

SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE

National Status: Impact of COVID-19 on VAWG

National Data and Actions by Government

*This living document outlines **national data and actions by government** in response to increased violence against women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic, as covered by media across the globe.*

Europe

France

Data

- A government statement from France reports that 90 women were killed by their partners or ex-partners in France in 2020, highlighting **a significant drop** from the 146 victims of femicide the previous year. Though the government expressed this is due to a societal shift against VAWG, measures taken by the justice ministry and because of the work of NGOs, **feminist organizations warn against accepting the government's declarations on the drop in the number of murders and its causes** (i.e. underreporting, case management, etc.) [Read more here](#) (2 March 2021)
- Contrary to the President's vow to eliminate violence against women, France's new Interior Minister and Head of the National Police was accused of rape and the new Justice Minister has been condemned for making hostile and insensitive remarks on television. Over a thousand people demonstrated outside City Hall in Paris on Friday to protest the appointments. There were also anti-government demonstrations in Toulouse, Bordeaux, Lyon, Nantes and Grenoble. [Read more here](#) (10 July 2020) and [here](#) (8 July 2020)
- The association, "Féminicides par compagnons ou ex", keeps a record of killings - since the beginning of the year around 40 women have died. Only about 20% of victims of domestic violence in the country are thought to file a formal complaint. [Read more here](#) (5 June 2020)

- It remains unclear if the pop-up pharmacies to report violence were effective. Anecdotal evidence from the Rhone region show pharmacies did not receive any requests for help. Although reception points were set up in supermarkets, in Lyon apparently only one opened, was difficult to find and closed as soon as the lockdown was lifted. [Read more here](#) (5 June 2020)
- The women's rights group VIFFIL received over 1000 calls during the seven week lockdown in Lyon. It says 230 women had never contacted the association before. [Read more here](#) (5 June 2020)
- The number of domestic violence reports made on France's interior ministry website rose fourfold against the same period last year, in the first month of the lockdown. The 759 such online reports were about the same number as phone calls and texts combined. Half of them led to a criminal complaint and more than 100 to the police being called in. [Read more here](#) (26 May 2020)
- The country has reported significant increases in reports of domestic violence since the COVID-19 outbreak. [Read more here](#) (13 May 2020)
- France has witnessed a 36% increase in the number of reported domestic violence cases to the police in Paris and a 32% rise throughout the rest of France. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020 - figure recorded in March) and [here](#) (31 March 2020)
- Norway's new Action Plan against Domestic Violence, Sweden's new legislation on sexual consent and Slovenia's training in social skills for men who perpetrate violence against women round up this collection of best practice measures that are implemented in the EU to protect women from violence. [Read more here](#) (2020).

Actions by Government and Civil Society

- Alarming rates of violence have inspired a poster campaign started by *Collages Contre les Féminicides*, which has spread beyond France to more than 15 countries. [Read more here](#) (23 March 2021)
- The state of Lyon opened 60 extra units for women who are victims of domestic violence. [Read more here](#) (5 June 2020)
- The government has launched new hotlines and web-based tools in response to the increase in violence against women during the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (7 June 2020) and [here](#) (1 June 2020)
- France's Health Ministry has given advice regarding domestic violence during the lockdown period and confirmed women could use old prescriptions to restock on supplies of the contraceptive pill. [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)
- Created a toll-free text messaging service which puts women in touch with security forces. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)
- The former French president François Hollande supports an app developed in France, App-Elles, which allows women and girls to discreetly alert 3 trusted contacts when they are being attacked and to call the police if necessary. It includes a GPS alert and a recording is made of the attack in real time on the victims and contacts' phones. [Read more here](#) (9 May 2020)

Italy

Data

- The country's Interior Ministry reported 11 killings in 11 weeks of lockdown (*discussing domestic violence, though did not explicitly say VAWG*). [Read more here](#) (5 June 2020)
- Italian centres for abused women lose state funding as lockdown fuels demand. [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)
- Requests for help on the 1522 anti-violence helpline are growing by about 60%. [Read more here](#) (13 May 2020)
- Despite the drop in crimes, 5,031 calls were made to a helpline during lockdown - 73% more than in the same period of 2019. [Read more here](#) (13 May 2020)
- There has been a rise in reports via other channels (rather than calling) such as email. [Read more here](#) (8 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- Adapted an anti-bullying app called "YouPol" that allows women to alert the police they need assistance without placing a phone call. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020) and [here](#) (7 June 2020)
- Police in Italy can remove the perpetrator from the home. [Read more here](#) (1 June 2020)
- A petition by women in the country demanding more of a say in the country's recovery gathered thousands of signatures in days and brought women into the national task force. [Read more here](#) (1 June 2020)
- A reporting app was recently introduced. [Read more here](#) (8 May 2020)

Spain

Data

- 20 women have been murdered by their partners or ex-partners so far in 2020. Unofficial sources say the figure is double that. [Read more here](#) (1 June 2020)
- During the hardest weeks of Spain's lockdown the number of criminal complaints fell up to 40 per cent before returning to more usual patterns. [Read more here](#) (26 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- Spanish government approves draft bill against child abuse, creating protocols against sexual harassment, gender violence, domestic violence, among other forms of violence, to be applied at all education centers, leisure and sports centers and other spaces. The draft bill also sets out a protocol for healthcare centers, and creates a central registry for information, as one of the main problems is the lack of data. Citizens will have the obligation to report situations of violence to the relevant authorities. [Read more here](#) (10 June 2020)
- Survivors of gender-based violence can call 016. It does not leave a mark on the invoice, but it must be deleted from the call log. [Read more here](#) (1 June 2020)
- The ministry set up a virtual “SOS button” on its mobile app, available to 500,000 women who have made criminal complaints about gender violence. If someone presses the button five times in swift succession, it records 10 seconds of audio and summons the police, without any need for the caller to speak. But as of May 17, only 175 women had downloaded the SOS button. [Read more here](#) (26 May 2020)
- The interior ministry said the 69 pop-up centres in place referred 401 people to shelters or the police.
- An innovative method is Spain’s instant messaging service that offers a geolocation function and an online chat room to provide immediate psychological support to survivors of violence. [Read more here](#) (12 May 2020)
- A system has been set up where women can inform pharmacists of abuse by using the code word 'mask 19', allowing pharmacy staff to alert the emergency services. [Read more here](#) (8 May 2020)

U.K

Data

- A UN Women U.K reports four-fifths of young women in the UK have been sexually harassed (as reported by [the Guardian](#) on 10 March 2021). Key findings include:
 - **71% of women of all ages in the UK have experienced some form of sexual harassment in a public space** – this number rises to 86% among 18-24-year-olds.
 - The two main reasons women of all ages cited for not reporting incidents are: “I didn’t think the incident was serious enough to report” (55%) and “**I didn’t think reporting it would help**” (45%)
 - **44% of women agreed that having more confidence that reporting the incident would prevent it from happening again would encourage them to report.** [Read more here](#) (March 2021)
- The death of Sarah Everard in the U.K spurred a wave of activism to end violence against women and girls, calling it a ‘#MeToo

- moment'. [Read more here](#) (11 March 2021)
- In the U.K, during the first national lockdown, the National Domestic Abuse Helpline saw an **80% increase in calls** and Karma Nirvana, which supports victims of so-called “honour-based” abuse and forced marriage, reported a **162% average increase in caseloads**. [Read more here](#) (11 March 2021)
 - At least 26 women and girls have been killed during the coronavirus lockdown, and others were trapped with abusers. [Read more here](#) (2 July 2020)
 - In the United Kingdom, calls, emails and website visits to a national domestic violence charity (Respect) have increased 97%, 185% and 581% respectively. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)
 - A national domestic abuse helpline in the UK (Refuge) said calls have jumped 66% since stay-at-home measures were implemented and visits to its website up 950%. It has had a 10-fold increase in visits to its website in the past two weeks. [Read more here](#) (29 May 2020), [here](#) and [here](#) (27 May 2020)
 - Reports of domestic violence in London have risen by a third under the lockdown, according to the city’s police force. [Read more here](#) (21 May 2020)
 - There were at least 16 suspected domestic abuse killings in the U.K and as many as 4,093 domestic abuse arrests in London since the start of the COVID-19 restrictions - an average of about 100 a day- since 9 March, with an average of nearly 100 calls a day to the help centers. [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)
 - (Ireland) The Department of Justice and Equality of Ireland launched a major TV, radio and social media campaign on domestic violence to raise awareness that services are still available. The department has provided an additional allocation of over €160,000 to community and voluntary groups to support their work (not clear if all or what portion is GBV specific) and is funding the making and airing of the ad. [Read more here](#) (Updated 16 April 2020)

Actions by Government

- After several delays since 2017, the UK’s House of Commons passed the Domestic Abuse Bill. The Bill creates Britain’s first statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic. It is described as “landmark” by campaigners against violence against women and girls. [Read more here](#) (8 July 2020)
- **UK:** Early in the lockdown, the government promised 37 million pounds, or about \$46 million, in emergency funds for domestic abuse charities. Only £1 million has reached front-line organizations. [Read more here](#) (2 July 2020)
- A group of women MPs and charities are urging the government to treat misogyny as a hate crime within the government's new domestic abuse laws, as "amendment 84". Their amendment to the Domestic Abuse Bill would require police to record and track

crimes motivated by misogyny. Recording misogyny as a hate crime "supports women to be able to name the experiences they have, and to know they will be believed when they do so". [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)

- The government of the United Kingdom is stalling on establishing a robust legal framework to address violence against women and girls even as reported domestic abuse spikes during the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (8 June 2020)
- The country has launched web-based tools in response to the increase in violence against women during the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (1 June 2020)
- Domestic abuse victims will be able to seek help by saying a codeword at pharmacies and supermarkets, following other countries. [Read more here](#) (21 May 2020)
- The U.K pledged £76m to help vulnerable children and victims of domestic violence, including £27m in emergency funding for domestic abuse services. [Read more here](#) (29 May 2020), [here](#) (12 May 2020), [here](#) (5 May 2020) and [here](#) (2 May 2020)
- The Home Secretary announced an action plan is being developed with the police, frontline charities and others to tackle severe crimes, including domestic violence. [Read more here](#) (13 May 2020)
- A popular app called 'Bright Sky' provides support and relevant information to victims of abuse. It can be disguised in cases where abusers might check on their victims' phones. [Read more here](#) (12 May 2020)
- The safeguarding minister is discussing with the domestic abuse commissioner on how to use the £750m fund dedicated to charities dealing with COVID-19, to further support victims [Read more here](#) (13 May 2020)
- The Home Office is working with the domestic abuse commissioner to provide an additional £2m to bolster domestic abuse helplines and online support. [Read more here](#) (12 April 2020)
- The home secretary announced £2m of funding for domestic abuse helplines and online support, while £600,000 of funding would go to six charities that specialise in supporting victims of domestic and sexual abuse. [Read more here](#) (27 April 2020)

Germany

Data

- The number of domestic violence cases handled by Luxembourg police was more or less stable during the COVID-19 lockdown from March to May 2020. [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020)
- The country has reported significant increases in reports of domestic violence since the COVID-19 outbreak. [Read more here](#) (13 May 2020)

Austria

Actions by Government

- The City of Vienna is taking a stand for prevention of domestic violence and granted the associations "White Ribbon" and "Männerberatung", which work to prevent male violence against women and children, with 50.000 euros each. [Read more here](#) (14 May 2020)
- Provides guaranteed place in shelters/refuges for women experiencing violence and a removal of perpetrators of violence from quarantined households.

Greece

Data

- A government helpline received nearly four times as many complaints in April as in March. [Read more here](#) (5 May 2020)

Kosovo

Data

- HALO's field reports from Kosovo confirm increases in domestic violence against women due to lockdown. [Read more here](#) (1 June 2020)
- The Ministry of Justice reported a 17% jump in cases of gender-based violence in March, compared with the same period in 2019. [Read more here](#) (6 May 2020)

Bulgaria

Data

- Eight women have lost their lives after being killed by their partner since the state of emergency was imposed on March 13. [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- The Interior Ministry said the ministry has not yet collected any data on the potential rise of domestic violence during the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)

Serbia

Actions by Government

- Serbia has ensured that courts prosecute complaints of violence without delay. [Read more here](#) (1 June 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- OSCE Mission to Serbia UK statement - “We would appreciate hearing more of your plans... on the increase in the dissemination of disinformation and misinformation that we’ve experienced during the Covid-19 crisis and the impact on domestic violence.” [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)

Montenegro

Data

- The head of the Centre for Women’s Rights, said calls to her NGO reporting domestic violence were up 20 per cent from the previous month. [Read more here](#) (21 April 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- UNDP Montenegro has launched an Android and IOS application that swiftly alerts cases of violence to the National SOS helpline for victims of domestic violence. The app ‘Budi Sigurna’ (‘Be Safe’) allows users to send an SMS with one click requesting help. The message includes a geolocator and telephone number of the user. The SOS helpline promptly responds. The UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia is exploring how to replicate the app. [Read more here](#) (1 May 2020)

Cross-regional - Europe

Data

- The European Union Commission published its [2021 report on gender equality in the EU](#) that highlights the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender-based violence. Relevant points from the report include:
 - While the collection of robust EU-level data is ongoing, preliminary findings from an assortment of independently carried-out studies point towards an **escalation of psychological and physical violence against women by an intimate partner**.
 - Even when lockdown measures will eventually be lifted, **long-term socio-economic consequences** are likely to prevail, including an **increase in intimate-partner violence**.
 - In order to prevent further escalation or long-term consequences, action is needed to end gender-based violence against women and girls. Ensuring that victims can **access adequate support** at this time of crisis, including in **rural areas**, should be one of the priorities. [Read more here](#) (5 March 2021)
- In a recent study covering the period until September 2020, the EIGE provides a preliminary overview of **national measures to support survivors of violence** during the COVID-19 outbreak, identifies examples of promising practices, and provides recommendations on how to better support them during the pandemic, as well as in future crises. The report identifies **common challenges faced by Member States** such as ensuring the continuity and finding new avenues for support services, addressing the increase in demand and the sustained strain on service provider staff, assessing levels of risk to gender-based violence and overcoming **inadequate funding**. [Read more here](#) (5 March 2021).
- The European Institute for Gender Equality's (EIGE) research found that while every country in the EU introduced special measures to protect women from intimate partner violence, **support for victims was often patchy**. Support service staff faced several challenges, including increased demand and heightened distress of victims; accessing personal protective equipment; quickly having to adapt to remote support and concerns around victim confidentiality; assessing victim's level of risk and maintaining contact without meeting face to face; and maintaining work-life boundaries and managing increasing levels of strain. [Read more here](#) (Date not available)
- WHO Europe member states have recorded a 60% increase in emergency calls to women victims or threatened with violence from their partners, compared to April 2019. Internet inquiries or calls to services responsible for preventing this violence have increased fivefold. [Read more here](#) (7 May 2020)
- Reports by the gender experts of the European Equality Law Network as well as those from news outlets and international organisations include:

- In France, a 32% increase in domestic violence cases was reported in just one week during the national lockdown.
- In Lithuania, 20% more cases were reported during three weeks of lockdown when compared to the same period in 2019.

