



COMMITTEE United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
ISSUE Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence
SUBMITTED BY Eszter Hunya, Chair of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and
the Empowerment of Women
APPROVED BY Szófia Tóth, President of the General Assembly

Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence directed against a person, because of their gender, which can include sexual, physical, mental, and economic harm inflicted in public or in private. There are many forms where the issue of gender-based violence arises such as rape, sexual abuse, femicide, trafficking, stalking, child marriage, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, intimate partner violence, and forced prostitution. It also includes the threat of violence, coercion, and deprivation of liberty, whether in public or private. Although men and women can both fall victim to gender-based violence, simply because of their sex and gender, women and young girls are especially at great risk, hence the phrase gender-based violence is often used interchangeably with *violence against women*.

It is estimated that one in three women will experience sexual or physical violence in their lifetime. And since the age of 15, 1 in 2 women experience some kind of sexual harassment.

Notably, this is one of the most violated human rights and it originates from gender inequalities within all societies. Gender-based violence survivors are often victim-blamed, struggle with mental and physical health, suffer several types of injuries, have suicidal thoughts, unwanted pregnancies, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, or are ostracized from their families and communities. They can be forced to marry their perpetrators or they can face retaliation for seeking support, help, or justice, which can result in further violence and damage to their mental health. At its worst, being a survivor of gender-based violence results in death, such as in the case of femicide or honor killings.

Definition of Key Terms

Femicide/feminicide - Intentional murder of women and girls with a gender-related motivation. Can be driven by stereotyped gender roles, harmful social norms, discrimination, and unequal power relations between men and women.

Homicide - Homicide is an act that causes the death of a person by another person.

Sexual assault - Unwanted sexual contact forced on a person without consent.

Rape - A type of sexual assault where one is being a victim of sexual intercourse or sexual penetration without providing consent.

Sexual harassment - Sexual harassment can be verbal or physical when the usage of explicit or implicit sexual overtones, including the unwelcome and inappropriate promises of rewards in exchange for sexual favors arises.

Intimate partner violence - "Any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviors." It can be referred to as spouse or partner violence too.

Female genital mutilation - Procedures that involve the partial or total mutilation of the female external genitalia or any kind of injury to the female genitalia, which was not done due to medical considerations and consent.

(Human) trafficking - Transporting, kidnapping, or transferring people of any age and gender against their will and using the victims to exploit them sexually, to the labor force, forced marriage, child soldiers, or removing their organs.

Honor killing - An act of violence, usually murder, committed mainly by male family members against female family members who are perceived to have brought dishonor upon the family.

