



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
29 November 2012

Original: English

Commission on the Status of Women

Fifty-seventh session

4-15 March 2013

**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women
and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled
“Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace
for the twenty-first century”: implementation of strategic
objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further
actions and initiatives**

Statement submitted by World Federation of Ukrainian Women’s Organizations, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.



Statement

Violence against women and girls is a human rights violation that is both insidious, constituting a serious impediment to health, security and development, as well as pervasive, having its roots in the unequal status of women in the public and private spheres. Based on a 48-country survey, the World Health Organization reports that from 10 to 59 per cent of women reveal that they have been physically assaulted by an intimate partner at some point in their lives, and a range of such surveys suggests that from 40 to 70 per cent of female murder victims are killed by an intimate partner. According to a study conducted by the Commonwealth Fund in 2010, one in three women in the United States are victims of intimate partner violence, defined as sexual, physical, psychological or economic abuse. If we understand overt acts of violence against women as a symptom of underlying cultural patterns of disrespect, then it is clear that the problem must be specifically addressed in the domestic sphere of family expectations of girls and women, as well as in all settings where intimate relations occur.

Despite the evolution of laws addressing these issues, violence against women and girls continues due to the entrenchment of cultural norms, practices and traditions, patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles, responsibilities and identities of women and men in the family and, by extension, in all spheres of society. We are concerned about the detrimental effect of the current global economic and ecological crises on women and girls, making them vulnerable to exploitation as caretakers within the family, often exposing them to the perils of trafficking in persons, and limiting their opportunities for education and satisfying employment due to domestic arrangements and expectations.

Within the context of a high level of international acceptance of violence against women, we are also deeply disturbed by the deteriorating situation in some of the transitional economies, particularly the heightened level of violence against women in Ukraine. It is now commonplace to hear of young women being brutally beaten by young men of privilege, attacks committed with impunity due to the perpetrators' privileged connections with State authorities. In July 2011, the media caught Roman Landik, the son of a Ukrainian parliamentarian, brutalizing Maria Korshunova in a restaurant while diners and staff looked on.

In the year 2012 alone, several extreme cases came to wide public attention, the most infamous of which has become the unfathomably brutal rape, strangling and torching on 8 March of 18-year-old Oksana Makar of Mykolayiv, a young woman with a sixth-grade education and a record of detentions for prostitution who lived with a widowed mother in relative poverty. A victim of life several times over, she was repeatedly violated and casually left for dead by three local young men whose social privilege nearly absolved them of responsibility (the trial, which began in June 2012, was ongoing as of November 2012, as the accused have used various legal tactics, such as changing testimony and switching attorneys, to delay the process and create distance from initial public outrage). On the same day in March, International Women's Day, teenager Aleksandra Popova was also similarly attacked, and managed to survive, while Oksana Makar died on 29 March 2012, in a Donetsk hospital burn unit.

Male-on-female violence in Ukraine is widespread. Although the homicide rate in Ukraine is relatively low compared with international rates, and is on par with the

rate in the United States, statistics from the Government of Ukraine reveal that 25 per cent of homicides are a result of domestic violence, indicating that in any given year, more than 1,000 women die at the hands of their boyfriend or spouse. This is a disproportionately high ratio. In the United States, approximately 1,500 women die annually from domestic violence; however, the adult female population in the United States is approximately 10 times larger than that of Ukraine. Since 2008, 35-50 per cent of all women admitted annually to hospitals in Ukraine have been admitted for bodily injuries resulting from domestic violence. In keeping with United States statistics, one third of Ukrainian women have been faced with domestic violence during their adult lives.

The Ukrainian legal system, inadequate and corrupt, offers little justice. Equally distressing is the apparent indifference of the Ukrainian public in the face of this alarming record of domestic violence, suggesting resignation and a lack of will to confront the acquiescent State with its responsibility and to make it accountable for violence against women and girls in Ukraine.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent international treaties, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993), which was adopted in 2011 by the Council of Europe, of which Ukraine is a member, as the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), are major steps towards recognizing effective responses and engaging preventive measures against gender-based violence.

Therefore, in advance of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations calls upon on all States Members of the United Nations to act in the spirit of general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, as well as the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2000 and:

- To immediately implement a policy of zero tolerance of violence against women and girls, in accordance with their commitment to United Nations conventions and protocols, as well as all other legislation pertaining to violence against women and girls
- To provide adequate funding in Government budgets for intensive media campaigns against violence against women and girls
- To provide adequate funding for the education of children, particularly girls, being raised in orphanages and to support school attendance and social and psychological services for these children and young adults at risk
- To integrate gender violence awareness into the national education system and the cultural sphere, in order to weaken the acceptance of gender violence as normal, and into the normative sphere, so that existing laws may be effectively applied

- To provide funding for local community-based civil society organizations to encourage the development of wider networks of grass-roots groups dedicated to combating violence against women and girls
- To provide adequate funding to State agencies and civil society organizations that provide supportive social services to women and girls in need of intervention or safe harbour
- To facilitate the access of women and girls to protective social services, while ensuring proper reporting of the incidents of violence against women and girls, including bringing transparency to the tabulation of the number of complaints, prosecutions and convictions
- To fund systematic collection of gender-disaggregated data, by type of violence and by the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, so that this information is available for future policy formulation
- To eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, including prostitution and trafficking, by instituting severe punishment for the purchase of sexual services or forced labour
- To decriminalize prostitution and focus on punishment of the consumer and on those who force women and girls to prostitute themselves
- To fund services for victims of violence and trafficking at adequate levels in order to provide reintegration into the community, and to provide trauma counselling, shelter, job development and education
- To provide funding for the regular training of police, prosecutors and judges on effective investigation, prosecution and punishment of acts of domestic and sexual violence against women and girls, ensuring the right of the victims to be represented by an attorney of their own choice
- To address State violence against women and girls, the indifference of law enforcement and the impunity with which men of privilege perpetrate violence against women.

In addition, we request:

- Allocation of funds for the regular conduct of the 16 Days against Violence campaign in Ukraine
- Establishment of a Ministry of Women's Affairs in Ukraine
- Drafting of a new United Nations international convention concerning gender violence.