

Countries Work to Monitor and Implement Laws on Violence against Women and Girls, Part 3

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!

The Anti-Violence Network of **Georgia** has participated in the elaboration of the National Action Plan for 2009-2010, and has prioritized active cooperation with the police. Together with the [Center for Protection of Constitutional Rights](#) and the [Georgian Young Lawyer's Association](#), they created a handbook for police, which supports implementation of the law against domestic violence and close cooperation between NGOs and the police, thus ensuring more effective protection of victims. The Anti-Violence Network has also trained police, social workers, journalists, medical professionals, lawyers, judges, and prosecutors. In 2008, the Inter-Institutional Council on Implementation of Actions for the Elimination of Violence was created, which unites government agencies and NGOs in their common objective to combat domestic violence in Georgia.

Contact information: [Anti-Violence Network of Georgia](#)

In **India**, the [Women's Rights Initiative of the Lawyers Collective](#) (LCWRI) has provided legal aid to survivors of domestic violence, sexual harassment, and sexual assault for over ten years. Lessons learned while providing legal aid were translated into advocacy initiatives aimed at effecting progressive law reform. Following years of draft preparation, regional consultations, and advocacy efforts, the [Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act](#) came into effect in 2006. That same year, the LCWRI began the process of monitoring the implementation of the law, and has published three monitoring reports to date. The reports and other advocacy materials produced by LCWRI under a project from the [UN Trust Fund on VAW](#) are available at <http://www.unifem.org.in/violenceagainstwomen.html>. The LCWRI is continuing its work of monitoring the implementation of the law using analysis of data collected from across the country and in partnership with other NGOs.

Contact information: Lawyers Collective Women's Rights Initiative:
<http://www.lawyerscollective.org/wri>

In **Kazakhstan**, the cooperation between government agencies and NGOs in preparation of strategies and programs to further the goals of the [National Plan of Action](#) and the [Strategy for Gender Equality](#) grows stronger as international standards on women's human rights are implemented. Law enforcement there aims to count protection of the rights of women as an integral part of protecting the rights and freedoms of its citizens. Thus, special police divisions have been created for women victims of violence, and the Department of Public Safety has created an automated databank on violence against women, which has the capacity to sort information by many parameters, including the consequences of the violence, the age of the victim, information about her life, and the decision reached in the criminal case.

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Kosovo has been the site of many projects since the end of the war in 1999. One of the most comprehensive projects involved the [UNDP](#) in partnership with the [Agency for Gender Equality](#), [Prime Minister's Office](#), [Kosova Women's Network](#), and the [Women's Safety and Security Initiative](#) (WSSI), which supported qualitative research on the forms of gender-based violence in Kosovo. The research findings served as a key reference for drafting the [Law on Domestic Violence](#) and the National Action Plan on Violence Against Women: Domestic Violence. (For more detail, see: <http://www.ks.undp.org/?cid+2,103,230>.)

Also under the UNDP WSSI, Kosovo judges and prosecutors were trained to effectively implement the laws and were informed about the kinds of abuses suffered by victims of trafficking, and how the abuse might affect a victim's ability to testify in court. The WSSI also established and equipped interviewing rooms for victims of trafficking and domestic violence in six regional police stations, and equipped the Trafficking in Human Beings Investigation Section in six regions with surveillance and recording equipment, including a vehicle.

Contact information: Luljeta Vuniqi, [Kosovar Center for Gender Studies](#).

In **Macedonia**, the Macedonia Women's Rights Center-Shelter Center has developed the program "Free Legal Aid" which provides legal advice and court representation to victims of domestic violence and others seeking divorce, including seeking custody of children and providing for their monetary support. They also help victims receive financial support through other channels. The MWRC-Shelter Center issued the report "[Monitoring of the court proceedings](#)," which identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the Macedonian legal framework regarding the protection of women's rights. Both criminal and civil court

proceedings were evaluated and their efficacy in domestic violence cases was noted for further strategic action.

Contact information: [Macedonia Women's Rights Center- Shelter Center](#).

Experts in **Moldova** have been working to develop the implementation mechanism for the Domestic Violence Law of Moldova, including amendments which would criminalize domestic violence, sexual harassment, and marital rape. The Women's Law Center of Moldova has conducted several trainings for judges, prosecutors, and lawyers on the implementation of Moldova's domestic violence law, which has resulted in the issuance of the first protection orders in Moldova. Activists continue to develop handbooks and training manuals for police, judges, prosecutors, and lawyers in domestic violence cases.

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The [National Center Against Violence](#) (NCAV) in **Mongolia** completed a study on forms of rape which are not covered under Mongolian legislation, such as incest, marital rape, and date rape, in 2008. The study found that despite the increasing incidence of these crimes reported in recent years, law enforcement does not view these as forms of rape. Charges which do not involve the use of physical force are dismissed as not actionable under the current Criminal Code. The study also found that rape victims must often give testimony many times, are not granted privacy in the interview setting, and that officers lack training in assisting victims of rape. These obstacles contribute to a general reluctance in society to report rapes. The NCAV recommended, among other recommendations, that the legislation on rape be changed to include rape without physical force and that it include specific provisions on incest, marital rape, and date rape. It noted that special investigative procedures should be developed which ensure confidentiality and safety for victims as well as favorable and prompt investigation conditions. The NCAV called for female police officers with special training to deal with cases of rape and for a code of ethics regarding these vulnerable victims. See: [The situation of sexual violence and rape and relevant legislation in Mongolia](#).

After the tragic suicide of a small boy who feared the abuse of his step-father, the NCAV successfully lobbied for the adoption of the National Program on Combating Domestic Violence in 2007. Under this program, NCAV's shelters began to receive partial funding for their operation, thus implementing a first step in ensuring that the government of Mongolia meets its obligation to provide safety for its citizens. The NCAV also asked the Supreme Court of Mongolia to issue interpretations on specific provisions of the [Law on Combating Domestic Violence](#) to facilitate the effectiveness of the law. Subsequently, the Court

declared that a restraining order need not require proof of physical damage to the victim, and that separation measures mean that courts must require the perpetrator not to live with the victim in the same home.

Contact information: The [National Center Against Violence](#).

In **Montenegro**, [SOS Hotline Niksic](#) implemented the project “Mobbing and sexual harassment in a new employment law” in 2008-2009. The NGO obtained relevant data on the prevalence of harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace in Montenegro, which was then used to lobby government ministries for proposed amendments. This was the first time that this type of data had been obtained. SOS Hotline Niksic also implemented a program of coordinated actions for the elimination of domestic violence, including: an initiative to establish the Council for Gender Equality as a permanent parliamentary body in Niksic municipality; creating police protocol in domestic violence cases; and trainings for police, prosecutors, the judiciary, health professionals, and others on domestic violence and gender equality. The entire program was later cited by [CIDA](#) as one of the most successful projects they realized with partner NGOs.

From 2004-2009, [SOS Podgorica](#) conducted a number of monitoring studies of law and policy in Montenegro. It also signed Memorandums of Understanding with relevant institutions and formed multidisciplinary teams in four towns to educate key stakeholders on domestic violence issues. SOS Podgorica has worked to implement a project to build the capacity of health care professionals to treat abused women and children and has created protocols, in partnership with the police, to prevent and investigate domestic violence cases and to improve the protection of victims. The NGO believes that these projects were successful due to the participation of all interested stakeholders, including victims. SOS Podgorica plans to provide further education to all institutions involved in violence against women cases and to continue to exchange positive practices and lessons learned with fellow professionals.

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