

HOW TO USE SURVEY DATA TO PREVENT AND COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS



Practical guide for decision makers,
policymakers and non-governmental
organizations on applying the OSCE-led
survey on violence against women



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Who is this guide for?

Policymakers and decision makers

Members of parliament, ministries,
gender-equality bodies

Non-governmental organizations

Academia, international organizations,
national human rights institutions

INTRODUCTION

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) recognizes that violence against women and girls is both a threat to individuals and a broader security concern; such violence must be prevented in order to achieve comprehensive security. Eliminating violence against women and girls is necessary to achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

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 from participating fully and equally in society.

This guide provides suggestions and practical examples for policymakers, decision makers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on how to use data to improve comprehensive responses – prevention, protection and prosecution – to such violence, with the ultimate goal of ending violence against women and girls.

The OSCE conducted a Survey on violence against women in 2018 in seven OSCE participating states in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine. The research was also conducted in Kosovo.¹ In addition to assessing the prevalence, types and impact of violence against women and girls, the survey also collected data on attitudes to violence and on women's experiences of violence in conflict and non-conflict settings.

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) is the most comprehensive international legal framework document on violence against women and is considered a benchmark for measures to eliminate such violence.

The OSCE-led surveys' methodology was based on the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' (FRA) survey on violence against women in all EU member states in 2012. The OSCE participating States can use the survey results and recommendations in their efforts to implement the Istanbul Convention.

¹ 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.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN DATA: OSCE-LED SURVEY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



HOW

was the data measured?

15,179 women interviewed

114 key experts interviewed

63 focus Group Discussions

35 In-depth interviews with women survivors of violence

WHAT

action did the OSCE take?

The OSCE researched how women are affected by different forms of violence in conflict and non-conflict settings.



WHY

are the survey results important?

- INCREASE SECURITY
- DECREASE VIOLENCE
- IMPROVE POLICIES AND ASSISTANCE



THE SURVEYS' KEY CONCLUSIONS



All women can experience violence, but some groups are at a higher risk.



Women do not report violence to the police, nor do they seek help from institutions in the majority of cases.



Violence has severe physical and psychological impacts, resulting in health problems for women.



Barriers to seeking help are rooted in attitudes that silence women and also in their lack of trust in authorities.



There is a need to implement legislation and improve action plans to address all forms of violence against women.



The characteristics and behaviour of perpetrators are possible risk factors contributing to violence.



The majority of women don't know what to do if they experience violence.

WHY ARE SURVEY RESULTS SO IMPORTANT?

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 regional initiatives to prevent violence against women and girls and protect victims.



70% **OF WOMEN** have experienced some form of violence since the age of 15, translating into **16 MILLION** women in the region covered by the OSCE-led survey

The OSCE-led survey provides the data needed to fill this gap:

- > Provides comprehensive information about the situation of women and girls who are victims of violence
- > Enables the planning and development of initiatives and actions based on reliable, representative and comparable data
- > Supports the prevention of violence against women and girls and the improvement of policies and services
- > Contributes to a reduction in violence against women and girls

Based on the survey's findings and conclusions, the survey report also recommend actions to be taken.

Update and implement legal frameworks

Improve the collection, analysis and use of data and monitoring

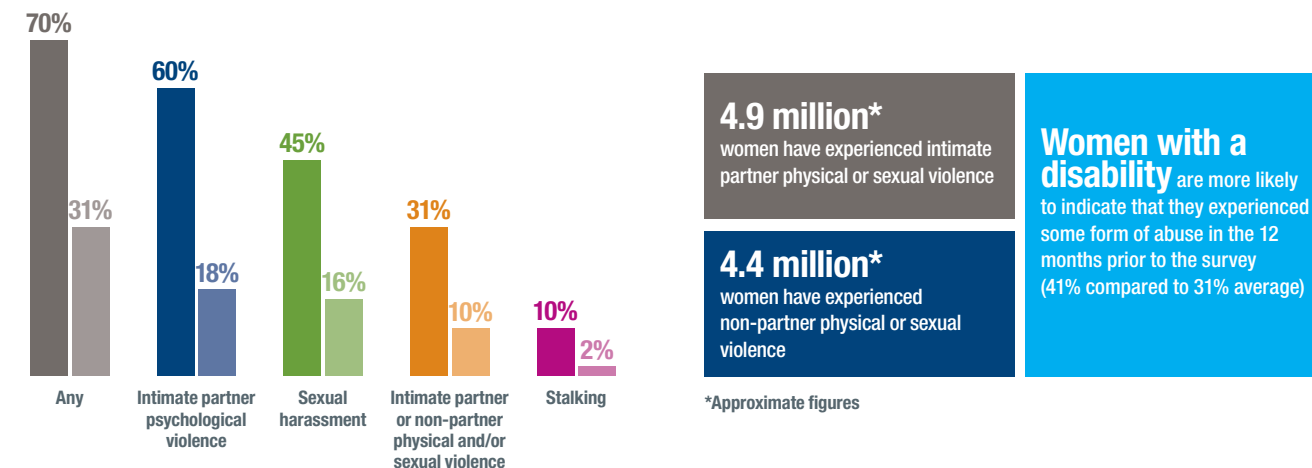
Implement awareness-raising campaigns on gender equality

