

Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences

Ref.: AL ROU 2/2026

(Please use this reference in your reply)

4 March 2026

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 59/20.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the failure to conduct a prompt, effective, impartial, and victim-centered investigation into the sexual violence experienced by a woman, in particular in the context of alleged pressures exerted by the perpetrators on the justice system.

According to the information received:

Alleged sexual assault and violence

In early February 2018, Ms. [REDACTED], a young woman working in the media and film industry, was informed through a political activist by the name of M. Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, known as Tommy Robinson, that there were potential investors in Romania interested in funding a non-conformist media outlet in the United Kingdom. On 21 February 2018, she, the political activist, and a film crew travelled to Romania for what she believed were legitimate business meetings. Upon arrival in Bucharest, she allegedly met with Mr. Andrew Tate and Mr. Tristan Tate (the Tate brothers'), whom she did not know before. Mr. Andrew Tate reportedly insisted on driving Ms. [REDACTED] alone, separating her from other colleagues. She was taken to his residence, where, in her view, it became apparent that the purported investment opportunity was not genuine and involved cryptocurrency scams rather than media financing.

On the night of 21–22 February 2018, Mr. Andrew Tate reportedly invited Ms. [REDACTED] to return to the residence, suggesting the possibility of investment discussions. However, no such meeting occurred. Instead, he allegedly insisted they go to a nightclub, assuring her that the other colleagues would also attend. Based on the information received at the nightclub, Mr. Tate repeatedly encouraged Ms. [REDACTED] to drink. After one or two drinks – significantly fewer than she would normally become intoxicated by, she experienced extreme disorientation and blackouts and believed she was drugged. Reportedly, during this time, one of Mr. Andrew Tate's associates suggested that Mr. Andrew Tate and Mr. Tristan Tate were running criminal operations and had "bought off" Romanian police, which was allegedly a claim that Mr. Andrew Tate himself had previously made.

In the early hours of 22 February 2018, Mr. Andrew Tate carried Ms. [REDACTED] from the club to his car and then to her hotel room at the JW Marriott in Bucharest. While she was in a severely impaired state, Mr. Tate allegedly initiated physical contact. When Ms. [REDACTED] told him to stop, he reportedly strangled her from behind and subsequently raped her. She lost consciousness multiple times due to strangulation. The following morning, she observed petechiae around her eyes and marks on her neck. As Ms. [REDACTED] was leaving, Mr. Tate allegedly told her, “You better not tell the media that I raped you.”

Ms. [REDACTED] reportedly disclosed the incident to her colleagues shortly thereafter. Upon returning to North America approximately one week later, she attended Toronto Women’s Hospital, where she underwent a medical examination and provided a report. The medical record noted strangulation and ongoing physical symptoms. At the time, although she provided descriptors, she did not name Mr. Tate in the medical report, as she was still processing the trauma and feared retaliation.

Reported retaliation and intimidation

In March 2018, Ms. [REDACTED] reportedly confronted Mr. Tate by text message, stating that he had raped her and strangled her when she said no. Reportedly, he responded angrily, denied wrongdoing, and claimed police protection. Later, he allegedly sent an apology stating he felt “terrible” that she thought badly of him. In subsequent years, Mr. Tate and persons working for him allegedly engaged in public and private actions intended to intimidate and discredit Ms. [REDACTED] including publishing articles portraying her as a woman fabricating rape allegations and engaging in manipulative sexual behaviors.

Reporting the case to the Romanian authorities

For several years, Ms. [REDACTED] did not report the assault to Romanian authorities due to alleged explicit statements by Mr. Tate and persons working with him that Romanian police were under their influence and her fear of retaliation.

In 2025, Ms. [REDACTED] despite her fears, decided to attempt to cooperate with Romanian authorities. In July 2025, she contacted a lawyer involved in the Romanian case against the Tate brothers, offering her assistance and testimony, but after the initial positive response and despite her repeated follow-ups, the communication fell silent. On 13 October 2025, she contacted the Romanian police to file or pursue a complaint. On 14 December 2025, she sent a follow-up inquiry, and the same day, also contacted an individual in Romania, who agreed to raise the matter internally with the police.

