

PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE IN UZBEKISTAN

Informal briefing paper on the event

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This briefing paper addresses the protection of women and children from violence in Uzbekistan. It is based on the International Expert Discussion held in Tashkent on 6 June 2023,¹ and convened by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), the Nationwide Movement “Yuksalish”, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Regional Office for Central Asia (OHCHR ROCA), within the framework of the EQUAL Project². The event followed the adoption of landmark legislative amendments in 2023 that criminalized domestic violence, provided legal remedies for women and children, and increased penalties for sexual crimes.

This paper briefly reviews the amendments to the Criminal and Administrative Codes of Uzbekistan and outlines the barriers to effective law enforcement. It also offers recommendations for the effective implementation of the adopted legislation.

Although this briefing paper has benefited from the discussion at the event, the opinions presented are summarized by the ICJ and may not reflect the consensus views of all participants. Therefore, it does not necessarily represent the views or legal policies of the ICJ, the event organizers, or the European Union.

¹ International Commission of Jurists, Uzbekistan: “From Legislation to Action: Effective Measures for Protecting Women and Children from Violence in Uzbekistan.” It was the fourth expert discussion organized within the framework of “Enhancing the Quality of Uzbekistan’s Application of International Law (EQUAL),” project funded by the European Union.

² “Enhancing the Quality of Uzbekistan’s Application of International Law (EQUAL)” is a project currently implemented by the ICJ aimed towards supporting civil society’s promotion of equal protection of ESC rights for groups particularly vulnerable to discrimination in Uzbekistan.

INTRODUCTION

In April 2023, Uzbekistan enacted landmark amendments to its legislation specifically addressing gender-based violence (GBV). These amendments criminalized domestic violence, established administrative liability for sexual harassment, introduced the concept of stalking, and further strengthened protections for the rights of women and children closing legal loopholes and increasing penalties. This legislative milestone followed recommendations from UN Treaty Bodies, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)³ and the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC),⁴ as well as the UN Human Rights Council.⁵ Additionally, an active civil society advocacy campaign involving human rights defenders, activists, NGOs, and journalists, consistently raised awareness about the widespread violence against women and children within families in Uzbekistan.⁶

Despite the support provided by the 2019 Law on the Protection of Women from Harassment and Abuse⁷ and a 2020 Government Decree on Protection Orders⁸, the implementation of the newly introduced legal framework has faced significant challenges. Enforcement gaps have been exacerbated by entrenched stereotypes⁹, judicial gender bias, and a lack of gender sensitivity among broader stakeholders, including law enforcement authorities.¹⁰ These biases influence both law enforcement agencies and the judiciary, perpetuating a culture of evading criminal responsibility through the forced reconciliation of victims with perpetrators.

While social activism and mass media have been essential in raising awareness of GBV and achieving certain gradual improvements, restrictions on freedom of expression have limited public discourse and directed government attention primarily towards only the most severe instances of intrafamilial violence. This undermines the effectiveness of the enacted legislation effectively compromising the State's efforts to protect women and children from violence.

³ See Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Uzbekistan*, CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/6 (1 March 2022), paras. 12 (a), 18 (d), 22 (a)-(h).

⁴ See Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), *Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan*, CRC/C/UZB/CO/5 (27 October 2022), paras. 28 (g)-(h), 29, 31 (h).

⁵ See Human Rights Council (HRC), *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Uzbekistan*, A/HRC/39/7 (9 July 2018), paras. 101.180-89, 101.193, 101.195.

⁶ E.g. representatives of the media-project against gender-based violence in Uzbekistan, reg. under No. 1418 as of 10.05.2021. <https://t.me/nemolchiuz>.

⁷ See the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on protection of women from harassment and abuse, available at: <https://lex.uz/docs/5147718>

⁸ See the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers On the measures to improve the system of protection of women from oppression and violence // <https://lex.uz/docs/4679532>.

⁹ Colloquially understood as reflecting “national mentality” (*millii mentalitet*).

¹⁰ See Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), *Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Uzbekistan*, CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/6 (1 March 2022), para 11.

I. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT INSTRUMENTS

1.1 Protection of women from violence

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (*CEDAW*)¹¹ and the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women,¹² outline a set of standards regarding the human rights of women. Article 2 (f) of *CEDAW*¹³ mandates governments to eradicate all forms of discriminatory practices violate of women's rights, including those related to GBV. Under international law, States are obliged to prevent and respond to such violence and to create an environment conducive to women's empowerment and equality.¹⁴

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (*ICESCR*) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (*ICCPR*) impose binding obligations on States to guarantee "the equal right of men and women".¹⁵ Regional human rights instruments, such as the European Convention on Human Rights,¹⁶ the American Convention on Human Rights,¹⁷ the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights,¹⁸ and the Arab Charter on Human Rights,¹⁹ also enshrine the right of women to be free from all forms of discrimination. Various international organs have been established to facilitate the implementation of these human rights obligations.²⁰

Numerous treaties have been drafted and adopted specifically to combat gender-based discrimination and violence, including the *CEDAW*, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. Another effective mechanism is the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), open for signature to all States.²¹

¹¹ UN General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (*CEDAW*), 1979. Available at: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/econvention.htm>

¹² Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (*DEVAW*), A/RES/48/104, UN General Assembly, 20 December 1993, art. 4(f). Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-elimination-violence-against-women>

¹³ *CEDAW* Convention, art. 2 (f): States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake: ... To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women.

¹⁴ See e.g. article 3 of the *ICCPR*, *ICESCR*, *CEDAW*

¹⁵ See *ICCPR*, arts. 3, 26; *ICESCR*, art. 3

¹⁶ European Convention on Human Rights (*ECHR*), art. 14, Sept. 21, 1970, 213 U.N.T.S. 222.

¹⁷ American Convention on Human Rights, art. 1, Aug. 27, 1979, 1144 U.N.T.S. 123.

¹⁸ African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, art. 3, June 27, 1981, 1520 U.N.T.S. 217.

¹⁹ League of Arab States, Arab Charter on Human Rights, art. 3, Mar. 15, 2008.

²⁰ These include the mandates of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls.

²¹ Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, pmbli., Apr. 7, 2011, C.E.T.S. No. 210 [hereinafter Istanbul Convention]; note that Uzbekistan is not a party to the Istanbul Convention.

1.2 Protection of children from violence

The CRC is a key global instrument designed to protect children from intra-familial and other forms of violence.²² Article 19 of the CRC enshrines a duty of States to implement mechanisms necessary to protect children “from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child...”. The general principles for addressing violence against children include non-discrimination,²³ consideration of the best interests of the child,²⁴ the right to life and development,²⁵ and the right to respect for the views of the child.²⁶

The UN Secretary General’s Study on Violence against Children further elaborates on the obligations outlined in these human rights instruments. It urges States to “prohibit all forms of violence against children, in all settings, including all corporal punishment, harmful traditional practices such as early and forced marriages, female genital mutilation, and so-called honour crimes, sexual violence, and torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as required by international treaties, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.”²⁷

1.3. Recommendations to Uzbekistan on violence against women and children

The CEDAW Committee has repeatedly²⁸ expressed concerns about ‘...the high incidence of gender-based violence against women in Uzbekistan, the absence of criminal law provisions on domestic violence as well as different forms of gender-based violence other than sexual violence and rape, and, consequently, the inadequate protection of women and girls from gender-based violence, including women and girls belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, women and girls with disabilities, and women living with HIV/AIDS.’²⁹

The Committee specifically highlighted the following issues ‘...a) the fact that the definition of rape is based on the use or threat of violence rather than lack of consent;

²² UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>

²³ CRC, *supra*, art. 2.

²⁴ *Id.*, art. 3 (1).

²⁵ *Id.*, art. 6.

²⁶ *Id.*, art. 12.

²⁷ Legal ban on violence against children, <https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/content/legal-ban-violence-against-children>

²⁸ In 2015, the CEDAW Committee shared concerns about the prevalence of violence against women, in particular domestic and sexual violence, in the State party and at the lack of statistical information on violence against women disaggregated by age and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. The Committee noted with concern that cases of domestic violence against women are underreported, given that it is considered a private matter, that there is limited use of protection orders and that cases are taken mainly to local bodies known as the mahalla for reconciliation. See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/5, para 17.

