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# ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: GLOBAL COMMITMENTS, LOCAL ACTIONS

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# ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS: GLOBAL COMMITMENTS, LOCAL ACTIONS

**ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

**UN Women**

New York, October 2025



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# ACRONYMS

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>AUCEVAWG</b> | African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls                               |
| <b>BPfA</b>     | Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action   |
| <b>CEDAW</b>    | Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women                        |
| <b>CEFM</b>     | Child, Early and Forced Marriage  |
| <b>CPVS</b>     | Centres de Prise en charge des Violences Sexuelles  |
| <b>DEVAW</b>    | Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women                       |
| <b>DV</b>       | Domestic Violence   |
| <b>EVAWG</b>    | Ending Violence Against Women and Girls   |
| <b>FGM</b>      | Female Genital Mutilation   |
| <b>GREVIO</b>   | Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence |
| <b>IPV</b>      | Intimate partner violence   |
| <b>NAP</b>      | National Action Plan  |
| <b>OAS</b>      | Organization of American States   |
| <b>OHCHR</b>    | UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights   |
| <b>SDG</b>      | Sustainable Development Goal  |
| <b>SOP</b>      | Standard Operating Procedures   |
| <b>UN</b>       | United Nations  |
| <b>UNDESA</b>   | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs  |
| <b>UNFPA</b>    | United Nations Population Fund  |
| <b>UNGA</b>     | United Nations General Assembly   |
| <b>UNICEF</b>   | United Nations Children's Fund  |
| <b>UNODC</b>    | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  |
| <b>UPR</b>      | Universal Periodic Review   |
| <b>VAWG</b>     | Violence Against Women and Girls  |
| <b>WHO</b>      | World Health Organization   |

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the first comprehensive analysis of UN Women's Global Database on Violence against Women and Girls,<sup>1</sup> which documents more than 7,500 national measures, as self-reported by States.<sup>2</sup> These include laws, policies, prevention efforts and victim/survivor services to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls (VAWG), adopted by 193 Member States of the United Nations (UN).

The analysis demonstrates that while there is tangible progress among States around the world in adopting measures to prevent and respond to various forms of VAWG, gaps and uneven progress in the adoption of key VAWG measures by States persist.

## Summary of key findings:

### Areas of progress in the adoption of ending violence against women and girls measures

There are clear trends indicating a rise in the adoption by States of VAWG measures globally and across all regions, with most measures enacted since the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women and girls in 1993 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) in 1995 (for example, 91 per cent of laws, 95 per cent of institutional mechanisms, and 96 per cent of services and policies).

States' measures prioritize widespread forms of VAWG, with domestic violence/intimate partner violence, sexual violence and trafficking comprising the specific forms of violence most frequently addressed in specific targeted measures.

### Regional trends highlights

Certain regions are taking the lead in responding to specific forms of violence that have not received adequate attention globally: for example, the Americas region is leading globally in measures responding to femicide/feminicide, accounting for 84 per cent of measures globally. Africa takes the lead in terms of adopting measures to respond to child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

The Americas, Europe and Oceania lead in the adoption of VAWG specific legislation (with 100 per cent of States in this region adopting), while the Americas is the leading region globally for the adoption of national VAWG policies (with 80 per cent of States in this region citing specific national action plans or strategies on VAWG). The adoption of social services measures is highest in Europe, the Americas and Asia (80 per cent of States per region or higher).

### Trends in adoption of a comprehensive range of violence against women and girls measures

UN Women conducted benchmark assessments of what types of VAWG measures States have adopted across selected indicators,<sup>3</sup>

Most States have adopted legislative and policy frameworks on VAWG:

●● **84% of States** reporting data have adopted specific legislation on violence against women and girls and/or domestic violence/intimate partner violence (IPV) and 66 per cent of States report adopting a National Action Plan (NAP) and/or Strategy specific to VAWG.

●● **90% of States** report establishing an institutional mechanism, such as specialized commissions, committees or task forces, to address VAWG, which play an important coordinating, advisory and monitoring role.

●● **86% of States** report adopting awareness-raising campaigns, as an important component of a broader prevention strategy.

●● **95% of States** report adopting some form of services related to VAWG, with social services reported as the most common form of VAWG response services.

●● The majority of States are adopting efforts to strengthen responses to VAWG in key sectors, through specific VAWG protocols/guidelines and training, specialized services, and collection of sector-specific administrative data. While roughly three-quarters of States have reported at least one sector-specific measure to strengthen service responses for justice (74 per cent) and police (75 per cent) sectors, only 62 per cent of States report specific measures on VAWG within the health sector.

●● The apparent link between major international normative developments and the uptake of VAWG-specific measures by States is evident in several cases, including the adoption of the BPfA in 1995, and the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (DEVAW) before it, in 1993, or the adoption of the treaty to the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in 2000.



based on international standards, to enable comparative analysis of how comprehensive the range of types of measures are that States have adopted in response to VAWG ('comprehensiveness').

- **Most States (87 per cent) have adopted at least a high or medium level of comprehensiveness**, involving different types of key measures, to respond to VAWG. Still, 13 per cent of States have adopted only a low level of different types of measures.
- States that have adopted specific VAWG legislation and policies appear more likely to have also adopted a more comprehensive range (high and medium levels) of other types of measures, such as prevention and services measures.

The average prevalence rate of IPV (over the last 12 months) is nearly 2.5 times higher in States with low levels of comprehensive VAWG measures as compared to States with a high level of comprehensiveness in adopting a broad range of types of VAWG measures.

Adoption of a more or less comprehensive range of VAWG measures by States varies by region, State income level, and IPV prevalence rates burden:

- **Only two regions have a majority of States adopting high levels of comprehensive measures:** Europe (70 per cent of States in the region) and the Americas (57 per cent of States in the region). The regions with the highest share of States with 'low' levels of comprehensiveness in VAWG measures are in Asia (21 per cent) and Oceania (21 per cent).

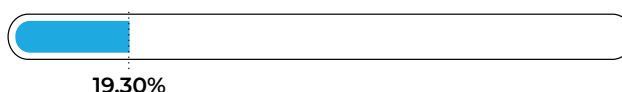
- Among States with high income levels, the percentage that have adopted a high level of comprehensiveness in VAWG measures is 4 times higher than among low-income States (59 per cent vs. 15 per cent).

#### Prevalence rates of intimate partner violence, by level of comprehensiveness of State VAWG responses

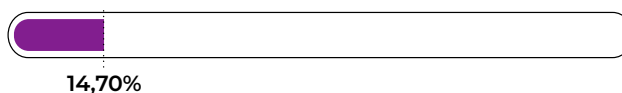
Level of comprehensiveness of State VAWG responses

Average national IPV prevalence rate (past 12 months)

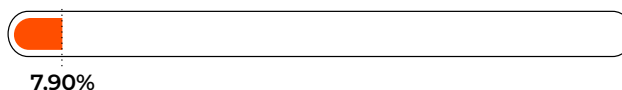
##### Low



##### Medium

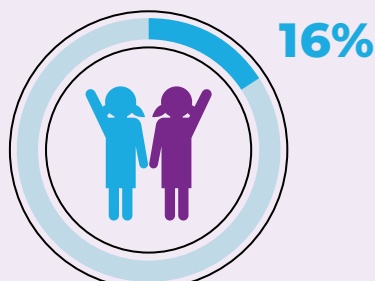


##### High

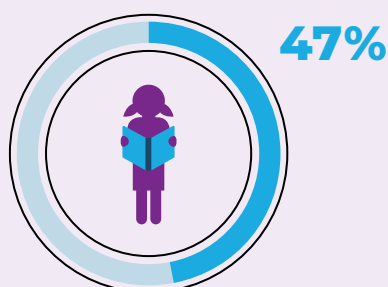


## Gaps in the adoption of violence against women and girls measures

Even among types of measures with high global uptake, including laws, services and prevention measures, there are still substantial gaps in VAWG responses by States documented in the database:



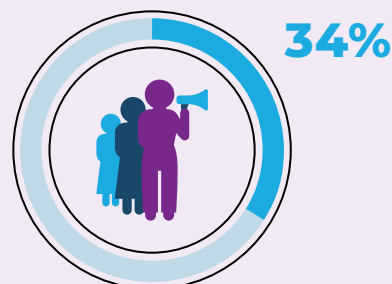
**One sixth of States (30)**  
still have not adopted any specific VAWG legislation.<sup>4</sup>



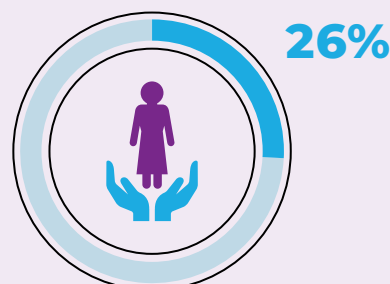
**Less than half of all States,**  
have reported adopting education measures (formal or informal) as part of prevention efforts.



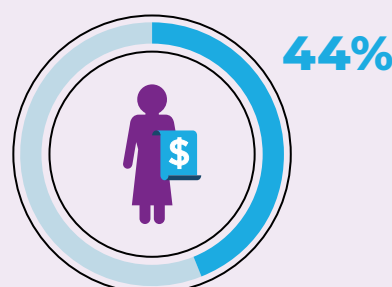
**Less than half of States**  
report tracking administrative data on VAWG (from justice, police, health or social services sources).



**A third of States**  
have not adopted a specific VAWG national action plan or strategy.



**Over one-quarter of States**  
have not reported any social services for VAWG victims/survivors. Even the most commonly adopted of all social services measure, helplines/hotlines, are only reported in just over half of States.



**Less than half of States**  
have adopted any sort of specialized VAWG budget, raising concerns about financial commitments to effectively implement VAWG measures.

Progress in adopting measures to respond to forms of violence that have traditionally received less attention remains slow and with significant gaps. For example, although femicide/feminicide is the most severe form of VAWG, less than one fifth of States (15 per cent) worldwide have reported adopting a measure specifically focused on femicide/feminicide. There is also evidence of regression in some States, where important measures to prevent and respond to VAWG are being rolled back amid a global backlash against women and girls' rights.<sup>5</sup> Overall, despite clear progress in State uptake of comprehensive measures on VAWG, the continued prevalence of the global epidemic of VAWG worldwide suggests that more attention is needed both to the adoption of necessary VAWG measures, and to ensuring their effective implementation.

## SECTION 1

# INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background: the global epidemic of violence against women and girls and State obligations to adopt national measures

Violence against women and girls (VAWG)<sup>6</sup> impacts approximately one in three women and girls worldwide, often at the hands of an intimate partner.<sup>7</sup> In its most severe form, women and girls are killed at alarming rates by intimate partners and family members.<sup>8</sup> This global epidemic requires comprehensive measures by States to effectively prevent and respond to the many forms of violence impacting women and girls around the world. States have a due diligence obligation to take a range of measures to combat VAWG, which is a form of gender-based discrimination.<sup>9</sup>

According to international standards developed over the past 30 years, including through the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (DEVAW), the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), the specialized General Recommendations of the expert Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee), and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (in particular Sustainable Development Goal 5),<sup>10</sup> the main types of national measures required to ensure effective responses to VAWG include legislation, policies, prevention initiatives, services for victims/survivors, adequate budgeting and research and data initiatives.<sup>11</sup>

Adoption – and effective implementation – of a comprehensive range of measures, in line with those outlined above, is essential for an effective response to VAWG at the State level. However, there are often gaps in data available on VAWG in general,<sup>12</sup> including on VAWG measures across States and regions.

#### The Global Database on Violence against Women and Girls

Recognizing the need for a centralized, accessible data source, and the importance of building the evidence base on VAWG measures globally, the UN Women Global Database on Violence against Women and Girls is a unique “one-stop source” on the measures governments are taking to build a world free from violence against women and girls.<sup>13</sup> The Global Database contains more than 7,500 entries<sup>14</sup> providing extensive information on country-level measures to prevent and respond to VAWG, taken by 193 UN Member States. The content of the database is based on the official reports and statements submitted by States as part of State reporting on VAWG.<sup>15</sup>

The database uses the following 10 categories of ‘types of

measures’ reported by States, drawn from international standards, as referenced above, which are further divided into subcategories to enable more detailed search functions:<sup>16</sup>

1. **Laws** – such as VAWG-specific legislation, constitutional provisions and other relevant laws.
2. **Policies** – such as National Action Plans or national strategies.
3. **Services** – such as integrated/coordinated service-delivery, social services for victims/survivors, and sector-specific services (including protocols/guidelines) and training programmes for service-providers.
4. **Institutional mechanisms** – such as coordinating bodies/committees or task forces.
5. **Prevention** – such as public awareness campaigns and education initiatives.
6. **Research and data** – such as administrative data (including justice, police, health sectors) and prevalence surveys.
7. **Budgets** – such as specific budgetary allocations for VAWG programmes and services.
8. **Perpetrators programmes** – such as rehabilitation programmes for offenders.
9. **Monitoring and evaluation** – such as studies to assess the effectiveness and impact of VAWG measures.
10. **Regional initiatives** – such as regional task forces, workshops and programmes.

The database also looks at different forms of violence against women and girls, including intimate partner and domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking, female genital mutilation, sexual harassment and technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, among others.

#### Background

In December 2006, the General Assembly requested the UN Secretary-General to establish a coordinated database on the extent, nature and consequences of all forms of violence against women and girls and on the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes for eliminating such violence. This was deemed necessary due to the lack of such compilation of information, and as of today the database is still a unique tool and the only centralized, publicly accessible platform where States’ measures to end VAWG are recorded. Therefore, the Global Database was developed and launched in 2009 by the UN Secretary-General as the “UN Secretary-General’s database on violence against women and girls”. In 2016, in accordance with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UN Women relaunched the database as the “Global Database on Violence



against Women and Girls". UN Women serves as the secretariat for the Global Database and has redesigned and relaunched the Global Database in 2025 with enhanced features and content to allow users to more easily navigate its extensive content. The database is hosted on the UN Women Data Hub, which regroups all UN Women's efforts on gender data.

## 1.2 Overview of the report

**The purpose of this report is to provide an analysis and assessment of key trends in the adoption of national measures by States to effectively prevent and respond to VAWG, based on analysis of information compiled in the Global Database on Violence against Women and Girls.** High-level findings on global and regional trends are complemented by more in-depth case studies and country-level examples of good practices. This analysis enables comprehensive insights into both progress and gaps in the State-level adoption of essential measures to prevent and respond to VAWG, which can inform future research, policy and advocacy prioritization efforts.

**Section 2** presents an overview of high-level global and regional trends, including types of measures adopted, developments over time, and forms of violence prioritized. **Section 3** presents a comparative analysis of how comprehensive the types of measures adopted by States are, and how the adoption of legal, policy and institutional frameworks may impact the adoption of other essential prevention and response measures. It also considers how the comprehensiveness of VAWG measures adopted compares with average prevalence rates of intimate partner violence, as well as State income levels. **Section 4** provides a spotlight focus on holistic measures for preventing and responding to VAWG, investigating trends on the adoption of survivor-centred, multisectoral prevention and service-provision measures. Finally, **Section 5** spotlights a more in-depth focus on specific forms of violence that have historically received less attention, such as femicide/feminicide, and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. **Section 6** offers concluding thoughts.

## 1.3 Methodology and research limitations

This analysis relies on the more than 7,500 data entries, and their categorizations and subcategorizations<sup>17</sup> adopted in the UN Women Global Database on Violence against Women and Girls as of October 2024. The data entries are drawn from official reports submitted by 193 UN Member States<sup>18</sup> through various UN fora and reporting procedures. In some cases, the report also refers to other research, reports and primary and secondary sources to triangulate findings and enhance case studies and country examples.

There are several important limitations to this data and its analysis, requiring caution in interpreting the results:

1. The data analysis relies on States' self-reported measures, as included in official reports submitted to the UN. This

means that the database reflects the different approaches of States' reporting and that there may be differences in quality and comprehensiveness of the information provided.

2. Although data were checked for basic consistency, the possibility of occasional random occurrences of inaccurately categorized and/or duplicate data cannot be excluded, given that the database is updated manually.
3. The data analysis relies on measures contained in the database, which is updated on an ongoing basis, and which may not be fully complete and immediately up-to-date (meaning that there may be measures that do currently exist and have been reported but are not yet captured in the database).<sup>19</sup>
4. In line with the report's focus on identifying and analysing trends at a global level, these findings report the number, forms and types of measures contained in the database, based on self-reported State data, but do not address the quality, content, scope, comprehensiveness or implementation status of all individual State-level measures reported.
5. Some measures are undated and therefore omitted from the timeline calculations. Additionally, as the database does not always contain information regarding how long a measure may remain in place, some measures may have been adopted but no longer be in effect, or may not be effectively implemented.

Despite these limitations, the analysis offers an extensive overview of the trends regarding the types of measures that States are adopting, and how comprehensive they are in terms of the different types of broad-based, holistic and integrated measures needed to effectively respond to VAWG at the national level, as well as insights into potential association between different types of measures. This analysis enables identifying both areas of progress and gaps, and also gaining insight into how the adoption of core framework measures, like laws and policies, are linked with other types of holistic and integrated measures to prevent and respond to VAWG.



