Republic of Serbia

Ministry of Human and Minority Rights

and Social Dialogue

Human Rights Department

B e l g r a d e, 27/04/2021

**ANSWERS TO**

**THE QUESTIONNAIRE OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

**1. On the existence, or progress in the creation, of a national femicide watch and/or femicide observatory and/or observatory on violence against women with a femicide watch role; observatories at Ombudspersons’ office or Equality Bodies; academic institutions and/or NGOs, or any plans to create one.**

In order to effectively implement the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, which has been applied since 1 June 2017, the Republic Public Prosecutor's Office has taken measures introducing specialization, priority treatment and reporting, risk analysis and enhanced control in all cases involving domestic violence, in order to facilitate the public prosecution service in responding to domestic violence and preventing its recurrence by taking measures within its competence.

In order to achieve legality, effectiveness and uniformity in the actions of all public prosecutors in the application of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, the Republic Public Prosecutor issued *General Mandatory Instruction O No. 1/17 of 30/05/2017*. The aforementioned instruction, among other things, instructed the competent public prosecution services to submit a report to the Republic Public Prosecutor's Office once a month concerning actions taken in accordance with the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, in line with the prescribed records attached to the Instruction.

Within each public prosecution service, one or more deputy public prosecutors who have completed specialized training have been appointed in order to exercise the competencies of the public prosecution service in preventing domestic violence and prosecuting perpetrators of crimes determined by this law.

With a view to achieving efficient cooperation in the prevention of domestic violence, *liaisons have been appointed within all higher and basic public prosecutor's offices*, pursuant to Article 24 of the Law, who on a daily basis exchange information and data crucial for the prevention of domestic violence, as well as other relevant data, in accordance with the Law.

In the area of ​​each basic public prosecutor’s office, *coordination and cooperation groups* have been formed for the area of ​​that public prosecution service. The Deputy Public Prosecutor, who chairs the group, as well representatives of the police and the Social Work Centre, participate in the work of the Group.

In addition to these groups, in the area of ​​forty-one out of a total of fifty-eight basic public prosecutor's offices, *a total of 87 coordination and cooperation sub-groups have been formed for individual municipalities* in the area of these prosecution services’ local jurisdiction. Representatives of groups and sub-groups hold meetings according to the timetable prescribed by law. At meetings of the coordination and cooperation groups and sub-groups, current and newly received cases are discussed, measures for ending court proceedings are proposed and plans for protecting and supporting victims are developed. The meetings are attended, if necessary, by representatives of the National Employment Service, health, educational and other relevant institutions, as well as the victims themselves.

Basic public prosecutor’s offices have established and keep special records in accordance with Article 32 of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, as well as records on the work of the Coordination and Cooperation Group according to the Rules of Procedure of the group. Reports on the conduct of public prosecution services are submitted to the Republic Public Prosecutor's Office every month. In accordance with conclusions from the second session of the Domestic Violence Suppression Council of 19 July 2018, records kept by public prosecutor's offices have been expanded by recording data on the sex and age of injured parties, defendants’ relationships with injured parties, as well as data on the transfer of cases to the Kt/Gt register.

The records of basic public prosecution services must contain:

1) data on the person for whom the extension of emergency measures has been proposed (name, surname, unique master citizen number, address of permanent or temporary residence, data on previously determined protective measures against domestic violence); 2) data on the extension of emergency measures (date and number of the proposal for extending emergency measures, name of the court to which the extension of emergency measures had been proposed, the court decision upon the proposal of the public prosecutor, data on the decision upon an appeal); 3) data on the filing of a lawsuit requesting the imposition of a protective measure against domestic violence; 4) the type of protective measure against domestic violence that is being requested; 5) data on the court decision upon the lawsuit requesting imposition of a protective measure against domestic violence (number and date of the decision, type of measure determined and duration of the measure); 6) data on the extension and termination of a protective measure against domestic violence.

