

OSCE-LED SURVEY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

# WELL-BEING AND SAFETY OF WOMEN



**NORTH MACEDONIA**  
RESULTS REPORT

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: North Macedonia



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## Background

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the world's largest regional security organization, deals with a broad range of security-related challenges, including the protection of human rights and promotion of gender equality. Among the Organization's main areas of focus are fostering regional security co-operation, as well as conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict management. The OSCE comprises 57 participating States, covering a region that spans across all of Europe and includes the United States, Canada and Central Asia, as well as Mongolia. Through the work of the Secretariat, three specialized institutions and 16 field operations, the OSCE works to address numerous security challenges and assists participating States with the implementation of their comprehensive political commitments.

The OSCE recognizes violence against women and girls (VAWG)<sup>1</sup> as both a threat to individuals and a broader security concern, and it therefore sees preventing and combating VAWG as one of its priorities. VAWG is a persistent human rights violation that threatens the security and safety of countless women and girls all around the world. It affects not only their lives, hindering their full and equal participation in society, but also the lives of those who are close to them; it ultimately has a lasting impact on their health and well-being as well as on their children, communities and society at large as well.

Gender inequality lies at the root of gender-based violence against women and girls. The OSCE plays a key role in working with national stakeholders to build their capacity to prevent gender-based violence and to protect survivors.<sup>2</sup> Under the slogan "Bringing Security Home", the OSCE has stressed that women and girls need to be safe both in public and at home, so that they can reach their full potential and contribute to political, economic and social development.

Violence against women and girls also occurs in times of conflict, and the OSCE commissioned this qualitative and quantitative study in order to shed light on the prevalence of different forms of VAWG in non-conflict and conflict-affected settings in selected OSCE participating States: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine. Research was also conducted in Kosovo.<sup>3</sup>

This study, the first such representative survey conducted in South-Eastern Europe or Eastern Europe to provide comparable data across the region, encompasses gender attitudes and the experiences of women from minority groups.<sup>4</sup> Its aim is to provide robust data in order to develop more comprehensive and evidence-based policies, strategies, programmes and activities to prevent and combat VAW. The ultimate goal of this research is to provide evidence for informed decision-making and advocacy at different levels and thereby contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and to a reduction of VAW in the target regions, improved services for survivors and greater security for women.

<sup>1</sup> The terms "violence against women" (VAW) and "violence against women and girls" (VAWG), which are used interchangeably in this report, include physical, sexual and psychological violence by intimate partners and non-partners, as well as stalking and sexual harassment.

<sup>2</sup> This report uses the terms "survivor" and "victim" interchangeably.

<sup>3</sup> All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

<sup>4</sup> The questionnaire used in this study was based on, and is comparable to, the questionnaire used by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in the 28 EU member states in 2012.



# Executive summary

## Introduction

This report presents the findings from the OSCE's qualitative and quantitative study in North Macedonia. The study was implemented in spring/summer 2018 and involved:

- 15 key expert interviews, which provided an overview of issues related to VAW and of conflict-related acts of violence;
- A survey on experiences of violence among a representative sample of 1,910 women aged 18–74, including 496 women who completed the survey in Albanian; the survey used a multistage, stratified, random probability sample design;
- Eight focus groups with women from various demographic backgrounds (two with Albanian and two with Roma women) on their attitudes towards the subject;
- Four in-depth interviews with women who had experienced violence in order to understand, in more detail, the impact the violence had on them (including one Albanian and one Roma woman).

## Key findings

Violence against women is perceived as a fairly prevalent phenomenon in the country. Three out of five (60%) women think that violence against women is common, and nearly three in ten think that it is very common. Almost one in five women (17%) personally know someone among their family and friends who has experienced some form of domestic violence, and a similar proportion know someone from their neighbourhood who has experienced violence. Just over half of women (54%) have recently seen or heard advertising about violence against women, and the majority feel at least somewhat informed about what to do should they experience it (63%). However, few are familiar with specialized support services provided by NGOs. Attitudes and awareness differ among the major ethnic groups in the country. Just over two in five of the Albanian-speaking women surveyed consider VAW to be a common phenomenon (42%), and there is even less awareness within this group of NGOs that offer support.

Fourteen per cent of women say they have experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 15 at the hands of a partner or non-partner (7% among Albanian-speaking women versus 16% among Macedonian-speaking women). Psychological violence committed by an intimate partner is significantly more common, with 44% of women indicating that they have experienced this (43% among those women who completed the survey in Albanian). Three in ten (30%) women disclose that they have been sexually harassed since the age of 15, and one in ten (10%) say they were sexually harassed in the 12 months prior to the survey (9% and 4%, respectively, among Albanian-speaking women). Seven per cent of women say they have been stalked (4% of Albanian-speaking women).

While the disclosed prevalence of violence in the country is substantially lower than across the EU, it is important to keep in mind that three times as many women in North Macedonia believe domestic violence is a private matter to be handled within the family compared with women across the EU, and the qualitative research conducted for this report showed that some women consider “minor” violence to be normal behaviour. These views are more pronounced among Albanian-speaking women, nearly seven in ten of whom (67%) consider domestic violence to be a private matter. This difference provides additional context when considering the lower indicated rates of violence among Albanian-speaking women.

Younger women, as well as those with more education and those living in urban areas, are more prone to sexual harassment. However, the higher prevalence among these groups

of women may also reflect less tolerance by these women of sexual harassment and thus more openness to talking about their experiences.

Women living in households that are struggling financially indicate a higher prevalence of violence, and in particular of physical and sexual intimate partner violence (17% of those finding it very difficult to cope on their income versus 9% on average).

In terms of perpetrators, physical and/or sexual violence is committed most often by a previous partner: 12% of women who have had a previous partner say they have experienced one or more forms of such violence, compared with 7% of those with a current partner who say they have experienced current partner violence. Seven per cent of women say they have experienced non-partner violence since the age of 15.

Survivors of physical or sexual violence at the hands of a partner or non-partner are often left with feelings of annoyance, fear, and anger, each of which is indicated by more than half of affected women, and nearly a quarter of the women surveyed suffered from difficulty sleeping, depression or a sense of vulnerability as a result of their most serious incident of violence.

There remains an important minority who maintain a traditional perspective on the role of women in society and at home. Approximately one-third of women (37%) think their friends would agree that a woman should obey her husband even if she disagrees, and a similar proportion (32%) believe that it is important for a man to show his partner who the boss is.

Three in ten (30%) women agree that women who say they were abused often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape. This belief is more widespread in rural areas.

**Only 2 per cent of women who have experienced violence at the hands of their current partner reported what they considered their most serious incident to the police**

It is possible that these traditional beliefs have an impact on the likelihood that women in the country will indicate that they have experienced violence.

That said, such traditional views appear to be slowly changing, with younger women much less likely to hold patriarchal beliefs. They are also less prevalent among those with more education and those who live in urban areas.

One-quarter of surveyed women have lived in a situation where there was an active armed conflict, the great majority of whom experienced the 2001 conflict in the country. Just over one in ten Macedonian-speaking women (11%) and more than two in five Albanian-speaking women (42%) were classified in this research as “conflict-affected”. The most common impact of conflict on these women was a lack of services, notably a lack of law enforcement and access to health services. While conflict-affected women who have themselves experienced violence do not directly connect these experiences to the conflict, previous partner violence is higher among conflict-affected women across all three forms of violence (physical, sexual and psychological), but it is particularly high in terms of sexual violence. Likewise, psychological violence committed by a current partner is more prevalent among conflict-affected women.

While the majority of women say they are at least somewhat aware of what they should do in the event of violence, in reality, few of the women who experience violence are likely to discuss or report the incident to the police or other support organization. Only 2% of women who have experienced violence at the hands of their current partner actually reported what they considered their most serious incident to the police. Reporting varies based on the category of perpetrator, with women who have experienced non-partner violence or previous partner violence much more likely to report their most serious incident to the police or hospital than someone who experiences violence at the hands of their current partner. While the low number of Albanian-speaking women who disclosed having experienced violence does not allow for a statistically relevant comparison, the qualitative research suggests that Albanian-speaking women are even less likely than Macedonian-speaking women to seek help from an institution or support organization (the police or other organization).

Local victim support organizations are rarely approached, which is not surprising given the low reporting rates and the general lack of awareness of these organizations among the women surveyed.

In line with the fairly widespread belief among women that domestic violence should be dealt with in private, women who do not report their experiences to the police explain that the reason for this is that the incident was a family matter: they preferred to deal with the situation themselves or with a friend or family member. The qualitative findings suggest that there are a number of reasons for this, including their lack of trust in institutions, feelings of shame or fear of repercussions. Despite differences in attitudes between younger and older women, younger women are not more likely to report experiences of violence to the police, be it at the hands of a non-partner or an intimate partner. The thing that women needed most following an incident of violence was somebody to talk who could provide moral support.

### Conclusions

The study points towards the following conclusions and recommendations (see Chapter 7 for more details):

#### **Violence against women is widely accepted as normal and underreported**

Nearly half of women believe that domestic violence is a private matter, and three in ten believe that victims exaggerate claims of abuse or rape. Very few women have reported violence, identifying shame, financial reasons, lack of information and mistrust of services, fear and lack of recognition of what counts as violence.

#### **Lack of shelters and sustainability of existing services**

The greatest unmet needs women identified were the lack of financial aid and long-term shelters. Women and key experts agreed that there are not enough shelters, that they do not have sustainable funding and that there are barriers to accessing existing shelters.

#### **Need for more support and targeted action to help women from minority groups and from rural areas**

The attitudes and norms among Albanian-speaking and Roma women were more traditional than in the general population. The acceptance of VAW and treatment of violence as a private matter could prevent these groups of women from accessing help. Women from rural areas are at increased risk due to their distance from support services and lack of financial independence.



## Recommendations

The above findings and conclusions from the survey and the qualitative research point to specific recommendations to address violence against women (see Chapter 7 for a complete list):

### ***Monitoring legislation and aligning it with the Istanbul Convention***

#### **For the parliament and the government:**

1. Adopt a new law on gender-based violence in line with the Istanbul Convention standards.
2. Following the adoption of gender-based violence law, amend relevant laws to align them with them with this, change the Criminal Code to make it possible to prosecute marital rape ex officio and analyse its alignment with the Istanbul convention, include the data from, and a reference to, the OSCE-led survey in the National Action Plan on the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention, and create a specific role within institutions for issues of gender-based violence.

### ***Co-operation, training and multisectoral approach***

#### **For the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy**

3. Ensure co-ordination between service providers and the integration of services into a system of multi-stakeholder co-operation, and provide social workers with training and awareness-raising events.

#### **For the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Interior**

4. Implement ongoing training on gender-based violence among service providers, provide systematic training on the new law on gender-based violence, its related and supporting-laws and amendments to the Criminal Code (2019), and consider reaching out to the OSCE for support for training and awareness-raising activities for the judiciary and police officers.

### ***Specialized services for women, including for disadvantaged groups of women, and awareness-raising activities***

#### **For the government and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in co-operation with NGOs**

5. Secure government funding and ensure the quality, consistency and accessibility of service at women's shelters. Provide financial aid and long-term support, employment services and housing to survivors of VAW, and relevant services to disadvantaged groups of women, including minority women.
6. Implement awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women, including localized information dissemination campaigns among disadvantaged groups of women

#### **For the Ministry of Education and Science**

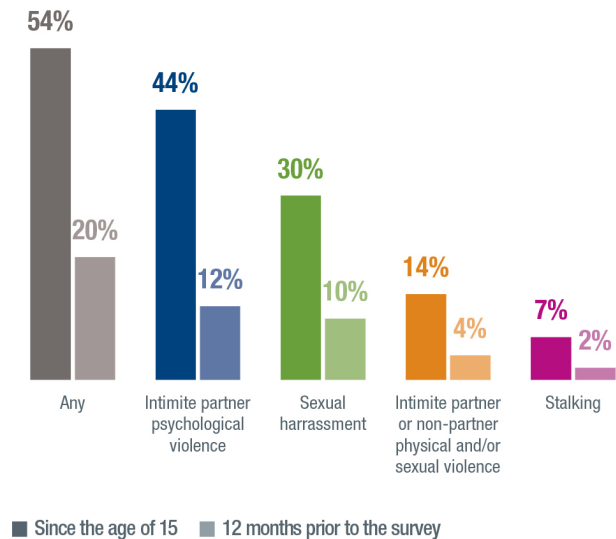
7. Implement educational programmes in schools and preschools on gender stereotypes and healthy relationships, with a focus on gender equality.



A quantitative survey was conducted among a representative sample of women aged 18 to 74 living in North Macedonia. A total of 1,910 interviews were conducted face-to-face between April and August 2018. Data have been weighted to the known population profile.

## HIGH PREVALENCE OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### HIGH PREVALENCE OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



**416,000\***  
women have experienced some form of sexual harassment, stalking, intimate partner violence, or non-partner violence (including psychological, physical or sexual violence) since the age of 15

**69,000\***  
women have experienced intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence

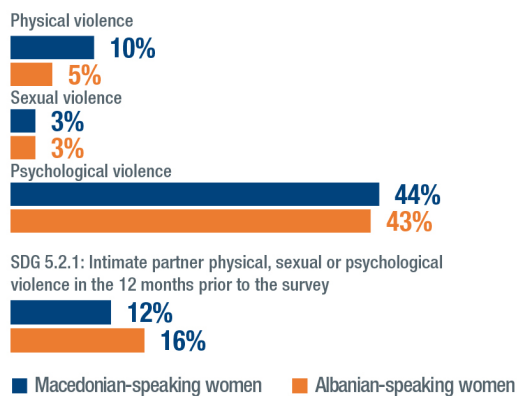
**55,000\***  
have experienced non-partner physical and/or sexual violence

\*Approximate figures

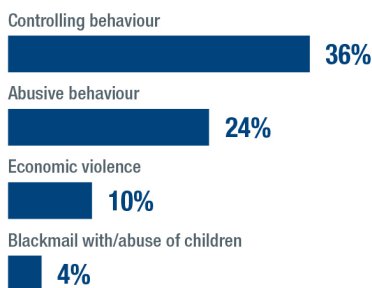
### PREVALENCE OF NON-PARTNER VIOLENCE AMONG MACEDONIAN-SPEAKING WOMEN AND ALBANIAN-SPEAKING WOMEN



### INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE



### INTIMATE PARTNER PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE IS THE MOST WIDESPREAD FORM

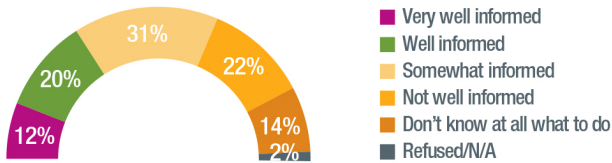


Base for slide 18 on share of directly conflict affected women: Macedonian-speaking women (1,414) and Albanian-speaking women (496)

Base for slide 19 on violence in conflict: Macedonian-speaking women who are directly affected by conflict (148) and Albanian-speaking women who are directly affected by conflict (216)

## LOW LEVELS OF REPORTING AND AWARENESS

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



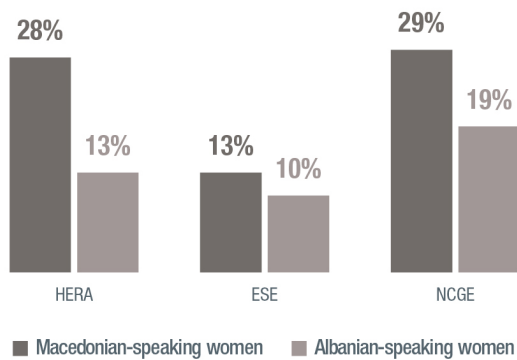
Albanian-speaking women



Macedonian-speaking women



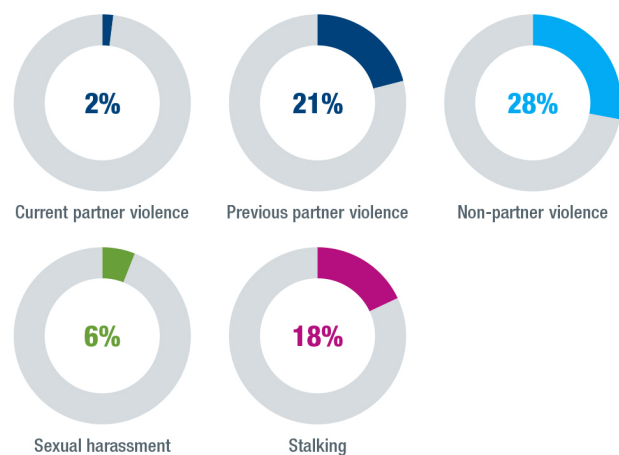
% who have heard of each local support organization



Base: All women aged 18-74 (1,910); all Macedonian-speaking women (1,414); all Albanian-speaking women (496)

## LOW LEVELS OF REPORTING TO POLICE

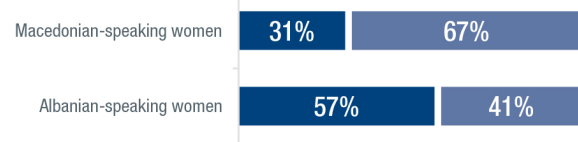
% who contacted the police directly following the most serious incident of violence



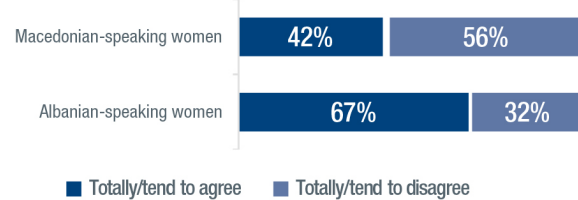
Base: All women aged 18-74 who identify most serious incident of each form of violence - sexual harassment (648), stalking (171), current partner (109), previous partner (216) non-partner (181)

## SUBSERVIENT AND SILENCING ATTITUDES

Q: Would your friends generally agree or disagree with the following statement? "A good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees"



Q: To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements? "Domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family."

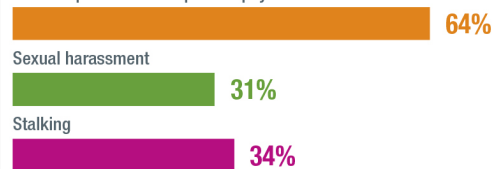


Base: All Macedonian-speaking women (1,414); all Albanian-speaking women (496)

## IMPACT OF THE MOST SERIOUS INCIDENTS

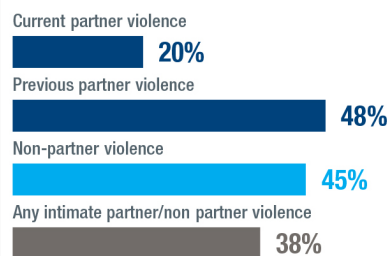
### VIOLENCE CAUSES PSYCHOLOGICAL SUFFERING

% who experienced one or more psychological consequences due to... Intimate partner or non-partner physical and/or sexual violence



### VIOLENCE CAUSES PHYSICAL SUFFERING

% who suffered one or more physical consequences due to...



This translates into **32,500 women\*** who were left with an injury or physical consequence, considering only the most severe cases they identified during their adult lifetime.

\*Approximate figures

Base: All women aged 18-74 who identify most serious incident of each form of violence - sexual harassment (281), stalking (83), current partner (85), previous partner (59) non-partner (107), any intimate partner/non partner violence (212)

The figures regarding awareness and consequences of violence have been updated- figures in earlier versions of this report should be disregarded

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# 1. How to read the data

## Introduction and main research goals

This OSCE-led survey captures the prevalence of violence against women in the Republic of North Macedonia based on a representative sample of the adult population of women (1,910 women aged 18–74, including 496 women who completed the survey in Albanian and 1,414 who completed it in Macedonian). The key demographics used for the research were women's age, work status, whether they lived in rural or urban areas and whether they were affected by conflict or not. The main goals of the study are to provide evidence of the prevalence of VAWG and its consequences for women's health and well-being for the purposes of policy-making. The main research questions were:

- What is the extent of violence experienced by women in North Macedonia?
- Which forms of violence do women experience in North Macedonia?
- Who are the perpetrators of violence against women?
- What are the consequences of violence for women's health and well-being?
- Do women report their experiences to the police or other authorities or organizations? If not, why not?
- Are there differences between women's experiences of violence depending on their age, education, professional status, income or whether they are from a minority group or a rural area?

The study also aimed to achieve a better understanding of the above in light of whether women had experienced an armed conflict based on the definitions used in this study (see more in Chapter 5).

The OSCE-led survey asked women to distinguish between incidents that have occurred since the age of 15 and in the 12 months before the survey interview. This helps women distinguish between recent and more distant events. It also provides data that is of direct policy relevance with respect to current practice, such as reporting and responses to victims.

Data has been **analysed by the language in which the survey was administered**, allowing for comparisons between Macedonian-speaking and Albanian-speaking women.

Women were also asked if they considered themselves to be a part of **an ethnic minority, an immigrant minority, a religious minority, a sexual minority, a minority in terms of disability, a refugee or displaced person or a returnee in the place where they were living at the time of the survey**. Overall, 8% said they belonged to a local ethnic minority and 6% a religious minority (none identified as being part of one of the other groups).

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: North Macedonia

Thinking about where you live (in your city or village), do you consider yourself to be part of any of the following?	Total	In which language was the interview conducted?	
		Macedonia	Albanian
<b>N</b>	<b>1,910</b>	<b>1,414</b>	<b>496</b>
An ethnic minority	7.6%	10%	1%
A religious minority	5.7%	4%	11%
None	81.5%	83%	77%
Don't know	4.4%	3%	8%
Refused to say	1.7%	1%	3%

As can be seen in the table, women do not necessarily identify as belonging to an ethnic or religious minority based on the language that the interview was conducted in.

### Comparability with EU data and with the area covered by the OSCE-led survey

This research is based on the methodology used by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) for its 2012 survey on violence against women in 28 European Union member states.<sup>5</sup> This OSCE-led survey is therefore comparable to the FRA's survey. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) uses the FRA's data in its current work and plans to use the findings of this study in the future. Finally, the OSCE study includes selected Eurobarometer questions on attitudes towards VAW.

### Reluctance to share

In order to better understand the prevalence of VAW, context is very important. The OSCE added to the survey several questions on norms, attitudes and behaviour of women and their families and friends (including men) in relation to violence and experiences of reporting abuse. In comparing the OSCE's data with the EU's data on gender attitudes and norms (Eurobarometer No. 449),<sup>6</sup> this study suggests that where more women feel that domestic violence is a private issue, there is a tendency that fewer women report experiences of violence to the police and other organizations than in countries where there is a longer tradition of raising awareness of violence against women. The qualitative research confirms that the taboo and shame linked to sexual violence is particularly prevalent.

### Prior research

The first national survey on domestic violence in North Macedonia was conducted in 2012, within the framework of a programme called "Strengthening National Capacities to Prevent Domestic Violence".<sup>7</sup> The survey was conducted with a sample of 2,100 men and women aged 15 and older. The focus of the survey was not gender-based violence or violence against women but domestic violence against women, men and children (adolescents 15–18 years of age were included).

According to the survey findings, 39% of women and 36% of men have experienced domestic violence. The prevalence of the different forms of domestic violence were consistently higher among women, while the majority of the perpetrators were found to be men. Younger women and men were particularly exposed to violence, and the prevalence among children (15–18 years old) was higher than for all other age groups.

The prevalence was higher among women with less education and among those living in rural areas. More than three-quarters of incidents of violence were not reported to any public

<sup>5</sup> Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Main results (Vienna: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2015), accessed 22 March 2019, <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>.

<sup>6</sup> "Special Eurobarometer 449: Gender-based Violence", European Commission, Directorate-General on Justice and Consumers, November 2016, accessed 22 March 2019, [https://data.europa.eu/euodp/data/dataset/S2115\\_85\\_3\\_449\\_ENG](https://data.europa.eu/euodp/data/dataset/S2115_85_3_449_ENG).

<sup>7</sup> Ljubinka Popovska, Vlado Rikalovski and Elizabeth Villagómez, Report on the National Survey of Domestic Violence (Skopje: MagnaSken, 2012), accessed 4 April 2019, [https://www.academia.edu/6318311/REPORT\\_ON\\_THE\\_NATIONAL\\_SURVEY\\_OF\\_DOMESTIC\\_VIOLENCE](https://www.academia.edu/6318311/REPORT_ON_THE_NATIONAL_SURVEY_OF_DOMESTIC_VIOLENCE).



services. When reported, it was mainly the police, social work centres and health centres that were informed, but satisfaction with the quality of the response from these institutions was rather low.

North Macedonia participated in the regional survey on Roma conducted by UNDP and the World Bank in 2017 in the Western Balkans. The survey findings revealed the particularly vulnerable position of Roma women and high prevalence of early marriages (every third Roma woman aged 20–49 was married before age of 18) which undermines the wellbeing of Roma girls.<sup>8</sup>

### A guide to interpreting survey data

Where the percentages provided do not add up to, or exceed 100, this may be due to rounding, the exclusion of “don’t know” responses or the fact that respondents were able to provide multiple answers to certain questions.

### Privacy and anonymity

Interviews were conducted face-to-face by trained and experienced female interviewers. Interviews were conducted by using a tablet and in private on the basis of the principles of informed consent. The women interviewed were informed that all the data collected would be confidential and anonymized.

### Forms of violence covered

The findings presented in this report are based on a set of questions asked in the OSCE survey concerning violence against women perpetrated by a non-partner or an intimate partner, as well as instances of sexual harassment, stalking, childhood violence and the impact of conflict on gender-based violence. The questionnaire was based on the definitions established in the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention).

To measure the (reported) prevalence of each type of violence, women were asked if they had experienced a range of different forms of violence in various reference periods as detailed in Chapters 3 and 4 of this report.

- Regarding **physical** and **sexual violence**, a list of questions that were asked in the research can be found on page 25 of Chapter 4.
- Regarding **psychological violence**, a list of questions that were asked in the research can be found on page 33 of Chapter 4.
- In terms of **sexual harassment**, women in the survey were asked the questions listed on page 36 of Chapter 4.
- For **stalking**, women in the survey were asked the questions listed on page 35 of Chapter 4.

**In this research, childhood violence** refers to violence before the age of 15. A list of questions that were asked about experiences of childhood violence can be found on page 45 of Chapter 4. The questions, methodology and the age of the respondents in the OSCE-led survey differs from the Adverse Childhood Experiences surveys<sup>9</sup> as well as from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys<sup>10</sup>, and the prevalence of childhood violence found in those surveys is not comparable.

**Regarding the chapter on conflict and gender-based violence** (Chapter 5), **armed conflict** was defined for the purposes of this research as armed fighting between two or more organized groups, attacks on communities or general insecurity caused by conflict, while women considered conflict-affected are those who have lived in a situation where there was an active armed conflict for a period of at least one week and who answered “yes” to at least one of the questions listed on page 49 of Chapter 5.

<sup>8</sup> “Regional Roma Survey 2017: Country Fact Sheets”, UNDP in Europe and Central Asia, 9 April 2018, accessed 4 April 2019, <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/library/roma/regional-roma-survey-2017-country-fact-sheets.html>.

