



QUICK GUIDE: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

PROBLEM: One in three women say they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at least once since the age of 16 (BMFSFJ 2020). Women experience this violence in relationships, at work, at colleges and universities, on the street, and even online. Despite awareness of these figures, a culture of trivialization (keyword: “victim blaming”) seems to prevail in society. Education is therefore important and necessary.

This quick guide is intended to help.

1 FORMS OF VIOLENCE ACCORDING TO THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION ¹

PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUALIZED VIOLENCE, AND RAPE

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

FORCED ABORTION AND FORCED STERILIZATION

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

STALKING

FORCED MARRIAGE

SELECTED DEFINITIONS AND FIGURES

Domestic violence refers to the use or threat of physical, psychological, and/or sexual violence in a family, marital, or partnership context. Domestic violence is characterized by the following features, among others: an emotional bond between the perpetrator and the victim, the existence of an asymmetrical power relationship, and the use of violence usually in the victim's own home.

- Women in relationships account for ... (see BMFSFJ 2020):
 - 98.4% of victims of rape, sexual assault, and sexual abuse in relationships,
 - 88.5% of victims of stalking and threats,
 - 77% of victims of intentional, simple bodily harm, murder, and manslaughter.
- So-called femicides also occur, especially in the domestic environment. This term refers to the killing of a woman because of her gender. The German Women Lawyers Association points out that every day a woman is affected by an attempted or completed homicide by her own husband, partner, or ex-partner. These acts of violence are far too often referred to as “family tragedies” or “relationship dramas,” which leads to a trivialization of the acts on the one hand and to misrepresentation on the other, due to the failure to label them as gender-based violence. (DJB 2020)

“Sexual harassment is a form of violence that is primarily directed against women and is primarily about demonstrating power. It can take various forms, for example: sexual innuendo, obscene words or gestures, unwanted [...] messages with sexual content [or] acts of sexual violence.” (BAfzA n.d., emphasis added)

- More than two-thirds of all women have been sexually harassed at work by colleagues or superiors at least once (BAfzA, n.d.).

¹ The Istanbul Convention is a Council of Europe agreement to combat all forms of violence against women. With the ratification and entry into force of the convention in 2014, a legal framework was created at the pan-European level. In addition, a monitoring mechanism (“GREVIO”) was established at the same time to ensure the cooperation of the contracting parties. Since 2018, Germany has also committed itself to combating violence against women at all levels of government. Further information: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/historical-background>



HERAUSFORDERUNGEN

- **THE PREVALENCE AND/OR TRIVIALIZATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Violence against women is a phenomenon that occurs in all social classes, regardless of the age or nationality of the women affected (BMFSFJ 2020). What is dramatic about these experiences of violence is that they often do not end with the act of violence itself, but usually have long-term emotional or even economic consequences for the victims (Meschkutat & Holzbecher 2011). In addition, those affected often become victims of so-called “victim blaming” or fear that they will become victims of it (Meyer 2015), which amounts to a “double punishment” (Appelt, Höllriegel & Logar 2001).

DEFINITION „VICTIM BLAMING“

This is an attitude that suggests that the victim themselves is responsible for the assault, for example due to provocative actions, choice of words, or clothing. This unjustified attribution of blame is one of the main reasons why survivors of sexual and domestic violence do not report these incidents (Appelt, Höllriegel & Logar 2001).

- **INADEQUATE SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE (AND EDUCATION) FOR WOMEN AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE**

Studies show that, on average, one in five women (i.e., 19%) in the EU is unaware of the support services available to women affected by violence in their country (FRA 2014). Furthermore, the majority of victims do not seek police or other professional assistance (Wiener & Winterholler 2016).

→ **Increased discrimination against trans women, migrant women, women with disabilities, or homeless women (see Institute for Human Rights).**

German Institute for Human Rights (2017) points out that, with regard to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention (which came into force in Germany on February 1, 2018), it is/will be crucial to pay attention to the specific living conditions of trans women, migrant women, women with disabilities, and homeless women, as these women are often unable to access official support services on an equal footing.

