

## **Violence against Algerian Working Women during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Forms, Determinants, and Legal Protection**

*Violence à l'égard des femmes algériennes travailleuses durant la pandémie de COVID-19:  
formes, déterminants et protection juridique*

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### **Abstract:**

Since late 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about profound health, economic, social, and professional changes, with particularly significant consequences for working women. In Algeria, women continued to perform their professional duties, especially in essential sectors, under exceptional circumstances marked by increased occupational, social, and psychological pressures. This study examines the various forms of violence experienced by Algerian working women during the pandemic and analyzes the factors that may have contributed to their exacerbation, with particular attention to verbal, physical, and psychological violence.

Drawing on a descriptive-analytical approach, The analysis indicates that the health, economic, and occupational pressures associated with the pandemic may have increased the vulnerability of some working women to various forms of violence in the workplace, family, and social environments. The study therefore emphasizes the need to strengthen legal and institutional protection mechanisms, ensure safe working environments, and develop effective mechanisms for prevention, reporting, and support for women exposed to violence, thereby contributing to the protection of their rights, dignity, and professional security.

**Keywords:** Working Women; Algerian Women; Violence Against Women; COVID-19 Pandemic; Workplace Violence; Legal Protection.

### **Résumé:**

Depuis la fin de l'année 2019, la pandémie de COVID-19 a entraîné de profondes transformations sanitaires, économiques, sociales et professionnelles, avec des conséquences particulièrement importantes pour les femmes actives. En Algérie, les femmes ont continué à

exercer leurs activités professionnelles, notamment dans les secteurs essentiels, dans des circonstances exceptionnelles caractérisées par une intensification des pressions professionnelles, sociales et psychologiques. Cette étude examine les différentes formes de violence auxquelles les femmes algériennes actives ont été exposées durant la pandémie et analyse les facteurs susceptibles d'avoir contribué à leur aggravation, en accordant une attention particulière aux violences verbales, physiques et psychologiques.

S'appuyant sur une approche descriptive et analytique, l'analyse montre que les pressions sanitaires, économiques et professionnelles associées à la pandémie ont pu accroître la vulnérabilité de certaines femmes actives à diverses formes de violence dans les milieux professionnel, familial et social. L'étude souligne ainsi la nécessité de renforcer les mécanismes de protection juridique et institutionnelle, de garantir des environnements de travail sûrs et de développer des mécanismes efficaces de prévention, de signalement et d'accompagnement des femmes exposées à la violence, afin de contribuer à la protection de leurs droits, de leur dignité et de leur sécurité professionnelle.

**Mots-clés :** Femmes actives ; femmes algériennes ; violence à l'égard des femmes ; pandémie de COVID-19 ; violence au travail ; protection juridique.

### **1. Introduction**

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019 catalyzed profound global transformations across virtually all spheres of human life. Transcending the boundaries of a conventional public health crisis, the pandemic generated far-reaching socio-economic and institutional shocks, compelling governments to adopt extraordinary containment measures governing public interactions, mobility, and labor organization. Furthermore, preventive measures—such as mobility restrictions, public gathering bans, and alternative working modalities—introduced acute stressors across diverse demographic groups, particularly those already navigating precarious occupational environments.

Within this context, the status of working women emerged as a critical domain warranting rigorous inquiry, given their dual roles within domestic and professional spheres. Working women bear concurrent familial, domestic, and occupational responsibilities, an intersectionality that renders them uniquely vulnerable to cumulative stress during systemic crises. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, these pressures intensified substantially due to sudden structural shifts in working environments, heightened risks of viral transmission, occupational precarity, escalated domestic duties, and widespread psychosocial distress.

In Algeria, female professionals performed vital duties throughout the pandemic, particularly within frontline public sectors such as healthcare and essential administration. Female workers in these critical sectors bore extraordinary burdens amidst institutional strain. However, these occupational hazards were not limited to sanitary risks; they were accompanied by various forms of violence—verbal abuse, psychological hostility, and physical aggression. This reality raises fundamental questions regarding the systemic dynamics of this phenomenon and the structural factors exacerbating it during major crises.

Investigating violence against working women is imperative: violence is not merely an isolated behavioral act, but a systemic phenomenon with complex legal, social, and occupational ramifications. It compromises physical integrity, human dignity, and psycho-social well-being, while impairing professional performance and socio-economic participation. Consequently, systemic emergencies necessitate a thorough evaluation of the adequacy of statutory and institutional safeguards in mitigating gender-based vulnerabilities.

