

**SAY NO-  
UNITE**

**16 DAYS  
TO END VIOLENCE  
AGAINST WOMEN**

[WWW.16DAYS-NOVIOLENCE-KS.COM](http://WWW.16DAYS-NOVIOLENCE-KS.COM)

**Ms. Atifete Jahjaga,**

President of Kosovo:

*“With women as equal partners in every area of life we achieve a free, prosperous and democratic society.”*



**Luan Jaha,**

Actor:

*“Violence is violence in any form it appears, either against men or against women. In this case, violence against a woman is violence against a mother, it’s violence against a sister, against a wife-spouse.”*



**Leze Qena,**

Actress:

*“Independent women fight a bit more for themselves, while the others have to remain silent. Some of them have knowledge, but some of them don’t and they suffer.”*



**Ilir Prapashtica,**

Actor:

*“As a father of two girls, I want them to have the same opportunities in life as boys do, but without the risk of violence and of course without discrimination.”*





**Shpat Deda,**

Singer songwriter:

*“Whenever I hear that there are cases when someone exercises sexual violence against women and tends to carry out this beautiful act by force and turns it into something horrible, then all I can think of is the war and some of its disgusting sides.”*



**Besim Dina,**

TV personality:

*“Raise your voice against violence, either as a victim or as a witness. It’s time to say no to violence in Kosovo.”*



**Rrona,**

*“We, the youth of Kosovo are the future of the country, and we have the power to make positive changes. Let’s show to the world that the violence against girls and women is not okay.”*



**Rreze,**

*“When I grow up, I want to go to university and become an artist. Help me fulfill my dreams. Say no to violence against women and girls.”*

# Facts and Figures

## DID YOU KNOW?

Among women aged between 15 and 44, acts of violence cause more death and disability than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war combined.

Violence against women and girls is a problem of pandemic proportions. Based on country data available, up to 70 per cent of women experience physical or sexual violence from men in their lifetime – the majority by husbands, intimate partners or someone they know.

Perhaps the most pervasive human rights violation that we know today, violence against women devastates lives, fractures communities, and stalls development. It takes many forms and occurs in many places – domestic violence in the home, sexual abuse of girls in schools, sexual harassment at work, rape by husbands or strangers, in refugee camps or as a tactic of war.

- An estimated 150 million girls under 18 suffer some form of sexual violence.
- As many as 1 in 4 women experience physical and/or sexual violence during pregnancy which increases the likelihood of miscarriage, stillbirth and abortion.
- Intimate partner and sexual violence are mostly perpetrated by men against girls and women. However, sexual violence against boys is also common. International studies reveal that approximately 20% of women and 5–10% of men report being victims of sexual violence as children.

## FEMICIDE THE MURDER OF WOMEN BECAUSE THEY ARE WOMEN

- Femicide occurs throughout the world at alarming rates and is perpetrated by intimate partners, family members, and men involved with criminal groups. Women and girls are killed because of their gender in their homes, in clinics, in the streets, and in times of conflict.
- In the United States, one-third of women murdered each year are killed by intimate partners

## TRAFFICKING

- 4 million women and girls are trafficked annually

## HARMFUL PRACTICES

- Over 60 million girls worldwide are child brides, married before the age of 18



## RAPE AS A METHOD OF WARFARE

- Rape has long been used as a tactic of war, with violence against women during or after armed conflicts reported in every international or non-international war-zone.
- Between 1998 and 1999, where women and girls were the most vulnerable civilians in Kosovo, it is estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 women were raped

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- Worldwide, up to 50 percent of sexual assaults are committed against girls under 16.
- Between 40 and 50 per cent of women in European Union countries experience unwanted sexual advancements, physical contact or other forms of sexual harassment at their workplace.
- In the United States, 83 per cent of girls aged 12 to 16 experiences some form of sexual harassment in public schools.

## WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

- The global average of women participation in National Parliaments is 19.9 %.
- Out of 24 major peace processes since 1992, only 2.5 % of signatories, 3.2 % of mediators, 5.5 % of witnesses and 7.6 % of negotiators were women.
- In Kosovo, 34% of MPs are women
- In Kosovo, 14.75% of the Kosovo Police and 8.1% of the Kosovo Security Forces are women
- In Kosovo, 28% of the Judiciary and 30% of Prosecutors are women
- In Kosovo, only 11% of private businesses are owned by women, and only 3% of bank loans to startup businesses go to women

## COSTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

- The costs of violence against women are extremely high. They include the direct costs of services to treat and support abused women and their children and to bring perpetrators to justice.
- The indirect costs include lost employment and productivity, and the costs in human pain and suffering.

# About the Campaign

## UNITE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CAMPAIGN

On 25 February 2008, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, launched the campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women, covering the period 2008-2015. The overall objective is to raise public awareness and increase the political will and resources for preventing and responding to all forms of violence against women and girls in all parts of the world.

The Framework for Action provides an overall “umbrella” for activities to be undertaken by different stakeholders at global, regional, national, and local levels in the course of the campaign.

The social mobilization platform “Say NO-UNiTE” has recorded more than 2 million activities worldwide – from protest marches to public awareness campaigns, legislative actions and advocacy to help victims.

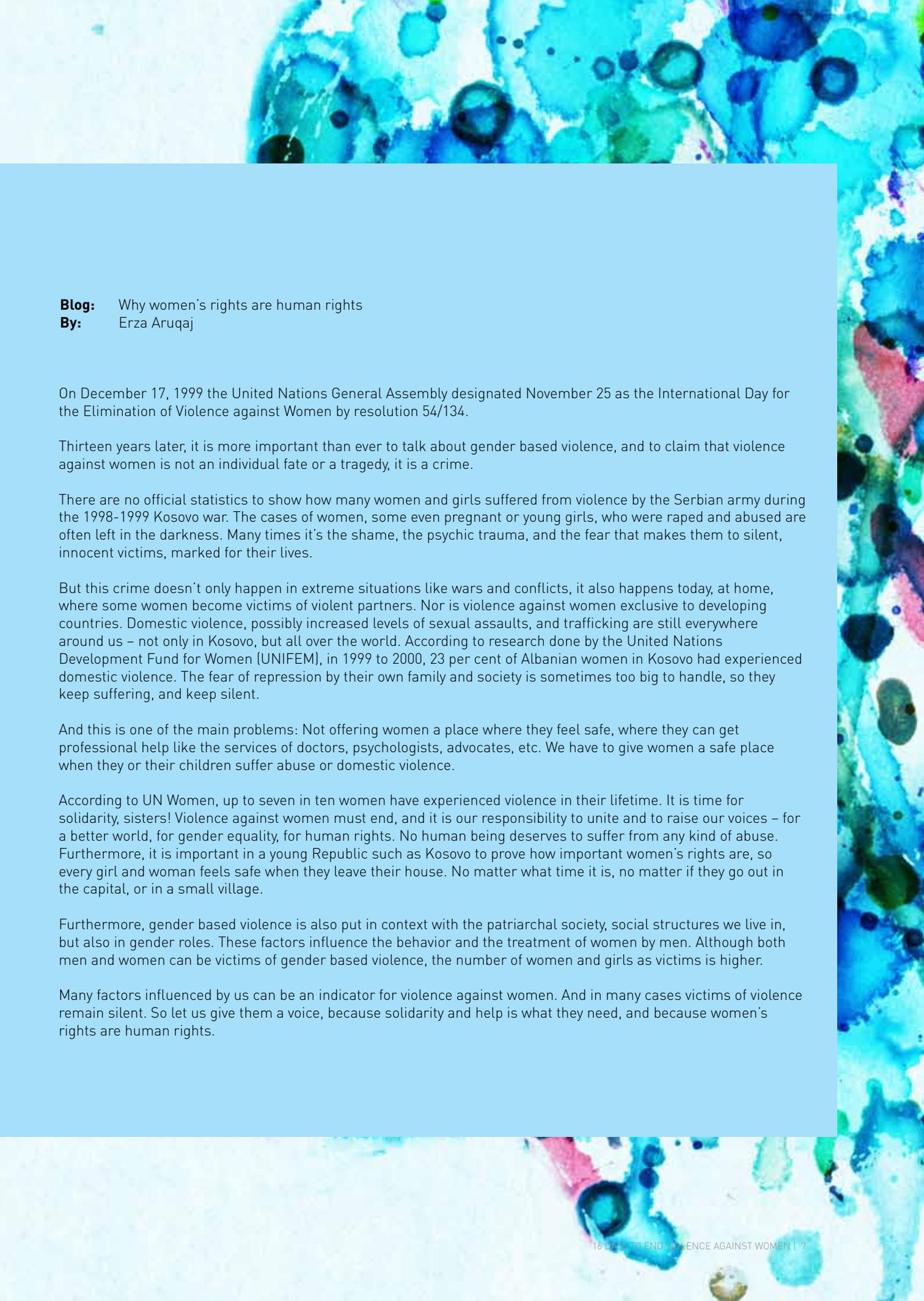
**Ban Ki-moon** Secretary-General

*“We must unite. Violence against women cannot be tolerated, in any form, in any context, in any circumstance, by any political leader or by any government. The time to change is now. Only by standing together and speaking out can we make a difference.”*

There can be no peace, no progress, when women live under the fear of violence. Today violence against women is increasingly recognized for what it is: a threat to democracy, a barrier to lasting peace, a burden on national economies, and an appalling human rights violation. As more and more people believe that violence against women is neither acceptable nor inevitable, as more and more perpetrators are punished, the change to end violence against women grows deeper and stronger.

This is not just a women’s issue, this is a responsibility for all of us. This violence is an outrage and it must be stopped. Time has run out for complacency or excuses. Let us show the will, the determination and let us mobilize greater resources to end what is a scourge of humanity, violence against women.

**Message of Michelle Bachelet, UN Women Executive Director  
International Day to End Violence against Women  
25 November 2012**



**Blog:** Why women's rights are human rights  
**By:** Erza Aruqaj

On December 17, 1999 the United Nations General Assembly designated November 25 as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women by resolution 54/134.

Thirteen years later, it is more important than ever to talk about gender based violence, and to claim that violence against women is not an individual fate or a tragedy, it is a crime.

There are no official statistics to show how many women and girls suffered from violence by the Serbian army during the 1998-1999 Kosovo war. The cases of women, some even pregnant or young girls, who were raped and abused are often left in the darkness. Many times it's the shame, the psychic trauma, and the fear that makes them to silent, innocent victims, marked for their lives.

But this crime doesn't only happen in extreme situations like wars and conflicts, it also happens today, at home, where some women become victims of violent partners. Nor is violence against women exclusive to developing countries. Domestic violence, possibly increased levels of sexual assaults, and trafficking are still everywhere around us – not only in Kosovo, but all over the world. According to research done by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), in 1999 to 2000, 23 per cent of Albanian women in Kosovo had experienced domestic violence. The fear of repression by their own family and society is sometimes too big to handle, so they keep suffering, and keep silent.

And this is one of the main problems: Not offering women a place where they feel safe, where they can get professional help like the services of doctors, psychologists, advocates, etc. We have to give women a safe place when they or their children suffer abuse or domestic violence.

According to UN Women, up to seven in ten women have experienced violence in their lifetime. It is time for solidarity, sisters! Violence against women must end, and it is our responsibility to unite and to raise our voices – for a better world, for gender equality, for human rights. No human being deserves to suffer from any kind of abuse. Furthermore, it is important in a young Republic such as Kosovo to prove how important women's rights are, so every girl and woman feels safe when they leave their house. No matter what time it is, no matter if they go out in the capital, or in a small village.

Furthermore, gender based violence is also put in context with the patriarchal society, social structures we live in, but also in gender roles. These factors influence the behavior and the treatment of women by men. Although both men and women can be victims of gender based violence, the number of women and girls as victims is higher.

Many factors influenced by us can be an indicator for violence against women. And in many cases victims of violence remain silent. So let us give them a voice, because solidarity and help is what they need, and because women's rights are human rights.

