

# UNWOMEN

## STUDY GUIDE



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## **A. Welcome Letters**

### **a. Letter from Secretary General**

Most Esteemed Participants,

It is both an honor and a pleasure to welcome you to the ninth edition of GITOMUN, taking place on 23–26 October 2025. Serving as this year’s Secretary-General is a privilege for me, and I feel truly excited to continue the tradition of a conference that has inspired so many young minds over the years. From the first stages of preparation, our academic and organizational teams have worked with real dedication.

This year we are glad to introduce eight committees. Our English committees are H-SPECPOL, UNWOMEN, F-ILO, WHO, H-UNSC, ECOFIN, and The Mirage of Democracy. Alongside them, our Arabic committee, *الأوسط الشرق الخارجية وزراء لجنة*, reflects the inclusivity and diversity that we always aim to uphold.

The theme of GITOMUN, “Power of the past, people of the future,” reminds us that the lessons of history are what guide us into tomorrow. Over these four days, I hope you will challenge yourselves, share new ideas, and also enjoy the atmosphere that makes MUN conferences special.

On behalf of the whole GITOMUN’25 team, I thank you for joining us. May these days be both rewarding and memorable, and may you carry the spirit of diplomacy beyond this conference.

Welcome to GITOMUN’25. Let us make this ninth edition truly unforgettable.

Yours sincerely,  
Secretary-General  
Sümeyye Tahmaz

## **b. Letter from Under Secretary General**

Most Esteemed Delegates of GITOMUN'25,

Welcome to this year's GÜNGÖREN ITO Model United Nations conference! As the Under Secretary General of this distinguished UNWOMEN committee, it is a great honor for me to write this study guide with my Academic Assistant, Elif Betül. My name is Beyza Nur Okumuş and I am a 11th grade student in Kartal AIHL. I am truly pleased to be in this GITOMUN'25 conference as a USG, and also I am really excited to see you in the upcoming GITOMUN'25 conference!

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) stands as a vital platform for advancing gender equality, protecting women's rights, and fostering international cooperation to address systemic challenges faced by women and girls. Our agenda item for this committee, "Combating Violence Against Women: Global Initiatives and Effective Strategies," holds paramount importance as it seeks to highlight the persistence of gender-based violence, evaluate global and regional responses, and explore innovative strategies to ensure the safety, dignity, and empowerment of women worldwide.

We encourage you to fully immerse yourself in your role, build alliances, and actively contribute to the discussions. Your insights, ideas, and enthusiasm are what will drive the conference forward and make it a success.

Thank you for being part of this event. We look forward to a memorable and impactful conference, and we are convinced that each of you will contribute to making it a truly exceptional experience.

If you have any questions or require further clarification, please do not hesitate to reach out to me for any assistance or additional information you may need.

Sincerely,

okumusbeyzanur46@gmail.com

Beyza Nur Okumuş

USG of UNWOMEN Committee



## **B. Key Terms**

**Violence Against Women (VAW):** A term that covers all forms of violence, specifically targeting women due to their gender.

**Domestic Violence:** Violence that occurs within the home, usually by intimate partners or family members.

**Sexual Violence:** Any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by force or exploitation. Includes rape, assault and harassment.

**Femicide:** The intentional killing of women and girls solely because of their gender

**Economic Abuse:** Controlling over a woman's access to financial resources, employment or education to force dependency and power over them.

**Child Marriage:** Refers to any formal marriage or informal union between a child under the age of 18 or another child.

**Stalking:** Repeatment of unwanted surveillance or contact that causes fear or distress, sometimes going all the way to physical violence.

**Misogyny:** Feelings of hating women, or the belief that men are much better than women.

**Patriarchy:** A societal or governmental system in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.

**Dowry:** An amount of money or property that a woman's parents give to the man she marries.

**Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** Violence directed against a person because of that person's gender or violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** All procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

### **C. Introduction to the Committee**

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, commonly known as UN Women, is a UN body responsible for advancing gender equality and promoting the rights of women and girls worldwide. The creation of UN Women came about as part of the UN reform agenda, bringing together resources and mandates for greater impact. It merges and builds on the important work of four previously distinct parts of the UN system which focused exclusively on gender equality and women's empowerment, which were: DAW, INSTRAW, OSAGI and UNIFEM. The main roles of UN Women include supporting inter-governmental bodies, such as the Commission on the Status of Women, in their formulation of policies, global standards and norms; helping Member States to implement these standards, standing ready to provide suitable technical and financial support to those countries that request it and to forge effective partnerships with civil society and enabling member states to hold the UN system accountable for its own commitments on gender equality, including regular monitoring of system-wide progress. UN Women is widely recognized as the leading source of gender expertise within the UN system. It provides governments, NGOs and civil society with research, data and knowledge on gender equality, ensuring evidence-based approaches to addressing challenges faced by women and girls across the globe. The entity also plays a central role in promoting global awareness by leading the coordination of international Women's Day events each year. Through many efforts across decades, UN Women has become a driving force for change, ensuring that women are heard, their rights are protected, and their leadership is advanced all over the world.

### **D. Introduction to the Agenda Item**

The United Nations define violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women,

including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life." The perpetration of VAW directly impacts women's physical and emotional health, continues the cycle of violence among their children, who may become perpetrators or survivors themselves, and hinders women's active participation in and contribution to society. VAW affects every aspect of well-being, agency, and self-actualization, including educational achievement, livelihood/employment prospects, physical and emotional health, involvement in civic activities, and many more. The international recognition of violence against women as a human rights issue is relatively recent. For centuries, such violence was often treated as a private matter rather than a societal concern. A turning point came in 1979 with the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which laid the framework for addressing the main reasons that enable gender-based violence. In 1993, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, forming the first international instrument to provide a clear and inclusive definition of the issue. Two years later, in 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action identified the elimination of violence against women as one of the twelve critical areas for achieving gender equality. For many years, the United Nations faced serious challenges in its efforts to promote gender equality globally, including inadequate funding and no single force to direct UN activities on gender equality issues. On 2 July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women to address such challenges.

## **E. Agenda Item: Combating Violence Against Women: Global Initiatives and Effective Strategies**

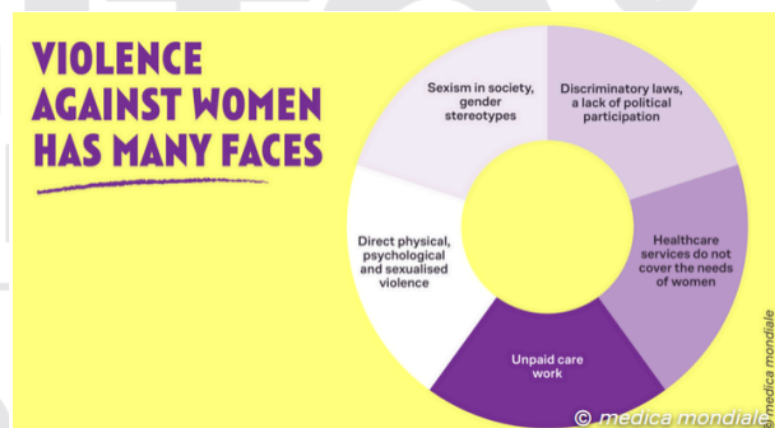
### **a. General Overview**



Violence against women is a major human rights violation as well as a widespread public health concern. It has significant short-term, medium-term and long-term effects on the physical and mental health and

well-being of women, children and families. It is estimated that between 38% and 40% of murders of women are committed by intimate partners. Violence against women also has serious social and economic consequences for countries and societies. The previous global and regional estimates of violence against women, published in 2013, established that intimate partner violence against women is a globally pervasive public health problem – experienced by almost a third of all women worldwide – requiring urgent action. This new report provides updated global and regional estimates of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, based on more and better quality data, and also presents country estimates<sup>1</sup> of intimate partner violence against women. Violence against women takes many forms, including: spousal/intimate partner violence (physical, sexual and/or psychological); sexual violence by persons other than a spouse/partner, including other family members, friends, acquaintances or strangers (i.e. non-partner sexual violence); femicide, including murders in the name of “honour”; and trafficking of women. Violence by a husband or male intimate partner (or other male family member) is the most pervasive form of violence against women globally.

Efforts to combat violence against women have undergone extensive changes since the 1970s, reflected in evolving language and practices as well as changes in the aspirations and demands of women and girls. As understanding has grown, it has been possible to identify unintended consequences of particular courses of action.



Under international law, a State may be responsible for acts of violence against women committed by non-state actors if it fails with due diligence to prevent, stop and investigate acts of violence, punish perpetrators and provide compensation to the victims, as specified in General Recommendation 19 (1992) of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The legal concept of due diligence clarifies the responsibility of States to make women's rights a reality. This responsibility is enshrined within the established requirement of exercising due diligence to respect, protect, fulfill and promote human rights.



Exercising due diligence includes actions with respect to prevention, investigation of violations of human rights that have occurred and prosecution of perpetrators through fair proceedings. It also requires that adequate reparations be made to victims, including compensation, justice and ‘rehabilitation’.

Despite strong and evolving policy from the United Nations, most States fail to comply fully with their international obligations: some States lack the political will to translate international human rights treaties, which they have ratified, into effective domestic laws that protect women from violence; some fail to allocate adequate resources to implement laws, put in place necessary measures such as policies, services and practices, or to develop and support primary prevention programmes; women’s services everywhere struggle for meagre resources, and in many countries and regions there are no specialized services at all; too many perpetrators continue to escape sanction even when they commit grave and repeated acts of gender-based violence; there are few claims by States to have made even the smallest reduction in overall prevalence; policy development and investment of resources has tended to follow populist agendas, with, for example, domestic violence and/or trafficking in women receiving most attention in the 1990s; work on prevention has in almost all contexts been limited to local short-term measures.

Significant differences exist in access to support and remedies: depending on where women currently suffering abuse or attempting to deal with its legacies live in the world determines the kinds of support -if any- that are available to them, and the sanctions -if any- their abusers receive. In this context, the basic parameters of ‘good practice’ remain to ensure that all women have access to basic protections, support and redress, including women who are currently excluded because they are undocumented, or have uncertain legal status. The right not to be abused must be absolute. States have the responsibility to address all violations of women’s human rights that take place on their territory and/or are committed by their citizens in extra-territorial contexts.

Violence against women has been a key theme for contemporary women’s movements, but the issue of when and how to intervene has been a matter of debate for three decades. Unresolved questions remain a matter of ongoing debates and dialogues at all levels, including within the research community. Data and evaluation do not, by themselves, resolve

fundamental questions: interventions that are shown to ‘work’ may not be adopted broadly for a range of reasons, only some of which are about resources. Equally, actions that statistical data suggest are relatively ineffective on their own in preventing violence against women continue to be widely used for their short-term impact and benefits for individuals.