### **1.1. Research Problem**

Building upon these dynamics, the central problem of this study is framed around the following overarching research question:

*How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the forms and determinants of violence experienced by Algerian working women, and to what extent were existing legal and institutional frameworks responsive to these challenges?*

From this core problem, several sub-questions arise:

1. What were the primary manifestations of violence experienced by Algerian working women during the pandemic?
2. What socio-economic and structural factors aggravated this phenomenon across workplaces and domestic settings?
3. How did occupational risks vary across essential sectors (such as healthcare) versus administrative environments?
4. To what extent did Algerian legislative provisions and emergency executive measures provide adequate protection and mitigation?

### **1.2. Objectives of the Study**

This study aims to:

1. Analyze the socio-occupational realities of Algerian working women during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Identify the prominent forms of workplace and domestic violence to which female workers were exposed during the health crisis.
3. Determine the structural, institutional, and social determinants amplifying violence against women during systemic disruptions.
4. Critically examine the efficacy and responsiveness of Algerian statutory provisions and emergency administrative decrees enacted during the crisis.

### **1.3. Methodology**

To achieve these objectives, the study employs a descriptive-analytical approach. It examines the lived reality of Algerian working women during the pandemic and critically evaluates the legal and sociological dimensions of violence directed against them. The analysis is supported by relevant statutory and regulatory texts, emergency decrees, and scholarly literature addressing gender-based violence, labor regulations, and crisis mitigation mechanisms.

#### 1.4. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study stems from its interdisciplinary approach bridging labor studies, gender-based violence, statutory protection, and crisis governance. It highlights the necessity of mainstreaming gender-sensitive protection into emergency management frameworks, ensuring that public emergencies do not compromise the safety, fundamental rights, and dignity of working women.

### 2. *The Conceptual Framework of Women's Labor*

Addressing violence against Algerian working women during the COVID-19 pandemic necessitates establishing the conceptual framework governing women's labor. This requires examining the intellectual foundations that have addressed female employment, followed by reviewing the prominent theories explaining women's participation in professional and economic life. Such an inquiry enables a comprehensive understanding of the diverse perspectives surrounding women's work and the multifaceted roles they undertake within both the family and society.

#### 2.1. *Theoretical Introduction to Women's Labor*

Analyzing women's labor from a theoretical perspective requires examining the intellectual paradigms defining its nature, rationales, and societal functions, illuminating the underlying theories governing female participation in professional life.

##### 2.1.1. *Islamic and Western Philosophies Regarding Women's Labor*

Approaches to women's labor diverge according to foundational normative paradigms:

- a. Islamic Jurisprudential Perspectives:** The Islamic perspective is rooted in a balanced normative framework of reciprocal rights and obligations within the family. As noted by Moustafa El-Siba'i, a woman is not primarily obligated to provide for her own maintenance as long as the legal guardian (husband, father, or relative) fulfills this obligation, allowing her the option to prioritize familial commitments<sup>1</sup>. However, this does not imply a prohibition against employment; women are fully entitled to engage in lawful economic and professional pursuits, particularly when necessity arises, in the absence of a financial provider, or when personal and societal interests are served<sup>2</sup>.
- b. Western Perspectives:** Conversely, Western frameworks closely associate female employment with modernization, industrial development, and economic independence. Work is conceptualized as an essential instrument for achieving financial autonomy, dismantling patriarchal dependency, and realizing gender equality across all socio-economic domains.

Despite their differing philosophical and normative foundations, both Islamic and Western perspectives recognize women's participation in economic life, albeit from fundamentally different conceptual premises. While the Islamic perspective frames women's employment within a broader balance between individual rights, family responsibilities, and social considerations, Western

<sup>1</sup> - Moustafa El-Siba'i, *Al-Mar'ah bayna al-fiqh wa-al-qanun* [Women Between Jurisprudence and Law], 7th ed. (Beirut: Dar Al-Warraq, 1999), p.137.

<sup>2</sup> - Moustafa El-Siba'i, *Idid.*, p.138.

thought generally emphasizes employment as a means of individual autonomy and economic independence. Consequently, the divergence lies not in the recognition of women's right to work itself, but rather in the underlying values, objectives, and social frameworks through which women's labor is conceptualized and regulated. Understanding these differences is essential for analyzing contemporary debates surrounding women's employment and the challenges arising from the interaction between professional participation, family responsibilities, and prevailing socio-cultural norms.

