



No More Excuses for Domestic Violence

It is natural that violence happens after someone drinks alcohol or uses drugs.

NO EXCUSES FOR VIOLENCE

Domestic violence remains among the most widespread forms of violence perpetrated worldwide. The Kosovo Women's Network's (KWN) newest research, entitled *No More Excuses: An Analysis of Attitudes, Incidence, and Institutional Responses to Domestic Violence in Kosovo*, assesses changes in: citizen awareness of domestic violence, incidence, and institutional response since 2008. It seeks to inform the process of drafting the new National Strategy and Action Plan on Domestic Violence, to be launched in 2016, as well as to provide individual institutions with concrete recommendations towards improving their approach in addressing domestic violence.

The 10-month research involved mixed methods, including a Kosovo-wide household survey of 1,315 randomly selected women and men ages 18+ of all ethnic groups; interviews with more than 200 representatives of institutions and other key actors; and a review of the legal framework.

What is domestic violence?

The Law on Protection against Domestic Violence (2010) defines acts of domestic violence as: "intentional acts or omissions when committed by a person against another person with whom the person is in a domestic relationship". Such acts may include physical force, psychological pressure, threatening the person or his/her family members, causing fear, threatening dignity, physical assault, insults (e.g., name-calling), intimidation, non-consensual sexual acts, limiting freedom of movement, damaging property, forcibly entering a common residence, forcibly removing someone from a common residence, and kidnapping. Notably, many of these acts also are defined as crimes

Did you know



Several international conventions are applicable in Kosovo, which say how states should respond to domestic violence:

- ▶ Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- ▶ European Convention on Human Rights
- ▶ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

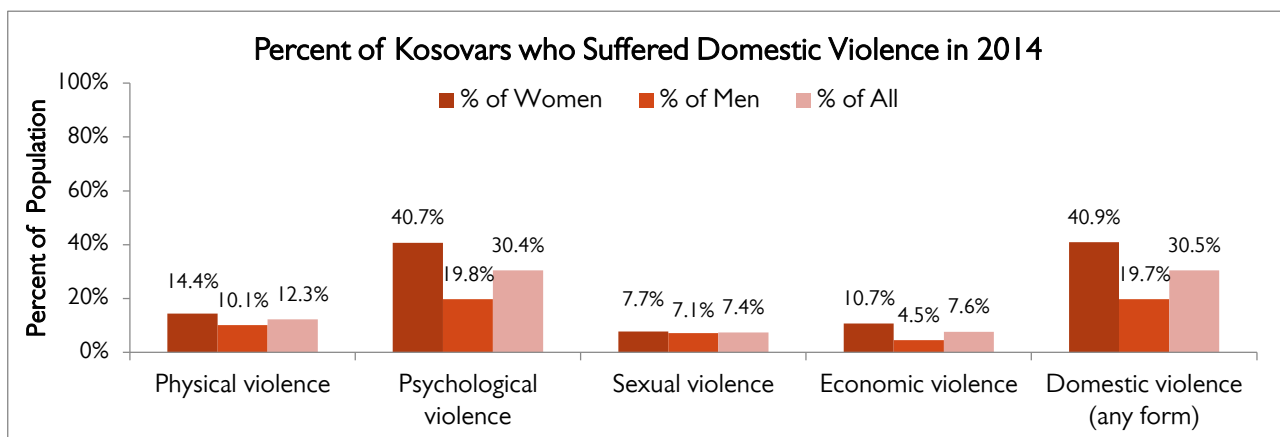
within the Criminal Code of Kosovo. It does not matter if these acts occur within a family, **behind closed doors**: they are still illegal and should be automatically prosecuted in accordance with the law!

The Law on Protection against Domestic Violence also defines what constitutes a domestic relationship. Such relationships exist among persons if they are now or were ever in the past: engaged, married, in an extra-marital relationship, cohabitating in a common household, in a guardianship relationship, are parents of a common child, are procedural parties in a dispute related to family relations, and/or are connected by blood, marriage, or adoption.