²⁹ See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/6, para 21.

b) the 30-day limit to the duration of protection orders, with the possibility of extension for one month, their limited enforcement, the absence of expulsion orders, the lack of victim support services, the barriers to women's and girls' access to justice in cases of gender-based violence, including revictimization during criminal proceedings, and the wide use of reconciliation and mediation procedures by mahallas.³⁰

In its latest Concluding Observations, the CRC raised concerns about '[...] insufficient legislative and institutional frameworks to prevent and combat violence against children, including failure to address domestic violence, the lack of capacity to identify victims of violence and child-sensitive approach to victim protection as well as insufficient victim support services and the absence of a specific hotline for child victims.'³¹

II. SHORT REVIEW OF THE LATEST AMMENDMENTS AND BARRIERS IMPEDING EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF THE CURRENT GBV FRAMEWORK

2.1 A brief overview of amendments

Uzbekistan's law 'On Introducing Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Connection with Further Improvement of the System of Reliable Protection of the Rights, Freedoms and Legitimate Interests of Women and Children,' entered into force on 12 April 2023.³² This comprehensive legislative act introduced amendments to various national laws concerning GBV, including the Criminal Code, the Code of Administrative Liability, and the Family Code. It also extended recognition and safeguards for the rights of women and children, by specifically defining different forms of violence, including sexual, economic, and psychological abuse.³³

Criminalization of domestic violence

The criminalization of domestic violence is a major achievement of the amended law,³⁴ establishing stricter penalties for violent acts that were previously absent within the national framework, leaving numerous cases of domestic violence unaddressed. As reported by the Committee on Family and Women's Affairs in 2023, nearly 85% of violence against women occurs within familial settings.³⁵ Prosecution for domestic

³⁰ See CEDAW/C/UZB/CO/6, para 21

³¹ See CRC/C/UZB/CO/5, para 27.

³² Закон Республики Узбекистан № ЗРУ-829 от 12.04.2023 г. «О внесении изменений и дополнений в некоторые законодательные акты Республики Узбекистан в связи с дальнейшим совершенствованием системы надежной защиты прав, свобод и законных интересов женщин и детей»//<https://lex.uz/en/docs/6430272>.

³³ See A/HRC/WG.6/44/UZB/1 (28 August 2023), para 235.

³⁴ See article 126-1 of the Criminal Code, introduced by the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated April 11, 2023 No. ZRU-829 - National Legislation Database, 04/12/2023, No. 03/23/829/0208. Available at: <https://lex.uz/en/docs/111457>

³⁵ *Nearly 85% of violence against women in Uzbekistan occurs within families (statistics)*, DARYO GLOBAL (7 September 2023, 1:51 AM), <https://daryo.uz/en/2023/09/07/nearly-85-of-violence-against-women-in-uzbekistan-occurs-within-families-statistics>; see briefing by Oghiloy Orozova, Head of the Family and Women's Committee, Agency of Information and Mass Communications under the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (AOKA), *in the past 7 months, nearly 22,000 women who suffered from harassment and violence were issued protection warrants* (4 September 2023), <https://telegra.ph/%D0%8Etagan-7-ojda-%D2%9Barijb-22-ming-nafar-tazji%D2%9B-va-z%D1%9Eravonlikdan-zhabrlangan-hotin-%D2%9Bizlarga-%D2%B3imoya-orderi-berildi-09-04>.

violence now entails both administrative penalties—fines ranging from 10 to 20 times the Reference Calculation Value (RCV)³⁶ or up to 15 days of administrative arrest³⁷—and criminal liability, with imprisonment terms ranging from 10 to 12 years.³⁸ Serious acts of domestic violence may trigger criminal responsibility as early as the age of 14.³⁹ Additionally, the current law introduced administrative liability for sexual harassment, tightened liability for various other GBV offences, addressed the age of consent and included measures such as protective orders and the introduction of a roster of perpetrators against minors.

