

2021 Regional Index on
Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)
Methodology

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Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EFI	EuroMed Feminist Initiative
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
NCHR	National Centre for Human Rights
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
RCSO	Regional Civil Society Observatory
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WPSA	Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Introduction

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is now recognized, in line with international human rights standards, as a violation of women's human rights. National efforts have been made in recent years to adopt national legislation, strategies, and policies to effectively address and prevent such violence.

In 2019, the Regional Civil Society Observatory on VAWG (RCSO) was established as an independent mechanism to follow up on the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration of the 4th Union for Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society ¹ (27 November 2017, Cairo), in the area of combatting all forms of VAWG, implementation of Women, Peace, Security Agenda (WPSA), and Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE). RCSO is hosted by EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI) in Amman and is funded by the European Union (EU) in the frame of the three years regional project "Combating Violence against Women and Girls in the Southern Mediterranean".

The RCSO strives to contribute to ending VAWG, to the inclusion of women's rights in policy debates, and to the social acknowledgement of women as actors of sustaining peace and security, underlining the importance of their role in the prevention of violent extremism. In this regard, the RCSO provides a regional perspective on the status of VAWG legislation, policies, and actions in the Southern Mediterranean States.

To this goal, the RCSO developed in 2020 a Regional Index to help implementing a continuous follow up, data collection of laws and policies, and analyses of the barometer results. The countries studied in the index are limited to those involved in the regional project: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia. All countries in the South Mediterranean region will be included during the second phase.

In the 2021 Index, a scoring methodology was developed by the expert groups of the RCSO, to allow monitoring progress and achievements made in combating VAWG. The group is consisted of academics and experts in the field of women rights and VAWG representing all Index countries. The expert group adopted the approach of composite indicators as clarified in the methodology section below.

The 2021 Index is available on the RCSO website in which the indicators' information and scores results are easily accessible².

¹ The 4th UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society took place on 27 November 2017 in Cairo, Egypt and gathered ministers of the 43 Member States of the Union for the Mediterranean responsible for women affairs and gender equality, under the Co-Presidency of the European Union and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The Ministers agreed to promote 4 actions, which are: raising women's participation in public life and decision-making, raising women's economic participation, combating all forms of violence against women and girls, challenging cultural and social norms and eliminate gender stereotypes, particularly in and through education and media.

² The 2020 index can be found on the RCSO's website: <https://www.efi-rcso.org/index>

Objectives of the Index

The overall objective of the Regional Index is to provide a global documentation on laws, public policies and services related to VAWG that allows a diagnosis of the state of legislation and tools put in place to address VAWG in the South Mediterranean.

This index provides policy makers with meaningful summary of complex data to support informed decisions and actions for the implementation of the 4th UfM Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society, in the area of combatting all forms of VAWG.

It constitutes extensive data and information that will allow researchers to have a quick overview of the status of women in the countries concerned and carry out comparative studies. The index also enables women's rights activists to follow up where gaps and weaknesses lie and thus make targeted and updated advocacy. Furthermore, the index provides a global picture for the international community on the progress and achievements made in each country in terms of combating VAWG.

Selection of Indicators

Four criteria guided the selection of indicators

Relevance: The indicators are relevant to all countries covered by the index and are in line with the international and regional agreements and resolutions, especially the 4th UfM Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society (DOC. DE SÉANCE N°:12/17), the 1995 Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, indicators to measure violence against women developed by UN expert group meeting 2007, goals 5 and 7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are related respectively to achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls, strengthening the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, as well as the proposed indicators by the UfM Secretariat.

Meaningfulness: The indicators represent significant information for policy makers and civil society.

Feasibility: The data required to feed into the indicators is accessible for collection and updating; the indicators are actionable by policy makers to modify policies and by civil society to advocate for change.

Data quality: The data is obtained from official resources and statistics as well as studies issued by national and international NGOs and research centres.

