Sexual and gender-based violence in Central Asia

PREVALENCE DATA

Quality and comprehensive data on experiences of victimization, scope, nature and consequences of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) are crucial for effective policymaking. Such data can raise awareness on SGBV in society and increase duty bearers' accountability in preventing and combating this type violence. It allows for the design of evidence-based measures and to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of legislation, policies, and other actions to tackle violence over time.

Dedicated surveys are the best way to get a comprehensive approach to SGBV prevalence data, but frequent, cost-effective, alternatives are to integrate SGBV modules in existing surveys, such as Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys – MICS, Demographic and

Health Surveys – DHS, or health or general crime surveys. However, violence against women is still highly underreported.

This publication provides a summary of the available data on the prevalence of SGBV in Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) from SGBV-dedicated surveys and broader surveys which include SGBV modules conducted in the region. This data may inform and assist decision-makers and stakeholders, at sectoral level (particularly, law enforcement, social sector and healthcare sector, as well as gender and statistics offices of the governments) to improve the quality and availability of SGBV prevalence data.

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)

> " All acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. "

> " Violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately "

> " Violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women "

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, 2011. [1]

In this publication, the term sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is understood to comprise the following forms:

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
family violence and abuse, intimate partner violence

SEXUAL VIOLENCE
limited to rape and sexual assault

HARMFUL PRACTICES
limited to early marriage, bride kidnapping

Types of SGBV data

Administrative data

- Collected through day-to-day delivery of services in institutions

- Used mainly for internal purposes

- Can provide information on the capacity of institutions to protect and support victims, as well as to prosecute perpetrators

- Encompasses only violence which is reported to these institutions and does not represent the full extent of the problem

Prevalence data

- The best source for estimating the prevalence of VAW are population-based surveys

- Capture the responses of people who have reported SGBV/sought helped, as well as of those who have not

- Provide a proxy to prevalence and not actual prevalence, depending on survey sample design and the respondents' willingness to disclose their experiences of violence

PREVALENCE ≠ INCIDENCE

Prevalence data = the proportion of the population that experienced violence in a given period (counts people, regardless of how many occurrences happened to them)

Incidence data = number of new episodes in a given time (even if perpetrated against the same person)

These types of data are different but complementary.

Standards for prevalence data

Definitions used in the survey should be consistent with international recommendations, in order to facilitate population of common indicators (i.e., SDGs indicators) during data processing stages.

Defining the target population is crucial to obtaining prevalence data. Sample design is a complex process that should ensure representativeness, considering all population who could be victims of violence.

It is recommended that only women aged 15 and above are considered, to avoid confusion between GBV and other types of violence against children, issues with validity of consent, inter alia. [2]

Besides focusing on experiences of victimization, surveys might also cover attitudes and perceptions of violence, as well as issues related to disclosure and barriers to seeking help. [2]

Surveys should integrate both quantitative and qualitative approaches to draw the most comprehensive conclusions possible.

Ethical and safety considerations should be a priority, to ensure privacy and confidentiality at all stages and guarantee data anonymity.

The outcomes of prevalence surveys should be made publicly available and presented in ways that are easily retrievable and useful for stakeholders, policymakers, service providers, advocates, the media and general public. [3]

SGBV prevalence data in Central Asia

Data sources considered in this publication are limited to currently available online population-based surveys conducted at national or regional levels in Central Asia, covering the forms of violence that were the focus of the Regional Spotlight Initiative activities. The timeframe selected for the search of data sources ranged was 2011-2022, the period between the landmark adoption of the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and October 2022.

Data on prevalence on intimate partner violence and non-partner violence against women was not available for all countries in Central Asia. Kazakhstan's nationally representative survey on

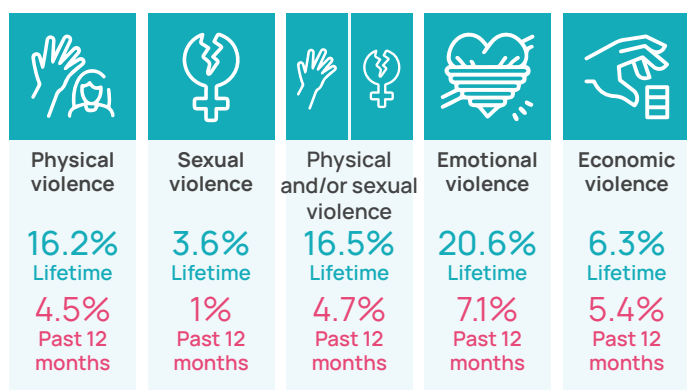violence against women can be regarded as a good practice.

