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المبادرة النسوية الأورومتوسطية
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Regional Observatory on VAWG
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The Syrian Arab Republic Report

2024 Regional Index on VAWG

SCORING RESULTS 2024 REGIONAL INDEX ON VAWG

2025

Report - Syria
2024 Regional Index on VAWG

SCORING RESULTS 2024 REGIONAL INDEX ON VAWG

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Contents

Introduction	3
❖ <i>First Category: Legal Framework and Public Policies</i>	4
Main Gaps	8
Recommendations	8
❖ <i>Second Category: Standard Procedures and Guidelines</i>	9
Main Gaps	11
Recommendations	11
❖ <i>Third Category: Provision of Services Funded by the State</i>	12
Main Gaps	13
Recommendations	13
❖ <i>Fourth Category: Data System and Statistics</i>	14
Main Gaps	14
Recommendations	14
❖ <i>Fifth Category: Preventive Programs and Measures</i>	15
Main Gaps	16
Recommendations	16
❖ <i>Sixth Category: Professional Capacity of First Respondents</i>	17
Main Gaps	17
Recommendations	17
❖ <i>Seventh Category: National Coordination and Regional Cooperation</i>	18
Main Gaps	19
Recommendations	19

Introduction

This report presents a comprehensive assessment of the progress made in combating Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) in Syria across seven key categories: legal framework and public policies, standard procedures and regulations, provision of services funded by the State, data systems and statistics, preventive programs and measures, professional capacity of first respondents, and national coordination and regional cooperation.

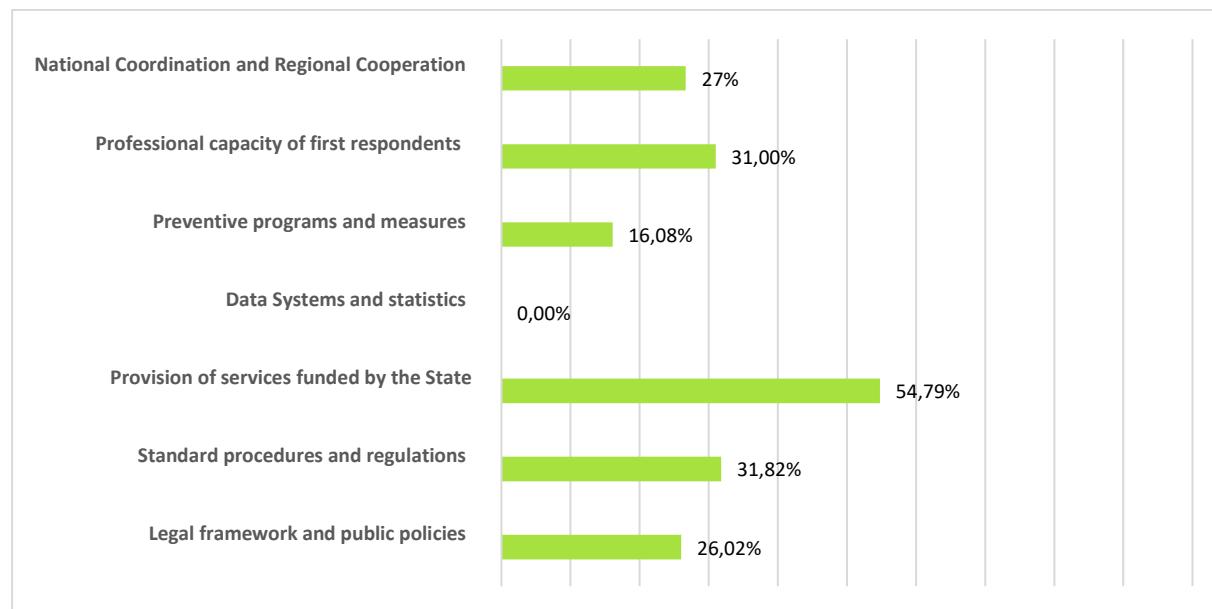
The overall results reveal substantial gaps, with consistently low levels of achievement across most areas, underscoring the severe impact of the ongoing conflict, institutional fragility, and limited State capacity to prioritize women's participation and protection.

The provision of services funded by the State (54.8%) marks the highest level of achievement, reflecting limited progress through limited government-supported shelters and legal aid, often implemented in partnership with civil society and international organizations. Standard procedures and regulations (31.8%) and professional capacity of first respondents (31.0%) show modest advancement, with ad hoc initiatives for case handling and frontline training, though without consistent national frameworks.

Meanwhile, legal framework and public policies (26.0%), national coordination and regional cooperation (27.0%), and preventive programs and measures (16.1%) remain largely underdeveloped, hindered by outdated legislation and the absence of sustained prevention or coordination structures.

Critically, data systems and statistics (0.0%) recorded no achievement, reflecting a complete lack of official mechanisms for data collection or monitoring of VAWG cases.

