Combating Gender Based Violence

In spite of the progress made in the field of gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a comprehensive legal framework and introduced specialised services for survivors of gender-based violence, predominantly for victims of domestic violence, discrimination and violence based on gender in both the public and private spheres continue to be highly prevalent in BiH. Violence not only affects individual women, it endangers the well-being of the society as a whole.

The role of the Mission
The 2018 OSCE-led Survey on the Well-being and Safety of Women1 was conducted in seven OSCE participating States, interviewing more than 15,000 women, including over 2,300 women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The survey results for BiH2 were released in June 2019 indicating that 38 per cent of BiH women have experienced some form of violence since the age of 15. The most prevalent form is psychological violence carried out by an intimate partner (36 per cent of women affected), closely followed by sexual harassment (28 per cent).

In only about one in twenty cases of current partner violence did the victim contact the police herself. This number increases to 33 per cent when it comes to a previous partner and 21 per cent to a non-partner. Reluctance among victims to report indicates mistrust in public institutions, particularly in the police. This can also be linked to a lack of support from victims’ immediate surroundings, as 25 per cent of women tend to agree that domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family.

In accordance with the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security, the OSCE Ministerial Council adopted Decision No. 4/18 on Preventing and Combatting Violence against Women in December 20183 as an expression of the importance the OSCE places on this issue.

1 Available at https://www.osce.org/projects/survey-on-the-well-being-and-safety-of-women
3 Available at https://www.osce.org/files/documents/e/e/406019.pdf
The OSCE Mission recognizes efforts of the BiH authorities and the Mission will continue to support national counterparts in addressing gender-based violence by tackling:

- Promoting the appropriate identification and prosecution of perpetrators of violence by the law-enforcement and justice systems.
- Advocating for survivor-centred policies, protection and services.
- Supporting the work of referral mechanisms that improve co-ordinated institutional responses in cases of violence.

The Mission, together with partner institutions, invests efforts in campaigning and information-sharing activities, for instance by marking the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence each year, and creating synergies between authorities and civil society in combating gender-based violence.

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
FRA Andela Zvizdovic 1, UNITIC Toranj A
71000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Tel: +387 33 952 100
Fax: +387 33 442 479
press.ba@osce.org
www.osce.org/bih

For more information, scan the QR code.