

RESEARCH BRIEF

# Violence Against Women and Girls in Albania







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Resilient nations.*

**NATIONAL POPULATION-BASED SURVEY 2018**

# **Violence Against Women and Girls in Albania**

This survey was conducted by INSTAT with technical expertise provided by and report writing led by Dr. Robin Haarr, international consultant, supported by UNDP and UN Women and financial contribution through the Government of Australia in the framework of the regional gender statistics and SDGs project “Women Count” and the Government of Sweden in the framework of the UN Joint Programme on Ending Violence Against Women in Albania. Opinions and views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of UNDP, UN Women and their donors.

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# INTRODUCTION

Violence against women (VAW) is a pervasive violation of human rights and a global public health problem of epidemic proportions. VAW is recognized as both a cause and consequence of gender inequality, and is a major obstacle to women and girls' enjoyment of human rights and their full participation in society and the economy.

There is no single factor that causes VAW; rather, there are a combination of elements operating at different levels of the 'social ecology' that perpetuate and reinforce gender discriminatory and biased attitudes, norms, and practices that contribute to the pervasive imbalance of power that exists between men and women within societies and contributes to VAW.

VAW manifests in various forms of physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence that occur in public and private spaces. VAW undermines the mental and physical health and well-being of women and girls and can have a negative impact on their long-term sense of safety, stability, and peace. VAW also has serious implications for the development and advancement of women, and their contribution to the economy.

VAW is not a new phenomenon in Albania, but has deep roots in the patriarchal traditions and customs that have long-shaped Albania, including strict gender identities and roles, patriarchal authority, adherence to an honour-and-shame system, customs of hierarchal ordering within the family, and intergenerational family control.

In 2007, with technical assistance and support from UNDP and UNICEF, INSTAT conducted the first National Domestic Violence Survey (NDVS). In 2013, with technical assistance from UNDP Albania and financial support from Government of Sweden, INSTAT conducted the 2nd NDVS. The 2018 National Violence Against Women and Girls Survey (NVAWGS) used a similar methodology and data collection tools as the 2013 NDVS to collect reliable data on the nature and prevalence of intimate partner violence, and was extended to collect data on dating violence, non-partner violence, sexual harassment, stalking, and social norms related to VAW.

It is important to monitor the prevalence of VAW in Albania. Over time, VAW data helps those who are responsible for decision-making and policy formation understand patterns and trends over time and the impact of EVAWG initiatives.



# 61.1%

of women who 'currently' experienced physical violence and more than 1 out of 2 or 56.0% of women who 'ever' experienced physical violence experienced fear, anxiety, depression, feelings of isolation, sleeplessness and/or irritability.