## SECTION 2

# THE GLOBAL PICTURE: TRENDS IN STATE ADOPTION OF MEASURES TO PREVENT AND RESPOND TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

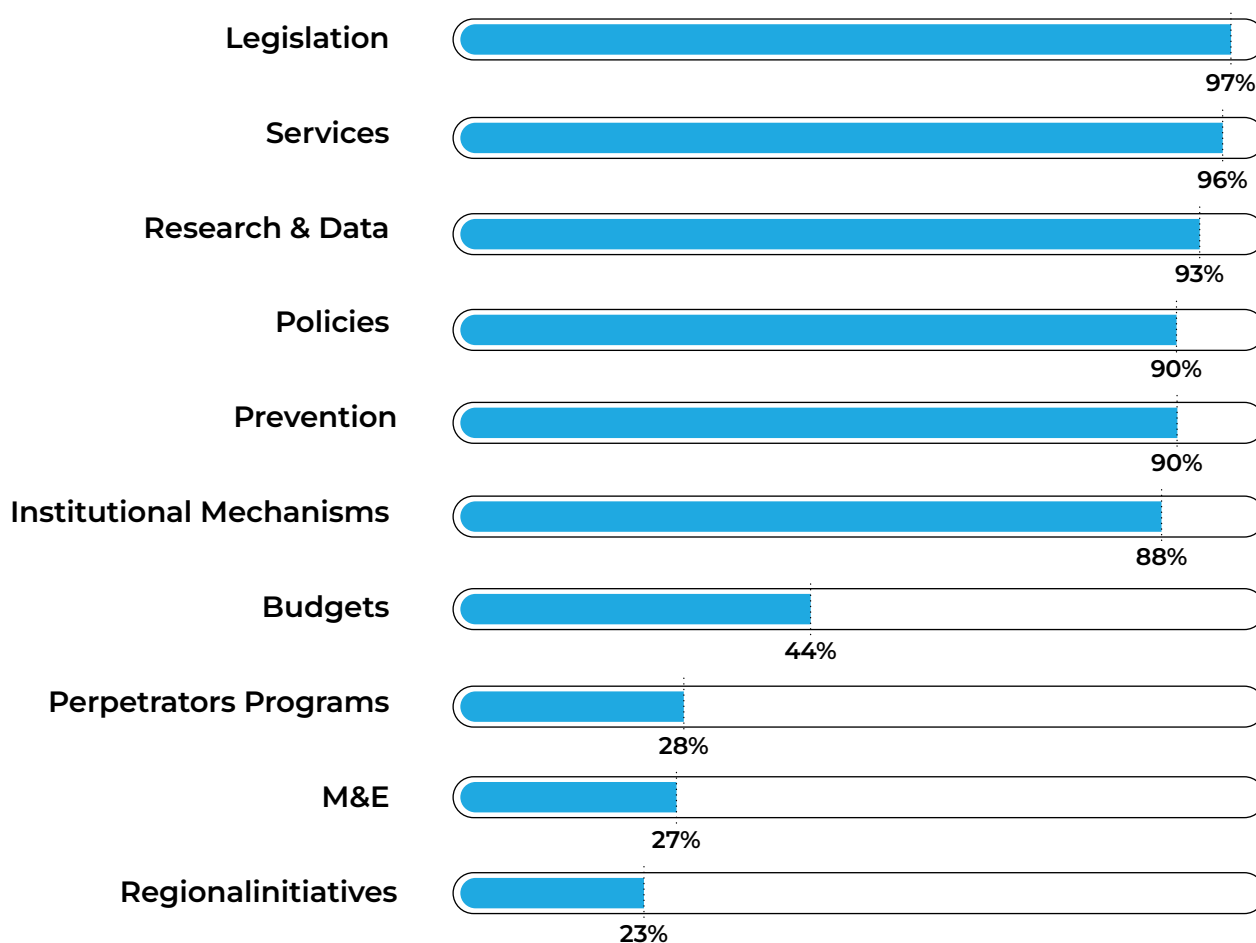
### 2.1 Types of violence against women and girls measures adopted

Overall, a high majority of States, 90 per cent or above, report adopting measures focused on laws, policies, services, prevention, or research and statistical data on VAWG.

However, other important VAWG measures are not widely adopted: specialized budgets (reported by 44 per cent of States), perpetrators programmes (reported by 28 per cent of States), and monitoring and

evaluation (reported by 27 per cent of States) measures are far less commonly reported State-level VAWG measures. **As such, less than half of States have adopted any sort of specialized VAWG budget, raising concerns about State financial commitments to effectively implement VAWG measures.** In addition, just over a quarter of States have adopted any monitoring and evaluation measures, raising concerns about the effective tracking and assessment of the implementation of VAWG measures.

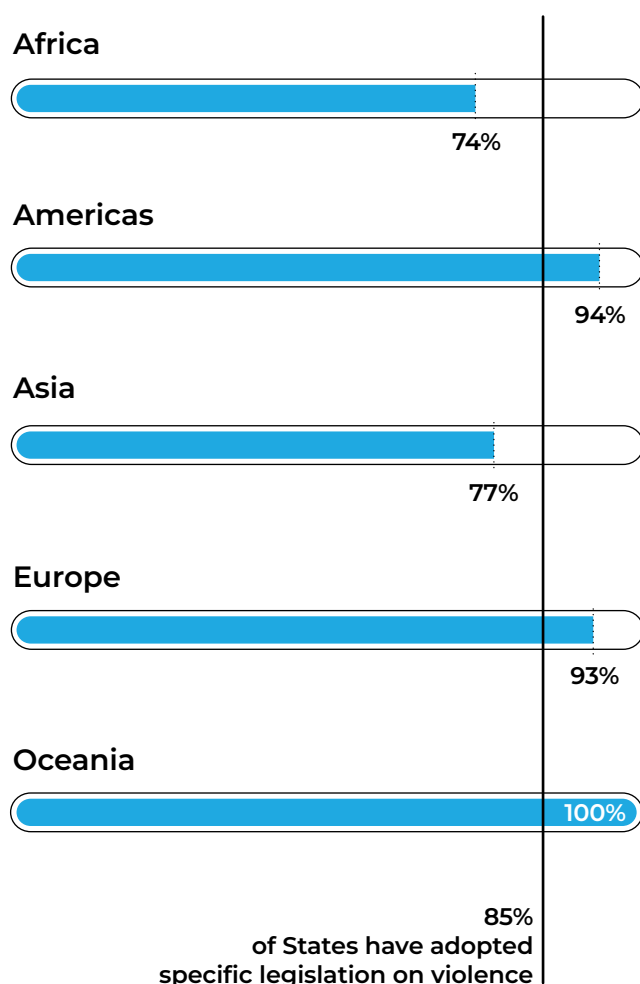
Percentage of States reporting adopting different types of VAWG measures VAWG-specific legislation



Appropriate, comprehensive VAWG legislation is an essential foundation for a legally binding and enforceable response to VAWG at the national level.<sup>20</sup> This normative standard appears to have gained broad global acceptance, as nearly all States (97 per cent) report adopting legal measures, meaning they have at least one legal provision specifically relating to VAWG generally or a specific form of VAWG.<sup>21</sup> Overall, **85 per cent of States (163 States) have adopted specific legislation on violence against women and/or domestic violence/intimate partner violence.**<sup>22</sup> However, **30 States (15 per cent of States) do not have any specific VAWG (or domestic violence (DV)/IPV legislation in place.**<sup>23</sup>

In terms of regional trends, the adoption of specific laws on VAWG or DV/IPV are most common in States in Oceania, Europe and the Americas, where more than 90 per cent of States in each region have adopted specific VAWG legislation. In Africa and Asia, around one-quarter of States have not adopted specific VAWG laws.

#### Percentage of States per region that have adopted specific legislation on VAWG or DP/IPV



Domestic violence/intimate partner violence is one of the most common forms of violence specifically addressed in VAWG legislation, with 73 per cent of States (141) reporting specific legal measures on DV/IPV. Trafficking and sexual violence are the other two specific forms of violence most often targeted in national legislation.<sup>24</sup>

#### Percentage of States adopting legislation on specific forms of VAWG Policies – National action plans and strategies

##### Trafficking



##### Domestic violence



##### Sexual violence



Policies such as national action plans or strategies provide an important framework for operationalizing effective State measures to prevent and respond to VAWG.<sup>25</sup> According to the database, **90 per cent of States report adopting a policy with reference to VAWG.**<sup>26</sup> In total, roughly **two-thirds of States (66 per cent) report adopting a national action plan and/or strategy specific to VAWG or domestic violence/intimate partner violence.**

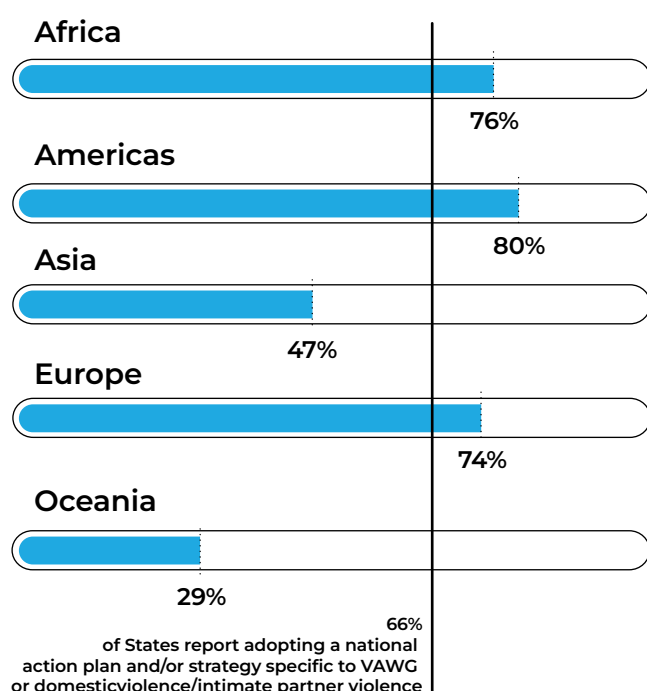
In terms of regional trends, the adoption of VAWG NAPs and strategies appears most common in the Americas, followed by Africa and Europe.

Of the VAWG-specific NAPs or strategies adopted by States, the top three forms of violence most commonly addressed are VAWG broadly, trafficking and DV/IPV.<sup>27</sup>



PHOTO: UN WOMEN/SALAMATOU BLANCHÉ

## Percentage of States per region that have adopted National Action Plans/Strategies on VAWG or DV/IPV Institutional mechanisms



**Most States (90 per cent) report establishing an institutional mechanism – such as specialized commissions, committees or task forces – to address VAWG, which play an important coordinating, advisory and monitoring role.** The most common forms are: commissions or committees, ranging from broad gender equality mandates to specific VAWG mandates; specialized police VAWG units; and task forces.

## Research and data

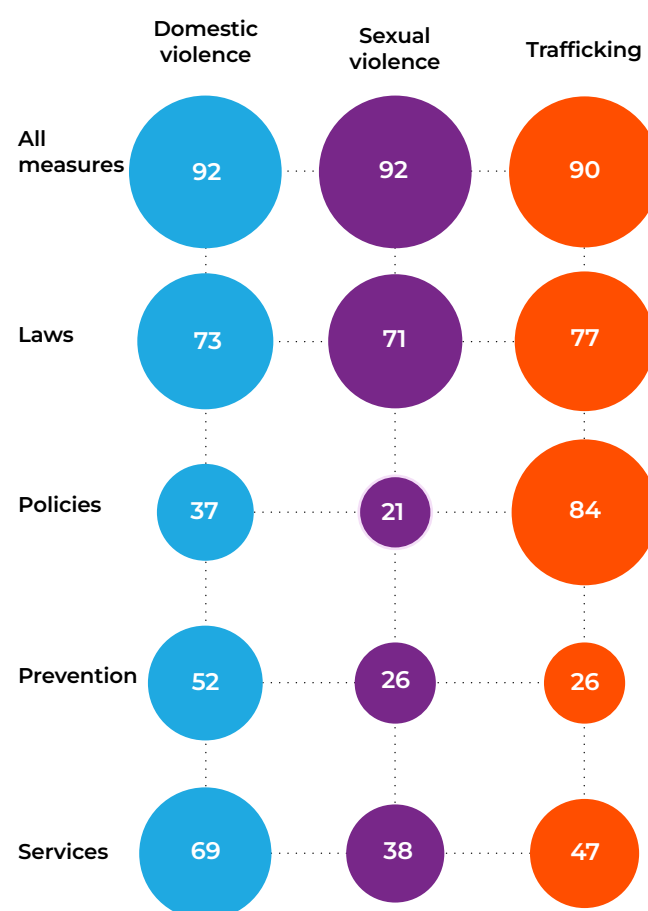
Conducting research on violence against women and girls and measuring its extent and characteristics is essential for the development of effective policies and programmes. Most States (93 per cent) reported at least one measure under the ‘research and data’ category and **surveys are the most common approach to gathering data on VAWG at the State level, with nearly half of research and data measures in the database categorized as surveys (45 per cent).** These include dedicated violence against women surveys, violence against women modules in other surveys and violence against children surveys. However, States’ efforts in collecting administrative data (from justice, police, health or social services sources) are limited, with only 45 per cent of States reporting the collection of such data on VAWG.

**The above findings indicate that there is broad global recognition by States that the adoption of a range of measures to prevent and respond to VAWG is necessary, in line with their commitments at global level, although gaps in some areas persist.** Trends in relation to the State adoption of prevention and services measures are explored in greater detail in section 4 below.

## 2.2 Forms of violence addressed

Most measures contained in the database address broadly ‘violence against women and girls’ – which typically covers a wide range of forms of violence. However, a large number of measures also address specific widespread forms of violence, especially domestic violence/intimate partner violence (DV/IPV), sexual violence and trafficking, as the most common specific forms of violence addressed in State measures globally.<sup>28</sup> Examples of good practices from a diverse range of States are highlighted below.

## Percentage of States adopting specific VAWG measures, by form of violence



In the chart above, “all measures” refers to all types of measures across all categories contained in the Database, including laws, policies, prevention, services, research and data, institutional mechanisms, budgets, monitoring and evaluation, perpetrator programmes and regional initiatives.

## Domestic violence/intimate partner violence

Given that it is the most widespread form of VAWG globally,<sup>29</sup> DPV/IPV is frequently the most common form of VAWG specified across measures, **with 92 per cent of States reporting at least one measure focused on DV/IPV**, including 73 per cent of States reporting adopting a law measure on DV/IPV, and 69 per cent of States reporting provision of services focused on DV/IPV.



Good practice in the adoption of laws on domestic violence include: broad definitions of domestic violence, classified as a criminal offence; access to enforceable protection orders; and mandated specific police duties,<sup>30</sup> such as outlined in the Combating of Domestic Violence Act No. 4 of 2003 of **Namibia**. In **Ghana**, One-Stop Centres attached to the police Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit were inaugurated in 2022, adopting holistic and survivor-centred approaches to domestic violence, to enhance access to justice, psychosocial interventions and other services for survivors of domestic violence.<sup>31</sup>

### Sexual violence

Sexual violence is referenced in specific measures adopted by 92 per cent of States, **including legislation with reference to sexual violence from 71 per cent of States, such as rape laws, Sexual Offences Acts, and relevant penal code amendments**. Specific policies (NAPs/ strategies) on sexual violence are much less common, reported by only 21 per cent of States, and primarily refer to policies on VAWG more broadly (covering various forms of violence).

**Iceland** offers a good example of a comprehensive State approach to sexual violence, with a specialized Sexual Offence Police Department and Specialized Units for Victims of Sexual Violence, a dedicated National Action Plan on the Handling of Sexual Offences by the Judicial System, an Inter-Ministerial Committee to Coordinate Measures to Combat Sexual Violence, and multisectoral, survivor-centred support services such as the Stígamót: Education and Counselling Centre for Survivors of Sexual Abuse and Violence.<sup>32</sup>

### Sexual harassment

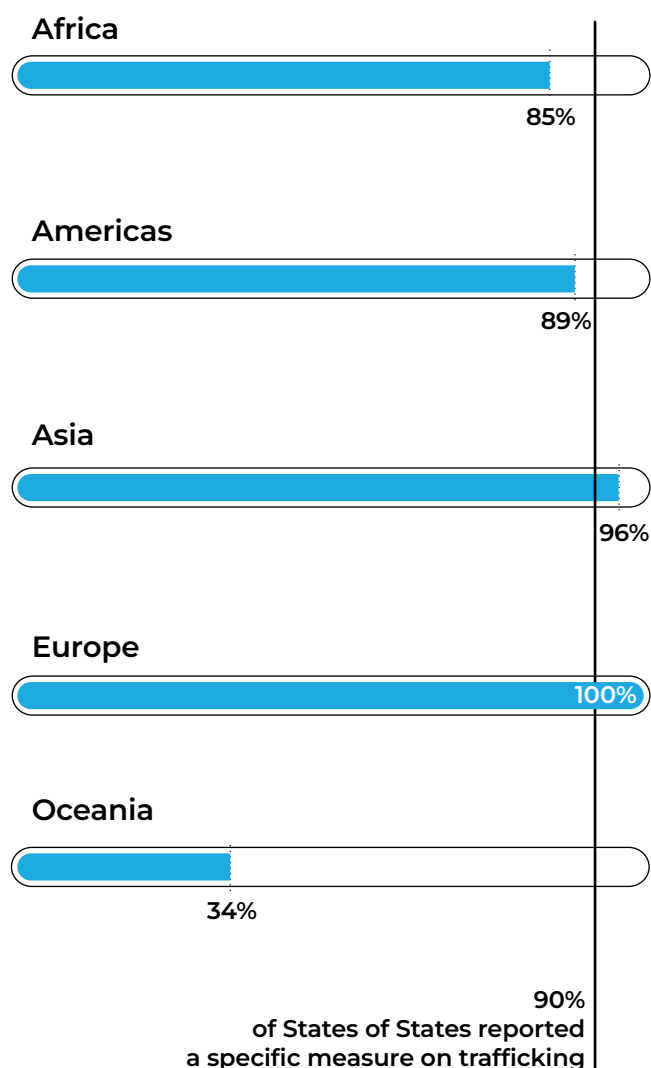
The database also contains **measures referencing sexual harassment from 67 per cent of States, and 52 per cent of States that have reported adopting specific legislation on sexual harassment**, including both labour/employment law, civil law and criminal/penal code provisions. In terms of policy and prevention measures, State initiatives on sexual harassment appear to primarily be included in broader VAWG national action plans or prevention campaigns, and only a handful of States cite policies or awareness or education initiatives on sexual harassment specifically.

