

Tracking sustainable peace through  
inclusion, justice, and security for women

Inclusion

Justice

Security

Women  
Peace and  
Security  
Index

2021/22



PRIO Centre on  
Gender, Peace  
and Security



**GIWPS**

Georgetown Institute for  
Women, Peace and Security

## Countries and index scores by rank, 2021 WPS Index

RANK	COUNTRY	INDEX	RANK	COUNTRY	INDEX	RANK	COUNTRY	INDEX
1	Norway	.922	58	Albania	.762	115	Guatemala	.664
2	Finland	.909	59	Kazakhstan	.761	116	Zambia	.661
3	Iceland	.907	60	Turkmenistan	.760	117	Tunisia	.659
4	Denmark	.903	61	Philippines	.758	118	Botswana	.657
5	Luxembourg	.899	62	Chile	.757	119	São Tomé and Príncipe	.656
6	Switzerland	.898	63	Nicaragua	.756	120	Senegal	.655
7	Sweden	.895	64	Mauritius	.750	120	Togo	.655
8	Austria	.891	64	Moldova	.750	122	Côte d'Ivoire	.654
9	United Kingdom	.888	66	Rwanda	.748	123	Kuwait	.653
10	Netherlands	.885	66	South Africa	.748	124	Lesotho	.650
11	Germany	.880	66	Ukraine	.748	125	Iran	.649
12	Canada	.879	69	El Salvador	.747	126	Cameroon	.648
13	New Zealand	.873	69	Ghana	.747	127	Jordan	.646
14	Spain	.872	71	Dominican Republic	.746	128	Malawi	.644
15	France	.870	71	Venezuela	.746	129	Bhutan	.642
15	Singapore	.870	73	Thailand	.744	130	Burundi	.635
15	Slovenia	.870	74	Lao PDR	.741	130	Nigeria	.635
18	Portugal	.868	74	Uzbekistan	.741	132	Azerbaijan	.630
19	Ireland	.867	76	Tanzania	.739	132	Lebanon	.630
20	Estonia	.863	77	Barbados	.737	134	Myanmar	.629
21	United States	.861	77	Kosovo	.737	135	Comoros	.628
22	Belgium	.859	77	Paraguay	.737	136	Burkina Faso	.627
23	Latvia	.858	80	Brazil	.734	136	Egypt	.627
24	Australia	.856	80	Fiji	.734	138	Equatorial Guinea	.624
24	United Arab Emirates	.856	80	Suriname	.734	138	Morocco	.624
26	Croatia	.848	83	Panama	.733	140	Gabon	.623
27	Israel	.844	83	Peru	.733	141	Algeria	.616
28	Italy	.842	85	Armenia	.727	142	Haiti	.611
29	Poland	.840	85	Tajikistan	.727	143	Mali	.610
30	Lithuania	.833	85	Zimbabwe	.727	144	Angola	.609
31	Czech Republic	.830	88	Mexico	.725	145	Papua New Guinea	.604
32	Hong Kong, SAR China	.829	89	China	.722	146	Eswatini	.602
33	South Korea	.827	90	Colombia	.721	146	Guinea	.602
34	Serbia	.826	90	Kenya	.721	148	Gambia	.597
35	Japan	.823	92	Belize	.720	148	India	.597
36	Cyprus	.820	93	Cambodia	.719	150	Libya	.596
37	Malta	.815	93	Tonga	.719	151	Djibouti	.595
38	Belarus	.814	95	Namibia	.714	152	Bangladesh	.594
39	Slovakia	.811	95	Nepal	.714	152	Liberia	.594
40	Georgia	.808	97	Bahrain	.713	152	Niger	.594
41	Bulgaria	.804	97	Kyrgyzstan	.713	155	Congo	.582
42	Montenegro	.803	97	Qatar	.713	156	Madagascar	.578
43	Jamaica	.800	100	Indonesia	.707	157	Central African Rep.	.577
44	North Macedonia	.798	100	Timor-Leste	.707	157	Mauritania	.577
45	Greece	.792	102	Saudi Arabia	.703	159	Somalia	.572
46	Hungary	.790	103	Malaysia	.702	160	Palestine	.571
47	Costa Rica	.781	104	Honduras	.698	161	Sierra Leone	.563
48	Uruguay	.776	105	Sri Lanka	.697	162	Sudan	.556
49	Argentina	.774	106	Turkey	.693	163	Chad	.547
49	Bolivia	.774	107	Viet Nam	.692	163	DR Congo	.547
49	Ecuador	.774	108	Cabo Verde	.690	165	South Sudan	.541
52	Trinidad and Tobago	.771	109	Uganda	.685	166	Iraq	.516
53	Russian Federation	.770	110	Oman	.675	167	Pakistan	.476
54	Mongolia	.769	111	Mozambique	.673	168	Yemen	.388
55	Romania	.765	112	Maldives	.671	169	Syria	.375
56	Bosnia and Herzegovina	.764	113	Ethiopia	.668	170	Afghanistan	.278
56	Guyana	.764	114	Benin	.667			

Please see page 107 for an alphabetical list of countries and ranks.

**Georgetown University's Institute for Women, Peace and Security** seeks to promote a more stable, peaceful, and just world by focusing on the important role women play in preventing conflict and building peace, growing economies, and addressing global threats like climate change and violent extremism. The institute pursues this mission through research that is accessible to practitioners and policy-makers, global convenings, strategic partnerships, and nurturing of the next generation of leaders. Melanne Verveer, the first U.S. ambassador for global women's issues, is the Institute's executive director. Hillary Rodham Clinton is the institute's honorary founding chair.

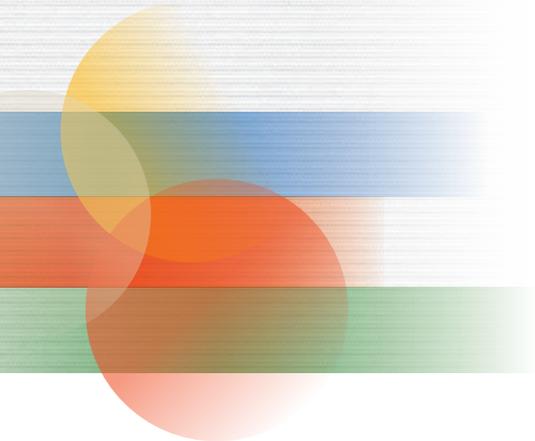
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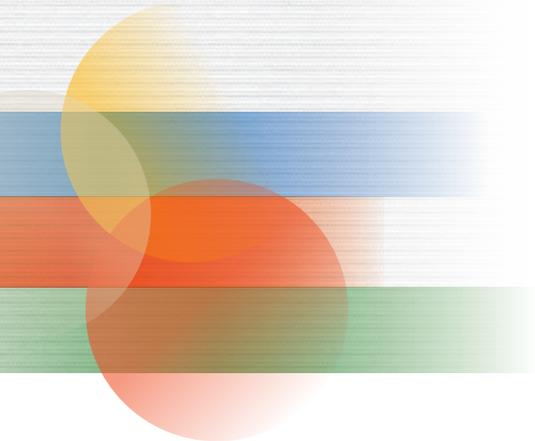
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# Preface

**T**his third edition of the global Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index provides important insights into patterns and progress on women’s status and empowerment around the world. It reflects a shared vision that countries are more peaceful and prosperous when women are accorded full and equal rights and opportunities.

In many ways, it seems a lifetime ago since the 2019 report, and this year we seek to capture insights about the repercussions of the COVID pandemic for women’s inclusion and security. The results are sobering. The global pace of improvement in the WPS Index has slowed considerably, with widening disparities across countries. This reflects a worsening of inequalities in the status of women, as countries at the top continue to improve while those at the bottom get worse, mirroring global trends in wealth and income inequality. The COVID pandemic has triggered multiple and overlapping crises, magnifying existing inequalities. For women, major challenges have worsened on several fronts—not least juggling paid jobs and unpaid care work—and have exacerbated threats to safety.

Key innovations this year have enhanced the value of the index.

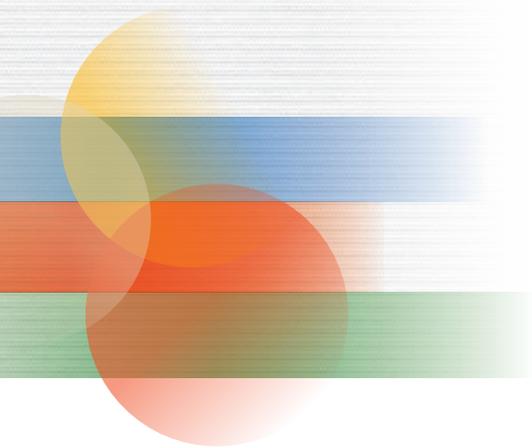
First, improvements in data availability have expanded coverage to 170 countries—encompassing more than 99 percent of the world’s population. We explore trends across regions, indicators, and time since our inaugural 2017 index rankings.

Second, with forced displacement at unprecedented levels worldwide, we constructed new indices for forcibly displaced and host community women in five Sub-Saharan African countries to illuminate the challenges facing displaced women. The results reveal deep disparities, underscoring the compounding effects of displacement on women’s status and opportunities.

Third, we investigate WPS Index performance at the provincial or state level in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States, revealing major disparities within country borders that national averages conceal. The results for Afghanistan, bottom ranked on the global index, are especially relevant at a time when Afghan women and girls face major threats to their basic rights and well-being. Our analysis reveals a precarious situation in many provinces where women and girls were already experiencing severe constraints on their opportunities outside the home and extremely high rates of violence.

Tracking the progress of women and pinpointing persistent structural gender inequalities are critical to informing equitable policymaking, especially in efforts to build back better in the wake of COVID. We see this year’s report as an important contribution to the growing evidence base underlining the importance of women, peace, and security and the Sustainable Development Goals, bringing partners together around a shared agenda for women’s inclusion, justice, and security.

*Jeni Klugman, Managing Director  
Georgetown Institute of Women, Peace and Security*



# Report team and acknowledgements

**T**his report on the Women, Peace, and Security Index was created in collaboration between the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security (GIWPS) and the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO).

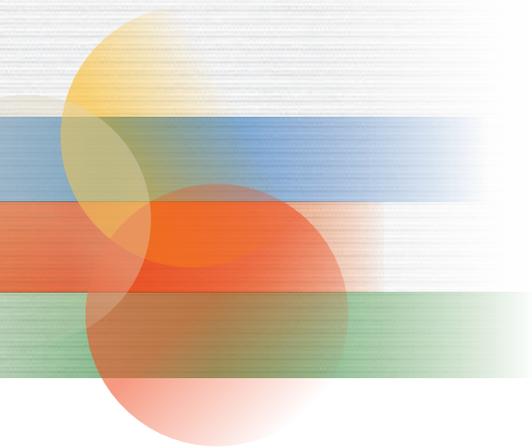
The work on the index and report was conducted by a team led by Jeni Klugman, Managing Director, GIWPS. The report team comprised Milorad Kovacevic with Michael Gottschalk (GIWPS), who were responsible for construction of the index, and Elena Ortiz, Jimena Diaz, Varsha Thebo, Isha Raj-Silverman, and Jiaqi Zhao (GIWPS), who provided extensive research analysis and support. We partnered with Siri Aas Rustad, Solomon Negash, and Kaja Borchgrevink (PRIO), who undertook statistical analysis and writing. This work was enabled by the excellent administrative and communications support of Luis Mancilla, Sarah Rutherford, and Evelyn Garrity (GIWPS).

For valuable analysis and inputs, we would like to thank Benjamin Valentino (Dartmouth University) and Sara Andrews, Gina Durham, and Elizabeth Dewey (DLA Piper/New Perimeter). The analysis for our novel forcibly displaced index benefited tremendously from the support of Jocelyn Kelly (Harvard University); Lucia Hanmer, Yeshwas Admasu, Diana Jimena Arango, and Isis Gaddis (World Bank); Daphne Jayasinghe, Barri Shorey, and Anneleen Vos (International Rescue Committee); and Julieth Santamaria (University of Minnesota). This year's report also features excerpts from oral histories compiled by Maggie Lemere and Amanda Hirsch (GIWPS).

Our appreciation goes to colleagues at partner organizations. At UN Women, we are thankful to Ginette Azcona, Raphaëlle Rafin, Kalliopi Mingeirou, Maria Karadenizli, Irene Hope Atim, Juncal Plazaola-Castaño, and Storai Tapesh for their help with retrieving data and for advice throughout. We are grateful also to Roger Gomis (International Labour Organization), Paula Sevilla (New York University), and Jamie Zimmerman and Syed Ali Mahmood (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) for their support on index analysis and inputs.

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Finally, we would like to acknowledge the generous funding of the Government of Norway's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, without which this work would not have been possible.



# Overview

*Disparities widening and progress slowing*

*Measuring women's inclusion, justice, and security for 170 countries*

*Index score rose 9 percent on average*

*All countries in the top dozen are developed*

**W**omen's inclusion, justice, and security are more critical than ever in the midst of a pandemic that has wreaked havoc around the world. This year's global report, the third since the inaugural edition in 2017, finds a slowdown in the pace of improvement in the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index and widening disparities across countries. The range of scores on the 2021 WPS Index is vast, with Norway at the top scoring more than three times better than Afghanistan at the bottom. The range of scores is much wider than in 2017, when the score of the top performer was about twice that of the worst performer. This widening gap reflects rising inequality in the status of women across countries: countries at the top continue to improve while those at the bottom get worse, mirroring global trends in wealth and income inequality.

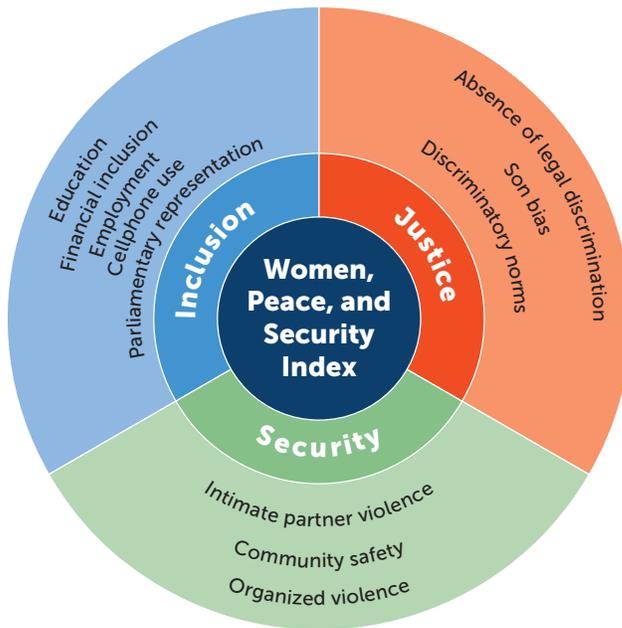
The index captures and quantifies the three dimensions of women's inclusion (economic, social, political), justice (formal laws and informal discrimination), and security (at the individual, community, and societal levels) through 11 indicators (figure 1).

Globally, WPS Index scores have risen an average of 9 percent since 2017 and at above-average rates in 31 countries. Score improved more than 5 percent in 90 countries. Six of the top ten score improvers are in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>1</sup> And current global levels of organized violence are significantly below the 2014 peak, despite a moderate uptick between 2019 and 2020.

## Comparing regions and countries: A snapshot in time

The top dozen countries on the index are all in the Developed Country group (see appendix 2 for region and country groups). The differences across these 12 countries are minimal, with a range from .879 (Canada, at number 12) to .922 (Norway, at the top; figure 2). At the other end of the spectrum, there is a much wider range of performance, with Afghanistan at the bottom performing some 51 percent worse on the index than Somalia, ranked 12th from the bottom. Of the bottom 12 countries, 10 are classified by the World Bank as fragile states.

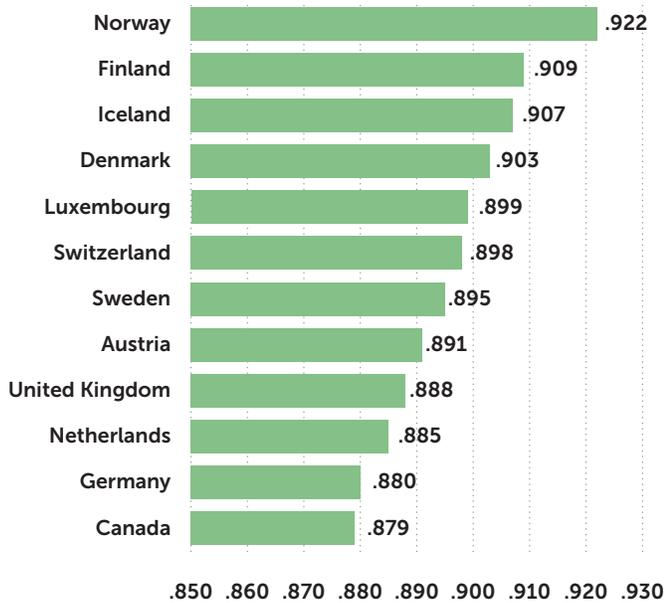
**FIGURE 1** The WPS Index captures three dimensions of women’s status in 11 indicators



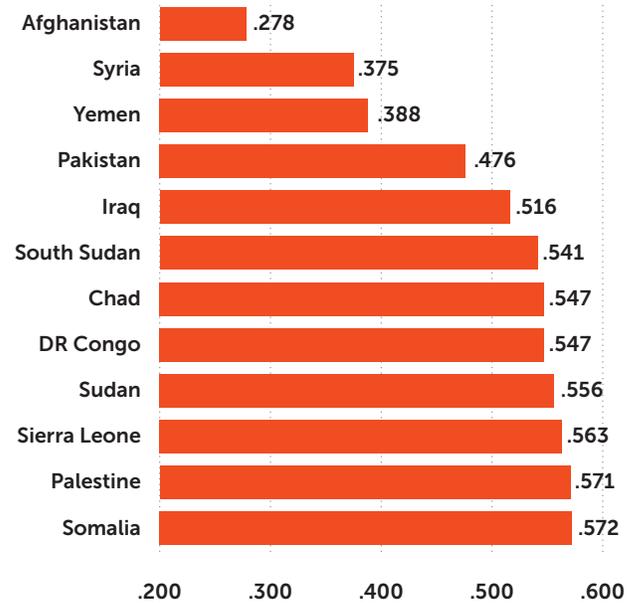
Note: See table 1.1 for indicator definitions and statistical table 1 for main data sources.  
 Source: Authors.

**FIGURE 2** The dozen best and worst performers on the WPS Index 2021

**Best performers**



**Worst performers**



Note: Possible index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.  
 Source: Authors’ estimates.

*South Asia scores worst overall*

*Comparisons reveal room for improvement*

*Widest ranges in employment and financial inclusion scores*

*Middle East and North Africa is the worst performing region on the legal front*

All except Palestine (newly added to the index), Sierra Leone, and Somalia have been in the bottom dozen since the 2019 WPS Index—and 7 of the bottom 12 have been in this group since 2017. Yet some of these countries have made progress: the Democratic Republic of the Congo is among the top score improvers since 2017, rising 13 percent, while the score of Central African Republic rose 22 percent, moving the country out of the bottom dozen, to 157th place.

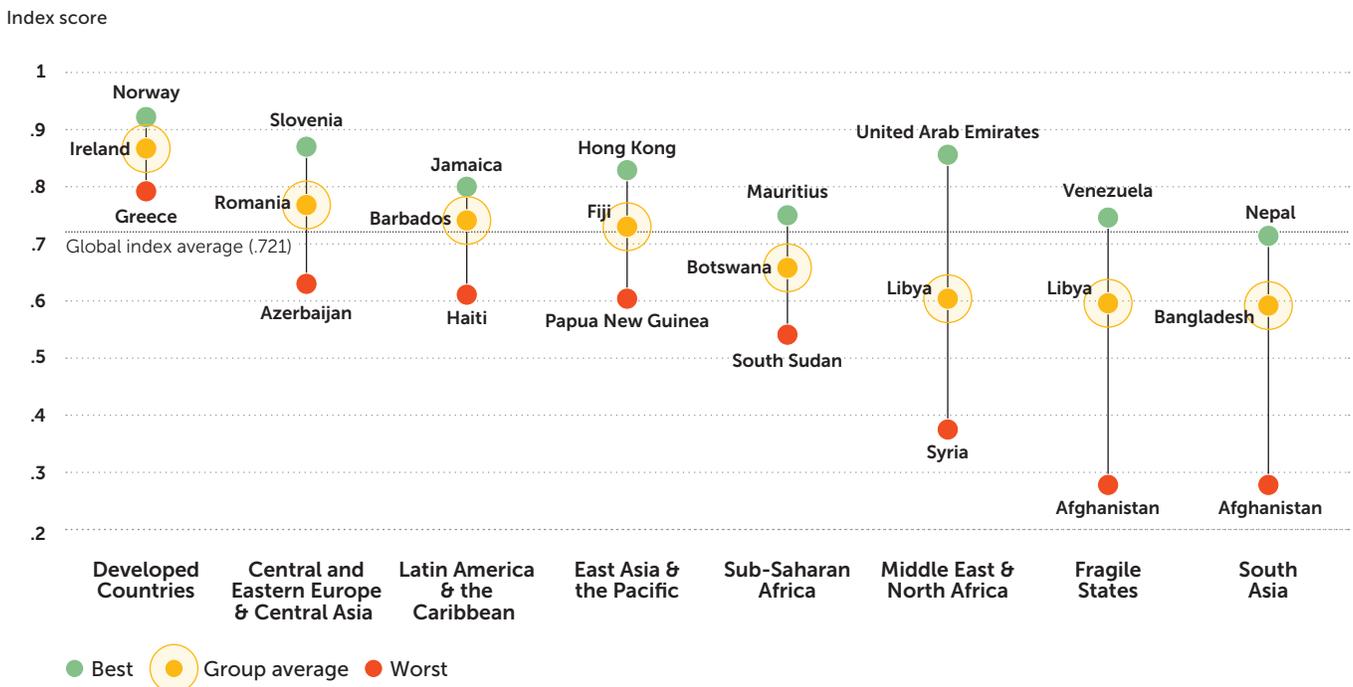
This year, for the first time, South Asia is the worst performing region, reflecting high levels of legal discrimination, intimate partner violence, and discriminatory norms that disenfranchise women, often coupled with low levels of inclusion. Fewer than one woman in four in the region is in paid work, less than half the global average.

Behind regional averages, some countries perform much better or much worse than their neighbors, illustrating the scope for feasible improvements (figure 3). Unpacking the WPS Index reveals mixed performance across indicators. All countries have room for improvement. Mexico, 88th overall, is 43rd on the justice dimension but falls to 160th on the security dimension: only a third of women feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood at night, and rates of organized violence are the among the 10 highest in the world.

The widest spectrums of performance are in employment and financial inclusion. And the COVID pandemic has undermined women’s opportunities for paid employment in much of the world. Women’s employment rates range from 92 percent in Burundi to just 5 percent in Yemen. Rates of financial inclusion range from universal in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden to fewer than 1 woman in 20 in South Sudan and Yemen.

On the legal front, the Middle East and North Africa is the worst performing region, averaging only 50 of 100 points, with Palestine having the worst legal score (26) globally. The share of men who believe it is unacceptable for women to have a

**FIGURE 3** Widest range of 2021 WPS Index scores in the Middle East and North Africa, the Fragile States group, and South Asia regions



Note: Possible index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources and scores. Countries in the Fragile States group are also included in their regional group.  
Source: Authors’ estimates.

*Community safety varies widely and is worst in Latin America and the Caribbean*

*Most of the top 10 score improvers are in Sub-Saharan Africa*

*The pace of progress has slowed*

*Some reversals as organized violence and community safety worsened*

paid job outside the home if they want one—our measure of discriminatory norms—is also highest in the Middle East and North Africa. This suggests a convergence of formal and informal barriers to women’s justice in the region.

On the security dimension, Latin America performs badly on community safety, with only about one woman in three feeling safe walking alone in her neighborhood at night, although the country where women feel least safe is Afghanistan. Syria does the worst globally on organized violence and the worst regionally on community safety.

**Trends in WPS Index scores between 2017 and 2021**

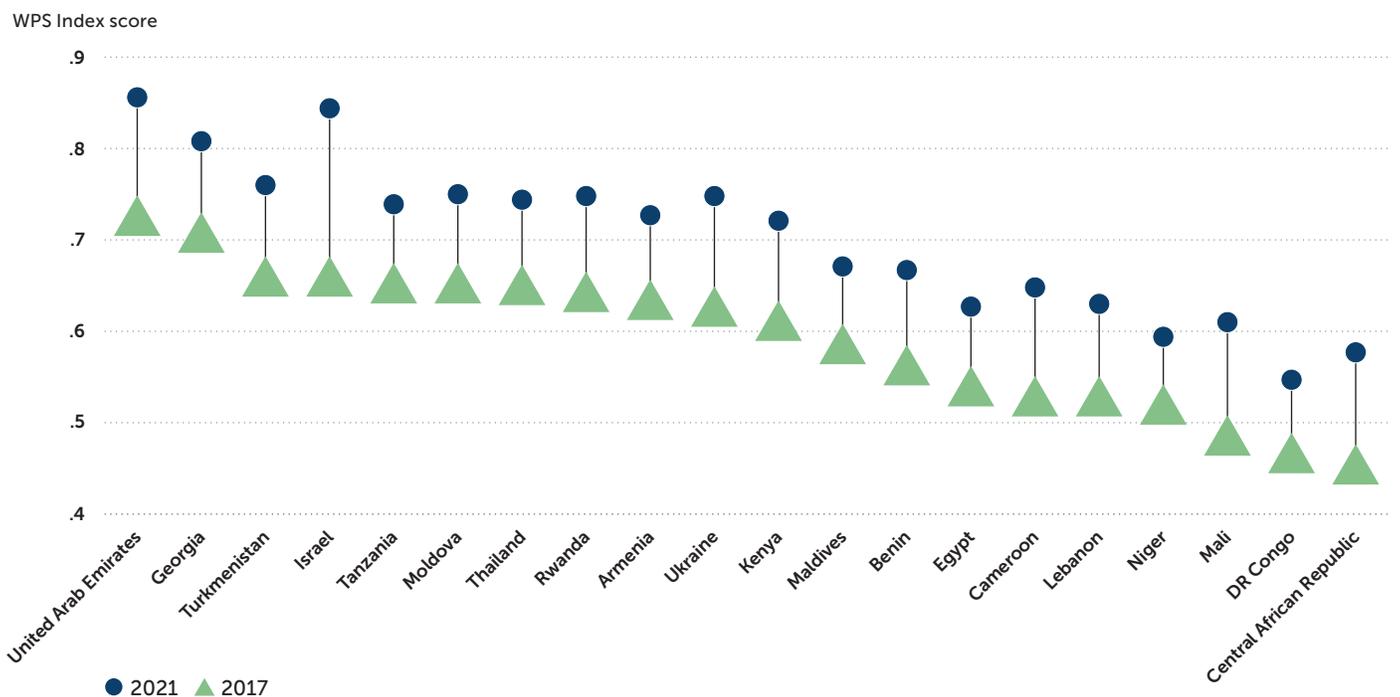
Changes in index rankings show how countries have performed relative to others,<sup>2</sup> while fluctuations in a country’s scores capture absolute changes in women’s inclusion, justice, and security.

Since the inaugural 2017 WPS Index, 90 countries have improved their score by at least 5 percent—and in 31 countries scores rose at least 9 percent, surpassing the global average improvement. Six of the top ten score improvers are in Sub-Saharan Africa: Central African Republic, Mali, Cameroon, Benin, Kenya, and Rwanda, in descending order of improvement (figure 4).

Analysis of trends reveals that the pace of progress has slowed by more than half: the global average WPS Index rose about 7 percent between 2017 and 2019 but only about 3 percent between 2019 and 2021.

Worsening index scores for several countries underscore persistent challenges. Since 2017, Afghanistan’s score has deteriorated 28 percent, driven mostly by worsening rates of organized violence and perceptions of community safety, with the recent rise of the Taliban threatening further deterioration. Scores also worsened in absolute terms for Haiti, Namibia, and Yemen, with especially marked declines

**FIGURE 4 WPS Index scores improved by at least 10 percent in 20 countries, 2017–21**



Note: Countries are in descending order of their 2017 score. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges and appendix 2 for region and country groups.  
Source: Authors’ estimates.

in community safety (except Yemen) and rising rates of organized violence (except Namibia).

### *Welcome advances*

Welcome improvements in many countries included new legislation to protect women from domestic violence, increases in women's cellphone use (jumping from 78 to 85 percent in the four years to 2020), and perceptions of community safety (climbing in 81 countries). Women's parliamentary representation, though rising, still averages only about one in four.

### *Organized violence down from its 2014 peak*

A unique dimension of the WPS Index is women's security, measured by rates of current intimate partner violence, perceptions of community safety, and organized violence. The good news is that global levels of organized violence are well below their 2014 peak, despite a moderate uptick in battle deaths between 2019 and 2020. In 2020, more than 60 percent of battle deaths occurred in four countries: Afghanistan (20,836), Mexico (16,385), Azerbaijan (7,621), and Syria (5,583).

### *But the number of conflicts is higher*

Organized violence has declined despite a rising number of conflicts: there were 56 unique state-based conflicts in 2020—the highest number since 1946—alongside 72 nonstate conflicts. This points to the presence of many low-intensity conflicts and underlines that more people now live in conflict zones. This is a major concern given accumulating evidence of the repercussions of conflict beyond the battlefield, especially for women and children, from increased food insecurity to higher risks of intimate partner violence.

### *Countries with high rates of organized violence rank low on the index*

High rates of organized violence are strongly correlated not only with high rates of violence against women in the home,<sup>3</sup> but also with poor performance on women's inclusion, justice, and security more broadly. Two of the four countries with the worst levels of violence in 2020—and indeed over the past decade—Afghanistan and Yemen, are also bottom ranked on the WPS Index.

## **COVID threatens to widen inequalities**

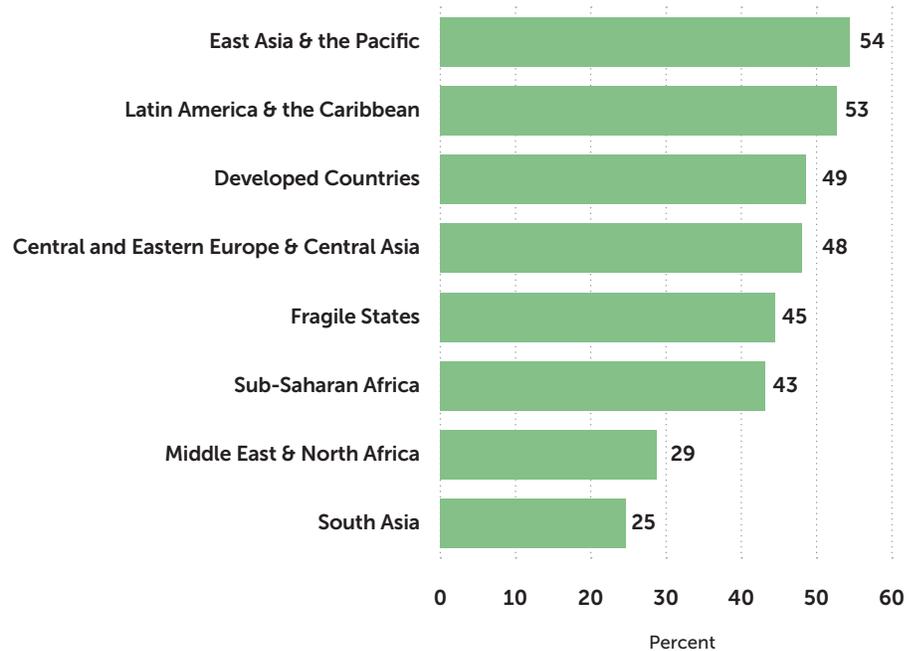
The pandemic has triggered multiple crises, and challenges for women have worsened on several fronts, not least in juggling paid jobs and unpaid care work, but also in growing threats to safety. Although comprehensive sex-disaggregated data covering the impacts are lacking, there is accumulating evidence that two of the three key dimensions of the index—inclusion and security—have been hard hit. While the gender inequalities exposed during the pandemic are nothing new, they underscore the urgent need to build equitable systems that are resilient in good times and bad.

### *Reversals in women's paid employment*

The pandemic has triggered major reversals in rates of paid employment, a key indicator of women's inclusion. Estimated losses in paid employment for women in 2020 (5 percent) exceeded those for men (3.9 percent).<sup>4</sup> In Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, 17 million women exited paid work during the pandemic, compared with 14 million men.<sup>5</sup> Globally among people who lost their jobs, 9 in 10 women became economically inactive, most of them young, urban, and less educated, compared with 7 in 10 men.<sup>6</sup> This has extensive repercussions, especially for pensions and savings, amplifying wealth gaps that favor men. Long-term exits of women from paid work also reduce national output and prospects for future economic growth.<sup>7</sup>

### *Women-owned businesses are closing more*

There is also evidence that women-owned businesses have closed at higher rates during the pandemic due to their smaller size, greater informality, and operation in hardest-hit sectors.<sup>8</sup> Surveys by the World Bank of about 45,000 firms in 49 mostly low- and middle-income countries found that in the hospitality industry, businesses led by men experienced a 60 percent fall in expected sales, compared with 68 percent for businesses led by women, which also reported higher financial risks and less cash available to cover costs.<sup>9</sup> Globally, 40 percent of women worked in sectors hardest hit by the pandemic, compared with 37 percent of men,<sup>10</sup> ranging from 25 percent in South Asia to 54 percent in East Asia and the Pacific (figure 5).

**FIGURE 5** Share of women working in sectors worst hit by the pandemic, 2020

Note: Data cover 104 countries; hard-hit sectors include accommodation and food services; wholesale and retail trade; real estate, business, and administrative activities; and manufacturing.  
Source: ILOSTAT database and ILO 2020.

*Care burdens amplified by lockdowns and school closures*

*Risks of intimate partner violence worsened*

*Heightened risk of both first-time intimate partner violence and ongoing abuse*

*Many new social protection responses*

Before the pandemic, an estimated 42 percent of working-age women worldwide were outside the paid labor force because of unpaid care responsibilities, compared with 6 percent of men.<sup>11</sup> National lockdowns and widespread school closures amplified these responsibilities, with gendered implications for time in paid work. In July 2021, about 36 million children lived in a country with full school closures, and another 807 million faced partial school closures.<sup>12</sup>

Women have faced increasing risks of intimate partner violence and greater difficulty leaving abusive relationships due to worsening economic conditions and national lockdowns. For example, survey data from more than 2,500 partnered women in Iran before the pandemic and six months into the crisis revealed that prevalence rates of current intimate partner violence soared from 54 to 65 percent and that job losses for women or their partner dramatically increased the likelihood of intimate partner violence.<sup>13</sup>

The pandemic has augmented the risk of both first-time and ongoing intimate partner violence. In Iran, more than a quarter of women who had not previously experienced intimate partner violence were abused during the first six months of the pandemic.<sup>14</sup> And during the first wave of lockdowns in Nigeria, women previously experiencing intimate partner violence suffered more severe acts or new forms of violence.<sup>15</sup>

### Addressing adverse impacts of the pandemic on women

The crisis has brought some welcome innovations that recognize and address inequalities. Expanding access to paid parental leave and quality childcare, alongside flexible work models, are keys to ensuring gender equality in the return to work in the short term and having good labor market opportunities in the long term (infographic 1).

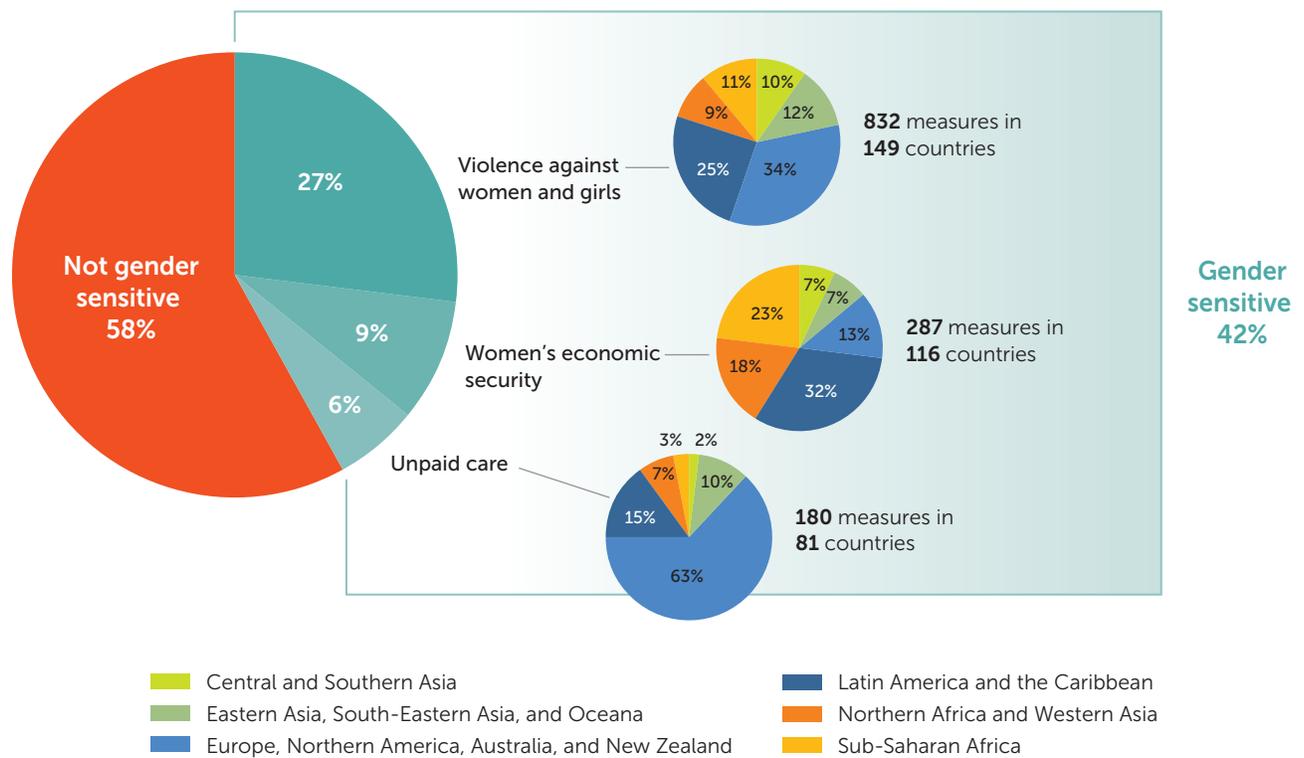
The social protection responses to the pandemic have been unprecedented in scale and scope—from labor market policies, to social assistance, to unemployment

**INFOGRAPHIC 1**

**Of 3,100+ policy measures in response to COVID, 1,300 are gender sensitive**

UNDP–UN Women have tracked the COVID responses of governments around the globe, with a focus on measures addressing threats to gender equality—from the surge in violence against women and girls to the unprecedented increases in unpaid care work and the large-scale loss of jobs and livelihoods. Many governments have taken measures to support women and girls, but the responses remain insufficient and uneven overall—across dimensions and regions.

**Gender-sensitive policy responses by type and region**



**49**  
**COUNTRIES**  
channel resources to female-dominated sectors

**136**  
**COUNTRIES**  
have strengthened services for women survivors of violence

**52**  
**COUNTRIES**  
classify violence against women and girls measures as essential services

**40**  
**COUNTRIES**  
collect and use data on violence against women and girls during the pandemic

**84**  
**COUNTRIES**  
have social protection measures that target or prioritize women

Source: UNDP and UN Women 2021.

*Nearly a billion new beneficiaries, but gaps in digital access persist*

*Some informal workers still excluded*

*Support for family leave*

*Services and access to justice for survivors of violence*

*Women's groups in critical roles*

*The pandemic underlines the need for equitable systems*

*Gender inequality compounds displacement*

benefits. The most common measures include liquidity support and tax relief for businesses. Among labor market policies, 60 percent were new, and 40 percent were adaptations of existing programs. About a third of developing countries have offered direct support to workers through wage subsidies, expanded unemployment benefits, or reduced income taxes.<sup>16</sup> To expand the reach of social protection programs, countries including Kazakhstan, Lesotho, and Viet Nam sought to include informal workers.<sup>17</sup>

Many new and expanded social protection programs leveraged digital platforms, reaching nearly one billion new beneficiaries.<sup>18</sup> Depositing government cash transfers directly into women's accounts and digitizing payments can promote gender equality in recovery.<sup>19</sup> Argentina distributed cash transfers to households in the summer of 2020 and prioritized women as the primary recipients.<sup>20</sup> Ghana and Kenya expanded mobile cash transfers during the pandemic, reaching women in informal work and in remote areas.<sup>21</sup> Digital innovations have potential advantages in speed, privacy, and reach, but gender gaps in digital access persist.

Even so, informal workers, who have traditionally been excluded from social protection, risk not receiving stimulus money because they are less frequently registered by the government as employees.<sup>22</sup> In India, more than half of the country's 326 million poor women were excluded from emergency cash transfers at the pandemic's onset because they lacked bank accounts to receive the transfers.<sup>23</sup>

Governments have taken various approaches to supporting people who are providing unpaid care. Uzbekistan extended paid leave for working parents for the duration of school and daycare closures. Similarly, Trinidad and Tobago introduced "pandemic leave" as a new classification of paid leave for working parents.<sup>24</sup>

Of the measures addressing gender-based violence tracked by the United Nations Development Program and UN Women, about two-thirds sought to strengthen services for survivors, including hotlines, other reporting mechanisms, and resources to enhance police and judicial responses.<sup>25</sup> According to the World Bank, 88 countries have allowed remote court operations, and at least 72 have declared family cases urgent or essential during lockdown.<sup>26</sup> Overall, however, measures to address violence against women during the pandemic have been uneven and often inadequate.<sup>27</sup>

Civil society organizations have played critical first-responder roles, especially in rural, remote, and marginalized communities where governments were unable or unwilling to act. Women's organizations have served in a broad range of capacities: supplying essential health and hygiene resources, distributing financial support to women-owned businesses, training women in virtual entrepreneurial skills, and supporting survivors of gender-based violence.

The crisis underscores the urgent need to build equitable systems that are resilient during good times and bad. The crisis has also brought welcome innovations that recognize and address inequalities. The more successful policy responses tend to be associated with strong precrisis systems, broad eligibility criteria, proactive outreach efforts, and effective financing.<sup>28</sup>

### **A new lens on forced displacement**

Forced displacement has moved up the global agenda as the number of displaced people has risen to unprecedented levels, approaching 90 million at the end of 2020. About 55 million remained in their own country as internally displaced persons (IDPs), and the rest were refugees.<sup>29</sup> About 48 million IDPs were displaced by conflict and violence and about 7 million by natural disasters.<sup>30</sup>

Displaced women and girls face a higher risk of all forms of gender-based violence and economic marginalization.<sup>31</sup> Public services are often disrupted or restricted in conflict-affected countries.<sup>32</sup> Displaced women face barriers to livelihood

*Displaced women do consistently worse*

*Performance echoes findings on multidimensional poverty*

*Rates of intimate partner violence and financial inclusion worse for displaced women*

*Gender gaps further disadvantage displaced women*

*The challenges facing displaced women vary*

opportunities, including eligibility for cash and voucher assistance, as a result of intersecting factors affecting their rights, agency, and access to economic opportunities.

Separate indices for forcibly displaced women and host community women in Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan reveal that displaced women had an average disadvantage of about 24 percent. And they generally faced much higher risks than host community women of violence at home, were less likely to be financially included, and often felt less free to move about. Displaced women's disadvantage was greatest in South Sudan, where their score (.284) fell about 42 percent below that of host community women.

The three countries with the greatest disparities in WPS Index scores between displaced and host community women—Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Sudan—are also the countries with the widest multidimensional poverty gaps between displaced and host community populations.<sup>33</sup> In all five countries, refugee and IDP households headed by women were more likely than those headed by men to be poor, showing how gender inequality compounds the effects of displacement and poverty. In refugee households in Ethiopia, 58 percent of those headed by a woman were impoverished, compared with 19 percent headed by a man.<sup>34</sup> Lack of physical safety, early marriage, and absence of legal identification were the largest contributors to poverty in households headed by displaced women.

Across all five countries, displaced women fared systematically worse than host community women in financial inclusion and risk of intimate partner violence. The gaps between refugee and host community women in financial inclusion exceeded 15 percentage points in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Somalia, compared with 4 percentage points in Sudan.<sup>35</sup> In Somalia, 36 percent of displaced women had experienced intimate partner violence in the past year, compared with 26 percent of host community women, a difference of 38 percent. In South Sudan, 47 percent of displaced women had experienced intimate partner violence—a rate nearly double the national average of 27.

