

OSCE-LED SURVEY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

# WELL-BEING AND SAFETY OF WOMEN



**AT A GLANCE**  
REPORT

# OSCE-led survey on violence against women: At a glance report



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# Foreword

Violence against women and girls is a persistent human rights violation that not only threatens the security and safety of its victims, but also hinders women and girls around the world from being full and equal participants in society. Women and girls who experience violence and abuse often suffer for years from the effects. They may have to deal with ill health and psychological trauma, which in many cases is passed on to their own children and also influences the communities and societies they live in.

The OSCE recognizes violence against women and girls as both a threat to individuals and a broader security concern. The participating States have adopted three Ministerial Council decisions on preventing and combating violence against women, including most recently in December 2018 in Milan.

Until now, however, we did not have sufficient data on the prevalence of such cases in the OSCE region, in particular in countries that have been affected by conflict. International organizations and civil society have called for robust and comprehensive data sets to formulate and steer policies and actions against violence against women and girls. This survey, implemented between spring and summer 2018, sheds new light on violence against women and girls in selected OSCE participating States, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, Moldova<sup>1</sup> and Ukraine. The research was also conducted in Kosovo.<sup>2</sup>

The resulting testimonials often paint a grim picture. Three in ten women say that they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 at the hands of a partner or non-partner. Over two-thirds of women think that violence against women and girls is common in their communities, and a fifth think it is very common. Just under a quarter personally know someone among their family and friends who has been subjected to violence.

Violence against women in the surveyed area should not be overlooked any longer. In 2018, I committed myself to taking a leadership role to integrate UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security into our activities and to break down gender barriers within the OSCE. This study marks an important step towards eliminating violence against women. It presents the needed evidence to inform decision-making and advocacy at various levels. Ultimately, we need to use the results to achieve specific policy goals: reduced violence against women, improved services for survivors and greater security for women and girls overall.

More than 15,000 women gave their time to be interviewed for this report. Many had to yet again confront traumatic experiences to answer the very detailed questions posed by the interviewers. And the majority of them had never before spoken to anyone about these events. On behalf of the OSCE, I would like to personally thank them for their trust in us.



**Thomas Greminger**

OSCE Secretary General

<sup>1</sup> The term Moldova is used for the "Republic of Moldova" throughout the report.

<sup>2</sup> All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

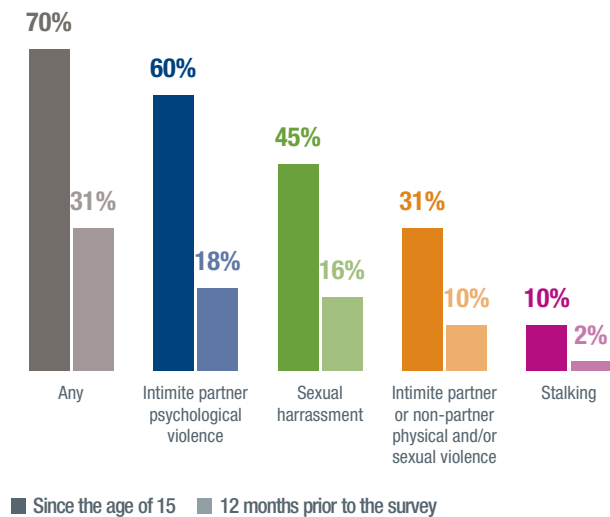




A quantitative survey was conducted among a representative sample of women aged 18 to 74 living in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine. The survey was also conducted in Kosovo.<sup>1</sup> A total of 15,179 interviews were conducted face-to-face between April and September 2018. Data has been weighted to the known population profile.

## HIGH PREVALENCE OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### DIFFERENT FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



**16 million**

women have experienced some form of sexual harassment, stalking, intimate partner violence, or non-partner violence (including psychological, physical or sexual violence) since the age of 15

**4.9 million**

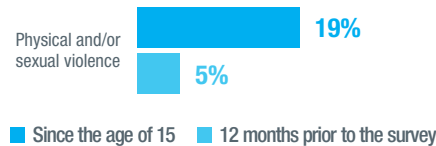
women have experienced intimate partner physical or sexual violence

**4.4 million**

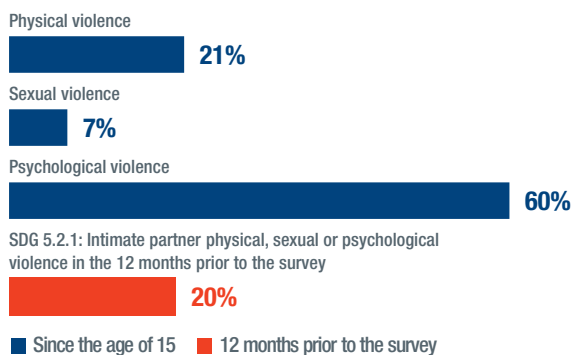
have experienced non-partner physical or sexual violence

\*Approximate figures

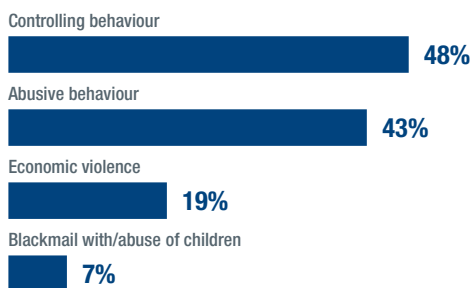
### ONE IN FIVE WOMEN HAS EXPERIENCED NON-PARTNER PHYSICAL AND/OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE



### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE



### INTIMATE PARTNER PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE IS THE MOST WIDESPREAD FORM

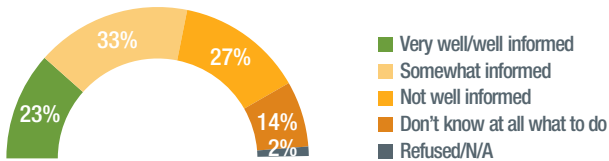


Base: Prevalence of intimate partner/non-partner violence, sexual harassment, stalking, and non-partner violence are based on all women aged 18-74 (15,179); intimate partner violence is based on all ever-partnered women (14,085)

<sup>1</sup> All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

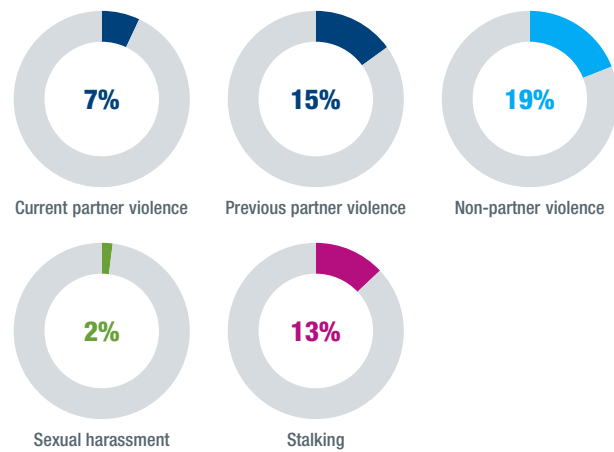
## LOW LEVELS OF REPORTING AND AWARENESS

MANY WOMEN DO NOT FEEL WELL INFORMED ABOUT WHAT TO DO IF THEY EXPERIENCE VIOLENCE



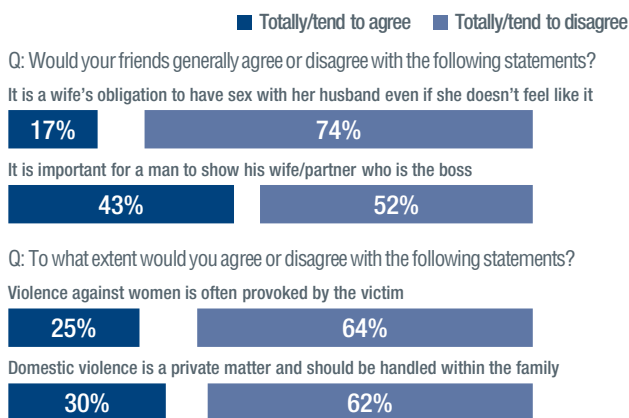
### LOW LEVELS OF REPORTING TO POLICE

% who contacted the police directly following the most serious incident of violence.



Base for how well informed women feel: All women aged 18-74 (15,179)  
 Base for reporting to police: All women aged 18-74 who identify a most serious incident of each form of violence - sexual harassment (3,514), stalking (885), current partner (1,068), previous partner (1,079), non-partner (1,298)

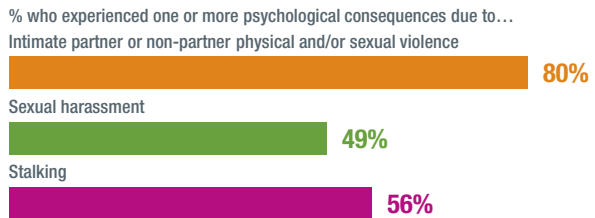
## SILENCING AND VICTIM-BLAMING ATTITUDES



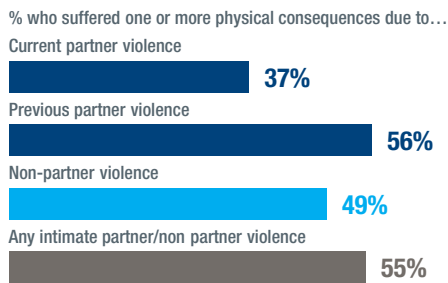
Base: All women aged 18-74 (15,179)

## IMPACT OF THE MOST SERIOUS INCIDENTS

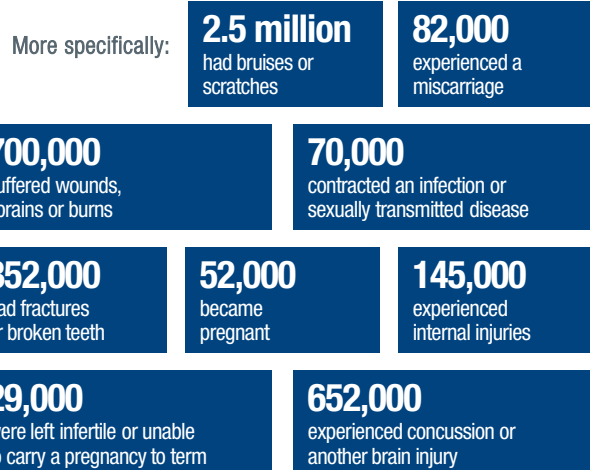
### VIOLENCE CAUSES PSYCHOLOGICAL SUFFERING



### VIOLENCE CAUSES PHYSICAL SUFFERING



3.25 million\* women in the region covered by the survey were left with an injury or physical consequence considering only the most severe cases of violence they identified during their adult lifetime.



\*Approximate figures  
 Base for psychological and physical consequences: All women aged 18-74 who identify a most serious incident of each form of violence - sexual harassment (3,514), stalking (885), current partner (1,068), previous partner (1,079), non-partner (1,298), any intimate partner/non-partner (2,763)

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# 1. Why is the OSCE-led survey needed?

## What is this report about?

This report presents the cross-regional, comparable findings of the OSCE-led Survey on the Well-being and Safety of Women, which was implemented in 2018 in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, Moldova<sup>3</sup> and Ukraine<sup>4</sup>. The research was also conducted in Kosovo.<sup>5</sup>

The OSCE-led survey included quantitative and qualitative components and was undertaken with the goal of providing comparable data on different forms of violence women experience in their childhood and throughout the course of their lives. The research examined violence that women experience in conflict and non-conflict settings, as well as the impact violence has on women, including its lasting consequences. Questions on norms and attitudes connected to violence against women were asked to better understand the underlying causes of violence.

The area covered by this research is diverse and has different historical, social and economic contexts. Rather than focusing on the findings from particular locations, the report aims to provide an overview of women's experiences and to highlight the issues – often similar – that persist and continue to hamper the well-being and safety of women throughout the area covered by the research.

## Why is it important?

Violence against women is a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women and a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women.<sup>6</sup> Identifying the scale of the problem is a first step to tackling it at its root.

The lack of comparable data on violence against women has limited the ability of key actors to develop cross-regional initiatives aimed at improving policies and measures on the prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG) and the protection of victims.

Since the OSCE-led survey is based on the methodology used by the European Union Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) for its EU-wide survey on violence against women, which was published in 2014<sup>7</sup>, the data collected in the area covered by this research is comparable to the data collected by the FRA survey. Together, the two surveys cover 35 OSCE participating States.

<sup>3</sup> The Transnistrian region has not been covered by the survey. However, one focus group discussion was held with women from this region.

<sup>4</sup> The sample in Ukraine does not cover the Autonomous Republic of Crimea or non-government-controlled areas in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The survey was carried out on a sample representative of the adult population of women (2,048 women aged 18–74), including 298 women living close to the contact line in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, in an effort to better understand how conflict affects violence against women.

<sup>5</sup> All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1994.

<sup>7</sup> Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Main results (Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2015), accessed 13 February 2019, <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: At a glance report

With its comparable data, the OSCE-led survey will provide much-needed information that will help depict the current situation concerning VAWG in OSCE participating States, and it will also enable the planning and development of cross-regional initiatives and actions as well as local policies and services. In the long term, this will lead to better prevention of VAWG, as well as improved policies and services for victims of violence. The overarching goal of this study is to contribute to a reduction of violence against women.

### How will the data and findings be used?

For each key finding, several possible action points are proposed to OSCE participating States and OSCE executive structures. These action points will be further developed and used as a basis for future work in the OSCE region on VAWG. The collected data will be made available so that further analysis can be conducted on the basis of this research.

### How can OSCE participating States use the data from the survey?

#### 1. Inform policies, strategies and action plans at the national and local levels

- Use the data for the development and implementation of national strategies and action plans, like national gender-equality plans, plans for combating violence against women and national action plans on UNSCR 1325
- The survey data and research contain relevant information for a wide range of ministries, including on social policy, interior affairs, defence, health and education
- Present and discuss data within co-ordination bodies and working groups on gender equality and combating gender-based violence, as well as on the security and defence sector and the armed forces, in parliamentary working groups and caucuses
- Inform gender-responsive budgeting at the municipal, provincial and national level

#### 2. For monitoring and reporting on international commitments (if applicable):

- Reports to the CEDAW Committee
- Beijing Platform for Action
- National action plans on UNSCR 1325
- Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 5 and Goal 16)
- GREVIO/Istanbul Convention
- European Gender Equality Index
- NATO reporting requirements

#### 3. Include data and research findings in communication and awareness-raising activities

#### 4. Further research using the OSCE-led survey data set

- Analyse differences in the prevalence, reporting and impact of violence against women at the subnational level and develop specific recommendations at that level

## 1. Why is the OSCE-led survey needed?



# 2. How to read the data

### Overview of the study conducted

The survey is the first cross-regional survey ever conducted that captures the prevalence of violence against women in the target regions.

The OSCE-led survey included:

- 114 key expert interviews from the area covered by the survey, providing an overview of issues related to VAW and of conflict-related acts of violence;
- a survey of a representative sample of 15,179 women aged 18–74 living in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro North Macedonia and Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine in order to establish the prevalence and consequences of violence by using a multistage, stratified, random probability sample design. The sample also included women living in Kosovo.
- 63 focus groups with women from various demographic backgrounds on their attitudes towards the subject;
- 35 in-depth interviews with women who had experienced violence, including women with a disability, to understand, in more detail, the impact this had on them.

### Main research goals

The main research questions were:

- What are the attitudes and norms towards gender roles and violence against women?
- What is the extent of violence experienced by women in these regions covered by the survey?
- Which forms of violence do women experience?
- Who are the perpetrators of violence against women?
- What are the consequences of violence for women's health and well-being?
- Do women report their experiences to the police or other authorities or organizations? If not, why not?
- Are there differences between women's experiences of violence depending on their age, education, professional status, income or whether they are from a minority group or a rural area?

The study also aimed to achieve a better understanding of the above in light of whether women had experienced an armed conflict based on the definitions used in the study. Initial analysis is provided in Chapter 8, and a separate report will discuss this in more detail.

### An overview of the quantitative research

In total, 15,179 women aged 18–74 were interviewed face-to-face using a multi-stage, random probability approach. The data is weighted to the known population profile with each. An additional weight (population weight) was calculated to enable reporting for the entire sample of the selected OSCE participating States or for a subgroup thereof.<sup>8</sup> This weight reflects the distribution of the survey population across the area covered.

The key socio-demographics used in the research were women's age, work status, whether they lived in a rural or urban area and whether they were affected by conflict or not.

The survey provides data that is of direct policy relevance, as data was collected for the 12-month period prior to the survey.

### Privacy and anonymity

The interviews were conducted face-to-face by experienced and trained female interviewers, using a tablet. Interviews were conducted in private and used the principles of informed consent. The women interviewed were informed that all data collected would be confidential and the data anonymized.

### An overview of the qualitative research

The 114 key experts shared their views on the current state of how governmental institutions and NGOs are working to prevent VAWG, what support is available to women who have experienced VAWG; and what improvements they recommend. These experts included representatives of international organizations as well as governmental and non-governmental institutions.

