



## 4<sup>th</sup> Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

**FORUM:** Legal Committee (GA6)

**TOPIC:** Ensuring the right to effective legal protection for victims of domestic violence and abuse

**STUDENT OFFICER:** Panagiota Katsifi

**POSITION:** Co-Chair

### PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Panagiota Katsifi, and I have the utmost honor of serving as one of the Co-Chairs of the Legal Committee at the 4th AML MUN conference, where we will be focusing on the theme: “Democracy, good governance and civil society”. I am an 11th-year student at the Greek-French school “Jeanne d' Arc”, and this will be my 7th conference, as well as my first time as a Student Officer. I am sincerely excited to share this experience with you! Whether you have any questions on this topic or anything else related to the conference, feel free to contact me via my email: pkatsifi@gmail.com

### TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a complex problem that affects millions of people worldwide regardless of race, age, gender, socioeconomic background, relationship status and sexual orientation. According to the Istanbul Convention<sup>1</sup>, domestic violence is defined as: “all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.”

Traditionally, women constitute the overwhelming majority of the victims. According to studies conducted by the World Health Organization, one in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence, primarily from an intimate partner. But it is important to distinguish domestic violence and gender-based violence, which thrives on power imbalance and discrimination against women. Nowadays it is observed that men, non-binary individuals, children and the elderly are also targeted. According to research conducted by the National Centre for Domestic

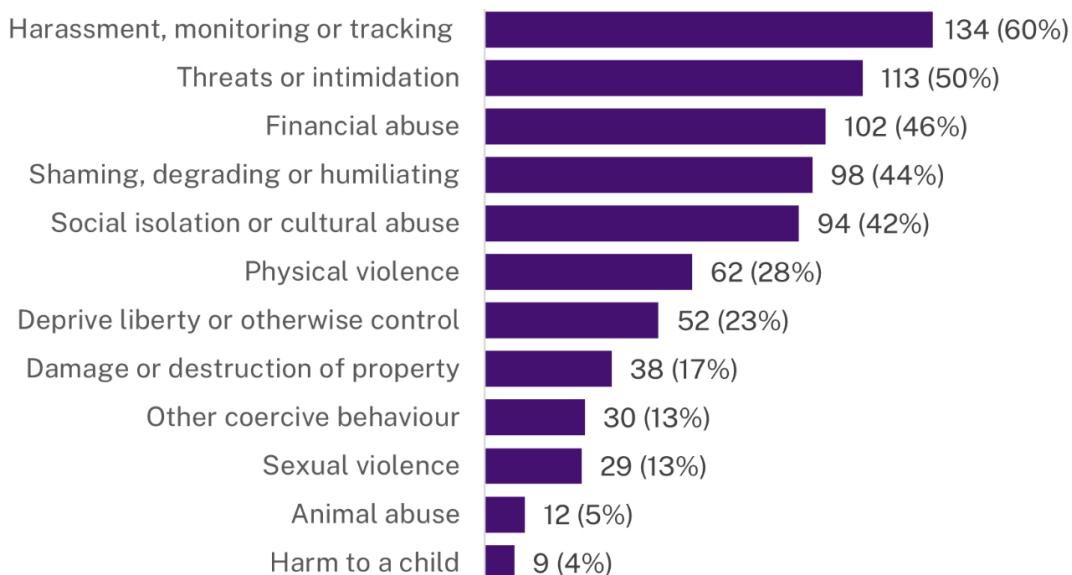
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<sup>1</sup> *The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) - Gender Matters - [Www.Coe.Int](http://Www.Coe.Int), [www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/council-of-europe-convention-on-preventing-and-combating-violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence](http://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/council-of-europe-convention-on-preventing-and-combating-violence-against-women-and-domestic-violence).* Accessed 26 June 2025.



