

IN BRIEF

Tracking countries' efforts to strengthen access to justice to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls

Introduction

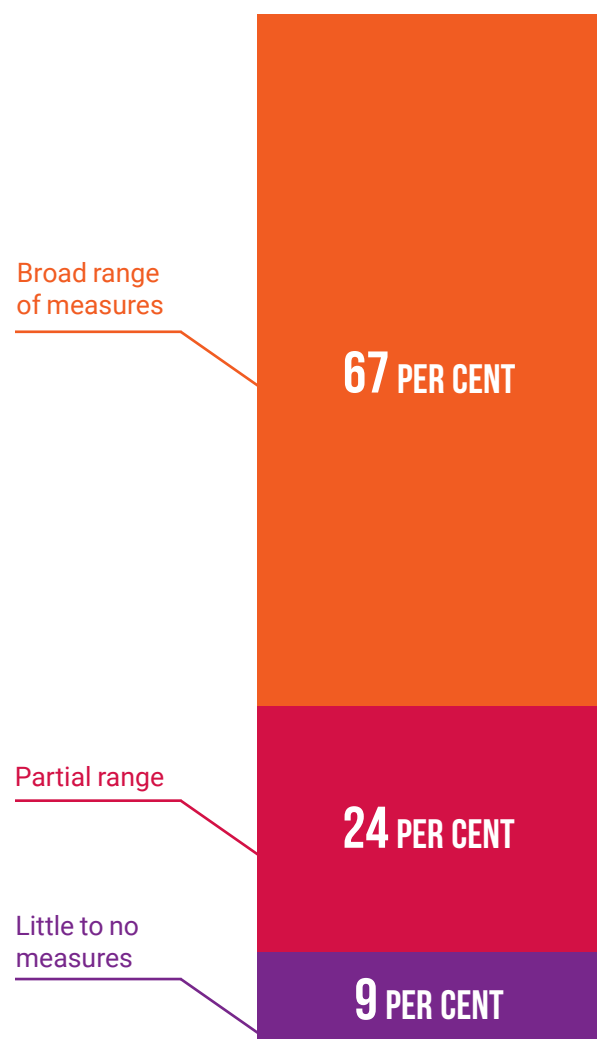
In 2026, the priority theme of the seventieth session of the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW70) focused on “ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, and addressing structural barriers”. Access to justice for survivors of violence is fundamental for addressing impunity, protecting the human rights of women and girls to live free from violence. It is therefore, a critical component of both prevention and response efforts.

In light of this focus, this research brief assesses the extent to which States around the world have reported the adoption of measures to strengthen access to justice in violence against women and girls (VAWG) cases. The brief presents a global snapshot of State progress – and gaps – in adopting effective measures to strengthen access to justice in VAWG cases. It also includes country examples of good practices, with a focus on multisectoral, coordinated, survivor-centered mechanisms and services.

THE MAJORITY OF STATES – 80 PER CENT AND ABOVE – HAVE REPORTED ADOPTING SPECIFIC VAWG LEGISLATION, PREVENTION INITIATIVES THROUGH AWARENESS RAISING, SOCIAL SERVICES, AND COORDINATED/INTEGRATED MECHANISMS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Highlights

Two in three States report adopting a broad range of measures to strengthen access to justice in VAWG cases – but gaps remain.



“Broad range of measures” refers to reported actions spanning law/policy, prevention, coordination/integration, institutional strengthening, and survivor services.

What the data shows

KEY FINDINGS



OVERALL COVERAGE

2 IN 3

Member States report adopting a broad range of measures to strengthen access to justice in VAWG cases.



THE GAP

1 IN 3

Member States report only partial measures, and nine per cent report little to none.



COORDINATED PATHWAYS

4 IN 5

Member States report some coordinated or integrated mechanism – but fewer report holistic models such as one-stop centres and referral systems.



SURVIVOR SERVICES

4 IN 5

Member States report some essential social services – but coverage varies, particularly for psychosocial support.

