

Sabina Belshaku, PhD¹

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**MEKANIZMI I REFERIMIT TË RASTEVE TË DHUNËS NË FAMILJE
SI ARRITJE DHE SFIDË PËR SHQIPËRINË**

**МЕХАНИЗМОТ ЗА УПАТУВАЊЕ НА СЛУЧАИ НА СЕМЕЈНО
НАСИЛСТВО КАКО ДОСТИГНУВАЊЕ И ПРЕДИЗВИК ЗА
АЛБАНИЈА**

**MECHANISM OF CASE REFERRAL FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AS
AN ACHIEVEMENT AND CHALLENGE FOR ALBANIA**

Abstract

Women who experience domestic violence from their intimate partner often know that they have nowhere to go, especially in societies where support services are limited and where it is difficult for women to leave their husbands/partners and live independently. In societies with high rates of domestic violence from intimate partners, girls learn from a young age that they should not make resistance to abuse and violence, being taught to see violence against women as something normal in their families. One of the most widespread phenomenon in Albanian society, but not only, is domestic violence, which affects not only girls/women but also children. This phenomenon has become a gangrene that is slowly destroying our society. Violence has often been treated more as an individual problem belonging only to the family members, rather than to society. The aim of this study is to identify the quality and importance of the social services provided for domestic violence and to assess the importance of these services and to highlight the shortcomings and needs for additional services. The methodology used to conduct the study is the descriptive qualitative method. The tools used for the realization of the study are literature review, focus groups, and structured and semi-structured

¹ University of Elbasan, Rruga Ismail Zyma, 3001 Elbasan, Albania.
Email: sabina_belshaku@yahoo.com

interviews. The study's data, based on the evaluation and analysis of social services, provides us with a clear picture of the practices used by representatives of institutions to assist victims of domestic violence.

Keywords: *intimate partner violence, social services, domestic violence case referral mechanism*

Acronyms

- **Domestic violence** – Refers to all acts of physical, sexual, psychological, or economic violence that occur within the family or household unit, or between ex-spouses or ex-partners, or between current spouses or partners, regardless of whether the perpetrator of the criminal act shares or has shared the same residence with the victim; (Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, Istanbul, 2011).

- **Gender-based violence** – Violence directed against a woman because she is a woman, or that affects women disproportionately. It constitutes a violation of the fundamental right to life, liberty, security, dignity, equality between women and men, non-discrimination, and physical and mental integrity. (Council of Europe, 2011).

- **Violence against women** – Any act of gender-based violence that results or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. (United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993).

- **Intimate partner violence** – Any behavior in an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological, or sexual harm to individuals in a relationship, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviors. (World Health Organization (2013), Global and regional estimates on violence against women: Prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence. WHO: Geneva, Switzerland).

- **Abused woman** – An abused woman is a woman who repeatedly undergoes physical or psychological force by a man in order to make her do what he wants without considering her rights. An abused woman includes any woman who is in an intimate relationship with a man, whether she is his wife or not. Furthermore, in order to be classified as an abused woman, the couple must go through the cycle of violence at least twice. Any woman may find herself in an abusive relationship once in her life, but when this happens for the second time and she remains in this situation, she is defined as an abused woman (Walker, 1979).

- **Abuser** – The person who commits harmful or illegal acts.
- **Protection Order** – It is the order issued by a court decision, which provides protective measures for the victim. The court reviews the request for issuing the Protection Order within 15 days of receiving the request.
- **Immediate Protection Order** – A temporary court order, valid for a specific period of time.
- **Victim** – Used to refer to an individual (woman, child, or man) who is still in an abusive relationship, characterized by minimal awareness or lack of awareness of how they are treated by others.
- **Survivor** – An individual who has taken the first step to break away from an abusive relationship, characterized by sufficient awareness to take steps toward change and benefit from service schemes.

