



REIGNITING THE VISION OF BEIJING TO ELIMINATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: AN ACTION AGENDA

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ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

UN Women

New York, September 2025

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INTRODUCTION

In 1995, 189 governments unanimously adopted the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** (BPfA) as a groundbreaking and far-reaching framework for the achievement of gender equality and the realization of the human rights of women and girls. The commitments made in the Platform for Action were forward thinking for its time, and many of the critical areas of concern identified in the Platform for Action remain pertinent for responding to the complex challenges of today, particularly the commitment to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

At the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), Member States reaffirmed their commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action through the adoption by consensus of a powerful **Political Declaration**. This Beijing+30 series highlights key normative developments, best practice approaches and case studies of promising initiatives alongside key tools and resources to support implementation. It also highlights critical gaps, challenges and priority actions needed to accelerate efforts to eliminate VAWG.

It also complements and builds on the "**Beijing+30 Action Agenda**, particularly Action 3, For All Women and Girls: Zero Violence and offers evidence-based policy and programmatic solutions for member states who are invited to make concrete and transformative commitments to advance gender equality at the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Beijing+30 in September 2025.

ACT to End Violence Against Women Programme

This paper was developed under the ACT to End Violence against Women programme funded by the European Union. ACT is a new game-changing commitment between the European Commission and UN Women as co-leaders of the Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence (CBV), in collaboration with the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. The **ACT shared advocacy agenda** is elevating the priorities and amplifying the voices of feminist women's rights movements and provides a collaborative framework focused on common priorities, strategies and actions.

To accelerate efforts in eliminating VAWG, ACT is calling for:

1. **Bold investments in prevention and responses to end violence against women and girls (VAWG);**
2. **Strengthened financing, protection and support to women's rights organizations;**
3. **Enhanced accountability, access to justice and the full and effective implementation of laws to prevent and respond to VAWG.**

These advocacy priorities reflect the core demands of the **Beijing+30 Action Agenda** and contribute to collective efforts toward the **High-level Meeting of the General Assembly** in September 2025 where Member States are called upon to make concrete and transformative commitments to advance gender equality.

THE STATUS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS 30 YEARS ON FROM BEIJING

At the time of its adoption in 1995, the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** (BDPFA) represented a groundbreaking vision of hope for the achievement of gender equality and the global realisation of women’s and girls’ human rights. The original commitment to “prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls” (para. 29)¹ remains pertinent today. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains a global issue of pandemic proportions and occurring across multiple settings, including home, work, public spaces and online. Across the world, it has significant impacts on the lives and well-being of individuals, communities and broader society, including through the intergenerational transmission of violence and trauma. Violence against women has also been identified as one of the strongest predictors of conflict and instability of nations.² Conservative estimates indicate that governments can lose up to 4 per cent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) due to violence against women, with violence against children costing up to 5 per cent of GDP.³

Every five years, a global review of the implementation of the BDPFA is undertaken. The present report examines key developments and actions taken between 2019 and 2024, synthesizing the **Secretary General’s report on Beijing +30** chapter on Freedom from Violence, Stigma and Stereotypes and the Secretary General’s most recent report on the **Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: Technology-facilitated violence against women and girls: Report of the Secretary-General (2024)**. It also includes emerging findings of a comprehensive analysis of UN Women’s Global Database on Violence against Women.

As the world counts down to 2030, ensuring women and girls are free from violence remains crucial to unlocking progress across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Formulated in 2015, twenty years after the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action, ending VAWG was, for the first time, recognised as a key enabler of development through the inclusion of a dedicated target (SDG 5) within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Eliminating VAWG is also crucial for accelerating progress on the goals of poverty eradication (SDG1), health (SDG3), education (SDG4), decent work (SDG8), inequalities (SDG10), sustainable cities and communities

(SDG11) and creating more peaceful and non-violent communities for all (SDG16).

At least 14 of the 17 SDGs will not be achieved without the global eradication of VAWG.⁴



In the past five years, the normative framework has continued to expand the commitments made in the BDPfA, particularly from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Committee), Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences, as well as General Assembly resolutions and the Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Key developments related to VAWG in the last five years include:

- CEDAW **General Recommendation 38 (2020)** which focuses on combatting all forms of trafficking, including by discouraging demand, and in emergencies resulting from conflict, political events, health crises or natural disasters
- CEDAW **General Recommendation 39 (2022)** which focuses on the disproportionate rates of violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls
- CEDAW **General Recommendation 40 (2024)** which focuses on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems
- Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls **annual thematic reports** on: prostitution and violence against women and girls (2024); custody, violence against women and violence against children (2023); violence against indigenous women and girls (2022); rape as a grave, systematic and widespread human rights violation (2021); and violence against women journalists (2020).
- Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls **annual thematic reports** on: Escalating backlash against gender equality and urgency of reaffirming substantive equality and the human rights of women and girls (2024); Gendered inequalities of poverty: feminist and human rights-based approaches (2022); Girls' and young women's activism (2022); Women's and girl's sexual and reproductive health rights in crisis (2021); and Women's human rights in the changing world of work (2020).