Improve services for victims and co-operation with NGOs

Establish co-ordinated, multisectoral response mechanisms

KEY DATA FROM THE OSCE-LED SURVEY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

THERE IS A HIGH PREVALENCE OF ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

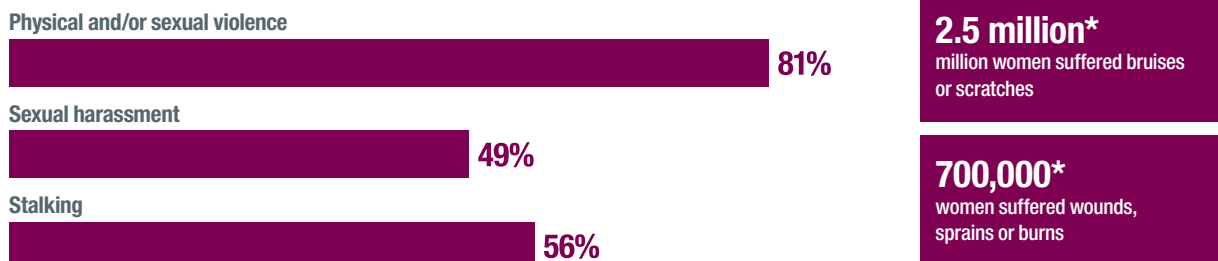


■ Since the age of 15 ■ 12 months prior to the survey

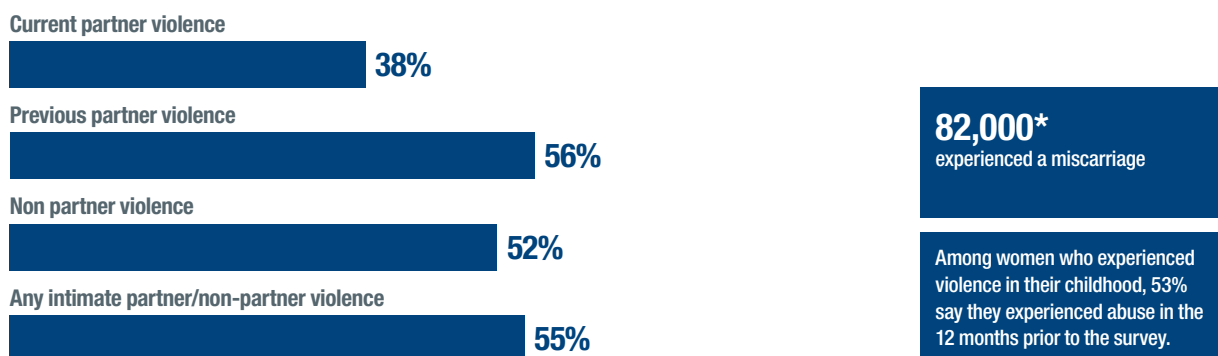
Base: Prevalence of intimate partner/non-partner violence, sexual harassment, stalking, and non-partner violence are based on all women aged 18 (15,179); intimate partner violence is based on all ever-partnered women (14,085).

VIOLENCE CAUSES PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SUFFERING

% OF WOMEN WHO EXPERIENCED PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES DUE TO...



% OF WOMEN WHO EXPERIENCED ONE OR MORE PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES DUE TO...