Methodology

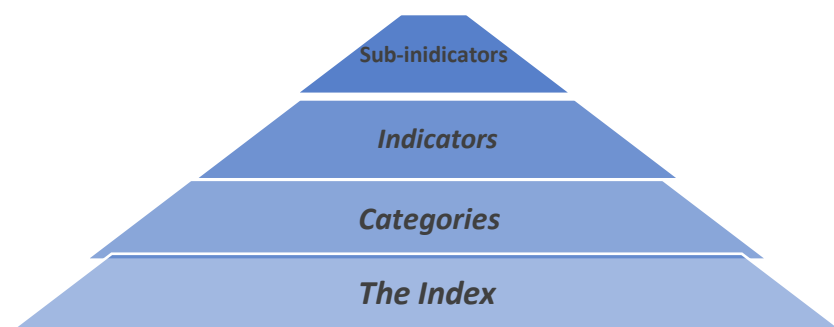
One of the concepts underlying the Index is that it deals with the input and means for combating VAWG rather than the outcomes. More specifically, the sub-indicators and scores are based on the means and tools adopted by the Index countries for combating VAWG including the existing public policies, laws and services. The outcomes and the impact of these laws and policies are not measured by this Index.

The scoring methodology is based on what is known as composite indicators methodology³ which is a mathematical combination (or aggregation) of a set of indicators. Using this method both assists in monitoring progress of combating VAWG by summarizing complex and multi-dimensional data and allows comparison and classification of countries. Under this approach, indicators that measure VAWG globally are further broken down into sub-indicators through which different variables or aspects of the main indicators are measured.

The assessment criteria and scoring are developed according to the sub-indicator of the index structure as shown in the diagram below. As mentioned above, the expert group consisting of 13 experts was formed for the purpose of developing further the 2021 Index. Through 3 group meetings, experts were able to identify the sub- indicators for each main indicator. **See annex 2 for the sub-indicators.** While developing the sub-indicators, the experts took into account the following criteria:

- Relevance: The sub-indicators are clearly and directly related to the main indicator.
- Representativity: The sub-indicators are sufficient and appropriate to describe and reflect the main indicator.
- Measurability: The sub-indicators can be measured, and data can be provided.
- Feasibility: The sub-indicators can reasonably be achieved.

Diagram No. 1: the index structure

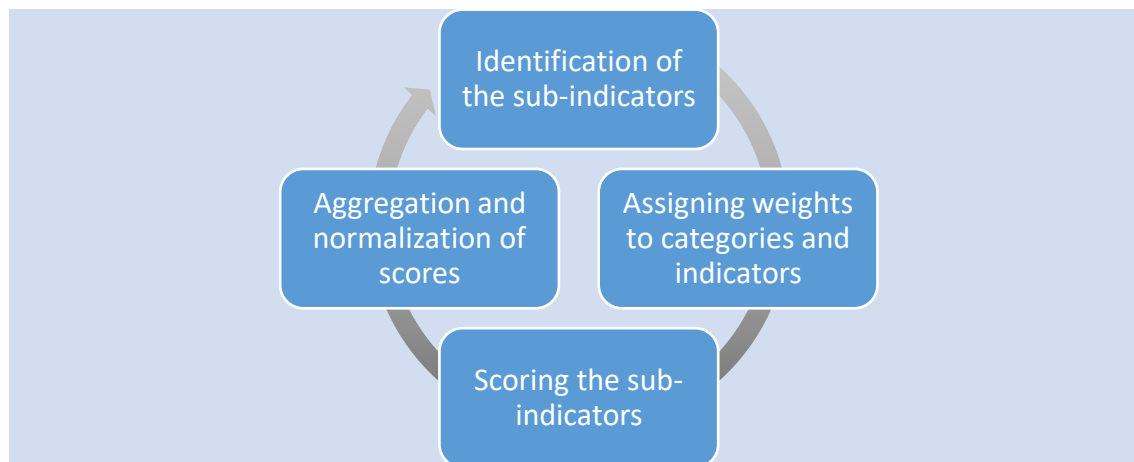


Following the identification of the sub-indicators, the experts assigned weights to the indicators and categories. Since the indicators and categories are different in terms of importance, variability and the impact on combating VAWG, specific weights have been assigned to each indicator and each category according to their respective priority and criticality. Scoring process came after this phase in which the experts scored each sub indicator. Scores given are 1 or 0. The country takes (1) if it fulfils the sub-indicator and (0) if it does not. Finally, the total scores for all indicators are aggregated by using the additive method.

