



Elimination of the Raising Domestic Violence During Covid-19 Pandemic

UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL
Eren Yalçın



TED UNIVERSITY TRAINING
AND DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE 2021

LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Highly esteemed participants,

I am Hüseyin Hikmet Fındık, a junior student at TED University, under the Department of Computer Engineering. I proudly would like to welcome you all to the TEDUMUN Training and Development Conference 2021, which we all believe will lead to a lot of new beginnings. While thinking about a training and development conference, it is impossible not to refer to what annoys us in real life. There is no doubt that day by day, the 21st century shows us the value of equality, democracy, justice, and every democratic norm that we deeply needed for peaceful communities. In the Turkey of the 21st century, it is obvious that we are stumbling at every single one of those values. These values create an environment that makes us happy, peaceful. It has been hard, sad, and desperate for us to see every single democratic norm being violated one by one, every day, right in front of our eyes.

When he first stepped into Havza, Samsun, while everything around was worse than ever, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk said “They do not want to kill us, they want to put us into the grave alive. We are now at the edge of the pit. One last tenacity can save us.”. When the hope ends, tenacity begins. Today is the day to show that tenacity to build a better society, to build a better Turkey, and to build a better world. On this road, we believe that we need every single piece of an idea to ensure the rights of every single one of us.

It was inevitable to see the will of our Under-Secretary-General Mr. Eren Yalçın, the trust that we gave on him was nothing but a success. I would like to thank him for being such a detail-lover, determined person. While creating this committee, he did a brilliant job by pointing out the most important parts of one of the biggest and newest problems that we have to solve, the relationship between mandatorily staying home and domestic violence. It will be a beneficial guide for you to understand the issue from different perspective. See you at the conference.

Sincerely.

Hüseyin Hikmet Fındık

Secretary-General of TEDUTRAIN’21

LETTER FROM THE UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL

Esteemed Participants,

I am Eren Yalçın, a freshman student studying at the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at TED University. It is my utmost honor to welcome you all to TEDUTrain'21, I will be serving as the Under-Secretary-General responsible for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women ("UN Women").

For this year, the committee of UN Women will be discussing a highly important agenda item, "Elimination of the Raising Domestic Violence During Covid-19 Pandemic". I am waiting excitedly to see the participants discuss this global issue for humanity.

In this short period, we, as an Academic and Organization team, faced many and different challenges to serve you an amazing conference. Therefore, I would like to thank our reputable Secretary-General Mr. Hüseyin Hikmet Fındık and Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Merve Reyhan Fındık for giving me this great opportunity to write the UN Women study guide for the honorable delegates, Director-General Ms. Doğasu Polat for their hard work and for organizing this conference. Also, I would like to present my thanks to all my team members for their great efforts. I have learned a lot of things from this fantastic team and felt lucky to be a part of it.

I hope you all will have an excellent and fruitful conference during two days in the committee of UN Women and experience unforgettable memories.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions,

Sincerely,

Eren YALÇIN,

Under-Secretary-General
responsible for the UN
Women

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I. Introduction to the UN Women

A. History

The representative beginning of the battle of women to have equal rights with men is considered to be the strike of hundreds of women working in the textile industry in New York, USA, on March 8, 1857. Since the foundation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945, women have always been on the agenda. Since and before that time, women try to find and have equality in all parts of life.¹

The United Nations began to forwardness on commitments of women with 160 signatures in 1945 with the signs of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco.

With the signing of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco in 1945, the United Nations began to take steps for ensuring women rights, with 160 signatures. In the preface of the Charter, the following is written: *"faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small"*.¹

In 1946, the Status of Women was established formally as a sub-commission. The aim of the commission was to ensure the equality of women and promote the rights of women. Furthermore, Status of Women's aim was to *"prepare recommendations and reports to the Economic and Social Council on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields"* and to give feedback and advice on *"urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights"*.² From 1946 to 1962, the Commission

¹ ("1946: BIRTH OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN", 2019)

² ("A short history of the Commission on the Status of Women", 2021)

focused on the rights of women, providing women universal access to political rights, removing discrimination in marriage, and equality in access to education.ⁱⁱ

