



## ACTION COALITION ON GENDER BASED VIOLENCE: ACCELERATING EFFORTS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

### The Issue

Gender based violence (GBV) is a widespread and persistent global issue affecting more than an estimated 1 in 3 women<sup>1</sup>, a figure that has remained largely unchanged over the last decade.<sup>2</sup> The most recent global estimates showed that, on average, more than five women or girls are killed every hour by intimate partners or other family

members.<sup>3</sup> Women and girls in all their diversity may experience multiple and intersecting forms of GBV in their lifetime including emotional, economic, physical, and sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, child, early and forced marriage, and sexual exploitation linked to human trafficking.

### What is the Action Coalition on GBV doing to prevent VAWG?

Through its comprehensive blueprint, and emphasis on multistakeholder partnerships which centers women's rights movements, the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence (GBV) is mobilizing all stakeholders to take concerted action and deliver transformative change for women and girls worldwide through four concrete actions focused on laws and policies, prevention, survivor-centered services and enhancing support to women's rights

organizations. **Action 2** of the [blueprint of the Action Coalition on GBV](#) is focused on **scaling up the implementation and financing of evidence driven prevention strategies** by public and private sector institutions and women's rights organizations to drive down prevalence of gender-based violence against women, adolescent girls and young women in all their diversity, including in humanitarian settings.

### The Action Coalition on GBV is calling for:

- Sustained political commitment and greater investments in effective prevention strategies through domestic financing, official development assistance, private and philanthropic financing to drive down the prevalence of gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity including in humanitarian settings;
- A whole-of-government approach to ending violence against women and girls to bring positive and sustainable results at scale through multi-sectoral budgeting including through health, education, social protection amongst other sectors;
- Adoption and implementation of laws and policies that address discrimination and inequalities to ensure there is an enabling environment for change to take place;
- Prevention of violence against women and girls through transforming social and gender norms, attitudes, beliefs, harmful masculinities and harmful practices;
- Ensuring that schools and educational institutions are safe, including through gender-sensitive curricula and comprehensive sexuality education; and
- Increased investments in women's rights movements and long-term, core and flexible funding to women's rights organizations.

**We invite partners and key actors to join the Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence to accelerate our joint work and step-up efforts to prevent and eliminate GBV.**

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ACTION COALITION PLEASE VISIT THE [WEBSITE HERE](#). PLEASE REGISTER YOUR INTEREST IN MAKING A [COMMITMENT HERE](#).**

# ACCELERATING EFFORTS TO PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

## The Issue

Gender based violence (GBV)<sup>4</sup> is a widespread and persistent global issue affecting more than an estimated 1 in 3 women<sup>5</sup>, a figure that has remained largely unchanged over the last decade.<sup>6</sup> The most recent global estimates showed that, on average, more than five women or girls are killed every hour by intimate partners or other family members.<sup>7</sup>

Women and girls in all their diversity may experience multiple and intersecting forms of GBV in their lifetime including emotional, economic, physical, and sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, child, early and forced marriage, and sexual exploitation linked to human trafficking. Women and girls experience violence in private and public spaces and in online or digital contexts. Women human rights defenders, feminist activists, and peace builders, as well as women who participate in politics, are often targeted. Women and girls in conflict, crisis and humanitarian, and climate change contexts are disproportionately vulnerable to various forms of GBV. For instance, in many emergency settings, incidences of sexual and gender-based violence increase, including intimate partner violence, early and forced marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse and trafficking.<sup>8</sup> GBV against women and girls in all their diversity can negatively affect women's physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health. It also affects women's full and active participation in the labour market, seriously impacting women in the formal and informal sectors. GBV also comes at significant economic cost to societies and economies. The cost of violence against women and girls (VAWG) globally was estimated at approximately US1.5 trillion.<sup>9</sup> The perpetration of GBV is deeply rooted in structural, social and gender norms, attitudes and beliefs that impact interpersonal relationships, families, communities, and institutions. Data shows that more than a quarter of the world's people believe that it is justifiable for a man to beat his wife. Social norms that support men's social or physical control over women (including over their assets) can increase the risk of intimate partner violence or sexual violence.<sup>10</sup>

The current climate of patriarchal backlash against women's rights, limited political will and political decisions that actively regress on the progress made on women's rights, as well as insufficient financial investments to end GBV against women and girls in all their diversity, serve as significant barriers to progress on gender-equality.

