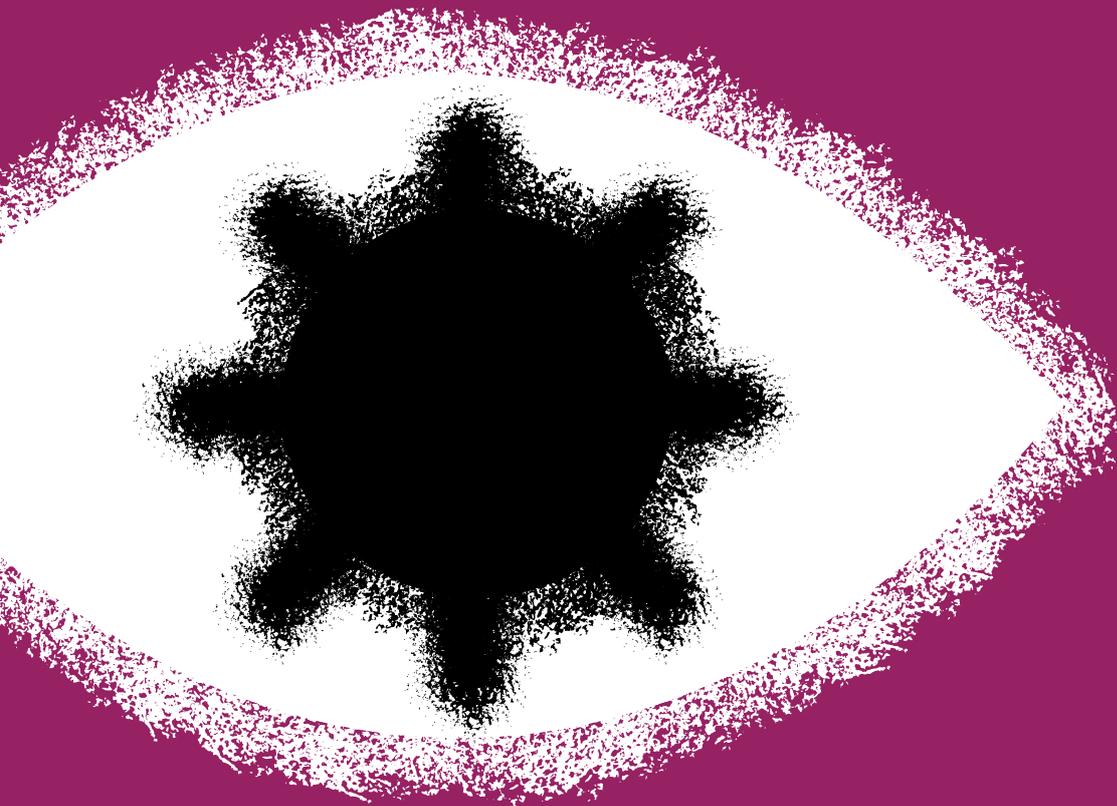


United Nations
Joint Programme
Ending Violence
Against Women in
Albania

May 2020

Response to COVID-19 in Albania



**Ending
Violence
Against
Women**



Emerging Gender Impacts

Public health emergencies related to disease outbreaks have a distinct gendered impact on women and girls.

Women and girls' roles in their homes and communities – such as domestic and unpaid care responsibilities and as frontline health and social sector responder roles – increase their exposure to COVID-19. Being aware that under the self-isolation circumstances, the situation of women and girls, victims of GBV/DV can worsen even more due to limited access to specialised support services, and a rather weakened institutional multi-sectorial response to their needs, UN JP “Ending Violence Against Women in Albania” (EVAWIA) has been working very closely with both central and local governmental authorities responsible for coordination and provision of specialized support services to Gender Based Violence (GBV)/ Domestic Violence (DV) victims.





Ensuring human rights in times of uncertainty

1. Support provided to GoA to ensure human rights are central to the GBV/DV response in the COVID-19 situation

Concrete recommendations were provided to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP), Ministry of Interior (Mol) and General Directorate of State Police (GDSP) on a number of issues related to emergency response for sexual and domestic violence victims. As a result, the MoHSP Department of Gender Equality communicated with all 61 Local Domestic Violence Coordinators (LDVC) on how to carry forward these recommendations, how to work with the State Police and other actors during the isolation period. Likewise, an informative memo was circulated to all local police units indicating on State's obligations towards DV/GBV victims and informing them about a uninterrupted services provided to victims during COVID-19 and all times.

