



TEIMUN 2021

# UNWOMEN COUNCIL

**TOPIC A:** THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON GENDER EQUALITY AND THE  
RISE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

## Welcome Letter

Distinguished Delegates,

Welcome to the UN Women Committee at TEIMUN 2021. We are delighted to announce that, during this year's conference, the topics to address will be about the impact of Covid-19 on gender equality, the rise of domestic violence and health discrimination against women.

The UN Women Committee came into existence in 2010 and is the body of the UN which addresses gender equality and promotes the empowerment of women. Worldwide, women and girls face lack of decent employment, gender gaps, under-representation in decision-making, discrimination, violence, and are denied access to education and healthcare. UN Women is the entity which addresses and recognizes these challenges for women and its creation meant an acceleration in the process of the already existing UN goals regarding gender equality and women empowerment. Before its establishment, funding and recognition for women empowerment projects has been scarce, however this entity provides women and girls with a powerful voice at multiple levels, from local to global. Finally, UN Women also works together with UN Member States, making sure governments implement laws, provide services and set up programmes to help women and girls globally.<sup>1</sup>

Your days at TEIMUN 2021 will consist of long discussions and negotiations, aimed at reaching an agreement with the other Member States, and passing a resolution which offers concrete proposals regarding the actions your delegation believes should be taken. You will find that reaching a compromise is often not easy, since all countries' interests differ and each hopes to promote their individual goals. As a consequence, in order for you to be a successful delegate, you must put yourself in the position of the other States, without losing sight of your own objectives. TEIMUN 2021 offers you the perfect opportunity to broaden your knowledge on this topic, to understand its complexity and to propose and address multiple possible solutions. To be prepared, we recommend that you read this background paper carefully, as it contains important information on the topic. In addition, we strongly encourage you to rigorously research your country's position on this issue before the start of the conference. Finally, it is important that you read the Rules of Procedure with great care, so we can have a fruitful and productive debate.

---

<sup>1</sup> "About UN Women". UN Women, 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women>.

We hope that you are as excited about TEIMUN 2021 as we are. We are very much looking forward to meeting you all; we are certain that it will be a great experience for everyone!

Sincerely,  
Keisha, Lara & Sophie

## **Introduction**

The United Nations Women Committee (UNW) was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010, which aims to achieve freedom of violence against women and girls, having gender equality in the distribution of capabilities and decision-making power. The UN Women is dedicated to gender equality and establishment for the empowerment of women by designing and recommending laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly beneficial to women and girls worldwide. Its central priorities are to support inter-governmental bodies dedicated to women's rights, offer technical and financial support to nations working towards gender equity, and expand the accountability of the UN's larger efforts towards gender equality.

With these mandates in mind, this background paper will discuss the topic of the rise of domestic violence in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on gender equality. You will be exploring the employability prospects and job security of women; domestic violence and its relation to security and economic circumstances; alongside protection of women and girls in vulnerable conditions.

These focuses on violence and discrimination against women is a cause and effect of gender inequality, which has been exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, it will be the task of the delegates to come up with creative and effective solutions in light of our theme 'Cooperation in Times of Crisis', while keeping in mind that global issues can only be resolved efficiently when tackled together.

## Problem Specification

Over the last century, the world has come a long way in terms of gender equality in the political, social and economic spheres. In modern history, the first-wave feminist movement began at the end of the 19th century and was primarily dedicated to achieving political equality for women through granting them the right to vote.<sup>2</sup> Although this involved a great struggle, forcing women to march and protest for over 70 years, all the while risking arrest, ridicule and violence, most countries introduced women's suffrage at some point during the first half of the 20th century.<sup>3</sup> After World War II, in which women in the West were finally given the chance to prove that they are valuable assets to society and the economy, the feminist movement received international recognition and steps were taken towards a global effort for gender equality. As such, in 1944, the value of gender equality became enshrined in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, which committed to 'promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.'<sup>4</sup> Following in these steps, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights made gender equality a fundamental human right.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, during the years following WW2, and as a result of a reinvigorated second-wave feminism movement between the 1960s and 1980s, women in Western countries gained the right to open a bank account without the permission of their husbands, enrol in higher-level education, use contraception and request an abortion, while several legislative projects were undertaken to tackle the issue of discrimination in the workplace and prohibit marital rape.<sup>6</sup> In 1979, the international community once again came together to pass the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with the aim to end the discrimination that women continue to face, despite various actions taken in the past.<sup>7</sup>

The efforts made to end the disparity between men and women during the end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century has achieved exceptional results. There

---

<sup>2</sup> Constance Grady, (2018) 'The Waves of Feminism, and Why People Keep Fighting Over Them, Explained,' Vox, <https://www.vox.com/2018/3/20/16955588/feminism-waves-explained-first-second-third-fourth>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, (1945, October 24) United Nations Charter, art. 1, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, (1948, December 10) Universal Declaration of Human Rights, preamble, <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

<sup>6</sup> Constance Grady, (2018) 'The Waves of Feminism, and Why People Keep Fighting Over Them, Explained,' Vox, <https://www.vox.com/2018/3/20/16955588/feminism-waves-explained-first-second-third-fourth>.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations, (1979, December 18), UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, preamble <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>.



are more women occupying leadership positions in politics and business than ever. Women hold jobs and are no longer required to stay at home and look after children. Women are politicians, CEOs, professors, judges at the highest levels and are overall encouraged to cultivate their creative and intellectual faculties. Nevertheless, discrimination on the basis of gender and sex continues to be pervasive in all sectors of society, often going unperceived and manifesting in a variety of detrimental consequences for women, ranging from micro-aggression, to the glass-ceiling effect, and even to violence. This is especially true in low and lower-middle income countries where focus on gender equality has not been as strong. As such, true gender equality is something that the world is not projected to achieve for a long time. In fact, if we continue at the rate of the year 2021, overall gender equality will not be achieved for another 133 years; this includes another 13 years in education, 146 years in politics, and 257 years in the economy sector.<sup>8</sup>

This is where the topic for this year's edition of the TEIMUN UN Women Council comes in. Over the last year, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, progress towards gender equality has stalled. In its 2021 Global Gender Gap Report, the World Economic Forum (WEF) has concluded that the pandemic has had a reversal effect on crucial aspects of the fight for gender equality that has been positively progressing over the last few decades.<sup>9</sup> This stems from the fact that the pandemic has had a more detrimental effect on women than on men. For example, thus far, 5% of all employed women have had their jobs terminated, compared to 3.9% of all employed men.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, fewer women are being hired for crucial leadership positions, which sets back recent progress by at least one or two years so far.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, A United Nations 2020 study has found that as schools closed and jobs went online in March last year, women have been confronted with the extra brunt of childcare and unpaid domestic work, while parents have been receiving more help from their daughters than sons around the house. This greatly worries UN Women, which has warned that there is 'a real danger that the pandemic will erase the important but fragile progress that women have made over the past decades'.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> "WEF: Coronavirus Has Reversed Progress on Gender Equality," (2021) DW, <https://www.dw.com/en/wef-coronavirus-has-reversed-progress-on-gender-equality/a-57048120#:~:text=The%20pandemic%20has%20reversed%20global,Gender%20Gap%20report%20released%20Wednesday.&text=Continuing%20at%20this%20rate%2C%20it,parity%20between%20men%20and%20women>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Vicky McKeever, "With More CHildcare and Domestic Work, the Pandemic Poses a 'Real Danger' to Women's Progress, UN Finds," (2020), CNBC, <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/11/26/un-covid-19-pandemic-poses-real-danger-to-womens-progress.html>.

