

# Facts about sex work & violence in Mozambique.



SEX WORKERS IN MOZAMBIQUE FACE UNACCEPTABLE LEVELS OF VIOLENCE, STIGMA, DISCRIMINATION AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. IT PUTS THEM IN SITUATIONS THAT MAKE THEM CONSIDERABLY MORE VULNERABLE TO HIV AND AIDS. SUPPORTIVE LAWS AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES ARE NEEDED TO SECURE THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF SEX WORKERS.

## What the law says:

Sex work is not criminalized by Mozambican law. However, the law penalizes assaults on public decency, like having sex in a public space or dressing 'indecently'.



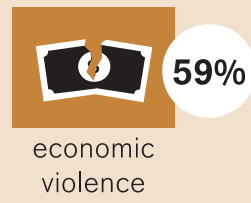
## Criminalization:

Sex workers who operate in settings where prostitution is criminalized face increased risk of violence, experience police abuse and lack of access to health care and the justice system.



# 70% of the sex workers in Mozambique experienced violence in the past year

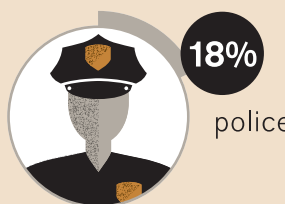
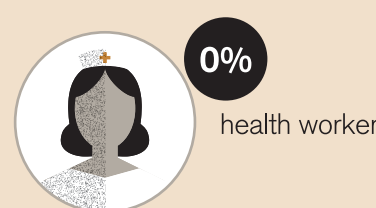
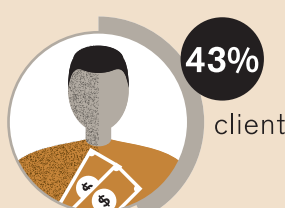
### Sorts of violence



### Risk factors



### Who are the perpetrators?



“ After we had sex he started to accuse me that I robbed his money. He hit me hard, strangled me, ripped of my clothes shouting 'give my money back, give my money back!' I hadn't robbed anything; the only thing he could take from me was the money he had paid me before. ”

# 18% of the sex workers experienced violence by the police in the past year upon arrest

### What type of violence are we talking about?



### Hard facts

To prevent getting arrested, 16% of the sex workers had **sex with a police officer** and 25% **paid bribes** to the police.



### Arrest

13% of the sex workers were **arrested** last year. On average they were arrested 1 time and most of them were detained for 24 hours per arrest.

### Filing a case

23% of the sex workers filed a case with the police. 48% of the cases were investigated by the police.

### Reasons for arrest



“ The officers threw us in the swimming pool. They said: 'So you say you need money? Go and look for fish and sell it on the market!' It was ice cold and they threw us in with all our clothes and bags and everything. ”

# 13% of HIV-positive sex workers do not have regular access to treatment

### HIV prevalence

66% is HIV negative



28% is HIV positive

4% does not want to disclose status

2% has never been tested

### At the clinic



32%

of the sex workers has been yelled at and/or stigmatised by a health worker in the past twelve months.

### Access to regular HIV medication

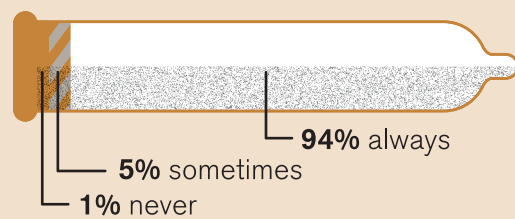
Of those who indicated to be HIV positive:

87% receives regular treatment



13% gets no regular treatment

### Condom use while selling sex:



“ I am ashamed. The gynaecologist sometimes asks me if I am doing this and this, but I say no, I'm not. She gives me medicines with which I am not supposed to have sex, but if I don't have sex, what will I eat? So I just continue doing it and I don't tell her. ”

# Recommendations:

- 1 **Clearly articulated support** by government and NGOs
- 2 **Training and sensitization** of law enforcement officials
- 3 Develop a **well-functioning rapid response system** to assist in cases of violence

## Hands Off! Reduction of violence against sex workers

The Hands Off! programme, coordinated by Aids Fonds, works on the reduction of violence against sex workers in Southern Africa through prevention, care and support. The programme works with sex worker-led groups, law enforcement, health and support services, legal centres and NGOs working on human rights.

### Tiyane Vavasate and Pathfinder

Tiyane Vavasate is a sex worker-led organisation that advocates for the rights of sex workers in Mozambique. Pathfinder is a global NGO focusing on sexual and reproductive health and rights worldwide, mobilizing communities most in need.

Read the full report or more about Hands Off! at [www.aidsfonds.nl/handsoff](http://www.aidsfonds.nl/handsoff)