The index adopted the following concrete steps as shown in the diagram below:

³ Handbook on Constructing Composite Indicators: Methodology and User Guide, <https://www.oecd.org/sdd/42495745.pdf>

Diagram No. 2: Steps followed for constructing the composite indicators



Weighting method

The Index adopts approach of assigning weights to indicators. As mentioned above, the more the category or indicator is considered significant in the context of combating VAWG, the greater weight is given.

Assigning weights process has been accomplished through a participatory method. For this purpose, the index used the process of “Budget Allocation Process (BAP)”. Each expert was given 100 points for each category to be distributed over the indicators. The experts were asked to allocate points to the indicator, based on their expertise in VAWG. In addition, experts took into account assigning a weight in relation with the spectrum of the indicator (indicators with wide spectrum have more weight).

The final weight of each indicator is the average of weights (points) received from the 13 experts. For example: assuming that indicator X received a total of 182 points from all the 13 experts. Then, the average weight of the indicator is $182/13= 14$ points.

The final results of the weighting for indicators and categories are included in **the annex 1**.

Scoring method

To achieve the maximum accuracy to the scoring process, the Index involves in each country relevant governmental bodies and experts from civil society working on combating VAWG.

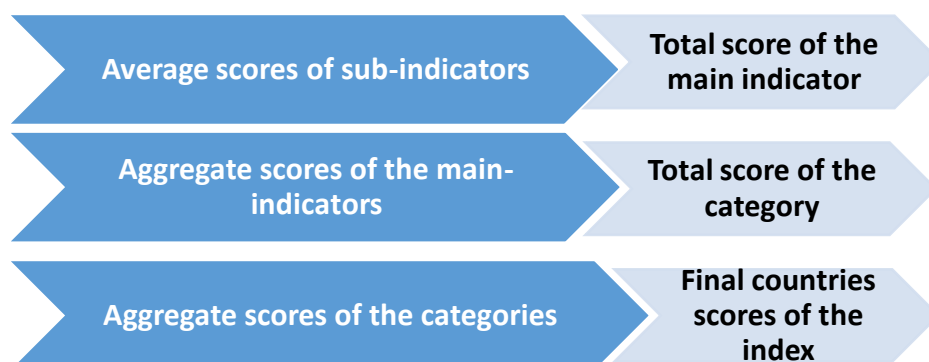
Each sub-indicator has a score 0 or 1. 0 is assigned when the country does not achieve or meet the sub-indicator, and 1 when the sub- indicator is met. The total country’s score value of the qualitative indicator is the sum of values for all the sub-indicators over the number of sub-indicators. This is clarified in the equation below:

$$\text{Score value of indicator} = (\text{the sum values of sub indicators})/(\text{Nr. of sub indicators}).$$

Aggregation process:

The aggregation process for scores depends on additive method. The method includes three stages as clarified below:

Diagram No. 3: Aggregation process



Scoring is done separately for the seven categories. The total score that is given to any category is based on the aggregate scores of the category’s main indicators. For example, the total score for the legal framework and public policies is directly based on the aggregate score of the 16 main indicators. In the same way, the score of the main indicator is the average scores of its sub-indicators.

The global score of the Index for any country is calculated by aggregating the scores of categories in light of the weight share the Index.

Example of scores aggregation is clarified in the table below:

Table No. 1: Example for weighting calculations

Category	Weight	Score	Calculations	Total score
Main indicator 1	60	1/3 = 33.3 %	60 * 33.3%	20 points
Sub-indicator 1A		0		
Sub-indicator 1B		1		
Sub-indicator 1C		0		
Main Indicator 2	40	2/2 = 100%	40 * 100%	40 points
Sub-indicator 2A		1		
Sub-indicator 2B		1		

Index Structure

The index contains 49 indicators divided under 7 categories as described under section 4. The categories constitute the thematic framework of the indicators which represent key criteria for the overview of the situation of VAWG.

