



Violence against women and girls with disabilities
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This statement is delivered on behalf of Save the Children, Plan International and Defence for Children International, International Disability Alliance and Child Rights Connect

Girls with disabilities are subject to severe and unique intersectional discrimination due to the combined effects of age, gender, disability and other factors. As a result, they face a higher risk of neglect, gender-based violence and harmful practices, including not being registered at birth, infanticide, child, early and forced marriage, forced sterilisation, social exclusion, abandonment, institutionalisation, abuse, including sexual abuse, exploitation and trafficking.

Girls with disabilities also experience systematic exclusion from essential services such as health and education services because of harmful social gender norms and stigmatisation around disability and thus do not receive accessible information about sexual and reproductive rights and health, mental health and violence prevention and reporting measures.

The long-term impact of these violations on girls with disabilities are severe and accumulative and can lead to negative consequences on mental health, increased risks of harm and marginalisation that lasts into adulthood.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these inequalities and children's experience of violence in the home, with studies¹ showing that girls with disabilities were more likely to report violence in the home compared to other children.

To fully respect, protect and fulfil the rights of girls with disabilities from violence and allow them to fully and effectively participate in society on an equal basis with others, it is of utmost priority that we break the cycle of exclusion and impunity through adapting disability inclusive, intersectional gender-transformative measures across sectors and support them to become key stakeholders and decision-makers in their own lives.

We call on the UN, Member States and relevant actors to take the following actions:

- 1) Actively promote the birth registration of all girls with disabilities by sensitizing communities and strengthening health care systems and traditional birth attendants.
- 2) End all forms of violence against girls with disabilities and ensure health and child protection services are accessible and age-, gender- and disability-sensitive.
- 3) Actively prevent abandonment and institutionalisation of girls with disabilities by enhancing community-based support and rehabilitation mechanisms

¹ Save the Children's study [The Hidden Impact Series](#).



- 4) Close the data gap and detect inequalities of access and use of gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health services through the collection of disability data using the Washington Group and UNICEF Disability data sets.
- 5) Ensure ethical, safe and meaningful participation of girls with disabilities in decision making, by engaging, supporting and making available flexible multi-year funding to organisations of persons with disabilities, specifically those led by children and women and girls.