

Exhibition



Ending violence
behind walls

Inside the Walls

In Kosovo, domestic violence often remains hidden, private, behind the walls of the home. When people hear violence next door, they still say “What happens in their home is their business”.

This exhibition brings out of these walls and into public space only a few of the many, real stories of women and men who have suffered domestic violence in Kosovo, collected by the Kosovo Women’s Network.

Come. Have the courage to walk within these walls, within this labyrinth. Just be careful. Be careful because you may become confused, disoriented, and even disappointed. Be careful, because you may feel, if only briefly, like 68% of women in Kosovo who have suffered domestic violence in their lifetimes. Come, listen, and think:

How can we break through these walls together? How can we put an end to silent suffering?

21% of Kosovars still say that:

**"Sometimes it is
acceptable for a man to
hit his wife."**

**Children should not be
disciplined with slaps.**

But every third Kosovar still thinks that its ok.

**Just because you are
unemployed, it's not an
excuse to be violent
with your wife.**

But every fourth Kosovar doesn't know.

**It doesn't matter if you
are married. Forced
sexual intercourse
is violence.**

62% of Kosovars

have suffered domestic
violence in their lifetimes.

256,000 Women

124,000 Men

suffered domestic
violence in 2014.

55+ Women

died from gender-based
violence since 2015.

What is domestic violence according to the Law?

If you feel lost in this labyrinth, there are people who can be your guide.

Victim Advocates can advise, counsel and support you:

0800 11 112. It's a free, 24-hour service.

Shelters can help you as well:

Prishtinë: 038-545-476

Gjilan: 0280-325-700, 0280-325-900

Gjakovë: 0390-330-098, 044-830-151

Mitrovicë: 028-534-351

Ferizaj: 049-334-354

Prizren: 029-234-794

Pejë: 044-278-809, 039-421-398

The use of force

Psychological pressure

Threats to inflict physical pain and psychological suffering

Inflicting fear, violating dignity

Physical attacks

Insults, swearing, calling of offensive names

Repetitive behaviour that aims to humiliate a person

Sexual relations without consent and sexual mistreatment

Restricting freedom of movement

Damaging and destroying goods, or threatening to do so

Inflicting fear on a person, regarding his/her physical, emotional or economic situation

Making someone enter or leave, by force, from a joint apartment/house

Kidnapping

Stories Told on Television

— “When I was a child, my cousin tried to rape me. He grabbed me and undressed me. I started to cry and I didn’t give up fighting. I don’t even know how I managed to escape and run”.

— “I was only nine years old when my mother died, leaving me alone with my father. My father did some weird things to me, but I didn’t know what was happening because I was only nine at that time. For three years he sexually abused me. Only when I turned 16, I realized what was happening to me, and only then I notified the police... my father was punished for what he did”.

— “When I was 16 years old I had a boyfriend. For the first time I had sexual intercourse, but it was in a violent way. I didn’t know what would happen to me, and after that I lost control, and I thought that my body was just for him. I didn’t accept my family’s help and also I lost self-respect and respect for others”.

— “Often, Selvije was telling me how her husband used to make her have sex when she was very tired and exhausted from all the work. She opened up to me about how her relatives tell her “You have to serve your husband, not only when it suits you”. After some time, she was raped by both her father in law and brother in law. The poor woman used to tell me how they had chained her to the bed and would do whatever they wanted to her body. Even the law didn’t protect her from this, so she decided to jump out of the window. Again, she changed her mind and said “Maybe they will change”. But no, it was written that she should suffer. Still, the same thing continued. One day I heard a gunshot. I knew it immediately. She left.”

— “We were happy and loved each other ... until my husband began drinking alcohol and playing the lottery. The problems began with maltreatment. It was rare in the beginning, but more often later. My husband began being violent also with our children who helped me.”

— “When I was a child, I remember watching my parents. I have seen horrible things. My father would beat my mother until she passed out... eventually my parents divorced. I was sent to live with my father and never saw my mother again during my childhood. But this didn’t solve things. The abuse continued against me and my siblings... Looking back, I wish the judge who sent us to my father would have considered that being poor with my mother, if she stayed unemployed, may have been better for us than being beaten by my father, even if he had a good job.”

