

COMMITTEE: World Health Organization

ISSUE: How can we strengthen the role of health systems in order to effectively combat violence against women, girls and children?

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PRESENTATION OF THE CHAIR



Hello dear delegates! My name is Elisa BOURGUIGNON and I will be in my final year of high school during the FerMUN 2026 conference. I'm a student at the Lycée International de Ferney-Voltaire in the European section. I have always lived in France, but I had the opportunity to grow up in a multicultural environment thanks to the presence of UN agencies not far from my town. I have been part of the MUN programme since 2024, having been an administrator and then a reporter for the press team in 2025. In my free time, I devote myself to dance, theatre and the school's web radio, and above all I love reading, surfing the internet and listening to music.

I also keep up with current events. We cannot ignore the figures released each year on femicide and complaints of violence against women. We also cannot ignore the children who are victims of these acts within their own homes. Despite improvements over the years in the care provided to them, it remains insufficient and many of these individuals cannot be effectively supported. That is why it is important to develop and strengthen health systems that enable us to combat all types of violence and improve detection and prevention.

I hope that this research report will serve as a useful guide in your work, and I look forward to meeting you soon at the ILO to discuss this issue together!

KEYWORDS

Violence: The intentional use of physical force, threat or coercion against oneself, another person or a group, which results in or is likely to result in trauma, psychological harm, impaired development or death. Violence can take many forms, including physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence.

Domestic violence: Acts of violence committed by an intimate partner or ex-partner, causing physical, sexual or psychological harm. This includes physical assault, sexual abuse, intimidation, persecution and coercive control (ie: psychological control over the spouse).

Healthcare system: A group of organisations, institutions, resources and individuals whose main objective is to promote, restore or maintain health. It includes hospitals, clinics, healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses, etc.), laboratories, health insurance companies, public health policies and disease prevention and treatment programmes.

Femicide: The murder of a woman or girl because of her sex or gender. Femicide is often committed in a context of domestic violence or hatred towards women.

Infanticide: The act of intentionally killing a child. This may be committed for various reasons, including cultural, economic, social or psychological factors.

Psychological influence: Also known as mental manipulation or coercive control, this is a form of psychological abuse in which one person exercises excessive and abusive control over another person. This may include tactics of manipulation, intimidation, isolation, threats and coercion to dominate and control the victim.

Chemical submission: The use of chemical substances to control or manipulate a person, often for the purposes of sexual exploitation or violence.

GENERAL OVERVIEW

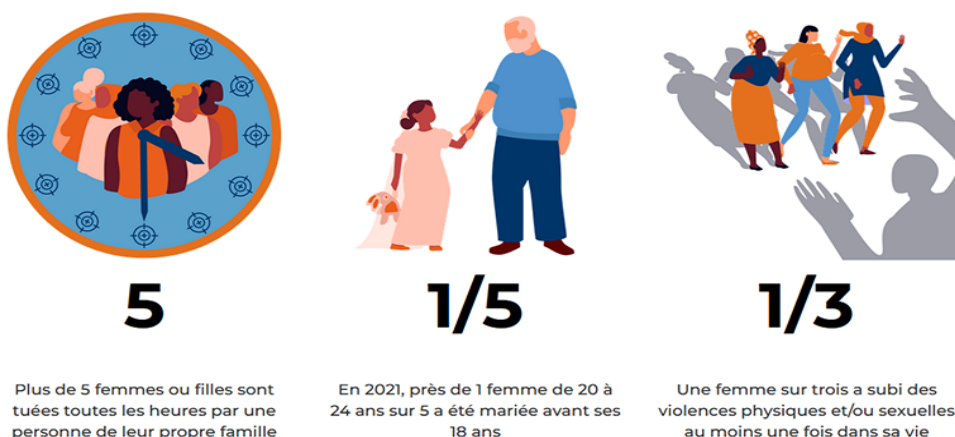
I. What is the role of health systems in addressing this violence?

Healthcare systems play a crucial role in combating violence against women, girls and children. They are on the front line when it comes to identifying, treating and supporting

victims of such violence. According to UN Women, approximately 736 million women, or nearly one in three women aged 15 and older, have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or other person at least once in their lifetime.

Source: <https://www.unwomen.org/fr>

Principaux faits et chiffres sur la violence à l'égard des femmes et des filles



Healthcare professionals are often the first to come into contact with victims of violence. They therefore play a vital role in identifying and managing these situations. Sexual and physical violence have serious consequences for the mental and physical health of victims. For example, women who have experienced violence are more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety disorders, unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Abortion may also be considered in cases of rape, except in countries where the law does not allow it.

II. How do they help to combat these acts?

They play a key role in collecting and analysing data, which is essential for understanding the extent of violence and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. They participate in awareness campaigns to educate the public and promote respectful behaviour, thereby contributing to the prevention of violence. In addition, health professionals, trained to recognise the signs of violence, can refer victims to specialist services, such as shelters and legal services.

