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# Issues Paper: Global prevalence of online VAWG

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**Query: What data and evidence exists on the global prevalence of online violence against women and girls (online VAWG)?** Please include data collected by UN agencies, internet intermediaries, research studies, and any other useful sources, and pay particular attention to:

- What differences are there in overall prevalence rates (e.g. by country, region, type of online VAWG, or in relation to specific women and girls?)
- To what extent does it identify targeted harm, gender disinformation, and misogynistic discourse and the broader effects on society, such as democracy, achieving gender goals/roll back of rights, women's political empowerment?
- Where are there gaps in the data and limitations with existing surveys? Please pay particular attention to any gaps in relation to understanding the gendered intersectional nature of the abuse.
- What are the methodological and ethical challenges in collecting data on this issue and ultimately measuring women's and girls' experience of online VAWG?

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## 1. Overview

**Online violence against women and girls (VAWG) continues to be a growing global phenomenon which attracts global attention from policy- and decision-makers**. In 2020, the Generation Equality Action Coalition on Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality included online VAWG within its blueprint for action as part of the Global Acceleration Plan for gender equality.[1] More recently, during the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 66 in 2022, the Global Partnership for Action on Gender-Based Online Harassment and Abuse (the Global Partnership) was launched by the Governments of the US, UK, Australia, Denmark, Republic of Korea and Sweden to help come up with a multi-stakeholder approach to addressing online VAWG.[2]

**However, despite increasing global commitments and attention to the issue of online VAWG, there remain significant gaps in data on the nature, prevalence and impacts of online VAWG.** In particular, data collection on online VAWG is not yet coordinated at regional or global level, which makes measuring and documenting the experiences of women and girls online difficult, and studies measuring online VAWG prevalence use different methods and definitions.[3] Understanding prevalence is critical in ensuring that coordinated and targeted action is taken in relation to the complexity, nature and impacts of online VAWG.

**This issues paper sets out the latest data and evidence on the global prevalence of online VAWG.** It has been developed to inform debate and discussion at a Wilton Park event in August 2022, co-hosted by Wilton Park, the Global Partnership and UN Women, which aims to build a shared agenda on the evidence base for gender-based online harassment and abuse. The paper is based on a rapid mapping of global prevalence data, which used the definition of prevalence set out by UNFPA in the box below. The mapping does not include data on incidence of online VAWG. Some regional examples of prevalence data were identified during the mapping exercise and are included at Annex 2.

**The rapid mapping focused specifically on four key areas of global prevalence data**: variations in prevalence data; the extent to which this data identifies targeted harm, gender disinformation, misogynistic discourse, and the broader effects on society; gaps in the data and limitations with existing surveys; and methodological and ethical challenges. A summary of the key findings in each of these four areas is set out in Section 2 with the detailed mapping set out in Section 3. Due to the size of the query and time limitations, it was not possible to carry out a systematic review of each of these four areas (see Annex 1 for further details about research methodology and limitations for this mapping exercise).

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**Definitions**

**Online VAWG:** There is no standardised definition of online VAWG and this paper uses the broad definition offered by the UN Special Rapporteur on VAWG. This states that Online VAWG is gender-based violence that is perpetrated through electronic communication and the internet: "Online violence against women therefore extends to any act of gender-based violence against women that is committed, assisted or aggravated in part or fully by the use of ICT, such as mobile phones and smartphones, the internet, social media platforms or email, against a woman because she is a woman, or affects women disproportionately."[4]

**Prevalence:** This paper uses the UNFPA definition of prevalence: "The prevalence of violence against women refers to the proportion of women who have experienced violence as part of the population of women 'at risk'. Prevalence rates are thus based on counting people rather than events or incidents… Prevalence estimates usually present the percentage of women who have experienced violence either during the previous 12 months (also sometimes called 'prevalence rate of current violence') or at any time in their life ('prevalence rate of lifetime violence' or 'lifetime prevalence')."[5]

**Incidence:** This paper uses the UNFPA definition of incidence: "In surveys on violence against women, the incidence rate refers to the number of times women experience violent events during a specific period, such as in one year, or lifetime… This is generally measured using categories like 'once', 'a few times' and 'many times', and could be seen as an approximate measure of the incidence rate."[6]

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## 2. Key findings

### 2.1    Variations in prevalence data

**Prevalence data related to online VAWG varies substantially between different studies, which is unsurprising given the different methods and definitions used.** Within one report which synthesised results from various surveys on online VAWG, prevalence ranged from 16% to 58%, varying with the questions asked, locations and demographic features of respondents.[7] Without a standardised methodology and definitions for assessing global prevalence of online VAWG, it is not possible to draw firm and reliable comparisons and conclusions. This includes in relation to prevalence of different types of online VAWG – the reviewed studies include various

types of online VAWG, with a wide range of categorisations and definitions used, which makes it challenging to draw any conclusions on the prevalence of different types of online VAWG. Types of online VAWG that surveys and reviews often focus on include threats of physical and sexual violence, sexual harassment, and stalking. Some also include the non-consensual sharing of private images or videos, which can also be called 'video and image-based abuse'. Other types of online VAWG that appear in several studies include body shaming, cyber-harassment, and insulting language. However, definitions are not always clear, and different studies appear to use different categorisations for similar online 'threats' and 'behaviours', contributing to the lack of consistency and conceptual clarity. For example, some studies single out anti-LGBTQI+ and racist comments, while others measure broader types of online violence such as 'insulting' comments, or 'hate speech'.

**This analysis of prevalence data shows that women who experience multiple discriminations due to the intersecting nature of their identities are more likely to experience online VAWG.** Several reviews found that Black and ethnic minority women, LBTQI+ women, and women with disabilities were at particular risk of online violence.[8] A prevalence study with girls and young women also found that girls and young women who are Black, from an ethnic minority, living with a disability, and who are LGBTQI+ reported that they are specifically targeted for online harassment due to who they are.[9] Other reports have highlighted that young women are at high risk of experiencing online violence due to their frequent use of social media.[10] One survey which included women aged 18-74 found that younger women were more likely to have personally experienced online violence – 45% of women from generation Z and Millennials compared to 31% of Generation X and baby Boomers who took the survey had personally experienced online violence.[11] One study found that more than half of girls (58%) surveyed across 22 countries had experienced online harassment and abuse.[12] The same study found that adolescent girls were less likely than young women to report such experiences as frequent or very frequent, however it highlights that this may not necessarily reflect a difference in prevalence, as it may be that younger girls are less aware of what online harassment and abuse constitutes than older peers.