— “Because of the physical violence that I experienced, I had an injured vertebra in my spine, my hand cut with a knife, and head broken. If the walls of my room could speak they would tell all kinds of things... So many tears were dropped on the pillows, so many moans ...many times without having eaten or drank. This is how I got sick.”

— "I had many health problems at that time, and even in that situation my mother in law made pressure on me to have children. Sometimes, she used to lock me in a room. I ended up peeing in a small bowl, like an animal".

—"When I was not in the room, she often told my husband to break up with me "leave her, can't you see that she is not giving birth to your child".

— "One day, my husband sent me to visit my family. I was telling my sister about how my mother in law is making me pressure to have a child and about everything else she's doing to me, and she replied "if you were my daughter in law, I too would tell him to leave you".

— "My family married me to a man who already had a wife but who was barren. After I gave birth to my kids, they didn't allow me to raise them as their mother because I have a disability. Now the kids are all grown up, but they don't recognize me as their mother..."

— "I suffered a lot from my husband. He beat me, he swore at me, he hit me... and I didn't say anything. I couldn't. Now these young girls divorce for only a word...they can't stand...they dare to speak up... to oppose. You can't ruin a family for something small. I've told my daughters that they should have patience and listen to their husband. To not even say a word..."

— "I had scars all over my body. The psychological burden made me feel suicidal. I drank many pills to try to kill myself, but I didn't achieve my goal because they sent me to the hospital and the doctors cleaned my body with infusions, so I got better."

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I am 78 years old. I have no family of my own, so I had to go to my brother's place. But his kids who are around 18 to 20 years old mistreat me, beat me, take my pension, my savings. Nobody helps me, neither the neighbours nor anybody else... I have nowhere to go because there isn't a place designated for old people.

Because of the physical violence that I experienced, I had an injured vertebra in my spine, my hand cut with a knife, and head broken. If the walls of my room could speak they would tell all kinds of things... So many tears were dropped on the pillows, so many moans ...many times without having eaten or drunk. This is how I got sick.

Retaining Walls

Once we break down these walls, a host of institutions can help us. They will help you who are suffering violence... They will help you who want to help someone else who is suffering violence.

These are the “Retaining Walls”. They provide a firm foundation of support, where we can seek help, demand justice, secure economic autonomy.

If these walls fail to assist us, we can open the door of the Ombudsperson Institution, which stands ready support us when other institutions have not listened or performed their responsibilities properly.

The Kosovo Police

Do you know that your first point of contact and help can be the Police?

How can you contact the Police?

Call 192. It's free!

What can the Police do for you?

The Kosovo Police has women and men police officers who specialize in dealing with cases of domestic violence. They should:

- Listen to you.
 - Accompany you and answer all of your questions.
 - Arrest the perpetrator immediately
 - Notify the State Prosecutor about the case.
 - Tell you about other services.
 - They also can provide a Temporary Emergency Protection Order
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Not happy with the performance of the police?

If you are unhappy with the police's performance, or the officer and his supervisor who have dealt with your case, you can report this to the Police Inspectorate.

Police Inspectorate

What should this institution do?

- It should investigate misconduct by employees of the Kosovo Police Force, regardless of their rank or position.
- It should inform victims, guiding them through the process, as well as notifying other necessary institutions.

How can you contact the Police Inspectorate?

Call 08000 3333. It's free and works 24 hours.

If you are unhappy with the services of the Police Inspectorate, you can head to the Ombudsperson Institution.

State Prosecutor

What should the State Prosecutor do?

- He/she should review the case to determine if there is enough evidence to support criminal prosecution.
 - He/she should act jointly with the victim if needed.
 - After collecting evidence, the Prosecutor should either file criminal charges or refute accusations.
 - The Prosecutor must inform the victim of the status of his/her case.
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How can you report poor performance by prosecutors?

- Any person or institution can file a complaint.
 - The Disciplinary Office of the Prosecution starts the investigation of the prosecutor if there's evidence that the law has been violated.
 - This office recommends to the Council's Disciplinary Commission whether they should start a disciplinary procedure against the prosecutor, based on the investigation that has taken place.
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If you are not happy with the performance of the Prosecutor or how the Disciplinary Commission has handled your case, you can head to the Ombudsperson Institution.

The Victim Advocacy and Assistance Office

What should this Office do?

