

# **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN TUNISIA**

The current situation according to the national  
survey on violence towards women in Tunisia  
“ENVEFT”, 2010

Pr. Majed ZEMNI, President-Director General,  
National Board for Family & Population (O.N.F.P.) Tunis

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# INTRODUCTION

- The studies conducted in many countries in the world on violence towards women have revealed the gender-based violence and underlined the emergency to implement strategies to counter this problem henceforth considered as a public health issue.

# National political commitment:

- Tunisia has shown commitment to promote gender equality and empowerment of women in line with ICPD recommendations (since 1994) and UN Millennium Development Goals.
- Tunisia has recognised violence towards women as a serious problem and the necessity to fight it, have been insisted on by the highest level of the State.
- The country has adopted since 2007 a strategy to alleviate all kinds of violence towards the woman. It was developed with the involvement of ministerial departments, and NGOs.

# THE NATIONAL SURVEY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN TUNISIA (ENVEFT 2010)

- It is the First National survey conducted in Tunisia within the frame of and gender approach and human rights
- The survey was conducted within the cooperation project (ONFP/AECID )« Promotion of equity and Prevention from violence against women »

# Operational definitions of violence

- The survey is premised on the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.
- This document defines the term violence against women as “***any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life***”

(Declaration on the elimination of violence against women. New York, United Nations, 1993 (Resolution N°.A/RES/48/104)).

# Operational definitions of violence

Violence can take different forms, it can be:

- **Physical violence** : act of physical aggression e.g., slapping, punching, kicking, immobilizing against a wall, kidnapping, strangling, burning, biting, throwing objects, hitting with a stick, or using a weapon or scissors
- **Psychological violence** : insult, intimidate, belittle, disparaging intellectual abilities, mocking physical appearance (...) threat of divorce, threat to deprive the woman of her children, maintain control over the victim from seeing friends and family, control of travel...
- **Sexual violence** : physically forcing a woman to have sex against her will, agreeing to have sex because of fear of the partner, being forced to do sexual degrading or humiliating acts, touching, sexual harassment, or sexual exploitation
- **Economic violence** : financial exploitation, theft, extortion, abuse of a position of economic dependence, deprivation of money or basic needs, control of salary, sale of property, denial of financial support, abusive exploitation of an economic dependent

# Objectives of ENVEFT

The main objectives of this survey are:

- To evaluate the frequency of the gender-based violence inflicted to women within the general community: the family framework, the couple, the public area and the professional sphere.
- To analyse the violence determinatives.
- To identify the women profiles, especially exposed to violence
- To analyse the violence effects on the women's health and quality of life.
- To study the family and the environment's position and function towards the gender-based violence.
- To estimate the women reactions to the violence endured and their appeal proceedings, and appreciate their satisfaction degree from the services provided.

# ENVEFT: Methods

The National Survey on Violence towards Women in Tunisia (ENVEFT, 2010) questioned a representative sample of the Tunisian women (3.873 women aged 18-64).

