



Concept Note for online workshop:

“Services to Protect Women Survivors of Violence the Arab Region”

26 - 29 July 2021

1. BACKGROUND

Although Arab State’s responses to violence against women could be traced back to the early 1990s with several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) establishing help lines, providing social and legal counselling services as well as formal and informal shelters for survivors of violence, governmental recognition of the problem and concerted efforts to combat violence against come came much later. The current implementation of services by governments is varied and requires greater availability and coordination among sectors. This situation became clear in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for available, accessible, affordable, and quality protection services for women survivors of violence increased significantly in the Arab region, as it did worldwide. During this time, research and documentation by United Nations (UN) organisations and other actors noted that available services were not initially labelled as ‘essential services,’ impeding access for survivors due to enforced measures that curtailed mobility, enforced social distancing and closure of vital services. These events pushed the State and service providers to adapt their response mechanisms to address the emerging challenges.¹

Prior to the pandemic, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and other UN agencies documented and examined available infrastructures and services in the Arab region including some of the gaps present in services provided by State actors (both governmental and non-governmental organisations); good practices were also acknowledged. In particular, ESCWA and other partners examined access to and availability of shelter services, protection orders and referral systems in the region.² Findings provided in these studies discussed the legislative and policy frameworks that govern such services and how the services are organized.

In order to facilitate knowledge sharing and support member States in their efforts to enhance their services, ESCWA and UN Women are co-organising a regional workshop to share findings from existing studies and present key findings and good practice in service provision for survivors of violence. The regional workshop also aims to draw out a vision for the coming years on how member States aim to combat violence against women and girls and support survivors.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE WORKSHOP

This workshop will gather representatives from National Women Machineries and other relevant stakeholders who provide services for survivors of violence. Presentations and discussions will be based on international standards and good practice along with outcomes of existing examples from the Arab region. The aim of the workshop is to enhance the capacity of National Women Machineries and service providers for survivors of violence in international framework for making quality services for survivors of violence available, accessible and affordable. In doing so, the workshop will a) provide

¹ <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/violence-against-women-girls-covid-19-arab-region>

² <https://www.unescwa.org/publications/utilizing-protection-orders-cultivate-holistic-response-domestic-violence> ;
<https://www.unescwa.org/publications/shelters-arab-region-availability-accessibility>

a presentation on international standards; b) share existing examples from Arab States as well as other countries to highlight successes; and c) allow for discussions among Arab States to discuss and examine possible interventions at the national level. Hence, each session will bring in experts' views and will allocate time for group discussion. Participants will be provided a syllabus of pre-session reading materials and will also be assigned brief tasks to complete after each session and in advance of the following session.

3. TIME AND VENUE

The workshop will be implemented on-line over Zoom and will run over a period of four days according to the agenda.

4. AGENDA

Day 1: 26 July 2021 from 10:00 – 12:00	
10:00 – 10:10	Opening and welcoming remarks by: <i>Ms. Mehrinaz El Awady, Cluster Leader, Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development Cluster, ESCWA</i> <i>Ms. Susanne Mikhail, Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Arab States (Video recording)</i>
10:10 – 10:45	<i>What is a survivor-centred approach? How is it operationalised? (ESCWA)</i>
10:45 – 12:00	<i>International frameworks for available, accessible, affordable and quality services for survivors of violence (ESCWA)</i>
Day 2: 27 July 2021 from 10:00 – 12:00	
10:00 – 11:00	<i>Legislation or VAW action plans, or other VAW policy creation (UN Women)</i>
11:00 – 12:00	<i>Data collection on VAW in order to enhance service provision (UN Women and WHO)</i>
Day 3: 28 July 2021 from 10:00 – 12:00	
10:00 – 11:00	<i>Referral systems and coordination among organisations on provision of services (ESCWA)</i>
11:00 – 12:00	<i>Social Services (ESCWA)</i>
Day 4: 29 July 2021 from 10:00 – 12:00	
10:00 – 11:00	<i>Policing and Justice Services (UN Women)</i>
11:00 – 11:50	<i>Health Services (WHO)</i>
11:50 - 12:00	<i>Closing Session</i>