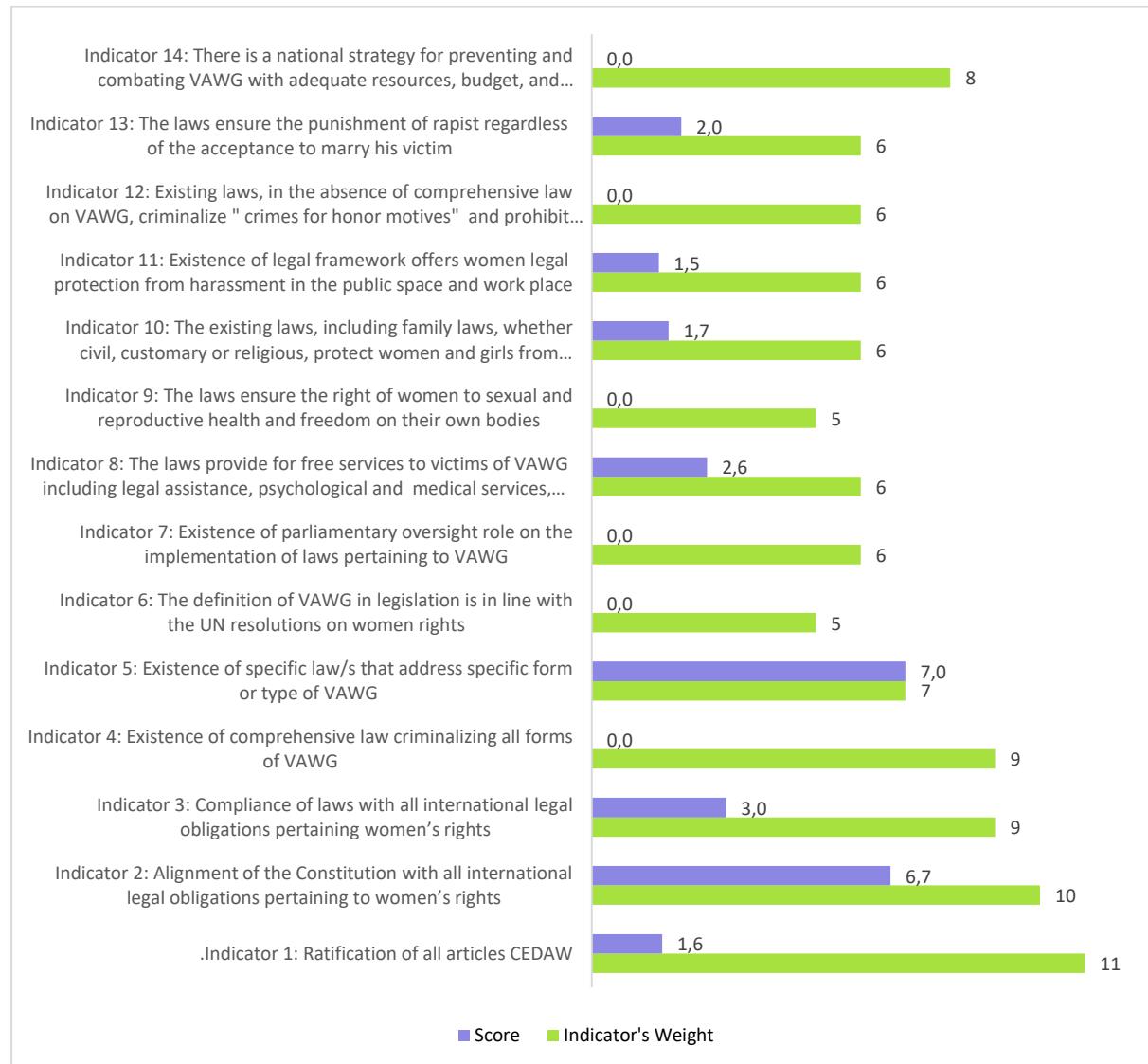
Level of achievement per category



❖ **First Category: Legal Framework and Public Policies**

Legal framework and public policies achieved 26.0%, reflecting weak legislative protection for women and limited alignment of national laws with international human rights standards.

First Category: Legal Framework and Public Policies



Syria has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). However, Syria entered **reservations** to the following articles:

1. Article 2, pursuant to Presidential Decree 230/2017, the Syrian government lifted its reservation to Article 2 relating to policy measures to eliminate discrimination against women. Nevertheless, the decree retains a declaration stating the government's willingness to apply this article insofar as it does not conflict with the provisions of Islamic Sharia.
2. Article 9(2), relating to the right to pass nationality to one's children.

3. Article 15(4), relating to equal rights of women regarding the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.
4. Article 16(1) relating to equality between women and men in all matters relating to marriage and family relations. (c)(d)(f)(g): (c) relating to equal rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution; (d) relating to equal rights in matters relating to their children; (f) relating to equal rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship and custody; (g) relating to equal right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation. Also, Article 16(2), concerning the minimum age for marriage and making registration of marriages compulsory in an official registry.
5. Article 29, relating to the administration of the Convention and arbitration in the event of a dispute over the application of treaty provisions.

It should also be noted that Syria has not ratified the **Optional Protocol** to CEDAW, which allows for the submission of individual complaints to the CEDAW Committee. This explains the low achievement of indicator 1 scoring 1.6/11, reflecting partial ratification but significant limitations in scope.

Regarding the **Constitution**:

- a. The Syrian Constitution (2012) does not recognize that international treaties concerning women's rights prevail over the Constitution. This limited recognition explains indicator 2 score of 6.7/10.
- b. The Constitution prohibits discrimination based on sex. Article 33 provides that "citizens are equal in rights and duties, and there shall be no discrimination among them on grounds of sex, origin, language, religion or creed."
- c. The Constitution contains specific provisions on women's rights and gender equality. Article 23 states that "the State shall provide women with all opportunities enabling them to participate effectively and fully in political, economic, social and cultural life, and shall work to remove the constraints that prevent their development and participation in building society." It should be noted, however, that phrasing such as "provide opportunities" and "work to remove constraints" does not amount to a binding State obligation, unlike terms such as "shall commit" or "undertakes."
- d. The Constitution does not adopt affirmative measures to achieve equality in participation between men and women.

At the **level of national legislation**, the main laws that do not align with international obligations on women's rights are as follows:

1. The Penal Code does not criminalize marital rape.
2. Under the Nationality Law, a Syrian woman married to a non-Syrian man cannot confer her nationality to her children or husband in the same way a Syrian man can.

3. Abortion is prohibited under Articles 525–532 of the Penal Code, including for women who have been raped. Abortion is permitted only if the pregnancy endangers the woman's life.
4. Articles 473–474 of the Penal Code criminalize sexual relations outside marriage.
5. Article 513 of the Penal Code and the 1961 Anti-Prostitution Law prohibit prostitution but while punishing clients, it does not guarantee protection for women in prostitution.
6. The Personal Status Law does not guarantee equality between women and men in marriage and divorce regarding:
 - o Polygamy: polygamy is permitted.
 - o Guardianship: the father and then the paternal grandfather have guardianship over the person and the property of the children.
 - o Early Marriage: Personal Status Law allows the marriage of underage girls.
 - o Freedom of movement: women's freedom of movement is curtailed.
 - o Inheritance: Personal Status Law provides that a woman's share of inheritance is less than a man's; inheritance rules also vary across the Personal Status Laws of different religious communities.
 - o Divorce: men may unilaterally divorce without going to court, whereas women have access only to limited forms of divorce obtainable through court after lengthy and costly procedures; khulo requires her to forgo the deferred dower.
 - o Restrictions on a woman's right to choose a spouse.
7. Punishments are reduced for a perpetrator of "rape, indecency, abduction, seduction, or debauchery" if he marries the victim.
8. Labor Law and its regulations impose legal restrictions on women's work in certain occupations deemed arduous or posing health and/or safety risks. The Labor Law also prohibits night work by women except in roles defined by the government.

