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NEVLADINA ORGANIZACIJA  
**ODBOR ZA LJUDSKA PRAVA VRANJE - HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE VRANJE**

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## GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

18.04.2020.

**Human Rights Committee – Vranje and Association Of Roma Women OSVIT – Nis are the only licensed SOS providers 24 hours 7 days a week for women with experience of violence from the civil sector, in the conditions of the COVID-19 virus pandemic and state of emergency. In order to ensure a greater degree of prevention of domestic and partner violence against women, girls, children and femicide during the longest curfew for 84 hours (Friday, April 17 from 5:00 PM, until Tuesday, April 21 until 5:00 AM) and in continuity in the following period, until the end of the prohibition of movement:**

We are submitting to the Government of the Republic of Serbia

### **PROPOSAL: Amendment to the Prohibition of Movement Regulation**

Amendment to the Prohibition of Movement Regulation during the curfew in a state of emergency in Serbia in the conditions of the COVID-19 virus pandemic: **LEAVING OF APARTMENT, HOUSE FOR ALL WOMEN, GIRLS, CHILDREN** who are exposed to all forms of acute domestic violence and violence in partnerships **IS ALLOWED DURING CURFEW, WITHOUT LIMITATION OF DISTANCE FROM THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE AND WITHOUT LEGAL CONSEQUENCES.**

- **We propose that the Government of the Republic of Serbia implement this preventive interim measure of protection against domestic violence continuously in the following period, until the end of the prohibition of movement.**
- Since March 15, 2020 and the introduction of the state of emergency in Serbia until now, the prohibition of movement applies to all, with the exception of: dog owners and persons with developmental disabilities and autism. We propose that the Government of Serbia also include a population category: women, girls, children with experience of domestic and partner violence.
- It is necessary for the Government of Serbia to make a clear amendment to this Regulation, in writing, which will provide the competent institutions for the implementation of the prohibition of movement with clear instructions and a legal framework for action. Competent institutions conduct proceedings for violation of the prohibition of movement during the curfew without exceptions, other circumstances are not taken into account.
- Send clear information to victims that they are ALLOWED to LEAVE - ESCAPE FROM HOME ISOLATION: We suggest that officials and competent state bodies for the prevention of violence against women launch a campaign, SEND CLEAR INFORMATION, CALL, ENCOURAGE ALL VICTIMS – during the curfew you are allowed to escape from isolation, from your home, apartment, space where you live in a situation of acute domestic violence that can be life-threatening. In this way, we will provide PREVENTION and conditions to reduce the risk of gender-based violence and homicide of women (femicide) in quarantine. At the same time, abusers will have clear information that their victims have strong protection from society, even in isolation, safe evacuation of victims will be enabled which will save the lives of many women and girls.

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- Do not sanction women, girls, children victims of family-partner violence: In situations where the home is not a safe place in isolation for victims of family-partner violence, it is imperative that the Government of Serbia clearly define that women, girls, children victims of domestic and partner violence (the most numerous and the most vulnerable population categories in the context of domestic and partner violence), WILL NOT BE PUNISHED FOR THE MISDEMEANOR from 50,000 RSD to 150,000 RSD if, during the curfew, they left the place of residence and fled to the public area (street, square, yard...) due to acute domestic violence. This will also avoid the double punishment of women, girls victims of violence: punishment by the perpetrator of domestic violence and a fine by the state.
- Fear of financial punishment compels victims to live in isolation in ongoing domestic-partner violence: SOS support phones for women with experience of violence in the civilian sector receive calls from women who testify that because of the fear of sanction, they cannot leave the house and are continually exposed to all forms of gender based violence in domestic isolation. They confirm that they do not always have the conditions to call SOS phones or the police. Due to dismissal, termination of seasonal and occasional jobs in the COVID-19 pandemic, many victims are economically dependent on a violent spouse, partner, and have no money to pay a penalty for a possible curfew violation. For many women, the amount of punishment is a small fortune.
- The ban on leaving home during curfew encourages many abusers in the family to commit violence, as they have clear information that their victim must not leave the area where they live together. The safety and lives of women are seriously endangered **especially in families where, before the pandemic, women have already reported domestic violence and where legal proceedings are pending.** This is an additional trigger for the continuation and increase of violence in the home isolation.

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the wave of domestic violence against women and girls has increased every day of domestic isolation. In Serbia, since the introduction of the state of emergency, according to media reports, at least three women have **lost their lives in the context of domestic violence in a state of emergency.**

**Licensed SOS Telephone Vranje 0800 001 017** for providing free service to women with experience of violence (24 hours 7 days a week) in March 2020 recorded a 25% increase in calls from women compared to February 2020. **Licensed SOS Telephone in Romani and Serbian languages - Osvit, Niš 0800 100 909** for providing free service to women with experience of violence (24 hours 7 days a week) in March 2020 recorded a 50% increase in calls from women. At the same time there are reports that show multiple increases in domestic-partner violence against women, girls, children, from all countries of the world, where the Corona virus pandemic has been present for a long period.

It should be mentioned that the implementation of effective measures to protect, prevent and support women, girls exposed and survivors of gender-based violence is an obligation of Serbia as a signatory to the Istanbul Convention and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and above all, it is the obligation of our state in emergencies such as the COVID-19 virus pandemic.

We would like to inform you that we have submitted the same Proposal to:

- Government of the Republic of Serbia - Prime Minister Ana Brnabic
- Deputy Prime Minister's Office - Deputy Prime Minister Prof. Dr Zorana Z. Mihajlović
- Coordination Body for Gender Equality
- Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs

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- Commissioner for the Protection of Equality
- Protector of citizens
- Office for Human and Minority Rights
- Office for Cooperation with Civil Society

In Vranje and Nis  
04/18/2020

APPLICANTS  
Human Rights Committee – Vranje  
Suzana A.Ristić, President

Association Of Roma Women OSVIT Nis  
Ana Saćipović, President

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