### 2.1.2. *Theoretical Perspectives Explaining Women's Labor*

Several theoretical frameworks explain female labor force participation:

- a. **Biological Theory:** Posits that physical and physiological characteristics have historically dictated the social division of labor, associating women with reproduction and domestic care while assigning men external economic production.
- b. **Equality Theory:** Emerged as a critique of biological determinism, asserting that disparities in female labor participation are not rooted in innate traits, but in discriminatory legal, social, and economic structures that restrict equitable access to opportunities<sup>3</sup>. At the international level, this theory is institutionalized through conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979<sup>4</sup>.
- c. **Economic Theory:** Conceptualizes women as essential human capital whose full integration is indispensable for macroeconomic growth and sustainable development.

Viewed collectively, these theories provide complementary perspectives for understanding women's participation in the labor force and the challenges surrounding their professional integration. While Biological Theory helps explain the historical persistence of traditional gender roles and the social division of labor, Equality Theory challenges the assumption that such roles are naturally determined by exposing the legal, social, and institutional barriers that restrict women's access to employment and professional advancement. Economic Theory, meanwhile, emphasizes that women's full participation in the labor market represents not only an issue of individual rights and social justice but also a fundamental requirement for economic growth, productivity, and sustainable development.

Taken together, these perspectives demonstrate that women's labor cannot be understood solely through biological or economic considerations, but must be examined within a broader framework encompassing social structures, gender relations, institutional arrangements, and prevailing cultural norms. Such an integrated approach is particularly important when examining women's vulnerability to discrimination and workplace violence, as unequal power relations, occupational segregation, and persistent gender stereotypes may expose women to multiple forms

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<sup>3</sup> - Sayed Abdel Fattah Afifi, *Buhuth fi 'ilm al-ijtima' al-mu'asir* [Studies in Contemporary Sociology] (Cairo: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1996), p.29–30.

<sup>4</sup> - United Nations, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*, adopted Dec. 18, 1979; ratified by Algeria pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 96-51 of January 22, 1996.

of marginalization and abuse. Consequently, protecting women's right to work requires more than ensuring formal access to employment; it also necessitates addressing the structural conditions that shape their experiences within the workplace and guaranteeing a professional environment founded on equality, dignity, safety, and institutional accountability.

## **2.2. Women's Labor Between Entitlement and Oppression**

Violence against women represents a profound infringement on human rights, spanning physical injury, psychological harm, economic abuse, and administrative harassment<sup>5</sup>.

### **2.2.1. The Right of Women to Work**

The right to work is a fundamental human entitlement. Article 1 of the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111) affirms equal access to vocational training and employment opportunities<sup>6</sup>. Paragraph 26 of the Beijing Declaration emphasized that women's economic independence is fundamentally realized through the right to work<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, International Labour Organization research establishes that female employment is a critical driver of household poverty reduction and macroeconomic stability<sup>8</sup>.

In Algeria, the legislature has consistently enshrined the principle of non-discrimination and equality in employment across constitutional texts and labor statutes (notably Law No. 90-11 on Labor Relations). This statutory foundation reflects Algerian historical realities, where women participated actively alongside men throughout the National Liberation War and post-independence state-building<sup>9</sup>.

However, the formal recognition of women's right to work and equality of opportunity does not, in itself, guarantee the effective enjoyment of these rights. Their practical realization depends on the existence of a safe and equitable working environment that protects women from discrimination, harassment, and all forms of workplace violence. Thus, ensuring women's access to employment must be accompanied by institutional and legal mechanisms capable of safeguarding their dignity, professional integrity, and equal opportunities for career advancement. The protection of working women should therefore be regarded as an essential complement to the right to work, transforming formal legal equality into substantive and effective equality within the workplace.

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<sup>5</sup> - Zineb Bougaa, *Violence against Women in Algeria*, Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), 2017, p.2-4.

<sup>6</sup> - International Labour Organization, *Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (No. 111)*, adopted June 25, 1958; ratified by Algeria on May 22, 1969, pursuant to Ordinance No. 69-31, Article 1.

<sup>7</sup> - United Nations, *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women: Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, Beijing, September 4-15, 1995, Paragraph. 26.