### **i. Definition and Scope of Violence Against Women**

One in three women worldwide experience physical or sexual violence, mostly by an intimate partner. Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation, and the immediate and long-term physical, sexual, and mental consequences for women and girls can be devastating, including death.

Violence negatively affects women’s general well-being and prevents women from fully participating in society. It impacts their families, their community, and the country at large. It has tremendous costs, from greater strains on health care to legal expenses and losses in productivity.

The question of definition recurs in relation to all issues, as new knowledge and perspectives extend understanding. The 1993 United Nations Declaration on the elimination of violence against women provides a very broad and inclusive framework.

Violence against women means *any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life*. (General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993, Article 1)

Specifically, the Declaration outlines a broad variety of acts and circumstances that are included in this definition:

Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape,

female genital mutilation, and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;

Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation occurring at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, and trafficking in women and forced prostitution;

Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

The Declaration recognizes that some groups of women are particularly vulnerable to violence, such as: women belonging to minority groups, indigenous women, refugee women, migrant women, women living in rural or remote communities, destitute women, women in institutions or in detention, female children, women with disabilities, elderly women and women in situations of armed conflict. Subsequent international legal and policy instruments have expanded this framework to trafficking for sexual exploitation, sexual and gender-based violence in conflict including forced pregnancy, and explored the question of deliberate exposure to HIV/AIDS.

This definition of violence against women has proved extremely helpful in indicating that such violence occurs in a range of contexts, and especially in drawing attention to violence in the family. The fact that various forms of violence against women continue to be 'legitimized' and 'normalized' makes it necessary, at all levels, to name them explicitly, as well as to locate them as violations of rights. Services need to enable women to name their own experiences and the tendency towards using gender-neutral concepts is unhelpful. For example, the important naming of 'sexual harassment' in the late 1970s has been eclipsed in many western countries by gender-neutral concepts of 'bullying' and 'violence at work'. In the process, the complexity of sexual harassment has been lost, as has its connection to gender inequality. The integration of violence against women into mainstream human rights thinking and discourse should not be at the cost of losing a sense of the violations of women's bodies, minds and spirits.

## **ii. Root Causes and Contributing Factors**

The factors contributing to Violence Against Women can be intrinsic, within the individual, in the victim or in the perpetrator; or extrinsic, in the environment. The latter could be in the immediate environment (e.g., family) or in the community. The important causes of violence are listed below.

### **Sociodemographic:**

Early and young age, illiterate or low level of literacy, poverty, urban domicile, and women with no income of their own, unmarried, separated or divorced status or being in a live-in relationship have been cited as risk factors for domestic violence. India ranks at 101 position in the list of 136 nations in the disparity index in terms of economic, political, health care, and educational opportunities for women and their participation in such services (Times of India, October 26, 2013).

Women engaged in small business and farming were more likely to be abused than women who were housewives or who had occupational status equal to that husbands. Where women have a higher economic status than their husbands and are having sufficient power to change traditional gender roles, violence is at its highest. In predisposed persons, marriage can contribute to mental health problems. Mentally ill women are subjected to different forms of violence in a marital unit without the appropriate steps being undertaken for the management of their mental illness, further contributing to marital disharmony and limited family functioning.

### **Family factors:**

Exposure to harsh physical discipline during childhood and witnessing the father beating the mother during childhood is a predictor of victimization and perpetration of violence against his wife in adulthood. Women, who reported experiencing harsh physical punishment during childhood and had witnessed their fathers beat their mothers, were at increased risk of spousal physical violence (beat, hit and kick).

### **Psychiatric morbidity:**

There is robust evidence to suggest that alcohol has been the factor associated with perpetration of several forms of Violence Against Women. A recent meta-analysis provided strong evidence for association between alcohol and intimate partner violence among women. Prevalence of aggression is higher among psychiatric patients, especially those suffering from severe mental illness like schizophrenia. The most pathological cluster type personality contributes to more anger experience. Other morbidities like paranoid schizophrenia, delusional disorder, bipolar disorder, and antisocial personality have been linked with perpetration of sexual Violence Against Women.

Persons with intellectual disability form a particularly vulnerable group as in them a higher prevalence of sexual assault than in general population has been reported. Likewise, women suffering depression, severe mental illness, and mental retardation would be at high risk for various types of abuse.

Women with severe mental illness constitute an extremely vulnerable population at risk for various types of violence. Women with mental illness are often rejected by their families, usually when the mental illness manifests soon after marriage, or the fact of mental illness before marriage comes to light, primarily because of the widespread stigma of mental illness. According to the Indian legislations like Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, and Special Marriage Act, 1954, a severe, recurrent and disabling mental illness is a ground for nullity of marriage. Thus, many husbands reject their wives with mental illness as they know that in a patriarchal society they would always be able to remarry. However, as many of these women are married with hefty dowry and also because the marriage is considered to be a permanent union, the women and their families may adopt all sorts of measures to prevent nullity of marriage. Thus, when social measures fail, legal measures may be adopted. Complaints may be made under their Dowry Prohibition Act, the PWDVA or 498A IPC (of cruelty by husband and relatives of husband). Although in such cases the allegations are of violence and/harassment for dowry, the main concern is the restitution of conjugal rights, not dowry. Dowry is a nonissue in most of the cases, because both the giver and receiver of dowry were in agreement. Various forms of violence may be inflicted on the women so as to drive them out of the matrimonial homes. It is usually a no-win situation. All along the treatment of mental



illness of the women is neglected which worsens the situation and closes the gates for reconciliation. Many marriages end up in separation or divorce; children are the worst sufferers.

### **Sociocultural traditions:**

Patriarchy, traditions like dowry, family honor, witnessing family violence etc., have continued through the ages and have put women in disadvantaged positions.

### **Media and pornography:**

Media plays a pivotal role. Repeated exposure to violence in the media has been associated with increased incidence of aggression, especially in children. Television and cinemas are portraying sexual material for making fast money. Pornographic material is easily available to many on the internet and through other ways.

### **Addiction:**

Easy availability of addicting substances (especially alcohol, bhang, and ganja) is also responsible.

### **Legislation:**

#### **Hindu Marriage Act (1955)**

Deficiencies in certain legislations are noteworthy. According to two major legislations on marriage the Hindu Marriage Act (1955) and Special Marriage Act (1954) presence of mental illness at the time of marriage or in the past, if concealed, can become a ground of nullity of marriage. The marriage is voidable if the person “is incapable of giving a valid consent to it in consequence of unsoundness of mind” or is “suffering from a mental disorder of such a kind, or to such an extent, as to be unfit for marriage and procreation of children” or “has been subject to recurrent attacks of insanity.” These words have not been clearly defined and have been differently interpreted both by people and legal professionals. During the past 50

years the prognosis of severe mental illness has improved considerably. Very few persons would meet the conditions laid down in the marriage Acts. However, because of mention of the word “mental disorder” and “insanity” many husbands and their families and lawyers take the stand that they are justified in rejecting their wives.

### **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005)**

This Act does not recognize mental illness as a cause of domestic violence. The perpetrator of domestic violence is not permitted to plead any defense. He is to be counseled to stop violence. There is no provision in the code of civil procedure for mandatory psychiatric assessment and treatment.

### **Dowry Prohibition Act (1961)**

Although many complaints under this Act are genuine, there is evidence that frivolous complaints are also made against the husband and relatives with the sole purpose of saving the marriage, when it is on the verge of breakdown. This is most often done when there is underlying mental illness in the women. In a typical case the husband rejects the woman because of mental illness, while the woman's family denies mental illness and alleges that the abnormal behavior is because of cruelty meted out to her to fetch more dowry. In most of the cases treatment of the mental disorder remains neglected leading to more violence. There is no provision in the code of civil procedure for mandatory psychiatric assessment and treatment.

### **Psychosocial stress:**

Psychosocial stress relating to poverty, education, career, unemployment, work, marriage, and corruption etc., can contribute to violence by resulting in maladaptive coping responses and/or triggering mental illness in vulnerable individuals.

### **Recreation and sports:**

Lack of appropriate facilities for recreation/sports and development of creative abilities and social networking also have some role.

### **Law enforcement machinery:**

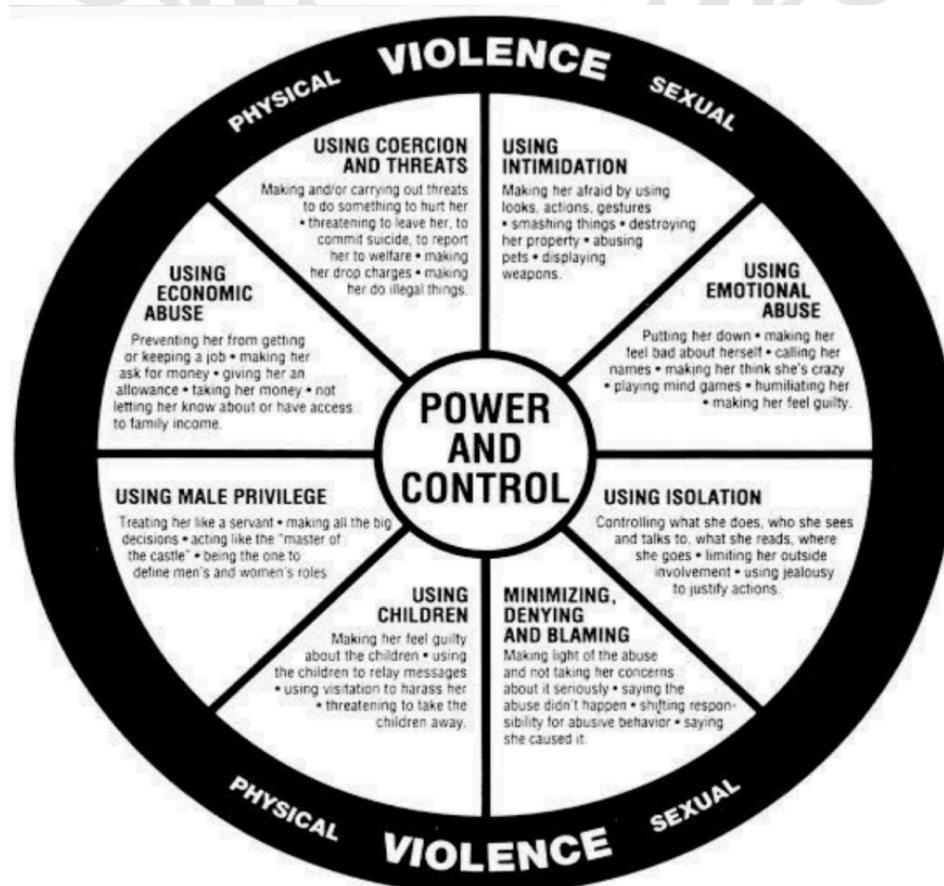
An insensitive, inefficient, unaccountable and corrupt law enforcement machinery (including administrators, police, and judiciary) loses its role as a mechanism for redress of complaints and deterrent for commission of crimes. Often, it has rightly been said that “justice delayed is justice denied.”