It is these issues, associated with the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic that we will consider this year. We will focus on three topics: (1) overall gender equality and the equality of women in the workplace, (2) increased domestic violence and violence against women, and (3) the position of particularly vulnerable women.

## **Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMAs)**

We hope that the QARMA sections for the TEIMUN 2021 debate of the UN Women Council provide you with interesting new facts and helpful insights. Please note that the following questions are issues which the resolution must address in order to be considered for discussion. As such, you must investigate where your respective countries stand on these subject matters. However, if you would like to address additional concerns in your resolution, that is, of course, permitted.

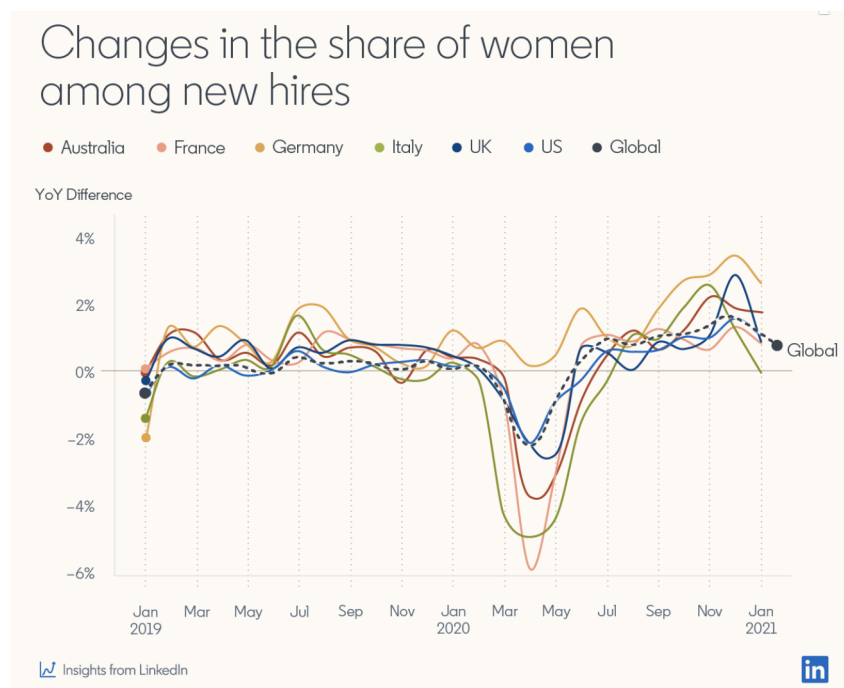
- a. What measures can be taken in response to rising gender inequality and the reversal of recent achievements in this field, in order to prevent the exploitation of women's unpaid care work, and ensure women's financial independence and job security?
- b. What measures can be taken in response to the rising domestic violence against women and girls and ensure the adequate provision of social financial, psychological and health resources by the state?
- c. What measures can be taken to tackle the increased unsafe conditions of women and girls in particularly vulnerable positions, such as, but not limited to, refugees, migrants, sex workers, disabled and indigenous women, to ensure their safety, as well as fiscal and social support in the short- and long-term?

## **Explanatory Section Per QARMA**

**QARMA 1: What measures can be taken in response to rising gender inequality and the reversal of recent achievements in this field, in order to prevent the exploitation of women's unpaid care work, and ensure women's financial independence and job security?**

## History / Background of the Problem

The Coronavirus pandemic and its significant impact on financial security has affected many nations; however, most notably, women and their families. As the year 2020 closed out, the American employment numbers have revealed that nonfarm payroll job losses for the month were entirely borne by women.<sup>13</sup> Over the course of the first 10 months of the pandemic, women, especially women of colour, have lost more jobs than men. Industries dominated by women were hit the hardest with a net loss of 5.4 million jobs during the recession, nearly 1 million more job losses than men. This push of job losses, combined with an increase of responsibility for caregiving at home, has further jeopardised families' fragile economic security, which can create lasting harm for women's careers. Women's lack of income also increases their dependency on their spouses, creating or elevating an uneven power dynamic in the household; where spouses may use financial tensions as excuses for abusive behaviour.



Graph 1: Changes in the Share of Women Among New Hires<sup>14</sup>

(Source: <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/trends-and-research/2020/many-women-rejoining-workforce-after-covid-cost-millions-job>)

<sup>13</sup> Kurtz, Annalyn. "The US Economy Lost 140,000 Jobs in December. All of Them Were Held by Women." CNN, Cable News Network, 9 Jan. 2021, [www.cnn.com/2021/01/08/economy/women-job-losses-pandemic/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2021/01/08/economy/women-job-losses-pandemic/index.html).

<sup>14</sup> "Millions of Women Lost Jobs in 2020 - Here's How They're Coming Back." LinkedIn Talent Blog, [business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/trends-and-research/2020/many-women-rejoining-workforce-after-covid-cost-millions-job](https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/trends-and-research/2020/many-women-rejoining-workforce-after-covid-cost-millions-job).

COVID-19 disproportionately impacts women in the workforce, seeing as the disparity across genders is a reflection of existing inequalities. Women performed 75% of the world's unpaid domestic labour before the pandemic;<sup>15</sup> Women's burdens in the increase of childcare only grew heavier with lockdowns forcing schools and childcare facilities to close. Due to this, women faced overwhelming workloads 20% more frequently than men did.<sup>16</sup> A massive increase in caregiving responsibilities at home and at work may jeopardise women's ability to stay in the workforce and progress. If these trends are left unaddressed, it will soon exacerbate existing inequalities and reverse decades of progress towards an inclusive economy for women and people of colour.<sup>17</sup> The effect of women's unemployment will last longer, with lower chances of climbing their professional careers, if they step off the ladder now, and exude more challenging procedures to re-enter the workforce, as shown historically after past recessions.<sup>18</sup>

## Recent Developments

### *The United States of America*

In the US, the CARES Act enacted in March 2020, established three programmes targeted jobless workers, which was built on by the new stimulus package of the Biden administration. There are tremendous increases in the number of workers claiming UI benefits alongside millions of workers becoming newly eligible for unemployment benefits, who are now eligible for additional weeks of benefits, and hence receiving higher benefit payments than they are as a result of the CARES Act.<sup>19</sup> Congress authorised full federal funding of the existing Extended Benefits (EB) and short-time compensation (STC) programs.<sup>20</sup> Alongside legislation in the government, there are also organisations such as Ellevest Network, National Domestic Workers Alliance, FairyGodBoss, Ellevest who have stepped up to provide

---

<sup>15</sup> "Discussion Paper: Unpaid Care and Domestic Work: Issues and Suggestions." UN Women, 2016, [www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2017/01/unpaid-care-and-domestic-work-en.pdf?la=en&vs=435](http://www2.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2017/01/unpaid-care-and-domestic-work-en.pdf?la=en&vs=435).

<sup>16</sup> "Well-Being Report: Employees Are Happy, and Burned Out." Glint, 16 Feb. 2021, [www.glintinc.com/blog/employees-are-happy-and-burned-out/?trk=bl-po&veh=LTS-blog-international-womens-day-post](http://www.glintinc.com/blog/employees-are-happy-and-burned-out/?trk=bl-po&veh=LTS-blog-international-womens-day-post).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ellingrud, Kweilin, and Liz Hilton Segel. "Commentary: COVID-19 Has Driven Millions of Women out of the Workforce. Here's How to Help Them Come Back." *Fortune*, Fortune, 13 Feb. 2021, [fortune.com/2021/02/13/covid-19-women-workforce-unemployment-gender-gap-recovery/](http://fortune.com/2021/02/13/covid-19-women-workforce-unemployment-gender-gap-recovery/).

