

MEDIA GUIDANCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-REGULATORY STANDARDS TO REPORT ON CASES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, BASED ON COUNCIL OF EUROPE STANDARDS



**Council of Europe Project
“The Istanbul Convention: a tool to advance
in fighting violence against women
and domestic violence in Ukraine” (2018-2020)**

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Acronyms

BPfA	Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CoE	Council of Europe
CRSV	Conflict Related Sexual Violence
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DV	Domestic Violence
EU	European Union
GE	Gender Equality
IC	Istanbul Convention
GBV	Gender-based Violence
LGBTi	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, intersex
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SOGI	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
VAW	Violence Against Women
WHO	World Health Organisation
WHRD	Women Human Rights Defenders

1. Introduction

The media plays a crucial role in increasing awareness and changing harmful attitudes towards gender-based violence against women, especially in conflict and post-conflict areas¹. However, despite this important role, media professionals often lack systematic and continuous support, knowledge and understanding to approach the topic of violence against women and domestic violence in a gender-sensitive manner to raise public awareness of the problem. In Ukraine, women are often represented in media stereotypically (due to their physical appearance, or as mothers, wives or carers) and are nearly absent in male-dominated sectors. Cases of violence against women and domestic violence are typically under-reported and when they are reported, it is not in a gender-sensitive ethical manner. This can be due to the lack of a set of standards for ethical reporting on gender equality/violence against women. To address this shortcoming, an interdisciplinary approach and cooperation between different professionals working on the issue of violence against women and media professionals is needed.

These guidelines are designed in cooperation with national and international experts on gender equality, violence against women and media experts and professionals, with the purpose of providing Ukrainian media professionals with concrete guidance that would develop self-regulatory mechanisms to facilitate human rights-based, gender-sensitive and ethical reporting on violence against women and thus contribute to a more just and equal society for all.

This media guidance has been developed under the project *The Istanbul Convention: a tool to advance in fighting violence against women and domestic violence in Ukraine*. Through this project, the Council of Europe aims to support and further develop capacities within Ukraine's preventive and protective institutional mechanisms to prevent and protect victims of violence against women, while also aiding professionals who provide assistance to victims of violence against women and domestic violence to capably apply their knowledge and skills.

2. Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide media professionals, including journalists, editors, bloggers and advertisers, working in various fields of print, online, social and broadcast media with recommendations and guidance on developing self-regulatory standards on gender-sensitive reporting on cases of violence against women and domestic violence.

Gender-sensitive reporting, as presented in these guidelines, is consistent with general ethical standards and aspirations of the profession, supporting the principles of accuracy, fairness and impartiality, protection of personal privacy, human rights and the public interest, as well as in line with the existing national and international legal frameworks² and professional codes of ethics³.

A final note on the terminology regarding the use of the terms “victims” or “survivors”. The word “victim” refers to a woman who is subject to domestic violence or violence against women. However, in many contexts, experts prefer to use the alternative term “survivor” as it is more empowering. In this report both terms are used.

3. Role of the Media in Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence

Violence against women is a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights. It represents a major obstacle to achieving gender equality and is recognised as a structural violation of women's human rights by all key international human rights instruments. The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, more commonly referred to as the Istanbul Convention, explicitly defines violence against women as:

A violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life⁴.

Understanding violence against women as a structural phenomenon that is a result of a historically unequal distribution of power between women and men is essential to understanding all of its specific manifestations in different time periods and contexts. It is a global phenomenon, common to all parts the world, and all cultures. Women are subjected to violence in a wide range of settings, including the family, the workplace, the community, in armed conflict and its aftermath. New technologies generate new manifestations and forms of violence, such as online or cyber violence or stalking. Violence constitutes a continuum across the lifespan of women, from prior to birth to very old age.

One of the most common forms of violence experienced by women globally is domestic violence. Domestic violence can take on many different forms and manifestations and is not limited only to physical, but also psychological, emotional, sexual or economic violence. Although the two terms (violence against women and domestic violence) are often used interchangeably, it is important to note that violence against women is a broader term that includes but should not be reduced only to domestic violence⁵.

Violence against women and domestic violence are clearly linked to the sexism in society as a root cause, which can be manifested through different symbolic forms including the so called “everyday sexism” through use of sexist jokes and language⁶. Sexism also fuels other manifestations of gender inequalities such as women’s unequal participation in political life and decision making processes, the gender pay gap, work discrimination, women’s unequal access to public and social services, etc.

