

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW) IN THE ARAB REGION



VAW is widely recognized as a critical human rights violation with a wide-ranging impact on public health, societal well-being and economic development

VAW key facts

It can happen anywhere



Public



Private

It involves multiple actors

Husband

Family

Community

State

The most common form is violence perpetrated by husbands, referred to as **marital violence**

It has many forms

Sexual



Physical



Emotional



Psychological



VAW requires political commitment and leadership to prevent it, protect those at risk, mitigate its consequences and prosecute its perpetrators



HOW WIDESPREAD IS VAW IN THE ARAB REGION?



Women of every colour, race, social class, age or education, can experience violence

1 IN 3 EVER-MARRIED WOMEN



has experienced physical or sexual violence in their lives



EGYPT



46%

of ever-married women aged 18-64 have reported experiencing a form of **marital violence**

PALESTINE



WEST BANK
30%



GAZA STRIP
51%

of ever-married women have faced a **form of violence within their household**



FACTORS INCREASING CHANCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Patriarchal gender relations

Unequal gender norms & stereotypes

Poor legislative & policy frameworks

EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Increased social marginalization

Limited ability to work & finish education

Perpetuated existing inequalities



Protracted conflicts in the Arab region increase women's exposure to various forms of violence in the public and the private sphere compared to non-conflict areas



UN
WOMEN

UNITED NATIONS
ESCWA

ARAB STATES' RESPONSES TO VAW



CONSTITUTIONS



Few Arab countries

explicitly prohibit discrimination on basis of sex in their constitutions



Egypt & Tunisia

have articles to protect women from violence

LEGISLATION

Five countries have adopted a specific law on VAW:

Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia.

But even these laws have limitations:

- ★ **Narrow definitions** of VAW that considers only physical abuse
- ★ **Focus on prosecuting** perpetrators of violence, ignoring the pillars of prevention, protection and reintegration
- ★ **Absence of frameworks** for providing needed services to survivors

POLICIES

Most Arab states have adopted policies on VAW, but **their application is often inconsistent because:**

- ★ **They are not aligned** with constitutional and legal frameworks, making their application inconsistent and practically difficult
- ★ **Reporting mechanisms are insufficient** and poorly coordinated



REPORTING VAW IN THE ARAB REGION



How can women report violence?

Formal channels

- Police, courts
- Government hospitals & other state institutions
- Government hotline where available



Informal channels

- NGOs
- Private hospitals
- Other informal channels (e.g. tribal leaders, shelters)

Who can report violence?



How do authorities follow up?

- In Egypt & Lebanon**
 - Survivors
- In Morocco**
 - Survivors
 - Family members
- In all other countries**
 - Survivors
 - Family members
 - A lawyer and/or public prosecutor

- ✓ Arrest the perpetrator if required
- ✓ Refer survivors to hospitals for medical examination
- ✓ Offer services to survivors (shelter, counseling etc.)
- ✓ Refer survivors to courts and public prosecutors who are responsible to initiate investigations

Survivors of VAW have access to free legal services in almost all Arab countries



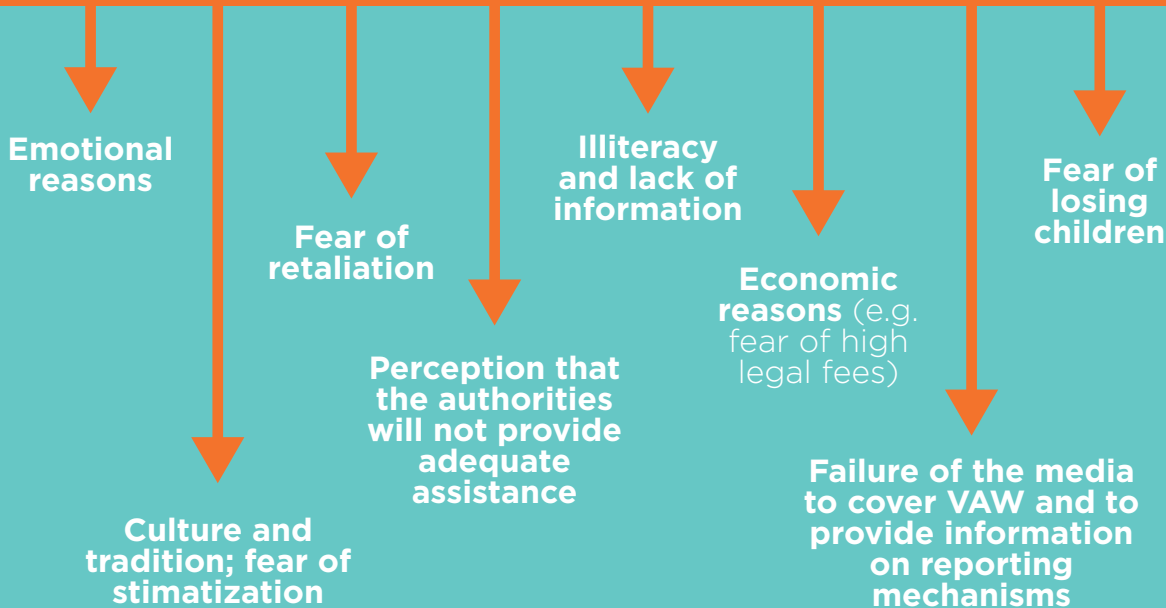
Almost all countries provide regular training to police officers on VAW and gender issues.

