



MEDIA COVERAGE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE HANDBOOK

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1. ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

This handbook seeks to assist members of the media community in and facilitate the reporting on violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The handbook is intended for journalists, editors, students of journalism, bloggers and public relations officials in institutions working to end violence against women in BiH.

It summarizes important information about the procedures, laws and relevant institutions, and also sheds light on certain aspects of violence against women that are rarely, if at all, covered by the media, but may contribute to more efficient response and prevention. The handbook also refers to the training methodology for media coverage of violence against women, in hopes that it would facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills to all who would like to take a more active role in resolving this problem.

One may wonder, and rightfully so, why should there be another handbook, yet another training for the media community on how to report about violence against women? So many stories on the subject were covered by the media over the past two years, haven't they learned how to do it by now?

Unfortunately, women and girls are subjected to different forms of violence every day, but only the most severe cases of violence with fatal outcome receive media attention, and that is the main problem. According to the

findings of the research conducted in 2016¹, most of the texts that appeared in printed media on the subject were published in the crime column. Only 1/5 of the media content describes violence against women as a **social problem**, rather than an isolated incident in an “unhappy” family. The media place greater emphasis on the physical and sexual violence, despite the significant prevalence of psychological violence in BiH.² The stories

1 The content published between 1 January and 30 June 2016 in the following media outlets was analyzed: daily papers (Dnevni avaz, Dnevni list, Oslobođenje and Nezavisne novine), online media (Klix, Buka and Bljesak), and tv stations (FTV, RTRS, BNTV, TV1 and N1). The research was conducted between July and October 2016. The total of 302 articles published in daily papers and online portals were analyzed, with additional 193 articles from the press clipping prepared by UN Women in BiH. The search of the digital archive Infobiro for the terms “violence against women” and “domestic violence” revealed additional articles, 27 in total, which were published in the same timeframe. For more information concerning presentation of violence against women, please see: Marija Babović, Olivera Pavlović, Katarina Ginić, Nina Karađinović. “Prevalence and characteristics of violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina”. Agency for Gender Equality, 2013. Available at: <http://arsbih.gov.ba/project/rasprostranjenost-i-karakteristike-nasilja-nad-zenama-u-bosni-i-hercegovini/>

2 Elvira Jukić, Research on media reporting on violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. UN Women, 2016.

are centered more on the perpetrator than the victim, and there is no particular mention of the institutions, who are rarely held accountable for their (in)action in ending and preventing violence against women. None of the cases we read or heard about in the media in the last year were followed through. We do not know if the court tried the case, whether any sanctions were imposed, nor do we know if victims are safe and if social work centers are undertaking concrete measures.

Responsible media coverage can neither end nor resolve the issue of violence against women, but it can be instrumental in triggering public response and greater involvement in prevention activities. Violence against women is not a sporadic incident caused by a “crazy” partner. It is a social phenomenon. Pressure exerted by the public and the media on the institutions, calling upon them to do their job, must be strong and incessant. Physical and sexual violence are not the only types of violence against women, and neither is domestic violence. Portraying women only as victims in the media furthers their victimization, even though there are many examples of women who have fought back and broken the cycle of violence.

Little attention is given to prevention of violence and values that justify it as “normal” behavior. Media significantly feed the stereotypes of a “real” man and a “real” woman. Portraying women only from the perspective of their domestic duties, motherhood and nurturing roles sends a message to women that their job is to endure, even in case of an incident; that they should not react to violence lest their family disintegrates, regardless of the dysfunctionality of that family or the threat it poses to their very lives.

Finally, media should not merely report the facts of the event. Questions raised in their reports can inspire others not to turn a blind eye and not to turn up the volume on their TV sets when they hear screams and furniture crashing in the apartment next door. The public needs to understand that violence is not some kind of a theatrical play of no concern to them. They should understand that by intervening they may save someone’s life. Therefore, we hope that this handbook, despite being one of many, will still be a useful tool to members of the media community in improving the quality of their reports on violence against women and in mobilizing public engagement. The media should send out a clear message to perpetrators of violence that violent behavior will not and must not go unpunished.

2. FOR WHOM IS THIS HANDBOOK INTENDED?

The handbook is structured so as to meet the needs of different target groups.

Journalists and students of journalism, for example, are advised about the important topics that have not received sufficient media coverage, the sources on violence against women that can be used in investigative journalism and the significance of visual content accompanying the story, that at times can have a stronger impact than the story itself.

Editors make final decisions on the media content. They decide on the headline, the size and the position of the text and often control the way in which certain topics are approached. Editors' influence on the portrayal of men and women in the media is very important. The handbook aims to sensitize editors about violence against women and the traditional portrayal of gender roles that justifies violence against women.

Blogger community, with the growing influence of online media, is an important factor in shaping the public opinion of today. Blogs can be a part of the existing media platform, but not necessarily. Blogging is an expression of one's personal opinions, rather than a place for objective journalistic texts. Blogger community, as such, can assume a more active role in advocating prevention of violence against women.

The handbook is also intended for PRs in intuitions directly involved in the effort to end violence against women. They are often the first (and only) source of information for the media. Institutions usually release scarce information only after an incident has occurred, even though nothing stops them from presenting their reports, statistics and activities pertaining to violence against women when there are no tragic events to report. The handbook underlines the importance of a proactive approach to the media and discusses the types of information valuable for investigative stories.

In the separate part of the handbook you will find links to regional publications on the subject of media reporting about violence against women and domestic violence. We hope that these sources will provide additional guidance on how to collect valuable information on all aspects of this problem and the ways in which media should cover violence against women.

3. WHAT CONSTITUTES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

Violence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development, and peace.³

According to the definition of the World Health Organization, violence is “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation”.⁴ Gender-based violence, as a sub-category of violence, is characterised by a wide range of violent practices. In the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) it is defined as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”⁵

Violence must be properly identified based on the manner in which it is committed and against whom it is committed. Violence against women and gender-based violence is any violent behavior prompted by misogynistic inclinations. Women are victims of violence only because they are women and only because of the lesser value attributed to women in a patriarchal society. Depending on the context, such take on women leads to violence, ranging from verbal violence, a slap on the face, to murder.

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) was adopted in May 2011. It aims to ensure mandatory implementation of its common standards and goals by all state parties. That means that the institutional and legal framework of state parties must be harmonized with the existing documents pertaining to the fight against gender-based violence. In the fifth chapter, the Convention deals with criminal law (from Article 29) and criminalizes the following types of gender-based violence (in addition to physical violence) in articles 33 through 42:

- 3 Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations, World Free of Violence Against Women, global video conference of the United Nations, 8 March 1999: <http://unitedwomenbl.org/rodno-zasnovano-nasilje-2/> (web page last visited on 22 January 2017; the same applies to other links, unless specified otherwise).
- 4 <http://blog.vecernji.hr/zenska-soba/definicija-i-tipologija-nasilja-1234>
- 5 Definition of violence against women is contained the UN Convention on elimination of all forms of violence against women (CEDAW) available at: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>. Cited according to: <http://unitedwomenbl.org/rodno-zasnovano-nasilje-2/>

- **Psychological violence** is any threatening conduct, coercion, verbal insulting and similar behavior impairing a woman's mental health;
- **Stalking** is any threatening conduct that makes a woman fear for her safety;
- **Sexual violence**, including rape, is any non-consensual penetration of sexual nature of woman's body. Causing another person to engage in non-consensual acts of sexual nature is also defined as sexual violence.
- **Sexual harassment** is defined as "*any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating and humiliating environment.*"⁶

Economic violence is a very important category of gender-based violence. Its defining characteristics differ from those attributed to other types of violence against women, but it does not mean that it should be given less attention. Its purpose is to strengthen the position of power assumed by the perpetrator of violence and increase the powerlessness of the victim. The victims, having been denied access to money, are denied any opportunity for making existential decisions. Economic violence is reflected in:

- a) limited access to money in a household;
- b) prohibited access to material assets (if the victim is not employed and has no personal income, does not earn money);
- c) not being given money to meet personal needs;
- d) not being allowed to seek employment;
- e) taking away of one's own money.

Another form of violence that has recently emerged with the growth of digital technology is **cyber violence**. It is characterised by threats and insults shared across social media platforms (Facebook, YouTube) using digital technology (e-mail, mobile phones, etc.) and control exercised through such conduct. Cyber violence, in general, entails the same situations in which women are exposed to violence in the real world, but now with the use of new technologies those situations can be "shared" with the public.⁷ It is particularly damaging because it cannot be prosecuted as a criminal offence under the laws governing prevention and protection against gender-based violence.

⁶ Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) is available at <http://arsbih.gov.ba/project/istanbulska-konvencija/>. Istanbul Convention also defines genital mutilation, forced abortion and forced marriage as violence against women.

⁷ A good example of this type of violence is a case of the so-called "sheik from Alipašino" who video recorded harassment of his former girlfriend and posted it on YouTube. The clip is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyxlGd8hvt8>. For more on cyber violence please see: <http://diskriminacija.ba/mapirajte-nasilje-na-internetu>

3a. Characteristics of violence against women in BiH

There were 1,459 cases and 992 reports submitted on the crime of domestic violence in 2014, in contrast to 2013, during which 1,699 cases were registered, and 916 reports submitted on the crime of domestic violence. In the Republika Srpska 1,089 cases were registered in 2015 and 353 reports were submitted to the relevant Prosecutor's Office, while in 2014 1,236 cases were registered, and 525 reports were submitted to the prosecutor's office. According to the data of the NGOs operating in the Federation of BiH, the six safe houses in the Federation of BiH sheltered 373 women and children in 2014, while that number decreased in 2015 to 264. According to the results of the media monitoring carried out by the Foundation Udružene žene /United Women/ Banja Luka, focusing on the media coverage of cases in which women were victims of murder in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 14 women were murdered in 2015 and 7 in the first six months of 2016.⁸

Also, according to the results of a comprehensive research carried out in 2013 by the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH, more than half of women involved in the research experienced some form of violence after turning 15. The research sample was comprised of 2,113 women in the Federation of BiH and 1,187 in the Republika Srpska.

Poverty, alcohol abuse and illness increase the risk of violence exponentially. Common perpetrators of violence are current and/or former partners and fathers. The most common type of violence suffered by women is psychological violence and violence that is both physical and psychological. It is particularly disquieting that 58.4% of women

who were subjected to physical violence do not consider themselves to be victims of physical violence. *Even lesser number of women describes psychological, economic and sexual violence they are subjected to as violence. Only a small number of women who were subjected to violence in the past or are currently subjected to violence had undertaken steps to escape the violence. Around 17% of women victims of violence sought to resolve their situation through divorce or moving out of the household, but only around 4% of them attempted counseling.*⁹

Reasons why women reluctantly seek help is lack of information, fear, shame, distrust in the institutions and their own conviction that they do not need help.¹⁰

Results of the mentioned research pertaining to the work of the relevant institutions, such as the police, social work centers and courts, are startling. Every tenth woman victim of violence has called the police for assistance. In 41.2% of those cases, the police arrived at the scene, "had a conversation with the abuser and left". In 30.9% of the cases, the police "warned the abuser and calmed him down". In 33.8% of the cases, the police apprehended the abuser, while in 4.4% of the cases the police never attended the scene upon being called. In 2.9% of the cases, the police treated the respondent "as though she was responsible for provoking the abuser". Only in 11.8% of the cases the police informed the social work center about the case and in 13.2% of the cases the police filed a criminal report against the abuser.¹¹

U centrima za socijalni rad je u više od 50% In more than 50% of the cases of reported violence, the social work centers offered counseling and legal assistance; in 22.5% of the cases representatives of the center

8 According to the Report of civil society organizations on implementation of the concluding observations and recommendations of CEDAW Committee for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013 - 2017. Available at: http://rightsforall.ba/bs/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2016/11/CEDAW-Alternativni-izvjestaj-2013_2017.pdf

9 Marija Babović, Olivera Pavlović, Katarina Ginić, Nina Karadinović. "Prevalence and characteristics of violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina". Agency for Gender Equality, 2013. Available at: <http://arsbih.gov.ba/project/rasprostranjenost-i-karakteristike-nasilja-nad-zenama-u-bosni-i-hercegovini/>. The study was produced in cooperation with UN Women and UNFPA.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

visited the respondent's house; in 5% of the cases, proceedings were initiated before the court to award protective measures.¹² Only 43 respondents sought to resolve their situation through judicial system. In the RS, 13 misdemeanor proceedings were conducted, of which 6 were finalized by: a) pronouncement of a suspended sentence (2); b) pronouncement of a prison sentence (2); c) verdict of acquittal (2). Out of 19 criminal proceedings, 10 were finalized by one suspended sentence. Prison sentence was pronounced in 4 cases and 5 accused were acquitted.