Media has a key role in shaping the way we perceive social reality, and thus also in preventing and combating violence against women. According to the annual Internews Media Consumption Survey (2019) 60% of Ukrainians uncritically consume media content - they trust their favourite or most familiar media outlet or rely on intuition⁷. The media can and should serve as an ally in raising awareness of the prevalence, root causes and the nature of violence against women. The media also has a responsibility to increase the knowledge and sensitivity of society to the phenomenon through addressing all forms of violence against women and linking them to structural issues of gender equality and women’s human rights.

The role of the media in reporting on cases of domestic violence is particularly important since official data is still often lacking or inadequate⁸. In the case of Ukraine, the Ukrainian government does not collect gender segregated statistics on domestic violence, that is on statistics of relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. Furthermore, violence against women often goes unreported or underreported because of the stigma and potential re-traumatisation of survivors during the reporting process, which can all lead to a distorted perception of the prevalence of the phenomena⁹.

Media organisations can actively contribute to raising awareness about violence against women, as well as sensitising the society on gender roles and stereotypes and how they are connected to violence against women and domestic violence. Through gender-sensitive reporting, media outlets have the opportunity to increase the general understanding of existing gender inequalities and its specific manifestations, such as violence against women and domestic violence. At the same time, “a failure to adhere to basic ethical principles when reporting

on such sensitive issues can further victimise, endanger and stigmatise gender-based violence [against women] survivors, aggravate their trauma and reinforce the stereotypes and misunderstandings of this form of violence”¹⁰.

The presence of sexism and degrading images of women and girls in the media, and the way the media covers violence against women and domestic violence can hinder change. According to media research in ten regions of Ukraine, hate speech and discrimination in the media have most often been related to gender (in 46% of publications)¹¹. Thus, according to the Istanbul Convention, media reporting on this issue must also work towards raising awareness of the structural problems of gender inequality, which form an important part of the context of violence against women and domestic violence, as opposed to presenting violence against women as an issue affecting women only individually.

Article 17 of the Istanbul Convention refers to the participation of the private sector and the media in the fight against violence against women and domestic violence, stating that:

Parties shall encourage the private sector, the information and communication technology sector and the media, with due respect for freedom of expression and their independence, to participate in the elaboration and implementation of policies and to set guidelines and self-regulatory standards to prevent violence against women and to enhance respect for their dignity. Parties shall develop and promote, in cooperation with private sector actors, skills among children, parents and educators on how to deal with the information and communications environment that provides access to degrading content of a sexual or violent nature which might be harmful¹².

4. Gender-Sensitive Reporting

Gender-sensitive reporting is a necessary precondition for ensuring that the media not only effectively and adequately mirrors society, but at the same time actively contributes to a more just and equal society for all, which, among other important issues of human rights, contributes to prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women and domestic violence¹³.

When writing about gender equality topics, such as violence against women or domestic violence, media professionals should contextualise individual acts of violence through additional information and analysis that can help the audience understand the complexity of violence against women and its psychological, legal, social, political and economic consequences on individuals, as well as the society as a whole. In this work, the educational and awareness raising component of the media's mission and role in society is particularly evident and important. Attention should be given to promoting gender equality and raising awareness on different forms of discrimination and violence towards women.

The selection of gender-sensitive language has enormous potential to shape the way society views and understands current events. Gender-sensitive language is an important component of gender-sensitive reporting. Through the use of non-sexist, inclusive and gender-fair language, media organisations avoid linguistic choices that may be interpreted as biased, discriminatory or demeaning by implying that one gender is the norm and thus superior to the other(s).

The Council of Europe in its Recommendation No. R (1990) 4E of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the elimination of sexism from language states that sexist language is the "current linguistic usage in most Council of Europe member states - whereby the masculine prevails over the feminine"¹⁴. In order to eliminate sexism from language, the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec (2007) 17 on gender equality standards and mechanisms advises that member states adopt guidelines addressed at all the actors involved requiring "that language

used in official documents, including legal texts, as well as texts regarding public policies and programmes, communication of public services with individuals, education and in media give women and men and their activities equal value and equal visibility, and member states should also encourage media to use non-sexist language”¹⁵. Similarly, the Council of Europe’s Recommendation CM/Rec (2019) 1 on preventing and combating sexism, acknowledges that language and communication are essential components of gender equality and “must not consecrate the hegemony of the masculine model”. The Recommendation draws specific attention to the role of the media in preventing and combating sexism through introducing various measures that would contribute to greater equality between women and men in both media content, as well as in the media as a profession¹⁶.