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Violence<sup>2</sup>, in the UK “for every three victims of domestic abuse, two will be female, one will be male.”, while globally up to 1 billion children between the ages of 2 to 17 years old are estimated to have experienced domestic abuse.<sup>3</sup>



The types of abusive behaviors that were documented by the New South Wales Police, Australia from July 2024 to March 2025.<sup>4</sup>

The consequences of domestic abuse on victims are visible on physical, emotional and social levels. To begin with, domestic violence can include short-term (burns, bruises, etc.) and long-term health problems (epilepsy, asthma, etc.), as well as impairments and gynecological issues. Victims are also psychologically affected, experiencing fear for their life and their family, anxiety, low self-esteem and shame. This can result in depression, panic attacks, PTSD, self-harm and even suicide. Furthermore, in domestic violence cases, the relationship between parents and children is in danger, since the victims' capacity to connect with their kids is lowered and the chance for harsh parenting and neglect is increased. Substance misuse is also a very dangerous but common consequence of this phenomenon. Socially, victims tend to isolate themselves from their families, friends and communities, leading to decreased access to support systems, while victims' professional lives and their capacity to preserve their financial independence are also hindered.

<sup>2</sup> “Domestic Violence against Men · NCDV.” NCDV, 22 Aug. 2024, [www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-violence-abuse-against-men/](http://www.ncdv.org.uk/domestic-violence-abuse-against-men/). Accessed 28 June 2025.

<sup>3</sup> “Violence against Children.” World Health Organization, 29 Nov. 2022, [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-children](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-children). Accessed 28 June 2025.

<sup>4</sup> “Domestic violence & coercive control.” BOCSAR, 31 July 2025, [Domestic violence & coercive control | BOCSAR](http://Domestic violence & coercive control | BOCSAR). Accessed 18 Aug. 2025.



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Nevertheless, domestic violence affects not only the direct victims but also has devastating consequences for other family members, friends, coworkers and witnesses, especially children. Regular exposure to domestic violence puts children at risk for a range of social and physical issues, as well as normalizes violence and thus increases the potential for abuse to continue. At the same time, domestic violence harms economic security and quality of life, making it difficult for low- and middle-income communities to grow.

Therefore, effective and inclusive access to legal protection is necessary to protect fundamental rights that are being violated, such as the right to life and security. However, the provision of legal protection is often hindered, due to cultural and religious norms and resource gaps, including limited access to shelters, legal protection, and mental health services. This also underlines the reasons behind serious tendencies observed in victims, such the fear of social isolation and of being disbelieved or shamed, that lead to underreporting and the silencing of victims.

Hence, in first place, the establishment of international treaties and guidelines (such as the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW) is needed to criminalize domestic violence, pursue offenders and provide victim support, as well as prevent the accentuation of the phenomenon. The recognition of all forms of domestic abuse, beyond physical violence, is also crucial. Furthermore, member states of the United Nations should integrate these measures into their national law and ensure their implementation through legal tools and practices, including the training of legal and public safety personnel, the creation of shelters and hotlines and the funding of those forenamed services.

### DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

#### Domestic violence

Domestic violence is a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound someone.<sup>5</sup> It fundamentally takes three forms, that are all characterized by the abuser's aim to exert control over the victim: intimate partner violence (IPV), child abuse and elder abuse.

#### Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

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<sup>5</sup> "What Is Domestic Abuse?" *United Nations*, [www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse](http://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse). Accessed 26 June 2025.



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The term IPV includes “stalking, sexual and physical violence, and psychological aggression by a current or former partner”.<sup>6</sup> IPV can range from a single episode to ongoing, severe abuse. As a form of domestic violence, it is also recognized as a form of gender-based violence, impacting both men and women.

### Child Abuse

This form of violence, that is exercised by a custodian towards a child under 18 years old, refers to emotional, sexual and physical abuse, or neglect. It can also include child molestation.

### Elder Abuse

This type of abuse involves intentional or unintentional acts by a caregiver that cause or risk harm to an elderly person. By an elderly person, we are referring to any individual over the age of 65.

### Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs)

DVPOs are a civil order that allow police and magistrates' courts to provide immediate protection to victims by enabling the police and magistrates' courts to put in place protective measures in the immediate aftermath of a domestic violence incident where there is insufficient evidence to charge a perpetrator and provide protection to a victim via bail conditions.<sup>7</sup>

### Dom Domestic Violence Protection Notices (DVPNs)

A DVPN is an emergency non-molestation and eviction notice which can be issued by the police, when attending a domestic abuse incident, to a perpetrator. Because the DVPN is a police-issued notice, it is effective from the time of issue, thereby giving the victim the immediate support they require in such a situation. A DVPO can prevent the perpetrator from returning to a residence and from having contact with the victim for up to 28 days. This allows the victim a degree of breathing space to consider their options with the help of a support agency.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Huecker, Martin R. “Domestic Violence.” *StatPearls [Internet]*., U.S. National Library of Medicine, 9 Apr. 2023, [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK499891/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK499891/). Accessed 26 June 2025.