### **Religious and ethical values:**

Deterioration of religious and ethical values are also important.

### **Multiple risk factors:**

Multiple risk factors may be present in some individuals making them at risk for perpetrating violence or of becoming victims of the same. For example, men living away from home, residing with an unhealthy peer group, facing multiple stresses, and having access to pornography and alcohol, may be particularly vulnerable.



### iii. Forms of Violence

#### *Intimate partner violence:*

Intimate partner violence refers to behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours. This is one of the most common forms of violence experienced by women globally. 16 Intimate partner violence is one of the manifestations of domestic violence. Domestic violence is violence that occurs within the private, domestic sphere, generally between individuals who are related through blood or intimacy. Domestic violence is not confined to women, for example it also includes child abuse and elderly abuse in the domestic sphere.

#### **Types of Intimate partner violence:**

- Physical violence: Acts like slapping, choking or burning.
- Sexual violence: Coercive acts including spousal rape.
- Psychological violence: Tactics of fear and control such as intimidation or forced isolation.
- Economic violence: Maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding access to money, and/or forbidding attendance at school or employment, among others.

#### *Sexual violence:*

Sexual violence is any sort of harmful or unwanted sexual behaviour that is imposed on someone. It includes acts of abusive sexual contact, forced engagement in sexual acts, attempted or completed sexual acts with a woman without her consent, sexual harassment, verbal abuse, threats, exposure, unwanted touching, incest, and others.

#### **Sexual violence can include the following:**

- **Sexual harassment** may involve any conduct of a verbal, nonverbal or physical nature, including written and electronic communications. Sexual harassment can take a variety of

forms – from looks and words though to physical contact of a sexual nature. Examples of sexual harassment include sharing sexual or lewd anecdotes or jokes; unwelcome touching, including pinching, patting, rubbing, or purposefully brushing up against another person, repeatedly asking a person for dates or asking for sex and making sexual comments about appearance, clothing, or body parts, among others.

- **Rape** is any sexual penetration without consent or as a result of intimidation, force, fraud, coercion, threat, deception, use of drugs or alcohol, abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or the giving or receiving of benefits. This can be by any person known or unknown to the survivor, within marriage and relationships, and during armed conflict.
- **Corrective rape** is a form of rape perpetrated against someone on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. It is intended to force the victim to conform to heterosexuality or normative gender identity.
- **Sexual exploitation** are acts of abuse of a position of vulnerability, power or trust, or use of force or threat of force, for profiting financially, physically, socially or politically from the prostitution or sexual acts of a person. Sexual exploitation is the most prevalent form of human trafficking.
- **Sexual violence in conflict** Acts of violence against women include violation of the human rights of women in situations of armed conflict, such as systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy, as well as forced sterilization, coercive/forced use of contraceptives, female infanticide and prenatal sex selection.

**Table 2.2. Operational definitions of non-partner sexual violence (NPSV) and indicators most frequently used in surveys included in this analysis**

| TERM                                           | DEFINITION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Non-partner sexual violence (NPSV)</b>      | <p>A woman's self-reported experience of one or more acts of sexual violence by someone other than a current or former husband or male intimate partner since the age of 15 years.<sup>a</sup></p> <p>"Sexual violence" refers to being forced, coerced or threatened to perform any unwanted sexual act; this could include rape, attempted rape, unwanted sexual touching or non-contact forms of sexual violence.</p> <p>Some surveys used "rape" or "attempted rape" as their only measure of NPSV. In order to avoid further underestimation of an already highly underreported form of violence, the statistical modelling adjusted for the use of this narrow definition (see Fig. 3.1 in Section 3, and Annex 11 for further details).</p> <p>Note: Sexual harassment was not included in the definition of sexual violence.</p> <p>Note: For this form of violence, all women (ever- and never-married/partnered women) can be considered "at risk" and are hence included in the denominator for this measure.</p> |
| <b>Lifetime prevalence<sup>b</sup> of NPSV</b> | <p>The proportion of women who reported that they had been subjected to one or more acts of sexual violence by someone other than a current or former husband or male intimate partner in their lifetime (defined as since the age of 15 years).<sup>c</sup></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

a The age of 15 years was set as the lower age limit for the purposes of these estimates (as for intimate partner violence). Adolescent girls in the age group 15–17 years who have been subjected to NPSV are also considered to have been subjected to child sexual abuse.

b Prevalence refers to the number of women who have been subjected to sexual violence divided by the number of at-risk women (all women, in the case of NPSV) in the study population.

c As presented in section 4.2.1 (Global prevalence of non-partner sexual violence), NPSV from the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) only captures (i) the experience if the perpetrator of the first act of sexual violence was a non-partner; (ii) sexual violence resulting from use of physical force only (which does not capture sexual violence involving the use of intimidation, threats or coercion); and (iii) women whose first sexual violence experience was since age 15 and hence filters out those who may have first experienced it before age 15 and also subsequently.

### ***Femicide (feminicide):***

Femicide (feminicide) is the intentional killing of a woman or a girl because she is a woman or a girl. The gender-related motivation of the killing may range from discrimination towards women and girls, harmful stereotypes, to unequal power dynamics between women and men. Femicide is the most extreme and brutal expression of gender-based violence.

Femicide can take place in a wide range of contexts, both private and public, and within different types of relationships between the perpetrator and victim. Often, gender-related killings involve cases with a previous record of physical, sexual, or psychological violence/harassment. Femicide is also found in situations involving human trafficking, forced labour, or slavery. In some cases, the body of the victim is disposed of in a public space, pointing to the perpetrator's intent to display power and reinforce fear.

Gender-related killings can also include so-called honor killings, where family members, usually targeting women or girls within the family unit, commit murder for the purported



reason that the person has brought dishonor or shame upon the family. These killings often have to do with ideas of sexual purity and supposed transgressions that are culturally condemned, leading to brutal consequences for female family members.

Gender-related killings and other forms of violence against women and girls are not inevitable. They can and must be prevented, through early intervention and multi-stakeholder and multisectoral partnerships—including the partnerships that helped to produce this research paper, which we hope will support more determined action against this crime.

### ***Human trafficking:***

Harmful practices are a violation of human rights that put women's and adolescents' sexual and reproductive health and rights at great risk. A variety of harmful practices exist, including female genital mutilation (FGM), child and forced marriage, virginity testing and related practices, extreme dietary restrictions, including during pregnancy (force-feeding, food taboos), binding, scarring, branding/ infliction of tribal marks, corporal punishment, stoning, violent initiation rites, widowhood practices, accusations of witchcraft and ritual attacks, son preference, daughter aversion and gender-biased sex selection, honor crimes, dowry related violence, menstruation restrictions, infanticide, incest and body modifications that are performed for the purpose of beauty or marriageability of girls and women.

### **Harmful practices can include the following:**

- Female genital mutilation (FGM) refers to all procedures involving partial or total removal of the female external genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is most often carried out on young girls between infancy and age 15. FGM has no health benefits and can lead to serious, long-term complications and even death. Immediate health risks include hemorrhage, shock, infection, HIV transmission, urine retention and severe pain. Psychological impacts can range from a girl losing trust in her caregivers, to longer-term feelings of anxiety and depression. In adulthood, girls subjected to FGM are more likely to suffer infertility or complications during childbirth, including postpartum hemorrhage, stillbirth and early neonatal death.

Numerous factors contribute to the persistence of the practice. Yet in every society in which it occurs, FGM is an expression of deeply rooted gender inequality. In every form in which it is practiced, FGM is a violation of girls' and women's fundamental human rights, including their rights to health, security and dignity. It was first classified as violence in 1997 via a joint statement issued by WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA.

- **Child, early and forced marriage:** Child marriage is any marriage where at least one of the parties is under 18 years of age. Forced marriage is a marriage in which one and/or both parties have not personally expressed their full and free consent to the union. A child marriage is considered to be a form of forced marriage, given that one and/or both parties have not expressed full, free and informed consent.

It is widely recognized that child marriage is a violation of children's rights and has several harmful effects on the lives of children (overwhelmingly girls), including early and frequent pregnancies, higher risks of maternal mortality and morbidity, limited decision-making in family matters and school dropout.

#### **Online or technology-facilitated violence:**

Technology-facilitated violence against women is any harmful act that is committed, assisted, aggravated, or amplified by the use of digital tools or information communication technologies. These acts can result in or have the potential to cause physical, sexual, psychological, social, political, or economic harm, as well as infringe on rights and freedoms. This violence can occur in online spaces, and it can be perpetrated offline through the use of technological means, such as controlling a woman's whereabouts by using a GPS tracker.

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence not only intensifies existing forms and patterns of violence against women, such as intimate-partner violence, but also introduces new forms of violence such as online stalking and image-based abuse through artificial intelligence like deepfake videos.

While all women and girls who are online or who use digital tools may face violence online, some groups are at greater risk. These include women who are most visible online, including

women in public life, journalists, human rights defenders, politicians, young women and girls and feminist activists.

Online violence can include the following:

- **Cyberbullying:** involves sending intimidating or threatening messages.
- **Non-consensual sexting:** sending explicit messages or photos without the recipient's consent.
- **Doxing:** public release of private or identifying information about the victim.

#### **iv. Intersectionality**

The works of Women of Color have brought forward intersectionality as a path of forming the differing interplays of race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion and other social divisions interlinking with patriarchy. In order to mediate the tension between declarations of multiple identities and the politics of social relations, the perspective for intersectionality could be helpful with its postmodern and postcolonial questioning technique that shows how meaning is socially constructed. Intersectionality addresses the problems related to patriarchy. It centralizes the problem of difference and how it is complex for the public.

Throughout history, black women have both struggled with racial problems and stood against the patriarchy with white women. Patriarchy has negative effects not only on black women, but also has serious effects on black men, too. To struggle with the misogynistic politics, patriarchal values are supposed to be taken into consideration. Patriarchal power ensures men stand in the front of women free from class and race. Therefore, black women and white women should struggle against the patriarchy together, however, when racism is the point in question, they should not forget men also suffer from racism. Thanks to the feminist movement, women have struggled against everyday violence that brutally forms their lives.

Through figuring out the power of sharing similar experiences, women have become conscious that political requests vocalize more effectively than the solicitation of a few segregated voices. As a result of this perspective, there has been a transformation in the politicization of how we comprehend violence against women.

