

# How the Climate Crisis Fans the Flames of Gender-Based Violence

As the climate crisis worsens globally, women and girls are facing increasing rates of gender-based violence—such as sexual assault, intimate partner violence, forced child marriage, and forced transactional sex.

But how does an environmental crisis become a crisis of women's rights and safety?

The following slides explore key statistics and provide explanations for the alarming rise in violence against women and girls.



# The Global Increase in Gender Based Violence

In Mozambique, regions with severe weather saw an increase of 91% of reported intimate partner violence against women (1).

Women exposed to Hurricane Katrina faced a 5–8 times higher risk of experiencing violence from intimate partners (2).

In Vanuatu, the aftermath of two cyclones resulted in rates of reported intimate partner violence skyrocketing by 300% (3).

A heatwave in Spain resulted in a 40% increase in the risk of intimate partner femicide (4).



# Food Insecurity Jeopardizes Women's Safety

As severe weather events increase food insecurity, women and girls are increasingly sold via early marriage and transactional sex (5).

As a result, women and teen girls experiencing severe food insecurity are twice as likely to contract HIV as other women—but men facing food insecurity do not have an increased risk of HIV (6).

Intimate partner violence increases as well; in Jordan, 62% of women experienced an increase in violence at home due to food insecurity. Women and girls also bear the brunt of the effects of food insecurity; in 2023, 74% of malnourished Syrians were women and girls (7).



# Droughts Expose Women to Sexual Violence

In over 90% of Bangladeshi households, women and girls are responsible for fetching water every day. However, droughts have extended the length of this journey and some women now must travel over six miles to find clean water. On this solo journey, these individuals are highly vulnerable to being ambushed and raped by predatory men (8).

As water becomes a scarce resource, predators will also use it to extort sex from women. For example, during droughts in Zimbabwe, some men guard wells and demand sexual acts before allowing any woman or girl to retrieve water (9).



# Dangers in Displacement

As homes are destroyed and people are relocated into temporary shelters, women and girls lose both privacy and security. This creates an opportunity for predators to harm women and leads to increased rates of sexual assault, rape, harassment, and even abduction (10).

Quotes from displaced women in Pakistan:

*“I lost my daughter when I came to this camp; she was 12, now people say she must have been sold by bad people.”*

*“Men here stare at us all the time and when our men are away, they try to give a shove or try to touch inappropriately, but what can we do?”*

(11).



# The Urgency of Climate Action & Gender Justice

To to save our planet and our sisters across the globe we must address the root causes of both climate change and gender inequality. The first step to enacting change is starting conversations to inform others of the painful reality faced by women in areas most impacted by the climate crisis.

Without an awareness of the truly dangerous impact the climate crisis is having on women and girls across the globe, there will be no efforts to create a gender based approach to resolving this issue. Share these stories and statistics to motivate those around you to enact change.





# Sources

1. Munala, L., Allen, E. M., Frederick, A. J., & Ngũnjiri, A. (2023). Climate change, extreme weather, and intimate partner violence in East African agrarian-based economies. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(23), 7124.
2. Harville, E. W., Taylor, C. A., Tesfai, H., Xu Xiong, & Buekens, P. (2010a). Experience of Hurricane Katrina and reported intimate partner violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 26(4), 833–845.
3. Morioka, K. (2016). Time to act on gender, climate change and disaster risk reduction. *UN Women*. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/11/time-to-act>
4. Sanz-Barbero, B., Linares, C., Vives-Cases, C., González, J. L., López-Ossorio, J. J., & Díaz, J. (2018). Heat wave and the risk of intimate partner violence. *Science of The Total Environment*, 644, 413–419.
5. Thurston, A. M., Stöckl, H., & Ranganathan, M. (2021). Natural hazards, disasters and violence against women and girls: A global mixed-methods systematic review. *BMJ Global Health*, 6(4).
6. Low, A., Gummerson, E., Schwitters, A., Bonifacio, R., Teferi, M., Mutenda, N., Ayton, S., Juma, J., Ahpoe, C., Ginindza, C., Patel, H., Biraro, S., Sachathep, K., Hakim, A. J., Barradas, D., Hassani, A. S., Kirungi, W., Jackson, K., Goeke, L., ... Findley, S. (2022). Food insecurity and the risk of HIV acquisition: Findings from population-based surveys in six sub-saharan African countries (2016–2017). *BMJ Open*, 12(7). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2021-058704>
7. Martin-Johnson, O. (2024). Correlation between climate change, Syrian Civil War, & gender based violence. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Multidisciplinary Education*, 3(5).
8. Gender Based Violence and its intersection with Climate Change. *The Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence*. (2022, March 22). <https://www.gbv.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ICGBV-Policy-Paper-Climate-Change-and-GBV.pdf>
9. Benson, K., & Hess, R. (2023, December 15). HIV & climate change: Safeguarding health in a Changing World. *Frontline AIDS*.
10. Thurston, A. M., Stöckl, H., & Ranganathan, M. (2021). Natural hazards, disasters and violence against women and girls: A global mixed-methods systematic review. *BMJ Global Health*, 6(4).
11. Memon, F. S. (2020). Climate change and violence against women: Study of a flood-affected population in the rural area of Sindh, Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Women's Studies: Alam-e-Niswan*, 27(1), 65–85.