<sup>19</sup> "Unemployment Insurance Agency." Labor and Economic Opportunity - Unemployment Insurance Agency, [www.michigan.gov/leo/0,5863,7-336-94422\\_97241---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/leo/0,5863,7-336-94422_97241---,00.html).

<sup>20</sup> — Brian Galle and Elizabeth Pancotti, et al. "The Case for Forgiving Taxes on Pandemic Unemployment Aid." The Century Foundation, 9 Feb. 2021, [tcf.org/content/report/the-case-for-forgiving-taxes-on-pandemic-unemployment-aid/?session=1](http://tcf.org/content/report/the-case-for-forgiving-taxes-on-pandemic-unemployment-aid/?session=1).



the professional support and resources needed to get through this pandemic. From mentorship opportunities to job connections, fellowship programs and financial assistance.

### *The European Union*

The EU released a Commission recommendation on an effective active support to employment following the COVID-19 crisis (EASE), which includes creating strategic approaches at the EU and national levels which requires gradual transition between emergency measures taken during the pandemic, and those necessary to ease the process of labour and capital reallocation in the recovery. Alongside making use of hiring and transition incentives to promote quality job creation and support the employability of workers.

### *China*

In 2020, 37 Chinese companies joined a discussion hosted by UN Women to underline the importance of empowering women as businesses face the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis. The companies discussed how the joint European Union-UN Women programme “WeEmpowerAsia” can support them. The EU-funded programme promotes women’s economic participation and business opportunities in seven Asian countries including China. Moreover, Wang Xiaotong, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at the Institute of New Economic Development signed the Principles which focused on implementing a Gender Equality project to promote more inclusive workplaces and economic growth to benefit more women in China on International Women’s Day on March 8.

### **Relevant Actors / Institutions**

Stakeholder	Role and Responsibility
Companies	The given number of paid leave, and other types of support given by the company to ensure equality, such as equal pay and opportunity, is in the hands of companies, if governments do not regulate it.
Ministry of Labour	Responsible for legislation and regulation of rights and responsibilities of companies; alongside finding a middle point where all stakeholders of companies can have their health and rights protected whilst not majorly

	disadvantageous to other parties.
Ministry of Health	Responsible for providing support for women through childcare, fair health insurance, and accessibility to other health infrastructures for women.
Civil Society Organizations	Providing direct advocacy with policy and decision-makers and mobilises public opinion and raises public awareness of the law.

### International Approaches That Have Already Been Taken

The International Labour Organisation realises a large part of South Asian workforces lack social security and employment benefits and hence, calls for internationally coordinated policy response.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, a new UN global initiative proposed by the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation was launched to address youth unemployment; focusing to ensure young women do not/t lose out on work opportunities. The Youth Initiative is aimed at helping segregated and undervalued women in labour markets and precarious areas of work. This initiative enacts on working towards women's access to education and opportunities that men generally have. It also focuses on adjusting legislation, which does not guarantee equal reward for work and adding value to unpaid care work. This act takes into consideration the need for a higher number of jobs, but also lifts the bar of quality above the poverty level to create decent quality jobs.<sup>22</sup>

The International Labour Organisation also adopted the "ILO Centenary Declaration" focused on the future of work. The Declaration's human-centred approach focuses on three areas of action which includes increasing investment in people's capabilities, increasing investment in the institutions of work and increasing investment in decent and sustainable work. Each element and its relevance to recovery from the current crisis are addressed to formulate a human-centred agenda for the future of work. The Declaration offers the building blocks on which to orient a human-centred recovery that can leave economies, enterprises and workers on a stronger footing to face whatever the future of work may bring, including future crises, technological advancements, demographic shifts and environmental

<sup>21</sup> "Coronavirus Could See Global Unemployment Rise by 25 Million: ILO in India || UN News." United Nations, United Nations, 25 Mar. 2020, news.un.org/en/audio/2020/03/1060212.

<sup>22</sup> "Jobs Plan to Give Young Women Equal Access to the Labour Market || UN News." United Nations, United Nations, Feb. 2016, news.un.org/en/audio/2016/02/608972.

degradation. Moreover, the Declaration urges governments, workers and employers to strive 'to shape a fair, inclusive and secure future of work with full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all' because, in so doing, countries can progress in creating quality jobs towards sustainable development.<sup>23</sup>

## **QARMA 2: What measures can be taken in response to the rising domestic violence against women and girls, and ensure the adequate provision of social, financial psychological and health resources by the state?**

*TRIGGER WARNING: This section includes emotionally difficult material such as domestic violence, physical violence, sexual violence and child abuse. This content may be disturbing, therefore we urge you to approach it mindfully and take care of your safety and wellbeing.*

### **History / Background of the Problem**

Historically, domestic violence is something that was often seen as acceptable or justified, and as the right of the husband, as part of his entitlement to control over his wife and her services, children, finances and all other resources.<sup>24</sup> This practice was also reflected in the law, or rather, the lack thereof, until the end of the 19th century, when some Western countries, as a response to the first feminist movements, began to introduce legislation prohibiting husbands from harming their wives.<sup>25</sup> Nonetheless, the law rarely provided effective or even concrete protection to women against danger, and the culture of domestic abuse and its acceptance have persisted to this day. It was only in the 1990s when issues of domestic violence and abuse received proper recognition and attention by the wider public and the law.<sup>26</sup> See more on international approaches already taken below.

Domestic violence, domestic abuse and intimate partner violence are typically refer to violence against women in the home, most commonly by their male partners, whether they are married, or simply in a relationship. In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly passed the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women as a response to the universal need for the protection of women's most fundamental rights to life and safety. In Article 1, the Declaration defines "violence against women" as:

---

<sup>23</sup> ILO Centenary Declaration.

<sup>24</sup> "Domestic Violence: Social and Legal Concept. (2021). Retrieved 30 April 2021, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/domestic-violence>.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

[...] any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.<sup>27</sup>

Further, Article 2 lays down a non-exhaustive list of the acts that shall be understood to encompass domestic violence:

- (a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.<sup>28</sup>

Intimate partner violence, more specifically, occurs where the victim is subjected to the type of violence that is defined above, by their intimate partner or ex-partner.

Here, it can be seen that domestic violence can be sorted into at least three different categories. Physical violence, perhaps the most obvious kind of violence, means physical force with the intention to bring bodily injury to the victim, and includes, but is not limited to acts such as hitting, punching, slapping, scratching, pushing, choking, throwing, or even use of restraints or weapons.<sup>29</sup> This has the potential to cause serious injury, disability or even death.<sup>30</sup> Research has shown that physical violence is regularly accompanied by both psychological and sexual abuse, and is rarely limited to one instance.<sup>31</sup>

In the second place is sexual violence, which is further divided into 5 categories:

- Rape or penetration of victim
- Victim was forced to penetrate a third party
- Non-physically pressured unwanted penetration
- Unwanted sexual contact
- Non-contact unwanted sexual experience.<sup>32</sup>

In the third place is psychological abuse, which constitutes the use of verbal and non-verbal communication that is intended to harm the victim - mentally or emotionally -

---

<sup>27</sup> United Nations, (1993, 20 December), Declaration on the Elimination of All Violence Against Women, art.1 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/violenceagainstwomen.aspx>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid art. 2(a).

