

Anticorruption Efforts Must Take A Gendered Approach To Successfully Protect Whistleblowers

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A new report by Transparency International found that whistleblowers are essential for ending corruption. Still, globally there are weak or absent whistleblower protections for the gendered violence that often accompanies [corruption](#).

Whistleblowers are essential to uncovering and reporting corruption. In making whistleblowing a successful anticorruption mechanism, whistleblowers often put themselves at personal risk. Therefore, they need comprehensive legal protections. Such protections should incorporate a gendered perspective because female whistleblowers face *more* reprisal than their male counterparts, in part because the necessary legal frameworks to protect them do not exist or have not incorporated a gender perspective. For example, a 2008 study found:

[M]ale whistleblowers were treated differently depending on their power in the organisation, but female whistleblowers received the same treatment regardless of the amount of organisational power they held: Their status as women overrode their status as powerful or powerless organisation members ... On the other hand, women who reported wrongdoing that was serious, or which harmed them directly were more likely to suffer retaliation, whereas men were not... When they (women) blow the whistle about serious wrongdoing or about a higher-level wrongdoer, the whistleblowing is even more at odds with the appropriate role for women, thereby causing them to be seen as deserving retaliation.

At the base, female whistleblowers need adequate laws and policies protecting them against retaliation and providing them strict confidentiality. Additionally, states can further protect female whistleblowers by:

- Creating specific channels through which to report sextortion and gendered retaliation safely;

- Lowering the monetary requirements for recovery, which deter women who may believe their complaints to “not be worth reporting,” due to a lack of perceived monetary value;

- Widely publicizing cases where the state has aggressively enforced antiretaliation provisions.

There is hope for such gendered approaches in the future. For example, the #metoo movement has raised global awareness of workplace sexual harassment and assault and the protections for women who make protected [disclosures](#). In 2019, leaders at the G20 Summit in Osaka endorsed the High-Level Principles for the Effective Protection of Whistleblowers and recognized the gender-specific aspects of [whistleblower protection](#).

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