

Monitoring Network against Gender-Based Violence

PUBLIC REACTION

PREVENT VIOLENCE – REPORT "STALKING"

Article 121 / a of the Criminal Code

The "Monitoring Network against Gender-Based Violence" presents this reaction on behalf of 26 civil society organizations to publicly condemn the violence exercised against young people and calls for prevention and punishment of such crimes.

Given the violent aggression committed by three people seriously endangering the lives of a boy and a girl in the area near the "New Ring", Tirana on May 6th 2018,, we insist on our repeated call that such cases, can and must be prevented.

From the statement of the aggressor Halit Ndreu, which have been published in the electronic media, we can find that there have been previous cases of harassment towards the girl and his actions have been repeated. Also, during our work, we have found that young people, especially young girls, are often subjected to repeated stalking and harassment that makes them feel feared and threatened.

Therefore, our appeal today calls on citizens, especially young women and teenagers to report cases of repeated threats or harassment at the nearest police station or prosecutor's office in order to prevent escalation of violence.

Article 121 /a of the Criminal Code provides for a criminal offense "Stalking", which imposes a prison sentence for a person who threatens or harasses someone with repeated actions in order to cause him a constant state of anxiety or fear for her personal safety, or to force her to change lifestyle. Since 2012, the time when the law sanctioning this offense entered into force, until 2016, we have data from the published statistics of the Ministry of Justice that 168 cases have been prosecuted throughout the country. **Out** of these, 164 persons were found guilty of the criminal offense of stalking.

These figure are a high indication of the effectiveness of the trial, but at the same time they prove that, unfortunately, this phenomenon is widespread. The criminal offense "stalking" in our Criminal Code has not only a punitive character but also a preventative one, because bringing charges at this stage prevents further escalation of violence. Repeated harassment is the first sign that we must turn to the favor of life and health of citizens, girls and boys, women and men. When violence escalates, it may be too late.

Persecution is one of the reasons for issuing a Protection Order from the Courts. But, our current legislation provides that this order protects persons only in cases of domestic violence. In this case, we call on the State authorities, the Assembly, the Council of Ministers (to the attention of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and the Ministry of Justice) to immediately take the initiative to establish legal protection for women and girls, who are victims of all forms of violence, regardless of whether or not the perpetrators are in family relations with them. This is an obligation deriving from the Council of Europe Convention "On Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence" (Istanbul Convention) which has been ratified by the Albanian State by Law no. 104/2012.

The Albanian society expects more support from the local government bodies in this regard. A call from us is directed specifically at the Local Government Child Protection Units. Their cooperation with parents, schools and the community will support young people and young women to condemn and report this form of violence as well as to prevent further violence.

The Monitoring Network against Gender-Based Violence offers specialized help for protection from violence. Therefore, we invite you to seek help also in the legal and psycho-social clinics of the organizations of this network. We advise you and support you to contact the competent authorities or a field specialist.

Contact us at the Women's and Girls' Counseling Line phone numbers 116117 and (04) 2233408, and for all your needs we operate as a one stop shop, networking with each other.

Let us all give our contribution to a peaceful society where we can live without violence!

Thank you!

Tirana, on 09.5.2018

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1. Different and equal
2. The organization "Unë, Gruaja"
3. The organization "Në Familje për familjen"
4. The Albanian Disability Rights Foundation ADRF
5. Albanian Helsinki Committee
6. Gender Alliance for Development Center GADC
7. The Children's Human Rights Centre of Albania (CRCA)
8. Useful to Albanian Women, UAW
9. Center for Development of Rural Women
10. Observatory for Children's and Youth Rights
11. Women's Empowerment Network in Albania AWEN
12. Center for the Rights of Roma Women
13. Albanian Christian Women Association
14. PINK Embassy
15. ALO 116 Albania.
16. Human Rights in Democracy Center
17. Albanian Group of Human Rights
18. Counselling Line for Women and Girls
19. Counseling Line for Men and Boys
20. Community Development Centre "Today for the Future"
21. The "Children Today" Center
22. Association of Women with Social Problems - Durrës
23. Centre for Integrated Legal Services and Practices
24. Psycho- Social Center "VATRA"
25. Albanian national, professional, businesswomen and crafts' association
European Network of Female Entrepreneurship
26. Center for Legal Civic Initiatives