Actions by Government

- In January 2021, the EU committed to:
 - Implement and disseminate its relevant humanitarian policies for **GBV in emergencies**
 - Continue to advocate for - the need to address GBV in emergencies from the onset of crises, the importance of **GBV risk mitigation and gender-sensitive humanitarian aid**, and to promote the work of the **Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies**, including through its engagement with the EU Member States (16 EU Member States are a partner of the Call to Action)
 - **Respond to GBV in emergencies against women, girls, men and boys** (**note inclusion of men and boys under GBV*)
 - Report annually on funding allocations for humanitarian-targeted actions that respond to GBV
 - Incorporate **protection strategies against GBV in all aspects of humanitarian assistance**
 - Implement a **Nexus approach in preventing and responding to GBV** [Read more here](#) (8 March 2021)
- On International Women's Day, a group of over twenty Green MEPS called on the European Commission to propose a comprehensive and inclusive directive to prevent, respond to and end gender-based violence online and offline. [Read more here](#) (8 March 2021)
- The European Parliament has called on member states to increase capacity in women's shelters during the pandemic, and to provide flexible tools for reporting domestic abuse such as text messages or online chats. [Read more here](#) (8 May 2020)
- In a recent study covering the period until September 2020, the EIGE provides a preliminary overview of **national measures to support survivors of violence** during the COVID-19 outbreak, identifies examples of promising practices, and provides recommendations on how to better support them during the pandemic, as well as in future crises. The report identifies **common challenges faced by Member States** such as ensuring the continuity and finding new avenues for support services, addressing the increase in demand and the sustained strain on service provider staff, assessing levels of risk to gender-based violence and overcoming **inadequate funding**. [Read more here](#) (5 March 2021).

North America

U.S

Data

- There have been budget cuts for domestic and sexual violence hotlines and community outreach in some of the most populous states, including New York and California. [Read more here](#) (18 June 2020)
- The COVID-19 pandemic is linked to a ten percent increase in domestic violence cases across the country - an equivalent to nearly 1,400 additional cases across the US each day. [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)
- The Chicago Police Department has reported an increase in domestic violence-related calls this year, compared with 2019. [Read more here](#) (26 May 2020)
- The country has reported significant increases in reports of domestic violence since the COVID-19 outbreak. [Read more here](#) (13 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- Nancy Pelosi called for reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)
- In Philadelphia, there are only two 100-bed shelters for domestic violence survivors. Women Against Abuse turned away 600 people looking for shelter in March. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)
- The head of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) told the UN Secretary General to stop treating abortion as “essential” humanitarian relief during the COVID-19 pandemic. The SG was asked to remove references to “sexual and reproductive health” from the UN’s COVID-19 policies and to “drop the provision of abortion as an essential component of the UN’s priorities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.” The head of USAID said the UN should focus on “life-saving interventions” and the “most urgent, concrete needs” instead, such as “essential healthcare”. [Read more here](#) (20 May 2020), [here](#) (19 May 2020) and [here](#) (18 May 2020)
- In the Governor of California’s [May Revise](#), in an attempt to budget for the deficit during the pandemic, there was no allocation for sexual and domestic violence prevention. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)

Canada

Data

- Perpetrators use the pandemic and public health restrictions to further abuse and control their female victims due to forced confinement in their home [Read more here](#) (8 March 2021)
- (B.C) Victoria police report a 20-per-cent increase in mental-health cases and in domestic disputes. [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)
- Since the pandemic began, groups and shelters that work with Indigenous women have reported a sharp rise in domestic violence as COVID-19 restrictions keep families in their homes. [Read more here](#) (29 May 2020)

- In some parts of Canada, front-line service providers noticed a 20 to 30 percent increase in domestic violence reporting. Vancouver-based Battered Women's Support Services faced a rapid increase in crisis calls: up by 300 percent compared with the number of calls before the lockdown. [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)
- Crisis intervention services have become rapidly overwhelmed during the pandemic. Service providers welcome the emergency funding but remain concerned about their ability to support survivors beyond the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)
- A man has been charged with terrorism for killing a woman in Toronto – a killing police allege was motivated by the “incel” ideology. The charges, announced Tuesday by Toronto Police and the RCMP, mark the first time police in Canada have formally acknowledged an alleged misogynistic crime as terrorism – a positive signal for advocates who have long been calling for the recognition of violence against women as terrorism. [Read more here](#) (19 May 2020)
- At least 9 women and girls killed in domestic homicides in Canada between 1 April and 4 May. [Read more here](#) (12 May 2020)
- The Canadian Women's Foundation states, in any given night, about 300 women and children are turned away because there are no beds. It is expected that the outbreak will make things worse. [Read more here](#) (8 April 2020)

Actions by Government

- The Government of Canada created the Commemoration Fund, which invests over \$13 million in over 100 commemoration initiatives from coast to coast to coast to help honour the lives and legacies of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, including LGBTQ and Two-Spirit people. [Read more here](#) (13 July 2020)
- To address the rise in domestic violence reported by Indigenous women's shelters during the pandemic, the government will spend \$44.8 million over five years to build 10 shelters in First Nations communities and two in the territories to help women and children fleeing violence. The government will also provide \$40.8 million to support operational costs for these new shelters over the first five years, and \$10.2 million annually after that. A further \$1 million a year is for engagement with Metis leaders and service providers to provide shelter to women fleeing violence and assist in community-led violence prevention projects. [Read more here](#) (29 May 2020)
- As of May 13th, several women's shelters and sexual assault centres received funds to help women and children who are fleeing violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. [Read the full list here](#) (19 May 2020)
- Up to \$10 million was provided to Indigenous Services Canada's (ISC) existing network of 46 emergency shelters on reserve and in Yukon to support Indigenous women and children fleeing violence. The funding is delivered through ISC's Family Violence Prevention Program and the amount for each shelter is determined based on factors such as on-reserve population, remoteness, and number of beds. [Read more here](#) (19 May 2020)

- \$40 million went to Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), \$30 million of which addresses immediate needs of shelters and sexual assault centres as follows: \$20.54 million to Women's Shelters Canada to distribute to over 420 violence against women shelters across the country; \$3 million to the Canadian Women's Foundation to distribute the funding to approximately 90 sexual assault centres across the country; A further \$6.46 million to women's shelters and sexual assault centres in Québec, through an agreement between Canada and Québec. [Read more here](#) (19 May 2020)
- \$50 million will go to women's shelters and sexual assault centres to help with their capacity to manage or prevent an outbreak in their facilities. This includes funding for facilities in Indigenous communities.
 - \$26 million is being given to Women's Shelters Canada to distribute to shelters and another \$4 million for Canadian Women's Foundation to distribute to sexual assault centres across the country.
 - The Ministry of Women and Gender Equality said they are working with provincial counterparts, as well as Women's Shelters Canada and the Canadian Women's Foundation, to identify which women's shelters and sexual assault centres will be eligible for funding and "to ensure coordinated approaches to addressing domestic violence during the outbreak."

Oceania

Australia

Data

- There has been an increase in the frequency and severity of violence against women in Victoria during the COVID-19 lockdowns, according to a study by Monash University. [Read more here](#) (8 June 2020)
- There was also an increase in first-time family violence reporting by women noted by 42 per cent of respondents and various new forms of intimate partner violence emerged. [Read more here](#) (8 June 2020)
- Australia has reported significant increases in reports of domestic violence since the COVID-19 outbreak. [Read more here](#) (13 May 2020)
- During Australia's restriction on movements in March, Google also saw searches on domestic violence up by 75% since the first recorded Covid-19 case. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)
- The number of requests from police for social services organisation Wayss had increased from an average of 120 per week to 209 in 7 days in mid-March. [Read more here](#) (28 March 2020)
- In a survey sent by Women's Safety NSW to 400 frontline workers across New South Wales, Australia, 40% of workers reported increases in pleas for help, while 70% said current cases were becoming more complex. [Read more here](#) (26 March 2020)

- In Victoria, women's support service Wayss said police requests for assistance with cases had almost doubled in the past week, as they dealt with a form of abuse "not experienced before". [Read more here](#) (26 March 2020)

Actions by Government

- Australia donated \$1.7 million in June to a campaign to end violence against women and children in Vietnam. [Read more here](#) (10 July 2020)
- Western Australia has created a "Covid-19 Family and Domestic Violence Taskforce" to work with the police force. [Read more here](#) (7 June 2020)
- Deploying more resources to help women suffering from physical and mental abuse, beyond the initial \$150 million to support Australians experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence due to the fallout from coronavirus. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)
- Funding for crisis accommodation and specialist services for people suffering or at risk of family violence; short-term accommodation for people unsafe isolating or recovering from COVID-19 at home; ensure family violence services meet the expected increase in demand during the health crisis.
- Courts can impose electronic monitoring on offenders; online access to restraining orders.

New Zealand

Data

- Police reported an initial 20 per cent increase in calls related to domestic violence and police figures comparing the week before the lockdown show a 22% increase in investigations. [Read more here](#) (4 June 2020) and [here](#) (1 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- The Treasury turned down a proposal by the Minister for Women to put a gender lens across Budget spending allocation, despite the pandemic revealing how assumptions connected to gender, and gender roles play a part in the workforce and economy and the country's high rates of violence against women. [Read more here](#) (4 June 2020)
- Domestic and sexual violence services will receive more than NZ\$200m in this year's budget. Services to rehabilitate perpetrators of violence will also receive NZ\$16m, "to help break the cycle of lifetimes of violence". [Read more here](#) (11 May 2020)
- Additional support will be made available for victims of non-fatal strangulation (recently made a separate crime). [Read more here](#) (11 May 2020)
- The #HakaAgainstViolence challenge is supported by the Ministry of Social Development's 'Its not OK' campaign, The Warehouse Group and Facebook. [Read more here](#) (1 May 2020)

- The Prime Minister advocated for a new way of addressing domestic violence as a nation, including through services and culture change. [Read more here](#) (1 May 2020)

Latin America

Argentina

Data

- A woman is killed every 30 hours in Argentina. [Read more here](#) (4 June 2020)
- The *Observatorio Ahora Que Si Nos Ven* reported 49 femicides from March 20 to May 10, or approximately one woman killed every 24 hours. [Read more here](#) (27 May 2020), [here](#) (15 May 2020) and [here](#) (6 May 2020)
- The country reported a 39% spike to hotlines since March and the national helpline is receiving an overwhelming number of requests for support via WhatsApp. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020).
- The Office of Domestic Violence in the Supreme Court in the capital city recorded 50 complaints daily. Under quarantine, it has been receiving five a day, indicating that women have barriers to filing complaints. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)
- Pharmacies have been declared as safe spaces for victims of abuse to report. [Read more here](#) (12 May 2020)
- At least 86 femicides have occurred in Argentina in 2020. One woman was killed every 29 hours in March, for a total of 24 femicides. Some feminist organisations peg the number of femicides during the quarantine at even higher. [Read more here](#) (1 April 2020)

Actions by Government

- Argentina has partnered with pharmacies to help women report covertly. [Read more here](#) (1 June 2020)
- Courts do not accept complaints digitally, severely limiting access. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)
- The Ministry for Women created a 24/7 hotline to report domestic abuse during the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (14 May 2020).

