



WOMEN'S AID ORGANISATION

STATISTICS AND FINDINGS REPORT

2024 - 2025



A JOINT INITIATIVE UNDER



Belanjawan 2025
**MALAYSIA
MADANI**



The Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) presents the
WAO Statistics & Findings Report (2024-2025)
in the continued pursuit of a Malaysia free
from violence against women.

This report is made possible through the valued support of
Yayasan Sime Darby and the **Ministry of Finance Malaysia**.
Their partnership strengthens collective efforts to ensure that
survivors are heard, protected, and supported.

**If you or someone you know needs help,
WAO is here.**



+603 3000 8858
9AM - 5PM



+6018 988 8058
24 HOURS

**Together, we can build a future where every
woman lives in safety and dignity.**

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
B40	Bottom 40 percent
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Violence Against Women
D11	Sexual, Women and Child Investigations Division, Royal Malaysian Police
DVA	Domestic Violence Act 1994
EPO	Emergency Protection Order
FFC	Face-to-Face Consultation
FGM/C	Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IO	Investigating Officer
IPO	Interim Protection Order
JKM	Jabatan Kebajikan Malaysia (JKM) or Social Welfare Department of Malaysia
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexual, queer +
MWFCD	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
NAP-WPS	National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security

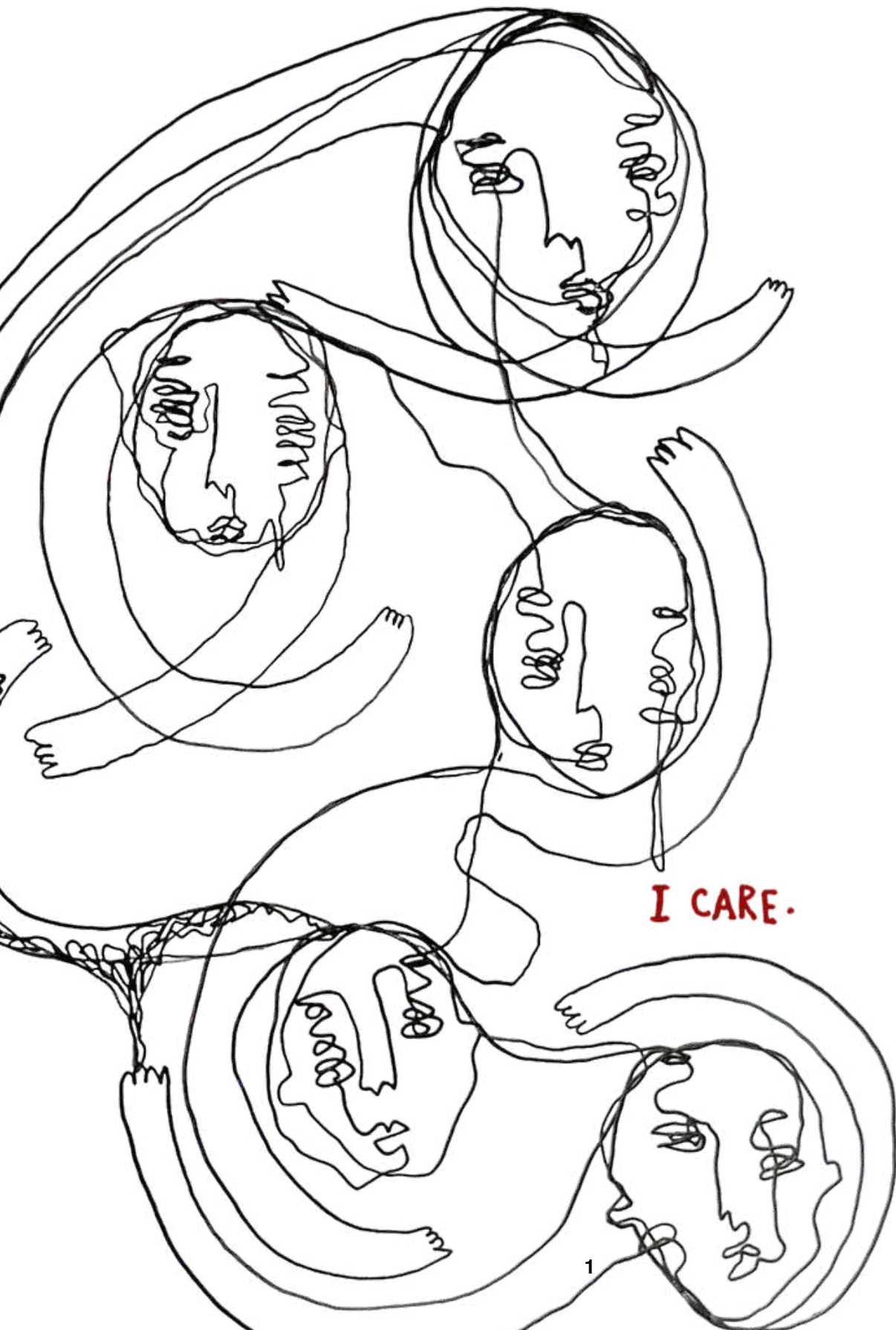
Abbreviations and Acronyms

NAP	Not Applicable
NAV	Not Available
OCSS	One-Stop Crisis Centre
OGBV	Online Gender-Based Violence
ONSA	Online Safety Act 2025
PO	Protection Order
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RMP	Royal Malaysian Police
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TAGS	Tribunal Anti-Gangguan Seksual/Anti-Sexual Harassment Tribunal
TA-GBV	Technology-Assisted Gender-Based Violence
TINA	Think I Need Aid (WAO's SMS/Whatsapp)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VAW	Violence against Women

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INTRODUCTION



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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This 2024–2025 Statistics and Findings Report presents the work of WAO and key insights into the evolving landscape of gender-based violence (GBV) in Malaysia.

As both a frontline service provider and an advocacy organisation, we provide integrated support services including shelter, hotline and in-person consultations, legal assistance, case management, and psychosocial support to women and children experiencing violence. Alongside this direct support, WAO engages in research, policy discussions, institutional collaboration, and public education to strengthen prevention and response efforts.

This report draws on our services data, survivor casework, research, and engagements with partners throughout 2024 and 2025. It highlights emerging patterns, lived experiences, and broader trends across the GBV ecosystem. These findings offer insight into how policies and systems are working in practice, and where they are falling short.

We honour and acknowledge all women and children who are living through and beyond violence, regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, or ability. We recognise their strength, agency, and right to make decisions about their own lives. This report is not only for stakeholders and decision-makers. It is also for survivors. Their experiences shape this work, and their realities are reflected in these pages.

The data in this report matters because it represents real lives. Behind every number is a person who reached out for help, navigated complex systems, and made difficult decisions in the face of harm. When gathered responsibly, data helps us see patterns, understand gaps in protection and services, and identify who may be left behind. It gives weight to advocacy efforts, supports better policy and funding decisions, and strengthens accountability. Most importantly, it helps ensure that responses to violence are grounded in what survivors are actually experiencing.



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The report aims to:



Share WAO's 2024–2025 service data and programme highlights



Present key findings from frontline engagements and research



Contribute evidence to ongoing national discussions on strengthening GBV prevention, protection, and support mechanisms

By documenting survivor experiences alongside institutional developments, this report seeks to support stronger collaboration **between civil society, government, and partners** in building a more **responsive and survivor-centred GBV framework in Malaysia.**



CURRENT GBV CONTEXT IN MALAYSIA

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to violence that is directed at someone because of their gender or that disproportionately affects people of a particular gender. It includes physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and economic abuse, and can occur in both private and public spaces. GBV is recognised internationally and in Malaysia as a form of discrimination rooted in unequal power relations and harmful gender norms.

While GBV takes many forms, WAO focuses on violence against women, specifically domestic violence and sexual assault. Violence against women remains a pervasive and deeply rooted form of gender-based harm in Malaysia. Through our services, research, and advocacy, WAO supports women experiencing violence and works to address the structural inequalities that enable it.

Factors Contributing to Violence Against Women

Unequal Power and Gender Norms



Unequal power relations in intimate relationships, families, workplaces, institutions, and wider society create conditions in which control and abuse can be normalised. Social expectations that prioritise male authority and restrict women's autonomy can allow violence to continue.



Patriarchal structures and internalised misogyny often normalise violence or silence survivors to protect family "honour".

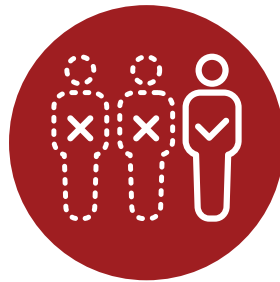


Women may lack financial independence, education, or support networks, increasing vulnerability to abuse.

Social Dynamics



Stigma surrounding GBV limits open conversation and public understanding.



Lack of participation from men in awareness and prevention initiatives reinforces the perception that GBV is solely a “women’s issue,” missing the chance to educate potential perpetrators.



Limited research and government funding reduce the effectiveness of prevention programs and support services.

Systemic Barriers in Legal and Institutional Responses







Malaysia has legal frameworks addressing domestic violence (e.g., the Domestic Violence Act), sexual offences, and provisions on stalking under the Penal Code, along with mechanisms such as One-Stop Crisis Centres (OSCCs), hotlines, and shelters that provide support to survivors.

However, survivors often encounter barriers that can reflect systemic shortcomings, including inconsistent enforcement, limited awareness of rights, procedural delays, and gaps in coordination between agencies. These barriers can compound harm and limit access to justice and protection, particularly for women from marginalised or vulnerable communities.



Forms of Violence Against Women

In our work, WAO sees violence against women in many forms, including:

<p>Intimate partner and domestic violence, one of the most commonly reported forms of violence against women in Malaysia.</p> 	<p>Sexual violence and assault</p> 	<p>Sexual harassment</p> 	
<p>Technology-facilitated abuse including online harassment and non-consensual sharing of intimate images</p>	<p>Child marriage</p> 	<p>Femicide, the gender-based killing of women and girls, often by intimate partners or close-known persons.</p> 	<p>Stalking</p> 

These forms of violence are often interlinked and occur as part of ongoing patterns of coercion and control rather than isolated incidents.

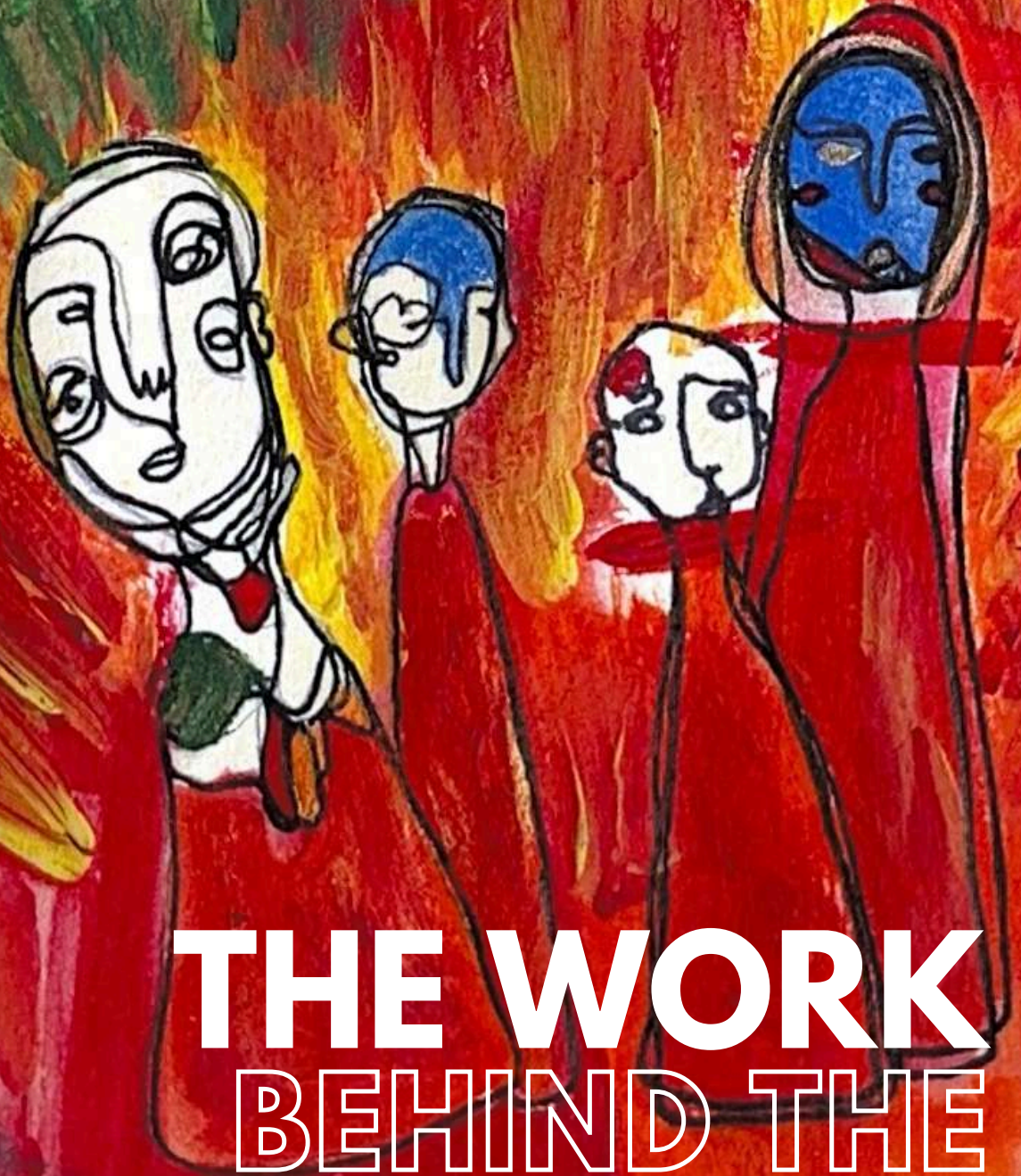
Why This Context Matters

Violence against women affects women's safety, physical and mental health, economic security, and ability to participate fully in society. It also reflects and reinforces deeper structural inequalities in power and opportunity.

Understanding violence against women within this broader context helps shift the conversation from individual cases to systemic change. Situating WAO's data within this reality supports more informed prevention efforts, stronger protections, and more equitable systems for women in Malaysia.

WE ARE
WAO

HIM



**THE WORK
BEHIND THE
NUMBERS**

HERSTORY

About Women's Aid Organisation

The Women's Aid Organisation was formally registered in 1983, however, our effort in creating WAO started earlier in 1981. Since then, WAO has sheltered a lot of survivors and provided counselling and crisis support to women and children who survive abuse. Now, WAO is one of Malaysia's leading domestic violence shelter, reintegration and case management service providers; supporting women and children through the challenge of evolving from domestic violence victims into empowered survivors. Through various platforms, including advocacy, shelter services at the WAO Refuge, and case management support; we aim to increase women and child survivors' access to justice and protection. We match our services with strong, sustained advocacy and capacity building work to create intolerance for violence against women.

Our WAO Hotline is widely accessed by women and children all over Malaysia. We serve a big number of women and children in crisis annually and our extensive network of partners spans around the compass. We push forward evidence-based training initiatives and share our data widely through our publications. Our impactful advocacy campaigns have helped change and shape laws, policies, public attitudes and perceptions.

In all WAO action areas, we set clear objectives that are bold, ambitious but progressively achievable and sustainable, as this Statistics and Findings will demonstrate. For each action, we continuously assess what is and is not working, deciding what to continue with and what to stop on the basis of its potential for impact at scale. We know our baselines and ground realities, target our actions to the changes we want to see, then measure our outcomes across all WAO actions areas like services, advocacy, capacity building, partnerships and the operations that underpin all.

Our work is guided by the voices, lived experiences, and leadership of women and girl survivors. Their courage, strength, and insight shape our priorities and deepen our understanding of the systemic barriers and harms they continue to face. Leaving an abusive environment is not a single act, but a complex and often dangerous process; one that requires safety, resources, and sustained support. Survivors remind us that healing is not linear, and that meaningful change must address both immediate protection and long-term stability.

HERSTORY

Herstory and Milestones

- 1981 — The initial conception of WAO emerged from the dedicated efforts of six friends intent on providing their friend and her children a refuge from domestic violence.
- 1982 — WAO registers to the Registrar of Societies Malaysia (ROS). A woman and her children became the first residents of WAO's rented refuge premise in September 1982, after discovering the organisation through a Malay Mail feature.
- 1983 — WAO gains official recognition as a society. Subsequently, Tun Tan Siew Sin envisioned the idea of setting up a haven for abused women and generously donated RM34,000.
- 1984 — In its first operational year, the WAO shelter housed 57 women and 75 children, and counselled 200 women over the phone. In the same year, the Joint Action Group Against Violence Against Women was formed (later renamed as Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAGGE)).
- 1985 — WAO marked a milestone by purchasing its first property intended as a women's refuge.
- 1988 — WAO expanded its operations by establishing a childcare centre.
- 1994 — Dato Napsiah binti Omar introduced the Bill for Domestic Violence Act in Parliament. The Act was gazetted on 7 July 1994.
- 2001 — In 2000, Dato Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman presented the Bill for Child's Act in Parliament. The Act was then gazetted on 1 March 2001.

2009

The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAGGE) expanded to include 13 more organisations alongside WAO: All Women's Action Society, Women's Centre for Change, Association of Women Lawyers, Justice for Sisters, EMPOWER, Family Frontiers, KRYSS Network, Perak Women for Women Society, Persatuan Sahabat Wanita Selangor, Sabah Women's Action Resource Group, Sarawak Women for Women Society, Sisters in Islam, Tenaganita

2012

Coordinated and edited 'CEDAW & Malaysia', an NGO Alternative Report.

2015

Launched Think I Need Aid (TINA). Introduced Crisis Support Officers: trained volunteers that handle the WAO Hotline. Published report: 'Working Together: Case Studies in Domestic Violence Response'.

2016

On 13/11/2016, WAO's Childcare Centre was burned down by fire caused by lightning. Published the guideline; "Domestic Violence Shelter Standards and Toolkit".

2017

WAO celebrated key legislative headways; Parliament passed the Bill for Sexual Offences Against children Act & made amendments to the Domestic Violence Act 1994. Published "TINA's Journey: a collection of words and poetry by survivors of domestic violence". Published reports: "Perspectives on Domestic Violence" and "Human Trafficking in Malaysia: A Focus on Women and Children".

2018

Capacity Building & Partnership Division was established. Distributed the CEDAW handbook and WAO training with members of parliaments. Launched WAO 'Komuniti Selamat'.

2019

The National Domestic Violence Committee was set up. Ground Breaking ceremony for the childcare centre rebuilding with REDA Youth. Developed "Level Up"; a WAO Gender mainstreaming program & "WAO Girl" empowerment program. Published: "The Status of Women's Human Rights: 24 Years of CEDAW in

Malaysia', 'Where's the Child: The Rights of Child Domestic Violence Survivors', 'The Shelter Needs of Domestic Violence Survivors and the Availability and Accessibility of Shelters and Related Services in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur'.

2020

"Shadow pandemic" saw the rapid expansion of WAO's operations (including online). WAO partners with UN Agencies. WAO publishes a gender responsive budget memorandum: "Facilitating Resilient and Sustainable Reforms to Support Women and Children". Research team was established.

2022

WAO's persistent advocacy aided in achieving amendments to the Employment Act 1955 on the following: Paternity Leave & Maternity Leave, Anti Sexual Harassment Legislation, Anti Discrimination Against Women Act. Together with ENGENDER & MoF, WAO conducted ministry training for Gender Responsive Budgeting in Practice (GRBiP).

2023

WAO celebrates amendments to Section 507A of the Penal Code (Act 574), which makes stalking a criminal offense in Malaysia. The anti-stalking and protection order provisions came into force on 31 May 2023.

2024

WAO celebrates the launch of the the Anti-Sexual Harassment Tribunal under the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act 2022 (Act 840), marking a significant advancement in access to justice for survivors of sexual harassment. The Tribunal began accepting cases in March and issued its first award in July, setting an important precedent for accountability. The Child Care Centre (CCC) underwent a significant transformation as it was repurposed into a Shelter, which can now accommodate a maximum of 24 individuals.

