

## Countries Work to Monitor and Implement Laws on Violence against Women and Girls, Part 4

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!

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In **Russia**, [ANNA, the National Center for the Prevention of Violence](#), formed a National Independent Commission on Women's Human Rights and Violence against Women in 2008 to monitor women's human rights violations. Members of the Commission included experts on gender equality and gender-based violence, experienced crisis counselors, and advocates for women's rights. The Commission investigated reports of domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, trafficking in women, and violent crimes against women as part of traditional practices. The Commission drew from interviews, expert surveys, information provided by NGOs, an analysis of media articles, and an analysis of survivor complaints. The result, [Territory of Silence: Women's Human Rights and Violence against Women in Russia](#), is the first report to document these practices solely and exclusively edited by Russian experts.

Among other findings, the Commission found that two-thirds of homicides in Russia can be attributed to domestic violence. It noted that there are only 200 beds for women and children in a country of 142 million people. The Commission also found that killings committed in the name of "honor" and bride abductions occur in Russia. It noted that the non-responsiveness of state officials to complaints of violence against women constitute a violation of Russia's obligations under several human rights instruments, and called upon the Government of the Russian Federation to develop and implement a National Action Plan on Combating and Preventing Violence against Women.

For more information, contact Center ANNA, at [annaruss93@gmail.com](mailto:annaruss93@gmail.com)

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In **Serbia**, the [Autonomous Women's Center](#) published a [summary report](#), written by a coalition of NGOs, one of the independent monitoring on the implementation of the "Concluding comments and recommendations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women" which were made on the Initial Report on the Implementation of the CEDAW submitted by Serbia in 2007. The NGOs found that Serbia's existing legislation "represents a

relatively good mechanism for the protection of victims of violence in the family and for punishing the perpetrators” but that a number of legal loopholes prevent the legislation from having full force. The NGOs are also working to improve systematic data collection in different areas, calling on the government to collect information on the types and frequency of domestic violence committed as well as perpetrator and victim characteristics. They are also calling on the government to provide public officials with systematic training on how to support domestic violence survivors, and to monitor the officials’ compliance with that training. For the complete report (in Serbian) click [here](#).

For more information, contact the [Autonomous Women’s Center](#) at [azc@azc.org.rs](mailto:azc@azc.org.rs)

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Also in **Serbia**, The Association of Women *Sandglass* has been implementing a project to protect and support victims of domestic violence. The NGO obtained the support of local and national authorities through persistent public awareness and education campaigns on gender-based and sexual violence, round tables, and media initiatives. Local authorities invited The Association of Women *Sandglass* to participate in developing a Strategy on Social Welfare, and the NGO succeeded in placing the issue of violence against women in the Strategy. As a result of this collaboration, *Sandglass* received a grant from the National Ministry of Work and Social Welfare to continue their important work.

For more information, contact The Association of Women *Sandglass* at [sandglass@ptt.rs](mailto:sandglass@ptt.rs)

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Experts from **Spain** noted that the Special Government Delegation on Violence against Women created a hotline for information and legal advice in 2006, free of charge and available 24 hours. The hotline provides assistance in Spanish, Catalan, Gallego, Vasco, English, and French. Calls have increased each year since its creation.

The General Judiciary Council in Spain has elaborated a number of protocols to support the implementation of the [Organic Act 1/2004 of 28 December on Integrated Protection Measures against Gender Violence](#):

- a. Protocols for the implementation of electronic devices to assess protection orders of victims of gender violence
- b. A guide of jurisdictional action on violence against women
- c. Protocol for the implementation of protection orders for victims of gender violence
- d. Protocol to coordinate the national enforcement and security agents and the judiciary
- e. Protocol for the healthcare of survivors of gender violence

For more information, see [www.poderjudicial.es](http://www.poderjudicial.es).

Since 2006, the Spanish NGO Medicus Mundi-Andalucía has been implementing an awareness and sensitivity campaign on female genital mutilation for health care professionals and social workers. The NGO coordinates trainings in universities and hospitals. For more information see: [www.luchamgf.org](http://www.luchamgf.org).

Medicus Mundi-Andalucía also published, in collaboration with the [Junta de Andalucía](#), [Asociación Andaluza de Matronas](#) and CICODE-Universidad de Granada, a report entitled “[Female genital mutilation: Treatment and prevention](#).”

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In **Ukraine**, advocates noted that the first law on domestic violence, which passed in 2001, represented great progress in recognizing and addressing the problem of domestic violence. However, according to that law, victims could be punished for having provoked the offender by their behavior. Women’s NGOs, including [Women’s Information Coordination Center](#) from Dnipropetrovsk, [La Strada Ukraine](#), [Women’s Perspectives](#) from Lviv, [The League of Business and Professional Women](#) from Donetsk, and [Progressive Women](#) from Vinnitsa, worked to repeal this provision, and in 2008, they were successful.

Current projects of the NGO [Progressive Women](#) are focused on incorporating victim input into the law and its implementation. Activists accompanied police on domestic violence cases, interviewed battered women, and participated in the court cases. They noted recurrent problems, including:

- Delays in police response
- Perpetrator not removed from family
- Fines paid from family budget make things worse for victims
- Forensic exams difficult to obtain
- Women must often pursue their cases on their own

For more information, contact Progressive Women at:  
[progress@mail.vinnica.ua](mailto:progress@mail.vinnica.ua).

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In **United Kingdom**, the government has recently published [Together We Can End Violence Against Women and Girls: A Strategy](#). This detailed plan represents an integrated approach to address violence against women and to support victims by prevention, provision of services, and protection. The government also published a strategy for the prosecution authority entitled [Violence Against Women Strategy and Action Plans](#), which aims to secure the coordination and an improved prosecution response to gender-based crimes.