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“If he beats you, it means he *does not* love you”

What prevents female IDPs from Eastern Ukraine
from talking about domestic violence

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Abstract

This thesis aimed to investigate the reasons that prevent internally displaced women from eastern Ukraine from talking about domestic violence which is becoming a concerning issue with the ongoing armed conflict. Although most of them tend to suffer in silence, we know that they are struggling with this problem: In 2016, 90,1% of the total number of calls received by the National toll “Free Hotline“ of the leading Ukrainian women’s rights organisation “La Strada“ – some 38,292 calls – were made by men, women and children worrying about violence in their homes, covering both Ukrainian and occupied Ukrainian territory. 1,486 of those callers were internally displaced persons. Of them, 4,4% asked for consultation concerning domestic violence, an amount that was six times higher than in the previous year.

Women who have to leave their homes due to armed conflict or other disasters are particular vulnerable during their flight and in their host communities with regards to violence and therefore deserve our particular attention.

During my field trip to the eastern parts of Ukraine and the capital in May 2017, I investigated the reasons behind women’s silence with the help of experts and one affected woman and defined several reasons. Furthermore, I gained broader knowledge of the topic by scrutinizing the Analytical report (2016) by the All-Ukrainian Charitable Organisation “Konviktus”, which in particular assessed domestic violence against female IDPs. Women’s tendency to remain silent with regard to domestic violence in Ukrainian society is deeply rooted in strong thinking patterns, which create the wrong perception of violence and dealing with it. Victim-blaming and secondary victimisation is still a common practice in society, even among authorities, and indicates how women’s behaviour about domestic violence (and other forms of violence) is supposedly meant to be – namely silent. In order to defeat domestic violence against women, legal expert Katarina Borosdina recommends: “First of all, women must know what is

violence. ‘If he beats you, it means he loves you’ is a stereotype. You must not love and beat!”

Introduction

What you saw in the first pages of this thesis is silence. This is the silence that spreads in Ukrainian homes. What would those Ukrainian women say, those who were forced to flee due to the ongoing armed conflict in the eastern part of their home country and who are experiencing domestic violence? *We hardly know. But we do know that they are suffering.*

In 2016, 90,1% of the total number of calls received by the National toll “Free Hotline“ of the leading Ukrainian women’s rights organisation “La Strada“¹ – some 38,292 calls – were made by men, women and children worrying about violence in their homes, covering both Ukrainian and occupied Ukrainian territory.² In 2016, 1,486 of those callers were internally displaced persons (hereafter IDPs). Of them, 4,4% asked for consultation concerning domestic violence, an amount that was six times higher than in the previous year. Furthermore, in 2016, “La Strada” received 706 calls regarding the armed conflict and from these 20,5% involved families (including non-IDP families) where one member was fighting in the armed conflict and which were as a consequence suffering from domestic violence.³

Women who have to leave their homes due to armed conflict or other disasters are particular vulnerable during their flight and in their host communities with regards to violence and therefore deserve our particular attention (Chapter 1: Internally displaced “strangers”). According to the “Analytical report” within the project “Mobilisation of IDP women against Domestic and Gender-Based

¹ International Women's Rights Center “La Strada”. Accessed online May 28 2017:

<http://www.la-strada.org.ua>

² See factsheet by “La Strada” in Annex 2.

³ This information I was given during the Interview with Katerina Borosdina, 10.5. 2017.

violence”⁴ (hereafter the AR) by the All-Ukrainian Charitable Organisation “Konviktus”, psychological abuse was indicated as the most common form of domestic violence among female IDPs after displacement (57%).⁵ The tense situation is leaving its profound marks in IDP families as 48% indicated that the armed conflict has a negative impact on the frequency of conflicts inside their homes. Furthermore, 47% of the polled women indicate that disputes inside the families “very often” end in violence. Compounding this for women themselves, and which at the same time makes places obstacles to investigating the silence about domestic violence, is that 75% believe that, “Family issues must be discussed only within the family circle”.

And we know that we have to listen to their silence if we want to remedy it.

Therefore, we have to investigate the reasons that prevent them from talking about domestic violence. Is it they who decide to remain silent or are they silenced by society? How do the armed conflict and its consequences influence their attitude? Are there any specific reasons for their silence related specifically to their being IDPs?

To discuss other people’s silence and reflect on it in a scientific way, it is necessary to make use of a methodological basis. For this thesis, the concepts of voice and silence defined by Shulamit Reinharz in her article “Toward an Ethnography of ‘Voice’ and ‘Silence’”⁶ (1994) were chosen.

⁴ Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa, 2016, Analytical report within the project “Mobilisation of IDP women against Domestic and Gender-Based violence”, Kiev. See Annex 1.

⁵ Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa, 2016, “Analytical report” Page 133

⁶ Reinharz, Shulamith “Toward an Ethnography of “Voice” and “Silence”, in Trickett, Edison J., Watts, Roderick J., Birman, Dina, 1994, “Human Diversity Perspectives on People in Context, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco

As groups in society who are silent cannot be considered to be oppressed beforehand and might have a diverging perception of their own lives, it is important to give them the possibility to denominate by themselves their status within society. Therefore, Reinhartz proposes concepts of voice and silence as those groups prefer to be written and talked about as “‘having no voice’, ‘losing a voice’, ‘wanting a voice’, ‘not being heard’, or ‘being silenced’”.⁷ However, before setting out how those two concepts reflect power relations not only between different groups and persons but also between men and women, it is useful to have a closer look at both their definitions. The Oxford Dictionary defines ‘voice’ in five different ways, of which the following two are relevant in this context: 1. the sound produced in a person's larynx and uttered through the mouth, as speech or song; 2. a particular opinion or attitude expressed.⁸ Reinhartz concludes therefore:

Thus, voice means having the ability, the means, and the right to express oneself, one's mind, and one's will. If an individual does not have these abilities, means, or right, he or she is silent.⁹

For us then, voice becomes a synonym of *freedom* and *power*. We remember that earlier those who had *no power, consequently had no voice and had no means to speak* and those *who had the power controlled those who spoke and decided* whom to permit to speak.

Throughout history, within the power constellations between men and women, the latter have had to struggle for their voice to be heard. If woman-kind had not dared to raise their voices, they could not have broken out of male control and liberated themselves from their subjugated position within the male organised and dominated system.

⁷ Reinhartz, 1994, page 179,

⁸ Oxford Dictionaries, Accessed online May 27 2017:
<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/voice>

⁹ Reinhartz, 1994, page 180

Silence is not the most powerful answer that can be given to violence, but the silence can be caused by fear of talking about the violence. Reinharz concludes and calls for women's courage:

When women are no longer afraid, they *will* speak up; in order not be afraid women *must* speak up.¹⁰

Only in recent times has women's voice entered our use of language. So, to counter powerlessness, female members of our societies expressed their wishes on how to be addressed: for example, prostitutes would prefer the term *sex workers* rather than *tricks* or *sexual slaves*.¹¹ People affected by violence would rather be called *survivors* instead of *victims*.

Sound as the additional meaning of voice, is linked to the possibility of being *silent* and *silenced*. On the one hand, *silence* in English has a polysemic meaning according to the Oxford Dictionary: a complete absence of sound, the fact or state from abstaining from speech.¹² In Russian, the nouns *тишина* and *молчание* both indicate silence in the meaning of the polysemic noun in English, whereas in German there are two different words for silence which indicate the state of soundlessness and the action of non-talking: *Stille* and *Schweigen*.

Her voice cannot be heard in different ways as explained by Reinharz:

A woman is silenced when no one listens, even when she talks. She is silenced when others do all talking, including speaking for her, especially speaking about her. She is silenced when people cannot understand what she is saying even when she does speak. They cannot hear what she is saying.¹³

¹⁰ Reinharz, 1994, page 182

¹¹ Reinharz, 1994, ibidem

¹²Oxford Dictionaries, Accessed online May 28 2017:
<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/silence>

¹³ Reinharz, 1994, page 184

Silence can have different meanings as explored, for example, by Nancy Seifer in her book, “Nobody speaks for Me! Self-Portraits of American Working-Class Women”:

Silence can be as much a sign of disapproval as of approval. It can denotive passive acceptance. Or it can simply represent the absence of a voice, or of a means of making one’s voice heard. From where I was sitting in the late 1960s, I began to perceive that the Silent Majority was voiceless, but not out of choice. ... their anger seemed to stem from two sources, conflicting at times: an inability of most working class people to make their voices heard publicly on major issues and an uneasy feeling that they were to well-informed enough to do so.¹⁴

If we want to understand other people’s need, we have to listen to their voices. When investigating those who are *made* invisible and unheard, we have to bear in mind that they are not attributed with any visibility or voice because they have no power. Therefore, in the first step of our investigation, we have to study the power constellations and dynamics of the society concerned and the individual’s or group’s position within it (Chapter 1: Internally displaced “strangers” and Chapter 2: Hitting the most inner core). In the next step, if (still) possible, it is necessary to approach the individual or group, to see if they are willing to share their experiences. With their permission, meeting them requires going to them or speaking to them in a safe environment (Chapter 3: “You do not talk about rape is the main message”). It is highly desirable to give them the chance to talk in their native language and that the person investigating has a very good command of the language or is assisted by an interpreter.

For analyzing the different voices of those who are repressed, Reinharz further recommends to “create a context where the person can speak and we can listen. That means that we must study who we are as well as who we are in relation to

¹⁴ Seifer Nancy, 1976, “Nobody speaks for me! Self-portraits of American working-class women”, New York: Simon & Schuster, page 186

those whom we study”.¹⁵ Furthermore, researching other people’s voices requires self-reflection as “we must be willing to hear what others are saying, even when it violates prior expectations or threatens our interests”.¹⁶

Particular attention has to be drawn during “collecting” the “voices of the unheard”, notably when claiming to give a voice to them or, even more, to speak for them. Those questions are also raised by Reinharz:

Can anyone give another person or group a voice? I believe not – rather, we can tell the story of our trying to give a voice to another group, presenting the group’s speech as contextualized in the process of listening to it. I also believe that it is worthwhile to find ways of helping others to utilize the media to project their own voices, rather than to have it mediated by others.¹⁷

¹⁵ Reinharz, 1994, page 195

¹⁶ Reinharz, 1994, ibidem

¹⁷ Reinharz, 1994, page 197

Chapter 1: Internally displaced “strangers”

According to the *Global Report on Internal Displacement* (2017) (hereafter GRID)¹⁸ by the Norwegian Refugee Council’s Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (hereafter IDMC), in 2016 there were 33,1 million people displaced within the borders of their home country worldwide, an increase of 3,3 million from 2015. Of these, 6,9 million men, women and children were forced to flee their homes because of conflict and violence, while over three times a higher number, 24,2 million, were due to disasters.

The majority of those *escaping conflict and violence* came from sub-Saharan Africa (2,6 million), followed by IDPs from the Middle East and North Africa (2,1 million); 0,3 million were from Europe and Central Asia. Other numbers of displaced were within South Asia (1,1 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (0,4 million), and from East Asia and the Pacific (0,3 million).¹⁹ *Because of disaster*, 16,4 million from East Asia and the Pacific were forced to move to another place in their home country, 3,6 million from South Asia, 1,8 million from Latin America, the Caribbean and North America, 1,2 million from sub-Saharan Africa, and 0,1 million from Europe and Central Asia.²⁰

In comparison to *refugees*, who are forced to *cross one or more international borders* to reach a ‘safe haven’, *IDPs*, as their denomination indicates, have to leave their homes and familiar environment *within the borders of their home country*: in other words, *they are those who do not cross international borders*. For a clearer differentiation between the status of a refugee and the one of an IDP, both definitions will successively be scrutinized.

¹⁸ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2017, “Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017“, Geneva, Accessed online, June 8 2017:

<http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2017/20170522-GRID.pdf>

¹⁹ GRID, 2017, page 12, Accessed online June 8 2017

²⁰ GRID, 2017, page 37, Accessed online June 8 2017

According to the *1951 Refugee Convention* (1951:14) Art. 1 (A2):

The term “refugee” shall apply to any person who: ... owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.²¹

The *UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* (2004:1) state that:

... internally displaced persons are persons or group of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border.²²

In Ukrainian legislation, namely the Law *On ensuring of rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons*²³, an IDP is defined in Art. 1 as follows:

Внутрішньо переміщеною особою є громадянин України, іноземець або особа без громадянства, яка перебуває на території України на законних підставах та має право на постійне проживання в Україні, яку змусили залишити або покинути своє місце проживання у результаті або з метою уникнення негативних наслідків збройного конфлікту, тимчасової окупації, повсюдних проявів насильства, порушень прав людини та надзвичайних ситуацій природного чи техногенного характеру.²⁴

²¹ UNHCR, 1951, “Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees“, Geneva, Accessed online 8 March 2017: <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/basic/3b66c2aa10/convention-protocol-relating-status-refugees.html>

²² UNHCR, 1998, “Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement“, Geneva, Accessed online May 28 2017: <http://www.unhcr.org/protection/idps/43ce1cff2/guiding-principles-internal-displacement.html>

²³ Verkhovna Rada, 20.10.2014, “On ensuring of rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons“ No. 1706-VII with amendment, Kiev
Accessed online March 9 2017 : <http://zakon5.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/921-viii>

²⁴ Trans: ‘An internally displaced person is a citizen of Ukraine, a foreigner or a stateless person staying on territory of Ukraine on legal grounds and being entitled to permanent residence in the territory of Ukraine, who was forced to leave or abandon his/her residence place as a result of or in order to avoid negative impact of armed conflict, temporary occupation, situations of generalized violence, mass violations of human rights and disasters

According to the Ministry of Social Police in Ukraine, the number of IDPs from Eastern Ukraine and Crimea reached 1,622,835 by March 2017.²⁵ About 540 new displacements were registered between 29 January and 13 February 2017 as a consequence of intensive fighting between the Government and separatists in Avdiivka, a city in Donetsk province, at the end of January 2017.²⁶

With the outbreak of armed conflict in eastern Ukraine in March 2014, numerous international organisations published thematic reports that dedicated their attention to the critical and difficult situation of the human rights of internally displaced women, men and children coming from Donbas and Crimea. *The Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights* (hereafter OHCHR) has published 18 reports²⁷ dedicated to the situation of human rights in Ukraine in general, and the situation of IDPs and the violations of human rights in particular, between April 2014 to February 2017. Further, the *OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine* (hereafter SMM), which was deployed in March 2014, published two relevant thematic reports on the situation of IDPs from western Ukraine and Crimea, namely *Internal displacement in Ukraine*²⁸ (2014) and *Conflict-related displacement in Ukraine: Increased vulnerabilities of Affected populations and Triggers of Tension within communities* (2016)²⁹. The

of natural or human-made origin'. Translation from UNCHR Ukraine, Accessed online March 21 2017: <http://unhcr.org.ua/en/who-we-help/internally-displaced-people>

²⁵ Ministry of Social Police in Ukraine, Accessed online March 3 2017: <http://www.msp.gov.ua/news/12645.html>

²⁶ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, "Internal Displacement Update Issue 11, 9-22 February 2017". Accessed online March 9 2017: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/IDUs/20170302-idu-issue-11.pdf>

²⁷ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/ENACARegion/Pages/UARports.aspx> (09.03.2017)

²⁸ OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, 2014, "Internal displacement in Ukraine", Accessed online March 9 2017: <http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/122620?download=true>

²⁹ OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, 2016, "Conflict-related displacement in Ukraine: Increased vulnerabilities of Affected populations and Triggers of Tensions within communities", Accessed online March 9 2017: <http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm/261176?download=true>

Mission also provides follow-up reporting of the political and human rights-related situation via newsletter.

Additionally, a high number of international organisations and non-governmental organisations located in the main cities of Lviv, Kyiv and Kharkiv and other smaller cities dealing with IDPs' issues have emerged or direct their work towards the problems and challenges forcibly displaced persons are currently facing.

First and foremost, UNHCR Ukraine³⁰ advocates human rights and the protection of IDPs, and collaborates with NGOs and community-based organizations.³¹ Furthermore, it grants financial support to IDPs who registered in Dnipropetrovsk, Saporischschja and Mariupol.³² The implementing partner of the UNCHR, the Ukrainian NGO *CrimeaSOS* advocates with regard to issue related to IDPs from Crimea and the eastern part of Ukraine at the national and international levels and also monitors the rights of both. Besides helping victims of the armed conflict, providing financial and psychological help to people from the eastern region of Ukraine, and disseminating information and monitoring, another NGO, *VostokSOS*, supports IDPs with humanitarian assistance, financial assistance, and with integration into the labour market.³³ Additionally, the *Resource Center for Internally Displaced Persons*³⁴, a non-governmental initiative, coordinates the various initiatives and organizations that provide help to IDPs, gives IDPs legal advice, assistance and consultation on employment,

³⁰ UNHCR Ukraine, Accessed online May 8 2017: <http://unhcr.org.ua/en/>

³¹ UNHCR Ukraine, "Achievements 2015", Accessed online March 9 2017: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/system/files/documents/files/unhcr_ukraine_achievements_2015_final.pdf

³² UNHCR Ukraine, Accessed online March 3 2017: http://unhcr.org.ua/en/?option=com_content&view=article&layout=edit&id=1516

³³ Vostok SOS, Accessed online March 9 2017: <http://vostok-sos.org/about-project/>

³⁴ Resource Center for Internally Displaced Persons, Accessed online March 9 2017: https://pereselennya.org/en/kto-my-2/what_is_rc/

and temporary accommodation. The initiative *House of Friends*³⁵ helps and supports those who want to leave the conflict-related areas or those who want to bring their family members and friends to secure places. The not-for-profit organization *The Right for Protection*³⁶ ensures and monitors the protection and human rights of IDPs and helps them to access state benefits. In addition, the NGO *Crimean Diaspora* provides IDPs with legal assistance.³⁷

The following section will be dedicated to detailing the human rights-related situation of IDPs from eastern Ukraine and the violations of their rights as human beings and their human rights protection, according to the reports by the OHCHR³⁸ and by the SSM. In all of the reports, IDPs were interviewed either

³⁵ House of Friends. Accessed online March 9 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/dom.druzey/>

³⁶ The Right for Protection, Accessed online March 9 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/dom.druzey/>

³⁷ Crimean Diaspora. Accessed online March 9 2017: <http://crimea-diaspora.org/>

³⁸ OHCHR, 2016, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 August to 15 November 2016“, Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

[http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/UAReport16th_EN.pdf\(14.03.2017\)](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/UAReport16th_EN.pdf(14.03.2017))

OHCHR, 2016, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 May to 15 August 2016“, Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/Ukraine15thReport.pdf>

OHCHR, 2016, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 February to 15 May 2016“, Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/Ukraine_14th_HRMMU_Report.pdf

OHCHR, 2016, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 November to 15 February 2016“. Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/Ukraine_13th_HRMMU_Report_3March2016.pdf

OHCHR, 2016, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 August to 15 November 2016“, Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/12thOHCHRreportUkraine.pdf>

OHCHR, 2015, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 May to 15 August 2015“, Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/11thOHCHRreportUkraine.pdf>

OHCHR, 2015, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 February to 15 May 2015“, Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/10thOHCHRreportUkraine.pdf>

OHCHR, 2015, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 1 December to 15 February 2015“, Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/9thOHCHRreportUkraine.pdf>

OHCHR, 2014, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 15 December 2014“. Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

by members of the OHCHR the SSM. The particular reasons for leaving, their flight to safer areas of the country, their settlement in the new environment and obstacles in their host community will be scrutinized, according to the information given in the reports.

Causes for leaving

The *insecurity* and *instability* of the conflict-affected region has been a common reason for IDPs from eastern Ukraine to leave their familiar environment. From the very first day of conflict, IDPs and activists from the violence-affected regions reported that they had been intimidated by armed groups. Additionally, local NGOs indicated that, through their access to the personal data of members of the armed groups, they had evidence of occurrences of intimidation. People reported having to stay in cellars to keep away from the fighting. Decisions to leave came because of *increasingly common abductions, threats and extortion*. The *loss or damage of their houses and the cessation of the functioning of the water and electricity system* gave them no other possibility than to leave.

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/OHCHR_eighth_report_on_Ukraine.pdf

OHCHR, 2014, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 19 September 2014”, Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/ENACARegion/Pages/UAREports.aspx>

OHCHR, 2014, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 17 August 2014”, Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/UkraineReport28August2014.pdf>

OHCHR, 2014, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 15 July 2014”. Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/Ukraine_Report_15July2014.pdf

OHCHR, 2014, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 15 June 2014”, Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/HRMMUReport15June2014.pdf>

OHCHR, 2014, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 15 May 2014”, Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/HRMMUReport15May2014.pdf>

OHCHR, 2014, “Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 15 April 2014”, Geneva, Accessed online March 14 2017:

http://www.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/Documents/Countries/UA/Ukraine_Report_15April2014.doc&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1

Furthermore, *working places were closed or destroyed*, leaving people without employment, income, or means of sustenance. Others indicated they had to leave in order to *save children's lives* and to *avoid both the children and themselves witnessing traumatizing events*. (Parents reported that children particularly suffered from sleeping problems, while others stopped talking). Some took only the most important items with them in order not to draw attention to themselves by carrying large luggage.

The number of IDPs is constantly increasing due to the ongoing conflict and the majority of them appear to be women and children

Getting away

Leaving the conflict-affected regions was not possible for everyone. Due to the expense and the situation for families with elderly or disabled persons, some chose to stay. As a consequence, families were separated, but social media, mobile phones and Skype helped them to stay in touch with relatives who had to remain in the conflict-affected areas.

Since passing checkpoints by car was considered to be too dangerous, as some reported having been harassed there, the fleeing men, women and children often chose trains as their means of transport. As a reaction to overcrowded trains and stations, in July, the Ministry of Transportation arranged extra trains from eastern regions, but their access was impeded by the spreading in fighting. IDPs interviewed by the SSM reported further that this way of transportation also became difficult, as armed groups started to search the train stations for adult men leaving the region.

Getting settled

In finding a temporary place to stay, IDPs could mostly rely on personal contacts and help from NGO: assistance from local volunteers was often highlighted. Most IDPs were accommodated in private homes, public sanatoria, and hotels. The government was commonly criticised for gaps in coordination, planning and resources. In terms of humanitarian assistance, NGOs and churches were the main actors in providing assistance to IDPs.

Negative information was disseminated about the men and women in need on social media and on the internet. They were further increasingly faced with stereotypes and discrimination, as men were accused of evading military service. Other IDPs reported being accused of stealing jobs and of being maligned by certain media concerning their alleged misbehaviour. In addition to that, some reported being discriminated by landlords who refused to rent apartments or rooms to IDPs from Donbas.

A new life with new obstacles

It was frequently indicated that IDPs had difficulties in finding employment and in receiving unemployment benefits. Many of those from Donbas worked in different sectors from those present elsewhere in the country, for example in heavy industry or mining sectors, and thus brought different or not required skills to a labour market, which made it difficult to employ them in their new communities. In mid-2016, about two years after the beginning of the armed conflict, the OHCHR reported that IDPs lacked security and shelter and were still facing discrimination with respect to their social and economic rights. Further, IDPs were reported to have been denied access to their bank deposits and credit.