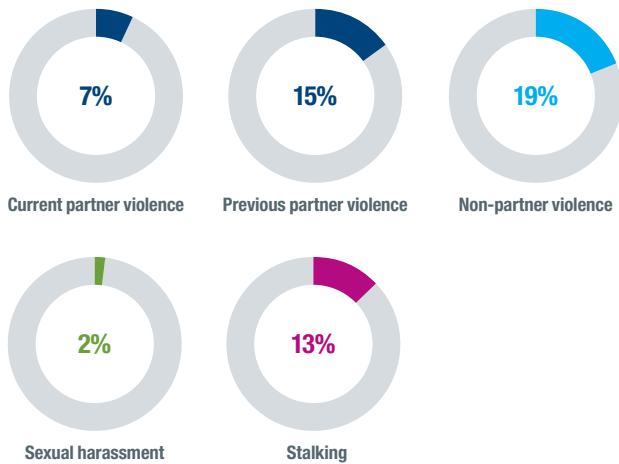


*Approximate figures

Base for psychological and physical consequences: All women aged 18-74 who identified 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)

THERE ARE LOW LEVELS OF REPORTING AND A LACK OF AWARENESS OF SERVICES

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

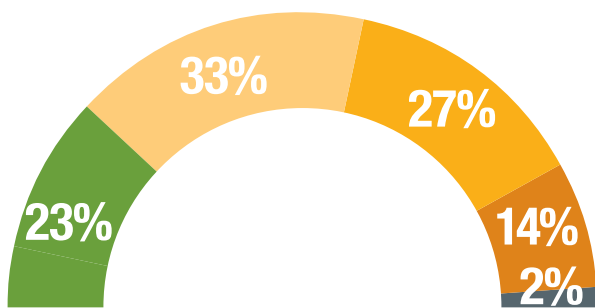


“ I would never turn to the police. You need to pull strings for that too. One woman’s husband held a very important position. He beat her up. She reported him. He pulled strings and nothing happened. ”
Survey respondent

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)

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



- Very well informed/well informed
- Somewhat informed
- Not well informed
- Don't know at all what to do
- Refused/No Answer

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

VICTIM-BLAMING ATTITUDES CONTRIBUTE TO SHAMING AND SILENCING OF VICTIMS

■ Totally/tend to agree ■ Totally/tend to disagree

Q: Would your friends generally agree or disagree with the following statements?

It is a wife's obligation to have sex with her husband even if she doesn't feel like it



It is important for a man to show his wife/partner who is the boss



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

Violence against women is often provoked by the victim



Domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family



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



HOW TO USE SURVEY DATA

The OSCE-led survey on violence against women is more than a collection of data. It is a detailed assessment of the situation related to violence against women and girls in the region where it was conducted. It also outlines a set of tools that can be used to prevent violence against women and girls and to protect potential victims.

“This survey gives us important arguments to go to policymakers, but also to the public, to the electorate, to show them how important this is and the gravity of this problem.”

“ *Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Gender Equality*

The survey examined violence that women experience in conflict and non-conflict settings, as well as the impact violence has on women, including its lasting consequences. In addition, the survey also considered the legal, institutional and policy contexts. This holistic approach made it possible to produce recommendations based on interviews with experts and victims of violence, and to build on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as well as the Istanbul Convention.

Members of parliament, policymakers, decision makers, non-governmental organizations and others can use the survey results to help reduce or eliminate violence against women and girls in the region.

How the survey data can be used to improve the situation of women and girls



HOW MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, MINISTRIES, GENDER-EQUALITY BODIES AND NGO'S CAN USE SURVEY DATA

PARLIAMENTARIANS, MINISTRIES AND GENDER-EQUALITY BODIES

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
DEVELOP	DISSEMINATE	INFORM	RESEARCH	ORGANIZE	ESTABLISH	PROMOTE
Develop and implement national action plans on gender equality, violence against women and UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security.	Disseminate and use the data in social policy, internal affairs, defence, health and education.	Inform gender-responsive budgeting at the municipal, provincial and central level.	Conduct further in-depth research on how women's trust in institutions can be improved.	Organize conferences to bring together experts and discuss the findings and follow-up actions to the survey.	Establish multisectoral response mechanisms based on the specific needs of different groups of women and girls.	Promote the use of the data to improve training for professionals (including law enforcement and the justice sector).

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
PROTECT	SUPPORT	ADVOCATE	RESEARCH	REPORT	IMPLEMENT	DEVELOP
Advocate for legislation and the implementation of policies and services to protect victims of violence.	Advocate for NGO-run specialized support services for victims of sexual violence.	Use the recommendations to advocate for the inclusion of NGOs in co-ordination mechanisms concerning violence against women.	Conduct further in-depth research into reasons why women don't trust institutions.	Develop shadow reports to the CEDAW and GREVIO reports that include survey data.	Implement campaigns to raise awareness of violence against women, gender equality and services for victims.	Develop innovative materials to change the attitudes of individuals, organizations and society at large.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES: WHAT CAN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, MINISTRIES AND GENDER-EQUALITY BODIES DO?

