

Euro-Mediterranean WOMEN'S Foundation



THIRD CYCLE

WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS AND LOCAL MOBILISATIONS AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN ALEXANDRIA

EGYPT

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Violence against women (VAW) has implications at many levels, especially at the social, psychological and economic ones. This diagnosis explores the level of women's awareness regarding the forms of violence they are exposed to, their causes and impacts, as well as their knowledge of existing protection mechanisms in Alexandria governorate. It focuses on national legislations regarding domestic violence and on the importance of engaging men, the media and religious figures in combatting VAW. It also provides various ideas on how to improve institutional mechanisms and civil society services offered to victims (police, security, legal, etc.).



Women and Development Association surveyed women victims of violence, health and social agents, lawyers, the police, parliamentarians, clerics and local civil society organisations' opinions on domestic violence. © Aleutie / Shutterstock.com



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- Eradicating all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls;
- Encouraging a change in attitude and behaviour for gender equality.

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Field diagnosis: Women's perceptions and local mobilisations against domestic violence in Alexandria

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November 2018

This field diagnosis is part of the Axis 1 "Strengthening the capacities of equality actors" of the Priority Solidarity Fund "Women for the future in the Mediterranean" funded by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, in the framework of the project "Developing Women's Empowerment" labelled by the Union for the Mediterranean.

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Consortium formed by:

Government of Catalonia

Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Barcelona City Council

European Institute of the Mediterranean

C/ Girona, 20

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Local clusters of gender equality actors© mobilized in 2018



- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| A Ifrane (Morocco) | D Alexandria (Egypt) | F Ma'an (Jordan) |
| B Sétif (Algeria) | E Al Khalil and Bethlehem (zones C) (Palestine) | G Tripoli (Lebanon) |
| C Tozeur (Tunisia) | | |

The Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation sets up local clusters of gender equality actors coordinated by associations every year, in the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia (1 per country).

Each local cluster of gender equality actors© chooses a target territory that can be a region or a province or a metropolitan area of a large city. Subsequently, the local cluster's members define a topic of interest related to gender equality that they consider a priority in this target territory.

Each local cluster is made up of 5 actors working in favour of gender equality in the target territory: associations; research or education institutions; local or regional authorities or ministerial departments in charge of advocating for women's rights; media; enterprises and trade unions. Their mission is to mobilize the gender equality actors through data collection, consultations and exchange of experiences. Thus, they analyse the situation related to the target topic and they follow-up the effectiveness of public policies in this area with a collective and participatory approach.

This bottom-up approach leads to produce a diagnosis of the situation that highlights the main obstacles to achieve gender equality, and to design a collaborative and replicable field project to address those obstacles. To date, local clusters were set in Algiers, Oran and Sétif (Algeria); Alexandria, Giza and Luxor (Egypt); Irbid, Ma'an and Zarqaa (Jordan); the eastern suburbs of Beirut, Mount Lebanon and Tripoli (Lebanon); Fès-Meknès, Marrakesh-Safi and Souss-Massa (Morocco); Ramallah-Al Bireh, Bethlehem and El Khalil/Hebron Governorates (Palestine); and Douar Hicher, Monastir and Tozeur (Tunisia). These clusters focus on women's access to political decision-making and high-level positions, women's economic empowerment and professional inequalities and violence against women. This document presents the diagnosis which was conducted in Alexandria.

A. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women (VAW) in the private sphere in Egypt has not yet been adequately researched. This could be due to the limited human resources dedicated to research, lack of awareness about the phenomenon, or lack of attempts to address it socially and politically in an appropriate way. Furthermore, within the family context, women usually remain uncommunicative about the type of violence they were subjected to for fear of exposing their families to social judgment or of family reprisal since the values of the Arab society do not protect women against violence. In fact, these values have become the general norm, with society chastising the victim instead of supporting her, thus reinforcing a passive attitude among women who tend to accept violence and the associated stigma as inevitable and inescapable. As a result, the victim succumbs to the many forms of violence and often passes on such attitude towards violence to younger women in the family.

Many reports and studies indicate that domestic violence is an issue of historical, cultural and social dimensions, as it is not exclusive to a certain place or time, nor to civilized or reactionary societies. In fact, it is an issue related to human existence and the relationship between men and women and how such relationship is shaped and characterized within the cultural frameworks governing men and women in a given society. "Family is a key pillar of the social structure, representing a social unit upon which the rest of society is based. It is perceived as the medium through which individuals fulfil their natural and social needs according to the law."¹

That being said, it is worth stressing that development cannot be achieved through a coerced human being: family, of which the woman is the main pillar, constitutes the framework that defines the behaviour of its members, shaping their lives and influencing their character. Family is at the heart of social awareness and national and cultural heritage, passing on this heritage across generations. Moreover, the school instils customs, traditions, rules of conduct and public morality into individuals.

It should be noted that women's rights organisations have seen some of their demands met through the criminalization of different forms of violence and establishing means to protect women from violence. However, women's awareness of the many forms of domestic violence is still in its early

¹ Khairy Khalil al-Gamily, Badreddine Kamal Abdo: *Introduction to Family and Child Professional Practice*, Alexandria, University Library for Computer, Publishing and Distribution, 1995, p. 5

stages, due to women's unawareness that what they are subjected to is violence which is unlawful and entails legal accountability for the perpetrator.

In addition, women do not have enough knowledge of the various legal and psychological protection mechanisms in place, and they lack information about the centres that provide these services, especially in popular areas far from the capital. Therefore, ensuring women's access to such services and prompting men, who are key players in the issue of VAW, to increase their engagement in combatting VAW are a priority.

Several studies prove that the highest rates of VAW are cases of domestic violence, with spouses topping the list of abusers, followed by fathers, brothers and mothers in second place. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's global study on homicide (2018), 87,000 women were intentionally killed in 2017 worldwide. More than half of them (approximately 50,000) were killed by intimate partners or family members, meaning that 137 women across the world are killed by a member of their own family every day. Moreover, this type of violence is widespread in densely populated neighbourhoods whose demographic characteristics are marked by poverty, illiteracy, the spread of erroneous religious concepts, male-dominated cultural heritage, and family disintegration.

This has prompted Women and Development Association in Alexandria to conduct a field diagnosis in three of Alexandria's neighbourhoods (Hay al-Gharb, Hay al-Sharq, and Hay al-Montazah) to identify society's needs for ending violence. Many relevant stakeholders were involved in the local cluster of gender equality actors[©] and mobilised for the sake of this diagnosis : public institutions and civil society organizations (CSOs) such as the associations "Al Baraka Fi Al Shabab", "Furssat Amal" (An Opportunity of Hope), "Family Planning" and "Ahlu Elkheir", the ministries of Health and Social Solidarity, the Higher Institute of Social Work in Alexandria, the Cheikhdom of Azhar in Alexandria and the Children's Protection Committee in Hay al-Montazah 1 and 2.

The diagnosis looked into the results and recommendations to eradicate VAW following a scientific method that took into account people's needs. Further, Women and Development Association communicated with all concerned parties to ensure that integrated efforts are being exerted in that direction by both public institutions and CSOs.

1. Epistemological framework

Numerous statistics have highlighted the increase of VAW rates worldwide. For instance, 25%

to 60% of hospital emergency female patients around the world are victims of spousal violence². VAW takes many shapes and forms and its definition encompasses several patterns of direct and indirect physical and moral behaviours.

a. Definitions of VAW

According to the UN General Assembly Definition (1993) it is understood as “any act of gender-based violence (GBV) 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, 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.”

The dictionary of social sciences defines violence as the use of control or force unlawfully or in a manner that contradicts the law with the aim of influencing an individual's will³. As for VAW, the dictionary defines it as any act deemed a flagrant interference in a woman's freedom and depriving her of the freedom of thought, expression, and behaviour, and it goes beyond physical harm to include mental and psychological harm, and turning women into a mean or a tool to achieve patriarchal ends in society.

The Declaration on the Elimination of VAW (1993)⁴ defines VAW as “any act of GBV 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”. In the same respect, the recommendations issued by the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995)⁵ concluded that VAW is an umbrella concept within the human rights context, and that combatting it aims to achieve gender equality in order to drive participation in development. VAW is any aggression-based act that may result in physical, psychological, sexual, legal or economic harm upon women.

In 2006, the United Nations defined VAW: “Any act of GBV that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict

² Najlaa Sabri, Violence against women. Retrieved from <http://www.c-we.org/ar/show.art.asp?aid=446944>.

³ Ahmad Zaki Badawi, The Dictionary of Social Sciences, Librairie du Liban, Beirut, 1986.

⁴ <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

⁵ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/beijingdeclaration.html>

physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.” As for the World Health Organization⁶, it defines violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, or deprivation.”

Regarding GBV, it is an umbrella term used to denote any harm inflicted upon someone else’s will as a result of inequality based on gender roles. Globally, GBV often has a more significant negative impact on women and girls, which is why it is often used interchangeably with VAW.

b. Forms of VAW

- Psychological: Any act that harms the abused person’s mentality and feelings without any physical marks. However, the resulting pain is often more significant, causing a lasting effect and undermining one’s personality and self-confidence, with repercussions on one’s life in the future. Some of the forms of psychological violence include insults, neglect, and disparaging, vulgar language, humiliation, treating someone as a servant, blaming, mistrust, accusations, intimidation, and guilt.
- Physical: Physical violence is the most extreme and recognizable form of VAW, as it involves the use of force from the simplest to the most serious acts such as battery, hair-pulling, slapping, shoving, arm-twisting, throwing on the ground, punching, biting, strangling, burning and kicking.
- Sexual: The use of force and threats to achieve sexual contact or the use of sex to inflict harm, such as harassment, name calling, forcing sexual intercourse, or forcing a woman to engage in certain sexual acts against her will.

c. Social, psychological and health implications of VAW

It is difficult to capture the numerous and various implications VAW has on women. However, some of its most significant and recognizable implications on women’s mental and psychological well-being include: losing one’s self-confidence and self-respect, feeling guilty about one’s actions, feeling reliant and dependent on men, frustration, depression, powerlessness,

⁶ See <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>



Service providers in Alexandria need more capacity building and coordination to intervene efficiently against domestic violence.

humiliation, shame, psychological and mental instability and insecurity, psychological disorder, as well as losing the sense of initiative and decision-making power.

Psychological effects of VAW include psychosomatic illnesses, such as reproductive and respiratory diseases (i.e. asthma), in addition to other non-organic diseases which are the direct result of VAW. Women often resort to sickness as a temporary excuse to avoid and circumvent violence within a societal framework that forces them to remain silent and submissive for various reasons.

Health implications also include physical and reproductive disorders as victims often display mental health disorders and social malfunctioning, with many resorting to alcohol and drugs. Women who were subject to violence also experience sexual health disorders and may attempt suicide, causing them to feel constant anxiety. This is not to mention central nervous system disorders and physical injuries, such as fractures and chronic pain. Death caused by violence itself or by suicide is the most serious consequence of violence.

At the social level, violence deprives women of being active members of the community as victims of violence are the least likely to be employed, or they occupy low-value jobs and do not seek to improve their careers.

While VAW reduces women's productivity and limits their innovative capacity, it generates high social services' spending and costs for the judiciary system. These are considered serious implications of VAW, but they are the most detrimental. Some of the most dangerous implications include divorce, family disintegration, troubled relationship between the wife's and the husband's families, child dropout from school, failure to provide children with a healthy psychological and social education and upbringing, as well as child delinquency, aggression and violence within violence-ridden families. VAW squanders household income in unnecessary expenses.

d. Economic implications of VAW

Many social researchers link the vulnerable social condition of women to their poor economic condition, which can barely be blamed for their other negative conditions (political and psychological). Although this perspective in analysing the current conditions of Arab women is largely valid, it is difficult to isolate each of these conditions from the others. That being said, it is hard to isolate the implications which are interconnected to a degree that it is impossible to understand each separately. For instance, VAW primarily, and by extent, violence against children, does not only reflect the actual degree of psychosocial violence, but also the size of economic violence and its disruptive effects on the economic structure. As a result of such violence, individuals often miss out on opportunities to be trained and prepared to bridge the employment gap, on the one hand, and enter the labour market with better conditions, on the other.

In this regard, violence leads a significant portion of unskilled workforce (males and females) to enter the labour market and be subjected to social injustice and unfair treatment. That is if those individuals were able to find job opportunities in the first place.

A survey by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics in Egypt indicates that the economic cost of partner violence has amounted to 2.17 billion Egyptian Pounds (EGP), with around 2.4 million women sustaining at least one type of injury as a result of violence perpetrated by the husband or fiancé. Likewise, around 200,000 women suffer from pregnancy complications due to spousal violence every year. Moreover, around 139,600 women were subject to workplace violence in 2014 – i.e. 3.7% of all working women. The survey was conducted in 2015 in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Egypt and the National Council for Women (NCW), and its results were published in June 2016. On another note, Egypt came in 134th on the World Economic Forum gender equality index of 2017, i.e. amongst the worst 10 countries in the world in terms of gender equality.



All the parties involved in the diagnosis called for an integrated law to protect women from violence in the public and private sphere, as well as for the amendment of the Egyptian Civil Code to ensure security for all members of the family.

B. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE DIAGNOSIS

1. Objectives

The diagnosis aimed at:

- Measuring women's awareness regarding the forms of violence they are subject to within the family;
- Monitoring and analysing women's capacity to resort to mechanisms of protection of domestic violence;
- Identifying the most effective actors in providing means of protection to women in the private sector;
- Determining the extent of men's participation in supporting and protecting women of domestic violence, and the most significant methods they adopt in doing so;
- Analysing the current mechanisms of communication between public institutions and non-governmental actors in combatting VAW.

2. Targeted areas

The diagnosis focuses on three districts of Alexandria: Hay al-Gharb, Hay al-Sharq, and Hay al-Montazah. Selection was based on a number of considerations:

a. High population density⁷

- The total area of Hay al-Montazah is 92 km², of which 82 km² are populated by 1,190,287. The population is projected⁸ to increase by nearly half a million in the next ten years. Hay al-Montazah has the largest population among the six Alexandria districts.
- Hay al-Gharb has an area of 35 km², and had, in January 2008, a population of 985,786, with a density of 20,289 / km². In January 2014, the number of households was 118,557, and the inhabited area 20.07 km².
- Hay al-Sharq is one of the most prominent districts of the city, hosting a number of vital facilities, like the Alexandria International Airport, Sidi Gaber Railway Station, and Stanley Bridge, with the tramway line crossing it from west to east. The district's population is approximately 985,786 according to a preliminary census conducted in 2006⁹ taking into consideration the natural population increase.

b. High number of cases presented before courts (criminal, and personal status) across the 3 districts

According to the Women and Development Association' Legal Centre's observations, two courts are assigned to each of the mentioned districts, unlike the remaining districts of Alexandria, given the high number of cases.

c. The prevailing radical religious discourse in women-related issues by a number of radical religious groups, as observed by the research team.

3. Methodology

The diagnosis followed the method of a descriptive survey research in order to describe the reality and unravel its characteristics and peculiarities. It also included qualitative methods based on in-depth interviews conducted during meetings, along with survey forms targeting 370 women as shown in the table below:

⁷ Alexandria Governorate Website <http://www.alexandria.gov.eg/mainhome.aspx>

⁸ <http://www.alexandria.gov.eg/Government/districts/almontaza/DispInformation.aspx?ID=2>