- They meet victims immediately after police take action.
- Build a rapport with the victim that lasts throughout the process.
- Represent the best interests of victims by acting in their name and requesting protection of their rights.
- Make sure that the victim understands the services that the state can offer and how to access them.
- Identify sources that fulfil the needs of victims of crimes and push forward their rehabilitation.
- Identify shortcomings in services and cooperate in coordination with other service providers to best fulfil victims' needs.

Where is the Office located?

Within the Office of the State Prosecutor of Kosovo. Regional offices are located in 7 regions in Kosovo: Prishtina, Ferizaj, Gjilan, Prizren, Peja, Gjakova and Mitrovica.

How can you contact Victim Advocates?

Call 0800 11 112. It's free and 24 hours.

If you are not pleased with the performance of victim advocates, you can file a complaint with the office manager, then with the state prosecutor who will open a case in court. In the end, you can approach the Ombudsperson Institution.

The Agency for Free Legal Aid

How can this institution help you?

- Judicial assistance is offered to all people who have the right to social welfare and marginalized groups who don't have sufficient means for protection during court procedures.
- You have the right to request free legal assistance if you are a victim of domestic violence.
- This includes assistance in compiling a complaint, lawsuit or other legal documents.
- If you are a victim, they will support access to justice, give you information and legal counsel, and represent you before courts or administrative bodies.

How do you request assistance?

- Agencies for Free Legal Aid exist in Prishtina, Peja, Prizren and Northern Mitrovica.
- You can submit a request to receive free legal aid at the office nearest you.
- You must provide the requested documentation to support your request for free legal aid.

Where can you appeal about a decision on free legal aid?

- You have the right to appeal the decision if your request for free legal aid has been refused.
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- The appeal should be presented to the Commission for Complaints within 8 days.
 - The Commission decides within 30 days from the day that they received the appeal.
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What if you are unhappy with the legal aid services provided to you?

You can send a complaint to the Commission for Complaints of the Council, which will decide within 15 days of receiving it. If you are still unhappy with the performance of the Office for Free Legal Aid, you can approach the Ombudsperson Institution.

Courts

What are the Courts responsible for?

- Courts should prioritize cases of violence, treating them justly and respectfully during criminal proceedings.
 - They can provide protection measures to prevent domestic violence and to protect the person who has suffered violence.
 - The civil departments in basic courts are responsible for issuing emergency protection orders (within 24 hours) and protection orders. They decide about the types of protection measures that a protection order will contain.
 - The Prosecution must follow possible violations of protection measures, as such violations constitute a criminal offense.
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Did you know that a Protection Order can protect you in different ways?

The Court can issue protective measures that seek to prevent violence. You can request the following measures from a judge:

- That the perpetrator cannot get close to you and upset you
- If the perpetrator is an alcohol or drug addict, you can request treatment for his/her addiction
- Psychosocial treatment for the perpetrator
- For the perpetrator to leave the apartment or house
- If you need to collect your things, then you have the right to be accompanied by a police officer
- To take the tool used in violence
- To stay in the joint space of living
- For the perpetrator to pay the cost for temporary rent
- For the perpetrator to pay alimony for you and your child.

The Basic Court decides which measures they will issue in an order.

How can you reach the right Court?

In the municipality where you reside, submit a request and the Basic Court will issue protective measures.

Who can submit the request for an emergency protection order?

- The victim
 - The Victim's Advocate with the consent of the victim
 - The person with whom the victim has family ties
 - The person who has knowledge about one or more cases of domestic violence against the victim
 - NGOs who are familiar with the problem of the victim and who are well-informed about their treatment.
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How do you report the illegal actions or misconduct of judges?

Complaints regarding the actions of judges can be presented to the Disciplinary Commission of the Judicial Council of Kosovo (JCK).

- This office will deliver the evidence and case to the Disciplinary Commission of the JCK, supporting disciplinary measures.
- JCK can take the initiative to open a case.
- If you disagree with the decision of the basic court, you can appeal to the Court of Appeals.
- **If you are still unhappy, you can go to the Ombudsperson Institution.**

Shelters

What do shelters offer?

- They offer shelter services for women and children who have suffered domestic violence.
 - They offer victims a safe, temporary place to reside if they are at risk of domestic violence.
 - Kosovo has eight shelters in: Ferizaj, Gjakova, Gjilan, Novobardo, Peja, Prizren, Prishtina and South Mitrovica.
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What do shelters offer?