Some forms of SGBV, such as harmful practices like bride kidnapping, are less documented. Prevalence estimates of these forms of SGBV were only found in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

In many countries, large-scale surveys, such as the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) or Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) are valuable (in some cases the only) sources of SGBV prevalence data. In other countries, like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, other national surveys (such as surveys on public safety and crime and victimization) integrated modules on SGBV, for example on non-partner sexual assault.
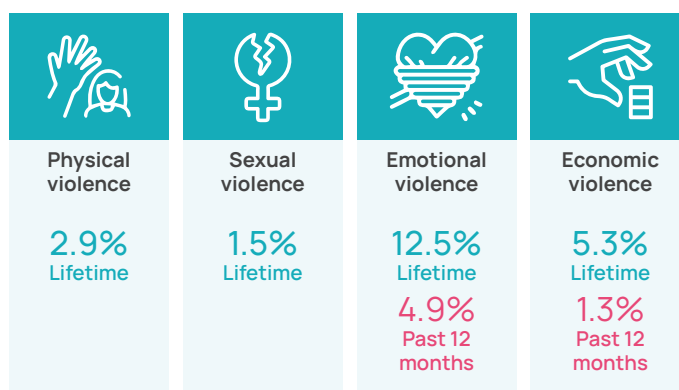
Kazakhstan

Intimate partner violence

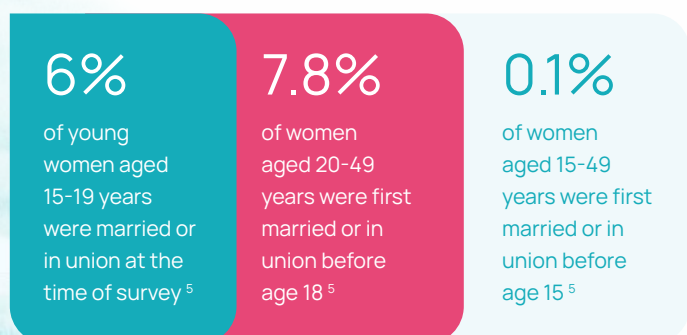Intimate partner violence experienced by women aged 18-75 years [4]

Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical and/or sexual violence	Emotional violence	Economic violence
16.2% Lifetime	3.6% Lifetime	16.5% Lifetime	20.6% Lifetime	6.3% Lifetime
4.5% Past 12 months	1% Past 12 months	4.7% Past 12 months	7.1% Past 12 months	5.4% Past 12 months

Non-partner violence

Violence committed by a non-partner experienced by women aged 18-75 years, since age 15 [4]

Physical violence	Sexual violence	Emotional violence	Economic violence
2.9% Lifetime	1.5% Lifetime	12.5% Lifetime	5.3% Lifetime
		4.9% Past 12 months	1.3% Past 12 months

Early marriage

6% of young women aged 15-19 years were married or in union at the time of survey [5]

7.8% of women aged 20-49 years were first married or in union before age 18 [5]

0.1% of women aged 15-49 years were first married or in union before age 15 [5]

Bride kidnapping

4.5% of married women report having been kidnapped for marriage [6]

34% of which (of the 4.5%) report not having agreed to this kidnapping in advance [6]

Kyrgyzstan

Intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence experienced by ever-married women aged 15-49 [7]

Emotional violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence
14.1% Lifetime	25.1% Lifetime	4% Lifetime
		17.1% Past 12 months
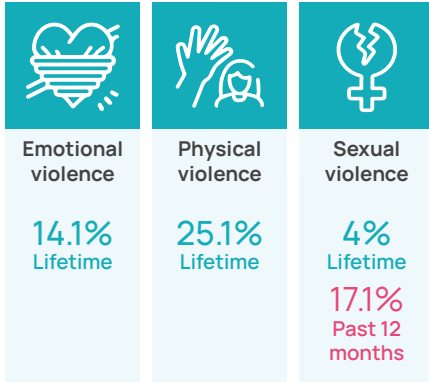
1 out of 4 women aged 15-49 have ever experienced physical or sexual violence [7]