Despite the scale of the problem and these worrying trends, there is also more evidence than ever before that GBV against women and girls is preventable. Growing global evidence indicates that investments in

## SINCE THE PANDEMIC BEGAN...



45% of women reported that they or a woman they know has experienced a form of VAWG.



7 in 10 women said they think that verbal or physical abuse by a partner has become more common.



6 in 10 felt that sexual harassment in public spaces has worsened.

UN Women (2021). *Measuring the shadow pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19*.

## FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS TO GBV PREVENTION REMAIN LIMITED

Prevention accounts for only 0.19% of overall aid and development spending in 2022. Over the last five years, ODA spending on VAWG has fallen by 13%.

*Preliminary OECD data 2022* (April 2023), Official Development Assistance.

sustained multi-year, evidence-driven prevention strategies can drive down prevalence of GBV against women and girls within programme time frames. Well designed and implemented projects can reduce intimate partner violence by over 50%, as demonstrated by the UK's What Works to Prevent VAWG research programme.<sup>11</sup> Evidence summaries from the What Works programmes and the [RESPECT Women: Preventing VAW Framework](#) show that effective prevention programmes are developed based on an understanding of the range of risk factors and contexts that causes violence; employ multilevel approaches to address multiple drivers of violence; and are linked to women's rights organizations' efforts to learn, innovate, and scale what works to prevent violence. Effective approaches include combined economic and social empowerment interventions that take a gender transformative approach; community activism to shifting harmful social norms and supporting survivors; school-based interventions to shape norms around gender, relationships and the use of violence; cash transfers and gender-transformative group-based parenting and couples programmes.<sup>12</sup>

## What is the Action Coalition on GBV doing to prevent VAWG?

Generation Equality is the world's leading effort to unlock political will and increase investment and implementation on gender equality to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the commitments outlined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Through its comprehensive [blueprint](#), and emphasis on multistakeholder partnerships which centres women's rights movements, the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence (GBV) is mobilizing governments, civil society, women's rights and youth led organizations, international organizations, philanthropies and the private sector to take concerted action and deliver concrete change for women and girls worldwide, through four concrete actions: (1) Creating enabling policy, legal and resource environments; (2) Scaling up evidence driven

prevention programming; (3) Scaling up comprehensive, accessible and quality services for survivors; and (4) Enabling and empowering autonomous girl-led & women's rights organizations to exercise their expertise. These actions can be cross-thematically linked with actions of other Action Coalitions particularly Economic Justice and Rights, Feminist Action for Climate Justice, and Feminist Movements and Leadership Action Coalitions.

**Action 2** of the blueprint of the Action Coalition on GBV is focused on **scaling up the implementation and financing of evidence driven prevention strategies** by public and private sector institutions and women's rights organizations to drive down prevalence of gender-based violence against women, adolescent girls and young women in all their diversity including in humanitarian settings.

### Targets of the Action Coalition on GBV:



Increase by 50% the number of countries that include one or more evidence-driven prevention strategies on gender-based violence against women and girls in national policies by 2026.



Increase by 25% the number of people who endorse gender equitable beliefs in every country by 2026.



Increase investment in evidence-driven prevention strategies by \$500 Million USD by 2026.



100 national governments revise and strengthen school and teacher training curricula to include effective approaches to prevent GBV and promote gender equality and respectful relationships by 2026.



Prevent 8 million cases of female genital mutilation by 2026 and the child, early and forced marriages and unions of 9 million girls and adolescents by 2026.

### Intersectional approach:

Multiple factors related to gender inequality need to be addressed to prevent VAWG. One of the guiding principles of the [RESPECT Framework](#) to prevent VAWG is to leave no one behind by addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination based on sex, gender, class, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity that are experienced by many women and girls. Furthermore, for effective prevention programming, another guiding principle is to use participatory approaches to stimulate personal reflection and

critical thinking, and build on the voice, agency, and skills of people in all their diversity.

