

Sexual Harassment and Domestic Violence in the Middle East and North Africa

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Key Findings

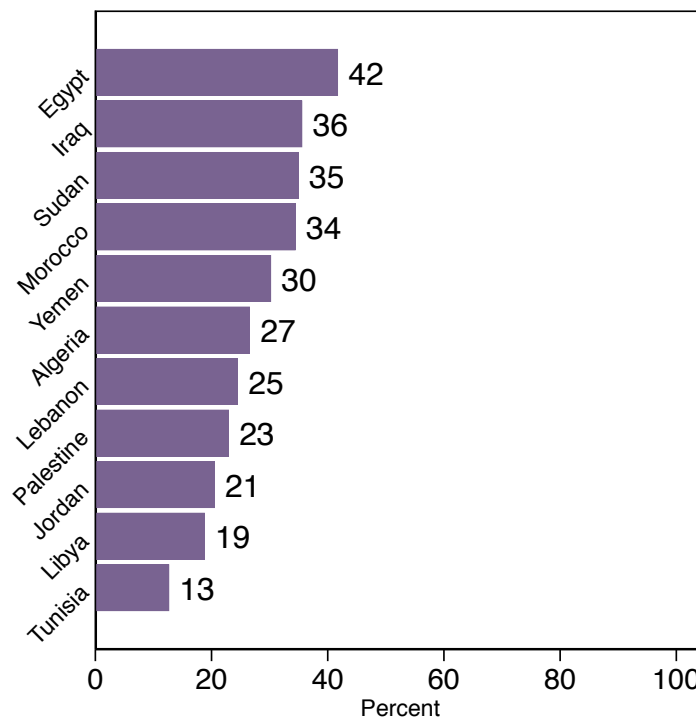
- Verbal sexual harassment in public places is more frequent than physical sexual harassment in all the participating countries (29 percent against 18 percent).
- Sexual harassment is prevalent in all Arab countries participating in Arab Barometer Wave V.
- Sexual harassment in public places is widespread in Egypt. The highest rate is observed in Dumyat (Damiette).
- Women still bear the burden of sexual harassment in public places in almost all the participating countries where around 39 percent of the female respondents are victims of sexual harassment in public places, against 22 percent of male respondents.
- In Iraq men are more concerned with the burden of sexual harassment in public places. More men than women (42 percent against 35 percent reported having experienced sexual harassment. Men are more victims of sexual harassment in Dhi Qar.
- Young women aged 17-28 years old face more sexual harassment than their older peers.
- Sexual harassment in public places is an urban phenomenon.
- Comparison within countries shows that domestic violence is relatively high in Yemen (26 percent), Morocco (25 percent), Egypt (23 percent), Sudan (22 percent) and Algeria (21 percent).
- Males are victims of domestic violence in the majority of countries under study.
- Females are victims of domestic violence in Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco.
- All females and males living in rural areas of Lebanon face domestic violence.
- Domestic violence is mostly a rural phenomenon.
- The victims of domestic violence in the Arab countries seek help from relatives in other words from the family. Domestic violence is still considered a private family matter.

Sexual Harassment in Public Places

Arab Barometer wave V survey aims at investigating two types of sexual harassment in public places in 12 Arab countries : verbal sexual harassment and physical sexual harassment. Public places are meant to be streets, public transportation and shopping malls. The questionnaire included a question on the frequency of the verbal sexual harassment and a question on the frequency of physical sexual harassment. The verbal sexual harassment is all the unwanted sexual remarks, whistling or gestures in public places. However, sexual harassment is the unwanted sexual advances, like being touched in public places. People were asked how often they have personally experienced this behavior in the past 12 months. Different responses were suggested for the respondent: never, rarely, sometimes and often. We investigate first how common is verbal and physical sexual harassment among the population surveyed. Then, we created a binary variable for sexual harassment combining both verbal and physical sexual harassment. This variable takes the value 1 if the respondent has been exposed either rarely, sometimes or often to both verbal and physical sexual harassment, and zero if not .

Most of the surveyed people across the participating countries reported that they “rarely” experienced verbal and physical sexual harassment in the past 12 months. Regarding verbal sexual harassment, from 2 percent to 12 percent of the surveyed people declared being “sometimes” exposed to verbal sexual harassment. The highest proportions are observed in Egypt (10 percent), Iraq (10 percent) and Morocco (11 percent). The lowest proportion which is around 2 percent is observed in Tunisia. For the category “often”, around 2 percent of the respondents declared that they are often victims of verbal sexual harassment in Palestine against 7 percent in Morocco.

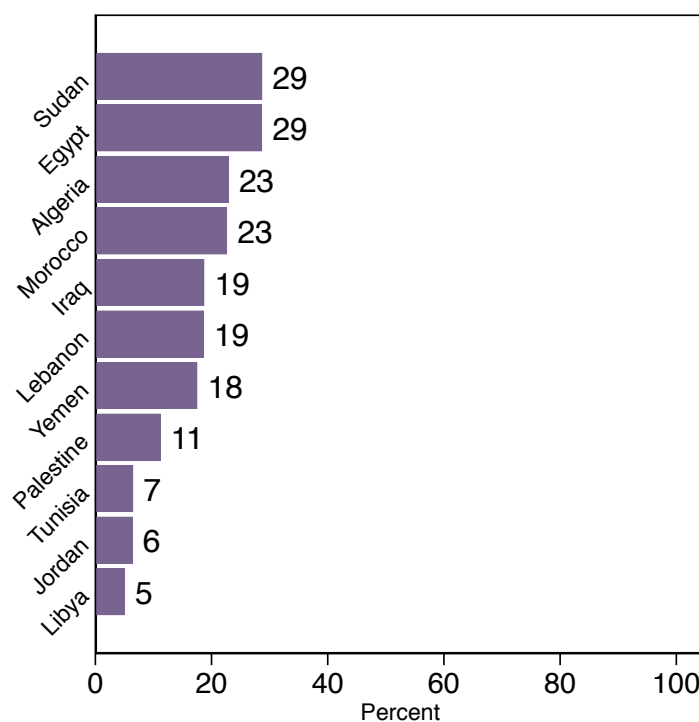
Frequency of Verbal Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months
% reporting being verbally harassed often, sometimes, or rarely.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

The frequencies of the physical sexual harassment are not so different. For those who responded “sometimes”, the proportions vary from 1 percent in Jordan, Libya and Tunisia to 8 percent in Sudan and 7 percent in Algeria, Egypt and Morocco. Likewise, around 3 percent of the participants in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and Sudan declared that they are “often” physically harassed in public places.

Frequency of Physical Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months
% reporting being physically harassed often, sometimes, or rarely.

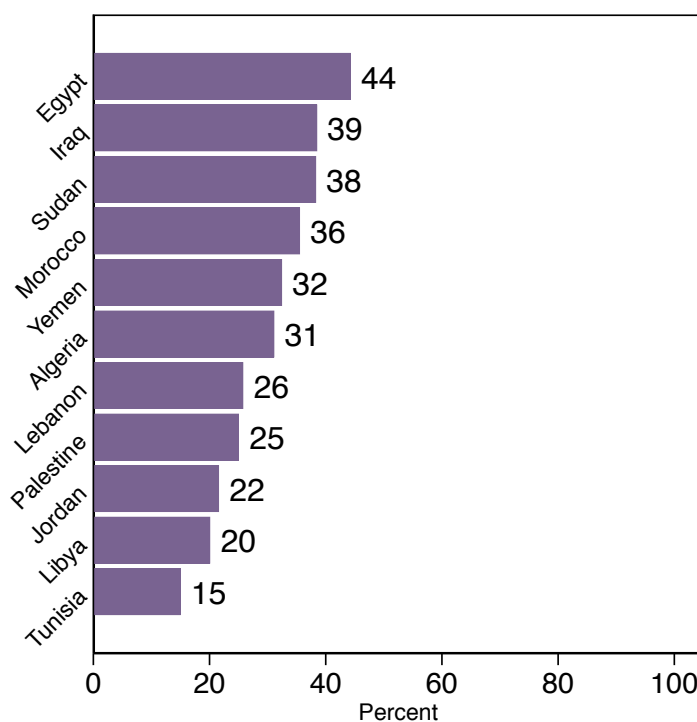


Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Verbal sexual harassment in public places is more frequent than physical sexual harassment in all the countries under study (29 percent against 18 percent). The figures also highlight the fact that in countries where verbal harassment is high, physical harassment is also high and vice versa.

The figure below shows the distribution of sexual harassment by country. Sexual harassment is prevalent in all the Arab countries participating in the survey. Sexual harassment is most common in Egypt (44 percent) and Sudan (38 percent). Lower rates of sexual harassment are reported in Libya (20 percent) and Tunisia (15 percent).