After the entry into force of the Law, in order to establish effective cooperation between all relevant actors in the prevention of domestic violence, public prosecution services concluded two cooperation agreements:

* On 20/10/2017, the Protocol on Cooperation between the First, Second and Third Basic Public Prosecutor's Offices in Belgrade and the Clinic for Psychiatric Diseases “Dr Laza Lazarević” was signed. The protocol envisages coordination of work, as well as urgent placement of persons with mental disorders who, due to these disorders, seriously and directly endanger their own life, health or safety and the life of another person. In accordance with the signed Protocol, the procedure for accommodating persons with mental disorders and providing an expert opinion about them has been significantly accelerated.
* On 19/07/2018, the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Vršac signed a Protocol on cooperation with the Special Hospital for Psychiatric Diseases “Dr Slavoljub Bakalović” from Vršac. The protocol envisages the manner of conduct when dealing with cases involving domestic violence within the meaning of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence and the Criminal Code, in cases when the perpetrator is a person who has already been hospitalized in such a hospital or a person demonstrating signs of mental illness.

The preparation of the Protocol on cooperation between the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Niš and the Special Hospital for Psychiatric Diseases “Gornja Toponica” from Niš is in progress.

Furthermore, when dealing with cases of domestic violence, the Basic Public Prosecutor's Offices from the territory of Belgrade continued cooperation initiated with the signing of the Agreement on Inter-Sectoral Cooperation in the Implementation of the General Protocol for Action and Cooperation of Institutions, Bodies and Organisations in Situations of Violence against Women within the Family and in Intimate Partner Relationships over the course of November 2015 between the Secretariat for Protection of Belgrade, Secretariat for Education and Child Protection, Secretariat for Health of the City of Belgrade, City Centre for Social Work in Belgrade, Police Administration of the City of Belgrade, First Basic Court in Belgrade, Second Basic Court in Belgrade, Third Basic Court in Belgrade, Misdemeanour Court in Belgrade, First Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade, Second Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade, Third Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade, the Centre for the Protection of Infants, Children and Youth, the Autonomous Women's Centre and the Counselling Centre against Domestic Violence.

Organised by the Judicial Academy[[1]](#footnote-1), public prosecutors and deputy public prosecutors, as well as assistant prosecutors attend *continuous training* on domestic violence, namely in connection with the application of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, with the purpose of facilitating efficient and consistent implementation of legal powers, recognition of domestic violence, ensuring safety and protecting victims' rights, as well as providing specialization to prosecutors dealing with cases involving domestic violence.

Under the auspices of all three basic public prosecutor's offices in Belgrade, special departments have been established for dealing with cases involving criminal offences against sexual freedom and against marriage and family, within which deputy public prosecutors act exclusively upon cases that involve the aforementioned criminal offences.

Such organization of work should provide the most efficient and professional procedure, both in terms of criminal prosecution and protecting victims of such crimes, as well as in terms of fuller and more direct cooperation with other state authorities, as well as civil society organisations dealing with victims’ protection.

With the same goal, in the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office in Niš established a Group for handling cases initiated in line with the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence.

**2. On other measures including research and studies undertaken to analyse femicide or gender related killings of women and girls, or homicides of women by intimate partners or family members and other femicides. If available, please share a copy of such studies.**

A *Manual for Femicide Prevention and Processing* has been developed as the result of work within the project “Eradicating and Preventing Femicide in Serbia” over the course of 2018 - 2019, which is being implemented by the Gender Knowledge Hub from Novi Sad, FemPlatz from Pančevo and the Women's Research Centre from Niš, with the support of the United Nations Agency for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women) and the European Union. Representatives of the Republic Public Prosecutor's Office also participated in its drafting.

Over the course of 2020, a gender analysis was conducted and a set of short- and medium-term measures were prepared to address the negative effects of the Covid 19 pandemic on women and men in Serbia, with a special focus on necessary measures that are needed to respond to violence against women and gender-based violence, women's economic empowerment and redistribution of unpaid care work, the position of particularly vulnerable groups of women, as well as gender-responsive emergency planning and budgeting.

In 2018, the second report Gender Equality Index in the Republic of Serbia - Measuring Gender Equality in the Republic of Serbia 2016 was prepared in cooperation with Coordination Body for Gender Equality (CBGE), the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, with the guidance and support of the European Institute for Gender Equality, which, in addition to 6 different domains, also included a satellite domain - violence against women. The third report of the Gender Equality Index in the Republic of Serbia is currently being prepared and it shall be published over the course of 2021.