The General Assembly has also strengthened the normative framework through the adoption of resolutions on EAW every two years:

- **Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls (2020)**
- **Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: gender stereotypes and negative social norms (2022)**
- **Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: the digital environment (2024)**

The **Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women** have also addressed VAWG in the context of: women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life (2021); climate change (2022); innovation and technological change (2023); and addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective (2024).

2020



CEDAW General Recommendation 38 on trafficking.



General Assembly Resolution:
Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

2022



CEDAW General Recommendation 39 Indigenous women and girls



General Assembly Resolution:
Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: gender stereotypes and negative social norm

2024



CEDAW General Recommendation 40 on equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems



General Assembly Resolution:
Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: the digital environment

KEY TRENDS ON FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

All forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) persist at alarming rates across the world affecting millions of women and girls. Recent years have seen an intensification of violence associated with the impacts of COVID-19, growing conflict and climate change, and the emergence of new forms of violence and abuse that is amplified using technology, and growing attacks on women in public life. Across their lifetime, **1 in 3 women**, around 736 million, are subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner – a number that has remained largely unchanged over the past decade.⁵

Intimate partner violence (IPV)

1 in 8

women and girls



aged 15-49 across the globe was subjected to sexual and/or physical violence by an intimate partner in the previous year,⁶ a ratio reaching almost 1 in every 3 women and girls in Oceania, and 1 in 5 in sub-Saharan Africa.

COVID-19 was associated with an intensification of IPV globally.⁷ Intimate partner violence starts early: by the time they are 19 years old, almost 1 in 4 adolescent girls (24 per cent) who have been in a relationship have already been physically, sexually, or psychologically abused by a partner.⁸

Femicide

The number of killings by family members and intimate partners – the most common manifestation of femicide – remains at staggering levels globally.

51,000

women and girls



were killed at home by people closely related to them in 2023, accounting for 60 per cent of all female homicides.⁹

In other words, an average of 140 women and girls worldwide lost their lives every day at the hands of their partner or a close relative.

Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence

Significant gaps remain in legal protections against sexual violence and sexual harassment towards women globally, despite measures taken by at least 151 countries to address sexual harassment in employment.

6%
of women



overall are estimated to have been subjected to non-partner sexual violence at least once in their lifetime.¹⁰

Only 75 countries extend legal protections to education, while even fewer protect against harassment in public spaces (39 countries) and online (75 countries). The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these issues, leading to an increase in VAWG. Perception data collected from 13 countries indicate that more than half of respondents noted worsening sexual harassment in public post-COVID-19.¹¹

Trafficking

A 25 per cent increase in the number of trafficking victims detected globally was recorded in 2022 compared to 2019 pre-pandemic figures, with a 38 per cent rise recorded for girls. Women and girls continue to account for most victims detected worldwide.

60%
of girl victims



detected are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.¹²

In around 25 per cent of cases examined, trafficking survivors were subject to multiple forms of gender-based violence (GBV) prior to being trafficked.¹³

Female genital mutilation

230

million+ girls and women



alive today have been subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM), according to the most recent estimates.

Over two million girls annually undergo the practice before their fifth birthday, often during the first days or weeks of their lives, and the total number of girls and women has risen as the population in countries where the practice is concentrated continues to grow rapidly. Prevalence is greatest in the African region followed by Asia and the Middle East. The rate of decline needs to be 27 times faster than current rates to achieve elimination of FGM by 2030.¹⁴

Child, early and forced marriage

Despite progress in ending child and forced marriage, prevalence remains high. Worldwide, more than 650 million women alive today were married as children.

12

million+ girls



are married every single year before they reach the age of 18.

In the least developed countries, that number doubles: 40 per cent of girls are married before age 18, and 12 per cent of girls are married before age 15. The practice is particularly widespread in conflict-affected countries and humanitarian settings.¹⁵

Technology-facilitated (TF) VAWG

Though comparable global data on TF VAWG remains limited, available data shows that TF VAWG is intensifying, with studies indicating that the prevalence of TF VAWG ranges from 16 to 58 per cent.

38%

of women



have personal experiences of online violence, with 85 per cent of women who are online having witnessed digital violence against other women¹⁶, according to one global study.

