**Call for submissions: COVID-19 and the increase of domestic violence against women**

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Ms. Dubravka Šimonović, is following closely the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women’s right to a life free from violence. As she warned in a recent [statement](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25749&LangID=E) in 27 March 2020, the efforts to deal with the current health crisis may lead to an increase in domestic violence against women.

As initial police and hotline reports suggest, domestic violence has already surged in many countries, as measures imposing isolation compel a number of women to be kept at home under the same roof with perpetrators, thus exacerbating women’s vulnerability to domestic violence, including femicides. The risk is aggravated by fewer police interventions; the closure of courts and limited access to justice; the closure of shelters and services for victims, and reduced access to reproductive health services.

The Special Rapporteur on violence against women wishes to receive all relevant information on the increase of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic from civil society, States, National Human Rights Institutions, international organisations, academia and other stakeholders on the following issues:

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.

Currently as of 18th of May 2020 Mongolia has declared a state of alert and state of emergency has not yet declared, therefore Mongolia did not implement a total lockdown. However, several times Mongolia enforced a restriction of intercity travels. According to official statistic data from the General Police Department number of registered crimes as for March 2020 (8003 cases) has decreased comparing to number of crimes registered in March 2019 (9905 cases), from which number of registered cases of domestic violence in March 2019 were 383 cases and in March 2020 were 279 cases out of which 48.1% was committed in Ulaanbaatar (Capital city) and 51.9% was committed in provinces of Mongolia. In terms of numbers of victims of domestic violence are the following:

1. Wife – 150
2. Cohabitant – 51
3. Stepchild – 11
4. Husband – 10
5. Biological children – 10
6. Parents – 5
7. Sibling – 4
8. Parent in law – 1
9. Others – 31
10. 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?

Government of Mongolia receives information, complaint from its citizens via the National Emergency Management Agency hotline 1800-1105 through which in this current situation citizens can receive information and/or lodge a complaint. Hotline operates 24 hours, and receives over 100 calls per day, almost half of received calls are registered as a complaint related to COVID-19 situation. In addition, for the prevention of the corona virus disease Public Health Institute launched a hotline 119 to provide with medical assistance and advice. The Ministry of Health (323002) and the Ministry of Foreign Relations (92262222 and 70082222) also run 24/7 hotline to provide with necessary information for the citizens. After corona virus outbreak most of public and private organizations have switched to the readiness mode, so in case of urgent lockdown they will be able to remain connected with citizens and clients.

1. Can women victims of domestic violence be exempted from restrictive measures to stay at home in isolation if they face domestic violence?

So far, all COVID-19 cases are imported cases and Mongolia has not implemented a strict restriction and no total lockdown has been implemented, thus all services for victims of domestic violence are operating as usual without any restrictions.

1. Are shelters open and available? Are there any alternatives to shelters available if they are closed or without sufficient capacity?

The National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia has visited and collected information of various places including shelter house of victims of domestic violence, which functions are prescribed by the Law to combat domestic violence. Main functions are: ensure security; provide medical aid; psychological support; social welfare services; child protection services; legal assistance; and mediation management services.

According to received information a shelter house of the Metropolitan police department elaborated and approved a plan to operate in emergency situation, which means in case of Mongolia would declare a state of emergency the shelter house will operate and provide its services to victims of domestic violence.

Since the corona virus outbreak shelter house provided its service to 40 families (98 people out of which 39 were women, 34 were boys and 25 were girls). Since February 2020 shelter house operates under the state of alert.

1. Are protection orders available and accessible in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What are the impacts on women’s access to justice? Are courts open and providing protection and decisions in cases of domestic violence?

All courts and public services are available to citizens, therefore all public services to protect the victims of domestic violence are working in normal mode.

1. 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.

As it was mentioned before, all COVID-19 cases are imported, and no local transmission has been registered in Mongolia so far. All healthcare services to girls and women are available to them. However, there are about 1924 people placed in quarantine in Mongolia and 280 people with blood pressure, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The National Center for Communicable Disease has an isolated department to provide healthcare services to pregnant women,

As of 16th of May 2020 there were 104 children and 61 pregnant women in quarantine facilities (total number of people placed in quarantine was 1623). All necessary medical aid was provided to those in need (dentists, gynecologists and ect.) On 13th of May a guaranteed pregnant woman delivered a baby at the National Center for Communicable Disease, according to test results COVID-19 was not detected to her and her baby.

1. Please provide examples of obstacles encountered to prevent and combat domestic violence during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Mongolia shut down all education facilities in late January (pre-schools, schools and universities) and all kids are staying at home since then, but there were no regulations on management of working hours for parents and legal custodians of kids. Only on 13th of February a Chairman of the State Permanent Emergency Commission of Mongolia issued an Order #04 adopting a guidance in its annex allowing parents and legal custodians to take paid leave up to five days to take care of their children (aged 0-5) with influenza. There was a case of death of three kids aged five, four and one and a half on 5th of February 2020 in a Darkhan-Uul province. All three were enrolled in a kindergarten, but due to closure of all education facilities, kids had to stay at home, but their mother (was employed in a kindergarten) were not allowed to stay with her children at home. She had to leave her children at home unattended, unfortunately, hot water leaked from the pipe while a plugged-in extension cord was on a floor, all three were found dead at the end of working day. This tragedy found a nationwide resonance.

1. 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.

Since the aforementioned tragic event, all private and public organizations included in their regulations to provide with necessary support of those with young children (aged 0-3 or 0-5 and even 0-12) by allowing them to work from homes or giving paid leave to take care of young children.

1. 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.

**The NHRC of Mongolia implemented a flexible working hour for those with young kids (aged 0-12).**

1. Please send any additional information on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on domestic violence against women not covered by the questions above.

All submissions should be sent to vaw@ohchr.org as soon as possible, and will be received until **30 June** **2020**. You are kindly requested to provide your submissions in English, French or Spanish. Kindly indicate if you **do not** wish your submission to be made publicly available.