<sup>7</sup> “Domestic Violence Protection Notices (Dvpns) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (Dvpos) Guidance.” GOV.UK, [www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-protection-orders/domestic-violence-protection-notices-dvpns-and-domestic-violence-protection-orders-dvpos-guidance-sections-24-33-crime-and-security-act-2010](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-protection-orders/domestic-violence-protection-notices-dvpns-and-domestic-violence-protection-orders-dvpos-guidance-sections-24-33-crime-and-security-act-2010). Accessed 28 July 2025.

<sup>8</sup> “Domestic Violence Protection Notices (Dvpns) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (Dvpos) Guidance.” GOV.UK, [www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-protection-orders/domestic-violence-protection-notices-dvpns-and-domestic-violence-protection-orders-dvpos-guidance-sections-24-33-crime-and-security-act-2010](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-protection-orders/domestic-violence-protection-notices-dvpns-and-domestic-violence-protection-orders-dvpos-guidance-sections-24-33-crime-and-security-act-2010). Accessed 28 July 2025.



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### Government tenancy

A government tenant, also known as a social tenant, is an individual that rents a home provided by the government usually at lower prices and with stronger protections. It is primarily addressed to people in need, due to economic difficulties, disability, advanced age or domestic abuse. Secure tenancy is a lifetime tenancy, that allows tenants to continue living in their home indefinitely, provided that they respect the conditions.

### Parole

Parole is the conditional release of prisoners before the full completion of their sentence, on the condition that they are supervised by parole officers and are following the terms/conditions of their parole. Common conditions of parole include adhering to curfews, confinement to specific geographical areas, notifying parole officers of any changes of address, refraining from the use of illegal substances, and refraining from committing any additional crimes while on parole.<sup>9</sup>

### The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The CEDAW Committee is a body of 23 independent experts on women's rights that monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The CEDAW treaty opposes the effects of discrimination, which include violence, poverty, and lack of legal protections, along with the denial of inheritance, property rights, and access to credit.<sup>10</sup>

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### The right to legal protection

Our topic concerns domestic violence victims' right to effective legal protection. But what does this right really involve? The right to legal protection is victims' access to legal aid and the ability to submit an application to the police or a prosecutor in order to report domestic abuse or threat of it. It also includes being transported to a medical facility to receive medical aid, being informed about protection and having the choice of being accommodated in a safe place. The stakeholders involved, responsible for preventing domestic abuse and providing social

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<sup>9</sup> "Parole." Legal Information Institute, [www.law.cornell.edu/wex/parole](http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/parole). Accessed 28 July 2025.

<sup>10</sup> "Domestic Violence Protection Notices (Dvpns) and Domestic Violence Protection Orders (Dvpos) Guidance." GOV.UK, [www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-protection-orders/domestic-violence-protection-notices-dvpns-and-domestic-violence-protection-orders-dvpos-guidance-sections-24-33-crime-and-security-act-2010](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-violence-protection-orders/domestic-violence-protection-notices-dvpns-and-domestic-violence-protection-orders-dvpos-guidance-sections-24-33-crime-and-security-act-2010). Accessed 28 July 2025.



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support to victims, include judicial authorities, prosecutors, state agencies and social service non-governmental institutions, such as NGOs.

### Risk Factors

Domestic violence is a multifaceted problem that has its roots in familial, individual, and social issues.

#### Familial Factors

To begin with, children who have experienced domestic abuse at home are more likely to repeat the cycle, both as abusers and victims, because violence has been normalized and presented as a natural way to solve problems. In this way, boys who have been taught that women are inferior to men will adopt a discriminatory and violent attitude in their relationship. Similarly, girls who witness their mothers or female relatives not seeking legal measures against their abusers, are more likely to not report their abuse. In addition, restricted emotional bonding between children and their caregivers, as well as family dysfunction and separation, increases the risk of domestic violence towards children.