In total, 63 focus group discussions were conducted with women from different age groups, women living in urban and rural areas, women from different minority groups and women who have experienced conflict. The aims of these discussions were:

- to understand societal attitudes towards women generally and towards VAWG and the perpetrators of such violence;
- to explore how attitudes towards VAWG have changed over time, including in periods of conflict;
- to explore the degree to which women are aware of existing support measures, their views on those measures and any barriers that might prevent them from accessing support; and
- to identify how prevention and support could be improved.

Overall, 35 in-depth interviews were conducted with survivors of violence, including women with a disability. The aims of these interviews were:

- to explore the forms of violence that women have experienced throughout their lifetime and the impact of conflict;
- to identify barriers to disclosing experiences and to seeking support, and to explore reasons why some women choose to disclose their experiences and others do not;
- to understand the support received, to identify gaps in service provision and to identify the unmet needs of women from specific minority groups (e.g., women from an ethnic minority or with a disability); and
- for women who have gained access to support (formal or informal), to understand how they were able to access such support and the impact this had on them.

<sup>8</sup> The same was done for Kosovo.

### Reluctance to share

In order to better understand the prevalence of VAW, context is very important. The OSCE added several questions to the FRA survey<sup>9</sup> on norms, attitudes and behaviour of both women and men in relation to violence and reporting experiences of abuse. The results illustrate women's strong reluctance to share their experience of violence and suggest that the real prevalence of VAWG is probably higher than what this study was able to measure.

The qualitative and quantitative research confirms this and illustrates that the taboo and shame linked to sexual violence is particularly prevalent.

### Possible explanations for differences between participating States

The FRA has described in its EU-wide survey on VAW several possible explanations for observed differences in the prevalence of violence against women. The same explanations are applicable among the OSCE participating States surveyed. These differences require further exploration and research for corroboration and should be looked at with respect to other possible explanations at the level of the participating State.

1. When considering the survey results, it is necessary to take into account that talking with other people about experiences of violence against women is not considered culturally acceptable everywhere. Consideration needs to be given to the possibility that, in societies in which intimate partner violence is largely perceived as a private matter, incidents of violence against women are unlikely to be shared easily and are also rarely disclosed to the police. In line with this, women are less likely to talk about their experiences with violence to a survey interviewer.
2. Increased gender equality could lead to higher levels of disclosure and recognition of the different forms of violence against women. In societies with greater gender equality, where the subject of violence against women is "normalized" within society, women are more likely to report incidents of violence to the police, as well as disclose information to a survey interviewer.
3. Women's experiences of violence are linked to their exposure to risk factors for violence. Factors that might increase exposure to violence include patterns in socialization and lifestyle such as going out and dating, as well as employment factors such as working outside the home.
4. Different drinking patterns in participating States may help to explain certain aspects of violence against women. The survey reveals that there is a link between perpetrators' drinking habits and women's experiences of intimate partner violence. However, when exploring this relationship it is important to consider other factors as well, such as patterns in an individual perpetrator's violent behaviour.
5. In analyzing the key findings of the survey, it is important to take into account that different prevalence rates should be interpreted with care, and could be a reflection of changing attitudes and norms around violence against women in different locations.

### Forms of violence covered

The findings presented in this report are based on a set of questions asked in the OSCE survey concerning violence against women perpetrated by a non-partner or an intimate partner, as well as instances of sexual harassment, stalking, childhood violence and the impact of conflict on gender-based violence. The questionnaire was based on the definitions established in the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).

To measure the (reported) prevalence of each type of violence, women were asked if they had experienced a range of different forms of violence in various reference periods as detailed in Chapters 5 and 6 of this report.

- Regarding physical and sexual violence, a list of questions that were asked in the research can be found in Chapter 5 on page 37.
- Regarding psychological violence, a list of questions that were asked in the research can be found in Chapter 5 on pages 44 and 45.
- For stalking, women in the survey were asked questions listed in Chapter 6 on page 51.
- In terms of sexual harassment, women in the survey were asked questions listed in Chapter 6 on page 52.

**In this research, childhood violence** refers to violence before the age of 15. A list of questions that were asked about experiences of violence during childhood can be found in Chapter 5 on page 43. The questions, methodology and the age of the respondents in the OSCE-led survey differ from the Adverse Childhood Experiences<sup>10</sup> surveys as well as from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys,<sup>11</sup> and the prevalence rates of childhood violence are not comparable.

**Regarding the chapter on conflict and gender-based violence** (Chapter 7), **armed conflict** was defined for the purposes of this research as armed fighting between two or more organized groups, attacks on communities or general insecurity caused by conflict, while women considered conflict-affected are those who have lived in a situation where there was an active armed conflict for a period of at least one week and who answered “yes” to at least one of the questions listed on page 53 of Chapter 7.

**Partners** include individuals to whom the respondents were married, with whom they were cohabiting or with whom they were involved in a relationship without cohabiting. Non-partners include all perpetrators other than women’s current or previous partners.

The **most serious incident** is defined as the incident that had the biggest impact on the surveyed women, either physically or psychologically.

<sup>10</sup> World Health Organization, Adverse Childhood Experiences International Questionnaire (ACE-IQ) accessed 26 March 2019, [https://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/activities/adverse\\_childhood\\_experiences/en/](https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/adverse_childhood_experiences/en/)

<sup>11</sup> UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) accessed 26 March, [https://www.unicef.org/statistics/index\\_24302.html](https://www.unicef.org/statistics/index_24302.html)



## 2. How to read the data



## 3. Key conclusions and proposed action points

The OSCE-led survey on the safety and well-being of women and girls reveals a number of trends and findings regarding the prevalence, impact and underlying social norms and stereotypes related to violence against women and girls, as well as risk factors. In analyzing the key findings of the survey, it is important to take into account that different prevalence rates should be interpreted with care and could be a reflection of changing attitudes and norms around violence against women in different locations.

These key conclusions build on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Istanbul Convention and recommendations by UN bodies, as well as the evidence gathered from face-to-face interviews with more than 15,179 women aged 18–74. The OSCE recognizes the importance of combating violence against women to achieve comprehensive security, and reach the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The full version of the key conclusions can be found in the main results report of the OSCE-led survey on [osce.org](https://osce.org).

- The scale of violence against women and girls in the area covered by the survey calls for enhanced efforts to **implement legislation and improve action plans** that will address all forms of violence experienced by women and girls.
- **The survey clearly finds that all women**, regardless of their economic or social status, **can experience violence, but some groups of women are at a higher risk**. These risks include having experienced violence as a child, being poor, economically dependent or having children.
- The **characteristics and behaviour of perpetrators** also need to be taken into consideration **as possible risk factors contributing to intimate partner violence**.
- Violence has a **severe physical and psychological impact**, and women in the surveyed locations suffer from health problems as a result of their experiences of violence.
- Based on the data gathered, it is clear that **women do not report the vast majority of incidents** to the police and that they rarely seek support from other institutions.
- **Barriers to seeking help are rooted in attitudes** that silence women and protect abusers and also in women's lack of trust in the authorities to help and protect them.
- The data collected illustrates that a **majority of women do not know what to do if they experience violence** and that they are not aware of local specialized organizations offering support.

### 3.1. Responding to all forms of violence against women and girls

The scale of violence against women and girls in the area covered by the survey calls for enhanced efforts to implement legislation and improve or develop action plans that will address all forms of violence experienced by women and girls, including women from disadvantaged groups and minorities.

#### 3.1.1: Prevalence of all forms of violence against women and girls

- Seventy per cent of women in the survey, which translates into an estimated 16 million women, disclose that they have experienced some form of violence since the age of 15, and 31% of women say they experienced some form of violence in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- Thirty-one per cent of women, or an estimated 7 million, have experienced **physical and/or sexual violence** since the age of 15 at the hands of a partner or non-partner, and 10% experienced such violence in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- Nineteen per cent of women and girls have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of a non-partner since the age of 15. Five per cent of women and girls experienced this in the 12 months prior to the survey, and 0.8% of women and girls (aged 18–74) were subjected to **sexual violence by a non-partner** in the 12 months prior to the survey (SDG Indicator 5.2.2).
- Twenty-three per cent of women have experienced **physical and/or sexual violence** at the hands of an **intimate partner** since the age of 15.
- Sixty per cent of women have experienced **psychological violence** committed by an intimate partner since the age of 15.
- Almost half of women have experienced at least one form of **sexual harassment** since they were 15 years old, and 16% experienced this in the 12 months prior to the survey, which means that an estimated 3.5 million women experienced some form of sexual harassment in the year leading up to the survey.
- Ten per cent of women have experienced **stalking** at some point since they were 15 years old, and 2% were stalked in the 12 months prior to the survey.
- Twenty-one per cent of women experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence during their childhood (up to the age of 15).
- Women identified as conflict-affected were asked whether or not any of their experiences of physical or sexual violence were connected with armed conflict. For example, among those who have experienced non-partner physical and/or sexual violence (including threats thereof), 26% say that some of their experiences were related to conflict, rising to 34% when asked about their most serious incident.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The survey asked women who had experienced physical and/or sexual violence to provide further details about the incident they considered the most serious over their lifetime, i.e., the one that had the most impact on them. This could have included actual violent acts as well as threats thereof.

**Table 3.1: Prevalence of different forms of violence**

	EU average, %	OSCE-led survey average, %
Any <b>intimate partner or non-partner</b> physical and/or sexual violence (lifetime/since the age of 15)	33	31
<b>Intimate partner</b> physical and/or sexual violence	22	23
<b>Non-partner</b> physical and/or sexual violence since the age 15	22	19
<b>Sexual harassment</b> since the age of 15	55	45
<b>Stalking</b> since the age of 15	18	10

SOURCE: OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)/ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights violence against women survey (2012)

#### SDG 5.2 Indicators

SDG Indicator 5.2.2: the proportion of women and girls aged 18–74 in the area covered by the survey subjected to sexual violence by a non-partner in the 12 months prior to the survey is 0.8%.

SDG Indicator 5.2.1: the proportion of women and girls aged 18–74 in the area covered by survey who have ever had a partner and who were subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the 12 months prior to the survey is 20%.

#### Perpetrators of non-partner physical and sexual violence

- In relation to **non-partner physical violence**, a relative or family member of the victim (26%) is identified as the perpetrator most often, followed by a friend, acquaintance, neighbour (24%) or someone else the victim knew but did not specify from the list of perpetrator types (23%). Nearly one in five (18%) say the perpetrator was someone they did not know.
- While 23% of women who say they have experienced **non-partner sexual violence** identify the perpetrator as a stranger, the same proportion say the perpetrator was a friend, acquaintance or neighbour, and 22% say that it was someone else they knew but that they did not wish to specify further from the list of categories provided.

### 3.1.2: Factors contributing to a higher risk of violence, sexual harassment and stalking

The survey clearly finds that all women, regardless of their economic or social status, can experience violence, but **some groups of women are at a higher risk**. These risk factors include having experienced violence in childhood, being younger, being a refugee or internally displaced, having a disability, being poor, being economically dependent or having children. Institutions and service providers should take risk factors into account, including by making an effort to remove barriers that prevent women from seeking support.

### 3.1.3: Nature and scale of intimate partner violence as the most common form of violence against women

Increased focus on the implementation of existing legislation and prevention and protection measures is required. To effectively respond, institutions must treat intimate partner violence as a public, rather than private, matter and take psychological violence seriously. The more severe nature of violence at the hands of previous partners and the fact that women continue to experience violence at the hands of their former partners even after the relationship has ended suggest a need for better protection of victims.

**Psychological violence** is the most widespread form of intimate partner violence, with 60% of women who have ever had a partner experiencing this form of violence from a current or previous partner. The qualitative research confirms that psychological violence is considered so common in the area covered by the survey that it is a norm. Multiple and repetitive forms of psychological violence need to be recognized as undermining women's autonomy and well-being, and police and other services should be trained to recognize and understand the nature and impact of psychological violence.

**Sexual violence in relationships including marital rape**<sup>13</sup> is a reality in the surveyed area. Four per cent of women, or approximately 810,000 women, say they have been raped by their partners. This suggests that laws and the implementation thereof should treat rape within marriage the same as rape by a non-partner.

The **characteristics and behaviour of intimate partner perpetrators** also need to be taken into consideration as possible risk factors (drinking habits, unemployment and having fought in an armed conflict) contributing to intimate partner violence. If practitioners recognize these factors, they can be alerted to them as a possible warning sign of violence.

**Sixty per cent of women who have ever had a partner say they have experienced psychological violence at the hands of a current or previous partner**

<sup>13</sup> This is based on all women who have ever been in a relationship who say they were forced into sexual intercourse by their current or previous partner by holding them down or hurting them in some way.

#### Action points

##### Participating States

- Update and implement national legal frameworks to prevent and address in a holistic manner all forms of violence against women and girls, including online violence, sexual harassment, stalking and psychological violence in full compliance with CEDAW and its General Recommendations Nos. 19 and 35 with the Istanbul Convention's standards and norms.
- Participating States covered by the survey have to improve the collection, analysis and use of data for the purposes of evidence-based policy-making. Improving data quality and accessibility have to be prioritized and linked with commitments on the part of participating States to monitor the progress of SDG 5 and SDG 16 by using internationally agreed comparable data disaggregated by sex, age, rural/urban group. This enables to review progress and challenges international commitments for ending violence against women and girls.
- Ensure the regular review and monitoring of recently introduced laws and policies on combating violence against women, e.g., women who seek help should be surveyed on a regular basis to determine their level of satisfaction with the assistance they received.
- Ensure engagement of national human rights institutions to promote gender equality and human rights of women and girls, and ensure transparent monitoring of the support provided to victims of violence.
- Provide the necessary resources and support for national mechanisms and relevant ministries for gender equality, so that they are able to conduct their key role in the implementation and monitoring of the policy and legal frameworks.
- Prevention of violence and response measures and policies should accommodate the needs of disadvantaged groups of women and girls.
- Provide specific support for (former) soldiers and their families.
- Consider addressing heavy alcohol use as a compounding factor to violence against women and girls.
- Share examples and best practices of programmes that address men of all ages, including programmes that deal with online violence.

##### OSCE executive structures

- Carry out a comparative study (meta study) based on existing studies by UN agencies and EU institutions on the costs of violence against women and the allocated budgets for prevention and response.
- Integrate the topic of preventing and combating VAWG and the data from the survey into all OSCE projects with security sector actors.
- Develop tailor-made approaches to accommodate the needs and challenges of disadvantaged groups of women in OSCE projects and activities.
- Research, document and share good practices in the implementation of legal and policy frameworks, as well as effective implementation plans to combat all forms of violence, including online violence against women and girls in the OSCE region.

## A continuous effort is needed to empower women to recognize that violence against them is a violation of their rights and to increase gender equality in general

### 3.2: Responding to the impact of attitudes and norms on women's experiences of violence

A continuous effort is needed to empower women to recognize that violence against them is a violation of their rights and to increase gender equality in general. The survey data suggests that beliefs in female subservience, spousal obedience, victim blaming and silence surrounding violence against women continue to persist in the area covered by the survey. Furthermore, women who agree with statements on these issues are more likely to say they have experienced sexual harassment, non-partner physical and/or sexual violence, and intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence. For example:

- Women who **agree that domestic violence is a private matter** are almost twice as likely to say they have experienced current partner physical violence than those who disagree (18% versus 10% respectively).
- Women who think that their friends **would agree that it is a wife's obligation to have sex with her husband even if she does not feel like it** are also more likely to say they have experienced violence at the hands of their current partner than those who disagree.
- Women who agree that **violence is often provoked by the victim** or that **women exaggerate claims of abuse or rape** are generally more likely to say they have experienced all forms of violence.

Women participating in the qualitative research thought that such attitudes were changing, and findings from the quantitative survey show that younger women think their friends are less likely to adhere to norms of female subservience and are also less likely to place responsibility for violence on the victim rather than the perpetrator.

Since other research has shown that these views are also held by men, campaigns on, and responses to, violence against women and girls must take these attitudes and norms into account, they must target society as a whole, and they must also be directed at men and boys.



#### Action points

##### Participating States

Overarching efforts are needed to change gender stereotypes, prejudices and biases, including:

- Mainstream information about gender equality and violence against women and girls in the education system, including by incorporating it into curricula (from kindergarten to university) and by training teachers and other education professionals.
- Implement awareness-raising campaigns for men and women on the importance of gender equality. Interventions should target society as a whole by involving men and boys. They should address, in particular, sexual violence in intimate relationships and sexual harassment. Campaigns and interventions should use the survey data and other evidence to be tailored to different groups in society.
- Improve the co-ordination of both prevention and support efforts (including with international partners), recognizing how they are interconnected, and allocate resources to address the root causes of violence against women.
- Use the data from the OSCE survey to calculate the EIGE Gender Equality Index in order to monitor changes in gender attitudes and behaviour.

