



EUROMED GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMME

State of Play:

Gender-based Violence in

Southern Mediterranean Countries

(April 2011)

*Enhancing Equality between Men and Women in the Euromed Region
(2008-2011)*

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|---------|--|
| AASW | Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women (Israel) |
| AFTURD | Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development |
| ALVF | Lebanese Association for Combating Violence against Women |
| ATFD | Tunisian Democratic Women's Association |
| ATM | Tunisian Mothers' Association |
| AWRD | Association for Women Role in Development |
| CAWTAR: | Center of Arab Women for Training and Research |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women |
| CEOFWW | Centre for Help and Counseling for Women Victims of Violence (Tunisia) |
| CNFFPA | National Council for Women, Family and the Elderly (Tunisia) |
| CNFT | National Commission of Women Workers (Algeria) |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| CREDIF | Centre for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women |
| EGEP | Enhancing Equality between Men and Women in the Euromed Region |
| ENPI | European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument |
| EU | European Union |
| FGM | Female Genital Mutilation |
| GBV | Gender-based violence |
| GWU | General Women Union (Syria) |
| IFH | Institute of Family Health (Jordan) |
| JNCW | Jordanian National Commission for Women |
| MAFFEPA | Ministry for Women, the Family, Childhood and the Elderly (Tunisia) |
| MDCFCF | Ministry for Family Affairs and Women Condition (Algeria) |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MOSAL | Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (Syria) |
| MOWA | Ministry of Women's Affairs (OPT) |

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| | |
|--------|---|
| NCFA | National Council for Family Affairs (Jordan) |
| NCLW | National Commission for Lebanese Women |
| NCW | National Council for Women (Egypt) |
| NGO(s) | Non-governmental organizations |
| ONFP | National Office for Family and Population (Tunisia) |
| OPT | Occupied Palestinian Territory |
| PCBS | Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics |
| PfA | United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing the Platform for Action |
| SCFA | Syrian Commission of Family Affairs |
| SFPA | Syrian Family Planning Association |
| Shama' | Network for Combating Violence against Women (Jordan) |
| SIGI | Sisterhood is Global (Jordan) |
| UN | Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) |
| UfM | Union for the Mediterranean |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNFT | National Union of Tunisian Women |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNIFEM | United Nations Development Fund for Women |

I. Introduction

1.1 Programme Context

The regional programme "Enhancing Equality between Men and Women in the Euromed region" (EGEP) was developed within the framework of the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions on "Strengthening the Role of Women in Society".

This three-year programme (May 2008 - May 2011) is funded by the European Union's Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The programme is implemented in the nine countries of the southern part of the EU neighbouring area: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Tunisia.¹

The overall objective of the programme is to enhance equality between men and women by strengthening the capacities of key players, particularly the states, and by supporting existing positive trends and dynamics relating to women's roles in decision-making in the public and private domains, and to follow up on the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions.

More specifically, the programme's purposes are:

- Purpose 1: Support and reinforce current dynamics that favour both de jure and de facto gender equality and that provide support to the promotion of women's rights in the region;
- Purpose 2: Improve understanding and knowledge of the various forms of violence against women;
- Purpose 3: Ensure that the Istanbul Ministerial Conclusions on "Strengthening the role of women in society" are being followed up.

Within Purpose 1, national situation analysis studies were conducted in eight partner countries (Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Syria and Tunisia). They also assessed the issue of gender-based violence (GBV) in the respective countries, in particular in relation to the strategies and measures undertaken by the states, including policy and legal reforms, and by

¹ For further information see: <http://www.euromedgenderequality.org/>

civil society organizations. The situational analyses are based on qualitative and, where available, quantitative data as well as interviews with key stakeholders and desk reviews of primary and secondary sources. The studies were presented and their findings discussed and validated during a national multi-stakeholder workshop in each country.

The national results of the situation analyses and the national priorities, as validated by the national workshops, were presented and debated during a regional roundtable organised in Brussels on 15, 16 and 17 March 2010. The roundtable brought together representatives of the Northern and Southern Mediterranean countries in order to share, discuss and finalise the national situation analyses and the regional report compiling results and insights of the national reports. From those, combating gender-based violence (GBV) emerges as a central priority in the region.

In the context of the programme and under the leadership of CAWTAR, a regional expert-group meeting ‘Gender-based violence research: Concepts, data, methodology and tools’ was also held in Tunis, from 20 to 23 April 2009 to assess good practices and the methods and tools used in GBV surveys and research.

The meeting also aimed at drafting recommendations to formulate a strategic plan of action for combating GBV causes. An important outcome of the meeting was the “Methodological Protocol: Harmonized Methodology and Concepts to conduct Gender-based Violence Surveys”.²

1.2 Methodology and Objectives of State of the Play

The present study builds upon the national situation analyses and also takes into account the conclusions and recommendations of the regional expert group meeting which took place in Tunis in April 2009 as well as those of the roundtable held in Brussels in March 2010. In some instances the study provides an update on the latest developments regarding legislation or relevant actions or policies.

² Report of the Regional Expert-Group Meeting on GBV Research: Concepts, data, methodology and tools, EGEP Tunis, 20-23 April 2009.

Despite the scarcity of information and the absence of systematically collected data in most of the countries, the findings of the studies allow a first assessment of the prevalence of GBV, its forms and extent, with the aim to contribute to a better understanding and knowledge of GBV in the partner countries.

The study provides an overview of pertinent issues as well as a comparative analysis among the 9 partner countries. In addition to a definition of GBV, Chapter II provides an outline of the most important international and regional legal instruments, which have been endorsed by a number of countries in the Southern Mediterranean countries in dealing with GBV.

In the following chapter, the main forms of GBV occurring in the 9 partner countries are outlined.

Chapter IV includes an overview of the main studies and surveys conducted in the 9 partner countries.

In Chapter V the national strategies or action plans adopted in the countries are discussed, in addition to the existing national legal and institutional frameworks.

Chapter VI provides an overview of the main contributions by civil society organizations to addressing GBV.

The study concludes with a summary of the most important findings and issues at stake and highlights examples of good practice.

2. Gender-based Violence (GBV) – International and Regional Frameworks

2.1 Gender-based Violence (GBV) – Concept and Definition

Violence against women is a term used to refer to “any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.”³

The term highlights the unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to the domination over and discrimination against women by men. Gender-based violence (GBV) may occur in all social classes, both in the public and private domains. According to CEDAW, GBV can take many forms and can range from verbal abuse to some severe forms, such as killings.⁴ Studies have shown that domestic violence is the most likely form of violence against women, as women are more likely to be victimized by someone they are intimate with.

GBV is often hidden by a culture of silence and remains underreported because of shame, stigma and retribution and tacit consent of GBV existing in many societies. As a result, reliable statistical data is often unavailable, which has an impact on the formulation of relevant policies.

GBV is a complex issue. Its multi-faceted dimension requires a coordinated, cross-sectoral response on the basis of recognition and identification of the phenomenon, its prevalence and the various forms it can take.

In order to address GBV, appropriate legislation is required. However, even in countries where appropriate legislation is in place, implementation and enforcement of protections for women are often lacking, or, in some instances, they are biased in favour of the perpetrator. In other countries, women who have been victims of GBV are themselves blamed and held responsible for violence perpetrated against them.

³ Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, Article 1
<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

⁴ Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, Article 2
<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

The eradication of GBV also requires an effective institutional framework which allows the implementation of relevant policy measures, in addition to support mechanisms provided by the state and civil society.

Successful eradication of GBV is further intimately linked with the level of awareness among the general public of the impact GBV has on its victim and society at large. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy is required to ensure the effectiveness of the adopted policies.

2.2 International Framework

For the past several decades, the international community has been developing the normative framework that protects women's rights and enshrines gender equality. Various international instruments highlight the specific responsibilities of states and other actors in protecting women and girls and preventing all forms of GBV.

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979 is considered as "the universal declaration of women's human rights" and is the most complete and most global international agreement on the subject. It represents an international consensus on the centrality of eliminating violence against women.⁵ It constitutes a comprehensive framework for achieving gender equality by providing the necessary steps states need to undertake.

The CEDAW provided the first official definition of GBV. According to Article 1 of the Declaration, GBV is "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life".⁶ It also states that GBV may take many different forms and is experienced in a range of crisis and non-crisis settings.

The Declaration further identifies in Article 2 three areas in which violence may occur:

⁵ Member State signatories to CEDAW are obligated to implement policies and laws that will comply with the convention's articles. In December 2000, an Optional Protocol to CEDAW entered into force, which allowed for individual women or groups of women to submit complaints to the CEDAW committee about signatory States that have violated these women's rights under the CEDAW articles and provisions.

⁶ General Assembly Resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, Article 1. <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

- Physical, sexual and psychological violence that occurs in the family, including battering; sexual abuse of female children in the household; dowry-related violence; marital rape; female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women; non-spousal violence; and violence related to exploitation;
- Physical, sexual and psychological violence that occurs within the general community, including rape; sexual abuse; sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere; trafficking in women; and forced prostitution;
- Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

GBV can be perpetrated by members of the family, close relatives and friends or by unknown aggressors.

In 1995, at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing the Platform for Action (PfA) expanded this definition, specifying that it includes: violations of the rights of women in situations of armed conflict.⁷

In addition to CEDAW and the Beijing PfA, other pertinent international instruments include the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 adopted in 2000 on women, peace and security, and the UNSCR 1820 (2008) on sexual violence in conflict; and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs 2000) – in particular goal three “to empower women and promote gender equality”.⁸

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 underlines the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, especially those related to sexual and other violence against women and girls. The UNSCR 1820 is a complement to the full

⁷ This includes systematic rape, sexual slavery and forced pregnancy, forced sterilization, forced abortion, coerced or forced use of contraceptives, prenatal sex selection and female infanticide. It further recognized the particular vulnerabilities of women belonging to minorities. The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action: Fourth World Conference on Women: Beijing, China: 4-15 September 1995. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm#framework> and <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm#statement>

⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation Number 19. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm>. This recommendation No. 19 on ‘Violence against women’ also suggests ways to consider government obligations and responsibilities to address gender-based violence. UN. Security Council resolution 1325 (S/2000/1325). <http://www.womenwarpeace.org/toolbox/1325.pdf>

implementation of UNSCR1325 and describes sexual violence as a tactic of war and a matter of international security.

