



**ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΗΜΟΣΙΑΣ ΤΑΞΕΩΣ**

Nicosia, 9 December 2019

CYPRUS CONTRIBUTION

Letter from the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, 5 November 2019

In 2019, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order drafted a **bill to criminalise all forms of violence against women and girls**, which is currently at the Legal Service of the Republic for legal vetting. The bill covers gaps identified in the legislative framework of Cyprus and complies fully with the extensive provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), ratified by the Republic in 2017. The bill has been perceived by the public and civil society as an innovative legislative tool, which will bring positive changes in the field, proving at the same time that the Republic will no longer tolerate any form of violence against women and girls. More specifically, the bill:

- Covers all forms of violence against women and girls as these are included in the Istanbul Convention;
- Strengthens the protection and assistance of women and girls victims of violence;
- Sets out proportionate, deterrent and effective sanctions;
- Lays a concrete basis for the provision of specialised assistance to victims;
- Sets out a comprehensive, holistic, women-centred approach, as well as preventative actions and enforcement measures;
- Provides for the establishment of a coordinated body to implement the Istanbul Convention, which amongst others, will undertake the responsibility for the creation of a unified data collection system on all forms of violence against women, which will include desegregated data by sex and age of the victims and perpetrators and the relationship between them as well as the type of violence;
- Sets the basis to establish international and national cooperation in the field of violence against women.

With regards to **stalking and harassment**, another bill has been prepared for the protection of individuals, which criminalises behaviour such as harassing and stalking, as well as other related offences. The bill also provides for the possibility for the court to issue orders with a view to protecting the victim or other persons in his/her environment. Furthermore, the right of the victim to compensation and rehabilitation after a final conviction is also provided. This bill has been tabled before Parliament.

A step forward was also the signing of a bilateral cooperation Protocol between the Ministry of Justice and Public Order (MJPO) and the NGO “Association for the Prevention and Handling of Domestic Violence” (APHDV). APHDV runs a 24-hour telephone helpline for

women victims of violence, funded by the MJPO. In addition, the Police has adopted a special Risk Assessment Protocol for cases related to intimate partner violence. The Protocol is used in cases of allegations of violence, involving (former) spouses, cohabitantes or partners.

Cyprus Police has also been exerting continuous and systematic efforts, aiming at higher levels of sensitivity, awareness and professionalism among police members handling cases of domestic violence. Within this framework, specialized training programmes have been carried out, aimed at police members dealing with these issues, as well as newly recruited police officers. These trainings took place within the framework of a two-year Project (2017-19), entitled "CIRCLE OF CHANGE" (JUST/2016/RGEN/AG/VAWA/9945). Funds of the project have been also used for drafting a police-training manual on violence against women, with an emphasis on domestic violence.

The administrative data on killings of women for the last three years, officially recorded by the Statistics Office of Cyprus Police, is shown in the table below.

Until the present, no further disaggregation of the data is available.

YEAR	RECORDED CRIMINAL CASES	MALE VICTIMS		FEMALE VICTIMS		TOTAL	
		ADULTS	MINORS	ADULTS	MINORS	ADULTS	MINORS
2016	11	8	0	5	0	13	0
2017	7	7	0	0	0	7	0
2018	14	7	2	5	1	12	3
2019	12	3	1	7	3	10	4
TOTAL	44	25	3	17	4	42	7

On 24 January 2019, the Council of Ministers approved the proposal of the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance for **the creation of the "Women's House"**, a crisis centre for women victims of violence and their children. The unit will operate as a 'one-stop-shop' providing integrated services for victims of violence. The Women's House will help women and their children, victims of violence find all services they need in one place including social workers, psychologists, medical professionals, police officers and others. The Council of Ministers appointed the Advisory Committee for the Prevention & Combating of Violence in the Family (ACPCVF) as Coordinator for the implementation and operation of the Women's House. The ministerial decision is based on a 2016 proposal submitted by the NGO "ACPCVF" to the Ministry of Labour and complies with the commitments deriving from the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women and Domestic Violence as regards the provision of comprehensive and integrated services to support and protect women victims of violence. The "Women's House" will provide services to all women based on the principle of non-discrimination, and irrespective of their migrant and/or legal status. Importantly, the Women's House will be responsible for conducting risk assessment based on validated risk assessment tools, and developing risk management strategies in order to respond to the safety needs of women and children.

Recognizing the lack of consistent and comprehensive administrative data on domestic violence in Cyprus, ACPCVF, in cooperation with the Cyprus Statistical Services, drafted a proposal regarding the implementation of a centralized data mechanism for the collection and processing of administrative data on domestic violence as foreseen by the Istanbul Convention and the Victims' Rights Directive. The proposal foresees the establishment of a **centralised data collection system**, containing a set of indicators (including sex of victim and perpetrator, relationship between victim and perpetrator, type of violence). This will promote the production of annual statistics, information sharing among front-line services and mutli-agency cooperation, case tracking across the system, identification of weaknesses in the system, and ultimately reform the design and implementation of policies to improve responses to violence against women. ACPCVF is also in the process of drafting the 3rd National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence (2020-2022).