How to improve legislation and policies to combat violence against women and girls

- Request that relevant ministries and agencies conduct a mapping analysis of domestic legislation and policies in line with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, CEDAW and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Propose or vote for the strengthening of criminal laws on violence against women and girls.
- Propose or vote for specific laws that address gender-based violence, including domestic violence / intimate partner violence.
- Regularly review the effectiveness of laws and policies, including the quality of police training, prosecution and access to justice.
- Propose or vote for policies that take into account the specific situation of disadvantaged groups of women and girls, such as women with disabilities, minority women, refugee or displaced women, rural women and women in conflict-affected areas.
- Advocate for regular surveys of the general female population and victims of violence to monitor the effectiveness of laws and policies.
- Take legislative and practical measures to empower women economically and politically and to strengthen gender equality.

How to communicate with other stakeholders

- Start with prevalence: highlight how widespread violence against women and girls is in your location or region, showing that it is a serious problem.
- Stress the seriousness of the consequences of violence against women and girls, including women's lack of trust in institutions.
- Demonstrate the connection between preventing and combating violence against women and the CEDAW Convention, the Istanbul Convention (if applicable), the UN Sustainable Development Goals and other international documents.
- Point out that living a life free of violence is a basic human right that is denied to a large number of women in the region. Policy- and lawmakers have a duty and responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of all citizens.
- Highlight the toxic cycle of violence: women with children are more likely to experience all forms of violence; children often witness violence and are also at risk of being exposed to violence. Violence in childhood means a higher likelihood of experiencing violence as an adult. Effectively addressing violence against women now will prevent it in the future.

EXAMPLES OF MESSAGES TO BE USED BY MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND POLICYMAKERS ²

Our communities are not equally safe for everyone. Seventy per cent of women have experienced some form of violence since the age of 15. We need to change our policies and legal framework to make sure that we 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 with the Istanbul Convention's standards and norms.

Psychological violence is the most widespread form of intimate partner violence reported in the survey, with 60% of women who have been in a relationship experiencing this form of violence. We need to change our criminal laws and procedures and educate legal practitioners to make sure that intimate partner violence is criminalized and prosecuted.

The data shows that victims are unaware of available services; only 55% of women feel that they are aware of what to do if they experience violence. We need to inform women and girls about available services, including through easily accessible websites, and we need to develop long-term information campaigns about the steps women can take to seek support. But informing women is not enough. There is a need to improve the quality of, and access to, specialized services for women and girls, including psychosocial support and shelters. All specialized services should be accessible to everyone, available in minority languages, free of charge and integrated into response mechanisms.

The survey tells us that beliefs in women's inequality and subservience still persist, alongside justifications for violence. The OSCE survey showed that three out of ten women in the regions where the survey was conducted believe that domestic violence is a private matter and that 25% of women believe that violence is often provoked by the victim. We need to incorporate information about gender equality and violence against women and girls into curricula and organize awareness-raising campaigns for the general public on violence against women and girls.

The data shows that 55% of women who have experienced violence have had physical injuries, and 80% of victims of physical and/or sexual violence have serious psychological consequences, yet only 7% of women reported violence at the hands of their current partner to the police. This can be explained by women's lack of trust in institutions and the fact that women are not informed about the help and services that are available. We need to make sure that women feel safe to report violence. We need to make sure that sustainable training is provided to the police and other relevant stakeholders on how to provide victim-centred, gender-sensitive support to women. We need to support and carry out an awareness-raising campaign to make sure that women know where they can ask for help.

² The data in the text below is the average for the OSCE-led survey region. For domestic-level messaging, add specific data for your location. The data can be found in each local results report.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES: WHAT CAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS DO?

How to advocate for better legislation, policies and services

- Request that the government change criminal laws to include all forms of violence against women and girls and to increase prosecution.
- Advocate for the adoption of specific legislation that regulates gender-based violence and, in particular, domestic violence.
- Ask the relevant ministry to systematically provide victim-centred training to the police and judiciary, and advocate to improve women's access to justice and end impunity for perpetrators.
- Create training materials and modules for institutions that put victims at the centre in order to increase the levels of reporting and victims' trust in those institutions.
- Use the survey data to evaluate service provision and tailor services to the needs of women who are at higher risk, such as women with disabilities, minority women, rural women and younger women.
- Organize media campaigns to raise awareness of the fact that domestic violence is not a private issue, to end victim-blaming and to inform women of what to do if they need help.

