



E G Y P T
 VI O L E N C E
 A G A I N S T
 W O M E N STUDY
 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



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E G Y P T

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

STUDY

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

April 2009

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Council for Women, the Government of Egypt, the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Preface

Women throughout the world suffer from violence. They experience physical harm, loss of life, emotional and psychological pain, lost productivity, and much more. Society suffers the economic cost of treating and rehabilitating women survivors of violence, healing emotionally damaged children and families of survivors, the loss of women's contribution to development, and prosecuting perpetrators. There are also the unquantifiable costs of traumatized individuals and dysfunctional families.

While it may be pervasive, violence against women is not inevitable. Both governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders have a central role in reducing violence for the benefit of the whole society. Creating conditions where women live free from violence is fundamental to the development of a peaceful and productive society. And, it is a core principle in international law and international agreements ratified by Egypt.

Violence against women is a violation of Egypt's cultural and religious values. Under the leadership of First Lady Suzan Mubarak, the National Council for Women is leading efforts to reduce violence and end discrimination against women in Egypt. In recent years, these efforts have resulted in some major successes, including the passage of a new law strengthening the family court system and the creation of an Ombudsman Office to help women secure their rights. With the rest of the Egyptian government, the National Council for Women continues to pursue initiatives to reduce violence against women. In addition, it is currently working with the Ministry of Justice, members of parliament, and civil society to propose new legal amendments to the penal code to ensure appropriate punishment for anyone who denies someone their inheritance rights.

As part of these efforts, the National Council for Women is hosting and actively participating in the Combating Violence Against Women project, which is implemented with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The National Council for Women directs the project in partnership with USAID through a Steering Committee composed of senior members of the council and external experts.

As the Combating Violence Against Women project's first activity, it conducted an extensive, multidimensional survey of violence against women in Egypt, building on previous research and experience. To conduct this major research project, the National Council for Women chose senior Egyptian and international experts from a wide variety of backgrounds, including public and private academic institutions, private-sector research firms, civil-society activists, and independent researchers. The results of their work are summarized in this report. For more detailed information, findings, and recommendations, readers should consult the full reports prepared by each of the experts. These reports are available in the specialized library of the Council in both English and Arabic.

As we move onto the next stage in the development of a National Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women in Egypt, we hope that the results of this research effort will be used to guide extensive and coordinated interventions for the benefit of all Egyptians.

The National Council for Women would like to thank the many researchers and research institutions which worked tirelessly to complete each piece of the study: Dr. Hoda Rashad,

Dr. Sahar El-Sheneity, and Dr. Mulki Al-Sharmani of the Social Research Center at the American University in Cairo; Dr. Fatima El-Zanaty & Associates; Dr. Sara Loza, Dr. Iman Soliman, and the research team of the Social, Planning, Analysis, and Administration Consultants (SPAAC); Nihad Abu Komsan of the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights; Dr. Enas Abu Youssef and the Women and Media Center at Cairo University; Amina Shafeek, Dr. Adel Abdel Ghaffar, and Mafouz Abdel Rahman; Combating Violence Against Women Team Leader Samah Said and the Combating Violence Against Women team; and Combating Violence Research Manager Gihan AbouZeid and Gender Specialist Susan Somach. Combating Violence team members Jerome Gallagher, Garrett Dorer, Lisa Marie Chavez, and the Chemonics Home Office team assisted with the editing and finalization of this report.

As important, the National Council for Women is grateful to the many focus group participants who so generously offered their time, expertise, and insights. The legal research would not have been possible without the participation of the many lawyers from the Council's Ombudsman Office and civil society. Dozens of journalists, drama writers, and producers contributed to media research, and more than 100 health professionals, shelter staff, and NGO representatives provided information about services to women victims of violence.

Our deepest appreciation also goes to the thousands of Egyptian women and men who so generously participated in the quantitative survey. Their voices, especially those of the survivors of violence, are critical to grounding this research in the reality of personal experiences.

This study would not have been possible without the support of the National Council for Women General Secretariat and the guidance of the Combating Violence Against Women Steering Committee. The study team was assisted by translators/interpreters, field assistants, logistics, and technology staff.

Special thanks are due to the American people and USAID for the generous support of Egypt's efforts to reduce violence against women.

Dr. Farkhonda Hassan

Secretary General

National Council for Women

Cairo, Egypt

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAW	The Alliance for Arab Women
AUC	American University of Cairo
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEWLA	Center for Egyptian Women Legal Aid
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DV	domestic violence
ECWR	Egyptian Center for Women’s Rights
FGC/FGM	female genital cutting/mutilation
FGD	focus group discussion
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOSS	Ministry of Social Solidarity
NCW	National Council for Women
NGO	nongovernmental organization
PTSD	post traumatic stress disorder
SRC	Social Research Center (at American University of Cairo)
STIs	sexually transmitted infections
TIP	trafficking in persons
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	violence against women
WHO	World Health Organization

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women has increasingly been recognized as an issue of national concern by the Government of Egypt and the National Council for Women (NCW). Responding to the government's commitment to ending violence, the NCW and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) established the Combating Violence Against Women project. As a major component of the project, the NCW commissioned this study to provide the background information needed for the development of a national strategy to combat violence against women in Egypt and to plan future activities.

Although much of the available research on violence against women focuses on the public health impacts, this Violence Against Women Survey takes a human rights approach that examines the issue from a holistic, multisectoral perspective. The study was conducted by Egyptian academics, researchers, and activists nominated by the NCW, including university research institutions, private-sector research firms, leading nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and government experts. The study process included gathering information from a variety of sources and sectors, analyzing new and existing research by Egyptian experts, and developing preliminary recommendations.

Building on research conducted previously by the NCW, other Egyptian government and nongovernmental entities, and experts, the study authors use a wide range of methodologies to focus on various aspects of the issue. Specifically, this study considers the prevalence of different types of violence against women, attitudes among married and unmarried women and men, the legal policy and regulatory framework related to violence against women issues, the role of media, services currently available to female victims of violence, and recommendations for reducing levels of violence.

A. Background

Violence against women is a worldwide epidemic. It may take different forms depending on history, culture, background, and experiences, but it causes great suffering for women, their families, and the communities in which they live. It is often imbedded in concepts of gender and the roles of men and women that are considered the "norm" in a given culture at a given time, and it is manifested in efforts to exert power and control over women's bodies and lives. Yet, violence against women can be reduced or even eliminated with adequate awareness, resources, and political will.

Only recently — due to the efforts of women's organizations, experts, and committed government officials around the world — has the issue of violence against women been recognized as more than a minor "social problem" or, as in the case of domestic violence, a private matter. Now, violence against women is identified as a serious human rights and public health issue that concerns all sectors of society. Violence against women is considered a type of discrimination and a violation of human rights by the international community, including Egypt.

Egypt is a state party to a broad range of international human rights instruments that address the issue of violence against women. The United Nations has recognized violence against women, as included within the gender equality principles and anti-discrimination

provisions of the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The issue of violence against women has been specifically addressed in the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the Beijing Platform of Action.

In the introduction to his in-depth study of violence against women¹ (mandated by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 58/185), the United Nations Secretary-General notes that “as long as violence against women continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress toward equality, development, and peace.” He reminds states of their “obligation to protect women from violence, to hold perpetrators accountable, and to provide justice and remedies to the victims.”

B. Study Objectives

The study objectives are: (i) to provide a source of multisectoral information and analysis on violence against women in Egypt; and (ii) to build consensus on recommendations designed to guide policy development, support advocacy activities, and form the basis for specific interventions by the Government of Egypt, NGOs, and other stakeholders to combat violence against women. The study is based in Egypt’s commitments to human rights, more specifically that women should be able to live free of violence.

C. Definition of Violence Against Women

For the purposes of this study and work with the NCW, violence against women is defined in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women of 1993 (A/RES/48/104), adopted by the General Assembly as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.” The United Nations Secretary General’s study provides additional detail:

Physical violence involves intentionally using physical force, strength or a weapon to harm or injure the woman. Sexual violence includes abusive sexual contact, making a woman engage in a sexual act without her consent, and attempted or completed sex acts with a woman who is ill, disabled, under pressure or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Psychological violence includes controlling or isolating the woman, and humiliating or embarrassing her. Economic violence includes denying a woman access to and control over basic resources.²

This study focuses primarily on two types of violence against women: *in the family*, including spousal violence, crimes against women committed in the name of “honor,” and other family violence; and *in the community*, including violence by non-family members, harassment and violence in the street, workplace, educational institutions, and other locations outside the household.

¹ - United Nations Secretary-General, *Ending Violence Against Women: From Words to Action — Study of the Secretary-General*, 2006.

² - Quoting: Saltzman, L., Fanslow, J. L., McMahon, P. M., and Shelley, G. A., *Intimate partner violence surveillance: Uniform definitions and recommended data elements, version 1.0.* (Atlanta, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2002).

The study does not focus on violence against women issues that primarily affect girl children because these are under the mandate of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. Some specific issues that require more in-depth analysis, such as early and temporary marriages, trafficking, elder abuse, and state violence, are introduced but are not fully explored in the study.

D. Scope of the Study

The Egypt Violence Against Women Study is designed to examine areas necessary for effective, multisectoral interventions to combat violence against women. The study's six main elements examine violence against women from various angles. Each of the main elements was specifically chosen to fill in gaps in current Knowledge identified by the project team based on the initial study process and literature review. The seventh and final section looks to the future, outlining some of the steps necessary to develop a national strategy. Each section was completed by a noted academic or research institution chosen by the NCW:

1. Literature review on violence against women, including international, regional, and Egyptian literature, by Susan Somach and Gihan AbuZeid, gender and violence against women experts for the Combating Violence Against Women project.
2. Secondary analysis of violence against women data from the Egypt Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS), and the 2007 Women's Empowerment Survey by Dr. Fatima El-Zanaty & Associates (EDHS) and the Social Research Center (SRC) at the American University in Cairo (Women's Empowerment).
3. Quantitative survey of experiences, attitudes, and practices related to violence against women among 4,408 women, men, and female and male youth by Social, Planning, Analysis, and Administration Consultants (SPAAC).
4. Review of the legal and regulatory framework related to violence against women in Egypt by Nehad Abu Komsan of the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights.
5. Analysis of the coverage and portrayal of violence against women in the media and attitudes of media professionals toward violence against women by the Women and Media Center at Cairo University (coverage and portrayal of violence against women) and Amina Shafeek of the NCW and *Al-Ahram* newspaper (attitudes of media professionals).
6. Overview of services currently available to help women victims of violence and efforts to reduce violence against women by Combating Violence Against Women Team Leader Samah Said.
7. Next Steps: Toward a national strategy to reduce violence against women.

Each of the experts used a unique methodology appropriate to their area of expertise and the aspect of violence against women in Egypt that they were studying.

This report presents a summary of the main findings of each of the research pieces, summarizing the information for non-specialists and decision-makers. Reading the summary is not a substitute for reading each of the pieces individually, as they provide additional data and detail on the methodological underpinnings of the findings, as well as more comprehensive recommendations and sector-specific bibliographies.

E. Finalizing the Report and Next Steps

As the study pieces were prepared, the NCW hosted roundtable sessions to discuss the findings with leading experts and the research team. After these roundtable sessions, the consultants modified their reports in response to comments. Each section of the report was also reviewed by the Combating Violence Against Women team and professionals working for the NCW Secretariat for accuracy of the information, presentation, and language. Then, the sections of this report were translated into English and Arabic (depending on the original language used by the authors) and edited for publication.

In the final section of this report, the Combating Violence Against Women team presents recommended next steps in the development of a national strategy for reducing violence against women in Egypt. Consistent with the multisectoral approach of this study, the team recommends that key stakeholders from government ministries and agencies join with key stakeholders from NGOs, academic institutions, and the private sector to consider the recommendations presented in each section of this report, achieve consensus, and develop an action plan for their implementation.

CURRENT KNOWLEDGE:

A Review of International, Regional, and Egyptian Literature

A. Objectives/Methodology

The *literature review* examines and summarizes the findings of the existing research studies on violence against women at the international, regional (Middle East and North Africa), and national (Egypt) levels. The review attempts to draw conclusions about the current state of knowledge regarding violence against women in Egypt and identify where major gaps remain. The review identifies a wide range of topics within the context of violence against women, including prevalence and risk factors, impacts of and responses to violence against women, as well as selected studies on specialized areas, including spousal violence, honor killings, and trafficking in persons, among others.

A variety of materials are reviewed: demographic health surveys, papers based on limited survey research, analytical papers or reports on particular issues or interventions, and others. Source institutions include international organizations, government institutions, universities, NGOs, and individual researchers.

The research began with an Egyptian researcher — under the supervision of Egyptian research firm, Social, Planning, Analysis, and Administration Consultants (SPAAC) — who searched for Arabic- and English-language resources published within the past 10 years on violence against women in Egypt. Then, Susan Somach, an American gender specialist, and Gihan AbouZeid, the project Research Manager, identified sources on violence against women globally, using both their own collected resources and the results of university-accessed online search services of journal articles and other sources, particularly about violence against women in Egypt and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The research continued with ongoing identification of resources on violence against women by Egyptian experts and the Combating Violence Against Women team during the preparation and development of the other study pieces.

Resources were selected for inclusion in this review because they are most representative of the range of international resources available on the topic and/or because they better identify gaps in existing violence against women research in Egypt. The literature review identifies key points from the selected international and regional resources on violence against women, and provides an overview of the entire range of identified resources on violence against women in Egypt.

The full literature review report includes a complete bibliography of references. In this summary, we present the main findings of the research and explore the limits of current knowledge, many of which are addressed by the NCW's Egypt Violence Against Women Study effort.

B. Findings

B1. Forms of Violence Against Women

A wide variety of forms of violence against women have been identified, including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence. Violence against women can

occur from the very beginning of life and continue through childhood, marriage, and into old age — identified in the literature as the life cycle of violence against women.³ Research on violence against women has identified specific actions within the categories of physical, psychological, and sexual violence. See Table 1.

Table 1: Types of violence against women

Life Cycle of Violence		
Pre-birth/Infancy	sex-selective abortion, infanticide or neglect (health care, nutrition)	
Childhood	child abuse involving malnutrition, FGC/FGM, excessive discipline, child sex abuse (including prostitution or pornography), violence against girls in schools, child marriage, or trafficking for sex, labor, or begging	
Adolescence	forced prostitution, trafficking, forced early marriage, psychological abuse, rape	
Reproductive Age	honor killing, dowry crimes and bride-price abuse, partner/spousal violence, sexual assault by a non-partner, homicide/femicide, sex trafficking, violence against domestic workers, sexual harassment and intimidation	
Elder Years	elder/widow abuse	
By Action		
Physical Violence	Psychological Violence	Sexual Violence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> slapped pushed or shoved struck with a fist kicked dragged threatened with a weapon having a weapon used against her 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> insulted or made to feel bad humiliated or belittled in front of others intimidated or scared on purpose (e.g., yelling and smashing things) threatened with harm (directly or indirectly) controlling behavior⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rape sexual abuse sexual exploitation partner/spousal violence also includes: having sex against her will, having sex due to fear of what the partner might do, being forced to do something sexual that is humiliating or degrading

Sources: Adapted from WHO VAW Consultation 1996; World Health Organization. *WHO Multi-country Study on Women’s Health and Domestic Violence Against Women*. Geneva, 2005.

State agents may commit violence against women on the streets and in custodial settings, and a state also may perpetuate violence against women through its laws and policies (e.g., forced sterilization, forced pregnancy and forced abortion, policies on virginity testing and sanctioning forced marriages). States also in effect condone violence against women through inadequate laws and ineffective implementation of laws, enabling perpetrators of violence against women to act with impunity.⁵

B2. Prevalence of Violence

*Violence against women is the most pervasive yet under-recognized human rights violation in the world.*⁶ The most comprehensive data on violence against women available is collected in demographic health surveys, but these typically focus primarily on intimate partner/spousal violence and the only respondents are ever-married women within a limited age range (i.e., 15-45). The literature usually divides violence into two parts: (1) family violence, which includes violence at the hands of intimate partners/spouses, as well as other members of the family; and (2) violence in the community, which includes violence committed by strangers or acquaintances. As discussed below, the literature on family violence is much better developed in Egypt and the Middle East than the literature on community violence, with the exception of specific issues, such as crimes in the name of family honor and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C).

3 - C. Watts and C. Zimmerman, “Violence Against Women: Global Scope and Magnitude,” *Lancet* 359 (9313) (2002): 1233; B. Shane and M. Ellsberg, *Violence Against Women: Effects of Reproductive Health* (Seattle: PATH, United Nations Population Fund, 2002), Report No. 20 (1).
 4 - Controlling behavior includes keeping her from her friends; restricting contact with her family of birth; insisting on knowing where she is at all times; ignoring or treating her indifferently; getting angry if she speaks with other men; often accusing her of being faithful; controlling her access to health care.
 5 - United Nations General Assembly, *In-depth Study on All Forms of Violence Against Women: Report of the Secretary-General*. (A/61/122/Add.1, 2006), 52.
 6 - Mary C. Ellsberg and Lori Heise, *Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists* (Washington, D.C. and Geneva: PATH/World Health Organization, 2005), 9.

Estimates range from 15 to 71 percent of women will be the victim of some form of violence by an intimate partner/spouse at some point in their lives.⁷ Based on surveys in 35 countries conducted prior to 1999, estimates range from 10 to 27 percent of women and girls reported having been sexually abused, either as children or adults.⁸ It should be noted, however, that the under-reporting of violence to any agency has been well documented.⁹

International and Egyptian researchers alike have confirmed that violence against women is both varied and widespread in Egypt. According to the 2005 Egypt Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS), 47 percent of ever-married women reported ever having experienced physical violence since the age of 15. Although the majority of those women identified a spouse (i.e., their current or previous husband) as the perpetrator for at least one episode of violence, nearly half (45 percent) had been subjected to physical violence by a male perpetrator other than their husband and a third (36 percent) identified a female perpetrator. Fathers were reported twice as often as brothers (53 percent compared to 23 percent) and most often the female perpetrator was the woman's mother.¹⁰ Similar studies have not been conducted of either women over the age of 45 or never-married women.

Family violence. Research has consistently found that a woman is more likely to be assaulted, injured, raped, or killed by a current or former partner than by any other person.¹¹ Prevalence of intimate partner/spousal violence varies greatly from country to country, as well as among studies within the same country. Findings from nearly 80 population-based studies conducted in 50 countries show that 10 to 60 percent of ever-married or ever-partnered women have experienced at least one incident of physical violence from a current or former partner/spouse.¹²

Most acts of *physical* intimate partner/spousal violence reflect a pattern of abuse rather than an isolated incident, according to a 10-country WHO study.¹³ And, in most sites, 30 to 56 percent of women who experienced any intimate partner/spousal violence reported both physical and *sexual* abuse. Worldwide, abuse during pregnancy has been identified as an important problem with significant consequences for maternal and infant health. Reporting in all sites of a multi-country study showed that abused women experience more incidents of severe *psychological* violence than severe physical violence in their lifetime.¹⁴ This is especially concerning since the literature suggests that psychological violence has more enduring and debilitating consequences than physical violence, not only for the victim, but also for her family and the larger society.¹⁵

In the 2005 Egypt DHS, 36 percent of the sample of 5,613 reported that they had ever experienced some form of marital violence (emotional, physical, and/or sexual) by their current/most recent husband, while 24 percent had experienced violence in the past year.

7 - World Health Organization. *WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women*.

8 - World Health Organization 2005 citing WHO/ Krug 2002 and Heise 1999.

9 - Greenan, Lilly, *Violence Against Women: A Literature Review* (Edinburgh: Scottish Executive, 2004), 16, citing the example of Edinburgh, where while over half of the respondents indicated that they had experienced physical or sexual violence, only 21 percent of those who had experienced such violence had approached a support agency for help.

10 - El-Zanaty, Fatma and Ann Way, *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2005* (Egypt Ministry of Health and Population; Egypt National Population Council, 2006) 222-223.

11 - E. G. Krug, et al., eds. *World Report on Violence and Health* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2002), 93, http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/; UNICEF "Domestic Violence Against Women and Girls," (Florence: Innocenti Digest No. 6, Innocenti Research Center, 2000); Heise, Ellsberg and Gottemoeller 1999.

12 - Ellsberg and Heise, 2005, 12.

13 - World Health Organization. *WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women*.