##### OSCE executive structures

- Collect lessons learned and good practices on changing attitudes that condone violence against women and on addressing the root causes, including for specific target groups like legal professionals, police, parliamentarians and policymakers.
- Develop innovative materials for various target groups (with a focus on police and judiciary) to change attitudes of individuals, organizations and society at large.
- Share information and good practices on preventing violence against women in the OSCE's main areas of work through seminars, round tables and peer-to-peer learning.
- Participate in interagency efforts at the national and regional level to promote gender equality and combat violence against women and girls.
- Support gender ethics training for the media with the aim of raising awareness among participating States of the need to address discriminatory and harmful stereotypes through the media.
- Work with education systems to establish curricula on gender equality in schools and universities.

### **3.3: Responding to the impact of violence on women's well-being, reporting to institutions, and raising awareness of available support**

Violence has a severe physical and psychological impact, and women in the area surveyed suffer from health problems as a result of their experiences of violence. The vast majority of women do not report violence to the police. Data is essential to measure whether women's needs are being met in practice and to determine the most efficient way to spend resources to assist women.

#### **3.3.1: Long-term impact of violence on women's health and public health**

The experiences women shared in the survey make it clear that violence against women is a public health issue with significant direct and long-term consequences that may translate into economic costs for the health sector. Well-trained healthcare professionals can play a significant role in identifying and helping prevent cases of violence against women.

Over half of survivors of physical and/or sexual violence suffered a physical consequence as a result of the most serious incident experienced, equivalent to approximately 3.25 million women, ranging from bruises and scratches to concussion and miscarriage.

The psychological impact of violence can be severe and long-lasting. The majority of survivors of physical and/or sexual violence developed longer-term psychological symptoms following the most serious incident experienced. Anxiety was mentioned most often (39%) among the women surveyed, followed by feelings of vulnerability (32%). About three in ten women say they have experienced difficulties in their relationships (29%) or depression (28%) as a result of their experience.

#### **3.3.2 Reporting rates to the police and other institutions are low**

Based on the data from the survey, it is clear that women do not report the vast majority of incidents to the police, and they rarely seek support from other institutions. The findings suggest that only in cases of more extreme violence do women seek help from the police or another support organization. Even then, the vast majority of cases are never brought to the attention of the authorities or a specialized service. Very few women contact a shelter or victim support organization.

**Violence against women  
is a public health issue  
with significant direct and  
long-term consequences**

## Based on the data from the survey, it is clear that women do not report the vast majority of incidents to the police, and they rarely seek support from other institutions

### 3.3.3: Barriers to reporting

Barriers to seeking help are rooted in attitudes that silence women and protect abusers and in women's lack of trust in the authorities to help and protect them. Shame and a lack of expectations of help from the authorities play a particular role when it comes to sexual violence by intimate partners and other perpetrators. The response of professionals has to be based on a zero-tolerance policy for violence that is free of any victim-blaming attitudes and makes the victim's needs the priority.

- The main reason for not reporting their most serious incident of violence to the police is that the victims decided to deal with the incident on their own, perhaps only involving friends and family
- Women who **agree that domestic violence is a private matter** are less likely to contact the police or any other organization following their most serious incident of non-partner violence (56% did not report the incident, compared to 49% among those who disagree), current partner violence (84% versus 77%) and previous partner violence (69% versus 63%).
- Victims of non-partner sexual violence who did not call the police are particularly likely to believe that the police would not do anything (22%).

In the qualitative research, several barriers were identified that may play a role in women's decision not to seek help after incidents of violence:

- **Shame** - including shame associated with certain types of violence and with divorce.
- **Financial reasons** - including concerns that the woman would not be able to financially support herself and her children and would not receive support from her family.
- **Lack of trust in institutions** - women did not expect an effective response from the police or feared that they would not be believed.
- **Lack of awareness of specialist services** - women did not know where else they could go to get help.
- **Fear of repercussions from the perpetrator** - women were afraid that the violence could escalate.

## **In the qualitative research, survivors described mostly negative experiences with the police**

### **3.3.4: Lack of satisfaction with the police and legal services**

Victims' lack of satisfaction with the police and legal services needs to be addressed by applying existing response and protection measures and monitoring their implementation.

### **3.3.5: Poor awareness among women of specialized victim support services and the needs expressed by women**

The data illustrates that a majority of women do not know what to do in case they experience violence and that they are not aware of local specialized organizations offering support. Awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women need to be based on credible data to ensure that they target their message at the right audience.

**The data illustrates that  
a majority of women do not  
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#### Action points

##### Participating States

- Establish coordinated, multisectoral response mechanisms with a sufficient capacity for service providers to deliver public services based on the specific needs of different groups of women and girls. At the same time, improve the quality of, and access to, specialized services for women and girls, including psychosocial support and shelters (free of charge). All specialized services should be accessible for all (available in minority languages) and should be integrated into the response mechanisms.
- Inform women and girls about available services, including through easily accessible websites, and develop long-term information campaigns using innovative approaches (posters, radio, websites, public announcements) about the step's women can take to seek support.
- Ensure state-supported and/or NGO-provided legal aid.
- Train the police and judiciary on how to protect and support victims, applying a victim-centred approach and improving reporting systems (e.g., accommodating reporting in a confidential and safe way).
- Support and make available specialist support services that take into account the elevated levels of shame in relation to sexual assaults and address self-blaming and longer-term psychological consequences.


##### OSCE executive structures

- Contribute to a multisectoral approach to support women who have experienced violence, including by promoting better collaboration and co-ordination between security actors, the health sector and other service providers.
- Support the OSCE participating States in addressing low reporting rates of non-partner and intimate partner violence to the police, including by sharing and reviewing different models and good practices in the OSCE region on the extent to which they protect victims and meet their needs in practice.
- Identify, collect and share good practices regarding victim/survivor protection and longer-term support for victims, including in cases of psychological violence, as well as access to justice in response to all forms of violence against women.
- Improve OSCE training manuals for security sector actors, and include the data and findings from the survey to better inform future projects and activities on all forms of violence against women and girls, including emerging forms.
- Organize training events for the police and judiciary on practices that enhance victim's access to justice.
- Support participating States in developing protocols for maintaining confidentiality and providing victim support.




43%

More than four in ten women aged 18–74 in the area covered by the OSCE-led survey say they believe that their friends would agree that: “It is important for a man to show his wife/partner who the boss is.”



17%

Nearly one in five women say they believe that their friends would agree that: “It is a wife’s obligation to have sex with her husband even if she doesn’t feel like it.”



30%

Three in ten surveyed women agree that domestic violence is “a private matter and should be handled within the family.”

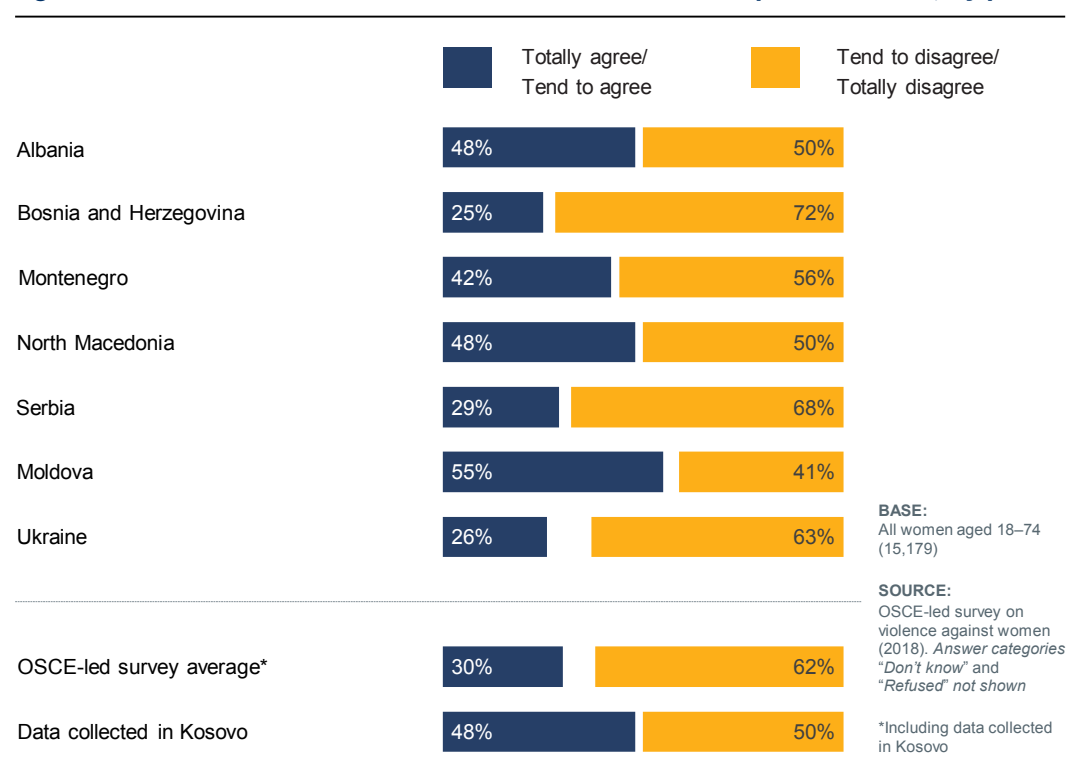
## 4. Attitudes towards gender roles and violence against women

### 4.1: Norms, attitudes and behaviours towards gender roles and violence against women

Beliefs in female subservience, spousal obedience and silence surrounding VAWG continue to persist in the area covered by the OSCE-led survey.

Thirty per cent of surveyed women agree that domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family, more than double the EU average (14%).<sup>14</sup> Agreement on this issue across the EU ranges from 2% in Sweden to 31% in Romania, suggesting that women in countries with a longer tradition of raising awareness of gender equality also are more open to talk about intimate partner violence.

**Figure 4.1: Views on whether or not domestic violence is a private matter, by place**



<sup>14</sup> "Special Eurobarometer 449: Gender-based Violence", European Commission, Directorate-General on Justice and Consumers, November 2016, accessed 26 January 2019, [https://data.europa.eu/euodp/data/dataset/S2115\\_85\\_3\\_449\\_ENG](https://data.europa.eu/euodp/data/dataset/S2115_85_3_449_ENG).

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: At a glance report

There are clear expectations of how women should look and behave. Participants in the qualitative research described how women were expected to be well-groomed and to act submissively. Women were seen as having less freedom than men to socialize and enjoy leisure time because of gender norms (for instance, socializing with other men can be frowned upon) and their responsibilities at home.

The quantitative data also points to the fact that there is a significant minority of women who hold opinions of female subservience and spousal obedience. For example, while 70% of women think their friends would agree that a woman should be able to choose her own friends even if her husband disapproves, a significant minority disagrees (26%). Similarly, more than two-fifths of women think their friends would agree that it is important for a man to show his wife/partner who the boss is. Seventeen per cent of women believe say their friends would agree that it is a wife's obligation to have sex with her husband even if she does not feel like it.

**Table 4.1: Norms and acceptable behaviours, by place**

People have different ideas about families and what is acceptable behaviour for men and women in the home. Please tell me whether your friends would generally agree or disagree with the following statements.

	If a man mistreats his wife, others outside of the family should intervene		It is important for a man to show his wife/partner who the boss is		A woman should be able to choose her own friends even if her husband disapproves		It is a wife's obligation to have sex with her husband even if she doesn't feel like it	
	Agree, %	Disagree, %	Agree, %	Disagree, %	Agree, %	Disagree, %	Agree, %	Disagree, %
Albania	56	42	34	65	56	42	19	79
Bosnia and Herzegovina	53	43	24	74	57	39	11	84
Montenegro	49	46	33	64	64	31	14	79
North Macedonia	67	29	32	67	61	37	19	79
Serbia	66	28	21	77	73	25	12	84
Moldova	41	47	25	68	64	25	15	73
Ukraine	43	41	51	42	73	22	19	71
OSCE-led survey average*	48	39	43	52	70	26	17	74
Data collected in Kosovo	62	35	48	51	42	56	26	71

BASE: All women aged 18–74 (15,179)

SOURCE: OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

\* Including data collected in Kosovo



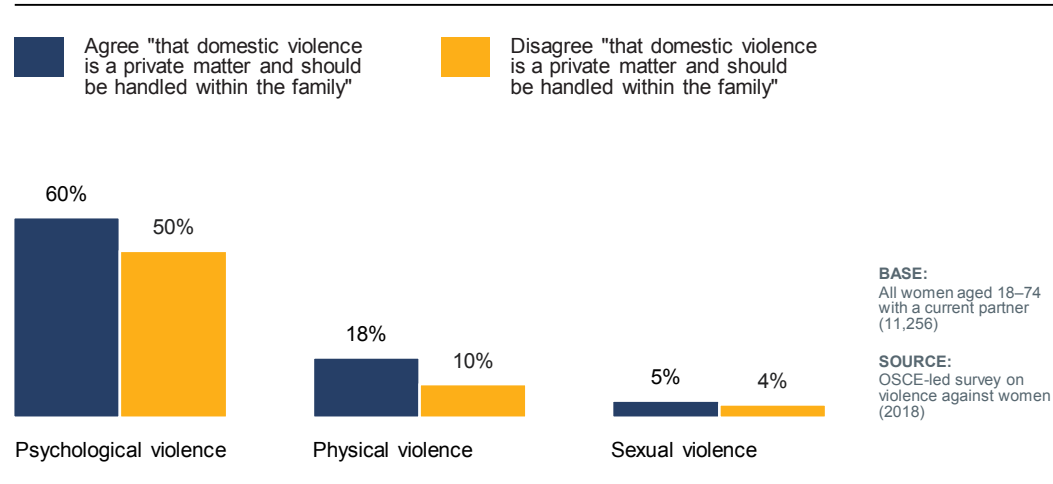
## 4. Attitudes towards gender roles and violence against women

### 4.2: The impact of attitudes on the prevalence of violence

Overall, the data suggests that those who hold such views are more likely to say they have experienced violence, both since the age of 15 and in the 12 months prior to the survey, albeit with some exceptions

**Figure 4.2: Indicated prevalence of intimate partner violence based on attitudes about whether or not domestic violence is a private matter**

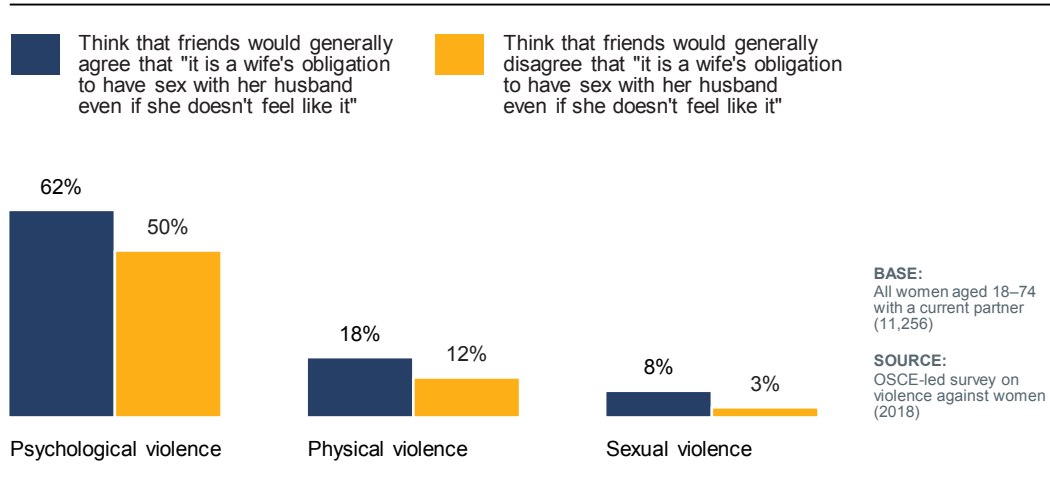
(% experiencing each form of violence)



Women who think that their friends would agree that it is a wife's obligation to have sex with her husband even if she does not feel like it are also more likely than those who disagree to say they have experienced current partner violence.

**Figure 4.3: Indicated prevalence of intimate partner violence based on attitudes about whether or not it is a wife’s obligation to have sex with her husband**

(% experiencing each form of violence)



Women who are older, those who have lower levels of education, those who find it difficult to cope on their current income and those who live in rural areas are more likely to hold subordinate attitudes and to indicate that they have experienced violence.

