

# Free and safe without violence and oppression

Action programme to prevent and combat men's violence against women, domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression, and prostitution and human trafficking for the period 2024–2026

Short version



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## Short version of the action programme

This is a short compilation of the Government’s new action programme to prevent and combat men’s violence against women, domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression, and prostitution and human trafficking for the period 2024–2026.

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Photo: Emmy Jonsson/TT

# Foreword

## Free and safe without violence and oppression

Women's right to integrity and freedom is violated every day. Every year, approximately 14 women in Sweden are subjected to the ultimate violation by being killed by a current or former partner. Sexual offences also pose a serious violation of women's right to a safe and secure existence. Young women aged 20 to 24 years are the age group in which the highest proportion state that they have been the victims of sexual offences. Concurrently, many women and girls – and boys and men – have their lives, rights and freedoms restricted by honour-based norms in Sweden.

Men's violence against women, domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression, prostitution and human trafficking are serious societal issues that must be combated with the same force as organised crime. This is about combating serious crime, but also promoting security, freedom and gender equality.

These are top priority issues for the Swedish Government. Everyone should have the same right and opportunity to shape their own lives and decide over their own bodies. Everyone should have the same

right and opportunity to choose their own partner. Violence and oppression have no place in our society.

With the Government's 2024–2026 action programme, we are intensifying our efforts to combat men's violence against women, domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression, and prostitution and human trafficking. The action programme contains a total of 132 measures and six clear objectives to enable broad, effective and long-term efforts.

These are preventive measures that focus on children and young people, which help prevent recidivism in perpetrators, offer greater protection and support for victims of violence and combat crime more efficiently. We are enhancing research-based knowledge and evidence-based methods to increase the accuracy of these measures, and we are mobilising efforts against honour-based violence and oppression.

Together, we will work tirelessly to end men's violence against women, domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression, and prostitution and human trafficking.

Stockholm, 20 June 2024

Paulina Brandberg, Minister for Gender Equality and Working Life


Gunnar Strömmer, Minister for Justice

Jakob Forssmed, Minister for Social Affairs and Public Health

Camilla Waltersson Grönvall, Minister for Social Services

Acko Ankarberg Johansson, Minister for Health Care

Lotta Edholm, Minister for Schools



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The Government is working tirelessly to prevent and combat men's violence against women, domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression, prostitution and human trafficking. The action plan for the period 2024–2026 helps reinforce these efforts.

The direction and considerations for the action programme are based on the Government's priorities, the Istanbul Convention and the national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women.

To clarify the Government's increased focus on perpetrators of violence and preventive measures in order to place a central focus on the needs of crime victims, the objection for the preventive work of the national strategy has been further developed in the action programme for the period 2024–2026.

The action programme includes includes 132 measures to be undertaken on a broad front at national, regional and local levels. The Government has developed the objectives in collaboration with a large number of actors, including in roundtable discussions with researchers, public authorities and non-governmental organisations.

# Main objectives in the action programme for the period 2024–2026

## ■ Measures for a long-term and sustainable structure in relation to support, organisation and monitoring

The management and coordination has been reinforced at national, regional and local levels. A clear structure is crucial, for the work, to be carried out equally throughout the country.

## ■ Early and preventive measures with a focus on children and young people, honour-based violence and oppression

This objective relates to preventing violence from occurring in the first place. This applies to measures aimed at the entire population and at groups with a higher risk of being subjected to violence. The objective focuses on children and young people in particular, including in honour-based contexts.

## ■ Measures to prevent recidivism aimed at perpetrators of violence

Efforts to prevent recidivism are a key priority. These includes measures targeting perpetrators of violence to prevent violence from being repeated. They also include measures aimed at reducing the number of opportunities to perpetrate violence.

## ■ Improved detection of violence and stronger protection and support for victims

This objective relates to improving detection of violence and perpetrators as well as protection and support for victims of violence.

## ■ More effective law enforcement

This objective involves measures to make law enforcement more effective in relation to men's violence against women, domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression, prostitution and human trafficking. The objective mainly involves improvements in the judicial system's interventions against crime.

## ■ Improved knowledge and method and development

There is a need for improved research-based knowledge and method development, in addition to increasing the evidence in each intervention. This applies in relation to the general public as well as relevant professional groups and decision-makers.