# Women, Peace and Security



## WHAT IS HUMAN SECURITY?

The concept of security has developed from a traditional state-centric approach to one in which the security needs of people are placed first. Having human security means protecting fundamental freedoms and human rights. It means protecting people from threats to their security or harm. Human security focuses on creating an environment where all people feel secure, and that in turn contributes to national, regional and international security. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, security and cultural systems that, when combined, give people the building blocks for dignified survival and livelihood. Human security constitutes sustainable peace and development potential that can only be achieved when the basic needs and rights of all human beings are met.

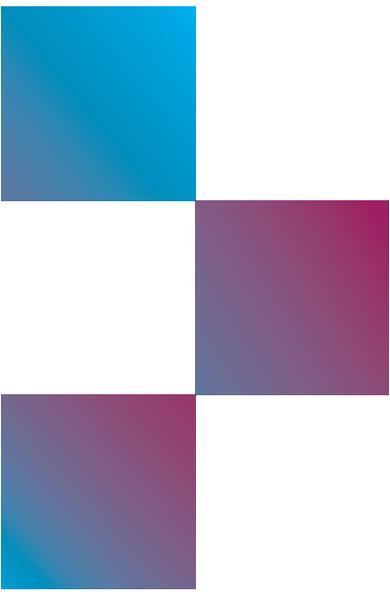
## WHAT IS WOMEN'S SECURITY?

Women throughout the world face attacks on their human rights and routine discrimination and violence, much of it defended through cultural and religious arguments. Even where discrimination is prohibited, it often persists in practice. Because of women's subordinate position in society, women's security is of particular concern as violence against women and girls is a widespread global phenomenon. It includes rape and domestic violence, harassment at work and school, and sexual violence in armed conflicts. A lack of participation of women in governance and security institutions, as well as decision-making and policy formulation, is a threat to women's security as these institutions do not reflect women's perspectives and needs. Violence and discrimination against women are the most significant barriers to the realization of gender equality where women's human rights and security is guaranteed.

## IS HUMAN SECURITY THE SAME AS PEACE?

Peace and security does not just mean the absence of fighting. There can be violence perpetrated by the state towards its citizens even when there is no war or armed conflict; this is referred to as structural violence.

Structural violence is always related to systemic discrimination and injustice towards a certain group in society - a country can have peace but also structural violence, creating a low level of human security. Worldwide, women and girls are often targeted by structural violence in the form of discrimination, being denied their right to equality before the law, equal access to education, property, work, and healthcare that in turn reinforces their subordinate position in society compared to men.



So is there peace if there is structural violence and discrimination? No, a positive peace requires social justice including non-discriminatory provision of human security to citizens.

To get an understanding of the level of human security in a country, ask: how are the women and girls being treated? Do they have the same rights as men when it comes to the political, educational, economic, social, security and legal areas of society? Peace requires that both women and men enjoy equal rights.

There is no peace if structural violence and discrimination against women and girls exists.

## WHAT ABOUT KOSOVO?

Members of the Kosovo judiciary and police force undergo compulsory training in women's human rights and domestic violence to promote the protection of human security in Kosovo.

Kosovo institutions have gender machinery including municipal gender officials, gender officers within ministries and the Agency for Gender Equality within the Prime Minister's Office.

The Kosovo Police have a human rights and gender equality unit, special investigation units on domestic violence and human trafficking and an internal gender advisory board to ensure that women's security concerns are reflected throughout the organization.

*“Peace is gender equality”*

# UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1325, recognizing the different impact that war has on women and men, and the important role women and girls have in both preventing conflict and achieving sustainable peace once conflict has ended. This was the first time that a direct link was created between women's rights and security, thereby acknowledging that we cannot have lasting peace when women and girls feel insecure and are discriminated against by not providing them with the opportunity to contribute to their own future economically, socially, politically and culturally.

The Security Council has passed four other resolutions on women, peace and security (UNSCR 1820, 1888, 1889 and 1960) which focus on improving protection against sexual violence in conflict and ensuring accountability by bringing perpetrators to justice and ending impunity.

**Kosovo** is currently developing an Action Plan for the Implementation of 1325 and will be submitted to the government for its approval at the end of the year.

Elements of **Resolution 1325** are also incorporated in other institutions and laws, such as the gender machinery in both Kosovo Police and Security Forces, the Gender Equality Law, the election quota, the anti-trafficking strategy and domestic violence law.

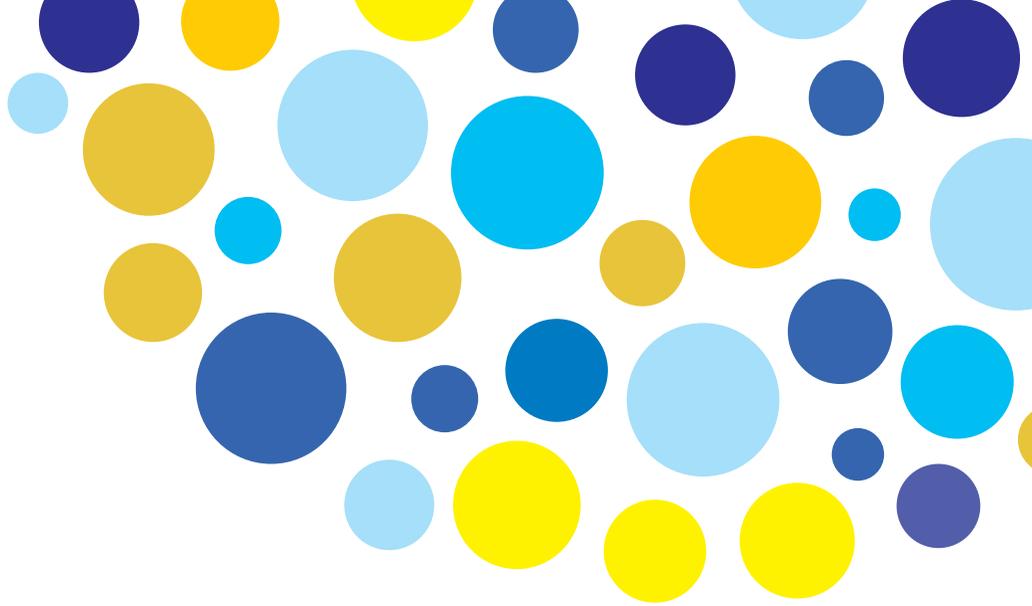
## WHAT DOES RESOLUTION 1325 MEAN?

The Resolution asks governments to increase the number of women in all decision-making positions, including in government and in security institutions such as the police and army as well as to include women and a gender perspective in all peace building initiatives. Besides participation, it calls for prevention and protection from gender based violence and asks governments to train people on the importance of gender and security and to increase the amount of resources it allocates to gender equality issues.

## WHY IS RESOLUTION 1325 SO IMPORTANT?

Resolution 1325 is legally binding, meaning that all UN Member States have to pay attention to women's subordinate position, both in times of war and peace.

This is a powerful resolution because it links women's rights and security. The main insecurities for women, like sexual and gender based violence, exclusion from decision-making levels in society, access to law-making and taking part in peace processes are addressed in the resolution.



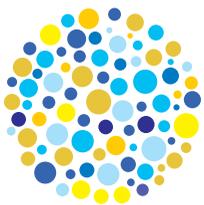
Implementation of the Resolution means that women have the opportunity to make their voice heard and speak out on behalf of women and girls in general.

Women often act as bridges between division in the communities created by race, religion, politics and ethnicity. Also, when empowered to influence their own future, they are inspirations and role models for future generations of both girls and boys. **Women's perspectives, needs and concerns not only influence law and policy for the benefit of women and girls, but also help achieve inclusive peace and security for communities and the whole of society.**

## THERE IS STILL WORK TO DO!

In the last 25 years, only 1 in 40 signatures to peace treaties have been women. And between 1990 and 2010 only 92 out of 585 peace accords actually mentioned women, and only 12 mentioned women's needs in rehabilitation and reconstruction.

It is the right of every woman to make choices about her life and to help make choices about the future of her country. **Both men and women, and boys and girls needs to work together to make a change! Be a part of that Change!**



UNSCR  
1325

# Gender based violence

Violence against women and girls is one of the most **widespread violations of human rights and the main source of insecurity for women and girls worldwide**. It includes physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse, and it cuts across boundaries of age, race, ethnicity, culture, income and geography. Until recently, gender based violence was treated as a private or a family problem. Nowadays, it is generally accepted that gender based violence is of public concern, limiting the potential of society for peace and prosperity.

**33%**  
of women in the world  
are exposed to violence  
during their lifetime

Gender-based violence is any harm that is perpetrated against a person on the basis of her biological sex and against the person's will, affecting the physical or psychological health, development, and identity of the person.

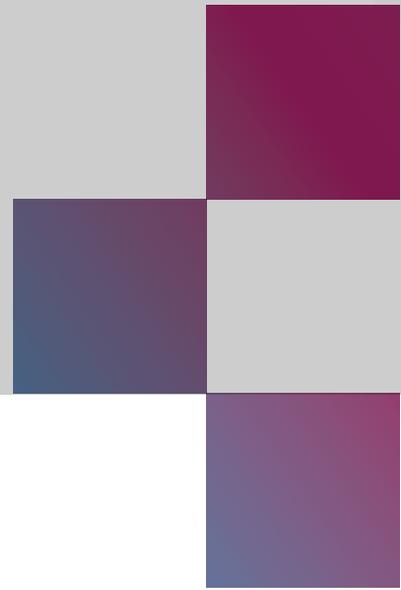
Among women aged between 15 and 44, acts of violence cause more death and disability than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents and war combined.

- Gender-based violence is most frequently committed by men against women, but it also occurs the other way around.
- Categories of perpetrators may include family members, community members, politicians and other state actors.
- It takes place in the home, on the streets, in schools, the workplace, in farm fields, refugee camps, during conflicts and crises.

**Domestic and sexual violence**, or intimate partnership violence, is the most common type of gender-based violence. It also requires special consideration because it is hard for many people to talk about.

#### **If a woman is being abused, why does she not leave the relationship?**

- Almost 60% of all dating violence happens after the woman has broken off the relationship
- The perpetrators often threaten to harm or even kill the woman, or someone close to her
- The woman is economically dependent on her violent partner
- Women and men alike hold strong beliefs about the importance of keeping the family together despite violence
- The woman is still in love with the perpetrator and wants to believe him when he says he is sorry and that he will change his behavior
- The long-term experience of being abused has destroyed the woman's self-confidence and broken her spirit



## WHAT DOES THE KOSOVO LAW SAY ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Kosovo has a Law on Protection against Domestic Violence and a Program against Domestic Violence and Action Plan 2011-2014. The law aims to protect victims of domestic violence, prevent it from happening, and provide services for the rehabilitation and integration of both victims and perpetrators.

Kosovo police is responsible for responding to any report of actual or threatened violence: physical or sexual, regardless of whom reports it. Kosovo police can issue temporary emergency protection orders, and is responsible for using reasonable means to protect victims of violence and prevent further violence.

Victim's advocacy officers provide support and assistance to the victims and advocate on their behalf.

District Legal Aid Bureaus provide free legal aid to qualifying victims. The domestic violence and anti-trafficking helpline number is 0800 11112. It helps to identify victims of domestic violence or trafficking in human beings and refer them to people who can help. It provides information and contact numbers not only to victims but also to media, government institutions and NGOs and provides a safe way to report these crimes.



**Blog:** Violence against women: An unspoken nightmare  
**By:** Kristina Zharkalliu

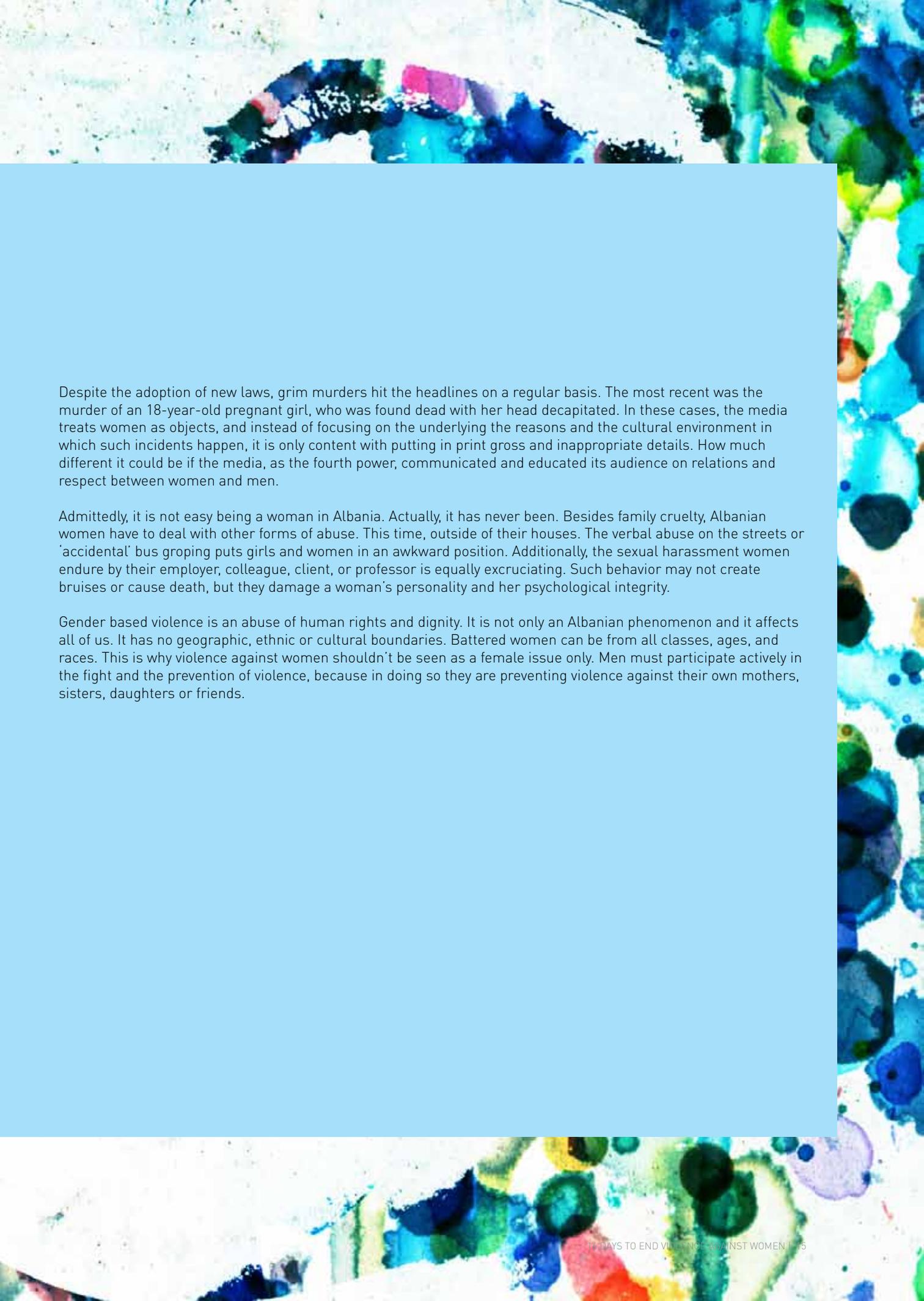
Many young girls await eagerly to grow up and one day to create the family of their dreams. Family has always played a significant role in Albanian society and culture. But while it remains among one of its greatest values, it simultaneously can turn into a nightmare for some women.

In Albania, one in three women has been beaten or has been subjected to other forms of violence within her family. Even though domestic violence in our country is not a secret, women do not talk openly about it. Shame, fear and honour make many women silently tolerate thuggish behaviour, usually inflicted by their husbands or intimate partners (without excluding the violence from their fathers, brothers or other male members of the family). In most cases, the victims are deterred from denouncing their aggressor. In comparison with previous years, the numbers of women who inform the police about incidents of violence have been significantly increased. But still, the rates of reporting on violence remain relatively low.

The justificatory myth of “he loves you he beats you,” simply doesn’t exist. According to surveys, the vast majority of the abused spouses continue to share their living place with their abuser. Worryingly, these women are forced to live under the same roof with these men due to the particularly high unemployment rates for women, the shortage of housing, for the sake of their children, the expectations of family members and the gossip of neighbors. What’s more, the tragic irony in such cases is that it is the woman who feels deeply embarrassed and stigmatized. The introversion and the hypocrisy of Albanian society makes people more concerned about what other people will say about them instead of facing the real problem.

Commonly, the violence against women stems from the inequalities between the two genders, both in public and private life. The patriarchal character of the Albanian family, the isolation from the rest of the world during the communist regime and the transitional period that the country is currently going through are the reasons why these middle-aged practices and mentalities continue to be embraced.

In 2006 Albania adopted the law “On Measures against Violence in Family Relations.” According to this law, victims of domestic violence are able to seek protection orders and relevant ministries are required to cooperate in the identification and prosecution of domestic violence. Definitely, the above mentioned law has inspired confidence in many women to report domestic violence to the authorities. However much more work remains to be done.



Despite the adoption of new laws, grim murders hit the headlines on a regular basis. The most recent was the murder of an 18-year-old pregnant girl, who was found dead with her head decapitated. In these cases, the media treats women as objects, and instead of focusing on the underlying reasons and the cultural environment in which such incidents happen, it is only content with putting in print gross and inappropriate details. How much different it could be if the media, as the fourth power, communicated and educated its audience on relations and respect between women and men.

Admittedly, it is not easy being a woman in Albania. Actually, it has never been. Besides family cruelty, Albanian women have to deal with other forms of abuse. This time, outside of their houses. The verbal abuse on the streets or 'accidental' bus groping puts girls and women in an awkward position. Additionally, the sexual harassment women endure by their employer, colleague, client, or professor is equally excruciating. Such behavior may not create bruises or cause death, but they damage a woman's personality and her psychological integrity.

Gender based violence is an abuse of human rights and dignity. It is not only an Albanian phenomenon and it affects all of us. It has no geographic, ethnic or cultural boundaries. Battered women can be from all classes, ages, and races. This is why violence against women shouldn't be seen as a female issue only. Men must participate actively in the fight and the prevention of violence, because in doing so they are preventing violence against their own mothers, sisters, daughters or friends.

# What can you do?

- **Speak Out:** Speak out against violence against women. Participate in dialogues and discussions, talk to your friends and family, as well as youngsters about respecting and treating women and men equally. Most importantly lead by example!
- **Join our Campaign:** Realizing the power of social networking, we are using Facebook, Twitter, this website, and our eBook to convey messages to make it clear that violence against women can no longer be tolerated.
- **Sign the SAY NO – UNITE campaign.** Add your name to the global call to make ending violence against women and girls a top priority worldwide: [www.saynotoviolence.org/take-action](http://www.saynotoviolence.org/take-action) Each signature is an action that counts in ending violence against women and girls.
- **Be an ally** to people who are working to end all forms of gender based violence. Support the work of centers which aid victims of violence.
- Attend programs, take courses, watch films, and read articles and books about multicultural masculinities, gender inequality, and the root causes of violence. **Educate yourself and others** about how larger social forces affect the conflicts between the individual men and women.
- Mentor and teach young boys/girls about how to live life in ways that avoid degrading or abusing others. Volunteer to work with violence prevention programs, including anti-sexism programs. **Lead by example.**

## IF YOU'RE WORRIED FOR YOUR FRIEND?

If you suspect that a friend is experiencing domestic violence **ASK** if there is anything you can do to help them

Let your friend know that they can **TALK** to you and you will be there to **LISTEN**.  
Remind them that it isn't their fault and that they deserve better.

**CONNECT** your friend with resources, such as **SOS** helpline or the details of shelters in the area.

You may not agree with the decision that your friend may make, but **RESPECT** their decision and believe in them.

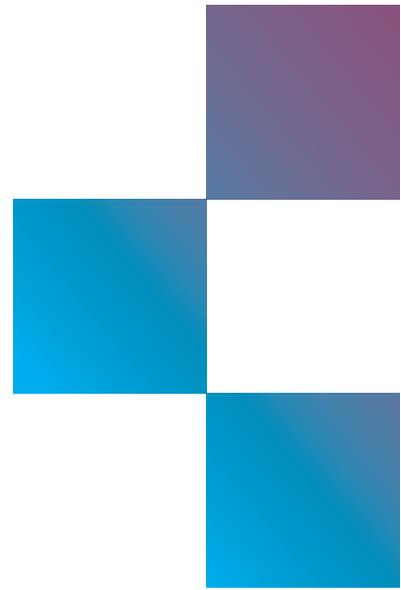
If you have a friend who is being abusive, tell them that **IT IS NOT OKAY**, and that they must **STOP**.  
Don't look the other way, report any suspected abuse.

## IF YOU'RE WORRIED FOR YOURSELF?

To determine whether your relationship is abusive, answer the questions below. The more "yes" answers, the more likely it is that you are in an abusive relationship.

### Do You:

- Feel afraid of your partner much of the time?
- Avoid certain topics out of fear of angering your partner?
- Feel that you can't do anything right for your partner?
- Believe that you deserve to be hurt or mistreated?
- Wonder if you're the one who is crazy?
- Feel emotionally numb or helpless?



## Does Your Partner:

- Humiliate or yell at you?
- Criticize you and put you down?
- Treat you so badly that you're embarrassed for your friends or family to see?
- Ignore or put down your opinions or accomplishments?
- Blame you for their own abusive behavior?
- See you as property or a sex object, rather than as a person?
- Have a bad and unpredictable temper?
- Hurt you, or threaten to hurt or kill you?
- Threaten to take your children away or harm them?
- Threaten to commit suicide if you leave?
- Force you to have sex?
- Destroy your belongings?
- Act excessively jealous and possessive?
- Control where you go or what you do?
- Keep you from seeing your friends or family?
- Limit your access to money, the phone, or the car?
- Constantly check up on you?

## WHAT TO DO AS A VICTIM

Report it – violence is never justifiable, it is not a sign of love and you never deserve it!  
Contact the police, a shelter organization or a friend or family member.

## WHAT TO DO AS A PERPETRATOR

If you are aware that you have an abnormal need of controlling your partner, or if you are violent in your relationship, seek professional help for your behavior and try to change it– violence is never justifiable, it is not a sign of love, and it is never deserved.

## HOW AND WHERE TO GET HELP:

Domestic violence and human trafficking is a criminal offense punishable by law;

A victim of violence, as well as victim of human trafficking, may seek help through the unique SOS Telephone number: 0800 11112

The call is free of charge and when you call do not have to say your name or provide personal information.

### If you are reporting violence to the police:

When you are physically attacked, the police are the first in the chain of help. You may call them on the number 112 /192 from a cellphone or 92 from a landline

- If you have sustained any physical injuries you should go to the hospital immediately and request them to give you a medical report on your injuries. You can go on your own, or you may ask the police to take you there.

### If you are reporting violence in a police station:

- You will talk to the officer responsible for domestic violence. You need to tell this officer everything that happened to you.
- If you are too afraid to go back home, ask the police to place you in one of the safe houses.

### Shelters for victims of domestic violence (safe houses):

- Requests to be placed in a safe house, with or without your children, may be made to the police officer and/or center for social work, or directly to the non-governmental organizations that have such safe houses.
- Once in the shelter, victims receive necessary medical, social/legal, psychological and other aid.

#### List of safe houses:

<b>Gjakova:</b> linjajuaj@hotmail.com	0390330098
<b>Pristina:</b> cpwcpishtina@yahoo.com	(both women and children)
<b>Prizren:</b> qsgf_pz@hotmail.com	
<b>Gjilan:</b> Liriagjilan10@hotmail.com	24 hour helpline 0280325700
<b>Peja:</b> pejawwc@yahoo.com	039421398
<b>Mitrovica:</b> cpwcmitrovica@yahoo.com	(both women and children)

**In Pristina there are also specific shelters for children (from 3-18 years of age) that operate by referral only. If you need to access their services, please contact the Kosovo Police.**

### List of safe houses houses for trafficking victims:

**Pristina:** Pvpt\_ngo@hotmail.com **Name:** PVPT Center

**Scope of work:** Providing of a rehabilitation and long-term socio-economic reintegration program for victims of trafficking and presumed victims of trafficking.

