



Erni is a survivor of gender-based violence. Photo: M. Nugie and Andito Wasi/Oxfam

# THE ASSAULT OF AUSTERITY

How prevailing economic policy choices are a form of gender-based violence

This briefing paper argues that austerity measures are a form of gender-based violence against women, girls and non-binary people, and lays out clear examples of how fiscal consolidation affects them. Its core argument is that ending austerity must be a priority. The paper goes on to share feminist economic alternatives offer pathways that can protect the Majority World from completely avoidable suffering.

# STAT 1: MORE THAN 54% OF THE COUNTRIES PLANNING TO CUT THEIR SOCIAL PROTECTION BUDGET IN 2023, ALREADY OFFER MINIMAL TO NO MATERNITY AND CHILD SUPPORT

## METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

The list of 120 countries planning to or already cutting their social protection budget is taken from the EURODAD report '[End Austerity: A Global Report on Budget Cuts and Harmful Social Reforms in 2022-25](#)',<sup>1</sup> Annex 2. It can be found in the table below (as the total number of highlighted and unhighlighted countries).

Albania	Bolivia	Costa Rica	Grenada	Iraq	Kyrgyz Republic	Mozambique	Rwanda	Solomon Islands	Trinidad and Tobago
Algeria	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Cote d'Ivoire	Gambia, The	Ireland	Latvia	Nepal	San Marino	South Africa	Tunisia
Angola	Botswana	Czechia	Georgia	Israel	Liberia	Niger	Saudi Arabia	Spain	Turkiye
Argentina	Brazil	Denmark	Germany	Italy	Malaysia	Nigeria	Samoa	Sri Lanka	Uganda
Armenia	Bulgaria	Djibouti	Ghana	Jamaica	Maldives	North Macedonia	Sao Tome and Principe	St. Lucia	Ukraine
Australia	Burkina Faso	Dominican Republic	Greece	Japan	Mali	Norway	Senegal	Suriname	United Kingdom
Austria	Cabo Verde	Ecuador	Guatemala	Jordan	Mauritania	Oman	Serbia	Sweden	United Arab Emirates
Azerbaijan	Cambodia	Egypt, Arab Rep.	Guinea	Kazakhstan	Mexico	Pakistan	Seychelles	Switzerland	United States
Bahamas, The	Cameroon	Estonia	Haiti	Kenya	Moldova	Peru	Sierra Leone	Tajikistan	Uruguay
Bangladesh	Central African Republic	Eswatini	Honduras	Korea, Rep.	Montenegro	Poland	Singapore	Thailand	Uzbekistan
Belgium	Chile	Fiji	Hungary	Kuwait	Mongolia	Romania	Slovakia	Timor-Leste	Vanuatu

Benin	Colombia	Gabon	Indonesia	Kosovo	Morocco	Russian Federation	Somalia	Togo	Vietnam
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**Table 1: This table shows the 120 countries planning to cut social protection in 2023. The countries in green have an average below 50% of coverage for support of new mothers and child support. Countries in yellow have an average above 50%. The countries in white are countries that appear on the EURODAD list (will cut their social protection budget) but as they do not have data on the ILO World Social Protection Data Dashboards they have been excluded.**

This data has been cross referenced with the social protection coverage data from the [ILO social protection dashboard](#).<sup>2</sup> Two social protection metrics were used: support of new mothers and child support.<sup>3</sup> We opted to focus on these two given that they are the only two that are gendered in nature, and because of the lack of gender segregated data in distribution for other metrics. Only countries that have an average below 50% of coverage of the two metrics were counted. They are a total of 65. Those countries are highlighted in green in the below table. The countries (total = 42) in yellow have an average above 50% for support of new mothers and child support and were excluded. The countries in white are countries that appear on the EURODAD list (will cut their social protection budget) but as they do not have data on the ILO World Social Protection Data Dashboards they have been excluded.

The total number of countries with an average coverage of maternity and child support below 50% (65) was divided by the list of 120 countries planning to cut their social protection budget to arrive at the percentage (54%) quoted in the statistic.