⁹ [https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%AD%D9%8A_%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82_\(%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%83%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9\)](https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D8%AD%D9%8A_%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82_(%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%83%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9))

| No. of persons | Target group | No. of interviews |
|----------------|--|-------------------|
| 40 | Women who have been affected by personal status laws and frequent the Women and Development Association' Legal Support Centre in Hay al-Montazaha, and the Al Baraka Fi Al Shabab Association in Hay al-Gharb | 2 |
| 40 | Female social leaders working for women's affairs administration at the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS) | 2 |
| 20 | Female health educators of the Ministry of Health (MOH) | 1 |
| 20 | Women attending literacy classes at Al Baraka Fi Al Shabab Association in Hay al-Gharb | 1 |
| 20 | Women with family conflicts frequenting the Women and Development Association's Legal Support Centre | 1 |
| 15 | Women who are part of the "Productive families" project of the Women and Development Association's Skills Development Centre | 1 |
| 40 | Mothers of children at risk ¹⁰ to whom Women and Development Association provides legal support within Alexandria's Child Protection Committee. | 2 |
| 20 | Women benefiting from the services provided by the Counselling Unit against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) of the Women and Development Association | 1 |
| 35 | Women benefiting of the Family Planning Unit in Hay al-Montazah, Hay al-Gharb and Hay al-Sharq, with whom Women and Development Association worked before as partners in the Network Against Domestic Violence in Alexandria (2008-2012) | 2 |
| 20 | Female intern lawyers of different specializations (first instance, appeal and cassation) | 1 |
| 20 | Representatives from several CSOs in the region: Women and Development Association, Ruwwad Association, Egypt Trade Union Federation, Shuruq El Islam Association, Bint Misser Association, ADC Foundation, Shery for Development Foundation, Qatret Hayat Organization, Ahlan Bil Kheir Association, Alexandria' Women Foundation, El Wafaa Association For Development & Social Rehabilitation, Sa'edhum Wa Isaadhum Initiative, Zuhoor Al Hayat Association, Masged El Taqwa Association, Rawnaq Association, El Hoda Center for Training and Development Counselling | 1 |
| 20 | Women attending literacy classes and benefiting from economic empowerment projects by Ahl El Kheir Association, a partner of Women and Development Association | 1 |
| 60 | Mothers of children at Forsat Amal Association' nursery in Hay al-Gharb, partner of Women and Development Association | 3 |
| 370 | Total | 19 |

The research team also met several influential figures, including journalists from Alexandria radio and TV, government officials (such as the Deputy Minister of Social Solidarity, the Director of Women's Affairs at the MOSS, and the Deputy Director of Awqaf representing the Ministry of Awqaf in the governorate), religious figures (representatives of Al-Azhar Chiefdom), CSOs, the police, as well as

¹⁰ Children at risk are children whose rights to development are at serious risk when they are orphaned, abandoned or deprived of family care or when they suffer long-term disruptions to relationships or separations (e.g. due to natural disasters or other emergencies, epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, parental imprisonment, armed conflicts, wars and forced migration).

researchers of the Higher Institute of Social Work. The diagnosis was presented and debated during a conference held in September 2018 in Alexandria in presence of 120 figures and stakeholders.

C. FINDINGS

1. Essential information about the survey respondents

a. Age

| Age group | Percentage/Number |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| 18-25 year | 17% (63 women) |
| 25-35 year | 33% (122 women) |
| 35-50 year | 40% (148 women) |
| 50-75 year | 10% (37 women) |

b. Marital status

| Marital status | Percentage/Number |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Single | 16% (59 women) |
| Married, without children | 7.5% (28 women) |
| Married, with children | 53% (196 women) |
| Divorced | 11% (40 women) |
| Widowed | 7% (26 women) |
| Separated | 5.5% (21 women) |

c. Level of education

| Level of education | Percentage/Number |
|--|--------------------------|
| Illiterate (never enrolled in educational institution) | 18% (67 women) |
| Primary School | 15% (56 women) |
| Middle School | 17% (63 women) |
| Secondary School | 26% (96 women) |
| University Graduate | 17% (63 women) |
| Postgraduate | 3% (11 women) |
| Enrolled in Literacy Classes | 4% (14 women) |

d. Employment status

| Employment status | Percentage/Number |
|--|--------------------------|
| Housewife / Unemployed | 40% (148 women) |
| Temporary / Seasonal Employment | 13% (48 women) |
| Permanent Employment | 17% (63 women) |
| Business Owner | 3% (11 women) |
| Pensioner | 2% (8 women) |
| Student | 15% (56 women) |
| House worker / Factory worker / Janitress | 7% (26 women) |

Housewives, i.e. unemployed women, represent a large portion of the diagnosis sample, standing at 40%, followed by women in permanent jobs at 17% (e.g. administrative worker in education / MOSS employee), temporary / seasonal employees at 13% (e.g. journalist at an independent newspaper / nanny / Quran teacher / bus chaperon at a private school / administrative worker at a factory), while house workers, packaging factory workers or janitresses represent 7% of the sample (e.g. plastic factory worker / street tissue vendor / library printing machine worker / school sanitation worker / vegetable street vendor). Shop owners / freelancers (fish shop owner / seamstress / assisting husband at a butcher shop) stand at 3%, and students at 15% of the sample.

e. Number of children

| Number of children | Percentage/Number |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Single child | 10% (37 women) |
| 2 children | 20% (74 women) |
| 3 children | 22.5% (83 women) |
| 4 children | 16.5% (61 women) |
| 5 children | 3.5% (13 women) |
| 6+ children | 3.5% (13 women) |
| Childless | 24.0% (89 women) |

f. Monthly income

| Monthly income (Egyptian Pounds) | Percentage/Number |
|---|--------------------------|
|---|--------------------------|

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| 500 | 3% (11 women) |
| 500-1,000 | 17% (63 women) |
| 1,000-2,000 | 35.5% (131 women) |
| 2,000-3,000 | 33.5% (124 women) |
| 3,000-5,000 | 9% (33 women) |
| 5,000+ | 2% (8 women) |

The majority of women in the sample (35.5%) earn EGP 1,000-2,000 (€ 50-100). Those earning EGP 2,000-3,000 (€100-150) also represent a significant portion (33.5%). In addition, 17% of the women earn less than EGP 1,000, while 9% have a monthly income of EGP 3,000-5,000 (€150-250). The diagnosis also highlighted that many women victims of violence were the ones working and providing for the husband and children due to the husband's unemployment, drug addiction or sickness. Those women work at clothing factories or houses, sell fruits and vegetables in the market, sell minor goods which make them a low income, work as janitress with husbands, work at fish shops or markets, or help their husbands with their businesses. All the survey respondents have been subjected to different forms of violence by their husband or society.

2. Measuring and monitoring violence, its forms and causes, and the role of men in combatting it

a. Rate of exposure to violence within the family

When asked whether they are or have been subjected to violence within the family, 40% (148) of the survey respondents said yes, while 50% (185) said sometimes and only 10% (37) said no. At the beginning, these 37 women did not realize that they were victims of violence within the family, but once the research team went into the details of domestic violence and explained its various forms, they realised that they had suffered violence by family members.

b. Types, forms and patterns of violence women face within the family

By order of priority, the survey respondents mentioned:

- Verbal abuse, defamation, disparagement, scowling, insulting.
- Physical violence in the form of battery and other forms of physical assault.
- Family violence by the father / older brother / spousal battery; insulting and verbal abuse.
- Exploitation of women through forcing them to work and provide for the family / economic exploitation problems.
- Sexual exploitation of women.
- Deprivation of education.

- Interference in personal life (in choosing clothes) and privacy violation (inspection of personal belongings and mobile phones).
- Deprivation of going out, or locking inside the house.

The majority of the survey respondents said that the most common ones were physical, verbal, moral, social, sexual and cultural violence.

c. Causes of VAW

When asked about the reasons for the violence they were subjected to, the survey respondents mentioned the following:

- Straying away from religion which spreads positive values of women.
- Illiteracy, ignorance, lack of awareness and culture.
- Proliferation of drugs in the slums and popular areas.
- Feeling of despair and indifference due to violence and uneducated generations.
- Prevalence of customs and traditions within the society and lack of awareness of women's rights.
- Economic factors.
- Low level of education.
- Lack of deterring laws and justice.
- Women relinquishing their rights under the pressure of economic conditions and family.
- False portrayal of men in the media.

d. Justifications of VAW

Although violence can take many forms, all the respondents rejected its justifications, unlike previous surveys¹¹ in which respondents justified domestic violence as a result of disobeying the husband / father/ mother; of men feeling empowered; of bad economic conditions; of poor education of boys; of women's inability to understand men and their financial situation; of ill treatment of men; of failing to fulfil the husband's desires; of men's lack of knowledge about religion, and of anger problems.

According to researchers, this can be due to misconceptions about masculinity and femininity, as well as how they are expressed. Such misconceptions are a logical justification for both the perpetrator and the victim of this violence.