**Reference:** Through special units for the investigation of human trafficking of the Kosovo Police or social work centers.

# Human Trafficking



The essential element of trafficking in human beings (THB) is the exploitation of people in conditions amounting to slavery. Trafficking is considered as a modern form of slavery, a gross violation of human rights, fundamental freedoms and human dignity, and is often a form of violence against women.

## DEFINITION

“Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force (...), for the purpose of exploitation.” It involves 3 elements:

- 1) recruitment, transportation, and transfer by using
- 2) coercive means to achieve the victims’ consent to
- 3) sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced begging or services similar to slavery, servitude or removal of organs.

In Kosovo, THB is a criminal offence under article 139 of the Provisional Criminal Code of Kosovo and is punishable by a sentence of up to 20 years of imprisonment.

## WHO CAN BE A VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING?

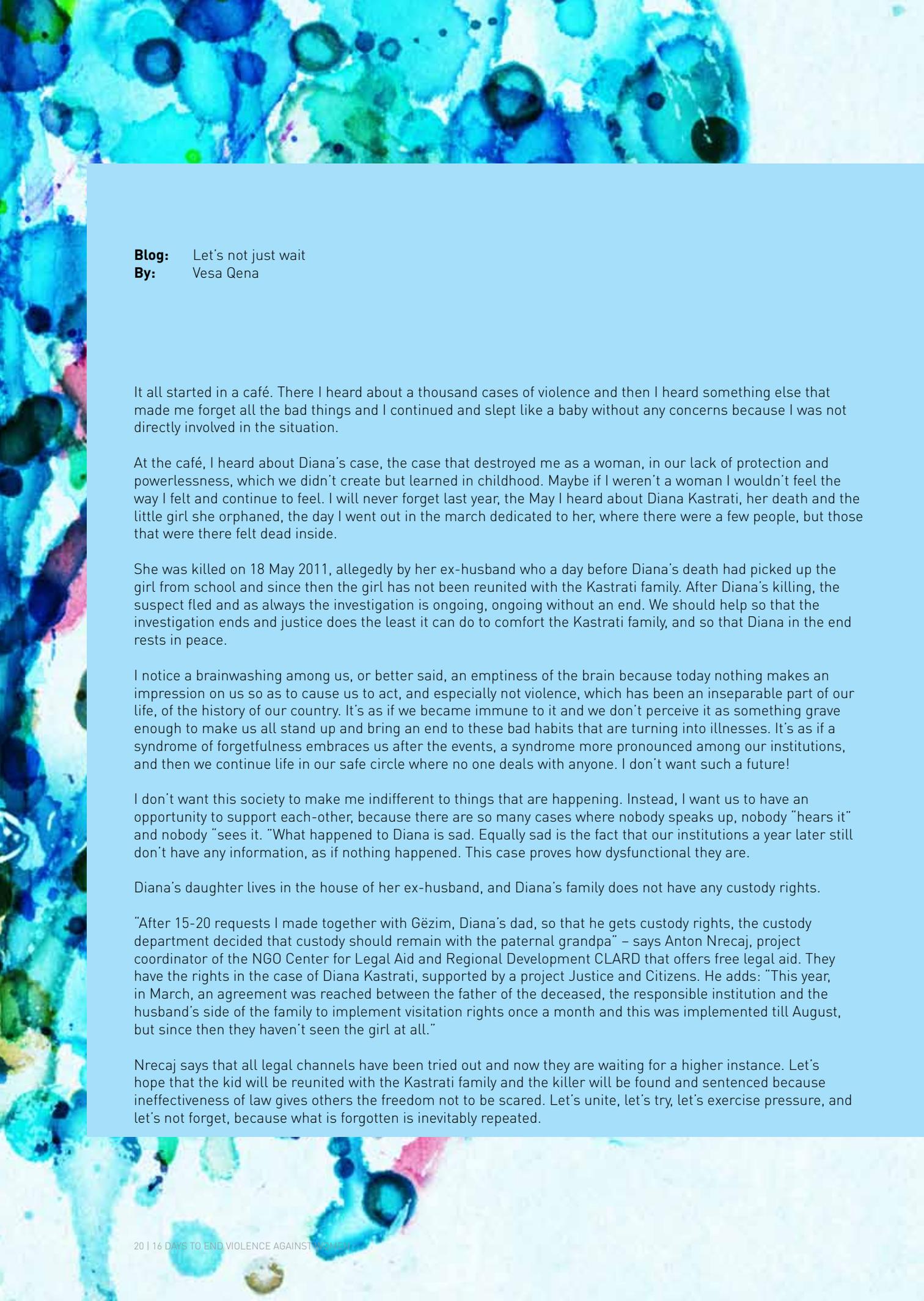
Anybody can be a victim of THB: men, women and children. They can be Kosovo inhabitants but also foreign nationals. In Kosovo, most of the victims are women, young girls and children. Nonetheless, there have been some cases of young men and boys being trafficked as well. | Between January and August 2012, Kosovo police identified 56 victims of trafficking out of which 30 were Kosovars, 24 from Moldova, 1 from Albania and 1 from Slovakia. Nine of them were aged between 14-17 and 18 between 18 and 22.

## WHERE AND HOW TO SEEK ASSISTANCE

The anti-trafficking and domestic violence helpline operates under the Victim Advocacy and Assistance Office/ Prosecutors Office and is available on the following number free of charge: 0800 11112. The line operates from Monday to Friday from 08:00 – 22:00. All calls are free, confidential and anonymous. The Kosovo police have anti-trafficking specialized sections at the local level across Kosovo. They work on the preventive aspects of this crime; anti-trafficking investigative activities; protection of the trafficked victims, and arrest of perpetrators.

Officials from the Kosovo Victims Assistance and Advocacy Office are specifically appointed to protect the victim’s interests and ensure her/his legal support and assistance. They operate across all of Kosovo. The Centres for Social Work has social workers within each Kosovo municipalities that offer a set of services to THB victims who would not otherwise be able to afford such services.

In Kosovo there are three shelters which have the capacity to accommodate exclusively victims of trafficking, while five other shelters are available for victims of domestic violence and located throughout the five main Kosovo regions and these can also accommodate low-risk victims of trafficking.



**Blog:** Let's not just wait  
**By:** Vesa Qena

It all started in a café. There I heard about a thousand cases of violence and then I heard something else that made me forget all the bad things and I continued and slept like a baby without any concerns because I was not directly involved in the situation.

At the café, I heard about Diana's case, the case that destroyed me as a woman, in our lack of protection and powerlessness, which we didn't create but learned in childhood. Maybe if I weren't a woman I wouldn't feel the way I felt and continue to feel. I will never forget last year, the May I heard about Diana Kastrati, her death and the little girl she orphaned, the day I went out in the march dedicated to her, where there were a few people, but those that were there felt dead inside.

She was killed on 18 May 2011, allegedly by her ex-husband who a day before Diana's death had picked up the girl from school and since then the girl has not been reunited with the Kastrati family. After Diana's killing, the suspect fled and as always the investigation is ongoing, ongoing without an end. We should help so that the investigation ends and justice does the least it can do to comfort the Kastrati family, and so that Diana in the end rests in peace.

I notice a brainwashing among us, or better said, an emptiness of the brain because today nothing makes an impression on us so as to cause us to act, and especially not violence, which has been an inseparable part of our life, of the history of our country. It's as if we became immune to it and we don't perceive it as something grave enough to make us all stand up and bring an end to these bad habits that are turning into illnesses. It's as if a syndrome of forgetfulness embraces us after the events, a syndrome more pronounced among our institutions, and then we continue life in our safe circle where no one deals with anyone. I don't want such a future!

I don't want this society to make me indifferent to things that are happening. Instead, I want us to have an opportunity to support each-other, because there are so many cases where nobody speaks up, nobody "hears it" and nobody "sees it." What happened to Diana is sad. Equally sad is the fact that our institutions a year later still don't have any information, as if nothing happened. This case proves how dysfunctional they are.

Diana's daughter lives in the house of her ex-husband, and Diana's family does not have any custody rights.

"After 15-20 requests I made together with Gëzim, Diana's dad, so that he gets custody rights, the custody department decided that custody should remain with the paternal grandpa" – says Anton Nrecaj, project coordinator of the NGO Center for Legal Aid and Regional Development CLARD that offers free legal aid. They have the rights in the case of Diana Kastrati, supported by a project Justice and Citizens. He adds: "This year, in March, an agreement was reached between the father of the deceased, the responsible institution and the husband's side of the family to implement visitation rights once a month and this was implemented till August, but since then they haven't seen the girl at all."

Nrecaj says that all legal channels have been tried out and now they are waiting for a higher instance. Let's hope that the kid will be reunited with the Kastrati family and the killer will be found and sentenced because ineffectiveness of law gives others the freedom not to be scared. Let's unite, let's try, let's exercise pressure, and let's not forget, because what is forgotten is inevitably repeated.

# Conflict Related Sexual Violence



*It is now more dangerous to be a woman than to be a soldier in modern conflict.* Maj. Gen. Patrick Cammaert, 2008.

## WHAT IS CONFLICT RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

One of the worst atrocities committed against civilians in armed conflicts is rape and other forms of sexual violence. The violence perpetrated against women and girls in armed conflicts includes rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, and human trafficking.

In many conflict situations, rape is systematically used to persecute and humiliate civilians, and as such used as a weapon of war to achieve military or political objectives. It may for example be committed with the intention of contributing to the destruction of a particular ethnic or social group. When used intentionally and systematically as a part of military strategy it constitutes a war crime, crime against humanity or an act of genocide, and based on the principle of Responsibility to Protect the international community should act to stop it. Even after conflict has ended, the impacts of sexual violence persist, including unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, psychological and physical trauma and stigmatization. Widespread sexual violence itself may continue or even increase in the aftermath of conflict, as a consequence of insecurity and impunity.

## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF CONFLICT RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE?

- **Individually:** Shame and stigmatization, identity loss, demoralization and undermining of the survivor, physical harm, trauma, separation from the family
- **The group:** Damage the integrity of the family, identity loss, subordinated position of the group
- **The society:** feeling of helplessness/powerlessness of individuals and groups, loss of economic development, continuing of violence, dividing ethnic, religious and regional groups

## WHAT ABOUT IN KOSOVO?

Between 1998 and 1999, women and girls were amongst the most vulnerable civilians in Kosovo. The actual number of women raped during the armed conflict may never be established while the estimates ranges from 10,000 to 20,000 as reported by women's groups, public institutions, NATO, UNIFEM (now UN Women), Human Rights Watch and others. Rape and other forms of sexual violence were used in parallel to other forms of violence committed against civilians. Rapes were also committed to extort money from families and force them to leave their homes. Sometimes women and girls were even taken away from their families and forced into sexual servitude. In general, women and girls were raped by combatants during the armed conflicts in the territory of the former Yugoslavia where rape and other forms of sexual violence was used as a strategy to obtain military and political objectives.

In Kosovo, very few people have spoken openly about this kind of violence because of the stigma that surrounds it. Often, survivors feel ashamed and afraid, and some women were even accused of adultery or being the ones inciting the violence. This lack of understanding in the society and insensitivity causes additional trauma to the survivors who finally gather the courage to talk about what happened to them. **It is important to stress that rape is an attack upon human dignity and integrity, and therefore a violation of human rights, constituting a criminal offence rather than dishonor for the survivor.**

# Transitional Justice



## WHAT IS TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE?

Transitional Justice is a **RESPONSE** to systemic or widespread violations of human rights during transition from war to peace. The purpose of transitional justice is to deal with the past to ensure accountability, serve justice, achieve reconciliation and rebuild social trust, repair the justice system and build democratic governance including rule of law. The aim is to ensure:

- **right to justice** including judicial and more community based reconciliation mechanisms
- **right to truth** including truth and reconciliation commissions and fact finding missions
- **right to reparations** both material and symbolic, individual and collective
- **duty of prevention** (guarantees of non-recurrence) including institutional reform

## WHAT IS REPARATION?

Reparations seek to **redress gross and systemic violation of human rights** by providing a range of material and symbolic remedy to survivors in order to restore the original situation before the violations took place including property restitution; public recognition of the harm suffered and public apology; monetary or in-kind compensation and rehabilitation, including medical and psychological services, educational support and vocation training.

