

21 September 2017

Business meeting 16. Tolerance and non-discrimination II, including:
- Prevention of violence against women.

Violence against women and children remains an urgent topic of the entire international community. Women in Tajikistan are most often targeted at home by relatives, but also by government officials.

The reason for domestic violence lies in the fact that the women of the east consider it a humiliation and a shame to complain about their family members or husband. On this basis, every second woman in Tajikistan is subjected to violence mainly from her husband and his relatives, from forced marriage to violence for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Women in the villages for their husbands are only a labor, they must take care of the husband, his relatives and on their shoulders is responsibility for raising children, feeding livestock, washing, cleaning and many other concerns.

All this inhuman treatment of women often leads to suicide. A woman, unable to withstand humiliation, physical pain and moral pressure, chooses a way to get rid of all this by suicide. Suicide is especially common among children and adolescents, and the trend of such crimes is increasing.

On June 13, 2017 in Tajikistan, 29-year-old Alifmo Khudoynazarova, as a result of domestic violence and psychological pressure committed suicide, being in the third month of pregnancy. She drowned herself to the Vakhsh River near the reservoir of the Nurek GEC.

In June 2017, a resident of the Vose District of Tajikistan, 18-year-old Rajabbi Khurshed committed suicide 40 days after her marriage. The girl ended her life by suicide after her husband did not believe in her virginity and demanded a second wife. Before the marriage, the girl underwent a medical examination, including a gynecologist. The 24-year-old husband, however, did not believe in the virginity of the wife. He twice sent her to gynecologists, and was not satisfied with the conclusions of doctors. According to relatives, after numerous reproaches and threats, Rajabbi, unable to stand the psychological pressure, decided to commit suicide.

In addition to domestic violence, in recent times, violence against women and children by certain security officials has become especially frequent in Tajikistan. For example, due to political destabilization, Tajik citizens began to immigrate to Russia and other countries. A lot of political opponents of the current government left the country because of unreasonable persecution, leaving their wives and children. After receiving the statute of a political refugee, members of the opposition family cannot reunite with them because of the ban on leaving Tajikistan from the power structures.

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It should also be noted that after the migration of political opponents, their mothers, wives and children are systematically brought for interrogation, for several hours they are tortured and interrogated about the location of their husbands, their occupation, etc.

On August 22, 2016, the spouse of Mahmadali Hayit, a member of the Islamic Revival Party in Tajikistan, Savriniso Djuraev and her 17-year-old son, was held for two days during interrogation because of the publication of a copy of the court verdict against Mahmadali Hayit on the payom.net Internet portal.

On February 1, 2017, the sister of one of the oppositionists Gulnoza Saidova (author's note - name changed for security reasons) was stopped by law enforcement officers on the street and forcibly taken to the police station for questioning, which was held at the MIA of the Sino district of Dushanbe. The interrogation was accompanied by insults, humiliations, brutal beatings and the use of sexual acts by the police in relation to a woman. As a result, Gulnoza Saidova received a severe psychological trauma, a nervous system disorder and is still on rehabilitation.

Such methods of treatment in relation to the relatives of the opposition are widely used by the authorities of Tajikistan and have already become the norm. As a result of such actions, police officers make suffering a large number of women from opposition families.

Besides all of this, law enforcement agencies already at the time of detention and investigation expose women to sexual violence, beatings and psychological pressure. Dozens of women annually become pregnant and give birth in places of deprivation of liberty or pre-trial detention facilities.

In 2015, the detained Juraeva Shahnoza (author's note - name changed for security reasons) gave birth to a son. In a personal conversation with her lawyer, she confessed that she had been raped by the criminal investigation department in the temporary detention centre and demanded to give confession statements regarding other participants in the case.

In the women's colony of the city of Nurek, dozens of women serve their sentence with their young children, who were born either in jail or in a colony. So far, no organization has conducted a check on the fact of who and under what circumstances these children were born.

There are no working mechanisms in Tajikistan to protect the rights of women against violence. There are no crisis centres for working with women affected by domestic violence, there is no proper medical and psychological assistance for rehabilitation, there are no temporary shelters or places for long-term residence for women who are on the street.

The facts of domestic violence are not properly investigated by law enforcement agencies and often the perpetrators remain unpunished. As a result of this, the ill-treatment of a woman by relatives has become the norm for society and for government bodies. Women affected by domestic violence find themselves in a vicious circle: on the one hand, their relatives who abuse her, on the other hand, lack the ability to be protected by state bodies. The only possible escape from torture for a woman is to commit suicide.

There are also no effective mechanisms for filing a complaint and protecting their rights by women who have been beaten by law enforcement agencies who use their power to abuse abused and imprisoned women, in most cases remaining unpunished for the acts committed.

Tajikistan should unquestioningly implement the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The structure of the Government of Tajikistan has a Committee on Women and Family Affairs. This Committee, in close cooperation with local executive authorities in the field, should not only react but also prevent all forms of domestic violence. To do this, it is necessary to conduct explanatory work among women, aimed at acquainting them with the rights and ways to protect these rights. It is necessary to change the social and cultural patterns of behavior of men and women in order to achieve the eradication of prejudice and the abolition of customs and all other practices that are based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of one gender or the stereotyped role of men and women. But these measures in no way should violate the principle of non-interference in private life, as it is done in Tajikistan. In the country, the right of women to self-expression through the choice of clothing is flagrantly violated. Legislation prohibits the wearing of certain types of clothing allegedly alien to the national idea and culture. In a democratic society, these prohibitions are contrary to international legal acts and infringe on women's rights in a rude manner.

Tajikistan, as a self-proclaimed democratic country, must eradicate the practice of pressure on the opposition through humiliations, insults, any form of violence and beatings of their wives and their families.

The international community should require Tajikistan to have open access to penitentiary institutions: pre-trial detention centres, temporary detention centre and prisons for human rights organizations.

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