#### Individual Factors

In addition, lower levels of education are strongly linked to higher rates of domestic violence, while drug and alcohol abuse raises the risk of violence. Furthermore, a person struggling with emotional dependence, mental illness, insecurity, and low self-esteem is more vulnerable to accepting domestic violence.

#### Social Factors

Religious and cultural norms often promote fixed gender roles, discouraging victims to leave or report abusive behaviors to protect their security, honor and stability. The emotional dependence on men where women do not have working rights also aggravates the situation. Especially in patriarchal societies, the needs of males are prioritized over those of females and children. This is why in those societies, males use violence as a mean to control females and to assert their dominance and “supremacy”. Moreover, according to research<sup>11</sup> communities with high poverty, criminality and

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<sup>11</sup> Capaldi D.M., Knoble N.B., Shortt J.W., Kim H.K. "A Systematic Review of Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Violence." *Partner Abuse*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, 3 Apr. 2012, [A Systematic Review of Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Violence - PubMed](#), Accessed 26 June 2025.



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unemployment levels, where there are restricted educational and economic opportunities, present higher domestic violence rates. This is also observed in communities where there is low social connection and involvement, and thus the neighborhoods are less likely to intervene in a case of a domestic violence incident.

### Challenges presented

There are numerous social, cultural, and economic barriers that challenge domestic violence victims' capacity to seek effective legal protection. To begin with, underreporting poses a major problem, since victims are hesitant to seek protection from law enforcement agencies, due to lack of trust in authorities and lack of belief in being believed and receiving help, especially in patriarchal societies. Fear of shame, social stigma, and reprisal from their local communities also prevent victims from denouncing the abuse.

Furthermore, practical challenges are presented, such as language barriers and economic dependency. Another important challenge in domestic abuse cases is the lack of evidence, because it is often hidden or not visible, and there are rarely external witnesses to confirm. Hence, legal decisions are often based on the victim's testimony and experts' reports.

In addition, women and children are particularly vulnerable to abuse in war zones. More specifically, women and girls are often experiencing sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, sexual slavery and child marriage, that is mostly perpetrated by men. The perpetrators include not only soldiers who use violence as a weapon of war but also individuals in position of power, such as humanitarian aid workers, that sexually exploit, harass or abuse victims, as seen in Congo and Haiti. Simultaneously, displacement and disruption due to conflict increase intimate partner violence, while mental health challenges arise in victims, including as PTSD, depression and psychosomatic disorders, that are caused by violence, exposure to war and discrimination.

Still, it is important to address victims' lack of knowledge regarding domestic violence, as they often do not realize that they are subjected to abusive behavior, considering incidents as not serious enough, nor are they aware of the justice process. This is why they often seek help from other institutions, "such as family support, community leaders, local NGOs specializing in domestic abuse, or religious institutions."<sup>12</sup>

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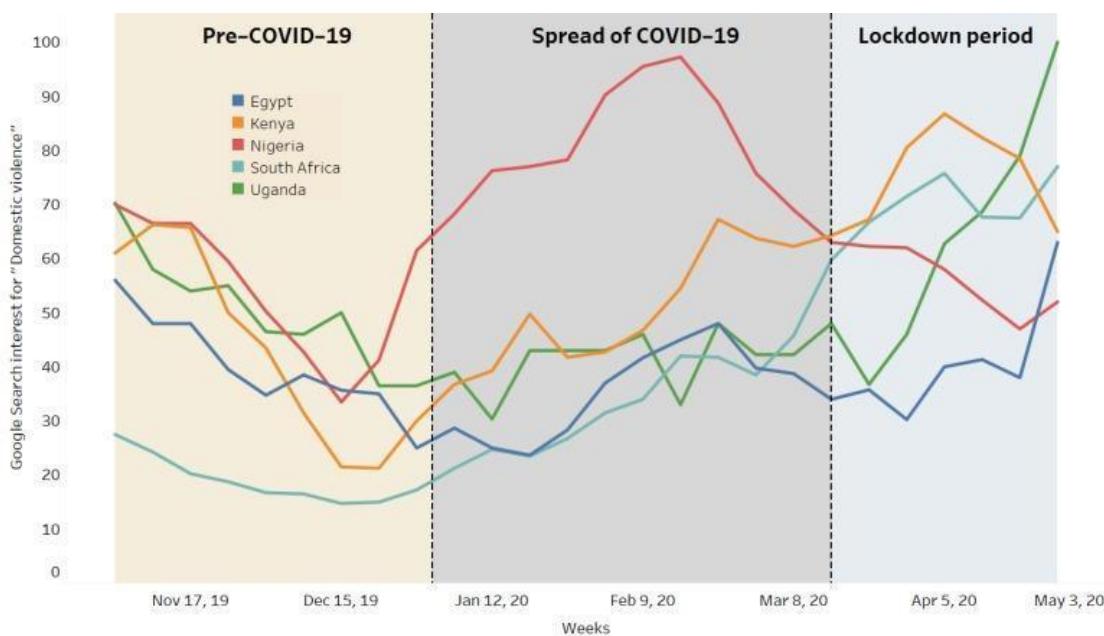
<sup>12</sup> Kainazarova, M., Abdukarimova, Z., Aitkhozhin, K., & Bayanbayeva, A. "Quantifying a hidden crisis: Challenges in addressing domestic violence against women in Kazakhstan." *International Journal of Discrimination and the Law*, 23 Apr. 2025, [Quantifying a hidden crisis: Challenges in addressing domestic violence against](#)