On 18 December 2025, Romanian police responded with instructions on how to formally file a report, which she subsequently prepared and submitted on 16 January 2026. On 22 January 2026, she followed up to confirm receipt of the report and, the following day, she received the confirmation. In February 2026, Ms. [REDACTED] was reportedly contacted by the Directorate for Investigating Organized Crime and Terrorism of Romania regarding her testimony.

Engagement with the legal systems of the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

It is reported that Ms. [REDACTED] was contacted by investigative bodies in the United Kingdom and the United States of America requesting information and testimony concerning the alleged crimes that occurred in Romania. In addition to reporting the case in Romania, Ms. [REDACTED] reportedly also cooperated with legal proceedings in the United Kingdom as of 2025 in relation to Mr. Andrew Tate. She was contacted by the UK lawyers who invited her to participate as a witness in a civil case concerning Mr. Tate. She accepted this request and provided a formal witness statement, detailing her experiences and the retaliation and intimidation she had faced following the assault. This required her to enter her account into the formal court record and to engage directly with the country system as a witness. As a result of this cooperation, Ms. [REDACTED] identity and allegations allegedly became known to the defendants and their associates, which increases the risk of further retaliation, intimidation, harassment, and reputational attacks.

Without prejudging the accuracy of the allegations described in this letter, we would like to express our serious concern regarding the alleged failure to ensure a prompt, effective, impartial, and victim-centered response by the competent authorities to serious allegations of sexual violence, including rape and strangulation, as well as the apparent absence of timely investigative steps following Ms. [REDACTED] contact with the police. We wish to recall that States have an obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, punish, and provide redress for acts of sex-based violence against women, whether perpetrated by State or non-State actors.

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, please refer to the Annex on Reference to international human rights law attached to this letter which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please indicate what measures have been taken to ensure that the allegations made by Ms. [REDACTED] were promptly, thoroughly, impartially, and independently assessed and investigated, including whether any investigative steps have been initiated following the submission of her report on 16 January 2026.
3. Please provide information on the reasons for the alleged absence of follow-up or communication by the competent authorities following Ms. [REDACTED] contact with the police on 13 October 2025.

4. Please indicate whether and how the Romanian authorities have cooperated with the United Kingdom authorities or other relevant jurisdictions regarding the underlying allegations of sexual violence, including any requests for mutual legal assistance.
5. Please provide information on the legal and procedural safeguards in place to ensure that victims of sexual violence are able to report crimes without fear of retaliation or intimidation, including where alleged perpetrators claim influence over law-enforcement authorities.
6. Please indicate what measures are in place to ensure effective communication with complainants and to guarantee victim-centered treatment during investigative and judicial proceedings.

This communication, and any response received from your Excellency's Government, will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) at the 60 days mark. Should Your Excellency's Government respond within 60 days, both the communication and the response, may be published before the 60 days mark. The communications and responses will also be made available in the subsequent periodic report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person(s) responsible for the alleged violations.

Please be informed that a letter on this subject matter has also been sent to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and a copy of this letter to United States of America.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

Reem Alsalem
Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences

Annex

Reference to international human rights law

In connection with above alleged facts and concerns, I would like to refer Your Excellency's Government to its legal obligations under the international treaties it has ratified, as well as to broader international human rights developments.

The right to access to justice in cases of human rights violations is closely linked to the obligation under article 2(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Romania on 9 December 1974, to ensure an effective remedy. Similarly, article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights safeguards the right of everyone to an effective remedy by competent national tribunals for acts violating fundamental rights. In its general comment No. 31, the Human Rights Committee clarified that article 2(3) requires States parties not only to provide remedies in law, but also to ensure effective investigative and judicial mechanisms capable of establishing the facts and identifying those responsible (CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, para. 15).

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified by Romania on 7 January 1982, in article 2, requires States parties to pursue, without delay, a policy of eliminating discrimination against women. General recommendation No. 19 of the CEDAW Committee (1992) on violence against women defines gender-based violence as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.” In general recommendation No. 35, the CEDAW Committee clarified that States may be responsible for private acts if they fail to act with due diligence to prevent, investigate, punish and provide reparation for such acts (CEDAW/C/GC/35, para. 24(2)). The Committee further emphasized that investigations into gender-based violence must be impartial, timely, victim-centered and free from stereotypes, and must guarantee survivors' safety, dignity and privacy (CEDAW/C/GC/35, paras. 31–33). States are required to ensure access to justice mechanisms that do not re-traumatize victims and that are responsive to the specific dynamics of sexual violence.

