

MULTI-SITE SCOPING STUDY
ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT
AND OTHER FORMS OF
SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST
WOMEN AND GIRLS
IN PUBLIC SPACES
IN EASTERN UKRAINE

Kyiv, Ukraine
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	NAP	National Action Plan
CRSV	Conflict-related sexual violence	SH	Sexual harassment
CSO	Community service organizations	SV	Sexual violence
DV	Domestic violence	SVAWG	Sexual violence against women and girls
EVAW	Ending Violence against Women	WSA	Women’s Safety Audit
FGD	Focus group discussion	UN	United Nations
GBV	Gender-based violence	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GRB	Gender-responsive budgeting	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus	UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
ILO	International Labour Organization	IDPs	Internally displaced persons
LNOB	Leave No One Behind		

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sexual harassment (SH) and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls (SVAWG) in public spaces in urban and rural settings are an everyday occurrence for women and girls across the world. Women and girls experience and fear different forms of sexual violence (SV) in public spaces, from unwelcome sexual remarks and gestures to rape and femicide. It happens on the streets, in and around public transportation, schools and workplaces, in public toilets, water and food distribution sites, parks and other public spaces. This reality reduces women's and girls' freedom of movement. It reduces their ability to participate in school, work, and public life. It limits their access to essential services and their enjoyment of cultural and recreational activities, and negatively impacts their health and well-being. Although domestic and workplace violence are widely recognized as human rights violations, sexual harassment against women and girls in public spaces is often neglected, with few laws or policies in place to prevent and address it.¹

For 10 years, UN Women's Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces for Women and Girls Global Initiative has worked with leading women's organizations, local and national governments, UN agencies, and other partners to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive approaches to prevent and respond to SH in public spaces in different settings.

In Ukraine, to better understand the risks of SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces, a multi-site scoping study was conducted by UN Women in the conflict-affected Novoaydar and Zolote, Luhansk region and Toretsk and Soledar, Donetsk region, within the framework of the United Nations Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme (UN RPP).

The study was conducted in the cities of Novoaydar and Zolote, Luhansk region, and Toretsk and Soledar, Donetsk region without covering all the settlements under these amalgamated communities. It included 1,314 women participants (aged between 18 to 50 years old) from Novoaydar (431) and Zolote (263), Luhansk region, and Soledar (299) and Toretsk (321), Donetsk region. The research included: a desk review of the national and international legal framework on gender-based violence, including SH and other forms of SVAWG; surveys using Google forms and paper questionnaires for data collection on the risks of SH and other forms of SV faced by women and girls in public spaces; focus group discussions (FGD) with women and girls; and a women's safety audit (WSA) conducted in public spaces.

Violence against women and girls is an entrenched social problem in Ukraine rooted in biased social gender

norms.² According to the 2019 OSCE-led Survey on Violence against Women, 5% of women in Ukraine experienced some form of SV perpetrated by someone other than an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime since the age of 15.³ According to the same survey, 49% of women had experienced some form of SH in their lifetime, and 17% said they had experienced SH in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Ukraine is a signatory to many international human rights instruments including international commitments on gender equality and on the prevention and response to violence against women and girls (VAWG). In 2011, Ukraine signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), which is still awaiting ratification nearly a decade later. At the same time, some amendments to the legislative framework on VAWG have been adopted by Ukraine in line with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. The definitions of rape (Art. 152, Criminal Code of Ukraine) and sexual assault (Art. 153, Criminal Code of Ukraine) were revised to correspond to the regional standard provided by the Istanbul Convention and now refer to rape as "non-consensual vaginal, anal or oral penetration of a sexual nature of the body of another person with any bodily part or object", and to sexual assault as "violent non-consensual acts of a sexual nature which do not imply penetration of another person's body".

A significant gap in the Ukrainian legislation concerns sexual harassment (SH). The Istanbul Convention defines sexual harassment in Art. 40 as "any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature

1. UN Women, Creating Safe and Empowering Spaces for Women and Girls. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/creating-safe-public-spaces>
2. Gender Norms, K4D Report 2017, p. 7
3. OSCE, OSCE-led survey on violence against women "Well-being and Safety of Women", Ukraine, 2019 <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/440312?download=true>



Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Vitaliy Shevelev

with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment” and leaves it up to the state parties to decide whether to take criminal or other legal sanctions for such harming behaviors, including civil or administrative legal sanctions.⁴

Whilst the definition of SH in the Ukrainian legislation still has to be aligned to the existing regional standards in this field, Art. 1 of the Law of Ukraine “On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men” provides a definition for sexual harassment which refers to “acts of a sexual nature expressed verbally (threats, intimidation, obscene remarks) or physically (touching, patting) which

humiliate or insult persons in employment and service subordination, in financial or another dependency”. This definition differs significantly from the one provided in the Istanbul Convention. Specifically, it narrows the sphere of SH to relations of subordination only, while SH can be perpetrated by a subordinated person against the supervisor and can also take place between peers. Additionally, except employment, service subordination and financial or another dependency, SH can also take place in public spaces like streets or transport, and online. The Ukrainian legislation does not criminalize SH in public spaces but it does contain several provisions that can be used to hold perpetrators of SH accountable, namely petty hooliganism described in Art. 173 of the Code of Administrative Offences of Ukraine.

This report presents data on SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces in each of the intervention sites and a comparative analysis of the risks of SH and other forms of SV faced by women in public spaces in the contact line communities (Torestk and Zolote) compared to the ones situated farther from the active military operations (Soledar and Novoaydar).

4. Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Istanbul, Turkey. 11.V.2011. <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>

Novoaydar

In Novoaydar, participants shared that women often experience a high risk of physical and sexual violence in public spaces, especially after dark, and that SH and other forms of SVAWG most often occurs in streets, bars, restaurants, clubs, and online.

43% of women respondents said that they have experienced some form of SH in public spaces in Novoaydar. According to the survey, the group reporting the highest incidence of sexual harassment included women aged 18-39 years old. The two most common forms of SH experienced included verbal harassment (e.g., unwelcome sexual comments and remarks made about their body or appearance) and stalking.

About 20% of women respondents said they had experienced online SH consisting of unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, stories, or images and videos of sexual nature transmitted in the form of emails, messages received on social media, texts or calls. Young women (aged 18-39 years old) were more likely to experience online SH than women (aged 40 years and older). Young women were 10 times more likely to be repeatedly asked out and receive invitations for sexual intercourse after they had explicitly refused these proposals.

Focus group participants shared that SH and other forms of SVAWG become intensified given limited public transportation options for moving around the settlement and especially when transiting to neighboring cities. Women participants said that while they may feel safe when traveling by bus, they noted that there are very few routes and they are only in service during the daytime. Given

limited transport options, many town residents said that they practice hitchhiking, which as they noted also poses additional SH risks for women.

Just over a quarter (27%) of women respondents said that they are afraid to pass by large groups of men when they are in public spaces. Just over a quarter (27%) of women respondents said that they are also afraid to pass by large groups of military men when they are in public spaces. Among these participants, many (89%) reported that they do not feel safe because “military men often make unwelcome verbal remarks of sexual nature”.

The women’s safety audit (WSA) conducted in Novoaydar reveals some of the public infrastructure issues affecting women and girls’ safety in public spaces. These include: a lack of or insufficient lighting in public spaces and areas where harassment and other forms of violence could occur; obstacles impairing the free movement of pedestrians; low traffic safety; unsatisfactory state of public toilets or their absence in crowded places; a lack of signs with street names and no numbers on houses which complicates orientation in the town, including when calling a taxi or seeking assistance in case of an emergency; no video surveillance cameras in public places; and the absence of police patrols or a visible presence of the police.

The survey also reveals that the police and centers for social services are two most known service providers for victims/survivors of SV in Novoaydar. More than half of women respondents said that they never told anyone about their experience of SH and other forms of VAWG in public spaces. The main reasons given included the following:



Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Vitaliy Shevelev

they (women) did not consider the form of SH serious enough to report, they had low trust in law enforcement and claimed that even if they did choose to report SH the authorities would not address the situation in any way. Furthermore, young women (aged 18-25 years) explained that preserving a good reputation among neighbors and acquaintances is more important for them than obtaining help in situations of SH and other forms of SVAWG, which calls attention to the presence of victim-blaming attitudes in the community.

Respondents indicated that young and old men commit SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces almost to the same extent. 20% of respondents hold the view that military men more often perpetrate SH in public spaces than civilians. The absence of punishment for SH was raised by participants as the main reason for the high prevalence of SH.

The assessment showed a very low understanding of SVAWG causes by women, with almost half of respondents considering men's uncontrolled sexual desire as one of the main reasons for SVAWG. One-fifth of women respondents said that women are to blame for their own experience of SH and other forms of SV. More than 25% of respondents of the survey said they consider the extent to which their physical appearance (e.g., the way they dress or wear their makeup) may lead to sexual harassment. Young women were twice as likely to hold these views than older women. These findings also reveal how deeply entrenched victim-blaming is in the community.

About 25% of respondents stated that SH is tolerated in their town and that this may be due to lack of awareness

of men and women on what constitutes SH, its non-identification as a harmful behavior, and a culture of impunity. Nearly half of respondents noted that the military conflict in Ukraine exacerbated SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces. Women stated that at the beginning of the armed conflict in 2014 there was a high presence of military in Novoaydar. Some women mentioned that they have experienced SH perpetrated by military men or witnessed SH of women perpetrated by military men. Currently, the presence of the military in Novoaydar is limited largely to the weekends or short visits when running errands in town. Respondents consider that the exacerbation of SH and other forms of SVAWG in their community is caused by the limited attention given by authorities to SVAWG and the increased military presence compared to the times before the armed conflict.

Of those women who said they experienced SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces in Novoaydar, about 25% said they avoid certain public spaces they regard as unsafe. Some women explained that their mobility in the town has been limited – for example, due to not feeling safe to go out alone at night, and that they need to exercise caution at all times.

Participants consider that ensuring an efficient investigation and perpetrator accountability in cases of SV, followed by the introduction of sex education in schools and community mobilization alongside awareness-raising campaigns are the most effective measures for preventing and responding to SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces.

Zolote

In Zolote, participants shared that women often experience a high risk of physical and sexual violence in public spaces, and most often this takes place after dark. SH and other forms of SVAWG most often occur in streets and online, and less in bars, restaurants, and clubs.

An overwhelming 61% of women respondents said that they have experienced some form of SH in public spaces in Zolote. According to the survey, the group reporting the highest incidence of sexual harassment included women aged 18-39. The two most common forms of SH experienced included verbal harassment (e.g., unwelcome sexual comments and remarks made about their body or appearance) and stalking.

About 25% of women respondents said they had experienced online SH consisting of unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, stories, or images and videos of sexual nature transmitted in the form of emails, messages received on social media, texts or calls. Young women (aged 18-23 years old) were three times more likely to experience online SH than

women aged 24-40 years old, and six times more likely than women aged 40 years and older.

More than half of women respondents indicated that they fear using public spaces after dark, mostly because of active military action. Respondents aged 40 years and older were more likely to hold this view than those aged 18-24 years old.

One third of women respondents said that they are afraid to pass by large group of military men when they are in public spaces. Among these participants, the majority reported that they do not feel safe because "military men often make unwelcome verbal remarks of sexual nature". The women's safety audit (WSA) conducted in Zolote reveals some of the public infrastructure issues affecting women and girls' safety in public spaces. These include: a lack of or poor lighting in public spaces; public spaces with limited sightlines areas where harassment and other forms of violence could occur; obstacles impairing free movement of pedestrians; low traffic safety; places where



Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Vitaliy Shevelev

alcohol is sold 24/7 including to the military and where groups of drunk people gather; unsatisfactory state of public toilets or their absence in crowded places; a lack of signs with street names and numbers on houses which complicates orientation in the town; no video surveillance cameras in public places; and the presence of the military.

The survey also reveals that the police and emergency health providers (ambulance) are two of the most known service providers for victims/survivors of SV in Zolote. More than half of women respondents said that they never told anyone about their experience of SH and other forms of VAWG in public spaces, most often because they did not consider the form of SH as serious enough to report.

In Zolote, women participants identified young men and military men as the main perpetrators of SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces. Many respondents hold the view that military men more often perpetrate SH in public spaces than civilians. The absence of punishment for SH was raised by over half of women participants as the main reason for the high prevalence of SH. More than one-quarter of women identify unequal gender relations and patriarchal culture in Ukraine as the main reason why men perpetrators commit SH and other forms of SVAWG. The majority of respondents (64%) regard gender stereotypes and inequitable social norms as the main causes of SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces. However, findings also reveal how deeply entrenched victim-blaming is in Zolote. 43% of respondents said that women are to blame for their own experience of SH and other forms of SV; 86% said that women are responsible for their own safety and should avoid places or situations where they might be at risk of SV; and 20% consider men's uncontrollable sexual desire as the main cause of SVAWG. More than 33% of respondents in the survey said they consider the extent to which their physical appearance (e.g., the way they dress, wearing heavy make-up) may lead to sexual harassment.

About 72% of respondents noted that the military conflict in Ukraine exacerbated SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces in Zolote. The ongoing active armed conflict, affecting Zolote situated directly on the contact line, was identified as a major threat to the dignity and life of residents. According to respondents, shootings have continued over six years, including after the ceasefire agreement between parties was announced.

Study participants shared that military men often move around Zolote in armed vehicles or walk in the streets. They enter stores carrying weapons, buy alcohol at any time of the day (in spite of the night ban) and consume it – sometimes in public places. The survey reveals that SH is often perpetrated by military men, with reported incidents of unwelcome verbal comments and touching, as well as stalking in Zolote.

Of those women who said they experienced SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces in Zolote, about 33% said this experience continues to affect their mobility in the town and that they are often afraid to travel alone, especially at night.

Participants consider that raising awareness in the community about gender equality and all forms of SVAWG in public spaces, the introduction of sex education in schools, community mobilization with awareness-raising campaigns on gender equality and respectful relationships targeting women and girls and men and boys, and ensuring an efficient investigation and perpetrator accountability in cases of SV are the most effective measures for preventing and responding to SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces.

Toretsk

In Toretsk, which is a town located close to the contact line community, 53% of women respondents said that they have experienced sexual harassment in public spaces. Of those women who experienced SV, nearly 45% said they received unwelcome sexual remarks in public spaces, including about their body or appearance, and about 20% said they experienced stalking.

According to the survey, young women (aged 18-23 years old) were two times more likely than women aged 24 years and older to experience these forms of SV. SH and other forms of SVAWG most often occur in the streets, online, in clubs, bars, and restaurants.

The vast majority of respondents also stated that they were afraid to go out to public spaces at night given military actions and shootings that take place in nearby settlements. At the same time, participants explained that there are less active military actions in the proximity of their town compared to previous years. However, they noted that sometimes they could hear loud cannonades which create constant tension, stress, and feeling of danger as they expect violence to take place.

About 40% of women respondents said that they are afraid to pass by large groups of military men and civilians when they are in public spaces. Among these participants, the majority reported that they do not feel safe because “military men often make unwelcome verbal remarks of sexual nature”.

The women’s safety audit (WSA) conducted in Toretsk noted some of the public infrastructure issues affecting women and girls’ safety in public spaces. These include: a lack of or poor lighting of streets; abandoned buildings or those under construction; public spaces with overgrown trees, bushes and tall grass reducing sightlines; no road surface markings including for pedestrian crossings; insufficient public transportation routes and limited public transportation schedules, especially after dark; a lack of signs with street names and numbers on houses which complicates orientation in the town; and identification of the exact location of a person in need of assistance when calling the police or an ambulance.

The survey also reveals that the police and centres for social services and health care institutions are the most known service providers for victims/survivors of SV in Toretsk. Almost half of women respondents said that they never told anyone about their experience of SH and other forms of VAWG in public spaces. Over one-fifth of women said they did not consider the form of SH as serious enough to report and expressed that even if they did choose to report SH, they felt that authorities would not address the situation in any way.

Of those women who said they experienced SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces in Toretsk, more than half said they avoid certain public spaces they regard as unsafe, and about 25% said this experience continues to affect their mobility in the town and that they are often afraid to travel alone, especially at night.



Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Vitaliy Shevelev

The absence of punishment for SH was raised by surveyed women as the main reason for the high prevalence of SH.

In Toretsk, one third of women participants regard gender stereotypes and inequitable social norms as the main causes of SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces. The assessment reveals a very low understanding of SVAWG causes by women, with almost half of respondents considering men's uncontrolled sexual desire as one of the main causes of SVAWG in Toretsk. One-fourth of women respondents said that women are to blame for their own experience of SH and other forms of SV. More than 50% of the survey respondents said they consider the extent to which their physical appearance (e.g., the way they dress, wearing heavy make-up) may lead to sexual harassment. Young women were twice as likely to hold these views than older women. These findings also reveal how deeply entrenched victim-blaming is in the community.

Nearly one-third of respondents indicated that SH is often tolerated in Toretsk and that this may be due to a culture of impunity, a lack of awareness among men and women on what constitutes SH, and that it may not be recognized as harmful behavior.

Nearly half of respondents noted that the military conflict in Ukraine exacerbated SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces, mainly due to the increased military presence in their community and limited attention of authorities to the issue of VAWG.

Respondents indicated that older men commit SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces slightly more often than younger men. More than one third of respondents hold the view that military men and civilians both perpetrate SH in public spaces. However, they pointed out that the risks of SH perpetrated by military men may be slightly higher than the risks of SH perpetrated by civilians.

Participants consider that ensuring an efficient investigation and perpetrator accountability in cases of SV and community mobilization with awareness-raising campaigns on gender equality and respectful relationships targeting women and girls and men and boys are the most effective measures for preventing and responding to SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces.

Soledar

In Soledar, participants shared that women often experience a high risk of physical and sexual violence in public spaces, especially after dark, and that SH and other forms of SVAWG most often occur in streets, clubs, bars, restaurants, and online.

53% of women respondents said that they have experienced some form of SH in public spaces in Soledar. According to the survey, the group reporting the highest incidence of sexual harassment included women aged 18-39 years old. The two most common forms of SH experienced included verbal harassment (e.g., unwelcome sexual comments and remarks made about their body or appearance) and stalking.

More than 20% of women respondents said they had experienced online SH consisting of unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, stories, or images and videos of sexual nature transmitted in the form of emails, messages received on social media, texts or calls. 14% of women who experienced online SH said that they repeatedly were harassed online. Young women (aged 18-39 years old) were four times more likely than women aged 40 years and older to experience online SH.

The women's safety audit (WSA) conducted in Soledar reveals some of the public infrastructure issues affecting women and girls' safety in public spaces. These include: a lack of or insufficient lighting in public spaces; periodic electricity blackouts; obstacles impairing the free movement of pedestrians (e.g., poor state of sidewalks or no

hard crust road surface on walking paths); abandoned buildings; places where drunk people gather; public spaces with overgrown trees, bushes and tall grass reducing sightlines; no public transportation options after 6 pm or no scheduled bus routes in particular neighborhoods; and a lack of a visible presence of the police.

The survey also reveals that the police, healthcare institutions, centres for social services and community service organizations (CSOs) are the most known service providers for victims/survivors of SV in Soledar. More than half of women respondents said that they never told anyone about their experience of SH and other forms of VAWG in public spaces, and about one quarter of women said they informed their friends. Over one fifth of women said they did not consider the form of SH as serious enough to report and expressed that even if they did choose to report SH, they felt that authorities would not address the situation in any way. Some women explained that they would not report SH to the police since they feel that the police will not take effective measures to stop the violence and hold the perpetrator accountable, and also because SH in public spaces is not an offense in Ukraine.

In Soledar, respondents indicated that older and younger men commit SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces. Almost one third of respondents hold the view that military men more often perpetrate SH in public spaces than civilians. The absence of punishment for SH was raised by women participants as the main reason for the high prevalence of SH. About one quarter of women iden-

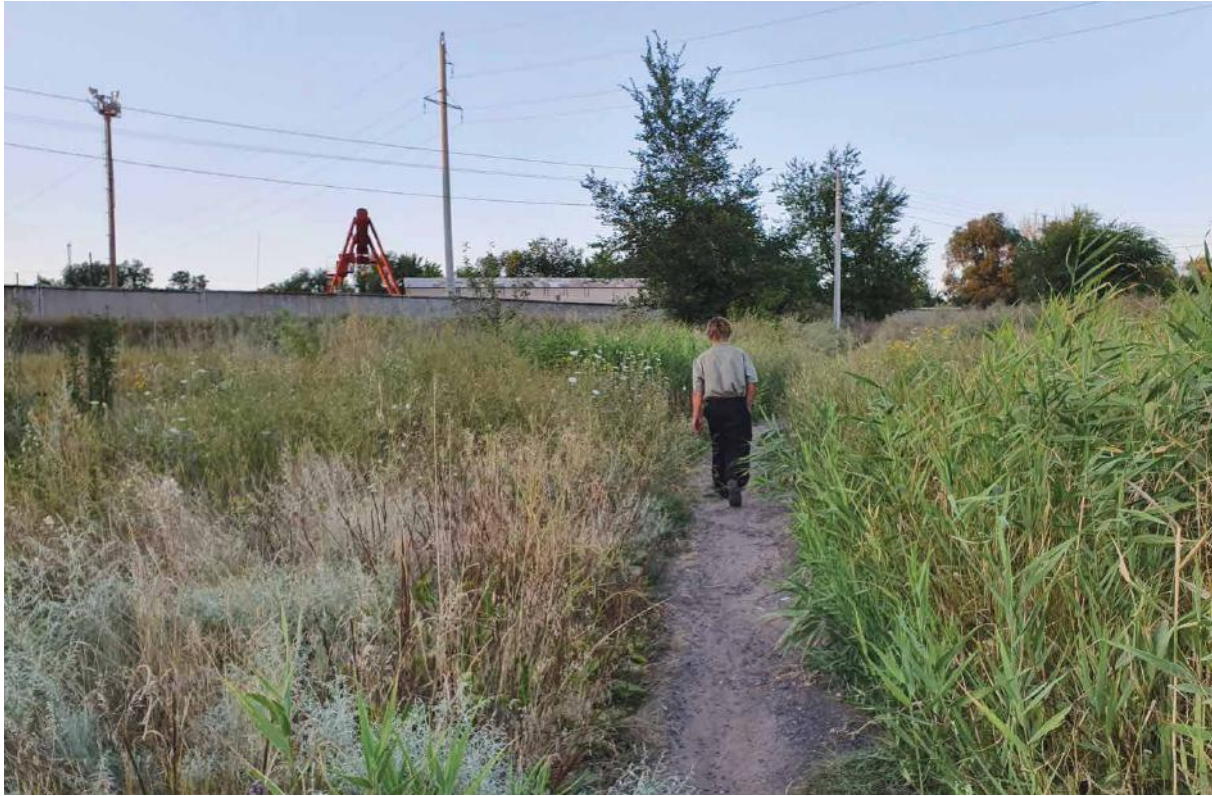


Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Local activist

tify unequal gender relations and patriarchal culture in Ukraine as the main reason why male perpetrators commit SH and other forms of SVAWG.

While the majority of women respondents said that SH is not tolerated in Soledar, one quarter of respondents indicated that they felt that perpetrators often do not understand that such behavior humiliates women and that there is a lack of awareness of men and women on what constitutes SH.

The assessment reveals a very low understanding of SVAWG causes by women, with 57% of respondents considering men's uncontrolled sexual desire as one of the main causes of SVAWG in Soledar. Many women respondents said that women are to blame for their own experience of SH and other forms of SV. More than 33% of respondents of the survey said they consider the extent to which their physical appearance (e.g., the way they dress, wearing heavy make-up) may lead to sexual harassment. Young women were twice as likely to hold these views than older women. These findings also reveal how deeply entrenched victim-blaming is in the community. Of those women who said they experienced SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces in Soledar, about 55%

said they avoid certain public spaces they regard as unsafe. Some women explained that their mobility in the town has been limited: for example, due to not feeling safe to go out alone at night, and that they need to exercise caution at all times.

About half of respondents noted that the military conflict in Ukraine exacerbated SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces of Soledar. At the same time, women participants indicated that they felt safer than they did in 2014 when the armed conflict started, given that there are fewer military men in town, they often visit the town during the weekends and are not usually seen carrying weapons.