Other conventions and declarations related to the promotion of women's rights include:

- Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1951);
- The UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952);
- The Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (1957);
- ILO Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (1958);
- The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960);
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965);
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1989, and its protocols; and
- The Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (2002) and its three protocols.

Most states in the Southern Mediterranean region have signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and are thus obligated by its provisions. However, all 9 states have expressed reservations stating they are considered incompatible with national legislation or religious rules. These include in particular article 9 (discrimination in granting nationality to children) and article 16 (discrimination relating to marriage and family relations). Efforts and campaigns on national, regional and international levels succeeded in bringing governments into lifting some of these reservations, but others continue to exist.

Algeria ratified CEDAW in 1996, with reservations made to the Articles (2) on the commitments of the State parties to pursue by all appropriate means policies to eliminate all forms of discrimination, Article 9(2) on nationality, Article 15(4) on the right to movement and the choice of domicile, Article 16 on marriage and the resulting family relations and Article 29 on the arbitration of the International Court of

Justice between two or more States parties. The reservations to Article 9(2) were lifted in 2008, in accordance with the promulgation of the Law on Nationality of 2005.

Egypt ratified the CEDAW in 1981. Simultaneously, it placed reservations on Articles 2, 9(2), 16, and 29. The reservation to Article 9(2) was lifted in 2008, after the nationality law was amended and women were given the right to transfer citizenship to their children.

Israel signed the Convention in 1980 and ratified it in 1991. It entered two reservations on Articles 7(b) and 16(2). The reservation to Article 7(b) relates to the appointment of women to serve as judges of religious courts. Although ratified by Israel, the provisions of the CEDAW are not formally incorporated into Israeli domestic law.⁹

The Kingdom of **Jordan** signed the CEDAW in 1980, ratified it in 1992 and published it in 2007. Jordan held reservations on Article 15 (4), which gives men and women the same rights with regard to legislation relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile. This reservation was lifted in 2009. However, reservations still apply to Article 9(2) relating to the transmission of nationality to children, Article 16.1 (c) relating to the rights arising upon the dissolution of marriage with regard to maintenance and compensation, Article 16.1(d) relating to equal rights of parents in matters pertaining to their children, and Article 16.1(g) relating to the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation.¹⁰

Lebanon ratified the Convention in 1997. It lodged however reservations against Article 9 (2) and against Article 16(1), relating to the equality of the two spouses in marriage and to the choice of family name.¹¹

Despite its non-state status, the government of the **OPT** ratified the CEDAW in 2009 without any specific reservations. This symbolic signing of the CEDAW has provided

⁹ This, according to Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel. See <http://www.adalah.org/eng/cedaw.php> for further information. See also National Situation Analysis Report: Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality: Israel. (Situation Analysis, EGEP: Israel).

¹⁰ See National Situation Analysis Report: Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality: Jordan. (Situation Analysis, EGEP: Jordan).

¹¹ For further information see National Situation Analysis Report: Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality: Lebanon. (Situation Analysis, EGEP: Lebanon).

women's organizations with the opportunity to advocate and lobby for women's rights and to lobby the government to implement its obligation under the convention.¹²

As in the case of the other countries, **Syria**, had reservations on articles 2, 9, 15, and 16. Syria had ratified CEDAW in 2002.¹³

Table1: CEDAW Ratifications, Reservations and optional protocol

| Country | Date of Ratification | Reservations | Optional Protocol | Recent Developments |
|---------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Algeria | 22/05/1996 | 2, 9 (2), 15(4), 16, 29(1) | Not ratified | 'Expressing the intention to review' Article 2 of the Convention in 2008. |
| Egypt | 1981 | 2, 9(2), 16 and 29 | | The reservation to Article 9(2) was lifted in 2008. |
| Israel | 03/10/1991 | 7(b), 16, 29(1,2) | Not ratified | |
| Jordan | 01/07/1992 | 9(2), 15(4), 16(1c) (1d), and (1g), | Not ratified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication of Convention in the Official Gazette without presentation before Parliament in order to accelerate its constitutional procedures. - Withdrawal of the reservation to the fourth paragraph of article 15 in March 2009. - Activism of Jordanian NGOs and lobbying efforts, including the submission of a shadow report to the CEDAW committee in June 2007, which discussed the government's third and fourth reports of 2005. |
| Lebanon | 21/04/1997 | 9(2), 16(1c) (1d)(1f), 29(1,2) | Not ratified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reservations continue to exist. - No amendments were introduced to relevant laws. |
| Morocco | 21/06/1993 | 2, 9(2), 15(4), 16, 29(1) | Declared accession in March 2006 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil society activism and Morocco's nomination to the Human Rights Council. - The national and regional campaign for the withdrawal of reservations, and the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration was cited in a royal letter to the Advisory Council on Human Rights on the occasion. |

¹² <http://www.alhaq.org/atemplate.php?id=118>. See also Situation Analysis Report: Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality: Occupied Palestinian Territory. (Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT).

¹³ National Situation Analysis Report: Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality: Syria. (Situation Analysis, EGEP: Syria).

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| Country | Date of Ratification | Reservations | Optional Protocol | Recent Developments |
|---------|----------------------|---|---|--|
| | | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In March 2006, the Ministry of Justice declared the partial withdrawal of reservations, replacement of some reservations with interpretative declarations, and the ratification of the Optional Protocol without submitting the necessary documents to the UN. - The Moroccan King also issued a declaration on December 10th to 'withdraw the reservations of the Kingdom of Morocco on the CEDAW.' |
| OPT | 08/03/2009 | No Reservations | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activism of Palestinian non-governmental organizations, particularly women's organizations, and lobbying efforts for the 'signing' of the Convention. - On March 8th, 2009, the President of the Palestinian Authority announced the ratification of CEDAW without any reservations. |
| Syria | 28/03/2003 | 2, 9(2), 15(4), 16(1c)(1d)(1f), 16 (2), 29(1) | Not ratified | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No change with regards to withdrawing the reservations. - Rather, there were indications that the government backtracked on its promises to withdraw the reservations to Articles 2, 15-4, 16-1, 16-2. - No changes were made to relevant laws. |
| Tunisia | 20/09/1985 | 9 (2), 15 (4), 16(1c)(1d)(1f)(1g)(1h), 29 (1) | - Declaration of accession through a law in June 2008 CHECK | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (TADW) reported that the Minister of Justice had promised to form a committee to study the reservations. - Ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention in June 2008. |

Source: Situational analysis/Regional Report: Euromed programme: Role of Women in Economic Life - Assessment of National Women's Mechanisms in 10 Mediterranean Partner Countries, 2007.

2.3 The regional Framework

The European Union's commitment to promoting gender equality in the Euro-Mediterranean region dates back to the Barcelona Declaration of 1995, which established the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. One of the components of the partnership is gender equality. More specifically, guidelines for the improvement of women's status and situation in the Euro-Mediterranean area were developed by the

inclusion of specific recommendations in the “Five-year work plan” adopted at the Barcelona Summit of Heads of State and Government, in November 2005.¹⁴

Strengthening the role of women in society is one of the key issues addressed by the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, with a pledge to take measures to achieve gender equality, preventing all forms of discrimination and ensuring the protection of the rights of women.

A milestone in promoting gender equality in this partnership is the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on “Strengthening the Role of Women in Society”, which was held on 14 – 15 November 2006 in Istanbul. During the conference the partners recognized the key role women’s rights play in the advancement of democracy, peace and stability in the Euro-Mediterranean region and agreed to further women’s rights by adopting “measures to achieve gender equality, preventing all forms of discrimination and ensuring the protection of the rights of women”.

The Istanbul conclusions included a five-year work plan and a follow up mechanism.¹⁵ The focus of the conference was:

- Women’s rights as a guarantee of human rights and deepening democracy;
- Women’s access to education and employment; and
- The role of culture and the media as key-instruments for changing perceptions of gender.

At the second Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, held in Marrakesh on 11-12 November 2009, Ministers of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) reaffirmed their commitment to the Conclusions obtained at the Istanbul Summit and to the Common Framework of Action (2006-2011) and evaluated progress achieved to date. They also elaborated on ways and means to implement “actions at national, sub-regional and regional levels, targeted towards improving women’s status, strengthening the role of women in political, civil, social, economic and cultural life, and combating all forms of discrimination against women and girls”. The present study builds on the commitments expressed during the two

¹⁴ http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/summit1105/five_years_en.pdf

¹⁵ http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/women/gender_followup_en.htm

ministerial meetings, in particular in relation to combating all forms of discrimination against women and girls.

2.4 Good Practice in the European Union (EU)

GBV is not confined to developing countries, but transcends all cultures and societies. In order to eliminate GBV a large number of EU countries have undertaken various measures.¹⁶

Evidence has shown that the most successful approach at the policy level has been the adoption of a comprehensive national strategy, on the basis of a multi-sector and multi-stakeholder approach. This approach which comprises prevention, protection, victim support and, criminal prosecution constitutes a powerful instrument for policy makers. A national strategy and its operational plan enables policy makers to make the necessary legal and institutional reforms, define responsibilities of the various governmental and non-governmental bodies involved and design cooperation mechanisms for the major stakeholders. It also allows assessing progress made against the targets set out in the national strategy.

According to the Euromed Partnership's Multi-Annual Report for the years 2006-2009, 29 of the 35 countries have adopted 'formal strategies and short to medium-term action plans agreed, or in preparation, and involving multiple partners, authorities, Ministries or stakeholders' to counter violence against women. ¹⁷

The key to the formulation of a national strategy is the availability of accurate and comprehensive data which is gathered through studies and surveys and updated on a continuous basis. For example, data available from two studies conducted in Germany, "Violence against women in relationships" (2009) and "Life situation, safety and health of women in Germany" (2004) provided invaluable information on the

¹⁶ See presentation "Good practices in combating gender-based violence in EU countries", GBV Expert Group Meeting, EGEP, Tunis, 20-23 April 2009.