Actions by Government and UN- Promising Practices

- On Wednesday (June 3rd), Argentina's largest newspaper, Clarín, published the names and stories of more than 300 women who have been murdered in the last year as part of a special obituary section. *(Note - This was part of a campaign with the Spotlight Initiative Argentina programme).* [Read more here](#) (4 June 2020)
- Public service campaigns that, including Argentina's #BarbijoRojo social media campaign produced in partnership with UN Women

encourages the reporting of domestic violence and helps alert leaders and law enforcement authorities to the scale of the problem. [Read more here](#) (27 May 2020)

Mexico

Data

- In Mexico, evidence pointed to an **80% increase in gender-based violence** during the initial months of the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (1 April 2021, said at a panel on March 24)
- In Mexico, emergency calls reporting attacks on women in Mexico jumped more than 50% in the first four months of the year compared with the same period last year, government data showed. [Read more here](#) and [here](#) (9 June 2020)
- Chihuahua state reported a 65% increase in femicides between March 2020 and April 2020. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)
- In 2020, 10 Mexican women are murdered every day on average. [Read more here](#) (29 May 2020)
- Emergency calls to Mexico's shelters (reported by shelters specifically) increased by 60%. Calls to the military police 190 hotline in São Paulo state increased 45%. [Read more here](#) (27 May 2020)
- Women who file complaints risk sexual torture by the police and are naturally reluctant to visit a precinct where they could face further abuse by officials untrained in gender attack cases. [Read more here](#) (18 May 2020)
- Only 11% of women attacked during the public health crisis have sought help from the authorities. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)
- Almost 1,000 women were murdered in Mexico in the first three months of 2020; an 8% increase from last year's figures. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)
- Figures from the government's National Security System show that emergency calls reporting domestic violence rose from 52,858 in February to 64,858 in March, while reports of violence against women rose by 20% in the same period. The number of women killed nationwide rose from 219 in February to 254 in March. [Read more here](#) (6 May 2020)
- At least 720 women were murdered in the first quarter of the year and 244 women were victims of femicide, the government said. [Read more here](#) (29 April 2020)
- Complaints to police of domestic violence rose around a quarter in March against a year earlier, official data show. [Read more here](#) (27 April 2020)
- Has seen a jump in domestic violence calls. [Read more here](#) (20 April 2020)
- The national network of women shelters has seen a 60% increase in calls for help. [Read more here](#) (10 April 2020)
- Digna Ochoa Human Rights Centre normally receives 5-10 victims of domestic violence per day. In the week before the country declared a health emergency on March 30, only two people arrived. [Read more here](#) (9 April 2020)
- In the first month of coronavirus quarantine starting in March, the national network of women's shelters reported an 80 percent increase in calls seeking help for gender-based violence. [Read more here](#) (released 20 May 2020, referencing March)

Actions by Government

- The government of Mexico initially denied the surge in violence during the pandemic and ignored the disproportionate impact of its shutdown policies on women. [Read more here](#) (1 April 2021, said at a panel on March 24th)
- When calls to domestic violence helplines spiralled during the coronavirus lockdown, the president dismissed such reports as “90% fake”. [Read more here](#) (4 June 2020), [here](#) (31 May 2020) and [here](#) (20 May 2020)
- On May 26, a government report showed Mexican authorities had lacked coordination in femicide investigations and promised to restructure how various federal agencies work together to solve these crimes. The government launched a public awareness campaign about domestic violence (*detailed below*). [Read more here](#) (29 May 2020)
 - Activists criticized a new Mexican government ad campaign on violence against women, saying it minimizes the problem and depicts women as aggressors - a video included in the campaign urges men and women to “count to ten” before lashing out at people in their home, an approach used in a similar campaign in the 1980s. But activists said that reduces a huge structural and cultural problem to a simple issue of anger management. [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)
- Mexico has increased virtual access to emergency services and government agencies. Judges in Mexico City received permission to issue protection orders electronically during the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (27 May 2020), [here](#) (15 May 2020) and [here](#) (13 May 2020)
- Women’s shelters remain operational as an essential service while coronavirus measures are in place. New government funding has been provisioned, and the federal government says a woman experiencing violence can call the emergency number for a response from police or a variety of hotlines to find a place in a shelter. [Read more here](#) (20 May 2020)
- The president returned the National Guard to the streets, after Mexico recorded its deadliest month in March since the start of his presidency. The country’s National Human Rights Commission has warned of the particular dangers women face as they have suffered abuse at the hands of troops, who frequently go unpunished. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020) and [here](#) (13 May 2020)
- Amid an austerity drive to confront the coronavirus pandemic, Mexico’s government is threatening to cut funds to counselling centres for indigenous women, and/as part of cuts to the Houses of Indigenous Women, which counsel and advocate for victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse, and co-ordinate programs for reproductive health. [Read more here](#) and [here](#) (6 May 2020)
- The Mexican government had declared shelters for female victims of violence to be essential services to remain open during the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (9 April 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- In Mexico UNDP and UN Women are helping establish phone and online platforms to support vulnerable women via the LUNA centers, which are safe spaces for women and girls. [Read more here](#) (22 May 2020)

Actions by Other Stakeholders

- With the rise of femicide during COVID-19, men's groups are providing preventative psychological support to men. [Read more here](#) (28 June 2020)

El Salvador

Data

- IRC's information hub, CuentaNos, allows users in El Salvador and Honduras to seek information and find service providers for essential services, including gender-based violence protection. In February, before the pandemic, 1,574 unique users visited CuentaNos' Facebook page on gender-based violence. In May, that number jumped over 30-fold to 38,902. In March, one user reached out for gender-based violence support, while in May, 121 people reached out for support. [Read more here](#) and [here](#) (9 June 2020)
- Nearly 200 complaints of violence against women were reported by the Organization of Salvadoran Women for Peace from March 17 to May 22, a 70% increase of reports compared to 2019. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)
- Internally displaced people and community leaders report that criminal groups are using the confinement to strengthen their control over communities, including through sexual and gender-based violence. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)
- The Human Rights Attorney's Office reported nine femicides in the first month of the lockdown, and authorities say the actual figure is most likely higher. The Organization of Salvadoran Women for Peace recorded 13 cases in the same period. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- 95% of local and government response services are closed in El Salvador. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)
- Women are allowed by law to leave their homes to report abuse. However, security services appear largely unaware of this special provision, leaving victims at high risk of detention. [Read more here](#) (27 May 2020) and [here](#) (15 May 2020)

Honduras

Data

- In February, before the pandemic, 1,574 unique users visited CuentaNos' Facebook page on gender-based violence. In May, that number jumped over 30-fold to 38,902. In March, one user reached out for gender-based violence support, while in May, 121 people reached out for support. [Read more here](#) and [here](#) (9 June 2020)
- Since the pandemic, the number of reported cases of domestic and intra-family violence increased by 4.1% per week. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)
- Internally displaced people and community leaders report that criminal groups are using the confinement to strengthen their control over communities, including through sexual and gender-based violence. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)

Guatemala

Data

- **(Guatemala/U.S)** As of June 30, 262,548 Guatemala immigration cases are pending in the US, primarily for asylum - many are indigenous women. Indigenous women in Guatemala are unable to report violence, and those awaiting asylum in the US are unsure about work, their ability to procure food and housing, and incarceration has both multiplied and been extended during the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (9 July 2020)
- A mine that has existing issues with the community has continued operating through the pandemic. With a history of violence against women, tensions have increased and led to instances of sexual violence, killings and criminalization of land rights defenders in El Estor. [Read more here](#) (27 May 2020)
- Internally displaced people and community leaders report that criminal groups are using the confinement to strengthen their control over communities, including through sexual and gender-based violence. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- UNDEF is working with the Women's Justice initiative to adapt its programming to the crisis and respond to the needs of survivors of violence during quarantine. The Women's Justice Initiative is conducting advocacy and awareness raising on COVID-19 GBV translated to the Kaqchikel language, broadcasting through community radio and other traditional community means; strengthening a dedicated hotline for GBV cases; and providing legal and psychological counselling to victims.

Brazil

Data

- 55% of the Brazilian hospitals that performed abortions before the pandemic stopped this service as resources were redeployed to treat patients with COVID-19. [Read more here](#) (17 March 2021)
- A study by the Brazilian Public Security Forum found that femicide rose by 22.2%. 143 women were killed in episodes of domestic violence. [Read more here](#) (1 June 2020)
- Reports of grievous bodily harm due to domestic violence fell, which researchers believe is because it is harder for women to reach police precincts to report. Reports of sexual violence are also down because these crimes require victims to be examined at police stations. [Read more here](#) (1 June 2020)
- A study by the Brazilian Public Security Forum found that femicide in six Brazilian states increased 56% in March, compared to the same period last year (from 32 to 50 killings). [Read more here](#) (27 May 2020) and [here](#) (15 May 2020)
- The number of emergency protective measures granted in São Paulo had dropped 38% during the first two weeks of April compared to the same period last year, even as domestic violence calls to the state's emergency 190 hotline rose 45%. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)
- An analysis of 50,000 posts on Twitter indicated a 431% increase in occurrences of domestic violence. [Read more here](#) (20 April 2020)
- The state hotline "Ligue 180" for callers to report domestic violence recorded an 18% rise in complaints from March 17 to 25, compared with the first two weeks of the month. [Read more here](#) (9 April 2020)
- Possible 40 or 50 percent increase in domestic violence cases. [Read more here](#) (28 March 2020)

Actions by Government

- Brazil's President attended an event promoting a government campaign against domestic violence. [Read more here](#) (31 May 2020)
- In some states, such as Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and the Federal District, police stations are still open 24 hours a day. Elsewhere, police stations, including special precincts for women, are operating under reduced hours. [Read more here](#) (27 May 2020)
- São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are allowing virtual domestic violence complaints, and São Paulo is allowing judges to grant emergency protective measures virtually and is transmitting summonses through WhatsApp. [Read more here](#) (27 May 2020)
- Many services for victims of violence in Brazil are now more limited. Rio de Janeiro, for example, has suspended operations at its Specialized Centers for Assistance to Women. [Read more here](#) (27 May 2020) and [here](#) (15 May 2020)
- The Human Rights Ministry launched an app to report domestic violence. As a measure to combat domestic violence, the Human Rights Ministry partnered with the National Council of Prosecution Services, to which information on human rights violations will be forwarded. [Read more here](#) (29 April 2020)

Actions by Government and UN- Promising Practices

- Brazil has produced TV ads in partnership with UN Women to alert leaders and law enforcement authorities to the scale of the problem. [Read more here](#) (27 May 2020) and [here](#) (15 May 2020)

Uruguay

Data

- Gender-based violence that has been exacerbated by the coronavirus lockdown. The last weekend of May, two women were killed and another two were injured in separate incidents involving male partners and relatives, while two children were murdered by their father (who also committed suicide) after their mother reported him to the police for violent behaviour. [Read more here](#) (10 June 2020)
- According to the authorities, police reports of violence against women decreased 8% in the first 45 days of the lockdown, compared to the same period last year. [Read more here](#) (10 June 2020)
- However, calls to a gender-based violence hotline increased 80% in the lockdown's first two months.
- Since January, at least eleven femicides and thirteen attempted femicides have been recorded in a database compiled by feminist groups. [Read more here](#) (10 June 2020)

Peru

Data

- Reports from Peru highlight nearly **16,500 cases of violence against women and girls** between March and December 2020, while **calls into the country's emergency sexual violence hotline almost doubled** in 2020 compared to 2019. [Read more here](#) (24 February 2021)
- Prevented by the lockdown over the coronavirus pandemic from earning a living, Peru's sex workers have had to organize soup kitchens supplied by food handouts to feed themselves and their children. [Read more here](#) (6 June 2020)
- At least seven women have been killed in femicides in Peru since the start of the country's shutdown. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- Deploying more resources to help women suffering from physical and mental abuse. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)
- Email address specifically for receiving complaints during the pandemic.

Bolivia

Data

- A drop in formal complaints in countries is likely due to movement restrictions and the inability or hesitance of women to seek help or report through official channels, according to the United Nations and local prosecutors. [Read more here](#) (13 May 2020)

Colombia

Data

- Women face barriers to accessing essential sexual and reproductive health services (Venezuelan refugees and migrants are not offered these services, and nationals face social barriers/in health facilities). [Read more here](#) (2 July 2020)
- There has been a 50% increase in domestic abuse reports in the country. [Read more here](#) and [here](#) (9 June 2020)
- The city of Cartagena witnessed a triple femicide and Bogotá registered four times more calls for domestic violence since the confinement measures started. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)
- According to the Presidential Counselor for Equity for women, during the first days of the national quarantine there was a 51% increase in cases of domestic violence against women. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)
- There has been a 90% spike to hotlines. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)
- In Colombia, reports of domestic violence during lockdown have increased by 175% compared to the same period last year. [Read more here](#) (19 May 2020)
- Calls to Colombia's domestic violence police hotline surged 225 percent under the lockdown, even as shelters closed. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)
- A government-run domestic abuse hotline received four times as many calls than usual during the first weekend of the lockdown. [Read more here](#) (9 April 2020)
- Calls to police's 24/7 hotline to report violence against women had surged 225% in the first weeks of the lockdown. [Read more here](#) (20 April 2020) and daily domestic violence calls to a national women's hotline were up nearly 130% during the first 18 days of the country's quarantine, according to government figures. [Read more here](#) (27 April 2020)

- Have expanded hotlines, added online and WhatsApp messaging services and kept shelters and family courts open. [Read more here](#) (9 April 2020)
- Decree to guarantee continued access to services virtually including legal advice, psychosocial advice, police and justice services including hearings.