IDPs in collective centres in the conflict-affected areas complained about not getting help. “No one listens to us. To get any help we need to go through all the circles of hell”, reported a woman living in an IDP centre in Donetsk.³⁹ Alarming, according to a recent study conducted by UNHCR Ukraine, 43% of interviewed IDPs reported that their health conditions had deteriorated since they arrived in the collective centres.⁴⁰ Furthermore, single collective centres did not and do not meet appropriate living standards, especially for disabled IDPs, who were often forced to leave again. IDPs were often forced to pay higher utility rates under the threat of eviction.

Further to this, often IDPs had to face verbal abuse on the streets, on public transport, and in markets they have sometimes been blamed for being guilty for the armed conflict in the east of the country.⁴¹ On the other hand, IDPs felt that internally displaced women and children were better accepted than men who according to stereotypical opinions “should be fighting”.

The armed conflict and forced displacement created new vulnerable groups, with women often having to take over new roles. In their new environment they often became the head of families due to the absence of their men staying behind or being killed in the hostilities. Many of them remain unemployed, do not have a stable income, and cannot attach to social networks. In the event that they do not live close the bigger cities there are no kindergartens for children, which represents another obstacle to employment.

³⁹ OHCHR, 2016, Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 August to 15 November, page 37

⁴⁰ NGO “Right to Protection”, 2016, Results of Monitoring of collective centres of IDPs in Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Saporischschja, Luhansk and Kharkiv region, Accessed online March 13 2017: <http://vpl.com.ua/uk/materials/zvit-za-rezultatamyonitorynhu-mkp/>

⁴¹ Donbass Realii, ”Nasilie nad shenschinami v semjach pereselenzev. Schto delat?”, Radio show from 16.9.2017, Accessed online March 13 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6gQCJH56ic>

Elderly people represent another affected group since they often depend on other family members. The elderly have especially expressed the wish to return home as soon as possible. Those elderly men and women who remained in the conflict-related areas due to financial and/or physical disability are considered to be a particular vulnerable group.

Returning home represents an obstacle in many ways. Firstly, reintegration in “old structures” seems to be very challenging not only because of the ongoing armed conflict but due to the lack of possibilities and prospects. Secondly, they might be perceived as traitors because of their decision to leave in the first instance. Thirdly, they might encounter practical obstacles in their old environment as many of their houses have been destroyed and their financially precarious situation might not allow for rebuilding. For that reason, many of the IDPs prefer to remain in temporary accommodations or in collective centres for IDPs. This is linked to further difficulties regarding their circumstances of housing: often those centres are not close to big cities, which further limits them in terms of access to health care, education facilities, and the local labour market. Some IDPs reported feeling like second-class citizens.

Some of the interviewed IDPs responded that they believed they had to face discrimination in the job-seeking process due to their status as an IDP. They reported that employers preferred not to hire them or send them on training because their stay was believed to be only temporary.

Risks and dangers

The hostilities and atrocities during the armed conflict present especially high risks and dangers for men, women and children. Unsecure working conditions

and an unsafe environment turn IDPs, as already mentioned, into a vulnerable group.

By way of example, in July 2015, the Lviv Regional Prosecutor's Office reported six cases of human trafficking of whom five victims were displaced women from Donbas and one a displaced woman from Crimea.

Current issues

Being far away from their familiar environments, IDPs may face, as already mentioned, a range of severe situations with regards to the violation of their political, social and economic rights. Due to their precarious situation, social benefits and pensions are of the utmost importance. This crucial issue is linked to the registration of IDPs, who, if not registered, do not have access to social benefits. Social payments and pensions for IDPs are becoming highly difficult issues as the outpayment is linked to their permanent residence which is obviously different from their temporary place of living. This is aggravated by the fact that some of their original towns do not appear on the official list.

As far as pensions are concerned, access is not fully guaranteed and is discriminatory, as eligibility for pensions is assessed through home visits by the authorities while for other Ukrainians this is not the case to such an extent. Linked to this, elderly IDPs are often forced to look for opportunities to work although they are already in pension age. Usually, the pension in Ukraine is very little and not enough, so some have to rely on the help of their children. Many of them have to reside in dormitories with their grown-up daughters or sons as they cannot afford other ways of living, or are required to move to collective centres.

Similarly, registration of the birth of children in non-government controlled areas is problematic as well. Firstly, without birth registration children can become stateless and, secondly, parents can gain the registration of their child's birth only through court proceedings, which are time-consuming and may be costly. Single female IDPs with children face major challenges with regard to work as they may no longer rely on the help from their parents or other relatives to look after the children while they are working. Further, they complain about a lack of kindergartens or also the inability to pay for it.

Due to the ongoing conflict, housing provision is of utmost importance as personal savings and assistance are limited. Since displacement, affected civilians have complained about housing problems and are frustrated by the current situation as they were hoping that the conflict would soon come to an end and that they could return to their homes. Under the current situation, IDPs try to reside with family members or with friends, so that they do not have to pay rent or at most a very low rent, or they have often found shelter in collective centres, which usually are former sanatoria.

Furthermore, checkpoints, which are often also used by IDPs, do not provide the needed facilities, which can therefore represent a physical challenge for elderly and disabled people. Mines in the surrounding areas represent a particular danger. The Government though has taken up this initiative and is currently working on facilitating the situation.⁴²

⁴² See UNHCR, "Key Messages on internal displacement of March 2017", Accessed online March 22 2017: <http://unhcr.org.ua/attachments/article/317/2017%2003%20UNHCR%20UKRAINE%20Key%20Messages%20Briefing%20Note%20FINAL%20EN.pdf>

Currently⁴³, IDPs are mostly worried about their security and safety in the eastern regions. Those living close to the *seraja sona*, the contact line, report suffering from different kinds of threats as, such as the presence of the military in civilian areas and collateral damage from fighting and shootings, as civilians' houses are used in the conflict. Furthermore, the affected population does often not know how to ask for remedies or compensation for their houses that are destroyed during military operations. In addition to that, due to mines in the soil, people are limited in their freedom of movement. Another concern related to freedom of movement is at borderlines where there are usually long lines and difficult conditions not only at the checkpoints but also from Ukrainian and Russian border guards.

Another issue that is raised frequently is linked to unemployment. Due to the armed conflict the economy has suffered heavily and competition with the locals for jobs makes it hard to find a stable employment, as well as provoking tension with locals. Furthermore, employers tend not to accept IDPs as they perceive their staying in the new environments as temporary, making employers unwilling to invest time and money in their recruitment and training.

Getting access to health care is another pressing topic. While the Ukrainian Government claims that this service is free, in reality it is associated with extra expense, which is a challenge for IDPs who already find themselves in a precarious financial situation.

Students, especially from Crimea, may have problems with regards to their studies due to their "official status" as being non-resident in Ukraine. This status further restricts their access to banking services and comes with all the problems of not being considered a citizen of the country.

⁴³ The information in the following part until the end of "Current issues" was given to me during an interview with the UNHCR Ukraine on May 11.5.2017.

Another concerning issue is some girls' romanticised idea of military personnel who they see as an escape from their difficult situation by getting married to them and leaving their village.

Prostitution is not only used by some women to survive but also used to disseminate certain illnesses as much as possible. In 2015, women infected with HIV, who would assume that due to their health status they would not have good prospects in life, reported to have chosen this way to fight the enemy.

The Ukrainian Government has been called upon to adopt and implement a strategy for IDPs, with special regards to their long-term legal, economic and social integration. With regard to representation, however, most IDPs do not have the right to vote in local elections, limiting their direct political influence and voice.

(Internally) displaced women

Female refugees and IDPs encounter the same or similar challenges, but within a diverse legal status. As explained before, they have been forced into new environments for a range of reasons and have to develop similar strategies to cope with them. Their particular vulnerability in times of armed conflict, as a single mother and/or widow, and their risk of exposure to violence directed against them brings them together.

As both groups have similarities and in order to create a comprehensive picture of women during their flight, both of the particular circumstances will be described.

Similar to female refugees⁴⁴, IDP women represent the majority of the displaced population in the world. According to numbers of *UN Women Europe and Central Asia* from October 2015, over 63% of that time estimated 1.4 million IDPs in Ukraine were women.⁴⁵

Having left their houses for similar reasons as refugees (armed conflicts, natural or manmade disasters), both refugee and IDP women are forced to face particular risks, dangers, and threats to their safety and security during their flight and also challenges in their new environment. Additionally, they are expected to take over new roles in their family structures and in the new societal setting. Hence, women are forcibly made a so-called “vulnerable group”, as are accompanied and unaccompanied children and minors and elderly people. Protecting them from the abovementioned risks and dangers should be a widespread issue, but still, women and girls in-flight especially lack the protection of their particular women’s human rights. They cannot always rely on the help and support of their own governments due governmental unpreparedness or lack of capability/capacity to host them adequately.⁴⁶ In that case, NGOs, International Organisations (hereafter IOs), churches and volunteers take over the financial, material and emotional support for the IDP and refugee population.

⁴⁴ The UNHCR states that women and girls represent about 50% of the refugee population. See UNHCR, Accessed online March 15 2017 <http://www.unhcr.org/women.html>
Forbes Martin, Susan reports that they make up *more* than 50 percent in Forbes Martin, Susan, 2004, “Refugee Women”, Second Edition, Lexington Books: United States of America, page xii

⁴⁵ See UN Women Europe and Central Asia, Accessed online March 15 2017: <http://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2015/10/ukraine-un-tackles-gender-and-humanitarian-impacts>

The fact that the majority of IDPs are women, children and elderly people was also confirmed by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyani during his country visit to Ukraine in September 2014. Human Rights Council, 2015, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons Chaloka Beyani, Mission to Ukraine“, page 6, Geneva, Accessed online March 24 2017: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IDPersons/Pages/Visits.aspx>

⁴⁶ See Human Rights Council, 2015, “Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons Chaloka Beyani, Mission to Ukraine“, Geneva, page 5

Women and girls crossing borders or fleeing to another region in their home country require special protection from human rights violations, notably sexual and physical abuse, exploitation and discrimination. The two main documents that address the protection of IDPs and refugee women are the *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women*⁴⁷ by the UNHCR (1991) and the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* by the OHCHR (2004).

Arriving in their new environments, displaced women are exposed to new circumstances that require them to adapt: learning new languages, acquainting themselves with another culture or hierarchy, taking over new social and economic roles, diverging familial relationships and, of course, new personal problems.

“Mater familias”

Due to the loss of male family members in war, husbands’ or sons’ recruitment into the army or rebel military forces, epidemics or natural disasters, or because of living in different refugee or IDP camps, women from one day to another can become heads of households and have to substitute one or more positions in family and society. In addition, they are traditionally imposed with domestic activities and required to stick to their typical gender roles as a caring mother and now – in addition – that of the protective “father”. Their domestic duties are time-consuming and bear further dangers, for example by collecting water and firewood, which may sometimes only be found in areas that are particularly dangerous, such as minefields in conflict-affected or checkpoints in war zones.

⁴⁷ UNHCR, 1991, “Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women”, Geneva, Accessed online March 15 2017: <http://www.unhcr.org/publications/legal/3d4f915e4/guidelines-protection-refugee-women.html>

With taking over new roles and being faced with economic deficiencies, women must rely on the help of humanitarian agencies or, in the worst cases, are forced to resort to offering sex in exchange for aid or for a safe passage, so-called survival-sex.

Often there is no time to learn the local language, which can represent an obstacle in participating in hosting communities and constructing a social net thus presenting the risk of becoming isolated. Further, the change of roles in families can lead to difficulties in families' hierarchy, where especially elderly women (for example grandmothers) are traditionally seen as “preservers of the culture”⁴⁸ and the younger generation acts as the transmitter between home and the outside-world. If the latter do not want to assume the prescribed roles, this can lead to additional inter-familial tensions.

Getting healthy, staying healthy

Single IDP women, who are usually overstrained and overwhelmed by the number of tasks that they have to do for the family within a new society, tend not to set health not as a high priority. Since they bear new responsibilities, their physical and psychological condition is of utmost importance and can at the same time put the whole family at risk, given that she is often the only constant. In case they were previously injured or are already traumatized due to their arrival in the new surroundings, they might be paralyzed in both physical and mental ways and not be able to take over the role which is attributed to them. Particularly vulnerable are pregnant female IDPs and mothers with newborns, whose needs must be addressed by health workers.

⁴⁸ Forbes Martin, 2004, page 16

Among common health problems should also be listed those affecting the women's health due to the abrupt change of living, traumatizing events, sexual violence and loss of the partner or children. Depression and post-traumatic stress are often consequences and "side effects" as a reaction to this circumstances and their traumatizing flight. Further, self-destructive and violent behaviour, alcohol or drug abuse and also self-injury may represent a reaction to the "incision" in women's lives.

Women's health care and female-specific needs are not always at the centre of the attention of IOs and NGOs in providing humanitarian assistance, though they are particularly important. In particular, access to health care represents a major obstacle for those female IDPs who live in dangerous or rural areas far away from hospitals, health care centres, or other health-related facilities. Hence, for example, the deployment of female health practitioners is important for female patients, especially those for who cultural- and personal-motivated reasons do not want to be seen by a male doctor. Further, women who give birth must be provided with the appropriate care since most refugees and IDPs are in countries with high maternal and infant mortality rates.⁴⁹ Additionally, various programs addressing reproductive health services and Sexual- and Gender-Based Violence (hereafter SGBV) must be made accessible to all women living in already precarious and fragile situations. The possibility of sexually transmitted diseases must be taken into account and addressed.

Made vulnerable

War causes vulnerabilities for women in myriad ways. They are considered to be an especially vulnerable group due to their exposition to gender-related dangers in armed conflict, crisis, naturally or by manmade disaster, or other

⁴⁹ Forbes Martin, 2004, page 73

disasters and conflicts. Having in mind their new position as breadwinners in society (see “Mater familias”) and even their role as combatants or agents for peace in armed conflict, there is solid proof of their strength and courage.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, they are made vulnerable by becoming victims/survivors of, for example, SGBV by armed groups, rebels, their intimate partners, husbands or wives, relatives, or even peacekeepers and humanitarian aid workers.

The most important document focusing on women’s human rights with respect to discrimination is the United Nations treaty body *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*⁵¹ (hereafter CEDAW), also called the International Bill of Rights for Women, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. In its General Recommendation No. 19, SGBV is defined as:

a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's⁵² ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men. ... violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.⁵³

Article 1 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women* (1993) states more broadly,

the term "violence against women" means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts,

⁵⁰ International Committee of the Red Cross, 2001, “Women facing war“, Geneva, page 29, Accessed online March 20 2017:

https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0798_women_facing_war.pdf

⁵¹ General Assembly, 1979, “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women“, New York, Accessed online March 20 2017:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>

⁵² Although SGBV has the major negative impact on women’s and girls’ lives, it refers also to violence against men.

⁵³ CEDAW, 1992, “General Recommendation Nr.19“, Accessed online March 20 2017:

<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm#recom19>

coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.⁵⁴

In addition to the in the listed definitional types of violence, physical, emotional and socio-economic violence and harmful traditional practices are also common, and will be set out hereafter. *Sexual violence* is understood as rape and marital rape, child sexual abuse, defilement and incest, forced sodomy, attempted rape or sodomy rape, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, forced prostitution, sexual harassment and sexual violence as a weapon of war and torture. *Physical violence* includes physical assault, trafficking and slavery. *Emotional and psychological violence* is defined as abuse, humiliation, and/or confinement. The term *harmful traditional practices* commonly encompass female genital mutilation, early marriage, forced marriage, honour killing and maiming, infanticide and/or neglect and denial for education for girls and women. *Socio-economic violence* means discrimination and/or denial of opportunities or service, social exclusion/ostracism based on sexual orientation and obstructive legislative practice.⁵⁵

For a better understanding of refugees' and IDPs' risks and dangers *during the "refugee cycle"*, Purdin's table⁵⁶ may serve here as a reference:

⁵⁴ General Assembly, 1993, "Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women", New York, Accessed online March 20 2017:

<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

⁵⁵ UNHCR, 2003, "Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons Guidelines for Prevention and Response", Geneva, pages 16 ff, Accessed online: March 22 2017:

<http://www.unhcr.org/afr/publications/operations/3b9cc26c4/sexual-violence-against-refugees-guidelines-prevention-response-unhcr.html>

⁵⁶ UNHCR, 2003, "Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons Guidelines for Prevention and Response", page 20

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Type of violence</i>
<i>During conflict, Prior to flight</i>	Abuse by persons in power; sexual bartering of women; sexual assault, rape, abduction by armed members of parties in conflict, including security forces; mass rape and forced pregnancies.
<i>During flight</i>	Sexual attacks by bandits, border guards, pirates; capture for trafficking by smugglers, slave traders.
<i>In the country of asylum</i>	Sexual attack, coercion, extortion by persons in authority; sexual abuse of separated children in foster care; domestic violence; sexual assault when in transit facilities, collecting wood, water, etc.; sex for survival/forced prostitution, sexual exploitation of persons seeking legal status in asylum country or access to assistance and resources, resumption of harmful traditional practices.
<i>During repatriation</i>	Sexual abuse of women and children, who have been separated from their families, sexual abuse by persons in power, sexual attacks, rape by bandits, border guards, forced/coerced repatriation.
<i>During reintegration</i>	Sexual abuse against returnees as a form of retribution, sexual extortion in order to regularise legal status, exclusion from decision-making processes, denial of or obstructed access to resources, right to individual documentation and right to recover/own property.

The *reasons for sexual violence* among refugees and IDPs are differently motivated and particularly conflict-related. SGBV can have a *political motive*, for example, as mass rape may be used to express domination and control by the perpetrator/perpetrator group. Women can also be targeted, for example, by neighbouring groups, as being *more materially privileged* than others. On the other side, the violence can come also from the local population because of the presence of refugees/IDPs and who *fear criminal activities or other degradation of the environment*, for example. Further, *tensions and feuds* between groups/clans may also lead to violence. *Disrespect by men* towards women can also be seen as root cause for SGBV. Men not being able to cope with the new situation and taking over *new cultural, social and economic roles* may cause

aggression towards women.⁵⁷ Finally, also *drug and alcohol abuse* by men can result in SGBV.

*“Til’ it happens to you, you do not know how it feels...”*⁵⁸

Once female refugees and IDPs have survived SGBV, they may not only have to handle the aftermath of the deed, but also to face and cope with new obstacles in society, such as discrimination. Affected women are at major risk of marginalization or even total exclusion. Female refugees and IDPs who have suffered violence can be *marginalized in three ways*:

- as survivors of sexual and gender-based violence,
- as refugees and asylum seekers in foreign lands,
- and as members of groups that face stigmatization, stereotyping and marginalization.⁵⁹

Additionally, they may feel *shame, guilt, anxiety* and *low self-esteem* and suffer from *self-destructive behaviour* as, for example, *self-harm* as a reaction to the physical or psychological trauma. Since they are often left alone or expected “to heal the wounds” on their own, their needs must be addressed with special emphasis by health workers and humanitarian workers, and special training must be offered for the latter.

⁵⁷ See UNHCR, 1995, “Sexual Violence against Refugees. Guidelines on Prevention and Response”, Geneva, page 8-9, Accessed online on March 21 2017:

<http://www.unhcr.org/publications/operations/3b9cc26c4/sexual-violence-against-refugees-guidelines-prevention-response-unhcr.html>

⁵⁸ “Til’ it happens to you” is the title of a song sung by the US-American singer Lady Gaga, which highlights the vulnerable role of victims/survivors of SGBV and the common incomprehension for their feelings and reactions.

Germanotta, Stefanie & Warren, Diana, 2015, “Til’ it happens to you”, Accessed online on March 22 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmWBrN7QV6Y>

⁵⁹ Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, 2004, “Protecting at risk refugee survivors of sexual- and gender-based violence.”, Accessed online March 22 2017

https://www.hias.org/sites/default/files/hias_-_triple_jeopardy_-_full_report.pdf

Whether to talk about the event(s) or not is solely the victim's/survivor's decision, which must be respected and in no way disregarded. The roots for the women's silence are as individual as the women themselves, but are influenced by various factors.

The silence about SGBV may be “enforced by xenophobia, homophobia [if the victim/survivor is part of a sexual minority] and stigmatization”.⁶⁰ To those factors has also to be added transphobia.

Access to justice is and may be limited due to various reasons: language barriers, police indifference, lack of trust in authorities, costs, and the illegal or irregular status of the affected women. Hence, access has to be facilitated by the local authorities or special help provided through interpreters, funds or the proper registration of refugees and IDPs.

Protecting the “unprotected”

The protection of the rights of the minority and those who are made vulnerable, namely female refugees and IDPS, should not only be guaranteed by humanitarian aid workers, but foremost at the mind of the most powerful and therefore most protected.

Sexual violence against women in situations of displacement, as mentioned earlier, is not only of major humanitarian concern, but also foremost a human rights violation. Women and girls are protected by law and human rights-related instruments.

⁶⁰ Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, 2004, “Protecting at risk refugee survivors of sexual- and gender-based violence.”, page 10, Accessed online March 22 2017
https://www.hias.org/sites/default/files/hias_-_triple_jeopardy_-_full_report.pdf

The issue of their physical and protection was first raised in 1990 by the UNHCR through the *Policy on Refugee Women*⁶¹. In international humanitarian law, namely in the IV Geneva Convention “relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War”, female civilians in armed conflict are protected. Moreover, Article 27 of the same convention recalls that:

Women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any form of indecent assault.

Furthermore, Art. 76 “Protection of Women” of the First Additional Protocol stresses women’s outstanding position and need for protection in international armed conflict:

1. Women shall be the object of special respect and shall be protected in particular against rape, forced prostitution and any other form of indecent assault.
2. Pregnant women and mothers having dependent infants who are arrested, detained or interned for reasons related to the armed conflict, shall have their cases considered with the utmost priority.
3. To the maximum extent feasible, the Parties to the conflict shall endeavour to avoid the pronouncement of the death penalty on pregnant women or mothers having dependent infants, for an offence related to the armed conflict. The death penalty for such offences shall not be executed on such women.⁶²

Further, the statute of the International Criminal Court, also known as the *Rome Statute*, recognizes rape and other forms of violence against women as a war crime. Art. 8 (xxii) defines that:

Committing rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, as defined in article 7, paragraph 2 (f), enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence also constituting a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions...⁶³

⁶¹ UNHCR, 1990, *Policy on Refugee Women*, Accessed online March 24 2017
<http://www.unhcr.org/protection/women/3ba6186810/unhcr-policy-on-refugee-women-1990.html>

⁶² International Committee of the Red Cross, 1994, “Geneva Convention IV”, Accessed online March 20 2017:
<https://ihldatabases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Treaty.xsp?documentId=AE2D398352C5B028C12563CD002D6B5C&action=openDocument>

⁶³ International Criminal Court, 1998, “Rome Statute”, Accessed online March 20 2017:

In CEDAW's *General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict, prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations*⁶⁴, the Committee recommends that State parties:

(c) Engage with non-State actors to prevent human rights abuses related to their activities in conflict-affected areas, in particular all forms of gender-based violence...

And urges Non-State actors

- (a) To respect women's rights in conflict and post-conflict situations, in line with the Convention;
- (b) To commit themselves to abide by codes of conduct on human rights and the prohibition of all forms of gender-based violence.

