

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A FORM OF DISCRIMINATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

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**Abstract:** This article examines the problem of violence against women and girls committed in all countries of the world, which is a serious obstacle to achieving progress in the field of equality, development and peace, as well as ensuring the rights of women and girls. Specific examples show that violence against women and girls remains widespread throughout the world “regardless of social status, and cultural level”.

**Key words:** violence against women and girls, discrimination, human rights, types of violence, women's movement, eradication of violence, campaign “16 days of activism against gender-based violence”.

## INTRODUCTION

Violence against women and girls occurs in all countries of the world and remains one of the most serious unresolved problems of our time. Despite progress in the development of international legal norms, standards and principles, the creation of international legal and political structures that monitor the various forms and types of violence committed both in public places and in the family, progress in reducing the level of violence against them is small.

UN Secretary General António Guterres, speaking to students and faculty at The New School in New York (February 27, 2020), stressed that gender-based

violence has reached epidemic proportions, that blatant discrimination against women still flourishes in the modern world which is a consequence of the patriarchal social system. Women are not admitted to the highest echelons of power, they are few among directors of corporate councils or at peace negotiating tables, they are not among the winners of prestigious awards [1], only about 8 percent of heads of state and less than 25 percent of parliamentarians are women [2].

In his speech on October 2, 2020, at the General Assembly meeting dedicated to the anniversary of the World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, UN Secretary-General António Guterres drew attention to the fact that in the world one woman in three is exposed to some kind of forms of violence, 12 million girls are married each year before the age of 18. In some regions of the world, the killings of women are comparable to military actions. So, in 2017, on average, 137 women died in family conflicts every day [3]. In 2018, women and girls accounted for about 65 per cent of the more than 45,000 victims identified worldwide, while there has been a decrease in the number of prosecutions against traffickers. Domestic violence against women is one of the most widespread human rights violations in the world. In Europe, 12% to 15% of women face domestic violence on a daily basis [4]. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of requests for domestic beatings has increased worldwide. New data show that violence against women and girls, especially domestic violence, has intensified since the COVID-19 outbreak [5]. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, every year 213 thousand adult women in France become victims of beatings and/or sexual violence by current or former life partners (1% of all women aged 18 to 75). According to the Psytel group of psychologists, 217 women in France committed suicide due to domestic violence in 2018 [6]. In Russia, the

number of cases of domestic violence has increased two and a half times [7]. The UN Secretary noted that in some countries 95 percent of women murderers go unpunished. According to him, “In other words, men are at war with women, but no one is calling for a ceasefire or imposition of sanctions”[1].

### **Research methodology**

The study is based on the available research, numerous sources and facts in the field of combating the phenomenon of violence against women and girls at the national, regional and global levels. Among the numerous sources, the speeches of the UN Secretary General, reports and studies of the UN system units, international organizations on human rights, various forms of violence against women, its causes and consequences are of great value.

### **Analysis and research results**

Violence against women is a major obstacle to progress towards equality, development and peace, and the better rights for women and girls. The landmark UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (Resolution 48/104.1993), which marks a landmark in the fight against violence, defines the term “violence against women” as: “any act of violence committed on the basis of gender that causes or may cause physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, as well as threats to commit such acts as coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether in public or private life” [8].

Many women experience gender-based violence in a wide variety of forms throughout their lives: physical, sexual and psychological. Experts and specialists identify the following types of violence as the most common:

- violence by a partner (beating, psychological abuse, marital rape, murder of women);

- sexual violence and harassment (rape, violent sexual acts, unwanted sexual advances, child sexual abuse, forced marriage, street harassment, stalking, cyberbullying);
- human trafficking (slavery, sexual exploitation);
- curing operations on female genital organs;
- child marriages.

Globally, about 750 million women and girls were married before the age of 18. About 200 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation. One of the two dead women died at the hands of a partner or relatives (2017 data). Among men, the figure is 1 in 20. Women and girls make up 71% of all victims of trafficking, 3 out of 4 of them are sexually exploited. Violence against women is a major contributor to death or disability among women of reproductive age.

The data shows the COVID-19 pandemic is having devastating social and economic consequences. As of September 2020, the damage to the global economy may amount to \$ 8.8 trillion, while 1.6 billion people will lose their livelihoods and the crisis will hit women primarily [7]. Nearly 60 per cent of women worldwide work in the informal economy, and as markets fell and businesses closed, millions of women's jobs disappeared. According to the UN, 47 million “have been put into poverty as a result of COVID-19”. By next year, about 435 million women and girls will be living on less than \$ 1.90 a day. [5]

A difficult economic situation, giving rise to unemployment and poverty, political crisis, armed conflict act in these cases as an aggravating factor, since, finding themselves in an unstable situation, women often become the most suitable targets for violence. Young girls and older women, migrants and refugees, women from indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, women and girls living with HIV or disabilities, and people in humanitarian crises and now the COVID-19 pandemic

are the most vulnerable. Refugee and displaced women and girls, as well as women and girls with disabilities are at particular risk of violence. Women and girls with disabilities make up more than half of all people with disabilities and almost a fifth of all women worldwide. However, common approaches to the rights of women and girls with disabilities are not always considered in terms of gender-based violence. A joint statement by UN Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Ending Sexual Harassment Against Women and Girls with Disabilities (22 October 2020) highlights: “We recognize what remains to be done work to ensure that the connection between gender and disability is more regular throughout our work. Their call - “Nothing about us without us” - must be heeded if our work is to make an appropriate contribution to the elimination of structural discrimination and the realization of rights” [9].