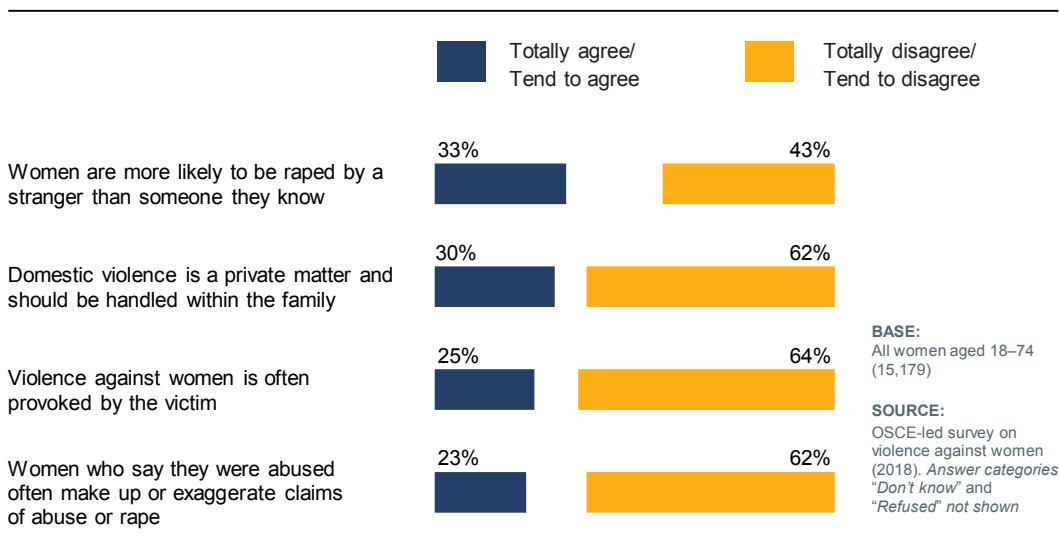
Around a quarter of women hold victim-blaming views and doubt the credibility of victims. As Figure 4.4 illustrates, 25% of women feel that violence against women is often provoked by the victim. A similar proportion (23%) believes that women who say they were abused often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape. By comparison, an average of 15% of women in the EU think that violence is often provoked by the victim, ranging from 6% in the Netherlands to 58% in Latvia, while 19% of women in the EU (ranging from 7% in Sweden to 43% in Malta) think that women exaggerate claims of abuse or rape, according to the European Commission’s Special Barometer 449 on gender-based violence.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> “Special Eurobarometer 449: Gender-based Violence”, European Commission, Directorate-General on Justice and Consumers, November 2016, accessed 26 January 2019, [https://data.europa.eu/euodp/data/dataset/S21115\\_85\\_3\\_449\\_ENG](https://data.europa.eu/euodp/data/dataset/S21115_85_3_449_ENG).

#### 4. Attitudes towards gender roles and violence against women

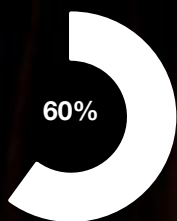
**Figure 4.4: Underlying attitudes on violence against women**

To what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements?



When considering those women who agree and disagree with the statements, “Women who say they were abused often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape” and “Violence against women is often provoked by the victim”, it is again the case that in nearly all cases, women who agree with either of these statements are more likely to say they have experienced sexual harassment, non-partner physical and/or sexual violence and intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence.

**Around a quarter  
of women surveyed  
hold victim blaming views**



Psychological violence at the hands of an intimate partner, which includes controlling or abusive behaviour, economic violence and using their children to blackmail their partner, is the most prevalent, with six out of ten women who have ever had a partner indicating one or more experiences of this.



While physical and sexual violence is indicated less often, 19% of women indicate that they have experienced such violence at the hands of someone other than a partner since the age of 15.



And nearly a quarter (23%) of women who have ever had a partner say the same regarding their current or former intimate partner(s).

## 5. Violence against women and girls

**In the area covered by the OSCE-led survey, the results suggest that approximately:**

**16 million** women have experienced some form of sexual harassment, stalking, intimate partner violence or non-partner violence (including psychological, physical or sexual violence) since the age of 15

**4.9 million** women have experienced intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence

**4.4 million** have experienced non-partner violence

### 5.1: The prevalence of physical and sexual violence and forms of violence

#### The prevalence of intimate partner and non-partner physical and sexual violence since the age of 15

According to the OSCE-led survey, 31% of women aged 18–74 have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of a partner or non-partner since the age of 15.<sup>16</sup> Women in the area covered by the OSCE-led survey, as in the EU, are more likely to indicate that they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner (23%) than a non-partner (19%).

<sup>16</sup> With regard to physical violence, women in the survey were asked the following questions: has someone/a current partner/previous partner ever 1) pushed you or shoved you? 2) slapped you? 3) thrown a hard object at you? 4) grabbed you or pulled your hair? 5) punched you or beaten you with a hard object or kicked you? 6) burned you? 7) tried to suffocate or strangle you? 8) cut or stabbed you or shot at you? 9) beat your head against something? In this report, the prevalence of physical violence is based on respondents who report having experienced at least one of these forms of violence on at least one occasion. The prevalence of physical violence is provided for current partners, previous partners, any intimate partner (either current or previous) and non-partners. The reference period for non-partner violence was since the age of 15/in the 12 months prior to the survey, and for partner violence it was whether this had ever happened during their relationship or in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Concerning sexual violence, women were asked: Since you were 15 years old and in the past 12 months, how often has someone 1) forced you to have sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way? 2) Apart from this, how often has someone attempted to force you to have sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way? 3) Apart from this, how often has someone made you take part in any form of sexual activity when you did not want to or were unable to refuse? 4) Or have you consented to sexual activity because you were afraid of what might happen if you refused? The prevalence of sexual violence is based on respondents who reported having experienced at least one of these forms of violence on at least one occasion. The prevalence of sexual violence is provided for current partners, previous partners, any intimate partners (either current or previous) and non-partners. The reference periods are as above.

**Table 5.1: Prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15, by type of perpetrator**

	Current partner, %			Previous partner, %			Any partner, %			Non-partner, %		
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical and/or sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical and/or sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical and/or sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical and/or sexual violence
Albania	17	3	18	22	6	23	19	4	19	11	1	11
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6	2	6	11	4	11	10	4	11	7	1	8
Montenegro	11	3	12	15	2	15	17	3	17	8	1	9
North Macedonia	6	2	7	10	4	12	9	3	10	6	2	7
Serbia	9	3	10	17	5	18	17	5	17	8	2	9
Moldova	24	5	25	35	11	37	33	9	34	15	4	17
Ukraine	13	5	15	27	7	28	23	7	26	22	5	24
OSCE-led survey average*	13	4	14	24	7	25	21	7	23	18	4	19
Data collected in Kosovo	8	4	9	15	6	18	9	4	11	7	1	8
EU average	7	2	8	24	9	26	20	7	22	20	6	22

BASE: All women aged 18–74 (15,179), those with a current partner (11,256), previous partner (6,520), any partner (14,085)

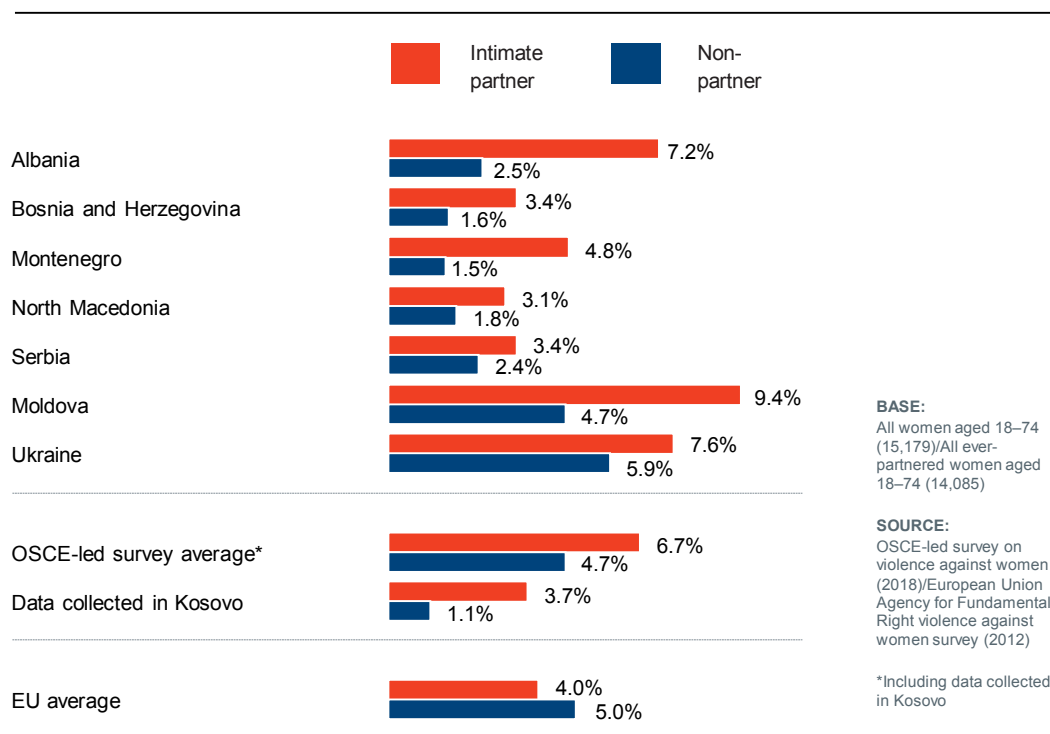
SOURCE: OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)/ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights violence against women survey (2012)

\* Including data collected in Kosovo

### Prevalence in the 12 months prior to the survey

The indicated prevalence of intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence in the 12 months prior to the survey is 7%. This compares with an EU average of 4% (ranging from 2% to 6%). Five per cent of women say they experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of a non-partner in the 12 months prior to the survey, in line with the EU average (also at 5%).

**Figure 5.1: Prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence in the 12 months prior to the survey, by type of perpetrator**



**Forms of physical and sexual violence**

Just over one in five women who have ever had a partner have experienced physical violence at the hands of a intimate partner in their lifetime (21%), while 18% of women have experienced non-partner physical violence. Across both intimate partner violence and non-partner violence, the most common forms of violence experienced by women since the age of 15 include being pushed or shoved or being slapped. These and nearly all other forms of violence are more commonly experienced at the hands of an intimate partner than a non-partner.

**Approximately 2 million women experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner or non-partner in the 12 months prior to the survey**

## Approximately 850,000 women have been raped by their partners

**Table 5.2 Forms of physical violence since the age of 15, by type of perpetrator**

How often has your current partner/your previous partner/someone other than your partner done any of the following to you? (ever/since the age of 15)

	Current partner, %	Previous partner, %	Any partner, %	Non-partner, %
Pushed you or shoved you	9	19	17	12
Slapped you	6	14	12	7
Grabbed you or pulled your hair	3	9	7	4
Thrown a hard object at you	3	6	6	3
Beat you with a fist or a hard object, or kicked you	2	9	6	3
Beat your head against something	1	4	3	1
Tried to suffocate you or strangle you	1	3	3	1
Cut or stabbed you, or shot at you	0.3	1	1	1
Burned you	0.3	0.4	1	0.2
Any of the above	13	24	21	18
Any of the above excluding pushed or shoved	9	19	16	12

**BASE:** All women aged 18–74 (15,179), those with a current partner (11,256), previous partner (6,520), any partner (14,085)  
**SOURCE:** OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

The overall indicated lifetime prevalence of intimate partner sexual violence is 7% while 4% of women say they have experienced non-partner sexual violence since the age of 15.



## Approximately 850,000 women have been raped by their partners

**Table 5.3: Forms of sexual violence since the age of 15, by type of perpetrator**

How often has your current partner/your previous partner/someone other than your partner done any of the following to you? (ever/since the age of 15)

	Current partner, %	Previous partner, %	Any partner, %	Non-partner, %
Forced you into sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way	2	4	4	2
Attempted to force you into sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way	2	4	3	3
Apart from this, made you take part in any form of sexual activity when you did not want to or you were unable to refuse	2	2	3	1
Made you consent to sexual activity because you were afraid of what might happen if you refused	2	3	3	2
Any of the above	4	7	7	4

**BASE:** All women aged 18–74 (15,179), those with a current partner (11,256), previous partner (6,520), any partner (14,085)  
**SOURCE:** OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

**5.2: Intimate partner physical and sexual violence**

Overall, 21% of women who ever had a partner say they have experienced physical violence at the hands of a current or previous partner. The most common form of intimate partner violence is being pushed or shoved, followed by being slapped.

**Table 5.4: Forms of physical violence since the age of 15 at the hands of an intimate partner**

How often has your current partner/your previous partner done any of the following to you?

	Albania, %	Bosnia and Herzegovina, %	Montenegro, %	North Macedonia, %	Serbia, %	Moldova, %	Ukraine, %	OSCE-led survey average*, %	Data collected in Kosovo, %
<i>Base size (n)</i>	<i>1,660</i>	<i>2,190</i>	<i>1,117</i>	<i>1,778</i>	<i>1,973</i>	<i>1,698</i>	<i>1,955</i>	<i>14,085</i>	<i>1,714</i>
Pushed you or shoved you	7	8	10	5	12	23	19	17	3
Slapped you	17	8	14	7	13	25	12	12	8
Grabbed you or pulled your hair	6	5	5	3	8	11	7	7	3
Beat you with a fist or a hard object, or kicked you	3	4	3	2	5	11	7	6	1
Thrown a hard object at you	2	2	3	2	3	9	7	6	1
Beat your head against something	3	2	3	1	3	7	3	3	0.4
Tried to suffocate you or strangle you	2	2	2	1	3	6	2	3	0.4
Cut or stabbed you, or shot at you	1	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	1	1	1	0.2
Burned you	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	1	1	0.3
Any of the above	19	10	17	9	17	33	23	21	9
Any of the above excluding pushed or shoved	18	9	14	8	14	28	18	17	9

BASE: All ever-partnered women aged 18–74 (n italics)

SOURCE: OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

\* Including data collected in Kosovo

## 5. Violence against women and girls

In terms of intimate partner sexual violence, the most common form is being forced into sexual intercourse, which 4% of women say they have experienced in a relationship.

**Table 5.5: Forms of sexual violence since the age of 15 at the hands of an intimate partner**

Has your current partner/your previous partner done any of the following to you?

	Albania, %	Bosnia and Herzegovina, %	Montenegro, %	North Macedonia, %	Serbia, %	Moldova, %	Ukraine, %	OSCE-led survey average*, %	Data collected in Kosovo, %
<i>Base size (n)</i>	<i>1,660</i>	<i>2,190</i>	<i>1,117</i>	<i>1,778</i>	<i>1,973</i>	<i>1,698</i>	<i>1,955</i>	<i>14,085</i>	<i>1,714</i>
Forced you into sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way	2	2	1	2	2	5	4	4	2
Attempted to force you into sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way	2	2	1	2	3	5	3	3	2
Apart from this, made you take part in any form of sexual activity when you did not want to or you were unable to refuse	1	3	1	2	3	2	3	3	2
Made you consent to sexual activity because you were afraid of what might happen if you refused	2	3	3	2	3	5	4	3	2
Any of the above	4	4	3	3	5	9	7	7	4

**BASE:** All ever-partnered women aged 18–74 (n in italics)

**SOURCE:** OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

\* Including data collected in Kosovo

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: At a glance report

For many women who have experienced various forms of intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence, these are not isolated experiences. For sexual violence and most types of physical violence, including those that might be considered more serious, more than half of those who have had such an experience say this has happened more than once.

This is more pronounced for previous partner violence than it is for current partner violence. Indeed, between 20% and 43% of women who have experienced each form of violence at the hands of a previous partner say that there have been six or more incidents of such violence.

### Difference in prevalence of violence perpetrated by current and former partners

- Women are more likely to say they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of a previous partner (25%) than their current partner (14%).
- Most forms of violence are more likely to be mentioned in respect of previous partners, including those that might be considered more severe.
- Three-quarters of those who identified a most serious incident of violence at the hands of their previous partner say that the violence experienced was one of the reasons, if not the main reason, why the relationship ended.
- It is possible that more severe violence brought an end to the relationship, as well as that women who have experienced violence in their current relationship are less inclined to disclose this, perhaps out of shame or fear of repercussions.

### 5.3: Intimate partner psychological violence

Three in five women who have ever had a partner indicate that they have experienced **psychological violence** committed by an intimate partner in their lifetime (60%), which is significantly higher than the EU average of 43%<sup>17</sup> and at the same level as the highest-ranking countries in the EU (Denmark and Latvia, the lowest being Ireland at 31%).

Women were asked about a number of different forms of psychological violence that have been grouped into four broad categories as follows:

- **Economic violence**, which includes being prevented from making decisions about family finances and from shopping independently and being forbidden to work outside the home.
- **Controlling behaviours**, which include situations where a woman's partner tries to keep her from seeing her friends, *restricts her use of social media sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.)*, tries to restrict contact with her birth family or relatives, insists on knowing where she is in a way that goes beyond general concern, gets angry if she speaks with another man, suspects that she has been unfaithful, *forbids the use of contraception or otherwise restricts decisions on family planning, prevents her from completing school or starting a new educational course, wants to decide what clothes she can wear or expects to be asked for permission so she can see a doctor.*

<sup>17</sup> The forms of psychological violence in italics were not asked about in the FRA survey.

## 5. Violence against women and girls

- **Abusive behaviours**, which includes situations where a woman's partner forbids her to leave the house at all or *forbids her to leave the house without being accompanied by a relative*, takes away her car keys or locks her up, belittles or humiliates her in front of other people or in private, purposefully scares or intimidates her (e.g., by yelling or smashing things), makes her watch or look at pornographic material against her wishes, threatens to hurt or kill someone she cares about (other than her children), threatens to hurt her physically, *threatens her with violent sexual acts (like rape, forced pregnancy, etc.)* and *hurts or threatens to hurt her when visiting, picking up or bringing back her children (previous partner only)*.
- **Using a woman's children to blackmail her, or abusing her children**, which includes threatening to take her children away, threatening to hurt her children, hurting her children or making threats concerning the custody of her children (previous partner only).