# STAT 2: AN ANNUAL PROGRESSIVE WEALTH TAX ON MULTI-DOLLAR MILLIONAIRES AT 2% FOR NET WEALTH \$5 MILLION AND ABOVE, 5% FOR \$50 MILLION AND ABOVE AND 10% FOR NET WEALTH OF \$1BN BILLION AND ABOVE COULD RAISE \$1.1 TRILLION MORE THAN THE ANNUAL BUDGET CUT THAT THE GOVERNMENTS ARE PLANNING FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS TO 2027

## METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

- Savings from cuts projected are \$1.4 billion (annual average)

Savings from cuts to government spending worldwide based on the IMF projection.<sup>4</sup> To arrive at the governments' expenditure in current USD, expenditure as a percent of GDP has been multiplied with the nominal GDP (current USD). Government expenditure for 2022 has been used as the baseline for the annual cuts from 2023 through to 2027 i.e., expenditure in 2022 is subtracted from annual expenditures in 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026 and 2027. The total cuts are then aggregated. The final cut does exclude those countries that are going to raise their expenditures. GDP and expenditure data are from the IMF October 2022 World Economic Outlook.<sup>5</sup>

Cuts (2023-27)	
	Annual average, \$bn
Low income	8.7
Lower middle income	124.3
Low and lower middle	132.9
Global	1,394.5

- An annual wealth tax on the worlds millionaires and billionaires could raise \$2.47 trillion

Using data from Forbes 2022 billionaire list<sup>6</sup> and Wealth-X, Oxfam have prepared estimates for what wealth taxes on the world's richest people could raise. We have looked at billionaires, those with \$50m in wealth and those with \$5m in wealth from 66 countries worldwide. We modeled the annual revenue from an annual wealth tax of 2% for \$5m and above, 5% for \$50m and above, and 10% for \$1bn and above. We found that an annual tax

of this nature could raise as much as \$2.47 trillion a year. Comparing this number with the annual cuts projected would show a close to a 1 trillion-dollar difference. (2.47 trillion – 1.56 trillion = 910 billion).

Wealth of multimillionaires and billionaires							Progressive tax: 2% for \$5 million, 5% for \$50 million and 10% for billionaires						
	\$5million+		\$50 million+		Billionaires, Forbes 2022								
Region	Population	Wealth	Population	Wealth	Wealth	Population	2% Base	5% base	10% base	2% rev	5% rev	10% rev	Total
World	3,612,730	75,306	183,300	36,462	12,706	2,668	29,946	17,259	10,038	599	863	1,004	2,466

A more conservative estimate: a wealth tax of 2% on the world’s millionaires, 3% on those with wealth above \$50 million and 5% on the world’s billionaires would raise \$1.62 trillion dollars annually – which would be still \$900,000 more than the cuts planned.

Wealth of multimillionaires and billionaires							Progressive tax: 2% for \$5 million, 5% for \$50 million and 10% for billionaires						
	\$5million+		\$50 million+		Billionaires, Forbes 2022								
Region	Population	Wealth	Population	wealth	Wealth	Population	2% Base	3% base	5% base	2% rev	3% rev	5%rev	Total
World	3,612,730	75,306	183,300	36,462	12,706	2,668	29,946	17,259	10,038	599	518	502	1,619

## STAT 3: ONLY 2% OF WHAT THE GOVERNMENTS SPEND ON MILITARY, COULD END GBV IN 132 COUNTRIES

### METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

- In 2020, UN estimated that \$42 billion could finance prevention and treatment programs to end GBV in 132 countries by 2030.<sup>7</sup>
- We have compared this with the global military expenditure in April 2022 which passed \$2 trillion for first time.<sup>8</sup>
- Dividing the cost of financing prevention and treatment programs to end GBV (\$42 billion) with the global military expenditure (\$2 trillion) is 2%.

# NOTES

<sup>1</sup>EURODAD (Sept 2022). END AUSTERITY: A Global Report on Budget Cuts and Harmful Social Reforms in 2022-25. Retrieved from:  
[https://www.eurodad.org/end\\_austerity\\_a\\_global\\_report](https://www.eurodad.org/end_austerity_a_global_report)

<sup>2</sup> International Labor Organization (ILO), World Social Protection Data Dashboards.  
<https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/WSPDB.action?id=32>

<sup>3</sup> Indicators that were looked at were: Children: Ratio of children/households receiving child/family cash benefits to the total number of children/households with children. Mothers with newborns: Ratio of women receiving maternity cash benefits to women giving birth in the same year.

<sup>4</sup> International Monetary Fund - World Economic Outlook April 22  
<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2022/04/19/world-economic-outlook-april-2022>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2022/October>

<sup>6</sup> Forbes Billionaires List. <https://www.forbes.com/billionaires/>

<sup>7</sup> UNFPA (2020) – Cost to Ending Gender Based Violence  
<https://www.unfpa.org/resources/chapter-5-cost-ending-gender-based-violence>

<sup>8</sup>STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (April 2022). Press Release - World military expenditure passes \$2 trillion for first time <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2022/world-military-expenditure-passes-2-trillion-first-time>

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It is part of a series of papers written to inform public debate on development and humanitarian policy issues.

For further information on the issues raised in this paper please email [advocacy@oxfaminternational.org](mailto:advocacy@oxfaminternational.org)

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