Actions by Government

- The government issued a decree to guarantee virtual access to legal services, which includes legal advice, virtual court hearings as well as police and justice services. [Read more here](#) (12 May 2020)
- A new strategy #SafeSpaces was launched for women experiencing violence in the home, allowing women to report it and be helped. Women facing domestic abuse in Bogota can seek help in supermarkets and pharmacies - the program involves more than 630 supermarkets from three different chains and store managers in the Farmatodo pharmacies in Bogota are being trained in how to respond to women seeking help and how to contact the police. [Read more here](#) (12 May 2020)

Venezuela

Data

- The assault of a 13-year-old girl in Venezuela, and the arrest of her mother and a teacher who helped her end the pregnancy, have **sparked a national debate about legalizing abortion**. This has become a rallying cry for activists to legalize abortion. [Read more here](#) (13 April 2021)
- In Venezuela, COVID-19 has [curtailed access to birth control](#), stripped [maternity wards](#) of resources and [created widespread hunger](#), denying millions of women the ability to control their lives. [Read more here](#) (13 April 2021)
- For the month of April 2020, there was a 65% increase in femicides compared to April 2019. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)
- The Digital Observatory of Femicides showed between January 1st and March 13th, 2020 there was one femicide every 36 hours in the country. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)
- Women have to show signs of abuse such as bruises or obvious signs of violence on their bodies. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)

Actions by Government

- Since the quarantine was imposed, the National Institute of Women launched a campaign through social media with prevention messages and announced mechanisms for complaints. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)

- Representatives of the institute declared shelters have been adapted for women who are at higher risk. Unofficial sources say there are four shelters in the country; two closed in 2018 and those that remain open face severe restrictions in their operations. Other sources claim that there are no public shelters currently operating in the country. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)
- Some survivors have reported that the telephone numbers provided by the authorities don't work and that once they are able to reach the institutions in charge of receiving the complaints, the authorities tell them that the COVID-19 pandemic is the priority at the moment. Reports are seldom taken seriously. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)
- A representative from the Venezuelan Association for an Alternative Sexual Education says there are no state shelters for survivors of gender-based violence in the country and that the public healthcare system can't respond. With the outbreak of COVID-19, authorities haven't developed a tailored approach to seeing to the victim's needs. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)

Chile

Data

- Calls to emergency telephone hotlines for abuse victims have increased on average 60% since lockdowns were announced in March. [Read more here](#) (2 June 2020)
- Coronavirus may be limiting access to abortion. Under the strict laws, abortion pills are tightly controlled by the government. [Read more here](#) (2 June 2020)
- An abortion "doulas," part of a clandestine network willing to break the law and face prison to help women obtain abortions. had three girls last week [mid-May] aged between 13 and 16 come in for rape cases. One had been raped by her father, and another by her boyfriend. [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- Chile's women and gender minister, a great-niece of dictator Pinochet, has resigned after just a month following a furious backlash to her appointment. She had had condemned Chile's forceful feminist groups for seeking "chaos and destruction". #WeDoNotHaveAMinister was trending in Chile and continues as she is replaced by Mónica Zalaquett, a former deputy who staunchly opposed Michelle Bachelet's push to ease on the total abortion ban, and permit termination in instances of rape or if there is a risk to the life of the woman or fetus. Zalaquett had applauded the bravery of an 11-year-old girl who gave birth after being denied abortion rights by the state in 2013. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)

- The advertisement was the second to be scrapped in a week after criticism. The first was a short cartoon created by private charities with the endorsement of the Ministry of Social Development which showed a family comforting a father who flies into a rage while attempting to work from home. [Read more here](#) (2 June 2020)
- Last month, the women's ministry launched a public service campaign against domestic violence, featuring a video in which an elderly man tearfully repented abusing his wife. Critics said it was overly sympathetic to abusers, and the ministry swiftly removed the video, admitting that the campaign "did not send the intended message". [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)

Cross-regional - Latin America

Data

- Before COVID-19, Latin America already had 10 of 12 countries with the highest rates of femicide in the world. Lockdown measures in the region have contributed to **huge spikes in GBV cases and greater difficulty in accessing assistance. Violence against trans women and trans men** has also increased during the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (24 February 2021)
- There is a significant increase in complaints of sexual violence in Colombia, El Salvador and Peru. [Read more here](#) (8 July 2020)
- Across the LAC region, there has been a significant rise in reports of physical, sexual and psychological abuse directed towards girls and adolescents. 95% of girls have been out of school since mid-March, increasing their vulnerability to gender-based violence. [Read more here](#) (8 July 2020)
- The Organization of Salvadoran Women for Peace reported a 70% increase in complaints of violence against women in Central America between mid-March and late-May. [Read more here](#) and [here](#) (9 June 2020)
- According to UN reports, an additional 18 million women are due to lose access to modern contraceptives in Latin America and the Caribbean because of the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (19 May 2020)
- Several countries saw substantial increases in calls to emergency hotlines following stay-at-home measures. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)
- Domestic violence reports have increased by 30 to 90 percent in Colombia, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Brazil and El Salvador, among other countries. [Read more here](#) (14 May 2020)

Africa

South Africa

Data

- In South Africa, more than 2,700 women have been murdered as a result of GBV since 2000. This is worsening as lockdown measures have trapped women inside with their abusers and **evidence has now emerged that suggests cases of violence against women are increasing.** [Read More here](#) (28 March 2021)
- South Africa's recent emergence from lockdown in February 2021 came with growing concerns that **another lockdown will be necessary given the slow roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine, which would have impacts on GBV.** It remains uncertain how the unfolding GBV crisis in South Africa will **hamper efforts to meet the SDGs** and their respective targets in less than 10 years time. [Read More here](#) (28 March 2021)
- There has been a wave of femicide since the easing of lockdown restrictions on June 1st. [Read more here](#) (9 July 2020)
- Bishops are scheduled to speak on violence against women at the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) Youth Office on Youth Day. [Read more here](#) (15 June 2020)
- The president and Police Minister linked the recent surge in violence against women to the lifting of coronavirus restrictions, including a ban on the sale of alcohol. [Read more here](#) (14 June 2020)
- Naledi Phangindawo was a 25-year-old that was stabbed to death. Those using the hashtag #JusticeforNaledi want the suspect, who is now in police custody, to be denied bail. He is believed to be her partner. [Read more here](#) (14 June 2020)
- A young woman police named Sanele Mfaba had been found under a tree in Johannesburg's Soweto township on Friday. This sparked another hashtag #JusticeforSanelisiwe, calling for more to be done to protect women. [Read more here](#) (14 June 2020)
- The President said violent men are taking advantage of the eased restrictions on movement to attack women and children. [Read more here](#) (14 June 2020)
- Authorities in KwaZulu-Natal say this week an elderly woman was raped and a child was found dead in a field, and two young women shot dead. [Read more here](#) (13 June 2020)
- 28-year-old Tshego Pule, was found hanging from a tree with stab wounds to her chest after having gone missing at the beginning of June, according to the Gauteng Department of Social Development. Pule was also reportedly heavily pregnant at the time of her death. Social media has erupted into #JusticeForTshegoPule, also addressing violence against women in the country more broadly. People have been urging the police to find the culprit though question whether the justice system will serve Ms Pule properly. [Read more here](#) and [here](#) (9 June 2020)
- The South African Police Services (SAPS) received 2,320 complaints of gender-based violence during the first week of the lockdown, 37% higher than the weekly average. [Read more here](#) (22 April 2020)

Actions by Government

- Cyril Ramaphosa deemed the surge in gender-based violence as South Africa's second pandemic. [Read more here](#) (9 July 2020)

- South Africa's president says it has been a "dark and shameful week" for his country following a surge in violence against women and that the culture of silence around gender-based violence had to end. The President condemned the brutality of recent killings, naming three of the victims. [Read more here](#) (14 June 2020)
- The President said he was deploying ministers to meet with community leaders nationwide to understand what exactly was fuelling the increase in VAWG and urged people to report perpetrators, pointing to a case where a man wasn't prosecuted for killing his girlfriend due to lack of evidence. "For public faith in the criminal justice system to be maintained, gender-based violence needs to be treated with the urgency it deserves by our communities working together with our police". [Read more here](#) (14 June 2020)
- More resources have been directed towards both places of safety for survivors of abuse, as well as government-funded programmes aimed at changing men's behaviour. [Read more here](#) (14 June 2020)
- A statement by SAPS said the parliament will try to ensure the modernization of the national register of gender-based violence offenders, resolution of the case backlog and delays in DNA testing, as well the availability of rape test kits in police stations. [Read more here](#) (14 June 2020)
- The President urged the SAPS to act swiftly to track down whoever was involved in the recent murders of women and ensure there is justice. He also urged South African communities to end the culture of silence and speak up, and encouraged communities to work with the police and report any tip-offs they may have to the Crime Stop Hotline on 08600 10111 or send an anonymous SMS to Crime Line at 32211, or to call the Gender-Based Violence Command Centre at 0800 428 428. [Read more here](#) (13 June 2020)
- Plans were made to support the Family Violence, Child Protection and Sexual Offences Units to deal with gender-based violence. [Read more here](#) (26 March 2020)

Uganda

Data

- During the COVID-19 crisis, sexual and physical violence against refugee children are notably on the rise. [Read more here](#) (10 June 2020)
- In refugee communities, several environmental and structural risks for girls persists, with discriminatory gender and social norms that perpetuate violence against women and girls. [Read more here](#) (10 June 2020)
- Sex workers are being unfairly targeted due to their association with truck drivers, and are being assaulted and arrested. There were 117 arrests of sex workers over a 2 week period. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)
- Attacks against female activists have been evident in the country. [Read more here](#) (25 May 2020)

- At least 11 pregnant women have died because of problems accessing maternal healthcare [due to lockdown], according to the Kampala-based Women's Pro-Bono Initiative. [Read more here](#) (21 May 2020)
- Beatrice Oceer, who was HIV positive, died aged 33 on March 21, days after the ban on public transport came into force. Oceer was a victim of domestic violence, and after escaping from her husband, was unable to eat after the pandemic began to spread. [Read more here](#) (21 May 2020)
- Activist Stella Nyanzi urged the government to revise anti-coronavirus measures that have benefitted the rich and "created an apartheid state and occasioned avoidable suffering upon many vulnerable Ugandans, especially women and low-income earners." She was recently arrested. [Read more here](#) (19 May 2020)
- In one month, police noted a surge in gender-based violence cases, with an estimated 3,280 recorded between March 30 and April 28, according to the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development. This is compared to 2019, where an average of 1,137 domestic violence cases were reported monthly. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)
- FIDA-U say they witnessed a 522% increase in the number of cases reported by phone (from nine on average to 56 calls per week) since the lockdown was first introduced, though they believe many more domestic violence cases are going unrecorded. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)
- Legal aid providers were not deemed essential until May. Now, 30 lawyers working for the Uganda Law Society are permitted to provide urgent legal services [for survivors of violence]. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)
- The Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA-U) has seen a 133% increase in reports of domestic violence. [Read more here](#) (2020)

Actions by Government

- Uganda's Ministry of Health has also set up a programme to allow community health workers to collect HIV pills for patients. [Read more here](#) (21 May 2020)
- In late March, Museveni indicated that domestic violence is not life threatening and should not be considered so during the Covid-19 pandemic. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)
- Ugandan President warned against domestic violence among families amid COVID-19 lockdown in the country. [Read more here](#) (5 May 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- In Uganda, UNDP in partnership with Jumia Food Uganda, the leading e-commerce company in the country, is exploring how to incorporate messaging to prevent violence against women and girls in an e-commerce platform which connects small and medium-sized enterprises and informal market vendors to customers. [Read more here](#) (22 May 2020)

Zimbabwe

Data

- The national gender-based violence station recorded a 90% increase for the lockdown period, as compared to pre-lockdown. [Read more here](#) (9 July 2020)
- Over 2,500 cases of sexual violence against women and girls were reported to Musasa Project since the start of the lockdown in March. Cyclone Idai and COVID-19 brought a substantial rise in sexual abuse due to the vulnerability of women and girls due to increased impunity in emergency situations. [Read more here](#) (29 June 2020)
- The lack of information and coordination in the lead up to the lockdown led many women to assume that they would not be able to access support services. Local organisations have had to increase their outreach efforts, tapping into rural networks and making use of radio broadcasts to let women know there are still avenues for help. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)
- Women in artisanal mining are at high risk of gender-based violence. [Read more here](#) (8 June 2020)
- State security agents abducted three women from the youth league of the Movement for Democratic Change. They were then tortured and sexually abused for almost two days before out of a moving car going at about 90 km. The women were reportedly taken to a remote, wooded area where they were beaten, stripped naked, sexually assaulted with firearms, and forced to drink each other's urine. [Read more here](#) (31 May 2020), [here](#) (25 May 2020) and [here](#) (17 May 2020)
- COVID-19 exposed more cases of gender-based violence and gender inequality. The inability to work because of restrictions has led to a shortage of income, food insecurity and an increase in physical and emotional abuse, as well as more child marriages. [Read more here](#) (26 May 2020)
- Attacks against female activists have been evident in the country. [Read more here](#) (25 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- The government declared social workers as essential service providers in efforts to minimise gender-based violence. [Read more here](#) (9 July 2020)
- The National Peace And Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) said the increase in GBV cases was worrying and “implores families to take advantage of this lockdown to build sound relationships, mend broken ones, appreciate one another and live in peaceful coexistence. ... The State is urged, as prescribed by the law, to take all reported cases of GBV seriously and protect all victims and survivors of GBV during this period.” [Read more here](#) (23 April 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- In response to a reversal of gains to end harmful practices during COVID-19, EU Ambassador in Zimbabwe said on the Spotlight Initiative, "The UN is collaborating with the government of Zimbabwe and Civil Society Organisations in its implementation of this USD \$30 million programme [to eliminate violence against women and girls]". [Read more here](#) (8 July 2020)

Actions by Other Stakeholders

- Mobile advertising company Promobile and GOAL reached 2.3 million vulnerable people in Zimbabwe with COVID-19 messaging, including on gender-based violence. The campaign promoted hotlines and a survey app was developed to gather information on the rise of gender-based violence. [Read more here](#) (7 July 2020)

Nigeria

Data

- Nigeria's police chief said the country had seen a sharp increase in cases of rape, domestic abuse and other forms of gender-based violence because of the COVID-19 lockdown. [Read more here](#) (15 June 2020)
- Since the pandemic, Nigeria has seen a threefold increase in the number of calls to domestic and sexual violence hotlines. [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020)
- From May 28 to June 1, two Nigerian students were raped and killed in separate incidents. The women were Vera Uwaila Omosuwa, 22, and Barakat Bello, 18. [Read more here](#) and [here](#) (12 June 2020)
- The recent online movement #WeAreTired saw Nigerians demanding that the government take fierce action against gender-based and police violence in the country, following a string of violent cases against young women. The online protests came shortly after the death of 23-year-old student Vera Omosuwa. [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020) and [here](#) (9 June 2020)
- Large numbers of Nigerians are taking to social media to demand justice for violence against women, using hashtags #JusticeForUwa, #JusticeForTina and #JusticeForJennifer with celebrities also joining virtual campaigns inspired by the Black Lives Matter protests sweeping the United States. [Read more here](#) (6 June 2020)
- Activists have contested the exclusion of women, notably Minister of Women Affairs Pauline Tallen from membership of the Presidential Task Force on Covid-19. [Read more here](#) (20 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- All 36 of Nigeria's governors resolved to declare a state of emergency over rape and other gender-based violence against women and children in the country. The governors aim to impose tougher federal laws punishing rape and violence against women and children, and to set up sex offender registers in all of the states. [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020)

Liberia

Data

- Reports from the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection indicate that from 16 March to 31 March 2020, 106 cases of gender-based violence were reported and a further 118 cases were reported in April 2020. [Read more here](#) (5 June 2020)
- Teen pregnancies are likely to increase in the wake of the pandemic because adolescent girls are more likely to be sexually exploited in crisis-affected areas. A 14-year old girl from Liberia worries over food shortages as men will demand sex in return for food. [Read more here](#) (19 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- The President closed the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and declared it as non-essential during the COVID-19 lockdown. [Read more here](#) (20 May 2020)

Actions by Government and UN- Promising Practices

- Liberia's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, in a statement delivered on Women, Peace, Security, and Development, during the 2020 Africa Dialogue Series paid tribute to the Women of Liberia, Africa, and the World; and reaffirmed Liberia's unflinching commitment and support to the Zero-Tolerance Policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020)
- The Ambassador said the proliferation of domestic and gender-based violence during this COVID-19 Pandemic is also of major concern, referencing the Secretary-General's call and encouraging that efforts and energy are directed towards it. [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020)
- Forty-nine media practitioners (27 females and 22 males) from 29 media institutions in Monrovia, Liberia participated in a three-day online training session on gender-sensitive reporting on COVID-19 and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) from Tuesday 2 June to Thursday 4 June 2020 with the support of the Spotlight Initiative. [Read more here](#) (5 June 2020)

- As part of an UNDEF project, the Liberia Women Media Action Committee is disseminating and training women in the use of a free offline mobile app that can be used to report GBV and find help for women in emergency situations.