The Coordination Body for Gender Equality, among other projects and activities, deals with the issue of violence against women and girls through two specific projects, as follows:

* “Integrated Response to Violence against Women and Girls in Serbia II” and “Integrated Response to Violence against Women and Girls in Serbia III” were implemented by CBGE as the main implementing partner in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Agency for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and in partnership with relevant ministries and provincial institutions (Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Policy, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Commissioner for Equality and the Provincial Secretariat for Social Policy, Demography and Gender Equality (with the financial support of the Government of Sweden - Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency - SIDA).
* “Ending Violence Against Women in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Implementing Norms, Changing Minds”, where the CBGE is a member of the project’s Technical Working Group. The project is implemented by UN Women offices in Serbia, in cooperation with the European Commission and the Delegation of the European Union and with the financial support of the European Union.

The project “Integrated Response to Violence against Women and Girls in Serbia II” was implemented from July 2016 to the end of 2019. The project “Integrated Response to Violence against Women and Girls in Serbia III” is being implemented from November 2020 to October 2022.

The objective of the project “*Ending Violence against Women in the Western Balkans and Turkey: Implementing Norms, Changing Minds*” is to influence a reduction of gender-based discrimination and violence against women, with special reference to marginalised groups of women (Roma women, women with disabilities, women living in rural areas), but also to encourage cooperation between the state and non-governmental sectors in order to better implement provisions of CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention, both internally and among countries where the project is being implemented.

Thus, during 2019, the CBGE contributed by involving 22 civil society organisations in the implementation of activities within this project. Moreover, in the same year, the CBGE participated in the organisation of two conferences, as follows: a) together with UN Women in Serbia and the NGO Bibija, a Regional Conference on the Status of Roma Women “Unite to End Violence Against Women” was organized, within which a Regional Report on Discrimination against Roma Women in the Areas of Health Care, Child Marriage and Support to Roma Women in Situations involving Violence was presented; b) a Conference on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Convention). The conference itself brought together representatives of state authorities and institutions and civil society organisations to ensure the implementation of recommendations delivered by the CEDAW Committee to Serbia in the concluding remarks of the fourth periodic report submitted by Serbia. The CBGE also participated in the Second Regional Forum for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Western Balkans and Turkey, held in Tirana. *Finally, within this project, the CBGE supported the development of the first study on femicide, as well as the project “Youth of Action”.*

Within this project, during 2020, the publication *“Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on specialist services for victims and survivors of violence in the Western Balkans and Turkey: A proposal for addressing the”* aims to highlight weaknesses in preventing and responding to violence, as well as show how services have adapted their working methods during the pandemic. Furthermore, a contract was signed with the SOS Vojvodina Network for the development of a SOS mobile application, as well as an information system for managing mobile applications intended for reporting violence against women in the Republic of Serbia. The application is designed as an alternative form of communication that allows women to alert SOS services in moments of acute violence or emergency. Victims of sexual violence during the pandemic had access to 3 support centres for women who experienced rape or some other form of sexual violence. In addition to the already existing centres in Novi Sad, Kikinda and Zrenjanin, a centre was revitalized in Sremska Mitrovica, whereby active advocacy activities were carried out with the aim of establishing two new crisis centres within the general hospitals in Čačak and Leskovac. In cooperation with the Women’s Support Centre, 7 counsellors and a coordinator were hired to provide services to victims of sexual violence 24/7 within the existing 3 centres intended for victims of sexual violence. In addition, medical equipment was provided to the centres, as well as hygiene packages for women who had to stay in the centres for a certain period due to injuries and examinations. Moreover, a protocol on cooperation between sexual assault care centres and primary health care centres has been drafted. The visibility of services provided by the centres has increased among national and local institutions, non-governmental organisations, decision-makers and the wider community. An agreement on cooperation was signed with ... the Organization Providing Support to Women With Disabilities Iz Kruga – Vojvodina in order to collect data on existing services before and during the pandemic for women with disabilities. Training courses for judges and prosecutors on legal and criminal responses to femicide were organized in Niš. An electronic version of the fourth edition of the bulletin has been developed and distributed, focusing on policies and measures for preventing femicide during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as recommendations and reports issued by international actors.