¹⁷ See Euromed Partnership: Strengthening the Role of Women in Society.. Multi-Annual Report 2006-2009 <http://www.euromedgenderequality.org/image/file/Multi%20annual%20report2006-2009IstanbulFINAL.pdf>

extent, severity and context of violence. This information, in turn, would allow the formulation of appropriate policies and interventions.¹⁸

The successful formulation and implementation of a strategy combating GBV also hinges upon the level of awareness among the general public. Experience in EU countries has shown that multi-level awareness campaigns through the involvement of the media and educational institutions result in the change of public attitudes. According to the Euromed Partnership's Multi-Annual Report for the years 2006-2009, "campaigns with multiple stakeholder involvement have a chance of reaching out and bringing women's rights information to remote or invisible corners of society, such as to women needing refuge from domestic violence, or women needing an easy-to-read guide to a Gender Equality Act", as has been the case of Estonia, or Turkey.¹⁹

Ensuring support to victims is equally important. Country experiences have shown that this requires the building of capacity of the main stakeholders in the provision of relevant services, from shelters to psychological support.

Last but not least, cross-border collaboration has proven an effective means to combat violence against women. This is particularly true for trafficking in women. Joint or cross border actions to reduce forced prostitution on the Czech-German border is an example of such an effort.²⁰

¹⁸ See Euromed Partnership: Strengthening the Role of Women in Society.. Multi-Annual Report 2006-2009 <http://www.euromedgenderequality.org/image/file/Annual%20Report%202008-2009%20Istanbul%20FINAL.pdf>

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

3. Prevalence in the Southern Mediterranean Region

As noted above, GBV can take many forms, from sexual and psychological forms of abuse to harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), rape, sexual violence, and trafficking. It also includes prenatal sex selection and female infanticide as well as systematic rape.

GBV can take place in many different locations in the home, the street, the workplace, in prison, in refugee camps, in the war zone, at the hands of various perpetrators known or unknown to the victim. Studies and surveys demonstrated that beyond cultures and societies, the most common place where women face violence throughout their life is in the home.²¹ Violence against women in the Southern Mediterranean countries is also manifested in the so-called honour killings, sexual violence, and in human trafficking. Women there are also subject to violence during conflict and in post conflict situations.

3.1. Domestic Violence

Findings of studies conducted in the 9 partner countries suggest that the most widespread form of GBV is domestic violence. Although, to date comprehensive and systematic studies on the nature and exact extent of domestic violence have not been conducted in all 9 countries, there are indications that domestic violence is widespread in the region. Moreover, as it is often considered a private matter it remains under-reported.

In **Algeria**, according to a National Survey carried out in 2006, half the women reported that they had been subjected to some form of violence within the family, with spousal violence being the most important category²².

In **Israel**, according to governmental and nongovernmental reports, domestic violence remains a serious problem that threatens the safety and sometimes the life

²¹ EGEP, Conceptual Framework Guidelines on gender-based violence and violence against women: categories and terminologies, working document, 2010

²² National survey *Women and socio-economic integration* carried out by the Social and Cultural Anthropology Research Center (Algeria), (CRASC) on behalf of MDCFCF, 2005. National Situation Analysis Report: Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality: Algeria. (Situation Analysis, EGEP: Algeria).

of woman.²³ Approximately one-fourth of domestic violence complaints were filed by new immigrants.²⁴ According to WIZO, however, in the first 10 months of 2010, 13,210 new cases of domestic violence were reported (www.wizonsw.org.au/2010/11/international-day/)²⁵. Based on figures WIZO publishes in November 2009 further reports that around 200,000 women are victims of domestic violence every year.²⁶ The majority of the domestic violence cases are closed. Indeed, 63% of police cases dealing with domestic violence in the family close due to a lack of evidence.²⁷ This high figure is also reflected in those published by the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services. According to the latter, in 2009, 748 women and 1059 children went to live in battered women's shelters after becoming victims of domestic violence; an increase over the 692 women and 1016 children from the previous year. (www.jpost.com/NationalNews/). In 2010, according to the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services, 765 women and 1097 sought refuge in battered women's shelters in 2010.²⁸

The situation in **Jordan** appears severe as, according to studies conducted there, almost seventy percent of women have been subjected to some form of domestic violence.²⁹

In **Lebanon**, a study carried out by the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) revealed that over two thirds of women in the country had suffered some form of domestic violence.

A nation-wide survey on violence against women in **Morocco** showed that 62.8% of women aged 18-64 suffered at least one act of violence during the 12-month period preceding the survey. Results reveal that marital violence is the most frequent form of violence, accounting for more than a half of cases. Almost 40% of married women were victims of psychological abuse, and more than 6% experienced physical violence. Meanwhile, only 3% of marital abuse incidents are reported. A quarter of

²³ According to police records the number of victims decreased from 14,748 in 2007 to 12,777 in 2008.

²⁴ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Israel.

²⁵ <http://www.wizonsw.org.au/2010/11/international-day/>

²⁶ <http://www.jpost.com/NationalNews/Article.aspx?id=196688>

²⁷ <http://www.jpost.com/Headlines/Article.aspx?id=195681>

²⁸ <http://www.jpost.com/NationalNews/Article.aspx?id=210267>

²⁹ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Jordan.

these cases ended with a police report and in 38% of cases, spouses agreed to drop the proceedings. Only 1.3% of complaints ended with an arrest.³⁰

The figure is equally high in the **OPT** where a study conducted by the Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in 2005 found that 61.7% of women were exposed to psychological violence, 23.3% to physical violence and 10.9% were exposed to sexual violence at the hands of their husbands. According to **Syrian** activists, 44% of Syrian women are subjected to physical violence from their husbands, and 63% are victims of verbal abuse, and 39% are sometimes or always forced into sexual relations.³¹

3.2 Honour Killings

The so-called honour killing is the murder of usually a female family or clan member by one or more fellow (mostly male) family members, where the murderers (and potentially the wider community) believe the victim to have brought dishonour upon the family, clan, or community. This perceived dishonour is normally the result of (a) utilizing dress codes unacceptable to the family, (b) wanting out of an arranged marriage or choosing to marry by own choice, (c) engaging in certain sexual acts or (d) engaging in relations with the same sex.³²

This perception implies that male relatives and community members exercise pressure to enforce an honour killing, in order to restore the honour of the family or community. In some countries, the law stands on the side of those who perpetrate such crimes by reducing their punishment in cases where restoring honour is the motive. The Absence of adequate legal provisions combined with the lack of an effective institutional framework often leave women unprotected.

³⁰ The study was released in a press conference on 10 January 2011. This extensive study was carried out by the High Commission for Planning (HCP) from June 2009 to January 2010. It focused on a sample of 8,300 women aged 18-65 across Morocco and investigated violence they suffered in the year-period preceding the survey. The study is the first of its kind covering the whole territory. It reveals that 6 million out of the country's 9.5 million women between ages 18 and 65 had experienced some form of violence in 2009. Of all forms of violence investigated in this time period, the most frequent and widespread abuse was psychological at 48.4 percent (4.6 million women) followed by the infringement of civil liberties at 32 percent (3 million) and law enforcement-related violence at 17.3 percent (1.2 million). <http://www.unwomen.org/2011/01/moroccan-government-releases-extensive-gender-based-violence-study/>

³¹ http://www.bbc.co.uk/arabic/middleeast/2009/11/091124_wb_syria_women_tc2.shtml

³² Situation Analysis, EGEP: Jordan.

There are no reliable or official figures on the prevalence of honour killings in the Southern Mediterranean region. However, various sources based on reported cases suggest that honour killings occur in Jordan, OPT, Israel and to some extent in Lebanon as well as in Egypt.

In **Jordan**, it is estimated that, every year, between 20 and 25 women are killed under the guise of family honour. Court sentences for these cases are often as low as six months in prison because the murderers have allegedly committed their crime while in rage.³³

In **Lebanon**, a study shows that out of 66 deliberate murders of women, 26 percent were motivated by restoring honour. Whereas penalty for first-degree homicide in Lebanon is either life in prison or death, verdicts for these crimes did not exceed 14-15 years. Moreover, in some cases the killer was even found innocent.

A study of 1999, based on records of the Lebanese authorities between 1995 and 1998, revealed that the number of honour killings in Lebanon was around 12 crimes per year. This was confirmed by available statistics for the years between 2001 and 2004, according to which a woman is murdered every month by her husband or by a relative for having 'dishonoured' the family.

In the **OPT**, it is believed that the number of cases of honour killings is particularly high. 32 cases of so-called honour killings were documented for the period between 2004 and 2006 (among them one case in 2004, 11 in 2005 and 18 cases in 2006).³⁴ The number increased further and in 2007, until the end of October, the number of women killed in the name of honour was 58, according to civil society and official sources. Yet, only 26 cases were documented officially: 10 cases in the West Bank and 16 cases in the Gaza Strip. In general, however, these figures are considered to underestimate the phenomenon, as most honour killings go unreported.³⁵

In **Israel** in contrast, the number of reported 'honour killings' among the Arab population decreased. In 2005, seven honour killings were reported, six in 2006, one in 2007 and one in 2008.³⁶ However, Assiwar, a women's organization, estimates

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Study carried out by al-Muntada. Quoted in Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT

³⁵ Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT.

³⁶ 5th Periodic Report Concerning the Implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. State of Israel. 2009. quoted in the Situation Analysis Report: Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality: Israel, EGEP.

that the actual number is much higher. The suspicious death of a number of women, which was attributed to other causes than to honour killings, was, according to the organization, probably the result of an honour killing.³⁷

In 2010, there were 19 women killed in acts of domestic violence. The figure increased from 15 in the previous year³⁸ and more women were murdered in 2010 than in any one of the years since 2004.³⁹ From those, a disproportionate number of victims were Arab women⁴⁰. Women were killed by their husband or partners.

3.3 Sexual Violence, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Sexual violence includes sexual harassment, unaccepted sexual remarks, rape and the use of unacceptable sexual methods that violate the rules of religion and morality.