¹¹ In 2016, the Egyptian Centre for Public Opinion Research conducted a survey on domestic violence whose results showed that 24% of surveyed women justified their husbands' violence as punishment for their misconduct: <http://bit.ly/2DYVCgo>

3. Mechanisms for combatting VAW at the individual and institutional (local and international) levels

When asked about the possible mechanisms for reducing and ending violence, the respondents mentioned:

- Media, schools and places of worship play an important and influential role in the family in terms of raising awareness.
- Providing decent and safe job opportunities that empower women and promote their rights.
- Focusing on gender equality in education.
- Raising awareness among men to change women-related customs and traditions at the social level, and more broadly the national level through enacting and enforcing laws and regulations that protect women's rights.
- Raising awareness through social actors, seminars and religious speeches.
- Activating laws and streamlining legal procedures, especially in harassment cases.
- Raising awareness about the role and position of women in the community.
- Providing victims of violence with psychological support.
- Promoting the community's rejection of some forms of VAW, such as harassment and domestic violence.

a. Social reward from fighting VAW at the individual and institutional levels

Individual level:

- Happy living.
- Curbing violence.
- Raising a generation that appreciates the importance of women's role.
- Promoting compassion among community members.
- Shifting from bad to good treatment of women.

Institutional level:

- Institutional cohesion.
- Promoting social peace among individuals.
- Fostering a healthy work environment that enables mutual understanding.
- Reducing the number of violence incidents.

State level:

- Development and prosperity.
- Addressing legal gaps.

- Advancement of women and acknowledgment of their role.
- Social stability.
- Reducing violence rate within society.

b. Are current laws enough to combat VAW?

When asked whether laws are sufficient to end violence, 47% (174) of the survey respondents said that it may sometimes be enough, while 43% (159) of women said yes and only 10% (37) said no. It was interesting that the majority of the survey respondents still believe in the power of laws, although some of them had already had bad experience with the legal authorities or knew women who had.

Many of them said that in popular areas, recourse to law was not possible. Instead, women often seek help from the parents and heads of families, in addition to the fact that filing a lawsuit is costly and most of these women are unable to afford it. Furthermore, many of the women fear no one would believe them, or are unable to provide valid evidence before the court. They are also afraid that the situation would get worse should they report the incident of violence. They suggested the following:

- Addressing current legal gaps and enacting a law that criminalizes all forms of VAW.
- Enforcing the otherwise unenforced legal provisions.
- Imposing harsher sentences in violence-related cases.
- Simplifying the procedures related to corroborating VAW crimes.

c. Are there cases of VAW perpetrated by women? How?

Only 19% (70) of the survey respondents answered no, while 33% (122) responded yes, and 48% (178) responded sometimes. In answering the “how?” question, respondents said both verbal and physical violence are possible, such as in the fights between women and “neighbours” because of children or husbands, or sometimes because of jealousy and hatred (if the woman is violent in nature), or to impose control (mothers against daughters, teachers against students, students among each other, and in many cases, mothers-in-law could be the perpetrators of violence against their daughters-in-law).

d. Is masculinity or men’s ignorance a factor of influence in VAW?

65% (240) of the survey respondents said yes, 12% (45) said sometimes and 13% (48) said no, while 37 women did not reply. This highlights the role of education in shaping men’s views and treatment of women and calls for aligning these views with the principles of equality.

e. Is being subjected to violence during childhood a factor influencing men's violent behaviour? 40% (148) of the survey respondents think that this could be a factor in triggering violent behaviour among men, while 50 % (185) answered sometimes and only 10% (37) answered no. These responses support the finding that violence against children is a main reason for adult men's violence toward women.

f. Poverty and VAW

When asked whether there is a link between poverty and VAW, 79% (292) of the survey respondents answered yes, 13% (48) answered sometimes and only 8% (30) no. Responses confirmed that poverty is another key factor behind VAW and violation of their rights within the family. Although families with better living conditions also suffer from violence, poverty remains a key driver of the hike in domestic violence and rights violations of family members in general.

g. Impact of denial of education on VAW

75% (277) of the survey respondents think that “yes” the denial of education is linked with VAW, while 12% (45) of women responded sometimes and only 13% (48 women) said no, it does not have any link with violence. When responding to this question, the majority of women expressed their belief in the importance of education as a factor that increases women's resilience and protection against violence.

h. Are married women more exposed to physical violence than men?

30% (111) of the survey respondents said yes, 37% (137) said sometimes and only 33% (122) said no.

i. Does gender-based discrimination within families have an impact on VAW?

40% (148) of the survey respondents said yes, 45% (167) said sometimes and only 15% (55) said no. “Yes” and “sometimes” were frequently repeated which means that gender- based discrimination gives males the green light to violate women's rights and leads to violence.

j. By knowing their rights, women can limit their exposure to violence.

79% (292) of the survey respondents agreed on this statement, 10% (37) responded sometimes, and only 11% (41) said no. During the survey, some women said that they had been able to claim their rights or resist some forms of violation of their rights after attending legal awareness sessions and gender trainings organised by some non-governmental organisations

(NGOs). Literacy courses' graduates claimed these trainings increased their capability to resist violence.

k. Can men contribute positively to the fight against VAW?

82% (303) of the survey respondents said yes, 11% (41) said sometimes and only 7% (26) said no. Since men are the main perpetrators of violence, combatting VAW would gain momentum with their participation.

l. What are men's roles in combatting VAW?

Responses were as follows:

- Protect family members in case of sexual or physical violence within or outside the family.
- Block any violation against women within the family.
- Be role models for other men.
- Voice and defend women issues.

m. Does the participation of men in combating VAW limit violence?

All answers were "yes" because combating VAW is not an issue related only to women but to society as a whole, and everyone is supposed to contribute to it. Men's participation supports the combat against VAW and helps in addressing it more quickly and efficiently.

4. Rates, scale and recurrence of different forms of violence and their impact on women

a. When asked about the most common perpetrators of VAW, responses came as follows:

| Perpetrators | Respondents |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| Fathers / mothers | 17% (63) |
| Stepfather / stepmother | 5% (18) |
| Sons | 3% (11) |
| Brothers | 12% (45) |
| Friends | 1.5% (6) |
| Employers | 5% (18) |
| Police | 0% |
| Strangers | 9% (10) |
| Co-workers | 3% (11) |
| Mother-in-law / father-in-law | 6% (22) |
| Husband | 38% (140) |

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Daughter-in-law | 0.0% |
| Uncle | 0.5% (2) |
| Other... | 0.0% |

The diagnosis revealed that husbands topped the list of perpetrators with 38% of total cases, followed by fathers and mothers (17%), older brother or brothers (12%) and strangers (9%) who, in most cases, harass women on the street or in public transportation. Mother-in-law and father-in-law were behind 6% of VAW cases because many women live in the same apartment as their husband's parents, which leads to conflicts. Violence might occur as well in the work environment by bosses who were behind 5% of the cases or colleagues (3%), relatives like uncles (0.5%) or stepfathers/stepmothers (5%) might also be behind VAW cases. One of the survey respondents said that she was abused by her son who hit and pushed her to get money from her to buy drugs.

b. What are the most common forms of VAW?

| Form of violence | Percentage |
|--|-------------------|
| Yelling | 37% (137) |
| Insulting / humiliation | 27% (100) |
| Throwing objects at the victim / pushing / shoving / dragging | 15.5% (57) |
| Hitting on the head / slapping / beating / kicking / biting / shaking / hair pulling | 10.5% (39) |
| Severe beating / Chaining and beating | 5% (18) |
| Threatening with a knife / gun / axe / sickle | 2% (7) |
| Burning / strangling | 1.5% (6) |
| Forced sex | 1.5% (6) |
| Acid throwing / stabbing / shooting | 0.0% |

37% of the survey respondents were subject to yelling, 27% were insulted and humiliated, 15.5% were hit by objects or shoved to the ground during a heated altercation, 10.5% were hit on their heads and slapped, 5% were severely beaten by their husbands, 2% were threatened

with a knife by their husbands, others were burnt and suffocated, and 1.5% were forced into sex. These percentages do not reflect the reality because many women abstained from talking about marital rape due to social, ethical and religious concerns.

c. VAW consequences according to the respondents' experiences (personal and of their relatives)

| Consequences | Frequency |
|---|------------------|
| Deprivation of money by the husband | 54.5% (202) |
| Children's school absenteeism | 45% (166) |
| Intestinal disorders | 36% (133) |
| Injuries/ fractures/ wounds/ burns | 30% (111) |
| Admission to a hospital | 30% (111) |
| Chronic pains | 25% (92) |
| Inability to go to work | 22.5% (83) |
| Women's diseases | 15% (55) |
| Pregnancy complications | 15% (55) |
| Abortion | 10% (37) |
| Committing / contemplating suicide | 10% (37) |
| Unwanted pregnancy | 7% (26) |
| Permanent disability | 5% (18) |
| Infection with a sexually transmitted disease | 3% (11) |

