

How climate change contributes to violence against women

Zonta Says NOW, 2024



Introduction



Gender-Based Violence and Disaster

Debra Parkinson

<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199389407.013.390>

Published online: 24 February 2022

Global investigation of over 50 studies between 1993 and 2020 (2022)

Gender-based violence (GBV) increases in disasters around the world

<https://oxfordre.com/naturalhazardscience/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780199389407.001.0001/acrefore-9780199389407-e-390>

Triggers of GBV include:

Unsafe or
insecure housing

Substance
abuse

Stress, trauma,
grief, loss

Relationship
problems

Unemployment and
economic pressures

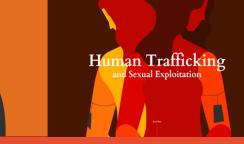
Complex bureaucracy
re: grants, insurance,
rebuilding

Reduced informal
and formal support
and services

Restricted movement
and transport options

Changed community
/ different life course

In disasters, there is enormous pressure on women not to speak of men's violence—from family members, friends, police, and even health professionals...



Intimate Partner Violence

Read More

Intimate partner violence



Climate crisis linked to rising domestic violence in south Asia, study finds

Increase of 1C in average annual temperature connected to more than 6% rise in physical and sexual domestic violence

The study tracked 194,871 girls and women aged 15-49 from India, Pakistan and Nepal between 2010 and 2018. (2023)

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/jun/28/climate-crisis-linked-to-rising-domestic-violence-in-south-asia-study-finds>

In Madrid, a 2018 study found that in a heatwave, the risk of intimate partner femicide rose 40%

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969718324446?via%3Dhub>

In Kenya, women who experienced severe weather events had a 60% higher odds of reporting intimate partner violence (2021)

<https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/18/23/12697>



Intimate partner violence



Suniti's story – India

- When the May and June heat hit, it became impossible for my husband to work in the fields.
- We lost our only source of income.
- He became angry because he feels helpless about not being able to feed the children.
- When the frustration builds up and the children are whining and fighting, he takes it out on me.
- He beats the children too.
- He regrets hitting the children later.
- The next day, when he still can't go out and earn, he does it again.



Comment from bushfire survivors in Australia





Sexual Violence

Read More





Sexual violence

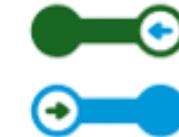


Women who are displaced

- At greater risk of violence, including sexual violence, in emergency shelters, tents, camps
- If women report the violence, they may be imprisoned

Women who are left behind

- When men leave home to seek a living elsewhere, women and children are left to fend for themselves.
- This makes them vulnerable to violence and sexual exploitation.



Following Hurricane Katrina, the rate of **rape** among women displaced to trailer parks **rose 53.6 times** the baseline rate in Mississippi for that year.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2022/07/climate-change-exacerbates-violence-against-women-and-girls#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%2080,High%20Commissioner%20for%20Human%20Rights.>

Sexual Violence



Sex as currency

- Food vendors, farmers or landowners
 - Trade sex with women
 - in exchange for food or rent.
- Women may try to negotiate providing labour in exchange for food
- In Kenya, fish for sex (Jaboya system) leads to high prevalence of HIV

<https://www.undp.org/blog/why-climate-change-fuels-violence-against-women>

<https://grist.org/justice/the-climate-crisis-is-putting-women-in-danger-study-finds/>

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2019/12/26/789129312/no-sex-for-fish-how-women-in-a-fishing-village-are-fighting-for-power>

Water
insecurity and
gender-based
violence in sub-
Saharan Africa
and South Asia

Water within households

Access, adequacy,
reliability



Insufficient water in the
household can cause:

Verbal disputes / violence

Intergenerational physical violence to
enforce water collection roles

Physical violence for failing to meet
prescribed gender roles, requesting
help to collect water, or taking too long
to fetch water.