Across 13 countries in Europe and Central Asia (ECA), more than half (53.2 per cent) of adult women online have experienced some form of TF VAWG at least once.¹⁷ In the Arab States, almost half of women surveyed (49 per cent) feel unsafe online.¹⁸ Girls and younger women are especially affected. Of 14,000 girls in 31 countries, more than half of girls surveyed had been harassed and abused online.¹⁹ Violence in online spaces may transition offline in various ways including coercive control, surveillance, stalking, physical violence, or even femicide.²⁰

Women with high levels of public visibility, such as journalists, human rights defenders, politicians and activists continue to be at significant risk of violence, including in online environments. One study found that 73 per cent of women journalists reported experiences of online violence, with reporting on elections and politics leading to an intensification of violence.²¹ Several country studies conducted on the experiences of women in politics show high levels of online violence and abuse, particularly through social media around election cycles and parliamentary activity.²²

Violence against marginalized women and girls

Intersectional inequalities exacerbate the risk of violence for women and girls, such as those with physical or mental disabilities²³ and older women.²⁴

70%

of women refugees



are estimated to experience sexual and other forms of gendered violence.²⁵

Research across regions indicates that LGBTIQ+ people experience high rates of violence, with close to half of LGBTIQ+ people (42 per cent) in the United States having been physically or sexually assaulted as adults. This rises to 56 per cent for sexual and gender minorities in Southern and Eastern Africa and Canada (59 per cent). As well as the more common impacts of VAWG, indigenous women and girls often endure intergenerational effects of violence, with the full scale of harm obscured by a lack of consistent data.²⁶

EMERGING TRENDS AFFECTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE VAWG

Crisis contexts exacerbate the drivers and risks factors of VAWG, as well as creating greater barriers in access to essential services while resources are often diverted to respond to emergencies.

COVID-19 impacts on VAWG

Data shows that COVID-19 led to an intensification of VAWG,²⁷ with significant impacts on women and girls facing multiple forms of discrimination. Overall, COVID-19 is associated with an increase in violence against women and a regression in women's positive representation in the media.²⁸ The exacerbation of existing forms of violence against women was felt in terms of, inter alia, increased public sexual harassment and decreased perceptions of physical safety in public spaces.²⁹ Data collected by UN Women indicates that seven in ten women believe physical and verbal abuse by partners became more common during and since the pandemic, and more than half of respondents felt that sexual harassment in public had worsened.³⁰

Climate change impacts on VAWG

Climate change and slow environmental degradation exacerbate the risks of VAWG due to displacement, resource scarcity and food insecurity and disruption to service provision to survivors. Climate change-induced disasters displace millions, an estimated 80 per cent of whom are women and girls, increasing the risks they face to experience VAWG, including sexual violence and trafficking.³¹ Women environmental human rights defenders (WEHRDs) experience threats and violence as they strive to defend natural resources and their territories. Indigenous women are at greater risk because of the intersection of sexism, discrimination, and racism. Accelerating climate change and environmental degradation have also been linked to heightened risks of GBV and child, early and forced marriage.³²

Conflict impacts on VAWG

Women in conflict, war, and humanitarian contexts are disproportionately affected by GBV. In 2023, 612 million women and girls lived within 50 kilometres of at least one of 170 armed conflicts, an increase of 41 per cent since 2015.³³ In 2023, the United Nations verified 3,688 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence, a 50 per cent rise since 2022, with women and girls making up 95 per cent of victims.³⁴ While data remain scarce, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), noted that where reporting on weapons is available, 70-90 per cent of incidents of conflict-related sexual violence involve a weapon, in particular firearms.³⁵ Child marriage rates also soar in conflict, with the average incidence of child marriage 14.4 per cent higher in conflict-affected areas than non-conflict settings.³⁶

Growing backlash on women's rights

The last five years have seen growing backlash against women's rights.³⁷ Nearly a quarter (24 per cent) of member states pointed to backlash on gender equality as a factor undermining the implementation of the BDPfa.³⁸

Anti-rights actors are increasingly using online platforms to propagate narratives that challenge women's rights, with tactics that include creating a hostile digital environment marked by cyberbullying, harassment and threats of offline violence. The 'manosphere' is a decentralized network of online communities that oppose feminism, featuring derogatory content about women and dismissive views on women's rights. It idealizes a past where men held more power over women. This content often goes viral, reflecting a growing regressive conservatism among young men. The alarming prevalence of online attacks serves to undermine women's participation in public discourse. Additionally, the prevalence of sexual aggression in mainstream pornography has been linked to the normalization of violence against women,³⁹ with 90 per cent of pornography on popular platforms depicting violence towards women⁴⁰ and evidence shows that men who consume violent pornography are more likely to pressure a partner into acting out what they see in pornography and more likely to perpetrate sexual abuse.⁴¹