Balanced representation of women and men in all areas and topics of media content reflects the actual composition of society and its experiences and concerns. Fair portrayal of women and men through elimination of stereotypes and promotion of equal and multi-dimensional representation in all media content is essential for gender-sensitive reporting, including advertising and commercial messages.

It is also essential to ensure equal participation of women and men at all levels of media organisations’ work, which includes creating equal opportunities for women and men to participate in ownership, decision making, at all levels of media professionals’ work and in associations. In addition, women should be visible as experts whenever possible, also in often male-dominated areas (such as hard sciences, technology, politics and sports) and not only in those traditionally more associated with women (such as fashion, care work, and teaching).

Gender-sensitive reporting, as an important contribution to gender equality, is not to be viewed in any way as opposed to freedom of expression and media freedom, but rather as complementary to it, as both represent an integral part of human rights and democracy¹⁷. Among other reasons, that is why it is important for the media to develop and strengthen self-regulatory mechanisms that can provide the media with tools for implementing, monitoring and evaluating measures for the promotion of gender equality, while at the same time maintaining autonomy and ownership over the process, as well as public confidence and common goals and interests.

5. Media Reporting on Violence against Women in Ukraine: Challenges and Opportunities

According to the information gathered for this report¹⁸, the main media outlets in Ukraine still perpetuate gender stereotypes and do not fully use the potential to contribute to democratic processes by promoting human rights standards and gender equality¹⁹. Besides the lack of the systematic training of media workers and editorial staff on the complex aspects of the phenomenon of violence against women and domestic violence, the lack of specific standards and guidelines for reporting on cases of violence against women and domestic violence as potentially were main reasons mentioned for inadequate reporting on the topic. In many cases clear editorial guidelines for the reporters is missing, which leaves adequate ethical reporting on cases on violence against women and domestic violence to individual journalists' capacities and knowledge on the subject.

When it comes to representation of women in the mainstream media in Ukraine, multiple reports²⁰ show that women remain vastly underrepresented. According to the results of news monitoring on the eight Ukrainian national television channels, ten national newspapers and seven print editions conducted by The Institute of Mass Information and Detector Media in 2017, women were the main topic of the news only in 27% of cases, which is three times less than men²¹. Even in cases in which women are represented in an affirmative way, it is mostly in relation to the so called "tabloid", "light" or "lifestyle related topics", traditionally attributed to women in patriarchal societies, represented in accordance with their traditional roles as mothers, housewives, teachers, care givers, or similar.

Having in mind the fact that violence against women is linked to the general sexism in society and gender inequality as one of its root causes, preventing and combating different manifestations of sexism in the media is complementary and even plays a crucial part in prevention and elimination of violence against women and domestic violence. Equal and fair representation of women and men and elimination of stereotypes in the media shows a commitment towards gender equality which is a precondition of creating a society free of any form of violence against women and girls.

According to 2017 regional media monitoring results conducted by Volyn Press Club and Gender Centre²², in Ukrainian media women are rarely invited as experts on political or social matters on central television channels, appearing as experts only in 19% of cases²³. Furthermore, the results of gender monitoring revealed the least and most “friendly and welcoming” areas for female experts. The least “friendly” for women experts are such areas as politics (16%), war (20%) and sports (20%), that are considered to be traditionally male dominated topics and fields of expertise and the “friendliest” being education/science (46%), volunteering (45%), medicine (43%)²⁴.

The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2013) 1 on gender equality in media, as well as the Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism has set out recommendations to create a media environment free of sexism and the perpetuation of gender stereotypes²⁵. One of the most important steps in this process is to recognise the importance of creating gender balance in media content and the work environment and committing to adopting and developing self-regulatory mechanisms to support and aid fair and equal representation of women and men in the media, including standards on reporting on cases of violence against women and domestic violence.

6. Self-regulation for reporting on cases of violence against women and domestic violence

Research on current practices on reporting on cases of violence against women and domestic violence in Ukrainian media shows that in the vast majority of cases there are no explicit mechanisms to support journalists in their work on these topics. Systematic support is lacking and it is often left to the personal capacities of individual journalists and editors to make sure that the issue of violence against women is covered in a professional and ethical manner. Even if there is a gender equality component included in the editorial policies, the practical knowledge on addressing the issues of violence against women and domestic violence is most often lacking, which is why developing specific standards on reporting on these issues is essential.