Particularly in the Arab countries of the Southern Mediterranean region rape incidences are rarely reported to the police or covered by the press. This has led to the general public perception that sexual assaults on women are few. Where laws exist they are often either equivocal or biased against women. In addition, the crime is often trivialized by both family and society in order to safeguard honour and reputation.

As the number of women in the labour market has increased, it is believed that sexual harassment at the work place has increased, too.

In **Israel** sexual harassment complaints to the police increased from 141 in 2005 to 199 in 2008. However, the percentage of prosecuted cases increased much faster (from 5.6 to 22.3 percent).⁴¹ According to the Country Report on Human Rights Practices of 2010, in June 2009, 35-40 percent of women experienced sexual harassment at the work place., one third of whom experienced it in the previous 12 months.⁴² According to a report, only a minority of the harassed women ever filed a

³⁷ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Israel.

³⁸ <http://www.jpost.com/Headlines/Article.aspx?id=196462>

³⁹ <http://www.wizonsw.org.au/2010/11/international-day/>

⁴⁰ <http://www.jpost.com/NationalNews/Article.aspx?id=196688>

⁴¹ Veeshblai, Eti. Violence Against Women – Data for 2008. The Knesset Research and Information Centre. November 2008. Quoted in Situation Analysis, EGEP: Israel.

⁴² <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/nea/154463.htm>

complaint and only 3 percent of single women reported complaining, while only 1.2 percent of married women did⁴³.

In **Syria**, a study revealed that 52.6% of assaulted women were victim of sexual harassment by a male family member; 18.6% by an unknown person, and 16.5% by a known person.⁴⁴

In **Egypt**, a field survey in 2008 on violence against women in the private and public domains revealed that unmarried women in particular are victims of sexual harassment in the street. According to survey results, this figure was as high as 99.6%. The most likely place of sexual harassment is, according to the survey, public transport (76%)⁴⁵.

In addition to violence, traditional gender-based practices, such as female genital mutilation and defloration, are a serious problem and remain common practice in rural areas in Egypt.

3.4 Trafficking in Women

Human trafficking is a transnational industry that operates almost entirely underground. Its victims may be men, women or children who are abducted, coerced or enticed into various degrading forms of servitude for the gain of traffickers. For women, the trade usually means domestic service often indistinguishable from slavery, sexual exploitation and work in nightclubs. Information on human trafficking is almost not available as most of it is hidden behind legal activities, such as employment agencies.

A number of Southern Mediterranean countries are affected by human trafficking. They are either destination countries for the trade (Israel and to a certain extent Jordan and Lebanon), act as a transit point, as in the cases of Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco, or they may be a source of persons being trafficked, as from

⁴³ <http://www.haaretz.com/news/study-79-of-single-israeli-women-harassed-at-workplace-1.3508>

⁴⁴ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Syria.

⁴⁵ Situation Analysis, EGEP, draft study on Egypt, unpublished 2010

Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia. Study findings suggest that the most seriously affected countries are Israel and Jordan and to a lesser extent Tunisia and Jordan.

Trafficking in women has increased significantly in **Israel** after the wave of immigrants from Russia in the early 1990s and has peaked in the early 2000s. This prompted the government in 2006 to undertake measures to address the trafficking in women.⁴⁶ As a result of these efforts, the number of victims of human trafficking decreased from several thousand to a few hundred in 2008. Many women's rights organizations, however, suspect that these figures estimated by the police do not reflect the real situation.

Similarly, **Jordan** is a destination and transit country for women and men from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. According to the situation analysis, there are also reports of East European and Moroccan women "being forcibly employed there as "dancers" and prostitutes in illegal brothels"⁴⁷.

Also **Morocco** and **Tunisia** have been transit countries for human trafficking. Victims there have been persons from Sub-Saharan countries, in particular women. They face various forms of violence, from physical and sexual violence, to trafficking and forced prostitution. This has led NGOs to include female migrants in their advocacy efforts.

3.5 Violence against Women in Conflict and Post Conflict situations

Women may become subject to GBV in situations of conflict or post-conflict. This has been mentioned in the situation analyses of Algeria, Israel, OPT, and Lebanon. In Lebanon, the National Commission for Lebanese Women has launched several initiatives to support women affected by the war of 2006 in South Lebanon.⁴⁸ In general, data and information about victims and the rehabilitation and compensation measures is very limited.

⁴⁶ These measures include among others: the creation of a new Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry on the Trafficking in Women; conducting raids on brothels in Tel Aviv; increase in the prosecutions of traffickers. See Situation Analysis, EGEP: Israel.

⁴⁷ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Jordan.

⁴⁸ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Lebanon.

4. Data: Studies and Surveys

A key prerequisite for the formulation of relevant policies and the creation of the legal and institutional frameworks to combat GBV is the availability of data and information on its forms and prevalence. In a number of countries studies and surveys were conducted by the government and/or civil society organizations to assess the prevalence and magnitude of GBV. Almost all studies have been conducted in the last decade.

In **Algeria**, a national survey was conducted in 2005.⁴⁹ The results revealed that over half of the interviewed women of all age groups were subjected to some form of violence at home. According to the study, violence afflicted by the spouse has been the most important category.⁵⁰ Another survey carried out in 2006 provided more insight of the extent with detailed information on forms and consequences of violence against women.⁵¹ Another survey conducted by the Algerian Ministry of Health (MICS3⁵²) focused on the extent to which women accept violence afflicted to them by their husband.⁵³ Important data is also provided by the Department of National Security which maintains statistics on physical and sexual violence against women on a national level and per wilaya.⁵⁴

In **Egypt**, two studies were carried out in 1995 and 2005 to assess domestic violence. Results of the study of 1995 indicated that 35% of women were beaten by their husband since they got married. According to a field survey in 2008 on violence

⁴⁹ The national sample consisted of 4,950 households in 66 communes, which are part of 16 *wilayas* (North, East, West, South). 13,744 women aged 16 and over were questioned.

⁵⁰ National survey *Women and socio-economic integration* carried out by CRASC on behalf of MDCFCE, under the leadership of Nouria Benghabrit-Remaoun, 2005.(quoted in the Situation Analysis, EGEP: Algeria)

⁵¹ *Violence against women*, Survey carried out by the Social and Cultural Anthropology Research Center (Algeria) (CRASC), on behalf of the Ministry for the Family and Women's Affairs and financed by UNIFEM, 2006, B. Mimouni, N. Benghabrit-Remaoun, F.Z. Sebaa, R. Abdellilah, Y. Bazizi. (See Situation Analysis, EGEP: Algeria for more information).

⁵² National, multi-indicator survey on the follow-up of the situation of women and children, carried out by the National Statistics Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Population and Hospital Reform, with the technical and financial support of UNICEF and the coordination of the United Nations, UNFPA and UNAIDS. (see Situation Analysis, EGEP: Algeria).

⁵³ According to the study more than two out of three women accept violence afflicted to them by their husband Among the reasons they accept for being beaten are: if they leave the house without telling her husband, if they neglect their children, if they argues with their husband him, if they refuse to have sexual relations with their husband or if they burn the food. RADP – Ministry of Health, Population and Hospital Reform– ONS: national, multi-indicator survey, December 2008, p 162.

⁵⁴ See Situation Analysis, EGEP: Algeria.

against women in the private and public domains, 63% of wives were victims of some form of violence. Of these 73% were victims of physical violence.⁵⁵

A recent publication in **Jordan** provides insight of prevalence and forms of GBV in the country. The study “Domestic Violence in Jordan. Knowledge, Attitudes and Reality”, conducted in 2008 by the Department of Statistics included approximately 15,000 families and 11,000 married women. Most of the respondents were aged between 15 to 49 years old. According to the study, around 20 percent of Jordanian women report being beaten by husband to discipline them.⁵⁶

In **Lebanon**, a series of studies on GBV were recently conducted, with the support of UNFPA: “Situation Analysis in Gender Based Violence in Lebanon”; an “Assessment of Media Coverage of GBV issues in Lebanon”; a “Review of Gender Based Violence Resource and Training Material in Lebanon”; and a “Review of Gender Based Violence Research in Lebanon”. According to them, insufficient resources are being devoted to address GBV in Lebanon. They identified the need for increased public awareness, and legislative and social reform. More specifically, according to them, a “more comprehensive and well-coordinated response to [the issue] is needed to advance [it] on the national agenda and to end this human rights violation and obstacle to development”.⁵⁷

In **Morocco**, the High Commission for Planning (Department of Statistics) conducted from June 2009 to January 2010 a nationwide survey to identify the prevalence of the phenomenon and its various forms. This survey formed part of the multi-sector programme Tamkine to fight GBV.⁵⁸ The survey covered a sample of 8,300 women aged 18-65 across Morocco. The study is considered the first of its kind to cover the entire country.⁵⁹

In the **OPT**, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics conducted a survey on violence against women in 2005/2006.⁶⁰ In addition, various civil society organizations implemented activities to assess the prevalence of GBV in the OPT.

⁵⁵ See National Situation Analysis Report: Women’s Human Rights and Gender Equality: Egypt (Unpublished). (Situation Analysis, EGEP: Egypt (Unpublished)).

⁵⁶ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Jordan.

⁵⁷ The studies are part of a joint collaboration between UNFPA and gender-based violence actors in Lebanon since 2008 and with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Italian Cooperation. <http://inthenews.unfpa.org/?s=lebanon>

⁵⁸ http://www.social.gov.ma/MdsfsFichiers/pdf/Programme_Tamkine_Fr.pdf

⁵⁹ <http://www.unwomen.org/2011/01/moroccan-government-releases-extensive-gender-based-violence-study/>

⁶⁰ See <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/PCBS/Downloads/book1335.pdf> In Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT.

