

VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN IN POLITICS
IN GEORGIA

2022



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**UN JOINT PROGRAMME
FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CRRC	Caucasus Research Resource Center – Georgia
NDI	National Democratic Institute
IRI	International Republican Institute
LGBT	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Study on Violence against Women in Politics (VAWP) in Georgia was commissioned by UN Women and administered by CRRG-Georgia. The study aimed at understanding the experiences of women in politics in Georgia, with a particular focus on assessing the factors supporting and hindering women's political participation, experiences of women seeking help, and the impact of violence on women's political participation and leadership.

The study used qualitative as well as quantitative research methods to better understand the experiences of women in politics and assess the state of VAWP. First, 10 qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with experts (key informants) during October 2020, including women's rights defenders, activists, independent scholars, and representatives of international organizations. The interviews aimed to obtain better insights into the VAWP types and context in Georgia, to feed into the design of the subsequent quantitative study and in-depth interviews with women politicians. Following the in-depth interviews with the key informants, an online survey of female elected office holders in the self-governments and in the Parliament and the candidates in the 2020 parliamentary elections was conducted in May and June 2021. The survey was completed by 151 women in politics, among whom 104 were members of local councils (Sakrebulo) or represented local municipalities between 2017 and 2021; 9 were Members of Parliament between 2016 and 2020; and 50 women ran for either majoritarian seats or were part of party lists in the 2020 parliamentary elections. After the online study, 12 women from the survey and 3 women appointees were selected to speak in-depth about the cases of violence they experienced in order to better understand the online survey findings. Overall, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted in July and August 2021.

The study covered the following topics:

- Factors supporting and hindering women in politics;
- Political campaigning and activism
- The experience of VAWP in Georgia

- Perpetrators of violence against women in politics
- The impact of violence on women in politics
- Reporting and help-seeking behaviours
- Mechanisms to prevent and address VAWP

Based on the data collected as a result of the research, we can draw the following main conclusions:

Enablers and barriers for women engaged in politics

- ▶ For the interviewed women, family support is an important enabler for their engagement in politics. Specifically, 88 per cent of respondents felt psychological and/or emotional support from their family members before getting involved in politics.
- ▶ 89 per cent of the surveyed respondents pointed out that neighbours and local community members supported their political career. Moreover, 87 per cent received support from members of their own political party, while 78 per cent and 59 per cent received support from international and local NGOs, respectively.
- ▶ On the other hand, a lack of family support was reported as a significant barrier for many women who might otherwise be willing to engage in politics.
- ▶ According to a large number of female politicians, the main barriers are the limited financial resources available for political campaigns (41 per cent), the limited opportunities for promotion to higher positions (27 per cent) and every fourth respondent-the negative attitude of the public towards women's involvement in politics.
- ▶ For female candidates, the greatest barrier is the limited financial resources, while for the female representatives of local government, having fewer chances for promotion to higher positions repre-

sents another barrier that is no less important than having insufficient financial resources.

- ▶ Although women activists carry out most of the party's work during parliamentary and municipal elections (including door-to-door canvassing, organizing, office work and arranging meetings), they rarely appear at the top of any party list.
- ▶ Family responsibilities, such as housework and taking care of children, parents and partners, leave less time for women to actively participate in politics. This problem has become even worse for women in politics since the pandemic.

Political campaigns and activism

- ▶ The pre-election period and the election campaign are particularly busy periods for female politicians. All of the interviewed candidates participating in the parliamentary elections in 2020 said that they were holding meetings with party members, activists and coordinators. About 90 per cent took part in door-to-door canvassing and travelling across Georgia to meet with voters, 88 per cent distributed campaign materials and were active on Facebook, 88 per cent cooperated with media representatives, and 82 per cent made speeches at public meetings.
- ▶ In their public statements, the majority of the interviewed female politicians often or sometimes spoke about gender equality (95 per cent), the rights of ethnic minorities (82 per cent) and the rights of sexual minority representatives (67 per cent), as well as criticized conservative and traditional views (66 per cent).
- ▶ The qualitative research shows that the risk of violence against female politicians increases when the female politicians actively engage in their election campaign, advocate for the rights of women and minorities in their public speeches, or confront traditional and conservative views.

Violence against women in politics

- ▶ The survey findings reveal that more than half of the interviewed female politicians (54 per cent) have experienced some type of harassment or violence during their time in office or while campaigning.
- ▶ Among the local government representatives, less than half (48 per cent) reported that they experienced harassment or some form of violence while in office, while this share rises to two thirds among the women candidates participating in the 2020 parliamentary elections, and all but two of the surveyed MPs said that they had experienced some form of violence or harassment.
- ▶ The most widespread form of violence against women in politics is psychological violence (37 per cent), followed by violence on social networks (32 per cent), economic violence (25 per cent) and sexual harassment (22 per cent). Only 5 per cent of respondents have experienced physical violence during the pre-election period or while in office.
- ▶ In total, 56 per cent of female politicians have personally experienced discrimination during their political career. Specifically, 41 per cent think that they had less opportunity than men to be in a leadership position in their party, 37 per cent had less chance to be involved in various committees, and 23 per cent were not given enough time to state their position during debates.
- ▶ The analysis of the quantitative data shows that when single or divorced women are involved in politics, they become targets of violence more often than other women.
- ▶ Almost one third of the respondents believe that threats, intimidation, harassment and hate speech are especially directed towards female politicians. The qualitative research showed that some women associate the violence against them with their political views and party, not necessarily with their gender.

Impact of violence on women in politics

- ▶ As a result of the violence that they have experienced, women in politics often take some measures to protect themselves (41 per cent). Among those who experienced violence, one in five (19 per cent) changed their daily routine, 16 per cent reported that they do not disclose information about their schedule online, and 11 per cent requested information regarding security measures. In addition, 9 per cent avoided using online media, 9 per cent avoided going to political meetings and rallies, 5 per cent avoided participating in election campaigns, and 3 per cent avoided going out alone.
- ▶ The results of the quantitative research show that experiencing violence has a negative impact on the psychological state of women in politics. Specifically, 37 per cent of female politicians talk about their deteriorated psychological condition. However, the majority of respondents indicated that their political activism actually increased (32 per cent) or did not change (41 per cent) after this experience and that having experienced harassment or violence either gained them more supporters (36 per cent) or had no effect on the number of their supporters (27 per cent).
- ▶ The qualitative research shows that female politicians react differently to harassment and discrimination directed against them. Some of them reported feeling devastated and distressed. Others pointed out that due to their own persistent nature, each new incident of violence makes them stronger and more willing to fight against gender discrimination and for their rights as women.
- ▶ Both the qualitative and quantitative research results show that when women speak up about violence, it empowers other female politicians too. The majority of interviewed female politicians (60 per cent) agreed or completely agreed with the statement that when candidates speak publicly about the harassment and bullying they have experienced, it helps other women in politics to start talking about these topics as well. Three quarters of the surveyed women (75 per cent) also disagreed with the statement that such women are considered weak.

Reporting incidents of violence and seeking help

- ▶ After experiencing violence, the majority of women in politics talked about this experience with family members and friends (81 per cent), while 65 per cent of respondents discussed the incident with party leaders or colleagues, 40 per cent talked to other people, and only 21 per cent contacted NGOs or women's rights organizations.
- ▶ More than half of the respondents (52 per cent) who experienced threats, harassment or violence did not report the incident to official authorities. Of those who did, 16 per cent contacted the police or the Prosecutor's Office, 12 per cent discussed the incident with the gender equality council of the local government, 7 per cent with the Central Election Commission or another election body, 5 per cent with the Public Defender, 4 per cent with the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia and 2 per cent with other official bodies.
- ▶ Those who did not file an official report after the incident mostly explained their inaction by saying that, in their opinion, their case required a political response rather than legal action (43 per cent) or that they were able to resolve the problem themselves (36 per cent), while 21 per cent thought that the incident was not significant or serious enough to report.
- ▶ The qualitative research shows that the factors hindering the respondents from reporting the incidents are their lack of confidence in relevant bodies, their fear of harming the party's reputation and their fear that no one would take their report seriously.

Mechanisms for preventing and responding to violence against women in politics

- ▶ The feedback received from women in politics about the current legislation, mechanisms and services for responding to violence is quite polarized. A greater number of respondents disagree than agree with the opinion that there are effective mechanisms for preventing violence against women in politics (47 per cent) and reporting to relevant authorities in Georgia.

- ▶ Respondents of the qualitative research believe that there were important steps taken in recent years in terms of working on the issues of violence against women. They see a bigger problem with regard to law enforcement mechanisms and services than in the legislation per se.
- ▶ Women in politics believe that the existence of political will is a necessary prerequisite for the effective investigation of cases of violence against women in politics.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ The results of both the quantitative and qualitative research indicate that violence against women in politics is a widespread phenomenon in Georgia that, despite its prevalence and severity, rarely becomes a subject of public discussion. According to the research, recognizing and extensively discussing the problem empowers those women who otherwise may not dare to talk about this problem. Therefore, **it is recommended that the representatives of the Government and political parties, as well as the Central Election Commission and the media, allocate proper attention to the issue of violence against women in politics.** These entities need to discuss the issue regularly, both at the central and local government levels and within political parties, as well as in public debates. The latter is especially important during the run-up to elections, when the risk of violence is even higher.
- ▶ Due to the fact that violence takes place not only between the representatives of different parties but also within the same parties, in order to protect the women engaged in politics from violence, it is recommended that **political parties introduce inter- and intra-party mechanisms** (among them, codes of conduct and sexual harassment response mechanisms) and publicly condemn all instances of violence committed via both traditional and social media, as well as violence in various forms.³
- ▶ The research shows that mistrust in respective agencies and the lack of effectively investigated cases prevent women in politics from reporting about violence. Therefore, **the actuality of effective investigations** will significantly enhance confidence in the existing system and help increase the reporting rates.
- ▶ In order to enhance confidence and reporting rates, it is also important **to raise the awareness of representatives of the media and the justice system** about violence against women in politics and to build their capacities. Doing so is important in order to cover these issues ethically and raise public awareness, on the one hand, and to ensure that similar cases are effectively investigated, prosecuted and brought to justice, on the other.⁴
- ▶ Women in politics and subject matter experts consider it critical to **strengthen the existing state institutions** (in particular, the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament and the gender equality councils within local governments, as well as the Office of the Public Defender) **to ensure the safety of women in politics.** Accordingly, the coordinated work of these institutions with other agencies will significantly contribute towards addressing this problem. In order to achieve this goal, it is also necessary to **collect and process the data on the cases of violence against women in politics at the national level, as well as to develop relevant prevention strategies.**⁵
- ▶ The research participants see NGOs playing a significant role in improving the mechanisms for the prevention of and response to the violence against women in politics. It is recommended that civil society continue **to support and empower the women victims of violence, to speak up about this problem and to raise the awareness of both women and men in this regard.** It is of utmost importance for the women in politics to break their silence and speak up about this problem in order to promote equality in politics and public life and eliminate gender-based violence.⁶
- ▶ Both the qualitative and quantitative research results show that women in politics rarely report the violence they have experienced. It is recommended **to update and expand the existing legislation** to comprehensively address all of the forms of violence against women in politics, including relatively new forms such as the violence on social networks, and to provide an effective enforcement mechanism.
- ▶ The lack of evidence about the violence against women in politics is a hindrance to promoting the significance of this issue and taking preventive measures. Therefore, it is recommended **to have more**

research and data to identify the frequency, types, victims and perpetrators of violence, as well as to determine the context and factors that increase the risk of violence. It is recommended to conduct future studies focused on the experience of women candidates participating in both local and parliamentary elections, as well as those involved in the legislative and executive branches of government. Along with studies, it is important to collect administrative data, monitor elections and use qualitative and mixed methods to identify any new forms of violence.

- ▶ This research explored the experience of women members of the sakrebulo (city assemblies), local government and the Parliament. However, due to the absence of a sampling frame, it was unable to survey a sufficient number of individuals among those who were standing as candidates in the parliamentary elections, which would have generated reliable results. Therefore, **it is recommended that political parties and the Central Election Commission ensure the availability of contact information of the candidates participating in the elections for research purposes.**

INTRODUCTION



Globally, more women are involved in politics than ever, including those who hold public offices⁷ and are elected to national legislative bodies.⁸ Nonetheless, violence and harassment against women in politics has systematically increased too, barring them from full and active political participation.⁹ Violence against women in politics (VAWP) is not solely limited to physical or verbal threats, assaults, or humiliation. This is a multifaceted phenomenon occurring publicly, or in a domestic sphere, where perpetrators might be both state and non-state actors.¹⁰ Women's attempts to participate in politics are met with harassment and discrimination, physical or sexual assault, and psychological abuse that has increasingly moved to cyberspace.¹¹

The situation is further exacerbated by VAWP being a largely hidden phenomenon. Societies fail to acknowledge a victim of VAWP because that violence is often not manifested physically and thus is rarely regarded as violence. Information and communications technology has created tools that have become new vehicles for violence against women, including social media and messaging. This violence is gendered and is different in intent, impact, frequency and form from the online violence and harassment that men face in politics.¹²

Violence against women in politics is a consequence of structural inequalities and deep-rooted prejudice stemming from systematic patriarchal harassment and an attempt to institutionalize women's subordinate position in society by continuously excluding them from decision-making.¹³ As a result, VAWP is recognized as the most consequential obstacle to realizing women's political rights.¹⁴

Georgia is not an exception to this trend. In recent years, the country has taken important steps to ensure greater participation of women in politics and to eliminate VAWP. Still, women are underrepresented in political positions of power, and they disproportionately suffer from harassment and intimidation when they do participate in politics. As elsewhere, VAWP in Georgia remains underreported, and many of the experiences of female politicians who have endured violence are unknown. This study aims to fill this gap by providing an overview of the existing situation, as well as collecting empirical evidence on female politicians' experience of violence.

A review of women's political participation in Georgia

quality between women and men is guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia.¹⁵ The document explicitly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of one's sex or gender identity. Notably, the Constitution obliges the State to eradicate gender inequalities, including through affirmative action.

While the Constitution of Georgia outlines the grounding principles of equality, other legislative acts and policy documents specify the measures for ensuring women's greater participation in the country's political life. The Law of Georgia on Gender Equality,¹⁶ among others, reiterates the principle of equal rights and opportunities for women and men when it comes to participating in politics. The law condemns the discrimination of Georgian citizens on the grounds of sex. In a similar spirit, the Law on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination¹⁷ and the Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and the Protection and Support of Victims of Such Violence¹⁸ also echo the illegality of the discrimination of women in any public domain, including politics.

Principles of equality and universal political participation guide the country's National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights and its action plans. The document further pledges to advance opportunities for the involvement of all citizens in political life and to combat the violence against women and gender equality, hate crimes, and crimes committed by the legal entities.¹⁹

Institutionally, both the Government of Georgia and the Parliament of Georgia have established bodies to promote women's rights. The Parliament's Gender Equality Council²⁰ that was established in 2010 and one of its tasks is to ensure women's greater inclusion in politics. Similar bodies exist in the country's municipal governments. While the existence of such bodies is indeed a step forward, local gender councils lack power and knowledge.²¹

A landmark decision to improve women's political participation in Georgia was the 2020 amendments to the country's Election Code. These changes establish practical tools for promoting women's greater political in-

volvement. The amendments required political parties to introduce more gender balanced proportional party lists. Every fourth member of the parliamentary list and every other nominee in municipal electoral lists should be of a different sex.²² While this significantly increased the number of women in the party lists for the 2020 parliamentary and the 2021 municipal elections, almost every political party included only enough women to satisfy the legal requirements.²³

Despite guaranteed rights and opportunities on paper, few women are present in politics. Georgia ranks low in terms of women's presence in the country's legislature:²⁴ only 21 women (15 per cent of all members) were elected to the Parliament in the 2020 elections. Similarly, only 469 women (24 per cent) were elected to municipal councils out of the potential 1,986 seats in the 2021 local elections; this is after around a 10-percentage point increase compared to 2017, which was largely a result of mandatory quotas.²⁵

All but two elected heads of municipalities are men, and none of the regional governors are women. As of January 2022, 3 of the 12 cabinet ministers are women.²⁶ The representation of women elected through a majoritarian system is even lower. Out of 622 Sakrebulo members elected through a majoritarian system, only 9 per cent (50) were women, and only 31 out of 150 Members of Parliament in 2020 were women.

Violence against women in politics in Georgia

While fewer women than men participate in politics in Georgia, they are disproportionately targeted for harassment based on their gender. Significantly, attacks and discrimination are not limited to political opponents only. Often, women politicians are unequally treated within their political parties too.

The usage of sexist language is the challenge that women in politics have to fight against every day. Sexist and gender-insensitive language has been used by prominent opposition leaders against their women opponents in the Tbilisi City Council²⁷ and in cabinet ministries.²⁸ Politicians involved in regional and local politics are often accused of using gender stereotypes to descri-

be women in general, including their opponents.²⁹

Verbal abuse and sexist attitudes against women politicians and activists have been especially problematic during election campaigns. This is visible in the example of online and social media, where women politicians often experience threats to their physical safety, are blackmailed or are verbally assaulted. For instance, at the outset of the 2020 parliamentary elections in Georgia, watchdog organizations identified that prominent Georgian female politicians were actively abused on social networks. Perpetrators used sexualized photo and video manipulations demonstrating women's subservient sexual nature, reinforcing the stereotype that there is no place in politics for women.³⁰

A study conducted by CRRC-Georgia investigating women politicians' in the 2020 parliamentary elections found that online violence directed at women was frequently highly gendered. Female candidates received substantially more comments relating to their personal and sexual lives than their male counterparts. Such attacks were mainly pointed to women's family roles, their appearance or sexuality. Female candidates' public status was frequently attributed to their personal or sexual relationship with prominent male figures.³¹

Women politicians and their family members receive threats to their physical safety too. In the most publicized case, the children of Georgia's current president, Salome Zourabichvili, were targeted. During the presidential campaign, her adult children were actively receiving death threats online, allegedly because of President Zourabichvili's political activities.³²

Opponents often weaponize materials allegedly depicting the private lives of women politicians to blackmail and silence them.³³ Since 2016, several videotapes have surfaced online that reportedly featured prominent women politicians.³⁴ Notably, some of these tapes were accompanied by immediate demands to victims to step back and abandon politics.³⁵ Women politicians are often threatened with their private videotapes being made public. Such events occur during election campaigns too. For instance, amid the 2020 elections, several female politicians received such threats either anonymously or overtly from government representatives.³⁶

Study goals and objectives

The goals of the Study on Violence against Women in Politics in Georgia are fourfold. First, it aims to collect and analyze the evidence on women's political participation in Georgia and the obstacles that women in politics face, particularly focusing on any experiences of violence as office holders at the Parliament or City Council, or election candidates of the 2020 parliamentary elections. Specifically, this report investigates violence against women in politics, including its magnitude and forms. The analysis identifies the groups that are most vulnerable to violence, their help-seeking behaviour and how the experience of violence affects their political participation and leadership.

