and counter hate speech while fostering peace, constructive dialogue and mutual trust.

This brief is a compendium to existing analyses and policy documents, further informed by semi-structured interviews with and a peer review by over 50 subject-matter experts and a survey of UNDP practitioners.

Defining the Challenge

The UN has provided some important guidance in its 2019 Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, which defines hate speech as “any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor”.²

There is no universally applicable definition of hate speech. However, Article 20(2) of the International

Covenant on Political and Civil Rights provides that “advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law”.

While this is not intended to be a comprehensive or legal definition, it does provide a useful starting point for national governments and stakeholders in their consideration of what defines hate speech. Each country working to address hate speech should work towards formulating a definition that is best suited to its particular situation.

Drivers and Enablers of Hate Speech

Hate speech arises out of particular social and historical contexts. However, some trends provide useful insights into broad categories of conditions and actors that should be understood when establishing pathways to mitigating and preventing the use of hate speech in different contexts. UNDP’s strategic guidance on information integrity³ divides these into drivers, that is, directly contributing factors and enablers, which indirectly facilitate conditions.

Socio-economic

In societies where there are long-standing intergroup tensions spurred on by divisive public discourse, misogynistic and/or hyper nationalist narratives and socio-economic inequality hate speech can often find fertile ground to take root.

In these contexts, drivers of hate speech are often observed in divisive rhetoric deployed against specific individuals and groups to amplify differences, create scapegoats and justify disparities, often along religious, ethnic and gendered lines. There is growing evidence of the relationship between growing feelings of insecurity, intergroup hostility and hate speech.⁴

Furthermore, hate speech can be enabled by misogynistic discourse, sometimes reinforced by gender discrimination, enshrined in legislation and government policy, which can both create and reinforce a culture of hatred towards women. In such places, there is a notable link between the proliferation of hate speech against women, a rise in extremist groups and violence against women, both through online and physical violence.⁵

Political

The existing political context is an important setting when considering enablers of hate speech. The influx in the use of hateful and inflammatory speech is facilitated by an erosion of trust in political parties, processes and media, often leading to a decline in their power to set the terms of political and public debate. Contexts with low public trust, exclusionary political discourse and identity-based politics or populist regime rhetoric can provide cover for hate speech to take form.

Another important enabler has been the **normalization or mainstreaming of extreme or extremist views**. Increasingly, political and public debate is driven by the loudest voices, whether on or offline. Online, for example, the majority of posts on political issues are made by 10 percent of the population with the strongest, most extreme views on either side of an issue.⁶ Backed by populist leaders – with populism in and of itself premised on deeply antagonistic rhetoric⁷ - this has meant that political dialogue is often drawn towards extreme positions, contributing to their normalization irrespective of support for such views amongst the general population.

One particular enabler can be seen in the advent of the internet, which has enabled public opinion leaders, including members of Parliament (MPs) and activists, to speak directly with each other allowing them to bypass the “guardrails” previously

maintained by gatekeeping institutions.⁸ Where their roles incentivize them to undermine political opponents or competitors to build influence – often in the absence of rules of conduct and a shared understanding of the problem – the political environment becomes particularly enabling for the proliferation of hate speech.^{9,10}

Digital

The **pervasiveness and penetration of social media** has greatly increased the velocity at which negative or dubious content, including hateful speech, can spread. The anonymity allowed by social media enables individuals to author and share unmitigated hateful messages with relative impunity. In addition, the veracity of statements on social media is rarely verified (or refuted) by impartial external arbiters and this can lead to a lie becoming the “truth” if repeated often enough and virally shared in the virtual world.¹¹

With the advent of the internet and social media, and especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a **decline in social capital**¹² which can also lessen the social opprobrium individuals may face when using hate speech in a face-to-face context.¹³ Drivers like social media **algorithms** that reaffirm users’ positions rather than challenge their views are particularly problematic when they amplify extreme views to promote engagement. The decline in social interactions may also make people more suspicious of those they perceive as “other” and less tolerant of opposing viewpoints.

Whilst **disinformation** is distinct from hate speech, it can have a symbiotic relationship with or reinforcing effect on its emergence. Disinformation can be seen as a driver of hate speech, which is often deployed as part of a concerted strategy to target or radicalize groups and individuals and lay the groundwork for hate speech, incitement to violence and actual violence.