Participants consider that ensuring an efficient investigation and perpetrator accountability in cases of SV, introduction of sex education in schools, and community mobilization with awareness-raising campaigns on gender equality and respectful relationships targeting women, girls, men and boys are the most effective measures for preventing and responding to SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces.

Analysis of this study results

The analysis of this study results confirms the presence of harmful social norms which facilitate SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces in all four target communities and reveals that women and girls may experience higher risks of SH and other forms of SVAWG in Zolote, which is a community situated directly on the contact line.



Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Vitaliy Shevelev

A dependency between the proximity to the contact line of Zolote (on the contact line) and to some extent of Toretsk (7 km from the contact line) and the increased concerns stemming from high risks of physical and SV for women from these communities while passing by groups of military men compared to Novoaydar (60 km from the contact line) and Soledar (25 km from the contact line) has been observed.

Women from the close to contact line community of Toretsk expressed concerns for their safety after dark more frequently than women from the other three settlements, linking their fear of going outside at night with the proximity to the ongoing military actions.

Women's fear and experience of SH and other forms of SV in public spaces is high in all four communities. An overwhelming 61% of respondents from Zolote, 53 % in Toretsk, 53% in Soledar and 43% in Novoaydar indicated that they have experienced some form of sexual harassment

in the public spaces of their towns. Younger women (aged 18-23 years old) are also more at risk of experiencing SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces than women in older age groups.

However, in Zolote women experience verbal, physical and online SH to a significantly larger extent than women in the other three communities. 82% of surveyed women from Zolote indicate that there is a direct connection between the armed conflict and the increase of SH and other forms of SVAWG incidents in this settlement.

Evidence also suggests that women from Zolote experienced SH perpetrated by military men on average three times more often than women from the other three communities. At the same time, many respondents from Zolote hold victim-blaming attitudes towards victims/survivors of SH and other forms of SVAWG – on average two times more than respondents from Toretsk, Soledar and Novoaydar.

Main recommendations

Main recommendations aimed at preventing SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces formulated based on the findings of the scoping study and WSA conducted in Novoaydar, Zolote, Toretsk and Soledar pertain to the need to strengthen national legislation on SH and other forms of SVAWG (central government); adopt local policies specifically targeting the prevention and combating of SH and other forms of SVAWG (local governments); strengthen the capacity of law enforcement to prevent and respond to SH and other forms of SVAWG (Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Police); improve the services provided to victims/survivors of SH and other forms of SVAWG (central and local governments); strengthen the capacity of the armed forces to prevent and respond to SH and other forms of SVAWG inflicted by the military (Ministry of Defense); put in place genderresponsive measures to address factors related to the built environment that impact women's safety, support community mobilization and raise awareness of the community on how to prevent and respond to SH and other forms of SVAWG (central and local governments, women's rights organizations and other CSOs, businesses, etc.).

II. BACKGROUND

Sexual harassment (SH) and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls (SVAWG) in public spaces are rooted in gender inequality and are a human rights violation. It is a universal issue with great impact on survivors/victims⁵, their families, and communities⁶. Women and girls experience and fear different forms of sexual violence (SV) in public spaces, from unwelcome sexual remarks and gestures to rape and femicide. It happens on streets, in and around public transportation, schools, workplaces, public toilets, parks, and water and food distribution sites. This reality reduces women's and girls' freedom of movement and their ability to participate in school, work, and public life. It limits their access to essential services and their enjoyment of cultural and recreational activities and negatively impacts their health and well-being.

2.1 Scoping Study Objectives

To better understand the risks of SH and other forms of SV faced by women and girls in public spaces in Ukraine, a multi-site scoping study was conducted in Novoaydar and Zolote, Luhansk region and Toretsk and Soledar, Donetsk region, within the framework of the United Nations Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme (UN RPP).

Adapting UN Women's Global Guidance on Scoping Studies⁷ developed for participating in the initiatives on safe cities and safe public spaces for women and girl, the objectives of the study included:

- 1) To profile the intervention area by providing insights to their demographic, social, cultural, economic and other relevant characteristics, including by analyzing the impact of the military conflict in the east of Ukraine on the exacerbation of different forms of SV.
- 2) To identify the prospective beneficiary groups/agents of change, risks, concerns and everyday experiences of girls and women, associated with SH and other forms of

SV in public places and their need for an intervention. To assess the level of awareness among women and girls about the availability of specialized services for survivors/victims and their experience in accessing support and identifying the changes that they would expect to see from the initiative.

- 3) To determine the profile of the perpetrator and of the survivor/victim in the context of SV.
- 4) To identify public spaces where sexual harassment occurs.
- 5) To analyze relevant development policies, plans and initiatives, including the Ukrainian legislative framework on responding to SH and other forms of SV.
- 6) To formulate recommendations for national, regional and local governments, the police, women's rights organizations and civil society groups on the prevention and response to SH and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls (SVAWG) in public spaces.

2.2 Methodology

Geography and Coverage

The scoping study was conducted in the cities of Novoaydar and Zolote, Luhansk region, and Toretsk and Soledar, Donetsk region without covering all the settlements under these amalgamated communities. It included 1,314 women participants (aged 18 to 50 years old) from Novoaydar (431) and Zolote (263), Luhansk region, and Soledar (299) and Toretsk (321), Donetsk region.

Research Methods

1) Desk review of the national and international legal framework on gender-based violence, including SH and other forms of SVAWG

The national legal framework on gender-based violence (GBV), including SV, was analyzed according to international norms and standards on ending violence against women

5. UN Secretary-General's Study, supra note 1, notes the ongoing debate about the terms "victim" and "survivor". Some suggest that "the term 'victim' should be avoided because it implies passivity, weakness and inherent vulnerability and fails to recognize the reality of women's resilience and agency. For others, the term 'survivor' is problematic because it denies the sense of victimization experienced by women who have been the target of violent crime". Therefore, this scoping study uses the term "victim/survivor".

6. UN Women (2020). COVID-19 and Ensuring Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces, p.3.

7. UN Women (2017). Guidance for Scoping Studies. UN Women Safe Cities Global Initiative. New York: UN WOMEN

(EVAW) to identify any legislative gaps pertaining to preventing and responding to SV.

2) Surveys using Google forms and paper questionnaires for data collection on the risks of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence faced by women and girls in public spaces.

The quantitative survey was conducted between May 1 and 20, 2020. Given the stay-at-home policies related to the COVID-19 pandemic 1,083 respondents participated in the online survey. The online survey was based on self-selection through an open invitation to participate disseminated to women through women’s organizations. After the relaxation of lockdown measures 231 respondents were surveyed using a paper questionnaire or based on an in-person standardized interview.

The survey was administered in line with the ethical standards in measuring violence against women.⁸ Correspondingly, the safety, privacy and confidentiality of women respondents were ensured (see page 12).

3) Focus group discussions (FGD) with women and girls

In July 2020, eight all-women FGDs were held with 61 participants. Two FGDs were organized in each of the cities covered by the assessment (involving between 5 and 10 participants per FGD). Each city included an FGD with young women (aged 18 to 25 years old) and an FGD with women aged between 25 and 50 years old.

This method ensured a targeted approach, with open and higher quality communication on women’s experiences of safety and the prevention of SVAWG in public spaces.

Summary Table of all-women FGDs conducted in July 2020

Town	Toretsk	Soledar	Zolote	Novoaydar
Date	<i>Jul 28</i>	<i>Jul 29</i>	<i>Jul 30</i>	<i>Jul 31</i>
Number of FGDs	2	2	2	2
Total number of women participants	17	15	17	12
Number of women participants, 18-25 years old	7	7	8	5
Number of women participants, 25-50 years old	10	8	9	7

4.) Women’s Safety Audit of Public Spaces

Інструмент «Аудит безпеки жінок» було вперше The Women’s Safety Audit tool was first developed in Canada following the recommendations of the 1989 report on violence against women by the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children in Toronto (METRAC) and has further been adapted by Women’s Initiatives for Safer Environments (WISE) and other organizations around the world and in different settings.⁹

It is a multi-purpose tool that allows participants to identify safe and unsafe spaces and recommend how spaces can be improved to ensure women’s safety. The WSA recognizes women’s empowerment and voice, recognizing

women as experts given their lived experiences, and in all their diversity. The WSA increases awareness of SH and other forms of VAWG and helps users and decision-makers understand how men and women experience city spaces.

The WSA included exploratory walks in each city which were conducted in August 2020. Each city included two exploratory walks that were conducted along different routes. Eight routes were covered in total. Grassroots women participants in the WSAs were identified in consultation with a women’s rights organization. Each group consisted of four to five people, most of them local women activists (aged 20 to 60 years old), and each group included 1-2 men, as discussed with grassroots women participants.

8. World Health Organization (2001), Putting Women First: Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Research on Domestic Violence against Women.

9. UN Women (2019). Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces International Compendium of Practices.

Participants were trained on WSA methodology and participated in an exploratory walk in the selected intervention area of each of the four cities. They entered their observations in a form (safety audit protocol form) and took photos of unsafe public spaces as part of the process in documenting the information in WSA.

Limitations of the research

The study included a focus on the cities of Novoaydar and Zolote, Luhansk region and Toretsk and Soledar, Donetsk region, and not the adjacent villages and towns of these amalgamated communities with the same name, given the limited resources. However, important insights from the scoping study will help to inform the design of Safe Cities Initiative in Ukraine and will allow multi-stakeholder partners in that process to consider which interventions would be city-specific and those that would be country-wide and could therefore benefit even more communities.

Ethical and Safety Recommendations

Дослідження здійснювалося згідно з підходами та The research followed the approaches and requirements listed in WHO document “Ethical and safety recommendations for intervention research on violence against women”.¹⁰

The collection, storage and analysis of empirical data of the research are in line with ethical standards and ensure the protection of the respondents’ rights to voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality. All respondents were informed about the goal and tasks of the research, anonymity and confidentiality of the process, as well as about their right to voluntary participation and the right to cease their participation at any moment.

The questionnaires contain no personal data that would allow for the identification of the respondents. With the same purpose all persons involved in project implementation, in particular all recruiters and interviewers, signed a non-disclosure agreement under which they committed not to disclose or pass to third persons any information about the respondents which has become known in the course of this research.

The interviewers and members of the research team were trained to understand the ethical and safety principles, and the information on services to support victims/survivors among women respondents who need them was made available.

2.3 Selection of Respondents

Women respondents in the FGDs and key informant interviews were identified with the involvement of grassroots women leaders living in the four cities selected for the study, including those community mobilizers from self-help groups established with the support of UN Women, in line with the provided technical specifications. The links to the online survey were published on the official websites of local governments, social network pages (mostly on Facebook) and community groups on Viber. The survey was also disseminated through direct communication

with local governments and institutions that provide social services.

This approach in line with the leave no one behind principle (LNOB) also helped to ensure the participation of those women and girls who face multiple and simultaneous forms of discrimination and are most at risk of sexual harassment and other form of sexual violence (related to factors such as age, disability, ethnicity, or being internally displaced). Young participants included students from high schools, colleges and universities.

2.4 Structure of Report

The present chapter details the background, objectives, methodology and approach of the multi-site scoping study. The second chapter documents the situation of SH and other forms of SVAWG in Ukraine with a focus on the policy and legislative frameworks, through a detailed literature review. Chapters 3 to 6 each begin with location-specific details and a snapshot of the selected city and capture the problems and concerns of women and

girls in each city. They also record women’s views about possible interventions to prevent and reduce SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces and the changes they would like to see. Chapter 7 provides a comparative analysis of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence risks faced by women and girls in public spaces with reference to the communities’ proximity to the contact line.

10. World Health Organization, Ethical and safety recommendations for intervention research on violence against women. Building on lessons from the WHO publication. Geneva: World Health Organization. February 2016. Putting women first: ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence against women. Available at: <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/251759/9789241510189-eng.pdf;jsessionid=F60CD5C1F61BCFACB7A424BD2292E511?sequence=1>

III. UKRAINIAN LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK ON COUNTERING SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND OTHER FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Violence against women and girls is an entrenched social problem across the world, including Ukraine.¹¹ It is a product of unequal gender power relations and discrimination against women and girls, which is exacerbated by conflict and humanitarian crises, poverty, economic stress, and, at times, the harmful use of alcohol or other drugs. According to the 2019 OSCE-led Survey on Violence against Women, 5% of women in Ukraine aged 18–74 years experienced sexual violence perpetrated by someone other than an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime since age 15.¹² According to the same survey, 49% of women indicate that they have experienced sexual harassment and 17% state that they have been sexually harassed in the 12 months prior to the survey.¹³

Ukraine is a signatory to many international human rights instruments including international commitments on gender equality and on the prevention and response to violence against women and girls (VAWG). The country has taken steps to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and ratified key women’s human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol. In 2011, Ukraine signed the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (hereinafter referred to as the Istanbul Convention) and is still awaiting ratification nearly a decade later. Although it is a necessary step to ensure comprehensive reforms to address VAWG, the ratification of the Istanbul Convention still poses a challenge to Ukraine’s decision-makers due to significant opposition from the Council of Churches and religious organizations and some

members of Parliament, similar to several Eastern European countries.

The Ukrainian legislative framework addressing VAWG includes three key laws: the Law “On Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence” (2018)¹⁴, which replaced the Law “On Prevention of Violence in Family” (2001); the Law “On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men” (2005)¹⁵; and the Law “On Combating Trafficking in Human Beings” (2012).¹⁶

Since 2015, Ukraine is taking steps to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals that were adopted by all UN member states, including Goal 5 “Gender Equality” by localization through consultations with local experts and stakeholders. VAWG is addressed within the framework of Target 5.2 Reduce the level of gender-based and domestic

11. Gender Norms, K4D Report 2017, p. 7

12. OSCE, OSCE-led survey on violence against women “Well-being and Safety of Women”, Ukraine, 2019 <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/440312?download=true>

13. Ibid

14. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine portal <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2229-19>

15. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine portal <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2866-15>

16. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine portal <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3739-17>

violence and ensure efficient prevention of its manifestations and timely assistance to survivors.

On December 18, 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), a universal comprehensive document in the sphere of protection and securing of women's rights, and it currently has 189 state parties, including Ukraine. At the time of CEDAW's adoption, the issue of combating violence against women was not yet considered as an integral component of protection of women's rights. While CEDAW does not explicitly refer to VAW in any of its articles, it is understood as an extreme form of discrimination against women and therefore covered under Articles 1 and 2 of CEDAW (this is confirmed by the CEDAW Committee in its GR 19 on VAW (1992)).

CEDAW Committee is the UN expert body overseeing/monitoring how state parties implement different provisions under the Convention. The CEDAW Committee as the UN expert body is mandated with monitoring the implementation of CEDAW and has concluded that violence against women and girls is a form of discrimination (as per its GR 19 (1992) and reaffirmed it in its GR 35 (2017)).

The CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation No. 19, adopted at the 11th session of the CEDAW Committee in 1992, became the first international document to univocally acknowledge violence against women as sex-based discrimination and violation of internationally guaranteed human rights of women. In particular, it defined four types of VAW – physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence; emphasized the need to provide multi-sectoral services for survivors and to build the capacity of key actors, e.g. law enforcement, judiciary, etc.

General Recommendation No. 35 elaborates on the gender-based nature of this form of violence, building on the work of the Committee and other international human rights mechanisms, as well as developments at national, regional and international levels. General Recommendation No. 35 is also a milestone as:

- It recognizes that the prohibition of GBV has become a norm of international customary law;
- It expands the understanding of violence to include violations of sexual and reproductive health rights;
- It stresses the need to change social norms and stereotypes that support violence, in the context of a resurgence of narratives threatening the concept of gender equality in the name of culture, tradition or religion;
- It clearly defines different levels of liability of the State for acts and omissions committed by its agents or those acting under its authority- in the territory of the State or abroad- and for failing to act with due diligence to prevent violence at the hands of private individuals and companies, protect women and girls from it, and ensure access to remedies for survivors;
- It unequivocally calls for the repeal of all laws and policies that directly and indirectly excuse, condone and facilitate violence; and it emphasizes the need for approaches that promote and respect women's autonomy and decision-making in all spheres of life.

Also, General Recommendation No.30 specifically addresses the role of women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, and General Recommendation No. 33 is dedicated to women's access to justice.

In its Concluding observations on the Eighth periodic report of Ukraine, the CEDAW Committee pointed out that the armed conflict in the East poses a major barrier to the implementation of CEDAW but even in the conditions of the continued conflict it is crucial to adhere to the Convention to secure observance of women's rights. Regarding conflict-related sexual violence (SV), the Committee pointed out that the definition of rape in Ukrainian Criminal Code was outdated and lacked threat, detention, pressure and abuse of power as tools for coercion and as such was not applicable to the situation of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). It also emphasized the lacking capacities of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary sphere to investigate, document and prosecute such cas-

es and a complete lack of specialized services and care for survivors of such crimes. Based on these observations, the Committee recommended amending the Criminal Code of Ukraine to update the definition of rape, securing appropriate trainings for law enforcement officers, making justice accessible to women and girls through gender-sensitive investigations of sex-based crimes, adopting codes of behavior for the army and police, strengthening the judicial system, and securing survivors/victims' access to urgent professional medical and psychological care and to means of redress. The last recommendation in this section was about including CRSV in the future transitional justice framework.

Ukraine adopted and is implementing the National Action Plan (NAP) for the Implementation of the Recommendations set out in the Concluding Observations of the UN CEDAW Committee to the eighth Periodic Report of Ukraine on the Implementation of CEDAW until 2021.¹⁷ CEDAW

17. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine portal, Adoption of the National Action Plan for the Implementation of Recommendations of the Final Observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the Eighth Periodic Report of Ukraine on the Implementation of the CEDAW until 2021, 5 September 2018. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/634-2018-%D1%80#Text>



Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Vitaliy Shevelev

NAP prioritizes measures to 1) prevent any manifestations of VAWG perpetrated by public officials, 2) train the representatives of law enforcement agencies to properly respond to VAWG, including CRSV, through ensuring access for VAWG victims/survivors to justice and developing proper investigation procedures in response to VAWG, 3) establish protocols for post-exposure prophylaxis and standards of medical assistance in case of SV, 4) improve the data collection system for domestic violence and VAWG cases, and 5) implement protection measures for women and girls who suffered from violence, including shelters.

Draft law 9438¹⁸ “On Amendments to Some Legislative Acts of Ukraine on Securing Harmonization of the Criminal Law with the Provisions of the International Law” of 20 December 2018 aimed to introduce the notion of conflict-related sexual violence in the Ukrainian legislation passed the first reading in the Parliament and is pending the second reading.

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, peace, security”¹⁹ is critical in strengthening women’s involvement in peacebuilding and post-conflict development. This landmark resolution was adopted in 2000 and reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the

maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

UNSCR 1325 was the first to underscore the necessity of securing women’s participation in decision-making at all levels concerning conflict prevention and resolution. Of crucial importance is UNSCR’s emphasis on **“the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other forms of violence against women and girls”**, and stresses the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible, from amnesty provisions. The first out of ten Resolutions of the ‘Women, Peace, Security’ agenda, UNSCR 1325 is based on four pillars: participation, prevention, protection, and resolution and recovery. The Participation pillar is about including women in both conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes; the Prevention pillar is about preventing attacks on women; the Protection pillar acknowledges that women and girls in the conditions of an armed conflict are prone to gender-specific violence and thus the states have to address the issue of conflict-related violence, including CRSV; and the Resolution and Recovery pillar requests that women’s needs and opinions are taken into consideration and women themselves should be engaged in the conflict resolution and after-conflict recovery.

The adoption of the first NAP for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace, Security” (NAP 1325) was a commendable step towards the

18. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine portal http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=65266

19. Women. Peace. Security: Guidelines on gender aspects of conflicts for specialists of the social sphere /Team of authors. – Kyiv, 2017. – pp.105-107.

implementation of the “Women, Peace, Security” agenda in Ukraine.²⁰ Among other things, NAP 1325 focuses on

prevention of VAWG in a conflict setting and protection of women and girls affected by the conflict.

The State Social Programme on Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men until 2021²¹ emphasizes the need to conduct awareness-raising campaigns to prevent gender-based discrimination and VAWG.

The Concept of the State Social Programme on Prevention and Response to Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence²² was approved in 2018. The Concept articulates the need to use the best international practices in order to establish an effective system of response services and encourage the survivors to seek specialized help. It stresses the paramount importance of launching awareness-raising campaigns aimed at promoting zero tolerance for VAWG and domestic violence (DV).

Decree No. 658 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of August 22, 2018 “On Approval of the Procedure of interaction for subjects working in the area of combating and prevention of domestic violence and gender-based violence”²³ outlines rights, services, and means of redress for victims of VAWG, the stakeholders and mechanisms of their coordination both nationally and locally as well as objectives and tasks they are to perform.

In spring 2019, Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine presented further steps in response to domestic and gender-based violence against women and girls in the framework of Passport of Reforms on Countering Domestic Violence and Gender-based Violence.²⁴ The presented strategic priorities are combined under 4-P approach: prevention (that implies zero tolerance of violence and increasing the willingness to respond to its manifestations), protection (e.g., all survivors/victims, regardless of their age and health have access to and receive comprehensive services tailored to their needs), prosecution (bringing the perpetrators to liability and interventions to change their abusive behavior) and policy (building a new system of comprehensive response to violence).

Finally, the Strategy for Prevention of and Response to the Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) in Ukraine²⁵ developed by UN Women and OHCHR was endorsed by the Ukrainian Government in 2018 to provide guidance and recommendations on how governmental institutions, civil society organizations, international organizations and

the UN system can join efforts to effectively prevent and respond to CRSV.

As a part of Ukrainian legislation comprehensive preparation to the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, in January 2019 the amendments to the Criminal Code of Ukraine (CCoU) on rape and sexual violence (sexual assault)²⁶ came into effect, broadening the scope of what qualifies as rape and sexual violence. The definitions of rape (Art. 152, Criminal Code of Ukraine) and sexual assault (Art. 153, Criminal Code of Ukraine) were revised to correspond to the regional standard provided by the Istanbul Convention and now refer to rape as “non-consensual vaginal, anal or oral penetration of a sexual nature of the body of another person with any bodily part or object”, and to sexual assault as “violent non-consensual acts of a sexual nature which do not imply penetration of another person’s body”. These amendments also included introduction of the specific articles on domestic violence in the Criminal Code of Ukraine and on court restraining orders against perpetrators of gender-based violence.

A significant gap in the Ukrainian legislation concerns sexual harassment (SH). The Istanbul Convention defines sexual harassment in Art. 40 as “any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment” and

20. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine portal, Adoption of the National Action Plan for Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, peace, security” until 2020, 24 February 2016. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/634-2018-%D1%80#Text>

21. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine portal, Adoption of the until 2021, 11 April 2018. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/273-2018-%D0%BF#Text>

22. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine portal, Concept of the State Social Programme on Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence until 2023. <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/728-2018-%D1%80#Text>

23. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine portal <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/658-2018-%D0%BF>

24. Passport of Reforms of the Ministry of Social Policy, Concept of the State Social Programme on Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence and Gender-Based Violence until 2023, posted on 22 March 2019. [/https://www.msp.gov.ua/news/16904.html](https://www.msp.gov.ua/news/16904.html) (date accessed: 23.08.2019).

25. UN Women, Report “Strategy for Prevention of and Response to the Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ukraine”, 2019.

<https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2019/04/the-strategy-for-prevention-of-and-response-to-the-conflict-related-sexual-violence-in-ukraine>

26. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine portal <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2341-14>

leaves it up to the state parties to decide whether to take criminal or other legal sanctions for such harming behaviors, including civil or administrative legal sanctions.²⁷

However, the definition of SH in the Ukrainian legislation still has to be aligned to the existing regional standards in this field, as Art. 1 of the Law of Ukraine “On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men” provides a definition for sexual harassment which refers to acts of a sexual nature expressed verbally (threats, intimidation, obscene remarks) or physically (touching, patting) which humiliate or insult persons in employment and service subordination, in financial or another dependen-

cy”. This definition differs significantly from the one provided in the Istanbul Convention. Specifically, it narrows the sphere of SH to relations of subordination only, while SH can be perpetrated by a subordinated person against the supervisor and can also take place between peers. Additionally, except employment, service subordination and financial or another dependency, SH can also take place in public spaces like streets or transport and online. The Ukrainian legislation does not criminalize SH in public spaces, but it does contain several provisions that can be used to hold perpetrators of SH accountable, namely petty hooliganism provided for in Art. 173 of the Code of Administrative Offences of Ukraine.