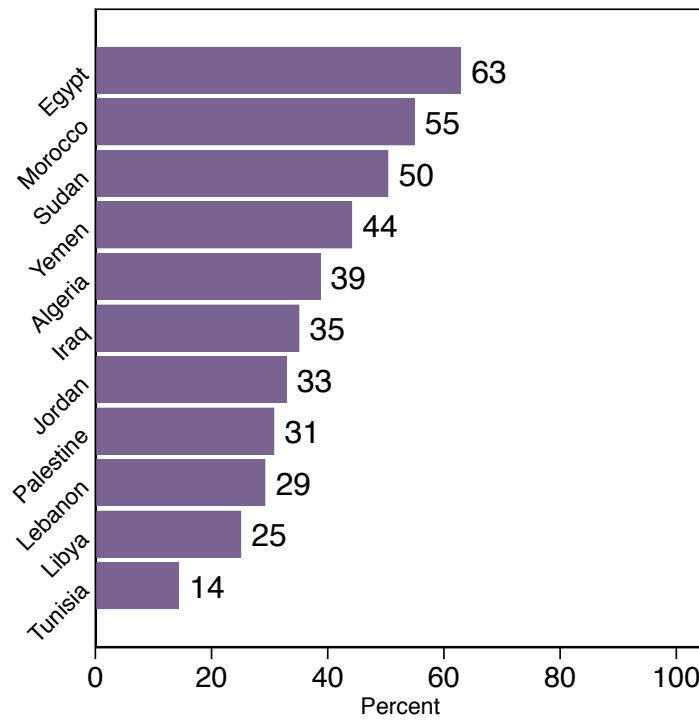
Frequency of Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months
% reporting being harassed often, sometimes, or rarely.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

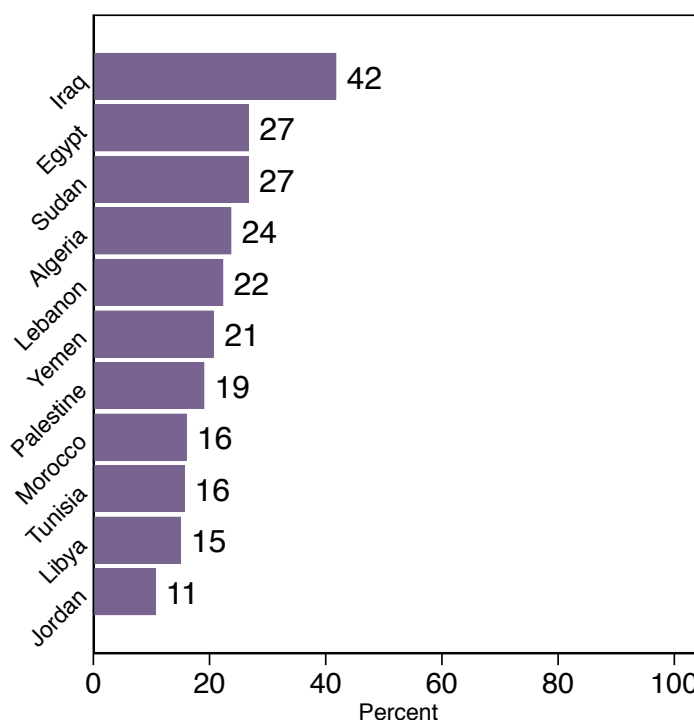
The percentage of women who have experienced sexual harassment in public places varies widely across the Arab countries. Arab Barometer wave V (2018-2019) data reveal that sexual harassment is a gendered problem. In all countries participating in the survey, 39 percent of the surveyed women (against 22 percent of men) reported that they have been exposed to sexual harassment in public places. More women experienced sexual harassment than men, with the exception of Iraq and Tunisia. From half to more than half of the surveyed women in Egypt, Morocco and Sudan had been harassed in public places. In Egypt, sexual harassment is a burden. Sixty-two percent of the surveyed women have experienced sexual harassment.

Frequency of Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months, Females
% reporting being harassed often, sometimes, or rarely.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Frequency of Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months, Males
% reporting being harassed often, sometimes, or rarely.



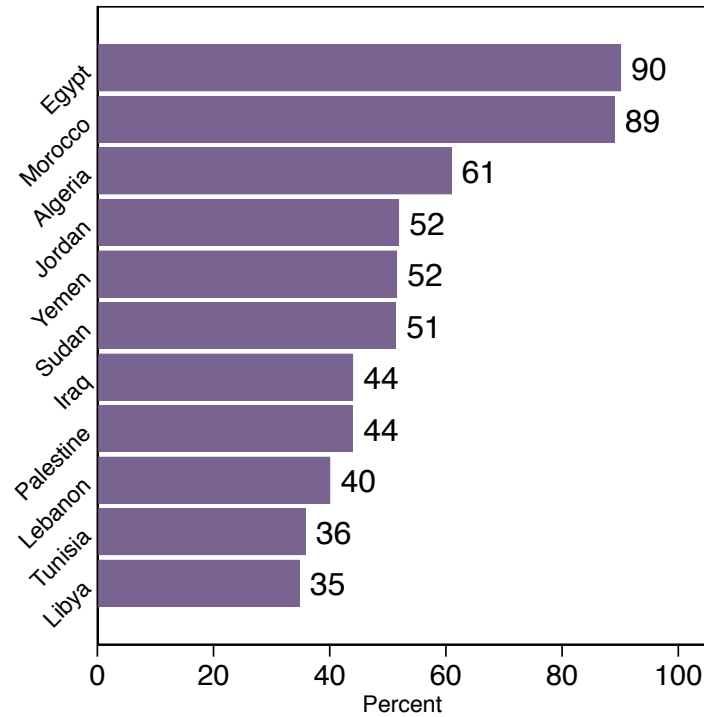
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

In Tunisia, around 16 percent of the surveyed women reported that they have been exposed to sexual harassment in public places. In contrast, 16 percent of the surveyed men declared that they were harassed. The picture is somewhat different in Iraq where men are more concerned with the burden of sexual harassment in public places. More men than women (42 percent against 35 percent) reported having experienced sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment happens in all age groups. Young women aged 17-28 years old face more sexual harassment than their older peers. The Arab Barometer wave V data (2018-2019) highlight that around 90 percent of the young respondents (aged 17-28) in Egypt have experienced sexual harassment in public places. In addition, more than 50 percent of these young women are more likely to be publicly harassed in Algeria, Jordan, Sudan and Yemen. Besides, between 35 percent and 45 percent of women in the same age group declared being harassed in Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine and Tunisia.

Frequency of Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months, Females, Ages 17-28

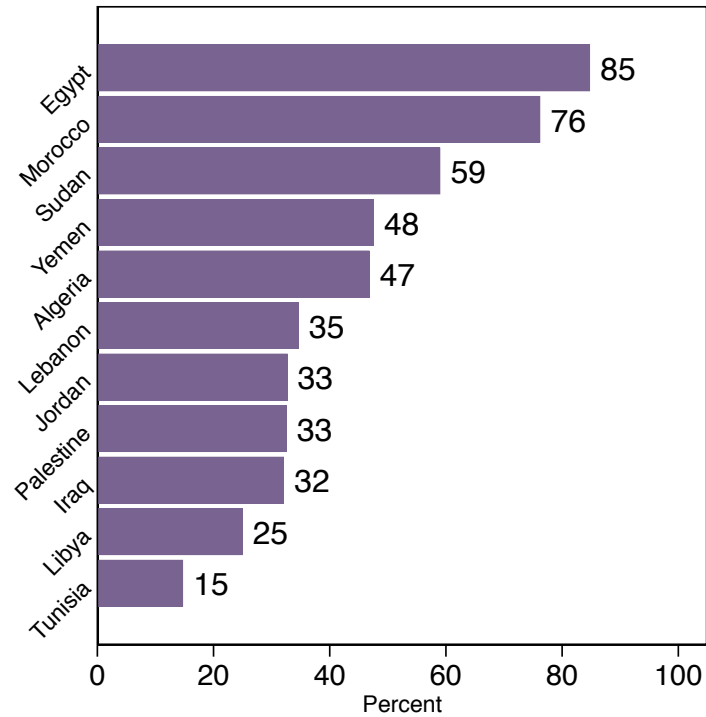
% reporting being harassed often, sometimes, or rarely.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

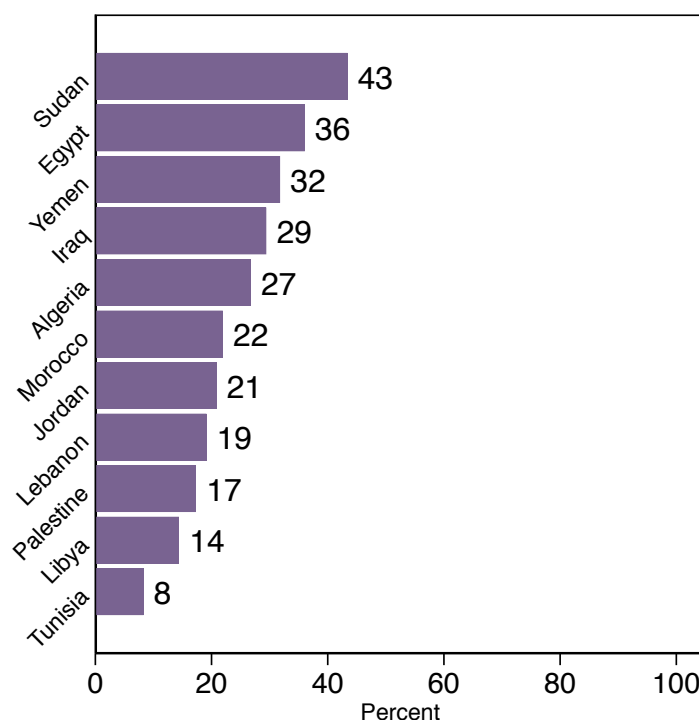
Frequency of Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months, Females, Ages 29-40

% reporting being harassed often, sometimes, or rarely.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Frequency of Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months, Females, Ages 41+
% reporting being harassed often, sometimes, or rarely.