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### Domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, an important rise in domestic violence reports occurred globally in comparison with 2019. This phenomenon is firstly due to the fact that victims were confined in their home with their abusers, without access to support services, which were in several areas closed or operating at reduced capacity, and isolated from those likely to spot signs of abuse and encourage them to seek protection. Simultaneously, the financial impact of the pandemic plays a double role regarding the escalation of the problem, because elevated unemployment rates, economic insecurity, and augmented stress increase the risk of violent behavior.



Google searches for 'domestic violence help' in Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda since the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>13</sup>

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

### United Kingdom (UK)

In the UK, 1 in 5 adults are subject to domestic violence during their lifetime. This is why in 2021, they passed the Domestic Abuse Act that firstly expands the definition and then allows domestic violence victims to automatically be eligible to receive special measures in criminal courts, such as giving evidence in live video or in

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women in Kazakhstan - Makpal Kainazarova, Zauresh Abdulkarimova, Kabdulsamikh Aitkhozhin, Aigerim Bayanbayeva, 2025. Accessed 15 July 2025.

<sup>13</sup> Chuku, C., Mukasa, A., & Yenice, Y. "Putting women and girls' safety first in Africa's response to COVID-19." Brookings, 9 May 2022, [Putting women and girls' safety first in Africa's response to COVID-19 | Brookings](#). Accessed 18 Aug. 2025.



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private, so that quality of evidence is not affected by stress or fear. In addition, the Act places a legal duty to local authorities to support victims, requiring them to provide at first safe accommodation, such as refuges or dispersed accommodation in cases of larger families or those needing privacy, and then support services in those places. Last but not least, it protects victims that have to leave existing secure tenancies because of their abusers, by granting them new secure lifetime tenancy for a safer home.

#### Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

In Congo, numerous citizens, especially women, face domestic violence, as up to 52% of women have been victims. The main causes mostly concern the living conditions, as high poverty levels and regular conflicts result in instability as well as the normalization of violence. Furthermore, patriarchal beliefs are deeply rooted in their mentality and everyday life, since women have unequal access to education and work. Hence, women are not only economically dependent on their abusive men but also learn to tolerate abuse, perceiving it as a private family matter. The Congolese government has tried remediating the situation, through the 2016 Law on Prevention and Fight Against Sexual Violence and several Family Code improvements, but corruption, weak judicial systems and insufficient awareness complicate their enforcement.

