

The shadow pandemic: COVID-19 and Essential Services for Women and Girls Survivors of Violence



Women and girls globally experience unacceptably high levels of violence

- **ONE IN THREE** women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lives¹

- Almost **SIX OUT OF TEN** women intentionally killed worldwide in 2017 were murdered by an intimate partner or other family member²



The great majority of women survivors of violence never formally report

- Less than **40%** of women who experience violence seek help of any sort³
- Less than **10%** of women seeking help after experiencing violence go to the police⁴

Emerging data show that since the outbreak of COVID-19 there has been an overall increase in the number of women calling helplines and reporting violence



- In Tunisia calls to a helpline in the first days of confinement increased **fivefold**⁵
- In the UK, there was a **25%** rise in phone calls to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline during the first week of lockdown and visits to its website increased by **150%**⁶

How COVID-19 may affect service delivery for survivors

Women and girls may have increased difficulty accessing essential services, either physically or remotely

As **health** care workers prioritize COVID-19 cases, urgent support for survivors of violence may be disrupted



Police and justice actors may focus on monitoring social distancing and/or responding to public unrest and other crime, affecting the safety and access to justice for survivors

Crisis centres, helplines, shelters and safe accommodation, often operated by women's organizations, may be scaled back or cease operations

Responses to COVID-19



Governments

- Services should be 'essential' during the pandemic
- Personal protective equipment and protocols should be in place for service providers
- Services for survivors should be adapted and strengthened and flexible funding for women's organizations included in national COVID-19 response plans
- Violence against women and girls should *never* be tolerated and perpetrators will be held accountable



Civil Society

- Share good practices on adapting frontline services during crises



United Nations

- Conduct assessments on both services' and survivors' needs
- Strengthen capacity of service providers, including on referrals and moving to online support

1 <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/9789241564625/en/>

2 https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/GSH2018/GSH18_Gender-related_killing_of_women_and_girls.pdf

3 https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/downloads/WorldsWomen2015_report.pdf

4 Ibid.

5 <https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/2206776/tunisia-lockdown-brings-rise-domestic-violence>

6 <https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-calls-to-national-domestic-abuse-helpline-rise-by-25-in-lockdown-11969184>



COVID-19
RESPONSE

UN
WOMEN

World Health
Organization



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNFPA