

9 August 2021 – From 26 to 29 of July, the WHO Regional Office took part in a regional workshop, co-organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the UN Women Regional Office for Arab States to facilitate knowledge sharing and support Member States in their efforts to enhance services to protect women survivors of violence.

Ms Anna Rita Ronzoni, Gender-based Violence Technical Officer (WHO Regional Office), co-led together with Dr Manal Benkinrane, Programme Specialist on Ending Violence Against Women (UN Women Regional Office for Arab States), the session on “Data collection on violence against women in order to enhance service provision” and led the session on “Health services to protect women survivors of violence”.

The data collection session focused on the importance of collecting data on violence against women, the different types of data sources, including remote data collection. The session was also an opportunity to share the alarming 2018 estimates of violence against women that showed 31% of women are subjected to violence. Participants were also informed about the newly developed WHO digital Global Database on the Prevalence of Violence against Women (2000–2018), a comprehensive tool on the prevalence of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. Finally, a discussion was held on data collection in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, based on a WHO/UN Women document “Violence against women and girls: data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic”.

The session on “Health services to protect women survivors of violence” focused on enhancing participants’ knowledge on the importance of the health system response to violence against women, as a culturally acceptable entry point and a key element of a multisectoral prevention and response strategy. Experiences from the field were presented by WHO Iraq and Sudan country offices. Both countries conducted a quality assurance assessment of health services for women survivors of violence. The findings helped to identify important gaps, particularly in the training of health providers and their high turnover, the lack of equipment in health facilities to ensure privacy and confidentiality for survivors and difficulties in referring survivors both internally within the health system and to other services. Discussions focused on the different challenges that participants face in identifying women subjected to violence, provision of services and referrals, and the importance of strengthening networking among countries to share good practices, such as for example the Palestinian National Referral System Takamol, for the referral of women survivors of violence. The Palestinian referral system is one of the few national referral systems in the Region, with institutionalized standard operating procedures that connect police, health and social services for women survivors of violence, which allow cases to be dealt with in a holistic multisectoral way.

The workshop brought together more than 100 representatives from National Women Machineries and other relevant stakeholders in the Region who provide services for survivors of violence. Through their participation in this webinar, the Regional Office asserted its position as a key stakeholder in the multisectoral interagency framework to prevent and respond to violence against women in the Region and renewed its commitment to continue engaging with partners in forging ways forward to strengthen services for survivors of gender-based violence.

[Related links](#)

[Violence against women prevalence estimates, 2018](#)

[WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region factsheet. Violence against women prevalence estimates, 2018](#)

[WHO Global Database on the prevalence of violence against women](#)

[Violence against women and girls data collection during COVID-19](#)

[United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia](#)

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