

LEGAL REFORMS TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Kalandarova Sabrina Assurovna

Termez State University

3th year student of the Faculty of Law

assurkalandarov92@gmail.com

Abstract. This article analyzes the nature of domestic violence, its impact on the stability of society, and the legal reforms being implemented to combat it. The Law "On Protection from Domestic Violence" adopted in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the introduction of a protection order, and mechanisms for legal protection of victims through a system of preventive measures are highlighted. The harmonization of international legal experience and national legislation, the role of law enforcement agencies and state institutions in this regard are also analyzed. The article shows the importance of a systematic approach to combating domestic violence.

Keywords: Domestic violence, legal reforms, protection order, legislation, preventive measures, victims' rights, international experience.

Introduction. Currently, domestic violence is one of the most pressing social problems in the world. It is considered a factor that undermines not only the stability of the family, but also the overall development of society. In particular, violence against women and children has many negative consequences. For this reason, many countries are strengthening legal reforms to eliminate this problem, protect victims and take strict measures against offenders. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, combating domestic violence has become one of the priority areas of state policy in recent years. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, combating domestic violence has become one of the important areas of state policy in recent years. A number of laws and regulatory legal acts have been adopted in this regard, and the legal framework has been improved. In particular, the Law "On the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence" (Uzbekistan Law No. 561), approved in 2019, became an important legal foundation for the prevention of discrimination and violence in the family. This law is aimed at ensuring gender equality and guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of women and men on an equal basis. In accordance with the law, a system of issuing protection orders to victims has been established. This serves to protect them from contact with the perpetrator of violence. In addition, relevant amendments and additions have been made to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Code of Administrative Responsibility, firmly establishing that domestic violence is a crime.¹ The Criminal Code and the Code of Administrative Responsibility of the Republic of Uzbekistan are undergoing significant changes in the field of combating domestic violence. In particular, Article 592 of the Code of Administrative Responsibility and Article 1261 of the Criminal Code have been supplemented in the new edition with the provision of liability for persons who commit violence against children. The main goal of these legal reforms is to identify cases of oppression and violence against children and women early, prevent them and strengthen measures in this regard. The draft law was developed based on the recommendations of the World Bank and international experience and is aimed at creating a healthy spiritual and

¹ [O'RQ-561-no. 02.09.2019. On the protection of women and girls from harassment and violence](#)

moral environment in families. According to official data, from 2023 to May 2024, 894 criminal cases related to domestic violence were registered in the country. Of these, 55.6 percent (506) were terminated based on reconciliation between the parties, while the remaining 44.4 percent (388) were sentenced by the court. These figures indicate the need to further improve the current mechanisms. Another important innovation being introduced into the legislation is the introduction of a procedure for submitting an application for reconciliation in cases of domestic violence only at the stage of court proceedings. That is, now reconciliation will be carried out not at the stage of inquiry or preliminary investigation, but during the trial. This will serve to better protect the rights of victims and to seriously assess cases of violence.²Article 592 of the Code of Administrative Responsibility brought 4,343 individuals to administrative responsibility for domestic violence, of which 2,344 were fined, and 1,999 were placed under administrative detention. 134 individuals were convicted of domestic violence committed repeatedly or with aggravating circumstances under Article 1261 of the Criminal Code, of which 51 were sentenced to imprisonment, and 83 were sentenced to a non-custodial sentence. Article 592 of the Code of Administrative Responsibility entails a fine of up to 20 times the minimum wage or administrative detention for up to 15 days, and Article 1261 of the Criminal Code entails imprisonment for up to 12 years.³

Methods. According to reports from 2024, 318 individuals were prosecuted in Uzbekistan for sexual violence under Article 411 of the Code of Administrative Offenses. Of these, 97 were fined, and another 221 were sentenced to administrative imprisonment. These indicators are important in analyzing the effectiveness of measures taken in the country to combat violence, prevent crime, and strengthen public safety.⁴

In general, sexual and domestic violence is not only a personal or family problem, but also a global problem closely related to the security of society and ensuring human rights. Many developed countries have been paying serious attention to this issue at the legal and institutional level. The Domestic Abuse Act, adopted in the United Kingdom in 2021, expands the concept of domestic violence and criminalizes not only physical, but also economic, psychological and emotional abuse as a crime on a legal basis. Based on the law, victims are issued with prompt protection orders through the court, special shelters and legal assistance are provided. At the same time, the state has also established a free legal service for victims.⁵In Sweden, a mandatory investigation has been introduced in cases of domestic violence based on the requirements of the Istanbul Convention. This means that even if the victim agrees to reconciliation, the case is not closed and the perpetrator is held accountable. Special “crisis centers” have been established in each region of the country, where victims of violence are provided with free psychological, medical and legal assistance. Protection orders are also widely used, depriving the perpetrator of the right to approach the victim.⁶In the US experience, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994 is one of the most effective mechanisms to date. Based on this law, victims of violence are provided with state shelter, psychological support, protection orders, and state

² [Number of people prosecuted for domestic violence in Uzbekistan in 10 months announced](#)

³ [Nearly 4,500 people convicted of domestic violence in Uzbekistan in three months – Uzbekistan News – Gazeta](#)

⁴ [Nearly 4.5 thousand people convicted of domestic violence in Uzbekistan in three months - khabar.uz](#)

⁵ [Legislation.gov.uk](#)

⁶ [The Council of Europe: guardian of Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law for 700 million citizens - Portal](#)

support during the trial. In addition, sexual violence crimes are classified as serious crimes, and long sentences are imposed on perpetrators.⁷At the European Union level, a unified approach has been introduced in many countries based on the Istanbul Convention. According to the Convention, states have undertaken specific obligations to prevent violence, protect victims and punish perpetrators. European countries have special hotlines, shelters and rapid intervention systems.⁸According to the UN Women Global Database, approximately one-third of women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence. These figures demonstrate the global scale of the problem. Experience in developed countries shows that effective legal frameworks, victim support systems, and strong accountability measures play a key role in reducing violence.⁹International experience shows that the effectiveness of combating sexual and domestic violence depends not only on the adoption of laws, but also on their strict implementation in practice, strengthening the system of protection of victims, and establishing cooperation between the state, the judiciary, and society. Uzbekistan can also increase its effectiveness in this area by studying international experience and adapting it to national legislation.

Conclusion. Combating sexual and domestic violence is an urgent issue not only at the national level, but also at the global level. The experience of developed countries shows that effective legal mechanisms, a victim protection system, and a strict approach to cases of violence are important factors in reducing this problem. The laws adopted and systems implemented in the UK, Sweden, the USA, and the European Union serve to provide prompt assistance to victims, protect their rights, and impose strict penalties on perpetrators. Uzbekistan can also increase the effectiveness of combating violence by studying these best practices and improving national legislation in line with international standards. This will be an important step in raising the legal culture in society, protecting human rights, and creating a safe social environment. In my opinion, the most important thing in this matter is a change in people's minds. It is inappropriate to view violence as a "family issue." Because remaining silent means allowing violence to continue. Society must recognize this problem and learn to listen to and support victims instead of blaming them. Everyone has the right to feel safe, respected and cared for. The family should be a place of love, understanding and support, not fear and oppression. The fight against violence will be effective not only through the government or laws, but only when society itself takes a firm stand against this phenomenon. The biggest change begins in the minds of these people.

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