

Violence Against Women



What is Violence Against Women?

UN Declaration on Violence against Women: Article 1

United Nations Declaration defines violence against women/girls: “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women/girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (United Nations, 1993)”.

Violence Against Women: An Overview

Violence against women takes many forms – physical, sexual, psychological and economic.

These forms of violence are interrelated and affect women from before birth to old age.

Women who experience violence suffer a range of health problems and their ability to participate in public life is diminished.

Violence against women harms families and communities across generations and reinforces other violence prevalent in society.

Violence against women also impoverishes women, their families, communities and nations.

Violence Against Women: Two Predominant Forms

1. Intimate partner violence refers to behavior by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours.
 2. Sexual violence is any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. It includes rape.
- Most victims are women, and most perpetrators are men.

Common Forms

Not confined to a specific culture, region or country, or to groups of women within a society.

The roots of violence against women lie in persistent discrimination against women.

Other common forms of violence against women are:

Early marriage of girls in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (60 million girls/year)

Female genital mutilation, in Africa

Dowry murder, in South Asia (woman killed by husband's family)

“Honor killing” (rape victims, accused of adultery) killed by relatives

Human trafficking (80% of trafficked are women and girls)

Sexual harassment (reported by 30-50% working women around the world).

The "Culture of Silence"

Domestic violence is an extremely sensitive issue that raises uncomfortable questions concerning ideology, morality and culture.

It is perpetrated behind closed doors, hidden from public view and deliberately disguised by both the victims and the societies in which they live.

Although violence against women is widespread, efforts of its documentation and quantification, in all countries are hindered by the "culture of silence" that surrounds the issue

Femicide

- 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 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 labor, or slavery.

Femicide

- 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 alleged reason that the person has brought dishonor or shame upon the family.

Human trafficking

- A global crime that trades in people and exploits them for profit. Physical and sexual abuse, blackmail, emotional manipulation, and the removal of official documents are used by traffickers to control their victims. Exploitation can take place in a victim's home country, during migration or in a foreign country.
- Human trafficking has many forms. While men, women and children of all ages and from all backgrounds can become victims of this crime, women are the primary targets and girls are mainly trafficked for sexual exploitation.

Online or technology-facilitated violence

- Is any harmful act that is committed, assisted, aggravated, or amplified using digital tools or information communication technologies.
- These acts can result in or have the potential to cause, physical, sexual, psychological harm, as well as infringe on rights and freedoms. This violence can occur in online spaces, and it can be perpetrated offline using 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.

Online violence can include the following:

- Cyberbullying: involves sending intimidating or threatening messages.
- Doxing: public release of private or identifying information about the victim.

Scope of the Problem

Population-level surveys based on reports from survivors provide the most accurate estimates of the prevalence of intimate partner violence and sexual violence.

- A 2018 analysis of prevalence data from 2000–2018 across 161 countries and areas, conducted by WHO on violence against women, found that worldwide, nearly 1 in 3, or 30%, of women have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner.
- Over a quarter of women aged 15–49 years who have been in a relationship have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner at least once in their lifetime (since age 15).

- Globally as many as 38% of all murders of women are committed by intimate partners.
- Lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic impacts have increased the exposure of women to abusive partners and known risk factors, while limiting their access to services.
- Situations of humanitarian crises and displacement may exacerbate existing violence, such as by intimate partners, as well as non-partner sexual violence, and may also lead to new forms of violence against women.

Setting of violence

1. Violence in home seen as normal or Private matter
2. Community
3. Workplace
4. En route during migration, smuggling, in refugee camps
5. War- rape of female civilians due to ethnicity, female soldiers exposed to sexual abuse (institutionalized sexual violence)

Risk Factors

Some factors are associated with being a perpetrator of violence, some are associated with experiencing violence and some are associated with both. Risk factors for both intimate partner and sexual violence include:

- Lower levels of education (perpetration of sexual violence and experience of sexual violence);
- A history of exposure to child maltreatment (perpetration and experience);
- Witnessing family violence (perpetration and experience);
- Antisocial personality disorder (perpetration);
- Harmful use of alcohol (perpetration and experience);
- Harmful masculine behaviors (perpetration);
- Community norms that privilege or ascribe higher status to men and lower status to women;
- Low levels of women's access to paid employment; and
- Low level of gender equality (discriminatory laws, etc.).

Risk Factors

The unequal position of women relative to men and the normative use of violence to resolve conflict are strongly associated with both intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence.