14 - Laurie Ramiro, Fatma Hassan, and Abraham Peedicayil, "Risk Markers of Severe Psychological Violence Against Women: A WorldSAFE Multi-country Study," *Injury Control and Safety Promotion* 11:2 (2004): 131-137

15 - *ibid.*

The rates for physical and sexual violence only (excluding psychological violence) were 34 percent ever and 22 percent in the past year.¹⁶ Chapter 3 of this summary report presents additional analysis of the DHS findings on the prevalence of violence against women. According to Amnesty International, almost 250 women in Egypt were reported to have been killed in the first half of 2007 by violent husbands or other family members.¹⁷

Less has been written about *other forms of violence against women in the family* than about intimate partner/spousal violence. Other forms of violence against women in the family include abuse by other family members (such as in-laws, parents, and brothers), dowry-related violence, female infanticide, sexual abuse of female children in the household, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/FGC) and other traditional practices harmful to women, early marriage, forced marriage, honor-related crimes, non-spousal violence, violence perpetrated against domestic workers, and other forms of exploitation.

Globally, the prevalence of non-partner violence after the age of 15 varies widely, with 5 to 65 percent of women reporting physical or sexual abuse, most commonly perpetrated by fathers and other male or female members, and in some settings, teachers as well.¹⁸ In many countries with strong patriarchal traditions, unmarried women in the home are often the victims of various types of abuse, including psychological and/or physical violence, by fathers and brothers. Mothers can also be abusive to their daughters in enforcing obedience over their unmarried daughters. Similarly, in-laws have a measure of authority over daughters-in-law that sometimes can turn abusive.

In the Middle East, areas of family violence that have been the subject of specialized research include honor-related violence¹⁹ directed at both unmarried and married women,²⁰ female genital cutting/mutilation (FGC/FGM), and early, forced, and/or temporary marriages. A report on *honor crimes* in Egypt provided statistics that 79 percent of honor crimes are murders of a female suspected of sexual behavior, nine percent are murders of a female due to adultery, six percent are murders of a female to hide incest, and six percent are murders for other reasons. The perpetrators of the reported crimes were husbands (41 percent), fathers (34 percent), brothers (18 percent), and other relatives (7 percent).²¹ FGM/FGC is practiced in only four countries in the region — Egypt, Sudan, Yemen, and Djibouti.²² According to 2000 DHS statistics, 97 percent of ever-married women have undergone FGC/FGM in Egypt.²³

On the issue of *early marriage*, one study in Upper Egypt found that 44 percent of girls are married before the age of 16, and 68 percent before the age of 18.²⁴ Little research

16 - El-Zanaty, Fatma and Ann Way, *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2005* (Egypt Ministry of Health and Population; Egypt National Population Council, 2006) 222-223.

17 - Amnesty International, *The State of the World's Human Rights* (2008).

18 - World Health Organization. *WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women*.

19 - The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 55/66 entitled, "Working Towards the Elimination of Crimes Against Women Committed in the Name of Honour", on 4 December 2000. In this resolution, concern was expressed about the continuing occurrence, in all regions of the world, of violence against women, "including crimes against women committed in the name of honour, which take many different forms", and also expressed its concern that "some perpetrators assume that they have some justification for committing such crimes." UNFPA, *State of the World's Women 2008*.

20 - Kardam, F., *The Dynamics of Honor Killings in Turkey*. United Nations Population Fund. (2005); Human Rights Watch, *Honoring the Killers: Justice Denied for "Honor" Crimes in Jordan*. (2004).

21 - Salam Seham Abdel Salam, *Daleil Tadreeby: Al Onf Ded Al Nesaa (Training Reference: Violence Against Women)*, (National Council for Women/Centre for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance, 2003).

22 - Jocelyn Defong, Rana Jawad, Iman Mortagy, and Bonnie Shepard, "The Sexual and Reproductive Health of Young People in the Arab Countries and Iran," *Reproductive Health Matters* 13:25 (May 2005): 49-59.

23 - Fatma El-Zanaty and Ann Way, *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2000* (Calverton, Md.: Egypt Ministry of Health and Population, Egypt National Population Council, and ORC MACRO, 2001).

24 - L. Hamamsy, *Early Marriage and Reproduction in Two Egyptian Villages* (Cairo: Population Council/United Nations Population Fund Occasional Paper, 1994).

has been conducted on *non-conventional marriages* in the region, such as temporary and customary (*'urfi*) marriage. In Egypt, so-called “summer marriages,” in which young girls from low-income families are married off to wealthy, visiting Arab tourists in return for a bride-price, but often divorced by the end of the visit, have also been reported.²⁵

Community violence. Measuring the prevalence of community violence against women can be even more difficult than measuring family violence. *Rape and sexual assault* are often underreported as crimes because of the stigma attached to being a “violated woman.” Research has shown that most nonconsensual sex occurs with individuals known to the victim — spouses, family members, dating partners, or acquaintances.²⁶ Coercion is likely in many young girls’ first sexual experience, and the younger she is, the more likely that her initiation into sexual activity was forced.²⁷ Violence against girls and women has been reported in school and health-care settings. Violence against widows and the elderly affects women in many countries.

Another form of violence against women, trafficking in women and girls for forced labor and sexual exploitation, has increased during the past decade, with estimates of 700,000 to 2 million women and girls trafficked annually across international borders.²⁸ Violence against women can be particularly acute in conflict settings. Rape has been used as a weapon of war in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Uganda, where women and girls have been abducted to provide sexual services to combatants. Women in refugee settings are particularly vulnerable to violence, including widespread sexual violence and exploitation.²⁹

In Egypt, researchers have estimated that as many as 98 percent of rape and sexual assault cases are not reported to authorities.³⁰ Despite the difficulty in finding statistics, some studies have managed to uncover high rates of abuse.

B3. Context, Causes, Risk Factors

*The roots of violence against women lie in historically unequal power relations between men and women and pervasive discrimination against women in both the public and private spheres.*³¹ Women throughout the world experience violence, regardless of their race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, age, or social class. Men are overwhelmingly the perpetrators.³² Feminist activists point to male violence against women, including sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment, and domestic violence as central to the continuing oppression of women.³³

25 - Jocelyn DeJong, Rana Jawad, Iman Mortagy, and Bonnie Shepard, “The Sexual and Reproductive Health of Young People in the Arab Countries and Iran,” *Reproductive Health Matters* 13:25 (May 2005): 49-59.

26 - Krug, et al., 2002.

27 - S. Jejeebhoy and S. Bott, *Non-consensual Sexual Experiences of Young People: A Review of the Evidence from Developing Countries*. New Delhi: Population Council (2003). <http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/wp/seasia/seawp16.pdf>.

28 - Watts and Zimmerman, 2002; C. Zimmerman, et. al. *The Health Risks and Consequences of Trafficking in Women and Adolescents: Findings from a European Study* (London: London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 2003); Orhant, M. and E. Murphy, “Trafficking in Persons,” in *Reproductive Health and Rights: Reaching the Hardly Reached*, ed. E. Murphy and K. Ringheim (Washington: PATH, 2002).

29 - J. Ward, *If Not Now, When? Addressing Gender-based Violence in Refugee, Internally Displaced and Post-Conflict Settings: A Global Overview* (New York: Reproductive Health Response in Conflict Consortium, 2002); Ward J. Ward and B. Vann, “Gender-based Violence in Refugee Settings” *Lancet* 360 *Suppl* (2002): 12; S. Swiss, et al. “Violence Against Women During the Liberian Civil Conflict,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 279 (1998): 625-629.

30 - Montasser, Khaled. *Al Khetan Wa al ‘Onf Ded el Mar’a [Translation: Female Circumcision and Violence Against Women]*, National Council for Women, 2003. *Takreer a’n al-Awdaa al-Ehsaeyya lel-Mar’a al-Mesriyya [Translation: A Report on the Statistical Data Concerning Egyptian Women]*, National Council for Women.

31 - United Nations Secretary-General, ii.

32 - Krug, et al., 2002.

33 - Greenan, 2004.

Researchers are increasingly using an “ecological framework” to understand the relationship among personal, situational, and socio-cultural factors that combine to cause abuse.³⁴ For example, a review of national surveys in nine countries found a consistent association of an increased risk of intimate partner/spousal abuse for women who have low educational attainment, who are under 25 years old, who have witnessed her father’s violence against her mother, who live in an urban area, and who have low socioeconomic status. Another multi-country study found significant associations between physical intimate partner/spousal violence and several characteristics including regular alcohol consumption by the husband or partner, witnessing of the father beating the mother in the past, the woman’s poor mental health, and a weak family employment status.³⁵

Research has demonstrated that rates of domestic violence tend to be lower for couples who share responsibility for household decisions than when either the husband or the wife makes decisions alone. Gender norms are often used as a justification of violence against women, and women who agree that it is acceptable for a husband to hit his wife are more likely to report having ever experienced violence.³⁶ In diverse cultures, studies have found that violence is viewed as the husband’s right to “correct” a wife’s mistakes,³⁷ or that dominant social and cultural norms of “ideal” women sanction of use of force to enforce these gender roles.³⁸ A variety of “trigger” events that may justify “disciplining” a wife include not obeying the husband or talking back, burning the food or not having it ready on time, failing to care adequately for the children or home, questioning the husband about money or girlfriends, going somewhere without his permission, or refusing to have sex with him.³⁹ Little has been written on the justification for other family members — fathers, brothers, in-laws — “disciplining” a wife or unmarried female, except within the context of honor crimes.

Regarding the rationale for FGC/FGM, research suggests that the practice, although reportedly declining, persists because of a belief that circumcision will moderate female sexuality and assure a girl’s marriageability, and that it is sanctioned by Islam. Circumcised women have been found more likely to support continuation of FGC/FGM, to circumcise their daughters, and to accept the right of husbands to beat their wives.⁴⁰ The level of education of the wife and the practice of FGC/FGM were significantly correlated with sexual abuse in a study of women in Upper Egypt.⁴¹

B4. Impacts of Violence against Women

*Violence against women has far-reaching consequences for women, their children, and society as a whole.*⁴² Violence against women results in major health problems affecting both women and children. See Table 2.

34 - L. Heise, “Violence Against Women: An Integrated Ecological Framework,” *Violence Against Women*, 4 (1998):262-290; Krug, et al., 2002; [4 studies cited in Ellsberg and Heise, 2005, 24]

35 - L. Jeyaseelan, et al. “World Studies of Abuse in the Family Environment — Risk Factors for Physical Intimate Partner Violence,” *Injury Control and Safety Promotion* 11:2 (2004): 117-124.

36 - Sunita Kishor and Kiersten Johnson, *Profiling Domestic Violence: A Multi-country Study*. (Columbia, Md: ORC MACRO, Measure DHS+, 2004). <http://www.measuredhs.com/pubs/pdf/OD31/DV.pdf>.

37 - Heise & Ellsberg: 1999.

38 - Marnju Rani, Sekhar Bonu, and Nafissatou Diop-Sidibe, “An Empirical Investigation of Attitudes Towards Wife-Beating Among Men and Women in Seven Sub-Saharan African Countries,” *African Journal of Reproductive Health/La Revue Africaine de la Sante Reproductive* 8:3 (December 2004): 116-136. The article uses DHS data collected between 1999 and 2001 in Benin, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

39 - Heise, 1998.

40- Manay Refaat, et al., “Female Genital Mutilation and Domestic Violence Among Egyptian Women,” *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* 27 (2001): 593-596.

41 - A. M. Elnashar, et al., “Sexual Abuse Experienced by Married Egyptian Women,” *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics* 99 (2007): 216-220.

42 - United Nations Secretary-General, iii.

Table 2: Fatal and non-fatal outcomes of violence against women

Non-fatal Outcomes			Fatal Outcomes
Physical injuries and chronic conditions	Sexual and reproductive sequelae	Psychological and behavioral outcomes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injury — fractures, lacerations, abrasions • Functional impairment • Physical symptoms • Poor subjective health • Chronic pain syndromes • Gastrointestinal disorders • Irritable bowel syndrome • Permanent disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwanted pregnancy • Sexually transmitted infections, including HIV • Gynecological disorders • Unsafe abortion • Pregnancy complications • Miscarriage/low birth weight • Pelvic Inflammatory disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-traumatic stress disorder • Depression • Anxiety • Phobias/panic disorders • Eating and sleep disorders • Sexual dysfunction • Low self-esteem • Mental distress • Smoking • Alcohol/drug use • Sexual risk-taking • Physical inactivity • Overeating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Femicide • Suicide • Maternal mortality • AIDS-related mortality

Sources: Adapted from Heise and Garcia Moreno, 2002; and Heise, Ellsberg and Gottemoeller, 1999.

Domestic violence not only poses a direct threat to women’s health, but also has adverse consequences for the survival and well-being of children. From conception, children of mothers who have experienced violence are at a disproportionately high risk for poor health outcomes. These include greater likelihood of a non-live birth, higher mortality rates for children under age five, and lower rates of full vaccination of children from 12 to 35 months of age (in Egypt, the rate is five to 10 percent higher among mothers who had not experienced violence than among mothers who have).⁴³

The economic costs of violence against women can be measured in terms of prevention, response, and opportunity costs.⁴⁴ For example, lost wages due to absenteeism, higher health care costs, and increased burdens on law enforcement structures have all been noted as costs of violence.⁴⁵ The state/public sector bears most of the direct cost of services, including those related to the criminal justice system, health services, housing and shelters, social services for women and their children, income support, and civil legal costs. Reduced employment and productivity can mean that women lose earnings, while employers may lose output and incur additional costs for sick leave and the recruiting and training of replacements. The state may lose tax revenues as a consequence of lost employment and output. More importantly, there is also the cost of pain and suffering inflicted on women, and the consequences for their children.⁴⁶ Thus, studies have shown that prevention efforts are cost-effective.⁴⁷

Consistent with data from around the world, ever-beaten women in Egypt, including those who were beaten within the previous year, were more likely to report health problems necessitating medical attention than never-beaten women.⁴⁸ Research has also shown a positive correlation between the increased frequency of beatings and the lack of contraceptive use, often out of fear that a husband may suspect some sort of infidelity. There is generally a negative relationship between the frequency of beatings and the

43 - Kishor and Johnson, 2004. Egypt statistic based on F. El-Zanaty, et al., *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 1995* (Cairo: National Population Council and Calverton, Md.: Macro International, 1996).

44 - N. Duvvury, C. Grown, and J. Redner. *Costs of Intimate Partner Violence at the Household and Community Levels: An Operational Framework for Developing Countries* (Washington: ICRW. 2004).

45 - Krug, et al., 2002.

46 - United Nations Secretary-General, 62-63.

47 - World Health Organization, *The Economic Dimensions of Interpersonal Violence* (2004).

48 - R. MacLean, “In Egypt, Beaten Wives Are Less Likely to Use Prenatal Care or Contraceptives,” *Guttmacher Institute: International Planning Perspective*, 32:3 (September 2006); Nafissatou Campbell Diop-Sidibe, Jacquelyn C. Campbell, and Stan Becker, “Domestic Violence Against Women in Egypt: Wife Beating and Health Outcomes,” *Social Science & Medicine* 62:5 (March 2006): 1260-1277.

number of visits to a health professional, in many cases due to the husband's control over the wife's mobility.⁴⁹

Egyptian studies have analyzed the psychological effects of violence against women,⁵⁰ including a focus on domestic violence and rape and the psychological characteristics leading to abuse for both the perpetrator and the victim.⁵¹ The NCW has published several studies on violence against women, including one on both the physical and psychological effects of violence on women and on society as a whole. When compared to their non-abused counterparts, abused wives reported more negative patterns of marital communication and lower levels of commitment to marriage, as well as lower levels of satisfaction, affection, harmony, and happiness in marriage.⁵²

Arab researchers have consistently reported that cultural factors arising mainly from the subordinate position of women in Arab communities influence the prevalence, pattern, and management of psychiatric disorders in women.⁵³ Some of these researchers argue that physical, sexual, and emotional safety and security (essential aspects of good mental health) are systematically denied to countless women in Islamic societies because of their sex. Health professionals, rather than detecting abuse, often deny, minimize, interpret as delusional, or ignore reports of abuse.⁵⁴

B5. Responses of Women Victims of Violence

The majority of physically abused women — between 55 and 95 percent according to a 10-country study — reported they had never gone to an agency to seek help. Women who experience severe physical violence are more likely than those who experience other types of violence to seek support from an agency or authority.⁵⁵ Informal networks of friends, families, and neighbors are usually the first point of contact for abused women, rather than engaging more formal services (health services, legal advice, shelters) or contacting the authorities (police, local leaders, or religious leaders).⁵⁶

The options available to a female victim of violence tend to limit her response. The seeming lack of response to violence (including living with violence) may in fact be a woman's strategic assessment of what it takes to survive and to protect her children.⁵⁷ Moreover, denial and fear of social stigma also prevent women from seeking help.⁵⁸ Researchers have found that the interviewer is frequently the first person that a woman has spoken to about her abuse — this is the case of 20 percent to two-thirds of those who reported being abused.⁵⁹

49 - *ibid* (both sources).

50 - *Al Onf Ded el Mar'a: Derasat Halet al Nesa'a al Monanafat 2003 (Violence Against Women: Study of Female Victims 2003)* (Ministry of Insurance and Social Administrative Development, 2003).

51 - Amal Abdel Hady, *Al Khroug Men Daerat al 'Onf: Dalil Monahdat al 'Onf Ded al Nes'aa (Exit from the Circle of Violence: Director of the Fight Against Violence Against Women)* (Al-Tlaai' Publishers, 2004).

52 - Nahed Ramzey and Adel Sultan, *Al'Onf Ded El Mar'a Ro'ya al Nekhba wa al Gomhour al Amm (Violence Against Women: The View of Electors and the General Public)* (National Council for Women, 1999).

53 - M. Fakhr El Islam, M. "Social Psychiatry and the Impact of Religion," in *Images in Psychiatry: An Arab Perspective*, ed. A. Okasha and M. Maj, M. (Cairo: WPA Publications, 2001), 37-51.

54 - S. Douki, S. Ben Zinb, F. Nacef, U. Halbreich, "Women's Mental Health in the Muslim World: Cultural, Religious, and Social Issues," *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 102 (2007): 177-189.

55 - World Health Organization. *WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women*.

56 - L. Rose, J. Campbell, and J. Cub, "The Role of Social Support and Family Relationships in Women's Responses to Battering," *Health Care for Women International* 21 (2000): 27-29.

57 - Ellsberg and Heise, 2005, 25-26.

58 - Krug, et al., 2002.

59 - World Health Organization. *WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women*.

The reasons given by women for staying in abusive relationships commonly include: fear of retribution, lack of other means of economic support, concern for the children, emotional dependence, lack of support from family and friends, and an enduring hope that the abuser will change. In some countries, the stigma of being single or divorced pushes women to stay in abusive marriages. Studies have also suggested a consistent set of factors that lead to a woman's leaving: the severity of the violence increases and the woman realizes the abuser will not change, or the violence starts affecting the children. Another key factor in the decision to leave is emotional and logistical support from family or friends.⁶⁰ Women often leave and return to an abusive relationship several times before making the final break.⁶¹ Leaving does not necessarily guarantee that a woman will be safe; rather the risk of being murdered is greatest immediately after separation from an abuser.⁶²

Women in Egypt rarely report wife abuse to the police. In one study of 100 abused women, only 13 went to the police, and even when complaints are filed, an estimated 44 percent are withdrawn within a few days, according to another study.⁶³ The Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights (ECWR) reported that of 2,500 women who had reported cases of sexual harassment to ECWR, only 12 percent had made a complaint to the police.⁶⁴

Women stay in abusive relationships because of challenges posed by Egyptian law, such as an unequal divorce system, "obedience" laws, and difficulty accessing their legal rights to alimony, child support, housing, and custody.⁶⁵ Other reasons for not divorcing, despite abuse, include fear their children would live in isolation and be shunned, they would have no friends, they would be shunned by neighbors, their parents would not accept them as a divorced woman, and their sisters would not be able to marry if they were divorced.⁶⁶

B6. Legal and Regulatory Framework

The starting point for a legal response to violence against women is the international conventions and laws that address the issue, from the anti-discrimination clauses of the basic human rights treaties to the U.N. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Governmental compliance with already ratified human rights treaties and international agreements related to gender equality and human rights for women would go a long way toward reducing violence against women.⁶⁷

Egypt is a state party to a broad range of international human rights instruments that address the issue of violence against women. Although progress has been made in some areas, human rights groups have argued that women remain legally, politically, and practically second-class citizens in the entire Arab region, including Egypt.⁶⁸

60 - Heise Ellsberg 1999.

