

Violence against Women and Girls –A Global Threat

1 in 3

women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime, according to UN statistics.¹

The global pandemic of violence against women cuts across all population groups, affecting women of every age, income and nationality. Violence against women and girls manifests in multiple forms, from femicide to physical and sexual violence, trafficking, harmful traditional practices, sexual harassment, rape as a method of warfare, and many others. The roots of violence against women lie in historically unequal power relations between men and women, and persistent discrimination against women.

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Among women aged 15 to 44, **acts of violence** cause more death and disability than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war **combined**.

Several global surveys suggest that **half** of all women who die from homicide are killed by their current or former husbands or partners.

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Every 6 hours

in South Africa, a woman is **killed** by an intimate partner.

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1 in 5

women worldwide will become a victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime.

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Young women are particularly at risk—**up to 50%**

of sexual assaults are committed against girls under 16, and 30 percent of women report that their first sexual experience was coerced. In San Paolo, Brazil, a woman is assaulted every 15 seconds.

Rape is also consistently used as a method of warfare. In Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo,

at least 200,000

cases of sexual violence, mostly against women and girls, have been documented since 1996, though the actual numbers are considered to be much higher.

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No

woman or girl in the world is entirely free of the risk of violence.

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¹ All citations available at http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/violence_against_women/

Between 40 and 50 percent of women in European Union countries experience unwanted **sexual advancements**, physical contact or other forms of sexual harassment at their workplace.

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83% of girls aged 12 to 16 experienced some form of **harassment** in public schools in the United States.

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80 percent of those trafficked across national borders every year are women and girls. Women and girls worldwide are subjected to harmful traditional practices such as child marriage.

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Violence against women affects us all.

Over **60 million** girls are **child brides**, primarily in South Asia (**31 million**).

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Sexual harassment in the workplace and in schools affects women and girls **everywhere**.

As violence against women remains severe and prevalent, the costs to individuals and society also mount. Direct costs include services to treat and support abused women and their children and to bring perpetrators to justice, while indirect costs include lost employment and productivity, plus human pain and suffering.

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In Australia, violence against women and children costs an estimated **US\$ 11.4 billion** per year.

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In Fiji, the annual estimated cost was **US\$ 135.8 million** or seven percent of Gross Domestic Product in 2002.