

# **Committee of the Parties**

Council of Europe Convention  
on preventing and combating violence  
against women and domestic violence  
(Istanbul Convention)

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**Implementation report submitted  
by Finland on the conclusions adopted  
by the Committee of the Parties  
on 2 June 2023**

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on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

**Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence  
against Women and Domestic Violence**

**Report by the Government of Finland on the implementation of  
recommendations adopted by the Committee of the Parties**

**30 May 2025**

## **Introduction**

1. Finland remains strongly committed to the full and effective implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention). Guided by the principles enshrined in the Convention, Finland has continued to strengthen its legislative and policy framework to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women.
2. In response to the recommendations adopted by the Committee of the Parties in June 2023, Finland has taken a series of targeted actions to ensure their effective implementation. To address the needs of all victims, efforts have been made to broaden the scope of the Action Plan for Combating Violence against Women and to allocate appropriate funding for its measures. Authorities have enhanced data collection mechanisms across sectors to improve the evidence base for policy decisions, with particular attention to disaggregated statistics and data on custody decisions in the context of domestic violence.
3. In addition, steps have been taken to reassess the use of mediation in cases involving violence against women, with a focus on ensuring compliance with the Istanbul Convention's requirements and protecting victims' rights throughout judicial and law enforcement procedures.
4. The Government provides the following information on the implementation of the recommendations.

### ***Recommendation 1. Addressing all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention which are not included in the current Action Plan for Combatting Violence against Women, based on a gendered understanding of such violence, and allocating adequate financial means.***

5. The report submitted by Finland pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 4 of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (first thematic evaluation round, (GREVIO/Inf(2023)25)) includes comprehensive information on various forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention and how those forms of violence are addressed and what measures have been taken to prevent and reduce them. Both the Committee for Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence's (later, the NAPE Committee) Action Plan and the Ministry of Justice's Action Plan included measures to combat violence against women and domestic violence. After preparing two separate and parallel Action Plans, it has been considered more appropriate to have one Action Plan to address the necessary measures in combating violence against women and domestic violence. Therefore, the NAPE Committee will be responsible for preparing future Action Plans for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.
6. Prime Minister Orpo's Government Programme includes several measures to combat various forms of violence against women.
7. These measures include strengthening the prevention and identification of violence against women, including domestic violence and intimate partner violence, particularly by authorities, municipalities and wellbeing services counties which are responsible for organising health, social and emergency services in Finland. In addition, efforts will be made to improve the identification

and response to violence against boys and men. Victims' awareness of protection and security opportunities will be increased. Accessibility to shelters and rape crisis centers will also be enhanced.

8. The Government has taken the necessary measures to clarify the criminalisation of forced marriage in the Criminal Code. Forcing a person to enter into marriage has been explicitly criminalized as trafficking in human beings since the beginning of 2025 (Criminal Code 39/1889, chapter 25, section 3 and 3a).

9. The Government Programme explicitly acknowledges and addresses the need to combat honor-related violence.

10. Awareness of honor-based violence will be increased, and penalties for such violence will be tightened.

11. The need to criminalise coercive control will be clarified.

12. Mediation in cases of domestic violence and intimate partner violence is, as a rule, discontinued.

13. The Government is drawing up a victim policy action plan aimed at securing funding for victim support services and improving the position of crime victims in criminal proceedings.

14. Services for the prevention and suppression of violent and sexual crimes, as well as the multi-professional rehabilitation for offenders during imprisonment, are being developed, with additional resources allocated. The specific needs of different client groups, such as women and young persons, are taken into account in prison operations.

15. Female genital mutilation is now more clearly criminalized in the Criminal Code. Taking a woman or a girl abroad for the purpose of genital mutilation, or coercing or procuring a woman or a minor girl to undergo genital mutilation, is also criminalized. Additionally, efforts to strengthen public authorities' ability to identify, exchange information about, and prevent female genital mutilation are being intensified.

16. On the basis of a government proposal, committing an offence against life, health, or liberty in a particularly humiliating manner will be laid down in law as grounds for increasing the punishment. This will enter into force in July 2025.

17. Regarding children, efforts to ensure a non-violent childhood continue. In cases of sexual violence against a child, investigations will prioritise the best interests of the child, and multidisciplinary support will be ensured through inter-agency cooperation. The Government will examine the extension or possible elimination of the statute of limitations for sexual offences against children and will take the necessary measures.

18. Regulations on child abuse material (CAM) will be tightened to protect child victims of serious crimes. Possession of images or video material depicting brutal violence will be criminalized, and an aggravated form of the offence will be introduced for possessing sexually

explicit images of children. In addition, possession of other extremely violent material will also be criminalized.

19. Regarding perpetrators, the Government will introduce a new criminal sanction, preventative detention, intended for the most dangerous offenders. Also, the role of the risk of violence will be significantly strengthened as part of the considerations of the release of life prisoners. From the beginning of 2025, the provisions on conditional release have been amended so that a person may be classified as a first-time offender only once.