*The Protector of Citizens and the Autonomous Women's Centre, with the support of the OSCE Mission to Serbia, conducted an in-depth study on the application of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence within the territory of the City of Belgrade.* This research is the first of its kind, which analyses the conduct of competent authorities within the system of protecting victims of domestic violence. Data from submitted records of the guardianship authority were used; copies of minutes from Coordination and Cooperation Groups, as well as individual plans for protecting and supporting victims of violence, compiled at the meetings of the groups held during May 2018. The results of the research were then compared with the opinions of representatives of all departments of the City Centre for Social Work in Belgrade given during the focus group discussions and then published in the Special Report prepared by the Protector of Citizens on the work of coordination and cooperation groups in the City of Belgrade. Within the framework of this project, research shall be continued first in Niš and then in other cities in Serbia, followed by seminars. The report was presented at a Round Table held on 8 October 2020 in Belgrade. The presentation of the report was organised within the project “Effective Policies and Harmonised Practices in Providing Support and Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence” conducted by the Autonomous Women's Centre, the Protector of Citizens and the Forum of Judges of Serbia, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

**3. On the results of analysis of femicide cases, including the review of previous court cases and recommendations and actions undertaken in this respect.**

The Ministry of Justice does not have any data relating to the relationship between perpetrators and victims in murder cases, nor do the courts within the Republic of Serbia keep records in such a manner. We only have aggregate data for criminal offences: Murder (Article 113 of the CC) and Aggravated murder (Article 114 of the CC) or on the structure of convictions, which we are delivering for the past three years, as presented in the tables below.

|  |
| --- |
| Judgment structure |
| Type of offence | The total number of persons for whom a first instance verdict has been rendered | The total number of persons convicted | Total number of persons released from punishment | Total number of prison sentences | Acquittals | Dismissing judgments |
| for the period 01/01/2018 to 31/12/2018 |
| Article 113 | 76 | **70** | 2 | **68** | 6 | 0 |
| Article 114 | 58 | **47** | 1 | **46** | 11 | 0 |
| for the period 01/01/2019 to 31/12/2019 |
| Article 113 | 83 | **81** | 0 | **81** | 2 | 0 |
| Article 114 | 53 | **52** | 0 | **52** | 0 | 1 |
| for the period 01/01/2020 to 31/12/2020 |
| Article 113 | 74 | **68** | / | **68** | 6 | / |
| Article 114 | 44 | **43** | / | **43** | / | 1 |

**4. On concrete measures taken to improve support to victims of violence and to prevent femicide, (risk assessment, efficiency of protection orders), in connection with the information gathered via femicide watches or observatories.**

The drafting and the adoption of a new National Strategy for Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for the period 2021-2025 is expected to be complete in the coming weeks.

The general objective of the Strategy is as follows: Ensuring effective prevention and protection from all forms of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence and developing a gender-responsive system of support services for victims of violence. The specific objectives of the Strategy are as follows: 1) Improved action on the part of all actors in the prevention of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence; 2) Ensured efficiency and effective protection of victims and established accessible and adequate general and specialized support services for victims of violence; 3) All forms of violence against women and domestic violence are incriminated, in accordance with international standards, conditions for adequate prosecution and punishment of perpetrators are secured, the position of victims and witnesses and the realization of victims' right to compensation have been advanced 4) Integrated public policies and an established comprehensive and functional system for collecting and analysing data concerning violence against women and domestic violence.

Coordination, monitoring and evaluation of planned measures and activities in preventing, protecting and supporting victims of violence against women and domestic violence shall be entrusted to the Coordination Body for Gender Equality. We stress that the Law on Gender Equality, the adoption of which is also expected in the coming weeks, establishes an institutional framework for achieving gender equality, which, according to the provisions of Article 59 of this Law, includes the CBGE. This has improved the mechanism that enables multi-sectoral coordination between different ministries when dealing with issues such as gender-based domestic violence.

Currently, there are seven licensed providers of shelters for victims of violence in the Republic of Serbia, with a total capacity of 110 users. In two cases, the founder was the local self-government, namely the City of Pančevo and the City of Leskovac.