Overall, 48% of women who have ever had a partner have experienced controlling behaviours on the part of a current or previous partner, most commonly the partners insisting on knowing where they were going (beyond general concern) or becoming suspicious that they had been unfaithful (each mentioned by 31%).

Around two in five women have experienced abusive behaviours. This includes over one-third of respondents who say they have been belittled or humiliated in private (36%) and around one in five women mentioning that their partners had scared them on purpose (23%) or belittled or humiliated them in public (21%).

Economic violence has been experienced by nearly one in five women (19%).

**Table 5.6: Prevalence of the different forms of intimate partner psychological violence, by place**

	Albania, %	Bosnia and Herzegovina, %	Montenegro, %	North Macedonia, %	Serbia, %	Moldova, %	Ukraine, %	OSCE-led survey average*, %	Data collected in Kosovo, %
<b>Base size (n)</b>	<b>1,660</b>	<b>2,190</b>	<b>1,117</b>	<b>1,778</b>	<b>1,973</b>	<b>1,698</b>	<b>1,955</b>	<b>14,085</b>	<b>1,714</b>
Economic violence	22	12	12	10	12	20	21	19	13
Controlling behaviour	50	28	35	36	35	55	53	48	42
Abusive behaviour	41	23	24	24	29	53	48	43	32
Using your children to blackmail you or abusing your children	11	6	7	4	8	12	7	7	4

BASE: All ever-partnered women aged 18–74 (14,085) (Blackmail with/abuse of children is based on ever-partnered women who have or have had children)  
SOURCE: OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

### 5.4: Non-partner physical and sexual violence

Nearly one in five women (19%) have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of someone other than their partner in their adult life (18% physical, 4% sexual). The most prevalent forms of non-partner physical violence are being pushed or shoved (experienced by 12% of women), followed by being slapped (7%).

In terms of sexual violence at the hands of a non-partner, the most common form is attempted rape, which 3% of women say they have experienced.

### 5.5: Perpetrators of non-partner physical and sexual violence<sup>18</sup>

Women who say they have experienced non-partner sexual violence most commonly identify the perpetrator as a stranger (23%), a friend, acquaintance or neighbour (23%), someone else they knew but that they did not wish to specify further (22%) or a date or someone the woman had just met (14%). More than eight in ten women (82%) who have experienced this form of violence say the perpetrator was male, while 1% say that a woman was involved (and 18% preferred not to say).

In relation to non-partner physical violence, a relative or family member of the victim (26%) is identified most often, followed by a friend, acquaintance, neighbour (24%), someone else the victim knew but did not specify (23%), and someone they did not know (18%).

Seventy per cent of women who have experienced non-partner physical violence say the perpetrator was a man (47% mention a man only, and 23% say both men and women were involved), compared with 45% who say a woman was involved (with 22% mentioning only women).

### Role of family members in perpetrating non-partner physical violence

Although the majority of incidents of non-partner physical violence are perpetrated by someone who is not part of the woman's family (or partner's family), three in ten victims of non-partner physical violence identify the perpetrator as a member of the victim's family or her partner's family.

<sup>18</sup> The list of perpetrators provided for non-partner violence includes: boss/supervisor; colleague/co-worker; client/customer/patient; teacher/trainer/coach; another pupil/fellow student; doctor/healthcare worker; a relative/family member (other than your partner); a relative/family member of your partner; a date/someone you just met; friend/acquaintance/ neighbour; somebody else you knew; guards at checkpoints/borders; police officer (not at a checkpoint or border); soldier or other armed man/woman (not police or a guard at a checkpoint/border); international peacekeeper/observer/aid worker; someone you did not know.

**5.6: High-risk partners**

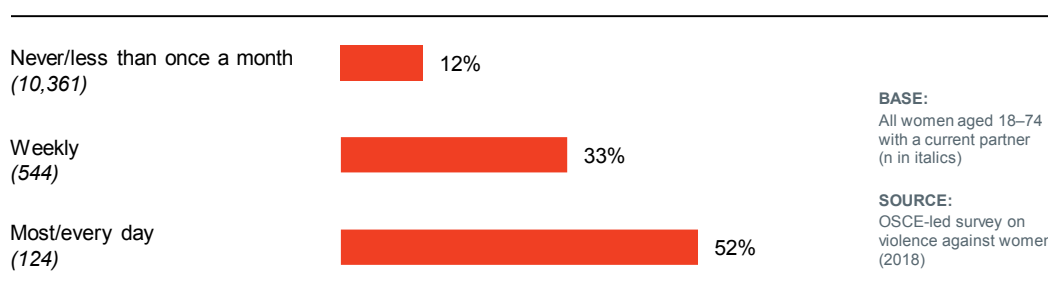
A range of socio-demographic variables were collected about women’s current partners in order to provide some insight into whether certain partner characteristics correlated with a higher risk of current partner violence.

Women whose partners are not working, whether due to unemployment (17%), because of illness or disability (35%) or because they are retired (17%), are all more likely to say they have experienced violence in their lifetime compared with the average (14%). The same holds true for prevalence in the 12 months prior to the survey, which may indicate that when men are not fulfilling their traditional role of being the family’s main breadwinner, this could prompt violent behaviour. Indeed, women whose partners earn less than them are also more likely to indicate that they have experienced psychological, physical and sexual violence both in their lifetime and in the 12 months prior to the survey than those who earn the same. That said, women whose partners earn more than them are also more likely to have experienced violence.

Women whose partners drink on a weekly or daily basis are more likely to indicate that they have experienced all forms of intimate partner violence both in their lifetime and in the 12 months prior to the survey.

**Figure 5.3: Prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence according to current partner’s drinking habits**

% any form of physical and/or sexual violence



Women whose partners have fought in an armed conflict are more likely to say they have experienced violence at the hands of these partners – see more details in chapter 9. This may be due to the fact that half of partners who fought in a conflict suffered from some form of long-term psychological impact (50%), namely difficulty sleeping (23%), anxiety (19%), depression (17%) or post-traumatic stress disorder (17%).

### 6.7: Childhood violence

In the survey, women were asked if they had ever experienced any violence at the hands of an adult before the age of 15. Overall, 21% say they did experience some form of physical (17%), sexual (3%) or psychological violence (8%) before the age of 15.<sup>19</sup>

Women who have experienced physical and psychological violence tend to have had repeated experiences rather than one-off events.

Perpetrators of physical and psychological violence are most frequently parents, while those who were victims of sexual violence in childhood most often identify men who were not family members as the perpetrators.

The multivariate analysis described in the main results report in chapter 12, shows that the strongest predictor of a woman experiencing some form of abuse or violence in adulthood is whether she experienced childhood violence.

Among those women who experienced childhood violence, nearly all of them (93%) say they have had some experience of the same in adulthood, compared with 70% on average and 65% of those who did not experience childhood violence. The same pattern is seen with the prevalence of abuse in adulthood in the 12 months prior to the survey. Over half of those who experienced childhood abuse (53%) have experienced violence as an adult, compared with 31% on average and 23% of those who did not experience childhood violence.<sup>20</sup>

Among those who are or have ever been married, 6% say that they were under the age of 18 when they first got married. This is equivalent to over 1.1 million women in the area covered by the OSCE-led survey who were child brides.

<sup>19</sup> Childhood violence refers to violence before the age of 15. In terms of physical violence before the age of 15, women were asked the following questions: Before the age of 15, how often did an adult who was 18 years of age or older do the following to you: 1) slap or pull you by the hair so that it hurt? 2) hit you very hard so that it hurt? 3) kick you very hard so that it hurt? 4) beat you very hard with an object like a stick, cane or belt? 5) Stab or cut you with something? In terms of sexual violence before the age of 15, women were asked the following questions: Before the age of 15, how often did an adult who was 18 years of age or older do the following to you when you did not want them to: 1) expose their genitals to you? 2) make you pose naked in front of any person or in photographs, video, or on an Internet webcam? 3) touch your genitals or breasts against your will? 4) force you to have sexual intercourse? In terms of psychological violence before the age of 15, women were asked the following questions: Before the age of 15, how often did an adult family member do the following to you: 1) say that you were not loved? 2) say that they wished you had never been born? 3) threaten to abandon you or throw you out of the family home? Before the age of 15, how often did an adult who was 18 years of age or older do the following to you: threaten to hurt you badly or kill you?

The prevalence of childhood violence is based on respondents who report having experienced at least one of the items listed above for either physical, sexual or psychological violence or any of the three.

<sup>20</sup> For more details on the multivariate analysis, please see Chapter 12 in the main results report, <https://www.osce.org/>



### Effects of intimate partner violence on children

Women who have children are more likely to indicate that they have experienced violence. Focusing on those who currently have children at home, 21% say they experienced psychological violence committed by a current or previous partner in the 12 months prior to the survey, compared with 15% of those who do not have children at home. Intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence is also indicated more often by those who have children at home: 8% say they have had such an experience compared with 5% of those who do not have children at home. The lifetime prevalence of intimate partner violence is also higher among those who currently have children at home or who have ever had children (their own children, foster children or step-children).

The children of women who experience violence are also impacted indirectly and directly. Of those with children or who have had children, almost a third (31%) say the children living with them are aware of violent incidents at the hands of their current partner, while over a third (36%) say the same in relation to violence perpetrated by previous partners

More directly, among those women who have ever had a partner and who have ever had children (their own children or step-children), 3% say their partners have hurt their children, and 2% say that their partners have threatened to hurt their children.

While contact with the police and other support services is low in general, women who have children at home are even less likely to have been in touch with these services. Just 15% of those with children at home have contacted one or more of these services, compared with 24% of those who do not live with children.



45%

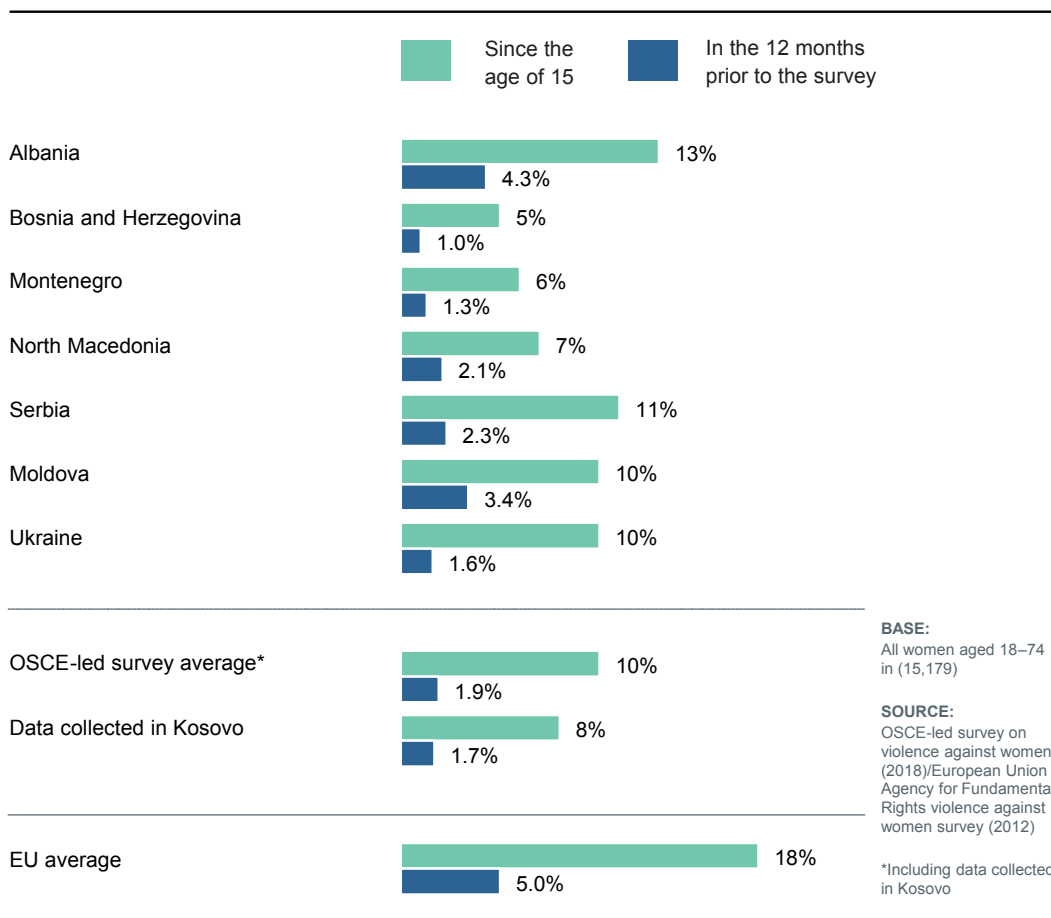
Almost half of all women aged 18–75 have experienced some form of sexual harassment since the age of 15.

## 6. Stalking and sexual harassment

### 6.1: Prevalence of stalking

Ten per cent of women state that they have been stalked<sup>21</sup> at some point since they were 15 years old. This is lower than the EU average of 18%, with results across the EU ranging from 8% in Lithuania and Romania to 33% in Sweden. Two per cent say they were stalked in the 12 months prior to the survey, which is lower than the EU average of 5%.

Figure 6.1: Prevalence of stalking



<sup>21</sup> For stalking, women in the survey were asked the following questions: Since you were 15 years old until now/in the past 12 months, has the same person repeatedly done one or more of the following things to you: 1) sent you emails, text messages (SMS) or instant messages that were offensive or threatening? 2) sent you letters or cards that were offensive or threatening? 3) made offensive, threatening or silent phone calls to you? 4) posted offensive comments about you on the Internet? 5) shared intimate photos or videos of you on the Internet or by mobile phone? 6) loitered or waited for you outside your home, workplace or school without a legitimate reason? 7) deliberately followed you around? 8) deliberately interfered with or damaged your property? The prevalence of stalking is based on respondents who reported having experienced one or more of the forms of stalking listed above.

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: At a glance report

Stalking is most likely to have been carried out by a stranger (45%), while 25% of victims identify a previous partner or boyfriend as the perpetrator. Women who have had a previous partner are almost twice as likely to indicate that they have been stalked since the age of 15 than those who have not had a previous partner (12% versus 7%).

The most common forms of stalking indicated in the survey are offensive, threatening or silent calls (4% compared to the EU average of 11%); being sent offensive emails or text messages; having someone loiter outside their home; being followed around; and having their property interfered with or damaged (all at 3%, which is lower than the EU average for each category)

### 6.2: Prevalence of sexual harassment

Forty-five per cent of women say they have experienced at least one form of sexual harassment since they were 15 years old.<sup>22</sup> This is lower than the EU average of 55%, which ranges from 24% in Bulgaria to 81% in Sweden. The countries with longer traditions of gender-equality policies and awareness-raising campaigns (the Nordic countries and Western Europe) also have higher percentages of women who say that they have experienced sexual harassment.

Sixteen per cent of women indicated that they experienced sexual harassment in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Thirty per cent of women say that they have experienced more serious forms of sexual harassment<sup>23</sup> (compared to a higher EU average of 45%), while 8% say the same about the 12 months prior to the survey (13% in the EU).

Women aged 18–29 (54%) are the most likely to say they have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15, while women over 60 (36%) are least likely.