The gender gaps facing displaced women were greatest for employment. Across all five countries, employment rates were at least 90 percent higher for displaced men than for displaced women—nearly 150 percent higher in Nigeria, where only about 15 percent of displaced women were employed. The gaps reflect the broader reality of high labor market segregation by gender around the world, with women more concentrated in unskilled and low-paid sectors than men, a condition that makes it hard for refugee women to find jobs.<sup>36</sup> Language barriers, lower literacy rates, unpaid care responsibilities, and gender norms that limit women's mobility can compound the constraints on displaced women's economic opportunities.<sup>37</sup>

Our results underline the added challenges related to inclusion, justice, and security for displaced women, highlighting the intersecting and compounding challenges of gender inequality and forced displacement. At the same time, the range of performance, both overall and on specific indicators, demonstrates the complexity of each situation. In Somalia, displaced women had relatively high rates of financial inclusion but the lowest rates of legal identification among the five countries. Nigeria had the lowest rates of intimate partner violence for both displaced and host community women, while cell-phone access for displaced women was the second worst of the five countries.

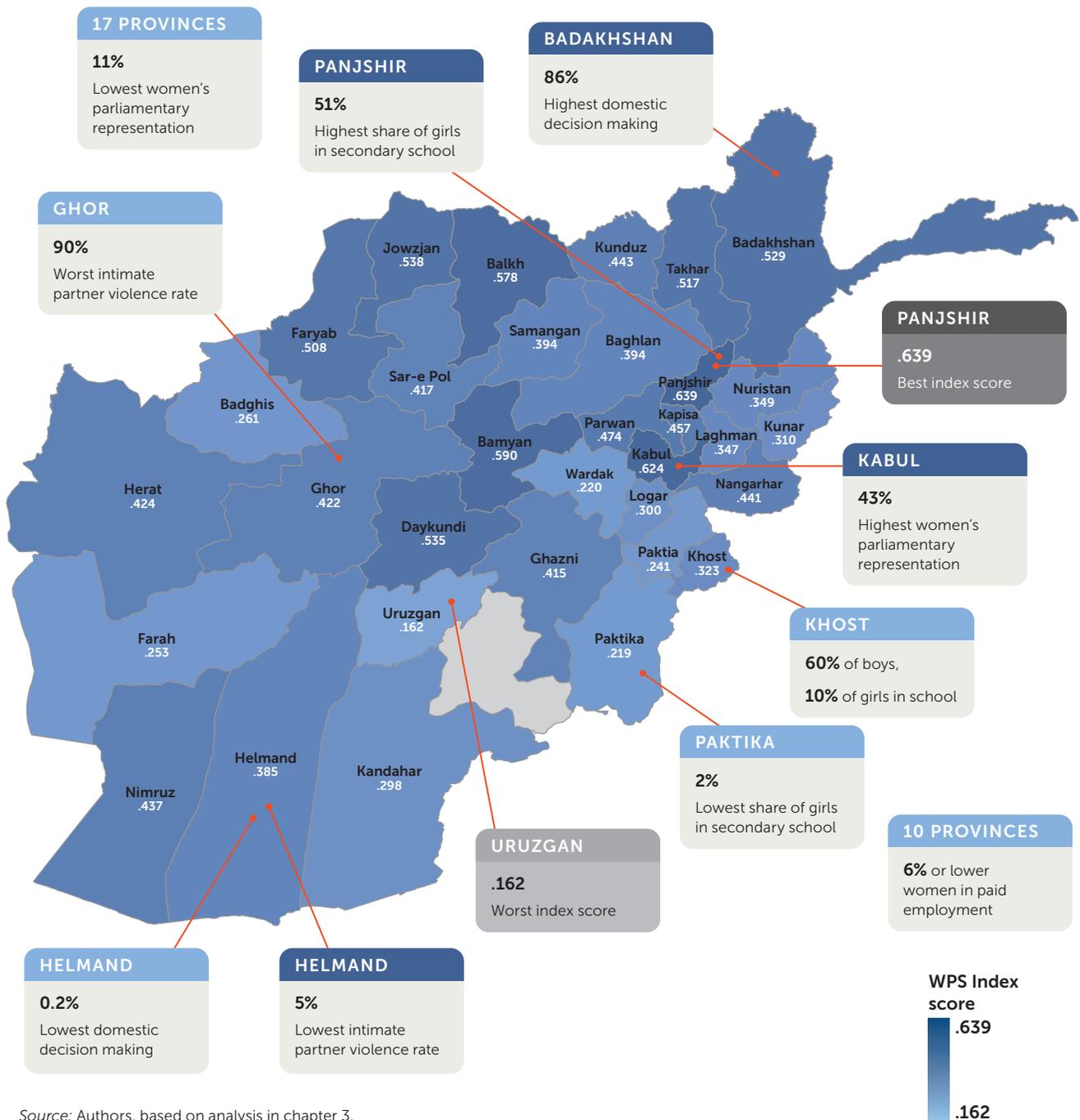
### Insights from subnational disparities

This report explores variation within national borders in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States based on new subnational WPS indices created for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States. In Afghanistan, provincial index scores ranged from .639 in Panjshir to .162 in Uruzgan (figure 6), with the widest gaps for organized violence. In Pakistan, provincial index scores ranged from .734 for Punjab to .194 for Balochistan (see infographic 2). And in the United States, Massachusetts at the top scored more than four times better than Louisiana at the bottom.

**INFOGRAPHIC 2**

**Where women live in Afghanistan matters greatly for their inclusion, justice, and security**

The global WPS Index tallies national averages in women’s inclusion, justice, and security. Behind those averages, new provincial WPS Index estimates reveal stark disparities across Afghanistan in 2019, showing how location matters and intersects with ethnicity, forced displacement, and security in determining women’s status. The COVID pandemic and the Taliban takeover are now making the situation even worse for women and girls in the lowest-ranked country in the world.



Source: Authors, based on analysis in chapter 3.

*High rates of organized violence and violence in the home in low-scoring provinces*

*Pakistan’s performance on the provincial index mirrors income and poverty levels*

*High rates of intimate partner violence and organized violence coincide in Pakistan*

*High variation in US state index performance*

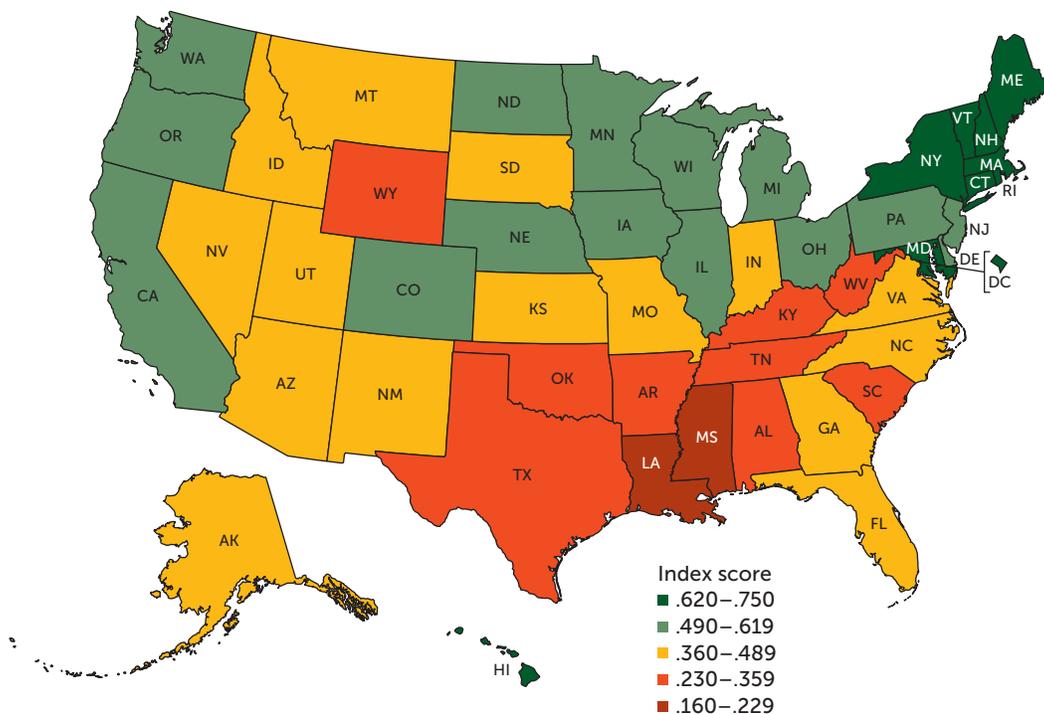
Afghanistan’s lowest-ranking provinces are mainly in the southeastern areas, where rates of organized violence and intimate partner violence were high. Acceptance of wife beating was widespread (between 67 and 97 percent), and levels of women’s participation in domestic decision making were very low (between 3 and 21 percent). High rates of violence in the home compounded the security threats facing women. Nationwide, 35 percent of Afghan women experienced intimate partner violence in the past year, and rates exceeded 84 percent in Ghor, Herat, and Wardak provinces—higher than those in any country in the global WPS Index. The return to power of the Taliban is widely expected to lead to further deterioration in the condition of Afghan women around the country.

Provincial index scores also ranged widely across Pakistan, from .734 for Punjab to .194 for Balochistan. The rankings on the provincial WPS Index mirror those for income and poverty. Punjab was the best-off, with the lowest reported rate of income poverty, at 32 percent, while Balochistan’s poverty rate approached 60 percent.<sup>38</sup>

As elsewhere in the world, two key aspects of women’s security—organized violence and current intimate partner violence—are closely related across Pakistan. Women in provinces with the highest rates of organized violence also face the highest rates of current intimate partner violence, underlining the amplified risks of violence at home for women living near conflict areas. Balochistan had the highest rates of both: organized violence was at 14 deaths per 100,000, and 35 percent of women had experienced intimate partner violence in the past year.

State performance varied greatly in the United States, with top-ranking Massachusetts scoring more than four times better than bottom-ranking Louisiana. We found clear regional patterns in performance, with all 6 states in the northeast scoring among the 10 best nationally, while all 5 of the worst performing states were in the southeast (figure 6). New Hampshire was the only state that scored in the top

**FIGURE 6** A spectrum of US index scores by state



Source: GIWPS 2020.

*Glaring racial injustice in the United States*

40 percent of countries for all 12 indicators, while Alabama, Arkansas, and Louisiana scored in the bottom 40 percent across the board.

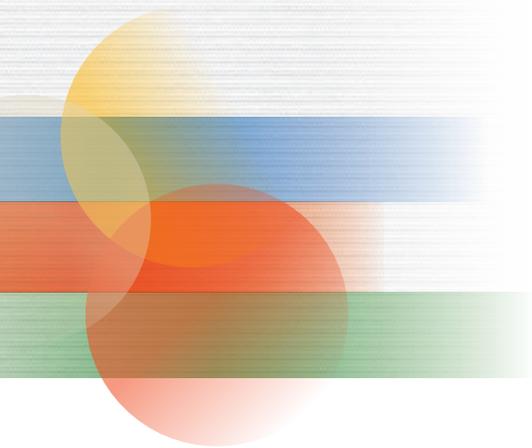
Major racial disparities affected the status of women in many US states—white women typically did best. Racial gaps were most marked for college degree attainment, representation in the state legislature, and maternal mortality. On average, 38 percent of white women had completed college, almost double the rate of Native American women, and in 26 states, no Hispanic women were represented in the state legislature. Large disparities also marked maternal mortality, with Black women experiencing higher mortality rates than white women in all states with data. In New Jersey, the maternal mortality rate among Black women, at 132 deaths per 100,000 live births, was almost four times the rate among white women

*Multidimensional indices help capture complex challenges*

The new subnational indices illustrate the diverse challenges and needs facing women behind national borders. The indices also underscore the importance of multidimensional measures of women’s status and opportunities.

\* \* \*

This year’s global rankings and novel WPS Index applications underline and illustrate the diverse obstacles and needs facing women around the world. The massive challenges created by the pandemic mean that intersectional analysis and policy making are more important than ever as communities and governments strive to build back better.



## CHAPTER 1

# Global, regional, and comparative findings

*Trends in the index reveal widening disparities across countries and slowing progress overall*

*Good news, with improvements in 90 countries and large gains in several African countries*

*Measuring women's inclusion, justice, and security for 170 countries*

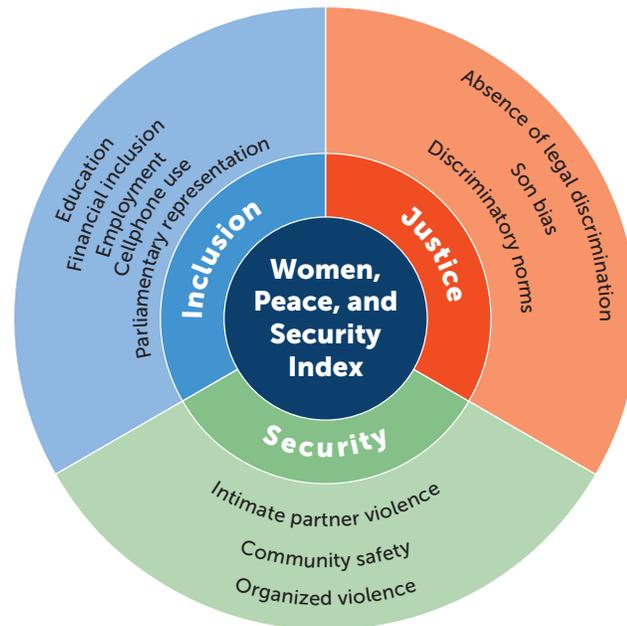
**W**omen's inclusion, justice, and security are more critical than ever in the wake of a pandemic that has wreaked havoc around the world. This year's report, the third since the inaugural 2017 Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index, finds that the pace of improvement in the index has slowed, with widening disparities across countries. The range of scores on the 2021 WPS Index is vast, with Norway at the top scoring more than three times better than Afghanistan at the bottom (see statistical table 1). Indeed, the range of scores is much wider than in our first edition in 2017, where the score of the top performer was about two times better than that of the worst performer. This widening gap reflects a worsening of inequalities in the status of women as countries at the top continue to improve while those at the bottom get worse, mirroring global trends in wealth and income inequality.

Globally, WPS Index scores have risen an average of 9 percent since 2017 and at above average rates in 31 countries. Six of the top ten score improvers are in Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>39</sup> And current global levels of organized violence are significantly lower than the 2014 peak, despite a moderate uptick between 2019 and 2020.

Global indices are a way to assess and compare countries by distilling an array of complex information into a single number and ranking. The WPS Index is the only measure that captures the dimensions of women's inclusion, justice, and security in a single index. Our approach underscores the value of an index that accounts for a range of diverse factors. For example, even if women are achieving higher levels of education than ever, an absence of measures of justice and security would leave the picture incomplete. Likewise, traditional measures of security include an array of conflict indicators but ignore systematic discrimination against women and girls.

The WPS Index is structured around the dimensions of women's inclusion (economic, social, political); justice (formal laws and informal discrimination); and security (at the individual, community, and societal levels). The index captures and quantifies these three dimensions through 11 indicators (figure 1.1).<sup>40</sup> The addition

**FIGURE 1.1** The WPS Index captures three dimensions of women’s status in 11 indicators



Note: See table 1.1 for indicator definitions and statistical table 1 for main data sources.  
Source: Authors.

of four countries to the WPS Index rankings in this edition (Kosovo, Oman, Palestine, and Tonga), made possible by improved data availability, has broadened coverage of the index to 170 countries,<sup>41</sup> representing more than 99 percent of the world’s population (see spotlight 1.1 at the end of the chapter). Table 1.1 presents the indicator definitions and rationale, and appendix 1 outlines the index methodology.

Lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed to prevent the spread of COVID created severe logistical barriers to conducting population surveys, and some global datasets that are typically updated annually were not produced for 2020.<sup>42</sup> For example, with stay-at-home orders constraining privacy and the ability to seek help against domestic violence, UN Women and the World Health Organization recommended against gathering data on intimate partner violence.<sup>43</sup> The WPS Index data for this indicator and for financial inclusion and discriminatory norms thus predate the pandemic. The International Labour Organization did not update its modeled data series for female employment for 2020; it published only total employment data and sex-disaggregated data for about 55 countries. For the WPS Index, we generated estimates for women’s employment using the available ILOSTAT data and following ILOSTAT methods.<sup>44</sup>

Disruptions to data collection caused by the pandemic mean that the 2021 index results do not paint a full picture of recent shifts in women’s status and opportunities. We know, however, that women have borne the brunt of job cuts and that worsening rates of violence have created what the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) has referred to as a “shadow pandemic.” Chapter 2 investigates these reversals.

### **A much wider range of index scores in 2021 than in 2017**

The range of scores on the 2021 WPS Index is vast (figure 1.2), with Norway at the top scoring more than three times better than Afghanistan at the bottom. It is striking that the range of scores, from .278 to .922, is considerably wider (44 percent) than the range in our first edition in 2017, from .385 to .886. Countries at the top continue to improve while those at the bottom deteriorate, a worsening inequality in the status

*COVID has curtailed data updates for this year’s index*

*The 2021 index does not reveal the full effect of the pandemic on women*

**TABLE 1.1** Index indicators, definitions, and rationale

DIMENSION and INDICATOR	DEFINITION	RATIONALE
<b>INCLUSION</b>		
Education	Average number of years of education of women ages 25 and older.	Critical to women's opportunities, freedom from violence, and health. A more precise measure than, for example, secondary school completion.
Employment	Percentage of women ages 25 and older who are employed.	Captures women's economic opportunities, which are central to realizing women's capabilities. Preferred to labor force participation because it excludes unemployment.
Cellphone use	Percentage of women ages 15 and older who report using a mobile phone to make and receive personal calls.	Increasingly recognized as core to people's opportunities to participate in the economy, society, and politics.
Financial inclusion	Percentage of women ages 15 and older who report having an individual or joint account at a bank or other financial institution or who report using a mobile money service.	Allows individuals to smooth consumption, manage risk, be more resilient, invest in education and health, and start and expand a business.
Parliamentary representation	Percentage of combined seats held by women in lower and upper houses of national parliament.	Political participation is a critical aspect of people's capabilities and is most widely measured by women's representation in parliament.
<b>JUSTICE</b>		
Absence of legal discrimination	The degree (0 to 100) to which laws and regulations differentiate between women and men, or protect women's opportunities, across 35 aspects of life and work. <sup>a</sup>	Discriminatory laws – such as restricting some professions to men – limit women's economic opportunities.
Son bias	Extent to which the sex ratio at birth (ratio of number of boys born to number of girls born) exceeds the natural demographic rate (1.05). <sup>b</sup>	The excess number of births of boys over girls relative to demographic norms reflects serious discrimination against girls and women.
Discriminatory norms	Percentage of men ages 15 and older who disagree with the proposition: "It is perfectly acceptable for any woman in your family to have a paid job outside the home if she wants one."	An important manifestation of gender discrimination is in economic opportunities and the world of paid work.
<b>SECURITY</b>		
Intimate partner violence	Percentage of ever-partnered women who experienced physical or sexual violence committed by their intimate partner in the preceding 12 months.	Current rates of intimate partner violence reveal the prevalence of intimate partner violence and allow tracking of trends.
Perception of community safety	Percentage of women ages 15 and older who report that they "feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where [they] live."	Perceived safety in the community affects women's mobility and opportunities outside the home.
Organized violence	Total annual number of battle deaths from state-based, nonstate, and one-sided conflicts per 100,000 people, averaged over 2018–20.	Captures the extent of insecurity in society due to armed conflict between groups of combatants.

a. Based on the Women, Business, and the Law database, a World Bank Group product that collects data on laws and regulations that constrain women's economic opportunities (World Bank 2021a).

b. Demographers estimate a natural sex ratio at birth to be 1.05 male births to 1 female birth. We estimate missing girls using the following formula: Missing girls =  $G = (X/F)M$ , where  $X$  is the difference between the number of boys and girls born in excess of 1.05,  $F$  is total number of girls born, and  $M$  is total number of boys born.

Note: See statistical table 1 for data sources and appendix 1 for index methodology for calculating the WPS Index.

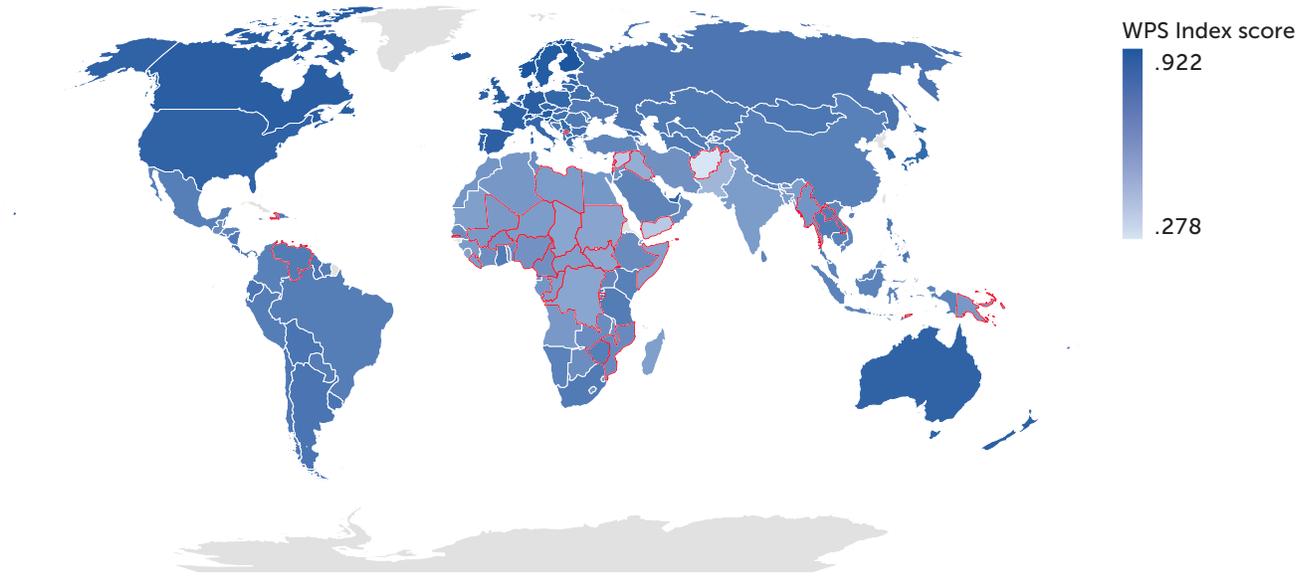
Source: Authors.

of women that mirrors global trends in wealth and income inequality.<sup>45</sup> The COVID pandemic threatens to further amplify inequalities, as discussed in chapter 2.

The top dozen countries on the index are all in the Developed Country group (see appendix 2 for region and country groups). The differences within the top dozen are minimal,<sup>46</sup> with a range from .879 (Canada, at number 12) to .922 (Norway, at the top; figure 1.3). It is also striking that all five Nordic countries rank among the top seven. This high standing is associated with progressive public policies, as highlighted in box 1.1.

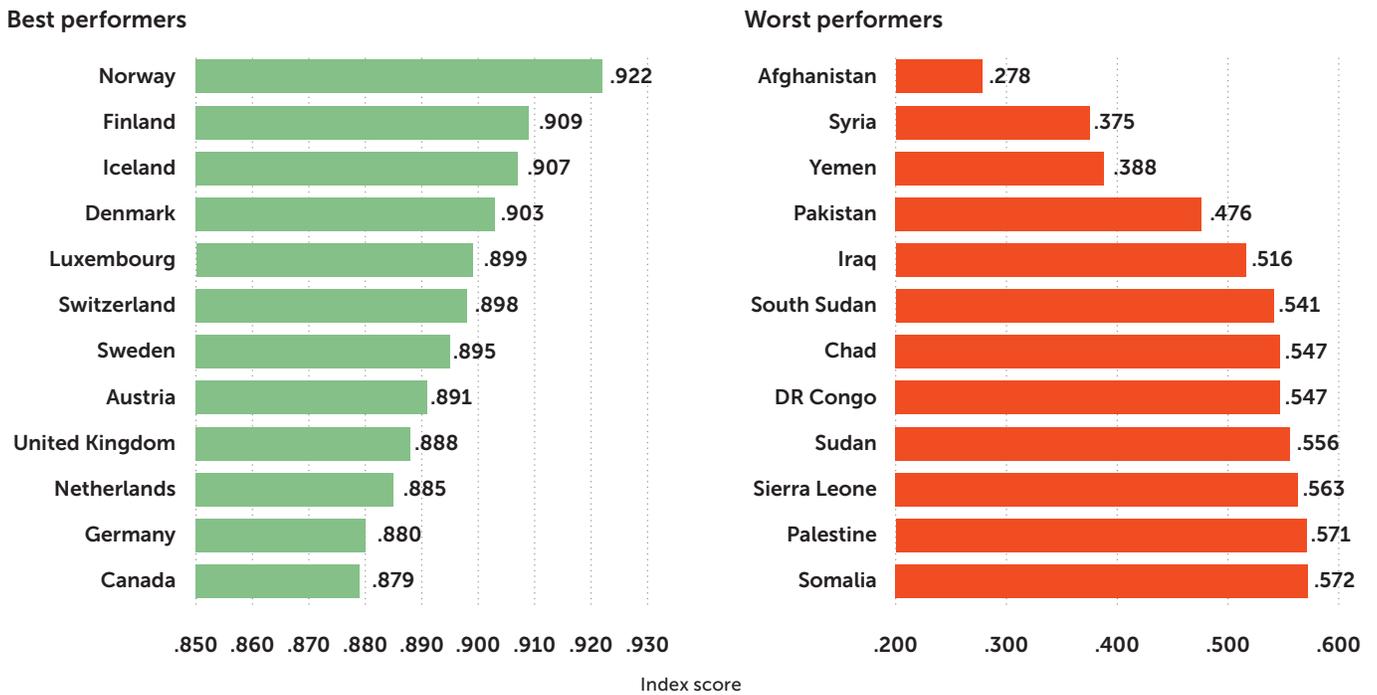
*All countries in the top dozen are developed*

**FIGURE 1.2** WPS Index scores span from .922 to .278



Note: Countries outlined in red are classified as fragile and conflict affected. Possible index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.  
 Source: Authors' estimates.

**FIGURE 1.3** The dozen best and worst performers on the WPS Index 2021



Note: Possible index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.  
 Source: Authors' estimates.

### BOX 1.1 Why Nordic countries do so well on the WPS Index

Policies in the Nordic countries are associated with strong performances on the WPS Index. The top four performers are all Nordic countries—Norway, Finland, Iceland, and Denmark—while Sweden, the other Nordic country, ranks seventh. Nordic countries do well even by developed country standards. High achievements on the inclusion and justice fronts can be traced, at least in part, to public policies that promote a dual-earner model. In all five Nordic countries, gender gaps in workforce participation are small.<sup>1</sup> Policies ensure parental leave for both mothers and fathers and state-sponsored childcare, encouraging parents to share responsibility for paid work outside the home and unpaid work at home.<sup>2</sup> In Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, both fathers and mothers have access to at least a year of paid parental leave, also helping to even out childcare responsibilities.<sup>3</sup>

The WPS Index does not tell the whole story, however. Finland has a gender wage gap of around 17 percent.<sup>4</sup> In Denmark, only 28 percent of managers are women, and across the region only 1 percent of tech investments in 2018 went to women-led companies.<sup>5</sup> There are also challenges in ensuring equal treatment for women in racial and ethnic minority groups. During the 2008/09 global recession, women from Iraq and Somalia living in Norway lost jobs at much higher rates than native-born citizens.<sup>6</sup>

In Denmark, as elsewhere, women refugees from Eritrea frequently take jobs for which they are overqualified.<sup>7</sup>

Nordic countries continue their efforts to improve women's rights and opportunities. Current efforts focus on multiple aspects of life:

- *Addressing sexual harassment and violence against women.* The Swedish government is resourcing the Crime Victim Compensation and Support authorities to handle cases of sexual violence.<sup>8</sup> To combat workplace harassment, the Danish and Finnish governments distributed guidance to employers on connecting survivors with support.<sup>9</sup>
- *Expanding access to fair economic opportunities.* In 2018, Iceland became the first country to require companies with at least 25 employees to prove that they were paying men and women equally, setting a strong standard of accountability.<sup>10</sup>
- *Improving conditions for women in sports.* Marking the first agreement of its kind, the Norwegian men and women's soccer teams and national football associations signed an equal pay agreement in 2017. In Sweden in 2015, 43 percent of top sport decision-making roles were filled by women, far above the EU average of 14 percent.<sup>11</sup>

#### Notes

1. OECD and Nordic Council of Ministers 2018.
2. Nordic Council of Ministers 2019.
3. Benify 2020.
4. Government of Finland n.d.
5. Savage 2019.
6. Torp 2016.

7. Joubert, Anand, and Mäki-Opas 2020.
8. Government Office of Sweden 2018.
9. NIKK 2019.
10. Wagner 2021.
11. European Institute for Gender Equality n.d.

*Many countries have remained in the bottom dozen since 2017*

*Yet some of the bottom dozen have improved their scores*

At the other end of the spectrum, 10 of the bottom 12 countries are in the Fragile States group. The range of performance here is much wider than at the top, with Afghanistan performing 51 percent worse on the index than Somalia, ranked 12th from the bottom.

All except Palestine (newly added to the index), Sierra Leone, and Somalia and have been in the bottom dozen since the 2019 WPS Index—and 7 of the bottom 12 have been in this group since 2017. In all the bottom dozen countries, women on average have not completed more than primary school (with the exception of Palestine), at least 16 percent of women have suffered violence at the hands of their intimate partner in the past year, and no more than one woman in three has access to her own bank account.

Yet some of these countries have made progress: the Democratic Republic of the Congo is among the top score improvers since 2017, rising 13 percent, while the Central African Republic's score rose 22 percent, moving the country out of the bottom dozen to 157th place. Improvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo came mostly in the inclusion dimension, as the share of women with financial accounts

*The WPS Index is strongly correlated with performance on other global indices*

almost tripled, to 24 percent, and increases exceeding 5 percentage points were achieved in cellphone use and parliamentary representation. In the Central African Republic, improvements were attained in the security dimension, as organized violence fell significantly and perceptions of community safety rose 6 percentage points, up to 49 percent.

Good performance on the WPS Index is strongly correlated with a range of positive outcomes. For example, the WPS scores are closely associated with crisis resilience, both in preparedness for the COVID pandemic and in climate change readiness (box 1.2; see also box 2.1 in chapter 2 and spotlight 2.1 at the end of chapter 2).

### BOX 1.2 Women's status and countries' resilience to climate change

The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel warns that climate change will continue to cause extreme weather events—droughts, severe heat waves, and devastating storms and floods.<sup>1</sup> Women often bear the brunt of these hazards.<sup>2</sup> In South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, women account for 60 percent of the people working in agriculture, a sector especially vulnerable to unpredictable weather.<sup>3</sup> Gender inequalities in land and asset ownership also create obstacles to climate adaptation; in nearly 40 percent of countries, women's property rights are limited.<sup>4</sup>

Notre Dame University's Global Adaptation Initiative (GAIN) Index quantifies countries' vulnerability to climate change and their readiness to respond to its impacts based on 45 indicators, ranging from water and energy infrastructure to health, governance, and economic opportunities. Countries are ranked and scored on a scale of 0–100, where higher is better.<sup>5</sup>

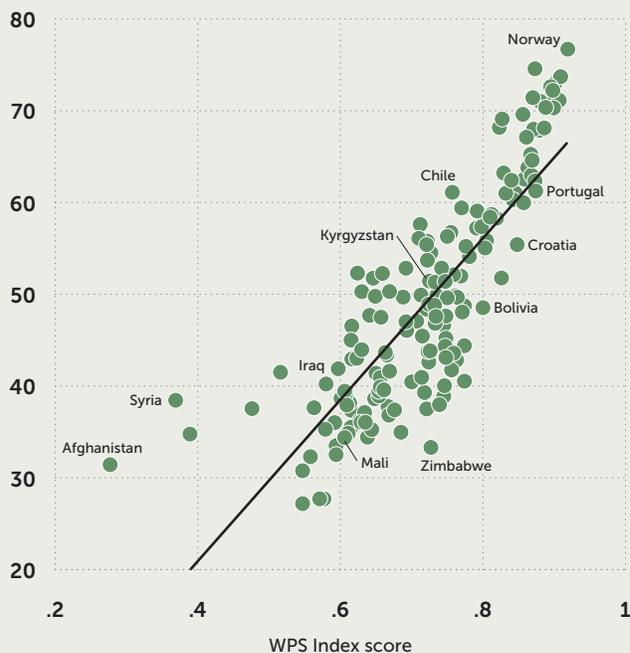
There is a strong correlation (.83) between the WPS Index and the GAIN Index (as shown in the figure). Correlation does not mean causation, but this relationship does suggest that countries where women's inclusion, justice, and security are protected are also better positioned to mitigate the rising threats of climate change.

These findings complement field studies highlighting women's roles as agents of change and climate resilience building. For example, in Indonesia, Peru, and Tanzania, greater representation of women in decision-making roles in forest management was associated with more effective and equitable forestry interventions.<sup>6</sup> In Sierra Leone, the Federation for Urban and Rural Poor, a women-led network of more than 3,000 people, offers households financial security through savings and loans groups as well as training on flood and disaster management.<sup>7</sup>

Women are on the front lines of climate change, both in feeling its impacts and in developing innovative solutions. Advancing women's inclusion, justice, and security is part of the solution to addressing climate change.

#### **Countries that do better on the WPS Index are less vulnerable to climate change and better prepared to respond**

GAIN Index score



Note: The GAIN Index measures countries' preparedness to respond to the effects of climate change. Correlation coefficient = .83.

Source: Authors' estimates based on data from statistical table 1 and ND-GAIN (2021) for GAIN Index estimates.

#### Notes

1. IPCC 2021.
2. Skinnari et al. 2020.
3. Solidarity Center 2018.
4. World Bank 2021a.
5. ND-GAIN 2021.
6. Cook, Grillos, and Andersson 2019.
7. Kellogg 2020.

*South Asia scores worst overall*

*Fragile states also score poorly*

*Greatest range of scores in Middle East and North Africa, Fragile States group, and South Asia regions*

*South Sudan is the worst performer in Sub-Saharan Africa, and Mauritius the best*

### Comparing regions and countries: A snapshot in time

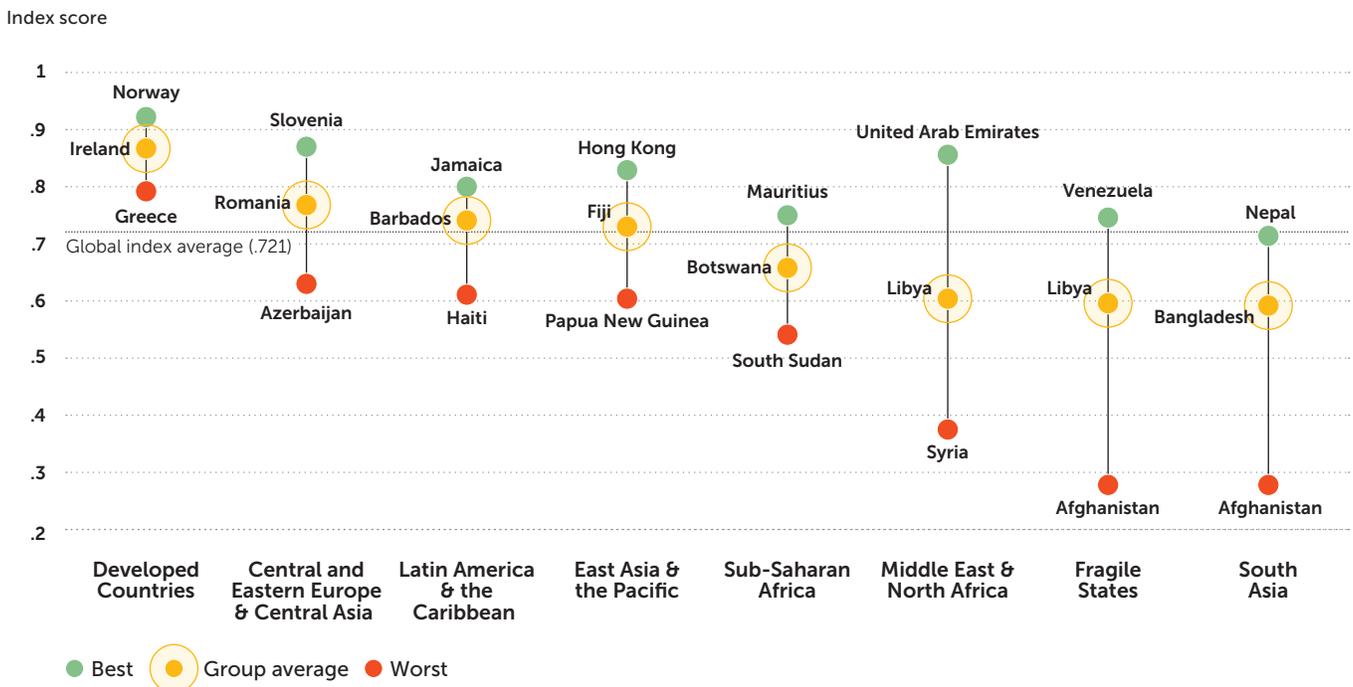
South Asia is the worst performing region on this year’s index, scoring even lower than the Fragile States group (see appendix 2 for region and country groups). This weak performance can be traced to the region’s high levels of legal discrimination, intimate partner violence, and discriminatory norms that continue to disenfranchise women, often coupled with low levels of inclusion. Fewer than one woman in four in the region is in paid work, just half the global average, and South Asia is the only region where not a single country ranks above the global average WPS Index score.

The 32 countries classified by the World Bank as fragile states do poorly on the WPS Index. Six of the ten countries with the highest rates of current intimate partner violence are in the Fragile States group, and Iraq has the highest incidence, at 45 percent. Women’s schooling averages less than five years among countries in this group—three years less than the global mean—and is as low as one year in Burkina Faso, Chad, and Niger. In fragile states, on average, only 26 percent of women have their own bank account, compared with a global mean of about 64 percent, with a range from 70 percent in Venezuela to just 2 percent in Yemen. Venezuela, at 71st, is the highest ranked fragile state.

At the same time, especially in the worst performing regions, some countries perform much better or much worse than their neighbors, illustrating the scope for feasible improvements (figure 1.4).

Sub-Saharan Africa’s worst performer, South Sudan, does poorly on the inclusion dimension, with only 5 percent of women having their own bank account and only 27 percent reporting use of a personal cellphone—the lowest share in the world—and high rates of organized violence and intimate partner violence. Mauritius, the region’s best performer, does relatively well across the board and is best in the region for women’s financial inclusion and absence of legal discrimination.

**FIGURE 1.4** Widest range of 2021 WPS Index scores in the Middle East and North Africa, the Fragile States group, and South Asia regions



Note: Possible index scores range from a low of 0 to a high of 1. See statistical table 1 for data sources and scores. Countries in the Fragile States group are also included in their regional group.  
Source: Authors’ estimates.

*Comparisons reveal room for improvement*

Unpacking the WPS Index reveals mixed performance across indicators. Our results identify where countries, even those scoring well, have room for improvement, as well as bright spots for poor performers. For example, Mexico, ranking 88th overall, is 43rd on the justice dimension but falls to 160th on the security dimension: only a third of women feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood at night, and its rate of organized violence is among the 10 worst in the world. Iraq ranks fifth worst on the index but is among the few countries where all women report using a cellphone. Only one country—Iceland—scores in the top quintile of countries across all 11 indicators. It also has the best possible scores on the justice dimension, with no legal discrimination against women, no son bias, and all men agreeing that it is acceptable for a woman to have a job outside the home if she wants one.

*Wide disparities in performance*

Table 1.2 shows, by region, the average, best, and worst values on each indicator, highlighting wide disparities in performance. For example, there is a nine-year range in mean years of schooling for women in Sub-Saharan Africa, from 10 years in South Africa to just 1 year in Burkina Faso. In developed countries, rates of intimate partner violence range from 2 to 8 percent, while in East Asia and the Pacific, rates span from 3 percent in Hong Kong to 31 percent in Papua New Guinea—a value nearly four times the regional average.

*Widest ranges in employment and financial inclusion scores*

The widest spectrum of performance is in employment and financial inclusion. And, as explored in chapter 2, the COVID pandemic has undermined women’s paid opportunities in much of the world. Women’s employment rates range from 92 percent in Burundi to just 5 percent in Yemen. There are also clear regional patterns—9 of the 10 countries with the highest rates of paid employment are in Sub-Saharan Africa, while 7 of the bottom 10 are in the Middle East and North Africa. Rates of financial inclusion range from universal in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden to fewer than 1 woman in 20 in South Sudan and Yemen. Performing worst on financial inclusion are the Middle East and North Africa, at 19 percent, and the Fragile States groups, at 26 percent, while the Developed Countries group averages 95 percent.

“If the woman does not even understand what the man does business-wise, does not know the accounts that he has, does not know the properties that he has... she does not know anything. She’s already disinherited... If a woman has an independent income and she can take care of certain things, there’s a way you can push her, and she will say, ‘Hey, stop that. You can’t push me. I can take care of myself.’”<sup>47</sup>

—Josephine Nzerem, Director of Ashoka Africa in Nigeria

*Middle East and North Africa is the worst performing region on the legal front*

Our measure of legal discrimination captures the extent to which women live in societies free of formal barriers to justice, as documented by the World Bank’s Women, Business, and the Law database.<sup>48</sup> The good news is that overall performance has improved, and over the past several decades, the number of discriminatory laws has been steadily declining across all regions.<sup>49</sup> Still, as on the 2017 index, the Middle East and North Africa is the worst performing region on this indicator, averaging only 50 of 100 points. Palestine has the worst overall legal score (26) globally, with glaring gender gaps in pay, responsibility for childcare, marriage, workplace protection, and retirement.<sup>50</sup> The best legal score in the Middle East and North Africa is reported for the United Arab Emirates, which nonetheless lags on women’s access to assets, including property.<sup>51</sup> At the other end of the spectrum, Latvia and nine developed countries<sup>52</sup> scored 100 on the legal measure, signaling gender equality under the law.