#### Afghanistan

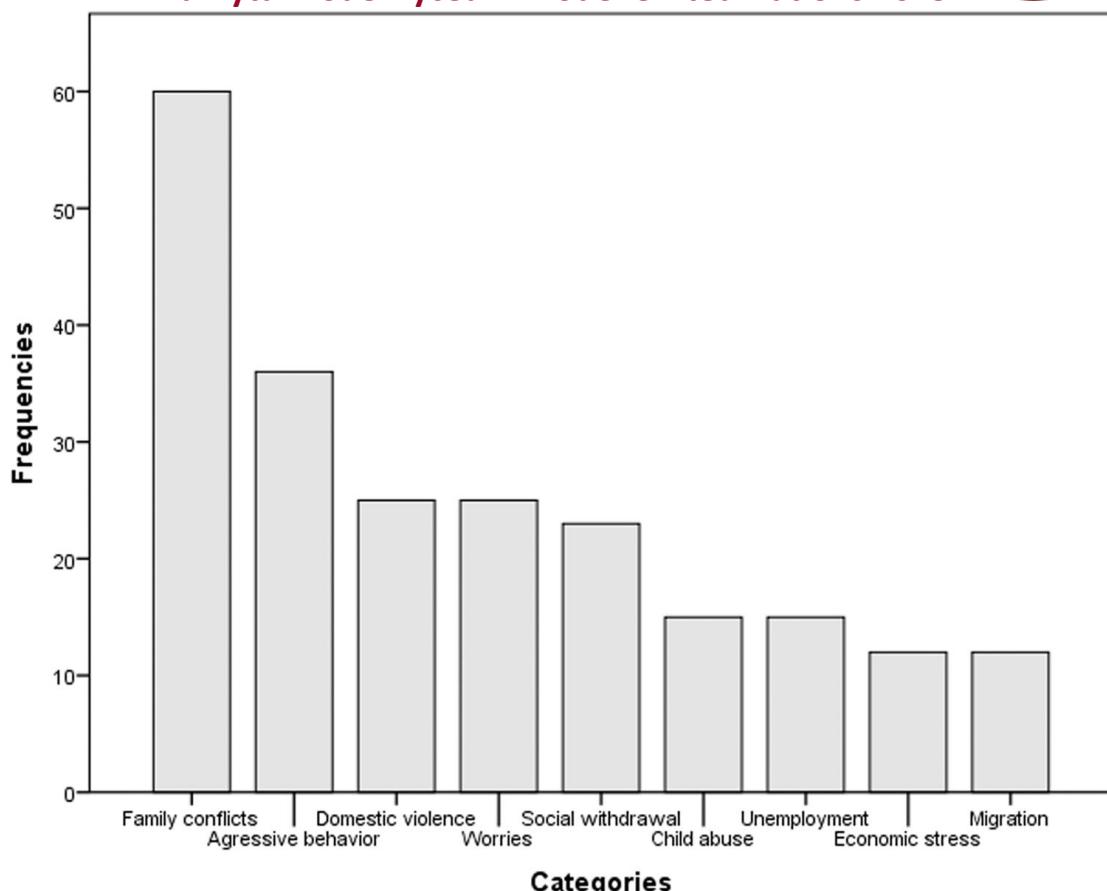
Even prior to the Taliban takeover, nine in 10 Afghan women had experienced some sort of intimate-partner violence in their lifetimes, as traditional social norms expect them to “protect their family honor” and endure violence, without leaving or denouncing their abusers. This is why previous international attempts to support women in Afghanistan, that were based on western ideas of empowering women to leave their violent relationships, have failed, since these practices “violate these norms and incite stigma and further perpetuate violence at the hands of families, communities, and authorities”<sup>14</sup>. Nevertheless, Taliban's recent decisions have aggravated the situation, by shutting down women's protection centers and by imprisoning female victims, seeking help, under the pretext of protecting them.

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<sup>14</sup> Mukerji, R., Saboor, L., Paphitis, S., Devakumar, D., & Mannell, J. “How does domestic violence stigma manifest in women’s lives in Afghanistan? A study of survivors’ lived experiences of help-seeking across three provinces.” *Global Public Health*, Taylor & Francis Online, 15 May 2023, [Full article: How does domestic violence stigma manifest in women’s lives in Afghanistan? A study of survivors’ lived experiences of help-seeking across three provinces.](#). Accessed 28 July 2025.



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The consequences of the Taliban takeover on Afghan civilians' lives, including family conflicts, domestic violence, and aggression.<sup>15</sup>

### UN Women

As most domestic violence victims are women, UN Women plays a crucial role in providing effective legal protection for the abused, collaborating with governments and civil society institutions. To begin with, they promote legal reforms, as up to 57 countries have strengthened their national programs to end violence. At the same time, UN Women engage with men and boys, resulting in 2 million of them attending positive masculinity initiatives. The organization also collects data and proposes solutions, having presented over 1,700 legislative measures in 188 countries.

