



WRITTEN EXERCISE:

## *Violence in Couples*<sup>45</sup>

FORMAT:

INDIVIDUAL  
AND GROUP  
EXERCISE

TIME: 60 MIN

REQUIRED MATERIALS: VIOLENCE IN COUPLES: WRITTEN EXERCISE IN APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

SUMMARY:

*This exercise explores violence against human rights defenders who are in intimate relationships. This relates primarily, although not exclusively, to partnerships, but it can be applied as well to intimate relationships with a parent, in-law or close friends.*

KEY EXPLANATION POINTS:

- Ask participants to work individually on the written exercise for 20 minutes.
- After the individual work, facilitators ask participants to work in pairs, and simply listen to each other as they reflect on whatever aspect of the exercise they wish. When someone is listening to their partner, they should not offer advice or opinions – the listener’s role is to listen, and as required, gently reflect and offer support. This process allows participants some time to assess the exercise safely and also to practise deep listening.
- A follow-on plenary should simply ask participants to reflect on the experience of having the undivided attention and support of another participant, and remind us that this is a protection strategy.

FACILITATION NOTES:

- This exercise is primarily, although not exclusively, of value to those participants in relationship(s). Think carefully before doing this exercise, because at times activists’ relationships and partnerships are fluid, so some participants may be able to speak about a current relationship whereas others may not, and because this exercise could unveil some hard realities.
- Note that, in some cases, even if you are not in a relationship(s), there may be someone (such as an in-law, child or parent) who relates to you in a similar way as a partner.
- Facilitators should recognise that many of the questions in this exercise are tough ones, and that they may make some participants feel sad, angry or anxious. Tell participants to take their time, and only answer the questions they feel that they can. Also encourage them to take time to speak to someone they trust afterwards, if they would like to talk.