Development of self-regulatory standards for reporting on cases of violence against women and domestic violence was identified by the media professionals that participated in the preparation of this report as a potential beneficial step towards improving media reporting on these issues. Also, as mentioned in a recent Council of Europe Analytical Report on gender equality and the media, setting up of self-regulatory mechanisms “enables media to strengthen public confidence, maintains editorial independence and limits state interference”²⁶ which are all essential to establishing and maintaining a broader culture of freedom of expression and media freedoms, as well as a culture of tolerance and respect for human rights. The establishment of self-regulatory bodies is a time-consuming process, but a vision of the eventual development of effective mechanisms for enforcement of self-regulatory

standards and ethical codes with specific mention of gender equality and violence against women would be helpful for Ukraine in the long term.

In the shorter term, developing self-regulatory standards is in keeping with the Istanbul Convention (Article 17.1), which states that the media organisations should be encouraged and supported to recognise themselves as relevant actors in prevention of gender-based violence against women. Media outlets not only have social interest and moral responsibility in contributing to violence prevention, but there are also economic and social advantages to engage in combating violence against women. The Istanbul Convention encourages the private sector, including media, to participate in the development of policies to prevent violence against women but also in their implementation, having in mind the respect of media autonomy and freedom of expression, as well as the ownership of the process of the media's contribution to preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The Istanbul Convention also requires states parties to encourage media to set guidelines and self-regulatory standards in order to strengthen respect for women's rights and in this way contribute to the prevention of violence against women and domestic violence.

With self-regulation, a voluntary framework under which media organisations draw up their own protocols or guidelines in order to achieve certain goals and take full responsibility for its implementation and monitoring, the media takes ownership over the process of developing, implementing and monitoring, detecting bias and errors and enforcing rules of conduct. A voluntary set of standards on reporting on the topic of violence against women and domestic violence, adjusted to the specific needs of specific media would be a useful tool to contributing to more ethical reporting on these issues and thus, contributing to a more equal and just society for all.

Media organisations may establish protocols or guidelines on how to prevent violence in their workplaces and support survivors and introduce self-regulatory standards, internal codes of conduct/ethics and internal monitoring systems to promote gender equality in media content; to combat gender stereotypes; avoid sexist advertising, language and content; and refrain from the use of degrading images of women associating violence and sex, etc. Journalists and media professionals must play a crucial role in drafting and developing any such document, while the society and experts can contribute as advisors.

Self-regulatory standards on gender equality and violence against women should:

- establish sectoral codes of conduct which specify the concrete responsibilities of the professional sector concerned;
 - encourage effective enforcement of internal guidelines, including standards for evaluating content, in the various media enterprises;
 - Establish appropriate consultation and control mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of self-regulatory standards;
 - take self-regulatory standards into account in contracts with other sectors, such as audio-visual producers, advertising agencies, and so on;
 - maintain regular contacts and exchange of information on self-regulation²⁷.
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7. Guidelines for Reporting on Violence against Women

In order to contribute to efforts to effectively prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence, developing specific self-regulatory standards when reporting on cases of violence against women and domestic violence, based on the Istanbul Convention and other Council of Europe standards, can be a very useful tool for media professionals working on these topics.

Ensuring privacy and safety

When developing guidelines for reporting on concrete cases, ethical and socially responsible reporting on violence against women and domestic violence should ensure privacy protection of the survivors. Media professionals should in principle obtain informed consent from any survivors interviewed or portrayed in any report to disclose their personal data. Any exceptions to this rule should be narrowly circumscribed, made on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with the editor or editor-in-chief. In addition, the survivor may at any time decline to provide information to the media. The survivor should not be identified in detail unless they have chosen to go public with their identity. This means that it is also important not to identify survivors' family members' names or identities, including children, or publish videos or photos of the survivors or the crime scene in a way that they can be identified. If needed, the faces, voices, names or places, or any other detail that can serve as the identification of the survivors should be blurred. Attention should be paid to the fact that, especially in smaller communities, survivors may be easily identified by some detail that might seem insignificant in other contexts, so there is a need to carefully balance between ensuring credibility of the story and protection of privacy of the survivors.

Secondary victimisation of the survivors, which occurs not as a direct result of a detrimental or criminal act but through a harmful response of the media to the crime, is a very real threat to women's safety and dignity and should be carefully avoided. It is of utmost importance to ensure that the survivor is being treated with respect, confidentiality and professionalism. This includes avoiding any questions that might lead the survivor to herself being seen as not credible or to be exaggerating.