- The first category examines the legal framework and public policies on women's rights, and its conformity with international standards, in particular CEDAW. It addresses laws specifically designed to combat VAWG, where such laws exist. It also concerns public policies, including budget policies, and national strategies to combat VAWG. 16 indicators are included under this category.
- The second category deals with standard procedures and guidelines. The police and judicial procedures put in place, whether in terms of the opportunities for victims to report offences or the obligation to inform the authorities of such offences by persons who are aware of them; legal aid or the existence of a guide for professionals, in order to unify and simplify procedures. This category consists of 13 indicators.
- The third refers to services provided by government to victims of VAWG. This category includes 5 indicators that address both the victims themselves, their physical and psychological care, and the caregivers, who must be specially trained to treat victims of all types of VAWG.
- The fourth category, which consists of 3 indicators, is linked to the collection and dissemination of statistics on VAWG and their classification by type of violence and frequency, but also in relation to whether or not they have been the subject of complaints and whether or not these complaints have led to convictions and lawsuits.
- The fifth category looks at preventive programs and measures, including whether specific training programmes for teachers have been set up and whether curricula and handbooks for primary, secondary and university education have integrated issues related to VAWG. This category also looks at national awareness raising, and advocacy campaigns initiated by the governments to address VAWG. 3 indicators are included under this category.
- The sixth category addresses the professional capacity of first respondents. It covers institutional trainings for policemen and policewomen and court staff who deal directly with victims of VAWG as well as the institutionalization of these trainings. This category consists of 3 indicators.
- The seventh category focuses on national and regional coordination mechanisms. It includes 4 indicators for cooperation mechanisms between police, shelters, hospitals, courts/judiciaries,

ministries and civil society on national level, and 2 indicators for regional or international cooperation mechanisms.

Rationality of Indicators' Categories

The rationale behind the selection of these categories are as follows:

Legal framework and public policies:

National laws provide a framework for identifying women's rights and for defining violations⁴ of these rights based on international human rights and women's rights conventions. Government has the primary responsibility for enacting and implementing laws, conducting legal public awareness, and ensuring their harmonization with international conventions to prevent and combat VAWG. VAWG is now fully recognized as a human rights violation and therefore all its forms must be criminalized by national laws. Due to its complex, prevalent, and multifaceted nature, there should be a specific and comprehensive law to combat VAWG, even if certain forms are already criminalized under penal code.

Public policies are especially important tools for change and must be undertaken to prevent and combat VAWG. Adequate resources such as allocation of budgets, human resources and capacity building are essential for the implementation of the desired change.

Standard procedures and guidelines:

Police: VAWG crimes are reported to the police who is the authority concerned with investigating crimes of violence against women and tracking the perpetrators. Therefore, it is especially important to have victim-sensitive procedures and guidelines and provide police officers, especially those who directly deal with VAWG cases, with capacity building.

Justice: The judiciary is the guarantor of women's and girls' rights and of impunity. Civil and criminal courts work to implement laws on violence against women and girls, to ensure their protection, to compensate them for the damages they suffered and to hold the perpetrators accountable, which lays the foundation for the prevention of VAWG.

Health: The health sector represents an important early point for identifying VAWG through medico-legal services and referring cases to the concerned authorities and police for investigation. The health sector can also provide a continuum of services ranging from medical to psychosocial care and rehabilitation.

⁴ VAWG is recognized as a violation of women's human rights by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and all other women's rights treaties. As a matter of fact, the recognition of VAWG as a human rights issue is rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which sets out that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" (article 1), without distinction of any kind including sex (article 2) as well as in all other International Human Rights Law instruments. However, it took decades for women's rights organizations to convince the International Community to consider that VAWG is not just a private matter but an actual human rights violation which the State has an obligation to address, as clearly set out by CEDAW.