There are a total of 10 licensed SOS telephone service providers for women that have fallen victim to violence within the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

The state financially supports the establishment and improvement of services within the community through an *earmarked transfers* mechanism that allocates funds to local self-governments, which in turn direct resources to service providers within their territory. For these purposes, the state allocates about RSD 700 million every year, which is about EUR 6 million. A part of these funds is directed to support victims of violence within the family and in intimate partner relationships, which is a decision left to the local self-governments.

A national SOS line (0800-222-003) has been established, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year, within the territory of the entire Republic of Serbia.

Furthermore, a telephone line (0800100600) has been opened in the Operations Centre of the Ministry of Interior, which is free and available 24 hours a day and where events with elements of domestic violence are reported at the level of the entire Republic of Serbia.

In the period from 2017 until the present, 11 accredited training programmes in the field of social protection have been implemented that are related to violence against women and children, including domestic violence, and intended for professional social workers dealing with victims of violence, as follows:

1. Domestic violence and institutional protection: 5 complete - 79 participants
2. Conference dealing with cases involving protection from domestic violence: 4 complete - 75 participants
3. Coordinated action of the local community in preventing and protecting against domestic violence: 5 complete - 98 participants
4. The role and responsibility of the social work centres in the protection of victims of violence within the family and in intimate partner relationships: 9 complete - 177 participants
5. Safe house - work in centres that provide assistance to victims of domestic violence: 4 complete - 90 participants
6. Training of social service providers to work with victims of violence: 3 complete - 26 participants
7. Training of social service providers to work with victims of gender-based violence: 7 complete - 90 participants
8. Invisible witnesses and double victims: the link between violence against women and child abuse: 4 complete - 90 participants
9. The role of social work centres in the implementation of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence: 6 complete - 114 participants
10. Basic training programme for providing SOS telephone services to women who have experienced gender-based violence: 1 complete - 20 participants
11. Basic training package for working on the SOS hotline with women with disabilities who have experienced violence: 1 complete - 1 participant.

Over the course of 2019, the Republic Institute for Social Protection established an *Information System for Collecting, Processing and Analysis of Aurora Data* within the framework of the Social Protection System, which enabled improvements in the data collection system on domestic violence and violence over women in intimate partner relationships, enhanced monitoring of indicators on victims of violence and advanced invention measures in social work centres.

The Ministry in charge of social issues, as well as the institutes tasked with social protection, at the national and provincial level, continuously provide professional support - in the form of consultative meetings in individual cases of domestic violence and through case conferences, at the request of social work centres.

In order to act uniformly and assist and support public prosecutors, but also other state authorities and institutions[[2]](#footnote-2) responsible for the application of this law, and also provide answers and eliminate possible dilemmas in conduct regarding the application of this law, the Ministry of Justice, with the support of UNDP, published a collection in 2018 - “Answers to doubts and dilemmas about the application of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence”, and another two in 2019 - “Why must we work together against domestic violence” and “A proposal for improving the work of the coordination and cooperation group”. These collections are published on the website of the Ministry of Justice [www.iskljucinasilje.rs](http://www.iskljucinasilje.rs).

In order to inform the professional public, over the course of February 2018 the Ministry of Justice prepared a poster on the implementation of the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence, whereby in November 2018 it produced a poster presenting the mechanism of protection and support for victims of domestic violence. The posters were delivered to relevant state institutions.

The Ministry of Interior has also prepared two promotional videos that were broadcast on the Serbian public service, aiming to encourage victims of domestic violence to report violence. Representatives of this Ministry also participated in television shows concerning the topic of combating violence against women in the family and intimate partner relationships.

At the initiative of the Coordination Body for Gender Equality, which worked on defining the needs of safe women's houses, the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure has been announcing a public competition in the field of social housing for the last 4 years with the aim of proving financial support to projects that contribute to improving accommodation conditions, in particular for victims of violence in the family and in intimate partner relationships.

Through the project “Integrated Response to Violence against Women and Girls in Serbia II”, the CBGE, together with its partners, has provided support to local women's organizations that assist women victims of violence through the work of SOS hotlines. Within the framework of this project, local women's organisations were supported through the award of grants for the implementation of SOS telephone services with the goal of providing support to women who have experienced violence. Moreover, in order to ensure continuity, the CBGE, in cooperation with UN Women and with the support of the EU Delegation to Serbia, provided financial resources and assistance to 22 local women's organizations that provide psycho-social and legal support via SOS hotlines in 2020.

