**UPR36**

**Recommendations by Canada for Bulgaria’s UPR**

**6 November 2020**

Thank you, Madame President.

Canada welcomes the positive steps taken by Bulgaria to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and violence against women and girls.

Canada recommends that Bulgaria:

1. Improve enforcement of laws criminalizing rape, including by conducting thorough investigations, compiling detailed statistical data, and prosecuting all acts of gender-based violence.
2. Investigate and hold to account those who threaten, intimidate and harm journalists, civil society and peaceful protesters, including the reporters who were injured in the protests in August 2020 in Sofia.
3. Conduct adequate investigations and prosecutions into incidents of hate speech with due regard to motives by requiring courts to regularly report, record, and make public cases where hate speech or hate crimes have or have not been considered in court proceedings.

Canada continues to be concerned about limitations on freedom of expression, pluralism and transparency of ownership in the media sector. As recommended during Bulgaria’s last UPR, Canada urges the Republic of Bulgaria to repeal the 1970 National Security Act to ensure freedom of the press.