Youth and Sports: Youth centres, sport clubs are places where VAWG can be perpetrated, especially against adolescent girls. In this respect, the youth and sport ministries need to be considered as targets for intervention.

Education: Schools, institutes, and universities are places where VAWG can be committed, but they are also places to change mindsets, where attitudes and understanding pertaining to VAWG are shaped by raising awareness of students and pupils through curricula and teaching content.

Provision of services funded by the State:

Addressing cases of VAWG needs specialized units within the police forces with sufficient resources, as well as existence of dedicated shelters, hotlines, and free psychosocial counselling.

Data system and statistics:

Providing accurate and comprehensive data and statistics is one of the governments' responsibilities. Collecting, analysing, and disseminating data and statistics is very crucial in enhancing State accountability acting against VAWG and raising public awareness.

Preventive programs and measures:

Preventive programs are necessary for addressing the rising rates of VAWG. Both government and civil society must adopt campaigns to address social tolerance to VAWG and gender stereotypes.

Professional capacity of first respondents:

Staff and workers who deal with victims⁵ of VAWG must be qualified and aware about the skills and procedures that must be taken to address VAWG.

National coordination and regional cooperation:

Cross-sectorial and ministerial planning and coordination mechanisms among governmental institutions are essential to address VAWG. CSOs, notably women's rights organisations, are critical partners especially in prevention and providing the means to reach communities. Governments must therefore cooperate and coordinate with civil society for addressing VAWG.

Furthermore, as VAWG is a universal problem, preventing and combating it requires cooperation on regional and international level.

⁵ The terminology "victim" is used in this index as defined by the UN Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power Adopted by General Assembly resolution 40/34 of 29 November 1985 as follows: 1. "Victims" means persons who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws operative within Member States, including those laws proscribing criminal abuse of power . 2. A person may be considered a victim, under this Declaration, regardless of whether the perpetrator is identified, apprehended, prosecuted, or convicted and regardless of the familial relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. The term "victim" also includes, where appropriate, the immediate family or dependants of the direct victim and persons who have suffered harm in intervening to assist victims in distress or to prevent victimization." As suggested by the UN declaration, the degree of involvement of victims of violence in the traumatic event leads to a distinction between direct victims and indirect victims. The direct victim may have been a subject (victimized) or a witness (having seen) the act of violence. The indirect victim, "did not witness the event but is concerned by it and/or by its consequences due to its emotional closeness with the direct victims. Indirect victims are all persons close to a primary victim who are disrupted by the experience of the latter." The UN declaration also highlights the rights of the victims in terms of access to justice and fair treatment, restitution, compensation and assistance.

Annex 1: Final weights of categories and indicators

Category / Indicator	Weighting results (points out of 100)
First category: Legal framework and public policies	21
Indicator 1: Ratification of all articles CEDAW	9
Indicator 2: Alignment of the Constitution with all international legal obligations pertaining to women’s rights	8
Indicator 3: Compliance of laws with all international legal obligations pertaining women’s rights	7
Indicator 4: Existence of specific law/s that address specific form or type of VAWG	7
Indicator 5: Existence of comprehensive law criminalizing all forms of VAWG	7
Indicator 6: The definition of VAWG in legislation is in line with the UN resolutions on women rights	5
Indicator 7: Existence of parliamentary oversight role on the implementation of laws pertaining to VAWG	6
Indicator 8: The laws provide support to all victims of VAWG including legal aid	6
Indicator 9: The laws ensure the right of women to sexual and reproductive health and freedom on their own bodies	5

Indicator 10: The existing laws, including family laws, whether civil, customary or religious, protect women and girls from partners, male relatives, and current and ex- spouses who cause VAWG	6
Indicator 11: Existence of legal framework that offers women legal protection from marital rape	6
Indicator 12: Existence of legal framework offers women legal protection from harassment in the public space and work place	6
Indicator 13: Existing laws, in the absence of comprehensive law on VAWG, criminalize honour crimes and prohibit harmful practices such as FGM, early marriage	6
Indicator 14: The laws ensure the punishment of rapist regardless of the acceptance to marry his victim	6
Indicator 15: There is a national strategy for preventing and combating VAWG with adequate resources, budget, and monitoring and evaluation plan	6
Indicator 16: The national health policies address VAWG	5