Health Consequences

- Intimate partner and sexual violence cause serious short- and long-term physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health problems for women. Such violence can:
- Have fatal outcomes like homicide or suicide.
- Lead to injuries, with 42% of women who experience intimate partner violence reporting an injury because of this violence.
- Lead to unintended pregnancies, induced abortions, gynecological problems, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

Health Consequences, cont.

- It increases the likelihood of miscarriage, stillbirth, pre-term delivery and low birth weight babies.
- It can lead to depression, post-traumatic stress and other anxiety disorders, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, and suicide attempts.
- Health effects can also include headaches, pain syndromes (back pain, abdominal pain, chronic pelvic pain) gastrointestinal disorders, limited mobility and poor overall health.
- Sexual violence, particularly during childhood, can lead to increased smoking, substance use, and risky sexual behaviors.

Impact on the Children

Children who grow up in families where there is violence may suffer a range of behavioural and emotional disturbances.

These can also be associated with perpetrating or experiencing violence later in life.

Intimate partner violence has also been associated with higher rates of infant and child mortality and morbidity (e.g. diarrheal disease, malnutrition).

The social and economic costs of intimate partner violence and sexual violence are enormous and have ripple effects throughout society.

Women may suffer isolation, inability to work, loss of wages, lack of participation in regular activities and limited ability to care for themselves and their children.

Prevention and Response

- In 2019, WHO and UN Women published RESPECT women – a framework for preventing violence against women aimed at policy makers.
- Each letter of RESPECT stands for one of seven strategies: Relationship skills strengthening; Empowerment of women; Services ensured; Poverty reduced; Enabling environments (schools, workplaces, public spaces) created; Child and adolescent abuse prevented; and Transformed attitudes, beliefs and norms.



- R Relationship skills strengthened:** strategies to improve skills in interpersonal communication, conflict management and shared decision-making.
- E Empowerment of women:** economic and social empowerment strategies including those that build skills in self-efficacy, assertiveness, negotiation, and self-confidence.
- S Services ensured:** ensuring a range of services including health, police, legal, and social services for survivors of violence.
- P Poverty reduced:** strategies targeted to women or the household, whose primary aim is to alleviate poverty.
- E Environments made safe:** efforts to create safe schools, public spaces and work environments, among others.
- C Child and adolescent abuse prevented:** strategies that establish gender equitable and nurturing relationships by parents, educators and others working with children. This strategy demonstrates the overlap between violence against children and violence against women.
- T Transformed attitudes, beliefs and norms:** strategies that challenge harmful gender attitudes, beliefs, norms and stereotypes.

Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2023

- Thirteen percent of ever-married women age 15–49 have experienced physical violence since age 15, and 8% experienced physical violence during the 12 months preceding the survey (Table 17.1).
- Trends: The percentage of women who have experienced physical violence since age 15 has decreased over time in Jordan, from 34% in the 2012 JPFHS to 13% in the 2023 JPFHS.
- Women in the Central region (15%) are more likely to have experienced physical violence since age 15 than women in the North (8%) and South (9%) regions.

Table 17.1 Experience of physical violence by any perpetrator

Percentage of ever-married women age 15–49 who have experienced physical violence by any perpetrator since age 15 and percentage who experienced physical violence by any perpetrator in the 12 months preceding the survey, according to background characteristics, Jordan PFHS 2023

Background characteristic	Percentage who have experienced physical violence since age 15 ¹	Percentage who experienced physical violence in the past 12 months			Number of ever-married women
		Often	Sometimes	Often or sometimes ²	
Age					
15–19	14.4	6.9	6.2	13.1	45
20–24	17.3	4.4	8.1	12.5	262
25–29	11.8	2.7	4.4	7.2	521
30–39	14.2	4.1	6.0	10.1	1,590
40–49	11.3	1.7	4.8	6.5	3,077
Marital status					
Married	10.7	2.4	5.1	7.6	5,024
Divorced/separated/ widowed	30.9	5.0	6.9	11.9	471
Employment status					
Currently employed	14.2	2.1	4.5	6.7	821
Not currently employed	12.2	2.8	5.4	8.2	4,674
Residence					
Urban	12.4	2.8	5.3	8.1	5,044
Rural	12.6	1.2	4.5	5.6	451
Region					
Central	14.6	3.1	6.2	9.3	3,611
North	8.2	1.8	3.4	5.2	1,571
South	8.8	1.6	3.9	5.6	313
Governorate					
Amman	11.0	2.0	4.2	6.2	2,523
Balqa	20.7	2.0	12.1	14.1	278
Zarqa	25.2	7.5	11.1	18.6	721
Madaba	11.6	3.6	5.5	9.1	90
Irbid	7.0	1.8	2.2	4.0	1,141
Mafrq	5.5	0.9	1.6	2.5	220
Jarash	14.6	2.9	9.4	12.3	125
Ajloun	22.8	2.5	15.5	18.0	84
Karak	9.1	1.9	3.8	5.6	123
Tafila	9.5	2.0	3.6	5.6	51
Ma'an	6.4	0.9	3.1	3.9	60
Aqaba	9.6	1.7	5.1	6.8	78
Nationality					
Jordanian	12.4	2.6	5.3	7.8	4,957
Syrian	8.8	2.7	2.9	5.6	339
Outside camps	9.5	2.8	3.1	5.9	285
Inside camps	5.0	2.0	2.1	4.1	54
Other nationalities	20.2	5.4	9.4	14.8	199
Education					
No education	19.0	12.7	3.3	16.0	117
Less than secondary	16.5	4.3	7.1	11.4	1,242
Secondary	12.8	2.6	5.8	8.4	2,255
More than secondary	8.9	1.0	3.5	4.6	1,881
Wealth quintile					
Lowest	17.3	5.2	7.2	12.4	905
Second	14.0	3.4	5.7	9.0	1,051
Middle	13.7	3.0	6.0	9.0	1,150
Fourth	10.7	1.5	5.8	7.3	1,165
Highest	8.0	0.9	2.3	3.2	1,223
Total	12.5	2.7	5.3	7.9	5,495