Punishment of daughters-in-law for
failing to provide sufficient water

Walking to water collection points

Access, reliability, safety



Long distances and isolation at water
sources, predictability of schedules,
darkness, and vegetation cover
facilitate targeting of women to:

Verbal and sexual harassment

Physical assault/ attack

Sexual harassment / assault / rape / 'bride' abductions

Fighting between water gatherers
due to long queues

Transactional sex between water
vendors and women/girls

Water collection points

Access, adequacy, reliability,
safety, affordability



Isolation of water collection
points and male control of water
points contribute to:



Women Environmental Human Rights Defenders:

Facing gender-based violence in defense of land, natural resources and human rights



SHARED RESOURCES, JOINT SOLUTIONS



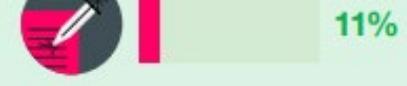
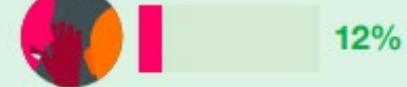
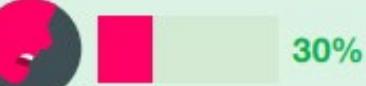
https://portals.iucn.org/union/sites/union/files/doc/iucn-srjs-briefs-wehrd-gbv-en_0.pdf

Between 2015 and 2016 in Mesoamerica, there were 2,197 documented attacks against women human rights defenders, 37% of which had a specific gender component,



meaning that part of the basis for attacks against the defender was due to being a woman.

Most of the attacks were in the form of intimidation and psychological harassment (30%), slander and defamation (12%) and threats and warnings (11%);



21 women defenders were murdered with another 44 attempted murders.



State actors were the main perpetrators of violence, with 54% of assailants identified as police, military personnel, public officials or government authorities [11].



54%



Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation

[Read More](#)



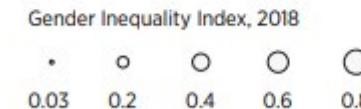
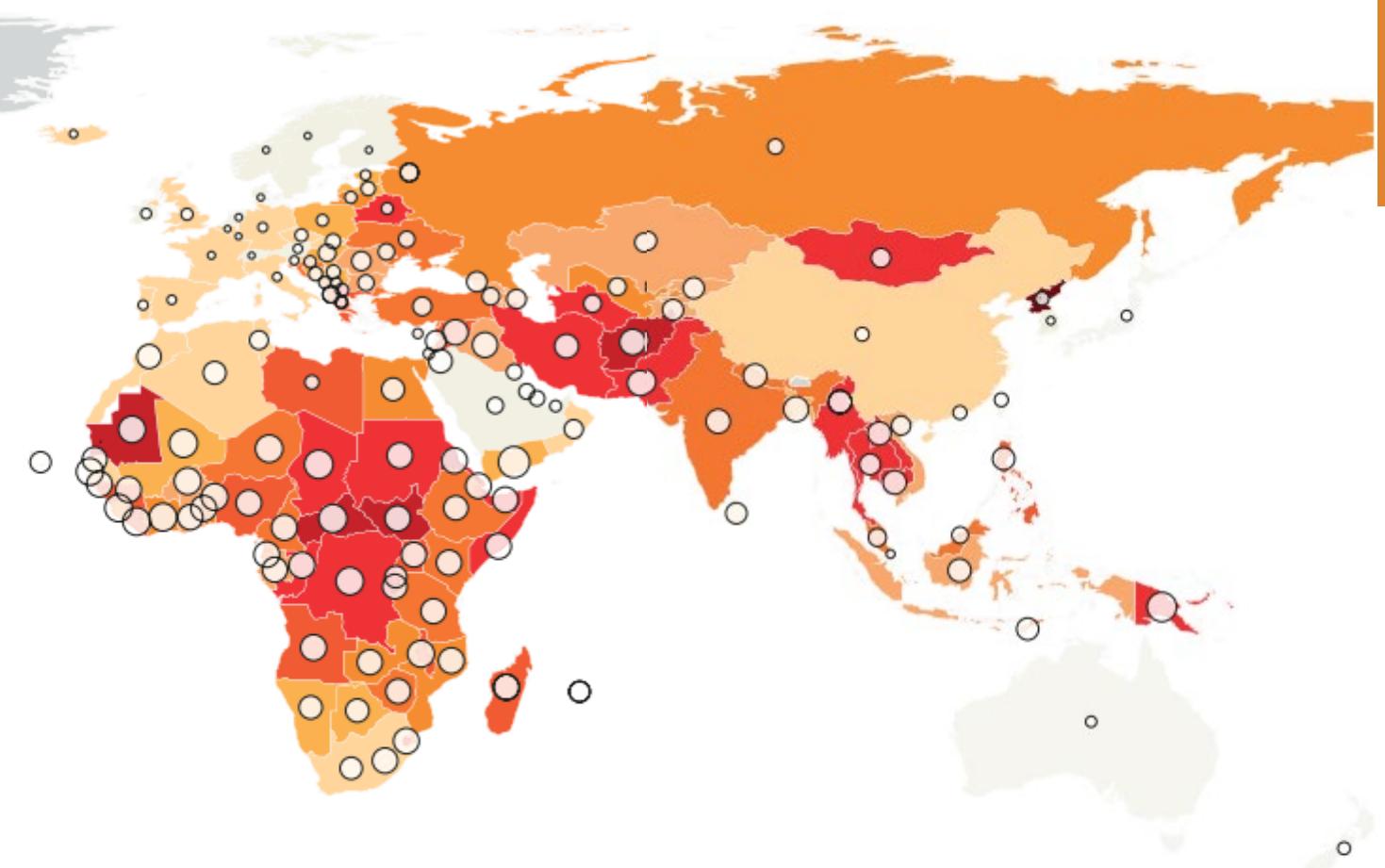
1 IN 130
WOMEN & GIRLS
GLOBALLY
IS LIVING IN
MODERN
SLAVERY