2025

WAO concludes the RE:CARE initiative, a flagship research and advocacy project that examines how care work in Malaysia is shaped by gender and systemic inequality. This work highlighted how care responsibilities, both paid and unpaid, have unequal impacts on women, especially in light of economic and social pressures. Through research, advocacy, and collaboration with government and civil society, WAO used RE:CARE to inform national discussions on gender equality, social support, and policies that recognise and value care work.

VISION

To create a society that upholds the principles of substantive equality where all women enjoy their human rights in every sphere.

MISSION

To promote and create the respect, protection and fulfilment of equal rights for women and to work towards the elimination of discrimination against women, in particular the elimination of violence against women.

PHILOSOPHY

The fundamental belief of WAO is that no one deserves to be abused. We believe that all human beings have the right to self-determination and should have control over the conditions that shape their lives.

OBJECTIVE



To provide temporary refuge to women (and their children) suffering from mental, physical and sexual violence, harassment and abuse; these temporary refuge services should empower and enable them to determine their own futures.



To offer emotional and social support to any women who request it, resident or otherwise, and offer support and aftercare.



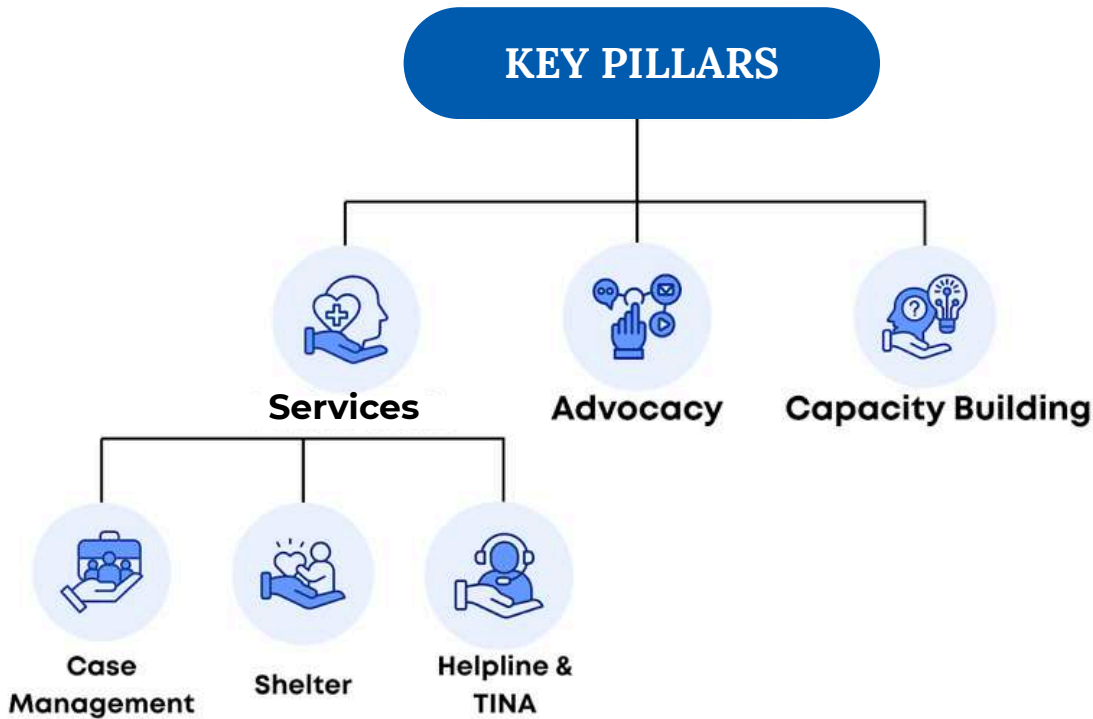
To undertake and encourage research into any of the factors which contribute to the inequality and subordination of women.



To advocate with government and non-government organizations, through the law, policy, institutional and societal reforms, for the eradication of factors that contribute to the inequality and subordination of women.



To create awareness and better understanding among individuals, the public and relevant agencies about the issues of violence against women and underlying inequalities that contribute to such violence.



Case Management

Our team offers personalised support, helping women make informed decisions and access the resources they need to rebuild their lives.



Shelter

Our shelter offers safe space and support for survivors of gender-based violence, giving them the security and time they need to heal and reclaim their future.



Helpline & TINA

WAO's Helpline and TINA (Think I Need Aid) provide confidential support through calls, SMS, and WhatsApp, enabling survivors to understand their rights, explore options, and access services, empowering them to make informed decisions at every step of their journey.



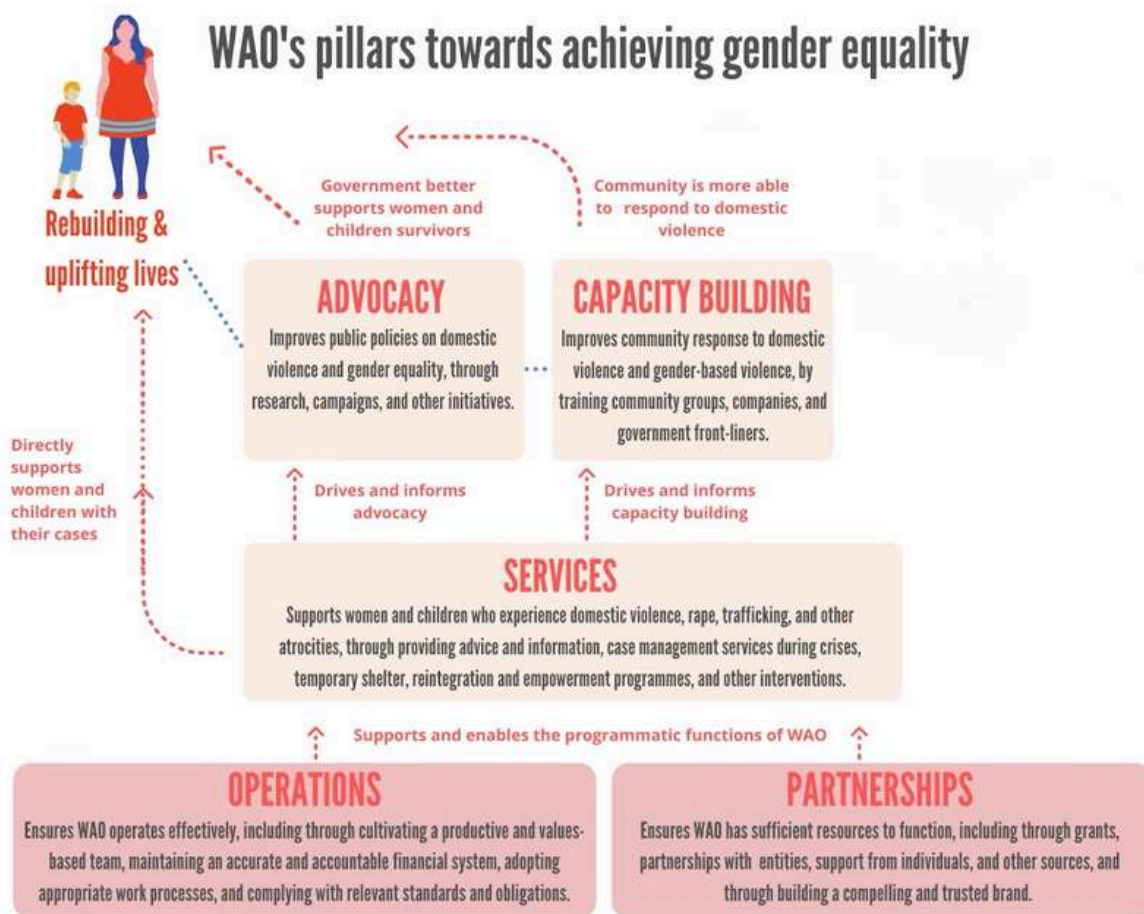
Advocacy

We advocate for systemic change to end gender-based violence and ensure women's rights and voices shape national policies.



Capacity Building

We build collective power through feminist education and training for individuals and communities to prevent violence and promote equality.



Approach to Ending Violence Against Women

WAO's approach is feminist, survivor-centred, and guided by a "do no harm" principle. Our feminist perspective recognises how unequal power dynamics drive violence and seeks to challenge the social norms that perpetuate it. By keeping survivors at the centre of everything we do, we ensure

that women and children can make informed decisions about their safety and recovery. The principle of "do no harm" underpins all our services, from confidential Helpline and TINA consultations to training and advocacy, ensuring care is delivered safely and respectfully.

#WE ARE
TINA

THE WOMEN
BEHIND THE
DATA



IMPACT OVERVIEW

In 2024 WAO made a significant impact:

Provided

1,470

phone consultations
via the WAO Hotline

Conducted

3,739

WhatsApp/SMS
consultations through TINA

Responded to
numerous email
and social media
inquiries

Conducted

81

face-to-face
consultations

Provided refuge to

33 46

women
children
in crisis

In 2025 we;

Provided

1,711

phone consultations
via the WAO Hotline

Conducted

6,228

WhatsApp/SMS
consultations through TINA

Responded to

176

emails and
numerous social
media inquiries

Conducted

103

face-to-face
consultations

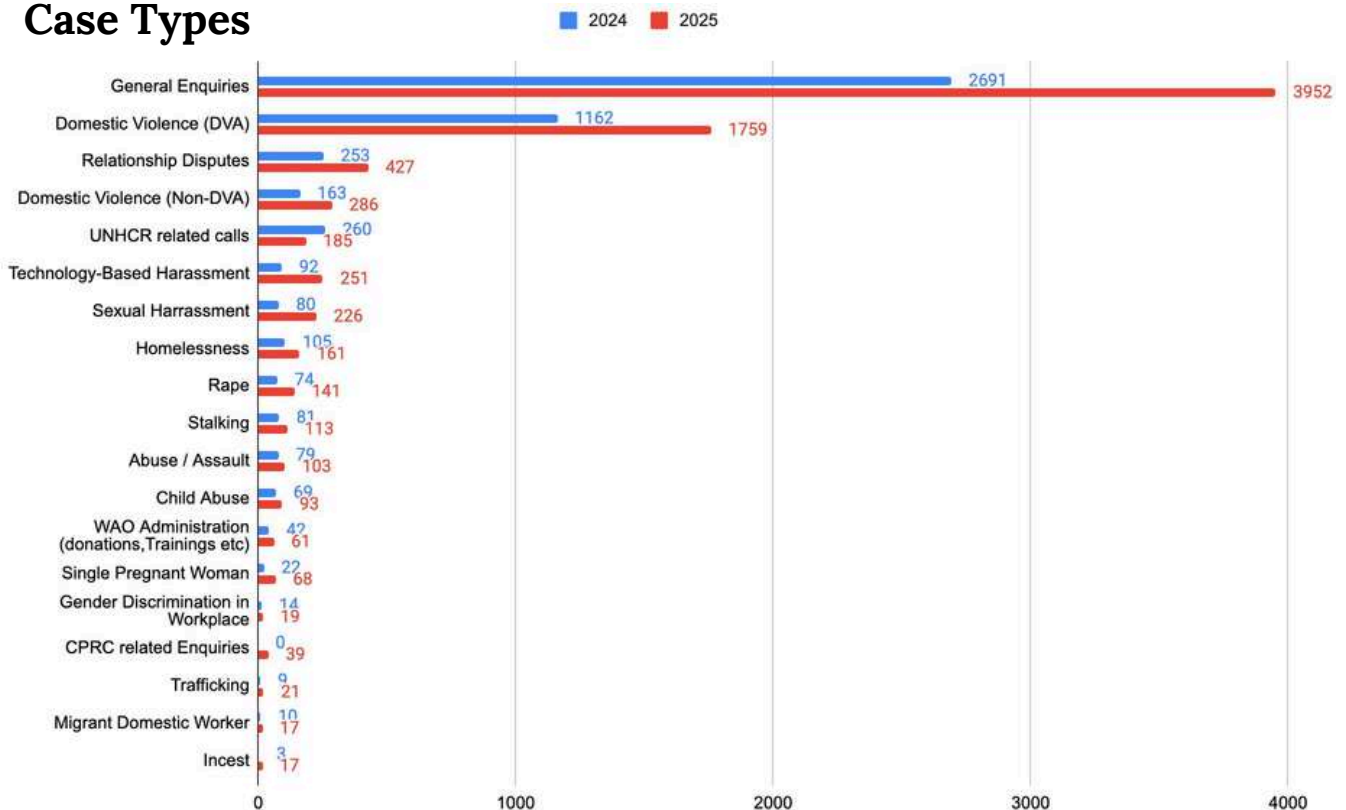
Provided refuge to

47 39

women
children
in crisis

CASE NUMBERS AND TYPES

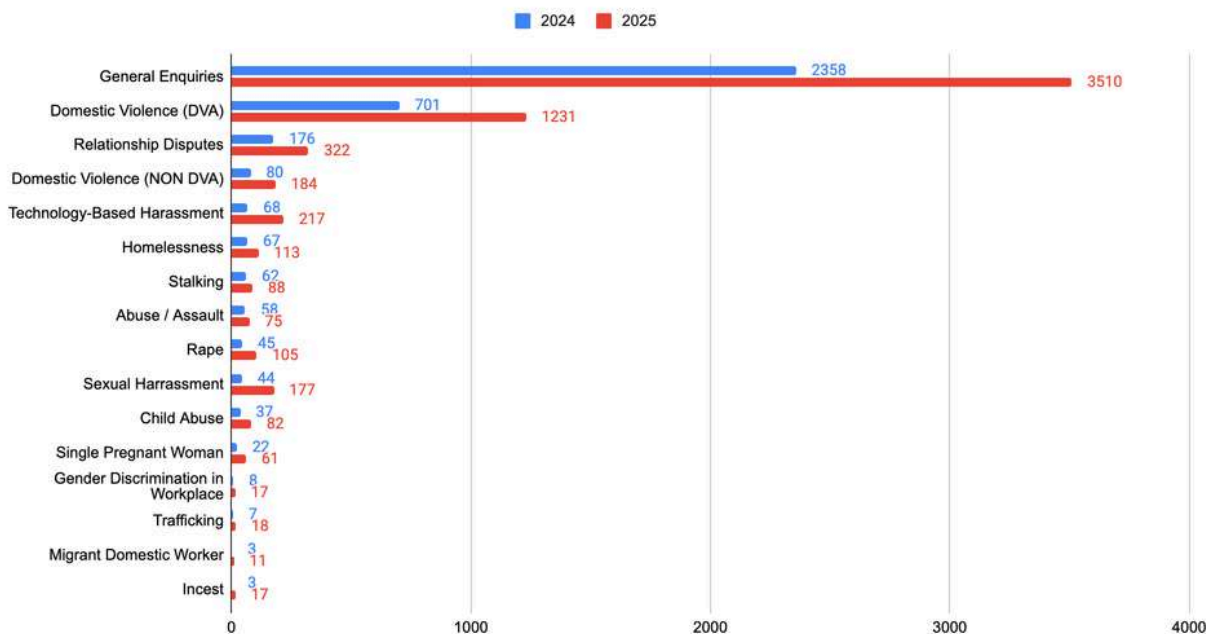
Case Types



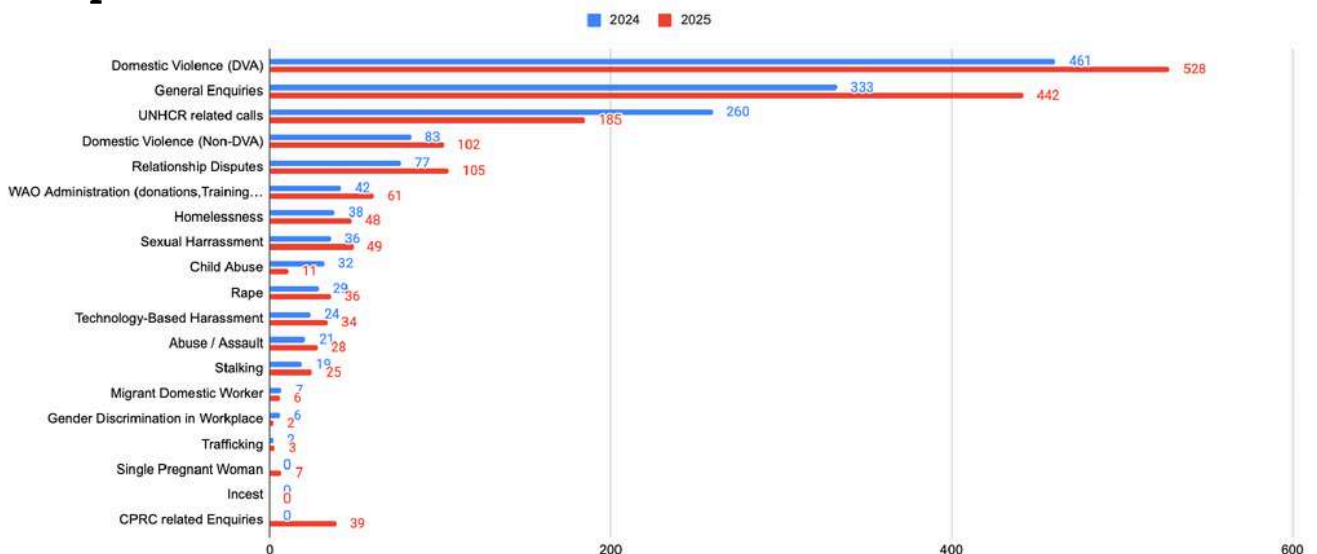
Overall, the data shows a sharp increase in total cases handled, rising from 5,209 in 2024 to 7,939 in 2025, driven largely by growth in general enquiries (2,691 to 3,952) and domestic violence (DVA) cases (1,162 to 1,759), indicating both increased demand for services and greater help-seeking behaviour. Relationship disputes, non-DVA domestic violence, technology-based harassment, sexual harassment, rape, homelessness, child abuse, and abuse/assault all increased in 2025, pointing to more complex and overlapping forms of gender-based violence faced by survivors. Technology-based harassment more than doubled (92 to 251), highlighting the growing role of digital abuse, while cases involving single pregnant women, trafficking, migrant domestic workers, and incest also rose, suggesting heightened vulnerability among specific groups. UNHCR-related calls declined (260 to 185), possibly reflecting changes in referral pathways or population movement. Although stalking cases increased overall (81 to 113), shelter data suggests reduced shelter admissions for stalking, which may reflect the deterrent effect of stronger anti-stalking enforcement rather than reduced prevalence. Collectively, the trends underscore escalating service demand, diversification of GBV forms, and the need for expanded, multi-sectoral responses.