Therefore, an intersectional, evidence-driven approach is consistently integrated into the Action Coalitions on GBV efforts to prevent and to drive down prevalence of gender-based violence against women, adolescent girls, and young women in all their diversity.

### To achieve the blueprint targets, the Action Coalition on GBV is calling for:

- **Sustained political commitment and greater investments in effective prevention strategies through domestic financing, official development assistance, private and philanthropic financing to drive down the prevalence of gender-based violence against women and girls in all their diversity including in humanitarian**

**settings.** Despite growing evidence of what works in preventing gender-based violence against women and girls there continues to be inadequate funding to drive sustainable change at scale. As highlighted in the [RESPECT framework](#), there are a growing number of approaches which have led to reductions in men's perpetration

of and women's experience of violence by addressing the root causes of violence, there now needs to be increased investment to adapt and scale up evidence-based interventions.<sup>13</sup>

- **A whole of government approach to ending violence against women and girls to bring positive and sustainable results at scale through multi-sectoral budgeting including through health, education, social protection amongst other sectors.** In order to address the multiple and intersecting factors that underpin violence against women and girls, a coordinated approach is required to bring different prevention initiatives under one overarching framework, involving relevant sectors including, but not limited to, education, health, social protection, economic, legal, justice, socio-cultural, and media. As highlighted in "[Together for prevention: Handbook on multisectoral national action plans to prevent violence against women and girls](#)", a whole of government approach is key to reaching people across society in different settings where they live, work, learn, socialize and play, and can ensure a coordinated and strategic approach under one shared vision. According to ODA data for 2021, prevention of GBV sits low on the list of priorities for donors, accounting for only USD387 million, compared to USD14.38 billion spent on health, USD10.12 billion on education, and USD1.84 billion on social protection aid and development.<sup>14</sup> In order to achieve an impact at scale for prevention, it is critical that all relevant sectors commit sectoral resources for prevention.
- **Adoption and implementation of laws and policies that address discrimination and inequalities to ensure there is an enabling environment for change to take place. 55 per cent of countries lack laws that explicitly prohibit direct and indirect discrimination against women.**<sup>15</sup> Discriminatory laws and policies contribute to and perpetuate unequal power relations between women and men, such as unequal inheritance or family laws that favor men over women. Efforts by governments to establish legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality, specifically to provide women with protection against violence, are lagging in many regions of the world. More than four in five women and girls (86 per cent) are living in countries without robust legal protection, or in countries for which data are not readily available.<sup>16</sup> This signals the need for urgent action by countries to develop and pass laws and policies consistent with global standards to ensure accountability for GBV and guarantee women's fundamental human rights.

55 per cent of countries lack laws that explicitly prohibit direct and indirect discrimination against women.

Over 60% of countries lack rape laws based on the principle of consent (SG Report 2022).

- **Prevention of violence against women and girls through transforming social and gender norms, attitudes, beliefs, harmful masculinities and harmful practices.** These transformative shifts needed to occur at scale and at different levels -individual, interpersonal, community and societal- including within government institutions coupled with essential services and support for survivors. Social norms change requires a whole-of-population approach with engagement of and coordinated efforts from key stakeholders, such as traditional and religious bodies, media, sport organizations, informal and formal education agencies, to promote gender equitable beliefs, behaviours, and practices. Evidence shows that well-designed community-based interventions, delivered over longer-periods, aimed at changing social norms can reduce experience of intimate partner violence. For example, a randomized control trial of the Safe Homes and Respect for Everyone (SHARE) Project in Uganda showed a 20% reduction in women's reports of past year physical and sexual IPV three years after baseline.<sup>17</sup>
- **Ensuring that schools and educational institutions are safe, including through gender-sensitive curricula and comprehensive sexuality education.** The fear of violence is a barrier to school attendance for girls in many countries.<sup>18</sup> Preventing gender-based violence against women and girls needs to start at an early age through whole of school approaches that promote gender equality, challenge gender stereotypes, and foster equitable norms, attitudes, and beliefs.
- **Increased investments in women's rights movements and long-term, core and flexible funding to women's rights organizations.** Elevating the powerful role of women's rights movements and activists is the single most effective strategy in preventing gender-based violence against women and girls.<sup>19</sup> The current climate of patriarchal backlash against women's rights, limited political will and political decisions that actively regress on the progress made on women's rights, as well as insufficient financial and other investments to end GBV against women and girls in all their diversity, serve as significant barriers to progress on gender-equality and ending gender-based violence against women and girls. Women's rights organizations and feminist movements across the world are struggling to raise funds for prevention work in their communities, alongside movement building, service delivery, and advocacy. According to the OECD's analysis, 99% of gender-related ODA fails to reach local WROs and feminist movements.<sup>20</sup> Only about 5 per cent of the total OECD funding for VAWG is allocated to civil society organizations.<sup>21</sup>
- The Black Feminist Fund reported that only 0.75% of human rights funding is being channeled to ending violence for Black women, girls and trans people.<sup>22</sup>