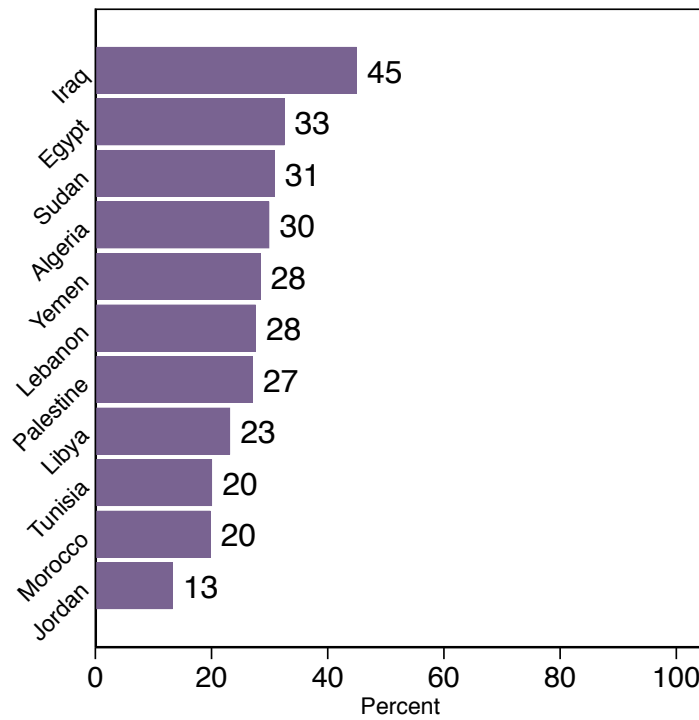


Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

It is worthy to note that though gender seems to play a role in how widespread sexual harassment is, age is the bigger divider. In Sudan, age group differences among females who have experienced sexual harassment are lower compared to the all Arab countries in the survey. The difference between women in age group 1 (17-28) and age group 2 (29-40) is negative. This points to the fact that women between 29-40 years old are more exposed to sexual harassment than younger women (59 percent against 51 percent).

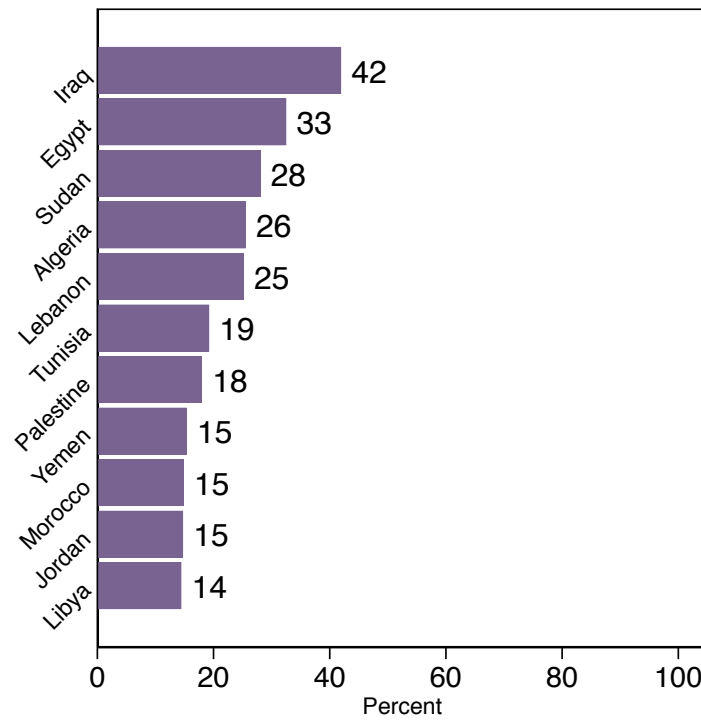
Regarding, Iraq and Tunisia where men are more exposed to sexual harassment than women ; by age group, 45 percent of 17- to 28-year-olds say they have been victims of sexual harassment in Iraq, compared with 37 percent of men aged more than or equal to 41 years old. In Tunisia, sexual harassment against men is prevalent in both age groups 1 and 2 where around 20 percent, and 19 percent of the respondents, respectively, say that they are victims of sexual harassment.

Frequency of Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months, Males, Ages 17-28
% reporting being harassed often, sometimes, or rarely.



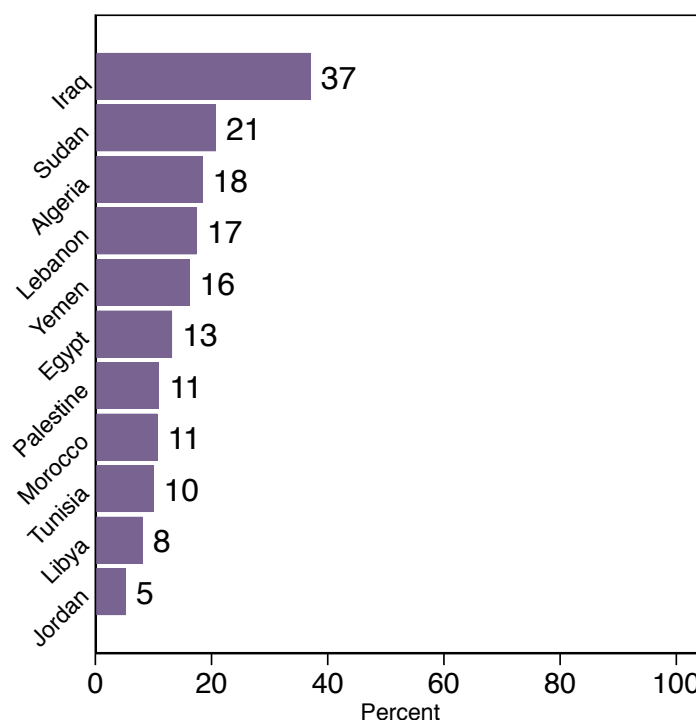
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Frequency of Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months, Males, Ages 29-40
% reporting being harassed often, sometimes, or rarely.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

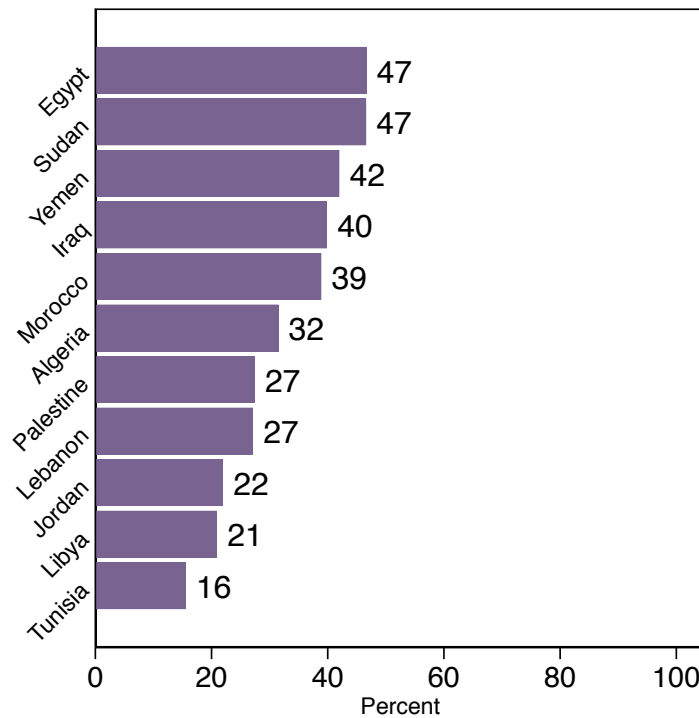
Frequency of Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months, Males, Ages 41+
% reporting being harassed often, sometimes, or rarely.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

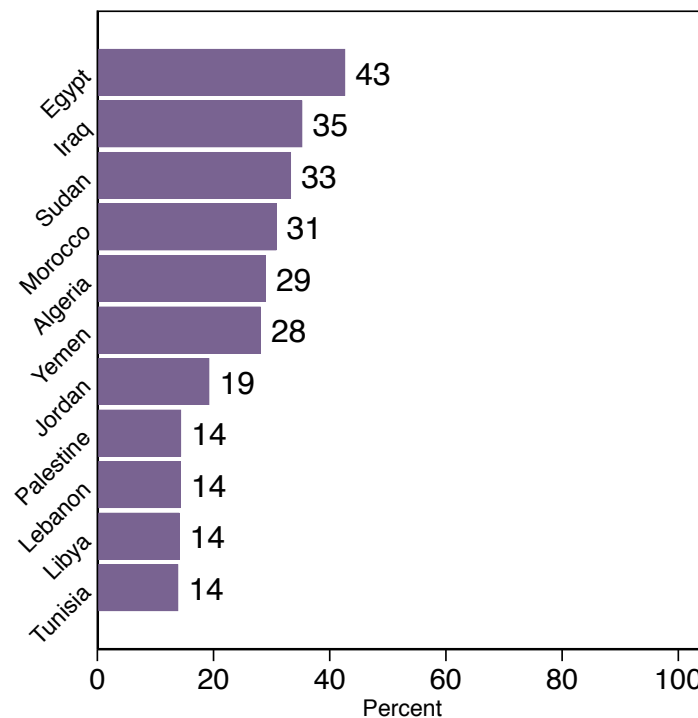
Sexual harassment in public places is an urban phenomenon. It is in urban areas of Sudan and Egypt where people are more at risk of sexual harassment. Furthermore, it is in Tunisia where people living in urban areas are less at risk of sexual harassment compared to the other countries in the sample. Nonetheless, the difference in points between the percentage of respondents living in urban areas and the percentage of respondents living in rural areas is less than 10 points in Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Libya and Morocco. This may suggest that there is no significant difference in sexual harassment in urban and rural areas in these countries.