Introduction

Violence Against Women by Intimate Partners in International and National Contexts

Violence against women, especially violence by intimate partners and sexual violence, is a major public health issue and a violation of women's human rights. Domestic violence is a global issue and a priority in many national and international policies. Estimates published by the WHO show that globally around 1 in 3 (30%) of women worldwide have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence by a non-partner during their lifetime. The majority of this violence is intimate partner violence. Intimate partner violence refers to behavior by an intimate or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and controlling behaviors. (Global, regional, and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women. WHO: Geneva, 2021). Common types of domestic violence by intimate partners include physical, sexual, and psychological violence. International studies have found that most women who experience violence in intimate relationships often experience multiple forms of violence and endure repeated acts of violence by their current and/or former spouse/partner. Within marriage, sexual violence may not be recognized or defined as such, due to assumptions that husbands are justified in forcing their wives to have sex with them and that women are obliged to sexually satisfy their husbands' needs. Women experiencing domestic violence by intimate partners often know they have nowhere to go, especially in societies where support services are limited and where it is difficult for women to leave their husbands/partners and live independently. In societies with high rates of intimate partner domestic violence, girls learn at a

young age that they should not make resistance to abuse and violence, learning to see violence against women as something normal in their families. (Violence Against Women and Girls in Albania, National Population-Based Survey, 2018)

Intimate partner violence and sexual violence are the result of factors that occur at individual, family, community, and broader societal levels, which interact with each other to increase or decrease risk (protective). A review of the literature highlights several factors that are most prevalent in intimate partner violence, such as: low educational levels, a history of exposure to violence, marital disagreements and dissatisfaction, difficulties in communication between partners; beliefs in family honor and sexual purity, community norms that privilege or assign higher status to men and lower status to women, low levels of access to paid employment for women, gender inequality, and norms about the acceptability of violence against women as the main cause of violence against women. Theoretical perspectives for research and intervention related to intimate partner violence may be sociological, psychological, or biological.

Some Recent Studies on Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, and Gender-Based Violence in Public Spaces in Albania

Some studies in recent years, conducted in 5 municipalities, highlighted the exposure and risk of sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other forms of gender-based violence in public spaces in Albania. The 2016 Assessment Study “On Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Against Women and Girls in Urban Public Spaces” revealed that in the three main neighborhoods surveyed in the capital of Albania, Tirana, 32% of the female participants and 40% of the total male participants think that sexual harassment happens everywhere; 24% of the women and girls participating, and 28% of the men and boys participating, think that women and girls are subjected to incidents of sexual violence within their neighborhoods. Another study conducted in 2019 on “Sexual Harassment and Other Forms of Gender-Based Violence in Urban Spaces,” focusing on the municipalities of Korça and Shkodër, found that women and girls in selected public spaces in these municipalities face multiple forms of sexual harassment, especially verbal harassment. 33% and 38% of the respondents reported having been at risk or exposed to sexual harassment or sexual violence before or after the age of 15. The latest data from the Third National Population-Based Survey on Violence Against Women and Girls in Albania in 2019, conducted by INSTAT, reconfirmed the high prevalence of violence against women in Albania: one in two (52.9%) Albanian women have experienced one or more forms of violence (violence by intimate partner, violence in romantic relationships, violence by non-partners, sexual harassment, stalking) during their lifetime; 47% of the surveyed women have experienced domestic violence by an intimate partner throughout

their life. For the first time, the 2019 survey revealed initial figures for four other forms of violence: 65.8% of women have experienced violence in romantic relationships throughout their life; 18.1% of women have experienced sexual harassment throughout their life; 18.2% of women have experienced violence by a non-partner, and 12.6% of women have experienced stalking throughout their life.

The findings of the National Survey on Violence Against Women show that GBV (Gender-Based Violence) is widespread but significantly underreported in Albania. Given these findings, GBV cannot be viewed as a marginal issue affecting only the lives of a few women in Albania. GBV affects the majority of women and results in the exposure of children to domestic violence.

Theoretical Framework on Violence Against Women by Intimate Partners

A review of the literature reveals the application of ecological and systemic theories, social learning theory (Barnes et al., 2013; Cochran et al., 2011), social disorganization theory, personality theories, self-control theory, family violence theory, exchange/social control theories, and resource theory (Dixon and Graham-Kevan, 2011; Lawson, 2012).