*Discriminatory norms are most widespread in the Middle East and North Africa*

Our measure of discriminatory norms is the share of men who believe it is unacceptable for women to have a paid job outside the home. Discriminatory norms are most pervasive in the Middle East and North Africa, where about two in five men

**TABLE 1.2 Best and worst country scores regionally and globally for WPS Index indicators**

INDICATOR and PERFORMANCE LEVEL	GLOBAL	DEVELOPED COUNTRIES	CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA	EAST ASIA & THE PACIFIC	LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN	MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA	SOUTH ASIA	SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	FRAGILE STATES
<b>EDUCATION (MEAN YEARS OF SCHOOLING)</b>									
Average	8.1	12.6	11.2	7.6	8.8	7.5	5.6	4.8	4.9
Best country score	13.9 Germany	13.9 Germany	13.6 Estonia	11.8 Hong Kong	11.2 Panama	11.9 UAE	11.1 Sri Lanka	10.0 South Africa	10.6 Venezuela
Worst country score	1.1 Burkina Faso	9.2 Portugal	7.5 Turkey	3.8 Timor Leste	4.3 Haiti	2.9 Yemen	1.9 Afghanistan	1.1 Burkina Faso	1.1 Burkina Faso
<b>FINANCIAL INCLUSION (%)</b>									
Average	63.6	94.9	65.7	66.3	50.9	28.6	64.8	34.6	25.7
Best country score	100 Denmark, Norway, Sweden	100 Denmark, Norway, Sweden	98.4 Estonia	95.0 Mongolia	77.8 Jamaica	76.4 UAE	91.6 Iran	87.1 Mauritius	70.0 Venezuela
Worst country score	1.7 Yemen	84.5 Greece	27.7 Azerbaijan	21.5 Cambodia	24.4 El Salvador	1.7 Yemen	7.0 Pakistan	4.7 South Sudan	1.7 Yemen
<b>EMPLOYMENT (%)</b>									
Average	46.5	51.4	47.3	59.1	45.6	17.5	23.3	63.2	47.8
Best country score	91.8 Burundi	64.2 Iceland	60.3 Kazakhstan	81.0 Lao PDR	61.8 Haiti	58.6 Qatar	73.7 Nepal	91.8 Burundi	91.8 Burundi
Worst country score	5.2 Yemen	37.1 Greece	13.4 Kosovo	39.6 Fiji	35.7 Guyana	5.2 Yemen	14.8 Iran	23.1 Somalia	5.2 Yemen
<b>CELLPHONE USE (%)</b>									
Average	84.7	94.4	96.1	94.2	90.1	91.8	61.7	80.8	76.2
Best country score	100 Multiple	100 Denmark, Finland	100 Multiple	100 China, Mongolia, Thailand	96.8 Ecuador	100 Iraq, Libya, UAE	94.6 Maldives	99.8 Kenya, South Africa, Uganda	100 Iraq, Kosovo, Libya
Worst country score	27.0 South Sudan	89.3 Australia	76.5 Uzbekistan	71.2 Indonesia	57.6 Guatemala	53.5 Yemen	42.7 Afghanistan	27.0 South Sudan	27.0 South Sudan
<b>PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION (%)</b>									
Average	25.5	33.2	23.3	20.7	32.8	17.5	17.6	24.9	18.8
Best country score	55.7 Rwanda	48.3 New Zealand	39.2 North Macedonia, Serbia	38.5 Timor Leste	48.4 Mexico, Nicaragua	50.0 UAE	33.6 Nepal	55.7 Rwanda	42.4 Mozambique
Worst country score	0.0 Papua New Guinea	13.4 Malta	12.6 Hungary	0.0 Papua New Guinea	14.8 Brazil	1.0 Yemen	4.6 Maldives	6.2 Nigeria	0.0 Papua New Guinea
<b>ABSENCE OF LEGAL DISCRIMINATION (AGGREGATE SCORE 0–100)</b>									
Average	74.5	92.9	80.2	73.2	83.1	51.9	67.4	71.7	60.9
Best country score	100 Multiple	100 Multiple	100 Latvia	89 Hong Kong	95 Peru	82.5 UAE	80.6 Nepal	91.9 Mauritius	92 Kosovo
Worst country score	26.3 Palestine	80.6 Israel	69.4 Kazakhstan	50 Malaysia	63.8 Haiti	26.3 Palestine	31.3 Iran	29.4 Sudan	26.3 Palestine
<b>SON BIAS (MALE TO FEMALE RATIO AT BIRTH)</b>									
Average	1.07	1.05	1.06	1.09	1.05	1.05	1.09	1.04	1.05
Best country score	1.01 Namibia	1.05 Multiple	1.05 Turkey, Turkmenistan, Slovakia	1.03 Mongolia, Myanmar	1.03 Belize	1.03 Saudi Arabia	1.04 Bhutan, Sri Lanka	1.01 Namibia	1.02 Mozambique, Zimbabwe
Worst country score	1.12 Azerbaijan, China	1.07 Greece, Singapore	1.12 Azerbaijan	1.12 China	1.07 Suriname	1.07 Iraq	1.10 India	1.06 Nigeria	1.08 Kosovo, Papua New Guinea
<b>DISCRIMINATORY NORMS (%)</b>									
Average	20.3	2.4	12.6	20.8	8.7	39.3	33.6	17.9	25.6
Best country score	0 Canada, Iceland, Norway	0 Canada, Iceland, Norway	2 Estonia	1 Hong Kong	4 Uruguay	18 UAE	18 Nepal	6 Rwanda	6 Venezuela
Worst country score	73 Pakistan	14 Israel	34 Turkmenistan	37 Indonesia	22 Haiti	53 Yemen, Iraq	73 Pakistan	33 Niger	53 Yemen, Iraq
<b>INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (% , LAST 12 MONTHS)</b>									
Average	11.7	4.8	7.1	8.2	7.9	17.6	18.2	20.3	19.7
Best country score	2.0 Singapore, Switzerland	2.0 Singapore, Switzerland	3.0 Multiple	3.0 Hong Kong	4.0 Argentina, Uruguay	8.9 Lebanon	4.0 Sri Lanka	8.0 Comoros	5.0 Kosovo
Worst country score	45.3 Iraq	8.0 Finland, South Korea	14.0 Tajikistan	31.0 Papua New Guinea	27.0 Barbados	45.3 Iraq	35.0 Afghanistan	36.0 DRC	45.3 Iraq
<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY (%)</b>									
Average	61.9	71.0	55.0	78.1	35.4	57.6	56.2	46.0	44.9
Best country score	98.5 UAE	96.9 Singapore	92.6 Turkmenistan	84.8 China	60.2 Jamaica	98.5 UAE	66.1 Iraq	85.9 Somalia	85.9 Somalia
Worst country score	9.8 Afghanistan	44.4 Belgium	37.0 Turkey	46.4 Mongolia	27.4 Venezuela	16.9 Syria	9.8 Afghanistan	25.3 Gabon	9.8 Afghanistan
<b>ORGANIZED VIOLENCE (BATTLE DEATHS PER 100,000 PEOPLE)</b>									
Average	1.1	0.00	0.7	0.0	2.3	5.2	1.5	1.5	7.5
Best country score	0.0 Multiple	0.0 Multiple	0.0 Multiple	0.0 Multiple	0.0 Multiple	0.0 Multiple	0.0 Multiple	0.0 Multiple	0.0 Multiple
Worst country score	75.1 Syria	0.7 Israel	25.1 Azerbaijan	0.6 Myanmar	9.7 Mexico	75.1 Syria	68.6 Afghanistan	14.8 Somalia	75.1 Syria

Note: See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges and appendix 2 for region and country groups.

Source: Authors' estimates.

*Community safety varies widely and is worst in Latin America and the Caribbean*

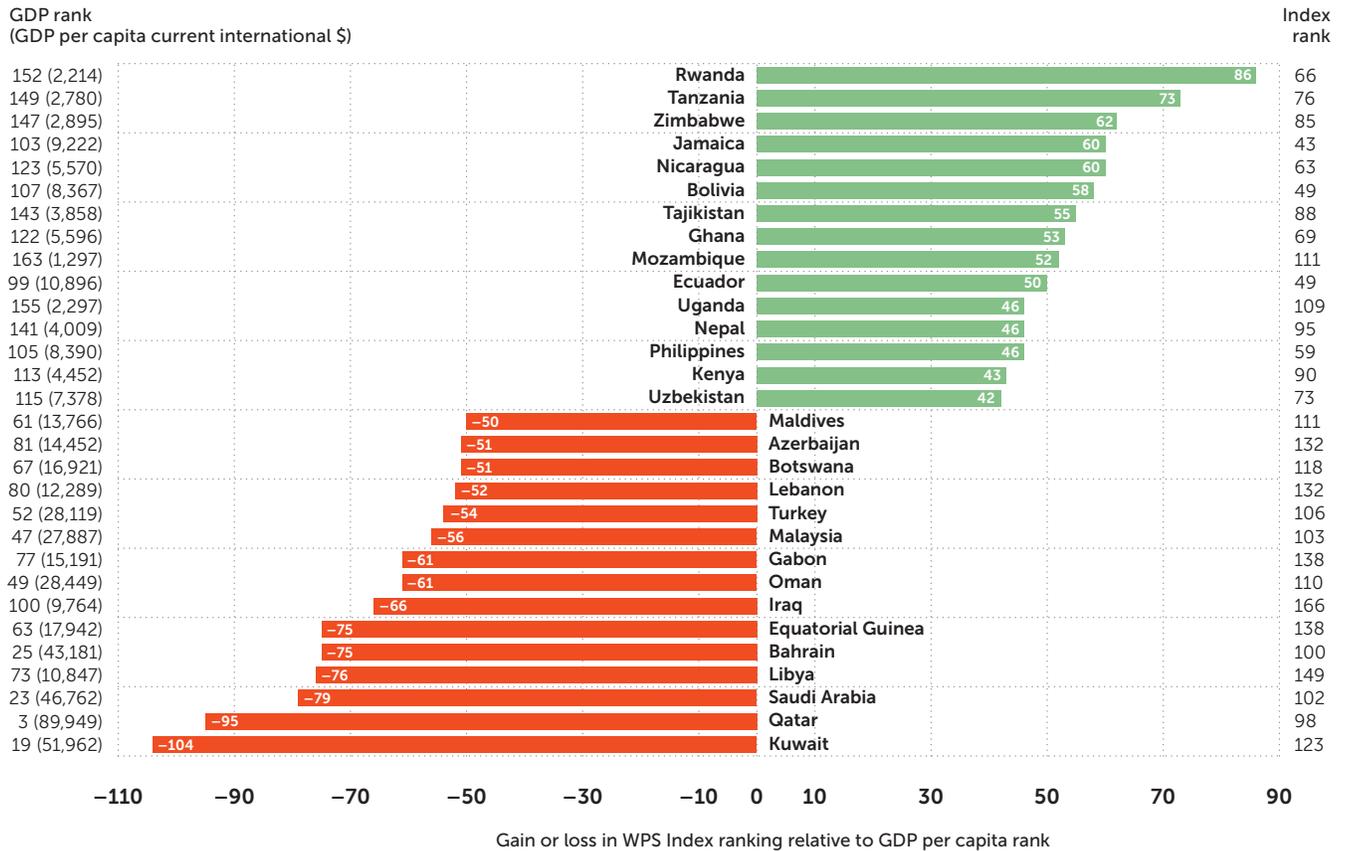
*Some countries rank much lower, or higher, on the WPS Index than their income rank*

do not believe it is acceptable for women to have a paid job and where 15 of the 17 countries score in the bottom two quintiles on legal discrimination. This suggests a convergence of formal and informal barriers to women’s justice in the region.

In the security dimension, Latin America performs poorly on community safety, with just more than one woman in three feeling safe walking alone in her neighborhood at night, compared with almost four women in five in East Asia and the Pacific. Overall, the country in which women reportedly feel safest is the United Arab Emirates, and the country where women feel least safe is Afghanistan. Syria does the worst globally on organized violence and the worst regionally on community safety. In all developed countries, more men than women feel safe walking alone at night, with the largest gender gaps (almost 30 percent) in Australia and New Zealand.<sup>53</sup>

Although national income matters for index performance, it does not tell the whole story. Some countries do much better or much worse on the index ranking than on their ranking on per capita income (figure 1.5). Some 35 countries score at least 20 ranks lower on the WPS Index than their income rank. Kuwait has the largest gap, scoring 104 places lower, and 5 of the 10 countries with the largest gap are in the Middle East and North Africa—Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Oman, in that order. This clearly underlines the scope for greater investments in advancing gender equality.

**FIGURE 1.5 Many countries gain or lose rankings on the WPS Index compared with their income ranking**



Note: Green indicates a country’s gain in the WPS Index ranking relative to income per capita rank; red indicates a loss. All GDP data are for 2020 except Kuwait and Oman, which are for 2019.

Source: Authors’ estimates based on data from statistical table 1 and the World Bank (2021e) for GDP data.

*Gains in women's inclusion, justice, and security since the 2017 index*

*Most of the top 10 score improvers are in Sub-Saharan Africa*

*Worsening rates of organized violence and perceptions of community safety in Afghanistan and elsewhere*

### Trends in WPS Index scores between 2017 and 2021

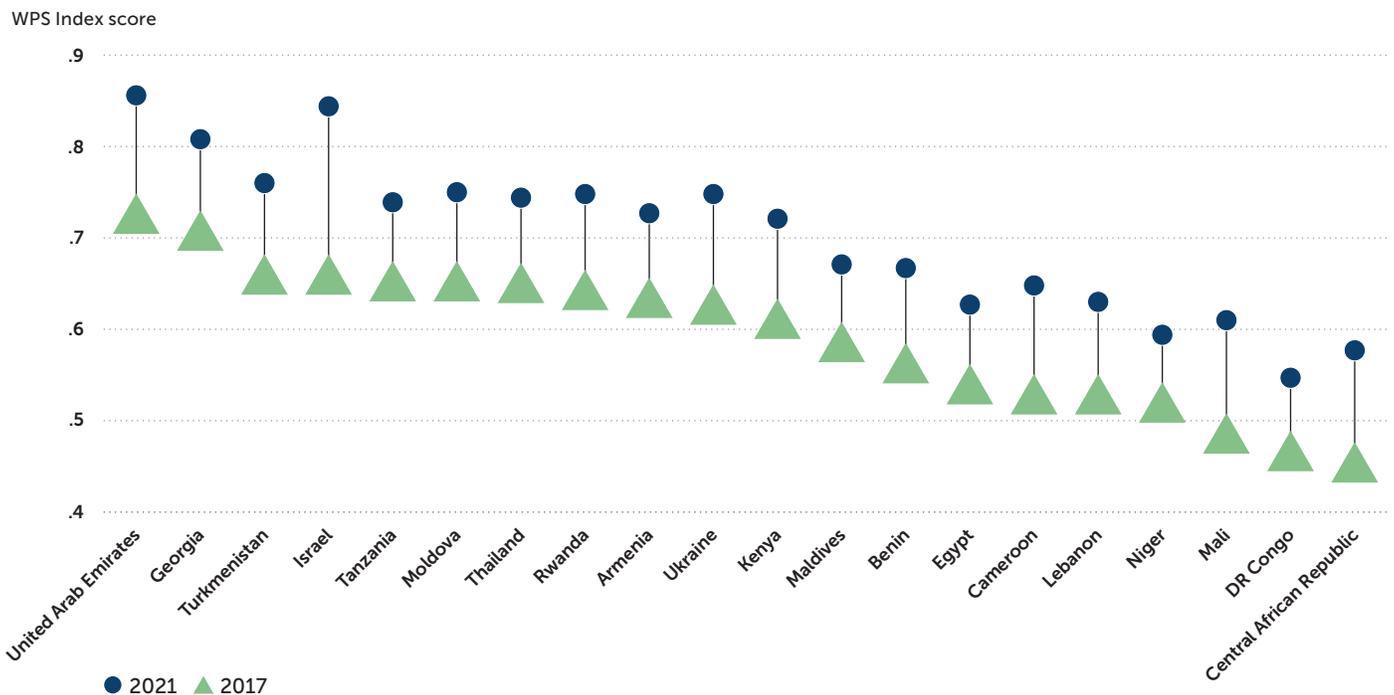
Changes in index rankings show how countries have performed relative to others,<sup>54</sup> while fluctuations in a country's score capture absolute changes in women's inclusion, justice, and security.

Since the inaugural WPS Index was published in 2017, women's overall status has risen, with the average index score up by about 9 percent. During this period, 90 countries improved their score by at least 5 percent—and 31 countries improved their scores by at least 9 percent, surpassing the global average improvement. However, over time, the rate of progress has slowed by more than half: the global average rose about 7 percent between 2017 and 2019 but by only about 3 percent between 2019 and 2021. At the regional level, the average score for Latin America and the Caribbean rose on par with global trends, while the average for South Asia deteriorated 7 percent, driven by large drops in employment in 2020 amid the COVID pandemic, as discussed in chapter 2.

Of the top 10 score improvers, 6 are in Sub-Saharan Africa: Central African Republic, Mali, Cameroon, Benin, Kenya, and Rwanda, in descending order of improvement (figure 1.6). Cameroon's gains reflect women's expanded cellphone access and employment and legal reforms advancing gender equality; for example, new legislation protects women against sexual harassment in employment and education and calls for stricter punishment for perpetrators of abuse.<sup>55</sup>

While the global improvements are welcome, the worsening index scores for several countries underscore persistent challenges. Since 2017, Afghanistan's score has deteriorated 28 percent, driven mostly by worsening rates of organized violence and perceptions of community safety, as explored in chapter 3. The recent rise of the Taliban has exacerbated the deterioration and undermined women's status. Scores also worsened in absolute terms for Haiti, Namibia, and Yemen, with especially marked

**FIGURE 1.6 WPS Index scores improved by at least 10 percent in 20 countries, 2017–21**



Note: Countries are in descending order of their 2017 score. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges and appendix 2 for region and country groups.  
Source: Authors' estimates.

*Some countries reveal variable performance over time*

*Some indicators shift slowly*

*New laws protect women against domestic violence*

*Expansions in cellphone use*

*Improvements in community safety*

*Though rising, women's parliamentary representation still averages only about one in four*

*Organized violence has fallen from its 2014 peak, but the number of conflicts is rising*

*Most deaths from organized violence are in Afghanistan, Mexico, Azerbaijan, and Syria*

declines in community safety (except Yemen) and rising rates of organized violence (except Namibia).

A handful of countries have performed quite differently over time, slipping in rank between 2017 and 2019 and ascending thereafter. For example, Saudi Arabia initially fell 21 ranks and later gained 18 slots to land in 102nd place in 2021, driven largely by a full year's gain in women's mean years of schooling and by legal reforms that eased restrictions on women's employment.<sup>56</sup>

We can directly compare performance for most indicators, but not all (see page 14 and appendix 1). When reviewing trends, we should be aware that some indicators change slowly. Notably, mean years of schooling is measured for adult women and is slower to shift year on year than, for example, parliamentary representation after a national election. Additionally, some indicators have less room to improve as coverage approaches 100 percent.

One welcome trend over the past decade has been the adoption of legislation to protect women from domestic violence. However, execution of the laws can lag. Spotlight 1.2 examines the record on implementation of these new laws in China, Kenya, Lebanon, and Nicaragua, illustrating gaps between laws on paper and in practice.

One indicator showing broad improvements is women's cellphone use, which rose in 115 countries, bumping the world average up from 78 to 85 percent between 2016 and 2020. Sub-Saharan Africa saw the largest regional jump, from 64 to 81 percent; in Ethiopia, women's cellphone use more than doubled, from 43 to 98 percent.

Women's perceptions of community safety improved in 81 countries—by 10 percentage points across East Asia and the Pacific, to 78 percent. In Malaysia, the share of women who feel safe walking in their neighborhood at night rose from 31 to 49 percent. However, at 30 percentage points, Malaysia's gender gap in community safety is still the largest in the region, while in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam, the gender gap exceeds 15 percentage points.

Since 2017, women's representation in parliament has increased globally, from 20 to 26 percent—most markedly in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a rise in the latter region from 24 to 33 percent. In 16 countries, women increased their representation in parliament by at least 10 percentage points, led by the United Arab Emirates, which recorded parity in 2021. That is welcome progress, even though Freedom House classifies the United Arab Emirates as “not free” and political power is effectively vested in the seven (male) emirs.<sup>57</sup> Papua New Guinea is the only country in the world in 2021 with no women in parliament, down from 3 percent in 2017.

### Focus on organized violence

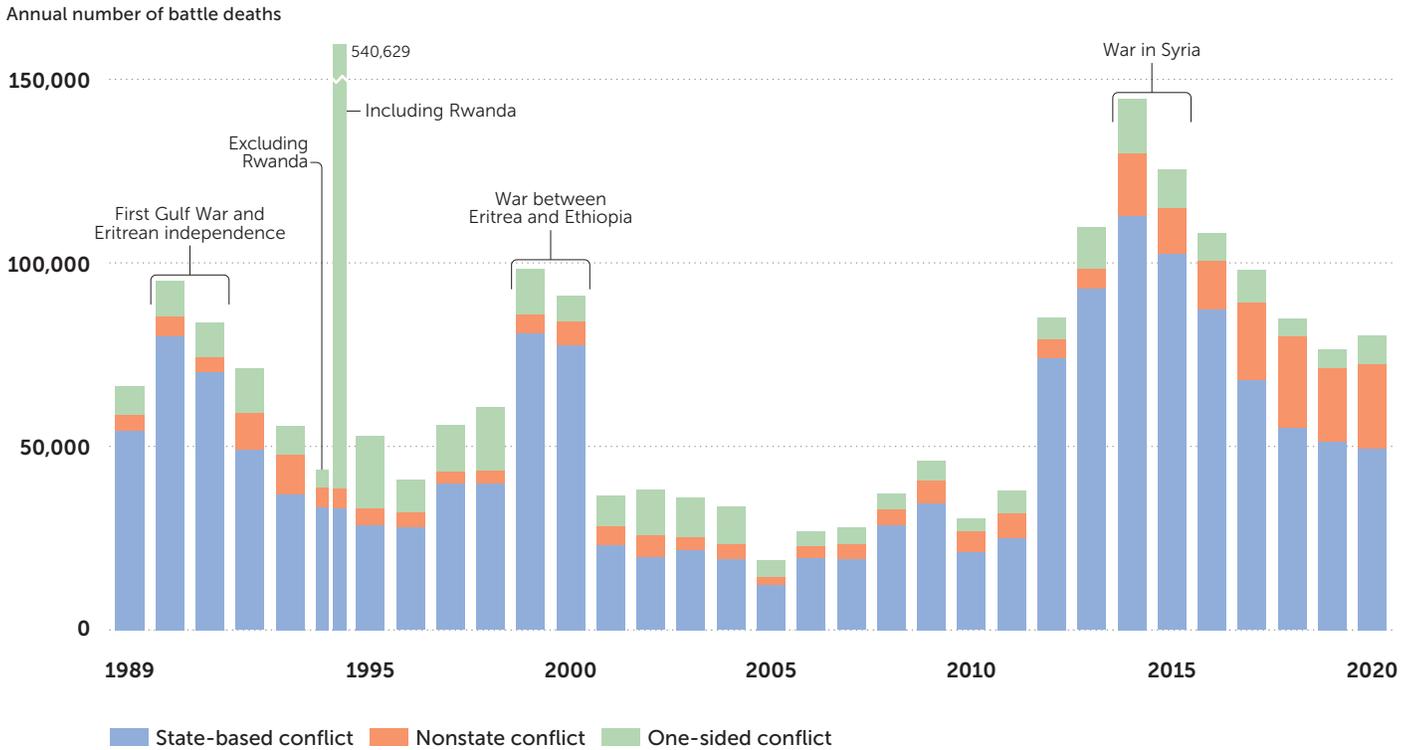
A unique dimension of the WPS Index is women's security, measured by rates of current intimate partner violence, perceptions of community safety, and organized violence.

The good news is that global levels of organized violence are well below their 2014 peak, despite a moderate uptick in battle deaths between 2019 and 2020 (figure 1.7). At the same time, however, the number of nonstate conflict-related battle deaths—mostly from drug cartel violence<sup>58</sup>—has risen and now accounts for about 30 percent of battle deaths.

The welcome fall in deaths from conflict violence has come about despite the rising number of conflicts: there were 56 unique state-based conflicts in 2020—the highest number since 1946—alongside 72 nonstate conflicts. This suggests that there are many low intensity conflicts and that more people now live in conflict zones.<sup>59</sup>

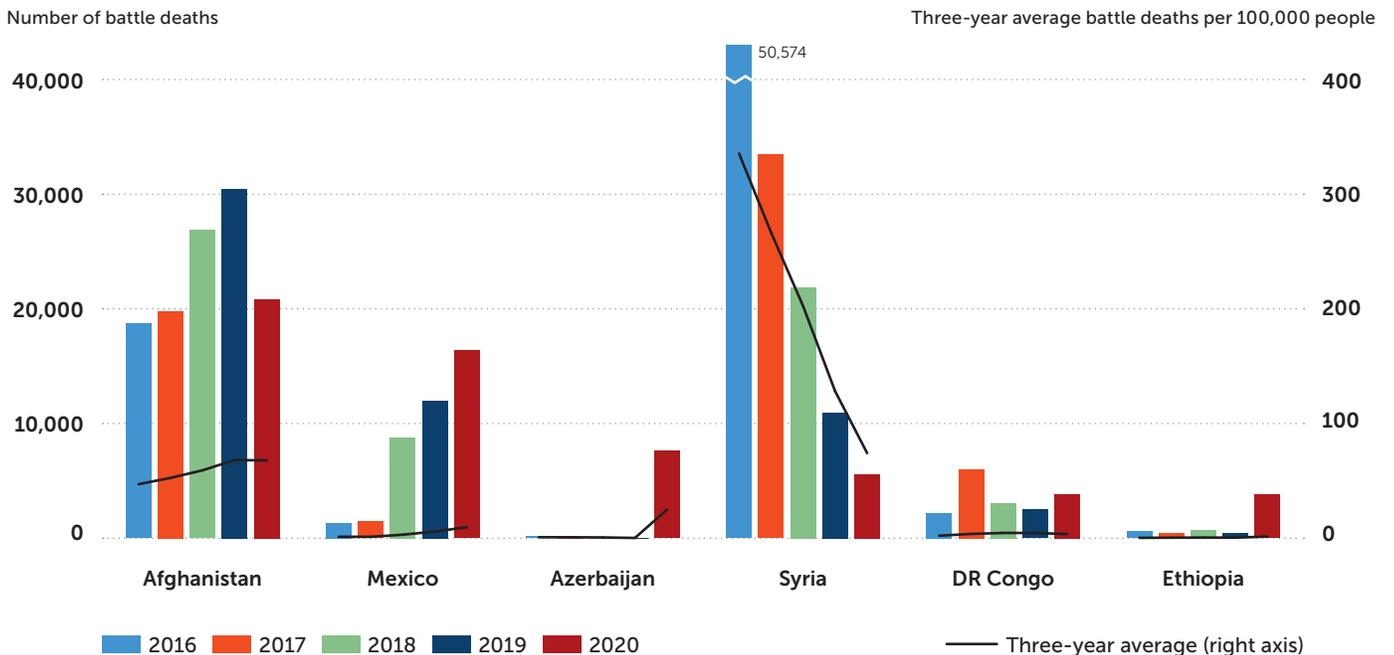
Battle-related deaths are concentrated geographically. In 2020, more than 60 percent of battle deaths occurred in four countries: Afghanistan (20,836), Mexico (16,385), Azerbaijan (7,621), and Syria (5,583), as shown in figure 1.8. Afghanistan has suffered the most violent conflict since 2018, even as the number of battle deaths

**FIGURE 1.7** The total number of battle deaths has declined since the 2014 peak, but deaths from nonstate conflict and the number of conflicts are up



Note: The sample is global and not restricted to countries in the WPS Index.  
Source: Authors' estimates based on data from UCDP (2020).

**FIGURE 1.8** The six most violent countries in 2020



Note: The three-year average shows the average rate of organized violence in the preceding three years.  
Source: Authors' estimates based on data from UCDP (2020).

*Countries with high rates of organized violence generally rank low on the index*

*Most conflict events are in Africa, with severe repercussions for women and children*

*More people living in conflict-affected areas*

*Some recent ceasefires following the UN Secretary-General's call*

fell from more than 30,000 in 2019 to about 21,000 in 2020. The return of the Taliban threatens to escalate violence against women and girls and reverse the progress of the last two decades, as discussed in chapter 3.

Some other countries have experienced grave deteriorations. Between 2017 and 2020, rates of organized violence increased 100-fold in Azerbaijan, to 25 deaths per 100,000 people, dragging the country's index ranking down from 113 to 132.

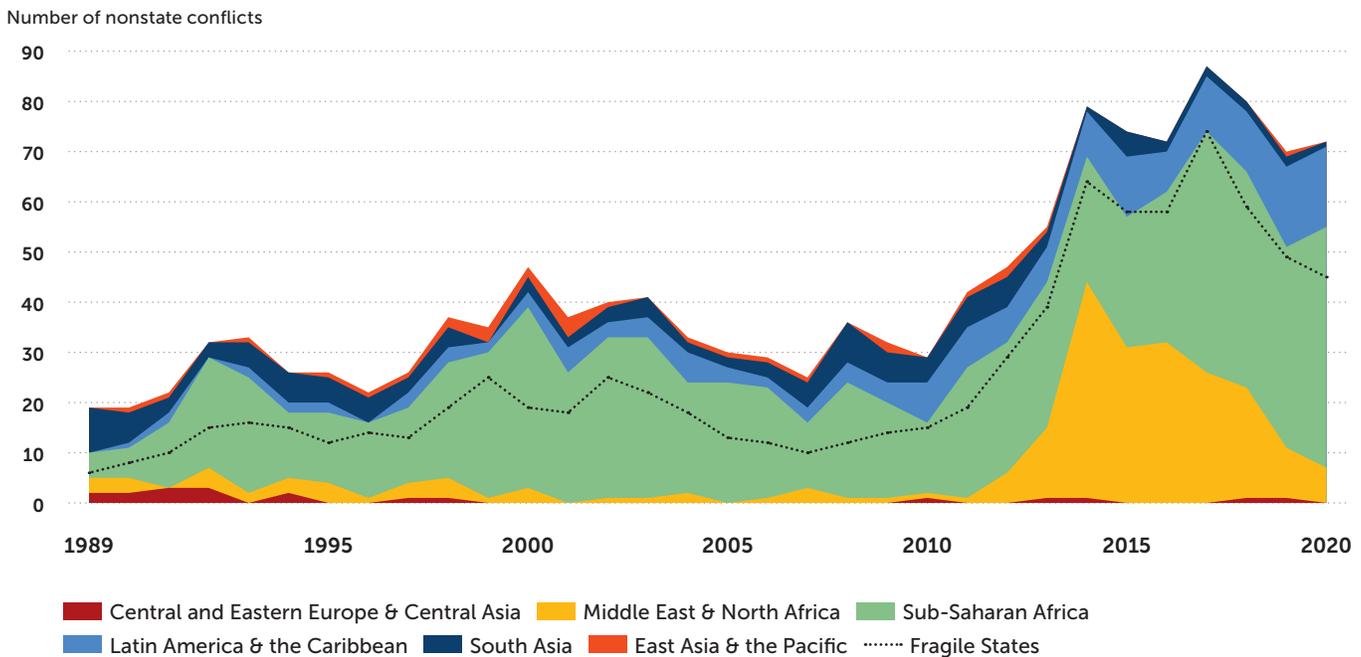
High rates of organized violence are strongly correlated not only with high rates of violence against women in the home,<sup>60</sup> but also with poor performance on women's inclusion, justice, and security more broadly. Two of the four countries with the worst levels of organized violence in 2020, and indeed over the past decade—Afghanistan and Yemen—are also bottom ranked on the WPS Index.

Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 48 of the 72 nonstate conflicts in 2020, even if not for a majority of deaths (figure 1.9), and two-thirds of all nonstate conflicts occurred in countries classified as fragile states. This is a major concern given accumulating evidence about the repercussions of conflict beyond the battlefield, especially for women and children. For example, proximity to conflict reduces the likelihood of giving birth at a health facility,<sup>61</sup> increases the risk of maternal death,<sup>62</sup> reduces the likelihood of completing high school,<sup>63</sup> and worsens the likelihood of food insecurity,<sup>64</sup> all outcomes that have also been intensified by the pandemic (see chapter 2). Conflict also impedes access to development assistance and increases the risk of attacks on aid workers.<sup>65</sup> As recounted below, conflict increases women's exposure to wartime sexual violence.

The number of people living in conflict-affected areas has doubled, from about 555 million in 1990 to almost 1.1 billion in 2019, when 14 percent of the world's population lived within 50 kilometers of a conflict event. Because conflicts are more common in countries with younger populations, this trend is even more devastating for children: in 2019, 18 percent of all children (425 million) lived in proximity to conflict.

As battle deaths mounted in 2020, the UN Secretary-General called for a global ceasefire in March 2021.<sup>66</sup> The call for a humanitarian pause attracted vocal support.

**FIGURE 1.9** Greatest number of nonstate conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa, 1989–2020



Source: Authors' estimates based on data from UCDP (2020).

**TABLE 1.3** Prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence and intimate partner violence in the 12 bottom-ranked countries on the WPS Index

COUNTRY	WPS INDEX RANKING 2021 <sup>a</sup>	PREVALENCE OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE, 2019	CURRENT RATE OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE, 2018 (% of women)
Somalia	159	Isolated	21
Palestine	160	Not available	20
Sierra Leone	161	None reported	20
Sudan	162	None reported	17
Chad	163	None reported	16
DR Congo	163	Isolated	36
South Sudan	165	Massive	27
Iraq	166	Numerous	45
Pakistan	167	None reported	16
Yemen	168	Numerous	18
Syria	169	Massive	23
Afghanistan	170	None reported	35

a. Gaps in index rank numbers reflect ties in some positions.

Source: Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict (SVAC) dataset and authors' estimates.

There were also responses on the ground, with additional ceasefires in the short term—such as the National Liberation Army's declaration of a unilateral ceasefire in Colombia and extensions of existing ceasefires by several rebel groups in Sudan. However, the call for a global ceasefire does not appear to have had a lasting effect on levels of conflict around the world.<sup>67</sup>

### *Women are advancing peace processes*

Women's participation in ceasefires and other peace agreements is central to achieving sustainable peace and development.<sup>68</sup> Women's organizations have mobilized around the world to support a global cessation of hostilities. Food4Humanity, one of Yemen's first women's civil society organizations and led by Muna Luqman, demanded a ceasefire to allow medical personnel to respond to COVID even before the UN Secretary-General called for a global ceasefire.<sup>69</sup>

### *Declining reports of conflict-related sexual violence*

Women living in conflict zones also face the threat of conflict-related sexual violence. The good news is that the number of countries with reported conflict-related sexual violence has fallen, from 20 in 2016 to 13 in 2019.<sup>70</sup> The countries with extensive reports of conflict-related sexual violence, such as Syria and Yemen, are often among the bottom dozen countries on the WPS Index, exposing how low levels of women's inclusion, justice, and security are associated with women facing higher risks during conflict (table 1.3).

 SPOTLIGHT 1.1

## Profiles of the four new countries added to the WPS Index in 2021

*Newly ranked Oman, Palestine, and Tonga score toward the bottom*

In 2021, Kosovo, Oman, Palestine, and Tonga were added to the WPS Index rankings. None of the countries scores in the top two quintiles, and their ranks range from 77th for Kosovo to 160th for Palestine.

**Kosovo**, ranking 77th on the index, does relatively well on most indicators, except financial inclusion and employment. Women's employment rate is now the fifth lowest in the world, at only 13 percent, reflecting ongoing declines. This has been traced to several factors, including conservative social norms and women's caregiver roles, lower education levels, and limited access to property relative to men.<sup>1</sup> Even primary school enrollment suffers from gender gaps, at 52 percent for boys and 48 percent for girls.<sup>2</sup> There is formal legal protection from discrimination on most counts,<sup>3</sup> although this does not always translate into protection in practice. Women have full legal property rights but in 2015 owned just 15 percent of property.<sup>4</sup>

Not captured in our index is the fact that almost 1 woman in 20 was raped during the 1990s conflict, causing severe physical and psychological trauma.<sup>5</sup> The first prosecutions for these rapes began in 2019.<sup>6</sup> Rape has significant social stigma, discouraging many women from reporting their experiences and leaving them with longer term physical, health, and psychological scars.<sup>7</sup>

**Oman** ranks 110th on the index overall, and is in the bottom quintile in both parliamentary representation and absence of legal discrimination. Oman is one of the last absolute monarchies in the world.<sup>8</sup> There are 17 women currently serving in Oman's legislative body, a rate of less than 10 percent: 2 were elected, and 15 were appointed by the Sultan.<sup>9</sup> No woman has ever served as a judge in Oman.<sup>10</sup>

Oman is also among the worst countries in the world on legal discrimination: women are unequal before the

law in marriage, guardianship over their children, and inheritance.<sup>11</sup> Women do not have equal rights to choose where they live, travel outside their homes, or apply for a passport.<sup>12</sup> Omani women's associations are lobbying for change but are denied official status as nongovernmental organizations, which limits their influence.<sup>13</sup>

**Palestine**, which enters at rank 160, faces major challenges around the blockade of Gaza and military occupation of the West Bank.<sup>14</sup> Palestine performs poorly almost across the board; the exception is community safety, with nearly two-thirds of women reporting feeling safe walking in their neighborhood alone at night, above the global average.

Palestinian women face the most extensive legal discrimination in the world.<sup>15</sup> The prevalence of intimate partner violence is high, with nearly one woman in five experiencing such violence in the past 12 months. The fact that Palestine does not have a law against domestic violence leaves women particularly vulnerable to abuse.<sup>16</sup> When violence occurs, women can also face challenges in accessing health services, particularly in Gaza and during the pandemic.<sup>17</sup>

**Tonga** joins the rankings at 93rd, reflecting uneven performance. Tonga is among the bottom dozen countries in female parliamentary representation, with only 2 women in its 26-member parliament. Over 15 percent of women in Tonga have experienced intimate partner violence in the past year.<sup>18</sup> There are also extensive legal restrictions. For example, women do not have rights to land ownership in Tonga.<sup>19</sup> Land remains vested in the Tongan monarchy and can only be passed down through male heirs, and for those without a hereditary land grant, only men can be granted leases.<sup>20</sup> Among other repercussions, this means that women can be trapped in abusive homes.

### Notes

1. World Bank 2018b.
2. Kushi 2015.
3. World Bank 2021a.
4. Kushi 2015.
5. Smith 2000.
6. Plesch 2019.
7. Plesch 2019.
8. CIA 2021.
9. CIA 2021.
10. Human Rights Watch 2021.

11. Human Rights Watch 2021.
12. World Bank 2021a.
13. Al Talei 2021.
14. Amnesty International 2020.
15. World Bank 2021a.
16. Begum 2019.
17. Amnesty International 2020.
18. Moala 2020.
19. World Bank 2021a.
20. Ministry of Internal Affairs 2019.

**SPOTLIGHT 1.2**

**Laws against domestic violence: Good practices, gaps, and challenges**

The widespread adoption around the world of laws focused on intimate partner violence is a welcome trend, as tracked by the World Bank’s Women, Business, and the Law database and included in our measure of absence of legal discrimination. The figure shows that as of 2021, nearly 160 countries had passed legislation on domestic violence. A recent study across 159 economies found that domestic violence legislation was associated with a 2.3 percent decline in the women-to-men adult mortality ratio, translating into hundreds of thousands of female lives saved.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, however, we know that laws on the books are not enough to fully prevent violence or deliver justice to survivors.

We look at four diverse countries that have passed laws in the last decade focused on preventing domestic violence and punishing perpetrators—China, Kenya, Lebanon, and Nicaragua—and highlight both good practices and problematic gaps in the laws’ design and implementation.

**Substance of the laws**

Intimate partner violence laws vary in how well they protect women. Some focus more on punishment, some on prevention, and some on responses or services for survivors. Welcome steps in our country sample include:

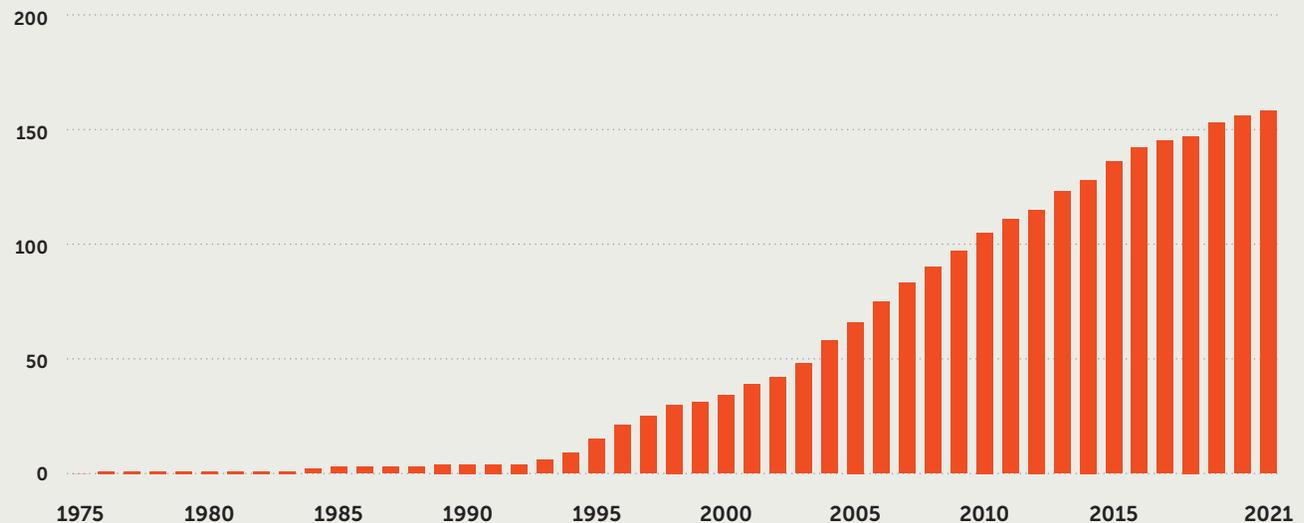
- *Explicit prohibition of intimate partner violence and domestic violence.* China’s Anti-Domestic Violence Law of 2016, the country’s first, “prohibits any form of domestic violence,” physical and mental, including psychological

abuse and “restriction of personal freedom” among married couples, unmarried people who cohabit, and other family members who cohabit.<sup>2</sup> Nicaragua’s second major law on domestic violence, which went into effect in 2012, explicitly declares that violence against women is rooted in the “unequal power relations between men and women” and articulates the state’s obligation to protect women’s rights, including the right to a life free of violence.<sup>3</sup>

- *Expanded access to protection orders.* China and Kenya have expanded access to protection orders. China requires courts to delay, reduce, or waive fees for domestic violence survivors seeking protection orders.<sup>4</sup> Kenya’s 2015 Protection against Domestic Violence Act enables survivors to apply for protective orders and allows third parties to apply on the survivor’s behalf if the survivor is unable or afraid to do so.<sup>5</sup>
- *Survivor compensation.* Kenya’s domestic violence law lays out procedures for awarding compensation to survivors who have thereby suffered personal injury, property damage, or financial loss.<sup>6</sup>
- *Specialized agencies.* Nicaragua’s 2012 law established specialized courts for gender-based violence, presided over by trained judges.<sup>7</sup> Under the 1996 national domestic violence law, dedicated police stations for women and children were established and staffed with specially trained female police officers and social workers.

**Nearly 160 countries now have domestic violence legislation**

Cumulative number of countries



Source: Authors’ analysis based on data from World Bank (2021a).

### SPOTLIGHT 1.2 (continued)

By 2015, there were 162 such police stations in Nicaragua, though many were reportedly shut down in 2016 because of budget cuts.<sup>8</sup>

- *Elimination of the mediation option.* Nicaragua’s 2012 law eliminated the option of mediation (nonbinding agreements between the woman and the accused, commonly facilitated by police), due to concerns about coercion and research finding that at least 30 percent of agreements ultimately ended in femicide. However, following a challenge to the law’s constitutionality, the National Assembly passed an amendment allowing mediation for first and minor offenses.<sup>9</sup>

Despite legislative progress, many of the laws contain loopholes, which can circumvent the legislative intent to women’s disadvantage. Examples include:

- *Lack of clarity about prohibited forms of violence.* China has not yet issued guidelines for implementation of the 2016 law, and courts have not developed comprehensive judicial interpretations of the law. This has led to uncertainties in defining and recognizing domestic violence and in applying standard procedures for protecting survivors.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Lebanon’s law is unclear about which crimes are covered. Drafts of the law had defined physical, sexual, psychological, and economic violence, but the definitions were not included in the final version.<sup>11</sup>
- *Failure to protect against marital rape.* The laws in China and Lebanon do not explicitly prohibit marital rape, one of the most common forms of intimate partner violence.<sup>12</sup> Kenya’s law exempts sexual violence within marriage from being a criminal offense, although it is recognized as a civil wrong.<sup>13</sup>
- *Precedence of personal status laws.* In Lebanon, personal status laws take precedence over domestic violence law in cases of conflict between the laws, putting women at risk in their home.<sup>14</sup> For example, personal status laws exclude children from protection orders if the mother does not have custody. As a consequence, women may remain in the home with their abuser in order to stay with and protect their children against an abusive partner.<sup>15</sup>
- *Exclusion of refugee women.* Lebanon’s law does not protect refugees. Though the law claims to protect all women living in Lebanon, refugee women exposed to violence are not able to access government help if they lack legal residence status or live in a refugee camp.<sup>16</sup>

#### Implementation of the laws

The good news is that the laws surveyed here report some positive impacts. In Nicaragua after 1996, the 12-month prevalence rate of physical intimate partner violence

plummeted by 71 percent.<sup>17</sup> In China, courts issued almost 6,000 protection orders between 2016 (when national legislation was enacted) and 2019, and the number of protection orders for survivors rose each year, from 687 in 2016 to more than 2,000 in 2019.<sup>18</sup> However, UN Women reports that no official national statistics are available for physical or sexual intimate partner violence in China, making it difficult to assess the law’s impact.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to loopholes, cultural and chronic barriers drive large gaps between laws on the books and implementation. Many problems can be traced to gender norms and attitudes and to deeply rooted inequalities, suggesting that concerted efforts are needed to advance implementation of laws against violence.

Practical problems can impede implementation and also discourage reporting. For example, survivors often face intimidating challenges to obtaining protection orders. In some areas in China, up to a third of applications for protection are withdrawn before a judge has ruled, and as many as two-thirds of the remaining applications are denied.<sup>20</sup> Survivors report that “local officials, police, and judges” have advised them “to go back to their partners for the sake of family or ‘social stability,’” prioritizing marriage over violence prevention.<sup>21</sup>

Evidentiary requirements can be difficult to meet or traumatic for survivors. To initiate an investigation, Kenyan law requires a survivor to provide written details in the public Occurrence Book that is held in each police station.<sup>22</sup> Widespread corruption in the police system reportedly causes delays and gives perpetrators an opportunity to bribe police to drop or delay the investigation.<sup>23</sup> In China, a study of 560 court judgments revealed that many domestic violence survivors faced difficulties meeting the court’s stringent evidentiary requirements for protection orders.<sup>24</sup>

Alongside these practical constraints are women’s lack of knowledge about their rights. In Lebanon, two years after the domestic violence law was passed, a third of a population surveyed was unaware of the law and a similar share reported that they preferred having the family rather than the courts handle domestic violence matters.<sup>25</sup> Internalized acceptance of abuse can also obstruct the path to reform, as emphasized by Dr. Liu Meng, a Chinese women’s rights activist.