Deprivation of money topped the list with 54.5% of the answers. In most of the cases, husbands refuse to assume the costs of managing the household following violence acts or women do not dare to ask for money out of fear or shyness. Children school absenteeism came second (45%), intestinal disorders third (36%), fractures, injuries and hospitalization fourth (30%), and inability to go to work fifth (22%) as most of the women claimed that violence was a reason behind their inability to work even though it was on the psychological and moral level.

d. Women's reactions to violence

| Women reactions to spousal violence | Frequency |
|--|------------------|
| Inform relatives / friends and ask for | |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| intervention | 30% (111) |
| Hospitalization / medical consultation | 7% (26) |
| Call the police / file a lawsuit | 10% (37) |
| Resort to a community leader / neighbourhood sheikh / mayor / influential local figure | 6% (22) |
| Consult a lawyer | 7% (26) |
| Ask for advice from a specialized women's center | 5% (18) |
| Ask for divorce | 3% (11) |
| Ask for advice on social media | 5% (18) |
| Ask for employer's help | 1% (4) |
| Resolve the problem within the family | 2% (7) |
| No reaction | 20% (74) |
| Leave the house | 10% (37) |

The diagnosis showed that the most common reaction was telling relatives and friends about what had happened and asking for intervention (30%), followed by “no reaction” (20%), and either call the police, file a lawsuit or leave the house (10%). 7% of the the survey respondents visited a doctor or rushed to the hospital, and 7% consulted a lawyer, while 6% resorted to community leaders. These choices reveal that women have very limited options in case of violence and they are not easily accessible nor safe. In addition, their reactions can backfire on women.

5. Services provided to women victims of violence, their effectiveness and where to receive them

a. Services available for women victims of violence

When asked about the services they are aware of, women’s responses came as follows:

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| 80% (296) | Legal support and counselling |
| 76% (281) | Psychological support and counselling |
| 30% (111) | Safe shelter (alternative housing) |
| 15% (56) | Financial support |

80% of the survey respondents declared that victims of violence can access “Legal support and counselling”, reflecting the importance of offering such support in the form of trainings,

awareness sessions, legal counselling, legal interventions in assault-related cases, legal protection, or support in personal status cases that mostly revolve around divorce, *Khula'* (dissolution of the marriage bond at the instance of the wife), child custody, alimony or child support.

Legal support helps dispel women's fears, providing them with the necessary reassurances to confront violence. Legal support was followed by psychological counselling as a key component of empowering and rehabilitating women (76%). Providing a safe shelter (alternative housing) came third with 30% of the responses, as many women subjected to violence, particularly by the husband, did not have an alternative house.

As for financial support as a form of support against violence, it was raised by 15% of the respondents, given that VAW is often related to families' difficult financial conditions, especially inflation and other economic problems faced by households.

b. Degree of awareness of NGOs providing services to women victims of violence

40% of the survey respondents mentioned the Women and Development Association's Psychological and Legal Support centre since they were among the target groups and beneficiaries of the association's various projects offering legal and psychological support. The respondents also mentioned Forsat Amal Association, Awlad El Khair Association in Qubbari, Moustafa Kamel Charity, Ahlu El Khair Association, Umm El Moumineen Association, Wodouh Association, Ein Gareyah Charity, and El Baraka Fi Al Shabab and El Shabab Association in Karmoz Gheit El Enab. These are charity associations that refer survivors and victims of violence to the Women and Development Association's Psychological and Legal Support center in Alexandria.

c. Nature of services provided to women victims of violence

When asked about these services, the survey respondents said that services often included the following:

- Legal counselling and filing lawsuits (personal status).
- Referral to Women's Affairs Department at the MOSS.
- Psychological support and therapy sessions.
- Organization of recreational trips.
- Educational services.
- Indirect assistance to women, such as Ramadan and Eid packages, as well as financial assistance.

- Health services through outpatient clinics at mosques and churches across the region and through CSOs.
- Literacy classes provided by CSOs, although these classes are insufficient
- Economic empowerment services (training on simple and manual crafts, small projects' management, etc.).

d. Availability of health facilities for women victims of violence

When asked about the availability of hospitals or clinics that receive women victims of violence, respondents did not provide any information about such facilities within the diagnosis target areas. Respondents indicated that public hospitals within or near the area provided health services to all the residents of the area, but not psychological support. These hospitals include Sharq El Madina Hospital in Hay al-Montazah, Moustafa Kamel Hospital (military hospital that offers services to civilians) and Al Mery Hospital (public).

e. Knowledge of the Department for Combatting VAW at the Security Directorate

98% (363) of the respondents were unaware of the Department for Combatting VAW, while only 2% (7) had heard of it in the media. Responses, however, did not clarify the services provided by this Department to women victims of violence, thus reflecting the diagnosis sample's lack of knowledge about the Department or the services it provides.

6. Ideas to improve women's protection at a national level

The discussions with the 370 survey respondents (women) and the in-depth interviews with the concerned institutions (women and men) resulted in several recommendations on multileveled protection approaches, as follows:

a. Through family, by:

- Adopting a healthy social upbringing, abstaining from discriminating between boys and girls from an early age, giving children the right to express themselves, and respecting their opinion.
- Abstaining from using violence in disciplining children.
- Abstaining from discussing problems in front of children.
- Refraining from demeaning and beating women, especially in front of the children.
- Adopting religious upbringing based on informed religious views and rejecting false religious concepts, legacies, and beliefs that have no actual religious basis.
- Renouncing child violence based on gender.

b. Through civil society, by:

- Organizing seminars and trainings to raise awareness on women's legal rights and duties.
- Organizing educational sessions for young adults intending to marry.
- Providing family consultations for family members.
- Offering legal and psychological support to abused women.

c. Through public institutions, by:

- Eradicating the discrimination existing in some laws as it produces VAW.
- Establishing protection centers for abused women.
- Establishing complaint offices for women at the NCW and its branches in different provinces.
- Launching a set of support projects for women, implemented by the MOSS.

D. NATIONAL LEGISLATION ON PROTECTING WOMEN FROM VIOLENCE

1. Egyptian Constitution and Egypt's commitments to international legislations

The 2014 Egyptian Constitution provided for equality (Articles 11 and 53) and opportunity for all citizens without discrimination (Article 9). Article 11 bears the only explicit reference to VAW: "The state commits to the protection of women against all forms of violence, and ensures women's empowerment to reconcile the duties of a woman toward her family and her work requirements. The state also ensures care and protection for motherhood and childhood, and for breadwinning, and elderly women, and women most in need." The same article further ensures appropriate representation of women in the houses of parliament and equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. In addition, Article 53 prohibits gender-based discrimination and calls for the state to take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

Article 93 of the Constitution declares: "The state is committed to the agreements, covenants, and international conventions of human rights that were ratified by Egypt. They have the force of law after publication in accordance with the specified circumstances." By virtue of this article, the Egyptian Government commits to implementing all international agreements signed by Egypt, including the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified in 1982, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), ratified on 18 September 1981. In 1960, Egypt ratified the International Labour Organization's Convention No. 100 concerning the "Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for

Work of Equal Value”, and Convention No. 101 concerning “Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation.” As per Article 93, all laws in contradiction of the principles and rights stipulated by these agreements ratified by the Egyptian Government shall be reviewed.

Egypt ratified the CEDAW but expressed reservation in respect of Article 16 related to family. Recently, Egypt withdrew its reservation to CEDAW’s Article 9 with respect to women’s granting nationality to their children. Furthermore, Egypt ratified UN Security Council Resolution 1325 concerning women in conflicts, and signed the Rome Convention but has not ratified it yet. However, Egypt neither signed nor ratified the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating VAW and domestic violence.

In June 2014, the National Council for Women (NCW) in partnership with several ministries announced a national strategy for combatting VAW. The strategy is based on three pillars: prevention, protection and intervention. It also includes awareness campaigns and rehabilitation programs for perpetrators and victims alike. However, the process of drafting the strategy lacked transparency, and the strategy was not executed in coordination with civil society and women’s organizations calling for such strategy to be in force.

