

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:
NATIONAL PRACTICE AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**ДОМАШНЕЕ НАСИЛИЕ:
НАЦИОНАЛЬНАЯ ПРАКТИКА И МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ ОПЫТ**

The problem of violence against women has always been a worldwide problem. Millions of women all around the world suffer from different forms of domestic violence. *Domestic violence* (as well as sexual violence) was singled out as a leading manifestation of structural violence.

The vast majority of states have already implemented various forms and mechanisms of preventing domestic violence. In the USA and Canada official bodies pay a lot of attention to the criminal liability, whereas in Australia, Germany, the UK and European countries the focus is made on alternate strategies including different services for victims. At the same time, while this problem is becoming more and more serious in Belarus, no steps are taken to respond to the pressing human rights issue of domestic violence. Belarus doesn't have a national domestic violence law or even a fixed definition of what domestic violence is. The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) defines "domestic violence" as all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim [1].

According to the statistics, more than 120 000 women experience domestic violence at the hands of their husbands and partners every year in Belarus [2]. Most of the time victims suffer from beating, torments and humiliations. A huge part of victims is invisible as most women have not reported about numerous cases of severe domestic violence to law-enforcement agencies. A range of factors contribute to this: social stigma attached to the issue; overwhelming lack of awareness about domestic violence among survivors themselves; a lack of trust in militia and poor militia response; financial dependence on husbands and fear of losing custody of their children [3]. In a case of a complex criminal prosecution process the injured party bears the burden of gathering

all evidence and must pay all costs. It seems advisable to switch from private prosecution to public, so that the state would have a duty to bring offenders to justice.

In addition, official bodies ignore fundamental differences between violence among strangers and domestic violence: that in the latter case, perpetrators frequently repeat their offenses and victims often live with their abusers and are often financially and otherwise dependent on them. In this case, state should take measures including services such as legal and psychological counseling, financial assistance, housing, education, training and assistance in finding employment.

To sum it up, Belarus should ratify or accede to the Istanbul Convention, give a clear definition of the term “domestic violence” and fix it in the national domestic violence law.

References

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THE MAIN FACTORS OF SUCCESS FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

ОСНОВНЫЕ ФАКТОРЫ УСПЕХА ПРЕДПРИЯТИЙ МАЛОГО БИЗНЕСА

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