REPORTING PATTERNS

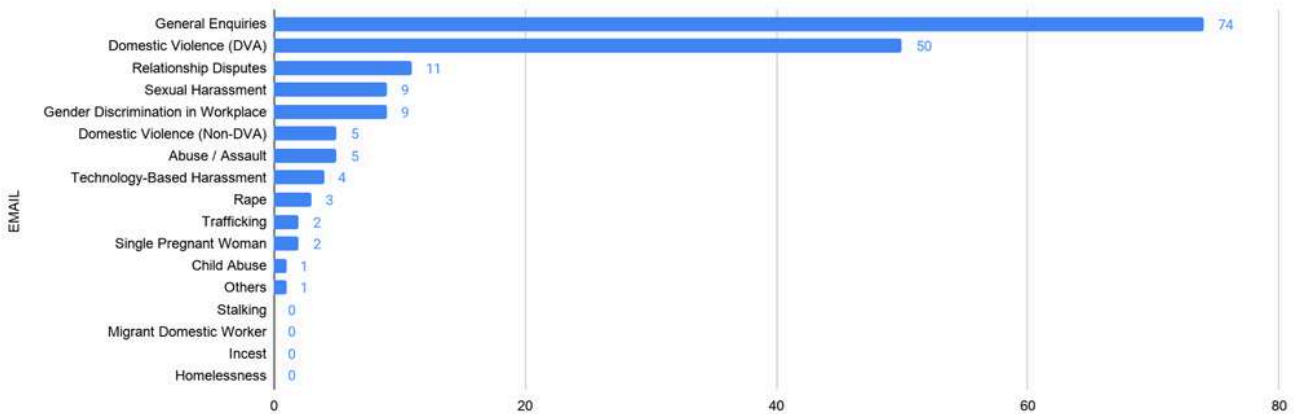
WAO SMS/Whatsapp TINA



Helpline



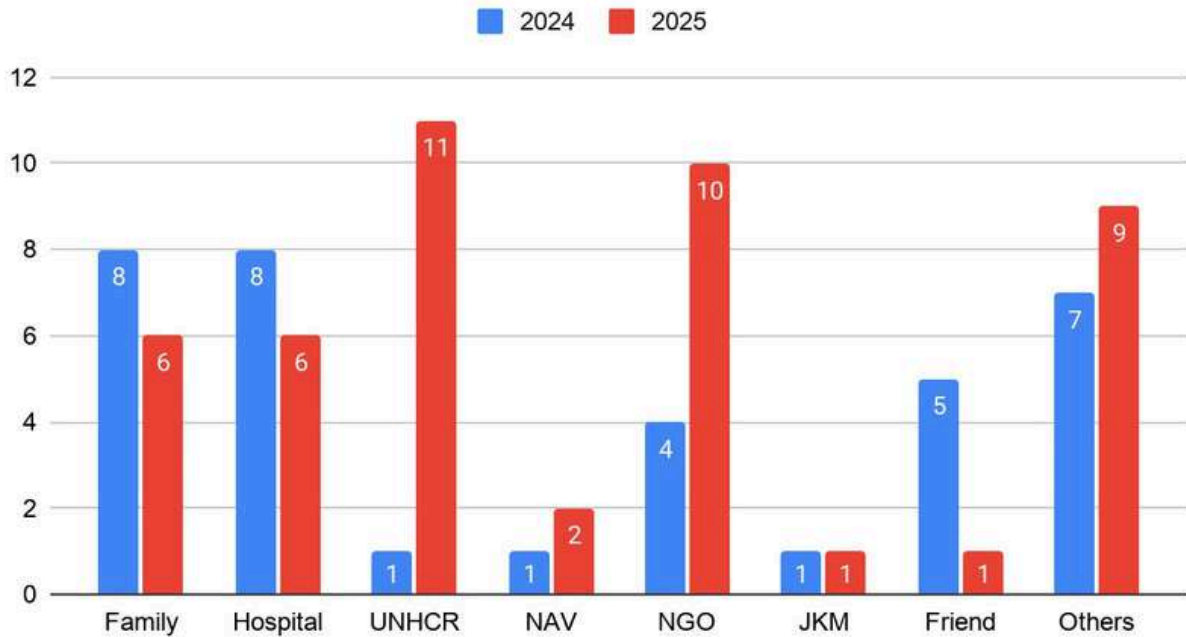
Email



The majority of the clients reached out to WAO via SMS and WhatsApp TINA in both 2024 and 2025. The data shows an increase in the number of messages received in 2025 (6,228) compared to 2024 (3,739) and the number of the cases and inquiries received were also increased especially on Domestic Violence (DVA; 2,358 to 3,510), Technology-Based Harassment (68 to 217), and Sexual Harassment (44 to 177). Overall, this data shows that survivors preferred using SMS and WhatsApp TINA as their main communication medium to reach out to WAO as it may be safer and less stressful for the survivors.

Our helpline received a rise in the number of cases related to Domestic Violence (DVA), general inquiries, Domestic Violence (non-DVA), relationship disputes and a sudden rise in CPRC-related inquiries (0 to 39 calls) in 2025. Meanwhile, there is a drop in UNHCR-related calls from 260 to 185 calls. Another medium that the survivors can reach out to us is through WAO e-mail. We received general inquiries as the highest (74) and regarding Domestic Violence (DVA; 50) in 2025.

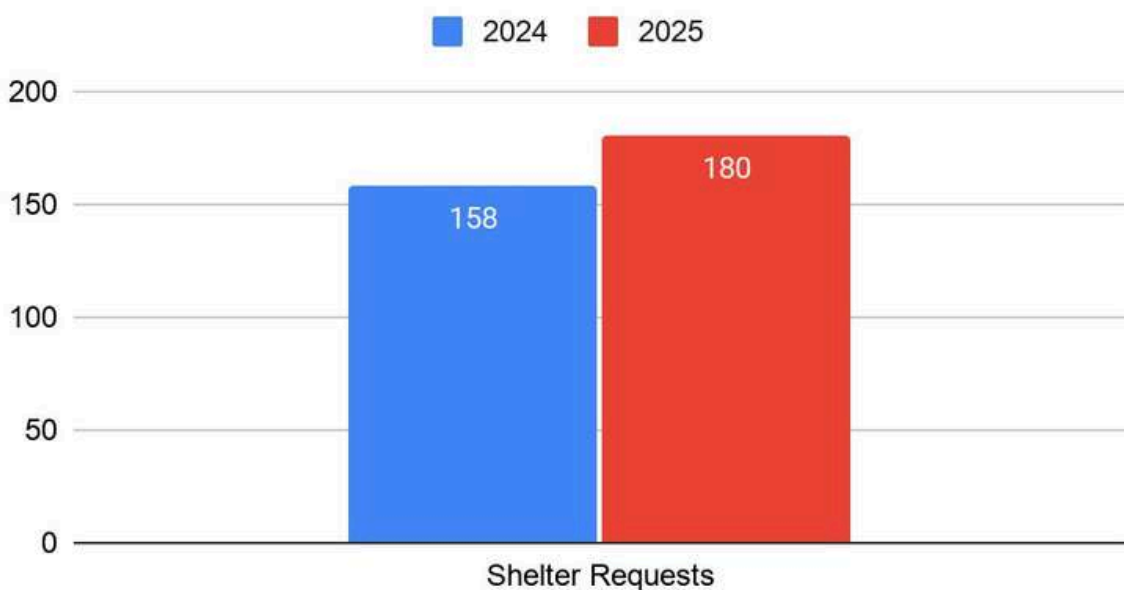
Other Referrals



We also received case referrals from various referral sources like family, hospital, other NGOs as well as UNHCR. We received a spike in the number of referrals from UNHCR (1 to 11 referrals)

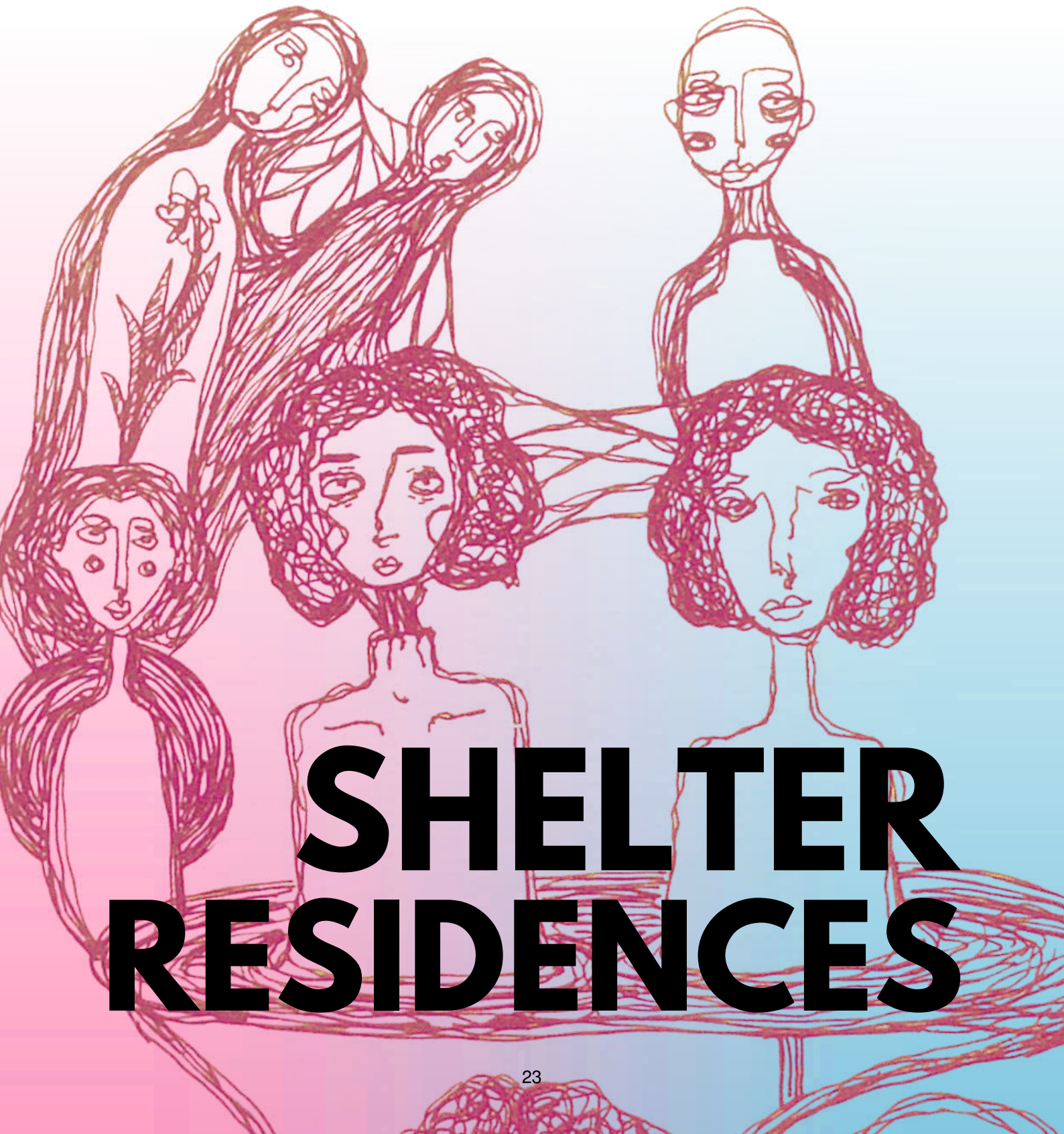
and other NGOs (4 to 10 referrals) from 2024 to 2025. Overall, most of the referrals were from the family, hospital, NGO and other referees outside of the list.

Shelter Request



Concurrently, we found that there was an increase in shelter requests from 158 requests in 2024 to 180 requests in 2025.

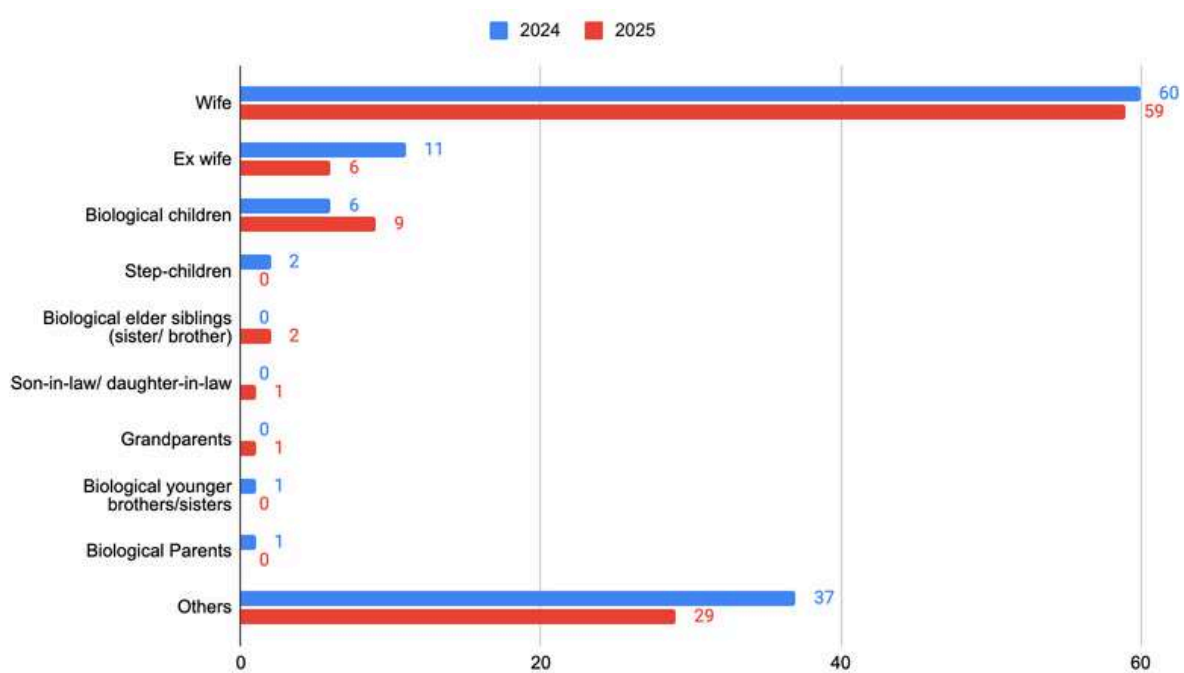
OUR



**SHELTER
RESIDENCES**

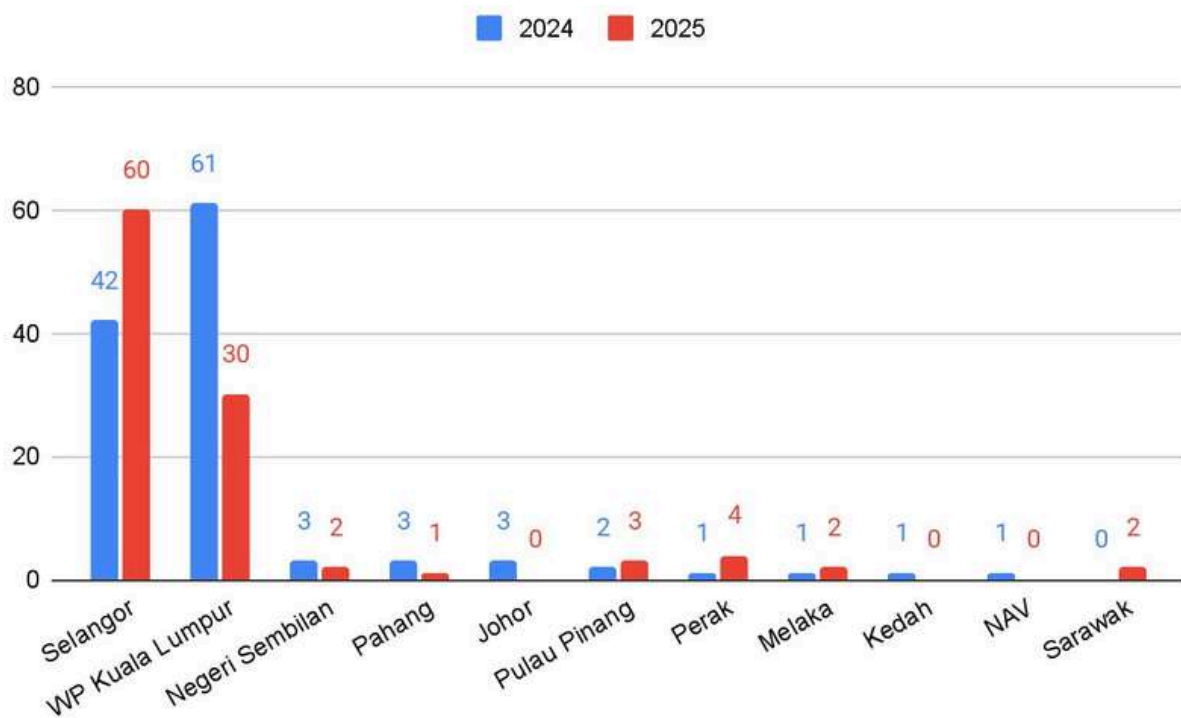
DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

Category of Survivors



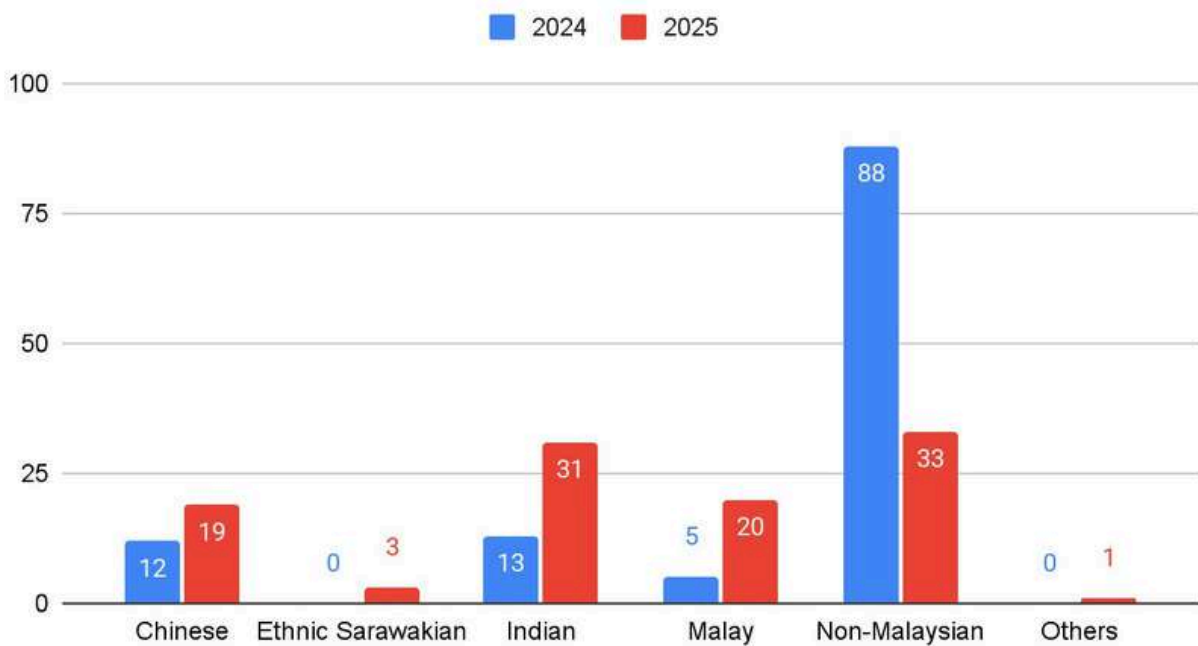
The demographic data shows that wives remain the largest category of survivors in both 2024 (60 cases) and 2025 (59 cases), indicating that intimate partner violence within marriage continues to be the most prevalent form of abuse among those seeking shelter services. While this figure remains consistently high, there is a decrease in the category of ex-wives from 11 to 6 cases. At the same time, a smaller category involving biological children, has increased from 6 to 9 cases, suggesting a growing need for child-sensitive and family-based interventions. Overall, the data reflects a concentration of cases among married women, with modest shifts across other categories, highlighting both the persistent nature of spousal violence and the diverse profiles of survivors accessing support.