When Dr. Liu Meng attended Beijing Conference in 1995, she realized that domestic violence was not just a normal part of family life. “At that time, in China, people believed—even me, I also believed—it was very, very common for

## SPOTLIGHT 1.2 (continued)

*couples to beat, to fight. In Chinese, we don't use 'beat,' we use the word 'fight,' and couple fighting was regarded as part of marriage." She went on to advocate for the anti-domestic violence legislation that China enacted in 2016—but "the cases keep coming. This journey was very, very long. It took me like 10, 15 years [to pass the anti-domestic violence legislation]. We were happy, but not for long because there are some gaps [in the legislation] and we believe that we still have a long way to go."<sup>26</sup>*

In Kenya, as elsewhere, a traditional culture of silence and disparagement of domestic violence discourages reporting.<sup>27</sup> Survivors might not believe that they are entitled to protection or might fear additional violence. Kenyan law also provides steep penalties for false accusations.<sup>28</sup> Together, these conditions can intimidate survivors.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, many women lack sufficient economic resources to leave an abusive relationship. In Lebanon, a survivor who files a case against an abusive partner might have to leave the home, despite lacking a source of income and the means to live independently. Thus, women may remain in the marital home despite suffering violence at the hands of their partner.<sup>30</sup>

In some legal settings, survivors are encouraged to rely on mediation and similar types of dispute resolution before pursuing other legal options. In China, mediation remains the primary method of resolving intimate partner violence disputes.<sup>31</sup> Police and courts use mediation to maintain "social stability," often failing to hold perpetrators accountable. Lack of proper training for police and mediators often

results in blaming the survivor and pressuring the survivor to try to win him back to "save the family."<sup>32</sup>

In addition to the aforementioned amendments to Nicaragua's 2012 law permitting mediation in certain cases, later presidential decrees mandated the establishment of neighborhood-based counseling (led by religious and political leaders) for women as a first step to resolving "family conflict" before making a legal complaint.<sup>33</sup> Yet data show that mediation can be ineffective against intimate partner violence. Women's rights advocates have asserted that mediation is not a neutral encounter, as women can feel coerced into an agreement.<sup>34</sup>

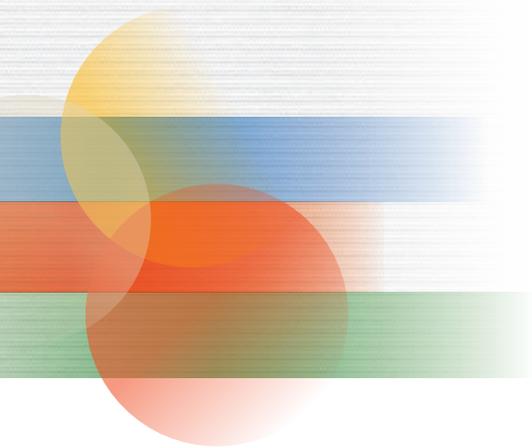
Funding constraints can also impede implementation. Kenya's government has failed to allocate adequate funds to implement its domestic violence law, reducing its effectiveness.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, just weeks before Nicaragua's 2012 law was to take effect, funding was not ensured for most of its major mandates, such as additional state prosecutors and courts specializing in gender violence.<sup>36</sup>

\* \* \*

In sum, there has been welcome progress in passing laws focused on domestic violence. But as the selected cases illustrate, countries often have a way to go in achieving the goals of the laws, given deficiencies in the legislation, practical obstacles to implementation, and problems rooted in gender inequality. And political commitment can waver over time, as in Nicaragua. More research is needed on the role of legislation in addressing intimate partner violence and on evidence of what works.

## Notes

1. Islam and Lopez-Carlos 2021.
2. National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China 2016.
3. Neumann 2018.
4. National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China 2016.
5. Parliament of Kenya 2015 § 26.
6. Parliament of Kenya 2015 § 32.
7. Neumann 2018.
8. Advocates for Human Rights 2020.
9. Neumann 2018.
10. Yang 2020.
11. UNDP 2018.
12. Yang 2020; Human Rights Watch 2014.
13. Parliament of Kenya 2006, § 43(5).
14. Human Rights Watch 2014.
15. Lebanon does not have a civil code regulating personal status matters. Rather, there are 18 separate "personal status laws" for recognized religious communities, including 12 Christian, 4 Muslim, the Druze, and Jewish confessions, which are each administered by separate religious courts. Marriage, divorce, inheritance, and custody fall under these personal status laws (Human Rights Watch 2015).
16. American University of Beirut Policy Institute 2017.
17. Ellsberg et al. 2020.
18. Yang 2020.
19. UN Women 2016.
20. Beijing Weiping Culture Co., Ltd. 2019.
21. Rauhala 2017.
22. Amnesty International 2002.
23. Amnesty International 2002.
24. Yang 2020.
25. KAFA 2016.
26. GIWPS commissioned oral history conducted by Maggie Lemere.
27. Demographic and Health Surveys Program 2014; Palermo, Bleck, and Peterman 2013.
28. Parliament of Kenya 2006, § 38.
29. Amnesty International 2002.
30. International Commission of Jurists 2019.
31. Mak 2020.
32. Mak 2020.
33. Neumann 2018.
34. Neumann 2018.
35. FIDA-Kenya, Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 2017.
36. Neuman (2018). Since the law was significantly weakened following its passage and funding was withdrawn for the special police stations, it seems likely that the specialized courts and prosecutors were never funded.



## CHAPTER 2

# COVID's impacts on women's inclusion and security

*Massive economic and social disruption from COVID*

*Worst-off workers hardest hit*

*Fragile states badly affected*

*Worsening civil conflicts*

As the global death toll from COVID passes 4.3 million, the pandemic is unsettling the daily lives and future prospects of billions of people.<sup>71</sup> The pandemic has disrupted economic activity worldwide, jeopardizing and even reversing decades of progress on poverty reduction and development. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that global GDP shrank by more than 4 percent in 2020, the largest decline since the Second World War.<sup>72</sup> Global working-hour losses in 2020 were quadruple those during the 2009 global financial crisis,<sup>73</sup> and Gallup estimates that the pandemic put more than 1 billion people out of work.<sup>74</sup> In mid-2021, working-hour losses amounted to around 127 million full-time jobs, signaling the scale of the ongoing economic crisis in many countries.<sup>75</sup>

While the crisis is widespread, the repercussions remain massively unequal, exposing and worsening existing disparities. People in poor and racial or ethnic minority communities, informal workers, and those living in conflict-affected areas have been especially hard hit. A Gallup poll of 177 countries found that 41 percent of workers in the bottom income quintile had lost their job or business due to the pandemic, nearly double the share in the top quintile, where only 23 percent reported the same.<sup>76</sup> This in turn has worsened poverty around the world. Recent World Bank and IMF estimates show that an additional 119–124 million people fell into extreme poverty (living on less than \$1.90 a day) in 2020.<sup>77</sup> At the \$3.20 a day poverty line, the global number of poor rose by 228 million between June 2020 and January 2021, largely in South Asia.<sup>78</sup>

For people living in fragile states, characterized by conflict, poverty, and weak infrastructure, the pandemic has compounded insecurities and triggered shocks across the board, from health and education to hunger and unemployment. Health facilities, already in a perilous state, have struggled even more to cope with the pandemic.

Civil conflicts in India, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, and the Philippines all worsened during the pandemic.<sup>79</sup> The Indian government launched a violent crackdown in Kashmir, cutting off internet access, denying access to critical healthcare, augmenting military power in the region, and launching assaults on civilians.<sup>80</sup> In Iraq, the

*Countries with higher WPS Index scores more able to cope*

Islamic State took advantage of weakened state capacity to escalate violent attacks throughout the country.<sup>81</sup> In the spring of 2020, attacks on Libyan hospitals by armed rebel groups thwarted the country’s pandemic response.<sup>82</sup>

At the same time, the pandemic has brought important innovations and widespread commitments by political leaders to “build back better.”<sup>83</sup> Good performance on the WPS Index is strongly correlated with a range of positive outcomes (see spotlight 2.1 at the end of the chapter). Countries scoring higher on women’s inclusion, justice, and security tend to be better prepared to absorb the impacts of COVID, pointing to critical implications for recovery (box 2.1).

As noted at the outset of chapter 1, comprehensive sex-disaggregated data covering the pandemic’s impacts are lacking, and the 2021 WPS Index does not fully capture women’s status amid COVID. But two key dimensions—inclusion and security—have clearly been hard hit, as shown by the pandemic’s impact on women’s employment and risk of violence.

**BOX 2.1 Women’s status and pandemic preparedness**

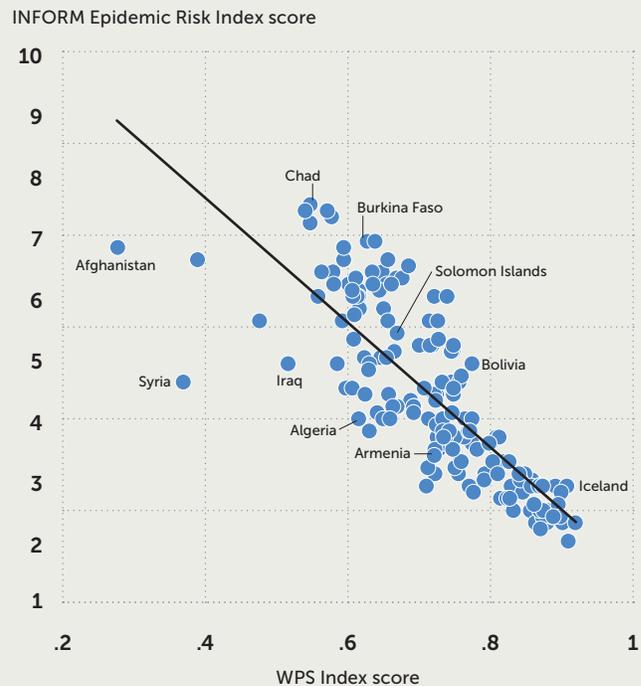
In countries around the world, the COVID pandemic quickly revealed systemic weaknesses in myriad institutions, from health systems to banks and government agencies. One study of 194 countries found that countries with women leaders had consistently lower numbers of COVID cases and deaths.<sup>1</sup> Other studies have found that most women-led governments introduced lockdowns quicker, prioritized public health over economic concerns, and were more successful at gaining public support for pandemic-related measures.<sup>2</sup>

Do the exclusion of women from economic, social, and political life and high levels of injustice and insecurity in some countries also mean that these countries are less able to deal with major pandemic risks? To explore this question, we investigated the correlation between scores on the INFORM Epidemic Risk Index and the 2021 WPS Index. The INFORM index assesses the risk to countries—in terms of hazards, exposures, vulnerabilities, and lack of coping capacity—of an epidemic outbreak that would exceed the national capacity to respond, with scores ranging from 0 to 10, where higher values signal greater risk.

As the figure shows, we found a strong statistical correlation of  $-0.80$  which, while not proving causation, points to key connections. It suggests that countries doing well on women’s inclusion, justice, and security are less likely to be overwhelmed in the face of a pandemic and more likely to be better prepared to absorb the impacts. Relatively few countries are doing much better or much worse on the INFORM Epidemic Index compared with their WPS Index score.

The analysis suggests that countries most vulnerable to the impacts of pandemics are also those where the status of women is low. This is harmful not only to women, but to everyone in society.

**Countries that do better on the WPS Index are less likely to be overwhelmed by pandemics**



Source: Authors’ estimates based on statistical table 1 and the European Commission’s INFORM Epidemic Risk Index data for 2021.

**Notes**

- 1. Garikipati and Kambhampati 2021.
- 2. Coscieme et al. 2020.

Source: Klugman, Dahl, and Zou 2021.

**Reversals in women’s paid employment**

**Shocks to paid work**

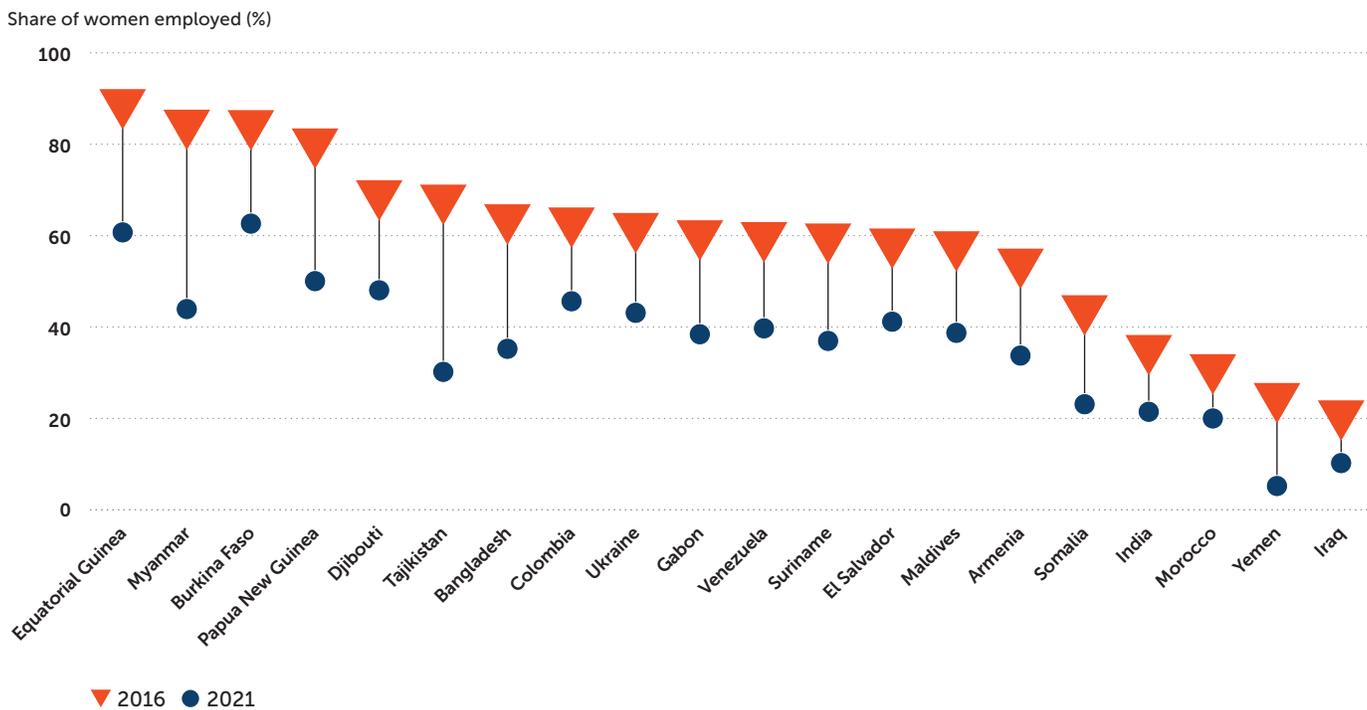
The pandemic has triggered major reversals in rates of paid employment, a key indicator in the WPS Index of women’s inclusion. Overall, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that in 2020 employment losses for women (5 percent) exceed those for men (3.9 percent).<sup>84</sup> World Bank microdata analyses of 34 developing countries using high frequency surveys found that, as of December 2020, 42 percent of women had lost their job due to the pandemic, compared with 31 percent of men.<sup>85</sup>

In 2020, about 47 percent of the world’s women were estimated to be in paid employment,<sup>86</sup> down from about 49 percent in 2018.<sup>87</sup> Since the 2017 WPS Index report, women’s rate of employment has declined in more than 100 countries, and the declines have exceeded 20 percent in 20 countries, including Armenia, Maldives, and Venezuela (figure 2.1). The size of the reversal in Yemen is a massive 74 percent, as women’s employment dropped from 19 percent to 5 percent. Countries experienced reversals from different starting points: Equatorial Guinea and Myanmar started from high rates of women’s employment of around 80 percent and are now at 61 and 44 percent, respectively, whereas Iraq and Yemen started below 20 percent and fell below 10 percent.

**Alarming high rates of women exiting the labor force**

In Latin America and the Caribbean, 17 million women exited paid work during the pandemic, compared with 14 million men.<sup>88</sup> In the United States between February 2020 and May 2021, net job losses were 4.5 million for women and 1.6 million for men.<sup>89</sup> Women of color fared worst, as systemic racism compounds gender inequality. The unemployment rate in the United States during the pandemic peaked at 20 percent for Hispanic women and 17 percent for Black women, compared with 15 percent for white women.<sup>90</sup>

**FIGURE 2.1 Countries with the largest relative drops in women’s employment, 2016–2020**



Note: Countries are ordered according to highest employment rate in 2016. The list of countries with the largest percentage *point* declines would be largely the same, except that Togo, Iceland, and Uganda would be added and India, Iraq, and Morocco would be dropped. See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.  
 Source: Authors’ estimates and ILOSTAT database.

*Young, urban, less educated female workers are more likely to exit the labor force*

*Preexisting gender gaps and policies shape impacts*

*Many women work in hard-hit sectors and occupations*

Globally among people who lost their jobs, 9 in 10 women became economically inactive (that is, not actively seeking work), compared with 7 in 10 men.<sup>91</sup> The World Bank’s high frequency phone surveys in 40 developing countries suggest that larger shares of young, urban, less educated female workers exited the labor force during the initial phase of the pandemic. This has extensive repercussions, especially for pensions and savings, amplifying wealth gaps that favor men. Long-term exits of women from paid work also reduce national output and economic growth.<sup>92</sup>

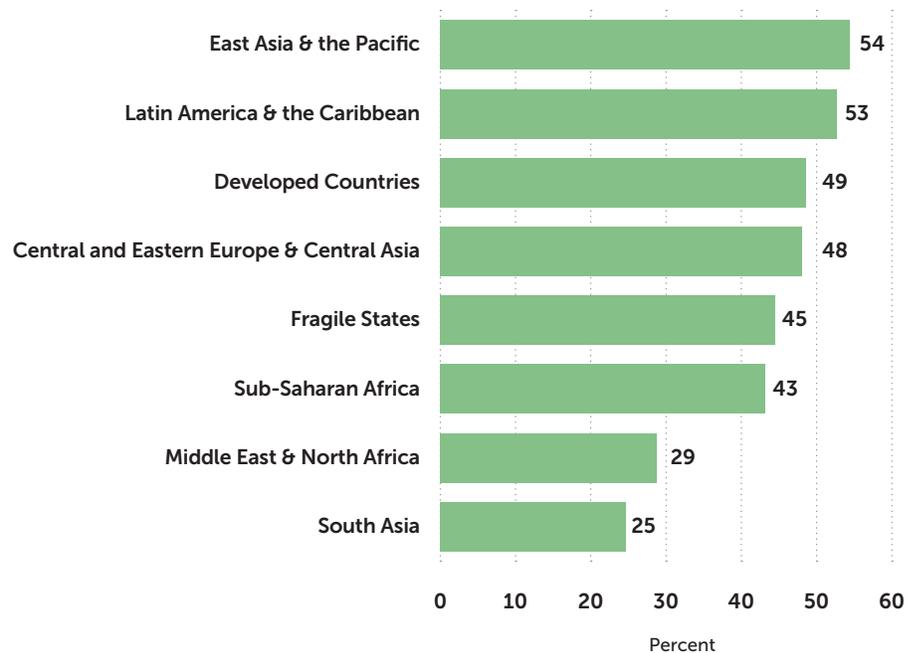
What drives these gendered impacts? They can be traced largely to preexisting inequalities, particularly in occupational gender segregation and unpaid care responsibilities—though with substantial differences across countries.<sup>93</sup>

Recent analysis of 43 developed and developing countries found that countries with greater gender equality in the law—as captured by the Women, Business, and the Law database and included in our global index—had narrower gender gaps in employment losses during COVID, underscoring the importance of equitable legal systems.<sup>94</sup>

**Occupational segregation and COVID**

Globally, the share of women working in accommodation and food services, wholesale and retail trade, and real estate averaged 40 percent in 2020 (compared with 37 percent for men),<sup>95</sup> ranging from 25 percent in South Asia to 54 percent in East Asia and the Pacific (figure 2.2). A review of 43 developed and developing countries also found that the gender gap in women’s employment worsened more in countries where more women worked in the services sector before the crisis.<sup>96</sup> About 88 percent of personal care workers, 74 percent of cleaners, and 60 percent of food preparation workers are women—all occupations hit hard by the pandemic.<sup>97</sup> In Chile, Colombia, and Costa Rica, around 45 percent of female domestic workers lost their jobs when lockdowns hit.<sup>98</sup> In some countries, by contrast, women’s strong representation in healthcare occupations increased demand for their skills.<sup>99</sup>

**FIGURE 2.2 Share of women working in sectors worst hit by the pandemic, 2020**



Note: Data cover 104 countries; hard-hit sectors include accommodation and food services; wholesale and retail trade; real estate, business, and administrative activities; and manufacturing. Source: ILOSTAT database and ILO 2020.

*Informal workers' earnings plummeted*

Prior to the pandemic, women held about 56 percent of informal jobs, which are characterized by lower wages, fewer benefits, and lack of social protection.<sup>100</sup> In India, about 70 percent of urban women workers and nearly 60 percent of rural women workers were informally employed and without a written contract.<sup>101</sup> In just the first month of the pandemic, UN Women estimates that informal women workers' income fell by 60 percent, a massive shock for women and their families already living in poverty.<sup>102</sup> The Center for Global Development has predicted that women laid off from the formal sector will crowd the informal labor market, further reducing earnings.<sup>103</sup>

*Some men's jobs are bouncing back faster than women's*

Men's jobs may be bouncing back more quickly. In Kenya, the share of men farmers reporting income losses fell from 82 percent to 64 percent in late 2020, while the share of women farmers reporting income losses remained around 85 percent.<sup>104</sup> By late 2020 in the United States, men had recovered 58 percent of their job losses while women had regained about 39 percent.<sup>105</sup> So, long-term repercussions may be worse for women in the absence of targeted interventions and support, although gender patterns during recovery do vary across countries and time periods.<sup>106</sup>

*Women-owned businesses are more likely to close*

There is also evidence that women-owned businesses have closed at higher rates during the pandemic due to their smaller size, greater informality, and operation in hardest-hit sectors.<sup>107</sup> Surveys by the World Bank of about 45,000 firms in 49 mostly low- and middle-income countries found that in the hospitality industry, businesses led by men experienced a 60 percent fall in expected sales, compared with 68 percent for businesses led by women, which also reported higher financial risks and less cash available to cover costs.<sup>108</sup> In Latin America and the Caribbean, 40 percent of women-owned businesses closed, a third more than men-owned businesses. And in South Asia, business closure rates were 51 percent for women and 45 percent for men.<sup>109</sup>

Despite being hardest hit, businesses owned by women were on average 2 percentage points less likely to access public support during the pandemic than businesses owned by men, highlighting the need for greater outreach and more equitable program design features.<sup>110</sup> In Kerala, India, for example, the government provided targeted relief to some women-dominated industries, but many women failed to qualify for the relief because of their classification as "subsidiary workers" supporting their husbands, rather than as independent workers in their own right.<sup>111</sup>

*Care responsibilities often drive women's workforce exits*

Another key force driving women's departure from the workforce was the unpaid care of young and school-age children during the pandemic, mainly by women. Many women informal traders in Ghana, for example, had to bring their school-age children with them to the markets, creating safety and public health risks.<sup>112</sup>

*Care burdens amplified by lockdowns and school closures*

**Care burdens at home and lack of affordable care options**

Before the pandemic, the ILO estimates that 42 percent of working-age women worldwide were outside the paid labor force because of unpaid care responsibilities, compared with 6 percent of men.<sup>113</sup> National lockdowns and widespread school closures amplified these responsibilities, with implications for time in paid work. Regionally in 2020, the longest school closures were in Latin America and the Caribbean (158 days).<sup>114</sup> In July 2021, about 36 million children lived in a country with full school closures, and another 807 million faced partial school closures (box 2.2).<sup>115</sup>

As the burdens of childcare and home schooling soared in 2020, millions of women had to either reduce their hours of paid work or exit the workforce. The scale of the shift has varied across countries and affected women at all parts of the income spectrum, though it affected poor women more.

- Research in 16 developed and developing countries reveals that the average time women spend weekly on household care rose by 5.0 hours during the pandemic, compared with 3.5 hours for men. In Mexico, women averaged 44 hours a week on childcare during the crisis, equivalent to a full-time job.<sup>116</sup>

## BOX 2.2 The pandemic and girls' education: Increasing threats and challenges

School closures caused by the pandemic have led to large losses in learning, and World Bank analyses of 157 countries suggests that the costs in future earnings could amount to \$10 trillion.<sup>1</sup>

School closures in fragile states have exacerbated educational challenges, especially given the lack of resources and connectivity for home schooling. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) data from July 2021 show that 61 percent of schools in fragile states were at least partly closed, far more than the 23 percent in nonfragile states.<sup>2</sup> As the World Bank and the Peace Research Institute Oslo highlight, this has severe long-term repercussions for security, since education is an important antidote to conflict.<sup>3</sup>

When schools reopen after lockdowns, girls are at greater risk than boys of not returning, jeopardizing their human rights and threatening to reverse earlier progress.<sup>4</sup> The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates that 11 million school-age girls, mostly in low-income countries, will not resume their education postpandemic.<sup>5</sup> This has serious ramifications across the board.

UN agencies project that child marriage and teenage pregnancy, two threats to girls' education, will rise as a result of the pandemic, though data on outcomes are not yet available. Worldwide, UNICEF expects 10 million more cases of child marriage in the next decade over prepandemic projections,<sup>6</sup> and an estimated 1 million additional girls are at risk of teenage pregnancy.<sup>7</sup> In Sub-Saharan Africa, UNESCO predicts that rates of teenage pregnancy could increase by as much as 65 percent during

the pandemic,<sup>8</sup> based on the spike experienced in Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis.<sup>9</sup> In some communities, increased economic stress has reportedly led some families to marry their daughters as a way reduce household costs and collect a bride price, while higher risks of sexual violence during lockdowns and disruptions to healthcare and contraceptive services worsen girls' risk of unplanned pregnancies.<sup>10</sup>

Efforts to enable girls to attend school are multifaceted<sup>11</sup> and include expanding girls' digital literacy skills, funding comprehensive sexual education, and removing discriminatory policies that prevent pregnant and married girls from attending school. Women's representation in school management and leadership positions is critical, alongside engaging civil society organizations to ensure that girls in remote and rural areas are supported in their transition back to school. Promoting equity in education needs to address the additional challenges facing girls with disabilities, those from racial or ethnic minority groups, and those from poor backgrounds.

### Notes

1. Azevedo et al. 2020.
2. UNESCO 2021.
3. UN and World Bank 2018.
4. Diallo et al. 2021.
5. UNESCO 2021.
6. UNICEF 2021b.
7. Save the Children 2020b.
8. Pfunye and Ademola-Popoola 2021.
9. UNESCO 2020.
10. UNICEF 2021b.
11. Henderson 2020.

- A 2020 survey of women informal workers in 12 major capital cities—mostly in developing countries—found that women reporting greater responsibilities at home in cooking, cleaning, childcare, and care for the ill and elderly were working fewer days in paid employment and earning less than other informal workers.<sup>117</sup>
- A June 2020 survey of more than 30,000 small businesses in 50 countries found that 23 percent of women business owners spent at least six hours a day on care work, more than twice the amount spent by men.<sup>118</sup>
- Mothers in Viet Nam were almost twice as likely as fathers to stop working or reduce work hours during school closures (81 versus 42 percent), and 52 percent of mothers supported and supervised children in learning, compared with 15 percent of fathers.<sup>119</sup>

Before the pandemic, about 8 percent of the global labor force worked from home permanently.<sup>120</sup> Home-based paid work massively expanded overnight, a two-edged sword for women, given the double burden of paid and unpaid work. Empirical analyses of six high-income countries found that women suffered greater productivity losses than men as they juggled care duties at home along with paid work.<sup>121</sup> Care

*Women suffering greater productivity losses*

work at home has also prevented women’s return to work. In August 2020 in the United States, about one-third of women not working cited childcare as their main reason for not working, compared with 12 percent of men.<sup>122</sup>

### Heightened risks of violence against women during lockdowns

We know that crises can multiply women’s risk of physical, emotional, and sexual violence.<sup>123</sup> During pandemics, worsening rates of intimate partner violence can be due to economic stress, quarantines, social isolation, reduced access to services, and inability to escape abusive partners. The dual health and economic crises induced by COVID have amplified threats to women’s security.<sup>124</sup>

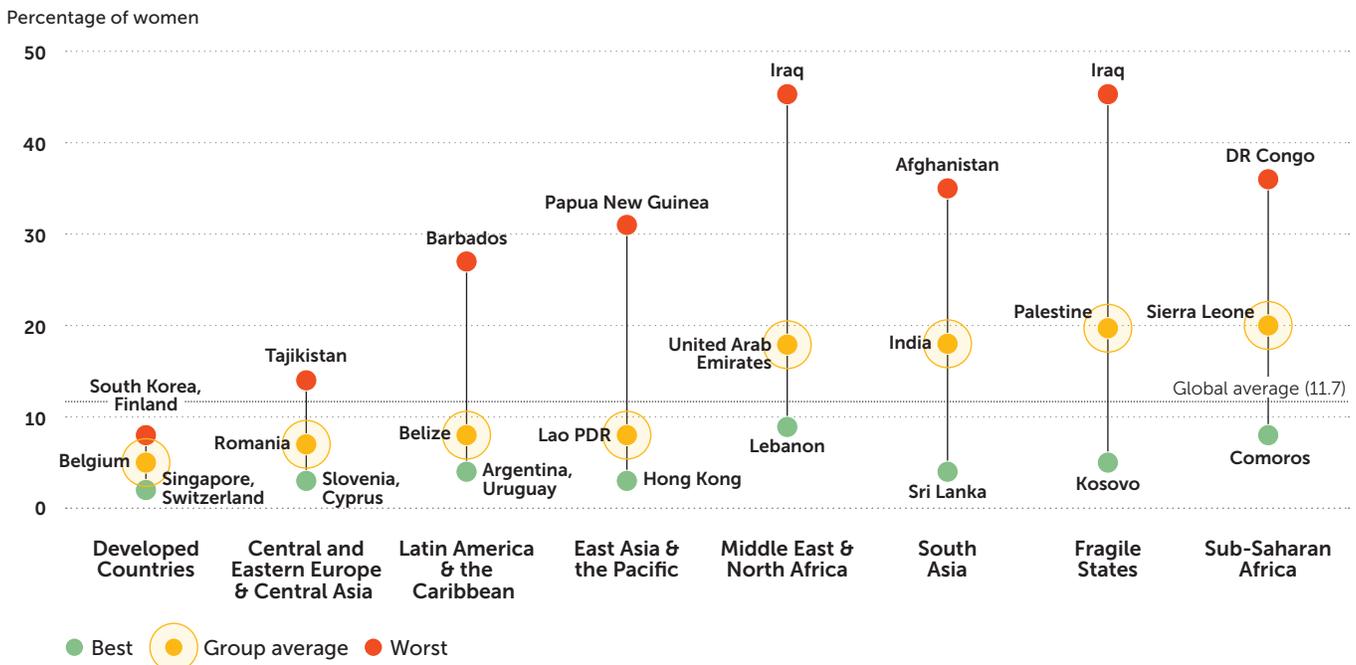
In 2018, about one woman in eight worldwide had experienced intimate partner violence in the preceding year, with wide disparities across regions and countries (figure 2.3). Sub-Saharan Africa and the Fragile States group have the highest averages, while Iraq reports the highest rate at 45 percent. Of the 15 countries with the worst rates, 10 are in Sub-Saharan Africa—in descending order, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Zambia, Ethiopia, Liberia, South Sudan, Djibouti, and Uganda.

Surveys of intimate partner violence are not available for 2020, given both the logistical difficulties posed by the pandemic and the joint recommendation by UN Women and the World Health Organization (WHO) not to collect such information during lockdowns because of the risks to survivors.<sup>125</sup> Studies investigating the prevalence of intimate partner violence during the pandemic have drawn mainly on administrative data, such as calls to emergency services or clinical data from hospital admissions, as well as internet search data, social media posts, and small-sample survey data collected online or by cellphone. These sources may capture a greater range of experiences than police reports or hotlines, but they are not nationally representative and, unlike population surveys, do not measure underlying prevalence.<sup>126</sup>

*About one woman in eight worldwide suffered intimate partner violence before the pandemic*

*Limited data on intimate partner violence during COVID*

**FIGURE 2.3 Rates of current intimate partner violence vary widely by country and region, 2018**



Note: See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges and appendix 2 for region and country groups. Source: WHO 2021c.

*Risks of intimate partner violence are worsening*

The accumulating evidence nonetheless makes clear that women have faced worsening risks of intimate partner violence and greater difficulty leaving abusive relationships due to deteriorating economic conditions, job loss, and national lockdowns. For example, survey data from more than 2,500 partnered women in Iran before the pandemic and six months into the crisis showed that prevalence rates of current intimate partner violence increased from 54 to 65 percent and that job losses for women or their partner dramatically increased the likelihood of intimate partner violence.<sup>127</sup> A phone-based survey in Kenya by UN Women in 2021 found that more than half of women had experienced physical violence and verbal abuse since the onset of the pandemic or knew someone who had.<sup>128</sup> Online survey data from nearly 14,000 women in Spain found a 23 percent increase in intimate partner violence from prepandemic levels, traced to the pandemic's economic effects.<sup>129</sup> A woman's access to jobs protected against worsening intimate partner violence in Indonesia, as additional income appeared to mitigate economic stress in the household.<sup>130</sup>

*Several factors aggravate the risk of violence*

Research findings indicate that marriage, unemployment (for either the respondent or the spouse), lost household income, food insecurity, and spousal substance abuse all increase the risk of violence against women.<sup>131</sup> And the transition to virtual services may create additional barriers to seeking help or leaving abusive relationships.

*Heightened risk of both first-time intimate partner violence and ongoing abuse*

The pandemic has augmented the risk of both first-time and ongoing intimate partner violence. In Iran, more than a quarter of women who had not previously experienced intimate partner violence were abused during the first six months of the pandemic.<sup>132</sup> And during the first wave of lockdowns in Nigeria, women previously experiencing intimate partner violence suffered more severe acts or new forms of violence.<sup>133</sup>

*More calls to domestic violence hotlines*

Around the world, calls to domestic violence hotlines increased following the first wave of COVID lockdowns. In Tunisia, calls to a survivor hotline increased fivefold during the first five days of lockdown.<sup>134</sup> In the United Kingdom, there was a 25 percent rise in phone calls to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline during the first week of lockdown, and visits to its website increased 150 percent.<sup>135</sup> The South African police minister reported that in the first week of lockdown, police received more than 87,000 gender-based violence complaints.<sup>136</sup> In Peru, calls to the helpline *Línea 100* increased 48 percent between March and July 2020, from women of all backgrounds.<sup>137</sup>

*Rising internet searches on domestic violence*

Internet search data indicate similar patterns. A cross-country study of 11 developed and developing countries found that the average frequency of domestic violence–related internet searches rose 30 percent when lockdowns were introduced.<sup>138</sup> For example, internet searches related to physical violence were up 47 percent in Malaysia, 55 percent in Nepal, and 63 percent in the Philippines. These searches included specific references to “men hitting women,” “spousal abuse,” “boy-friend hit me,” “controlling men,” and “controlling husband.”<sup>139</sup>

*Women often don't report abuse*

Survey data show that most women survivors of violence never report abuse to police, helplines, or other service providers.<sup>140</sup> While reports from service providers suggest increases in domestic violence in many countries, there have been declines in others—for example, Morocco's national police recorded an 11 percent decline in reported cases of violence against women in 2020.<sup>141</sup> But this trend could be traced to limited privacy at home as well as constraints on phone or digital connectivity.

*Some women less able to report abuse and access help*

While some countries saw no change in reports of domestic violence,<sup>142</sup> this could have reflected women's greater difficulty accessing help. In Thailand, though reports to hotlines did not initially increase at the onset of the pandemic, the search volume of help-seeking keywords rose by 29 percent between October 2019 and September 2020.<sup>143</sup> Similarly, a community-based survey in northern Ethiopia found that nearly a quarter of women of reproductive age experienced intimate partner violence in April and May of 2020, though there were fewer hotline calls.<sup>144</sup>

*Transition to virtual services may reduce access for some women*

*40 percent of national policy responses to COVID were gender sensitive*

*Many new social protection responses*

The transition to virtual services might have created additional challenges to access.<sup>145</sup> Internet access and cellphone use are two avenues for reporting abuse, though women, especially those in poor and rural areas, may be excluded. Digital gender divides can amplify the barriers to safely seeking support, as discussed in box 2.3.

### Efforts to address adverse impacts on women

The good news is that there has been widespread recognition of the extent of hardships and worsened inequalities brought about by the pandemic. Some welcome responses and innovations by governments have sought to alleviate the impacts on people and communities, through financial assistance and efforts to protect women from heightened risks of violence. Community responses and women's groups have also played critical roles on the frontlines.

By early 2021, the UNDP–UN Women COVID-19 Global Gender Response tracker had tallied more than 3,100 national policy responses to the pandemic, of which about 40 percent were gender-sensitive, with 832 targeting gender-based violence, 287 women's economic security, and 180 unpaid care (see infographic 2.1).<sup>146</sup> Gender-sensitive measures seek to directly address the specific risks and challenges that women and girls face as a result of the pandemic, including women's economic security, women-dominated economic sectors, and unpaid care.<sup>147</sup>

We now outline policy innovations aimed at promoting gender-equitable protection and recovery across five broad categories: social protection, childcare and elder care, flexible work, support for survivors of violence, and civil society engagement (see infographic 2.2).

#### **Social protection, including direct cash transfers**

The social protection responses to the pandemic have been unprecedented in scale and scope, from labor market policies, to social assistance, to unemployment benefits. The most common measures include liquidity support and tax relief for businesses,

### BOX 2.3 Growing importance of mobile technology access, but persisting gender gaps

During the pandemic, access to cellphone technologies has become more important than ever, as digital spaces provide tools to access critical information, services, and for some, continued employment. Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA) surveys of more than 9,000 participants across eight developing countries in late 2020 found that mobile money helped women mitigate the repercussions of COVID.<sup>1</sup> Restrictions and lockdowns prompted increased use of mobile money to purchase products, pay utility bills, manage financial accounts, and receive transfer payments.

Women's connectivity has been increasing in developing countries. GSMA estimates that the overall gender gap in cellphone use shrank modestly, from 9 to 7 percentage points between 2017 and 2021. The gender gap in mobile internet usage has been shrinking faster, narrowing from 27 to 15 percent over the same period, driven largely by South Asia, where the gap, though still large, dropped from 50 to 36 percent between 2019 and 2020. Women

are more likely than men to access the internet exclusively on mobile devices, underscoring the importance of closing gender gaps in cellphone use. The World Bank finds that microbusinesses led by women were much more likely to increase the use of digital platforms during the pandemic than those led by men.<sup>2</sup>

Several factors nonetheless limit women's access to mobile technology, beginning with poverty and high service costs. Rural women tend to have lower access, as do illiterate and older women, and those with disabilities. For example, in Uganda, the gender gap among those with disabilities is 42 percent—31 percentage points higher than for people without disabilities.

#### Notes

1. GSMA is an industry organization that represents the interests of mobile network operators worldwide.
2. Iacovone et al. 2021.

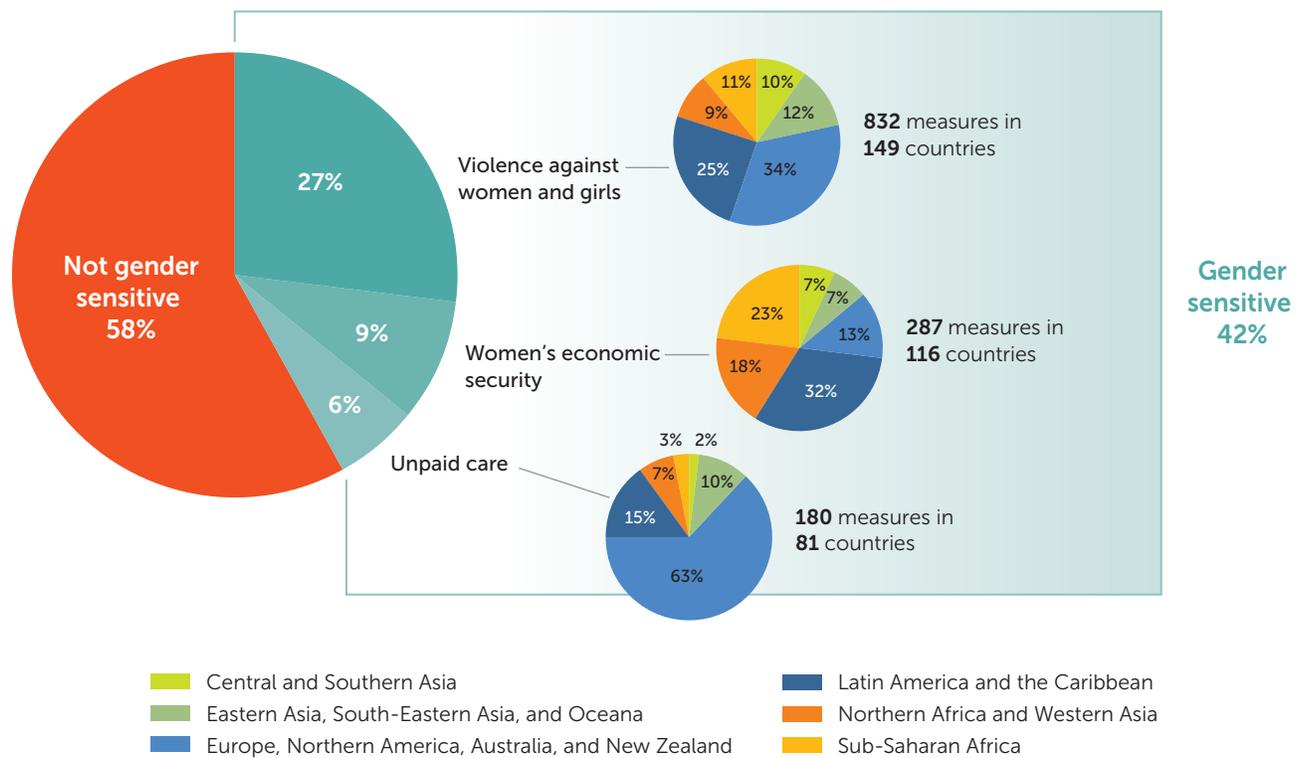
Source: GSMA 2021.

**INFOGRAPHIC 2.1**

**Of 3,100+ policy measures in response to COVID, 1,300 are gender sensitive**

UNDP–UN Women have tracked the COVID responses of governments around the globe, with a focus on measures addressing threats to gender equality—from the surge in violence against women and girls to the unprecedented increases in unpaid care work and the large-scale loss of jobs and livelihoods. Many governments have taken measures to support women and girls, but the responses remain insufficient and uneven overall—across dimensions and regions.

**Gender-sensitive policy responses by type and region**



<p><b>49</b></p> <p><b>COUNTRIES</b></p> <p>channel resources to female-dominated sectors</p>	<p><b>136</b></p> <p><b>COUNTRIES</b></p> <p>have strengthened services for women survivors of violence</p>	<p><b>52</b></p> <p><b>COUNTRIES</b></p> <p>classify violence against women and girls measures as essential services</p>	<p><b>40</b></p> <p><b>COUNTRIES</b></p> <p>collect and use data on violence against women and girls during the pandemic</p>	<p><b>84</b></p> <p><b>COUNTRIES</b></p> <p>have social protection measures that target or prioritize women</p>
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Source: UNDP and UN Women 2021.

**INFOGRAPHIC 2.2**

**National responses addressing COVID's impacts on women**



Source: Authors, based on UNDP and UN Women (2021).

*Nearly a billion new beneficiaries, but gaps in digital access persist*

*New relief initiatives directed to informal sector workers*

*Some informal workers still excluded*

*Social protection too limited in some countries*

*Need for better inclusion of refugees*

*Support for family leave*

*Strong paid leave policies helped some companies navigate the crisis*

both examples of labor market policies. Among labor market policies, 60 percent were new, and 40 percent were adapted from existing programs. About a third of developing countries have offered direct support to workers through wage subsidies, expanded unemployment benefits, or reduced income taxes.<sup>148</sup> To expand the reach of social protection programs, countries including Kazakhstan, Lesotho, and Viet Nam have sought to include informal workers.<sup>149</sup>

Many new and expanded social protection programs leveraged digital platforms, reaching nearly one billion new beneficiaries.<sup>150</sup> Depositing government cash transfers directly into women's accounts and digitizing payments can promote gender equality in recovery.<sup>151</sup> Argentina disbursed cash transfers to households in the summer of 2020 and prioritized women as the primary recipients.<sup>152</sup> Peru's cash transfers were given to the oldest adult woman in the household.<sup>153</sup> Ghana and Kenya expanded mobile cash transfers during the pandemic, reaching women in informal work and in remote areas.<sup>154</sup> Digital innovations have potential advantages in speed, privacy, and reach, but gaps in digital access persist (box 2.3).