<sup>29</sup> "3. Types of Intimate Partner Violence," A Train Education, <https://www.atrainceu.com/content/3-types-intimate-partner-violence>.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

or manipulate them. This is considered to be the starting point and therefore the underlying factor for all other types of domestic violence.<sup>33</sup> Psychological abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- Expressive aggression
- Coercive control
- Threats of physical or sexual violence, as well as control over reproductive and sexual health
- Exploitation of the vulnerability of the victim
- Intentional misinformation with the intent of manipulating the victim's conviction, perception or memory.<sup>34</sup>

Violence against women, and particularly intimate partner violence, is unfortunately an incredibly prevalent violation of women's human rights and poses a major public health concern.<sup>35</sup> Worldwide, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has estimated that approximately 1 in 3 women have at least once in their lifetime experienced physical and / or sexual violence.<sup>36</sup> Almost every instance of this violence is intimate partner violence.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, of those who have been in a relationship, 24% of girls aged between 15 and 19 have experienced physical and / or sexual abuse from their partner.<sup>38</sup> Please note that this figure does not include sexual harassment, which is something that 97% of women experience, according to recent findings.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, 38% of all murders of women are perpetrated by intimate partners - that includes approximately 137 women every day and 87,000 women globally in 2017.<sup>40</sup>

As is the case with most injustice, it is women in low- and lower-middle income situations that are disproportionately affected by these issues. In fact, there is a direct correlation between a country's level of income, gender equality and the

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> "Violence Against Women," World Health Organization, 9 March 2021, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> "Facts and Figures: Ending Violence Against Women," UN Women, March 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid;

Alexandra Topping (2021, 10 March), Four-Fifths of Young Women in the UK Have Been Sexually Harassed, Survey Finds, The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/10/almost-all-young-women-in-the-uk-have-been-sexually-harassed-survey-finds>.

<sup>40</sup> "Facts and Figures: Ending Violence Against Women," UN Women, March 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>.



prevalence of domestic abuse.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, in countries with strict patriarchal traditions and where it is rare for women to hold paying jobs, such as India, domestic violence, and violence against women in general is more likely to occur more frequently. This also extends to the degree to which women are likely to report their abuse.

For further statistics about domestic violence worldwide, consult the tables below.

WHO region	Prevalence, %	95% CI, %
<b>Low- and middle-income regions:</b>		
Africa	36.6	32.7 to 40.5
Americas	29.8	25.8 to 33.9
Eastern Mediterranean	37.0	30.9 to 43.1
Europe	25.4	20.9 to 30.0
South-East Asia	37.7	32.8 to 42.6
Western Pacific	24.6	20.1 to 29.0
<b>High income</b>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>20.2 to 26.2</b>

CI = confidence interval.

Lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence among ever-partnered women by WHO region. Source: Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, World Health Organisation 2013 <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564625>.

Age group, years	Prevalence, %	95% CI, %
15–19	29.4	26.8 to 32.1
20–24	31.6	29.2 to 33.9
25–29	32.3	30.0 to 34.6
30–34	31.1	28.9 to 33.4
35–39	36.6	30.0 to 43.2
40–44	37.8	30.7 to 44.9
45–49	29.2	26.9 to 31.5
50–54	25.5	18.6 to 32.4
55–59	15.1	6.1 to 24.1
60–64	19.6	9.6 to 29.5
65–69	22.2	12.8 to 31.6

CI = confidence interval.

Lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence by age group among ever-partnered women. Source: Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence, World Health Organisation 2013 <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564625>

<sup>41</sup> World Health Organization, (2009), Promoting Gender Equality to Prevent Violence against Women, WHO Press, [https://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/gender.pdf](https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/gender.pdf).

Lastly, it is crucial to keep in mind that domestic violence is not limited to heterosexual relationships, nor only against women. In fact, research has shown that men and women are roughly equal perpetrators when it comes to physical and psychological abuse.<sup>42</sup> The difference between male and female violence lies in the type of situations in which abuse occurs, the motivations behind it, and the fact that women are more likely to be physically harmed. Men and women are equally likely to initiate physical violence where violence is less serious - in "situational couple violence".<sup>43</sup> However, men are more likely to perpetrate sexual abuse, coercive control and stalking, and therefore in more violent "intimate terrorism".<sup>44</sup> Further, women's violence is more likely to be motivated by self-defence and fear, while men's violence is more likely to be motivated by desires to control.<sup>45</sup> For further information see [A Review of Research on Women's Use of Violence With Male Intimate Partners](#).

## Recent Developments

Just as many other issues, the problems associated with domestic abuse and intimate partner violence have been exacerbated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Factors such as stay-at-home orders, general restriction of movement, the closure of schools and many workers being told to work from home, being furloughed, or laid off, which resulted in growing economic insecurity, have increased women's vulnerability as well as intensified the conditions under which domestic violence is more likely to occur.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, the measures that have been adopted to curb the spread of the virus and protect the population against one pandemic, have forced households to spend much more time in close contact, prevented women from leaving the home when faced with danger, and therefore created a new kind of pandemic in itself.

Emerging data shows that all types of violence against women and girls have increased since the beginning of the pandemic - but particularly domestic violence.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Suzanne C. Swan, "A Review of Research on Women's Use of Violence With Male Intimate Partners," PMC, November 2010, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2968709/>.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Megan L. Evans, Margo Lindauer and Maureen E. Farrell, (2020), A Pandemic within a Pandemic - Intimate Partner Violence during Covid-19, The New England Journal of Medicine, 383:2302-2304, DOI:10.1056/NEJMp2024046; "Facts and Figures: Ending Violence Against Women," UN Women, March 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>.

<sup>47</sup> "The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against Women duuring COVID-19," UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>.

In fact, during the last year, calls to helplines in relation to domestic issues have increased up to 5 times in some countries, with a 60% increase across Europe.<sup>48</sup>

While there is some country-specific data available regarding the degree to which domestic violence has increased, more research must be done in order to identify global trends and the social impact this has had. For example, in Argentina, the number of women killed during the lockdown reached a 10-year high, only 2 months after the beginning of the pandemic.<sup>49</sup> In Spain, there was a 47% increase of calls made to domestic violence helplines at the beginning of April 2020, while the number of women who sought support through email and social media increased by 700%.<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, Spain experienced a sudden decrease in domestic violence reports to the police, something that occurred also in other countries, such as The Netherlands. This has been attributed to the fact that victims are pressured to remain at home, with little access to outside help to file official complaints or privacy to contact essential services.<sup>51</sup>

Furthermore, the pandemic has not only put a strain on health services which might be able to provide help in cases of violence, but also on other essential services, such as domestic violence and women's shelters, as well as helplines, which have in many countries reached full capacity. Additionally, not only has the demand for these kinds of services increased over the last year, but measures aimed at curbing the spread of the virus have in some cases forced the closure or reduced capacity of these services, further limiting access for victims.<sup>52</sup>

Lastly, although many countries have at least acknowledged the need to ensure a higher level of protection to women against violence, some countries have moved in the other direction. Russia, for example, has decreased scrutiny of violence against women by decriminalising certain forms of domestic violence in 2017, which has

---

<sup>48</sup> Elisabeth Mahase, (2020), Covid-19: EU states report 60% rise in emergency calls about domestic violence, the BMJ, 369:1872, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m1872>.