Location



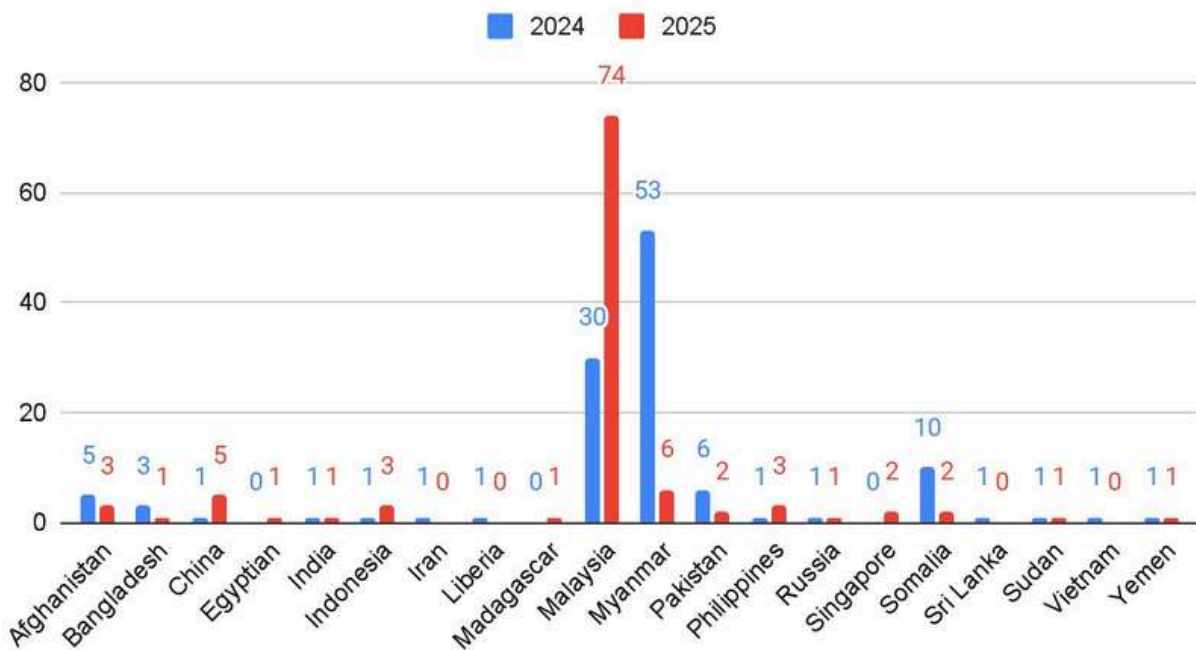
The analysis of collected location data indicates that the majority of residents in our shelter were mainly from Selangor, with a total of 102, and Kuala Lumpur, with a total of 91 clients, for both 2024 and 2025. A year-on-year comparison shows an increase in the number of residents from Selangor, Pulau Pinang, Perak, Melaka and Sarawak in 2025 compared to 2024. Conversely, the number of residents from the remaining states recorded a decrease during the same period. As the shelter is located in Klang Valley, it is more accessible to survivors in the surrounding areas, while survivors from rural or outer states face greater difficulty accessing services. This calls for the introduction of more GBV shelters across Malaysia.

Ethnicity



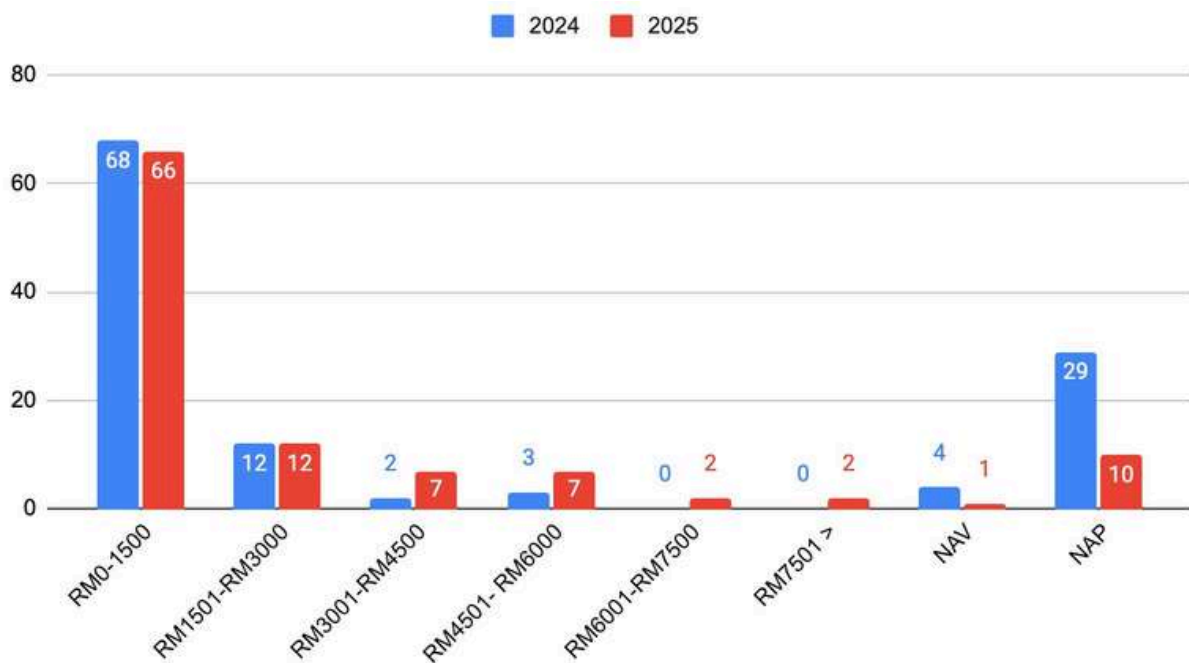
In 2024, Non-Malaysian survivors formed the overwhelming majority of shelter residents at 88 cases, but this dropped to 33 in 2025. Among Malaysian ethnic groups, Indian survivors saw the most significant increase, nearly tripling from 13 to 31 cases, while Chinese survivors rose from 12 to 19 and Malay survivors from 5 to 20. This disparity may be partly explained by geographical barriers due to the location of the shelter. Ethnic Sarawakian survivors appeared for the first time in 2025 with 3 cases, though geographical distance from East Malaysia continues to pose a significant barrier to access for this community.

Nationality



The nationality profile of survivors accessing the shelter shows a significant shift between 2024 and 2025. While survivors from Myanmar formed the overwhelming majority in 2024 (53 cases), this number decreased markedly to 6 in 2025. In contrast, survivors from Malaysia increased sharply from 30 cases in 2024 to 74 cases in 2025, becoming the largest group served. Cases involving Somali survivors dropped from 10 to 2. Other nationalities, including Afghan, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Filipino, Sri Lankan, Sudanese, Vietnamese, and Yemeni survivors, remained relatively small in number but demonstrated continued diversity within the shelter’s client base. Overall, the data suggests a demographic transition toward a higher proportion of Malaysian clients in 2025, alongside a broader mix of migrant and refugee survivors, with implications for language support, culturally responsive services, and immigration-related assistance.

Survivor's Income

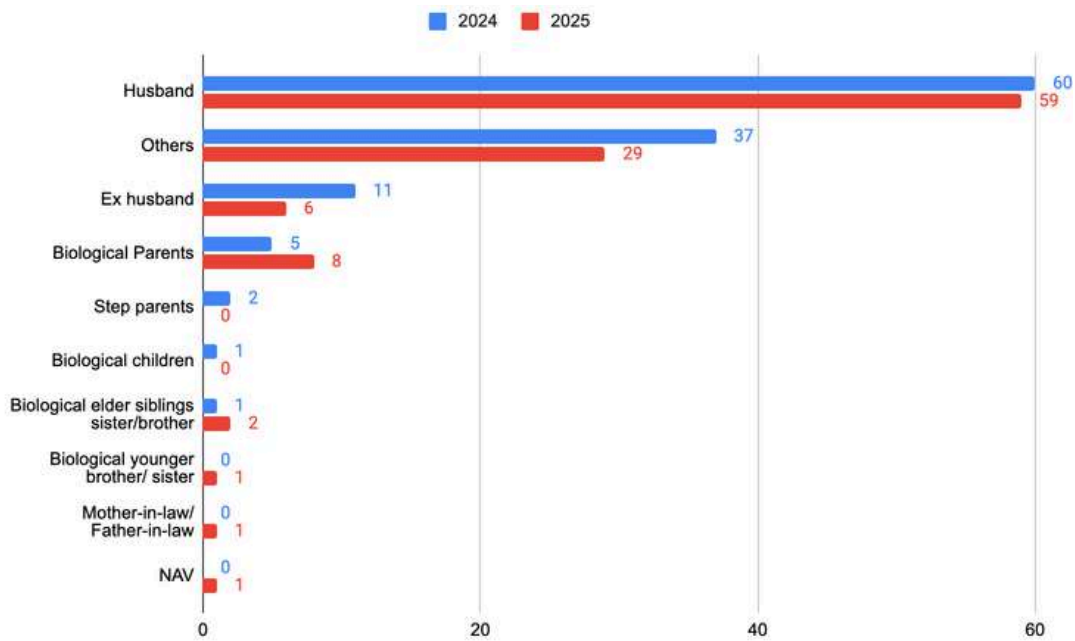


**NAV: survivors prefer to not disclose the information*

The income profile of survivors shows that the majority in both 2024 and 2025 fall within the lowest income bracket of RM0–RM1500 (68 cases in 2024 and 66 in 2025), indicating that most survivors accessing the shelter are from economically vulnerable backgrounds. The RM1501–RM3000 category remained stable at 12 cases in both years, while the RM3001–RM6000 brackets saw slight increases in 2025 compared to 2024. Very few survivors reported incomes above RM6000 in either year. Notably, the number of survivors who preferred not to disclose their income (NAV) decreased significantly from 29 in 2024 to 10 in 2025, suggesting improved data collection or greater willingness to share financial information. Overall, the data highlights persistent low-income vulnerability among survivors, reinforcing the need for financial assistance, employment support, and economic empowerment services.

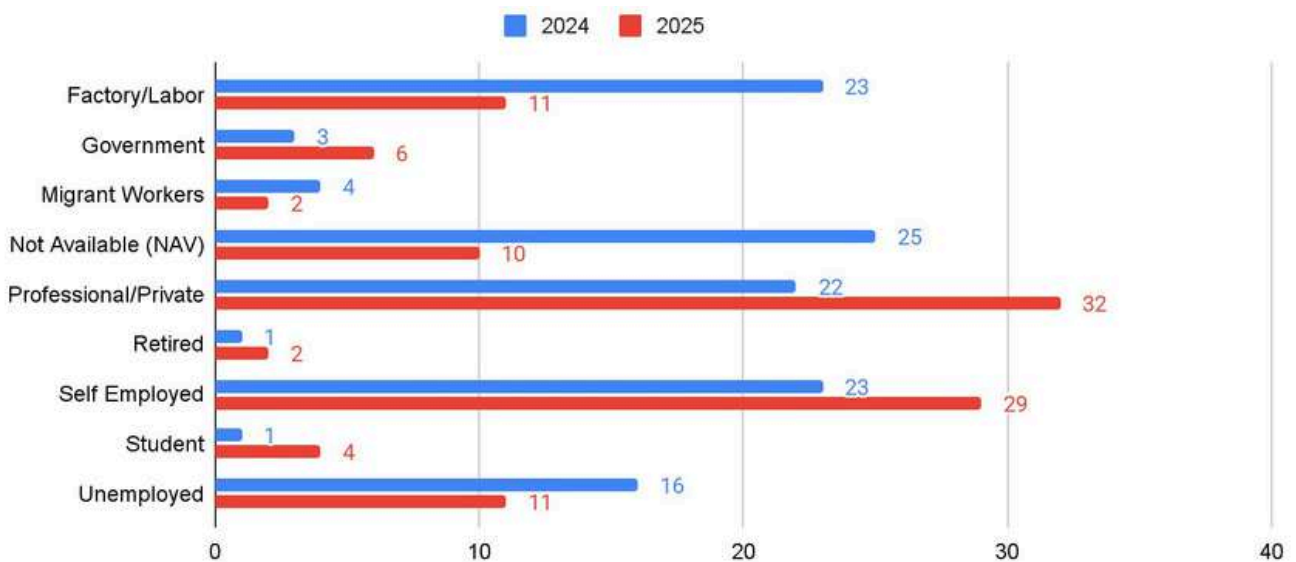
PERPETRATOR PROFILES

Category of Perpetrators



The data shows that intimate partner violence remains the primary driver of shelter admissions, with husbands accounting for the majority of perpetrators in both 2024 (60 cases) and 2025 (59 cases), representing over half of all cases each year, reinforcing that married women remain the most affected group. Cases involving ex-husbands declined (11 to 6), while incidents involving biological parents increased (5 to 8), suggesting a possible rise in younger survivors or family-based abuse. Other family categories remain low in number, and documentation appears strong with minimal missing data. Overall, the findings highlight that intimate partner violence continues to be the dominant pattern among residents, while family-perpetrated violence, though smaller in scale, remains an important concern.

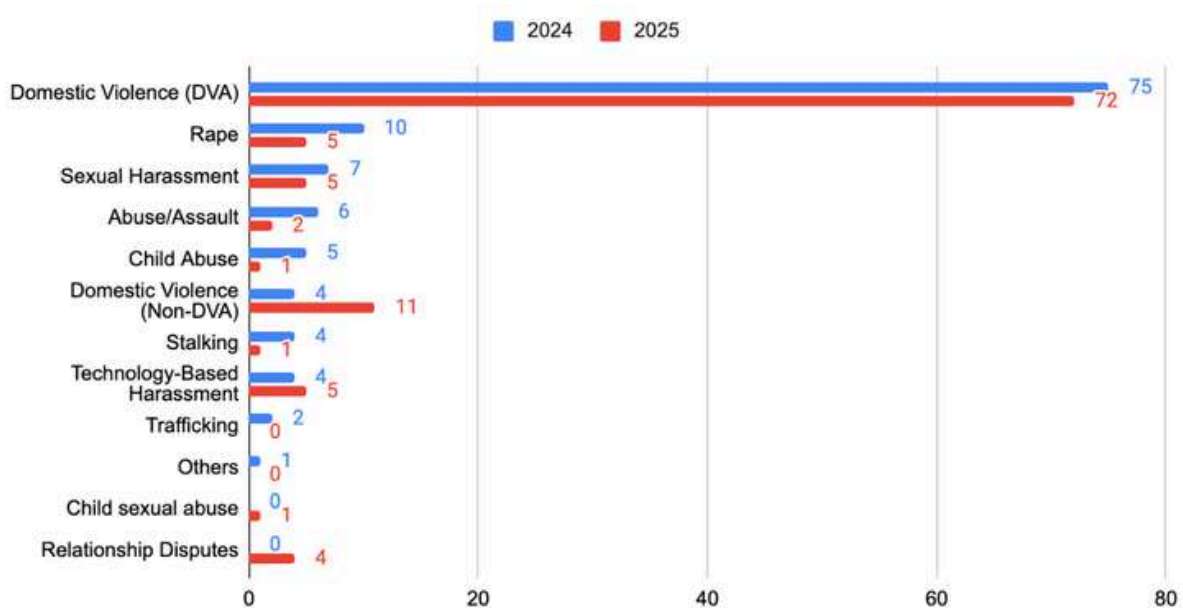
Perpetrator Occupation



In 2024, the perpetrator’s occupation was recorded as not available (NAV) for 25 cases, compared to 10 cases in 2025. The absence of this information may be due to the survivor not knowing the perpetrator’s identity, or because the details were not captured during the Face-to-Face Consultation (FFC). Additionally, two cases in 2024 involving military perpetrators were attributed to the Myanmar junta, with the incidents occurring in Myanmar prior to the survivors’ arrival in Malaysia.

TYPES OF CASES

Case Types



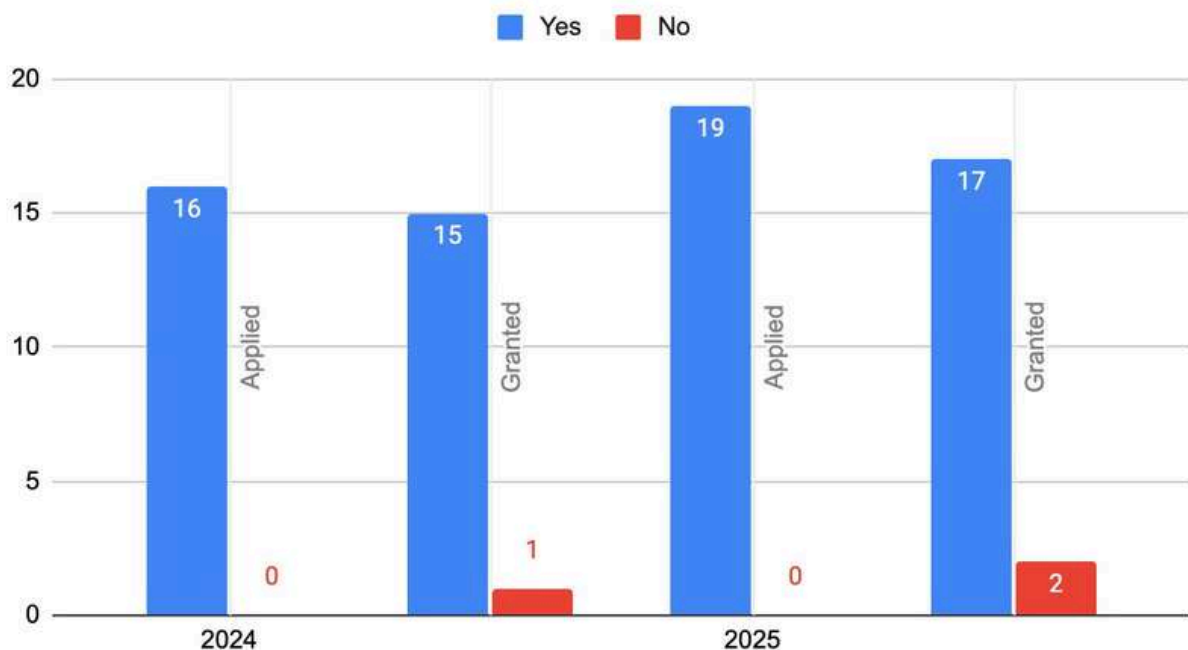
The data shows that domestic violence continues to dominate shelter admissions, with 75 cases in 2024 and 72 in 2025, reflecting its persistent prevalence despite a slight overall decrease. Sexual violence-related cases, including rape (10 to 5), sexual harassment (7 to 5), and abuse/assault (6 to 2), also declined in 2025. Notably, stalking cases dropped significantly from 4 to 1, which may be attributed to strengthened enforcement following the introduction of anti-stalking legislation, potentially acting as a deterrent and improving legal protection for survivors. Meanwhile, technology-facilitated violence increased slightly (4 to 5), and relationship-related cases rose from 0 to 4, suggesting evolving patterns of abuse. Overall, while traditional forms of domestic violence remain the most prevalent, shifts in specific categories highlight the impact of legal reforms and the need for continued monitoring of emerging abuse trends.

PROTECTION STATUS

IPO applied VS IPO granted in 2024 and 2025

	2024		2025	
	Applied	Granted	Applied	Granted
Yes	16	15	19	17
No	0	1	0	2

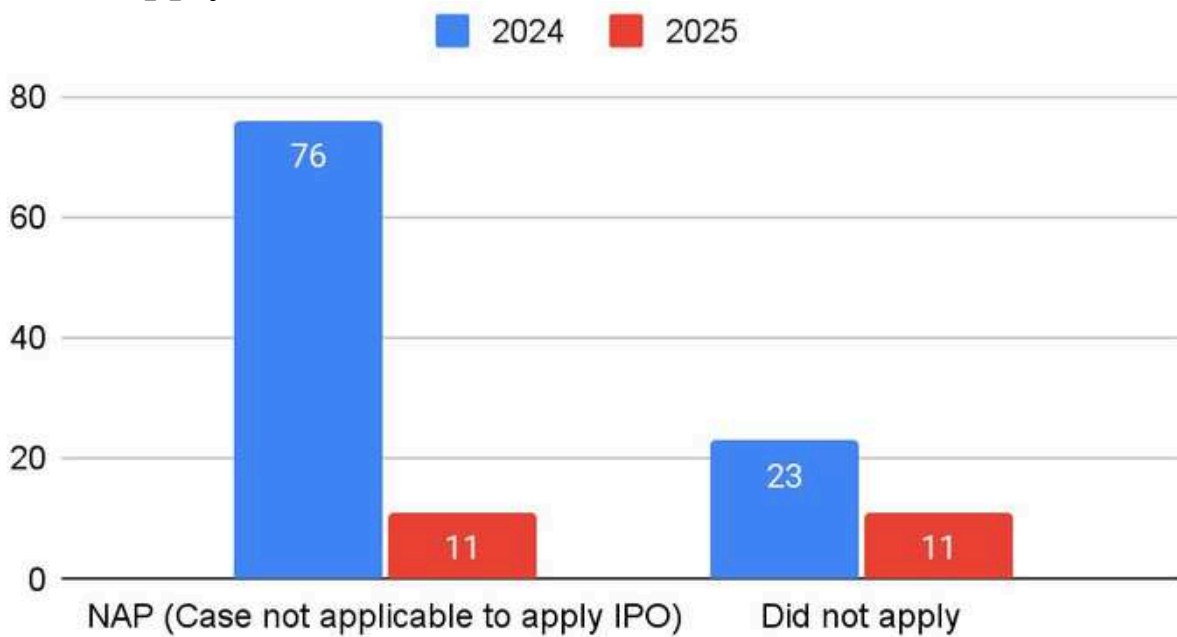
Applied IPO and Granted Status



The data shows a slight increase in IPO applications in 2025 compared to 2024, rising from 16 to 19 applications. In 2024, 15 out of 16 applicants were granted an IPO (94% approval rate), with one rejection, while in 2025, 17 out of 19 applicants were granted (approximately 89% approval rate), with two rejections. Although the approval rate decreased marginally, the overall number of women seeking legal protection increased,

indicating growing awareness of legal remedies and willingness to pursue formal protection mechanisms. The consistently high approval rates across both years suggest that most applicants met the legal threshold and that IPOs remain a critical and accessible protective measure for survivors.