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the Commission on Human Rights, and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) brought the issue of violence against women.ⁱⁱⁱ It was an agenda item, but it had been seen as and considered as a private matter, rather than a social, or human rights issue. Therefore, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) encouraged the CSW to see this issue as an important problem for women. To end the violence against women, the CSW took responsibility for a drafting declaration. Thus, on 20 December 1993, it led the way to the adaption of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women by the General Assembly.^{iv}

During the 1990s, with the leadership of the UN, a series of global conferences were held to constitute a global agenda to raise awareness, human rights, food security, social development, and issues of gender equality at the center of international discourse. Conferences were held in Vienna, Austria, Cairo, Egypt, Denmark, Turkey, and Italy.

The best and most important change throughout the time in the handling of gender issues in the UN has been the decision taken by the General Assembly in July 2010 to establish UN Women,^v the United Nations Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. The entity is created to end violence against women, to demand justice within equality in leadership and political participation of women, to empower women economically, and to ensure the participation of women in all aspects of peace, security, and humanitarian aid processes. The UN Member States have taken a historic step by accelerating the targets for the empowerment of women, equality in society, and for women to get one's due what they deserve a place in society.^{vi}

B. Membership

Membership constitutes the Executive Board of UN Women from the representatives of 41 Member States elected by the UN Economic and Social Council for three years. The regional distribution and membership numbers are as follows: Africa (10), Asia and the Pacific (10), Eastern Europe (4), Latin America and the Caribbean (6), Western Europe and other States (5), and contributing countries (6).^{vii}

II. Agenda Item: Elimination of the Raising Domestic Violence During Covid-19 Pandemic

A. Introduction

The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is a virus that was first identified as a result of research conducted on a group of patients who encountered respiratory symptoms like cough, shortness of breath, and fever on January 13, 2020, in Wuhan province, China.^{viii}

The virus spread from person to person by coughing, sneezing of sick individuals, and inhaling droplets scattered in the environment. Coronavirus spread to other cities in Wuhan in China, and other provinces of the Republic of China. As a result, it spread to other world countries.^{ix}

Competent authorities of the countries recommend the citizens, to keep a distance of one meter between people, avoid close contact with patients, wash hands profusely, to protect themselves from the virus.^x

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect, disrupting both social and economic activity around the world. The Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected millions of people in almost every country, has confirmed a total of 64.2 million Covid-19 cases, with 191 countries and 1.5 million deaths worldwide, as of December 2, 2020. (Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University, 2020).^{xi}



Figure 1: The total cases of Covid-19 throughout time, based on December 2021^{xii}

Every country in the world has introduced quarantine and social distance rules to prevent the spread of the virus regardless of Covid-19 is seen in their country or not and social distance rules to prevent the spread of the virus. As a result, people had to stay in their homes for a long time. Economic and social stressors from the Covid-19 pandemic have increased with the coming of quarantine, resulting in higher levels of stress within the home, the rate of domestic violence and abuse increased, and mental health problems were encountered.^{xiii}