## 2.2. Targeted harm, gender disinformation, misogynistic discourse, and broader effects on society

**Four out of the nine global prevalence studies included in this mapping referenced the use of targeted online violence, disinformation campaigns and misogynistic discourse.** This tended to be focused on women in public-facing roles such as journalism, politics and activism. An analysis of global prevalence data across different reports found that online violence had been experienced by 73% of women journalists[13] and 44.4% of women in politics.[14] A regional study, which was not included in the main nine studies reviewed, also found that 70% of women activists and human rights defenders has experienced online violence in the Arab States region.[15] The intersectional nature of abuse against women in public-facing roles was also identified in several studies, suggesting that harm is targeted against some women disproportionately (as indicated in section 2.1 above). For example, one study on online violence against women journalists found that the highest rates of online violence were experienced by women journalists identifying as

Black (81%), Indigenous (86%), Jewish (88%), lesbian (88%) and bisexual (85%), as compared to white (64%) and heterosexual (72%) women.[16] Several studies highlighted that gendered disinformation campaigns were used against journalists and women in politics to stop critical reporting and political engagement.[17,18] A study on girls' and young women's experiences of online harassment and abuse found that the targeting of women's activism and opinions start early – 47% of respondents reported that they had been attacked online because of their opinions.[19] Being politically outspoken, especially on feminist and gender equality issues, was seen to 'provoke' backlash and online harassment.

**This analysis of global prevalence data also reveals that online violence has wide-reaching impacts on women and girls, including on their physical and mental health and well-being, and broader effects on their rights and freedoms.** Several studies highlighted that online VAWG increases survivors' risks of mental health issues, including low self-esteem, anxiety and depression.[20] Some studies also highlighted the linkages between online and offline VAWG.[21] For example, one review cited a study in Malawi which found that 53% of women experienced physical abuse exacerbated by online violence, and that 34% were physically harmed as a consequence of it[22] Online VAWG also increases the risk of self-censorship, withdrawal from online spaces, missing school, and missing work. Self-censorship and withdrawal from online spaces is of concern as it shows that online VAWG negatively impacts on women's other human rights and freedoms, including the right to freedom of expression online,[23] and may also negatively impact women's political engagement. One study highlighted that these impacts would undermine democracy, discouraging women and girls from engaging in politics and shifting the focus of women politicians away from the political to the personal, reducing time to engage on substantive issues.[24] Another study described the silencing effect this has on women.[25] Research with young women has also highlighted the impacts of online VAWG on education and employment - 18% of young women and girls globally who have been subjected to online VAWG have since experienced challenges at school, and 7% faced challenges finding and keeping jobs.[26] While it is difficult to estimate the economic impacts on society from online VAWG it is likely to be substantial. One piece of research for the European Parliament, estimates that it amounts to €49.0 to €89.3 billion per year among EU countries.[27]

## 2.3    Gaps and limitations

**This issues paper has identified particular gaps in understanding targeted harm, broader effects of online violence, and the intersectional nature of the abuse experienced.** The majority of reports did not go into detail about targeted harm, gender disinformation and misogynistic discourse, even if they did make some references to this. Instead, they tended to focus on quantifying the extent of abuse rather than the drivers and causes of abuse. Those which did focus on these issues highlighted overarching themes of power and control, and heteronormative expectations around gender roles and sexual practice. While the majority of reports referenced the broader impacts of online VAWG on society and on the intersectional

nature of the abuse, this was not universally the case, and more understanding is needed about prevalence to inform a more nuanced understanding about impacts.

The prevalence data mapped for this paper comes primarily from three different sources: civil society, the UN and research organisations, many of which rely on survey data. This indicates **there are gaps in sources of data in relation to official government statistics and data published by internet intermediaries**. As this was a review of global prevalence data, official government statistics were not included as there is no global database of official government statistics. It is worth noting that in some countries government data is available, however these statistics should be treated with caution as under-reporting of online VAWG is a significant issue, and official repots only tend to capture illegal activity (which itself comes with issues classifying an offense or crime).[28] In addition, whilst attempts were made to look at data published by internet intermediaries, none of the reports published met the selection criteria for inclusion (see Annex 1 for further details). It is worth noting that reports or user requests to internet intermediaries are potentially an important and reliable source of data for understanding the prevalence of online VAWG. However, to our knowledge, no company has published comprehensive disaggregated data in this area, including gender disaggregated data, and where companies have published data on their actions against abusive content it is unclear how prevalent this is in relation to overall content (as platforms tend not to share how much content they host). There are calls for technology companies to provide more transparent data on online harms, including online VAWG, in relation to country-specific disaggregation and more disaggregation on the types of online violence, target groups and perpetrators, as well as calls to introduce standardised reporting across platforms to allow for comparisons.[29]

## 2.4    Methodological and ethical challenges

The mapping for this issues paper has identified four key methodological challenges related to the collection of global prevalence data on online VAWG. **First, prevalence data is unlikely to be representative of the actual population.** This is because many surveys use 'purposive' sampling rather than 'representative' sampling techniques to avoid illegitimate or inauthentic responses. **Second, attempts to estimate global – and indeed regional - prevalence face difficulty because of the reliance on country-specific surveys which use different research methods and definitions**, which makes comparison and aggregation challenging and potentially unreliable. Since prevalence data does not exist for all countries, 'global' prevalence data will be disproportionately focused on countries where studies have been conducted. **Third, there is an absence of comprehensive disaggregated data, meaning that global prevalence data lacks nuance which presents challenges in interpreting the data.** For example, some studies do not disaggregate data by country, type of violence or respondent's socio-economic or identity characteristics, including those related to age, race, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, or ethnicity. **Finally, these studies provide a "snapshot" of prevalence at a particular time rather than rigorously measured data over a period of time.** Only a few studies explicitly stated ethical challenges related to their research methodology. Those which did, highlighted risks to **researcher and respondent safety, trauma and emotional fatigue.**

# 3. Mapping of global prevalence data and evidence

## 3.1 Data collected by UN agencies

| The Chilling: Global Trends on Violence against Women Journalists, UNESCO | |
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| Description | This UNESCO-commissioned study is part of a broader global study on online violence against women journalists produced by the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ). |
| Timeframe | 2020-2021 |
| Geographic coverage | Global, but with 15 detailed country case studies (Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Lebanon, Tunisia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Poland, Serbia, UK, US, Sweden, Brazil and Mexico) |
| Methods used | • A global survey of 901 journalists from 125 countries<br>• Interviews with 173 international journalists, editors, and experts in the fields of freedom of expression, human rights law, and digital safety<br>• 2 big data case studies assessing over 2.5 million posts on Facebook and Twitter directed at two prominent women journalists (Maria Ressa in the Philippines and Carole Cadwalladr in the UK)<br>• 15 detailed country case studies<br>• A literature review covering hundreds of scholarly and civil society research publications. |
| Type of online VAWG covered | Gendered online violence against women journalists covering:<br>• Misogynistic harassment, abuse and threats<br>• Digital privacy and security breaches that increase physical risks associated with online violence<br>• Coordinated disinformation campaigns leveraging misogyny and other forms of hate speech. |
| Data on overall prevalence rates | • 73% of survey respondents identifying as women said they had experienced online violence<br>• 25% had received threats of physical violence (including death threats)<br>• 18% had received threats of sexual violence<br>• 13% had received threats of violence against those close to them, including children and infants<br>• 20% had been attacked or abused offline in connection with online violence they had experienced, with rates being much higher for Arab women (53%) |
| Data on targeted harm, gender disinformation and | • 41% of survey respondents said they had been targeted in online attacks that appeared to be linked to orchestrated disinformation campaigns<br>• The study highlights disinformation as a 'multi-pronged and intersecting threat', with the weaponisation of false and misleading content being both a method |