As a good example of a strong legislative response to sexual harassment, **Peru** has passed comprehensive legislation and regulations to prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace. Law No. 27942, on the Prevention and Punishment of Sexual Harassment obligates employers to take specific actions, including policies and complaint procedures, for sexual harassment complaints, while Legislative Decree No. 1410 (2019) introduced strengthened criminal sanctions and protections for victims under existing sexual harassment laws.

### Trafficking

**Trafficking has received substantial attention by States, with dedicated measures across all regions. At least 90 per cent of States reported a specific measure** on trafficking, 77 per cent reported specific trafficking legislation and 40 per cent of States reported having national action plans or strategies on trafficking. The adoption of trafficking measures is especially strong among States in Asia and Europe.

### Percentage of States per region that have adopted trafficking measures



**Cambodia**<sup>33</sup> takes a comprehensive response to trafficking, with the adoption of numerous measures to address trafficking specifically. Laws include Criminal Code anti-trafficking provisions (2009) and the Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation, 2008. Specialized policies include the National Strategic Plan to Counter Trafficking in Persons 2019–2023 and the Policy and National Minimum Standards for the Protection of the Rights of Victims of Human Trafficking (2009). Prevention efforts include trafficking prevention awareness campaigns and the implementation of the Safe and Fair<sup>34</sup> programme to enhance policy and service responses.

The above findings show that many States are adopting various measures targeted at specific widespread forms of VAWG, especially domestic violence/IPV, sexual violence and trafficking, although gaps in the adoption of a comprehensive range of measures remain. The various examples of good practices adopted by different States demonstrate the importance of strong legal and policy frameworks alongside efforts to provide comprehensive prevention and services. Other forms of violence that have typically received less attention are discussed in section 5.

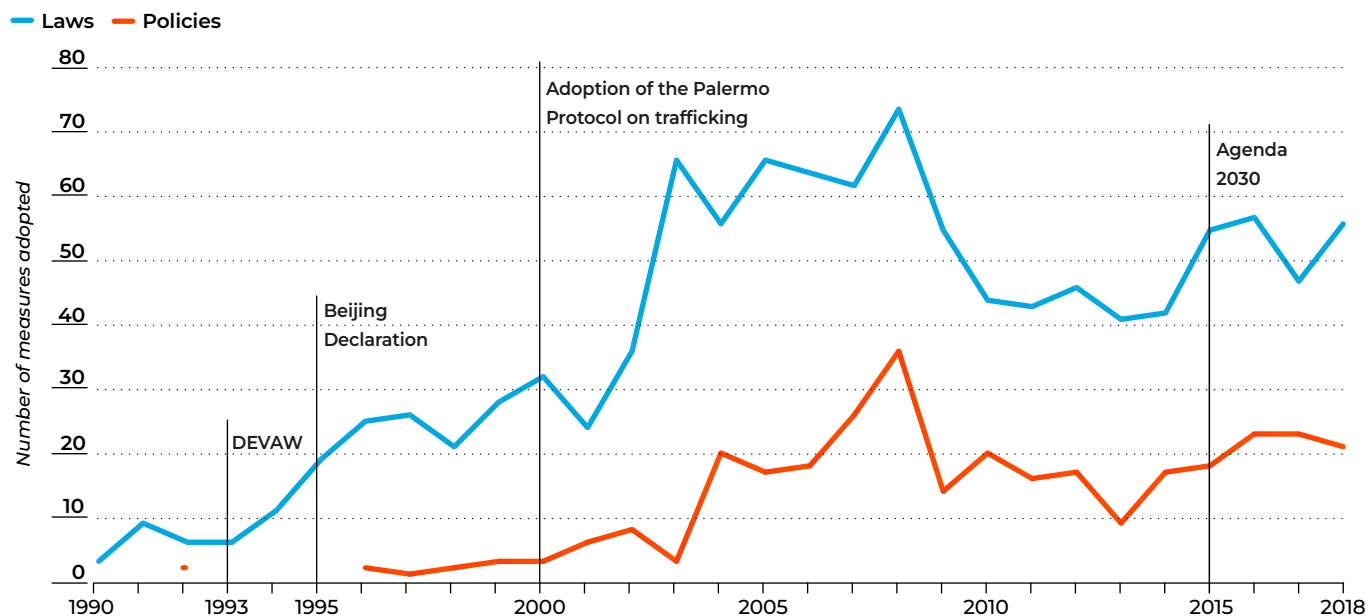


## 2.3 Trend analysis

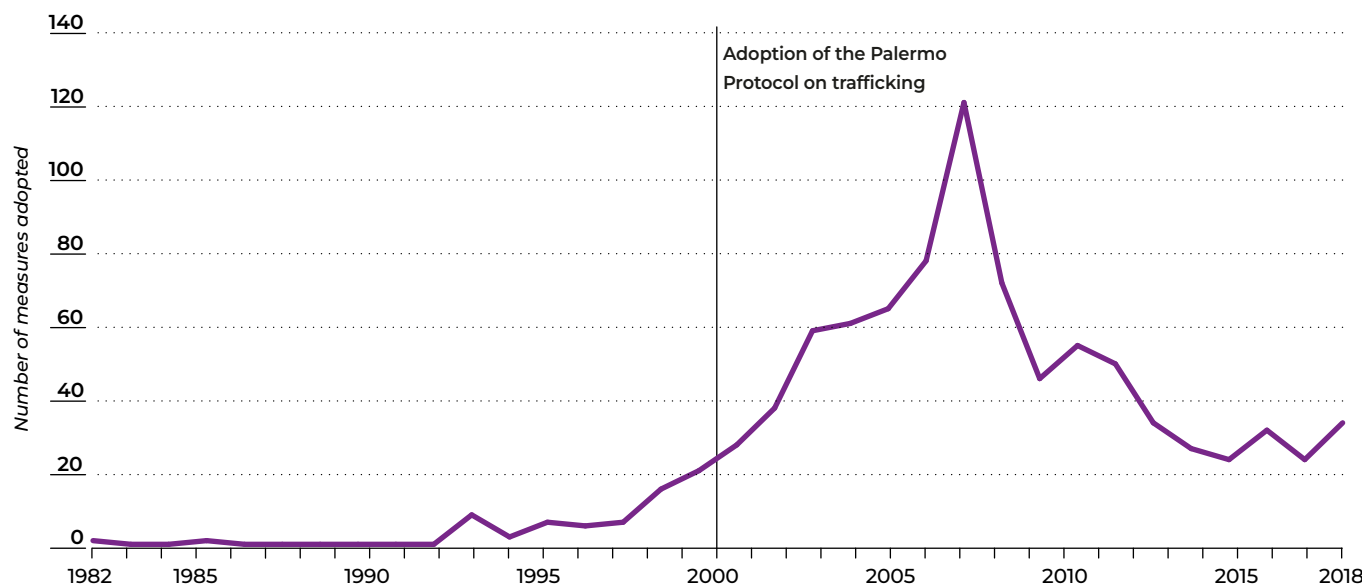
The significant majority of all measures documented in the database were adopted within the past 30 years – for example, 91 per cent of laws, 95 per cent of institutional mechanisms, and 96 per cent of services and policies. There was a notable increase in the decade after the adoption of the BPfA in 1995, and the adoption by the UN General Assembly of DEVAW before it, in 1993.<sup>35</sup>

The apparent link between major international normative developments and the uptake of VAWG-specific measures by States is evident in other cases as well. For example, 95 per cent of reported State measures addressing trafficking contained in the database were introduced since 2000, when the international treaty to the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking<sup>36</sup> was adopted by the UN.

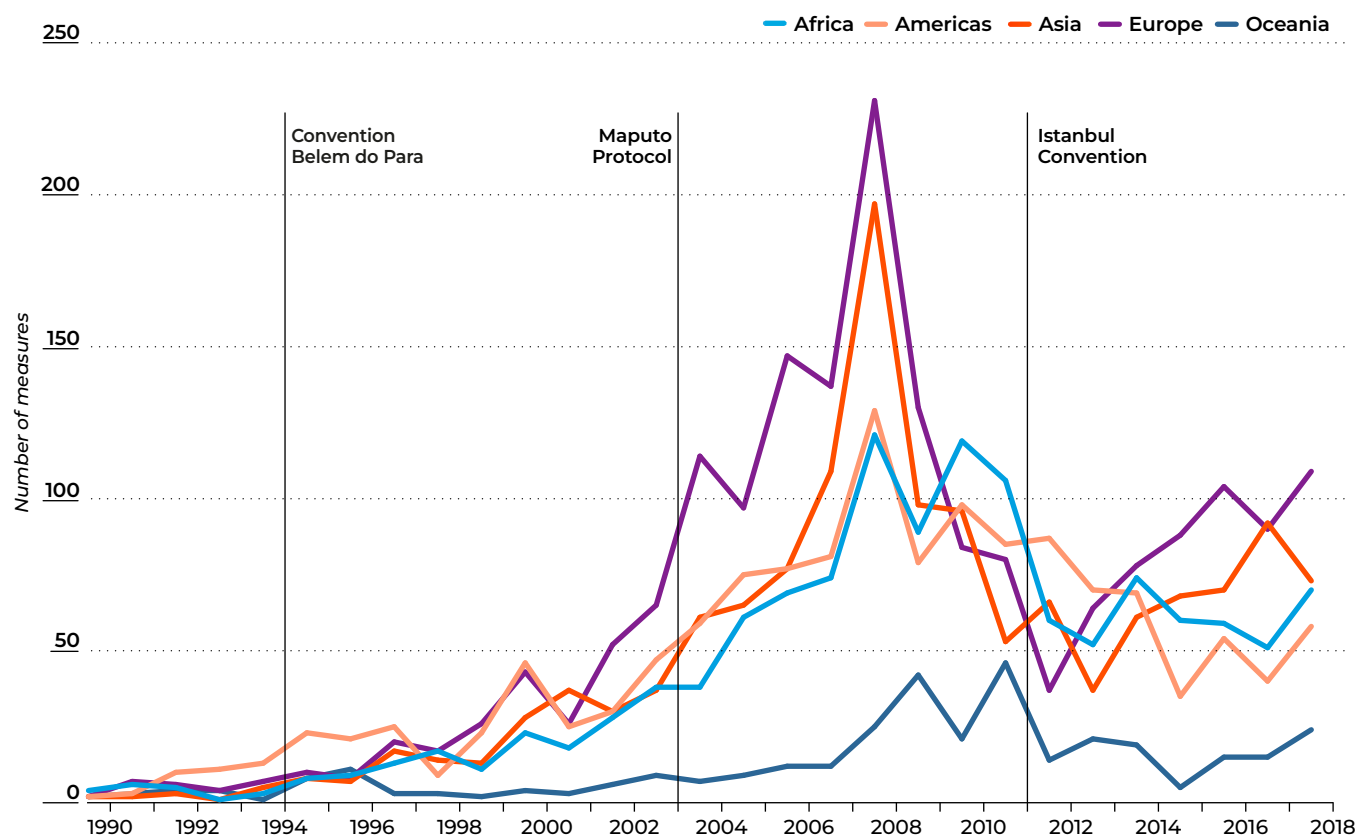
### Year of adoption of laws and policies on VAWG, globally



### Year of adoption of trafficking-focused measures, globally



## Year of adoption across all categories of VAWG measures, by region



There also appears to be some regional variation, which may be linked with regional normative developments. Although there is not currently an international binding treaty on violence against women and girls, there are three regional treaties specifically addressing VAWG in the Americas (the 1994 Convention of Belém do Pará), in Africa (the 2003 Maputo Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa), and most recently, in Europe, the 2011 Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and girls and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), all three of which are legally binding for ratifying member States. In each of these regions, as visible in the below chart, a rise in the number of measures adopted is noticeable during and after the adoption of these regional treaties. In coming years, the implementation of the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AUCEVAWG) adopted in February 2025 at national level will be monitored by the Global Database on VAWG following its ratification.

There was also a substantial rise in measures adopted in 2008. This trend appears to result from a noticeable increase in State reporting on VAWG measures at the global level. As noted in section 1, in 2008, the UN Secretary-General established the Global Database on VAWG, and requested that all UN Member States complete a detailed questionnaire outlining different types of VAWG measures adopted, which then formed the basis of the first data entries into the Global Database and resulted in a rise in documented measures VAWG measures globally.<sup>37</sup> This effort followed the adoption in 2006 of the first General Assembly resolution on the intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls<sup>38</sup> following

the publication of the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women and girls.<sup>39</sup>

These findings highlight the importance and positive impact of international and regional instruments for the adoption of State-level measures to address different forms of VAWG.

### Trends of regression in State violence against women and girls measures

While there has been a clear global trend towards State uptake of national measures to prevent and respond to VAWG since the 1990s, in recent years there has also been growing backlash against women and girls' rights and backsliding on gender equality measures.<sup>40</sup> As observed by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in 2025: "as we see in every corner of the world, from pushback to rollback, women's rights are under attack...instead of mainstreaming equal rights, we are witnessing the mainstreaming of chauvinism and misogyny".<sup>41</sup>

In some States, this trend has resulted in regression in State-level protections through the rollback of legal, policy and other VAWG measures.<sup>42</sup> For example, in **Afghanistan**, the return of Taliban rule in 2021 resulted in a severe deterioration of women's rights and extreme discrimination against women and girls, described by many international actors as 'gender apartheid'.<sup>43</sup> The Ministry for Women's Affairs was abolished, and with it, the important gains made in the adoption of measures to prevent and respond to VAWG, including the 2009 Law on Elimination of Violence against women and girls.<sup>44</sup>

## SECTION 3

# COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF STATE RESPONSES TO VAWG ACROSS KEY MEASURES

According to international normative standards, effective responses to VAWG require comprehensive, holistic and integrated approaches through adoption of a broad range of measures by States, including legal, policy, research, budgetary, prevention and services measures. As the first global platform containing data on VAWG measures adopted by 193 States, the Global Database enables the 'benchmarking' and comparative analysis of State progress in adopting what is defined here as a comprehensive response to VAWG, by assessing what types of key measures are adopted by States across seven categories (represented by 10 indicators).

In addition to providing insights into State progress on adopting a comprehensive range of measures across the categories described below, this analysis enables investigation of how the adoption of

certain types of measures are linked with each other – especially the role of law and policy frameworks – and to identify regional trends, as well as to examine whether the comprehensiveness of measures adopted is linked with prevalence rates of intimate partner violence or State income levels.

Based on an assessment of whether a State has reported adopting at least one measure under each category and indicator outlined below, this analysis divides State responses by "high" (8–10 indicators met), "medium" (5–7 indicators met) and "low" (0–4 indicators met) levels of comprehensiveness.<sup>45</sup> The below indicators were developed based on identifying commonly recommended and frequently adopted types of measures adopted by States under each category, as provided by key global standards.<sup>46</sup>

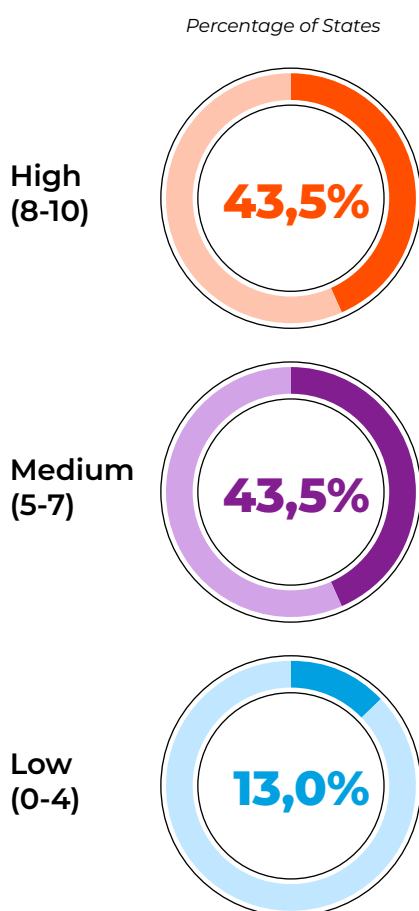
| Category of measure        | Indicators   |  |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1. Laws                    | 1.1 Specific VAWG legislation  |  |
| 2. Policies                | 2.1 Dedicated VAWG national action plan or strategy  |  |
| 3. Budgets                 | 3.1 Specific VAWG governmental budget allocation   |  |
| 4. Institutional mechanism | 4.1 VAWG coordinating body (e.g. dedicated government ministry, or specialized committee/commission/mechanism) |  |
| 5. Prevention              | 5.1 Awareness campaign   | 5.2 Education programme (formal or informal)   |
| 6. Research and data       | 6.1 Administrative data (health, justice, police or social services)   | 6.2 Dedicated VAWG survey  |
| 7. Services                | 7.1 VAWG specialized justice, police and health services, including protocols/guidelines or training           | 7.2 VAWG social service (helpline, shelter, long-term support or psychosocial counselling) |

### 3.1 Trends in State adoption of high and medium levels of types of violence against women and girls measures

Of the 193 States reported in the database, most (87 per cent) have adopted at least a high or medium level of comprehensive measures to prevent and respond to VAWG.

