

Countries Work to Monitor and Implement Laws on Violence against Women and Girls

As part of The Advocates for Human Rights' work in creating the section on Developing Legislation on Violence against Women and Girls for UNIFEM's new website, the Global Centre to End Violence against Women and Girls (<http://endvawnow.org>), we recently asked our colleagues from around the world to share information on projects on advocacy, monitoring and implementation of laws on violence against women and girls that have worked well in their countries. In the next several VAW Monitors, The Advocates will highlight some of the responses we received. We thank all who sent us examples of their work. The scope of the work that dedicated activists accomplish each year to end violence against women is truly inspiring!

In **Albania**, the process of drafting a law on domestic violence involved the cooperation of international organizations and many Albanian NGOs, including the [Citizen's Advocacy Office](#), the [Center for Legal Initiatives](#), and the [Women Advocacy Center](#), as well as a public awareness campaign to support the need for the law. The law "[On Measures against Domestic Violence](#)" (2006) was the first citizen's bill presented to the Albanian Parliament in the history of Albanian democracy. The law was followed by the State Strategy for Gender Equality and Domestic Violence 2001-2010, which was also created through a participatory and inclusive process. Still to come are hotlines and adequate shelters and support systems for victims. The Network against Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking began work in 2007 to build a referral network for case management and a database system for keeping records on domestic violence cases.

[Refleksione Association](#), **Albania**, on behalf of the Network against Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking, is implementing a two-year project called "Making it Real: Implementing the Law against Domestic Violence in Albania." The core initiative of the project is piloting the development and implementation of integrated and sustainable referral systems for women victims of violence at the local level. The project also involves trainings for police, prosecutors, and lawyers so that their knowledge and capacity to fulfill the responsibilities assigned to them in the Albanian law is increased.

[UNDP Albania](#), [UNICEF Albania](#), and [UNDP Small Arms Project](#) supported the [Albanian Institute of Statistics](#) in conducting a national domestic violence survey in Albania. The survey report, [Domestic Violence in Albania: A national population-based survey](#), was published in March of 2009. The goal of this significant project, the first of its kind in Albania, was to establish national baseline data on domestic violence in Albania.

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[Different and Equal NGO](#) in **Albania** reported that Albanian NGOs have conducted a number of monitoring studies on different aspects of laws on violence against women, including:

- [Enforcement of the Law on Measures against Domestic Violence](#) (2009) *Monitoring of the decisions of the Tirana District Court on the issuance of the Protection Orders/Immediate protection orders and cases of domestic violence victims supported with free legal aid by the Center for Legal Civic Initiatives (CLCI). Monitoring period 30.04.2008 – 01.06.2009.* Prepared by Center for Legal Civic Initiatives and Civil Rights Defenders For more information visit the website: <http://www.qag-al.org>.
- [Study on the Social-Economic Reintegration of Victims of Trafficking in Albania](#) (2009), prepared by the NGO “Different & Equal.” For more information visit the website: <http://www.differentandequal.org>.
- [Violence in the Family and in the Communities with Different Ethnicities](#) (2008), prepared by the Psycho –Social Center “[Vatra](#).” For more information visit the website: <http://www.qendravatra.org.al>

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In 2007-2009, the [Gender Alliance for Development Center](#) (GADC) of **Albania** created and implemented a number of trainings to increase the professional capacities of those who work directly with victims of domestic violence. They trained forensic experts, judges, prosecutors, police, bailiffs, and social service workers not only on the domestic violence law in Albania, “On Measures against Domestic Violence” (2006), but also on the importance of establishing a cooperative network of professionals. “Joint trainings with all these actors...not only will increase the capacities of local law enforcement professionals, it will also set up the necessary bridges of communication to make the intervention effective,” responded Mirela Arqimandriti, Executive Director of GADC.

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The [Human Rights in Democracy Centre](#) (HRDC) of **Albania** has worked with victims of violence since 2004, and is currently monitoring the implementation of the law on domestic violence, particularly regarding the mandate given to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Interior to provide infrastructure to properly implement the law. They report that the Ministry of Health and other relevant authorities have prepared health protocols on domestic violence that enable victims to receive a forensic report and free-of-charge

medical treatment. However, HRDC has observed that particularly in rural areas, health care providers are not identifying cases of domestic violence or providing victims with forensic reports in order to prove the violence in court.

HRDC has also noted that, although the violation of protection order is a crime according to Article 320 of the [Albanian Criminal Code](#), in many cases police do not proceed with criminal proceedings when violations of protection orders occur. Police also have a legal duty to refer victims and if necessary, transport them, to assistance centers. HRDC notes that implementation in this area is also lacking, and recommends that specialized domestic violence sections be established in every police station.

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In **Armenia**, in 2009, [UNFPA Armenia](#) initiated an assessment of the compliance of Armenian legislation with international standards on the protection of women's human rights. An expert group reviewed the laws, noted gaps in the legislation and made recommendations for amendments. The assessment noted that acts of gender-based violence in Armenia are not reported or prosecuted. Domestic violence is not penalized as a specific criminal offense, and there is a lack of protective measures for victims and their children. The recommendations for amendments to the laws in Armenia call for improvements in these areas. A focus group, consisting of government and civil society members, was convened to review the recommendations from a practitioner's standpoint and to design a strategy for implementation of the recommendations.

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The [Women's Rights Center](#) (WRC) of **Armenia**, in consultation with the [Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation- Armenia](#), has been working intensively on a draft law on domestic violence since 2008. They established a working group consisting of experts from government ministries, courts, and others. [The Advocates for Human Rights](#) has been involved as experts to assess the law at different stages of development, as well as to provide a training session on advocacy for the working group members in 2008. The WRC continues to lobby for the law.

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Also in **Armenia**, [UNFPA Armenia](#) and the [Armenian Statistical Service](#) implemented a quantitative survey to collect data on gender-based violence in

2009-2010, in response to the need for official data on violence against women and girls, so that the importance of addressing the problem could be substantiated. They sought to create an official baseline for policy makers in Armenia to utilize in the formation of policies and programs to reduce gender-based violence. Survey administrators collected representative information at the marz, or regional level in Armenia. (There are 11 marzes in Armenia.) Using the database of addresses from the 2001 population census, field workers visited nearly 5000 households and administered questionnaires on gender-based violence. A working group, consisting of ministry officials, police, and members of civil society and led by a sociologist and gender expert, was created to analyze the data. The results will be published during the second quarter of 2010.

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