In a 2019 paper, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) highlighted the ways that disinformation, especially when reinforced by technology, can be used to manipulate and exploit existing social tensions and divisions for political or financial gain, encouraging the further spread of hate speech and radicalization of susceptible individuals.¹⁴

Impacts of Hate Speech

Understanding the negative impact of hate speech on people and communities, especially through data and location-specific evidence, is crucial to developing interventions that can limit and repair the harm that it causes.

Impact on individuals and groups

Hate speech fundamentally **undermines human dignity**. Hate speech and the resulting perceptions and treatment of specific individuals or groups makes them vulnerable to human rights violations and acts of violence. This can result in broader marginalization, leading to long-term physical and mental health issues and economic disadvantages.¹⁵ Hate speech should be understood, then, not only as an attempt to distinguish “others” from the dominant group, but also as a means of subjugating them.

In addition, hate speech is often used as a justification for acting on hate. **Violent acts and long-term socio-economic violence** are preceded by hate campaigns and propaganda, as observed in recent armed conflicts such as the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Hate speech online is often an early warning for violence offline.¹⁶

Online hate speech can amplify discrimination and marginalization of **women and persons of diverse sexual orientations and identities**. For many, discrimination and violence have become the norm online. There are real life consequences borne from online hate speech including barriers to participation and concerns over the safety of publicly and politically active women and their families. An eight-country survey by Amnesty International found that 23 percent of respondents had experienced online abuse or harassment (a more recent study put that percentage at 38 percent¹⁷), 41 percent of whom felt their physical safety was at risk due to the online activity.¹⁸ A study by the International Foundation for Electoral

Systems (IFES) has shown how misogynistic hate speech can serve both to discredit women electoral candidates and to stoke distrust and lack of confidence in women decision makers.¹⁹ Evidence is emerging that hate speech and harassment amplified by technology represent serious obstacles to the ability of women MPs to fulfil their mandates²⁰ and is driving them out of public and political life.²¹

There is also a growing body of evidence linking hate speech, especially online, to **radicalization of individuals and acts of violent extremism**.²² The proliferation of hate speech online can lead to the radicalization of a small, but significant, minority of those exposed. Some of them go on to engage in acts of violent extremism either as part of a group (e.g. ISIS) or as a “lone wolf” (e.g. the Christchurch Mosque Shooter in New Zealand).

Impacts on democratic institutions and societies

The proliferation of hateful language, in online discussions or in person, is both stimulated by and contributes to a **decline of trust in the institutions upon which democratic societies are based**, including an independent judiciary, free and fair elections, autonomous parliaments and state ministries and agencies. Where a public perception exists that such institutions are unable to address the proliferation of hate speech, public confidence in their effectiveness is at risk. The eroding trust in these institutions can, in turn, make the task of combatting hate speech even more challenging.

As discussed earlier, **political and social polarization** can be a driver of hate speech, but it is a two-way relationship. Where the lines of divisions that are the subject of hate, be it race, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation, overlap with political or social divisions, they can have a mutually reinforcing effect.

The Role of Parliament in Combating Hate Speech

Effective responses to the problem of hate speech require people from different sectors to work together to develop common understanding and collaborate on holistic strategies and responses. This kind of cross-sectoral collaboration can, however, be challenging. National parliaments, as formal and practical loci of dialogue and consensus building, are ideally positioned to lead an inclusive, whole-of-society dialogue to generate new thinking and policy options.

Parliament is particularly suited to this important role because of its:

- **Mandate:** Parliaments have a constitutional mandate to reflect the voice of the people in decision-making. Their deliberative role allows them to convene and facilitate cross-sectoral and inclusive public dialogue on issues of critical importance in their country and constituencies, and function as a space where societal grievances and tensions are mediated. Parliaments cannot effectively fulfil this role without taking a clear stand against hate speech and in favour of inclusive participation.
- **Resources:** Parliaments have at their disposal unique mechanisms to draw upon to support a whole-of-society effort to address hate speech. These include accountability mechanisms such as the committee system, and processes

for the interaction with and convening of key stakeholders, including government, civil society and the private sector. Cross-party caucuses, access to parliamentary libraries and research services and civic education and outreach programmes all constitute important resources that parliaments can use to discuss, debate, analyse and address hate speech.