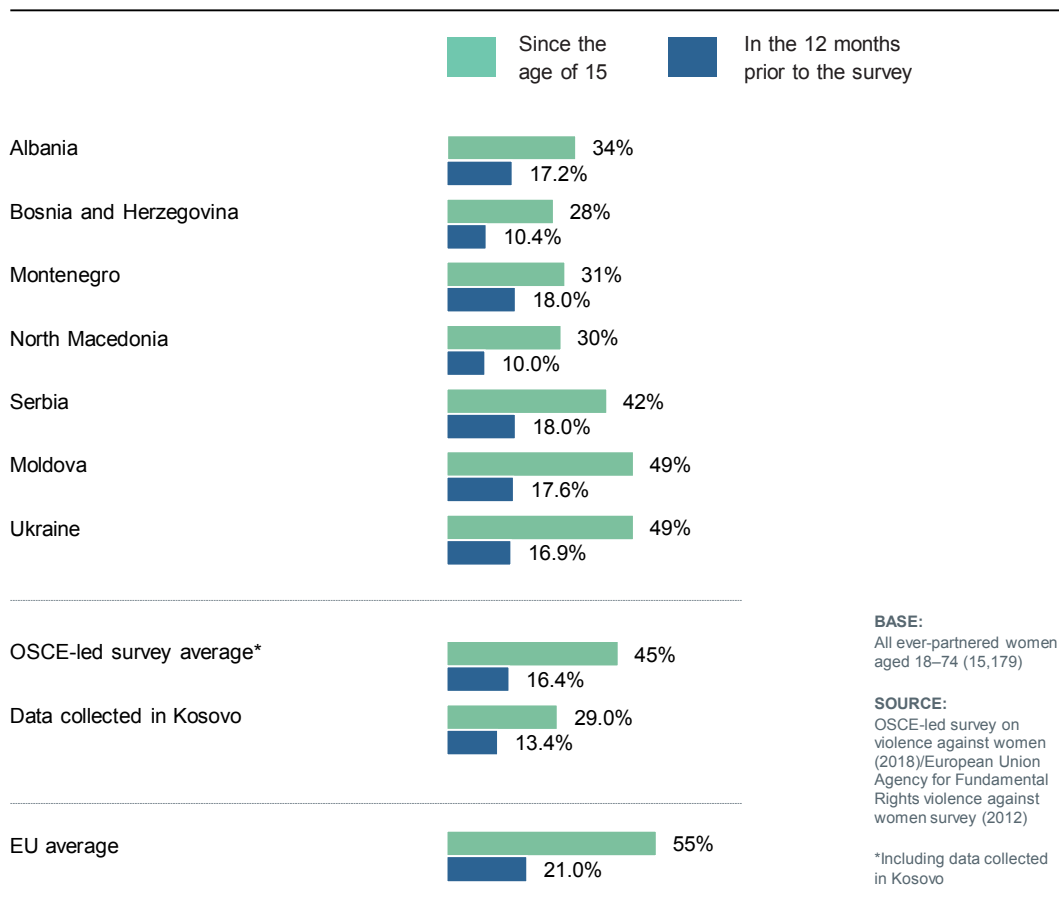
22 In terms of sexual harassment, women in the survey were asked: How often from the time you were 15 years old until now/in the past 12 months have you experienced any of the following: 1) unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing? 2) sexually suggestive comments or jokes that offended you? 3) inappropriate invitations to go out on dates? 4) intrusive questions about your private life that offended you? 5) intrusive comments about your appearance that offended you? 6) inappropriate staring or leering that you found intimidating? 7) somebody sending or showing you sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that offended you? 8) somebody indecently exposing themselves to you? 9) somebody making you watch or look at pornographic material against your wishes? 10) unwanted sexually explicit emails or SMS messages that offended you? 11) inappropriate advances that offended you on social networking websites such as Facebook or in Internet chat rooms? With regard to each form of sexual harassment, women could indicate whether they had experienced it never, once, two to five times or six times or more. The prevalence of sexual harassment is based on respondents who reported having experienced one of the listed items at least once. Six forms of sexual harassment were selected for their severity, and they are referred to in this report as “the most severe forms” of sexual harassment.

23 The most serious forms of sexual harassment are reported as “unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing”, “sexually suggestive comments or jokes that offended you”, “somebody sending or showing you sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that offended you”, “somebody indecently exposing themselves to you”, “somebody making you watch or look at pornographic material against your wishes” and “unwanted sexually explicit emails or SMS messages that offended you”. The prevalence of the most severe forms of sexual harassment is based on respondents who report having experienced at least one of these six forms of sexual harassment on at least one occasion.

# Approximately 3.5 million women experienced some form of sexual harassment in the year prior to the survey

**Figure 6.2: Prevalence of all forms of sexual harassment**

Since you were 15 years old until now/in the preceding 12 months how often have you experienced each of the following?



### Forms of sexual harassment

The most common forms of sexual harassment that women say they have experienced since the age of 15 are intimidation through staring or leering (22%, EU 30%); unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing (19%, EU 29%); sexually suggestive comments (17%, EU 24%) and intrusive and offensive questions (17%).

### 6.3: Perpetrators of sexual harassment

Perpetrators of sexual harassment were most likely to be someone the woman did not know (53%), followed by a friend or acquaintance (39%), somebody else they knew (32%) or a co-worker (17%).

Men are identified as the perpetrators of sexual harassment by 93% of victims and women by 42% (55% mention only men and 5% only women, while 37% mention both men and women). Female perpetrators are most commonly found among the victim's own or their partner's family members, fellow students, doctors or other healthcare workers, colleagues and friends.

Supporting the survey findings, women who took part in the qualitative research said that sexual harassment was a common occurrence for women.

Some women said that sexual harassment could be triggered by the woman herself, i.e., that it is natural for a man to behave this way in response to how a woman dresses or behaves. This sort of belief may help explain the lower prevalence compared with the EU.

**Thirty per cent of women  
say that they have experienced  
more serious forms of sexual  
harassment**

## 6. Stalking and sexual harassment





## 7. Conflict and violence

### 7.1: How are women affected by conflict?

For the purposes of this research, armed conflict is defined as armed fighting between two or more organized groups, attacks on communities or general insecurity caused by conflict.

Eighteen per cent of the women surveyed in the area covered by the OSCE-led survey indicate that they have lived in a situation where there was an active armed conflict for a period of at least one week.

Among the women who have lived through conflict, 72% actually heard gunshots or the sound of bombing or shelling in the area where they were living, and 58% lived somewhere where armed personnel were stationed or moving in larger numbers for at least a week. Twenty-eight per cent said they saw fighting where they were living, and 24% said that their property was damaged or destroyed, while 17% had property taken by armed groups. Twenty-six per cent of the women who said they had lived through conflict<sup>24</sup> had a spouse or family member who took part in the fighting, and 2% played an active part in the fighting themselves. For 34%, it was impossible to find work due to the conflict, and 33% stated that they had to flee or evacuate temporarily.

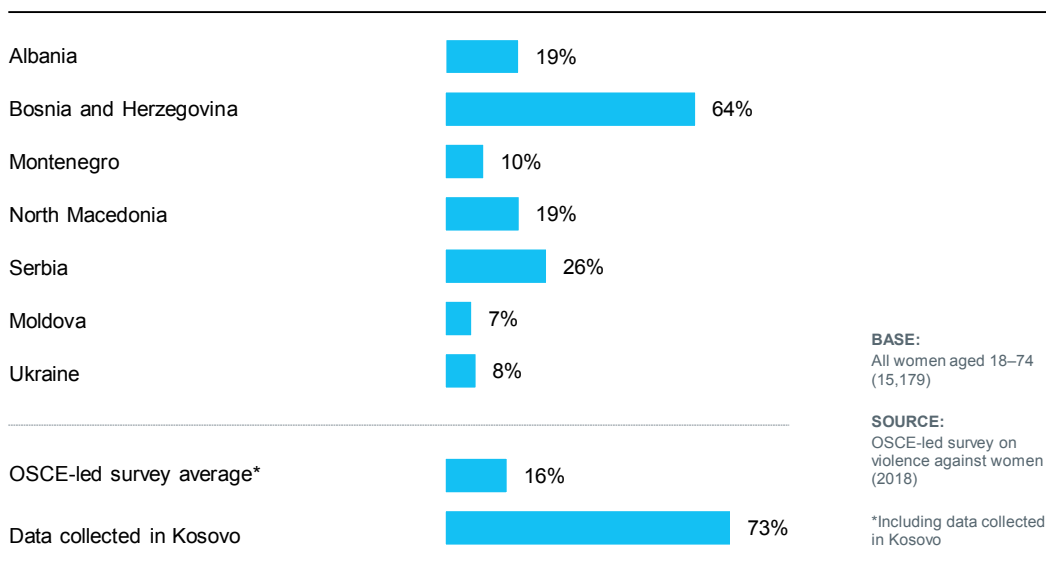
Overall, 16% of women in the area covered by the survey can be considered to be directly conflict-affected.<sup>25</sup>

**Twelve per cent of directly conflict-affected women lived in an area where members of armed groups deliberately targeted women in some way**

<sup>24</sup> Numbers for all women in the region might be higher.

<sup>25</sup> The definition of "conflict-affected" is having lived in a situation where there was an active armed conflict for a period of at least one week and answering "yes" to at least one of the following questions: "Did you hear gunshots, the sound of bombing or shelling in the local area where you were living at the time of the conflict?" "Did you live for at least a week in a location where armed personnel (regular military or other armed groups) were stationed or moving in larger numbers? This may include local residents participating in the conflict." "Did you witness fighting in the local area where you were living at the time of the conflict?" "Was the property (e.g., your home, car, livestock) of your immediate family destroyed or seriously damaged due to the conflict?" "Was the property (e.g., your home, car, livestock) of your immediate family taken by an armed group?" "Was it impossible to find work in the local area due to the conflict (office/factories were closed or destroyed, it was too dangerous)?" "Did an immediate family member or your spouse or partner take part in the conflict or participate in fighting as a member of an armed group?" "Did you play an active part in fighting during the conflict?" "Were civilians from the local area where you were living detained or imprisoned?" "Did civilians in the local area where you were living die due to the conflict?" "Were you personally physically attacked or injured due to the conflict?" "Did you have to flee your home during (any of) the conflict(s) you experienced?"

Figure 7.1: Proportion of directly conflict-affected women



Twelve per cent of directly conflict-affected women lived in an area where members of armed groups deliberately targeted women in some way, e.g., through threatening or violent behaviour, harassment, humiliation or by making women provide sexual services in exchange for goods or to ensure their safety. This highlights how conflict could make women feel less secure through gender-based violence or threats thereof.

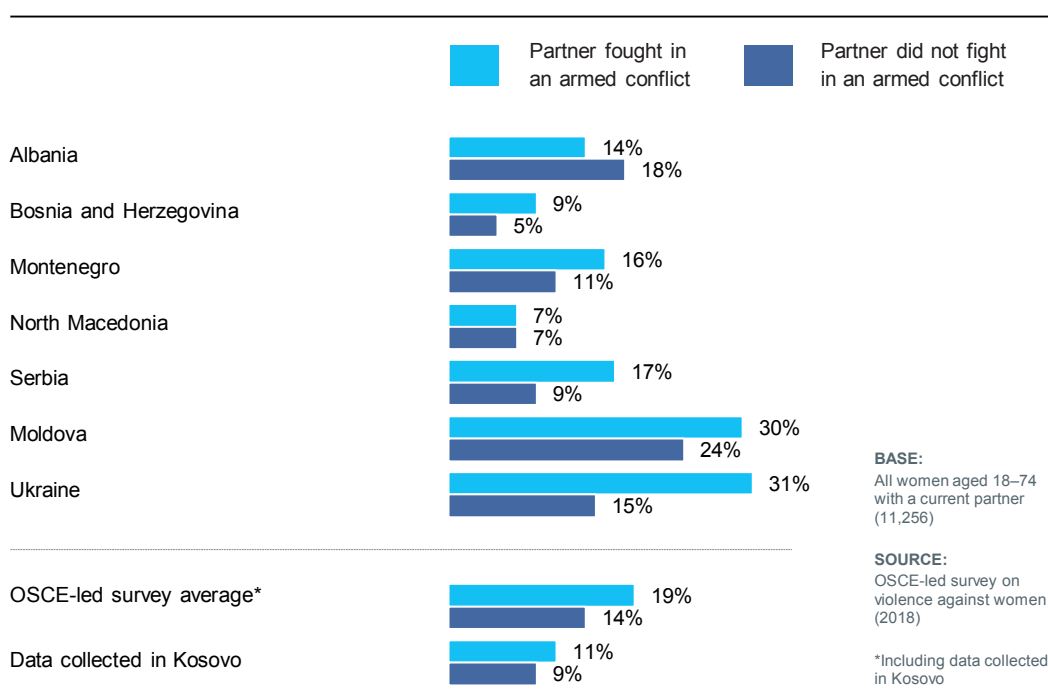
### 7.2: Conflict and violence against women

Women identified as directly conflict-affected were asked whether or not any of their experiences of violence discussed in previous chapters were connected with armed conflict. The data shows that a significant percentage of women do make this connection. Among those who have experienced non-partner physical and/or sexual violence (including threats thereof), 26% say that some of their experiences were related to conflict, rising to 34% when asked about their most serious incident. A similar pattern can be seen with previous partner violence, with 29% connecting an experience of physical and/or sexual violence to armed conflict, but this rises to 34% when asked about their most serious incident. For current partner violence, the equivalent figures are 32% and 39%, respectively.

Conflict appears to have had a widespread impact on the men involved in the fighting, with half of women whose current partner fought in an armed conflict saying it has had a long-term psychological impact on their partner. A number of differences are noted that suggest that women are more vulnerable to violence when their partner has been involved in conflict. For example, women whose current partners have fought in an armed conflict are more likely to indicate that they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of their current partner compared with those whose partners have never fought in an armed conflict (19% versus 14%, respectively) and in the 12 months prior to the survey (9% versus 6%, respectively). While there is little difference between the indicated prevalence of psychological violence between these two groups, some individual forms are more prevalent among those living with a former combatant, including current partners who do things to scare or intimidate their partner, e.g., by yelling or smashing things (22% versus 15%, respectively) and belittling or humiliating them in front of other people (16% versus 13%, respectively).

**Figure 7.2: Prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence, by current partner's involvement in conflict**

How often has your current partner done any of the following to you?



Directly conflict-affected women who indicate that they have experienced violence at the hands of a partner or non-partner are more likely to say that, following their most serious incident, they felt fear (65% compared to 59% of women who are not conflict-affected), shock (45% versus 42%, respectively) and, shame (31% versus 28%, respectively). They are also more likely to say they have experienced all of the psychological impacts they were asked about, most notably loss of self-confidence (34% compared to 26% of women who are not conflict-affected), feeling vulnerable (38% versus 32%, respectively) and depression (33% versus 27%, respectively).

**Data from the survey suggest that women whose partners have been involved in conflict are more exposed to physical and/or sexual violence than those whose partners have not**



**Over half of survivors of the most serious incidents of intimate-partner and non-partner physical and/or sexual violence have experienced one or more physical injuries as a consequence of the incident.**

**Eight out of ten women who identify a most serious incident of intimate-partner or non-partner physical and/or sexual violence developed a longer-term psychological condition as a result.**

## 8. Impact of violence, sexual harassment and stalking on women's lives

It is important to note that this analysis focuses only on the impact of the most serious incident experienced. The survey findings do not reveal the full extent of the way in which survivors of violence are affected, as there will also be consequences following other experiences they may have had. That being said, the findings can already demonstrate the public health consequences of violence against women.

### **The public health impact of the most serious incidents of violence against women**

**Approximately 4 million women** have felt the impact of at least one of a range of long-lasting psychological symptoms in response to the most serious incident of non-partner or intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence that they have experienced.

**Approximately 3.25 million women** were left with an injury or physical consequences of the violence they suffered, considering only the most severe cases they identified during their adult lifetime.

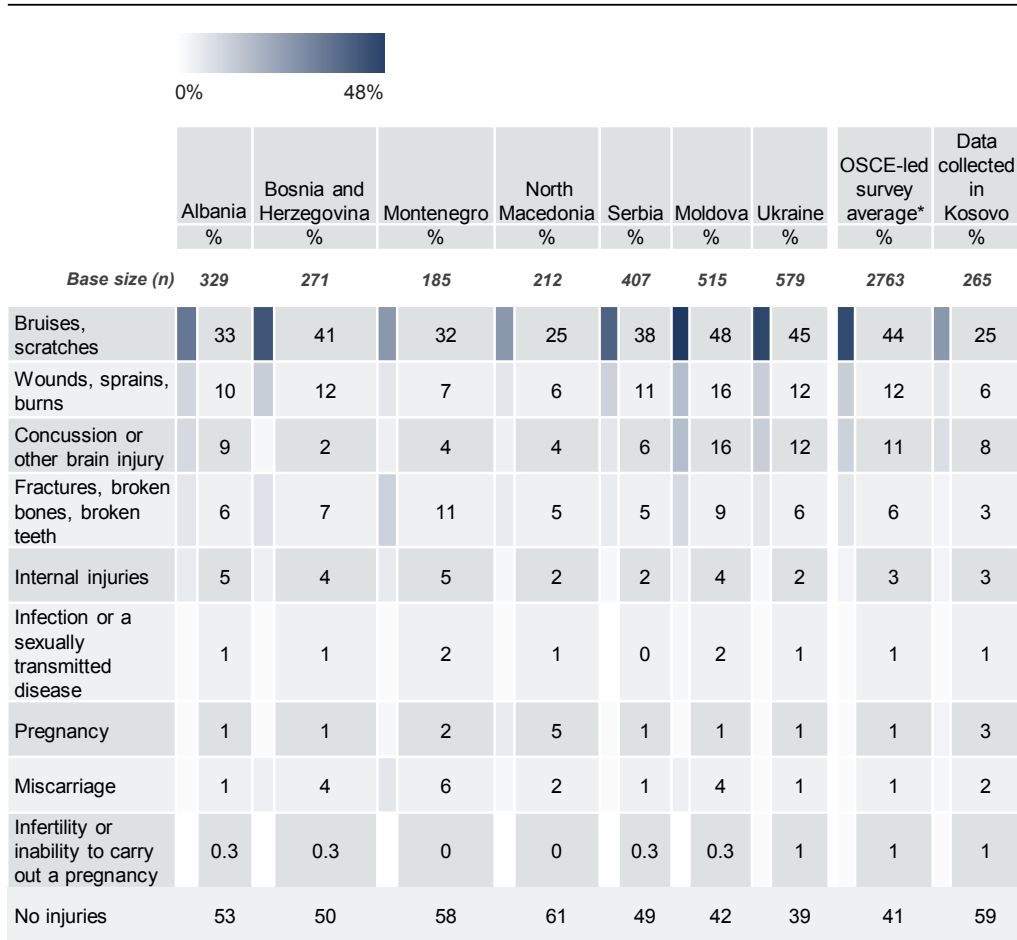
### **8.1: Physical consequences and psychological effects of partner and non-partner violence**

#### **Physical consequences of intimate partner and non-partner violence**

Over half of survivors say they experienced some physical consequences, with bruises and scratches reported most often in the survey following the incident of partner or non-partner physical and/or sexual violence identified as the most serious (44%).