*29 respondents were able to evaluate the impact of the court proceedings on the perpetrator's violent behavior and their safety. In eight cases, the respondents stated that violent behavior diminished, and in 21 cases the respondents reported that violence ended.*¹³

One of the issues of concern related to the sentencing policy in the cases of domestic violence, identified in other research as well, is the practice where judges take into account "other social factors", such as the accused's expression of remorse, or characterization of "the victim as a difficult person prone to conflict", as well as the accused's status as the sole provider in the family.¹⁴

12 Ibid.

13 NGOs working to resolve this issue have underlined several problems regarding the implementation of laws and procedures. For example, proceedings before the court at times last up to 4 months; hearings in cases of sexual violence are delayed, for no objective reasons; prosecutors arguing the case change frequently; minors testify without the presence of support staff, etc. For more information, please see the Report of civil society organisations on implementation of the concluding observations and recommendations of CEDAW Committee for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2013 – 2017. Available at: http://rightsforall.ba/bs/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2016/11/CEDAW-Alternativni-izvjestaj-2013_2017.pdf. pg 74.

14 Majda Halilović and Heahter Huhtanen. "Gender and Judiciary". Agency for Gender Equality, Sarajevo, 2014. Available at: http://www.atlantskainicijativa.org/bos/images/Rod_i_reforma_pravosudja_u_BiH/Publikacije/Implikacije_roda_u_pravosudju_Bos.pdf

3b. Mechanisms of protection from domestic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The following protective measures are foreseen in the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in FBiH and the RS¹⁵:

- ▶ Removal from the apartment, house or other dwelling and being barred from returning to that apartment, house or dwelling;
- ▶ Restraining order
- ▶ Prohibition from harassment and stalking of the victim of violence
- ▶ Mandatory psycho-social treatment
- ▶ Mandatory treatment of addiction
- ▶ Temporary deprivation of liberty and detention

A perpetrator of violence who violates the protective measure may be fined in the amount between BAM 2,000 and 10,000 (in FBiH) and between BAM 300 and 500 (in the RS).¹⁶

15 Guidelines for ending domestic violence: How to assist victims of domestic violence – basic information. Prava za sve. Sarajevo, 2010. Available at: http://www.rightsforall.ba/publikacije-bs/docs-bs/Vodic-Nasilje_u_porodici.pdf

16 Ibid.

Institutions/organizations responsible for the implementation of the mentioned protective measures are as follows:¹⁷

POLICE

Respond to calls relating to violent abuse; take statements; undertake measures to protect the victim of violence; enable access to medical or other assistance to the victim; document the case; file a report with the relevant prosecutor's office; file a motion for ordering of protective measures, and in cooperation with the social work center, place the victim in a safe house.

SOCIAL WORK CENTER

Forwards every reported case of violence to the police; provides direct assistance and support to victims, including social and legal counseling; provides material assistance; makes home visits and prepares reports; provides psychological assistance to victims in line with the available resources or refers the victim to another institution or NGO for treatment; files a motion, in cooperation with the police, for victim's placement in a safe house; ensures protection of children and minors; oversees the implementation of protective measures.

COURT/PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

Acts without delay, advises victims of their rights, takes statements separately from the victim and the perpetrator, ensures protection of the victim before the court. Prosecutor brings an indictment, a judge issues a decision on protective measures and renders a verdict.

HEALTHCARE FACILITY

Reports every suspicion of violence to the police; provides comprehensive healthcare regardless of whether the victim has health insurance; treats all injuries and trauma, and if needed refers the victim to additional medical screenings; documents all injuries; treats the victim as a priority. Submits medical records to the police and/or prosecutor/court as required.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

24 hrs SOS line – **1265 in FBiH and 1264 in RS;**

manage safe houses for women and children victims of violence; provide free legal assistance and psychological support; provide social and legal counseling; some NGOs run programs of economic empowerment of women.

Links to relevant institutions, non-governmental organizations, documents and regulations pertaining to violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina are provided in Annex 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

4. MYTHS AND TRUTHS ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Myth 1: Violence starts with a punch

Violence is defined as any unwanted conduct with a purpose of impairing one's psychological, physical and sexual health and economic independence. Although this definition of violence may seem too broad or far-reaching, it is important to see violence through the lens of power in all instances. The purpose of gender-based violence is to keep a specific group in an inferior position. The most common type of violence is physical and sexual violence. Sexual violence tends to be downplayed, while psychological and economic violence receive insufficient coverage and attention. Violence against women has been considered socially acceptable behavior for centuries because all patriarchal societies favor men per se.

Myth 2: Women are responsible for provoking violence

An assumption that a woman got what she deserved is still more or less accepted in the society. Another widespread misconception is that women not only provoke violence, but use it as a bargaining chip, because they know that their abuser could face charges. Violence must never be excused as punishment for someone's behavior. Slaps on the face, threats and rape will not resolve domestic problems or relationship issues. This has to be repeated over and over again. Violence is not a disciplinary measure.

Myth 3: Only stupid women put up with abusers

Women victims of violence are often accused of being lowbrow. If a woman puts up with violence, she must be stupid. What tends to be disregarded is that women victims of violence are vulnerable on multiple grounds. They endure violence, they are afraid of their abuser, they are afraid that they might lose their children, they have no economic or social

support... They neither have control over the situation, nor can they be certain of a positive outcome once they break free from the cycle of violence. Many women were killed by their abusive husbands and partners because they had left them.

Myth 4: His violence is an expression of love and care

What leads a "calm and withdrawn man", and commonly also "a good neighbor" to commit "a crime of passion"? "Being provoked" implies the female "provocateur". Crime of passion is often the subject of sensationalism in the media. Rich with trivial details, such reports only endorse the misconception that macho behavior is an expression of romantic love and implies that the woman was the abuser's "provocateur". The perpetrator of violence must be held accountable for his conduct. Alcohol abuse, unemployment and jealousy are not an excuse for violence, and violence cannot be justified because the perpetrator is "a crazy guy".