Trained and knowledgeable professionals

In order to avoid further victimisation of the survivors, it is recommended that the editors assign the topic of violence against women to journalists who are trained and knowledgeable on the topic. If the report includes interviewing or in any way contacting the female survivor of violence it may be necessary to have a women journalist conduct the interview, since many women in this situation may still feel uncomfortable or fearful talking to a man about their experience of violence. Apart from this, if in direct contact with the survivor for the purpose of reporting on the case, a secure and comfortable location for the interview should be provided. Any questions or comments that may lead to repeated traumatisation of the survivors or their families should be avoided.

Zero tolerance to violence against women and domestic violence

On online platforms, it is also important to put in place clear policies against comments or messages that may encourage a culture of violence, including prohibiting and systematically blocking access to messages threatening perpetrators or victims/survivors or that are survivor/victim-blaming.

Media outlets should be cognisant of their responsibility to raise awareness and provide a clear standpoint on zero tolerance of violence against women and domestic violence. This ensures that the responsibility for the violence lies with perpetrators and not with the victims/survivors. The use of language should focus on survivor empowerment and clearly place responsibility for the violent act on the perpetrator as the active element (such as using "he raped her", instead of "she was raped").

Avoiding sensationalism or stereotypes

In order to ensure ethical and socially responsible reporting on cases of violence against women and domestic violence it is important to avoid sensationalist or

stereotypical portrayal of violence against women, survivors or perpetrators. A detrimental practice in media reports on these topics is the use of sensationalist headlines or narratives that express surprise or serve only to draw the attention of the public by fostering a superficial approach to this complex social phenomenon. This includes, but is not limited to using terms such as “monstrous”, “horrid” or “shocking” in the headlines or text when reporting on violence against women, using photos that are meant to shock or show stereotypical views on violence against women, such as bruised women’s faces. In addition to perpetuating stereotypes, these images have a tendency to simplify the phenomena of violence against women and equate it solely with physical violence. If the person is physically unharmed by the act, she can still experience emotional, psychological or other equally devastating consequences. Media professionals should clearly note that these too are cases of violence, taking special care not to downplay or diminish acts of violence in which force was not explicitly used²⁸. The use of force is not in any way a necessary element of sexual violence. Rape is a legal concept not a physical one.

Media reports should be avoided which equate domestic violence with partner/marital problems by portraying domestic violence or any other form of violence against women as “crimes of passion”, a “Romeo and Juliet scenario”, or a similar portrayal of events. These practices are harmful since they normalise violence as part of intimate relationships. Similarly, it is important to eschew terms such as “tragic event” to describe a calculated act by a perpetrator. Similarly, the term “sex” when reporting on rape or sexual assault should not be used, as rape is a violent act having nothing to do with sex, and everything to do with power and control.

When reporting on perpetrators, media professionals should be aware of stereotypical representations as well, for example as substance or alcohol abusers. Personal facts regarding perpetrators, such as their addiction or substance abuse, may demonstrate misleading information on the phenomenon of violence against women and unnecessarily shift the focus from the criminal act at hand, as addictions are not a necessary catalyst for violence. Similarly, journalists should avoid linking violence against women to a mental illness, unless a mental illness is a proven condition of the perpetrator. Otherwise, it helps create an erroneous perception of why perpetrators commit violence against women given that the vast majority of perpetrators have not been diagnosed with a mental illness. At the same time, this portrayal stigmatises mentally challenged persons as potentially more violent than any other individual, which is erroneous.

The perpetrator’s ethnic or religious background or social category itself is not the cause of violent behaviour and should normally not be emphasised. Violence

cannot be justified by any cultural and religious customs associated with a specific social or ethnic group, which is why it is important not to name violent acts as part of any culture, religion or ethnic group. However, in some cases ethnic and religious background is closely connected to the act of violence itself, such as in a situation of rape as a weapon of war between conflicting ethnic groups. In these situations, it may be more relevant to specifically note these particular conditions.

The statements of individuals close to the victim/survivor or the perpetrator should be conveyed carefully and, if used, the context for the statement made must be provided. For example, if the statement of a neighbour is used in reporting on a case of femicide that states that the perpetrator was always very “quiet” and “nice”, it should be explained in the text that abusers and murderers can present themselves differently to the public as opposed to the privacy of their home and that anyone can be an abuser, regardless of their public image. Also, individuals close to the perpetrator might view him through the lens of their own relationship, which does not necessarily reflect his relationship with the survivor/victim, and may portray an erroneous picture of perpetrators.

