

BIGMUN 2025

ECOSOC 2: Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
(CCPCJ)

Research Report

Topic 1: Addressing online security and combatting online abuse of vulnerable individuals.



Varia Tkachenko & Priyanka Gonella

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Definitions of Key Terms	1
Background Information	23
Relevant UN Resolutions	4
Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue	5
Possible solutions	6
Bibliography	7

Introduction

Online abuse and lack of online security pose a significant threat to social harmony, undermines public trust and questions the safety in the free world of media. For instance, cyberbullying and online abuse has been a significant issue in countries like India and Brazil, causing severe decrease in public health matters and others. Moreover, the question of online security has been imposed on all states after the increase of social media activity and changes in policies.

Therefore, this research report will elaborate on the problem of the first topic and give examples of resolutions voted to eradicate the issue.

Definitions of Key Terms

Cyberbullying: The activity of using the internet to harm or frighten another person, especially by sending them unpleasant messages.

Harassment: Negative behaviour and mistreatment, such as intimidating or threatening, of another being through social media or any kind of online platform.

Vulnerable individuals: A person/member of a group that is under the legal age of 18 or other individuals who may be unable to take care of themselves or undergo an oppressed group (e.g.: LGBTQ+, Afro-American community, etc.)

Child protection: Measures and structures to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence towards children,

Computer fraud: Illegal action of utilising digital devices to obtain or modify the information of other users, against one's will.

Law enforcement: Refers to the system by which laws are enforced and maintained within a society, typically involving agencies and personnel responsible for ensuring compliance with legal norms and addressing violations of laws and regulations.

Background Information

Online abuse and inadequate online security pose significant challenges to social harmony, public trust, and individual safety worldwide. Vulnerable individuals, including children, women, and marginalised groups, are particularly affected, facing threats such as cyberbullying, online harassment, identity theft, and exploitation. The increasing reliance on digital platforms for communication and interaction has exacerbated these issues, creating an environment where perpetrators can operate with relative anonymity and impunity.

Several countries have faced severe challenges related to online abuse and security vulnerabilities.¹ In India, reports of cyberbullying among adolescents have highlighted its devastating impact on mental health, with many young individuals experiencing heightened anxiety, depression, and, in extreme cases, self-harm. Similarly, in Brazil, the proliferation of hate speech and targeted harassment on social media has contributed to societal divisions and diminished public trust in digital platforms. These examples underscore the urgent need to address the systemic and technological factors enabling such abuses.

In response to these challenges, numerous efforts have been undertaken at national and international levels to enhance online security and protect vulnerable users. The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation² (GDPR) has been a landmark initiative, aiming to safeguard user privacy and ensure accountability among digital service providers. Additionally, countries like the United Kingdom have introduced online safety codes of practice, requiring social media companies to combat illegal activities and foster safer online environments.

Organisations such as UNICEF and Save the Children have also played crucial roles in addressing online abuse through public awareness campaigns and educational initiatives. These programs empower individuals to recognise and report harmful behaviours, while also advocating for stronger policies and frameworks to safeguard vulnerable populations. Technology companies have introduced measures such as artificial intelligence-driven content moderation systems to identify and mitigate harmful content, although the effectiveness and consistency of these efforts remain subjects of debate.

¹ **Cyberbullying Research Center.** (2023). *The Impact of Cyberbullying on Mental Health*. Retrieved from <https://www.cyberbullying.org>

² **European Commission.** (2022). *The Digital Services Act: The new rules for online platforms*. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu>

Combating online abuse and strengthening online security require sustained cooperation across governments, international organisations, and private stakeholders. The rapid evolution of technology and the anonymity offered by digital platforms present significant challenges to regulatory frameworks and enforcement mechanisms. Nonetheless, fostering a secure and inclusive digital environment is essential for ensuring the safety and dignity of all users, ultimately contributing to a more harmonious and equitable global society.

Major Countries and Organisations Involved

Countries

India: India has been significantly impacted by online abuse, with rising cases of cyberbullying, especially among adolescents. The government has responded with initiatives like the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, aimed at regulating digital platforms and addressing online abuse.

Brazil: Brazil has faced challenges related to hate speech and targeted online harassment. The Marco Civil da Internet, often referred to as the "Internet Constitution of Brazil," has been a key legislative framework addressing internet governance and user protection.

United Kingdom: The United Kingdom has introduced online safety codes of practice that require tech companies to address harmful content on their platforms. The United Kingdom's approach emphasises accountability for social media platforms and strict enforcement measures, including financial penalties for non-compliance.

Organisations:

Interpol: As an international police organisation, Interpol works with member states to address cybercrime, including online abuse, by sharing intelligence and coordinating cross-border operations.

UNICEF³: A specialised agency of the UN, UNICEF focuses on protecting children from online threats through awareness campaigns, technical assistance, and international advocacy.

Tech Companies: Major corporations like Meta (formerly Facebook), Google, and X (formerly Twitter) are actively involved in combatting online abuse through initiatives such as content moderation algorithms and enhanced user-reporting mechanisms.

