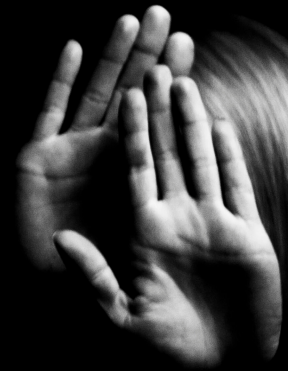


ქალთა მიმართ ძალადობის და
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მომუშავე ორგანიზაციების
მიმართვა სახელმწიფო უწყებებს



Organizations working on the issues of violence against women and domestic violence address the state entities

We, organizations, working on the issues of violence against women and domestic violence, call upon the relevant state entities to take effective steps to prevent violence against women and domestic violence as well as to respond to the incidents promptly and effectively during the state of emergency.

Home is not a safe place for women and girls, who experience domestic violence, sexual assault, and forced marriage. In order to follow the measures taken to stop the COVID-19 pandemic, they have to stay home, which gives the abusers advantage and they make use of the current situation against their victims to strengthen their control upon them. It should be noted, that during the past two weeks, more women contacted us for legal assistance regarding violence, rather than at any other time. International experience also shows that violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic is another challenge that the state must respond to with

effective steps.

The measures imposed due to the state of emergency, also reduce the possibilities to involve lawyers to help the victims, which is another barrier for women and girls to ensure access to justice.

An additional risk for victims is that due to the pandemic, probationers (including those convicted of domestic violence) are exempt from the obligation to appear to the Probation Bureau.

In response to the current challenges, it is important:

- To adopt interim procedures that will enable the victims during the state of emergency to give testimony/explanation, with the involvement of a lawyer remotely, by electronic means.

- Given the current situation, to adapt the rules that will enable the victim and the lawyer remotely to be informed about the course of the investigation and to get acquainted with the case-file.

- Where possible-to participate remotely in the process of conducting investigative activities.

In addition, we call upon:

- The Prime Minister, Minister of Internal Affairs and other High Officials-**to make clear public statements, that the cases of violence against women and domestic violence during the pandemic will not be left without a response;

- The Ministry of Internal Affairs-**to intensify public communication about the services to which victims will have an access, among them, about sending messages. The information should also be available in the language of ethnic minorities. Also, give proper instructions to police officers not to fine the victim of violence if s/he violates the rules of quarantine (between 21:00-06:00 o'clock).

- The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia-**to adopt (or if applicable-publish) a protocol specifying how the safety of victims (both, inhabitants of the shelter and newcomers) is being protected in order to prevent infection of COVID-19, also, how a

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child placed in a shelter is being taken care of, if a parent gets infected.

-The Ministry of Justice- In order to reduce the risks of repeated crime to take preventive measures against probationers convicted of domestic crime.

Signatories:

Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA)

Union "Sapari"

Partnership for Human Rights (PHR)