United Nations Resolutions 1325 calls for protection against GBV and the rights of girls and women during armed conflict. *United Nations Resolution 1820* demands, inter alia, on all conflict parties to end sexual violence. Moreover, displaced women's rights are protected in the *The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*⁶⁵ (hereafter the Istanbul Convention) in Art 4 – Fundamental Rights, equality and non-discrimination, paragraph 3:

The implementation of the provisions of this Convention by the Parties, in particular measures to protect the rights of victims, shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or *refugee* status, or other status.

https://www.icc-cpi.int/nr/rdonlyres/ea9aeff7-5752-4f84-be94-0a655eb30e16/0/rome_statute_english.pdf

⁶⁴ CEDAW, 2013, General recommendation No. 30 on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations, Accessed online June 06 2017,

<http://www.ohchr.org/documents/hrbodies/cedaw/gcomments/cedaw.c.cg.30.pdf>

⁶⁵ Council of Europe, 2011, "Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence", Istanbul, Accessed online May 24 2017:

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>

Among important documents giving NGOs and IOs a guide in terms of protection of refugees and IDPs and prevention of SGBV, are the aforementioned *Sexual Violence against Refugees: Guidelines on Prevention and Response* published by the UNHCR in 1995 and also the UNHCR *Guidelines for the Prevention of and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons* (2003).

Chapter 2: Hitting the most inner core

...
So to his
frustration,
I gave my face
And now I'll never look the same.
Here in fractured mirrors,
I have found my place.
He said "Your look will never change.
You are not the one."⁶⁶
...

Wishing to understand violence in one of the most intimate spheres, namely between a husband (or male partner) and his wife (or female partner)⁶⁷, whose relationship, according to society's perception, is intended to be built upon love and goodwill towards each other, one has to acknowledge, perhaps most unexpectedly, that this type of relationship can be hurt in its most inner core.

For a more scientific and analytical approach of understanding, several factors have to be considered, such as the type of violence itself and the constellation in which it occurs. The society in question, cultural beliefs and institutional practices must be scrutinized (see Dobash, R. Emerson & Dobash, Russell⁶⁸). Gender-related stereotypes and education that are often closely linked to each other might play a decisive role as well. In addition, widespread constructed or

⁶⁶ This strophe is taken from the song 'You are not the one' by the band Windhaven. It tells the story of a wife who was physically and mentally abused by her husband. She concludes her monologue with the words "he is not the one" referring to the refrain of the song where he is telling her that "she is not the one".

Sadler, Victoria; Lovelace, Wicasta, "You are not the one", Accessed online May 5 2017; <http://www.windhaven.us/lyrics/youre-not-the-one/>

⁶⁷ Violence also occurs in homosexual partnerships.

⁶⁸ Dobash & Dobash, 1979 "Violence against wives. A case against the Patriarchy", The Free Press: New York, page 12. It may seem outdated to use a book of 1979 for a thesis in 2017, but the authors accurately describe IPV from a historical perspective and women's role in IPV and this was therefore chosen as a reference.

opposed thinking patterns should be considered as they might be decisive how a society tends to perceive *Intimate Partner Violence* (hereafter IPV).

Conversely, it must be stated that just indicating the background or personal characteristics of the perpetrator will not lead to a broader knowledge about his motives. For a in depth understanding of IPV and any other form of violence, it has to be embedded in the respective social and cultural context.

With regards to the focal society of this thesis, within the Ukrainian and other societies in Ukraine, the prevailing gender-stereotypes define the man as the dominating partner and place women in a submissive role in familial structures, which has to be considered while investigating women's silence with regard to IPV (see Chapter 3: "You do not talk about rape is the main message").

The concept of partnership and family, which is stereotypically considered and depicted as a safe haven by many parts of society, is however for many women and children the most violent group they can belong to. To some it may seem that getting beaten by someone close is less severe, whereas to affected individuals this constellation can be the most painful part of all.

Promoting a male-oriented ideology, creating a disproportionate power system between men and women, and the consequent subordination of women in societal and familial structures may lead men to commit violence against their female partners, as stated by feminist theorists like Dobash & Dobash:

The use of physical violence against women in their position as wives is not the only means by which they are controlled and oppressed but it is one of the most brutal and explicit expressions of patriarchal domination.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Dobash, & Dobash, 1979, page ix

Donna Coker states further:

Battering may be experienced as a personal violation but it is an act facilitated and made possible by societal gender inequalities. The batterer does not, indeed could not act alone. Social supports for battering include widespread denial of its frequency or harm, economic structures that render women vulnerable, and sexist ideology that holds women accountable for male violence and the emotional lives of families, and that fosters deference to male familial control.⁷⁰

She claims further that:

Batterers often use the political and economic vulnerability of women to reinforce their power and dominance over particular women. Thus, their dominance, or their attempts to dominance, are frequently bolstered by stigmatization of victims through the use of gender social norms that define the 'good' women (wife/mother).

Women's position within a family and partnership has been socially constructed and follows a linear pattern not only throughout different epochs but also through differing religious beliefs.

"Pater Familias!"

The strongest known patriarchy in history is that of the Roman family. The early Roman family⁷¹ was considered to be the most solid fundament in society at that time and was led by strong male structures. A Roman father's status and his power can be set out briefly in the following definition:

Patria potestas. The power of the head of a family over the members, i.e. his children, natural and adoptive, his wife. If the conclusions of the marriage were combined with *conventio in manum*, the wives of those sons remained under his power (under the same condition as with regard to his wife). Originally, unlimited in the judicial, economic, and moral

⁷⁰ Coker, Donna, 1991, "Enhancing Autonomy for Battered Women: Lessons from Navajo Peacemaking", 47 UCLA Law Review 1, page 39

⁷¹ After the Punic wars of the second century B.C., the patriarchal structures became more loose and women's and girls' education was attached with utmost of importance. They had even special rights for example inheriting property.

fields, the *patria potestas* gradually became a power in the interest of the person subject to it and was conceived as embracing moral duties (*officium*), such as protection, maintenance and assistance. ... Only the *ius vendendi*, i.e., the right to sell a child which made him a *persona in mancipio in rome*, and a slave when he was sold abroad, remained in force for a longer period. ...⁷²

The family members' destiny depended solely on the will of the father, as it was he who decided not only daily life matters but, for example, also on the marriage partners for his children and had the power to divorce them without their consent.

In contrast to boys whose manhood was celebrated about the age of seventeen and who from that moment on wore the toga of a man, for girls there was no such event to celebrate their womanhood. Girls were given in marriage at the age of twelve and were prepared to serve as wives in their early education. They were considered to be the property of their husbands.

Getting married was one of the few options girls had as there were no place for single women in the Roman society. Their attitude towards their husbands was considered to be one of obedience, which can be equally be understood as him enlarging his control over his wife. Personal rights for a woman were limited and any derivation punished severely, as for example the drinking of wine, which constituted the greatest offence a wife could commit. Divorce or death potential consequences of her "misbehaviour".⁷³

Women's subordinated role still exists in some societies today and is a mirror of her position in a partnership's hierarchy in the past, which requires examination in order to recognize *her* distorted picture.

⁷² Berger, Adolf, 1980, "Encyclopedic dictionary of Roman Law, Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, page 620

⁷³ See Dobash & Dobash, 1979, pages 34 ff

Beating her to her place throughout history

... Imaginatively she is of the highest importance, practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades poetry from covert to cover, she is all but absent from history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction; in fact she was slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring on her finger. Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts fall from her lips, in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband. ...⁷⁴

To answer the pressing question why in the majority of reported cases in particular women are the focus of male violence, it is useful to reflect on her (in)visibility and the various roles in society that were attributed to her throughout history. Dobash and Dobash state:

They were nameless, undifferentiated, undistinguished, and undistinguishable.⁷⁵

Despite “herstory” with violence being little mentioned and documented in “history” (and still in some societies in our time), that does not exclude that violence against wives of female partners existed and, as is known, still exists. Within “herstory”, the issue of combating IPV has only reached the public in the past in a few cases, as the one of Sarah Cantwell in 1776. Her husband published an advertisement in the local newspaper accusing her publicly of having run away and announced that his financial support had ended from that moment on. She courageously decided to reply to his accusation and punishment by clarifying the situation in the *South Carolina and American General Gazette*:

RETORT FROM A RUNAWAY WIFE

John Cantwell has the Impudence to advertise me in the papers, cautioning all Persons against crediting me; he never had any credit till he married me: As for his Bed and Board he mentioned, he had neither Bed

⁷⁴ Woolf, Virginia, 1974, “A room of one’s own“, page 66, 15th Edition, London: Hogarth.

⁷⁵ Dobash & Dobash, 1979, page 38

or Board when he married me. I never eloped, I went away before his face when he beat me.⁷⁶

Patriarchal thinking patterns and violence-related behaviour outlasted the male-dominated past and are rooted in the constructed *servicing, giving and receiving role of women* in the past. According to Dobash and Dobash, women were seen only through their relationship with men and in those roles they were allowed to (co-)exist for them as “mothers, daughters, lovers, whores and saints”.⁷⁷

Another concept which represented an obstacle for many women in order to rebel against the opposed patriarchy was the ideal of a family, which at that time was and may still be in some societies today, linked to personal privacy and with the rejection of interference in private matters by the outside.

Getting married to a man and subsequently being under his control was and still is in certain societies one of the few alternatives a woman had or has. Dobash and Dobash root the “seeds of wife beating in the subordination of females and in their subjection to male authority and control.”⁷⁸ This violent tendency can be further explained with the prevailing hierarchy in partnerships, namely husbands or male partners who consider themselves as superior and wives or female partners who are seen as inferior and categorized as subordinated.

*“The beginning is always today”*⁷⁹

This was stated by British feminist Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97), author of the book “The Vindication of the Rights of Women”, and it reminds us that

⁷⁶ apud Dobash & Dobash, 1979, page 4

⁷⁷ Dobash & Dobash, 1979, ibidem

⁷⁸ Dobash & Dobash, 1979, ibidem

⁷⁹ The Quotations Page. Accessed online June 8 2017:

<http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/31287.html>

women's struggle for equality is still ongoing today and has to be begun every day anew in order to be continued.

It may have been or be a sole woman who 'dared' or 'dares' to raise her voice, or a group of women who gather to speak out in order to raise awareness of their subjugated situation within their relationships with men. They usually not only protest against the IPV they suffer but also other urgent topics related to their equal status with men. These demands pertain to property rights, divorce, guardianship of children, and equal access to education or other fields related to inequality – relevant topics which must be heard through to the current day.

Deconstructing the unjustifiable

*Last night I heard the screaming
Loud voices behind the wall
Another sleepless night for me
It won't do no good to call
The police
Always come late
If they come at all
...
And when they arrive
They say they can't interfere
With domestic affairs
Between a man and his wife
And as they walk out the door
The tears well up in her eyes⁸⁰*

They [the police] say they can't interfere with domestic affairs between a man and his wife or violence becomes more acceptable in times of war are only two of several severe claims that wrongly enhanced and justified the acceptance of SGBV or other forms of violence as, for example, in the domestic sphere against

⁸⁰Chapman, Tracey, 1998, "Behind the walls", Accessed online on March 27 2017:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfeUZJwioio>

women, men⁸¹ and children, during interpersonal conflict, armed conflict or in the aftermath of armed conflict.

Global estimations by the World Health Organisation (hereafter WHO) of women affected of domestic violence are alarmingly high: about 1 in 3 (35%) women worldwide has experienced either physical and/or sexual IPV or non-partner sexual violence in her lifetime.⁸² According to Art 3b of the *Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* by the European Council:

“domestic violence” shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.⁸³

The given definition encompasses *Intimate Partner Violence* and *Violence in the domestic sphere*, which will be set out henceforth:

Intimate partner violence refers to behaviour by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours.⁸⁴

Whereas, *Violence in the domestic sphere*,

doesn't necessarily happen at the domicile, while harm at home is not exclusively inflicted by intimates. Some people's (temporary) homes are outside the family sphere, such as care centres, shelters, asylum, hospitals or prisons.⁸⁵

⁸¹ For the purpose of this thesis, the focus will put the focus only on intimate partner violence in heterosexual relationships. It occurs also in homosexual partnerships.

⁸² WHO, 2016, “Factsheet Violence against women November 2016”, Accessed online April 20 2017: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/>

⁸³ Council of Europe, 2011, “Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence“, Istanbul, Accessed online May 24 2017: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>

⁸⁴ WHO, 2016, ”Factsheet November 2016”, Accessed online April 20 2017: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/>

⁸⁵ Westendorp, Ingrid&Wollewinkel, Ria, 2005, “Violence in the domestic sphere”, Oxford: Intersentia, page 1

IPV affected and affects predominantly women who are pushed into weaker positions by their male abusers. In order to reconstruct indifference, gender discrimination and sexist convictions, one must consider prevailing stereotypes and gender stereotypes in a broader sense and their roots and outreach. To overcome these both male and female constructed ways of thinking, it is important to clarify as a first step what the roots of IPV by men are *not*, namely that the roots of IPV are not “poor communication skills, stress, anger, addiction, mental illness, financial status, unemployment, [the] other person’s behaviour and external events”.⁸⁶ To this list may be added no or a poor level of education, poverty, and a violent childhood or past.

Foremost, in order to dismantle the majority of those “myths”, it has to be made clear that IPV against women is committed in all educational-level, age-range, and socio-economic groups in society. Further, alcohol and drug abuse are not the major motive for violence, albiet that they may be the trigger for it. Sober men may become violent while when under the influence of alcohol they may not attack a woman. Men who grew up in violent homes and/or whom were subject to abuse themselves can be a risk group, but they do *generally* not become abusers themselves later.

The roots *for* committing IPV against women are, as already mentioned, related to gender stereotypes and discrimination on the grounds of sex. This type of violence aims at preventing women from equality with their male counterparts. It expresses dominance and control over the wrongly perceived “weaker sex”.

A lack of comprehension with regard to and ignorance of the difficult situation of affected women can lead to assumptions by outsiders of interpersonal conflict, including reflections like *She might have deserved it* or *It was her who*

⁸⁶ Erie County Coalition Against Family Violence, Accessed online May 29 2017: <http://www.eccafv.org/roots-of-domestic-violence/>

provoked the violence. The lack of empathy might also be the root for claiming that *She can leave the abuser if she only wanted to.*

Violence is a choice!?

*Alle Männer müssen kämpfen
sagten sie mir
Alle Männer müssen kämpfen
Das sag ich nur Dir
Viele Männer werden sterben
Und ich bet ich wär nicht dabei
Viele Männer werden sterben
Und wenn's mich trifft hoff ich Du verzeihst⁸⁷*

“They have become used to violence and consider it normal, so they continue to display this behaviour, this time with their families,” claims Aliona Subchenko⁸⁸ in explaining the violent attitude of former combatants in the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine towards their families. She is absolutely convinced that men’s violence is rooted in post-traumatic stress disorder (hereafter PTSD) and psychological trauma from war.

In 2016, 90,1% of the calls of men and women to the 24/7 helpline of “La Strada” concerned IPV. Furthermore, in 2016, “La Strada” received 706 calls which regarded the armed conflict and from those 20,5% of the families (including non-IDP families) where one member was fighting in the armed conflict and who as a consequence suffered from domestic violence.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Naidoo, Xavier, 2002, “Alle Männer müssen kämpfen“, Accessed online May 30 2017:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-TSzr8MTnqA>

Trans.: All man must fight / They said / All men must fight / This I tell only you / Many men wil die / And I pray It wasn't me / Many men will die / If they hit me, I hope you will forgive.

⁸⁸ Aliona Zubchenko is the spokesperson of Ukrainian leading women’s right organisation “La Strada” in Kyiv and reported about PTSD among male veterans from Eastern Ukraine Radio Free Europe, “Men Return Completely Changed’: Ukraine Conflict Fueling Surge In Domestic Violence“, 26.4.2015. Accessed online March 30 2017:

<http://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-conflict-domestic-violence/26979064.html>

⁸⁹ This information I was given during the Interview with Katerina Borosdina, 10.5. 2017.

Furthermore, since the helpline functions 24/7, more men called in the evening or during the night in 2016, reported Katerina Borosdina, the director of the department on Expertise, Monitoring and Legislation at “La Strada”.

If we consider that using violence is a choice one makes and not an effect or consequence of the above mentioned symptoms, the psychological consequences of such trauma will be scrutinized henceforth. Armed conflict has diverse effects on people’s physical integrity and their mental health. As physical damages are more visible than psychological ones, the consequences on the psyche are emphasized.

Besides PTSD, acute stress disorder and trauma-related depression are listed as being among the most frequent reactions to trauma from war. Clearly, the closer one witnesses a traumatic event, the more likely he/she will be to having to cope with the effects in the aftermath. If he/she had already been vulnerable due to insecure life conditions, the loss of a societal environment, or other destabilizing factors, he/she will be more at risk. All these mental disorders may have also an impact on the affected persons’ environment.

The WHO states that PTSD:

Arises as a delayed or protracted response to a stressful event or situation (of either brief or long duration) of an exceptionally threatening or catastrophic nature, which is likely to cause pervasive distress in almost anyone. Predisposing factors, such as personality traits (e.g. compulsive, asthenic) or previous history of neurotic illness, may lower the threshold for the development of the syndrome or aggravate its course, but they are neither necessary nor sufficient to explain its occurrence. Typical features include episodes of repeated reliving of the trauma in intrusive memories ("flashbacks"), dreams or nightmares, occurring against the persisting background of a sense of "numbness" and emotional blunting, detachment from other people, unresponsiveness to surroundings, anhedonia, and avoidance of activities and situations reminiscent of the trauma. There is usually a state of autonomic hyperarousal with hypervigilance, an enhanced startle reaction, and insomnia. Anxiety and depression are commonly associated with the above symptoms and signs, and suicidal ideation is not infrequent. The onset follows the trauma with a latency period that may range from a few weeks to months. The course is fluctuating but recovery can be expected in the majority of cases. In a small proportion of cases the condition

may follow a chronic course over many years, with eventual transition to an enduring personality change (F62.0).⁹⁰

Although violence is not directly mentioned in this broad definition, PTSD is often associated with it. The interrelationship between PTSD and aggression has been little examined in science (Taft, Kaloupek, Schumm, Marshall, Panuzio, King and Keane, 2007⁹¹), whereas a stronger link has been demonstrated between PTSD symptoms and measures of aggression (Byrne & Riggs⁹², 1996; McFall, Fontana, Raskind & Rosenheck, 1999⁹³). Further, the amount of physical aggression among male veterans affected by PTSD was higher than among those without the disorder (Beckham et al. 1997⁹⁴).

PTSD is often associated with alcohol, violence and aggression. A study among male veterans in alcohol rehabilitation indicated that in 39% of self-reported IPV over the year before, 20% of them reported severe assault.⁹⁵

Taft *et alia* hypothesized in their study (2007) that among the PTSD symptoms, hyperarousal would evidence the strongest association with aggressive behaviour. Furthermore, physiological reactivity and alcohol abuse were predicted to partially prove that link.

⁹⁰ WHO, Accessed online April 30 2017:

<http://apps.who.int/classifications/icd10/browse/2016/en - /F43.1>

⁹¹ Taft, Casey T. and Kaloupek, Danny G., Schumm, Jeremiah, A., Marshall, Amy D., Panuzio, Jillian, King, Daniel W. and Keane, Terence, M., 2007, *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, Vol. 116. No. 3, pages 498-507

⁹² Byrne, C.A. & Riggs, D.S., "The cycle of trauma: Relationship aggression in male Vietnam veterans with symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder", pages 213-225, 1996

⁹³ McFall, M., Fontana A., Raskind, M. & Rosenbeck, R., 1991, "Analysis of violent behavior in Vietnam combat veteran psychiatric inpatients with posttraumatic stress disorder", *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, Nr. 12, pages 501-517

⁹⁴ As a result of their study, it was demonstrated that approximately 75% of those affected of PTSD were more likely to commit aggression over the year before whereas 17% of veterans non suffering from PTSD with an average of less than one act during the year.

See Beckham, J.C., Feldman, M.E., Kirby, A.C., Hertzberg, M.A. & Moore, S.D., 1997, "Interpersonal violence and its correlates in Vietnam veterans with chronic posttraumatic stress disorder, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, Nr. 53, pages 859-869

⁹⁵ Gondolf, E. W. & Foster, R. A., 1991, "Wife assault among VA alcohol rehabilitation patients", *Hospital and Community Psychiatry*, Nr. 42, pages 74-79

Some 1,168 US male veterans who had served in the Vietnam war between August 1964 and May 1975 participated in a multisite trial organised by the Cooperative Studies Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs. In a first step, the candidates were psychophysiologicaly tested and analysed. PTSD symptoms were classified according to the PTSD module of the Structured Clinical Interview for the DSM-III-R (SCID).⁹⁶ Alcohol abuse was examined by the CAGE questionnaire that assesses the individual's drinking behaviour and its effects. Aggression was measured by the use of a six-item method including verbal aggression ("threatened someone with physical violence without a weapon"; "threatened someone with a weapon"; "was verbally abusive") and physical aggression ("destroyed property"; "had a physical fight with someone"; used a weapon against someone"). After the test and the assessments, the male veterans underwent a psychophysiological challenging task: first, they were required to sit quietly during a 10-minute resting period, which was followed by a mental arithmetic task that was aimed to serve as a stressor. After a 5-minute rest period, they were presented six standardized still images with natural scenes and listened to a musical soundtrack. After another 5-minute rest period, they saw six standardized images of combat in Vietnam and listened to a matching soundtrack, for example, helicopter sound or gun shots. In a further step, they listened alternately to scripts and then rested again for 5 minutes twice. (Two of the scripts were neutral, the other were trauma-related scripts.) During the tasks, the heart rate and skin conductance were measured.

The results of the study proved the initial hypothesis. It confirmed that the association between the hyperarousal cluster and aggression was given to a large

⁹⁶ The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders is a set of standard criteria for the classification of mental disorders and is published by the American Psychiatric Association. The DSM-III-R is the forth version of it and was revised in 1987. Accessed online June 8 2017:

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diagnostic_and_Statistical_Manual_of_Mental_Disorders

extent. There was medium to large connection between the re-experiencing and the PTSD symptoms of avoidance and numbing.

IPV – a private matter?

The close relationship between women and their abusers can sometimes make it difficult to turn the private side of the relationship into a public matter, namely in making the name of the perpetrator known. According to the EU-wide survey *Violence against women* by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, violence against women and domestic violence go *underreported* and *unreported*.⁹⁷

Following this stony path, courageous women may encounter *several types of obstacles* that are aimed at rendering them weak and powerless, namely by shifting the unjustifiable blame from the perpetrator to the victim: *self-blame* is a particularly frequent feeling of victims of SGBV. It gives them the impression that, for example, *their* behaviour was the decisive factor in getting raped or beaten and therefore makes them guilty, although it was the perpetrator who committed the crime and must be considered as the responsible party. Additionally, they may face *victim-blaming*, which follows the same mechanism – fooling the victim. Frequently, abused women have to listen to reactions or questions like, “Was there alcohol involved?”⁹⁸, “Did you do anything that could have been misinterpreted?”⁹⁹, “Did you say anything back?”¹⁰⁰ and similar other comments aimed at reducing the deed.