This Law provides for protection orders, which can include several special measures to protect persons who have suffered domestic violence, such as: psychosocial treatment, banning the perpetrator from approaching the victim at a certain distance, banning harassment of the victim by the perpetrator, removing the perpetrator from a shared residence, medical treatment for the perpetrator for drug and alcohol dependency, confiscation of weapons, ordering the perpetrator to pay rent or child alimony, ordering the perpetrator to allow the victim to return to a common household, and prohibiting the perpetrator from selling assets.

Is there domestic violence in Kosovo?

- ▶ 62% of Kosovars have suffered one or more forms of domestic violence in their lifetimes (56% of men and 68% of women).
- ▶ In 2014, 31% of Kosovars suffered violence (41% of women and 20% of men).
- ▶ At least 22 people were murdered by persons with whom they had a domestic relationship between 2005 and 2015.
- ▶ 7% of Kosovars said their partner pressured them to have sex when they didn't want to in 2014.
- ▶ Statistically, women are more likely to suffer domestic violence than men.
- ▶ Interestingly, there is no statistically significant relationship between experiencing violence in 2014 and geographic location (rural/urban or region), educational level, receiving social assistance, or income.



What do people know and think about domestic violence?

- ▶ In some ways people's knowledge about domestic violence has improved since KWN conducted its last Kosovo-wide household survey in 2008. Today, 75.3% of Kosovars know that a Law on Protection against Domestic Violence exists in Kosovo, whereas only 55.7% knew about the prior Regulation in 2008.
- ▶ More people tend to consider various forms of physical violence as domestic violence than in 2008.
- ▶ Despite these improvements, nearly one-third of Kosovars believe that domestic "violence is a normal part of any relationship, and society in general accepts that violence happens sometimes".
- ▶ Further, nearly one in three Kosovars believes that domestic violence is "a family matter, so neighbours shouldn't report it to police", which may prevent the reporting of violence.
- ▶ While 73.6% of respondents said they would contact police if they experienced domestic violence, very few knew about other actors that could offer them services, such as Victim Advocates, Centres for Social Work, or women's organizations.

Can you believe that...

- ▶ 21% of Kosovars agree that "Sometimes it is okay for a husband to hit his wife."
- ▶ 53% think that "If a husband is unemployed, violence is bound to happen sometimes."
- ▶ 24.6% believe that "sexual intercourse can never be violence if it happens between two adults who are married."
- ▶ 45.8% do not consider "controlling where a person can or cannot go" a form of violence.
- ▶ 33.9% think its "natural that family violence happens after someone drinks alcohol."

P.S. In case you're not sure, none of these statements are true! There's never any excuse for domestic violence!! EVER.

How well are institutions responding to domestic violence?

Overall, the response of institutions to domestic violence in Kosovo seems to have improved since 2008. Police in particular are better trained and tend to know their duties. Several basic courts now have civil court judges specialized in domestic violence cases, an important improvement. However, several challenges remain:

- ▶ Inadequate services for persons who have suffered violence, including sustainably funded shelters, services for rehabilitation, quality long-term psychological counselling, and places to go after shelter. Still weak coordination among institutions in supporting persons who have suffered domestic violence.
- ▶ Insufficient availability of counselling services and treatment programs for perpetrators of violence.
- ▶ Poor enforcement of protection order measures, such as perpetrators paying child alimony.
- ▶ Some, albeit not all, still inadequately trained persons within institutions, particularly on legal responsibilities, the importance of confidentiality, and the appropriate approach in working with persons suffering trauma from domestic violence.
- ▶ Some representatives of institutions still (wrongly) "blame the victim" for crimes perpetrated against them.
- ▶ Several also try to "reconcile" families, which is not part of the roles and responsibilities of most institutions and may undermine their responsibility to ensure protection or justice.
- ▶ Insufficient resources in some institutions, including human resources, space, and supplies.
- ▶ Weak consolidation and reporting on statistics pertaining to domestic violence cases, including in criminal proceedings, particularly by courts and health institutions, which have not yet digitalized files sufficiently to allow for the monitoring of trends.

We were going to intervene, but I heard that the woman was cheating on her husband.
[Police Officer]

NO EXCUSES
for failing to investigate