



Shared Prosperity Dignified Life



Unit for Combating Violence Against Women & Children
Ministry of Labour & Social Development

Webinar Series on Best Practices and Shared Experiences on Shelters for Women Survivors of Violence in the Republic of the Sudan

Microsoft Teams – 25 - 27 August 2020

11:00-13:30 (GMT+2)

[Draft Concept Note](#)

Background

According to the World Health Organization, approximately 37 per cent of women in the Middle East and North Africa region have been exposed to intimate partner violence.¹ There are no official statistics on domestic violence in the Sudan; however, it is noted to be “widespread, pervasive and remains largely invisible, due to the absence of reporting mechanisms and statistics as well as a lack of adequate policies and programmes,” according to the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences (SR-VAW).² During the COVID-19 lockdown in the Sudanese capital Khartoum, the number of cases of domestic violence against women and girls, including rapes and beatings, has increased. Under the lockdown, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development documented 42 incidents of gender-based violence in the country during the month April. Notably, a domestic violence hotline staffed by trained social workers has been established to allow women and girls to access support during the lockdown.³

The Republic of the Sudan is not party to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Transition Constitution of 2019, however, mentions the State’s obligations to combat violence against women in Article 36(2), in addition to harmful traditions and mores that are degrading to women’s dignity and status in Article 32(3). Sudan has adopted a National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women and Children (2015-2032) and has developed a five-year action plan for its implementation. More recently, Sudan’s new Government has taken major steps consolidating women’s human rights agenda in the country. In April 2020, it outlawed the practice of female genital mutilation, for example.

As part of these national efforts to combat violence against women (VAW) and protect women survivors of violence, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security in the Republic of the Sudan seeks technical support from the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to better understand the function and role of shelters for women survivors of violence.

¹ P. 17. Available at :

https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/85239/9789241564625_eng.pdf;jsessionid=0F7DE4716D1B5AFF84044B1241C7961A?sequence=1

² Report of the SR-VAW, its causes and consequences on her mission to the Sudan, A/HRC/32/42/Add.1, p. 6. Available at: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/079/16/PDF/G1607916.pdf?OpenElement>

³ Michael Atit, “Reports of Gender-Based Violence Increase in Sudan During COVID Lockdown”, VoA, 26 May 2020. Available at: <https://www.voanews.com/africa/south-sudan-focus/reports-gender-based-violence-increase-sudan-during-covid-lockdown>

Shelters represent an essential service for survivors as part of a comprehensive and coordinated response to VAW. According to the SR-VAW, “The establishment of safe women’s shelters and efficient and immediate protection orders should be seen as human rights obligation that uphold a woman’s right to life free from violence.”⁴

In this context, ESCWA and the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security will organize a **Webinar Series on Best Practices and Shared Experiences on Shelters for Women Survivors of Violence** via Microsoft Teams over a period of three days on 25 - 27 August 2020. A series of two-hour sessions each day from 11:00 to 13:00 Khartoum Time/ UTC+2 will be provided. The webinar series will target participants representing national stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental.

Objectives and Expected Accomplishments

This Webinar Series aims to provide the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security and other beneficiaries with the knowledge of available norms and tools for addressing violence against women and implementing a holistic and survivor-centred approach to shelter provision in the Sudan.

The following outcomes are expected to be achieved at the end of the Webinar Series:

- Increased knowledge of available norms and tools that obligate member States to address violence against women and provide shelter and other support services for survivors of violence;
- Increased knowledge of good practices around shelter provision from the region and globally, including the need to provide a holistic and survivor-centred approach; and
- A brief analysis of existing practices in the Sudan and the way forward to enhance the services.

Methodology

The Webinar Series will be guided by the ESCWA publication entitled, *Shelters for Women Survivors of Violence: Availability and Accessibility in the Arab Region*,⁵ in addition to other relevant texts, such as the thematic report on shelter and protection orders by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequence⁶; United Nations *Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women*⁷; the *Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence*⁸; Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) protocols⁹; and the shelter model developed by UN Women¹⁰, among others.

Proposed Participants

⁴ Report of the SR-VAW, its causes and consequences, A/HRC/35/30, para 100. Available at:

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/162/08/PDF/G1716208.pdf?OpenElement>

⁵ ESCWA (2020), *Shelters for Women Survivors of Violence: Availability and Accessibility in the Arab Region* Available at:

<https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/publications/files/shelters-arab-region-availability-accessibility-english.pdf>

⁶ A human rights-based approach to integrated services and protection measures on violence against women, with a focus on shelters and protection orders, A/HRC/35/30

⁷ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2012/12/handbook-for-legislation-on-violence-against-women>

⁸ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/12/essential-services-package-for-women-and-girls-subject-to-violence>

⁹ WAVE Co-ordination Office / Austrian Women’s Shelter Network (2004). *Away from Violence: Guidelines for Setting Up and Running a Women’s Refuge*; WAVE – Women against Violence Europe (2017). *WAVE-Handbook: Prevention and Support Standards for Women Survivors of Violence*.