Secondly, the study contributes to UN Women's project goal of developing a global model for measuring and monitoring violence against women in politics. Thirdly,

the study includes a review of the national legislation ensuring women's political participation and protection measures. Finally, it outlines recommendations on strengthening the monitoring, prevention of and response to violence against women in politics in Georgia.

This report proceeds as follows. First, a short description of the study methodology is outlined (see Annex 1 for a more detailed description). Next, the report details the study findings across several chapters, describing the following: support and barriers for women in politics; political campaigning and activism; the experience of violence against women in politics; perpetrators; the consequences of violence on victims; reporting and help-seeking behaviour; measures and mechanisms to address VAWP; and prevention mechanisms to counteract VAWP. Each of the chapters incorporates the perspectives of survey participants and individual women politicians (and in some cases, the perspectives of experts).

METHODOLOGY

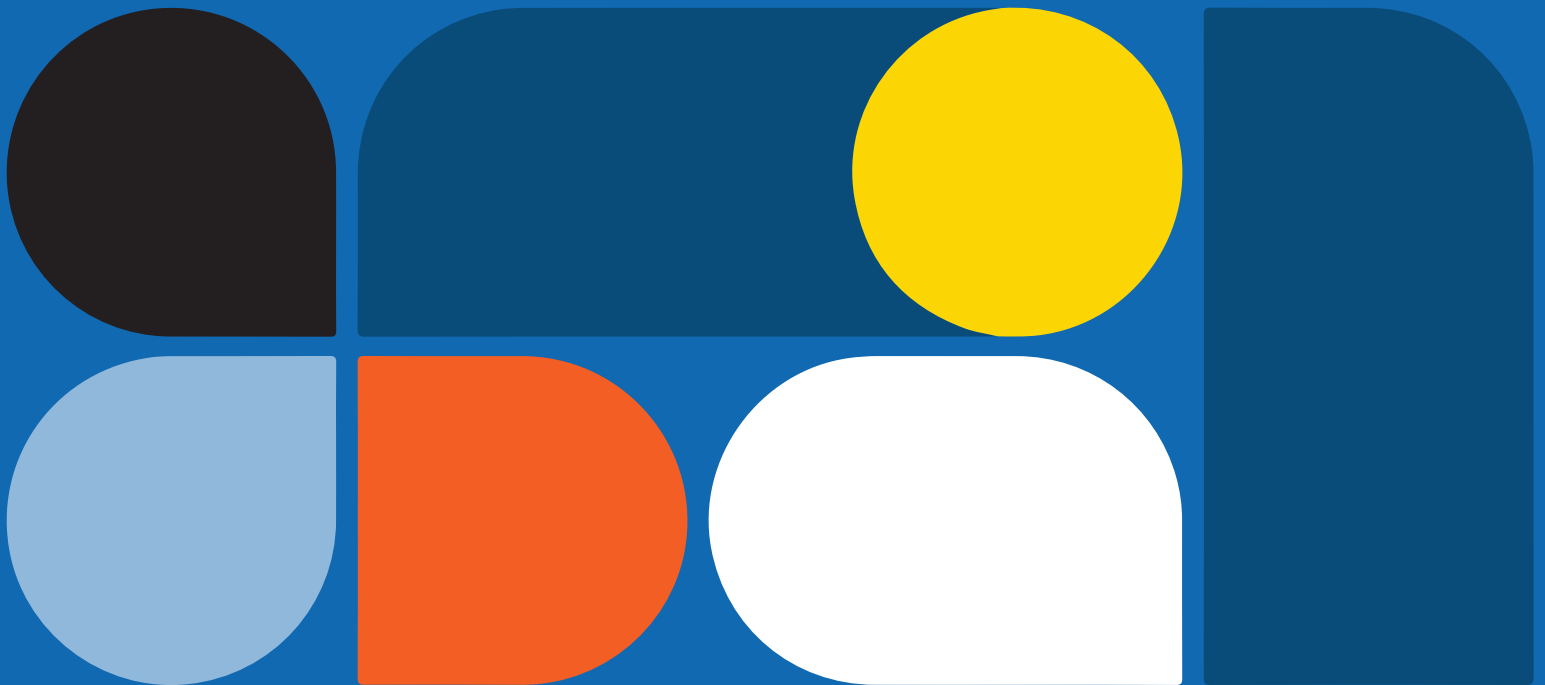
This study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining a quantitative survey of women involved in politics with the findings of in-depth interviews with women politicians and experts. Ten interviews were conducted with experts who are women's rights defenders, independent scholars and representatives of international organizations during October 2020. In addition, 151 women office holders or candidates in parliamentary elections took part in a self-administered online survey between May and June 2021. Among them, 104 were members of local councils (Sakrebulo) or led local municipalities between 2017 and 2021; nine were Members of Parliament between 2016 and 2020; and 50 ran in the

2020 parliamentary elections. Some of the electoral candidates also completed the survey as office holders; therefore, the numbers do not add up to 151, and the sample cannot be considered representative.³⁷ Finally, 15 in-depth interviews with women politicians (12 from the survey and 3 with women political appointees) were conducted in July and August 2021.

Detailed information about the methodology is given in the methodological note in Annex 1.

Background information about the survey participants is given in Annex 2.

STUDY FINDINGS

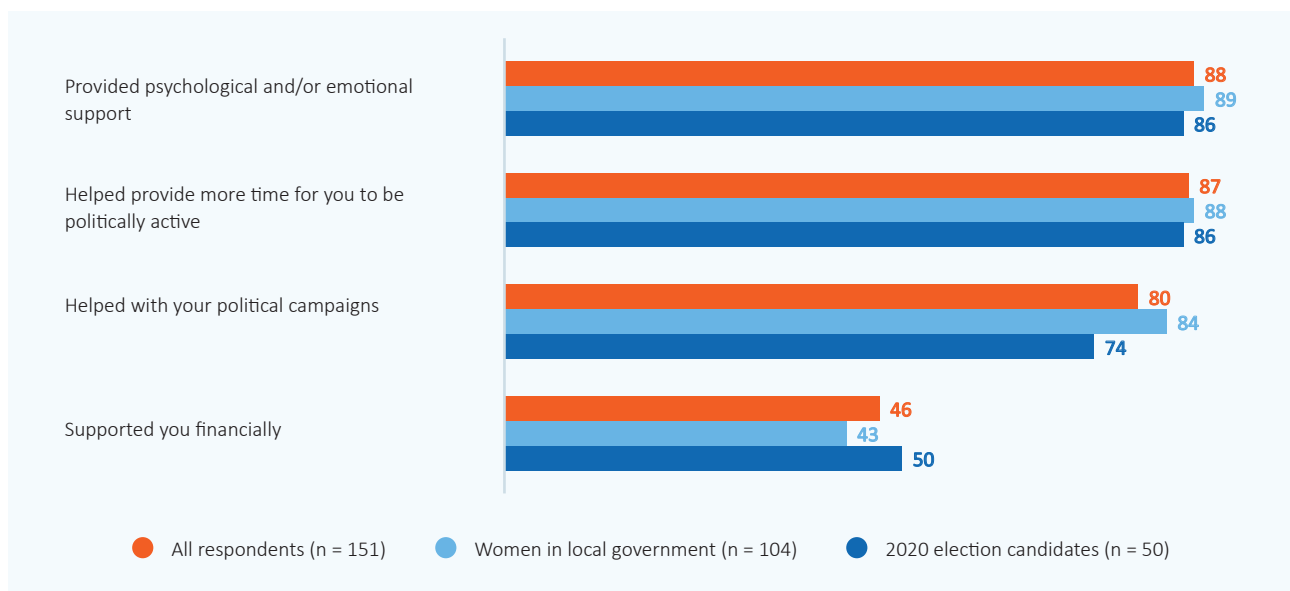


SUPPORTING AND HINDERING FACTORS FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Becoming involved in politics in Georgia is challenging for women. The majority of the surveyed women in politics said that their family members supported them in one or another form (Figure 1). Eighty-eight per cent claimed that family members provided emotional and psychological support, and 87 per cent said that family members helped in such a way so that women had more time to be politically active—for example, by helping care for family members and children

and by doing household chores, such as cleaning, cooking, shopping, etc. About 80 per cent said that their family members contributed to their campaigns through non-monetary contributions—for instance, by canvassing and distributing campaign materials. Almost half (46 per cent) received financial support from their families, including contributions to their campaigns. When looking at differences across groups, only small variations were observed.

FIGURE N1
Types of family support received by women in politics (%)



Female politicians participating both in the quantitative and the qualitative interviews first and foremost highlighted the support they receive from their family members (husbands, children, parents, and other relatives).

“I had the full support of my family. From the beginning, I also had some financial support from my family, from my husband, even though I had financial support from the party as well, and there was no need for it; nevertheless, the family also helped me financially at that time.” (2016–2020 Member of Parliament, Respondent 2)

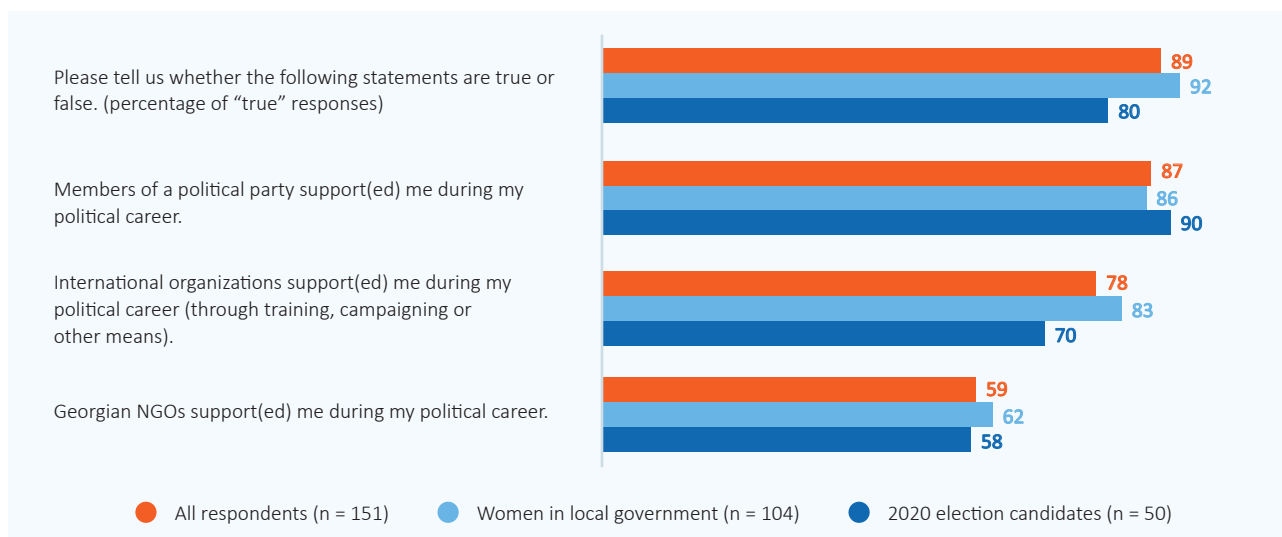
However, some also highlighted that not all women in politics are lucky to receive such support from their families.

“From [my] family, I remember [receiving] nothing but support. I have two children, and my parents help me take care of them. They do everything so that nothing interferes with my work. You know that party activities are not highly paid; it is mostly based on volunteering. So [my parents] are supporting me financially, they’re supporting me morally, [and] they stand by me, but that does not mean that this is the way it goes for other women.” (Electoral candidate, Respondent 10)

In addition to the support of their families, female politicians talked about the support they receive from their communities, their own political parties, and international organizations. For example, the majority of survey respondents (89 per cent) mentioned that their neighbours and local community members supported their political careers. About the same proportion (87

per cent) mentioned members of their own political party. A large number (78 per cent) reported receiving support from international organizations, while 59 per cent received support from Georgian civil society organizations. Only slight differences were observed when looking at women politicians representing different political groups (Figure 2).

FIGURE N2
Sources of support received by women in politics (%)



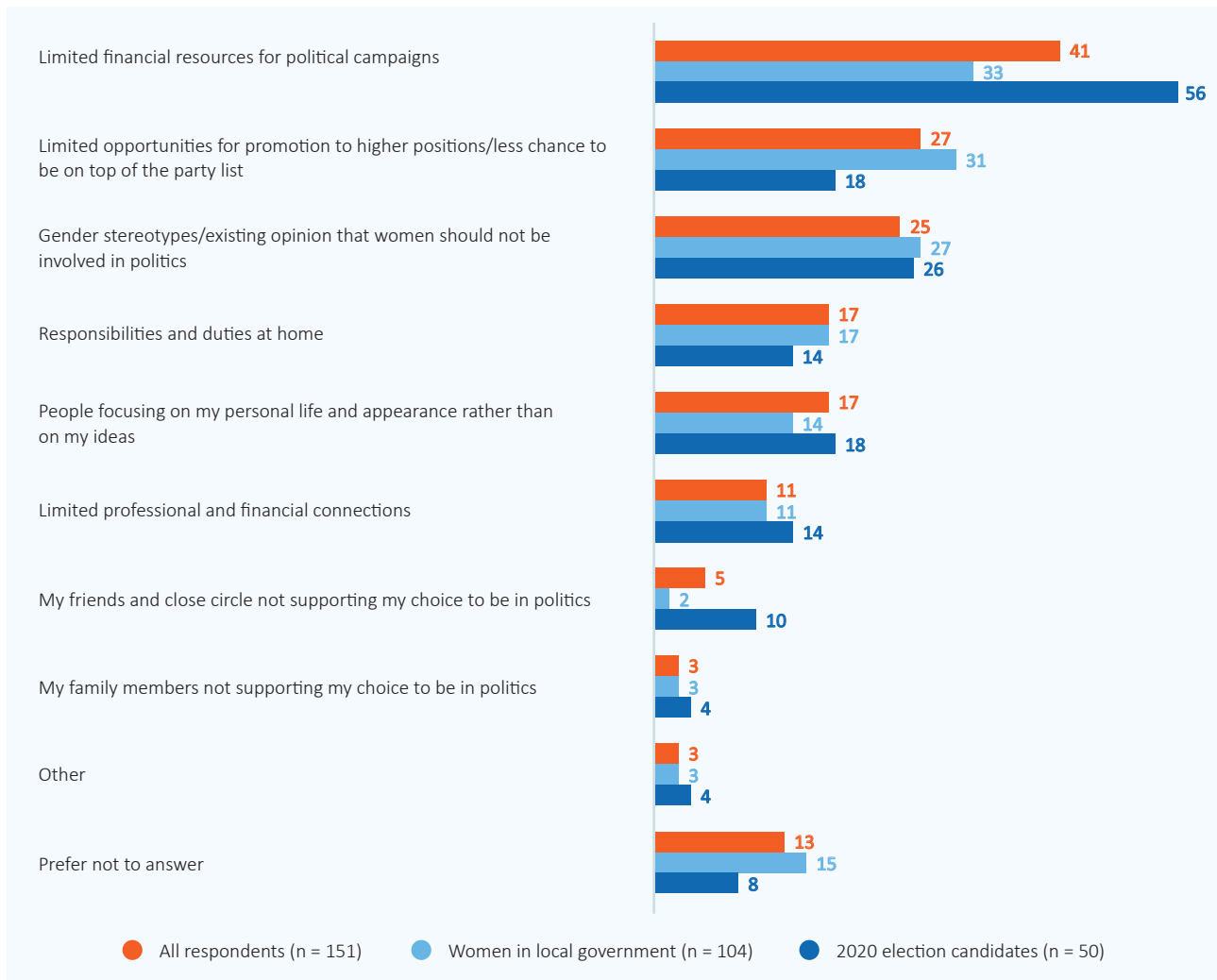
During the qualitative interviews, some women politicians also confirmed to have received support from international organizations, such as NDI and IRI, who conduct training sessions for them.

“There was huge support from NDI and IRI, like public speaking, communication with the camera, public relations—it all needs to be learned, ... all of this needed professional education. And not only me but probably 90 per cent of Georgian politicians should be grateful to NDI and IRI for the service they provide. I still remember my first inter-party training conducted by NDI, and despite our dissimilar political views, I am still friends with these women, and we have relationships outside of politics.” (2016–2020 Member of Parliament, Respondent 2)

When it comes to barriers women face in politics, study findings show that the main challenges for women in politics in Georgia are related to finances, gender stereotypes and uneven opportunities before starting a political career, as well as challenges within the political parties where women politicians are active.

The plurality of surveyed female politicians named the limited financial resources available for political campaigns (41 per cent) as a main challenge. Importantly, more than a quarter of respondents named the problem of the ‘glass ceiling’—that is, limited opportunities for promotion to higher positions (27 per cent). One in four respondents chose the negative public opinion regarding the involvement of women in politics. Fewer respondents named their responsibilities and duties at home (17 per cent), and a similar proportion pointed out that society often focuses on their personal lives and appearance rather than their ideas. A few named their limited professional and financial connections (11 per cent), the lack of support from friends (5 per cent) and family members (3 per cent), and other barriers (3 per cent). About 13 per cent of respondents preferred not to answer the question. Some differences were observed when looking at women involved in local politics as council members and 2020 election candidates (Figure 3). Specifically, the biggest barrier for women candidates is limited financial resources, while for the women working in the local self-government, less chance to be promoted is an equally significant barrier.

FIGURE N3
Barriers that women in politics face in Georgia (%)



These results are supported by qualitative data. During the in-depth interviews, women politicians talked about the barriers they face at home, in their workplace and in society.

Household-related responsibilities, such as taking care of domestic chores, children, parents and partners, leave women less time to engage in politics.