<sup>49</sup> "Femicides in Argentina Reach 10-year High Under Coronavirus Lockdown," (2020, May 20), KCET, <https://www.kcet.org/coronavirus-worldwide/femicides-in-argentina-reach-10-year-high-under-coronavirus-lockdown>.

<sup>50</sup> Stephen Burgen, (2020, October 15), Women killed in Spain as coronavirus lockdown sees rise in domestic violence, The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/apr/28/three-women-killed-in-spain-as-coronavirus-lockdown-sees-rise-in-domestic-violence>.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Gender-based violence, European Institute for Gender Equality, <https://eige.europa.eu/covid-19-and-gender-equality/gender-based-violence>; "The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against Women during COVID-19," UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>.

made estimates of violence trends during the pandemic incredibly difficult to make.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, Turkey has, as of the beginning of 2021, decided to pull out of the Istanbul Convention, a European-wide convention which seeks to 'prevent, prosecute and eliminate domestic violence.'<sup>54</sup> This decision is seen as 'devastating' and a 'huge setback' for efforts to combat violence against women, particularly in light of the increasing number of rapes and femicides in Turkey.<sup>55</sup>

## Relevant Actors / Institutions

National Entities	Relevance	Website
National Governments	Ultimately, the responsibility for adopting legislation and policies that effectively protect women from domestic abuse and other types of violence, as well as the necessary essential services to offer help to victims, lies with national governments.	-
Authoritative International Entities:	Relevance	Website
UN Women	UN Women is the common name for the UN entity that is tasked with upholding the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and, accordingly, fights for gender equality and women's rights worldwide.	<a href="https://www.unwomen.org/en">https://www.unwomen.org/en</a>

<sup>53</sup> D. U. T Stanglin, (2017, January 27), Russia parliament votes 380–3 to decriminalize domestic violence, USA TODAY, <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/01/27/russian-parliament-decriminalizes-domestic-violence/97129912/>.

<sup>54</sup> BBC News, (2021, March 20), Domestic violence: Turkey pulls out of Istanbul convention, BBC News, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56467689>.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women	The office of the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences was first established in order to recognise violence against women as a human rights violation. Now, their job is to ensure that violence against women is 'integrated into the United Nations human rights framework and its mechanisms.' <sup>56</sup>	<a href="https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/women/srwomen/pages/srwomenindex.aspx">https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/women/srwomen/pages/srwomenindex.aspx</a>
European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)	The EIGE is an autonomous body created by the European Union in order to combat the issue of gender inequality. This includes the steering of EU policies and resultantly, national policies, towards the fight against discrimination based on sex. <sup>57</sup> Since the beginning of the pandemic, the EIGE has carried out research and raised awareness about the increasing levels of domestic violence in Europe. <sup>58</sup>	<a href="https://eige.europa.eu/">https://eige.europa.eu/</a>
WHO	As the world's foremost international health organisation, the WHO has recognised the danger that domestic violence poses to women's health worldwide and taken action to rectify regional shortcomings by lending a hand at a global level.	<a href="https://www.who.int/">https://www.who.int/</a>
Civil Society and NGOs:	The task of civil society organisations and NGOs is to advocate, raise awareness and positively influence policy-making at the national and international level. Examples of relevant international organisations: UN Trust Fund to End	<a href="https://www.unwomen.org/en/trust-funds/un-trust-fund-to-end-violence-against-women">https://www.unwomen.org/en/trust-funds/un-trust-fund-to-end-violence-against-women</a> ;

<sup>56</sup> OHCHR | Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/women/srwomen/pages/srwomenindex.aspx>.

<sup>57</sup> About EIGE, European Institute for Gender Equality, <https://eige.europa.eu/about>.

<sup>58</sup> Covid-19 and gender equality, European Institute for Gender Equality, <https://eige.europa.eu/topics/health/covid-19-and-gender-equality>.



	<p>Violence against Women, International Foundation for Crime Prevention and Victim Care (PCVC), End Violence Against Women International, and Global Network of Women's Shelters.</p> <p>Further, there are many more national non-governmental organisations that deal with domestic violence.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.pcvconline.org/">https://www.pcvconline.org/</a>;</p> <p><a href="https://evawintl.org/">https://evawintl.org/</a>;</p> <p><a href="https://gnws.org/">https://gnws.org/</a>.</p>
--	--	---

### International Approaches That Have Already Been Taken

Although historically, violence against women was not seen as a noteworthy issue, this began to slowly change in the 20th century. Still, however, real change was not taken until second-wave feminism took off and encouraged women to refuse blame for their own victimisation in the 1970s.<sup>59</sup> Since, 155 countries have taken steps to pass laws on domestic violence.<sup>60</sup>

On the international stage, the fight against discrimination against women began with the adoption of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979. While this was an admirable first step towards the combatting of gender inequality, which is ultimately the cause of violence against women, this document does not address domestic, or any other types of violence. These kinds of issues were first addressed in the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted in 1993, which recognises that violence against women violates their fundamental human rights, and commits to the protection of (vulnerable) women in order to achieve a higher degree of gender equality.<sup>61</sup>

The document provides a definition of what constitutes violence against women, and urges states to adopt domestic legislation and establish 'penal, civil, labour and administrative sanctions' in order to punish past, and discourage future wrongs committed against women.<sup>62</sup> In the same year, the "United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs" also published a resource manual, *Strategies for Confronting Domestic Violence*, which aims to raise awareness of

<sup>59</sup> "Domestic Violence: Social and Legal Concept. (2021). Retrieved 30 April 2021, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/domestic-violence>.

<sup>60</sup> "Facts and Figures: Ending Violence Against Women," UN Women, March 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>.

<sup>61</sup> United Nations, (1993, 20 December), Declaration on the Elimination of All Violence Against Women, preamble  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/violenceagainstwomen.aspx>.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid arts. 1-4.

domestic and intimate partner violence, encourage governments to address the issue, and propose strategies which they can use to protect women and children from domestic physical and sexual abuse.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, at the European level, in 2011, the Council of Europe adopted the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Abuse, more commonly known as the Istanbul Convention. This document draws on the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), its Protocols and the European Social Charter (1961), among other treaties, in order to 'protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence',<sup>64</sup> while contributing to the elimination of discrimination based on sex, and promoting gender equality.<sup>65</sup>

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in response to the rising domestic violence figures as mentioned above, 121 countries have adopted a variety of measures and policy changes, in order to strengthen essential services for women and other survivors of violence during global crises.<sup>66</sup> Additionally, as of September 2020, at least 52 countries had included preventative measures against violence against women and girls into their response plans to the pandemic.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, a number of international organisations, including UN Women, UN Population Fund, UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Organisation of American States, among others, have carried out research to identify the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on gender-based violence and associated issues. For more information see [Reaction by other International Organisation](#).

**QARMA 3: What measures can be taken to tackle the increased unsafe conditions of women and girls in particularly vulnerable positions, such as, but not limited to, refugees, migrants, sex workers, disabled and indigenous women, to ensure their safety, as well as fiscal and social support in the short- and long-term?**

---

<sup>63</sup> United Nations Office at Vienna: Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, (1993), Strategies for Confronting Domestic Violence: A Resource Manual, United Nations, 1-2, [https://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/tools\\_strategy\\_english\\_domestic\\_violence.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/tools_strategy_english_domestic_violence.pdf).