Examples are the survey on “Gender based Violence in Palestine” (2006) by MIFTAH⁶¹, and “Crimes of Women Killings in Palestine in the Period 2004-2006 (2007) by Al-Muntada.⁶²

In **Syria**, the General Women’s Union (GWU) was the first organization that carried out a study on GBV. In 2000, it published its “*Discrimination and Violence against Women Report*” based on a case study of 240 women who were victims of violence. In 2004, a field study was conducted by the Syrian Family Planning Association on women’s rights and domestic violence, in cooperation with UNIFEM.⁶³

In 2005, the “Case study on violence against women in Syria”, was carried out by the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs (SCFA), in cooperation with the General Women Union (GWU) and the Central Bureau of Statistics. Its results showed that violence against women remains a widespread phenomenon and highlighted the need to formulate a coordinated policy and implement measures to address GBV.⁶⁴

In **Tunisia**, the data on GBV were provided in studies conducted by the MAFFEPA. Given the lack of gender-disaggregated data, ONFP launched a survey on the prevalence of GBV in the context of a regional Arab project. Furthermore, the National Statistics Institute has also made efforts to include gender in their statistical system.⁶⁵

⁶¹ http://www.miftah.org/Publications/Books/Gender_Based_Violence_in_Palestine.pdf See Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT.

⁶² Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT

⁶³ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Syria

⁶⁴ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Syria

⁶⁵ Situation Analysis Report: Women’s Human Rights and Gender Equality: Tunisia. (Situation Analysis, EGEP: Tunisia)

5. National Policies

5.1. National Strategies

In order to combat GBV some countries in the Southern Mediterranean region have adopted national strategies. These constitute a comprehensive approach to address the issue of violence against women.

In **Algeria**, a National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women (2007-2011) was launched in 2007 by the Ministry for Family and the Status of Women (MDCFCF). The MDCFCF led the process of drafting the National Strategy, in partnership with representatives from government, the media, and civil society organisations. The launch of the Strategy was preceded by the systematic assessment of causes and consequences of violence against women and the capacity building of the key institutions and organizations involved in the implementation of the strategy. Key to its successful adoption was the broad consensus on its content and objectives reached among various stakeholders, from various ministries, NGOs, the police and national gendarmerie, universities and research centres. The strategy involves several dimensions of addressing the issue GBV: from protection, appropriate health care, legal protection and assistance to the raising of awareness and the implementation of necessary legal, institutional and political reforms in addition to the creation of alliances that would lobby for change.⁶⁶

In **Egypt**, the National Council for Women has mainstreamed gender in the Socio-economic Development Plan (2002-2007) with the aim to reduce gender inequalities in the different development sectors. This is also true for the second Socio-economic Development Plan (2007-2012).⁶⁷

In **Israel**, several national policies and programmes and strategies were implemented to address GBV, in particular those related to sex-related crimes, such as trafficking in women, prostitution, early marriage and sexual harassment, and gender-related crime, such as domestic violence and so-called honour killings. The increased attention to these issues is the result of NGO efforts in particular.

⁶⁶ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Algeria for more information.

⁶⁷ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Egypt (Unpublished).

In an effort to curb prostitution associated with trafficking in women, the government allocated through the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women (AASW) funding to the Ministry of Education for the treatment of sexual assault victims. It also shut down 107 brothels between 2005 and 2007, and 50 in 2008.⁶⁸ However, hundreds of brothels are still operating in Israel as legitimate businesses, such as health or massage clinics. In addition, the government arrested in 2008, 78 suspects of trafficking in women.⁶⁹

The government also improved services to women victims of trafficking and violence. It provided free legal services, funded new rape crisis centres and opened two new counselling centres to treat the victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, it supported awareness and educational programs on trafficking in women and sexual harassment through the AASW.

Special efforts were made to curb trafficking in women. In 2006, a new Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry on the Trafficking in Women was created. As a result of the measures undertaken by the government, the prosecution of traffickers increased and courts began to award damages to the victims of trafficking paid by the traffickers themselves. Equally important is the significant decrease of female trafficking victims from several thousand prior to the government's initiative to several hundred in 2008 after the government's measures. However, according to many women's rights organizations, current police figures underestimate the real extent of trafficking.

In **Jordan**, the key policy that guides the implementation of gender equality and women's rights is the National Strategy for Jordanian Women (2006-2010), which was developed by the National Commission for Women (JNCW), in partnership with governmental and nongovernmental institutions and organizations. Among its various components, the strategy also addresses violence against women and the protection from domestic violence in particular. It also includes the improvement of safety measures for victims. The JNCW is also responsible for the implementation of the National Strategy.⁷⁰

In an important move, the JNCW established the Women's Complaints Office, in order to help achieve the three objectives of the National Strategy: to receive

⁶⁸ The law 5765-2005 (Limiting Use of Premises in order to Prevent the Commission of Crime) gives the police the authority to shut down brothels. See Situation Analysis, EGEP: Israel.

⁶⁹ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Israel.

⁷⁰ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Jordan.

complaints of discrimination and violence against women within their families, work or in public life; to assist and empower women to take advantage of their rights guaranteed in the Constitution, national laws, and in ratified international conventions; and to increase general social awareness on issues of violence and discrimination against women with the help of the full coordination and cooperation of all governmental and non-governmental organizations.⁷¹

In order to better detect, diagnose and refer cases of victims of violence against women, a training manual for private health care providers in the management of victims of violence against women was issued in 2010 by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation's Institute of Family Health (IFH)⁷²

In **Lebanon**, the National Women's Strategy was formulated in 2009 giving GBV more attention. The redrafting involved NGOs and several public institutions. In March 2011, the ten-year National Women's Strategy was validated. The strategy is guided by the national constitution and development frameworks as well as CEDAW and the MDGs. It identifies national priorities in relation to the advancement of women along with main interventions involving policy and legislation required to address these priorities.⁷³

In **Morocco**, as is the case of Algeria, the government applied a comprehensive approach to the formulation of a national strategy to combat violence. Based on the strong political will at the highest level, the government achieved broad societal and political consensus through a process of debate and extensive consultation with various stakeholders, from ministries, to civil society organizations,⁷⁴ to religious institutions, the media and research institutes as well as women survivors of violence. This process also involved public awareness campaigns and capacity building of institutions that are charged with implementing the strategy.⁷⁵

The Strategy to Combat Violence against Women was officially presented in March 2002. This led to the adoption of the operational plan, presented in 2004 before the Prime Minister and the creation of a high-level steering committee (2005). The latter

⁷¹ http://www.women.jo/claim/AR/home_en.php

⁷² Situation Analysis, EGEP: Jordan.

⁷³ <http://inthenews.unfpa.org/?m=2011&w=11>

⁷⁴ Noteworthy is the involvement of civil society organizations in the collection of data on women victims of violence in Morocco. They had developed a database on cases of violence against women and the quality of institutional services provided to them http://www.unfpa.org/endingviolence/html/pdf/chapter_morocco.pdf

⁷⁵ Situation Analysis Report: Women's Human Rights and Gender Equality: Morocco. (Situation Analysis, EGEP: Morocco)

has four targets: research, training and awareness raising, care for victims of violence and setting up a unified information system. The Ministry of Social Development, the Family, and Solidarity is the main implementer of the strategy and is in charge of following up on its implementation and that of its operational plan.

In the **OPT**, weak political will and political instability as manifested through the high turnover in governments⁷⁶ and the overall instable security situation has had negative repercussion on the progress of women's issues. Yet, several important achievements were made. In 1997, the first National Strategic Plan for Palestinian Women was formulated by the Governmental Coordination Committee and the General Union for Palestinian Women, in cooperation with women's organizations. Its objective was the identification of the priorities for Palestinian women in the political, economic, legal and social domains as well as in relation to media and the environment.⁷⁷

An important achievement was the recent adoption of a national strategy to combat violence against women. On 11 January 2011, the Palestinian Cabinet adopted the nine-year *National Strategic Plan to Combat Violence against Women (2011-2019)* in the OPT. Drafted under the leadership of Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) it is the result of a bottom-up approach which reflects the inputs from a range of sources, including women's organizations, civil society, community organizations, private sector, ministries and women refugees. As such it is considered the first of its kind in the Arab region. The strategy adopts a cross-sector approach, recognizing violence against women as an issue affecting the overall development of Palestinian society. The Strategic Plan complements the Palestinian Authority's 2011-2013 Cross-Sector National Gender Strategy, which considers violence as one of its main themes.⁷⁸

In Syria, the issue of GBV in its various forms has been widely raised in 2006 after the release of a study which revealed that despite the social progress made, Syrian women continue to experience various forms of GBV, from beatings through sexual abuse to harassment, all in violation of existing national legislation. While there is no

⁷⁶ During the past 14 years, 11 governments were formed. See Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT.

⁷⁷ Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT.

⁷⁸ http://www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/BRIEF_NationalStrategyToCombatViolenceAgainstWomen.pdf Preparing the Strategic Plan was part of the three-year Millennium Development Goals Trust Fund Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment programme, financed by the Government of Spain and bringing together six UN agencies.

national strategy addressing GBV, this issue was incorporated in Syria's 10th National Five-Year-Plan (2006-2010), in particular in its Chapter 23, which identified GBV as one of the main challenges facing women. A national policy and strategy on preventing GBV is under preparation.⁷⁹

In **Tunisia**, gender issues have been an integral part of national development. This is reflected in its fourth strategic gender plan for 2007-2011 which is currently being implemented, in alignment with its national development plan.⁸⁰

In addition, as a result of efforts by the Ministry for Women, the Family, Childhood and the Elderly (MAFFEPA), a Strategy for Combating Violence against Women was developed and is currently being implemented by MAFFEPA, in cooperation of the National Office for Family and Population (ONEP) and in partnership with various governmental and non-governmental bodies. The strategy was formulated in 2007 by MAFFEPA on the basis of a study it conducted in 2002 to assess the prevalence of GBV in Tunisia. This strategy, which situates violence in the broader context of violence within the family and in society, includes a separate component on GBV. Since the adoption of the national strategy for combating GBV, MAFFEPPE has offered a helpline for responding to questions on this subject.

The implementation of the strategy, however, has been slow. This has been attributed largely to the lack of human and financial resources, in addition to coordination difficulties between governmental and non-governmental institutions.⁸¹

5.2 The National Legal Framework and Legal Reforms

In addition to the formulation and adoption of a national strategy, several countries have introduced new laws or amended existing ones to address the issue of violence against women.