Photo: Emmy Jonsson/TT

# Four areas for development

To ensure continuously strong efforts against men's violence against women, domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression, prostitution and human trafficking, these efforts are enforced within the following four areas for development that the Government considers to be lagging behind.

## ■ An exit programme with measures for leaving destructive relationships

Many factors can prevent a person who is being subjected to domestic violence or honour-based violence and oppression from speaking up about it and seeking help. The thresholds for seeking help must therefore be low, and coordinated. Easily accessible and motivational information that makes it as easy as possible to leave a violent or threatening living situation is needed.

The Government prioritises a coordinated chain of support, enhanced rights for children in sheltered accommodation, enhanced opportunities for permanent housing, measures against economic violence, increased possibilities to obtain non-contact orders and support for victims of violence to protect their personal data.

## ■ Intensified action against honour-based violence and oppression

Efforts to combat honour-based violence and oppression are a top priority and the Government implements measures on a broad front. It is self-evident that everyone must have the right to decide over their own life.

For this reason, the action programme includes a range of measures to prevent and combat honour-based violence and oppression throughout the country. The Government considers that the legislation on honour-based violence and oppression must be enhanced, the support for vulnerable people improved and the public authorities' work made more efficient. More victims of honour-based violence and oppression need to be reached through the right support operations, and the knowledge within the school system, social services, health and medical care and other relevant societal actors must increase their efforts to prevent violence and offer support to the victims.

## ■ Enhanced support to children and young people who experience violence, including children taken abroad in honour-related contexts

Preventing, detecting and combating violence against children and young people is an important starting point for the Government's national strategy. The action programme includes efforts to prevent violence in schools and to improve knowledge on children's and young people's vulnerability to violence within health and medical

care, social services, the school and the judicial systems. Measures to prevent and combat honour-based violence and oppression against children and young people are a particular priority.

Special emphasis is placed on preventing and averting harmful stays abroad, supporting parents in honour-related contexts, highlighting links between the conditions in which children grow up and involvement in criminal activities, enhanced health and social care measures for children and young people who are victims of violence, providing support to particularly vulnerable groups of children and young people, preventing and combating violence and oppression in young people's relationships, and stricter legislation to combat violence against children and young people.

## ■ Increased knowledge on digital dimensions of men's violence against women, domestic violence, and honour-based violence and oppression

Digital violence, or 'digital dimensions of violence', includes sexual harassment, stalking, psychological violence and attempts to contact children under the age of 18 for sexual purposes. Prostitution and human trafficking can also have digital dimensions. Measures against digital dimensions of violence aim at a comprehensive approach to better counteract and prevent the various aspects of this type of violence.

These measures are aimed at increasing professional knowledge in this area. The Government has commissioned that existing knowledge in this area be gathered from the public sector, non-governmental organisations and the business sector to strengthen and develop new actions against digital violence. Several government agencies are also tasked with developing and disseminating information about the internet as a crime scene, focusing on reducing the digital dimensions of violence in young people's relationships as well as sexual exploitation and sexual violence against children and young people. In addition, the action programme includes a government commission to follow up how digital devices are used in schools and to analyze students' exposure to digital dimensions of violence, including honor-based violence and oppression, and to propose measures to prevent and counteract this type of violence.

# National strategy

The national strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women encompasses domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression, sexual violence, prostitution and human trafficking.

The strategy also covers LGBTIQ people's, men's and boys' vulnerability to domestic violence, honour-based violence and oppression, and girls' and women's perpetration of that violence.

The objectives of the national strategy are the following:

- **expanded and effective preventive work to combat violence;**
- **improved detection of violence and stronger protection for victims of violence;**
- **more effective law enforcement;**
- **improved knowledge and method development.**

# Sweden's international commitments and priorities

The national strategy is based on the Istanbul Convention, the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Sweden operates within the framework of the EU and the Council of Europe in the application of the Convention.

Sweden is also a part of the European Commission's network for the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence.

Within EU cooperation, a new directive combating violence against women and domestic violence was adopted in May 2024. A revised directive on human trafficking is expected to enter into force in the mid-2024.

Within the framework of the Nordic cooperation, there are joint initiatives to prevent men's violence against women, honour-based violence and oppression, prostitution and human trafficking.

In addition, Sweden actively participates internationally through commitments under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), within the UN's annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS).

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