<sup>9</sup> World Health Organization, Adverse Childhood Experiences International Questionnaire (ACE-IQ) accessed 26 March 2019, [https://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/activities/adverse\\_childhood\\_experiences/en/](https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/activities/adverse_childhood_experiences/en/)

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) accessed 26 March, [https://www.unicef.org/statistics/index\\_24302.html](https://www.unicef.org/statistics/index_24302.html)

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: North Macedonia

**Partners** include individuals to whom the respondents were married, with whom they were cohabiting or with whom they were involved in a relationship without cohabiting. Non-partners include all perpetrators other than women's current or previous partners.

The **most serious incident** is defined as the incident that had the biggest impact on the surveyed women, either physically or psychologically.

### **An overview of the qualitative research**

Fifteen key experts working in North Macedonia shared their views on the current state of how governmental institutions and NGOs are working to prevent VAWG, what support is available to women who have experienced VAWG and what improvements they recommend. These experts included representatives of international organizations and of governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Nine focus group discussions were conducted with women from different age groups, women living in urban and rural parts of North Macedonia, women from different minority groups (Albanian and Roma) and 24 women who have experienced conflict. The aims of these discussions were:

- to understand societal attitudes towards women generally and to understand VAWG and the perpetrators of such violence;
- to explore how attitudes towards VAWG have changed over time, including in periods of conflict;
- to explore the degree to which women are aware of existing support measures, their views on those measures and any barriers that might prevent them from accessing support; and
- to identify how prevention and support could be improved.

Four in-depth interviews were conducted with survivors of violence, including women with a disability. The aims of these interviews were:

- To explore the forms of violence that women have experienced throughout their lifetime and the impact of conflict;
- To identify barriers to disclosing experiences and to seeking support, and to explore reasons why some women choose to disclose their experiences and others do not;
- To understand the support received, to identify gaps in service provision and to identify the unmet needs of women from specific minority groups (e.g., women from an ethnic minority or with a disability); and
- For women who have gained access to support (formal or informal), to understand how they were able to access such support and the impact this had on them.

## 2. Legal, institutional and policy context

This chapter briefly reviews key national legislation related to violence against women<sup>11</sup>, prevention and protection of women against violence, data collection and the impact of conflict on women. It draws on the views of the 15 key experts who were interviewed and a literature review, including the 2018 Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).<sup>12</sup>

### Introduction

Violence against women impacts the lives of millions of women and girls and hampers progress towards comprehensive security for all. The OSCE, as the world's largest regional security organization, recognizes that VAWG not only affects women's personal safety and security, but it also prevents them from participating in society or from using their skills and knowledge to their full potential.

The OSCE-led survey focused on gender-based violence against women perpetrated by their partners, family members, friends, acquaintances and colleagues, as well as unknown perpetrators.

Violence against women is a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women, and a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women.<sup>13</sup> As gender inequality lies at the root of gender-based violence, it is important to take into account the broader context of women's status in the OSCE region in order to assess their safety and well-being.

In North Macedonia, like in many other countries in the region and around the world, these structural inequalities are visible in different areas: political and economic participation; access to assets, income and services; participation in the economy; and a decent standard of living and quality of life.

Women are underrepresented in positions of political power, and they do not have an influence equal to that of men on the policies, laws and reforms that shape socio-economic development. Due to the legal quota system, women represent around one-third of the national parliament (36%), but their participation in executive power is still low, with only four women among 25 ministers (16%). Women are underrepresented in all government bodies, and only 7% of municipalities are governed by women.<sup>14</sup>

11 Trafficking in human beings and, more specifically, trafficking in women and girls for purposes of sexual exploitation is a form of gender-based violence against women. It is a serious human rights issue and a security issue. This study did not include questions on this type of violence. As researching trafficking in human beings includes a very high risk for its victims, and a household survey is not an appropriate research method. The FRA survey on which the OSCE led survey is based did not investigate trafficking in women and girls either.

12 "Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", United Nations Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 22 October–9 November 2018, accessed 22 March 2019, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/MKD/CO/6&Lang=En](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/MKD/CO/6&Lang=En).

13 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1994.

14 "Information submitted for consideration to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in its adoption of a list of issues regarding the Sixth Periodical Report of the Republic of Macedonia under the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 71 Pre-Sessional Working Group, 12-16 March, 2018", Reactor – Research in Action, January 2018, accessed 22 March 2019, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/MKD/INT\\_CEDAW\\_NGO\\_MKD\\_30045\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/MKD/INT_CEDAW_NGO_MKD_30045_E.pdf).

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: North Macedonia

Women do not participate in the economy on an equal basis with men. They are underrepresented in the labour market and have less favourable terms of employment than men. The activity rate<sup>15</sup> of working-age women (15–64) is much lower than that of men (51.9% versus 79%), as is the employment rate (41.2% compared to 62.3%).<sup>16</sup> Women are paid less than men for jobs of equal value. A study on the gender wage gap shows that women earn 18% less than men with the same labour market characteristics (qualifications, working experience, occupation, etc.), meaning that women would need to work 65 extra days per year to get equal pay.<sup>17</sup>

While women participate less in paid work, they conduct a disproportionate amount of household and family care duties. Married women with dependent children up to 6 years of age spend on average 4.2 hours more than men with the same marital and parental status on domestic activities and have more than one hour less free time per day.<sup>18</sup>

Violence against women committed by partners, family members, friends, colleagues or unknown perpetrators can only be fully understood within this context, as instruments available to eliminate it are limited or reinforced by actions in other areas in which women are not equal.

### 2.1: National legislative framework and implementation

North Macedonia declared its independence from the former Yugoslavia in 1991. Since then, it has ratified or inherited a number of international commitments on gender equality, including the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1980) and its Optional Protocol. This has been reinforced by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), which committed participating countries to take steps to achieve gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals. North Macedonia recently ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), which entered into force in July 2018.<sup>19</sup>

The country's Constitution guarantees equality and forbids discrimination on any basis, including sex-based discrimination and violence against women.<sup>20</sup> Its national legislation covers gender equality, domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual and physical assault, marital rape and mandatory reporting, but not sex-disaggregated data collection.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The activity rate indicates the participation of women in the labour force, i.e., the share of women who are employed or looking for employment in the total population of working-age women (15–64 years of age).

<sup>16</sup> "Labour Force Survey", Database - Eurostat, 2018, accessed 22 March 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/data/database>.

<sup>17</sup> Sonja Avlijaš et al., Gender Pay Gap in the Western Balkan Countries: Evidence From Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia (Belgrade, Foundation for the Advancement of Economics, 2013), pp. 11–12, accessed 22 March 2019, <https://www.fren.org.rs/sites/default/files/Gender%20pay%20gap%20in%20the%20Western%20balkan%20countries.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Time Use Survey, 2009 (Skopje: Republic of Macedonia State Statistical Office, 2011), p. 27, accessed 22 March 2019, <http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/2.4.11.01.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> "Chart of Signatures and Ratifications of Treaty 210: Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence", Council of Europe Treaty Office, status as of 22 March 2019, accessed 22 March 2019, [https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210/signatures?p\\_auth=DR7St6oc](https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/210/signatures?p_auth=DR7St6oc).

<sup>20</sup> Article 9 of the Constitution states that: "Citizens of the Republic of Macedonia are equal in their freedoms and rights, regardless of sex, race, colour of skin, national and social origin, political and religious beliefs, property and social status. All citizens are equal before the Constitution and law." See "Equality and Non-Discrimination", Global Gender Equality Constitutional Database, accessed 22 March 2019, [http://constitutions.unwomen.org/en/search?keywords=Macedonia, the former Yugoslav Republic of](http://constitutions.unwomen.org/en/search?keywords=Macedonia,the%20former%20Yugoslav%20Republic%20of).

<sup>21</sup> Sex-disaggregated data involves general statistics and gender-based macroeconomics but not violence against women as such. Key experts interviewed for this report said that a limited body of data is being collected by the police and the relevant institutions, but this not publicly available.

North Macedonia's criminal law addresses domestic violence and breaches of human rights generally, with several criminal acts considered aggravated if they are committed within a close personal relationship. Under the 2014 Law on the Prevention of, and Protection against, Domestic Violence, violence against women is regulated as a form of domestic violence. Rape is illegal, with penalties ranging from one to 15 years' imprisonment. However, force or threat of force is required to prove rape, as opposed to lack of consent. Rape within marriage is illegal but is prosecuted only on the basis of a private complaint.<sup>22</sup> The 2010 Law on the Prevention of, and Protection against, Discrimination includes sexual harassment as a prohibited form of discrimination.<sup>23</sup>

The CEDAW Committee's 2018 report welcomed the progress achieved in the country, including the above legislation and the ratification of international and regional instruments. However, it set out wide-ranging recommendations related to discrimination and violence against women (including the prevalence of arranged and early marriage within Roma and Albanian communities).<sup>24</sup>

In relation to violence against women specifically, it urged the government, in line with the requirements of the Convention, to enact legislation to address all forms of violence against women, including marital rape. It recommended that the country's family law and other relevant legislation be amended to abolish mediation and reconciliation in cases of gender-based violence against women and that the Criminal Code be amended to ensure that the definition of rape is based on lack of consent. The Committee also recommended that the state ensure that victims have access to free legal aid and shelters.

These conclusions were supported by key experts interviewed for this report, who also pointed to inadequacies in legislation. The 2014 Law on the Prevention of, and Protection against, Domestic Violence does not specifically address violence against women and, notwithstanding the 2010 Law on the Prevention of, and Protection against, Discrimination, the U.S. State Department 2013 country report on North Macedonia stated that: "Sexual harassment of women in the workplace remains a problem, and victims generally do not bring cases forward due to fear of publicity and possible loss of employment."<sup>25</sup> During the validation round table for this study in Skopje<sup>26</sup>, stakeholders said a new law on gender-based violence was being drafted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and that changes to the Criminal Code were also planned.

This remains the case, as the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights reported to the CEDAW Committee in 2018: "Domestic violence is the only form of gender-based violence which is regulated. The [2014 law] is not gender sensitive ... and does not recognise girls and women as a particularly vulnerable group to gender-based violence."<sup>27</sup>

22 Excerpts from primary legislation and North Macedonia's Criminal Code (1996, as amended 2004) can be found in English on the OSCE's Legislationline website at: <http://www.legislationline.org/documents/action/popup/id/5637>. Rape is defined in Article 186 of the Criminal Code.

23 Article 7 of the Law on the Prevention of, and Protection against, Discrimination defines sexual harassment as "[unwanted behaviour of [a sexual nature that is expressed physical, verbally] or in any other way, and is aimed [at violating the] dignity [of the victim], especially in [the] case of creating hostile, threatening, derogatory and humiliating [surroundings]".

24 "Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"

25 "Macedonia 2013 Human Rights Report", U.S. Department of State, 27 February 2014, accessed 22 March 2019, <https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2013/eur/220304.htm>.

26 The validation roundtable took place on 4 December 2018 in Skopje and was attended by 25 stakeholders from governmental institutions, civil society and international organizations.

27 "Republic of Macedonia: Submission to United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in its adoption of a list of issues regarding the Sixth Periodical Report of the Republic of Macedonia under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women", Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, 29 January 2018, accessed 22 March 2019, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/MKD/INT\\_CEDAW\\_NGO\\_MKD\\_30018\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/MKD/INT_CEDAW_NGO_MKD_30018_E.pdf).

### 2.2: Institutional mechanisms and co-operation

A number of strategies and institutions that address human rights protection and the prevention of discrimination have been put in place, including the Gender Equality Strategy (2013–2020), the Department for Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the parliamentary Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, the Commission for Protection from Discrimination and the Office of the Ombudsperson, which intends to include gender-based violence as a separate topic of expertise.

Since the demise of the National Co-ordination Body for Domestic Violence in 2011, however, the Ministry of Interior is the only national state body mentioned in official UN sources as an institutional mechanism that deals with violence against women. Under the 2014 Law on the Prevention of, and Protection from, Domestic Violence, four protocols were introduced, including a multisectoral protocol that requires that various institutions work together.<sup>28</sup> It also envisages the formation of a national co-ordinating centre against domestic violence with a five-year mandate to include representatives from relevant ministries, national politicians, the judiciary, the ombudsperson and civil society organizations. This centre has been created but it was not yet functioning at the time of writing. Consequently, no report has been submitted regarding the functionality of the law, nor are there any directions that could be provided on improving the co-operation and co-ordination between the above-mentioned institutions and civil society organizations.<sup>29</sup> Following the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, the government adopted the National Action Plan (NAP) for Implementation of the Istanbul Convention (2018–2023) in October 2018. The first NAP activity that the government plans to implement is the drafting of a new law on gender-based violence in order to align the legislation with the Istanbul Convention. That is to be followed by the establishment of new counselling centres for perpetrators and the development of training modules for professionals who work with victims of violence.<sup>30</sup> The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy informed the authors during the validation round table that they had started working with the EIGE on its Gender Equality Index.<sup>31</sup>

28 “Pravilnitsi Od Zakonot Za Sotsijalna Zashtita”, Ministry for Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of North Macedonia, accessed 22 March 2019, <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/pravilnici.nspix>.

29 Zorica Saltirovska and Sunchica Dimitrijoska, “Legal and Institutional Functionality in the Protection of Women – Victims of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Macedonia – Present Situation and Future Perspectives”, *European Journal of Social Sciences Education and Research* 4, No. 4 (May–June 2017): 131–139, accessed 22 March 2019, [http://journals.euser.org/files/articles/ejser\\_may\\_august\\_17\\_nr\\_2/Zorica.pdf](http://journals.euser.org/files/articles/ejser_may_august_17_nr_2/Zorica.pdf).

30 “Presentation of the Sixth Periodic Report of the Republic of Macedonia on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women”, Government of the Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, 1 November 2018, accessed 22 March 2019, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/MKD/INT\\_CEDAW\\_STA\\_MKD\\_32920\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/MKD/INT_CEDAW_STA_MKD_32920_E.pdf).

31 European Institute for Gender Equality, accessed 26 March 2019, <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/about>

### 2.3: Availability of administrative and other data

Administrative data, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, disability, geographical location and socio-economic background, is necessary for an accurate assessment of the situation of women, gender inequalities and the extent and nature of violence against women. Without data, it is not possible to take evidence-based corrective action.

There appears to be no mandatory collection of data on violence against women in the country. The only national sources of data are the judiciary and the police, but experts advise that this data is no longer publicly available.<sup>32</sup>

The Office of Ombudsperson is currently undertaking research into the occurrence of domestic violence and plans to contact government bodies, social work centres, the Ministry of Interior and the courts in order to gain access to their statistics. The ombudsperson has also expressed willingness to co-operate with NGOs and to share the resulting data.

Data was provided for the 2018 CEDAW report, and there is a large but fragmented body of domestic NGO reports, including by HERA (which primarily deals with health and sexually transmitted diseases), EHO Stip and its partner organizations (which analysed survivors of domestic violence in Stip and Strumica), and a number of shelters and counselling centres. Other sources of data include Human Rights Watch (which provides allegations of violence against women by police officers in refugee shelters), the *Revija za kazneno pravo i kriminologija* (*Journal for Criminal Law and Criminology*)<sup>33</sup> and some local authorities.

The 2018 CEDAW Committee was concerned about the absence of reliable information on violence against women and urged the government to “systematically collect data, disaggregated by relevant factors, on cases of gender-based violence and discrimination against women brought before the courts and on the number of temporary protection orders”.

Key experts echoed these concerns, especially about the fact that it appears that no data is collected on conviction rates for violence against women, either because it is not recognized as a criminal offence or because of the data collection method used by the courts.<sup>34</sup> This prevents the authorities and the general public from actually recognizing violence against women, measuring it and tackling it.<sup>35</sup>

32 Saltirovska and Dimitrijoska. “Legal and Institutional Functionality in the Protection of Women – Victims of Domestic Violence in the Republic of Macedonia – Present Situation and Future Perspectives”, *European Journal of Social Sciences Education and Research* 4, No. 4 (May–June 2017): 131–139, accessed 22 March 2019, [http://journals.euser.org/files/articles/ejser\\_may\\_august\\_17\\_nr\\_2/Zorica.pdf](http://journals.euser.org/files/articles/ejser_may_august_17_nr_2/Zorica.pdf).

33 The Macedonian Journal for Criminal Law and Criminology is published by the Association for Criminal Law and Criminology. See <http://journal.maclc.mk/en/revija/> or <http://journal.maclc.mk/en/>.

34 See Yordanka Gancheva, *The Costs of Domestic Violence Against Women in FYR Macedonia: A Costing Exercise for 2006* (Cape Town: Economic Policy Research Institute, 2008).

35 Some data is presented by the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy in North Macedonia’s “sixth periodic report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women”, (CEDAW/C/MKD/6), 5 May 2017, accessed 22 March 2019, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=3&DocTypeID=29](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=3&DocTypeID=29). Civil society information presented during this reporting cycle will also be valuable in this regard.

#### 2.4: Prevention, protection and support

Preventive activities can help raise awareness, develop understanding and effectively address violence. There are a number of broad preventive activities in the country:

##### **Development of the criminal justice system to hold perpetrators accountable**

- Developing the criminal justice system so that perpetrators are held accountable for the offences they commit, discussed above.
- Providing adequate social, medical, psychological and legal assistance to survivors of violence against women. The current national strategy aims to provide a framework for gender-specific measures oriented towards prevention and protection of women, simultaneously offering a wide range of measures and activities that encompass all other survivors as well.

Preventive activities are mainly run by civil society. The experts interviewed for this report suggested, however, that they are often seriously hindered by cultural barriers, lack of recognition of violence against women, poorly maintained mechanisms and protocols, inadequate legal enforcement and lack of political will.

There is no central institution that conducts training on violence against women. Official and NGO reports refer to training for justice practitioners, law enforcement officers and other professional staff, but no reference could be found to the implementation of an ongoing strategy or to the establishment of a national co-ordinating body. While some of the interviewed experts acknowledged that training had had some success in raising awareness, they were concerned about a lack of systematic evaluation and frequent political interference. Some of the experts also referred to a lack of motivation among professionals to learn about this topic. In their view many attended the training because it was compulsory, not because they wanted to.

Victims of violence against women, or those at risk of violence, need access to protection and basic services. Support services include seven limited-capacity government shelters; an NGO-operated shelter for women at risk; a national NGO-operated hotline (in Macedonian and Albanian); two crisis centres for temporary shelter (from 24 to 48 hours) for victims of domestic violence; a family and counselling centre for victims; and a number of organizations offering free legal aid.

In 2018, the state established three sexual violence referral centres, which are all accessible to women with disabilities.



In published reports, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights was highly critical of protection arrangements:

- The state provides shelter only for victims of domestic violence, and less than 5% of female victims who reported violence were accommodated, leaving large numbers at home—often with the perpetrators. There is a geographical imbalance in the location of these services.
- Three organizations provide free, national SOS helplines, though none of the helplines offer service in all of the languages spoken in the communities where they operate. The services are not disability-sensitive, as victims with sensory disabilities cannot receive information in sign language or Braille.
- The process of obtaining protection orders is bureaucratic and demeaning: “Discrimination against women based on gender stereotypes, stigma, patriarchal norms and gender-based violence impedes and/or hinders women’s access to justice on an equal basis as men.”<sup>36</sup>

### 2.5: Consequences of conflicts for women

The country seceded non-violently from the former Yugoslavia. However, the 2001 insurgency between the ethnic-Albanian National Liberation Army (NLA) militant group and the country’s security forces affected the north and west of the country and ended with the Ohrid Framework Agreement. The country was also affected by refugees from the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo in the 1990s.

There is no official publicly available data on conflict-related violence against women in 2001. The experts interviewed for this report suggested that a lot of information might be missing due to the absence of national mechanisms and the lack of a systematic approach. The experts said they were aware of cases of conflict-related violence against women, but there have been no formal studies to confirm this. Human Rights Watch referred to alleged police-related violence and violence against women in refugee centres, claims that were denied by the Ministry of Interior.<sup>37</sup>

SEESAC reported in 2004 that, following the 2001 conflict, small arms and light weapons were wide available in the country. Although local people expressed their concerns about the availability of weapons, they seemed to be unwilling to give up their own weapons out of concern for their own safety.<sup>38</sup> There is no recent data on this issue, although SEESAC reported in 2016 that there is a particularly high proportion of female victims of firearm offences in the country compared to elsewhere in South-eastern Europe.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Helsinki Committee for Human Rights.

<sup>37</sup> “As Though We Are Not Human Beings: Police Brutality against Migrants and Asylum Seekers in Macedonia”, Human Rights Watch, 17 January 2018, accessed 22 March 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2015/09/21/though-we-are-not-human-beings/police-brutality-against-migrants-and-asylum>.

<sup>38</sup> Suzette R. Grillo et al., *A Fragile Peace: Guns and Security in Post-conflict Macedonia* (Belgrade: South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, 2004), , accessed 22 March 2019, <http://www.seesac.org/f/docs/SALW-Surveys/A-Fragile-Peace--Guns-and-Security-in-post-conflict-Macedonia-.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> Dragan Božanić, *Gender and SALW in South East Europe: Main Concerns and Policy Response* (Belgrade: South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, 2016), accessed 22 March 2019, [http://www.seesac.org/f/docs/Armed-Violence/Gender\\_and\\_SALW\\_publication\\_eng-web.pdf](http://www.seesac.org/f/docs/Armed-Violence/Gender_and_SALW_publication_eng-web.pdf).

37%

Approximately two in five women aged 18–74 believe that their friends would generally agree that a good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees.

48%

Almost half of women aged 18–74 agree that “domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family”.

19%

Nearly one in five women aged 18–74 believe their friends would agree that it is a woman’s obligation to have sex with her husband even if she does not feel like it. This opinion is more widespread among older women.

60%

Three in five women aged 18–74 think that, in general, violence against women by partners, acquaintances or strangers is very or fairly common in the country.

## 3. Attitudes towards gender roles and violence against women

The generational differences uncovered by the research suggest that gender roles in the country are changing, as are attitudes among younger generations concerning the subservience of women to men. Such shifts are slow, however, and there remains an important minority of women who retain a traditional perspective on the role of women in society.

Women who took part in the qualitative research discussed women's responsibilities in two separate spheres: work and family life, as well as the balance between the two. Traditionally, a woman's role has been focused on the family, with her main responsibilities being caring for her children, her partner and her home.

**“Women nowadays are in a better position than in the past, because they can make their own decisions and are more independent in their thinking and behaviour.”**

**Female, aged 18–34, ethnic Albanian, rural**

While the extension of women's roles to include paid work was generally seen as a good thing, the women who took part in the qualitative research said that, in some ways, women's responsibilities had simply doubled. They said that, while women have taken on increasingly more responsibility for providing financially for their family, their partners have not met them halfway by taking on more work at home. This means that, overall, women feel they were being asked to do too much. This issue was particularly important to older women, who said they had seen this develop over time and were sceptical about the benefit of this change for women.

**“Being employed, being a housewife and wanting to take care of the children, the husband is the one who, when he comes home, will lie down, go for a walk, go out, and the woman has to do everything?”**

**Female, aged 55–74, ethnic Macedonian, urban**

While the women who took part in the qualitative research said they had too many responsibilities at work and at home, they also lamented their lack of involvement in anything outside of these two spheres, particularly in leisure and social activities. The two main reasons for this were lack of time because of their other responsibilities and lack of freedom because of gender norms in the country.

The women said that even if they did have time to spend outside of home and work, they would be judged harshly for actually doing anything else because society expects them to be completely fulfilled by their family. Further to this, some women, particularly older women, said that while things had changed enough to allow women to work alongside men, they had not changed enough to allow them to socialize with male friends or colleagues. They described always feeling watched by others who would be quick to label them if they stepped outside the established norms

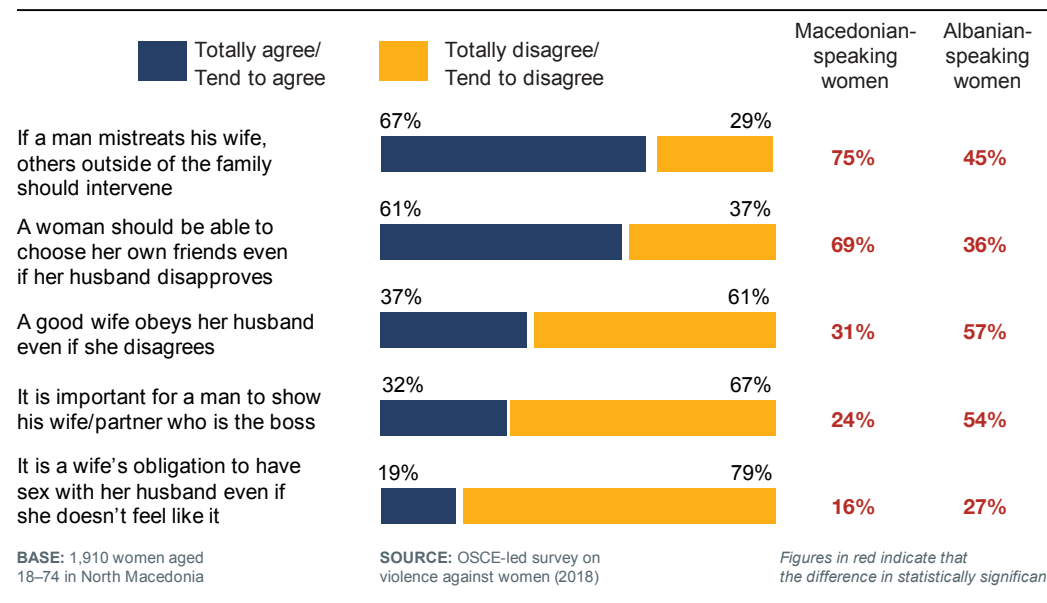
**“If you go to a cafe on your own, let’s say people could forgive you for that ... but if you decide to hang out with solely male company, then you will immediately be labelled ... This is awful ...”**

**Female, aged 18–34, ethnic Macedonian, rural**

The quantitative data also points to the fact that there is still a significant minority of women who hold traditional opinions on the role of women. For example, nearly two in five (37%) believe their friends would agree that a good wife should obey her husband even if she disagrees, almost a third (32%) say that their friends would agree that it is important for a man to show his wife or partner who the boss is, and nearly one in five (19%) say that their friends would agree that it is a wife’s woman’s obligation to have sex with her husband even if she does not feel like it. More patriarchal views were expressed among Albanian-speaking women, nearly six in ten of whom (57%) think their friends would agree that a good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees, and nearly the same proportion (54%) think their friends would agree that it is important for a man to show his wife who the boss is. Nearly three in ten (27%) believe that their friends would agree that it is a wife’s obligation to have sex with her husband even if she does not feel like it.

**Figure 3.1: Perceptions of social norms and acceptable behaviours**

People have different ideas about families and what is acceptable behaviour for men and women in the home. Please tell me whether your friends would general agree or disagree with the following statements.



### 3. Attitudes towards gender roles and violence against women

As seen in the qualitative research, however, the quantitative data also points to shifting attitudes among younger generations. Aside from whether others should intervene when a man mistreats his wife, younger women believe their friends hold less traditional views than their older peers. For example, 28% of women aged 18–29 and 29% of those aged 30–39 say their friends would agree that a good wife should obey her husband; this increases to 45% of 50–59-year-olds and 48% of those over 60. Likewise, 12% of women under 40 say their friends would agree that it is a wife’s obligation to have sex with her husband, but this view is almost three times as prevalent among women over 60 (30%).

