

File No.: Ε.Δ. 4.3.01

Tel. No.: 22 405526


Nicosia, November 20, 2020

United Nations Special Rapporteur
on violence against women, its causes and consequences
vaw@ohchr.org

Dear Ms. Šimonović

Please find attached the contribution of my Office to your survey concerning the collection of information on prevention activities, including through the collection of data on femicide or gender-related killings of women:

I remain at your disposal for any further co-operation.



Maria Stylianou-Lottides
Commissioner for Administration and
Human Rights Protection
National Human Rights Institution

C.C.:

- Permanent Mission of Cyprus in Geneva
pm.geneva@mfa.gov.cy

The Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsman Institution) was set up in 1991 by virtue of Law no. 3(I)/1991, as the independent authority responsible to deal with individual complaints concerning maladministration, misbehavior and human rights violations by state authorities or officers.

After several amendments of the basic law, the Commissioner was provided with broad functions of protecting, promoting and guaranteeing human rights as National Institution for Human Rights (NHRI). In addition, further discrete legislations have expanded the role and mandate of The Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights, which was assigned to act, among other, as Equality Body and as Independent Mechanism for the Promotion, Protection and Monitoring of the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in accordance with article 33(2) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Our Institution has in several occasions used its above-mentioned wide powers both to ensure awareness of the gendered nature of the different forms of violence against women and to monitor the implementation and coordination of measures and policies to combat violence against women.

In particular, a number of Reports were issued regarding the deficiencies of the framework for combating domestic violence, sexual violence and stalking, as well as the absence of an effective mechanism for timely and coordinated interagency intervention in cases of serious risk of violence against women. Furthermore, our Office has carried out several educational and training activities on the issues of gender equality and gender-based violence, while it strongly encouraged the ratification of Istanbul Convention by our country.

So far, our Office has not been explicitly mandated to establish femicide watches/observatories and to/or collect and collate data in this regard. According to the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2019-2023), it is

the Ministry of Justice and Public Order that has been tasked with the responsibility setting-up a data system for coordinating the collection of systemic and accurate data concerning all forms of violence against women. At the same time, our Office, among other stakeholders, share the obligation to co-operate with the Ministry for the collection and analysis of gender-based violence data.

At the moment, all relevant data can be sought from Cyprus Police and Ministry of Justice and Public Order.

It should be noted that the data collected by the competent authorities concern a vast variety of gender-based violence incidents, given that femicide has not been recognized yet as a specific criminal offense. At present, murder committed by spouse or intimate partner is considered as an aggravating circumstance, in accordance with the Violence in the Family Law L. 47(I)/1994.

Very recently, however, a woman member of the Parliament has proposed the classification of femicide as a specific criminal offence. My Office will support any amendment of the legislation that aims to facilitate monitoring femicide and to provide adequate measures for its prevention, quick response, adequate investigation and proper prosecution and punishment of perpetrators.

ND