- **Gravitas:** Whilst public perceptions of parliaments will vary across contexts, they remain a critical governance institution legitimized through elections to act on serious societal issues. Multi-party parliaments that represent society in its diversity and embody a range of political viewpoints can credibly stand as a people's representative, build political will and facilitate the development of solutions for addressing hate speech.

These features make parliaments a natural partner for UNDP and the broader development community to engage in the fight against hate speech. This does not mean that parliaments should lead exclusively. Rather, development partners should see parliaments as an entry point or key partner in building a coalition of key actors in a whole-of-society effort, based on the 2030 Agenda's principles of inclusivity, transparency and leaving no one behind.

Actions Parliament Can Take

Specific parliament-led interventions will vary according to the political and societal context. Therefore, a deep context analysis should be a precursor to any programming. Once available, such analysis should guide a discussion with a parliament and assist in the identification of specific actions that parliament can take as part of the broader coalition against hate speech. By and large, the following are potential interventions by a parliament that can be considered:

1. Self-Regulate

In some jurisdictions, the political elite are the greatest purveyors of hate speech – against each other and against certain groups of people – for political gain.²³

Showing leadership by how it conducts its own business, parliament can build and sustain the

credibility to lead a whole-of-society effort against hate speech and more broadly promote an inclusive society and dialogue. It can do this by:

1. Expanding the **ban and associated sanctions on unparliamentary language** within the institution (through standing orders or other internal regulations) to include hateful and degrading language.
2. Requiring members to commit to and respect a **code of conduct** that specifically bans hate speech outside of parliament. Codes of conduct have become more common within parliaments in recent years, especially with regard to corrupt or unethical behaviour.
3. Promoting measures within parliamentary **administrative procedures and systems** that allow for a culture of inclusivity and diversity. This

can include strengthening workplace complaints processes, addressing harassment and bullying and developing strategies that ensure equal employment and career opportunities. Such efforts, and programming to support them, can be particularly useful in transforming toxic masculine and exclusionary institutional culture.²⁴

4. Educate

Given the seriousness of the threat to democratic dialogue and decision-making, parliamentary civic education programming could be expanded to include measures to educate citizens on the negative impact of hate speech.

Parliament-led civic education programs might focus on the harm that hate speech does to vulnerable groups, individuals and to the democratic process itself. Programs implemented by UNDP²⁵ and UNESCO²⁶ provide useful models for parliaments looking to develop such programming. Media literacy, especially regarding the use and misuse of social media, is another potential area of focus for parliamentary civic education.²⁷

5. Communicate

As an elected body that represents a wide range of social and political interests, parliament is well positioned to push back against hate speech by promoting balanced dialogue and deconstructing or delegitimizing hateful speech. This can have a positive impact, which is well thought out, part of a collaborative approach with relevant stakeholders and based on data that allow strong targeting of vulnerable groups. The Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe have implemented counter-narrative campaigns related to hate speech that provide useful models for parliaments interested in addressing the issue.²⁸

6. Congregate

Most modern democratic parliaments and effective MPs understand that representing the electorate fundamentally requires ongoing engagement with the public between elections. This can include tabling and consideration of citizen petitions, routine town hall meetings, one-on-one constituent meetings held by MPs and online/in person consultation on draft laws. Some political systems have gone one step further and have allowed citizens to initiate draft laws that must be debated and voted upon in parliament. By providing regular opportunities for citizen participation and

dialogue on policy matters, parliament can provide an inclusive and constructive alternative to the polarization and extremism that often characterizes political speech on social media and can be a driver of hate speech.

7. Aggregate

Parliaments can counter the tendency of political and party dialogues to be skewed towards the extremes by collecting and publishing evidence-based research based on the aggregation of information from a broad range of sources, including those least likely to participate in the policy dialogue and parliamentary consultation. These processes are often dominated by the perspectives of a few and often neglect the positions of traditionally marginalized groups, i.e. women, youth, persons with disabilities and minority communities. To combat this, parliaments must be strategic and purposeful in their approach to meaningfully collate objective data that accurately reflects the views of the public.