The term “intersection” has been used in the UN Commission on Human Rights on 23rd of April 2002. Yuval-Davis states that the resolution on the human rights of women had been stated in its first paragraph. In accordance with them, the United Nations “...recognized the importance of examining the intersection of multiple forms of discrimination, including their root causes from a gender perspective.” (Resolution E/CN.4/2002/L.59)

From this perspective, social elements that determine a woman’s identity are actually indivisible. Ignoring one of the social situations cannot be possible in identity politics to understand the person. Women are subject to double oppression by the intersection of race, gender, and class. Therefore, while we are speaking of gender or race, we should not have any division between two situations. If there is an isolation, there will be missing parts in the gender politics.

#### **v. Impact on Economy, Society, and Development**

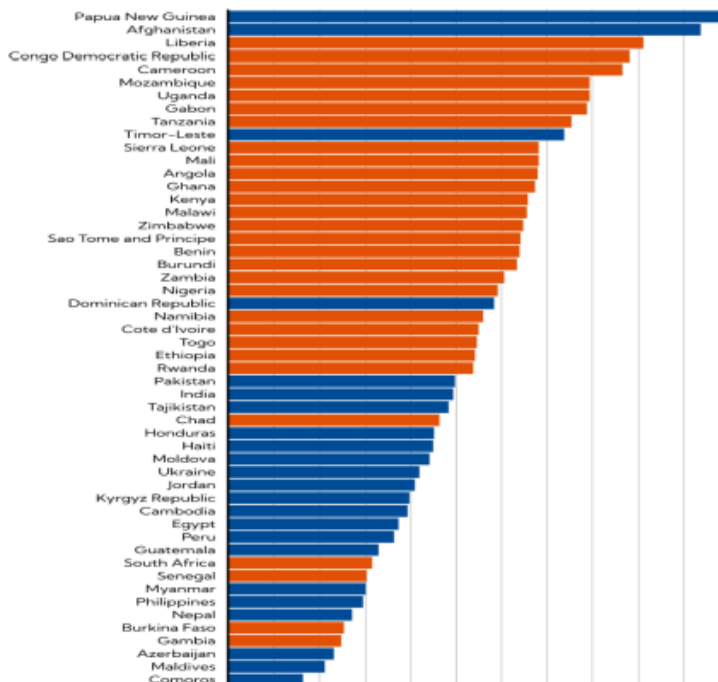
##### **Economy:**

The economic costs of domestic violence are higher during downturns and could make recovery more challenging. Abuse of any form is fundamentally wrong and a violation of basic human rights. New IMF staff research shows how violence against women and girls is a major threat to economic development in a region where domestic violence is widespread—sub-Saharan Africa.

The results of the study suggest that an increase in violence against women by 1 percentage point is associated with a 9 percent lower level of economic activity (proxied by nighttime lights).

### Nothing to envy

Sub-Saharan African countries have some of the highest rates of reported physical, sexual and emotional abuse of women committed by a husband or partner.  
(percent, SSA in orange)



The data come from 18 sub-Saharan African countries, covering more than 224 districts and more than 440,000 women representing around 75 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's female population.

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around 75 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's female population.

The surveys found that more than 30 percent of women in the region had experienced some form of domestic abuse.

To measure the impact on economic development at a district level, the IMF compares the survey data with satellite data on nighttime lights provided by the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Nightlight satellite data can be a powerful tool for measuring economic activity when the most used measure for economic activity—gross domestic product—is not available at the sub-national level.

The IMF found that higher levels of violence against women and girls are associated with lower economic activity, driven mainly by a significant drop in female employment. The physical, psychological, and emotional violence that women experience makes it more difficult for them to achieve or maintain a job.

Based on this connection, if sub-Saharan African countries in the sample were to reduce the level of gender-based violence closer to the world average of 23 percent of women experiencing abuse, it could result in long-term GDP gains of around 30 percent.

**Table 1: Categories and examples of costs resulting from violence against women**

#### Justice

Police: vehicle use, dispatch center use, emergency response teams, interrogations, training, administrative time, criminal investigations, forensic services, in-court time, restraining orders, coroner.  
Legal: prosecuting and defending lawyers' time in office, preparation and in court, legal aid, judge time, court time, jury costs, witness time, Courts of Appeal, Supreme Courts hearings and decisions.  
Penal: jail time both prior to and after sentencing, probation, parole, therapies.  
Related: prisoner support organizations, victim compensation payouts.

#### Health

Direct costs include short run and long run health care in doctor's offices, clinics of all types and hospitals including:  
Capital in buildings, infrastructure, laboratory equipment, machinery and vehicles.  
Labour for ambulance, emergency ward services, hospital admissions, outpatient clinics, physicians offices support staff, mental health services and clinics, physicians, nurses, paramedics, physiotherapists, other specialists, psychiatrists, psychologists, alternative healers, dentists, etc.  
Materials for: diagnostic procedures, treatments, medications, food, etc.  
Health insurance premiums and payouts.  
Indirect health costs borne by individuals include reduced longevity, the effects of poor health on lifestyle choices, reduced mobility for participating in public life, HIV/AIDS from coerced sex and health consequences of practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM).

#### Social Services

May apply to victim, perpetrator or children  
Publicly funded services such as shelters, crisis lines and services, social workers, counselling, home visits, children's services, emergency response teams, fire fighters, therapeutic support groups, retraining, networked support services.  
Government time addressing laws on violence against women, administration of ministries responsible, government research and policy analysis.  
Research grants, conferences, publications, policy papers, advocacy groups, public awareness campaigns.  
Privately funded services such as hot lines and help lines, Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, community support groups, church-run support, perpetrator therapeutic support groups, volunteer hours, volunteer agencies.

#### Education

Special education for children who witness violence.  
Job-readiness, training in the local language, re-training for victims and their children.  
School programs aimed at reducing violence against girls.  
Indirect cost of reduced educational attainment for women and their children.

**Table 1: Categories and examples of costs resulting from violence against women**

#### Business and Employment Costs

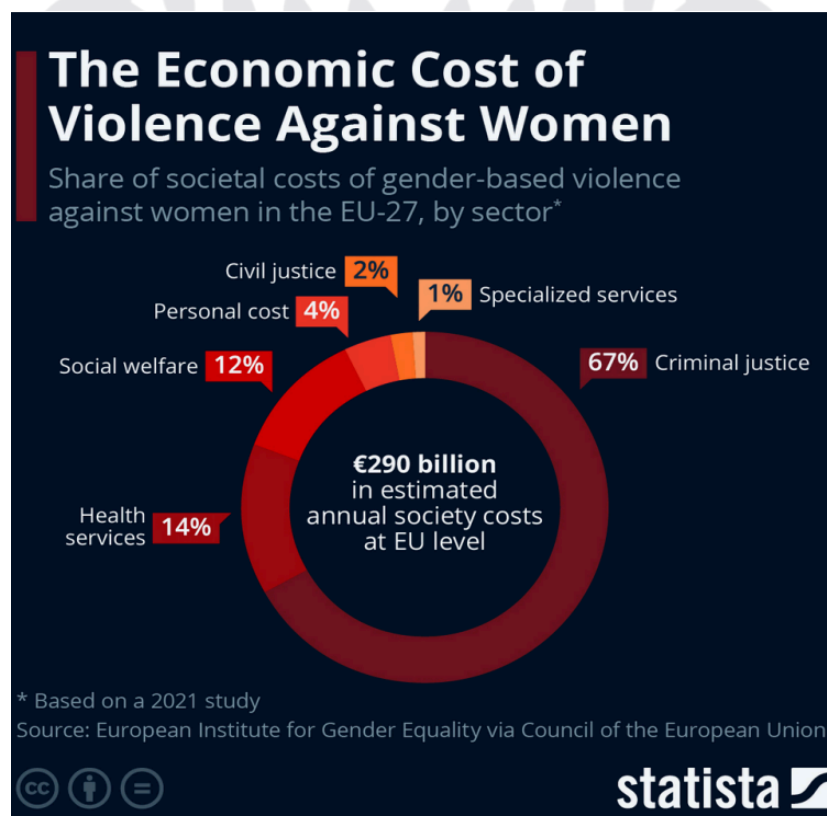
Reduced productivity, reduced output, reduced profits.  
Administrative time and costs of search, hiring and training replacements.  
Programs for creating safe workplaces, training staff, on-site medical services, Employee Assistance Plans.  
Overtime paid to co-workers who cover for victim.  
Relocation, separation pay, benefits, insurance premiums.  
Grievances for incidents at work, supervisory time, processing complaints, litigation, court time, compensation expenses.  
Lost tax revenue from reduced output and income, lower GNP.

#### Personal or Household Costs

Lost earnings from time off work, lower productivity, less attachment to the labour force, expenses of a new job search.  
Medical fees, therapies, counselling, transportation for doctors or legal appointments, childcare for same, medications, prescriptions, treatment programs, alternative healing, self-help materials.  
Lower savings and investments.  
Lost household productivity in unpaid work, loss of economies of scale if separating.  
Legal fees for assault, custody, separation or divorce cases.  
On-going child custody disputes, custody arrangements or visitation problems requiring time, attention and resources to solve.  
Interest on loans, car rentals, lost deductibles on insurance claims, bad debts of ex-spouse, loss of shared pensions or transfer payments.  
Expenses incurred from relocation, replacing destroyed articles, repairing damage to home or possessions, temporary accommodation.  
Funerals and burials.  
Other out-of-pocket expenses such as interpreters, drugs, alcohol, protection services, self-defence courses, rehabilitation and recovery programs, special diets, unlisted phone numbers.

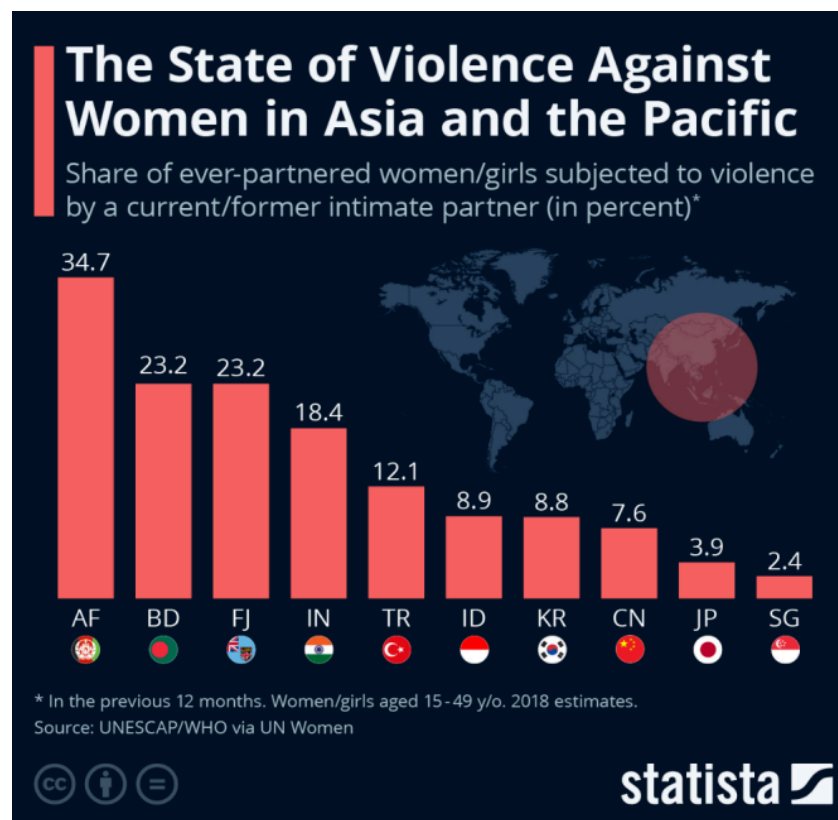
#### Intangibles

Pain and suffering of the victim and her children.  
Death of the victim or perpetrator, including suicides.  
Second generation effects on children who witness violence.  
Loss of freedom for incarcerated perpetrators.  
Fear of violence among women in society.