Malawi

Data

- There has been an increase in child marriage due to financial burdens during COVID-19 (potentially anecdotal evidence). [Read more here](#) (26 June 2020)
- Since the COVID-19 outbreak, many women have reported increased levels of stress, anxiety, depression, suicide ideation (thoughts of suicide), and psycho-emotional distress to domestic violence and the increased use of alcohol and drugs within the home. [Read more here](#) (15 June 2020)
- Girls are considering marrying and having children sooner, with reports of girls being encouraged to marry because schools are closed. [Read more here](#) (5 June 2020)

Actions by Government and UN- Promising Practices

- The Ministry of Gender, Child Development and Community Development received 940 bicycles and 60 motorcycles from the UN's Spotlight Initiative for use by GBV service providers in communities. They are expected to ease mobility challenges for service providers in their efforts to reach out to vulnerable groups in hard-to-reach areas. It is expected to help service providers reach 2.8 million women, girls, men and boys directly and 8.2 million indirectly. [Read more here](#) (22 May 2020)
- UN Resident Coordinator made an emergency appeal of \$140 million for COVID-19 response, and women will get special consideration when financial aid is distributed: "We know that in situation of COVID, where there is loss of income and there are less possibilities of families to cope with the impact, women and girls are normally more exposed to abuse and violence. And we are discussing that with national institutions to make sure that we all play a role and we continue protecting women and girls from violence". [Read more here](#) (5 May 2020)

Mali

-

Kenya

Data

- Three police officers in Kenya have been arrested after one of them was filmed dragging a 21-year-old woman tied to a motorcycle. Accusing her of involvement in a robbery, another man is seen whipping her as she pleads for them to stop. [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)
- A UN human rights report has documented widespread police violence in 182 communities, including beating and sexual violence. [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)
- The government noted a sharp rise in cases of sexual violence amounting to 35.8% of all criminal cases reported during two weeks of lockdown. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)
- There has been a surge in physical attacks and killings of sex workers in Kenya since COVID-19 restrictions, attributed not only to clients attacking sex workers but also by the police and other community members who blame them for spreading the coronavirus. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)
- The Kenya Sex Workers Alliance (KESWA), a coalition of around 30 sex worker rights groups, said it has documented six murders of sex workers since the east African nation imposed a dusk-to-dawn curfew on March 27 and recorded 80 incidences of violence against sex workers by clients, neighbours and police in the first of the month of the pandemic compared to a monthly average of 25 incidents before COVID-19 hit Kenya in mid-March. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)
- A survey of 884 sex workers in Kenya conducted by KESWA found more than 65% of respondents could not get condoms and medication for HIV, such as anti-retroviral drugs, due to price hikes on public transport linked to COVID-19 restrictions. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)

Actions by Government

- The President ordered an investigation into rising reports of violence against women and girls - including rape, domestic violence, female genital mutilation and child marriage - as a result of coronavirus restrictions. [Read more here](#) (6 July 2020)
- The governor of Nakuru told journalists on Wednesday that the behaviour seen in the video would not be tolerated. "The notion of innocent till proven guilty must be upheld at all times. For Mercy, she appeared to have been sentenced already before her trial. This should never happen," the governor added. [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)
- The government is working with religious communities to address domestic violence. [Read more here](#) (21 May 2020)

Somalia

Data

- There is a high prevalence of domestic violence during the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)
- Extremely high levels of gender-based violence, exacerbated by decades of conflict, compound these challenges and undermine women's capacity to care and provide for their families during COVID-19. [Read more here](#) (1 June 2020)
- Somalia's coronavirus lockdown has led to a huge increase in FGM, with circumcisers going door to door offering to cut girls stuck at home during the pandemic. Nurses across the country had also reported a surge in requests from parents wanting them to carry out FGM on their daughters while they were off school because of the lockdown. [Read more here](#) (22 May 2020) and [here](#) (18 May 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- In Somalia, UNDP is supporting communities to develop neighborhood watch systems, where men and women receive training to regularly patrol their neighborhood to prevent or mitigate incidents of violence. [Read more here](#) (22 May 2020)

Rwanda

Actions by Government

- UNFPA Representative to Rwanda commended Rwanda's efforts to assess the continuity of sexual and reproductive health services as part of COVID-19 response. The country leveraged strong community platforms to promote SRH services. [Read more here](#) (12 July 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- UNFPA and partners held a campaign to raise awareness on the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights. The campaign focused on ending gender-based violence and teenage pregnancy and engaged the public, particularly youth, through a series of virtual webinars, social media outreach, and public media events. [Read more here](#) (12 July 2020)
- As part of an UNDEF project, The Community of Potters of Rwanda are conducting monthly radio broadcasts on COVID-19 GBV prevention; disseminating documentaries on ending domestic violence and on the impacts faced by the potters community

Nyaruguru; offering referral services and discussion sessions in women safe spaces; holding monthly safe space meetings with facilitators to share information on prevention; and launching a competition on innovative, sustainable and independent actions to fight GBV.

Ethiopia

Actions by Governments

- Filson Abdulahi, Minister for Women, Children and Youth of Ethiopia, said the Government has addressed a **rise in cases of child marriage and gender-based violence due to the pandemic** with initiatives aimed at **'bringing perpetrators to justice' and providing support services to victims**. [Read more here](#) (19 March 2021)
- The country has continued to hear domestic violence cases with minimal interruption. [Read more here](#)

Namibia

Data

- This year police have recorded 329 rape cases. In most instances, there are about three rape cases reported each weekend by the police and the majority of the victims are minor girls. [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020)
- The Office of the First Lady is dealing with 11 active rape cases of which four are on trial. "These are cases that, if successful, can help change the way the whole system deals with rape and other forms of gender-based violence". [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020)

Actions by Government

- The technical advisor in the Office of the First Lady of Namibia noted that the pervasiveness of the rape culture in the country suggests women are devalued. Karuaihe-Upi blamed the safety and security and education ministries for doing a poor job in standing up and being visible and audible on the issue of rape. He said the churches are also quiet on the matter. [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- Well-known MC and TV host Pombili Shilongo stepped back from a decade-long career in national broadcasting to focus on addressing gender-based violence, noting it has exacerbated during the pandemic. Shilongo, in partnership with the Namibia Planned Parenthood Association (Nappa) and UNFPA has started a project called 'Ensuring Life-Saving GBV Assistance to Women and Girls'. She will engage with adolescents and young people, including those with disabilities, through traditional and social media. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)
- As part of an UNDEF project, the Women's Action for Development is preparing radio programmes on GBV facilitated by their regional community voice members.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Data

- DRC is racing to also stop the spread of measles and a new outbreak of Ebola, in addition to COVID-19, leaving women delaying reproductive health needs. The country is facing armed conflict, with rampant sexual violence against women who, as caregivers, are often on the frontlines of caring for the sick and at higher risk of falling ill and also often blamed for spreading these viruses. [Read more here](#) (Updated 6 June 2020)
- A hotline set up a year ago to support sufferers of domestic violence in DR Congo has experienced a huge increase in calls from women locked down with their abusers. [Read more here](#) (27 May 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- Caritas is disseminating and broadcasting educational programming on COVID-19 GBV through community radio stations; building partnerships with local clinics for referral of potential GBV cases; training local staff and local committees on GBV response and referral, in cooperation with UNDEF and UNFPA.

Botswana

Data

- Undocumented migrant sex workers who regularly returned to their homes in neighbouring Zimbabwe to collect medication are now forced off treatment due to borders being closed. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- Community members, including school principals, tribal chiefs, farmers and nurses, are raising awareness of the rise in violence and advising the government on village challenges and needs. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)

Ghana

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- UNFPA country office is supporting a hotline being managed by the Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit of the Ghana Police. In their individual capacities, some women opinion leaders are asking abused women to send them coded messages for support or transmission to the relevant authorities. [Read more here](#) (20 May 2020)

Benin

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- As part of an UNDEF project, the Ligue LIFE is adapting its community mobilization project against trafficking of young girls in Benin by disseminating information on COVID-19 GBV through awareness-raising and advocacy activities.

Cross-regional- Africa

Data

- Amnesty International reported in a briefing that the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted an **escalation in gender-based violence against women and girls in Southern Africa**. [Read more here](#) (9 February 2021)
- This brief by Amnesty International analyses the **intersection of gender-based violence, pandemic responses, sociocultural practices and barriers to justice** in Southern Africa. [Read more here](#) (9 February 2021)
- Harmful gender stereotypes** embedded in social and cultural norms have fueled the **rise in violence** against women and girls in Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe (e.g. harmful beliefs that suggest that women must always submit to men or that a man who beats his wife does so because he loves her). [Read more here](#) (9 February 2021)
- The crisis has led to an alarming escalation of violence in the home and emerging evidence shows COVID-19 has had a significant impact on gender-based violence. [Read more here](#) (4 June 2020)

- There are surges in emergency calls to helplines – with rises between 25 and 300 per cent, dramatic increases in internet searches to find support for those affected by domestic violence, and higher numbers of domestic homicides. [Read more here](#) (4 June 2020)
- Mass school closures are putting many more girls at risk of sexual exploitation, early pregnancy and early or forced marriage. With restrictions on home visits by police and health workers, violence shelters being converted into health facilities, and courts being forced to close, many victims may find themselves trapped and feeling abandoned. [Read more here](#) (4 June 2020)
- The regional coordinator for the African Sex Workers Alliance said police in countries such as Uganda, Kenya Ivory Coast, Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa, were raiding brothels and bars, assaulting and arresting sex workers. “Sex workers are an easy target in a time of crisis. Clients feel they can take advantage of them, and law enforcement think they can use them to show that they are implementing COVID-19 measures”. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)
- Stories have emerged of brutal gender-based violence across the continent with regards to COVID-19 contexts. [Read more here](#) (20 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- The Commonwealth Secretariat is working alongside partner organisations on measures to help its 54 member countries to stem the rising tide of gender based violence and will work with members to implement policy responses and interventions to safeguard victims and those at risk. [Read more here](#) (4 June 2020)
- Some governments have provided additional resourcing and funding to organisations supporting victims to upscale operations and continue providing services in a safe manner. Other useful innovations such as virtual hearings and legal advice, are allowing survivors to continue to access justice. Advocacy is being increased through a range of initiatives, such as the need to address GBV due to its economic impacts. A virtual follow up session to the Women Affairs Ministerial Meeting will be held to set out an action plan to support women and girls (and specifically survivors of violence) during the COVID-19 crisis. [Read more here](#) (4 June 2020)
- The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) delivered a statement highlighting the issue of GBV as the African ministers on Gender met on the Implementation of AU Guidelines on Gender-responsive Responsive to COVID-19. [Read more here](#) (12 May 2020)
- The AUC has worked out a Continental Strategy and established a Fund in Response to Covid 19 to support a sustainable medical response to the pandemic and mitigate its socio-economic consequences in its Member States. The Chairperson shared concerns about gender-based violence, highlighting that Covid 19 accentuates the inequalities and discrimination of vulnerable groups. “The confinement and the social distancing, can transform the haven of peace, which must be the home, into a place at high risk of violation of human rights and particularly the rights of women. We must, therefore, together ensure that this situation does not become the breeding ground for the propensity of violence against women. The fight against impunity, respect for dignity, equality and solidarity must be the cardinal values in the gender approach against Covid19”. [Read more here](#) (12 May 2020)

- The Chairperson encouraged ministers to share good practices to mitigate the negative socio-economic effects of COVID-19 and affirmed the necessity of solidarity and cooperation between public authorities, the private sector and civil society. Member States of the African Union and social partners were called upon to continue to develop and implement policies and systems enabling the empowerment of African women, as stipulated in Agenda 2063. [Read more here](#) (12 May 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- The Global Network of Sex Work Projects and UNAIDS have urged governments to support sex workers by giving them access to national social protection schemes, emergency aid if needed, and end evictions, brothel raids and arrests. [Read more here](#) (3 June 2020)

Actions by Other Stakeholders

- The South African Catholic Bishops Association's Justice and Peace Commission delivered a statement condemning gender-based violence, amounting the recent femicides to civil war. They are calling for men's engagement to end violence against women and for a multi-sectoral approach, as was employed to tackle COVID-19. [Read more here](#) (9 July 2020)

Caribbean

Jamaica

Data

- The National Children's Registry received over 1,000 reports of sexual abuse between January to June 2020 that have been referred for investigation. While reports dipped significantly in April (82) and May (119) – at a time when reporting was more difficult among COVID-19 restrictions – they rose again in June to 228 (no comparative data provided). Article refers to the Spotlight Initiative. [Read more here](#) (12 July 2020)
- Domestic violence has been substantially rising between December 31, 2019 and March 2020. [Read more here](#) (26 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- Two centres have been established at the Constant Spring and Matilda's Corner Police Stations. They offer professional counselling, referrals to appropriate agencies and follow-ups with clients. Domestic violence helplines are also available, including the Bureau

of Gender Affairs helplines for domestic abuse and the Women's Crisis Centre 24-hour hotline. The Women's Crisis Centre also offers emergency shelter for a short period of time, following a screening process. [Read more here](#) (26 May 2020)