Barnes (2013) applied social learning theory and the role of significant genetic factors to understand the nature of intimate partner violence and to highlight the complex interaction between nature and nurture. In her discussion of sociological perspectives on intimate partner violence, Lawson (2012) emphasizes it not as an individual issue but as a function of social stratification within structures. She further discusses ecological theories that explain intimate partner violence in the family context, focusing on the role of internal conflict. The approach to intimate partner violence from biological, social, or psychological sciences offers several theoretical perspectives. In their review of biological and psychological theories, Ali and Naylor (2013) discuss the impact of brain injuries, attachment theory, and the role of anger, self-esteem, communication skills, and substance abuse. Ali and Naylor (2013) also provide a summary of feminist, social, and ecological theories regarding the causality of intimate partner violence. They highlight the cycle of violence, learned helplessness, the battered woman syndrome, patriarchy and power, as well as social learning theory. While many theories focus on individual factors leading to intimate partner violence, Blumenstein and Jasinski (2015) applied social disorganization theory based on the idea that factors such as concentrated social disadvantage, population heterogeneity, and residential instability affect violent behavior. The theory of planned behavior includes a public health perspective and aims to help predict abusive behaviors (Betts, 2011).

Perhaps most importantly in shaping the understanding of the factors generating intimate partner violence is feminist theory. The feminist framework highlights the impact of gender roles and gender-based inequality in all

issues. Bell and Naugle (2008), among others, directly attribute the phenomenon of violence against women to patriarchy, which reinforces male supremacy and control. The feminist perspective has supported the professional efforts of researchers, the foundation, and practice to understand and respond to intimate partner violence. Important contributions from feminist scholars include concepts such as the cycle of violence, learned helplessness, the battered woman syndrome, power and control dynamics, male control theory, social disorganization of social control, self-determination theory, and the role of patriarchy. (Ali and Naylor, 2013).

One of the theories that more explicitly explains intimate partner violence is the perspective of adverse childhood experiences related to intimate partner violence, known as the theory of posttraumatic growth. Exposure to intimate partner violence can result in a range of negative consequences, but it can also stimulate posttraumatic growth. Researchers have found an increased potential for understanding life lessons and creating a positive future from a troubled past (Anderson 2011; Calhoun and Tedeschi 2001). Posttraumatic growth after childhood exposure to intimate partner violence may involve a strong commitment to avoid or prevent traumatic exposure as an adult and for one's own children, rooted in their perspective of what should be avoided (Anderson 2011).

From a posttraumatic growth perspective, researchers have also shown that adult women who were exposed to their mothers being beaten by an intimate partner as children may exhibit greater awareness of the trauma's impact and the recovery process (Anderson 2011). Adults exposed to domestic violence as children may gain considerable wisdom and resilience, as well as a commitment to ending violence by processing disengagement, contemplation, and understanding. This cognitive restructuring process, which involves examining and reconstructing distorted and altered schemas, is key to growth and well-being after trauma (Anderson 2011). Exploring posttraumatic growth processes is as important as the ongoing research into posttraumatic stress and the negative health impacts stemming from adverse experiences.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development identifies ending violence against women and girls (VAWG) as a core priority for achieving gender equality and sustainable development under the Sustainable Development Goals.

Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in Albania

Domestic violence is an increasing concern in our society. The deep social and economic transformation after the 1990s brought significant changes not only in the structure of the economy, the standard of living, but also in the shift of gender balance in Albanian society.

Gender balance within the family is severely damaged by the presence of violence in intimate partner relationships. This severely damaged relationship has health, social, and economic consequences for the family.