GENDER INEQUALITY AND MODERN SLAVERY

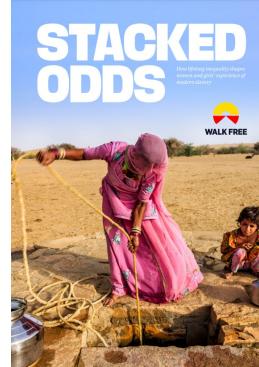
An analysis of the UNDP's Gender Inequality Index against the 2018 Global Slavery Index demonstrates that countries with a greater gender gap across health, education, and economic status have higher prevalence of modern slavery.

<https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2020/10/19130043/WF-Stacked-Odds-20210517.pdf>

6



Where there is more slavery, there is more gender inequality



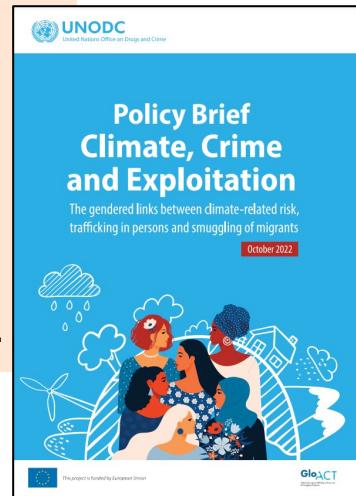
Human Trafficking



Onima's story – Bangladesh

- We didn't have any wage-earning brother
- My sisters and I used to grow spinach and other vegetables to sell in the market, not far from the border with India.
- **During storms and floods, it was impossible to grow crops, and so we used to live in complete poverty.**
- A female trader at the market saw that my family was in crisis and offered to help.
- She claimed that domestic helpers abroad earned US\$80 a month, ten times my income.
- I trusted the woman and went with her to India.
- The woman left me in the care of a brothel owner in Mumbai.
- I managed to escape and made my way back to Bangladesh.

https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/GLO-ACTII/UNODC_Climate-TIP-SOM_Policy_Paper.pdf





Human Trafficking



Is this advert legitimate – or is it the first step on a human trafficking journey?

reply

Posted 8 days ago

prohibited [\[?\]](#)

**★ Did Harvey displaced you?
(Spring/The Woodlands/Conroe/Tomball)**



Were you displaced by by Harvey, now looking to get it all back together? Are you a female under 40 and, need a place to call it your home? Then this mature gentleman is ready to help with a rent free accommodation. If you are interested, then lets talk? Explain your situation, send a pic, and must use HARVEY as subject, to show you are real? I am!