<sup>64</sup> Council of Europe, (2011, 11 May), Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, art. 1, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> "Facts and Figures: Ending Violence Against Women," UN Women, March 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

## History / Background of the Problem

Every person worldwide has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as this paper has already shown, women and girls have generally been impacted even more. Particularly those in vulnerable positions are hit hard, and the pandemic has made their positions increasingly more insecure.<sup>68</sup> The global pandemic is deepening existing inequalities, which is amplifying and exposing vulnerabilities in social systems.<sup>69</sup> Many have lost their jobs, and women have been hit disproportionately by the pandemic-induced recession. The compounded economic impacts of COVID-19 are felt especially hard, as women generally earn less and hold less secure jobs. Next to paid work, unpaid care work has increased, because children cannot always go to school as a result of restrictions.<sup>70</sup> As a result, this means that women have a higher chance of experiencing social and economic consequences as a result of the pandemic, such as domestic violence, job insecurity, economic insecurity in general and increased domestic overload.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, due to the pandemic, healthy resources have been reallocated, resulting in less being available for sexual and reproductive health services.<sup>72</sup>

There are numerous positions or conditions that can put a woman in a more vulnerable position. A few examples will be discussed below, in order to get an image of how women and girls in certain situations have been affected by the pandemic, or are vulnerable to its effects.

### *Indigenous People*

Historically, indigenous people have suffered harder consequences of pandemics. There are higher infection rates, more severe symptoms and higher death rates than the general population. This is a result of social and health inequities and lack of political power. The legacy of colonisation has left indigenous peoples with numerous difficulties, including intergenerational and concentrated poverty, poor health, increased domestic violence and shorter life expectancy. In Canada, Australia,

---

<sup>68</sup> Tamara Power, Denise Wilson, Odette Best, Teresa Brockie, Lisa Bourque Bearskin, Eugenia Millender, and John Lowe, "COVID-19 and Indigenous Peoples: An imperative for action," *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 2020, pp. 2737-2741.

<sup>69</sup> United Nations, (9 April 2020), Policy brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Catherine Gebhard, Vera Regitz-Zagrosek, Hannelore K. Neuhauser, Rosemary Morgan, and Sabra L. Klein, "Impact of sex and gender on COVID-19 outcomes in Europe," *Biology of sex differences*, vol. 11, 2020.

<sup>72</sup> United Nations, (9 April 2020), Policy brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women.

New Zealand and the Americas, colonization has led to inequities which still affect Indigenous people in these respective countries.<sup>73</sup>

COVID-19 is expected to exacerbate the already existing inequalities in countries where women and girls are left behind, for instance because of poor financial situations. Moreover, through incomplete or unavailable data, the full extent of how the pandemic affects women and girls is not fully captured.<sup>74</sup>

### *Victims of Domestic Violence and Migrant Women*

Also victims of domestic violence have become increasingly more vulnerable during this pandemic. The UN General Secretary has recognized violence against women as a “global pandemic” as well. As a result, there are two pandemics for these women raging on at the same time. This heightens the risk of negative outcomes regarding health and well-being even more. Vulnerabilities for these women have increased as a result of the social-distancing measures, but also the vulnerability to violence in general for women as a result through the social, economic and personal changes the pandemic has induced. The health sector could play a large role in identifying these cases of domestic violence, and recognizing their experiences as valid. Moreover, there is need for more strategies to be designed which can prevent and otherwise confront cases of violence against women during COVID-19.<sup>75</sup>

Domestic violence is a serious health concern worldwide, however COVID-19 has increased its frequency. Through the need to stay at home due to the pandemic, there has been enhanced potential risk for domestic violence, as one is forced to live with the abuser. Especially for immigrant women this is an increasing concern. Furthermore, they face more barriers to receive help: social isolation, lack of support, language barriers and the stigma that surround domestic violence. Moreover, uncertain immigration status makes someone even more vulnerable, and creates unequal power relations through the possibility for the abusive partner to threaten with deportation. Consequently, there is an enhanced need to address services for

---

<sup>73</sup> Tamara Power, Denise Wilson, Odette Best, Teresa Brockie, Lisa Bourque Bearskin, Eugenia Millender, and John Lowe, “COVID-19 and Indigenous Peoples: An imperative for action,” *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 2020, pp. 2737-2741.

<sup>74</sup> Mayra Buvinic, Lorenz Noe and Eric Swanson, “Where Are Women and Girls Especially Vulnerable to the COVID-19 Pandemic?” Center for Global Development, November 30, 2022, <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/where-are-women-and-girls-especially-vulnerable-covid-19-pandemic>.

<sup>75</sup> O. R. Sánchez, Vale, D. B., Rodrigues, L., & Surita, F. G., “Violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic: An integrative review,” *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 2020, doi:10.1002/ijgo.13365.

basic needs. However, COVID-19 also poses barriers, as it is harder to contact victims at home.<sup>76</sup>

### *Sex Workers*

Sex workers are one of the most marginalized groups and most vulnerable members of society. Overwhelmingly consisting of the poorest segments of society and mostly made up of migrant women, sex workers often find themselves at the intersection of multiple oppressive forces. There is thus a particular urgency to have their human rights protected and offer them support.

As a result of physical distancing, direct sex work has largely stopped. This has forced sex workers to accept exceedingly exploitative terms, as falling demand weakens their bargaining positions.<sup>77</sup> Even sex workers who could move their work online have seen their incomes decrease, as the market has become saturated. In a world, where access to women's bodies has become a marketable commodity, for which mostly poor women compete according to the laws of supply and demand, the demand-shocks caused by the pandemic have pushed down prices and forced women to engage in increasingly dangerous sexual activities, in order to stay afloat. Lockdowns have also moved much sex work underground, increase women's exposure to human trafficking and abusive clients.<sup>78</sup>

Moreover, social stigma and criminal persecution of sex workers by authorities, have led them to fall through the cracks of the welfare system, leaving sex workers unable to access governments' social protection programs. Sex workers who are without a home, use drugs or have an insecure legal status face even greater challenge regarding longer-term negative economic impacts. Especially, as they are vulnerable to health issues, as underlying health conditions might increase the severity of COVID-19.<sup>79</sup>

### **Recent Developments**

In the United States, unemployment has hit women disproportionately as a result of the pandemic. In total, women have lost 5.4 million jobs during the recession,

---

<sup>76</sup> B. Sabri, Hartley, M., Saha, J., Murray, S., Glass, N., & Campbell, J. C., "Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on women's health and safety: A study of immigrant survivors of intimate partner violence," *Health Care for Women International* vol. 1 no. 19, 2020, doi:10.1080/07399332.2020.1833012.

<sup>77</sup> Chini, Maïthé. "[How the coronavirus impacts prostitution in Brussels](#)." *Brussels Times*, 2020

<sup>78</sup> "Schaps, Kaolin, "[Dutch sex workers risk trafficking and abuse as coronavirus bites](#)." *Reuters*, 2020.

