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# Call for submissions: COVID-19 and the increase of domestic violence against women

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Ms. Dubravka Šimonović, is following closely the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's right to a life free from violence. As she warned in a recent [statement](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25749&LangID=E) in 27 March 2020, the efforts to deal with the current health crisis may lead to an increase in domestic violence against women.

As initial police and hotline reports suggest, domestic violence has already surged in many countries, as measures imposing isolation compel a number of women to be kept at home under the same roof with perpetrators, thus exacerbating women's vulnerability to domestic violence, including femicides. The risk is aggravated by fewer police interventions; the closure of courts and limited access to justice; the closure of shelters and services for victims, and reduced access to reproductive health services.

In her upcoming report to the General Assembly, to be presented in October 2020, the Special Rapporteur on violence against women will address the topic of COVID-19 and the increase of violence against women, with a focus on domestic violence. To that end, the Special Rapporteur wishes to receive all relevant information on the increase of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic from civil society, States, National Human Rights Institutions, international organizations, academia and other stakeholders on the following issues:

1. To what extent has there been an increase of violence against women, especially domestic violence in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns? Please provide all available data on the increase of violence against women, including domestic violence and femicides, registered during the COVID-19 crisis.
2. Are helplines run by Government and/or civil society available? Has there been an increase in the number of calls in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. Can women victims of domestic violence be exempted from restrictive measures to stay at home in isolation if they face domestic violence?
4. Are shelters open and available? Are there any alternatives to shelters available if they are closed or without sufficient capacity?
5. Are protection orders available and accessible in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?
6. What are the impacts on women's access to justice? Are courts open and providing protection and decisions in cases of domestic violence?
7. What are the impacts of the current restrictive measures and lockdowns on women's access to health services? Please specify whether services are closed or suspended, particularly those focusing on reproductive health.
8. Please provide examples of obstacles encountered to prevent and combat domestic violence during the COVID-19 lockdowns.
9. Please provide examples of good practices to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence and to combat other gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by Governments.
10. Please provide examples of good practices to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence and to combat other gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by NGOs and NHRIs or equality bodies.
11. Please send any additional information on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on domestic violence against women not covered by the questions above.

All submissions should be sent to vaw@ohchr.org as soon as possible, and will be received until **30 June 2020**. You are kindly requested to provide your submissions in English, French or Spanish. Kindly indicate if you DO NOT wish your submission to be made publicly available.