Haiti

Data

- Women with disabilities are experiencing problems with getting transportation and assistance for food, supplies and water, and to protect themselves from the virus.
- The Haitian Secretary of State on Disability Soinette Désir reports that COVID-19 has worsened the situation of women and girls with disabilities, who are experiencing sexual violence at greater rates and suffering economic hardships. As the practice of sheltering in place spreads, intimate partner and sexual violence are anticipated to increase as has been seen in other parts of the world. [Read more here](#) (25 May 2020)
- Survivors and family members have accused the president of the Fédération Haïtienne De Football, Yves Jean-Bart, of coercing young female players at the Centre Technique National in Croix-des-Bouquets into having sex with him. [Read more here](#) (22 May 2020)
- From March 19 to April 22, Rassemblement des femmes engagées de Ouanamin (RFEO) - a local organization focused on ending GBV and supporting victims - recorded 13 cases in Ouanamin, including the rape of a minor and 12 cases of domestic violence, up from the usual 4-5 cases per month. [Read more here](#) (4 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- The Mayor's office has agreed to prioritize women and girls with disabilities in the community in the distribution [of hygiene kits] and also verbally discussed measures to prevent sexual exploitation. [Read more here](#) (25 May 2020)
- The Women's Voice and Leadership project in Haiti (WVL-Haiti) increased its support RFEO, supporting its GBV campaigns and collaboration with other local organizations to offer support to survivors. Funding was also given to five other women's organizations. WVL-Haiti receives financial support from the Government of Canada (GAC). [Read more here](#) (4 May 2020)
- In 2019 RFEO received financial support from the WVL-Haiti project to set up a database to record the cases of violence. The tool is now used to measure the impacts of the COVID-19 preventive measures on the safety of women and girls. [Read more here](#) (4 May 2020)
- Over the next few weeks and months, the WVL-Haiti project will support 13 women's organizations to promote the health precautions recommended by the Haitian state to combat COVID-19, while continuing the essential work of raising awareness on

GBV. [Read more here](#) (4 May 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- With funding from UNTF EAW, Beyond Borders is creating a series of communication materials, including self-filmed videos, radio spots, social media memes, and quick chat conversation guides adapted to provoke thinking and conversation on violence against women and girls during COVID-19. These will be used by staff, community networks, girls' group members, and in partner organizations and social networks across Haiti. Several community network members, school focal points, and girls' group mentors will be trained in dialogue-style megaphone campaigns using quick-chat conversation guides. One guide specifically speaks to issues facing girls and women with disabilities. A mix of audio and visual materials allows for maximum accessibility, and, pending funding availability, the organization will ensure videos are available in Sign Language. [Read more here](#) (25 May 2020)
- Beyond Borders is also partnering with the Ministry of Health, sharing prevention messages via WhatsApp groups, text messages and phone calls. A communication committee has also been formed, which is responsible for vetting these messages to ensure validity and appropriateness of content and clear communication channels. [Read more here](#) (25 May 2020)
- UNDEF is working with the civil society organization Fanm Deside to create intervention units to support women exposed to GBV during the crisis, and to disseminate awareness through local media.

Dominican Republic

Data

- In the Dominican Republic, the violence service of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, received 619 calls. [Read more here](#) (19 May 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- UNDP and BHD Bank are putting in place a partnership to facilitate referral services of domestic violence cases that are reported by the bank's customers. [Read more here](#) (22 May 2020)

Trinidad & Tobago

Data

- A woman was murdered outside a bus when on her way to file a police report following years of domestic violence. [Read more here](#) (2 July 2020)

Pacific

Papua New Guinea

Data

- Papua New Guinea sports star Debbie Kaore was attacked by her partner, army lieutenant Murray Oa, who has been charged with grievous bodily harm over the footage showing this violence. The graphic video, which showed the rugby player being hit with a hot iron and headbutted, was posted on social media. It sparked outrage and calls for action against domestic abuse in the country. (TW: photos of survivor after violent incident) [Read more here](#) (8 June 2020)

Actions by Government

- The government amended the Criminal Code to increase penalties for perpetrators of gender-based and sorcery accusation-related violence to life imprisonment. [Read more here](#) (13 July 2020)
- Prime Minister James Marape put out a statement urging the country's men not to beat up their wives, in response to Debbie Kaore's case: "I am a Tari man who learnt not to beat up my wife. My brother or son, you can do it too." [Read more here](#) (8 June 2020)
- The Prime Minister said PNG will struggle to reach the goal of leaving no one behind if men in the country do not respect women and girls, and perpetrate violence, in his call to all men in PNG to exercise restraint. [Read more here](#) (8 June 2020)

Fiji

Data

- The national domestic violence helpline recorded a significant increase in calls in the month of April (around 527), compared to 87 in February and 187 in March. [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)
- "Close to 50 per cent of women are reporting a correlation between COVID-19 and increased violence, linked directly to the restrictions of movement and economic strain on families", said Fiji's Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation (MWCPA). Close to three-quarters of women reported physical violence, including some extremely serious forms of violence, such as being punched, kicked and hit by stones and timber (domestic violence). [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)

- There is an increase in violence against women in Fiji since the COVID-19 outbreak, as well as high rates of violence faced by people of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, who may be forced to isolate in homes which are hostile. [Read more here](#) (20 May 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- The Fiji Multi-Country Office in the Pacific works in close collaboration with governments, civil society organisations, and communities to address violence against women and girls, pre- and during COVID-19. [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)

Samoa

Data

- There has been a 150 per cent increase in helpline calls compared to the same time last year. [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)
- President of the Samoa Victim Support Group said domestic violence was rife during lockdown and with the daily struggle for food and other necessities, stress and anger were the usual triggers of violence. [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- The Solomon Islands Family Support Centre (FSC) and the Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre (KWCSO), with the UN Women EVAWG programme, are working to ensure that women are part of all national safety plans. [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)

Cross-Regional - Pacific

Data

- Women calling in to helplines and physically visiting the centres are reporting domestic violence, sexual abuse, incest and requesting information on COVID-19. Those calling in on the helpline and physically visiting the centres are, however, reporting domestic violence, sexual abuse and incest and Tahiti believes women will start sharing more once their basic needs are met. . [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020) and [here](#) (11 June 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- Through support from UN Women, mobile counselling visits were quickly organized with 30 physical visits to three areas – Malampa, Sanma and Pentecost. [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020)
- As part of UN Women's EVAWG programme in the Pacific, the Fiji and Tonga crisis centres began intensively promoting their helpline numbers on radio, television and social media, with the Tonga centre piloting online counselling for the first time in their country. Both the Fiji and Tonga centres started providing phone counselling from home. As a result of concerted advocacy, both the Fiji and Tonga centres were deemed essential services. [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)

Asia

China

Data

- In Hong Kong, Harmony House, a domestic violence prevention centre and shelter, the number of admissions to the centre rose from 10 in January to 40 in April. [Read more here](#) (4 June 2020)
- Domestic violence increased threefold in Hubei province from 47 cases in 2019 to 162 this year when under lockdown. [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)
- Activists have reported a surge in domestic violence cases as millions of people have been under quarantine. Some police stations received as many as three times more reports of domestic violence this February than during the same month the previous year. [Read more here](#) (2 March 2020)
- In southern Hubei province, police reported triple the number of incidents of domestic violence in February, compared to last year. [Read more here](#) (29 March 2020)

Actions by Government

- Chinese couples seeking a divorce must first complete a month-long "cooling-off" period according to a new law passed Thursday, sparking outrage. The cooling-off period will not apply if one spouse is seeking divorce following domestic violence. Other new laws include expanding the definition of sexual harassment. [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)

India

Data

- The COVID-19 pandemic led to a **27% rise in child marriages in Telangana**. [Read more here](#) (10 April 2021)
- Women's organisations have seen a rise in reports of domestic violence - e.g Swayam has helped almost 1,000 women in the past 2 ½ months, when the yearly figure is 1,200-1,400. New cases have increased by 60-80%, many reaching out through WhatsApp or over social media. [Read more here](#) (18 June 2020)
- There are two recorded incidents of hospital staff sexually abusing women COVID-19 patients. [Read more here](#) (18 June 2020)
- The National Commission for Women (NCW) registered an increase of at least 2.5 times in domestic violence complaints since the nationwide lockdown, according to official data. [Read more here](#) (15 June 2020)
- Between March 25 and May 31, the NCW received 1,477 complaints of domestic violence. Nearly 727 of these complaints were received on its WhatsApp helpline set up in April. [Read more here](#) (15 June 2020)
- Cases of violence against women have increased in severity, according to Swayam, an NGO in Kolkata. Swayam received an average of 22 complaints each month before COVID-19 and it has increased to an average of 57 complaints per month on their helplines or through email. The NGO started with three helplines when the lockdown was imposed on March 25, and now has nine functional helplines. [Read more here](#) (15 June 2020)
- The number of cases of domestic violence has continued to increase in India since the national lockdown. [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020)
- Delhi courts ordered helplines and WhatsApp numbers for dealing with violence against women and girls should remain open during the lockdown, following media pressure. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)
- NGO Sneha, with the help of several Bollywood actors/actresses, took to Instagram to draw attention to the unheard voices of DV victims. People were encouraged to speak up about domestic violence and reduce shame for survivors through the #LockdownMeinLockup campaign. [Read more here](#) (2 June 2020)
- Many women don't want to leave abusers given the stigma attached to divorce in India, and leaving to go stay in a shelter or with parents is especially hard during the lockdown when transport has been limited. [Read more here](#) (2 June 2020)
- Domestic violence cases have doubled than what it was before the lockdown. The cases of domestic violence are high in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana and Punjab. [Read more here](#) (1 June 2020) and [here](#) (28 May 2020)
- The NCW reported a steep rise of total complaints from women to 257 in the final week of lockdown - March 23-April 1. [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)
- Rates of IPV are twenty percentage points higher for poor groups of women (35.3 per cent) in comparison to those for the richest groups of women (12.6 per cent). These women are especially vulnerable to psychological, physical, and/or sexual violence by their intimate partners. [Read more here](#) (28 May 2020)
- In Delhi about 2,500 women called state emergency helpline numbers. (Shared by WUNRN on 27 May 2020)

- The National Commission for Women reported a doubling in the number of domestic abuse cases in the first week of nationwide shutdown. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)
- The NCW received 315 domestic violence complaints in April, online and on WhatsApp [Read more here](#) (4 May 2020)
- 92,000 calls on child abuse and violence in 11 days. [Read more here](#) (8 April 2020)
- Over 257 complaints were filed between March 24 and April 1 compared to 116 filed between March 2 and 8. The National Commission for Women (NCW) has received 123 complaints of domestic violence from March 23 - April 10 with the panel saying it has observed a spike in such cases during the lockdown.
- The National Commission for Women (NCW) had received 116 complaints of crimes against women from across the country in the first week of March (2-8), during the lockdown period, the number of the same for 10 days, from March 23-31, is 257.
- Complaints to a domestic violence hotline have nearly doubled during the pandemic.

Actions by Government

- **(Kashmir)** With government efforts focused on COVID-19, survivors of gender-based violence are left without access to the justice system. [Read more here](#) (9 July 2020)
- The Women and Child Development Ministry has instructed One Stop Centres and Women Helplines to remain open. [Read more here](#) (15 June 2020)
- The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has decided to open online legal assistance services by a panel of women lawyers in each district to support survivors of domestic violence. NALSA has collaborated with state and district legal service authorities to establish one stop centres. [Read more here](#) (7 June 2020)
- The National Commission for Women has seen a spike in complaints and launched a WhatsApp helpline for women during the lockdown. [Read more here](#) (2 June 2020)
- The police, who are the first responders, are known to be unsympathetic to survivors and the force is further stretched during the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (2 June 2020)
- India introduced hotlines for survivors of violence. [Read more here](#) (1 June 2020)
- Akshara Centre in collaboration with the Special Cell for Women and Children [TISS] and supported by the Government of Maharashtra and Maharashtra Police launched a campaign to disseminate information so women can access the police number 100 [not usually associated with domestic violence] for complaints and support during the lockdown. (Shared by WUNRN on 27 May 2020)
- A district-wide directory for Maharashtra was compiled with the mobile numbers of over 550 service providers – social workers, Protection Officers, one stop crisis centres, and NGOs. The directory was given to all district control rooms and followed by an

online training, for phone counselling and protocols during lockdown. It was attended by over 350 service providers in the State. (Shared by WUNRN on 27 May 2020)

- Delhi Commission for Women has set up a helpline number (181) to combat violence and trauma during the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (21 May 2020)

Pakistan

Data

- Government officials reported a 25% increase in domestic violence incidents during the lockdown across the eastern Punjab province. According to rights organizations, women working in the informal sector are most impacted by domestic violence during the pandemic. A woman was beat by her husband for needing financial support to purchase sanitary napkins. [Read more here](#) (9 July 2020)

Bangladesh

Data

- Bangladesh experienced a **13% rise in child marriage during the pandemic**. [Read more here](#) (28 March 2021)
- Reports of gender-based violence have decreased in Rohingya refugee camps since lockdowns began, suggesting it continues but potentially face barriers to report violence. [Read more here](#) (19 June 2020)

Nepal

Data

- Quarantine centres housing migrants returning from India are poorly equipped to protect women at risk of violence. [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020)
- According to the WOREC, 176 reported domestic violence cases were recorded in 18 districts by May 9, among which 26 were rape cases. [Read more here](#) (7 June 2020)

Actions by Government

- Nepal Police say they have taken special precautions against crimes against women and children during the lockdown. As it is difficult to reach police offices to file a complaint during a lockdown, the police have urged the public to use online platforms such as 'Nepal Police Mobile App' to lodge a complaint. [Read more here](#) (7 June 2020)

Singapore

Data

- The number of women calling helplines increased 33%. [Read more here](#) (7 June 2020) and [here](#) (6 May 2020)
- AWARE's Women's Helpline has seen a 33 per cent increase in February over calls received in the same month last year. [Read more here](#) (7 April 2020)

Malaysia

Data

- The country has seen the number of calls to helplines double in March, compared with the same month last year. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)

Cambodia

Actions by Other Stakeholders

- **Cambodia:** A research team from KHANA Center for Population Health Research has won funding for a platform that provides 24-hour support via WhatsApp to female entertainment workers who are at risk or survivors of gender-based violence. [Read more here](#) (9 July 2020)

Vietnam

Data

- Despite action that led to zero COVID-19 deaths, similar efforts were not mobilized to end violence against women and girls - hotlines reported receiving twice the volume of calls as the same time last year. [Read more here](#) (10 July 2020)

Kyrgyzstan

Data

- A man brutally abused his wife on video. He was detained on June 13 and has been sentenced to serve 15 days in jail. [Read more here](#) (15 June 2020)
- In the first three months of this year, domestic violence cases were up by 65% compared to the same period in 2019. [Read more here](#) (15 June 2020)
- HelpAge Kyrgyzstan reported that nine crisis centres received 29 calls on domestic violence from older people (27 women and 2 men) in just over one month, between 25 March and 30 April this year. [Read more here](#) (15 June 2020)

Actions by Government

- Parliament approved the second reading of legislation that will require NGOs to engage in more exhaustive reporting on their finances than is currently required, draining the often-small organizations of their already depleted human and financial resources. [Read more here](#) (15 June 2020)
- A rally, which was organized by a local feminist group and attended by about 10 people in full respect of social distancing requirements, was quickly broken up by a group of more than a dozen policemen. The police told activists they were spoiled and badly brought-up and none of the policemen volunteered their name, position or showed any identification. [Read more here](#) (15 June 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- As part of an UNDEF project, the Community Media Association is broadcasting COVID-19 GBV information in their community radio programming, and will hold virtual round table discussions focusing on the topic.