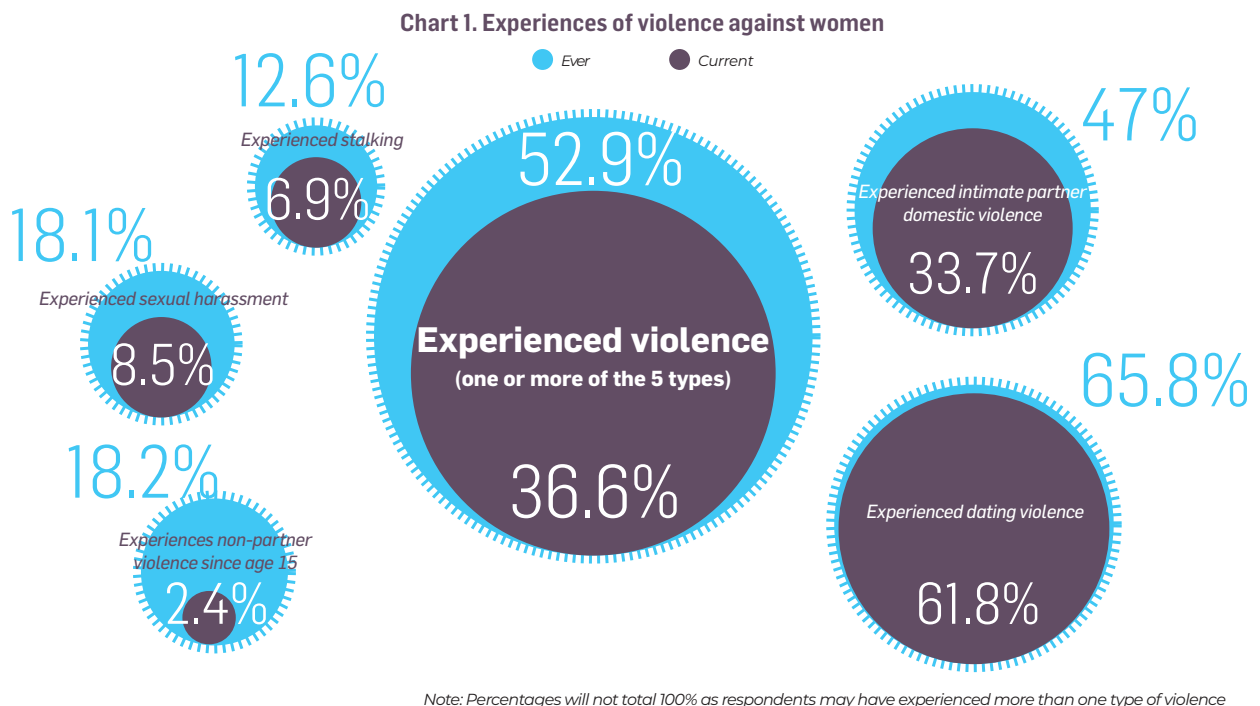
## Research design

The 2018 NVAWS in Albania was developed to measure the nature and extent of five different types of VAW – intimate partner domestic violence, dating violence, non-partner violence, sexual harassment, and, stalking – and social norms related to VAW. The study consisted of a national population-based household survey conducted across each of the 12 prefectures in Albania. A stratified sample design was used for selecting women for sampling. The goal was to generate a sample of women age 18-74 that would allow for the production of statistically reliable national estimates of the prevalence of VAW.

### Sample of Women

The final sample of women included 3,443 households and women age 18-74. The sample was not equally distributed across prefectures, as more women were sampled in Tirana (27.1%), the capital city which has a much larger population, and in Fier (11.5%) and Elbasan (10.6%), compared to Kukës (3.0%) and Gjirokastër (2.6%) where far fewer women were sampled. There was a fairly equal distribution of women sampled across each of the age groups. Women ranged in age from 18 to 74 years with an average age of 43.6 years. In terms of education, 42.4% of women had a lower secondary education (8-9 years), 27.8% had an upper secondary education, and 19.7% had a university education; only 7.7% of women had only a primary education or less.

The majority of women sampled were currently married and/or living with a male partner (73.3%); 20.3% were not currently married or living with a male partner. Only 4.1% were widowed, 1.2% divorced, and .2% separated or broken up with their current male husband/boyfriend. The majority of women first married or lived together with a man at 18-24 years of age (63.2%).



## VAW at a glance

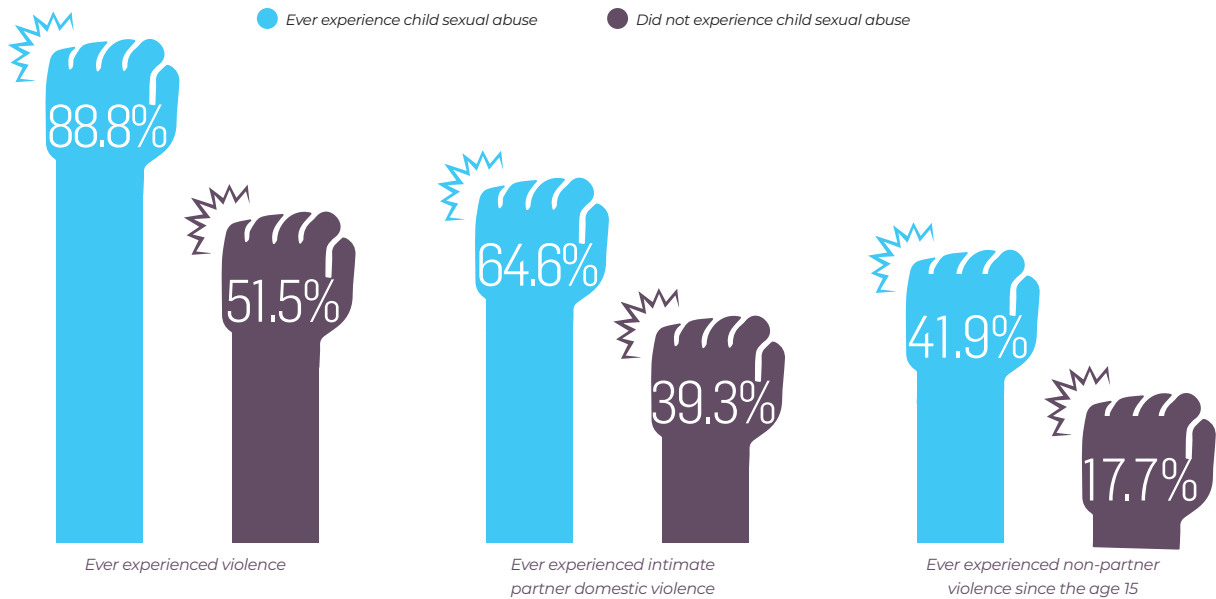
Chart 1 reveals 1 out of 2 or 52.9% of women age 18-74 'ever' experienced one or more of the five different types of violence during their lifetime. More specifically, 47.0% of women (those who were or had been married and/or lived with a partner) 'ever' experienced intimate partner domestic violence, and 65.8% of women (those who were never been married and never lived with a male partner, but have been involved in a relationship with a male without living together) 'ever' experienced dating violence. Among all women age 18-74, 18.2% 'ever' experienced non-partner violence, 18.1% 'ever' experienced sexual harassment, and, 12.6% 'ever' experienced stalking.