As in the case of the Scottish Parliament, well-targeted opinion surveys are one tool parliaments can use to extend their range of sources from traditional methods (i.e. calling for submissions on a draft law).²⁹

8. Evaluate

Parliaments can combat misinformation and its links to hate speech, by serving as an objective source of information and analysis where appropriate. Some parliaments already play this role with regard to budget analysis through Parliamentary Budget Offices (PBOs) that conduct independent analyses of the budget allocations reported by the executive in the annual state budget and other fiscal statements. Where PBOs have been established, they have quickly become a trusted and politically neutral source of reliable information on such matters.³⁰

There is the potential to apply this approach to other policy areas in which the need for timely, evidence-based, impartial analysis is clear.

9. Collaborate

While Parliament is well placed to lead on countering hate speech, by no means should it attempt to craft policy on its own. In most jurisdictions, there are already various individuals and groups working on hate speech issues that have valuable experience and expertise to contribute. Parliament should use its prestige and

resources to bring these stakeholders into a whole-of-society dialogue on how best to respond to hate speech. Potential partners include:

- **Political Governance Institutions.** Institutions such as electoral management bodies that help to establish political procedural rules can be important partners in developing policies that reduce or eliminate the use of hateful language in political life, while ensuring that pluralistic debate and competition are not stifled.
- **Executive Organizations:** The participation of key ministries and executive bodies may be particularly important if the response to hate speech includes legislative or regulatory measures.
- **Media Organizations:** Media are key partners in setting broadcasting standards and monitoring content. It can also play an important role in ensuring that appropriate protections for freedom of the press and expression are maintained.
- **Civil Society Organizations:** CSOs, in particular women's and youth groups, that represent the interests of those targeted by hate speech will be important partners with significant insights to draw from based on lived and "frontline experiences".
- **International Development Partners:** Where parliament lacks expertise or capacity to address hate speech on its own, international development organizations, including UNDP, other UN Agencies and other intergovernmental organizations, may be able to provide useful resources and assistance as part of a broader plan to build capacity within the parliament.
- **Independent Regulatory and Oversight Bodies:** National independent human rights organizations, in particular, have a wealth of knowledge regarding the protection of human rights and prevention of hate speech and the maintenance of freedom of expression. Other institutions, such as privacy commissions and telecommunication regulators, may also be useful partners for parliament.
- **Neighbouring Parliaments:** Peer-to-peer cooperation among parliamentarians takes place in many different contexts, including the International Parliamentary Union, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and the Pan African Parliament. Such linkages can be a helpful way of sharing experiences and lessons learned in addressing hate speech.
- **Technology Firms:** Progress against hate speech will require engagement and cooperation from the technology sector. An example can be seen in Mexico, where the Federal Elections Commission (*Instituto Nacional*

Electoral) partnered with Facebook and other social media firms to establish a reporting system for hate speech during the mid-term elections in 2021. This was achieved without any regulations or other rules requiring a partnership, but through dialogue and voluntary cooperation.

10. Legislate

Making laws is at the heart of what parliaments do; however, scholars and legislators around the world remain deeply divided about how best to use legislation to combat hate speech.

At one end of the spectrum, a consensus has emerged in the EU countries in favour of proactive legal regulation of hate speech. In 2017 Germany passed the Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG), which requires social media companies and others to remove illegal content from their websites immediately upon being made aware of it.³¹ This approach has shown some success in reducing online hate speech, and this success has led other European countries to adopt similar rules. It has also informed draft EU legislation, which was being debated in the European Parliament at the time of the writing of this report.³²

At the other end of the spectrum, the United States has taken a relatively hands-off approach to hate speech, leaving questions of content moderation up to individual content publishers and social media platforms. This approach is one whereby "more speech to counter hate speech" is intended to ensure protection of freedom of speech, even in cases where such speech is considered offensive to some (if not most) of the population.