<sup>8</sup> - International Labour Organization, *ABC of Women Workers' Rights and Gender Equality*, 2nd ed. (Geneva: International Labour Office, 2007), p.165.

<sup>9</sup> - Sorour Talebi, *Himayat huquq al-mar'ah fi al-tashri'at al-jaza'iriyyah muqaranatan ma'a ittifaqiyyat huquq al-insan* (Master's thesis, University of Algiers, 2000), p42.

### 2.2.2. *Workplace Violence Directed Against Working Women*

Workplace violence encompasses actions that undermine an individual's autonomy, dignity, and professional integrity<sup>10</sup>. It manifests through subtle psychological harassment, verbal hostility, and overt sexual harassment. Research published by the International Labour Organization demonstrates that workers in precarious positions, young employees, and those in frontline public-facing roles face a heightened risk of harassment and abuse compared to tenured administrative personnel<sup>11</sup>.

The consequences of workplace violence extend beyond immediate psychological and emotional harm, affecting victims' professional performance, sense of security, and ability to participate effectively in the workplace. Persistent exposure to hostile behaviors may create an intimidating work environment, undermine self-confidence, and limit opportunities for career advancement. Moreover, when such practices are tolerated or insufficiently addressed by institutions, they may contribute to a culture of silence and normalize discriminatory power relations. Workplace violence should therefore be understood not merely as individual misconduct, but as a structural and organizational issue requiring effective preventive mechanisms, institutional accountability, and adequate protection for vulnerable workers.

In the Algerian context, the statutory protection of working women against workplace violence and abuse remains bifurcated between general labor legislation—principally Law No. 90-11—and penal sanctions. While labor regulations establish disciplinary avenues, the practical realization of legal safeguards continues to be constrained by stringent evidentiary requirements and institutional reluctance to formalize grievances against occupational harassment.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. *The Scope and Dynamics of Violence During the COVID-19 Era*

International and national legal frameworks have established a range of mechanisms aimed at combating workplace violence and gender-based violence. However, the efficacy of this legal protection remains contingent upon the implementation of preventive measures capable of ensuring a safe work environment—one that guarantees working women the same physical and psychological protection enjoyed by their male counterparts.

Gender-based violence, particularly violence directed against working women, is inherently complex. It is deeply intertwined with gendered power dynamics within the economy and the labor market, the nature of the employment relationship, and institutional culture, alongside prevailing socio-cultural determinants. While this issue poses significant challenges under normal operating conditions, it becomes even more critical when examined under the extraordinary circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and its accompanying public health, economic, and social fallout.

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<sup>10</sup> - Chemissa Kheloui, "Mushkilat al-'unf al-mumaras 'ala al-mar'ah al-jaza'iriyyah" (Paper presented at the University of Chlef, November 26–27, 2013), p.2.

<sup>11</sup> - International Labour Organization, *ABC of Women Workers' Rights and Gender Equality*, op. cit., p.166.

<sup>12</sup> - Nadjia Arab Tani, "Al-Himayah al-qanuniyyah lil-mar'ah al-'amilah min al-'unf wa-al-i'tida" [Legal Protection of Working Women from Violence and Assault], *El-Bahith Review for Academic Studies* 10, no. 1 (2023), p.462.

### 3.1. *Theoretical Explanations of Violence Against Working Women*

The analysis of violence relies on several established behavioral paradigms:

- a. Instinct Theory:** Posits that aggressive behavior stems from innate drives that accumulate and require discharge through constructive or destructive actions.
- b. Frustration-Aggression Theory:** Suggests that aggressive behavior arises when external barriers prevent individuals from achieving desired goals or fulfilling basic needs<sup>13</sup>.
- c. Threat-Event Theory (Buss):** Asserts that when an individual perceives an incoming event as an imminent threat or hostile attack, the behavioral reaction is mediated by the relative power balance between the parties and their social status<sup>14</sup>.
- d. Social Learning Theory:** Explains aggression as a modeled behavior acquired through observation, imitation, and social reinforcement.
- e. Socio-Ecological Perspective:** Conceptualizes violence as the outcome of interacting variables operating simultaneously across individual, familial, organizational, and societal tiers.