“The hardest thing in politics is that you never know when you are going to get home, ... and not all women have the luxury to stay at work after 6 o’clock. There were often cases in which I got back home by midnight, and this is the hardest challenge for women who want to engage in politics, because they have to do the household chores after midni-

ght when they get home. ... Men do not realize that ... this environment is adapted to them.” (Electoral candidate, Respondent 10)

Women politicians talked about the advantages that men have compared to women in office. In line with survey findings, in the in-depth interviews, women politicians explained how men have more privileges, higher positions and less routine, bureaucratic work to do.

“There are more successful men than women, who are [stuck] doing the routine work. [...] We are practically invisible, doing routine work in our rooms. There were cases in which there was a briefing next door, and I did not even know what it is about because I was occupied with my things... And men ra-

rely do such kind of work. They come and get quick updates from me about the daily events and issues, and then they go and present this on television or to the leader. ... So they take the info from me and use it tactfully without filling in forms [and] following the formalities, bureaucracy, etc.” (Electoral candidate, Respondent 10)

According to key informant interviews (KIIs), party leaders exploit hardworking women activists but rarely promote them to higher positions within the party or nominate them as political candidates. For instance, while in parliamentary and municipal elections, female activists do the most work for parties (such as canvassing, organizing, doing clerical work and organizing meetings). Despite this, they rarely end up at the top of any political party’s electoral list.

“[Women] have to establish themselves in their parties... Internal structures or internal party dynamics are not transparent, open or competitive in Georgia. This means that a person is not on the party list because of his/her achievements but because of better connections and power... Women do not have these connections and have less access to finances; they get into politics mostly because they are either very determined or very patriotic, some values connect them to politics, or because of their hardworking nature and eagerness to do the job. ... Therefore, more women are represented in parties as day labourers who just work for parties without receiving the adequate appreciation, payment or promotion that they deserve.” (Expert from an international organization, KII 2)

In addition, dominating stereotypes and negative attitudes towards politically active women often prevent others from engaging in politics. These widespread attitudes are often echoed in their family members’ opinions, who might not always be in favour of a woman’s choice to get involved in politics. According to the experts, these challenges are especially pressing for ethnic minorities and the representatives of other vulnerable groups.

“Ethnic minority women face double discrimination because of their traditions. There are cases of physical, psychological and sexual abuse. ... [There was one case in which] a husband threatened to divorce [his wife] if she went into politics because what would people say about that? At some level, politics in ethnically populated regions is perceived to be a dirty business that should not concern women.” (Expert from an international organization, KII 5)

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were also mentioned as a barrier to women’s participation in politics. Respondents stated that because all family members have mostly been home during the pandemic, women have had extra work to do. They have to deal with the household chores and take care of their children who are online schooling, in addition to doing their jobs as politicians. Respondents also highlighted that generally, the number of cases of violence has increased in families as family members have had to spend more time together at home, which sometimes becomes unbearable for the partners. On the other hand, the pandemic became an obstacle to meeting people in person to tell them about the political programmes and provide them with information about the party’s activities.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is generally a hindrance [for women politicians] because in most cases, a female politician has a family and children. Consequently, when there is distance learning, when people spend most of their time at home, when everyone has to live in the same space, ... workspace for female politicians may be limited as other needs at home might become a priority. The second point is that the pandemic makes things very difficult for politicians, [as they cannot actively] make connections, attend meetings, go door-to-door. ... People are afraid to go out to meetings. They do not take informational brochures because the risk of virus transmission increases, and this reduces the ability to deliver information.” (Political appointee, Respondent 15)

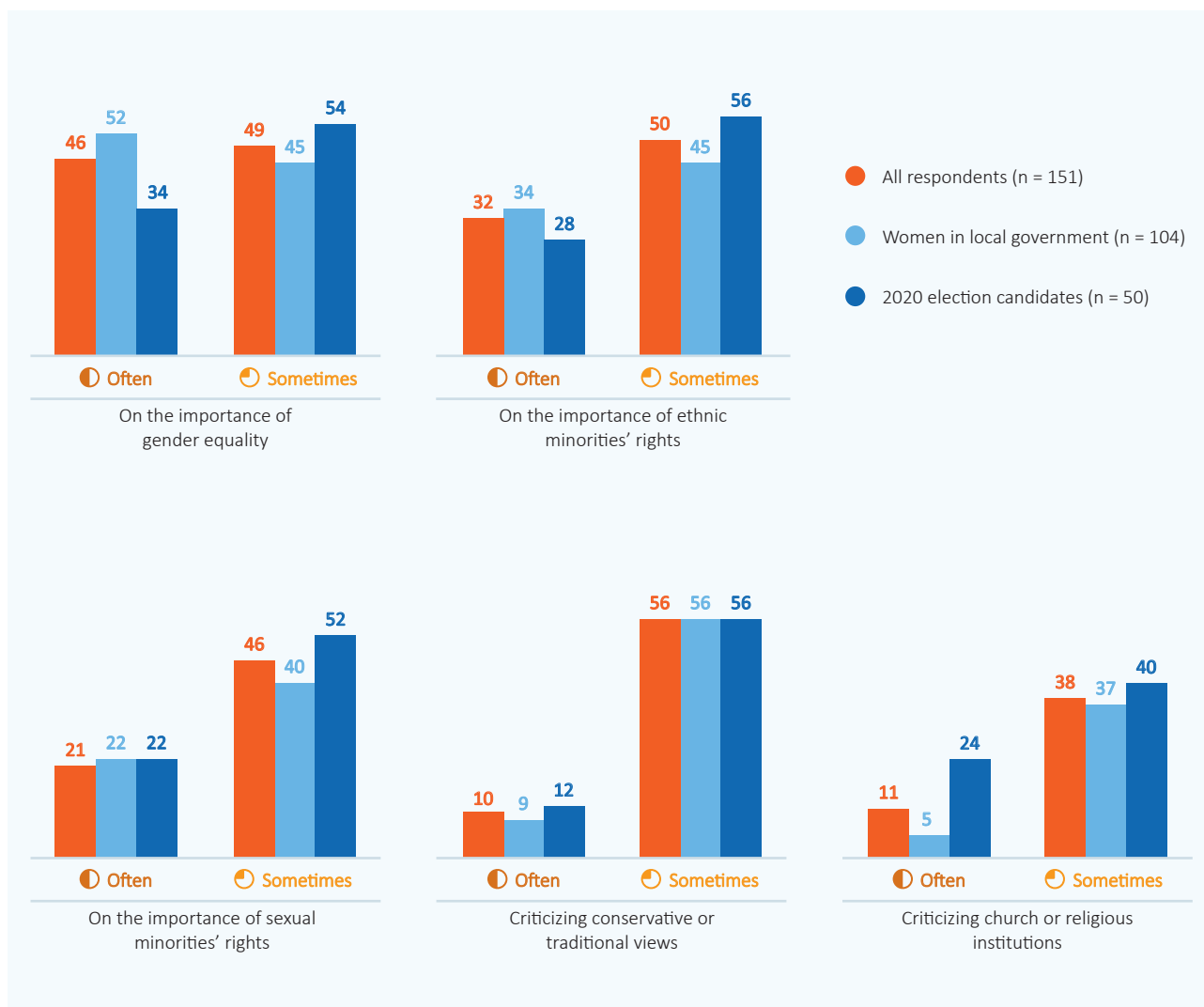
POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING AND ACTIVISM

The survey findings show how often women politicians in Georgia make public statements that reflect their position towards women’s and minority rights, as well as challenge conservative values. The majority of the surveyed respondents (95 per cent) either often or sometimes make public statements on the importance of gender equality. More than 80 per cent have made a statement on the importance of protecting ethnic minority rights, while two thirds (67%) have expressed their support for protecting the rights of sexual minorities.

Sixty-six per cent of respondents have publicly criticized conservative and traditional view, including 10 per cent who would do this often and 56 per cent who reported expressing their criticism sometimes. Moreover, almost half of women politicians have publicly criticized church or religious institutions, while an almost similar proportion (45 per cent) has never done so. About 7 per cent refrained from answering this question.

Some differences were observed when looking at different groups of respondents (Figure 4).

FIGURE N4
Public statements made by women politicians (%)



The key informants mentioned that some women in politics are more vulnerable to violence than others and that the key critical motive for threatening women politicians is their activism. The more active women are, the higher the chance that they will be verbally assaulted.

“It depends on how active [the woman politician] is... and what issues she discusses. She may be attacked because she raised an unfavourable topic for certain groups, and she may be bullied by the group or become an object of psychological violence. They might discredit her using communication technologies. Therefore, age is not as important as her political status and actions, how active she is and what topics she raises.” (Independent researcher/gender expert, KII 1)

Others also confirmed that the level of criticism increases when female politicians talk about an issue unacceptable to the majority of the public.

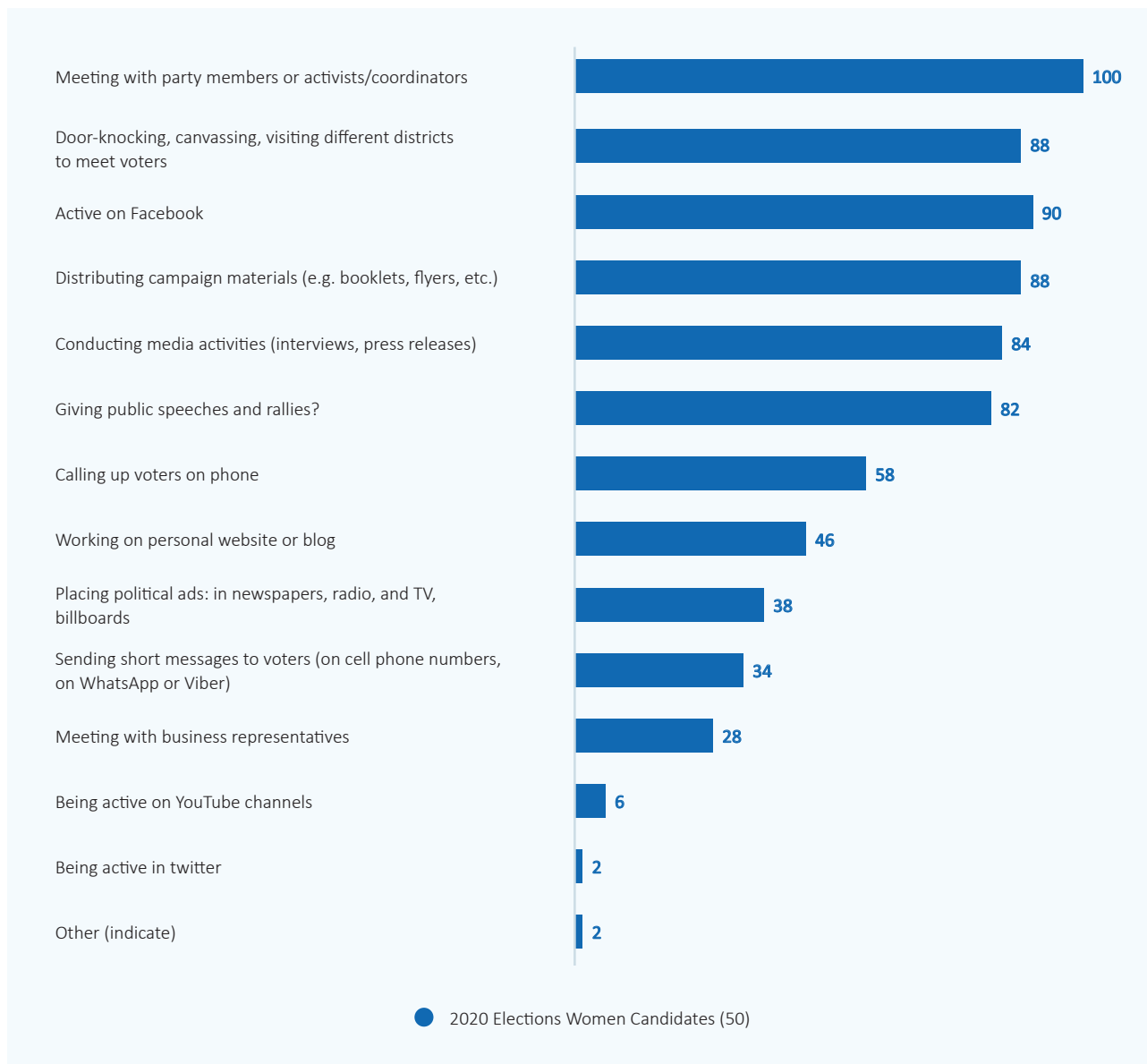
“When women in politics say or do something unacceptable to the mainstream, e.g. if they defend LGBT rights, or make remarks regarding the neo-Nazi group, ... these neo-Nazi groups attack women politicians and write horrible things about her. For example, some cases with threats of rape, swearing and insults are done by specific groups. Some people write comments like ‘a woman belongs in the

kitchen’ and similar things. But we have also seen, many times, organized attacks on women politicians by specific groups, by anti-liberal groups, and by these neo-Nazi and xenophobic groups. ... The most tragic thing that is happening in this country is [the practice of] blackmailing with videos depicting the private lives of women politicians...” (Expert from an international organization, KII 2)

Another factor that increases the violence against women is the pre-election period and electoral campaign, during which women in politics become very active. Out of 50 MP candidates, who reported running for a seat in the 2020 parliamentary elections, all reported meeting with party members, activists, and coordinators. About 90 per cent participated in canvassing and travelled across Georgia to meet voters. Eighty-eight per cent distributed campaign materials, while similar proportion was active on Facebook. Eighty-eight per cent worked with the media representatives and 82 per cent delivered speeches at public rallies.

Relatively fewer (58 per cent) called their voters over the phone, almost half (46 per cent) ran a personal blog or website, while 38 per cent placed advertisements in the media or public spaces. About one third sent short text messages to voters and 28 per cent met with business representatives. Very few used YouTube (6 per cent) or Twitter (2 per cent) for campaigning (Figure 5).

FIGURE N5
Activities during the 2020 election campaign (%)³⁸



To summarize, the study findings show that women who are in politics are quite active. This is especially true during the campaign period, when they hold meetings, meet voters, distribute campaign materials, are active on social media and give public speeches. However, besides the election period, women in politics also report

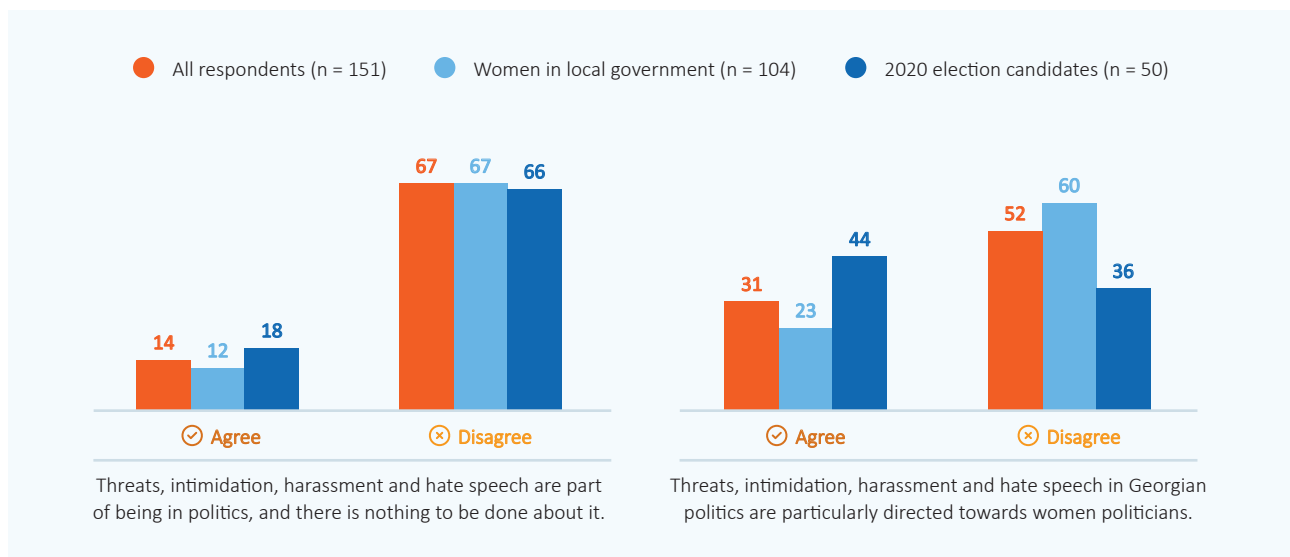
often making public statements on issues that are not always popular among the public (e.g. gender equality, minority rights or criticizing conservative views). Being active during the pre-election period, as well as making statements unacceptable to the mainstream, can lead to violence and aggression against women in politics.

THE EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN POLITICS IN GEORGIA

Women in politics evaluated the situation regarding the threats, intimidation, harassment and hate speech in Georgian politics. Two thirds (67 per cent) of surveyed women disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that threats, intimidation, harassment and hate speech are part of being in politics and that there is nothing to be done about it, while only 14 per cent agreed or fully agreed with the statement. The share of those disagreeing with this statement is similar among women in local government and those women participating in the 2020 elections (Figure 6).

Opinions are split when it comes to women politicians' assessment of whether such things are particularly directed against women or not. 31 per cent agreed with the statement that threats, intimidation, harassment and hate speech are particularly directed towards women politicians, while slightly more than half (52 per cent) of the surveyed politicians disagreed. While 23 per cent of women in local government see the threats, intimidation, harassment and hate speech in Georgian politics particularly directed to women politicians, the share of such women is higher among women who took part in the 2020 elections (44 per cent).

FIGURE N6
Attitudes towards violence being part of politics (%)



The study findings also show that more than half of the surveyed female politicians (54 per cent) have experienced one or another type of harassment or violence throughout their term in office or during the campaign.³⁹ Relatively fewer respondents representing local governments experienced harassment during their term in office (48 per cent, equal to 50 respondents). In contrast, all but two MPs reported experiencing harassment, as well as two thirds of women candidates running for seats in the 2020 parliamentary elections.

If we group the specific types of violence, about 37 per cent of respondents have experienced psychological violence. Thirty-two per cent said that they experienced violence on social media, while 25 per cent reported ex-

periencing violence that was economic in nature. More than one fifth (22 per cent) noted that they experienced sexual harassment. Only 5 per cent said that they experienced physical violence. Specific types of violence are discussed separately below.