According to the survey results, the great majority of women do not feel that having sexual intercourse without the woman’s consent can be justified under any circumstance. Respondents were given a range of scenarios and asked if sexual intercourse without consent could be justified in any of them—such as sex within a marriage or partnership—if either the woman or assailant had been drinking or if the woman was wearing provocative clothing. More than six in ten strongly disagree that sexual intercourse is justified in any of the scenarios. Nevertheless, it is not a unanimous view. For example, more than one in five women (22%) believe that non-consensual sex in a marriage or among partners who live together could be justified, and one in six approve if the woman had been flirting beforehand or did not clearly say no or fight back.

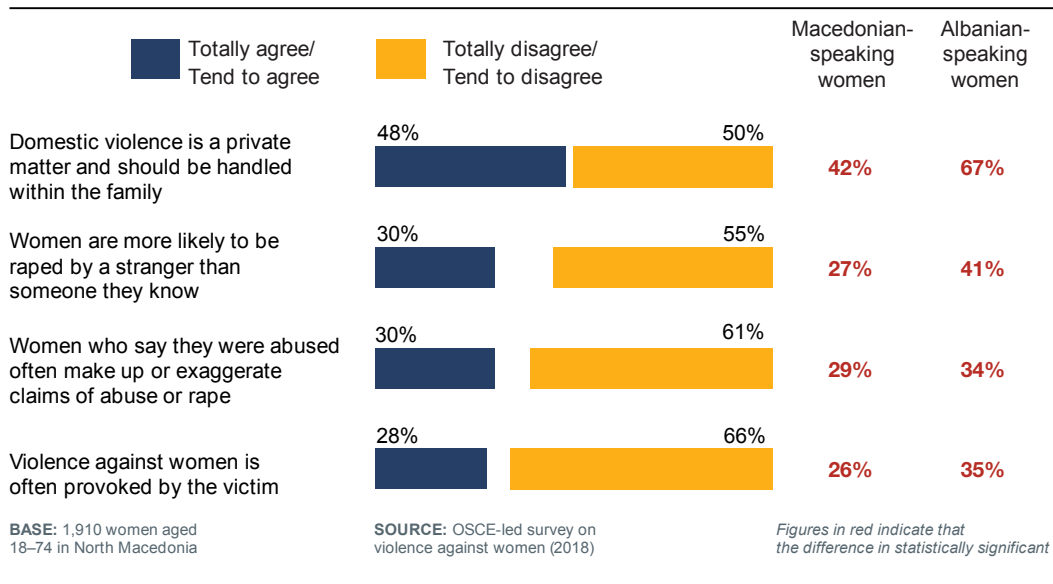
As with views on the role of women, older women are generally more likely to agree that non-consensual sex can be justified. Across the board, women with no formal education and those who identify as being part of an ethnic minority are also more likely to hold this view than on average.

While attitudes towards women who experience sexual violence are generally supportive, three in ten (30%) women believe that women who say they were abused often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape, and a similar proportion believe that violence against women is often provoked by the victim (28%). Women with tertiary education are less likely to hold these views, as are women who live in urban areas. By comparison, 19% of women in the EU (ranging from 7% in Sweden to 43% in Malta) think that women exaggerate claims of abuse or rape, and an average of 15% of women in the EU think that violence is often provoked by the victim, ranging from 6% in the Netherlands to 58% in Latvia, according to the European Commission’s Special Barometer 449 on gender-based violence.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> “Special Eurobarometer 449: Gender-based Violence”.

**Figure 3.2: Underlying attitudes to violence against women**

Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.



Nearly half of women (48%) think that domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family including 31% who totally agree that this should be the case. In comparison, across the EU, only 14% of women would agree that domestic violence is a private matter.<sup>41</sup> This ranges from 2% in Sweden to 31% in Romania, which suggests that where there is a longer tradition of raising awareness on gender equality, there is more openness to discussing domestic violence outside of the family.

**Nearly half of women surveyed think that domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family**

41 "Special Eurobarometer 449: Gender-based Violence".

### 3. Attitudes towards gender roles and violence against women

Women with no formal education are more likely to believe domestic violence is a private matter (66%), as are women living in rural areas (60%). Similarly, Albanian-speaking women are substantially more likely to hold this view, with 67% agreeing with this. In line with this, Albanian-speaking women are much more likely than average to think their friends would disagree that if a man mistreats his wife, others outside of the family should intervene (53% of Albanian-speaking women disagree versus 29% on average).

Women participating in the qualitative research said that violence against women in all forms is fairly common in the country, particularly intimate partner violence (IPV). The types of violence women identified included physical, psychological, emotional, economic/financial and sexual violence.

Psychological violence was considered to be the most common form of violence, and the women who took part in the qualitative research said that it takes place daily within intimate relationships but mostly goes undetected. In terms of psychological violence, a range of types of behaviour were discussed, including verbal aggression (such as insults), controlling behaviour, humiliation and threats to women themselves or their family members.

**“[Perpetrators of violence] mostly try to break your spirit, to disrupt your mental state.”**

**Female, aged 35–50, ethnic Albanian, urban**

Some types of physical and sexual violence were also viewed as common, including slapping or pressuring a partner into sex. More violent or forceful acts such as beating or rape were viewed as much less acceptable.

**“Having intercourse with your husband even though you don’t feel like it is somewhat sexual violence but it’s usually done for the sake of ‘keeping the peace and quiet in the house’.”**

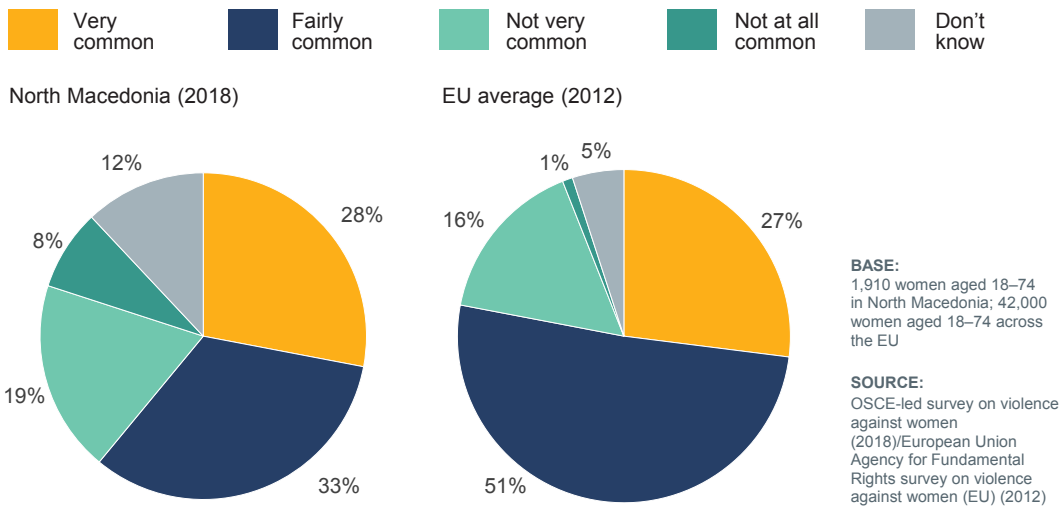
**Female, aged 35–50, ethnic Albanian, urban**

This is reflected in the survey findings: three in five women feel that violence against women (by partners or non-partners) is common in the country (60%, dropping to 42% among Albanian-speaking women). According to the FRA survey in 2012, this is less than the EU average of 78%<sup>42</sup> (Figure 3.3). Around one in six women personally know someone in their circle of family or friends (17%) or their neighbourhood (16%) who has been subjected to violence.

<sup>42</sup> “Survey on Violence against Women in EU (2012)”, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 17 January 2019, accessed 22 March 2019, <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-violence-against-women-survey>.

**Figure 3.3: Perceptions of the pervasiveness of violence against women**

How common do you think violence against women by partners, acquaintances or strangers is in North Macedonia?



In the qualitative research, women who had experienced violence said that some form of violence was present in almost every intimate partner relationship and that women hide this, as they do not want to break up their family. They spoke of their duty to endure violence, including controlling behaviour, physical violence and sexual violence, for the sake of their children, and they said that they did not think that their situation was unusual. In fact, they said it was fairly commonplace.

**“I mean friends. They endure it, but they are not ready to report it and ask for help. They always say, ‘Well, it will be good’. For the sake of the children, we always endure for the sake of the children. This is how we have imagined our life.”**

**Survivor of violence, ethnic Macedonian**

Roma women who took part in the qualitative research expressed the belief that intimate partner violence was particularly common in their community. They said that most forms of violence, including physical violence, was part of the everyday life of a Roma woman. A survivor of violence said that this has been a normal part of life for generations and that most women simply hid what happened to them, as they could not imagine things being any different.



### 3. Attitudes towards gender roles and violence against women

**“Women are mistreated. They just hide it, they don’t tell [anyone]. Mothers, grandmothers and daughters-in-law... what can I tell you, even the girls are mistreated. They just hide it.”**

**Survivor of violence, Roma**

While most women expressed the belief that violence against women has always been an issue in the country, some women said that it had gotten worse. This view, held mainly by older women, was that violence against women had become more of a problem since the break-up of Yugoslavia. They gave two reasons for this. The first was that they believed that men were affected more than women by privatization, which, they said, had left thousands of people jobless or redundant and had a negative impact on men’s self-esteem and their position within the family and society. This, they said, had made men more likely to perpetrate violence against their family and others as a way of maintaining a sense a power. The second reason was that they believed that institutions had become weaker since the break-up of Yugoslavia, which meant that the institutional response to violence was not as effective as it had been. This, they said, meant that men are now less fearful of the consequences of perpetrating violence.

**“The mid-1990s was when privatization had its biggest impact on both men and women. If both spouses remained jobless, the woman was more capable of finding her way around, while the husband was more picky, and they would refuse to do a job that they didn’t like. Thus, men would stay at home doing nothing. There was a big crisis at an emotional level that led to many problems ...”**

**Female, aged 55–74, ethnic Macedonian, urban**



7%

One in fourteen women aged 18–74 state that they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of a non-partner since the age of 15.



10%

One in ten women aged 18–74 who have ever had a partner say they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner since the age of 15.



44%

Psychological violence perpetrated by a partner has affected more than two in five women who have ever had a partner in their lifetime.



30%

Three in ten women aged 18–74 state that they have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15

## 4. Violence against women in North Macedonia

### 4.1: Physical and sexual intimate partner violence

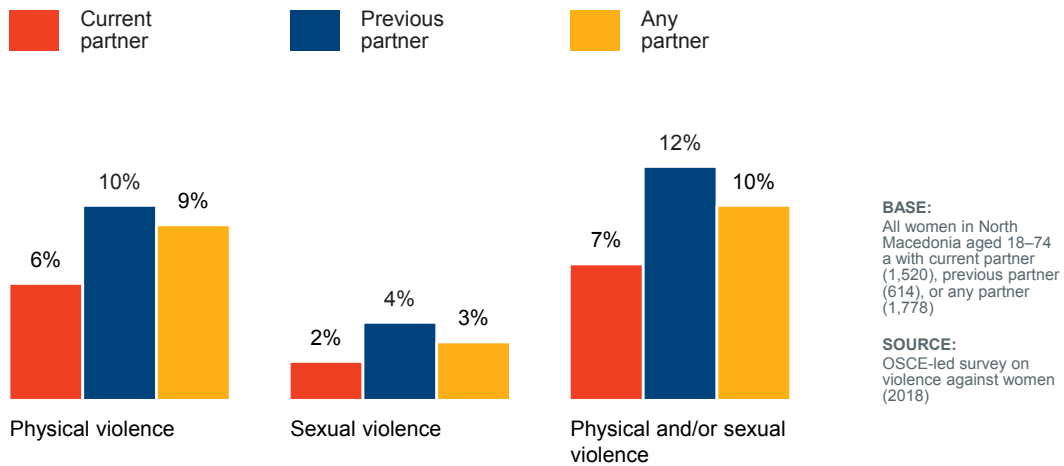
Nearly half (45%) of women in the country who have ever had a partner say they have experienced psychological, physical or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner. For the most part, this violence is psychological (indicated by 44% of all women, including 44% of Macedonian-speaking women and 43% of Albanian-speaking women), but about one in ten (9% overall, including 10% of Macedonian-speaking women and 5% of Albanian-speaking women) women who have ever had a partner say they have experienced physical violence<sup>43</sup> at the hands of a current or previous partner, while 3% (the same for both Macedonian-speaking and Albanian-speaking women) say they have experienced sexual violence.<sup>44</sup> Women are more likely to indicate experiences of violence within a previous relationship than in a current relationship.

Women finding it difficult (15%) or very difficult (21%) to get by on their current income are significantly more likely to say they have experienced intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 than overall (10%), as are those who are currently unemployed (14%). Women living in rural areas (7%) and those whose main employment activity is fulfilling domestic duties (5%) are less likely than on average to declare that they have experienced violence.

<sup>43</sup> With regard to **physical violence**, women in the survey were asked the following questions: Has someone/a current partner/previous partner ever 1) pushed you or shoved you? 2) slapped you? 3) thrown a hard object at you? 4) grabbed you or pulled your hair? 5) punched you or beaten you with a hard object or kicked you? 6) burned you? 7) tried to suffocate or strangle you? 8) cut or stabbed you or shot at you? 9) beat your head against something? In this report, the prevalence of physical violence is based on respondents who report having experienced at least one of these forms of violence on at least one occasion. The prevalence of physical violence is provided for current partners, previous partners, any intimate partner (either current or previous) and non-partners. The reference period for non-partner violence was since the age of 15/in the 12 months prior to the survey, and for partner violence it was whether this had ever happened during their relationship or in the 12 months prior to the survey.

<sup>44</sup> Concerning **sexual violence**, women were asked: Since you were 15 years old and in the past 12 months, how often has someone 1) forced you to have sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way? 2) Apart from this, how often has someone attempted to force you to have sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way? 3) Apart from this, how often has someone made you take part in any form of sexual activity when you did not want to or were unable to refuse? 4) Or have you consented to sexual activity because you were afraid of what might happen if you refused? The prevalence of sexual violence is based on respondents who reported having experienced at least one of these forms of violence on at least one occasion. The prevalence of sexual violence is provided for current partners, previous partners, any intimate partners (either current or previous) and non-partners. The reference periods are as above.

**Figure 4.1: Prevalence of intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence**



**Table 4.1: Prevalence of intimate partner physical and sexual violence, by language**

How often has something like this happened to you? Your current/previous partner has...

	Macedonian-speaking women % ever happened		Albanian-speaking women % ever happened	
<b>Physical violence</b>				
Current partner	<b>7</b>	(1,120)	<b>3</b>	(400)
Previous partner	<b>10</b>	(581)	<b>28</b>	(33*)
Any partner	<b>10</b>	(1,359)	<b>5</b>	(419)
<b>Sexual violence</b>				
Current partner	2	(1,120)	1	(400)
Previous partner	<b>4</b>	(581)	<b>19</b>	(33*)
Any partner	3	(1,359)	3	(419)
<b>Physical and sexual violence</b>				
Current partner	<b>8</b>	(1,120)	<b>4</b>	(400)
Previous partner	<b>11</b>	(581)	<b>36</b>	(33*)
Any partner	<b>11</b>	(1,359)	<b>5</b>	(419)

**BASE:** All women in North Macedonia aged 18–74 with a current partner, previous partner, or any partner, n in italics

**SOURCE:** OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

\*Caution: low base size

Figures in red indicate that the difference is statistically significant

### Differences in the indicated prevalence across countries

It is important to note that countries with longer traditions of gender-equality policies and awareness-raising campaigns (the Nordic countries and Western Europe) also have higher rates of women reporting experiences of violence.

According to the FRA survey across the EU, for example, the three countries where women were most likely to say they had experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of a partner or a non-partner since the age of 15 are Denmark (52%), Finland (47%) and Sweden (36%). The indicated prevalence is lowest in Croatia (21%), Austria (20%) and Poland (19%).

The indicated prevalence of intimate partner violence is lower than in the EU, where, on average, 20% of women say they have experienced physical violence (ranging from 11% in Austria, Croatia and Spain to 31% in Latvia) and 7% say they have experienced sexual violence (ranging from 3% in Croatia and Portugal to 11% in Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands).

Women who took part in the qualitative research expressed the belief that IPV was fairly common in the country but was unlikely to be discussed or reported by the women who experienced it. While the women who took part in the qualitative research said that they thought physical and sexual violence were viewed as less common and less acceptable than psychological violence within society, they said that some acts such as slapping or pressuring women into sex were regarded as unwelcome but fairly insignificant by the victims. Acts such as beatings and rape were seen as the least acceptable forms of IPV, but the women who took part in the research believed that even these types of violence were not unusual and would be likely to go unreported by the women who experienced them.

Roma women described physical violence as being fairly common in their communities. They said that a woman might be hit by her husband for causing him a minor annoyance such as overcooking dinner or not adding enough salt to his lunch. They expressed the belief that they are more likely to experience such violence than other women in the country, and they said that they do not believe that people either within or outside their community are concerned about these experiences.

**“With us, it is like ‘good morning’, ‘good afternoon’, he will curse you, kick you, you will get up, serve him everything, and that’s all. And nobody asks how you feel.”**

**Female, aged 20–40, Roma, urban**

Slapping or pushing or shoving are the forms of violence most often experienced at the hands of both current and previous partners (Table 4.2). This is comparable to the EU results, where, on average, these types of physical violence were the most prevalent.

## Ten per cent of women who have, or have ever had, an intimate partner say they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of a partner

**Table 4.2: Forms of intimate partner physical violence**

How often has your current/your previous partner done any of the following to you?

	Current partner % ever happened	Previous partner % ever happened
Slapped you?	5	7
Pushed you or shoved you?	3	7
Threw a hard object at you?	1	3
Grabbed you or pulled your hair?	1	4
Beat you with a fist or a hard object, or kicked you?	1	4
Burned you?	0	0
Tried to suffocate you or strangle you?	0	2
Cut or stabbed you, or shot at you?	0	1
Beat your head against something?	0	2

**BASE:** All women in North Macedonia aged 18–74 with a current partner (1,520) or previous partner (614)  
**SOURCE:** OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

#### 4. Violence against women in North Macedonia

Among women who currently have a partner, 2% indicate having experienced sexual violence, while the prevalence of sexual violence at the hands of a previous partner is 4%. The sexual violence experienced by the 3% of women who have ever had a partner took a number of forms (Table 4.3)

**Table 4.3: Prevalence of intimate partner sexual violence**

How often has your current/previous partner done any of the following to you?

	Current partner % ever happened	Previous partner % ever happened
Apart from this, attempted to force you into sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way?	1	4
Forced you into sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way?	1	3
Apart from this, made you take part in any form of sexual activity when you did not want to or you were unable to refuse?	1	2
Have you consented to sexual activity because you were afraid of what might happen if you refused?	1	3

BASE: All women in North Macedonia aged 18–74 with a current partner (1,520) or previous partner (614)  
SOURCE: OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

In the qualitative discussions, women also expressed the belief that sexual violence within relationships was common and widely accepted in society as normal behaviour. The women said that being forced or pressured into having sex with their partner was undesirable but that it was generally considered acceptable within society. They said that they would never consider reporting being forced to have sex with their partner because others would think that the idea of rape within marriage is absurd. Such attitudes may contribute to the low prevalence in the survey when compared with the EU average<sup>45</sup> across all types of violence.

**“They would laugh at you if you said that your husband raped you. ... Here, by default, you have to go to bed with your husband; whether you like it or not, you have to.”**

**Female, aged 35–54, ethnic Macedonian, urban**

Women who have experienced sexual IPV described situations where the violence was persistent over many years and used as a form of control by their partners. One woman described being pressured and sometimes forced into sex with her partner and not being allowed to use any form of contraception. As a result, she became pregnant 17 times during her marriage, resulting in two children and 15 terminations.

<sup>45</sup> “Survey on violence against women in EU (2012)”.

**“I got pregnant with him every year. I was not allowed to take [birth control] pills, I was not allowed to ... avoid pregnancy. I had 15 abortions and gave birth to two children— 17 in total, two every year.”**

**Survivor of violence, ethnic Macedonian**

### **Patterns in intimate partner violence<sup>46</sup>**

The data suggests that violence in current relationships tends to happen repeatedly, i.e., women who have experienced intimate partner violence are more likely to say that it has happened more than once than that it was an isolated incident and that it occurred over a long period of time.

Of those women who say they experienced their first incident of current partner physical and/or sexual violence five or more years before the survey, 21% experienced their most recent incident in the 12 months prior to the survey, and a further 12% said their most recent incident had taken place between one and four years earlier.

Nearly nine in ten women were living with their current partner at the time of their first incident of violence at the hands of a current partner (87%, compared to 82% in the EU), while 47% of previous partners were living with the woman concerned at the time of their first incident of violence (or threat of it), compared with 65% in the EU.

Among the respondents who were pregnant during their relationship with their partner and who experienced violence (or threats thereof) during the relationship, 16% of survivors of current partner violence say that physical or sexual violence took place during the pregnancy, compared with 20% across the EU. The equivalent for previous partner violence is 46% (compared with 42% across the EU), but given the very low base (23 respondents), this data should be treated with caution.

The survey asked women who had experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner to provide further details about the one incident they considered the most serious over their lifetime. Among those who had experienced current partner violence, being slapped or being pushed or shoved were most commonly involved in the most serious incident (mentioned by 42% and 20%, respectively). Being slapped (30%) and being pushed or shoved (23%) are also among the most common types of violence involved in the most serious incident of previous partner violence, but threats of physical violence are mentioned more often, by 31% of respondents (compared with 17% for current partner violence). The most serious incident of previous partner violence is also twice as likely to have involved the victim being grabbed or having their hair pulled when compared with the most serious incident of current partner violence (17% versus 9%).

<sup>46</sup> While the reporting rates/prevalence of physical and sexual violence discussed above do not include threats of such violence, other questions relating to when such violence happened and details on the most serious incident do include threats of violence.



#### 4. Violence against women in North Macedonia

**Table 4.4: Most serious incidents of intimate partner violence**

I would like you to think about the most serious incident by your current/previous partner. Which of the things on this card happened at that time? By “most serious”, we mean an incident that had the biggest impact on you.

	Current partner %	Previous partner %
Slapped you	42	30
Pushed you or shoved you	20	23
Threatened to hurt you physically	17	31
Grabbed you or pulled your hair	9	17
Threw a hard object at you	9	8
Beat you with a fist or a hard object, or kicked you	8	9
Forced you into sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way	5	7
You have consented to sexual activity because you were afraid of what might happen if you refused?	5	5
Tried to suffocate you or strangle you	4	6
Attempted to force you into sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way	3	6
Made you take part in any form of sexual activity when you did not want to or you were unable to refuse.	3	4
Beat your head against something	1	3
Threatened you with violent sexual acts (like rape, forced pregnancy, etc.) in a way that really frightened you?	0	4
Burned you	0	1
Cut or stabbed you, or shot at you	0	1

**BASE:** All women in North Macedonia aged 18–74 who have ever experienced violence from a current partner (116) or previous partner (76)

**SOURCE:** OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

### Physical and sexual violence in the 12 months prior to the survey

Three per cent of women state that they experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the 12 months prior to the survey (with no difference between Macedonian-speaking and Albanian-speaking women). The most prevalent form of current partner violence in the 12 months prior to the survey is being pushed or shoved, which 1% of women with a current partner say they experienced.

While slightly under half (47%) of the most serious incidents experienced at the hands of a current partner took place more than a year before the interview, more than one-third (38%) of the most serious incident identified took place in the 12 months prior to the survey.

### 4.2: Intimate partner psychological violence

The women who took part in the qualitative research said that psychological violence was the most common form of IPV in the country and that it was mostly ignored within society. The women expressed the belief that society perceived psychological violence as something that was not serious or harmful. However, they said that psychological violence committed by a partner was one of the most damaging forms of violence and that it can impact all parts of a woman's life. Psychological violence, they said, could make a woman fearful, disrupt her sleep, damage her self-esteem and prevent her from enjoying all other parts of her life.

Women described acts of psychological violence such as controlling behaviour (e.g., telling a woman what to wear and checking her phone), verbal abuse, humiliation and threats. Verbal abuse was seen as very common and part of daily life for most women. More controlling behaviour was seen as worse, but still fairly common, and something that women were expected to endure.

**“A colleague of mine has a very jealous husband. He does so many weird things to her ... she is constantly under pressure, he interrogates her about everything she does, checks her phone, even checks her ID entry card to see when she checks in and out from work, counting the time she needs to get home ... and she is still coping with that ...”**

**Female, aged 55–74, ethnic Macedonian, urban**

The women who took part in the qualitative research also discussed their concerns about how technology is being used by men to perpetrate psychological violence. Now, they say, a woman is not just pressured into sex by her partner, but she may also be recorded having sex and have this used against her.

**“With today's technology, recordings, videos of intercourse, whatever, [it can be used as] blackmail. That is disturbing.”**

**Female, aged 35–54, ethnic Macedonian, urban**

Women described psychological violence as a form of everyday torture used within relationships. They said that psychological violence was always present alongside every other type of violence experienced by women and that it had the greatest long-term impact on a woman's mental health.

**“Psychological violence is torture. If there is torture, and he uses physical violence, it is normal for her to be psychologically damaged.”**

**Female, aged 18–34, ethnic Albanian, rural**

Given the impact psychological violence is thought to have, it is concerning that the survey findings indicate that psychological violence is the most common form of intimate partner violence, with more than two in five women who have ever had a partner (44%) saying they have experienced it (44% among Macedonian-speaking women compared with 43% among Albanian-speaking women), which is similar to the EU average of 43%. Twelve per cent of women who have been in a relationship in North Macedonia say they experienced intimate partner psychological violence in the 12 months prior to the survey.<sup>47</sup>

## More than two in five women who have ever had a partner state that they have encountered psychological violence at the hands of their current or previous partner

The various forms of psychological violence asked about were categorized into four broad types as follows.<sup>48</sup>

**Economic violence**, which includes being prevented from making decisions about family finances and from shopping independently and being forbidden to work outside the home.

**Controlling behaviours**, which include situations where a woman's partner tries to keep her from seeing her friends, *restricts her use of social media sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.)*, tries to restrict contact with her birth family or relatives, insists on knowing where she is in a way that goes beyond general concern, gets angry if she speaks with another man, suspects that she has been unfaithful, *forbids the use of contraception or otherwise restricts decisions on family planning, prevents her from completing school or starting a new educational course, wants to decide what clothes she can wear or expects to be asked for permission so she can see a doctor*.

**Abusive behaviours**, which includes situations where a woman's partner forbids her to leave the house at all or *forbids her to leave the house without being accompanied by a relative*, takes away her car keys or locks her up, belittles or humiliates her in front of other people or in private, purposefully scares or intimidates her (e.g., by yelling or smashing things), makes her watch or look at pornographic material against her wishes, threatens to hurt or kill someone she cares about (other than her children), threatens to hurt her physically, threatens her with violent sexual acts (like rape, forced pregnancy, etc.) and *hurts or threatens to hurt her when visiting, picking up or bringing back her children (previous partner only)*.

**Blackmail a woman with her children or abusing her children**, which includes threatening to take her children away, threatening to hurt her children, hurting her children or making threats concerning the custody of her children (previous partner only).