Technical support was provided to the MoHSP to respond to the emergency and ensure adequate DV Law implementation. A quick needs' assessment was conducted engaging public and non-public shelters that provide services for victims/survivors of domestic violence and trafficking as well as for the ones working with children and LGBTI community, on their basic needs during COVID-19.

All Coordinated Referral Mechanisms handling domestic violence received support from the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP) with two standardized protocols for managing urgent and non-urgent DV cases, one in normal situation and other one in COVID-19 situation:

- i) 1st protocol aims to standardize the actions needed to be performed by all CRM members at local level to ensure an immediate, comprehensive and accountable response, in accordance with the competencies and legal duties as foreseen in the recently amended DV Law, to adequately protect DV victims and provide specialized support services as per the case;
- ii) 2nd protocol aims to assist local authorities at municipal level, members of the CRMs responsible for prevention and management of DV cases, in particular members of the Multidisciplinary Technical Team (MTT), in adequately handling DV cases during COVID-19 situation.

To help all CRMs members have a unified understanding and proper implementation of these protocols, so far, 38 LDVC and over 60 service providers at local level are provided with online training. Online training of the rest of the LDVCs and local service providers will continue. <https://twitter.com/UNDPAlbania/status/1268076881426948096>



REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JUDICIARY SYSTEM BENEFITED FROM THE ONLINE TRAINING

In cooperation with the Albanian School of Magistrate online capacity building trainings continued with judges, prosecutors and other judicial officials on due diligence principles on adequate DV law implementation tailored for COVID-19 situation. The online training focused on new Protocol on Domestic Violence case management during COVID 19 situation at local level. 11 representatives of the judiciary system benefited from the training. <https://www.facebook.com/Shkollaemagjistratures/photos/pcb.2988048167954368/2988047574621094/?type=3&theater>

2. Support provided to CRMs for immediate specialized support services to GBV/DV victims and an increased awareness for potential increase of violence case

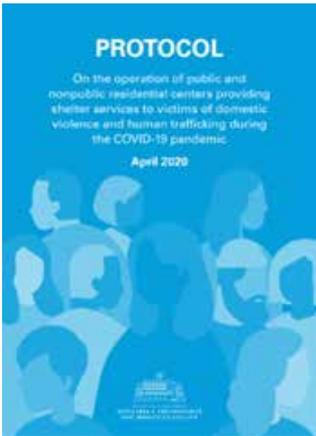
15 municipalities (Malesi e Madhe, Maliq, Ura Vajgurore, Kucove, Patos, Kavaja, Himara, Klos, Selenice, Dropull, Divjake, Has, Fushe Arrez, Roskovec, Bulqize) are supported to establish and strengthen coordinated referral mechanisms for domestic violence cases. Expedited local efforts took place on how to best use the specialized support services provided by state and non-state actors for DV and GBV victims in the emergency.

Under the motto "You are not alone" Safety tips for DV survivors tailored for COVID-19 situation and relevant information for sexual violence victims were developed and shared with 61 Local DV Coordinators (LDVCs).



MUNICIPALITIES ARE SUPPORTED TO ESTABLISH AND STRENGTHEN COORDINATED REFERRAL MECHANISMS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES

(MALESI E MADHE, MALIQ, URA VAJGURORE, KUCOVE, PATOS, KAVAJA, HIMARA, KLOS, SELENICE, DROPULL, DIVJAKE, HAS, FUSHE ARREZ, ROSKOVEC, BULQIZE)



Support was provided to the MoHSP, to develop and approve the protocol “On the operation of public and non-public residential centres, providing shelter services to victims of domestic

violence and human trafficking during the Covid-19 pandemic” which ensures uninterrupted provision of services by state social service, public and NGO-run shelters and LGUs to provide needed shelter and protection during the COVID-19 pandemic as essential services for VAW.

