

16 Days of Activism

Day 3

Violence against women (VAW) is a human rights violation, with often devastating immediate and long-term consequences. Women around the world experience violence in various forms, settings, levels of frequency and severity, at the hands of intimate partners, family members or others. In addition, women's feelings of insecurity restrict their lives in myriad ways, hampering their health, as well as their civil, political, economic and social rights. Women's safety is the gateway to basic health, living standards and empowerment, and a necessary condition to achieve gender equality. Widespread stay-at-home orders to curb the spread of COVID-19 potentially locked women down with their abusers, creating dangerous conditions, often with tragic consequences. Using administrative data from police, violence against women hotlines, and other service-providers, and data from online searches and social media posts, UN Women research has found that violence against women and girls has intensified since the outbreak of COVID-19. This coincided in many countries with a reduction in services to support survivors, partly due to operational challenges and reduced funding for law enforcement agencies and local women's organizations. This is now called the "shadow pandemic."

Women are feeling more unsafe at home.

The study also found that COVID-19 has eroded women's feelings of safety outside of their households, with significant negative impacts on their mental and emotional well-being. Socioeconomic stressors such as financial pressure, employment, food insecurity and family relations stood out as having a significant impact not only on experiences of safety (or violence) but also on women's well-being overall.

As a result, UN Women has mounted a multifaceted response to address this shadow pandemic, involving working with local governments, justice, police and health sectors as well as civil society and grassroots women's organizations to ensure safe public spaces for women and girls during the crisis and to strengthen the capacities of front-line service-providers, shelters and helplines. UN Women has supported mass media and social media sensitization on COVID-19- related VAW increases, and ways to prevent it, including through positive masculinities, and equitable sharing of household responsibilities. Zonta International and local Zonta clubs have hosted webinars and social media campaigns raising awareness about the shadow pandemic and ending violence against women. Although most lockdown orders have been rescinded, as surges of the virus continue, and women are still lacking basic services. How can you help? If you know a survivor, believe her story. Contact local social service organizations to find the best way to assist the survivor. Continue to offer emotional support for the survivor and let her know she is not alone. Help raise societal awareness about the shadow pandemic and its very real and negative effects on women and children.

1 in 2 WOMEN
report that they or a woman they know have experienced violence since COVID-19.

Note: Based on pooled estimates from a 2021 study of 12 countries
Source: Measuring the shadow pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19

UN WOMEN WOMEN COUNT

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

is one of the most common forms of violence against women
includes physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as controlling behavior by an intimate partner

THESE VIOLATIONS RESULT IN SERIOUS SHORT AND LONG-TERM:

- physical problems
- reproductive problems
- sexual problems
- mental health problems
- and increased vulnerability to HIV

30% of women worldwide who have been in a relationship report that they have experience some form of physical and/or sexual violence by their intimate partner.

34% of female homicide victims in 2017 were killed by a former or current intimate partner.



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Facts from WHO and UNODC