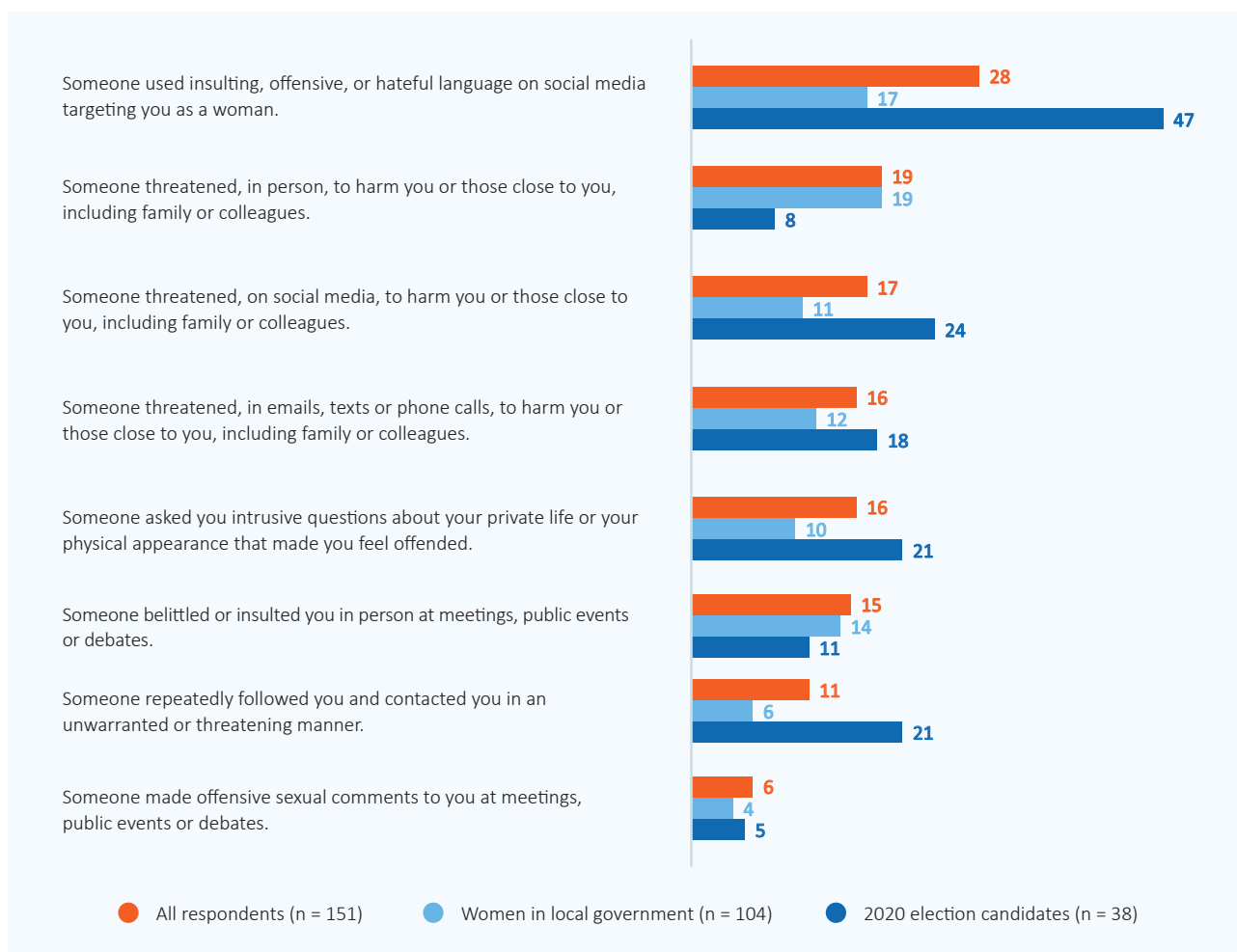
PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

When it comes to specific types of violence or harassment, the most widespread was psychological violence. The usage of hate speech on social media was reported by 28 per cent of respondents. About 19 per cent of respondents said that someone threatened them in person, while 17 per cent claimed that they received threats on social media.

Sixteen per cent of the surveyed women politicians received threats by email, text or phone call. A further 16 per cent of respondents noted that they received intrusive questions about their private lives or appearance, while 15 per cent were belittled or insulted in person

at public events. In addition, 11 per cent were repeatedly followed in an unwanted or threatening manner. Offensive sexual comments at meetings, public events or debates happened less often (Figure 7).

FIGURE N7
Cases of psychological violence (%)⁴⁰



Also, during the qualitative interviews, women politicians reported cases in which there was verbal aggression, harassment, and threats towards them. Many said that such cases happen very often and that they hurt and humiliate women. According to the respondents, they were harassed and assaulted because they were women and that they would not have been in the same situation if they were men.

“These [verbal insults] happen so often that it is hard to come up with an example. It happened inside and outside of the party. ... In [year], I was on

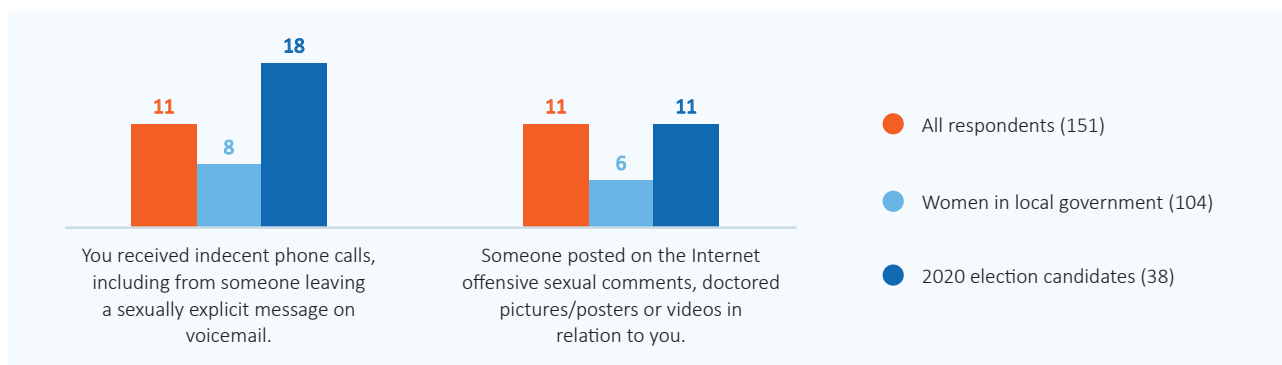
[one of the television channels] and while debating about devaluation of GEL or increases in prices, I heard someone yelling at the top of his voice to get that horrible street woman—that prostitute—out [of the studio]. I have had other cases in which they’ve told me that I don’t know anything and to go home, but calling me [a prostitute] was more stressful and difficult than physical violence. ... If there was a man in my place, they would have had a debate, but not with these words.” (Electoral candidate, Respondent 12)

“The chairman of the Sakrebulo told me that I should not be in the Sakrebulo. He referred to me as a street woman. All of the television stations recorded this. ... The cameras were on. He abused me intentionally, ... and when I got up, he repeated that I am a street woman, and of course I left the Sakrebulo meeting...” (Local government member, Respondent 4)

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Compared to psychological violence, cases of sexual harassment were reported fewer times during the survey. Eleven per cent of the surveyed women claimed to have received indecent phone calls, and the same share also claimed that someone posted offensive sexual comments, doctored pictures or videos online in relation to them (Figure 8).

FIGURE N8
Cases of sexual harassment (%)⁴¹



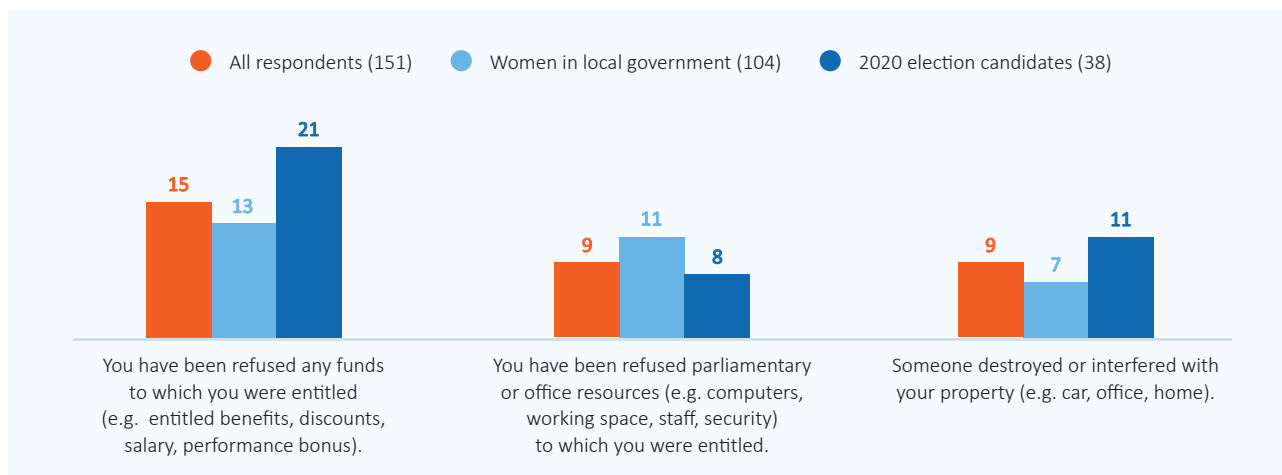
During the qualitative interviews, women politicians reported that they often receive messages of a sexual nature.

“I have had many sexual messages in my inbox. I think every woman has these kind of message requests.”
(Electoral candidate, Respondent 10)

ECONOMIC VIOLENCE

Survey results show that 15 per cent of women in politics have been refused funds to which they were entitled. Nine per cent were refused office resources and reported that someone had destroyed or interfered with their property (Figure 9).

FIGURE N9
Cases of economic violence (%)⁴²



During the qualitative interviews, women politicians mentioned cases in which some of their property was damaged. In some cases, there were attacks on the party office by activists of an opposition party.

“Once, my car was scratched because I am the head of one of the headquarters [of a political party]... Another time, the tire of my car was slashed. This was a way to fight against me rather than to have a direct confrontation. That direct confrontation happened when my posters were torn down [by an opposition party].” (Electoral candidate, Respondent 7)

“[Activists of an opposition party] came to our office, painted over our banners, ... tore down our posters and abused us. They [had paintball guns], and before they shot the paint, we did not know what kind of guns they were, and I had young people standing next to me. ... They shot at the windows, the door, I was trying to avoid the shots. ... Our office was robbed as well...” (Local government member, Respondent 11)

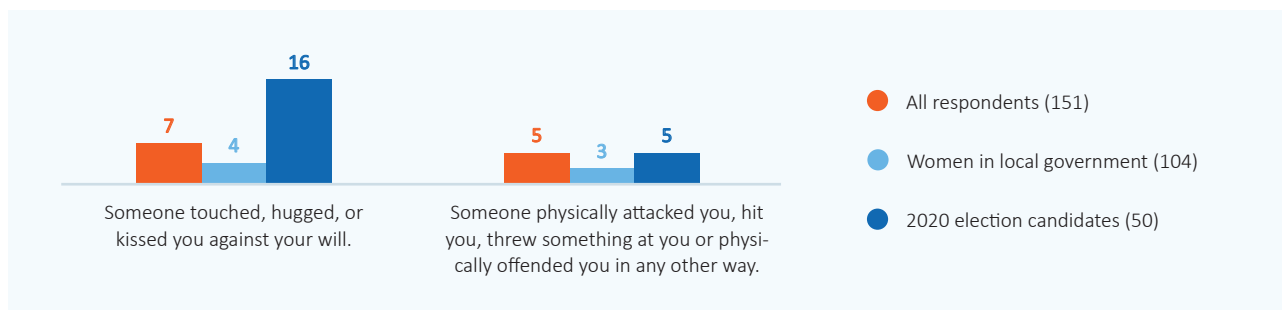
SEXUAL AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is reported rarely. Seven per cent of respondents claimed that someone touched, hugged, or kissed them against their will; such incidents were also mentioned during the qualitative interviews.

“It happened in a very academic environment, [one where] men touch you or embrace you as if it is a friendly gesture, and you feel awkward because you can’t really say anything. But I make them understand that it is not okay to touch my shoulder without my consent, when I am wearing something with short straps, or to touch my hand, which can be very intimate.” (Electoral candidate, Respondent 10)

A further 5 per cent of respondents reported being physically attacked. No one noted that someone threatened them with a gun, knife, or other object (Figure 10).

FIGURE N10
Cases of physical violence (%)⁴³



Within the framework of the qualitative study, part of the respondents surveyed consider that a key reason of violence against women in politics is their political party affiliation.

“I see this not as a personal confrontation, especially not in terms of gender, but simply as expressing an attitude towards a representative of a political party that is not acceptable to this person, therefore this is the way of expression.” (Political appointee, Respondent 1)

However, both the quantitative and qualitative study data shows that violence is experienced by all women whether in the opposition parties or in the ruling party and it is not explained by their affiliation to a specific political party or a political team. This finding coincides with the findings of the study conducted by National Democratic Institute and CRRC-Georgia, according to which online violence towards women is mostly gender based and women get more comments about their personal and sexual life compared with their male colleagues, notwithstanding their political affiliation.

It should be mentioned that in a few cases, respondents reported not to have experienced harassment or violence in person. According to them, in some cases, this is because of the respect given to women in Georgia, especially in mountainous areas of Georgia, where men

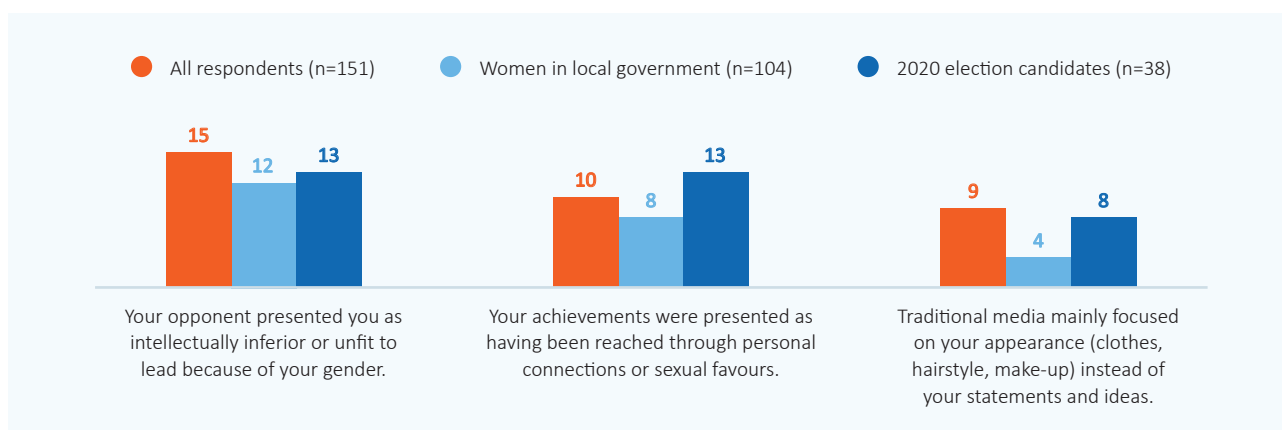
would not humiliate women, especially if the women are elderly. In these cases, women still report being harassed online, but they believe that the abuse comes from trolls and bots and not ‘real men’.

WOMEN BEING PRESENTED AS INFERIOR (STEREOTYPING WOMEN)

The study findings show that colleagues, the media and society might present women in politics as inferior due to their gender and downplay their achievements. About 15 per cent of women politicians mentioned that their opponents presented them as intellectually inferior because of their gender. Ten per cent said that their achievements were presented as a result of per-

sonal connections, while in the case of 9 per cent of respondents, traditional media focused on their appearance rather than their ideas when covering their work. Only slight differences were observed between women politicians working in local governments and women running for parliamentary seats in the 2020 elections. Overall, they reported similar experiences (Figure 11).

FIGURE N11
Stereotyping women politicians (%)⁴⁴



The qualitative interviews proved that not only does the media focus on women’s appearance rather than on their achievements, but the general public does as well. Women politicians reported that too much attention is being paid to their appearance, instead of the content that they share online.

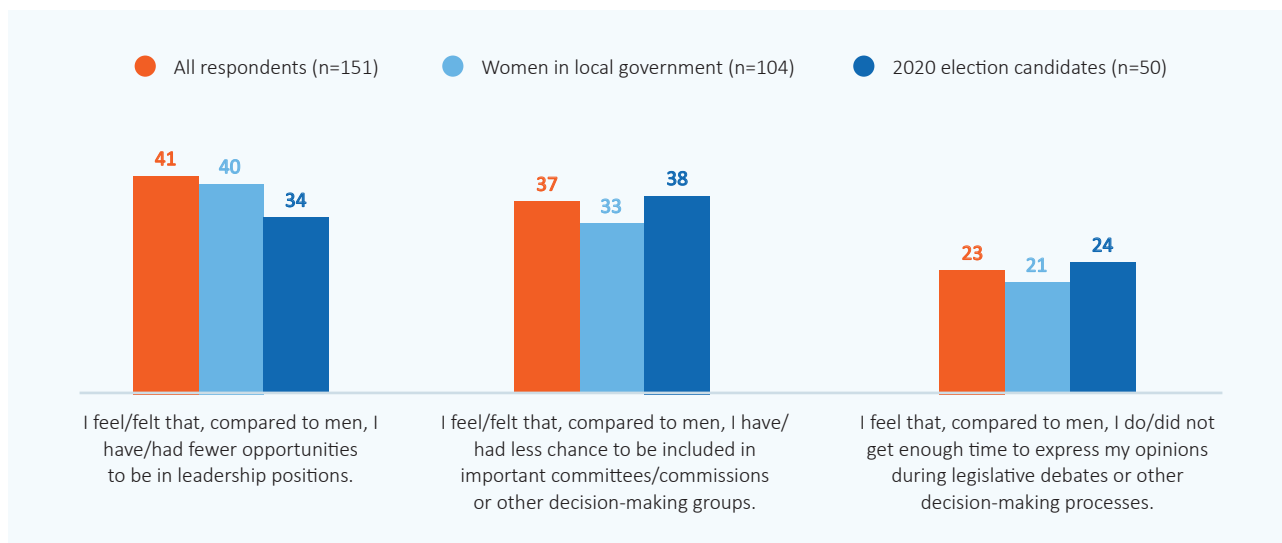
“I prepared a publication on a serious matter. I worked, researched and posted the news online with

my photo, and everyone—not just strangers but acquaintances as well—commented on my appearance. For example, [they said] how beautiful I am, or that my hair colour suits me well and comments like that, and it breaks my heart that the topics I worked on—elections, democracy or other ongoing events in the country—and shared receive comments on my appearance, which is not at all important.” (Electoral candidate, Respondent 10)

DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Fifty-six per cent of women politicians have personally experienced discrimination in their political careers. Forty-one per cent had fewer opportunities than men to be in leading positions in their parties, 37 per cent felt that they would have fewer chances to be included in various committees, and 23 per cent did not get enough time to express their opinions during debates (Figure 12).