Kazakhstan

Data

- Most crisis centers and shelters for domestic violence victims – many run by nongovernmental organizations (NGO) – stopped accepting new survivors due to the mandatory quarantine measures and lack of capacity for social distancing or self-isolation. Their activities are limited to online consultations. [Read more here](#) (9 April 2020)

Actions by Government

- During quarantine, the courts do not work, claims are not accepted, and abusers are not isolated. Several cases were suspended, including a rape case. [Read more here](#) (9 April 2020)

Turkey

Data

- Syrian refugee families are marrying off daughters to Turkish men to ease the financial burden during COVID-19. In some cases, daughters are being sold to landlords if rent cannot be paid - they are then exploited for labor or sex. [Read more here](#) (8 July 2020)
- The number of Turkish women suffering from domestic violence surged after some 90,000 convicts were freed under an early release law and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Victims were not informed in advance about the release of those who had committed domestic violence against them. [Read more here](#) (10 June 2020)
- Physical violence against women has risen 80 percent while the psychological abuse cases rose 93 percent, according to the Federation of Turkish Women Associations. [Read more here](#) (19 May 2020)
- More women are seeking refuge in shelters amid the coronavirus outbreak. There has been a 96% drop in legal complaints over domestic abuses given women's inability to call in the same house as the perpetrator. [Read more here](#) (19 May 2020)
- 'We Will Stop Femicide Platform' has seen an increase in calls by 55% this month [April/May]. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)
- 14 women were murdered in Turkish homes since the lockdown, as of April. [Read more here](#) (2 April 2020)
- At least 12 women were killed at home in March.

Actions by Government

- Against the backdrop of COVID-19 restrictive measures in Turkey, experts highlighted an **increased risk of violence against women**, particularly domestic violence, with even **greater impacts on the elderly and those with disabilities**. As femicide in Turkey has risen in recent years, there is a call for better implementation of international norms and standards, rather than withdrawing from the Istanbul Convention. The **UN Special Rapporteur on violence** against women expressed this "sends a dangerous message that violence against women is not important, with the risk of encouraging perpetrators and weakening measures to prevent it" [Read more here](#) (23 March 2021)
- Most advocacy groups agree that a key reason for Turkey's domestic violence problem is the failure of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government to implement relevant laws, particularly the Istanbul Convention and a 2012 law to curb violence against women. [Read more here](#) (10 June 2020)

Russian Federation

Data

- The trial of a decorated Russian historian accused of murdering and dismembering his young lover began Tuesday in a case that has fuelled intense debate in Russia over domestic violence. [Read more here](#) (9 June 2020)
- Some women's advocacy groups in Russia are reporting a 70% increase in calls for help. [Read more here](#) (6 June 2020)
- According to the ANNA Center for the Prevention of Violence, calls to their Russia-wide helpline for women were up by 74% in May compared to February. In Early May, Russian Human Rights Commissioner said domestic violence cases in Russia had more than doubled during the lockdown. Her statement contradicted earlier reports from the Russian police that domestic crimes had fallen by 13%. [Read more here](#) (6 June 2020)
- The Kitezh crisis centre received more than 400 calls for help since the enforcement of stay-at-home rules. Most of the victims said police did not help. The organization expects the situation will get worse. [Read more here](#) (24 May 2020)
- The number of people who've contacted the Russian LGBT Network via its hotline and live chat service since the lockdown at the end of March has doubled. [Read more here](#) (22 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- The Interior Ministry said this month there was no evidence domestic violence was on the rise. On the contrary, it said, such crimes went down by nine percent in April compared to last year. [Read more here](#) (24 May 2020)
- Had Russia adopted a domestic violence law, coping with the upsurge would have been easier, according to the ANNA Center for the Prevention of Violence. [Read more here](#) (24 May 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- As part of an UNDEF project, Focus-Media is working with crisis centers for women to develop an algorithm for advising women on issues of violence; providing online 24-hour support and information; adding psychologists to support women who have applied; and disseminating information among target groups.

MENA

Lebanon

Data

- Domestic violence and divorce cases have increased, with women and girls particularly at risk. Unable to pay rent and facing evictions, refugees are forced to share sub-standard accommodation, further increasing the risk of sexual and gender-based violence. [Read more here](#) (14 June 2020)
- Organizations reported increased cases of violence against refugee and Lebanese women and girls by as much as 100 percent in March, particularly in the form of domestic violence. Nearly half of Syrian and Lebanese caregivers recently reported increased levels of violence against children since the national lockdown caused by COVID-19. [Read more here](#) (10 June 2020)
- Reporting on domestic violence suggests a dramatic surge since the onset of COVID-19. [Read more here](#) (29 May 2020)
- In Lebanon, a domestic violence helpline set up by the Internal Security Forces has seen calls double. [Read more here](#) (20 May 2020)
- The country had seen the number of calls to helplines double in March, compared with the same month last year. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)
- An analysis of 50,000 posts on Twitter indicated a 431% increase in occurrences of domestic violence. [Read more here](#) (20 April 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- The Gender Alert on Covid-19 Lebanon report, produced by UN Women in partnership with the National Commission for Lebanese Women, WHO and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), helped inform the social media campaign UN Women and UNDP undertook. [Read more here](#) (2020)
- #TogetherAndEqual aims to influence perpetrators of violence against women, and to challenge men to do their part in domestic work and childcare to alleviate the burden on working mothers. In two weeks, the campaign reached some 210,000 people and engaged over 15 TV presenters, actors, bloggers, and ambassadors to serve as male influencers. [Read more here](#) (2020)
- The United Nations in Lebanon continues is working with the Lebanese Government and partners to scale up work to address the immediate and long-term needs of women and girls, such as providing support to the Ministry of Social Affairs to maintain the delivery of emergency health and protection services through its Social Development Centres, while scaling up support to National Governmental Organizations who serve as essential first responders to incidents of gender-based violence. It has been working to provide unconditional cash to women and men laid off as a result of the COVID pandemic, and basic assistance and urgent protection services. [Read more here](#) (29 May 2020)
- The UN has begun issuing regular gender alerts, in collaboration with the government of Lebanon, to provide real time reporting on the gendered impact of the crisis, while supporting and leading awareness raising campaigns on issues such as gender-based violence. [Read more here](#) (29 May 2020)

- UNDEF is preparing to launch a project on strengthening victim protections and realigning social attitudes on gender-based violence during COVID-19 and its aftermath. UNDEF will work with the civil society organization Abaad to incorporate actions relevant to the acute COVID-19 challenges in this area. The project will build on a recently completed first UNDEF Lebanon project in this area, implemented by the same organization. This contributed to an agreement to repeal Lebanon's Article 522, which exempted a rapist from punishment if the survivor married the perpetrator -- a provision grounded in social norms that often resulted in a victim being coerced by family to marry her attacker.
- With Lebanon's Syrian refugee community, and as part of an UNDEF project, Mandat International is conducting surveys among women refugees to identify abuse and develop awareness; and is working with legal experts on women's rights to address gender-based physical, psychological, economic abuse.

Egypt

Data

- In May, a sobbing 17-year old girl, her face battered and bruised, posted a TikTok video in which she said she had been gang-raped by a group of young men. She was arrested, along with her six alleged attackers, and all were charged with "promoting debauchery". She was recently transferred from custody to a rehabilitation centre for female victims of abuse and violence. [Read more here](#) (11 June 2020)
- Attacks against female activists have been evident in the country. [Read more here](#) (25 May 2020)
- With court trials suspended across the country, many women have been abused relentlessly and deprived of their rights, fueling perpetrators to abuse their victims further. Since the beginning of the shutdown measures last month, there has been a surge in family conflict and cases of violence, representing 43% of the total number of 1146 cases received, with over 70% of the complaints received by women. [Read more here](#) (1 May 2020)
- A study revealed a 33% increase in family problems, 19% increase in violence between family members, and 11% of wives subjected to violence from their husbands. [Read more here](#) (1 May 2020)

Actions by Government

- Precautionary measures for shelters to protect women from gender-based violence were intensified and existing support programs regarding all health aspects including reproductive health care services and family planning methods were upscaled for women to ensure easier accessibility. [Read more here](#) (12 May 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- UNDEF is working with the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights on COVID-19 GBV to build awareness-raising through media, mobilize civil society, and provide legal consultations to women exposed to violence.
- As part of an UNDEF project, The Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights is building awareness-raising through media, mobilizing civil society, and providing legal consultations for exposed women.

Israel

Data

- Since the beginning of this year, eight women and a 10-month-old infant were murdered in acts of domestic abuse, according to the Movement of Working and Volunteering Women (Naamat). [Read more here](#) (21 May 2020)
- During the coronavirus crisis when the country was locked down over the past two months, domestic violence complaints spiked and calls to abuse hotlines soared. [Read more here](#) (21 May 2020)
- Facebook is donating the first prize to the winner of a hackathon tackling domestic violence held in Jerusalem this week in memory of Michal Sela, a domestic abuse victim murdered by her husband. The COO, Sandberg, brought attention to the fact that gender-based violence was present before COVID-19 though the UN warned there could be an extra 31 million cases. [Read more here](#) (21 May 2020)
- A Haaretz investigation has found that in the shadow of the coronavirus, there has been an increase of tens of percentage points in reports of suicidal intentions expressed by domestic violence victims. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)
- There have been four cases of suicide related to domestic violence in recent weeks, the Labor, Social Affairs and Social Welfare Ministry reported. These four cases represent only a small part of the increasing phenomenon of women and children who are subjected to violence. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)
- Data provided by ERAN – a nonprofit organization that provides emotional first aid on the phone and online – shows that 729 domestic violence-related calls and emails were received from March to May, compared to 537 from January to March, an increase of 35.8%. Of these, 9 were deemed as urgent cases with immediate suicide risk that required the intervention of the police and welfare personnel. In the months preceding COVID-19 zero cases linked to domestic violence and with an immediate suicide risk were reported. ERAN stresses that domestic violence cases constitute 10% of all the cases defined as having an immediate suicide risk reported during the coronavirus crisis. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)
- The hotline (reached by dialing 118) received 400 complaints of domestic violence between April 16 and April 27, compared to 244 complaints between March 15 and April 15. The week of April 20th the center received 222 complaints, a record for a single week. [Read more here](#) (10 May 2020)

- Calls to a domestic abuse hotline operated by the Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services Ministry soared in the second half of April, to over 33 a day on average, compared to eight a day in the first month of the coronavirus lockdown in Israel, from March 15 to April 15. [Read more here](#) (30 April 2020)

Actions by Government

- The president said he would devote the final year of his presidency “to the important battle against domestic violence,” calling for a national response and a “plan of action” from the government. “The time has come to end violence against women and to set national goals to reduce domestic abuse in a real plan of action. This terrorism against women must end”. [Read more here](#) (21 May 2020)
- “The fight against gender terrorism comes before the fight against organized crime. In my role at the UN, I promise to continue my commitment to this fight,” said Erdan, Israel’s new minister for regional cooperation and formerly the minister of public security and set to be confirmed as Israeli ambassador to the UN. [Read more here](#) (21 May 2020)
- Israel’s new Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Social Welfare Itzik Shmuli said: “The responsibility that falls on me is clear: to get the entire Israeli government to put forward the resources required to establish a system to monitor and get violent men away, to widen the support for victims, to strengthen coordination between the various bodies and more. We will be judged on the results, not by what we say.” [Read more here](#) (21 May 2020)

Afghanistan

Data

- The Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL), echoed worries about the devaluing of girls’ education during the pandemic. [Read more here](#) (5 June 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- As part of an UNDEF project, the Transparent Election Foundation of Afghanistan is preparing radio and TV programming focusing on GBV under COVID-19.
- As part of an UNDEF project, the Community Center for the Disabled is conducting awareness campaigns for women with disabilities at risk of domestic violence. A call center is being set up, and training of trainers will enable campaigns to inform some 10,000 women with disabilities about COVID-19 prevention, GBV, and support resources.