61 - K. A. Landenburger, "A Process of Entrapment in and Recovery from an Abusive Relationship," *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 9 (2006): 927-938.

62 - J. C. Campbell, *Assessing Dangerousness: Violence by Sexual Offenders, Batterers and Child Abusers* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1995).

63 - N. H. Ammar, "Beyond the Shadows: Domestic Spousal Violence in a 'Democratising' Egypt," *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 7:4 (October 2006): 244-259. The author cites Tadros, M. (1998). *Rightless women, heartless men: Violence against women a field study in a Cairo suburb*. Cairo, Egypt: Legal Research and Resource Center for Human Rights and Abd el-Wahhab, L. (1994). *Al-'unf al-usarī: Al-jarīmah wa-al-'unf diddaal-mar'a* [Translation: Violence against women in Egypt]. Dimashq, Syria: Dār al-Madā lil Thaqāfah wa-al-Nashr.

64 - Amnesty International. *The State of the World's Human Rights* (2008).

65 - Human Rights Watch/Middle East, *Divorced from Justice: Women's Unequal Access to Divorce in Egypt*, (Human Rights Watch Series MENA 16:8, 2004).

66 - Abeer A. Ibrahim and Abby L. Ferber "An Overview of Domestic Violence Against Women in Egypt's Slums," *American Sociological Association Conference Paper* (2004).

67 - UN. *Report of the Expert Group Meeting on Good Practices in Legislation on Violence Against Women*.

68 - Amnesty International, *The State of the World's Human Rights* (2007).

The Egyptian research on violence against women from the legal perspective is limited mostly to a broader analysis of discrimination against women, without specifically addressing violence. Nevertheless, a limited number of studies and reports of local legal and women's organizations have addressed violence against woman from the legal perspective. These studies have reviewed the most significant international conventions and treaties and the status of the Egyptian government's response to them, as well as the text of articles under reservations.⁶⁹ The studies have also addressed the phenomenon of violence through the Egyptian constitution and Islamic law covering a wide range of issues, such as an analysis of cases involving domestic violence, rape, indecent assault, and torture in police stations.⁷⁰ A book published by the NCW's Ombudsman Office analyzes the role of the police in protecting women from violence, including sexual harassment, rape, and honor crimes.⁷¹

B7. Victim Services

Services and assistance for victims of violence against women varies, but a typical package of services includes many, if not all of the following:

- Shelter or other type of residential facilities
- Medical care and assistance
- Psychological and psychiatric assistance
- Legal assistance
- Educational assistance and vocational training
- Economic opportunities, job placement, and income-generation activities
- Humanitarian assistance
- Housing assistance
- Family mediation and counseling services
- Witness protection and security services
- Specialized assistance to minors (for victims and minors accompanying a family member who is a victim)

Victim services can be offered in residential and non-residential settings, or in a combination. Providing services for victims of different types of violence (e.g., domestic violence and trafficking) can be complicated and requires careful consideration.⁷²

Many international organizations have developed guidelines and manuals on how to respond to the needs of female victims of violence. For healthcare providers/managers, the UNFPA has a program guide and International Planned Parenthood Federation has a resource manual on the health sector response to gender-based violence.⁷³ Manuals that have been developed target specific issues, such as sexual violence in the education

69 - Mohamed Al-Gamrey, *Wake' al Mar'a al Masriyya fi Daw'Etifakeyat al Kada' ala Gamei' Ashkal al Tamyez Ded al Mar'a ma Banyan Dawr al-Monathamat Ghayr al-Hokomiyya fi Taazeez wa Hamayat Hekook al Mar'a (The Reality of Egyptian Women in Light of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and a Report on the Role of NGOs in Fostering and Protecting Women's Rights)* (National Council for Women, 2003). This is the report of the coalition of the organizations concerned with following up on the CEDAW for 2000.

70 - El Nadeem Center for Treatment and Psychological Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence, "Women against Violence — Accounts from inside the Egyptian Families." 2003.

71 - Fatima Khafagy, Azza Soliman and Rdwan Al-Qadi, *Daleil Ma'lomat an Dawr al-Shorta fi Hemayat al Nesa'a men al Onf (Information Guide on the Role of the Police in Protecting Women from Violence)* (Office for Women's Complaints, 2006).

72 - Rebecca Surtees and Susan Somach, *Methods and Models for Mixing Services for Victims of Domestic Violence and Trafficking in Persons in Europe and Eurasia* (Washington: USAID, 2008).

73 - United Nations Population Fund, *A Practical Approach to Gender-Based Violence: A Programme Guide for Health Care Providers and Managers* (New York: United Nations Population Fund, 2001). http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/99_filename_genderbased.pdf; S. Bott, et al. *Improving the Health Sector Response to Gender-Based Violence: A Resource Manual for Health Care Managers in Developing Countries*. (New York: IPPF/WHR, 2004).

sector,⁷⁴ intimate partner/spousal violence during pregnancy,⁷⁵ routine screening for DV,⁷⁶ sexual and gender-based violence in refugee situations,⁷⁷ and services for victims of trafficking.⁷⁸

Due to a lack of legal protections and restrictions on social services, female victims of violence generally have limited options for assistance in the Middle East and North Africa.⁷⁹ Developing interventions for abuse victims is challenging because victims rarely believe seeking assistance outside the family is a viable option, particularly when their families often counsel them to forgive their husband, be tolerant of his behavior, and return to his house. Social service providers must find ways to use Western training to assist victims without simultaneously violating cultural norms.⁸⁰

Because abused women in Egypt do not typically talk to doctors or other health care providers about their beatings, additional interventions have been recommended to involve health care providers in combating domestic violence against women. These include adding a module on domestic violence in medical education and training curricula, developing a culturally appropriate screening tool to help health care providers assess risks for each female patient, modifying the national health information system (NHIS) to include systematic data collection on domestic violence and its consequences for women's health, and developing referral systems and informing the medical personnel of these mechanisms.⁸¹

A 2004 Human Rights Watch study⁸² raised concerns about the lack of institutions available in Egypt to help women who have been victims of violence (at the time of the study, only four shelters existed, currently there are nine). The report examined the rules governing women's shelters in Egypt concluding that they should be modified to enable more women to seek assistance. The "Helping Victims of Violence: An Overview of Services" section of this Egypt Violence Against Women Study provides more recommendations for improving shelters and other services for women victims of violence.

B8. Support, Advocacy, and Prevention

Much has been written on the need to prevent violence against women, focusing on multisectoral action plans that include a coordinated community response (health and social services, religious organizations, the judiciary and police, trade unions and businesses, and the media) at the national and local levels.⁸³ Overall recommendations include: (i)

74 - Panos Institute, *Beyond Victims and Villains: Addressing Sexual Violence in the Education Sector*. (2003).

75 - American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, *Intimate Partner Violence During Pregnancy: A Guide for Clinicians* (1998).

76 - Family Violence Prevention Fund. *National Consensus Guidelines: On Identifying and Responding to Domestic Violence Victimization*. 1999.

77 - United Nations Population Fund. *Interagency Manual on Reproductive Health in Refugee Situations: Sexual and Gender-Based Violence*. 2001. *Reproductive Health Response in Conflict Consortium. Gender-based Violence Tools Manual for Assessment and Program Design, Monitoring and Evaluation*. 2004. Ward, 2002.

78 - UNOHCR. *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*. New York: United Nations: E/2002/68/Add.1. UNOHCR. *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking*. New York: United Nations: E/2002/68/Add.1. IOM. *The IOM Handbook on Direct Assistance to Victims of Trafficking*. Geneva: IOM.2007. http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/books/CT%20handbook.pdf. UNICEF. *Guidelines of the Protection of the Rights of Child Victims of Trafficking*, Updated 2005. UNICEF: SEE. 2005. Davis, L, Early, T. and J. Hagen. *Social Services for Battered Women: Are They Adequate, Accessible and Appropriate?* *Social Work*. 39(6): 395-704.

79 - Angie Boy and Andrzej Kulczycki, "What We Know About Intimate Partner Violence in the Middle East and North Africa," *Violence Against Women* 14:53 (2008); S. Nazir, *Challenging Inequality: Obstacles and Opportunities Towards Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Freedom House, 2005).

80 - Muhammad Haj-Yahia, "Wife Abuse and Battering in the Sociocultural Context of Arab Society," *Family Process*, 39, 237-255.

81 - Diop-Sidibe, Campbell, and Becker, 2006.

82 - Human Rights Watch/Middle East, "Divorced from Justice: Women's Unequal Access to Divorce in Egypt," *Human Rights Watch Series MENA 16:8* (2004).

83 - World Health Organization. *WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women*; Krug, et al., 2002. Also known

strengthening national commitment and action; (ii) promoting primary prevention (e.g., raising public awareness, breaking the silence, targeting risk factors, and increasing public safety); (iii) involving the education sector (in particular, making schools safe for girls); (iv) strengthening the health sector response (and making it comprehensive, including direct support and referral services); (v) supporting women living with violence; (vi) sensitizing the criminal justice system (especially to the needs of female victims of violence); and (vii) supporting research and collaboration.⁸⁴

Promising prevention practices include: advocacy and campaigns; community mobilization; working with men; using the news media and information technology; promoting public safety, education, and capacity-building; and other efforts, such as hearings and victim/survivor tribunals. A variety of violence against women prevention activities in the justice, health, and education sectors, as well as multisectoral approaches, have been reviewed in UNIFEM and World Bank publications.⁸⁵ The Council of Europe has developed its own comprehensive plan that urges member states to prioritize prevention of violence against women with a strong commitment at the national level, including legal and policy measures, support and protection for victims, data collection, and awareness raising.⁸⁶

Women's rights advocates are crucial participants in advocacy campaigns on violence against women, with culturally-appropriate slogans developed around the "stop violence against women" theme.⁸⁷ Advocacy is a key element in promoting social change,⁸⁸ and strategic communications has been identified as a critical tool to raise awareness about and combat violence against women.⁸⁹ Prevention strategies include working with men as allies to combat violence against women, and with young people to develop healthy non-violent relationships.⁹⁰ Working with male perpetrators is a challenging area of prevention. Batterer intervention groups work with voluntary and court-mandated clients.⁹¹

Not much has been written in the region specifically on the topic of preventing of violence against women. Because the many abused women in Egypt regard beating as a normal part of marriage, actions must be taken to make women, as well as all of Egyptian society, understand that violence against women is not legitimate or acceptable and that everybody pays a high price for it.⁹² One study recommended that behavior change communication campaigns should be conducted in Egypt to address violence against women by targeting the public at large and specific subgroups of the population using various communications strategies (for example, targeting men at mosques, churches, and workplaces, targeting women through special programs in the mass media or women's organizations, and targeting boys and girls at secular and religious schools).⁹³

as the Duluth Model; see <http://www.theduluthmodel.org/duluthmodel.php>.

84 - World Health Organization. *WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women*.

85 - United Nations Development Fund for Women, *Not a Minute More: Ending Violence Against Women (UNIFEM, 2003)*; S. Bott, A Morrison, and M. Ellsberg. *Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence in Middle and Low-Income Countries: A Global Review and Analysis*. (Washington: World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3618, 2004).

86 - Council of Europe, "Blueprint of the Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Violence Against Women, including Domestic Violence," *EG-TFV 8 rev 5* (2006).

87 - Such as Amnesty International's "Shelters Not Cemeteries" Stop Violence Against Women Campaign in Turkey and the Council of Europe's "It starts with screams but must never end in silence" campaign.

88 - Shereen Usdin, et al., "The Value of Advocacy in Promoting Social Change: Implementing the New Domestic Violence Act in South Africa," *Reproductive Health Matters* 8:16 (November 2000): 55-65.

89 - UNIFEM. *Making a Difference: Strategic Communications to End Violence Against Women*. 2003. UNIFEM. *Picturing a Life Free of Violence: Media and Communication Strategies to End Violence Against Women*. 2001.

90 - Neha Bhandari, "Strategies and Tools for Working with Men and Boys to End Violence Against Girls, Boys, Women and Other Men," UNIFEM and Save the Children (2004).

91 - Such as Men Stopping Violence www.menstoppingviolence.org; Emily R. Rothman, Alexander Butchart and Magdalena Cerda, *Intervening With Perpetrators of Intimate Partner Violence: A Global Perspective* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2003), 9.

92 - Diop-Sidibe, Campbell, and Becker, 2006.

93 - *ibid*.

To respond to the issue of religion and combating violence against women, resources are available on Islamic interpretations of wife beating, including comparisons of literal, patriarchal, and feminist interpretations of Qur'anic texts.⁹⁴ The Internet could play a role in promoting reforming trends in Qur'anic interpretation that would help lead to further empowerment of Muslim women (e.g., the Domestic Violence Forum on the website for the Islamic Society of North America, which provides information on community prevention programs and a link to a 10-step program of advice for *imams*).⁹⁵

C. Conclusion

Although available research on violence against women worldwide covers a wide range of topics, the majority of research in Egypt has been on the prevalence of wife-beating, risk factors, and health consequences. Moreover, the methodology and data collection techniques used in many of the non-DHS studies have been questioned on the basis of adequacy and/or ethical foundations. Therefore, major gaps exist when considering the spectrum of violence against women issues. Policymakers in Egypt seeking to develop a strategy to combat violence against women should benefit from the following:

- **Additional analysis of existing data** sets in Egypt for correlates of and risk factors for violence against women.
- Prevalence of, responses to, and attitudes about **community violence against women and types of violence against women other than spousal violence**.
- Prevalence of and responses to violence against women among **young women particularly the unmarried**.
- **Help-seeking behavior** of victims of violence against women, their awareness about available assistance, and what types of assistance they want.
- **Awareness and attitudes** of married men, and of young women and men.
- Comprehensive analysis of **legal and regulatory framework** specific to violence against women in Egypt.
- Types of **services and service provision** environment in Egypt for female victims of violence.
- Analysis of **media approach** to violence against women to better understand the media environment and how it influences attitudes toward violence against women in everyday lives.
- Attitudes and approaches of media workers and management to lay the groundwork on a centralized level for **raising public awareness and changing attitudes about violence against women**.

94 - Nawal H. Ammar, "Wife Battery in Islam: A Comprehensive Understanding of Interpretations," *Violence Against Women* 13:5 (May 2007).

95 - Referring to the Web site www.isna.net: Alexis Kort, "Dar al-Cyber Islam: Women, Domestic Violence, and the Islamic Reformation on the World Wide Web," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 25:3 (December 2005).

Each of these gaps is partially filled in by the remainder of the pieces of the Egypt Violence Against Women Study. While further research is necessary, the study pieces establish a solid groundwork for policy development and implementation on the part of the NCW and other Egyptian governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

PREVALENCE, TRENDS, AND RISK FACTORS: Secondary Analysis of Data from the EDHS and Women's Empowerment Survey

A. Objectives/Methodology

The secondary analyses of the Egypt Demographic Health Survey data (1995, 2005) and Women's Empowerment Survey data (2007) were designed to glean the most useful information on violence against women from these existing datasets, even though the primary focus of both surveys was not violence against women. The information contributes to a better understanding of the prevalence of violence against women and various demographic and other factors that correlate to higher and lower incidence of violence against women in Egypt. The quantitative survey (described in the next chapter) was designed to complement this existing data on violence against women in Egypt by deepening and expanding the areas of inquiry. Together, these three data sets provide a rich source of information for a better understanding of the characteristics and dynamics of violence against women in Egypt.

The *secondary analysis of the violence against women data from the Egypt Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2005*, conducted by El-Zanaty & Associates, led by Dr. Fatima El-Zanaty, provides quantitative indicators of the prevalence of domestic violence against women, risk factors associated with violence, and attitudes of women toward domestic violence. In addition, the analysis compares the 2005 survey data to the 1995 DHS survey data to identify changes over time.

The 2005 survey is based on a nationally representative sample of 19,474 ever-married women. These women were asked questions on attitudes toward wife-beating along with other demographic information. A sub-set of these women, 5,613 in total, were also asked questions about domestic violence, thus providing the most accurate measure available of the prevalence of domestic violence in Egypt. Descriptive statistics from this survey show the prevalence of domestic violence and attitudes of women toward domestic violence across various regions of Egypt and population groups. Logistic regression analysis is used to identify socioeconomic risk factors associated with domestic violence, such as household wealth, age, employment status, and education level.

The *secondary analysis of the violence against women data from the 2007 Women's Empowerment Survey* was conducted by Drs. Sahar El-Sheneity and Mulki Al-Sharmani of the Social Research Center (SRC) at American University in Cairo (AUC). The Women's Empowerment data set (SRC data) is based on a 2007 pilot survey conducted by SRC on Measuring the Situation of Women and Living Conditions. The survey collected a wide variety of indicators of women's empowerment from a sample of 2,400 women in Cairo, Sharkeyah, and Menya.

The SRC analysis involves developing a conceptual a framework for women's empowerment within the Egyptian context based on direct and indirect indicators of empowerment. Direct indicators include involvement in the marriage process and mobility restrictions and a woman's attitudes toward gender roles and violence. Indirect indicators include age at first marriage, level of education, participation in organizations, and other indicators. Using the

empowerment framework, SRC utilizes factor analysis to identify operational dimensions of empowerment for further analysis. Logistic regression analysis is used to examine the relationship between these measures of empowerment and exposure to domestic violence.

B. Findings

Violence against women is a wide ranging phenomenon that affects women of all backgrounds and experiences. Nearly half (47.4 percent) of the ever-married women in Egypt have been victims of physical violence at some point in their adult lives according to the 2005 EDHS. There seemed to be no noticeable difference between urban and rural regions in Egypt regarding the aggregate percentage of ever-married women who have experienced physical violence since the age of 15. However, the differences between urban and rural by wealth are clear, where women in urban areas report having experienced violence more than women in rural areas for all wealth quintiles.

B1. Prevalence of Spousal Violence

Spousal violence is one of the most common forms of violence against women in Egypt. Differences in questions⁹⁶ between the 1995 and 2005 EDHS make it difficult to determine changes in the prevalence of spousal violence. Overall, though, the prevalence of physical spousal violence does not appear to have changed over this decade.

In 2005, 33 percent of women report that they had ever been hit, slapped, kicked, or subjected to some other form of physical violence at some point by their current or previous husband. In 1995, 34 percent of married women report having ever been “beaten” by their husband at some point since their first marriage.

Similarly based on reports by women about their experience in the 12 months preceding the survey, the differences are not substantial. In 1995, 16 percent of currently married women were “beaten” by their husbands in the 12 months preceding the survey, while in 2005, 19 percent of currently married women experienced a form of physical violence at the hands of their current husband in the 12 months preceding the survey. Approximately 6 percent of women who have ever been pregnant reported that they have ever-experienced physical violence during pregnancy in EHDS 2005.

Table 3: Percent of currently married women who have experienced (physical, sexual, or psychological) violence from most recent husband by socioeconomic characteristics, EDHS 2005

	Ever	Within past 12 months
Age		
15-19	20.9	17.2
20-29	33.1	23.6
30-39	38.1	22.9
40-49	36.4	18.3
Education		
No education	42.6	27.2
Some primary	45.8	27.2
Primary complete/some secondary	40.4	25.4
Secondary complete/higher	24.5	14.4
Work status		
Working for cash	29.2	16.3
Not working for cash	36.3	22.7
Wealth quintile		
Lowest	41.0	27.7
Second	39.3	24.3
Middle	39.3	24.3
Fourth	33.2	18.9
Highest	23.5	12.2
Location		
Urban	32.6	18.5
Rural	37.0	23.9
Total	35.1	21.6

⁹⁶ - In 1995, women were asked about being beaten, while in 2005, women were asked a series of questions about specific types of physical violence.

Prevalence of spousal violence (including emotional, physical, and sexual violence) across various socioeconomic categories of women in 2005 is presented in Table 3. Although those with higher incomes and higher levels of education do have a lower prevalence of violence, approximately 24 percent of women with a complete secondary education or higher and 25 percent of women in the highest income quintile have nonetheless experienced physical violence by their husbands.

Women from rural areas were slightly more likely to report that they have experienced spousal violence compared to women in urban areas (although, as seen in the next section, when controlling for other factors, women in urban areas were found to be at a higher likelihood of experiencing violence). Looking at the various forms of spousal violence, women in rural areas were more likely to report emotional violence, moderate physical violence, or sexual violence than women in urban areas, whereas women from urban areas were slightly more likely to report severe physical violence.