Technological change outpacing development of regulatory frameworks

The evolution of new forms of TF VAWG continues apace, alongside rapid technological advances. The recent growth of generative AI, through deep learning models, is exacerbating existing harms online, including through more convincing false media that can be generated and disseminated automatically and at scale. According to Sensity AI, up to 95 per cent of all online deepfakes are non-consensual pornographic images, with around 90 per cent depicting women.⁴²

AI is intensifying VAWG in numerous ways, both through the deliberate spread of targeted disinformation and through the automated and often-unintended promulgation of misinformation. Content produced by generative AI, which learns from existing trends, can reinforce and intensify misogynistic norms that justify, excuse and normalize VAWG. The sheer volume of media created using ever more advanced generative AI is obscuring the distinction genuine information and 'fakeries', resulting in legal, social, regulatory, technical and ethical challenges.

Despite the introduction of several important frameworks, laws that address TF VAWG continue to lack consistent definitions and have not kept pace with the technological changes they are meant to regulate. The challenge will be to ensure laws remain flexible enough to keep pace with technological evolution. Otherwise, inadequate laws and regulatory frameworks, as well as ineffective enforcement, will perpetuate a culture of impunity for perpetrators of online VAWG, with victims-survivors left without access to justice.

A complex funding ecosystem

The recognition that addressing VAW is critical for advancement of gender equality and achievement of SDGs has come with some significant investments in the field but overall, the resources allocated for ending violence against women are inadequate compared to the magnitude of the problem. Despite numerous calls and some significant investments through programmes like Spotlight, What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Pacific Partnership to end Violence against women and girls, Official Development Assistance to end violence against women and girls reached USD 563 million on average per year in 2021-2022, an increase from USD 479 million in 2019-2020 but still representing less than one per cent of total ODA.⁴³



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IMPLEMENTATION TRENDS AND CASE STUDIES ON PROMISING PRACTICES

Key take-aways from the [30 year review of implementation of the Platform for Action](#).

88% of member states reported that eliminating violence against women and girls was one of their top priorities for action. Over the last five years significant progress has been made:

79 per cent of member states reported that they have introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending VAWG, up from 68 per cent in 2019.



Responding to the vulnerability of girls to violence, 77 per cent of States focused action on violence against girls, up from 62 per cent in 2019.



88% reported introducing or strengthening services for survivors of violence.

75% reported that they introduced or strengthened strategies to prevent VAWG, up from 67 per cent in 2019.

However, investments in prevention and responses are not commensurate with the scale of the problem and technology and innovation have not been adequately leveraged to accelerate progress.

90 per cent of member states reported the introduction or strengthening of laws, their implementation and enforcement, up from 83 per cent in 2019.



Despite this focus, there remain significant gaps in legal protection against VAWG, particularly as new forms of VAWG emerge due to technological change.

66% of countries prioritized action to address technology-facilitated VAWG in the last five years, particularly through awareness raising and strengthened legislation and regulation.

However, sustained attention is needed so that legislation keeps pace with technological change.

The following sections report on data from the survey undertaken by States as part of the 30-year review of implementation of the Platform for Action.

Policy and legal frameworks

Eliminating VAWG necessitates change at all levels, with well-resourced national action plans that facilitate coordination between agencies and civil society being essential. In 2024, 79 per cent of countries reported developing or enhancing national action plans, an increase from 68 per cent in 2019. Comprehensive laws addressing various forms of VAWG as a human rights violation are crucial, and 90 per cent of countries prioritized the introduction and strengthening of such laws in the past five years, up from 83 per cent in 2019. Legal reforms have included broader definitions of domestic violence to include psychological violence, increased penalties for perpetrators, and enhanced protection measures and criminalizing additional forms of violence including new standards of consent with respect to rape. A new focus for legal reform in recent years has been the criminalization of coercive control which recognizes the patterns of power and control in intimate partner violence and the impacts of psychological and financial abuse. Coercive control and psychological violence are now criminalized as a form of domestic violence and intimate-partner violence in several European Union Member States⁴⁴

However, significant gaps still exist in legal protection against VAWG. While at least 151 countries have taken measures to prevent sexual harassment in employment, there are gaps in protection. Only 75 countries include protection for sexual harassment in education, 39 for sexual harassment in public spaces, and 75 countries for sexual harassment online.⁴⁵ In some 86 countries domestic violence law does not sufficiently ensure protection from all forms of violence, such as marital rape, or does not adequately impose criminal penalties or protection orders.⁴⁶ Only 29 countries – mostly in Latin America and the Caribbean – explicitly criminalize femicide.⁴⁷

Addressing gaps in protection is critical as recent evidence found that countries with domestic violence laws report significantly lower rates of intimate partner violence (9.5 per cent) compared to those without such legislation (16.1 per cent⁴⁸), demonstrating the importance of creating a strong enabling environment through the development and implementation of VAWG laws.