IV. APPRAISAL OF THE INTERVENTION SITE AND UNDERSTANDING LOCAL PROBLEMS IN NOVOAYDAR, LUHANSK REGION

4.1. Main characteristics of Novoaydar

Novoaydar is an urban village situated 60 km from the contact line²⁸ in the conflict-affected region of Luhansk in the East of Ukraine. Novoaydar village council consists of three settlements: Novoaydar, Malovendeleyivka and Aydar-Mykolayivka with a population of 8,692 people.²⁹ This scoping study has been conducted only in Novoaydar settlement.

Senior citizens amount to 22% of the total population and most of them are women (61%). At the same time, IDPs represent 60% (5000 people) of the community’s population. 190 residents are persons with disabilities, and 144 are single mothers and fathers.

In 2019 Novoaydar adopted a local programme on ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men

for the period of 2020-2022. A Local Gender Coordination Council, a Community Security Working Group, and a working group on gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) are operating in this community as formal mechanisms aimed at integrating gender into local policies, providing a dialogue platform for the community and local public authorities.

A local police officer is assigned to each settlement, with the responsibility to prevent gender-based violence (GBV), and a mobile group of social and psychological support operates only in Novoaydar since the mobile team does not have a vehicle to reach out to the other two settlements (the mobile group uses bicycles).

27. Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Istanbul, Turkey. 11.V.2011. <https://rm.coe.int/168008482e>

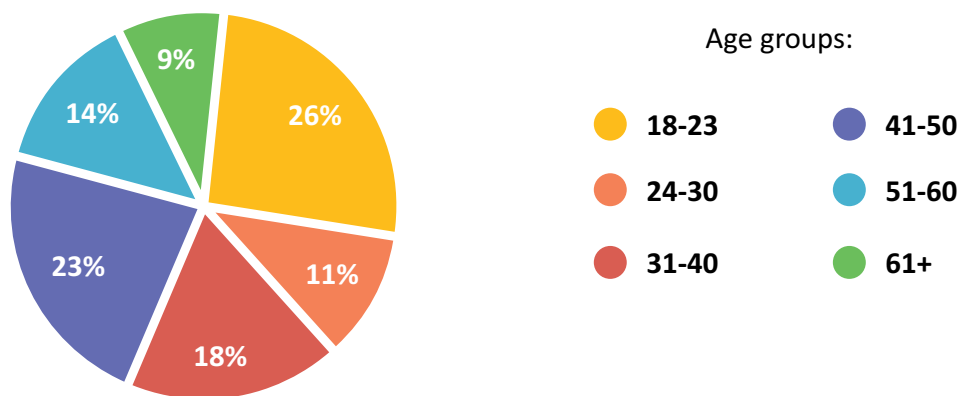
28. The contact line is the buffer zone on the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk regions between the settlements controlled by Ukraine and the temporarily occupied territories

29. Ukrainian portal on decentralization <https://decentralization.gov.ua/>

4.2 Analysis of respondent's profile

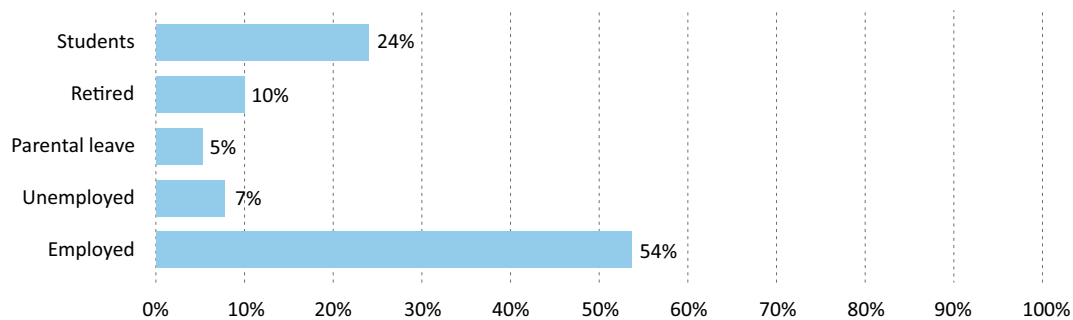
The survey sample in Novoaydar consisted of 418 women of various age groups: 26% aged 18-23; 11% aged 24-30; 18% aged 31-40; 23% aged 41-50; 14% aged 51-60; and 9% aged 60 years and older. (See Figure 4.2.1.)

Figure 4.2.1.
Distribution of survey respondents by age (n=418)



Out of the total number of respondents, 54% are employed, 24% are students, 7% are unemployed, 5% are on parental leave, and 10% are retired (see Figure 4.2.2).

Figure 4.2.2.
Distribution of respondents by occupation (n=418)



13% from the total of 418 respondents represent groups that may be more at risk of discrimination and violence: 7% of respondents are IDPs and 5% are persons with disabilities (Figure 4.2.3).

Figure 4.2.3.
Distribution of survey respondents by groups at risk (n=418)

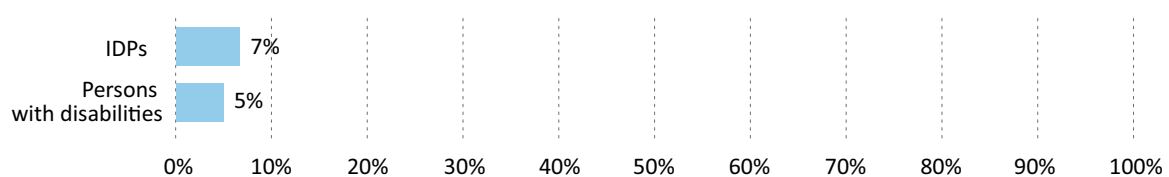




Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Vitaliy Shelev

4.3. Awareness of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence

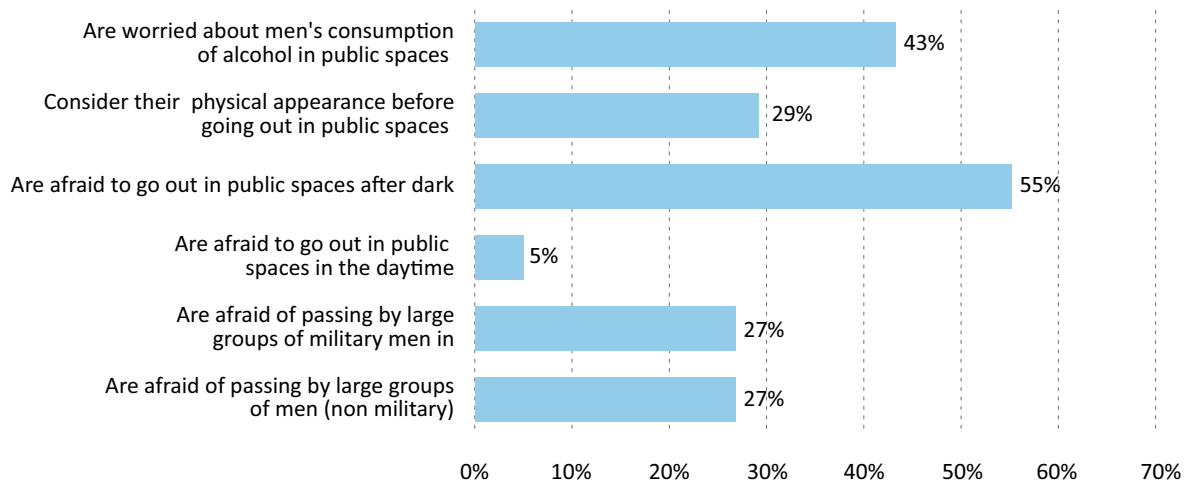
Social gender-biased norms can negatively impact the perception of safety, self-esteem and daily lives of women and girls.

More than half of women respondents said they are afraid to go out in public spaces after dark. A large number of respondents (43%) indicated that they are worried about men’s consumption of alcohol in public spaces, and 29% of respondents said they consider the extent to which their physical appearance (e.g., the way they dress or wear their make-up) may lead to sexual harassment.

Just over a quarter (27%) of women respondents said that they are afraid to pass by large groups of men (civil-

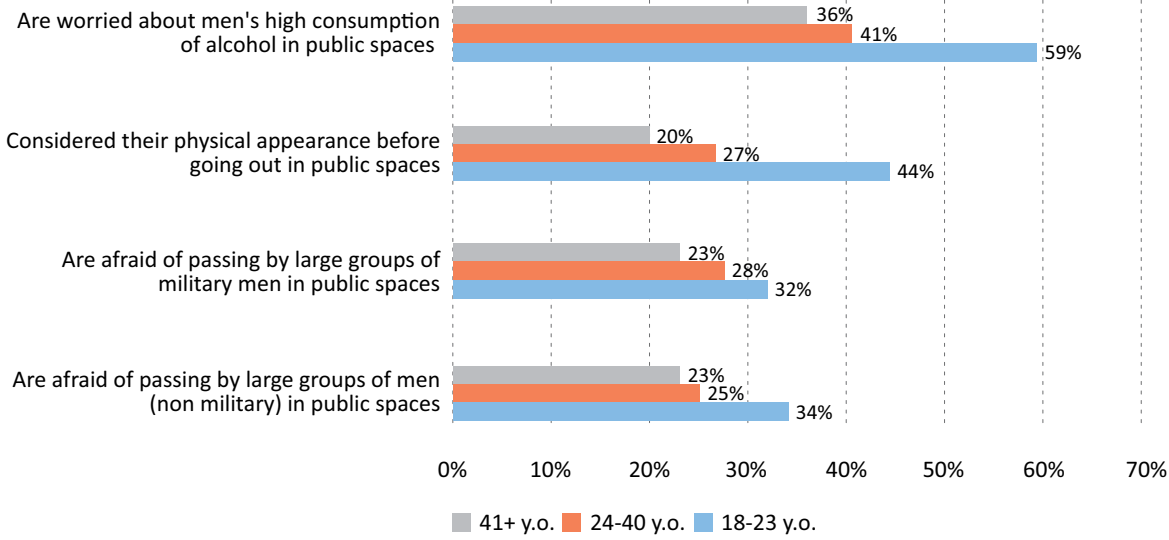
ian/nonmilitary) when they are in public spaces. Just over a quarter (27%) of women respondents said that they are also afraid to pass by large groups of military men when they are in public spaces. Among these participants, many (89%) reported that they do not feel safe because “military men often make unwelcome verbal remarks of sexual nature”. In terms of perception of SH and SV risks in public spaces, going out in public spaces after dark represents the most frequently perceived risk of physical and sexual violence in public spaces followed by passing by large groups of men in public spaces and the fear of men’s high consumption of alcohol in public spaces.

Figure 4.3.1. Concerns of surveyed women residents of Novoaydar about their safety and risks of SH in public spaces, % (n=418)



Women under 24 years old were much more likely to express these concerns compared to women from the other age groups of respondents across four areas as indicated in Figure 4.3.2.

Figure 4.3.2.
Concerns of surveyed women residents of Novoaydar about their safety and risks of SH in public spaces by age, %



4.4. Unsafe public spaces

Survey respondents indicate that SH and other forms of SVAWG most often take place in the streets (63%), bars and restaurants (47%), and clubs (64%).

During the FGDs, some women participants described that at the beginning of the armed conflict in 2014 there was a high presence of military in their settlement. They moved around with weapons, were impolite and appeared suspicious of local residents; they consumed alcohol and often behaved aggressively towards local women. Some women participants expressed that they have experienced SH perpetrated by military men or witnessed SH perpetrated by military men against other women.

Several FGD participants also shared that parents do not allow their teenage daughters to go out after dark. Many women participants explained that there are major risks of SH and other forms of VAWG associated with limited public transportation options for moving around the settlement and traveling to neighboring cities. Women FGD participants said that while they may feel safe when traveling by bus, they noted that there are very few routes and that buses are only in service during the day. Given limited transportation options, many residents said that they practice hitchhiking, which they indicated poses additional SH risks for women and girls.

Women participants in the FGDs identified several unsafe public spaces in Novoaydar which increase the risk of SH and other forms of SVAWG:

- Municipal park, especially alleys located behind the children’s playground
- The public toilet and the adjacent territory
- Some public catering institutions and the adjacent territory
- Unlit or poorly lit streets, lanes and yards
- Abandoned and under construction buildings (regardless of their location)

FGDs participants helped to identify of potentially unsafe public spaces and informed the development of two routes for conducting the WSA.



Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Vitaliy Shevelev

Main infrastructure issues affecting women’s safety in public places identified as a result of WSA conducted in Novoaydar:

- Lack of or insufficient lighting in public spaces
 - Areas where harassment and other forms of violence could occur
 - Obstacles impairing the free movement of pedestrians
 - Low traffic safety
 - Unsatisfactory state of public toilets or their absence in crowded places
 - Lack of signs with street names and no numbers on houses which complicates orientation in the town, including when calling a taxi or seeking assistance in case of an emergency
 - No video surveillance cameras in public places
 - Absence of police patrols or visible presence of the police
- In particular, WSA participants identified specific spaces/streets that are perceived as unsafe within Novoaydar. These are presented below.

Nezalezhnosti street (one of the central streets in town): only a few navigation signs (signs with addresses, numbers of houses, directions of movement for pedestrians and cars), abandoned buildings, places with limited visibility, unlit areas, and obstacles for free movement of pedestrians (e.g., no sidewalks, high curbs on available sidewalks, broken stairs/stairs without railings in public places, etc.).

Tsentralna street: in part of the street (from the bridge across Aydar river to Pereshyyok beach) there is no lighting, no sidewalks and navigation signs; there are places with limited visibility (overgrowth of plants and trees) and limited sightlines.

Shevchenka neighborhood: no lighting, abandoned buildings surrounded by an overgrowth of trees, bushes and tall grass- with no visible sightlines.

Utochka store: poorly lit territory where groups of men under the influence of alcohol often gather. There is a public toilet behind the store which is in a poor state.

Sosnovyi park: the absence of lighting in some areas of the park, a road is covered in large holes which affects mobility.

Pereshyyok beach: a territory far from residential houses with no lighting and frequent presence of groups of men under the influence of alcohol.

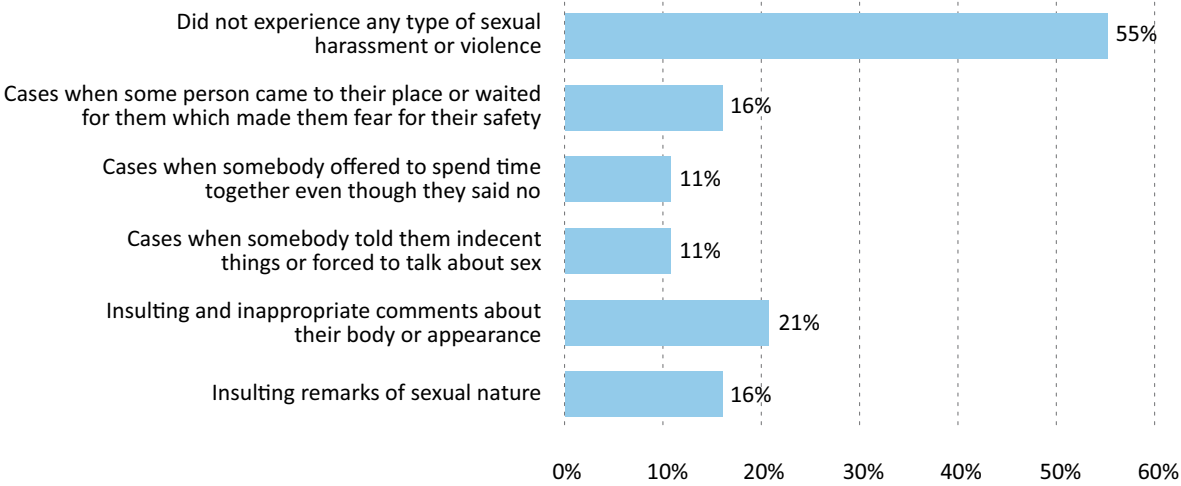
Recommendations provided by participants for addressing women’s safety concerns in the current environment and improving overall safety in their community:

- Improvement of lighting in public places
- Addressing the presence of abandoned buildings
- Installation of reliable fencing and elimination of overgrown trees and bushes
- Installation of additional video surveillance cameras
- Improved police patrolling, especially for potentially dangerous locations (park, beach) and places where alcohol is sold
- Installation of signs with addresses and directions of movement
- Creation of opportunities for recreation and leisure, especially for young people (e.g., establishment of a youth hub)
- Implementation of community mobilization activities with awareness-raising campaigns on preventing SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces and on promoting respectful relationships among residents of Novoaydar.

4.5 Women’s experiences of sexual violence in public spaces and online, and awareness of services for survivors

While sexual harassment is not criminalized in Ukraine, although it represents the most widespread form of GBV, on the continuum of SH and other forms of SV stalking, sexual assault and rape are crimes defined in the Criminal Code of Ukraine. The study indicates that 45 % of women respondents have experienced some form of sexual harassment in public spaces in Novoaydar. 45% of women respondents from Novoaydar indicated that they have experienced sexual harassment in the public spaces of their town.

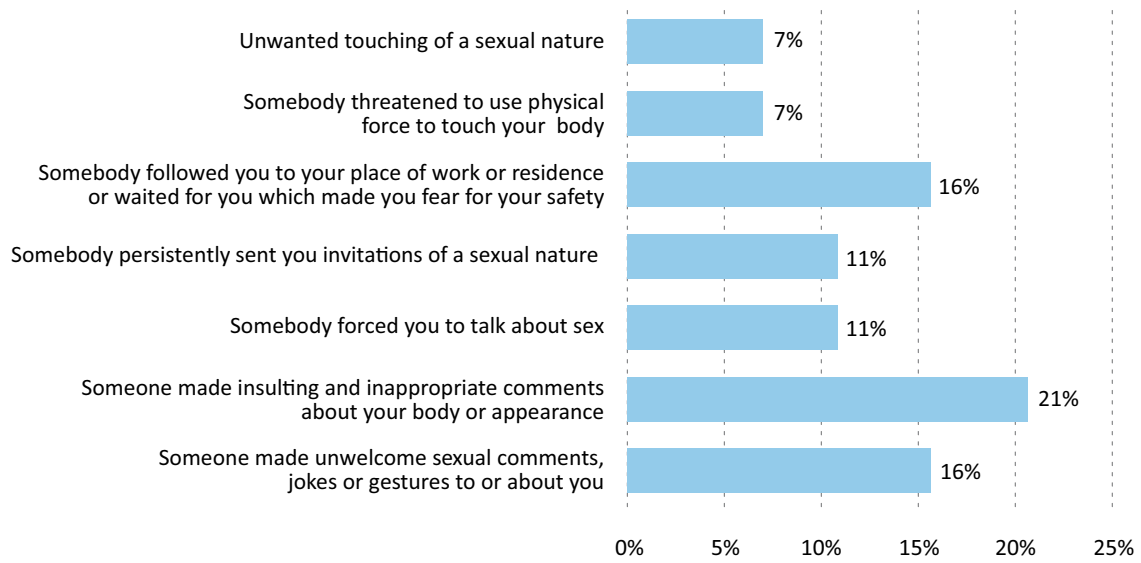
Figure 4.5.1.
Experiences of SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces among women residents from different age groups, %



Verbal sexual harassment expressed by offensive or inappropriate comments of sexual nature about their body or appearance, including of sexual nature, is the most frequent form of sexual violence experienced by respondents in Novoaydar, followed by stalking and physical forms of sexual violence.

Of those women who experienced SH in public spaces, 16% of women said that they have received unwelcome sexual comments, jokes or gestures in public spaces and 21% indicated that they have experienced insulting and inappropriate comments about their body or appearance. Another 11% shared that somebody forced them to talk about sex. (Figure 4.5.1).

Figure 4.5.2.
Types of sexual harassment experienced by women in public spaces, %



In relation to stalking, 16% of respondents informed somebody had followed them to their place of residence or work or waited for them which made them fear for their safety, and 11% said that somebody persistently sent them invitations of a sexual nature.

7% of women participants also indicated that somebody

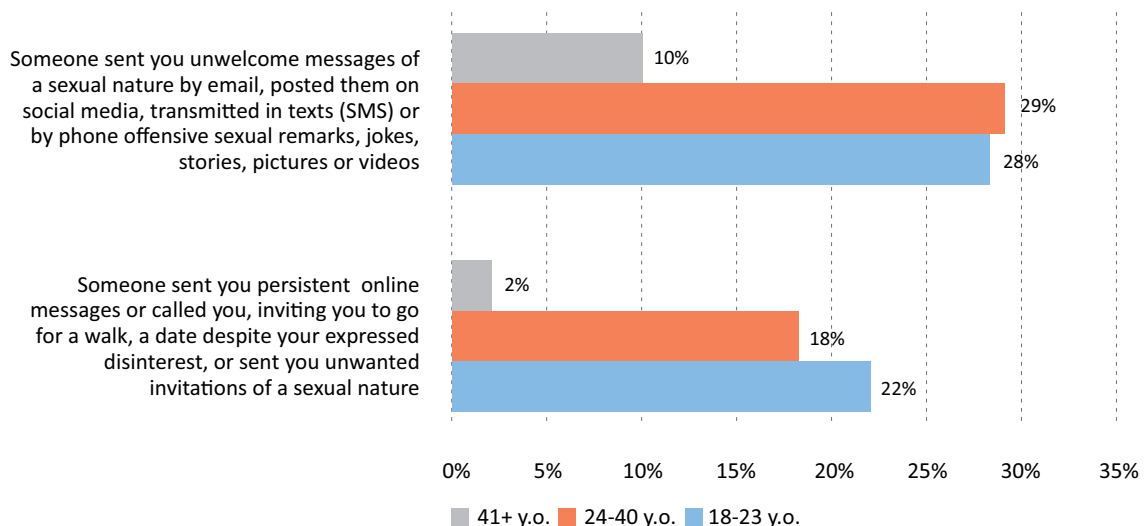
had threatened to use physical force to touch their body (kissing, groping, etc.), and 7% of women stated that they had experienced unwanted touching of a sexual nature.

Young women (aged 18-23 years old) and women aged 24-40 years old experienced SH in public spaces more often than women aged 41 years and older (Figure 4.5.2).

Experience of online sexual harassment

About 20% of women respondents said they had experienced online SH consisting of unwelcome sexual remarks, jokes, stories, or images and videos of sexual nature transmitted in the form of emails, messages received on social media, texts or calls. Young women (aged 18-39 years old) were more likely to experience online SH than women aged 40 years and older. Young women were 10 times more likely to be repeatedly asked out and receive invitations for sexual intercourse after they had explicitly refused these proposals.

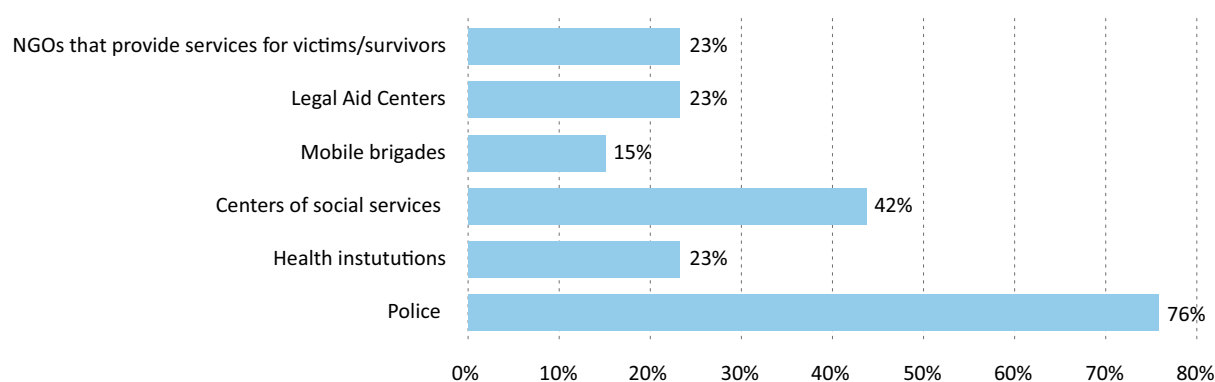
Figure 4.5.3.
Experiences of sexual harassment online or over the phone by respondents' age (% of those who answered "yes")



Awareness of services for victims/survivors

The survey indicates that police (76%) and centers for social services (42%) are the most known service providers for victims/survivors of sexual violence. Among respondents who claimed that they are aware of services for victims/survivors of sexual violence, 76% mentioned police; 23%, medical institutions; 42%, centers for social services; 15% mobile brigades; 23%, Legal Aid Center; and 23%, services provided by NGOs.