Several legal reforms were introduced in **Algeria**. As a result of advocacy efforts by civil society organizations, in particular the National Commission of Women Workers (CNFT) and the Algerian League for Human Rights, the Penal Code was amended

⁷⁹ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Syria.

⁸⁰ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Tunisia.

⁸¹ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Tunisia.

with regards to the articles addressing sexual harassment (Article 341bis) during 2005 and 2006. However, victims of sexual harassment faced obstacles resulting from the nature of the general rules of law, in particular regarding the establishment of proof and the lack of legal witness-protection. Civil society organizations highlight the need for addressing domestic violence, which, according to them, is trivialized by legislation and tolerated by society. Civil society organizations have also demanded that conjugal violence be criminalized⁸².

In **Egypt**, the Penal Code includes provisions that reduce sentences for men who have committed “honour killings”. Women activists have also criticised the lack of legal provisions for punishing crimes of sexual harassment and rape.⁸³

In **Israel**, GBV in the form of rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, early marriage and killings in the name of “honour” is low when compared with the other countries of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. There, GBV is particularly manifested in sex-related and gender-related crimes. Among these are trafficking in women, prostitution, domestic violence and honour killings.⁸⁴

An important legal amendment in relation to the human trafficking was the Law against Human Trafficking, which was adopted in 2006. The law addresses various offences, such as prostitution, sexual crimes, slavery or forced labour, the removal of organs and pornography. It establishes a minimum penalty for human trafficking offences at 25 percent of the maximum punishment that can be imposed.⁸⁵

The Israeli government also addressed the issue of prostitution. In 2007, it allocated funds for the rehabilitation and treatment of women and girls who were engaged in prostitution. Additional measures included, among others, mobile health clinics, temporary shelters and treatment and rehabilitation centres as well as the training of professionals and volunteers in the provision of services.⁸⁶

On 28 November 2011 the government announced that it will invest in renovating shelters and giving grants victims of violence in order to assist

⁸² See Le Quotidien d'Oran of Thursday 17/01/08: personal status: violence still permitted. Quoted in Situation Analysis, EGEP: Algeria

⁸³ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Egypt (Unpublished)

⁸⁴ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Israel.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

them in integrating into the labor market; (www.imra.org.il/story.php3?id=50077)

In addition, in 2008, the Amendment no. 9 to the Legal Aid Law 5769-2008 was passed with the provision that the state offer free legal services to victims of human trafficking. In 2008, the Ministry of the Interior also published guidelines for issuing temporary visas to victims of trafficking. Furthermore, the Law against Human Trafficking established a fund for the victims of trafficking.⁸⁷

Despite these improvements and the harsh punishment applied, however, in practice human traffickers still receive insufficient punishment, according to a number of NGOs. They maintain that the government should improve the identification, tracking, monitoring, persecution, conviction, and sentences of human traffickers to reduce the level of human trafficking in Israel. The government should also improve services to the victims of human trafficking by providing shelter, medical and psychological services beyond what they presently provide.⁸⁸

In 2006, the Knesset promulgated the Public Protection of Sex Offender Law. The law includes a number of restrictions on sex offenders after their release. These may involve limiting permissible workplaces and places of residence. In addition, it foresaw the establishment of a sex-offender registry to track and monitor the movements of released offenders. The law also provided for the creation of a special supervision unit which would monitor offenders once released. Many women's organizations maintain, however, that the legal system, which is characterized by short sentences and early releases, remains inadequate.⁸⁹

Another important legal provision is the Witness Protection Law which went into effect in 2008. The law provides for protection for persons who cooperate with the police and as a result may be at risk.⁹⁰

In **Jordan**, several legal amendments were introduced to address the issue of GBV. They have affected the Labour Code, the Law to Protect from Domestic Violence and Penal Code⁹¹.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Israel.

⁹¹ Labour Code no. 51, amended in 2002, and the Labour Law no. 48 in 2008, included groups that were previously excluded from the law, such as child workers, agricultural and domestic workers and women and

The amended Labour Code of 2008 criminalized sexual harassment and granted rights to the victims of sexual abuse. In cases of abuse or harassment its provisions have also given the Minister the authority to shut down the institution where such crimes occur.

Among the main contributions to combat violence against women are the adoption of the Protection from Domestic Violence Law and the creation of special wards in the courts for family issues and domestic violence.

Furthermore, there have been a number of amendments to the Penal Code to criminalize sexual harassment and rape. The most recent amendment was made in 2007. The Penal Code criminalizes sexual violence against women in the family and the public sphere. These include rape, indecent assault, acts that contradict public ethics and moral.⁹²

The Jordanian judicial system also sought to address honour crimes, which is regulated in Articles 98 and 340 of the Penal Code in particular. Prior to its amendment, Article 340 of the Penal Code stated that "a husband or a close blood relative who kills a woman caught in a situation highly suspicious of adultery will be totally exempt from sentence." Complementary to it, is Article 98, which guarantees a lighter sentence for male killers of female relatives who have committed an "act which is illicit in the eyes of the perpetrator." While Article 340 was amended, Article 98 remained unchanged. The continuance of Article 98 to which judges still resort to, effectively invalidates the amendment to Article 340. Although both the late King Hussein and King Abdullah II have explicitly asked for discriminatory laws to be amended, Parliament has resisted to adopting the amendment.⁹³

In January 2009, an Anti-Human Trafficking Law was endorsed by the government to prohibit all forms of human trafficking in the country. A Committee to promote public awareness on the issue was created and the law came into force in March 2009. The new law foresees penalties of up to ten years' imprisonment for forced prostitution.⁹⁴ In an effort to curb human trafficking, the government, in cooperation with the Filipino Government, also formulated an agreement which gives a wide

workers in family enterprises. However, concrete measures are required to ensure that the rights of women migrant domestic workers are protected. See Situation Analysis, EGEP: Jordan.

⁹² Situation Analysis, EGEP: Jordan.

⁹³ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Jordan.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

range of rights and access to legal protection to domestic workers. This renders Jordan the first Arab country to provide victims of human trafficking with a wide range of protective measures. The Jordanian authorities also plan to establish a shelter for victims of trafficking providing them with temporary accommodation.⁹⁵

In **Lebanon** legal provisions that discriminate against women continue to exist in Personal Status law and the Penal Code as well as other laws. A case in point are the articles of the Penal Code which relate to the acquittal of a convicted rapist if he marries his victim as well as those that concern the penalty provided for rape when committed by the husband of the victim. Another example relates to the so-called honour killing which remains a contentious issue in Lebanon. According to Article 562 of the Lebanese Penal Code, reduced penalties are applied to crimes intended to “preserve honour”⁹⁶. NGOs have been continuously lobbying for the legal protection of women, in particular in relation to violence against women.

There are no also laws that penalize sexual harassment or domestic violence. For example, in relation to sexual harassment, a draft law proposed by the Ministry of Labour was referred to the Council of Ministers in April 2010, but failed to introduce any protections against sexual harassment at the workplace.⁹⁷ As a result, acts of harassment continue to persist without any sanctions.

Only recently were draft laws on violence against women introduced to legislature following pressure by civil society organizations and their leading role in drafting the laws.

In **Morocco**, GBV which was until recently seen as a private matter, has received increased visibility, particularly as a result of the efforts of NGOs. A series of measures were launched between 1999 and 2009. The Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure introduced provisions to improve the protection of women. In particular, the definition of violence was revised to include sexual harassment and to codify the principle of equality in the application of mitigating circumstances in cases

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ See: Two studies on murders of women in the country of 2007 and 2008 by the Lebanese Council to Resist Violence against Woman and the NGO, *Kafa*.

⁹⁷ See Situation Analysis of Gender-based violence in Lebanon. Executive Summary (prepared by the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), United Nations Population Fund, Lebanon 2011.

of alleged adultery. A medical certificate issued by a competent authority now suffices as evidence in cases of domestic or marital violence.⁹⁸

Furthermore, the new labour law of 2003 has allowed the criminalization of sexual harassment in the workplace and considers it for the first time a serious offense.

In a recent initiative the Ministry for Social Development, Family and Solidarity drafted a bill on domestic violence, which was submitted in 2010 to the parliament.

In addition to the legal improvements, women activists highlight the need to eliminate article 496 of the Penal Code, according to which shelters for female victims of violence can be pursued for the “abduction, detention and lodging of married women”. This, according to the activists, contradicts the legal provisions for establishing shelters for female victims of violence.⁹⁹

In the **OPT**, the legal framework is characterized by the existence of several legal bodies: those inherited from Ottoman, British, Egyptian and Jordanian legal systems in addition to the Israeli military and civil law. These coexist with the numerous laws adopted by the Palestinian Authority. The often conflicting provisions in these legal systems constitute a challenge to promulgating laws on GBV. To date, discriminatory legislation remains in force in the OPT.¹⁰⁰ For example, perpetrators of sexual violence often face virtual impunity, as is the case for rapists who agree to marry their victim. Discrimination is also evident in legal provisions reducing penalties for men who kill or attack a female relative.¹⁰¹

In the **OPT**, the publication of *Honour crimes in Palestine (2004-2006)*¹⁰² came to the conclusion that “the absence of laws to protect women against all forms of violence, including killing, and the absence of laws that penalize the abusers and perpetrators is the primary source for the perpetuation of the criminal practice of women’s killing in the name of honour”. According to the report, suspending police investigation in cases of alleged honour killings in response to the family’s desire to close down the case of female death are also detrimental for the female victims.

⁹⁸ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Morocco.

⁹⁹ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Morocco

¹⁰⁰ The outdated nature of these Codes and the difference in legal norms between Gaza and the West Bank are criticized by human rights activities and organizations as they constitute a challenge to addressing GBV. http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/policy_and_research/un/59/A_59_281_en.pdf. See

Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Lamis Abu Nahleh, *Honour Crimes in Palestine (2004-2006)*, Al Muntada, 2007. Quoted in Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT.

In **Syria**, the government undertook a series of legislative measures to combat various forms of discrimination against women, in particular in relation to violence directed against women.

