News



A 2024 photo shows red shoes symbolizing violence against women, can be seen in this screen grab from a video from the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network. A new U.N. report released Nov. 25, 2025, said that every 10 minutes, a woman is killed somewhere in the world. Over the past year, it noted, about 50,000 women were victims of femicide, 60% of whom were killed by partners or relatives. (CNS/ThePopeVideo.org)

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"Women speaking to us from El Fasher, the heart of the latest catastrophe in Sudan, tell of hunger, displacement, rape and bombardments."

With these words, Ginevra Anna Mutavati, who is regional director for East and Southern Africa at U.N. Women and is based in Nairobi, Kenya, recently described to journalists the situation in North Darfur's capital. After more than 500 days of siege by Rapid Support Forces, widespread abuses — including summary executions and sexual violence — have been documented.

Women, she noted, continue to bear the heaviest burden. Even in flight, they remain exposed to grave dangers. The threat, however, is not limited to contexts of war. Worldwide, the U.N. estimates that 840 million women — nearly 1 in 3 — have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner, sexual violence by a nonpartner, or both, at least once in their lives.

The figures underscore the significance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, observed Nov. 25. The day also launched the 16-day UNITE campaign, which ends Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day.

This 2025 campaign has as its theme "End Digital Violence against Women and Girls" and calls on governments to end impunity through laws that penalize it and technology companies to ensure the safety of platforms and remove harmful content. The campaign also urges "individuals to speak out, support survivors and challenge harmful online norms."

A new U.N. report highlights one of the most tragic realities: Every 10 minutes, a woman is killed somewhere in the world. Over the past year, approximately 50,000 women were victims of femicide, 60% of whom were killed by partners or relatives. By comparison, only 11% of male homicide victims were killed by family members. Gender inequality and misogyny remain key drivers.

On average, 137 women are murdered each day. Although slightly lower than in 2023, this number is influenced by uneven reporting across countries. No region has

been spared, and Africa again recorded the highest number, with around 22,000 victims last year.

The U.N. notes that technological development has also contributed to new forms of violence. These include nonconsensual sharing of images and information, doxxing and deepfake videos created using artificial intelligence. Automated harassment and coordinated hate campaigns target women of all ages.

More than 38% of women are estimated to have experienced online violence, while 85% have witnessed abuse directed at other women on digital platforms.

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"It is very important for us to raise awareness," said Maryknoll Sr. Abby Avelino, the Rome-based international coordinator of Talitha Kum, the global, sister-led network against human trafficking.

Digital violence, she explained, is increasingly widespread, and the online world is now a major site of exploitation.

Sr. Abby noted that members of the network gathered online Nov. 25 to reflect on the impact of war and conflict on gender-based violence. "We focused in a particular way on vulnerable women and girls wherever they are — in Ukraine, in the Global South, in African nations, and also in Asia," she said.

She added that Europe continues to receive many trafficked women, especially those forced to move by trafficking networks.

Among recent stories, Sr. Abby recalled the case of a young woman from South Sudan who had sought assistance. "We did not know where she was, but our network was able to locate her," she explained. The woman had been taken to Chad; through cooperation with partners in Italy, she was able to reconnect with her mother — herself a trafficking survivor — and they were reunited.

According to Talitha Kum's latest report, the network accompanied 47,000 victims and survivors in 2024.

"My thoughts today," Sr. Abby concluded, "are with women and girls afflicted by trafficking. As Talitha Kum, we renew our commitment to remain close to those who

suffer, offering listening, protection and tenderness, so that every girl may rediscover hope, safety and the strength to begin again. Together: 'Talitha Kum' — 'Little girl, arise.'"

This story appears in the **Out of the Shadows: Confronting Violence Against Women** feature series. View the full series.