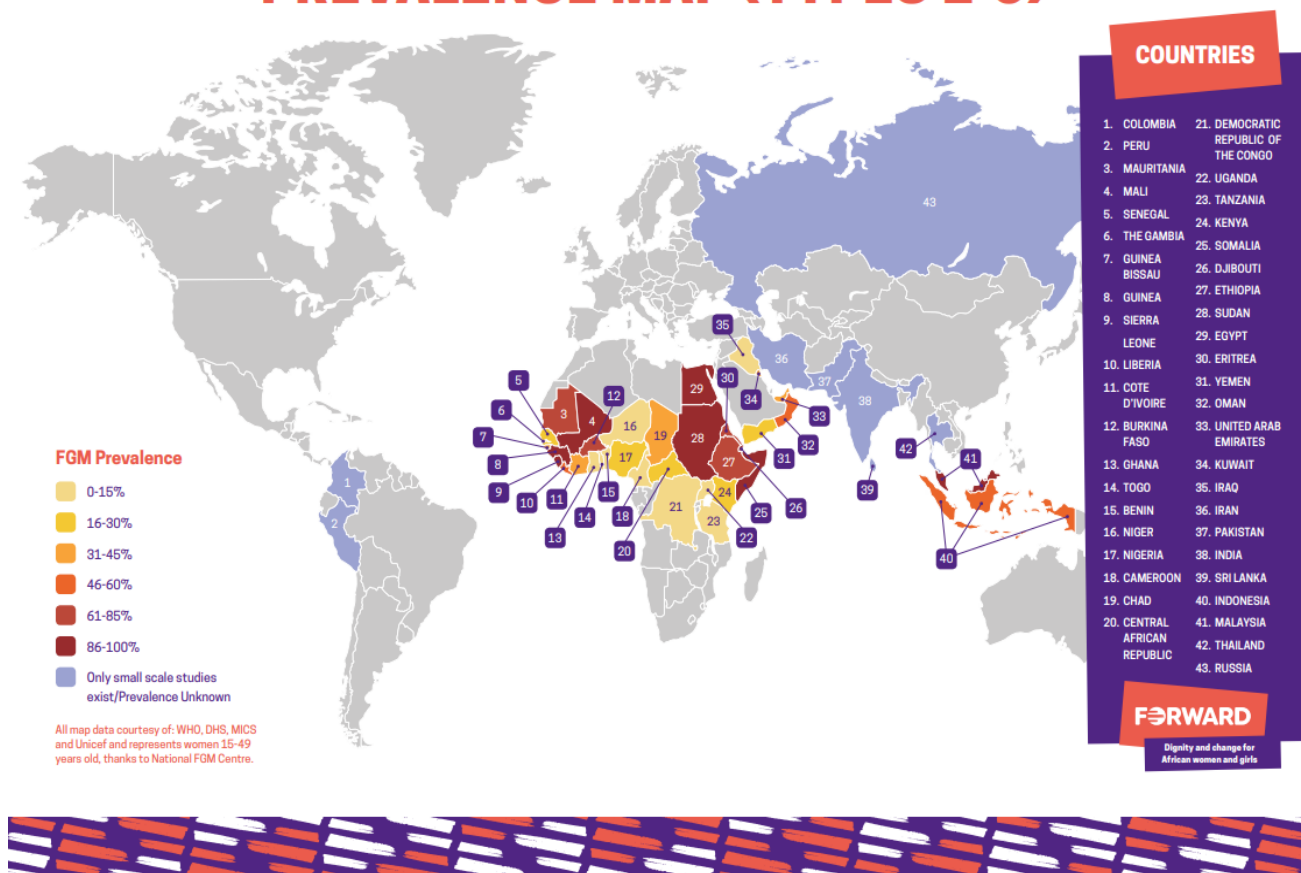
General Overview

Gender-based violence can be present in many ways and forms. One of these is femicide or feminicide which is an act of violence and a form of homicide directed against women all around the world. "The UN estimates that 470,000 women are murdered in reported incidents of femicide every year worldwide, which means that 1 woman is murdered every 11 seconds." Femicide is often also a form of intimate partner violence or honor killings, which also have a highly estimated risk for women and girls. Out of all female homicide victims in 2022, around 55% were killed by intimate partners or other family members, indicating clearly the most dangerous place for women is their own home.

Honor killings are accepted and justified acts of violence in many cultures as dishonor is highly shameful and judged by their local communities. Hence, a variety of reasons can be seen as dishonor which can result in the targeting of a woman, including being a victim of sexual assault, committing adultery, refusing to enter an arranged marriage, or seeking divorce. The UN estimates that around 5,000 women and girls are murdered each year in so-called "honor killings" by members of their families. However, experts suppose that the number of this kind of violence against women must be much higher due to many cases being reported as suicide or as an accident rather than honor killing.

Another form of GBV which is an issue not often discussed is female genital mutilation. Many women and girls fall victim to this form of violence against women, especially during their adolescence. It is nearly always carried out by traditional practitioners on minors, therefore it is not just a violation of women's rights but also a violation of the rights of children. Statistics show that at least 200 million women and girls aged 15–49 have undergone female genital mutilation in 31 countries where the practice is concentrated. The mutilation has four types depending on the parts of the genitalia which are partially or fully injured or cut during the procedure. The consequences or complications can vary from severe pain to death and different kinds of infections and damage to the victim's mental health. This act of violence is performed on several continents including a lot of countries, however, it is mainly present in Africa, especially the most severe type of mutilation which is mostly practiced in the northeastern region of Africa.

GLOBAL FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM) PREVALENCE MAP (TYPES 1-3)



Source:

<https://www.forwarduk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Forward-FGM-Prevalence-Map-2019-WEB-1.pdf>

Human trafficking is also a form of violence against women which mainly concerns young girls and adult women. Trafficking can include the exploitation of labor, removing organs, child soldiers, forced marriage, and sex work. Most of the detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation (91 percent) are women, which means that women are at extremely high risk of sexual trafficking, while men are mostly exploited to labor.

Addressing all these forms of gender-based violence would engender solutions that would help to combat the aforementioned human rights violation issue. Therefore, different communities would result in a less violent and problematic society, especially for women and young girls.

Major Parties Involved

Türkiye: Statistics show that Türkiye has great issues with the protection of women, gender equality, and fighting against gender-based violence. Around 4 out of 10 women in Turkey have suffered physical and/or sexual violence during their lives. Since 2015 over

2,500 women have been murdered in reported incidents of femicide in Turkey, which indicates that violence against women is common in the country. Türkiye was the first country to sign the Istanbul Convention, however, in 2021 several demonstrations took place in the country when Türkiye withdrew through which it became the only country to withdraw from the convention.

Brazil: Brazil is considered one of the most dangerous countries for women due to the 13th highest rate of femicides globally and other forms of violence against women which happen on a daily basis. However, its government is starting to recognize this issue and take steps to combat GBV. “The government has also adopted additional measures since 2006, including the Law of Femicide (2015) and Law 14.188 (2021), which criminalize femicide and psychological gender-based violence, respectively.”