These legislative inconsistencies correspond to indicator 3 low score of 3/9, showing limited compliance with international obligations.

There is no comprehensive law that criminalizes all forms of VAWG. Some forms are criminalized under the Penal Code, such as sexual harassment and rape. Sexual harassment in the workplace is not prohibited under the Labour Law, though it is banned as an immoral act under the 1961 Anti-Prostitution Law. Female genital mutilation is not legally prohibited, though it is believed not to be practiced in Syria. For this reason, indicator 4 scored 0/9 and Indicator 5 scored 7/9, showing the absence of comprehensive law but partial coverage through scattered provisions.

Other forms of VAWG that are not comprehensively criminalized include marital rape, unequal inheritance, and child marriage. Although the legal age of marriage is now 18, a judge may, in what the law calls "exceptional cases" (applying to boys and girls), authorize the marriage of those younger. Sexual harassment in workplaces is not criminalized by the Labour Law.

There is no specific legal definition of VAWG in Syrian legislation. Certain forms of violence appear under the Penal Code, the 2010 Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law, and the 1961 Anti-Prostitution Law. The Penal Code defines offenses—including sexual ones—and their penalties as crimes against persons generally, not specifically against women and girls. This limited scope explains indicator 6 score of 0/6.

The People's Assembly has a Committee on Women, Family and Children that discusses bills on women's rights on the Assembly's agenda and holds meetings with relevant government stakeholders on combating VAWG. However, this Committee is dysfunctional. Hence, indicator 7 scored 0/6, reflecting a lack of parliamentary engagement.

The law provides a right to legal aid for those unable to afford an attorney, but not specifically for women victims of VAWG. The Legal Aid Law (No. 29, as amended in 2013) exempts complainants who cannot afford costs from paying fees and expenses. The laws do not provide for psychological or medical support specifically for women victims of VAWG. Therefore, indicator 8 scored 2.6/6.

Various laws address sexual and reproductive health. However, the law criminalizes the sale and promotion of contraceptive materials and means under Articles 525 and 526 of the Penal Code. Abortion is illegal unless the pregnancy endangers the woman's life. At the same time, Article 531 provides that "a woman who aborts herself to protect her honour benefits from a mitigating excuse." These restrictive provisions are reflected in indicator 9 score of 0/5.

Neither the **Penal Code** nor the **Labour Law** expressly mention sexual harassment. The Penal Code criminalizes "indecent touching." Article 493 states: "1. Anyone who forces another by violence or threats to submit to or perform an indecent act shall be punished with hard labour for not less than twelve years. 2. The minimum penalty shall be eighteen years if the victim has not completed the age of fifteen." Moreover, under the Anti-Prostitution Law, "a worker may leave employment before the end of the contract without notifying the employer if the employer or his representative behaves immorally toward the worker." This provision is insufficient and does not establish a right to complain and seek judicial remedy, nor does it apply where the perpetrator is a co-worker. This is reflected in indicator 11 and explains the low score of 1.5/6.

So-called "honour crimes" are criminalized in the sense that reductions in penalties are no longer allowed where the motive is "honourable." Article 548 of the Penal Code, which permitted a reduced sentence for a man who harmed or killed his wife caught committing "adultery", was repealed in 2020. However, Articles 192 and 242 still allow a perpetrator to benefit from mitigating excuses if the crime was committed in a "fit of rage caused by an unlawful and serious act". This explains indicator 12 score of 0/6.

The legal age of marriage is 18 for boys and girls, but judges have exceptional authority to approve the marriage of a minor at 15. Diverse Personal Status Laws allow child marriage (Article 18 of the Syrian Personal Status Law; Article 13 of the Greek Orthodox Personal Status Law; Article 4 of the Syriac Orthodox Personal Status Law; Article 15 of

the Armenian Apostolic Personal Status Law; Article 24 of the Evangelical Personal Status Law). Hence, indicator 10 scored 1.7/6.

The law does not guarantee the punishment of a rapist regardless of his marriage to the victim. Article 489 criminalizes rape, and if the rape is committed against a minor under 15, the penalty is increased to 21 years. The perpetrator's sentence may be reduced if he marries the victim: the penalty may be reduced to a minimum of two years' imprisonment. Under Article 508, "a valid marriage contract between the victim and the offender is a mitigating circumstance for the crime of rape, reducing the penalty to imprisonment for two years." Accordingly, indicator 13 scored 2/6.

Syria does not have a national strategy to combat VAWG, nor a specific health strategy in this field. That is why indicator 14 score is 0/8. However, the Ministry of Health launched the National Strategy for the Health of Women, Children and Adolescents in Syria (2022–2025), which aims to achieve equitable access to high-quality, comprehensive, integrated health services for women, children and adolescents, and to promote social and behavioural health practices and community participation to improve equitable health outcomes. The Ministry also launched the Primary Health Care Strategy (2023–2027), which includes the provision of reproductive health services for women.

Main Gaps

- There are reservations to several CEDAW articles and the Optional Protocol to CEDAW is not ratified.
- Absence of a comprehensive law defining and criminalizing all forms of VAWG, including marital rape and domestic violence.
- The Penal Code and Personal Status Laws continue to contain discriminatory provisions related to marriage, divorce, inheritance, and guardianship.
- There is no comprehensive national strategy to combat all forms of VAWG.