Tunisia

Data

- The pandemic saw a five-fold increase in reported incidents of gender-based violence in three months. Women lost access to birth control during Covid-19 since hospitals prioritised Covid-19 concerns. [Read more here](#) (22 June 2020)
- After Tunisia imposed a curfew in mid-March, the number of domestic violence cases rose fivefold. [Read more here](#) (2 April 2020)

Actions by Government

- **Tunisia:** The Prime Minister and President have both been silent on violence against women during the pandemic. The Ministry of Interior and the police reportedly refuse to take women's complaints seriously, and pressure them to return home when filing domestic violence complaints. [Read more here](#) (22 June 2020)

Morocco

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations responded to the Secretary General's call to end domestic violence. (13 April 2020)

Jordan

Data

- One case reported by victim on Facebook subjected to physical and emotional abuse by her mother and brother [Read more here](#) (31 March 2020)

Cross-Regional

Global

Data

- **Almost half of women** in 57 countries **do not have the power to make choices over their healthcare, contraception, or sex lives.** According to *UNFPA's State of World Population Report*, the **lack of bodily autonomy may have worsened during the coronavirus pandemic**, placing record numbers of women and girls at risk of gender-based violence and harmful practices such as early marriage. Across every sphere, from health to the economy, security to social protection, the impacts of COVID-19 are exacerbated for women and girls simply by virtue of their sex. [Read more here](#) (14 April 2021)
- A UN Women report documents that women remain absent in COVID-19 government task forces around the world. This may have implications for responding to violence against women and girls in the COVID-19 context. [Read more here](#) (22 March 2021)
- **Impact of COVID-19 on Family Planning: What we know one year into the pandemic (UNFPA):** Analysis conducted for 115 low- and middle-income countries in January 2021 by UNFPA and Avenir Health provides the latest estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on family planning:
 - An estimated **12 million women may have been unable to access family planning services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic**, with disruption of supplies and services lasting an average of 3.6 months. **This number could be as high as 23 million.**
 - As a result of these disruptions, as many as **1.4 million unintended pregnancies may have occurred** before women were able to resume use of family planning services. This number could be as high as **2.7 million.** [Read more here](#) (January 2021)
- A rapid global review by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS) and New Perimeter, ***Responding to Rising Intimate Partner Violence Amid COVID-19***, highlights **worsening rates of intimate partner violence** during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Some of the first indications of a possible rise in IPV coinciding with COVID-19 were seen in increased outreach by women to service providers and hotlines at the outset of the pandemic:
 - In Tunisia, during the first five days of lockdown, calls to a hotline for **survivors of IPV increased fivefold.**
 - An anti-domestic violence nonprofit based in Hubei Province in China received **triple the number of calls** in February 2020 as compared to the previous year.
 - In April 2020 compared with April of 2019, Argentina's emergency line for reporting IPV received a **67% increase in calls.**
 - Calls to domestic violence hotlines in Europe increased by approximately **60%.**
 - In Russia, where IPV has been decriminalized since 2017, **calls to hotlines doubled** in between March and April of 2020.
 - In South Africa, the police minister reported that within the first seven days of lockdown, police had received **more than 87,000 gender-based violence complaints.**

- India's National Commission of Women recorded nearly **double the number of domestic violence cases** in March through April of 2020 as compared to a similar period prior.
 - In Thailand, the number of clients visiting domestic violence crisis units in hospitals in April 2020 was **more than double** the number from the same time period of the previous year.
 - A study of a prominent academic hospital in the United States showed an **increase in incidents and the severity of physical trauma in patients due to IPV** during the spring of 2020 as compared to the previous three years
- It is important to note reports to hotlines and social services providers are not always an accurate indicator of rates of violence, however, and some cities **experienced significant drops in the volumes of calls** to hotlines, a phenomenon service providers attribute in part to the difficulty of connecting with services during lockdown.
- **Comprehensive data on the numbers of women experiencing IPV during the pandemic is not available** though formal reports and anecdotal information indicate a **worsening situation**. [Read more here](#) (February 2021)
- A new analysis from the International Rescue Committee (IRC) finds that **15 million people** in need, **mainly women and girls**, are currently **left out of GBV service provisions**.
 - The **average GBV funding request is only 3% of the total needed**, with less than \$11 allocated per person in need of support.
 - GBV funding did not grow proportionally alongside need nor COVID-19 funding requests, and in some cases, **GBV funding requests declined**. [Read more here](#) (8 March 2021)
- #MeToo in 2021: Global activists continue to build on the movement against sexual violence. Alongside the impacts of COVID-19, the past year was also characterized by new and revamped #MeToo reckonings.
 - There are numerous **barriers to reporting sexual violence** given the restrictions amidst the pandemic. A large proportion of sexual assault reports are [dismissed by the police as unfounded](#). When charges are laid, the [trial process can cause re-victimization and trials seldom result in a conviction](#), meaning survivors are unable to have their experiences validated through the legal system. [Read more here](#) (10 January 2021)
- Abusers have used technologies to facilitate gender-based violence and online providers have not done enough to curb harassing behaviors. [Read more here](#) (18 June 2020)
- Domestic violence cases are thought to have increased 20% since lockdowns have started. [Read more here](#) (12 June 2020)
- 78% of respondents to a survey sponsored by the Center for Global Development, including responses from 82 organizations providing educational services in at least 32 countries from Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and Latin America, expressed concerns about school closures increasing gender-based violence. Girls will be disproportionately harmed by school closures related to COVID-19. 69% of respondents said they believed girls are more likely to be negatively affected by COVID-19 school closures than boys. Of the 69%, more than half cited increased household chores during the pandemic as

hindering continued education, and 40% said early marriage and pregnancy as a result of school closures were a worry. [Read more here](#) (5 June 2020)

- **Projections**
 - 31 million additional cases of gender-based violence can be expected to occur if the lockdown continues for at least 6 months. For every 3 months the lockdown continues, an additional 15 million extra cases of gender-based violence are expected.
 - 47 million women in 114 low- and middle-income countries may not be able to access modern contraceptives and 7 million unintended pregnancies are expected to occur if the lockdown carries on for 6 months and there are major disruptions to health services. For every 3 months the lockdown continues, up to an additional 2 million women may be unable to use modern contraceptives.
 - Due to the disruption of programmes to prevent FGM in response to COVID-19, 2 million FGM cases may occur over the next decade that could have been averted.
 - COVID-19 will disrupt efforts to end child marriage, potentially resulting in an additional 13 million child marriages taking place between 2020 and 2030 that could otherwise have been averted. [Read more here](#) (27 April 2020)

Actions by Government

- The rapid review by GIWPS and New Perimeter also shares examples of responses by governments and organizations to the spike in violence due to the pandemic, including through **public awareness campaigns, the use and expansion of traditional hotlines and online resources, and confidential mobile applications and other non-traditional ways to report**. For example:

Public awareness campaigns

- In Iraq, the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) launched a grassroots campaign called **#ViolenceIsWeakness** in April to raise awareness of the increase in IPV during the pandemic. IWPR partnered with the local community police to create and distribute a leaflet promoting an IPV hotline.
- Since not everyone in Brazil has a television or access to the internet, community journalist groups in Rio de Janeiro favelas have **circulated and posted written information on domestic violence in favela neighborhoods**. They have hung banners and posters and even incorporated artistic measures, such as street art, graffiti, videos and photo cards. To facilitate communication with those who cannot read, the groups, with the guidance of health workers, broadcast audio messages from cars throughout the favelas.
- Citizens in Argentina make noise with pots and hang green and purple handkerchiefs from their balconies to, among other issues, express outrage over domestic violence and in support of survivors

- In Iran, the State Welfare Organization sent a text blast to mobile phone users urging IPV survivors to call the Organization's Counseling and Psychological Affairs Department on a dedicated hotline, 38 and UNFPA and partner organizations sent **240,000 text messages to Libyan recipients to raise awareness of IPV in the context of COVID-19**

Use and expansion of traditional hotlines and online resources

- In India, **more than 50 helplines have been started across the country** to help women facing IPV during the ongoing pandemic
- South Africa continues to operate its **government-sponsored hotline for IPV survivors**. The Thuthuzela Care Center, which is run by South Africa's National Prosecuting Authority's Sexual Offences and Community Affairs Unit (SOCA), is continuing to provide helpline support for women in need.
- In Nigeria, the Women at Risk International Foundation (WARIF) currently hosts a **24-hour confidential helpline** for IPV survivors, or they can send WARIF a message online via Twitter or Instagram.
- Zimbabwe's Musasa, an organization created to assist IPV survivors, also has a **toll-free 24-hour support line** in operation
- In Nepal, the National Women's Commission launched a 24-hour toll-free helpline service to actively assist IPV survivors in **filing complaints** as well as **offer counselling and therapy sessions**.
- A number of **governments have boosted funding for existing hotlines**
 - For example, the **Belgian government increased funding for IPV intervention teams**, which will allow them to expand their helpline capabilities for survivors to report instances of IPV and to seek counseling.
 - The United Kingdom government has increased funding and support for helplines and survivor services.
 - The Australian government provided **\$150 million** for programs geared toward supporting IPV survivors during the pandemic, including 1800RESPECT, the national domestic, family, and sexual violence helpline.
 - Hotlines that predated the pandemic have also been reactivated, reinforced and publicized in Azerbaijan, Tunisia and Uruguay.
 - In Ghana, the UNFPA supported the **reactivation of a Ghana Police Service Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) IPV hotline** during the COVID-19 crisis.
 - UNFPA partnered with DOVVSU, the Multi-Party Trust Fund (MPTF) Secretariat and the Canadian Government to train hotline operators in **trauma-informed approaches** to crisis intervention to assist callers seeking to report instances of IPV or access resources and support.

Confidential mobile applications and other non-traditional ways to report

- In the **United States**, **Snapchat**, in partnership with the National Network to End Domestic Violence, **provides resources to IPV survivors through an in-app search feature.**
- Italy's government has adapted a mobile application created for reporting teenage bullying to allow women to **secretly report instances of IPV.**
- In Spain, authorities launched a WhatsApp chat for women to report abuse without making a phone call. According to Spain's Equality Ministry, **consultations have increased 270 percent** since the introduction of the app.
- The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has **expanded the functionality of an existing web-based resource**, CuentaNos, to address increases in IPV and other needs related to COVID-19 in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala
- Canada's Canadian Women's Foundation started the "**Signal For Help**" campaign, which involves survivors using a simple one-handed sign to silently show that they need help. This hand sign has been used on video calls and on social media apps such as **TikTok.**
- As a result of the global interest in the **Mascarilla-19 campaign**, the Instituto Canario, in partnership with the government of the Canary Islands, has provided **free editable and non-editable PDF and JPG materials that are intended to be used and shared broadly.**
- There is encouraging evidence of innovative public-private partnerships rapidly mobilizing resources and delivering urgently needed services. [Read more here](#) (February 2021)
- Laws in **Australia, New Zealand, Italy** and the **Canadian province of Ontario** provide protections such as flexible working and paid or unpaid leave for survivors of domestic violence, but **France** and **Britain** do not. Australia protects victims against unfair dismissal. Ontario was the only jurisdiction studied that obliges employers to raise awareness of domestic violence and actively protect victims in the workplace. [Read more here](#) (8 July 2020)
- The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the importance of ILO's Violence and Harassment Convention - in this context, **Uruguay** became the first country to ratify C190 on June 12, and **Fiji** is close behind. Others, including **Argentina, Ireland, and Italy**, appear to be making rapid progress towards ratifying the convention. [Read more here](#) (25 June 2020)

Actions by Government and UN - Promising Practices

- UNFPA released the statement, *Peace in the home: safeguarding the health and rights of women and girls – even during COVID-19.* [Read more here](#) (10 July 2020)

- The Human Rights Council held an interactive dialogue on violence against women. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women urged for a United Nations system-wide coordinated approach or strategy to combat and prevent violence against women and a global implementation plan. The list of participating Member States are included. [Read more here](#) (8 July 2020)
- An inter-agency statement on violence against women and girls in the context of COVID-19 was released. [Read more here](#) (24 June 2020)
- The Deputy Secretary-General calls on men and boys to stop violence against women. [Watch and read more here](#) (22 June 2020)
- A page to support UN personnel experiencing domestic abuse has been added to the UN COVID-19 website. This page provides background on what domestic abuse is, the risks while isolating due to COVID-19, FAQs, access to support organizations and guidance on legal rights, as well as information on safety planning, digital safety, and tips for coping with stress at home and actions to take if personnel or their family members are experiencing violence. [Read more here](#) (15 May 2020)
- Various ministers issued a joint statement Protecting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Promoting Gender-responsiveness in the COVID-19 crisis on behalf of the people and governments of 59 countries affirming that specific measures should be implemented to prevent violence against women and girls; sexual and reproductive health needs, including psychosocial support services, and protection from gender-based violence, must be prioritized; recommitting to provide all women and girls of reproductive age with reproductive health commodities, and calling on governments around the world to ensure full and unimpeded access to all sexual and reproductive health services for all women and girls. It welcomes multilateral efforts, including by the UN, including UNFPA and UN Women, WHO, the World Bank and IMF, and regional development banks, as well as the G7 and G20 declarations, towards a coherent and global response to COVID-19. [Read more here](#) and [here](#) (6 May 2020)
- In response to the Secretary-General's call, a joint statement was signed by 146 UN member states calling for action to address the rise of gender-based and domestic violence under COVID-19. It includes a commitment to making prevention and redress of GBV a key part of national and global responses. [Read more here](#) (23 April 2020)
- The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) calls on Member States to adopt a gender perspective in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to combat sexual and domestic violence in this context. [Read more here](#) (11 April 2020)
- UNDEF currently has more than 20 ongoing projects in many countries focusing on women's empowerment. UNDEF is working with grantee organizations to incorporate actions relevant to GBV in COVID-19.

Actions by Other Stakeholders

- Twitter launched a search prompt that will direct people looking for domestic violence-related keywords towards relevant information and sources of help. This is an expansion of the #ThereIsHelp prompt. [Read more here](#) (17 June 2020)