



AN OVERVIEW: OBJECTIVES OF POPULAR TRIBUNAL/HEARINGS

"As women testify, they not only make visible the abuse to which all too many females are regularly subjected. They also move from being victims to becoming survivors engaged as political actors in changing their own lives and creating the conditions necessary to end such abuse in the lives of millions of women around the world."

Charlotte Bunch, "Without Reservation: the Beijing Tribunal on Accountability for Women's Human Rights"

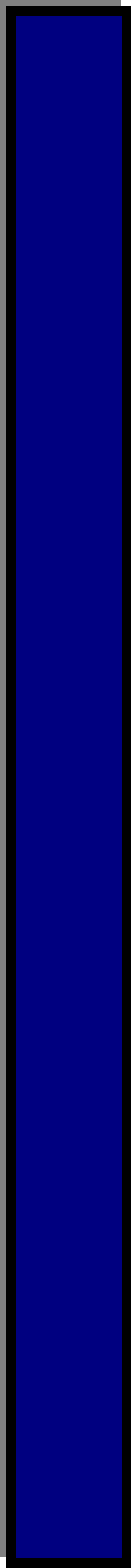
Perhaps the most important overarching objective of a popular tribunal/hearing is to provide women with a supportive public space in which to articulate and make visible their human rights concerns. In most cases, tribunal/hearings include personal, and at times emotional, accounts of abuse and highlight inaction by particular actors in preventing or ending these human rights violations. But tribunal/hearings can also aim to celebrate innovative organizing being carried out around certain themes and issues. Consequently, tribunal/hearings can be shaped according to your own goals and objectives: who do you want to address, what themes do you want to highlight and what would you like the outcomes/products to be from the tribunal/hearing.

While popular tribunals/hearings are not official legal proceedings, they can be used in a variety of ways to further the protection and promotion of women's human rights. The goals and objectives of a tribunal/hearing, therefore, might include one or more of the following:

INCREASE VISIBILITY, EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

A popular tribunal/hearing can serve as a media event to bring women's human rights concerns to a wider national or international audience. Additionally, a tribunal/hearing can be used to:

- Highlight concrete action-strategies that women are using to secure their human rights and achieve accountability.
- Facilitate education and awareness of women's rights as human rights among target audiences – the local community, schools, government departments, policymakers, service providers, etc.
- Educate and sensitize public representatives, decision makers, and opinion shapers about women's human rights concerns at local, national,

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- regional and/or international levels.
 - Help inform mainstream human rights organizations about the issues surrounding women's human rights.

RECORD WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

A popular tribunal/hearing can provide an opportunity to document violations of women's human rights through written transcripts, photographs and audio and video footage. The tribunal/hearing can:

- Create a historical record of human rights violations during specific periods in time such as war and armed conflict situations.
- Highlight the failure of existing human rights mechanisms to promote and protect the human rights of women.

PROMOTE GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The tribunal/hearing can act as a forum for public accountability around gender-based human rights violations and challenge public representatives and decision makers to account for their role in perpetrating violations, or allowing the violations to occur and/or go unpunished.

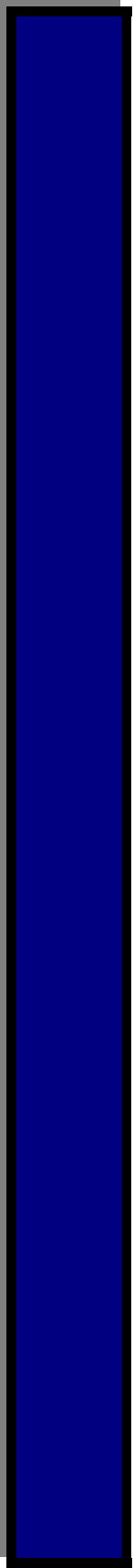
STRENGTHEN AND PROVIDE TOOLS FOR LOBBYING EFFORTS

A popular tribunal/hearing can serve as a powerful central event for a particular lobbying effort or wider campaign for women's human rights. Additionally, it can provide the basis for developing specific demands and recommendations with respect to legislation, policy, and/or remedial action and redress for violations.

MOBILIZE AND BUILD CAMPAIGNS

Tribunals/hearings empower women who testify as well as those who listen or hear about the event. They also:

- Situate particular or local struggles by women within a broader global movement.
- Demonstrate the growing determination of women worldwide to demand accountability for gender-based violations and the avenues available to seek redress.

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- Serve as a focal event around which to extend and strengthen activism for women's human rights.

EMPOWER WOMEN AND SHOWCASE THEIR STRENGTH

Finally, a popular tribunal/hearing provides an opportunity for women to showcase their strength and highlight successful women's human rights organizing strategies.