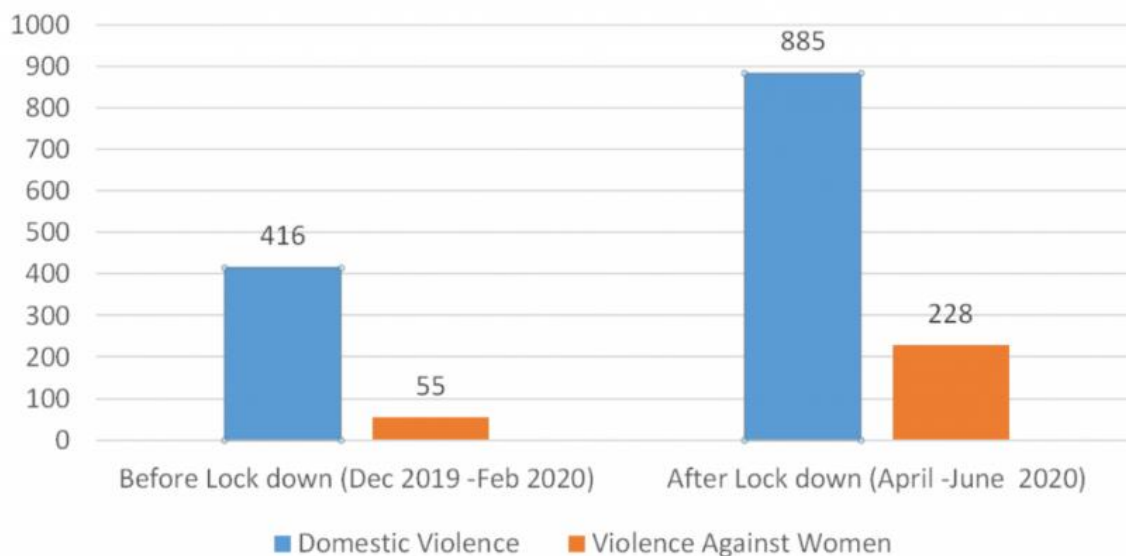


Figure 2: Graph illustrating the number of domestic violence before and after the lockdown was announced^{xiv}

B. Domestic Violence

Domestic violence (DV) is also known as "domestic abuse", and it can be defined as power and control over an intimate partner. Domestic abuse can be physical, economic, psychological, sexual, and emotional.^{xv} It can happen for everyone, without making discrimination like religion, gender, race, or age and it can eventuate in any kind of relationship including married relations or couples living together or those who are dating. Domestic violence does not occur only for women or men, but also for children and household members.^{xvi} There may be several reasons why the abuser attempts domestic violence. The most known and most common four reasons are:

- The abuser may have experienced childhood trauma,
- The abuser may have witnessed domestic violence as a child,
- Cultural beliefs of the abuser,
- Psychological disorders of the abuser.

Initially, it is hard to understand the behaviors of the abuser. Do they act in that way because they are prone to violence or do they want to abuse their partner because they want to have control and manipulate the victim and maintain a sense of dominance? If you feel you are manipulated by the person you are with, it could be a sign that you may be in a domestic abuse situation.^{xvii}

Domestic violence is not a new concept. Throughout time, people have encountered this problem. However, DV cases increased during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns. Between March 2019 and March 2020, The Crime Survey of England showed that 1.6 million women and 757,000 men had experienced domestic abuse.^{xviii}

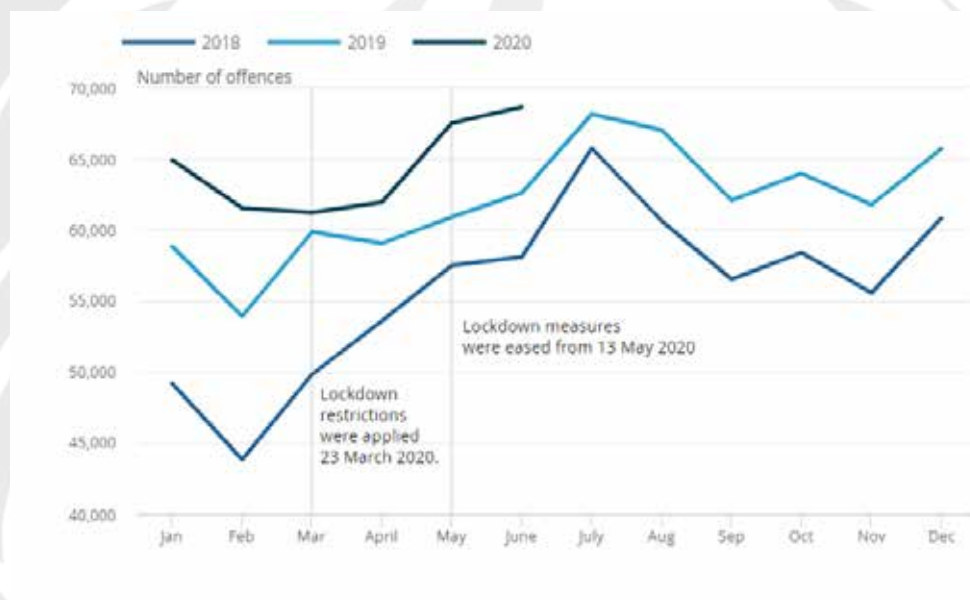


Figure 3: The total number of offenses flagged as domestic abuse-related increased during the lockdown period, continuing long-term gradual increases observed in recent years^{xix}

