

These COVID-19 Analytical Snapshots are designed to capture the latest research, information and analysis in a fast-moving environment. Topics will be repeated from time to time as analysis develops. If you have an item to include, please email us at research@iom.int.

New research & analysis on COVID and gender

[COVID-19 and women migrant workers: Impacts and implications](#) by Laura Foley and Nicola Piper

[Effect of COVID-19 pandemic on women's health and safety: A study of immigrant survivors of intimate partner violence](#) by Bushra Sabri, Maria Hartley, Jyoti Saha, Sarah Murray, Nancy Glass and Jacquelyn C. Campbell

[The impact of COVID-19 on migrant women workers in India](#) by Abdul Azeez EP, Dandub Palzor Negi, Asha Rani & Senthil Kumar AP

[The impacts COVID-19 on women and labour migration](#), IOM Migration Research Division covid-19 webinar

[COVID-19 and violence against women and children: A third research round up for the 16 days of activism](#) by Amber Peterman and Megan O'Donnell

“ Most essential frontline workers are women — many from racially and ethnically marginalized groups and at the bottom of the economic ladder. Most of the increased burden of care in the home is taken on by women.

Violence against women and girls in all forms has skyrocketed, from online abuse to domestic violence, trafficking, sexual exploitation and child marriage. Women have suffered higher job losses and been pushed into poverty in greater numbers.

UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, [46th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council](#),
22 February 2021



High unemployment



While the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in unemployment across various groups, women have been particularly hard hit. In addition to losing their sources of income, domestic work burden and unpaid care have also [greatly increased](#). In the United States, immigrant women experienced some of the highest unemployment rates of any group, [reaching 18.5 per cent before falling to 11.2 per cent](#) by September 2020. For other groups, including immigrant men and U.S-born men and women, their unemployment rates never topped 16 per cent. Immigrant women in Canada are also facing similar challenges; a Carleton University [survey](#) of high-skilled immigrant women revealed that the vast majority had been negatively impacted by the pandemic, including layoffs, delayed careers and decreased availability of short-term opportunities.

High unemployment continued..

[Work by OECD](#) shows that in countries such as Norway, immigrant women from Central and Eastern Europe are some of the most affected by the pandemic, seeing their unemployment increase by more than [10 percentage points](#). Indeed, across Europe, extra-EU migrants, especially women, are losing employment at higher rates than men, according to a [recent study](#). Immigrant women also faced [unique vulnerabilities](#) due to their gender responsibilities which, in turn, affect their work experiences.

Gender-based violence (migrant workers)

Over the past year, the pandemic's wide-ranging impacts, such as increased unemployment, food and economic insecurity, socio-economic stress as well as associated movement restrictions have worsened [violence against women](#), including [migrant workers](#). A recent series [of interviews](#) with frontline workers in several Asian countries, including Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, and Viet Nam, for example, reveal how they have had to quickly adapt their operations to support women migrant workers, some of whom have grown increasingly isolated or trapped with abusers in their workplaces and homes due to lockdowns and movement restrictions. The situation is especially acute for women domestic workers, as there is a much thinner line between home and workplace.

Gender-based violence (GBV) in displacement contexts

Women and girls in displacement contexts are also experiencing a rise in GBV incidents. An [October 2020 report](#) by International Rescue Committee (covering 15 African countries) found that 73 per cent of refugee and displaced women reported an increased in domestic violence as a result of COVID-19. The report also found a 51 per cent increase in sexual violence and 32 per cent observed rise in early and forced marriages. Between January and September 2020, there was also a [40 per cent](#) increase in incidents of GBV among the Venezuelan population in Colombia. UNHCR-led Global Protection Cluster also recorded a [rise in incidents of GBV](#) within its operations in the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Supporting women migrants

There have been several initiatives aimed at supporting women migrant workers affected by COVID-19. In Somalia, where women-owned businesses form a large part of the informal sector that has been badly bruised by the pandemic, IOM together with partners are [supporting](#) women-led micro and small enterprises (MSEs) recover from the impacts of COVID-19. IOM has also assisted many migrant women who had lost their jobs and had been stranded, as well as victims of trafficking, return to their countries of origin, was recently the case with [dozens of Ugandan](#) women in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In Italy, IOM, together with UNHCR and UNICEF, recently [launched a guide](#) for frontline workers who support migrant survivors of GBV.

This COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot has been produced by [IOM Research](#) (research@iom.int).

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