| misogynistic discourse | of attack and a lightening rod for further attacks. Orchestrated disinformation also operationalised gendered online violence to stop critical reporting. |
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| Data on broader effects on society | The study notes that 30% of women-journalists self-censored online, and 20% withdrew completely, so there may be further impacts in terms of critical reporting of social issues. |
| Data on intersectional nature of abuse | • The highest rates of online violence were experienced by women journalists identifying as Black (81%), Indigenous (86%), Jewish (88%), lesbian (88%) and bisexual (85%), as compared to white (64%) and heterosexual (72%) women. <br> • See also big data case study on Maria Ressa |
| Further information | Posetti, J., Shabbir, N., Maynard, D., Bontcheva, K. and Aboulez, N. (2021). *The Chilling: Global Trends in Online Violence against Women Journalists,* Paris: UNESCO |

| **Making all spaces safe: technology-facilitated gender-based violence, UNFPA** | |
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| Description | This report by UNFPA was written to foster greater understanding of how technological innovation and digitalisation have opened the door to new forms of gender-based violence (GBV). This report draws on other studies as part of this research, including some examined in this issue paper. |
| Timeframe | Not specified |
| Geographic coverage | Global |
| Methods used | • No methodology detailed. This report appears to be based on a desk review examining secondary evidence. |
| Type of online VAWG covered | Gendered online violence against women, including: <br><br> • Insulting language <br> • Body shaming <br> • Threats of sexual and physical violence <br> • Sexual harassment <br> • Stalking |
| Data on overall prevalence rates | • 38% of women with internet access have personally experienced online violence <br> • 63% of women known someone who has been subjected to online violence <br> • 85% of women have witnessed online violence being perpetrated against another women <br> • 41.8% of women in politics had seen comments with sexual, defamatory or humiliating connotations of themselves spread through social media. |

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| | • 44.4% of women in politics had received threats of physical violence during their parliamentary term. |
| Data on targeted harm, gender disinformation and misogynistic discourse | No information included |
| Data on broader effects on society | • Online violence exacerbates, triggers and drives offline physical and sexual violence. A survey in Malawi found that 53% of women experienced physical abuse exacerbated by online violence. 34.3% of women were physically harmed as a result of online violence.<br>• Sexualised forms of technology facilitated gender-based violence have led to honour-related violence against those women in some anecdotal cases.<br>• Technology facilitated gender-based violence can lead to emotional and psychological distress, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicidal thoughts, self-harm and suicide attempts.<br>• Women and girls who have experienced online violence report a deterioration of their relationships, lack of trust and feelings of fear.<br>• Women who have been subjected to online violence or who have witnessed this tend to decrease their participation and engagement with technology, self-censoring their content.<br>• 18% of young women and girls globally who have been subjected to technology facilitated gender-based violence have since experienced challenges at school.<br>• 7% of young women and girls globally who had experienced technology facilitated gender-based violence faced challenges finding and keeping jobs.<br>• Online violence serves as a barrier to using online and digital spaces, services, education and employment. |
| Data on intersectional nature of abuse | • 58% of women and girls aged 15-25 years old had experienced online harassment, linked to the higher and more frequent use of social media by younger people.<br>• 80% of images of cases of child sexual abuse materials are of girls aged 11-13 years old.<br>• As many as 58% of young women and adolescents have been harassed online, according to a study by Plan International. 85% of these young women had experienced multiple types of violence.<br>• Many girls who identify as part of an ethnic minority, having a diverse sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and those with a disability said they were harassed online because of this. |

| | • Women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions, and Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic (BAME) individuals are more likely to be subjected to different forms of technology facilitated gender-based violence. |
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| Further information | UNFPA (2021) *Making all spaces safe: technology-facilitated gender-based violence.* UNFPA |

| **Online and ICT facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19, UN Women** | |
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| Description | This report by UN Women was written to foster greater understanding of how ICT-facilitated gender-based violence has increased during COVID-19 |
| Timeframe | Not specified |
| Geographic coverage | Global but specific mentions of Canada, France, United States and Pakistan |
| Methods used | No methodology detailed but this brief appears to be based on a desk review examining secondary evidence |
| Type of online VAWG covered | • Physical threats<br>• Sexual harassment<br>• Stalking<br>• Zoom-bombing<br>• Sex trolling |
| Data on overall prevalence rates | • One in five women in Canada reported experiencing online harassment in 2018<br>• 15% of women in France in 2018 said they had experienced cyber harassment<br>• In the United States in 2017, women were twice as likely to report being targeted online as a result of their gender<br>• 1 in 10 women within the European Union report having experienced cyber-harassment since the age of 15.<br>• In Pakistan, in 2017, 40% of women reported facing various forms of harassment on the internet. |
| Data on targeted harm, gender disinformation and misogynistic discourse | No information included |

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| Data on broader effects on society | • The report highlights the impact of online GBV on psychological, social and reproductive health for women. It also often leads to offline violence against women.<br>• Online GBV acted as a barrier to women survivors' access to online services during COVID-19, with women survivors limiting their use of the internet following instances of violence.<br>• Survivors of online GBV also reduce their presence online following instances of online violence, demonstrating how online GBV acts to silence women in the political space.<br>• The economic cost of online violence is high, especially where reliance on the internet is increasing. In Australia, online abuse costs the economy up to 3.7 billion dollars. |
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| Data on intersectional nature of abuse | • LBTQI+ women, ethnic minorities and indigenous communities tend to be targeted more through online discrimination and hate speech, often causing them to withdraw from online debates and to self-censor. |
| Further information | UN Women (2020) *Online and ICT facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19.* UN Women. |