In the past two decades, Albania has made progress in respecting and promoting gender equality and addressing domestic violence, gender-based violence, and violence against women and girls through improvements in legislation and national policies, as well as harmonizing them with international human rights standards. However, violence against women remains a serious concern, which was reconfirmed by the most recent data presented by the Third National Population-Based Survey on Violence Against Women and Girls in Albania, conducted by INSTAT in 2018. According to this survey, one in two (52.9%) Albanian women have experienced one or more forms of violence (intimate partner violence, violence in a romantic relationship, non-partner violence, sexual harassment, stalking) throughout their lives.

A number of policies and action plans with a specific focus on gender equality have been approved in several areas, including (i) the Gender Equality Law (2008), (ii) the ratification in 2013 of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence ("Istanbul Convention") and aligning the national framework with its principles, (iii) the National Strategy and Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016-2020, (iv) the National Action Plan for the Inclusion of Men and Boys as Partners for Women and Girls in Challenging Gender Stereotypes and in the Fight Against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), (v) the approval of the Resolution for the Fight Against Gender-Based Violence by the Parliament in 2017 and the establishment of a parliamentary subcommittee for gender equality, which works closely with the Women's Deputies Alliance.

Ending all forms of violence against women is a key priority for the United Nations (UN) in Albania and is in line with the 2017-2021 Cooperation Programme between the Albanian government and the UN. The Cooperation Programme 2017-2021 aims to contribute to the implementation of international norms and obligations in support of Albania's integration into the European Union, including the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The country has followed a long path of isolation until it managed to complete a legal framework with the Domestic Violence Law (which came into effect in June 2007) Law No. 9669/2006 "On Measures Against Domestic Violence," which outlines legal measures for preventing and reducing domestic violence, amended in 2008 and 2013 to ensure immediate protection for women, girls, and other family members experiencing violence, along with the National Strategy and Action Plan (2007-2012) to fight it, as well as multiple programs and projects against violence which have been implemented and partially addressed many aspects of domestic violence.

Despite the legal provisions for criminal prosecution and the punishment of perpetrators of domestic violence, there is a widespread tendency in Albania to "negotiate" or "mediate" domestic violence cases. The problem with the use of mediation in domestic violence cases is that mediation is based on the principle of equality of the parties, but in cases of domestic violence and intimate partner violence, there is no equality. The creation of the Support Services Map for Violence Against Women in Albania in 2015 revealed that efforts by service providers to work with domestic violence perpetrators, especially through counseling and family mediation, are sometimes initiated at the request of the courts. However, working with perpetrators of domestic violence has also started at the request of survivors of domestic violence. An assessment of such pilot programs found that the models used to work with domestic violence perpetrators need to be improved and consolidated (Violence Against Women and Girls in Albania, National Population-Based Survey 2018).

According to Albanian legislation, "Domestic Violence" is any act or failure to act committed between people who are or have been in a family relationship, resulting in harm to physical, moral, psychological, sexual, social, or economic integrity. Domestic violence is a crime that is often hidden. In Albanian society, it has been seen as a private matter, with little or no attention to prevention, primarily by various non-governmental organizations. To date, the incidence, spread, and assessment of the phenomenon of violence in our country remains undocumented and not properly measured. The fact that this problem has been kept closed and silent makes its study even more difficult. Starting from this fact, there is little data and statistical figures to illustrate the dimensions of the problem, and there are few studies in this field. Some of the most important studies conducted on domestic violence and violence against women at the national level include three national surveys conducted by INSTAT.

After the national surveys on domestic violence in Albania (2007, 2013) that addressed only domestic violence, the 2018 national survey for the first time collected data on the nature and extent of other forms of violence: violence in romantic relationships, violence by non-partners, sexual harassment, and stalking. It also presents findings on the social norms related to violence against women. Some of the key findings of the study show that 65.8% of the interviewed women had experienced violence in romantic relationships during their lifetime, 47% had experienced domestic violence from an intimate partner; 1 in 5 women had experienced physical and/or sexual violence, and 18.2% had experienced violence from non-partners. The survey reveals that 18.1% of women had experienced sexual harassment during their lifetime, and 12.6% had experienced stalking.