**Table 8.1: Physical injuries arising from the most serious incident of physical and/or sexual violence (all perpetrators)**

Thinking about the most serious incident, did it result in any of the following?



**BASE:**  
All women aged 18–74 who have experienced intimate partner or non-partner physical and/or sexual violence and who identified a most serious incident (n in italics)

**SOURCE:**  
OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)  
\*Including data collected in Kosovo

**Across the survey, women most frequently say they have experienced bruises and scratches following the most serious incident of violence, followed by wounds, sprains, or burns**

## 8. Impact of violence, sexual harassment and stalking on women's lives

Injuries were noted most often as a result of the most serious incident of violence committed by a previous partner, particularly when it involved some form of sexual violence. The more brutal or severe nature of the violence that women indicate experiencing at the hands of a previous partner is reflected in the fact that they are more likely to suffer physically in some way.

### Psychological consequences of intimate partner and non-partner violence

The majority of survivors of physical and/or sexual violence developed at least one of the longer-term psychological symptoms listed in Table 8.2 as a result of their most serious incident.

**Table 8.2: Psychological consequences of physical and/or sexual violence (most serious incident) - all perpetrators**

Thinking about the most serious incident, did you suffer from any of the following as a result?

	Albania	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Montenegro	North Macedonia	Serbia	Moldova	Ukraine	OSCE-led survey average*	Data collected in Kosovo
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Base size (n)</i>	329	271	185	212	407	515	579	2763	265
Anxiety	28	29	29	14	41	44	40	39	31
Feeling vulnerable	19	36	17	24	32	26	34	32	23
Difficulties in relationships	19	18	8	10	13	29	32	29	16
Depression	22	34	16	23	27	39	28	28	28
Loss of self-confidence	21	34	21	19	26	28	27	27	25
Difficulty in sleeping	27	30	17	26	25	42	25	26	40
Panic attacks	15	24	9	17	15	28	23	22	22
Concentration difficulties	23	13	4	11	12	18	11	12	17
None of the above	31	31	44	35	31	19	15	18	29

**BASE:**

All women aged 18–74 who have experienced intimate partner or non-partner physical and/or sexual violence and who identified a most serious incident (n in italics)

**SOURCE:**

OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)  
\*Including data collected in Kosovo

In the qualitative research, women described feeling ongoing emotional trauma as a result of their experiences. Psychological impacts discussed included lower self-esteem, anxiety, depression and feelings of isolation.

**“I am still afraid. If I go somewhere, I start shivering and think that I have to walk more quickly in order not to have problems. I have this fear of talking, of sharing my opinion. I still have this fear. Because I am afraid that if I tell someone how I like something or do something the way I like it, there will be a problem. I struggle a lot with this because I always remember how I suffered.”**

**Survivor of violence, Moldovan, religious minority, Moldova**

In the survey, the psychological impact of violence perpetrated by a previous partner was, as with physical consequences, generally more pronounced than that of violence perpetrated by a current partner or non-partner.

When the incident identified as the most serious included sexual violence, women are more likely to have experienced at least one psychological consequence.

### **8.2: Emotional responses to intimate partner and non-partner violence**

Almost all women had an emotional response following the most serious incident of physical and/or sexual violence, with anger and fear mentioned most often (by 59% each). Survivors of non-partner sexual violence were much more likely to experience fear if the incident was sexual, with the proportion who felt this way increasing to 74% compared to 50% who felt afraid if the most serious incident was only physical. The proportion who felt shocked increases to 65% among victims of sexual assault by non-partners, and survivors of such attacks were also more likely to feel ashamed (40%) than those whose most serious incident was physical.

Feelings of shame (49%), embarrassment (31%) and guilt (23%) are also more common among those who have experienced previous partner sexual violence, a reflection of the taboo nature that still persists around discussing such experiences and victim-blaming views.

**Seventy-four per cent of women say they felt afraid following the most serious incident of non-partner sexual violence**



## 8. Impact of violence, sexual harassment and stalking on women's lives

### 8.3: Impacts of sexual harassment and stalking

As with the most serious incidents of violence, most women had an emotional response to their most serious incidents of sexual harassment. While fear was evoked less often, anger is mentioned by 39% of victims, and embarrassment also features more prominently, with 34% saying this is how the incident made them feel. This illustrates that responsibility for sexual harassment is often placed on the victim and her actions rather than on the perpetrator.

Women who experienced stalking are most likely to say they felt annoyance (50%) (perhaps linked to the ongoing nature of this type of abuse) and anger (50%) when describing their most serious incident. Around one-third of women felt afraid.

Longer-term psychological consequences are less often indicated following the most serious incidents of sexual harassment and stalking, though they were experienced by 49% of women in response to sexual harassment and 56% of women in response to stalking.

The most serious incidents of harassment caused a sense of vulnerability and anxiety in 19% and 18% of women, respectively, while 14% of women lost self-confidence, and 10% experienced difficulties in their relationships. Anxiety is the most often mentioned psychological consequence of the most serious incident of stalking (31%), while 22% of women say they were left feeling vulnerable, and 20% say that they subsequently had difficulties sleeping.

**The responsibility for sexual harassment is often placed on the victim rather than the perpetrator**



**Less than 10% of survivors of an incident of current-partner violence identified as the most serious contacted the police following the incident.**

## 9. Reporting experiences of violence, sexual harassment and stalking

### 9.1: Reporting experiences of violence, sexual harassment and stalking

Even following the most serious incidents of physical and/or sexual violence, the police were not informed in the majority of cases. Victims of non-partner violence are most likely to report their most serious incident to the police, with 19% doing so.

Victims of previous partners (15%) are more than twice as likely as victims of current partners (7%) to go to the police about their most serious incident.

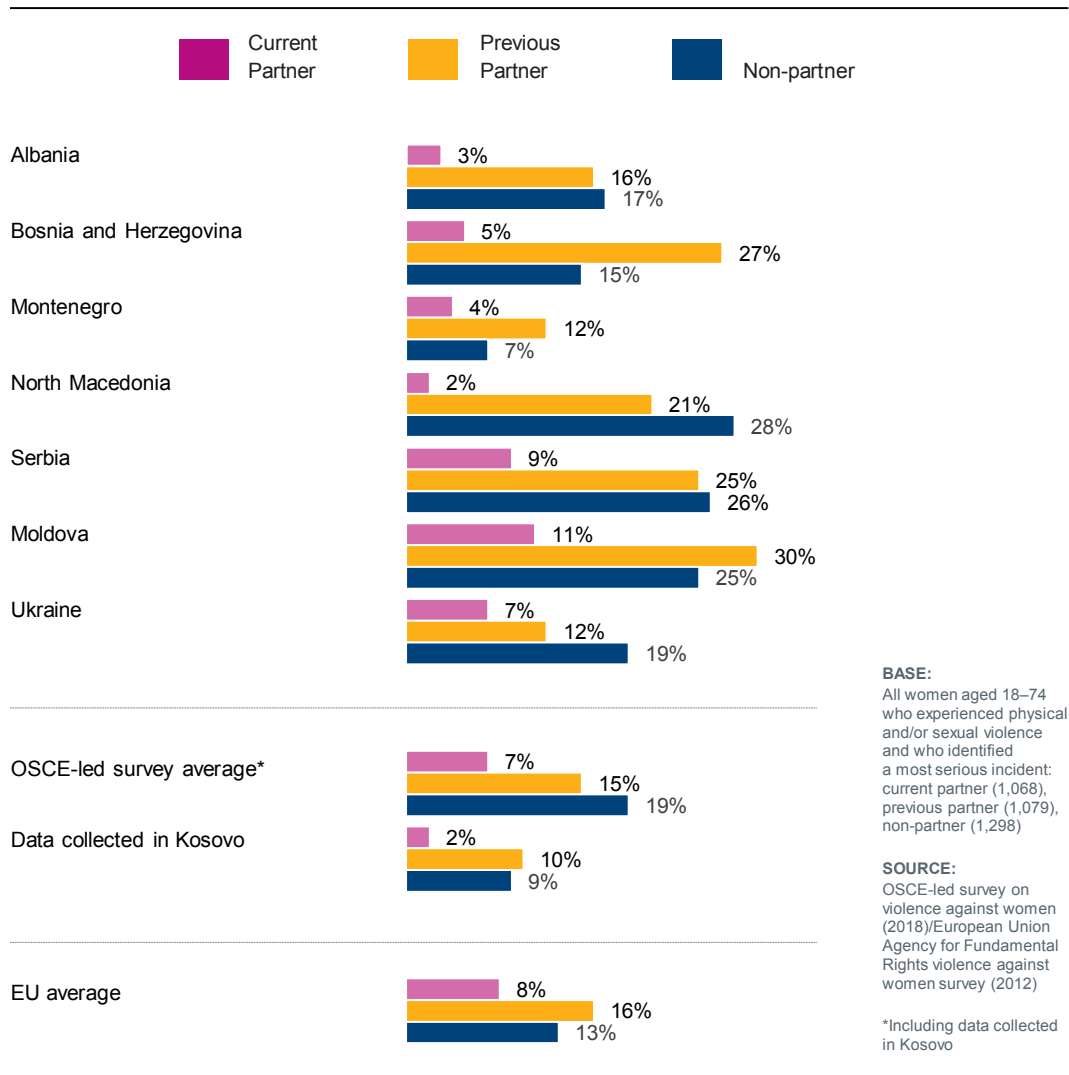
Women are more likely to have reported previous partner violence to the police if the violence was the main reason for ending the relationship (22%), perhaps suggesting that the violence would have had to be severe before the victim sought help from the police.

Only 2% of victims of sexual harassment contacted the police about their most serious incident. This figure is higher among victims of stalking, with 13% reporting their most serious incident to the police (21% in the EU).

**Even following the most serious incidents of physical and/or sexual violence, the police were not informed in the majority of cases**

**Figure 9.1: Contact with the police following victims' most serious incident of current-, previous- or non-partner violence**

Did the police come to know about the most serious incident? (% self-reported)



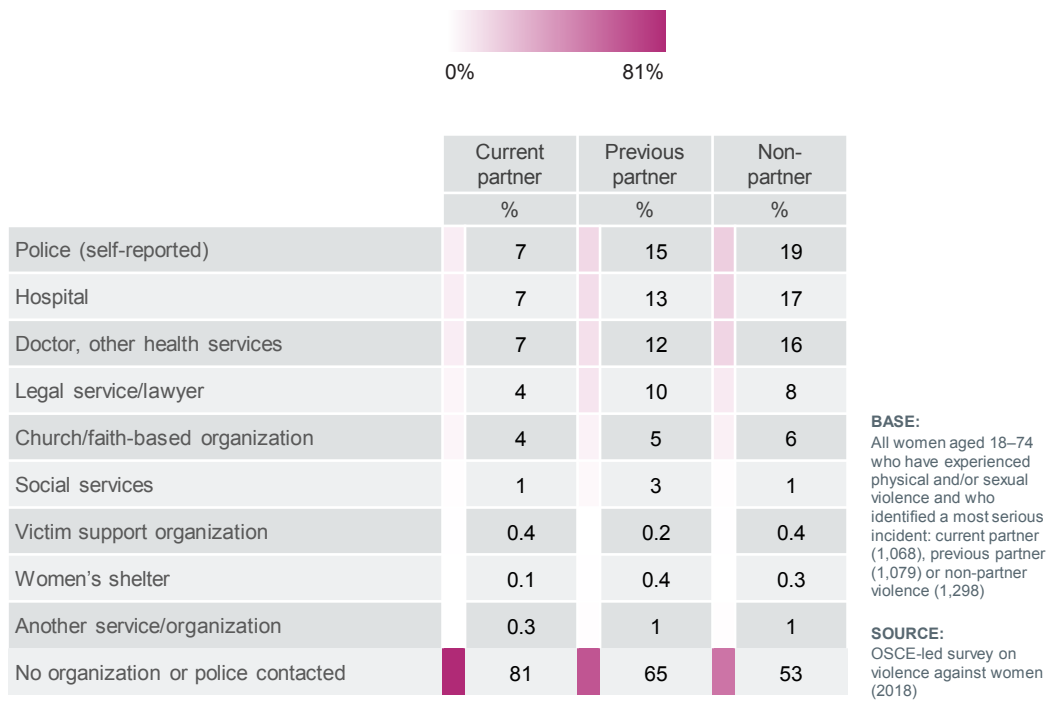
Women also tended not to contact other services. In relation to current partner violence, 81% did not contact the police or any other organization about their most serious incident. The same is true for 65% of victims of previous partner violence and 53% of victims of non-partner violence. In the EU, more or less the same proportions of survivors of current partner violence and previous partner violence who identified a most serious incident did not contact any services (81% and 66%, respectively). Non-reporting of the most serious incident of non-partner violence was higher in the EU, with 81% saying that they did not contact the police or other services.

Of the other services that surveyed women were asked about, healthcare is the most likely to have been sought either at a hospital or from a doctor or other healthcare institution, while very few women contacted a women’s shelter or victim support organization.

## 9. Reporting experiences of violence, sexual harassment and stalking

**Table 9.1: Contacts after victims' most serious incident of violence**

Did you contact any of the following services as a result of the most serious incident?



The main reason that victims did not report their most serious incident of violence to the police is that they decided to deal with the incident on their own, perhaps only involving friends and family. The belief that the incident was too minor to report, wanting to keep things private, feelings of shame and embarrassment, fear of the offender and a belief that nothing would be done were other common reasons.

Among those whose most serious incident involved sexual violence, a number of reasons are mentioned more often than when the incident was physical only. Victims of non-partner sexual violence who decided not to contact the police are particularly likely to believe that the police would not do anything (22%). Shame (38%) and wanting to keep the incident private (27%) are also more prevalent reasons that victims of sexual violence provided for not contacting the police.

Attitudes are another barrier to reporting. Women who agree that domestic violence is a private matter are more likely to have had no contact with the police or any other organization following their most serious incident of non-partner violence (56% compared to 49% among those who disagree), current partner violence (84% versus 77%) and previous partner violence (69% versus 63%).

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: At a glance report

In the qualitative research, the reasons why women did not involve the police (or other services) were discussed in more detail. The barriers identified may contribute to why women prefer to deal with incidents of violence themselves and are discussed below.

- **Shame**, including shame associated with certain types of violence and with divorce.
- **Financial reasons**, including concerns that the woman would not be able to support herself and her children financially and would not receive support from her family.
- **Lack of trust in institutions:** women did not expect an effective response from the police or feared that they would not be believed.
- **Lack of awareness of specialist services:** women did not know where else they could go to get help.
- **Fear of retribution on the part of the perpetrator:** women were afraid that the violence could escalate.

**“When [a woman] goes to the police, they first ask her for her ID card and ask questions: how, why, what ... At the very beginning, they act like she is responsible for what happened to her.”**

**Female, aged 38–55, conflict-affected, urban, Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**“A battered Roma woman is not treated in the same way as a battered white woman. When she goes to the police, they will say, that’s how you do it, go home. Things will be sorted out by themselves.”**

**Female, aged 18–29, urban/rural, minority group (Roma), Serbia**

**“There is nowhere you can hide. You go to the social services, and the officials there will gossip about you, and the whole town will find out about you. They will tell a friend, that friend will tell another friend, that friend will tell your husband, and he will come and beat you up.”**

**Female, aged 35–50, Macedonian, rural, North Macedonia**

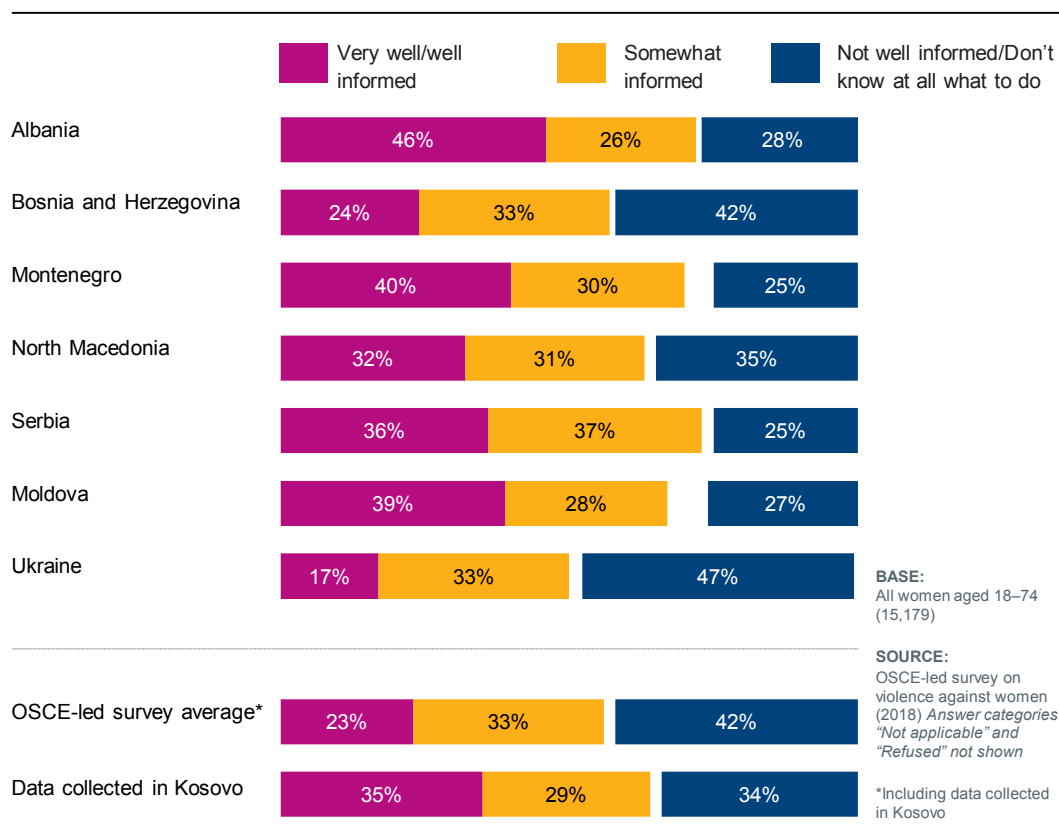
### 9.3: Awareness of services

In the survey, women were asked how well informed they thought they were about what to do if they experienced violence. Slightly over half (56%) indicated feeling at least somewhat informed, though a small percentage said that they thought they were either very well informed (7%) or well informed (17%). Furthermore, more than two in five (42%) indicated that they thought they were not well informed.