Did Not Apply IPO



Among clients who did not apply for an IPO, the majority of cases in both years were classified as Not Applicable (NAP), with 79 cases in 2024 and 76 in 2025, meaning the nature of the cases did not meet the criteria for an IPO (e.g., non-DVA cases, cover reports, or cases resulting in NFA). For clients who were eligible but chose not to apply, the number decreased significantly from 23 in 2024 to 11 in 2025, indicating a positive shift toward greater acceptance of legal protection options. This trend suggests improved legal awareness, stronger case management support, or increased client confidence in pursuing IPOs in 2025, even though the majority of overall cases remain outside the scope of IPO eligibility.

BEYOND THE **STATISTICS**



SURVIVOR STORIES

Survivor's Story

Mai's Story

“My name is Mai, and I am 38 years old. I have been in this situation for five years. I experienced abuse, mental torture, restrictions from visiting my parents' house, disrespect, and pressure to upgrade my job to earn a higher salary.

Earlier in 2025, he beat me while I was in confinement. I called the police; they came and left us with some advice. I hoped he would not do it again because I believed he would be afraid of losing his job. Unfortunately, he repeated the abuse, and this time it happened in front of my son and caused me serious injuries. The worst part was that before I made my police report, when I went to the police station, he was already there with his brother to lodge a report against me, claiming that I had beaten him.

There were two reasons why I stayed with him: my son, and my hope that he would slowly change through my kindness and care for him and his family. However, he pushed me to this situation, and I decided to leave him, for my son as well, because I did not want to harm my son's emotional well-being or allow him to grow up following his father's behaviour. After the incident, I made a police report one week later. Initially, I did not want to make a report because I had many things to consider before taking such a drastic decision.

Since he is a police inspector, his superior officers tried to settle the matter privately by using my son as a means of pressure. I did not agree to this. I also noticed that the case was progressing

very slowly. Eventually, I contacted Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) for case management. I contacted WAO after receiving recommendations from a friend and my cousin. It was not difficult to reach out, although it took some time for them to get back to me after my first call. I later understood that time was needed to assign a social worker and conduct background checks. They also informed me that I had previously contacted them in 2022, which was when domestic violence first began in my life.

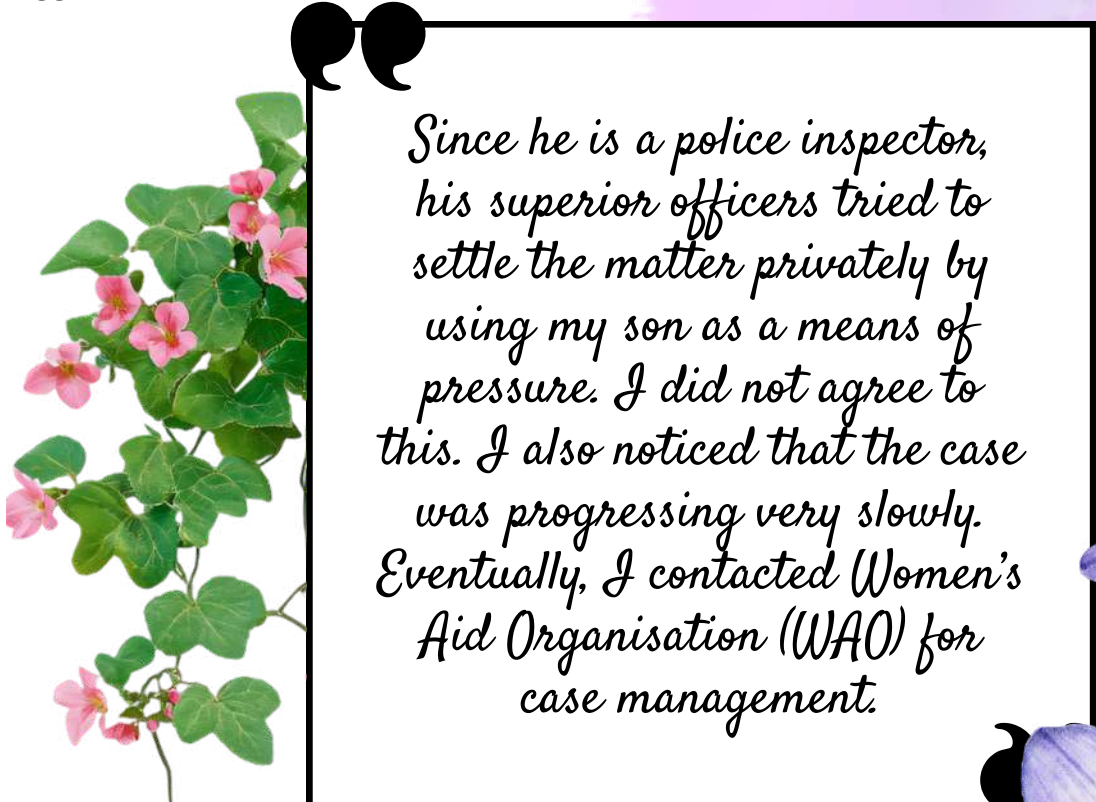
My main sources of support and motivation were my family and, most importantly, my son. My greatest concern was bringing my son back to me, and I was firm in my decision not to allow him to grow up with my husband's family, which I believe is toxic.

WAO helped me through case management and followed up on my case closely. After their involvement, I managed to obtain an Interim Protection Order (IPO) for both my son and myself. I began receiving regular updates on my case. They also supported my emotional well-being by offering free counselling sessions.

Another major challenge occurred when my husband filed a complaint against me, falsely accusing me of abusing my son. By this time, WAO trusted me and assisted me in obtaining updates on the child abuse investigation when I struggled to do so on my own. Eventually, the case was officially closed due to insufficient evidence.

The biggest challenge I faced was my son. My concern was that he needed a complete family with both parents. At the same time, I realized that it is better for a child to be surrounded by good people than to grow up exposed to domestic violence and constant conflict.

Based on my experience, my advice is this: do not assume that your children will suffer if you leave an abusive relationship. In reality, leaving is often the best decision for their well-being. By leaving, you become emotionally and physically stronger, enabling you to provide them with a better life. Even if you are not ready to leave immediately, start collecting and keeping evidence. You may need it in the future, and it can help you seek justice without unnecessary struggle.”



Since he is a police inspector, his superior officers tried to settle the matter privately by using my son as a means of pressure. I did not agree to this. I also noticed that the case was progressing very slowly. Eventually, I contacted Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) for case management.

Survivor's Story

Rita's Story

“My name is Rita, I'm from Madagascar, I'm 27 years old. My story is about emotional, psychological, and financial abuse. At first, everything seemed normal and loving, but slowly the control, manipulation, and fear started to appear. I was isolated, confused, and constantly blamed. I stayed because I believed things would change, and because I felt trapped. Over time, I realized that what I was experiencing was abuse, and that realization was the first step toward saving myself.

It was very difficult to seek help because I was scared, ashamed, and unsure if anyone would believe me. I also doubted myself for a long time. What motivated me was the moment I realized that staying was destroying me mentally and emotionally. I chose myself. I also found strength through people who listened without judging and reminded me that I deserved safety.

WAO gave me something I had not felt in a long time: safety. They listened to me, believed me, and guided me step by step. They provided emotional support, legal guidance, and helped me understand my rights. Most importantly, they reminded me that I was not alone and that what happened to me was not my fault.

There were many challenges to leave the relationship, Fear was the biggest one, fear of retaliation, fear of the future, and fear of being alone. There were also practical challenges like legal processes, uncertainty, and emotional exhaustion. Leaving was not a single decision, but a process, and it took courage every single day.

My advice is this: trust your feelings. Abuse does not always start with physical violence, control, fear, and manipulation are also abuse. You are not weak for staying, and you are not wrong for wanting to leave. Seek help when you can, speak to someone you trust, and remember that you deserve peace, safety, and respect.”



My advice is this: trust your feelings. Abuse does not always start with physical violence, control, fear, and manipulation are also abuse. You are not weak for staying, and you are not wrong for wanting to leave.



Survivor's Story

YC's Story

YC is a 45-year-old woman who has been married to her husband for 20 years. After the birth of their second child, her husband began to abuse her. She endured various forms of abuse, including physical, psychological, social, sexual, and financial abuse. Additionally, YC was not allowed to drive or visit her mother, seeing her only once a year. Her parents-in-law were both aligned with her husband, and the situation worsened as her mother-in-law would inform her husband about YC's whereabouts.

YC attempted to escape the abusive situation several times, but each attempt failed as her husband would pursue her. She was also deeply concerned about her young children. Furthermore, YC was financially dependent on her husband, which made it even more difficult to leave.

The most recent incident occurred in October 2024, resulting in severe injuries that required surgery. Afterward, with the support of her daughter and friends, she reached out to WAO. Guided by WAO, YC filed a police report against her husband, taking a powerful step toward justice. Although overwhelmed and terrified, she no longer felt alone. While staying at the shelter, YC was introduced to professional counselling sessions, which she completed successfully. These sessions helped her gain the emotional strength to take control of her future. During her time at the shelter, WAO also assisted her in applying for a protection order (PO) through JKM and accompanied her to the court hearings

with the support of their social worker and LAC intern.

Additionally, WAO's social worker accompanied her to the hospital for medical check-ups. While in the shelter, YC demonstrated her determination to live independently by actively seeking employment. She also committed to her physiotherapy, working hard to recover the full use of her hand. Furthermore, YC completed the divorce process with her husband.

Upon checking out of the WAO shelter, she was provided with financial assistance to help her transition to independent living. She plans to reunite with her children after she has settled down. YC has secured a job as an assistant for an online business and is now independent, safe, and, most importantly, free from violence. She expressed deep gratitude to WAO, particularly to the social workers who supported her when she had no one else.

“ During her time at the shelter, WAO also assisted her in applying for a protection order (PO) through JKM and accompanied her to the court hearings with the support of their social worker and LAC intern. ”

Survivor's Story

Shenise's Story

For nearly a decade, Shenise lived a nightmare no child should ever endure. Since she was just 11 years old, she was subjected to relentless sexual and physical abuse by the one person who should have protected her, her own father. What started as inappropriate touching quickly escalated into a horrific cycle of sexual violence and psychological manipulation that continued for almost ten years.

Shenise's father controlled her every move. Under the guise of fatherly affection, he would force her to massage him, placing her legs in spread positions while he sexually gratified himself. He demanded her obedience, using threats and intimidation to keep her silent. He would watch pornography in her presence, touch himself inappropriately, and rub his genitals against her while pretending it was normal. This horrifying routine continued week after week, year after year, leaving Shenise deeply traumatised, yet trapped in silence, afraid of what would happen if she spoke out.

Her mother and younger brother lived under the same roof, unaware of the extent of the abuse until April 2024, when the horror unfolded before their eyes. During a family trip to Langkawi, Shenise's father attempted to sexually assault her in her sleep. He slid his hands under her clothing, stroking her thighs up to her private areas. Her mother saw what was happening and immediately intervened, kicking him away from Shenise but the abuse didn't stop there. For three consecutive nights, her father

continued his attacks, using his legs to stroke her private areas, forcing her into the same degrading situations she had endured for years.

After returning home from the trip, the situation escalated. One night, her father demanded she enter his room, lock the door, and massage him. Shenise resisted, but he grew aggressive, shouting at her and threatening to kill her if she didn't obey.

For nine long years, she had been forced into this cycle of fear, degradation, and control.

But this time, something changed. She had enough. Shenise finally found the courage to seek help. With her mother's support, she reached out to WAO's helpline, where she was immediately connected to our Services Team. She broke her silence for the first time, sharing the horrific details of her abuse with social workers who believed and supported her, and promised to help her escape.

With WAO's guidance, Shenise lodged a police report against her father, a powerful step toward justice. Although overwhelmed and terrified, she was no longer alone. WAO's social workers stood by her side, ensuring she had refuge, protection and legal advocacy. At the Shelter, Shenise was introduced to professional counselling, but at first, she resisted. The trauma was deep, and opening up about it felt impossible. But with gentle encouragement, she





committed to the process, slowly confronting her pain.

Through months of counselling, she processed years of abuse, rebuilt her confidence, and, for the first time, believed that she was not to blame for what had happened to her. She completed all her counselling sessions, gaining the emotional strength to take control of her future. When she was ready, Shenise checked out of WAO's Shelter and reunited with her mother and younger brother. They relocated to a safe home, far from her father, ensuring that he would never be able to harm her again.

Determined to rebuild her life, Shenise worked closely with WAO's transitional support team, who helped her find a stable job that aligned with her interests. But she didn't stop there, she took charge of her future and started her own online business, finally achieving the independence and financial security she had never thought possible.

Several months later, Shenise reconnected with WAO to share that she is now living independently, in a secure environment, and most importantly, free from abuse. She conveyed her sincere appreciation to WAO, particularly acknowledging the dedication of the social workers who stood by her during her most vulnerable moments.



Under the guise of fatherly affection, he would force her to massage him, placing her legs in spread positions while he sexually gratified himself. He demanded her obedience, using threats and intimidation to keep her silent. He would watch pornography in her presence, touch himself inappropriately, and rub his genitals against her while pretending it was normal. This horrifying routine continued week after week, year after year, leaving Shenise deeply traumatised, yet trapped in silence, afraid of what would happen if she spoke out.



Survivor Testimonials

“Everyone in WAO has been very helpful, they empower me and make me feel brave to actually go out and start my own life. They help me all the way, from hospital visits, JKM, Police and until I’m divorced. I am brave now and can’t wait to start this new journey”

– Client JP

“Since I've been living at the WAO shelter, I feel calmer and safer. The social worker also helped me a lot with many things and they are very approachable. All facilities are well provided. We appreciate all the necessities that were provided.”

– Client H

“I wish and pray that the social workers in WAO are given lots of blessings and may Allah always protect them and give them the best in life and hereafter. I respect them for taking risks in going through the difficulty I face even up to late night. I am also given a comfortable and clean place to stay where I actually feel safe staying with my son.”

– Client RS

Challenges Faced by Survivors

Survivors supported by WAO face multiple challenges in accessing protection, justice, and support services. These challenges affect not only survivors but also their children, and can increase their vulnerability to further abuse.

1. Delays and Lack of Progress in Investigations

One of the major challenges is the slow progression of cases, especially when alleged perpetrators are affiliated with enforcement authorities. Survivors often experience prolonged waiting periods before cases proceed to trial, changes in investigating officers, and inconsistent updates on case developments. Repeated breaches of Interim Protection Orders (IPOs) are sometimes left unaddressed, undermining the sense of security for survivors. WAO stresses that such delays and lack of timely enforcement can exacerbate survivors' psychological stress and reduce confidence in the justice system.

2. Child Protection and Placement Concerns

Another challenge involves the protection and placement of children who witness domestic violence. In some cases, children were not included in IPO applications, or placement decisions allowed them to remain with alleged perpetrators despite evident risks. Authorities often require formal medical or psychological documentation before recognising emotional harm, even when children display signs of fear or distress. WAO highlights that children who witness abuse may suffer long-term psychological effects, and current systems do not always account for non-physical trauma, leading to gaps in child-sensitive protections.

3. Administrative and Procedural Barriers

WAO has identified several administrative hurdles that complicate access to medical and support services for survivors. For example, unclear referral pathways to medical social workers, inconsistencies in fee exemptions, and complicated reimbursement processes can create delays and financial burdens. Survivors may also face challenges navigating multiple agencies or departments to access essential services, including medical assessments, counselling, and shelter. These procedural gaps can result in additional stress and retraumatisation.



4. Gender Insensitivity and Victim-Blaming Attitudes

A persistent challenge highlighted by WAO is the lack of gender sensitivity among frontliners, including police and medical personnel. Survivors have reported experiences where they were questioned in dismissive or provocative ways, discouraged from fully reporting incidents, or blamed for the abuse they endured. These attitudes not only retraumatise survivors but also contribute to under-reporting of gender-based violence (GBV). WAO emphasises the urgent need for comprehensive, mandatory gender-sensitivity and trauma-informed training for all personnel involved in GBV response.

6. Safety and Harassment Concerns

Survivors often continue to face harassment, intimidation, or coercion from alleged perpetrators even after making reports or obtaining protection orders. WAO notes instances where perpetrators circumvent legal protections, engage in false reporting against survivors, or use surveillance or other forms of control to intimidate them. These ongoing threats not only impact survivors' physical safety but also affect their emotional well-being and willingness to engage with legal processes.

5. Facilities and Manpower Constraints

We understand that authorities such as police and medical officers (frontliners) face challenges such as lack of facilities and manpower. However, this must be addressed urgently to avoid under-reporting and retraumatisation of GBV survivors. There is also sometimes an absence of female police officers to attend to survivors. This is a critical issue because, in cases where men are the perpetrators, rape survivors may not feel comfortable reporting to a male officer. Timely handling of GBV cases, including domestic violence and suspected rape, is essential, as delays in lodging police reports can compromise evidence and put survivors' safety at risk.

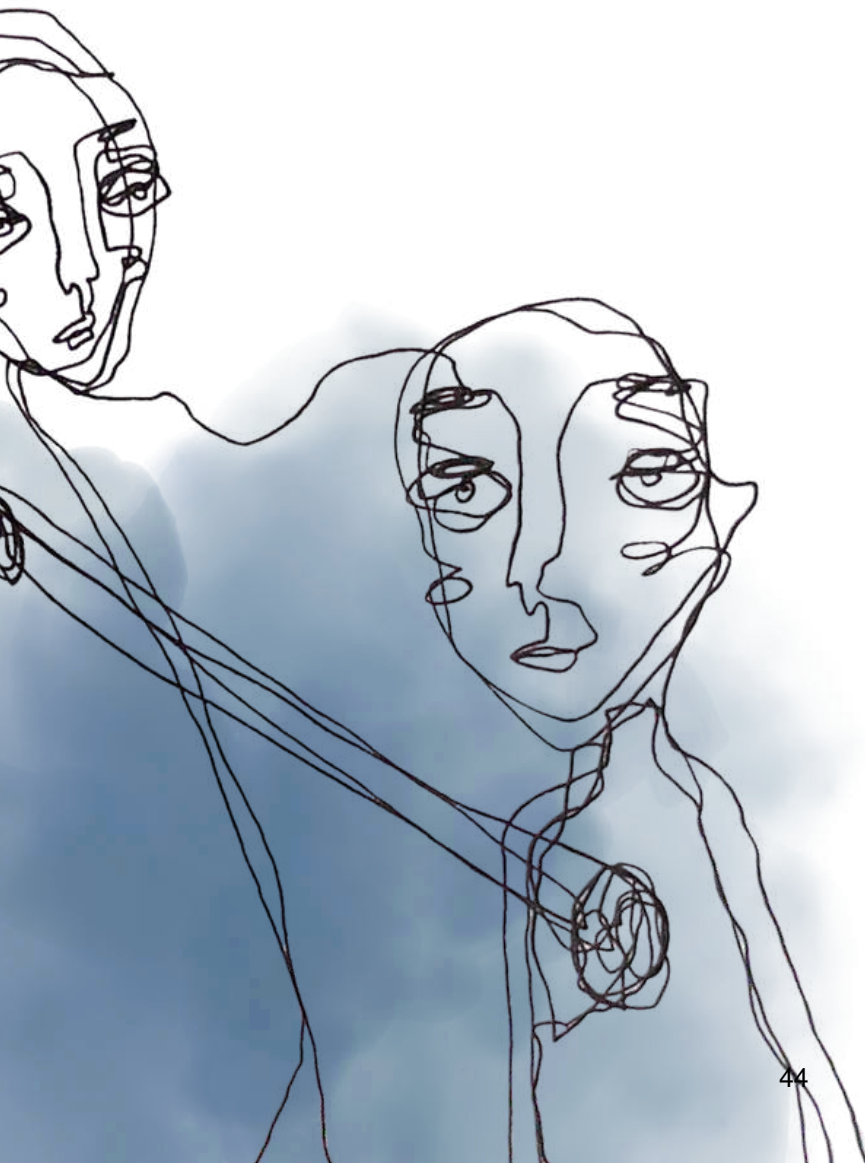
7. Limited Access to Trauma-Informed Mental Health Services

Survivors often face difficulty accessing counselling and mental health support that is sensitive to the trauma of abuse. Long waiting lists, lack of trained professionals, or services that do not address domestic and sexual violence trauma can increase psychological stress and hinder recovery.