Figure 4.5.4.
Respondents who are aware of services for victims/survivors of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls, %



52% of respondents never told anyone about their experience of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence, while 24% of surveyed girls and women told their friends and 21% informed their family members. 4% went to the police, 4% accessed free legal aid services, and one person addressed a healthcare facility. 7% out of those who never told anyone said they didn't know whom to address, and 25% said that they didn't treat it as something serious enough to report, while 14% persons feared breach of confidentiality. 7% of respondents didn't think somebody would believe them, and 15% of respondents did not believe that something would be done.

FGD findings indicate a low awareness of women and girls about the services for victims/survivors of sexual violence. For cases of SV, most respondents indicate that they are only aware of the police and the ambulance services.

However, in cases of SH participants noted that they would not report SH to the police, because they have low trust in

law enforcement and consider that SH is not a serious offense (with rape being the only exception). Local residents explained that they feel the police will react impolitely or inadequately to victim/survivor reports of SH and would not be able to provide quality assistance to them.

Furthermore, some young female FGD participants (aged 18-25 years) explained that preserving a good reputation among neighbors and acquaintances is more important for them than obtaining help in situations of SH and other forms of SVAWG, which calls attention to the presence of victim-blaming in the community.

The lack of awareness about health and social services as well as low levels of trust or confidence to report to the police can work to reinforce the feeling of insecurity among girls and women.

4.6. Profile of perpetrators

53% of respondents indicated young men as the most common perpetrators of SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces, while 46% pointed to older men. 20% of respondents noted that more often sexual harassment in public spaces is inflicted by military servicemen. At the same time, 10% respondents stated that it could be any man, including persons with mental problems, alcohol and drug users.

46% of respondents stated that the reason men commit sexual harassment is the absence of punishment for these actions and another 20% indicated the provocative behavior of victims/survivors.

During the FGDs participants explained that perpetrators of sexual harassment most often are:

- Foreign workers who are now engaged in road construction. Quote: “...but they will finish building soon and leave our town”;
- Long-haul drivers who traditionally have their rest in the town suburb on a platform arranged for them next to a store and a public catering place. Quote: “We are trying not to walk past there and tell our children not to do that as well...”;
- Local men and those coming from other places, including the military, and young men consuming alcohol in local cafes, gathering in crowds or moving around on their own.

4.7. Factors contributing to sexual harassment

Victim-blaming

Every fifth respondent (20%) believes that women themselves are to blame for SH and other forms of SVAWG. No significant discrepancies by age group have been identified in the relation to victim-blaming attitudes towards women. The persistent victim-blaming attitudes are one of the causes for under-reporting of cases of sexual violence, since the victims/survivors very often believe that they are holding their part of the blame and/or are afraid of the public victim-blaming.

33% of respondents believe that women dress and behave provocatively, while 45% stated that women are responsible for their own safety and should avoid places or situations where there might be a risk of sexual violence.

Understanding of causes of SH and other forms of SVAWG

46% of respondents consider uncontrolled sexual desire as one of the main causes for sexual violence against women, while 18% invoke the provocative behavior of the victim/survivor. Only 26% consider that the root causes of sexual violence against women are gender stereotypes and cultural norms according to which men are aggressive, controlling and dominant, while women should be

docile, subservient and rely on men as providers. Another 33% of respondents could not answer this question.

Perception of tolerance of SH and other forms of SVAWG

20% believe that sexual harassment is tolerated in their town. 37% suppose that victims/survivors tolerate sexual harassment because they don't perceive it as a harmful behavior. Another 31% consider that sexual harassment is tolerated because it's not sanctioned, while 26% consider that even unwanted sexual advances are treated as a compliment.

No significant discrepancies by age group have been identified in the answer to this question.

Perception of the impact of military conflict in the east of Ukraine on the exacerbation of SH and other forms of SVAWG

41% of respondents noted that the military conflict in Ukraine exacerbated SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces. Out of this number 51% of respondents consider that the exacerbation of SH and other forms of SVAWG in their community is caused by the limited attention of authorities to the issues of violence against women, while 49% indicated the increased military presence.

4.8. Women's responses and the consequences of sexual harassment

24% of respondents who claimed to experience SH and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces indicated that they have started avoiding certain places considered not safe, 13% noted that their freedom of movement has been limited by, for example, not going out alone at night. Another 30% stated that after experiencing an instance of sexual violence or sexual harassment in public spaces they exercise caution at all times, and 22% indicated that they felt fear.

4.9. Perceptions on effective measures for preventing and responding to SH and other forms of SVAWG

The majority of respondents (69%) consider that ensuring an efficient investigation and liability for sex crimes is an effective measure for preventing and combating SH and other forms of SVAWG. Another 42% of respondents believe that sexual education in schools is an effective way to prevent sexual violence, while 40% have supported the idea of raising awareness in the society about gender equality, gender-based violence, sexual violence and harassment and only 26% of respondents stand for the idea of raising awareness about gender quality among men and boys and promoting respectful relationships between women and men.

V. APPRAISAL OF THE INTERVENTION SITE AND UNDERSTANDING LOCAL PROBLEMS IN ZOLOTE, LUHANSK REGION

5.1. Main characteristics of Zolote

Zolote is a civil-military administration situated 4 km from the contact line in the Popasna district of Luhansk region in the conflict-affected east of Ukraine. It includes the town of Zolote, comprising five districts (Zolote 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) and the village of Katerynivka. Zolote 5 is located on the other side of the contact line and currently is not controlled by the Ukrainian government. Zolote 3 and Zolote 4 districts, as well as the village of Katerynivka, are located directly on the contact line.

The total population of Zolote is 14,974 people.³⁰ 4,056 senior citizens reside currently in Zolote 1, 2, 3 and 4, which represents 29.5% from the total population. 64% of the senior people residing in Zolote are women. Almost 21% of town residents are IDPs, out of which 57% are women.

237 residents are persons with disabilities, representing 1.7% of the total population. 113 persons are single mothers and fathers, the majority of which (110) are women.

A Community Security Working Group with an extended mandate covering GBV issues and the implementation of Women, Peace and Security agenda at the local level is operating in Zolote. 73% of the members of the Community Security Working Group are women. Using this dialogue platform, the community, CSOs, police and local governments are addressing safety and security issues faced by women and men.

The police release periodic reports on criminality and state of public order in the community. It is important to mention that the district police officer is not based in Zolote, but in Popasna. Consequently, Zolote doesn't have a permanent presence of a police officer operating in this community.

Street Committees are established in Zolote to monitor the situation in the streets of Zolote and report any identified safety and security issues. 67% of members of the street committees are women.

30. Ukrainian decentralization portal <https://decentralization.gov.ua/newgromada/4151/composition#>



Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Vitaliy Shevelev

The town has a large number of military officers, and there are specialized teams on disabling explosives deployed in Zolote.

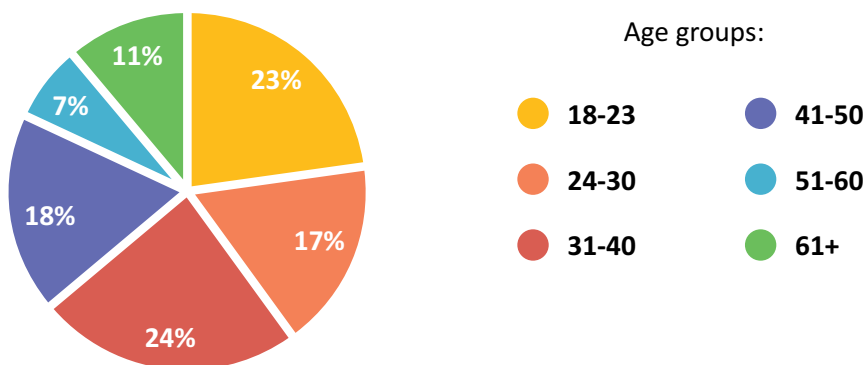
Since the beginning of the armed conflict in 2014 many families living in Zolote unwillingly found themselves on different sides of the contact line with Zolote 5 being out

of the control of the Ukrainian government. Children cannot visit their elderly parents, and grandchildren cannot visit their grandparents and provide them with timely support. The only checkpoint in Luhansk region is located in Stanytsya Luhanska. To get to Zolote 5 from Zolote 1, 2, 3 or 4 a one-day roundabout route should be taken.

5.2. Analysis of respondent's profile

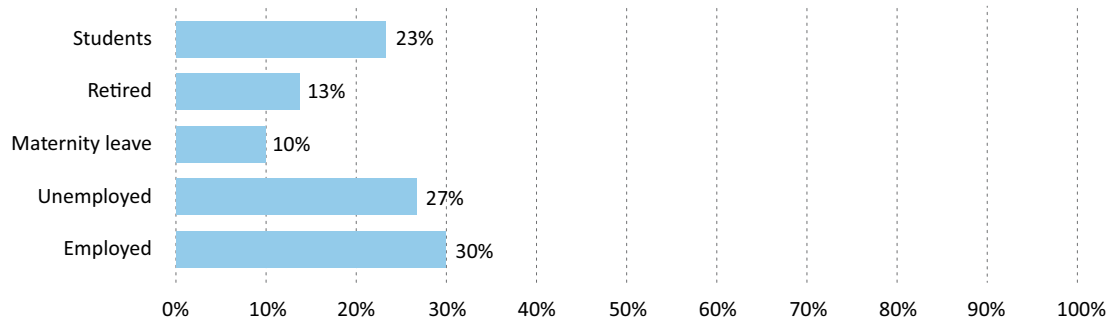
The survey sample is 264 women and girls of all age groups: 23% aged 18-23; 17% aged 24-30; 24% aged 31-40; 18% aged 41-50; 7% aged 51-60; and 11% aged 61 years and older. (Fig. 5.2.1)

Figure 5.2.1.
Number of respondents by age, n=264



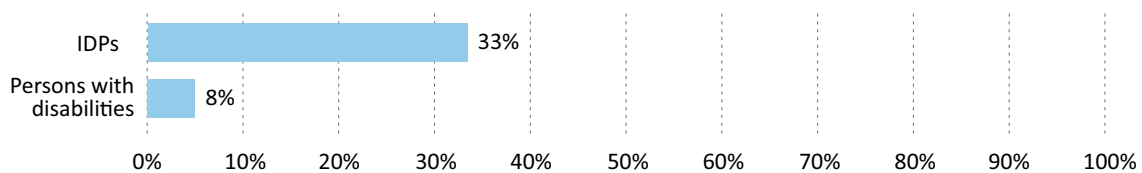
Out of the total number of respondents 30% are employed, 27% are unemployed, 10% are on maternity leave, 13% are retired, and 23% are students (Fig. 5.2.2).

Figure 5.2.2.
Number of respondents by occupation (n=264)



33% of the total of 264 respondents are IDPs and 8% are persons with disabilities (Fig 5.2.3.).

Figure 5.2.3.
Distribution of survey respondents by risk groups



5.3. Awareness of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence risks

32% of respondents indicated that before going out they are considering the extent to which their physical appearance (e.g., strong make-up) or the way they are dressed (e.g., low neckline, too short skirt, high heels) might be perceived as too provoking. Out of this number, 48% assume that people may label them as “easy to get” and 50% believe that men will exhibit unwanted attention towards them.

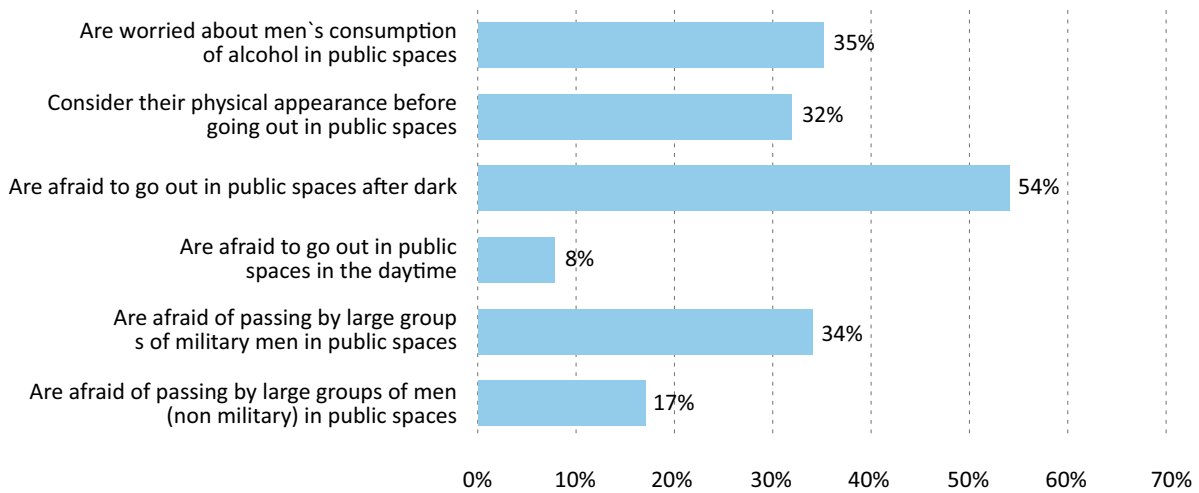
35% of respondents indicated that it is not safe for them to consume alcohol in the company of men in a public space. Out of this number 46% of women exposed concerns related to their physical integrity and personal belongings (money, handbag, etc.), 18% were afraid of sexual violence risks and 53% of women who had such concerns were afraid that the men would think they were open to flirting or sex.

While only 8% of respondents confirmed that they are afraid of going outside in daytime (mostly due to military actions), 54% said they were afraid of going outside in the nighttime (mostly due to military actions). Respondents of older age groups are more often afraid of going outside in the daytime and especially in the nighttime. For

example, fear of leaving home in the nighttime was voiced by 29% of respondents aged under 23, by 56% of respondents aged 24 to 40, and by 71% of respondents aged 41+. 17% of respondents are afraid to pass by a large group of men when they are in public spaces in Zolote. 47% of respondents in this group said that “normally men make unwanted verbal remarks of sexual nature” due to which they do not feel safe, 23% stated that they are afraid of sexual assault (e.g., unwanted touches, kisses, etc.), while 28% of respondents are afraid of physical assault (of being hit or pushed). This fear was more frequently expressed by respondents aged 24 to 40.

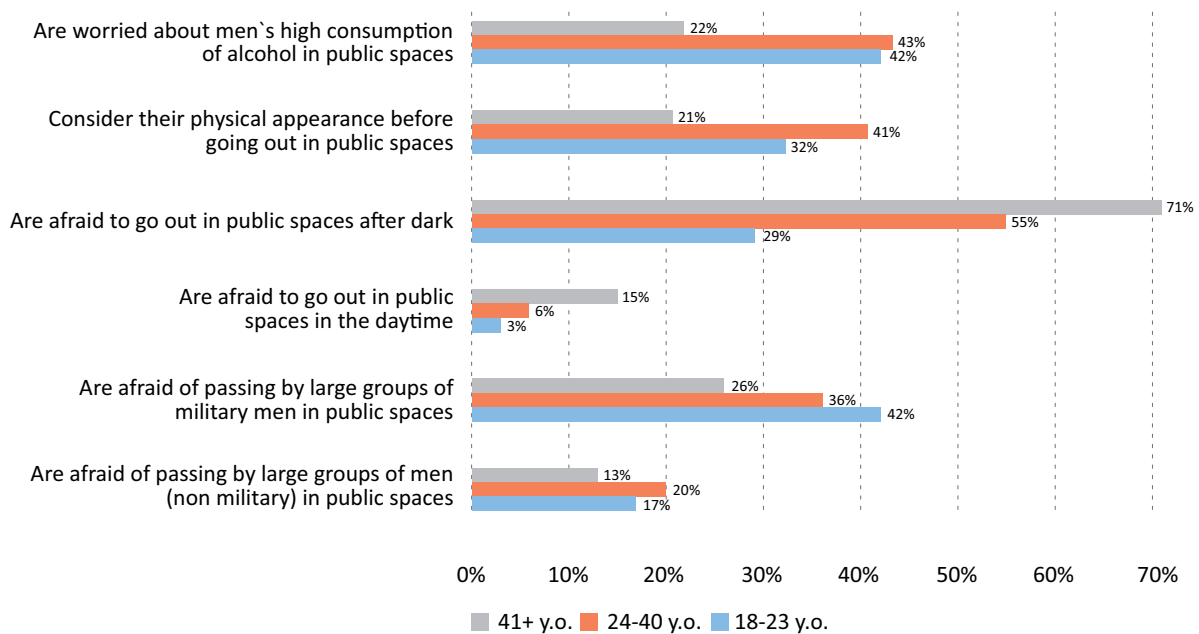
34% of respondents are afraid of passing by a large group of military men in public spaces. 64% of respondents in this group indicated that military men normally make unwanted verbal remarks of sexual nature due to which girls and women do not feel safe. 10% of respondents are afraid of sexual assault (unwanted touches, etc.). 16% of these respondents are afraid of physical assault (of being hit or pushed). Other respondents chose “other” option (afraid of groups of the military under alcohol intoxication, I had conflicts with them in the past, I am afraid of people with weapons, etc.).

Figure 5.3.1.
Concerns of surveyed women residents of Zolote about their safety and risks of SH in public spaces, %



These concerns are the most frequent among respondents aged under 24: 42% compared to 36% of those 24 to 40 years of age and 26% of those aged 41+ (Fig. 5.3.2)

Figure 5.3.2.
Concerns of surveyed women residents of Zolote about their safety and risks of SH in public spaces by age, %



5.4. Unsafe public spaces

In the opinion of survey respondents, most often SH and other forms of SVAWG are inflicted in the streets (89%), bars and restaurants (28%), and clubs (28%).

Women participants in the FGDs identified several reasons for unsafe public spaces in Zolote which increase the risk of SH and other forms of SVAWG:

- Insufficient street lighting
- Lack of walking paths
- Abandoned buildings
- Presence of the military in town

FGD participants helped to identify potentially unsafe public spaces and informed the development of two routes for conducting the WSA.

Route No. 1: 8a Sonyachny neighborhood-72-32 Tsentralna street (along T1316 highway) – 24-11 Tsentralna street (Soglasnye store) – 10-1 Tsentralna street – 14 Bazarna street (St Nicholas church).

Route No. 2: 10 Sonyachny neighborhood – Novyi Zubok street – Zelena street – Karbonit mine park – Kurgansky pond – Futbolna street – Karbonit mine.

Main infrastructure issues affecting women’s safety in public places identified as a result of the WSA conducted in Zolote:

- A lack of or poor lighting in public spaces
- Public spaces with limited sightlines where harassment and other forms of violence could occur
- Obstacles impairing the free movement of pedestrians
- Low traffic safety, places where alcohol is sold 24/7 including to the military and where groups of drunk people gather
- Unsatisfactory state of public toilets or their absence in crowded places
- A lack of signs with street names and numbers on houses which complicates orientation in town
- No video surveillance cameras in public places
- Presence of the military

In particular, WSA identified specific spaces/streets that are perceived as unsafe within Zolote:

Tsentralna street: the street is only partially lit; some streetlamps are covered with treetops; sidewalks are available only on parts of the street; spots with limited visibility and abandoned buildings.

Coal warehouse in 14 Bazarna street: the industrial zone not lit at night and not fully fenced.

Walking path between Sonyachny neighborhood and Tsentralna street (connects two neighborhoods in town where the local administration, market, pharmacy and other public buildings are situated): the path is located along T1613 highway with active traffic, there is no hard crust road surface; the road is not lit and has a thick overgrowth of trees and bushes along it with no visible sightlines.

Places where alcohol is sold 24/7: a store in 1 Tsentralna street and a kiosk in “Sonyachny neighborhood” bus stop.

Karbonit mine park: the park is abandoned with no street lighting; frequently groups of drunk people gather in the park after dark.

Kurgansky pond: there is no street lighting; the pond is not fenced; frequently groups of drunk people gather in the proximity of the pond.

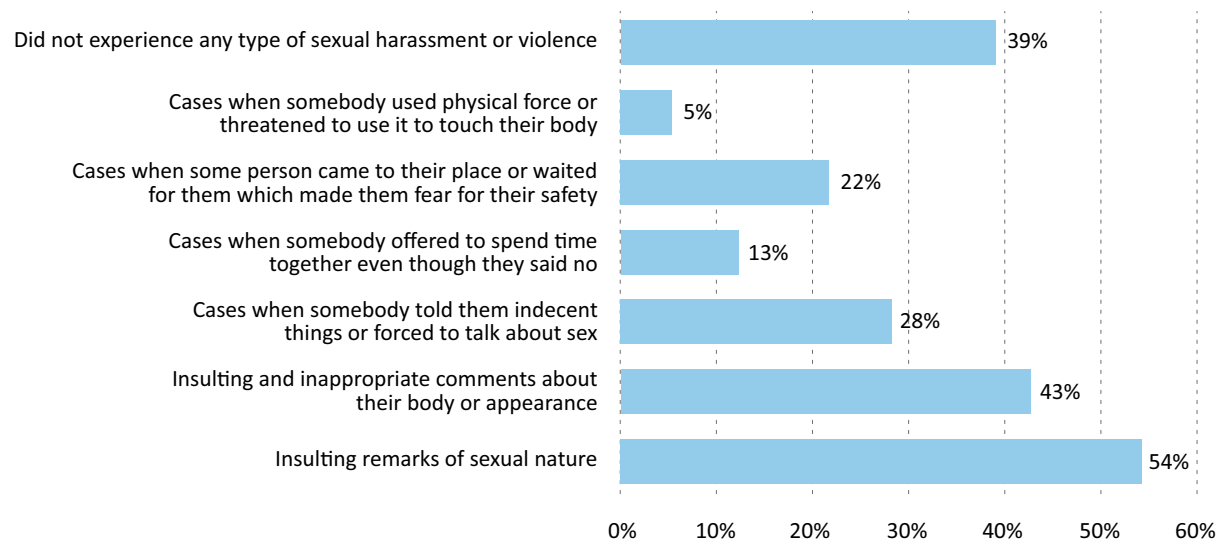
Recommendations provided by participants for addressing women’s safety concerns in the current environment and improving overall safety in their community:

- Installation of sidewalks in places they are missing
- Improvement of lighting in public places
- Installation of CCTV cameras
- More active police patrolling of public places, especially after dark

5.5. Women’s experiences of sexual violence in public spaces and online and awareness of services for victims/survivors

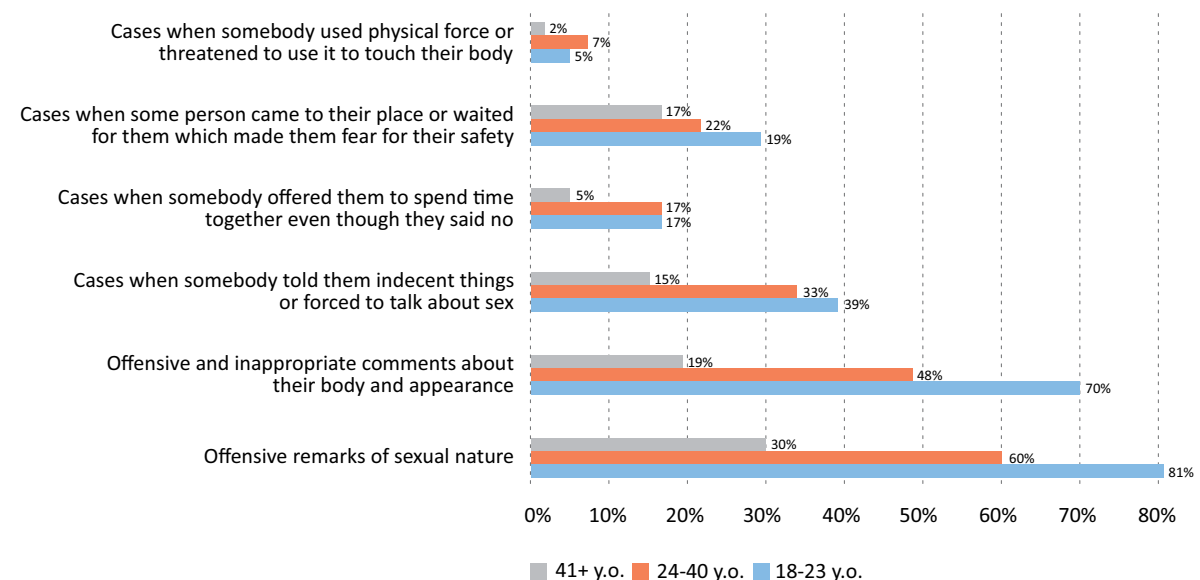
61% of respondents indicated that they have experienced sexual harassment in the public spaces of Zolote. Out of this number 54% of respondents noted that they have received offensive remarks of sexual nature in public spaces and 43% noted that they have been subjected to offensive or inappropriate comments about their body or appearance (or the body of another person). 22% of respondents informed that they had experienced stalking, which made these women fear for their safety. (Figure 5.5.1)

Figure 5.5.1.
Experiences of Zolote female residents associated with SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces, %



As showcased in the figure below, women of younger age experience SH and other forms of sexual violence more often than women over 40 years old (Fig. 5.5.2).