<sup>47</sup> See Annex 3, SDG 5.2.1 for details on how the prevalence of psychological violence in the 12 months prior to the survey is calculated.

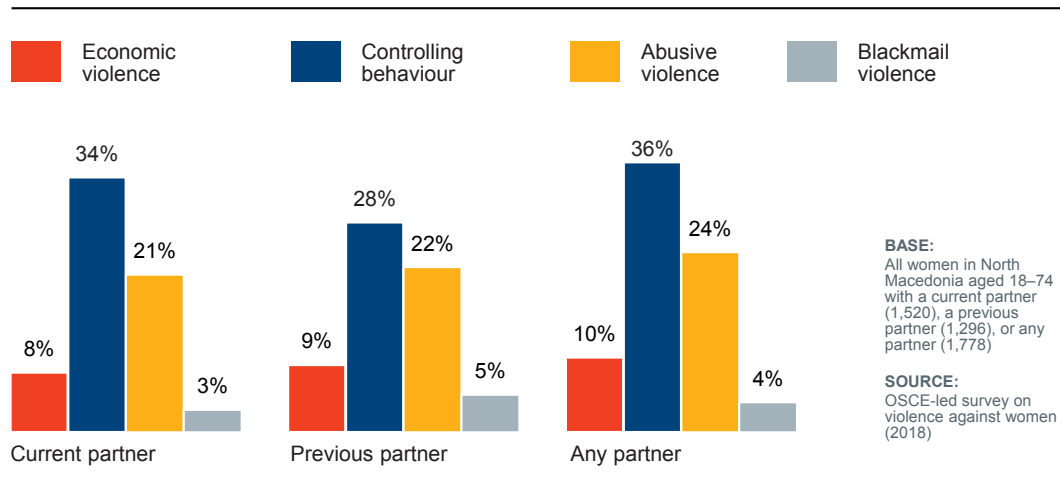
<sup>48</sup> The forms of psychological violence in italics were not asked about in the FRA survey.

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: North Macedonia

Women who are in a relationship were asked if any of these things had happened sometimes, often or all of the time or had never happened, while women who had been in previous relationships were asked if any of their previous partners had ever done any of these things to them.<sup>49</sup>

Overall, 36% of women who have ever had a partner have experienced controlling behaviours, with this form of violence being more prevalent in current relationships than it was in previous relationships. Around a quarter of women who have ever had a partner have experienced abusive behaviours (24%), and 10% have experienced economic violence. Among those women who have ever had a partner and who have children, 4% say they have been blackmailed with their children or their children have been abused by a partner.

**Figure 4.2: Prevalence of the different forms of intimate partner psychological violence**



There are no differences in the prevalence of each of these four types of psychological violence between Albanian-speaking and Macedonian-speaking women.

In terms of specific types of psychological violence, the most common forms reported as having been perpetrated by current partners are the woman's partner getting angry if she speaks to another man (19%), insisting on knowing where she is (16%), belittling her in private (14%), deciding how she should dress (10%) and trying to keep her from seeing her friends (10%).

These same types of psychological violence are also the most commonly experienced forms of psychological violence reported as having been perpetrated by previous partners, with the addition of becoming suspicious that they were unfaithful (19%), doing something on purpose to scare or intimidate them (12%) and belittling them in public (10%).

These results are in line with findings across the EU, where the three most prevalent forms of psychological violence are belittling in private, insisting on knowing where the woman is in a way that goes beyond general concern and getting angry if she speaks with another man or woman.

<sup>49</sup> In relation to being threatened with physical or sexual violence, women were asked how many times their current and/or previous partner had ever done this and how often they had done it in the 12 months prior to the survey.

### 4.3: Stalking

The prevalence of stalking is defined as the percentage of women who say they have experienced at least one of eight types of stalking behaviours.<sup>50</sup> Overall, 7% of women say they have experienced stalking since they were 15 years old (8% of Macedonian-speaking women and 4% of Albanian-speaking women), and 2% say they were stalked in the 12 months prior to the survey (the same for both groups). This is lower than the EU average of 18%, with results ranging from 8% in Romania to 33% in Sweden.

In North Macedonia, younger women (11%), students (17%), those in paid employment (10%), those with tertiary education (10%), those who live in urban areas (9%) and those who have had a previous partner (12%) are all more likely than on average to say they have been stalked.

The stalker is often unknown (53%), but previous partners or boyfriends are also commonly identified as perpetrators (30%) by those who have been stalked.

In over a quarter of the most serious incidents of stalking (28%), the stalking went on for a few days, but nearly half of the cases lasted for at least several months (48%). In 13% of cases, the stalking continued for more than 10 years.

The most commonly experienced form of stalking is receiving offensive, threatening or silent phone calls, which 4% of all women say they have experienced since the age of 15. This is followed by being deliberately followed; someone loitering or waiting around their workplace, school or home; and being sent offensive or threatening emails or text messages, each mentioned by 2% of respondents. These types of stalking are also identified most often as the most serious incidents. Six per cent of those who have been stalked say it is still going on.

The perpetrators of the most serious incidents are again most likely to be someone the women does not know (35%) or a previous partner or boyfriend (29%). For the most serious incident, perpetrators most commonly acted alone (69%), but one in five victims did not know how many people were involved.

In over seven in ten cases, the most serious experience of stalking made the woman feel annoyed (71%). Embarrassment (51%), anger (43%) and fear (39%) are also common emotional responses. Longer-term psychological consequences include difficulty in sleeping (affecting 25% of women in the most serious case), a feeling of vulnerability (14%) and depression (13%).

In relation to the most serious incident of stalking, 70% of women talked it over with friends or relatives; in the EU, 77% of women did the same. In several cases, women report having taken action: 48% confronted the perpetrator (43% in the EU), 21% closed their social networking accounts (7% in the EU), and 20% changed their telephone number or email address (23% in the EU). Fewer women in North Macedonia moved house (6%) than did in the EU (14%). In 30% of cases, the woman threatened the perpetrator with court action, similar to the proportion who did the same in the EU (32%). Nearly one in five (18%) went to the police themselves, again similar to the EU.

<sup>50</sup> For stalking, women in the survey were asked the following questions: Since you were 15 years old/in the past 12 months, has the same person repeatedly done one or more of the following things to you: 1) sent you emails, text messages (SMS) or instant messages that were offensive or threatening? 2) sent you letters or cards that were offensive or threatening? 3) made offensive, threatening or silent phone calls to you? 4) posted offensive comments about you on the Internet? 5) shared intimate photos or videos of you on the Internet or by mobile phone? 6) loitered or waited for you outside your home, workplace or school without a legitimate reason? 7) deliberately followed you around? 8) deliberately interfered with or damaged your property? The prevalence of stalking is based on respondents who reported having experienced one or more of the forms of stalking listed above.

## Three in ten women have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15

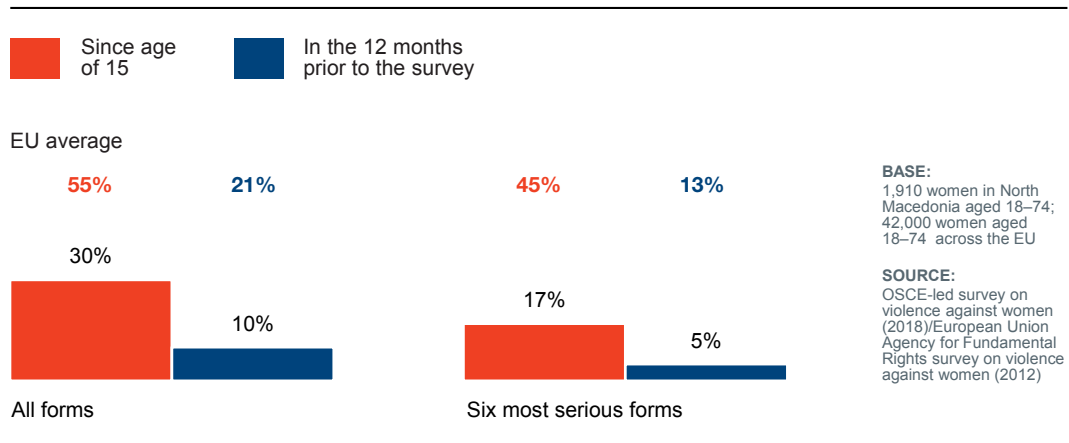
### 4.4: Sexual harassment

Three in ten women (30%) have experienced one or more forms of sexual harassment<sup>51</sup> (as detailed in Figure 4.3) at some point in their life since the age of 15, while one in ten (10%) say they were sexually harassed in the 12 months prior to the survey.

The indicated prevalence of sexual harassment is substantially lower than the EU average of 55%, which ranges from 24% in Bulgaria, 41% in Croatia and to 81% in Sweden. Generally, countries with longer traditions of gender-equality policies and awareness-raising campaigns (the Nordic countries and Western Europe) have higher rates of women saying they have experienced sexual harassment.

Looking specifically at the most severe forms of sexual harassment<sup>52</sup>, 17% of women have had such experiences since the age of 15, and 5% had such experiences in the 12 months prior to the survey (4% and 1%, respectively, among Albanian-speaking women). Again, this is much lower than in the EU, where an average of 45% of women say they have experienced at least one of the six most serious forms of sexual harassment since the age of 15.

**Figure 4.3: Prevalence of sexual harassment**



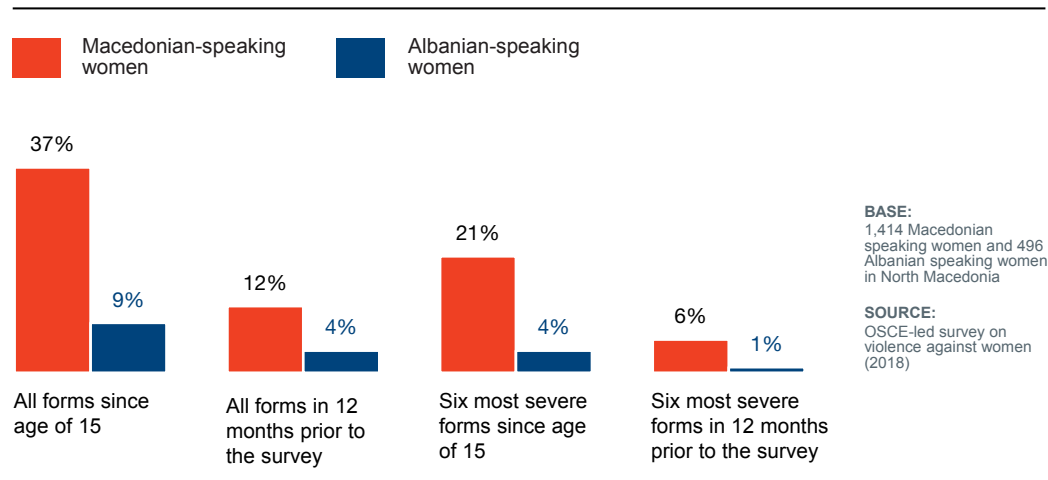
51 In terms of sexual harassment, women in the survey were asked: How often from the time you were 15 years old until now/in the past 12 months have you experienced any of the following: 1) unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing? 2) sexually suggestive comments or jokes that offended you? 3) inappropriate invitations to go out on dates? 4) intrusive questions about your private life that offended you? 5) intrusive comments about your appearance that offended you? 6) inappropriate staring or leering that you found intimidating? 7) somebody sending or showing you sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that offended you? 8) somebody indecently exposing themselves to you? 9) somebody making you watch or look at pornographic material against your wishes? 10) unwanted sexually explicit emails or SMS messages that offended you? 11) inappropriate advances that offended you on social networking websites such as Facebook or in Internet chat rooms? With regard to each form of sexual harassment, women could indicate whether they had experienced it never, once, two to five times or six times or more. The prevalence of sexual harassment is based on respondents who reported having experienced one of the listed items at least once. Six forms of sexual harassment were selected for their severity, and they are referred to in this report as “the most severe forms” of sexual harassment.

52 The most serious forms of sexual harassment are reported as “unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing”, “sexually suggestive comments or jokes that offended you”, “somebody sending or showing you sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that offended you”, “somebody indecently exposing themselves to you”, “somebody made you watch or look at pornographic material against your wishes” and “unwanted sexually explicit emails or SMS messages that offended you”. The prevalence of the most severe forms of sexual harassment is based on respondents who report having experienced at least one of these six forms of sexual harassment on at least one occasion.

## 4. Violence against women in North Macedonia

Macedonian-speaking women are far more likely than Albanian-speaking women to have experienced sexual harassment both since the age of 15 and in the 12 months prior to the survey, as can be seen in Figure 4.4

**Figure 4.4: Prevalence of sexual harassment, by language**



The indicated prevalence of sexual harassment since the age of 15 is highest among women aged 18–39 (40%), those who have tertiary education (44%), those who are students (47%) or in paid employment (40%) and those who have had a previous partner (49%). These same groups are also the most likely to say they experienced sexual harassment in the 12 months prior to the survey, with the indicated prevalence particularly high among students (32%) and among those who do not have children (22%).

The most prevalent form of sexual harassment experienced by women since the age of 15 is inappropriate staring or leering that made them feel uncomfortable, mentioned by 16% of all respondents, followed by intrusive questions about their private life (10%); unwelcome touching, hugging, or kissing (10%); and intrusive comments about their physical appearance (10%). In the EU, inappropriate staring or leering is also the most common form of sexual harassment, mentioned by 30% of women, while unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing is mentioned by 29%. Across most types of harassment, women who have had these experiences tend to have had more than one such experience.

**Table 4.5: Prevalence of sexual harassment**

At times you may have experienced people acting towards you in a way that you felt was unwanted and offensive. How often since you were 15 years old, until now, have you experienced any of the following?

	Never %	Once %	2-5 times %	6+ times %	Ever since the age of 15 (%)
Inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel?	82	5	7	4	16
Intrusive questions about your private life that made them feel offended?	88	3	5	3	10
Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing?	90	4	4	2	10
Intrusive comments about your physical appearance that made them feel offended?	88	2	5	3	10
Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended?	92	2	3	2	7
Inappropriate advances that offended you on social networking websites such as Facebook, or in internet chat rooms?	76	2	3	2	7
Inappropriate invitations to go out on dates?	94	2	3	2	6
Somebody indecently exposing themselves to you?	95	3	1	1	4
Unwanted sexually explicit emails or SMS messages that made you feel uncomfortable	90	1	2	0	3
Somebody sending or showing you sexually explicit pic	98	1	1	0	2
Somebody made you watch or look at pornographic material against your wishes?	99	0	0	0	1

BASE: 1,910 women aged 18–74 in North Macedonia

SOURCE: OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)



#### 4. Violence against women in North Macedonia

In the qualitative research, women described sexual harassment on a scale or continuum, from a lower level (such as being whistled at or called to by groups of men on the street) to more serious incidents, including touching. There were mixed views on what was acceptable, with the general view being that seemingly low-level or frivolous unwanted sexual attention was acceptable. Some participants even said that this was triggered by the woman herself, i.e., that it is natural for a man to behave this way in response to how a woman dresses or behaves. This sort of belief may help explain the lower prevalence compared with the EU, as certain types of behaviour that are recognized as sexual harassment in some EU countries are not perceived as such in North Macedonia.

The women who took part in the qualitative research also discussed their experiences of online sexual harassment. They said that it was becoming increasingly common to be harassed by men on social media platforms, especially by younger men, who the women believed were looking for sex. They expressed the belief that being online emboldened men to say things that they would not say in person.

**“I am quite active on social networks, and I sometimes receive messages from kids younger than my son. That is a virtual world, however, in the way he allows himself to address somebody like that, to look at you as a sexual object.”**

**Female, aged 35–54, ethnic Macedonian, urban**

For more than one in five women (22%), the most serious incident of sexual harassment experienced since the age of 15 involved inappropriate staring or leering, followed by unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing (13%).

The perpetrators of sexual harassment are often unknown: three in five women say that their experience was with someone they did not know (60% compared with 68% across the EU). Among known perpetrators, a friend/acquaintance or neighbour is most commonly mentioned (36% compared with 31% across the EU), followed by someone else known to the woman but not specified<sup>53</sup> (19% compared with 35% across the EU). Perpetrators of the most serious incident follow this same pattern.

While perpetrators of sexual harassment tend to be men, this is not always the case. Men are identified as the perpetrators by 63% of women who say they have experienced sexual harassment. Women only are mentioned by 6% of respondents, while 24% say that both men and women were involved.

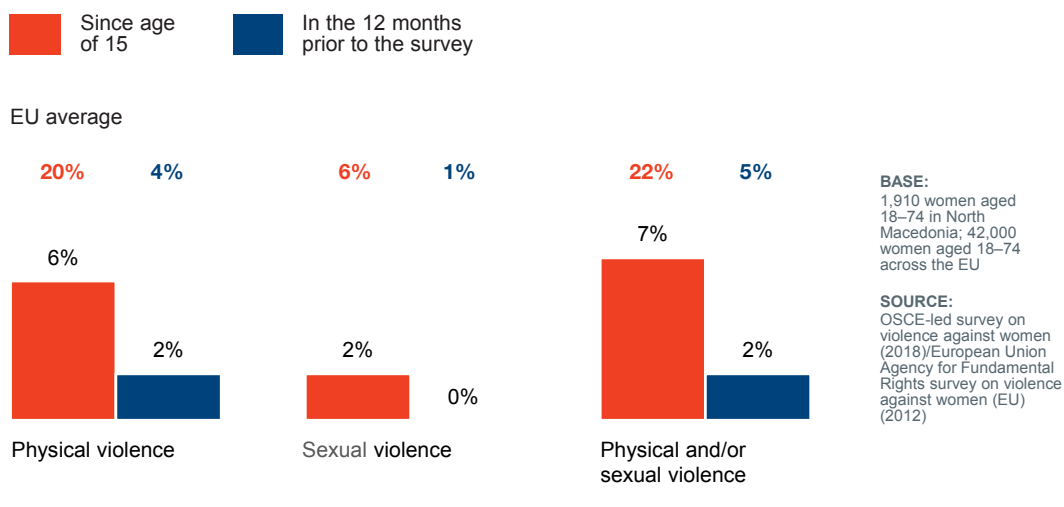
In more than seven in ten of the most serious incidents, only one perpetrator was involved (71%). In 8% of cases, two perpetrators were involved, and 16% of cases involved three or more perpetrators.

<sup>53</sup> The categories were “current partner”, “previous partner”, “boss/supervisor”, “colleague/co-worker”, “client/customer/patient”, “teacher/trainer/coach”, “fellow student”, “doctor/healthcare worker”, “relative/family member (other than partner)”, “partner’s relative/family member”, “a date/someone you just met”.

**4.5: Physical and sexual violence at the hands of non-partners**

Six per cent of women aged 18–74 say they have experienced one or more forms of physical violence at the hands of a non-partner since they were 15 years old (2% in the 12 months prior to the survey), while 2% have experienced one of the forms of sexual violence asked about (0.1% in the 12 months prior to the survey) (Figure 4.5). This is much lower than in the EU, where an average of 20% say they have experienced physical violence at the hands of a non-partner since the age of 15 (ranging from 10% in Austria, Greece, Poland and Portugal to 36% in Denmark). Six per cent of women in the EU disclosed that they had experienced sexual violence at the hands of non-partners, ranging from 1% in Greece and Portugal to 12% in Sweden.

**Figure 4.5: Prevalence of non-partner physical and/or sexual violence**



The indicated prevalence of non-partner violence is lower among Albanian-speaking women than among Macedonian-speaking women. Three per cent of Albanian-speaking women say they have experienced non-partner physical violence (compared with 7% of Macedonian-speaking women), and fewer than 0.5% of women say they have experienced non-partner sexual violence since the age of 15 (compared with 2% of Macedonian-speaking women).

#### 4. Violence against women in North Macedonia

**Table 4.6: Prevalence of non-partner physical and/or sexual violence, by language**

Since you were 15 years old until now/in the last 12 months, how often has someone (other than partner/previous) done any of the following to you.

	Macedonian-speaking women % ever happened	Albanian-speaking women % ever happened
<b>Physical violence</b>		
Since the age of 15	7	3
In the 12 months prior to the survey	2	0
<b>Sexual violence</b>		
Since the age of 15	2	0
In the 12 months prior to the survey	0	0
<b>Physical and sexual violence</b>		
Since the age of 15	8	3
In the 12 months prior to the survey	2	0

**BASE:** 1,414 Macedonian-speaking women and 496 Albanian-speaking women in North Macedonia

**SOURCE:** OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

Figures in red indicate that the difference is statistically significant

In the qualitative research, non-partner physical and sexual violence were viewed as the most serious, and least common, types of violence in the country, and few of the women who took part shared their personal experiences of such violence. One of the survivors of violence did describe her experience of being raped by a stranger at the age of 15. Her experience is included in the case study below.

**Case study: T's story- Part 1**

- T is 20 years old. When she was 15, she met a boy who became her friend. One day, he took her to the hotel his father owned. Excusing himself to go get something, he left her in one of the rooms to wait for him.
- After a few minutes, an older man she did not know entered the room and raped her.

**“He was strangling me. I thought the man wanted to suffocate me, to kill me. And then he [ejaculated and withdrew] and even now I get sick when I hear that sound. I have a panic attack.”**

- When the man left, T climbed out of the hotel window and down several balconies to get away. She went home and did not tell anyone about what had happened.

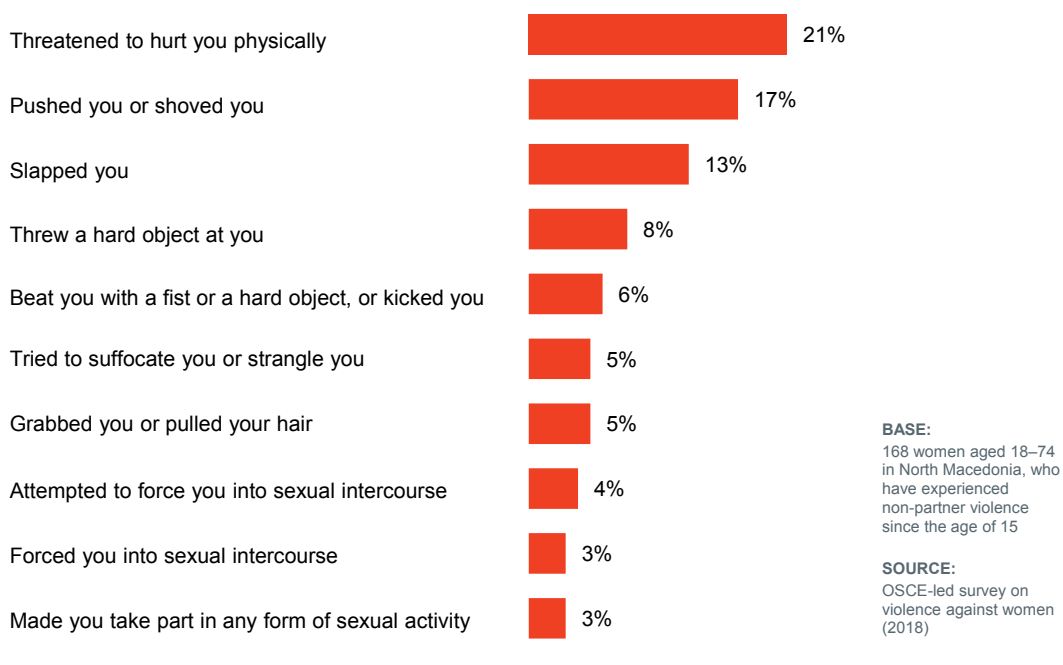
The most prevalent forms of physical violence at the hands of a non-partner are being pushed or shoved and being slapped, both indicated by 3% of women as having occurred since the age 15 (much lower than the EU average of 13%) and by 1% in the 12 months prior to the survey. No single form of sexual violence asked about is indicated as having been experienced by more than 1% of women. Experiences of non-partner violence are more likely to have occurred just once rather than on repeated occasions.

The most serious incidents of violence (i.e., the one experience that had the most impact on the woman, including threats of violence) by non-partners tend to be physical rather than sexual (Figure 4.6), which is similar to the prevalence of all incidents of violence experienced by victims of non-partners. The forms of violence most frequently identified as committed during the most serious incident are being threatened to be hurt physically' and being 'pushed or shoved, each of which is mentioned by around one in five of women who have ever experienced any non-partner violence.

## 4. Violence against women in North Macedonia

**Figure 4.6: Women's most serious incidents of non-partner violence**

I would like you to think about the most serious incident by a non-partner. Which of the things on this card happened at that time? By "most serious", we mean the incident that had the biggest impact on you.

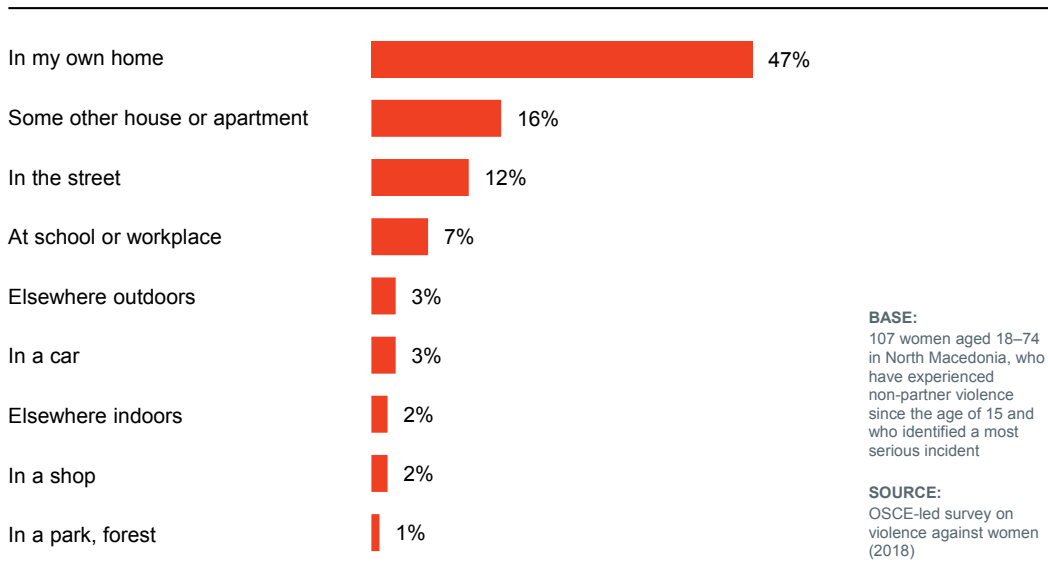


The majority of these most serious incidents took place in private spaces, with nearly half (47%) of all most serious incidents said to have taken place in the respondent's home, while a further 16% took place in some other house or apartment. Across the EU, just 27% of the most serious incidents took place in the woman's own home, but comparatively many more incidents took place in public spaces. For example, 18% of incidents took place in the street, and 16% took place at school or in the workplace, which is in line with the fact that a larger proportion of women are employed in the EU.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> At the time of the FRA survey, just 4% of women in the EU indicated that they had never worked, compared with 23% in this survey.

**Figure 4.7: Location of the most serious incident of non-partner violence**

Thinking about the most serious incident of non-partner violence, where did it take place?



#### 4.4.1: Perpetrators

The majority of women *disagree* that women are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know (55%).

