Media Monitoring Africa’s (MMA) submission to the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls addresses the nexus between sex work and violence against women and girls, focusing on the role of news media and social media platforms in perpetuating or countering harmful narratives and practices related to sex work.

MMA emphasises the need for nuanced reporting in traditional news media to challenge negative stereotypes and empower sex workers, while also raising concerns about content moderation practices on social media platforms and their impact on platform sex workers.

The submission provides an overview of the South African legal context related to sex work, highlighting the criminalization of sex work and the ongoing legislative process for decriminalization. Additionally, MMA presents two overarching issues - the use of outdated, harmful terminology and the conflation between consensual sex work and child sexual exploitation.

The submission concludes with recommendations for the Special Rapporteur, emphasising the importance of accurate and contextually rich media reporting, transparent and balanced content moderation policies on social media platforms, and the need for further investigation into the challenges faced by platform sex workers, considering intersectional forms of discrimination.