Myth 5: Domestic violence is a private matter

Privacy of one's home makes violence less visible and it often goes unreported for a number of reasons. This breeds misconceptions about the actual prevalence of violence. Family environment often creates an impression that violent behavior should be tolerated with excuses such as "he lost his temper", "he had too much to drink" or "he is under a lot of stress, you need to indulge him". It is very likely that the perpetrator of violence will behave violently again outside such situations, before the victim seeks help. In order to protect the health of the family as a nuclear unit of society, the perpetrator of violence must not be protected by the privacy of his four walls.

5. MEDIA AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: GOING BEYOND THE PAGES OF THE CRIME COLUMN

The aforementioned analysis of the media coverage of gender-based violence¹⁸ provides recommendations to the media with an aim of tackling the main problems identified in the media reporting about violence against women.

Journalists and editors are thus advised to make their reporting gender sensitive by avoiding the use of stereotypes in their portrayal of women and men, sensationalistic and blown-up titles that highlight the brutal details in their accounts about violence against women and by focusing on investigative stories that paint a bigger picture of the phenomenon of violence against women, its causes and consequences. Media must assume a more active role in the prevention of violence against women and always keep in mind the effects of their stories when this type of violence is concerned.

In order to translate these recommendations into practice, there should be a better exchange of information between non-governmental organizations working on these issues, institutions and media. This includes easier access for the media to reports, information and statistics prepared by the institutions and non-governmental organizations; regular exchange of information through direct and informal contacts, if necessary; joint trainings where journalists and representatives of institutions and the NGO sector have the opportunity to get to know each other better.

In the following chapters, we will address

each target group separately- journalists, students of journalism, editors, bloggers and PR officials in institutions. We will describe different approaches that may help raise the quality of media reporting about violence against women and facilitate a more effective involvement of the media community in prevention and ending of violence against women.

5a. Challenges and opportunities in media reporting about violence against women: the role of journalists and students of journalism

The role of journalists and future media professionals in changing the perception and attitudes concerning violence against women is instrumental. The current patterns of reporting must be changed through appropriate selection of topics that pertain to violence against women, as well as the selection of sources used for the stories and the visual content accompanying the stories.

Thus far, physical violence has been the topic of the majority of journalistic texts addressing gender-based violence¹⁹, while other forms of gender-based violence barely received any coverage in the media. Majority of texts were written only after violence had occurred, focusing on a specific case (“after the fact”). Texts in which violence is approached as a continued social phenomenon are almost non-existent.

¹⁸ Elvira Jukić, Research on media reporting on gender-based violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UN Women, 2016.

¹⁹ The up-to-date practice of the media is determined based on the referenced research on media reporting supported by UN Women.

Police reports or rumors are the usual source of information that media rely upon. The main actors in the media reports are perpetrators of violence, victims and occasionally activists dealing with this problem. The voice of women survivors of violence is almost not heard at all. Save for the police, other institutions responsible for providing protection to victims of violence remain invisible.

Photographs depicting faces of the perpetrator or a woman victim of violence have appeared in every fifth article. This practice is particularly concerning because it reveals the victim's identity, which may significantly exacerbate her victimization. The practice of depicting brutal scenes- bruises, blood and similar- sends a message that women are exclusively the victims of physical violence without any power to change their situation.

WHICH TOPICS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED?

The following are some of the topics that are relevant for the prevention of violence against women and awareness raising and as such should be addressed by the media:

- **Continued monitoring of the work of relevant institutions in ending violence against women** – Why only a small number of cases see a judicial outcome? How have these cases been tried? What is the court jurisprudence? What are centers for social work doing and how much are they helping women who lived or continue to live in violent situations? What the media should do in this regard is follow the developments in one particular case of violence, from the start until the end of the court proceedings, and follow up on the actual implementation of protective measures foreseen under the law.
- **Economic violence against women** – According to the research findings, poverty in BiH is one of the major factors

contributing to violence against women.²⁰ To what extent does economy influence the prevalence of domestic violence and are there any identifiable trends? Are economically independent women less likely to occur in violent situations? What is economic violence and its manifestations? How can women protect themselves from economic violence? Are statutory protection mechanisms applicable to cases of economic violence at all?

- **Cyber violence** is a topic that receives almost no media attention, even though it is very important because it affects younger women who do not know how to protect themselves against it. What is cyber violence, how to protect oneself from it, whom can women approach for help if they are subjected to cyber violence? These are all questions that the media can provide answers to.
- **Why is it so difficult for women to talk about violence?** One of the biggest myths about violence against women, as mentioned earlier, is that women subjected to violence put up with violence because they have “grown accustomed to it” (see pg. 9). The referenced research has revealed that many women subjected to psychological or physical harassment do not identify this type of behavior as violence. Could this be a reflection of social values that justify “acceptable” violence? Could it be attributed to fear? What are the experiences of women who had escaped the cycle of violence? Who can women from minority communities (Roma women, lesbians, women with disabilities, sex workers) victims of domestic violence approach for assistance and how?

²⁰ Elvira Jukić, Research on media reporting on gender-based violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. UN Women, 2016.

- **Working with perpetrators of violence** – One of the protective measures foreseen in the law is working with perpetrators of violence. This has long been the practice in some European countries and some NGOs in BiH have been involved in similar activities (Vive Žene from Tuzla and Budućnost from Modriča, whose contact information is provided in the Annex to the Handbook). What were the experiences in this program? What do perpetrators of violence say about the program?
- **How much protection is afforded to victims of violence under current legislation?** – One of the problems that women victims of violence face is the lack of social protection. In the Federation of BiH, victims of domestic violence are entitled to social protection in only four cantons (Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica-Doboj and West Herzegovina). Why is social protection important for these women? How much has the current legislation improved/impaired the work of safe houses in BiH?

WHAT ARE THE RELEVANT SOURCES FOR STORIES ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

The hardest part of any journalistic work is to find the right and reliable source for the story. The most common sources for the stories about violence against women and the media coverage of socially sensitive topics in general are police reports, information provided by the NGOs and in rare cases victims of violence. That is not enough because the sources for the story and the actors in the story often influence the portrayal of violence against women as an isolated incident, rather than a social problem.