According to the data from the SRC Women's Empowerment Survey, respondents who were married for the first time at younger ages (before the age of 20) reported higher levels of exposure to violence by their ex- or last husbands. A high percentage of divorced respondents also reported that spousal violence and/or ill-treatment were the main reasons for the breakup of their marriages.

B2. Risk Factors for Domestic Violence

While Table 3 is a useful guide to the differences among these groups, it is important to recognize that many of these socioeconomic characteristics are interrelated. For instance, persons with high levels of education are also likely to have higher levels of income. In order to determine if any of the socioeconomic factors are associated with higher levels of violence *independent* of the other factors, it is important to employ multivariate analysis.

Both Dr. El-Zanaty and Dr. El-Sheneity examined the relationship between the socio-demographic factors and women's experience of violence. Both used logistic regression to control for interrelated factors. Logistic regression helps determine if any of these socioeconomic factors (e.g., age) are statistically associated with the likelihood that a woman would be a victim of domestic violence, independent of other factors.

EDHS Survey. Analysis by El-Zanaty reveals that — when controlling for a variety of socio-demographic factors — partner's education level, respondent's education level, respondent's working status, and place of residence are all significant correlates for experiences of violence, while wealth levels have no significant association with the likelihood of experiencing violence. Specifically, when controlling for other factors:

- higher education levels for both the partner and the respondent are associated with a lower likelihood of experiencing violence;
- a respondent currently working is more likely to have experienced violence than one who is not working; and
- the likelihood of experiencing violence is higher for women in urban areas than rural areas.

Women’s Empowerment Survey. The SRC Women’s Empowerment Survey asked women about various dimensions of women’s empowerment, allowing the authors to examine how these relate to violence against women in addition to socioeconomic factors that may be associated with the likelihood of being a victim of violence.

As in the EDHS study, women who have completed secondary education or higher were less likely to be victims of spousal violence than those with lower levels of education, controlling for other factors.

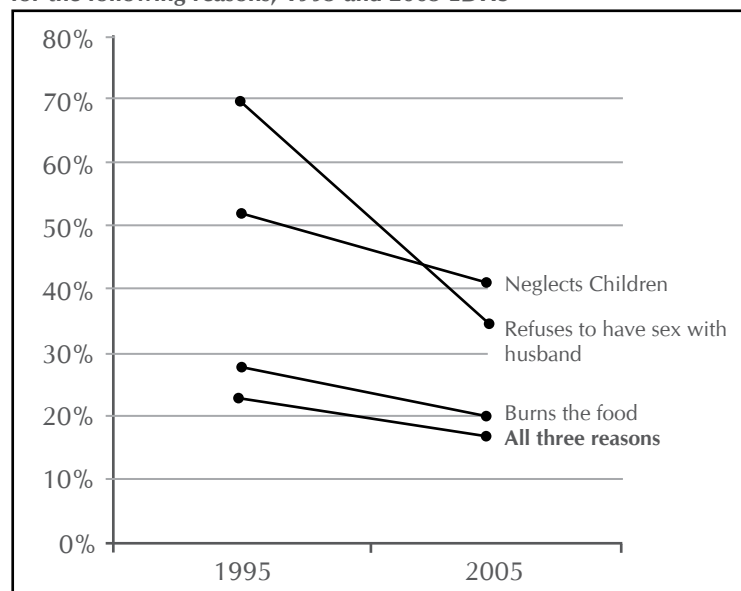
Some measures of a woman’s autonomy (one of the dimensions of empowerment), such as whether a women is able to buy things for herself or seek medical advice by herself, appear to be significantly related to the likelihood of spousal violence. Higher levels of these forms of autonomy are associated with a decrease in the likelihood of being a victim of spousal violence. However, most of the measures of women’s empowerment that were examined — such as participation in elections, attitudes on gender relations, having a bank account, and other, more expansive measures of women’s autonomy — did not appear to be significantly related to the likelihood of a woman being a victim of spousal violence.

B3. Women’s Attitudes toward Violence

Changes in attitudes. Despite the lack of evidence for substantial changes in reports of spousal violence between 1995 and 2005, attitudes to spousal violence among women do appear to have changed. In both years of the DHS survey, women were asked if a husband was justified for beating his wife for: 1) neglecting the children; 2) refusing to have sex with her husband; and 3) burning the food.⁹⁷

Examining these three justifications reveals that 17 percent of women in 2005 agreed with all three reasons (as shown in Figure 1) compared with 23 percent in 1995. This pattern of decline also applies separately for each of the three reasons in 2005 and 1995. Most notably, in 1995, 70 percent of surveyed women believed that a husband is “justified” in beating his wife for refusing sex, compared to 34 percent of surveyed women in 2005 agreeing with this justification. In 2005, the most widely supported justification for a husband beating his wife is for neglecting the children; 40 percent of women agreed that a husband was justified to beat his wife for this reason, down from 51 percent in 1995.

Figure 1: Percentage of women who agree that wife-beating is justified for the following reasons, 1995 and 2005 EDHS



97 - While both the 1995 and the 2005 EDHS asked about additional justifications for spousal violence, these were the only three questions asked in both the 1995 and 2005 surveys.

Regional differences in attitudes. Looking more closely at all five possible justifications for spousal violence that women were asked to consider in 2005, results show that a greater percentage of rural women believe husbands are justified in beating their wives.

Table 4: Attitudes toward wife-beating, EDHS 2005

Percent agreeing husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife if she:						Agree with at least 1 reason	Agree with all reasons	Number of ever-married women
	Goes out without telling him	Neglects the children	Argues with him	Refuses to have sex with him	Burns the food			
Urban	27.4	27.1	23.8	20.1	10.4	37.0	8.4	8,033
Rural	49.4	48.6	47.0	43.0	25.0	59.1	22.3	11,441
Total	40.4	39.8	37.4	33.5	19.0	50.0	16.5	19,474

Similarly, the women’s empowerment study respondents in rural areas had the highest levels of acceptance of violence. On the other hand, respondents living in middle and upper income urban areas of Cairo, as well as respondents having a secondary level of education or higher, expressed the lowest levels of acceptance to violence. Divorced and separated respondents, respondents having no children, and those married at the age of 30 or older expressed low levels of acceptance of violence as well.

B4. Help-Seeking Behaviors

The differences between rural and urban areas in the EDHS 2005 data were also noticeable in women’s help seeking behaviors. Women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the past 12 months at the hands of their current or most recent husband were questioned about their help-seeking pattern. Overall, 32 percent of women from rural areas who have experienced violence at least once sought help, whereas this percentage increases to 39 percent among women in urban areas. The variation by urban-rural residences is greater among women who have often experienced violence: 60 percent of those in urban areas reported seeking help compared to 44 percent among those in rural areas. Assistance was most often sought from relatives in both rural and urban locations.

C. Conclusion

Agreement among women with justifications for violence against them is on the decline. Unfortunately, declining acceptance of violence among women has not been matched with fewer reports of violence since 1995 — nearly a fifth of married women have been recent victims of physical violence at the hands of their husbands. The persistence of high levels of spousal abuse reveals that more needs to be done by policymakers and civil society to effectively address this issue, not only with women but also with men and the community as a whole.

Having secondary education or higher was shown to be inversely related to the risk of exposure to violence. Secondary education or higher is also associated with better attitudes toward violence and increased likelihood of positive responses, such as taking action to eliminate such violence. Based on this finding, it is recommended that policies aiming at combating domestic violence focus on increasing school retention and university enrollment for girls.

Both the EDHS and SRC data sets cover a few lines of inquiry on violence against women, primarily on prevalence of and attitudes toward wife-beating. To develop a strategy to combat violence against women in Egypt, policymakers will need more data about all forms of violence in the family and in the community, including the experiences of unmarried women, help-seeking behavior, and attitudes of both women and men. Such data is presented in the next chapter of this summary report.

EXPERIENCES, ATTITUDES, AND PRACTICES: A New Survey of 4,408 Women, Men, and Female and Male Youth

A. Objectives/Methodology

The *quantitative violence against women survey of women, men, and female and male youth* is intended as gap-filling research to complement other recent surveys that have addressed violence against women in Egypt, including the EDHS and the SRC Women's Empowerment Study. The EDHS survey focused solely on the experience and attitudes of women and the questions addressed primarily spousal violence. The SRC study also focused only on the experience and attitudes of women, and the number of questions regarding violence against women was limited. Therefore, the NCW and Combating Violence project designed the quantitative survey to provide new data on violence against women in areas not previously studied in Egypt, such as women's experiences with forms of non-spousal violence, help-seeking behavior of women victims of violence, experiences of unmarried female youth, and attitudes of men and unmarried male youth.

The research firm SPAAC, led by Dr. Sara Loza, conducted a quantitative survey of 4,408 married and unmarried women, men, and male and female youth to measure levels, attitudes, and knowledge related to violence against women in a wide range of locations throughout Egypt. It was designed to provide useful data to analyze the following issues: (i) the types, levels, and causes of violence against women; (ii) perceptions of violence among men and women and in different social groups and regions; and (iii) options women currently have or would like to have if they are victims of violence. The survey complements the EDHS and SRC surveys in several ways:

- Selecting a sample that is representative of the a large portion of the Egyptian population, including persons from various regions, economic backgrounds, and education levels;
- Including interviews with not only married women, but also married men and young unmarried women and men, in order to gauge their views on violence against women;
- Including a larger more in-depth set of questions regarding violence against women (including questions that examine community violence, as well as a broader category of domestic violence beyond spousal violence), the attitudes that underlie violence against women, and responses to violence.

The sample design for the survey included four distinct focal population groups: (i) ever-married women ages 15 to 49; (ii) men currently married to women ages 15 to 49; (iii) never-married female youth age 15 to 24; and (iv) never-married male youth age 15 to 24. The objective was to obtain statistically reliable results, but not necessarily a statistically representative sample nationwide for each of the four focal groups.

However, by selecting a large sample across governorates in a variety of regions (Cairo, Alexandria, Sharkia, Gharbia, Beni Suef, Sohag, and Qena), the sample is designed to be generally representative of Egypt. The sample is not suitable for analysis of results at the governorate level, but does allow for analysis of the results by region. And, the sample was designed to allow for analysis of the various disaggregated sub-groups within the

four population groups, including individuals of different ages, locations (urban/rural), economic status, and education levels. Given the significance of spousal violence, the highest priority group in terms of sample size was married women.

Respondents were asked about their experience of both domestic violence and community violence, and specifically about physical, psychological, and sexual violence. *Physical violence* questions asked about being kicked or dragged, being wounded or injured, an attempt made to choke or burn, being attacked with a weapon, and/or having broken bones. *Psychological violence* questions focused on: (i) *emotional/verbal* violence as represented by being insulted, humiliated, addressed by the name of an animal, etc., being threatened with harm and/or being threatened with divorce: and (ii) *controlling/isolating* violence as represented by money being taken by force and/or being prevented from seeking health care, going out of the house, visiting family, and/or going to work. *Sexual violence* questions referred to a wife being forced into sexual relations with her husband, or any other forced sexual relations experienced by a married woman or unmarried female youth.

Table 5: Respondent married women victims of violence and married men perpetrators of violence by type of violence

	Married Women Victims of Violence		Married Men Perpetrators of Violence	
	Ever Experienced	Experienced in Last 12 Months	Ever Inflicted	Inflicted in Last 12 Months
Total N	1276	1276	1044	1044
% Experienced/Inflicted Any Violence	63.2	50.2	78.1	63.7
Psychological Violence	%	%	%	%
Emotional/Verbal				
Insulted	60.3	46.1	68.4	53.2
Humiliated	22.5	18.2	7.8	5.7
Called name of animal, etc.	34.4	28.0	30.3	24.5
Threatened to harm	14.5	10.2	15.7	11.3
Threatened to divorce	22.6	11.1	27.3	14.9
<i>At least one type of Emotional/Verbal</i>	61.3	47.7	75.2	60.9
<i>Two-three types of Emotional/Verbal</i>	27.6	23.5	55.0	31.0
Controlling/isolating				
Money taken by force	6.4	4.1	0.8	0.3
Prevented from health care	4.8	3.1	2.3	1.8
Prevented from going out of house	16.0	10.5	11.3	6.2
Prevented from visiting family	20.9	14.0	12.4	7.5
Prevented from going to work	3.8	2.4	5.6	2.7
<i>At least one type controlling/isolating</i>	29.2	19.7	25.2	14.9
<i>Two-three types controlling/isolating</i>	12.7	8.7	24.2	2.9
<i>At least one type of psychological</i>	62.6	49.5	77.7	63.4
<i>Five or more types of psychological</i>	15.0	9.1	6.5	2.3
Physical Violence	%	%	%	%
Kicked or dragged	24.8	13.7	27.9	11.1
Wounded/injured	13.8	8.0	4.9	2.3
Attempt to choke or burn	3.5	1.7	0.2	0.1
Attacked with a weapon	2.4	1.3	0.2	0.0
Broke bones	4.5	2.5	0.8	0.6
<i>At least one type of physical</i>	28.3	16.1	28.6	11.5
<i>Two - three types of physical</i>	10.1	6.1	4.4	2.2
Sexual Violence	%	%	%	%
Forced into sexual relations	17.3	13.8	0.4	0.3

Prior to the start of field work for the quantitative survey, the NCW approved the plan, locations, and survey instruments used by the research team, and official authorization was

provided by the Egyptian Central Authority for Population Mobilization and Statistics. Data collection took place between April and June 2008, followed by analysis and reporting from July through October.

B. Findings

The survey of violence against women attempted to determine the prevalence and intensity of domestic and community violence against women, as well as the underlying social attitudes and norms, which either perpetuated the cycle of violence or would be useful in breaking it.

B1. Family Violence

Prevalence of spousal domestic violence. In this survey, 28 percent of women report having been victims of physical violence by their husbands (see Table 5), similar to the 33 percent of women in the 2005 EDHS study who reported having been subjected to spousal physical violence. However, a much higher percentage of women (62.6 percent) report psychological violence compared to the EDHS study. Nearly two-thirds of women (61 percent) report that they have been subject to an emotional/verbal form of psychological violence, most often reporting that they have been insulted by their husbands. Even more married men, almost four out of five respondents acknowledged that they had ever inflicted any form of psychological violence on their wives. In most other categories, the responses of married men are similar to the responses for women regarding violence. However, substantially fewer men reported forcing their wives into sexual relations (.04 percent) compared to women who report having been forced into sexual relations (17 percent).

Rationale for spousal violence. Both women who experienced any form of violence from their husbands and men who perpetrated any form of violence against their wives were asked what they thought the reasons were for the violence.

Large proportions of both men and women cite factors external to the marriage, such as the high cost of living and problems at work as a main reason for the violence. However, a third of women cite the character of their husband as a reason for the violence, while over half of all men who perpetrated violence against their wives report that it resulted from her not doing what he wanted.

Responses to spousal violence.

The initial responses of women who were victims of spousal violence in the 12 months preceding the survey are reported in Table 6. One in four women (25 percent) who suffered physical or sexual violence reported that the violence caused her to leave the house and go to her family; 13 percent of those who suffered only psychological violence had the same response. A small

Table 6: Responses of respondent married women who suffered spousal violence in the past 12 months by type of violence

	Any	Psychological Only	Physical/ Sexual
N Women Who Suffered Violence in Past Year	640	328	312
Response to Violence*	%	%	%
Do nothing	5.0	8.2	1.6
Get upset and cry	87.8	85.4	90.4
Silently curse him	26.6	20.7	32.7
Curse him aloud	19.8	14.9	25.0
Leaves the house & goes to her family	19.4	13.7	25.3
Complain to her relatives	11.6	8.5	14.7
Deprive him of marital relations	11.1	7.6	14.7
Complain to his relatives	7.5	5.8	9.3
Hit the children	5.0	5.2	4.8

*More than one answer so percentages do not add up to 100%.

percentage (5 percent) of the women reported hitting the children in response to the violence perpetrated against them.

Help-seeking behavior. Only one in four (25 percent) respondent women who had ever suffered any form of spousal violence (typically those who reported at least one type of physical violence) reported that they had ever sought help or assistance following

Table 7: Percentage distribution of interviewed wives that experienced violence from husbands and sought external support

N Married Women Who Experienced Violence	806
% Asked for help	25.1
N Requested Support	202
Requested Support To:*	%
Assist in changing character by guidance	80.2
Support to be divorced or separated	16.3
Financial help to reduce pressure on husband	3.0
Assist in changing character by force	5.9
Help the husband and wife reconcile	4.0
Other requested support	1.5
Those Being Asked For Support*	%
Wife's family	74.5
Husband's family	36.6
Heads of husband's family	4.9
Heads of wife's family	6.9
Friends and neighbors	3.5
Lawyer	2.0
Sheikhs/Omda/Sheikh El Balad (Head of the town)	1.0
N Did Not Request Support	604
Reason For Not Asking For Support*	%
Feared her husband's anger	71.1
Feared divorce or desertion	20.7
Became used to such treatment	26.2
Her family stopped her for fear of scandals	19.9
Feared impact on her children	11.3
Became used to treatment & knows how to get her rights without anybody's help	10.6
Improper to talk about family's internal secrets	4.0
Husband does not listen to anybody	2.6
Did not know whom to ask for help	0.2

* More than one answer so sum of percentages more than 100%.

the violence (see Table 7). The primary source of help cited by most women is the family. Of the women who suffered from a violent act and requested help, three-quarters requested support from their own families and more than one-third (37 percent) requested support from their husbands' families. Very few respondent married women who suffered from acts of spousal violence sought support from outside of the family. The majority of respondents agreed that family issues should be kept within the family and that outsiders, particularly the police, should not get involved, as indicated by the responses to other questions in the survey (see, for instance, Table 16)

However, the fact that help-seeking is a minority behavior and that most women report that family problems should be kept in the family does not necessarily imply that the women victims of spousal abuse do not want help. Among those victims of violence who did **not** ask for help, 71 percent report not asking for help due to fear of their husband, while only 4 percent thought it improper to talk about it outside the family. The fears of many of these women appear justified: 87 percent of men who perpetrated acts of violence against their wives and whose wife did not ask for support stated that it was improper for a wife to let anybody know what happens with her husband.

All surveyed women and men were asked when it is appropriate for a woman to complain to the police. Overall, about a quarter of both men and women do not think it is ever appropriate for a wife to complain to the police about her husband, while about a third of both men and women believe that if a husband stops supporting his wife financially, the wife can complain to the police. Differences between men and women are substantial when it comes to opinions about complaining to the police regarding physical or psychological violence. Close to a half (47 percent) of married women believe it is appropriate to complain to police when her husband beats her compared to just over a quarter (28 percent) of married men who agree.

Attitudes about how to protect women from spousal violence. Women and men differ as to what should be done to protect women from spousal violence (see Table 8). Women were much more likely to look toward new laws to address the situation, while men were more likely to rely on improving the economic situation. Over half of women and a third of men cited religious awareness as a key to better protection of women. As to *who* should protect women from spousal abuse, 41 percent of women reported that the law and government should protect women, while only 5 percent of men agreed.

In-law domestic violence. One quarter (25 percent) of respondent married women reported that they had suffered violence from their in-laws. For the large majority of those, the violence had been in the form of insults and humiliation (22 percent of respondent married women). The main perpetrators of this were the husband's parents, largely the mother. Other forms of violence were not as prevalent, although 8 percent reported that in-laws had incited the husband to beat her. A total of 13 percent of married men also reported that their families had incited them to inflict some type of violence on their wives, of which the highest percentages were incited to beat or curse their wives (7 percent and 4 percent, respectively).

Attitudes about "punishment" by in-laws. Many respondents agreed with the statement that in-laws have the right to punish a wife if she does not follow their orders. There was a small gap between the responses, with married women slightly more likely than married men to agree with the statement (25 percent and 20 percent, respectively). However, while the male youth responses are similar to the married men (22 percent agree), the female youth are significantly less likely to agree with the statement (13 percent).

