

## **Corruption in cases of gender and family violence**

After 20 years of actively fighting domestic violence, we see that the results are quite disappointing.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, an information campaign has been ongoing to combat and prevent domestic and gender-based violence, and pertinent laws have been adopted. Throughout this time, national laws continued to reform; and finally, the Istanbul Convention was proposed in 2011.

However, after taking a closer look at the real statistics, we will see that the indicators for serious crimes committed in the family and murders of women in most countries have remained unchanged.

Take Spain for example, which launched a sweeping and well-funded campaign. The first law on domestic violence was enacted in 2003, followed in 2004 by the law on protection against gender-based violence. And what do we see after almost 20 years of fighting gender-based violence?

The statistics show that the number of women killed has now once again effectively returned to the level of 1999.

Let me remind you that in 1999 there were 53 women killed in Spain, 76 women were killed in 2008 (note the increase of 25% 5 years after (!) the adoption of the first law on domestic violence), and only in 2015 did the indicators return to the level of 1999.

In 2018, 48 women died, and in the current year of 2019, which has not yet ended - already 42 have been killed. This is according to the official statistics, while according to statistics from the website [femicidio.net](http://femicidio.net), 74 women have already perished.

How can it be, that even though the overall crime rate has nearly halved, as is the case in Spain, and with all the effort and resources invested, the number of women killed is not decreasing?

This begs the question of whether someone is analyzing the true effectiveness of all the measures and laws on domestic and gender-based violence that are being adopted, or is it not important, since the goal is different? Specifically, in introducing market relations into the sphere of all intimate relations, including into the family? The impression is created that they are turning a blind eye to the negligible results, while huge amounts of money are being allocated. And no one looks at the fate of the real victims, but they have not gone anywhere.

As in the case of protecting children from domestic violence, which has become infamous for the large number of cases of unlawful removal of children from their families in different countries, the decision-making on the status of the victim is now transferred from the court system to the jurisdiction of social workers, NGOs, and psychologists. In addition, according to the conditions prescribed in the Istanbul Convention, they must do so even without a statement from the victim. I.e. they must do so on the basis of denunciation, slander, and third party decisions... Essentially, the woman is deprived of her legal capacity: the right to decide for herself whether she is a victim or not, equating her to minors.

We have the opportunity to observe what this leads to in practice with abundant funding in a place like Italy, using the example of a notorious case, known as “Angels and Demons”.

To refresh our memories, at the end of June this year, Italian prosecutors brought criminal charges against 27 people, including child psychologists, social workers, and even the mayor of Bibbiano, on suspicion of conspiracy to illegally profit off foster children. Officials and psychologists are

accused of convincing children that they were victims of sexual and psychological abuse by their parents. Psychologists set children against their parents, telling them that their relatives did not like them, added sexual content to children's drawings to support allegations of non-existent rape in their own families. Then they sent information to the social welfare services to remove the children from their families and to transfer them to foster parents "for a fee" (that is, they were simply sold). And in these families, children were indeed subjected to real cases of sexual assault. But finding this no longer seemed to be in the commercial interests of these "protectors from violence". Incidentally, it is reported that 7 out of 10 children have already returned to their own families.

There are many such examples. We can also recall the sad case of the now-nonexistent company of O'Belen, which had spent years making money off of children, who were removed from their families and kept in inhuman conditions.

Now that the authority to determine that someone is the victim of gender-based violence is being transferred to bureaucrats, psychologists, and NGOs, the next step is to create conditions in order to do so without a report from the alleged victim, as well as without the opportunity to refuse this "service".

In the CEDAW shadow report on the Istanbul Convention, Spanish NGOs insist that this "service" not be tied to a complaint on the part of the "victim" herself. They say, "as a rule, support and protection measures remain conditional on the victim's complaint, which is a clear violation of Article 18.4 of the Convention," which states: "The provision of services shall not depend on the victim's willingness to press charges or testify against any perpetrator."

We already know from history how the Women's Patronage under Francoism engaged in "saving women from themselves" as well as from their children, selling them to foster families. Spain has freed itself from Francoism, but now the Istanbul Convention is going to introduce it again?

What is the guarantee that this will not happen in cases of gender-based violence, if decisions are transferred from the judicial to the administrative and private sectors, which function in a market? After all, a huge number of people and organizations are already employed in the victim assistance system, and their earnings depend directly on the number of victims. And what if the alleged victim, furthermore, cannot refuse such a "service"? All this cannot help but lead to catastrophic consequences not only for the family, but also for human relations as such. Money turns a person's problem into a commodity. A person with his or her real problem becomes insignificant for everyone; his main function is to provide a source of income.

And finally. Every human life is valuable, and we cannot search for violence in only one place, the family, while failing to see the situation as a whole. The campaign on gender and family violence is completely disproportionate, both in its own results and in its unjustified ignoring of other serious problems of society. The war that has unfolded between the sexes in itself creates a large number of unhappy and lonely people. We are being reminded from everywhere that over the past 16 years in Spain, violence by men has killed 1017 women. No one wants to draw attention to the fact that nearly 1000 women in Spain die by suicide in the course of a single year! And this happens every year! This is 2.5 times more than men. And again, suicide rates in almost all countries are many times higher than all other violent deaths, including murders. This is a huge percentage! Why do they not talk as much about these victims? In the loveless and atomized world that we are building, people are unhappy, and they do not want to live.

I suggest:

Revise the clauses of the convention, remove the rules that provoke corruption, unlawful interference and profit from violent incidents.