Figure 5.5.2.
Experiences of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence among female respondents of different age groups, % of those who had such experience in each age group

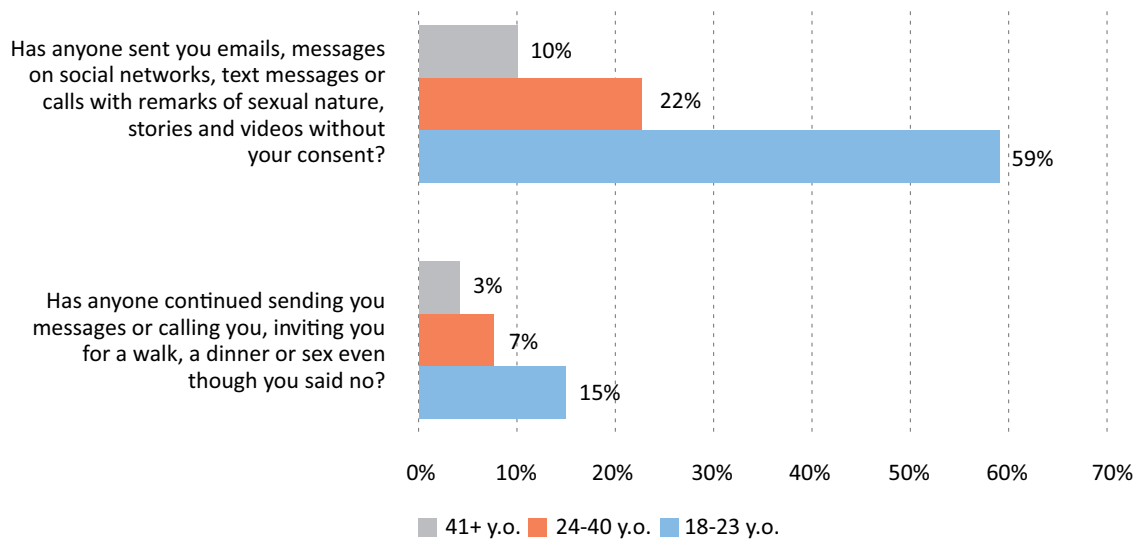


Experience of online sexual harassment

Every fourth respondent (26%) experienced online sexual harassment. 8% of those surveyed informed that they received messages on social media networks or were called on the phone with proposals to have a walk or dinner or even have sex although they had explicitly refused. Such experiences were more frequently reported by respondents from younger age groups (Fig. 5.5.3).

Figure 5.5.3.

Experiences of sexual harassment online or over the phone depending on the respondents' age (% of those who answered "yes" in each age group)

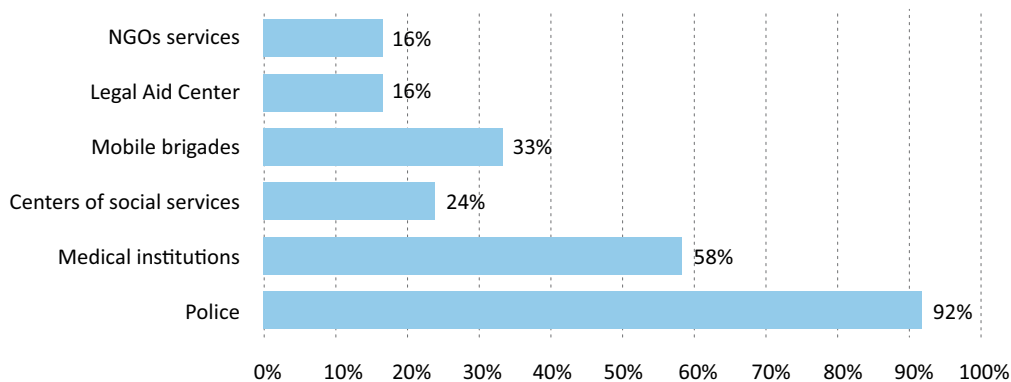


Awareness of services for victims/survivors

The outcomes of the survey show that police (92%) and medical institutions (58%) are the most known service providers for victims/survivors of sexual violence. Another 24% of respondents mentioned the centers for social services and 33%, the mobile brigades. The Legal Aid Centers and CSOs providing support to victims of sexual violence are the least known service providers.

Figure 5.5.4.

Extent of awareness of services for victims/survivors of sexual violence, %



53% of respondents never told anyone about their experience of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence. Women usually tell friends (37%) and family members (16%) about their experiences of SH and other forms of SVAWG. Only 2% would report an incident of sexual violence to police or CSOs.

Out of those who never told anyone about SH and other forms of sexual violence they had experienced 74% explained that they didn't treat it as something serious enough to report, 11% didn't know whom to address, 11% didn't think that somebody would believe them, and 12% were confident that the authorities would not react.

5.6. Profile of perpetrators

68% of survey respondents noted that most often perpetrators of SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces are young men, while 65% indicated military men and 48% pointed to older men. 51% of respondents believe that the reason that perpetrators sexually harass is because they are not punished for such behavior, 27% explained that perpetrators don't understand that such behavior humiliates women, and another 24% believe that the current patriarchal culture in Ukraine is the reason why perpetrators commit SH and other forms of SVAWG.

5.7. Factors contributing to sexual harassment

Victim-blaming

43% of respondents believe that women themselves are to blame for sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence in public spaces. 86% believe that women are responsible for their own safety and should avoid places or situations where there might be a risk of sexual violence. Another 7% of respondents consider that women are subjected to SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces because they dress and behave provocatively.

Understanding of causes of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls

22% of respondents consider uncontrolled sexual desire as one of the main causes for sexual violence against women, while 17% invoke the provocative behavior of the victim/survivor. 64% consider that the root causes are gender stereotypes and cultural norms according to which men are aggressive, so they control and dominate, and women are submissive, meek and rely on men as "bread-winners". Another 19% could not answer this question.

Perception of tolerance of SH and other forms of SVAWG

20% of survey respondents believe that sexual harassment is tolerated in Zolote. No significant discrepancies by age have been identified in the answers to this question. At the same time, out of the total number of respondents who consider that sexual harassment is tolerated 39% believe that many victims don't know that sexual

harassment represents a harmful behavior, while 36% consider impunity as the main reason for high tolerance of sexual harassment. Another 16% of respondents stated that victims may interpret unwanted sexual advances as a compliment.

Perception of the impact of military conflict in the east of Ukraine on exacerbation of SH and other forms of SVAWG

82% of surveyed women noted that the military conflict in Ukraine worsened the situation with SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces. This is a more frequent answer among respondents aged under 40. 85% of these respondents consider that the exacerbation of SH and other forms of SVAWG in Zolote is a result of increased military presence and 29% believe that insufficient attention is given by the authorities to issues pertaining to violence against women.

FGD results confirm the high level of concern among women about their safety in Zolote public spaces. Participants raised the issue of ongoing active armed conflict, directly affecting their community situated on the contact line, as a major threat to their physical integrity and life.

According to respondents, the shootings in Zolote have been ongoing for the sixth year already and continue even after the ceasefire agreement between the belligerent parties was announced.

"They totally forgot about Zolote: the ambulance, police and local authorities don't react..."
(FGD participant, 41 y.o.)

"Our military have occupied several houses. And now their owners cannot come back to their homes, since the military still live in their houses..." (FGD participant, 39 y.o.)

"During troops rotation, the military took out all the things from the private houses they used to live in. They took household appliances, personal belongings, took off radiators, even dug out cedars growing in the yard." (FGD participant, 36 y.o.)

Respondents also noted that the military actively move around Zolote in armed vehicles or walk in the streets. They enter stores carrying weapons, buy alcohol at any time of the day (in spite of the night ban) and consume it – sometimes in public places. There were incidents of alcohol-intoxicated military shooting for fun in public spaces.

Out of eight young participants (aged under 25) in the FGDs, five explicitly stated that they have experienced

unwanted verbal comments, touches and embraces from the military men in Zolote, and three of them indicated that they have been stalked by military. Another participant aged 30 recalled being stalked by two military men, but once they noticed that she was pregnant they stopped following her. Another woman stated that she heard that a woman was raped by a military man a year ago and that made her and other women from the community feel unsafe.



Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Vitaliy Shevelev

As opposed to sexual harassment risks linked to the high presence of military in Zolote, participants of the FGDs explained that they are not afraid of local boys and men. The town is small, and everybody knows and trusts each other.

Participants in the FGDs specifically indicated that there is a high risk of sexual harassment inflicted by military in the streets of Zolote. At the same time, some respondents pointed out that the behavior of military men greatly de-

pends on their commander. Some positive instances of military helping the residents were also highlighted by respondents. For example, some women explained that military men helped them with household tasks and organized joint celebration of International Children's Day. However, most often women, especially the young ones, have negative feelings about the military associated with fear for their own safety and increased risk of sexual harassment.

5.8. Women`s responses and consequences of sexual harassment

16% of survey respondents who claimed that they have experienced sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence indicated that they started avoiding certain places considered not safe, 28% limited their freedom of movement (for example, didn't leave home alone in the nighttime), and 23% felt fear.

5.9. Perceptions of effective measures for preventing and combating SH and other forms of SVAWG

69% of survey respondents believe that to prevent and counter SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces in their community there is a need to introduce sexual education in schools. 66% militate for raising awareness among boys and men about gender equality and respectful relationships between women and men and 51% supported the idea of raising awareness in the society about gender equality, SH and other forms of SVAWG. Only 33% pointed out the need for efficient investigations and ensuring liability for such actions as an efficient measure for preventing and combating SH and other forms of SVAWG.

VI. APPRAISAL OF THE INTERVENTION SITE AND UNDERSTANDING LOCAL PROBLEMS IN TORETSK, DONETSK REGION

6.1. Main characteristics of Toretsk

The amalgamated community of Toretsk is a civil-military administration situated 7 km from the contact line in the conflict-affected Donetsk region. The amalgamated community of Toretsk includes 18 settlements with a total population of 67,700.³¹ IDPs represent almost 10% with 4,347 women and 3,026 men. 22% are senior citizens with 8,840 women and 6,756 men, and more than 7% of people are with disabilities (51% of women).

The survey was conducted in the town of Toretsk which has a total population of 43,371.³²

A Local Gender Coordination Council (Coordinating Council for GBV and DV Prevention and Protection of Gender Equality and for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings)

and a gender-responsive budgeting working group are operating in Toretsk aimed at enhancing the integration of gender perspectives into local policies.

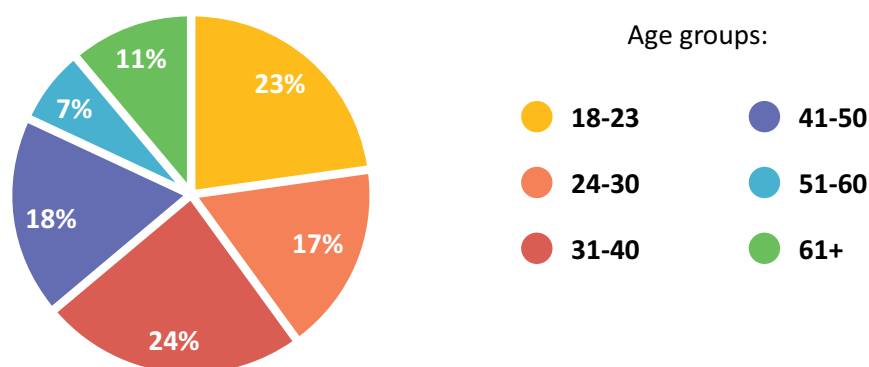
“Youth and Family of the city of Toretsk for 2019- 2020” program, including measures on preventing and combating gender-based violence, is currently implemented in Toretsk. Legal aid and services of a mobile brigade providing social and psychological support are available to victims/survivors of gender-based violence. Additionally, POLINA which is a specialized gender-based violence police unit is operating in Toretsk.

Military units are deployed on the territory of Toretsk, considering the proximity to the contact line.

6.2. Analysis of respondent’s profile

313 women participated in the survey: 26% aged 18-23; 11% aged 24-30; 20% aged 31-40; 21% aged 41-50; 14% aged 51-60; and 10% over 60 years of age (Fig. 6.2.1.).

Figure 6.2.1.
Distribution of survey respondents by age, n=313



31. Social-economic development strategy of Toretsk 2021- 2027

32. Social-economic development strategy of Toretsk 2021- 2027

Out of the total number of respondents 60% are employed, 10% are unemployed, 6% are on maternity leave, 6% are retired, and 17% are students.

Figure 6.2.2.
Distribution of survey respondents by occupation

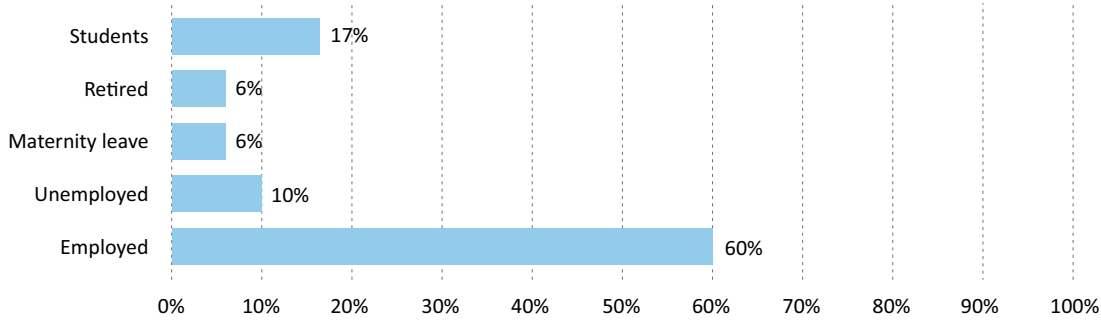
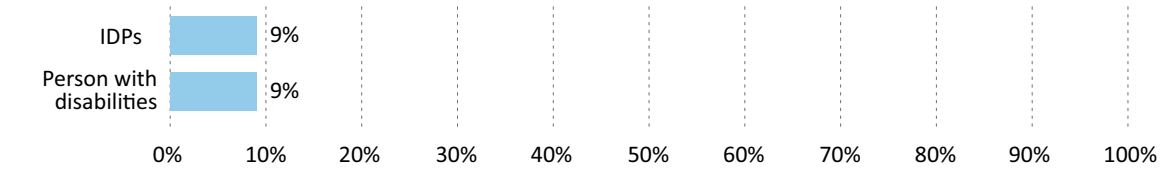


Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Mariia Litvin

16% from the total of 313 respondents are from vulnerable groups: 9% are IDPs and 9% are people with disabilities.

Figure 6.2.3.
Distribution of survey respondents by vulnerable groups



6.3. Awareness of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence risks



Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Mariia Litvin

36% of those surveyed indicated that before going outside they make sure that the way they look is not provocative. Out of this number, 43% are concerned that men may label them as “easy to get” and 49% consider that men will exhibit unwanted attention towards them.

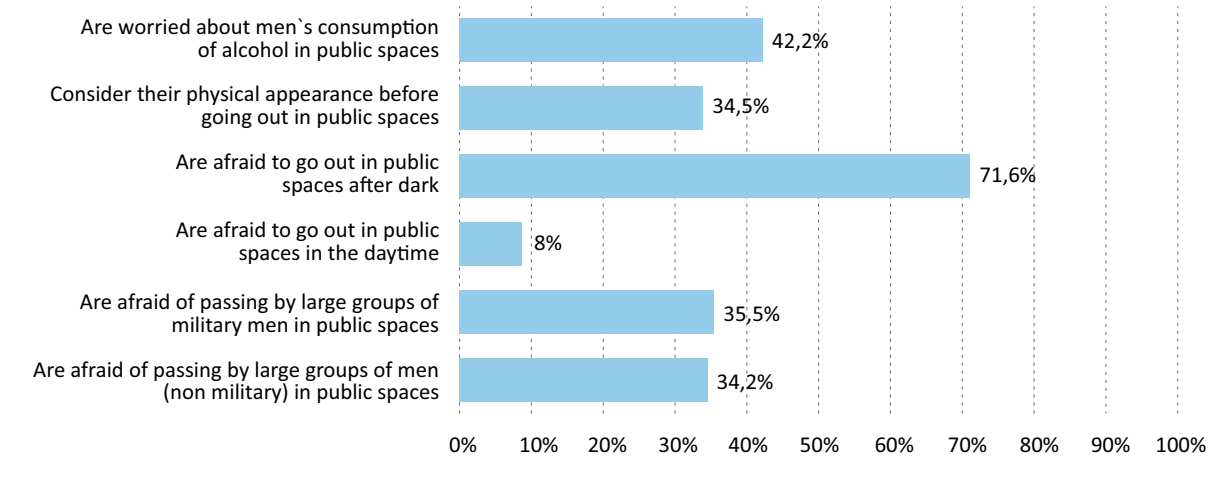
42% of respondents consider that it is unsafe for them to consume alcohol in the company of men in a public space. Out of them 73% feared for their physical integrity and personal belongings (money, handbag, etc.). 22% stated that they might be prone to sexual violence risks, while 28% who had such concerns were afraid that men would think they were open for flirting or sex.

8% of those surveyed are afraid of going outside in daytime mostly due to military actions and 72% said they were afraid of going outside in nighttime also mostly due to military actions.

34% of respondents are afraid of passing by a large group of men when they are in public spaces. 39% of respondents of this group said that “normally men make unwanted verbal remarks of sexual nature” due to which they do not feel safe. 26.3% of surveyed girls and women in this group are afraid of sexual assault (e.g., unwanted touches, kisses, etc.), while 41% of respondents are afraid of physical assault (of being hit or pushed).

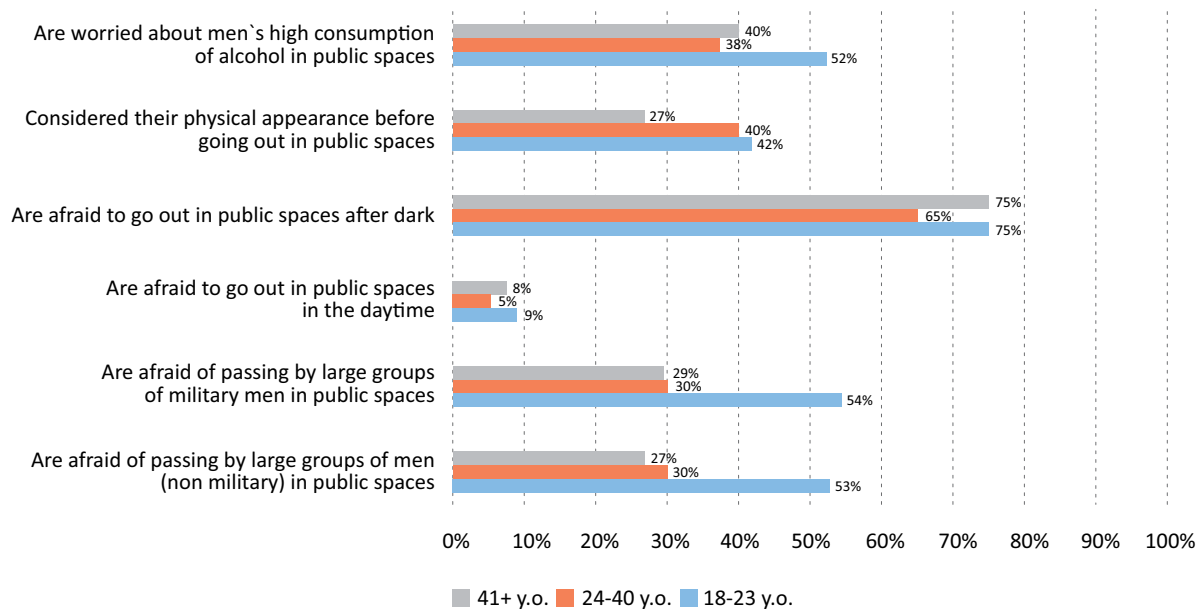
36% of respondents are afraid of passing by a large group of military men in public spaces. 33% of respondents in this group indicated that military men normally make unwanted verbal remarks of sexual nature due to which girls and women do not feel safe. 34% of respondents are afraid of being sexually assaulted (unwanted touches, etc.), another 40% indicated risks of physical assault (of being hit or pushed).

Figure 6.3.1.
Concerns of surveyed women residents of Toretsk about their safety and risks of SH in public spaces, %



Most often these concerns were expressed by representatives of younger age groups. (Fig. 6.3.2.).

Figure 6.3.2.
Concerns of surveyed women residents of Toretsk about their safety and risks of SH in public spaces by age, %



6.4. Unsafe public spaces

In the opinion of survey respondents, most often SH and other forms of SVAWG are inflicted in the streets (67%), bars and restaurants (42%), and clubs (59%).

FGD results confirm the main trends determined during quantitative survey. Participants are mostly concerned about their physical safety after dark, noting the shootings in the nearby settlements, especially at night. At the same time, participants explained that there are less frequent military actions in the proximity of their town compared to the previous years. However, sometimes they can hear loud cannonades, which creates constant tension, stress and feeling of danger as they expect possible shootings of the town itself.

“Some say they have got used to that. And I wake up every time, it can be three or four a.m., and then I can't go back to sleep. You just can't ignore the cannonade.” (FGD participant)

FGD participants especially pointed out the unsatisfactory state of public infrastructure, e.g. poor lighting of streets and court yards as well as of other public places. Respondents shared their own experience or cases which happened to people they knew who got injured due to open hatches or other obstructions in the pedestrian zones and on sidewalks.

The problem of stray dogs was brought up by women of different ages. During discussions in each group, respondents rather emotionally exemplified several experiences of attacks or threats of attacks on adults and children from stray dog packs. This problem is especially relevant for mothers who have children of preschool and elementary school age.

Sexual violence as a problem was mostly brought up by younger women. Among the participants of “youth” FGD, five women out of seven noted that they fear sexual harassment from men of different ages. The girls provided examples of verbal harassment and stalking they experienced from men. Usually, sexual harassment was inflicted when the girls were coming back home after school or had evening walks in town. Young women also noted that they feel totally safe in public transport and that they don't see military men as a threat.

Seven out of ten FGD respondents aged between 30 and 50 years old totally denied the fact that SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces are inflicted in the public spaces of Toretsk. When discussing this topic, they have expressed gender stereotypes, tolerance to sexism and harassment, explaining that the issue is with the low culture and weak moral values of contemporary youth. In particular, they blamed young women for wearing provocative clothing and too much makeup, consuming alcohol, and having irresponsible relationships with men.

The FGDs revealed that participants believe that many public spaces, especially downtown, are posing a risk of sexual violence and sexual harassment for women and girls, particularly due to insufficient street lighting, abandoned buildings and open access to cellars or attics.

FGD participants helped to identify potentially unsafe public spaces and informed the development of two routes for conducting the WSA.

Route No. 1: Cheremushky market – Dzerzhynskgaz – Donbaska street – Heroiv pratsi street – Myrna street – Havrylova street – Sedneva street – School No. 3.

Route No. 2: Tsentralna street (ATB store) – town cemetery – Zalizne village.