<https://albania.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2020/04/albania-adopts-new-protocol-to-ensure-undisrupted-shelter-services>

Following the approval of the Order, in collaboration with MoHSP, an online training

THE TRAINING WAS ATTENDED BY

37

PUBLIC AND NON-PUBLIC SERVICES PROVIDERS FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

session was organized to provide information on the requirements of the Protocol. The training was attended by 37 public and non-public services providers for survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking, including representatives of 19 residential centers that provide long-term or short-term housing service.

<https://www.facebook.com/668381123207158/posts/3229667300411848/?d=n>



Practical and user-friendly info sets together with phone numbers to report and seek help are shared by a number of municipalities in their social media channels and online activities are carried out deploying municipality social medial networks aiming at maximizing local community outreach. Around 60 000 people were reached through social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)



<https://www.facebook.com/PNUDSHQIPERI/photos/pcb.3015403981851691/3015395485185874/?type=3&theater>

<https://twitter.com/UNDPAlbania/status/1248879453310193664>

The monitoring of the local level response to violence against women and girls by civil society organisations continued during the pandemic. 11 Municipalities were specifically monitored on measures they implemented to continue the case management and provision of services to women victims of violence during the lockdown and movement restrictions imposed by the government.¹ The initial findings of the monitoring process point to several gaps particularly with regard to the management of cases of domestic violence by CRMs, which during the pandemic was very low compared to the number of cases referred to the Police or the national hotline 116 117 in the respective municipalities. Recommendations will serve responsible authorities to adequately implement the DV LAW.

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic situation and in view of ongoing work on gender responsive budgeting in five

1. Vlore, Tirane, Shkoder, Sarande, Pogradec, Lezhe, Kamez, Korce, Fier, Elbasan, Durres



MUNICIPALITIES WERE SPECIFICALLY MONITORED ON MEASURES THEY IMPLEMENTED TO CONTINUE THE CASE MANAGEMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE DURING THE LOCKDOWN AND MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY THE GOVERNMENT

selected Municipalities² with focus on social services targeting survivors of violence, capacities of municipalities are being assessed to identify capacity gaps and challenges municipalities face while addressing priorities of women and girls survivors of violence during crisis/emergency situations.

2. Tirane, Elbasan, Durres, Korce and Lezhe

3. CRM members with strengthened skills for adequate referral and cooperation in treating effectively GBV/DV cases at local level

CRMs multi-sectorial technical teams (MTT) in 15 municipalities held continuous online discussions to ensure timely coordination of efforts from all involved state and non-state actors needed for preventing and handling of domestic violence cases at local communities.

<https://twitter.com/UNDPAlbania/status/1258461792960995334>

4. Emergency support provided to vulnerable groups including VAW survivors

Over 65 members of CRMs from 15 municipalities benefited from the online trainings provided services to 78 domestic violence (DV) cases during COVID-19 pandemics containment measures.

70

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES ARE PROVIDED WITH EMERGENCY PACKAGES DURING COVID-19 SITUATION



Furthermore, 70 domestic violence cases are provided with emergency packages during COVID-19 situation.

Over 1000 packages of food and hygiene products are distributed to 663 families from vulnerable communities in Municipalities of Pogradec and Cerrik, from which 152 are women households, 346 elderly without any support and living alone; 131 families with people with disability and 34 families in extreme poverty.

<https://www.facebook.com/119376631560623/posts/1558625434302395/>

Over
1000



PACKAGES OF FOOD AND HYGIENE PRODUCTS ARE DISTRIBUTED TO 663 FAMILIES FROM VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES IN MUNICIPALITIES OF POGRADEC AND CERRIK.

152
WOMEN
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FAMILIES WITH
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DISABILITY

346
ELDERLY
WITHOUT
ANY SUPPORT

34
FAMILIES IN
EXTREME
POVERTY



5. Updated disaggregated data on DV cases managed through CRMs registered in REVALB system recording domestic violence cases even during COVID-19 situation

Local domestic violence coordinators have been supported through continuous online technical expertise to continue their work on updating records according to the services provided by multisectoral technical team members. 1510 DV cases and updates are recorded in the REVALB system from 15 municipalities with EVAWIA support and 1717 DV cases and updates are recorded from all municipalities across the country during COVID-19 situation thanks to the increased skills of all the LCDVs to systematically use the system.