FIGURE N12
Experiences of discrimination in the workplace (%)



During the qualitative interviews, a few women in politics also talked about the intimidation coming from men in their political parties. According to them, men start to humiliate women and treat them very aggressively when women do not agree with them. In addition, they try to be dominant and to control the situation. Even if men and women have the same hierarchical status, men try to give women tasks, pretend to have higher positions, and undermine the work that women are doing.

There were also cases of men not showing aggression but simply believing that women are below them and that men have to make the main decisions; as a result, they just ignore the women in their parties.

“There were cases in which my colleagues—five men—had a meeting, and they did not invite any women. This was not done intentionally but just because this is their habit—[to think] that this does not concern women, because ‘big’ men sit together and make decisions [and there is no place for women].” (Political appointee, Respondent 14).

THOSE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE VAWP

Who is more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace? To estimate this, a compound variable was constructed that registered whether a respondent felt that she had less of a chance to be included in committees or to be nominated to a leadership position or that she did not get enough time during political deba-

tes. While controlling for other variables such as age and how long they have been involved in politics, women who are divorced are more likely to experience discrimination. Seventy-seven per cent of women politicians (17 respondents) who reported being divorced experienced one or another form of discrimination.

WHAT ARE THE FACTORS THAT PREDICT WHETHER A FEMALE POLITICIAN BECOMES A VICTIM OF HARASSMENT? ⁴⁵

All things being equal, only respondents' marital status is associated with the experience of harassment in recent campaigns or during their tenure in a political office. Those who were single or divorced were disproportionately targeted with violence: three quarters of single respondents (15 out of 20 respondents) and 80 per cent of divorced respondents (18 out of 22) reported recently experiencing some form of harassment.

Overall, the majority of surveyed women disagree with the statement that threats, intimidation, harassment and hate speech are part of being in politics and that there is nothing to be done about it. Almost one third think that these attitudes are particularly directed towards women politicians.

About half of the surveyed women in politics reported having experienced one or another type of harassment or violence throughout their term in office

or during the election campaign. Single or divorced women in politics were more likely to have such experiences. Women in politics mostly experienced hate speech on social media (28 per cent), threats in person (19 per cent) or on social media (17 per cent), threats by email, text or phone (16 per cent) that they or those close to them will be harmed, intrusive questions about their private life or appearance (16 per cent), insults (15 per cent) or a refusal of funds to which they were entitled (15 per cent). Offensive or sexually explicit comments on social media are also very common. Cases of harassment and discrimination especially increase before elections and when female politicians become more active. On the other hand, cases of physical and sexual violence are mentioned only in rare cases. Women in politics also experience harassment and discrimination within their own political parties, which is confirmed by the survey data as well as the qualitative interviews.

PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE

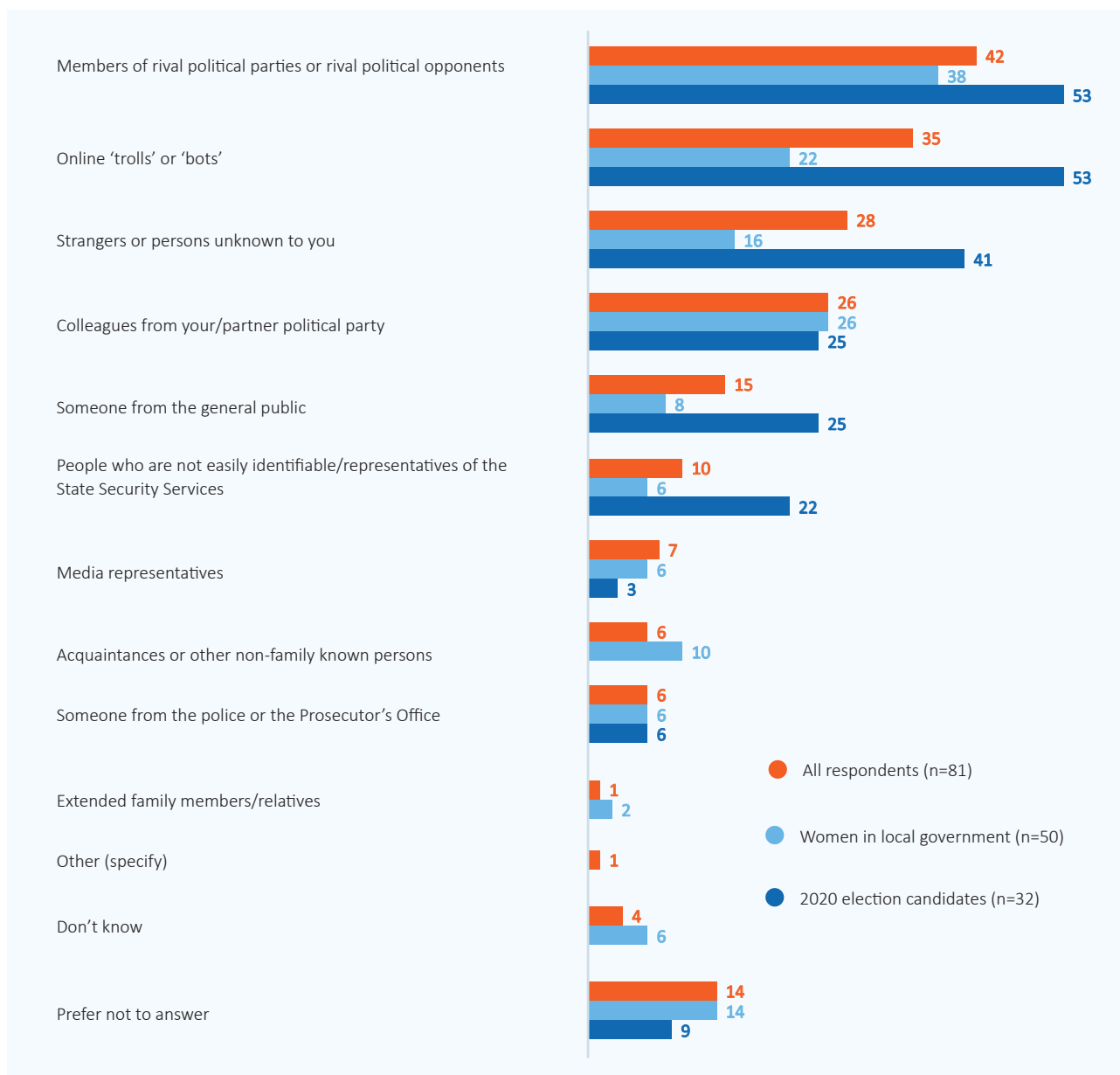
The study findings show that in most cases, the perpetrators are representatives of opposition parties (mostly men) or people, trolls and bots who are controlled by political parties. In some cases, the women politicians could identify the perpetrators by name or say that they can recognize them when the harassment and abuse happened in person. Generally, representatives of the governing parties blame the opposition, while representatives of the opposition blame the Government of Georgia for being behind the discrimination and harassment.

“There are journalists, and then there are ordinary people on Facebook. In addition, there are special agencies, bots and trolls working on such issues. [...] Opposition parties try to portray a member of the ruling party in an unwelcoming way, and this is one way to fight the Government—to accuse its representatives of something that sometimes looks like the truth and other times like a total fake. But the main thing is to spread the news, and then [it is hard to] prove the opposite.” (2016–2020 Member of Parliament, Respondent 5)

When looking at the quantitative data, of the surveyed women politicians who were victims of threatening, violence, or harassment (54 per cent, equal to 81 respondents), about 42 per cent (34 respondents) reported that the perpetrators were members of rival political parties or were rival politicians. Thirty-five per cent (28 respondents) named online 'trolls' or 'bots', followed by persons whom respondents did not know personally (28 per cent). Twenty-six per cent named someone from their own party or a partner political party.

Fewer respondents (15 per cent) said that the perpetrator was a member of the general public, 10 per cent claimed it to be someone not easily identifiable (e.g. a representative of the State Security Services) and 7 per cent named a media representative as the harasser. About 6 per cent named acquaintances or other non-family known persons, and another 6 per cent named someone from the Prosecutor's Office. A further 14 per cent preferred not to provide an answer to this question. Small differences were observed between women in local government and women who participated in the 2020 elections (Figure 13).

FIGURE N13
Perpetrators of violence against women in politics (%)⁴⁶



In the majority of cases, women politicians who have experienced harassment or violence (81 cases) reported that the perpetrators were male (46 per cent), while 26 per cent of women mentioned that the actions came from both female and male perpetrators. Five per cent of such respondents named women as the perpetrators. A further 12 per cent said that they did not know, and 11 per cent refrained from answering the question.

To summarize, the study findings show that the perpetrators are mostly representatives of the opposition parties, online ‘trolls’ or ‘bots’, which are also mostly controlled by opposition parties, strangers or persons whom respondents do not know or recognize, or colleagues from their own or partner political parties. Quantitative survey data as well as qualitative interviews confirmed these findings.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE ON WOMEN IN POLITICS

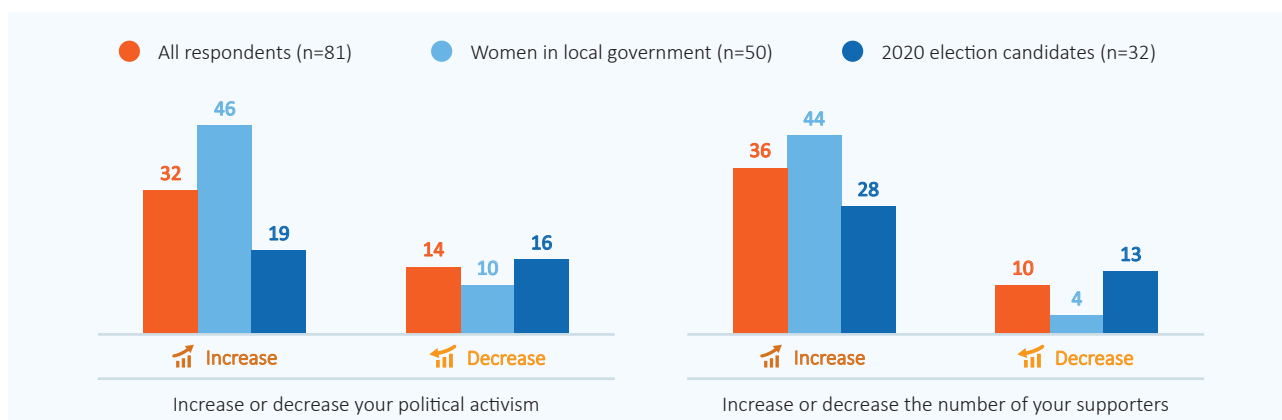
Women in politics who took part in the qualitative interviews were divided in terms of their reactions to discrimination and harassment that was directed towards them. Some said that it was devastating and that they felt horrible about it, noting that they tried to be more careful after such cases of violence. Others said that they are fighters and that, with each attempt to bring them down, they became stronger with a growing desire to fight more against gender discrimination and to defend their rights as women.

For some women, particularly those who have been in politics for a while, violence against women may be seen as an integral part of the political process.

*“My case might be an exception, because I have been in politics for so many years that I have some kind of immunity and I accept everything calmly. When you make the decision to step in front of society as a politician, you have to have realized that such cases [of violence] accompany the process.”
(Local government member, Respondent 13)*

When looking at the quantitative study, we can see that for about one third of respondents, such incidents motivated them to increase their activities and get more supporters (Figure 14). About 32 per cent of women politicians who have experienced intimidation and harassment reported that their political activism has increased, 41 per cent said that their activities have stayed the same, and 14 per cent said that their activism has decreased after the cases of violence. Thirty-six per cent of respondents who reported having experienced some kind of intimidation or harassment said that the incident has increased the number of their supporters. Twenty-seven per cent reported no change in their supporters, while 10 per cent said fewer people are supporting them. Female politicians in the local government also more frequently reported an increase rather than a decrease in their political activism and number of supporters; however, the low number in the group should be taken into consideration while looking at the percentages (Figure 14).

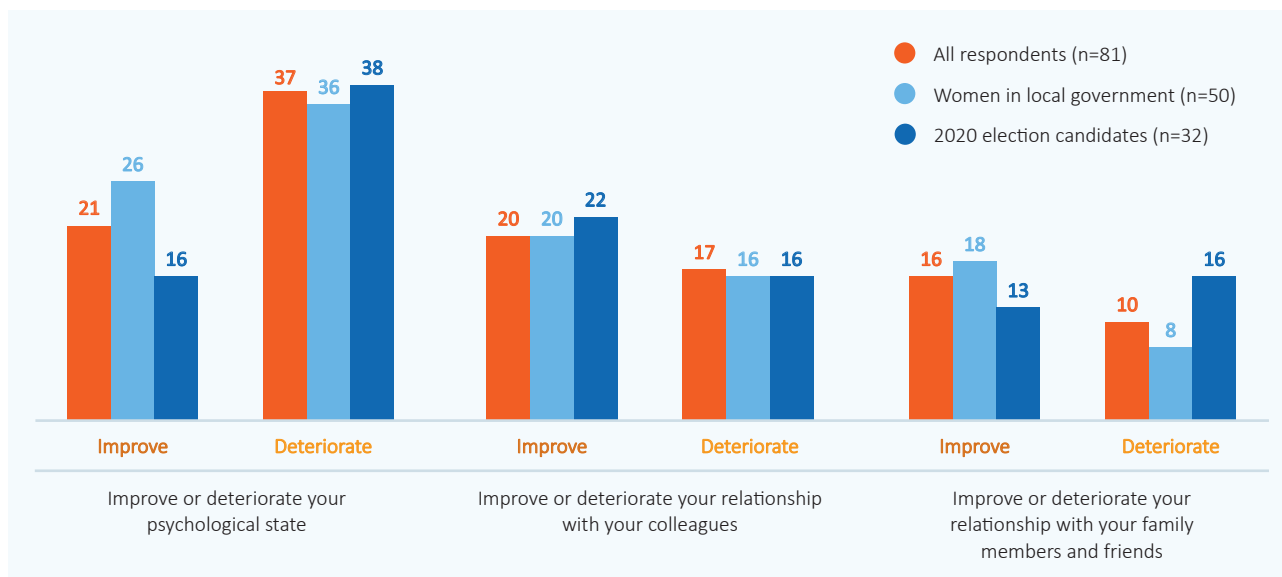
FIGURE N14
Consequences of the most serious incident of violence, harassment or threats on respondents’ political activism (%)⁴⁷



Even though about a third of the respondents said that their political activism as well as their number of supporters increased, many survey respondents also reported on having a deteriorated psychological state (37 per cent) as a result of their most serious harassment incident (Figure 15). In addition, the majority reported

that after the incident, their relationships with their family, friends and colleagues have either improved or did not get affected at all. Only 10 per cent said that the incident deteriorated their relationships with family members and friends, while 17 per cent reported the same about colleagues.

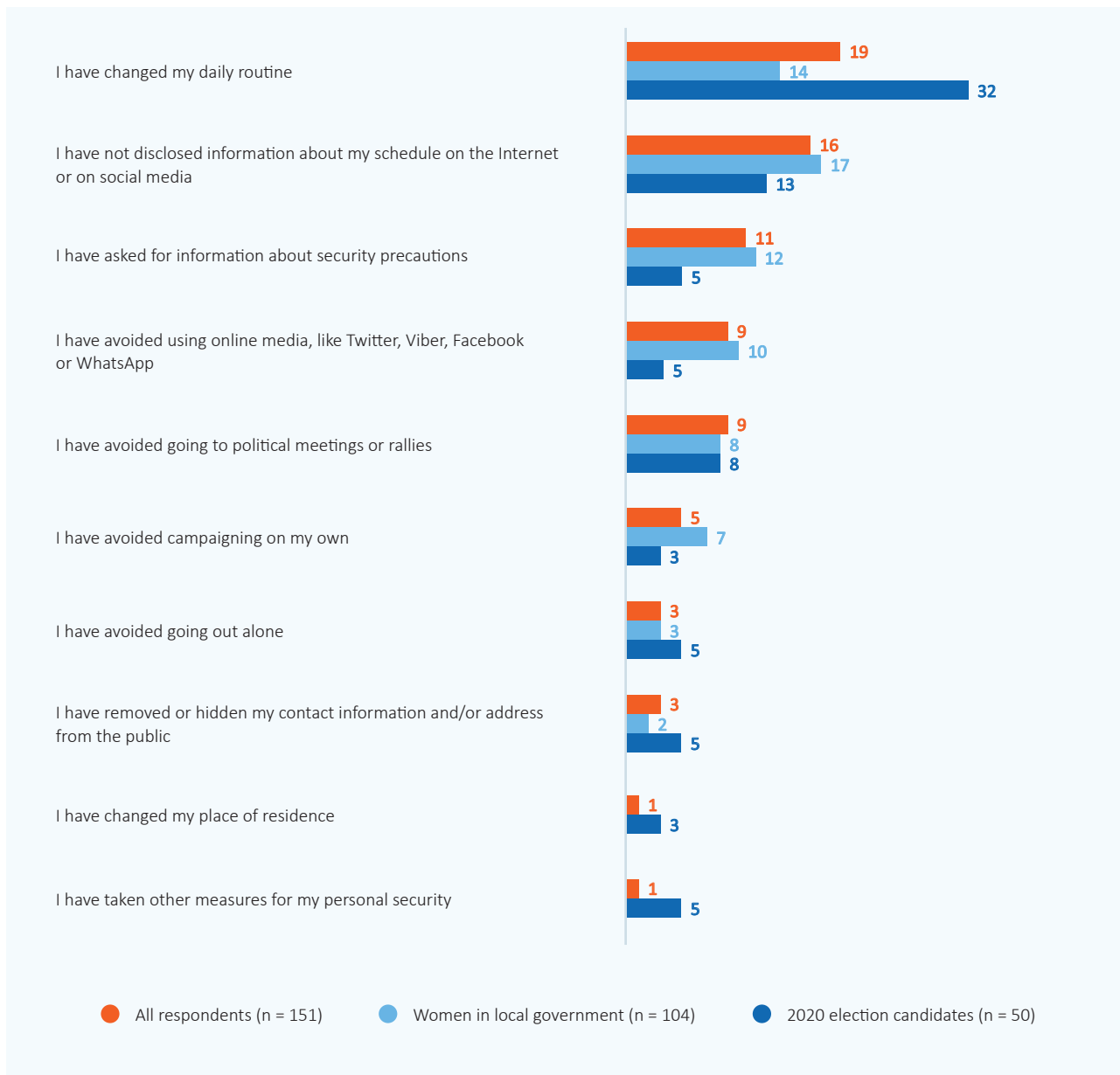
FIGURE N15
Consequences of the most serious incident of violence, harassment or threats on respondents' mental state (%)⁴⁸



Besides, women in politics often had to change their routines and political activities for reasons of personal security. About 41 per cent of women politicians took measures to protect themselves during their tenure in the local government, in the Parliament or during the election campaign. About 19 per cent of the respondents said that they changed their daily routines, 16 per cent did not disclose information about their schedule on the Internet, and 11 per cent have looked for infor-

mation about security measures. Besides, 9 per cent of the respondents avoided using online media, another 9 per cent avoided going to political meetings or rallies, 5 per cent avoided campaigning, 3 per cent avoided going out alone, and another 3 per cent said that they hid their contact information from the public. Fewer respondents took other measures or moved to another place to live (Figure 16).