20. The NAPE Committee is currently preparing the third Action Plan for the Istanbul Convention for 2026-2033, which will continue to address several forms of violence against women covered by the Convention.

***Recommendation 2. Ensuring that all sectors of the administration, including law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, social services and the public health sector collect data at regular intervals and disaggregated, at a minimum, by sex, age, type of violence, relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, the age of the victim, and the place where the violence took place, so that the prevalence of violence against women and women's experiences can emerge and inform policy-making. Special attention should be given to collecting data on the extent to which reports of domestic violence are taken into account in decisions about the custody and visitation of children, as well as to the collection of data showing how the safety of all family members is ensured.***

21. The report submitted by Finland pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 4 of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (first thematic evaluation round, (GREVIO/Inf(2023)25)) includes comprehensive administrative data, which has been collected on a regular basis up to October 2023.

22. In addition, the NAPE Committee, as the coordination body established in accordance with Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention, has included data collection as a major component of its Action Plan for the Istanbul Convention for 2022-2025 ([STM, NAPE 2022:7](#)) in efforts to combat violence against women. It has promoted data collection through various projects, including the development of police and judicial information systems, namely the "VITJA" and "AIPA" projects. Systematic data collection in the information systems of social welfare and healthcare authorities is also being improved by encouraging the use of the structured Kanta document (the Local Violence Filter and Mapping Form) and by monitoring its use through Kanta entries.

23. The NAPE Committee is currently preparing the third Action Plan for 2026-2033, where data collection and its further development are among the key components.

24. In 2024, the NAPE Committee commissioned Statistics Finland to conduct further analyses of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence data in Finland, based on a previous 2021 Study. Their main results are presented below by topic and were compiled into a single publication at the end of 2024 (<https://stat.fi/tup/sukupuolistunut-vakivalta/artikkelit-blogit.html>). This publication will also be translated into Swedish and English (due to be published in August 2025). The analyses cover the following topics:

- (1) Online violence and its connection to other forms of perceived violence;
- (2) A comprehensive review of violence experienced by young women;
- (3) Sexual harassment experienced in working life;
- (4) Women's and men's experiences of persecution;
- (5) Honor-related violence, forced marriages and attitudes towards female genital mutilation; and
- (6) Violence experienced and confirmed in childhood.

25. The main results will be translated into English and are due to be published in August 2025.

26. The NAPE Committee funded the study on *Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence in Finland: Services, Programmes and Encounters of Domestic Violence Perpetrators in Health and Social Services* (THL Report 7/2024) which describes work carried out by the third sector, as well as wellbeing services counties, regarding perpetrators of domestic violence. The encounters and service models for domestic violence perpetrators in the social and health services were examined through a professional survey. The report also covers work with perpetrators of sexual violence in the third sector and crime-based programmes of the Criminal Sanctions Agency, along with other violence prevention activities. Based on the results of the study, the publication evaluates the implementation of violence prevention and quality standards and the obligations of the Istanbul Convention. Finally, it offers recommendations for developing and strengthening work with perpetrators of intimate partner violence and sexual violence. The report is intended especially for decision-makers, ministries and professionals involved in violence prevention, but it is also suitable for anyone interested in the subject.

27. The development of the information system “AIPA” by judicial authorities supports the obligation for systematic and comprehensive statistical data collection, as required by the Istanbul Convention and recommended by GREVIO. As the development of the law-enforcement system “VITJA” was discontinued, the police are looking into the possibility of making the necessary changes to the current “PATJA” system. These systems address violence against women, especially domestic violence, more effectively.

28. Healthcare and social welfare authorities are improving systematic data collection through the use of a structured document (Domestic Violence Enquiry and Assessment Form) within the National Archive for Health Information known as ‘Kanta Services’ and are monitoring both the frequency of its use and the reported prevalence of violence through Kanta entries.

29. Several additional individual projects and surveys have been conducted and finalized, including:

- The Ministry of Justice’s statistical survey “Progress of Violent Crimes against Women in Criminal Proceedings”, ([Oikeusministeriön julkaisuja, Selvityksiä ja ohjeita 2025:1](#)).
- Survey of international information models: Information Models in Primary Healthcare Use (STM 2025). This study reviews international data model frameworks and their applicability to the Finnish healthcare system. The goal of the customer-centered model is to enhance the effectiveness and quality of healthcare services. The survey report proposes further

development of information system services to improve the usability, interoperability, and the quality of patient data.