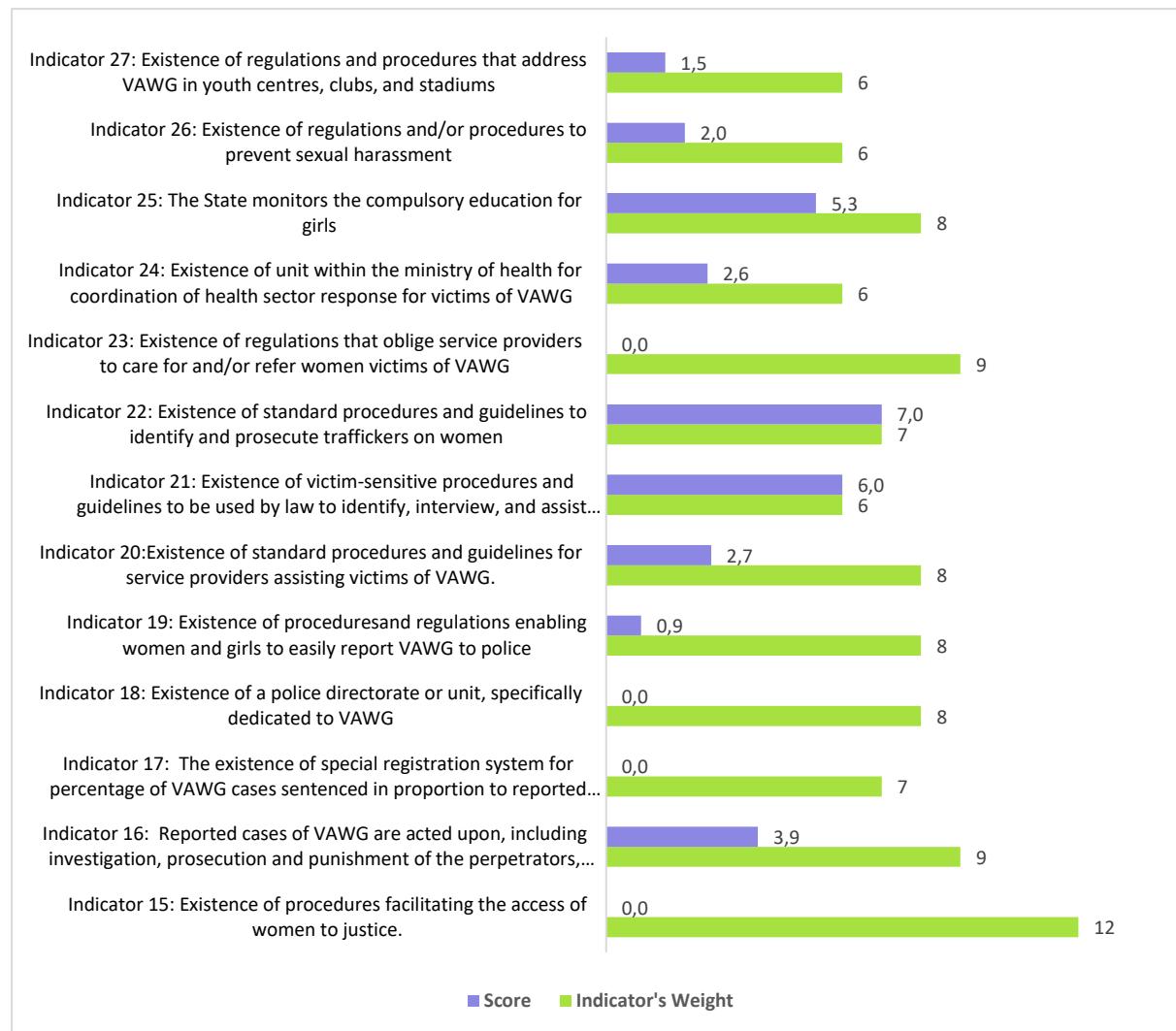
Recommendations

- Lift reservations to CEDAW and ratify the Optional Protocol to strengthen accountability mechanisms.
- Amend discriminatory provisions in the Penal Code and Personal Status Law to ensure equality between men and women.
- Enact a comprehensive law criminalizing all forms of VAWG in line with international human rights standards.
- Develop a national strategy to combat VAWG with clear monitoring, evaluation.

❖ **Second Category: Standard Procedures and Guidelines**

Standard procedures and regulations achieved 31.8%, highlighting the absence of unified national protocols for prevention and response to VAWG.

Second Category: Standard Procedures and Guidelines



Justice

The official reporting channels include the police, court departments, the Ministry of Interior, public hospitals, and the Family Protection Unit under the Syrian Commission for Family and Population Affairs (SCFPA). The unit is tasked with receiving cases and assistance requests referred from governmental, public, and civil institutions. It provides shelter for women survivors of violence for a maximum of six months, during which they receive legal and psychological support. The unit also cooperates with other institutions to provide vocational training to women whose cases remain unresolved after leaving the shelter. These training programs aim to help women start small businesses or find

income-generating jobs to achieve financial independence. It should be noted that while these channels exist in theory, there is a significant gap in their practical implementation and in their accessibility for women survivors of violence — a limitation reflected in indicator 15 score of 0/12, showing the absence of functional procedures facilitating access to justice.

In addition, the Code of Criminal Procedure (2016) regulates the work of law enforcement and judicial authorities concerning complaints, including those related to physical or sexual VAWG. However, there is no specific registry tracking the percentage of cases of VAWG that result in court judgments compared to the number of reported cases, consistent with indicator 17 score of 0/7. Reported cases are acted upon, but implementation remains inconsistent, which aligns with indicator 16 score of 3.9/9.

Police

The police do not have a specialized unit or department dedicated specifically to handling cases of VAWG or domestic violence. All police stations are mandated to receive and/or refer such cases. The procedures in place include referring the woman survivor to the competent authority when necessary and providing transportation to a hospital or medical facility if required. This absence of a specialized police unit corresponds to indicator 18 score of 0/8.

There are no unified or standardized procedures and guidelines for police officers and service providers assisting women survivors of violence. There are also no specific guidelines for identifying women victims of trafficking, although Anti-Trafficking Law No. 3 of 2010 is in force. However, Article 20 of that law provides that “the Ministries of Justice, Interior, Social Affairs, and Labour shall issue executive regulations for this decree in cooperation with other relevant entities.” The lack of regulations is reflected in indicator 19 low score of 0.9/8, while the lack of guidelines and service provider standards corresponds to indicator 20 score of 2.7/8.