Analysis of the perpetrators of non-partner sexual violence is limited due to the small number of women reporting experiences of it. Among those who have reported such an experience, the perpetrators identified most often are someone the woman knew but whom she did not specify as belonging to any of the provided categories (seven cases); a friend, acquaintance or neighbour (four cases); or a date or someone they had just met (three cases). A doctor or healthcare worker, a relative of their partner and a police officer are mentioned by one person each, while five women said the perpetrator was someone they did not know. Six people (about one-third of the survivors) refused to say who the perpetrator was.

Most women survivors of non-partner physical violence identified their perpetrators as someone they knew. A relative of their partner is mentioned most often (21%), and their own relatives are mentioned by 17%. Relatives were the most often mentioned perpetrators of non-partner violence in the EU as well (31%). A friend, acquaintance or neighbour (18%) and a fellow pupil or student (17%) are the other most commonly identified perpetrators known to the victim. Twelve per cent of victims say that they did not know the perpetrator, which is lower than the EU average of 23%.

## 4. Violence against women in North Macedonia

Men are identified as the perpetrators of non-partner physical violence by 70% of those women who have experienced non-partner physical violence, with 60% of survivors mentioning a man only, while 10% say that both men and women were involved. Women are identified by 31% (with 21% mentioning women only). The remainder (9%) did not know or preferred not to specify the gender of the perpetrator. Two-thirds of survivors of sexual violence say the perpetrator was a man (64%), while the remainder did not know or preferred not to say.<sup>55</sup>

In more than four out of five of the most serious incidents identified (83%), the perpetrators acted alone. A fifth of the most serious incidents were perpetrated by someone who was drunk or under the influence of drugs (20%).

### 4.6: Experience of violence during childhood

Nine per cent of women say they experienced either physical, sexual or psychological violence in their childhood,<sup>56</sup> which is substantially lower than, for example, in Croatia and Bulgaria (30% and 31%, respectively). The indicated prevalence is even lower among Albanian-speaking women: 2% say they experienced some form of violence in their childhood compared with 11% of Macedonian-speaking women.

The most common form of violence experienced during childhood is physical violence, at 7% (9% among Macedonian-speaking women and 1% among Albanian-speaking women), while the prevalence of psychological and sexual violence is at 2% and 1%, respectively. The prevalence of sexual violence is comparable across both groups, but Macedonian-speaking women indicate slightly higher rates of childhood psychological violence (3% versus 1%). Furthermore, women in urban areas indicate higher levels of physical and sexual childhood violence than those in rural areas (9% versus 5% for physical violence and 1% versus 0% for sexual violence).

All forms of childhood violence are more common in the EU, with 27% of women across the EU saying they experienced physical violence, 12% saying they experienced sexual violence, and 10% saying they experienced psychological violence before the age of / 15. Again, countries where women feel that domestic violence is a private issue and where there is a culture of silence tend to have lower rates of women sharing these experiences than countries with a longer tradition of raising awareness of violence against women.

The most prevalent form of physical violence in childhood that women say they experienced is being slapped or having their hair pulled so hard that it hurt them, which are mentioned by 7% of respondents.

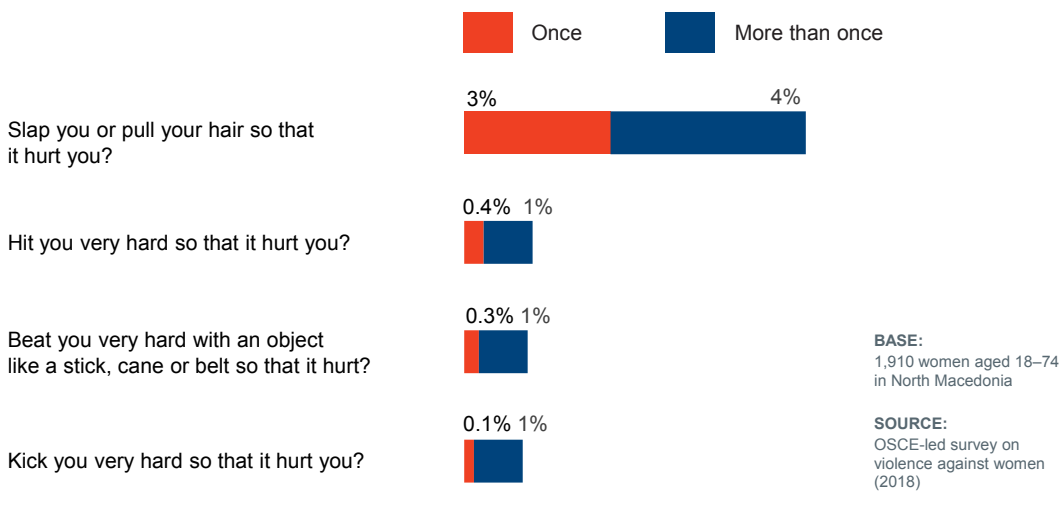
<sup>55</sup> Given the small base (n=30), caution should be applied when interpreting these findings.

<sup>56</sup> Childhood violence refers to violence before the age of 15. In terms of physical violence before the age of 15, women were asked the following questions: Before the age of 15, how often did an adult who was 18 years of age or older do the following to you: 1) slap or pull you by the hair so that it hurt? 2) hit you very hard so that it hurt? 3) kick you very hard so that it hurt? 4) beat you very hard with an object like a stick, cane or belt? 5) Stab or cut you with something? In terms of sexual violence before the age of 15, women were asked the following questions: Before the age of 15, how often did an adult who was 18 years of age or older do the following to you when you did not want them to: 1) expose their genitals to you? 2) make you pose naked in front of any person or in photographs, video, or on an Internet webcam? 3) touch your genitals or breasts against your will? 4) force you to have sexual intercourse? In terms of psychological violence before the age of 15, women were asked the following questions: Before the age of 15, how often did an adult family member do the following to you: 1) say that you were not loved? 2) say that they wished you had never been born? 3) threaten to abandon you or throw you out of the family home? Before the age of 15, how often did an adult who was 18 years of age or older do the following to you: threaten to hurt you badly or kill you?

The prevalence of childhood violence is based on respondents who report having experienced at least one of the items listed above for either physical, sexual or psychological violence or any of the three.

**Figure 4.8: Experiences of physical violence before the age of 15**

Before you were 15 years old, how often did any adult, do any of the following to you



Family members, and in particular parents, are the most likely perpetrators of childhood violence. In the majority of incidents where a woman said she was slapped as a child or had her hair pulled so hard that it hurt, the perpetrator was her father (54%). The next most likely perpetrator of this form of childhood violence was the woman's mother (23%), followed by her brother or step-brother (19%). Likewise, in 47% of cases where the child was hit so hard that it hurt, the perpetrator was her father. In 19% percent of cases, the perpetrator was her mother, and in 18% of cases, it was her brother or step-brother.

Women who experienced violence in their childhood are much more likely to have experienced violence as an adult. Among those who experienced childhood violence, 43% have experienced intimate partner or non-partner physical and/or sexual violence as adults, compared with 10% of those who did not experience childhood violence.



## **Forty-three per cent of women who experienced childhood violence say they have experienced intimate partner or non-partner physical and/or sexual violence later in life**

This is reflected in the qualitative research: survivors of violence who took part in the qualitative research tended to have both childhood and adult experiences of violence. Violence in childhood was perpetrated by one or both parents and continued over many years. Some of the women who took part in the research expressed the belief that these childhood experiences had a direct link to their later experiences, either because they were forced by their family into a relationship that became violent or because they entered into a relationship with a man they did not know simply to get away from their family.

**“I didn’t know him. I agreed [to marry him] only to get out of [my] home. He saw that I was mistreated, and he started [doing] the same during the first month [that we lived together].”**

**Survivor of violence, Roma**



Nearly one in five women could be defined as directly conflict-affected (11% among Macedonian-speaking women and 42% among Albanian-speaking women).<sup>58</sup>

## 5. Conflict and violence

### 5.1: Conflict-related experiences

Armed conflict is defined for the purposes of this research as armed fighting between two or more organized groups, attacks on communities or general insecurity caused by conflict.

Although the country seceded non-violently from the former Yugoslavia, the 2001 insurgency between the ethnic-Albanian National Liberation Army militant group and the country's security forces affected the north and west of the country. As a result, almost one in four (23%) women say they have lived in a situation where there was an active armed conflict for a period of at least one week during their lifetime, however not all of them can be classified as directly conflict affected. This is more prevalent among Albanian-speaking women, 50% of whom say they have lived through an active armed conflict (compared with 13% of Macedonian-speaking women).

Among those who have lived through a period of conflict for at least one week, the majority (82%) have had at least one of the conflict-related experiences asked about in the survey. Most commonly mentioned were hearing gunshots or the sound of bombing (66%), living in a location where armed personnel were stationed or moving in larger numbers for at least one week (54%), directly witnessing fighting (48%), not being able to find work due to the conflict (30%) or having to flee their home (27%). Albanian-speaking women are more likely to say they experienced most of these situations (Table 5.1).

57 The definition of "conflict-affected" is having lived in a situation where there was an active armed conflict for a period of at least one week and answering "yes" to at least one of the following questions: "Did you hear gunshots, the sound of bombing or shelling in the local area where you were living at the time of the conflict?" "Did you live for at least a week in a location where armed personnel (regular military or other armed groups) were stationed or moving in larger numbers? This may include local residents participating in the conflict." "Did you witness fighting in the local area where you were living at the time of the conflict?" "Was the property (e.g., your home, car, livestock) of your immediate family destroyed or seriously damaged due to the conflict?" "Was the property (e.g., your home, car, livestock) of your immediate family taken by an armed group?" "Was it impossible to find work in the local area due to the conflict (office/factories were closed or destroyed, it was too dangerous)?" "Did an immediate family member or your spouse or partner take part in the conflict or participate in fighting as a member of an armed group?" "Did you play an active part in fighting during the conflict?" "Were civilians from the local area where you were living detained or imprisoned?" "Did civilians in the local area where you were living die due to the conflict?" "Were you personally physically attacked or injured due to the conflict?" "Did you have to flee your home during (any of) the conflict(s) you experienced?"

**Table 5.1: Experiences of directly conflict-affected women**

Please tell me whether you experienced any of the following during the armed conflict(s) that you have experienced.

	Yes (%)	Macedonian-speaking women	Albanian-speaking women
Did you hear gunshots, the sound of bombing or shelling in the local area where you lived at the time of the conflict?	66	57	74
Did you live in a location where armed personnel (regular military or other armed groups) were stationed or moving in larger numbers and for at least one week. This may include local residents participating in the conflict?	54	34	71
Did you witness fighting in the local area where you lived at the time of the conflict?	48	29	64
Was the property (e.g. your home, car, livestock) of your immediate family destroyed or seriously damaged due to the conflict?	12	8	16
Was the property (e.g. your home, car, livestock) of your immediate family taken by armed group personnel?	6	3	9
It was not possible to find work in the local area due to the conflict?	30	20	39
Did an immediate family member or your spouse or partner take part in the conflict or participate in fighting as a member of an armed group?	20	30	11
Did you take an active part in fighting during the conflict?	1	0	2
Were civilians from the local area where you lived detained or imprisoned?	11	7	15
Did civilians in the local area where you lived die due to conflict?	14	12	15
Were you personally physically attacked or injured due to the conflict?	1	0	1
Did you have to flee your home during (any of) the conflict(s) you have experienced?	27	30	24

BASE: 191 Macedonian-speaking women and 242 Albanian-speaking women in North Macedonia who have lived through armed conflict  
 SOURCE: OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)  
 Figures in red indicate that the difference is statistically significant

In conclusion, nearly one in five women (19%) can be considered directly conflict-affected, which is defined as having lived through a period of conflict *and* having at least one of the conflict-related experiences listed in Table 5.1. Nearly all of these women live today in the regions of Polog, Skopje and the northeast of the country.

Those defined as directly conflict-affected were also asked about other consequences of having lived through conflict, from the availability of public services through to the loss of family members and experiences of violence. Overall, just over half of respondents had at least one of these experiences (53%, which is somewhat higher among Albanian-speaking women, at 58%), the most common of which relate to the lack of services. Just over one-third (34%) of those defined as directly conflict-affected say there was no law enforcement for a prolonged period of time in the place where they were living, and 23% say that health services they had previously used were not available or were inaccessible (Table 5.2). Both of these were an issue for those living today in Polog in particular, while those in the northeast and Skopje regions were more likely to feel the impact of the absence of the men in their family, who were away from home due to the conflict.

**Table 5.2: Experiences of directly conflict-affected women**

Please tell me whether or not you experienced any of the following during the armed conflict(s) that you have experienced.

	Yes (%)	Macedonian-speaking women	Albanian-speaking women
No law enforcement (police or other organization to keep law and order) present in your local area, for a prolonged time	34	18	45
Health services (including women's health services) that you previously used were unavailable or inaccessible for a longer period of time.	23	13	31
Men in your family (husbands, fathers, brothers) were away from home and the family, (because they had to flee, fought in the conflict, were detained, went missing)	13	25	4
An immediate family member or your spouse or partner was injured or died due to fighting/violence?	4	7	2
Women in your family had to go into potentially dangerous places (i.e. through frontline/boundary line or close to explosives like mines) for work or to fetch essentials for the household (firewood, food, drinking water, fuel, etc.)	2	3	2
Armed groups deliberately used threats, rumours or actual violence against women to terrify the local population in the area where you lived	2	4	1
Members of armed groups harassed local women in the area where you lived	1	1	0
Members of armed groups employed deeply humiliating practices against local women in the area where you lived, such as forcing women to strip naked in public, mutilating their bodies, having them undergo internal body cavity searches for no reason, etc.)	0	1	0
Circumstances caused women to offer sexual services in exchange for essential goods or for ensuring the safety of their family in the area where you lived.	0	1	0

BASE: 191 Macedonian-speaking women and 242 Albanian-speaking women in North Macedonia who have lived through armed conflict  
 SOURCE: OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)  
 Figures in red indicate that the difference is statistically significant

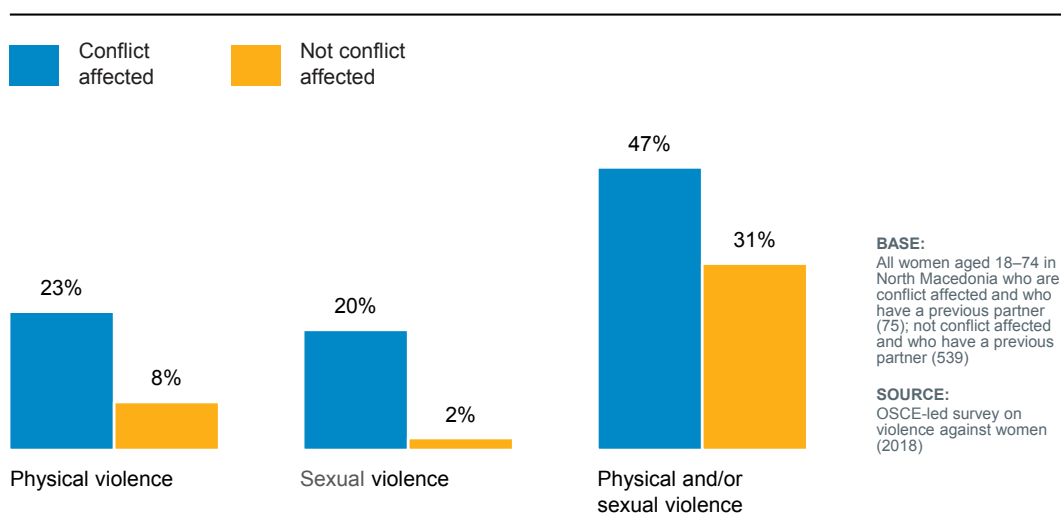
Today, 12% of women who have experienced armed conflict and suffer from an illness or disability attribute this to their experience of conflict. This figure varies widely by language spoken, as the figure is 21% among Macedonian-speaking women, while it is just 2% among Albanian-speaking women.

### 5.2: Conflict or crisis and violence against women

Women identified as directly conflict-affected were asked if their experiences of sexual harassment and physical or sexual violence at the hands of partners or non-partners were connected to an armed conflict or not. According to the survey findings, most women do not make any connection between the two. Likewise, the women who took part in the qualitative research did not link their experiences of violence with their experience of conflict, and, more broadly, the conflict itself was not thought to have impacted gender norms or attitudes.

The prevalence of sexual harassment and non-partner physical and/or sexual violence does not differ between conflict-affected women and those who are not conflict-affected. However, previous partner psychological, physical and sexual violence is considerably higher among conflict-affected women, particularly in relation to sexual violence, indicating some link between violence and experience of conflict. Current partner psychological violence is also more prevalent among conflict-affected women.

**Figure 5.1: Prevalence of previous partner violence among directly conflict-affected women**



Women whose current partners fought in a conflict are no more likely to say they have experienced current partner violence than those women whose partners did not fight in any conflicts.

One per cent of interviewed women say they have been threatened or assaulted with a firearm since they were 15 years old. This totalled 16 respondents, three of whom say the perpetrator was their partner. Among those who have experienced partner or non-partner violence, this figure rises to 3%, who say they have been assaulted or threatened with a firearm (totalling five respondents).



**Four in ten women who identified a most serious incident of intimate partner or non-partner physical and/or sexual violence suffered from one or more physical injuries as a result of the incident.**



**Over half of women who have experienced intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence had a longer-term psychological response to their most serious incident.**



**Police were informed about only 3% of cases identified as a most serious incident of current partner violence.**



## 6. Impact of violence on women's lives and barriers to seeking support

This chapter provides an overview of the impact of violence on women's well-being, if they reported their experiences to anyone, and if they did, how satisfied they were with the response. Throughout these questions, women were asked about the impact of their most serious incident of physical or sexual violence, which included threats of both. The most serious incident was defined as the one that had the most impact on the woman, either psychologically or physically.

### 6.1: Psychological responses and physical injuries

Women who have experienced physical or sexual violence (Chapter 4) respond in a variety of emotional ways. Almost all of them report feeling at least one of the emotions set out in Table 6.1 in response to their most serious incident. Whether perpetrated by a current partner, previous partner or someone else, the most common emotional responses were fear, anger, annoyance and embarrassment, reactions typically felt by half or more of those affected in response to the most serious incident identified. Shock and shame were also common reactions to intimate partner violence. These are also the most commonly recorded reactions across the EU, where the top three emotional responses to violence are anger, fear and shock.

**Table 6.1: Emotional responses to physical and/or sexual violence (most serious incident)**

Thinking about the most serious incident, did you feel any of the following as a result?

	Current partner	Previous partner	Non-partner
	%	%	%
Annoyance	56	75	49
Fear	50	63	52
Embarrassment	44	58	42
Anger	34	69	56
Shame	26	51	35
Shock	18	41	36
Aggressiveness	14	34	28
Guilt	9	16	6
None of the above	10	2	2

**BASE:**  
All Women in North Macedonia aged 18-74 who experienced physical and/or sexual violence since age of 15 and who identified a most serious incident: current partner (85), previous partner (59) or non-partner violence (107)

**SOURCE:**  
OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: North Macedonia

Similar emotions resulted from respondents' most serious incident of sexual harassment. Again, nearly every woman who reported having experienced such harassment felt at least one of the emotions in Table 6.1, with embarrassment (58%) and annoyance (54%) mentioned most often.

The majority of victims of physical and/or sexual violence also felt the impact of at least one of the longer-term psychological consequences listed in Table 6.2 as a result of their most serious incident. Here, the impact of non-partner violence is more pronounced than the impact of current partner violence. Indeed, 70% of those who identify a most serious incident of non-partner violence say they suffered from a long-term psychological consequence as a result, while the figure drops to 49% and 60%, respectively, among those who identified a most serious incident of current partner violence and previous partner violence.

Similar types of psychological consequences are indicated across the three perpetrator types, including feelings of vulnerability, trouble sleeping and depression. This is comparable to results across the EU, where the most common reactions were anxiety, depression and vulnerability. Panic attacks are more likely to have resulted following non-partner violence compared with partner violence, while partner violence more often led to a lack of self-confidence.

**Table 6.2: Psychological consequences of physical and/or sexual violence (most serious incident)**

Thinking about the most serious incident, did you suffer from any of the following as a result?

	Current partner	Previous partner	Non-partner
	%	%	%
Difficulty in sleeping	26	36	20
Feeling vulnerable	23	18	26
Loss of self-confidence	22	25	13
Depression	18	27	22
Concentration difficulties	14	17	8
Anxiety	10	17	11
Panic attacks	7	13	21
Difficulties in relationship	2	14	10
None	50	37	30

**BASE:**  
All Women in North Macedonia aged 18-74 who experienced physical and/or sexual violence since age of 15 and who identified a most serious incident: current partner (85), previous partner (59) or non-partner violence (107)

**SOURCE:**  
OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

## 6. Impact of violence on women's lives and barriers to seeking support

Fewer women indicate longer-term psychological consequences to their most serious incident of sexual harassment, with two-thirds saying that they did not have any longer-term response (67%). However, nearly one in five (18%) say the experience made them feel vulnerable, and just over one in ten (11%) say it resulted in difficulty sleeping. In the EU, one in six (14%) suffered from anxiety, and one in five (20%) felt vulnerable. Cultural context is important here, specifically the widespread acceptance of what is considered low-level, unwanted sexual attention, as described in Chapter 3.

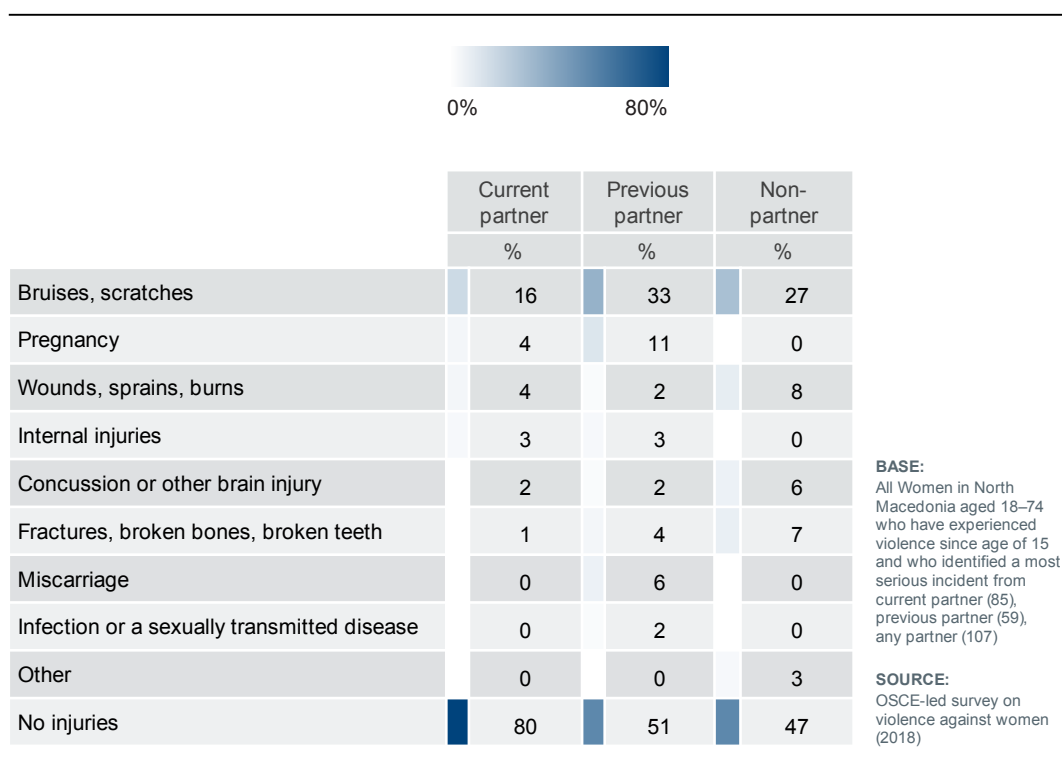
In relation to the most serious incident of non-partner violence, 45% of respondents say they suffered a physical injury or consequence as a result. One in four (27%) had bruises or scratches. More serious injuries are less common, but wounds, sprains or burns were experienced by 8%, fractures or broken teeth by 7% and concussion or another brain injury by 6%.

The most serious incident of previous partner violence also resulted in physical injury or consequence in around half of survivors (48%). Bruises and scratches were the most common type. For 11% of respondents, their most serious incident led to pregnancy, and 6% had a miscarriage.

Physical consequences in relation to the most serious incident of current partner violence is less common: 80% say they were not injured, while 16% say they received bruises or scratches. Pregnancy was the result for 4%.

**Table 6.3: Physical injuries arising from physical and/or sexual violence (most serious incident)**

Thinking about the most serious incident did it result in any of the following?



In the qualitative research, women with experiences of intimate partner violence or non-partner violence discussed the impacts of both psychological and physical violence. In some cases, women were living with permanent physical disabilities as a result of the violence they experienced. Regardless of the severity of the physical injuries they experienced, however, the women expressed the belief that the psychological impact of their experiences had been the most damaging to them. They described ongoing emotional trauma as a result of their experiences.

## **The most-mentioned source of information, advice or support women say they wanted after the most serious incident of physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by their partner was just someone to talk to who could provide moral support**

### **Case study: T's story- Part 2**

- After being raped by a stranger at the age of 15, T went home and scrubbed herself in hot water, but she felt she could not get herself clean.
- Soon after, she began to self-harm and attempted suicide several times.

**“I felt so dirty, I wanted to cleanse my body, I wanted somehow to hurt myself. I tried it in every possible way ... I took pills, I tried to cut my veins.”**

- On one occasion, she threw herself in front of a car and ended up in a wheelchair for six months as a result.

**“I thought to myself, the last chance to save myself was to jump in front of a car, that that would be the least painful [way to die]. You get hit by the car, and it's painless. Bam! It hits you, and you die. I can no longer deal with these problems, I can't bear it.”**

- After leaving the hospital, T began taking drugs and has struggled to cope with both her addiction and the trauma she experienced.