¹⁰ UN Women and the Canadian Network of Women’s Shelters and Transition Houses (2011). *Shelter for Women and Girls at Risk of or Survivors of Violence*.

Government: Ministry of Labour and Social Development, and other relevant ministries, administrations, and VAW service providers.

Civil Society: Non-governmental organizations concerned with VAW.

Date and Platform

The Webinar Series will take place through the digital platform of **Microsoft Teams**.

Three webinars will be held every day for two and half hours between 11:00 and 13:30 (GMT+2) on 25-27 August 2020.



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Agenda

DAY 1 WEBINAR I International Standards and Norms on Shelters

11:00-11:15 Opening Remarks

11:15-12:15 Session 1: International Legal Frameworks and Global Norms on Shelter

This session will open with an overview of the international legal frameworks and global norms for the provision of shelter and other complementary services. This will also include a discussion of the thematic report on shelter and protection orders by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequence, and the United Nations *Handbook for Legislation on Violence against Women*.

The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- What are the main international frameworks and global norms utilized to guide shelter provisions?
- How best can these frameworks and norms be applied in the Sudanese context?

Facilitators: ESCWA Expert

12:15-13:30 Session 2: Violence against Women through Service Provision: Good Practice Globally

This session will draw upon good practice employed by international/regional agencies and bodies concerning the provision of shelter services and a holistic, survivor-centred response to violence against women and girls, with focus on the elements of service: availability, accessibility, affordability and quality. This will include a discussion of the Essential Services Package for Women and Girls Subject to Violence; Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) protocols; and the shelter model developed by UN Women, among others. The findings of ESCWA Study on Shelters for Women Survivors of Violence: Availability and Accessibility in the Arab Region will be discussed during this session.

The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- What are the frameworks that promote good practice for shelter provision and a holistic response?
- What global good practice can be applied to the Sudanese context? Where is there room for innovation?

Facilitators: ESCWA Expert

DAY 2**WEBINAR II
Experiences from the Arab Region****11:00-13:00****Session 3: Violence against Women through Service Provision: Regional Good Practices**

This session will draw upon shared experiences and good practices from the Arab region. Difference experiences of shelter service provisions will be shared from three countries, including Saudi Arabia (State-run), Lebanon (NGO-run) and Tunisia (State-owned and NGO-run).

The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- What gaps, limitations and/or obstacles faced by these shelter systems?
- What provisions needed to ensure efficient functioning of the shelter?
- What advantages and disadvantages of the different shelter systems?

Facilitators: Experts from Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Tunisia

DAY 3**WEBINAR III
Shelter Service Provision in the Sudan****11:00 – 12:00****Session 4: Shelter Service Provision in the Sudan**

The session will allow participants from the Sudan to discuss and analyse existing shelter services. Participants are requested to bring in information relating to legal and policy frameworks that governs women's access to shelters, information on geographical distribution, occupancy and other information relating to the operation of shelters. The session would also allow for a participatory SWOT analysis and identification of key gaps.

The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- What are the available shelter services in the Sudan?
- What is the scope of work of existing shelters?
- What are the types of shelters?
- What are the occupancy rates? Who are the occupants? Any restrictions on use?
- What are the sources of funding? Who manages the shelters? How is their work organised?

Facilitators: ESCWA Expert

12:00 – 13:00

Session 5: Moving Forward with Shelter Service Provision in the Sudan

This session will be dedicated to discussing the prospects and opportunities to move forward with the shelter system in the Sudan with the aim to improve the Government's response to the shelter needs of women and girls that is both holistic and survivor-centred. This will include improving legal frameworks; developing a coordinated response among government and service providers; ensuring a survivor-centred approach; improving education and training opportunities for service providers; and engaging with regional and global organizations/agencies.

The discussion will be guided by the following questions:

- What are the best approaches that apply to the Sudan for shelter service provision?
- What steps can be taken in the short, medium and long-term to ensure a holistic and survivor-centred provision of shelter?
- What networking opportunities exist regionally and/or globally to better engage and empower the Sudanese service providers?

Facilitators: ESCWA Expert

13:00-13:30

**Webinar Assessment
Closing Session**