## WHAT IS GENDER SENSITIVE TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE?

Human rights violations may impact women and men in different ways. Predominately women experience conflict related sexual violence while transitional justice measures tend to ignore these violations.

The pursuit of gender sensitive justice includes:

- prosecutions for rape and other forms of sexual violence
- reparations delivery to groups of women and their families
- non-discriminatory access to governmental services
- construction of memorials
- institutional reform that ensures the rights and needs of women including equal access to justice

The “invisible” war against women became visible during armed conflicts in the 1990s, reaching the point where no one could turn a blind eye anymore. An international criminal prosecution system was established including the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).



In a number of landmark judgments, the tribunals including the ICTY advanced the development of international justice in the realm of gender crimes by enabling the prosecution of sexual violence. In Resolution 1820, adopted by the UN Security Council in 2008, it was affirmed that “rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide.”

Despite this, women have had limited access to justice and recognition as civilian victims of war entitled to reparation. The groups receiving reparation from the state are mostly male war veterans and political prisoners, or families of martyrs, while the rights of survivors of conflict related sexual violence, predominantly women, are ignored and their needs neglected. **Unequal Access to Justice and Reparation for Women Constitutes Serious Gender Discrimination.**

## WHAT DO SURVIVORS OF CONFLICT RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN KOSOVO WANT?

### Recommendations from the Open Day on Women, Peace and Security 12 September 2012:

- Legal recognition of women survivors of sexual violence during armed conflict
- Support from the Government in addressing matters pertaining to sexual violence related to armed conflict
- Establishment of a central database on survivors of conflict related sexual violence to help coordinate efforts to increase access to justice and the right to reparation
- Improved access to healthcare, in particular to psychosocial care
- Right to inheritance and property fully implemented
- Training of the legal profession to deal with cases of survivors of conflict related sexual violence gender sensitively
- Community awareness raised, including through media, to increase sensibility and knowledge on the fact that sexual violence during armed conflict represents an outrage upon personal dignity and a violation of international human rights and humanitarian law, which can amount to a war crime or a crime against humanity.

## WHAT KIND OF TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE MECHANISMS ARE IN PLACE IN KOSOVO?

- The ICTY, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and the EULEX, European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, have the mandate to prosecute war crimes including those containing elements of sexual violence. Nevertheless, no perpetrators have yet been convicted for conflict related sexual violence in Kosovo by the ICTY or EULEX.
- Since 2011, Kosovo has a law protecting “civilian victims of war”. However, survivors of conflict related sexual violence are not recognized as a specific category of victims.
- In February 2012, a working group was established by Kosovo authorities to develop an Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325.
- The Inter-Ministerial working Group on Dealing with the Past and Reconciliation was established in June 2012 to deal with “gross human rights violations and serious violations of the past in Kosovo” The WG is mandated to draft a Transitional Justice Strategy, based on a comprehensive, inclusive and gender-sensitive approach for dealing with the past in Kosovo.

# Women's Economic Security



## WHAT DOES THE KOSOVO LAW SAY?

Kosovo's legislative framework has been completed and meets international standards related to the protection of human rights, which includes women's perspectives.

There are various mechanisms established for the implementation of the legislation however, they do not always function effectively and can lead to inefficiency of institutional mechanisms.

Women in Kosovo are equal before the law, but in reality, a considerable number are discriminated against in various forms on a daily basis.

- Only **6%** of property registered in the Cadaster is under women's ownership
- Only **3%** of bank loans to startup businesses go to women
- The unemployment rate in Kosovo is **43%** but **57%** for women

## WHY ARE WOMEN ECONOMICALLY DISCRIMINATED AGAINST?

One of the biggest reasons for the unfavorable situation of women is a lack of economic sustainability. Another big factor is the patriarchal culture, prejudices and common practices, which restrict the application of rights guaranteed to women by law.

This is evident in practices regarding inheritance, which is not partitioned among heirs as provided by law, because in the majority of cases women do not use their inheritance right. For example, property within a marriage is not viewed as a joint property between husband and wife, as required by law, but rather as property of the man.

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S ECONOMIC SITUATION?

In order to increase the participation of all members of society in social and economic issues, the state has to introduce economic development that targets women. While it is true that the empowerment of women can be reached through the economic development of a country, a stronger approach needs to be undertaken to understand why this is so important.



The main and most important factor for women's emancipation in society is their participation in the labor market, meaning, becoming decisive actors and a part of a sphere of life that is public and political – namely, work – in order to legitimize the right to politically influence that sphere. In order for a society to boost and support a steadily increasing growth of economic security for women, it needs to lay out the appropriate legal infrastructure.

Legal measures can change societal beliefs and common thoughts on women in the economic sphere, thereby reducing discrimination. Through a sound legal framework, for instance, a law on labor that is decisively favorable for women, economic stability, support, as well as security will increase. The implications of such a measure might look vague initially, however, with the proper implementation and supervision; such a law can bring about positive change to women's lives.

## THE WAY FORWARD!

- The government of Kosovo has developed an Action Plan for the Economic Empowerment of Women 2011-2013
- Change attitudes and cultural practices to give more women access to the economic sector in Kosovo
- Improve the participation of women in the labor market
- Support women entrepreneurship
- Increase women's access to property
- Provide training for women
- Introduce an employment quota in public work programs
- Establish a scholarship fund for young women studying business administration
- Support campaigns aimed at raising awareness on the importance of women and girls acquiring education as key to economic empowerment

\* Photo Credit: Gjergj Filipaj / <http://www.wominnovation.org>



# Child Marriage and Violence

Child marriage is the union of two people when one or both is below the age of 18. It is also called early or forced marriage as the consent is either not asked or the child doesn't have power to resist their parents. Child Marriage is a violation of human rights and the rights of the child.

It affects both girls and boys, although girls are affected in greater number with more serious consequences. Child brides are usually forced to drop out of school to bear children and to work at home. They are isolated from their friends and family, may go out just with their husband's approval, and don't earn their own money so they are economically dependent on their husband's family and have little or no power in their new households. For these reasons, child brides are especially vulnerable to domestic violence.

In some communities, the marrying of a girl is seen as a safeguard against premarital sex, and protection of the girl from sexual harassment and violence. The reality is different. Girls who marry before the age of 18 are more likely to experience violence within marriage than girls who marry later.

He beat me up twice.  
I remember the first time was  
because I didn't charge his phone.  
(Child spouse)

Once a girl is married she can feel powerless to refuse sex. She is likely to find it difficult to insist on condom use by her husband, who commonly is older and more sexually experienced, making the girls especially vulnerable to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Early marriage can lead to unplanned pregnancy, to complications in pregnancy and even death as the girl's body is not prepared for bearing a child.

In Kosovo, child marriage is not a common practice though it happens in some communities. When child spouses from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians communities were interviewed many of them reported suffering from domestic violence "several times". Domestic violence can impact severely on mental and physical health, including reproductive health. This can include internal bleeding, injuries to the fetus, miscarriage, and sterility, as well as depression and fear of future relationships. Girls suffering violence may not be permitted to see doctors, which can further impact on their health.

Greater attention needs to be paid to the issue of child marriage, and to girls at risk, will protect young brides from the marriage and domestic violence. Especially important is the education of girls and giving them life skills to make them less vulnerable to early marriage. Provision of information, and access to social and health services including sexual and reproductive health and HIV prevention, belong to other important factors leading to the end of the child marriage. Educated girls get married later, they can decide about their lives, their family, their children are more educated and healthier, and the whole society benefits.

# The reality of non-majority groups



Non-majority groups can be based on one or more observable human characteristics, including, for example, ethnic, national, religious, linguistic or cultural affiliation, who either do not hold the majority of positions of social power in a society, or are numerically smaller than the rest of the population.

Members of non-majority communities can be subject to a range of problems that stem from their distinct characteristics. For example, groups that speak a different language from the majority will have more difficulty accessing essential public services such as education and health care, and will find it harder to compete for jobs in a professional environment that is dominated by the majority language.

The difficulty in accessing public services is even worse for women survivors of domestic violence who belong to non-majority groups. Because of this, women members of non-majority groups who are subject to violence are even more vulnerable. Non-majority groups are also often proportionally under-represented in legislative, executive and judicial institutions, which can limit their influence over decisions that directly affect their lives and hamper their effective participation in political, economic and social life.

The development and implementation of communities' rights is a way of 'levelling the playing field' for non-majority groups in relation to the majority community. For example, communities' rights ensure that members of linguistic communities can communicate effectively with public institutions, thereby guaranteeing them equal access to public services. There are also rights that enhance participation of non-majority groups in public life, for example through reserved parliamentary seats or positive action measures aimed at achieving equitable representation of communities in the civil service.

## WHAT DOES THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN KOSOVO SAY ABOUT NON-MAJORITY GROUPS?

Kosovo now has one of the most advanced legal frameworks for the protection of non-majority communities in the world. However, despite extensive legal provisions, members of non-majority communities continue to face serious problems in accessing their essential rights. For example, they remain under-represented in all areas of public life and experience consistently higher levels of unemployment than the majority population. Moreover, despite the fact that the Albanian and Serbian languages have equal official status, in many cases members of Serbian-speaking communities are not provided with adequate translation, limiting their ability to communicate with public institutions.

**Blog:** Cheap life and “family values”  
**By:** Dušan Komarčević

1. “The movement of family people led by Dveri (gates) walked through the Belgrade streets and once again proved that the Serbian family is not dead, it’s alive and it’s awakening ready to defend the only thing we have left, our families!

Gathered today around our families, sharing family values, all together, us 10 000, we showed through the Family Walk in Belgrade that the political movement of the Serbian family exists, it’s growing, it’s spreading, and it raises the hope that Serbia will be saved in the 21st century.”

(Press statement of the Dveri srpske [Serbian Gates] movement.)

2. “I love you dead, cold and stiff!” (Title in a Belgrade tabloid.)

3. “The problem is still with the women, because they dictate everything....they have in their heads only money, i.e. the ‘guy should have money,’ and nothing else matters.....they act that way, though none of them would publicly admit that....but, such is the reality...”

(Anonymous reader’s comment on a popular Belgrade news portal.)

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In recent years, around the end of summer, Serbian media begin reporting on two events: the Gay parade and the Family Walk. While the title of the first manifestation clearly states what it’s about, the Family Walk is, at least for people who are not familiar with the Serbian situation, a mystery. What is it, the reader will ask, some Sunday walk down Kalemegdan? An extended weekend outside the city with family members? You guessed wrong. The Family Walk is organized by the extreme right-wing political movement Dveri in response to the Pride parade (read: Gay parade), which for them is a symbol of “fornication, sodomy, a satanic show.” In one word, for the “dvers” homosexuality is a threat to the patriarchal model and the traditional scheme: god in the sky – king on earth – father in the family. The first Family Walk was held in 2009 and since then one phrase is repeated in these gatherings (which cannot be held by without the “peaceful” slogan: Kill the gays!) – family values. Dveri and the like represent themselves, as seen in the first quote mentioned above from one of their statements, as guardians of family values whose main enemy is love between two men or two women.

## And, what are today’s family values in Serbia?

In Serbia, by the 20th of November, 28 women were killed this year. They were killed by current or former partners or, in a number of cases, some other male relative. According to reports from women’s organizations, 1/3 of femicide in Serbia is carried out with a firearm, and the tragedy, in most cases, has been preceded by years of death threats. This means that the victims had previously been abused, either mentally or physically, that in many cases they have asked for help from the family or an institution (the police, a social welfare center, etc.) however, in the end they still experienced a tragic end.