Table 8: Comparison between respondent married women and men views on how women should be protected and who should protect them (responses > 1%)

N Married Women	1276
Requirements for Protection*	%
Religious awareness	54.7
A law other than Kholae	28.5
Improve family's economic status	12.6
Local women's rights organization	10.0
Stronger role of wife's family	3.3
Wife's family should know the fiancé's manners before marriage	1.0
Don't know	9.7
Who Should Protect Women*	%
Woman protects herself	42.4
Law and government	40.5
Religious leaders	15.5
Wife's family	12.4
The husband himself	4.7
Head of town or family	4.1
Husband's family	3.6
Police	3.4
Media	3.2
Community associations	2.1
National Council for Women	1.2
Don't know	9.6
N Married Men	1044
Requirements for Protection*	%
Government improves family economic conditions	39.4
Religious programs/raise awareness of female rights	33.3
Families teach daughters about marital relationship	14.4
More understanding between couples before marriage	11.1
Local centers to solve marital problems	4.6
Issue strict laws to solve family problems	2.1
Who Should Protect Women*	%
Wife's family protects her	65.1
Woman protects herself	28.0
Husband's family	18.1
Community and family leaders	8.2
The law	5.3
Religious leaders	1.1
Don't know	2.1

* More than one answer so sum of percentages more than 100%.

Domestic violence against unmarried female youth. Over half of unmarried female youth reported that they had suffered physical violence from their brother (57.1 percent), with a similar percentage reporting that they suffered physical violence from their father (56.5 percent). Table 9 also shows that an overwhelming majority of female youth also reported being subjected to at least one type of psychological violence by fathers and brothers (78 percent and 80 percent, respectively).

Table 9: Respondent unmarried female and male youth reports of domestic family violence against unmarried female youth

N Female Youth	1044
Subjected by Fathers to at Least 1 Type of:*	%
Psychological Violence	78.1
Physical Violence	56.5
N Female Youth Who Have a Brother	935
Subjected by Brothers to at Least 1 Type of:*	%
Psychological Violence	80.3
Physical Violence	57.1
N Male Youth Who Have a Sister	904
Father Subjected Sister to at Least 1 Type of:*	%
Psychological Violence	90.3
Physical Violence	66.9
Subjected Own Sister to at Least 1 Type of:*	%
Psychological Violence	86.5
Physical Violence	54.0

* More than one answer so sum of percentages more than 100%.

Rationale for violence against female youth by brothers. Among female youth who suffered from violence by their brothers, not being obedient was the most frequently reported reason given by respondent female youth for the violence by their brothers (see

Table 10). Nervousness and anger were the reasons mentioned most frequently by the male youth (61 percent) who perpetrated violence against their sisters.

Table 10: Main reasons given for violence from brothers by respondent male and female youth

N Female Youth Who Suffered Violence from Brother	828
Reasons for Violence*	%
Not being obedient	62.3
Nervousness and anger	50.6
Mother complaining about daughter	40.5
Answering back	25.2
Going out without permission	14.6
N Male Youth Who Inflicted Violence on Sister	836
Reasons for Violence*	%
Nervousness and anger	61.2
Answering back	60.3
Not obeying father	51.6
Mother complaining about daughter	12.7
Going out without permission	10.5

* More than one answer so sum of percentages more than 100%.

Responses related to disobedience revealed a clear gender gap. Answering back was mentioned as a reason for violence against their sister by 60 percent of the male youth overall, but only by 25 percent of the female youth agreed. These reasons were mentioned less frequently in both urban and rural Upper Egypt, with closer to 40 percent for male youth and 10 percent for female youth.

The mother complaining about the daughter was only mentioned as a reason for violence by 13 percent of respondent male youth who perpetrated violence and 41 percent of respondent female youth who suffered from violence. This could indicate that the mother-daughter relationship is sometimes hostile. However, when all respondent female youth were asked who could support her if she suffered from violence from her father or brother, two-thirds (68 percent) stated that the mother would support her. Almost half (46 percent) said that a senior family member would help her, while more than one in five (22 percent) said that only God could help her because she has to bear it.

Honor crimes. Attitudes toward out-of-wedlock pregnancies reveal a majority of respondents believe that honor crimes are justified in some circumstances. In particular, when asked about whether an unwed girl who gets pregnant due to her own behavior should be killed, large majorities of married women and male youth agree (71 percent

each), compared to a slight majority of married men (53 percent) and a substantial minority of female youth (40 percent) who agree. Even when the pregnancy is the result of rape, 10 percent of married men and 7 percent of male youth still agree that the girl should be killed.

Table 11: Respondents’ views on unwed pregnancies

	Married Women	Married Men	Female Youth	Male Youth
Total N	1276	1044	1044	1044
Agree That:	%	%	%	%
Unwed girls who get pregnant from being raped should be forgiven and continue their lives	94.4	89.6	97.9	89.8
Unwed girls who get pregnant due to their behavior should be forgiven and continue their lives	4.0	4.6	1.4	3.3
Unwed girls who get pregnant from being raped should be killed	4.2	10.2	2.2	7.1
Unwed girls who get pregnant due to their behavior should be killed	70.8	53.2	39.7	70.8

B2. Community Violence

The issue of harassment of women has garnered substantial media coverage in recent months. News stories about large groups of young men harassing women during holiday celebrations have provoked public outrage and a police response leading to mass arrests of young men. Most of the information concerning sexual harassment available to policymakers is anecdotal in nature, though, focuses on high profile cases. As part to the Egypt Violence Against Women Study, questions were asked about community violence, including sexual harassment.

In the streets. Large majorities of both married women (72 percent) and unmarried female youth (94 percent) report having been verbally harassed in the streets. The data suggest that sexual harassment is widely prevalent behavior among most young men. Nearly two-thirds of the unmarried male youth, including nearly three-quarters of young men in Cairo and Alexandria report verbally harassing girls in the street. Of these, 81 percent blame the “seductiveness of girls” as their reason for harassing women. Harassment of women is not only limited to verbal abuse, with 17 percent of married women and 22 percent of unmarried young women reporting that they have had their body touched inappropriately by men in the streets.

Table 12: Respondent married women and unmarried female youth reports of experienced harassment and male youth reports of practice of verbal harassment in the streets

Total Number of Married Women	1276
Ever Experienced in Streets	%
Verbal harassment	71.8
Body touched	16.6
Attempt to rob/robbed	19.3
N Unmarried Female Youth	1044
Ever Experienced in Streets	%
Verbal harassment	94.0
Body touched	21.7
Attempt to rape	9.1
Attempt to photograph	38.4
Stalking her	10.2
Exposed to none of these acts	5.8
N Unmarried Male Youth	1044
% Who Verbally Harass Girls in Street	62.1

On transportation. Married women were also asked about their experience of harassment on public transportation. Compared to harassment on the street, fewer, but still a majority of married women report being verbally harassed (51 percent). As with harassment in the street, a substantial percent of married women (20 percent) also report being touched inappropriately on transportation.

At work, school, and government offices. Of married women who are currently employed, 21 percent report having ever been subjected to verbal harassment at work and six percent report having had their body touched inappropriately at work. Fifteen percent of respondent women reported that they were verbally harassed in school, with the highest proportions in Lower Egypt, both urban and rural.⁹⁸ Small proportions of respondent married women reported being verbally harassed in government offices (6 percent) and at the police station (1.1 percent), although these results do not filter for those women who actually frequented police stations or government offices. Those who reported being verbally harassed in police stations were all located in urban Governorates.

Rape/sexual molestation. Since the question of community violence in the form of rape and/or serious sexual molestation was a delicate one, it was addressed indirectly by asking respondent married women and men, and unmarried female youth if they knew a female who had been raped and/or sexually molested. A slightly higher proportion of respondent married women and unmarried female youth reported knowing a female who was raped and/or sexually molested (13 percent and 9 percent, respectively), in comparison to respondent married men (7 percent).

Table 13: Respondent views on the reasons females get sexually harassed in the streets

	Married Women	Married Men	Female Youth	Male Youth
Total Sample	1276	1044	1044	1044
Reasons Females Get Harassed*	%	%	%	%
The way they dress	83.5	85.5	82.5	90.8
The way they walk	55.5	58.0	67.1	54.2
Going out at night	24.8	20.0	16.3	25.9
Poor morals of male youth	63.4	43.9	72.5	21.2
Male youth taking drugs	0.0	0.0	26.2	0.0

* More than one answer so sum of percentages more than 100%.

Rationale for harassment. The way females dressed and walked were the reasons mentioned most often by all the respondents for why females get sexually harassed in the streets (see Table 13). Even married women and unmarried female youth put the blame for harassment on the females, although they also attributed it to the poor morals of male youth (63

percent for married women and 73 percent for female youth).

Attitudes on what can be done. As to how females can be protected from harassment, the majority of both married women and married men mentioned that females should wear less revealing clothes (see Table 14). The three other main suggestions by married women include providing separate transportation for females (39 percent), raising awareness through media and religion in mosques and churches to raise commitment to religious teachings (32 percent), and issuing a law (26 percent). Additionally, 13 percent of women added that girls should stop going out alone (13

Table 14: Percent distribution of interviewed wives and husbands by opinion on how to protect females from harassment in transportation (responses > 1%)

N Married Women	1276
How to Protect Females From Harassment in Transportation	%
Wearing less revealing clothes	79.9
Providing transportation exclusive for girls	38.9
Raising awareness through media and religious leaders	32.3
Issuing a law	26.0
Girls stop going out alone	12.6
N Married Men	1044
How to Protect Females From Harassment in Transportation	%
Ensuring decent dressing	70.9
Following religious teachings	46.0
Having transportation for females	29.6
Raising awareness through media	24.9
Girls do not go out alone	22.2
Issuing a law	11.9
Implementing changes to reduce crowdedness in transportation	1.2

* More than one answer so sum of percentages more than 100%.

⁹⁸ - The average age of the respondent married women was approximately 35 years old, so the school experiences of many respondents were a number of years in the past in addition to the fact that a large proportion were illiterate or could only read and write — i.e., did not complete primary education.

percent), especially at night; a suggestion that more married men mentioned (22 percent). Married women in urban governorates were less likely to mention that females should wear less revealing clothing and more likely to mention issuing a law than were married women in other parts of Egypt.

When unmarried youth were asked what should be done to protect females in the street from harassment, a total of 87 percent of respondent male youth and 74 percent of respondent female youth also suggested that women wear less revealing clothes on the streets (see Table 15).

Having a law against harassment and having police on the streets are two other options to protect women from harassment in the streets mentioned by substantial proportions (42 percent and 36 percent, respectively) of

respondent female youth. A much smaller proportion of respondent unmarried male youth (9 percent) mentioned the law as a method of protection for females in the street, but 22 percent mentioned police presence. A clear gender gap in opinions was revealed with two other suggestions of the male youth — abiding by religious teachings and not allowing girls to go out alone (50 percent and 35 percent, respectively) — both of which were mentioned by less than 2 percent of the unmarried female youth.

Table 15: Percentage distribution of interviewed unmarried male youth by their opinion on how best to protect girls from harassment in the street

N Unmarried Male Youth	1044
How Girls Can be Protected From Harassment in the Street*	%
Girls wear less revealing clothes	86.6
Abiding by religious teachings	50.1
Girls stop going out alone	34.9
Police be present in the streets	21.9
Raising awareness through media	19.7
Providing exclusive transportations for girls	11.3
Issuing a law	8.7
N Unmarried Female Youth	1044
How Girls Can be Protected From Harassment in the Street*	%
Females dress properly	73.6
Having strict law	41.6
Having police in the streets	36.1
Stop broadcasting intimidating scenes on TV	35.9
Girls should not walk alone in the streets	1.7
Increasing awareness of religious teachings	1.3
Increasing work opportunities and sports activities for male youth	1.0
Do not know	1.7

* More than one answer so sum of percentages more than 100%.

B3. Gender and Family Relationships

The survey findings indicate that there is a general consensus on various aspects of the relationship between husband and wife and family issues (see Table 16).

The majority agree with the standard conservative family norms in Egypt where, in general, a man should please his wife and make things comfortable for her, and it is the woman’s role to serve her husband. A woman does not have the independent right to choose her own friends without agreement from the husband; and children and family problems should only be discussed within the family. However, there was also general consensus that a female has a right to control her own inheritance.

There is more disagreement between the respondents with respect to the issues of whether the man should have the first and final say at home, particularly among the respondent youth. A gender gap was clear among the youth, where respondent male youth exhibited more conservative values than their fathers, while the girls were less conservative than their mothers. The same dynamic can be seen in the response to girls having to be treated strictly so that they do not deviate: a larger percentage of male youth (80 percent) agreed

Table 16: Respondent views on the relationship between the husband and the wife, male and female youth issues and legacy of abuse

	Married Women	Married Men	Female Youth	Male Youth
Total N	1276	1044	1044	1044
Husband and Wife Relationship				
Agree That:	%	%	%	%
A man should please his wife and make things comfortable for her	99.1	89.2	98.9	91.2
A woman's role is to serve her husband and children	86.7	88.2	89.3	84.0
Family problems should be discussed only within the family	99.0	98.7	99.0	98.6
The man should have the first and final word at home	71.2	75.4	56.7	85.1
A woman has the right to select her female friends even if her husband does not like them	4.3	1.5	4.7	2.3
A respectable woman stays at home and does not go out alone	54.9	69.1	37.5	79.5
Females have a right to control their inheritance	92.0	86.8	96.4	83.8
Male and Female Youth Issues				
Agree That:	%	%	%	%
Girls' education is not as important as boys' education	12.5	16.3	6.2	20.5
Girls have to be treated strictly so that they do not deviate	71.3	64.0	54.3	79.6
A girl has to serve her brother even if she does not want to	69.1	68.3	62.4	64.3
Any man is better than no man	62.5	56.7	48.0	61.0
Legacy of Abuse				
A girl who is beaten in her father's home will be beaten in her husband's home	37.1	28.4	29.9	34.5
A boy who beats his sister will beat his wife	60.2	52.2	58.3	44.2

compared to married men (64 percent), while a smaller percentage of female youth (54 percent) agreed compared to married women (71 percent).

C. Conclusion

New data for the Egypt Violence Against Women Study, including responses from both men and women provides further evidence of the high prevalence of spousal abuse in Egypt.

More than three out of five respondent married women reported that they had ever suffered any form of psychological domestic violence and almost four out of five respondent married men acknowledged that they had ever inflicted any form of psychological violence. The results for unmarried respondent female and male youth were even higher. Physical violence directed toward unmarried female youth was much higher with over half reporting that they had suffered physical violence from their brother and over half reporting that they had suffered violence from their father. In-law violence was much less prevalent and was largely contained to insults.

Of women who have been victims of spousal abuse, though, only a quarter have ever sought help, typically from their family or their husband's family. The most common reason given for not seeking help is fear of the husband. Despite the widespread tendency to keep problems "in the family" a substantial portion of women believe that the police, the law, and government have a significant role to play in addressing violence against women.

As for community violence, the survey findings indicate that the majority of females are subjected to persistent sexual harassment in the streets and in transportation. Younger

females appear to be subjected to higher levels of harassment than are the older women. The general attitude of all the respondents toward sexual harassment on the street is that it is the female's fault based on her dress and behavior. Male youth felt their behavior was justified and their response to protect females often involved constraining and controlling the behavior of the females — i.e., restricting her dress and movement when alone. In general, respondent male youth expressed more conservative attitudes than the older married men in terms of taking more control over females and restrictions of females' movements and behavior. On the other hand, for the females, both married women and unmarried female youth, their responses to harassment in the streets and transportation indicate a certain level of acceptance of the status quo and hesitation in seeking help.

Respondents' general attitudes on gender and family relationships reinforce the trend indicated in the community violence data, namely that the male youth have more conservative and controlling attitudes toward females than the older married men. Additionally, there is a very large gender gap between the attitudes of the respondent unmarried females in comparison to those of the respondent unmarried males. This indicates that if attitudes do not change, society may be heading toward more domestic violence in the future as these male youth marry and have unrealistic expectations of their wives.

For both domestic and community violence, there was greater support among the females, both respondent married women and unmarried female youth, for laws and regulations that would protect women from violence. Respondent married men were substantially less likely to mention the development of laws to protect women from violence and the unmarried male youth were even less likely to do so.

D. Recommendations

Pass a strict law to protect females from violence that protects the victim's rights and punishes the perpetrators. The NCW should take the lead in convincing government officials of the need for such a law to protect women from violence in their homes and in the community.

Raise awareness of men, women, and male and female youth of Islamic religious teachings of the obligations of parents toward their children to ensure their physical, mental, religious, psychological, and cultural well-being to improve their future livelihood. That should be done in all local mosques, and through TV and mass media. Also, Islamic religious teachings encourage familial understanding, good treatment, warmth, love, and compassion between the husband and his wife (*mawada* and *rahma*) for both of them and for their children, raising them without creating disparities between males and females.

Focus media programming on equal rights for women and men rather than provocative and intimidating scenes of violence against women. Programming should include respectful relations between husbands and wives, and parents and their children, as well as siblings, acquaintances, and friends.

Increase police surveillance in streets, public transportation, and educational institutions and enforcement action to reduce community violence, including harassment of females in public places.

Enhance all local services to female victims of violence and raise awareness of the benefits of the services provided. In addition to victim services, prevention activities should include providing guidelines and raising awareness on how to stop violence and to protect females, as well as the legal consequences for perpetrators.

Collect comprehensive data on violence against women on an ongoing basis, conducting additional analysis and research on specific topics as needed. National DHS and crime data should be collected on a regular basis to monitor trends and assess progress in combating violence against women. All available data sets should be made available to researchers to analyze further the information to inform policymakers.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THE LAW: A De Jure and De Facto Review of the Legal and Regulatory Structure

A. Objectives/Methodology

The *review of the legal and regulatory framework related to violence against women in Egypt* is designed to update previous analyses with current experiences and insights from practitioners in the field. The paper reviews laws, legislation, executive regulations, and enforcement of policies related to violence against women. It also identifies some lessons learned from previous legal reform and implementation efforts, opportunities for change, and the capacities necessary to enforce the law and rules of justice.

The legal expert chosen by the National Council for Women, Nehad Abu Komsen of the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, began by preparing a literature review of the previous studies, including government and NGO reports on CEDAW, as well as legal analyses of specific violence against women issues. Then she conducted five focus group discussions with 62 lawyers who work with the NCW Ombudsman Office and NGO legal units that provide legal assistance to women victims of violence. The lawyers were from 17 governorates — Cairo, Giza, Qalyubeya, South Sinai, El-Wadi El-Gedeed, Marsa Matrooh, Ismailia, Menufeya, Port Said, North Sinai, Fayoum, Assiut, Beni Sweif, Aswan, Suhag, Alexandria, El-Minia, and Luxor. Four in-depth interviews were also held with legal experts and senior human rights lawyers. In addition, advocacy organizations were consulted on their legal reform activities and to glean lessons learned. The discussions explored the practitioners' and experts' perspectives on the *de jure* and *de facto* situation of how the legal and regulatory framework responds to violence against women. The lawyers participating in the focus groups also identified a wide range of recommendations that are summarized at the end of the report.

Ms. Abu Komsan synthesized the results of her research into an analysis of legal policy, legislative, and operational issues related to violence against women, including the Family Code, Penal Code, Labor Law, and Civil Code. The legal review is intended to assist in the development of recommendations for legal and law enforcement policy reform that build on the expertise and efforts of those with direct experience with victims of violence against women.

B. Findings

The legal system, depending on its structure and implementation, can be a key element in combating violence. The law should not only provide direct protection from physical and sexual violence, but also avoid exacerbating psychological violence against women in the public and private spheres. Failure to enforce criminal penalties for domestic violence or mitigation of penalties for so-called honor crimes indicates that society and the state condone such violence. The failure of labor laws to address sexual harassment allows perpetrators to act with impunity. Meanwhile, discrimination in family law can effectively limit a woman's ability to leave an abusive situation, and create hardship in meeting her own and her children's financial needs (economic violence). Therefore, it is important to consider how Egyptian law, starting with the Constitution and continuing with key laws, addresses women's rights in general and provides protections from violence against women specifically.

The review of the legal and regulatory framework examines both the text of the law (*de jure*) and the implementation of the law (*de facto*). In many cases, the current legal structure is strong, but the implementation of the law is weak. In other cases, the law itself should be changed. The lack of clarity in some of the legal texts can result in contradictory applications of the law based on the individual biases of judges or other officials in charge of enforcing the law.

Ms. Komsan's full report provides analysis of each major law related to violence against women, with citations of relevant articles and extensive recommendations that should be consulted by legal specialists, activists, legislators, and other experts. This summary report presents the findings of Ms. Abu Komsan's research divided into three distinct areas: (1) protections for women and guarantees of equality in the Egyptian Constitution and international conventions ratified by Egypt; (2) laws on the criminal and civil adjudication of cases of violence against women (focusing on the Penal Code and Labor Law); and (3) laws on the rights of women in family relationships and individually (such as marriage, divorce, financial rights) and their ability to successfully leave abusive situations (focusing on the Personal Status Laws and the Civil Code). Throughout, the report highlights other areas where inequalities and discrimination in the law encourage violence and/or inflict psychological or emotional harm on women.