Second category: Standard procedures and regulations	13
Justice	
Indicator 17: Existence of procedures facilitating the access of women to justice	12
Indicator 18: Reported cases of VAWG are acted upon, including investigation, prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators, wherever the violence occurs: home, school, work place, and public sphere	9
Indicator 19: The existence of special registration system for percentage of VAWG cases sentenced in proportion to reported cases	7
- Police	
Indicator 20: Existence of a police directorate or unit, specifically dedicated to domestic violence or VAWG	7
	8

Indicator 21: Existence of procedures and regulations enabling women and girls to easily report VAWG to police	
Indicator 22: Existence of standard procedures and guidelines for service providers assisting victims of VAWG	8
Indicator 23: Existence of victim-sensitive procedures and guidelines to be used by law to identify, interview, and assist trafficked women	6
Indicator 24: Existence of standard procedures and guidelines to identify and prosecute traffickers on women	7
- Health	
Indicator 25: Existence of regulations that oblige service providers to care for and/or refer women victims of VAWG	9
Indicator 26: Existence of unit within the ministry of health for coordination of health sector response for victims of VAWG	6
Education	
Indicator 28: The State monitors the compulsory education for girls	8
Indicator 28: Existence of regulations and/or procedures to prevent sexual harassment	6
Indicator 29: Existence of regulations and procedures that address VAWG in youth centres, clubs, and stadiums	6

Third category: Provision of services funded by the State:	15
Indicator 30: Existence of dedicated shelters, specialized crisis centers or other housing	25
Indicator 31: Existence of hotlines and free psychosocial counselling	16
Indicator 32: Existence of legal counselling and assistance	17
Indicator 33: Existence of specialized public services for women of vulnerable groups of victims of VAWG (migrant, disable women): bilingual hotlines, specialized crisis centres, specialized trained police	21

Indicator 34: Existence of government funds dedicated to shelters, or centers	22
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الفئة (4): نظام البيانات والاحصائيات Fourth category: Data Systems and statistics	14
Indicator 35: Existence of public statistics on all forms of VAWG, including the rate of unreported violence -	38
Indicator 36: The statistics provide information in terms of type of VAWG, severity and frequency, characteristics of victims	30
Indicator 37: The statistics and data collected by national agencies/institutions are disseminated	32

Fifth category: Preventive programs and measures	15
Indicator 38: The national educational curricula cover issues related to VAWG, gender equality, women rights	40
Indicator 39: Existence of training programs and manuals for teachers on gender equality and VAWG	30
Indicator 40: Existence of governmental awareness raising programs and advocacy campaigns to address gender stereotypes and VAWG in public and private spheres and shift the blame to perpetrators	30

Sixth category: Professional capacity of first respondents	13
Indicator 41: Existence of trainings for policemen and policewomen, and court staff who deal directly with victims of VAWG	38
Indicator 42: Provision by the Ministry of Health of specific training on VAWG for healthcare providers	31

Indicator 43: institutionalization of trainings on VAWG within different ministries and governmental institutions	31
Seventh category: National Coordination and Regional Cooperation	10
Indicator 44: Existing cooperation mechanisms between police, shelters, hospitals, courts/judiciaries, and civil society for addressing VAWG	19
Indicator 45: Existence of inter-ministerial coordination on VAWG	15
Indicator 46: Existence of a governmental body/agency in charge of leadership, coordination, and support for VAWG policies across different sectors, including services for women refugees	18
Indicator 47: Existence of gender responsive budget with specific lines allocated for addressing VAWG	22
Indicator 48: Existence of bi/multi-agreements or programs to address VAWG at the regional level based on international women's rights norms and agreements	14
Indicator 49: Existence of regional monitoring mechanism on VAWG	12