A 2025 comprehensive analysis of UN Women's Global Database on Violence against Women found that of 193 countries, 16 per cent of States (30) still have not adopted any specific VAW legislation and a third of States, 34 per cent, have not adopted a specific VAW national action plan or strategy.⁴⁹ **Comprehensive approaches to policies and laws are urgently needed as they make a significant difference - the average prevalence rate of intimate partner violence (IPV) (over the last 12 months) is nearly 2.5 times higher in States with low levels of comprehensive VAW measures, as compared to States with a high level of comprehensiveness in adopting a broad range of types of VAW measures.**⁵⁰

A further challenge for ensuring comprehensive laws and policies to address VAWG is the growth of anti-rights movements and attacks

on women's and girls' equal rights which are increasingly influencing decision makers and resulting in proposals for regressive laws and policies that reinforce inequality, misogyny and norms that excuse or justify VAWG.⁵¹

STRENGTHENING NATIONAL ACTION PLANS: Many States have recognized that a coordinated and sustained approach is necessary. National Action Plans are essential to this effort, providing comprehensive, multisectoral and sustained blueprints for ending violence against women. Such plans enable all the sectors involved to coordinate and systematize their activity, evaluating and building on initiatives so that approaches remain adaptive and responsive for years to come. Research from various countries indicates that VAW prevention and response efforts achieve faster, more impactful results when coordinated across government sectors through comprehensive NAPs that integrate multi-sectoral strategies. Examples from Trinidad and Tobago, Fiji, Cambodia and Samoa show that investment in development and implementation of NAPs on prevention have strengthened leadership and increased the ownership of ERAW prevention and response efforts among key ministries and departments

LEGAL REFORM ON ONLINE VIOLENCE: Some 70 per cent of countries have introduced or strengthened legislation and regulatory provisions to address technology facilitated VAWG in the last five years. Although more countries are enacting laws against such violence, challenges remain at the intersection of digital rights, including freedom of expression and privacy. In some regions, progress is being made with legal frameworks adapting, such as the UK's 2023 Online Safety Act. Argentina has reformed its laws to address digital violence as a form of gender-based violence. To effectively combat the issue, enhanced international cooperation and coherence in policies are essential, recognizing VAWG as a significant barrier to realizing the benefits of the digital age for all women. The recently adopted Global Digital Compact provides an opportunity to accelerate collective action in this area with gender as a cross-cutting principle and the commitment to address technology facilitated VAWG.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORLD OF WORK: There has been a growing focus on sexual harassment in the world of work with 45 States ratifying the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (No. 190). Some 68 per cent of countries reported passing national legislation and implementing policies to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace, including by creating a supportive environment where victims feel safe to report workplace abuses. This includes confidential and accessible reporting mechanisms, thorough investigation procedures, and protection for those who report incidents, and expanding counselling and support services. The most comprehensive laws require employers to put in place accountability measures and zero-tolerance policies and provide comprehensive training for all employees to address discriminatory workplace cultures.

Access to justice

While comprehensive laws are essential for protecting women from violence, their effectiveness relies on women and girls being able to access justice through robust implementation and enforcement.



have focused on improving access to justice in the last five years, with the highest engagement in Central and Southern Asia, and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia.

Common actions include the establishment of specialized courts, free legal assistance for survivors, training for justice personnel, and improved court processes. There has also been a shift toward survivor-centred and trauma-informed approaches, with the involvement of multiple agencies to ensure victim/survivor safety and access to justice. Challenges that remain include insufficient resources, institutional barriers, patriarchal attitudes, and gender stereotypes within security and justice systems.

Specialist services

Specialist services are essential for the healing of women and girls who have experienced violence, requiring comprehensive, well-coordinated, and survivor-centred approaches that prioritize safety and empowerment, across the health, justice and policing and social services sectors, including coordination of these services, as outlined in the **Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence**. Governments have increasingly prioritized these services, with 88 per cent of states undertaking actions such as expanding shelters, enhancing mental health support, and improving training for health and justice sectors. However, gaps and challenges persist, including the limited availability and funding of services, lack of integration among different support systems, and insufficient monitoring of service quality.