Frequency of Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months, Urban
% reporting being harassed often, sometimes, or rarely.



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Frequency of Sexual Harassment in the Past 12 Months, Rural
% reporting being harassed often, sometimes, or rarely.



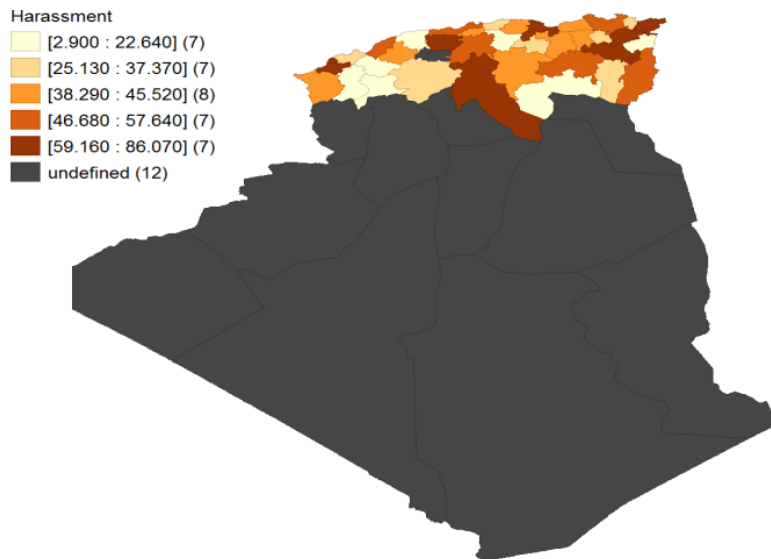
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

The data also shows that in Palestine, people living in refugee camp are more exposed to sexual harassment than people living in rural areas (25 percent against 15 percent).

In this section, we identify the governorates with the highest rates of sexual harassment against women in all the countries participating in the survey (2018-2019). In addition, we indicate the governorates with the highest rate of sexual harassment against men in Iraq and Tunisia.

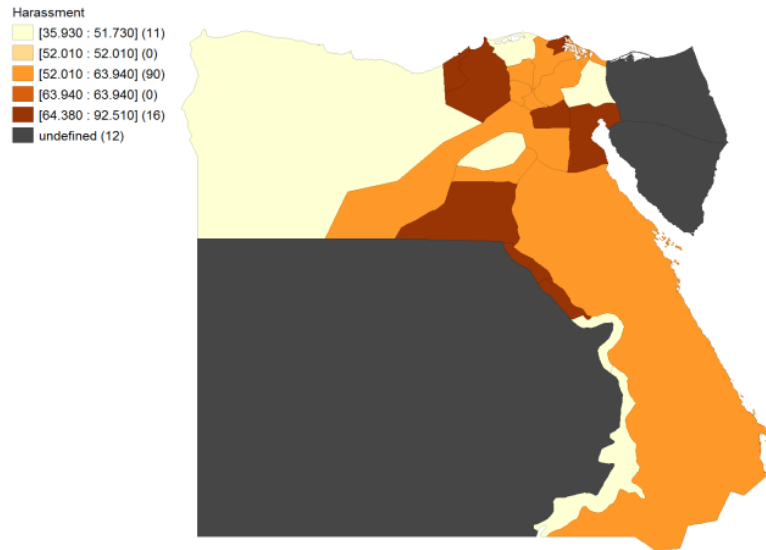
Algeria

Sexual harassment against women is high in the following governorates: Ain Timouchent, Djelfa, Ain defla, Bejaia, Oum El Bouaghi, Guelma and El Traf. It is between 59 percent and 86 percent. The highest rate is observed in Ain Timouchent (86 percent).



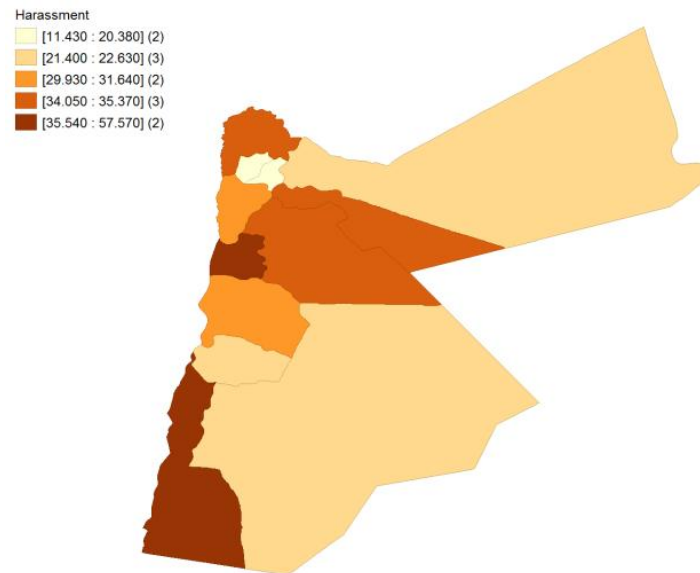
Egypt

Sexual harassment against women is high in the following governorates: Al Buhayrah, Dumyat , Al Minya ,Asyut, Suhag, Alexandria, Cairo and Suez. The highest rate is observed in Dumyat (around 93 percent).



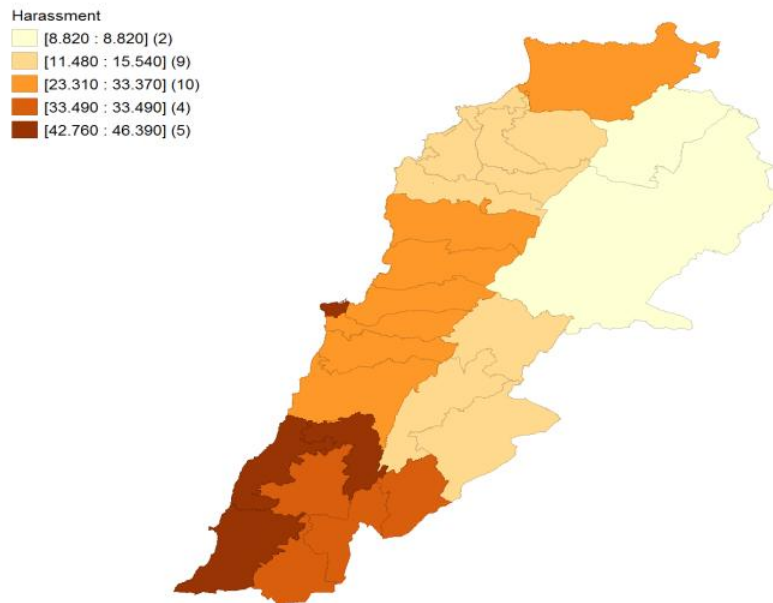
Jordan

Sexual harassment against women is high in the following governorates: Madaba and Aqaba. Madaba shows the highest rate (around 58 percent).



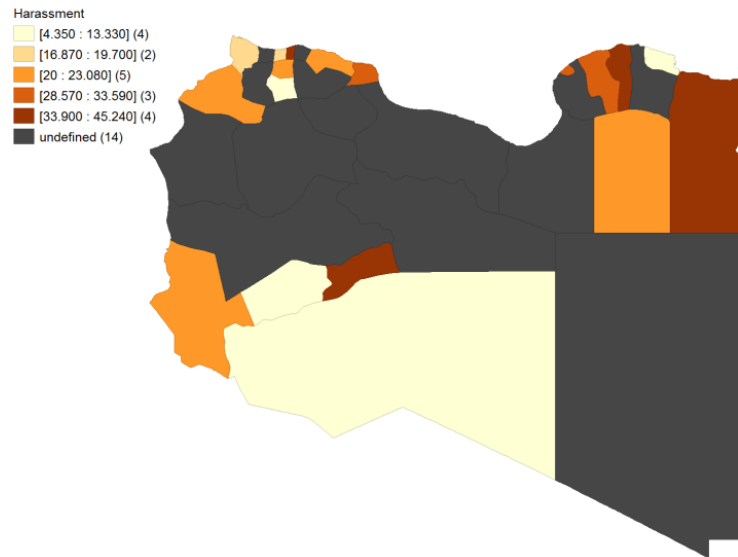
Lebanon

Lebanon shows the highest rates of sexual harassment in the governorates of South and Beirut. The capital Beirut recorded the highest rate (around 47 percent).