## 3.2 Data collected by civil society and research studies

| **Global evidence on the prevalence and impact of online gender-based violence (OGBV), Hicks, J.** | |
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| Description | This rapid review updates a previous report (Fraser and Martineau-Searle, 2018) with evidence from 2018 onwards. Two global and one multi-country (in the same region) studies were covered by the synthesis, which are also mapped separately in this report:<br>• Iyer et al (2020), *Alternate realities, alternate internets: African feminist research for a feminist internet*<br>• Plan International (2020), *Free to be online? Girls' and young women's experiences of online harassment*<br>• WWWF and Girls Guides (2020), *Survey - Young people's experience of online harassment* |
| Timeframe | New evidence included covers the period 2018 and onwards. |
| Geographic coverage | Global |
| Methods used | Desk-based research. Studies included cover a range of methods used, including face-to-face surveys; online surveys; and telephone interviews. |

| Type of online VAWG covered | Includes studies on various types of online VAWG, which is covered under the umbrella terms 'online GBV', 'cyber violence against women and girls', and 'technology-facilitated GBV'. |
|---|---|
| Data on overall prevalence rates | • Most recent surveys included show a prevalence of online GBV ranging from 16% to 58% depending on the questions asked, and the demographic features of respondents such as age and gender.<br><br>• Difficult to synthesise the overall prevalence of different types of VAWG based on multiple studies as these use different definitions, categorisations and measurements. However, an overall pattern of high levels of sexualised harassment faced by women and girls emerges across all the studies. |
| Data on targeted harm, gender disinformation and misogynistic discourse | • Analysis of underlying drivers highlights an overarching theme of power and control, and heteronormative expectations around gender roles and sexual practice<br><br>• Women political leaders say gendered disinformation campaigns discourage women from political involvement, and evidence indicates that women who speak about political issues face higher rates of harassment online<br><br>• A 'climate of unsafety' prevails, with strong evidence on the integration of online and offline gender-based violence<br><br>• Perpetrators are more likely to be unknown and acting alone, but large numbers are also known to the survivors<br><br>• Perpetrators report divergent, multifaceted and often over-lapping motivations for their actions. A survey with perpetrators of image-based sexual abuse online in the UK, New Zealand, and Australia noted that the motivations were underpinned by "perpetrator performances of celebrated forms of masculinity, and culturally specific and heteronormative expectations around gender roles, sexuality and sexual practice" (see Henry et al., 2020)<br><br>• The same study also argues image-based online abuse is part of the contemporary digital society, which includes an obsession with realism and visuality, and a commodification of digital content and users, normalising the non-consensual taking and sharing of nude and/or sexual images. |
| Data on broader effects on society | • Existing research highlights how online VAWG against women who are politically engaged leads to self-censorship, which may have further impacts on women's political engagement and wider media freedoms. This is noted to have widespread consequences in terms of undermining democracy, as online violence against female leaders and politicians may discourage other girls and women from engaging in politics, and that it shifts away the discourse surrounding female politicians from the political to the personal – leading to women politicians having less time and energy to focus on substantive issues.<br><br>• Linkages are drawn between online GBV and offline GBV, which together creates 'climates of unsafety' for women and girls<br><br>• Difficult to estimate the economic impacts on society from online GBV, but that it is likely to be substantial. The study identified one piece of research for the European Parliament which has attempted to estimate the costs if online |

| | GBV – which according to the study amount to €49.0 to €89.3 billion per year among EU countries (see Lomba et al, 2021). |
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| Data on intersectional nature of abuse | • Higher levels of online harassment and abuse are faced by people who face intersecting inequalities (women of colour, LGBTQ+ people, women with disabilities), women in abusive intimate partner relationships, women in marginal social locations, and women in leadership positions (e.g. politicians, human rights defenders and journalists) |
| Further information | Hicks, J. (2021). *Global evidence on the prevalence and impact of online gender-based violence*. K4D Helpdesk Report. Institute of Development Studies. |

| **Free to be online? Girls' and young women's experiences of online harassment, Plan International** | |
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| Description | The 2020 report on girls' experiences of being online on social media platforms is the third in a new series that each year will examine the behaviours, attitudes and beliefs that limit girls' freedom and opportunities in specific environments or sectors. |
| Timeframe | 2020 |
| Geographic coverage | • 22 countries quantitative data - Australia, Benin, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Germany, Ghana, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, Spain, Thailand, USA, Zambia. <br> • 16 countries qualitative data (in-depth interviews with 18 young female activists from 16 countries) |
| Methods used | For the quantitative survey, data was collected using a closed question survey with 16 questions that asked girls about their social media use, their experience of online harassment, the consequences of online harassment and possible solutions to it. The survey was administered online and via computer-assisted telephone interviews. Respondents were girls and young women aged 15-25. |
| Type of online VAWG covered | See types of online harassment below |
| Data on overall prevalence rates | • More than half of girls surveyed have been harassed and abused online - Across all 22 survey countries, 58% of girls reported that they have personally experienced some form of online harassment on social media platforms <br> • There were only minor regional differences: in Europe 63% of girls reported harassment, followed by 60% of girls in Latin America, 58% in the Asia-Pacific region, 54% in Africa, and 52% in North America <br><br> Different types of harassment online against girls: <br> • 32% reported experiencing stalking <br> • 39% reported experiencing body shaming <br> • 21% reported receiving threats of physical violence |

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| | • 41% had experienced purposeful embarrassment<br>• 26% reported experiencing anti-LGBTIQ+ comments<br>• 37% reported experiencing sexual harassment<br>• 39% reported experiencing threats of sexual violence<br>• 29% reported experiencing racist comments |
| Data on targeted harm, gender disinformation and misogynistic discourse | Among the girls who were targeted because of their opinions/ activism, they reported that the attacks aim to diminish their credibility and knowledge of an issue or to try to silence them altogether – i.e. sending a message that girls should not speak about certain topics. Girls reported that they were particularly targeted when speaking out about feminist and gender equality issues. Girls connected the harassment they face online to wider gender norms that dictate social expectations on girls and how they should behave, which is being used to justify harassment when girls move outside 'acceptable' behaviour. They connected this to entrenched ideas about male superiority, |
| Data on broader effects on society | The most commonly reported effects of the online harassment was feeling afraid, uncomfortable or unsafe, followed by feeling upset, anxious or depressed. These effects on girls can have far reaching impacts on societies, including the freedom of speech and social and political life, as the research indicates that girls start censoring themselves and changing the way they express themselves and their opinions. Girls who were activists and engaged on feminist and gender equality issues are particularly targeted, which shows that the discouragement of women to engage politically and on social issues starts early.<br>• 18% of girls who face very frequent harassment stop posting content that expresses their opinion<br>• 16% of girls who face very frequent harassment change the way they express themselves in order to avoid harassment. |
| Data on intersectional nature of abuse | • Young age – most girls report their first experience of social media harassment between the ages of 14-16.<br>• However, young women were more likely than adolescent girls to report frequent or very frequent harassment. This is despite the fact that adolescent girls use social media more often. The report notes that this does not necessarily mean that they adolescent girls are harassed less frequently but could also suggest that they are less aware of what harassment constitutes than their older peers<br>• Girls reported that they were targeted for online violence because they are black, living with a disability, and being LGBTIQ+: 42% of girls who identified as LGBTIQ+ and had experienced online harassment, said that they get harassed because of being LGBTIQ+; 14% who self-identified as having a disability and had experienced online harassment said they get harassed because of it; 37% girls who identified themselves as from an ethnic minority and had experienced online harassment said they get harassed because of it.<br>• Being politically outspoken and being an activist, especially on feminist or gender equality issues was seen to provoke backlash and online harassment: 47% of interview respondents reported being attacked for their opinions. |

| Further information | Plan International. (2020). *Free to be online? Girls' and young women's experiences of online harassment*. Surrey, UK: Plan International. |
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## Survey - Young people's experience of online harassment, World Wide Web Foundation & World Association of Girl Guides and Girls Scouts