Particular attention should be paid to reporting on cases of violence against women that involve women facing multiple discrimination. Namely, although violence against women is common to any group, evidence suggests that some women, such as LBTIQ+, elderly, women with disabilities, women in situations of conflict, etc. may be more vulnerable to violence²⁹. Media professionals should use relevant statistics and explain the phenomenon of multiple discrimination for women in vulnerable situations.

Co-operation with civil society organisations

In order to ensure a professional, ethical, unbiased and expert approach on reporting on violence against women and domestic violence, it is important to establish and maintain cooperation between the media and the civil society organisations that have a long standing expertise in combating violence against women. Media organisations should acquaint themselves with the views and analyses of feminist NGOs or individuals with a longstanding expertise on working with the topic of violence against women and domestic violence from a gender-sensitive perspective. Relevant information could be included in coverage, and what is particularly important is to include in the stories a list of relevant helplines or organisations working to provide support to women in situations of violence. At the same time, it is important not to include in the reports on domestic violence or violence against women any statements of ideologically biased individuals who show tolerance or justification for violence in general or

who have a history of misogyny, discriminatory standpoints or victim-blaming. While these views should be addressed in public debate, they should be featured in separate reports and properly contextualised. Likewise, statements from and interviews with perpetrators, while they can serve the public interest, should be handled with caution and full understanding of the risks that may need to be mitigated by providing sufficient background and, where applicable, rebutting incorrect statements.

Using reliable and independent sources of information

Finally, media professionals should be sure to use reliable and independent sources of information on the survivor/victim or the perpetrator. If existing and reliable, official sources (i.e. the police, court, social services, experts on violence against women or gender equality, etc.) should be used whenever possible and media professionals should be familiarised with the national, regional and international protocols and legal frameworks on violence and include the relevant information on the existing framework in the report.

For the use of media professionals, Annex 2 of this publication provides an example of a checklist that can be used by the editors and reporters in order to double check whether concrete reporting on cases of violence against women and domestic violence is in line with professional and ethical standards and goals of contributing to prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women.

It is vital that journalists and media professionals who report or play a role in reporting on violence against women and domestic violence are able to preserve the safety, confidentiality and dignity of survivors, their families and communities, as well as to raise awareness of the phenomena of violence against women and to counteract myths and damaging attitudes about violence against women and domestic violence.³⁰ With the essential role held by media in influencing society, media professionals have a key role in guiding the way Ukrainian society recognises and prioritises preventing and combating violence against women.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1.

International and National Legal Framework and Mechanisms on Gender Equality and Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence

Numerous international human rights instruments have been adopted over recent decades, with the aim of protecting women's human rights and combating different forms of violence against women.

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. The CEDAW Committee is the United Nations (U.N.) treaty body that oversees the Convention. The implementing states have the obligation to send periodic progress reports to the Committee which has the mandate to issue general recommendations on particular articles or topics of the Convention, as well as to provide advice on the implementation to the signing states. *General recommendations no 12 (1989)* and *General recommendations no 19 (1992)* explicitly focus on the topic of violence against women. Ukraine signed the convention in 1980 and ratified it in March 1981.

The Council of Europe has undertaken a series of initiatives to promote the protection of women against violence since the 1990s which has resulted in the adoption of several key documents containing recommendations on preventing and combating violence against women. One of the most important documents is *The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* (the Istanbul Convention), a human rights treaty of the Council of Europe against violence against women and domestic violence, which was opened for signature on 11 May 2011, in Istanbul, Turkey. The Convention aims at prevention of violence, victim protection and to end with the impunity of perpetrators. Ukraine signed the Istanbul Convention in 2011, but it is still awaiting ratification.

In December 2017, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted the law “On Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence”. In accordance to the new law, “domestic violence is deliberately and systematically exerted physical, mental, sexual or economic violence against a spouse, a former spouse, a family member or a close person, resulting in physical or psychological suffering, health disorders, disability, emotional dependence or deterioration in the quality of the victim’s life”³¹. Everyone who has suffered from domestic violence is entitled to free legal assistance from the state.

APPENDIX 2.