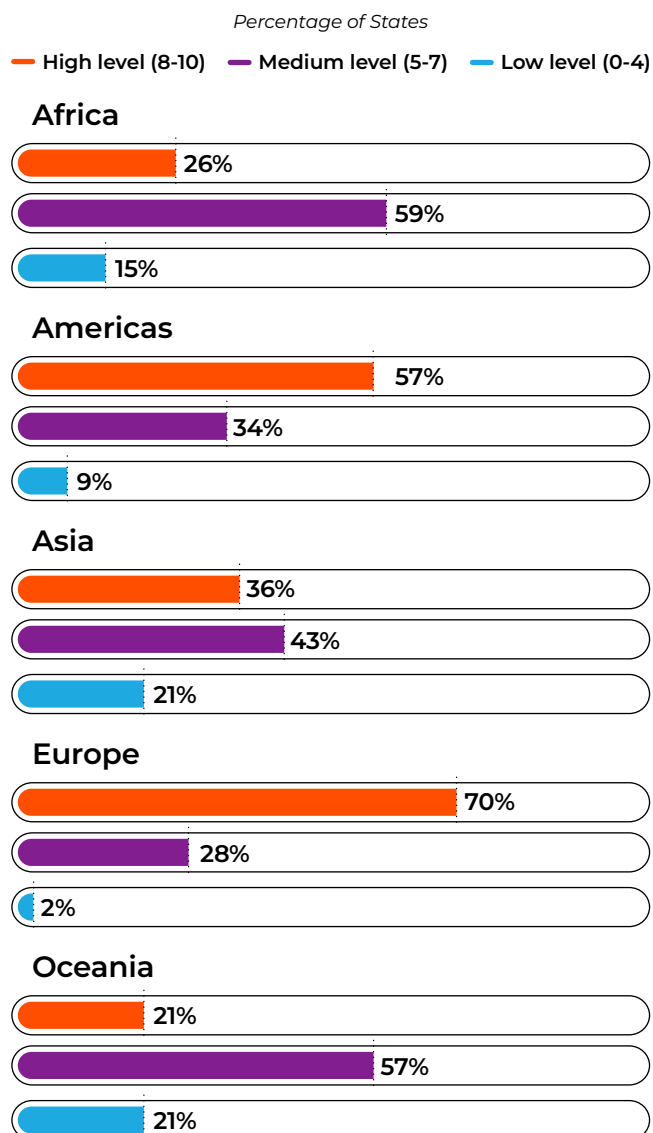
Nearly half of States (43.5 per cent – 84 States) have reported adopting at least one measure across nearly all categories, meeting at least 8 out of 10 of indicators<sup>47</sup> and indicating a high level of comprehensiveness in adopting a broad range of different types of VAWG measures. All of these States have adopted specific VAWG legislation,<sup>48</sup> and a high majority, 86 per cent of these States (all but 12), have reported adopting a national policy (NAP or strategy) specifically focused on VAWG or domestic violence/IPV.<sup>49</sup>

Breakdown of comprehensiveness of types of VAWG measures adopted, by percentage of States



Of the remaining States (with less than 8 indicators) analysed, most (43.5 per cent – 84 States) have adopted measures across at least half of the 10 indicators assessed (that is, measures have been reported across 5, 6 or 7 of the indicators), indicating a medium level of comprehensiveness. However, there are still **25 States (13 per cent)** that have adopted only 0 to 4 of the 10 indicators, indicating low levels of comprehensiveness in adopting VAWG measures.

Regional trends for comprehensiveness of adoption of VAWG measures, by percentage of States per region



Regional-level analysis shows that there is broad geographical distribution in terms of where the more comprehensive range of VAWG measures are adopted, ranging from one-fifth of States (Oceania – 21 per cent) to nearly three-quarters of States (Europe – 70 per cent). **Only two regions have a majority of States adopting high levels of comprehensive measures:** Europe (70 per cent of States in the region) and the Americas (57 per cent of States in the region). It is notable that these are also the only two regions that have widely adopted, specific and comprehensive binding regional treaties on violence against women and girls.<sup>50</sup>

While the adoption of measures is the first step – and ensuring that adopted measures are effective in practice, through sustained resourcing and implementation of measures is crucial – **the findings show that many States are making demonstrable progress in adopting a more comprehensive range of measures reflective of a more holistic and multisectoral, integrated approach to preventing and responding to VAWG.**

### 3.2 Law and policy frameworks as a catalyst or gateway to adopting a more comprehensive range of other violence against women and girls measures

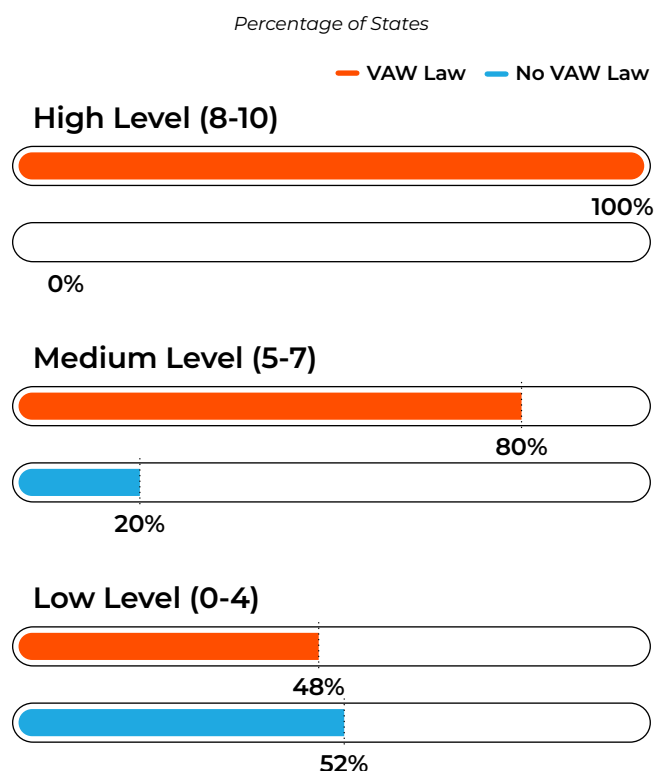
State adoption of laws and policies, as well as institutional mechanisms, are strongly associated with a higher level of comprehensiveness in terms of the adoption of other types of VAWG measures, indicating a more integrated and holistic approach to VAWG.

**States that have a specific VAWG law in place appear more likely to also have adopted other types of measures to address VAWG.**

For example, out of 163 States with specific laws on VAWG, more than half (52 per cent) have adopted a high level of other measures, that is, at least eight of the indicators.

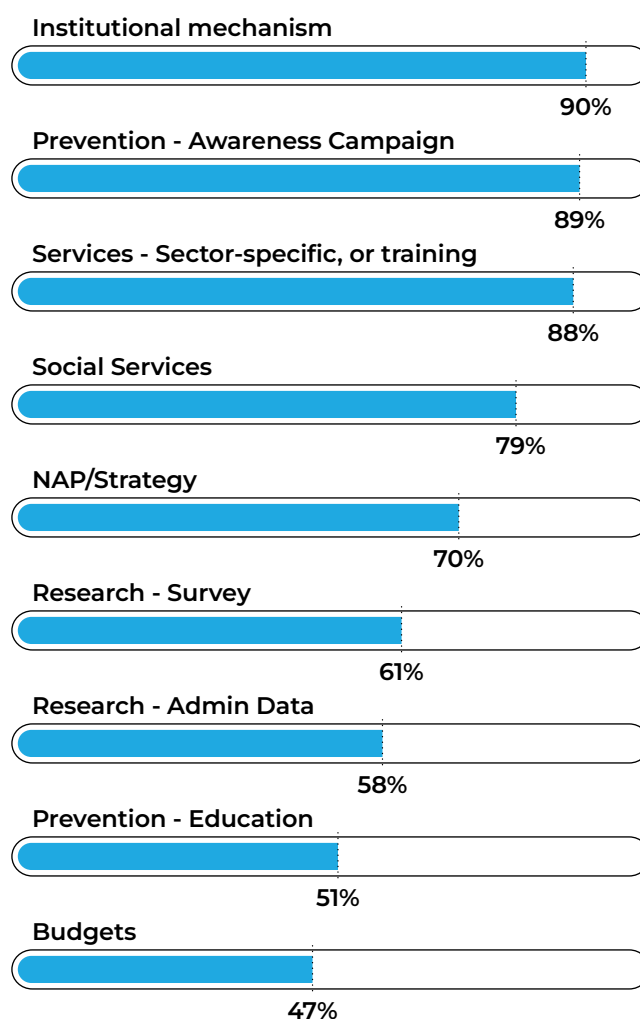
The majority of States (80 per cent) that have adopted a medium level of other types of measures also have specific VAWG laws in place.

**Distribution of comprehensiveness of VAWG measures by percentage of States, with and without specific VAWG laws**



In contrast, among States that have only adopted a low level of VAWG measures, more than half (52 per cent) have not adopted specific VAWG laws. **There is a strong association between a State adopting a specific VAWG law and the adoption of a broader range of other types of measures.** Closer analysis of the types of other measures States with VAWG laws are adopting indicate strong uptake of certain measures, and clear gaps in others. For example, of States with specific laws, 90 per cent have established institutional mechanisms, 89 per cent have adopted prevention awareness campaigns, and 88 per cent have developed VAWG sector-specific services (including protocols or guidelines).

**Percentage of States with specific VAWG Law (163 States) adopting other measures**



However, as the above chart also shows, **among the 163 States with VAWG laws, there are still substantial gaps in the broad adoption of important measures to prevent and respond to VAWG.** Only 58 to 61 per cent of States with laws are reporting research measures, and less than half (47 per cent) report adopting dedicated budgetary allocations. Moreover, 21 per cent of States with VAWG laws have not reported adopting any type of social service, and 30 per cent of States with VAWG laws have not adopted specific VAWG national action plans or strategies.

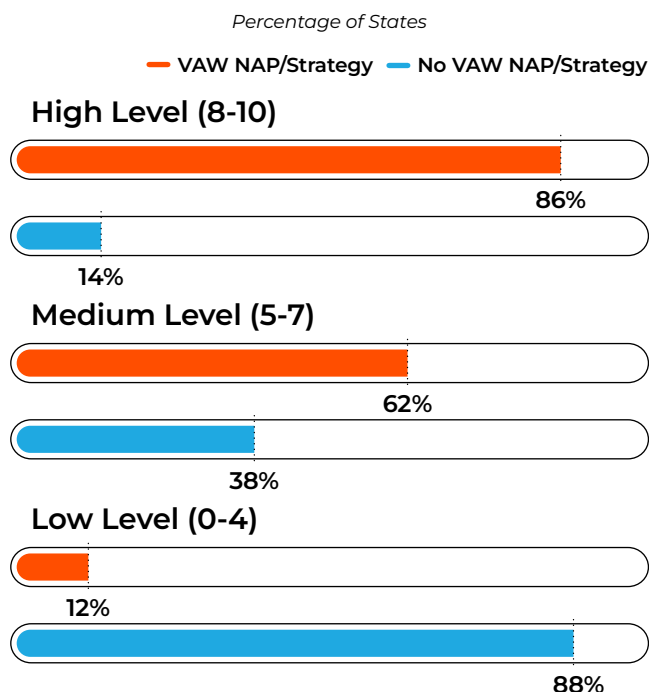
**States that have adopted a national VAWG policy (specifically, a NAP or strategy) also appear more likely to have adopted a broader range of other VAWG measures.**

**Of 127 States reporting a specific NAP or strategy on VAWG or domestic violence/IPV, more than half (57 per cent – 72 States), have a high level of comprehensiveness in the adoption of other measures.** Of States with a high level of VAWG measures adopted, a high majority (86 per cent) report adopting a NAP/strategy on VAWG.

The majority of States (62 per cent) that have adopted a medium level of VAWG measures also have a NAP or Strategy in place.

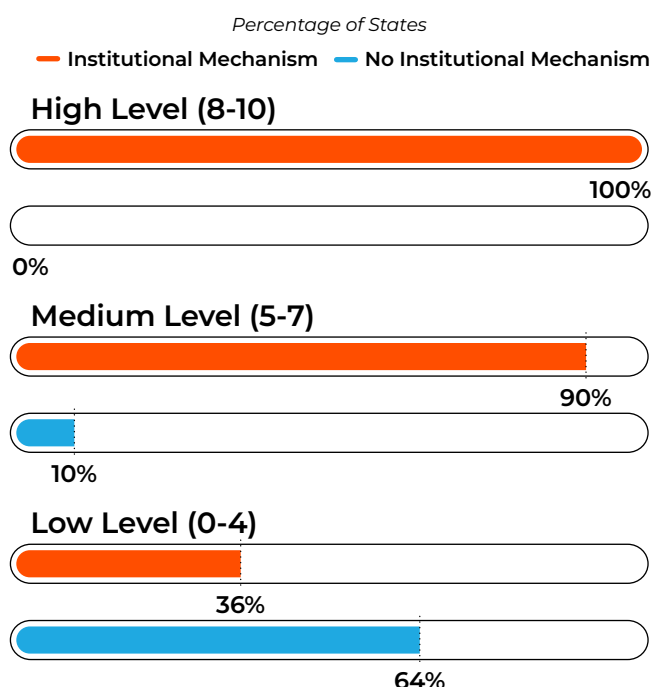


### Distribution of comprehensiveness of VAWG measures by percentage of States, with and without policies



In contrast, a high majority of States (88 per cent) with only a low level of VAWG measures adopted do not report having adopted a VAWG NAP/strategy.

### Distribution of comprehensiveness of State VAWG measures, with and without institutional mechanisms



Adoption of an institutional mechanism is also strongly associated with high levels of comprehensiveness in the adoption of other types of measures, indicating the importance of a State mandated coordinating, implementation and oversight body for VAWG measures.

Out of 169 States reporting adopting institutional mechanisms, 84 (50 per cent) report a high level of comprehensiveness, and 76 States (45 per cent) have adopted measures with a medium level of comprehensiveness.

All States reporting a high level of VAWG measures, and 90 per cent of those reporting a medium level of VAWG measures adopted, also report establishing an institutional mechanism. In contrast, of States that have adopted only a low level of VAWG measures, only roughly one-third (36 per cent) have adopted an institutional mechanism. The above findings indicate that the **adoption of legal and policy frameworks on VAWG appears to be an important catalyst for the adoption of a broader and more comprehensive and integrated range of other types of important responses to VAWG, including research, prevention and services measures.**



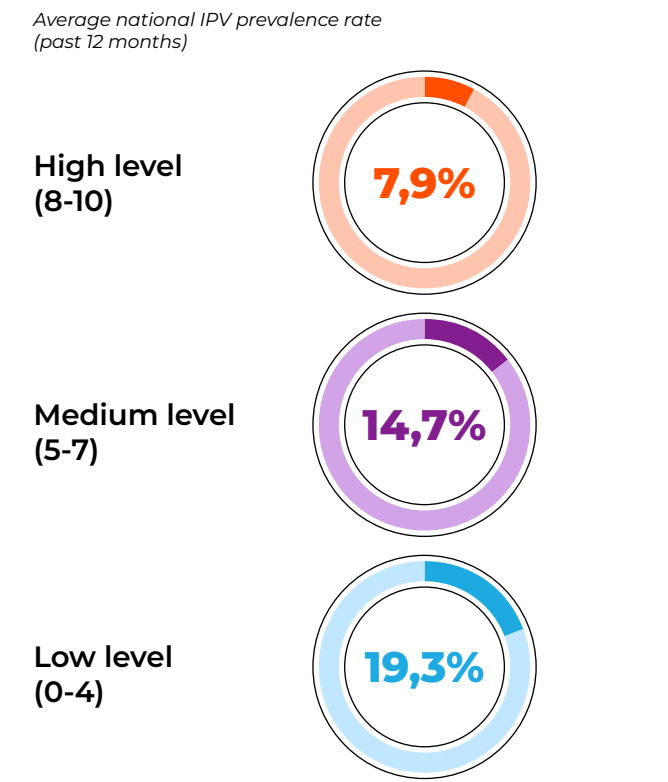
PHOTO: UN WOMEN/ALICE AMBRUCER

### 3.3 Comparing State adoption of a more or less comprehensive range of VAWG measures with average intimate partner violence rates

On average, States with a high or medium level of different types of VAWG measures adopted also have lower estimated prevalence rates of intimate partner violence, the most widespread form of VAWG. States falling in the three comprehensiveness categories were compared with regard to country-level estimates of intimate partner violence prevalence (sexual and/or physical violence occurring in the last 12 months) published by the World Health Organization (WHO).<sup>51</sup>

The finding indicates that the average prevalence rates of IPV (past 12 months) in States with ‘high’ levels of comprehensiveness in measures adopted is 7.9 per cent. The average IPV prevalence rate rises to 14.7 per cent for States with ‘medium’ levels of comprehensiveness in VAWG measures. For States that have adopted a low level of VAWG measures (between 0–4), the average prevalence rate of IPV rises to 19.3 per cent. For reference, according to the WHO, the global average for IPV prevalence rates (in the past 12 months) varies from 10–13 per cent.<sup>52</sup> The reasons for this difference are not yet clear, and further research could help to better understand the factors underlying this finding.

Prevalence rates of intimate partner violence, by level of comprehensiveness of State VAWG responses



That is, the average prevalence rate of IPV is nearly 2.5 times higher in States that have adopted little or no VAWG measures, as compared to States that have adopted a highly comprehensive range of types of VAWG measures.

