

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

Indicator 5.2.1: Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age

## Institutional information

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### Organization(s):

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)

World Health Organization (WHO)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

## Concepts and definitions

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### Definition:

This indicator measures the percentage of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older who have experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner, in the previous 12 months.

Definition of violence against women and girls and of the forms of violence specified under this indicator are presented in the next section (Concepts).

### Rationale:

Violence directed at women and girls is the most common form of gender-based violence. In societies that sanction male dominance over women, violence between intimate partners may be perceived as an ordinary component of interpersonal dynamics between the sexes, particularly in the context of marriage or other formal unions. Therefore, it represents one manifestation of gender inequality.

Prevalence data are required to measure the magnitude of the problem; understand the various forms of violence and their consequences; identify groups at high risk; explore the barriers to seeking help; and ensure that the appropriate responses are being provided. These data are the starting point for informing laws, policies, and developing effective responses and programmes, as needed. They also allow countries to monitor change over time and assess the effectiveness of their interventions.

### Concepts:

According to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), Violence against Women is "Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following: Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family [...]". See here for full definition: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

Intimate partner violence includes any abuse perpetrated by a current or former partner within the context of marriage, cohabitation or any other formal or informal union.

The different forms of violence included in the indicator are defined as follows:

1. Physical violence consists of acts aimed at physically hurting the victim and include, but are not limited to, pushing, grabbing, twisting the arm, pulling the hair, slapping, kicking, biting or hitting with the fist or object, trying to strangle or suffocate, burning or scalding on purpose, or threatening or attacking with some sort of weapon, gun or knife.

2. Sexual violence is defined as any sort of harmful or unwanted sexual behaviour that is imposed on someone. It includes acts of abusive sexual contact, forced engagement in sexual acts, attempted or completed sexual acts without consent, incest, sexual harassment, etc. In intimate partner relationships, experiencing sexual violence is commonly defined as being forced to have sexual intercourse, having sexual intercourse out of fear for what the partner might do, and/or being forced to do something sexual that the woman considers humiliating or degrading.

3. Psychological violence includes a range of behaviours that encompass acts of emotional abuse and controlling behaviour. These often coexist with acts of physical and sexual violence by intimate partners and are acts of violence in themselves.

For a more detailed definition of physical, sexual and psychological violence against women see *Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women- Statistical Surveys* (UN, 2014).

### **Comments and limitations:**

#### Comparability:

The availability of comparable data remains a challenge in this area as many data collection efforts have relied on different survey methodologies, used different definitions of partner or spousal violence and of the different forms of violence and different survey question formulations, and diverse age groups are often utilized. Willingness to discuss experiences of violence and understanding of relevant concepts may also differ according to the cultural context and this can affect reported prevalence levels.

#### Regularity of data production:

Since 1995, only some 40 countries have conducted more than one survey on violence against women. Obtaining data on violence against women is a costly and time-consuming exercise, no matter if they are obtained through stand-alone dedicated surveys or through modules inserted in other surveys. Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) are conducted every 5 years or so and dedicated surveys, if repeated, are conducted with less periodicity than this. Monitoring this indicator with certain periodicity may be a challenge if sustained capacities are not built and financial resources are not available.

## Methodology

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### **Computation Method:**

This indicator calls for breakdown by form of violence and by age group and yields the following for each form of violence or forms of violence:

#### 1. Physical violence:

Number of ever-partnered women and girls (aged 15 years and above) who experience physical violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months divided by the number of ever-partnered women and girls (aged 15 years and above) in the population multiplied by 100

#### 2. Sexual violence:

Number of ever-partnered women and girls (aged 15 years and above) who experience sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months divided by the number of ever-partnered women and girls (aged 15 years and above) in the population multiplied by 100

### 3. Psychological violence:

Number of ever-partnered women and girls (aged 15 years and above) who experience psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months divided by the number of ever-partnered women and girls (aged 15 years and above) multiplied by 100

### 4. Any form of physical and/or sexual violence:

Number of ever-partnered women and girls (aged 15 years and above) who experience physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months divided by the number of ever-partnered women and girls (aged 15 years and above) multiplied by 100

### 5. Any form of physical, sexual and/or psychological violence:

Number of ever-partnered women and girls (aged 15 years and above) who experience physical, sexual and/or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months divided by the number of ever-partnered women and girls (aged 15 years and above) multiplied by 100

### **Disaggregation:**

In addition to form of violence and age, income/wealth, education, ethnicity (including indigenous status), disability status, geographic location and frequency of violence are suggested as desired variables for disaggregation for this indicator.

