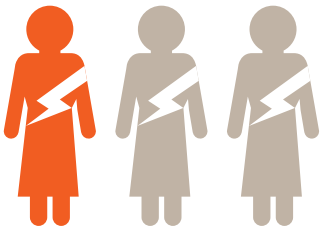




INTENSIFICATION OF EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS. REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (2022)

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG) PERSISTS AS A GLOBAL PANDEMIC THAT IS EXACERBATED BY CRISES

Globally



1 in 3 women

is subjected to physical and/or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime

COVID-19 led to an intensification of VAWG



45% of women

reported that they or a woman they know experienced violence since COVID-19



6 in 10 women

said sexual harassment in public worsened



Online and ICT-facilitated VAWG also escalated in the shadows of the pandemic as **women and girls' lives shifted online for work, school, access to services and social activities.**

DEFINING VAWG IN DIGITAL CONTEXTS

VAWG in digital contexts



describes a wide range of violence committed against women and girls in **digital spaces and/or using information and communication technologies.**



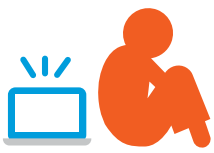
Online VAWG occurs on a continuum that is **connected to offline violence** and can take many forms including **sexual harassment, stalking, zoom bombing, intimate image abuse, misogynistic hate speech** amongst others.



Digital tools can also exacerbate violence occurring offline including **intimate partner/domestic violence and trafficking.**

THE EXTENT OF VAWG IN DIGITAL CONTEXTS

One global study found that



38 percent

of women have **personal experiences** of online violence



85 percent

of women who are online have witnessed **digital violence against other women.**

In the Arab States

60 percent

of women internet users had been exposed to **online violence in the past year.**

A study of 5 countries in sub-Saharan Africa found

28 percent

of women had experienced **online VAWG.**

GROUPS OF WOMEN THAT ARE AT HEIGHTENED RISK

Groups of women that are at greater risk include **women in public life, women human rights defenders, young women and girls, indigenous, migrant, and ethnic minority women; lesbian, bisexual and transgender women and women with disabilities.**



Most **girls** report their first experience of social media harassment **between the ages of 14 and 16.**



73 percent of **women journalists** have experienced **online violence** in the course of their work.



58 percent of **women parliamentarians** in Europe said they had been **subject to online attacks**

IMPACTS OF ONLINE VAWG



Online VAWG can be as harmful as offline violence with serious impacts on **health and wellbeing** as well as serious **economic, social and political impacts** as it can affect **women's professional lives.**



It can also have a “chilling effect” as women who are **silenced, discredited and censored online** limit their participation in online and public spheres.

RECOMMENDATIONS



States are urged to:

- Recognize violence against women and girls (VAWG) in digital contexts as a human rights violation and to introduce effective laws, policies and regulatory frameworks in line with existing international human rights instruments to criminalize and prohibit all forms of violence in digital contexts and strengthen capacities of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute crimes effectively.
- Continue to intensify efforts to eliminate all forms of VAWG (including in digital contexts) through the implementation and enforcement of comprehensive laws and budgeted national action plans; evidence-based, whole of government prevention strategies; increase access to high quality, specialised multisectoral services including access to justice and reparations and greater accountability of perpetrators.
- Address the impacts of COVID on violence against women and girls including the economic fallout as well as the impact of climate change and environmental degradation, conflict and crises.
- Increase cooperation with the technology sector, women's rights organizations, civil society and national human rights institutions to ensure that technology companies and intermediaries strengthen policies and measures to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls in digital contexts; to provide fast and effective responses and remedies to violence when it occurs; as well as to ensure transparency reporting from technology intermediaries on the nature and extent of the problem, and the actions taken in response.
- Ensure flexible funding is available for civil society and women's rights organizations so that they can inform decision-making and policy on VAWG and play a lead role in implementing effective prevention and response measures.
- Continue to address data gaps and regularly collect data on VAWG as well as to invest in evidence and knowledge of what works in eliminating VAWG including in digital contexts.



Technology intermediaries should:

- Ensure gender-responsive design of technology, through increasing the participation of women in the technology sector and partnerships with civil society and women's rights organizations.
- Ensure design features of technology enable women's safety online and accessible reporting options as well as access to support.
- Establish, communicate, and enforce strict codes of conduct for users on their platforms and develop consistent standards for content moderation that detect and respond to more subtle forms of online violence.



UN agencies will:

- Ensure VAWG in digital contexts is addressed under the Common Agenda and Global Digital Compact to be agreed at the Summit of the Future in September 2023.
- Strengthen cooperation between states, the technology sector and CSOs to effectively address VAWG through key partnerships such as the Action Coalition on GBV, Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation and the US led Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse.
- Convene partners to develop international standards and framework for preventing and responding to VAWG in digital contexts, including standardized definitions, legal standards, roles and responsibilities, standards of accountability for internet intermediaries and technology sector; internationally agreed standards and methodologies for measuring VAWG to address data and evidence gaps.