Sexual harassment

Another significant achievement of the adopted law is the introduction of administrative liability for sexual harassment, defined as either single or repeated actions of a sexual nature that are unwanted and demeaning to the victim's honour and dignity, including comments on their appearance or physique, gestures, physical contact, solicitation, or displaying sexual interest.⁴⁰ Punishments for such offences include penalties ranging from 2 to 5 RCV or up to 5 days of administrative arrest. In 2023 alone, 666 individuals were found guilty of sexual harassment under the new Article 41-1 of the Code of Administrative Responsibility.⁴¹

Stalking

The term 'stalking' was incorporated into the Law 'On Protection of Women against Harassment and Abuse' as a form of abuse. It now includes actions taken against the victim's will, such as searching for the victim, initiating contact (including via the Internet and by telephone), visiting the victim's place of work, school, or residence, and causing the victim to feel unsafe or threatened.⁴²

Age of consent

The law has removed unawareness or mistake regarding the victim's age as a mitigating factor in sentencing sexual offenders.⁴³ Previously, the provisions of the law allowed sexual offenders to evade harsher punishment by claiming ignorance of the victim's age in cases involving the violation of minors' sexual freedom and integrity. Consequently, offenders could be sentenced as though the victim were an adult, rather than facing charges for sexual offences against minors.

³⁶ Reference Calculation Value in Uzbekistan amounts to 340,000 soums (~USD 30) as of 2023.

³⁷ See Code of Administrative Responsibility of the Republic of Uzbekistan, article 59-2.

³⁸ See Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, article 126-1.

³⁹ See Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, article 14 (article 126(1) para 4,8)

⁴⁰ See Code of Administrative Responsibility of the Republic of Uzbekistan, article 41-1.

⁴¹ See The Official channel of the head of the Center for Public Relations of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan <https://t.me/AzizAbidov/4558>

⁴² See the Law «On Protection of Women against Harassment and Abuse», article 3

⁴³ The amendments were made throughout the text of the Criminal Code.

Roster of perpetrators against minors

According to the amendments, individuals who commit acts of sexual violence against minors will be registered and barred from employment involving children.⁴⁴ Notably, offenders who commit sexual violence against minors will not be eligible for parole.⁴⁵

Protective orders

Previously, the protective orders system in Uzbekistan faced was heavily criticised for its lack of effectiveness.⁴⁶ The absence of enforcement mechanisms allowed most perpetrators to avoid punishment,⁴⁷ and the initial 30-day protective order period, with the possibility of a 30-day extension, was deemed insufficient.⁴⁸ However, the new GBV law addresses these shortcomings by allowing the extension of protection orders for up to one year, a significant improvement from the previous 30-day limit.⁴⁹ Furthermore, when deciding on the extension of a protection order, the court now has the authority to impose additional restrictions.⁵⁰ These newly introduced restrictions include prohibiting the abuser from visiting certain places, requiring outpatient or inpatient treatment for drug-related illnesses, temporarily restricting the right to use the victim's living space or part thereof, and prohibiting the abuser from approaching the victim's workplace or other locations.⁵¹ Protective orders for children are also expected to be introduced.⁵²

2.2 Barriers impeding effective enforcement of the GBV law

Failure to immediately apply the new amendments in practice

Despite the positive legislative changes, national courts have failed to promptly apply the new legal provisions in practice. According to observations from the local activist group NeMolchi.uz, as of 4 May 2023, no court verdict had been issued under Article 126-1⁵³ of the Criminal Code or any other relevant charge.⁵⁴ Additionally, investigators and the judiciary have continued to adhere to the "old practice" of classifying domestic violence as an "insult" or "minor bodily harm".

Failure to provide adequate investigation and punishment due to stereotypes and gender bias

⁴⁴ See the Law On guarantees of the rights of the child, article 10

⁴⁵ See Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, article 73

⁴⁶ See <https://anhor.uz/society/impunity/>

⁴⁷ According to the [data](#) as of 2020-2021, 44 people were brought to administrative responsibility - less than 3% of the total number of protective orders issued.