Where progress stalls

Reporting a measure is an important first step – but access to justice depends on whether laws and services are well designed, accessible in practice, and consistently implemented. The adoption of a law does not in itself guarantee protection, accountability, or effective remedies for survivors. Similarly, services may remain out of reach due to cost, distance, lack of information, language barriers, gaps in disability-inclusive protocols, unsafe reporting pathways, weak coordination across sectors, and gender bias and systemic discrimination. Ensuring effective

implementation is essential. This includes whether legislation aligns with international standards, whether protocols are applied consistently by frontline actors, and whether services are resourced and survivor-centred. Because this brief assesses only whether States have reported selected measures, further research is needed to understand how measures are formulated and implemented at country level, and to assess impact, building on initial analysis showcasing the effectiveness of comprehensive approaches to end violence against women and girls.



Survivor referral pathways are uneven

Many Member States report coordination, but fewer report holistic systems to help survivors move smoothly from first disclosure to services and justice outcomes.

< **1 IN 3** Report one-stop centres

< **1 IN 2** Report referral mechanisms



Training gaps persist – especially in justice institutions

Training is a practical enabler of survivor-centred justice, yet reported coverage is lower for justice sector personnel than for police.

Police training: **1 IN 2** MEMBER STATES

Justice Sector training: **40 PER CENT** OF MEMBER STATES



Institutional capacities are limited

Specialized measures including specialized courts and legal aid services are necessary to ensure accessible, inclusive and gender-responsive justice and police services.

Measures aimed at strengthening the response of police and justice sectors to VAWG: **1 IN 2** MEMBER STATES

Legal aid measures: **22 PER CENT** OF MEMBER STATES



Survivor-centered social services

Survivor-centered social services are essential for providing holistic assistance to victims/survivors seeking to escape violence and to access necessary information and safety.

Shelters or helplines: **2 OUT OF 3** MEMBER STATES

Psychosocial counseling: < **1 IN 2** MEMBER STATES

Takeway

The relatively low uptake of necessary measures to strengthen capacity of police and justice service providers and ensure gender-sensitive responses is concerning as these are key measures necessary to ensure effective implementation of existing legal and policy frameworks.

Examples from country practice

Member States report a range of approaches to strengthening access to justice – including measures to improve coordination, specialized justice responses, and safer ways to report violence.

Antigua and Barbuda

Sexual Offences Model Court

With specialized procedures including fast tracking, specially trained court staff, victim-sensitive court measures, and integrated support services.

Fiji

National GBV Service Delivery Protocol

A protocol designed to strengthen referral networks, providing a multisectoral response to ensure access to appropriate, timely and quality services.

Greece

Domestic violence risk assessment tool

A multisectoral risk assessment approach for enhanced risk assessment and victim protection.

Lesotho

National referral framework for trafficking in persons

A structured mechanism to enhance coordination to ensure victims have access to support services and protection.

Philippines

“Aleng Pulis and the Cybersquad”

A specialized virtual helpline that supports reporting of online violence and provides access to knowledge and resources.

Ecuador

National Protocol for Investigating Femicides and Other Violent Deaths of Women and Girls

A protocol with specific gender-focused guidelines.

This brief is drawn from UN Women’s Global Database on Violence against Women and Girls, which contains 7,500+ measures self-reported by 194 UN Member and Observer States through official UN reporting procedures.

These findings reflect what Member States report having in place in official UN reporting processes. The analysis identifies global patterns, but it does not assess the content, effectiveness, or implementation status of individual

measures. In other words, a measure appearing in the database does not necessarily mean it is effective or adequately implemented, and the database does not track the degree of implementation or impact.

For deeper detail and expanded examples, see the full companion document: **Global Database on Violence against Women and Girls – Access to Justice Analysis.**

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UN Women exists to advance women’s rights, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. As the lead United Nations entity on gender equality, we shift laws, institutions, social norms and services to close the gender gap and build an equal world for all women and girls. We keep the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because gender equality is not just what we do. It is who we are.