8. Financial and Legal Barriers

Refugees and non-citizens may face financial constraints and legal restrictions that prevent them from pursuing justice. Costs for legal representation, court proceedings, or medical assessments, combined with limited eligibility for certain services, can discourage survivors from reporting abuse or seeking protection, leaving them vulnerable to ongoing harm.



HER RIGHTS



IN MALAYSIA

LEGAL FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW AND THE GAPS IN LAW AND IMPLEMENTATION

Rape

Section 375¹

- “Rape” is sexual intercourse by a man with a woman against her will or without her consent.
- “Rape” also includes sexual intercourse with a woman under 16 years of age, with or without her consent.
- Penetration is sufficient to constitute the sexual intercourse necessary to the offence of rape.

Marital Exception:

Sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife is not rape, unless:

1. They are under a decree of judicial separation or a decree nisi.
2. She has an injunction restraining him from intercourse.
3. (For Muslim women) She is in the period of 'iddah'.

Punishment for Rape²

- Up to 20 years imprisonment and whipping.
- Up to 30 years imprisonment and whipping for aggravating circumstances

Section 375A³

Husband causing hurt in order to have sexual intercourse is a crime with a **maximum imprisonment of 5 years.**

¹Penal code 375
²Penal code 376
³Penal code 375a

Sexual Assault

Malaysian law doesn't specifically define sexual assault, however, there are various laws that cover different forms of sexual assault.⁴

**This list excludes Penal codes 375 and 376 mentioned previously.*

Law	Offence	Punishment
Sexual Offences Against Children Act, Section 15	Non-physical sexual assault on a child	Maximum 10 years imprisonment or maximum RM 20,000 fine, or both
Sexual Offences Against Children Act, Section 14	Physical sexual assault on a child	Maximum 20 years imprisonment and whipping
Sexual Offences Against Children Act, Section 13	Meeting following child grooming	Maximum 10 years imprisonment and whipping
Sexual Offences Against Children Act, Section 12	Child grooming	Maximum 5 years imprisonment and whipping
Sexual Offences Against Children Act, Section 11	Sexually communicating with a child	Maximum 3 years imprisonment
Penal Code, Section 377E	Inciting a child to an act of gross indecency	3 - 15 years imprisonment and whipping
Penal Code, Section 377D	Outrages on decency	Maximum 2 years imprisonment
Penal Code, Section 377CA	Sexual connection by object	5 - 30 years imprisonment and whipping
Penal Code, Section 377C	Committing carnal intercourse against the order of nature without consent, etc.	5 - 20 years imprisonment and whipping
Penal Code, Section 354	Assault or use of criminal force to a person with intent to outrage modesty	Maximum 10 years imprisonment, or with fine and/or whipping
Child Act, Section 31	Sexually abusing a child or causing or permitting the child to be abused	Maximum 20 years imprisonment or maximum RM 50,000 fine, or both

⁴ "Rape and Sexual Assault Laws in Malaysia," Women's Aid Organisation, n.d., <https://wao.org.my/laws-on-rape-and-sexual-assault/>.

Domestic Violence Act 1994

Who does this act protect?⁵

- Spouses, former spouses, “de facto spouses” (couples\ who have gone through a religious or customary marriage ceremony, but did not register the marriage)
- Children and family members (adult sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, and any other relatives)
- “Incapacitated adults” who are living as members of the family.

★ The act, however, does not cover non-married couples, even if they live together.

The act outlines 3 types of protection orders for victims of domestic violence.

1. Emergency Protection Orders (EPO)⁶

- Issued by an authorised social welfare officer within 2 hours of application (where practicable).
- A police report relating to domestic violence is not required.
- The protection order lasts for a period of 7 days from the date of issuance.

Effect:

- a) Prohibits domestic violence from the person the order is made against (directly, or indirectly via a 3rd party)
- b) Prohibits the person from entering the protected person’s safe place (shelter, residence etc.)

2. Interim Protection Orders (IPO)⁷

- Issued by the Magistrate Court, thus requiring court approval.
- Lasts the duration of the criminal investigation.

⁵ “Domestic Violence Laws in Malaysia - Women’s Aid Organisation,” Women’s Aid Organisation, 2018, <https://wao.org.my/laws-on-domestic-violence/>.

⁶ Dva 1994, 2017 amendment - section 3a

⁷ Dva 1994 - section 4

- Expires within 7 days upon being informed by a police officer that the case has been charged in court.

3. Protection Orders (PO)⁸

- Issued by the Magistrate Court and is valid once the case has been charged in court and during the court trial (following the completion of the police investigation).
- The PO is valid for one year and may be renewed for up to another year — as long as there is an ongoing court trial.

Sexual Harassment

1. Anti-Sexual Harassment Act 2022⁹

- Established the **Tribunal for Anti-Sexual Harassment (TAGS)**
 - TAGS is empowered to hear and determine complaints relating to sexual harassment as defined under the Act.
 - It **does not have investigatory powers**, instead, it focuses on adjudicating cases and granting appropriate remedies.¹⁰
- The **victim initiates the proceeding** at the Tribunal, playing a more active role in establishing the complaint, presenting the relevant evidence, and testifying in trial.
- **Awards:**
 - Written or public apology from the respondent;
 - Compensation up to RM250,000.00; and/or
 - Mandatory participation in programs that the Tribunal deems necessary.

2. Employment Act 1955

- **Employer-led** investigations¹¹
 - Mandatory for employers to inquire into, investigate and make findings on all sexual harassment complaints involving their employees.
 - An employer may refuse to inquire further into the complaint if:
 1. The complaint had previously been inquired into but was not proven
 2. The complaint is frivolous, vexatious, or is not made in good faith.
 - If the complainant is dissatisfied with a refusal, they can refer the matter to the Director General of Labour (DGL).

★ Much of the process remains within company walls, allowing the employer to resolve the matter internally. **Thus, if the perpetrator holds a senior or managerial**

⁸ Dva 1994 - section 5

⁹ ASHA 2022

¹⁰ "An Overview of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Tribunal," Richardweechambers.com, 2022, <https://www.richardweechambers.com/an-overview-of-the-anti-sexual-harassment-tribunal/>.

¹¹ EA 1955 Part XVa, section 81b

Online Gender Based Violence (OGBV)

1. Online Safety Act 2025 (ONSA)¹⁴

- Applies to licensed Providers (social media and internet messaging platforms with a significant - currently, >8 million - user base in Malaysia). Individual users are not regulated under this Act.
- Providers must comply with “Prescribed Duties” to mitigate harmful content
 - Child sexual abuse material and financial fraud are distinguished as priority harmful content.

Action Required	For Priority Harmful Content	For Other Harmful Content
Acknowledge user report	Within 1 hour	Within 1 hour
Initial assessment & notification	Within 12 hours of acknowledgement	Within 12 hours of acknowledgement
Make content inaccessible	Immediately for 24 hours; permanently within 1 hour if confirmed	Within 4 hours of report; permanently within 12 hours if confirmed
Respond to user inquiry about decision	Within 5 days	Within 7 days

2. Penal Code

- **Malaysia does not have laws that target OGBV specifically**, but legal protections do exist. The following is a compilation of crimes in the Penal Code that may protect users from OGBV.¹⁵

¹⁴ “Online Safety in Malaysia: What You Should Know about the Online Safety Act 2025 and Its Subsidiary Legislation,” Rahmat Lim & Partners, 2025, <https://www.rahmatlim.com/perspectives/articles/32091/online-safety-in-malaysia-what-you-should-know-about-the-online-safety-act-2025-and-its-subsidiary-legislation/>.

¹⁵ “Online Violence: Laws in Malaysia – WCC,” n.d., <https://www.wccpenang.org/online-violence-laws-in-malaysia/>.

Sections	Offences	Punishments
292	When a person sells, distributes, produces, possesses, etc., any forms of obscene materials (except for good religious purposes).	Imprisonment for a maximum of 3 years or fine or both.
293	When a person sells, distributes, circulates, etc., any forms of obscene materials to any person under the age of 20.	Imprisonment for a maximum of 5 years or fine or both.
294	When a person, to the annoyance of others, does any obscene act in any public place, sings, recites or utters any obscene song or words.	Imprisonment for a maximum of 3 months or fine or both.
377D	Outrages on decency.	Imprisonment for a maximum of 2 years.
503, 506, & 507	When a person threatens another with any injury to his person, reputation or property with the intent to cause alarm to that person, even by using anonymous communication.	Imprisonment for maximum 2 years or fine or both. In addition, imprisonment maximum 2 years for using anonymous communication.
507A	Stalking. This may include communicating or attempting to communicate with a person in any manner or by any means.	Imprisonment for a maximum of 3 years or with fine or both.
507B	Causing harassment, distress, fear, or alarm.	Imprisonment for a maximum of 3 years or with fine or both.
507C	Causing harassment, distress, fear, or alarm to a person likely to feel harassed, distressed, fear or alarmed.	Imprisonment for a maximum of 1 year or fine or both.
507D.(1)	Causing a person to believe that harm will be caused.	Imprisonment for a maximum of 1 year or with fine or both.

Sections	Offences	Punishments
507D.(2)	Causing a person to believe that harm will be caused, and if the person provoked attempts to commit suicide or commits suicide as a result of provocation.	Imprisonment for a maximum of 10 years or fine or both.
507E	Publishing, circulating or making available any identity information to cause harassment, distress, fear or alarm.	Imprisonment for a maximum of 3 years or fine or both.
507F	Publishing, circulating or making available any identity information to cause a person to believe that harm will be caused; or does so in a way that is likely to facilitate harm to a person or his related person.	Imprisonment for a maximum of 1 year or fine or both.
507G	Definitions of “harm”, “identity information” and “related person” (in relation to Sections 507D, 507E and 507F). Harm means harm to a person’s body, mind, reputation or property, including psychological harm. Identity information means any information that identifies or purports to identify a person. Related person means, in relation to a person, any person whose safety or well-being would reasonably be expected to be of concern of the first-mentioned person.	See Sections 507D, 507E and 507F.
509	Word or gesture intended to insult the modesty of any person.	Imprisonment for a maximum of 5 years or fine or both.

AVAILABLE PROTECTION AND SERVICES

In Malaysia, a network of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operates telephone or in-person support services for GBV survivors across Malaysia. In addition to WAO, they include

- **AWAM (All Women's Action Society)**
- **Perak Women for Women Society (PWW)**
- **Women's Centre for Change (WCC Penang)**
- **Sarawak Women for Women Society (SWWS)**
- **Sabah Women's Action-Resource Group (SAWO)**
- **SIS Forum Malaysia (SIS)**
- **Tenaganita**
- **Persatuan Sahabat Wanita Selangor**

- The Ministry of Women, Family and Community Department (MWFCD) and Department of Social Welfare Malaysia (DoSW) operates a 24-hour helpline (Talian Kasih) which acts as a primary triage for crisis calls for victims of abuse, violence, and neglect. Within a 5 month period in mid-2025, the helpline received over 27,000 calls requesting assistance for welfare, counselling-related services and child-related complaints.¹
- The One-Stop Crisis Centre (OSCC) in Malaysia is a 24/7, integrated service within government hospital Emergency Departments, providing comprehensive care for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse. It acts as a one-stop hub where victims receive medical treatment, counselling, evidence collection, and police assistance in a single location, ensuring immediate and coordinated support.²
- Survivors may apply for protection orders to legally enforce distance between themselves from their perpetrators³. Their scope of protection varies along different stages of their legal process in seeking justice for the victim. The Emergency Protection Order (EPO) is valid for a period of seven days and does not require a police report. Once a police report has been filed against the perpetrator, an Interim Protection Order (IPO) is granted by the court and will be valid throughout the period of investigation, until the case has been charged in court. Once charged by the court, survivors may be issued a longer-term Protection Order (PO) that can be extended up to another one year, as long as there is an ongoing court trial.

¹ Danish Raja Reza, "How Talian Kasih Turns Distress Calls Into Action," Free Malaysia Today, November 11, 2025. <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2025/11/11/how-talian-kasih-turns-distress-calls-into-action>.

- Women with chronic exposure to intimate partner abuse report severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression, however, factors such as lack of financial and social resources, parenting stressors, and other stressors secondary to partner abuse⁴ have been shown to inhibit their recovery significantly. Given the multidimensional nature of intimate partner abuse, survivors require support beyond the legal and medical framework. Survivors seeking mental health, counselling, and suicide prevention services may turn to:
 - **Talian HEAL operated by Ministry of Health Malaysia**
 - **Talian Kasih operated by MWFC and DoSW**
 - **Befrienderskl**
 - **Life Line Association Malaysia**
 - **SNEHAM Malaysia (officially known as Pertubuhan Kebajikan Snehama Malaysia)**

- The Anti-Sexual Harassment Tribunal (TAGS), established under the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act 2022, provides survivors with a formal avenue to address sexual harassment in workplaces and other settings. It is designed to provide a fast, simple, and affordable way to seek redress for sexual harassment for the survivors. TAGS adjudicates complaints, grants remedies such as financial compensation, written or public apologies, and can mandate participation in corrective programs for perpetrators. Unlike traditional legal processes, the Tribunal empowers survivors to play an active role in presenting evidence and establishing their cases, ensuring that their voices are central in seeking justice and accountability.

² UNFPA, Portraits: Journeys of Gender-Based Violence Survivors across Malaysia's One-Stop Crisis Centres, 79-80, <https://malaysia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2025-03/%5BFINAL%5D%20OSCC%20Report%20%E2%80%94%20Portraits%20%281%29-compressed.pdf>.

³ "Laws on Domestic Violence", Women's Aid Organisation, n.d., <https://wao.org.my/laws-on-domestic-violence/>.

⁴ Mindy B Mechanic et al. "Mental health consequences of intimate partner abuse: a multidimensional assessment of four different forms of abuse", *Violence Against Women*, 14(6), (2008): 634–654, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801208319283>.

CURRENT & EMERGING ISSUES IN GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Social and Cultural Barriers:

- Malaysians' beliefs in rape myth: 83.3% believe rape happens because men are not able to control their sexual desires, 51% believe rape happens because of how women behave, and 49% believe rape happens because of women dress.¹
- High prevalence of normalised harassment: 62% of Malaysian women report sexual harassment experiences, yet only 21% recognize them as such.²
- Misclassification of stalking (42%), unwanted touching (15%), and sexual advances (9%) as merely “unprofessional” behavior.²

Data and Documentation Gaps:

The lack of comprehensive GBV data limits policy responses and resource allocation, particularly for:

- Disabled women
- Indigenous (Orang Asal) women
- LGBTIQ+ women
- Rural populations facing employment and healthcare barriers

Fragmented Monitoring:

Malaysia lacks a centralised GBV database, complicating accurate assessment of prevalence, intersectional vulnerabilities, and the effectiveness of interventions.

¹ Women's Aid Organisation, “Malaysian Public Attitudes and Perceptions towards Violence Against Women (VAW).” Women's Aid Organisation, 2021, <https://wao.org.my/publications/waoagainstvaw/>

² Natasha Dandavati, “Women's Experiences and Perceptions of Sexual Harassment Demonstrate the Urgent Need for a Sexual Harassment Act.” Women's Aid Organisation, 2020, <https://wao.org.my/womens-experiences-and-perceptions-of-sexual-harassment-demonstrate-the-urgent-need-for-a-sexual-harassment-act/>

Emerging Issues in Gender-Based Violence

Recent global and local trends point to several emerging risk factors shaping gender-based violence (GBV) in Malaysia. These issues reflect both technological shifts and socio-cultural influences, in line with the 2024 UN Secretary-General report on violence against women and girls.

1. Expansion of the Manosphere

Definition: The manosphere is a network of online communities claiming to address men's struggles but united by opposition to feminism and framing men as "victims" of current social and political climates.

Local Incidents (2025):

- Alleged gang rape of a teenage girl at a school in Melaka by four male students.
- Fatal stabbing of a female student by a male peer.

Emerging Concern: While some incidents are framed as bullying,⁴ experts and advocates link the rising manosphere influence to the spread of misogynistic attitudes, shaping boys' understanding of gender norms and potentially increasing GBV.

2. Rapid Rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI-facilitated abuse:

AI models are increasingly used to create non-consensual sexually explicit images of women. The AI model Grok has been used in such cases.

³ "What Is the Manosphere and Why Should We Care? | UN Women – Headquarters," UN Women, May 15, 2025, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/explainer/what-is-the-manosphere-and-why-should-we-care>.

⁴ Hazlin Hassan, "Malaysia Shocked by Alleged Gang Rape Case in School, Sparking Nationwide Outrage and Calls for Harsher Actions, Reform," The Straits Times, October 13, 2025, <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/malaysia-expels-students-accused-of-gang-rape-in-melaka-school-as-case-ignites-outrage-debate>.

⁵ Bernama, "Fatal School Stabbing: 14-Year-Old Boy Charged with Murder of Female Schoolmate," BERNAMA, 2025, <https://bernama.com/en/news.php?id=2481324>.

⁶ ByTJ Sari, "Of Mice & Manosphere: The Rise of Gender-Based Violence in Schools - a Malaysian Lens," Roar News, November 30, 2025, <https://roarnews.co.uk/2025/of-mice-manosphere-the-rise-of-gender-based-violence-in-schools-a-malaysian-lens/>.

⁷ The Star Online, "'red Pill' Ideology Pushing Malaysian Boys towards Violence against Women, Says Criminologist," The Star, October 17, 2025, <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2025/10/17/039red-pill039-ideology-pushing-malaysian-boys-towards-violence-against-women-says-criminologist>.

⁸ John Power, "Malaysia Blocks Grok amid Uproar over Nonconsensual Sexualised Images," Al Jazeera, January 12, 2026, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/1/12/malaysia-blocks-musks-grok-amid-uproar-over-non-consensual-sexual-images>.

Regulatory response:

The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission banned Grok,⁸ but access remains possible via VPN or alternative AI tools, including smaller, less regulated platforms.

Impact:

AI-mediated sexual content magnifies risks of online harassment, image-based abuse, and deepfakes targeting women and girls.

3. Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence

Regional research:

Monash University identifies technology-facilitated violence as an “emerging and critical issue” in the Indo-Pacific, still under-researched.

Forms of abuse include:

- Online sexual harassment,
- Tech-facilitated sexual harassment (using trackers, etc.),
- Image-based sexual abuse, including AI-generated deepfakes.¹⁰

Disproportionate impact:

Women and girls experience digital harassment at significantly higher rates, affecting safety, privacy, and freedom of expression.

4. Other Emerging Global Risks

Backlash against women’s rights:

The UN highlights growing resistance to gender equality initiatives globally, which may influence local attitudes.

⁹Rebecca Ratcliffe, “‘Still Here!’: X’s Grok AI Tool Accessible in Malaysia and Indonesia despite Ban,” The Guardian, January 18, 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2026/jan/18/grok-x-ai-tool-still-accessible-malaysia-despite-ban-vpns>.

¹⁰Asher Flynn and Emma Quilty, “Technology-Facilitated Violence in the Indo-Pacific Is on the Rise,” Monash Lens, January 13, 2026, <https://lens.monash.edu/technology-facilitated-violence-in-the-indo-pacific-is-on-the-rise-and-under-researched/>.