- **Statistics** – Gender Center of the RS Government collects data from all

institutions in the system providing protection from violence and publishes these data on annual basis. All statistical agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in cooperation with the Gender Centers and the Agency for Gender Equality, publish annual reports about the status of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. What are these data telling us? Can we follow trends and developments with regards to violence against women?²¹

- **Non-governmental organizations** – Activities of NGOs should be followed on a regular basis because NGOs are usually the first place where victims of violence seek assistance through the SOS line. Most of the organizations dealing with violence against women can assist media in establishing contact with the relevant sources in the institutions. At the end of this handbook, you will find the list of organizations providing direct assistance to women victims of domestic violence, who can be contacted and asked for information.
- **Institutions** – The courts and the prosecutor's office, as well as social work centers, are equally important sources of information, in addition to Gender Centers and the Agency for Gender Equality. These institutions should be regularly contacted to provide information about the current implementation of laws, strategies and protective measures for victims of domestic violence. You can send inquiries to these institutions citing the Law on Freedom of Access to Information.²²

21 Annual reports available at: http://www.bhas.ba/index.php?option=com_publicacija&view=publicacija_pregled&ids=1&id=13&n=Gender

22 For more information about the law, please see: http://www.mpr.gov.ba/pristup_info/default.aspx?id=2542&langTag=bs-BA

WHAT KIND OF VISUAL CONTENT SHOULD ACCOMPANY THE TEXTS?

Photographs of representatives of institutions in charge of the issue of violence against women should be shown in the media more often. Their increased visibility may increase their sense of responsibility for what they are (not) doing. SOS phone lines (1265 in the Federation of BiH and 1264 in the Republika Srpska) should be included in every text about violence against women as a clear message to women - You are not alone, seek help.

Statistics about violence against women may be shown as an infographic, which is a useful tool for presenting frequently complicated procedures and percentages in a simple and clear form.²³



If you are writing about violence against women, **refrain from the following:**

- ✗ Revealing in any way the identities of the perpetrator, victim and children involved.
- ✗ Using generic images depicting blood, bruises, brutality or the victim and the perpetrator in question.
- ✗ Relying only on police reports and statements of relatives or neighbors.
- ✗ Sensationalistic sentences, dramatic headlines and subheadlines.
- ✗ Writing about violence against women only when violence or murder has been committed.



If you are writing about violence against women, **strive to do the following:**

- ✓ Use more than one source – you can include NGOs or some institutions.
- ✓ If you are writing about a specific case, observe it in a broader context. How many cases of domestic violence have been reported thus far? How were these cases resolved, if at all? Whom can women victims of violence approach for help, etc.
- ✓ Focus on the general problem of violence against women, rather than one particular case.
- ✓ Follow the work of institutions regularly. How are police, social work centers, prosecutor's offices doing their job...
- ✓ Write about other forms of violence against women, not only physical violence.
- ✓ Promote the use of SOS phone lines.

²³ For more information about data driven journalism please see "Data driven journalism for self-taught beginners", Kenan Efendić. Published at www.media.ba on 5 January 2017. Available at: <http://www.media.ba/bs/magazin-teme-i-resursi/data-novinarstvo-za-samouke-pocetnike>

5b. Violence against women and the role of bloggers

Blog is a non-journalistic form of expression. It is an online platform that anyone can create to write about one's personal opinions, experiences and activities. Blogs play an important role as a potential instrument of activism, advocacy and awareness raising about various social issues. Due to its "informality", blog can be used as a fast and simple communication channel for sharing important information about violence against women in BiH.

How can bloggers in BiH join the effort to end violence against women?

- Being free from any editorial constraints, bloggers can write about this problem whenever they want and from their own perspective. This is important because it **encourages public discussion** about violence against women. Our views may differ, but the more we speak about violence the more visible it becomes as a social problem, rather than a sporadic incident that happens in the private realm.
- Blog is a handy tool for sharing personal experiences. Every second woman in BiH is subjected to some form of violence after turning 15, as already noted above. **Personal experience** is very important. Blog provides a platform for women who are subjected to violence or have escaped a violent situation to tell their story without editorial interventions, restrictions or sensationalistic headlines. Blog is a space for **her story** as it happened.
- Holding institutions accountable and monitoring their work in the system of protection of victims of violence is very important. Considering that blogs have

more independence than the media from economic and political structures of power in their work, using blogs for **public criticism of those who are not doing their job** and who are responsible for frequent fatal outcomes in cases of domestic violence is very important.

- Existing blogging community in BiH can be a strong **ally of the organizations and institutions** working to end violence against women. If a blogger has 10,000 visits on her blog in one month, then her blog is a much more relevant outlet to place the information on a SOS phone line or instructions for recognizing domestic violence, than a website of a particular institution or organization.

If you are writing a blog, do not ignore the problem of violence against women. Here is what you can to:



- ✓ Support initiatives for prevention and ending of violence against women.
- ✓ Give space to women survivors of violence to tell their story, in their own words, the way they want to.
- ✓ Criticize publicly institutions for their irresponsible approach and work in ending violence against women.
- ✓ Educate the public that violence against women is not an isolated problem, but a daily occurrence in the life of every second woman older than 15!

5c. Media and violence against women: editorial role

The aforementioned analysis of the media reporting has revealed that reporting about violence against women tends to be sensationalistic. The more brutal, the more appealing.²⁴ The texts are rather short, signed by initials and published in a crime column. That said, editors are instrumental in choosing the right approach to violence against women portraying it as a **social problem**, rather than a sensationalistic horror story. If women are portrayed only as victims, it will exacerbate their victimization and send a message that they are weak and powerless and that it is best for them to “endure silently”.

Editorial policy influences the way in which gender roles are presented in the media. Stereotypical portrayal of women as a “weaker sex” and men as “macho protectors” reflects those very social values that define domestic violence as a “common” and inevitable part of marriage.²⁵

Gender sensitive editorial policy that promotes responsible reporting about violence against women takes into consideration the following:

- **Avoiding sensationalistic headlines in narratives about violence against women**- Violence against women should not be used to boost circulation or TV ratings.

24 Elvira Jukić, Research on media reporting on gender-based violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. UN Women, 2016.