A 2025 comprehensive analysis of UN Women's Global Database on Violence against Women found that of 193 countries, over one-quarter have not reported any social services for VAW victims/survivors.⁵³



Attention to intersectionality to ensure responsiveness to women and girls in all their diversity also remains an area requiring further focus. There has also been a focus on the provision of services in crisis contexts. Some 30 per cent of countries reported that they have focused actions on addressing violence against women and girls in

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR TRAFFICKING:

Recent years have seen a growing focus on access to justice for trafficking victims and survivors with a focus on removing barriers to reporting, addressing bias in the justice system and ensuring survivor-centred approaches.⁵² To ensure a holistic response, it is essential that sexual and reproductive health services, psychological counselling and non-conditional legal support be available to women and girls who have been trafficked. Malta has adopted a survivor-centred approach to court proceedings by allowing minors, victims of sexual offences, and vulnerable persons to have their original police interview admitted as evidence. This eliminates the need for victims to recount their experiences multiple times during a trial. Survivors' advisory councils in some countries have also sought to centre survivors' perspectives to make justice mechanisms more trauma informed. Additional capacity-building for law enforcement personnel and judicial actors has been prioritized by many States to improve responsiveness to trafficking victims and survivors.

humanitarian settings, with 43 per cent of States taking action to address violence experienced by refugee and displaced women. Amid the compounding crises of climate change and protracted conflicts, services must be responsive and demonstrate adaptability across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.⁵⁴

ACCESS TO SERVICES IN HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS:

Amid the compounding contexts of climate change impacts and protracted conflicts, services must be responsive and demonstrate adaptability across the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus. Mobile service hubs – sometimes called one-stop centers (OSCs) – have enabled more expedient access to services for women who have experienced violence. These hubs house multidisciplinary teams in compact units that are mobile and agile, allowing for a rapid response in unstable or demanding circumstances. Evidence shows that these services make a difference in the communities where they are located.⁵⁵ However, mobile service hubs should not completely replace permanent, comprehensive support services for women and girls.⁵⁶

SOCIAL PROTECTION AND GBV: Social protection systems are important policy tools to combat VAWG by addressing economic insecurity and enhancing women's autonomy. While cash transfers are the most common form of social protection that can have an impact on supporting women who have experienced violence and abuse, there are other effective measures, such as subsidized housing for victims of IPV in Canada, safe mobile childcare in Burkina Faso, and leave and pension benefits for GBV victims in Norway, Spain, and the Philippines.⁵⁷

Prevention

Preventing VAWG necessitates addressing its root causes and risk factors through multi-level interventions targeting individual, community, and societal aspects to transform gender inequality. The **RESPECT women framework** (2019), provides actionable steps for designing, implementing, and evaluating prevention programs, emphasizing that combined and long-term strategies are most effective. For instance, challenging harmful gender roles is more impactful when coupled with equal property rights and access to public services.

STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENTS:

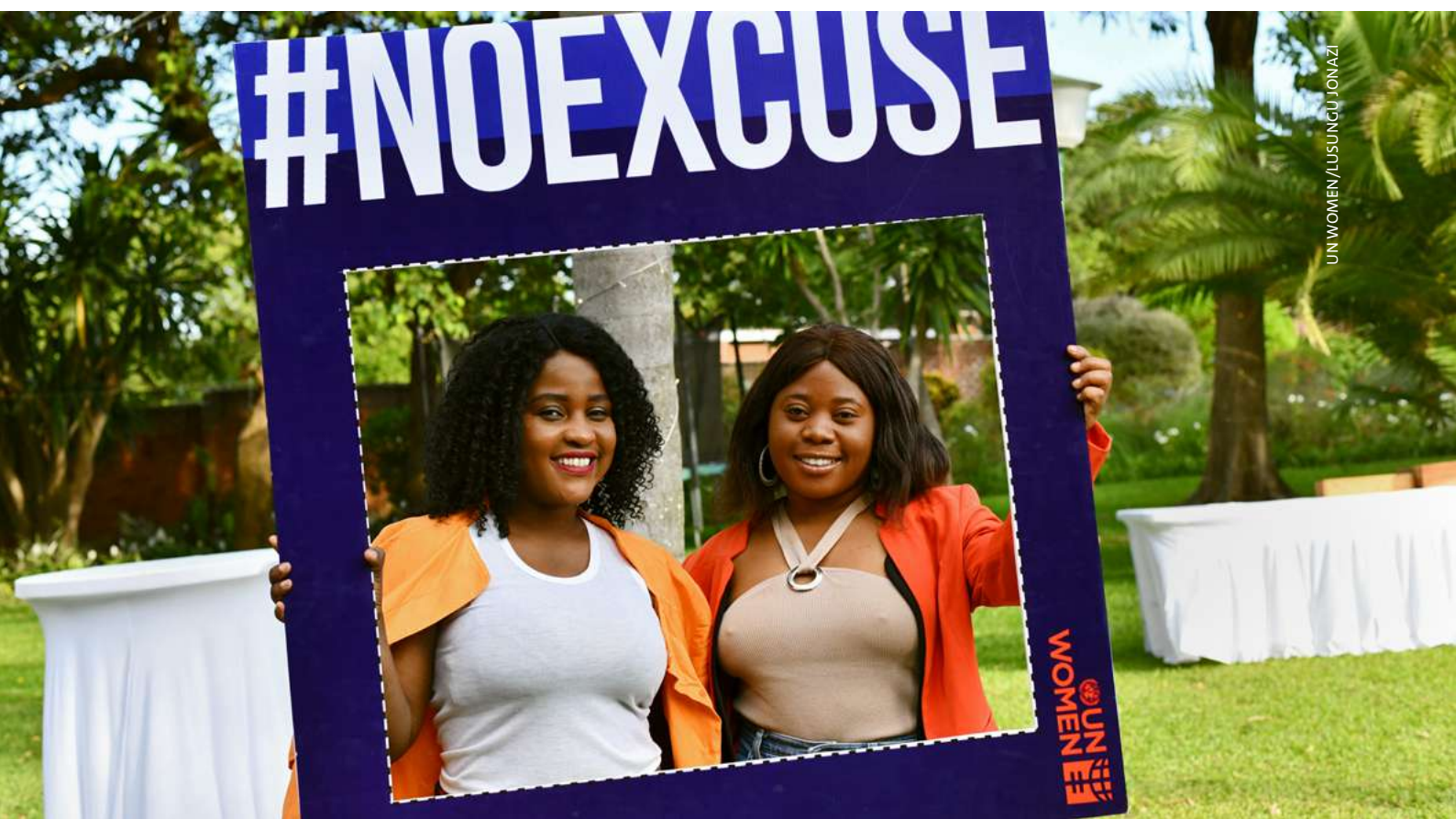
The presence of a strong and autonomous women's rights movement is the single most critical factor to drive progress in ending violence against women. Women's rights organizations play a crucial role in preventing violence against women and girls, advocating for and securing normative and policy change, monitoring and holding governments to account and in driving reductions in violence against women.⁵⁸ During COVID-19, research found that countries with strong feminist movements adopted on average three more measures addressing VAWG than those that did not.⁵⁹ Given the critical role that women's rights movements play in preventing and eliminating VAWG, the EU has funded UN Women to lead a new programme, **ACT to End Violence Against Women**, aims to accelerate efforts to eliminate all forms of VAWG through Advocacy, Coalition Building, and Transformative Feminist Action (ACT).