Data from non-governmental organizations also tells us something about the “cozy family environment”: in fact, in over 80 percent of cases, women have been killed in a familiar area – in their house or apartment, i.e. in the “warmth of a family home.” But, Dveri and the like never said anything about this.

However, the torture does not end there. Once the news reaches the media, the victim is placed on the public altar, where brutalization gets a new form that bears an uncanny resemblance to the street executions which hundreds of years ago satisfied the exhibitionistic needs of the masses. This way, the population in Serbia over the past ten days followed the printed “reality show” which involved a 27-year old guy and his ex-girlfriend from Novi Sad. The guy is suspected to have killed her in a horrible manner, and before the police arrested him, after several days of searching, he left a morbid status on his Facebook profile. A Belgrade tabloid used part of that status as a title, I guess because it incorporates a selection of the best adjectives for the police report section – dead, cold, stiff. And when we add to this mixture the verb “love,” we get a necrophiliac “Bloody Mary” cocktail to feed the minds of the reader-cannibals.

In the exploitation of a tragic story, we learned a lot about the private life of the victim and the suspected executioner: he was in jail before, she cheated on him, he had abused her before too, but she couldn’t leave him. We have seen tons of photos from their private collections, memorized every muscle in his beautifully sculpted body, each story was accompanied by provoking photos of the murdered girl who worked as a photo model, we read stories about her funeral, ... But, no journalist thought to tackle the fact why the competent institutions failed and how, in spite of reports from the girl’s parents, no one reacted. I guess nobody is bothered by that, especially not when the main topic of discussion are comments the suspect left on his Facebook account.

He is shown as a circus attraction; and she as a skimpily-dressed starlet who, in the end, got what she deserved. “Why didn’t she leave him?” is the question asked in the readers’ comments of all the major media. This way, the victim basically became the only one responsible for her tragic end (similar to the sexist belief that the raped girl asked for it because she walked down the street in a mini-skirt). Driving through a one-way street of generalization we will inevitably reach the last point, the one proudly pointed out by the anonymous commenter who sees gold-diggers among women who “have only money in their heads.”

The circle is closed. Media portals got their clicks, readers satisfied their cannibalistic urges. And the victims? Pff! Who will think about them now when the gays and the lesbians are attacking our “Family Values!”



# Violence against children

Violence against children happens everywhere around the world in all countries, whether rich or poor. There is no single factor to explain why a person behaves in a violent manner, but different factors may play an important role, such as unemployment, poverty, alcohol and drug abuse and mental health problems. Violence can affect all categories of children regardless of their personality, background, ethnicity, education, gender or age. Some categories of children are especially vulnerable to violence, such as children living or working on the streets, children from ethnic minorities or children with disabilities.

Children can be subjected to violence in different settings, including homes, schools, communities, places of work and residential institutions. Some of the violence experienced by children can be unexpected, but in most cases children experience violence by people they know and trust, such as parents, relatives, teachers, boyfriends/ girlfriends, schoolmates and employers.

## DEFINITIONS OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF VIOLENCE:

- Physical violence – slapping, hitting, punching and other forms physical use of force
- Sexual violence – sexual touching, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, rape or sexual exploitation in prostitution or pornography and other forms
- Psychological violence – insulting, threatening, humiliating, name-calling, isolation and others forms
- Neglect – failure of a parent or other caregiver to provide children with the care and protection they need, such as shelter, food, clothing and medical care. It means also to not provide children with emotional support or not taking care of the child's education.

Families are usually perceived as places of trust but sometimes they can also be dangerous for children; witnessing or experiencing violence always affects children.

Consequences of different forms of and witnessing violence can include increased risks for illness or physical injury, unwanted pregnancy, discrimination and difficulties at school. Psychological consequences include eating and sleeping disorder, feelings of shame, criminal and violent behavior, depression, anxiety, alcohol and drug abuse.

Violence can also affect the lives of children many years after it has happened, and children who experience or witness violence as a child are more at risk of experiencing violence later in their lives again.

Violence in the family is one of the most serious dangers for children in Kosovo. In over half of the reported cases of violence in the family also children experienced violence. Corporal punishment is widely accepted as a disciplinary tool of children in schools, and Kosovo society is still influenced by the belief that disciplining girls makes them 'morally correct' or disciplining boys makes them 'stronger'. Much of the violence experienced by children in general remains hidden and is often socially approved, but it is never justified and always a violation of children's rights. Children's rights, such as the rights to a safe childhood and the protection against all forms of violence, are included in the Convention of the Rights of the Child, and in Kosovo's Constitution. In order to prevent violence against children in the future, it is important to engage in an open dialogue around beliefs related to violence that harms children.

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\* Photo Credit: Jetmir Idrizi

# Violence and discrimination against persons with disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities does not explicitly define what a disability is, rather it says that a disability “is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”<sup>1</sup> The Convention sets out international standards which should be respected in Kosovo as well.

## WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH DISABILITIES

Equal opportunity and non-discrimination are central to the respect of human rights and take even a greater importance when speaking of persons with disabilities. Girls and women of all ages with any form of disability are among the more vulnerable and marginalized of society. There is therefore need to take into account and to address their concerns in all policy-making and programming. Special measures are needed at all levels to integrate them into the mainstream of development. Women and girls with disabilities experience violence in situations similar to all women and girls but face even bigger challenges when seeking for help. They are more vulnerable to physical violence when depending on other peoples’ help on a daily basis.

## PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN KOSOVO

Currently, the lack of resources and of specialized professionals and facilities are some of the major challenges faced by persons with disabilities living in Kosovo. Some of these shortcomings stem from the society itself, while others result from economic, social and cultural challenges. However, the real challenge is to ensure that persons with disabilities are equal and are treated equally in our day-to-day activities, including within our families. Also as important, recognizing that women and girls with disabilities are often at greater risk, both within and outside the home of violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation.

There are around 150,000<sup>2</sup> people with different disabilities in Kosovo who all share the stigma and discrimination due to their disability. In the fight against stereotypes associated with persons with disabilities we all gain from increasing our knowledge on the issues they face. It is essential for communities and institutions alike to acknowledge this and respond appropriately as a step towards improved social inclusion and as a fulfilment of our obligations towards the respect of human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> CRPD see: <http://www.un.org/disabilities/>

<sup>2</sup> See: Comprehensive Disability Policy Framework for Kosovo, 2001, [p.3], at [http://www.see-educoop.net/education\\_in/pdf/compr\\_disability\\_policy\\_frmwrk\\_kos-yug-kos-enl-t02.pdf](http://www.see-educoop.net/education_in/pdf/compr_disability_policy_frmwrk_kos-yug-kos-enl-t02.pdf); and Strategy and Action Plan on Human Rights of Republic of Kosovo (2009-2011) [p.20], at [http://www.humanrights-ks.org/repository/docs/Strategjia\\_2009\\_2011\\_Eng%20.pdf](http://www.humanrights-ks.org/repository/docs/Strategjia_2009_2011_Eng%20.pdf)



# Role of Education

## ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN KOSOVO

Kosovo has one of the youngest populations in Europe; about half of its population is under 25 years old. This fact makes children's rights, including the right to education, crucial issues to deal with. Realizing the right to education for every child, and addressing any form of discrimination, is important as education is essential to the realization of other human rights. Education is a fundamental right essential for the enjoyment of other human rights.

## THE LINK BETWEEN GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND EDUCATION

Children growing up in an environment of domestic violence may suffer a range of behavioural and emotional disturbances which impacts on their ability to learn and fully develop. Children living in families where domestic violence occurs may experience difficulties in learning and in school attendance. Low levels of education is listed as one of the many risk factors for being both a perpetrator and a victim of domestic violence placing children who are exposed to or witnessing violence against women at a higher risk of continuing the cycle of violence.

Education also empowers young girls to become economically active, providing them with the skills to enter the labour market and become independent. Women's economic independence is key to ending the cycle of violence, ensuring that women and their children are not forced to remain in a violent home for financial security.

## GENDER ROLES IN SCHOOLS

At an early stage in life, children learn how to behave from people and institutions around them - parents, schools and teachers, friends, movies, television, music, books, and religion. The behaviors that children and young people take on depend on what part of the world they grow up in, with different cultural norms and practices and religious views. Young children receive many powerful messages about gender roles and gender identity, what is expected from you as a girl and as a boy, with feminine or masculine attributes. These roles limit both young boys and girls in different ways, especially if you are different from the norms. Bullying, discrimination or even violence is common towards individuals not fitting into the traditional gender roles.

School is an important place to where young people learn about gender roles, and it has the power to influence young people's behaviour. This influence can be both negative and positive, limiting the full developmental potential of a child or encouraging gender equality and fighting against traditional gender stereotypes. Good education can break stereotypes and change norms and behavior, which widens acceptance of people that are different.

Focusing on educating young people is crucial in order to foster positive attitudes towards gender equality and to instill zero tolerance for violence against women and girls. Working with adolescents (both girls and boys) presents an invaluable opportunity to make sure that future generations know that violence against women should not and will not be tolerated.

Youth participation is a means to achieve positive changes in young people's lives and build a culture for the prevention of violence against women and girls. Youth participation is crucial to end violence against women and girls.

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\* Photo Credit: Kushtrim Ternava

# Role of Young Men

In the hallway of a public high school, a young man, urged on by his friends, gropes a classmate despite her repeated attempts to push him away. A silent majority of male and female students, uncomfortable but uncertain what to do, pretend not to notice. In schools all across the country, every day, young men and boys build relationships based on their notion of what it means to be a “real” man.

As in many other settings, patriarchal and rigid norms around gender and masculinities are still prevalent in the Western Balkans. These norms influence young men’s attitudes, behaviors, and relationships with other young men, young women, families, and larger communities. From an early age, many young men are taught that being a “real man” means being a provider for, and protector of, one’s family and community. Boys and young men are often raised to be aggressive and competitive, in preparation for these social roles.

Many boys and young men are also often raised to be self-reliant, to not worry about their health and do not reach out for help when they may need it. Often, boys and young men who may act contrary to these social expectations – for example, who show interest in domestic tasks traditionally associated with women, such as cooking, cleaning, or caring for younger siblings, or who easily display their emotions – may be ridiculed by their families and peers as being “sissies”, or not real men.

## WHAT CAN AND SHOULD BE DONE IN BREAKING PREJUDICE AND STEREOTYPES AND ENSURE GBV PREVENTION AND PROTECTION?

More often we are seeing young men challenge their peers to take overt stands against violence, especially violence against women.

The importance of the male voice in the violence prevention movement is essential, as we know that ending violence will only be achieved through the collective effort of both women and men.

Young men have many things they can do to address violence against girls and women. In schools, cafes, and clubs, young men can take a stand amongst their peers and show that this type of behavior is wrong. When your friend is making harassing or sexist comments you can challenge them. If you see friends using violence, sometimes it’s easier to ignore or walk away.

As a bystander who is a witness, you are giving your silent consent to that violence by not acting. If these people are friends, you can try and cool off the situation. If you are not sure for your own safety, you can get school teachers or call the police to intervene. We all have a role to play to promote healthy and positive relationships, where violence has no role.





**Blog:** How machismo and patriarchy pave the way to gender-based violence  
**By:** Doris Manu

In towns and villages across the Balkans, the family and the social environment - the so called 'school of life' - inculcates young boys with the idea that they have to be tough with those around them.

Because of the difficult social conditions they live in, there is a widely-held belief that life in the community/ society is more about competition than about solidarity and mutual support. Moreover, boys are educated to act as heads of their future families and invested with a higher degree of confidence and support, to the detriment of young girls. On top of that, the heroes and role models presented to young boys by the media and by the history taught in formal education programs, are nothing but violent and powerful male characters, either in the form of military men from the recent wars or as kings and rulers from the past who fought and killed other peoples. No wonder that many boys later turn into macho men, to be understood as aggressively male, unpleasantly masculine, and possibly also develop a predisposition to violence.