2023 is the midpoint of the Generation Equality journey and more momentum is imperative to scale up evidence-driven prevention of GBV, including through new financial investments and transformative commitments.

We are excited and energized to step up efforts and call upon partners and key actors to join the Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence to accelerate our joint work and make strong progress towards GBV prevention as we reach the midpoint moment of our journey.

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ACTION COALITIONS PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE [HERE](#). PLEASE REGISTER YOUR INTEREST IN PLEDGING A COMMITMENT [HERE](#).**



You can make a commitment to prevent violence against women or join the Collective Commitment on Prevention of GBV by making FINANCIAL, POLICY, PROGRAMMATIC or ADVOCACY commitments.

## Examples of game-changing prevention initiatives under the Action Coalition on GBV



### ENABLING PREVENTION SYSTEMS AND NETWORKS

- Australia committed AUD 1.1B to prevent and respond to violence against women and their children. It includes targeted measures to prevent violence, deliver frontline and response services, provide financial support for women leaving violent relationships, improve data collection and monitoring, enhance our justice system, and improve online safety to support women and girls in their diversity.
- The European Commission, co-leader of the Action Coalition on GBV, has established an EU network on the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence, bringing together EU Member States and stakeholders to exchange good practices, and will provide funding for training, capacity-building, and support services.
- Uruguay is working to deepen knowledge on GBV through a third Survey on the “Prevalence of Gender Based Violence and Generations”, as well as to develop a national comprehensive strategy on gender equality as a tool for the prevention of GBV, with special emphasis on children and adolescents in formal and informal education settings.
- Iceland and UN Women committed to enhance work in the areas of masculinities and engaging men and boys. The action is focused on enhancing UN Women’s work on prevention and response to GBV through engaging men and boys and transforming harmful masculinities. The two mutually reinforcing and complementary areas of work include: internal capacity on engaging men and boys and masculinities; engaging men and boys in advocacy and mobilization by scaling the movement to localize the global campaign to a network of in-country and regional campaigns; and prevention of GBV through male engagement and Generation Equality Action Coalitions Leadership.
- The UK is scaling up proven approaches to prevent gender-based violence through the flagship What Works to Prevent Violence: Impact at Scale programme investing up to £67.5m. This is the

first global effort to systematically scale-up violence prevention efforts globally. It will scale-up evidence-based violence prevention approaches; pioneer new scalable solutions in areas where evidence is lacking, such as in conflict and humanitarian settings, for adolescent girls, and for marginalised groups, such as women with disabilities; drive evidence-led practice through world class research and rigorous evaluations of scale-up and innovation interventions; strengthen long-term capability and capacity to deliver cutting-edge VAWG prevention across the UK government and globally; and use evidence to influence a more effective scaled-up global response.



### EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO TRANSFORM SOCIAL NORMS

- ABAAD - Resource Center for Gender Equality (MENA) committed to prevent and respond to gender inequalities, including systemic work with government administrations through engagement with the ministry of education to review and engender the education system in Lebanon and building and influencing social norms in terms of gender equality.
- Mongolia committed to improve and enhance the GBV prevention system, services, and victim protection in rural areas. The government is scaling up implementation of community and school-based behavioral change communication strategies and actions both nationally and locally; develop and improve both mandatory and voluntary behavior change programs for social workers, law enforcement officers, psychologists and psychotherapists dealing with male perpetrators; as well as strengthen civil society organizations capacity on men's training programs; among other actions.