Main public infrastructure issues impairing the safety of women and girls in public places:

- Lack of lighting in public places
- Abandoned and under construction buildings
- Public spaces covered with overgrown trees, bushes and tall grass
- Many secluded areas
- No road surface markings, including for pedestrian crossings
- Insufficient public transportation routes and limited public transportation schedules, especially in the evenings and at night
- Lack of signs with addresses and numbers of houses, which complicates identification of the exact location for a person in need of assistance when calling the police or an ambulance

Unsafe public spaces identified as a result of the Safety Audit conducted in Toretsk:

- Road from Tsentralna street to Zalizne village (the shortest road used by this neighborhood's residents when public transportation is not available in the evening or at night): no street lighting, many destroyed buildings, overgrown trees and bushes, no pedestrian crossings, no ad-

dress signs, and stray dogs.

- Territory from Cheremushky market to Dzerzhynskgas building: no street lighting, overgrown bushes causing limited visibility, an abandoned building, and no address signs.
- Donbaska street: no street lighting, overgrown bushes which limited visibility, and no address signs. There is a wasteland on 4 Donbaska street. On the crossing of Donbaska and Heroiv pratsi the movement of pedestrians is obstructed by a pipe considerably sticking out over the level of sidewalk, which is hard to notice after dark.
- Lanes between Heroiv pratsi street and Myrna street, Myrna street and Havrylova street, Havrylova street and Sedneva street: no street lighting, no address signs, and abandoned buildings where groups of drunk people gather.

Recommendations provided by participants for addressing women's safety concerns in the current environment and improving overall safety in their community:

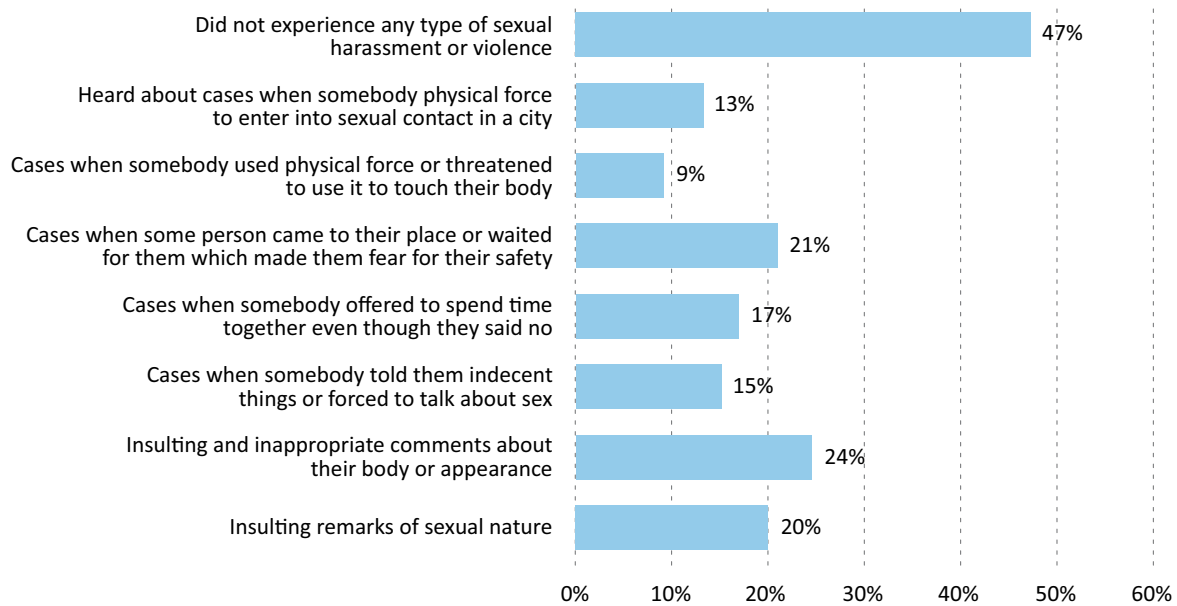
- Improvement of lighting
- Elimination of overgrown trees and bushes
- Disassembling of abandoned buildings or closing access to those
- Organization of additional routes for public transport and prolongation of its work in the evening
- More active police patrolling
- Installation of street signs/better signage

The WSA confirmed the main conclusions received based on FGD results that a great part of the town is dangerous for girls and women, including the risks of SH and other forms of sexual and physical violence. The danger is the greatest in the evening and at night. The introduction of a range of infrastructure and organizational measures proposed by initiative groups could significantly improve the safety situation in Toretsk.

6.5. Women's experiences of sexual violence in public spaces and online and awareness of services for victims/survivors

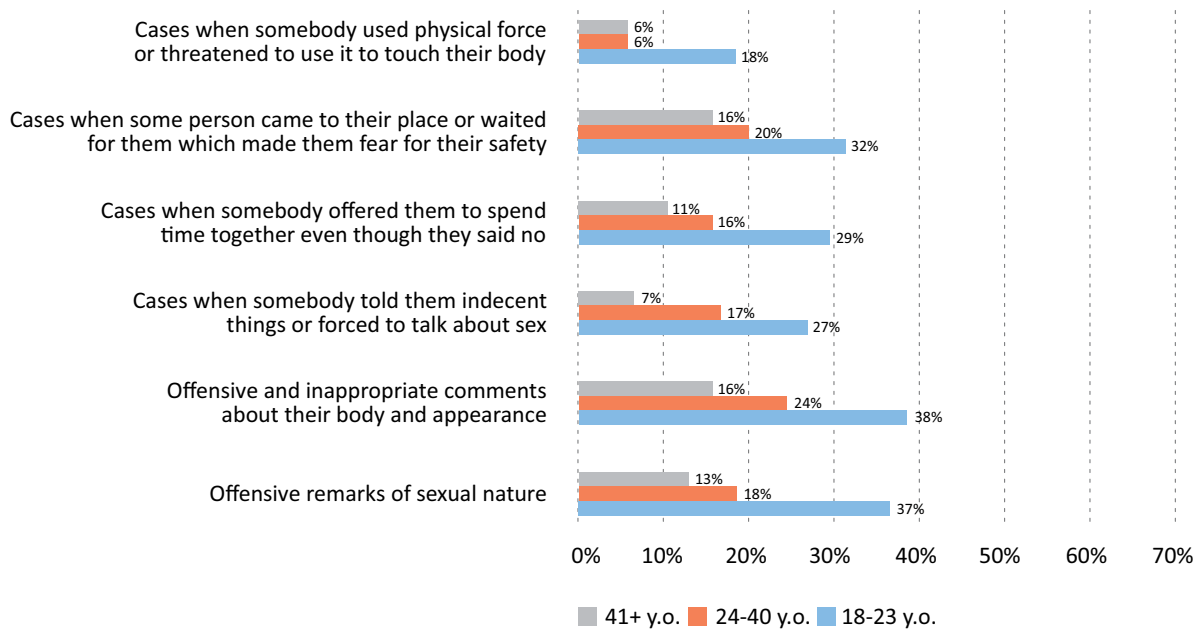
53% of respondents from Toretsk indicated that they have experienced sexual harassment in the public spaces of their town. Out of this number 24% noted cases of offensive or inappropriate comments about their body or appearance (or the body of another person) and 20% of respondents indicated that they have received offensive remarks of sexual nature in public spaces. 21% exposed incidents when they have been subjected to stalking.

Figure 6.5.1.
Experiences of Toretsk women residents associated with sexual harassment and violence in public spaces, %



These experiences are more widespread among respondents from younger age groups. (Fig. 6.5.2).

Figure 6.5.2.
Experiences of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces among women respondents by age groups, % of respondents of each age group that had this experience

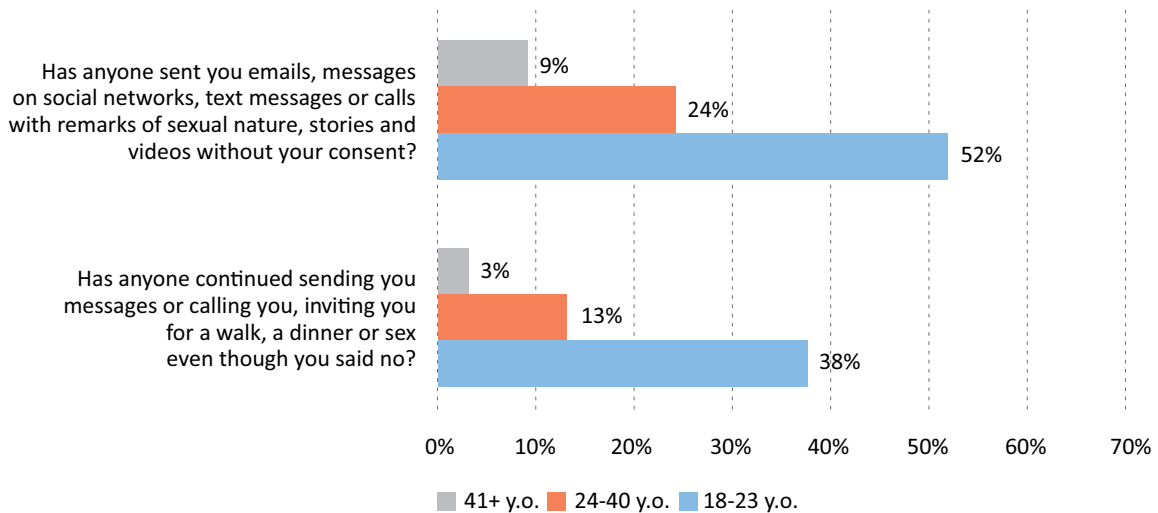


Experiences of online sexual harassment

25% informed about cases of harassment in cyberspace. Women indicated that they received messages or emails of sexual nature, including images or videos, without their consent and 15% informed that they kept receiving such messages even though they explicitly expressed their lack of will to participate in such conversations.

Such experiences are much more frequent among respondents aged under 23 years old. For example, among these respondents every second woman has informed she has been sent unwanted messages of sexual nature.

Figure 6.5.3.
Experiences of sexual harassment online or over the phone among respondents of different age groups (% of those who answered “yes”)

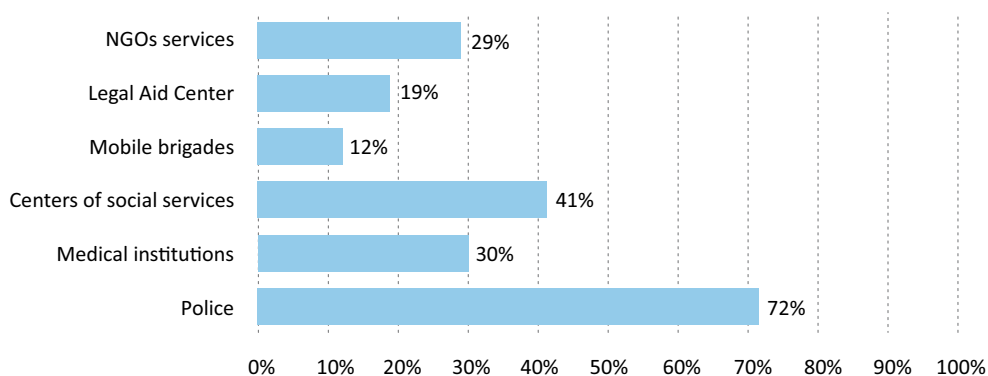


The youngest FGD participants informed about regular cases of sexual harassment through phone apps or social media networks. After a more detailed discussion, it turned out that unacceptable photos and videos as well as proposals of virtual sex were received from foreign subscribers who contacted these women via social media networks.

Awareness of services for victims/survivors

Among respondents noting that they know about services for victims/survivors of sexual violence 72% indicated police; 30%, medical institutions; and 41%, centers for social services. Only 12% recalled mobile brigades; 19%, Legal Aid Center; and 29%, CSOs as service providers for victims/survivors of sexual violence.

Figure 6.5.4.
Awareness of services for victims/survivors of sexual violence, %



47.3% of respondents never told anyone about their experience of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence. 30.7% of surveyed women told their friends and 26.5% told their family members, while only 3.8% went to the police and 2.3% accessed the services provided by CSOs.

Out of those who never told anyone about their experience of SH or other forms of sexual violence 23% did so because they thought it was not serious enough to report, the same share of respondents felt shame, and 24% didn't believe that something will be done to protect them or prevent instances of such violence in the future.

6.6. Profile of perpetrators

441% of survey respondents noted that most often perpetrators of SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces are young men and 46% indicated older men, while 22% of respondents considered that SH and other forms of SVAWG are most often inflicted by military men.

47% of survey respondents suppose that the reason that sexual harassment is a common phenomenon is the absence of a punishment for these actions; 17% stated that perpetrators do not understand that such behavior humiliates women; and 22% blamed victims/survivors for provocative looks and behavior. Only 5% believe that the cause of SH and other forms of SVAWG perpetrated by men is patriarchal culture.

6.7. Factors contributing to sexual harassment

Victim-blaming

24% of survey respondents believe that women who became victims/survivors of sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence in public spaces are responsible for this. More frequently such opinion has been voiced by respondents aged under 23 (29%) compared to respondents aged 24 to 40 (19%) and respondents aged 41+ (25%).

43% of respondents consider that victims/survivors are to blame for provocative looks and behavior and another 43% of respondents consider that women are responsible for their safety and should avoid situations with a risk of sexual violence.

Therefore, on average every fourth or fifth woman respondent from Toretsk firmly believes that women themselves are responsible for SH and other forms of SVAWG inflicted by men.

Understanding of causes of SH and other forms of SVAWG

45% of survey respondents consider uncontrolled sexual desire as one of the main causes of sexual violence against women, while 27% invoke provocative behavior of the victim/survivor. 28% consider that the causes of SH and other forms of SVAWG are gender stereotypes and biased cultural norms according to which men are aggressive, so they control and dominate, and women are submissive.

Perception of tolerance of SH and other forms of SVAWG

31% of survey respondents believe that sexual harassment is tolerated in their town. Respondents aged under 23 (38%) supported this statement to a larger degree compared to those aged 24 to 40 (24%) and 41+ (32%). Out of these women, 33% believe that SH and other forms of SVAWG are tolerated because victims/survivors don't know that sexual harassment represents sexual violence and 47% indicated impunity. 26% of respondents consider that many victims/survivors believed that unwanted sexual advances were actually a compliment.

Perception of the impact of military conflict in the East of Ukraine on exacerbation of SH and other forms of SVAWG

50% of survey respondents noted that the military conflict in Ukraine worsened the situation with SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces. This belief is widespread among respondents aged under 23 (58%).

52% of respondents who agreed with the statement that the armed conflict exacerbated SH and other forms of SVAWG in their town believe that the reason for that is the increased military presence in their community and 45% pointed out the limited attention of authorities to the issue of violence against women.

6.8. Women's response and the consequences of sexual harassment

16% of survey's respondents who claimed that they have experienced sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence indicated that they started avoiding certain places considered not safe, 28% limited their freedom of movement (for example, didn't leave home alone in the nighttime), and 23% felt fear.

6.9. Perceived effective measures for preventing and combating SH and other forms of SVAWG

36.1% of survey respondents believe that the way to prevent and counter SH and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces in their community is the introduction of sexual education in schools. 43.1% of respondents supported the idea of raising awareness among boys and men about gender equality and respectful relationships between women and men, while 34.5% spoke for raising awareness in the society about discrimination, gender equality, SH and other forms of sexual violence. 68.7% believe that efficient investigation and ensuring the liability of the perpetrator is the most effective way to prevent and combat SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces.

VII. APPRAISAL OF THE INTERVENTION SITE AND UNDERSTANDING LOCAL PROBLEMS IN SOLEDAR, DONETSK REGION

7.1. Main characteristics of Soledar

Soledar is an urban amalgamated territorial community situated 25km from the contact line in the conflict-affected Donetsk region. Soledar includes five settlements: the town of Soledar and the villages of Bakhmutske, Yakovlivka, Paraskoviyevka, and Rozdolivka. The total number of people residing in this amalgamated territorial community is 24,508.³³ Senior citizens represent 21% of the total population, while IDPs represent 6% and persons with disabilities, 2.6%. The town of Soledar has a population of 11,898 persons.³⁴

A Local Gender Coordination Council, a Community Security Working Group and a gender-responsive budgeting working group are operating in Soledar aimed at integrating gender mainstreaming into local policies. Additionally, a Gender Commissioner was appointed in Soledar to coordinate the work on integrating gender dimension into local programs and budgets.

Soledar adhered to the European Charter on equal opportunities for women and men, and a local Action Plan on implementing the National Action Plan on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted in 2019.

Presently there are no NGOs dealing with women's rights and gender equality active in Soledar.

The nearest police station is located in the town of Bakhmut (15 km away). In the amalgamated territorial community of Soledar there are two local police officers coming from Bakhmut according to an established schedule. Recently a community police officer was appointed, although considering the total number of the population of the amalgamated territorial community there should be four community police officers. Additionally, several military units are deployed in Soledar.

33. Community website <https://gromada.info/gromada/soledarska/>

34. Community website <https://gromada.info/gromada/soledarska/#2016>

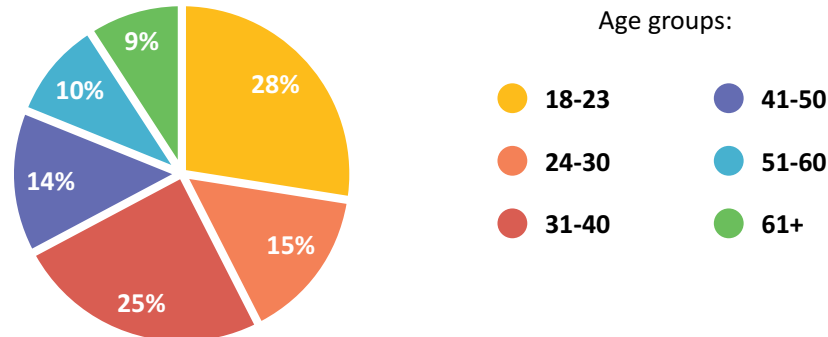


Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Mariia Litvin

7.2. Analysis of respondent's profile

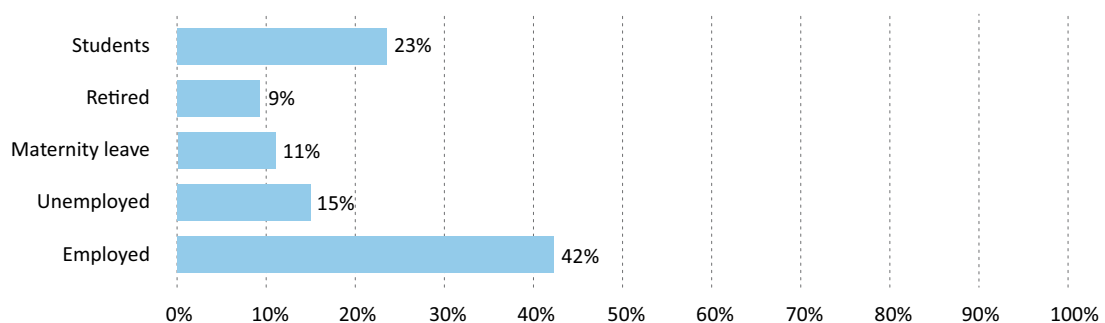
290 women participated in the survey in Soledar: 28% aged 18-23; 15% aged 24-30; 25% aged 31-40; 14% aged 41-50; 10% aged 51-60; and 9% over 60 years of age. (Fig. 7.2.1)

Figure 7.2.1.
Distribution of survey respondents by age, n=290



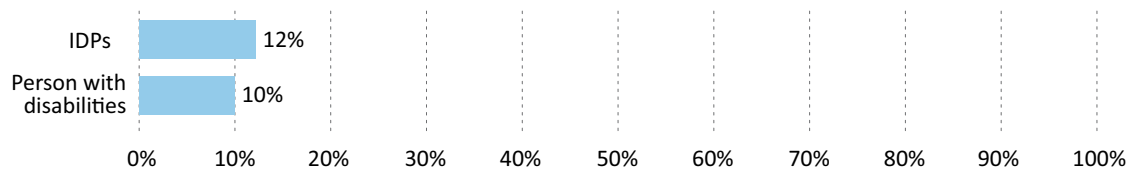
Out of the total number of 290 respondents, 42% are employed, 15% are unemployed, 11% are on maternity leave, 9% are retired, and 23% are students.

Figure 7.2.2.
Distribution of survey respondents by occupation



22% of the total of 290 respondents are representing vulnerable groups: 12% are IDPs and 10% are persons with disabilities.

Figure 7.2.3.
Distribution of survey respondents by vulnerable groups



7.3. Awareness of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence risks

37% of those surveyed indicated that before going outside they make sure that the way they look is not provocative. Out of this number 53% are concerned that people may label them as “easy to get” and 45%, that men will exhibit unwanted attention towards them.

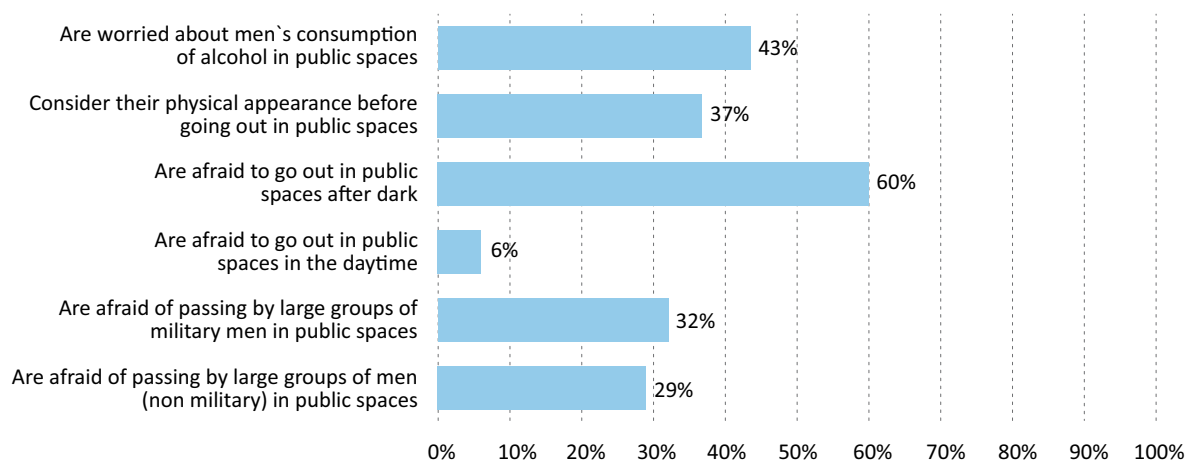
43% of respondents thought that it was dangerous for them to consume alcohol in the company of men in a public space. Out of this number 58% were afraid for their physical integrity and personal belongings (money, handbag, etc.); 15% were concerned about sexual violence risks; and 36% were afraid that men would think they were open for flirting or sex.

6% of those surveyed stated that they are afraid of going outside in daytime and 60% said they were afraid of going outside in the nighttime.

29% of respondents are afraid of passing by a large group of men when they are in public spaces. 31% respondents in this group said that “normally men make unwanted verbal remarks of sexual nature” due to which they do not feel safe and 28% of surveyed girls and women in this group are afraid of sexual assault (e.g., unwanted touches, kisses, etc.), while 54% of respondents are afraid of physical assault (of being hit or pushed).