We would also like to refer to the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), which affirms that violence against women constitutes a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Under article 4, States are required to pursue, by all appropriate means and without delay, a policy of eliminating violence against women; to exercise due diligence in preventing, investigating, and punishing acts of such violence; and to provide access to just and effective remedies for victims (A/RES/48/104). Moreover, states may be responsible for private acts if they fail to act with due diligence to prevent violations of rights or to investigate and punish acts of violence, and for providing compensation (A/47/38, para. 9).

States are required to ensure that victims and witnesses can safely report sexual violence without fear of reprisal. This obligation derives from due-diligence standards

under CEDAW (CEDAW/C/GC/35, para. 24(b)) and from international standards on access to justice for victims. The UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders further obliges States to protect individuals against threats or pressure related to their engagement with authorities or international mechanisms (art. 12).

The UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law (A/RES/60/147) stress that states have an obligation to “investigate violations effectively, promptly, thoroughly and impartially and, where appropriate, take action against those allegedly responsible in accordance with domestic and international law” (par. 3(b)). The Guidelines further note that “Victims should be treated with humanity and respect for their dignity and human rights, and appropriate measures should be taken to ensure their safety, physical and psychological well-being and privacy (par. 10). To this end “States should ensure that their domestic laws (...), minimize inconvenience to victims and protect against unlawful interference with their privacy, as appropriate, and against intimidation and retaliation (par. 12(b)).”

In the same spirit, the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (A/RES/40/34) provides that victims should be treated with compassion and respect for their dignity and should have access to mechanisms of justice and prompt redress. In the same vein, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls has repeatedly emphasized that sexual violence, including rape, intimidation and threats, must be addressed through survivor-centered approaches that ensure safety and access to justice and that failures to investigate or communicate with victims may amount to secondary victimization (see A/HRC/44/52, paras. 18 and 24; A/73/301, paras. 12–13). She emphasized in particular that sexual violence, including sexual assault and rape, as well as the threat of rape, continues to be used as a form of violence against women journalists and as a tool to undermine their credibility and discourage them from working in the media (A/HRC/44/52, par. 24).

On the regional level, Romania is a member of the Council of Europe and has ratified the European Convention on Human Rights on 20 June 1994. Article 3 of the Convention prohibits torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and has been interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights as protecting individuals from serious violations of physical and psychological integrity, including sexual violence. Article 8 guarantees the right to respect for private and family life and article 13 protects the right to an effective remedy before a national authority for violations of Convention rights, ensuring that victims have access to effective mechanisms capable of examining complaints and providing appropriate redress.

In the case *I.C. v. Romania*, the European Court of Human Rights considered that States have a positive obligation inherent in Article 3 of the Convention to enact criminal-law provisions that effectively punish rape and to apply them in practice through effective investigation and prosecution (*I.C. v. Romania*, no. 36934/08, 24 May 2016, par. 52). In case of *C.A.S. and C.S. v. Romania* the Court reiterated that “For the investigation to be regarded as “effective”, it should in principle be capable of leading to the establishment of the facts of the case and to the identification and punishment of those responsible.” (*C.A.S. and C.S. v. Romania*, no. 26692/05, 20 March 2012, par. 70.)

Furthermore, Romania ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) on 23 May 2016. The Convention establishes binding obligations to prevent violence, protect victims and prosecute perpetrators. Article 49 of the Istanbul Convention requires Parties to ensure that investigations and judicial proceedings in relation to all forms of violence covered by the Convention, including sexual violence, are carried out without undue delay while taking into consideration the rights of the victim at all stages. Article 50 requires competent authorities to provide immediate protection and support to victims and to respond promptly and appropriately to reports of violence. Article 55 mandates that investigations and prosecutions not depend entirely upon a complaint filed or maintained by the victim when the offence has been committed in whole or in part on its territory. Article 56 requires measures to protect victims from intimidation, retaliation and repeat victimization during investigations and judicial proceedings.

The Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), in its baseline evaluation report on Romania, expressed concern about underreporting of sexual violence in the country and stressed the need for strengthened law enforcement and judicial responses to sexual violence and for gender-sensitive training to ensure that non-consensual sexual acts are effectively investigated and prosecuted (GREVIO, Baseline Evaluation Report Romania, paras. 454–459 (2022)).