Collectively, these theoretical perspectives demonstrate that violence against working women cannot be attributed to a single cause, but rather results from the interaction of psychological, social, and structural factors. While behavioral theories explain the individual motivations underlying aggressive conduct, Social Learning Theory highlights the role of acquired patterns and social normalization of violence. The socio-ecological perspective further broadens the analysis by linking workplace violence to institutional power relations, gender inequalities, and prevailing cultural norms. Accordingly, understanding violence against working women requires a multidimensional approach that considers both individual behavior and the broader organizational and societal contexts in which such violence occurs.

### **Discussion: The Algerian Context Under Pandemic Pressures**

The COVID-19 crisis introduced severe strains across Algerian occupational sectors. While academic institutions and specific public administrations implemented alternate schedules, critical public sectors—most notably public healthcare facilities—operated continuously under immense pressure. Healthcare professionals (doctors, nurses, and administrative personnel, a large proportion of whom are women) confronted compounding burdens. They were routinely subjected to verbal hostility, psychological distress, and physical altercations initiated by distressed patients and relatives facing medical shortages and strict quarantine protocols.

Furthermore, compliance with occupational safety standards was uneven across public establishments during the initial waves of the pandemic. Deficits in the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitizers, and adequate physical distancing exacerbated occupational stress among female public servants charged with direct public intake. Combined with domestic confinement measures, the crisis deepened the "double burden" of professional duties and

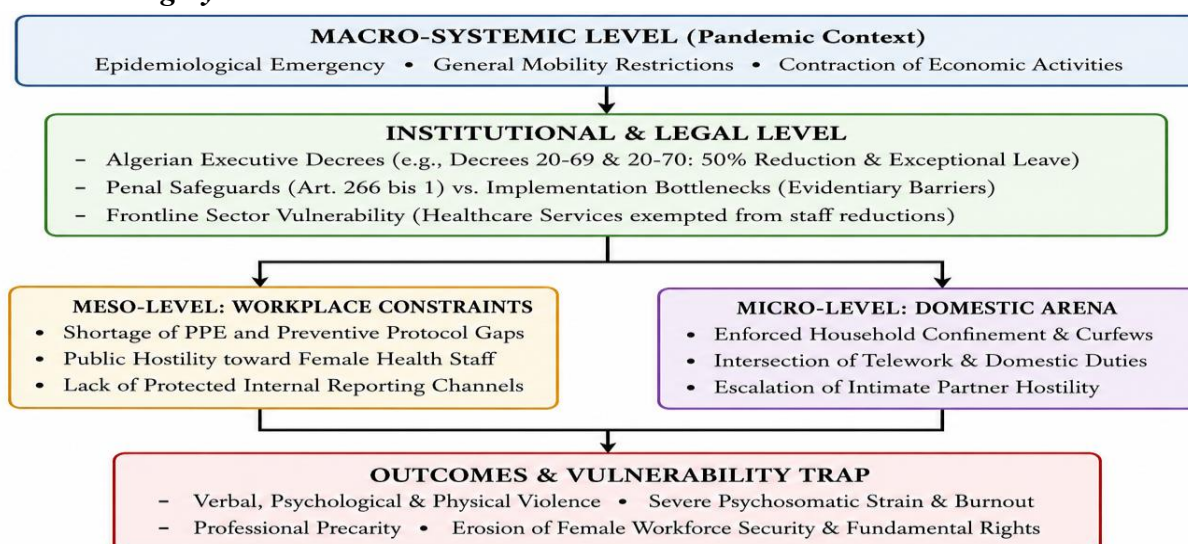
<sup>13</sup> - Ibtisam Shariji and Sanaa Al-Kawaz, "Dirasah muqaranah fi al-'unf al-zawji al-muwajjah nahwa al-zawjah al-'amilah wa-ghayr al-'amilah" (Research paper, Mustansiriyah University), p.6.

<sup>14</sup> - Ibtisam Shariji and Sanaa Al-Kawaz, Idid., p.10.

expanded domestic caretaking, heightening vulnerability to domestic tensions and workplace fatigue.

In this regard, empirical inquiries into the Algerian public healthcare infrastructure during the pandemic demonstrate that female healthcare practitioners—notably physicians, registered nurses, and administrative staff—bore compounded occupational strain. Operating under acute equipment deficits and strict quarantine protocols, these workers were frequently subjected to aggressive encounters, verbal hostility, and intense psychological exhaustion generated by overwhelmed patients and their relatives<sup>15</sup>.