FIGURE N16
Measures taken to ensure personal security (%)⁴⁹



When women in politics come forward and discuss assaults, it empowers other women politicians to do so too. The majority of women politicians (60 per cent) surveyed, agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that candidates speaking publicly about the harassment and intimidation that they have experienced encourages other women in politics to speak up. Three fourths of surveyed women (75%) also disagreed with the statement that such women are perceived as weak.

In the words of one of the experts in our study:

“[One particular female politician] has empowered all women with her behaviour. By telling the truth, she broke a very big stigma and made a very big break, and [having one’s personal/sexual life shown on the Internet] is no longer shameful. Women have a personal life, and manipulation and blackmail are unacceptable. [This female politician] did not die and did not even sit at home, but she came out and exposed those who did it and, thus, gave a lot of motivation to other women. [...] And other women supported her, even if they were from opposition

parties. [...] It showed that in this fight, all women are together today.” (Expert from an international organization, KII 2)

Reactions to experiences of harassment and threats differ among women in politics. While some women politicians felt devastated and reported on having a de-

teriorated psychological state, many say that such cases made them stronger and that they felt more resolve to fight against gender discrimination.

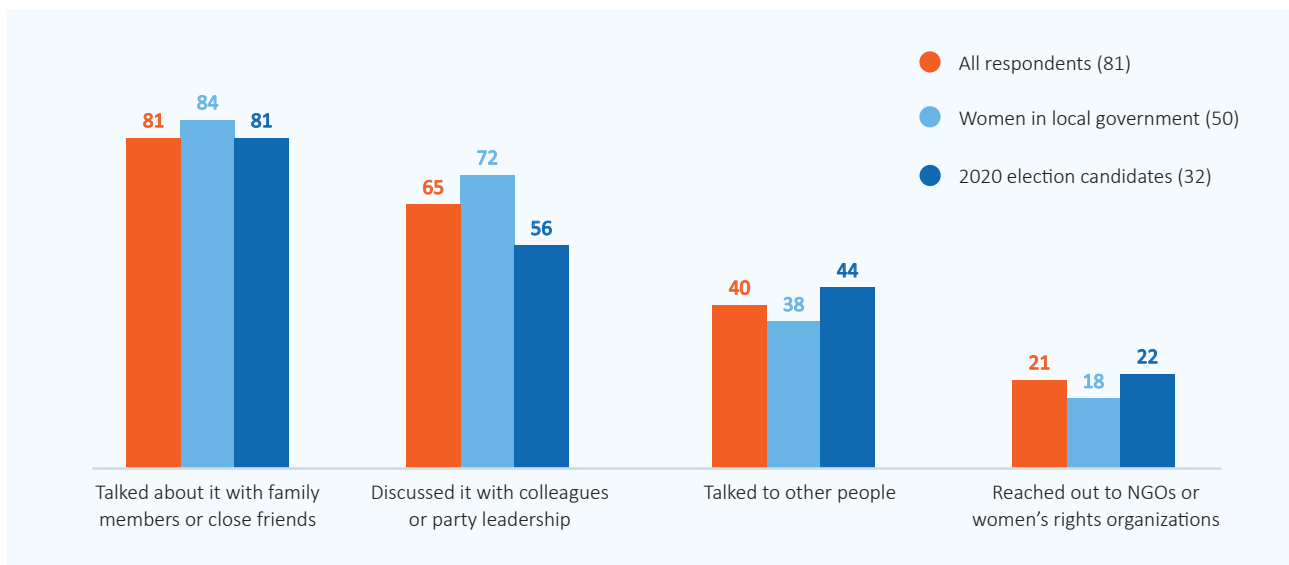
Some of the respondents took certain measures to protect themselves from violence. These include changing their daily routines and not disclosing their private information and schedules online.

REPORTING AND HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

In most cases, family members and friends are the people whom women in politics turn to when they seek help. The majority of those women (81%), who have experienced harassment and threats talked about the most serious incident with family members or close friends. Sixty-five per cent discussed it with

party leadership or colleagues, and 40 per cent talked with other people, while the fewest reached out to civil society organizations or women’s rights organizations (21 per cent). The percentages are more or less similar for those reaching out to different political groups (Figure 17).

FIGURE N17
Help-seeking behaviour taken by respondents (%)⁵⁰

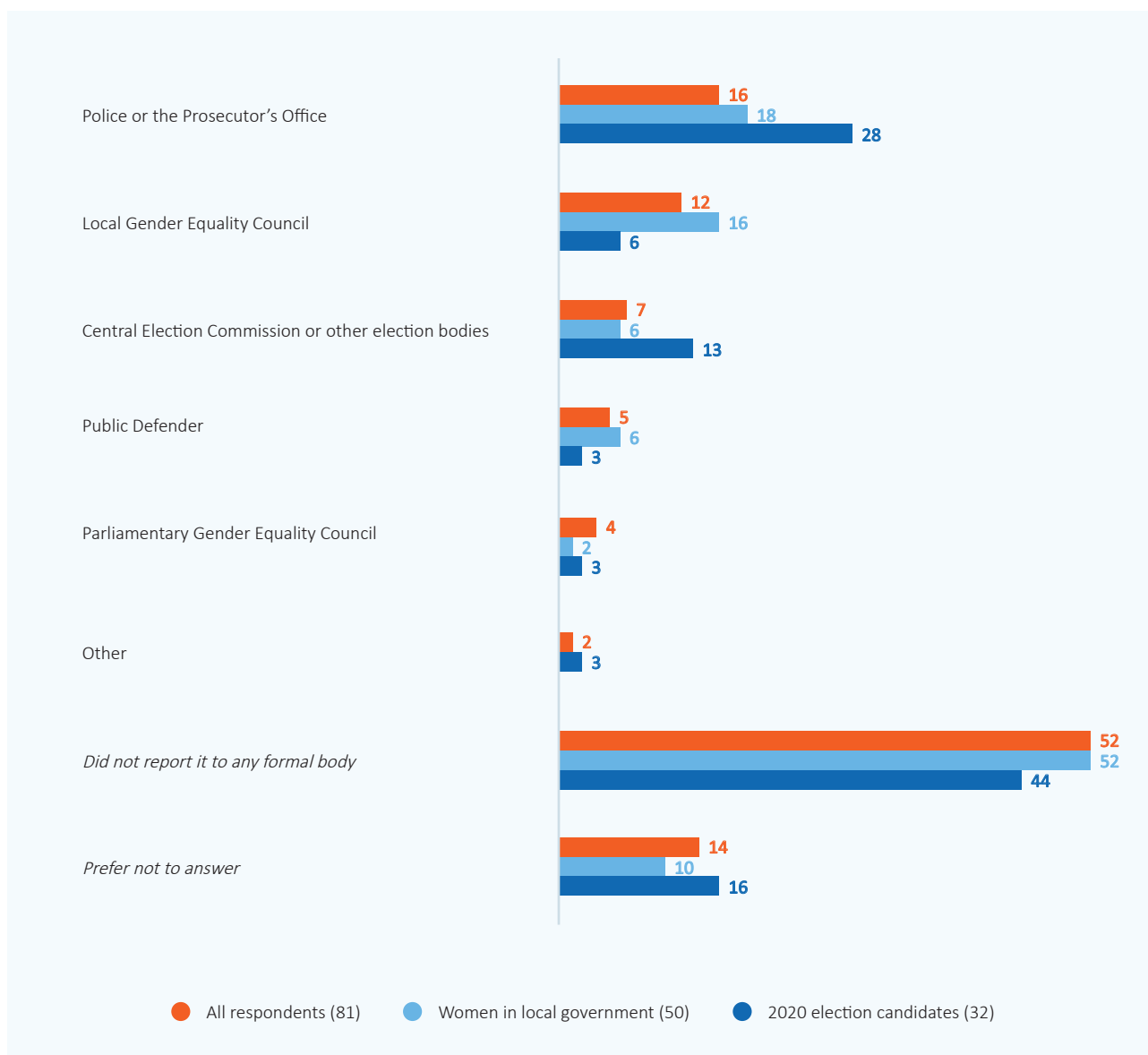


More than half of those respondents who experienced threats, harassment or violence have not reported the incident to formal bodies (52 per cent, equal to 42 cases).

Sixteen per cent claimed that they have talked with the police or the Prosecutor’s Office, 12 per cent discussed

the incident with the local Gender Equality Council, 7 per cent with the electoral administration, 5 per cent with the Public Defender, 4 per cent with the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament and 2 per cent with other formal bodies. Fourteen per cent refrained from answering the question (Figure 18).

FIGURE N18
Reporting of serious incidents of VAWP (%)⁵¹

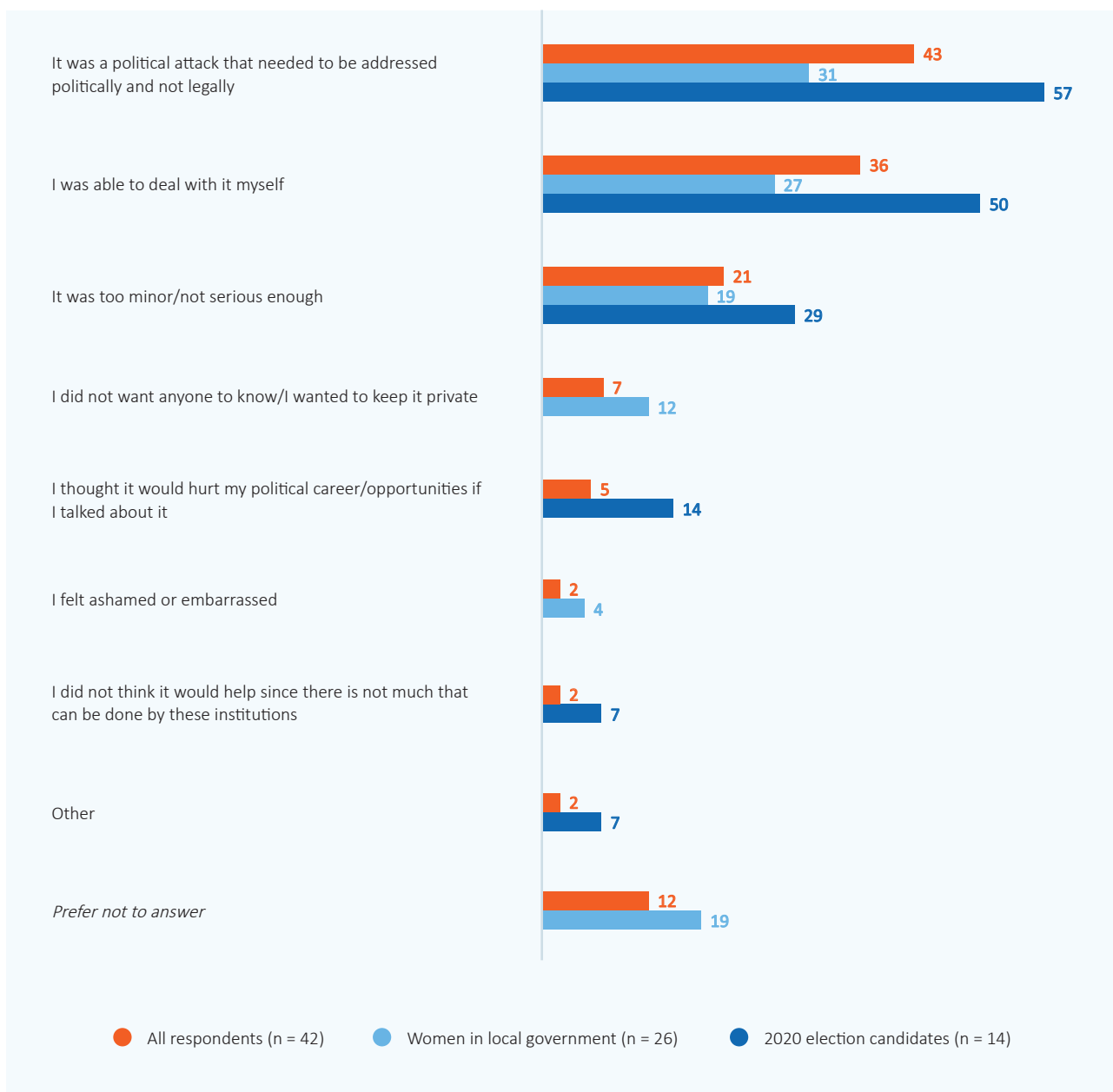


Those 42 respondents who did not report about the most serious incident were further asked about their reasons for not doing so. The plurality (43 per cent) refrained because they claimed the incident needed to be addressed politically rather than through legal proceedings. Thirty-six per cent said they were able to deal with the incident themselves, and 21 per cent considered it

too minor and not serious enough to report. Seven per cent kept the incident to themselves, 5 per cent did not discuss the incident as it would have hurt their political careers, 2 per cent felt ashamed or embarrassed, and a further 2 per cent did not think that reporting would have helped. Twelve per cent refrained from answering the question (Figure 19).

FIGURE N19

Reasons why respondents did not report their most serious incident of violence, harassment or threats (%)⁵²



Women politicians who have not reported cases of verbal aggression and threats towards them say that this is because they have no hope that such cases will be investigated properly and objectively. Representatives of the opposition parties claim that there is no political will to investigate cases against women politicians who are not representing the Government. Whenever they report the cases of verbal harassment or threats, there are no real consequences, and no one actually gets punished.

"I have talked [about the case] with many people, but I haven't reported it to the police, as it would make no difference. [Once,] someone cursed at me from his car window to my car window. He had his 3-year-old child in his car and verbally abused me in front of the child; and before he started his car, I took a photo of the number plate and found out who he was. ... I even wrote a complaint. ... They haven't done much about it. They said that no one

was at his house when they went there. ... The court date was one month later, and he was acquitted, [... even though] many people confirmed that the abuse happened. Many cameras in front of the Georgian Dream office confirmed this, but the evidence was not presented. With the evidence that was presented, he was not even fined administratively. ... [So yes,] I have reported [the incident] many times but to no avail. In such moments [of abuse], I think about how to not report to the police and instinctively call 112, but I have still not had an outcome.” (Local government member, Respondent 11)

In other cases, women fear not being taken seriously if they report verbal aggression or threats. In cases where aggression happens from their party representatives, women politicians say that they would not report the incident to formal bodies in order not to harm the party's reputation.

“In cases of violence from outside the party, ... I did not report them because I think it is pointless, because I will not be taken seriously. They think I am exaggerating. Not even women are gender sensitive, and [officials] are even less so. I might even get into more trouble or be bullied. Or they will make me go there [to a police station], but it will be ineffective in the end. I have never reported such cases of verbal abuse to officials, even though the-

se were not minor [cases]. ... As for the cases that happened inside of the party, sometimes I say that he is nervous and it is just a debate, but it cannot be like that systematically, and it is also my mistake [not to report] because I realize that I am being bullied. ... I should probably report it to the party, or else who should I report it to? ... If there was an agency outside, it would still be a problem because I would not take it outside of the party, as it would harm the party image. ...” (Electoral candidate, Respondent 12)

In the case of harassment and threats, women in politics mostly turn to family members and close friends, colleagues, or party leadership, as well as sometimes to NGOs and women's rights organizations. In rare cases, they turn to formal bodies, but more than half claim not to have reported their cases to any formal body.

