

Strengthening Protection for Victims and Survivors of Online Gender-Based Violence or Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in Malaysia

Executive Summary

This policy brief was prepared based on key findings and recommendations from the evaluation report on the effectiveness of Malaysia's legal and regulatory framework in addressing online gender-based violence / technology-facilitated gender-based violence (OGBV/TFGBV), particularly the reporting/complaints mechanisms.¹ The evaluation report drew on survivor testimonies, and assessments by relevant individuals and bodies including lawyers, school counsellors, the Communications and Multimedia Content Forum of Malaysia, the Malaysian Bar Council Cyber and Privacy Laws Committee, and civil society organisations (CSOs, specifically Women's Centre for Change, All Women's Action Society, Association of Women Lawyers, Women's Aid Organisation, Family Frontiers, Justice for Sisters, Sarawak Women for Women Society, and the Child Rights Innovation and Betterment Foundation).

Problem:

OGBV/TFGBV significantly restricts the ability of women, girls and gender minorities to express themselves online and in digital spaces. Malaysia currently lacks specific legislation dedicated to OGBV/TFGBV. Survivors must navigate a fragmented, "gender-blind" legal framework where existing laws utilise vague and subjective terminology that is prone to abuse or selective enforcement. Systemic failures, including poor interagency coordination, non-responsive enforcement, and a lack of gender sensitivity among frontline officers, further prevent survivors from obtaining meaningful redress.

2. Critical gaps hindering the effectiveness of existing laws include insufficient legal protection, lack of interagency coordination, slow institutional response, lack of gender sensitivity, limited understanding of online harm, and a trust deficit and lack of public confidence in the system.
3. The Online Safety Act 2025 (ONSA) has potential but lacks gender-specific protections, uses vague definitions and has limited victim/survivor support mechanisms. Its effectiveness will ultimately depend on the subsidiary legislation yet to be announced at the time of enactment.

Key Findings:

1. Although relevant laws exist on paper and some provisions may appear adequate, the system fails at the implementation stage. Consequently, victims and survivors are often left frustrated by the system without seeing justice served.

Priority Recommendations:

1. Legislative Reform: Adopt a rights-based framework that specifically recognises online and gendered harm, and that prioritises a "safety by design" approach to prevent violence before it occurs.

¹ KRYSS Network, Effectiveness of Reporting Mechanisms in Ensuring Redress for Victims & Survivors of Online Gender-Based Violence / Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (Petaling Jaya: KRYSS Network, 2025)