Example of a Checklist for Media Workers when Reporting on Violence Against Women

1. Is there a trained journalist that can be assigned to do the report? If the report involves an interview with the survivor, is there a woman journalist who can do it?
2. Is there any risk to publishing my story to those involved in it, to their relatives, or the social group they belong to?
3. Did I arrange a safe space for the interview with the survivor?
4. Did I provide enough information to the persons being interviewed, including the potential risks?
5. Are the questions I prepared for the interview respectful, professional and articulated in a way that will not distress or upset the women who survived violence or members of her family?
6. Are photos and videos of survivors and their injuries really necessary for telling the story?
7. Can the identity of the survivor be revealed owing to the details presented in my story?
8. Are photos and videos accompanying the story stereotypical representation of gender roles, women or men?
9. Is my story (including its title and accompanying photographs) adequate in a way that it reflects the professional, ethical and expert and not sensationalist approach to the topic of violence against women and domestic violence?
10. Apart from being interesting to the readers, will my story bring any public benefit? Is it educational, does it raise awareness on the topic, or provide concrete helpful information to other potential victims?
11. Does my story provide a broader context and analysis of the phenomena of violence against women and domestic violence by contextualising it as an issue for the whole society, not (only) as a private/family matter?

12. Does my story provide a broader context and analysis of the phenomena of violence against women and domestic violence by contextualising it as a structural problem of gender inequality, as opposed to presenting it as an issue that affects only women individually?
13. Do I have enough knowledge of the topic? If not, do I have contact with local experts on violence against women that I could consult with?
14. Am I sure I am using the proper terminology when writing about violence against women and domestic violence?
15. Are perpetrator's personal characteristics I would like to mention in the report in any way relevant for the crime or my story?
16. Are the individuals whose statements I want to include in the report biased in their view of the case? If yes, is their statement contextualised?
17. Are the sources of information on the survivor/victim or the perpetrator that I have used reliable, unbiased and independent?
18. Are there relevant helplines or organisations working at providing support to women in situation of violence whose names and contacts I can include in my article or broadcast?

APPENDIX 3:

Promising Practice Example of Media Coverage on Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence

Patrols and Weapons Aren't a Way Out, and Why Nobody Helped: Some Thoughts After an Attack on the Train

Anastasiia Luhova

Anastasiia Luhova was attacked on July 31 in a sleeping car of the Mariupol-Kyiv train. Have law enforcement officials and the carrier drawn any conclusions after this incident? And will a weapon permit help to make people safe?

This case is one of the most discussed in the Ukrainian social media this weekend.

The woman was travelling with her son on the Mariupol-Kyiv train, taking the train from Zaporizhzhia. Suddenly, a stranger entered the compartment and began to assault Anastasiia.

Anastasiia said that her son woke up and began to beg the attacker not to beat his mother. But her son's words didn't stop the attack.

"I realized that I needed to somehow take the man out of the compartment. I offered him to go out in order for my son not to see anything. The man agreed, wrapped himself in a sheet and took me into his compartment. He locked the door behind me with the upper lock. There was a cut melon on the table in his compartment with a knife sticking out of it. It made no sense to scream. I was afraid that if he was capable of attacking an innocent unknown woman, then stabbing her with a knife in case she was screaming was not a problem for him," Anastasiia went on.

"The worst thing was that nobody responded to the noise".

According to the woman, the attacker took off the sheet in his compartment. At the same time, the son began calling his mother.

Anastasiia mentioned that she had persuaded the attacker to let her go to the child with a promise to return, "I left his compartment, ran to my son, and we ran barefoot to find the train hostess. She was sleeping and did not understand what was going on. A naked man was running along with the car in our direction. Having realized that I couldn't be safe here, we ran to the other car, where I began to shout and

knock at all doors. The worst thing was that nobody responded to the noise. But I'll dwell more on that later. The hostess of the second car finally saved us."

Anastasiia Luhova also relayed that the attacker was detained by the police.

The attacker – a persistent offender

Details about the attacker were revealed by Anton Gerashchenko, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs. According to A. Gerashchenko, the detained resident of Zaporizhzhia is 45. He has already been convicted three times: for car theft, hooliganism and theft.

As the city of Kyiv prosecutor's office stated, the man was notified of suspicion of committing a criminal misdemeanour under part 1 of Article 153 (Violent, unnatural gratification of sexual desire) and part 2 of Article 122 (Intended bodily injury of medium gravity) of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.

On August 1, 2020, the Solomianskyi District Court of Kyiv approved of a pre-trial restriction for the detainee in the form of detention pending trial for two months.

If the court finds the man guilty, the crime will be punishable by imprisonment for a term of seven years.

"State bodies are weak," O. Matviichuk

Oleksandra Matviichuk, Head of the NGO Centre for Civil Liberties, told the journalists that this particular case fit into the general situation in the country.

"Our society due to the trauma, including the one caused by the ongoing armed conflict, becomes more tolerant to violence in general," O. Matviichuk describes the public background.

She is also convinced that the incidents of violence show a public problem in the observance of equality between women and men.