⁹⁷ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014, “Violence against women: an EU-wide survey”, Accessed online April 20 2017:

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>

⁹⁸ Bustle. Accessed online June 30 2017: <https://www.bustle.com/articles/153879-8-common-comments-that-are-really-examples-of-victim-blaming>

⁹⁹ Bustle. Accessed online June 30 2017: <https://www.bustle.com/articles/153879-8-common-comments-that-are-really-examples-of-victim-blaming>

Secondary victimization is a phenomenon, which is used as a silencer by authorities, health workers, or other help-providing institutions. Affected women who speak out may be punished with negative comments so that in the end they decide not to disclose the incident at all. This might be a particular painful experience for women who hoped to find trust in those who are supposed to help them whereas they fail in their reaction.¹⁰¹

“*Women who love too much*”

*Hopefully this book will be of help for anyone,
who loves too much,
but it is primarily written for women
because loving too much
is primarily a (sic!) female phenomenon.¹⁰²*

“*Women who love too much*” is the title of a self-help book (1985) by US-American marriage and family therapist Robin Norwood¹⁰³, who tries to elucidate the reasons why women stay with abusive partners. It contains several stories of women and juggles with gender-related stereotypes and displays women as weak victims who love too much or feel attracted by the “wrong” type of men.

Norwood tells us that it is *again women* who are condemned to suffer from their self-sacrificing love, *women* who tend to blame themselves for loving their partners too much, and it is *again women* who are suffering. One might assume

¹⁰⁰ Bustle. Accessed online June 30 2017: <https://www.bustle.com/articles/153879-8-common-comments-that-are-really-examples-of-victim-blaming>

¹⁰¹ See Ahrens, Courtney E., 2006, “Being Silenced: The impact of negative social reactions on the disclosure of rape“, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, pages 263-274, Accessed online April 24 2017:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1705531/>

¹⁰² Norwood, Robin, 2009, “*Women who love too much*”, Arrow Books: London, page 4

¹⁰³ Norwood, 1997, further published “*Daily meditations for women who love too much*”, Tarcher Perigee: New York

that it is *solely women* who are sick. That leads to the false impression that abusive partnerships are solely a “women’s” issue, although most of the perpetrators are men.

Those outside a conflict might put the seemingly obvious question as to why women *do not just leave the perpetrator*. Affected women would probably enumerate a list of individual answers and make the person not involved in the problem understand that their decisions are motivated by different factors. Those reasons are often linked to some women’s weaker financial situation, personal fears, the partner’s manipulative behaviour, missing language skills, her illegal status etc.¹⁰⁴

GBV and IPV among female IDPs from Eastern Ukraine

“War is this phenomenon which exposes violence and hides violence to that extent that civilians and people who never saw war now see totally different things in warzones and other places. I think that there is a difference between women who live in their homes with their families and women who had to flee and to live in place where they would not like to live. That is why we decided to investigate this phenomenon and put the emphasis on women.”

This explanation by Julija Zarevskaja, coordinator of the project ‘Mobilisation of IDP women against Domestic and Gender-Based violence’¹⁰⁵ within the All-Ukrainian Charitable Organisation “Konviktus”¹⁰⁶, outlines the major reasons behind the conduction of the Analytical Report (AR) about the issue of

¹⁰⁴ Making the list of reasons complete in order to make the difficult reasons of women heard seems to be impossible, but this table by the National Center for Domestic and Sexual Violence might cover a lot of them: Accessed online April 24 2017:

http://www.ncdsv.org/images/50_Reasons_Women_Dont_Leave.pdf

¹⁰⁵ Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa, 2016, “Analytical report“

¹⁰⁶ All-Ukrainian Charitable Organisation “Konviktus“, Accessed online May 18 2017: www.convictus.org.ua

concern.¹⁰⁷ The above-mentioned project aims to be a reaction to the challenges that IDPs are currently facing and aims to help reduce the cases of violence towards women in Ukrainian society in general.¹⁰⁸ It reaches out to women in 10 regions of Ukraine. The AR is implemented in cooperation with the Analytical Centre “Socioconsulting” and financed by the European Commission for a time span between 2016 and 2018.

The research objective of the AR included the assessment of the “incident level of different types and consequences, analysis of mobilization potential among women on the level of the public and their readiness to counter different forms of violence.”¹⁰⁹ The methodological basis consisted of quantitative (structured interviews with female IDPs) and qualitative sociological methods (in-depth interviews with experts). The information was collected in regional centres and smaller towns and districts of 10 regions of Ukraine that host the most IDPs. The AR was conducted between 13 May and 20 June 2016, with 1,003 female IDPs interviewed.

The expert interviews were conducted with representatives of the Ukrainian state authorities, local authorities working in the field of social policy, representatives of international NGOs and foundations dealing with IDP issues and IDPs affected by violence, and regional and local non-governmental organisations assisting in the counter-violence field.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Zarevskaja and others issued the topic of GBV and IPV in the radio show “Donbass Realii” at the Ukrainian radio station of “Radio Svoboda“. Donbass Realii, ”Nasilie nad shenschinami v semyach pereselenzev. Chto delat’?”, Radio show from 16.9.2017, Accessed online March 13 2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6gQCJH56ic>

¹⁰⁸ Project “Mobilisation of IDP women against Domestic and Gender-Based violence”, Accessed online May 18 2017: <http://www.convictus.org.ua/en/mobilization-idp-women-against-domestic-and-gender-based-violence>

¹⁰⁹ See Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa, 2016, “Analytical report“, page 2

¹¹⁰ For more information on the experts and their field of expertise see Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa, 2016, “Analytical report“, page 4

The authors of the report draw particular attention its major limitation¹¹¹, namely the low level of confidence in the sincerity amongst the interviewed women, due to several reasons. Firstly, the interviewers reported that the affected women were indeed interested in the topic of study but showed a lack of trust, suspicion, and sometimes fear. Furthermore, during the interviews, some women showed psychological difficulties due to traumatic events in the past. Not all of the interviewed IDPs were willed to speak about family issues, not least due to the impact on a possible return to their homes in the occupied area.

At the time of the AR, the majority of the anonymously polled female IDPs were between 30 - 39 years old (36%). The second largest group, 22%, were constituted by 40 - 40 years old IDPs. Women of 18- 29 years old and those 50 years and older were both 21%. The majority (56%) of the women interviewed have a higher education and level of qualifications: 61% have fled the Donetsk region, a third (31%) from the Luhansk region.

The right to obey?

Despite strong gender-related stereotypes in Ukrainian society, only 23% agreed to the idea that a “Good wife must always listen to her husband even if she disagrees with him”; 73% disagreed. Some 75% thought that “Family issues must be discussed only within the family circle”, while 23% did not share this opinion. Alarmingly, 75% agreed to the idea that “Other people must not intervene in conflicts between husband and wife”, which reflects the tendency to not make a private issue a public concern as previously stated.

¹¹¹ Another limitation constituted to form a fully representative sample due to the selection of particular populated areas and the lack of statistical data on the number of female IDPs from Anti-terrorist operation (ATO) regions.

The majority of women expressed their opinion clearly as far as physical violence by their husband was concerned: 98% disagreed with the idea that a husband has the right to beat his wife if she refuses a sexual relationship with him. To the same extent they disagreed on violence for reasons including “if she did not obey him” and if “he is dissatisfied by how she performs her household responsibilities”; 97% considered that a husband’s suspicion of adultery were not as a motive for IPV; and 92% disagreed violence was acceptable if “he finds out she is not faithful to him”.

A similar negative perception of sexual violence was observed. While 94% agreed that a “wife can refuse sexual relationship with her husband if she feels unwell/sick”, 30% thought that “a wife should not refuse a sexual relationship with her husband”. Nearly all questioned women (93%) agreed with the idea that a “wife can refuse a sexual relationship with her husband if he is drunk”, 5% disagreed and 2% opted for “hard to tell”. With the statement that a “wife can refuse sexual relationship with her husband if he treats her badly”, 94% agreed.

Breaking out of circles

The authors of the AR claim to investigate what are superficially called *main reasons and precipitating factors of domestic violence and GBV* among female IDPs, which in this thesis will be considered as *stones laid in women’s ways to independence*. Some of them regard the current societal situation in Ukraine, and are more like massive rocks that might be overcome in another time but beyond which might be a transformed society. A reason for the change in labelling is to ensure a change in perspective, as to call them obstacles sees them as something that can be overcome, and should be seen as chances, which must be taken in order to achieve change.

It will be here claimed that the authors of the AR themselves were caught by prevailing stereotypes and that the list of “social” and “personal factors” enumerated in the report are not reasons but rather circumstances, consequences and socially motivated constructions and perceptions of violence in armed conflict. For example, supporting the idea that violence is always a choice, it is highly questionable why the economically unstable situation Ukraine is currently facing should be the *reason* for domestic violence. An explanation might be fear of the unsure future, which may lead to tension and then aggression, but then violence is still a consequence but not the reason. By stating that personal factors for GBV and domestic violence include the economic and legal state of the individual (loss/change of employment, low income, material dependence, status of IDPs) the authors mistakenly link violence to those factors in a stereotypical way of blaming the circumstances and not the individual, who is the one who actually makes the choice to commit violence.

Further, another “reason” for GBV, namely the “Absence of effective realization of the State policies on gender equality or violence prevention” must be scrutinized as well: truly, it should be the State’s major role to take over those kind of tasks, but also the responsibility of the individual citizen to critically reflect on it and promote it. A valid argument is that female IDPs especially can find it difficult to leave their abusive husbands, as she may find herself in an unknown or little-known environment – notably in rural areas where public transport is scarce, with limited opportunities to get away. Additionally, the numbers of shelters¹¹² for abused women is limited in Ukraine: they are mostly non-governmental led and function only until there is international or national financing. Governmental shelters do not exist in five Ukrainian regions and in the others is there is usually only one in each region. They tend to be overcrowded and when an affected woman needs a place she usually does not

¹¹² The information about the shelters for affected women in Ukraine I got during an expert interview with Katerina Borosdina on May 10 2017.

get one. Find a place for a woman with a child is even harder, as those places are very limited. This situation has not emerged recently but has been pressing for several years, even before the outbreak of the armed conflict.

In the context of IPV in Ukraine, education and family models play a crucial role as is indicating in the following statement: “My grandfather beat my grandmother, my father beat my mother, so I will beat my wife. And they think it is ok to do so they used to live this way”.¹¹³

Another “reason” that does not really exist but which is indicated in the AR as a “reason” for GBV and domestic violence is women’s “lack of understanding/knowledge on the fact the woman suffers from violence.”¹¹⁴ This missing piece in women’s awareness regarding their own perception of violence should be rather handled as an alarming reason for them not reporting violence and for their silence.

The authors also see “important reasons” for GBV in the low level of legal consciousness and informational awareness regarding violence in Ukrainian society. Again, the focus is shifted to the circumstances and not to the individual, which must be the decisive reason for society’s lack of awareness for violence. Not being aware of the diffusion of violence and women’s oppressed position in it, might – in a next step – lead to widespread victim-blaming as it is common in the society in regard (see Chapter 3: “You do not talk about rape is the main message”).

Another deeply concerning statement by an expert is that, “When the woman is independent, she will not suffer from violence inside the family. Factors which

¹¹³ Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa, 2016, “Analytical report“, ibidem

¹¹⁴ See Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa, 2016, “Analytical report“, ibidem

influence the independence include both [sic!] work, economic independence from the husband, desire to develop oneself, self-education, hobby, when a person lives a full life. These factors will hold back aggression towards this woman's life."¹¹⁵ Surely, economic independence increases a woman's chances to be able to leave an abusive partner, but considering her independence as a sole reason for him not committing violence against her is rather unrealistic and gives a romanticised idea of the "independent woman". It is here further doubted that the mentioned factors will hold back his aggression, which might be rooted in various other motivations.

A particularly vulnerable group is represented by those female IDPs who live in rural areas, as their access to information and social services are limited. Legal services, for example getting divorced, are out of reach, especially when they are economically dependent on their husband and a divorce would mean losing her house and property.

Another vulnerable group are teenagers who, if victims of GBV report, are often not being believed due to their inferior position in age and status. Experts report that they would most worry about their credibility as they believe in a lower value of their words against the ones of an "influential man".¹¹⁶

Violence and its perception in IDP families

Due to the diverging perception of violence by the different groups of IDPs, it is difficult to draw general lines. The most vulnerable group is considered to be those families where a member fought in the ATO zone and who consequently

¹¹⁵ See Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa, 2016, "Analytical report", ibidem

¹¹⁶ Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa, 2016, "Analytical report", page 16

after demobilization, suffers from PTSD causing violence in his family. According to the authors of the AR, Ukraine has not provided rehabilitation programs for war veterans, but requires them in order to reduce the level of violence within the most inner core of society.

The opinions amongst the polled women tend to be divided as far as the link between the increase of violence in families or partnership and the conflict in the eastern regions of the country is regarded. According to half of them (48%), the armed conflict has had a negative impact on the frequency of conflicts inside families. During the interviews, others reported to have felt stronger solidarity in the family because of the developments in the East. About 47% of the polled women indicate that disputes inside the families “very often” end in violence.

Investigating their own perception towards a man’s right to commit power, a large minority of the interviewed women (43%) clearly believed that, “violence cannot be justified by any means”. More than a quarter (28%) shared the opinion that, “I think that violence can be sometimes justified. It depends on every specific situation”. There we still 4% who tended to think, “Sure, violence can be justified. Usually, women themselves provoke violence.”

Differentiating the types of violence

As a lack of knowledge and low awareness of violence in general is missing or considered as a normal practice for married life or the relationship between sexes, the AR aimed to differentiate violence clearly in order to get a broader picture of the type of violence women suffer.¹¹⁷ The results show a high level of GBV among female IDPs: 61% of the polled women indicated to have suffered

¹¹⁷ Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa, 2016, “Analytical report“, page 16

one of the indicated types of violence during the conflict and 56% after displacement. Psychological abuse was indicated as the most common form of abuse before (50%) and after displacement (57%), and sexual abuse as the less frequent form (11%) after relocation from the conflict areas.

Frequency of IPV and its types

The most frequent offender is the women's intimate partner. According to the results of the AR, every 8th women has suffered IPV from her current partner (13%). Before displacement, more than three quarters of the violent incidents by the current partner concerned insults and humiliation (82%): 19% of the polled women indicated they had been psychologically abused and 16% physically abused; 10% reported having been restricted in their social circle or in communication with close people; 12% were faced with inappropriate comments or actions of a sexual character; and 10% suffered from sexual abuse. After displacement some types of violence increased, as for example insults and humiliation increased by 8% up to 39% and psychological abuse increased by 7%.

Over a quarter of the polled women (27%) faced violence by their ex-husbands during the conflict. The prevailing types of violence by the ex-husband/partner before displacement was insult and humiliation (60%) and physical abuse (40%). Some 39% said they had been psychologically abused and 33% to have been blackmailed, threatened and bullied.

After the displacement, the number of women who experienced IPV by their ex-partners decreased (8%), which can be explained by the termination of the

partnership due to relocation.¹¹⁸ Some 65% reported to have been insulted and humiliated, 27% suffered from psychological abuse and 15% from physical abuse.

Factors for IPV

The authors of the AR argue that the financial situation of the household and the pressing economic situation of an IDP family are key-factors for the emergence of domestic violence. Every 5th of the polled women assumes that violence was caused by the problematic living conditions faced by the family due to displacement, whereas every 7th interviewed female IDP considers the reason for violence is to do with the difficult distribution of household duties. The authors also draw attention to the fact that female victims do not link the reasons for aggressive behaviour with the influence of combat operations, a tendency in thinking patterns that as a consequence, according to the authors, confirms “the theory that gender-based violence remains deeply-rooted inside the Ukrainian society and is accepted by the citizens as something normal of day-to-day routine.”¹¹⁹

Action to reaction?

According to the results of the AR, just 10% of the polled women who had faced a form of violence called the police. This can be further interpreted as mistrust in the authorities.¹²⁰ The same percentage “tried to call/called for help”.

¹¹⁸ See Table 5.2 psych.1 in Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa, 2016, “Analytic report”

¹¹⁹ Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa, 2016, “Analytical report”, page 34

¹²⁰ See Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa, 2016, “Analytical report”, page 36

The majority opted for passive behavioural strategies: 30% indicated that they “did nothing”; 31 % of them “tried to defuse the conflict, calm down the offender”; at least 26% defended themselves with shouting and yelling; and 22% indicated they suffered and cried.

Another indicator of women’s silent suffering is the low proportion of women who disclosed the incident to a relative or a family member, namely only 12%.

Why there is mostly silence about GBV in Ukrainian society

According to the authors of the AR, the major reason for women remaining silent is attached to the influence of long-standing public views on gender-based violence issues. As an exemplar for silence, 32% of the interviewed women replied that they “did not see anything special in this situation or consider it normal” or thought that they “could deal with the consequences by themselves”.

The fear of having the blame shifted to them made 9% of women not talk about the violent experience and every 6th woman reported to have been too embarrassed to tell anyone. Some 10% did not know whom to ask for help.

More than the half of the women, namely 63%, indicated they had disclosed the situation. They confided with a female or male friend (31%) or with a parent (23%). (For further elaboration on this topic, see Chapter 3: “You do not talk about rape is the main message”.)

“Kyiv is far from Istanbul”

While the Istanbul Convention is based on the four “Ps”, namely *Prevention*, *Protection* and support of victims, *Prosecution* of the offender and *Integrated Policies*, the Ukrainian parliament, the *Verchovnaja Rada*, is still struggling

with the four “Gs”: Gender, Gender identity, Gender-based violence and Gender-orientation. These four terms in the Convention, which was signed by Ukraine in November 2011, represented an obstacle during the process of ratification in November 2016, which has not been conducted successfully. The opinions regarding the ratification are divergent in the parliament and even among members of the same party: Ukraine must agree to several European values but “not completely with those which destroy the foundations of Christianity, namely in our state”, argued Jurij Solovej, deputy and member of the leading party Petro Poroschenko Block. He continued, “that the norms of the Istanbul Convention destroy the Ukrainian identity”.¹²¹ Irina Suslova, deputy and member of the same party and moreover head of the Subcommittee of the Supreme Council of Ukraine on Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination, supports the ratification of the Convention by stating: “We will insist that the international document will be ratified in that way as it has been ratified by other member states of the Council of Europe. Either it is ratified that way or this is not considered to be a ratification.”¹²²

¹²¹ Information Agency Unian, 17.11.2016, “Rada ne ratifizirovala Stambulskuju Konvenziju is-sa togo, chto ee normy “rasruschajut” ukrainskuju identichnost“, Accessed online May 24 2017: <https://www.unian.net/politics/1629767-rada-ne-ratifikirovala-stambulskuju-konventsiju-iz-za-togo-chto-ee-normyi-razrushayut-ukrainskuyu-identichnost.html>

¹²² Levij Bereg, 26.4.2017, “Bes slova “gender” Stambulkaja konvenzija ne budet schitatsja ratifizirovannoj – Suslova.”, Accessed online May 24 2017: https://lb.ua/news/2017/04/26/364883_bez_slova_gender_stambulkaya.html

3. Chapter “You do not talk about rape is the main message”¹²³

*I suffer not a woman, to teach,
nor to usurp authority over the man,
but to be in silence.
(Timotheus 2:12)¹²⁴*

During my fieldtrip to Eastern and Central Ukraine from 29.4. to 13.5. 2017, I met not only experts from international organisations like the UNCHR, the Gender-subcluster of the UNDP, the OSCE and the local women’s rights-related NGOs, including Konviktus and La Strada, but also activists in the field. Despite my preliminary search for female IDPs from eastern Ukraine who have suffered IPV and the help of well-known Ukrainian feminists, only one woman had the courage to talk with me about her experience, which I will share hereafter. Maybe, the other women’s decision not to speak is an answer to their silence as well and must be observed.

“Прости меня!”¹²⁵

32-year old Viktorija is an IDP from the small town Shaktshersk in the Donetsk region and until her displacement in July 2014 to Svjatohirsk, she performed a leading role in the local government. She is currently working as a legal consultant for the charity fund ‘Slavic heart’, which is also based in Svjatohirsk and deals with IDPs from eastern Ukraine and issues including SGBV.

Viktorija is the only breadwinner of her family and a mother of two. She is living in a temporary accommodation in Svjatohirsk with her partner V. and her children, and will soon move to a bigger apartment. Viktorija lost her third child in the sixth month of pregnancy due to the distress of the ongoing armed conflict.

¹²³ Vikhrest, Antonina, “All-enveloping silence persists around rape in Ukraine conflict“, blog entry, 15.1.2015, Accessed online May 06 2017:

<http://www.womenundersiegeproject.org/blog/entry/all-enveloping-silence-persists-around-rape-in-ukraine-conflict>

¹²⁴ apud Reinharz, 1994, page 181

¹²⁵ Trans.: Forgive me!

She reported that her partner V. is continuously pressuring her for money. He would repeatedly criticise her for the little amount she is giving him, which he would mostly spend on alcohol.

V. used to work as a fireman but was later deployed as a saviour for the Ukrainian Ministry of Emergency. According to Viktorija, he suffered from two psychoses and was diagnosed with schizophrenia: not only once, he tried to jump out of the window. His psychological problems are rooted in the traumatic events he suffered during his work as a saviour after Malaysian Airline flight 7 was shot down over Ukrainian territory. He often reported not being able to forget the shocking images of dead people and the terrible smell on the field. He is currently unemployed and according to Viktorija shows a high level of alcohol abuse.

Viktorija reported to have experienced IPV in a previous relationship and further indicated that she never will forget the first fight she had with her then partner. He called her on the phone that time because he felt sick due to massive alcohol abuse. She consequently bought medicine and drove to him. There he called her a дыра, an idiot, for not having brought her money and offended her with swear words she had “never heard before“. She left him after this incident.

She reported to have once visited her current partner in his apartment on the 4th floor in 2010. After a fight, she left his flat. As she was on the second floor, she suddenly felt someone striking her head so that for a short period of time she lost coordination. The aggressive act came from her partner who consequently pulled her by her long hair back to his apartment. There, he put her hands around her neck and told her: “Forgive me!”

Currently, he often comes home drunk and feels the need to destroy objects. He

further frightens the children with his disturbing behaviour. During one night, her daughter was telling him to go away and was crying so loudly that the neighbours called the police. As they arrived V. calmed down and “behaved”. She herself tried several times to call the police in severe situations but V. tried to beat her and took her phone and did not give it back to her.

She considers it important to call the police in case of emergency and to appeal to her partner to have respect in the future. She is convinced that even if her partner killed her, he would be punished for that and that his deed would not be justified. She recommends that the police should raise awareness of violence with youth, young families, and other groups.

With regards to making domestic violence a topic of a broader public discussion, she would not be afraid to do so, but would perhaps feel a bit uncomfortable about it. According to her words, her negative feeling is rooted in a fear of being condemned for that by V.’s relatives. She describes them as people who would frighten her, as for example V.’s father, who once, when he was drunk, took an ax and shouted at his family members: “I will kill you!” She said that this would be “more or less normal” behaviour, as he is the only breadwinner in the family, but she does not consider it to be normal, albeit that she says, “It is their life”. She would not want a life like that, she adds.