In terms of current experiences of violence, 1 out of 3 or 36.6% of women experienced violence in the 12 months prior to the survey. In particular, 1 out of 3 or 33.7% of women experienced intimate partner domestic violence and 61.8% experienced dating violence in the 12 months prior to the survey. Among all women age 18-74, 3.4% experienced non-partner violence, 8.5% experienced sexual harassment and 6.9% experienced stalking in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Additional analysis revealed a strong correlation between intimate partner violence and non-partner violence. In particular, 3 out of 4 or 75.8% women who experienced non-partner violence since the age of 15 also experienced intimate partner domestic violence. In other words, women who experienced non-partner violence since the age of 15 were two times more likely to experience intimate partner domestic violence (75.8%), compared to women who did not experience non-partner violence since age 15 (32.1%).

The survey also found that 3.1% of women age 18-74 had been sexually abused during childhood, i.e. had been touched sexually when they did not want or was made to do something sexual that they did not want. Analysis explored the relationship between child sexual abuse and gender-based violence in adulthood. Chart 2 shows that women who experienced child sexual abuse were more likely to experience gender-based violence in adulthood (88.8%), compared to women who did not experience child sexual abuse (51.5%). Women who experienced child sexual abuse were also more likely to experience intimate partner domestic violence (64.6%) and two times more likely to experience non-partner violence (41.9%), compared to women who did not experience child sexual abuse (39.2% and 17.7% respectively).

**Chart 2. Relationship between child sexual abuse and gender-based violence in adulthood (weighted data)**



Note: Percentages will not total 100% as respondents may have experienced more than one type of violence

## Social norms related to VAWG

It is important to understand the power of social norms, which reach into all corners of people's public and private lives every day. Individuals may conform to social norms in their external behaviours, but privately disagree with the social norms. While social norms, personal attitudes, and behaviours are not mutually exclusive, they often reinforce each other.

### Social Norms Related to Domestic Violence

The survey found that 1 out of 2 or 52.2% of women age 18-74 maintained all or most people in the community believe violence between a husband and wife is a private matter and that others should not intervene, and 46.5% maintained all or most people in the community believe a woman should tolerate some violence to keep her family together. In addition, 27.5% of women maintained all or most people in the community believe when a woman is beat by her husband that she is partly to blame or at fault. Another 27.5% maintained that a woman should be ashamed or embarrassed to talk to anyone outside of her family about abuse or violence in her marriage. These social norms can contribute to the prevalence of intimate partner domestic violence against women and keep battered women trapped in violent relationships.

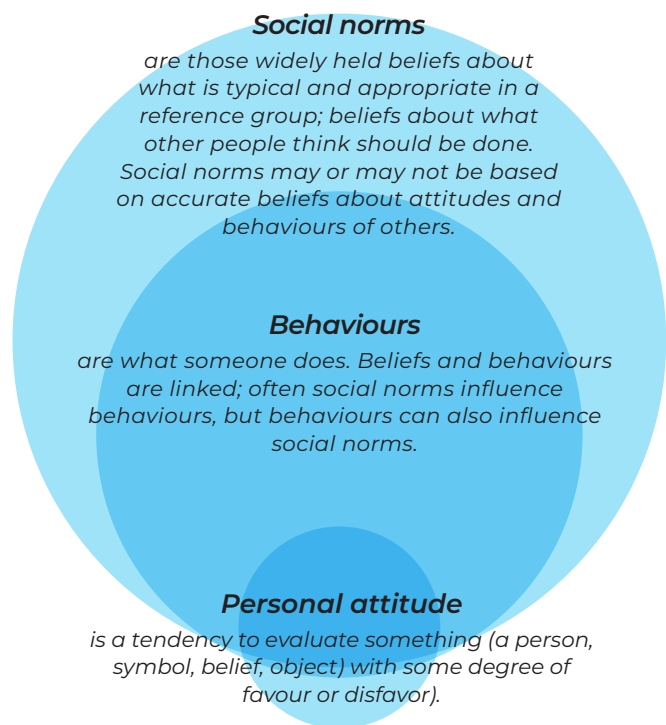
Despite these social norms, only 13.5% of women maintained all or most men in the community sometimes hit or beat their wives, and 11.4% maintained all or most men in the community sometimes hit or beat their wives for refusing to have sexual intercourse.

