

International regulations

United Nations

In 1979 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the [Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#). In 1989, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women released [General recommendation No. 12 on Violence against Women](#) stating that articles 2, 5, 11, 12 and 16 CEDAW require the States parties to act to protect women against violence of any kind occurring within the family, the workplace, or in any other area of social life. In 1992, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women released the [General recommendation No. 19 on Violence against Women](#) which incorporates violence against women into a framework of discrimination and human rights violations and measures to combat them. Both recommendations reiterate a state's responsibility to act with due diligence in eliminating violence against women.

The United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993 and the [Vienna Declaration and Programme for Action](#), presented gender-based violence as structural and universal. The Declaration also called for the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on violence against women and contributed to the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1993. The Declaration is the first international instrument that solely concerns violence against women. It defines violence against women (article 3) and it specifies that the measures to end violence against women shall target the structures, contexts, and social and cultural patterns which constitute the root causes of this type of violence (article 4 j). Finally, it establishes the relationship between intersecting inequalities and violence.

The Fourth UN World Conference on Women produced the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action \(BPfA\)](#) which comprises a set of 12 critical areas for achieving women's empowerment, including a commitment to combat violence against women, and was adopted by 189 Member States. The Beijing Declaration shows the universal and particular nature of violence against women. It also considers the fear of violence to be a permanent constraint on the mobility of women, limiting their access to resources and basic activities. Furthermore, the BPfA acknowledges additional barriers faced by women due to such factors as race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, disability, etc.

The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe has been actively engaged in the development of policy and legislation targeting gender-based violence. The most relevant instruments to tackle violence against women are:

the 2011 [Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence \(Istanbul Convention\)](#)

the 2005 [Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings](#)

the 2002 [Recommendation Rec\(2002\)5](#) on the protection of violence against women

Together, they provide a comprehensive framework to prevent violence, to protect victims, and to end the impunity of perpetrators. The Istanbul Convention is legally binding regarding all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence. It recognises that domestic violence affects women disproportionately and Parties are encouraged to pay particular attention to women victims of gender-based violence. The Istanbul Convention applies in times of peace and armed conflict. It has been recognised as the **most powerful legally binding set of comprehensive standards** for preventing and combating violence against women in Europe and beyond. The Istanbul Convention entered into force on the 1st of August of 2014. Article 75 (1) expressly provides for - to date outstanding - ratification by the European Union.

Database

[Legal definitions of different types of gender-based violence used in EU Member States](#)