Female Genital Mutilation

[Read More](#)

Female Genital Mutilation



Margaret's story – Kenya

- I lived in a Maasai community in Southern Kenya.
- **Our community was dramatically hit by drought.**
- All of my father's cows died last year.
- Our family depends on cows, there is no other option.
- My father could no longer afford to send me to school.
- My father and grandfather looked for a source of income.
- They planned to have me circumcised (female genital mutilation) and married off for a dowry.
- They only get five cows, sugar, and blankets and then it is over – you are married off.
- I escaped to a rescue centre for girls.
- (FGM is illegal in Kenya)

<https://jhr.ca/kenya-how-climate-change-is-driving-fgm-and-early-marriages#:~:text=Climate%20change%20can%20be%20an,climate%20change%20is%20exacerbating%20both.>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nxtzixcnuus>

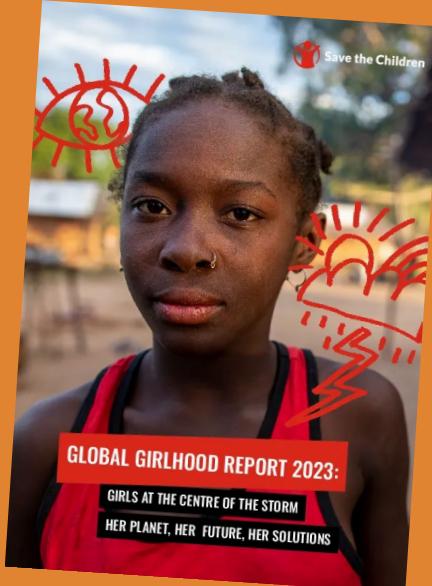


Child Marriage

Read More

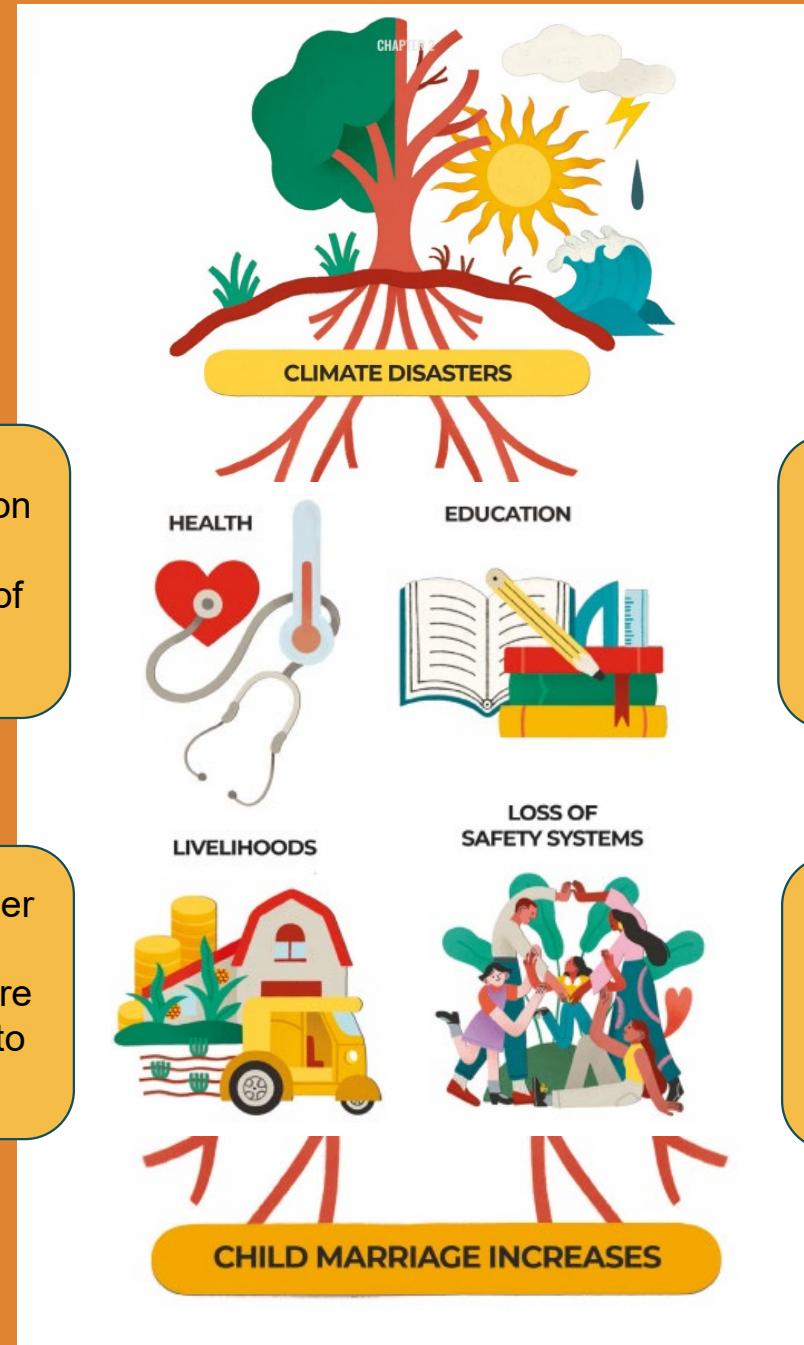


How the impacts of climate disasters can increase risk of child marriage



Health services and nutrition interrupted. Unintended pregnancy increases risk of child marriage.

Droughts, floods, and other disasters affect family income. Financial pressure to turn to child marriage to reduce costs.