# **Main results and salient Facts**

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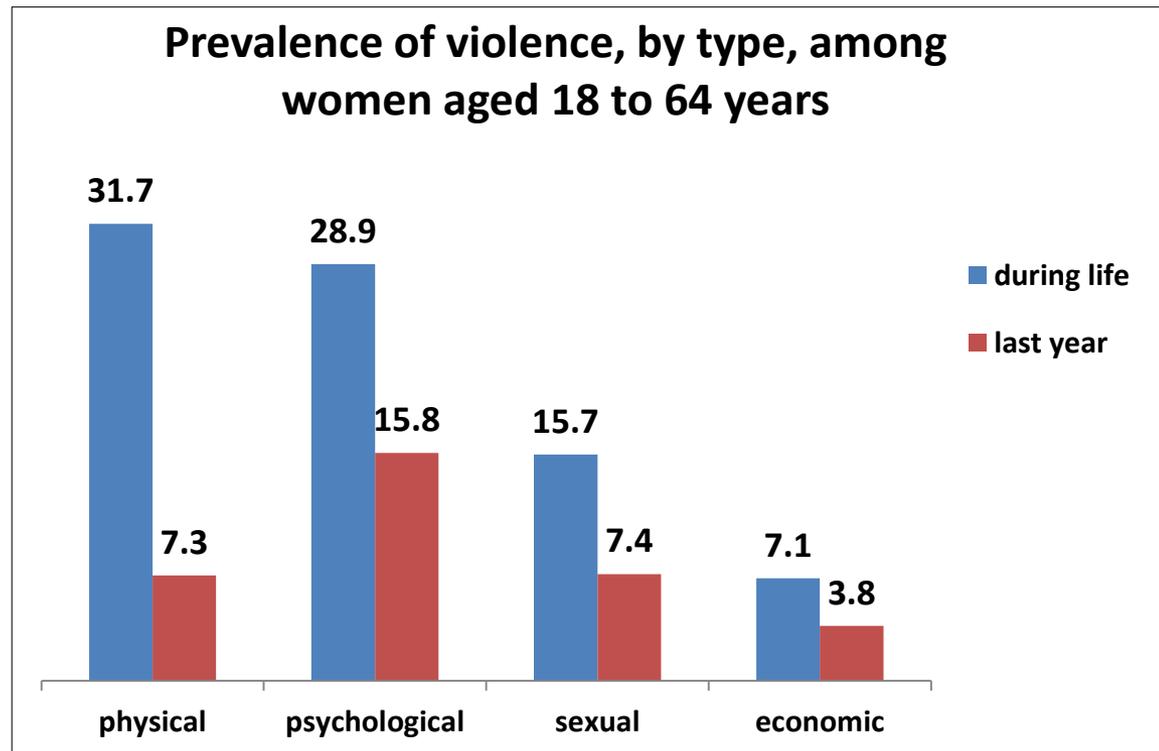
**I- The prevalence of gender -based violence**

**II- The prevalence of gender based -violence within the private sphere**

**III- Consequences of violence & women reactions**

# Prevalence of gender-based violence

**47.6% of women aged 18-64 years reported having experienced at least one form of violence during their life times and 32.9% during the last 12 months.**



# Prevalence of gender-based violence

**Proportional distribution (%) of spaces where gender-based violence is practiced**

	<b>Physical violence</b>	<b>Psychological violence</b>	<b>Sexual violence</b>	<b>Economic violence</b>
<b>Intimate partner</b>	<b>47,2</b>	<b>68,5</b>	<b>78,2</b>	<b>77,9</b>
<b>Family</b>	43	16,7	0,6	22,1
<b>Public space</b>	9,8	14,8	21,3	----
	100	100	100	100

the private sphere is where a woman is most likely to be exposed to violence. Coming in second place family sphere then public spaces.