- Coordination group setup (Ministry of Justice, 25 October 2024): A coordination group was established to streamline regulation on information exchange in the field of crime prevention. Its purpose is to strengthen inter-ministerial cooperation and promote the harmonisation of legislation concerning information sharing in crime prevention.
- Report on challenging divorce situations and the service system (as a measure of the National Child Strategy, Reports and Memos of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2025:12): the report concluded that courts recognize the complexity of violence and its role in hidden crime. However, uncertainty about the existence of intimate partner violence remains a challenge, often due to unfounded claims. Violence is considered in decision-making, particularly in determining custody and visitation rights. The report proposes, among others:
  - a. The limitation of custody and rights of access, and the cancellation of appointments, should be considered where justified for the protection of the child and the prevention of traumatization.
  - b. The enforcement of children's appointments by bailiffs should be abandoned, and new, more child-friendly and humane ways of arranging meetings should be found.
  - c. Adequate information should be provided to the parties offering the meeting site service regarding the supervision of meetings, as well as factors related to the parents' mental health, substance abuse, or violence that may pose a risk to the safe organization of the meetings.
- Report on Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence in Finland (THL Report 7/2024): as mentioned above, this study focuses on services and programmes related to relational violence in private, public, and third sectors and offers actionable recommendations based on findings.

30. The encounters and operating models related to domestic violence perpetrators in social and health services were examined through a survey aimed at professionals. In addition, the report describes work with perpetrators of sexual violence in the third sector, as well as crime-based programmes implemented by the Criminal Sanctions Agency and other activities related to violence prevention. Based on the study results, the publication assesses the implementation of violence prevention and quality criteria, as well as the obligations under the Istanbul Convention. Finally, recommendations are made to develop and strengthen work with perpetrators of intimate partner violence and sexual violence. The report is intended especially for decision-makers, ministries and actors involved in violence prevention.

31. The Police Information System ("PATJA") is the national database used by the police for operational purposes. Its sub-registers include the crime reporting system, investigation system and assistance system. However, "PATJA" does not yet contain structured data identifying the relationship between victims and perpetrators, but as the development of the replacing system "VITJA" was discontinued, the police are now looking into the possibility of making the required changes into the present system. Therefore, data from Statistics Finland are merged with police

statistics. This includes information on the victim's and suspect's domiciles, family status, children, parents, and marital history. For married couples, the offence date is compared with marriage and divorce dates. A review is also conducted on whether the victim and suspect share a child. All information used in the review corresponds to the statistical year in question.

32. Gender-disaggregated statistics and analysis continue to be produced annually in Åland, to clarify unequal living conditions.

33. The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), the organiser of the national helpline service Nollalinja, is responsible for the statistical data collected from all contacts to the helpline. The data provides information on the phenomenon of violence and the situations of those who have experienced violence. THL analyses and publishes the data, which is also used by other public authorities. Also, civil society organizations collect data.

***Recommendation 3. Reconsidering the power vested on police officers to propose mediation in violence against women cases, ensuring that all law-enforcement and prosecution staff are informed that mediation is prohibited in cases of repeated violence, and that there is no discontinuation of criminal investigation and prosecution in violence against women cases under mediation.***

34. Mediation of intimate partner violence has been prohibited in Finland. As of 1 January 2025, mediation will no longer be permitted in criminal offences involving violence or other certain other offences, such as sexual offences, threats, or stalking, if the offence is committed against a family member or other close person. The ban will apply not only to intimate partner relationships but also to other domestic relationships.

35. The above-mentioned amendment to the Act on Mediation in Criminal Matters and Certain Disputes (966/2024) was approved by Parliament in December 2024 and entered into force on 1 January 2025. With the amendment to the Act, neither violent crimes nor certain other offences committed against a close relative of the suspect may be accepted for mediation.

36. Domestic violence cases may be submitted for mediation only by exception: either when they concern petty offences committed by minors against their parents, other custodians, or relatives, or when prosecution is permitted only at the request of the complainant.

37. The aim of the legislative amendment is to ensure that victims of domestic violence are not pressured into consenting to mediation. The amendment was prompted by cases where, as a result of mediation offenders avoided punishment through mediation, even in cases of repeated violence.

38. In its reply to the Government, Parliament required the Government to strengthen and develop the support and services of parents, families, suspects of intimate partner violence, and victims. It also called for enhanced service guidance and ensured adequate funding for the prevention and resolution of intimate partner violence. Furthermore, Parliament required the Government to monitor the implementation, functionality, and impact of the prohibition on domestic violence mediation and to submit a report on the matter to the Legal Affairs Committee of Parliament by the end of 2028. The follow up shall include effects of the prohibition on victims,



their experiences of the legislative change, the sufficiency and equal availability of services for both suspects and victims of intimate partner violence, as well as the resourcing and practical implementation of referrals to services.

39. The effects on children shall also be monitored. In addition, changes in the handling of intimate partner violence offences and in the processing volumes at different stages of the criminal process, as well as the adequacy of the appropriations allocated to the police, prosecutors and courts, shall be monitored. The effects of the prohibition on the mediation of intimate partner violence offences outside the scope of the Mediation Act, as well as the impact on official practices and the progress of related criminal proceedings, shall also be monitored.

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