25 For more on stereotypical portrayal of women in the media, please see: Stereotypes: Portrayal of women in printed media in South East Europe. Edited by: Nirman Moranjak-Bamburać, Tarik Jusić, Adla Isanović. Mediacentar Sarajevo, 2007. Available at: http://www.media.ba/mcsonline/files/shared/Rodni_stereotipi_u_medijima.pdf

- **Encouraging journalists to regularly report about the problem** - Even when there are no current cases to cover, journalists can still analyze the work done by institutions and success of protective mechanisms, or investigate the trends and statistics concerning violence against women. In this way, violence against women will be presented as a problem of the entire community, that involves much more than just “someone beating up his wife”.
- **Placement of content pertaining to violence against women**- Instead of the usual placement of content pertaining to violence against women before the end credits, in the crime column or on a webpage section with low visit count, this content should be made significantly more visible in the media.
- **Cooperation with NGOs and institutions in prevention activities**- Media are in a position to directly support or launch advocacy campaigns dealing with this problem. The role of the media in the prevention of violence depends on how much media are sensitized to portrayal of women and men outside their traditional social roles. Reporting outside the box, which does not promote “traditional”, patriarchal values, contributes to the empowerment of women and helps them develop a sense of self-worth, while also educating the public that domestic violence must be disclosed and eliminated.
- **Support to education and specialization of journalists who cover violence against women** - Media in BiH struggle with the lack of financial and human resources. Newsrooms employ a small number of people who must cover a lot of work during the day. It is much easier when journalists specialize in one topic,

because that enables them to maintain contact with their sources efficiently, obtain information and follow up on the situation. Over time, they become sensitive to this specific topic and they

know how to approach a victim of violence, they know which institutions are in charge and of what, and with which NGOs they should build mutual trust.



If the topic you are covering deals with violence against women:

- ✘ Do not use such cases to boost ratings or circulation.
- ✘ Avoid sensationalistic headlines.
- ✘ Encourage journalists to write about violence against women regularly, rather than cover specific cases only.
- ✘ Do not place a narrative about violence against women only in the crime column, and do not give it a front page headline only when a fatal outcome occurs.



You can help end violence against women by doing the following:

- ✓ Encouraging investigative stories covering different aspects of the problem.
- ✓ Promoting initiatives for prevention and ending of violence against women.
- ✓ Launching own campaigns to end violence against women.
- ✓ Promoting positive stories about women who escaped the cycle of violence and sanctions imposed on the perpetrators of violence. Such stories send a message that there is a way out and that violence against women will not go unpunished.
- ✓ Avoiding stereotypes in the portrayal of men and women.

6. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS SECTIONS IN THE INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE PROTECTION SYSTEM

Save for the police, institutions in the system of protection against violence - courts, prosecutor's offices and social work centers - are rarely mentioned in media reports.

The police are usually the only source of information about an incident and yet there are no texts about police work on the ground, their enforcement of laws and recommendations, etc. The research referenced above²⁶ did not come across any narratives about a case of domestic violence, that follow the case through (from the moment it is reported to the police, until it is finalized before the court). Therefore, the public often does not know who is responsible for what and why many reported cases remain unresolved.

Each of the mentioned institutions can serve as a source of information for the media. More importantly, they are each responsible for presenting their work to the public. Therefore, they must build a stronger cooperation with the media by doing the following:

- **Assuming a proactive approach to the media** – Each institution should prepare monthly and annual reports about the cases of violence against women, instead of waiting for something to happen and for the media to ask them for information. These reports and data are already available, but it is important

to present them to the media in a simple and concise fashion, so that the media can convey them to the public as truthfully as possible. If a case is pending, institutions should share basic information about the case at a press conference, regardless of whether media make inquiries or not.

- **Using statistics** – The development of digital technologies has facilitated a more efficient use of statistical data in the production of media content, especially in data driven journalism. Data about violence against women collected by institutions in a quantitative form may be posted on the websites of these institutions, in line with 'open data' standards. This will make it easier for the media to follow the trends about this problem and to identify potential topics for investigation.
- **Respecting the Law on Freedom of Access to Information** – This law is one of the most important laws for the media. Institutions have an obligation to respond to inquiries and provide requested information within 15 days. Unfortunately, the implementation of the

26 Elvira Jukić, Research on media reporting on gender-based violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. UN Women, 2016.

law is not satisfactory²⁷ and that should change. The public has the right to know whether institutions are discharging all duties assigned to them, especially when sensitive topics such as violence against women are concerned.

NGOs can also help relevant information about violence against women reaching the public. Think about how you present your activities, reports and analyses to the media, and the time of those presentations. Avoid the use of 'project language' in addressing the media and focus on the information relevant to the problem you are trying to describe, rather than information about the project. Web pages and social media outlets of organizations should contain all relevant sources of information and contact points for the media.



If you are a PR in the police force, prosecutor's office, healthcare facility, social work center, you should do the following:

- ✓ Post your reports about violence against women in electronic form on the web page of your institution. Avoid the use of PDF format because it makes it difficult for the journalists to use statistical data presented in the report.
- ✓ Respect the Law on Freedom of Access to Information and provide requested information within the statutory deadline of 15 days.

²⁷ For more on this issue please see the publication of Nermina Voloder, Development of proactive transparency in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Key factors of success/failure, Center for Social Research Analitika, 2016. Available at: <http://www.analitika.ba/bs/publikacije/razvoj-proaktivne-transparentnosti-u-bosni-i-hercegovini-kljucni-faktori-neuspjeha>

What should be done for the media to improve the quality of their work?

- Frequent consultations and personal introductions if possible
- More training
- List of all contacts in all institutions and contact persons who know more about the problem
- Continued cooperation between the media and persons dealing with the issue
- Looking for ways to report about victims of violence without jeopardizing their safety
- Including the media in the work of coordination bodies at the cantonal level
- Dialogue
- Information sharing
- Building trust between the media, NGOs and institutions
- More open institutions
- Better cooperation with the NGO sector.

How to present the topic of violence against women in a sensitive manner?

- When covering a specific incident, do not present details that would jeopardize the integrity of the victim and members of her family;
- Reflect on the problem in a general sense, instead of focusing only on the case at hand;
- Use the specific case as an incentive for investigation and covering of violence against women.
- Stick to verified information.
- Do not publish disturbing content and photographs.
- Avoid labeling and passing judgments before trial.
- Follow the case through. Follow up on the victim even after trial.