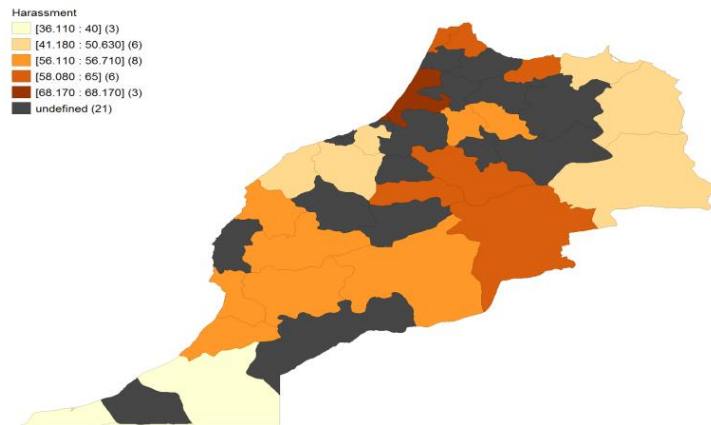
Libya

Sexual harassment against women is high in the following governorates: Al Jabal Al Akhdar, Sebha, Tobrouq and Tripoli. Tobrouq has the highest rate (around 46 percent).



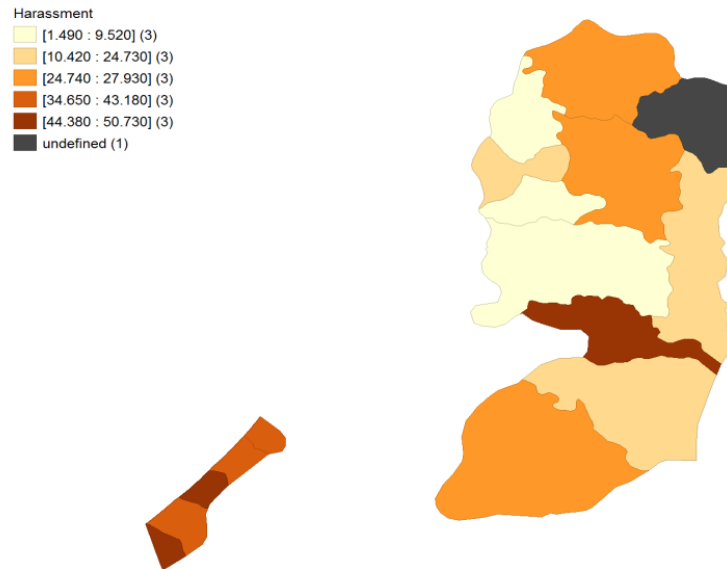
Morocco

Rabat, Salé and Kenitra are the governorates with the highest rates of sexual harassment against women in Morocco (around 68 percent).



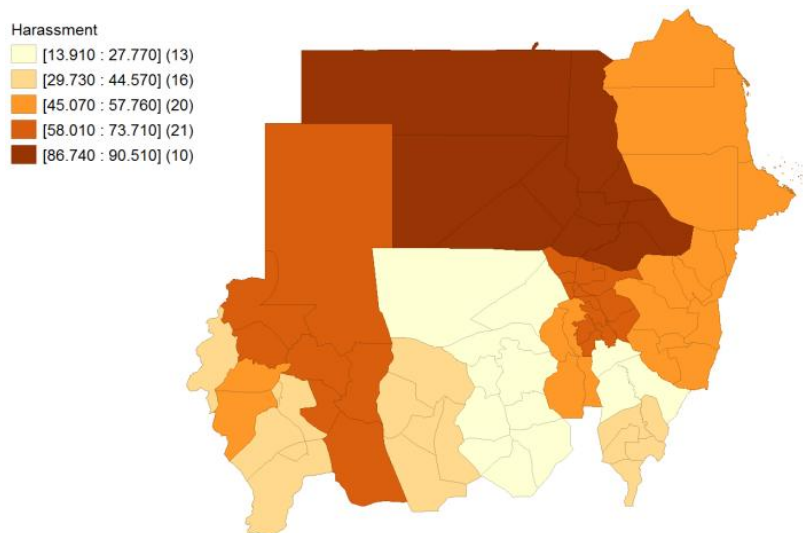
Palestine

Sexual harassment against women is high in the following governorates: Deir al Balah, Rafah and Jerusalem. The highest rate is observed in Rafah (around 51 percent).



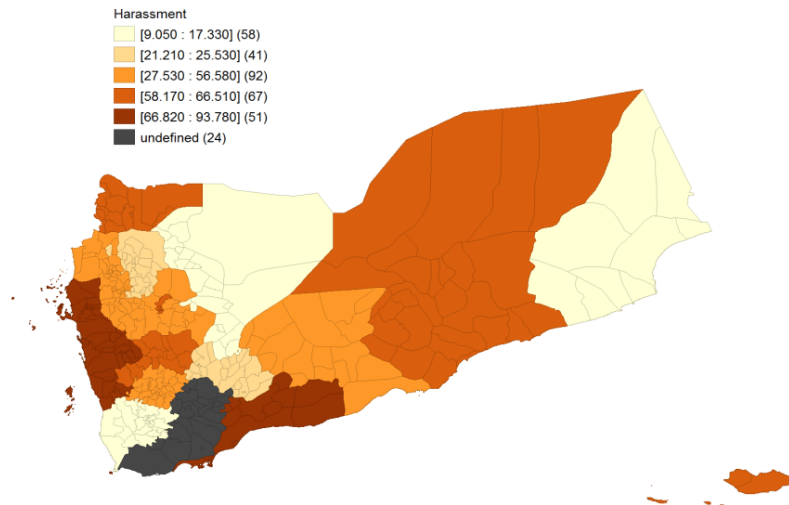
Sudan

*Sexual harassment against women is high in the following governorates:
North and River Nile. Around 91 percent of the surveyed women living in the
River Nile are victims of sexual harassment.*



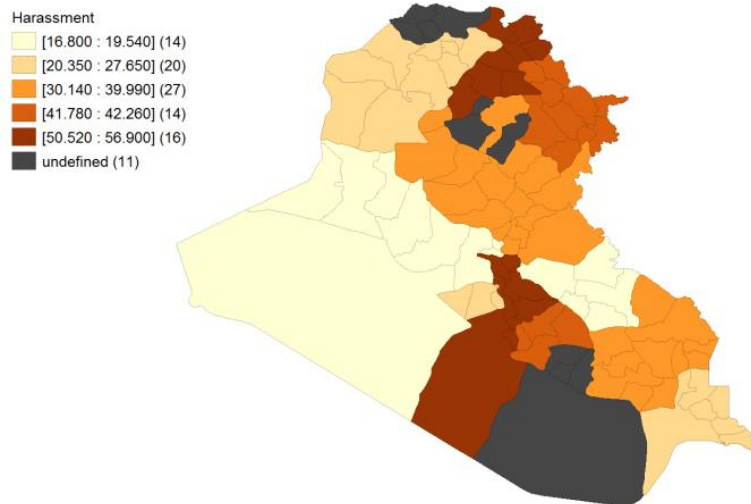
Yemen

Sexual harassment against women is high in the following governorates: Al Hudaydah, Raymah, Adan and Abyan. It is in Abyan where women are more at risk of being victims of sexual harassment (around 94 percent).



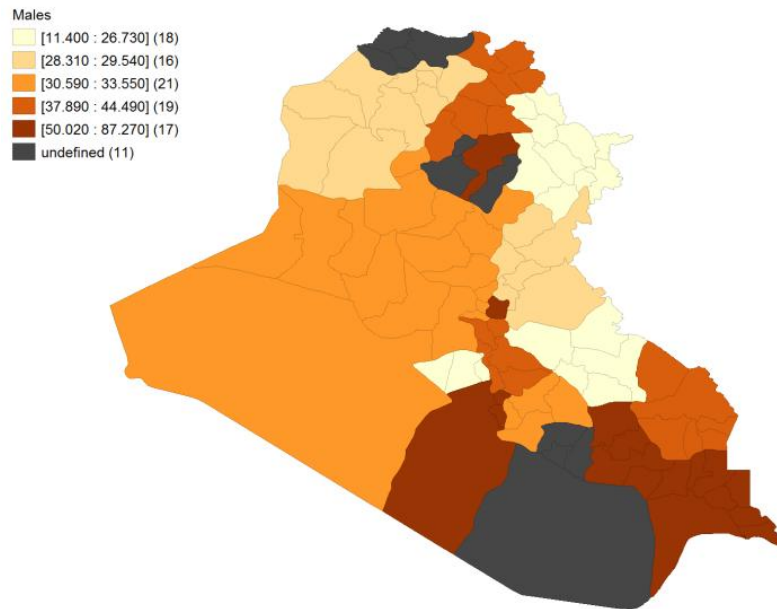
Iraq, females

Sexual harassment against women is high in the following governorates: Najaf, Babylone and Erbil. The highest rate is observed in Erbil (around 57percent).