Machismo is obvious everywhere on the streets of the Balkans, but especially in Serbia. Here, machismo combined with nationalism and low quality of life is an explosive mix that enhances violence. Some Serbian men share not only ideas about how they have to behave to be men, but also about what they should do to be "real Serbian men." They behave that way so as to preserve the stereotypes about Serbian men - inherent physical and psychological strength, resistance to alcohol, virility, strong sex drive and very active sexual life, pride, etc. Those who don't have those attributes naturally strive to fake them in many ways, for example through the consumption of aphrodisiacs and of proteins that help develop their muscular mass. The rates of consumption of such substances are high in Serbia.

Then, if something - be it an emotional breakdown, a lack of opportunities or a disadvantaged economic situation - leads these men to feel disempowered and in a feminized position, violence can constitute a means to reaffirm their power in accordance with the hegemonic role attributed to them, even if the victim they choose is someone as vulnerable as a woman. Other means that men use to mask their weaknesses is the abuse of alcohol and drugs, which reduces inhibition and then allows the abuser to justify his abusive behavior as a result of intoxication. It can be easier for both the man and the woman to believe that the violence would not have happened if a drink had not been taken.



The numbers showing the dimension of the phenomenon known as gender-based violence are worrying: this year in Serbia no less than 35 women have been killed and 27 lost their lives after being subjected to violence by their partners or husbands. What is even more shocking, as much as 12.7 percent of women have suffered sexual abuse in Albania. Albanian society still fails to confront its culture of patriarchal oppression while women remain dangerously marginalized and devalued and continue to experience disproportionate levels of violence. It was evident to me, during my first visit in this country, that there are deeply entrenched stereotypes about women and women's role in the family/society. The belief that a woman should be exclusively dedicated to the man who chose her, should always be ready to sexually satisfy her man, to cook for him and for his family, etc. are still held by so many Albanian men. If a woman fails to conform to the role she has been attributed, she might be subjected to violence. In this line, if she provokes sexual attraction, by way of dress or anything else, and is not willing to satisfy the man, she might be sexually abused. If she finds sexual or emotional satisfaction outside the relationship or marriage, the man will respond with violence driven by jealousy.

These traditional beliefs and structures of patriarchy that are deeply embedded within Albanian society account for the high rates of domestic violence and continue to suppress the human rights which are intended to be representative of a democratic society valuing equality between the sexes. Unfortunately, we will not reach equality and protection of human rights until the people of the Balkans see themselves and each other primarily as human beings, not as males, females and nationals who have to perform the role that has traditionally been attributed to them by others.

# Citizens' Engagement against Gender Based Violence



Civil society is said to be the link between the individual citizen and the state. It is an arena of voluntary collective actions around shared interests, purposes and values. The motto is often "we do not have time to sit and wait for things to change; we have to make an active move and claim our rights". This work is typically done by non-governmental organizations, so called NGOs.

Around the world women have started to organize themselves to struggle for enhanced recognition of women's rights and against different forms of discrimination and violence against women. The logic is easy: one person cannot do much alone, but many people together can create a critical mass and challenge existing attitudes, power structures and discriminatory legislation.

Women in Kosovo have many times showed that it is possible to mobilize women and join forces to achieve change. In Kosovo there are more than 100 active women's organizations today. The majority of them started to work right after the war in 1999 or in the early 2000's. At that time, the main line of work of the women's organizations was to provide direct services for people whose lives were shattered as a consequence of the war.

Many women who have suffered violence at home have found a support or a safe haven thanks to the women's organizations. Others have become informed about their human rights and been empowered to take a more active role in the family, at the workplace or in the society. In recent years, women's organizations have directly involved in and influenced the new legislation protecting women's rights.

Still today, however, despite steps forward, many challenges remain. Violence against women remains a widespread, structural problem in Kosovo. War, poverty and patriarchal structures are some of the underlying causes of the problem. Hence, the mobilization of women to continue to fight gender based violence together is crucial. But is the fight against gender based violence only for women? No, it is not. Most people would agree that it is crucial to include men in the fight against violence against women. That is why many women's organizations have started to also targeting men in their work to raise awareness about the presence of gender based violence in the society and to involve men in their struggle.

## BUT CONCRETELY, WHAT CAN WE, AS CITIZENS, DO TO STOP THIS STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

Many people chose to join a group or an organization, typically a women's NGO.

There are at least three main fields of work of the women's organizations:

1. Women's organizations provide direct support to victims: through telephone hotlines, women's shelters and psychological support.
2. Women's organizations contribute to increased awareness about gender based violence and to changed attitudes in the society.
3. Women's organizations can approach government agencies, politicians and international actors to claim women's rights and demand change.

The women's movement in Kosovo is playing an important role within all three areas of work.

**If you want to contribute, join them!**



# Role of Women Leaders

*"In a deep understanding, all women somewhere between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five, whether they admit or reject feminism, are the daughters of feminism, who inherit attempts, failures and successes; whether we want or not, they are successors of a bold phase of the contemporary women's movement"* **Glicman**

Strong female role models, women who are empowered economically, socially and politically, have an important role to play in reducing the amount of violence experienced by women and girls in society. Women leaders can act as an inspiration to both young girls and young boys, and change societal norms around violence against women.

The increased participation of women in political processes in the post conflict years in Kosovo is proof that the 30 percent gender quota in parliamentary elections has brought positive results. Kosovo is listed among countries with very high representation of women in politics and even exceeds many EU countries in this regard.

The importance of the gender quota becomes even greater when we consider that in the first elections in post-war Kosovo, before the introduction of the quota, only 8.6 per cent of the elected members of the Municipal Assemblies were women. Many researches and analyses on the political representation of women in Kosovar society show that it is still too early to think that without the application of affirmative action or quotas, women will be represented equally with men.

Kosovar women's political development has faced countless obstacles. In the decades after World War II, the main problems were illiteracy and a patriarchal mentality, while during the 90s, due to disorder in the functioning of life in Kosovo, women had very reduced space for political activity. For this reason, there is a need for continuation of strong institutional measures in order to correct the gaps created by the past.

But what is the situation with the girls and our societies' investment in their empowerment, especially in the area of politics, which is the area still dominated by men. The gender composition of the government, the presidency of parliament, parliamentary committees and other statistics demonstrate that even after so many years, women political leaders fail to capitalize on the power of the quota to further develop the leadership of women and young girls in politics and other areas of life. As indicated by current trends, the "magic" of the quota is limited and it does not secure the development of women's political leadership and substantial representation, we need much more than that.

Although we have a number of women leaders in politics that serve as a model and inspiration for future generations, the entire masculine environment and culture of our society narrows the space of strengthening young women in political life.

The lack of women in leadership and decision-making structures of political parties has at least two consequences: the further impoverishment of the opposition in Kosovo and thus delay in the development of democracy and the weakening or marginalization of women in political leadership in general. If there are not investments in new women leaders, politics and political life will be impoverished, reducing us to 'big party leaders', leaving us with few alternative choices.

A cynical guardian would say: "What do you women want, you have a woman president, 30 percent of women in Parliament, two deputy prime ministers, ministers, some ambassadors, etc." Of course this is an achievement and progress, but as one activist for women's rights has said: 'activist women have learned a bitter lesson from the past that there is no eternal victory and that there is no retirement in women's issues.' In other words, the struggle for women's equality and human rights is a permanent effort of all generations without any exception.



**Blog:** The power of women in power  
**By:** Shqipe Gjocaj

I will not be lectured about sexism and misogyny by this man, I will not! Not now, not ever!" This is what Australia's Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, stated in parliament months ago, labeling the opposition leader Tony Abbot, a sexist and misogynist.

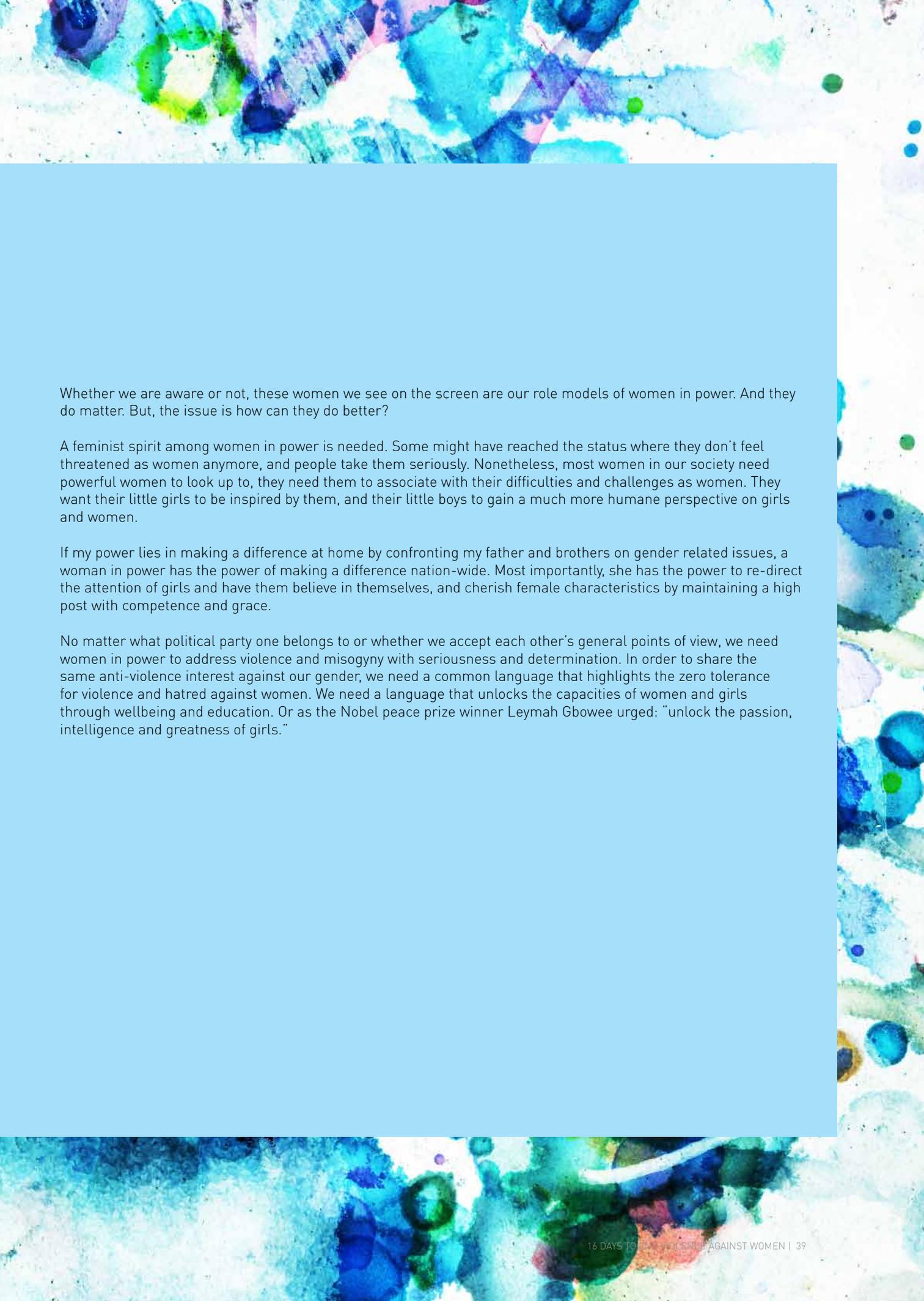
Gillard's strong words were a response to Abbot's call to have parliamentary speaker Peter Slipper removed from office over a series of sexist text messages he sent about female genitalia. The incident resulted in a change in the definition of misogyny in Australia's leading dictionary "The Macquire." From "the hatred against women" it has been expanded to "entrenched prejudice against women," due to the way in which this word has been used for about 30 years.

Watching Gillard speaking up fiercely against her male opponent is what made me think about the power of women in power. The fierce attitude, the powerful speech, the sharp tone of voice is what gave me insights on the impact of a role model who has power. The image got stuck in my head and ever since, I feel supported and comforted by what I and Gillard have in common; zero tolerance for these two social diseases: sexism and misogyny.