### Safe Horizon

Safe Horizon is the largest nonprofit victims' services organization in the USA, annually supporting more than 250,000 children, adults, and families impacted by domestic abuse and crime. First of all, shelters for victims are provided within the organization, as well as legal aid, including assistance in legal proceedings and explanation of the court process. Safe Horizon also offers counseling, by ensuring

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<sup>15</sup> Orang, Mina, et al. "Connections between Family Violence and Violence in the Public Sphere in Afghanistan." *Nature News*, Nature Publishing Group, 7 Sept. 2023, [www.nature.com/articles/s41599-023-02013-1](http://www.nature.com/articles/s41599-023-02013-1). Accessed 18 Aug. 2025.



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access to case managers for emergency intervention support, and practical help when needed, namely transportation, food and clothes, lock changes and more. Furthermore, the organization plays a crucial role in supporting children, firstly through its Child Advocacy Centers (CACs), which provide a safe and supportive environment for underage victims. Moreover, Safe Horizons offers free educational care to children, in cases where the parents have to appear in family court, while it also facilitates secure supervised meeting between children and their non-custodial parents, when ordered by the family court.

### TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT
June 1871	Alabama is the first state to criminalize assaults by husbands against their wives.
28 <sup>th</sup> of August 1857	The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 legalizes divorce in the UK.
1 <sup>st</sup> of June 1922	The Soviet Union is the first country to recognize marital rape.
1974	In the USA, Women's Advocates was founded, providing a divorce rights information line and then opening the first domestic abuse shelter in Minnesota, USA.
18 <sup>th</sup> of December 1979	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is signed, recognizing gender-based violence globally.
20 <sup>th</sup> of November 1989	The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted.
20 <sup>th</sup> of December 1993	The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women passed, defining and criminalizing domestic abuse.
25 <sup>th</sup> of March 1999	Victims of gender base persecution are acknowledged as a particular social group meriting refugee status



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4 <sup>th</sup> of September 2000	Domestic abuse offenders are prohibited from cross-examining victims
11 <sup>th</sup> of May 2011	The EU Istanbul convention opened for signature.
13 <sup>th</sup> of April 2013	Pornographic abuse is criminalized and 'revenge porn' is recognized as an offence
16 <sup>th</sup> of February 2025	The African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AUCEVAWG) was adopted.

#### RELEVANT UN TREATIES, CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

##### Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

This Convention was adopted in 1979, aiming to define discrimination, to guide Member States in ensuring gender equality in fields, including education, work and family life, and to require them to eliminate violence against women, through national legal reforms, the establishment of specialized courts and the promotion of cultural shifts. While numerous countries amended their laws on themes, such as marital rape, divorce rights and equal pay, and ameliorated their protection mechanisms, the non-binding nature of the Convention questions its effectiveness, as its implementation remains uneven.

##### A/RES/71/170 - Intensification of efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: domestic violence

This General Assembly resolution acknowledges that domestic violence is often rooted in gender inequality and social norms. Thus, it urges Member States to adopt legal reforms, that criminalize all forms of domestic abuse, including cyber violence, ensure accountability as well as protection of victims, while creating preventive measures, through education, male engagement and public awareness. It also promotes victims' right to have access to support services, such as legal aid, shelters, and healthcare.

#### PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

##### Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), USA

In 1994, the USA passed the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, a milestone for tackling domestic violence. Ever since, VAWA has been reauthorized 4 times, to



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establish inclusive legal frameworks, ameliorate law enforcement and provide increased legal assistance. To begin with, thanks to the VAWA, the National Domestic Violence Hotline was created, receiving more than 22,000 calls every month, while local prevention programs were supported. The VAWA also increased access to safety and justice services for marginalized groups, such as Native American women, immigrants, youth, and public housing residents, while providing culturally and linguistically broadened services. In addition, resources for housing assistance have been developed, through ameliorating existing housing protections and increasing access to emergency and short-term housing. Similarly, the act funds the training of law enforcement officers, judges, advocates and prosecutors, resulting in over 500,000 of them being trained every year. The 2022 reauthorization also focused on strengthening tribal jurisdiction, by firstly allowing tribal courts to prosecute a wider range of crimes committed by non-Native people, including sexual assault and child abuse, and secondly by funding and guiding tribal governments in strengthening their justice systems. Lastly, VAWA established a federal rape shield law, which funds rape crisis centers, calls for stricter penalties and covers victims' rape exams expenses.