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| Description | Global survey of young people's experience of online abuse and harassment, conducted in February 2020. Conducted by the World Wide Web Foundation & World Association of Girl Guides and Girls Scouts using UNICEF's Ureport platform. |
| Timeframe | 2020 |
| Geographic coverage | 180 countries |
| Methods used | UNICEF's Ureport platform – a digital platform that can collect opinions and information from children and adolescents who are registered on the platform through a text message tool. 8109 children and young people responded to the survey (49% male and 51% female). Respondents ages were distributed as follows: 0-14 (1%); 15-19 (20%); 20-24 (40%); 25-30 (24%); 31-34 (5%); and 35+ (9%). |
| Type of online VAWG covered | Online abuse, including threating messages, sexual harassment and the sharing of private images without consent. |
| Data on overall prevalence rates | • 52% of young women and girls have experienced online abuse, including threating messages, sexual harassment and the sharing of private images without consent |
| Data on targeted harm, gender disinformation and misogynistic discourse | No information included |
| Data on broader effects on society | No information included |
| Data on intersectional nature of abuse | No information included |
| Further information | World Wide Web Foundation & World Association of Girl Guides and Girls Scouts (2020) Survey - Young people's experience of online harassment, UNICEF, Ureport |

## Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women, Economist Intelligence Unit

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| Description | Global survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), supported by Jigsaw. The study measures the prevalence of online violence against women globally. |

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| Timeframe | 2020 |
| Geographic coverage | The study analyses the 51 countries with the largest number of persons online, based on internet penetration rates. The survey measuring prevalence was implemented in 45 countries. It was not possible to run the survey in 6 countries, instead, prevalence data estimates were developed for these countries based on expert interviews and modelled data from comparable countries. |
| Methods used | A multinational survey; country-specific estimation models; extensive literature reviews and expert interviews. The survey included adult women (aged between 18-74), with access to the internet. What the study describes as 'overall prevalence' is an estimate based on modelling, which includes factors such as the prevalence of the measured threat tactics; number of women with access to the internet; and active mobile phone subscriptions in the country. The prevalence data based on survey results only is referred to as the 'raw prevalence'. |
| Type of online VAWG covered | Building on the UN's Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women definition of online violence against women, the study defines and analyses nine 'threat tactics': <br><br> • Astroturfing: A coordinated effort to concurrently share damaging content across platforms <br><br> • Cyber-harassment: Repeated behaviour using textual or graphical content to frighten and undermine self-esteem <br><br> • Doxing: posting personal real-world information such as addresses to perpetuate violence <br><br> • Hacking and stalking <br><br> • Hate speech: Sexist or hateful language designed to attack or humiliate <br><br> • Impersonation: Creating a false online presence in someone else's name <br><br> • Misinformation and defamation: Spreading rumours and slander to discredit or damage a woman's character <br><br> • Video- and image-based abuse: Sharing private images or video with malicious intent <br><br> • Violent threats: Threats of physical harms through online channels |
| Data on overall prevalence rates | The study estimates the global overall prevalence of online violence against women to be 85% (it should be noted that this is an estimation based on data modelling and does not refer to the 'raw' prevalence data based from the global survey). <br><br> The global survey found the following 'raw' prevalence of women's personal experiences of different threat tactics: <br><br> • Astroturfing: 58% <br><br> • Cyber-harassment: 66% <br><br> • Doxing: 55% <br><br> • Hacking and stalking: N/A <br><br> • Hate speech: 65% <br><br> • Impersonation: 63% <br><br> • Misinformation and defamation: 67% |

| | • Video- and image-based abuse: 57%<br>• Violent threats: 52% |
|---|---|
| Data on targeted harm, gender disinformation and misogynistic discourse | No information included |
| Data on broader effects on society | The survey also found that 1 in 3 women think twice before posting content online – indicating that online violence against women may lead to self-censoring and discourage women from voicing their opinions online. |
| Data on intersectional nature of abuse | Younger women in the survey were more likely to have personally experienced online violence: 45% of women from generation Z and Millennials compared to 31% of Generation X and baby Boomers have personally experienced online violence. |
| Further information | Economist Intelligence Unit (2021). *Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women*. Economist Intelligence Unit.<br><br>Further information about the methodology can be found in the methodology of the report "Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women". |

| **Children's experiences of online sexual exploitation and abuse in 12 countries in eastern and southern Africa and southeast Asia, UNICEF** | |
|---|---|
| Description | The research was conducted from 2019 to 2022 in six countries in East Asia Pacific (Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam) and seven countries in Eastern and Southern Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda). The study collected data from girls and boys, however, only disaggregated data for girls is included here for the purposes of the query. |
| Timeframe | 2019-2022 |
| Geographic coverage | Phillipines, Uganda, Mozambique, Kenya, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Thailand, Namibia, Malaysia, Tanzania, Indonesia, Vietnam. |
| Methods used | Nationally representative household survey with internet-using children (12-17 year olds) and their caregivers. The survey questionnaire used for Disrupting Harm was adapted from the Global Kids Online survey, which has already been used in over 30 countries around the globe. Additional modules were developed specifically for the *Disrupting Harm* project that focused on children's experiences of different forms of violence. |
| Type of online VAWG covered | The survey measured the following types of online sexual exploitation and abuse of children: |