Viktorija is not afraid of society’s stereotypical manner of blaming the victim for violence. She further argues that they would not be in the right, but she would be. She told her colleagues at work about her problems with her partner and they did not condemn her.

She considers the question who is guilty in IPV rhetorical and further outlines that at the beginning of a relationship, partners should clarify why are they

entering in a relationship and the fundamentals they are building it on so that there can coexist respect, tolerance and so on. She blames society for the wrong perception of violence, which is rooted in education in the family through to kindergartens and schools.

If her partner was not mentally ill, she would leave him. Viktorija furthermore would not consider the situation she is in as “terrible”, as she can stand it, she says. She would not describe their relationship with the word “love” but rather “pity” and wishes him a better girlfriend. She is convinced that time will show how their relationship will proceed.

Silence or silenced?

“You do not talk about rape is the main message“¹²⁶, stated Tatyana Lokshina, Russian Program Director and senior researcher for Human Rights Watch as she draws attention to women's silent and widespread suffering with only a few words. She further points out that despite some positive changes in gender roles in recent years in former Soviet countries, like the Russian Federation and Ukraine, stereotypes around sexualized violence still prevail. Geography might influence this trend, as while in relatively big cities like Kyiv, Moscow or Saint Petersburg clocks may tick faster than in towns or rural regions, in other areas social progress is slower. Women’s financial independence from their husbands or partners may also influence the reduction of gender-related stereotypes, but when it comes to their silence about violence, the motives behind it tend to be common to all of them, as also reported by local experts and activists later described in this chapter.

¹²⁶ Vikhrest, Antonina, 15.1.2015, “All-enveloping silence persists around rape in Ukraine conflict“, blog entry, Accessed online May 06 2017: <http://www.womenundersiegeproject.org/blog/entry/all-enveloping-silence-persists-around-rape-in-ukraine-conflict>

According to Lokshina, women who survived GBV mostly fear *victim-blaming* and *stigma*. “The main for a missing public discourse is rooted in *society’s tendency to give the fault to the victim,*” explains the expert.

By shifting the blame to women’s behaviour and taking their voice away, how the accusing part of the society narrows their ability in *expressing their individual experience* is also explained by Reinharz:

Disregard for individual differences is a fundamental ingredient in the dynamics of oppression. Oppression relies on the ability to subdue diversity.¹²⁷

Wishing to understand women’s silence not only about domestic violence but violence in general, requires asking women directly and the ability to undertake this. Approaching their silence is a first step, which requires affected women deciding to break it, states Reinharz:

When women are no longer afraid, they *will* speak up; in order not be afraid, women *must* speak up.¹²⁸

Investigating their silence in a scientific way requires a researcher to have knowledge about the given silence beforehand, namely from at least one affected woman who spoke up. She might become a role model for other women to find their courage and share their stories in order to gain a broader understanding of their suffering. This information might be the “spark” for investigations through journalistic articles, whose authors perceive themselves as the “fourth power” in a state with a duty to elucidate hidden and alarming consequences of war. An example of this is human rights advocate Antonina Vikhrest, who as a guest blogger in the online journalist project “WMC Women

¹²⁷ Reinharz, 1994, page 181

¹²⁸ Reinharz, 1994, page 182

under Siege”¹²⁹ has investigated the reasons for women's disclosure about GBV in Ukraine in 2015.

*#янебоюсьсказати*¹³⁰

“Я хочу, аби сьогодні говорили ми, жінки. Аби ми говорили про насильство, яке пережила більшість з нас. Я хочу, аби ми не оправдувалися “я йшла у спортивках серед дня, а мене все одно схопили”. Бо нам не треба оправдуватися. Ми не винні, винен ЗАВЖДИ насильник. Я не боюсь говорити. І я не почуваюся винною.”¹³¹

Thus posted Ukrainian social activist and journalist Anastasia Melnichenko on her Facebook profile in 2016, which as a consequence became the hashtag *#янебоюсьсказати* in Ukraine, Russia and Belorussia, and through which hundreds of women and men openly spoke out about the GBV that they suffered in the past or just recently. Many international journalists picked up her initiative and spread women’s stories.¹³²

Writing about violence requires the ability of affected women to be *heard*. In contrast to being seen, which is rather a more passive human sense, having a voice and using it is doubtlessly active. Posting a strong message on Facebook, *which can be shared, reposted and commented on, gives volume to women’s*

¹²⁹ Women under Siege Project, Accessed online May 06 2017:

www.womenundersiegeproject.org

¹³⁰ Trans.: #Iamnotafraidoftelling

¹³¹ Trans.: I want that today we women speak. That we speak about violence, which the majority of us suffered. I want that we do not justify ourselves: “I walked in shorts in broad daylight and they still assaulted me.” Because you do not need to justify yourself. We are not guilty, guilty is ALWAYS the rapist. I am not afraid of telling. And I do not feel guilty.

¹³² Walker, Shaun, 8.7.2016, “Russian and Ukrainian women’s sexual abuse stories go viral”, in The Guardian, Accessed online: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/08/russian-ukrainian-women-sexual-abuse-stories-go-viral>

Lokot, Tetyana, 5.7.2016, “#IAMNotAfraidToSayIt: Ukrainian Social Media Users Break the Silence on Sexual Violence“, in Global Voices, Accessed online May 7 2017:

<https://globalvoices.org/2016/07/05/iamnotafraidtosayit-ukrainian-social-media-users-break-the-silence-on-sexual-violence/>

Lettera D, 12.7.2016, “Non hanno più paura di parlare“, Accessed online May 7 2017:

<http://letteradonna.it/246480/molestie-sessuali-racconti-donne-russia-ucraina-facebook/>

voices until which point had previously *not been recognized* and increases the chance to be heard and seen.

Listening to the silence of female IDPs from Eastern Ukraine

Approaching female IDPs from eastern Ukraine required patience and the ability to cope with frustration as their disclosure will not come easily or at all.¹³³ Nevertheless, with the precious help of experts from various NGOs and charity organisations in the country's capital Kyiv and Svyatohirsk in eastern Ukraine, which either closely work with IDPs or are committed to women-related issues, and a few activists from Donbas, I managed to gain a broader understanding of the topic in question.

Speaking is silver, silence is golden?!

Being silent about a certain issue may also be a decision to keep the reason behind secret. Further, falling silent may be the reaction to a traumatic event. Not talking may be understood as hesitation. Silence can be a sign of approval or disapproval and/ or can further lead to misunderstanding. It can be imposed when using one's voice might not be appreciated.

Female IDPs may not be deaf nor mute, but their silence is an answer that is rooted in several reasons.

¹³³ Despite the help of well-known Ukrainian feminists and activists, who spread my search in social media during my field trip to Kyiv from the 29 April to 13 May and before my arrival, I could find not one affected woman who was available for a brief interview.

Personal reasons

“Говорить о домашнем насилии всем у нас женщин сложно. Эта тема у нас закрыта.”¹³⁴ states Lydia Kozub, leader of the program “Countering violence and human trafficking” at All-Ukrainian Charitable Organisation “Konviktus“, which indicates women’s behaviour towards speaking up about domestic violence.

Another personal reason for choosing silence over words is shame, reports Tetyana Rudenko, a Human Security Program Manager at the OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine. It might be quite difficult to acknowledge that you are a successful person outside your house, but harassed within, she reports.

Economic reasons

The majority of the experts interviewed indicated that financial dependence on the male counterpart in their relationship is one of the main reasons for abused female IDPs not wanting or being able to leave their abusive partners. Similar to many other societies, men in Ukraine still earn more than women or are the only breadwinner, and by moving out of their common home, her economic situation might deteriorate to the extent that leaving him would be really difficult.

Geographical reasons

According to Kozub, the enduring silence about domestic violence is also linked to the characteristics of women’s origin location, namely eastern regions of the country. Their inhabitants tend to be more “closed”, mostly because their homes were closer to Russian Federation. They tended to go there frequently. Further,

¹³⁴ Trans.: Talking about domestic violence is for all of us women difficult. This topic is hidden inside us.

people living in the East would have a more post-Soviet way of thinking compared to those in central or western regions of Ukraine, where people would be more progressive and rather open, she claims. For the inhabitants of eastern Ukraine, it was not so common to call the police in cases of domestic violence in order not to “share litigations and problems with the outside”. This way of thinking was taken over by children, who are now the affected women, and tend not to share problems inside the family with the outside. Furthermore, in those regions, alcoholism tends to be a major problem due to the hard working conditions in mines which, according to Kozub, represents a risk factor for domestic violence.

Natalia B., a society rights activist from the small town Krasnodon in Luhansk region in eastern Ukraine, roots domestic violence and the silence about it in the hard circumstances people used to live with. According to her, people in the East “are stuck in small cities and lack opportunities”, as she was herself before she left for the capital. The population in those industrial cities mostly consists of men who used to work in the local coal mines. Due to the hard working conditions and missing entertainment for distraction, they would have “gone for drinks in the evening”. As a consequence of the extensive alcohol abuse, they became violent towards women and children, but this would not “become public”. Alarmingly, she reports that some women would consider violence “as a part of life”. Kozub and B. indicated geographical observations and would rather not link the allegedly massive alcohol abuse to domestic violence but highlight the fact that it might be a risk factor for domestic violence.

Gender-related reasons for women's tendency to remain silent

Kozub roots women's silence in strong, typical gender-related stereotypes that tend to prevail in Ukrainian society, including among female IDPs. According to

the existing “male” stereotypes, men are the heads of families and take the decisions. “He” would tend to ask for help very rarely if he himself suffers or suffered from violence. A typical Ukrainian man further should be courageous which in a further step might be his weakness, says Kozub. In contrast, women should take over a much more caring role with regard to the children and the household.

Those stereotypes tend to be widespread in rural regions and smaller towns and cities, and in some regions of both western Ukraine and eastern Ukraine, where there are still more patriarchal structures because of men earning more than women.

Borosdina also indicated that some women tend to react towards domestic violence and IPV in a stereotypical way by justifying men’s behaviour by saying to themselves, “He is my husband – I have to stand the situation”, “Where will I go to live without him and what will happen with the children?”. Further, in the most frequent cases they would perceive themselves as being economically dependent on their husbands by thinking, “I am no one without him and without him I cannot do anything”. This way of thinking would lead them to the false perception that they have to endure the difficult situation within their relationship.

Victim-blaming as a reason for silence

Gender-related stereotypes have also become an alarming issue with regards to victim-blaming as many men tend to perceive women's behaviour as the reason for committing violence and would argue that it was her who provoked the silence. In some cases, they may also think that she does not understand other

ways than that of violence. This opinion tends to be common also among policemen, whom victims of domestic violence might approach.

Borosdina roots victim-blaming further in the behaviour of local judges who might react to women's statement of having suffered violence with blaming, thinking, "She might have provoked it herself." Some women also blame themselves for "having provoked her husband or partner".

Further, Borosdina reports that there have been cases where female IDPs wrongly placed the fault upon themselves for sexual violence when they, for example, agreed to a sexual favour demanded by a border guard as a precondition to cross the border between occupied territory and Ukrainian territory. Borosdina explains that due to the widespread missing awareness with regard to forms of violence, those cases would go underreported. The affected women would be assumed to be considered less trustworthy because they are "only a woman", but that the man, as a soldier, would enjoy more credibility in society due to his official status.

Some women would be victimized even by their own mothers who have been raised themselves in a stereotypical way or have suffered domestic violence themselves and would say, "You might have provoked it, as you maybe put too much salt in the Borscht"¹³⁵, explained Borosdina.

Particular reasons related to their status as an IDP

According to Kozub, one of the main reasons for remaining silent is that female IDPs usually suffer from the trauma of displacement. Furthermore, they find themselves in a foreign environment where they might not know whom to

¹³⁵ Borscht is a typical Ukrainian soup.

approach for help and support. Their silence is also rooted in the fear of being persecuted by their husbands who are left behind.¹³⁶ Another reason for considering domestic violence a secondary subject is that according to Rudenko they do not see it as a problem as it might have existed in the family already. Violence may also be due to the precarious status of IDP families as they might struggle with the ongoing conflict, as the chance to return is decreasing and frustration increasing because of unemployment and the lack of financial resources. Rudenko believes that at the current moment, IPV is not the most pressing topic, but much more daily concerns like where to find better employment and/or financial income for the family. B. claims that violence in IDP families is mostly linked to missing facilities and activities, like sports, where men could release their aggression and frustration.

B. further roots female IDPs' silence over domestic violence in fear and insecurity.

As usual and already mentioned, it is the men in the family who provides them with financial income whereas women are allocated rather domestic tasks. B. would see a further reason for remaining silent over violence in their fear for their children. In IDP families, where women are suffering from domestic violence, leaving the man is often not possible as they might be financially dependent on him. Breaking out of this vicious circle between not being independent from her partner and probably fearing to have to go back to him some day, represents a further reason for silence. In addition to that, family structures tend to be really tight so that if she “dares” to speak up and her relatives back home find out, she will be the “guilty” one. They would blame *her* for shaming them, as it is her task to keep the family together.

¹³⁶ Women's reason for not speaking out because of their fear that the offenders would pay them back was mentioned also in the Analytical report which was elaborated in Chapter 2. See Demchenko, Irina, Fenchak Anna, Gerasimenko, Anna, Tkach Ivanina, Golzas, Larisa 2016, “Analytical report”, page 35

“Не выноси сор из избы!”¹³⁷

“Не выноси сор из избы”, which in a metaphorical sense means that one should handle domestic violence as a family matter, is the major reason and common stereotype for not talking not only about IPV, irrespective of whom it is directed against, and further health issues. Rudenko estimates that in 90% of the cases people would rather handle violence as a private matter. She further indicates that the level of acceptance of violence in general is high.

Kozub confirms that talking about “private” matters in public is not often seen or common, and usually becomes so only in the case of severe fighting and trauma, where domestic violence would become a criminal issue. Borosdina links this thinking pattern with the thinking patterns of post-Soviet countries, where due to the non-criminalization of domestic violence, the idea of making incidents public due to the lack of its criminalization, would have led to this stereotypical way of thinking. This would make women fearful of destroying the good picture of their family. Some would rather tend to stand violence inside their families than making it known to the outside in order to protect the idea of a “perfect family”. In addition, interfering with other family’s affairs is not always appreciated. Only a small number of people would call the police if they heard their neighbours fighting, reports Borosdina.

Domestic violence is not criminalized and abusive men are only “punished” with community work. This would be a further step that leads to the perception that IPV is a private issue.

¹³⁷ Trans. “Do not wash your dirty linen in public!”

“Если бьет, значит любит.”¹³⁸

“If he beats you, it means he loves you” is the most frequent saying I encountered during my expert and activist interviews, and also during my interview with Viktorija. It is considered to be a stereotype in society but it is a still existing strong thinking pattern.

B. sees a strong link between this seemingly contradictory saying with the history of Soviet Union, with the consequences of which society is still struggling – not just as is commonly known on a political level, but also on a societal level. In the context of the above cited saying, one burden would lie in the clearly defined image of a man and his superior status over women. *He should be strong. He should be admired and wants to be admired by women for his physical strength.* He might prove this in physical violence not only against other men in fights but also against women. It would be *his brutal behaviour* that would *show his female partner his masculinity* and *consequently would prove his feelings for her.* This would lead to the stereotypical assumption that by beating her, he would prove that he is a “real man” and “puts her in her place”. According to B. this image of men persists.

¹³⁸ Trans. “If he beats you, it means he loves you“

Conclusion

It would be too easy to give female IDPs from eastern Ukraine only a pen so that they could fill in the blank pages and share their experiences of domestic violence with us. This thesis aimed to investigate the reasons that prevent them from talking about domestic violence but the answers I got were, with one exception, mostly silence and thus these pages will still remain blank. Therefore, I had to rely on the precious help of local experts who work closely with either IDPs or on the topic of GBV, during my fieldtrip to the Kyiv and eastern Ukraine.

I gained broader knowledge of the topic by scrutinizing the AR by the All-Ukrainian Charitable Organisation “Konviktus”, which in particular assessed domestic violence against female IDPs. Women’s tendency to remain silent with regard to domestic violence in Ukrainian society is deeply rooted in strong thinking patterns, which create the wrong perception of violence and dealing with it. As a consequence, this attitude further turns into widespread lower awareness of this form of violence. Victim-blaming and secondary victimisation is still a common practice in society, even among authorities, and indicates how women’s behaviour about domestic violence (and other forms of violence) is supposedly meant to be – namely silent.

Female IDPs’ disclosure is mostly prevented by the vulnerable situation they are in due to the trauma of displacement, and fear of their husbands, partners or relatives if they find out that they talked about “family issue” in public as this is not appreciated and well received. If we analyse the situation with Reinharz’s definition of voice¹³⁹, as outlined in the Introduction, then we have to recognize that female IDPs *do not have a voice* in Ukrainian society as *they do not have the right to speak*. They are clearly assigned a place in society where are they

¹³⁹ Reinharz, 1994, page 180

are not seen. Weighted with the burden of displacement and restricted with stereotypes about their supposed behaviour, the consequence is remaining silent.

Silence is the worst answer we can give to violence if you want to remedy our and others' suffering. Having learnt that internally displaced women from eastern Ukraine prefer being silent over talking, it is now time to focus on how to leave this “babylon of silence”, as according to experts there was little chance to ask them personally. It is therefore recommended to listen to the voice of Katerina Borosdina, who as outlined earlier in this thesis, lends women her voice and tells us what has to be done: “First of all, women must know what is violence. ‘If he beats you, it means he loves you’ is a stereotype. You must not love and beat!”

She further recommends that in order to make domestic violence a public issue, a widespread information campaign in traditional media, online and social-media like Facebook or Youtube is required, which would bring the forms of violence to the knowledge of affected women. This could increase a woman’s ability to identify herself with violence, explains the Ukrainian expert.

Furthermore, *education* on how to counter and prevent violence against women is needed and should begin in the kindergarten, schools and reach through to universities, especially for those who are aiming at working with women affected by violence, like social workers of authorities, who are not beyond having stereotypes with regards to violence, as highlighted by Borosdina. Especially in rural areas of the country, for example, information campaigns are needed but there the competent rural councils would not put social services for women as their priority but rather decide to spend the money needed for agriculture, criticises Borosdina.

She further indicates another way of how to overcome silence is to participate in a support-group. There women would feel equally treated and could learn from the positive experiences of other women, who, for example, left their husbands. By *talking publicly* about their National Toll “Free Hotline”, more women would know about them and Borosdina confirms that after a public mention of “La Strada” for example on TV, women would call and tell their stories as a reaction to that. *We have to listen to women’s silence, write about it, reflect about it and foremost of all talk about it in order to draw attention to their suffering and in a further step remedy their silence.*

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Annex 1

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATO	–	Antiterrorist Operation
AC	–	Analytical Center
ACF	–	All-Ukrainian Charitable Foundation
ANGO	–	All-Ukrainian Non-Governmental Organization
HIV	–	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
IDP	–	Internally Displaced Persons (individuals who left or abandoned their place of residence because or in order to avoid negative consequences of the armed conflict or temporary occupation and who are officially registered in the areas controlled by the government of Ukraine)
SAO	–	Social Action Organization
GBV	–	Gender-based Violence
MM	–	Mass Media
WAG	–	Women Action Group
INGO	–	International Non-Governmental Organization
NGO	–	Non-Governmental Organization
LA	–	Local Authorities
UN	–	United Nations
PC	–	Personal Computer
DS	–	Difficult Straits
LSPD	–	Labor and Social Protection Department
FCYSC	–	Family, Children and Youth Social Services Center

2. Research Methodology

Research objective – conduct situational analysis to further implement the project entitled Mobilization of Internally Displaced Women Against Domestic and Gender-based Violence including assessment of the incidence level of different types and forms of gender-based and domestic violence in IDP families, analysis of its reasons and consequences, analysis of mobilization potential among women on the level of the public, their readiness to counter different forms of violence and the needs of internally displaced women who suffered because of GBV.

To achieve the mentioned research objective, the following *tasks* have been resolved:

1. Social and demographic characteristics of the female respondents and their experience on internal displacement has been studied.
2. Attitude towards gender-based violence issue and domestic violence in Ukrainian society has been studied.
3. Incidence level of domestic and gender-based violence inside internally displaced women's community and its consequences has been assessed.
4. The strategies on overcoming consequences caused by violence experienced in life and requests by the affected for external assistance have been examined.
5. The needs of services for the affected by domestic and gender-based violence have been assessed.
6. Social and psychological state and mobilization potential of internally displaced women has been evaluated.

Social data acquisition period: May 13 – June 20, 2016.

Study design and sampled information approach – the situational analysis focused on collection of the information on the incidence level of the domestic and gender-based violence forms among internally displaced women, its consequences and needs by internally displaced women in project areas who have suffered from violence. The results of the study will be used to form the project information campaign, performing sub-grant activities etc. The study was based on the comprehensive methodology which combines usage of quantitative (structured interviews with internally displaced women) and qualitative sociological methods (in-depth interviews with experts).

Internally-Displaced Women Survey

Survey technique: structured one-on-one interviews according to the places of residence of the female respondents.

Specific character of the study is its geography which is defined by the Project entitled Mobilization of Internally Displaced Women Against Domestic and Gender-based Violence under which this study is implemented. Thus, 10 regions (Table 2.1) were included in sampling information which are characterized by the highest number of officially registered IDPs in two-types areas: in regional centers and in smaller towns/districts of this regions.

Sampling information is target-oriented, multilevel, stratified, with quota-selection method of female respondents used at the last stage. While performing the poll, the quotes of two specifications were followed: type of the populated area (capital/city of regional significance, other town/village) and age of women (18-29 years, 30-44 years, 45-59 years). Sampling information is conditioned by the fact this study is aimed at, in the first place,

assessment of the needs in services and their availability support on the ground irrespective of the detected violence level.

The recruiting of the female respondents among IDPs has been performed at:

- IDP temporary accommodation centers;
- Humanitarian aid distribution centers;
- Employment centers;
- Medical care institutions;
- Civil, voluntary organizations, charitable foundations and state institutions assisting IDPs;
- Among IDPs (snow globe method).

In each of the regions included in the sampling information, it was planned to poll 100 female respondents allowing to perform the contrastive regional analysis. The realized sampling information displays the planned sampling information without significant deviations as follows: 101 female respondents participated in the poll in Donetsk region, in Cherkassy region – 102, in other regions – 100 female respondents. The general sample volume is **1003 female respondents** (Table 2.1).

In general, 39% of the polled women live in the regional centers, 57% in other cities, 4% - in villages.

Table 2.1

Number of polled women among IDPs according to regions

<i>Region</i>	<i>Populated areas</i>	<i>Information sample</i>	<i>Total</i>
City of Kyiv		100	100
Dnipropetrovsk	Dnipro	50	100
	Zhovti Vody	50	
Donetsk	Mariupol	41	101
	Bakhmut	35	
	Kramatorsk	25	
Zaporizhia	Zaporizhia	50	100
	Berdiansk	50	
Kyiv	Irpın	30	100
	Town settlement Vorzel	20	
	Litky village	20	
	Town settlement Kotsiubynske	15	
	Sosnivka village	15	
Luhansk	Starobilsk	50	100
	Severodonetsk	50	
Odesa	Odesa	35	100
	Bilhorod-Dnistrovsky	35	
	Chornomorsk	30	
Poltava	Poltava	50	100
	Myrhorod	25	
	Hadiach	25	
<i>Region</i>	<i>Populated areas</i>	<i>Information sample</i>	<i>Total</i>
Kharkiv	Kharkiv	50	100

	Izium	25	
	Town settlement Kupiansk-Vuzlovy	25	
Cherkasy	Cherkasy	52	102
	Uman	50	

Expert Survey

The representatives of the state authorities and the local authorities involved in the formation and realization of the social policy; representatives of the international non-governmental organizations and foundations focused on IDP issues or affected by violence and the regional and the local non-governmental organizations assisting in counter-violence field; the leaders among internally displaced women were the experts in this study.