**Figure 1: The Socio-Ecological Transmission Channels of Violence Against Algerian Working Women during Systemic Crises**



**Source:** Designed by the author based on the socio-ecological model of violence, Algerian regulatory frameworks (Executive Decrees No. 20-69 and 20-70), and relevant empirical literature (Arab Tani, 2023; Boukhanouche, 2023; Djouza, 2022; Kalache & Benchouri, 2020).

As illustrated in Figure 1, the intersection between epidemiological shocks and institutional realities reveals how systemic stressors cascaded down from macro-level governance to organizational and domestic arenas, reinforcing a multi-tiered vulnerability trap for female workers.

### 3.2. *Legal Protection and Mitigation Mechanisms Under Algerian Legislation*

Beyond workplace environments, the socio-occupational repercussions of the pandemic severely destabilized domestic spaces. Empirical assessments in Algeria confirm that lockdown measures, curfew restrictions, and economic insecurity precipitated an unprecedented escalation in domestic and interpersonal abuse against women. This domestic volatility intersected directly

<sup>15</sup> - Siham Boukhanouche, "Halat al-mar'ah al-'amilah fi qita' al-sihha khilal ja'ihat COVID-19 fi al-Jaza'ir" [The Situation of Working Women in the Health Sector during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Algeria], *Hikma Journal of Philosophical Studies* 11, no. 2 (2023), p.1065.

with professional distress, generating severe psychosomatic disorders and impairing women's overall well-being and job retention<sup>16</sup>.

Addressing violence and structural vulnerabilities during emergencies requires robust legal and institutional mechanisms:

**a. Criminal Law Safeguards:** The Algerian Penal Code provides criminal sanctions against domestic and interpersonal violence. Specifically, Article 266 bis 1 criminalizes forms of verbal, psychological, and physical abuse, prescribing imprisonment of one to three years for specified acts of ill-treatment against women.

**b. Exceptional COVID-19 Executive Measures:** To mitigate pandemic risks for vulnerable workers, the Algerian executive enacted targeted regulations, notably **Executive Decree No. 20-69 of March 21, 2020** (and Executive Decree No. 20-70). These measures mandated placing at least 50% of personnel on paid exceptional leave, explicitly prioritizing pregnant women, mothers caring for young children, and individuals suffering from chronic medical conditions (Article 8).

Although the Algerian executive sought to mitigate occupational vulnerabilities by enacting emergency containment measures—foremost among them Executive Decree No. 20-69 of March 21, 2020, which placed pregnant female workers and mothers of young children on exceptional paid leave—the practical enforcement of this measure encountered substantial administrative dilemmas, particularly regarding sector exemptions and service continuity in vital public facilities.<sup>17</sup>

**c. Institutional Limitations:** While exceptional decrees provided temporary occupational relief, significant gaps remained:

- Essential sectors—specifically public healthcare and emergency response—were largely exempted from general workforce reductions, keeping female healthcare workers exposed to high infection risks and aggressive public encounters.
- The lack of confidential, specialized workplace reporting channels and psychological support units hindered female workers from reporting administrative abuse or harassment during the emergency.

**d. Preventive and Occupational Measures:** Effective protection necessitates strengthening internal workplace regulations, occupational health inspections, binding collective agreements, and transparent grievance channels that shield victims from professional retaliation.

Overall, the effectiveness of legal protection depends not only on the existence of criminal sanctions and exceptional regulatory measures, but also on their practical implementation and accessibility to victims. The experience of emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the limitations of traditional protection mechanisms when workplaces face

<sup>16</sup> - Abdellah Djouza, "Al-'Unf al-usari didda al-mar'ah fi zaman ja'ihat Corona (COVID-19 al-mustajadd) wa-ijra'at al-hajar al-manzili wa-hazr al-tajwal: Tajribat al-mar'ah al-jaza'iriyah unmu'dhajan," Review of the Researcher in Sports and Social Sciences 4, no. 2 (2022), p.208.

<sup>17</sup> - Kholoud Kalache and Salah Benchouri, "Tadbīr al-'utlah al-istithna'iyyah madfu'at al-ajr fi zill ja'ihat firūs Korona wa-al-ishkalat al-mutarattibah 'alayh," Review of Comparative Legal Studies 6, no. 2 (2020), pp.15–16.

exceptional pressures and vulnerable groups remain exposed to heightened risks. Therefore, a comprehensive protection strategy should combine criminal accountability, preventive workplace policies, accessible reporting mechanisms, psychological support, and effective institutional oversight. Such an integrated approach is essential to ensure that legal guarantees translate into meaningful protection of working women's dignity, safety, and professional rights.