<sup>79</sup> Lucy Platt, et al., "Sex workers must not be forgotten in the COVID-19 response," *The Lancet* vol. 396, no. 10243, 2020, pp. 9-11.



whereas men have lost nearly a million less. The failure of Congress and the federal government to act immediately will potentially lead to harm to women's careers that will last for a long time. As in most majority white countries, women of color are hit hard particularly hard, as this group is disproportionately concentrated in underpaid jobs in the service and care sector. The long-standing history of the US of lacking a social safety net and the chaotic management of the coronavirus pandemic have pushed already vulnerable women into further financial hardship.<sup>80</sup>

The economic consequences of COVID-19 are affecting women more than health issues during the pandemic in low and middle income countries. This indicates that long-term recovery programs could be helpful to help such women with income generation. Furthermore, in a significant number of countries, where the economic consequences hit less hard, the well-being is generally low among women. As a result, it makes them more vulnerable to the negative effects of the pandemic.<sup>81</sup>

In vulnerable countries and low-income countries, the situation for women is even more complex. There is not always sufficient available gender data or birth registrations. This makes these countries ill-prepared to address women's vulnerabilities, for instance through investing in social safety nets. Furthermore, there are also fewer financial means in such countries to address the health and economic needs of these particular women. As a result, it could be helpful to invest in data generating capacity in all areas of society and offer more assistance programs.<sup>82</sup>

In Latin America, which has some of the highest rates of femicide relative to the rest of the world, this, combined with the heavy coronavirus outbreaks, has meant a huge spike in gender based violence cases, and made it even more difficult to find support. Furthermore, violence against trans women has also risen during the COVID-19 pandemic, as more people are pushed into the shadows.<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> [When Women Lose All the Jobs: Essential Actions for a Gender-Equitable Recovery](#) (Center for American Progress, 2021).

<sup>81</sup> Mayra Buvinic, Lorenz Noe and Eric Swanson, "Where Are Women and Girls Especially Vulnerable to the COVID-19 Pandemic?" Center for Global Development, November 30, 2020, <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/where-are-women-and-girls-especially-vulnerable-covid-19-pandemic>.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Paula Dupraz-Dobias, "Latin American women battle shadow pandemic of gender-based violence," The New Humanitarian, 24 February 2021, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2021/2/24/latin-american-women-battle-pandemic-gender-based-violence>.

## Relevant Actors / Institutions

One of the relevant actors is the UN Women, as they dedicate themselves to gender equality and women empowerment. They fight for women's rights, so that every woman can live free from violence, poverty and discrimination. Furthermore, the organization sets standards for UN Member States to achieve gender equality. In this way, governments are encouraged to design certain laws, initiate programs, provide services and implement these standards themselves.<sup>84</sup>

Next to the UN Women, the European Union (EU) has gender equality incorporated into their core values as well. There is a Gender Action Plan for 2021-2025 in which the EU has set out a roadmap to achieve such gender equality. In this program, structural problems are challenged and a particular focus is on the women and girls facing more than one form of discrimination. The plan encourages EU Member States to work together, and also fosters partnerships with others, such as women's organizations. Another key element of the plan, which is relevant for vulnerable women, is increased monitoring.<sup>85</sup>

## International Approaches That Have Already Been Taken

With regard to sex workers, unions, NGOs and charities have been quick to respond, demanding funds, financial relief and the admission of sex workers into government support programs. In Bangladesh, they have supplied these workers with food packages, in England and Wales with provision of emergency housing and in Thailand, the Netherlands and Japan sex workers have been included into the schemes of those getting financial benefits. Still, these initiatives are mostly not focused on homeless, transgender or migrant sex workers, so there is still urgent need for governments to be more inclusive in their initiatives.<sup>86</sup> As a result, there is still a lot of work to be done in this regard.

The UN has tried to map the impacts of the pandemic on women's health and safety. They therefore have proposed to take into account the gender impacts of COVID-19 in their response and support packages for the pandemic. They want women and organizations representing women to be at the core of the COVID-19 response, they want to address the inequalities coming from unpaid care work usually taken care of

---

<sup>84</sup> "About UN Women," UN Women, 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women>.

<sup>85</sup> "Empowering women and girls," European Commission, [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/topics/empowering-women-and-girls\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/topics/empowering-women-and-girls_en).

<sup>86</sup> Lucy Platt, et al., "Sex workers must not be forgotten in the COVID-19 response," *The Lancet* vol. 396, no. 10243, 2020, pp. 9-11.

by women, and they want to make a sustainable plan for the futures of girls and women.<sup>87</sup>

Finally, as also mentioned in the previous section, next to the UN, organizations such as the EU are actively trying to address the negative impacts COVID-19 has on gender equality, vulnerable women and women in general.<sup>88</sup>

## Sources for Further Research

[Lost jobs, less pay, no childcare: A year into the pandemic, women are not OK](#) (NBC News, 2021)

[When Women Lose All the Jobs: Essential Actions for a Gender-Equitable Recovery](#) (Center for American Progress, 2021)

[The Coming Setback for Women in the Workplace](#) (The Atlantic, 2020)

[Confronting Dowry-Related Violence in India: Women at the Center of Justice - The Story of Shehnaz Bano](#) (UN Women, 2012)

[Encyclopedia of Domestic Violence and Abuse by Laura L. Finley](#)

[Factsheet: 9 Types of Violence and Abuse and What they Entail](#) (Newfoundland Labrador, 2014)

[Gender Equality Reactions by Other International Organisations](#) (Council of Europe, 2020)

[Stop Domestic Violence Against Women](#) (Council of Europe)

[How NGOs are dealing with the global surge in domestic violence](#) (APolitical, 2020)

[Addressing Domestic Violence against Women: An Unfinished Agenda](#) (PMC, 2008)

---

<sup>87</sup> United Nations, (9 April 2020), Policy brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women.

<sup>88</sup> "Empowering women and girls," European Commission, [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/topics/empowering-women-and-girls\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/topics/empowering-women-and-girls_en).

## Bibliography

About EIGE, European Institute for Gender Equality, <https://eige.europa.eu/about>.

"Asia-Pacific Employment and Social Outlook 2020." International Labour Organization, 2020, Asia-Pacific Employment and Social Outlook.

BBC News, (2021, March 20), Domestic violence: Turkey pulls out of Istanbul convention, BBC News, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56467689>.

Burgen, S, (2020, October 15), Women killed in Spain as coronavirus lockdown sees rise in domestic violence, The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/apr/28/three-women-killed-in-spain-as-coronavirus-lockdown-sees-rise-in-domestic-violence>.

Buvinic, Mayra, Lorenz Noe and Eric Swanson. "Where Are Women and Girls Especially Vulnerable to the COVID-19 Pandemic?" Center for Global Development. November 30, 2002. <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/where-are-women-and-girls-especially-vulnerable-covid-19-pandemic>.

"China's Companies Recommit to Helping Female Workers amid the COVID-19 Crisis." UN Women | Asia and the Pacific, [asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2020/05/chinas-companies-recommit-to-helping-female-workers-amid-the-covid-19-crisis](https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2020/05/chinas-companies-recommit-to-helping-female-workers-amid-the-covid-19-crisis).

"Coronavirus Could See Global Unemployment Rise by 25 Million: ILO in India | | UN News." United Nations, United Nations, 25 Mar. 2020, [news.un.org/en/audio/2020/03/1060212](https://news.un.org/en/audio/2020/03/1060212).

Covid-19 and gender equality, European Institute for Gender Equality, <https://eige.europa.eu/topics/health/covid-19-and-gender-equality>.

Council of Europe. (2011, 11 May). Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>.

"Discussion Paper: Unpaid Care and Domestic Work: Issues and Suggestions." UN Women, 2016, [www2.unwomen.org/](https://www2.unwomen.org/)

/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2017/01/unpaid-care-and-domestic-work-en.pdf?la=en&vs=435.

"Domestic Violence: Social and Legal Concept". (2021). Retrieved 30 April 2021, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/domestic-violence>.

Dupraz-Dobias, Paula. "Latin American women battle shadow pandemic of gender-based violence." The New Humanitarian. 24 February 2021. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2021/2/24/latin-american-women-battle-pandemic-gender-based-violence>.