Since many people in Kosovo haven't heard of misogyny as a notion, it is crucial that we present it, that we explain it and fight it. If we explain misogyny as "hatred towards women" or "rooted prejudice against women," men will be objecting and claiming it does not exist among us. Most likely, they will ironically claim that they love women for being women. However, what is not widely perceived is the fact that this type of humor is used as a tool of oppression. Along with the harsh judgments it throws on women, this kind of humor also leads to justifying violence against them. The classics 'he hit her because she deserved it' or worse 'he hit me because I deserved it' are still present and still common. As such, violence persists among us, in both forms, verbal and physical.

Considering that our feelings, thoughts and desires for a healthy community of girls and women are most of the time unexpressed, unrealized and therefore unknown to the majority, we need women in power to express this in the name of all of us. They have the opportunity, they have the space, they have the courage, they have the authority and most importantly, their voice will be heard. We don't need these role models to do all the hard work for us. What we need is their power to support our claims, us coming together not against men, but against the mindset that justifies violence against women for whatever sick reasons.

Although small in number, we have women in power we can look up to, admire and recognize their leadership. There is Flora Brovina, a remarkable woman both in attitude and profession. Vjosa Osmani, a smart, academically prepared, competent young woman. There is determination and fierceness coming from someone like Alma Lama and Mimoza Kusari. There are brave journalists in both speech and writing, like Jeta Xhara and Flaka Surroi who stand up for sensitive, critical political issues. However, we intend to leave the gender based issues to feminist activists such as Igballe Rogova from Kosova Women's Network. We intend to think that only women whose job it is to be a feminist, should deal with gender based violence or discrimination.



Whether we are aware or not, these women we see on the screen are our role models of women in power. And they do matter. But, the issue is how can they do better?

A feminist spirit among women in power is needed. Some might have reached the status where they don't feel threatened as women anymore, and people take them seriously. Nonetheless, most women in our society need powerful women to look up to, they need them to associate with their difficulties and challenges as women. They want their little girls to be inspired by them, and their little boys to gain a much more humane perspective on girls and women.

If my power lies in making a difference at home by confronting my father and brothers on gender related issues, a woman in power has the power of making a difference nation-wide. Most importantly, she has the power to re-direct the attention of girls and have them believe in themselves, and cherish female characteristics by maintaining a high post with competence and grace.

No matter what political party one belongs to or whether we accept each other's general points of view, we need women in power to address violence and misogyny with seriousness and determination. In order to share the same anti-violence interest against our gender, we need a common language that highlights the zero tolerance for violence and hatred against women. We need a language that unlocks the capacities of women and girls through wellbeing and education. Or as the Nobel peace prize winner Leymah Gbowee urged: "unlock the passion, intelligence and greatness of girls."



# Media, Gender, and Violence

The influence that media, and increasingly social media, has on youth is substantial in Kosovo and therefore a campaign like the 16 days can enable public discussion of issues such as domestic violence, gender representation, human trafficking, the sex trade and justice, according to Kosovo 2.0:

Over the past 12 years, Kosovo has undergone various processes of democratization, institution building, reconstruction and economic development. In the midst of international and local endeavors to establish and promote democratic governance, great assistance has also been given to the development of free and independent media. In the immediate post-1999 Kosovo, the latter was deemed of significant importance considering that journalistic practices were characterized by poor professional standards due to lack of media ethics, and only a small pool of journalists were educated and knowledgeable about concepts of free media.

Such initiatives have without doubt improved Kosovo's overall media performance. Kosovo has developed professional daily newspapers outlets and increased its TV networks. However, to date, issues related to social change, inequality, participatory politics continue to attract limited attention; they remain largely unexposed with the dominant focus on processes pertaining to the country's political developments.

In the midst of this, mainstream media, in general, tend to reinforce prescribed notions and representations of gender. Gender equality is predominantly talked through the frame of women's rights issues, and mainly covered through activities organized by civil society actors to raise awareness on the topic. Mainstream media lag behind in bringing to the forefront topics related to ongoing discrimination, shortcomings of the legal system to appropriately and rightfully address violence against women or even advocating for equal representation.

From the onset, Kosovo 2.0 has tackled and addressed stories that speak of unrepresented and marginalized groups. Our large network of bloggers, composed of individuals with different mindsets from diverse professional and cultural backgrounds, has constantly challenged constructed notions and representations of gender within their societies. Our bloggers have raised issues ranging from gender stereotypes, sexual harassment, representation of gender, sexual orientation, homophobia, romantic relationships, safe sex, gender and politics, etc. Storytelling techniques such as blogging lend themselves to discussion, debate and critical thinking, and this is evident in the way our readers respond to such stories.

Moreover, through our print magazine, we have always placed great importance to thoroughly addressing and challenging representations of gender in our society. For example, in our first magazine issue, Image, Kosovo 2.0 published an Alarm on Justice, bringing attention to violence against women and the continuous failure of the legal system to respond, prevent and break the culture of silence. Such work will continue through our Sex issue magazine, to be published in December of this year, which is entirely dedicated to examining and interpreting existing gender and identity patterns, and raising awareness of the importance to equality, emancipation and recognition.

That is why we see the 16 Days of Activism as an important way to not only bring attention to the continued prevalence of gender based violence in Kosovo, but also as a way to publicly discuss issues such as domestic violence, gender representation, human trafficking, the sex trade and justice. We believe that a problem that is never discussed is never resolved, in fact it remains invisible. We believe that starting a conversation is the first step in breaking stereotypes about gender roles, and in giving a voice to those who are silenced by violence.

**Blog:** Let's (not) talk about sex: Communication as the first part of contraception  
**By:** Kaltrina Ademi

A friend of mine in his mid-20s, living and breathing in Kosovo, was telling me about how he and his then-girlfriend constantly argued about contraception. He told me that he saw, like many other men, no sense in using condoms because they would simply erase most of the pleasure of sex and therefore preferred coitus interruptus — or the pullout-method. But with this technique, a drop of pre-cum can get out before a man feels an orgasm, which can lead to pregnancies. Many of you should know that it only takes one sperm cell of that drop to get a woman pregnant and usually one drop contains far more than that.

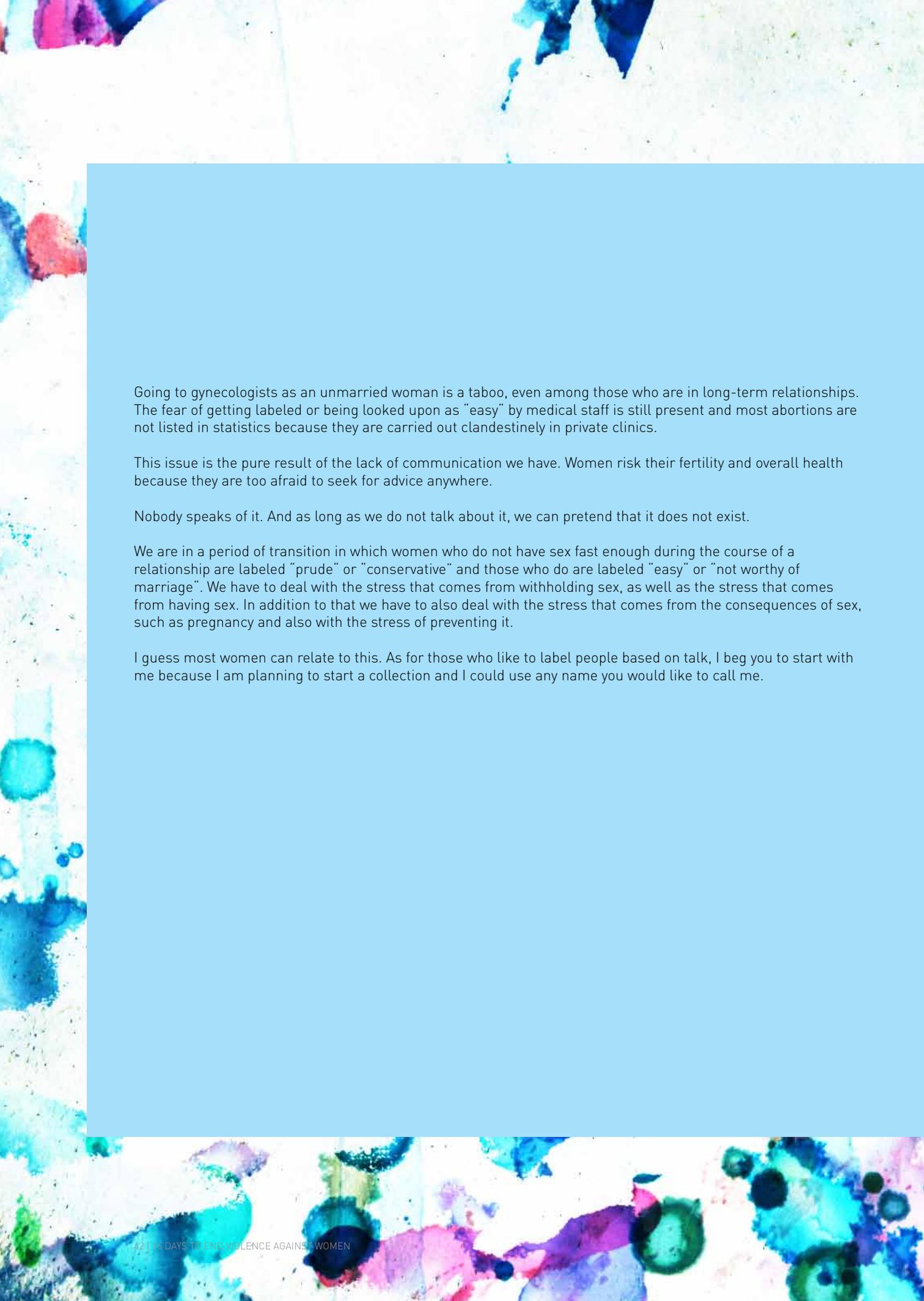
However, he would tell me that she was against using birth control pills, as she did not want her parents to know that she was sexually active, which would have been rather hard to hide. Then, they had agreed to use emergency contraceptives, commonly known the morning-after pill. Now, I did not ask him how they would get hold of it as many times as he suggested they did.

I was rather astonished that they seemed to be pretty much in the dark about why the morning-after pill was not something intended for regular use, but he did say that she would complain of irregular bleeding and other typical side effects. He then would have denied that those could have been caused by the pill and explained that they could be anything else, because the pill, in his eyes, was clinically intended to “protect.”

I'm surprised that somebody of his age and with his experience in women (I have known him for years and seen girlfriends come and go) needed an explanation from me that the morning-after pill was intended as an emergency backup but not as a primary method for preventing pregnancy.

I used the example of mouth hygiene: Brushing your teeth and preventing plaque and paradontosis is one thing, but waiting until your teeth have holes and until you have to fill them or take them out entirely is another. He did not possibly know about what harm he caused his girlfriend and probably was not too concerned either, because if he did, he would have ran to the doctors as soon as those irregularities had occurred. Instead he was complaining about her withdrawal from sex because she could not stand the sickness she was feeling afterwards.

When I confronted him with that, he said that it was his girlfriend who was not very fond of gynecologists, especially because she had family working in the health departments of Prishtina and she was afraid that the word would go around.



Going to gynecologists as an unmarried woman is a taboo, even among those who are in long-term relationships. The fear of getting labeled or being looked upon as "easy" by medical staff is still present and most abortions are not listed in statistics because they are carried out clandestinely in private clinics.

This issue is the pure result of the lack of communication we have. Women risk their fertility and overall health because they are too afraid to seek for advice anywhere.

Nobody speaks of it. And as long as we do not talk about it, we can pretend that it does not exist.

We are in a period of transition in which women who do not have sex fast enough during the course of a relationship are labeled "prude" or "conservative" and those who do are labeled "easy" or "not worthy of marriage". We have to deal with the stress that comes from withholding sex, as well as the stress that comes from having sex. In addition to that we have to also deal with the stress that comes from the consequences of sex, such as pregnancy and also with the stress of preventing it.

I guess most women can relate to this. As for those who like to label people based on talk, I beg you to start with me because I am planning to start a collection and I could use any name you would like to call me.

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