However, in most cases the training is basic and does not for example cover the steps that survivors should follow to document VAW incidents





WHY DO WOMEN NOT REPORT EPISODES OF VIOLENCE?



VAW coordination mechanisms

Most countries have several, non-unified reporting forms for VAW incidents, however:

Morocco

has a standardized form to report VAW across all reporting channels

Tunisia & Palestine

are piloting projects to standardize reporting

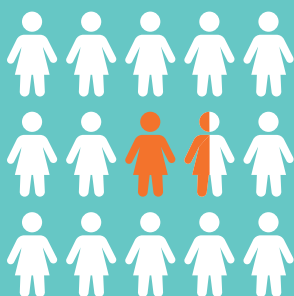
VAW database systems

Fragmented sources mean that responding agencies do not have consistent information or aggregated data on VAW

- ✓ Most countries have established/ are establishing some form of VAW national database
- Few countries provide training for maintaining databases on VAW indicators

Channels for refugee and migrant women

- There is a great disparity in the reporting mechanisms available to vulnerable groups such as migrant and refugee women
- ✓ Only Bahrain allows any woman full access to formal and informal channels, regardless of her nationality or residency status



IN EGYPT

7.9 MILLION WOMEN

are estimated to experience some form of violence each year



LESS THAN 1% REPORT

such incidents to the police each year



WHAT SHOULD ARAB STATES DO TO COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?



CONSTITUTIONS

States should revise their constitutions to ensure they are gender-sensitive. As per UN recommendations, gender-sensitive constitutions:

- Enshrine gender equality and women's rights
- Explicitly forbid discrimination on basis of sex
- Include articles specifically protecting women from violence

POLICIES

States should adopt policy frameworks, such as national strategies, that give adequate resources and improve coordination between reporting mechanisms and the various services offered to survivors, including justice, law and order, health and social services

LAWS

States should adopt laws specifically geared at combating violence against women, this entails:

- Defining violence against women broadly to cover all its forms
- Creating a framework to improve access to the various services needed by survivors of violence
- Putting emphasis on preventing violence, protecting survivors of violence and reintegrating them into society, in addition to prosecuting perpetrators



Most recently, in July 2017, the Tunisian parliament adopted a new law on violence against women that sets an example for the region



UNITED NATIONS
ESCWA

UN WOMEN

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?



Affects women's physical, mental, sexual and reproductive

HEALTH

Reduces women's ability to access or pursue an

EDUCATION

Reduces women's employment opportunities and ability to perform +
Increases medical expenses

Discourages women from seeking & performing at

WORK

Causes a loss in potential and productivity +
Reduces women's employment opportunities

Negative impact on women's participation in the labour market and the economy

Increased expenditure on:

PROTECTION

PREVENTION

COMPENSATION

PROSECUTION

Direct implications on

NATIONAL ECONOMY & SOCIETY



How does VAW impact the economy?

- Women exposed to violence tend to be less productive and more likely to take time off work, **resulting in a net loss both for them and the economy as a whole**
- **Marital violence leads to huge expenses for the state**, including costs associated with prevention, protection, prosecution, as well as compensation and reintegration of survivors and their children into their communities

\$500 billion

Cost of VAW in the US per year

500,000

Working days lost in Egypt each year due to marital violence

£3.9 billion

Burden in the UK from intimate-partner violence on health & social services

How does VAW impact public health?

- **Sexual violence** can result in unwanted pregnancies, miscarriages and reproductive health issues
- **Physical violence** increases the risk of miscarriage. Average birth-weight of new-borns is significantly lower for women who experience violence during pregnancy
- **Children** who witness incidents of VAW are more likely to feel socially isolated and exhibit aggressive behaviour
- **Treating survivors puts pressure on health services**

98%

of surveyed Lebanese women who had experienced VAW displayed symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder

\$14.55 million

Estimated cost for the health sector in Egypt as a result of one quarter (600,000) of VAW survivors seeking healthcare

\$211

Average out-of-pocket expenditure in Morocco for health services following an incident of domestic violence



COSTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



WHY COST VAW?