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|---|---|
| | • Someone offered you money or gifts online in return for sexual images or videos;<br>• Someone offered you money or gifts to meet them in person to do something sexual;<br>• Someone shared sexual images of you without your consent;<br>• Someone threatened or blackmailed you online to engage in sexual activities. |
| Data on overall prevalence rates | Among girls aged 12-17, the prevalence of having experienced at least one form of clear online sexual exploitation and abuse (as defined above) within the year prior to the survey was:<br>• Philippines: 19%<br>• Uganda: 20,6%<br>• Mozambique: 15,6%<br>• Kenya: 11,2%<br>• Cambodia: 9,2%<br>• Ethiopia: 8.8%<br>• Thailand: 9,5%<br>• Namibia: 9,7%<br>• Malaysia: 4%<br>• Tanzania: 3,1%<br>• Indonesia: 2,3%<br>• Vietnam: 0,9% |
| Data on targeted harm, gender disinformation and misogynistic discourse | No information included |
| Data on broader effects on society | No information included |
| Data on intersectional nature of abuse | No information included |
| Further information | UNICEF (2022) *Children's experiences of online sexual exploitation and abuse in 12 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa and Southeast Asia.* UNICEF<br><br>Global Kids Online (2022) *Online sexual exploitation and abuse: new findings.* Global Kids Online. |

| Amnesty and Ipsos Poll on Online Abuse and Harassment | |
|---|---|
| Description | Amnesty International commissioned a poll which looked at the experiences of online abuse against women between the ages of 18 and 55 in eight countries. |
| Timeframe | 2017 |
| Geographic coverage | Denmark, Italy, New Zealand, Poland, Spain, Sweden, the UK and USA. |
| Methods used | The research was carried out by Ipsos MORI, using an online quota survey of 500 women aged 18-55 in each country, via the Ipsos Online Panel system. The survey sample in each country was designed to be nationally representative of women in that country. All in all, 4,000 women across 8 countries were surveyed. |
| Type of online VAWG covered | Online abuse and harassment. This is not clearly defined but included threats of physical or sexual assault and so-called doxxing. |
| Data on overall prevalence rates | • Nearly a quarter (23%) of the women surveyed across the eight countries reported that they had experienced online abuse or harassment at least once, ranging from 16% in Italy to 33% in the US. <br> • Between one-fifth (19% in Italy) and one-quarter of women who had experienced abuse or harassment said it had included threats of physical or sexual assault. <br> • 26% of women who had experienced online abuse or harassment across all countries surveyed said personal or identifying details of them had been shared online (known as "doxxing"). |
| Data on targeted harm, gender disinformation and misogynistic discourse | Across all countries, just under half (46%) of women responding to the survey who had experienced online abuse or harassment said it was misogynistic or sexist in nature. |
| Data on broader effects on society | The study captured the impact of online abuse and violence on women (including lower self-esteem, stress and anxiety) and describes that it has a 'silencing effect' on women and marginalised groups, and is to be considered a direct threat to freedom of expression as it leads women to step back from critical public conversations and self-censoring. Over three quarters (76%) of women who said that they had experienced abuse or harassment on a social media platform made changes to how they use the platforms – including restricting what they post about. 32% of women said they had stopped posting content that expressed their opinion on certain issues. |
| Data on intersectional nature of abuse | 58% of survey participants across all countries who had experienced online abuse or harassment said it had included racism, sexism, homophobia or transphobia. |
| Further information | Amnesty International (2017) *Amnesty reveals alarming impact of online abuse against women.* Amnesty International |

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# 4. Methodological and ethical challenges

## 4.1 Methodological challenges

The mapping carried out for this issues paper has identified four key methodological challenges related to the collection of global prevalence data on online VAWG.

1.  **Many of the surveys reviewed for this report do not use representative sampling**. Some surveys, such as the ICTJ's survey of women journalists used a 'purposeful' rather than a 'representative' sampling approach.[30] In order to avoid illegitimate or inauthentic responses, this survey was distributed digitally via closed networks. Therefore, the findings of this survey may not be representative of the population.

2.  **Where studies have attempted to estimate global or regional prevalence of online VAWG, they often draw on data from country-specific surveys.** National level surveys and databases measure prevalence of online VAWG differently and use different definitions, which results in comparisons between countries and aggregation at regional and global level difficult and potentially unreliable. Since not all countries have prevalence data on online VAWG, global or regional prevalence data will be disproportionately focused on the experiences reported in those countries where studies have been conducted.

3.  **Due to the absence of comprehensive disaggregated data, global prevalence data lacks nuance which presents challenges in interpreting the data.** For example, some studies do not disaggregate by country, type of violence, or respondent's socio-economic or identify characteristics, including those related to age, race, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, or ethnicity, and use different definitions, group behaviour differently, or target respondents differently. Understanding how online violence impacts certain groups differently will have important implications for policy and programme design around preventing and responding to online VAWG.

4.  **Most studies and surveys are not conducted on a regular basis and only provide a "snapshot" of prevalence at a particular time rather than rigorously measured data over a period of time.** Ideally, studies and surveys would be conducted on a regular basis and measured over time to allow for the collection of longitudinal data for a deeper understanding on how prevalence changes and to facilitate more meaningful analysis and interpretation of data.

## 4.2 Ethical challenges

This report found that only a few studies explicitly stated ethical challenges related to their research methodology. However, of those which did reference ethical challenges, the main risk highlighted related to **researcher and respondent safety, trauma and emotional fatigue.** For example, surveys that ask people to recount their experiences related to online violence can contribute to re-victimisation and re-traumatisation of respondents.[31]

## Annex 1: Research methodology and limitations

This rapid research query has been conducted as systematically as possible, under tight time constraints. A total of nine reports have been included in the main body of this report, with an additional four included in Annex 2 on regional prevalence.

**Step 1: Search** – Literature was identified primarily through searches conducted using Google and relevant electronic databases using key search terms including but not restricted to: online violence against women and girls, online VAWG, online GBV, online gender based violence, AND prevalence, data, research, studies AND global, multi-country, AND impacts, journalists, politicians, public figures, activists, human rights defenders. A number of resources were shared by FCDO for the purposes of this query.

**Step 2: Inclusion** - To be eligible for inclusion in this rapid mapping, reports had to fulfil the following criteria:
- **Focus:** Research highlighting global or multi-country prevalence of online violence against women and girls. Regional studies/surveys were not included in the focus, however a number were found during the mapping and are presented in Annex 2. Data on violence against children was only included if it was disaggregated to draw out violence against girls.
- **Time period:** From January 2010 to present.
- **Language:** English.
- **Publication status:** Publicly available – in almost all cases published online
- **Geographic focus:**  Global
- **Format:** Civil society reports, research reports, survey data, peer-reviewed journal articles, systematic reviews
- **Study design:** All study types, designs, and methodologies including primary and secondary studies with clear methodologies to enable an assessment of quality

**Step 3: Focus in on the 4 main areas of enquiry** within global prevalence data studies:

- Differences in overall prevalence rates;
- Extent to which data identifies targeted harm, gender disinformation, misogynistic discourse and the broader effects on society;
- Gaps in the data and limitations with existing surveys;
- Methodological and ethical challenges in collecting data

It was not possible to carry out a systematic review of these four areas in the timeframe. In addition, whilst attempts were made to look at data published by internet intermediaries, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google, Porn Hub and Mind Geek, no data was found that met the above criteria for inclusion. Searches looked at transparency reporting – only a few companies provide statistics on online abuse and no data reviewed was gender disaggregated.