Furthermore, during 2020, cooperation with the company “Mocart” continued with the aim of alleviating the situation resulting in isolation and enabling children placed to attend classes at a distance in safe house, whereby technical equipment was also donated to 13 safe houses.

Additionally, in cooperation with UN Women, 60 panic button systems have been installed within health facilities and social work centres in order to improve the safety of women accommodated in these facilities.

**5. On good practices and challenges in implementing an evidence-based response to the prevention of femicide.**

The fight against violence directed against women and domestic violence is one of the Government's priority objectives. In the past period, significant progress has been made in terms of prevention and protection from gender-based violence against women and domestic violence, as part of the overall gender equality policy, the implementation of which has been determined by the RS Constitution. Since 2002, when domestic violence was criminalized, the system of preventing and protecting against gender-based violence directed towards women and domestic violence has been constantly improved.

The commitment of the Republic of Serbia to combat gender-based violence against women and domestic violence was also expressed with the ratification of the CoE Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in 2013 (Istanbul Convention). In order to align legislation with the Istanbul Convention, a number of laws have been adopted and amended, as follows: In 2017, the *Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence* was adopted, in 2016 *amendments to the Criminal Code* criminalized persecution, sexual harassment and forced marriage as special offences, while the *Law on Free Legal Aid* was adopted in 2018. This year, the Law on Gender Equality has been submitted for parliamentary procedure, while its adoption, which is expected by the end of May, is vital in the context of preventing and suppressing violence against women and domestic violence. Namely, this law, the drafting of which was coordinated and completed by the newly formed Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, and which contains an entire segment entitled Prevention and Suppression of Gender-Based Violence (Articles 51-58), prohibits any form of violence based on gender, gender characteristics, i.e. gender in the private and public spheres. The law prescribes and regulates the following: special measures and programmes intended for: victims of violence and preventing perpetrators of violence from continuing or repeating violence; the obligation to report violence; general support services for victims of violence and their right to psycho-social and legal assistance and social and health care; specialized services such as: a National SOS hotline for girls and women who have experienced gender-based violence, safe accommodation in shelters and forensic, medical and laboratory examinations; introduction of programmes for perpetrators of violence; measures and procedures aimed at preventing violence, as well as methods of financing specialized services.

Although significant results have been achieved in the past in terms of suppressing and preventing gender-based violence against women and domestic violence, these forms of violence are still widespread in both the private and public spheres of life. Women are the dominant victims of violence in the family and intimate partner relationships, whereby the number of femicides has not seen any significant reductions.

*The key challenges in this area are as follows*: the presence of traditional cultural patterns and gender stereotypes; non-reporting of violence due to fear of stigmatization, lack of support from one’s surrounding, economic dependence and fear of the perpetrator; further harmonization of the legal framework with international standards and the Istanbul Convention; more efficient implementation of policies and measures of competent institutions in combating gender-based violence against women and domestic violence; improving mechanisms for effective law enforcement; adoption of new by-laws, improvement of existing assistance and support services and establishment of new ones, provision of sustainable financing of policies, measures and specialized services to support women especially from vulnerable social groups (women with disabilities, women of different sexual orientation, women from rural areas, and so-forth). In addition to the above, the challenge for Serbia is the establishment of a single standardized system of data collection, recording and monitoring of all forms of violence against women and domestic violence, including gender-based murder of women.

Considering the gender dimension in crisis situations, such as the COVID 19 pandemic, is also vital for the purpose of preventing an escalation of violence and improving the effectiveness of activities dealing with security risks for women. Therefore, it is necessary to make additional efforts in order to improve the system of protection and support that would be able to adequately respond to the needs of women and men even during possible future crises.

With the initiative of 2017 put forward by the Coordination Body for Gender Equality and the “Network of Women Against Violence”, 18 May is marked as the Day of Remembrance for murdered women victims of violence. Moreover, during other important dates such as International Women's Day, International Day of the Girl, International Day of Rural Women and International Human Rights Day, the CBGE calls for the prevention and suppression of violence against women and girls, as well as for sensitizing people to this problem, which is necessary in order to provide support to women and girls who have experienced violence.