¹¹“FAQs: Digital Abuse, Trolling, Stalking, and Other Forms of Technology-Facilitated Violence against Women and Girls | UN Women – Headquarters,” UN Women, November 13, 2025, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/faqs/digital-abuse-trolling-stalking-and-other-forms-of-technology-facilitated-violence-against-women>.

Climate crisis:

Environmental and social stresses associated with climate change may exacerbate GBV through economic strain and displacement.

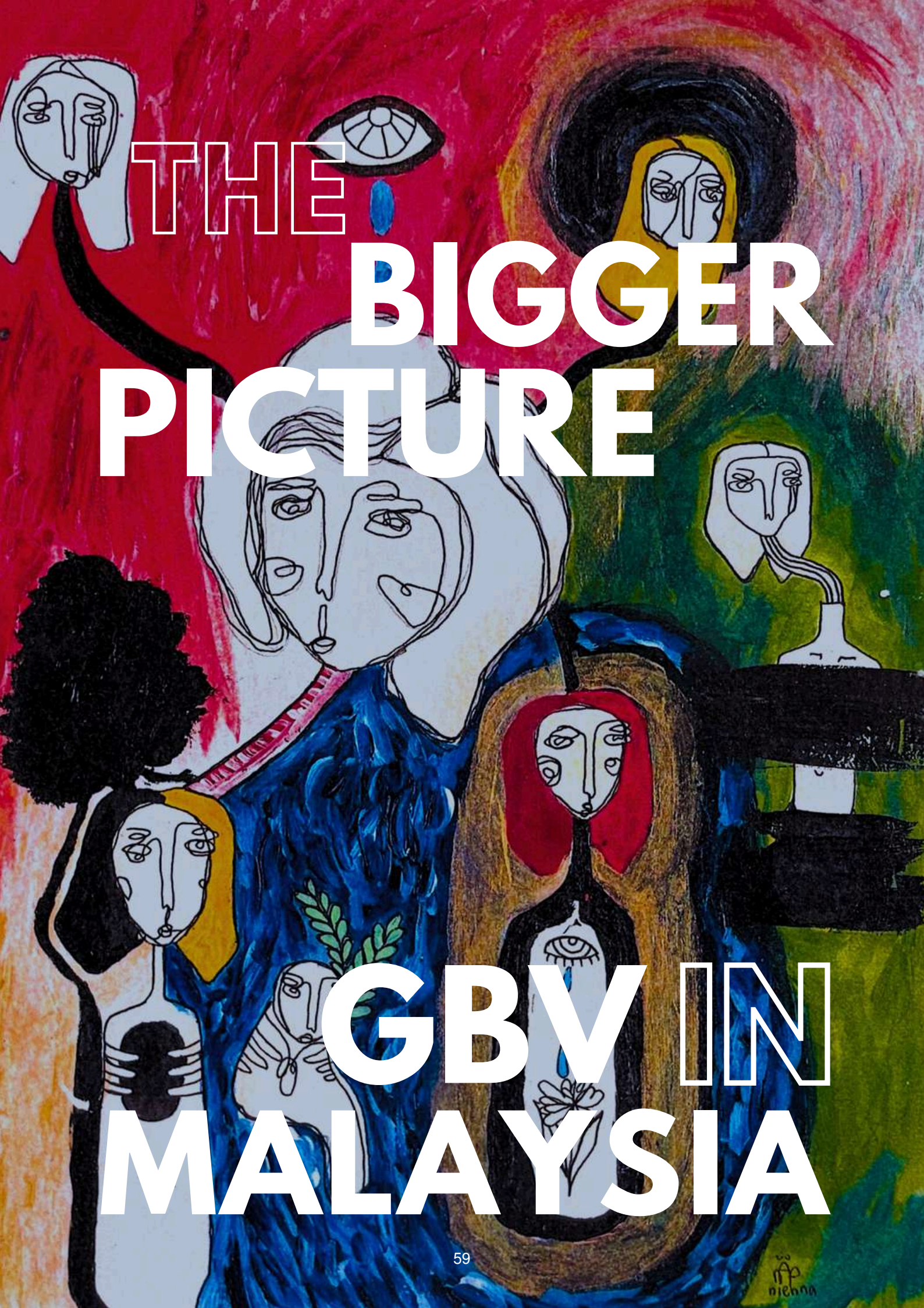
Local evidence:

Currently, there is no formal data confirming these trends are widespread in Malaysia. Globally, the UN warns that 40 million additional women and girls may experience intimate partner violence by 2090 if these factors persist.¹²

Finding:

Emerging GBV risks in Malaysia are shaped by digital platforms, socio-cultural shifts, and global stressors. The interplay of online misogyny, AI-driven sexual abuse, and broader systemic pressures highlights the need for ongoing monitoring, research, and targeted interventions.

¹² Laura Quinones, "Climate Crisis Driving Surge in Gender-Based Violence, UN Study Finds | UN News," United Nations, April 22, 2025, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/04/1162461>.



THE BIGGER PICTURE

GBV IN MALAYSIA

NATIONAL GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) LANDSCAPE (2024 – 2025)

Gender-Based Violence (GBV), defined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as harm inflicted on a person because of their gender,¹ continues to present a serious and evolving challenge in Malaysia.

GBV encompasses physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological harm, including violence facilitated through digital technologies. Many forms of GBV are criminal offences under Malaysian law. Recent data indicates not only sustained prevalence, but also increasing complexity in how violence manifests.

1. Sustained Rise in Domestic Violence and Rape Cases

Long-Term Trend

- Reported domestic violence and rape cases increased from 3,500 (2000) to 5,500 (2018).²
- Underreporting remains a significant concern, suggesting actual prevalence may be higher.

Recent Developments in Domestic Violence Cases (2023-2025)

- **2023:** 5,507 cases
- **2024:** 7,116 cases³
- **2025:** Approximately 7,000 cases recorded to date

The data reflects a continued upward trajectory in reported cases over consecutive years.

Finding:

The sustained increase signals persistent structural drivers of GBV and highlights the need for continued strengthening of prevention, protection, and response systems.

¹ "Gender-Based Violence," UNHCR, last modified 23 February 2026, <https://refugeemalaysia.org/support/gender-based-violence>.

² Arrow Malaysia, *Gender-Based Violence in Malaysia – Grounding Human Rights in Malaysia for All: Embracing Change Advocacy Brief*, https://arrow.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/GEI_gender-based-violence.pdf.

³ Bernama, "Parliament: Domestic Violence cases increase to 7, 116 in 2024.", Bernama News, 4 March 2025, <https://www.bernama.com/en/news.php?id=2398758>.

2. Rapid Escalation of Technology-Assisted Gender-Based Violence

Technology-Assisted Gender-Based Violence (TA-GBV) refers to acts of GBV committed, assisted, or aggravated through information and communication technologies, including smartphones, social media platforms, email, and other online tools.⁴

Reported Cases

- **2023:** 1,763 cases
- **2024:** 8,756 cases
- **As of 31 October 2025:** 28,394 cases⁵

The exponential increase within a two-year period reflects the growing centrality of digital environments in the experience of gender-based harm.

In November 2025, Malaysia marked the UN's International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women through a national campaign led by the Ministry of Communications in collaboration with the United Nations and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The Kuala Lumpur Tower was illuminated in orange as part of the 16 Days of Activism against digital violence.⁶

Finding:

While institutional recognition of digital violence is increasing, the scale and pace of reported cases indicate that digital safety and enforcement mechanisms are under significant strain.

3. Gendered and Generational Dimensions of Online Harm

Research conducted by the Penang Institute highlights distinct gendered patterns in online harassment:

- Young women are more frequently subjected to sexualised forms of abuse.
- Young men more commonly experience aggressive or technical harassment.
- Women remain disproportionately targeted due to sex and gender identity.

⁴ Rachel Westerby and Christopher Boonekamp, "ICMC Responds to Online violence and Exploitation affecting Refugee Communities", International Catholic Migration Commission, 6 March 2025, <https://www.icmc.net/2025/03/06/icmc-responds-to-online-violence-and-exploitation-affecting-refugee-communities/#:~:text=Online%20bullying%2C%20violence%2C%20and%20exploitation.a%20result%20of%20online%20threats>.

⁵ United Nations, "UN, UNFPA in Malaysia and Communications Ministry launch 16 Days of Activism against Digital Violence; KL Tower Lights up Orange.", UN, 26 November 2025, <https://malaysia.un.org/en/309295-un-unfpa-malaysia-and-communications-ministry-launch-16-days-activism-against-digital>.

⁶ *ibid.*

- Over **62% of young female survivors** experienced abuse during adolescence.⁷

A survey by PeopleACT found that:

- Women are **twice as likely** to encounter online sexual harassment.
- Women report higher rates of online death threats, rape threats, and stalking.⁸

Finding:

The evidence demonstrates that GBV in digital spaces is both gendered and age-specific, with adolescent girls and young women facing heightened exposure to sexualised and threatening forms of violence.

4. National Policy Developments

In September 2025, Malaysia launched its National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security (NAP-WPS), integrating GBV prevention into national security and peacebuilding frameworks.

Finding:

The incorporation of GBV into national security planning represents a notable policy development. The effectiveness of this approach will depend on implementation mechanisms, cross-sector coordination, and sustained institutional commitment.

Overall Assessment

Between 2024 and 2025, Malaysia has experienced:

- A continued rise in reported domestic violence and rape cases,
- A dramatic surge in technology-assisted GBV,
- A disproportionate and early-age impact on women and girls, particularly in digital contexts.

While increased reporting may reflect improved awareness and access to formal channels, the scale and acceleration of cases underscore the need for sustained policy attention, institutional responsiveness, and comprehensive prevention strategies.

⁷ Yeong Pey Jung and Mangleswary Subramaniam, "Mapping online Harassment: A Penang state-level prevalence study," Penang Institute Monographs, Volume 33, 3 Feb 2026.

⁸ MMCHR, Survey on How Cyberharassment Affects Malaysians 2016.

<https://mcchr.org/files/uploads/2024/10/Issues-paper-on-cyberharassment-FINAL.pdf>.

RISK FACTORS AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

Systemic and Socio-Economic Root Causes

Power Imbalance and Inequality:

The unequal distribution of power and resources between men and women remains a fundamental driver of gender-based violence (GBV), perpetuating cycles of discrimination, control, and dependency.¹

Economic Dependence:

Financial instability is a primary reason survivors remain in abusive situations.² In many cultural contexts, women are often perceived as property: first of their father, then of their husband, facilitating economic abuse and enabling perpetrators to maintain total control over household finances.³

Lack of Economic Independence:

Limited access to skills development and employment opportunities prevents survivors from attaining the financial autonomy needed to leave abusive situations.

Vulnerabilities of Marginalized and Undocumented Groups

Legal Status and Fear of Authorities:

Refugees, stateless individuals, and migrant workers face heightened GBV risk due to fears of arrest, deportation, or discrimination when seeking help.

Identity-Based Risks:

Gender non-conforming and transgender individuals experience elevated vulnerability owing to societal stigma and limited access to inclusive protection services.

Geographic Isolation:

Communities in remote areas, including Sabah and Sarawak, encounter additional barriers to accessing support services.

External Stressors and Humanitarian Crises

¹ UN Women. 2025. "FAQs: Types of violence against women and girls." November 17, 2025.

² Murad, Dina. 2025. "A whole-of-nation approach needed to address gender-based violence." The Star, November 25, 2025.

³ Concern Worldwide. 2023. "12 types of gender-based violence that you should know about." October 3, 2023.

Pandemic and Movement Restrictions:

Global health emergencies, such as COVID-19, intensified GBV risks in Malaysia. Movement restrictions and increased household stress contributed to a 42% rise in reported domestic violence cases in 2021.⁴

Environmental and Conflict Settings:

Humanitarian crises, displacement, and climate vulnerability increase the risk of sexual violence and human trafficking, as families are forced into temporary or insecure shelters.^{1 2 3}

Digital and Modern Vulnerabilities

Technology-Facilitated Abuse:

The rise of digital platforms has introduced new risks, including cyberstalking, doxxing, and the use of AI for deepfake pornography.^{1 2 3}

Online Visibility:

Women in public roles (journalists, politicians, and activists) face disproportionately higher risks of targeted harassment and intimidation online.

Institutional and Cultural Barriers

Normalization of Violence:

Many survivors do not recognize behaviors such as stalking or unwanted touching as harassment because these have been normalized as “unprofessional” rather than criminal.⁵

Failure of Reporting Systems:

Deficiencies in the justice system, including police inaction and victim-blaming, increase the risk of violence escalation. High-profile cases in Malaysia demonstrate that delayed or insufficient protection can lead to lethal outcomes, even when multiple reports are filed.^{4 6}

Social Stigma and Norms:

Entrenched patriarchal norms foster a culture of silence, where survivors fear that speaking out may bring “shame” or “dishonor” to their families. Such social pressures drive violence and underreporting of GBV incidents.^{2 3 5}

⁴ Supramani, Shivani. 2023. “Gender-Based Violence And Domestic Violence On The Rise in Malaysia: A Growing Concern.” The Rakyat Post, June 26, 2023.

⁵ Dandavati, Natasha. 2020. “Women’s Experiences and Perceptions of Sexual Harassment Demonstrate the Urgent Need for a Sexual Harassment Act.” Women’s Aid Organisation, November 6, 2020.

⁶ Women’s Aid Organisation. 2024. “Urgent Need to Address Violence Against Women After Shooting in KLIA 1 Terminal.” April 16, 2024.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS ADVOCACY OUTSIDE WAO

Disclaimer: This list is non-exhaustive.

This section highlights organisations in Malaysia advocating for women's rights beyond WAO, addressing issues from reproductive health to the protection of marginalised communities.

Binational Families

A major focal point has been gender-discriminatory citizenship laws. **Family Frontiers** successfully led the "Malaysian Campaign for Equal Citizenship" (#PindaPerkara14UntukIbu), resulting in a constitutional amendment granting Malaysian women the right to confer citizenship to overseas-born children on an equal basis as Malaysian men.¹ The process is expected to be implemented in mid-2026. Another historic settlement was reached in March 2025, extending the citizenship rights to children born before the amendment, ensuring they were not left in legal limbo.²

Gender Diverse Individuals

LGBTIQ+ and gender-diverse individuals face pervasive discrimination and escalating criminalisation. **Justice for Sisters** (JFS) is a Malaysian advocacy organisation dedicated to advancing the rights, safety, and well-being of LGBTIQ+ people in Malaysia, including transgender women. JFS works to address discrimination, harassment, and criminalisation that trans women face in both public and private spaces, including barriers to healthcare, employment, and legal recognition. The organisation provides support through community outreach, legal assistance, and public education, while also documenting human rights violations and advocating for policy reforms. By centering the experiences of trans women, JFS strives to create a safer, more equitable environment where gender-diverse individuals can live with dignity, autonomy, and access to essential services.

Indigenous Women and Girls

In Malaysia, indigenous women and girls face intersecting forms of discrimination, including limited access to education and healthcare, economic marginalisation, gender-based violence, and systemic land dispossession. **Pertubuhan Wanita Orang Asal Malaysia** (PWOAM) advocates for the rights of these communities, highlighting the urgent need for culturally sensitive policies and protections. By engaging with both local and international mechanisms, PWOAM seeks to empower indigenous women and girls, ensure their participation in decision-making, and protect their rights in accordance with constitutional and human rights standards.

Mail, October 17, 2024.

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2024/10/17/all-you-need-to-know-about-the-constitutional-amendment-to-malaysias-citizenship-laws/153975>.

² "Automatic Citizenship for Children Born Abroad to Malaysian Mothers Set for Mid-2026, says Home Minister," Malay Mail, November 14, 2025.

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2025/11/14/automatic-citizenship-for-children-born-abroad-to-malaysian-mothers-set-for-mid-2026-says-home-minister/198317>.

Migrant Domestic Workers

Migrant domestic workers are not acknowledged as “employees” equal to workers in offices and other business settings. As such, they remain vulnerable as they are excluded from key labour protections under the Employment Act 1955. Despite calls by advocacy group, **Tenaganita**, to introduce comprehensive legal protections for domestic workers³, these workers remain at risk of exploitation in the form of forced unpaid labour, physical abuse,^{4,5} and trafficking,⁶ some even resulting in cruel death.⁷

Methods of abuse have also evolved, with employers using digital tools to enable surveillance, deepfakes, and sextortion to harass and abuse migrant domestic workers.⁸ These technology-facilitated sexual violences are a threat to migrants' safety, dignity, and psychological well-being.

Muslim Women

The issue of injustice faced by Muslim women under the Shariah legal system in Malaysia has long raised concerns about equality, dignity, and fundamental rights. **SIS Forum**, formerly known as Sisters in Islam, emerged in response to these challenges with the aim of advancing the rights of Muslim women in Malaysia. Through a critical and hermeneutical reading of the Al-Quran, SIS Forum promotes an understanding of Islam grounded in justice, equality, love, and mercy. Today, SIS Forum plays a significant role both locally and internationally by contributing a rights-based perspective on Islam, strengthening advocacy strategies, building networks within the women's movement, and pushing for legal and policy reforms that affect Muslim women in Malaysia and in minority Muslim communities worldwide. SIS Forum also voices concerns regarding the minimum marriage age of Muslim women standing at 16 years old, leaving young girls vulnerable to exploitation and risk of early pregnancy.⁹

³ “Tenaganita Renews Calls for Standalone Legislation to Protect Domestic Workers,” Free Malaysia Today, June 12, 2025.

<https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2025/06/12/tenaganita-renews-calls-for-standalone-legislation-to-protect-domestic-helpers>.

⁴ Gombak Domestic Helper Abuse: Woman, Son Remanded For Four Days,” Bernama, August 12, 2025. https://www.bernama.com/en/news.php/world/crime_courts/news.php?id=2500157.

⁵ Faiz Ruzman, “Domestic Worker Rescued after 16 years: Unpaid, Abused, and Hiding,” The Sun, November 26, 2025.

<https://thesun.my/news/malaysia-news/crime/domestic-worker-rescued-after-16-years-unpaid-abused-and-hiding/>.

⁶ Ahmad Mukhsein Mukhtar, “Duo Arrested for Abusing, Trafficking Foreign Domestic Worker,” New Straits Times, November 5, 2025.

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/regional/2025/11/1309067/duo-arrested-abusing-trafficking-foreign-domestic-worker>.

⁷ Wan Ahmad Atarmizi, “‘Prolonged Campaign of Cruelty’: Inside the Chilling Maid Murder by MasterChef Finalist,” Sinar Daily, June 23, 2025.

<https://www.sinardaily.my/article/728275/focus/deep-dive/prolonged-campaign-of-cruelty-inside-the-chilling-g-maid-murder-by-masterchef-finalist>.

⁸ “Domestic Workers in Southeast Asia are Increasingly Facing Technology-Facilitated Sexual Violence,” Asialink, October 31, 2025.

<https://asialink.unimelb.edu.au/diplomacy/domestic-workers-southeast-asia-are-increasingly-facing-technology-facilitated-sexual/>.

⁹ “Ending Child Marriage: Crucial Step to Curb Teenage Pregnancies and Safeguard Malaysia's Future,” SIS Forum (Malaysia), November 12, 2024.

Online Gender-Based Violence (OGBV)

OGBV has become a pervasive threat, with social media algorithms often amplifying sensationalist and hateful content that reinforce existing biases, prejudices and stigmas against women, especially from marginalised groups. The **KRYSS Network** advocates for freedom of expression and the importance of addressing OGBV in Malaysia. They host town halls to understand barriers to regulate online violence and document cases of technology-facilitated abuse. Their 2022 review report highlighted the invisible pressures on women to self-censor or distance themselves in digital spaces due to fears of becoming targets of OGBV.¹⁰¹⁰

Sexual and Reproduction Health and Rights

Malaysian women face barriers in accessing sexual and reproductive rights. **RRAAM** (Rights of Women and Advocacy Across Malaysia) was established on 2 February 2007 by a collective of 12 organisations and individuals to strengthen access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The organisation believes that all women have the right to legal, safe, and affordable reproductive healthcare, including contraceptive and abortion services, recognising these both as essential reproductive rights and as fundamental aspects of the right to health. RRAAM also acknowledges that women's overall well-being, health, and empowerment are significantly enhanced when these rights and services are accessible.