Referral Mechanism for Domestic Violence Cases: Achievements and Challenges for Albania

The government has approved and implemented a comprehensive policy framework for addressing domestic violence, but its implementation faces challenges related to interinstitutional coordination, as well as the lack of human and financial resources.

Referral mechanisms (RM) have been created in more than 60% of communes as a tool to coordinate the various government institutions mandated to respond and provide adequate support to victims of domestic violence.

The RM mechanism consists of (i) Steering Committees, which represent relevant institutions at the local level, under the leadership of the municipality's mayor; (ii) Interdisciplinary Technical Teams (ITT), whose members are appointed by the SCs and are technical representatives of the member institutions of the SCs; and (iii) Local Coordinator for Domestic Violence, who leads and coordinates the work and services of the ITTs for the referral and response to domestic violence cases at the local level.

The philosophy of this mechanism is that once a victim contacts any member of the Referral Mechanism - no matter which member is contacted first - the contacted member immediately starts the support process by informing at least one representative from the municipality, police, and health structures. The services provided to the victim/survivor are short-term and long-term. In the short term, these services include immediate protection and safety, health support, shelter (including transport to a safe place), as well as information and assistance to initiate the procedure for an Immediate Protection Order or to pursue criminal prosecution. Meanwhile, the case is also referred to other institutions based on the needs of the case. Long-term support includes referral to employment offices for job support, receiving any professional recommendation, referral to the social services department for economic assistance, long-term housing, legal advice and assistance if the survivor wishes to initiate a divorce procedure or file a complaint against the perpetrator, counseling, and psychotherapy for trauma recovery, reintegration, as well as support for children (e.g., transferring them to another kindergarten or school, counseling/therapy if necessary, etc.).

Although referral mechanisms are now established in several parts of the country, efforts should be made to implement them nationwide. Local government units continue to face challenges in improving and strengthening interinstitutional cooperation within this mechanism, which operates at varying levels of effectiveness. Domestic violence against women and intimate partner violence remains underreported and is still considered a "private" issue, especially in rural areas. As a result, protective services for women and girls remain insufficient, and awareness of their legal rights continues to be lacking.

The EU Progress Report 2020 emphasizes that efforts should be increased to address gender equality with a specific focus on violence against women through intersectoral and local coordination mechanisms to provide more services for women and improve their access to justice.

Domestic Violence Against Women in Elbasan

The municipality of Elbasan provides social services dedicated to victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence. Some of the services and forms of support provided for victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence include: psycho-social and emotional support, legal counseling and assistance, emergency shelter, transport to a safe place, economic support in case of need, food packages, rent bonuses (depending on the specifics of the case), health care, coverage of medicine costs for mothers and children, referral for professional courses, employment coordination with the Elbasan Regional Employment Office, registering children in school and daycare, covering the cost of daycare for 8 children, information and counseling for perpetrators, monitoring the implementation of Protection Orders based on legal obligations stemming from Law No. 9669, dated 18.12.2006, "On Measures Against Domestic Violence," as amended.

However, despite the variety of services and support provided, as well as the breathing space these services give to the work and functioning of the Ministry of Social Welfare (MKR) in cases of domestic violence, there is a need to increase the services dedicated to the victims of domestic violence. The socio-economic empowerment of victims of domestic violence is a priority that requires special attention and sustainable budgeting.

Throughout 2020, the Coordinated Referral Mechanism for Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence in the Municipality of Elbasan identified and supported 124 cases of domestic violence in family relationships, of which 86 were identified and referred during 2020, 29 were carried over from 2019, and 9 were cases of rejection of the lawsuit request by the court, which were supported with services according to their needs

The Number of the cases of family violence (in total) 124	
• Number of cases of lawsuit rejection	75
• Number of cases with PO or CPO	11
• Number of cases without PO/CPO	9
Number of cases carried over from 2019	29

The cooperation between the Municipality of Elbasan and civil society organizations has been a strong point in managing gender-based violence and

domestic violence cases, enabling the well-functioning of the MKR and supporting the victims/survivors of violence with services.