III. Various devices already acquired:

There are many associations around the world. They address a wide range of issues such as sexual harassment, rape, sexism, sexual assault and harassment suffered by women with disabilities. This can happen at school, at home, at work and also in public spaces, either repeatedly or occasionally. In France, the Fédération Nationale GAMS fights against female

genital mutilation and forced marriages, plays a crucial role in promoting maternal and child health, and combats violence against women and girls.

In addition, WHO also collaborates with partners within the United Nations system and other international organisations to reduce and eliminate violence globally. Initiatives such as the Sexual Violence Research Initiative and the joint programme of UN Women and WHO aim to strengthen methods for measuring violence against women and improve data collection on this phenomenon. This is almost impossible during conflicts such as the current civil war in Sudan.

In India, where a veritable 'rape culture' prevails and a woman is raped every 40 seconds, despite Narendra Modi's 'zero tolerance' policy, most trials end in dismissal or a lesser sentence. Thus, progress can only be expected in this country, which continues to be marked by its actions. Elsewhere in Asia, here in China, the government is rolling back women's rights. It is closing down support centres for women who are victims of domestic violence. Here, the state is demonstrating that these measures are very fragile and not yet firmly established in some countries.

Finally, associations and support centres are not only found in developed countries, and this should not be a privilege. They are widespread in most countries, with at least one network or organisation supporting women and/or children who are victims of violence. These are often local NGOs, sometimes supported by regional networks. However, it is clear that some countries have well-organised laws and public services, while others rely almost exclusively on private or voluntary initiatives. International organisations play a major role in supporting local actors or intervening directly in countries where structures are underdeveloped or at risk.

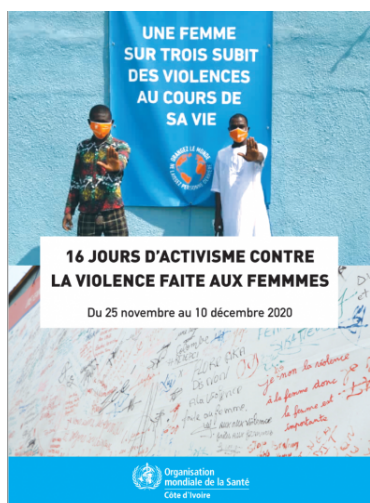
WHO TREATIES AND MAJOR EVENTS

2002: Adoption of the World Report on Violence and Health as part of the WHO's response to resolution WHA49.25. This text is primarily intended for researchers and practitioners in the field. These include health professionals, social workers, individuals involved in the creation and implementation of prevention programmes and services, those responsible for education, and those vested with public authority. ([here](#)).

2014: WHO develops first draft of clinical manual on care for women who have experienced intimate partner violence or sexual violence ([here](#)). This demonstrates a commitment to providing widespread education on how to enable access to care for a person in danger.

05/2014: At the Sixty-seventh World Health Assembly, resolution WHA67.15 entitled 'Strengthening the role of the health sector in addressing violence against women and girls and children' was adopted ([here](#)). It also focuses on violence in humanitarian emergencies and post-conflict situations.

25/11: 25 November is an international day promoting the elimination of violence against women. Events such as the [16 days of activism](#) in 2024 are organised in the run-up to this day to highlight the ever-increasing global rate of femicide. It also serves as a reminder of the political commitments made by decision-makers, encouraging governments to take action.



These 16 days illustrated by the WHO African Region

source: <https://www.afro.who.int/node/14522>

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

→ Training and awareness-raising for healthcare professionals

- Offer a training programme for doctors focused on this issue during their studies.
- In addition, organise awareness campaigns on violence against women and children.

→ Strengthening protocols and care structures

- For more effective care, create an emergency procedure specifically for this type of alert.
- Open or strengthen centres for the care of victims of violence in hospitals.

Community involvement

- Establish local partnerships to raise public awareness about reporting violence.
- Create support groups for victims of violence within communities and liaise with healthcare professionals.
- Strengthen collaboration with governments, particularly on issues relating to legislation protecting women and children affected by violence.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER :

1. What are the annual rates of femicide and infanticide in your country?
2. Has your country already implemented action plans (if so, which ones)? For example, does it have a mobile helpline connecting healthcare professionals to victims? How can these be improved?
3. What infrastructure has your government built to meet the needs of victims?
4. Is this infrastructure sufficient to accommodate abused women, girls and children in general?
5. Are healthcare professionals in your country trained to respond to these acts? If so, what tools are available to them?
6. Financially speaking, is your state able to strengthen these healthcare systems and enter into multilateral agreements in which it commits to helping others?
7. Which delegations would be in favour of an agreement with you? (Who are your allies in creating a coalition?)
8. Does your country grant women and girls the right to access abortion in cases of sexual violence? Can certain doctors refuse to perform abortions on the basis of a conscience clause?

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Videos:

- [OMS : Violence contre les femmes - Renforcer la réponse du système de santé](#)
- [Mettre fin aux violences contre les femmes et les filles: Si nous ne le faisons pas, qui le fera?](#)
- [Un livret pour sensibiliser les soignants aux violences conjugales](#)