



Photo: UN Women/Bruno Spada

ACT TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: Advocacy, Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action to End Violence Against Women

Background

Violence against women and girls is the most pervasive human rights violation worldwide. Twenty-eight years after the Beijing Platform for Action, and despite unprecedented momentum and commitments to eliminate gender-based violence, its prevalence has remained persistent.¹ Global emergencies, crises, and conflict have intensified the drivers and risk factors of violence against women and girls. Digitalization has also exacerbated existing forms of violence and led to the surge of new types of gender-based violence. The rise in anti-rights movements, shrinking civic spaces and backlash against women's rights continue to undermine efforts to prevent violence against women and girls, fueling a rise in attacks against women's rights activists.

Despite these worrying trends, there is more evidence than ever before that violence against women and girls is preventable. Evidence demonstrates that the presence of a strong and autonomous feminist movement is the single most critical factor to drive policy change in ending violence against women globally and in domestic policy making.² Research has also shown that violence against women and girls can be dramatically reduced when governments and civil society work together, and women's rights movements coordinate intensive advocacy efforts to push for access to justice and comprehensive services as well as to raise awareness of women's rights.³

ACT to end violence against women is a new programme focused on strengthening global and regional advocacy, coalition building and transformative feminist action to end violence against women.

¹ WHO (2021) *Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018*.
² Mama Cash (July 2020) *Feminist Activism Works! A review of select literature on the impact of feminist activism in achieving women's rights*. AWID (November 2020) *Moving More Money to the Drivers of Change: How Bilateral and Multilateral Funders Can Resource Feminist Movement*. Htun, M & Weldon, S.L. (2012) *The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005*. American Political Science Review. Vol. 106, No. 3 August 2012.
³ Mary Ellsberg, Margarita Quintanilla & William J. Ugarte (2022) *Pathways to change: Three decades of feminist research and activism to end violence against women in Nicaragua*. Global Public Health, DOI: 10.1080/17441692.2022.2038652

Objectives of ACT to end Violence against Women

ACT is a new, game changing joint commitment between the European Commission and UN Women as co-leaders of the Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence (GBV). Its overall objective is to accelerate efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, with two overarching objectives:

- To strengthen coalition building, networking, leadership and resilience of global and regional feminist women's rights movements
- To increase and enhance advocacy, campaigning, and policymaking on ending violence against women and girls through multistakeholder partnerships and coalitions.

The ACT programme will achieve its results through direct investments in feminist women's rights organizations to strengthen their institutional capacities, to facilitate networking and the establishment of intersectional and intersectoral alliances and to enhance their access to global and regional advocacy spaces.

It will also coordinate and amplify a shared advocacy agenda designed in collaboration with women's rights organizations, bringing on board multistakeholder partners and new actors to accelerate efforts to end violence against women and girls.

The ACT programme will work in close coordination with the [Spotlight Initiative](#), particularly with the Global Civil Society Reference Group, to ensure that the evidence, results, and knowledge generated from the Spotlight Initiative inform the evidence-based advocacy of the ACT programme.



Funded by the European Union



When, where and how will ACT be implemented?

ACT will initially be rolled out in two regions: **Africa** and **Latin America**. The selected regions have a high prevalence of violence against women and girls that has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both regions have strong feminist movements with a history of major contributions to tackling violence against women. However, they are now facing setbacks to women's rights compounded by shifting political, economic, and social contexts.

At the global level, ACT will also push to accelerate impact and position the priorities of women's rights movements in global fora across a wide range of related issues.

ACT will be implemented further to consultation and input of women's rights organizations at the global and regional level.

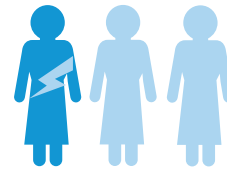
UN Women

will lead the overall management and coordination of the initiative. This will include providing funding and resources to regional and global level coalitions of women's rights organizations working on ending violence against women and girls. UN Women will use its influence to facilitate the participation of feminist women's rights movements in global and regional advocacy and decision-making spaces. Through its bridge-building role, UN Women will connect feminist movements to a broad range of global and regional institutions and actors, strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships, accountability, advocacy, and campaigning on ending violence against women.

The UN Trust Fund

will provide grants to emerging women's rights coalitions at the regional or sub-regional level. These grants aim to foster inclusive and intersectional practice-based knowledge generation to inform and strengthen policy and advocacy. Additionally, the UNTF will coordinate regional gatherings to forge robust connections and feedback loops with grassroots women's rights organizations.

1 in 3 women globally



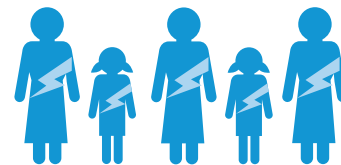
have been subjected to physical or sexual violence at least once in their lifetime. In the **Americas** and **Africa**, prevalence rates are higher than the global average (33% and 36% respectively).⁴

Global emergencies, crises, and conflict have further intensified VAWG



Since the start of COVID-19, 45% of women reported that they or a woman they know has experienced a form of VAWG and 6 in 10 felt that sexual harassment in public spaces has worsened.⁵

More than 5 women or girls



on average are killed every hour by someone in their own family globally. Women and girls in **Africa** and the **Americas** are at greatest risk.

Technology and digitalization are also exacerbating VAWG



Globally, it is estimated that the prevalence of online VAWG is 85% and both **Africa** and **Latin America** have prevalence rates above the global average with 90% and 91% respectively.⁶

⁴ WHO (2021) *Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates*, 2018.

⁵ UN Women (2021) *Measuring the shadow pandemic: Violence against women during COVID-19*

⁶ The Economist Intelligence Unit, "Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women", 2021. Available at <https://onlineviolencewomen.eiu.com/> (accessed on 28 November 2022)



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