Moreover, the NCW did not take into consideration the insights provided by women’s organizations. These recommendations called for a national, holistic and cross-sectoral strategy that involves collaboration and commitment from several ministries, such as the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Education. Women’s rights organizations also called for a clear action plan for dealing with VAW cases and providing training for judiciary members, social workers and health practitioners, given the current lack of coordination between these different actors.

Furthermore, women’s organizations demanded that a study be conducted to enable the development of a successful gendered budget to ensure the provision of tools and medical treatment to violence survivors, as well as shelters that offer medical services and advice to them. To this day, there is no information about the percentage or amount of government budget allocated, if so, to combatting VAW.

Although a specialized unit for combatting VAW across police departments was established as per a decision by the Ministry of Interior to investigate and examine harassment and battery cases, as well as all forms of violence against Egyptian women, the lack of adequate gender

training and resources for the members of this unit is a challenge rendering proper protection mechanisms ineffective.

2. National legal and criminal protection of women

Article 267 of the Criminal Code penalizes rape in its simple form by life in prison or rigorous imprisonment. If the felon is of the victim's ancestors, or those in charge of rearing, observing, or having power on her, or is a paid servant to her or to any of the abovementioned persons, he shall be punished with life in prison.

Article 268 of the Criminal Code penalizes acts of indecent assault by force or threat or attempts of such assaults by 3 to 7 years of rigorous imprisonment. If the victim of the said crime has not attained complete 16 years of age, or the perpetrator of the crime is of the victim's relatives, or those having power on her, or is a paid servant to her, the period of the penalty may be extended to the ceiling determined for rigorous imprisonment, i.e. 15 years. If these two conditions combine, the ruling shall be a sentence to permanent rigorous imprisonment.

According to article 269 of the Criminal Code, whoever indecently assaults a lad or a lass not yet attaining 18 complete years of age, without force or threat, shall be punished with detention for a maximum of 3 years.

If the victim has not attained 7 complete years of age, or the person committing the crime is of the victim's relatives, or those having power on her, or is a paid servant to her, the penalty shall be rigorous imprisonment from 3 to 15 years. Article 249 permits premeditated killing if it is in self-defence against an indecent assault by force or kidnapping. In these cases, conditions of lawful self-defence are met. The law also criminalizes any immoral act perpetrated with a woman or in her presence, even if not publicly (Article 279 Protection granted solely to women).

a. Crime of abduction in the Criminal Code

The Egyptian Criminal Code criminalizes the abduction of persons and imposes very severe punishment if the abductee is female:

- Whoever kidnaps unforcedly and uncunningly a child that has not reached 16 complete years of age, shall be punished with imprisonment from 3 to 10 years. If the kidnapped child is a female, the punishment shall be imprisonment from 3 to 15 years (Article 289).

- Whoever kidnaps cunningly and forcibly a female shall be punished with permanent rigorous imprisonment. If the perpetration of this felony is accompanied with a felony of lying with the kidnapped female without her consent, the perpetrator shall be punished with a death sentence (Article 290).

b. Crime of harassment in the Criminal Code

The Egyptian Criminal Code criminalizes sexual harassment through the following: “Whoever induces one or more persons to commit a felony or misdemeanor, by talks, shouting in public, a deed, or a hint insinuated in public, by writing, drawing, pictures/photographs, marks and symbols, or any other method of representation made in public, or in any other means of publicness, shall be considered an accomplice in doing it, and shall be punished with the penalty prescribed therefore, if such inducement results in actual occurrence of the felony or misdemeanour. However, if the inducement results in just an attempt of murder, the judge shall apply the legal provisions on attempt penalty. Talking or shouting shall be considered publicly made if it is declared openly or reiterated via any mechanical method at a general meeting, on a public road or any other frequented place, or if it is declared openly or reiterated, such that anyone found on that road or in that place can hear it, or if it is diffused by wireless or any other method. The deed or hint shall be considered publicly made if it takes place at a general meeting, on a public road, or at any other frequented place, or if it takes place such that whoever is found on that road or at that place can see it” (Article 171).

“Whoever makes or holds, for the purpose of trade, distribution, leasing, pasting or displaying printed matter, manuscripts, drawings, advertisements, carved or engraved pictures, manual or photographic drawings, symbolic signs, or other objects or pictures in general, if they are against public morals, shall be punished with detention for a period not exceeding two years and a fine of not less than five thousand pounds and not exceeding ten thousand pounds or either penalty” (Article 178). “Whoever commits in public a scandalous act against prudence shall be punished with detention for a period not exceeding one year or a fine not exceeding three hundred pounds” (Article 278). “Whoever perpetrates with a woman an immoral act, even not publicly, shall be punished with the previous penalty” (Article 279).

Whoever carries out sexual or obscene gestures, actions or insinuations, in public or in private, or a frequented place, by hint, talks, or deed, in any available means including wireless or wired shall be punished with detention for a period not less than six months and a fine of not less than EGP 1,000 and not exceeding EGP 5,000 or either penalty. If the act is repeated by the same

individual and was proven through monitoring the defendant, the punishment will be increased to no less than a year of detention and a fine of not less than EGP 5,000 and not exceeding EGP 10,000.

Any act prescribed in Article 306 bis (A) shall be considered as sexual harassment if the intent is receiving sexual gratification. In this case, the felon shall be punished with detention for not less than a year and a fine of EGP 10,000-20,000, or either penalty. If the felon is among those prescribed in Article 267 (paragraph 2) of this law, or had a functional, rearing, or educational power on the victim, or carried out any act of coercion made possible by the circumstances, or if the felony was carried out by more than two persons of whom one at least was armed, the penalty shall be detention for not less than two years and not exceeding five years and a fine of not less than EGP 20,000 and not exceeding EGP 50,000" (Art. 306 bis A, bis B).

c. Trafficking and exploitation of women

VAW takes many forms, one of which is human trafficking. According to the international protocol and convention concerning the crime of human trafficking, and despite Egypt's ratification of both and promulgation of Law No. 64 of 2010 on Combatting Human Trafficking, the trafficking of women has many forms in Egypt, such as exploitation for beggary, house serving, unfree labour, temporary marriage, child marriage, sale of children for adoption, prostitution, and organ trade. The smuggling of migrants can easily turn into human trafficking, especially in Arab countries, where large numbers of women and children go to work at houses, which exposes them to exploitation through unfair contracts and salaries way below the minimum wage. Although there are several protection mechanisms in place, including the National Coordinating Committee on Combating and Preventing Illegal Migration, civil society still calls for more protection to confront the many forms and types of women and girls trafficking, including:

- The presence of secret networks involved in women and girls trafficking, operating under the guise of touristic facilities.
- Organ trade.
- Forced abduction.
- Exploitation and severe treatment of women and children in beggary.
- Exploitation of female workers in some companies and institutions by forcing them to work longer hours (in violation of the Labour Law) at extremely low wages.
- Tourist marriage (temporary commercial marriages of girls).

d. Clemency, penalty mitigation and grounds of permissibility to circumvent punishment
VAW in the private domain is widely tolerated and the government has yet to take action to combat it. Not only that, but many Criminal Code provisions may be applied to downplay, and sometimes justify, domestic violence. For instance, Art. 17 enables mitigation of penalty as a form of clemency in rape cases and “honour” killings. In addition, Art. 60 promotes impunity in domestic violence cases, with the perpetrator being granted clemency if he was able to prove that his deed was committed in “good faith.” Therefore, this article can be invoked to justify domestic violence as the husband’s right to discipline his wife and exonerate the perpetrator of “honour” killing. Furthermore, marital rape is not recognized by the Criminal Code.

3. Personal status law: A driver of domestic violence

Many problems stem from prejudiced attitudes and are exacerbated by the discriminatory Egyptian personal status law and other provisions which put up unsurmountable obstacles for women to prove that their spouses have harmed them. Support for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence is quasi-inexistent. Women who choose to report it are confronted with several obstacles, including a lack of interest by the security forces or prosecution, as well as inadequate criminal laws, with domestic violence and marital rape not explicitly criminalized. This leads many women subjected to domestic violence to suffer in silence.

A deeply discriminatory divorce system also often leaves women trapped in abusive relationships. While men may unilaterally divorce their wives without providing any justification, women must either forfeit their financial rights by accepting a “no-fault” Khula’ divorce, or be prepared to fight a long and costly court battle to prove that their husband “harmed” them.