The cost of violence in socio-economic aspects, psycho-social well-being, individual contribution to the community, safety, etc.

Domestic violence has consequences for both parties, both the victim and society. It consumes public and voluntary services and causes significant pain and suffering to individuals who have been subjected to it. While considerations based on human rights principles offer strong foundations for public intervention in domestic violence, a better understanding of the total costs of domestic violence provides a basis for intervention with a policymaking assistance system, especially in financial terms. By adding a financial dimension to violence, the scope of how strategic interventions can be articulated, measured, and evaluated expands. Specifically, the inclusion of the financial dimension can help address priorities in the policy-making structure.

Calculating the cost of violence is a useful strategy for increasing policymakers' sensitivity to the importance and effectiveness of intervention. Understanding the economic dimensions of interpersonal violence is crucial not only for assessing the economic damages it brings to the family and society but also for determining complete intervention platforms, supporting those at risk. Violence has often been considered a phenomenon that requires the proper attention, thus, a phenomenon rooted in an individual psychological problem or a dysfunctional psycho-social relationship. Therefore, it is also a structural and complex social phenomenon, a composition of factors that interact at different levels.

The cost, in a socio-economic analysis, is divided into direct costs, which result directly because they are linked to the provision of health services and the judicial system costs, and indirect costs. The division of costs into direct and indirect is problematic. The impact of violence has short-term and long-term effects that are of a social and economic nature on individuals and communities. So far, many of these effects have been categorized together as indirect, a black box that has rarely been opened and evaluated.

Direct costs represent the value of goods and services used in response to domestic violence. Direct costs are defined as "the value of goods and services used for the treatment and prevention of domestic violence" (A. Morrison and M. Bihel). Another definition treats direct costs as "expenses related to interpersonal violence" (CDC 2003). Most studies on direct costs have addressed various sectors, including legal services, justice, healthcare, and social services. To determine the distribution of costs through various agents of society, some studies distinguish between services offered by society, the private sector, and a combination of both (Graves 1995). In some other studies, individual expenses are also included.

Indirect costs are "total costs that do not arise directly from the consequences of family violence relationships." Indirect costs include lost wages

and psychological costs (Hornick, Paetch, and Bertrand, 2002). The calculation of psychological costs has been a standard practice in judicial cases requiring the measurement of the monetary values of compensation for victims of violence. Psychological costs were much higher than the direct economic losses caused to victims (Miller, Cohen, and Rossman 2010). Some studies have attempted to assess the negative effects of violence on housing expenses, a cost to society.

A useful typology that shows the indirect costs of violence is suggested by Buvinic et al. (1999). This typology presents an evaluation scheme that shows the impact of violence. This structure allows the separation between social and economic costs, monetary costs or those with an imputable value, and non-monetary costs, as well as those costs that cannot be presented with a monetary value.

Table no.1. A typology of the socio-economical costs of violence

The Type of The Cost	The Impact
Direct costs: Value of goods and services used for the treatment and prevention of violence	•Medical •The Policy •The Systemation of The Criminal Justice •The Sheltering •Social Services
Non-monetary Costs: The pain and suffering	• Increase in morbidity • Increase in mortality through homicide or suicide • Abuse of alcohol and drugs • Depressive disorders
•Multipleeconomic effects: Effects on the economy, labor market, and intergenerational productivity	•Decline in market labour participation • Decline in work productivity •Decrease in income • Increase in absenteeism from work • School repetition and lower participation in education for children • Decrease in investments and savings • Capital leakage