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Shobujer Ovijan Foundation (Bangladesh) is raising awareness of preventive actions that should be taken as a society to reduce overall harmful practices against women and girls. This includes

arranging educational forums and workshops among groups that are vulnerable to gender-based violence

- Swayam (India) committed to implementing context specific strategies to prevent violence against women and girls at inter-personal, family, community, institutional and societal levels; build leadership capacities of adolescent girls and young women to prevent harmful practices against them including child, early

and forced marriage; build knowledge and capacity of men and boys and actively engage them as agents of change in promoting gender equality and eliminating GBV against women and girls in their communities; include economic empowerment strategies as components of GBV prevention and response; build capacities and leadership of community women's joints to access their rights, prevent GBV against women and girls and intervene in cases of GBV in their communities.

## Endnotes

- 1 Across their lifetime, 1 in 3 women, around 736 million, are subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner, non-partner or both (Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates), however, this figure would be even higher if it included the full continuum of violence that affects women and girls including sexual harassment, violence in digital contexts, harmful practices and sexual exploitation.
- 2 WHO (2021) Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates.
- 3 UNODC (2022) Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide). [Global estimates of gender-related killings of women and girls in the private sphere in 2021 Improving data to improve responses.](#)
- 4 The definition of Gender-Based Violence for the purpose of the Action Coalition is "violence which is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately"iv. Recognizing that genderbased violence affects women and girls in all their diversity, the Action Coalition on GBV adopts the definition of gender-based violence derived from the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life"
- 5 Across their lifetime, 1 in 3 women, around 736 million, are subjected to physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner, non-partner or both (Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates), however, this figure would be even higher if it included the full continuum of violence that affects women and girls including sexual harassment, violence in digital contexts, harmful practices and sexual exploitation.
- 6 WHO (2021) Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates
- 7 UNODC (2022) Gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide/feminicide). [Global estimates of gender-related killings of women and girls in the private sphere in 2021 Improving data to improve responses.](#)
- 8 UN Women (2020), 'Who Holds the Microphone?' [Crisis-Affected Women's Voices on Gender-Transformative Changes in Humanitarian Settings: Experiences from Bangladesh, Colombia, Jordan and Uganda](#)
- 9 UN-Women (2020), [COVID-19 and ending violence against women and girls.](#)
- 10 UNDP (2023), [Gender Social Norms Index – Breaking down gender biases: Shifting social norms towards gender equality.](#)
- 11 What Works to Prevent Violence (2022), [Tipsheet 1: What is prevention?](#)
- 12 [FCDO International Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2030.](#)
- 13 UN Women, World Health Organization (2020) [RESPECT Women: Preventing violence against women – Implementation package.](#)
- 14 OECD, [Creditor Reporting System](#) as accessed on 15 July 2023.
- 15 United Nations (2023) [The Sustainable Development Goals Report.](#)
- 16 UN Women, [Generation Equality Accountability Report 2023.](#)
- 17 Kerr-Wilson, A.; Gibbs, A.; McAslan Fraser E.; Ramsoomar, L.; Parke, A.; Khuwaja, HMA.; and Jewkes, R. (2020). A rigorous global evidence review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls, [What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls Global Programme](#), Pretoria, South Africa
- 18 UNICEF (2014) [Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Analysis of Violence Against Children.](#)
- 19 Mama Cash (July 2020) [Feminist Activism Works! A review of select literature on the impact of feminist activism in achieving women's rights.](#) AWID (November 2020) [Moving More Money to the Drivers of Change: How Bilateral and Multilateral Funders Can Resource Feminist Movement.](#) Htun, M & Weldon, S.L. (2012) [The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005.](#) American Political Science Review. Vol. 106, No. 3 August 2012
- 20 OECD (2019), [Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Donor Charts.](#)
- 21 UN Women, [Generation Equality Accountability Report 2023.](#)
- 22 Black Feminist Fund (March 2023), [Where is the Money for Black Feminist Movements?](#)