Most noteworthy is the amendment of Article 548 of the Penal Code which prior to its amendment reduces penalties for cases of so-called honour crimes. This amendment followed the recommendations of the National Forum on Honour Killing held in October 2008, which, for the first time, addressed the issue at a national level. The Forum brought together the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Awqaf (Religious Affairs).

In addition, a national plan to protect women against violence is under preparation as is an anti-human trafficking law. Activists have underlined to the need for a law addressing domestic violence, as, according to them, existing legislation is insufficient.

Despite these advancements, discrimination against women in the Penal Code remains. This is for example true for the penalties for rape. According to the Penal Code, the perpetrator can be acquitted if he marries the victim.¹⁰³

In **Tunisia**, the issue of GBV was addressed through the combined efforts of civil society, in particular women's NGOs, and the MAFFEPA and ONFP, whereby NGOs played a pioneering role in raising awareness of this issue. Legal amendments that have been introduced do not address violence against women, but focus on both spouses. Legislation has also addressed sexual harassment. However, while, according to the Penal Code, this is a crime, the issue has been addressed in neither the Labour Code nor the Civil Service Law.

Despite the improvements discrimination against women in legal provisions continue to exist. Conjugal rape for example is still ignored by the law and does not constitute a criminal act.

¹⁰³ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Syria.

5.3 Institutional Framework

According to CEDAW adequate institutions are needed to implement policies aiming at the prevention of violence against women and their protection and rehabilitation. These would act as the unit coordinating all relevant efforts. In a number of the Southern Mediterranean countries the State has created the institutional framework to implement measures and policies aimed at combating GBV. In a number of countries the main institutions of the national women machinery were created after CEDAW ratification or in preparation for the conference in Beijing.

In **Algeria**, the Ministry for Family and Women's Affairs (MDCFCF) is the main institution in charge of women affairs. In 2006, it created the National Council for Women and the Family as its advisory body, responsible for contributing to the development of programmes, research and studies on the family and women and making recommendations on all legal, economic, social and cultural measures aimed at promoting the family and women. It is also responsible for issuing opinions on draft legislation relating to the family, for collecting and processing information and data on the family and women with the aim to build a database on these subjects. It issues periodic report on the situation of the family and women. It consists of approximately fifty people representing national institutions, research institutions and civil society organizations.¹⁰⁴

In **Egypt**, the National Council for Women (NCW) was established in 2000. As a government institution it is affiliated with the office of the President of the Republic. Its main tasks include the submission of policy proposals on development and the empowerment of women to government institutions. The NCW has also established an Ombudsman Office in 2002 to receive complaints from women with regard to gender discrimination.¹⁰⁵

In **Israel**, the governmental body responsible for women's issues is the Authority for the Advancement of the Status of Women (AASW), which is situated within the PM's office. It is charged with conducting awareness and educational campaigns as well as with the training on gender-related issues. Although it has been successful in its initiatives, its effectiveness has been undermined by the frequent change of its

¹⁰⁴ Extract of Executive decree n° 06-421 of 22 November 2006 creating the National Council for Families and Women. For further detail see Situation Analysis, EGEP: Algeria.

¹⁰⁵ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Egypt (Unpublished).

leadership, who is a political appointee. The frequent change of leadership in turn is the result of the high turnover of governments. This has made long-term planning and strategy building difficult.¹⁰⁶

In **Jordan** the national machinery, the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) is a semi-governmental body, as in the case of Lebanon or Syria. It was established in 1992 after the ratification of CEDAW. Since then it has been involved in the main initiatives for reform as well as in the formulation of the National Strategy for Women in Jordan. It was expanded in 2008 and represents now several ministries, national institutions and NGOs. In addition to the National Strategy for Jordanian Women (2006-2010), one of its main achievements is the launch of the “Network for Combating Violence against Women (Shama’)” in 2007 as part of the national campaign to combat violence against women. The objectives of the Shama’ network are to coordinate efforts to eliminate VAW and follow up on the implementation of the National Strategy for Jordanian Women (2006 - 2010). Its members include representatives from the Ministry of Social Development, the Family Protection Department, Ministry of Health, the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) and representatives from civil society organisations as well as other stakeholders.

Together with the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA)¹⁰⁷ and the Family Protection Department, which is part of the Public Security Directorate, the National Commission for Women (JNCW), are the most important institutions for the protection of women from violence.

In addition, gender units have been established in several ministries. These however lack the necessary resources and capacity to fulfil their role.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Israel.

¹⁰⁷ The National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) was established in 2001 as “an umbrella organization that supports, coordinates and facilitates the work of its partners and relevant institutions which are involved in the field of family affairs. It is also charged with the implementation of the National Framework for Family Protection and with limiting domestic violence and sexual abuse. Its members include representatives from the Security Directorate, the Judicial Council, the Family Protection Department, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Awqaf, the Jordan River Foundation (JRF), JNCW, the Jordanian Women’s Union (JWU), the Centre for Family Counselling (CFC), the National Centre for Human Rights (NCHR), the Institute for Family Health, and the Queen Zein Al-Sharaf Institute for Development (ZENID).

¹⁰⁸ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Jordan.

In **Lebanon**, the main national institution is the National Lebanese Women's Committee which in 1998 evolved of the national commission that was formed in preparation for the Beijing Conference. The Committee suffered from lack of resources and obtained its own budget only in 2009. In contrast to the leading role of civil society organizations have had in addressing GBV, the Committee is generally considered weak.¹⁰⁹

In Morocco, several institutions were created to address the issue of women's affairs. The main institution is the State Secretariat in charge of the Family, Children and the Disabled, under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Development, Family and Solidarity. In addition to the main institution, a number of gender units were created in several ministries.

Although women's affairs remain embedded in field of social development and family affairs, the Secretariat has adopted an approach that has furthered gender mainstreaming. It is considered to be a dynamic department which has launched a number of programs.¹¹⁰

According to the situational analysis report, the absence of a dedicated structure for gender equality, "ideally cross-functional and situated within the organization of the various ministerial departments, has led to poor coordination among them in the implementation of activities targeting women. It has also prevented efficient monitoring and evaluation".¹¹¹

The creation of an Observatory and a Gender Cooperation Committee to improve coordination among various stakeholders suggests that these shortfalls have been addressed. Activists, however, underlined the need for an advisory body on women's rights.

In the **OPT**, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) was created in 2003. Since then it has been successful in bringing about legal reforms and in raising awareness of gender issues. The continuity of the MOWA's work, however, is hampered through its shift from women's issues to emergency and relief programs in response to the consequences of the occupation.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Lebanon.

¹¹⁰ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Morocco.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT.

In addition to the Ministry, units dedicated to women's issues were established in several ministries. For example, the Department of Planning and Participation of Women was created in 1996, as part of the Ministry of Planning with the objective to promote gender mainstreaming in Palestinian legislation. In 1997 a gender department was created in the Ministry of Education to mainstream gender in the ministry's programs to conduct gender training.¹¹³

Furthermore, in a number of ministries and in public institutions gender units were established by the Palestinian Cabinet in 2009. They however lack technical and financial resources.¹¹⁴

In an important move, a special commission, the National Commission for Combating Violence against Women, was formed in 2008 to deal with GBV. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) the Committee brought together representatives from twelve ministries and civil society organization with the aim to unify all efforts to combat violence against women. Its efforts culminated in the formulation of the National Strategic Plan to Combat Violence against Women (2011-2019).¹¹⁵

In another initiative, departments for the protection of families in police stations were established to provide counselling and transfer services to shelters for women. In order to provide services to women in an efficient way, female police officers have been trained to this end.

In **Syria**, the National Women's Committee, composed of representatives from all involved ministries, was established in 1995. It was abolished however soon after and was replaced only in 2003 by the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs (SCFA) as a governmental body charged among others with reviewing discriminatory laws and suggesting legal amendments or the drafting of new laws to promote gender equality. Since then, the SCFA has undertaken various measures to combat violence against women and to promote gender equality through awareness raising campaigns, studies and research, policy advocacy and the building of constituencies for legal reform. In addition to the above institutions, women's units were created at

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT.

¹¹⁵ Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT. See also http://www.unwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/BRIEF_NationalStrategyToCombatViolenceAgainstWomen.pdf

the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MOSAL), the State Planning Commission and the Central Bureau of Statistics.¹¹⁶

In **Tunisia**, the existing national institutional mechanism in support of women's issues dates back to 1996 when the State Secretariat for Women and the Family was created. Its mandate has been successively expanded to become the Ministry for Women, the Family, Children and the Elderly (MAFFEPA) in 2004. The MAFFEPA played a key role in the design, implementation and leadership of gender equality policies and has developed its fourth national strategic gender plan 2007-2011.

It is supported by three structures:

- the National Council for Women, Family and the Elderly (CNFFPA – an advisory body created in 1992),
- the Centre for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF a scientific and technical body established in 1990),

and

- the National Commission for Women and Development, an advisory body on planning and evaluation body in the framework of national planning.

An important institution is the Observatory for the Tunisian family, which was created in 2006 to collect, analyze and disseminate quantitative and qualitative data with the aim to act as a source of information for policy makers.

¹¹⁶ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Syria.

6. The Role of Civil Society Organizations

The extent to which civil society organizations were involved in addressing GBV and their effectiveness varies from country to country. In a number of countries civil society organizations were crucial for breaking the wall of silence and addressing the issue of GBV in public, through awareness campaigns, workshops and other means. In some countries, civil society organizations have been also instrumental in the provision of information and data on GBV.

In **Algeria**, civil society organizations have been active in increasing public awareness in relation to women's rights. Moreover they were the first to challenge public opinion on the existence of GBV. Civil society organizations have also been involved in building the capacity of relevant organizations and institutions through training, and in conducting surveys and studies. In addition, they have been important in providing support services to female victims of violence, ranging from shelters, to judicial and psychological counselling. An important major achievement of civil society organizations was also the creation of a national directory of organizations involved in the fight against GBV.¹¹⁷

In **Egypt**, civil society organizations have been involved in particular in raising awareness and in the provision of service to victims of GBV. A campaign that was coordinated by the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, the *Safe Streets for All Campaign*, aimed at addressing sexual harassment in the streets through legislative and cultural changes. This campaign, which addressed a broad audience, sought to improve legal mechanisms to protect women. Its objective was to also support the development of a legal clause defining sexual harassment and the adoption of punitive measures and more importantly the promulgation of a law to Combat Sexual Harassment.¹¹⁸

Civil society organizations in **Israel** have been active in raising awareness, in advocating for women-friendly legislation and in the provision of services. They continue to make significant contributions to improving the status of women. They were also the first to raise the issues of rape and domestic violence and remain the

¹¹⁷ For further information see Situation Analysis, EGEP: Algeria.