Globally, 75 per cent of countries have strengthened their prevention strategies against violence since 2019 (compared to 67 per cent in 2019), with the highest focus in Central and Southern Asia,

sub-Saharan Africa, and Oceania. Key measures include public awareness campaigns (81 per cent of countries), promoting women's economic independence (75 per cent), and fostering safe environments including schools, workplaces and public spaces (66 per cent). 62 per cent of member states reporting a focus on promoting positive gender-equitable attitudes, beliefs, values and norms, especially among men and boys. While there is an increasing emphasis on changing social norms few states have reported comprehensive long-term strategies for prevention.

CHANGING SOCIAL NORMS:

Discriminatory social norms strongly contribute to VAWG, necessitating a multi-faceted approach for sustainable change. Key strategies include transforming societal narratives to foster egalitarian values, improving the lived experiences of women and girls through legal reforms and increased opportunities, and strengthening feminist movements and collaborations with other stakeholders. Successful examples include the Democratic Republic of Congo, where community healing and support for survivors altered spousal relationship norms; India's long-term community organizing efforts to advocate for girls' education and against early marriage; and Egypt's coalition-led reforms in family laws promoting gender equality. Similarly, in Mexico, legal changes against IPV, coupled with activism, improved women's conditions. Initiatives like Samoa's arts program and Zimbabwe's empowerment of traditional leaders demonstrate additional avenues for challenging harmful norms. Despite these advances, more comprehensive measures are needed to create egalitarian norms, alongside effective evaluation methods to guide progress and ensure that women and girls can live free from violence and exercise their rights fully.



RESPONDING TO THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Addressing the issue of violence against women and girls that occurs through or is amplified by the use of technology requires a comprehensive approach including consistent laws, regulatory frameworks and effective implementation; a focus on prevention and response including through technology intermediaries; investments in better data through internationally agreed standards and measurement frameworks, as well as actions to improve transparency; and partnerships between governments, technology providers and women's rights organizations.

66%
of countries



prioritized action to address technology facilitated gender-based violence in the last five years.

The greatest focus has been in Central and Southern Asia and Europe and Northern America. Specifically, 76 per cent of countries have implemented awareness raising initiatives targeting the general public and education settings to sensitize young people, caregivers and educators to ethical and responsible online behaviour; 70 per cent of countries have introduced or strengthened legislation and regulatory provisions; and 49 per cent of countries have strengthened the capacity of government actors for the development of policy and legislation, and their enforcement and implementation.

Despite these efforts, significant gaps remain.