## 9. Reporting experiences of violence, sexual harassment and stalking

**Figure 9.2: Awareness of what to do after experiencing violence**

How well informed do you feel about what to do if you experience violence?

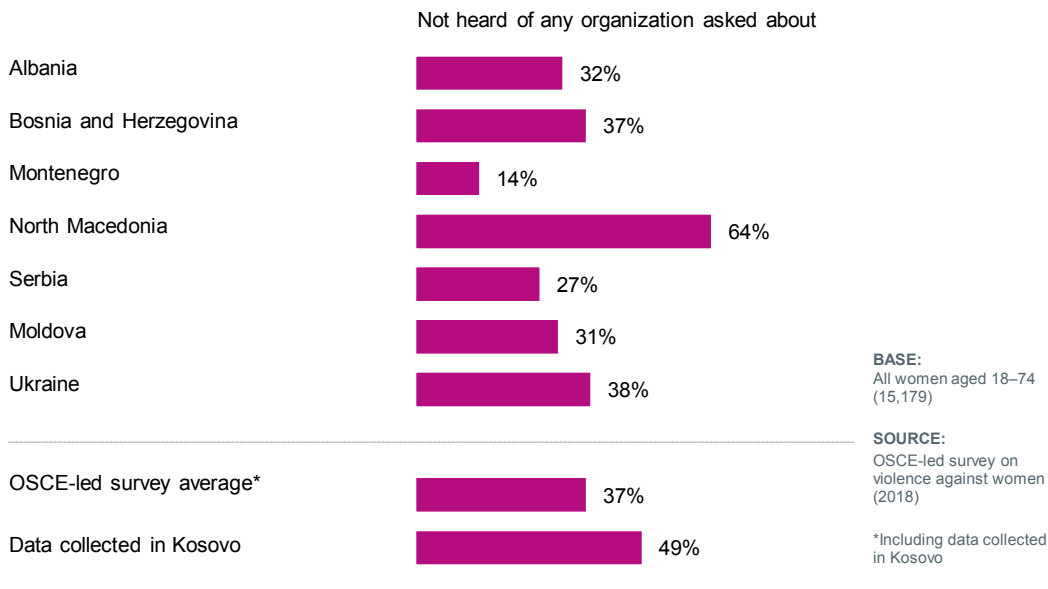


The women surveyed were also asked whether they had ever heard of three local organizations or services that provide support to women who are victims of violence. Across the area covered by the OSCE-led survey, 37% of respondents indicate that they never heard of any of the three organizations they were asked about (as seen in Figure 9.3 below).<sup>26</sup> A similar proportion (41%) indicate being aware of just one of the three organizations, while 15% indicate being aware of two of them, and just 6% say they have heard of all three. The list of organizations that participants were asked about is provided in Annex 1.

<sup>26</sup> Awareness of the police in Ukraine is not included in this analysis.

**Figure 9.3: Proportion of women who indicate that they are unaware of any of the support organizations asked about**

Have you heard of the following organizations or services?



**9.4: Satisfaction with services**

With the exception of the police, the lowest level of satisfaction is with legal services, with 58% of women who contacted a legal service reporting that they were satisfied in relation to violence committed by a non-partner. Feedback on contact with the police is more divided. Forty-nine per cent of those who reported their most serious incident of non-partner violence to the police were satisfied with the contact they had, but 45% were dissatisfied, including 33% who were very dissatisfied. In relation to the most serious incident of previous partner violence, 46% of those who contacted the police were satisfied, but another 46% were dissatisfied, including 28% who were very dissatisfied. For incidents of current partner violence, 39% were satisfied, but 50% were dissatisfied and 19% very dissatisfied.

In the qualitative research, survivors described mostly negative experiences with the police. Some women said their complaints were completely ignored (in some cases on the grounds that the violence had taken place too long ago), were not followed up thoroughly enough or were not dealt with appropriately, e.g., the perpetrator was merely given a verbal warning.

**“I called the police, but they didn’t come, because they consider this a domestic matter. They said a police officer would come the next day. The police officer did not come, and when I met him at an outdoor market and asked why, he said, ‘Why should I?’”**

**Female, aged 36–55, urban, Ukraine**



## 9. Reporting experiences of violence, sexual harassment and stalking

### 9.5: Support that survivors of violence want

The most-mentioned source of information, advice or support women say they wanted after their most serious incident of physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of a partner was, as in the EU, just someone to talk to who could provide moral support. Protection from further violence and harassment was particularly important for victims of previous partners and non-partners (20% and 16%, respectively) and all the more so when the most serious incident included a form of sexual violence (increasing to 37% and 27%, respectively).

Practical help, medical help and financial support are other common needs, again all the more frequently called for in relation to previous-partner and non-partner violence.

**Table 9.2: Types of information, advice and support wanted after an incident**

What types of information, advice or support would you say you wanted following the most serious incident you experienced?

	Current partner		Previous partner		Non-partner	
	Physical %	Sexual %	Physical %	Sexual %	Physical %	Sexual %
Information from the police	3	4	9	9	10	5
Information about security/crime prevention	4	8	9	11	9	7
Practical help	10	10	16	19	17	22
Someone to talk to/moral support	31	28	37	44	31	56
Help with insurance or compensation claim	2	1	2	2	4	2
Protection from further victimization/harassment	9	11	16	37	22	27
Help in reporting the incident/dealing with the police	2	10	4	11	10	14
Medical help	7	12	12	21	17	20
Financial support	5	12	14	24	10	17
None of these/did not want any support	5	48	34	15	27	18

**BASE:**  
All women aged 18–74 who have experienced physical/sexual violence and identified a most serious incident: current partner (1,068), previous partner (1,079), non-partner (1,996)

**SOURCE:**  
OSCE-led violence against women survey (2018)

**Survivors of violence  
highlighted the importance  
of practical support to  
enable women to leave their partners and  
start a new life**



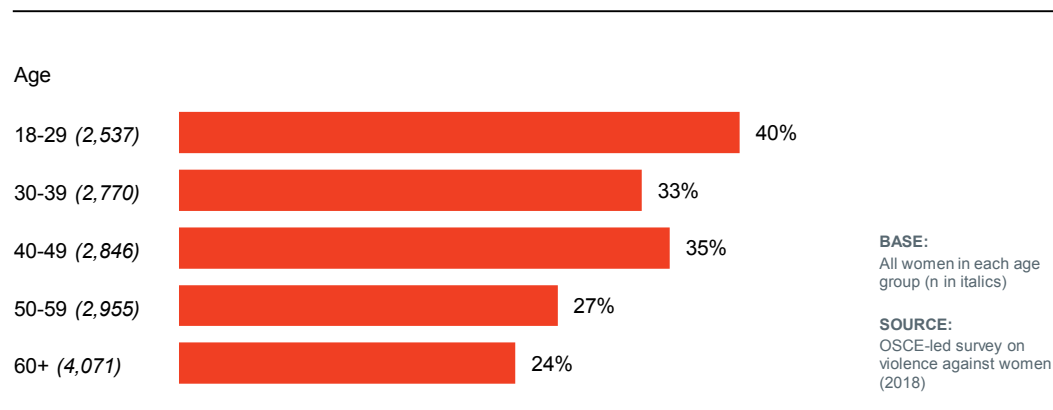
# 10. Experiences of violence among specific groups of women

## 10.1: Experiences of violence among specific groups of women

Age is a significant factor for differences in experiences of violence in the 12 months prior to the survey. Women aged 18–29 are more likely to disclose that they experienced any form of abuse in the 12 months prior to the survey (40% compared to 31% overall), while women over 60 are the least likely (24%). The stated incidence of abuse among 50–59-year-olds (27%) is lower than among 18–29-year-olds, 30–39-year-olds (33%) and 40–49-year-olds (35%).

**Figure 10.1: Stated incidence of abuse in the 12 months prior to the survey, by age**

% who have experienced sexual harassment, stalking, psychological violence, physical violence or sexual violence



### Relationship status

Women with a current partner are particularly likely to disclose that they experienced any form of abuse in the 12 months prior to the survey (34% compared to 23% among those without a partner). This can also be seen among women who have had a previous partner (33%) compared to those who have not (30%), pointing to the significant role of intimate partner violence in the overall prevalence of violence.

Women who have never had a partner (6%) are more likely to say they were stalked in the 12 months prior to the survey than those who have had a partner (2%).

### Choice in marriage

Women who did not have a say in the choice of their spouse are more likely than those who did to indicate that they experienced some form of abuse in the 12 months prior to the survey (39% versus 32%). The stated prevalence of psychological violence committed by a partner is also higher among women who did not have a choice in marriage (31% versus 21%). This is also true of physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner (12% versus 9%).

### Employment status

There are differences in the stated incidence of violence according to both employment status and occupation. Women who are students (43%), working in a family business (42%) or not working due to illness or disability (46%) are more likely to say they experienced abuse in the 12 months prior to the survey, while women who are retired (23%) are less likely.

### **Education**

There is a clear pattern of differences in experiencing abuse according to education. Women with tertiary education are more likely to indicate that they experienced any form of abuse in the 12 months prior to the survey (34%) than women with secondary education (30%) or primary education or no formal education (28%).

### **Income**

Among women finding it very difficult to cope on their current income, 42% disclose that they experienced some form of abuse in the 12 months prior to the survey, compared with 27% of women who are comfortable on their income. The stated incidence of physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of a partner is 13% among women who are finding it very difficult to cope and 5% among women who are comfortable or coping.

### **Minority groups and refugees/displaced women**

Women were asked if they considered themselves to belong to one or more of seven minority groups in relation to where they were living: an ethnic minority or religious minority (which are combined for analysis purposes), an immigrant minority, a sexual minority, a disabled person, a refugee/displaced person or a returnee/former IDP/refugee.

Women with a disability are more likely to indicate that they experienced some form of abuse in the 12 months prior to the survey (41%), as are, to a lesser extent, women who are refugees or displaced (34%). Women with a disability indicate that they experienced, in particular, sexual harassment, sexual violence at the hands of a non-partner, and psychological violence committed by their current partner more often than on average, while refugees seem more at risk of current-partner psychological violence and non-partner physical violence.

**Women with a disability are more likely to indicate that they experienced some form of abuse in the 12 months prior to the survey (41%)**

### **Women with children**

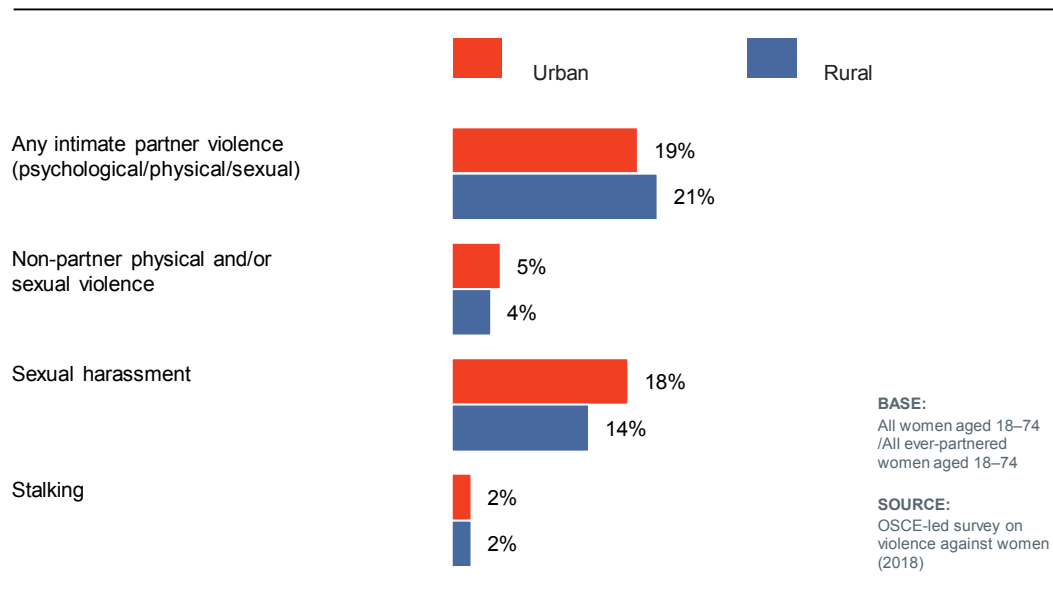
Women with children at home are more likely to disclose that they experienced some form of abuse in the 12 months prior to the survey (35% compared to 28% without children). Women with children at home are more likely to say they experienced almost all the forms of violence they were asked about in the 12 months prior to the survey: physical and/or sexual abuse at the hands of a partner (8% versus 5% of women without children at home), psychological violence committed by a partner (21% versus 15%, respectively) and sexual harassment (18% versus 15%, respectively).

## 10. Experiences of violence among specific groups of women

### Location

Women living in urban areas (32%) are somewhat more likely than women living in rural areas (30%) to say that they experienced some form of abuse in the 12 months prior to the survey. The stated incidence of sexual harassment is higher among urban (18%) than rural (14%) women. However, women in rural areas are more likely to disclose that they experienced intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence (8% versus 6%, respectively) and psychological violence (19% versus 17%, respectively).

**Figure 10.2: Prevalence of violence in the 12 months prior to the survey, by urban/rural residential location**



**Women in rural areas are more likely to indicate that they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner**



# ANNEXES

## Annex 1: List of support organizations measured in the survey

**Table A1.1: List of support organizations measured in the OSCE participating States covered in the survey**

"Have you ever heard of the following organizations or services?"		Yes, %
Albania	Counselling Line for Girls and Women – Tirana	65
	Centre for Legal Civic Initiatives	41
	Gender Alliance Centre for Development	44
Bosnia and Herzegovina	SOS line for victims of domestic violence 1265 (asked about in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina only)	56
	Medica Zenica (asked in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Brčko District only)	32
	Foundation for Local Democracy (Sarajevo) (asked about in Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Brčko District only)	16
	Lara Bijelina (asked about in Republika Srpska only)	26
	SOS line for victims of domestic violence 1264 (asked about in Republika Srpska only)	49
	United Women, Banja Luka (asked about in Republika Srpska only)	35
Montenegro	NGO SOS Line Nikšić	52
	NGO SOS Telephone Podgorica	62
	NGO Women's Safe House Podgorica	85
North Macedonia	Health Education and Research Association, HERA	24
	Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of Women, ESE	13
	National Council for Gender Equality, NCGE	26
Serbia	Regional SOS helpline for women victims of violence in Vojvodina	23
	Counselling centre for combating violence against women – SOS hotline and safe house, Belgrade	70
	Autonomous women's centre, Belgrade	35
Moldova	Trustline for women administered by the La Strada International Centre	56
	Refugiul Casa Marioarei (shelter)	28
	Assistance and Protection Centre for Victims	52
Ukraine	Centre of Social Services for Families, Children and Youth	59
	La Strada Ukraine	15
	The Police	94

**Table A1.2: List of support organizations respondents were asked about in Kosovo**

		Yes %
Kosovo	Criminal Victim Assistance Line (public prosecutor)	27
	Gjakovë/Đakovica safe house	37
	The Kosova Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims	37











Organization for Security and  
Co-operation in Europe

**OSCE Secretariat**

Gender Issues  
Wallnerstrasse 6  
1010 Vienna, Austria

Email: [equality@osce.org](mailto:equality@osce.org)  
[www.osce.org/secretariat/gender](http://www.osce.org/secretariat/gender)