¹¹⁸ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Egypt (Unpublished).

most active in providing services for victims. The government partially funds both the rape crisis centres and the NGO-operated shelters for battered women. Thirteen shelters for battered women, two of them for Arab women, are run by NGOs with the support of the government.

In addition, there are centres for the treatment and prevention of violence against women, which are run by the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs. The centres provide families with group therapy and personal empowerment activities. 17 provide services for the Arab population, one for the Bedouin population and two for the ultra-orthodox Jewish population.¹¹⁹

The Maagan shelter, established in 2004, remains the only shelter for trafficking in women victims in Israel. The shelter which is a multidisciplinary centre that provides psycho-social, psychological, medical and legal services offers treatment to victims regardless of whether they agree to testify in trafficking cases.

In **Jordan**, civil society organizations have been involved in raising awareness and the provision of services. They have played a crucial role in the provision of shelters to women or safe accommodations, as is the case of Mizan, Sisterhood is Global (SIGI) and Family Awareness and Counselling Centre, who do not run any shelters. Some civil society organizations, such as (SIGI), provide legal assistance to women victims of violence. This includes legal representation in courts.

Civil society organizations in **Lebanon** have been at the forefront of raising the issue of GBV and have been the first to implement concrete actions. During the 1990s a number of NGOs were created whose work focus on combating GBV. In the late 1990s collaboration with state departments and the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) increased and has focused on interventions aimed at combating GBV.¹²⁰

In the past few years two noteworthy initiatives were launched by NGOs, piloted by Kafa (Enough Violence and Exploitation), and the Lebanese Association for Combating Violence against Women (ALVF) which led to the drafting of bills on violence against women.

¹¹⁹ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Israel.

¹²⁰ Situation Analysis, EGEP: Lebanon

Kafa, in particular has had a prominent role in advocating for the elimination of all forms of violence against women. To this end, it carries out research, conducts campaigns and training to build the capacity of civil society organizations. In a recent initiative, Kafa launched the first White Ribbon Campaign in the Middle East, through which young men are being encouraged to speak out against violence directed at women. The focus of the campaign was to mobilize men to endorse a draft law on the Protection of Women from Family Violence. This action forms part of the project “Promoting working with men and boys to end violence against women in the Middle East”, which aims at improving attitudes and practices of men and government policies to end domestic violence in the Middle East.¹²¹

In **Morocco** civil society organizations have played an important role in addressing GBV. Since the 1990s they have been key to raising public awareness of GBV, through campaigns focusing on sexual harassment and on physical and sexual violence against women. In addition, they have been active in lobbying for a law against domestic violence in advocating for the amendments of the Penal Code.

The role of civil society organizations in Morocco was also important in creating support structures for victims of violence. A number of women’s associations have opened support centres to provide assistance and legal counsel in order to combat violence against women. Moreover, their opening of the first support centre in Casablanca in the 1990s has made GBV visible. They have also been crucial in advocating for legal amendments, in particular in relation to sexual harassment. Civil society organizations also played a key role in assessing the extent of the phenomenon through studies, field research and data collection.

Despite the numerous initiatives and the increased visibility of GBV, however, violence against women continues to be viewed as a private matter, according to the situational analysis. This conclusion suggests that raising awareness remains a priority in combating violence against women.

In the **OPT**, in order to address the incoherencies among Palestinian laws and between Palestinian laws and international instruments, a series of coalitions for legal reform have been set up. Examples constitute the Coalition for the Revision of the Personal Status (established in 2000), the Coalition for the Revision of the Penal

¹²¹ The project is implemented by Oxfam UK, in partnership with Kafa from January 2011-January 2014. For more information see: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/>. See also Situation Analysis, EGEP: Lebanon.

Code Coalition and the Muntada: Coalition for Combating Violence Against Women (2000). The objective of the latter is to raise awareness of this violence against women among the public and to promote the coordination among NGOs concerned with the issue of violence against women. It has formulated a draft law that protects families from domestic violence which was submitted to the Palestinian Legislative Council for discussion.¹²²

In addition to raising awareness, civil society organizations have played a prominent role in providing services. For example, women's NGOs in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs run two shelters for women and their children who have been victims of domestic violence.¹²³

Civil society organizations are also involved in the provision of capacity building and of training on how to address violence against women to various societal groups and professions, such as judges and police officers.¹²⁴

In **Syria**, civil society organizations are limited in numbers. The only legal NGOs and institutions given permission to work on gender equality and GBV issues are the General Women Union (GWU), the Association for Women Role in Development (AWRD), the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs (SCFA) and the Syrian Family Planning Association (SFPA). These NGOs have been involved in awareness raising campaigns (the SCFA), the running of counselling services (SFPA) or the establishment of shelters (AWRD).¹²⁵

An important network has been the *Nesa Syria* (an observatory) composed of organizations and NGOs with the objective to conduct a nationwide dialogue on GBV and on the so-called honour killings. To this end, it drafted a petition which was signed by over 10,000 people to end the practice of honour killings. It also established a website in 2005 to campaign for the abolish article 548 which permits honour killings.

Civil society organizations have also provided training for the media on the reporting on GBV.

¹²² Situation Analysis, EGEP: OPT.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ AWRD's shelter in Damascus will be upgraded into a national pilot center for victims of GBV through capacity building and rehabilitation with the help of UNDP. See Situation Analysis, EGEP: Syria.

In **Tunisia**, women's NGOs have had a pioneering role in addressing sensitive topics, such as GBV. In this context, two NGOs are particularly noteworthy: The National Union of Tunisian women (UNFT) and the Tunisian Mothers' Association (ATM). Both provide help lines, counseling services and shelters for female victims of GBV. The UNFT offers women and their children accommodation for a limited period of time in one of its two centres:

Another NGO, the Tunisian Democratic Women's Association (ATFD) promotes women's fundamental rights by supporting women who have victims of violence. Since its creation in 1989 it has undertaken various actions to combat violence through the provision of psychological support, legal advice, and of support through referral to relevant institutions and through the raising of awareness. In 1993 it established a Centre for Help and Counseling for Women Victims of Violence (CEOFWW) which has a referral system and psychological support. Equally important has been the organization Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development (AFTURD) in the provision of shelter, legal and psychological support.

7. Summary of findings

The national situation analysis studies conducted in eight Southern Mediterranean countries and findings from research conducted in Egypt revealed that GBV is wide spread in the region. Although comprehensive and systematic data on violence against women is not available, reports from human rights and other civil society organizations and women's shelters for victims of violence suggest that violence against women is widespread in the Southern Mediterranean region and constitutes a serious challenge to the development of the respective country.

Governments in various countries have adopted policies, implemented legal reforms and created institutions with the aim to eradicate GBV.

At the policy level, various countries have embedded the fight against GBV in the broader context of family protection. In other countries GBV has been singled out as an issue to be addressed in its own right.

These two different approaches are reflected in the development and adoption of national strategies, where strategies addressing violence against women may either form part of the measures to safeguard the family or those that address women in particular. In some countries a national strategy of addressing violence against women was integrated in the broader framework of development plans.

The different approaches manifested at the policy level are also evident in the institutional framework developed in support of policy implementation. In some countries the institutions established to address GBV are embedded either in the ministry for social development and of family affairs or are institutions responsible specifically for the advancement of women's rights, including the combat of violence against them.

In a number of countries legal reforms were undertaken to create the necessary legal framework. Findings suggest that inroads have been made as manifested in the new laws adopted and the modification of some of the existing laws and regulations that govern the status of women. However, in general, they remain inadequate to provide women with the necessary protection against GBV. Prosecution of the offenders and effective protection of women is undermined by a series of laws, practices, and

customs. In general, physical violence is prohibited, but only in a limited number of Arab countries do legal provisions and their enforcement exist to protect women against domestic violence or spousal rape.

In some countries where appropriate legislation is in place, implementation and enforcement of protections for women are often lacking, or, in some instances, they are biased in favour of the perpetrator.

In some countries the driving force has been the state or government, building on the groundwork established by civil society organizations on the subject. In some countries, the political will acted as the driving force to address GBV. In other countries, civil society organizations have assumed a prominent role in fighting the concealment of GBV and in raising public awareness. There where violence against women has been confined to the private realm they have succeeded in rendering it an issue of public debate.

There is also evidence that the media can play an important role in furthering reform agendas. To play an effective role the media needs to be sensitized on gender issues and there is need to eradicate derogative images of women.

Despite these improvements, acts of violence against women continue as do legal provisions protecting the criminal, especially in relation to crimes of honour. Furthermore, the lack of awareness within the societies as manifested in their tacit consent to GBV and the trivialization of sexual and domestic violence account for the need to address traditional cultural norms and existing stereotypes that continue to affect public opinion. In addition, support for women victims need to be strengthened.

Study findings suggest that two factors are crucial for addressing GBV. The existence of a national strategy based on a broad societal and political consensus and the existence of institutions dedicated to the issue of women's rights and GBV. In contrast, where the mandate is fragmented and distributed among various governmental bodies and entities, effectiveness to address GBV seems to be reduced.

Experiences in the EU suggest that the development of national strategies and their action plans are key to the successful fight against GBV. A national strategy provides the national framework for action and constitutes a reference point against which progress can be measured. They also provide for a framework of cooperation and

coordination in the implementation of the strategy through its action plan. More recently, research and practice have pointed out the importance to link the need to institutionalise policies and structures to prevent, protect women from and criminalise GBV to the allocation and execution of appropriate and sufficient budgetary resources.

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