Polling method: in-depth one-on-one interview according to the experts' work/stay place.

Survey of the experts was performed in 10 regions included in the study.

In total, 10 national experts were polled (Table 2.2) and 40 regional out of which 17 are the representatives of the regional/city public institutions (LSPD, FCYSC etc.), 2 – the representatives of law-enforcement agencies, 20 – the representatives of public/charitable organizations and one leader among IDPs. The general volume of the realized information sample totals **50 experts**.

Table 2.2

National Experts

№	Family name, Name	Place of Work and Position
1	Savchuk Olena	National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy – Candidate of Psychological Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Social Sciences; UNDP «Rapid Response to the Social and Economic Issues of Internally Displaced Persons in Ukraine» – National expert
2	Kozub Lidiya	Democracy Development Center ANGO – Director of Counter-violence and Human Trafficking Programs; Safety and Health Management Social Initiatives INGO – Program Expert on career enhancement
3	Volhina Oksana	Vifania Social Service CF – Deputy Director, Social Orphanhood Prevention Project Coordinator
4	Kulyk Maryna	Founder of Village and City CF; Democratic Action ANGO
5	Tsvetkova Natalia	International Charitable Foundation Ukrainian Foundation of Public Health – Project Coordinator on Humanitarian Response on Gender-based Violence; HealthRight International – Social Apartment Manager
6	Melnyk Liudmyla	Medical and Social Rehabilitation for Victims of Spousal Abuse Program under Family and Children Social Services Center at Kyiv City Council Executive Agency – Medical Psychologist
7	Rainsh Artur	Ukrainian Interior Ministry Headquarters – Youth Prevention Department Chief Expert
8	Borozdina Kateryna	La Strada Ukraine NGO – Director of Department on Expertise, Monitoring and Legislation

9	Romaniuk Hanna	City Center for Children under Children's Services – Psychologist, Trainer
10	Yesypenko Olena	Trainer, Social Work with Families and Children

Study Limitations

The main limitation is the impossibility to form the fully representative information sample. It occurs due to both purposeful selection of the populated areas defined by the Project Objectives and the unavailability of reliable statistical data on general population – number of internally displaced women from ATO regions.

By analyzing the obtained data, it is necessary to consider low sincerity level of the polled women. According to interviewers, the female respondents were sympathetic to the topics of the discussion but at the same time failure of trust, suspicion and sometimes fear was felt. While conducting interview there were some difficulties because of depressed psychological state of the female respondents associated with horrible experience in the past. But they were interested in talking to the interviewer and followed-up the study results. Not all of the female respondents were willing to share their personal phone numbers and speak about the issues inside their families because they are afraid of the possibility to go back home (to the occupied area). That's why directness of speech by several female respondents may raise doubts.

Ethical Study Principles

Before the start of data collection, the Commission on Professional Ethic at Social Association of Ukraine has approved the positive conclusion on the study protocol and instrumentarium correspondence to the standards of ethics.

Collection, storage and analysis of empirical study data is based on observance of the standards of ethics and protection of study participants' rights on voluntariness, anonymity and confidentiality. In particular, the questionnaire has no personal data allowing to identify the person of the female respondent filling in the questionnaire and the documentations while the contacts of the female respondents are kept apart from the questionnaires. With the same aim all personnel at Socioconsulting AC involved in the project implementation, all interviewers in particular, signed the non-disclosure agreement according to which they are obliged to keep the confidential information confidential and not to disclose information to third parties by any means regarding information on the respondents known by them while performing their professional obligations.

Before the start of the study, all potential respondents were informed on the aim and objectives of the study, its characteristics and also on anonymity and confidentiality guarantees, their right for voluntary participation in the study and its termination at any time. After this the informed consent statement in written by each of the female respondent on the agreement to participate in the study was received.

Sociological Data Analysis Approach

SPSS software was used to perform interviews and conduct statistical analysis of the structured interviews. After entering information in PC and SPSS database formation, the programmer performed the variety of procedures to identify technical mistakes in questionnaire recordings (e.g. reasonableness checks on the answers regarding social and demographic characteristics, correctness of changes etc.).

Sociological data analysis was performed using SPSS software. Information was analyzed as the classifications of answers by the female respondents in the form of one-dimensional tables, two-dimensional tables, average numbers, integrated indexes with the definition of statistically significant differences available in particular on the basis of the chi-square tests and Student's t-test.

One-dimensional tables are represented as the certain percentage of answers given by the polled women regarding the question in the questionnaire. Two-dimensional classification is represented as the percentage of the answers given by the polled women regarding the question asked depending on one or another criterion which characterizes the woman, e.g. sex, age, level of education, region, type of settlement etc.

Average scores to determine the satisfaction level were calculated according to 5(10)-point ordinal scales where 1 point corresponds to the highest possible negative point (“completely dissatisfied”), but 5(10) points – the highest possible positive point (“completely satisfied”). Averages scores were calculated using SPSS software as the arithmetical average on answers by female respondents. Therefore, the increase of the average score will mean the increase of the satisfaction level in internally displaced women’s different spheres of life.

The results of the analysis of quantitative data were verified using the results of qualitative methods of the study collected while performing in-depth interviews and presented in readouts.

3. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF POLLED WOMEN AMONG IDPS

As part of the study, 1003 women among IDPs were polled. Among the polled, women of reproductive and working age prevail (Figure 3.1) and women aged 30-39 years make the biggest age group (36%).

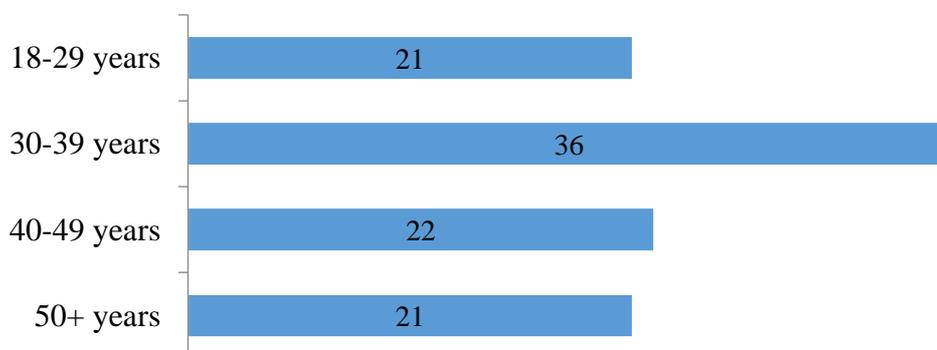


Figure. 3.1. Classification of women among IDP according to age groups, %

Generally, the women have high education and qualification level. According to the poll results, over half of the women (56%) have higher or incomplete higher education, one third (35%) – vocational school or college education, minor part of the polled (9%) have the lowest education level, only 2% of them have incomplete secondary education.

Almost two-thirds of the polled lived in Donetsk region (61%) before the relocation, others – in Luhansk region (39%), however, most of women (70%) lived in the cities of regional significance and in the cities with total population over 100 000 people. Most of the female respondents (66%) moved out from the occupied areas one-two years ago, at the beginning or in the active stage of the armed conflict (Figure 3.2).

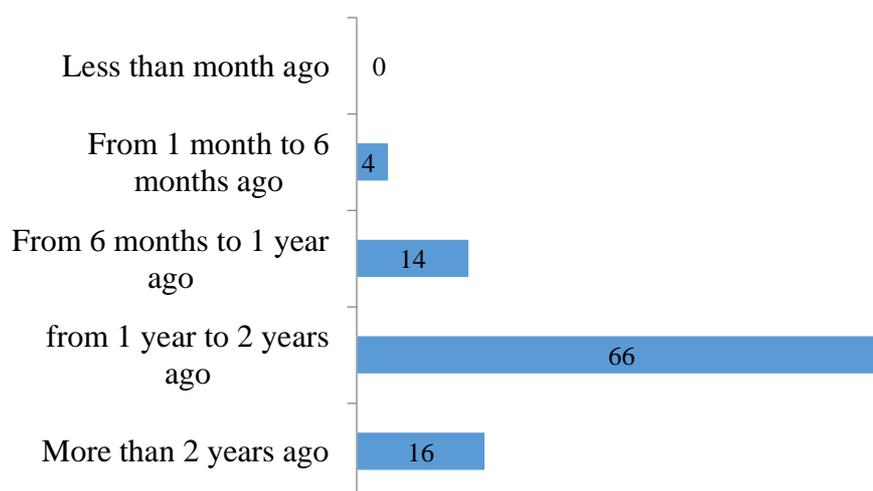


Figure. 3.2. Relocation time for women among IDPs from occupied areas, %

After the relocation most women (86%) addressed the local authorities and underwent re-registration at the state institutions, namely:

- Social Protection Department (94%);
- State Emergency Service (27%);

- Migration Service (2%);
- Employment Center (2%);
- Pension Fund (less than 1%).

Minor part of the polled women (14%) didn't registered themselves at the state institutions, half of those plan to register themselves at these institutions and other half have any of these plans.

The study results show the change of individual's employment status due to the forced change of residence. Before the relocation most women (68%) were officially employed and worked part time, 1% of women mentioned they were involved in entrepreneurial businesses before the relocation. 14% of women weren't officially employed including those who were:

- On child-care leave – 10%;
- On pension (age) – 6%;
- Getting education – 6%;
- Involved in household management – 5%;
- Out of work due to disability– 2%;
- Unemployed – 2%.

After the relocation, the employment situation has changed. In total, the number of women excluded from active social and economic life has increased. At the moment of the survey, 39% were officially employed, 19% - off-the-books employed (Figure 3.3).

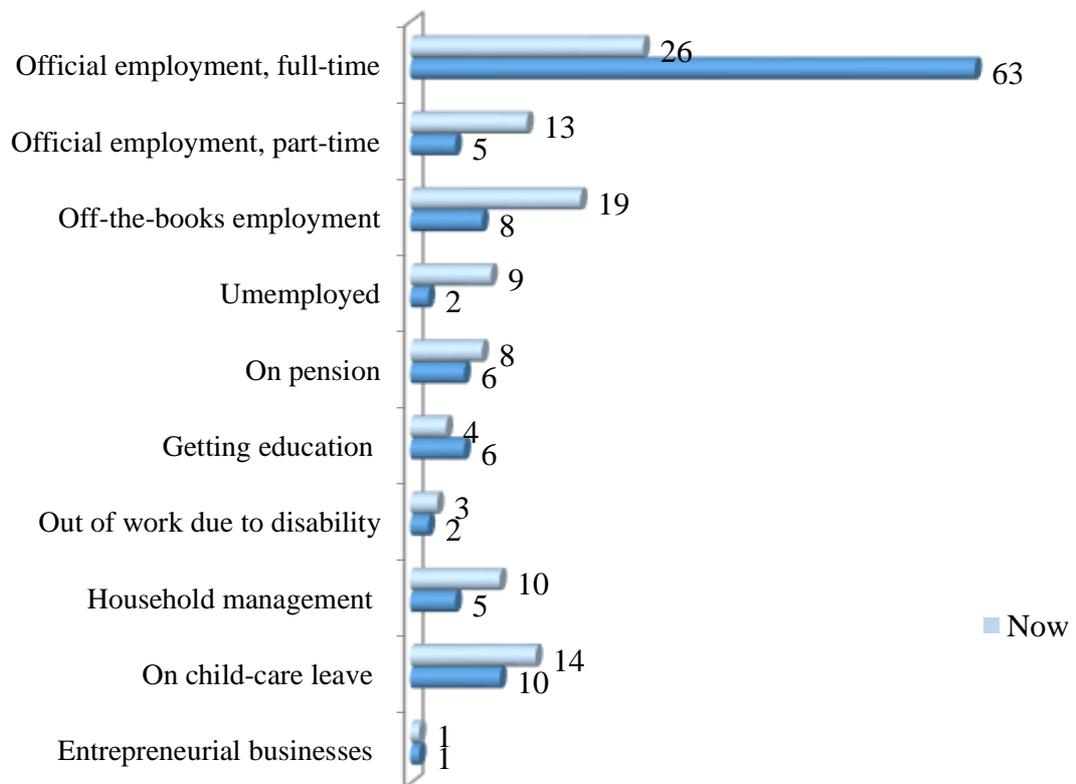


Figure. 3.3. Employment level comparison of women among IDPs before and after relocation¹⁴⁰, %

¹⁴⁰ Polled women could choose several answers.

The number of women officially employed on full time basis has decreased (from 63% to 26%), instead the number of women working part-time has increased (from 5% to 13%) and who are off-the-books employed (from 8% to 19%). The number of unemployed has increased (from 2% to 9%) and also the number of women getting education has decreased as it can be explained by the completion of the course or unrenewed education. The number of women who are mostly involved in household management has increased (from 5% to 10%) with the percentage of those who are on child-care leave (from 10% to 14%). Therefore, by comparing the employment status before and after the relocation, the decrease in numbers of women officially employed is noted as well as the increase in numbers of those women who aren't involved public economy including those who are forcedly unemployed. Despite this fact, three-quarters of women (72%) try to find jobs with many out of them receiving only small social payments resulting in their increased vulnerability and dependency on main breadwinners in the family.

More than half of the female respondents (56%) are married, among which 39% of women have registered marriage, 10% – de facto relationship and 7% – separated but not officially divorced (Figure 3.4). Single women make 44% of all the polled among which 21% are divorced, 15% have never been married and 8% are widows. Most women who have registered marriage or civil marriage (83%) live together with their husband/partner.

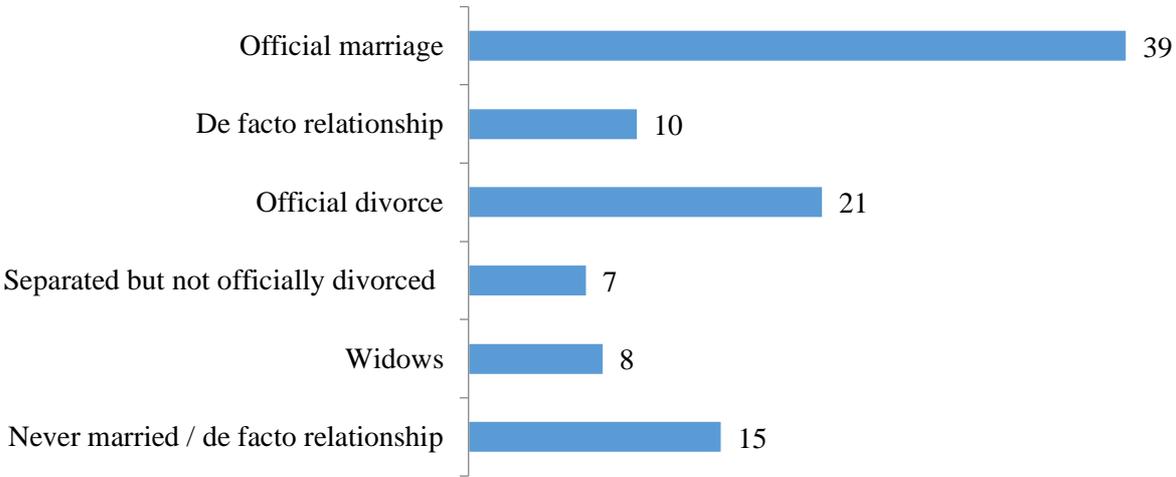


Figure 3.4. Marital status of women among IDPs, %

Half of the polled women (50%) have children aged up to 17 years old, out of them 59% have 1 child, 32% – 2 children and 9% – 3 and more children.

Women among IDPs (37%) have husbands/partners aged mostly 30-39 years old. Just like women, most of husbands/partners (55%) have higher or incomplete higher education, 36% –vocational school or college education and 9% – secondary-level education among which 1% of husbands have incomplete secondary education (Figure 3.5).

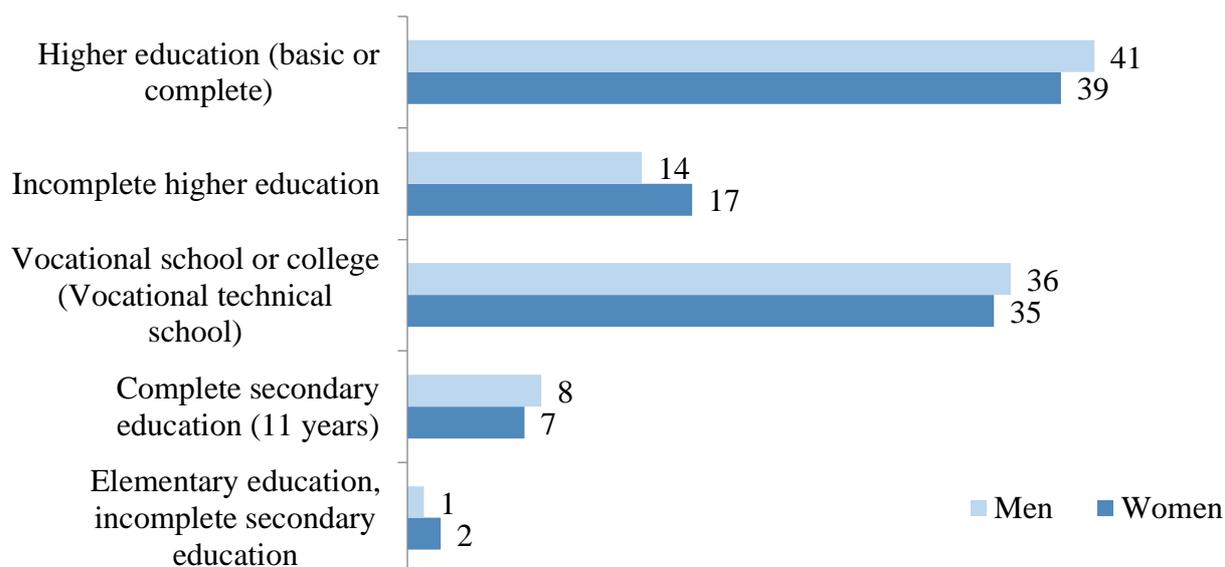


Figure 3.5. Education level comparison between women among IDPs and their husbands/partners, %

Before the relocation, most of men (77%) were officially employed, 9% were off-the-books employed, 2% were involved in entrepreneurial businesses. Part of the men were unemployed due to some reasons:

- On age pension (8%);
- Because of disability (3%);
- Education, household management or being on child-care leave (close to 1% or 6 individuals).

After the relocation the employment situation has changed as the number of officially employed individuals has decreased (from 74% to 49%), the number of those who are unofficially employed has increased (from 9% to 20%) as well as the number of unemployed (from 2% to 7%). None of these men have been on child-care leave since the time of relocation.

After the relocation the women who have husband/partner (n=483) faced more difficulties with recruitment and it affected their employment level in the official economy. Before the time of relocation, the difference between officially employed men and women was 12% (62% of women and 74% of men were officially employed on full-time basis) but after the relocation this difference is up to 19% (Figure 3.6) (the differences are considered significant if they exceed 4,5%). As the result of this, women became more economically dependent upon their partners and consequently more vulnerable.

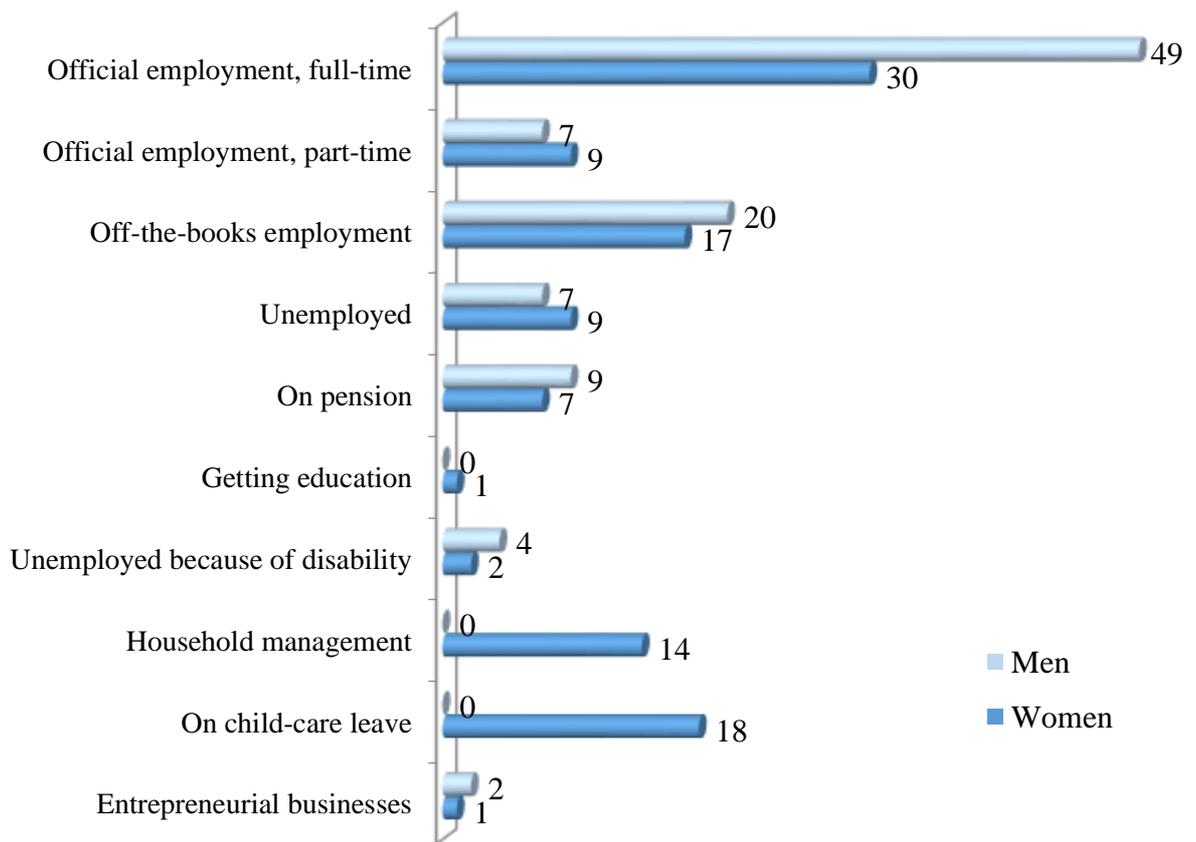


Figure 3.6. Comparison of employment level between men and women living with partner after relocation¹⁴¹, %

Over half of the polled women (57%) mentioned all family members moved out together with them during the forced relocation. Among those family members who weren't relocated, the highest numbers make older family members – their own parents or their husband's parents (73%) and grandmothers and grandfathers (22%). 15% of women mentioned their husband/partners didn't move out together with them. 12% of women mentioned their children didn't move out together with them among which 65% have children of majority age who study or work in other populated areas.