- They can submit requests for protection orders and emergency protection orders.
 - They help victims during the process of self-recovery, including by providing psychological care, physical care, rehabilitation and reintegration support.
 - Most shelters offer legal assistance as well.
 - Some collaborate with local businesses to help employ sheltered women.
 - All shelter services are free.
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How can you enter a shelter?

If you are a victim of domestic violence, you can request help directly from a shelter:

Prishtina: 038-545-476

Gjilan: 0280-325-700, 0280-325-900

Gjakova: 0390-330-098, 044-830-151

Mitrovica: 028-534-351

Ferizaj: 049-334-354

Prizren: 029-234-794

Peja: 044-278-809, 039-421-398

The Centre for Social Work

Every municipality has a Centre for Social Work.

What does this Centre do?

- It protects citizens who need social and family services.
- It protects and offers services to persons who have suffered domestic violence.
- It offers social services to victims, such as protection, rehabilitation and reintegration into society.
- It appoints a case manager for each victim.
- The case manager examines the social and economic situation of victims of violence.
- During court cases, the social worker testifies about the needs of the child while considering their best interests, including the appointment of a guardian if the need arises.
- Social workers must ensure confidentiality.

Are you aware that you can file a complaint if:

- A social worker breaks confidentiality and spreads information about your case;
- You think that you have been discriminated against;
- You think that you have been denied social services;
- You think that the social worker has taken an unjust decision regarding social services.

The complaint procedure is as follows:

- The Director of the Centre for Social Work should review the case;
- If you are unhappy with the response from the Director, you can proceed with the complaint to the Department for Social Welfare;
- The Commission for complaints must review the complaint, documentation and interview witnesses, if needed;

If you are unhappy with the decision of the Commission for Complaints, then you can approach the police or the court. If you are not pleased with the performance of these institutions and the way your case has been handled, then approach the Ombudsperson Institution.

Vocational Training Centres and Employment Offices

What is the role of these institutions?

- Vocational Training Centres (VTC) and Employment Offices must help persons who have suffered domestic violence with professional development and reintegration into society.
- These institutions can identify and assist victims of violence.
- They encounter violence, they can refer victims to institutions or organizations that can support victims.
- VTC provide professional counseling for employment and career advice, mediate during the employment process, and offer information to job seekers.
- These services can be provided to victims who haven't entered a shelter as well.

Do you have complaints about the work of VTC?

You can complain to the Director of the VTC, the Inspectorate for Employment or to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare Division for reviewing and submission of complaints.

If you're not happy with these institutions, then approach the Ombudsperson Institution.

Health and Educational Institutions

What do health institutions offer?

- After experiencing violence, victims often approach healthcare centers for treatment.
- They offer victims healthcare and psychological treatment, as well as refer victims to other relevant institutions.
- Doctors in health institutions must ensure confidentiality of all information.
- They must make sure that they offer victims of domestic violence healthcare, even if the victim does not wish not to report the case to the police.
- Healthcare workers who observe violence can assist victims in reporting it to the police.

What should you do if you aren't pleased with the services offered?

- If you've requested any of the aforementioned services and you aren't pleased with the way you have been treated by this institution, go to the Disciplinary Commission and then to the Health Director of the municipality where you reside.
- If you do not find a solution, you can report the case to the police. They should start an investigation and file a criminal case in the court.
- If these institutions do not investigate the case according to your complaint, then approach the Ombudsperson Institution.

What can educational institutions do?

- Some schools have psychologists who are there to help and support kids who have suffered violence or who have witnessed it.
- They are important for identifying and protecting children victims of domestic violence.

Hey teacher, if you see signs of violence, report it!

Report violence to the school director, and then to the Directorate for Education in your municipality. If they do not take any action, then go to the police and Center for Social Work, which can assist you with the legal procedures.

Ombudsperson Institution

What does the Ombudsperson do?

- He/she addresses accusations of human rights violations carried out by state institutions (e.g. courts, police, and prosecution).
- Treats cases of violence if there has been any irregularity or if the rights of the victim have been undermined.
- Accepts complaints from people whose rights have been violated by state institutions.
- Informs relevant institutions about the start of investigations, if he/she deems that the law has been violated.

How can you contact the Ombudsperson Institution?

Call 0800 15555. It's free!



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