Early marriage

9.1% women aged 15-19 years were married or in union at the time of survey [8]

Women aged 20-24 who were first married before 18-year-old [8]

2012 - 7.8%

2018 - 12.9%

Bride kidnapping

14.4% of women report having been kidnapped for marriage [9]

4.89% of women have been kidnapped for marriage without giving their prior approval [9]
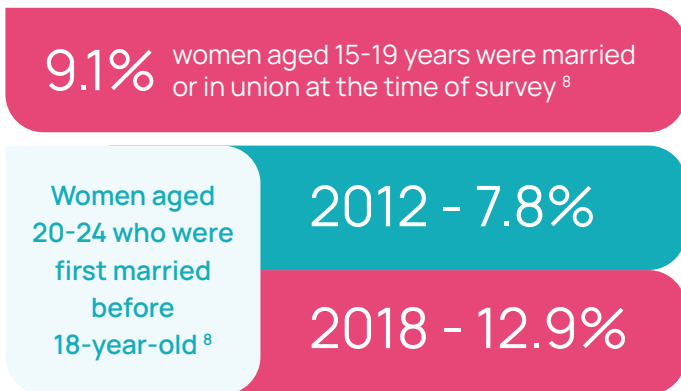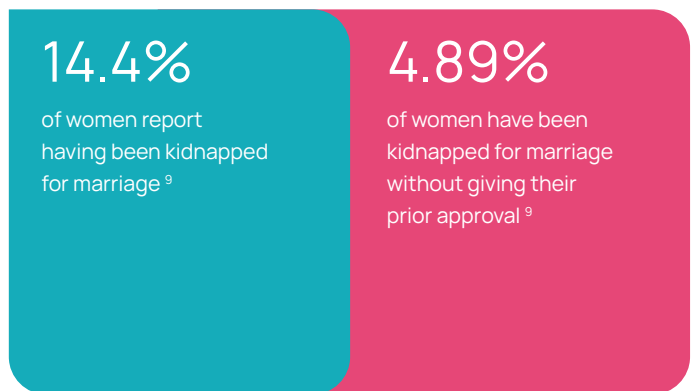
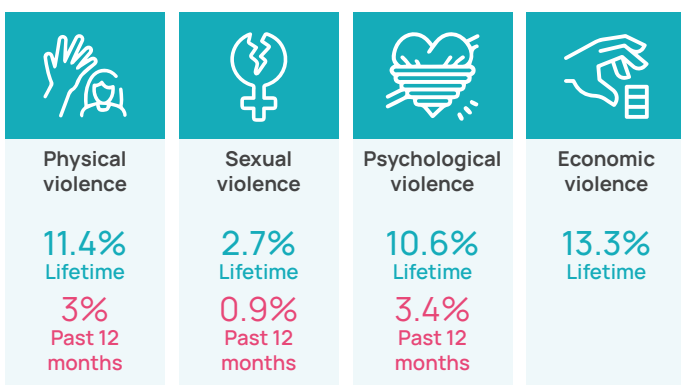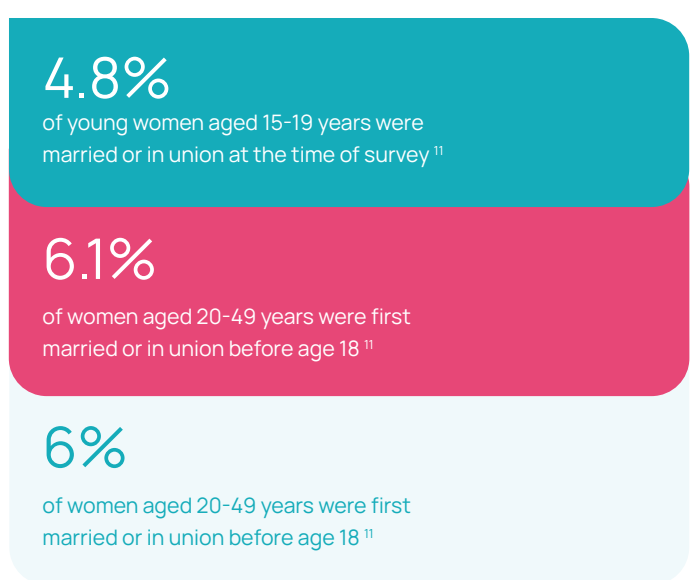# Turkmenistan