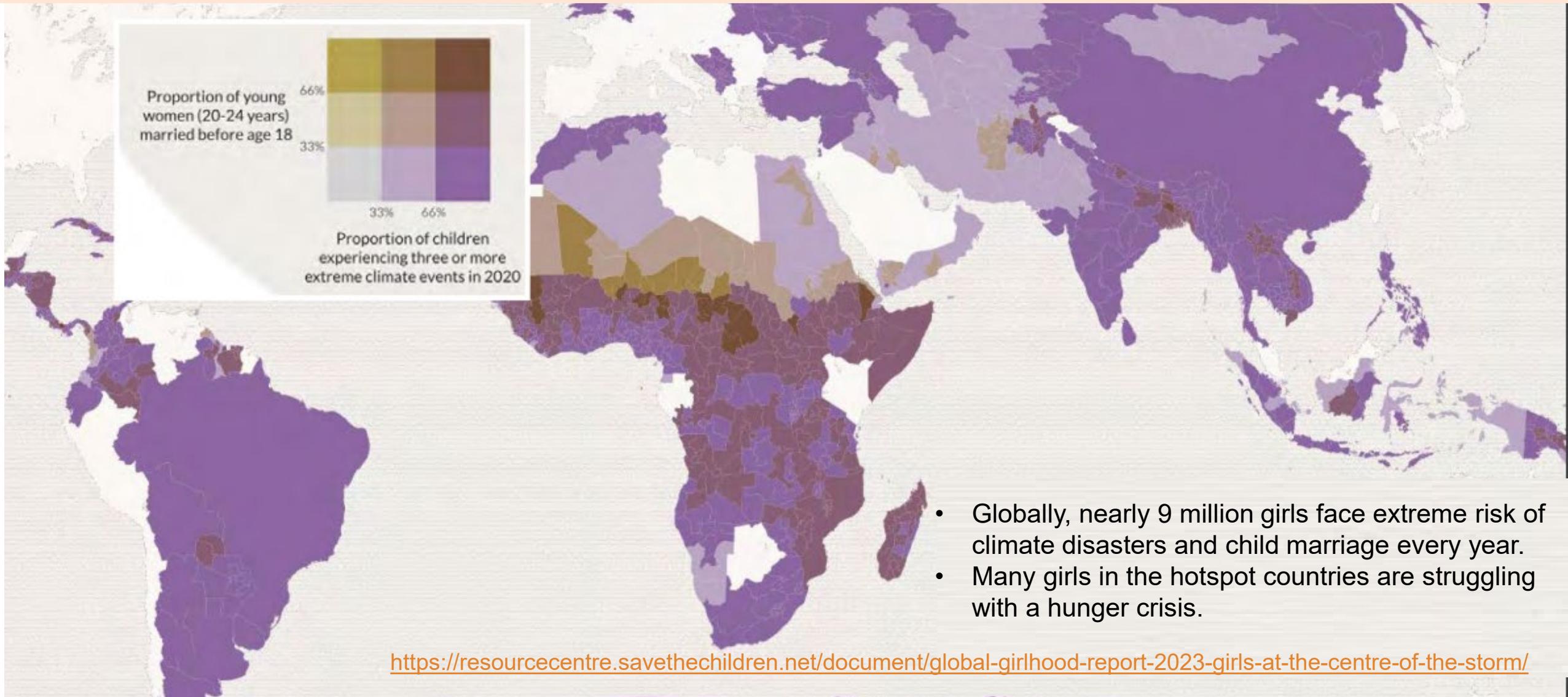


Travelling to school may be dangerous or schools may be shelters. Being out of school increases risk of child marriage.

Disruption of child protection services, law enforcement and schools. Separated from friends and family. Child marriage used to protect daughters from strangers.

Adapted from diagram 3 in
https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/STC_Global_Girlhood_Report_2023.pdf/

Child Marriage





Child Marriage



I was pressured to get married when I was 15 years old because we were starving at home...girls think that by getting married their living conditions will improve ...but not always ...everything depends on luck...