Grady, Constance. (2018). 'The Waves of Feminism, and Why People Keep Fighting Over Them, Explained.' Vox. <https://www.vox.com/2018/3/20/16955588/feminism-waves-explained-first-second-third-fourth>.

Ellingrud, Kweilin, and Liz Hilton Segel. "Commentary: COVID-19 Has Driven Millions of Women out of the Workforce. Here's How to Help Them Come Back." Fortune, Fortune, 13 Feb. 2021, [fortune.com/2021/02/13/covid-19-women-workforce-unemployment-gender-gap-recovery/](https://fortune.com/2021/02/13/covid-19-women-workforce-unemployment-gender-gap-recovery/).

European Commission. "Empowering women and girls." [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/topics/empowering-women-and-girls\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/topics/empowering-women-and-girls_en).

Evans, Megan L., Lindauer Margo and Farrell, Maureen E. (2020). A Pandemic within a Pandemic - Intimate Partner Violence during Covid-19. The New England Journal of Medicine, 383:2302-2304. DOI:10.1056/NEJMp2024046.

"Facts and Figures: Ending Violence Against Women," UN Women, March 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>

"Femicides in Argentina Reach 10-year High Under Coronavirus Lockdown." (2020, May 20). KCET. <https://www.kcet.org/coronavirus-worldwide/femicides-in-argentina-reach-10-year-high-under-coronavirus-lockdown>.

Galle Brian and Pancotti Elizabeth, et al. "The Case for Forgiving Taxes on Pandemic Unemployment Aid." The Century Foundation, 9 Feb. 2021, [tcf.org/content/report/the-case-for-forgiving-taxes-on-pandemic-unemployment-aid/?session=1](https://www.tcf.org/content/report/the-case-for-forgiving-taxes-on-pandemic-unemployment-aid/?session=1).



- Gebhard, Catherine, Vera Regitz-Zagrosek, Hannelore K. Neuhauser, Rosemary Morgan, and Sabra L. Klein. "Impact of sex and gender on COVID-19 outcomes in Europe." *Biology of sex differences*, vol 11, 2020, pp 1-13.
- Gender-based violence, European Institute for Gender Equality,  
<https://eige.europa.eu/covid-19-and-gender-equality/gender-based-violence>;
- "Jobs Plan to Give Young Women Equal Access to the Labour Market | UN News." United Nations, United Nations, Feb. 2016,  
[news.un.org/en/audio/2016/02/608972](https://news.un.org/en/audio/2016/02/608972).
- Kurtz, Annalyn. "The US Economy Lost 140,000 Jobs in December. All of Them Were Held by Women." CNN, Cable News Network, 9 Jan. 2021,  
[www.cnn.com/2021/01/08/economy/women-job-losses-pandemic/index.html](https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/08/economy/women-job-losses-pandemic/index.html).
- Mahase, Elisabeth. (2020). Covid-19: EU states report 60% rise in emergency calls about domestic violence. *the BMJ*, 369:1872.  
<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.m1872>.
- McKeever, Vicky. "With More Childcare and Domestic Work, the Pandemic Poses a 'Real Danger' to Women's Progress, UN Finds." (2020). CNBC.  
<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/11/26/un-covid-19-pandemic-poses-real-danger-to-womens-progress.html>.
- "Millions of Women Lost Jobs in 2020 - Here's How They're Coming Back."  
 LinkedIn Talent Blog, [business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/trends-and-research/2020/many-women-rejoining-millions-job](https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/trends-and-research/2020/many-women-rejoining-millions-job).
- OHCHR | Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner,  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/women/srwomen/pages/srwomenindex.aspx>.
- Platt, Lucy, et al. "Sex workers must not be forgotten in the COVID-19 response." *The Lancet* vol. 396, no. 10243. 2020. pp. 9-11.
- Power, Tamara, Denise Wilson, Odette Best, Teresa Brockie, Lisa Bourque Bearskin, Eugenia Millender, and John Lowe, "COVID-19 and Indigenous Peoples: An imperative for action," *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 2020, pp. 2737-2741.

- Sabri, B., Hartley, M., Saha, J., Murray, S., Glass, N., & Campbell, J. C., "Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on women's health and safety: A study of immigrant survivors of intimate partner violence," *Health Care for Women International* vol. 1 no. 19, 2020, doi:10.1080/07399332.2020.1833012.
- Sánchez, O. R., Vale, D. B., Rodrigues, L., & Surita, F. G. "Violence against women during the COVID-19 pandemic: An integrative review." *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 2020, doi:10.1002/ijgo.13365.
- "The Shadow Pandemic: Violence against Women duuring COVID-19." UN Women. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19>.
- Topping, Alexandra. (2021, 10 March). Four-Fifths of Young Women in the UK Have Been Sexually Harassed, Survey Finds. *The Guardian*.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/mar/10/almost-all-young-women-in-the-uk-have-been-sexually-harassed-survey-finds>.
- Stanglin, D. U. T. (2017, January 27). Russia parliament votes 380–3 to decriminalize domestic violence. *USA TODAY*.  
<https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/2017/01/27/russian-parliament-decrimiinalizes-domestic-violence/97129912/>.
- Swan, Suzanne C. "A Review of Research on Women's Use of Violence With Male Intimate Partners." *PMC*. November 2010.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2968709/>.
- "Unemployment Insurance Agency." Labor and Economic Opportunity - Unemployment Insurance Agency, [www.michigan.gov/leo/0,5863,7-336-94422\\_97241---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/leo/0,5863,7-336-94422_97241---,00.html).
- United Nations. (1945, October 24) United Nations Charter.  
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>.
- United Nations. (1948, December 10) Universal declaration of human rights.  
<https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.
- United Nations. (1979, December 18). UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>.
- United Nations. (1993, 20 December). Declaration on the Elimination of All Violence Against Women. Art.1.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/violenceagainstwomen.aspx>.

United Nations. (9 April 2020). Policy brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women.

United Nations Office at Vienna: Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. (1993). Strategies for Confronting Domestic Violence: A Resource Manual, United Nations.  
[https://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/tools\\_strategy\\_english\\_domestic\\_violence.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/youthnet/tools_strategy_english_domestic_violence.pdf).

United Nations Women. "About UN Women." 2021.  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/about-un-women>.

"Violence Against Women," World Health Organization, 9 March 2021,  
<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>.

"WEF: Coronavirus Has Reversed Progress on Gender Equality." (2021). DW.  
<https://www.dw.com/en/wef-coronavirus-has-reversed-progress-on-gender-equality/a-57048120#:~:text=The%20pandemic%20has%20reversed%20global,Gender%20Gap%20report%20released%20Wednesday.&text=Continuing%20at%20this%20rate%2C%20it,parity%20between%20men%20and%20women>.

"Well-Being Report: Employees Are Happy, and Burned Out." Glint, 16 Feb. 2021,  
[www.glintinc.com/blog/employees-are-happy-and-burned-out/?trk=bl-po&veh=LTS-blog-international-womens-day-post](http://www.glintinc.com/blog/employees-are-happy-and-burned-out/?trk=bl-po&veh=LTS-blog-international-womens-day-post).

World Health Organization. (2009). Promoting Gender Equality to Prevent Violence against Women. WHO Press.  
[https://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/gender.pdf](https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/gender.pdf).

"3. Types of Intimate Partner Violence, . A Train Education.  
<https://www.etrainceu.com/content/3-types-intimate-partner-violence>.