Oleksandra Matviichuk is sure that there is a third issue which should be considered in this case, the weakness of state bodies and state institutions in general. This also includes the weakness of the law enforcement agencies, and the weakness of the judicial system that gives rise to impunity in general.

The human rights activist believes that this case shows the unpreparedness of Ukrzaliznytsia personnel for such situations and the absence of an emergency notification system.

“In this case, I would look not only at what the staff had to do but, first, whether the management of Ukrzaliznytsia carries out this kind of training, because it is easy to put everything off on the staff now or to fire or punish the train hostesses. However, this will not be the solution to the problem. We need to develop guidelines. We need to introduce training,” added Oleksandra Matviichuk.

According to the human rights activist’s opinion, it is necessary to look at how the salary of the train hostesses meets the requirements that are imposed on them.

Would the presence of police officers on the trains make a difference? Oleksandra Matviichuk is convinced that if police officers are not trained in accordance with the requirements, this could actually lead to a greater violation of passengers’ rights.

“The train hostess should have protected the woman,” D. Kobzin

The first hostess should have responded to the situation and immediately placed the woman and child in a safe place where the attacker could not have access, as discussed by Denys Kobzin, Director of the Kharkiv Institute for Social Studies, on Radio Donbas Realii.

D. Kobzin is convinced that such situations on trains are not unique. The society learned about this case thanks to Luhova speaking out. However, many other women and men choose to keep silent about the abuse.

Denys Kobzin is confident that law enforcement officers can improve the situation. “Once transport police worked on the trains. And police officers did a lot of work in order to protect people in such and other difficult situations. I believe that the return of the police to work on the trains will be an important step in creating a safer environment there.”

D. Kobzin is convinced that only the active engagement of the train hostess and the people nearby, as well as the ability to quickly call the police, can protect passengers.

Why Didn’t the Passengers Help? A psychologist’s opinion

Why didn’t the passengers of the other compartments come to help the woman who was chased by the naked attacker? This question was addressed to Doctor of Psychology, Professor Vadym Vasiutynskyi.

Prof. Vasiutynskyi explained to the Radio Donbas Realii that the situation on the train sounded strange to him. The psychologist said that Ukrainians were usually

inherent in compassion and mutual assistance. “We cannot say that we are cold, disengaged people,” assures Prof. V. Vasiutynskyi.

According to the psychologist, in order to understand the motives of people, it is worth investigating the entire sequence of events that preceded the attack. And it is also necessary to find out who was travelling in the neighbouring compartments: women with children, or adult men.

The psychologist hopes that neighbours from another compartments will come out and discuss the issue of helping the victim, to reassure passengers who did not dare to ask about the cause of the screams.

The psychologist is convinced that Anastasiia Luhova was behaving correctly when trying to attract people’s attention. Prof. Vasiutynskyi also added that criminals fear publicity when their intentions become the subject of public attention.

APPENDIX 4:

Promising Practice Example of Self-Regulatory Standards to Report on Cases of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence

A number of promising practices for the development of self-regulatory standards are outlined in the July 2020 Council of Europe Analytical report on Gender Equality and the Media. These examples include:

France

Following concerns expressed by women journalists, the French Press Agency (AFP) adopted in 2018 new guidelines to reflect the diversity and improve women's portrayal in its reports. They include information about gender sensitive language, about the publication of positive images of women, sensitive reporting of cases of gender-based violence and increased use of women experts. The agency also ran staff training sessions on these issues and invited gender equality experts to meetings.³²

The Netherlands

The Dutch broadcaster NPO signed a performance agreement with the Dutch Government which includes a balanced presence of women on and off screen and which has an annual reporting obligation. According to the agreement, NPO measures annually what the Dutch audience thinks about the representation of women in NPO's television and radio content. In 2018, the results highlighted that NPO's audience was predominantly positive about the representation of women in their programmes. For TV programmes, 53% of respondents were satisfied with the representation of women. The report shows however a relatively high percentage of respondents expressing their incapacity or unwillingness to answer the set of questions on gender equality³³.

Spain

The Equality Observatory of the Spanish Radio and Television Corporation (CRTVE) was established to ensure progress towards full equality and to combat sex-based discrimination and one of its worst expressions, gender-based violence.

In 2018, the CRTVE created the position of 'equality editor', a new self-regulatory mechanism whose mission is to guarantee equality between women and men in both content and presence on public television and radio. Some national newspapers (paper and digital), such as eldiario.es or El País have also appointed similar editors. These appointments received very positive comments from the industry and could be replicated elsewhere³⁴.

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