What topics need more coverage?

- *Cyber violence*, how to identify it and what to do about it?
- Economic empowerment of victims of violence.
- Violence against professionals helping women victims of violence and their protection.
- Responsibility of institutions for a more efficient protection of women victims of violence.
- Fines for perpetrators – effects on the family and the woman victim of violence?
- How are protective measures for women victims of violence being implemented?

How can media become more actively involved in the prevention of violence against women?

- Report more on the sanctions imposed on the perpetrators of violence
- Continued monitoring of the work of institutions
- Talk to professionals about the problem
- Investigate and write about the root causes of violence
- Always include details about SOS phone lines for women victims of violence on a visible spot.

Annex 1: Secondary sources on media reporting about violence against women

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Elvira Mujkić-Jukić, Research on media reporting on gender-based violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina UN Women, 2016.

Guidelines for ending domestic violence: How to assist victims of domestic violence – basic information. Prava za sve. Sarajevo, 2010. Available at: http://www.rightsforall.ba/publikacije-bs/docs-bs/Vodic-Nasilje_u_porodici.pdf

Marija Babović, Olivera Pavlović, Katarina Ginić, Nina Karađinović. *Prevalence and characteristics of violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Agency for Gender Equality, 2013. Available at: <http://arsbih.gov.ba/project/rasprostranjenost-i-karakteristike-nasilja-nad-zenama-u-bosni-i-hercegovini/>

Free of fear, free of violence – Handbook for parliamentarians (Parliamentary Assembly of BiH, 2012.)
http://website-pace.net/documents/19879/730532/HandbookParliamentarians_BCS.pdf/ea275e6f-639b-4c53-8d07-a2a5cc24b6a2

dr Zorica Mršević: Legislation governing treatment of victims of domestic violence in the Republika Srpska (2012)

Handbook on monitoring of the implementation of the Convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (Helsinki Citizen Assembly, Banjaluka, 2015.)

Regaining dignity – Handbook for religious communities on ending violence against women

http://www.nahla.ba/cms/tekstovi3/tekstovi_datoteke/130226082630_Vratimo_im_dostojanstvo.pdf

Dragana Dardić; Milkica Milojević: *Reporting about marginalized groups: Handbook* (Helsinki Citizen Assembly, Banja Luka, 2010.)
http://www.fondacijacure.org/uploads/prirucnik_izvjestavanju%20X-PRESS.pdf

Workshop Report: Reporting about violence against women and gender-based violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Udružene žene Banja Luka, 2008.)

Croatia

It's her own fault – Violence against women in war and peace (B.a.B.e. 2008.)
<http://www.babe.hr/hr/a-ko-joj-je-kriv/>

Nataša Bijelić: "The dark side of love. The story of Tanja and Marko" (CESI – Center for Education, Counseling and Research, 2006.)
<http://www.babe.hr/hr/a-ko-joj-je-kriv/>

"What do we know about economic violence against women" – Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Serbia (B.a.B.e. 2013.)
<http://www.babe.hr/hr/sto-znamo-o-ekonomskom-nasilju-nad-zenama/>

Documents and guidelines on media reporting about violence against women (Feminist Collective fAKTIV)
http://www.kulturpunkt.hr/sites/default/files/Popis%20izvora%20za%20smjernice_fAKTIV.pdf

Ten recommendations for reporting about violence against women (Feminist Collective fAKTIV, 2016.)
<http://www.hnd.hr/kako-izvjestavati-o-nasilju-nad-zenama>

“Analysis of media reports about violence against women and domestic violence” (Work Report of the Public Defender for Gender Equality for 2013, chapter on media, Zagreb, March, 2014.)
<http://www.prs.hr/attachments/article/1790/Istra%C5%BEivanje%20o%20na%C4%8Dinu%20medijskog%20izve%C5%A1tavanja%20o%20nasilju%20nad%20%C5%BEenama%20i%20nasilj-.pdf>

Kosovo

Portrayal of women in printed media 2010-2011 (Agency for Gender Equality of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, 2012.)
<http://abgi.rks-gov.net/Portals/0/ARP%20Pretstavljanje%20zena%20u%20pisanim%20mediama.pdf>

Montenegro

Dr Anita Ramšak: “Guidelines for gender sensitive reporting”
http://www.publicpolicyinstitute.eu/uploads/editor/GUIDELINES_FOR_GENDER_SENSITIVE_REPORTING_Crnogorska_verzija_PDF.pdf

Serbia

“Portrayal of women in public broadcasting” – Analysis of Serbia radio and TV public broadcasting and Vojvodina radio and TV public broadcasting (January-June 2016.)
<http://www.novinarska-skola.org.rs/sr/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/FR6.pdf>

Dr Jelena Kleut; Uroš Mišljenović: “Protection of privacy and presumption of innocence in the media” (Partners for Democratic Change, Serbia, 2016.)
<http://www.partners-serbia.org/zastita-privatnosti-i-pretpostavke-nevinosti-u-medijima/>

For life without fear. Handbook 2005/6. (Autonomous Women’s Center, 2007.)
<http://www.womenngo.org.rs/publikacije-dp/Prirucnik06.pdf>

Guidelines for journalists – Domestic violence (Autonomous Women’s Center, 2008.)
http://www.womenngo.org.rs/images/publikacije-dp/2016/Vodic_za_novinarke-nasilje_u_porodici-II_izdanje.pdf

Veronika Mitro: “How media in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina reports about violence against women and other forms of gender-based violence. Research Report” (Secretariat for Labor, Employment and Gender Equality, Executive Committee of the AP Vojvodina and Women’s Studies and Research, Novi Sad; 2009.)

prof. dr. Zorica Mršević: “Quality analysis of media reporting about violence against women in Serbia” (UNDP, 2013.)
http://www.sigurnakuca.net/upload/documents/Multisektorska_saradnja/Kvantitativna%20analiza%20medijskih%20sad%C5%BEaja%20o%20nasilju%20nad%20%C5%BEenama.pdf

Handbook on gender-sensitive media reporting- Training about gender sensitivity for members of the media community (Care International Balkan, youngmeninitiative.net)

Jelena Aleksić; Jelena Đorgović: *Handbook on media reporting about domestic violence and violence against women* (Project: Ending sexual and gender-based violence. Administration

for Gender Equality, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, 2011.)