Intimate partner violence

16.1% of women aged 18-59 have been subjected to any form of intimate partner violence during lifetime [10]

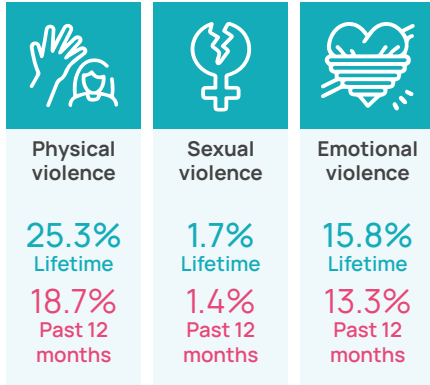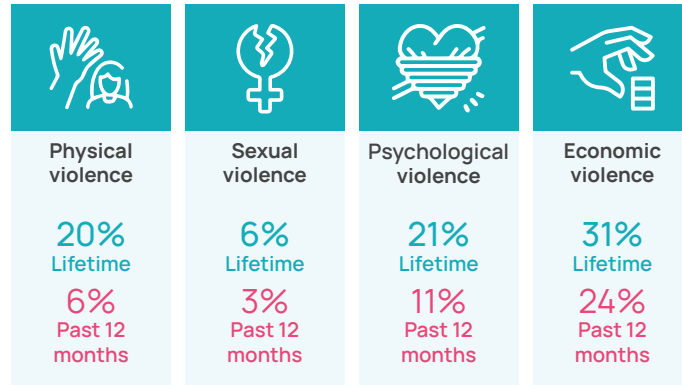Intimate partner violence experienced by women aged 18-59 [10]

Physical violence	Sexual violence	Psychological violence	Economic violence
11.4% Lifetime	2.7% Lifetime	10.6% Lifetime	13.3% Lifetime
3% Past 12 months	0.9% Past 12 months	3.4% Past 12 months	

Early marriage

4.8% of young women aged 15-19 years were married or in union at the time of survey [11]

6.1% of women aged 20-49 years were first married or in union before age 18 [11]

6% of women aged 20-49 years were first married or in union before age 18 [11]

Tajikistan

Intimate partner violence

Intimate partner violence experienced by women aged 15-49 [12]

Physical violence	Sexual violence	Emotional violence
25.3% Lifetime	**1.7%** Lifetime	**15.8%** Lifetime
18.7% Past 12 months	**1.4%** Past 12 months	**13.3%** Past 12 months

Violence committed by current partner experienced by women aged 18 and above [13]

Physical violence	Sexual violence	Psychological violence	Economic violence
20% Lifetime	**6%** Lifetime	**21%** Lifetime	**31%** Lifetime
6% Past 12 months	**3%** Past 12 months	**11%** Past 12 months	**24%** Past 12 months

Violence committed by former partner experienced by women aged 18 and above [12]

Physical violence	Psychological violence	Economic violence
66% Lifetime	**59%** Lifetime	**60%** Lifetime
5% Past 12 months	**11%** Past 12 months	**10%** Past 12 months