## 6. Impact of violence on women's lives and barriers to seeking support

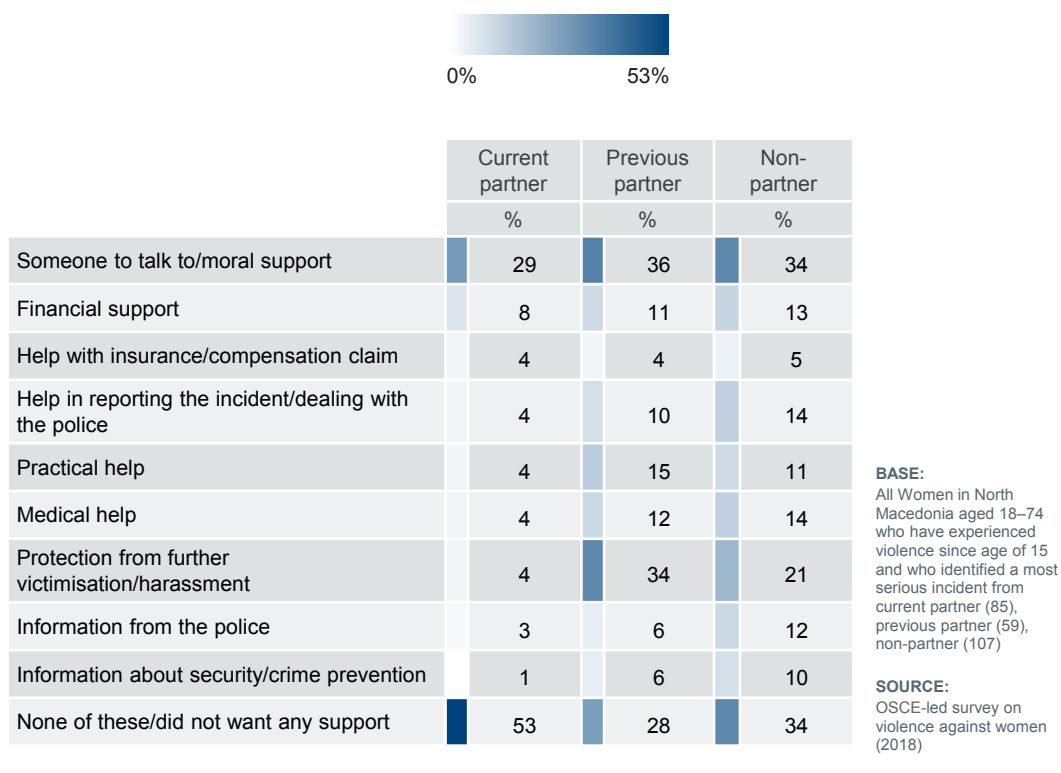
### 6.2: Support that survivors of violence want

All respondents who had experienced physical and/or sexual violence were asked if they needed any type of assistance following the most serious incident that they had experienced.

The most-mentioned source of information, advice or support women say they wanted after their most serious incident of physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of a partner was just someone to talk to who could provide moral support. Protection from further violence and harassment was particularly important for those whose previous partner had perpetrated the violence (34%) and for those who had experienced violence at the hands of a non-partner (31%). In contrast, just 4% of women said they needed protection following the most serious incident with their current partner, and victims of current partner violence were less likely than others to indicate that they needed medical assistance.

**Table 6.4: Types of information, advice and support wanted following an incident**

What types of information, advice or support would you say you wanted following the most serious incident you experienced?



Survivors of violence who took part in in-depth interviews said that the greatest unmet needs were financial support and long-term shelter for women who choose to leave a violent relationship. They said that, currently, it is only possible for a woman to leave a violent relationship if her birth family is willing to take her and her children in and support them until she is able to find work. They expressed the belief that women who could not access support from their birth family were prevented from leaving violent relationships, as they have nowhere to go and no means to support themselves or their children. They said that more services and support should be offered to women to ensure that they have housing and assistance finding work.

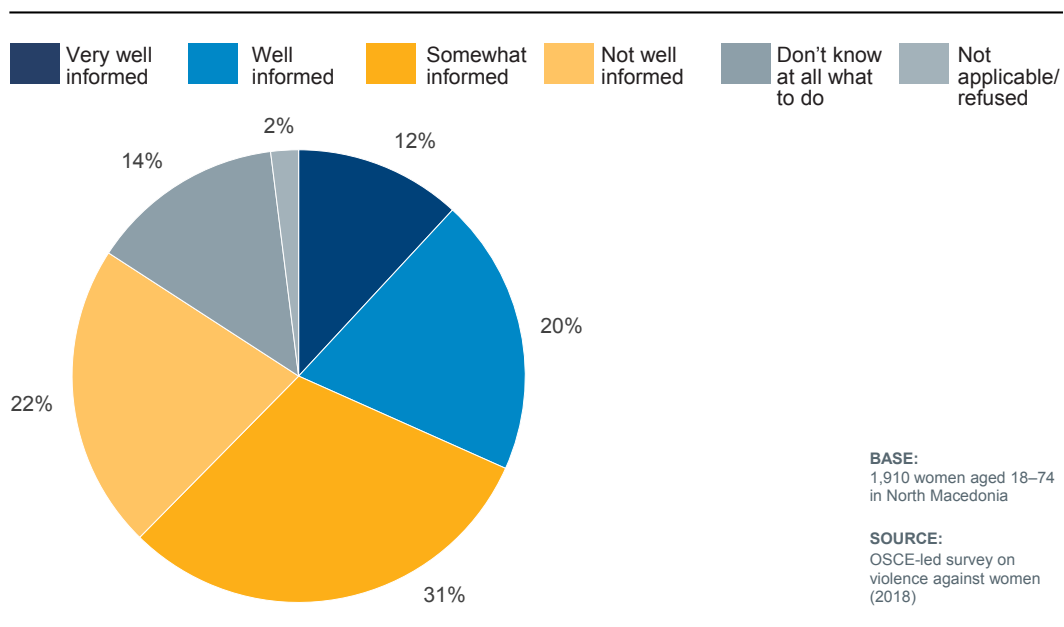
**“[A woman needs] to be provided for [for her] entire life, not only helping her for two or three months, and afterwards throwing her out. And not only that, [she needs] a house, she needs to eat as well. Here, I am disabled and I work. I am not ashamed. I have two hands, two legs, eyes, why shouldn’t I work?”**

**Survivor of violence, ethnic Macedonian, disabled**

Women in the survey were asked—regardless of whether they had experienced any violence—how well informed they felt about what to do if they ever did experience violence. Views were split, with nearly one-third (32%) indicating that they felt very well informed or well informed, while slightly more women (35%) say they are not well informed or do not know what to do at all. The remaining 31% say they feel somewhat informed. Younger women are more likely to feel very well informed or well informed than older women are. This is also true of women with tertiary education as opposed to those with less education (61% versus 33% among those with secondary education). Women who are in paid work are more likely to feel informed (49%), while those who are unemployed or retired are less likely (26%). Women in urban settings are more likely to indicate that they are informed about what to do than those in rural areas (36% versus 24%), and awareness is also higher among Macedonian-speaking women than among Albanian-speaking women (36% versus 22%).

**Figure 6.1: Awareness of what to do after experiencing violence**

How well informed do you feel about what to do if you experience violence?



## 6. Impact of violence on women's lives and barriers to seeking support

Women in the survey were also asked whether they were aware of three support organizations. Awareness of these organizations is low, with only a little more than one-third of women (36%) being aware of any of the three organizations tested. Specifically, around one in four say they have heard of NGCE (26%, dropping to 19% among Albanian-speaking women) and HERA (24%, 13% among Albanian-speaking women), while only 13% say they are aware of ESE (10% among Albanian-speaking women). These low levels of awareness could be contributing to the very low usage of these services by women who have experienced violence, as described in Section 6.3 below.

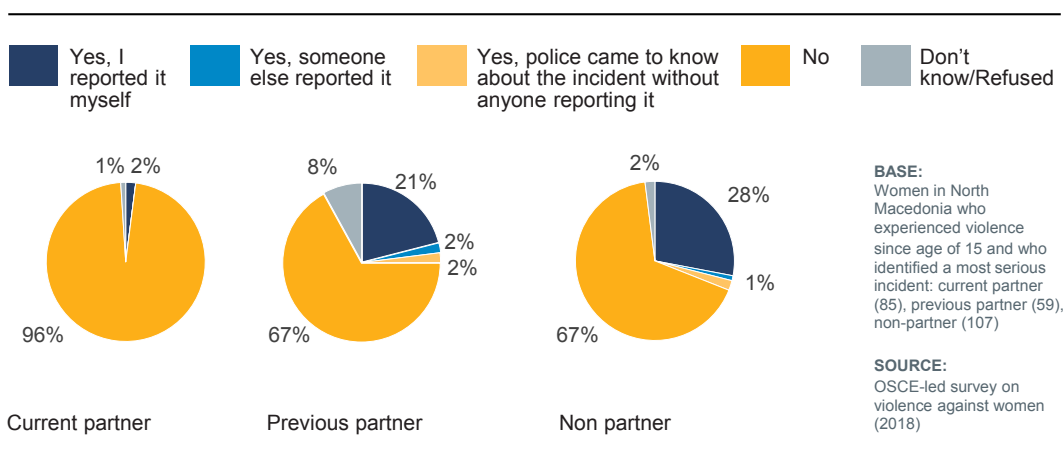
### 6.3: Reporting experiences of violence and harassment

In the survey, women were asked whether the police or other organizations came to know about their most serious incident of physical or sexual violence or threat thereof.

Even following women's most serious incident of physical and/or sexual violence, the police did not come to know about it in the majority of cases, particularly in relation to current partner violence (Figure 6.2).

**Figure 6.2: Contact with the police following the most serious incident of physical and/or sexual violence**

Did the police come to know about the [most serious] incident?



A comparison of contact with the police between Macedonian-speaking women and Albanian-speaking women is not possible, as only 17 Albanian-speaking women identified a most serious incident of partner or non-partner violence. However, women who consider themselves to be part of an ethnic minority where they live are less likely to say that they reported their most serious incident of any of the current partner, previous partner or non-partner violence they endured to the police (10%<sup>58</sup> versus 33% on average). By location, women in rural areas who experienced violence at the hands of an intimate partner or non-partner are equally likely as those in urban areas to say that they contacted the police themselves after their most serious incident (22% versus 21% of those in urban areas). Likewise, there are no significant differences by location when it comes to reporting an incident to other services, such as medical services or social services.

<sup>58</sup> Given the small base (n=31), caution should be applied when interpreting these findings.

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: North Macedonia

This reticence to report violence to the police on the part of those from an ethnic minority was explored in the qualitative research among women from an Albanian background. According to these women, a victim of violence would generally only share her experience with, and seek support from, a close friend or family member rather than contacting the police. These women explained that they did not trust police officers, and that they considered them to be inefficient and apathetic. They also felt that a victim would most likely be advised by friends and family to put up with it, at least for a while longer, rather than get a divorce. One of the reasons for this was that a woman who leaves her husband would have nowhere to go unless her birth family took her back in, and they said that parents—particularly in the Muslim Albanian community—were not generally supportive of this.

**“If my parents don’t understand [why I want a divorce], I can’t handle it alone since I [would] have nowhere to live.”**

**Female, aged 18–34, ethnic Albanian, rural**

In line with the fact that Albanian-speaking women are more likely to agree in the survey that domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family (67% versus 42% among Macedonian-speaking women), women from an ethnic-Albanian background explained in the qualitative research that they felt there were differences in reporting behaviour based on ethnicity. They explained that Macedonian women would be more willing to seek help from an organization, would be better informed about the services available, and would have support from their birth family in doing so. In turn, they felt that an Albanian woman would be more afraid to seek help, primarily as a result of her cultural upbringing and the belief that women are less valued in society.

**“[Macedonian women] are more advanced, they know the laws better, more opportunities are given to them. [Their] family supports them [in raising] their voice, while we don’t have [this support].”**

**Female, aged 18–34, ethnic Albanian, rural**

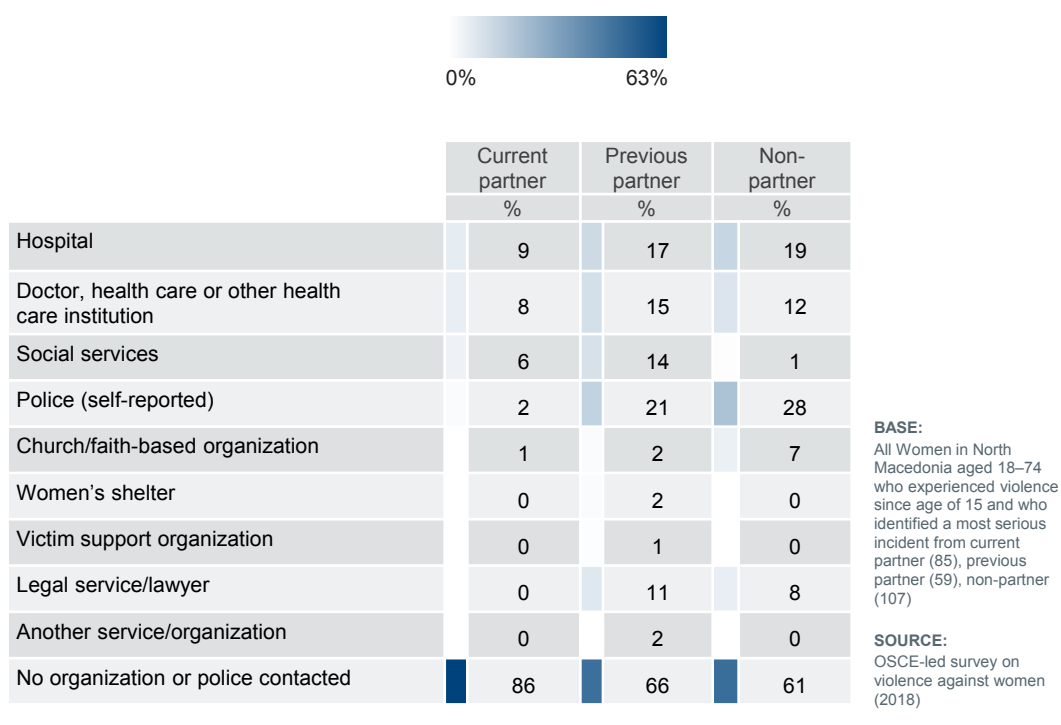
The survey reveals that all women, regardless of which group they were in, tended not to contact other services either. In relation to current partner violence, nearly nine in ten women who identified a most serious incident did not contact the police or another organization (86%), and the same is true for 66% of the most serious incidents of previous partner violence and 61% of the most serious incidents of non-partner violence.



# 86% of women who experienced current partner physical and/or sexual violence and who identified a most serious incident did not contact the police or another organization following it

**Table 6.5: Contacts after the most serious incident of physical and/or sexual violence**

Did you contact any of the following services as a result of the incident?



## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: North Macedonia

The main reason for not reporting their most serious incident of violence to the police is that survivors said they preferred to deal with it themselves, perhaps only involving friends and family, i.e., their priority was to keep the incident private. Other reasons include considering the incident too minor, shame or embarrassment, and fear of the perpetrator, as detailed in Table 6.6.

The findings from the qualitative research are largely in line with actual reporting behaviours recorded through the survey. Participants expressed the belief that non-partner violence was most likely to be sexual in nature and thus shameful for a woman to report, as they would be held partly or wholly responsible for what happened to them, even in cases of rape by a person they did not know. Similarly, the women who took part in the qualitative research held the view that a woman would be unlikely to report experiences of IPV. If a woman did want to seek advice, they said she would be most likely to reach out to close female friends. However, violence at the hands of a partner was seen as so common that women expected that any friend they told would not be overly concerned about it.

Looking at specific sources of support, women from an Albanian background pointed out that it was considered very shameful for someone in their community to seek support from a psychiatrist. They explained that unlike ethnic-Macedonian women, it was considered taboo for an ethnic-Albanian woman to see a psychiatrist, and any woman who did so, they said, would immediately be labelled by the community as mentally ill. They said that for an ethnic-Macedonian woman, seeking help from a psychiatrist was not considered taboo.

**“Going to a psychiatrist in our society is a taboo, and you are considered to be insane [if you do so].”**


**Female aged 35–50, ethnic Albanian, urban**

They also explained that while they were aware that a woman suffering from physical violence should go to the hospital, they did not think that many women from their community who had experienced violence did so. They explained that, instead, a woman would try to treat herself or would seek help from her birth family. In the rare case that she did go to the hospital, they said she would most likely lie about the cause of the injury. One of the reasons for this is fear that the doctor would report the incident to the police, and that this would cause further problems for the woman.

## 6. Impact of violence on women's lives and barriers to seeking support

**Table 6.6: Reasons victims did not contact the police**

Why did you not contact the police?



	Current partner	Previous partner	Non-partner
	%	%	%
Dealt with it myself/involved a friend/family matter	50	62	36
Too minor/not serious enough/never occurred to me	30	16	21
Fear of partner/offender	11	6	16
Shame/embarrassment	15	18	15
Did not think they would do anything	9	6	10
Did not think they could do anything	4	5	4
Didn't want anyone to know/kept it private	4	7	3
Could not contact police because of conflict	0	1	2
Went someplace else for help	4	6	2
Would not be believed	4	4	2
Thought it was my fault	4	6	2
Too emotionally upset to contact the police	3	4	2
Didn't want my partner arrested or to get in trouble with the police	3	11	-
Fear of reprisal from someone other than partner	1	2	1
Somebody else stopped me or discouraged me	1	0	1
Did not want the relationship to end	1	1	-
Afraid I would lose the children	1	-	-
My partner did not let me	1	0	-
Somebody else had reported it, or police came to know about it on their own	0	0	3
Other reason	2	0	5

**BASE:**  
All women in North Macedonia aged 18–74 who have experienced violence but who did not seek support from organizations following most serious incident: current partner (83), previous partner (46), non-partner (82)

**SOURCE:**  
OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

The reasons given for not contacting other services are similar to those given for not contacting the police.

Barriers to reporting for all ethnicities were discussed in some detail in the qualitative research. The common themes are detailed in Box 6.1 and discussed in more detail below.

### Box 6.1: Barriers to reporting identified in the qualitative research included:

1. **Shame** – either the shame of being assaulted by a non-partner or the shame of going against their partner.
2. **Financial reasons** – if a woman’s family does not take her in, then she would be unable to support herself and her children.
3. **Lack of information on services available** – women were unsure about where they could go for help.
4. **Mistrust of services** – low opinions of services, assuming that they will be unlikely to deliver a professional or useful response.
5. **Fear** – that the perpetrator will find out and this will make the violence worse.
6. **Lack of recognition of what counts as violence** – assumptions that most types of violence would not be taken seriously.

According to the women who took part in the qualitative research, shame was the most significant barrier to women reporting violence. The women interviewed said that if they confided in a female relative, such as their mother, she would encourage them not to report the violence formally because of the shame it would bring on the woman and her family. The shame seemed to be focused on the fact that a woman was expected to endure difficulties and not to leave her marriage.

**“Women are taught to be quieter and to endure injustices in order to protect their children. Any action taken by a woman in order to stop violence is seen as shameful.”**

**Female, survivor of violence, ethnic Albanian, urban**

Women could also face **financial barriers if they attempted to leave their partner**. According to the women who took part in the qualitative research, only a woman who was sufficiently financially independent would be able to leave her husband, and they expressed the belief that this would be unlikely given that women earn less than men and are less likely to own property or receive an inheritance. Even in cases where married couples have purchased property together, the woman has no legal claim to the property. This means that a woman would need to rely on her family to support her if she left her husband, and women cannot always count on this support.

**“He said ‘she is not allowed to come to my house any more’. [He said] I was stealing from him. How can I steal from my own house? I’m disabled and I work, plus I was beaten.”**

**Survivor of violence, ethnic Macedonian, disabled**

## 6. Impact of violence on women's lives and barriers to seeking support

The women who took part in the qualitative research seemed to have little **awareness of where they could go to receive support** (as noted above, awareness of the specialized support organizations asked about in the survey is poor). Women in rural areas expressed the belief that there were no women's support services available to them. Women in urban areas were aware of women's shelters, but they identified multiple barriers to using them. Primarily, they expressed the belief that shelters were only for emergency short-term support, which would mean that women who had been subjected to violence might still have to return to live with the perpetrator at some point, as they would have nowhere else to go. Some women also said they believed that shelter services were only accessible during the day, meaning they would not necessarily be open when they needed them. Some also questioned the security of these shelters, saying that their locations are public knowledge and that this put women at risk.

**“There is nowhere you can hide. You go to the social services, and the officials there will gossip about you, and the whole town will find out about you. They will tell a friend, that friend will tell another friend, that friend will tell your husband, and he will come and beat you up”**

**Female, aged 35–50, ethnic Macedonian, rural**

The women interviewed held a low opinion of professionals working in the relevant services (such as police or health professionals) and said they would be unlikely to report violence to them. This tended to be based on personal negative experiences or the experiences of people that they knew. They said that service providers would be unlikely to demonstrate sympathy for their situation or provide a useful response.

Roma women said that the police were highly unlikely to respond to a case of IPV in the Roma community. Some said they had experiences where the police accused them of wasting their time or making a fuss or of doing nothing to prevent IPV from happening again in the future.

**“There is a woman with six children who was beaten on many occasions and thrown out of her home. She went to the police two or three times, reported [her husband]. As soon as the police let him out ... you go report him, but the police do nothing ... he already made her bleed, broke everything ... but she has no one she can go to.”**

**Female, aged 20–40, Roma, urban**

Another key barrier was fear that **reporting violence would make the violence worse**. This was linked to a lack of trust in services based on assumptions that these services would be unlikely to maintain confidentiality if they required it. This would also prevent anyone reporting violence on someone else's behalf, as women expected that the perpetrator would be able to contact the police and find out who had reported them. This lack of confidentiality would put anyone who tried to report violence at risk from the perpetrator.

**“Society doesn't react ... fear prevents us from reacting, and our culture—in other countries they just call the police—but here if they find out who reported it, the person would be in danger as well.”**

**Female, aged 55–74, ethnic Macedonian, urban**

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: North Macedonia

More broadly, the women who took part in the qualitative research said there was a **lack of clarity within society as to what constituted violence**. They said that “minor” physical violence and sexual violence within a relationship were considered normal behaviour, and that psychological violence was not considered to be violence at all. The women expressed the belief that only serious physical violence that resulted in visible injuries might be taken seriously, but, they said, even that would depend on the attitudes of the individual they reported it to.

If a woman wanted to get help to leave her husband or partner, women in the qualitative research said that the best place to seek help would be from their family members. They said that a woman’s birth family would be the most likely source of practical and emotional support in this kind of situation, but only if the woman experienced serious physical violence. They expressed the belief that a woman would not receive any help to separate from her partner due to psychological, sexual or financial violence.

**“Some families would say she brought it on herself; others would say they have ‘no child to throw away’, and they would take their daughter back in with them.”**

**Female, aged 55–74, ethnic Macedonian, urban**

Even in cases of physical violence, participants said that a woman may not be able to rely on her birth family, as they may view IPV as normal and expect the woman to stay with her husband. The women interviewed said there was also a difference in terms of the level of responsibility that birth families felt that they had to their daughters, with some thinking that a family would not feel any obligation to their daughter once they were married, as they were then seen as part of a different family, the one they married into.

**“It is a well-known fact that men get the entire inheritance from their parents in our country. So, if a woman wants to leave an abusive marriage, she almost always has no property in her name to move into, and her parents are not always supportive, especially in the Muslim community. Therefore, because of the frightening idea of being homeless, women often decide to stay in an unhappy or even abusive marriage.”**

**Female, aged 18–34, ethnic Albanian, rural**

Survivors of violence who took part in the qualitative research said that they told no one about their experiences for a number of years. When they did finally tell someone, it was normally a family member in order to ask for practical support to leave a violent partner, or they told a friend for emotional support. Women only took this step after experiencing serious physical or sexual violence, sometimes over a number of years. Women who later reported their experiences to the police, the Centre for Social Work or an NGO did so with the encouragement of a friend or relative. No women went directly to a formal source of support without first sharing their experience with an informal source.

## 6. Impact of violence on women's lives and barriers to seeking support

### Reporting sexual harassment

Nearly half of those who have experienced sexual harassment did not speak to anyone about their experience (47%). They said that this was because they were able to deal with it themselves, told a friend or thought it was a family matter (68%) or because it was too minor or never occurred to them to tell anyone (32%).

For those who did talk about sexual harassment, the most common people to talk to were a family member/relative or a friend (both at 19%), followed by their partner/boyfriend (11%). Women's thoughts were not to reach out to services, the police or special support organizations.

### 6.4: Satisfaction with services

The low levels of reporting to police and other organizations limit the extent to which satisfaction with services can be evaluated. In terms of response from the police, among the few women who reported their most serious incident of sexual *harassment*, the number who were dissatisfied outweighs the number who were satisfied. In relation to the most serious incident of *non-partner violence*, opinions are more split, with 51% saying they were satisfied and 42% dissatisfied. These results echo to some extent the opinions expressed in the qualitative research regarding the effectiveness of support services.

Among the survivors of violence in the qualitative research who reported their experiences or sought formal help, satisfaction varied. Women who reported their experiences to the police tended to be dissatisfied with how this was handled, feeling that their complaint was either ignored completely or not followed up thoroughly enough. Women said police refused to look into an experience of violence because too much time had passed, they believed there was no evidence or simply because they arrived at the police station without identification.

Experiences involving the Centre for Social Work and NGO support tended to be more positive. In particular, women were grateful for the psychological support they had received to help them cope with their experiences. However, women expressed the belief that practical support, including longer-term housing, financial support or help with finding work, was lacking and that this acted as a significant barrier to women leaving violent relationships and beginning a new life.





# 7. Experiences of violence among specific groups of women

The survey collected a range of details from respondents in order to provide a more in-depth analysis of the extent to which violence is experienced by different groups of women. The purpose of this is to identify the prevalence and risk of experiencing violence among specific groups. This chapter focuses on significant differences in the reported experiences of all forms of violence, including sexual harassment among different groups of women.

### Age

Where there are differences by age, it is always younger women who share experiences of harassment and violence more often.

The indicated prevalence of non-partner physical violence since the age of 15 does not differ by age, although women aged 18–29 are more likely to indicate that they experienced violence in the 12 months prior to the survey than on average (4% versus 2%). While there are no differences observed in the prevalence of current partner physical and/or sexual violence, about twice as many younger women (18–39) indicate having had such experiences with their previous partner than do those over 40 (16% versus 9%) since the age of 15.

The indicated prevalence of psychological violence committed by partners is higher among young women. For example, more than half (53%) of women aged 18–29 who have ever had a partner say they have ever experienced some form of psychological violence by a current or previous partner compared with just a little over a third (36%) of those over 60.

Women aged 18–39 are more likely to say they have experienced some form of sexual harassment than women over 40. This is the case for both experiences since the age of 15 (40% versus 22%) and in the 12 months prior to the survey (17% versus 5%). It could be assumed that over a lifetime, older women would have been subjected to harassment at least as often as younger women now. That half as many older women say they have had one or more experiences of harassment than their younger counterparts could be an indication of shifting attitudes towards what is acceptable.

Incidents of stalking are also higher among the youngest age group, both since the age of 15 (11% versus 7% on average) and in the 12 months prior to the survey (5% versus 2%). As with sexual harassment, this could be a reflection of generational differences in attitudes towards these sorts of behaviours.

### Relationship status

The data has been analysed in terms of whether the respondent has a current partner (currently married, living together without being married or involved in a relationship without living together), has had a previous partner (same definitions as current partner) or has never had an intimate partner.

Women who have had a previous partner are more likely than those who have not to say they have experienced sexual harassment both since the age of 15 (49% versus 20%) and in the 12 months prior to the survey (18% versus 6%). They are also more likely to say they have experienced both physical and sexual forms of non-partner violence. Since the age of 15, 13% of women who have had a previous partner say they have experienced non-partner physical and/or sexual violence compared with 4% of those who have not had a previous partner. The indicated prevalence of non-partner physical and/or sexual violence in the 12 months prior to the survey is also higher among this group (4% versus 1%). Furthermore, women who have had a previous partner are more likely to say they have experienced physical violence at the hands of a current partner (9%) than those who have not had a previous partner (5%). The indicated prevalence of this in the 12 months prior to the survey does not differ.

### Education

In the survey, women were asked about the highest level of education that they have completed, and they were categorized into three groups: those with primary, secondary or tertiary education. About 8% of respondents have no formal education.