[http://www.medijskapismenost.net/dokument/Prirucnik-za-medijsko-izvestavanje-o-nasilju-u-porodici-i-nasilju-nad-zenama-\(PDF\)](http://www.medijskapismenost.net/dokument/Prirucnik-za-medijsko-izvestavanje-o-nasilju-u-porodici-i-nasilju-nad-zenama-(PDF))

Handbook for members of the media (Žindok centar, 2009.)

http://arhiv.rosalux.rs/userfiles/files/Prirucnik_za_medije.pdf

Miloš Resimić: "Media reporting about violence against women in marital unions and common law marriages in Serbia" (published in: *TEMIDA* magazine; 2016/ vol. 19, No. 1, pg. 63-82)

http://www.academia.edu/29148358/Medijsko_izve%C5%A1tavanje_o_nasilju_nad_%C5%BEenama_u_porodici_i_u_partnerskim_odnosima_u_Srbiji

Marija Babović; Katarina Ginić; Olivera Vuković: "Mapping domestic violence against women in Central Serbia" (SeCons 2010.)

http://www.sigurnakuca.net/upload/Mapiranje_porodicnog_nasilja_prema_zenama_u_Centralnoj_Srbiji.pdf

"Analysis of articles printed in daily papers about violence against women – February-April 2015" (Kontakta, 2015.)

<http://kontakta.rs/analiza-izvestavanja-dnevne-stampe-o-nasilju-u-porodici-februar-mart-april-2015/>

"Ten rules of reporting about domestic violence" (Kontakta, 2015.)

<http://kontakta.rs/kako-izvestavati-o-nasilju-u-porodici/>

Jelena Višnjić: "*Killing me softly* – Reporting of the printed media about women victims of violence" (published in: *Genero* magazine, 2012/ 16, pg. 141-156)

<http://www.womenngo.org.rs/vesti/241-killing-me-softly-medijsko-izvestavanje-o-zenama-koje-ni-su-prezivele-nasilje>

"Femicide – killings of women in Serbia.

Quantity and narrative report for 2015"

(Network of Women Against Violence, 2016. Reports for the period 2010-2016 are available on the webpage)

<http://www.zeneprotivnasilja.net/femicid-u-srbiji>

Annex 2: List of laws, documents and institutions dealing with the protection from violence against women and prevention

Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) – available at: <http://arsbih.gov.ba/project/istanbulska-konvencija/>

Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina under Article 2 forbids discrimination on any basis, including gender-based discrimination. Annex I of the Constitution of BiH contains Convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (1979) and Convention on the nationality of married women (1957)

Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina – available at: <http://arsbih.gov.ba/project/zakon-o-ravnopravnosti-spolova-u-bih/>

Gender Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina – available at: <http://arsbih.gov.ba/oblasti/247-2/>

Framework strategy for the implementation of the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in BiH (2015-2018) – available at: http://arsbih.gov.ba/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/CAHVIO_Strategija.pdf

Strategy for preventing and combating domestic violence (2013–2017) in the Federation of BiH – available at: <http://www.gcfbih.gov.ba/strategija-za-prevenciju-i-borbu-protiv-nasilja-u-porodici/>

Strategy for preventing and combating domestic violence in the Republika Srpska

Laws in Bosnia and Herzegovina governing issues of domestic violence and violence against women (links available at: <http://arsbih.gov.ba/resursi-2/>)

Law on amendments to the Law on protection from domestic violence in the Federation of BiH

Law on protection from domestic violence in the Federation of BiH

Criminal Code of the Federation of BiH

Law on protection from domestic violence in the Republika Srpska

Criminal Code of the Republika Srpska

Criminal Code of the Brčko District

Institutions

Committee on Gender Equality of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH

<https://www.parlament.ba/committee/read/21>

Committee on Gender Equality of the House of Representatives

Committee on Gender Equality of the House of Peoples of the House of Representatives and House of Peoples of the Parliament of the Federation of BiH

http://www.parlamentfbih.gov.ba/dom_naroda/bos/dom_naroda/organizacija/tijela.html#9

Committee on Equal Opportunities of the National Assembly of the RS

<http://www.narodnaskupstinars.net/?q=la/narodna-skup%C5%A1tina/radna-tijela/odbori/odbor-jednakih-mogu%C4%87nosti>

Committees for gender equality of the cantonal assemblies and municipal assemblies/councils.

Agency for Gender Equality of BiH – <http://arsbih.gov.ba/>

Gender Centers in the Federation of BiH – <http://www.gcfbih.gov.ba/> and Republika Srpska – <http://www.vladars.net/sr-SP-Cyrl/Vlada/centri/gendercentarrs/Pages/default.aspx>

Safe houses – there are 9 in BiH

SOS phone line for women victims of violence – 1264 in the RS and 1265 in the Federation of BiH

Statistics Institutes in the FBiH (<http://fzs.ba/>) and RS (<http://www.rzs.rs.ba/>) and Agency for Statistics of BiH (<http://www.bhas.ba/>) publish special annual reports with gender related statistics.

NGOs providing specific services to women victims of violence:

Udružene žene Banjaluka: <http://unitedwomenbl.org/new-page-1/>

Horizonti Tuzla: <http://horizonti.ba/en/>

Medica Zenica: <http://www.medicazenica.org/>

Centar za pravnu pomoć ženama Zenica: www.cenppz.org.ba

Budućnost Modriča: <http://www.buducnost-md.com/>

Lara Bijeljina: <http://fondacijalara.com/>

Ženski centar Trebinje: <http://www.zenskicentar.org/sr/>

Forum žena Bratunac: www.forumzena.org

Prava za sve Sarajevo: <http://rightsforall.ba/bs/>

Vive žene Tuzla: <http://www.vivezene.ba/>

Glas žene Bihać: www.glas-zene.org

Forma F Mostar: <https://womencitizensforconstitutionalreform.wordpress.com>

Fondacija lokalne demokratije: <http://www.fld.ba/stranica/unapreenje-i-zatita-ljudskih-prava>

Žena BiH Mostar: <http://www.zenabih.ba/index.php/en/>