## Society:



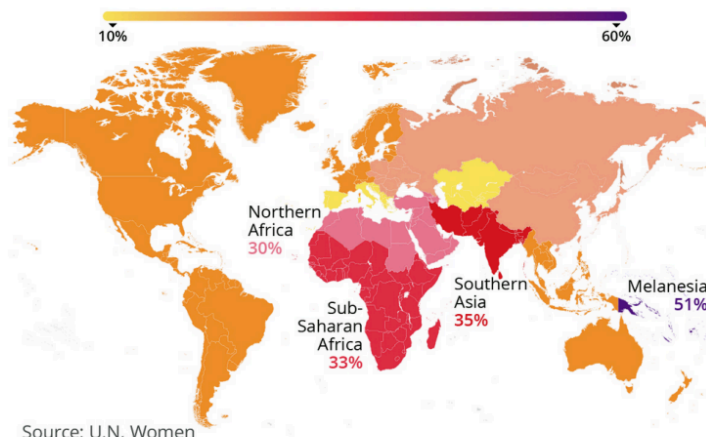
Violence against women and girls brings huge economic costs to any society. The negative impact on women's participation in education, employment and civic life undermines poverty reduction. It results in lost employment and productivity, and it drains resources from social services, the justice system, health-care agencies and employers. As such, violence against

women is a clear barrier to sustainable development.

VAW (Violence Against Women) is directly related to the structural and cultural norms of societies that push women into the background. Women often internalize the effects of the violence they experience and as a result, they face situations such as loss of self-confidence,

### One in Three Women Experience Violence at Hands of a Partner

Lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence among women aged 15-49, by region



isolation, and suicidal thoughts. As a result, violence against women is not only an individual trauma, but also an inequality problem deeply rooted in the social structure.

In societies where domestic violence occurs frequently, its outcomes are directly noticed in the development of these societies, and high number of domestic violence cases negatively

affects society. Women living in a domestic violence environment experience mental shocks from other types of violence as well as psychological violence. Those women see decline in their social activities, and in the days they experience violence their concentration and participation at work decreases too. Mothers who lost their self-confidence and hope cannot properly engage in the upbringing and education of their children at home.

### **Development:**

Violence against women and girls imposes large-scale costs on families, communities and economies when women cannot work as a result of violence, their employment could be put at risk, jeopardizing much-needed income, autonomy and their ability to leave abusive relationships. The violence also results in lost productivity for businesses, and drains resources from social services, the justice system and health-care agencies. The net result 'is enormous suffering as well as the exclusion of women from playing their full and rightful roles in society'.

A culture of violence against women also has serious consequences for our efforts to eradicate poverty and promote inclusive, sustainable development. Violence prevents women from participating in all areas of society in the decisions that impact their lives. It is a barrier to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: our roadmap for peaceful prosperous lives on a healthy planet.

### **b. Timeline of Key Events**

1979: Adopted by the UN General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) recognized violence as a part of discrimination against women in recommendations 12 and 19.

1992: The World Conference on Human Rights recognized violence against women as a human rights violation and requested the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

1993: Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women was the first international instrument to specifically define and address violence against women as a human rights issue.

1994: The International Conference on Population and Development drew links between violence against women and reproductive health rights, also providing recommendations to governments on how to respond to violence against women.

1995: The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing recognized VAW as one of the 12 critical areas of concern, pushing governments to take preventive and protective actions.

2000: UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was adopted, making it the first formal and legal document from the Security Council that required parties in conflict to prevent violations of women's rights and to protect women and girls from wartime sexual violence.

2006: The UN Secretary-General's In-Depth Study on All Forms of Violence Against Women, the first comprehensive report on the issue, was released.

2011: The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, known as the Istanbul Convention, became the second legally binding regional treaty on violence against women and girls.

2012: The UN Human Rights Council first adopted a resolution on accelerating efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women.

2015: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all UN Members, Goal 5 aiming to end gender inequality and violence against women and girls.

2017: The European Union and the United Nations jointly launched the Spotlight Initiative, a global partnership to end all forms of violence against women and girls by 2030, which is being led by UNFPA, UNDP and UN Women jointly.

2022: The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on eliminating sexual violence mainly against women, recognizing sexual harassment as a global issue that requires solutions.

**Current:** Ongoing movements include digital campaigns like #HeForShe and #MeToo, encouraging women to speak out for violations they have faced.

### **c. Major Parties Involved**

#### **i. United Nations Bodies (UN Women, OHCHR, WHO, UNFPA)**

##### **UN Women**

UN Women is the main UN organization dedicated to promoting gender equality and empowering women around the world. In the fight against violence against women, its role is diverse: it provides direct technical aid to governments for developing and implementing legislation, launches international awareness campaigns such as UNiTE to End Violence against Women by 2030, and gathers financial resources to support survivor-focused programs. UN Women works alongside governments to integrate anti-violence measures into broader national development plans, ensuring that gender issues are included in every policy. In this agenda, UN Women serves as the primary coordinating entity to integrate international, regional, and local efforts within one comprehensive global framework.

##### **OHCHR**

The OHCHR approaches the issue of violence against women from a human rights standpoint, highlighting that it transcends mere social or cultural concerns and constitutes a serious breach of international law. It offers technical support to countries regarding adherence to treaties like CEDAW and oversees human rights abuses through mechanisms such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and Special Rapporteurs focused on Violence against Women. In this regard, the OHCHR plays a crucial role in holding states accountable by recording violations, releasing reports on particular national contexts, and pushing for enhanced accountability measures for offenders. The OHCHR integrates the topic of violence against women within the broader UN human rights framework, connecting it to issues like torture, discrimination, and the right to justice.

## **WHO**

The WHO views violence against women as a significant global health issue and a challenge for development. The research highlights the significant physical and mental health consequences of gender-based violence, encompassing trauma, chronic illnesses, depression, and threats to reproductive health. In line with this initiative, the WHO provides evidence-based guidelines for national health systems to integrate survivor-centered methods into routine medical care. Furthermore, it develops training materials for healthcare professionals to identify indicators of abuse and guide survivors towards appropriate support services. In addition, the WHO's duties involve collecting and monitoring data, helping governments understand the magnitude of the problem and devise focused prevention strategies.

## **UNFPA**

UNFPA's mission focuses on sexual and reproductive health, positioning it as a crucial player in combating violence against women, especially in humanitarian emergencies. In areas affected by conflict, refugee settlements, and regions impacted by disasters, women and girls encounter increased dangers of abuse, trafficking, and exploitation. In response, UNFPA establishes safe spaces, provides dignity kits, offers psychological assistance, and guarantees access to reproductive health services. As part of this initiative, UNFPA also promotes education and prevention, tackling the underlying causes of violence through community awareness initiatives. Its programs connect the prevention of gender-based violence with broader objectives, such as decreasing maternal mortality and safeguarding the rights of adolescent girls.

## **ii. Regional Organizations (EU, African Union, OAS, ASEAN, etc.)**

### **European Union**

The EU has established itself as a global leader in legislative and policy measures to combat violence against women. Through its Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025, the EU pushes for harmonized standards across member states, funding grassroots initiatives and promoting

victim protection services. The EU also actively encourages member states to ratify and implement the Istanbul Convention, one of the most comprehensive international treaties on combating violence against women. In this agenda, the EU demonstrates how supranational organizations can leverage financial resources, legal instruments, and political pressure to advance gender equality across borders.

### **African Union**

The AU's role is particularly significant given the prevalence of harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation in parts of Africa. Through the Maputo Protocol, the AU has created binding obligations for its member states to end such practices. It also integrates gender issues into the Agenda 2063 framework, highlighting that eliminating violence against women is critical for Africa's social and economic transformation. For this agenda, the AU provides valuable insight into how regional frameworks can challenge entrenched cultural norms, while also supporting national governments with resources and collective action mechanisms.

### **OAS**

The OAS has pioneered regional legal commitments to women's rights through the Belém do Pará Convention, which explicitly obliges states in the Americas to prevent, punish, and eradicate violence against women. This makes it one of the most advanced regional frameworks worldwide. Within this agenda, the OAS's experience demonstrates how binding legal obligations and monitoring mechanisms can create real accountability for governments, leading to legislative reforms and stronger protection systems in Latin America.

### **ASEAN**

ASEAN's Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) focuses on addressing cross-border challenges such as trafficking, online sexual exploitation, and labor exploitation. ASEAN's work is crucial because legal protections for women vary widely among its member states. In this agenda, ASEAN



highlights how regional cooperation can bridge gaps, fostering knowledge exchange, technical assistance, and joint campaigns across culturally diverse contexts.

### **iii. Governments and National Action Plans**

Governments bear the primary responsibility for eliminating violence against women through lawmaking, policy design, and enforcement. Many states have developed **National Action Plans (NAPs)** that outline comprehensive strategies covering prevention, survivor protection, prosecution of offenders, and capacity-building. These plans often draw from international frameworks such as the CEDAW Committee's recommendations or the Istanbul Convention. However, their effectiveness depends heavily on political will, resource allocation, and monitoring mechanisms. Within this agenda, governments are expected to demonstrate commitment not only by drafting policies but also by ensuring implementation through dedicated budgets, specialized police and judicial units, and strong partnerships with civil society. National leadership is indispensable to sustain momentum against violence and to localize international commitments into everyday practice.