Generally, according to the survey results, the women among IDPs are in difficult financial situation. Third of the polled women (34%) do not have enough money for even basic necessities. Half of the female respondents (49%) do not have enough finances for the most necessary items but they must cut down expenses, 13% of women can afford buying basic products and services but have any possibility to save up money and only 1% of the women mentioned their needs in anything saying they have some financial savings.

As for the source of income, over half of the polled women (61%) receive social assistance from the state and 55% count on their salaries or their husbands' salaries (Figure 3.7). However, salaries remain the main source of income for 44% families, 23% of the polled women mention social assistance as the main source of their income, 12% - pension

¹⁴¹ Polled people could choose several answers

payments, 11% - irregular earnings and only 5% count on their relatives' support and 3% rely on income generating activities.

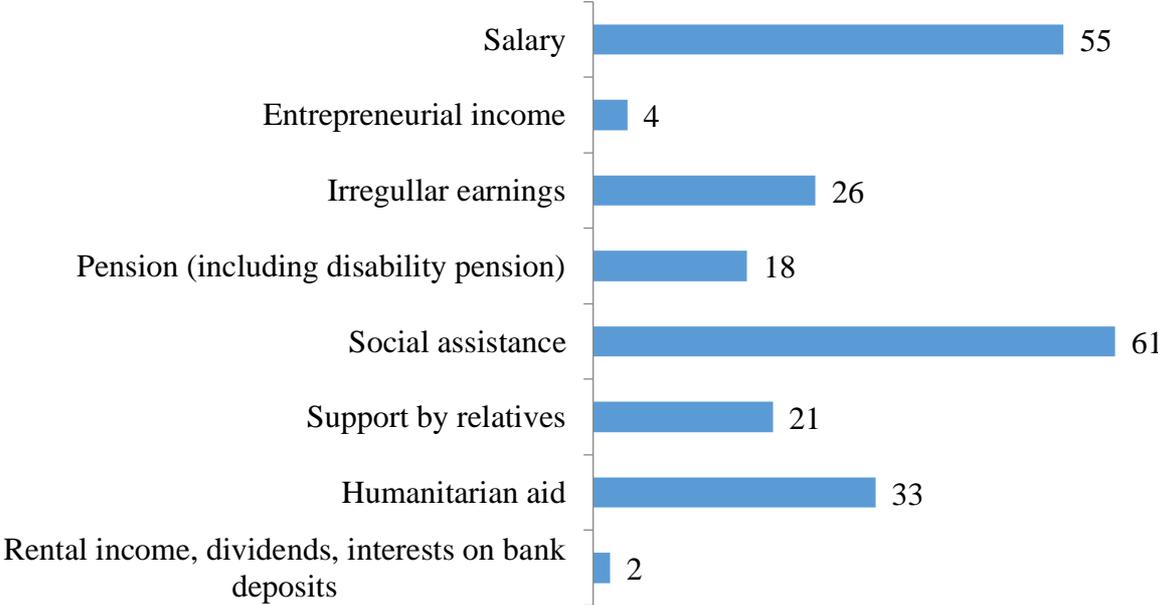


Figure 3.7. Classification of all income sources at women's households among IDPs, %

One of the most sensitive issue for IDPs is the lack of their own residential property. Less than half of the polled women (44%) live in rented apartments, 25% stay at relatives or friends. The number of women staying at compact settlement areas totals 22%, at hostels – 7%. Only 2% of women live in their own residential property.

4. ATTITUDE TOWARDS DOMESTIC AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN UKRAINIAN SOCIETY

4.1. Public views on gender aspects characteristics

Usage of stereotypes to describe women and men are popular in news shows, TV-shows, newspaper articles and videogames. Often advertising connects gender with specific types of behavior, professions, family situations, ways of thinking or certain categories of products. All these facts affect stereotypization of thinking by women and men. Nevertheless, the results of the performed research show disagreement by women regarding possible pressure on them at their families. Thus, absolute majority of the polled women (73%) disagree with the statement saying “good wife must always listen to her husband even if she disagrees with him.” However, less than 3/4 of the female respondents think all family conflicts must remain within the family circle (Figure 4.1.1). Such women’s views may cause suppression of domestic violence.

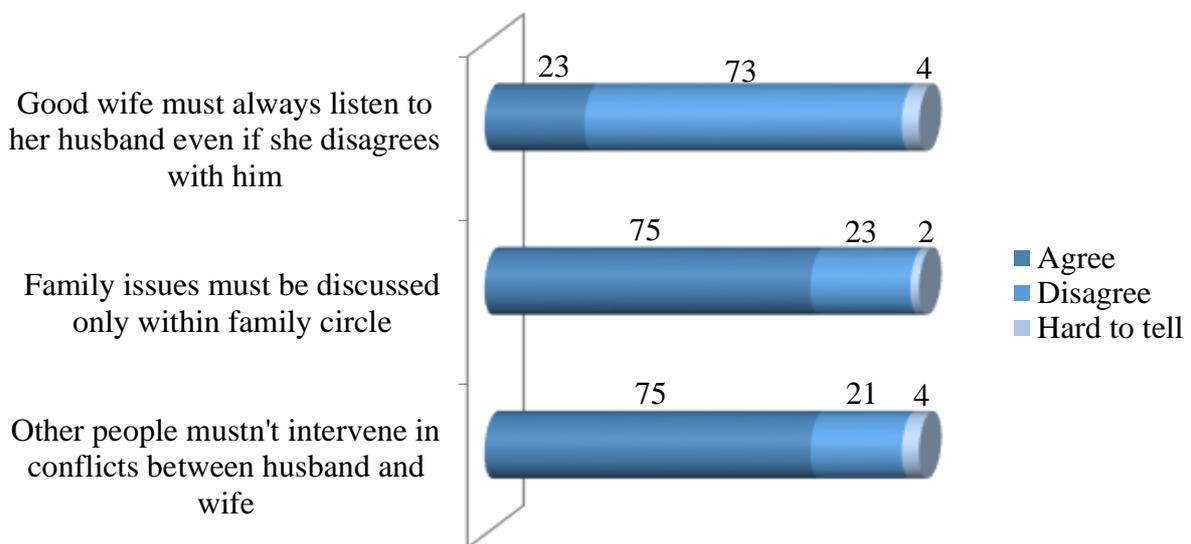


Figure 4.1.1. Gender aspects by female respondents, %

The study has also revealed negative approach by the polled women towards physical abuse issue in the family. Absolute majority of the female respondents (from 92% to 98%) think the husband has no right to beat his wife under any circumstances (Figure 4.1.2).

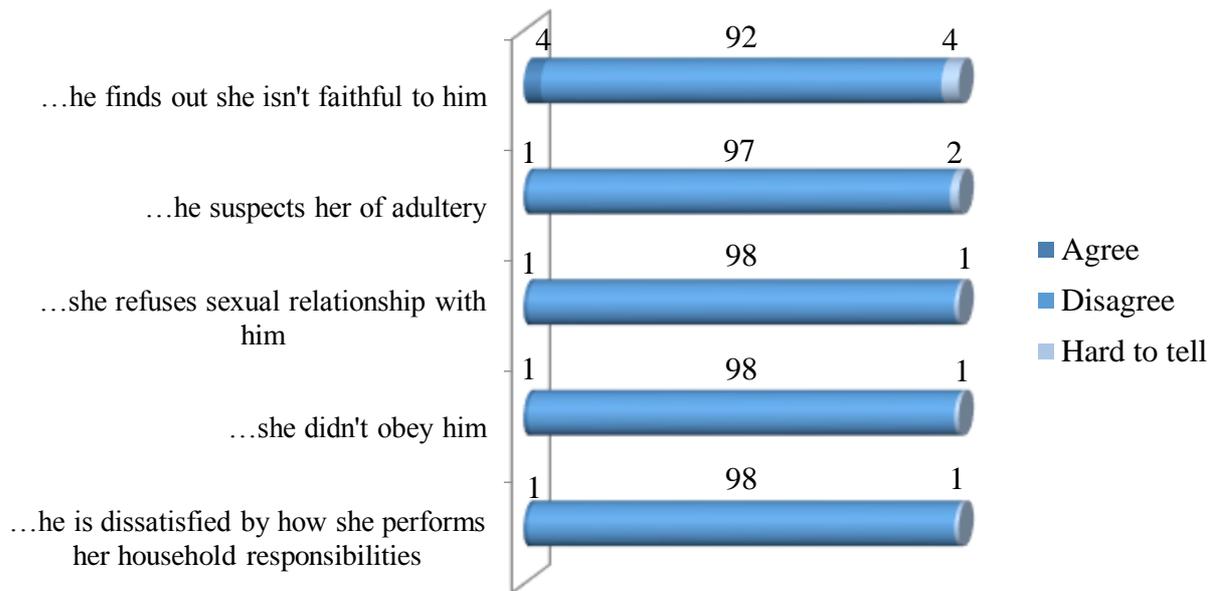


Figure 4.1.2. Classification of answers by female respondents to question from the questionnaire «What do you think, does husband have the right to beat his wife if....?», %

Female respondents have the same negative approach towards domestic sexual violence. Majority of the polled women (93-94%) think the wife has the right to refuse sexual relationship with her husband if she feels herself unwell or if the husband is under the influence of alcohol and/or if he treats her badly (Figure 4.1.3). Nevertheless, 30% of the female respondents think the wife has no right to refuse sexual relationship with her husband. Moreover, the socio-demographic portraits of these women have no significant differences from those surveyed ones in general.

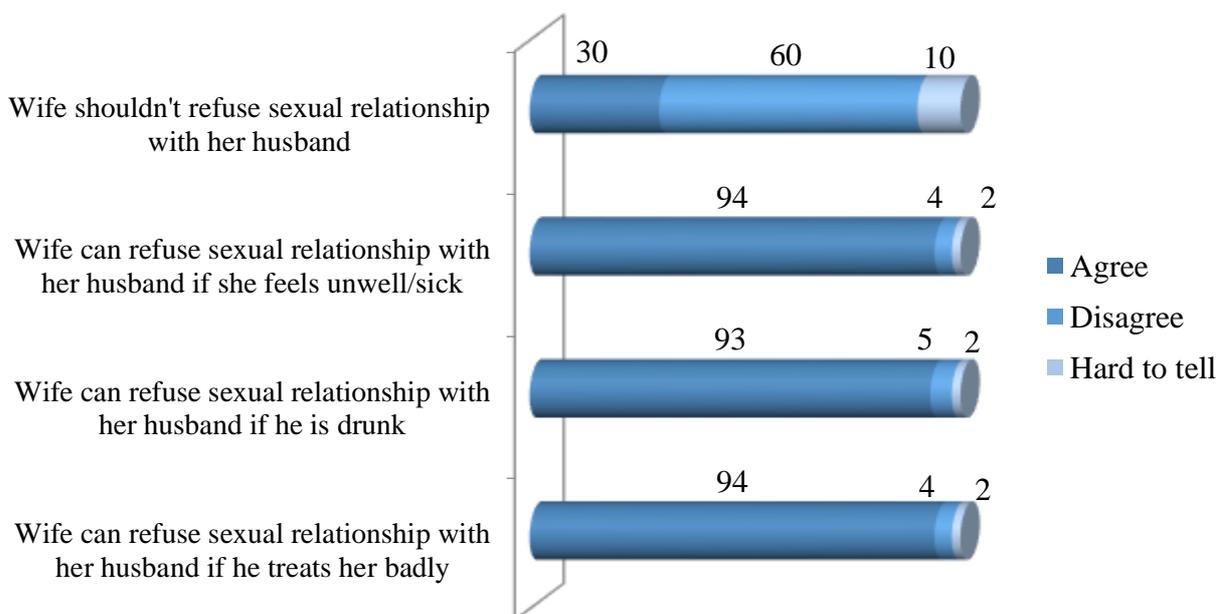


Figure 4.1.3. Women's approach towards sexual relationship with husband, %

Consequently, at large, the polled women have negative approach towards physical and sexual violence and they do not have patriarchal stereotyped images of matrimonial relationship.

4.3. Definition of main reasons and precipitating factors of domestic and gender-based violence

Reasons for GBV mentioned by the experts can be conditionally divided into two groups: social factors and personal factors. Social factors include:

- Unstable and dangerous political situation in the country and war actions, *“also because of the conflict there is huge migration of people who face violation of their rights and violence including GBV”* (national expert);
- Economic decline in the country;
- Community attitude towards life values, extent of stereotyped images;
- *“Absence of effective realization of the state policies on gender equality or violence prevention”* (national expert).

Personal factors include economical and legal state of the individual (loss/change of employment place, low income, material dependence, status of internally displaced person) and psychological characteristics, especially:

- Aggression, social unadjustment, impossibility to socialize;
- Lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem, inability to stand for one’s opinion, personal immaturity, inability to see results of one’s actions;
- Fear to leave husband as there is no place to go, inability to protect oneself;
- *“lack of understanding/knowledge on the fact the woman suffers from violence”* (national expert);
- Presence of dependency of any kind;
- Personal qualities, education;
“education factor, family environment, in what type of a family the child lived in, presence of violence in the family, type of a family model the child was educated in, environment at kindergarten, school, college, university” (national expert);

“my grandfather beat my grandmother, my father beat my mother, so I will beat my wife. And they think it is ok to do so, they used to live this way” (NGO expert, City of Poltava).

- Positioning oneself as being the victim;
- *“When the woman is independent, she won’t suffer from violence inside the family. Factors which influence the independence include both work, economic independence from the husband, desire to develop oneself, self-education, hobby, when a person lives a full life. These factors will hold back aggression towards this woman’s life”* (expert at social services institution, City of Kyiv).

Important reasons for GBV are low legal consciousness level and informational awareness regarding violence. For teenagers according to the experts, lack of life experience and knowledge on possible risks while seeking for employment, establishing new social contacts can be the reasons for gender-based violence. Unfortunately, these issues are paid too little attention during educational process.

According to the experts, access to information and social services are differentiated according to the place of residence: women living in rural areas have the lowest level of access. Usually, domestic violence is accepted as something normal and women do not try to counter it. Legal services are unavailable. Considering that the women often are economically dependent upon their husbands, they can't divorce without legal services and there are high risks to loose property and accommodation because of the divorce.

Stories told by the experts regarding cases of violence they faced show one more factor which triggers GBV – violence issue suppression as usually offenders are in power and they care about secrecy of their actions thanks to their influence, so neither police, nor society believe teenager sharing his or her troubles “*How much does teenager's word value against influential man's word?*” (FCYSC expert, City of Zaporizhia).

The results of the performed quantitative social study define the main reasons for controversies/conflicts in the families according to internally displaced women's opinion:

- Issues with earnings, income (57%);
- Accommodation issues, living conditions, way of life (46%);
- Alcohol/drugs abuse (29%);
- People do not want to yield to one another (28%);
- Issues at work/employment issues (27%);
- Expenses issues (22%);
- Relations with parents/children/relatives (18%);
- Conflicts because of political views (16%);
- Jealousy (11%);
- Sharing household responsibilities (7%);
- Health issues (5%);
- Sexual relationship (4%);
- Differences in religious views (2%).

Other reasons mentioned by the polled women include:

- Husband's unfaithfulness (5 female respondents);
- Different world views (2 female respondents);
- Absence of communication standards (1 female respondent).

Consequently, it is possible to say that according to the polled women the main reasons for family conflicts are financial issues (issues with earnings, income or accommodation issues, living conditions, way of life or issues at work/employment issues or expenses issues) as mentioned by 85% of the female respondents. Another important group of the reasons triggering the conflicts can be defined as the interfamilial conditions (people do

not want to yield to one another or relations with parents/children/relatives or jealousy or sharing household responsibilities or sexual relationship or husband's unfaithfulness or absence of communication standards) mentioned by 56% of the polled women. Third reason is represented by dependencies and bad habits of one of the partners in the family (alcohol/drugs abuse) as mentioned by 29% of the polled women. 18% of the female respondents think different world views, differences in religious and/or political views can be the cause of the conflict.

Despite the fact that the social status has no significant influence on person's vulnerability to violence, still there are situations which cause these conflicts. The increase of violent incidents is especially noted during war actions.

"At the beginning of the event in the East, when the danger of external threat was present, the significant decrease was noted as consolidation of efforts was focused on solution of this question and other issues (mobilization of men, relocation, living arrangements by IDPs at the new location). But the increase in numbers of demobilized ATO participants who underwent any rehabilitation programs, issues with their adaptation, accommodation difficulties and employment problems have caused increase in GBV cases" (national expert).

"Crisis developments of any kind in the society aggravate its issues, however, the increase in GBV cases is the result of aggravated gender inequality issue in the society. War actions levels up the degree of hate in the society, polarizing it. The territory of the armed conflict means weapons, lawlessness, military, bandit formations, instincts aggravation, poverty, fear, necessity to obey in order to survive, lost sense of security. Such situations bring the society back to lowest forms of life, weird regress where gender roles are polarized even more and women get objective perception (trophy, method to punish the enemy, method to show dominance and power, possibility to live the life by instincts). The war by its presence gives men power but takes away woman's possibility to protect her rights" (national expert).

Experts are sure the war facilitates the increase in aggression, violence especially sexual violence, human trafficking.

"Domestic violence inside the families of ATO veterans and among IDPs are associated with experienced post-stress situations which can appear in the form of aggression and aggressive actions. In future it can formalize violent way of solving conflict situations where man's physical strength that helped him to survive in the war conditions, is reflected in the family life" (national expert).

"If we consider Yugoslavia, expressions of violence there were highly spread especially sexual violence. Our situation in the East is also the spike of violence especially sexual violence by so-called DPR and LPR" (FCYSC expert, City of Kyiv).

"Events in the East mainly concern violence and human trafficking. Many women among IDPs tell about the facts when their work is abused and employers refuse to pay because "you are from Donetsk/Luhansk." There also known but unconfirmed cases of sexual abuse in so-called DPR and LPR" (national expert).

"People who were in difficult straits before the war still remain in the risk zone and their situation inside this group will get worse. It means people can't overcome these issues by themselves and if their numbers increase, it will mean deterioration of the situation. They see the problems inside each other but do not solve all issues structurally. It shows they didn't

manage to solve their problems before the start of ATO and now they are ready for any of difficult situation” (expert at Social and Psychological Assistance Center, City of Kyiv).

According to the experts because of the developments in Eastern Ukraine the increase of economical violence is noted.

“Economical violence has increased, even structural violence from the side of the state towards citizens, massive poverty is seen. If we take into account the situation with women among IDPs, certainly, they all are low-income individuals and economic conditions always further the increase of violence. Some in order to get food for themselves and children intentionally engage in prostitution and face sexual violence” (national expert).

One of the most vulnerable categories according to the experts are IDPs. They suffer the most because of economical and psychological violence. Limitation of resources, stereotyped negative attitude from the society towards people from Donetsk and their opinions, loss of social connections, own accommodations, documents, relocation into unknown environment, close-together living conditions are those factors which trigger violence towards IDPs and among them.

“IDPs often face discrimination signs, men are often asked the question “Why do not you fight? You must defend your land!” (national expert).

“The problem of absolutely all these towns is their type defined as the reservation area with very low access level and poor psychological climate. The risk of violence from local people is possible at the sanatoriums where IDPS live” (national expert).

“IDPs are people left without their homes, families, close people. Constant stress is experienced by those who have close people there or property. It means constant borderline crossings, all checks at checkpoints, entry-exit points, constant passing through “grey zone” where shellfire occurs. Now we have the “feeling” which is new for us when we feel there live your relatives, friends and you come from another territory and still they know you were absent here and know where you moved. And then you must quickly solve all your property issues and quickly, quietly go back, run away, again to Ukrainian territory. Because people have already started looking at you with a jaundiced eye, because they have absolutely different perception, because there is clear information policy present in the occupied territory. Then people themselves lose courage and nothing can be done here – on one side there is a soldier with automatic weapon, on the other side – legal lawlessness, so that everybody is happy” (national expert).

“IDPs are in the risk group. It is associated more than likely with the attempts by IDPs to get established somehow in the new place when IDPs intentionally run the risk: illegal employment, sexual services etc.” (national expert).

Nevertheless, violence isn't mainstreamed inside IDPs families as the most significant issue.

“Women among IDPs identify violence issue as not the significant one. We have made the analysis of requests regarding psychological issues under the project, so violence has 5t place in this rating. Women define depression, fear, despair as more significant, thus, those issues which are focused on themselves but not on others. Often it depends how family is relocated – all family members together or only mother and child. In cases when the full family is relocated, women adapt quicker compared with men which probably causes high

stress level experienced by men and violence towards relatives as the consequence of all this (national expert).

Most vulnerable groups according to the experts include families of the antiterrorist operation (ATO) participants. After the demobilization most of the war veterans suffer from post-traumatic syndrome causing violent incidents inside the family. This tendency is shown by the increase of requests addressed to FCYSC by members of their families.

“I think tension inside the country has increased as well as inside the families. International studies show the level of tension inside families and expression of violence always goes up during the conflict. Unfortunately, here our system works in a way when women often do not address law enforcement agencies, social services with their issues. We can only speak about international practice showing the increase of violence” (NGO expert, City of Kyiv).

Ukraine lacks rehabilitation programs for the war veterans and this lack acts as the triggering factor for GBV. Special rehabilitation program to reduce the level of violence in such families is required. The experts share positive experience in Israel where the person after 1 month of military actions undergoes 2-months rehabilitation program that primarily consists of psychologist consultations.

“Because men are isolated in the war and live in mud for 6 months in a row, they are under high psychological stress. They can’t come back to peaceful life by themselves without consultations and professional support” (Social and Psychological Assistance Center Expert, City of Kyiv).

Some experts tend to think the level of violence in Ukraine hasn’t change because of the developments in the East, so, it means if the individual before the relocation faced domestic violence, then after the relocation this issue most probably still exists. Other experts note that such external factors, on the contrary, unite and mobilize people.

“The most critical and deadliest year was the first one – 2014. There was huge flow of people. The most important issue for them was to find a place to stay. There were too many educated people and they started looking for job immediately, adapting at the new place, creating NGOs. It gives inspiration to live new life and do not come back to those issues they had before” (FCYSC Expert, City of Poltava).

The results of the quantitative study showed half of the polled women think the armed conflict in Donbas has negative influence on the frequency of disputes/conflicts inside the families (they occur more often now). However, during the interviews some IDPs had strong feelings against this type of question saying the families are now more united. Nevertheless, only 11% of the female respondents think the number of conflict cases and disputes inside IDPs families has decreased because of the developments in Donbas (Figure 4.3.1).

