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# NCW records spike in domestic violence amid lockdown

Minister had dismissed concerns about rise in numbers

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The National Commission for Women (NCW) registered an increase of at least 2.5 times in domestic violence complaints since the nationwide lockdown, according to official data. The sharp spike belies Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani's remarks that there was no increase in such incidents and that NGOs were "scaremongering".

Between March 25 and May 31, the NCW received 1,477 complaints of domestic violence. Nearly 727 of these complaints were received on its WhatsApp helpline (+917217735372) set up in April to ensure women, who couldn't access emails or send complaints by post, could receive help.



Smriti Irani

The total complaints during the 68-day period were 1.5 times the 607 of complaints received between March and May last year.

### 'Scaremongering'

Despite the numbers, Ms. Irani dismissed concerns over the rise in incidents of domestic violence. News reports last week said that during a webinar, the Minister

had denied there was an increase in incidents. Ms Irani said there was some "scaremongering done especially with some development partners who are in the NGO sector that 80% of women who are now at homes in India or across the world will be getting beaten up."

Anuradha Kapoor, Director of Swayam, an NGO in Kolkata, said, "The kind of violence that is now being meted out to them is much more severe. We had a woman locking herself up in a room and asking us to call the police to rescue her because she feared for her life. Another woman, who was pregnant, was beaten up so badly that she fled the house with her 5-year-old daughter and walked to her parents home in the middle of the night."