Young woman, 22, Mozambique.⁶⁴



We are seeing and living the climate crisis. We have seen the drought ruin our farm. Now the sun is very hot, everything is so dry and the trees are dying. You can't walk along the road because the dust is so bad. The dust is everywhere...Without climate change I would have had a better life. That is something that really upsets me.

Amina, 17, climate activist in Baidoa, Somalia.



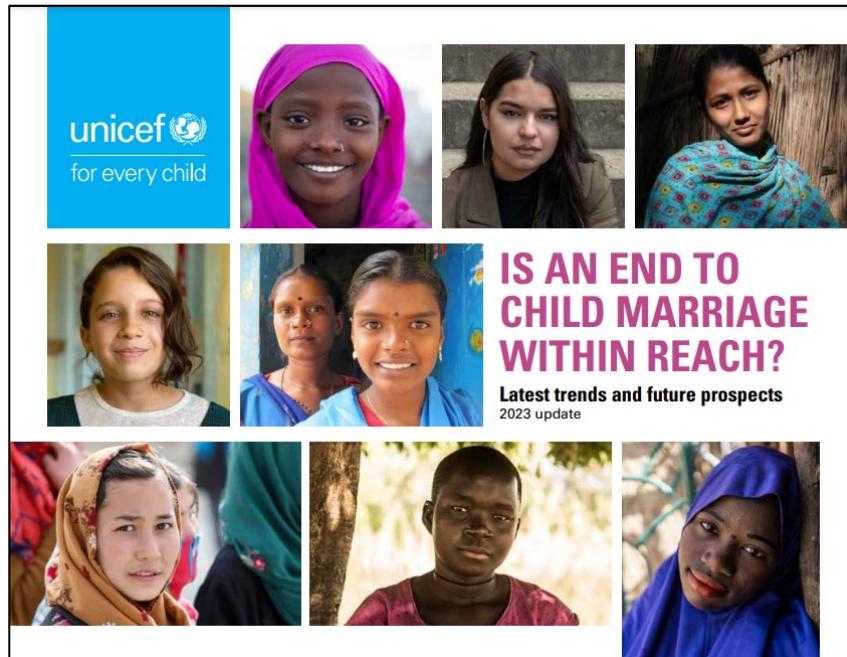
Due to climate change, parents are losing their only source of livelihoods, which is livestock, and they are committing suicide. Children are left as orphans and they may die due to hunger.