The government has also adopted a National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which focuses on four main areas: prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership/cooperation. Furthermore, a National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Protect Victims was established with the participation of civil society. Chaired by the Minister of Interior, the committee reviews plans and assesses progress in combating trafficking. A special department for receiving women and children victims operates under the Anti-Trafficking Directorate. This institutional framework aligns with Indicator 21 score of 6/6, showing progress in victim-sensitive procedures.

Health

Regulations require service providers, including those in the health sector, to care for and/or refer victims of VAWG. Health service providers are obligated to report incidents of violence—including gender-based violence—to the police. However, the Ministry of Health lacks specific tools or guidelines addressing VAWG to guide service provision. Nonetheless, the Ministry has developed guidelines for the management of rape cases

with support from the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). This limited but existing framework is reflected in indicator 23's score of 0/9 and indicator 24 score of 2.6/6.

There is no focal point within the Ministry of Health to coordinate the health sector's response to survivors of gender-based violence.

Education

There is no mechanism for monitoring compulsory education for girls. However, Law No. 7 of 2012 on Compulsory Education provides for the establishment of a "Main Committee for Compulsory Education" within the Ministry of Education. This committee is responsible for coordination with other institutions, supervising compulsory education for boys and girls, and receiving field visit reports. The existence of this law contributed to indicator 25 score of 5.3/8.

At the same time, there are no regulations or procedures to prevent sexual harassment in educational settings. Some provisions of the Penal Code impose stricter penalties when offenses are committed against minors, aligning with indicator 26 low score of 2/6. Similarly, there are no specific regulations or procedures addressing VAWG in youth centres, clubs, or sports facilities, reflected in indicator 27 score of 1.5/6. In general, the Penal Code prescribes harsher penalties when crimes are committed against minors, but there remains no specialized system for prevention or response in educational and youth spaces.

Main Gaps

- There are no unified national procedures or protocols for prevention and response to VAWG across justice, health, and police sectors.
- No specialized police units are dedicated to VAWG cases, and coordination between institutions remains weak.
- The referral mechanism for trafficking victims lacks consistent implementation and monitoring.
- Limited data exist on the number of cases reported versus those prosecuted or resolved.

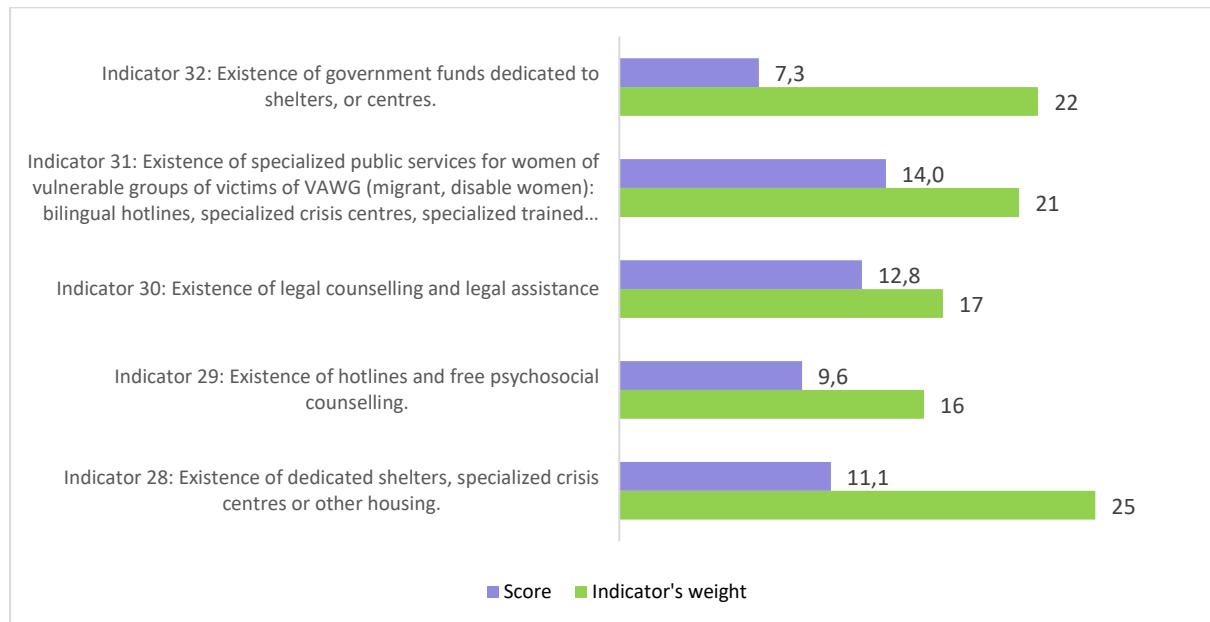
Recommendations

- Develop and institutionalize unified national procedures for handling VAWG cases across sectors.
- Establish specialized police and prosecution units dealing with survivors of VAWG as well as specialised units for trafficking cases.
- Strengthen coordination between the judiciary, police, and health institutions through an intersectoral protocol.
- Adopt mechanisms to prevent VAWG in youth club and centres.

❖ **Third Category: Provision of Services Funded by the State**

Provision of services funded by the State achieved 54.8%, indicating moderate governmental commitment through limited shelters and legal aid, yet insufficient to ensure nationwide coverage.

Third Category: Provision of Services Funded by the State



Specialized services for women survivors of violence are available in only four shelters across the country, two of which are non-governmental and run by nuns, mainly located in Damascus and its countryside. This limited number of operational shelters corresponds to indicator 28 score of 11.1/25, reflecting partial but geographically restricted service provision. It is worth noting that the executive instructions for the Associations Law prohibited the establishment of women's organizations, limiting the capacity for broader service expansion.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and the SCFPA provide psychosocial support, legal counselling, and rehabilitation programs through community welfare centres and the Family Protection Unit. However, these services are not available across the whole country. The SCFPA has also announced a hotline (9461) for reporting cases of VAWG, but this hotline remains inactive. This partial accessibility aligns with indicator 29 score of 9.6/16.