How to communicate with other stakeholders

- Point out differences in the prevalence of certain forms of violence, reporting and attitudes between your locations/areas/regions the EU average, showing why the situation needs to change.
- Link the survey findings to provisions of the Istanbul Convention, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, GREVIO recommendations and other international obligations your authorities have committed to. Explain the connection between international framework documents and the gaps that exist in your location, and explain the benefits that would result from improving the status quo to meet international standards.
- Translate percentages into estimated actual numbers of women affected by violence, and use those numbers to illustrate the gravity of the problem.
- Share examples of progress and best practices from other places. Point out why these examples are relevant for the local context and what could be improved/changed in your location and how those changes could be implemented.
- Point out that significant reforms were made in EU countries based on an EU-wide survey on violence against women conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights. For example, several countries adapted their legislation and increased funding to support services, and the EU signed the Istanbul Convention.
- Prepare a brief for a relevant ministry that links the prevalence of violence against women and girls to costs to society.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES: ADVOCACY POINTS FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The OSCE survey on the well-being and safety of women found that up to 70% of women have experienced some form of violence since the age of 15. Thirty-one per cent have experienced physical and/or sexual violence. Up to 45% have experienced sexual harassment, and 10% have experienced stalking. In order to address these issues in a holistic manner, we need to **create an action plan to combat all forms of violence against women and girls, and we need to criminalize all forms of violence, including psychological violence.** Amendments to criminal laws need to be made to align the laws with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention and CEDAW.

Three in ten women believe that domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family, even though our law says it is a crime that should be punished. Those women are more likely to have experienced violence but are less likely to contact the police or any other organization. Beliefs in female subservience that persist in our society contribute to feelings of shame and silence around violence. **We need to end the silence. Raising awareness about our zero-tolerance policy towards violence and disseminating information about available help are key.**

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. Nearly one in five women say they believe that their friends would agree that “it is a woman’s obligation to have sex with her husband even if she doesn’t feel like it”. **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 are of the utmost importance and need to be supported.**

“

The survey data highlights that women do not trust institutions. Only 7% of women reported their abusers to the police, even when we know that 42% of women suffered physical injuries from a current partner. Women are not safe in their homes, yet they don't feel safe in reporting violence. 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. **We need to put victims at the centre when providing assistance. We need to provide regular gender-sensitive training to the police and other responders. Referral mechanisms must include women's NGOs**, as they have decades of experience in working directly with victims, and victims place more trust in women's NGOs.

”

“

This survey has demonstrated the importance of comprehensive data in determining the scale and consequences of violence against women and girls and how it affects different groups of women. The collection, analysis and use of data needs to be improved for the purposes of evidence-based policy-making.

We need to ensure the regular review and monitoring of laws and policies by periodically surveying women who seek help to determine their level of satisfaction with the assistance they receive.