Iraq, males

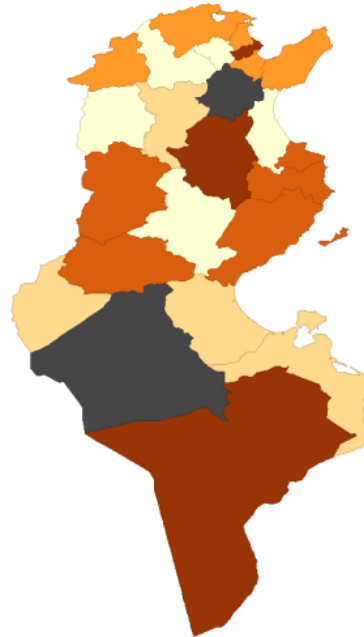
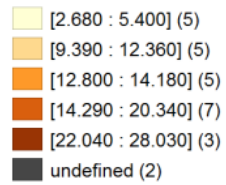
Sexual harassment against men is high in the following governorates: Najaf, Baghdad , Kirkuk, Dhi Qar and Al Basra. Men are victims of sexual harassment in Dhi Qar (around 88 percent).



Tunisia, females

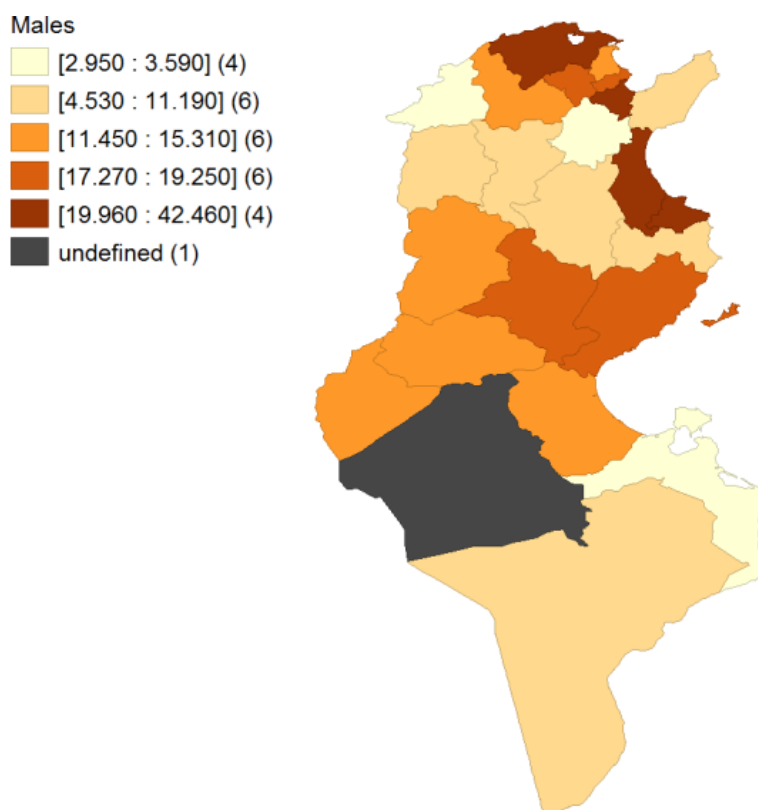
Sexual harassment against women is high in the following governorates: Tataouine and Kairouan. Women living Kairouan are more exposed to sexual harassment (around 28 percent).

Harassment



Tunisia, males

Sexual harassment against men is high in the following governorates: Bizerte, Sousse, Ben Arous and Monastir. The highest rate is recorded in Bizerte (around 43 percent).



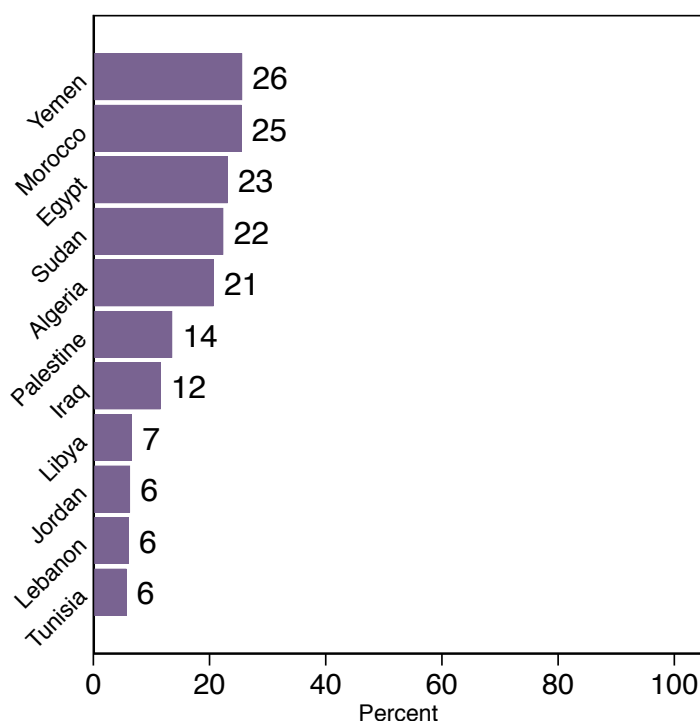
Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a broad term as it may include child abuse, abuse of the elderly, in addition to the intimate partner violence. Domestic violence assessed by Arab Barometer Wave V is the physical violence or abuse perpetrated by a member of a family on another member of the family. It was assessed using “yes-no” question describing violent acts such as pushed, grabbed, or shoved; having an object thrown at the victim; or being slapped. The variables of interest were: (1) the timing of the violence (ever experienced domestic violence or in the past 12 months), (2) the domestic violence gender victim, and (3) the domestic violence support actors.

The following figures highlight the prevalence of domestic violence in the participating countries. The results are somewhat reassuring. They show that this type of violence does not seem to be widespread in the Arab countries. From approximately 70 percent to more than 70 percent of the respondents, reported that

none of their household members was physically abused by another member of the family in their lifetime. Nonetheless, if we compare within the countries, the proportion of respondents reporting domestic violence is relatively high in Yemen (26 percent), Morocco (25 percent), Egypt (23 percent), Sudan (22 percent) and Algeria (21 percent) against 6 percent in Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia; and Libya (7 percent). Palestine and Iraq lie in the middle with 14 percent and 12 percent respectively.

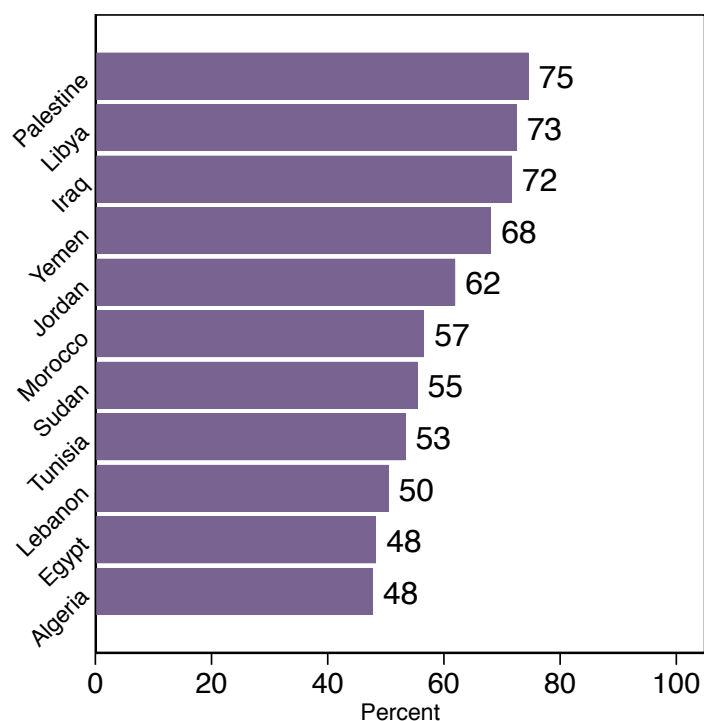
Frequency of Domestic Violence



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

The prevalence of physical abuse in the past 12 months provides another picture of this phenomenon. Roughly half of the respondents to more than half of them, in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen, reported that one of their household members has experienced this type of behavior in the last 12 months. This proportion rises to more than 70 percent in Iraq, Libya and Palestine.