### Social Norms Related to Sexual Violence

In terms of social norms related to sexual violence, 26.1% of women age 18-74 maintained all or most people in the community believe a woman should be ashamed or embarrassed to talk to anyone if she is raped, and 21.2% of women maintained all or most people in the community believe if a woman is raped, she probably did something careless to put herself in that situation.

## Perceived Seriousness of VAWG

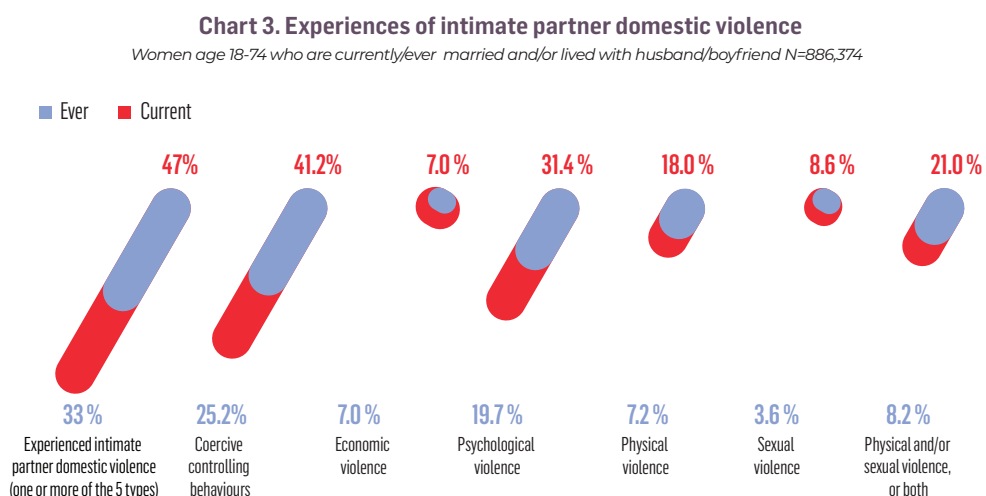
The survey found that 3 out of 4 or 75.4% of women reported domestic violence against women is a major problem in Albania. In addition, 70.8% of women reported sexual violence against women and girls is a major problem in Albania, 69.9% reported sexual harassment of women and girls is a major problem, and 68.4% reported stalking of women is a major problem in Albania. Given these findings, it is not surprising the majority of women maintained it is very important to have laws in Albania that protect women and girls from violence in marriage/families (83.0%) and from sexual assault and rape (81.9%).



## Intimate partner domestic violence

Graph 3 reveals 47.0% of women experienced intimate partner domestic violence. More specifically, 41.2% of women 'ever' experienced coercive controlling behaviours, 31.4% experienced psychological violence, 18.0% experienced physical violence, 8.6% experienced sexual violence, and 7.0% experienced economic violence. Twenty-one percent of women 'ever' experienced physical and/or sexual violence, or both.

Chart 3 also shows that 1 out of 3 or 33.7% of women experienced intimate partner violence in the 12 months prior to the survey. More specifically, 1 out of 4 or 25.2% of women experienced coercive controlling behaviours, 19.7% experienced psychological violence, 7.2% were experienced physical





violence, 7.0% experienced economic violence, and 3.6% experienced sexual violence in the 12 months prior to the survey. It is notable that 8.2% of women experienced physical and/or sexual violence, or both, in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Women age 18-24 were most likely experience intimate partner domestic violence (55.8% ever, 55.8% current). As women age, their 'current' experiences of intimate partner domestic violence decreased, with only 25.8% of women age 55-64 and 18.2% age 65-74 experiencing intimate partner domestic violence in the 12 months prior to the survey.

### Physical Violence During Pregnancy

Among women who were currently/ever married and/or living with a husband/partner, 94.9% had ever been pregnant. Among women who had ever been pregnant, 1.1% were hit, slapped, kicked or physically abused during their pregnancy. Among women who 'ever' experienced physical violence, 2.3% were hit, slapped, kicked or physically abused during their pregnancy.

When asked who hit, slapped, kicked or physically abused them during their pregnancy, 50.9% of women identified the perpetrator as their current/former husband/boyfriend. Some women reported the perpetrator was other family members, including their mother/step-mother (4.3%), father/step-father (4.5%), sister/brother (4.3%), daughter/son (2.5%), other relative (7.3%), mother-in-law (1.6%), father-in-law (1.6%) and other-in-laws (2.6%). Women also reported the perpetrators were teachers (7.3%) and employers or someone at work (2.5%).

Among women who were physically abused during pregnancy, 30.5% reported this happened during their last pregnancy and 10.1% were punched or kicked in the abdomen while pregnant. Women who were punched or kicked in the abdomen while pregnant, 79.1% identified the perpetrator was their current/former husband/ boyfriend and 10.4% reported it was an in-law.

