



26 July 2021 – On 15 July 2021, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and UN Women Regional Office for Arab States organized a regional virtual launch on the new estimates of violence against women in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. The webinar aimed to draw attention to newly published data and explore how best they could be utilized to inform actions towards strengthening data collection for the prevention of and the response to violence against women.

The new data were published in the report on [“Violence against women estimates, 2018. Global, regional and national estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women”](#), launched at the global level on 9 March 2021. The report, developed by WHO on behalf the Violence Against Women Inter-Agency Working Group on Estimation and Data, presents data from 2000 to 2018, as an update of the one published in 2013.

Dr Hala Sakr, Regional Advisor Violence, Injuries and Disability (WHO Regional Office) and Dr Manal Benkirane, Regional Programme Specialist on Ending Violence Against Woman (UN Women Regional Office for Arab States), began the webinar with opening remarks. They highlighted that the new estimates driving political and public awareness will contribute to establishing a more evidence-based response to ending violence against women and to advancing and driving both political and public awareness of the issue in order to move towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They noted the importance of highlighting stories behind the statistics and the many shattered lives behind every figure; stories of women subjected to violence because of insufficient investment in prevention programmes, lack of legal frameworks to protect them, or inadequate social or economic support to enable them to escape such violence.

Dr Lynn Marie Sardinha, Violence against Women Research and Data Officer (WHO headquarters), presented the new estimates that are alarming both at the global and regional levels. In the Eastern Mediterranean Region 31% of women are subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence from a non-partner. This is the third highest prevalence across WHO regions and is slightly above the global estimate of 30% (1 in 3 women). She also shared with the audience the new [WHO digital Global Database on the Prevalence of Violence against Women](#)

This interactive data visualization platform presents the first global, regional, and country/area estimates on intimate partner violence, and global and regional estimates on non-partner sexual violence in the United Nations Sustainable Goals era (2015–2030) for 161 countries and areas across the globe.

The need to prioritize efforts to address violence against women was emphasized by Dr Lina Abirafeh, Executive Director of the Arab Institute for Women at Lebanese American University, who emphasized the need to address the data gap in the Region as it hinders overall progress in addressing violence against women in the Region. Dr Abirafeh presented some of the efforts undertaken to address the information gap, including building the capacity and training national and local civil society organizations, community-based organizations and government stakeholders as they play a pivotal role in advancing women's rights and gender equality overall.

The virtual launch was an opportunity to shed the light on some of the joint efforts of WHO and UN Women to strengthen capacities on measurement of violence against women in the Region and offered recommendations for strengthening related regional and country data, as well as communication and collaboration for preventing and responding to violence against women. During the webinar WHO also renewed its commitment towards eliminating violence against women and continued collaboration with sister United Nations agencies and partners to forge the course ahead to strengthen health and multisectoral efforts to address violence against women at all levels.

Related links

[Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018](#)

[WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region factsheet. Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018](#) | [Arabic](#) | [French](#)

[Link to the Global Database: WHO Global Database on the Prevalence of Violence Against Women](#)

[31% of women in the Eastern Mediterranean Women have faced violence from a partner in their lifetime, says new UN report](#)

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