The term “personal status” refers to “the set of legal rules governing the relationship among individuals in respect of descent and marriage, and the resulting affinity, birth, guardianship, custody, and mutual rights and obligations, as well as the dissolution thereof which entails the right to alimony, custody, inheritance and estate”. In Egypt, Law No. 1 of 2000 comprises a set of rules organizing certain conditions and procedures of litigation in matters of personal status (alimony, divorce for the inability to pay maintenance and absence or loss of the husband). This procedural law came into force on 1/3/2000, with procedural amendments later introduced by virtue of Law No. 10 of 2004 on the formation of family courts and settlement offices.

Law No. 1 of 2000 also includes substantive rules, governed originally by the first personal status legislation in Egypt, Law No. 25 of 1920, organizing some personal status topics. The

said law is comprised of 13 articles covering alimony, divorce for the inability to pay maintenance and absence or loss of the husband. A number of key amendments were later made to this law such as:

- Setting the marriageable age at 18 for both men and women.
- Criminalizing early marriage of girls as per the Child Protection Law, and the Civil Status Law, amended by the Child Protection Law.
- Criminalizing the failure to carry out a court ruling ordering due alimony for wife or custody or nursing fees if it was proven that the person refraining was financially capable.
- Setting custody age at 15 for young boys and girls.

However, the philosophy of the law issued nearly a century ago still embraces reactionary concepts that are unfair to women and fails to grant equal rights to family members. As such, it was imperative to call for amendments regulating polygamy, marriageable age, and assets split after divorce. These demands are driven by the need for ensuring justice and preserving individual rights in line with the Constitution and human rights declarations, particularly women's and children's rights with regard to the legal provisions governing the aftermath of divorce. In Egypt, divorce has become an alarming phenomenon, with Cairo topping the list of capitals in terms of divorce rates (one each six minutes), resulting in 2.5 million divorced women, according to data from the Egyptian Cabinet's Information and Decision Support Centre and the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS).

It should be noted also that divorce, polygamy and marriageable age have become alarming phenomena in Egypt, registering significant increases in the past years. According to CAPMAS, divorce cases stood at 180,344 in 2014 vs. 162,583 in 2013, i.e. an increase of 17,761 (10.9%)¹². Egypt came in first place worldwide, with an average of 170,000, mostly because of the Khula' Law, according to UN international statistics.

As regards polygamy, the Egyptian law authorizes it for Egyptian Muslims on the basis of the Islamic Shariah, which authorizes men to have multiple wives within the limit of four, and on condition of dealing justly with them and the ability to perform all the related obligations. There were several attempts to restrict polygamy through the judiciary, starting with the proposals of 1926 to include the condition of court approval in the Personal Status Law upon Sheikh

¹² Although these figures saw a decrease in 2017, Egypt is third worldwide in terms of divorce rate: <http://bit.ly/2AQSAT7>

Mohammad Abdo's call for government supervision on polygamy to restrict men who are unable to fulfil the obligations. These proposals were opposed by jurists and religious scholars. Decree-law No. 25 of 1929 was issued without prescribing any restrictions on polygamy.

The debate was renewed, resulting in Decree-law No. 44 of 1979 which amended some personal status laws and required Muslim husbands to submit a documented statement of their social status with the names of their registered wives and inform them of their remarrying. Law 44 also considered remarrying without the first wife's (wives) consent as harmful even if the prenuptial agreement did not include a clause prohibiting remarriage, thus granting the wife the right to divorce for the harm she sustained provided she so requested within a year from the day she got to know of her husband's remarriage. However, the Supreme Constitutional Court, in May 1985, declared Decree-law No. 44/1979 unconstitutional on procedural grounds, and Law 100/1985 was adopted. The new law authorized the wife to divorce her husband for polygamy within a grace period of one year, but required the wife to prove that her husband's remarriage had caused her material or moral harm, so that it made continued married life impossible. The same rule applies to the new wife who is unaware of her husband's other marriage.

4. Institutional mechanisms to combat VAW

a. Training of professionals working with victims

There is little educational material on gender equality and the need for mutual respect, and the existing material does not include specific and clear concepts to end VAW. Furthermore, the material is often culturally framed and lack a human rights perspective. There is no extensive training to deal with cases of VAW for police officers, judges, lawyers, and health and social workers. If existing, this training is centrally presented by the National Council to women on a very narrow scope. The lack of training for forensic and medical personnel on dealing with victims of all forms of sexual violence is particularly problematic, as it leads to the loss of important evidence and non-provision of emergency contraception in case of rape. Similarly, the lack of training of legislators, prosecutors, and judges on matters pertaining to violence compromises access to justice of women victims of violence. There are no official governmental campaigns to combat domestic VAW. However, many civil society campaigns are organized, aimed at stopping various types of VAW.

b. Consultations, psychological support, and empowerment services

There are eight shelters for women victims of violence affiliated to, and under the supervision of

MOSS in Egypt. However, their efforts are insufficient and do not take into account the culture of discrimination and VAW. In addition, employees of these shelters are not well trained in matters related to gender and VAW. The Egyptian government supervises these shelters, but with limited resources and commitment.

c. Equal access to justice and police system

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) established the Department of Combating VAW. The former Minister of Interior, Major General Mohammad Ibrahim, issued an order stating the establishment of sections or branches of this Department in all security directorates to combat VAW and coordinate with the Department of Fighting Crimes of VAW in the Human Rights sector on dealing with any reports of VAW. The aforementioned Department was founded in May 2013 as per order No. 2285/2018 as a result of the increase in the rate of violence and harassment crimes. The MoI also established sections to combat violence in security directorates, with female police officers. In principle, women can file a complaint in court in case of GBV. However, cases are often stalled off either by the police or the General Prosecutor.

d. Draft Law of the NCW to protect women against violence

In mid-2018, the NCW prepared a draft law for combating VAW¹³. This draft law incorporates 5 main chapters and 40 articles, with definitions of concepts of VAW, identification of crimes of VAW in all forms, including sexual assault crimes and relevant sanctions, and victim and witness protection in violence cases. It also targets rehabilitating women, reducing their suffering, compensating their material and moral losses, and giving just and fair trials for those accused of any crimes stipulated by this law. This draft law also insists on the importance of the presence of witnesses, experts, technical staff and clear evidences verified by modern technologies during trials.

The draft law is due to be presented to parliament by the end of 2018, and it includes the following main points:

“The incriminating aspect which includes defining new terminology introduced in the draft law and an explanation to some aspects of criminalization that the draft law has maintained as is, such as rape and indecent assaults, while increasing sanctions according to the characteristics of the perpetrators in certain cases, such as recidivism, crime commission under the influence

¹³ <http://bit.ly/2Qu10QL>

of a narcotic, or using a weapon, or several of such; a new text to be written that prevents the statute of limitation of civil or criminal cases related to deprivation of fundamental rights and freedoms, as per article 99 of the Constitution; a new more accurate definition of indecent assault crimes to be developed, taking into consideration the perpetrator's intention, as well as adding sanctions that best fit the current situation; a new text to be written on violent sexual assaults to expose, humiliate, or degrade the battered woman and obtain sexual benefit."

The law tackles the following crimes: obtaining photos of females and threatening to publicize them, photo shopping them, disseminating a partner's indecent or marital photos, disseminating pornographic photos, tampering with evidence and granting battered women's rights reserved for people with special needs if the crimes of violence result in serious illnesses or disabilities, or using the female body in an indecent manner to gain financial profit or publicity in a way that contradicts religious and moral society values.

The law focuses on witness protection and violence crime's victim care fund, as well as legal protection for witnesses considered public sector employees during their testimonies in the investigation and trial. It also states the possibility of the court accepting hearing the victims' and witnesses' testimonies via modern communication means and judicial appointment, as well as the establishment of a violence crime's victim protection fund with a responsible legal entity and resources. If approved, the law would grant battered women' rights reserved for people with special needs if the crimes of violence result in serious illnesses or disabilities, while forcing the MOSS and the MoH to establish necessary institutions that provide violence' victims rehabilitation services. It would also ensure the protection of all victims' data and information via confidentiality."

The law incorporates new measures to ensure its effective enforcement through the following provisions: the possibility of issuing a sentence with social measures instead of freedom-depriving sanctions in crimes mentioned in the law, or with forcing the accused to perform social services for entities set by the MOSS in coordination with the NCW and CSOs. It also aims at forcing the government to support and encourage the civil society to establish organizations that combat VAW, rehabilitate victims and offer them legal aid, as well as assigning to the NCW the task of ensuring the effective enforcement of this law and periodic reporting to the President, and granting the NCW the right to intervene in compensation cases for damages arising from violence in favour of the victims, and to appeal against issued

sentences as per article 214 of the Constitution, as well as stressing that the draft law does not breach more severe sanctions stipulated by other laws.