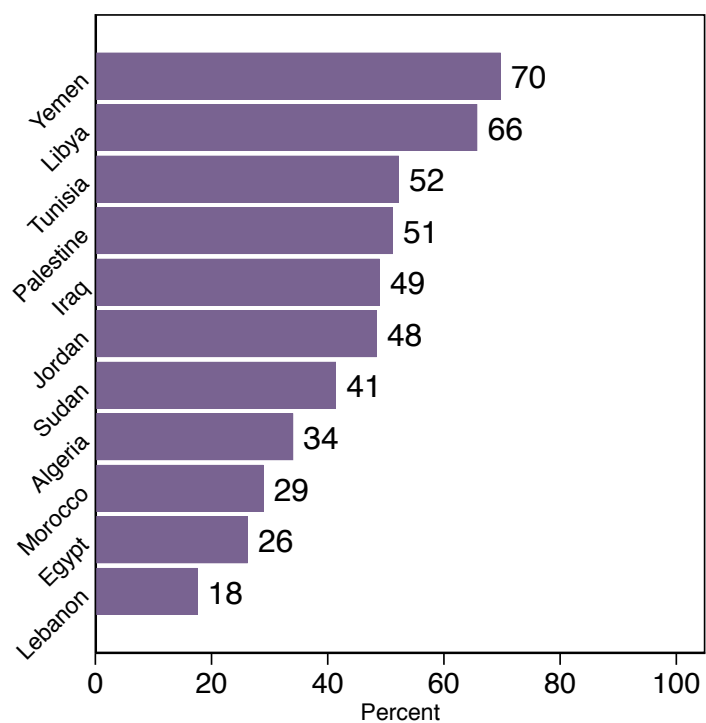
Frequency of Domestic Violence in the Past 12 Months



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

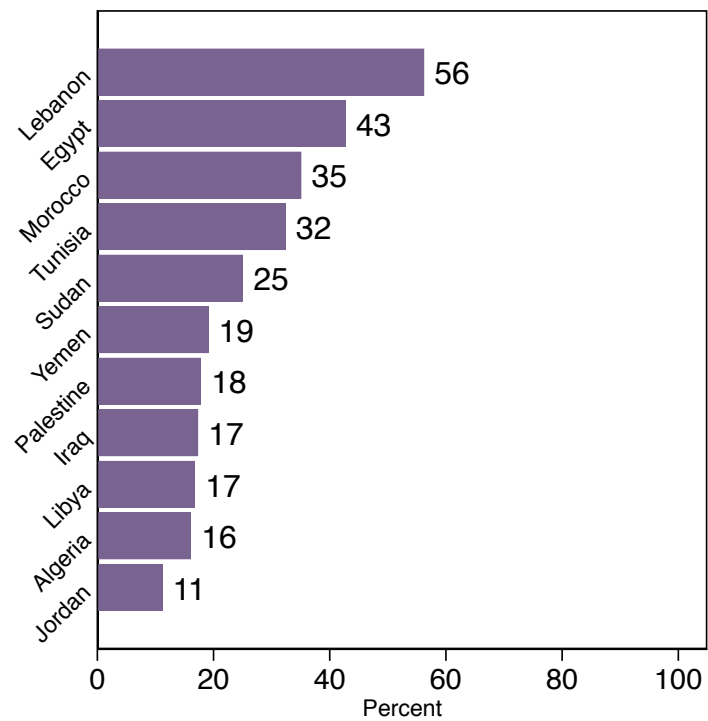
The following figures highlight the domestic violence gender victim. It is clear that males are victims of domestic violence in the majority of countries under study: Algeria (34 percent), Iraq (49 percent), Jordan (48 percent), Libya (66 percent), Palestine (51 percent), Sudan (41 percent) and Tunisia (52 percent). Females are victims of domestic violence in Egypt (43 percent), Lebanon (56 percent) and Morocco (35 percent).

Frequency of Male Victims of Domestic Violence



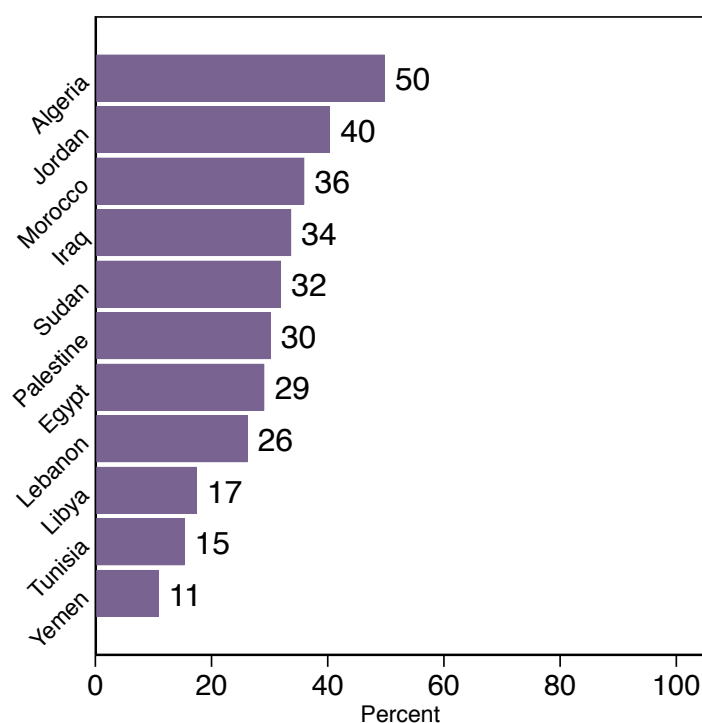
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Frequency of Female Victims of Domestic Violence



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

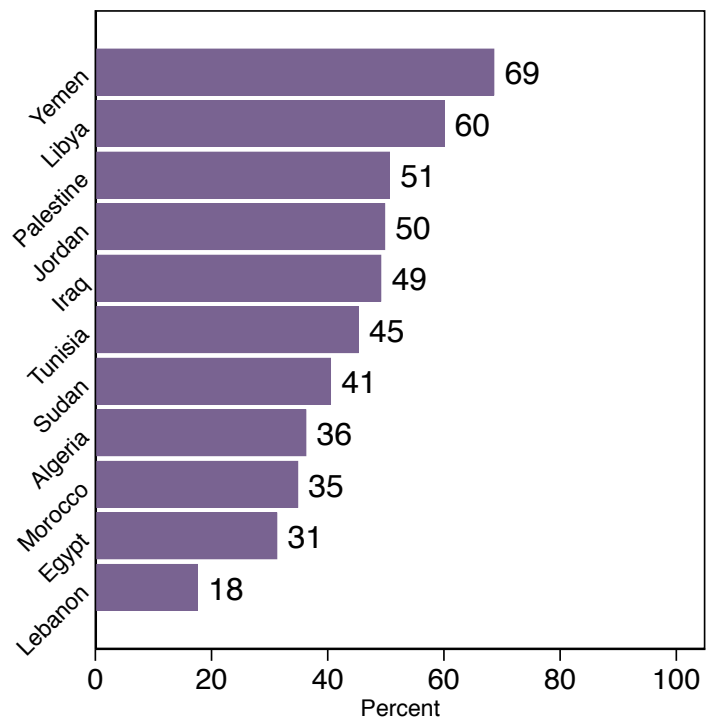
Frequency of Both Male and Female Victims of Domestic Violence



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

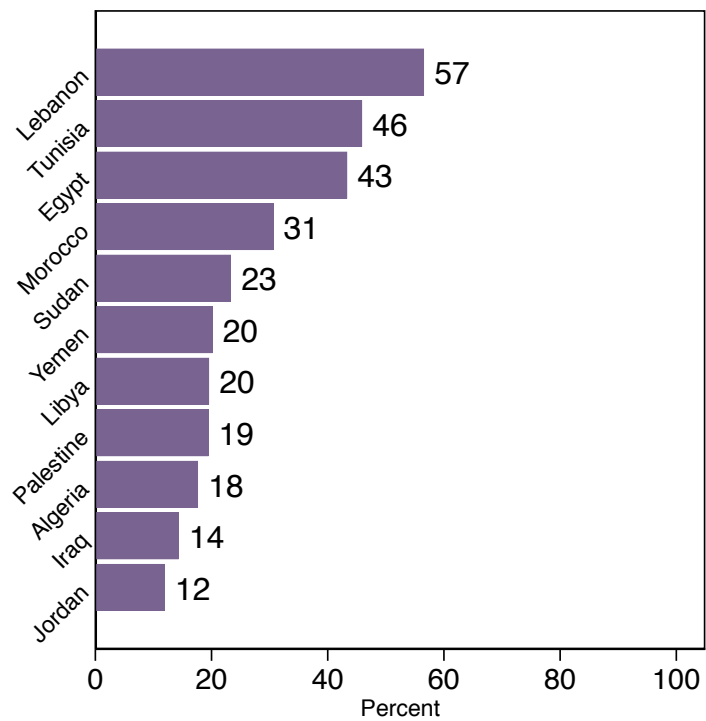
In urban areas of Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Morocco, males suffer from domestic violence. In rural areas of Libya, Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen, males experience more domestic violence. Females are more exposed to domestic violence in urban areas of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya and Palestine. It is in rural areas of Iraq, Morocco and Sudan, where females experience domestic violence. The figures also show that both females and males living in rural areas of Lebanon face domestic violence (100 percent). This rate is also high in Algeria (70 percent).