2 SEXUAL VIOLENCE ² AT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

As places of research and teaching, colleges and universities are obliged to protect their members from all forms of discrimination (Antidiskriminierungsstelle 2019). However, research on this topic indicates that universities have structures that can promote sexual harassment, discrimination, and violence (e.g., lack of trained staff, unclear structures and responsibilities, short-term contracts for employees) (Pantelmann 2020).

- Half of the female students surveyed (54.7%) in an EU-wide study conducted between 2009 and 2011 reported having experienced sexual harassment during their studies. In 3.3% of cases, this involved sexual violence. These two forms of violence are perpetrated by men in 97.5% and 96.6% of cases respectively, with fellow students being more likely to be the perpetrators than teachers (cf. Kocher&Porsche 2015).
- A 2012 survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights shows that half of the LGBTQ people surveyed reported having experienced violence in educational institutions, primarily because of their recognizable membership in a marginalized group. 18% felt personally discriminated against because of their sexuality or gender. (cf. Kocher&Porsche 2015).
- Initial results of an exploratory study by the Free University of Berlin (Pantelmann 2020, survey conducted in the 2017/18 winter semester) indicate that these incidents often involve non-physical assaults, such as

² Der Begriff „Sexualisierte Gewalt“ wird verwendet, um darauf hinzuweisen, dass es sich nicht ausschließlich um sexuelle Übergriffe handelt, sondern um eine Form der Gewalt, die maßgeblich mit einem Machtmissbrauch einhergeht. D.h. diese Bezeichnung schließt auch Diskriminierung aufgrund des Geschlechts mit ein (z. B.: Sprache, Blicke).



catcalling, sexually charged looks, comments/messages, or conversations with sexual content. At the same time, those affected tend to normalize these incidents.

- Unfortunately, there is a gap in protection against discrimination, particularly sexual harassment, at universities: while employees are protected by law under the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG), this is unfortunately not the case for students. Universities have various options for counteracting this problem, for example through preventive measures, procedural guidelines, or sanctions. However, even if these measures are already in place, there is often room for improvement, including in the areas of continuing education and staff training. In addition, there is still a lack of data providing information on the specific situation regarding sexual harassment and violence at colleges and universities. (see Gender Congress 2020)

3 DIGRESSION: VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN

Statistics show (e.g., police crime statistics (2018) or a pilot study by the BMFSFJ (2004)) that men also regularly experience physical, psychological, and sexual violence in domestic and non-domestic settings—albeit significantly less researched. Men experience dealing with this violence as an obstacle, especially when it falls into the realm of alleged “unmanliness.” This is often due to a strong social taboo, because, for example, the idea of a man as a victim is difficult to reconcile with stereotypical notions of masculinity. This problem manifests itself in particular in feelings of shame and the associated failure to make use of official support programs (see BMFSFJ 2004 and BKA 2018).

- In 2018, the proportion of men affected by intimate partner violence was 18.7% (BKA 2018).
- The incidence of violence against men decreases in adulthood (BMFSFJ 2004). Men primarily experience physical violence and psychological violence in public and in their leisure time or at work (BMFSFJ 2004).

IF YOU HAVE BEEN A VICTIM OF (SEXUAL) VIOLENCE, YOU CAN FIND HELP HERE, AMONG OTHER PLACES:

- Bamberg Women's Shelter: 24-hour telephone: 0951 5 82 80, frauenhaus@skf-bamberg.de
- Bamberg sexual violence emergency hotline: 0951 9 86 87 30, notruf@skf-bamberg.de
- Bamberg Police Officer for Victims of Crime: 0951 9129 480, www.polizei.bayern.de
- Violence Against Women Helpline: 08000 116 016, www.hilfetelefon.de
- Sexual abuse helpline: 0800 22 55 530, www.hilfeportal-missbrauch.de
- Police advice: www.polizei-beratung.de
- Pro Beweis network: www.probeweis.de
- www.telefonseelsorge.de
- www.weisser-ring.de
- Violence against men helpline: 0800 123 99 00, www.maennerhilfetelefon.de



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