#### Maria da Penha Law, Brazil

Maria de Penha<sup>16</sup>

In May 1983, Maria da Penha was left paraplegic by her violent husband, and it took 19 years for the Brazilian justice system to arrest and imprison him. After international criticism, in 2006 Brazil created the Maria da Penha Law on Domestic and Family Violence, that establishes special courts and stricter criminal sanctions for offenders, while also developing rehabilitation programs for them. In addition, it creates special police bodies, as well as patrols by civil guards in municipalities, to remediate the situation. recognized as a violation of human rights, rather than merely a crime against public morals, resulting in over 300,000 prosecution and 100,000 final judgments by 2011, according to UN women.



In this way, domestic violence was

<sup>16</sup> Fernanda, Canofre. "The Story of Maria Da Penha, the Woman Whose Name Was given to Brazil's Domestic Violence Law." *Global Voices*, 3 June 2025, [The story of Maria da Penha, the woman whose name was given to Brazil's domestic violence law · Global Voices](https://globalvoices.org/2025/06/03/the-story-of-maria-da-penha-the-woman-whose-name-was-given-to-brazil-s-domestic-violence-law/). Accessed 18 Aug. 2025.



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### Reforming national laws

National legal frameworks should be developed to firstly include all forms of domestic violence, besides physical ones, and similarly include all potential victims, such as women, men, children, elderly and more, as well as be accessible to members of marginalized communities not only in urban but also in rural areas, to tackle geographical, social and economic issues. Emergency legal mechanisms, including restraining orders and temporary custody arrangements, should also be integrated into countries' legal systems to protect victims.

### Penalties

Penalties should also be addressed, since a lack of faith in the justice system's ability to deliver justice discourages victims from seeking legal aid. Domestic violence is a particularly serious offence, that is rarely a one-off incident and concerns violations of trust and safety. According to your country's policy, you can either advocate for more severe penalties, such as pre-trial detention, sentence without parole and/or heavy fines, or you can support more flexible and community-based sentencing options, such as obligatory treatment programs and support services.

### Developing support mechanisms

In the first place, the development of emergency shelters and multilingual hotlines is necessary, so that victims gain access to emotional and medical support, as well as legal guidance. Free legal presentation should also be guaranteed, since legal systems often seem complex, frightening, and unfair to victims. In addition, measures, such as housing and financial assistance, reintegration programs and physiological care, are necessary to ensure victims' ability to retrieve their independence and re-enter society. Accessibility to all those forenamed mechanisms should be addressed, too.

### Effective Law Enforcement

Firstly, it is imperative to establish international and national response protocols in cases of domestic abuse and then to train officers on those protocols for the better applications of laws, through workshops and stimulations. Strengthening coordination between police, law officers and social services is also necessary, as well as the use of technologies, such as digital evidence and monitoring equipment. Simultaneously, healthcare professionals play a very important role in identifying and reporting domestic violence incidents. Hence, they should also be trained to treat physical and mental traumas with discretion, document them and provide victims with helpful information, including locations of domestic violence organizations in the area and domestic violence support hotlines. Special courts should also be established so



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that law officers become equipped with both knowledge and experience to deal with sensitive cases of this kind.

### Collaboration

All Member States, to a greater or lesser extent, face difficulties in ensuring effective legal protection for domestic violence. This is why collaboration is necessary in all forms. In the first place, countries should be encouraged to collaborate with UN agencies, since they can offer funding and guidance in developing legal frameworks and capacity building programs. Data collection is also essential for identifying patterns and risk factors in order to create evidence-based policies tailored to each areas' need. Still, collaboration among countries is also very beneficial, as it allows the exchange of knowledge and experience. Civil society also plays a key role, as they influence state decisions. Therefore, collaboration with NGOs should be supported, too.

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