## Annex 2: Regional prevalence data and evidence

This rapid research query focused on global prevalence data, however a number of regional prevalence surveys and studies were also identified which have been included here.

| Violence against women in the online space: insights from a multi-country study in the Arab States, UN ROAS. | |
|---|---|
| Description | UN Women ROAS produced this study to understand the impact and consequences of online violence on women and girls in the Arab States. |
| Timeframe | 2021 |
| Geographic coverage | 14 countries across the Arab States |
| Methods used | <ul><li>Quantitative web-based survey with a sample size of 11,497 respondents (4,187 women). The questionnaire included 22 questions for all respondents and 38 questions depending on skip logic and country. This survey was available in Arabic, English and French. During analysis, weighting was applied to adjust for age, sex and educational attainment.</li><li>Qualitative research on experiences of online violence through the lens of Civil Society Organisations, women activists and service providers. This research involved a mixed methods approach. An online survey was administered to 67 civil society organisations and 90 women activists and human rights defenders across 14 countries. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were also held with civil society organisations and service providers in the region.</li></ul> |
| Type of online VAWG covered | <ul><li>Harassment</li><li>Offline violence linked to online violence</li><li>Receiving unwanted sexually explicit content</li><li>Insulting messages</li><li>Direct sexual blackmail</li><li>Annoying phone calls, inappropriate or unwelcome communication</li></ul> |
| Data on overall prevalence rates | <ul><li>60% of women who have experienced online violence and who reported exposure in the last year. The most common form of violence was receiving unwanted images or sexually explicit content (43%) followed by inappropriate or unwelcome communication (38%), receiving insulting or hateful messages (35%) and direct sexual blackmail (22%).</li><li>44% of women who had experienced online violence experienced it multiple times.</li><li>The largest share of women who experienced online violence were subjected to this on Facebook (43%) followed by Instagram (16%) and Whatsapp (11%).</li></ul> |

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| | • 44% of women who experienced online violence in the past year reported that this incident moved offline.<br>• Women and girls who had experienced online violence in the past year were 27% more likely to have deactivated or deleted their accounts, or to have missed school or work because of the incident than women whose experience of violence did not occur this year.<br>• 70% of women's rights activists and human rights defenders reported receiving unwanted images or symbols with sexual content, 62% reported receiving insulting and/or hateful messages, and 58% reported receiving annoying phonecalls and inappropriate or unwelcome communication. |
| Data on targeted harm, gender disinformation and misogynistic discourse | No information included |
| Data on broader effects on society | • 70% of women activists and human rights defenders reported feeling unsafe online.<br>• 35% of women who experienced online violence reported feeling "sad/depressed", 35% reported they had "lost trust in the people around them" and 12% said they had suicidal thoughts following an incident.<br>• Over 22% of women who experienced online violence deleted or deactivated their accounts.<br>• Over 26% of women who experienced online violence reported being careful about what they put online. |
| Data on intersectional nature of abuse | No information included |
| Further information | UN Women (2021) *Violence against women in the online space: insights from a multi-country study in the Arab States.* UN Women. |

| Alternate realities, alternate internets: African feminist research for a feminist internet, Iyer et al. | |
|---|---|
| Description | This research explores the online lived experiences of women living in five sub-Saharan African countries, highlighting how online violence impacts how they navigate and utilise the internet. |

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| Timeframe | 2020 |
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| Geographic coverage | Addis Ababa, Nairobi, Kampala, Dakar, Johannesburg |
| Methods used | <ul><li>Semi-structured quantitative survey with 3306 women aged 18-65 that access and use the internet were interviewed once a week face-face.</li><li>Focus group discussions with 10 women and five in-depth interviews with women who self-reported as having experienced online gender based violence</li><li>Convenient sampling was used to identify respondents for the quantitative survey. Purposive sampling was used to select participants for the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The cities were chosen for the survey based on the high density of internet users and cost implications for the study design.</li></ul> |
| Type of online VAWG covered | <ul><li>Sexual harassment</li><li>Online stalking</li><li>Doxing</li><li>Organised attacks</li></ul> |
| Data on overall prevalence rates | <ul><li>28% of women had been a victim of online gender-based violence</li><li>36% had experienced sexual harassment; 26.7% had experienced online stalking such as repeated contact or doxing.</li></ul> |
| Data on targeted harm, gender disinformation and misogynistic discourse | <ul><li>23% of cases involved multiple perpetrators. Organised attacks, especially against women with public-facing careers including journalists, activists and politicians are on the rise.</li></ul> |
| Data on broader effects on society | <ul><li>In Senegal 53% of women who experienced online violence reported mental stress and anxiety; in Ethiopia, 20.4% reported problems with friends and family, 14% reported damage to reputation and 9.2% reported problems at their workplace.</li><li>14.5% of women deleted or deactivated their accounts while 12.2% stopped using a digital service after experiencing online violence.</li></ul> |
| Data on intersectional nature of abuse | No information included |

| Further information | Iyer, N., Nyamwire, B., and Nabulega, S., (2020) *Alternate Realities, Alternate Internets: African Feminist Research for a Feminist Internet.* APC and IDRC |
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| **Violence against women: an EU wide Survey , European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights** | |
|---|---|
| Description | The report presents the findings from FRA's survey with 42,000 women in the EU. The survey was the first of its kind to measure the extent, nature and consequences of violence against women in all member states of the EU. The survey included a question on experiences of cyber harassment. |
| Timeframe | 2014 |
| Geographic coverage | Member states in the EU (28 at the time) |
| Methods used | The survey targeted the general population of women living in an EU Member State, who spoke at least one of the country's official languages. It used a random sample of women aged 18 to 74 years in the general population in each EU Member State. The survey used multistage random (probability) sampling and aimed to be representative for different regions and urban/ rural areas. The survey was conducted through face-to-face interviews. |
| Type of online VAWG covered | The survey measures two forms of online violence which it categorises as cyber harassment – unwanted sexually explicit emails or SMS messages, and inappropriate advances on social networking websites |
| Data on overall prevalence rates | One in 10 women (11 %) had faced at least one of the two forms of cyber harassment since the age of 15, and one in 20 (5 %) had experienced this in the 12 months before the survey. Denmark and Sweden (both 18%), followed by Slovakia and the Netherlands (both 17%) showed the highest prevalence rates. The lowest rates were found in Romania (5 %), and in Lithuania and Portugal (both 6%). |
| Data on targeted harm, gender disinformation and misogynistic discourse | No information included |
| Data on broader effects on society | No information included |
| Data on intersectional nature of abuse | Younger women in the survey reported higher prevalence of threatening and offensive experiences online than older women – the risk of young women aged between 18 and 29 years is twice as high as the risk for women aged between 40 and 49 years, and more than three times as high as the risk for women aged between 50 and 59 years. |