Other relief efforts have directed support to informal sector workers. The Chinese government expanded access to social protection to migrant workers, who have traditionally been excluded, though the measures are explicitly temporary.<sup>155</sup> In March 2020, Brazil's National Congress approved emergency cash transfers to nearly 66 million informal workers over nine months, and women heads of household received double the standard benefit.<sup>156</sup> Togo launched a mobile cash transfer program for 600,000 informal workers, about two-thirds of them women.<sup>157</sup> In Côte d'Ivoire, almost \$200 million was distributed directly to informal enterprises, more than 90 percent of whose employees are women.<sup>158</sup>

Even so, informal workers, who have traditionally been excluded from social protection, risk not receiving stimulus money because they are less frequently registered by the government as employees.<sup>159</sup> In India, more than half of the country's 326 million poor women were excluded from emergency cash transfers at the pandemic's onset because they lacked bank accounts to receive the transfers.<sup>160</sup>

In some countries, the rollout of social protection efforts has been slow and limited. For example, Congo announced plans to roll out emergency cash transfers in April 2020, but only 8 percent of eligible beneficiaries had received the payments by September 2020.<sup>161</sup>

Several countries have explicitly included refugees in pandemic responses. In Cameroon, Colombia, Congo, and Pakistan, refugees were eligible for the same emergency cash benefits as citizens, though less than half the refugee population in each country received the benefits, with the share dropping to as low as 2 percent in Congo.<sup>162</sup> Legal barriers to refugees' registration, lack of required documents, and lack of awareness of eligibility were among the reasons cited for low coverage, underlining the need for stronger systems that protect refugee inclusion.<sup>163</sup> Chapter 3 compares the rights and status of forcibly displaced women with those of the host community population in six African countries.

#### **Access to affordable childcare and elder care**

Governments have taken various approaches to supporting people providing unpaid care, though only about 1 in 10 of the policies tracked by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN Women addressed this challenge directly.<sup>164</sup> Support for family leave was the most common response. Uzbekistan extended paid leave for working parents for the duration of school and daycare closures. Similarly, Trinidad and Tobago introduced "pandemic leave" as a new classification of paid leave for working parents.<sup>165</sup>

Paid leave policies make economic sense, by reducing turnover and firm costs. Promundo found that UK and US companies with strong paid leave policies were

*Gender norms discourage fathers from taking leave*

*Effects of the pandemic on gender norms appear mixed*

*Support for care services expanded, sometimes temporarily*

*Some governments compensated families for school closures*

*Caregiver supports require careful design*

*Teleworking can enable better balance between childcare and work, for women and men*

*But teleworking can have drawbacks for women*

*Bridging gaps in technology and financial literacy*

*Efforts to strengthen services and access to justice for survivors*

better able to adapt to the economic shocks induced by COVID.<sup>166</sup> And of surveyed businesses, 73 percent reported that their paid leave policies enabled them to navigate the crisis better. They also reported benefiting from greater workplace satisfaction and being better positioned to support working parents.<sup>167</sup>

Gender norms remained a barrier to fathers taking parental leave. Prior to the pandemic, a study of seven countries—Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States—found that fewer than half of fathers took all the leave they were entitled to, and many took none at all.<sup>168</sup>

Reports of worsening violence against women suggest that there has been an upsurge in negative masculinity and deepening inequality in the home in some settings.<sup>169</sup> By contrast, men teleworking from home during lockdowns may better appreciate women’s work–family experiences and understand the value of flexible work arrangements, leading fathers to model more equitable work–family gender roles for their children.<sup>170</sup>

Support for care services has expanded, albeit sometimes only temporarily. In Australia, free childcare was available for the first three months of the crisis, and Guyana and New Zealand funded free childcare for essential workers.<sup>171</sup> In South Korea, relatives living with disabled family members are now registered and paid as temporary care workers.<sup>172</sup> Chile’s Subsidio Protege program directs cash to working mothers with young children who lack access to employer-provided childcare.<sup>173</sup>

Some governments have compensated families for some of the costs of school closures. Belgium, Canada, and Hungary supplied parents with extra cash, while Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and Japan ensured that school lunches were delivered for free to families in need.<sup>174</sup>

The South African government had two social protection programs during the pandemic: a single cash transfer to household caregivers (98 percent women), alongside ongoing unemployment benefits for formal sector workers. Individuals were eligible only for one benefit, meaning that women, who are overrepresented in unemployment and job losses, were excluded from ongoing unemployment benefits and de facto penalized for being caregivers.<sup>175</sup>

### ***Flexible work policies***

The transition to teleworking, primarily for office-based workers, has multiple gendered impacts. Some argue that this shift will allow working mothers to better balance childcare and professional duties. Teleworking can also increase fathers’ engagement with childcare and unpaid household work. In the United States, fathers able to work from home and married to mothers who cannot spend about 50 percent more time on childcare than fathers who do not telecommute.<sup>176</sup> In Italy, the extended lockdown was found to trigger an increase in fathers’ involvement in childcare and home schooling, improving children’s emotional well-being.<sup>177</sup>

However, teleworking can be a double-edged sword for women by creating a dual burden of paid and unpaid work. It also tends to disproportionately benefit higher-income workers who have better access to technology.

To offset widening gender gaps, Cabo Verde, Colombia, Egypt, and Mexico developed digital entrepreneurship training programs and financial literacy workshops for women traders to enable them to sell their products online during lockdowns.<sup>178</sup> Chile sponsored virtual training sessions on commercial logistics and business development for women working in exports—and launched a platform for women looking to start their own businesses during the crisis.<sup>179</sup>

### ***Support services for survivors of violence***

Of the measures addressing gender-based violence tracked by UNDP–UN Women, about two-thirds sought to strengthen services for survivors, including hotlines,

*Some governments and NGOs provided financial support to survivors*

other reporting mechanisms, and resources to enhance police and judicial responses.<sup>180</sup> Other actions prioritized ensuring access to justice for survivors, including virtual legal services, and awareness-raising. According to the World Bank, 88 countries have allowed remote court operations, and at least 72 have declared family cases urgent or essential during lockdown.<sup>181</sup> Overall, however, measures to address violence against women during the pandemic have been uneven and appear to have been inadequate.<sup>182</sup>

To address the economic stress that can increase the risk of intimate partner violence, governments and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) provided financial support to survivors.

- A consortium of Kenyan NGOs, with support from international partners, implemented mobile cash transfers in Nairobi and Mombasa, including to more than 3,600 survivors of gender-based violence and to those at risk of such violence.<sup>183</sup>
- The International Rescue Committee's El Salvador team provided access to information and resources (including cash transfers and basic supplies) to women and girls experiencing gender-based violence and to those at risk of such violence.<sup>184</sup>
- In Portugal, the government is working with local organizations to ensure that the National Support Network for Victims of Domestic Violence can continue to provide food, medicine, personal care products, and other resources to survivors.<sup>185</sup>

*New housing options for survivors*

Providing housing options for survivors of domestic violence and their children has been challenging during the pandemic because social distancing requirements have reduced the capacity of existing shelters.<sup>186</sup> Some governments adjusted by extending new housing options. In France during the first wave of lockdowns, the government subsidized 20,000 nights of hotel accommodation for survivors of domestic violence and their families.<sup>187</sup> Belgium's government also funded hotel accommodation for survivors.<sup>188</sup> And the US city of Chicago partnered with Airbnb to provide hotel rooms for people fleeing intimate partner violence.<sup>189</sup> These are all welcome initiatives, though information on how large or effective the programs have been is not yet available.

It is critical to keep shelters open for survivors during the pandemic, with protection protocols to prevent the spread of COVID. But in Kazakhstan, where domestic violence has not yet been criminalized as an offense in its own right,<sup>190</sup> most crisis centers and shelters—many run by NGOs—stopped accepting survivors due to mandatory quarantine measures and lack of capacity.

*Some countries expanded shelters or designated shelters as essential*

Some countries expanded shelters or designated them as essential. Albania designated shelters as essential, allowing them to remain open during the pandemic.<sup>191</sup> In Portugal, the government opened two new emergency shelter facilities, adding to the existing 65 shelters. In Turkey, 40 facilities have been repurposed in 36 provinces to house survivors of violence.<sup>192</sup>

*Survivors of intimate partner violence may not be able to access health services during the pandemic*

The unprecedented pressure on the health sector during the pandemic has made it harder to access essential health services, including for survivors of intimate partner violence. Making medical appointments has been more difficult, and women experiencing abuse might hesitate to seek help to avoid burdening an already strained healthcare system or out of fear that their abusers would find out and interfere.<sup>193</sup>

*Efforts to ensure access to healthcare*

Some governments ensured access to healthcare for survivors of intimate partner violence.

- Uganda's Ministry of Health's COVID Essential Services Committee, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), developed standard operating procedures to ensure the continuity of services during the pandemic for gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health/HIV.<sup>194</sup>
- Peru's president decreed that health facilities guarantee urgent and emergency care for all women and family members who have suffered violence and authorized the special protection unit of the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations to conduct interviews and evaluations using remote technology.<sup>195</sup>

*Some countries expanded psychosocial support for survivors*

*Awareness-raising efforts expanded*

*Women's groups have played critical roles*

- Bangladesh included gender-based violence interventions under essential health services and risk communication and community engagement activities.<sup>196</sup>
- Colombia classified healthcare for women and girls experiencing abuse during mandatory quarantines as an emergency service and provided care through telemedicine.<sup>197</sup>

The psychological impacts of intimate partner violence might be harder to detect during the pandemic.<sup>198</sup> Bangladesh and Belgium maintained or expanded psychosocial support for survivors of intimate partner violence. In Bangladesh, the National Trauma Counseling Center of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs continued to provide legal and psychosocial counseling online and by cellphone.<sup>199</sup> In Belgium, the Federal Sexual Assault Referral Centers have remained accessible 24/7 and provided psychological and legal consultations to survivors of intimate partner violence in person and by phone.<sup>200</sup>

Governments and organizations have also worked to prevent violence against women through awareness-raising efforts (box 2.4).

**Civil society engagement**

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have played critical first-responder roles, especially in rural, remote, and marginalized communities where governments were unable or unwilling to act. Women's CSOs, working hard to address the gendered impacts of COVID, have served in a broad range of capacities.

- *Supplying essential health and hygiene resources.* The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa assists and trains women in South Sudan in the production of masks and reusable sanitary pads, meeting local demand and generating income.<sup>201</sup>
- *Distributing financial support to women-owned businesses.* The government of Egypt is partnering with CSOs to distribute payments to women-owned businesses, aiming to support 216,000 microprojects and create 250,000 new jobs.<sup>202</sup> In Palestine, the Mother's School Society supports women business owners affected by the pandemic through direct cash grants, counseling sessions, and account management training.<sup>203</sup>

**BOX 2.4 Innovations to raise awareness about intimate partner violence**

A key element in preventing and responding to intimate partner violence is raising awareness through radio, television, social media, and printed materials. Such efforts aim to increase knowledge about risk factors and encourage survivors to seek support. Although cellphone use for women and girls is high and rising, gender gaps remain in lagging regions, as discussed in box 2.3.

Governments and social service providers have developed innovative outreach campaigns during the pandemic to connect intimate partner violence survivors with assistance. While more work is needed to assess the efficacy of these strategies, they illustrate creative ways to connect survivors to vital resources.

- In China, survivors, activists, and nonprofit organizations created the hashtag “#AntiDomesticViolence-DuringEpidemic” on Sina Weibo, a Chinese social media platform similar to Twitter, to raise awareness

and support for survivors. The hashtag has been reproduced more than 3,000 times.<sup>1</sup>

- The German government launched a national campaign “Not Safe at Home?” in more than 26,000 supermarkets, informing survivors and their friends and families about the help and support services available.<sup>2</sup>
- The government of Ireland launched “Still Here,” a public awareness campaign on television, radio, and social media to communicate the message that the police and courts are there to protect survivors, that services are still available to them, and that “restrictions on movement do not apply to someone who is escaping from danger.”<sup>3</sup>

**Notes**

1. Owens 2020.
2. Edelman 2020.
3. UNDP and UN Women 2021b.

- *Training women in virtual entrepreneurial skills.* SHEROS, an online community for South Asian women established in 2014, has increased membership by 6 million during the pandemic—to 22 million members.<sup>204</sup> The platform offers training in digital and financial skills and acts as an online marketplace for women entrepreneurs to sell their goods.
- *Supporting survivors of gender-based violence.* Afghanistan's Hoda-e-sharq Organization for Development established a hotline and provides emergency cash to survivors, helping women connect with support services and flee abusive situations. In Colombia, the Corporación de Hombres en Marcha works with men to transform harmful gender norms around violence and promote men's participation in unpaid care work.<sup>205</sup> The NGO Themis Brazil trains community members in the basics of women's legal rights so that they can support efforts to handle claims of rights violations, educate communities about violence against women, and advocate for women's rights in local government bodies.<sup>206</sup>
- *Sharing critical information about the virus and vaccine.* In rural India, where misinformation discouraged people from getting tested and spread distrust of the vaccine, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) partnered with local teachers and students to operate village testing drives and encourage vaccinations.<sup>207</sup>

These examples illustrate how CSOs are critical in ensuring that government relief is accessible to all and in addressing gaps, especially for the most vulnerable populations.

Yet, across the world, CSOs are struggling with their own challenges caused by the pandemic, including major funding cuts from governments and donors.<sup>208</sup> In North Macedonia, the government excluded CSOs from all economic assistance measures, forcing many to drastically reduce or terminate operations.<sup>209</sup> Budget cuts have especially hindered the delivery of sexual and reproductive healthcare, services provided largely by CSOs.<sup>210</sup>

While women's CSOs are providing important leadership at local levels, women are severely underrepresented in high-level COVID task force and leadership positions (box 2.5).

### Emerging conclusions and recommendations

The pandemic has triggered multiple crises, exposing and exacerbating gender inequalities. Women face challenges on several fronts, including juggling paid jobs and unpaid care work, and worsening threats to safety at a time when access to vital services may be constrained. The challenges are interrelated. For example, when access to childcare is unavailable, gender norms continue to assign the bulk of household responsibilities to women, perpetuating their exclusion from employment opportunities. Women who lack financial autonomy are less able to leave abusive relationships. Women from racial or ethnic minority groups, those from poor and fragile communities, and those working informally all face additional challenges that compound gender inequality. Policy responses must take into account these overlapping disadvantages and ensure that no one is left behind.

The crisis underscores the urgent need to build equitable systems that are resilient during good times and bad. The pandemic has also brought welcome innovations that recognize and address inequalities. Expanding access to quality childcare and to paid parental leave, alongside flexible work models, will be keys to ensuring gender equality in the return to work in the short-term and in long-term labor force opportunities. As underlined in a recent review by the Overseas Development Institute, more successful policy responses tend to be associated with strong precrisis systems, broad eligibility criteria, proactive outreach efforts, and effective financing.<sup>211</sup>

Protecting women from threats of violence requires boosting public awareness about domestic abuse and knowledge about how survivors can access support services, both during the pandemic and beyond. Lockdowns accentuated the need to

*Civil society organizations are battling funding cuts*

*Women excluded from COVID policy making*

*Multiple interrelated crises for women*

*The pandemic underlined the need for equitable systems and brought welcome innovations*

*Diversifying outreach to connect with more survivors of intimate partner violence*

### BOX 2.5 Amplifying women's voices in COVID leadership and policy making

Some of the most successful national COVID responses have emerged in countries with strong female leadership. CARE found that countries scoring higher on the Council on Foreign Relations' Women's Power Index—measuring women's participation in head of state positions, national cabinets, and national and local legislatures—are more likely to implement gender-sensitive COVID response policies.<sup>1</sup>

Yet women have been largely excluded from leadership and policy making. Of the 225 COVID response task forces with membership data in March 2021, just more than one-fourth (27 percent of members) were women.

Globally, there is gender parity in only 4 percent of task forces. Belize has the highest share of women task force members, at 89 percent, while in 18 countries women have no representation.<sup>2</sup>

Some countries have task forces to address gender gaps. For example, Fiji created the COVID Response Gender Working Group, and Lebanon established a technical task force to minimize interruptions to prenatal healthcare.<sup>3</sup>

#### Notes

1. CARE 2020.
2. UNDP and UN Women 2021b.
3. UN Women, UNDP, and University of Pittsburgh n.d.

*More evidence needed about what works*

*Fair distribution of vaccines worldwide is essential*

*Few national vaccine policies mention gender*

*Comprehensive sex-disaggregated data are needed to inform effective responses*

diversify outreach, especially for women with limited private digital and cellphone access. Innovations that expand the ways that people seek support through hotlines by creating enhanced safety features, mobile apps, and online networks hold promise for the longer term.

As highlighted by the Center for Global Development and others, there is little evidence about what works to reduce the risk of violence or support survivors during the pandemic.<sup>212</sup> The same applies to most policies and programs designed to offset the negative economic and labor market impacts of the crisis. There is an urgent need for more evidence about the effectiveness of the range of interventions and innovations that have been recently introduced, even for responses that appear to be well conceived and designed, and thus especially promising.

It is of course critical to redress the skewed access to COVID vaccines. As Helen Clark and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf underlined in the spring of 2021, only 1 person in 100 in low-income countries had gotten a first shot, while in aggregate, developed countries had secured vaccines for 200 percent of their population.<sup>213</sup> This uneven and unfair distribution—alongside weak health infrastructure, security challenges, and misinformation—will exacerbate existing gaps and put global recovery from COVID out of reach.<sup>214</sup> The COVID Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) program, led by the WHO, aims to distribute 1.8 billion doses to developing countries by early 2022, though efforts have been hampered by lack of funding and by vaccine nationalism.<sup>215</sup>

Global Health 5050 reviewed national vaccine policies in 58 countries and found that although almost three-quarters of governments broadly committed to equity and reaching vulnerable and marginalized communities, only about 9 percent specifically mentioned gender.<sup>216</sup> Women may face extra barriers to vaccine access due to limited decision-making power, high care demands at home, and lack of access to financial resources and information.<sup>217</sup>

Finally, the pandemic has again exposed the critical need for comprehensive, up-to-date, sex-disaggregated data. We know that many women have been disproportionately hit by the crisis, but data deficits prevent a full understanding. This creates blind spots in policy making and impedes the ability to build back better. Innovative approaches to data collection are needed, especially for administrative data on who has access to services. Gathering sex-disaggregated data should become standard practice so that leaders have the information they need to advance gender equality in the long term.<sup>218</sup>

## SPOTLIGHT 2.1

### How the WPS Index relates to other global indices

“It is no coincidence that so many of the countries that threaten regional and global peace are the very places where women and girls are deprived of dignity and opportunity.... It is no coincidence that so many of the countries where the rule of law and democracy are struggling to take root are the same places where women and girls cannot participate as full and equal citizens.”

*Hillary Clinton,*

*Women in the World Summit, New York City, 2013*

A growing body of scholarship confirms a positive relationship between women’s rights and security and a wide range of critically important goals, including economic prosperity, human rights, and domestic and international peace.<sup>1</sup> One of the most compelling ways to visualize and understand these connections is to compare the WPS Index to other global indices designed to measure achievements not only in development, political freedom, and absence of conflict, but also in wider outcomes such as protection of the environment.

This spotlight compares the 2021 WPS Index with the most recent versions of 10 widely used global indices (see

table). Since each index has specific measurement and scoring methods, the most straightforward way to compare across indices is to calculate the correlation between rank orders.<sup>2</sup>

The WPS Index is strongly correlated with all 10 indices. The rank order correlation averages .783 overall (statisticians consider any value above .7 as a strong correlation).<sup>3</sup>

The very strong correlations between the WPS Index and the Fragile States Index (.851) and the Human Development Index (.845) suggest that states that fail to provide inclusion, justice, and security for women are also at high risk for political violence, instability, and weak overall development. The WPS Index is also correlated with indices that focus on problems that seem far removed from “women’s issues.” The high correlation of the WPS Index with the Environmental Performance and Freedom House indices indicates that countries that do a better job ensuring the status of women and girls also do a better job of protecting the natural environment and promoting democracy and government accountability.

#### Ten widely used global indices

INDEX	SOURCE	WHAT IS MEASURED	CORRELATION WITH WPS INDEX 2021
Positive Peace Index	Institute for Economics and Peace	Attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peace	.863
Fragile States Index	Fund for Peace	Domestic instability and violence	.851
Human Development Index	United Nations Development Programme	Levels of health, education, and income	.845
Environmental Performance Index	Yale and Columbia Universities	Protection of environmental health and ecosystem vitality	.828
INFORM Epidemic Risk Index	European Commission’s Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre	Risk of an epidemic outbreak that would exceed the national capacity to respond to the crisis	.817
Rule of Law Index	World Justice Project	Domestic rule of law	.767
Corruption Perceptions Index	Transparency International	Public sector corruption	.762
Early Warning Project Statistical Risk Assessment	US Holocaust Memorial Museum	Risk of genocide and mass killing	.746
Freedom House Global Freedom Aggregate Score	Freedom House	Political rights and civil liberties	.693
Global Peace Index	Institute for Economics and Peace	Peacefulness of society	.663

Note: Higher correlation numbers indicate greater convergence.

Source: Authors’ estimates.

**SPOTLIGHT 2.1** (continued)

The scatter plots below show country performance on four indices, with 0 representing the worst performing country and 1 the best. Countries that cluster around the red line receive similar rankings in both lists, while those above the line are ranked better on the WPS Index than on the comparison index. Across the board, we see the same countries doing well or badly. Nordic countries tend to be clustered among the top scorers, whereas conflict-affected countries such as Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Yemen are invariably ranked among the worst.

For example, Bolivia, Nepal, and North Macedonia tend to perform better on the WPS Index than on other indices. All three countries score far above the global average on women’s parliamentary representation and on the absence of legal discrimination and have no reported deaths from organized violence. As shown in figure a, Rwanda ranks 66th on the WPS Index, much better than its 160th position on the Human Development Index, revealing important achievements for women despite overall low levels of income, health, and education. At the other extreme,

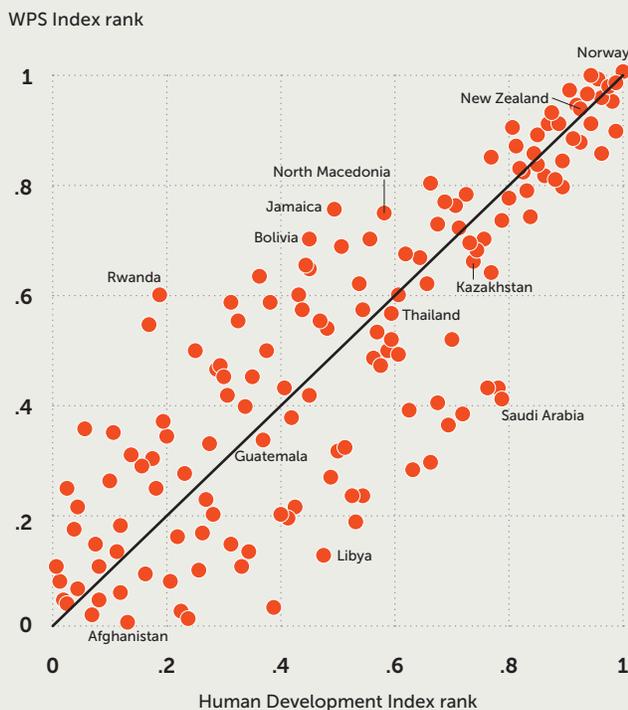
Saudi Arabia ranks 62 places higher on the Human Development Index (in 40th place) than on the WPS Index (102nd), where weak showing on legal discrimination and low rates of women’s employment pull down the score.

The Fragile States Index has one of the strongest correlations with the WPS Index, as shown in figure b, with most countries clustered around the 45-degree line showing perfect correlation. Outliers include Israel and Zimbabwe, which score relatively better on the WPS Index despite their fragility, while Kuwait and Uruguay do relatively worse.

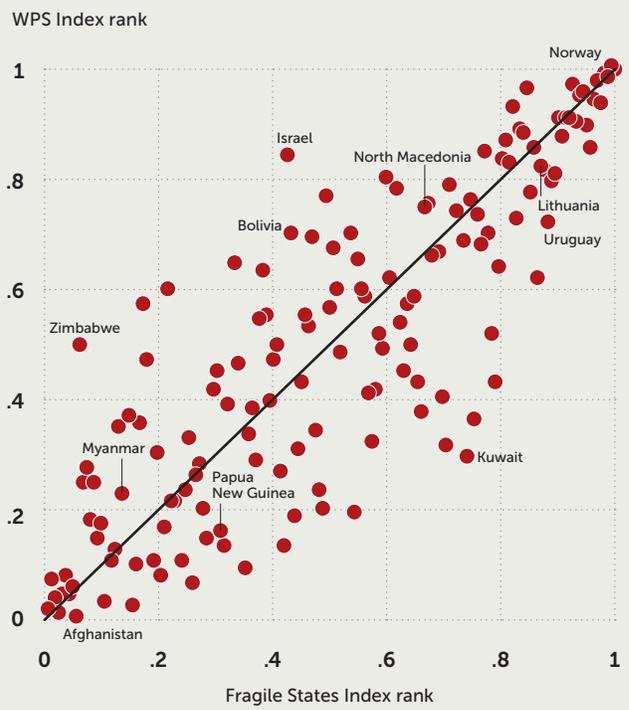
As evidenced in figure c, the relationship between environmental protection and the WPS Index is also remarkably strong, suggesting that countries where women are doing well also prioritize environmental protection. This confirms the finding explored in box 1.2 that countries scoring high on the WPS Index are most prepared to respond to the impacts of climate change, exemplifying the relationship between women’s status and climate crisis resilience.

**Rankings on the WPS Index correlate strongly with rankings on other major indices**

**a. Human Development Index**

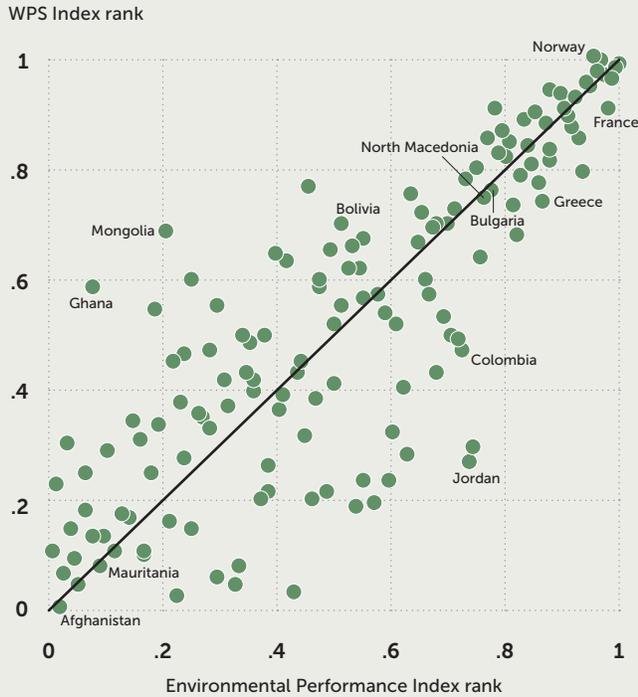


**b. Fragile States Index**

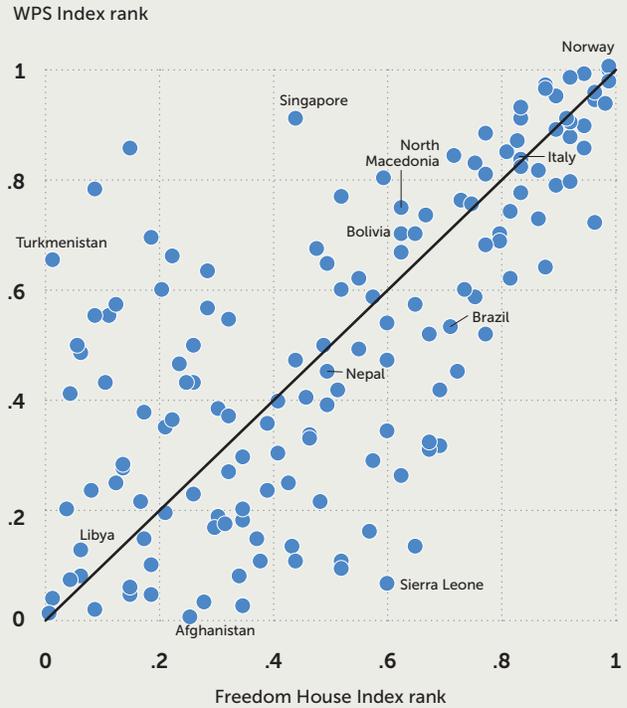


SPOTLIGHT 2.1 (continued)

c. Environmental Performance Index



d. Freedom House Index



Note: The axes refer to country ranks, not index scores. Since the indices cover different numbers of countries, the ranks are adjusted for the total number of countries in the respective index. Only countries with populations greater than one million are compared.  
 Source: Benjamin Valentino, Dartmouth University, based on data from UNDP (2020), The Fund for Peace (2021), Wendling (2020), and Freedom House (2021).

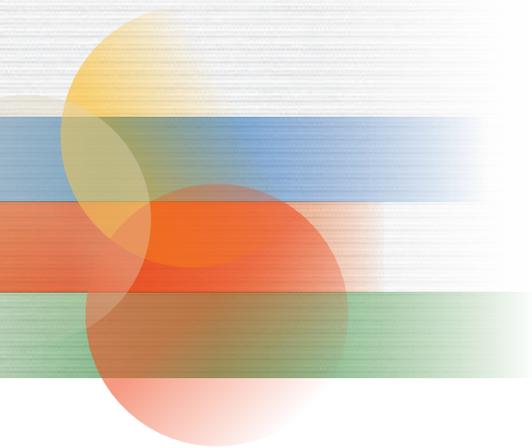
The strong correlation with Freedom House scores shown in figure d suggests that countries where women are doing well tend to be those with strong and more open democratic institutions. Outliers include Singapore, which ranks higher on the WPS Index than on the Freedom House index and, in the opposite direction, Sierra Leone, where women attend school for less than three years on average and where fewer than half (46 percent) of women feel safe walking in their neighborhood at night. Italy and Norway are among the countries that fall on the trendline.

The picture that emerges from this survey of global indices emphasizes the central role of women’s inclusion, justice, and security in advancing broader goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.<sup>4</sup> While

correlation does not prove causation, this suggests that efforts to promote women’s rights and status can generate larger gains for society and the economy and that higher levels of human development, environmental protection, and security can generate better opportunities for women. There is also a strong relationship with the INFORM epidemic risk index, as documented in box 2.1.

Notes

1. Futures without Violence 2017; Klugman, Nagel, and Viollaz 2021; Davies and True 2019.
2. Since each index ranks a different number of countries, the ranks are adjusted for the total number of countries in the index. Countries are limited to those with populations greater than 1 million.
3. Akoglu 2018.
4. UNDESA n.d.



## CHAPTER 3

# Behind national averages

*A new WPS Index for forcibly displaced women*

*The new index reveals uneven performance at provincial and state levels*

*Displacement and location matter for women's status*

*Forced displacement rising globally*

The global WPS Index relies on national averages to capture women's inclusion, justice, and security across countries. But averages conceal variation behind national borders. In this chapter, we introduce two innovative applications that take the WPS Index behind national averages to illuminate the challenges facing different groups of women within countries: forced displacement and subnational disparities.

The first innovation constructs separate indices for forcibly displaced and non-displaced women in five Sub-Saharan countries: Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan. The results underscore the compounding effects of displacement on women's status and opportunities.

The second innovation creates provincial or state-level WPS Index estimates for Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States. All three cases reveal stark disparities in performance within the countries, showing how location matters for women's inclusion, justice, and security.

Both sets of results highlight the policy importance of intersectional approaches to women's empowerment that recognize how forced displacement, geographic location, race, ethnicity, and other characteristics interact to affect women's experiences. The COVID pandemic, which emerged after the data underlying these analyses were collected, almost certainly worsened the disparities.

### **A new lens on forced displacement**

Forced displacement has moved up the global agenda as the number of displaced people has continued to rise, approaching 90 million at the end of 2020. About 55 million—most of the displaced—remained in their own country as internally displaced persons (IDPs).<sup>219</sup> About 48 million IDPs were displaced by conflict and violence and about 7 million by natural disasters.<sup>220</sup> And of the 1.44 million refugees in urgent need of resettlement globally, only 23,000 were resettled in the past year, the lowest number in almost two decades, according to estimates by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).<sup>221</sup>

*Gender inequality compounds displacement*

Displaced women and girls face a higher risk of all forms of gender-based violence and economic marginalization.<sup>222</sup> Public services are often disrupted or restricted in conflict-affected countries, according to the International Rescue Committee’s global watchlist of humanitarian crises.<sup>223</sup> Displaced women face barriers to livelihood opportunities, including cash and voucher assistance, as a result of intersecting factors affecting their rights, agency, and access to economic opportunities. Displacement can impede women’s access to financial services—for example, through language barriers, lack of documentation, and unavailable services.<sup>224</sup>

*Internally displaced concentrated in low- and middle-income countries*

Nearly all IDPs (99 percent) are in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>225</sup> Somalia, Ethiopia, and Nigeria are among the countries with the largest numbers. Figure 3.1, mapped by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, shows the location and number of conflict- and disaster-induced IDPs.

*Refugee-origin countries tend to rank poorly on the WPS Index*

About two-thirds of refugees come from four countries—Afghanistan, South Sudan, Syria, and Venezuela—with Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Myanmar, Somalia, and Sudan accounting for another fifth.<sup>226</sup> Notably, 7 of these 10 countries rank among the bottom 15 on the WPS Index, highlighting how women’s inclusion, justice, and security were severely constrained even before displacement.

*New forcibly displaced index for Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan*

**Constructing the forcibly displaced WPS Index**

To better understand challenges to inclusion, justice, and security for displaced women, we constructed WPS indices for five African countries with high levels of displacement: Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan. The World Bank’s new high frequency surveys enabled separate estimates of the WPS Index for displaced and host community women in those countries. The surveys investigated are the Ethiopia Skills Profile Survey (2017), covering refugees from four countries living in Ethiopia in camps and the surrounding host communities; the Nigeria IDP Survey (2018), covering IDPs and host communities in the northeast; the Somalia high frequency survey (2017), covering internally displaced and host communities nationwide; South Sudan’s high frequency survey Wave 4 (2017), covering urban IDPs and host communities in seven states; and the Sudan IDP Profiling Survey (2018), covering IDPs living in the Abu Shouk and El Salam camps in Darfur and the host communities around Al Fashir.<sup>227</sup> The data from these surveys allow tracking the impacts of conflict and displacement, which can inform policy and programmatic responses.

*Focus on internal displacement*

Ethiopia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan had large numbers of displaced people even before the tragic conflict in Ethiopia’s Tigray region in 2021 (table 3.1). UNHCR estimates that in Somalia, almost 3 million people (19 percent of the population) were internally displaced as of January 2021 due to drought, flooding, famine, and armed and clan conflicts.<sup>228</sup> The 2017 drought in Somalia, followed by extreme floods in 2018, displaced more than 926,000 people.<sup>229</sup>

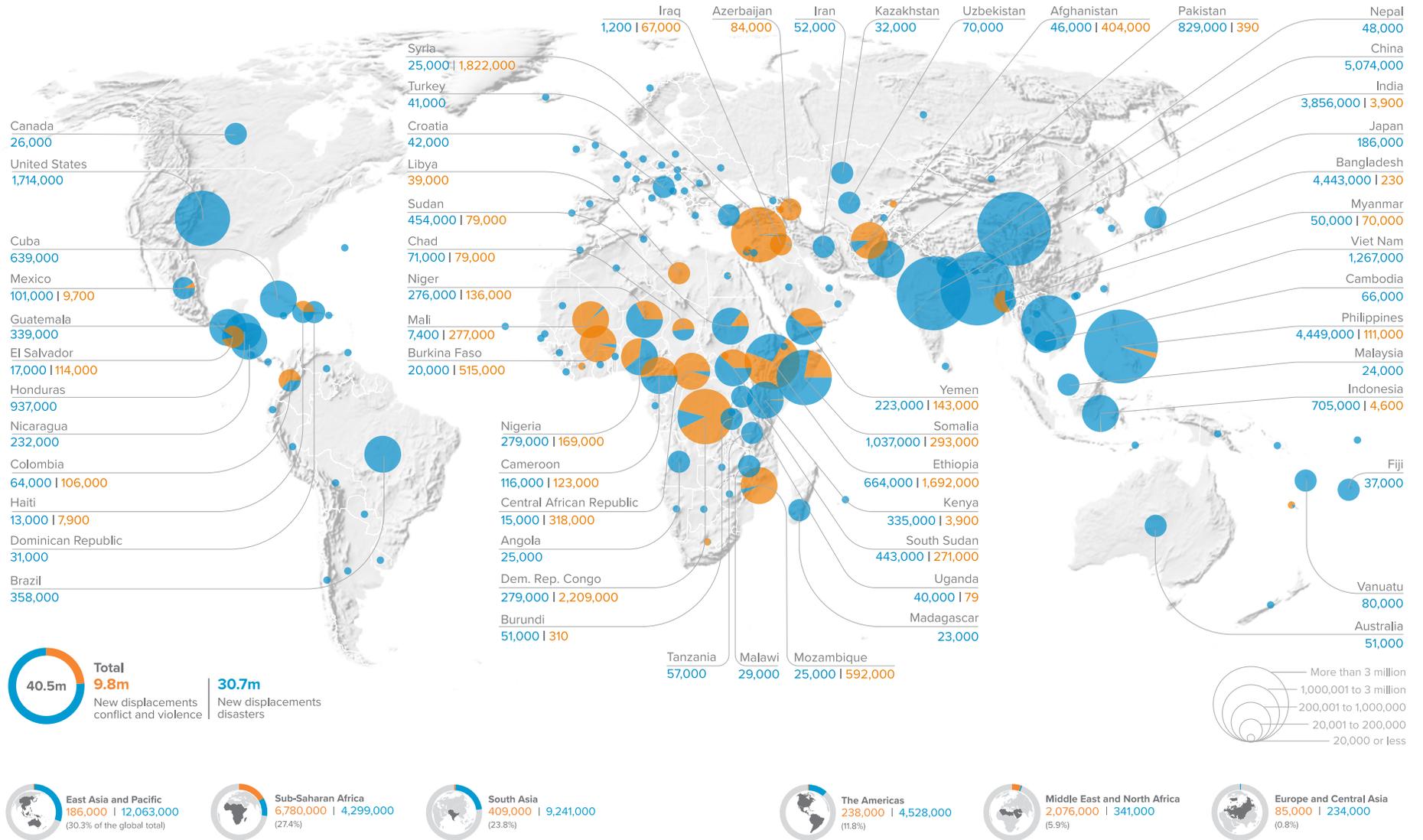
*First index of its kind*

To assess the differences between the experiences of displaced women and those of host community women, we measured the differences in inclusion, justice, and security between displaced women and host community women. As far as we are aware, this is the first attempt to comprehensively capture and quantify the relative status of forcibly displaced women through a gender-focused index.

*Structure similar to global index*

The indicators used in the forcibly displaced index are similar to those in the global index, with some adjustments for data availability and relevance (table 3.2). The inclusion dimension considers women’s mean years of schooling, employment rates, cellphone access, and financial inclusion. The justice dimension captures women’s possession of legal identification, legal protections (as defined below), and ability to move freely. The security dimension takes into account community safety,

**FIGURE 3.1 New displacements by conflict and disaster in 2020**



The country and territory names and figures are shown only when the total new displacements value exceeds 20,000. Due to rounding, some totals may not correspond with the sum of the separate figures.

The boundaries and the names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDMC.

**TABLE 3.1** Number of displaced persons and their share of the population in five African countries, 2020

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF DISPLACED PERSONS	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION
Ethiopia	800,464	1.0
Nigeria	2,610,278	1.3
Somalia	2,967,500	19.2
South Sudan	1,600,254	14.5
Sudan	2,552,174	6.0

Note: See statistical table 1 for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.

Source: Authors' estimates.

**TABLE 3.2** Indicators and definitions for the forcibly displaced WPS Index

DIMENSION and INDICATOR	DEFINITION
<b>INCLUSION</b>	
Education	Women's mean years of education
Employment	Percentage of women who worked for money for at least one hour in the seven days preceding data collection
Cellphone access	Percentage of women who live in a household where at least one person has a cellphone
Financial inclusion	Percentage of women whose household has access to a bank account or a mobile money account
<b>JUSTICE</b>	
Legal identification	Percentage of women who have a legal form of identification
Legal protection	Summary score based on whether the country provides the seven legal protections for displaced persons shown in figure 3.2
Mobility	Percentage of women who feel free to move where they choose
<b>SECURITY</b>	
Intimate partner violence	Percentage of women who experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of an intimate partner in the 12 months preceding data collection
Community safety	Percentage of women who feel moderately or very unsafe when walking alone in their neighborhood after dark

Note: See the online appendix for data sources.

Source: Authors.

measured as the share of women who do not feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood at night, and current intimate partner violence. Most data come from high frequency surveys carried out by the World Bank that were designed to cover IDP communities, while the data on intimate partner violence and legal discrimination were drawn from other published sources.<sup>230</sup>

### *Status likely worsened by COVID*

Our data predate the pandemic, which emerging evidence suggests is compounding the disadvantages facing displaced women, who are enduring the triple challenges of gender inequality, displacement, and COVID impacts. A new International Rescue Committee/Overseas Development Institute report surveying conditions in Greece, Jordan, and Nigeria reveals that displaced women have been less likely to earn income or be employed during the pandemic than men, in part because they rely heavily on the informal labor market for work.<sup>231</sup> In Nigeria, 75 percent of displaced women reported struggling to cover their basic needs during the pandemic, and in Greece, only half of displaced women felt that their current wages were enough to meet their household needs.

*Some data limitations*

*A new measure of legal protection*

*Legal protection scores for the forcibly displaced range from 29 to 93 percent*

*Displaced women do consistently worse*

*Worst gaps in South Sudan*

*Wide disparities in Ethiopia*

Not all data were available for all countries. For Sudan, we had only national rates of intimate partner violence and mobility.<sup>232</sup> For Ethiopia and South Sudan, no financial inclusion data were available.

To capture the legal situation of displaced women, we combined seven elements, equally weighted and taking into account the rights of both refugees and IDPs, to generate a new measure of legal protection. Refugees’ rights to work in the private sector, to own property, and to choose where to live were drawn from the Migration and the Law database of the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development.<sup>233</sup> For IDP-specific aspects, we counted whether the country has ratified the Kampala Convention,<sup>234</sup> whether national legislation protects IDPs, and whether there is a national policy addressing IDP-related issues. To capture gender discrimination in national law, we used the absence of legal discrimination as measured by the Women, Business, and the Law score and incorporated in the global WPS Index. Scores out of seven were translated into summary percentages to factor into index scores.

Among the five countries, Ethiopia had the highest score, 93 percent, and Sudan had the lowest, 29 percent (figure 3.2). These scores are national and do not differentiate by gender, but they do provide insight into displaced women’s legal setting.

**Forcibly displaced women generally did worse**

In all five countries, WPS Index scores were worse for displaced women than for host community women, with an average disadvantage of about 24 percent (figure 3.3). Across the five countries, displaced women generally faced much higher risks than host community women of violence at home, were consistently less likely to be financially included, and often felt less free to move about.

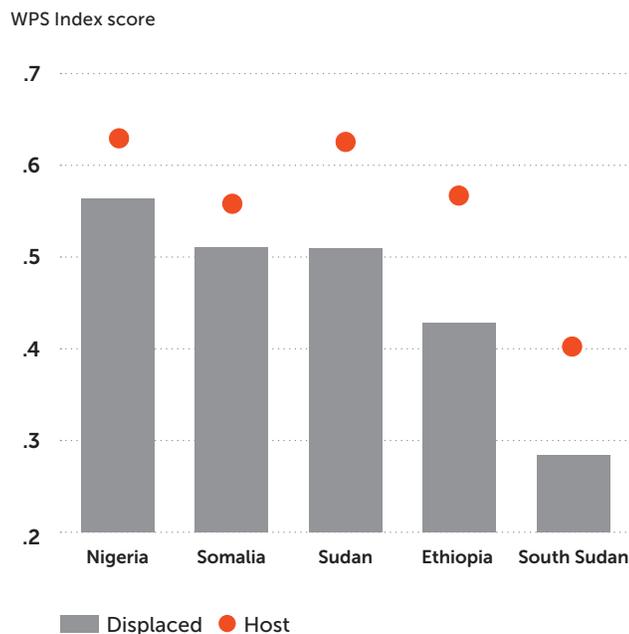
Displaced women’s disadvantage was greatest in South Sudan, where their score (.284) fell about 42 percent below that of host community women. On our global WPS Index, the country ranks third to last. The poor performance for both forcibly displaced and host community women underlines the scale of deprivations in the conflict-affected country.