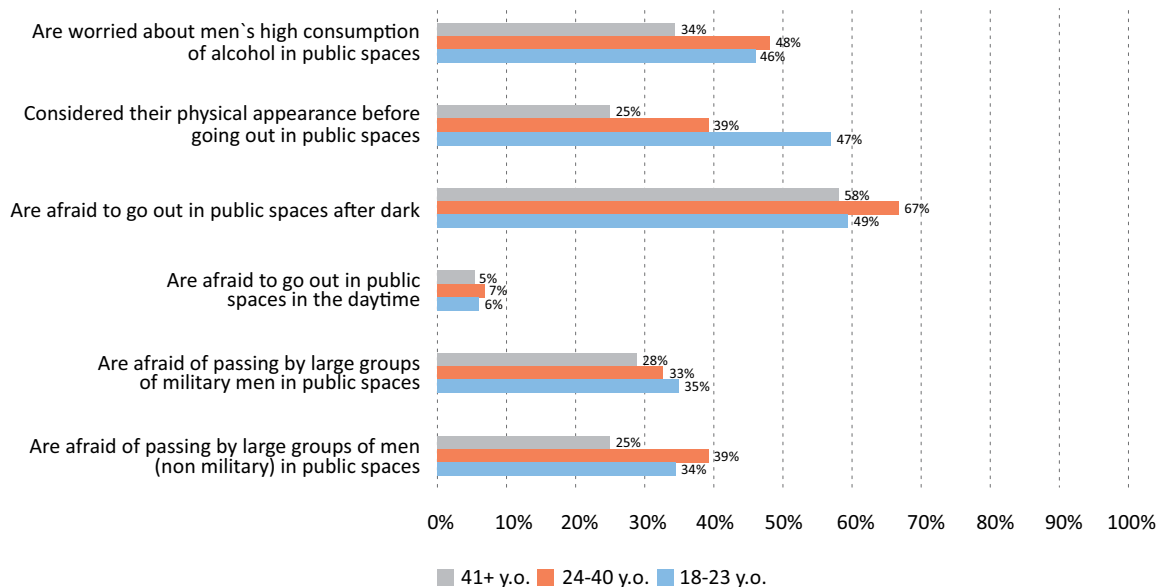
32% of respondents are afraid of passing by a large group of military men in public spaces. 33% of respondents in this group indicated that military men normally make unwanted verbal remarks of sexual nature due to which girls and women do not feel safe. 29% of respondents indicated that they are afraid of sexual assault (e.g., unwanted touches, kisses etc.) and 42% of these respondents are afraid of physical assault (of being hit or pushed) from military men.

Figure 7.3.1.
Concerns of surveyed women residents of Soledar about their safety and risks of SH in public spaces



These concerns are more widespread among respondents aged under 40. (Fig. 7.3.2.)

Figure 7.3.2.
Concerns of surveyed women residents of Soledar about their safety and risks of SH in public spaces by age, %



7.4. Unsafe public spaces

In the opinion of surveyed respondents, most often SH and other forms of SVAWG are inflicted in the streets (71%), bars and restaurants (42%), and clubs (63%).

FGD results confirm the main trends determined during quantitative surveying. FGD participants are mostly concerned about the lack of personal safety in public places after dark. Participants raised the issue of physical violence and sexual harassment inflicted by local men and crowds of young men abusing alcohol. This problem is especially pertinent in warm seasons. According to local women, very often one can encounter such crowds even in the central street of Soledar. The men are sitting right on the benches next to the supermarket, consuming alcohol and making verbal remarks of sexual nature towards girls and young women passing by.

Additionally, participants mentioned that drivers often don't comply with traffic rules and don't allow pedestrians to pass on road crossings. The issue of stray dogs attacking people was raised particularly by younger women.

Sexual violence as a problem was mostly brought up by teenage girls. All participants of youth FGD noted that the risks of SH and other forms of SVAWG in public places are higher during the evening and night, as well as during mass events like the celebration of the "Day of the Town".

FGD participants explained that the presence of police in the streets is limited in Soledar and that they are

not satisfied with the quality of their work aimed at preserving public order and preventing crime.

Additionally, FGD participants mentioned the limited schedule of public transport. The town does not have its own transport operator. Passenger transportation services are provided by an entrepreneur from Bakhmut. The last route of the bus is at 6pm. However, many local residents use a suburban train that comes to the town much later and stops far from most neighborhoods. After descending from the urban train, local residents have to go on foot (from 15 to 20 minutes up to almost an hour) in the evening along unsafe routes. There are neighborhoods in the town where there are no bus routes at all.

Surveyed women indicated that they feel safer compared to 2014 when the armed conflict started. There are fewer military men in town who visit it during the weekends and do not usually carry weapons.

FGD participants stated that many public spaces are especially unsafe during the evening and at night due to insufficient street lightning, periodic electricity blackouts, and poor state of the walking paths.

FGD participants helped to identify potentially unsafe public spaces and informed the development of two routes for conducting the WSA.



Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Local activist

Route No. 1: Preobrazhenskogo street from Pharmacy – Hospital (1a Soledarska street – to Soledarska street bus stop, Constitution street, Tselinnikiv, Parkova, and Karpinskogo streets).

Route No. 2: 5 Karpinskogo street – Parkova – road to the village (Ostrovskogo, Tolstogo, Chernyshevskogo, Lykova streets) – Soledarska street, Sonyachna street, 52 Division street – Parkova (recreation park) – Kalinina street.

Main public infrastructure issues impairing safety of women and girls in public places identified as a result of the Safety Audit conducted in Soledar:

- Lack of or insufficient lighting in public places
- Obstacles for movement of pedestrians (e.g., poor state of sidewalks or no hard crust road surface on walking paths).
- Abandoned buildings
- Territories overgrown with trees, bushes, and tall grass
- Places where groups of drunk people gather.

Unsafe locations identified during the Safety Audit:

- Soledarska street: there is no lighting in some parts of the street
- Road to the hospital from Preobrazhenska street to 1A Soledarska street: the road passes a wasteland, there is no street lighting, and the pavement is full of holes.
- Hospital territory: overgrown tall grass, bushes, and reed close to 1 Soledarska street, an open-access abandoned building where groups of drunk people gather

andoned building where groups of drunk people gather

- Constitution street: there is practically no street lighting, the houses are located far from the road and they can be reached only by passing through a territory covered with overgrown bushes and grass
- Road from bus stop in Soledarska street “to the village” (to Ostrovskogo, Tolstogo, Chernyshevskogo and Lykova streets) which goes along Parkova street. This is the road used by town residents to the downtown. It is a dirt road which is hard to pass after rainfall. There is no street lighting and the road is covered with overgrowth. Several abandoned and destroyed buildings are located on this street.
- Ostrovskogo, Tolstogo, Chernyshevskogo and Lykova streets: no street lighting, a lot of overgrowth, abandoned and destroyed buildings and piles of trash.
- Sonyachna street: no street lighting, a lot of overgrowth, abandoned and destroyed buildings, piles of trash.
- Recreation park: no street lighting, in the evening groups of drunk people gather there and there is no public bathroom.
- Path to Tinysta street: unsafe suspension bridge and reed overgrowth.

Annex 4 presents the map of unsafe places identified in Soledar.

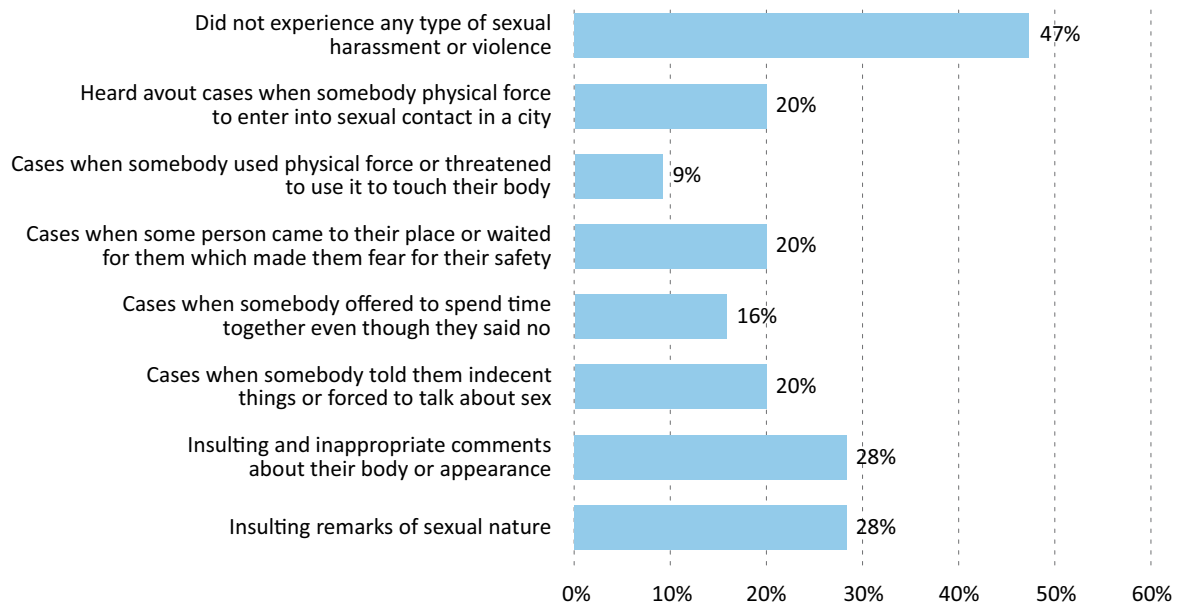
Recommendations provided by participants on possible ways of improving safety in the community:

- Improvement of lighting in public places.
- Territory improvement (elimination of overgrown bushes and grass, installation of rails at the descent on the road to the hospital).
- Police patrolling of dangerous locations.

7.5. Women’s experiences of sexual violence in public spaces and online, and awareness of services for victims/survivors

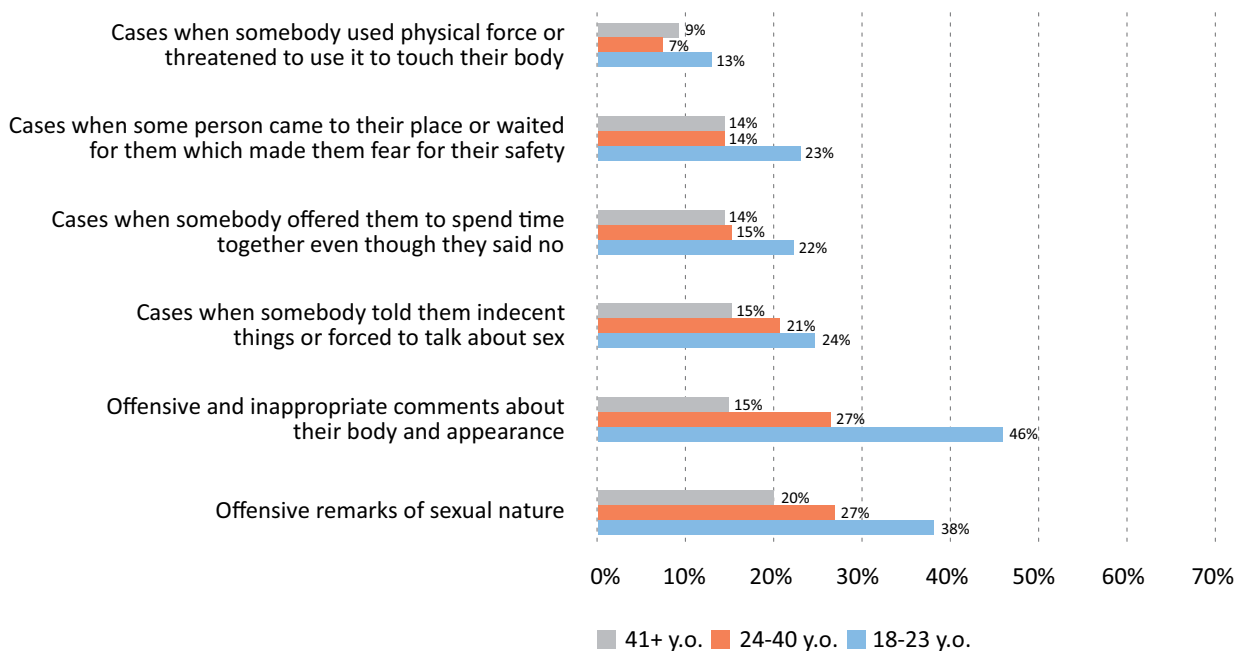
53% of respondents from Soledar indicated that they have experienced sexual harassment in the public spaces of their town. Out of this number 28% noted that that they received offensive remarks of sexual nature in public spaces and another 28% noted cases of offensive or inappropriate comments about their body or appearance (or the body of another person). 20% experienced instances of stalking.

Figure 7.5.1.
Experiences of Soledar women residents associated with sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces, %



These experiences are most often evoked by respondents from younger age groups. (Fig. 7.5.2).

Figure 7.5.2.
Experiences of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces among women residents of Soledar by age group, % of respondents in each group who had such experiences

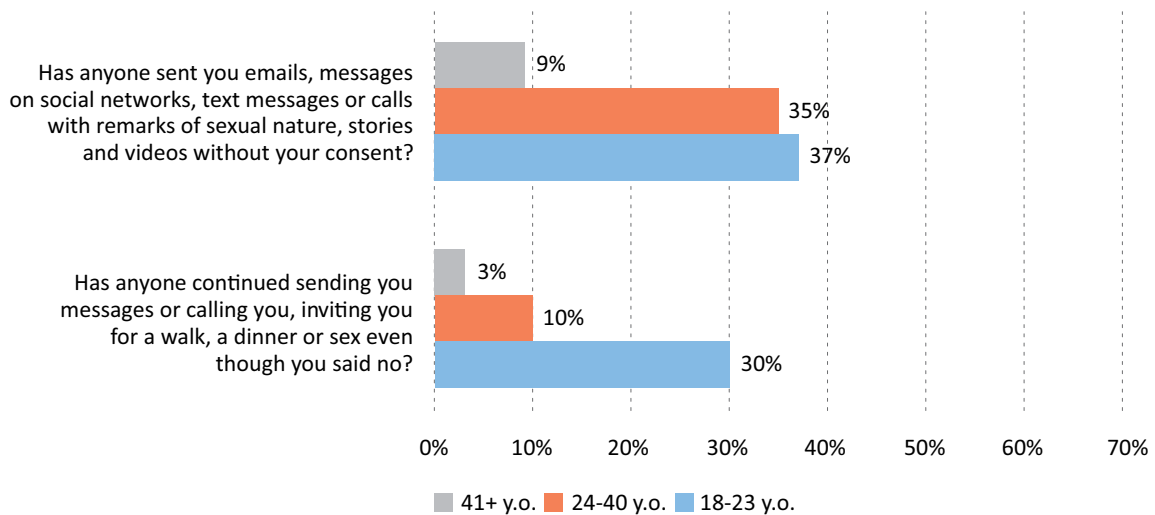


Experiences of online sexual harassment

23% of surveyed women informed about cases of sexual harassment they have experienced in cyberspace. Out of this number 14% informed that they kept receiving such messages even though they explicitly made it clear that they don't want to continue communicating with the perpetrator. Most often such experiences are noted among respondents of younger age groups. (Fig. 7.5.3)

Figure 7.5.3.

Experiences of sexual harassment online or over the phone among respondents by age group (% of those who said they had such experiences)



Awareness of services for victims/survivors of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls

The outcomes of the survey show that police are the most known service for victims of sexual violence (66%). 35% of respondents mentioned medical institutions; 29%, centers for social services; 10%, mobile brigades; 13%, Legal Aid Center; and 25% mentioned CSOs providing services to victims/survivors of sexual violence.

62% of respondents never told anyone about their experience of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence. 25% of surveyed girls and women told their friends, while 18% told their family members. Only one person went to the police, one person to Legal Aid Center, and one accessed the services of a CSO.

Out of those who never told anyone about such cases 18% thought that the instance of sexual harassment they

have experienced was not serious enough to report, 24% felt shame, 14% did not believe that something would be done to redress the situation, and 17% didn't know whom to address.

According to FGD results, awareness of girls and women about services in cases of sexual violence is very low. In the context of sexual violence, most respondents indicate only police and ambulance as service providers. At the same time, participants stated that they would not report to the police, since they don't believe that the police will take effective measures to stop the violence and punish the perpetrator due to persistent gender stereotypes and also because sexual harassment in public spaces is not an offence in Ukraine.

7.6. Profile of perpetrators

51% of surveyed respondents noted that most often perpetrators of SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces are young men, while 49% indicated older men. Another 28% indicated that most often the perpetrators are military men. 40% believe that the reason that perpetrators sexually harass women is that they are not punished for such behavior; 23% explained that often perpetrators do not understand that such behavior humiliates women; and 24% think that women's provocative behavior is inviting perpetrators to inflict sexual violence or sexual harassment.

7.7. Factors contributing to sexual harassment

Victim-blaming

17% of surveyed respondents believe that victims/survivors of sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence in public spaces are to blame for what happened to them. Out of these respondents 29% believe that the provocative looks or behavior are the main reason why women are sexually harassed. 37% of respondents consider that women themselves are responsible for their safety and they should avoid situations where they could be at risk of sexual violence.

Therefore, on average every fifth female respondent from Soledar firmly believes that women themselves are to blame for SH and other forms of SVAWG.

Understanding of causes of SH and other forms of SVAWG

43% of surveyed respondents indicated that the cause of SH and other forms of SVAWG is the uncontrolled sexual desire of the perpetrator; 18% brought up the provocative behavior of the victim/survivor; and 28% referred to gender stereotypes and biased cultural norms as causes of sexual violence according to which men are aggressive, so they control and dominate, and women are submissive, meek and rely on men as "breadwinners".

Perception of tolerance of sexual harassment

18% of surveyed women believe that sexual harassment is tolerated in their town. No significant discrepancies by age were identified in the answer to this question. Out of these women, 14% believe that victims/survivors don't know that sexual harassment represents harmful behavior, and 31% indicated that sexual harassment is tolerated because it is not sanctioned. 18% of respondents supposed that many victims/survivors believe that unwanted sexual advances are actually a compliment. 46% indicated that they don't know the reason why sexual harassment is tolerated in Soledar.

Perception of the impact of military conflict in the east of Ukraine on the exacerbation of SH and other forms of SVAWG

52% of respondents noted that the military conflict in Ukraine worsened the situation with SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces in Soledar. No significant discrepancies by age were identified in the answer to this question.

60% of these respondents consider that increased military presence in Soledar increased the number of incidents of sexual harassment, and 56% believe that limited attention is directed by the authorities towards preventing and combating violence against women.

7.8. Women`s response and the consequences of sexual harassment

35% of respondents who had experience of sexual harassment or other forms of sexual violence started avoiding certain places; 21% limited their freedom of movement (e.g., they do not go outside at night alone). 45% are now more careful at all times to avoid situations with high risk of SH and other forms of SVAWG, and 42% declared that they felt fear.

7.9. Perceptions of effective measures for preventing and combating SH and other forms of SVAWG

45% of surveyed respondents believe that the effective way to prevent and combat SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces in their community is the introduction of sexual education in schools. 42% of respondents are for raising awareness among boys and men about gender equality and respectful relationships between women and men. 38% supported the idea of raising awareness in the society about discrimination, gender equality, SH and other forms of sexual violence, and 63% supported the need for efficient investigations and adequate sanctions for the perpetrators.

VIII. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT RISKS

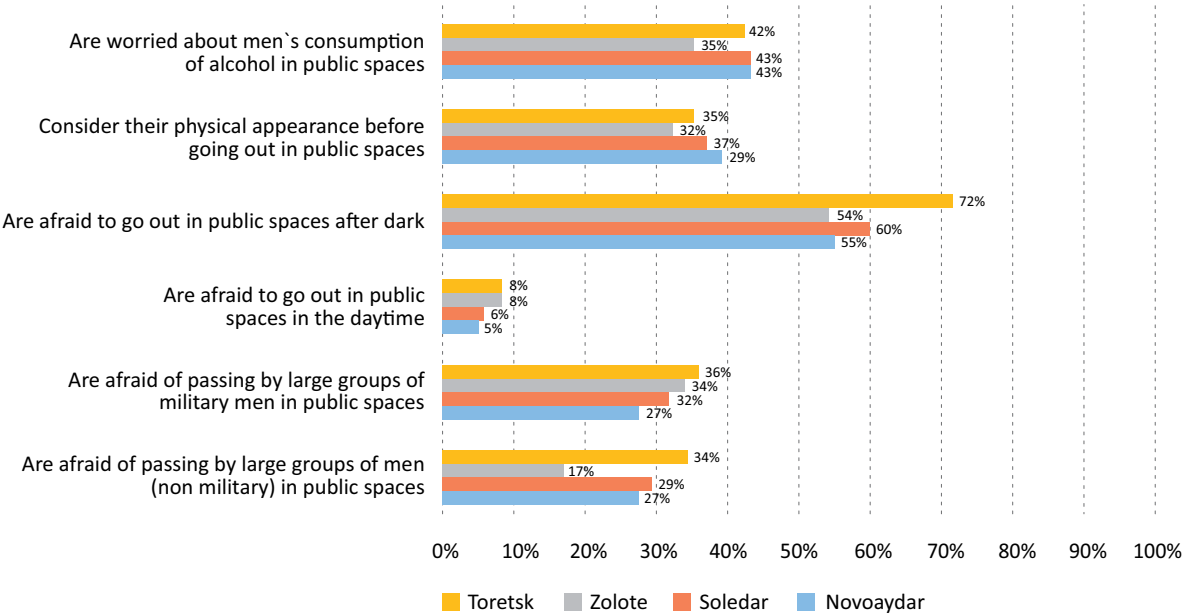
The comparative analysis of the results of this assessment confirms the existence of gender-based norms, which trigger sexual harassment in all four communities. Women perceive the risk of SH and other forms of SVAWG paying attention to the way they look so as not to “provoke” unwanted sexual attention in public spaces to a similar degree in Toretsk, Zolote and Soledar and to a lesser extent in Novoaydar.

At the same time, women from Toretsk expressed concerns for their physical and sexual integrity during night-time more frequently than women from the other three settlements. 72% of women from Toretsk expressed this

concern compared to an average of 56% in the other three communities. Women in Toretsk linked their fear of going outside at night with the proximity to the ongoing active military actions.

A dependency between the proximity to the contact line of Zolote (on the contact line) and Toretsk (7 km from the contact line) and the increased concerns stemming from high risks of physical and sexual assault of women from these communities while passing by groups of military men compared to Novoaydar (60 km from the contact line) and Soledar (25 km from the contact line) has been observed.

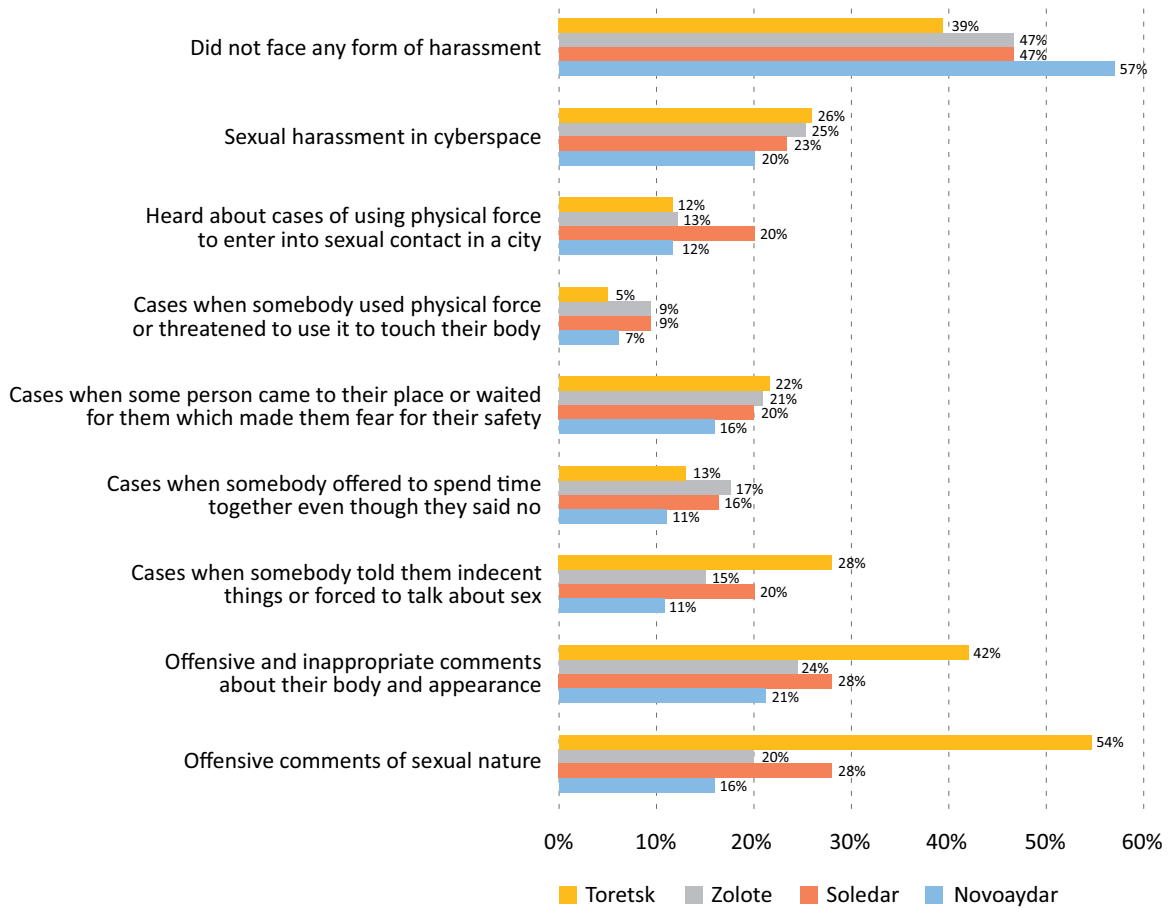
Figure 8.1.
Concerns of surveyed women residents from target communities, %



An imposing 61% of surveyed women from Zolote and a bit over half of all surveyed women from Toretsk (53%) and Soledar (53%) indicated that they have experienced SH or other forms of sexual violence in public spaces, while only 43% of women from Novoaydar confirmed this statement. In all four communities, younger women (18-23 years old) are prone to higher risks of SH and other forms of SVAWG than women from older age groups.