CENTRUM 23

• Multiple social effects: Impact on interpersonal relationships and quality of life	• Intergenerational transmission of violence • Reduction in quality of life • Erosion of social capital • Reduction in participation in democratic processes
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CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (DV) IN THE LAST 5 YEARS					
Municipality			LIBRAZHD		
CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE					
Year	Total number of cases	Number of cases of spousal or intimate partner violence.	Number of victims (victims of violence).	Number of perpetrators.	Number of those who have received PO or CPO.
2018	7	7	9	7	3
2019	9	9	10	9	8
2020	11	10	12	11	9
2021	14	13	15	14	10
2022	16	14	17	19	10
Municipality			PRRENJAS		
CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE					
Year	Total number of cases	Number of cases of spousal or intimate partner violence.	Number of victims (victims of violence).	Number of perpetrators.	Number of those who have received PO or CPO.
2018	25	20	20	20	6-PO 3-CPO
2019	20	16	16	16	10-PO 6-CPO
2020	26	8	8	8	7-PO 1-CPO
2021	30	25	25	25	9-PO 2-CPO
2022	15	13	13	13	10-PO 3-CPO
CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE					

C E N T R U M 23

Municipality			CERRIK		
CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE					
Year	Total number of cases	Number of cases of spousal or intimate partner violence	Number of victims (victims of violence).	Number of perpetrators	Number of those who have received PO or CPO.
2018	12	7	9	8	5
2019	13	8	10	9	6
2020	26	15	17	17	10
2021	21	12	20	20	12
2022	25	11	14	15	11
CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE					
Municipality			PEQIN		
CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE					
Year	Total number of cases	Number of cases of spousal or intimate partner violence	Number of victims (victims of violence).	Number of perpetrators	Numberof those who have received PO or CPO.
2018	1	1	9	1	UM
2019	1	1	2	1	UM
2020	7	1	1	1	UM
2021	2	1	1	1	UM
2022	7	1	1	1	6 - UM dhe 1 - UMM
CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE					
Bashkia			BELSH		
CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE					
Year	Total number of cases	Number of cases of spousal or intimate partner violence	Number of victims (victims of violence	Number of perpetrators	Numberof those who have received PO or CPO.
2018	10	10	10	10	0
2019	6	6	6	6	1
2020	4	4	4	4	1
2021	9	9	9	9	7
2022	12	12	12	12	4

Conclusion

According to the official data generated by the Elbasan Prefecture, it appears that the reported cases of domestic violence and cases that have received immediate protection orders or protection orders during the five-year period from 2018 to 2022 have increased. Notably, there was a rise in prevalence during the COVID-19 pandemic period (2020-2022) across all five municipalities of the Elbasan District. The pandemic deepened social problems in Albanian families, problems which were reflected by escalating internal conflict and violence against girls and women.

The lack of affordable and alternative housing impacts abused women, who may wish to leave abuse and violence in their marriage or intimate relationships but lack reasonable alternatives, considering the lack of economic resources. Feminist theories consider male dominance as a key element in domestic violence against women. Women's dependence on male authority is believed to be institutionalized in the structure of patriarchal societies, which consists of a social structure that gives women an inferior status and a culture that serves to reinforce the acceptance of this rule. This assessment is supported by research in cultures and societies that have shown reciprocal connections between patriarchal social structures and the incidence of violence against women. Feminist theories also consider stereotypes about the "proper" roles and responsibilities of men and women in families, which reinforce the belief that men are dominant and women are dependent on men. Women are expected to show obedience and respect towards their husbands, and men have the right to discipline and control their wives through any necessary means to maintain a dominant status in the family. In fact, many men and women view violence as a normal part of an intimate and marital relationship. Continuing with feminist theory, domestic violence is a manifestation of gender inequality that exists in Albania. There is ample supporting evidence in research for feminist theories of domestic violence. Therefore, it is important to challenge women's dependency and to oppose behaviors and beliefs that excuse the use of violence by husbands against their wives, as well as to prevent confrontation and discussion within the community regarding spousal abuse.

Preventing domestic violence requires changing the beliefs and behaviors of Albanian men and women that support male dominance in gender relations and that excuse violence against women. Gender inequality is also reflected in women's response to domestic violence, especially their fear of speaking out or seeking help for domestic violence. Studies show that domestic violence has its roots in the creation of roles as learned models in society, where women are forced to remain dependent on men, both in their private and public lives. The patriarchal cultural tradition in Albanian society, new forms of poverty, and the difficult economic situation many families face create the conditions for the spread of the phenomenon.

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