B1. Egyptian Constitution and International Agreements

The Egyptian Constitution is the supreme legal reference in Egypt, followed by laws, regulations, and decrees. The text of the constitution emphasizes the protection of human rights, in general, and women, in particular, as illustrated by the following articles:

Article 40: "All citizens are equal before the law. They have equal public rights and duties without discrimination due to sex, ethnic origin, language, religion, or creed."

Article 8: "The State shall guarantee equality of opportunities for all citizens."

Article 10: "The State shall guarantee the protection of motherhood and childhood, take care of children and youth and provide the suitable conditions for the development of their talents."

Article 11: "The State shall guarantee coordination between a woman's duties toward her family and her work in the society, considering her equal to man in the political, social, cultural, and economic life without violation to the rules of Islamic jurisprudence (*Sharia*)."⁹⁹

These stipulations imply that women enjoy all the same rights as men and are held responsible to all the same duties. Nevertheless, different interpretations of *Sharia* sometimes affect women's rights.

International conventions. International law affirms women's rights both generally, in non-discrimination clauses of human rights conventions and declarations, and separately, in documents specifically addressing the issue. As noted in the introduction to this

⁹⁹ - The importance of Islamic law is also mentioned in Article 2: "Sharia is the primary source of legislation."

summary report, Egypt has signed and ratified most major UN conventions related to human rights, the rights of women, and reduction of violence, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); Universal Declaration of Human Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In some cases, Egypt has expressed reservations to conventions related to possible conflicts with the *Sharia*.

These agreements become part of Egyptian law after they are signed by the President, unless they deal with certain issues related to alliances, trade, navigation, and any treaties that result in amendments to the land of the state, or that pertain to the sovereignty of national law, or impact on the budget, in which case they must also be ratified by the Egyptian Parliament and published in the official gazette. However, even when ratified by the Parliament, the Egyptian judicial system has not generally applied these international instruments in its decisions except in a very limited number of cases and rarely in cases involving the rights of women.

B2. Violence Against Women and the Penal Code

The Penal Code is the primary law for the prosecution of physical violence against women, including domestic violence, honor crimes, rape, and sexual assault.

Domestic violence. The Penal Code does not distinguish between violence in private and in public. It criminalizes violence regardless of the perpetrator or location of the crime. As such, domestic violence is subject to the general rules set forth in the Penal Code, which specifies graduated penalties for a wide range of offenses based on the seriousness of the crime.

While the legal structure allows for the prosecution of cases of domestic violence, in practice, judges and prosecutors often use their discretionary authority to dismiss cases and/or reduce penalties. In some cases, judges make reference to the general principle, “family is above the law,” established by the Court of Cassation. In other cases, judges cite Article 60 of the Penal Code, which states that “the provisions of the Penal Code may not be enforced on any act committed in good faith, in accordance with a right prescribed by virtue of *Sharia*,” and Article 7, which states that “The provisions of the said law may not replace in any way the personal rights conferred by the dignified *Sharia*.” Article 209 of the *Sharia* provisions of the Personal Status Code allow men to use a moderate level of violence against wives and children in the name of maintaining “discipline” in the household. Hence, the *Sharia* concept of “discipline” is often used to justify domestic violence and allow perpetrators to escape justice, including husbands who beat their wives and fathers who beat their children.

The focus group participants confirmed that mitigation of sentences is a barrier to ending violence against women. In reality, many cases of domestic violence are never brought to trial. If a trial is held, sentences are reduced out of consideration for the husband’s rights in the marital relationship and/or the judge’s own social and culture views, which sometimes support the right of the husband to “discipline” his wife.

Honor crimes. The law does not contain articles specifically related to so-called “crimes of honor.” However, Article 17 of the Egyptian Penal Code grants judges the discretionary

authority to reduce the original sentence by two degrees below that mandated by law in the name of leniency. While the Article applies to all crimes without distinction, judges often consider the mitigating circumstances in passing sentence for honor crimes, such as the accused was under psychological pressure, the victim violated the prevailing social values, or the accused eliminated a shame caused by the victim to her family. Thus, the specific use of Article 17 in honor crimes creates the impression that such crimes are somehow permissible or less important than other forms of assault and murder.

Mitigation of penalties in crimes of passion. Article 237 of the Penal Code states that: “A husband who surprises his wife in the act of committing adultery and on the spot kills her and her adulterer-partner, shall be punished by detention [similar to a misdemeanor], instead of the penalties determined in Articles 234 and 236 [murder or homicide].” For a woman who kills her husband under the same circumstances, the law has no similar provision. She would be charged with felony murder and subject to the maximum sentence under the law. The difference in treatment of women and men and the fact that the penalty for men is reduced in the first place provide some justification, and perhaps even encourage, this type of “crime of passion” murder in the name of family honor.

Rape. Rape is a punishable felony under Article 267 of the Penal Code, which states: “Anyone who has intercourse with a female against her will is punished by temporary hard labor. If the perpetrator is one of the victim’s principle relatives, in charge of raising her, has authority over her, or is a paid servant for her, he shall be punished by lifetime hard labor.” In other words, the law reinforces the punishment if the perpetrator is in a position of responsibility over the victim or a servant in the home.

In 2000, Article 291 of the Penal Code was amended to remove the provision that allowed perpetrators to escape punishment if they married their victims. However, focus group participants responded that reports issued in rape cases often cover up the crime as a romantic relationship, and a marriage is concluded between the victim and her assailant in the police station or prosecutor’s office. The victim is forced to marry the perpetrator typically due to ignorance of the law and/or social pressure to explain the loss of virginity. In other cases, women do not come forward to report rape because of invasive investigation procedures that lack gender sensitivity and during which their rights to privacy are frequently violated (see box above).

Lack of Privacy during Investigations
In practice, each police station has a place designated for receiving reports, called “the shift office”, where statements are made in public without any privacy. Victims of sexual assault or rape are obliged to re-tell details of the incident in front of everyone who happens to be in the office at that time. The lack of specialists trained to deal with sexual assault crimes is another issue, with many investigators asking questions and details that the victim cannot answer or exhibiting a lack of sensitivity to the victim’s emotional needs and the trauma to which she has been exposed. Similarly, the administrative procedures for prosecutors contain no articles guaranteeing the privacy of the victim and her family.
According to focus group participants, the lack of privacy and the intrusive investigation procedures are the main reasons women do not go to the police or prosecution if they are raped or sexually assaulted.

Incest. In cases of a woman or underage girl is raped by a family member, there is a question of who would bring the case, particularly if the parent guardian is the offender. The focus group participants noted that the victim, mother, or any other person has the right to report the incident. However, the law has a three-year statute of limitations, which

means that some cases are never brought before the court if they are discovered years after the crime is committed. Moreover, proving incest in court can be difficult after the passage of time, especially without forensic evidence.

Sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other forms of violence against women. Articles 268 (indecent assault, by force or threat, or attempted assault), 278 (indecent and shameful public act), and 279 (indecent act with a woman anywhere) in the Penal Code apply to cases of sexual assault and sexual harassment. The punishment under Article 268 is imprisonment with hard labor for a period ranging from three to seven years, with increased maximum penalties for incest and underage victims. The punishment under Articles 278 and 279 are “detention for a period not more than one year or a fine not exceeding LE300.”¹⁰⁰

The Penal Code does not provide a definition for sexual harassment or regulate the methods of proof. Therefore, the crime must fit within the law as a sexual assault, requiring the same procedures of proof, witness testimony, and other methods previously mentioned with respect to rape cases, with all of the difficulties these cases involve. In a recent landmark case of sexual harassment, a judge sentenced a man to three years imprisonment with hard labor for repeatedly groping a woman on a Cairo street. The judge also awarded LE5,001 (approximately \$900) in damages to the victim.

Protection orders. There is no order of protection provided by law to which women can avail themselves when a known perpetrator — a husband, other family member, or an acquaintance — poses a threat of ongoing violence.

Victim compensation. Article 251 of the Criminal Procedure Code establishes victim compensation for harm inflicted by violence or torture, but only if a parallel criminal case is filed with the court and won. As stated in the section on domestic violence, the rules of evidence and the “right to discipline” hamper the ability of women to pursue and win in court, hence, also making it difficult for them to seek compensation. With respect to civil damages, the court also requires a substantial amount of documentary evidence which is difficult for women to obtain.

Human trafficking. Trafficking in human beings is not a special crime under Egyptian law although a number of laws have been enacted that respond to this phenomenon, including Law 103 of 1976, Public Places Law 371 of 1956, and the amended Child Law 126 of 2008. Further, Prime Ministerial Decree 1584 of 2007 created the National Coordination Committee for Combating and Preventing Trading in Persons. The decree mandates the development of a national action plan to confront trafficking in persons and the preparation of an annual report on the national efforts to confront the issue.

Despite recent efforts to combat trafficking in persons, a review of legislation and executive regulations covering different forms of trafficking is required. In particular, decision-makers should determine whether certain types of early or temporary marriage should be considered human trafficking, such as is common involving rich men from Gulf, oil producing countries. These are mostly “transactional” marriages in which a financial element plays a major role. Moreover, there are also temporary “summer marriages” in

¹⁰⁰ - To strengthen protection for women victims of sexual harassment, the National Council for Women and Egyptian NGOs are each proposing new legal amendments to the Parliament that would strengthen definitions and punishments for these crimes.

which women (some under 18, the legal age of marriage) are “married” to men from the Gulf for a few days or months. Again, definitions and criminal penalties related to these types of marriages should be considered.

B3. Unequal Treatment of Women in the Penal Code

Several areas of the Penal Code and its application reveal the unequal treatment of men and women. These inequalities contribute to discrimination against women, which can encourage physical violence, and cause emotional and psychological harm.

Prostitution. Article 9(c) of Law 10 of 1961 prescribes the punishment of anyone, regardless of sex, who practices prostitution or debauchery. However, women often face unequal treatment in the application of this law.¹⁰¹ The woman is considered a wrongdoer and typically punished for prostitution with imprisonment for periods ranging between three months and three years and a fine, while her male associate goes unpunished even if he admits to the crime when testifying against her in court. This is an extreme form of discrimination against women, as the woman is seen as a source of temptation and evil, justifying both her punishment and the man’s absolution from guilt.

Adultery. Similar to the mitigation of penalties in crimes of passion discussed earlier, the penalties for adultery differ based on the sex of the offender, with men receiving lighter sentences. While Article 274 of the Penal Code punishes the adulterous wife with imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years, Article 277 punishes the adulterous husband by imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months. In addition, the husband is only punished if he commits adultery in the marital residence, while the wife can be punished regardless of where the incident of adultery took place. Thus, adultery by the husband outside the home is not considered a crime. Unequal punishments for adultery have negative implications not only for the social messages they carry, but also by encouraging husbands to act in such a manner with little concern for the consequences.

Denying paternity. The law does not punish a man for denying the paternity of his children, even if it is established beyond a doubt that he is the father. Denying paternity is equivalent to accusing a woman of adultery (in cases where the couple is married), with all of the social implications that this entails. If the accusation is false, then he has essentially slandered his wife, raising the risk of her being subjected to a so-called honor crime by a family member.

B4. Labor Law and Violence Against Women

Workplace violence and harassment. The Labor Law does not specifically address workplace harassment or violence in the workplace (whether physical, psychological, verbal, or sexual). Violations of workplace standards are disciplinary matters dealt with by progressive penalties depending on the act committed. If a crime is involved, the provisions of the Penal Code are applied (as with any case of sexual or physical assault).

101 - The National Council for Women has prepared draft legal amendments and sent them to the Minister of Justice on the equality of punishment for men and women before the law in cases of prostitution.

Focus group participants noted that there are no disciplinary penalties for verbal or physical harassment at work under the Labor Law and that such matters must be handled through a criminal investigation body (i.e., the police and the prosecutor). The Labor Law contains no specific procedures for reporting sexual harassment in the workplace, and no protections for women from reprisals from their employers, co-workers, or superiors if they report sexual harassment. In some cases, the focus group participants reported that harassment complaints could go to the victim's superior, even if he is accused of being the perpetrator. In the end, many women do not bring sexual harassment complaints at work for fear of reprisals and being ostracized. In addition, colleagues often refuse to testify for fear of losing their jobs.

Sexual harassment and protections for farm workers and household workers. Farm workers and household workers are exempted from the provisions of the Labor Law and, hence, do not have even minimum protections related to wages and working conditions. The Law also does not cover women working in the informal sector. Therefore, these women lack even administrative procedures for bringing complaints about sexual harassment. They also do not have other basic protections, such as health care, social insurance, and other services, provided to women who work in the formal economy.

B5. Family Law and Violence Against Women

Many aspects of Personal Status Laws (family law) have direct implications for violence against women, both as wives and as daughters. Early marriage has been recognized globally as a type of violence against women, but unofficial marriages also increase the risk women face to physical, psychological, and economic violence. Unequal treatment and gaps in the laws of divorce, property rights, alimony, and child custody, and burdensome procedural rules can facilitate psychological and economic violence against women, as well as making it difficult for women to escape domestic violence if they choose to do so.

Recent amendments to the Personal Status Law have addressed some of the legal problems faced by women, by establishing family courts (Law 10 of 2004) and improved procedures for processing personal status cases, expediting court rulings, increasing the age of custody, and setting up a Family Insurance Fund (Law No. 1 of 2000). Nevertheless, many changes are still required. Of key importance are provisions in the Personal Status Law that recognize the husband's right to "discipline" his wife (Article 209), mentioned earlier. While the Court of Cassation has established limits on the level of violence that may be used, international conventions and treaties, to which Egypt has agreed, prohibit the sanctioning of any level of violence or the *de jure* establishment of unequal power relationships in the marital relationship. Other weaknesses in the Personal Status Law that cause or perpetuate violence against women are considered below.

Early marriage. Early marriage is considered an act that results in physical, psychological, and sexual harm. Recent amendments (Law 126 of 2008) increase the age of marriage for girls to 18 years, equal to that previously established for boys. Despite this achievement, other articles in the law leave gaps that can be exploited to allow early marriage, especially in rural and tribal areas. While the law requires an official birth certificate to prove the ages of the couple, age can also be proven using the submission of "any other official document that includes that date of birth in order to know the age of the to be wedded couple." Participants in focus groups said that officials have been known to falsify

certificates in agreement with the girl's family in a limited number of cases. Marriage age also can be established by certification from two relatives in certain governorates with high concentrations of Bedouin and tribal groups — Al Nouba, Wady Al Gedid, the Red Sea, Marsa Matrouh, and Sinai.

Falsifying the age assessment is made easier because “any other document” may be submitted; in practice, this is often a certificate stating an older age that is authorized and issued by the Health Directorates in agreement with the girl's family. This practice facilitates widespread early marriage, particularly in rural and tribal areas.

Unofficial/*urfi* marriage. The law gives only limited rights to women in unofficial (*urfi*) marriages, although recent legal amendments have improved their status. The Family Law of 2001 allows women married under *urfi* marriages to divorce under the same general conditions as official marriages, and the existence of a marriage relationship can be proven by a variety of means such as correspondence. However, it is often difficult for women to establish the existence of the marriage, especially if the original documentation for the *urfi* marriage is lost. The lack of clear rules for establishing proof of a marriage relationship leaves the evidentiary determination to the discretion of the judge. On the whole, women in unofficial marriages are at a significant disadvantage when securing their rights and can be subject to many forms of violence from which they have little legal recourse.

Right to divorce. Violence is grounds for divorce under Egyptian Law. In such cases, the wife must provide proof of harm for the judge to grant her a divorce. Included in the law are stipulations that a judge can grant a divorce if the husband marries another woman, but the wife still must prove that psychological harm has taken place. The second marriage is not, by itself, considered grounds for divorce. The first wife seeking such a divorce is required to file a case within one year of notification of her husband's second marriage.

Focus group participants and legal experts noted that the evidence requirement and statute of limitations on filing for divorce pose challenges that prevent some women from getting divorce. Women have difficulty proving physical abuse at the hands of their husbands, and proving emotional and psychological abuse is even more difficult. Moreover, the husband and his lawyers can also draw out the legal process in divorce cases and delay final judgments. In these cases, many women eventually settle for a type of “walk-away” divorce or “*khul'*.”

“Walk-away” divorce (*khul'*). Article 20 of Law No. 1 of 2000 states that: “Both spouses may mutually consent to the divorce of the wife for consideration (*khul'*); if not, the wife may file for a divorce by waiving all her legal financial rights and returning the dowry he gave her, and the court will order her divorce.” However, the court may order a *khul'* divorce only after “an attempt at reconciliation between both spouses is made by two mediators, delegated by the court, within a period not exceeding three months” and “after the wife explicitly declares that it is intolerable to live with her husband, that the matrimonial life

The absence of regulations or publications related to the execution of *khul'* divorce has resulted in conflicts in judicial decisions and orders, as problems arise in applying the text of Article 20. For example, the husband can allege that the dowry money stated in the marriage contract is fictitious and that he paid a much larger sum of money. The court then refers the case for investigation and verification, which prolongs the proceedings. Judges can also order further attempts at reconciliation and other measures that delay final judgment in the case.

cannot continue, and that she is afraid she will commit a violation of the rules that God has dictated because of that hatred.”

Financial rights and alimony. Women have their own independent financial estates and ownership (of property and money) even after marriage. The law limits women’s financial rights after divorce to a number of types of alimony depending on the stage of the divorce and other circumstances. Egyptian law does not provide for joint property nor does it include provisions obliging women to bear some degree of financial responsibility toward the family.

Focus group participants and other experts said that some married women do not have independent financial estates or property and that their income usually goes directly to the husband and the family household. In divorce, the law has no provision for the division of property gained in the husband’s name during the marriage as compensation for her contribution to the household.

Paternity. Births in Egypt may be reported and officially registered by either the father or the mother, but in the case of mothers, the marital relationship must be proven. Under the amended Child Law (Law 126 of 2008), a mother is also permitted to register the birth of her child without the father present or a marriage certificate, but only if she can prove that the father is unknown, unavailable, or unwilling to come forward. According to focus group participants and experts, health offices usually refuse to register births without the father, the father’s brother, or the paternal grandfather present, even when the mother provides the marriage certificate, a copy of the father’s identity card, and a certificate from the hospital. As stated previously, the law does not provide criminal punishments for fathers who deny the paternity of their children or provide women with ways of suing for damages under slander laws in court. That said, recent amendments to the Child Law establish the right of the child to know his birth parents, and give the court the authority to order any procedures necessary to ensure this right, including the use of advanced scientific means (presumably, DNA testing). Forthcoming regulations to the amended Child Law will provide more specificity on how this legal change will be implemented.

The **Family Insurance Fund** was created by Law 11 of 2004 to overcome some of these problems and step in when men failed to pay alimony. However, the fund does not pay the temporary alimony and the maximum payment is LE500 (approximately \$90), and the procedures are lengthy and complicated.

Failure to pay alimony or child support. Failure to pay alimony or child support is a major form of financial and economic violence affecting women. Despite multiple attempts to improve the law, implementation problems still exist. In particular, the period for awarding temporary alimony, while cases are being adjudicated, is only 15 days which is not enough considering the lengthy legal processes mentioned above. The law also specifies imprisonment for men who fail to pay court ordered alimony, but the procedures are complex and can take over a year to complete.

Law 11 of 2004 establishes a Family Insurance Fund to help poor women obtain minimum alimony payments. The fund pays a maximum of LE500 and does not cover all types of alimony. In addition, orders issued by settlement offices affiliated with the Family Courts are often not executed, and complex procedures have limited the fund’s ability to resolve alimony problems.

Child custody. Law 4 of 2005 states that mothers are entitled to custody of their children until they reach the age of 15, after which the judge shall give the children the choice of staying with either parent. However, the law does not provide adequate guarantees allowing women to receive child support, or to prevent deception or the prolongation of alimony cases, which can cause great economic and psychological suffering for mothers. Focus group participants even noted that some mothers have been forced to abandon their children for lack of money or a home.