### **iv. NGOs and Civil Society (Amnesty International, Women's Rights Groups)**

Civil society organizations form the backbone of advocacy and service delivery in the fight against violence against women. Groups like Amnesty International campaign globally to hold states accountable for failing to protect women's rights, while local women's organizations provide shelters, crisis hotlines, counseling, and legal aid to survivors. In this agenda, NGOs also play an essential role in documenting cases, raising awareness, and creating safe spaces for survivors to speak out. Grassroots activism is particularly crucial in communities where government responses are weak or where cultural stigma silences victims. NGOs are often the first point of contact for survivors, bridging the gap between global commitments and local realities, and ensuring that voices of women are not lost in high-level discussions.

### **v. Private Sector and Tech Companies (role in addressing online violence)**

The private sector, particularly technology companies, has become increasingly central in combating online violence against women, which is an expanding form of gender-based abuse. Social media platforms face mounting pressure to develop transparent reporting systems, remove harmful content more swiftly, and cooperate with governments and international organizations to improve safety standards. In addition to the digital realm, private corporations contribute through workplace policies that address sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and equal pay. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives also channel financial support toward survivor services and awareness campaigns. In this agenda, the private sector is seen as both a potential enabler of violence—through unsafe online environments—and a critical ally in creating innovative, tech-driven solutions that protect women in both physical and digital spaces.

#### **d. Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue**

##### **i. International Legal Frameworks and Conventions**

International frameworks are important because they set out internationally agreed norms and standards on VAW prevention and response. These frameworks matter because they hold States and the international community to account for meeting their human rights obligations on VAW. The principle of due diligence means that States can be held to account for protecting and preventing VAW, supporting women survivors of violence through high quality VAW services and access to justice, and punishing perpetrators. These frameworks are also the backbone for civil society organisations, including women's rights organisations and movements, who work tirelessly to hold States to account for their national legal and policy response, ensuring laws and policies are in place and that they are implemented consistency and effectively in line with their human rights obligations.

There are a number of international frameworks which set out internationally agreed norms and standards in relation to VAW, some of which are legally binding.

#### **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

International legal frameworks have a significant worldwide influence on gender equality initiatives and women's rights. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an important treaty that aims to eliminate gender discrimination and promote equality. CEDAW adopts a holistic approach to addressing gender inequality, including legal rights, economic opportunity, and political involvement. According to research, countries that have adopted CEDAW have made significant progress in enhancing women's legal position and rights. However, the execution of these interventions remains inconsistent.

Being the only legally binding international treaty that directly addresses women's human rights, it's considered the international bill of rights for women. While VAW is not explicitly mentioned in the Convention, General Recommendations 12 and 19 clarified that states should report cases of VAW.

### **Vienna Declaration and Platform on Action**

The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna provided women's groups and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with an excellent platform for advocating the integration of women's rights as human rights into the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. In addition, the Conference provided an opportunity to strengthen U.N. mechanisms for enforcing women's human rights, particularly with respect to implementation procedures under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Women's Convention), as well as mechanisms to eliminate violence against women, both in the private and public spheres. Subsequent to the Conference, mechanisms to eliminate violence against women were secured through the adoption of the Draft Declaration on Violence Against Women and the appointment of a special rapporteur on violence against women, as called for in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. Additionally, other important issues (such as reproductive rights, the indivisibility and universality of human rights, and the isolation of women) were also addressed at the Conference. In addition to participants in government delegations to the Vienna Conference, 5000 people attended the NGO Forum, representing over 1500 women's and human rights groups and organizations from all over the world. The NGO Forum was a three-day conference prior to the official governmental conference, and produced and submitted a set of recommendations to the

Vienna Conference. Those recommendations, in turn, were formally accepted as a U.N. Document. During the two weeks of the Vienna Conference, the NGOs held workshops and seminars on issues pertaining to human rights. The Women's Caucus met every day to discuss problems and update participants on developments from the World Conference and the NGO Forum. The Women's Caucus also organized advocacy and lobbying activities with governmental delegates to ensure that the voices and messages of women were heard. Eventually, many of the recommendations made by the Women's Caucus became part of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, including the recognition that:

- The human rights of women and the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of human rights and that the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex, are priority objectives of the international community.
- Gender based violence in all its forms is incompatible with the dignity and worth of human persons and must be eliminated.
- The human rights of women should form an integral part of human rights activities, including the promotion of all human rights instruments relating to women.

Specifically, section 38 of Part II of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action calls on the General Assembly to adopt the Draft Declaration on Violence Against Women, and emphasizes violations of human rights against women in situations of armed conflict. Section 40 calls for the appointment of a special rapporteur on violence against women. These goals were fulfilled in 1993 when the Assembly adopted the Declaration on Violence Against Women, and a special rapporteur on violence against women was appointed. Furthermore, the Conference encouraged the goal of universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women by all States by the year 2000. It also requested that the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) review the reservations made by States Parties, and encouraged those States to withdraw reservations contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention. This Conference also recognized the importance of women's enjoyment of the highest standard of physical and mental health throughout their lifespan and reaffirmed the principle of equality between men and women. Furthermore, it underscored women's right to accessible and adequate health care and the widest range of family planning, as well as equal access to education at all levels.

## **Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women**

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women was adopted without vote by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993. Contained within it is the recognition of "the urgent need for the universal application to women of the rights and principles with regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity of all human beings". The resolution is often seen as complementary to, and a strengthening of, the work of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action. It recalls and embodies the same rights and principles as those enshrined in such instruments as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 1 and 2 provide the most widely used definition of violence against women. As a consequence of the resolution, in 1999, the General Assembly, led by the representative from the Dominican Republic, designated 25 November as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

## **Beijing Declaration and Platform on Action**

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is a visionary agenda for women's rights. It is considered the most comprehensive global policy framework and progressive blueprint for action ever for advancing women's rights. It was developed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in 1995. The Beijing Platform for Action aims to remove all obstacles to women's active participation in all spheres of public and private life through ensuring women a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. This means that the principle of shared power and responsibility should be established between women and men at home, in the workplace, and in the wider national and international communities. It affirms that equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice. It is also a necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality, development and peace. The Beijing Platform for Action was adopted by 189 governments who committed to take bold action in 12 critical areas of concern for women globally, including violence against women. It calls on action from governments, the international community and civil society, including non-governmental organisations, and the private sector.

In 1994, around 12 countries had legal sanctions against domestic violence. After the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, this number grew rapidly. Today, UN Women's Global Database on Violence Against Women lists 1,583 legislative measures across 193 countries, including 354 targeting domestic violence specifically. Research indicates that adoption of international and regional human rights agreements and feminist social mobilization spurred action in introducing progressive laws and policies.

Today there is ample evidence that domestic violence laws reduce intimate partner violence. Countries with such laws report a prevalence rate of 9.5 per cent, compared to 16.1 per cent in countries without domestic violence legislation. However, enforcement remains a challenge, with gaps in comprehensive legal protection and survivor support services.

## **ii. Global Campaigns and Awareness Programs**

Awareness raising encompasses a diversity of activities and often includes efforts to increase knowledge about the causes and consequences of different types of violence, to challenge attitudes, beliefs and norms that condone VAWG, and educate people about relevant laws, policies, services, and rights. Awareness raising approaches rely on a variety of avenues to communicate messages: television, radio, podcasts, exhibitions, billboards, performances, the Internet, comics, magazines or other publications, theatre, music, posters, art, social media, workshops, community dialogues or debates.

### **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence**

The “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence” is an annual international campaign run by the United Nations that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day. Having been started by civil society and women's rights activists in 1991, today the campaign is used as an organizing strategy and platform by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. In support of this civil society initiative, the campaign, under the leadership of the UN Secretary General, calls for individuals and organizations to take action to increase awareness about violence against women and girls and to galvanize advocacy efforts.



## **UNITE to End Violence Against Women**

The UNITE to End Violence against Women initiative is a multiyear effort to prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls around the world. The initiative, launched in 2008 under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, was created to support the civil society led 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign around the world. Managed by UN Women, UNITE calls on governments, civil society, women's organizations, young people, the private sector, media, and the UN system to join forces to address the global pandemic of violence against women and girls. Through advocacy initiatives at the global, regional and national levels, the UNITE campaign is working to raise public awareness and mobilize communities to end violence against women and girls. In addition to supporting the longstanding efforts of women and civil society organizations, the campaign is actively engaging with men and boys, young people, celebrities, artists, sports personalities, the private sector and many more. People from all regions are lending their support to UNiTE's cause.

As part of the growing effort to include men as part of the solution to ending violence against women and girls, Secretary-General Ban launched his Network of Men Leaders in 2009. Each member of the Network – current and former politicians, activists, religious and community leaders, and others – is undertaking specific actions to end violence against women, from raising public awareness, advocating for adequate laws, to talking to young men and boys, to holding governments accountable. UNiTE aimed to expand the Network of Men Leaders by 2015 to include hundreds of dedicated individuals from all walks of life and parts of the world.

One of the key targets of the UNiTE campaign is to increase funding for the UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. The Trust Fund is the only global multilateral fund exclusively dedicated to ending all forms of violence against women, and which harnesses the support of governments, corporations, individuals and foundations to encourage innovative responses to addressing the cause. Since it began operations in 1997, the Fund has awarded over \$60 million in grants to 304 initiatives in over 120 countries. However, resources for the Fund fall drastically short, meeting only 4 percent of the vast demand.

## **The #MeToo Movement**

The Me Too movement, often represented by the hashtag #MeToo, is a significant social justice initiative focused on addressing and raising awareness of sexual misconduct and abuse. Originally coined by activist Tarana Burke in 2006 to support survivors, particularly women of color, the movement gained tremendous visibility in 2017. This resurgence followed a groundbreaking New York Times article exposing numerous allegations against film producer Harvey Weinstein, prompting many individuals to share their own experiences of harassment and assault on social media. The movement has since implicated various prominent figures across entertainment and politics, sparking discussions about accountability and the cultural dynamics surrounding sexual misconduct.

On October 15, 2017, the actress Alyssa Milano tweeted, "If you've been sexually harassed or assaulted write 'me too' as a reply to this tweet." With this phrase that Tarana Burke first used in 2006, the Twitter-based #MeToo movement rapidly gained speed against the backdrop of emerging allegations of sexual assault against film producer Harvey Weinstein. Within the first 24 hours, more than 12 million Facebook posts referenced #MeToo, and the #MeToo campaign soon spread across 85 countries with 1.7 million tweets. Personal reports of sexual assault and harassment were shared widely through online social networks, while public accounts of famous survivors began to proliferate through the news media.

With the issue of sexual misconduct firmly established as a major social concern, the broad movement represented by #MeToo remained in the spotlight over the following years. Various groups and sub-movements emerged, often focusing on specific aspects, demographics, or responses. One prominent advocacy organization was Time's Up, founded in January 2018 by a coalition of Hollywood women to support anti-harassment campaigns and fund survivors' legal defense needs. The movement also gained impact in other countries. In April 2019, Australia's Sydney Peace Prize was awarded to Tarana Burke and Australian activist Tracey Spicer for their #MeToo efforts.