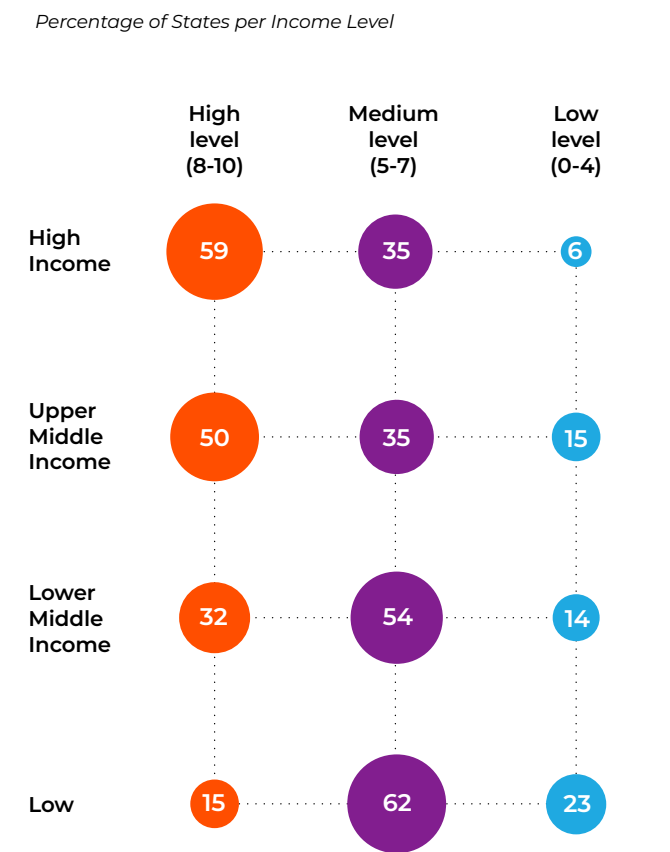
### 3.4 Comparing State income levels with comprehensiveness of adoption of VAWG measures

Analysis indicates that State adoption of VAWG measures varies by income level, and that States with high income and upper middle-income levels also have adopted a more comprehensive range of VAWG measures.

Drawing on the World Bank classification of States by four income levels: high, upper-middle, lower-middle and low-income,<sup>53</sup> the analysis shows that 59 per cent of high-income States also have adopted a high comprehensiveness level of VAWG measures, while half (50 per cent) of upper-middle-income States have adopted a high level of VAWG measures. In contrast, in lower-middle-income and low-income States, the adoption of a high level of comprehensive measures is much lower (32 and 15 per cent, respectively). Nearly one quarter of low-income States have adopted only a low level of comprehensiveness of VAWG measures.

That is, among States with high income levels, the percentage that have adopted a high level of comprehensiveness in VAWG measures is four times higher than among low-income States (59 vs. 15 per cent). However, even in lower middle- and low-income States, the majority have adopted at least a medium level of comprehensiveness in VAWG measures (54 and 62 per cent, respectively).

State trends for comprehensiveness of adoption of VAWG measures, by income level



These findings suggest that States with higher income levels also tend to have greater resources available to allocate to adopting and implementing a range of VAWG measures, including resource-intensive measures such as service-provision.

Overall, the analysis shows that the range of comprehensiveness of VAWG measures adopted by States are unevenly distributed globally, varying by region, by State income level, and by IPV prevalence burden.

### 3.5 Case studies highlighting good practices: State examples of comprehensive approaches to violence against women and girls measures

**Two of the States identified in the comparative analysis as having adopted a highly comprehensive level of types of VAWG measures – Spain and Jamaica – are highlighted here as part of a case study of good practices. In line with the findings in section 3.3, both States also have lower than average intimate partner prevalence rates according to WHO estimates:** Spain's estimated IPV prevalence rate (for the prior 12 months) is 3 per cent,<sup>54</sup> while Jamaica's estimated IPV prevalence rate is 7 per cent,<sup>55</sup> both falling below the average of 7.9 per cent for States adopting a high range of comprehensiveness in measures noted above, as well as the WHO global average of 10 to 13 per cent.

**Spain<sup>56</sup>** has adopted a comprehensive range of VAWG measures, starting with the adoption of the **Organic Law 1/2004 on Integrated Protection Measures against Gender-based Violence**, a comprehensive law providing for legal, preventive and protection services for VAWG victims/survivors. Spain has ratified the Istanbul Convention, which has been in force since 2014.

Spain has both a comprehensive National Action Plan and Strategy on VAWG: the national **State Pact on Gender-based Violence** was adopted in 2017 and is the current main framework for the Government's response to VAWG. It is further operationalized by the **State Strategy to combat violence against women 2022–2025** and the **Multi-Annual Joint Plan on Violence against women (2023–2027)**. Spain's policy frameworks on VAWG takes a very comprehensive and holistic approach to VAWG, outlining measures on awareness-raising and prevention, institutional coordination, improving assistance, support and protection for victims, training of service-providers and statistical monitoring. Importantly, the State Pact mandates a substantial **dedicated budget allocation** from the State.

The Organic Law also establishes two coordination and monitoring bodies dedicated to VAWG at the national level. The **Government Delegation for Gender-Based Violence** is the national body responsible for promoting, coordinating and collaborating with actions and measures against the different forms of VAWG. The **State Observatory on Violence against Women** is a specialist body, overseen by the Government Delegation, that is responsible for providing advice and analysis, conducting research and collecting data.

In terms of research and data, Spain collects and publishes extensive administrative data on VAWG from police and judiciary sources, and conducts dedicated VAWG prevalence surveys every four years. For example, the Government Delegation publishes monthly and annual statistical bulletins that are publicly accessible online, as well as bulletins on a range of data on topics including women killed by partners, compliance with protection orders, users of the national helplines, etc.

Spain has implemented public awareness campaigns as well as public education measures on VAWG, such as the online resource platform 'For a Society Free of Gender Violence'. It implements various training programmes for service-providers and has adopted protocols and guidelines for law enforcement. It has also adopted comprehensive social services measures to enhance protection and support to survivors/victims, such as shelters and a 24-hour national helpline and national network of Victim Support Offices offering integrated and coordinated support and assistance. The VioGén System (Integrated Supervision System for cases of Gender Violence), a centralized online system to integrate and better coordinate among public agencies in VAWG responses, including monitoring specific cases for risk levels. Still, despite important gains in adopting comprehensive responses, VAWG persists in Spain, and in 2023, government data recorded a 12 per cent increase in both the number of reported victims of gender-based violence and of domestic violence.<sup>57</sup>

In another example, **Jamaica** has developed a comprehensive range of measures to prevent and respond to VAWG. The **Domestic Violence Act (2004)**<sup>58</sup> provides the legislative framework addressing domestic violence and enabling access to protection orders, accompanied by a **National Strategic Action Plan to Eliminate Gender-Based Violence 2017–2027**.<sup>59</sup> This policy framework adopts a multisectoral, holistic approach to prevention, protection, intervention, legal procedures and data collection. Jamaica has also ratified the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Belem do Pará).<sup>60</sup>

Jamaica has appointed the **Bureau of Gender Affairs (under the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport)** as the **national coordinating body responsible for VAWG measures**. In terms of data and research, Jamaica collects administrative data from the justice system, police and health sectors and has conducted national prevalence surveys.<sup>61</sup> In terms of prevention, Jamaica has launched a public education campaign, 'No Excuse for Abuse', across the country. It has also delivered gender sensitization and VAWG education programmes in schools.<sup>62</sup> Social services providing support and assistance to victims/survivors include **Domestic Violence Intervention Centres, shelters and a 24-hour hotline**.<sup>63</sup> Police and justice actors have received specialized training on VAWG to improve service provision.<sup>64</sup>

The broad and comprehensive range of measures adopted by both Spain and Jamaica to prevent and respond to VAWG reflect good practices in establishing multisectoral and integrated responses to VAWG across legal, policy, research, prevention and services approaches.



## SECTION 4

# SPOTLIGHT ON HOLISTIC MEASURES FOR PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

### 4.1 Prevention

**Prevention measures – which are essential to prevent VAWG by challenging norms and attitudes that perpetuate gender discrimination and VAWG – are reported by 90 per cent of States (173 States total).** Although most States (86 per cent) have adopted awareness-raising campaigns, less than half of all States (47 per cent), have reported adopting education measures (formal or informal), or even less commonly, community mobilization initiatives (22 per cent). While there are increasing examples of community mobilization and education-focused initiatives at the State level, these forms of prevention measures are still relatively underutilized globally.

**Bangladesh** offers an example of a State that has adopted numerous types of prevention measures on VAWG.<sup>65</sup> Bangladesh's awareness-raising campaigns include national initiatives, via radio and television, and various specialized programmes and activities in formal education settings, including on university campuses<sup>66</sup> and in schools, as a key activity in the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and Children (2018–2030).<sup>67</sup>

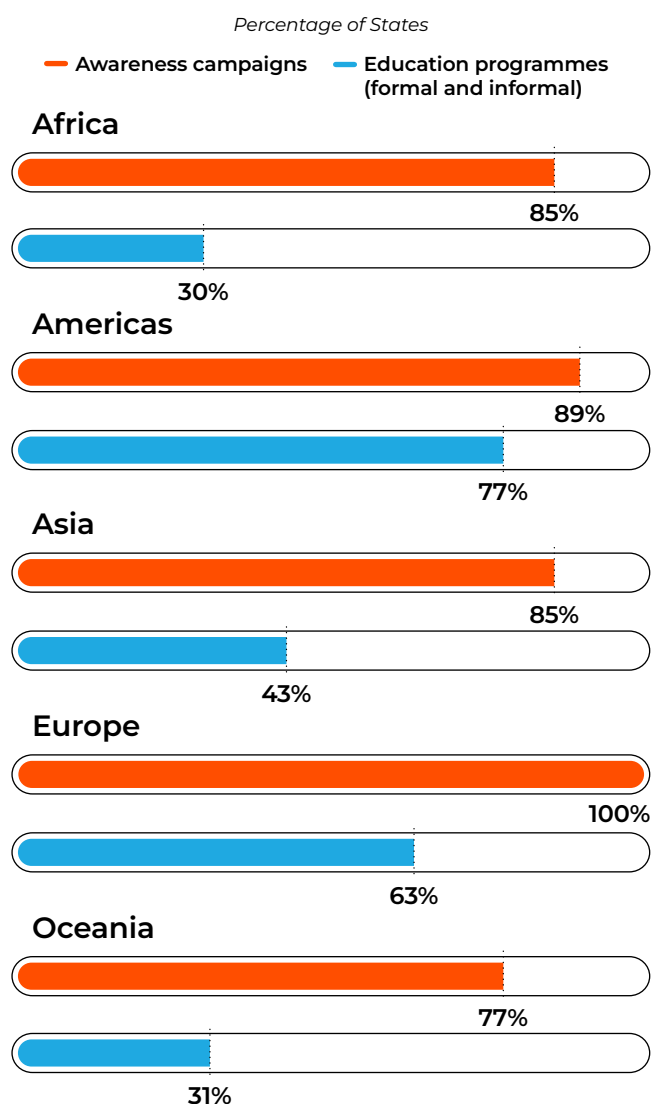
In another example, **the Netherlands** has adopted a comprehensive awareness-raising programme, the 'Violence Does Not Belong at Home Programme', in 2018, to tackle domestic violence and violence against children, which also includes a multidisciplinary and integrated approach to ensuring adequate access to necessary services via a 'safety network'.<sup>68</sup>

Community mobilization efforts in some States involve working at the local level, including with community and religious leaders to address domestic violence. For example, **Kiribati's** 'Strengthening Peaceful Villages Programme' is village-led and seeks to raise awareness about power imbalances between men and women that perpetuate VAWG.<sup>69</sup> Formal education measures, including gender equality and VAWG topics in schools, have been adopted by some States. For example, in **Georgia**, special learning sessions on "10 Lessons of Safety" provide information on domestic violence.<sup>70</sup>

The chart below shows that prevention measures are popular across all regions, with over three quarters of States across all regions

reporting adopting awareness campaigns. Education programmes, however, which typically involve longer-term and more comprehensive efforts, are less common, with only the Americas and Europe reporting a majority of States adopting this measure. Adoption of education programmes is especially low in Africa and Oceania.

Percentage of States adopting prevention measures, by region



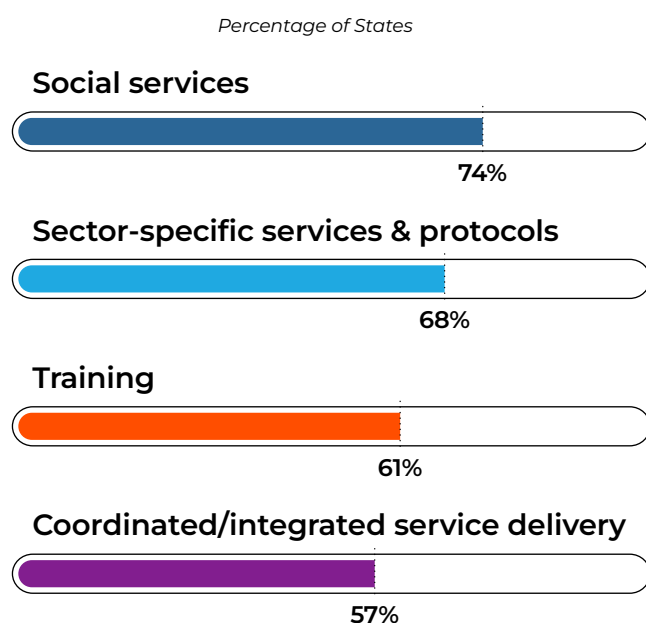
The above analysis indicates that there is evident State interest in adopting prevention measures, although there is a heavy focus on awareness campaigns, which are often short-lived or one-off initiatives, and less State uptake of more sustained measures, such as education programmes. Best practices indicate the importance of a comprehensive strategy towards the prevention of VAWG, as one-off campaigns are insufficient, particularly as “there is little evidence that awareness-raising activities on their own are able to significantly reduce VAWG”.<sup>71</sup> Rather, “prevention cannot be a short-term effort, but rather an endeavour that requires ongoing commitment from governments and other stakeholders, increased research to inform and monitor progress, and persistent action that addresses VAWG at its source”.<sup>72</sup>

## 4.2 Services

Services are essential to respond effectively to VAWG, through ensuring survivor-centred, comprehensive responses and access to a range of social services for VAWG survivors. **Almost all States (95 per cent) report adopting some form of services related to VAWG.** The most common form of VAWG services reported in the database are social services (adopted by 74 per cent of States), followed by sector-specific services, including police and justice services and protocols and guidelines (68 per cent), and training (61 per cent), both for service-providers including police, justice actors and health professionals, and finally, coordinated/integrated service delivery (57 per cent).

In terms of forms of violence addressed in services measures, nearly half of documented services measures (44 per cent) focus on VAWG broadly, while over one-third (35 per cent) specifically focus on domestic violence. As the third most common form of violence focused on, 10 per cent of services address trafficking.

### Percentage of States reporting adopting services measures



While the majority of States have adopted some form of services measures to prevent and respond to VAWG, there are still significant gaps. Nearly half of States (44 per cent – 84 States) do not report any integrated or coordinated service-delivery mechanisms. Roughly one third do not have sector-specific services, including protocols/guidelines, or training programmes for VAWG service-providers. Over one-quarter, 26 per cent (51 States), do not provide any social services for VAWG victims/survivors.

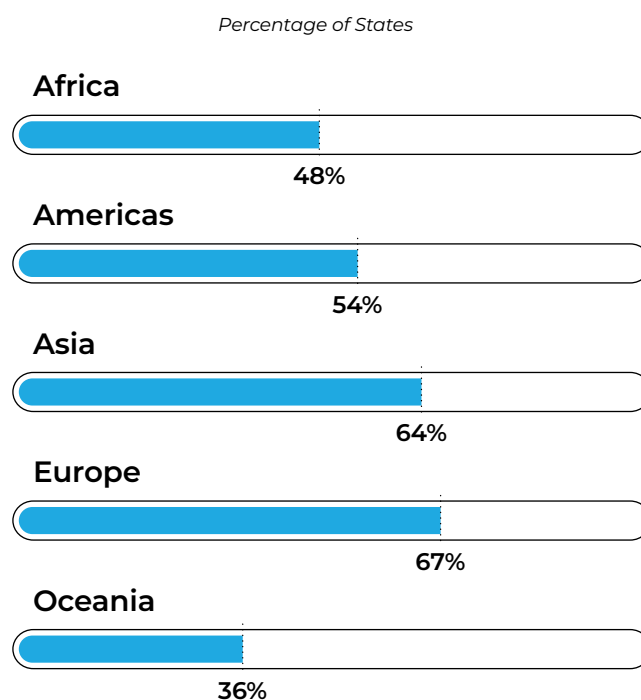
### Coordinated/integrated service delivery

Coordinated and integrated delivery of services refers to approaches or mechanisms to improve service delivery to VAWG victims/survivors, via referrals, linking individuals with service-providers, or through providing a number of services in one location, such as one-stop centres. **While 57 per cent of States report providing some form of coordinated/integrated service delivery, nearly half do not report any such measure** to assist survivors/victims of VAWG.

In terms of geographic distribution, Europe and Asia are the region with the highest share of States reporting adopting a coordinated/integrated service-delivery measure, followed by the Americas and Africa.

