

# MENA REGIONAL

## Socio-Economic Costs of Gender-Based Violence



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### **Gender-based violence (GBV) is a widespread human rights and public health concern in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region,**

where at least 37% of women experience one or more forms of intimate partner violence (IPV), which is notably higher than the reported worldwide prevalence of 30%.<sup>i</sup> This project aimed to estimate the socio-economic costs of GBV (domestic violence, early and forced marriage, and public sexual harassment) in six USAID presence countries: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and West Bank and Gaza. Among the six countries included in this study, Egypt has the largest amount of available data, which is summarized here.



**37%** of women have experienced IPV



**18%** of women were married before 18

Although there is evidence that the region may be making progress in reducing child marriage, three percent of girls are married before the age of 15 and 18% are married before the age of 18.<sup>ii</sup> In many countries in the region, marriage before age 18 is not legal, but almost all family laws allow for exceptions, e.g. with parental consent. Judges in all countries surveyed for this report, apart from Egypt, can grant exceptions allowing children to be married, with or without defining a minimum age, if it is seen as being in the child's best interest. There is no clear legal guidance on how this "best interest" or "own good" are to be determined. The highest prevalence of early marriage was found in West Bank and Gaza (19%), followed by Egypt (17%), Morocco (12%), Lebanon (11%) and Jordan (10%). Egypt also has exceptionally high rates of female genital mutilation, where it is nearly universal at 92%.

Public harassment is highly prevalent in Egypt, with 95% of women reporting some form of harassment and 87% reporting a form of public sexual harassment. There is a lack of data on public sexual harassment in Jordan. Prevalence of workplace sexual harassment is 70% in Egypt, 58% in Tunisia, 23% in West Bank and Gaza, and 14% in Morocco.<sup>iii</sup> It is important to note that though several countries do not have prevalence data for multiple forms of GBV, this should not be interpreted as lack of violence, but rather as lack of evidence about this problem.

All six countries included in this study have ratified CEDAW, though Tunisia and Morocco ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol. West Bank and Gaza also ratified 19 human rights conventions in April 2014, after being recognized as a non-member UN observer state. The six countries have made considerable efforts to adopt laws and institute policies and strategies for promoting gender equality and leveling the playing field for women. However, in several of the countries laws give husbands the right to discipline their wives. Even where such violence is illegal, it is important to note that marital rape is criminalized in only one of the six countries covered here - Lebanon, where a husband may be punished for using threats to coerce his wife into having sex, however the act itself is not prohibited.<sup>vi</sup>

All countries in the MENA region consider non-partner sexual violence as a crime, whether it is committed against a man or woman, though the term "rape" is not commonly used.<sup>v</sup> In Tunisia, for example, men who kidnap and/or rape women may escape punishment by marrying their victims.

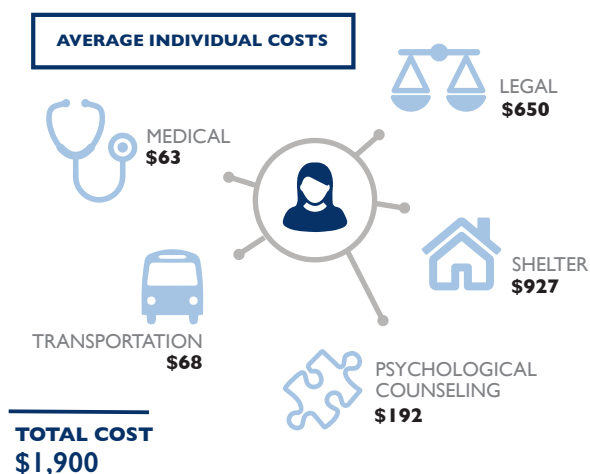
The table below shows prevalence rates at the global, regional, and country level. It is important to note that these figures are not directly comparable due to different definitions and analysis in each country. The global, regional, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon statistics reflect the global standard indicator of ever experiencing physical and/or sexual partner violence. For Tunisia, this shows the prevalence of ever experiencing physical IPV, while for West Bank-Gaza it is physical IPV in the past 12 months. The statistic for Morocco is for ever experiencing sexual violence by anyone, including a partner.