Numerous reports have shown a marked increase in all forms of domestic violence and abuse, particularly domestic homicide. According to the declaration published by the World Health Organization in 2013, sexual and physical violence resulting from domestic violence and abuse causes serious psychological and emotional problems not only for the victim but also for the

children and other members of the family.^{xx} Some of the psychological effects of domestic violence and abuse includes:

- Various and similar emotions such as guilt, fear, low self-esteem;
- Anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep disorders, and eating disorders, mental health conditions, and disorders such as depression,
- Behaviors such as starting smoking, substance and alcohol use, and self-harming.^{xxi}

C. Types of Domestic Abuse

All kinds of abuse, harm the victim in some way and all these exploits are interconnected and interrelated. However, the most important subcategories of domestic violence and abuses are explained down below:^{xxii}

- **Physical Abuse:** It may include punching, cutting, slapping, biting, hitting, pinching, and any kind of violence. Also, physical abuse comprises forcing the victim to drug or alcohol usage by the abuser.
- **Psychological Abuse:** It includes the use of various words and physical actions that the abuser regularly uses to manipulate, hurt, or frighten the victim mentally and emotionally. As a matter of fact, verbal intimidation by the abuser to change the thoughts of and harm the well-being of the victim is psychological abuse.
- **Sexual Abuse:** In general, sexual abuse occurs when the victim is forced into sexual intercourse without their consent. In brief, it can be called domestic rape. Sexual abuse includes inflicting violence on the genitals of the victim and making sarcastic remarks to humiliate the victim, before and after the sexual intercourse.

- **Emotional Abuse:** It causes the victim to lose their self-worth and self-respect, and to feel psychologically bad. Constantly insulting the victim causes to loss of the position and power of the victim in the family.

D. The Effect of Covid-19 Pandemic on Women

The Covid-19 pandemic has reversed the progress made so far on gender equality and the rights of women. To regain this loss, may take years. Inequalities for women are increasing during the pandemic in all areas from health, economy, security to social protection.^{xxiii} The UN Secretary-General has mentioned *“Limited gains in gender equality and women’s rights made over the decades are in danger of being rolled back due to the COVID-19 pandemic,”*³ in April 2020. Markets and businesses closed because of the covid-19 pandemic, and it caused millions of women's jobs to disappear.

Due to the gender equality related issues, women play a lesser role than men in responding to the virus, including healthcare workers and home caregivers because they were given fewer opportunities than men. According to studies, approximately 60 percent of women work in the informal economy, and women earning less, saving less so, this puts them at risk of falling further into poverty during the pandemic.^{xxiv}

During the ongoing pandemic, the financial problems people experience and the fear of getting sick have brought along stress and anxiety. As a result of, first and foremost, physical, and psychological violence against women and young girls has increased during the pandemic. Curfews were imposed due to the coronavirus, this led to many women and their abusers

³ ("United Nations: Gender equality and women's empowerment", 2020)

being in the same environment. With the data collected, it is seen that domestic violence, especially against women and girls, has intensified since the start of the pandemic.^{xxv}

The lockdowns led to failure to detect the harassment and crimes committed by the harassers because police officers are also less likely to respond to domestic service calls to comply with social distancing rules.^{xxvi}

UN Women has started support activities to help and reduce the impact of the covid-19 crisis on women and girls as a priority for women. UN Women works and cooperates with governments, civil society organizations, UN agencies, and other institutions to avoid and prevent violence against women and girls. Moreover, UN Women raises awareness and gives educational programs, for men and boys. For instance, it works with UN agencies on the “Partners for Prevention” program that aims to end and prevent domestic and gender-based violence and to change the behaviors among boys and men towards women.^{xxvii}

The conflict between the law and the country, and culture; racial profiling in law, non-implementation of law, low education rate, illiterate and ignorant people, hence led women to be put in a position where they are ignored and made them feel insignificant. This supreme problem causes the fact that the statement of women is not ground on before the law, and the application process lacks legal structures. All or a few of these, the ignorance of women rights has been and still is one of the biggest problems in all countries of the world.