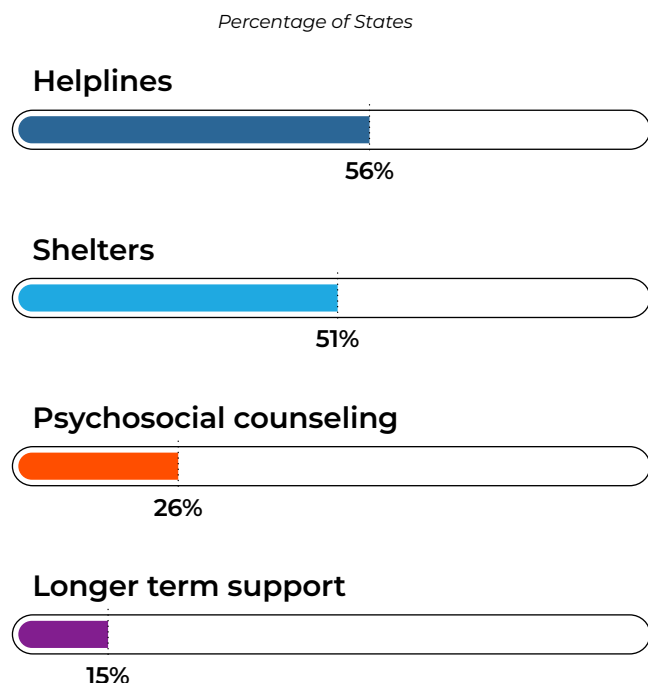
**Belgium** has adopted good practices in integrated service-delivery. Family Justice Centres are available to respond to domestic violence, where all relevant services, including the public prosecutor’s office, the police, doctors and psychologists, are all available in one place.<sup>73</sup> Belgium has also established Sexual Assault Centres (CPVS), a multidisciplinary approach involving health care services, police and the public prosecutor’s office that provides extensive medical, forensic and psychological assistance in sexual violence cases.<sup>74</sup>

### Percentage of States per region reporting coordinated/integrated service-delivery measures Social services



The main types of social services provided by around half of States are helplines/hotlines (56 per cent) and shelters (51 per cent). Far less commonly provided support services are psychosocial counselling (26 per cent), and longer-term support in the form of employment, housing, educational and financial support (15 per cent).

#### Percentage of States adopting different types of Social Services



While there are trends towards the uptake of services measures at the global level, there are significant gaps in State-level adoption of essential social services measures to support VAWG survivors/victims. While **142 States report providing some form of social services, over one-quarter (26 per cent) of States have not reported providing any social services specifically for VAWG victims/survivors.** Even the most commonly adopted social services measure – helplines/hotlines – is only reported in just over half of States.

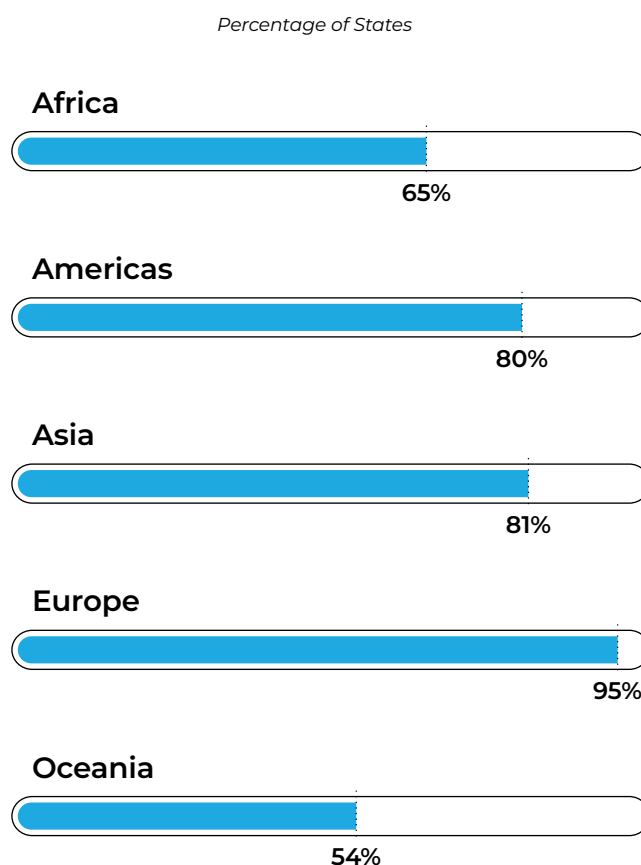
An enabling policy environment seems to support the adoption of social services at the State level. **States with a specific national action plan or strategy on VAWG or domestic violence are more likely to adopt social services for victims/survivors** (83 per cent of States with a NAP/strategy have adopted at least one social service on VAWG, compared to 65 per cent of States without a NAP/strategy that have adopted at least one social service).

Only eight of all States (4 per cent) have indicated adopting measures across all four of the categories of social services documented in the database. **France** offers a good example of the adoption of comprehensive social services, offering a helpline/hotline (Violence Femmes Info helpline 3919), a network of shelters, and extensive online resources.<sup>75</sup> To provide psychosocial counselling, it has established LEAO centres, as “a place of listening, reception and orientation,” which offer assistance to VAWG victims/survivors by phone and in person.<sup>76</sup> France has also introduced emergency universal financial

support for victims of domestic violence.<sup>77</sup>

There are regional variations in terms of adoption of social services measures. Europe is the region with the most States (95 per cent) reporting adopting at least one type of social services, and at least 80 per cent of States in both the Americas and Asia also report social services. However, the adoption of social services for VAWG cases is less common in Africa (65 per cent of States) and Oceania (54 per cent of States).

#### Percentage of States per region reporting adopting social services measures



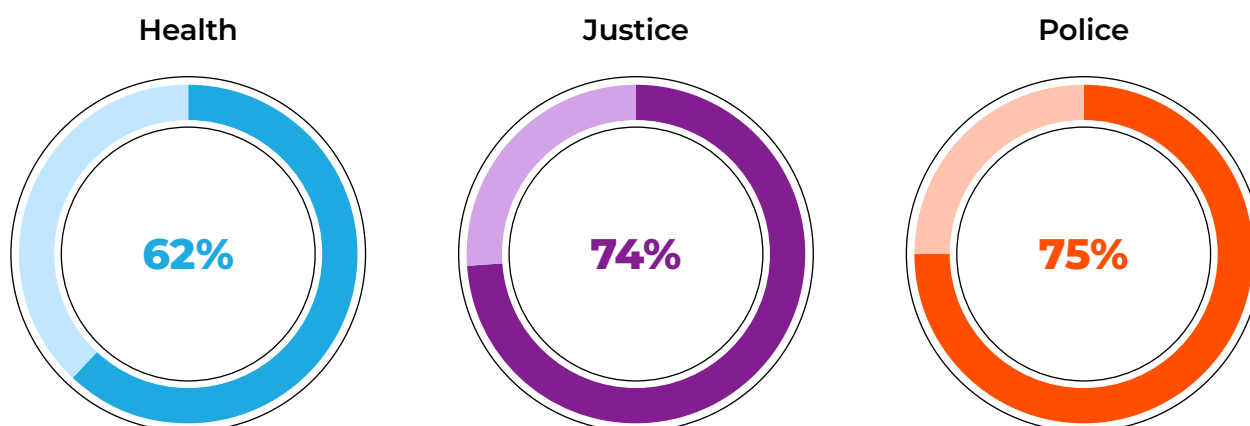
**A small minority of 24 States (12 per cent) have reported providing legal aid assistance in VAWG cases,** an important service to enhance access to justice for VAWG victims/survivors. A good model is State-provided legal aid assistance, specialized for VAWG cases, or in some cases, provided by non-governmental organizations with governmental support. For example, **Tonga's** Ministry of Justice administers and funds a Family Protection Legal Aid Centre for domestic violence cases.<sup>78</sup>

#### Strengthening responses to violence against women and girls by the health, justice and police sectors

The majority of States are adopting efforts to strengthen responses to VAWG in key sectors – justice and police, and to a lesser extent, health. While roughly three-quarters of States have reported at least one sector-specific measure to strengthen service responses for justice and police sectors, only 62 per cent of States report specific measures on VAWG within the health sector.<sup>79</sup>

Percentage of States adopting sector-specific services,  
capacity-strengthening, and administrative data, by sector

Percentage of States



Measures to strengthen sectoral responses include: specific VAWG protocols/guidelines and training to enhance service delivery and the capacity of service-providers; specialized services such as helpdesks and specialized police units; and/or the collection of sector-specific administrative data to improve availability of data on VAWG cases.

Most States have adopted specialized training programmes to strengthen responses of service providers in VAWG cases across key sectors. For example, to strengthen police responses in VAWG cases, in **Singapore**, all police front-line officers receive gender-sensitive training, including on a victim-centred approach, aiming to ensure that interviews and investigations involving victims of family violence and sexual offences are conducted sensitively and professionally.<sup>80</sup> Also with the goal of improving VAWG service-delivery, in a number of States, specific protocols and guidelines have been adopted for various service-providers, including police and justice actors and, to a slightly lesser degree, healthcare-providers, to guide appropriate responses in VAWG cases. A good example from **Australia** is the National Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book,<sup>81</sup> which provides guidance to judges and judicial officers on domestic violence cases, including information and knowledge supported by research, links to a range of legal and related resources, and practical guidelines for courtroom management in such cases.

Another example of a good practice in the health sector is from **Grenada**, which has introduced Health Care Sector Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Gender-Based Violence, with the aim

of providing guidelines to healthcare professionals to improve the quality and consistency of services to VAWG victims, and guidance on the collection and handling of medico-legal evidence.<sup>82</sup>

There are also a number of State initiatives to improve sector-specific responses to VAWG survivors/victims, through, for example, specialized police units and victim services. For example, in the **Dominican Republic**, the Specialized Directorate of Attention to Women and Domestic Violence of the National Police is a specialized unit working to respond to VAWG cases, especially domestic violence.<sup>83</sup> As an example of specialized victim services, in **Eswatini**, Domestic Violence and Victim Support Centres provide specialized and sensitive care for victims/survivors seeking to report VAWG cases.<sup>84</sup>

Within the justice sector, good practices include the establishment of specialized courts to handle VAWG cases, such as integrated domestic violence courts in Ontario, **Canada**.<sup>85</sup>

**The findings indicate that there is overall progress in the State adoption of services measures, which are essential to provide holistic, survivor-centred service responses in VAWG cases. In addition, there are clear indicators that States are adopting specific measures to strengthen service responses across the justice, police and health sectors. However, there are still significant gaps globally, especially in the provision of social services, and the provision by States of training and development of protocols and guidelines for service-providers.**

## SECTION 5

# SPOTLIGHT ON PRIORITY FORMS OF VIOLENCE

This section takes a closer look at a selected set of specific forms of violence that have historically received less attention, but are now increasingly the focus of new specialized measures at the State level, particularly in certain regions. These forms of violence include femicide/feminicide, female genital mutilation, and child, early and forced marriage.

Another major area of concern as a more recently emerging form of violence is technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. While there is increasing attention to this issue globally and at State level, most developments are quite recent and not fully captured in the database at the time of this research analysis.<sup>86</sup>

### Femicide/Feminicide

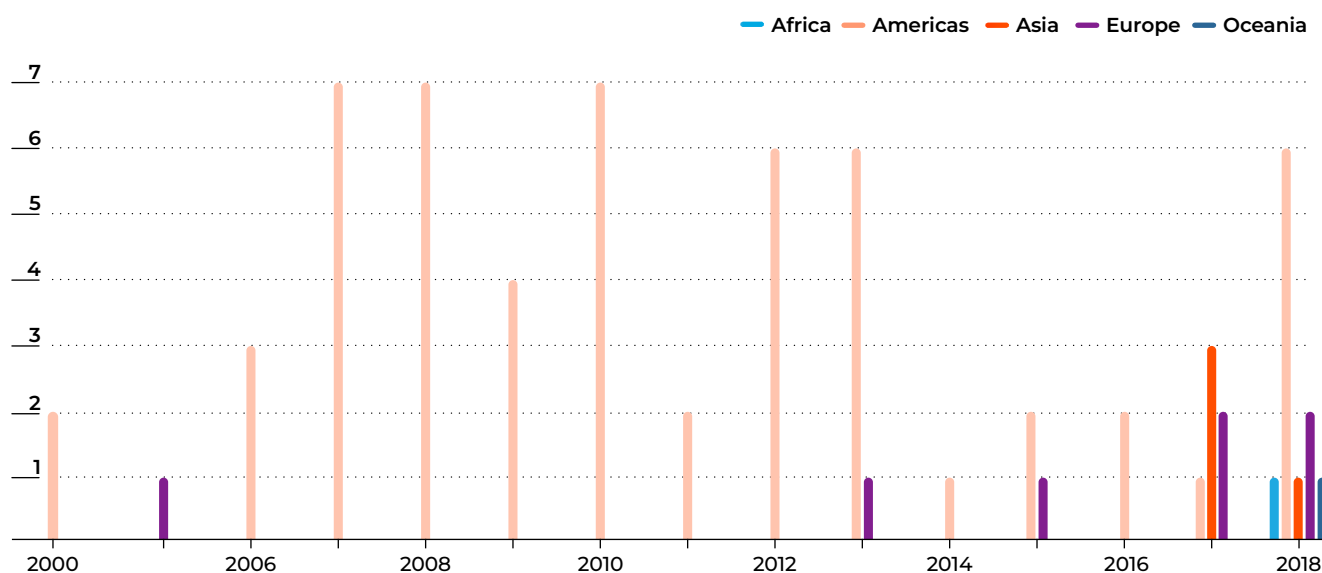
Femicide/feminicide is the most severe form of VAWG, and rates are rising globally, with a woman killed every 10 minutes.<sup>87</sup> Yet, according to the database, **less than a fifth of States (15 per cent – 28 States) worldwide have adopted a measure specifically focused**

### on femicide/feminicide.

In terms of laws, some States have introduced dedicated legislation specifically on femicide/feminicide, while others have enacted amendments to existing criminal or VAWG laws to explicitly include femicide/feminicide. For example, in 2007 **Costa Rica** was the first State in the world to criminalize femicide. Many States in the Latin American region followed this example with legislative amendments to specifically criminalize femicide.

A small minority of States – predominantly in the Americas – are also adopting specialized institutional mechanisms to address femicide, such as **Chile's** Intersectoral Circuit of Femicides,<sup>88</sup> a multisectoral body to monitor femicides, conduct research and advise on coordinated government responses. As part of specialized services, several States have introduced specific protocols and guidelines on femicide for law enforcement actors, such as **Peru's** Inter-Institutional Protocol for Action against Feminicide, Attempt at Feminicide and High-Risk Domestic Violence.<sup>89</sup>

### Year of adoption of measures on feminicide, by region



Overall, uptake of measures focused on femicide/feminicide is a recent development. All referenced measures were adopted in 2000 or later, with more than 40 per cent adopted since Agenda 2030 in 2015. There is a strong geographical distribution in terms of the Americas leading these efforts, with the substantial majority of these

measures adopted in the Americas (84 per cent).

**Mexico** offers an interesting case study of comprehensive State responses to VAWG and femicide. Mexico has recorded very high levels of femicide, as government data indicates that at least 10 women or girls are killed every day by intimate partners or other

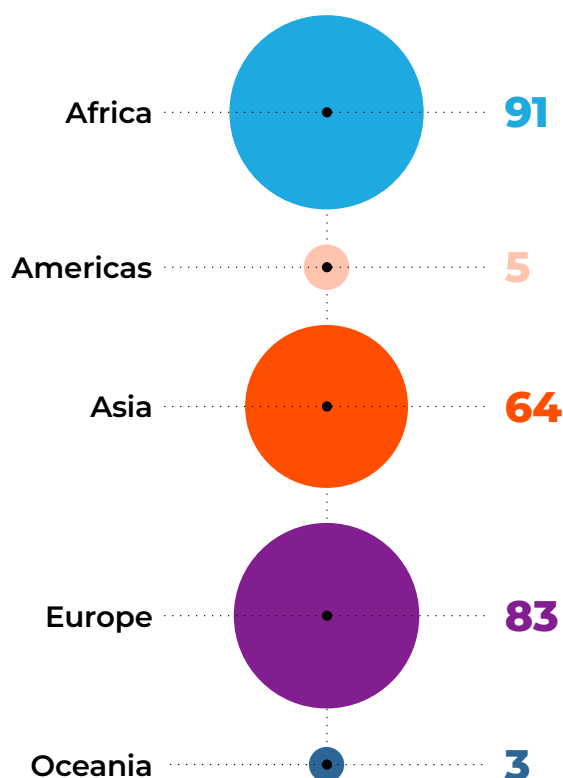
family members.<sup>90</sup> Mexico has comprehensive VAWG legislation, the General Law on Women's Right to a Life Free of Violence, and in 2012, included femicide/feminicide as a specific offence in the Penal Code. Mexico has a strong policy framework, with both a National Action Plan, the Emerging Action Plan to Guarantee the Integrity, Safety and Life of Women and Girls in Mexico (2019–2024)<sup>91</sup> and a national strategy, the Comprehensive Programme to Prevent, Address, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women 2021–2024. It has also established an advisory Technical Committee for Attention to Femicide. The National System for the Prevention, Attention, Sanction and Eradication of Violence against Women is a centralized coordinating institutional mechanism. Civil society organizations lead the National Citizen Observatory on Femicide, to monitor cases and government responses.<sup>92</sup> State-run specialized Women's Justice Centres offer multidisciplinary integrated assistance in VAWG cases.

However, recent research suggests that despite the importance of adopting specific laws, policies and related measures on femicide, they are not resulting in decreased femicide rates, and moreover, many cases are not properly categorized and investigated as femicides.<sup>93</sup> According to governmental data covering the period from 2015–2020, cases of femicide rose from 411 to 983 in Mexico, representing an increase of approximately 139 per cent.<sup>94</sup>

### Child, early and forced marriage

Child, early and forced marriage (CEFM) severely undermines the rights of women and girls and is a focus of Agenda 2030 SDG 5.3, working to eliminate harmful practices. Globally, 1 in 5 women (aged 20–24 years) were married before age 18, although rates are declining.<sup>95</sup> The highest rates of CEFM occur in Africa and in South Asia.<sup>96</sup>

#### Number of CEFM measures, by region



**Nearly half of States (46 per cent – 88 States), report adopting some measure on child, early and forced marriage.** However, less than half of States (41 per cent) have reported specific laws on CEFM (79 States). A minority of States (11 per cent – 22 States) have adopted specific policies on CEFM, in the form of dedicated National Action Plans, such as **Bangladesh's** National Action Plan to Prevent Child Marriage (2018–2030).<sup>97</sup> Only 15 per cent of States (29 in total) report prevention measures, including community awareness campaigns.