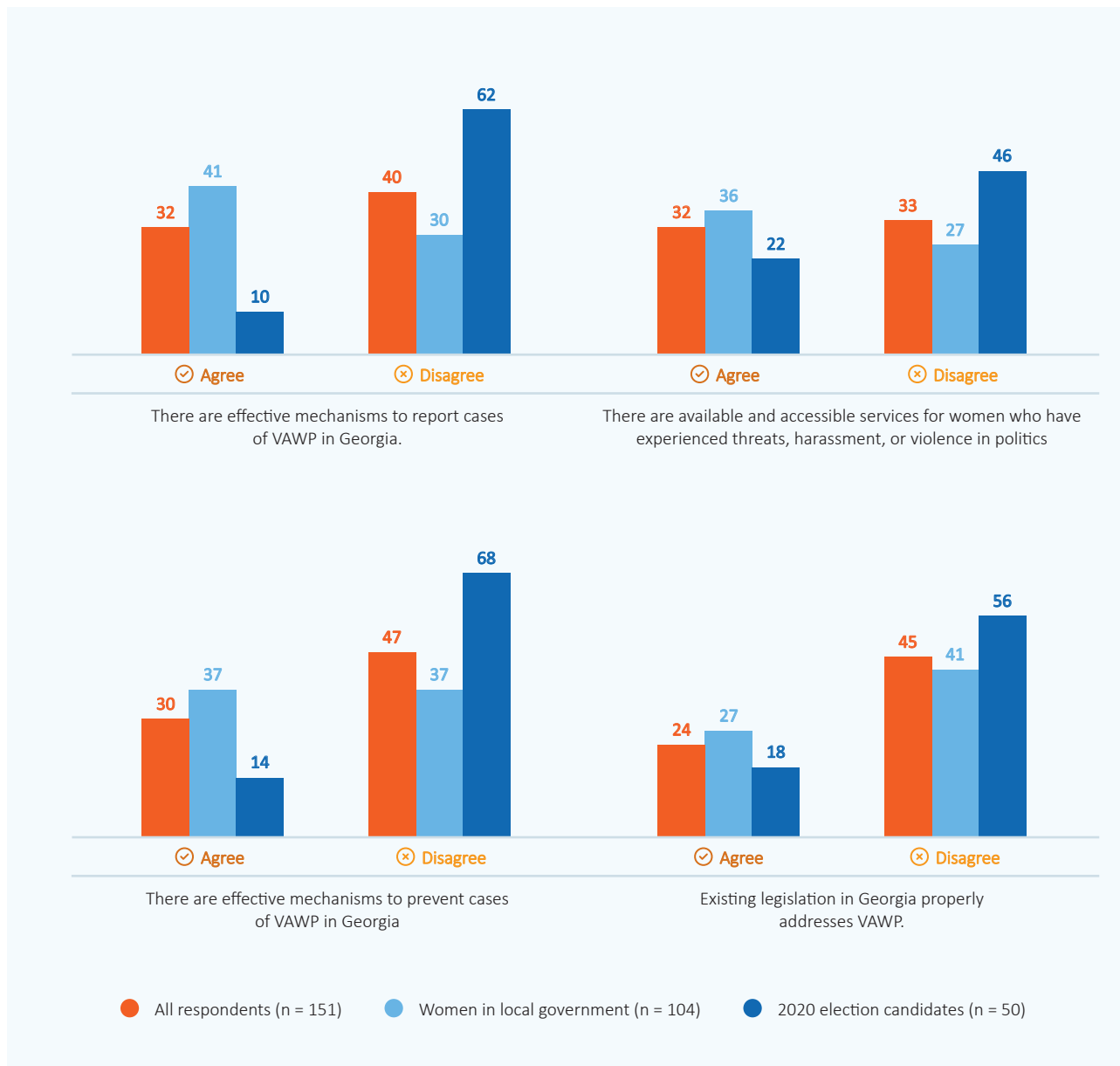
There are many reasons why women in politics do not report cases of violence and discrimination. Many think that it was a political attack that needed to be addressed politically, not legally. Some prefer to deal with the problem themselves instead of making a big deal out of it; others mentioned that they have no hope that the case will be investigated properly. In some cases, women fear not being taken seriously if they report verbal aggression or threats. In the case of online harassment, blocking and ignoring are the most common tactics.

MEASURES AND MECHANISMS TO ADDRESS VAWP

The survey data show that overall, more women in politics disagree than agree that effective mechanisms exist for preventing, reporting and addressing VAWP in Georgia. Some differences were observed among local office holders and candidates (Figure 20).

FIGURE N20

Attitudes towards existing legislation on violence against women and domestic violence in Georgia, as well as towards the services and mechanisms to fight against it (%)



Even though the existing legislation against VAWP was rather negatively assessed by 45 per cent of surveyed women politicians, during the qualitative interviews, key informants as well as female politicians generally had positive evaluations regarding the general legislation on violence against women. When asked about the recently enacted anti-violence against women legislation, key informants highlighted the positive changes made since 2016. Respondents believed that the Government had made some groundbreaking changes relative to violence against women. For instance, an immense amount of work has been done on preventing domestic violence and punishing the perpetrators. Issues remain, although experts believe that progress is being made. They expect that the future Parliament will bring more changes concerning women's rights. Nonetheless, some respondents expressed critical views. They highlight that while laws exist, they are not always adequately enforced.

“Now the abuser gets punished. This is a fantastic thing because it did not happen in the past. Now the police are paying earnest attention, and the previous attitude is gone. [...] However, the woman's problems remain, besides the fact that the abuser goes to jail. She is still unemployed, depends on the abuser, has no property, has no apartment and has nowhere to go. When the perpetrator gets out of prison and returns to his family, he repeats the violence. In other words, some in-depth changes need to be made and the next Parliament will hopefully work on this.” (Expert from an international organization, KII 2)

“I think that today in Georgia, we do not have a problem with the legislation, but we have challenges in its effective implementation in practice. The changes that are being implemented mostly serve to harmonize our legislation with international standards, and I appreciate that. But we see the need for more measures in terms of enforcement and practice.” (Representative of the Public Defender's Office, KII 3)

The qualitative interviews with women in politics showed similar results. There are no specific regulations, services or mechanisms for female politicians who face violence.

However, the general legislation on violence against women is acceptable and adequate for many respondents. The issue is, however, its implementation.

“Actually, we have very good legislation against violence; it is in line with international standards. The fact that, in some individual cases, it may not be implemented properly does not mean that we should run off and change the law.” (Political appointee, Respondent 14)

“There are definitely no special services, but there is our law enforcement system as a whole, including the Ombudsman's Office, the personal data protection inspector or the universal services that the State has. [As for] some specific services, I do not think that any political party has a special service created for women. This could also be a bit artificial. In this case, again and again, it is better to strengthen the existing structures.” (Political appointee, Respondent 1)

Furthermore, some female politicians stated that even though legislation combating violence against women is present, there is no political will to investigate cases of violence towards female politicians.

“The existing legislation generally covers issues against violence. It does not matter whether it is violence against women, sexual minorities or so on. The problem is not in the legislation; the problem of our State is in the execution and the lack of political will from the State.” (2016–2020 Member of Parliament, Respondent 2)

In addition, some claimed that the investigators who should study the cases of harassment, threats, and violence have low qualifications and are incapable of doing their jobs. So, even if the mechanisms are there, they are ineffective.

“Here, we are dealing with an institutional weakness and a problem. In order for the Prosecutor's Office to investigate, for the Ministry of Internal Affairs to be directly involved, for the Prosecutor's Office to do its job, there must be the political will of the governing party. They manage these divisions.” (Political appointee, Respondent 15)

To summarize, the study findings show that the attitudes towards the existing legislation on violence against women in politics, as well as towards the mechanisms to prevent VAWP in Georgia, are split among study participants. While a large part disagrees that there are effective mechanisms to report and prevent cases of VAWP in Georgia and that the legislation does not properly ad-

dress VAWP issues, others state that the services, and mechanisms are already in place. Furthermore, some of the respondents raise the issue of proper implementation of the legislation, claiming that even though the legislation is consistent with international standards, it is not enforced and practiced properly.

PREVENTION MECHANISMS TO COUNTERACT VAWP

What can be done to eliminate violence against women in politics? Respondents discussed several mechanisms that exist to prevent and prosecute violence against female politicians. The permanent Gender Equality Council of the Parliament of Georgia is responsible for the elaboration and development of the legislative base for gender equality and for its respective strategy. The Public Defender (Ombudsman) of Georgia also focuses on this issue, as it establishes specific policies and mechanisms for reporting violence against women in politics. Nevertheless, implementation is often ineffective. The key informants stated that the policies and mechanisms that are in place need to be re-evaluated in order to better respond to the barriers that women face when reporting incidents of violence. They highlighted that currently women are not encouraged to report, as they can only expect retribution and a more hostile environment.

“[Women who have experienced violence in politics] can address the Gender Equality Council [and the] Ombudsman’s Office, but I have never heard that any of them were effective.” (Independent researcher/gender expert, KII 1)

The key informants noted that the reported cases are not investigated properly, and therefore women are not encouraged to report further cases of threats and harassment.

“The current practice does not encourage women to go and report to the law enforcement agencies about the violence because, for the cases that have already been reported, no one has been punished. It does not encourage women politicians to go to law enforcement [because they will not] get

anything other than a hostile environment there, so it is a very bad precedent. ...” (Gender equality expert, KII 9)

“When there were cases of violence against women in politics and they were not investigated and perpetrators were not punished, it set a very bad example for all. ... If we speak about [a particular female politician’s] case, she spoke openly [and] asked everyone to investigate her case, but nothing has been done in this regard.” (Expert from an international organization, KII 2)

State institutions can play a major role in preventing and addressing violence against women in politics. The key informants singled out legislation against gender discrimination and talked about specific mechanisms of reporting. While these tools exist, they are not often enforced. Our informants highlighted that the Government of Georgia should act promptly and speak out loudly with regard to the violence against women in politics.

“We know that there is an inter-agency commission on human rights and gender equality, [and] there are gender equality councils in the Parliament and local self-governments. These institutional mechanisms should not only be written on a piece of paper. They should speak about these issues openly and loudly. The Gender Equality Council of the Parliament should be the initiator, make a statement and call on all Members of Parliament to join it.” (Expert from an international organization, KII 4)

Like the key informants, women politicians also talked about the importance of state institutions. During the

qualitative interviews, those women in politics who represented opposition parties claimed that the Government should have the key role in this. One of the issues raised is that of coordination between relevant state agencies. In this regard, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Social Service Agency, the Prosecutor's Office and all other relevant bodies should work in coordination. On the other hand, some respondents also mentioned that the Government cannot always force changes when it comes to people's mentality.

"I generally see the role of the State first in all problems and in solving all problems. But I do not think it is right to only blame the State, especially for issues that are part of your past, part of a culture that takes a long time to change. ... Serious changes cannot be forced. ... Laws and punishment alone do not work. ... We have good laws written that do not work in practice. We live in a society where anything new should be introduced slowly without any force or aggression." (Political appointee, Respondent 14)

Like the Government, **political parties** are essential in addressing the issue of violence against women in politics. The key informants felt that they need to work more actively in this regard and create inter-party mechanisms for protecting women from violence in politics. Female politicians need to be particularly active. A very good example of this was when women members of various political parties organized a meeting (and later signed a joint memorandum) where they condemned violence. Informants highlighted that it was a unanimous decision from all political groups except the ruling Georgian Dream party.

"Women members of political parties should prepare a memorandum supporting one another in cases of violence. ... We have already witnessed a meeting of women politicians where they expressed their views against violence. Everybody attended this meeting in front of the Parliament except for the representatives of the Georgian Dream party." (Expert from an international organization, KII 4)

The key informants also talked about the parties' internal agreements and rules, or lack thereof, to protect women from discrimination.

"Political parties should have a sort of internal regulation mechanism, like we have in our organization, against sexual harassment. When a woman feels safe inside the political party and she herself feels that nothing is threatening her there, it is already a very big step forward. This will increase her motivation to continue working in a healthy work environment." (Expert from an international organization, KII 7)

During the qualitative interviews with women in politics, they mentioned that every party should agree to destroy any materials that have been recorded illegally and that are being used to oppress women politicians. Political parties should agree that, no matter who comes to power, their approach should be similar and that discrimination against women should stop.

NGOs also play an important role in preventing and addressing violence against women in politics. They participate in the creation of public opinion and provide psychological and legal help for women who report violence against them. Civil society should speak out loudly about this issue. What has been achieved so far regarding women's rights is because of their work.

"The role of NGOs, of course, is quite large in this process—yes, this [part of] civil society plays a very big role. They can participate in the formation of public opinion and protecting victims of violence. When women report [incidents of] violence, they need legal and psychological support that NGOs can provide." (Independent researcher/gender expert, KII 1)

One of the key informants stated that UN Women was the first organization to raise the issue of violence against women in politics. This was a big step forward on this topic.

"I think that this issue was first raised directly by UN Women and there were quite large panels in the beginning of the year [2021] when they start talking with the Ambassadors about upcoming elections and that special attention should be paid to violence against women in politics. This was already a very big step forward in this regard." (Expert from an international organization, KII 7)

Furthermore, during the qualitative interviews with women politicians, one of them claimed that the non-governmental and international organizations should continue training sessions for women politicians but also train men politicians.

“NGOs should continue empowering and strengthening women, but [men] might not like that because the more training that we women get, the more we know about our rights. They raised the awareness of women, but men’s awareness also needs to be raised. And then joint training sessions should be held instead of separate ones, and leading specialists should see the advantages that women politicians have.” (Local government member, Respondent 6)

Additional measures can also be taken to address the issue of violence against women in politics. According to the key informants, a lot of work needs to be done in order to accelerate gender equality and the political empowerment of women. This process should begin from early childhood, in kindergartens and in schools. Children should be brought up with gender-neutral or gender-sensitive books and with the perception that boys and girls are equal. In addition, awareness-raising campaigns should be implemented involving various TV channels and social media outlets.

“Education reform, I repeat, the reform should start again. ... There should be a component of civic education, gender equality [and] women’s rights. We should start working on it from the education system and kindergartens. [...] All we are saying is that it is long term, and years go by and nothing is done—if we do not start today, it may be too late. So that would be my main recommendation.” (Gender equality expert, KII 9)

Some key informants state that this is a long process and needs many years to complete. Respondents believe that the education system is the most powerful actor, although there needs to be complementary work on a

legislative and institutional level as well. The country’s laws definitely need improvement, and the institutional mechanisms should become more actively engaged in the process.

One of the female politicians stated that one agency or body alone cannot change much to prevent violence against women in politics. Instead, everyone should act in coordination.

“One [person or entity] cannot change things [in regard to violence]. I believe that unless everyone acts together, [no real changes can be achieved]. Political parties, non-governmental organizations, all have to contribute one brick.” (Electoral candidate, Respondent 8)

The study participants have their viewpoints on how violence against women in politics can be prevented. Even though the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament and the Ombudsman are fully involved and working on policies and mechanisms for preventing cases of violence, these tools do not always turn out to be effective. The number of reported cases is low; even those that were reported were not investigated properly, and the perpetrators were not punished in most cases.

State institutions can play a major role in preventing and addressing violence against women in politics by implementing the mechanisms that are already developed. The key informants, as well as women in politics, highlighted that there needs to be political will to investigate the cases and punish the perpetrators. Political parties could also play a role by collaborating and setting up internal mechanisms to protect women in politics. The role of NGOs was also highlighted, as they interact closely with the public.

Finally, gender equality and the political empowerment of women should be brought to one’s attention from childhood. While reform in education is needed, it is the responsibility of all agencies and bodies to contribute to the elimination of violence against women in politics.

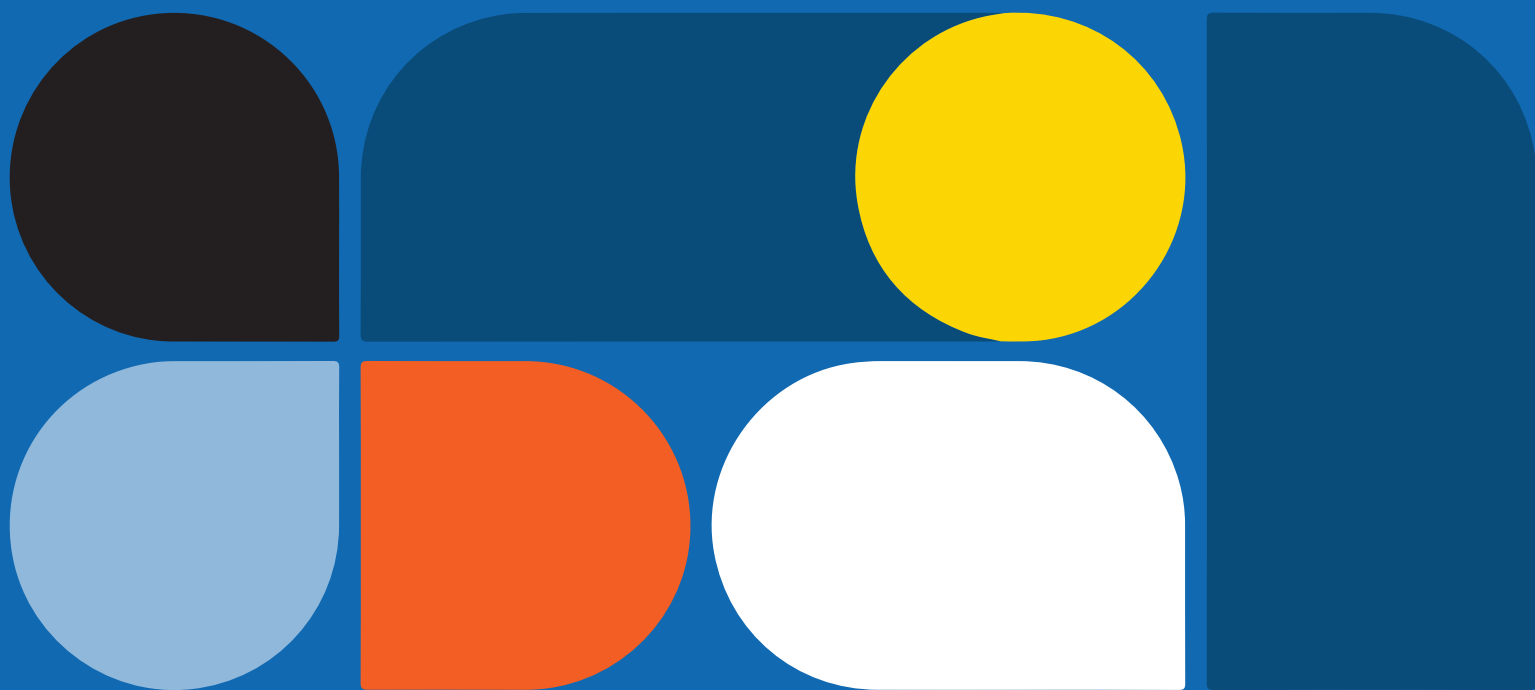
CONCLUSIONS



- Participation in politics for women in Georgia is associated with many challenges. Although most who are interested have support (emotional, financial or otherwise) from family members, their community or political party members, and/or local or international organizations, they still have to overcome a number of obstacles. The barriers can include financial difficulties, unequal opportunities for men and women, widespread societal prejudices that do not consider women in politics, and the need to combine family work and duties with political activity. The latter was further exacerbated by the pandemic. Due to these obstacles, it is a challenge for women to establish themselves—not only in society but also in their own political party.
- Despite the obstacles, those women who are in politics are quite active. Their activity is especially visible during pre-election campaigning, when they hold meetings, meet with voters, distribute campaign materials, actively engage on social networks and make public statements. Besides these activities, during their public speeches many women in politics often speak about some issues that are not always appealing to society (for example, gender equality, LGBTIQ+ rights and criticism of conservative viewpoints). The activism of female politicians (especially in the pre-election period), as well as their voicing of statements that are unacceptable to a large part of society, may lead to violence against them.
- Most of the interviewed women disagree with the statement that threats, intimidation, harassment and hate speech are part of being in politics and that there is no solution to it. Almost one third of respondents believe that this kind of attitude is especially directed towards female politicians.
- Almost half of the interviewed female politicians say that they have experienced harassment or violence in some form during their time in office or while campaigning. The most common types are hate speech on social media (28 per cent), face-to-face threats (19 per cent), threats on social media (17 per cent) and threats via email, text message or phone call, with the perpetrator threatening to harm the female politicians or their close ones (16 per cent). Female politicians are also subjected to intrusive questions about their private life or appearance (16 per cent), humiliation or abuse during meetings (15 per cent) and rejection of the funds that they are entitled to (including benefits, discounts and a salary) (15 per cent). Insulting or sexual comments on social media are also very common. At the same time, cases of physical and sexual violence occur only in rare cases.
- The respondents also spoke about harassment and humiliation in their own political parties. About 41 per cent stated that compared to men, they had less opportunity to be in a managerial position, 37 per cent felt that they had less chance to get into different committees, and 23 per cent did not get enough time to express their opinions during debates.
- Single and divorced female politicians are more likely to experience harassment or violence in various forms.
- According to the survey participants, in most cases the perpetrators are members of the opposition party, online ‘trolls’ or ‘bots’ (which are also mostly handled by political parties) or people who the respondents do not know or cannot recognize. Harassment and discrimination are also common within their own political party, where it is the respondents’ colleagues who are the abusers. Usually, the perpetrators are men; however, it is often difficult to identify their gender since the abuse often occurs online.
- In total, 60 per cent of the surveyed female politicians agree that candidates who speak publicly about their experiences of harassment and intimidation help other women in politics to start talking about the issue. Moreover, the majority (75 per cent) disagree with the opinion that such women are considered weak.
- Female politicians have different reactions to harassment and threats. Although some of them feel devastated and talk about their deteriorated psychological state, many of them say that such cases have made them stronger and that they now fight against gender discrimination with more courage.