For the rest of this document, all those countries that are listed below show that this is a problem that occurs in all types of societies. It should be underlined that those victims and abusers can be from different cultural backgrounds, different religions, or different socio-

economic statuses. Humanity should discuss and solve all those problems in detail for a better future, for a better world, for an equal and better living space for women.

E. Country States

1. Yemen

According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), due to war, currently, the human rights of women are massively violated. Women are forced to killing as their thought of “honor killings” in Yemen, with the existence of big numbers of child marriages in Yemen too. Yemeni women have social norms that prevent them from speaking out to media and helping organizations because in their culture, divorcing is a shame which being violated and getting physical abuse carries a stigma. Domestic violence for Yemeni women is so common that, %92 of women admit that they have faced domestic violence at least once during their marriage. ^{xxviii}

2. United States of America

According to the source of the National Organization for Women, 4.8 million American women experience physical assaults and rapes by their intimate partners every year. Race, ethnicity, age, culture, income are the key reasons for domestic violence in the United States of America. Furthermore, for Americans, domestic violence starts early because 81 million Americans experience intimate partner abuse before turning 18. ^{xxix}

3. Pakistan

According to UN Women research, Pakistan is in rank among the most dangerous countries for women. It is difficult to live in Pakistan for women because of the patriarchal attitudes.

The rate of lifetime physical or sexual intimate partner violence is 24.5% in Pakistan. Women face all kinds of abuse and therewithal the child marriage rate is 21%.^{xxx}

4. Turkey

The Turkish state has never declared the numbers of domestic violence to the public but in May 2020, the government surprisingly shared the official numbers. According to the police data of Turkey, 81 women were killed only in that month. Between January 1 and May 20, law enforcement officers recorded 88,491 domestic abuse-related incidents. Due to several reasons, the Turkish government has never showed an open support to the women victims of abuse and violence, even at some cases, abusers and harassers were openly guarded and protected by the different level of government officials.^{xxxix} Despite the legal framework, women face challenges because of the problems and failure in the implementation of the law in Turkey. Even, The Turkish government has declared its opposition to the Istanbul Convention^{xxxix} when the women needed it most. During the Covid-19 pandemic, "stay at home" calls were a nightmare for women because according to DW Turkey, in 2020, nearly 60% of women that were killed at their houses.^{xxxix}

5. Netherlands

As well as in every country in the world, violence against women is happening in the Netherlands too. Nearly 33 women are killed by their ex-partner or intimate partner each year. In the past five years, over 18 years old 747.000 individuals have experienced physical and sexual violence, according to the recent research in 2021. However, the Netherlands government believes and states that the Istanbul Convention provides a clear basis and government. In terms of the Istanbul Convention, violence against women, domestic or not, should be addressed as a violation of human rights of women.^{xxxix}

F. Points That Resolution Should Cover

- What is domestic violence?
- What is the definition of domestic abuse?
- How does the Covid-19 increase domestic violence?
- How has Covid-19 affected the psychology of people?
- Why does domestic violence exist?
- What are the causes of domestic violence?
- What are the reasons for the abuser's harassment?
- Does domestic violence only happen to women?
- How does Covid-19 affect women?
- What are the impacts of domestic violence on women?
- What are the types of domestic abuse?
- Why does domestic abuse have subcategories?
- What is the impact of culture on domestic violence?
- What should women do if they experience domestic violence?
- What should women do during domestic violence?
- What should children do if they have domestic violence in their home?
- Does Covid-19 need to end to dissolve domestic violence?
- What can be done to end domestic violence?

G. Further Reading

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- <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>
- <https://thehighcourt.co/domestic-violence-statistics/>
- <https://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries>
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