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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: COVID-19 AND THE INCREASE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has the following inputs to the call for submissions: COVID-19 and the increase of domestic violence against women: The inputs are presented in bullets corresponding to the order they were asked.

1. *To what extent has there been an increase of violence against women, especially domestic violence in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns? Please provide all available data on the increase of violence against women, including domestic violence and femicides, registered since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis.*
 - a. The Danish Institute for Human Rights does not have any available data in this matter.
 - b. The Danish civil society organization “Lev Uden Vold” has experienced a significant increase in the demand for women shelter spaces via their telephone hotline. During the lockdown period it has received 4,1 daily inquiries on average. This is a doubling compared to the normal. In the period from 12th to 18th of March 2020, the hotline received 36 inquiries, which corresponds to 5,1 per day. For comparison they had received 2,7 inquiries in average per day in the remaining time of 2020.¹

¹ <https://danner.dk/blog/coronap-bud-f-r-partnervold-til-stige-verden-rundt>
<https://danner.dk/nyt/covid-19-preset-p-krisecenterpladser-stiger>

2. *Are helplines run by Government and/or civil society available? Has there been an increase in the number of calls in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?*
 - a. The Danish Government has secured 55 extra emergency women shelters places because of the increase in violence against women in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. The civil society organizations “Lev Uden Vold” has worked on making it clear in the media, social media and websites that the existing advice has been open and available during the lockdown.²
 - b. The Danish civil society organization “Lev Uden Vold” has experienced a significant increase in the demand for women shelter spaces via their telephone hotline. During the lockdown period it has received 4,1 daily inquiries on average. This is a doubling compared to the normal. In the period from 12th to 18th of March 2020, the hotline received 36 inquiries, which corresponds to 5,1 per day. For comparison they had received 2,7 inquiries in average per day in the remaining time of 2020.³
3. *Can women victims of domestic violence be exempted from restrictive measures to stay at home in isolation if they face domestic violence?*
 - a. Denmark does not have restrictive measures about home isolation and curfews.
4. *Are shelters open and available? Are there any alternatives to shelters available if they are closed or without sufficient capacity?*
 - a. The Danish women shelters are open and available both as telephonic hotline and by psychical appearance.
 - b. The Danish Government has secured 55 extra emergency women shelters places because of the increase in violence against women in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. The Danish Institute for Human Rights does not have any available data on the sufficiently in the Danish women shelters.
5. *Are protection orders available and accessible in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?*

² <https://levudenvold.dk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ugentlig-noegletal-fra-lev-uden-vold-11.05.2020.pdf>

³ <https://danner.dk/blog/coronap-bud-f-r-partnervold-til-stige-verden-rundt>
<https://danner.dk/nyt/covid-19-preset-p-krisecenterpladser-stiger>

- a. The Danish courts opened April 27, 2020, after almost two months off closure.
6. *What are the impacts on women's access to justice? Are courts open and providing protection and decisions in cases of domestic violence?*
 - a. The Danish courts opened April 27, 2020, after almost two months off closure.
7. *What are the impacts of the current restrictive measures and lockdowns on women's access to health services? Please specify whether services are closed or suspended, particularly those focusing on reproductive health.*
 - a. In most of the Danish regions it has not been possible to give birth at home in the lockdown period in Denmark. The measure was justified by the fact that the hospitals wanted to assemble the resources at the hospital physically and to protect the midwives against the risk of COVID-19. The regions have repealed the measure after the re-opening of Denmark.⁴
 - b. During the lockdown period, it has only been possible for one of the women's relatives to participate during the birth of a child at the hospitals. If the partner/relative shows any kind of symptoms, they are not allowed to participate during the birth of the child.
 - c. During the lockdown period, parenting and antenatal classes hosted by the Danish regions were cancelled.
8. *Please provide examples of obstacles encountered to prevent and combat domestic violence during the COVID-19 lockdowns.*
 - a. An obstacle could be that women have been challenged in getting through at the telephone lines to the women's shelters. The Danish civil society organization "Lev Uden Vold" has experienced a significant increase in demand for women shelter spaces via their telephone hotline. In the lock down period, "Lev Uden Vold" has seen a doubling in telephone inquiries.⁵

⁴ The Danish Regions: News on birth of children at home, available in Danish at: <https://www.regioner.dk/services/nyheder/2020/april/gravide-kan-igen-foede-hjemmeGreenland>

⁵ The civil society organization "Danner": COVID-19: The pressure on women shelters is increasing, available in Danish at: <https://danner.dk/nyt/covid-19-preset-p-krisecenterpladser-stiger>

- b. It could be an obstacle for women who are victims of domestic violence to contact the women's shelters by telephone as they are at home and not always alone.
 - a. It could have been challenging for the women, who are victims of domestic violence practically to leave the house with their children in an economic unsecure period.
- 9. *Please provide examples of good practices to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence and to combat other gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by Governments.*
 - a. It is important that the relevant governments monitor the data on violence against women and domestic violence closely and ensure that the area has sufficient resources.
- 10. *Please provide examples of good practices to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence and to combat other gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic by NGOs and NHRIs or equality bodies.*
 - a. It is important that the NGOs, NHRIs and equality bodies monitor the area on violence against women and domestic violence closely and ensure that the area gets sufficient resources, so the victims can achieve sufficient help.
- 11. *Please send any additional information on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on domestic violence against women not covered by the questions above.*
 - a. The Danish Institute for Human Rights does not have any relevant information on this matter.

We hope our inputs are useful.

Yours sincerely,

Sinja Laursen

LEGAL ADVISOR