While the #MeToo movement earned widespread praise for giving a new voice to many people, it also generated significant controversy. Debate over the issue often followed similar

tensions around the concept of cancel culture, which became a major element of partisan politics and the so-called culture wars in the 2010s and 2020s. Some activists and public figures have raised concerns that #MeToo has evolved into a form of public shaming and punishment without due process of law or any intervening arbitration for the accused. Others question efforts to censor or devalue the works of artists and other figures accused of misconduct or abuse. Even some supporters of the movement's core mission have worried about the power of social media to spin certain situations out of proportion or control, which might cumulatively have a chilling effect on sexual expression overall.

Critics of such critiques, meanwhile, point out that allegations of misconduct and abuse have long been ignored when directed at those in power, leaving public accusation and punishment through the media as the sole recourse for victims.

### **Take Back The Tech! Campaign**

Take Back The Tech! is a call to everyone, especially women and girls, to take control of technology to end violence against women. It's a global, collaborative campaign project that highlights the problem of tech-related violence against women, together with research and solutions from different parts of the world. The campaign offers safety roadmaps and information and provides an avenue for taking action. Take Back the Tech! leads several campaigns at various points in the year, but the biggest annual campaign takes place during 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (25 Nov - 10 Dec).

During campaigns, Take Back the Tech! announces actions that combine creative and strategic use of information and communication technology (ICT), with the issue of VAW. Campaigners organise actions that respond to their local priorities, such as workshops on online safety, media monitoring on rape reporting, solidarity actions on the streets and in online spaces and discussions on women's right to privacy.

Take Back The Tech! was initiated in 2006 by the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) Women's Rights Programme and has grown into a diverse movement of individuals, organisations, collectives and communities. It is the result of research papers published in 2005 that looked at the connection between ICT and VAW, an issue that received

little attention or discussion at that time. After sharing the findings with women's rights and communication rights advocates in different spaces, APC found this to be a critical issue that compelled further attention and deeper engagement.

### **HeForShe Movement**

HeForShe is an invitation for men and people of all genders to stand in solidarity with women to create a bold, visible and united force for a gender equal world. Created by UN Women, the HeForShe solidarity movement for gender equality provides a systematic approach and targeted platform where a global audience can engage and become change agents for the achievement of gender equality in our lifetime.

Since its launch at the United Nations in September 2014, by then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and UN Women Global Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson, millions of people from around the world including Heads of State, CEOs and global luminaries from all walks of life have committed to gender equality. #HeForShe has been the subject of more than 2 billion conversations on social media, with off-line activities reaching every corner of the globe.

### **iii. Regional Initiatives (e.g., Istanbul Convention, Maputo Protocol)**

In addition to international frameworks on human rights, regional frameworks are important because they can also clarify States' obligations to protect the rights of women and girls and eliminate violence and discrimination. This is particularly the case, where:

- States are not party to international instruments but are to regional ones;
- Regional legal standards provide more detailed and/or higher standards;
- Regional courts are able to investigate acts when they occur, to prosecute and punish the perpetrators, and to provide redress and relief to VAW survivors.

There are three legally binding regional frameworks in relation to VAW:

- The “Maputo Protocol” in Africa.
- The “Convention of Belem do Para” in the Americas.
- The “Istanbul Convention” in Europe.

The “Belém do Pará Convention” and “Istanbul Convention” focus exclusively on eliminating VAW, and the Maputo Protocol is a broader women’s rights treaty.

These regional frameworks and their monitoring mechanisms are important because they support the integration of international norms into domestic/national law. The lack of integration of these international norms nationally was a driving force behind the creation of legally binding treaties at the regional level.

The Asia Pacific and Middle East regions do not have pan-regional frameworks on human rights and VAW. However, a number of sub-regional bodies have focused on the improvement of human rights in the region. For example, in Southeast Asia through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

### **Istanbul Convention**

Gender-based violence has been a focus of international attention for several decades, and progress has been achieved. However, although countries in Europe had enacted legislation on violence against women, prior to 2014, there was no comprehensive European framework setting out standards on prevention, protection, prosecution and adequate provision of services to respond to the needs of victims and those at risk. The Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), which was adopted in 2011 and entered into force in 2014, now provides such a framework. One in three women (33 %) in the EU has experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15; 75 % of women in a professional job or in top management have experienced sexual harassment; and one in ten women has experienced sexual harassment or stalking through new technologies.

The Convention – which emerged from the Council of Europe's work to monitor violence against women and girls, identify gaps in legislation and find best practices – covers a broad range of measures, including obligations ranging from awareness-raising and data collection to legal measures on criminalising different forms of violence. Unlike other international treaties for tackling gender-based violence, the Istanbul Convention provides for the implementation of comprehensive and coordinated policies between national and

governmental bodies involved in prevention, prosecution, and protection activities. The Convention:

- defines and criminalises various forms of violence against women, including physical, sexual, and psychological violence, stalking, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion and forced sterilisation;
- prevents violence by obliging parties to invest in awareness-raising campaigns and education, training for experts in close contact with victims, and treatment programmes for perpetrators, and to address the role of the media in eradicating gender stereotypes;
- protects victims by obliging states to establish appropriate support services such as a free national telephone hotline; shelters; medical, psychological and legal counselling; and help with housing and financial issues;
- sets an obligation for parties to collect data on gender-related crimes;
- addresses asylum and migration, as it requires gender-based violence to be recognised as a form of persecution when establishing refugee status;
- takes a cross-border approach, as some forms of violence, such as forced marriages, entail action in different states. The Convention makes it obligatory for states party to extend their jurisdiction to cover crimes committed abroad by their nationals;
- introduces a different definition of 'gender', as 'the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men' as opposed to the usual definition based on the sex of the person;
- covers boys and men as well as girls and women as possible victims, in particular of domestic violence and forced marriage.

To ensure effective implementation of the Convention, a two-pillar monitoring mechanism has been established, consisting of an independent expert body (GREVIO), which draws up reports on the themes of the Convention) and a Committee of the Parties (which follows up on GREVIO reports and makes recommendations to the parties concerned). Two types of monitoring procedures have been provided. First, there is a country-by-country evaluation procedure, beginning with a baseline report and concluding with final reports and conclusions adopted by GREVIO. Second, a special urgent inquiry procedure may be initiated by GREVIO, when there is reliable information indicating that action is required to prevent serious, massive or persistent pattern of any of the acts of violence covered by the Convention.



## **Convention of Belém do Pará**

On 9th June, 1994 the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women was adopted by acclamation at the 24th regular session of the General Assembly of the Organisation of American States (OAS). The adoption of this Convention demonstrated the commitment of the countries mainly from Latin America to revise their laws to ensure specific solutions to the problems of physical and psychological violence encountered by women. The Belém do Pará Convention was the first binding international treaty in the world to recognize that violence against women constitutes a punishable violation of human rights. The Belém do Pará Convention has contributed to raising awareness of the severity of violence against women, as well as the States' responsibility to adopt concrete measures to prevent and eradicate it. The Convention establishes a system of rights in order to guarantee women a life free of violence and a system of State obligations to respect and guarantee those rights and act with due diligence to protect women from any form of gender-based violence. Although a general regional concern about violence against women existed before the adoption of the Convention, it was not reflected in the laws of the majority of States. Thanks to this instrument, the region began to accept the realities of violence against women, in both the private and public spheres, as a violation of human rights. Since its adoption in 1994, the majority of American States have adopted protection laws relating to women and the family. It has been ratified, as of 2016, by all 34 OAS States except, the United States and Canada. The Convention went into force in 1995. In October 2004, the States parties created the "Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Para Convention (MESECVI)", an agency charged with monitoring compliance with the Convention at a continental level.

## **Maputo Protocol**

The Maputo Protocol was adopted by the African Union in Maputo, Mozambique on 11 July 2003, and came into force on 25 November 2005. It is the main regional instrument in Africa for the protection of women and girls' rights. As of September 2018, 40 countries had ratified the Maputo Protocol. The Protocol places obligations on the member States, including eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and girls, through appropriate

legislative and institutional measures and prohibiting all forms of harmful practices which negatively affect the human rights of women and girls. It requires States to protect the dignity of women and girls, and their freedom from exploitation, degradation and violence. It further requires them to take specific positive action to promote participative governance and equal participation of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action, and adopting legislative measures to guarantee women and girls equal opportunities in education, work and career advancement. The member States are also under an obligation to ensure the right of women to health, including respect and promotion of sexual and reproductive health, food security, adequate housing, positive cultural context, healthy environment, sustainable development, widow's rights, inheritance, and special protection of elderly women, women with disabilities and women in distress. In fulfilling these obligations, they have to find appropriate remedies for the violation of fundamental freedoms and rights of women and girls as determined by competent judicial, administrative and legislative bodies.

The principles enshrined in the Maputo Protocol are in some instances based on existing international human rights standards, but in many others significantly advance international human rights standards and specifically enhance the protection and promotion of women and girls' rights in Africa. In particular, the Maputo Protocol makes explicit the protection of women and girls' rights in areas which are not expressly covered by existing treaties by:

- providing specific legal protection against violence against women and girls, both in the public and private sphere,
- requiring States to prohibit, through legislative measures backed sanctions, all forms of female genital mutilation,
- providing protections to adolescent girls, including the right to be free from abuse and sexual harassment in schools,
- specifically articulating widows' rights to equality,
- prohibiting forced marriages and specifying 18 years as the minimum age of marriage,
- articulating a woman's right to retain her maiden name and to participate equally in decisions regarding the parties' matrimonial regime and residence,
- expressly articulating women's right to abortion in specified circumstances and specifically addressing women's rights and States' obligations in relation to HIV/AIDS.

#### **iv. National Legislation and Law Enforcement Reforms**

##### **Spain**

The law of gender violence in Spain was created in 2004, with the purpose of solving the problems caused by aggressions and deaths mostly of women by their husbands or partners. The reason for its creation was to provide a legal solution to the increase in deaths of women and injuries that occurred at that time and by the existing social alarm. The aim was to eradicate all forms of violence against women and, in particular, to punish the perpetrators of attacks on women more severely. The legislation contained in the 19952 penal code was not thought to be sufficient. The main idea of the law was to protect women exclusively from physical and psychological aggression, suffered by their husbands or partners by men towards their partners, only women this includes, wives, ex-wives and non-marital emotional relationships, such as boyfriends or couples who live or have lived together.

