

**DECLARATION OF EUNJI WON,  
UPR PRE-SESSION ON REPUBLIC OF KOREA, GENEVA, 30 NOVEMBER 2022**

Good morning. I am Eun-ji Won from Team Flame and I speak today at the invitation of Amnesty International Korea. In September of 2019, I helped reveal the “Nth Room” - the world’s largest case of online gender-based violence.

As someone very close to the issue who has worked with victims as a front-line witness for four years, I’m here today to share their voices and urge you to raise the issue of combatting digital sex crimes with the South Korean government at the upcoming UPR.

Excuse me for wearing sunglasses and a mask, as I risk retaliation from perpetrators.

The South Korean government supported eleven of the thirteen recommendations on the rights of women and girls at the last UPR, but actual progress has been minimal.

In 2020, sex crimes accounted for over 90% of the top four violent crimes, and 24% of these were digital sex crimes.

In 2019, I became aware of the Telegram “Nth Room” while researching digital sex crimes as a student. Perpetrators collected the IDs and bank account information of women and girls by luring them with fake modelling jobs. They then forced them to send sexually explicit and abusive photos and threatened to send these to parents, friends and workplaces if the victims did not comply with their demands.

I will never forget the moment I discovered the “Nth Room”. Crimes that aimed to completely erase the humanity of the victims happened there. Victims were forced to carve the word “slave” on their bodies, place dangerous objects inside their genitals, drink toilet water, crawl on the floor, or perform sexual acts outside.

Victims often go into social isolation. Victims suffer from stress, anxiety, eating disorders and some self-harm. Many change their names and addresses. One victim I know even got plastic surgery after she changed her school and name. Because she couldn’t erase the videos, she had to erase herself.

In 2020 alone, the police arrested around [3500] three thousand five hundred perpetrators and identified some [1100] one thousand one hundred victims. Over 60% of the victims were in their teens.

The government took an unprecedented series of steps including strengthening punishment and expanding victim support. However, the government response has not been sufficient.

In August I exposed another incident similar to the “Nth Room”. All of the nine victims were teenagers. A suspect was arrested in Australia last week which shows that this is already becoming a global problem.

President Yoon Seok-yeol has made many sexist remarks and denies there is any structural gender discrimination. The government’s Digital Sex Crime Task Force I was on was dissolved and he is now abolishing the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family - a major threat to victims of digital sex crimes who rely on government funding and resources.

With the current government’s push against women’s rights, we urgently need the international

community to call on the South Korean government to:

- **Encourage** domestic and international private intermediaries to take all appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of online discrimination and violence.
- **Establish** a comprehensive inter-agency mechanism to create an enabling environment for women to access justice.