There is merit in both approaches. Where there is an entrenched system of checks and balances such as an independent judiciary, autonomous parliament, robust and active civil society, there is a reduced risk that regulatory frameworks will be abused. If these conditions are not in place, hate speech regulations may be used to stifle dissent or criticism of governments and ruling parties, even in established democracies.³³

When legislative measures are used, they should be narrowly tailored so that they counter only hateful language or conduct and do not unduly limit free thought, expression and discussion in line with democratic principles and constitutional governance, as set out in the Human Rights Committee General Comment 34 on the freedoms of opinion and expression.³⁴

Possible legislative measures include:

- **Regulation of Social Media:** Since social media is so important to the creation and spread of hate speech, much of the regulatory response has been focused there as in the case of NetzDG (see above).
- **Criminalizing Hate Speech:** Perhaps the most forceful, but possibly the most complex and sensitive measure from a human rights perspective that a legislature can take against hate speech is to make it a crime. However, as the Human Rights Committee General Comment 34 of 2022 and the 2012 *Rabat Plan of Action* make clear, criminalization of expression should only be considered as a “last resort.” Other measures, including public statements by leaders, education and intercultural dialogue,

should be considered first. Expression should be subject to criminal prosecution only if it meets a threshold of seriousness based on the following six variables:

1. social and political context of the speech;
2. status of the speaker;
3. intent to incite an audience towards a targeted group;
4. content and form of the speech;
5. extent of dissemination and;
6. likelihood of harm, including imminence.³⁵

Recommendations

Parliament is an important institution that can lead a whole-of-society approach to countering and neutralizing the effects of hate speech. It has a unique mandate and, in many cases, the necessary tools, resources and gravitas. Depending on the jurisdiction and the level of engagement by civil society and other actors in such efforts, this can entail an up-front or background role.

This issue brief makes the following recommendations for parliaments and their partners to consider as they venture towards engaging on the issue of hate speech:

- Develop dedicated action plans on hate speech identifying and committing to concrete steps in this regard.
- Take the lead on changing the political culture of parliament and those affiliated with the institution, including political parties. Parliaments must step forward to demonstrate that there are “red lines” that will not be crossed in political debates and build a culture that is respectful and inclusive.
- Women parliamentarians, acting collectively, can be powerful champions for action to address hate speech. They can and should act collectively and across political party lines – as occurs in many parliaments through all-party groups or caucuses – to raise awareness with regard to hate speech and its specific effect on women and to study, identify and promote solutions, both legal and otherwise, that can ensure that women seeking to participate in

public and political debate, are provided a safe space to do so.

- Regulation of hate speech requires strong democratic architecture to avoid overreach and limitations on political debate. Where a parliament determines that there is a need to regulate or criminalize hate speech, it must ensure that there are robust democratic checks and balances, such as an independent judiciary, an autonomous parliament and active civil society, to limit the ability of the government to use such rules to suppress political debate and the voicing of opinions contrary to the government perspective.
- Parliaments with resources should partner with less resourceful parliaments, for instance, through peer-to-peer exchanges.
- Parliaments need to lead but cannot act alone. They can act as facilitators, conveners and brokers of broad-based coalitions or networks to address hate speech.
- Parliaments need to fight hate speech with “clean hands”. If they are to be credible in their efforts, they need to first ensure that individual MPs and political parties are held accountable for the use of hate speech, both in the parliament and outside, through codes of conduct and other measures.
- Addressing the drivers and enablers of hate speech, including inequalities and misogyny, through parliamentary oversight and law-making, will have a direct impact on the proliferation of hate speech.

