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<th>Title/ Título/ Titre:</th>
<th>Fight sexual violence – feminize UN!</th>
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<td>Organization/ Organización/ Organisation:</td>
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In January 2019 Deloitte published the resulting report of the “Safe Space Survey” about sexual violence within the United Nation staff. In November 2018 over 30,000 members of UN personnel had participated in the survey. The results sparked a new debate on sexual violence and the role of the UN in which IUSY as a voice for a feminist international youth movement is determined to take a leading part. We see the survey’s results as an expression of the relation between power constellations, gender, international organization and peacekeeping and fight for them to be understood as a wake-up call of the international community on developing an effective feminist peace and defense policy.

Due to the confidential report 38.7% of respondents experienced sexual harassment at least once while working for the UN. Targets of sexual violence reported that nearly 60% of the incidents occurred in office environment being executed by mostly colleges, even 24.3% by managers and supervisors. Two out of three harassers were male. Sexual violence is not an expression of sexual interest and not to be compared with flirting. It really is about power, dominance and patriarchy. Understanding patriarchy as a global phenomenon which is part of most societies in the world there is no surprise that cases of sexual violence were made public within the UN.

Nevertheless, especially the UN as an embodiment of international solidarity and peace has a special responsibility to promote women’s rights and security as well as to pioneer as a role model for a global society within its own administrative body. It is likewise pleasant and surprising, that at the same time of sexual harassment still being solid component of UN staff work environment, 70.7% of the study’s respondents said their immediate supervisor performs a zero-tolerance policy on sexual violence. The resulting contradiction underlines the complex and multilayer impact of the patriarchal power decline. While the creation of UN Women in July 2011 helped emphasizing gender equality and women empowerment as topics of international peace keeping, UN entities still fail on reorganizing their own structures towards effective gender equality. The fact...
that there never was a female General Secretary or that leading positions being held by mainly males – especially within the peacekeeping troops and sexual harassment being performed within the UN administrative body, but also within the exterior performance of some peacekeeping troops are no coincidence. While helping member states to achieve the 5th UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), UN itself fails at its own standards.

As a feminist international youth organization IUSY acknowledges the UN as a possible engine for international change. We are convinced: If the UN currently fails to be that engine, this is embedded in the structures of the UN bodies and national interests of the member states, for whom gender equality is not a priority. To work for a better – a feminist and socialist – future for our and all future generations we contribute to and fight for a joined concept to fight patriarchy internationally and therefore to feminize UN.

Fortunately, fighting for a UN feminist agenda does not need to start from scratch. Besides the outlined institutional pillars that already exist, leading feminist thinkers in global civil society, philanthropy, academia and from the UN staff have united within the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW). Especially around the elections of the current UN Secretary-General António Guterres the ICRW initiated a global call for redirecting the UN gender policy resulting into the Feminist U.N. Campaign. On January 23rd 2019 the Campaign released its second-year report card on the Secretary-General’s second year. In 2016, when the Campaign first entered international platform, it set several goals to be hit by the Secretary-General’s policy promoting a feminist leadership agenda, the accountability of the fifth SDG, finance for gender equality, utilization of feminist leadership, feminist transformation for the ECOSOC-Commission on the Status of Women and UN Women and promoting transparency to build trust in the UN.

Due to the report overall the UN improved when it comes to gender equality goals. Especially in terms of fighting sexual violence Guterres established a task force in 2017, whose key output should be to work on a new U.N. System Model Policy on sexual harassment for all U.N. agencies. Despite all the effort, also the outcomes of this process reflect the reservation within the institutions. For instance, the new policy model contains a provision that allows legal representation for the accused, but not for the survivor. Provisions like these contradict a survivor-centered perspective and can be seen as examples of an inherited view on sexual violence that doubts the perspective of survivors and delegitimizes their report. Hence, even though the UN efforts on gender equality within their body and beyond have to be acknowledged and appreciated, the problem comes from a deeper source of social perception. Therefore, as an inside observer IUSY wants to point out that fighting sexual violence effectively UN institutions have to address sexual harassment as an abuse of power and cannot hide behind the institution of a task force that is only very poorly equipped and faces severe resistance from within the UN body.
Besides the U.N. System Model Policy and UN Women as agency to assist the governments of member states, there is a section in which a feminist point of view is just at the beginning of development: The UN Security Policy. Even though since the early 2000s there have been 6 resolutions linking peace, security and women, violence against women is still a key element of war related action. Violence against women in military conflicts reflects the pattern of sexual violence as an abuse of power in the most obvious way. However, the implementation of the UN Security Council mandates has been uneven. Nonetheless, this year’s Security Council has advocated on working on strategies to a more effective women-related security policy. It is however striking, that none of the resolutions ever addressed sexual violence performed by the UN peacekeeping troops. During the last decades there have been various scandals about sexual violence by UN peacekeepers. The incidents are especially hard to regulate, since the prosecution is subject to the national law of the sending state. Again, as an institution born out of international crisis and with the attempt to make the world a place without military violence it is the UN’s responsibility to especially address any breaches of their fundamental values. This comes to special importance, where executive forces are empowered by UN Security-Council mandates to enter into military conflicts and act as trustful authority.

Overall what is most striking about the UN’s engagement for gender equality is the disparity between a strong political feminist UN campaign and the refusal of the UN entities below to perform up to the agenda. We are very aware that the UN entities are not solely responsible for the maintenance of patriarchal abuse of power against women. Intensifying nationalist and misogynist sentiments and the rise of authoritarian governments around the world contribute to an overall anti-feminist backlash. Still the UN as key player for multilateralism and human rights has special responsibility to fight back anti-feminist movement and implement profound strategies against patriarchal power abuse, starting within their own institutions.

We, as IUSY call for stricter discipline and severe regulation within the UN body when it comes to gender equality and particularly in terms of fighting sexual harassment as abuse of power. We therefore think, it is important to integrate a global network of social protagonists and activists of feminist campaigns and fights all over the world, but also to implement stricter consequences towards breaches by any UN functionaries. We are convinced that after two very current reports on the topic, real action has to follow-up not anytime, but now.

Therefore, IUSY calls for:

- An internal agenda on women equality that transfers the outside goals of women empowerment and fight against discrimination to the interior of the UN
- A strict set of regulations and consequences in case of sexual harassment or violence by any member of UN staff
A survivor-centered perspective when it comes to the topic of sexual violence and a trustworthy institutional framework to report incidents.

Transparency within the UN entities in terms of gender equality, women leadership and a safe working environment.

A task force on sexual harassment that is effectively equipped to turn down resistance from within the UN administrative body.

The integration of a global network of social protagonists and women’s rights organizations into the ongoing evaluation of the UN as work place.

Severe investigation on sexual violence within the UN peacekeeping troops and enforcement of a female leadership program.

Effective consequences and prosecution of sexual violence by UN peacekeepers on international level.

Moreover, also we ourselves want to work on building an international youth network of young social activists against sexual violence for IUSY.