Labor Rights and Hospital Support Workers

National Union of Workers in Hospital Support and Allied Services (NUWHSAS) advocates for the highly feminised "invisible" frontliners, cleaners and maintenance workers within Malaysia's public healthcare system. Despite performing essential duties, these workers remain trapped in a precarious subcontracting model that denies them the security of permanent civil service roles. KPSHK has intensified its campaign against union-busting and stagnant wages, arguing that the RM1,700 minimum wage remains a floor rather than a living wage for long-serving staff. By documenting labor violations and pushing for direct government employment, the union seeks to dismantle the exploitative outsourcing system, ensuring those who maintain our hospitals receive the dignity they deserve.

<https://sistersinislam.org/ending-child-marriage-crucial-step-to-curb-teenage-pregnancies-and-safeguard-malysias-future/>.

¹⁰ Serene Lim, The Hidden Codes that Shape Our Expression: Understanding How Social Media Algorithms Obstruct Feminist Expression and How Malaysian Women Navigate the Challenges, 9-12. <https://www.kryss.network/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/The-Hidden-Codes-that-Shape-Our-Expression-Understanding-How-Social-Media-Algorithms-Obstruct-Feminist-Expression-and-How-Malaysian-Women-Navigate-the-Challenges.pdf>.

SNAPSHOTS

FROM MALAYSIA AND AROUND THE WORLD:

FEMINIST WINS AND GOOD PRACTICES

Disclaimer: This list is non-exhaustive.



Malaysia

Institutional and Policy Achievements



Annual Celebration of Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls (Nov 25):

Led by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD) to commemorate efforts to combat GBV.¹



Cybersecurity and AI Measures:

- Cybersecurity Bill (2024) improves online safety, indirectly addressing digital GBV.¹
- National Guidelines on AI Governance & Ethics to prevent AI-based discrimination, including gender-based biases.¹

Community-Based and Advocacy Initiatives



Skuad Waja Volunteers:

336,590 volunteers as of Sept 2025, assisting 81,473 cases nationwide.¹



Children's Services System (ANAK):

Under development to enhance child safety by screening criminal records of those working with children.¹



Domestic Violence Advocacy Programs (2025):

1,131 programs conducted with 154,241 participants, including Nov 25 celebrations.²

National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (NAP WPS 2025–2030)



Recognizes GBV as a risk to national stability.



Objectives: Address cultural and structural contributors to GBV, strengthen legal frameworks and institutional capacity, and enhance men's and women's participation in prevention.³

¹ "Malaysia Progress Report 2020 - 2024," UN Women, 2024, https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/b30_report_malaysia_en.pdf.

² Bernama, "1,131 Domestic Violence Advocacy Programmes Conducted Last Year - Nancy," BERNAMA, January 27, 2026, <https://www.bernama.com/en/general/news.php?id=2517262>.

³ "National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2025-2030," Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2025, https://kpwkm.gov.my/uploads/content-downloads/file_20251024084835.pdf.



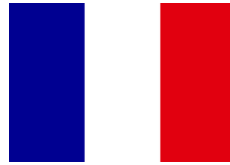
Global

Legal and Policy Milestones (2025)



Brazil

Law empowers judges to protect GBV victims, remove abusers from the victims' home, restrict abuser contact, and mandate monitoring.⁴



France

Rape law amended so any sexual act without consent constitutes rape.⁵



Italy

Femicide criminalized, punishable by life imprisonment.⁶



Sweden

Sexual acts require consent called **Samtyckeslagen (Consent Law)**; negligent rape/sexual abuse laws focus on offender responsibility.⁷



United Kingdom

- 'Right to Know' guidance allows victims to learn online stalkers' identities.
- New £13M police centre dedicated to GBV specialist response.
- **Sarah's Law:** Individuals can request police checks on people with contact with children; disclosure provided to child carers.
- **Clare's Law (Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme):** Enables checks on partners' violent history with safety plans for potential victims.



African Union

AU Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AU CEVAWG) creates first continent-wide legal framework recognizing GBV, including digital violence, and promoting positive masculinity.¹²

⁴ Eleonore Hughes, "Brazil Approves Law Strengthening Protective Measures for Female Victims of Gender-Based Violence," AP News, December 9, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/brazil-genderbased-violence-law-lula-ee5d28a8ca21013de4f1506d68c36d73>.

⁵ Laura Gozzi, "France Enshrines Need for Consent into Rape Law in Wake of Gisèle Pelicot Case," BBC News, October 29, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce9d3ldgg5vo>.

⁶ Sarah Rainsford, "Italian Parliament Unanimously Votes to Make Femicide a Crime," BBC News, November 26, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1dzp050yn2o>.

⁷ "Protecting Women against Violence – Best Practices from All over Europe," Bundesministerium, December 2020, <https://www.bmfsfj.bund.de/resource/blob/164296/5073c15b7c0939acf236f157e0777a62/protecting-women-against-violence-best-practices-from-all-over-europe-data.pdf>.

⁸ "Victims to Be given More Protection in Stalking Crackdown," GOV.UK, December 3, 2024, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/victims-to-be-given-more-protection-in-stalking-crackdown>.

⁹ "New £13M Police Centre to Tackle Violence against Women and Girls," GOV.UK, February 4, 2025, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-13m-police-centre-to-tackle-violence-against-women-and-girls>.

¹⁰ "Sarah's Law' Protects More than 200 Children in First Year," GOV.UK, April 4, 2012, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/sarahs-law-protects-more-than-200-children-in-first-year>.

¹¹ "Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme Factsheet," GOV.UK, January 3, 2024, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/domestic-violence-disclosure-scheme-factsheet>.

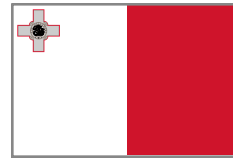
¹² Penelope Neves, "2025 Breakthroughs: Real Wins against Gender-Based Violence," ActionAid UK, December 1, 2025, <https://www.actionaid.org.uk/blog/2025/12/01/2025-breakthroughs-real-wins-against-gender-based-violence>.

Victim Support and Community-Based Initiatives



Bulgaria

Emergency hospital has a 24/7 reception for domestic violence victims staffed by doctors, police, and psychologists.⁷



Malta

Free 24/7 helpline, supervised by social workers; victims receive immediate free legal consultation.⁷



Slovenia

NGO program provides social skills training for men who perpetrate violence, referred by courts and institutions, to reform abusive behavior.⁷



UN Women UNiTE Campaign (Nov 25 – Dec 10, 2025):

Spotlight on digital GBV, calling governments, tech companies, donors, and individuals to take action.¹³

¹³ "16 Days of Activism 2025: End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls | UN Women – Asia-Pacific," UN Women, September 5, 2025, <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/stories/announcement/2025/09/16-days-of-activism-2025>

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An abstract painting with a vibrant red background. On the left, there are two dark, rectangular shapes, one black and one dark grey with some brownish texture. To the right, a dark blue, rounded figure with a bright yellow circular shape on its head is visible. Below this figure, there are broad, expressive brushstrokes in yellow and orange. At the bottom, there are dark, swirling shapes in black and grey.

**WHERE
WE GO**

**FROM
HERE**

SPECIAL RECOMMENDATIONS FROM WAO TO THE GOVERNMENT



1. Enhancing Professional Social Work Capacity for GBV Response

To significantly strengthen Malaysia's GBV response, the government should prioritize funding to expand the cadre of specialized professional social workers. This strategic investment directly supports KPWKM's commitment to the Social Work Profession Bill, ensuring services transition toward an effective, trauma-informed and survivor-centered model. Specifically, we propose dedicated budget allocations for advanced training programs focused on domestic violence and psychological support. Furthermore, it is vital to provide NGOs with the financial resources necessary to offer competitive salaries, enabling them to recruit and retain high-caliber talent. By professionalizing the workforce and stabilizing the sector, the government ensures every survivor has access to the sophisticated, compassionate care they deserve. This investment is an essential pillar for a truly resilient social safety net.



2. Operational Funding for Domestic Violence Shelters and Hotlines

To ensure the sustainability of life-saving interventions, the government should provide dedicated annual operational funding for NGOs managing domestic violence shelters and hotlines that meet JKM standards. These services are vital yet inherently costly to maintain. We propose a robust grant framework to cover core expenditures, including rent, utilities, 24/7 security, meals, and medical support. Furthermore, funding must specifically address staffing and transportation needs to guarantee professional, trauma-informed assistance for every survivor. Moving towards a model of consistent subsidies rather than relying on unpredictable public donations will allow these centers to focus on recovery instead of financial survival. This commitment is essential for providing immediate, safe refuge and maintaining a reliable, nationwide 24/7 crisis response system.



3. Gender Mainstreaming Capacity Building

To fulfill Malaysia’s commitments under CEDAW and advance gender-responsive budgeting, the government must institutionalize comprehensive gender mainstreaming training for essential frontliners, including police, medical staff, and judicial officers. We propose allocating dedicated funding to specialized NGOs to develop and deliver standardized modules focused on gender sensitivity, survivor-centered protocols and legal rights. This initiative should encompass mandatory annual training and refresher courses to ensure consistent, high-quality care across all touchpoints of the justice system. By equipping these professionals with the necessary tools to navigate complex gender dynamics, the state can dismantle systemic barriers to justice. Ultimately, this investment transforms policy into practice, fostering a more equitable and professional environment that prioritizes the safety and dignity of every survivor.



4. Comprehensive Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Public Awareness Campaign

To address the multifaceted nature of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), the government should fund a nationwide public awareness campaign focusing on emotional, financial and reproductive coercion. This initiative promotes early intervention by encouraging community participation in ending violence. We propose a strategic, multi-channel approach utilizing traditional media alongside high-impact collaborations with platforms like TikTok and Instagram. By featuring survivor testimonies, expert-led discussions and educational content, these campaigns will demystify IPV and provide actionable resources. Institutionalizing this funding ensures that awareness remains consistent, reaching diverse demographics while dismantling systemic stigma. Ultimately, a well-funded, modern communications strategy serves as the first line of defense, transforming public perception and empowering survivors to seek help before crises escalate.

“WEH, BRO!”

- Active Bystander Intervention Initiative

As part of Women’s Aid Organisation’s continued commitment to preventing gender-based violence, we launched “Weh, Bro!”, a series of advocacy videos on Active Bystander Intervention developed in collaboration with Malaysian filmmaker Khairi Anwar.

Building on the internationally recognised 5Ds of Active Bystander Intervention framework¹, WAO is introducing the Malay-language adaptation: 5M Campur Tangan Saksi (Mengalihkan, Melaporkan, Merakamkan, Menenangkan, Menegur).



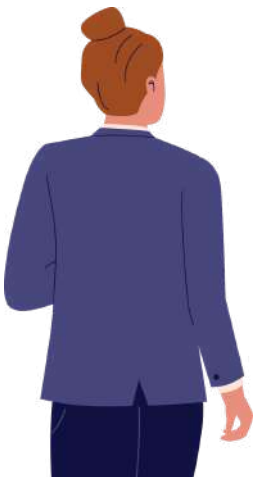
5M Campur Tangan Saksi 5Ds of Active Bystander Intervention

- 1 Mengalihkan - Alih perhatian untuk hentikan gangguan.**
Distract - Interrupt the harassment to defuse tension.
- 2 Melaporkan - Minta tolong dan lapor kepada pihak bertanggungjawab.**
Delegate - Report and ask someone else to help to make sure that something is done.
- 3 Merakamkan - Rakam atau catat bukti kejadian gangguan.**
Document - Record or note evidence of harassment.
- 4 Menenangkan - Tunggu dan berikan sokongan kepada orang yang diganggu selepas kejadian.**
Delay - Wait for the situation to pass and offer support to the person being harmed.
- 5 Menegur - Menegur orang yang melakukan gangguan secara terus.**
Direct - Confront the person doing the harm.

Through this initiative, we aim to normalise safe intervention, strengthen peer accountability, encourage male allies, and cultivate a culture where silence is no longer the default response to harm.

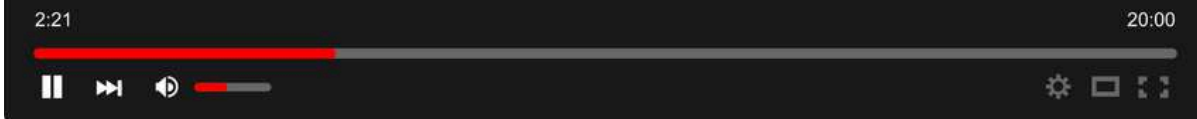
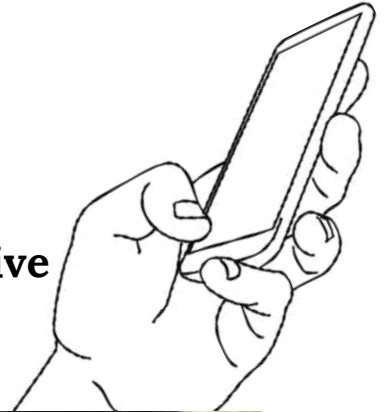
To learn more about how you can intervene as an active bystander, visit our social media.

¹“The 5Ds of Bystander Intervention.” Right To Be, <https://righttobe.org/guides/bystander-intervention-training/>



“WEH, BRO!”

- Active Bystander
Intervention Initiative



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Businesses can make a difference by providing funding, resources, or expertise to help WAO continue its life-saving programs.



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Your time and skills matter. Volunteers help WAO run services, campaigns, and community outreach, directly supporting women and children in need.



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You can help raise awareness and create change. Collaborate with us for trainings and engagements, participate in campaigns, or advocate for gender equality to strengthen WAO's impact.



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Every contribution counts. Your donation helps WAO provide critical support to women and children, including:

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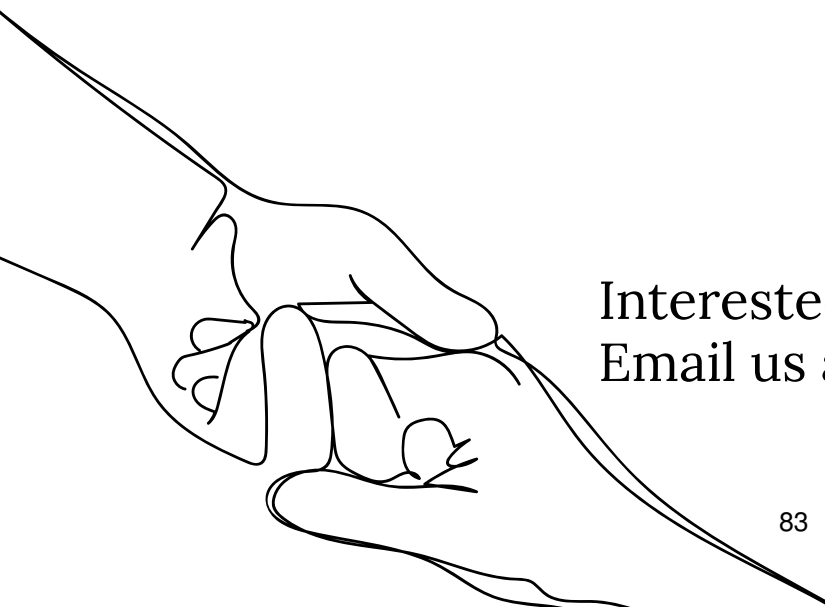


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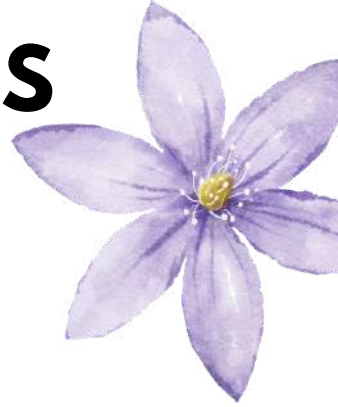
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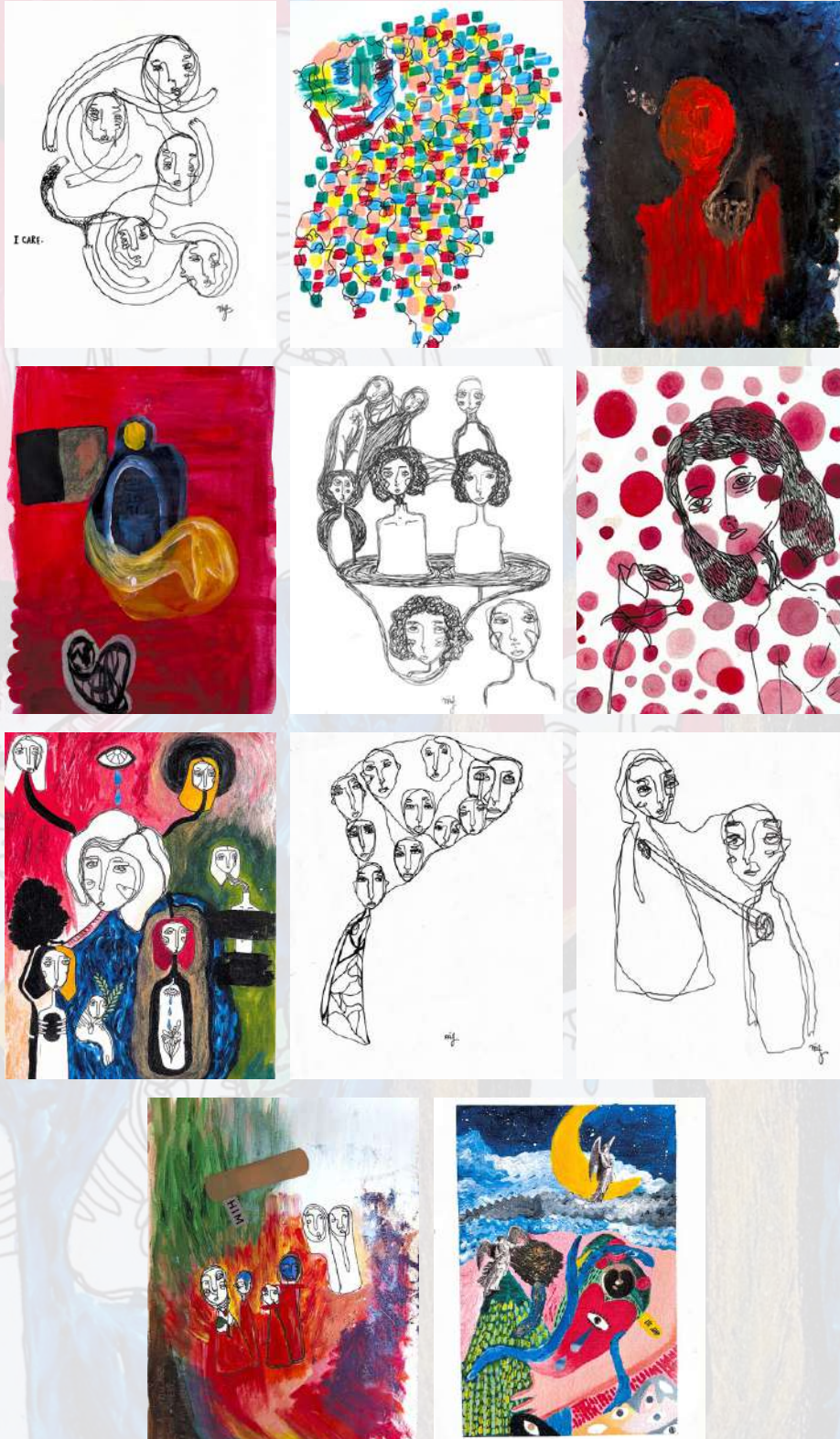
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**All survivors and clients
who have sought
support from WAO**



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WOMEN'S AID ORGANISATION
PERTUBUHAN PERTOLONGAN WANITA

ஒன்றாக இணைவோம்! பெண்களுக்கு
எதிரான வன்முறையைத் தடுப்போம்!

让我们一起制止针对女性的性别暴力

Together, We Can Stop Violence Against Women

Bersama, Kita Boleh Mengakhiri Keganasan
Terhadap Wanita