Frequency of Male Victims of Domestic Violence, Urban



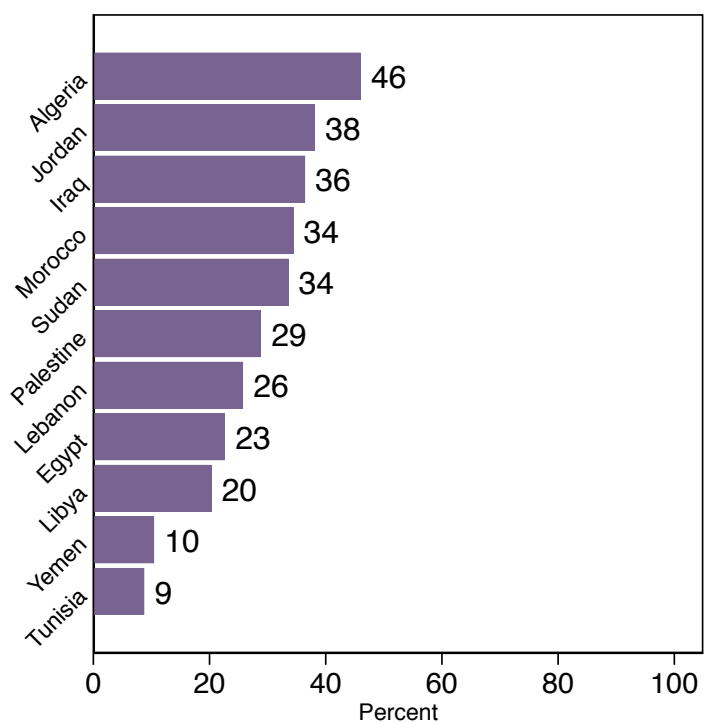
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Frequency of Female Victims of Domestic Violence, Urban



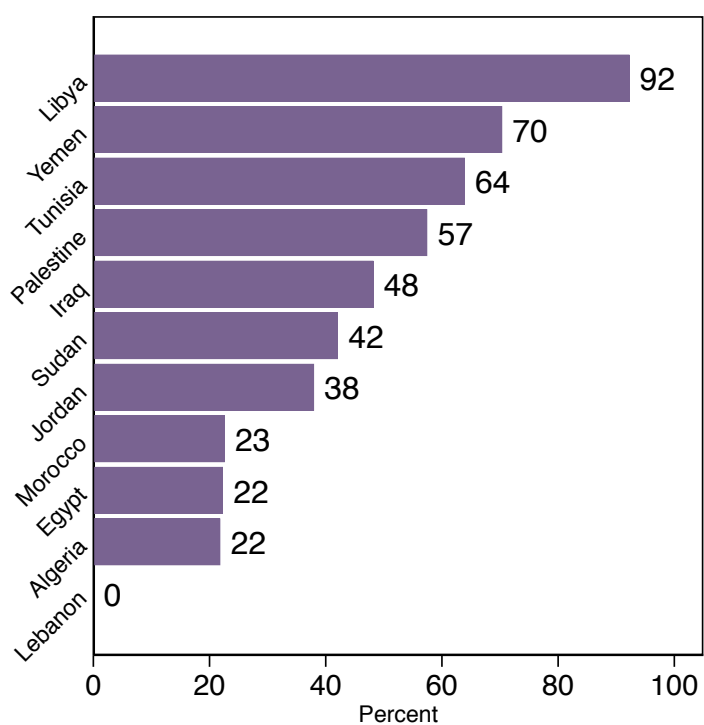
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Frequency of Both Male and Female Victims of Domestic Violence, Urban



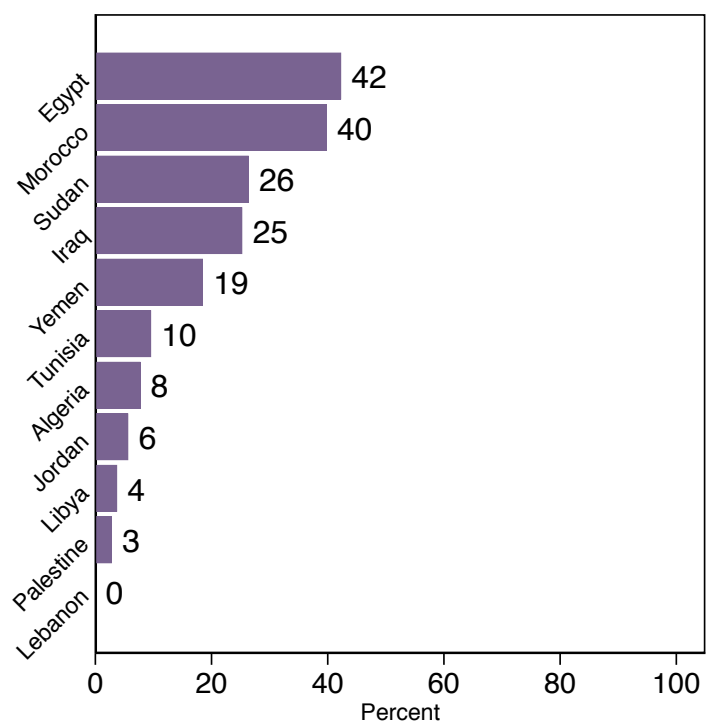
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Frequency of Male Victims of Domestic Violence, Rural



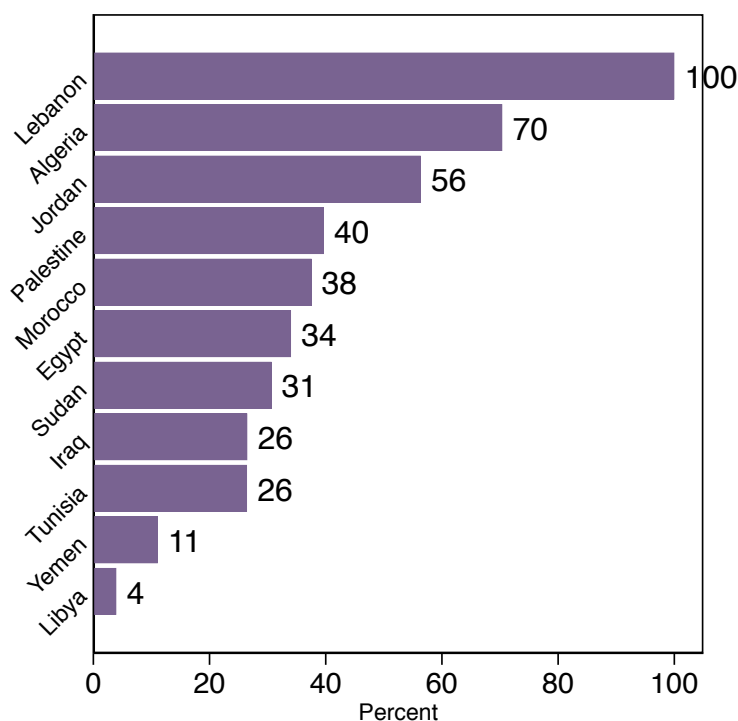
Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Frequency of Female Victims of Domestic Violence, Rural



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

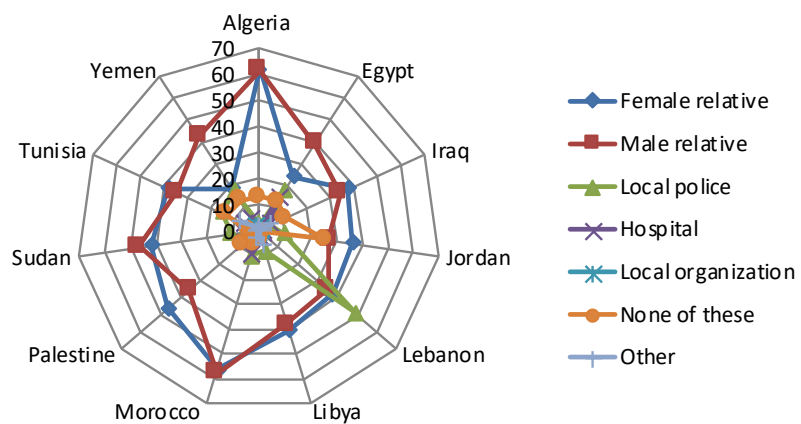
Frequency of Both Male and Female Victims of Domestic Violence, Rural



Notes: Weighted estimates.
Source: Arab Barometer V.

Reporting domestic violence is an important step when one experiences such type of abuse. The Arab Barometer survey questionnaire addresses this issue by asking the respondent about the actors from whom she/he thinks that the victim is likely to be able to receive assistance. The victims in the Arab countries seek help from relatives either female or male; in other words from the family. Domestic violence is still considered a private family matter and should be confined in the family sphere by fear of being labeled or judged. It is only in Lebanon, where victims report domestic violence to the local police (49 percent).

Domestic Violence Support Actors





About Arab Barometer

The Arab Barometer is a nonpartisan research network that provides insights into the social, political, and economic attitudes and values of ordinary citizens across the Arab world.

We have been conducting rigorous, and nationally representative face-to-face public opinion surveys on probability samples of the adult populations across the Arab world since 2006. The margin of error is ± 3 percent.

The Arab Barometer is the largest repository of publicly available data on the views of men and women in the MENA region. Our findings give a voice to the needs and concerns of Arab publics.



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