To systematically assess the structural and operational dimensions of these safeguards across various sectors, Table 1 outlines the legal instruments deployed, their protective scope, and the corresponding operational barriers encountered during the crisis.

**Table 1: Analytical Mapping of Violence Dynamics, Statutory Safeguards, and Implementation Bottlenecks during COVID-19 in Algeria**

| <b>Institutional &amp; Environmental Domain</b>             | <b>Manifestations of Abuse &amp; Vulnerability</b>                                                     | <b>Applicable Algerian Legal &amp; Regulatory Instrument</b>                                                  | <b>Operational Scope &amp; Crisis Responsiveness</b>                                                        | <b>Implementation Deficits &amp; Systemic Gaps</b>                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Frontline Health &amp; Essential Facilities</b>          | Verbal aggression, physical intimidation, severe psychological harassment from distressed users.       | Law No. 90-11 (Labor Relations); Penal Code (Art. 266 bis 1; amended provisions protecting health personnel). | Criminal deterrence against assault; occupational dispute mediation.                                        | Essential personnel excluded from general deconfinement; lack of round-the-clock physical security escorts and on-site psychological triage units. |
| <b>Public Administration &amp; Non-Essential Workplaces</b> | Heightened occupational anxiety, forced exposure due to lack of PPE/sanitizers, precarious scheduling. | Executive Decree No. 20-69 (March 21, 2020), Art. 8; Executive Decree No. 20-70.                              | Mandatory 50% physical workforce reduction; priority exceptional paid leave for pregnant women and mothers. | Administrative ambiguities regarding essential service continuity; absence of anonymous, digital grievance mechanisms for safety violations.       |
| <b>Domestic &amp; Remote Working Spheres</b>                | Compounded domestic violence, psychological                                                            | Penal Code (Arts. 266 bis, 266 bis 1); Law No. 15-                                                            | Penal sanctions ranging from 1 to 3 years imprisonment                                                      | Curfews and mobility restrictions impeded physical                                                                                                 |

|  |                                                                  |                                   |                                                 |                                                                                                        |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | coercive control, acute caregiving and domestic "double burden". | 19; National legal aid framework. | for spousal abuse and psychological harassment. | access to judicial police, shelters, and medico-legal certification centres; reporting under-utilized. |
|--|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

*Source: Synthesized by the author based on Algerian statutory frameworks and empirical literature (Arab Tani, 2023; Kalache & Benchouri, 2020; Djouza, 2022).*

#### 4. Conclusion

The investigation of violence against Algerian working women during the COVID-19 crisis illustrates that the pandemic was not exclusively an epidemiological emergency; it acted as an amplifier of pre-existing socio-economic and structural vulnerabilities. Algerian working women, particularly in frontline public sectors, bore extraordinary occupational, domestic, and psychosocial burdens.

Drawing upon the theoretical, legal, and socio-occupational analysis undertaken in this study, a number of analytical conclusions can be drawn regarding violence against Algerian working women during the COVID-19 pandemic. These conclusions are summarized as follows:

1. The pandemic intensified occupational strain, multiplying verbal and psychological abuse in frontline sectors such as public healthcare.
2. Exceptional executive regulations (such as Executive Decree No. 20-69) acknowledged gendered domestic realities by granting priority paid leave to pregnant women and mothers, though essential frontline personnel were largely excluded due to operational necessity.
3. The effectiveness of legal guarantees (e.g., Article 266 bis 1 of the Penal Code) remained contingent upon institutional reporting mechanisms, which were constrained during lockdown conditions.

Based on these analytical conclusions, the study proposes a set of recommendations aimed at strengthening the legal and institutional protection of working women during health crises and other emergency situations, namely:

1. Formulate clear crisis protocols within public and private institutions guaranteeing safe working conditions, PPE provision, and security escorts for frontline female staff during health emergencies.
2. Establish secure, confidential digital reporting lines and institutional ombudsperson offices to handle workplace harassment without fear of professional reprisal.
3. Integrate comprehensive psychological counseling and occupational health units within public hospitals and administrative directorates.
4. Encourage targeted empirical and field studies to measure the long-term career and psychological impacts of pandemic-induced stress on Algerian female workers.

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