Differences in Ethiopia between refugee and host community women were also wide—around 33 percent—despite few formal legal barriers separating them. The rate of financial inclusion among displaced women was minimal, at around 2 percent—the lowest in our five-country sample and around 25 times less than the rate among host community men and women. Although a 2019 law in Ethiopia

**FIGURE 3.2** Legal protections for internally displaced persons vary greatly



Note: See the online appendix for data sources and detailed scores.  
Source: Authors’ estimates.

**FIGURE 3.3 WPS Index scores for displaced and host community women**

Note: See the online appendix for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.  
Source: Authors' estimates.

allows refugees to work and open bank accounts, implementation has been delayed, and the mobile money market is nascent. Social norms and a lack of financial and digital literacy disproportionately obstruct displaced women's access to financial services.<sup>235</sup> Only one refugee woman in five felt free to move where she chooses, and 26 percent felt unsafe walking in their neighborhood at night, more than double the share for host community women, highlighting severe barriers to mobility and security for refugee women.

*Ethiopia does relatively well on legal identification for refugee women*

Refugee women in Ethiopia were more likely to have a form of legal identification than host community women (54 versus 36 percent). This could be linked to a national policy introduced in 2017 that allows refugees to obtain birth, death, and marriage certificates.<sup>236</sup> UNHCR's ongoing programming also aims to help refugees obtain digital identification—as of April 2019, approximately 500,000 refugees in Ethiopia had been registered this way.<sup>237</sup>

*In Ethiopia, women displaced longer are more likely to find work*

Employment rates are low in Ethiopia, pointing to generally limited livelihood opportunities. Employment rates ranged from 7 percent for displaced women to 24 percent for host community men. Recent analysis of displaced women in Ethiopia found that the length of displacement had a significant impact on their employment prospects—women displaced for at least three years were more likely to be in paid work than those recently displaced. This suggests that, over time, women are able to assimilate into their communities and pursue economic opportunities.<sup>238</sup> The analysis also shows that education boosts economic opportunities for refugee women in Ethiopia.

*Performance echoes findings on multidimensional poverty*

The countries with the greatest disparities in WPS Index scores between displaced and host community women—Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Sudan—are also the countries with the widest multidimensional poverty gaps between displaced and host community populations.<sup>239</sup> In all five countries, female-headed refugee/IDP households were also more likely than male-headed households to be poor, showing how gender inequality compounds the effects of displacement and poverty.

*Smaller disparities between displaced and host community women in Somalia, but poor outcomes overall*

*Mixed results in Nigeria*

*Rates of intimate partner violence and financial inclusion worse for displaced women*

*Higher risks of intimate partner violence for displaced women*

*Community violence closely related to violence at home*

*Similar feelings of safety for displaced and host community women in Nigeria and Somalia*

In refugee households in Ethiopia, 58 percent of female-headed households were impoverished, compared with 19 percent of male-headed households.<sup>240</sup> Lack of physical safety, early marriage, and lack of legal identification were the largest contributors to poverty in households headed by displaced women.

We found the smallest gap in WPS scores in Somalia, where displaced women were about 9 percent worse off than host community women. Both groups had similarly low rates of access to legal identification (14 percent). Because of protracted conflict and poor government administration, fewer than 1 birth in 10 in the country was registered, and there is no national system of identification.<sup>241</sup> Additional reasons reported for not having legal identification in Somalia included lack of trust in the government, absence of legal protections for personal data, and high costs.<sup>242</sup> Displaced and host community women in Somalia also had similar rates of employment, mobility, and community safety, with gaps of less than 5 percentage points.

In Nigeria, the gaps between displaced and host community women averaged about 12 percentage points, with relatively large disparities in cellphone access (11 percentage points) and legal identification (15 percentage points), while rates of employment and mobility were similar. Gender gaps were small for cellphone access, financial inclusion, mobility, and community safety, but wide for employment, concurring with other analyses finding wide gender gaps in employment in northeast Nigeria for both displaced and nondisplaced populations. In data collected by the International Rescue Committee and the Overseas Development Institute in 2021, 43 percent of displaced women in Nigeria lost income during the COVID pandemic, while 29 percent reported having to give their earned money to their husband or encountering other controlling behaviors.<sup>243</sup>

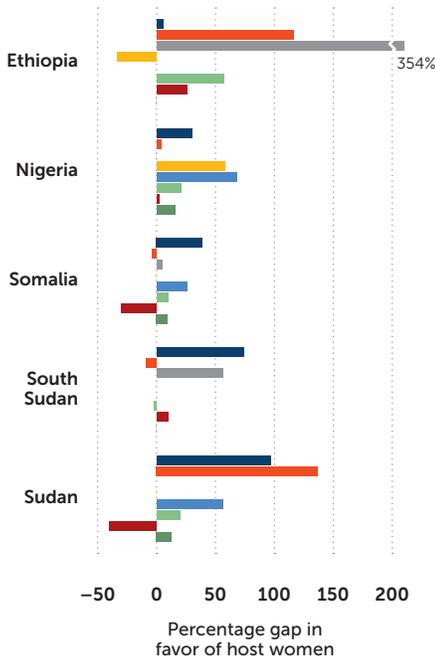
Across all five countries, displaced women fared systematically worse than host community women in financial inclusion and risk of intimate partner violence (figure 3.4). The gaps between refugee and host community women's rates of financial inclusion exceeded 15 percentage points in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Somalia, compared with 4 percentage points in Sudan.<sup>244</sup>

The security dimension results highlight the risk that displacement will compound women's insecurity. In all five countries, levels of current intimate partner violence were higher among displaced women than among women in the host population. In Somalia, 36 percent of displaced women experienced intimate partner violence, compared with 26 percent of host community women, a difference of 38 percent. In South Sudan, 47 percent of displaced women had experienced intimate partner violence in the past year—a rate nearly double the national average of 27 percent and quadruple the global average of about 12 percent.

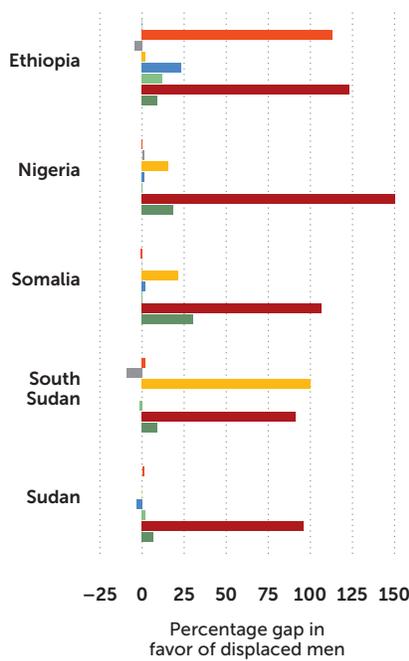
These results are consistent with accumulating evidence—in settings ranging from Colombia<sup>245</sup> to Democratic Republic of the Congo,<sup>246</sup> Liberia, Mali, and Nigeria<sup>247</sup>—documenting how displacement and instability significantly increase the risk of intimate partner violence. A recent study from Democratic Republic of the Congo found that both former and current displacement significantly worsened women's risk of intimate partner violence in the past year, as well as other forms of gender-based violence such as rape.<sup>248</sup> Displaced women in Colombia and Liberia had 40–55 percent greater odds of experiencing past-year intimate partner violence than their nondisplaced counterparts.<sup>249</sup> A quasi-experimental study in Mali examining changes in intimate partner violence risks as the country became unstable found that women living in conflict-affected areas were significantly more likely than their counterparts outside such areas to experience multiple forms of intimate partner violence.<sup>250</sup> These studies highlight the important linkages between violence at the community level and violence in the home.

In Nigeria and Somalia, displaced and host community women had similarly high levels of perceived safety, with only 5–8 percent reporting feeling unsafe in their neighborhood at night. This contrasts with Ethiopia, where about one

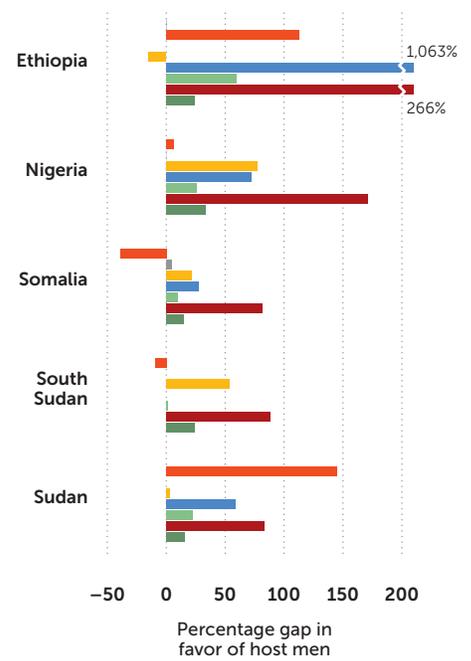
**FIGURE 3.4 Gaps between displaced women and host community women**



**FIGURE 3.5 Gender gaps between displaced women and displaced men**



**FIGURE 3.6 Larger gender gaps between displaced women and host community men**



Legend: Current intimate partner violence (dark blue), Financial inclusion (light blue), Community safety (orange), Cellphone access (green), Employment (red), Mobility (grey), Legal identification (yellow), Education (dark green).

Note: See the online appendix for detailed scores, definitions, sources, and date ranges.  
Source: Authors' estimates.

*Displaced women feel safer in South Sudan*

*Strong overall legal protections*

*Gaps between laws and practice in Ethiopia*

displaced woman in four felt unsafe in her neighborhood, more than double the rates for displaced men, host community men, and host community women, suggesting that gender inequality and displacement can intersect to threaten women's safety.

By contrast, displaced women in South Sudan were less likely to feel unsafe than host community women, though rates were extremely high for both groups at 78 percent for displaced women and 86 percent for host community women. Interestingly, gender gaps on this indicator in South Sudan were relatively small, with both displaced and host community men reporting rates within 2 percentage points of women's rates, suggesting pervasive perceptions of insecurity. The somewhat higher sense of safety among displaced women may be due to residence in camps, which could provide protection and security amid the ongoing conflict.

The results for the justice dimension reveal that the five countries generally have good laws on paper protecting internally displaced persons and refugees. All five countries in the analysis except Sudan have ratified the Kampala Agreement, a regional commitment protecting IDP rights, and all countries except South Sudan have published a national action plan on IDPs, signaling commitment to protecting their rights.

But in Ethiopia, only about one refugee woman in five felt free to move where she chose, compared with 94 percent of displaced women in Nigeria and 86 percent in Somalia. Ethiopia's low score on mobility contrasts with its high score on legal protection (93 percent), pointing to gaps between protection in principle and rights in practice.

*Displaced men have higher employment rates*

*Displacement compounds gender inequality in employment*

*The challenges facing displaced women vary*

*Builds on 2019 subnational analysis*

*Widest disparities in the United States*

### **Gender gaps compound disadvantages**

The gender gaps facing displaced women were greatest for employment (see figure 3.5). Across all five countries, employment rates were at least 90 percent higher for displaced men than for displaced women—nearly 150 percent higher in Nigeria, where about 36 percent of displaced men were employed, compared with about 15 percent of displaced women. The gaps reflect the broader fact that labor markets around the world remain highly segregated by gender—with women more concentrated in unskilled and low-paid sectors than men, a condition that also tends to make it hard for refugee women to find jobs.<sup>251</sup> Other obstacles such as language barriers, lower literacy rates, unpaid care responsibilities, and gender norms that limit women’s mobility can compound the constraints on refugee women’s economic opportunities.<sup>252</sup>

Comparisons between displaced women and host community men exposed even starker gaps, highlighting the multiplying effects of displacement and gender inequality (see figure 3.6). In Ethiopia, for example, the share of employed host community men was almost three times the share of employed refugee women. The results suggest that even in countries where displaced women are legally permitted to work (the case for all five countries in our analysis), many face discriminatory norms and regulatory barriers. The impediments affect the economy at large. For example, estimates by the Georgetown Institute on Women, Peace, and Security and the International Rescue Committee suggest that if gender gaps in employment and earnings were closed in the top 30 refugee-hosting countries, refugee women could generate \$1.4 trillion a year in global GDP.<sup>253</sup>

Our results underline the added challenges related to inclusion, justice, and security for displaced women, highlighting the intersecting and compounding challenges of gender inequality and forced displacement. At the same time, the range of performance, both overall and on specific indicators, demonstrates the complexity of each situation. In Somalia, for example, displaced women had relatively high rates of financial inclusion but had the lowest rates of legal identification among the five countries. Nigeria had the lowest rates of intimate partner violence for both displaced and host community women, while cellphone access for displaced women was the second worst in the five-country sample. The forcibly displaced index reminds us of the need to go beyond national averages to better understand disparities in women’s status and opportunities.

### **Insights from subnational disparities in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States**

We turn now to variations in women’s inclusion, justice, and security at the provincial and state level in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States, viewing the spectrum of performance behind national averages through a different lens.

The 2019 WPS Index report investigated variation across provinces in China, India, and Nigeria. The indicators, similar to those in the global index, fall under the dimensions of inclusion, justice, and security. Nigeria had the widest range of within-country scores, from .752 to .369, equivalent to the difference in global index scores between Mauritius and Afghanistan that year. This year, we pursued localized analysis for three very different countries—Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the United States. Each country reveals wide internal disparities, demonstrating the value of this type of analysis.

Overall, the widest internal disparities in performance on the subnational index were in the United States, where top-ranked Massachusetts scored more than four times better than bottom-ranked Louisiana. The range of performance was almost as wide in Afghanistan, where Panjshir scored nearly four times better than Uruzgan. In Pakistan, scores ranged from .734 in Punjab, similar to Brazil’s

*And wide disparities in indicator performance*

*Distinct challenges across the three countries*

*Similar structure to global index*

2021 score, to .194 in Balochistan, which is far worse than Afghanistan’s national score.

There were also massive disparities at the indicator level—in Afghanistan, for example, the share of men who tolerated wife beating ranged from 97 percent in Paktia to 15 percent in Daykundi, while current rates of current intimate partner violence ranged from a massive 90 percent in Ghor to 5 percent in Helmand. By comparison, in the United States, rates of current intimate partner violence peaked at 11 percent in South Carolina and fell as low as 4 percent in Rhode Island. The United States is also marked by larger disparities by race and ethnic identity, with white women doing much better than women of color on multiple measures, including maternal mortality and employment.

In all three countries, the challenges women faced varied by location. In Afghanistan, decades of conflict between the government and the Taliban threatened women’s progress on all fronts. In Pakistan, rates of women’s inclusion were consistently and alarmingly low across multiple metrics. In the United States, women’s inclusion, justice, and security were deeply connected to the level of legal protection, which varied enormously by state. In 37 states, domestic abusers subject to protective orders were not required to relinquish firearms, and 44 states have no legislated minimum wage above the national low-income threshold.<sup>254</sup>

**Indicators and data for Afghanistan and Pakistan**

The data for Afghanistan and Pakistan come largely from the most recent Demographic Health Survey available, complemented by data from United Nations

**TABLE 3.3 Afghanistan and Pakistan subnational WPS Index: Indicators and definitions**

INDICATOR	DEFINITION	
	AFGHANISTAN	PAKISTAN
<b>INCLUSION</b>		
Employment	Percentage of adult women in paid employment	
Education	Percentage of secondary school–age girls enrolled in secondary school	Percentage of women who have completed secondary school
Cellphone use		Percentage of ever-married women ages 15–49 who have their own cellphone
Financial inclusion		Percentage of women with their own bank account
Exposure to mass media	Percentage of ever-married women ages 15–49 who watch television at least once a week	
Parliamentary representation	Percentage of women representatives in the national assembly, by province	Percentage of women representatives in provincial assemblies
<b>JUSTICE</b>		
Household decision making	Percentage of women who report participating in major household decisions related to healthcare, major purchases, and visits with relatives	
Son bias	Male to female ratio at birth	
Discriminatory norms	Percentage of men saying wife beating is acceptable if a wife does any of the following: burns the food, argues with him, leaves the house without telling him, neglects children, refuses to have sex with him, or neglects in-laws	
<b>SECURITY</b>		
Current intimate partner violence	Percentage of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence in the past 12 months by an intimate partner	
Organized violence	Battle deaths per 100,000 people from explosions, protests, or riots, or violence against civilians, 2018–21	

Note: See the online appendix for data sources and detailed definitions.

Source: Authors.

agencies, government databases, and the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) project. Most indicators in the provincial index resemble those in the global index, with some nuances (table 3.3). Education in Pakistan was measured as the share of women who had completed secondary school, and discriminatory norms in Afghanistan and Pakistan captured the share of men who agreed that wife beating was acceptable for certain actions. Indicators distinct from the global index included exposure to mass media in Afghanistan (defined as watching television at least weekly) and household decision making in both countries, which was the share of women who reported regular involvement in major household decisions about healthcare, purchases, and visits with relatives. Data for Afghanistan were mostly from 2015, and data for Pakistan were mostly from 2018.<sup>255</sup>

*Provincial data cover most of Afghanistan and Pakistan*

In Afghanistan, data were available for 33 of the country's 34 provinces—the exception was Zabul. In Pakistan, index scores were calculated for all four of the country's provinces, though not for Pakistan's special regions—Azad Jammu Kashmir, Federally Administrated Tribal Areas, Gilgit Baltistan, and Islamabad Capital Territory.

*Wide urban–rural disparities*

### **Ongoing conflict in Afghanistan worsens local outcomes for women**

Afghanistan's 34 provinces range in population from about half a million in Badghis to more than 5 million in Kabul. The population is 74 percent rural, though urbanization has been rapid over the past decade.<sup>256</sup> Rural–urban disparities in income, education, and access to public services are large and growing.<sup>257</sup> In Afghanistan, one of the world's poorest countries, an estimated 40 percent live in poverty.<sup>258</sup>

*Ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity*

Afghanistan is ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse, with political mobilization and conflict often reflecting these divides. Pashtuns are the largest ethnic group (38 percent), followed by Tajiks (25 percent) and Hazaras (19 percent).<sup>259</sup> Pashtuns generally observe more conservative gender norms than the Tajiks and Hazaras,<sup>260</sup> constraining women's status and rights.

*Poor performance overall in Afghanistan*

Efforts to advance the position of Afghan women and girls received much attention after the fall of the Taliban in 2001, and opportunities for education, employment, and political representation improved. For example, by 2018, 83 percent of Afghan girls had enrolled in primary school,<sup>261</sup> and by 2019, more than 1,000 Afghan women had started their own businesses, two activities previously prohibited under the Taliban.<sup>262</sup> However, mean schooling for Afghan women was still alarmingly low, at just two years. The collapse of the Afghan government and rise of the Taliban in August 2021 clearly jeopardize past progress for Afghan women and threaten reversals in access to rights and justice.

*Ongoing conflict has devastated women's status and opportunities*

Despite some modest gains prior to recent events, progress had not been linear, and the country still lags significantly behind others. In the 2021 global ranking of 170 countries on the WPS Index, Afghanistan scores worst, falling in relative and absolute terms since 2017. On several indicators—women's cellphone use, parliamentary representation, and perceptions of community safety—Afghanistan has regressed, while much of the rest of the world has improved. On all aspects of security in the global index, Afghanistan's score is the worst in South Asia and among the worst in the world. This record underscores the devastation of women's status and opportunities wreaked by ongoing conflict.

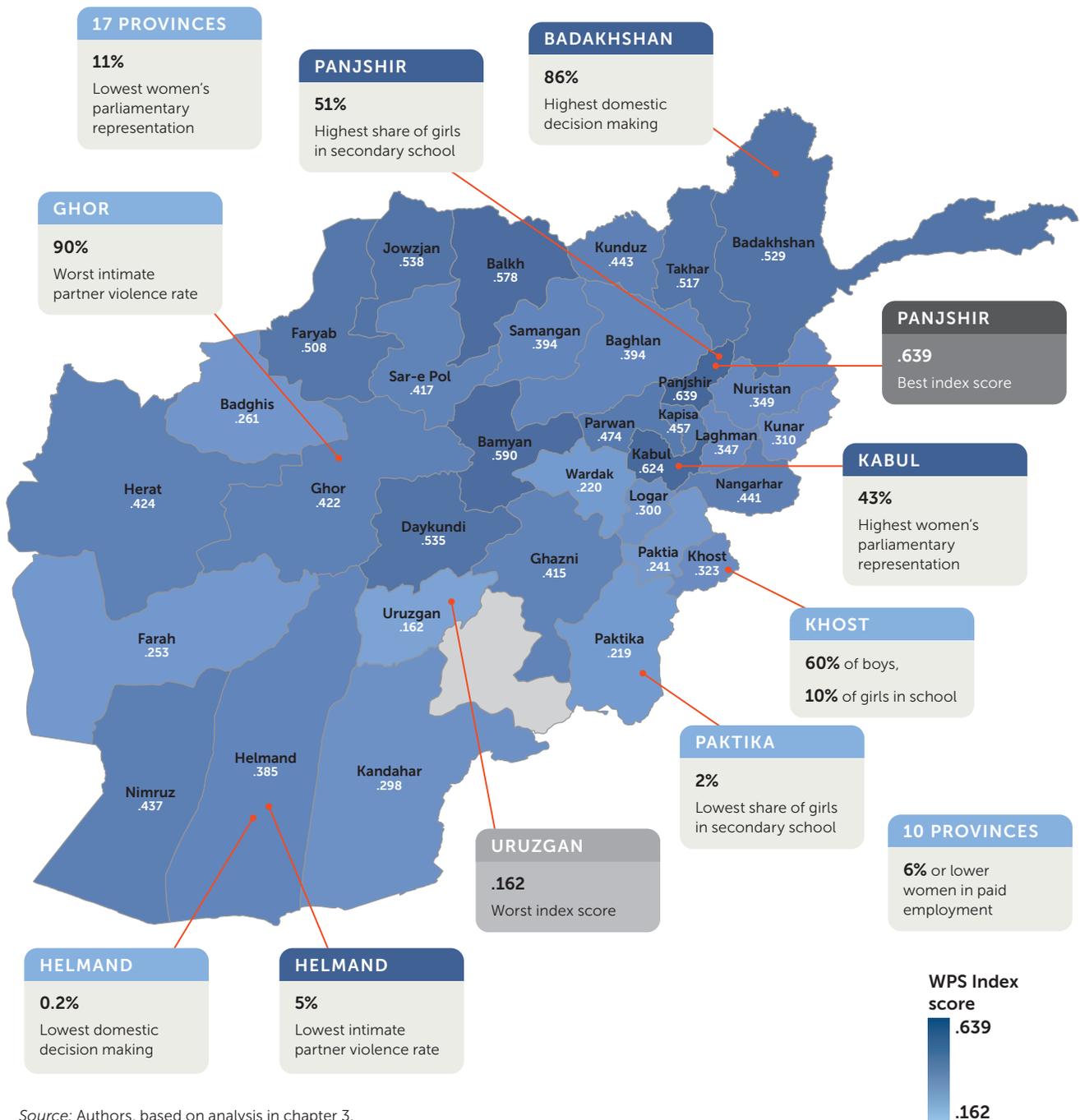
*Wide range in provincial scores*

While Afghanistan ranked worst in the world on the 2021 global WPS Index, there were major disparities within the country. Millions of women living in some provinces fared far much worse than others. The subnational index scores ranged from .639 in Panjshir to .162 in Uruzgan (infographic 3.1). The widest gaps were in organized violence, ranging from about 7 deaths per 100,000 people in Bamyan to 301 in Uruzgan. The narrowest gaps were in the rates of son bias.

**INFOGRAPHIC 3.1**

**Where women live in Afghanistan matters greatly for their inclusion, justice, and security**

The global WPS Index tallies national averages in women’s inclusion, justice, and security. Behind those averages, new provincial WPS Index estimates reveal stark disparities across Afghanistan in 2019, showing how location matters and intersects with ethnicity, forced displacement, and security in determining women’s status. The COVID pandemic and the Taliban takeover are now making the situation even worse for women and girls in the lowest-ranked country in the world.



Source: Authors, based on analysis in chapter 3.

*Panjshir ranks highest in Afghanistan*

*Better performers*

Panjshir province, northeast of Kabul, leads the Afghan subnational index, doing relatively well on the security dimension—though the rate of organized violence in the province, 8.8 fatalities per 100,000 people, is still at a level similar to those among the worst 10 countries in the world. Panjshir’s rate of current intimate partner violence—reported at 23 percent—was about half the national average but double the global average and among the worst in the world. Girls’ secondary education attainment in Panjshir was 51 percent—double the national average but still far short of the 60 percent average estimated for South Asia.<sup>263</sup> About 7 of 10 women in the province participated in household decisions about healthcare, major purchases, and visits with relatives.

*Relatively good education but low employment in Kabul*

The capital Kabul ranked second best in Afghanistan. It outperformed the national average on girls’ education, exposure to mass media, parliamentary representation, discriminatory norms, intimate partner violence, and organized violence. While girls’ access to education was highest in Kabul and Panjshir, levels of women’s employment remained low in both provinces, recalling patterns in the Middle East and North Africa.

*Better outcomes in central and northeast Afghanistan*

Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan, Daykundi, Faryab, Jowzjan, Parwan, and Takhar, located in the central and northeast regions of Afghanistan, have majorities of ethnic Hazara, Tajik, and Turkmen populations. All exceeded the national average on education and women’s participation in household decision making. Daykundi stood out, with the highest rate of female secondary school enrollment, at 45 percent, and the second highest rate of participation in domestic decision making, at 74 percent.

*High rates of organized violence in low-scoring provinces*

*Worst performers*

Afghanistan’s lowest-ranking provinces are mainly in the southeastern areas, where conflict has been protracted. Nine of the ten lowest-performing provinces—Badghis, Logar, Kandahar, Khost, Kunar, Paktika, Paktia, Uruzgan, and Wardak—are Pash-tun-majority. These provinces were marked by high rates of organized violence and intimate partner violence, widespread acceptance of wife beating (between 67 and 97 percent), and very low levels of women’s participation in domestic decision making (between 3 and 21 percent).

*Uruzgan performs worst on provincial index*

Ranking worst in the country, Uruzgan scored poorly across the board, reporting the highest level of organized violence (301 fatalities per 100,000 people), very low levels of girls’ secondary school attendance (3 percent), few women in paid employment (6 percent), and very little exposure to mass media (only about 1 woman in 20 watched television at least once a week). The province also had one of the smallest proportions of female legislators at 11 percent, compared with the national average of 27 percent.

*Ghazni scores better than other southeast provinces*

Ghazni province is an exception among the southeastern provinces. Levels of insecurity were extremely high (198 battle deaths per 100,000 population and a 65 percent rate of current intimate partner violence), and the share of women in paid employment was only 7 percent. Yet, Ghazni had one of the highest provincial rates of girls’ secondary education enrollment, at 39 percent—good by Afghan standards, but still very low compared with regional and global averages.

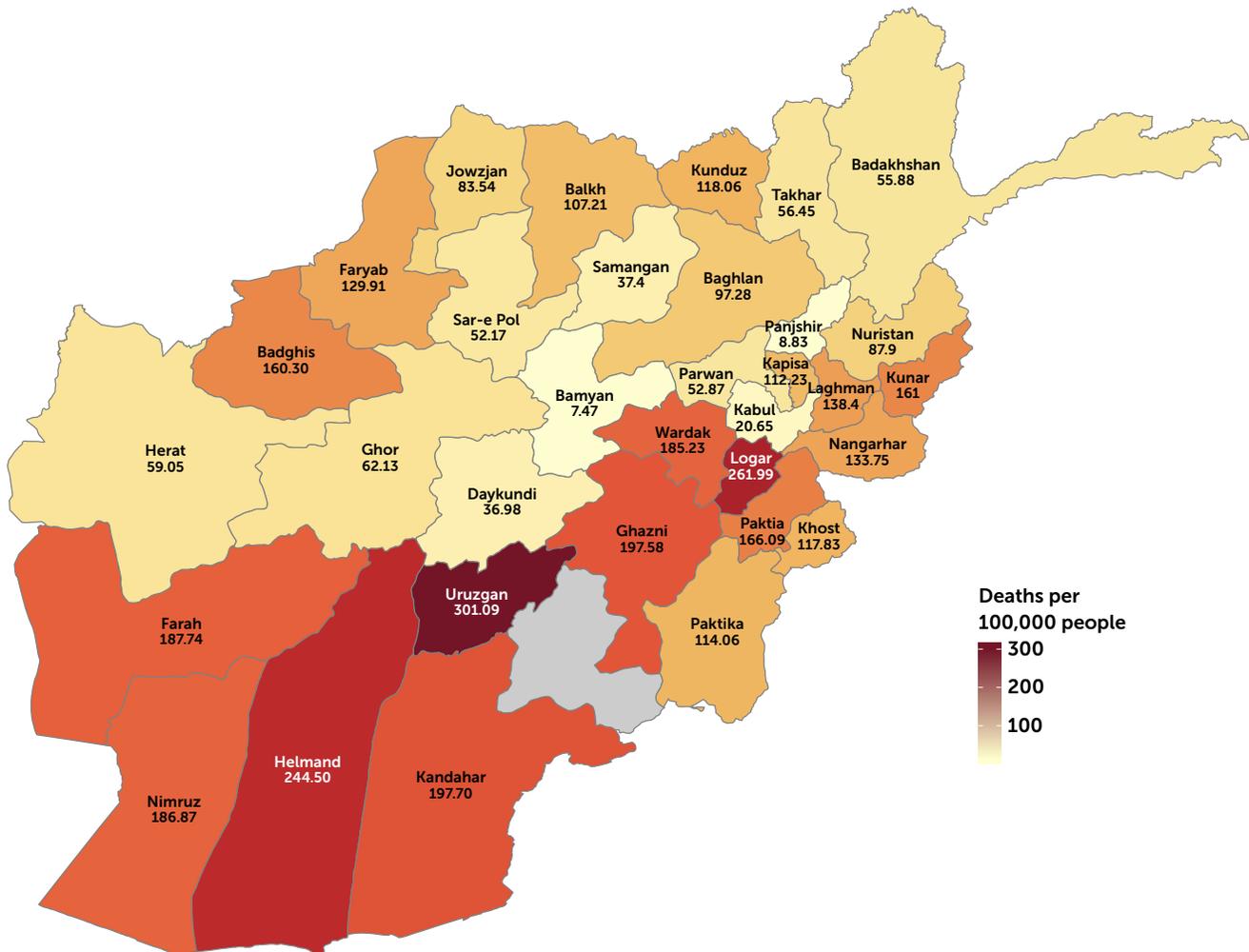
*Afghan conflict concentrated in the south and southeast*

*Organized violence and intimate partner violence*

The ongoing conflict in Afghanistan has been among the world’s deadliest. Organized violence was high across the country, with the worst-affected provinces clustered in the south and southeast (figure 3.7). And attacks by the Taliban, sectarian and ethnic violence, and criminal violence associated with the war and drug economy were frequent.

*Return of Taliban threatens to unravel progress*

The return of the Taliban is widely expected to further unravel progress Afghan women have made and worsen the situation for women around the country. In mid-2021, there were already signs of oppression, as the Taliban reportedly sent

**FIGURE 3.7 Highest rates of organized violence in Afghanistan concentrated in the southeast**

Note: See the online appendix for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.  
Source: ACLED 2021.

home women professors and students in Herat<sup>264</sup> and were forcibly marrying women to Taliban soldiers.<sup>265</sup> A Taliban spokesman has warned that, for their own safety, women should not go to work.<sup>266</sup>

Many are calling on the United States and allies to evacuate Afghan women activists, support relocation efforts, and expedite refugee visas for those displaced.<sup>267</sup> Organizations like the International Rescue Committee are working to provide Afghan women and girls access to education and critical healthcare.<sup>268</sup>

High rates of violence in the home compounded the security threats facing women. Nationwide, 35 percent of Afghan women experienced intimate partner violence in the past year, and rates exceeded 84 percent in Ghor, Herat, and Wardak provinces—higher than those in any country in the global WPS Index. Gender-based violence reportedly increased during the pandemic, as did women’s suicides and attempted suicides.<sup>269</sup>

### High risks of violence in the home

### Uneven access to education

#### Limited opportunities for Afghan women in education and employment

The results revealed especially large provincial disparities in women’s access to education and paid employment. Despite the Taliban’s ban, girls’ education was

*Conflict and gender norms limit women's opportunities*

a priority for the government and its international supporters. In 2015, 1 girl in 4 attended secondary education—marking gains since 2001—but the vast majority of girls were still excluded. Girls' access to schooling ranged from 45 percent in Daykundi to a mere 2 percent in Paktika, with the lowest rates concentrated in the southeast. There were also major gender gaps: for example, about 6 boys in 10 were in secondary school in Khost, but only 1 girl in 10. With the Taliban back in power, girls' education is under severe threat.<sup>270</sup>

Few Afghan women were in paid employment, due to both ongoing conflict<sup>271</sup> and adverse norms. Female employment rates were under 10 percent in the insecure provinces in the southeast but around 20 percent in the relatively stable provinces of Faryab, Jowzjan, Nuristan, Samangan, and Sar-e Pol. Cultural norms emphasizing women's domestic and caregiver roles limit women's opportunities outside the home,<sup>272</sup> not only in rural areas but also in Kabul, where only about 1 woman in 17 was in paid employment. If Kabul were a country, it would rank second worst on this indicator worldwide, above only Yemen.

*Parliamentary representation quota of 27 percent*

The post-2001 political order set an ambitious agenda for women's political participation, introducing a 27 percent quota for women's parliamentary representation—the highest in South Asia.<sup>273</sup> Although that quota was met nationally, women's representation was highly uneven across provinces. Kabul led with 43 percent female parliamentary representation, but 25 provinces did not meet their target, which was lowered from 25 to 20 percent in 2013—a setback for women's rights.<sup>274</sup> And although women's formal representation rose, it is unclear whether women's substantive influence actually increased.<sup>275</sup> Again, the prospects for women's representation in government and decision making are under severe threat.

*Some Afghan laws protect women's rights*

The Afghan government, with international support, developed comprehensive legal frameworks for securing women's rights, political participation, and inclusion in the peace process. Progress included securing women's rights in the constitution (2004), enacting the Law on Elimination of Violence against Women (2009), and launching the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security in 2015. Yet, only 10 percent of participants in peace processes were women, and they were not included in 61 of 76 talks between 2005 and 2020.<sup>276</sup>

*Challenges to implementing legal protections*

The national government faced significant challenges in implementing the National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, including insecurity, budget and capacity constraints, and lack of interagency coordination.<sup>277</sup> The donor community was expected to fund implementation, but it is unclear how much support materialized.<sup>278</sup> The future of the National Action Plan is in serious doubt.

*Unprecedented threats to women's inclusion, justice, and security*

With the Taliban gaining control of the country in August 2021, the future of women's rights is in severe jeopardy in a setting where discrimination and violence against women is already pervasive, especially in the southeastern provinces. Girls' access to school, now ensured around much of the world, even in the poorest countries, was denied to most Afghan girls under the previous Taliban regime. As Afghanistan continues to attract attention on the global stage, a special focus on the women and girls living in provinces that have been left behind will be critical. Our results—though not capturing trends over time or demonstrating what would have happened without these reforms—suggest that Afghanistan has far to go to protect the basic rights of women across the country.

*Deterioration in inclusion in Pakistan*

**Consistently low rates of women's inclusion across Pakistan's provinces**

In 2021, Pakistan again scored poorly on the WPS Index, ranking 167 of 170 countries, behind Iraq and South Sudan. Between 2017 and 2021, Pakistan regressed on two measures of inclusion—women's mean years of schooling and rates of paid employment. Pakistan's ranking on the WPS Index is 42 places below its ranking on GDP per capita.

*Limited enforcement of legal protections*

Pakistan has adopted several key international commitments to women's rights, including the Beijing Platform for Action, the 1996 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Federal and provincial governments have gradually legislated legal reforms, most notably the Women's Protection Bill (2006) and the 2016 Criminal Law Act outlawing rape. While those steps are important, implementation remains weak, and Pakistani women's rights advocates face continuing opposition from political and religious forces.<sup>279</sup>

*Multiple forms of inequality*

Pakistan has achieved major reductions in poverty over the past 20 years, but stark inequality persists both within and across its four federal provinces.<sup>280</sup> In all provinces, there are huge gaps between the political elite and ordinary citizens, between urban and rural populations, between rich and poor, and between women and men.

*Progress in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan hindered by conflict*

Large economic disparities characterize Pakistan.<sup>281</sup> Punjab, with 110 million people, and Sindh, with 48 million, are the main drivers of Pakistan's economy, with the country's largest cities and the main areas of agricultural activity. Balochistan, with 12 million people, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), with 31 million, are less prosperous and tend to receive less federal fiscal support.<sup>282</sup> Balochistan and KPK have also experienced protracted conflicts, political violence, and military operations, which have limited economic and social development. While KPK's economic situation has improved since 2012, Balochistan, the largest province in size and the smallest in population, lags behind the rest of the country in human development.<sup>283</sup>

*Performance on the provincial index mirrors income and poverty levels*

Provincial index scores ranged widely across Pakistan, from .734 for Punjab to .194 for Balochistan (figure 3.8). The rankings on the provincial WPS Index mirror those for income and poverty. Punjab was the best-off, with the lowest reported rate of income poverty—32 percent—while Balochistan's poverty rate approached 60 percent.<sup>284</sup>

*Low employment and cellphone use*

Performance on inclusion was alarmingly low across Pakistan's provinces. Rates of female employment hovered around 10 percent in Balochistan, KPK, and Sindh, which would rank those provinces with the world's bottom four countries on the global WPS Index. Agriculture was the country's largest source of employment, but women in agriculture were more likely than men to be unpaid family workers and unprotected by labor laws in any province but Sindh.<sup>285</sup> Only 16 percent of women in Balochistan had a cellphone, 11 percentage points lower than women in South Sudan, the country with the world's lowest women's cellphone use rate.

*Little access to schools*

On average, girls had much less access to education in Pakistan than boys—mean years of schooling was 3.9 for women and 6.4 for men. Only in Punjab did even half of women (52 percent) complete at least primary school, and rates were as low as 19 percent in Balochistan and 30 percent in KPK.<sup>286</sup> In all provinces, 10 percent or less of women have completed secondary school.

*17 percent quota for women's parliamentary representation*

Although women have been active in Pakistani politics since independence, their formal parliamentary representation remains limited. Almost two decades ago, President Pervez Musharraf introduced a 17 percent quota for women in national and provincial assemblies. Current women's parliamentary representation in provincial assemblies ranges between 17 and 20 percent, just meeting the modest quota.

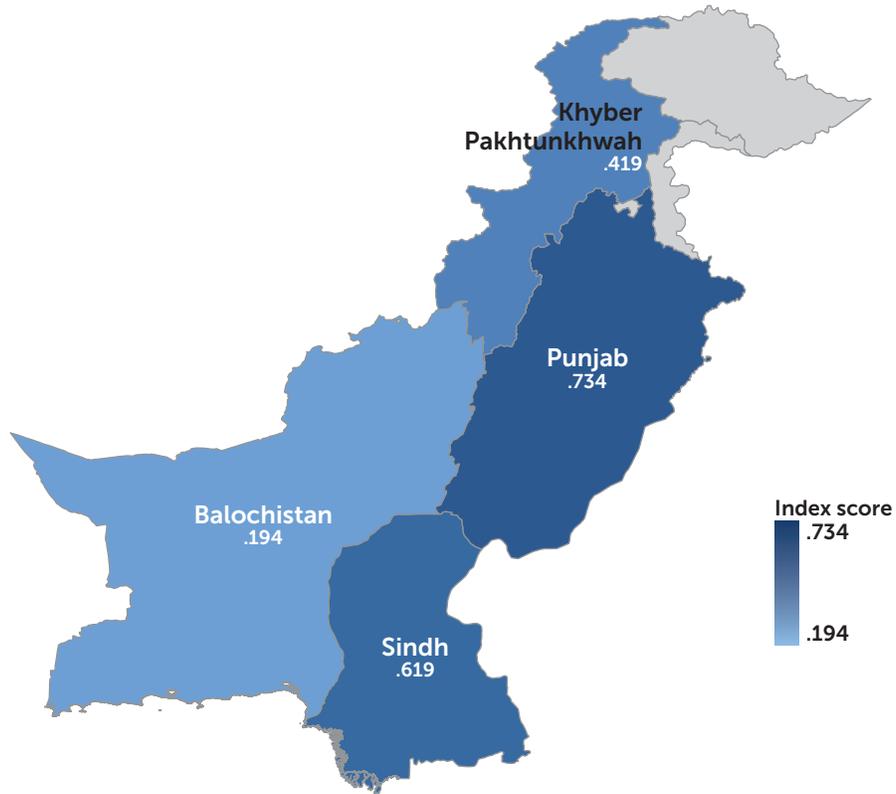
*High rates of intimate partner violence and organized violence tend to coincide*

As elsewhere in the world, two key aspects of women's security—organized violence and current intimate partner violence—are closely related across Pakistan. Women in the provinces with the highest rates of organized violence also face the highest rates of current intimate partner violence, underlining the amplified risks of violence at home in the vicinity of conflict (figures 3.9a and 3.9b). Balochistan had the highest rates of both—organized violence was at 14 deaths per 100,000, and 35 percent of women had experienced intimate partner violence in the past year.

*Better outcomes in urban areas*

Pakistan's provinces are large. Provincial averages conceal considerable diversity, especially between better-off urban areas and more remote areas. Pakistan has the highest urbanization rate in South Asia, estimated in 2017 at 36 percent and

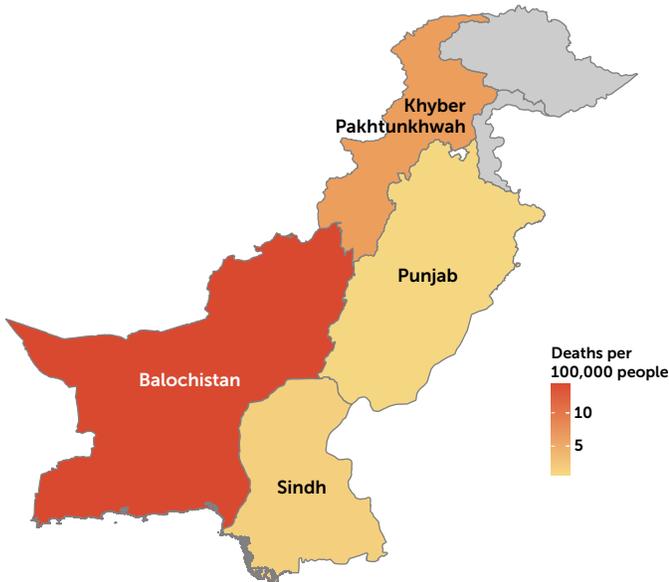
**FIGURE 3.8** Bottom-ranked province in Pakistan scores almost four times worse than the highest-scoring province



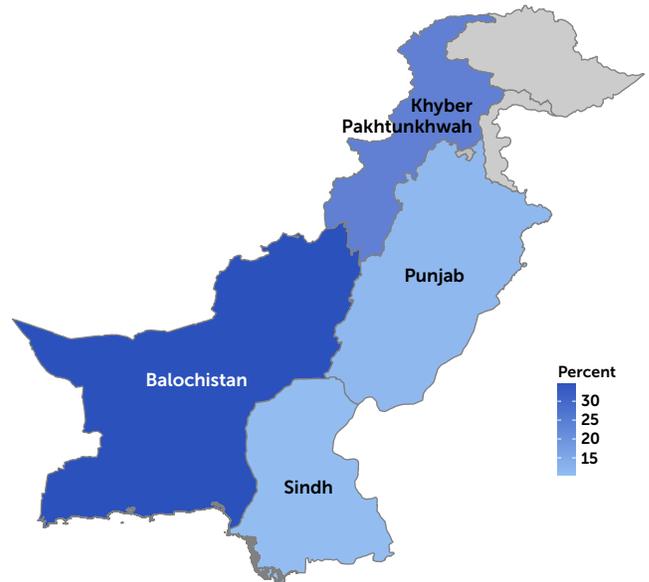
Note: See the online appendix for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.  
Source: Authors' estimates.