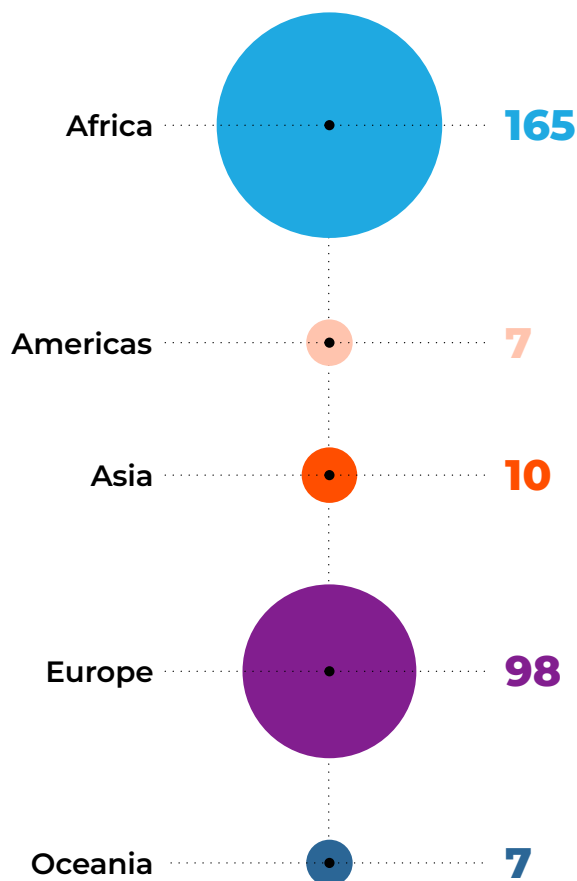
In terms of regional distribution, the highest uptake of CEFM measures is in Africa, representing nearly 40 per cent of all measures globally, which aligns with this being the region with the highest prevalence rates, followed by Europe (32 per cent) and Asia (27 per cent).

More than 80 per cent of measures adopted globally on CEF marriage occurred within the last 20 years, and nearly a third were adopted since 2015. In Africa in particular, there is a notable rise in new measures since 2015, when Agenda 2030 was adopted. In addition, in 2014 the African Union introduced a regional campaign to end child marriage.<sup>98</sup>

### Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Female genital mutilation is considered a harmful practice under Agenda 2030 SDG 5.3, which seeks to eliminate the practice. Over 230 million women and girls have undergone FGM, and rates are increasing. FGM rates are most prevalent in Africa, in particular North Africa.<sup>99</sup>

#### Number of FGM measures, by region





According to the database, **just over one third of States (35 per cent – 67 in total) have adopted measures referencing FGM.** The most common FGM measures are laws, adopted by 55 States (38 per cent), followed by prevention measures (11 per cent – by 22 States) and finally, policies, with only 9 per cent of States (18 in total) reporting specific action plans or strategies.

In line with regional prevalence rates, Africa is the region with the greatest focus on this issue, with more than half of all cited measures are adopted in the African region (57 per cent). A further one-third of measures are adopted in Europe (34 per cent).

**Burkina Faso** demonstrates a comprehensive State-level approach to FGM, having adopted a specific law criminalizing FGM, national prevention campaigns, school-based education programmes, training programmes, and a specialized helpline, as well as a National Strategic Plan to Promote the Elimination of FGM.<sup>100</sup> Subsequent research

has found that such measures have contributed to a decline in FGM rates in the country.<sup>101</sup>

In terms of trends over time, most of the measures focused on FGM were adopted since 2000 (83 per cent), with one-quarter adopted since Agenda 2030's adoption in 2015.

**The above findings indicate that there is growing recognition by some States – with strong regional trends - of the need to adopt a comprehensive range of measures to respond to serious forms of VAWG that have not typically been prioritized, especially femicide/feminicide, child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation.** Particularly following the focus on CEFM and FGM in Agenda 2030 and SDG 5, there is evident progress in State measures adopted to respond to these harms. However, gaps in types of measures adopted persist and ongoing attention to address these serious forms of violence is needed.



PHOTO: UN WOMEN/MAGFUZUR RAHMAN SHANA

## SECTION 6

# CONCLUSION

Analysis of the measures included in the UN Women Global Database on Violence against Women and Girls demonstrates that, 30 years after the adoption of the BPfA, there has been clear progress in efforts to prevent and respond to VAWG by States globally, especially with the adoption of laws, policies, services and prevention efforts. Indeed, as part of the current Beijing+30 review process, 88 per cent of States indicated that eliminating violence against women and girls was a top priority in the last five years.<sup>102</sup>

Most States have adopted a range of measures to respond to VAWG, of at least a medium or high level of comprehensiveness. The analysis in section 3 suggests that specific laws and policies on VAWG appear to serve as a catalyst or gateway to States adopting a high level of other types of measures, including prevention, research, services and budgets, to prevent and respond to VAWG. Moreover, **State adoption of a comprehensive range of different types of VAWG measures appears to be linked with lower rates of VAWG**. Conversely, States that have only adopted a low level of VAWG measures have average intimate partner violence prevalence rates that are 2.5 times higher than States that have adopted a high level of comprehensiveness in VAWG measures.

Yet, this analysis of global trends in national VAWG measures also shows gaps and uneven progress, such as a lack of comprehensive social services for VAWG survivors globally and inadequate budget allocations. A number of States still lack adequate VAWG-specific

laws and policies. There is also slow progress on adopting measures to address severe forms of VAWG, such as femicide/feminicide.

At the same time, a growing global backlash against women and girls' rights and gender equality is resulting in the rollback of important measures to prevent and respond to VAWG in some States. Further, the global epidemic of VAWG continues, without any notable decreases in prevalence rates. This suggests that even when measures are in place, they may vary widely in their scope and quality, and they are not necessarily consistently and adequately resourced, implemented or enforced, hampering effective responses to VAWG.

In light of these findings and dynamics, areas of suggested further research include more in-depth analysis of the scope, content, comprehensiveness and level of effective implementation of State VAWG measures at the national level, including in light of trends in VAWG prevalence rates over time (where such data are available). The Global Database provides an evolving rich repository for additional research and analysis, including to identify areas of progress and gaps in VAWG measures at country level to help shape priorities in preventing and responding to VAWG. Ultimately, the Global Database is a valuable tool to strengthen State accountability for meeting due diligence obligations to prevent and respond to VAWG, through recording, reporting and monitoring of the adoption of national VAWG measures in a centralized, easily accessible public platform.



## ANNEX 1

# AT A GLANCE: OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ON VAWG MEASURES<sup>103</sup>

| Measures                       | International standards   | Sources  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Laws</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enact legislation to punish and redress VAWG, emphasizing the prevention of violence and the prosecution of offenders</li> <li>Take measures to ensure the protection of women subjected to violence, access to justice and effective remedies, and rehabilitation of perpetrators</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DEVAW, art 4(d).</li> <li>BPfA Strategic objective D.1.(124)(c)-(d)</li> </ul>                                |
| <b>Policies</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formulate and implement plans of action to eliminate VAWG</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DEVAW, art 4(e)</li> <li>BPfA Strategic objective D.1.(124)(j)</li> </ul>                                     |
| <b>Services</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide the following services to women subjected to violence: shelters, medical, psychological and other counselling services, legal aid, assistance in child care and maintenance, and financial assistance</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DEVAW art 4(g)</li> <li>BPfA Strategic objective D.1.(125)(a)</li> </ul>                                      |
| <b>Institutional mechanism</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen institutional mechanisms so that women can report acts of violence against them in a safe environment</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BPfA Strategic objective D.1.(124)(l)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Prevention</b>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt preventive approaches to promote the protection of women against any form of violence</li> <li>Adopt all appropriate measures, especially in the field of education, to modify social and cultural patterns and stereotypes</li> <li>Provide training programmes for judicial, legal, medical, social, educational and police officials and immigration personnel on VAWG</li> <li>Organize, support and fund community-based education and training campaigns to raise awareness about VAWG, and educational and training programmes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DEVAW art 4(f), (i)</li> <li>BPfA Strategic objective D.1.(124)(k), (n)</li> <li>D.1.(125)(e), (g)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Research and data</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote research, collect data and compile statistics, especially concerning domestic violence, relating to the prevalence of different forms of VAWG</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DEVAW art 4(k)</li> <li>BPfA Strategic objective D.2.(129)(a)</li> </ul>                                      |
| <b>Budgets</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocate adequate resources within the government budget to VAWG</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DEVAW art 4(h)</li> <li>BPfA Strategic objective D.1.(124)(p)</li> </ul>                                      |
| <b>Perpetrator programmes</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide, fund and encourage counselling and rehabilitation programmes for the perpetrators of violence</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BPfA Strategic objective D.1.(125)(i)</li> </ul>  |

## ANNEX 2

# LIST OF 193 UN MEMBER STATES REFERENCED IN THE GLOBAL DATABASE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

| Africa<br>(54 States)            | Americas<br>(35 States)          | Asia<br>(47 States)                   | Europe<br>(43 States)  | Oceania<br>(14 States)           |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Algeria                          | Antigua and Barbuda              | Afghanistan                           | Albania                | Australia                        |
| Angola                           | Argentina                        | Armenia                               | Andorra                | Fiji                             |
| Benin                            | Bahamas                          | Azerbaijan                            | Austria                | Kiribati                         |
| Botswana                         | Barbados                         | Bahrain                               | Belarus                | Marshall Islands                 |
| Burkina Faso                     | Belize                           | Bangladesh                            | Belgium                | Micronesia (Federated States of) |
| Burundi                          | Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | Bhutan                                | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Nauru                            |
| Cabo Verde                       | Brazil                           | Brunei Darussalam                     | Bulgaria               | New Zealand                      |
| Cameroon                         | Canada                           | Cambodia                              | Croatia                | Palau                            |
| Central African Republic         | Chile                            | China                                 | Czechia                | Papua New Guinea                 |
| Chad                             | Colombia                         | Cyprus                                | Denmark                | Samoa                            |
| Comoros                          | Costa Rica                       | Democratic People's Republic of Korea | Estonia                | Solomon Islands                  |
| Congo                            | Cuba                             | Georgia                               | Finland                | Tonga                            |
| Côte d'Ivoire                    | Dominica                         | India                                 | France                 | Tuvalu                           |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo | Dominican Republic               | Indonesia                             | Germany                | Vanuatu                          |
| Djibouti                         | Ecuador                          | Iran (Islamic Republic of)            | Greece                 |                                  |
| Egypt                            | El Salvador                      | Iraq                                  | Hungary                |                                  |
| Equatorial Guinea                | Grenada                          | Israel                                | Iceland                |                                  |
| Eritrea                          | Guatemala                        | Japan                                 | Ireland                |                                  |
| Eswatini                         | Guyana                           | Jordan                                | Italy                  |                                  |
| Ethiopia                         | Haiti                            | Kazakhstan                            | Latvia                 |                                  |
| Gabon                            | Honduras                         | Kuwait                                | Liechtenstein          |                                  |
| Gambia                           | Jamaica                          | Kyrgyzstan                            | Lithuania              |                                  |
| Ghana                            | Mexico                           | Lao People's Democratic Republic      | Luxembourg             |                                  |
| Guinea                           | Nicaragua                        | Lebanon                               | Malta                  |                                  |
| Guinea-Bissau                    | Panama                           | Malaysia                              | Monaco                 |                                  |
| Kenya                            | Paraguay                         | Maldives                              | Montenegro             |                                  |

| Africa<br>(54 States)       | Americas<br>(35 States)            | Asia<br>(47 States)  | Europe<br>(43 States)                                | Oceania<br>(14 States) |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|--|------------------------|
| Lesotho                     | Peru                               | Mongolia             | Netherlands  |                        |
| Liberia                     | Saint Kitts and Nevis              | Myanmar              | North Macedonia                                      |                        |
| Libya                       | Saint Lucia                        | Nepal                | Norway   |                        |
| Madagascar                  | Saint Vincent and the Grenadines   | Oman                 | Poland   |                        |
| Malawi                      | Suriname                           | Pakistan             | Portugal   |                        |
| Mali                        | Trinidad and Tobago                | Philippines          | Republic of Moldova                                  |                        |
| Mauritania                  | United States of America           | Qatar                | Romania  |                        |
| Mauritius                   | Uruguay                            | Republic of Korea    | Russian Federation                                   |                        |
| Morocco                     | Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) | Saudi Arabia         | San Marino   |                        |
| Mozambique                  |                                    | Singapore            | Serbia   |                        |
| Namibia                     |                                    | Sri Lanka            | Slovakia   |                        |
| Niger                       |                                    | Syrian Arab Republic | Slovenia   |                        |
| Nigeria                     |                                    | Tajikistan           | Spain  |                        |
| Rwanda                      |                                    | Thailand             | Sweden   |                        |
| Sao Tome and Principe       |                                    | Timor-Leste          | Switzerland  |                        |
| Senegal                     |                                    | Türkiye              | Ukraine  |                        |
| Seychelles                  |                                    | Turkmenistan         | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland |                        |
| Sierra Leone                |                                    | United Arab Emirates |  |                        |
| Somalia                     |                                    | Uzbekistan           |  |                        |
| South Africa                |                                    | Viet Nam             |  |                        |
| South Sudan                 |                                    | Yemen                |  |                        |
| Sudan                       |                                    |                      |  |                        |
| Togo                        |                                    |                      |  |                        |
| Tunisia                     |                                    |                      |  |                        |
| Uganda                      |                                    |                      |  |                        |
| United Republic of Tanzania |                                    |                      |  |                        |
| Zambia                      |                                    |                      |  |                        |
| Zimbabwe                    |                                    |                      |  |                        |

## ANNEX 3

# CHART OF CATEGORIES OF MEASURES AND SUBCATEGORIES CONTAINED IN THE DATABASE

| Category of measure           | Subcategory 1   | Subcategory 2  |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Budget                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External funds</li> <li>Allocation</li> </ul>  |  |
| Institutional mechanisms      |   |  |
| Laws                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other relevant laws</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment labour law</li> <li>Family law</li> </ul>                                  |
|                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Violence against women and girls</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constitutional provision</li> <li>Legislation</li> <li>Regulations</li> </ul>         |
| Monitoring and evaluation     |   |  |
| Perpetrator programmes        |   |  |
| Policies                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion of violence against women and girls in other national plan or strategy</li> <li>National action plan specific to violence against women and girls</li> <li>National strategy specific to violence against women and girls</li> </ul> |  |
|                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness-raising campaigns</li> <li>Community mobilization</li> </ul>   |  |
| Prevention                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal education</li> <li>Non-formal education</li> </ul>                             |
|                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with the public and private sectors</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faith-based organizations</li> <li>Media</li> <li>Military</li> <li>Sports</li> </ul> |
|                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with men and boys</li> </ul>   |  |
| Regional initiatives          |   |  |
| Research and statistical data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrative data</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health</li> <li>Justice</li> <li>Police</li> <li>Social services</li> </ul>           |
|                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dedicated violence against women survey</li> </ul>   |  |
|                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other research and statistical data</li> </ul>   |  |

| Category of measure           | Subcategory 1                                    | Subcategory 2   |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Research and statistical data | • Violence against children survey               |   |
|                               | • VAWG module in survey                          |   |
| Services                      | • Coordinated and or integrated service delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated service delivery</li> <li>• One stop centres</li> <li>• Referral services</li> </ul>                                      |
|                               | • Health   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocols and guidelines</li> <li>• Training</li> </ul>  |
|                               | • Justice  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocols and guidelines</li> <li>• Training</li> </ul>  |
|                               | • Police   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocols and guidelines</li> <li>• Training</li> </ul>  |
|                               | • Mapping of all services                        |   |
|                               | • Social services                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hotline/helpline</li> <li>• Longer term support</li> <li>• Psychosocial counselling</li> <li>• Shelter safe accommodation</li> </ul> |