Endnotes

- 1 Under the guidance of Nika Saeedi (nika.saeedi@undp.org), Agata Walczak, Heesu Chung (heesu.chung@undp.org) and Charles Chauvel, the research and writing was undertaken by a consulting team led by Kevin Deveaux and supported by independent consultants: Tim Baker, Mary O'Hagan, and David Ennis. Kevin Deveaux is a former Member of Parliament, Canadian Barrister and currently the CEO of Deveaux International Governance Consultants Inc.
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- 2 *UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech* (2019), p. 3. Available at https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/advising-and-mobilizing/Action_plan_on_hate_speech_EN.pdf
- 3 UNDP (2022) "Information Integrity: Forging a Pathway to Truth, Resilience and Trust", Strategic Guidance, <https://www.undp.org/publications/information-integrity-forging-pathway-truth-resilience-and-trust>
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- 5 https://www.voanews.com/a/south-central-asia_brutal-killing-spotlights-violence-against-women-pakistan/6208934.html
- 6 *Supra*; Notes 30 & 31
- 7 Mudde, Cas. "The Populist Zeitgeist." *Government and Opposition* 39, no. 4 (2004): 541-63
- 8 <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/04/09/how-hateful-rhetoric-connects-to-real-world-violence/>
- 9 For example, the Standing Orders of the Canadian House of Commons (SO 18) "prohibits the use of disrespectful or offensive language in debate. Moreover, personal attacks, insults, obscene language or words that question a Member's integrity, honesty or character are not permitted." *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Third Edition, Bosc & Gagnon 2017, p. 97, Footnote 171
- 10 For example, the Standing Orders of the Canadian House of Commons (SO 18) "prohibits the use of disrespectful or offensive language in debate. Moreover, personal attacks, insults, obscene language or words that question a Member's integrity, honesty or character are not permitted." *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Third Edition, Bosc & Gagnon 2017, p. 97, Footnote 171
- 11 As reported in traditional media in late 2021, some social media platforms have been accused of amplifying and promoting hate speech due to the ability of negative or hateful content to attract and retain online viewers and thereby increase advertising revenue for such platforms. See for example: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kalevleetaru/2018/12/14/should-social-media-be-allowed-to-profit-from-terrorism-and-hate-speech/>, https://www.gicj.org/images/2021/Final_Report_on_ID_with_SR_Minorities-A.pdf and <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/can-social-media-firms-tackle-hate-speech/>
- 12 The decline in social capital was well articulated in Robert Putnam's books: *Bowling Alone* (1995) <http://bowlingalone.com/>
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- 20 Council of Europe and IPU, Sexism, Harassment and Violence against Women in Parliaments in Europe (2018)
- 21 Council of Europe, 'Women in Politics and in the Public Discourse: What Role Can National Parliaments Play in Combating the Increasing Level of Harassment and Hate Speech towards Female Politicians and Parliamentarians?' (2019)
- 22 For example: *Fanning the Flames of Hate: Social Media and Hate Crimes* (2020) Muller, K. & Schwartz, C.; SSRN: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3082972 & *The Harm in Hate Speech* (2012) Waldron, J.; Harvard University Press; Boston <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2jbrjd> & Independent Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Scotland - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/independent-review-hate-crime-legislation-scotland-final-report/pages/15/>
- 23 <https://theconversation.com/when-politicians-use-hate-speech-political-violence-increases-146640> & <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/mar/29/penny-wong-warns-racism-and-hate-speech-in-parliament-threaten-democracy>
- 24 See the following examples from Australia (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-03-29/female-politicians-reveal-toxic-culture-in-parliament-house/13249844>) & Kenya (<https://news.yahoo.com/kenya-court-orders-parliament-pass-gender-quota-162749941.html>)
- 25 <https://www.undp.org/speeches/preventing-atrocity-crimes-countering-and-addressing-hate-speech>
- 26 <https://www.gcedclearinghouse.org/news/addressing-hate-speech-through-education-united-nations-global-education-ministers-conference>

- 27 For example, a recent partnership between Norway and Romania aims to build digital literacy amongst secondary school students to reduce their use of hate speech. It is described here: <https://activecitizensfund.no/countries/romania-56080/developing-media-competence-amongst-young-people-in-romania-to-fight-discrimination-and-hate-speech/>
- 28 We Can!: Taking Action Against Hate Speech Through Counter and Alternative Narratives (2017) Council of Europe; Strasbourg <https://rm.coe.int/wecan-eng-final-23052017-web/168071ba08>
- 29 https://archive2021.parliament.scot/S5_EconomyJobsFairWork/Inquiries/Analysis-Business_Support_Survey.pdf & <https://archive2021.parliament.scot/newsandmediacentre/88180.aspx>
- 30 For example see the Republic of Korea's National Assembly Budget Office established in 2003: <https://korea.nabo.go.kr/naboEng/main/contents.do?menuNo=17700019>
- 31 <https://germanlawarchive.iuscomp.org/?p=1245>
- 32 EU Draft Law on Digital Services - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?qid=1608117147218&uri=COM%3A2020%3A825%3AFIN>
- 33 For example, in 2021 farmer protests in India over a new law resulted in heated debate on social media platforms. The government used its current legislation to demand that Twitter remove the accounts of more than 250 protesters and even media outlets that were reporting on the protests. Twitter complied with those requests. See: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/02/twitter-suspends-hundreds-of-indian-accounts-after-government-demand>
- 34 <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/gc34.pdf>
- 35 The Rabat Threshold Test is summarized and briefly explained by OHCHR here: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Opinion/SeminarRabat/Rabat_threshold_test.pdf