Sexual harassment is indicated much more often among those with higher education. More than a third (35%) of those with secondary education and 44% of those with tertiary education have had one or more such experiences since the age of 15. This compares with 13% of those who have no formal education or only primary education. Those with higher levels of education are more likely to say they have experienced stalking since the age of 15 (10% with tertiary education versus 1% with no formal education).

Non-partner physical violence is also more often disclosed by those with higher levels of education than on average, both since the age of 15 (9% among those with tertiary education versus 6% overall) and in the 12 months prior to the survey (4% versus 2%).

In contrast, those with lower levels of education are more likely to reveal that they have experienced current partner violence. Just over half of women who have no formal education say they have had at least one experience of psychological violence involving their current partner (52%) compared with 35% of those with tertiary education. Physical violence at the hands of a current partner is also more prevalent among those with no education than those with tertiary education (12% versus 4%).

### Employment status and occupation

Women who are in paid employment or self-employed (40%) or are students/in training<sup>59</sup> (47%) are significantly more likely than on average (30%) to say they have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15, while those whose main activity is fulfilling domestic duties are significantly less likely to do so (9%). There may be an element of age or education contributing to these differences, but it is also possible that employed women and students are more exposed to such behaviours if they are in the company of others more often.

Non-partner physical violence is also indicated more often by students, with 12% saying they have experienced this since the age of 15. This is higher than both the average prevalence (6%) and that indicated by those aged 18–29, the age group in which nearly all students fall.

The prevalence of current partner psychological violence is lower among employed women (35%) than on average and in particular compared with the unemployed, 50% of whom say they have had at least one experience, compared with 47% of those fulfilling domestic duties.

<sup>59</sup> Given the small base (n=52), caution should be applied when interpreting these findings.

## 7. Experiences of violence among specific groups of women

### Income

Women participating in the survey were analysed according to four income groups: those living comfortably on their present (household) income, those coping, those finding it difficult to get by and those finding it very difficult to get by. It was generally women in the last two categories, particularly those living in families most constrained financially, who say they experienced more violence.

Women who find it very difficult to live on their current household income are three to four times more likely to say they have experienced current partner physical and/or sexual violence than those who are living comfortably (20% versus 6%). The prevalence of current partner psychological violence is much higher among those finding it difficult live on their household income (57% versus 39% living comfortably) and the same is true for previous partner sexual violence (13% versus 1%, respectively).

### Minority groups

Women were asked if they considered themselves to be a part of an ethnic minority, an immigrant minority, a religious minority, a sexual minority, a minority in terms of disability, a refugee or displaced person, or a returnee ***in the place where they were living at the time of the survey***. Overall, 8% said they belonged to a local ethnic minority, and 6% said they were part of a religious minority (very few identified as being part of one of the other groups mentioned above). Comparing these two groups with the average or those who do not belong to a minority shows that those from an ethnic minority are more likely to have encountered non-partner physical and/or sexual violence, both since the age of 15 (12% versus 7% on average) and in the 12 months prior to the survey (5% versus 2%). In terms of partner violence, current partner psychological violence is more common (52% versus 42%), but the differences are insignificant otherwise.

Data was also ***analysed in terms of the language in which the survey was administered***, allowing for comparisons between Macedonian-speaking women and Albanian-speaking women.

Albanian-speaking women revealed lower levels of sexual harassment, stalking, childhood violence, non-partner violence and intimate partner physical violence. The indicated prevalence of intimate partner psychological and sexual violence are similar between Albanian-speaking and Macedonian-speaking women.

Roma women who participated in the qualitative research said that many types of physical violence were viewed as acceptable in the Roma community because a woman belonged to her husband and that it is a husband's right to slap his wife. They also said that some types of physical violence were seen as a sign of a fiery or passionate romance, especially in young couples, and that such behaviour could put a relationship in a positive light.

**Location**

The data was analysed according to whether women lived in an urban or rural setting. As seen in Table 7.1, the indicated prevalence of most forms of violence is higher among women living in urban areas than among women living in rural areas. For example, 37% of women living in an urban area indicate that they have been sexually harassed since the age of 15 compared with 18% of those living in rural areas. The prevalence of stalking, intimate partner physical violence and childhood violence is also higher among women in urban areas.

**Table 7.1: Prevalence of violence since the age of 15 (apart from childhood violence), by location**

	Urban %	Rural %
Sexual harassment	37	18
Non-partner physical violence	6	6
Non-partner sexual violence	2	1
Stalking	9	3
Intimate partner psychological violence	42	48
Intimate partner physical violence	10	6
Intimate partner sexual violence	3	3
Childhood violence	11	6

**BASE:** All women in North Macedonia aged 18–74 living in an urban setting (1,117) or a rural setting (793), or ever-partnered women in an urban setting (1,046) or rural setting (732)  
 Figures in red indicate a significant difference.

**SOURCE:** OSCE-led survey on violence against women (2018)

# Both physical and psychological violence is more commonly indicated among women whose partners have no formal education

### Women with or without children

Women without children have a significantly different experience of sexual harassment compared with women who do: 46% of women without children have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15 compared with 25% with children, and 22% of women who have children experienced sexual harassment in the 12 months prior to the survey compared with 7% of those who do not have children. Stalking is also more prevalent among those who do not have children (5% of those with children, compared to 13% of those without children). Similarly, 10% of women without children have experienced non-partner physical and/or sexual violence, which drops to 6% among their peers with children. The prevalence of current partner violence does not differ between those who do and do not have children, but previous partner physical violence is indicated more often by those who do not have children (15% versus 9% of those who do have children).

### Partner characteristics

Background information on the age, education, employment and certain experiences and behaviours of the respondent's partner were collected. Two areas where differences are fairly consistently seen in the indicated prevalence of violence are by partner education and the extent to which the partner drinks.

While the number of partners who have no formal education is small (base of 49), psychological violence is more commonly indicated by women whose partners do not have any formal education (66%) than on average (42%). In contrast, this figure drops to 34% among women whose partners have tertiary education. The same is also true for physical violence, both since the age of 15 (15% of those whose partners have no formal education versus 6% of those whose partners have at least primary education) and in the 12 months prior to the survey (7% versus 2%).

Women whose partners never get drunk seem less likely to experience intimate partner violence than those whose partners do, which applies to all forms of violence: psychological, physical and sexual.



# 8. Key conclusions and recommendations

The survey results and qualitative research point to three main conclusions and recommendations to address them in order to reduce violence against women in this country:

### **1) Violence against women is widely accepted as normal and is underreported**

According to the experiences disclosed by women in the survey, intimate partner violence has been experienced by nearly half (45%) of women. Almost one in ten (9%) women have experienced physical violence at the hands of a partner, and 44% have experienced psychological violence. However, the women in the qualitative research said that there is a lack of clarity in society as to what constitutes violence against women. Some forms of physical violence, such as slapping, and sexual violence in relationships are considered normal, while psychological violence is not perceived as violence at all. The women who took part in the research expressed the belief that some form of violence was present in almost every intimate partner relationship.

Nearly half (48%) of the women surveyed agree that domestic violence is a private matter, and almost three out of ten (28%) believe that violence is often provoked by the victim. Marital rape, which is considered normal, is also treated differently in legislation than rape by a stranger, with the Criminal Code requiring the victim to file a private complaint instead of prosecuting ex officio. Since the use or threat of force is required to prove rape, reporting is difficult for women, especially when committed in an intimate partner relationship.

Although one-third of women (32%) say they feel very well or well informed and 31% that they feel somewhat informed about what to do in case of violence, only 2% of survivors of current partner violence and 21% of survivors of previous partner violence reported the violence to the police. Barriers to reporting included shame, as well as a lack of trust in institutions. The experts who were interviewed also expressed the belief that the staff working in relevant services (police, social services and health professionals) had inadequate knowledge and understanding. The experts said that it was insufficient for personnel in the relevant services to attend a one-off training session on gender-based violence. Instead, the experts advocated a more systematic approach to improving the knowledge and working practices of professional services.

*In its 2018 Concluding Observations, the CEDAW Committee recommended the adoption of a comprehensive strategy to eliminate gender stereotypes and harmful practices against women. This strategy needs to address educational materials and engage the educational system, parents and civil society. The state should also review the gender-neutral provisions of the Law on the Prevention of, and Protection against, Domestic Violence to include gender dimensions of domestic violence. The Committee also urged the state to amend the Criminal Code to ensure that marital rape is prosecuted and that the definition of rape is based on lack of consent.*

## **2) Lack of shelters and sustainability of existing services**

The greatest unmet needs women in the survey identified were the lack of financial aid and long-term shelters. Both women and key experts in the qualitative research agreed that there were not enough women's shelters. While several new shelters have been opened where women can receive health and police support (sexual assault referral clinics), there is still a lack of centres that provide accommodation. Women's shelters are primarily located in larger cities and are not available across the country. Only about a third of the women surveyed are aware of the specialist support services that are available. Experts noted that not only are there not enough shelters, but that the capacity of individual shelters was often low as well.

Both experts and the women who took part in the qualitative research also commented on the sustainability of women's shelters, with one issue being that shelters that were funded purely by donations might not be sustainable in the long term. Experts advocated for funding from organizations such as the OSCE and the UN to ensure that these services could be provided on a consistent basis

The women interviewed also identified a number of additional barriers in accessing shelter services that should be addressed. These included ensuring that shelters could be accessed at any time, keeping the location of shelters confidential and improving the length and reach of services to make it more likely that a woman can leave a partner who has perpetrated violence against her.

*The CEDAW Committee recommended that the number of shelters be increased in all geographic areas and that women be ensured access to counselling, rehabilitation, medical and psychological support.*

## **3) Need for more support and targeted action to help women from minority groups and from rural areas**

The social attitudes and gender norms identified in groups of Albanian-speaking and Roma women were more traditional than in the general population. For example, 57% of Albanian-speaking women think their friends would agree that a good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees (compared to 37% generally), while they are also more likely to disagree that someone outside of the family should intervene in cases of violence (53% compared to 29% on average). That domestic violence is a private matter is a more commonly held belief among Albanian-speaking women (67%) than among Macedonian-speaking women (42%). Roma women who took part in the qualitative research said that most forms of violence are part of their everyday life. The wider acceptance of violence against women in these communities and treatment of violence as a private matter could hinder these groups of women from accessing and getting help. They are also more at risk because of attitudes on the part of service providers. The women who took part in the qualitative research also expressed the belief that women living in rural communities and/or not working and thus had no financial independence were more at risk due to their distance from support services. These women would be unlikely to have the means to seek support services in cities if they needed them.

*The CEDAW Committee noted the especially difficult position of minority women and urged the state to implement temporary and permanent measures in order to ensure education, employment, housing and access to health services for Roma women, as well as to promote tolerance and equal participation of Roma women in public life. In particular, it recommended addressing the intersecting forms of discrimination faced by Roma women, other minorities, women with disabilities and rural women.*



### **Recommendations**

The survey findings point to further specific recommendations to address violence against women:

#### ***Monitoring legislation and aligning it with the Istanbul Convention***

##### **For the parliament and the government:**

1. Adopt a new law on gender-based violence in line with the Istanbul Convention standards
2. Amend the relevant laws (family law, law on the police, law on health protection) to respond to the provisions of the new law on gender-based violence, once it has been adopted.
3. Change the Criminal Code to prosecute marital rape ex officio. Analyse if all other provisions in the Criminal Code are in line with Istanbul Convention standards.
4. Include data from the OSCE-led survey in the National Action Plan on the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention.
5. Create a specific role within institutions focusing on issues related to gender-based violence.

#### ***Co-operation, training and multisectoral approach***

##### **For the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy**

6. Ensure co-ordination between service providers and the integration of different services into a system of multi-stakeholder co-operation.
7. Provide social workers with training and awareness-raising events to help them change their own attitudes and behaviours towards violence against women and to ensure professional support for survivors.

##### **For the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Interior**

8. Implement ongoing, longer-term, sustained training on gender-based violence among service providers, including training on gender-based causes of violence against women, capacity-building, peer-to-peer training and training on soft skills (judiciary, Public Prosecutor's Office, judges, lawyers, together with social workers, healthcare workers and the police).
9. Provide systematic training on the new law on gender-based violence and its related and supporting laws as well as the amendments to the Criminal Code to be adopted in 2019.
10. Consider reaching out to the OSCE for more support on training and awareness raising for the judiciary and police officers.

***Specialized services for women, including for disadvantaged groups of women, and awareness-raising activities***

**For the government and Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in co-operation with NGOs**

11. Secure regular and sufficient government funding for women's shelters.
12. Ensure quality, consistency and accessibility of service at women's shelters  
Introduce subjects dealing with gender-based violence in the pre-school and primary-school curriculum.
13. Provide financial aid and long-term support, integration into employment services and housing for survivors of VAW and their children.
14. Ensure the provision of relevant services to disadvantaged groups of women, including minority women.
15. Implement awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and available support.
16. Implement localized information dissemination campaigns among disadvantaged groups of women and in their communities on how to prevent violence and where to seek support. These campaigns should be tailored to the target group and include local round tables, small group discussions and thematic craft workshops and social activities. Local prevention councils (citizen advisory groups) should be involved in awareness-raising and educational activities, as should local community leaders and local CSOs.

**For the Ministry of Education and Science**

17. Implement educational programmes in schools and preschools on gender stereotypes and healthy relationships, with a focus on gender equality.

## 8. Key conclusions and recommendations



# ANNEXES

## **Annex 1: Survey and qualitative fieldwork**

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) commissioned Ipsos to undertake a qualitative and quantitative study into violence against women in seven participating States<sup>60</sup> of the OSCE and in Kosovo.<sup>61</sup> This is the first comparative study of its kind in this area, and it is intended to be used to improve policy-making in future by both national and international stakeholders working on policy and programme implementation in the region. This report presents the findings for North Macedonia.

The key research questions for the project are as follows:

- What is the extent of violence experienced by women in non-conflict and in conflict situations?
- Which different forms of violence do women experience in non-conflict and in conflict situations?
- Who are the perpetrators of violence against women in non-conflict and in conflict situations?
- What are the consequences of violence?
- Do women report their experiences to the police or other authorities or organizations?
- Are there differences between women's experiences depending on their age, education, professional status, whether or not they have experienced conflict or if they can be defined as an internally displaced person or a migrant?
- What are the social attitudes towards VAW and VAW in conflict situations?

<sup>60</sup> Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine.

<sup>61</sup> All references to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text should be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244.

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: North Macedonia

The study comprises the following elements:

- A quantitative survey among a representative sample of 1,910 women aged 18 to 74 was conducted between 2 April and 1 August 2018.
  - A multistage, stratified, random probability sample was used. The sample frame, a list of polling station territories from 2016, was obtained from the State Election Commission of North Macedonia. This provided 99% coverage. The sample frame covered all territories in North Macedonia. Due to fieldwork practicalities, primary sampling units (PSUs) with fewer than 70 voters were excluded from the selection, as these were usually remote and secluded. They covered 1% of the population.
  - The sample frame was stratified by region and size of residential area. PSUs were then selected within each stratum with probability proportional to size. A total of 175 PSUs were selected, and a set number of addresses was selected within each sampled PSU with the aim of conducting 10 interviews within each PSU. Addresses were selected via a random walk approach at the same time that the interviews were conducted. When more than one household was identified at a selected address, one household was randomly selected using an electronic contact sheet. In each sampled household, one woman was selected for the interview. The respondent was selected randomly from the list of all eligible women in a selected household, i.e., all women aged 18–74 within the household were listed by age in descending order on the electronic contact sheet. Then the contact sheet randomly selected one of them using a random-number generator.
  - Interviews were conducted face-to-face by specifically trained female field workers (see Annex 2 below for more details on training and protocols).
  - The response rate achieved was 49%,<sup>62</sup> and the average actual eligibility was 91%. The weights were calculated in two stages: a) sampling design weights and b) post-stratification weights. The design weights reflected the probabilities of the selection of respondents, while post-stratification weights were calculated to compensate for non-responses. Region, urbanisation level and age categories were used for post-stratification.
  - Due to differences in methodology, sampling and questionnaire design, the results from this survey will not be directly comparable with other national surveys conducted in North Macedonia.
- Nine focus group (FG) discussions, including groups with women from minority ethnic groups and women with experience of conflict, which took place 12–22 June 2018.

<sup>62</sup> The response rate is calculated in accordance with the RR3 definition of response rates by the American Association for Public Opinion Research. See Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys, 7th edition (Oakbrook Terrace, IL: The American Association for Public Opinion Research, 2011), p. 46.

Table A1.1: Composition of focus groups

FG	Location	Number of participants	Age group	Ethnicity	Number conflict-affected	Number with children	Number working
1	Skopje	8	35–54	Macedonian	3	8	6
2	Bitola	8	35–54	Macedonian	0	8	6
3	Shtip	8	18–34	Macedonian	0	3	5
4	Skopje	8	18–34	Macedonian	1	3	3
5	Skopje	8	20–45	Roma	0	7	4
6	Skopje	8	20–45	Roma	0	5	2
7	Tetovo	8	35–54	Albanian	7	8	6
8	Tetovo	8	18–34	Albanian	3	2	4
9	Skopje	8	35–54	Macedonian	3	8	6

- Four in-depth interviews (IDI) with survivors of violence, including one woman with a disability, in August–September 2018.

Table A1.2: Profile of in-depth interview participants

IDI	Age group	Work status	Has children	Medical condition/disability
1	55+	Employed	Yes	No
2	55+	Works as a household cleaner (not officially employed)	Yes	Yes
3	18–34	Employed	No	No
4	18–34	Unemployed	Yes	No

- Five key expert interviews that were designed to provide an overview of issues related to VAW and of conflict-related acts of violence that took place in June–July 2017 and a further round of 10 key expert interviews that took place in June–August 2018 to explore changes since the first round and to gather recommendations for the OSCE.

## OSCE-led survey on violence against women: North Macedonia

The survey was designed to be nationally representative of women in North Macedonia aged 18–74. A breakdown by demographics is shown in Table A1.3.

**Table A1.3: Weighted and unweighted sample profile**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Weighted %</b>	<b>Unweighted %</b>	<b>Unweighted n</b>
18–29	21	13	254
30–39	20	17	326
40–49	19	19	360
50–59	18	24	460
60+	21	27	510
<b>Economic activity</b>			
In paid work	32	30	564
Self-employed	4	3	64
Helping in a family business (unpaid)	2	2	34
Unemployed	23	21	408
Pupil, student, in training	5	3	52
Not working due to illness or disability	0	1	11
Fulfilling domestic duties and care responsibilities	20	23	440
Retired	13	17	330
Compulsory military/community service/other	0.4	0.4	7
<b>Education</b>			
No formal education	8	9	171
Primary education	23	25	486
Secondary education	51	49	927
Tertiary education	19	17	326
<b>Location</b>			
Urban	63	58	1,117
Rural	37	42	793
<b>Directly conflict-affected</b>			
Yes	19	19	364
No	81	81	1,910



### Sampling tolerances

As the data is based on a sample rather than the entire population, and the percentage results (or estimates) are subject to sampling tolerance, not all differences between results are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. When calculating the confidence intervals, the effective sample size must be taken into consideration.

The effective sample size (or the design effect, a related concept) is linked to individual estimates, and so it will vary across estimates. To calculate the design effects for the total sample size a formula based on the following ratio was used:

Design effect = (unweighted sample size) \* (sum of the squared weights) / (square of the sum of weights).<sup>63</sup>

This approach to design effect estimation is related to disproportional sampling (in the case of the OSCE survey, the women in household were selected with unequal probability, depending on the number of eligible women in the household), as well as unequal nonresponse across population segments, which were corrected with post-stratification weights (as described above).

The table below summarize the design effect for the total sample size and conflict-affected sample size and provide confidence intervals based on the effective sample size for a survey estimate of 50%.

**Table A1.4: Effective sample sizes and confidence intervals**

	<i>N</i>	Design effect	Effective sample size	95% confidence interval for a survey estimate of 50% based on a weighted sample	
				Lower	Upper
All women aged 18–74	1,910	1.434	1,332	47.3%	52.7%
Women directly affected by conflict	364	1.515	240	43.7%	56.3%

<sup>63</sup> Leslie Kish, "Weighting for unequal PI", Journal of Official Statistics, 8 (1992): 183–200

### Annex 2: Ethical and safety considerations

Given the sensitivity of the survey, a number of steps were taken to protect both respondents and interviewers from potential harm and to provide sources of support in the event of distress:

- All interviewers and moderators were women who had experience conducting surveys on sensitive issues and who were native speakers of the language used for the interviews. All interviewers and moderators attended a two-day briefing.
- For the protection of both respondents and interviewers, interviewers were instructed not to disclose in advance that the survey was about violence, and to conduct the survey in private.
- At the end of the survey, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, all respondents were offered information on support organizations that they could contact should they wish to discuss any issues arising as a result of taking part in the survey.
- The project co-ordinator was available for interviewers and moderators to speak with at any time during fieldwork, and individual meetings with counsellors could be arranged if needed.
- Adherence to ethical principles is a cornerstone of the research methodology used for the OSCE-led survey, and the procedures used by the World Health Organization<sup>64</sup> and the United Nations *Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women*<sup>65</sup> were taken into account.

### Annex 3: Sustainable Development Goal Indicators

#### SDG Indicator 5.2.2: Proportion of women and girls aged 18–74 who were subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the 12 months prior to the survey, by age, area and education.

All women 18–74 years old (1,910)	0.1%
18–29 years old (254)	0%
30–39 years old (326)	0%
40–49 years old (360)	0.2%
50–59 years old (457)	0.4%
60+ years old (510)	0%
Residents of urban areas (1,117)	0.1%
Residents of rural areas (793)	0.2%
No/primary education (657)	0.2%
Secondary education (927)	0.1%
Tertiary education (326)	0%

64 Ethical and safety recommendations for intervention research on violence against women. Building on lessons from the WHO publication *Putting women first: ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence against women* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2016), accessed 12 February 2019, <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/251759/9789241510189-eng.pdf;jsessionid=8E35B9DA678667DD989016A395720263?sequence=1>

65 *Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women: Statistical Surveys* (New York: United Nations, 2014), accessed 14 February 2019, [https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/docs/guidelines\\_statistics\\_vaw.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/docs/guidelines_statistics_vaw.pdf)

**SDG Indicator 5.2.1: Proportion of women and girls aged 18–74 who have ever had a partner and who were subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the 12 months prior to the survey, by age, area and education.**

All women 18–74 years old (1,778)	13%
18–29 years old (201)	17%
30–39 years old (313)	15%
40–49 years old (315)	11%
50–59 years old (439)	12%
60+ years old (471)	8%
Residents of urban areas (1,107)	11%
Residents of rural areas (641)	15%
No/primary education (617)	15%
Secondary education (852)	13%
Tertiary education (309)	7%

Women were asked how often they had experienced different forms of psychological violence at the hands of their current partner: never, sometimes, often, or all of the time.

For previous partner violence, women were asked if they had ever experienced various forms of psychological violence. Threats of physical or sexual violence, as part of psychological violence, are the only forms of psychological violence recorded in the 12 months prior to the survey.

As such, a proxy has to be used to calculate SDG indicator 5.2.1, as follows:

- Women who experienced threats of physical or sexual violence at the hands of their current or previous partner in the 12 months prior to the survey
- Women who have experienced any of the other forms of psychological violence **often** or **all the time** at the hands of their current partner
- Women who experienced any of the forms of physical or sexual violence at the hands of their current or previous partners in the 12 months prior to the survey

Annex 4: Overview of key figures

Prevalence of violence

		Average	Macedonian-speaking women	Albanian-speaking women
Any psychological/physical/sexual violence at the hands of a partner or non-partner	Since the age of 15	44%	58%	42%
Any physical/sexual violence at the hands of a partner or non-partner	Since the age of 15	14%	16%	7%
	In the 12 months prior to the survey	4%	5%	2%
Non-partner violence	Since the age of 15	Physical: 6% Sexual: 2%	Physical: 7% Sexual: 2%	Physical: 3% Sexual: 0%
	In the 12 months prior to the survey	Physical: 2% Sexual: 0.1%	Physical: 2% Sexual: 0%	Physical: 0% Sexual: 0%
Intimate partner violence – any partner	Since the age of 15	Physical: 9% Sexual: 3% Psychological: 44%	Physical: 10% Sexual: 3% Psychological: 44%	Physical: 5% Sexual: 3% Psychological: 44%
	In the 12 months prior to the survey	Physical: 3% Sexual: 1% Psychological: 12%	Physical: 3% Sexual: 1% Psychological: 11%	Physical: 2% Sexual: 1% Psychological: 16%
Sexual harassment	Since the age of 15	Any: 30% Most severe forms: 17%	Any: 37% Most severe forms: 21%	Any: 9% Most severe forms: 4%
	In the 12 months prior to the survey	Any: 10% Most severe forms: 5%	Any: 12% Most severe forms: 6%	Any: 4% Most severe forms: 1%
Stalking	Since the age of 15	7%	8%	4%
	In the 12 months prior to the survey	2%	2%	2%
Violence during childhood (physical, sexual, psychological)	Up to the age of 15	Physical: 7% Sexual: 1% Psychological: 3%	Physical: 9% Sexual: 1% Psychological: 3%	Physical: 1% Sexual: 0% Psychological: 1%

### Consequences of the most serious incident

Non-partner violence	Emotional: 97% Psychological: 70% Physical: 42%
Intimate partner violence	Emotional: 93% Psychological: 55% Physical: 33%
Sexual harassment	Emotional: 97% Psychological: 31%
Stalking	Emotional: 93% Psychological: 34%

Reporting of the most serious incident	% of women who reported it themselves to the police	% of women who did not contact the police or another organization
Non-partner violence	28%	57%
Current partner	2%	81%
Previous partner	21%	65%
Sexual harassment	6%	N/A
Stalking	18%	N/A

### Attitudes and norms

% who agree that that their friends would generally agree that a good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees	37%
% who agree that their friends would generally agree that it is a wife's obligation to have sex with her husband even if she does not feel like it	19%
% who agree that violence against women by partners, acquaintances or strangers is common in the country	60%
% who agree that domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family	48%
% of women who agree that women are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know	30%
Proportion of conflict-affected women in the country <sup>66</sup>	19%

<sup>66</sup> Women considered conflict-affected are those who have lived in a situation where there was an active and armed conflict for a period of at least one week and answering "yes" to at least one of the questions listed on page 50 in Chapter 5.