### Domestic Violence Injuries

More than 1 out of 2 or 58.8% of women who 'ever' experienced physical violence experienced domestic violence injuries, and nearly 3 out of 4 or 72.4% of women who 'currently' experienced domestic violence experienced domestic violence injuries.

The majority of women who experienced physical violence experienced fear, anxiety, depression, feelings of isolation, sleeplessness and/or irritability (56.0% ever, 61.0% current). A significant proportion of battered women also experienced cuts, scratches, aches, redness or swelling and/or other minor marks (23.6% ever, 28.1% current). Women also experienced more serious injuries, including: eye injuries, dislocations, sprains and/or blistering from burns (6.5% ever, 12.4% current); miscarriages (2.6% ever, 1.2% current); head injuries, concussions and/or hearing loss (2.0% ever, 2.6% current); abdominal injuries (2.1% ever, 1.0% current); deep wounds, broken bones, broken teeth, blackened or charred skin from burns and/or any other serious injury (1.2% ever, 1.2% current); permanent injury and/or disfigurement (1.1% ever, 0.0% current); and loss of memory (0.5% ever, 0.2% current). Battered women often experience more than one type of injury.



**58,8%**  
of women who 'ever'  
experienced physical  
violence experienced  
domestic violence  
injuries



**47,0%**

**of women experienced intimate partner domestic violence. More specifically, 41.2% of women 'ever' experienced coercive controlling behaviours, 31.4% experienced psychological violence, 18.0% experienced physical violence, 8.6% experienced sexual violence, and 7.0% experienced economic violence.**

Findings also revealed that 5.6% of women experienced physical violence were hurt bad enough by their husband/partner that they needed health care, even if they did not receive it. Among those women who needed health care, 23.1% spent nights in a hospital due to their domestic violence injuries, and only 13.4% of battered women told a health worker that domestic violence was the cause of their injuries.

## **Disruptions to Work Due to Domestic Violence**

Twenty-five percent of women who experienced physical violence and domestic violence injuries in the 12 months prior to the survey reported they were unable to perform household chores and/or take care of their children due to domestic violence. In addition, 8.9% of women reported they were unable to go to work (missed days at work) due to domestic violence, and .5% of women lost a job or source of income due to domestic violence.

## **Sexual Violence, Use of Birth Control, Risk of STDs**

Women who experienced sexual violence by their husbands/partners (27.1%) were nearly nine times more likely than women who did not experience sexual violence (3.1%) to report their husband/partner refused to use birth control or tried to stop them from using a method of birth control to avoid getting pregnant.

The most common way that husbands/partners restricted women from using birth control was by means of psychological violence: ridiculed them for using birth control (79.7%); screamed/got mad at them for using birth control (56.4%); threatened to beat them (51.9%); threatened to leave them or throw them out of the house for using birth control (36.7%); accused them of not being a good woman (18.3%); and, threw away the contraceptives (13.9%).

Women who currently experienced sexual violence (20.8%) were nearly two times more likely to worry about getting a STI, and three times more likely to have had a STI (7.8%), compared to women did not experience sexual violence in the past 12 months (11.3% and 2.1% respectively). Women who currently experienced sexual violence (36.0%) were ten times more likely to have had a STI in the past 12 months, compared to women who were not currently experiencing sexual violence in their marriage/intimate relationship (5.8%).

## Alcohol and Domestic Violence

Women who 'currently' experienced domestic violence were two times more likely to see their husband/partner drunk most days in the past 12 months. Women who saw their husband/partner drunk most days and weekly were most likely to experience fear, anxiety, depression, feeling of isolation, sleeplessness and/or irritability. Women who saw their husband/partner drunk most days and weekly were also more likely to experience cuts, scratches, aches, redness or swelling and/or other minor marks as a result of domestic violence.

When it comes to women's experiences with more serious domestic violence injuries, husbands/partners' alcohol consumption habits were significant. Women who saw their husband drunk most days and weekly were three to four times more likely to experience eye injuries, sprains and/or blistering from burns. Women who saw their husband drunk on a weekly basis were four to ten times more likely to experience head injuries, concussions and/or hearing loss, and seven times more likely to experience a miscarriage; whereas women who saw their husbands/partners drunk most days were two to seven times more likely experience head injuries. Also, women who saw their husband/partner drunk on a weekly basis were most likely to experience permanent injuries and/or disfigurement.

# 2-7

times more likely experience injuries, women who saw their husbands/partners drunk most days.



## Children's Exposure to Domestic Violence

Domestic violence negatively effects on children who are direct and/or indirect victims. The survey revealed 47.7% of women who experienced domestic violence had children age 0-17 living in their households. Women who experienced domestic violence were two times more likely to report their children age 5-17 have frequent nightmares (25.3%), compared to women who were not exposed to domestic violence (9.5%). In addition, women who experienced domestic violence were more likely to report their children age 5-17 wet their bed often (20.4%), are very timid or withdrawn (21.5%) and act aggressive with their mother and/or other children (6.9%), compared to children who were not exposed to domestic violence (6.7%, 7.1% and 1.9% respectively).