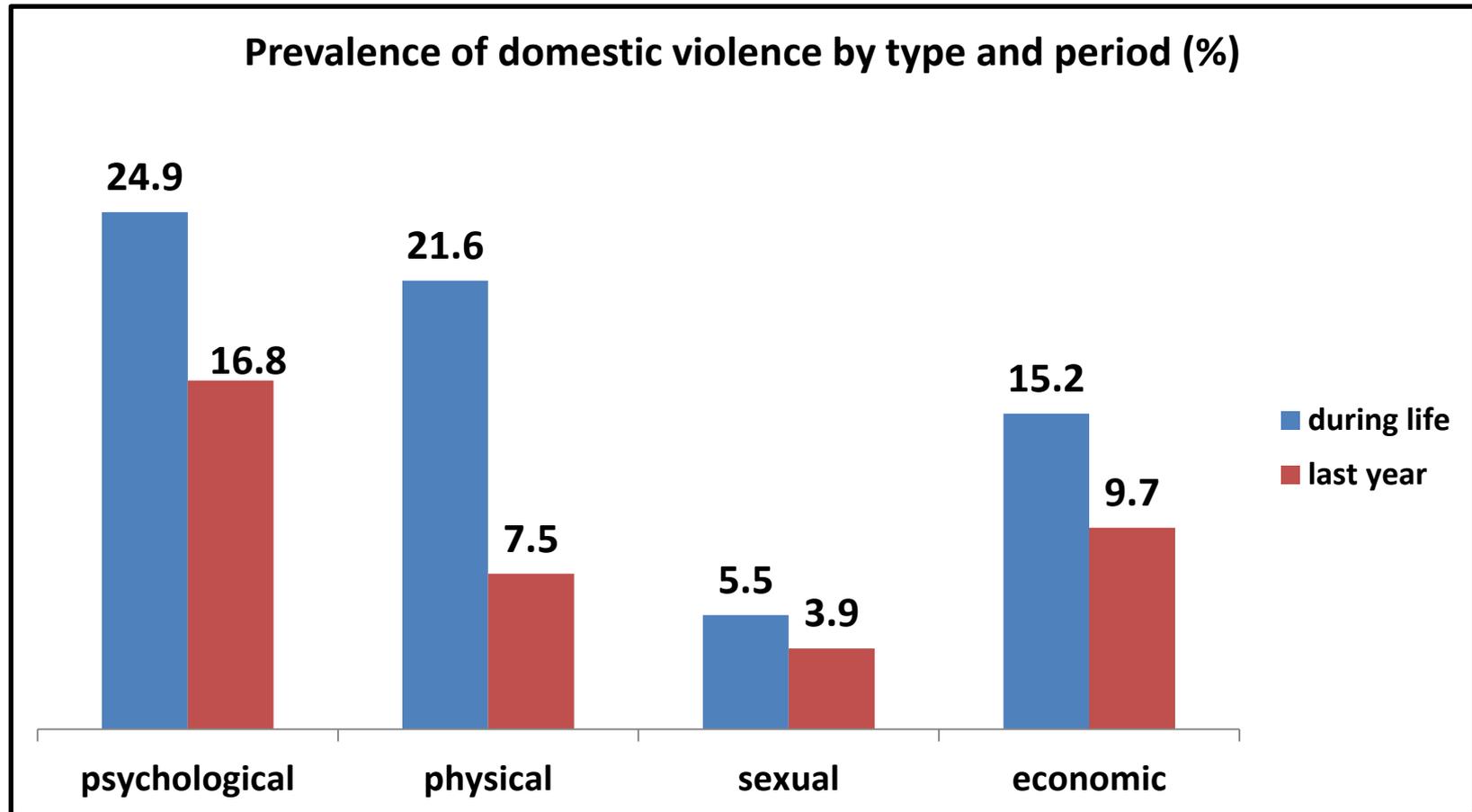
# Prevalence of gender-based violence

**The prevalence of violence in its different forms according to marital status of women**

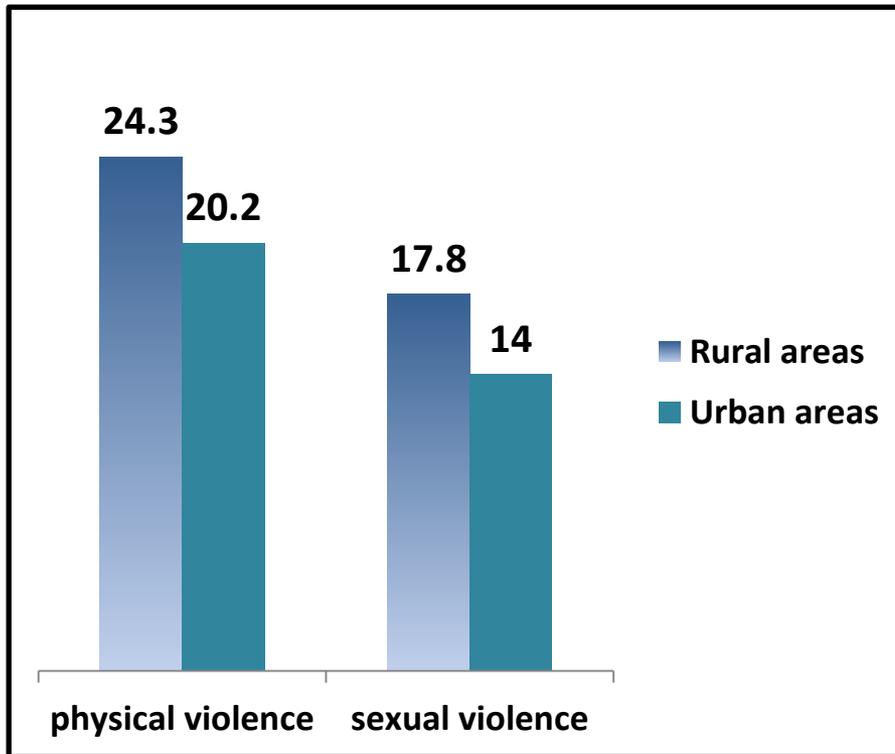
	<b>Psychological violence</b>	<b>Physical violence</b>	<b>Sexual violence</b>
<b>Married women</b>	24,9	21,6	15,2
<b>Engaged women</b>	24,0	5,6	0,8
<b>Divorced women</b>	67,3	59,4	44,8
<b>Widowed women</b>	21,4	15,7	11,1