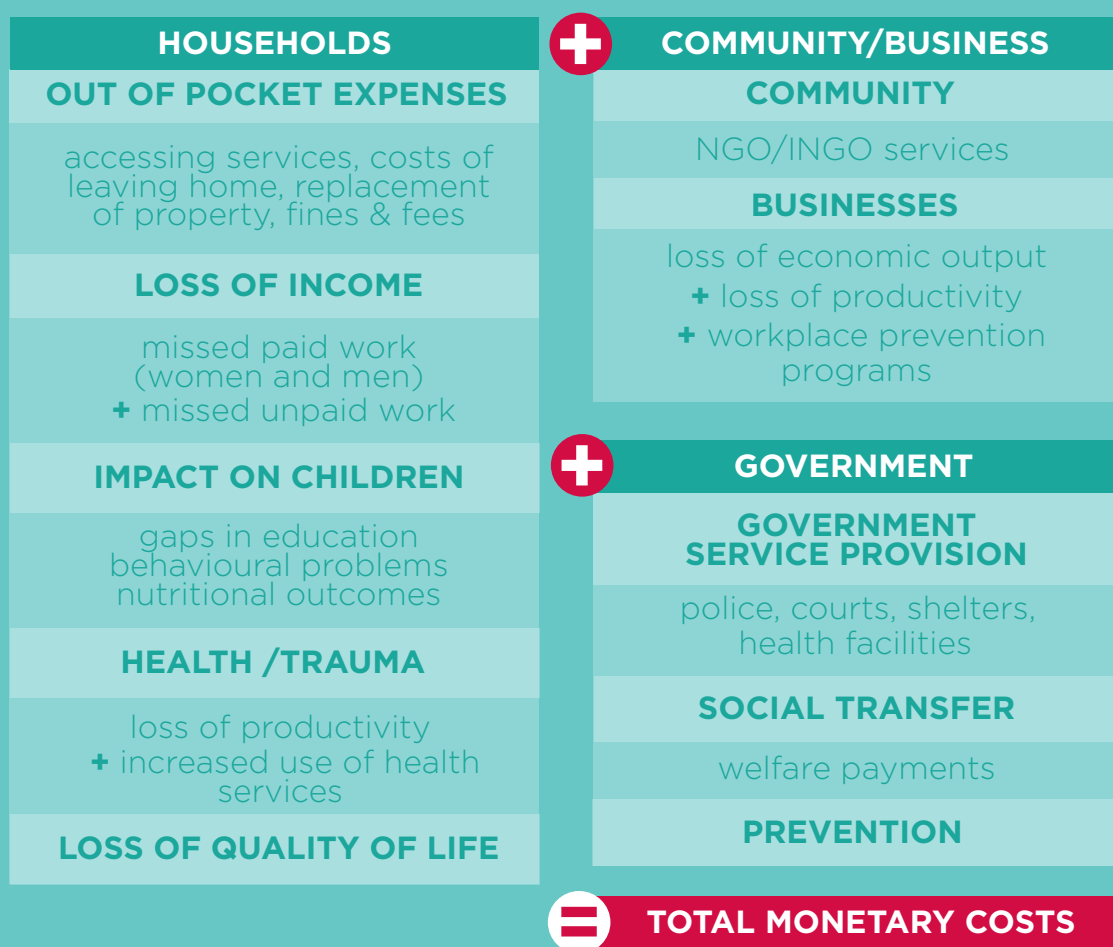
- Costing VAW is a key tool for policy reform
- It provides governments with an economic rationale and tools to reform legal frameworks
- It enables governments to revise their budget allocation to support prevention and protection

60+ STUDIES WORLDWIDE

have been conducted worldwide to estimate the costs of VAW

In the arab region, **ONLY EGYPT HAS CONDUCTED SUCH A STUDY**

ESCWA - UN Women methodology for estimating the costs of VAW in the Arab region



Operational model for estimating the costs of violence against women in the Arab region

PHASE I : THEORETICAL GROUNDWORK 2016-2017

- Study on violence against women in the Arab Region
- Technical feasibility study for estimating the costs of violence
- Panel on violence against women at the 8th ESCWA Committee on Women
- Study launch

PHASE II: IMPLEMENTATION

2017-2018

- Piloting of the costing model in Palestine
- Replication in other ESCWA Member States
- Capacity development for all ESCWA Member States