The LOMPVG (Law 1/2004 of 28 of December about Protection Measures for Victims of gender-based violence) consists of a total of 72 articles, divided into several sections. Thus, in the first place, the principles are established, the purpose and scope of the law are explained and then it is committed to the promotion of social education in values of equality and in the detection and prevention of gender violence. In addition, sexist, discriminatory advertising in which women are seen as mere objects are prohibited. Big importance is given for the media to defend the values of equality between men and women and avoid discrimination between them and also to help visualize the problem of gender violence objectively when reporting.

Secondly, a system of rights is organized only for women, victims, at various levels, such as in the economic field, in which victims will be helped financially and will also have help such as free legal assistance and complete legal information. Also in the workplace and social security, you can change your place of work, as the most important novelties. An extensive network of social assistance has been set up, especially for housing for victims, so that they have preferential access to decent housing. Thirdly, at the governmental level, a Delegation against gender violence is created, whose function is the protection and defense of gender victims. The State Observatory against Gender Violence was also created. The most remarkable thing in this section is that a framework of collaboration and information is

created so that the police know how to act in cases of gender violence, so that they know how to act before and after an aggression has been committed against the victim.

## **Türkiye**

Following Türkiye's ratification of the Istanbul Convention, a major step forward in Türkiye's response to violence against women was the enactment in 2012 of Türkiye's central piece of legislation on violence against women, namely, Law No. 6284 on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women thanks to the feminist movement's enormous effort in Türkiye.

The Law No. 6284 on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women entered into force on 20th March 2012 following the ratification of the Istanbul Convention to make domestic law comply with the Istanbul Convention. This Law No. 6284 aimed to prevent violence against women and protect women, children, family members who are exposed to violence or in danger of violence, and victims of stalking, and regulates the measures to be taken to prevent any violence from being directed against them. Thus, it is a prevention law rather than a criminal law, which aims to provide vital and instant protection measures for victims and to quickly stop perpetrators of violence without the need to go through the criminal law system; in other words, to report the violence before the prosecutor's office or the Court.

The Law 6284 defines "violence" as "acts which result or will probably result in people having physical, sexual, psychological and financial sufferings or pain and any physical, sexual, psychological, verbal or economical attitude and behaviour which include the threat, pressure and arbitrary violation of person's freedom as well and conducted in social, public and private space". In this regard, the Law 6284 recognises multiple forms of violence, which are not criminalised under the Turkish Penal Code. The measures that can be implemented under the Law 6284 may include removal of the perpetrator from the shared home, or the interdiction to approach the victim and refrain from arriving at their house or workplace. This law also gives a framework for the provision of services such as shelters, financial aid, and psychological and legal guidance services for the victim.

## Philippines

The RA9262, or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act is a law the seeks to address the prevalence of violence against women and their children (VAWC) by their intimate partners like their husband or ex-husband, live-in partner or former live-in partner, boyfriend/girlfriend or ex-boyfriend/ex-girlfriend, dating partner or former dating partner. R.A. 9262 covers several acts of violence, which are:

*Physical Violence* – acts that include bodily or physical harm (battery)

- causing/threatening/attempting to cause physical harm to the woman or her child;
- placing the woman or her child in fear of imminent physical harm

*Sexual Violence* – the acts which are sexual in nature committed against a woman or her child. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Rape, sexual harassment, acts of lasciviousness, treating a woman or her child as a sex object, making demeaning and sexually suggestive remarks, physically attacking the sexual parts of the victim's body, forcing him or her to watch obscene publications and indecent shows or forcing the woman or her child to do indecent acts and/or make films thereof, forcing the wife and mistress/lover to live in the conjugal home or sleep together in the same room with the abuser.

- Causing or attempting to make the woman or her child to perform sexual acts (that do not constitute Rape) by use of force, threats, intimidation directed against the woman, her child, or her immediate family.

- Prostituting the woman or her child.

*Psychological Violence* – Acts or omissions causing or likely to cause mental or emotional suffering of the victim which includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Controlling or restricting the woman's or her child's movement or conduct
- Threatening to or actually depriving the woman or her child of custody or access to her/his family;
- Depriving or threatening to deprive the woman or her child of a legal right;
- Causing mental or emotional anguish, public ridicule or humiliation to the woman or her child, e.g. repeated verbal and emotional abuse, and denial of financial support or custody or minor children or denial of access to the woman's child/children

- Threatening or actually inflicting physical harm on oneself for the purpose of controlling the woman's actions or decisions;

- It includes causing or allowing the victim to witness the physical, sexual or psychological abuse of a member of the family to which the victim belongs, or to witness pornography in any form or to witness abusive injury to pets or to unlawful or unwanted deprivation of the right to custody and/or visitation of common children.

- Causing substantial emotional or psychological distress to the woman or her child;
- Stalking or following the woman or her child in public or private places;
- Peering in the window or lingering outside the residence or the woman or her child;
- Entering or remaining in the dwelling or on the property of the woman or her child against her/his will;
- Destroying the property and personal belongings or inflicting harm to animals or pets of the woman or her child;
- Engaging in any form of harassment or violence.

*Economic Abuse* – Acts that make or attempt to make a woman financially dependent upon her abuser, which includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Preventing the woman from engaging in any legitimate profession, occupation, business or activity except in cases wherein the other spouse/partner objects on valid, serious and moral grounds as defined in Article 73 of the Family Code;
- Controlling the woman's own money or property; or solely controlling the conjugal or common money/properties;
- Destroying household property.

## **India**

The Domestic Violence Act was enacted providing for an effective, time efficient, civil law remedy, considering the right to equality (Article 14), prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, and place of birth (Article 15) and right to life and liberty (Article 21) ensured by the Indian Constitution.

*Preventing Domestic Violence:* The Act aims to stop any form of violence, safeguarding the security and welfare of women and children, in their homes and within families and matters therewith or incidental thereto.



*Supporting Victims:* It establishes laws for protection of rights guaranteed under the constitution and to shield women and children from types of mistreatments such, as physical, emotional, verbal, financial, and sexual abuse.

*Support and Aid Provision:* The legal system guarantees that people who have suffered from violence can receive help such as medical facilities, financial support, counselling, shelter homes, and therapy. It mandates the assignment of protection personnel and service authorities to assist those requiring assistance.

*Legal recourse:* It allows individuals the right to seek remedies, like court orders, living arrangements and financial aid. The legislation gives judges the authority to intervene in safeguarding those impacted.

## **v. Community-Level and Grassroots Efforts**

### **The SASA! Initiative**

As part of a multi-intervention Gender-Based Violence (GBV) prevention project, UN Women and partners adapted and implemented SASA! At a community level, alongside implementing a family-based approach based on Sammanit Jeevan in Nepal, the CGBV project adapted the SASA! Together community mobilisation approach to the Bangladesh context. The SASA! Together programme was developed by Raising Voices in Uganda to prevent and respond to violence against women and HIV through supporting communities through a comprehensive process of social change focused on interrogating unequal power dynamics between women and men. It uses a core strategy of community activism with sustained activities to support neighbours, friends, relatives and family members to use their power positively to change gender attitudes, behaviours and norms and create safe, violence-free communities for women.

### **Women In Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET)**

The Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) is one of the programmes of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) aimed at integrating a gender perspective in its peacebuilding work. It was launched in November 2001 with the primary objective to build the capacity of women to enhance their roles in peacebuilding and post conflict reconstruction in West Africa. WIPNET seeks to increase the number of women practitioners in peacebuilding as trainers, researchers, mediators and advocates. Through community mobilization and other innovative platforms, grassroots women are provided opportunities to amplify their voices on issues of peace and human security. The Women in Peacebuilding Programme (WIPNET) is committed to ensuring that women's needs, concerns and issues are mainstreamed into all formal and informal peace building processes in West Africa. Since 2002, through a program called Women's Peace Activism, WIPNET has been mobilizing women's groups to promote social justice in West Africa where patriarchy has kept women marginalized and excluded from the decision making table.

#### **e. Questions to be Answered**

- 1- How can member states ensure that their national legal frameworks are fully aligned with international conventions such as CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention?
- 2- What mechanisms can be introduced to improve the enforcement of laws against gender-based violence, particularly in countries where institutional capacity is limited?
- 3- How can governments guarantee comprehensive victim protection, including shelters, hotlines, and psychological support, especially in rural and conflict-affected areas?
- 4- To what extent should international organizations provide financial and technical assistance to strengthen national responses to violence against women?
- 5- What strategies can be developed to effectively engage men and boys as allies in preventing gender-based violence?

6- How can education systems integrate gender equality and violence-prevention curricula at different levels of schooling?

7- What measures should be taken to address the increasing risks of online and digital gender-based violence, while also protecting freedom of expression?

8- How can regional organizations (e.g., EU, AU, ASEAN, OAS) better coordinate their efforts to create uniform standards and share best practices?

9- What role should NGOs and grassroots women's rights organizations play in shaping national and international strategies, and how can states ensure their active participation?

10- How can reliable data on violence against women be collected in countries where reporting is stigmatized or access to information is restricted?

11- What are the economic impacts of violence against women on national development, and how can governments highlight these costs to mobilize stronger political will?

12- In what ways can humanitarian and post-conflict responses be improved to better protect women and girls from heightened risks of gender-based violence?

13- How should accountability mechanisms be designed at the national and international levels to ensure compliance with commitments to end violence against women?

14- To what extent should the private sector and technology companies be held responsible for addressing online harassment and exploitation of women?

15- How can the Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG 5 on Gender Equality) serve as a framework for measuring progress in eliminating violence against women?

## **F. Further Reading**

**["Good practices in combating and eliminating violence against women"](#)**

## **[The value of intersectionality in understanding violence against women and girls](#)**

[View of The Impact of Violence Against Women on Women's Daily Lives in Türkiye](#)

[The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence \(Istanbul Convention\) - Gender Matters](#)

[Issues brief prepared by: WAVE \(Women Against Violence Europe\)](#)

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[Counselling service for women with trauma of violence](#)

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[Good practice in designing a community-based approach to prevent domestic violence](#)

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The Economic Costs of Violence Against Women

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UNITE to End Violence against Women Campaign - UN Women

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Me Too Sexual Misconduct Movement

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8713172/pdf/nihms-1720851.pdf>

Global and Regional Frameworks to End VAW - UN Women

Legal and Policy Frameworks for Women's Empowerment: Global Perspectives.pdf

FROM HUMAN RIGHTS TO PROGRAM REALITY: VIENNA, CAIRO, AND BEIJING  
IN PERSPECTIVE

Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women



The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at 30: How it transformed the fight against gender-based violence | UN Women

About Take Back the Tech!

The Istanbul Convention: A tool to tackle violence against women and girls AWARENESS RAISING TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

HeForShe | UN Women – Asia-Pacific

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED408074.pdf>

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Breathing Life into The Maputo Protocol: Jurisprudence on the Rights of Women and Girls in Africa

The Law and Gender-Based Domestic Violence in Spain

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