¹ Includes physical violence in the past 12 months. For women who were married before age 15 and reported violence only by their husband, the violence could have occurred before age 15.

² Includes women for whom frequency in the past 12 months is not known

Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2023

Table 17.2 Persons committing physical violence

Among ever-married women age 15–49 who have experienced physical violence since age 15, percentage who report specific persons who committed the violence, by the respondent's partnership status, Jordan PFHS 2023

Person	Percentage of ever-married women
Current husband	63.1
Former husband	25.6
Father/stepfather	11.7
Mother/stepmother	11.1
Sister/brother	11.1
Mother-in-law	0.4
Other	1.6
Number of women who have experienced physical violence since age 15	685

Note: Percentages may add to more than 100% since women can report more than one perpetrator.

Who is the perpetrator?

The most reported perpetrator of physical violence is the current husband (63.1 percent).

Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2023

- Among ever-married women age 15–49 who have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence, 25% have sustained some kind of physical injury.
- Cuts, bruises, or aches (23%) are the most common types of injuries reported by women who experienced spousal violence in the past 12 months.

Table 17.12 Injuries to women due to spousal violence

Among ever-married women age 15–49 who have experienced violence committed by their current or most recent husband, percentage who have been injured as a result of the violence, by types of injuries, according to type of violence, Jordan PFHS 2023

Type of violence experienced	Cuts, bruises, or aches	Eye injuries, sprains, dislocations, or burns	Deep wounds, broken bones, broken teeth, or any other serious injury	Any of these injuries	Number of ever-married women who have experienced physical or sexual violence
Physical violence¹					
Ever ²	25.0	10.0	5.5	26.5	570
Past 12 months	25.0	10.1	4.9	26.3	420
Sexual violence					
Ever ²	38.9	19.5	10.8	40.1	155
Past 12 months	32.4	16.0	7.0	32.6	99
Physical or sexual violence¹					
Ever ²	23.3	9.3	5.2	24.7	611
Past 12 months	22.9	9.3	4.4	24.1	459

Note: Husband refers to the current husband for currently married women and the most recent husband for divorced, separated, or widowed women.

¹ Excludes women who reported violence only in response to a direct question on violence during pregnancy

² Includes in the past 12 months

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- Three percent of ever-married women age 15–49 have ever experienced spousal sexual violence, and 2% experienced spousal sexual violence in the 12 months preceding the survey.
- The proportion of women ever experiencing spousal sexual violence is higher among those age 15–19

Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2023

- Controlling behaviors can be important warning signs and correlates of violence.
- The 2023 JPFHS results show that 71% of ever-married women age 15–49 have experienced controlling behaviors from their husband.
- Sixty-seven percent of women reported that their husband is jealous or angry if they talk to other men, 23% said that he insists on knowing where they are at all times, 11% reported that he does not permit them to meet their female friends, and 5% said that he tries to limit their contact with their family

Jordan Population and Family Health Survey 2023

- The likelihood of women experiencing emotional, physical, or sexual spousal violence generally decreases as the husband's educational level increases.
- Nineteen percent of women whose husbands have no education have experienced spousal violence (physical or sexual), as compared with 11% of women whose husbands have a higher education
- Women whose fathers beat their mothers are much more likely to have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence than women whose fathers did not beat their mothers (57% versus 16%)