1510

DV CASES AND UPDATES ARE RECORDED IN THE REVALB SYSTEM FROM 15 MUNICIPALITIES WITH EVAWIA SUPPORT

6. LILIUM Center services to sexual violence victims tailored for COVID-19 situation

LILIUM Center the only one-stop center for sexual violence victims has continued providing specialized emergency services to sexual violence victims. During the pandemic two cases of sexual violence are supported.

In addition, an internal regulation on managing urgent sexual violence cases in COVID-19 situation has been prepared by LILIUM Center.

User-friendly information is provided through social media channels to reach out to as many community members and victims as possible.

<https://shendetesia.gov.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Broshura-Dhuna-seksuale-per-profesionistetr.pdf>



7. Awareness interventions focusing on GBV/DV victims

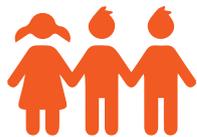
7 municipalities (Kavaja, Malesi e Madhe, Maliq, Patos, Ura Vajgurore, Kucova, Dropull) launched online art competitions called: "Together for healthy and non-violent families, even in emergency situations". This aimed to engage men, boys, women and girls in the fight against domestic violence, and promote healthy relationship through art.

Four municipalities (Bulqiza, Roskovec, Fushe-Arrez, Has) prepared and shared in social media platforms leaflets regarding legal remedies to be used in DV cases at local level reaching out to a large number of women and men.





Over
125



YOUNG GIRLS AND BOYS PARTICIPATED WITH THEIR ARTISTIC WORKS ONLINE BY SHARING THEIR MESSAGES OF THE NEED TO FIGHT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The winners of the best artistic works were announced in the social media platforms of the municipalities.

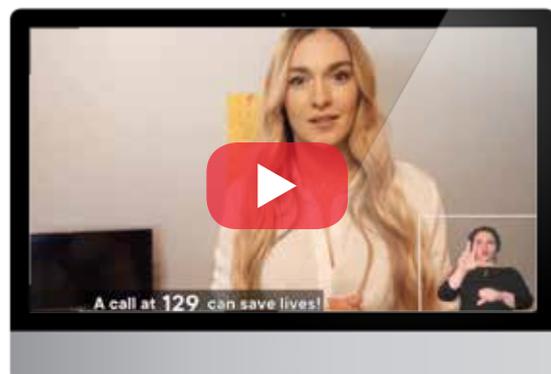
<https://www.facebook.com/PNUDSHQIPERI/videos/2586950714890866/UzpfSTExN-zA0MzQxOTk6MTAyMjl5NTQwMDC2NTY1ODY/>

400,000



VIDEO VIEWERS

In partnership with MoHSP a video spot was produced to raise awareness on violence against women during COVID-19 health crisis, aiming to call on those who witness or experience domestic abuse to report to the National hotline 116 117 or the Police 129. The video was released on 27 April generating an extensive public discussion on social platforms and was broadcasted by the Albanian Public TV. The video has been viewed more than 400,000 times on social media. It is narrated in Albanian, with sign-language provided to ensure greater reach among people with hearing disabilities, as well as English subtitles.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuU_xqrob9w

8. Support to Women's Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Twelve CSOs that provide direct services to women survivors of DV Dures and Elbasan were supported with 1100 protective equipment. This is essential for the CSO-service providers to continue offering services to women in need, including accommodation in shelters respecting some of the main requirements of the MHSP's Protocol on the management and functioning of shelters during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://twitter.com/unwomenalbania/status/1265301233230925826?s=21>

9. Assessing the differentiated impact of COVID -19 on women and men livelihoods during the lockdown

A Rapid Gender Assessment was conducted to measure the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on women and men. Findings have suggested an increase in burden of unpaid work, more economic insecurity and increased violence against women and girls during the past few months. This Rapid Gender Assessment is being used for policy recommendations and programming purposes in support of the government's and civil society's efforts in responding to VAWG and other challenges faced by women during the imposed lockdown.

FINDINGS HAVE SUGGESTED AN INCREASE IN BURDEN OF UNPAID WORK, MORE ECONOMIC INSECURITY AND INCREASED VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS DURING THE PAST FEW MONTHS



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