

Protecting Women from Violence

The indicator on Protecting women from violence focuses on examining the scope and existence of laws on domestic violence and sexual harassment. Women, Business and the Law 2016 expands coverage to whether women are protected from marital rape, what the legal age of marriage is for boys and girls and if there are any exceptions to the legal age of marriage, and whether protection orders can be authorized.

Key Findings in this Indicator:

- 46 economies of the 173 analyzed by the report have no laws specifically protecting women from domestic violence. Where governments fail to provide this protection, women are likely to have shorter life spans.
- Over the past two years, Belarus, Latvia, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Tonga enacted laws on domestic violence for the first time.
- 75 economies have laws on domestic violence which provide protection from physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse.
- Hungary, Italy, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and New Zealand recently amended their legislation to cover economic abuse as a form of domestic violence.
- In 124 economies protection orders are offered to victims of domestic violence.
- 18 economies have no legislation on either domestic violence or sexual harassment: Afghanistan; Cameroon; Chad; the Republic of Congo; Djibouti; Equatorial Guinea; Gabon; Guinea; Haiti; the Islamic Republic of Iran; Liberia; Mali; Mauritania; Oman; the Russian Federation; South Sudan; Swaziland and Uzbekistan.
- Only 52 of the covered economies protect girls and women from sexual harassment in education and only 18 protect women from sexual harassment in public places.
- Recently, the Arab Republic of Egypt adopted a law which criminalizes sexual harassment in employment, education and public places and Peru enacted legislation covering sexual harassment in public places.
- 71 economies have legislation explicitly criminalizing marital rape.
- In 26 economies husbands are exempt from facing criminal penalties for marital rape.
- In 11 economies the perpetrators of rape are exempt from criminal charges if they marry their victim.
- Mozambique's new penal code no longer allows charges for rape to be dropped when the perpetrator marries the victim, and it protects against sexual harassment in education.
- Georgia's criminal code now explicitly penalizes marital rape, provides for the removal of a domestic violence perpetrator from the home and adds criminal sanctions for the forced marriage of a minor.
- Israel, Kenya and Malawi raised the legal age of marriage for girls to 18. And Pakistan and Zimbabwe set the legal age of marriage for boys and girls at 18.
- Nicaragua and Uruguay raised the minimum age of marriage for boys and girls with consent to 16.

Women, Business and the Law measures how laws, regulations and institutions differentiate between women and men in ways that may affect women's incentives or capacity to work or to set up and operate a business. It analyzes legal differences on the basis of gender in 173 economies, covering seven areas: accessing institutions, using property, getting a job, providing incentives to work, building credit, going to court and protecting women from violence. The report is published every two years.

The full report and accompanying datasets are available at wbl.worldbank.org.

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