

Youth Call to Action to End Violence Against Women and Girls

in the Arab States Region



We, young people of the Arab States region, met in Beirut from 28th to 31st of March 2019 during a regional workshop to examine solutions to end violence against women and girls, co-convened by UN Women and UNFPA Regional Offices for Arab States with the generous support from the Government of Japan.

1. We refer to violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”; as defined in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993.
2. We meet in a time where violence against women and girls is widespread and accepted by many in the region despite being a violation of fundamental human rights.
3. We reiterate as young people from the Arab States region the centrality of gender equality and women’s empowerment to the achievement of sustainable development and fundamental rights and freedoms.
4. We recall all international commitments made to eliminate violence against women and girls, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as Sustainable Development Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
5. We unanimously call for a life free from violence for all women and girls in the region.
6. We consider that if an enabling legislative and policy environment in line with international standards on ending violence against women and girls and other forms of discrimination is in place and translated into action; if favorable social norms, attitudes and behaviors are promoted at community and individual levels to prevent violence against women and girls; and if women and girls who experience violence are empowered to use available, acceptable, accessible and quality essential services and to recover from violence; then violence against women and girls will come to an end.
7. We call on governments to translate their commitment into action and to recognize the powerful role young people can play to end violence against women and girls and build resilient communities.
8. We call on all stakeholders working on ending violence against women and girls to address the vulnerable status of many women and girls including indigenous, refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, disabled and internally displaced persons.
9. We highlight the potential of technology and innovation to mobilize exponentially all aspects of society and pledge to foster and promote technological innovation as a crucial component to end violence against women and girls in the Arab States region.
10. We assert that the impacts of comprehensive, gender and age-responsive, and inclusive legislative frameworks have exponential effect to end violence against women and girls.
11. We underscore the importance of raising civil society and youth organizations voices’ and holding governments accountable for human rights conventions, national plans, stated goals and targets related to addressing the social stigma and acceptance of violence against women and girls.



Participants of the Regional Youth Workshop on Ending Violence against Women. With a representative from the Japanese Embassy in Lebanon. Photo: UN Women/Emad Karim

We, young people of the Arab States, link our voices with those of all stakeholders in the Arab States region to confirm the centrality of our role to promote gender equality and end violence against women and girls. Accordingly, We call upon all governments and decision-makers in the Arab States region to:

12. Facilitate diverse stakeholder engagement on the urgency to address violence against women and girls, and as such, develop manuals and databases that are inclusive of different views and perspectives.
13. Dedicate timely and instructive efforts by diverse stakeholders at national and regional levels to understand and address the issue of violence against women and girls. We fully pledge and call upon all governments and stakeholders to dedicate the time and resources to conduct contextual studies, mapping of services, and national situational analyses tailored for each country in the Arab States region, as there is no one size fits all solution.
14. Reaffirm the urgency to develop a broader study for the Arab States region to further investigate the range of acts, underlying causes, diversity and breadth of impact, and potential responses that can be developed and implemented to end violence against women and girls, including in humanitarian settings.
15. Commence a dialogue with the active participation of youth activists, organizations, and stakeholders on the urgency of innovative solutions inspired by youth participation in addressing violence against women and girls on all platforms and ensure the full and effective participation of Youth- led initiatives at all levels.
16. Enact legal reforms related to violence against women and girls, and other vulnerable groups.
17. Enact effective policies, that provide women and girls protection in the private and public spheres, including digital spaces.
18. Implement strategies that ensure the protection and safety of frontline advocates working to end violence against women and girls. We further affirm that violence against advocates is unacceptable in all its forms and further the call to include national civil societies and the international community.
19. Forecast gender equality and the imperativeness to end violence against women and girls as a national priority in the Arab States region.
20. Emphasize that youth, being one of the largest demographic groups, are an essential agent of positive change in attitudes towards violence against women and girls in the Arab States region. Through government-led active participation, we are empowered to play a vital role in our



Aisha (Aisha Altubuly, co-leader coordinator of the organization Together We Build It. Photo: UN Women/Emad Karim)



Racha (Racha Haffar, Founder and President of 'Not 4 Trade', an NGO working to prevent human trafficking in Tunisia. Photo: UN Women/Emad Karim)



Amani (Amani Aruri, Advocacy Team Leader at Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counselling. Photo: UN Women/Emad Karim)

communities to enforce positive changes and eradicate negative social norms. We reaffirm that there are no grounds for complacency towards all forms of violence against women and girls.

- 21.** Implement governments' stewardship role of national educational curricula, systems, and institutions to ensure the promotion and protection of the fundamental rights of women and girls, men and boys; and engage with religious leaders and institutions to create a societal environment that promotes gender equality and that protects women and girls against all forms of violence.
- 22.** Fully engage men and boys in the efforts to promote respectful relationships and gender equality between men, women, boys and girls.
- 23.** Implement and position service provision systems that covers both urban and rural communities to ensure a comprehensive, available, accessible, acceptable, quality and timely service delivery to women and girls survivors of violence.
- 24.** Align education and training of service-providers on national and regional levels with justice and police systems, health systems, and women and girls' needs. The education systems must train



Nabil Hendy, a member of UN Women's Youth Gender Innovation Agora. Photo: UN Women/Emad Karim

service-providers to transition from operating in silos to a truly inter-sectoral and inter-professional, team-based, survivor-centered model of education and professional training,

- 25.** Communicate all available services and channels and ensure that all women and girls are informed on the services provided, before, during and after acts of violence are perpetrated.