## Help-Seeking Behaviours among Battered Women

Only 16.9% of women who 'currently' experienced domestic violence told someone about the violence, and 8.4% sought help for domestic violence; women who 'currently' experienced physical and/or sexual violence were nearly two times more likely to tell someone about the violence (30.8%) and

two times more likely to seek help (18.5%). Most battered women in Albania continue to suffer in silence despite ongoing efforts to raise public awareness about domestic violence and newly created domestic violence legislation and victim support services.

Most women sought help from their own family (98.9%). Some women also sought help from their husband/ partner's family (40.4%) and from informal networks, such as neighbours (11.9%), friends (6.7%) and religious leaders (1.7%). Few women sought help from formal networks, such as police (4.4%), lawyers (3.4%), health workers (3.1%), judges (2.8%), social service agencies (1.6%) and shelters (0.4%). No women sought help from the helpline or local domestic violence coordinators.

The most common reasons for seeking help was because friends and/or family encouraged them to seek help (63.5%), they knew that violence is unacceptable in relationships (62.6%), they could not endure more violence (58.8%), and they were badly injured (43.6%). Although fewer in number, some women sought help because: they saw their children suffering (22.3%); they were afraid their husband/ partner would kill them (9.8%); their husband/partner threatened to kill them (4.9%); their husband/ partner threw them out of the home (4.7%); and, their husband/partner threatened or hit their children (4.3%). In addition, 2.2% of women were afraid they would kill their husband/partner.



**47,8%**

of women who experienced domestic violence did not seek help. The most common reason for not seeking help was because the situation was not serious enough to complain.

Few women who experienced domestic violence (10.0% current, 8.8% ever) and physical and/or sexual violence (18.3% current, 12.1% ever) ever left home, even if for one night because of domestic violence. The number of days they left home ranged from 1 to 20 days, for an average of 2.1 days per women.

The majority of women who experienced domestic violence did not seek help. The most common reason for not seeking help was because the situation was not serious enough to complain (47.8%). Other women did not seek help because: they did not want to bring same to the family (12.0%); they were embarrassed, ashamed or afraid they would not be believed (10.9%); they thought they would be blamed (9.7%); they thought there was no reason to complain because violence is normal (6.8%); they were afraid of divorce or the relationship ending (6.5%); they were afraid of being threatened and the consequences or more violence (6.1%); they were afraid of losing their children (6.0%); they did not know where to ask for help (4.9%); and, they believed it would not help (4.2%).

# Non-partner violence

Among women age 18-74, 18.2% 'ever' and 2.4% 'currently' experienced one or more of four types of non-partner violence since age 15 (by someone other than their husband/ boyfriend). Women were more likely to experience non-partner physical violence (17.3%) than non-partner sexual violence (1.3%).

Among women who 'ever' experienced non-partner physical violence since the age of 15, the majority reported the perpetrator was a mother/step-mother (76.1%) and father/step-father (58.0%). In addition, 35.7% identified the perpetrator as a teacher, and 28.0% identified a sibling (sister/brother). Women identified a variety of other perpetrators, but to a less extent.

Women who experienced non-partner sexual violence since age 15 identified the perpetrators as: classmates/schoolmates (15.1%); teachers (7.1%); friends/acquaintances (5.4%); fathers/step-fathers (5.2%); mothers/step-mothers (4.4%); and, strangers (3.3%).

## Help-Seeking Behaviours for Non-Partner Violence

Among women who experienced non-partner violence, only 6.6% told someone and 4.6% sought help for the violence. Most women sought help from their own family (85.3%). Some women sought help from neighbours (16.6%), their husband/boyfriend's family (15.5%), friends (12.1%) and current/former husbands/ boyfriends (2.6%). Very few women sought help from formal sources, but those who did sought help from the police (8.3%), courts/judges (4.7%), doctors/nurses (2.6%), lawyers (2.2%) and social service agencies (2.2%).

Among women who sought help, the majority sought help because their friends and/or family encouraged them to seek help (70.8%). A significant proportion sought help because they could not endure more violence (45.9%) and they were badly injured (43.9%). Fewer women sought help because what happened to them was not acceptable and a crime (17.4%), because they were afraid (3.5%) and the man who committed the violence threatened their family (3.5%), and the man threatened or tried to kill them (2.2%).

The most common reasons for not seeking help was because the situation was not serious enough to complain (38.1%), because they did not want to bring shame to the family (10.9%), they thought they would be blamed (9.6%), and they were embarrassed, ashamed or afraid they would not be believed (9.0%). Some women maintained there is no reason to complain because violence is normal (7.0%), they didn't know where to ask for help (4.9%), and they believe it would not help (2.7%).