⁴⁸ See <https://anhor.uz/society/impunity/>, <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2023/01/16/women/>

⁴⁹ See the Law «On Protection of Women against Harassment and Abuse», article 23¹

⁵⁰ See the Law «On Protection of Women against Harassment and Abuse», article 26

⁵¹ See the Law «On Protection of Women against Harassment and Abuse», article 26, para 2

⁵² https://uza.uz/uz/posts/bolalarga-himoya-orderi-berish-tizimi-zhoriy-qilinishi-kutilmoqda_565938

⁵³ Family (domestic) violence

⁵⁴ Media-project against gender based violence in Uzbekistan, Reg. under No. 1418 as of 10.05.2021. Available at: <https://t.me/nemolchiuz>

In practice, the seriousness of GBV crimes is often underestimated, with law enforcement agencies and courts viewing such offences as wrongdoings that do not pose a real danger to the health and lives of victims. This attitude leads to the ineffective processing of complaints filed by GBV victims and frequent refusals to initiate court proceedings.⁵⁵ Furthermore, cases are often hushed up due to the “connections” of the perpetrator and corruption.⁵⁶

Judges tend to impose lighter punishments for serious GBV crimes, opting for non-custodial sentences such as short-term correctional labour, which typically does not prevent the perpetrator from continuing abuse or fines, which are ineffective in family violence cases as they financially impact not only the perpetrator but also the victim. According to the Press Service of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan, since the adoption of the law in 2023, 203 individuals were convicted under Article 126-1 of the Criminal Code for domestic violence. Among them, 59 were sentenced to imprisonment, while 144 received non-custodial sentences. Additionally, 8,928 citizens were prosecuted under Article 59-2 of the Administrative Liability Code for domestic violence, with 5,229 receiving fines and 3,699 being subject to arrest.⁵⁷

Abuse of reconciliation procedures and so-called mentality

The continued inclusion of reconciliation procedures under the Criminal Code⁵⁸ has also hindered the effective implementation of the GBV law. The Supreme Court, in its reports on administrative and criminal cases, highlighted that due to the effective utilization of reconciliation procedures, 14,698 individuals were exempted from criminal liability.⁵⁹ While it is acknowledged that these numbers may not exclusively pertain to GBV cases, it remains a widespread practice to utilize reconciliation procedures even in severe GBV cases. Prioritizing the preservation of family by referencing the so-called “national mentality”, which includes gender-based stereotypes and prejudices about the role of women in the family and male superiority, significantly impedes the effective enforcement of the newly adopted amendments. Moreover, such an approach perpetuates discriminatory attitudes towards GBV victims, legitimizing or justifying GBV.

Failing rehabilitation system and children in law

Despite tangible improvements, significant legislative gaps remain unaddressed, particularly concerning the rehabilitation of GBV victims. The existing rehabilitation system only provides for a maximum stay of one month in shelters, which may not always be adequate or effective. Additionally, there is a lack of sufficient or adequate social services, such as psychotherapy, legal assistance, and medical support, which are not readily available or affordable for GBV victims.

⁵⁵ <https://mediazona.ca/news/2023/04/08/photo>; <https://nova24.uz/incidents/delo-ob-iznasilovanii-devochki-11-muzhchinami-pytajutsya-zamyat/>; https://lex.uz/Pages/GetPdf.aspx?file=LexUz_6602060.pdf, page 135-136

⁵⁶ See <https://nemolchi.uz/domogatelstva-i-iznasilovanija-nesovershennoletnih/>

⁵⁷ Official channel of the head of the Center for Public Relations of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan at <https://t.me/AzizAbidov/4556>

⁵⁸ See Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, article 66-1

⁵⁹ Official channel of the head of the Center for Public Relations of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan at <https://t.me/AzizAbidov/4556>

Concerns have also been raised regarding the interrogation of children, particularly due to the limited availability of child-friendly rooms and specially trained officers, judges, and prosecutors within the judicial system of Uzbekistan. It is essential to establish an integrated system of social services, such as Barhouse, where every child victim would receive medical, psychological and other necessary support in parallel to the interrogation process, ensuring that it is conducted in a manner that is not harmful to the child.⁶⁰

III. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

While the adopted law introduced progressive amendments to the national framework,⁶¹ strengthened sanctions for numerous GBV offences,⁶² and sparked positive dynamics in accountability for GBV crimes,⁶³ barriers persist that hinder the effective enforcement of the GBV legislation.