- ▶ In cases of harassment and threats, female politicians often turn to family members, close friends, colleagues, party leaders and sometimes NGOs and women’s rights organizations for help. In rare cases, they also turn to official bodies, although more than half of the respondents say that they have not referred to them.
- ▶ There are several reasons why female politicians do not report violence and discrimination to official bodies. Many of them believe that their case was a political attack and therefore required a political response, not a legal one. Some say that they were able to resolve the problem on their own; a large segment of the respondents do not assign much importance to their case and prefer to deal with the problem quietly. Others do not have any hope that their case will be investigated adequately. In some cases, women are fearful that no one will take them seriously if they report about verbal aggression or threats.
- ▶ In the case of online harassment, the most common solution is to block and ignore the user. To protect themselves from violence, women often have to change their daily routines and refrain from sharing their personal information and schedules online.
- ▶ Most of the research participants believe that there are no effective mechanisms for reporting or preventing cases of violence against women in politics and that the legislation does not properly cover the issues of violence against women in politics. However, for some of the respondents, the legislation, services and mechanisms are all in place. In addition, some of the respondents see a problem in the implementation of the legislation. According to their assessment, although the legislation meets international standards, its implementation remains a challenge.
- ▶ As for the ways to prevent violence against women in politics, some of the research participants state that despite the involvement of the Gender Equality Council and the Public Defender in the development of appropriate policies and mechanisms for the prevention of violence, these efforts are not always effective. The rate of reporting cases of violence to official authorities is low; and even in the case of filing a report, most of the cases are not investigated, and the perpetrators are not punished.

ANNEXES



ANNEX 1: METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

The study used quantitative as well as qualitative research methods and included three components: (1) interviews with key experts and stakeholders on women’s political participation (as part of the preliminary scoping exercise); (2) an online survey on violence against women in politics (the quantitative component of the study); and (3) in-depth interviews with women in politics (the qualitative component of the study). Expert interviews were conducted in October 2020. The aim of this exercise was to collect background information on women’s political representation and the nature of VAWP in Georgia. The findings of the expert interviews informed the study design and the contextual review of the study, while the in-depth interviews and online survey provided empirical findings with regard to women politicians’ experiences of violence.

For the online survey, CRRC-Georgia focused on the following target groups:

- ▶ Women elected in the 2016–2020 convocation of the Parliament of Georgia (21 individuals)
- ▶ Women elected in the 2017–2021 convocation of the country’s municipal councils (277 individuals)
- ▶ Women who ran in the 2020 parliamentary elections

The latter pool included candidates who contested seats in single-member districts (105 individuals) and the first eight women candidates in select party lists. Only those parties that overcame the 1 per cent threshold required to be elected to the Parliament (80 individuals) were sampled. The survey was completed by 151 women politicians, office holders and candidates. Among the office holders, 104 respondents were members of local governments, while nine women politicians were MPs. The number of political candidates in the 2020 parliamentary elections who completed the survey was 50 respondents. Among them, 12 were also part of the local government or the Parliament, while 38 only ran for seats in the 2020 parliamentary elections.

Overall, the response rate in the local government subsample achieved 38 per cent. From women politicians who were MPs in the 2016–2020 convocation of the Parliament, 43 per cent answered the questions. As for female candidates, 27 per cent responded to the survey. Considering the small number of female MPs who sat in the Parliament between 2016 and 2020, CRRC-Georgia did not present them separately in the subgroup analysis.

For the third component of the study, the in-depth interviews with female politicians, informants were recruited in the following manner. Twelve interviews were conducted with those female politicians who participated in the online survey, reported having an experience of violence and consented to participate in the qualitative study. Three other participants of the qualitative study were women political appointees who did not participate in the online survey, although they had an experience of violence and agreed to share their experience with CRRC-Georgia’s researchers.

Due to the sensitive nature of the study, it was ensured that survey respondents remained anonymous, while the identity of informants from the qualitative component of the study remained confidential. The interview process was informed by the principle of “do no harm” and the World Health Organization’s “Ethical and safety recommendations for intervention research on violence against women”.

ANNEX 2: STUDY PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR BACKGROUND

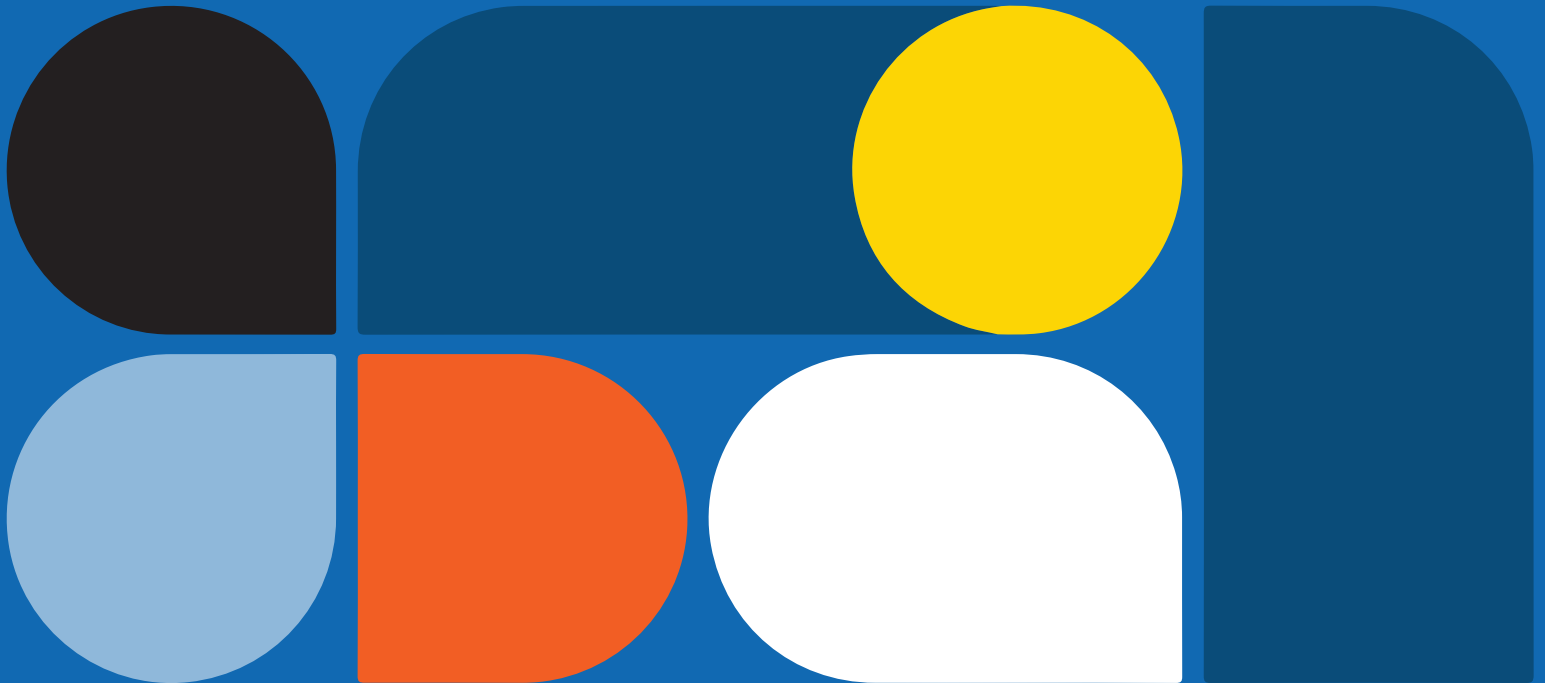
The women participants in the survey are mostly (60 per cent) between 35 and 54 years old, 15 per cent of the respondents are 18 to 34 years old, and 21 per cent are 55 or older. The majority identify as ethnic Georgian (96 per cent) and have obtained higher education degrees (95 per cent, equal to 143 respondents). Sixty per cent of the quantitative survey respondents are married, 15 per cent are divorced or separated, 13 per cent are single, and 11 per cent are widowed.

Thirty per cent of the respondents began their political careers after 2017, while 40 per cent began their careers between 2012 and 2016. A further 15 per cent launched their political career between 2003 and 2011, while 13 per cent say that they got involved in politics even earlier, between 1987 and 2002.

In their most recent electoral campaigns, more than half of the respondents (55 per cent) ran as a representative of the ruling party, 38 per cent as a representative of the opposition and only 4 per cent as independents. Of those running in the 2020 elections, only 14 per cent (seven respondents) became members of the 2020 Parliament. Four respondents ran as representatives of the ruling party, while three ran representing the opposition.

All 15 female politicians participating in the qualitative interviews were ethnic Georgians. Five informants represented local governments and councils. Another five interviews were conducted with women politicians who ran either as a majoritarian candidate or as being included on the party list in the 2020 parliamentary elections. Five more interviews were administered with members of the 2016–2020 convocation of the Parliament of Georgia or with political appointees.

ENDNOTES



¹ Part of the respondents had experience both working in the local self-government as well as in the Parliament or participating in the recent parliamentary elections. Therefore, the numbers do not add up to 151.

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⁶ Ibid., para. 89.

⁷ Ballington, Julie et al. 2017. Preventing violence against women in elections: A programming guide 2017, available in English at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/11/preventing-violence-against-women-in-elections> (most recently accessed on 7.04.2022).

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¹⁰ Simonovic, Dubravka. Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective, United Nations Human Rights Council 2018. Available in English at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1641160?ln=en> (most recently accessed on 04.04.2022).

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¹⁴ Ballington, Julie, Bardall, Gabrielle and Borovski, Gabvriela, Preventing violence against women in elections: A programming guide, 2017. Available in English at: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2017/Preventing-VAW-in-elections-en.PDF> (most recently accessed on 04.04.2022)

¹⁵ Constitution of Georgia, Parliament of Georgia, Document # 786, 1995. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/30346.?publication=36>

¹⁶ Law of Georgia on Gender Equality, Parliament of Georgia, Document #2844, 2010, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/91624>

¹⁷ Law of Georgia on Eradicating All Forms of Discrimination, Document # 2391- IIs, 2014, Parliament of Georgia, <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2339687>

¹⁸ Law of Georgia on the Elimination of Violence against Women and /or Domestic Violence, and the Protection and Support of Victims of Such Violence, Document #3143, 2006. Available at: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/26422.?publication=21>

¹⁹ National Strategy for the Protection of Human Rights in Georgia (2014–2020). Available at: <http://myrights.gov.ge/ka/documents/documents/strategy> (most recently accessed on 5.04.2022).

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³⁷ Selection is not representative.

³⁸ It included only women candidates participating in 2020 Elections – 50 respondents.

³⁹ Respondents who were running for a seat in the 2020 Parliament were asked about their political campaign period. Those who sat in the Parliament during the 2016–2020 period were probed about their term in office. Representatives of local governments (2017–2021) were asked about their tenure in office.

⁴⁰ Representatives of local governments were asked about their tenure in office, while candidates were asked about the 2020 campaign.

⁴¹ Representatives of local governments were asked about their tenure in office, while candidates were asked about the 2020 campaign.

⁴² Representatives of local governments were asked about their tenure in office, while candidates were asked about the 2020 campaign.

⁴³ Representatives of local governments were asked about their tenure in office, while candidates were asked about the 2020 campaign.

⁴⁴ Representatives of local governments were asked about their tenure in office, while candidates were asked about the 2020 campaign.

⁴⁵ Differences were identified using a logistic regression model predicting the experience of any type of harassment or violence. Controls included the respondent's age, marital status and whether they represented local governments, Parliament or were running for a parliamentary office in the 2020 elections, and other variables.

⁴⁶ This question was asked to only those respondents who noted that they felt like victims of any instances of violence, harassment, or threats.

⁴⁷ This question was asked to only those respondents who noted that they felt like victims of any instances of violence, harassment, or threats.

⁴⁸ This question was asked to only those respondents who noted that they felt like victims of any instances of violence, harassment, or threats.

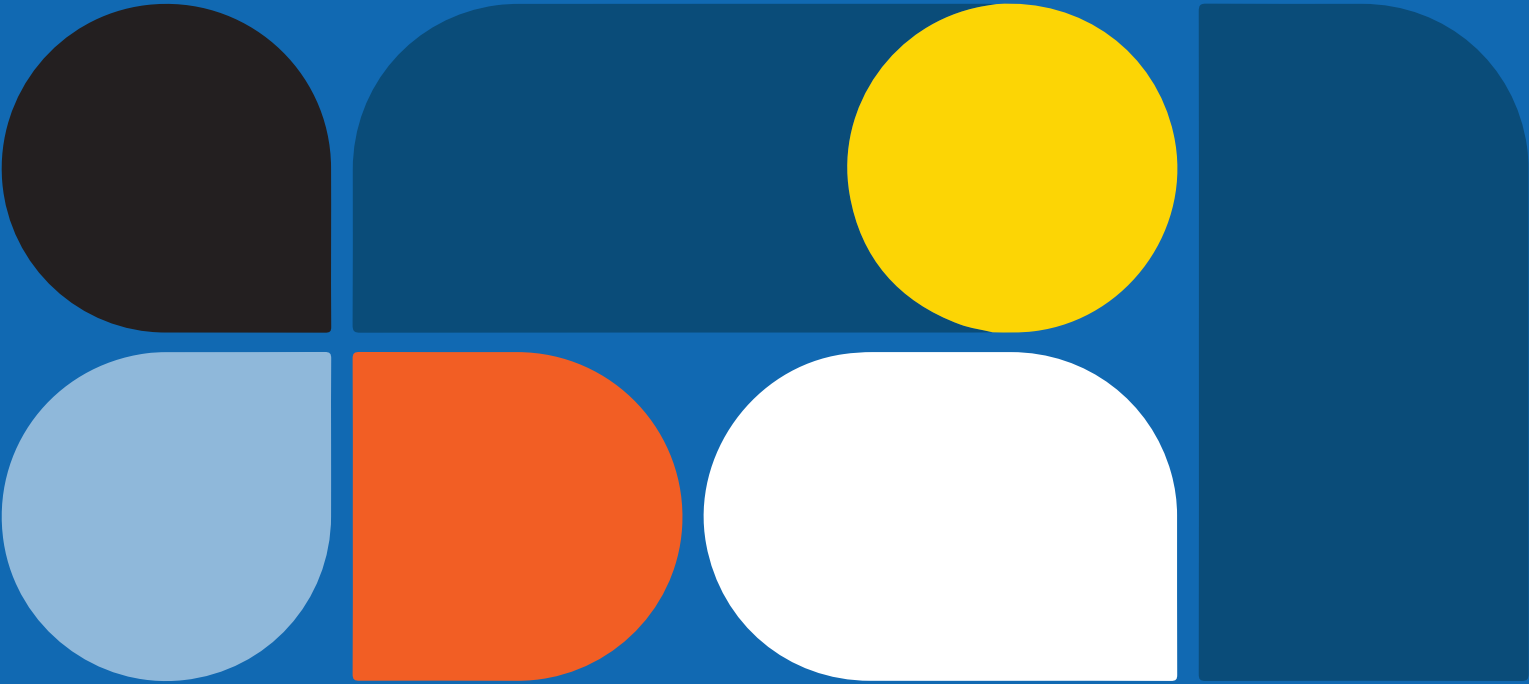
⁴⁹ Representatives of local governments were asked about their tenure in office, while candidates were asked about the 2020 campaign.

⁵⁰ This question was asked to only those respondents who noted that they felt like victims of any instances of violence, harassment, or threats.

⁵¹ This question was asked to only those respondents who noted that they felt like victims of any instances of violence, harassment, or threats.

⁵² This question was asked to only those respondents who noted that they felt like victims of any instances of violence, harassment or threats but did not apply to official institutions.

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