### **Treatment of missing values:**

- **At country level**

When data for a country are entirely missing, no country-level estimate is published.

- **At regional and global levels**

No imputations are made in cases where country data are not available. Where regional and global figures are presented, clear notes on data limitations are provided. The number of countries included in the average is clearly indicated.

### **Regional aggregates:**

Global aggregates are weighted averages of all the sub-regions that make up the world. Regional aggregates are weighted averages of all the countries within the region. Where data are not available for all countries in a given region, regional aggregates may still be calculated if the minimum threshold for population coverage is met. The number of countries included in the average is clearly indicated.

### **Sources of discrepancies:**

Only figures published by countries are used.

### **Methods and guidance available to countries for the compilation of the data at the national level:**

Data sources:

1. UN Women. 2016. Global Database on Violence against Women. Available at: <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en>
2. UNICEF Data portal: <http://data.unicef.org/child-protection/violence.html>
3. UNSD Portal on the minimum set of gender indicators: <http://genderstats.un.org/beta/index.html#/home>

4. UNSD dedicated portal for data and metadata on violence against women:  
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/vaw/>

United Nations, 2014. Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women- Statistical Surveys. Available at: [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/docs/Guidelines\\_Statistics\\_VAW.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/docs/Guidelines_Statistics_VAW.pdf)

### Quality assurance

This is to be developed in detail. The following criteria were used for the selection of data to be included in the database that guaranteed quality and comparability of the data:

- (1) Nationally representative data;
- (2) Collected through household surveys;
- (3) Comparable definition of physical and sexual intimate partner violence across countries;
- (4) Comparable age range (15-49);
- (5) Reliable data source.

Data were extracted from public published national reports and databases associated with these reports made available by data producers. No estimates or computations were done.

## Data Sources

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### Description:

The main sources of intimate partner violence prevalence data are (1) specialized national surveys dedicated to measuring violence against women and (2) international household surveys that include a module on experiences of violence by women, such as the DHS.

Although administrative data from health, police, courts, justice and social services, among other services used by survivors of violence, can provide information on violence against women and girls, these do not produce prevalence data, but rather incidence data or number of cases received in/reported to these services. We know that many abused women do not report violence and those who do, tend to be only the most serious cases. Therefore, administrative data should not be used as a data source for this indicator.

For more information on recommended practices in production of violence against women statistics see: *UN Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women- Statistical Surveys* (UN, 2014).

### List:

NA

### Collection process:

An Inter-Agency Group on Violence against Women Data and its Technical Advisory Group is currently being established (jointly by WHO, UN Women, UNICEF, UNSD and UNFPA) to establish a mechanism for compiling harmonized country level data on this indicator.

## Data Availability

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### Description:

About 100 countries have conducted violence against women national prevalence surveys or have included a module on violence against women in a national household survey on other topic, and most of them

include data on intimate partner violence. However, not all these data are comparable and in many cases they are not collected on a regular basis.

Comparable data are available for a sub-sample of women and girls aged 15-49 for 52 low- and middle-income countries.

**Time series:**

Time series are available for some countries. Global time series with comparable data not yet available.

## Calendar

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**Data collection:**

NA

**Data release:**

NA

## Data providers

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**Name:**

National Statistical Offices (in most cases) or line ministries/other government agencies that have conducted national surveys on violence against women and girls.

**Description:**

National Statistical Offices (in most cases) or line ministries/other government agencies that have conducted national surveys on violence against women and girls.

## Data compilers

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**Name:**

UN Women, UNICEF, UNSD, WHO, UNFPA

**Description:**

UN Women, UNICEF, UNSD, WHO, UNFPA

**Comment:**

NA

## References

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**URL:**

<http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en>  
[data.unicef.org](http://data.unicef.org)  
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/default.html>

**References:**

1. United Nations, 2014. Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women- Statistical Surveys.
2. United Nations, 2015. The World's Women 2015, Trends and Statistics.
3. World Health Organization, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, South African Medical Research Council, 2013. Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence.
4. UN Women. 2016. Global Database on Violence against Women. Available at: <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en>
5. UNICEF Data portal: <http://data.unicef.org/child-protection/violence.html>
6. UNSD Portal on the minimum set of gender indicators: <http://genderstats.un.org/beta/index.html#/home>
7. UNSD dedicated portal for data and metadata on violence against women: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/vaw/>

## Related indicators

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**5.2.2:**

Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence

**11.7.2:**

Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months

**16.1.3:**

Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months

**16.2.3:**

Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18