The failure of the justice system to effectively use the new legislation, a society influenced by traditional so-called ‘mentality’, the widespread use of reconciliation procedures, and the tendency to downplay the seriousness of GBV crimes—both by law enforcement agencies and courts—undermine this landmark legislation and contribute to the impunity of perpetrators.

The recommendations outlined below are based on key points shared by participants of the Expert Discussion, observations made during the post-adoption period of the law, and supplemented by additional research.

Stereotypes and “national mentality”:

- Introduce and effectively implement practical measures to eradicate practices, stereotypes, traditions, and the use of the so-called “national mentality” justifications perpetuating discriminatory attitudes towards women, especially GBV victims, which legitimize or justify GBV and hinder accountability;
- Undertake targeted capacity-building efforts, including training seminars and the development of guidelines for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, investigators and social workers;

⁶⁰Observations shared during the ED.

⁶¹ Please see full review of the amendments available at: https://www.norma.uz/novoe_v_zakonodatelstve/za_bytovoe_nasilie_ustanavlivaetsya_administrativnaya_i_ugolovnaya_otvetstvennost

⁶² See <https://xs.uz/ru/post/o-vnesenii-izmenenij-i-dopolnenij-v-nekotorye-zakonodatelnye-akty-respubliki-uzbekistan-v-svyazi-s-dalnejshim-sovshenstvovaniem-sistemy-nadezhnoj-zaschity-prav-svobod-i-zakonnykh-interesov-zhenschin-i-detej-3>

⁶³ As reported by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in 2023 since the adoption of the law, 9.8 thousand citizens of Uzbekistan were prosecuted for sexual harassment, dissemination of information about private life and domestic violence. Available at: Official channel of the head of the Center for Public Relations of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan at <https://t.me/AzizAbidov/4556>

Adequate sanctions:

- National courts should impose adequate and effective penalties for GBV and violence against children as stipulated by law;

Reconciliation and rehabilitation:

- Abolish the *de facto* mandatory practice of reconciliation between perpetrator and victim in GBV cases, particularly when the safety of the victim and third parties (such as children, elderly individuals, etc.) is at risk;
- Review and enhance correction programs for perpetrators, prioritizing the mitigation of risks for GBV victims;
- Support long-term shelters for GBV victims, reallocating financial resources to prioritize the rehabilitation of victims over correctional programs for perpetrators;
- Implement a special financial support program exclusively for residents of shelters or rehabilitation centres to aid GBV victims in their resocialization;
- Establish a case-management system within all service providers to effectively address Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and other destructive consequences of GBV among women;
- Expand the availability of services for GBV victims, particularly in rural areas, to ensure comprehensive support reaches all those in need;

Children in the justice system:

- Implement mandatory specialized trainings and guidelines for working with children within the justice system, with a focus on minimizing the stress of children during legal procedures;
- Ensure that children who have faced or witnessed domestic violence or GBV are supported through a specialized system; in particular, a qualified and competent child support specialist (intermediary) should be available in all judicial facilities to prevent secondary victimization and other harmful consequences for children who are victims of GBV or domestic violence;
- Introduce an integrated system of social services for children who are victims of domestic and sexual violence;
- Develop a strategy to address the widespread practice of parental abuse of children, emphasizing that such actions should be recognized as a crime, rather than as a right of parents to use violence against children under the guise of “upbringing” or “education”;

Awareness-raising and further improvements:

- Conduct advocacy campaigns in all relevant languages to eradicate harmful practices and mitigate the influence of various internal and external factors;
- Organize public discussions and events to raise awareness among key stakeholders about the issues of GBV and domestic violence in Uzbekistan.