With the rise of the Internet, it becomes important to keep girls safe online, as studies show that women and girls are more likely than men to experience harassment and violence online. Plan International surveyed 500 Indonesian girls between the ages of 15 and 20. The survey found that 32% of Indonesian girls have experienced violence on social media and 56% have witnessed violence on social media. As UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay said, “During the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated school closures, we saw an increase in violence and hate on the Internet, including bullying. Now that schools are starting to reopen, children are expressing their concerns about going back to schools. We must think and act together to stop violence in schools and in society at large” [10].

Violence against women and girls remains widespread throughout the world “regardless of social status and cultural level” [8]. Not a single country, even a very developed one, was able to cope with this problem.

Since 1981, activists of the women's movement have celebrated November 25 as a day to combat violence against women. On this day in 1960, in the Dominican Republic, by order of the Dominican ruler Rafael Trujillo, members of the underground society “Group of July 14”, the three Mirabal sisters, were brutally murdered

In memory of the Mirabal sisters, in 1991, the Rutgers University Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) in the United States launched the 16 Days of Activism against Violence Campaign, which has become one of the longest running campaigns in the world. On December 7, 1999, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/54/134) proclaiming November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and invited governments, international and non-governmental organizations to hold events on this day aimed at attracting attention to this problem.

The campaign is held annually from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to December 10 (Human Rights Day), during which women's organizations, UN agencies and national governments conduct awareness-raising activities for government bodies and the public about this issue. It is emphasized that violence against women and girls is a huge obstacle to equitable and sustainable development, ensuring fundamental human rights, and is the result of gender inequality based on existing harmful norms and attitudes. The campaign calls on governments, civil society, youth, the private sector, the media and the entire UN system to join forces to fight the global pandemic of violence against women and girls.

The UN Secretary-General's Campaign to End Violence against Women (2008) and Together by 2030 are in support of this initiative, engaging a wide

range of civil society in preventing violence and supporting women and girls who have experienced violence, raising awareness and intensifying advocacy.

In 2018, it was decided to make the elimination of gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace a long-term theme of the global 16 Days campaign. This event coincided with the adoption in June 2019 of the landmark International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment (No. 190), which addresses violence and harassment in the world of work. [11]

As part of the events dedicated to this action in 2018, the UN system in Uzbekistan, together with the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, organized a photo competition “Different Images of Women in Society” to draw the attention of the public, in particular young people, to intensify efforts to eliminate violence against women [12].

In 2019, the theme of the global campaign “16 Days” remained gender-based violence in the world of work, with a special focus on actions to support the ratification of ILO Convention No. 190. The theme of the UNiTE 2020 campaign was “Orange World: Funding, Responding, Preventing, Collecting!”

The problem of violence against women is also urgent for Uzbekistan. However, this problem in the Republic is still insufficiently studied. Until recently, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence Campaign has received little attention as a high-risk issue of public interest. Violence against women and girls was often perceived as a private, “family affair.” Now, more and more attention is being paid to this urgent problem. Recently, Uzbekistan has adopted several documents regulating the rights of women in society. These are the Laws “On guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for women and men” and “On the protection of women from oppression and violence”, signed on September 2, 2019,

the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers, and “On measures to improve the system of protecting women and girls from oppression and violence” from 4 January 2020.

Centers for the rehabilitation and adaptation of women in crisis have opened in the Republic. Police inspectors for women have begun to play a huge role in protecting women from harassment and violence. So, since the beginning of October 2020, at the initiative of the women’s department of the Department of Internal Affairs in Tashkent, a large-scale action has been organized under the motto “We are against violence” in order to attract the attention of citizens and the public to the problem of violence against women and to promote their rights. To provide anonymous urgent medical, psychological, social, pedagogical, legal and other assistance to women in difficult social situations, including those faced with family problems and domestic violence, rehabilitation centers have been opened for women victims of violence and prone to suicide [13].

Under the law “On Protection of Women from Oppression and Violence,” a victim of violence can obtain a protection order from law enforcement agencies and expect to be placed in a special assistance center. The law defines protection as a system of urgent measures of an economic, social, legal, organizational, psychological and other nature in order to eliminate the danger to the life and health of women, to ensure their safety, as well as to prevent repeated illegal actions against them [13], [14].

## **CONCLUSION**

Violence against women and girls in all forms and manifestations is a violation of human rights and fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to health and integrity. They are based on gender inequality and discrimination.

Violence against women affects women and girls around the world, and is one of the fundamental social mechanisms by which women are forced to take a subordinate position compared to men. It requires:

- to raise public awareness of the problem of violence against women and girls;
- to condemn all forms of violence against women and domestic violence;
- to protect women from all forms of violence and eradicate violence against women and domestic violence;
- to ensure de facto equality between women and men, including through the empowerment of women;
- to develop measures to protect and provide assistance to all victims of violence against women and domestic violence;
- to promote international cooperation for the elimination of violence against women and domestic violence.

In order to achieve this progress:

- women should be assigned the role of leaders with equal representation and equal decision-making authority;
- measures to protect and stimulate the economy should be targeted at women;
- expand international cooperation to eliminate violence against women and domestic violence;
- to develop measures to protect and provide assistance to all victims of violence against women;
- to strive to create a world free from violence against women and from domestic violence.

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