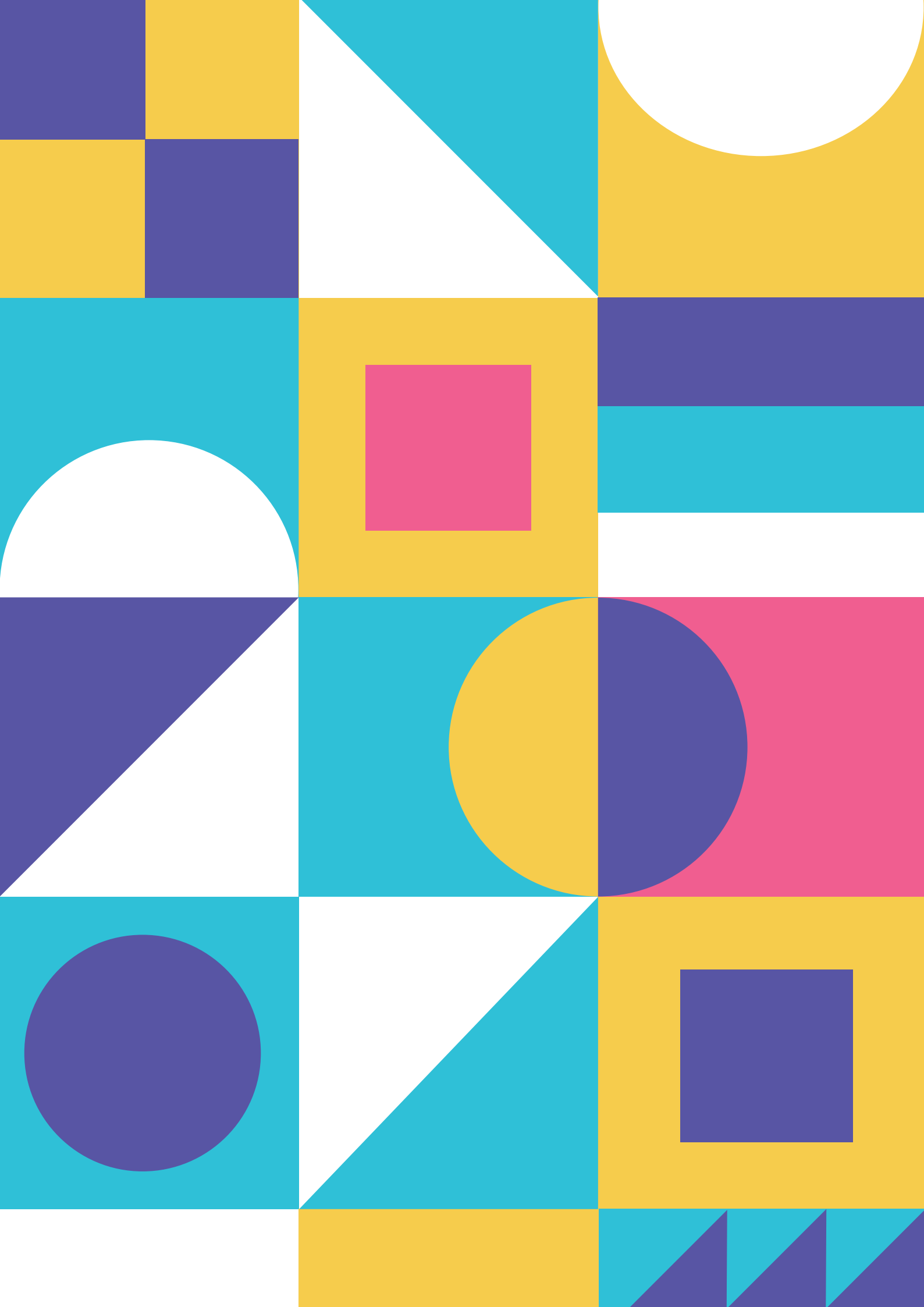
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Almost half of women don't know what to do when they experience violence. With low levels of reporting and high levels of shame and silence, women's NGOs that have decades of experience in working with victims of violence and monitoring legislation and policies are key partners in reducing violence against women and girls.

Regular and sufficient funding needs to be ensured for NGOs for service provision and advocacy work.

”



USE OF SURVEY DATA IN PRACTICE

MONTENEGRO

A booklet with guidelines for health professionals in Moldova was created on the basis of the OSCE-led survey data on the prevalence and consequences of violence on women's health and well-being.

SERBIA

In 2018, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia used the preliminary OSCE-led survey data to calculate national SDG indicators, which were used in Serbia's voluntary national review on implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Data from the survey was also used to calculate Serbia's 2018 EIGE Gender Equality Index.

MOLDOVA

In Moldova, the survey results and recommendations were discussed within the national co-ordination platform for gender equality and among a national coalition of NGOs called Live without Violence. Based on those discussions, the survey data on Moldova is seen as strong evidence that can be used in addressing national and sectoral policies, in particular in the process of advancing Moldova's ratification of the Istanbul Convention. Progress is already being made on certain recommendations, e.g., strengthening the referral mechanism at the local level by improving co-operation between law enforcement and social workers to improve their response to domestic violence.

On the basis of the survey results and recommendations, we improved the [domestic] mechanism[s]: more prevention; referral of victims to psychologists [at] district police stations. We [stressed] cooperative mechanisms. ... [This has been] integrated [into] the interdisciplinary teams' training.

Civil servant

“In my organization, we use [the OSCE] survey; the quantitative [data] to show how widespread [violence against women] is. I co-ordinated a project about [violence against women], and we asked the survivors what was useful for them. They said ‘understanding, moral support from friends, community and institutions’. We need to [decrease] the general tolerance towards violence. [We need to] believe ... women.”

NGO representative

International organizations

UNFPA and UNICEF

In 2019, UNFPA developed a policy brief based on data from the OSCE-led survey. UNFPA drafted a thematic brief called “Violence against women living with disabilities in South-East and East Europe” that will be used for advocacy purposes.

<https://eeca.unfpa.org/en/publications/violence-against-women-living-disabilities-south-east-and-eastern-europe>

UN WOMEN

UN Women is using the survey data as a basis for its regional work on the Istanbul Convention and on the review process of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Extensive references to the OSCE-led survey can be found in a paper the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe published in 2019. Titled “Preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls”.

OSCE

In 2019, the OSCE Programme for Gender Issues and seven OSCE field operations in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe conducted an awareness-raising campaign called “End the Silence”.