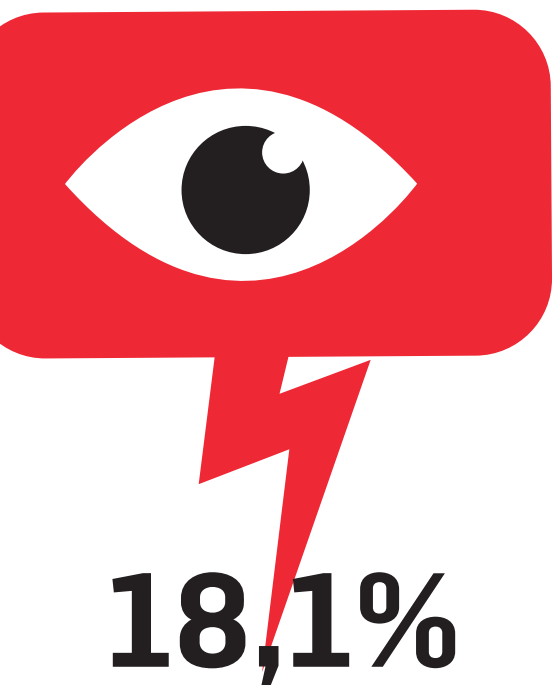
# Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature that constitutes a breach of the principle of equal treatment between men and women. Sexual harassment is a form of sexual abuse and discrimination, and

gender-based violence. The survey found 18.1% of women age 18-74 'ever' and 8.5% 'currently' experienced one or more of the six types of sexual harassment measured. More specifically, women reported someone other than their husband/boyfriend made comments about their body and/or physical appearance that made them feel comfortable, embarrassed or offended (12.2%), and asked them intrusive questions about their sexual, intimate or private life that made them feel uncomfortable, embarrassed or offended (5.9%).

Women also reported someone other than their husband/boyfriend showed or exposed the private parts of their body or 'flashed' their genitals to them against their will (4.5%), and touched, hugged or kissed them in a sexual way without their permissions (4.0%). Far fewer women reported being sent offensive or unwanted sexually explicit emails or text messages and/or inappropriate advances on social network sites (1.9%) and being sent or shown sexually explicit or pornographic pictures, photos or gifts that made them feel uncomfortable, embarrassed or offended (1.4%).

Women age 18-24 (22.2%), 25-34 years (19.7%) and 35-44 years (21.0%) were more likely to ever experience sexual harassment, compared to women 45-54 years (18.0%), 55-64 years (15.9%) and 65-74 years (9.5%). Similarly, women age 18-24 years, 25-34 years and 35-44 years were more likely to experience sexual harassment in the 12 months prior to the survey.



of women age 18-74 'ever' and 8.5% 'currently' experienced one or more of the six types of sexual harassment measured

## Places Where Sexual Harassment Occurs

Most incidents of sexual harassment occurred on roads/streets (82.9%), followed by schools (42.3%), markets/shops (38.3%), in a woman's home (29.1%), in the workplace (25.8%), inside cars, buses and other means of transport (19.9%), bars, restaurants and/or discos/clubs (17.5%), someone else's home (15.7%), fields or natural areas (14.4%), and at the sea, lake, river or other body of water (13.5%). Places where sexual harassment occurred varied by type of harassment.

## Perpetrators of Sexual Harassment

Women reported strangers (79.3%) and friends/acquaintances (51.2%) committed most incidents of sexual harassment, followed by neighbors (33.4%) and classmates/schoolmates (32.6%). Fewer women identified sexual harassers as relatives/family members (16.8%), coworkers (13.8%) and current/former boyfriends (10.1%). One percent or less identified sexual harassers as employers, teachers, police/soldiers and community leaders. Sexual harassment perpetrators vary by type of harassment.