E. CONCLUSIONS

1. There is a clear lack of training efforts on how to deal with cases of VAW for the police, lawyers, healthcare workers, and social and psychological specialists.
2. There is also a lack of large-scale periodical government campaigns to combat domestic VAW. However, there are several organized campaigns that seek to end VAW across several fields at the level of CSOs. The number of alternative locations to protect women from violence is also low, with only 8 centres across the country supported and supervised by the MOSS. There are, however, internal regulations that hinder women's access to these locations. For instance, these centres do not receive women before validating their identities. This is often a hindrance, since most women are kicked out from their homes without any personal belongings. The regulations also necessitate that legal proceedings be underway in order to receive the abused woman, and that physical signs of abuse be apparent. Moreover, an abused woman can be received at the centre for a period of maximum three months. The regulations also stipulate that the supervisory committee shall meet at the centre to evaluate the case at hand, noting that the former meets every three months.

Women and Development Association has stressed the need to amend these regulations on multiple occasions. The Ministry was informed and stated that it will amend these regulations soon. It has also been noticed that employees working in such centres lack the proper training on how to deal with GBV.

3. Despite the MoI having formed the Department to Combat VAW in May 2013, by virtue of decree no. 2285 of 2013, and despite efforts exerted by this department and the Human Rights Departments in that direction, the provided services remain unknown to women and therefore inaccessible.
4. Women often refrain from revealing the type of violence they are subject to within the family, out of fear of society as it might affect their social relations.
5. Psychological VAW is the most prominent form of violence among all.
6. Resorting to the law in cases of violence is often hindered by several procedural or financial difficulties.
7. Adopting violence in children's upbringing is often a main cause of violence among men.

Violence practiced by the father against the mother in the presence of children is a main cause of violence among male children as they grow up, while female children often grow up accepting this type of violent behaviour as a normalized one.

8. Indicators show that women's education and their entry into the labour force represent a main factor in the decrease of VAW.
9. Men are the main perpetrators of violence. Thus, the larger share of plans, programs, and initiatives must target men, in an attempt to put an end to this phenomenon.
10. The majority of cases of violence are those practiced by husbands against their wives.
11. The most prominent forms of VAW within the family are shouting and scolding.
12. The effects of VAW are many. However, according to the diagnosis, the most common is women losing any financial income from their husbands. Other adverse effects of VAW include the psychological impact. The most prominent form of violence, however, is men's refusal to spend on their wives and children, which turns women into the families' breadwinners without any financial resources. With the majority of abused women being illiterate, they are unqualified to join the labour force. If they indeed manage to find work, the latter would consist of marginal labour without any legal protection. Oftentimes, women accept to work out of fear of losing their livelihoods, despite being subject to violence in the workplace, particularly sexual harassment.
13. It is urgent to raise awareness on VAW through education and the media.
14. The blatant absence of CSOs' role clearly affects the seriousness of the programs aimed at protecting abused women, particularly within the family. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the capacities of employees dealing with women in these organizations.
15. Given the lack of legal and psychological services dedicated to abused women and the high population density in the diagnosis' target areas, new innovative mechanisms should be established to provide direct information services that would meet the needs of abused women. There is also a need for establishing legal assistance centres that provide support and raise awareness among women in their respective residential areas in Al-Azeb and Al-Najou' (rural areas), through medical and awareness-raising campaigns or through art (i.e. movie screenings and theatre plays.) It is worth noting that Women and Development Association had previously implemented similar initiatives in the framework of the international 16-day campaign to combat VAW.

F. RECOMMENDATIONS

The institutions taking part in the diagnosis' final conference organised by the Women and Development Association in September 2018 recommended the following:

1. Combatting the social phenomenon of VAW, as it represents a social responsibility that must be assumed through state institutions in cooperation with CSOs.
2. Speeding up the promulgation of a comprehensive law that protects women against violence both in the public and private spheres.
3. Amending personal status laws in order to restore guarantee justice and equality, and preserve the dignity of all members of the family, in a way that would ensure security and stability within the family.
4. Building the capacities of legal and psychological service providers, thus enabling them to deal with cases of VAW via a right-based approach.
5. Finding a mechanism to ensure effective government-level monitoring and follow-up in combatting VAW.
6. Launching more programs that train women on their rights, including programs that empower and advance women socially and economically.
7. Fighting cultural stereotypes and negative attitudes towards women.
8. Building the capacities of journalists covering cases of VAW and tackling the matter as a social phenomenon with social and economic dimensions.
9. Paying special attention to the psychological rehabilitation of violence victims.
10. Creating a digital mobile phone application to report cases of violence.
11. Publishing a guidebook covering the mechanisms in place and the roles of stakeholders and professional actors combatting VAW.
12. Promoting a culture of gender equality, in addition to the skills needed in dealing with the opposite sex (i.e. consent).
13. Involving police officers in combatting VAW, as police stations are the first and only place where women seek refuge in search of protection. When the police creates a safe environment for female victims of violence, the latter will feel encouraged to report violence they are subject to, including sexual harassment, domestic violence and other crimes, which in turn contributes to reducing the rates of such crimes and enable the police to follow-up on the cases more effectively.
14. Lawyers and judges play an essential role in ending VAW, as they are in direct contact with the cases thereof. Lawyers are those defending the cases of women, while judges are those issuing rulings on such cases. These figures have a highly important role in combatting VAW, as they are directly in charge of providing legal protection to them.
15. The clergy are also important actors in combatting VAW. Aside from their power to convince

and influence individuals, they play an essential role in shaping social ideas, determining behaviours, and clarifying religious concepts from any patriarchal flaws inherited from existing cultural customs and traditions.

16. Legislators have the most important role in combatting VAW as they are responsible for promulgating and amending laws.

Furthermore, Women and Development Association has committed to continue its efforts to reduce domestic violence in Alexandria through:

- Renewing the protocol of cooperation with the Higher Institute of Social Work and the Legal Office in the Faculty of Law of the University of Alexandria.
- Signing a cooperation protocol with the Faculty of Humanities in order to establish the Anti-violence Department which will be inaugurated in November 2018 on the first day of the international 16-day campaign, and to present the diagnosis.
- Signing a cooperation protocol with Al-Azhar, the Awqaf, and the church to organize awareness-raising events.
- Signing a cooperation protocol with the Department for Combatting VAW within the Security Directorate and launching a campaign entitled “Alexandria without harassment” in cooperation with the department.
- Training CSOs’ employees to attend to abused women and refer them adequately.
- Training female and male lawyers on defending women in courts of law in line with international conventions.
- Training social, psychological and health specialists, rural elites and intellectuals to become supporting figures for abused women.
- Updating and printing the guide for female / male interview facilitators previously drafted by the Women and Development Association, in order to involve more people in the fight against VAW.
- Communicating with concerned governmental and non-governmental actors through periodical meetings aimed at managing the cases of abused women and identifying the necessary interventions and the actors in charge of the implementation, follow-up, and evaluation thereof.

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- **EGYPT' GOVERNMENT PORTAL** <https://www.egypt.gov.eg/English/Home.aspx>



مؤسسة نساء الأورو-متوسط
Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation
Fondation des Femmes de l'Euro-Méditerranée

According to its mandate, the **Euro-Mediterranean Women's Foundation (FFEM)** analyses women's local realities and public policies through consultations and dialogues at a grass-roots level. Concretely, the Foundation sets up **local clusters of gender equality actors**© every year, in the following countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia (1 per country).

Each local cluster of gender equality actors© is coordinated by an association as the Foundation recognises that civil society is the real motor of change in our societies to improve women's conditions.

The local clusters' approach is an innovative and participatory process, which supports networking and sharing of good practices in favour of gender equality at a decentralized level and promotes the emergence of projects rooted in the territory.

The Foundation systematizes the results obtained through the local clusters and transfers them to the policy-makers in the Region's countries and at the Euro-Mediterranean level. All the information related to the local clusters' results is available on the Foundation's website (www.euromedwomen.foundation) and widely disseminated across the Region among key stakeholders, policy-makers and international organisations.

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