# END NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> UN Women. Global database on violence against women and girls. <https://data.unwomen.org/global-database-on-violence-against-women>  
Analysis is based on data available in the Database as of October 2024.
- <sup>2</sup> The term 'measures' is understood in a comprehensive way and includes the following categories: laws; policies; institutional mechanisms; research and statistical data; services; prevention; budgets; perpetrators programmes; regional initiatives; and monitoring and evaluation.
- <sup>3</sup> The analysis draws on seven categories of key measures with 10 indicators, to assess whether States have adopted at least one measure across each category and indicator, falling into three levels: high range of measures adopted (8–10 indicators met); medium range of measures adopted (5–7 indicators met); low range of measures adopted (0–4 indicators met).
- <sup>4</sup> The term 'legislation' here refers to statutory national laws that have been formally enacted by a State government, and does not include regulations (a separate sub-category in the database) or non-statutory law.
- <sup>5</sup> UN Women 'Women's rights in review 30 years after Beijing' (2025): <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/womens-rights-in-review-30-years-after-beijing-en.pdf>, stating that "almost one quarter of countries reported that backlash on gender equality is hampering implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action."
- <sup>6</sup> This refers to women of all ages, including girls. Violence against women and girls is defined as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."  
—UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women (1993).
- <sup>7</sup> World Health Organization. 2021. **Violence against Women prevalence estimates, 2018**.
- <sup>8</sup> UNODC and UN Women. 2024. **Femicides in 2023: Global estimates of intimate partner/family member femicides**.
- <sup>9</sup> UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee). 2017. General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19. CEDAW/C/GC/35.
- <sup>10</sup> UN General Assembly. 1993. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women: Resolution 48/104' (DEVAWG) A/RES/48/104; United Nations. 1995. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women. A/CONF.177/20; UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women (CEDAW Committee). 1992. General Recommendation No. 19: Violence against women. A/47/38; CEDAW Committee. 2017. General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19 CEDAW/C/GC/35; UN General Assembly. 2015. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A/RES/70/1.
- <sup>11</sup> Please see Annex 1 for an overview of the key international standards discussed here and their sources.
- <sup>12</sup> See UN Women. Undated. **"Research and data: Ending violence against women and girls."**
- <sup>13</sup> See UN Women. Undated. **Global Database on Violence against Women and Girls**, for further details.
- <sup>14</sup> As of October 2024.
- <sup>15</sup> Sources include: responses to UN questionnaires (including as part of the preparations of the UN Secretary-General's reports on VAWG); follow-up reports on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; periodic reports of human rights bodies, such as the CEDAW Committee and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR); and other official reports of relevant UN entities.
- <sup>16</sup> Please see Annex 3 for a chart outlining the 10 categories of measures and their subcategories, as contained in the Database.
- <sup>17</sup> As noted above, the database adopts a number of categories of measures (entitled Laws, policies, institutional mechanisms, prevention, research and data, services, monitoring and evaluation, perpetrators programmes, etc.), which are then subdivided into subcategories (e.g. Laws > Legislation, VAWG, or Laws > Constitutional Provisions), enabling more targeted search functions.
- Please see Annex 3 for the list of all categories of measures and subcategories included in the database.
- <sup>18</sup> The database categorizes the 193 UN Member States across the following five regions: Africa (54 States), Americas (35 States), Asia (47 States), Europe (43 States) and Oceania (14 States). Please see Annex 2 for a full list of the 193 Member States referenced in the Global Database.
- <sup>19</sup> The data entries within the database are updated on an ongoing basis, however this analysis is based on data as of October 2024, which does not contain immediately up-to-date data entries for all States. The most recent comprehensive update of the database was conducted based on States' Beijing+25 reports (submitted in 2020). More recent State reporting captured in State reports to the UN Secretary-General on VAWG and Beijing+30 reports were ongoing at the time of the research project and were not yet fully available in the database for analysis.
- <sup>20</sup> See UN Women. 2012. **Handbook on violence against women legislation** for a detailed guide and model framework for the necessary components of VAWG legislation. For example, VAWG legislation should ensure broad criminalization of all forms of VAWG, effective prosecution and punishment of perpetrators, as well as prevention of violence and support and protection of victims/survivors.
- <sup>21</sup> In addition, 179 States report constitutional provisions relevant to VAWG. The term 'legislation' used in the database refers to statutorily enacted laws formally adopted by State governments, and 'regulations' are also included as a subcategory.
- <sup>22</sup> This figure reflects specific legislation that is focused on 'violence against women and girls' broadly, and 'domestic violence/intimate partner violence' specifically, and includes both stand-alone legislation and criminal/penal code amendments.
- <sup>23</sup> Note that these figures were initially sourced from the database and triangulated with additional sources, in particular the World Bank's **Women, Business and the Law, Women's Safety data** in November 2024, to ensure up-to-date references to State legislative measures on VAWG.
- <sup>24</sup> In addition, some States (15–30 per cent in total) have adopted more broadly focused stand-alone legislation on violence against women and girls generally, typically including reference to domestic violence/IPV, among other forms of VAWG.
- <sup>25</sup> See UN Women. 2012. **Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence against Women**.
- <sup>26</sup> This figure refers to both specific action plans or strategies on VAWG, and other national plans or strategies (for example, on gender equality or women's empowerment) where references to VAWG are included.
- <sup>27</sup> The specific NAPs/strategies adopted by 119 States address VAWG broadly, while 78 States report adopting NAPs/strategies specifically on trafficking and 71 States report NAPs/strategies focused specifically on DV/IPV. However, due to the database's tagging of multiple forms of violence for many measures, there may be some overlap in terms of a single State NAP/Strategy being included in multiple categories (e.g. both 'violence against women and girls' and 'domestic violence/intimate partner violence').
- <sup>28</sup> There is a large amount of overlap in the database with the 'forms of violence' used to classify a specific measure – some measures have broad application, covering different forms of violence and some are categorized with four or more forms of violence. For example, India's entry for the Penal Code, 1986, is tagged with the following seven forms of violence: "other harmful practices; Child early and forced marriage; Sexual harassment; Sexual violence; Stalking; Trafficking; Violence against women and girls". For this analysis, all measures that were tagged with the term 'domestic violence', 'sexual violence' or 'trafficking' respectively are included. This analysis should be interpreted with caution, and taken as indicative and not exact, given the large amount of overlap in measures categorized in the database, as well as the large number of measures categorized broadly as 'violence against women and girls', which likely capture some or all of the various forms of violence delineated here, but which is also often used as a categorization alongside more specific forms of violence.

- <sup>29</sup> World Health Organization. 2021. **"Fact sheet: Violence against Women"**.
- <sup>30</sup> See Human Rights Commission. 1996. Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Ms. Radhika Coomaraswamy, submitted in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1995/85: A framework for model legislation on domestic violence. E/CN.4/1996/53/Add.2.
- <sup>31</sup> See Government of Ghana. 2022. **"One-Stop Centre on Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit Commissioned"**.
- <sup>32</sup> See Government of Iceland. 2019. **Iceland's report on Beijing +25**.
- <sup>33</sup> Ministry of Women's Affairs, Royal Government of Cambodia. 2024. **Report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on Trafficking in Women and Girls**.
- <sup>34</sup> European Commission, Safe and Fair: Realising women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region, [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/programming/projects/safe-and-fair-realising-women-migrant-workers-rights-and-opportunities-asean-region\\_en](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/programming/projects/safe-and-fair-realising-women-migrant-workers-rights-and-opportunities-asean-region_en)
- <sup>35</sup> The figures presented in this section include data up to 2018, reflecting the fact that updating of the database is currently in progress, and does not contain complete data entries beyond this year.
- <sup>36</sup> UN General Assembly. 2000. Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.
- <sup>37</sup> In addition, data entry at the inception of the database appears to have assigned '2008' as the date of adoption of an undated measure referenced in a State questionnaire, regardless of the year in which it was introduced, meaning that some of the measures documented as adopted in 2008 actually predated this time.
- <sup>38</sup> United Nations. 2006. **General Assembly Resolution 61/143. Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women**.
- <sup>39</sup> United Nations. 2006. **In-depth study on all forms of violence against women. Report of the Secretary-General**.
- <sup>40</sup> See, for example, Roggeband, C. and A. Kiszsan. 2020. **Democratic backsliding and the backlash against women's rights:**
- Understanding the current challenges for feminist politics;** UN Women. 2025. **"Women's rights in review 30 years after Beijing. Women's rights in review 30 years after Beijing,"** stating that "almost one quarter of countries reported that backlash on gender equality is hampering implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action."
- <sup>41</sup> Guterres, A. 2025. "UN Secretary-General António **Statement on International Women's Day 2025**".
- <sup>42</sup> The database does not currently indicate when or if certain measures (for example, legislation and policies) have been repealed or are no longer in force, and therefore does not readily track whether backsliding on State VAWG measures is taking place. However, there is ample evidence of global trends towards backsliding on gender equality and protection of women's rights: see, for example: UN General Assembly (Third Committee). 2023. **"As Rights of Women and Girls Plunge to Lower Than Previous Depths, Third Committee Urges Nations to Tackle Violence, Address Poverty, Bolster Rural Development"**.
- <sup>43</sup> See UN Women. 2024. **Gender Country Profile Afghanistan**.
- <sup>44</sup> See Reuters. 2021. **"Taliban replaces women's ministry with ministry of virtue and vice."**
- <sup>45</sup> This analysis captures all measures reported as having been adopted by States for all forms of violence across all timeframes (except with reference to legislation and policies). However, it must be noted that the scope, content, quality and implementation status of each measure may vary widely; it is also possible that a measure contained in the database (e.g. an awareness campaign) was time-bound and is no longer in effect. In addition, as the database is updated on an ongoing basis, some more recent State measures may not be captured.
- <sup>46</sup> See the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**. 1995, as well as the other sources of international standards on VAWG referenced earlier. And for implementation guidance, notably UN Women. 2012. **Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women;** UN Women. 2012. **Supplement to the Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women: "Harmful Practices" against women;** UN Women. 2012. **Handbook for National Action Plans on Violence against Women;** The Equality Institute and UN Women. 2023. **Together for Prevention: Handbook on Multisectoral National Action Plans to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls.**
- <sup>47</sup> Of all States reporting in the database, 11 per cent have reported adopting a measure across every indicator assessed: 21 States (10.9 per cent) have reported adopting at least one measure across all 10 indicators; 30 States (16.5 per cent) have reported adopting measures across 9 out of 10 indicators, and 33 States (17.1 per cent) have reported adopting measures across 8 out of 10 indicators.
- <sup>48</sup> Two States that would otherwise fall within this range of 8–10 indicators met were removed due to the lack of a specific law on VAWG, a core requirement (and reassigned to the 'medium' category).
- <sup>49</sup> The database includes all legislation and national actions plans and strategies for all forms of violence, including 'violence against women and girls', 'domestic violence/intimate partner violence', 'trafficking', 'female genital mutilation' etc. Because this analysis focuses on legislative and policy measures with broader scope, to encompass a range of forms of VAWG, only legislation and national actions plans/strategies that focus on 'violence against women and girls' and 'domestic violence/intimate partner violence' are included here. In addition, to triangulate the database findings, additional research from other sources was conducted to ensure accuracy and timeliness of VAWG legislation and policy measures adopted by States in recent years (including some that have not yet been updated in the database).
- <sup>50</sup> While the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa ('Maputo Protocol') contains important, comprehensive provisions specifically addressing EVAWG, the present analysis considered that its scope cannot be compared to specific EVAWG regional conventions. The implementation of the African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AUCEVAWG) adopted in February 2025 at national level will be monitored by the Global Database on VAWG in the coming years following its ratification.
- <sup>51</sup> See World Health Organization. Undated. **"Global Database on the Prevalence of Violence Against Women,"** where country-level prevalence estimates of IPV rates are available for 153 States for the time period 2000–2018 and are included in this analysis. Thus 40 States, for which there are no available prevalence estimates, are omitted from this analysis. As such, the following breakdown of sample sizes for each category results: 74 of 84 States in the 'high' category, 67 of 84 States in the 'medium' category, and 12 of 25 States in the 'low' category. Acknowledging that the sample size for the 'low' category is small (only 12 States), additional analysis was conducted that confirmed statistical evidence of a true difference.
- <sup>52</sup> The reported WHO global averages based on the 2000–2018 prevalence estimates are: 10 per cent of ever-married/partnered women aged 15 years and older, and 13 per cent of for ever-married/partnered women aged 15–49 years. See WHO. 2018. **Global Fact Sheet: Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates**.
- <sup>53</sup> See World Bank. 2025. "World Bank Country and Lending Groups: Country Classification." Applying this classification to the States included in the Global Database on Violence against Women and Girls, there are: 63 high-income States, 54 upper-middle-income States, 50 lower-middle-income States, and 26 low-income States.
- <sup>54</sup> World Health Organization. 2021. **Violence against women prevalence estimates**, 2018. p. 70.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>56</sup> This section is based on the following sources: CEDAW Committee. 2023. Concluding observations on the ninth periodic report of Spain. CEDAW/C/ESP/CO/9; Government of Spain. 2019. **Spain's submission for National Review for Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, Beijing+25;** Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). 2020. Baseline Evaluation Report Spain; and GREVIO. 2024. Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice: Spain First thematic evaluation report.
- <sup>57</sup> Spain National Statistics Institute. 2023. **Statistics on Domestic Violence and Gender Violence (SDVGV) Year 2023.** As this figure represents reported cases (as opposed to prevalence rates, it is possible the rise in reported cases also correlates with a higher public awareness of and access to mechanisms to report VAWG and seek assistance from authorities.
- <sup>58</sup> Jamaica Ministry of Justice. 2004. **The Domestic Violence Act**.
- <sup>59</sup> Permanent Mission of Jamaica to the UN. 2017. **"Ten year action plan to eliminate gender-based violence launched"**.
- <sup>60</sup> OAS. 2005. **"Jamaica ratifies hemispheric treaty to eradicate violence against women."**



- <sup>61</sup> See UN Women. ["Jamaica," Global Database on Violence against Women and Girls.](#)
- <sup>62</sup> Spotlight Initiative. 2023. [Jamaica Annual Narrative Report 2022.](#)
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>64</sup> UNFPA. 2022. ["Police providing better services for GBV survivors in Jamaica - A survivor-centered approach."](#)
- <sup>65</sup> UN Women. 2023. ["UN Women's prevention project helps make women and girls in Bangladesh safer from violence."](#)
- <sup>66</sup> Government of Bangladesh. 2019. [Comprehensive National Review Report, for Beijing + 25 Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995](#)
- <sup>67</sup> Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. 2018. [National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and Children 2018-2030.](#)
- <sup>68</sup> Netherlands Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport and the Ministry of Justice. 2019. ["Brochure: 'Violence does not have a place in the home'."](#)
- <sup>69</sup> Government of Kiribati. 2019. [Kiribati's submission for National Review for Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, Beijing+25.](#)
- <sup>70</sup> UN Women. 2018. ["UN Women supports raising students' awareness on domestic violence."](#)
- <sup>71</sup> See UN Women. 2022. ["Asia-Pacific Awareness-raising."](#)
- <sup>72</sup> See UN Women. 2015. [A Framework to Underpin Action to Prevent Violence against Women.](#)
- <sup>73</sup> Thuis, Veilug. [Family Justice Center and Chain Approach to Intrafamily Violence.](#)
- <sup>74</sup> Government of Belgium. Undated. [About the Sexual Assault Centres.](#)
- <sup>75</sup> Government of France. Undated. [Les Violences Sexistes et Sexuelles sont Interdites et Punies par la loi.](#)
- <sup>76</sup> Du côté des Femmes. Undated. [Lieu d'écoute d'accueil et d'orientation.](#)
- <sup>77</sup> Government of France. 2023. ["Emergency universal support is being established for victims of domestic violence."](#)
- <sup>78</sup> The Pacific Community, [Tonga Family Protection Legal Aid Centre opens on 12 March 2018.](#) 8 March 2018.
- <sup>79</sup> As there are no currently publicly searchable sector-specific services categories in the database, this subsection is instead based on keyword searches of services measures tagged with 'police', 'justice' or 'health'.
- <sup>80</sup> Republic of Singapore. 2024. [Singapore's submission for the Report of the Secretary-General under A/RES/75/161 and A/RES/77/193.](#)
- <sup>81</sup> Australian Institute of Judicial Administration. 2024. [National Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book.](#)
- <sup>82</sup> See Government of Grenada. 2019. Grenada's submission for National Review for Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, Beijing+25.
- <sup>83</sup> See Government of the Dominican Republic. 2019. Dominican Republic's submission for National Review for Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, Beijing+25.
- <sup>84</sup> Government of Swaziland. 2014. National Review on Beijing+20.
- <sup>85</sup> See Government of Ontario. Undated. ["Integrated Domestic Violence Court."](#) Ontario Courts.
- <sup>86</sup> UN Women intends to release a detailed report on technology-facilitated violence with up-to-date findings in 2025.
- <sup>87</sup> UNODC and UN Women. 2024. [Femicides in 2023: Global estimates of intimate partner/family member femicides.](#)
- <sup>88</sup> See Government of Chile, Ministry of Women and Gender Equality. 2023. ["Circuito Intersectorial de Femicidios difunde su trabajo ante casos de violencia extrema en Magallanes."](#)
- <sup>89</sup> See Government of Peru, Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations. 2018. [Protocolo Interinstitucional.](#)
- <sup>90</sup> OHCHR (UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights). 2023. ["We're here to tell it: Mexican women break silence over femicides."](#)
- <sup>91</sup> Government of Mexico. 2019. [Plan of Emerging Actions to Guarantee the Integrity, Safety and Life of Women and Girls in Mexico.](#)
- <sup>92</sup> National Citizen Observatory on Femicide, Mexico: [https://www.observatoriofemicidiomexico.org.](https://www.observatoriofemicidiomexico.org)
- <sup>93</sup> See study by Roxana Gutiérrez-Romero. 2023. ["Femicide laws are failing,"](#) Queen Mary, University of London.
- <sup>94</sup> Data quoted are provided by the Secretary General of National Public Security (Secretariado Ejecutivo del Sistema Nacional de Seguridad Pública, SESNSP). See [https://justiceinmexico.org/legal-context-femicide-mexico.](https://justiceinmexico.org/legal-context-femicide-mexico)
- <sup>95</sup> UN Women and UNDESA. 2024. [Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023.](#)
- <sup>96</sup> UNICEF. 2018. [Child Marriage: Latest trends and future prospects.](#)
- <sup>97</sup> UNICEF. 2018. ["Plan of Action launched to eliminate child marriage in Bangladesh."](#)
- <sup>98</sup> African Union. Undated. [Campaign to end child marriage.](#)
- <sup>99</sup> 2023 prevalence rates report FGM at 21.7 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa and 73.6 per cent in Northern Africa. UN Women and UNDESA. 2024. [Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023.](#)
- <sup>100</sup> See Burkina Faso measures in the Global Database: [https://data.unwomen.org/global-database-on-violence-against-women/country-profile/Burkina%20Faso/measures.](https://data.unwomen.org/global-database-on-violence-against-women/country-profile/Burkina%20Faso/measures)
- <sup>101</sup> UNICEF. 2023. [Female Genital Mutilation: Profile Burkina Faso.](#)
- <sup>102</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Council. 2025. [Review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. Report of the Secretary General.](#)
- <sup>103</sup> This chart presents a condensed summary, please see the original documents for the full text: UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women and girls (adopted 20 December 1993 UNGA Res 48/104 (DEVAWG): Fourth World Conference on Women 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action' (1995) UN Doc A/CONF/177/20



# UN WOMEN EXISTS TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS.

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