## Annex 5. More detailed tables

Respondent characteristics<sup>67</sup>

		All women		Women who have ever had a partner	
		%	Number	%	Number
Residential area	Urban	63	1,194	63	1,107
	Rural	38	716	37	641
Age category	18–19	4	74	2	39
	20–24	8	152	6	111
	25–29	10	181	10	165
	30–34	10	193	11	186
	35–39	10	190	10	180
	40–49	19	370	21	359
	50–59	18	350	19	335
	60–69	15	283	15	268
	70–74	6	115	6	104
	75–79	0	2	0	2
Education	None	8	147	8	133
	Primary	23	432	24	411
	Secondary	51	975	50	874
	Tertiary	19	356	19	330
Do you have any children?	Yes, own children	78	1,480	31	125
	Yes, took care of step- or foster children	1	9	-	-
	Yes, both	2	33	2	8
	No	20	386	67	273
	Refused to say	0	2	1	2
Employment	In paid work	32	620	34	589
	Self-employed	4	69	4	68
	Helping in a family business (unpaid)	2	36	2	36
	Unemployed	23	432	22	388
	A pupil, student, in training	5	104	3	56
	Not working due to illness or disability	0	6	0	6
	Fulfilling domestic duties and care responsibilities	20	389	21	369
	Retired	13	248	13	229

67 The data presented in these tables is weighted.

Current job/occupation	All women		Women who have ever had a partner	
	%	Number	%	Number
Elementary occupations	12	86	12	83
Plant and machine operator and assembler	3	24	4	24
Building, crafts or a related tradesperson	5	34	5	33
Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery worker	5	38	6	38
Sales, customer or personal service worker	30	218	30	208
Clerical support	22	161	22	154
Technician or associate professional	10	71	10	68
Professional	10	69	9	65
Manager	3	19	2	16
Employed in a military capacity by the Armed Forces	0	1	0	1
Refused to say	0	2	0	2

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Attitudes

			A good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees		Women who say they were abused often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape		Violence against women is often provoked by the victim		Domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family		Women are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know	
			Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Total		%	37	61	30	61	28	66	48	50	30	55
		Number	712	1,157	582	1,158	532	1,256	919	963	581	1,045
Residential area	Urban	%	29	69	28	63	25	70	41	58	27	61
		Number	350	820	331	758	296	839	490	688	323	722
	Rural	%	51	47	35	56	33	58	60	38	36	45
		Number	362	336	251	401	237	417	429	275	259	323
Age	18–29	%	28	69	30	60	26	69	47	52	38	50
		Number	114	282	123	242	108	281	193	211	157	204
	30–39	%	29	69	26	65	25	71	42	57	28	59
		Number	110	264	100	247	96	271	160	217	106	225
	40–49	%	37	61	29	60	24	66	44	54	26	57
		Number	138	224	108	221	90	245	161	199	97	210
	50–59	%	45	53	36	59	29	65	52	47	28	59
		Number	158	186	125	205	100	226	184	164	98	206
60+	%	48	50	32	61	35	59	56	43	31	50	
	Number	192	201	126	242	139	233	221	172	124	199	
Education	None	%	76	22	33	58	40	55	67	31	38	44
		Number	112	32	49	85	59	81	98	46	56	65
	Primary	%	50	48	29	64	27	66	55	44	28	57
		Number	215	206	123	278	115	283	237	191	122	246
	Secondary	%	32	65	35	56	31	63	48	51	31	53
		Number	315	635	337	543	299	609	468	492	304	520
	Tertiary	%	20	80	20	71	17	80	33	66	28	60
		Number	71	283	72	252	59	283	117	234	100	214
Ever had a partner	Yes	%	37	61	30	61	27	67	48	51	30	55
		Number	648	1,065	528	1,069	479	1,163	838	889	525	968
Children	Yes	%	41	57	32	60	29	65	49	49	30	55
		Number	624	867	483	917	436	989	750	749	459	830
	No	%	22	75	25	62	24	69	43	55	32	56
		Number	87	290	97	241	94	267	167	214	123	214



		A good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees		Women who say they were abused often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape		Violence against women is often provoked by the victim		Domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family		Women are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know		
		Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	
<b>Total</b>	%	37	61	30	61	28	66	48	50	30	55	
	Number	712	1,157	582	1,158	532	1,256	919	963	581	1,045	
<b>Employment</b>	In paid work	%	26	72	29	64	24	72	38	60	30	58
		Number	160	446	178	395	150	445	235	374	187	361
	Self-employed	%	16	83	31	62	19	75	40	59	17	71
		Number	11	57	21	42	13	52	28	41	12	49
	Helping in a family business (unpaid)	%	52	48	47	32	21	60	53	47	17	62
		Number	19	17	17	11	8	21	19	17	6	22
	Unemployed	%	38	60	29	64	28	65	51	47	34	53
		Number	164	260	127	276	123	282	222	204	148	229
	Pupil, student, in training	%	11	83	16	62	17	77	36	61	26	57
		Number	11	86	17	64	17	79	37	64	27	59
	Not working due to illness or disability	%	72	28	13	72	22	63	77	23	38	28
		Number	5	2	1	5	1	4	5	1	2	2
	Fulfilling domestic duties and care responsibilities	%	60	39	33	57	34	57	63	36	34	47
		Number	232	151	128	222	132	221	247	139	133	184
	Retired	%	44	54	37	56	35	59	50	49	26	55
		Number	109	135	91	139	87	146	124	121	65	136
	Compulsory military service or other community service	%		100		100	23	77		100		100
		Number		2		2	1	2		2		2
	Other	%	56	44	64	36	12	89	64	12	33	42
		Number	2	2	3	2	0	4	3	0	1	2

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		A good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees		Women who say they were abused often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape		Violence against women is often provoked by the victim		Domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family		Women are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know		
		Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	
Total	%	37	61	30	61	28	66	48	50	30	55	
	Number	712	1,157	582	1,158	532	1,256	919	963	581	1,045	
Occupation	Elementary occupations	%	35	64	32	62	31	64	54	45	20	64
		Number	30	55	28	54	26	55	47	39	17	56
	Plant and machine operator and assembler	%	33	60	28	64	25	75	37	57	33	60
		Number	8	15	7	16	6	18	9	14	8	15
	Building, crafts, or a related tradesperson	%	21	79	41	55	32	68	29	71	27	69
		Number	7	27	14	19	11	23	10	24	9	23
	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery worker	%	44	56	25	70	8	80	31	69	8	77
		Number	17	21	10	27	3	31	12	26	3	29
	Sales, customer or personal service worker	%	25	73	33	60	26	71	42	57	32	55
		Number	55	160	72	130	57	155	90	125	70	119
	Clerical support	%	26	71	22	68	25	70	38	59	33	59
		Number	42	114	35	110	39	113	62	94	53	95
	Technician or associate professional	%	22	74	37	51	19	74	37	63	35	56
		Number	16	52	26	36	14	52	26	44	25	39
	Professional	%	16	84	23	69	19	76	25	76	19	66
		Number	11	58	16	47	13	52	17	52	13	45
	Manager	%	8	87	40	42	5	85	40	60	32	48
		Number	2	17	8	8	1	16	8	12	6	9
	Military	%	44	56	44	56	44	56	100		100	
		Number	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	

		A good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees		Women who say they were abused often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape		Violence against women is often provoked by the victim		Domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family		Women are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know		
		Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	
<b>Total</b>		%	37	61	30	61	28	66	48	50	30	55
		Number	712	1,157	582	1,158	532	1,256	919	963	581	1,045
<b>Household income</b>	Living comfortably on present income	%	33	65	30	62	29	66	54	46	33	54
		Number	175	352	161	335	154	354	289	246	177	291
	Coping on present income	%	37	61	31	59	28	64	46	52	29	55
		Number	306	511	260	496	235	533	388	433	243	461
	Finding it difficult on present income	%	39	59	32	59	27	68	44	54	28	57
		Number	138	213	116	212	97	245	156	195	100	203
Finding it very difficult on present income	%	56	42	25	67	28	67	48	51	34	52	
	Number	86	64	39	102	43	103	74	78	53	81	
<b>Bank account owner</b>	Yes	%	29	69	31	59	27	67	43	56	29	60
		Number	287	693	315	593	274	674	429	559	290	601
	No	%	47	51	29	62	29	64	54	44	32	49
		Number	418	455	262	555	255	570	482	396	286	438
<b>Conflict-affected</b>	Yes	%	42	57	32	58	31	64	60	39	37	48
		Number	149	202	113	205	112	229	215	139	130	171
	No	%	36	61	30	61	27	66	45	53	29	56
		Number	563	954	468	953	421	1027	704	824	451	874

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Prevalence of intimate partner violence (any partner)

		Partner or previous partner psychological violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner physical violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner sexual violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner psychological, physical or sexual violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner physical or sexual violence - Ever		
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
<b>Total</b>	%	56	44	91	9	97	3	55	45	90	10	
	Number	979	770	1,594	155	1,692	56	968	780	1,578	171	
<b>Residential area</b>	Urban	%	58	42	90	10	97	3	58	42	89	11
		Number	646	461	992	115	1,071	36	639	468	982	125
	Rural	%	52	48	94	6	97	3	51	49	93	7
		Number	333	309	601	40	621	20	330	312	596	46
<b>Age category</b>	18–29	%	47	53	91	9	97	3	47	53	88	12
		Number	147	168	286	30	304	11	147	168	278	37
	30–39	%	51	49	89	11	98	2	51	50	89	11
		Number	186	180	327	39	358	8	185	181	326	40
	40–49	%	57	43	91	9	96	4	56	44	90	10
		Number	203	156	327	32	344	15	201	159	323	36
	50–59	%	61	39	92	8	97	3	60	40	92	8
		Number	203	132	309	26	324	10	200	134	307	28
	60+	%	64	36	92	8	97	3	63	37	92	8
		Number	240	132	344	28	360	12	236	136	342	30
<b>Education</b>	None	%	51	49	87	13	96	5	50	50	87	13
		Number	68	65	116	17	127	6	67	66	116	17
	Primary	%	59	41	93	8	97	3	58	42	92	8
		Number	243	168	380	31	399	13	239	173	377	34
	Secondary	%	56	44	91	10	97	3	55	45	89	11
		Number	486	388	791	83	848	26	482	393	778	96
	Tertiary	%	55	45	93	7	97	4	55	45	93	7
		Number	181	148	306	23	318	11	181	148	306	23

			Partner or previous partner psychological violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner physical violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner sexual violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner psychological, physical or sexual violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner physical or sexual violence - Ever	
			No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
			%		%		%		%		%	
<b>Total</b>		%	56	44	91	9	97	3	55	45	90	10
		Number	979	770	1,594	155	1,692	56	968	780	1,578	171
<b>Children</b>	Yes	%	58	42	92	9	97	3	57	43	91	9
		Number	854	627	1,355	126	1,436	45	844	637	1,345	136
	No	%	46	54	89	11	96	4	46	54	87	13
		Number	123	142	236	29	254	11	123	142	231	35
<b>Employment</b>	In paid work	%	58	42	90	10	97	3	58	42	89	11
		Number	344	246	529	60	569	20	340	250	525	65
	Self-employed	%	66	34	92	8	100		64	36	92	8
		Number	44	23	62	5	68		43	25	62	5
	Helping in a family business (unpaid)	%	56	44	83	17	100		56	44	83	17
		Number	20	16	30	6	36		20	16	30	6
	Unemployed	%	47	53	89	12	95	5	47	53	86	14
		Number	184	205	344	45	368	20	182	206	336	53
	A pupil, student, in training	%	43	57	90	10	100		43	57	90	10
		Number	24	32	50	6	56		24	32	50	6
	Not working due to illness or disability	%	46	54	81	19	81	19	46	54	81	19
		Number	3	3	5	1	5	1	3	3	5	1
	Fulfilling domestic duties and care responsibilities	%	53	47	96	5	98	2	53	47	95	5
		Number	195	175	353	17	362	8	195	175	351	18
	Retired	%	71	29	93	7	97	3	69	31	93	7
		Number	162	67	214	15	222	7	158	71	212	17
Compulsory military service or other community service	%	100		100		100		100		100		
	Number	2		2		2		2		2		
Other	%	31	69	100		100		31	69	100		

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		Partner or previous partner psychological violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner physical violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner sexual violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner psychological, physical or sexual violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner physical or sexual violence - Ever		
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
		%		%		%		%		%		
<b>Total</b>	%	56	44	91	9	97	3	55	45	90	10	
	Number	979	770	1,594	155	1,692	56	968	780	1,578	171	
<b>Occupation</b>	Elementary occupations	%	57	43	86	14	94	6	53	47	86	14
		Number	47	36	72	11	78	5	44	39	72	11
	Plant and machine operator and assembler	%	73	27	100		100		73	27	100	
		Number	18	7	24		24		18	7	24	
	Building, crafts or a related tradesperson	%	85	15	95	5	100		85	15	95	5
		Number	28	5	31	2	33		28	5	31	2
	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery worker	%	54	46	89	11	96	4	54	46	89	11
		Number	21	18	34	4	37	1	21	18	34	4
	Sales, customer or personal service worker	%	58	42	88	12	97	3	58	42	86	14
		Number	121	87	182	26	202	6	120	88	178	30
	Clerical support	%	55	45	89	11	97	3	54	46	89	11
		Number	84	69	137	17	149	4	83	70	137	17
	Technician or associate professional	%	57	43	93	7	98	2	57	43	93	7
		Number	39	29	64	5	67	1	39	29	64	5
	Professional	%	65	35	90	10	96	4	65	35	90	10
		Number	42	23	59	7	63	3	42	23	59	7
	Manager	%	46	54	100		100		46	54	100	
		Number	8	9	16		16		8	9	16	
	Military	%		100	56	44	100			100	56	44
		Number		1	1	1	1			1	1	1

		Partner or previous partner psychological violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner physical violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner sexual violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner psychological, physical or sexual violence - Ever		Partner or previous partner physical or sexual violence - Ever		
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
		%		%		%		%		%		
<b>Total</b>		56	44	91	9	97	3	55	45	90	10	
	Number	979	770	1,594	155	1,692	56	968	780	1,578	171	
<b>Household income</b>	Living comfortably on present income	%	57	43	94	7	98	2	56	44	93	7
		Number	279	212	458	32	481	9	276	215	454	36
	Coping on present income	%	59	41	93	7	98	2	59	41	93	7
		Number	450	313	712	51	748	15	449	314	709	54
	Finding it difficult on present income	%	52	48	86	15	95	5	51	49	85	16
		Number	175	160	287	49	318	18	171	165	284	52
Finding it very difficult on present income	%	48	52	83	17	90	10	47	53	79	21	
	Number	66	71	113	23	122	14	64	73	108	29	
<b>Bank account owner</b>	Yes	%	62	38	90	10	96	4	61	39	89	11
		Number	581	353	843	91	900	34	572	362	833	100
	No	%	49	51	92	8	97	3	49	51	91	9
		Number	390	410	736	64	778	22	389	411	730	70
<b>Conflict-affected</b>	Yes	%	51	49	89	11	93	7	51	49	87	13
		Number	167	158	290	35	302	22	165	160	283	41
	No	%	57	43	92	8	98	2	56	44	91	9
		Number	812	612	1,304	120	1,390	34	804	620	1,294	129

## Current partner violence by current partner characteristics

			Partner psychological, physical or sexual violence - Ever	
			No	Yes
<b>Total</b>		%	58	42
		Number	875	641
<b>Current partner's age category</b>	15–29	%	51	49
		Number	94	91
	30–39	%	58	42
		Number	183	133
	40–49	%	54	46
		Number	183	154
	50–59	%	62	38
		Number	206	125
60+	%	61	40	
	Number	203	133	
<b>Current partner's employment</b>	In paid work	%	59	41
		Number	493	342
	Self-employed	%	54	46
		Number	95	81
	Helping in a family business (unpaid)	%	50	50
		Number	22	22
	Unemployed	%	63	37
		Number	100	58
	A pupil, student, in training	%	32	68
		Number	7	16
	Not working due to illness or disability	%	34	67
		Number	4	9
	Fulfilling domestic duties and care responsibilities	%	37	63
		Number	10	18
	Retired	%	62	38
		Number	142	87



		Partner psychological, physical or sexual violence - Ever			
		No	Yes		
<b>Total</b>	%	58	42		
	Number	875	641		
<b>Current partner's occupation</b>	Elementary occupations	%	47	53	
		Number	51	56	
	Plant and machine operator and assembler	%	56	44	
		Number	61	48	
	Building, crafts or a related tradesperson	%	55	45	
		Number	124	102	
	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery worker	%	48	52	
		Number	37	39	
	Sales, customer or personal service worker	%	66	34	
		Number	120	62	
	Clerical support	%	65	35	
		Number	91	49	
	Technician or associate professional	%	62	38	
		Number	58	36	
	Professional	%	67	33	
		Number	30	14	
	Manager	%	58	42	
		Number	30	21	
Military	%	18	82		
	Number	3	15		
<b>Education</b>	None	%	31	69	
		Number	15	33	
	Primary	%	58	42	
		Number	161	117	
	Secondary	%	57	43	
		Number	525	400	
	Tertiary	%	66	34	
		Number	174	91	
	<b>Earnings</b>	Partner earns less	%	52	48
			Number	25	23
Both earn roughly the same amount		%	66	34	
		Number	127	66	
Partner earns more		%	66	34	
		Number	188	95	

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			Partner psychological, physical or sexual violence - Ever	
			No	Yes
<b>Total</b>		%	58	42
		Number	875	641
<b>Current partner's alcohol consumption</b>	Never	%	62	38
		Number	733	457
	Less than once a month	%	47	53
		Number	123	138
	Weekly	%	33	68
		Number	9	19
	Most days/every day	%	12	88
		Number	2	18
<b>Current partner's drug use</b>	Never	%	58	42
		Number	874	633
	Less than once a month	%		100
		Number		2
	Weekly	%		100
		Number		1
	Most days/every day	%		100
		Number		2
<b>Partner ever fought in an armed conflict</b>	Yes	%	57	43
		Number	49	37
	No	%	58	42
		Number	814	591

## Non-partner violence since age of 15

			Non-partner physical violence - since age of 15		Non-partner sexual violence - since age of 15		Non-partner physical or sexual violence - since age of 15	
			No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Total</b>		%	94	6	99	2	93	7
		Number	1,793	117	1,882	28	1,774	136
<b>Residential area</b>	Urban	%	94	6	99	2	93	7
		Number	1,120	75	1,176	18	1,108	86
	Rural	%	94	6	99	1	93	7
		Number	673	43	706	10	666	50
<b>Age category</b>	18-29	%	95	5	98	2	93	7
		Number	385	22	401	7	379	29
	30-39	%	93	7	99	1	92	8
		Number	355	28	379	4	353	30
	40-49	%	94	6	98	2	94	6
		Number	349	21	363	7	346	24
	50-59	%	93	7	98	2	92	8
		Number	326	24	343	7	322	28
60+	%	95	5	99	1	94	6	
	Number	376	22	395	3	373	25	
<b>Education</b>	None	%	97	4	99	1	96	4
		Number	142	5	145	2	142	6
	Primary	%	93	7	99	1	93	7
		Number	403	29	430	2	401	31
	Secondary	%	95	5	98	2	93	7
		Number	923	52	958	17	910	64
	Tertiary	%	91	9	98	2	90	10
		Number	324	32	349	6	320	35
<b>Ever had a partner</b>	no	%	94	6	99	2	93	7
		Number	1,640	109	1,722	26	1,621	128
<b>Children</b>	Yes		94	6	99	2	94	7
		Number	1,437	85	1,499	23	1,423	99
	No	%	92	8	99	1	90	10
		Number	354	32	381	5	349	37

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		Non-partner physical violence - since the age of 15		Non-partner sexual violence - since the age of 15		Non-partner physical or sexual violence - since the age of 15		
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
<b>Total</b>	%	94	6	99	2	93	7	
	Number	1,793	117	1,882	28	1,774	136	
<b>Employment</b>	In paid work	%	94	6	98	2	93	7
		Number	581	38	609	10	575	44
	Self-employed	%	92	8	100		92	8
		Number	63	6	69		63	6
	Helping in a family business (unpaid)	%	94	6	99	1	93	7
		Number	33	2	35	0	33	3
	Unemployed	%	93	7	98	3	91	10
		Number	401	31	422	11	391	41
	Pupil, student, in training	%	88	12	100		88	12
		Number	91	12	104		91	12
	Not working due to illness or disability	%	81	19	81	19	81	19
		Number	5	1	5	1	5	1
	Fulfilling domestic duties and care responsibilities	%	97	3	100	0	97	3
		Number	376	12	387	2	376	12
	Retired	%	95	6	99	2	93	7
		Number	235	14	245	4	232	17
	Compulsory military service or other community service	%	100		100		100	
		Number	2		2		2	
	Other	%	100		100		100	
Number		4		4		4		

		Non-partner physical violence - since the age of 15		Non-partner sexual violence - since the age of 15		Non-partner physical or sexual violence - since the age of 15		
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
<b>Total</b>	%	94	6	99	2	93	7	
	Number	1,793	117	1,882	28	1,774	136	
<b>Occupation</b>	Elementary occupations	%	91	9	99	1	91	9
		Number	79	8	86	1	79	8
	Plant and machine operator and assembler	%	99	1	100		99	1
		Number	24	0	24		24	0
	Building, crafts or a related tradesperson	%	88	12	97	3	88	12
		Number	30	4	33	1	30	4
	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery worker	%	90	10	100		90	10
		Number	35	4	38		35	4
	Sales, customer or personal service worker	%	96	4	99	1	95	5
		Number	209	9	216	2	207	11
	Clerical support	%	93	8	100	0	92	8
		Number	149	12	160	1	148	13
	Technician or associate professional	%	96	4	94	6	90	10
		Number	68	3	67	4	64	7
	Professional	%	95	5	96	4	95	5
		Number	65	3	66	3	65	3
	Manager	%	85	15	100		85	15
		Number	16	3	19		16	3
Military	%	100		100		100		
	Number	1		1		1		

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			Non-partner physical violence - since the age of 15		Non-partner sexual violence - since the age of 15		Non-partner physical or sexual violence - since the age of 15	
			No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
<b>Total</b>		%	94	6	99	2	93	7
		Number	1,793	117	1,882	28	1,774	136
<b>Household income</b>	Living comfortably on present income	%	95	5	99	1	94	6
		Number	512	27	535	4	508	31
	Coping on present income	%	94	6	99	1	94	6
		Number	788	47	826	9	783	53
	Finding it difficult on present income	%	91	9	98	3	90	10
		Number	328	31	350	9	323	36
Finding it very difficult on present income	%	92	8	96	4	89	11	
	Number	141	12	147	6	137	17	
<b>Bank account owner</b>	Yes	%	94	6	98	2	92	8
		Number	940	63	985	18	927	76
	No	%	94	6	99	1	93	7
		Number	838	53	882	10	832	60
<b>Conflict-affected</b>	Yes	%	92	8	98	2	91	9
		Number	329	27	347	8	325	31
	No	%	94	6	99	1	93	7
		Number	1,464	90	1,535	20	1,449	106

## Sexual harassment and stalking

		Sexual harassment – since the age of 15		The most severe forms of sexual harassment - since the age of 15		Stalking - since the age of 15		
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
		%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	
<b>Total</b>		70	30	83	17	93	7	
		1,344	566	1,592	318	1,779	131	
<b>Residential area</b>	Urban	63	37	79	22	91	9	
		756	439	938	256	1,083	111	
	Rural	82	18	91	9	97	3	
		588	128	654	62	696	20	
<b>Age category</b>	18–29	58	42	75	25	89	11	
		236	171	305	102	362	46	
	30–39	62	38	84	16	94	7	
		239	145	321	62	358	25	
	40–49	75	25	88	12	93	8	
		276	94	324	45	342	28	
	50–59	78	22	84	16	96	4	
		273	77	294	56	335	15	
	60+	80	20	87	13	96	5	
		320	79	346	52	380	18	
	<b>Education</b>	None	88	12	92	8	99	2
			130	17	136	12	145	2
Primary		87	13	93	7	97	3	
		376	57	403	29	420	12	
Secondary		66	35	81	19	92	8	
		638	337	790	185	893	82	
Tertiary		56	44	74	26	90	10	
		200	156	263	92	320	36	
<b>Ever had a partner</b>		70	30	83	17	94	7	
		1,228	521	1,456	293	1,635	114	
<b>Children</b>	Yes	75	26	87	14	95	5	
		1,134	387	1,316	206	1,440	81	
	No	54	46	71	29	87	13	
		208	178	274	112	337	49	

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				Sexual harassment - since the age of 15	The most severe forms of sexual harassment - since the age of 15	Stalking - since the age of 15		
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
<b>Total</b>	%	70	30	83	17	93	7	
	Number	1,344	566	1,592	318	1,779	131	
<b>Employment</b>	In paid work	%	60	40	78	22	90	10
		Number	373	246	484	135	558	62
	Self-employed	%	59	42	77	23	100	
		Number	40	29	53	16	69	
	Helping in a family business (unpaid)	%	85	15	93	7	100	
		Number	30	5	33	3	36	
	Unemployed	%	67	33	82	18	94	6
		Number	291	142	356	76	405	27
	A pupil, student, in training	%	53	47	70	30	83	17
		Number	55	49	72	31	86	18
	Not working due to illness or disability	%	81	19	81	19	100	
		Number	5	1	5	1	6	
	Fulfilling domestic duties and care responsibilities	%	91	9	96	4	97	3
		Number	353	36	373	16	378	11
	Retired	%	76	24	84	16	95	5
		Number	190	59	208	40	235	13
	Compulsory military service or other community service	%	100		100		100	
Number		2		2		2		
Other	%	100		100		100		
	Number	4		4		4		



		Sexual harassment - since the age of 15		The most severe forms of sexual harassment - since the age of 15		Stalking - since the age of 15		
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
<b>Total</b>	%	70	30	83	17	93	7	
	Number	1,344	566	1,592	318	1,779	131	
<b>Occupation</b>	Elementary occupations	%	63	37	83	17	95	5
		Number	54	32	72	14	82	4
	Plant and machine operator and assembler	%	67	33	85	16	96	4
		Number	16	8	21	4	23	1
	Building, crafts or a related tradesperson	%	67	33	89	11	99	1
		Number	23	11	30	4	33	0
	Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery worker	%	87	13	87	13	97	3
		Number	33	5	33	5	37	1
	Sales, customer or personal service worker	%	62	38	84	16	91	9
		Number	135	83	183	35	199	19
	Clerical support	%	59	41	68	32	86	14
		Number	94	67	109	52	138	23
	Technician or associate professional	%	63	37	80	21	94	6
		Number	45	26	56	15	67	4
	Professional	%	46	54	68	33	87	13
		Number	32	37	46	22	60	9
	Manager	%	55	46	90	10	100	
		Number	11	9	17	2	19	
Military	%	56	44	56	44	100		
	Number	1	1	1	1	1		

OSCE-led survey on violence against women: North Macedonia

				Sexual harassment - since the age of 15	The most severe forms of sexual harassment - since the age of 15	Stalking - since the age of 15		
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	
<b>Total</b>	%	70	30	83	17	93	7	
	Number	1,344	566	1,592	318	1,779	131	
<b>Household income</b>	Living comfortably on present income	%	73	27	84	16	95	5
		Number	393	146	451	89	512	27
	Coping on present income	%	71	30	85	15	94	6
		Number	589	246	706	129	781	54
	Finding it difficult on present income	%	68	33	81	19	89	11
		Number	242	117	292	67	319	40
Finding it very difficult on present income	%	64	36	79	21	93	7	
	Number	99	55	122	32	143	10	
<b>Bank account owner</b>	Yes	%	65	35	81	19	92	8
		Number	649	354	813	190	927	76
	No	%	76	24	86	14	94	6
		Number	680	212	764	128	837	55
<b>Conflict-affected</b>	Yes	%	73	28	86	14	93	7
		Number	258	98	305	50	331	25
	No	%	70	30	83	17	93	7
		Number	1,086	469	1,287	268	1,448	106

### Annex 6: Acknowledgements

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