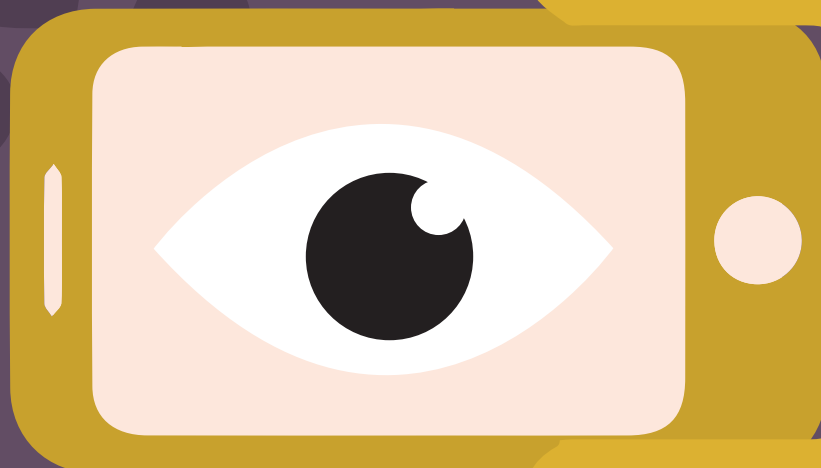
# Stalking

Like intimate partner domestic violence, stalking is a crime of power and control. Stalking is “a course of conduct directed at a specific person that involves repeated (two or more occasions) visual or physical proximity, nonconsensual communication, or verbal, written, or implied threats, or a combination thereof, that would cause a reasonable person fear.” Stalking behaviors may include persistent patterns of leaving or sending the victim unwanted items or presents that may range from seemingly romantic to bizarre, following or lying in wait for the victim, damaging or threatening to damage the victim's property, defaming the victim's character, or harassing the victim via the Internet by posting personal information or spreading rumors about the victim. Stalking may involve acts which are individually innocuous, but combined they are intended to undermine the victim's sense of safety.

The study found that 12.6% of women age 18-74 'ever' and 6.5% 'currently' experienced one or more of six different types of stalking. More specifically, 8.9% of women had someone repeatedly make offensive, threatening or silent phone calls to them, and 4.6% had someone repeatedly send them emails, text messages or messages on social networking websites that were offensive and/or threatening. Only 1.6% of women reported someone repeatedly sent them letters, cards or fits that were unwanted, offensive or threatening, and 1.2% reported someone repeatedly loitered or waited for them outside of their home, workplace, or school without legitimate reason, then deliberately followed you around. Less than one percent of women experienced having someone repeatedly post offensive comments about them on the internet or shared intimate photos or videos of them on social network sites and repeatedly and had someone deliberately damage their property or broke into their home. Women age 18-24 were more likely to experience stalking, compared to women age 25 years and older.

**8,9%**

of women had someone repeatedly  
make offensive, threatening or silent  
phone calls to them



# 97,0%

of women reported their stalkers were strangers, but some women reported they were stalked by classmates/schoolmates, current/former boyfriends, friends/acquaintances, current/former husbands, neighbours, coworkers and employers



## Perpetrators of Stalking

Most women reported their stalkers were strangers (97.0%), but some women reported they were stalked by classmates/schoolmates (14.7%), current/former boyfriends (13.8%), friends/acquaintances (10.8%), current/former husbands (8.9%), neighbours (7.1%), coworkers (3.5%) and employers (2.0%). Fewer than one percent identified their stalker as police/soldiers and relatives/family members. Stalkers varied by type of stalking.



# Ways forward

This study was the third study of VAWG in Albania conducted by INSTAT, which can serve to inform policy responses and action on the ground. This 2018 NVAWS survey findings show that VAW is widespread, but widely under-reported in Albania. Given these findings, VAW cannot be seen as a marginal issue that touches only some women's lives in Albania. VAW affects the majority of women and results in children's exposure to violence in the home.

General considerations as to the ways forward for prevention and responses to VAW include:

- Strengthening policies, action plans and strategies for promoting gender equality, including legislation that protects women and girls from all forms of VAW, including new or newly recognized forms of VAW, such as sexual harassment and stalking, including through new technologies, and forms of VAW that are under-reported by women to police and justice agencies, and victim support organizations.
- The Government of Albania (GoA) is encouraged to implement recommendations for strengthening compliance with the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combatting violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) put forward in the 2017 *GREVIO (Baseline) Evaluation Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) for Albania* which was produced by the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO).
- Policies and national action plans to combat VAW must be developed and/or strengthened on the basis of evidence drawn directly from women's experiences with gender-based violence and using results of this study. Findings from this study can provide evidence for the development of policy responses and actions on the ground. Civil society actors working with VAW survivors should be involved in such work to help ensure that practical results for VAW survivors are sustainable.
- The GoA and civil society actors need to work together on primary prevention with a gender transformative approach to engaging the whole-of-society across different sectors changing social norms related to VAW to improve prevention of VAW.
- The GoA should ensure that funding mechanisms exist to support VAW prevention and intervention programmes and initiatives, which contribute to protection of women and girls from all forms of violence. In particular, funding is needed for the delivery of quality essential services for VAW survivors, and awareness raising as to the range of available victim support services and the rights of women and girls to protection from violence.
- The GoA should signify their commitment to the collection of VAW data on an ongoing and regular basis, by ensuring that funding mechanisms exist to support VAW prevalence studies and collection of administrative and criminal justice data on VAW. The GoA should promote and fund VAW prevalence surveys in a concerted effort to uncover information on women's experiences with intimate partner domestic violence, dating violence, non-partner violence, sexual harassment and stalking. These surveys should be repeated at the least every five years to measure developments over time. Data collection should be supported by INSTAT and relevant expert groups, with continued technical support from international organizations.



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