The prevalence of violence among married women is comparable to that of the female population as a whole except for divorced women for which the analysis shows higher prevalence rates.

# Prevalence of domestic violence

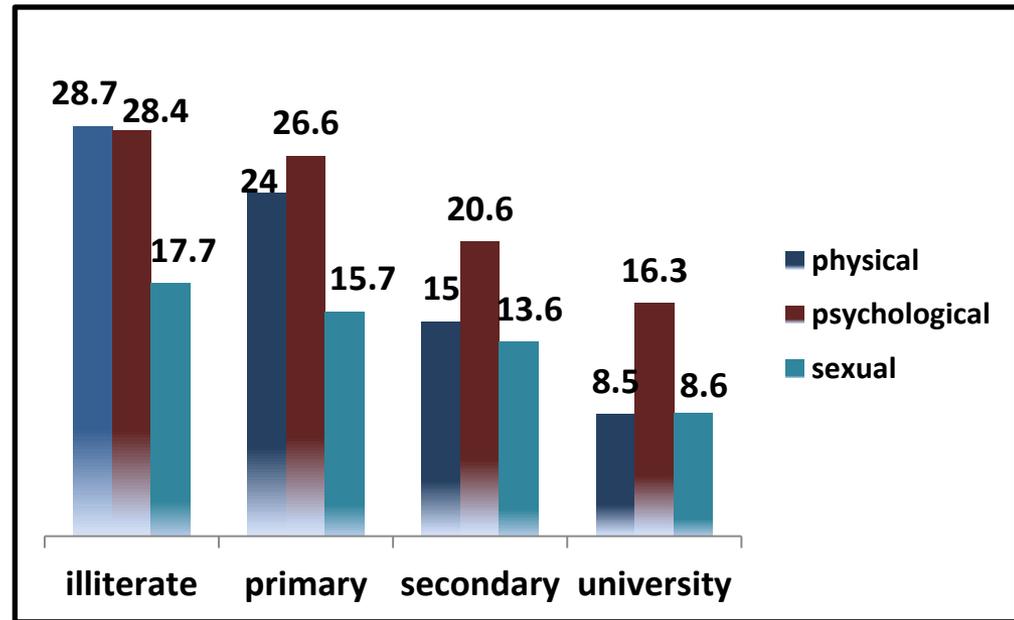
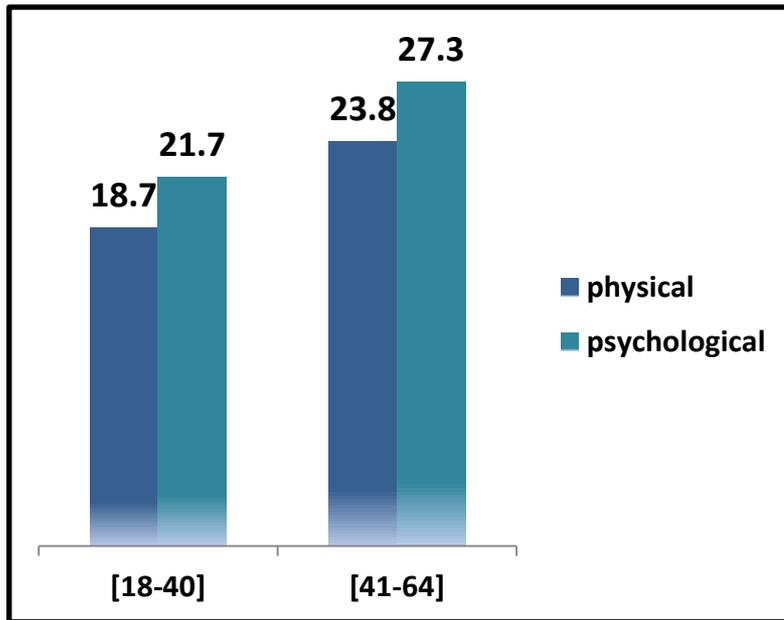