**FIGURE 3.9** Rates of violence across Pakistan's provinces

**a. Organized violence**



**b. Current intimate partner violence**



Note: See the online appendix for data sources, detailed scores, and date ranges.  
Source: ACLED 2021, DHS 2015, and DHS 2018.

expected to increase to 50 percent by 2025. Sindh is more than 52 percent urban.<sup>287</sup> In Pakistan, as elsewhere, urban areas tend to be more prosperous economically, with better access to education and health services.<sup>288</sup> But inequality is also high in urban areas,<sup>289</sup> contributing to grievance and conflict.<sup>290</sup> Inequality in urban centers is most pronounced in levels of income and education.<sup>291</sup>

### *Provincial profiles*

#### *Punjab scores highest*

Punjab emerged as Pakistan's highest-scoring province, with a provincial WPS Index score comparable to Brazil's score on the global WPS Index. Punjab scored above the national average on inclusion, justice, and security, traceable in part to high rates of urbanization. The province had the fewest deaths due to organized violence, around a quarter of the national average, but was still marked by political violence, including riots, protests, and attacks by militant groups.<sup>292</sup> Punjab had a largely agrarian economy with economic stagnation in more rural areas along with high, and worsening, income inequality traced to urbanization.<sup>293</sup>

#### *Better levels of financial inclusion and decision making in Sindh*

Sindh performed around the national average on women's education and discriminatory norms, but below average on employment, intimate partner violence, and organized violence. Sindh had the highest levels nationally of women's financial inclusion, at 25 percent, and participation in household decision making, at 46 percent. But urban–rural differences were stark, with 15 percent of urban women completing secondary education, compared with only 2 percent of rural women.<sup>294</sup>

#### *But stark urban inequalities*

Urban inequalities are also prevalent in Sindh. Karachi, Pakistan's largest city and financial capital, hosts some of South Asia's largest slums and informal settlements.<sup>295</sup> Despite substantial income from wages and salaries and from property,<sup>296</sup> Karachi has experienced recurrent waves of ethnopolitical, sectarian, and militant violence.<sup>297</sup>

#### *Balochistan scores worst*

KPK and Balochistan scored poorly on virtually all the indicators in our provincial WPS Index. In KPK, women's employment stood at 12 percent, financial inclusion at 17 percent, cellphone use at 37 percent, and participation in domestic decision making at 19 percent. Balochistan, bottom ranked of the provinces, experienced extensive deficits in women's social and economic inclusion: women's employment was a meager 8 percent, financial inclusion was 13 percent, and cellphone use was 16 percent. Balochistan also scored poorly on women's participation in decision making (10 percent) and had a high level of son bias—approximately 111 boys were born for every 100 girls, similar to the world's three highest country rates (Azerbaijan, China, and Viet Nam). Only 5 percent of girls in KPK and 4 percent in Balochistan completed secondary education.

### *Provincial variations in threats of violence at home and at large*

#### *Worst rates of intimate partner violence in Balochistan and KPK*

Balochistan and KPK had the highest rates of intimate partner violence in Pakistan—Balochistan at 35 percent and KPK at 24 percent. Women's rights groups report that gender-based violence increased during the pandemic, when women were forced to stay at home.<sup>298</sup> Human rights groups report more than 1,000 "honor killings" of women annually.<sup>299</sup> The two provinces are also marked by protracted conflict, causing high levels of civilian casualties and displacement.<sup>300</sup> Balochistan has suffered from inadequate numbers of qualified teachers and deficient public transportation, severely limiting access to public services such as healthcare.<sup>301</sup>

#### *Threats of violence in special regions*

Even more stark is the violence faced by women in some of Pakistan's federally administered territories and so-called special regions,<sup>302</sup> which are not official provinces. It has been reported that in those regions, 56 percent of girls experience gender-based physical violence by the age of 15.<sup>303</sup> More than 95 percent of women in those regions believe that their husbands are justified in beating them during domestic disagreements or as punishment.<sup>304</sup>

*Punjab and Panjshir were the best performers*

*Afghanistan and Pakistan show that conflict is a major barrier to women's progress*

*Best performers in northeastern states*

*Women not equally protected by the law*

*New metric for legal discrimination covers gun violence, reproductive healthcare, and economic opportunities*

### *Poor performance regionally and globally in Afghanistan and Pakistan*

The provincial WPS Index results underline the immense challenges facing women's inclusion, justice, and security in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. On financial inclusion and cellphone ownership, all four provinces in Pakistan scored below the regional average for South Asia. While the overall situation is among the world's worst, the situation for women living in rural areas in Balochistan and KPK was even more difficult. If ranked as countries on the global index, those provinces would be among the bottom four worldwide. Punjab, however, did much better than the other three provinces, scoring similarly to Brazil, which ranks 80 on the global index. In Afghanistan, the highest ranking province of Panjshir achieved a provincial WPS Index score comparable to national performance in Bhutan and Nigeria, scoring nearly four times higher than the lowest-ranking province of Uruzgan, whose score is far below that of any country in the world.

Provincial results for Afghanistan and Pakistan show the multidimensional repercussions of protracted conflict, instability, and economic inequality for the status of women. Those results were revealed in outcomes in the home and in the broader society and economy. Greater investments in social and economic infrastructure to support women and girls, including in education and reproductive healthcare, emerge as key priorities.<sup>305</sup>

### *The best and worst states for women in the United States*

At the state level, the United States revealed vast disparities in women's inclusion, justice, and security. Mirroring the global WPS Index, the US subnational WPS Index is structured around those three dimensions but uses several distinct indicators to better reflect the situation of American women, including the share of women working while poor, the share of women with a college degree, access to reproductive healthcare, maternal mortality, gun deaths, and healthcare affordability (figure 3.10).

### *High variation in state index performance*

State performance varied greatly, with top-ranking Massachusetts scoring more than four times better than bottom-ranking Louisiana. We found clear regional patterns in performance (figure 3.11), with all 6 states in the northeast scoring among the 10 best nationally, while all 5 of the worst performing states were in the southeast. New Hampshire was the only state that scored in the top two quintiles for all 12 indicators, while Alabama, Arkansas, and Louisiana scored in the bottom two quintiles across the board.

Our analysis revealed key achievements and major deficits behind the striking variation in state performance. Differences were largest for access to reproductive healthcare and legal protection. In Wyoming, fewer than 1 woman in 20 lived in a county with an abortion provider, compared with 19 in 20 women in California, Connecticut, and Hawaii and all women in the District of Columbia. Women in the United States did not benefit from the same legal protections as men, with the state in which a woman lived determining her ability to file a workplace sexual harassment claim, her level of protection from an abusive partner, and her ability to take paid time off for caregiving.

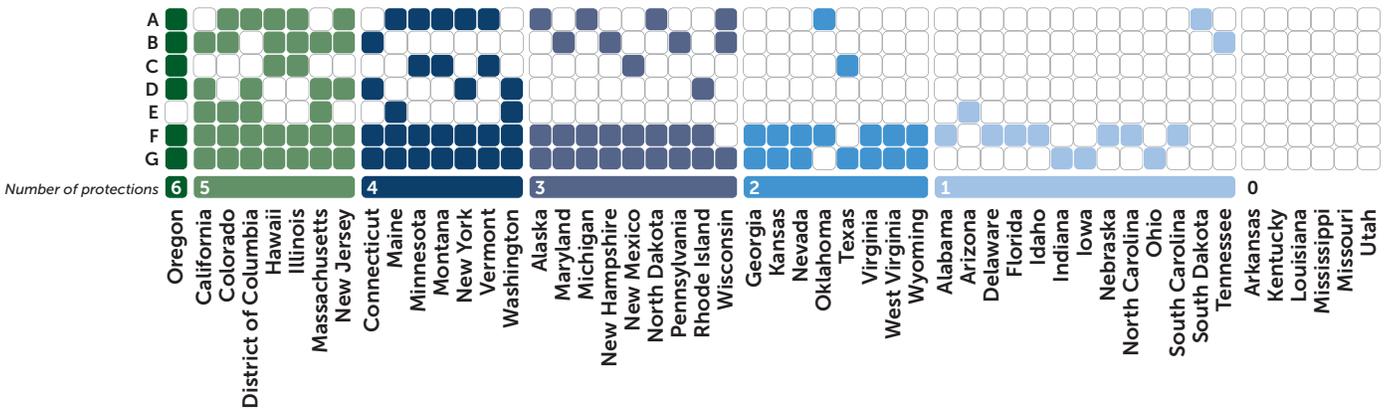
In the absence of an established metric for state-level legal protections for women, we created a new measure based on seven key questions (figure 3.12). States scored 1 for each question if a state law is in place, and 0 otherwise, for a total possible score of 7. Oregon scored highest with 6. Six states—Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Utah—scored 0. In those six, abusers placed under domestic violence protective orders were not required to relinquish their firearms, in-person counseling was mandatory for women to have an abortion, and the minimum wage



**FIGURE 3.12 No state offers full legal protections of women’s rights—some offer none**

Does state law:

- A. Protect workers from sexual harassment, regardless of company size?
- B. Require the relinquishment of firearms from abusers subject to domestic violence protective orders?
- C. Guarantee unemployment benefits to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking?
- D. Mandate paid parental leave?
- E. Set minimum wage above the low-income threshold of \$12/hour?
- F. Allow abortion without state-mandated in-person counseling?
- G. Ratify the Equal Rights Amendment?



Source: GIWPS 2020.

was below the low-income threshold of \$12 an hour. Only 9 states had mandated paid parental leave, and 16 states had not ratified the Equal Rights Amendment.

*Glaring racial injustice*

The US state WPS Index also examined racial disparities to highlight the intersection of gender and racial injustice. Major racial disparities affected the status of women in many states—and white women typically did best. Racial gaps were most marked for college degree attainment, representation in the state legislature, and maternal mortality. On average, 38 percent of white women had completed college, almost double the rate of Native American women, and in 26 states, no Hispanic women were represented in the state legislature. Large disparities also marked maternal mortality, with Black women experiencing higher rates than white women in all states with data—in New Jersey, the maternal mortality rate was 132 deaths per 100,000 live births among Black women, almost four times the rate among white women (35; figure 3.13).

*American views on gender*

A nationally representative survey conducted for GIWPS by YouGov and PerryUdem in August 2020 explored American views on women’s status and opportunities in the United States. The results yielded some good news, with almost two-thirds of American adults agreeing that there is more work to be done to achieve gender equality nationally. Similarly, strong majorities recognized that equality involves equal pay, livable-wage jobs, parental leave, and access to childcare and affordable healthcare, and four in five adults believed that it is important for elected officials to work on issues of gender equality.

Almost two-thirds (65 percent) of those surveyed believed that the country would be better off with more women in political office, though views varied greatly by race, gender, and political party affiliation (figure 3.14).

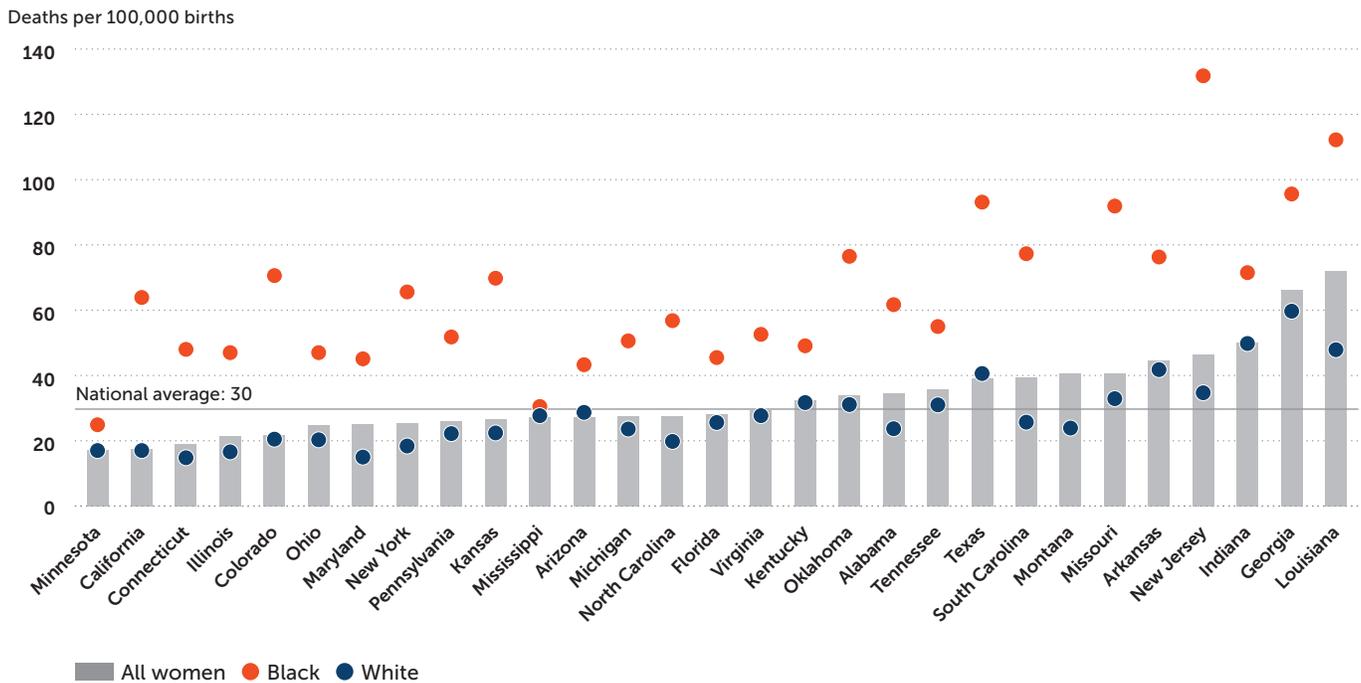
Our first-ever examination of women’s status in inclusion, justice, and security across the 50 states and the District of Columbia exposed great unevenness. Given

*Marked racial gaps in college completion, political representation, and maternal mortality*

*Most Americans agree more is needed to achieve gender equality*

*But views on gender vary by race, gender, and political party affiliation*

*Racial and class injustice compound gender inequality*

**FIGURE 3.13 Rates of maternal mortality were higher for Black women across all states, 2018**

Note: Not all states are shown because of data constraints.  
Source: GIWPS 2020.

that gender inequalities are compounded by racial and class injustice, efforts to advance gender equality in the United States, especially in the wake of the COVID pandemic, demand an intersectional approach that safeguards rights and opportunities for all women. The US WPS Index also highlights the importance of measuring and addressing gender inequalities behind national borders.

### Emerging conclusions and policy implications

Our innovative applications of the WPS Index shine new light on the glaring disparities in women's inclusion, justice, and security that national averages conceal. We found that displacement and geographic location can compound gender inequality and present added disadvantages for women. These findings underline the importance of intersectional policy making that is responsive to the ways different identities and living situations interact to shape the needs of women.

Results from the forcibly displaced index show that displaced women typically face additional challenges, while the nature of disadvantage varies across countries. This points to the need for gender-responsive and context-specific solutions to displacement-related crises. This was recognized by the recent United Nations High Level Panel on Internal Displacement, which recommended a whole-of-government approach to addressing displacement, with clear mechanisms to coordinate actions across agencies.<sup>306</sup> Our findings also endorse the call in the recent International Rescue Committee/Overseas Development Institute report, which underlines the importance of involving local women's rights organizations—given their superior awareness of women's needs on the ground—in policy making and national response efforts.<sup>307</sup>

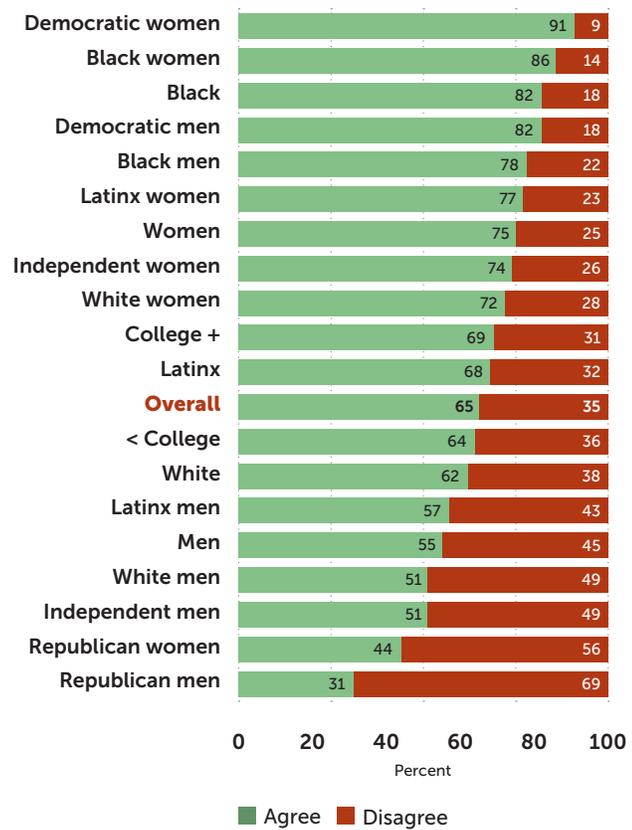
Findings from the forcibly displaced index also underscore the importance of interventions that promote the safety, as well as the social and economic inclusion, of displaced women and strong legal protections as entry points in protecting their

*Women's status varies by displacement status and geographic location*

*Need a comprehensive approach, engaging women's groups*

*Policies on forcible displacement need to promote safety and economic inclusion*

**FIGURE 3.14 Views differed on whether the United States would be better off with more women in political office**



Source: GIWPS 2020.

rights.<sup>308</sup> An integrated response needs to be informed by an understanding of the challenges encountered by displaced women. We find that such responses will often need to address barriers to financial services and formal employment, restrictions on movement, and social stigma surrounding displacement. Education emerged as a strong determinant of employment prospects for both displaced and host community women, underlining the need for investments in schooling.<sup>309</sup>

Provincial WPS Index results for Afghanistan and Pakistan capture the devastating consequences for women of conflict and organized violence. The index also reflects long-term structural inequalities and adverse norms that limit women’s opportunities and status. Reforms are needed to redress disparities, alongside measures to increase participation of women at negotiating tables and gender-sensitive approaches to peacebuilding and long-term stabilization.

Our innovative analyses were made possible by existing data, but also reveal the need for better high-quality, updated, sex-disaggregated data covering displaced groups, representative at the provincial and state level and inclusive of different racial and ethnic groups. We know that women’s status and opportunities are shaped along these lines, among others, and that improved data are needed to identify gaps and inform targeted and effective interventions.

The new indices illustrate the diverse challenges and needs facing women within national borders. They also underscore the importance of multidimensional measures of women’s status and opportunities. The massive challenges created by the pandemic mean that intersectional analysis and policy making are more important than ever as governments and communities strive to build back better.

*The gendered impacts of conflict are critical in Afghanistan and Pakistan*

*Better data needed to inform and track policies*

*Multidimensional indices help capture complex challenges*



# Statistical table and appendixes

**STATISTICAL TABLE 1** Country performance and ranking on the Women's Peace and Security Index and indicators

WPS Index rank	Country and group	WPS Index score	INCLUSION					JUSTICE			SECURITY		
			Education (years)	Financial inclusion (%)	Employment (%)	Cellphone use <sup>a</sup> (%)	Parliamentary representation (%)	Absence of legal discrimination (aggregate score)	Son bias (male to female ratio at birth)	Discriminatory norms (%)	Intimate partner violence (%)	Perception of community safety <sup>a</sup> (%)	Organized violence (battle deaths per 100,000 people)
<b>TOP QUINTILE</b>													
1	Norway	.922	13.0	100.0	58.9	99.0	45.6	96.9	1.06	0	4	89.5	0.0
2	Finland	.909	12.9	99.6	52.7	100.0	46.0	97.5	1.05	1	8	80.9	0.0
3	Iceland	.907	12.6	92.4 <sup>b</sup>	64.2	99.6	39.7	100.0	1.05	0	3	72.6	0.0
4	Denmark	.903	13.1	100.0	54.0	100.0	39.7	100.0	1.06	2	3	79.1	0.0
5	Luxembourg	.899	12.0	98.2	54.9	99.4 <sup>c</sup>	31.7	100.0	1.05	2	4	85.6 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
6	Switzerland	.898	12.7	98.9	58.8	93.6	39.0	85.6	1.05	2	2	81.9	0.0
7	Sweden	.895	12.7	100.0	57.3	98.5	47.0	100.0	1.06	1	6	68.9	0.0
8	Austria	.891	12.2	98.4	51.7	97.5	40.6	96.9	1.06	7	4	84.9	0.0
9	United Kingdom	.888	13.2	96.1	56.3	94.2	30.6	97.5	1.05	2	4	77.3	0.0
10	Netherlands	.885	12.1	99.8	54.8	94.9	35.1	97.5	1.05	2	5	73.7	0.0
11	Germany	.880	13.9	99.2	53.7	95.3	31.9	97.5	1.06	3	3.0 <sup>d</sup>	72.4	0.0
12	Canada	.879	13.4	99.9	53.5	90.6	33.9	100.0	1.06	0	3	68.8	0.0
13	New Zealand	.873	12.7	99.3	62.7	90.6	48.3	97.5	1.06	3	4	50.3	0.0
14	Spain	.872	10.0	91.6	44.3	98.9	42.6	97.5	1.06	1	3	75.1	0.0
15	France	.870	11.2	91.3	48.3	92.2	37.7	100.0	1.05	2	5	70.5	0.0
15	Singapore	.870	11.3	96.3	61.3	96.8 <sup>c</sup>	29.5	82.5	1.07	2	2	96.9 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
15	Slovenia	.870	12.7	96.9	51.9	98.8	21.5	96.9	1.06	4	3	84.9	0.0
18	Portugal	.868	9.2	90.6	52.1	96.8	40.0	100.0	1.06	4	4	77.7	0.0
19	Ireland	.867	12.9	95.3	54.1	97.7	27.3	100.0	1.06	3	3	69.9	0.0
20	Estonia	.863	13.6	98.4	54.6	100.0	27.7	97.5	1.07	2	4	71.0	0.0
21	United States	.861	13.5	92.7	52.0	94.0	26.8	91.3	1.05	1	6	70.6	0.0
22	Belgium	.859	11.9	98.8	48.7	96.4	42.9	100.0	1.05	3	5	44.4	0.0
23	Latvia	.858	13.5	92.5	54.2	100.0	29.0	100.0	1.06	7	6	66.4	0.0
24	Australia	.856	12.8	99.2	55.2	89.3	37.9	96.9	1.06	1	3	49.8	0.0
24	United Arab Emirates	.856	11.9	76.4	50.6	100.0	50.0	82.5	1.05	18	17.9 <sup>e</sup>	98.5	0.0
26	Croatia	.848	11.1	82.7	44.3	98.1	31.1	93.8	1.06	6	4	81.1	0.0
27	Israel	.844	13.0	93.7	58.3	96.3	26.7	80.6	1.05	14	6	74.8	0.7
28	Italy	.842	10.2	91.6	38.0	98.2	35.3	97.5	1.06	1	4	64.2	0.0
29	Poland	.840	12.5	88.0	48.7	97.6	27.6	93.8	1.06	8	3	65.6	0.0
30	Lithuania	.833	13.3	81.0	55.2	100.0	27.7	93.8	1.06	6	5	56.0	0.0
31	Czech Republic	.830	12.6	78.6	53.2	99.8	20.6	93.8	1.06	8	4	69.2	0.0
32	Hong Kong, SAR China	.829	11.8	94.7	50.3	94.6	17.1 <sup>f</sup>	89.0	1.07	1	3	77.5	0.0 <sup>b</sup>
33	South Korea	.827	11.4	94.7	54.6	99.8	19.0	85.0	1.06	6	8	76.2	0.0
34	Serbia	.826	10.8	70.1	46.5	97.0	39.2	93.8	1.07	4	4	66.0	0.0
<b>SECOND QUINTILE</b>													
35	Japan	.823	13.1	98.1	52.5	90.6	14.4	81.9	1.06	5	4	70.9	0.0
36	Cyprus	.820	12.2	90.0	56.7	95.8	21.4	91.3	1.07	5	3	59.9	0.0
37	Malta	.815	11.6	97.0	46.2	98.2	13.4	88.8	1.06	11	4	70.9	0.0
38	Belarus	.814	12.2	81.3	56.1	90.1 <sup>c</sup>	34.7	75.6	1.06	11	6	63.9 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
39	Slovakia	.811	12.7	83.1	52.1	98.2	22.7	85.0	1.05	26	6	66.8	0.0
40	Georgia	.808	13.2	63.6	53.7	99.8	20.7	85.6	1.06	17	3	70.7	0.0
41	Bulgaria	.804	11.3	73.6	48.7	99.0	27.1	90.6	1.06	8	6	56.5	0.0
42	Montenegro	.803	10.9	67.6	40.8	98.9	24.7	88.1	1.07	6	4	77.8	0.0
43	Jamaica	.800	10.2	77.8	59.9	93.2	31.0	68.1	1.05	9	7	60.2	0.0
44	North Macedonia	.798	9.4	72.9	36.3	97.9	39.2	85.0	1.06	13	4	58.4	0.0

WPS Index rank	Country and group	WPS Index score	INCLUSION					JUSTICE			SECURITY		
			Education (years)	Financial inclusion (%)	Employment (%)	Cellphone use <sup>a</sup> (%)	Parliamentary representation (%)	Absence of legal discrimination (aggregate score)	Son bias (male to female ratio at birth)	Discriminatory norms (%)	Intimate partner violence (%)	Perception of community safety <sup>a</sup> (%)	Organized violence (battle deaths per 100,000 people)
45	Greece	.792	10.3	84.5	37.1	99.1	21.7	97.5	1.07	10	5	61.2	0.0
46	Hungary	.790	11.7	72.2	49.0	97.1	12.6	96.9	1.06	12	6	63.2	0.0
47	Costa Rica	.781	8.8	60.9	42.1	88.2 <sup>c</sup>	45.6	83.1	1.05	8	7	42.0 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
48	Uruguay	.776	9.2	60.6	48.6	95.8	26.2	88.8	1.05	4	4	39.7	0.0
49	Argentina	.774	11.1	50.8	45.1	96.5	42.0	76.3	1.04	10	4	39.9	0.0
49	Bolivia	.774	8.3	53.9	61.3	93.7	48.2	88.8	1.05	12	18	45.4	0.0
49	Ecuador	.774	8.7	42.6	52.7	96.8	39.4	89.4	1.05	7	8	40.5	0.0
52	Trinidad and Tobago	.771	11.1	73.6	46.8	92.1 <sup>g</sup>	32.4	75.0	1.04	9	8	45.0 <sup>g</sup>	0.0
53	Russian Federation	.770	11.9	76.1	54.3	96.8	16.1	73.1	1.06	7	6.0 <sup>d</sup>	49.2	0.0
54	Mongolia	.769	10.7	95.0	60.4	100.0	17.3	82.5	1.03	8	12	46.4	0.0
55	Romania	.765	11.9	53.6	46.7	90.7 <sup>c</sup>	18.5	90.6	1.06	6	7	52.5 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
56	Bosnia and Herzegovina	.764	8.9	54.7	30.8	98.2	24.6	85.0	1.06	5	3	60.2	0.0
56	Guyana	.764	8.9	59.3 <sup>b</sup>	35.7	92.3 <sup>b</sup>	35.7	86.9	1.05	13.8 <sup>b</sup>	10	51.0 <sup>b</sup>	0.0
58	Albania	.762	9.7	38.1	51.1	100.0	29.5	91.3	1.08	6	6	61.5	0.0
59	Kazakhstan	.761	12.2	60.3	60.3	100.0	24.5	69.4	1.06	16	6	44.1	0.0
60	Turkmenistan	.760	9.8 <sup>b</sup>	35.5	46.6	94.9 <sup>b</sup>	25.0	76.8 <sup>b</sup>	1.05	34	7.2 <sup>e</sup>	92.6 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
61	Philippines	.758	9.6	38.9	49.2	93.9	28.1	78.8	1.06	16	6	69.8	0.3
62	Chile	.757	10.5	71.3	45.3	94.4	23.2	80.0	1.04	6	6	38.2	0.0
63	Nicaragua	.756	7.2	24.8	52.2	73.4 <sup>c</sup>	48.4	86.3	1.05	15	6	55.2 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
64	Mauritius	.750	9.4	87.1	42.0	83.5	20.0	91.9	1.04	7	18.4 <sup>d</sup>	55.4	0.0
64	Moldova	.750	11.8	44.6	37.6	100.0	24.8	84.4	1.06	10	9	49.1	0.0
66	Rwanda	.748	3.9	45.0	88.2	46.7 <sup>c</sup>	55.7	80.6	1.03	6	23	79.0 <sup>c</sup>	0.1
66	South Africa	.748	10.0	70.0	38.0	99.8	45.3	88.1	1.03	19	13	32.8	0.0
66	Ukraine	.748	11.3	61.3	43.1	99.5	20.8	79.4	1.06	11	9	45.6	0.5
THIRD QUINTILE													
69	El Salvador	.747	6.5	24.4	41.2	96.0	33.3	88.8	1.05	8	6	58.4	0.0
69	Ghana	.747	6.6	53.7	70.2	98.6	14.6	75.0	1.05	7	10	56.5	0.0
71	Dominican Republic	.746	8.8	54.1	49.4	95.7	25.7	86.3	1.05	9	10	37.3	0.0
71	Venezuela	.746	10.6	70.0	39.7	92.0	22.2	85.0	1.05	6	8	27.4	0.0
73	Thailand	.744	8.2	79.8	62.3	100.0	13.9	78.1	1.06	22	9	50.3	0.1
74	Lao PDR	.741	4.9	31.9	81.0	99.8	27.5	88.1	1.05	24.1 <sup>b</sup>	8	46.7	0.0
74	Uzbekistan	.741	11.6	36.0	48.7	76.5 <sup>c</sup>	28.7	70.6	1.06	32	7.3 <sup>e</sup>	85.7 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
76	Tanzania	.739	5.8	42.2	83.3	99.6	36.7	81.3	1.03	15	24	67.1	0.0
77	Barbados	.737	11.0	70.4 <sup>b</sup>	54.3	92.2 <sup>b</sup>	29.4	76.9	1.04	6.3 <sup>b</sup>	27.0 <sup>d</sup>	52.6 <sup>b</sup>	0.0
77	Kosovo <sup>h</sup>	.737	8.1 <sup>b</sup>	43.7	13.4 <sup>i</sup>	100.0	36.7 <sup>j</sup>	92.0	1.08 <sup>k</sup>	9	5	65.8	2.9 <sup>b</sup>
77	Paraguay	.737	8.6	46.0	58.2	84.9 <sup>c</sup>	16.0	94.4	1.05	14	6	43.0 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
80	Brazil	.734	8.2	67.5	44.7	96.3	14.8	85.0	1.05	6	6	31.5	0.9
80	Fiji	.734	11.0	67.0 <sup>b</sup>	39.6	87.6 <sup>g</sup>	21.6	82.5	1.06	19.8 <sup>b</sup>	23	72.4 <sup>b</sup>	0.0
80	Suriname	.734	9.4	59.3 <sup>b</sup>	37.0	87.5 <sup>g</sup>	29.4	73.8	1.07	13.8 <sup>b</sup>	8	58.6 <sup>g</sup>	0.0
83	Panama	.733	11.2	42.3	50.2	76.7 <sup>c</sup>	22.5	79.4	1.05	10	8	43.4 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
83	Peru	.733	9.2	34.4	56.5	78.3 <sup>c</sup>	26.2	95.0	1.05	7	11	39.4 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
85	Armenia	.727	11.2	40.9	33.8	94.5 <sup>c</sup>	22.7	82.5	1.10	17	5	87.3 <sup>c</sup>	0.2
85	Tajikistan	.727	10.8	42.1	30.2	99.0	23.4	78.8	1.07	29	14	86.8	0.0
85	Zimbabwe	.727	8.1	51.7	76.5	95.9	34.57	86.9	1.02	7	18	35.5	0.0
88	Mexico	.725	8.8	33.3	42.9	92.9	48.4	88.8	1.05	14	10	32.0	9.7
89	China	.722	7.7	76.4	59.6	100.0	24.9	75.6	1.12	19	8	84.8	0.0
90	Colombia	.721	8.7	42.5	45.6	93.8	19.6	81.9	1.05	6	12	44.2	0.3
90	Kenya	.721	6.0	77.7	82.6	99.8	23.2	80.6	1.03	19	23	48.3	0.3

WPS Index rank	Country and group	WPS Index score	INCLUSION					JUSTICE			SECURITY		
			Education (years)	Financial inclusion (%)	Employment (%)	Cellphone use <sup>a</sup> (%)	Parliamentary representation (%)	Absence of legal discrimination (aggregate score)	Son bias (male to female ratio at birth)	Discriminatory norms (%)	Intimate partner violence (%)	Perception of community safety <sup>a</sup> (%)	Organized violence (battle deaths per 100,000 people)
92	Belize	.720	9.9	52.3	47.9	92.3 <sup>b</sup>	19.6	79.4	1.03	13.8 <sup>b</sup>	8	45.4 <sup>g</sup>	0.0
93	Cambodia	.719	4.2	21.5	77.0	99.3	19.8	75.0	1.05	15	9	59.8	0.0
93	Tonga	.719	11.3	67.0 <sup>b</sup>	41.9	94.3 <sup>b</sup>	7.4	58.8	1.05	19.8 <sup>b</sup>	17	72.4 <sup>b</sup>	0.0
95	Namibia	.714	7.3	80.7	56.7	99.6	35.6	86.3	1.01	17.3 <sup>b</sup>	16	32.0	0.0
95	Nepal	.714	4.3	41.6	73.7	81.8 <sup>c</sup>	33.6	80.6	1.07	18	11	52.1 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
97	Bahrain	.713	10.4	75.4	45.7	99.8	18.8	55.6	1.04	22	18.1 <sup>e</sup>	58.5 <sup>g</sup>	0.0
97	Kyrgyzstan	.713	11.2	38.9	42.4	100.0	17.1	76.9	1.06	28	13	61.5	0.0
97	Qatar	.713	11.3	61.6	58.6	93.4 <sup>g</sup>	9.8	29.4	1.05	20.7 <sup>b</sup>	18.0 <sup>e</sup>	89.0 <sup>g</sup>	0.0
100	Indonesia	.707	7.8	51.4	55.2	71.2 <sup>c</sup>	21.0	64.4	1.05	37	9	75.3 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
100	Timor-Leste	.707	3.8	48.6 <sup>b</sup>	70.9	79.8 <sup>b</sup>	38.5	83.1	1.05	24.1 <sup>b</sup>	28	59.6 <sup>b</sup>	0.0
102	Saudi Arabia	.703	9.8	58.2	20.1	99.6	19.9	80.0	1.03	26	18.0 <sup>e</sup>	72.3	0.0
FOURTH QUINTILE													
103	Malaysia	.702	10.3	82.5	53.8	83.5 <sup>c</sup>	14.6	50.0	1.06	20	13.1 <sup>e</sup>	49.1 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
104	Honduras	.698	6.4	41.0	44.3	71.8 <sup>c</sup>	21.1	75.0	1.05	11	7	53.9 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
105	Sri Lanka	.697	11.1	73.4	33.8	77.5 <sup>c</sup>	5.4	65.6	1.04	31.0 <sup>b</sup>	4	61.2 <sup>c</sup>	0.4
106	Turkey	.693	7.5	54.3	28.5	98.2	17.3	82.5	1.05	16	12	37.0	0.5
107	Viet Nam	.692	8.0	30.4	74.0	91.9 <sup>c</sup>	26.7	81.9	1.11	18	10	61.6 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
108	Cabo Verde	.690	6.0	44.2 <sup>b</sup>	51.3	76.4 <sup>b</sup>	26.4	86.3	1.03	22.3 <sup>b</sup>	11	51.0 <sup>b</sup>	0.0
109	Uganda	.685	4.9	52.7	71.7	99.8	34.9	73.1	1.03	21	26	42.9	0.0
110	Oman	.675	10.6	63.5	38.0	90.9 <sup>b</sup>	9.9	36.0	1.05	20.7 <sup>b</sup>	18.1 <sup>e</sup>	63.5 <sup>b</sup>	0.0
111	Mozambique	.673	2.7	32.9	81.5	62.2 <sup>c</sup>	42.4	82.5	1.02	19.1 <sup>b</sup>	16	47.7 <sup>c</sup>	2.5
112	Maldives	.671	7.0	66.3 <sup>b</sup>	38.7	94.6 <sup>c</sup>	4.6	73.8	1.07	26.1 <sup>b</sup>	6	45.5 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
113	Ethiopia	.668	1.7	29.1	71.8	98.1	37.3	76.9	1.04	14	27	43.2	1.4
114	Benin	.667	2.4	28.6	77.9	91.1	8.4	77.5	1.04	14	15	58.9	0.0
115	Guatemala	.664	6.6	42.1	38.2	57.6 <sup>c</sup>	19.4	70.6	1.05	13	7	46.5 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
116	Zambia	.661	6.3	40.3	73.0	99.4	16.8	81.3	1.03	16	28	39.7	0.0
117	Tunisia	.659	6.5	28.4	20.4	94.9	26.3	67.5	1.05	26	10	43.0	0.0
118	Botswana	.657	9.5	46.8	60.4	86.6 <sup>c</sup>	10.8	63.8	1.03	9	17	29.1 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
119	São Tomé and Príncipe	.656	5.8	44.2 <sup>b</sup>	39.9	76.4 <sup>b</sup>	23.6	86.3	1.03	22.3 <sup>b</sup>	18	48.0 <sup>g</sup>	0.0
120	Senegal	.655	1.9	38.4	36.9	76.6 <sup>c</sup>	43.0	66.9	1.04	22	12	39.4 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
120	Togo	.655	3.5	37.6	66.5	68.2 <sup>c</sup>	18.7	84.4	1.02	9	13	47.7 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
122	Côte d'Ivoire	.654	4.2	35.6	52.0	98.4	13.6	83.1	1.03	15	16	42.8	0.0
123	Kuwait	.653	8.0	73.5	48.5	99.8 <sup>c</sup>	1.5	28.8	1.05	47	18.1 <sup>e</sup>	84.1 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
124	Lesotho	.650	7.2	46.5	50.6	74.7 <sup>c</sup>	22.9	78.1	1.03	19	16	26.9 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
125	Iran	.649	10.3	91.6	14.8	91.2	5.6	31.3	1.05	38	18	66.1	0.2
126	Cameroon	.648	4.7	30.0	77.2	94.9	31.1	60.0	1.03	19	22	38.4	3.4
127	Jordan	.646	10.3	26.6	13.0	99.3	11.8	46.9	1.05	38	13	77.0	0.0
128	Malawi	.644	6.9	29.8	73.4	50.5 <sup>c</sup>	22.9	77.5	1.03	25	17	44.3 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
129	Bhutan	.642	3.3	27.7	64.9	67.1 <sup>b</sup>	15.3	71.9	1.04	31.0 <sup>b</sup>	9	61.7 <sup>g</sup>	0.0
130	Burundi	.635	2.6	6.7	91.8	33.5 <sup>g</sup>	38.9	73.1	1.03	19.1 <sup>b</sup>	22	62.6 <sup>g</sup>	1.0
130	Nigeria	.635	5.7	27.3	51.7	99.5	6.2	63.1	1.06	17	13	42.3	1.4
132	Azerbaijan	.630	10.2	27.7	59.6	90.6 <sup>c</sup>	18.2	78.8	1.12	31	5	84.7 <sup>c</sup>	25.1
132	Lebanon	.630	8.5	32.9	21.7	91.7	4.7	52.5	1.05	20	8.9 <sup>d</sup>	46.3	0.1
134	Myanmar	.629	5.0	26.0	43.9	96.6	15.0	58.8	1.03	33	11	59.6	0.6
135	Comoros	.628	4.0	17.9	39.0	70.1 <sup>c</sup>	16.7	65.0	1.05	22.4 <sup>b</sup>	8	61.9 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
136	Burkina Faso	.627	1.1	34.5	62.6	71.4 <sup>c</sup>	6.3	79.4	1.05	20	11	57.9 <sup>c</sup>	4.3
136	Egypt	.627	9.0	27.0	16.5	98.5	22.7	45.0	1.06	48	15	70.9	0.5

WPS Index rank	Country and group	WPS Index score	INCLUSION					JUSTICE			SECURITY		
			Education (years)	Financial inclusion (%)	Employment (%)	Cellphone use <sup>a</sup> (%)	Parliamentary representation (%)	Absence of legal discrimination (aggregate score)	Son bias (male to female ratio at birth)	Discriminatory norms (%)	Intimate partner violence (%)	Perception of community safety <sup>a</sup> (%)	Organized violence (battle deaths per 100,000 people)
<b>BOTTOM QUINTILE</b>													
138	Equatorial Guinea	.624	4.2	51.2 <sup>b</sup>	60.7	87.5 <sup>b</sup>	20.4	51.9	1.03	17.3 <sup>b</sup>	29	48.0 <sup>g</sup>	0.0
138	Morocco	.624	4.7	16.8	20.0	98.4	18.5	75.6	1.06	31	10	49.2	0.0
140	Gabon	.623	7.8	53.7	38.4	87.1 <sup>c</sup>	16.7	57.5	1.03	11	22	25.3 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
141	Algeria	.616	7.7	29.3	14.5	84.1 <sup>c</sup>	21.2	57.5	1.05	45	9.4 <sup>d</sup>	42.4 <sup>c</sup>	0.1
142	Haiti	.611	4.3	30.0	61.8	73.6 <sup>g</sup>	2.5 <sup>b</sup>	63.8	1.05	22	12	38.9 <sup>g</sup>	0.6
143	Mali	.610	2.3	25.7	58.3	64.8 <sup>c</sup>	27.3	60.6	1.05	30	18	51.5 <sup>c</sup>	6.7
144	Angola	.609	4.0	22.3	79.7	44.7 <sup>g</sup>	29.6	73.1	1.03	22.3 <sup>b</sup>	25	39.8 <sup>g</sup>	0.1
145	Papua New Guinea	.604	4.0	68.2 <sup>b</sup>	50.0	79.8 <sup>b</sup>	0.0	60.0	1.08	24.1 <sup>b</sup>	31	77.3 <sup>g</sup>	0.1
146	Eswatini	.602	6.3	27.4	45.9	89.8 <sup>c</sup>	18.5	46.3	1.03	22.3 <sup>b</sup>	18	34.6 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
146	Guinea	.602	1.5	19.7	66.4	70.5 <sup>c</sup>	16.7	76.3	1.02	11	21	50.4 <sup>c</sup>	0.1
148	Gambia	.597	3.3	27.7 <sup>b</sup>	50.3	75.3 <sup>c</sup>	8.6	74.4	1.03	19.1 <sup>b</sup>	10	31.6 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
148	India	.597	5.4	76.6	21.5	57.9	13.4	74.4	1.10	25	18	55.9	0.1
150	Libya	.596	8.5	59.6	30.6	100.0 <sup>c</sup>	16.0	50.0	1.06	52	18.3 <sup>e</sup>	50.4 <sup>c</sup>	15.9
151	Djibouti	.595	5.4 <sup>b</sup>	8.8	48.0	41.2 <sup>g</sup>	26.2	68.1	1.04	22.3 <sup>b</sup>	26.9 <sup>e</sup>	69.3 <sup>g</sup>	0.2
152	Bangladesh	.594	6.0	35.8	35.2	85.9	20.9	49.4	1.05	57	23	51.4	0.0
152	Liberia	.594	3.5	28.2	75.1	52.8 <sup>c</sup>	8.7	83.8	1.05	12	27	30.6 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
152	Niger	.594	1.4	10.9	66.3	43.6 <sup>c</sup>	25.9	59.4	1.05	33	13	58.4 <sup>c</sup>	1.9
155	Congo	.582	6.1	21.0	68.9	74.0 <sup>c</sup>	13.6	49.4	1.03	8	33.8 <sup>e</sup>	40.3 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
156	Madagascar	.578	6.4	16.3	84.7	38.7 <sup>c</sup>	17.2	74.4	1.03	16	35.0 <sup>d</sup>	38.7 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
157	Central African Rep.	.577	3.0	9.7	68.2	70.6 <sup>b</sup>	8.6	76.9	1.03	11	21	49.4 <sup>g</sup>	9.2
157	Mauritania	.577	3.8	15.5	30.6	72.6 <sup>c</sup>	20.3	48.1	1.05	21	19.7 <sup>e</sup>	45.5 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
159	Somalia	.572	4.3 <sup>b</sup>	33.7	23.1	63.5 <sup>g</sup>	24.3	47.0	1.03	28	21.2 <sup>d</sup>	85.9 <sup>g</sup>	14.8
160	Palestine <sup>h</sup>	.571	9.4	16.0	13.2	83.5 <sup>c</sup>	21.2 <sup>l</sup>	26.3	1.05	49	19	63.7 <sup>c</sup>	4.3 <sup>b</sup>
161	Sierra Leone	.563	2.9	15.4	66.7	45.2 <sup>c</sup>	12.3	69.4	1.02	12	20	45.8 <sup>c</sup>	0.0
162	Sudan	.556	3.3	10.0	24.7	68.1 <sup>g</sup>	22.1 <sup>b</sup>	29.4	1.04	19.1 <sup>b</sup>	17	64.3 <sup>g</sup>	1.2
163	Chad	.547	1.3	14.9	65.5	36.8 <sup>c</sup>	15.4	66.3	1.03	20	16	42.2 <sup>c</sup>	1.2
163	DR Congo	.547	5.3	24.2	68.0	43.2 <sup>g</sup>	14.3	78.8	1.03	25	36	37.0 <sup>g</sup>	3.6
165	South Sudan	.541	3.9	4.7	63.3	27.0 <sup>g</sup>	26.6	70.0	1.04	25	27	42.6 <sup>g</sup>	7.6
166	Iraq	.516	6.0	19.5	10.2	100.0	26.4	45.0	1.07	53	45.3 <sup>d</sup>	57.6	2.7
167	Pakistan	.476	3.9	7.0	21.1	52.3	20.0	55.6	1.09	73	16	65.4	0.2
168	Yemen	.388	2.9	1.7	5.2	53.5 <sup>c</sup>	1.0	26.9	1.05	53	18.2 <sup>e</sup>	44.0 <sup>c</sup>	10.9
169	Syria	.375	4.6	19.6	13.5	72.9 <sup>b</sup>	11.2	36.9	1.05	26.3 <sup>b</sup>	23.0 <sup>d</sup>	16.9 <sup>g</sup>	75.1
170	Afghanistan	.278	1.9	7.2	19.2	42.7 <sup>c</sup>	27.2	38.1	1.06	51	35	9.8 <sup>c</sup>	68.6

<b>COUNTRY GROUPS AND REGIONS</b>													
Developed Countries	.867	12.6	94.9	51.4	94.4	33.2	92.9	1.05	2	4.8	71.0	0.01	
Central & Eastern Europe & Central Asia	.768	11.2	65.7	47.3	96.1	23.3	80.2	1.06	12.6	7.1	55.0	0.65	
East Asia & the Pacific	.730	7.6	66.3	59.1	94.2	20.7	73.2	1.09	20.8	8.2	78.1	0.04	
Latin America & the Caribbean	.741	8.8	50.9	45.6	90.1	32.8	83.1	1.05	8.7	7.9	35.4	2.27	
Middle East & North Africa	.604	7.5	28.6	17.5	91.8	17.5	51.9	1.05	39	17.6	57.6	5.23	
South Asia	.592	5.6	64.8	23.3	61.7	17.6	67.4	1.09	33.6	18.2	56.2	1.45	
Sub-Saharan Africa	.658	4.8	34.6	63.2	80.8	24.9	71.7	1.04	17.9	20.3	46.0	1.50	
Fragile States	.598	4.9	25.7	47.8	76.2	18.8	60.9	1.05	25.6	19.7	44.9	7.49	
World	.721	8.1	63.6	46.5	84.7	25.5	74.5	1.07	20	11.7	61.9	1.07	

Country and group	WPS Index score	INCLUSION					JUSTICE			SECURITY		
		Education (years)	Financial inclusion (%)	Employment (%)	Cellphone use <sup>a</sup> (%)	Parliamentary representation (%)	Absence of legal discrimination (aggregate score)	Son bias (male to female ratio at birth)	Discriminatory norms (%)	Intimate partner violence (%)	Perception of community safety <sup>a</sup> (%)	Organized violence (battle deaths per 100,000 people)
OTHER COUNTRIES AND ECONOMIES NOT IN THE INDEX												
Andorra	..	10.5	..	..	..	46.4	..	..	..	..	..	0.0
Antigua and Barbuda	..	..	..	..	..	31.4	66.3	1.03	..	..	..	0.0
Bahamas	..	11.7	..	63.3	..	21.8	81.0	1.06	..	..	..	0.0
Brunei Darussalam	..	9.1	..	56.8	..	9.1	53.0	1.06	..	..	..	0.0
Cuba	..	11.2	..	38.5	..	53.4	..	1.06	..	5	..	0.0
Dominica	..	..	..	..	..	34.4	62.5	..	..	..	..	0.0
Eritrea	..	..	..	65.8	..	..	69.0	1.05	..	..	..	0.5
Federated States of Micronesia	..	..	..	..	..	0.0	63.8	1.06	..	21	..	0.0
Grenada	..	..	..	..	..	32.1	80.6	1.05	..	8	..	0.0
Guinea-Bissau	..	..	..	68.5	..	13.7	43.0	1.03	..	..	..	0.0
Kiribati	..	..	..	..	..	6.7	78.8	1.06	..	25	..	0.0
Liechtenstein	..	..	..	..	..	12.0	..	..	..	..	..	0.0
Marshall Islands	..	10.7	..	..	..	6.1	68.1	..	..	19	..	0.0
Monaco	..	..	..	..	..	33.3	..	..	..	..	..	0.0
Nauru	..	..	..	..	..	10.5	..	..	..	20	..	0.0
North Korea	..	..	..	70.1	..	17.6	..	1.05	..	..	..	0.0
Palau	..	..	..	..	..	6.9	58.8	..	..	14	..	0.0
Saint Kitts and Nevis	..	..	..	..	..	25.0	71.3	..	..	..	..	0.0
Saint Lucia	..	8.8	..	57.0	..	20.7	83.8	1.03	..	..	..	0.0
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	..	8.9	..	49.8	..	18.2	68.1	1.03	..	..	..	0.0
Samoa	..	..	..	30.7	..	10.0	80.0	1.08	..	18	..	0.0
San Marino	..	..	..	..	..	33.3	80.0	..	..	..	..	0.0
Seychelles	..	9.9	..	..	..	22.9	76.0	1.06	..	..	..	0.0
Solomon Islands	..	..	..	86.5	..	8.0	56.9	1.06	..	28	..	0.0
Taiwan Province of China	..	..	..	51.6	97.7	..	91.0	..	2	..	85.0	0.0
Tuvalu	..	..	..	..	..	6.3	..	..	..	20	..	0.0
Vanuatu	..	..	..	63.5	..	0.0	58.0	1.06	..	29	..	0.0

**Notes to table**

- .. Not available or not applicable.
- a. Data come from the most recent Gallup World Poll (2017, 2018, or 2019) available for the country.
- b. Imputed cross-group average (region, fragile states, income level).
- c. Based on the 2019 release of the Gallup World Poll.
- d. Data are from the UN Women Global Database on Violence against Women (<http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en>). Based on DHS data.
- e. Modeled estimates by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (<http://ghdx.healthdata.org/record/ihme-data/global-sustainable-development-goals-sdg-intimate-partner-violence-indicator-1990-2019>).
- f. In the 2016 election, women occupied 12 seats out of 70 (17.1 percent) in the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, SAR China (Research Office Legislative Council Secretariat 2018).
- g. Based on the 2018 release of the Gallup World Poll.
- h. This designation is without prejudice to positions on status.
- i. From the 2019 Labour Force Survey.
- j. Kosovo had elections in February 2021. Women hold 44 of the 120 seats in the national parliament.
- k. Sex ratio at birth is taken from CIA World Factbook.
- l. This number represents the female share of seats in deliberative bodies of the local councils of West Bank (Sustainable Development Goal 5.5.1) and refers to 2018.