³ **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).** (2023). *Child Online Protection*. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org>

Relevant UN Resolutions ⁴

The United Nations General Assembly has adopted several resolutions addressing online abuse and the protection of vulnerable individuals. Notably, here are relevant Operative Clauses that discuss protection of vulnerable individuals online:

1. *Calls upon* Member States:

- (a) To continue to take all appropriate measures to prevent and protect children, including in school, from any form of violence, including forms of bullying, by promptly responding to such acts, and to provide appropriate support to children affected by and involved in bullying;
- (b) To continue to promote and invest in education, including as a long-term and lifelong process by which everyone learns tolerance and respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring such respect in all societies;
- (c) To address, through necessary measures, the wider economic and social inequalities that may contribute to bullying, including poverty, gender norms and stereotypes, taking into account that risk factors are mixed and vary depending on country and context;
- (d) To develop and implement, as appropriate, measures and restorative practices to repair harm, restore relationships, avoid recidivism, promote the accountability of perpetrators and change aggressive behaviour;

2. *Strongly condemns* all forms of violence against all women and girls, which often occur in a continuum and throughout the life course, and their persistence and pervasiveness, recognising that they are an impediment to the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and to the full realisation of their human rights;

3. *Stresses* that “violence against women and girls” means any act of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary

⁴ **United Nations General Assembly.** (2019). *Protecting Children from Bullying*. Retrieved from [n1844636.pdf](#)

United Nations General Assembly. (2022). *Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: gender stereotypes and negative social norms*. Retrieved from [n2275958.pdf](#)

deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life, online and offline, and notes the economic and social harm caused by such violence;

4. *Urges* States to strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and girls, both offline and online, and reaffirms that they should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination and should pursue, by all appropriate means and without delay, a policy of eliminating all forms of violence against women, as set out in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women;

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Child Online Protection Initiative⁵ (COP):

- Established by International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in November 2008 within the framework of the Global Cybersecurity Agenda (GCA).
- COP initiative promotes awareness of child safety in the online world and develops practical tools to assist governments, industry, and educators.

UN General Assembly Resolution 73/154

- *Acknowledges* risks from new information and communication technologies, including bullying.
- *Calls for* measures to protect children from online abuse while recognising the educational benefits of these technologies.

UNICEF's Initiatives Against Cyberbullying

- Collaborates with social media platforms to address cyberbullying and provide advice to young people.
- Features campaigns like "Kindly," promoting positive online interactions.

UNESCO's Efforts on Cyberbullying

- Observes the International Day against Violence and Bullying at School, including Cyberbullying.
- Raises awareness and promotes actions to ensure student safety online and offline.

UNODC's Work on Online Child Abuse

⁵ **International Telecommunication Union.** (2008). *Child Protection Operation Initiative*
Retrieved from COP.aspx

- Supports member states in combatting human trafficking and raising awareness of online safety for children.
- Reviews the effects of new information technology on child abuse and exploitation.

Possible solutions

The UN and national or international organisations could:

Strengthen Legal Frameworks:

- Support the development and implementation of robust legal and regulatory frameworks that criminalise online abuse, cyberbullying, and other forms of digital misconduct.
- Promote the ratification and effective implementation of international conventions, such as the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, to enhance international cooperation and legal standards for addressing online security threats.

Promote Digital Literacy and Ethical Use of Technology⁶:

- Develop and implement comprehensive educational programs that teach digital literacy, online safety, and the ethical use of technology to children, educators, and parents.
- Foster a culture of responsible online behaviour and respect for digital rights through public awareness campaigns and inclusion in school curricula.

Enhance Technological and Institutional Capacity:

- Invest in technological tools and platforms that enable real-time detection, reporting, and response to online abuse and security breaches.
- Strengthen institutional frameworks to support cybersecurity initiatives, digital forensics, and cross-border cooperation on tackling online threats.

Empower Civil Society and Media:

- Strengthen partnerships with civil society organisations, media, and other stakeholders to raise awareness, monitor compliance, and advocate for measures to protect vulnerable individuals online.

⁶ **Digital Rights Watch.** (2023). *Online Abuse: How Governments and Tech Companies Can Respond*. Retrieved from <https://www.digitalrightswatch.org>

- Support initiatives that encourage transparency, citizen engagement, and public participation in identifying and addressing online abuse and its underlying causes.

Bibliography:

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2023). *Child Online Protection*. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org>

European Commission. (2022). *The Digital Services Act: The new rules for online platforms*. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu>

World Health Organization (WHO). (2022). *Cyberbullying and Mental Health*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int>

Cyberbullying Research Center. (2023). *The Impact of Cyberbullying on Mental Health*. Retrieved from <https://www.cyberbullying.org>

Human Rights Watch. (2021). *Digital Threats: How the Internet is Used to Target Vulnerable Individuals*. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org>

Meta (formerly Facebook). (2022). *Meta's Commitment to Addressing Online Harm*. Retrieved from <https://about.fb.com>

Digital Rights Watch. (2023). *Online Abuse: How Governments and Tech Companies Can Respond*. Retrieved from <https://www.digitalrightswatch.org>

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). (2022). *The Role of Technology in Online Abuse and Exploitation*. Retrieved from <https://www.unodc.org>

United Nations General Assembly. (2019). *Protecting Children from Bullying*. Retrieved from [n1844636.pdf](#)

United Nations General Assembly. (2022). *Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: gender stereotypes and negative social norms*. Retrieved from [n2275958.pdf](#)

Cambridge Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/>

International Telecommunication Union. (2008). *Child Protection Operation Initiative*. Retrieved from [COP.aspx](#)