Also, several civil society representatives reported that these services largely remain on paper and are not effectively implemented in practice. Similarly, indicator 30 scored 12.8/17, showing partial presence of legal counselling mechanisms but with limited enforcement and coverage.

There are no public specialized services for women from marginalized groups who are victims of VAWG. The Ministry and the SCFPA collaborate with civil society and non-governmental organizations to offer legal advice and rehabilitation programs for women, through their community centres and the Family Protection Unit. However, these women and girls face significant barriers in accessing adequate legal services due to their limited availability and the complexity of procedures. This challenge is reflected in indicator 31 score of 14/21, highlighting the lack of specialized services for vulnerable groups, including migrants or women with disabilities.

Furthermore, there are no sustainable government funds allocated for shelters or centres beyond minimal operational budgets, consistent with indicator 32 score of 7.3/22, showing weak financial sustainability.

Main Gaps

- The number of government-run shelters is very limited and geographically concentrated in Damascus.
- Access to psychosocial and legal support services is inconsistent and restricted is limited and does not extend across the whole country.
- Services for marginalized women, including displaced, rural, and disabled women, are nearly absent.

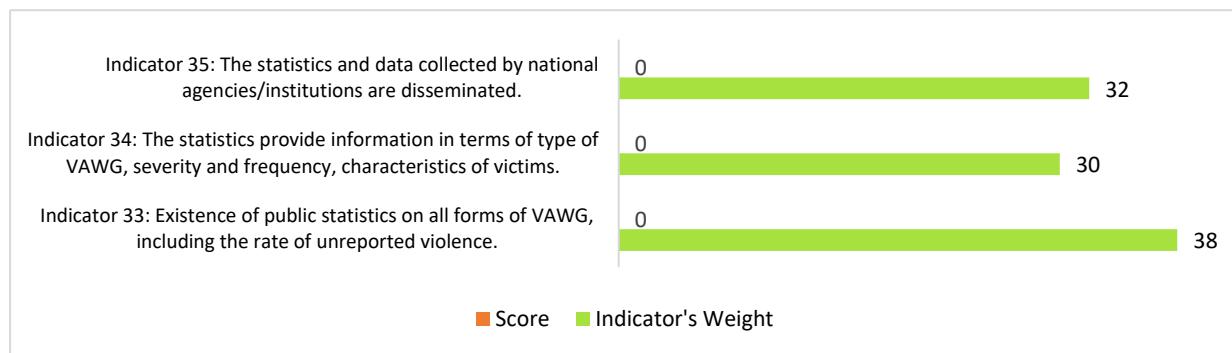
Recommendations

- Expand the number of shelters across all governorates and ensure accessibility for all women survivors of violence.
- Allocate government funding for shelters and integrate them into the national protection system.
- Establish specialized services for women from vulnerable groups, including displaced and disabled women.

❖ **Fourth Category: Data System and Statistics**

Data systems and statistics achieved 0.0%, revealing a complete absence of official mechanisms for data collection, monitoring, or dissemination on VAWG.

Fourth Category: Data System and Statistics



There are no regular or up-to-date public statistics measuring the prevalence of all forms of VAWG, including unreported cases. The Central Bureau of Statistics does not collect indicators or data related to VAWG. This complete absence of official statistics corresponds to indicator 33 score of 0/38.

There are some partial statistics but they do not cover all forms or rates of VAWG, and according to Syrian civil society organizations, the National Observatory on Violence against Women has not yet been effectively activated in practice. These limited, non-systematic efforts are reflected in indicator 34 score of 0/30 and indicator 35 score of 0/32, confirming the lack of structured data collection, analysis, or dissemination mechanisms.

Main Gaps

- There are no official national data systems or surveys measuring the prevalence of VAWG.
- The Central Bureau of Statistics does not collect or disseminate data related to VAWG.
- The National Observatory on Violence against Women remains inactive and lacks institutional coordination.
- Existing information is fragmented and unavailable to policymakers or the public.