Girl, 17, Kenya.⁶⁷

<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/global-girlhood-report-2023-girls-at-the-centre-of-the-storm/>

Child Marriage

AT THE CURRENT PACE, THE WORLD IS AT LEAST 300 YEARS AWAY FROM ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE



10% increase or decrease
in rainfall
is associated with a
1% increase in child marriage

What can we do?



TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

SUMMARY

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and climate change are two of the most pressing global emergencies and sustainable development challenges of our time. VAWG is the most widespread and pervasive human rights violation worldwide, affecting more than an estimated 1 in 3 women throughout their lifetime.¹ Globally 81,000 women and girls were killed in 2020 alone, and a woman or girl was killed in their home every 11 minutes.² Climate change is threatening our planet's sustainability with devastating social, cultural, economic, health and human rights impacts, affecting women and girls disproportionately, especially the most marginalized groups. It is also a serious aggravator of the different forms of VAWG. The shadow pandemic of VAWG during COVID-19 exemplified the surge of violence that occurs during crises and disasters.³ Women Environmental Human Rights Defenders are at particular risk of threats, violence and even femicide as they take action to protect their territories, ecosystems and communities from the impacts of human-led habitat loss, degradation, pollution and climate change.⁴ A failure to eliminate VAWG poses a serious risk to mitigation, adaptation, and resilience-building efforts to combat the climate crisis.⁵ At the same time, as climate change worsens the incidence of VAWG, the failure to address gender-based violence (GBV) risk and challenges in climate action can compound risks for women and girls' safety and right to a life free from violence.⁶ While there has been increased international attention over the last decade in understanding and addressing gender-climate issues in policies and programmes, the intersections between climate change and VAWG have received much less focus. Cross-sectoral action is urgently required to ensure comprehensive, integrated approaches to address VAWG across the humanitarian-development-peace-and climate continuum. This paper provides a brief overview of the evidence of the impact of climate change on VAWG and makes recommendations to be considered by all sectors of society, from governments to international organizations and to civil society organizations across both the climate change and ending VAWG sectors.



Climate action is an essential component in the ongoing fight to eliminate violence against women and girls

Climate change and violence against women and girls

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and climate change are two of the most pressing global emergencies of our time.

Globally, VAWG affects

1 in 3 women

in their lifetime.



Climate change and slow environmental degradation exacerbate the risks of violence against women and girls due to displacement, resource scarcity and food insecurity and disruption to service provision to survivors.

In Puerto Rico, following hurricane Maria in 2017, there was a 62 per cent increase in requests for survivor-related services



Following Hurricane Katrina, the rate of rape among women displaced to trailer parks rose 53.6 times the baseline rate in Mississippi for that year.



In Ethiopia there was an increase in girls sold into early marriage in exchange for livestock to help families cope with the impacts of prolonged droughts.



Nepal witnessed an increase in trafficking from an estimated 3,000-5,000 annually in 1990 to 12,000-20,000 per year after the earthquake.



Please see the Tackling VAWG in the context of climate change policy brief for references.

Women environmental human rights defenders (WEHRDs) experience threats and violence as they strive to defend natural resources and their territories. Indigenous women are at greater risk because of the intersection of sexism, discrimination, and racism.

Between 2016 & 2019,

1,698 acts of violence

were recorded in Mexico and Central America against women environmental human rights defenders.



VAWG limits women's participation, leadership and agency which is critical for effective climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience-building efforts.

Recommendations:



Create an enabling policy environment for the elimination of VAWG in the context of climate change.



Promote strategic cross-sectoral partnerships across the climate and EVAW sectors.



Generate data to understand the impact of climate change on VAWG and risk factors.