29%
of countries



Less than one third of countries have worked with technology providers to introduce or strengthen human rights-based design, development and deployment approaches to address technology-facilitated violence against women, indicating that greater efforts are needed in this area.

Data and monitoring

Data and research on the nature and extent of different forms of VAW - from sexual harassment to femicide, the drivers as well as the impacts-including women survivors' access to and use of support services, are critical to inform effective laws, policies and programmes in different contexts. VAW data are also critical for advocacy on ending VAW and for mobilizing political commitments and investments as well as for measuring progress over time.

Recent years have seen a growing focus on VAWG data from States, although significant gaps remain. At the global level, there have been developments to strengthen the collection of data on prevalence of intimate partner violence and sexual violence, on femicides and more generally improved administrative data systems on VAWG. Several states have reported creating new tools to better understand VAWG including through prevalence surveys and improving administrative data collection. There is an increasing emphasis on using big data to analyse online VAWG.

DEVELOPMENTS IN DEFINING AND MEASURING TF VAWG:

The lack of standardized definitions and measurement methods for VAWG in digital contexts, alongside significant underreporting, has hindered the collection of comparable global data on the issue. Over the last two years, there have been some important developments in further refining definitions. An **Expert Group Meeting** convened by UN Women built on the definition offered in 2018 by Special Rapporteur on VAWG, its causes and consequences, defining 'technology-facilitated violence against women' (TFVAW) and 'technology facilitated gender-based violence' (TF GBV) as "any act that is committed, assisted, aggravated, or amplified by the use of information communication technologies or other digital tools, that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological, social, political, or economic harm, or other infringements of rights and freedoms".⁶⁰ Further, the UN Statistical Commission has called on UN Women, in collaboration with the World Health Organization and UNFPA, to develop a statistical framework for measuring technology-facilitated violence against women. The SVRI, APC, UN Women and the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse co-facilitated a process to identify a set of research priorities to help address the knowledge gaps through a Shared Research Agenda on TF GBV.⁶¹

CALL TO ACTION: FIVE PRIORITY ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ACCELERATE CHANGE

Thanks to the persistent advocacy of global movements to end violence against women, 88 per cent of countries globally have identified eliminating violence against women and girls as one of their top five priorities for the next five years – making ending violence against women and girls the most common priority area among States.

VAWG can be prevented, yet investments in prevention and responses have not yet been commensurate with the scale of the problem. Urgent action is required to realise the vision of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, with a focus on accountability, resourcing and recommitment. This includes action to:

- 1** **Adopt and fund whole-of-government national action plans, focused on preventing and eliminating VAWG at scale through multi-sectoral budgeting across all relevant sectors such as health, education, child protection, social protection, among others.** This should include quality, core, flexible, and sustainable financing for women's rights organizations and youth organizations and movements as engines of change including those working in crisis and conflict and post-conflict areas. This should also include robust accountability mechanisms to monitor implementation, investments to fill gaps on regular, comparable and **quality data** on violence against women, including new and emerging forms, to track progress over time and inform investments and policy interventions.
- 2** **Introduce, implement and enforce budgeted comprehensive laws on ending violence against women, especially to address current gaps related to TFCBV.** This should include addressing gaps in legal protection and ensuring comprehensive laws and enforcement to ensure access to justice for victims and survivors. Reforms should ensure the accountability of the technology sector and social media platforms to address TF VAWG and provide safe and respectful environments online.
- 3** **Invest in evidence-based, long-term prevention strategies across different settings, including educational settings.** These strategies should include transforming social and gender norms, attitudes, beliefs, harmful masculinities and harmful practices across all settings including online/digital contexts. This also requires data on the drivers and risk factor of VAWG, the perpetration of VAWG and generating evidence and knowledge of what works in eliminating VAWG.
- 4** **Ensure victims and survivors of VAWG have prompt access to long-term comprehensive support and justice.** This includes providing avenues for survivors to seek legal redress, specialist support services, including emergency health care, psycho-social counselling and access to safe accommodation and shelter. It also requires the transformation of institutional cultures and strengthened capacities of the police, judges, and other justice actors to put an end to impunity in violence against women cases. Preventative strategies should also be developed to mitigate the escalating risks of online-offline violence against women human rights defenders and women in public life in the global context of backsliding on women's rights.
- 5** **Strengthening protection and support for women human rights defenders including feminist activists, researchers and journalists in both online-offline spaces.** This includes increased quality funding to women's rights organizations including those working in crisis and conflict and post-conflict areas to ensure long-term, core and flexible funding. It also includes strengthened protection mechanisms to prevent violence, attacks and threats against women's human rights defenders and feminist activists facing attacks both online and offline. Increase funding for rapid response mechanisms to support women's rights activists and human rights defenders that are under attack.

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