# Domestic violence and women's characteristics



- The prevalence of domestic violence is higher in rural areas.
- Urban women are more reluctant to answer the questionnaire than rural women

# Domestic violence and women's characteristics



- The prevalence of different types of violence increases with age, except for sexual violence.
- The prevalence of physical, psychological and sexual violence are higher among less educated women.

# The prevalence of violence by the social and demographic characteristics of the husband

- The husband age, his professional status, and the level of education are associated to different types of violence
- The prevalence of physical and psychological violences increases with partner's age.
- The prevalence of violence decreases when the level of education of the partner increases.
- The prevalence of physical and psychological violence is higher among partners looking for a job

# CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE & WOMEN REACTIONS

- 45% of the victims declared that violence has physical, mental and social effects
- Almost 50% of victims declare leaving home and 17.8% have lodged a complaint
- 42.1% have never spoken about violence before.
- **55%** of the victims accepted violence as part of the order of things because of shame and fear of aggravating the situation.
- **73%** of the victims does not seek help from anyone

The few that do seek help turn mostly to the family. Only 3.8% turn to the police station and 2.3% to health services

# SOME ACHIEVEMENTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

- Creation of the **Center for psychological assistance to women victim of violence**, within the framework of ONFP/AECID Cooperation. The Center provides services encompassing listening, counselling guidance and psychological care for women victim of violence and children exposed to violence.
- Setting up of a “**green line**” (Telephone assistance) under the guidance of the Ministry of Women and the coordination of the NGOs.
- A **wide consultation on the legal framework** to fight violence against women

# SOME ACHIEVEMENTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The New Constitution (adopted in 26 January 2014) states:

- article 21 : « All citizens, male and female alike, have equal rights and duties, and are equal before the law without any discrimination. The state guarantees to citizens individual and collective rights, and provides them with the conditions to lead a dignified life”
- Article 34 : “ The State seeks to guarantee women’s representation in elected councils”
- Article 40 : “Work is a right for every citizen, male and female alike. The state shall take the necessary measures to ensure the availability of work on the basis of competence and fairness. All citizens, male and female alike, shall have the right to adequate working conditions and to a fair wage.
- Article 46: “ The state shall commit to protecting women’s achieved rights and seek to support and develop them. The state shall guarantee equal opportunities between men and women in the bearing of all the various responsibilities in all fields. The state shall seek to achieve equal representation for women and men in elected councils. The state shall take the necessary measures to eliminate violence against women”

# RECOMMENDATION

- Reinforce international partnership to deal with issues of gender-based violence
- Reinforce international mechanisms for the protection of women
- Agencies and Programmes should continue to work on changing culture and attitudes
- Setting up of the services of Reception, Assistance, and Accompaniment for the victims of the gender-based violence
- Reinforcement of the capacities of the health service providers receiving victims of gender-based violence.
- Setting up of a strong coordination network (NGOs, media, religious leaders, governmental Departments (Justice, Police force and other key partners...))

# CONCLUSION

- Recommendations presented are essential, but couldn't be exhaustive
- Violence against women/Gender-based violence are highly complex and multidimensional issues
- It's important to notice the universal aspect of the issue of violence against women and the necessity of a multidisciplinary and a multi partnership approaches in the judicial and social sections
- We estimate the role of time in making the mentalities and behaviours change.
- This survey on violence against women demonstrates that despite a very progressive legal framework, there is still much to be done before real parity is achieved for Tunisian women

Thank you