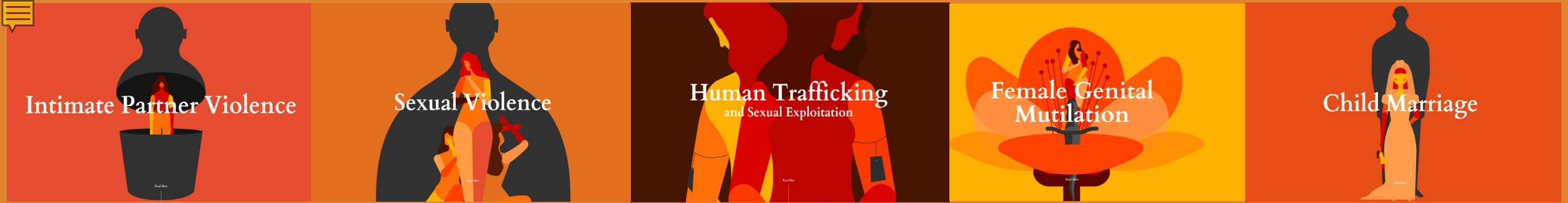
Increase investment in flexible and adaptive approaches to VAWG prevention and response, prioritizing funding for women's rights and civil society organizations.



Prevent violence against women environmental human rights defenders and ensure perpetrators are held to account.



<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/03/tackling-violence-against-women-and-girls-in-the-context-of-climate-change>





ZONTA SAYS **NOW**
TO GENDER-EQUAL CLIMATE ACTION



ZONTA SAYS NO
TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

ZONTA
FOUNDATION
FOR WOMEN



UNFPA

Ending Child Marriage

US\$1.5 M

12 countries:

Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia



UNFPA

Climate Empower

US\$1M

Prevent climate-induced gender-based violence.

Madagascar,
Mozambique, South
Sudan

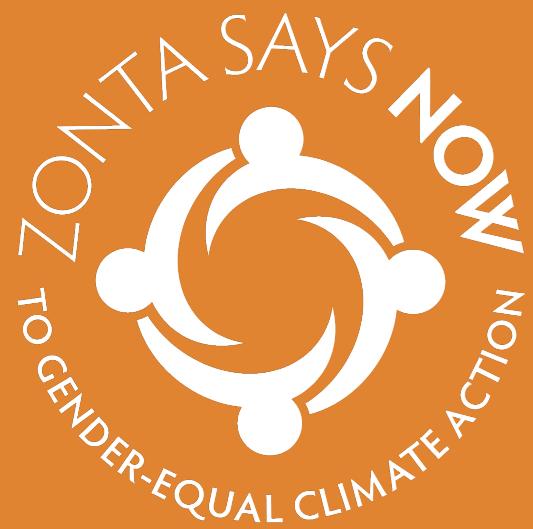
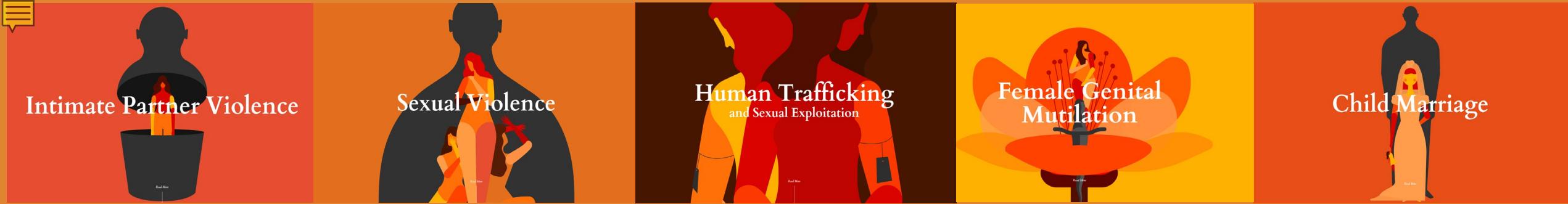


UNICEF

Laaha

US\$0.75M

Extending to 12 countries, this virtual safe space where women and girls learn about gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health.



Please use this presentation to raise awareness of the links between climate change and violence against women

Let's build a better world for women and girls.

Thank you.

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