Based on the results of the OSCE-led survey, the campaign raised public awareness of the prevalence of violence against women and initiated discussions about the extent of the problem and its consequences. It reached over 35 million people through posters, newspaper articles, radio and television programmes, and social media outreach in the course of the international campaign “16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence”.

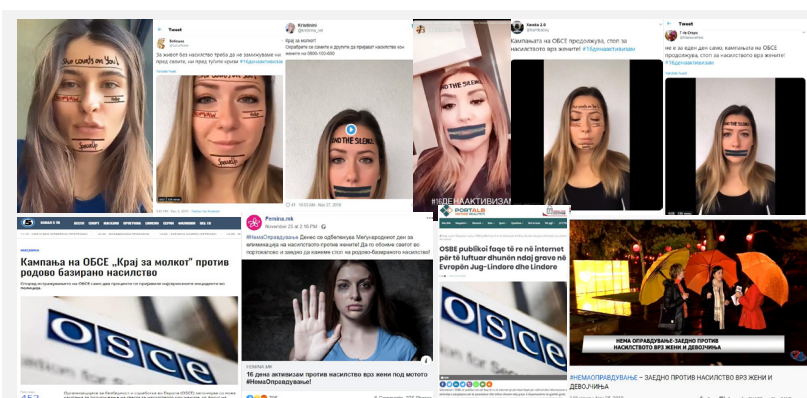
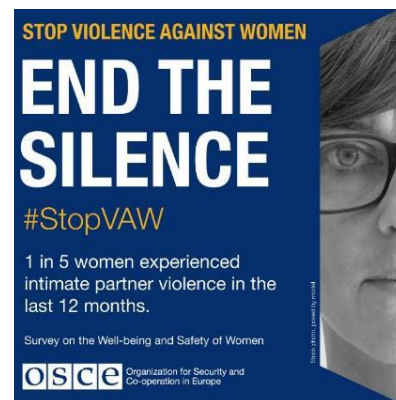
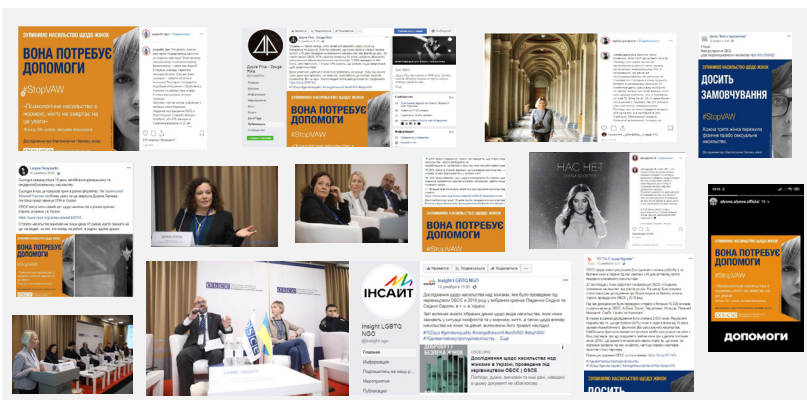
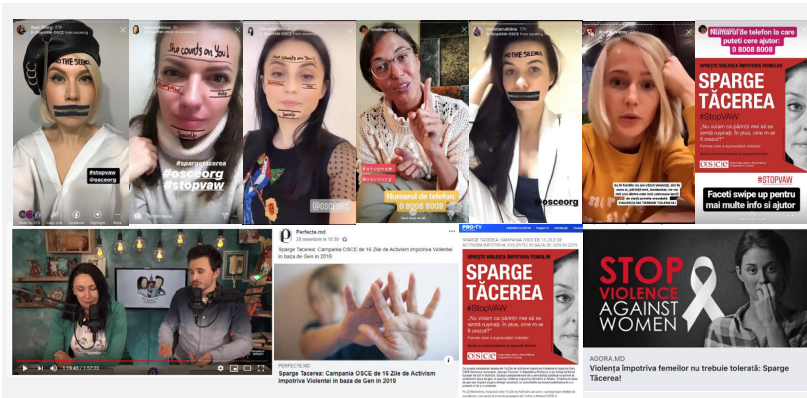
“End the Silence” also included an online resource page (<https://www.stopvawnow.org/>) with information to support efforts to prevent and combat violence against women.

In the course of the campaign, posters targeting local police officers including information on their role as first responders that support women who have experienced violence were produced and distributed in police stations in the locations covered by the survey.