**Main data sources**

**WPS Index value:** Calculated by the authors based on the methodology outlined in in appendix 1.

**WPS Index rank:** Based on WPS Index value.

**Education:** 2020 Human Development Report database (<http://www.hdr.undp.org/en/data>) updated with MYS from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (<https://uis.unesco.org>). March 2021 release. 2019 or most recent year. Accessed May 2021.

**Financial inclusion:** World Bank Global Findex Database, 2017 or most recent year. (<http://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/global-findex>). Accessed May 2021.

**Employment:** Authors' modeled estimates of employment to population ratio for women ages 25 and older for 2020, based on data available from ILO (<https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulk-explorer23>). Accessed May 2021.

**Cellphone use:** Gallup World Poll, 2020 or most recent year available ([http://www.gallup.com/topic/world\\_region\\_worldwide.aspx](http://www.gallup.com/topic/world_region_worldwide.aspx)). Accessed May 2021.

**Parliamentary representation:** Inter-Parliamentary Union 2021 (<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>). Accessed May 2021.

**Absence of legal discrimination:** World Bank, Women, Business, and the Law database (<http://wbl.worldbank.org>). Accessed May 2021.

**Sex bias:** UNDESA 2019 (<https://population.un.org/wpp>). Accessed May 2021. Data refer to 2020. The official name of the indicator is "sex-ratio at birth."

**Discriminatory norms:** Gallup Inc. and ILO 2017. Accessed May 2021.

**Intimate partner violence:** WHO 2021c. (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022256>). Accessed May 2021.

**Perception of community safety:** Gallup World Poll, 2020 or most recent year available. ([http://www.gallup.com/topic/world\\_region\\_worldwide.aspx](http://www.gallup.com/topic/world_region_worldwide.aspx)). Accessed May 2021.

**Organized violence:** UCDP n.d. c. Data refer to 2020. (<http://ucdp.uu.se>). Accessed May 2021.

## APPENDIX 1

# Index methodology and addressing missing data

The Women’s Peace and Security Index is a summary measure capturing achievements in women’s status across three dimensions—inclusion, justice, and security. It is estimated as the geometric mean of the subindices computed for each of the three dimensions, while each subindex is the arithmetic mean of the normalized indicators for each dimension. The policy and academic literature on composite indices provide a robust foundation for our approach.<sup>310</sup>

The two steps required to estimate any index—normalization and aggregation—are described below, along with a worked-through example.

### Normalization

Normalization makes data comparable across indicators, so that the information can be combined in a meaningful way. All indicators need to be transformed in a way that higher or lower values consistently mean that the achievement is better or worse. A typical approach is to rescale the set of original values to the interval 0 to 1 (or 0 to 100), with 0 denoting the worst performance and 1 (100) denoting the best. This is done, for example, for the Sustainable Development Goals Index (SDGI) developed by Schmidt-Traub and colleagues,<sup>311</sup> the Africa Gender Equality Index (AGEI) developed by the African Development Bank in 2015, and the Human Development Index (HDI) published by the United Nations Development Programme since 1990.

Many of the indicators for the WPS Index fall naturally between 0 and 100—notably, those presented as percentages (financial inclusion, employment, cellphone use, absence of legal discrimination, intimate partner violence, and community safety). Indicators with a broader range of observations create challenges. We use aspirational maximum values of 15 years for mean years of schooling and 50 percent for parliamentary representation. For organized violence we use 50 deaths as the maximum. The goalposts are laid out in table A1.1.

Rescaling is sensitive to the choice of bounds (goalposts) and extreme values (outliers) at both tails of the distribution. Where the observed data range for an indicator is wide, the indicator acquires a larger implicit weight that, together with the assigned explicit weight, defines the relative contribution of the indicator to the WPS Index. Setting upper and lower bounds can reduce spurious variability, although this needs to be done with care. We sought to avoid allowing outliers to have undue influence on the values of the subindices and the aggregate index.

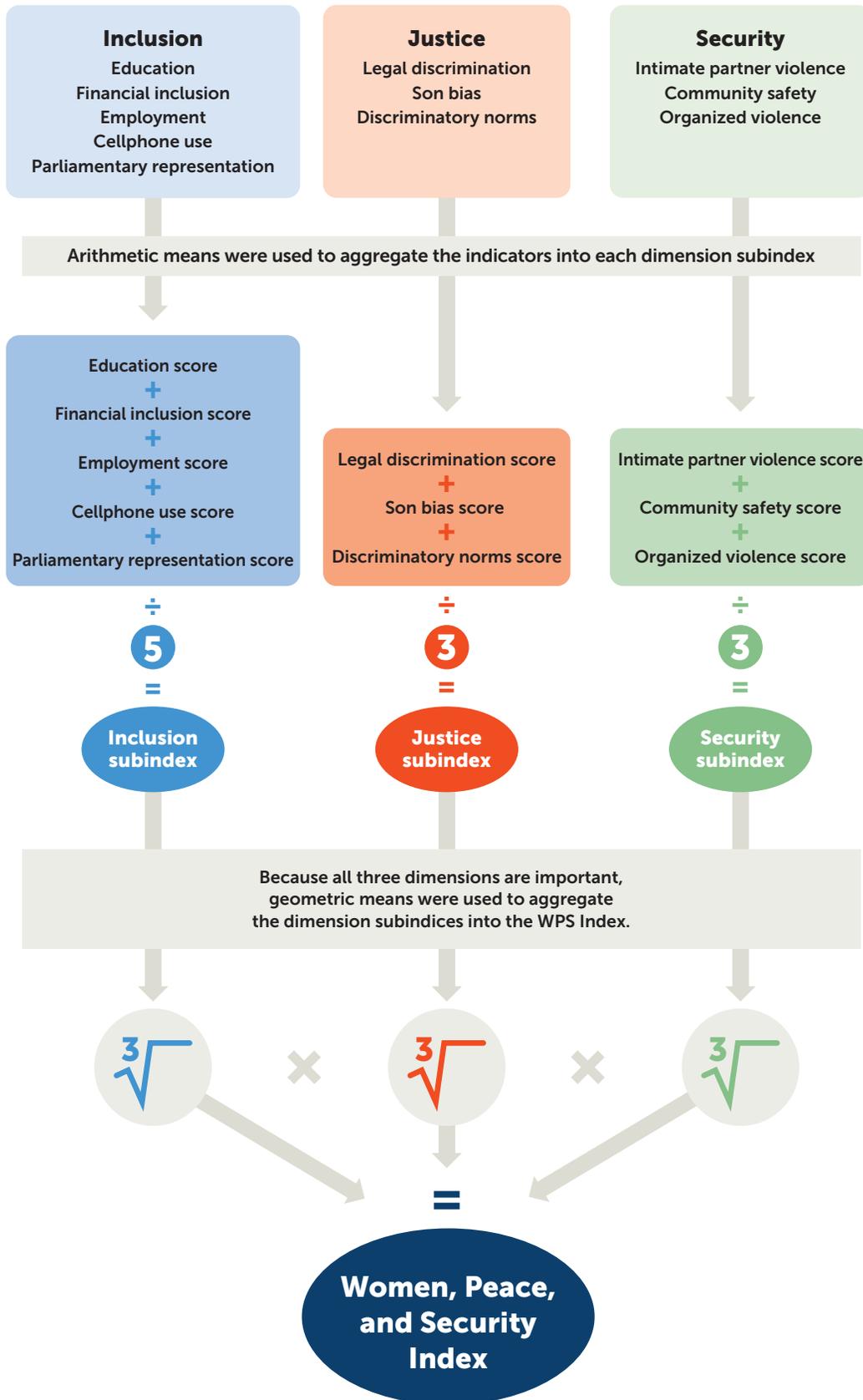
Unless otherwise indicated in the example, indicators are normalized as:

$$\text{Normalized indicator score} = \frac{\text{Actual value} - \text{lower bound}}{\text{Upper bound} - \text{lower bound}}$$

### Aggregation

The indicators and the dimensions in the WPS Index are considered integrated, indivisible, and equally important. We therefore assign equal weight to inclusion, justice and security, and equal weight to each indicator within these three dimensions.

**FIGURE A1.1** Construction of the Women, Peace, and Security Index



Source: Authors.

**TABLE A1.1 Minimum and maximum values for component indicators of the WPS Index**

INDICATOR	LOWER BOUND	UPPER BOUND
Education (years)	0	15
Financial inclusion (%)	0	100
Employment (%)	0	100
Cellphone use (%)	0	100
Parliamentary representation (%)	0	50
Absence of legal discrimination (aggregate score)	0	100
Son bias (male/female ratio at birth) <sup>a</sup>	1.15 <sup>b</sup>	0.95
Discriminatory norms (% of men)	100 <sup>b</sup>	0
Intimate partner violence (%)	50 <sup>b</sup>	0
Community safety (%)	0	100
Organized violence (deaths per 100,000 people)	50 <sup>b</sup>	0

a. For male to female ratio at birth that is *below* 1.05, the lower and the upper goalposts are 0.95 and 1.05 respectively, and normalization means that higher is better. For male to female ratio at birth that is *above* 1.05, the lower and the upper goalposts are 1.05 and 1.15, respectively, and normalization means that lower is better. This method means that any deviation from 1.05 is “penalized” in a symmetrical way.

b. Worst case.

Source: Authors.

Aggregation proceeded in two steps. First, the normalized indicators (scores) were aggregated for each dimension before being aggregated across all three dimensions into the WPS Index (figure A1.1). Arithmetic means are used to aggregate indicator scores within each dimension because the indicators can be considered complementary. The relative weight of each indicator in a dimension is inversely proportional to the number of indicators in that dimension.

- *Inclusion subindex* = (Education score + Financial inclusion score + Employment score + Cellphone use score + Parliamentary representation score) ÷ 5.
- *Justice subindex* = (Absence of legal discrimination score + Son bias score + Discriminatory norms score) ÷ 3.
- *Security subindex* = (Intimate partner violence score + Community safety score + Organized violence score) ÷ 3.

To capture the importance of performing well on all three dimensions—inclusion, justice, and security—a geometric mean is used to aggregate the subindices into the overall WPS Index:

- *WPS Index* = (Inclusion subindex)<sup>1/3</sup> × (Justice subindex)<sup>1/3</sup> × (Security subindex)<sup>1/3</sup>.

In this edition of the WPS Index, the index values rounded to three decimals are used to generate country rankings, so countries with the same WPS Index score at three decimal places are listed with tied ranks. Countries with the same tied ranks are ordered alphabetically.

Statistical table 1 presents weighted aggregates for country groupings—Developed Countries, Developing Regions, and Fragile States. The weights are population counts corresponding to the definition of indicators. For example, for mean years of schooling, the weights are the female population ages 25 and older; for discriminatory norms, the male population ages 15 and older; and so on.

### **A worked-through example: The Philippines**

We use Philippines’ scores from statistical table 1 to illustrate the application of this method (table A1.2).

**TABLE A1.2** Illustration of WPS Index aggregation using Philippines as an example

DIMENSION and INDICATOR	VALUE
<b>INCLUSION</b>	
Education (years)	9.6
Financial inclusion (%)	38.9
Employment (%)	49.2
Cellphone use (%)	93.9
Parliamentary representation (%)	28.1
<b>JUSTICE</b>	
Absence of legal discrimination (aggregate score)	78.8
Son bias (male/female ratio at birth)	1.06
Discriminatory norms (% of men)	16.0
<b>SECURITY</b>	
Intimate partner violence (%)	6.0
Community safety (%)	69.8
Organized violence (deaths per 100,000 people)	0.3

Source: Authors' estimates based on data in statistical table 1.

The arithmetic mean of the indicator scores within each dimension is used to aggregate the normalized indicator scores for the dimension, and then the geometric mean is used to aggregate the three subindices into the WPS Index, as follows:

#### ***Inclusion subindex***

- Education =  $(9.57 - 0) \div (15 - 0) = .6378$
- Financial inclusion =  $(38.9 - 0) \div (100 - 0) = .3890$
- Employment =  $(49.16 - 0) \div (100 - 0) = .4916$
- Cellphone use =  $(93.9 - 0) \div (100 - 0) = .9390$
- Parliamentary representation =  $(28.1 - 0) \div (50 - 0) = .5620$

$$\text{Inclusion subindex} = (.6378 + .3890 + .4916 + .9390 + .5620) \div 5 = .6039$$

#### ***Justice subindex***

- Absence of legal discrimination =  $(78.8 - 0) \div (100 - 0) = .7880$
- Sex ratio =  $(1.15 - 1.06) \div (1.15 - 1.05) = .9000$
- Discriminatory norms =  $(100 - 16) \div (100 - 0) = .8400$

$$\text{Justice subindex} = (.7880 + .9000 + .8400) \div 3 = .8427$$

#### ***Security subindex***

- Intimate partner violence =  $(50 - 6) \div (50 - 0) = .8800$
- Community safety =  $(69.8 - 0) \div (100 - 0) = .6980$
- Organized violence =  $(50 - .344) \div (50 - 0) = .9931$

$$\text{Security subindex} = (.8800 + .6980 + .9931) \div 3 = .8570$$

$$\text{Philippines' WPS Index} = (.6039 \times .8427 \times .8570)^{1/3} = .758$$

#### **Missing data**

Where necessary, missing data are replaced with data from sources different from the main source or from different releases by the same data source. For example, for most countries the source for the intimate partner violence indicator is WHO

(2021d), but for 10 countries data are taken from UN Women (2016), and for 14 countries data are modeled estimates by the Institute for Health Measurement and Evaluation.<sup>312</sup> Indicators from the Gallup World Poll on cellphone use and community safety come from the most recent year, which may be the 2017, 2018, or 2019 release.

For some countries, specific indicators were not available in the main or the alternative data source. If the country has at least seven of the indicators available, the missing values are imputed using the average of weighted aggregates of the missing indicator for the country's region, income category, and Fragile State category. For example, Papua New Guinea belongs to the East Asia and the Pacific region, it is a lower-middle income country, and is classified as a fragile state. The missing value for use of cellphone for Papua New Guinea is imputed as an average of weighted aggregates for these three country groups. This type of imputation is likely to be more reliable than one based only on the country's region. The total number of such imputations is 68—about 3.6 percent of all cells in statistical table 1.

### **Estimating the female employment-to-population ratio for 2020**

The employment indicator in the WPS Index is the female employment-to-population ratio, which represents the employed share of the female population ages 25 and older. The usual international source of the national data on employment is ILOSTAT, the International Labour Organization (ILO) database. As of July 15, 2021, the ILOSTAT database had two series of data on employment for the female population ages 25 and older: modeled data through 2019 for 190 United Nations member states and 2020 estimates based on the ILO's Labour Force Surveys for about 100 countries, in which the data for only 56 countries are disaggregated by sex. For employment of the total population ages 15 and older, ILO provides 2000–20 series of modeled estimates for 190 United Nations member states.

The pandemic significantly affected women's employment. Using past annual trends in women's employment (such as for 2010–19, or any other years before 2020) to extrapolate figures for 2020 would be unlikely to be reliable. We applied the available Labour Force Survey and ILOSTAT data for 2020 to the female employment rate for 2019 to obtain the estimate of women's employment (the female population ages 25 and older) for 2020 for all countries.<sup>313</sup>

## APPENDIX 2

# Regional and country groups

### Developed Countries

Australia  
Austria  
Belgium  
Canada  
Denmark  
Finland  
France  
Germany  
Greece  
Iceland  
Ireland  
Israel  
Italy  
Japan  
Luxembourg  
Malta  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
Norway  
Portugal  
Singapore  
South Korea  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
United Kingdom  
United States of America

### Fragile States<sup>a</sup>

Afghanistan  
Burkina Faso  
Burundi  
Cameroon  
Central African Republic  
Chad  
Comoros  
Congo  
Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Gambia  
Haiti  
Iraq  
Kosovo  
Lao PDR  
Lebanon  
Liberia  
Libya  
Mali  
Mozambique  
Myanmar  
Niger  
Nigeria  
Palestine  
Papua New Guinea

Somalia  
South Sudan  
Sudan  
Syria  
Timor-Leste  
Venezuela  
Yemen  
Zimbabwe

### Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Albania  
Armenia  
Azerbaijan  
Belarus  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Bulgaria  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Estonia  
Georgia  
Hungary  
Kazakhstan  
Kosovo  
Kyrgyzstan  
Latvia  
Lithuania  
Moldova  
Montenegro  
North Macedonia  
Poland  
Romania  
Russian Federation  
Serbia  
Slovakia  
Slovenia  
Tajikistan  
Turkey  
Turkmenistan  
Ukraine  
Uzbekistan

### East Asia and the Pacific

Cambodia  
China  
Fiji  
Hong Kong, SAR China  
Indonesia  
Lao PDR  
Malaysia  
Mongolia  
Myanmar  
Papua New Guinea  
Philippines

Thailand  
Timor-Leste  
Tonga  
Viet Nam

### Latin America and the Caribbean

Argentina  
Barbados  
Belize  
Bolivia  
Brazil  
Chile  
Colombia  
Costa Rica  
Dominican Republic  
Ecuador  
El Salvador  
Guatemala  
Guyana  
Haiti  
Honduras  
Jamaica  
Mexico  
Nicaragua  
Panama  
Paraguay  
Peru  
Suriname  
Trinidad and Tobago  
Uruguay  
Venezuela

### Middle East and North Africa

Algeria  
Bahrain  
Egypt  
Iraq  
Jordan  
Kuwait  
Lebanon  
Libya  
Morocco  
Oman  
Palestine  
Qatar  
Saudi Arabia  
Syria  
Tunisia  
United Arab Emirates  
Yemen

### South Asia

Afghanistan  
Bangladesh

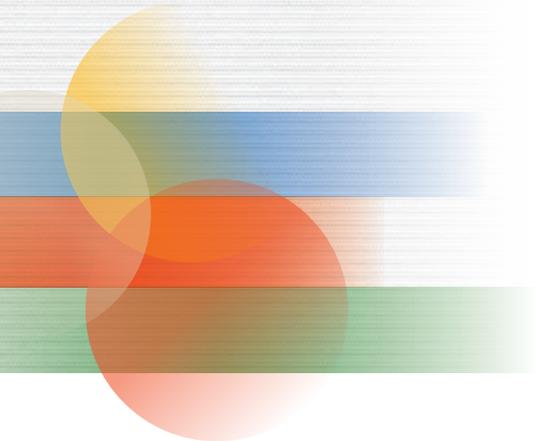
Bhutan  
India  
Iran  
Maldives  
Nepal  
Pakistan  
Sri Lanka

### Sub-Saharan Africa

Angola  
Benin  
Botswana  
Burkina Faso  
Burundi  
Cabo Verde  
Cameroon  
Central African Republic  
Chad  
Comoros  
Congo  
Côte d'Ivoire  
Democratic Republic of the Congo  
Djibouti  
Equatorial Guinea  
Eswatini  
Ethiopia  
Gabon  
Gambia  
Ghana  
Guinea  
Kenya  
Lesotho  
Liberia  
Madagascar  
Malawi  
Mali  
Mauritania  
Mauritius  
Mozambique  
Namibia  
Niger  
Nigeria  
Rwanda  
São Tomé and Príncipe  
Senegal  
Sierra Leone  
Somalia  
South Africa  
South Sudan  
Sudan  
Tanzania  
Togo  
Uganda  
Zimbabwe

a. Classified by the World Bank Group as fragile and conflict-affected; see definition here: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/harmonized-list-of-fragile-situations>.

Note: Only countries ranked on the index are included.

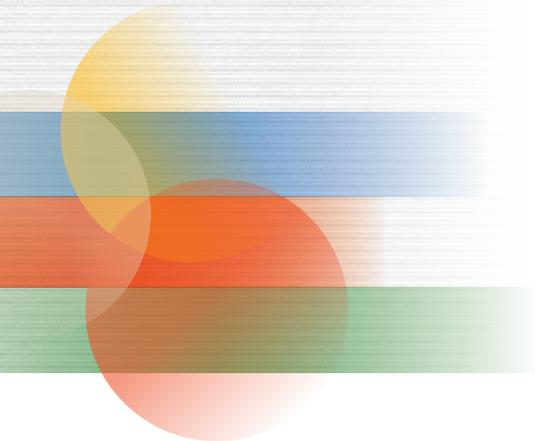


## Notes

1. The 10 countries, in order of largest improvement, are: Israel, Central African Republic, Mali, Cameroon, Ukraine, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Benin, Kenya, and Rwanda.
2. Overall since 2017, 18 countries improved at least 10 ranks while 59 dropped at least 10 ranks. In some cases, changes in rank are not proportional to score changes. For example, Chad, Tunisia, and Sierra Leone lost more than 20 ranks, while their scores fell by less than 1 percent. Their lower ranking reflects stagnation in relative performance while other countries improved.
3. GIWPS and PRIO 2019.
4. ILO 2021.
5. UN Women and Women Count. n.d.
6. ILO 2021.
7. Madgavkar et al. 2020.
8. IFC 2021.
9. Iacovone et al. 2021; Torres et al. (forthcoming).
10. ILO 2020.
11. ILO 2018.
12. World Bank 2021b.
13. Fereidooni et al. 2021.
14. Fereidooni et al. 2021.
15. Fawole, Okedare, and Reed 2020.
16. De la Flor et al. 2021.
17. Nygaard and Dreyer 2020.
18. Bull et al. 2020.
19. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation et al. n.d.
20. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
21. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
22. WIEGO 2019.
23. CGAP 2020.
24. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
25. UNDP and UN Women 2021b.
26. World Bank 2021a.
27. Espinoza-Wasil, Plazaola-Castaño, and Williams 2020.
28. Bastagli and Lowe 2021.
29. UNHCR 2021.
30. IDMC 2021.
31. UNHCR 2021.
32. IRC 2020a.
33. Admasu et al. forthcoming.
34. Admasu et al. forthcoming.
35. Financial inclusion values for Sudan measure mobile money access only.
36. Kabir and Klugman 2019.
37. Kabir and Klugman 2019.
38. Jamal 2021.
39. The 10 countries, in order of largest improvement, are: Israel, Central African Republic, Mali, Cameroon, Ukraine, Lebanon, United Arab Emirates, Benin, Kenya, and Rwanda.
40. Our threshold for a country's inclusion in the global index is the availability of 7 of the 11 indicators. When one or more indicators were missing from the data source, the missing values were imputed using the average of weighted aggregates of the missing indicator for the country's region, income category, and Fragile States group. For example, Papua New Guinea belongs to the developing region of East Asia and the Pacific, it is a lower-middle income country, and it is a fragile state. A missing value for the cellphone use indicator is imputed as an average of weighted aggregates for these three groups of countries. The total number of such imputations is 68, which is about 3.6 percent of all cells in statistical table 1.
41. Because of insufficient data, Solomon Islands was not ranked this year.
42. McDougal et al. 2021.
43. UN Women and WHO 2020.
44. Unless otherwise noted, employment figures for 2020 in this report rely on our modeled estimates (see page 14 and appendix 1).
45. *UN News* 2020.
46. Malta and Greece have the lowest scores in the Developed Country group, ranking 37th and 45th, respectively.
47. GIWPS commissioned oral history conducted by Maggie Lemere.
48. World Bank 2021a.
49. GIWPS and The Rockefeller Foundation 2020.
50. World Bank 2021a.
51. World Bank 2021a.
52. The nine countries are Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, and Sweden
53. OECD 2020.

54. Overall since 2017, 18 countries improved at least 10 ranks, while 59 dropped at least 10 ranks. In some cases, changes in rank are not proportional to score changes. For example, Chad, Tunisia, and Sierra Leone lost more than 20 ranks, while their scores fell by less than 1 percent. Their lower ranking reflects stagnation in relative performance while other countries improved.
55. World Bank 2018a.
56. World Bank 2021a. Statistical reporting on mean years of schooling also improved during this period, producing better estimates of women's education.
57. Freedom House n.d.
58. UCDP n.d. b.
59. Save the Children 2020a.
60. GIWPS and PRIO 2019.
61. Østby et al. 2018.
62. Kotsadam and Østby 2019.
63. Gates et al. 2012.
64. Martin-Shields and Stojetz 2018.
65. Hoelscher, Miklian, and Nygård 2017.
66. Guterres 2020.
67. Rustad, Nygård, and Methi 2020.
68. UN Women 2020a; Krause, Krause, and Braenfors 2018.
69. Abramian 2020.
70. The 12 countries are: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.
71. WHO 2021a.
72. IMF 2020; Yeyati and Filippini 2021.
73. ILO 2021a.
74. Ray 2021.
75. ILO 2021b.
76. Rothwell 2021.
77. World Bank 2021b.
78. Lakner et al. 2021.
79. Ide 2021.
80. Misgar 2021.
81. Ide 2021.
82. IRC 2020a.
83. Euronews 2021.
84. ILO 2021b.
85. Bundervoet, Dávalos, and Garcia 2021.
86. Unless otherwise noted, employment figures for 2020 in this report rely on our modeled estimates. See page 14 and appendix 1 for details.
87. GIWPS and PRIO 2019.
88. UN Women and Women Count. n.d.
89. Ewing-Nelson and Tucker 2021.
90. Boesch and Phadke 2021.
91. ILO 2021b.
92. Madgavkar et al. 2020.
93. GIWPS and The Rockefeller Foundation 2020.
94. Djankov et al. 2021.
95. ILO 2020.
96. Djankov et al. 2021.
97. ILO 2021b.
98. Barcena et al. 2021.
99. Slaughter 2021.
100. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation et al. n.d.
101. Mitra and Sinha 2021.
102. Azcona et al. 2020.
103. O'Donnell et al. 2021.
104. Ndegwa 2020.
105. Long 2020.
106. This may explain why different studies seem to reach different conclusions in this regard (for example, compare Kugler et al. [2021] with Bundervoet, Dávalos, and Garcia [2021], two studies that draw on the same harmonized high frequency survey data but use slightly different samples and time periods.)
107. IFC 2021.
108. Iacovone et al. 2021; Torres et al. forthcoming.
109. Goldstein et al. 2020.
110. Iacovone et al. 2021.
111. Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021.
112. Boatan-Pobee et al. 2021.
113. ILO 2018.
114. UNICEF 2021a.
115. World Bank 2021c.
116. UN Women and Women Count n.d.
117. Ogando, Rogan, and Moussié 2021.
118. Facebook, OECD, and World Bank 2020.
119. Paz Nieves, Gaddis, and Muller 2021.
120. ILO 2021b.
121. Alon et al. 2021.
122. Heggeness and Fields 2020.
123. UNICEF 2019.
124. Peterman et al. 2020.
125. UN Women and WHO 2020.
126. Bourgault, Peterman, and O'Donnell 2021.
127. Fereidooni et al. 2021.
128. UN Women Data Hub 2021.
129. Arenas-Arroyo, Fernandez-Kranz, and Nollenberger 2020.
130. Halim, Can, and Perova 2020.
131. Bourgault, Peterman, and O'Donnell 2021.
132. Fereidooni et al. 2021.
133. Fawole, Okedare, and Reed 2020.
134. Berger 2020.
135. UN Women 2020c.
136. Masweneng 2020.
137. Agüero 2020.
138. Berniell and Facchini 2020.
139. UN Women 2021.
140. UN Women 2020b.
141. Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco in Geneva 2021.
142. UN Women 2020c.
143. UN Women 2021.
144. Gebrewahd, Gebremeskel, and Tadesse 2020.
145. Elka Pangestu and Granryd 2020.
146. UNDP and UN Women 2021b.
147. UNDP and UN Women 2021b.
148. De la Flor et al. 2021.
149. Nygaard and Dreyer 2020.
150. Bull et al. 2020.
151. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation et al. 2020.
152. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
153. Andina 2021.
154. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
155. Wang et al. 2020.
156. UNDP and UN Women 2021b.
157. IMF 2021.
158. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
159. WIEGO 2019.
160. CGAP 2020.
161. Bastagli and Lowe 2021.
162. Bastagli and Lowe 2021.
163. Hagen-Zanker and Both 2021.
164. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
165. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
166. Promundo, PL+US, and Parental Leave Corporate Taskforce 2021.
167. Promundo, PL+US, and Parental Leave Corporate Taskforce 2021.
168. Gaag et al. 2019.
169. Ruxton and Burrell n.d.
170. Smith and Johnson 2020.
171. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
172. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
173. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
174. Chinchilla Miranda 2020; Johnston 2020.
175. Holmes and Hunt 2021.
176. Alon et al. 2020.
177. Mangiavacchi, Piccoli, and Pieroni 2020.
178. UNDP and UN Women 2021b.
179. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
180. UNDP and UN Women 2021b.
181. World Bank 2021a.

182. Espinoza-Wasil, Plazaola-Castaño, and Williams 2020.
183. Rugene 2020.
184. IRC 2020b.
185. ENVR 2021a.
186. Evans, Lindauer, and Farrell 2021.
187. Lampen 2020.
188. Galindo 2020.
189. Office of the Mayor of Chicago 2020.
190. Almukhanbetkyzy and Eaton 2020.
191. UN Women 2020d.
192. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
193. Moreira and Pinto da Costa 2020.
194. UNFPA Uganda 2020.
195. El Peruano 2020.
196. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
197. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
198. Moreira and Pinto da Costa 2020.
199. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
200. ENVR 2021b.
201. UN Women 2020e.
202. UNDP and UN Women 2021a.
203. Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund n.d.
204. Fruman 2021.
205. Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund n.d.
206. Themis Brazil n.d.
207. Nanavaty and Garrity 2021.
208. LINC Local 2020.
209. Civicus 2020.
210. EPF and IPPF EN 2020.
211. Bastagli and Lowe 2021.
212. Bourgault, Peterman, and O'Donnell 2021.
213. Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response 2021.
214. Desmidt and Neat 2021.
215. WHO 2021b.
216. Global Health 5050 2021.
217. Global Health 5050 2021.
218. McDougal et al. 2021.
219. UNHCR 2020a.
220. IDMC 2021.
221. UNHCR 2021a.
222. UNHCR 2021a.
223. IRC 2020c.
224. Clingain et al. forthcoming.
225. Huang and Graham 2019.
226. UNHCR 2020b.
227. See Admasu et al (2021) for details. For information on survey coverage, design and the data, see <https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog>.
228. UNHCR 2021b.
229. World Bank 2018c.
230. See the online appendix for detailed data sources and years.
231. Clingain et al. forthcoming.
232. For mobility, we assumed no restrictions on mobility for host community women in Ethiopia, South Sudan and Sudan.
233. KNOMAD 2021.
234. Formally known as the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, the 2009 Kampala Convention aims to protect the rights of IDPs in African Union countries. It addresses all phases of displacement, ranging from prevention to response. To date, more than 30 African Union countries have ratified the agreement. See <https://au.int/en/treaties/african-union-convention-protection-and-assistance-internally-displaced-persons-africa>.
235. IRC 2020d.
236. UNHCR 2017.
237. Taye, Rahman, and Baker 2020.
238. Admasu forthcoming.
239. Admasu et al. forthcoming.
240. Admasu et al. forthcoming.
241. World Bank 2017.
242. World Bank 2017.
243. Clingain et al. forthcoming.
244. Financial inclusion values for Sudan measure mobile money access only.
245. Ekhaton-Mobayode et al. 2020.
246. Ekhaton-Mobayode et al. forthcoming.
247. Kelly et al. 2021.
248. Kelly et al. 2021.
249. Kelly et al. 2021.
250. Ekhaton-Mobayode et al. forthcoming.
251. Kabir and Klugman 2019.
252. Kabir and Klugman 2019.
253. Kabir and Klugman 2019.
254. The current rate, as determined by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, is \$12 per hour.
255. The online appendix includes full data, sources, and years.
256. El-Arnaout and Wang 2017.
257. Asey 2019.
258. World Bank 2021d.
259. Strand, Borchgrevink, and Harpviken 2017.
260. Cortright and Wall 2012.
261. World Bank 2020a.
262. Visual Journalism Team 2021.
263. World Bank 2020b.
264. Trian 2021.
265. Shah 2021.
266. NDTV 2021.
267. Verveer and Henderson 2021.
268. IRC 2021.
269. Cousins 2020.
270. Amiri and Jackson 2021
271. Cahalan, Gitter, and Fletcher 2020.
272. Akseer et al. 2019.
273. Strand, Borchgrevink, and Harpviken 2017.
274. Sharan and Wimpelmann 2014.
275. Sharan and Wimpelmann 2014.
276. CFR 2020; O'Donnell 2021.
277. Cesaretti, Parto, and Raha 2018.
278. Cesaretti, Parto, and Raha 2018.
279. Weiss 2014.
280. UNDP 2020b.
281. UNDP 2020b.
282. UNDP 2020b.
283. UNDP 2020b.
284. Jamal 2021.
285. UNDP 2021b.
286. UNDP 2021b.
287. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics n.d.
288. World Bank 2020c.
289. UNDP 2020b.
290. Kugleman 2014.
291. UNDP 2021b.
292. Batten-Carew 2017.
293. UNDP 2021b.
294. UNDP 2021b.
295. Hassan and Arif 2018.
296. UNDP 2021b.
297. Yusuf 2012.
298. Perveen 2020.
299. Human Rights Watch 2020.
300. IDMC 2020.
301. UNDP 2021b.
302. Pakistan's special regions include Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and the Newly Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
303. UNDP 2021b.
304. UNDP 2021b.
305. UNDP 2021b.
306. UN HLP 2021.
307. Clingain et al. forthcoming.
308. Clingain et al. forthcoming.
309. Admasu forthcoming.
310. Klugman et al. (2011); OECD (2008); UNDP (2014).
311. Schmidt-Traub et al. (2017).
312. Institute for Health Evaluation and Metrics 2021.
313. The details of the five-step estimation procedure is available in Kovacevic (2021).



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## Alphabetical key to countries and ranks on the 2021 WPS Index

COUNTRY	INDEX	RANK	COUNTRY	INDEX	RANK	COUNTRY	INDEX	RANK
Afghanistan	.278	170	Germany	.880	11	Norway	.922	1
Albania	.762	58	Ghana	.747	69	Oman	.675	110
Algeria	.616	141	Greece	.792	45	Pakistan	.476	167
Angola	.609	144	Guatemala	.664	115	Palestine	.571	160
Argentina	.774	49	Guinea	.602	146	Panama	.733	83
Armenia	.727	85	Guyana	.764	56	Papua New Guinea	.604	145
Australia	.856	24	Haiti	.611	142	Paraguay	.737	77
Austria	.891	8	Honduras	.698	104	Peru	.733	83
Azerbaijan	.630	132	Hong Kong, SAR China	.829	32	Philippines	.758	61
Bahrain	.713	97	Hungary	.790	46	Poland	.840	29
Bangladesh	.594	152	Iceland	.907	3	Portugal	.868	18
Barbados	.737	77	India	.597	148	Qatar	.713	97
Belarus	.814	38	Indonesia	.707	100	Romania	.765	55
Belgium	.859	22	Iran	.649	125	Russian Federation	.770	53
Belize	.720	92	Iraq	.516	166	Rwanda	.748	66
Benin	.667	114	Ireland	.867	19	São Tomé and Príncipe	.656	119
Bhutan	.642	129	Israel	.844	27	Saudi Arabia	.703	102
Bolivia	.774	49	Italy	.842	28	Senegal	.655	120
Bosnia and Herzegovina	.764	56	Jamaica	.800	43	Serbia	.826	34
Botswana	.657	118	Japan	.823	35	Sierra Leone	.563	161
Brazil	.734	80	Jordan	.646	127	Singapore	.870	15
Bulgaria	.804	41	Kazakhstan	.761	59	Slovakia	.811	39
Burkina Faso	.627	136	Kenya	.721	90	Slovenia	.870	15
Burundi	.635	130	Kosovo	.737	77	Somalia	.572	159
Cabo Verde	.690	108	Kuwait	.653	123	South Africa	.748	66
Cambodia	.719	93	Kyrgyzstan	.713	97	South Korea	.827	33
Cameroon	.648	126	Lao PDR	.741	74	South Sudan	.541	165
Canada	.879	12	Latvia	.858	23	Spain	.872	14
Central African Rep.	.577	157	Lebanon	.630	132	Sri Lanka	.697	105
Chad	.547	163	Lesotho	.650	124	Sudan	.556	162
Chile	.757	62	Liberia	.594	152	Suriname	.734	80
China	.722	89	Libya	.596	150	Sweden	.895	7
Colombia	.721	90	Lithuania	.833	30	Switzerland	.898	6
Comoros	.628	135	Luxembourg	.899	5	Syria	.375	169
Congo	.582	155	Madagascar	.578	156	Tajikistan	.727	85
Costa Rica	.781	47	Malawi	.644	128	Tanzania	.739	76
Côte d'Ivoire	.654	122	Malaysia	.702	103	Thailand	.744	73
Croatia	.848	26	Maldives	.671	112	Timor-Leste	.707	100
Cyprus	.820	36	Mali	.610	143	Togo	.655	120
Czech Republic	.830	31	Malta	.815	37	Tonga	.719	93
Denmark	.903	4	Mauritania	.577	157	Trinidad and Tobago	.771	52
Djibouti	.595	151	Mauritius	.750	64	Tunisia	.659	117
Dominican Republic	.746	71	Mexico	.725	88	Turkey	.693	106
DR Congo	.547	163	Moldova	.750	64	Turkmenistan	.760	60
Ecuador	.774	49	Mongolia	.769	54	Uganda	.685	109
Egypt	.627	136	Montenegro	.803	42	Ukraine	.748	66
El Salvador	.747	69	Morocco	.624	138	United Arab Emirates	.856	24
Equatorial Guinea	.624	138	Mozambique	.673	111	United Kingdom	.888	9
Estonia	.863	20	Myanmar	.629	134	United States	.861	21
Eswatini	.602	146	Namibia	.714	95	Uruguay	.776	48
Ethiopia	.668	113	Nepal	.714	95	Uzbekistan	.741	74
Fiji	.734	80	Netherlands	.885	10	Venezuela	.746	71
Finland	.909	2	New Zealand	.873	13	Viet Nam	.692	107
France	.870	15	Nicaragua	.756	63	Yemen	.388	168
Gabon	.623	140	Niger	.594	152	Zambia	.661	116
Gambia	.597	148	Nigeria	.635	130	Zimbabwe	.727	85
Georgia	.808	40	North Macedonia	.798	44			