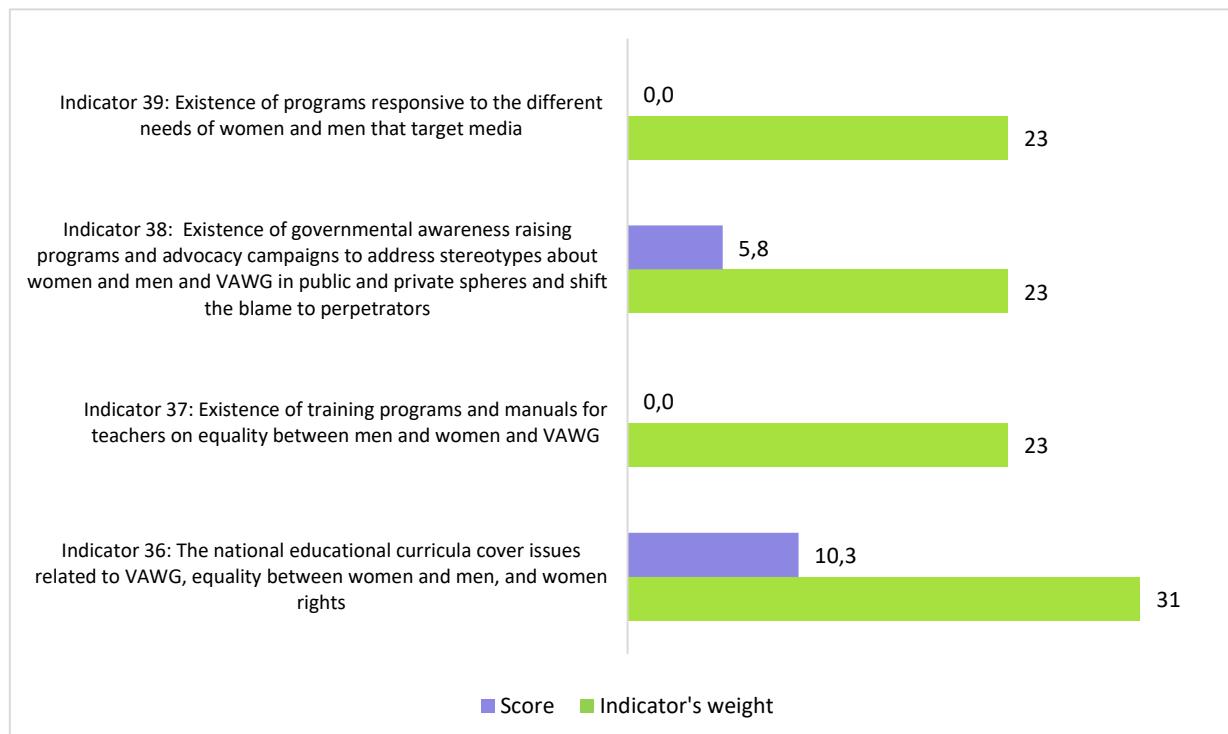
Recommendations

- Establish a centralized data collection and management system on VAWG coordinated by the SCFPA.
- Activate and institutionalize the National Observatory on Violence against Women to ensure regular monitoring and reporting.
- Develop standardized data collection tools and protocols across all relevant ministries.
- Publish annual national reports on VAWG trends and cases to inform evidence-based policymaking.

❖ ***Fifth Category: Preventive Programs and Measures***

Preventive programs and measures achieved 16.1%, demonstrating minimal investment in awareness and education programs, with prevention largely led by civil society rather than the State.

Fifth Category: Preventive Programs and Measures



The national educational curricula do not include topics related to VAWG, gender equality, or women's rights. However, the Syrian government issued an update to school curricula in 2017, which still contains gender-stereotyped depictions of women. This limited inclusion explains indicator 36's partial score of 10.3/31, reflecting some reform attempts without substantive gender integration.

There are also no specific training programs for schoolteachers addressing gender equality or VAWG, as reflected in indicator 37 score of 0/23.

In contrast, the SCFPA conducts awareness campaigns as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign. Additionally, in 2022, the Ministry of Information launched a national campaign titled "Don't Stay Silent" to combat violence against women. The campaign aims to raise awareness of women's rights and inform survivors about their legal rights and the available services for women victims of violence. These limited governmental efforts correspond to indicator 38 score of 5.8/23, showing progress in awareness raising but insufficient consistency or reach.

However, there are no governmental programs responsive to the different needs of women and men or media-based prevention initiatives, as indicated by indicator 39 score of 0/23.

Main Gaps

- The national education curricula lack gender equality and anti-VAWG content and continues to reflect gender stereotypes.
- No teacher training programs exist on gender equality or VAWG prevention.
- Awareness campaigns are limited, irregular, and primarily organised by civil society.
- Media engagement on VAWG prevention remains minimal.

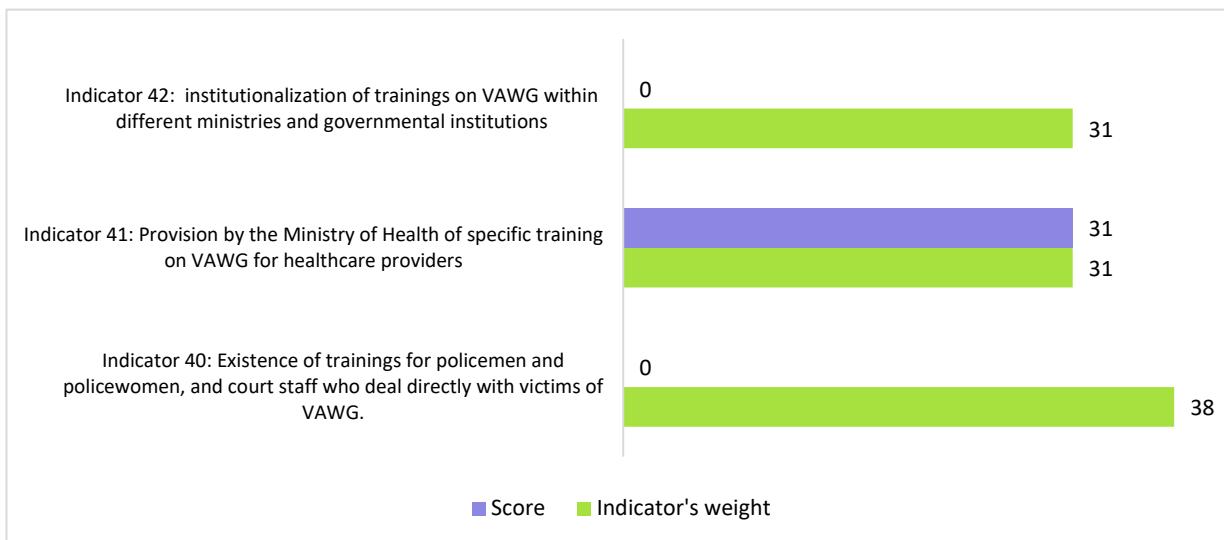
Recommendations

- Integrate gender equality and VAWG prevention into the national education curricula.
- Develop teacher training programs to promote gender sensitivity and prevention of violence, utilizing [the Manual for Teachers in the South Mediterranean](#).
- Institutionalize annual awareness campaigns through the Ministries of Information and Education.
- Collaborate with civil society and national media to promote gender equality and challenge harmful stereotypes.

❖ ***Sixth Category: Professional Capacity of First Respondents***

Professional capacity of first respondents achieved 31.0%, showing limited and inconsistent training of justice, health, and social service personnel without institutionalized systems.

Sixth Category: Professional Capacity of First Respondents



There are no training courses for police officers and/or court staff that deals directly with victims of VAWG, which explains indicator 40 score of 0/38.

No specific training programs are offered by the Ministry of Health for nurses or doctors who respond to cases of VAWG. However, international organizations conduct training sessions for healthcare providers, covering clinical management of rape, gender-based violence response, case management, and guidelines for dealing with adolescent girls. These efforts correspond to indicator 41 full score of 31/31, reflecting strong involvement of external partners, however limited national ownership. There is no institutionalized training program on VAWG within government ministries or public institutions. This absence is mirrored in indicator 42 score of 0/31.

