

WOMEN'S SAFETY AND ROLE IN SECURITY

The 2026 Women's 20 calls on governments to (1) end gender-based violence (GBV) and (2) advance women's meaningful participation in peace and security processes at all levels.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Globally, [one in three women](#) will be subject to physical or sexual violence in her lifetime and up to 70% of women experience GBV in humanitarian contexts. Ensuring that women and girls are free from all forms of GBV throughout their lives, and creating systems where women are central to peace and conflict resolution, are fundamental to women and girls fully participating in society. This leads to greater opportunities, ensures stability, and saves money. Estimates are that GBV costs the European Union €366 billion annually. Comprehensive and effectively implemented legislation prevents GBV, closes accountability gaps, and lowers large downstream health, justice, and productivity costs. Further, women play an integral role in conflict prevention and resolution leading to more durable peace agreements (often called the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) framework). Addressing women's role in security empowers community members and focuses on economic stability, political participation, and inclusion in peace and justice systems.

Reducing GBV and enhancing WPS:

- **Builds on G20 Commitments:** WPS amplifies G20 commitments on GBV and establishes credible frameworks and initiatives supporting prevention, survivor services, legal protections, and accountability.
- **Creates Political/Economic Stability:** Women and children continue to bear the brunt of conflict with escalating levels of violence and vulnerability. Countries that rank the lowest on women's well-being are unstable, fragile and experience armed conflict.
- **Supports National Efforts and Investments:** Underfunded services and weak legal protections leave women, girls, and other vulnerable groups at continued risk of violence, while imposing major economic costs. Investing in prevention, survivor support, and legal enforcement reduces health, justice, housing, and productivity costs. The IMF links a one percent rise in domestic violence to a 9% fall in economic activity.

THE CHALLENGE

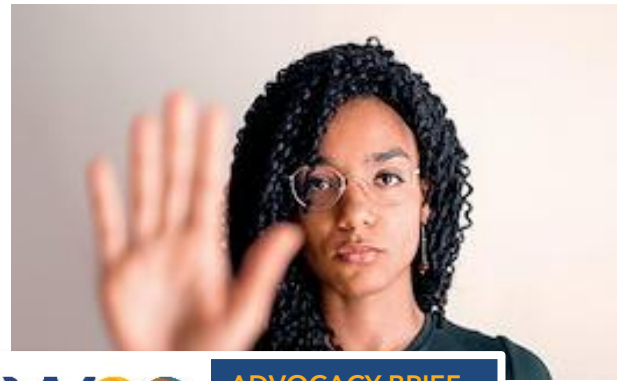
To advance these policies, governments need to:

Ensure Comprehensive Legal and Social Protections and Adequate Funding of Investments in Infrastructure for Essential Services. In both safety and security, strong laws are needed to protect women and prosecute perpetrators, and these laws need to be implemented. At the country level, there must be enhanced funding for essential services. All efforts (bilateral, multilateral, and cross-sector) must be coordinated so that women and girls have access to services.

Close Gender Data Gaps. Too few governments collect and share reliable, sex-disaggregated GBV data, making it harder to identify the gaps in policy and programs as well as design and track effective actions to address GBV in every context.

Recognize Women's Central Role in Peace, Security and Recovery. Governments must recognize and support women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding and recovery. National Action Plans are often sidelined, inconsistently implemented, and underfunded. Women's involvement in peace negotiations adds to the quality and permanence of agreements. Agreements with women signatories are 20% more likely to last two years and 35% more likely to last 15 years. However, women remain underrepresented in negotiations.

Strengthen Accountability for Conflict-related Sexual Violence: Weak documentation, limited prosecutions, and inconsistent use of legal tools, including UN sanctions, allow perpetrators to avoid accountability.



W20
Women20 for the G20

ADVOCACY BRIEF
Safety and Security



1. Commit to Strong Legal Frameworks

- Adopt, fund, and enforce comprehensive GBV legislation aligned with CEDAW and ILO Convention 190, covering domestic, workplace, public, and digital spheres.
- Increase the number of countries with current WPS National Action Plans (NAPs), and specific NAP implementation plans. Governments should address all forms of conflict related sexual violence, as well as impunity for perpetrators.
- To guide prevention, investment, and accountability, collect and publish safe, standardized, internationally comparable, disaggregated data about both GBV rates and relevant WPS issues. Data should be made public and reported internationally.

2. Enhance Women's Leadership in the Safety and Security Sectors

- Increase the percentage of women in the security and defense sectors, to ensure stronger security services for women and advance representation of women in peacekeeping roles. Increase the percentage of women serving in key positions within government at all levels and in all branches.
- Boost the percentage of women serving as negotiators, mediators and experts in peace processes.

3. Ensure Coordination and Services across Sectors and Entities

- Guarantee more access to survivor-centered essential services: health, legal aid, psychosocial support, shelter, and digital safety. Ensure that these services are funded and accessible, including through partnerships with women-led local organizations.
- Align financing, technical assistance, and service delivery across international partners and women-led local organizations to keep essential, survivor-centered services accessible in all settings.

THE GLOBAL SNAPSHOT

While there has been progress in addressing GBV and advancing women's role in security, there is still much to be done to fill gaps in legislation and implementation.

We especially acknowledge the **rapidly growing threat of technology-facilitated GBV**, with some countries reporting double-digit annual increases in online abuse.

Existing legal frameworks have not kept pace, but at least eight G20 members have enacted or expanded laws covering digital stalking, deepfake-enabled abuse, and the distribution of intimate images without consent. (See e.g. [Australia](#), [Brazil](#), [Canada](#), [Mexico](#), [South Africa](#), [United Kingdom](#), [United States](#), and the [European Union](#).)

There are other **examples of both country-specific and multilateral efforts** to accelerate change. India's [Safetipin initiative uses citizen data to identify infrastructure gaps](#) such as poor lighting, weak visibility, and unsafe routes.

Within six months of launch, residents completed over 12,000 safety audits, identifying 7,483 dark or unsafe locations to inform citywide lighting upgrades and street-design improvements.

The initiative has expanded to 65 cities across 16 countries, mapping over 150,000 locations and drawing on data from over 400,000 institutions.

Multilateral efforts, like a new **international coalition to end violence against women and girls**, will share expertise to scale up prevention work. This was announced at the [Global Partnerships Conference](#), and with eight initial member countries (UK, South Africa, Brazil, Morocco, Spain, Jamaica, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Australia).

The Coalition has three pillars:

- 1) building an international coalition to drive national action and political commitment;
- 2) tackling technology-facilitated violence; and
- 3) preventing and responding to violence in conflict and humanitarian crisis including sexual violence and survivor centered justice.

Next year, the UK will convene a major summit on tackling violence against women and girls where countries can set out further commitments and report on progress.

The W20 Safety and Security full report, in the **W20 Guidebook for Policymakers**, presents additional recommendations, each accompanied by measurable targets, implementation metrics, and illustrative case studies to support adaptation and implementation across diverse national contexts. www.Women20.org