COUNTRY/ REGION	PERCENTAGE OF IPV	PERCENTAGE OF ANY HELP-SEEKING	PERCENTAGE OF "FORMAL" HELP-SEEKING
Global	30	40	9
MENA	37	n/a	n/a
Egypt	26	33	n/a
Jordan	24	41	<4
Lebanon	23	57	n/a
Morocco	6	n/a	3
Tunisia	20	27	<5
West Bank /Gaza	24	n/a	1

As is true across the globe, the vast majority of women who experience violence in the MENA region do not seek help from any formal service providers or law enforcement. For example, in Tunisia while 27% of survivors seek help from any source, less than five percent sought support from formal sources such as police and justice officials, social workers, emergency shelters, or health professionals.

## INCIDENT LEVEL COSTS

The figures in this section represent data from five countries<sup>viii</sup> obtained through 80 interviews with service providers and local policymakers. The study identified that the average cost of responding to a single episode of IPV is \$1,900. As represented in the graphic, this number is the sum of the average costs for medical services, legal services, psychological counseling, transportation and shelter.



The costs of an average expenditure of \$192 for psychological counseling, and an average expense of \$68 for transportation are calculated to include the average number of follow up visits a survivor is required to make for full treatment. In seeking legal services, costs vary significantly among and within countries. Average costs for seeking justice through a court system in the five countries are \$650 per case, though this accounts for high-end estimates for religious courts in Lebanon. In each country, survivors' out-of-pocket expenses will depend

on whether services are widely accessible and paid for by public and/or private sector providers. Concerns about these costs can contribute to low levels of help seeking, and a dramatic under-reporting of cases of IPV and other forms of GBV.

\$55.14 MILLION

\$27 MILLION

## REGIONAL LEVEL COSTS

The average total cost, assuming all services are used, varies depending on which services a survivor requires and is able to seek, including whether they choose to pursue justice through a court system. These calculations can help us understand the consolidated GDP percentage these five countries spend on GBV response. Given the national prevalence figures and global and country specific statistics on help seeking among GBV survivors at the higher end (which assumes the most costly combination of service use) these expenditures can add up to \$55.14 million or 0.0001% of total regional \$528 million GDP.<sup>ix</sup> Alternatively, the average total cost of the least costly combination of seeking services which only include psychological services, still equates to \$27 million.

These figures reflect the significant costs of continued inaction to prevent GBV across the region. They also represent significant lost opportunity costs. If violence were prevented, the money that is currently invested in responding to cases of GBV could instead be invested in services like education that promote the prevention of GBV and challenge patriarchal traditions and harmful social norms.

## METHODOLOGY

The data presented here were collected via 80 key informant interviews across five of the countries. No primary data were collected in Egypt, due to governmental restrictions on field work. The cost estimates include only the direct costs of service access and provision for survivors of IPV and were calculated at the individual level using an accounting methodology.<sup>x</sup> Limitations in the primary data collected meant that the national level cost estimates relied on extrapolation using publicly available secondary data/statistics.

i. World Health Organization, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and Medical Research Council of South Africa. 2013. "Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women: Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-Partner Sexual Violence."

ii. NOTE: the prevalence of child marriage is calculated as the percentage of women currently 20-24 years of age who were married before the age of 18.

iii. [http://swmena.net/library/uploads/pdf/Freedom\\_of\\_Movement-Violence-English\\_Final.pdf](http://swmena.net/library/uploads/pdf/Freedom_of_Movement-Violence-English_Final.pdf)

iv. Articles 573/578/582/584 of the penal code 340 of 1943 and amendments of up to 2014. Article 333 of the penal code of women and family members' protection from domestic violence law, ratified by Lebanese parliament in April 2014.

v. However it is used in the legal codes of several other countries of the region: Djibouti, Sudan, Mauritania, and Yemen.

vi. Klugman, J., Hanmer, L., Twigg, S., Hasan, T., McCleary-Sills, J., and Santa Maria, J. (2014). Voice & Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity. Washington DC: World Bank Group.

vii. See details in this project's Context Analysis.

viii. No primary research was gathered in Egypt.

ix. Combined 2014 GDs for: Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and West Bank and Gaza

x. Morrison AR & Orlando BM. (2004). The costs and impacts of gender-based violence in developing countries: Methodological considerations and new evidence. Unpublished manuscript.