

JOINT STATEMENT ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

24 November 2017

Violence against women is a serious human rights violation and a form of discrimination. It is estimated that over 20% of Ukrainian women are victims of violence in its different forms (physical, psychological, sexual). Many women do not report violence to authorities and they are suffering in silence. Violence against women cannot continue to be seen as a private matter. Violence against women has enormous physical, psychological and also economic costs to its victims. The consequences of violence against women also affect the children of victims, families, communities and the whole society. According to UNFPA in Ukraine the direct and indirect economic costs of violence against women is an estimated \$ 208 million per year. Without making the issue and all its consequences visible, also through collecting reliable sex-disaggregated data by authorities, it is impossible to tackle the problem.

Inequality between women and men is the root cause behind violence against women. To tackle this gross human rights violation, all forms of discrimination against women must be eliminated. To that effect, we all need to challenge the gender stereotypes that negatively affect the fulfilment of the rights of women and girls. Education and awareness raising at all levels of society is needed to challenge stereotypes and change attitudes that make violence against women acceptable. Those changes are also necessary to enhance the prevention of violence against women.

Protection of survivors of violence is another important aspect. Violence survivors should have access to the necessary essential services and support without any fears of being mistreated or revictimized. Prevention and protection are not enough: those who have committed acts of violence should be held responsible. Bringing perpetrators to justice sends a strong message to society: violence against women is not allowed.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals also call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres, and Ukraine committed to a national target “To reduce the level of gender-based and domestic violence, and ensure efficient prevention of its manifestations and timely assistance to victims” by 2030. It is particularly important in Ukraine to ensure that all women, particularly women experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, have access to justice, protection and services in combating violence against women. The latest conclusions of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) regarding Ukraine expressed concern about the prevalence of violence against women and called for necessary changes in legislation to align with regional and international standards, including the ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

We, the undersigned call on Ukraine to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (“Istanbul Convention”). The Convention provides a comprehensive approach to the elimination of and combat against violence against women through prevention, protection, prosecution and integrated policies. The ratification and the implementation of the Convention would provide an important tool to ensure that every woman should be safe from fear and safe from violence.

Embassy of Austria in Ukraine
Embassy of Canada in Ukraine

Embassy of the Republic of Cyprus in Ukraine
Embassy of the Kingdom of Denmark in Ukraine
Embassy of Estonia in Ukraine
Embassy of Germany in Ukraine
Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ukraine
Royal Norwegian Embassy in Ukraine
Embassy of Romania in Ukraine
Embassy of Slovenia in Ukraine
Embassy of Sweden in Ukraine
Embassy of Switzerland in Ukraine
Council of Europe Office in Ukraine
Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine
NATO Liaison Office Ukraine
OHCHR/HRMMU Ukraine
UNAIDS in Ukraine
UNFPA Ukraine
UNICEF Ukraine
UN Women