Main Gaps

- Training for police, justice, and social service personnel remains limited and donor dependent.
- Ministries lack institutionalized programs to train first respondents on responding to VAWG.

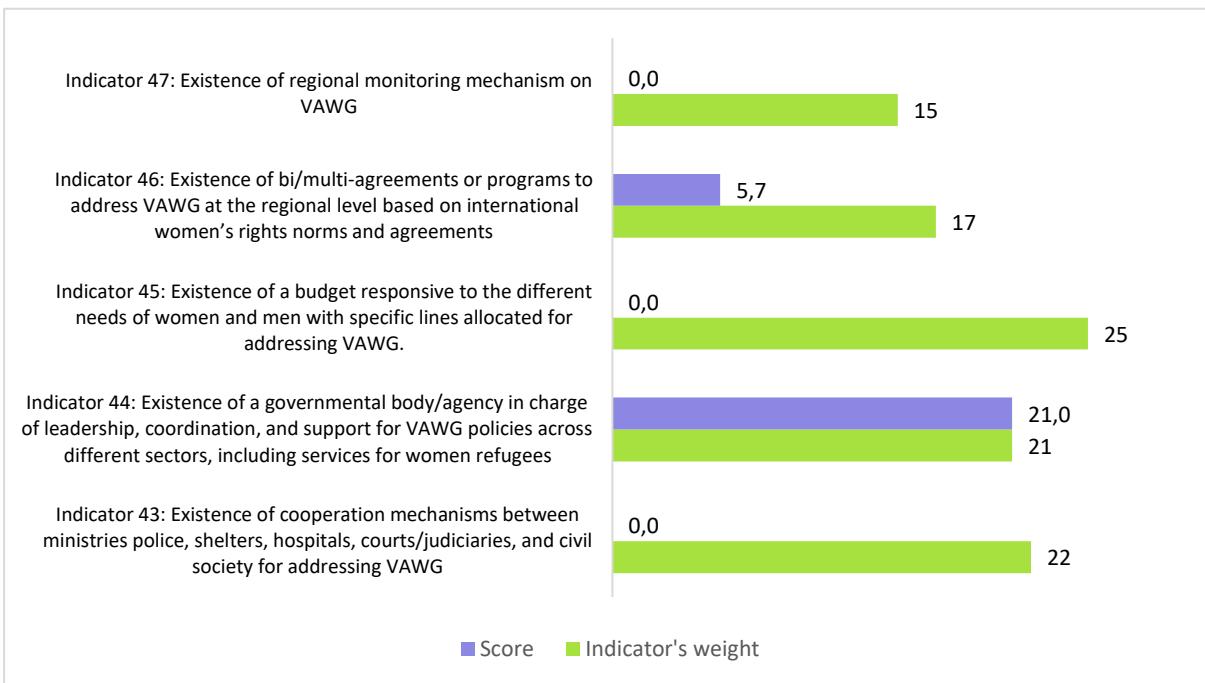
Recommendations

- Institutionalize regular training programs on VAWG response for police, justice, and health sectors.

❖ **Seventh Category: National Coordination and Regional Cooperation**

National coordination and regional cooperation achieved 27.0%, reflecting weak inter-ministerial collaboration and minimal engagement in regional or international frameworks addressing VAWG.

Seventh Category: National Coordination and Regional Cooperation



There are no formal inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms, though the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour and the SCFPA, which operates under the same ministry, are mandated to coordinate efforts to protect women and families from violence. The absence of formal cooperation frameworks explains indicator 43 score of 0/22, showing the lack of an institutionalized mechanism linking key ministries such as justice, health, interior, and social affairs.

The SCFPA was established under Law No. 42 of 2003, later amended by Law No. 6 of 2014, with the goal of protecting the family, strengthening its cohesion, preserving its identity and values, and monitoring national efforts to implement the CEDAW. This leadership role corresponds to indicator 44 score of 21/21, reflecting the SCFPA legal existence. The SCFPA also relaunched the National Observatory on Violence against Women, which includes 20 initial monitoring focal points in hospitals, police stations, and some associations to document domestic violence cases and produce analytical reports to support decision-makers in policy and planning related to domestic violence.

Furthermore, there is no budgeting system responsive to the needs of both women and men adopted by the government with dedicated budget lines to address VAWG. This lack of financial commitment is reflected in indicator 45 score of 0/25.

At the regional level, the League of Arab States established the Arab Women's Committee, which in February 2020 launched a five-year strategy to define national priorities in Arab countries in line with the Beijing Platform for Action. In September 2020, the League approved the creation of the Arab Women Mediators Network as a regional mechanism under the Committee. Additionally, the Arab League launched the "Cairo Declaration for Arab Women: The Arab Women Development Agenda 2030", adopted in 2017. The declaration integrates gender equality into environmental and climate action and disaster response, and includes specific results aimed at eliminating VAWG. However, Syria has not been part of these initiatives, nor has any bilateral or multilateral agreements. Syria is not part of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) ministerial declaration of the Fifth UfM Ministerial Conference on "Strengthening the Role of Women in Society" (2022, Madrid), which includes four priority areas, one of which is combating VAWG. This is reflected by indicator 46 score of 5.7/17.

While there is no regional monitoring mechanism on VAWG on the governmental level, the UfM follows up on the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Women's Rights (2022, Madrid). In terms of monitoring of the Declaration, the Ministers of the UfM States showed willingness in the 5th UfM Declaration to "Pay particular attention to well-functioning monitoring processes in the four priority areas of the Cairo Declaration well as to the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the impact of actions undertaken." As Syria is not part of this declaration, this aligns with indicator 47 score of 0/15.

Main Gaps

- There is no formal inter-ministerial mechanism to coordinate national efforts on VAWG.
- The National Observatory on Violence against Women remains largely inactive.
- Gender-responsive budgeting and dedicated funds for VAWG programs are absent.

Recommendations

- Reactivate and expand the National Observatory on Violence against Women to monitor and coordinate national efforts.
- Establish a permanent inter-ministerial committee on VAWG led by the SCFPA.
- Introduce gender-responsive budgeting and allocate budget lines for VAWG.
- Enhance Syria engagement in regional monitoring and bi-lateral cooperation mechanisms.



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