Custody disputes are one of the major areas of psychological and emotional violence against women. These issues are exacerbated by unequal rules affecting a women's ability to exercise her parental rights. While recent changes to the law have helped with respect to educational custody and other areas, several areas of weakness in the law remain. Specific custody-related areas include:

- **Educational custodianship.** Until recently, fathers had the sole right to determine the educational choices of their children, even if the mother had custody. Fathers sometimes exploited their rights to educational decision-making to harm women. This matter was addressed by the amended Child Law (Law 126 of 2008), which states that educational custody is granted to the custodial parent, but there is still a lack of awareness of these changes to the law.
- **Loss of marital residence after the end of custody.** Divorced women lose their marital residence when child custody ends. This reality increases the vulnerability of domestic violence victims who may not be willing to risk leaving an abusive spouse and end up without a place to live.
- **Abduction of children who are in the mother's custody.** Article 292 of the Penal Code states that, "Any of the two parents or grandparents who did not deliver the child or the grandchild to the person who has right to custody, by virtue of a court order issued in regard of the child's custody or maintenance, shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year or by a fine not more than LE500." However, if the mother does not have custody of her child by a court order, abduction is not deemed a crime. Also, the mother cannot stop the father from traveling with the abducted child, as he has the sole right to apply for a passport for the child and can travel without her permission.

Procedural issues. There are numerous procedural problems that aggravate the crisis women often face in Family Law cases. These include difficulties proving how much the husband earns in alimony cases, problems in executing court orders, the burden of serving legal notice upon the husband, and the lack of binding power of the Offices of Dispute Settlements. The financial burdens of legal and administrative procedures are sometimes too much for many poor women to afford, causing them to not pursue their rights under family law.

B6. Civil Code and Violence Against Women

The provisions of the Civil Code state that women and men enjoy equality in all civil rights and undertake the same duties, without exception.¹⁰² However, due to the absence

¹⁰² - The general rules in Civil Law are not gender-sensitive, but rather contain a general provision that "the legal rule is a general rule" that applies to both males and females.

of safeguards or legal consequences for denying such rights to women, discrimination often takes place. Some areas where inadequacies in the law or its implementation create discrimination or cause violence are noted below.

Financial rights. As noted above in the family law section, the Civil Code provides for an independent financial estate, as well as property rights for women, even after marriage. Despite women having the right to their independent financial estates, the law provides no guarantees or enforcement provisions. Thus, application of the law differs. Under the influence of societal and family pressure, the wife often waives her right to have an independent financial estate and instead devotes her life and income to her family. As a result, the husband controls most or all of the family assets gained together at the expense of his wife, who is then especially vulnerable in the case of abandonment, separation, or divorce.

Inheritance and transfer of property. Inheritance rules and procedures are determined according to the Personal Status Law and the Civil Code, which determine precisely the shares received by women and methods for dividing estates. Focus group participants noted that women frequently do not receive their inheritance in accordance with the law and that there are no clauses in the law criminalizing the denial of inheritance rights. In Upper Egypt, there is tradition (*radwa*) of offering women a small payment in exchange for not claiming their inheritance rights in order to retain family estates in patrilineal families. Women are often forced to accept such an amount because they cannot access justice or their rights due to social pressures and lengthy litigation procedures. The NCW is launching a campaign to strengthen legislation guaranteeing women their right to inheritance in accordance with the law and *Sharia*.

C. Conclusion

The success of the efforts aimed at curbing violence against woman relies on the existence of an integrated strategy in terms of laws, government policies, and participation of civil society and the media. Below are recommendations on how to improve the legal and regulatory framework to respond to violence against women.

C1. General Policy Recommendations

Conduct a violence against women review of laws and legislation. It is necessary to review all the laws, legislation, and mitigation clauses to identify those that directly or indirectly promote violence against women, and then to revise them.

Criminalize violence against women. Deterrent legislation should be enacted to protect girls and women against all types of physical and psychological violence in the family, workplace, and society. Such legislation should consider domestic violence as a crime against the entire society and not simply a private matter. Moreover, it should ensure the strict application of laws protecting women, together with sanctioning violators. Women should be engaged in formulating laws, especially those affecting their status.

Allocate funding for combating violence against women. The state, including all its concerned institutions, should assume its role in protecting women from violence by providing the necessary resources and assigning appropriations out of the state budget to the enforcement of legal mechanisms that combat violence against women.

Raise awareness of violence against women among policymakers and legal actors. Raise awareness among senior officials, policymakers, and educators of human rights and woman's rights issues. Appropriate training should be provided for everyone dealing with victims of violence, including security officials, policemen, and personnel in the judicial, social services, and medical fields, as well as lawyers and NGO professionals. The training should focus on the dimensions and consequences of the problem, and assist in changing their values and enabling them to offer effective assistance that preserves the dignity and rights of the women.

Expand women's shelters with legal assistance. There is a need to expand the establishment of shelters for abused women and provide training to employees of these centers. These shelters should provide legal assistance, in addition to psychological and social advice and medical treatment, both on a residential and non-residential basis.

C2. Specific Recommendations

1. Penal Code

General

- Establish specialized units in police stations to receive and investigate cases of domestic violence and sexual assault staffed with trained officers and investigators.

Domestic violence

- Amend legal articles that discriminate against women. The concept of "disciplining" wives, which is used as grounds for allowing violence, should be reconsidered.
- Maximize the penalties for domestic violence, with a view that the husband is part of the family and entrusted with his wife's interests (similar to the enhanced penalties mandated when a rape is committed by a relative of the victim).
- Record the incidence of violence as an offense in the husband's record that can be used against him in case of repeat offenses. An incident should be recorded even if the wife waives her rights and reconciles with her husband.
- Train law enforcement officers and prosecutors on the appropriate approaches in dealing with domestic violence.

Rape

- Implement administrative procedures by the Prosecutor General requiring that statements take place at the victim's home or at the hospital, and investigations be conducted by specialized female district attorneys.
- Grant human rights' organizations the right to observe investigations, in order to ensure the protection and privacy of the victim.
- Establish criteria governing the judges' jurisdiction in applying Article 17 of the Penal Code which permits lenient sentencing according to judicial discretion.

Sexual harassment

- Enact a new law stipulating a definition, as well as criminalization, of the act of sexual harassment, and setting forth the standards of proof. Police officers on the street should be vested with the authority to take a statement on the spot, instead of only at the police station. Specially designed forms (such as used in traffic violations) should be used. Statements should be recorded in a special register in the police station, so that the perpetrator would be subject to penalty in case of recurrence. The second complaint filing should represent sufficient grounds of proof to open a case against the perpetrator.
- Adopt measures of deterrence to curb the negative practices of law enforcement officers, such as refraining from proceeding with making a statement, or cooperating with the perpetrator against the victim.

2. Labor Law

- Draft legal provisions to address the phenomenon of sexual harassment in the workplace. Maintain the confidentiality of complaints, and conduct thorough investigations in case of reoccurrence.
- Monitor the implementation of provisions of the law, and provide protection for women against the violations to which they are exposed.

3. Family Law

Violence and marriage

- Shift the burden of proof in personal status affairs to the husband. Also, a Family Investigation division should be established, having the competence to conduct the necessary investigations and create a family register to record the legal status of the family as a reference for determining rights and obligations of all parties concerned.
- Grant binding authority to the resolutions of the Family Dispute Settlement offices by submitting them for judges to issue as orders. Those offices should be authorized to impose a fine on a husband who does not fulfill his family obligations, and to determine penalties and other necessary enforcement measures.
- Upgrade the Family Court and allocate a place where religious leaders can provide religious services and family counseling, after receiving appropriate training and capacity building.
- Establish alternative measures and penalties to the custodial penalty in alimony lawsuits that would not leave the family without financial support. For example, imposing severe financial fines on the convicted husband would be much more effective than imprisonment, and would serve the interests of the victimized wife, either by gaining the fine or having the fine deposited in the Family Insurance Fund.
- Classify domestic violence as a dishonorable crime that should be registered in the criminal record in case of recurrence.
- Build the capacity, as well as improve the performance, of the Ombudsman offices at the NCW to provide legal services to women victims of violence.
- Establish a toll-free national crisis hotline for women.

Violence and divorce

- Apply the arbitration mechanism that was adopted for economic lawsuits in the family lawsuits, and vest it with binding authority.
- Improve the performance of the staff working in Family Dispute Settlement offices in the Family Court, enabling them to settle disputes by means of reconciliation arrangements, as well as enhancing the judicial system.

Women's rights and children custody after divorce

- The state, official bodies, and institutions, as well as syndicates, should assist women in obtaining alimony directly to save them the trouble of lengthy procedures that usually result in loss of their rights. Meanwhile, custodial mothers should be provided with temporary or permanent alimony so that they can proceed with their daily lives. Obligate Nasser Bank to enforce all the judicial decisions that pertain to alimony without a maximum ceiling, and also to enforce temporary alimony decisions, as Nasser Bank has the authority to undertake garnishment of wages.
- Impose deterrent penalties for false denial of paternity.
- Explore innovative solutions addressing custody and visitation issues that will serve the best interests of children and reduce all forms of violence against women, while providing the fathers with the opportunity to participate in the care of their children.
- Children should have a personal right to the issuance of a passport pursuant to a court order (rather than it being an exclusive right of the father).
- The state should provide a residence for the custodial mother who has been deprived of a home.
- The Ministry of Interior should respond promptly to child kidnapping cases reported by a nursing mother.

4. Civil Code

- Expand the umbrella of the social insurance for all women.
- Study the prospects of sharing family income in divorce cases.

COVERAGE, PORTRAYAL, AND ATTITUDES IN THE MEDIA: A Secondary Analysis of NCW Media Watch Data and Findings from Focus Groups with Media Professionals

A. Objectives/Methodology

Media has a major influence on the way the population perceives violence against women. What gets reported and how it gets reported affects the perceptions of violence, either positively or negatively. Drama also impacts attitudes, both by reflecting prevailing social trends and by providing alternative visions. In reducing violence against women, the media will play a major role. For that reason, the NCW and Combating Violence project commissioned two studies. The first study reviews how the media portrays violence against women, both in print and broadcast news media, and in television and radio drama. The second study examines the attitudes of media professionals and how they could help with efforts to reduce violence against women in Egypt.

The *secondary analysis of the portrayal of violence against women in the media* focuses on media reports prepared by the NCW Media Watch Unit and the Centre for Research on Women and Media at Cairo University. The original Media Watch Project was funded by UNICEF, and implemented under the direction of Dr. Enas Abu Youssef. The reports from the NCW's Media Watch included detailed observations from a sample of:

- Over 20,000 hours each of television and radio transmissions, excluding news bulletins and films.
- 672 issues of Egyptian daily newspapers or magazines (national, party, and private).
- 96 issues of Egyptian weekly print newspapers or magazines.
- 64 TV and radio drama series broadcasted from April 2005 to March 2006 and from February 2007 to February 2008.

In the secondary analysis of the Media Watch data, Dr. Abu Youssef and her team considered the types of violence portrayed by various parts of the media and how these types of violence were portrayed. The full report contains detailed quantitative results in each area that should be considered by professionals addressing the subject of violence against women in the media. In this report, we provide a summary of some of the major findings.

The *analysis of the attitudes of media professionals toward violence against women* provides perspectives on the attitudes of journalists, drama writers, and producers. Media experts Amina Shafeek, Adel Abdel Ghaffar, and Mafouz Abdel Rahman conducted a series of seven focus groups to explore the awareness and level of concern about violence against women among media professionals, and made recommendations for media involvement in the issue. A total of 75 media professionals participated, including 27 print journalists, 21 radio and television journalists, 17 drama writers, and 10 television producers. The qualitative media research is intended to inform recommendations on the role of media, including suggested approaches toward engaging the media in raising awareness, increasing sensitivity, and promoting a reduction in violence against women.

B. Findings

Media is an important source of information and a pervasive influence on society's values, habits, and perceptions. Newspapers, radio, and television provide the news of the day and, in the process, decide what is worthy of coverage. Radio and television dramas provide entertainment and also reflect society's values and ideals. Mass media reinforces and supports social roles, including those of men and women in the family and in the community. To analyze the relationship between the media and society with respect to violence against women, it was important to consider two angles: (1) how media portrays the issue; and (2) the attitudes of media decision-makers and professional staff toward the issue.

B1. Coverage and Portrayal of Violence Against Women

Print media. The results of the media analysis indicated that only 29 percent of print media coverage of women's issues addresses violence against women. Dr. Abu Yousef takes a broad view of violence that includes the psychological and emotional violence that emanates from discriminatory treatment of women and women's subjects in the media. When taking this definition of violence, two-thirds of the media coverage of violence against women was the representation of discrimination or community violence and one-third domestic violence.

When the print media does deal with discrimination and violence against women, the focus is usually on types of physiological and emotional violence. With respect to physical domestic violence, the most common topic was violence of husbands against wives, followed by female genital mutilation (FGM).

With respect to community violence, the number of articles in the print media does not reflect in-depth coverage or regular campaigns combating different forms of violence against women. Rather most coverage is sporadic, in response to particular incidents, or presented as part of coverage of public events. Approximately half of the articles dealing with community violence related to women are about incidents where women are accused of crimes. Combined articles concerning rape, sexual harassment, and crimes committed against women only accounted for approximately 13 percent of the total number of articles on community violence and discrimination in the print media. Political participation of women was the most common issue related to discrimination in the press.

The analysis showed that print media still tackles issues of domestic violence hesitantly and omits mention of issues considered taboo, or "not to be touched." With rare exceptions, coverage primarily focused on issues of concern to the upper class and upper segments of the middle class. Forms of violence that are prevalent among the poorer social classes — such as sexual harassment in factories and fields, incest in slum areas, and trading of girls through so-called summer marriages — only rarely appear on the print media's agenda.

The print media also does not offer a wide range of solutions to issues of either domestic or community violence against women. Rather, print coverage only requested separation of men and women in public transportation to minimize harassment of women. However, plenty of attention was given to the absence of political participation by women, leading

to demands by the print media to strengthen laws and legislation to guarantee fair representation of women in the Egyptian Parliament.

Television programs. Twenty percent of sampled television programs that dealt with women's issues addressed violence against women. Similar to print media, television programs are much more likely to cover discrimination and community violence than domestic violence. Egyptian television programs have dealt extensively with forms of discrimination against women, including political participation of women, lack of women in leadership positions, and the failure of women to hold judicial positions (together accounting for more than 60 percent of the programming related to violence and discrimination against women in the community). Qualitatively, the Egyptian television programs have a supportive attitude against all forms of community violence, but domestic violence is portrayed as the result of the spread of violence, unemployment, and family disintegration without providing solutions or encouragement for society to combat it.

Radio programs. Radio programs covered discrimination and community violence and domestic violence approximately equally. With respect to domestic violence, radio programming focused on a range of issues, with the mistreatment of girl children, verbal violence of husbands against wives, and FGM being the most common topics. With respect to community violence and discrimination, the most common topic was the gossip and accusations related to personal lives of women celebrities, followed by political participation and the negative portrayal of women in music videos. Slightly more than 5 percent of programming regarding discrimination or community violence concerned rape, and none of the programming in the sample covered sexual harassment, sexual abuse, or crimes against women.

Radio and television drama. Unlike the print and broadcast news media, the analysis of *radio and television drama* showed that violence against women is a prominent issue, as it is one of the main plotlines for conflict, primarily domestic violence. Almost half of the radio drama episodes addressed issues of violence against women, the overwhelming majority of which included domestic violence rather than community violence. A slightly lower percentage of television drama series addressed violence against women, with about two-thirds of these series addressing some form of domestic violence.

The qualitative analysis of the drama productions addressing violence showed that women are often portrayed as responsible for the disintegration of the family and that violence against her is justified. However, a minority of drama episodes addressed issues of violence against women in a positive manner. For instance, sexual harassment and assault was addressed in a manner sympathetic to the female character in the television series, "A Case of Public Opinion."

B2. Attitudes of Media Personnel on Violence Against Women

To supplement the quantitative analysis of media coverage and portrayal of violence against women, Amina Shafeek and her team conducted a series of focus groups with print and broadcast journalists, drama writers, and producers. Most of the print and broadcast (radio and TV) journalists who participated in the focus groups acknowledged the prevalence of violence against women in society and agreed that improvements could be made in how the media addresses the problem. However, print and broadcast journalists added that the

issue of violence against women is often intentionally underreported for fear of revealing taboo social problems. Print journalists also noted that specific cases of violence against women are sometimes reported in a sensationalistic manner to attract readers without follow-up or appreciation for the broader social context in which the violence occurred.

Knowledge about violence against women. In every focus group discussion, many forms of violence against women both in the family and the community were identified. All of the print journalists agreed that there is an increase in the appearance of “new” acts of violence in Egyptian society, such as incest, especially in poor and slum areas. The print journalists were the only media sector that mentioned that female prisoners are subjected to violence at the hands of policemen in Egyptian prisons, and that young girls are victims of violence in many forms, including early marriage, genital mutilation, and rape. Discussion sessions revealed that the male print journalists have a broader network of news sources on violence than do female journalists, since it is easier for men to interact with police departments, the prosecution, courts, and prisons.

Drama writers expressed their awareness of the issue of violence against women in different social segments and age groups. They made a connection between the increase of rape and sexual harassment cases and the prevalence of drug addiction among youth. They asserted that there is a direct relation between the social violence and the congestion and cramped living conditions that have dominated all aspects of life in Egypt.

Approach toward violence against women. Female print journalists approached the issue of violence against women from a legal perspective (with CEDAW being their frame of reference), while the male print journalists approached it from a social and moral perspective. The female journalists attributed their knowledge and approach to violence against women to two factors: first, that they are women, so they share similar experiences; and second, that many of them have participated in NCW activities from which they have learned about CEDAW and the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Similarly, female radio and television professionals became aware of the issue of violence against women through NCW and NGO activities. They showed a vast knowledge of the types of violence and its affect on women and their families. The male media professionals from the Radio and Television Union, however, indicated that they do not have particular sources to obtain their information about violence against women. Their approach varied between denying the existence of violence against women in Egyptian society (television personnel) and considering it a logical result of the society’s straying away from religion (radio personnel).

Perspectives of producers. The group of producers working in *cinema and television drama* also acknowledged the prevalence of violence against women in society. However, they were candid in admitting that, although they realize the importance of their ability to affect change as businessmen operating according to profit-loss rules, their primary commitment is to fulfill market needs, especially in the Gulf. Similarly, in explaining how they respond in their writing about violence against women, the writers noted that they are constrained by the demands of the censors, the interests of the producer, and the demands of the drama’s star.

Both drama writers and producers agreed that cinema and television dramas can be a vehicle for changing attitudes on violence against women, but addressing the issue effectively would require changes to their constraints and incentives. The producers requested that the government adopt the production of positive social drama consistent with the messages of concerned entities, such as the NCW. They also indicated that, if they were asked, they would be willing to cooperate with public production organizations.

C. Conclusion

Based on the secondary analysis of the NCW Media Watch reports and the focus group discussions with media professionals, recommendations were made for the media's role in combating violence against women. Media professionals recognize that media as an institution can have a profound impact on crystallizing and influencing public opinion. Thus, the media could perform a positive role in dealing with the issue of violence against women by working alongside other institutions, such as schools, universities, writers, and civil society institutions that operate in the field of human rights advocacy.

C1. General Policy Recommendations

Build the capacity of media experts to address violence against women. A training program for media experts of different generations and fields should be conducted over a period of five years to improve their ability to deal with issues of violence against women. Such a program should focus on the representation of violence against women in the media and its economic, social, cultural, and legal impact on society, families, men, and women. Program goals should include changing attitudes about violence against women, implementing new approaches guided by a human rights perspective, and establishing a lobby among media professionals to address issues of violence against women. NCW should participate in the training program together with human rights NGOs.

Increase awareness of issues of violence against women through mass media and communications. A unit to monitor violence against women in the Egyptian mass media should be established. Based on its analysis, the unit could help develop messages addressing issues of violence against women and help plan a national media campaign to increase the population's awareness of the negative impact of violence against women on the family and society.

Develop a media strategy to combat violence against women based on the human right to live free from violence, with a work plan to implement the strategy. All relevant authorities should participate in drafting the strategy, which should be sensitive to cultural considerations, while acknowledging problems and proposing solutions. Media messages should be reviewed in light of this strategy.

Change media programming to recognize violence against women as a community issue that has economic, social, cultural, psychological, and human rights dimensions, and not just as a women's issue. The strategy should be based on this view. Initiatives should encompass a wide range of programming and should not be limited to specific sections in the newspaper or programs dedicated to women. Violence against women should be handled on a larger scale in the print media in general, and in specialized programs, especially those with large audiences.