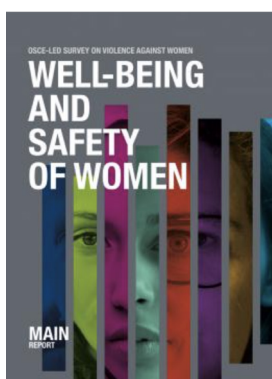
Awareness-raising and dissemination of the survey results and recommendations will continue, and future activities will be posted on the survey’s website:

<https://www.osce.org/projects/survey-on-the-well-being-and-safety-of-women>

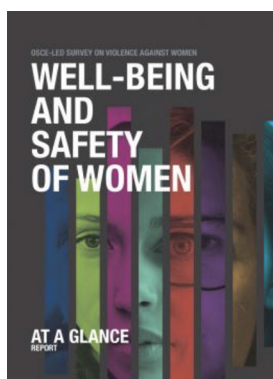
CAMPAIGN MATERIALS OF THE 'END THE SILENCE' CAMPAIGN IN 2019



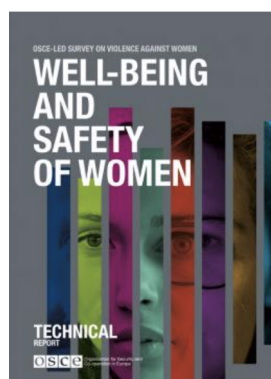
OVERVIEW OF OSCE-LED SURVEY REPORTS AND RESOURCE MATERIALS



MAIN REPORT
<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/413237>



AT A GLANCE REPORT
<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/418913>

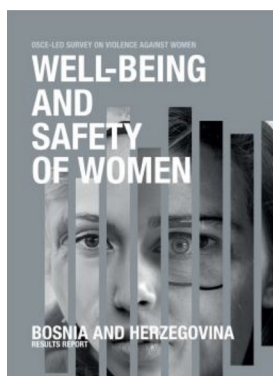


TECHNICAL REPORT
<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/418919>

LOCAL RESULTS REPORTS



ALBANIA
<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/434849>



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/423470>



MONTENEGRO
<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/424985>



NORTH MACEDONIA
<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/419264>



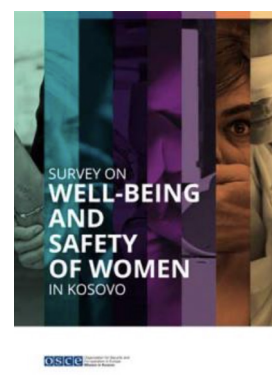
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MOLDOVA
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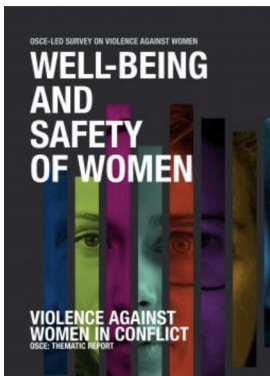


UKRAINE
<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/440312>

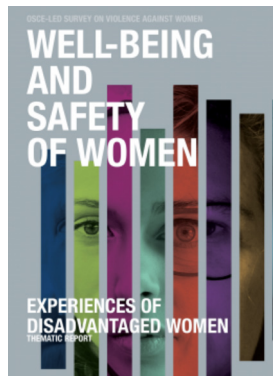


KOSOVO
<https://www.osce.org/mission-in-kosovo/439781>

THEMATIC REPORTS



**VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN IN CONFLICT**
[https://www.osce.org/
secretariat/444157](https://www.osce.org/secretariat/444157)

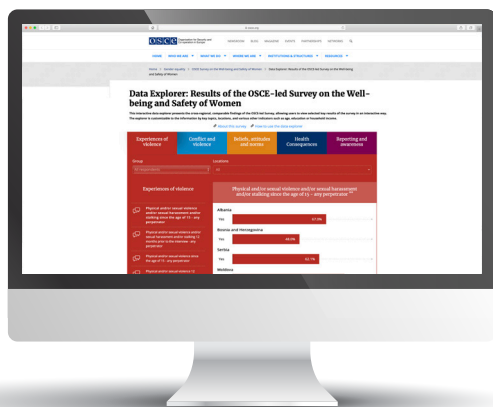


**EXPERIENCES OF
DISADVANTAGED WOMEN**
[https://www.osce.org/
secretariat/430007](https://www.osce.org/secretariat/430007)

ONLINE RESOURCES

DATA EXPLORER

<https://www.osce.org/violence-against-women>



STORYTELLING WEBSITE

<https://www.osce.org/violence-against-women/story>

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN RESOURCE PAGE

<https://www.stopvawnow.org/>



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