

# Violence against Women and the SDGs in Egypt: Where Do We Stand ?

## Violence against women and girls in the SDGs

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread human rights violations affecting communities across the globe. Violence against women and girls cuts across boundaries of age, race, culture, wealth and geography. It occurs in both public and private spaces, and in the majority of cases is perpetrated by someone the victim knows, most often an intimate partner. It can take many forms, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic. Worldwide, 35 % of women have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence<sup>1</sup>. Violence against women and girls can cause long-term physical and psychological health problems, and too often, death. Violence against women and girls does not only negatively impact their well-being and hinder their full and equal participation in the society, but also negatively affects families, communities and society at large. In spite of recent progress, harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM/C) persist. Social tolerance and widespread impunity for perpetrators are among the main factors contributing to its persistence.

Violence against women and girls was absent from the Millennium Development Goals, but **the fight against this widespread human rights violation is now an integral part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**. Two SDGs targets focus specifically on the issue of violence against women: *5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls* and *5.3*

*Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.*

Others targets also address issues related to violence against women and girls including: *11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities; 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere; and 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children*

## Progress towards the SDG targets addressing the issue of violence against women and girls

In the past years, Egypt has made some significant progress towards the eradication of violence against women and girls. These include important amendments made to the legislative and policy framework on violence against women and girls:

- The introduction of a Constitutional provision to protect women from violence (Article 11)
- The criminalization of Sexual Harassment in 2014 (Article 306 of the Penal Code)
- The strengthening of the criminalization of FGM in 2016 (Article 242 of the Penal Code)
- The adoption of a National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women (2015-2020), accompanied by an Action Plan to guide the concrete implementation of the Strategy (2017)
- The inclusion of violence against women as a priority of the National Strategy on Women's Empowerment 2030.

## Snapshot of available data to populate the SDGs indicators related to violence against women and girls



**Indicator 5.2.1:** 18.6% of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older have been subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or most recent husband in the previous 12 months. 13.5% have experienced physical violence; 2.7% sexual violence, and 13.1% of emotional violence (EDHS 2014).

**Indicator 5.3.1:** The proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 18 is 20.6% and 17.4% respectively (CAPMAS, 2015).

**Indicator 5.3.2:** The proportion of girls and women aged 15–17 years who have undergone female genital mutilation is 61% (Ministry of Health).

<sup>1</sup> UN Women ESAR (n.d.), *Women and sustainable development goals*.



**Indicator 11.7.2:** In 2015, 13% of women aged 18-64 reported being exposed to any form of violence in public spaces during the 12 months preceding the survey (ECGBV, 2015). Furthermore, 42.8% of female youth aged 13-29 experienced sexual harassment (SYPE, 2014).

## Measurement challenges

Data on violence against women and girls (whether survey-based or administrative data) are crucial to measuring the magnitude of the problem, as well as understanding the various forms of violence and their consequences, identifying groups at high risk, exploring the barriers to seeking help and ensuring that the appropriate responses are being provided and reach women of all ages everywhere. They are also necessary to monitor change over time and assess the effectiveness of the policies and programmes tackling the issue.

However, collecting data on violence against women and girls is complex, with its innate sensitivity creating a number of methodological and ethical challenges affecting the reliability and quality of the collection, analysis and dissemination of data. Data on different forms of violence and prevalence levels among different groups and/or regions within countries is often difficult to gather on a regular basis. Moreover, conducting research and collecting data on the phenomenon requires taking into consideration specific ethical and safety concerns to ensure that women feel safe to speak openly about their experiences<sup>2</sup>.

Currently in Egypt there is limited data on violence against women and girls that occurs outside home. In addition, data on specific forms of violence such as sexual harassment or trafficking is limited.

## UN Women Egypt's work towards the SDGs Violence Against Women related targets

Ending violence against women (EVAW) is one of UN Women's core areas of work. UN Women Egypt works closely with the Government of Egypt to support the implementation of the strategic objectives on violence against women as part of the National Strategy on Women's Empowerment 2030.



**Target 11.7:** To develop a better understanding of the challenges and needs of women using public transport, ITDP, UN-Habitat and UN Women Egypt conducted a series of surveys and focus groups with commuters in the city. This data collection

exercise aimed to capture the travel patterns and preferences of women and girls, and collect sex-disaggregated data on women and girls' most used modes of transport, trip origins and destinations, trip purposes, and safety and security concerns. The findings will inform the gender-sensitive design of the Cairo BRT system.



**Target 5.2:** In partnership with the National Council for Women, UN Women Egypt has been collaborating with the Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research 'Baseera' to design and establish an Observatory on the Status of Women at the National Council for Women. This Gender Equality Observatory serves as a repository of data and information on the status of gender equality and women's empowerment and allows the NCW and its partners to analyse the current situation and impact of legal and policy frameworks on women and girls. The Observatory launched a survey to identify "Egyptian's Perspectives on Women's Issues". 6000 respondents (60% men and 40% women) were asked about several issues, including education, marriage, employment and violence against women. The findings should provide a credible evidence base to inform public policies and strategies on women's issues in Egypt, and additionally support the government in developing robust indicators to track progress in the implementation of the Nations Strategy on Women's Empowerment (NSWE).

<sup>2</sup> UN Women (2018), Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.