1 out of 4 women aged 15-49 have ever experienced physical or sexual violence [12]
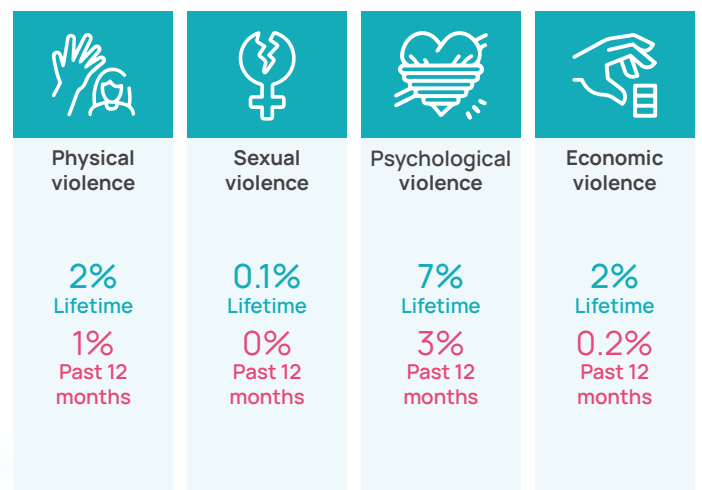
Early marriage

13.3% women aged 25-49 years were married or in a union before age 18 [12]

1 out of 10 girls aged 15-19 were in a union in 2017 [12]

Non-partner violence

Non-partner violence experienced by women aged 18 and above [13]

Physical violence	Sexual violence	Psychological violence	Economic violence
2% Lifetime	**0.1%** Lifetime	**7%** Lifetime	**2%** Lifetime
1% Past 12 months	**0%** Past 12 months	**3%** Past 12 months	**0.2%** Past 12 months

Uzbekistan

Intimate partner violence

4 out of 10 girls
aged 18-19 years

3 out of 10 girls
aged 15-17 years

consider wife beating justified for any of the following reasons: [14]

- she goes out without telling her husband
- she neglects the children
- she argues with her husband
- she refuses having sex with her husband
- she burns the food

Early marriage

4.9%
of women 15–19 years were married in Uzbekistan in 2022 [15]

Women aged 20-49 who were first married before 18-year-old (2007 [14] compared to 2022 [15])

2007 - 12.5%

2022 - 8%

Recommendations

- Countries should estimate through surveys the prevalence of intimate partner violence and non-partner violence against women aged 15 and older, in their lifetime and previous 12 months, as well as the prevalence of harmful practices.

- Surveys should assess also other crucial data necessary for effective policymaking, such as use of services and attitudes towards domestic violence.

- International large-scale surveys can be used as model tools to collect data on SGBV against women.

- SGBV modules integrated in other national surveys should be repeated regularly, to provide comparable data over time.

References

[1] Council of Europe (2011). Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Opened for signature in Istanbul, 11.V.2011, entry into force 01/08/2014.

[2] United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UN DESA] (2014). Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women: Statistical Surveys. United Nations.

[3] Walby, S. (2016). Ensuring Data Collection and Research on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence: Article 11 of the Istanbul Convention. Council of Europe.

[4] Committee of Statistics of Kazakhstan, UN Women, UNFPA, World Health Organization (WHO) in Kazakhstan (2018). Sample Survey on Violence Against Women in Kazakhstan.

[5] The Statistics Committee of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Statistics Committee of the MNE RK), UNICEF, UNFPA (2016). 2015 Kazakhstan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Final Report.

[6] North Irish Cooperation Organization (2018). Criminal Victimization in Kazakhstan in an international perspective: new findings from the International Crime Victims Survey.

[7] National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (NSC), Ministry of Health [Kyrgyz Republic], and ICF International (2013). Kyrgyz Republic Demographic and Health Survey 2012.

[8] National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF (2019). Kyrgyzstan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2018, Survey Findings Report.

[9] Civil Union "For Reforms and Results" (2015). International Public Safety Survey in Kyrgyzstan 2015, Final Report.

[10] Institute of State, Law and Democracy of Turkmenistan, State Statistics Committee of Turkmenistan, Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan, and UNFPA (2021). Health and Status of a Woman in the Family in Turkmenistan: Report on the results of the national sample survey.

[11] The State Committee of Turkmenistan for Statistics and UNICEF (2020). 2019 Turkmenistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey. Survey Findings Report.

[12] Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, and ICF (2018). Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017.

[13] UNDP, the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNFPA and the Committee on Women and Family Affairs under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. (2021) Assessment of the Situation on the Manifestation of Gender Violence Against Women and Girls in the Republic of Tajikistan.

[14] State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). October 2022. 2021-2022 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Uzbekistan, Statistical Snapshot Report.

[15] UNICEF and State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2007). 2006 Uzbekistan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Final Report.