260 Women in Bahrain Admit Abuse in Key Study

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By Shahlaa Ahmed

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More than 260 women in Bahrain have come forward in just three weeks to say they have experienced some form of domestic violence.

They responded to a survey by the Bahrain Youth Forum Society's Naseem Initiative, which is conducting nationwide research into violence against women in partnership with Tafawuq Centre for Women and Gender.

It aims to shine a light on domestic violence in its physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and economic forms.

Enas Fardan, who is heading the initiative, said she was shocked that nearly half of victims who came forward so far were financially independent Bahrainis with a university degree and a job.

"I was shocked to find out that almost 50 per cent of the respondents are employed and educated, as I thought that the majority experiencing violence were housewives," she told the GDN.

"This should alert everyone that education and a degree do not define a person's attitudes.

"It seems that even employed women get abused financially and also physically and emotionally."

Women have until the end of next month to take part in the anonymous survey.

The results are due to be released by the end of February and will be combined with at least 60 case studies from six centres in Bahrain, which work to combat domestic abuse.

It will also be complemented by interviews with eight women who have been victims of domestic violence, which are designed to provide an insight into their plight and the reasons behind it.

The completed research will be submitted, along with recommendations, to both the Social Development Ministry and parliament to inform national strategies on combating domestic abuse.

A 2013 global review of available data by UN Women found that 35 per cent of women worldwide had experienced physical or sexual abuse.