C2. Specific Recommendations

- **Lift the explicit and tacit restrictions on violence against women** issues considered taboo in the media, such as honor crimes. Violence against women should be presented in a clear and transparent way using neutral, scientific language, rather than using language that provokes viewers' feelings or beliefs.
- **Require media to respect the privacy of all women** who have been subjected to violence, without regard to their social positions and with respect for their basic human rights.
- **Develop a cooperation protocol** between the NCW and the various media organizations — such as the Radio and Television Union, Journalists' Syndicate, Writers' Syndicate, and Producers' Association — to establish joint policies toward combating violence against women, as well as to undertake joint work in the field of media production on the topic.
- **Help female media professionals** reach decision-making positions and to contribute to the development of approaches tackling issues affecting women, including violence against women.
- **Provide sources of accurate and gender-sensitive information** for media professionals on violence against women and its impact on women, their families, and society, in general.
- **Include material on human rights, including women's rights and violence against women**, in the curriculum of Egyptian media and communications faculties.
- **Encourage the Journalists' Syndicate to take responsibility for training journalists** from the national, party, and independent newspapers on issues related to women's rights and violence against women as part of enforcing the code of ethics for journalists.
- **Coordinate between the various public and private entities** involved in the production of radio and television drama — including the Ministry of Information, Radio and Television Union, private and government production companies, distributors, and writers — to encourage the development of programming that deals sensitively with the issue of violence against women, without disrupting the artistic integrity needed to attract viewers.
- **Produce public service announcements and messages** on violence against women for airing on television, especially during primetime.
- **Continue the dialogue** between the NCW, print and broadcast journalists, and Egyptian drama writers and producers on ways of reducing violence against women, with the participation of critics and academics from different intellectual spheres.

HELPING VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE: An Overview of Services

A. Objectives/Methodology

An *overview of services currently available to women victims of violence and efforts to reduce violence against women* was conducted by Ms. Samah Said, team leader of the Violence Against Women component of the Combating Violence project. The overview provides a look at various services available to women victims of violence from government and NGO service providers throughout the country. It also examines prevention efforts. The overview is intended to identify a core set of direct protection services for addressing the immediate needs for women victims of violence, including shelters, health services, helplines, counseling services, and legal services. In addition, the overview describes selected initiatives by NGOs in recent years which seek to prevent violence against women through legal changes, research, and public awareness. The report ends with set of recommendations for future action to address the needs of women victims of violence, focusing primarily on shelters, medical services, and the role of NGOs as service providers. The full report includes tables that list different types of services that are available.

To produce the report, Ms. Said and the Violence Against Women component conducted workshops, meetings, and in-person interviews with representatives of the Ministry of Health, health units, hospitals, forensic units, shelters, Egyptian NGOs providing services to women victims of violence, and other stakeholders to examine the services they offer. These discussions also looked at counseling centers, legal support centers, and other selected governmental or nongovernmental agencies. In addition, the team conducted focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with key experts and service providers in Cairo and selected regions to gather information about available services, and to gather lessons learned and best practices from current and past programs.

B. Findings

*Women subjected to violence need access to shelters, medical, psychological and other support, legal aid, and other services.*¹⁰³

The overview of services focuses on the work being undertaken by key actors within the medical, social services, and legal services spheres to address the needs of women victims of violence in Egypt. In assessing the needs of services provided in several categories — shelters, medical services, hotlines/helplines, listening/counseling, and legal services — this research focuses on the offered services, barriers experienced by women seeking help, and gaps in existing programs that need to be addressed. The overview also identifies some notable advocacy and prevention activities addressing different aspects of violence against women.

Shelters. There are eight shelters for women victims of domestic violence in Egypt, seven shelters overseen and funded by the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MOSS) and one independent shelter established by the Association for Development and Enhancement of Women (ADEW), a feminist NGO. In total, only 214 shelter beds are available across all eight shelters, approximately one bed per 380,000 inhabitants of Egypt.

¹⁰³ - *In-depth study on all forms of violence against women — Report of the Secretary General, United Nations, General Assembly 2006.*

According to the Council of Europe's Group of Specialists for Combating Violence against Women, there should be a minimum of one place in a shelter per 10,000 persons in the population.¹⁰⁴ To meet this standard, Egypt would need more than 10,000 more shelter beds. Moreover, there are many population centers without close access to a shelter. While there are two shelters in Lower Egypt (Alexandria and Mansoura), three in Greater Cairo (6th of October, Heliopolis, and Qalubiya), and three in Upper Egypt (Fayoum, Beni Suef, and Menia), there are no shelters in Sinai, the Canal region, or Upper Egypt beyond Menia.

Despite the limited number of shelter beds available, shelter managers noted that a very limited number of victims of violence go to shelters, resulting in shelters that are found empty for long periods of time. Shelter managers attribute this to a combination of factors, including inadequate protective measures and legislation to protect women victims of domestic violence, patriarchal culture, problems in the rules governing the shelters, and the lack of awareness of the existence of shelters. Moreover, most of the shelters' staff and managers share the view that their role is primarily to reconcile families rather than protecting women from violence and providing the help and support needed to treat the causes of domestic violence.

Finally, although, shelters have a mandate to provide psychological rehabilitation for victims of violence, psychologists are not included in the mandated organizational structure. Only four of the shelters have recruited psychologists to serve on their staff.

Medical services. Medical professionals interviewed in hospitals and health units noted that they commonly treat cases of domestic violence, but also noted that there are no *specific* services at hospitals or health units for victims of gender-based violence, except emergency treatment as normally provided to any women in need of medical attention. Similarly, the interviewed health professionals also noted that there is no case management protocol specifically for victims of gender-based violence or abuse. Despite the need for counseling interventions for abused women, hospitals and health units do not have social workers to help women. This role is often taken on by nurses, and in some rural health units, by community leaders. Referrals to other victim services are not provided, and medical reports for police complaints are only issued upon request.

Family planning and community health. The Ministry of Health currently employs approximately 15,000 community leaders (*ra'idat al rifiyat*) dispersed throughout urban and rural areas in all governorates of Egypt. In most cases, these community leaders are attached to health units or rural hospitals. They address women's health needs and disseminate information on issues, such as hygiene, family planning, reproductive health, and more recently, avian flu. In rural areas, the community leaders typically conduct home visits, while in urban areas, they conduct workshops and lectures in health units. Interviews with community leaders (*ra'idat al rifiyat*) reveal that they are often the first to hear about cases of violence against women and that woman victims often turn to these workers when they have problems. However, the interviewed community leaders have little training in how to deal with victims of violence against women or where to refer them for appropriate services.

104 - Council of Europe, Group of Specialists for Combating Violence against Women, *Final Report of Activities of the EG-S-VL including a Plan of Action for combating violence against women* (Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 1997), p. 74.

Hotlines/helplines. Among 85 NGOs interviewed, only one 24-hour hotline and four helplines were identified as operating in Egypt. Most of these helplines focus on legal advice to women regarding discrimination or the personal status law, with the exception of the Nadeem Center which operates a 24-hour hotline (the only one in the country) that focuses specifically on serving women victims of violence. Three hotline/helplines provide actual counseling, although all five provide referrals to other services. Of the five, only the NCW Ombudsman Office helpline and the Nadeem Center hotline have nationwide reach.

Listening/counseling services. In total, eight NGOs interviewed provide in-person listening/counseling services. The El Nadeem Center was the first of these eight counseling centers to be established, opening a listening/counseling center to meet, treat, help, and support women victims of violence in 2001. The center transferred their knowledge by developing a toolkit and guidelines, and conducting training for NGOs to establish listening/counseling centers in different areas in Egypt. In addition to listening/counseling services, these centers provide referrals to psychiatrists and legal specialists.

The MOSS currently funds local NGOs to operate 183 Family Counseling Offices throughout all governorates in Egypt, but violence against women is not their primary focus. Family counseling offices contain a social worker, religious leader, part-time psychologist, and part-time lawyer. They often meet with families to help solve problems or to informally advise couples considering divorce about the legal process and their rights. For couples who are already divorced, the offices help mediate issues of child visitation and child alimony. With the advent of the mediation centers in the family court, the role of these offices is shrinking.

Legal services. The Ombudsman Office at the NCW was established in 2002 to receive complaints from women with regard to gender discrimination, including violence against women. Complaints typically deal with gender discrimination at the workplace, personal status law, domestic violence, inheritance, and other issues. It also assigns lawyers free of charge to poor women who cannot afford to file court cases. In addressing violence against women, the Ombudsman Office cooperates with the MOSS and NGOs to refer victims to shelters, if needed. The Ombudsman Office has so far received about 20,000 complaints and legal queries of various types, related primarily to personal status, work-related problems, implementation of court rulings, social security pensions, insurance, violence, and citizenship. The office is active in all governorates of Egypt.

In addition to the Ombudsman Office, 20 of the women's NGOs interviewed currently provide some form of direct legal advice or services — i.e., specific and direct counseling to women facing legal problems on how to address their problems. Eleven of these NGOs provide legal representation for their clients in court. Legal services typically focus on divorce, child custody, housing, etc. The volume of legal services these NGOs can provide is quite limited, and geographically, the majority are located in Greater Cairo. The most widely recognized leaders in the field are the Center for Egyptian and Women's Legal Activities (CEWLA), the Association for the Development and Enhancement of Women in Egypt (ADEW), and the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR).

Advocacy and prevention strategies. In addition to protection services to victims of domestic violence, prevention strategies are integral part of addressing violence against

women. Many of the 85 NGOs participating in the discussions and interviews highlighted the work that has been done on building community awareness of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, NGO representatives acknowledged that the initiatives that have focused specifically on violence against women have been sporadic. Still, a few advocacy campaigns of note have been conducted in recent years, including a campaign on sexual harassment led by the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights (ECWR), the "Life is Possible Without Violence and Discrimination" campaign led by the Nadeem Center, a campaign on honor killing led by the Center for Egyptian Women Legal Aid (CEWLA), and an initiative to combat gender-based violence conducted by The Alliance for Arab Women (AAW), among others.

C. Conclusion

A number of government agencies (particularly, MOSS and the NCW) and a limited number NGOs are actively engaged in providing the core services needed by victims of violence against women. However, these available services are quite limited considering the magnitude of the problem and challenges. While some of these services, particularly shelters, appear to be currently underutilized, this does not necessarily mean there is a lack of need. Fear of seeking help and a lack of awareness of existing services are the likely factors depressing utilization of services.

To ensure that women victims of violence receive appropriate services, policymakers and service providers will need to consider addressing not only the quantity and variety of services needed, but also how to ensure that such services are of high quality, provide a holistic response, and are accessible to women who could benefit from them.

Finally, it is essential to address cultural stereotypes and negative social attitudes of the community, including those held by many service providers who share the same values and attitudes that are dominant in society at large.

C1. General Policy Recommendations

Develop a coordinated community response to violence against women through constructive links between police, prosecutors, health-care providers, shelters, NGOs, and community leaders to maximize the benefit from the available community resources. Establish or strengthen existing NGO services for women including legal, health, social, and psychological help, in particular to expand and integrate services.

Establish new operating procedures for shelters that include gender sensitivity at all levels of the shelter management. Training for relevant services is highly needed and should provide awareness and increase the structural understanding of domestic violence and the commitment to service provision. Shelters should not only seek to protect victims of violence, but also empower them and provide the complete range of services included in their mandate.

Provide abused women with long-term solutions and support. Shelters, for instance, should integrate adequate services to empower women socially, psychologically, and economically in order to provide long-term solutions and support to help women who survive violence.

Develop capacity of health-care providers to address violence against women. In Egypt, as in other countries, the health-care system interacts with almost every woman at some point in her life. Reproductive health-care providers, notably nurses and Ministry of Health community leaders, are strategically placed to help identify victims of violence and connect them with support services. To appropriately address the needs of victims of violence, social work should be integrated into health-care facilities through referral protocols or placement of social workers in health-care facilities.

C2. Specific Recommendations

Victim Services

- **Increase the availability of informational materials on domestic and other forms of violence, and on available services for victims.**
- **Provide appropriate training for health professionals and health providers.** Train staff to identify and respond appropriately to victims of abuse. Train medical professionals on the issue of domestic violence.
- **Ensure that counseling services are available in health facilities.** Counseling is especially needed in health units of rural areas and the squatter areas of Greater Cairo.
- **Target female community leaders with appropriate training** for their role in listening and responding to cases of domestic violence.
- **Strengthen the capacity of existing shelters for women** through training and sensitization workshops on women's rights and human rights. Ensure that professional staff members in shelters are well-trained and well-educated about domestic violence and how to respond to the needs of battered women.
- **Ensure that professional staff members in shelters and health units are well-informed and educated** on how to deal with traumatic cases of sexual assault and rape.
- **Ensure that shelter staff members do not seek to effect family reconciliation or family mediation unless the woman requests** that such actions be taken.
- **Share best practices on service provision** to foster exchange of insights and experiences.

Prevention

- **Increase the number and scope of programs to teach women their rights** and empower them to exercise those rights if they are victims of violence. Prevention efforts must include programs that promote social and economic empowerment.
- **Develop programs to educate men and women** about women's human rights and their responsibility to respect the rights of others.
- **Address cultural stereotypes and negative social attitudes regarding women.** Such efforts should cut across all educational prevention programs, with targeted messages to diverse stakeholders, including community leaders, religious leaders, media representatives, and others.

NEXT STEPS:

Toward a National Strategy to Reduce Violence Against Women

Egypt has ratified numerous human rights conventions and declarations; led by the National Council for Women, it is making significant steps toward reducing violence against women. This includes recent initiatives to strengthen laws related to harassment and inheritance rights. Nevertheless, violence against women continues to be a major problem in Egyptian society. The findings of this Egypt Violence Against Women Study confirm the conclusions of other studies that both family and community violence remains a major issue. Egypt is not alone among both developed and developing countries around the world in expanding efforts to reduce violence against women and to assist victims more effectively.

The study's sections each identify issues that require attention and that show weaknesses in responses to violence against women in Egypt. The quantitative survey confirms the widespread prevalence of both family and community violence and points to community attitudes toward female victims that still reflect strong patriarchal traditions. For example, the majority of those surveyed (including both females and males) blame females for sexual violence in the streets due to the way women dress; the majority of respondents also believe a man should have the first and final word at home. The survey results on help-seeking behavior show the challenges that service providers will face in ensuring that victims receive needed assistance.

Although some aspects of the legal and regulatory framework related to violence against women have been improved, the study's legal analysis identified additional reform that is needed, including better implementation of legal protections under criminal, civil, labor, and family law.

The media focus group discussions explored how media professionals can envision a role in changing public opinion to reduce violence against women. However, analysis of media content revealed that newspapers, as well as radio and television shows, still portray violence against women as almost exclusively a "woman's issue," one for which women themselves are held largely responsible.

Finally, the overview of services showed limited availability and scope of services for female victims. In addition, the overview of services revealed that prevention efforts have been sporadic.

This study represents an important first step by the National Council for Women to develop and implement a national strategy to combat violence against women. It provides the analytical basis for better understanding the scope of the problem and specific areas in need of improvement. Each piece of the study offers findings and analysis relevant to different sectors that can be applied to various components of the national strategy. This evidence-based approach should ensure that efforts to tackle violence against women are grounded in Egyptian realities, and thus, meet the needs of Egyptian women.

Principles to guide a national response to violence against women. In developing a national strategy, NCW and the Government of Egypt can look to international standards and international experience — both of which are extensive in this policy area — for some principles to apply to the work ahead. The United Nations Secretary-General’s study¹⁰⁵ provides guidance on developing an effective national response to violence against women. The six strategic and interconnected recommendations (in italics) are:

- 1. Secure gender equality and protect human rights.*** The state has obligations grounded in its obligation to protect women’s right to be free from discrimination, including the most severe form — violence.
- 2. Exercise leadership to end violence against women.*** This includes advocacy at all levels of government (local, regional, national, and international) and in all sectors of society (government, civil, business, media), as well as among opinion-makers, and community and religious leaders, and ending impunity and ensuring accountability on the issue.
- 3. Close the gaps between international standards and national laws, policies, and practices.*** In addition to ensuring that Egyptian laws provide adequate legal protections for women, the government must ensure that the law is implemented in policy and practice to adequately address all forms of violence against women.
- 4. Strengthen the knowledge base on all forms of violence against women to inform policy and strategy development.*** Although this study is an important step in gathering and increasing the available data, the government must take responsibility for systematic collection and analysis of disaggregated violence against women data on an ongoing basis.
- 5. Build and sustain strong multisectoral strategies, coordinated nationally and locally.*** Ending violence against women requires a comprehensive, systematic, and sustained approach with adequate funding, support, and coordination.
- 6. Allocate adequate resources and funding.*** Resources are needed not only for victim services, but also for efforts to eliminate discrimination and violence against women.

Next Steps

Several steps will be needed for the NCW to develop a national strategy on violence against women: facilitating a consensus on shared recommendations; engaging multisectoral stakeholders; ensuring that adequate resources are committed to realize the goals of the national strategy; identifying areas for future research; and providing overall leadership in promoting a violence-free vision for women in Egypt. These actions are largely interconnected and overlapping rather than consecutive. Combating violence against women requires a coordinated community response to make the necessary changes, so work must be done in several areas at the same time.

¹⁰⁵ - United Nations Secretary-General, *Ending Violence Against Women: From Words to Action — Study of the Secretary-General. (2006), 23-25.*

Facilitating consensus on shared recommendations. The NCW should facilitate the development of shared recommendations on what needs to be done, by whom, and at what level of priority. The conclusion of each section of this report contains recommendations based on the findings of the research consultants. These preliminary recommendations should be taken into consideration by NCW and other interested stakeholders as they discuss which strategies to use. Consistent with the multisectoral approach of the study and study team, the NCW could convene experts, policymakers, and implementers from the public and private sectors and civil society (for example, women’s groups and NGOs) to collaborate on recommending and prioritizing principles, actions, and targeted activities to be included in the national strategy.

Engaging multisectoral stakeholders. In addition to NCW and the nongovernmental organizations currently working on the issue of violence against women, it will be critical to maximize the engagement of and interaction with stakeholders in all relevant sectors. In its groundbreaking *World Report on Violence and Health*,¹⁰⁶ the World Health Organization explains more specifically the rationale for a multisectoral approach toward national action against violence:

Multisectoral partnerships are highly desirable at the national level as much as at the local level. A variety of government ministries — and not only those concerned with law enforcement, social services, and health — have important contributions to make in preventing violence. Education ministries are obvious partners, given the importance of intervening in schools. Ministries of labour can do much to reduce violence in the workplace, especially in collaboration with trade unions and employers. Defence ministries can positively shape the attitudes towards violence of large numbers of young men under their control, by encouraging discipline, promoting codes of honour, and impressing a strong awareness of the lethality of weapons. Religious leaders and organizations have a role to play in their pastoral work and, in appropriate cases, by offering their good offices to mediate in specific problems.

Thus, at the government level, NCW should engage with a wide range of the Government of Egypt’s ministries, including Justice, Social Solidarity, Health, Education, Internal Affairs, and the Prosecutor General. Utilizing its access to both the range of government ministries and nongovernmental organizations, as well as institutions and the private sector, the NCW could bring together those needed to build a consensus on a national strategy to combat violence against women and generate the political will needed to ensure its full implementation.

Ensuring that adequate resources are committed to realize the goals of the national strategy. For the national strategy to be put into action, resources of time, money, and attention must be allocated to the effort. Data collection and transparent mechanisms for monitoring progress through institutionalized systems will be important to measure progress and impact. Moreover, each sector must be mobilized and committed to being part of a coordinated approach to providing adequate and appropriate services to victims, and ultimately, to stopping violence against women throughout the society.

106 - E. G. Krug, L. Dahlbert, J. A. Mercy, A. B. Zwi, and R. Lozano, eds. *World Report on Violence and Health*, Geneva: World Health Organization, 2002. http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/.

Identifying areas for future research. Although this study covered many aspects of violence against women in Egypt, some issues were not explored. Areas for future research include early marriage, elder abuse, violence against female youth, trafficking in women and girls, state violence, and analyzing the cost of violence to society.

Providing leadership in promoting a new violence-free vision for women in Egypt. With its broad-based mandate for the development and empowerment of women, the NCW is uniquely situated to play a critical role in assisting the Government of Egypt in meeting its national and international commitment to ensuring that Egyptian women realize their right to live their lives free of violence.