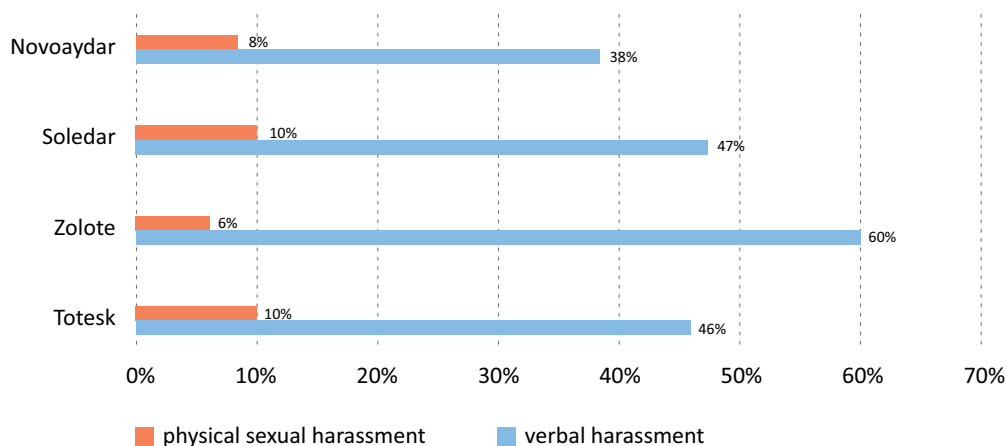
At the same time, women from Zolote experience verbal sexual harassment to a significantly larger extent than women from the other three communities. At the other end women in Novoaydar experience this form of sexual harassment to a lesser degree. Compared to the other three settlements Novoaydar is a village situated farthest from the contact line (60 km) with a small population of 8,692 residents where people know each other, which might be a factor contributing to less frequent instances of verbal sexual harassment.

Figure 8.2.
Experiences associated with sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces from surveyed women residents of target communities, %



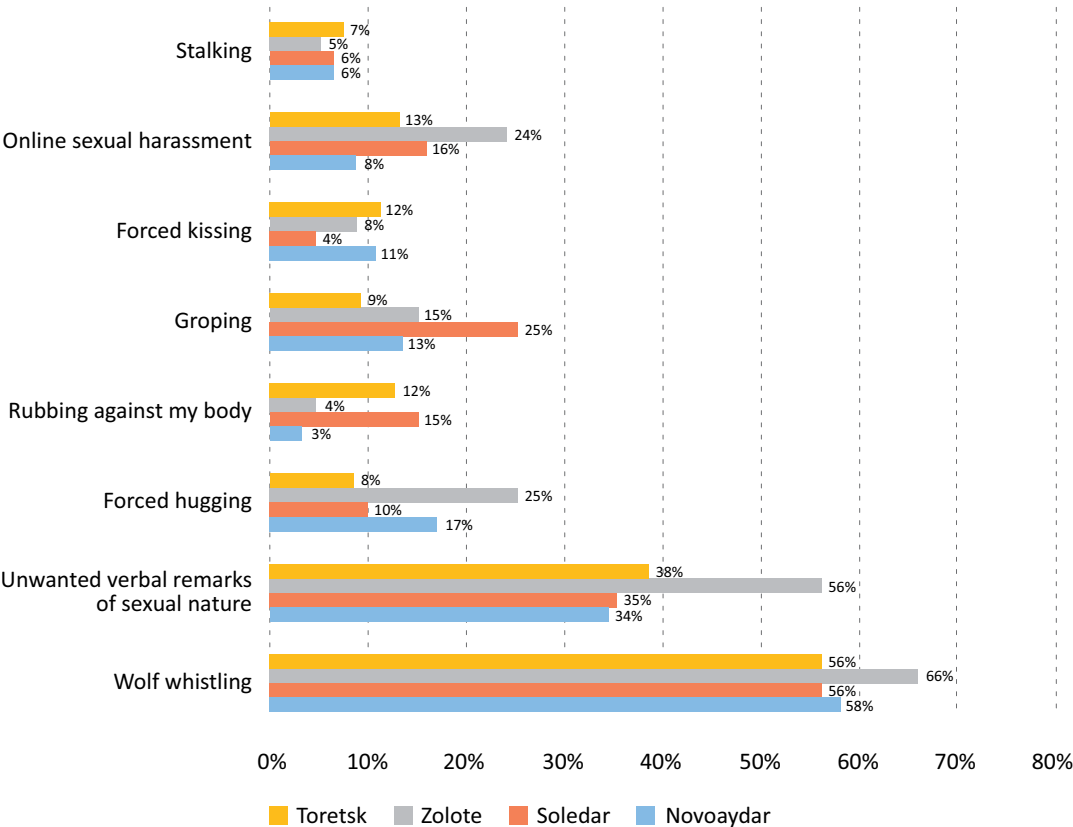
The results of the comparative analysis of experiences of verbal and physical sexual harassment show that respondents from all four communities have somewhat similar experiences of physical sexual harassment. At the same time, as stated above, women from Zolote experience verbal sexual harassment to a significantly larger degree.

Figure 8.3.
Proportion of respondents who have experienced at least one form of verbal or physical sexual harassment, %



Various forms of sexual harassment such as online sexual harassment, forced hugging, unwanted verbal remarks of sexual nature and wolf-whistling are experienced by women in Zolote to a larger extent compared to women from the other three communities.

Figure 8.4.
Most frequent forms of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence faced by women from target communities, %



The results of this assessment also point out the fact that women from Zolote experienced sexual harassment inflicted by military men on average three times more often than women from other three communities. At the same time, surveyed respondents from Zolote showcased victim-blaming attitudes towards victims of SH and other forms of SVAWG on average two times more than respondents from Toretsk, Soledar and Novoaydar.

The link between increased SH and other forms of SVAWG risks faced by women in Zolote and the proximity to the contact line and high presence of military in this community is also confirmed by the fact that 82% of surveyed women from Zolote believe that there is a direct connection between the armed conflict and the increase of SH and other forms of SVAWG incidents in this settlement. To compare, 52% women from Soledar, 50% from Toretsk and 41% from Novoaydar confirmed this statement in relation to their community.

Women in Novoaydar, Toretsk and Soledar believe that young and older men commit SH and other forms of SVAWG to the same extent, while in Zolote women be-

lieve that sexual harassment is inflicted more often by young and military men.

Awareness of specialized services in all four communities is low. The main recognized service providers are the police and health care institutions. Women also exhibit low trust in law enforcement and believe that no action will be taken by the police to prevent or respond to cases of SH and other forms of SVAWG. Particularly in the case of sexual harassment women stated that police would not react, taking into account the fact that sexual harassment is not defined as a separate offence in the Ukrainian legislation.

Effective investigation of SH and sex crimes and sanctioning of perpetrators was indicated by women from Novoaydar, Toretsk and Soledar as the most effective way to prevent and combat SH and other forms of SVAWG, while respondents from Toretsk indicated awareness-raising campaigns.

During the safety audits conducted in all four communities women identified similar issues pertaining to the risks

of SH and other forms of SVAWG of the identified unsafe public spaces. In particular, lack or insufficient street lightening, abandoned buildings, lack of signs with street names and numbers of buildings, and insufficient public

transportation routes as well as limited schedule of public transportation in the evening and at night were the major issues identified in all four communities.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To strengthen national legislation on SH and other forms of SVAWG (central government)

1.1. To adopt the Council of Europe Convention on prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence;

1.2. To revise the definition of sexual harassment provided in Art. 1 of the Law of Ukraine No. 2866-IV “On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men” to

cover horizontal sexual harassment between peers as well as the vertical sexual harassment inflicted by a subordinate against the supervisor. Additionally, sexual harassment can occur not only in labor relations but also in various other settings such as educational institutions, in the streets, in public transportation and other public spaces.

2. To adopt local policies specifically targeting the prevention and combating of SH and other forms of SVAWG (local governments)

2.1. To collect and analyze data on SH and other forms of SVAWG at the level of community on an annual basis and to use it for evidence-based policy-making aimed at developing tailored responses to the identified SH and other forms of SVAWG risks faced by women;

2.2. To develop targeted programs on preventing and combating SH and other forms of SVAWG against women and girls in public spaces (Safe Cities for Women and Girls Programs), including those aimed at improving the public infrastructure and

services (e.g. street lighting, available public transportation, video surveillance of public spaces);

2.3. To ensure participation of women and girls, law enforcement, education institutions, private sector and CSOs in the development and monitoring of local policies aimed at preventing and combating SH and other forms of SVAWG in public spaces;

2.4. To allocate sufficient financial resources for the implementation of targeted policies aimed at preventing and combating SH and other forms of SVAWG.

3. To strengthen the capacity of law enforcement to prevent and respond to SH and other forms of SVAWG (Ministry of Internal Affairs and National Police)

3.1. To develop the capacity of law enforcement to effectively prevent and combat SH and other forms of SVAWG;

3.2. To strengthen the capacities of community police officers to communicate effectively with the residents of the community to improve the identification of SH and other forms of SVAWG cases, to raise the legal awareness of

women and girls and the general awareness of the community about gender-based violence, to ensure protection and safety of victims/survivors as well as referral to specialized legal aid, psychological and social services, and liability of perpetrators.



Photo: UN Women Ukraine/Mariia Litvin

4. To improve the services provided to victims/survivors of SH and other forms of SVAWG (central and local governments)

- 4.1. To provide trainings for gender-based violence service providers on prevention and countering of SH and other forms of SVAWG with a particular focus on the survivor-centered approach;
- 4.2. To strengthen the coordination and referral among service providers for victims/survivors of gender-based and sexual violence, including the involvement of specialized CSOs;

- 4.3. To facilitate regular consultative meetings and joint activities with the participation of police, local authorities, private sector, CSOs and the community aimed at tackling issues pertaining to gender-based and sexual violence and developing locally owned solutions for preventing and combating SH and other forms of SVAWG.

5. To strengthen the capacity of the Armed Forces to prevent and combat SH and other forms of SVAWG inflicted by the military (Ministry of Defense)

- 5.1. To develop and prioritize operational strategies to prevent SH and other forms of SVAWG inflicted by the military;
- 5.2. To raise the awareness of gender equality and gender-based violence, including SH and other forms of SVAWG, inflicted by the Armed Forces;
- 5.3. To develop a Code of Conduct for the Armed Forces

- es strictly prohibiting SH and other forms of SVAWG from the military;
- 5.4. To establish a complaint and sanctioning mechanism within the Armed Forces to ensure identification of SH and other forms of SVAWG cases inflicted by military men, effective investigation and punishment of perpetrators.

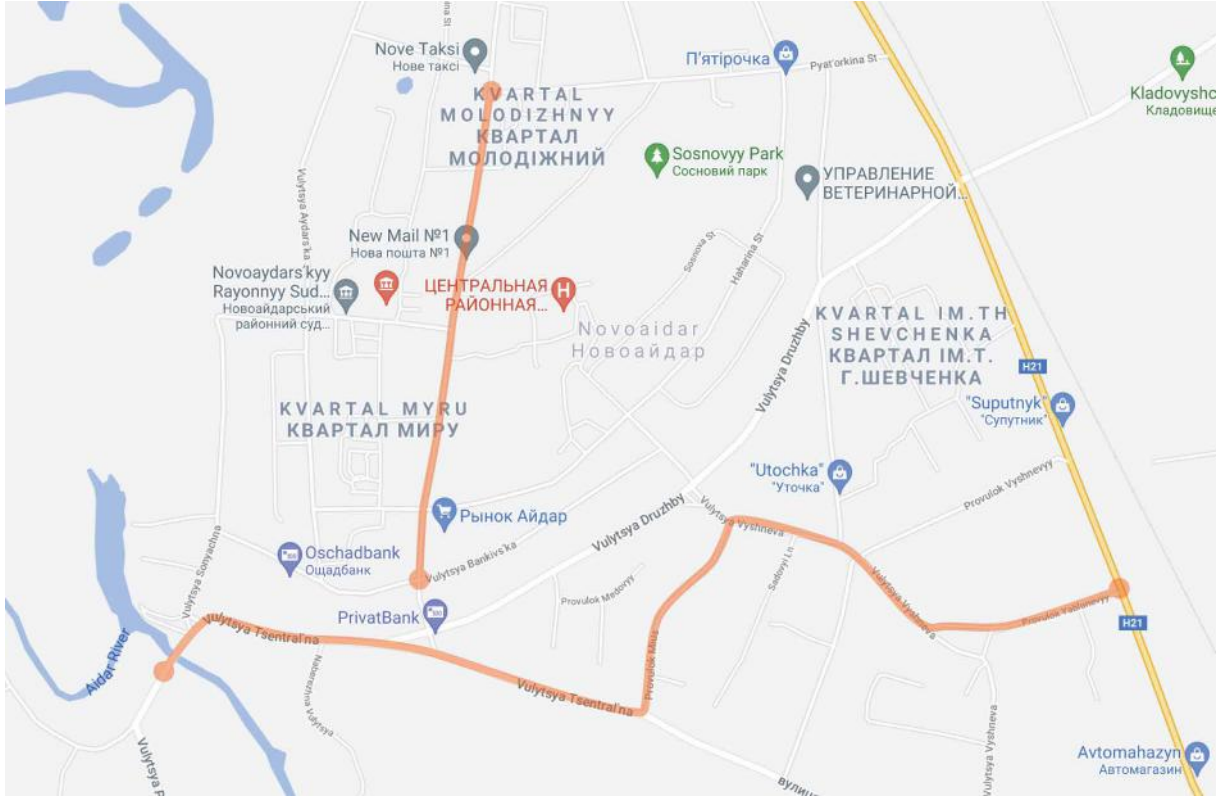
6. To raise awareness of the community about SH and other forms of SVAWG (central and local governments)

- 6.1. To implement awareness-raising campaigns aimed at educating boys and men about respectful relationships and gender equality;

- 6.2. To conduct awareness-raising campaigns directed at informing the community about SH and other forms of SVAWG.

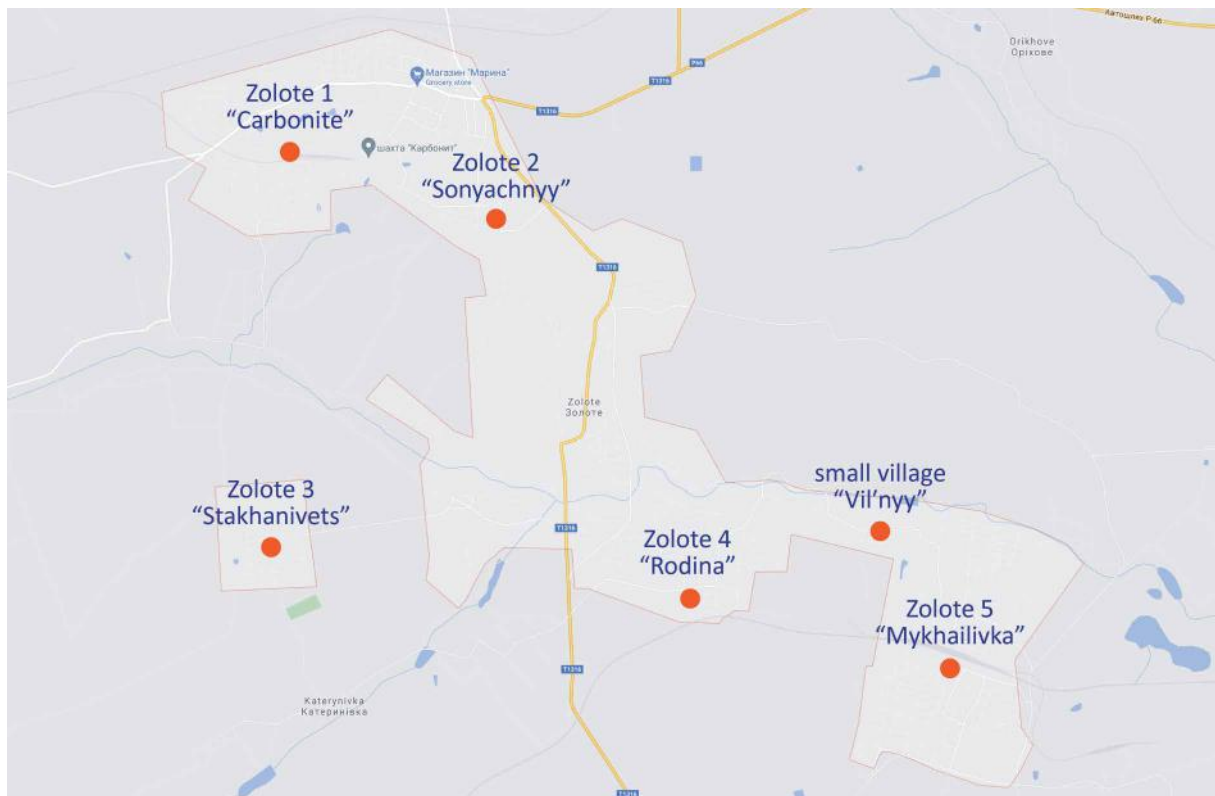
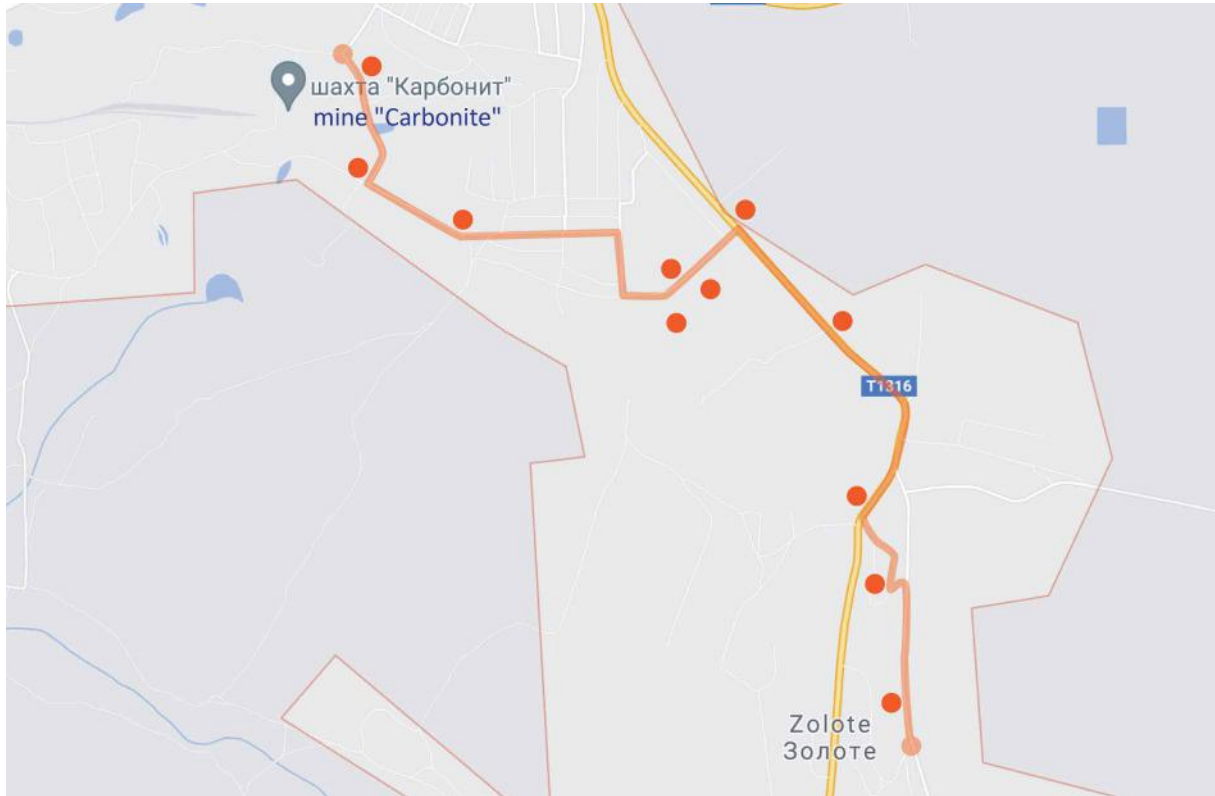
ANNEX 1

MAP OF UNSAFE PLACES IN NOVOAYDAR



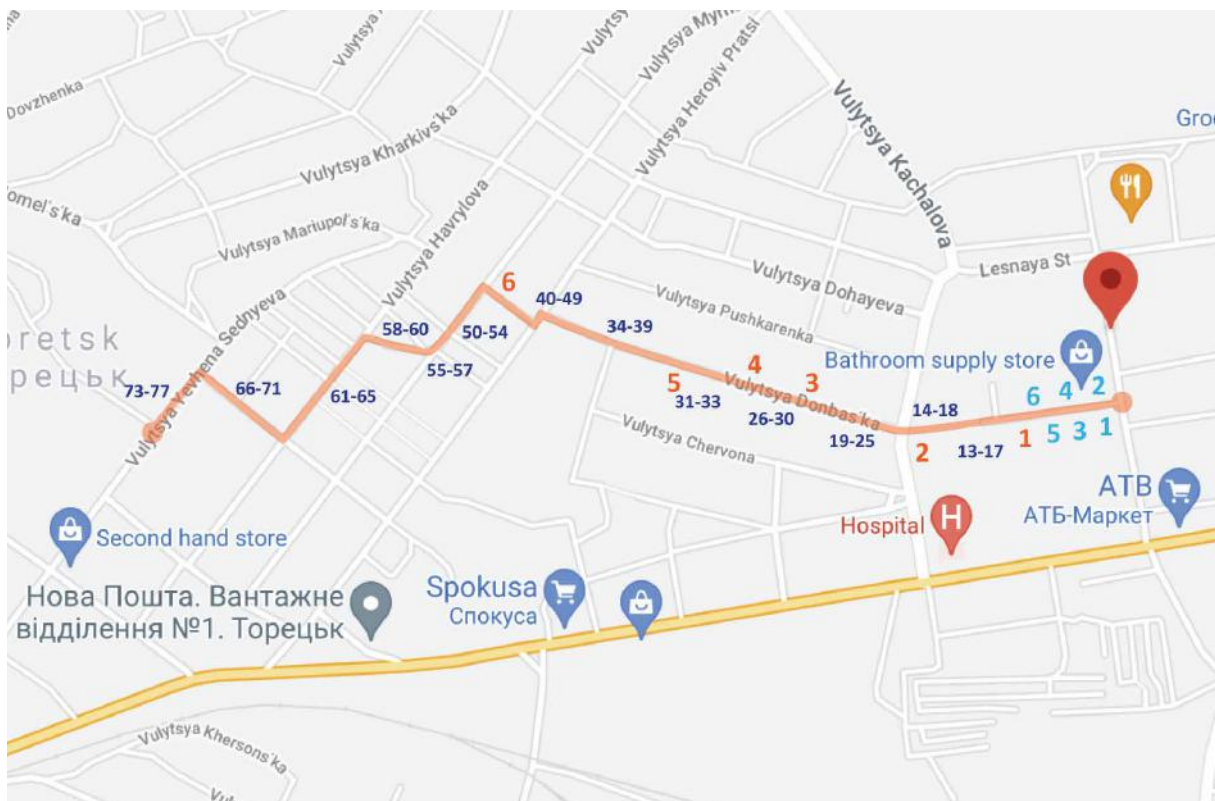
ANNEX 2

MAP OF UNSAFE PLACES IN ZOLOTE



ANNEX 3

MAP OF UNSAFE PLACES IN TORETSK



UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.