



## **Economic and Social Council**

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### **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 Feminist League and Forum of Women’s NGOs of Kyrgyzstan, non-governmental organizations 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

We state that in Central Asia there is ineffective application and enforcement of existing laws and State orders intended to protect women from violence. Monitoring of violence against women in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan has shown the urgent need to eliminate and prevent all forms of violence against women. It is urgent to reform legislation, improve the application and enforcement of existing laws and State orders, increase the awareness of State officials, the private sector, women and the public about existing laws, increase financing for programmes and policies and implement laws relating to violence against women, among other things. Shelters, crisis centres and hotlines in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan are generally operated by women's non-governmental organizations.

The elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against rural poor women and girls remain absent from mainstream programmes, agendas and budgets of the majority of development stakeholders. Rural poor women are in particular badly protected from violence. State commitments and obligations are not translated into financing processes and no funds have been allocated to address violence against women in rural communities. Their remote location reduces their access to tools to combat violence against women and thus makes them more vulnerable to violence. Bride kidnapping, a brutal form of violence against women, is much more widespread and violent in rural areas of Central Asia. There is no sustainable and well-funded programme or mechanism to stop this form of violence against women. Victims do not have access to free legal consultations or psychological rehabilitation, and laws are rarely used effectively against perpetrators. The majority of law enforcement officers in rural areas are exhibiting patriarchal behaviour patterns towards this phenomenon, perceiving it as a private family issue and not as a crime, even though, for example, it is an offence under the Kyrgyz Criminal Code. In rural areas, the police often refuse to act, on the pretext that there is not enough evidence that a crime has been committed. Monitoring the results of violence against women in villages of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan shows the negative impact of growing religious fundamentalism on the status of vulnerable women, such as rural poor women. The lack of crisis centres in rural areas is a big problem. The reduction of rural women's representation in decision-making bodies makes it challenging to include women's issues, including issues of violence against women, in the local political agenda.

We call upon States to include budget lines for the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, including rural poor women, in State, provincial and local budgets. They should allocate sufficient funds to combat violence against women in State budgets and elsewhere, in addition to financing activities to realize State policy in the area of gender equality. They should create networks of free consultative services (legal and informational) for rural poor women and girls to prevent and protect them from violence. We call upon States to strengthen sanctions for violators of women's rights, including with regard to domestic violence and bride kidnapping.

We call upon donors to set up special programmes to assist national and local women's groups for the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls in countries where development priorities are not inclusive of women's rights or gender equality.

We call upon States, international organizations and donors to partner with local women's organizations to create a safe life for women, including rural women and girls.