

The Women's Human Rights Program of The Advocates for Human Rights applies international human rights standards to advocate for women's human rights in the United States and around the world. One of the ways The Women's Human Rights program carries out this mission is through its work on domestic violence legal reform, including trainings for legal professionals and extensive research and reports monitoring domestic violence laws and implementation in partner countries.

In 2003, we launched the Stop Violence Against Women website, [www.stopvaw.org](http://www.stopvaw.org). StopVAW provides current research, news about promising practices, model laws, implementation and training modules on violence against women. The Advocates has also worked with the United Nations to develop the *Legislation* section of the new Virtual Knowledge Center to End Violence Against Women, <http://www.endvawnow.org/?legislation>. This section provides expert guidance on drafting, advocating for, implementing, and monitoring national legislation from diverse regions in the world.

In addition to these online resources, The Advocates frequently provides consultation on drafting laws on domestic violence at the request of government officials and NGOs from around the world. We have provided commentary on new and proposed domestic violence laws for 19 countries. In 2008 and 2009, Cheryl Thomas, the Director of the Women's Program, participated in United Nations Expert Group Meetings in Austria and Ethiopia to develop handbooks on drafting legislation on violence against women.

### Monitoring Domestic Violence Laws

- In collaboration with our partner, the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (BGRF), The Advocates published the report, *Implementation of the Bulgarian Law on Protection against Domestic Violence* in 2008. The recommendations in this report resulted in changes and improvements to the domestic violence law in Bulgaria
- The Advocates traveled to Croatia in 2010 and 2011 to conduct interviews and research for a human rights monitoring report that is scheduled for publication in March, 2012.
- Most recently, The Advocates traveled to Moldova at the invitation of a local partner, The Women's Law Center and in collaboration with BGRF to conduct interviews with police, prosecutors, judges, direct service providers and victims of domestic violence as the first phase in creating a human rights report on the implementation of the domestic violence law in Moldova. The report is scheduled to be completed in 2012.

### Trainings for Legal Professionals

The Advocates provides trainings to lawyers, police, prosecutors, and judges on the implementation of new and existing criminal and civil laws on domestic violence and best practices in responding to these cases. We prepare and conduct these trainings at the invitation of and in collaboration with local partners so that the trainings reflect the nuances of the laws, legal system, and other important community dynamics that will affect the success of the trainings.

The Advocates has conducted such trainings in: Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, and Morocco.

***"The seminars you led with police, judges, and prosecutors in Lithuania were the first training of this sort for law enforcement there. You played a key role in changing their mindsets about domestic violence and empowering them to take action to prevent it."***

*-Training partner  
May, 2011*