| Further information | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014) *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey main results.* European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights |
| --- | --- |

| **A long way to go for LGBTI equality, EU-LGBTI II** | |
| --- | --- |
| Description | This 2019 survey on LGBTI people in the EU and North Macedonia and Serbia is the largest survey of its kind with almost 140,000 respondents. It collected data on discrimination and violence against LGBTI people, including cyber harassment. |
| Timeframe | 2019 |
| Geographic coverage | EU, including the UK as data was collected pre-Brexit |
| Methods used | Online survey. Detailed information on sampling methods is not available, however, it appears to have been conducted through self-selection sampling. |
| Type of online VAWG covered | Cyber harassment (definition not provided) |
| Data on overall prevalence rates | The following percentage of age groups reported that they had experienced cyber harassment in the 12 months before the survey: <br> • 15-17 years – 15% <br> • 18-24 years – 12% <br> • 25-39 years – 9% <br> • 40-54 years – 9% <br> • 55+ years – 7% |
| Data on targeted harm, gender disinformation and misogynistic discourse | No information included |
| Data on broader effects on society | No information included |
| Data on intersectional nature of abuse | The report does not include disaggregated findings for different LGBTI groups. However, 46 % of bisexual women respondents and 29 % of lesbian respondents indicated that they were harassed (in general, not only online) because of their sex in addition to or as part of being harassed for being bisexual or lesbian (which was only the case for 2% of gay men). This suggest that bisexual and lesbian women are targeted because of intersecting inequalities. |
| Further information | EU-LGBTI II (2020) *A long way to go for LGBTI equality.* EU-LGBTI II |

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## Endnotes

[1] The Technology and Innovation Action Coalition's blueprint sets out that 'By 2026, a majority of countries and tech companies demonstrate accountability by implementing policies and solutions against online and tech facilitated GBV and discrimination.' For further information see https://forum.generationequality.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/UNW%20-%20GAP%20Report%20-%20EN%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf.

[2] For further information see https://www.whitehouse.gov/gpc/briefing-room/2022/03/18/launching-the-global-partnership-for-action-on-gender-based-online-harassment-and-abuse/

[3] See for example the challenges with measuring the prevalence of cyber violence and hate speech online against women in the EU, highlighted in: Van der Wilk A. (2018). *Cyber violence and hate speech online against women*. European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1ccedce6-c5ed-11e8-9424-01aa75ed71a1

[4] UN (2018). *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences on online violence against women and girls from a human rights perspective.* UN

[5] Jansen, H. (2016) *Measuring prevalence of violence against women: key terminology.* UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office. P. 6

[6] Jansen, H. (2016) *Measuring prevalence of violence against women: key terminology.* UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office. P. 6

[7] Hicks, J. (2021). *Global evidence on the prevalence and impact of online gender-based violence.* K4D Helpdesk Report. Institute of Development Studies

[8] See Hicks, J. (2021). *Global evidence on the prevalence and impact of online gender-based violence.* K4D Helpdesk Report. Institute of Development Studies; UNFPA (2021). *Making all spaces safe: technology-facilitated gender-based violence.* UNFPA; and UN Women (2020) *Online and ICT facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19.* UN Women.

[9] Plan International (2020). *Free to be online? Girls' and young women's experiences of online harassment.* Surrey, UK: Plan International.

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[11] Economist Intelligence Unit (2021). *Measuring the prevalence of online violence against women,* Economist Intelligence Unit

[12] Plan International (2020). *Free to be online? Girls' and young women's experiences of online harassment.* Surrey, UK: Plan International.

[13] Posetti, J., Shabbir, N., Maynard, D., Bontcheva, K. and Aboulez, N. (2021). *The Chilling: Global Trends in Online Violence against Women Journalists*, Paris: UNESCO

[14] UNFPA (2021). *Making all spaces safe: technology-facilitated gender-based violence.* UNFPA

[15] UN Women (2021) *Violence against women in the online space: insights from a multi-country study in the Arab States.* UN Women.

[16] Posetti, J., Shabbir, N., Maynard, D., Bontcheva, K. and Aboulez, N. (2021). *The Chilling: Global Trends in Online Violence against Women Journalists*, Paris: UNESCO

[17] Posetti, J., Shabbir, N., Maynard, D., Bontcheva, K. and Aboulez, N. (2021). *The Chilling: Global Trends in Online Violence against Women Journalists*, Paris: UNESCO

[18] Hicks, J. (2021). *Global evidence on the prevalence and impact of online gender-based violence.* K4D Helpdesk Report. Institute of Development Studies

[19] Plan International (2020). *Free to be online? Girls' and young women's experiences of online harassment.* Surrey, UK: Plan International.

[20] See for example: UNFPA (2021) *Making all spaces safe: technology-facilitated gender-based violence.* UNFPA and Amnesty International (2017) *Amnesty reveals alarming impact of online abuse against women.* Amnesty International

[21] See for example: Hicks, J. (2021). *Global evidence on the prevalence and impact of online gender-based violence.* K4D Helpdesk Report. Institute of Development Studies; UN Women (2020). *Online and ICT facilitated violence against women and girls during COVID-19.* UN Women

[22] See D. F. Malanga (2020) in UNFPA (2021). *Making all spaces safe: technology-facilitated gender-based violence.* UNFPA

[23] UN (2017). UN experts urge States and companies to address online gender-based abuse but warn against censorship. https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2017/03/un-experts-urge-states-and-companies-address-online-gender-based-abuse-warn

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[27] Lomba, N., Navarra, C., and Fernandes, M. (2021). *Combating gender-based violence: Cyber violence: European added value assessment.* European Parliamentary Research Service Study. European Parliament. H

[28] See for example: Van der Wilk A. (2018). *Cyber violence and hate speech online against women.* European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs. Ch 4.

[29] See for example: Vidgen, B., Margetts, H., and Harris, A. (2019). *How much online abuse is there? A systematic review of evidence for the UK.* Policy Briefing – Full Report. The Alan Turing Institute. https://www.turing.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-11/online_abuse_prevalence_full_24.11.2019_-_formatted_0.pdf

[30] Posetti, J., Shabbir, N., Maynard, D., Bontcheva, K. and Aboulez, N. (2021). *The Chilling: Global Trends in Online Violence against Women Journalists*, Paris: UNESCO

[31] Iyer, N., Nyamwire, B., and Nabulega, S., (2020). *Alternate Realities, Alternate Internets: African Feminist Research for a Feminist Internet.* APC and IDRC