South Africa: South Africa has the highest rate of rape cases which marks the country as a perilous place for women and young girls. In response, civil society organizations across South Africa came together in 2014 to form the National Strategic Plan on Gender-Based Violence. Many feminist and women’s groups have taken action against GBV in South Africa with the collaboration of different organizations and the UN.

Sudan: The risk of falling victim to gender-based violence severely increased in Sudan in recent times. From 3 million girls and women being at risk of gender-based violence has increased to an estimated 4.2 million people. Since fighting broke out, several refugee women and girls have suffered and become victims of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, or other kinds of GBV. Right now, many prevention programs and organizations work in Sudan to combat violence against women in the country.

Timeline of Events

1878 - Frances Power Cobbe published ‘Wife Torture in England,’ to support a new law that would expand legal options available to survivors of domestic violence. This happened in response to several brutal attacks by intimate partners in England.

1920 - Article 23 of the Covenant recognizes women’s right to “fair and humane conditions of labour” and the problem of human trafficking specifically for women and children.

1960 - The President of the Dominican Republic ordered the assassination of political activists and sisters, Patria, Minerva, and Maria Teresa Mirabal which became the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

2008 - The UNiTE campaign: The Secretary-General launched the initiative in 2008 to take action against gender-based violence.

2011 - The Istanbul Convention: This is a landmark agreement to protect women that includes 45 countries and was signed in Turkey's largest city in 2011.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Previously, several attempts have been made by different organizations, the European Parliament, the UN, and many more to solve the issue of gender-based violence.

One of these attempts is the UNiTE campaign which the UN Secretary General put forward. UNiTE calls on governments to take action against GBV, while also calling on women's organizations, media, the private sector, and many others to address the issue of violence against women. They are calling on society and all civilians around the world to end gender-based violence and harmful societal norms which are the main causes of GBV.

The Istanbul Convention was another attempt to solve the issue of violence against women. This is a landmark agreement that included and was ratified by many countries to protect women, punish perpetrators, combat GBV, and prevent domestic violence. This convention demanded legally binding standards and individual institutions and organizations specialized against violence against women which had to be fulfilled by the given country to ratify the agreement.

Possible Solutions and Approaches

A possible solution to this problem is to raise awareness globally and address the main causes of GBV, such as gender inequality, harmful social norms, socially constructed stereotypes, patriarchy, and many other issues that may occur in societal structures. The addressing of gender-based violence, or in other words violence against women, could lead to a safer environment both for women and men worldwide with the reduction of gender-based crimes such as trafficking, stalking, homicide, mutilation, and domestic violence. Prevention programs,

support services, legislation, end of victim blaming, media campaigns, and education can help to combat gender-based violence. The reason behind this solution is the change of societal norms which are deeply rooted in societal structures, which do not support gender equality, such as patriarchy. The change in the patriarchal system and this type of social structure would be the key to be able to reduce the number of cases and solve the issue of violence against women.

Bibliography:

UNICEF:

<https://www.unicef.org/protection/gender-based-violence-in-emergencies>

Eige Europa

<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/what-is-gender-based-violence>

WHO

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

UN WOMEN

<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/gender-related-killings-of-women-and-girls-femicide-feminicide-global-estimates-2022-en.pdf>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>

Amnesty

<https://www.amnestyusa.org/updates/the-horror-of-honor-killings-even-in-us/>

Article about honor killing

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2021/8/1/murdered-women-a-history-of-honour-crimes>

WHO: Female genital mutilation

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>

WHO: Prevalence of FGM

[https://www.who.int/teams/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-research-\(srh\)/areas-of-work/female-genital-mutilation/prevalence-of-female-genital-mutilation](https://www.who.int/teams/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-research-(srh)/areas-of-work/female-genital-mutilation/prevalence-of-female-genital-mutilation)

FMG prevalence map, Forward UK

<https://www.forwarduk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Forward-FGM-Prevalence-Map-2019-WEB-1.pdf>

Brazil – Wilson Center

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/fighting-gender-based-violence-brazil>

South Africa – Sonke Gender Justice

<https://genderjustice.org.za/project/policy-development-advocacy/stop-gender-violence-national-campaign/>

Türkiye - My Name Is Happy documentary and an article about GBV and Istanbul Convention

<https://www.mynameishappy.org/>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/26/turkish-police-fire-tear-gas-at-women-protesters-in-istanbul>

Istanbul Convention

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2018/630297/EPRS_ATA\(2018\)6302_97_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2018/630297/EPRS_ATA(2018)6302_97_EN.pdf)

UNiTE

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/unite/theme>

https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/unite_concept_note_english.pdf

Timeline:

https://lsedesignunit.com/VAW_timeline/