The CBGE, together with UNICEF, has launched an initiative to form a *National Coalition for the Prevention and Suppression of Early Marriages*. The founding meeting was held on 21 February 2019. The coalition consists of representatives of relevant ministries/ institutions, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, as well as civil society organizations. Even under conditions arising from the pandemic, the coalition managed to hold regular meetings, and in cooperation with the civil sector, print and electronic media, it continuously conducts a campaign on the topic of child marriages’ harmfulness.

**6. On data, if available, on femicides or intimate-partner and family-related homicides of women and men in the past 3 years, including during the Covid-19 pandemic (indicating the time period e.g. since March 2020 to the end of December 2020) and its comparison with such data before the COVID-19 pandemic.**

***According to data provided by the Ministry of Interior:***

* *In the time period from 01/01/2018 until 31/12/201*8, a total of 47 people were killed: 34 females (19 by emotional partners, while 15 females were deprived of their life by persons on the basis of kinship or blood relationship) and 13 males. In the period 01/03-31/12/2018, a total of 14 females were killed by emotional partners, which is one female less than for the same duration over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic in the period 01/03-31/12/2020.
* *In the time period from 01/01-31/12/2019*, a total of 54 people were killed: 31 female (19 by emotional partners, while 12 females were deprived of their life by relatives or blood relatives) and 23 males. *In the period 01/03-31/12/2019*, a total of 8 females were killed by emotional partners, which is 3 more females than for the same duration over the course of the COVID-19 disease pandemic in the period 01/03-31/12/2020.
* *In the time period from 01/01/2020 until 31/12/2020*, a total of 48 people were deprived of life: 28 females (21 females by emotional partners, while 7 females were deprived of life by persons on the basis of kinship or blood relationship) and 20 males. The overall number of lives lost as a result of violence perpetrated by emotional partners during 2020. *In the time period 01/03-31/12/2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, a total of 15 females were killed by their emotional partners.*
* *In the time period 01/01-06/04/2021*, a total of 11 people were killed: 8 females (a total of 4 females were deprived of their life by emotional partners, while 4 females were killed by relatives or blood relatives) and 3 males.

***A tabular presentation of available statistical data contained in annual reports on the work of public prosecutor's offices*** in terms of crime prevention and protection of constitutionality and legality:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| YEAR | DATA PER CATEGORY OF PERSONS |
| CRIMINAL OFFENCE  | PERPETRATED AGAINST |
| a man | a women | a minor |
|
| **2020** | Murder Article 113 of the CC | 65 | 6 | / |
| Aggravated Murder Article 114 of the CC  | 19 | 5 | 1 |
| Murder Article 115 of the CC | / | / | / |
| Domestic violence Article 194 of the CC | 1,146 | 3.78 | 254 |
| **2019** | Murder Article 113 of the CC | 52 | 9 | 2 |
| Aggravated Murder Article 114 of the CC  | 14 | 11 | 2 |
| Murder Article 115 of the CC | / | / | / |
| Domestic violence Article 194 of the CC | 1,386 | 4,493 | 521 |
| **2018** | Murder Article 113 of the CC | 94 | 95 | 96 |
| Aggravated Murder Article 114 of the CC  | 49 | 12 | 1 |
| Murder Article 115 of the CC | 28 | 9 | 1 |
| Domestic violence Article 194 of the CC | 1,861 | 5,166 | 274 |

1. Established by the Law on the Judicial Academy, “Official Gazette of the RS”, No. 104/2009, 32/2014- decision of the CC and 106/2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence (“Official Gazette of the RS”, No. 94/2016 - Article 7, paragraphs 1- 2. “The police, public prosecution services, courts of general jurisdiction and misdemeanour courts, as competent state authorities, and social work centres, as institutions, are competent to prevent domestic violence and provide protection and support to victims of domestic violence and **victims of crimes determined by this law**”. In addition to the competent state authorities and social work centres, other institutions in the area of child protection, social protection, education, upbringing and health (hereinafter: state bodies and institutions responsible for the application of this law), as well as bodies dealing with gender equality at the level of local self-governments, shall participate in the prevention of domestic violence through the provision of assistance and notification of violence, as well as through the provision of support to victims of violence.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)