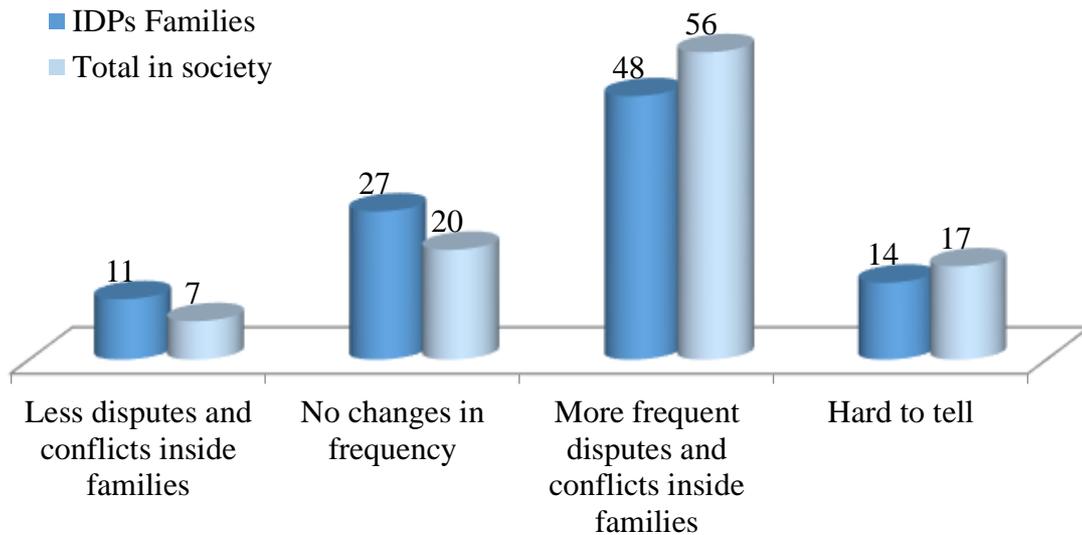


Figure 4.3.1. Classification of answers by respondents on question from questionnaire «What do you think about influence of Donbas events on disputes/conflicts frequency inside families?», %

Despite the fact that most of women among IDPs think expression of violence inside the families are inappropriate, almost half of them say disputes/conflicts inside the families very often end in expression of violence (Figure 4.3.2).

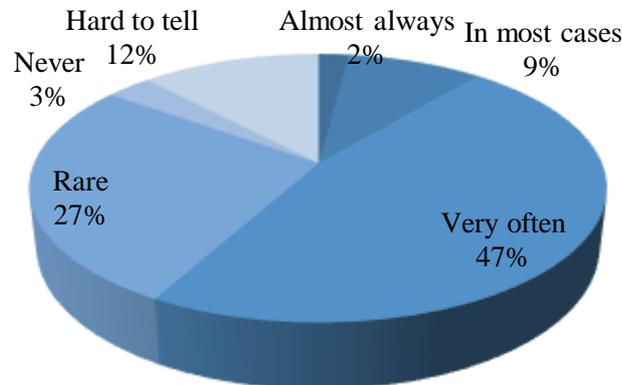


Figure 4.3.2. Classification of answers by respondents on question from questionnaire «What do you think on how often disputes/conflicts inside families end in expression of violence?», %

Almost half of the polled women among IDPs think violence towards women can't be justified by any means (Figure 4.3.3). There is no significant difference in terms of social and demographic characteristics between the female respondents regarding their opinions of women's guilt. Only women who were on child-care leave before the relocation or are now on this type of leave are more tend to think women can be guilty once in a while at least ($p=0,02$). The interesting fact is that half of polled women in Kharkiv region think women can be guilty of expression of violence (it depends on the situation or usually women provoke

violence by themselves) and the highest categorical approach towards violence was found out in Donetsk region. Here 55% of respondents say violence can't be justified by any means and only few female respondents note woman can be herself guilty of expression of violence if she forgives her husband.

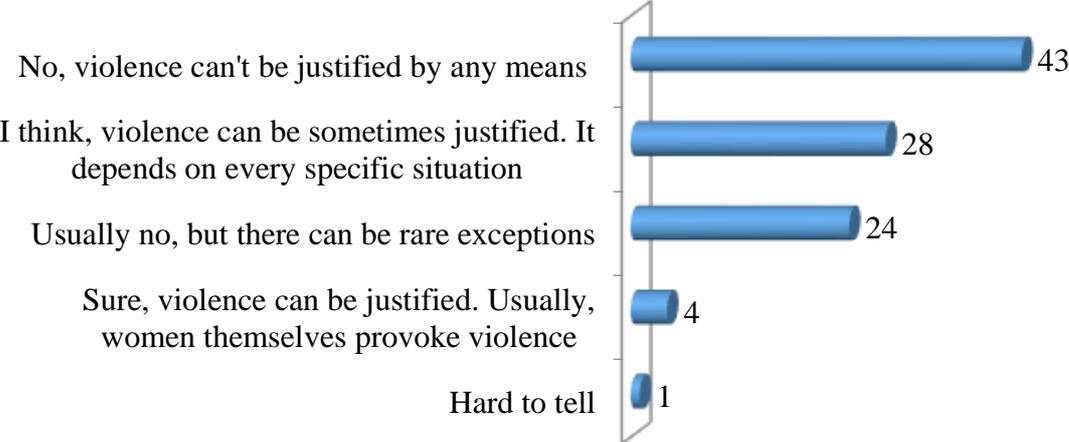


Figure 4.3.3. Classification of answers by responders on question from questionnaire «What do you think about woman herself being partially guilty of her abusive treatment by her husband?», %

Consequently, main reasons for GBV in Ukraine according to the experts are: low level of legal consciousness and informational awareness of the population regarding violence, economic dependence and patriarchal stereotypes. Additional important factor which leads to increase of gender-based and domestic violence is ATO in Eastern Ukraine. It is possible to say IDPs have more psychological issues and as the result of all this we have increased aggression level. Another risk factor for IDPs is economical inability to keep the family by themselves and it leads to the increased number of divorced families. Women with children move out to other regions and husbands stay in the occupied areas. Many of them aren't socially adapted: they have any job, any money, any possibility to place children in pre-school establishments despite having priority for their placement. Beside these issues, FCYSC specialists in Luhansk region (City of Severodonetsk, Luhansk region) point at stress situations characteristics faced by IDPs while passing through the check-points. Although some psychologist note these situations are hardships of life due to the loss of normal way of life and they shouldn't be considered as acts of violence. Women among IDPs consider financial issues and intrafamilial issues as the main reasons for family conflicts. They at most as well as the experts tend to think the events in Donbas has caused the increase of aggression level inside families both in terms of population in general and among IDPs.

5. DOMESTIC AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE OUTSREAD AMONG INTERNALLY DISPLACED WOMEN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES
5.1. Personal experience of domestic and gender-based violence among internally displaced women

Gender-based and domestic violence may appear in different forms which not only show use of force and doing physical harm but also include psychological pressure, threatening, stalking or restriction of freedom for the victims. But not all such cases are clearly perceived by the society as acts of violence because some of these acts are considered to be normal practice for married life or for relationship between sexes due to the influence of long-standing social norms.

Consequently, any studies focused on gender-based violence face a variety of challenges associated with victims' unwillingness to share their experience considering possible condemnation by the society and because of inability to identify corresponding form of violence, lack of understanding of inappropriateness of such behavior. That's why methodological approaches on surveying population regarding domestic and gender-based violence need clear and coherent formulations which apart from the study subcomponent are focused both at explanatory activities and raising public awareness.

Taking this into consideration, this study program has specified the questions characterizing possible demonstration of psychological, economical, physical, sexual violence and also controlled behavior towards the female respondents. Main situations are generalized below which were categorized according to possible violence forms and suggested for the review by the polled women.

Psychological violence: images, humiliation (strong language, criticism, humiliating treatment); blackmailing (including usage of the child), threatening, stalking; psychological pressure (intrigues, gossips, bullying etc.).

Controlled behavior: physical harassment (spying, control, intrusive meetings); social circle restriction (communication with friends, relatives), limiting ability to visit place of employment/education; restriction of access to necessary medical services, medicines, treatments; keeping under lock and key against one's will.

Economical violence: pocketing money, belongings, documents; eviction from house/apartment; forcing to work without payment or for minimal salary.

Physical violence: physical abuse / physical pain (beating, choking, slapping, jabbing and other traumas); wounding using weapons of any type; forcing to take drugs or alcohol; forcing to watch violent acts against other person.

Sexual violence: unpleasant comments or actions of sexual character; attempted rape; rape; sexual abuse by force or threatening; sexual abuse in order to get necessary items (products, services, protection for family etc.).

In order to consider other possible acts of violence the corresponding category "Other situations" was introduced which includes open question.

Comprehensive list of the situations characterizing different expressions of violence and proper interviewers' level of training to participate in such highly sensitive polls have secured the highest possible accurate information uptake. The study results have confirmed the high level of gender-based violence outspread among internally displaced persons. Over two thirds of female respondents (71% of the representatives from the target group) faced at least one of the mentioned forms of violence before or after the relocation out of the armed conflict areas. However, the effect by the conflict of women's vulnerability is clearly visible: for at least 61% of the female respondents mentioned one act of violence during the conflict

while the number of women who suffered because of such situations after the relocation has decreased to 56% (Figure 5.1.1).

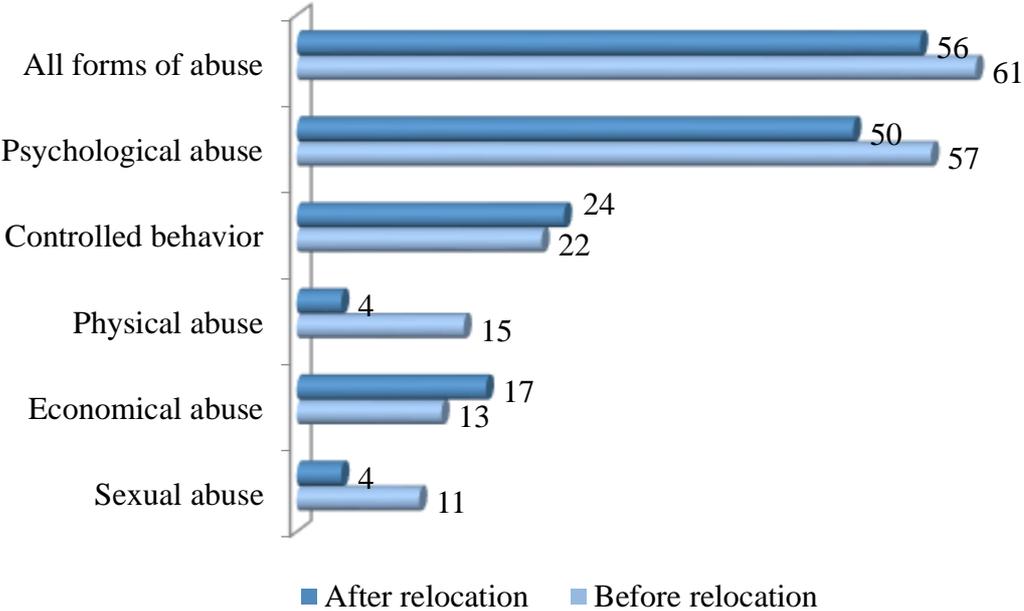


Figure 5.1.1. Numbers of internally displaced women who suffered from at least one act of violence of different type before and after internal relocation, %

It is important to note the consequences of the conflict and forced relocation affected differently the level of abuse outspread. When the relocation from the war zones has caused marked decrease in physical, sexual and psychological abuse levels among IDPs, then the level of economical abuse has increased significantly as well as the outspread of controlled behavior cases towards the polled women (Figure 5.1.1). In this context it is important to underline the rising numbers of the female respondents reporting on cases of forced labor free of payment or employment with minimal salary possible after the moment of their relocation (“we worked 2 weeks at the supermarket without being paid,” City of Iziium, Kharkiv region) and these case are the examples of absolute violation of both employment laws and human rights and require appropriate legal response.

Intensification of the feeling when their lives are controlled by other people felt by women is associated in the first place with restricted access to required medical services, medicines and treatments including high level control of social circle communications, restrictions to visit place of employment or education. Access to basic services and employment may be partially associated with external institutional factors which can complicate living arrangements at the new location for IDPs: in particular, one of the female respondents complains about her incapability to get medical services needed by her and by her child in city of Mariupol (Donetsk region) because she is registered in the village located now in the grey zone but without ATO status. On the contrary, the control over relations with relatives or friends is mainly defined by immediate family members, husband and wife or partner.

It is possible to make the assumption one of the reasons for restricted communication with close people after the forced relocation may be the differences in political and social views as some female respondents' relatives are in non-government controlled areas in Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

“My aunt is hostile to me, sets about gossips and intrigues” (City of Kharkiv).

(After the relocation out of my home city I have no possibility to communicate with the relatives who are in the areas of combat operations” (City of Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast).

At the same time, it is necessary to mention the positive tendency for women's personal safety improvement after the relocation as the poll result show markedly lower psychological and sexual violence expression level of all types in receiving societies as well lower outspread of physical harassment and physical traumatic experience against relocated women. In particular, part of the polled women who faced at least one form of sexual violence has decreased from 11% during the conflict to 4% after the internal relocation and the numbers of women who suffered from physical abuse of any kind have dropped from 15% to 4% of the female respondents correspondingly.

Although the target group representatives speak about extended experience of psychological abuse before and after the relocation, its level has also decreased compared with the previous period. Nevertheless, it is necessary to consider the time “before relocation” was longer maximum by 2 years than “after relocation” period and that's why it is impossible to say the level of violence has definitely dropped.

Most common forms and expressions of gender-based violence. Generally, most common forms and expressions of violence include psychological (over half of the polled women told about such experience).

In most cases the female respondents recall cases of insult and humiliation (approximately 40%) and psychological pressure by other individuals (approximately third of target group representatives). Every sixth woman faced situations with threatening and stalking during the conflict period but after the relocation the amount of victims who suffered from such expressions of psychological violence has decreased to 10% (Table 5.1.1). Among other forms of psychological abuse, the female respondents often remember negative attitude towards IDPs from receiving communities, unwillingness to rent out accommodations for IDPs.

“Often clients among IDPs speak about cases of psychological abuse: humiliation, emotional and social deprivation, depreciation, threatening, discrimination they faced both in occupied areas and during the relocation period” (national expert).

“It is difficult to find apartment to rent. Attitude towards IDPs is suspicious and great distrust is felt” (City of Poltava).

“Here neighbors do not like us. They say we take their jobs away from them” (Town settlement Kupiansk-Vuzlovy, Kharkiv region).

Table 5.1.1

Amount of women facing different forms of violence before and after internal relocation, %

Forms of abuse	Polled women – IDPs		Other known women (according to female respondents)	
	Before relocation*	After relocation*	Before relocation*	After relocation*
Psychological violence				
Insult, humiliation (strong language, criticism, humiliating treatment)	46	39	46	35
Blackmailing (including usage of the child), threatening, stalking	17	10	20	13
Psychological pressure (intrigues, gossips, bullying)	39	32	37	27
Controlled behavior				
Physical harassment (spying, control, intrusive meetings)	10	5	15	8
Social circle restriction (communication with friends, relatives), limiting ability to visit place of employment/education	13	16	18	17
Restriction of access to necessary medical services, medicines, treatments	7	14	10	14
Keeping under lock and key against one's will	3	1	6	2
Economical violence				
Pocketing money, belongings, documents	8	4	14	7
Eviction from house/apartment	6	7	9	7
Forcing to work without payment or for minimal salary	4	10	8	9
Physical violence				
Physical abuse/physical pain (beating, choking, slapping, jabbing and other traumas);	14	4	21	9
Wounding using weapons of any type	1	0	5	1
Forcing to take drugs or alcohol	2	1	4	1
Forcing to watch violent acts against other person	1	4 respondents	3	3 respondents
Sexual violence				
Unpleasant comments or actions of sexual character (touch, kisses)	9	3	8	3
Attempted rape	5	4 respondents	5	1
Rape	2	1 respondents	4	1
Sexual abuse by force or threatening	4	1	3	3 respondents
Sexual abuse in order to get necessary items (products, services, protection for family)	1	3 respondents	2	2 respondents
Other situations	4 respondents	2 respondents	4 respon	1 respondents

**Total number exceeds 100% because these female respondents could choose several variants of the answers*

Occurrences of controlled behavior cases as the form of violence towards women remain the second outspread group – in general almost quarter of the female respondents faced this kind of abuse. Virtually, every 6th woman faced restrictions of communication with close people, every 7th woman had no access to medical services or medicines necessary for her because of other individuals' actions. Physical harassment level was slightly lower but there were single cases of freedom of movement restrictions for victims in the form of staying under lock and key against their will.

Although the total level of physical violence remained relatively high within the armed conflict period (Figure 5.1.1), the study results show any major cases of serious injuries caused by weapons of any kind, cases of forcing to take drugs or alcohol or forcedly making women watch violent acts against other individuals. Similar situation characterizes also the outspread level of economic violence in terms of looting property, pocketing documents, eviction from accommodations or forced labor. However, those single cases of economic violence faced by the polled women not only deeply hurt them but also caused long-standing negative consequences.

“At the borderline the separatists have torn my passport apart and I can't still get the new one” (City of Odesa).

“When I was in the occupied areas my apartment was completely looted and later my accommodation was taken over by other people and I was evicted” (City of Severodonetsk, Luhansk region).

Therewith, it is necessary once again to stress on vulnerability of internally displaced women regarding worker exploitation and non-payment of corresponding salaries because every 10th female respondent faced these situations after the relocation.

Sexual violence remains the most suppressed issue all over the world because only small percentage of the victims decide to report on such experience even under the conditions of complete anonymity and confidentiality of obtained information. Despite this, the study results show 11% of the polled women became victims of sexual violence of one or another type before their forced relocation. For sure the most “light” expressions of violence were the commonest – almost tenth of women reported on situations with unacceptable comments or actions of sexual nature while only very few of the female respondents mentioned sexual abuse. In total, 5% of the polled women mentioned situations of attempted rape before their relocation, 4% - sexual abuse by force or threats, 2% women suffered from rape. After the internal relocation there are only very few female respondents suffering from such situation and it is a positive sign.

It is generally recognized that the subject-matter of gender-based violence is highly sensitive element for performing public opinion polls and that's why indirect assessment methods are used in the sociologic practice to increase the reliability level of obtained information. For this purpose, the respondents are asked about cases of violence faced by their direct female friends, relatives or close friends they are aware of. Similar assessment allows not only to extend the general picture of gender-based violence inside the society but also

gives the respondents the possibility to speak on personal experience on behalf of third parties.

Indeed, the result of indirect assessment identify markedly higher level of physical and economical violence outspread among IDPs as well as expressions of controlled behavior towards other women (Figure 5.1.1). In particular, 21% of the polled women mentioned situations of physical abuse they were aware off faced by their close female friends before the time of relocation (higher by one third compared with the number of the female respondents sharing their own experience of such cases), 14% of women spoke about known to them other people's cases of money, documents pocketing, property looting (twice the number of the female respondents, accordingly), 15% of women shared cases on physical harassment against their friends (more by one third of the polled women, accordingly). The female respondents were honest while sharing information regarding the cases faced by their female friends and close people.

“Husband insults my female friend... Several times I address police with this issue but he isn't afraid of police. Police officers take him away and then let him go. For some time we live quietly but then again conflicts start” (Town settlement Kupiansk-Vuzlovy, Kharkiv region).

“My female friend is highly worried because these scandals often occur when the child is present” (City of Kharkiv).

These data indirectly confirm the high level of gender-based violence suppression issue in Ukrainian society which can be associated both with self-stigmatization and fear of payback by the offender due to information disclosure and feeling of distrust in any human institutions.

When analyzing experience of violence among IDPs it is necessary to mention the similar situations at most have non-systematic character (Table 5.1.2). The great majority of those violent acts faced by the polled women after the relocation to the new place happened only once or few times.

Only expressions of controlled behavior associated with restrictions on social circle communications, ability to visit place of work/education and access to required medical services had more regular character. Threatening and stalking, psychological violence and forcing to work without being paid should also be noted among all those cases faced by relatively large numbers of female victims. Along with that despite the small number of those who suffered due to violent restrain of freedom (9 women or 1% of all female respondents), near half of them mentioned they still face these issues often. By remembering their friends' experience, the female respondents demonstrate greater openness.

“Some of my friends were kept in the basement in the occupied territories, their belongings were taken away from them and they were beaten by the so-called rebels” (City of Severodonetsk, Luhansk region).

Table 5.1.2

Incidence rate regarding different expressions of violence

Expressions of violence	Virtually every day	Often	Sometimes	At least once	Hard to tell, refusal to speak
<i>Number of internally displaced women who faced corresponding situations after relocation, %</i>					
Insult, humiliation (strong language, criticism, humiliating treatment), n=388	2	17	62	18	2
Blackmailing (including usage of the child), threatening, stalking, n=102		30	45	22	3
Psychological pressure (intrigues, gossips, bullying), n=318	3	26	52	16	3
Physical harassment (spying, control, intrusive meetings), n=51		24	51	26	
Social circle restriction (communication with friends, relatives), limiting ability to visit place of employment/education, n=158	18	37	35	6	4
Restriction of access to necessary medical services, medicines, treatments, n=140	8	41	43	7	1
Eviction from house/apartment, n=73	7	16	41	32	4
Forcing to work without payment or for minimal salary, n=104		25	40	33	2
<i>Number of internally displaced women who faced corresponding situations after relocation, individuals</i>					
Keeping under lock and key against one's will, n=9		4	1	3	1
Pocketing money, belongings, documents, n=38	1	7	17	11	2
Physical abuse/physical pain (beating, choking, slapping, jabbing and other traumas), n=35		4	20	10	1
Wounding using weapons of any type, n=0					
Forcing to take drugs or alcohol, n=6			1	3	2
Forcing to watch violent acts against other person, n=4				3	1
Unpleasant comments or actions of sexual character (touch, kisses), n=28	1	4	14	5	4
Attempted rape, n=4			2	2	
Rape, n=1				1	
Sexual abuse by force or threatening, n=9			2	7	
Sexual abuse in order to get necessary items (products, services, protection for family), n=3			1	1	1

*Total number exceeds 100% because these female respondents could choose several variants of the answers

Violence vulnerability and sociodemographic characteristics of female victims. The study results have confirmed the fact that under the conditions of the armed conflict the risks of gender-based violence are extended on all groups of women. Detailed analysis of victims' sociodemographic characteristics gives no grounds to identify specific vulnerable population

categories as their classification according to the level of education, family status, social and economic status at the job market or self-rating on material household status (Table. 5.1.3) in general terms corresponds to the characteristics of the implemented demographic complex of the female respondents.

Table 5.1.3

Classification of internally displaced female victims according to basic sociodemographic characteristics, % of female respondents who faced at least one form of violence

Sociodemographic characteristics	Total number of polled women, n=1003	Total number of victims, n=710	Out of them:	
			Before relocation, n=614	After relocation, n=564
Age groups				
18-29 years	21	19	19	20
30-39 years	36	37	37	38
40-49 years	22	22	22	22
Over 50 years	21	22	22	20
Education level				
Elementary education, incomplete secondary education	1	1	1	1
Complete secondary education (11 years)	8	8	8	7
Vocational school or college (Vocational technical school)	38	38	39	40
Incomplete higher education	16	16	15	16
Higher education (basic or complete)	37	37	37	36
Family status				
Married	39	37	36	39
Civil marriage	10	10	10	10
Divorced (officially)	21	23	25	23
Divorced (not officially)	7	9	9	7
Widow	8	7	6	6
Never married/civil marriage	15	15	14	15
Social and economic status at the job market (several variants of answers were possible)				
Official employment, full-time	26	26	65	26
Official employment, part-time	13	14	6	15
Off-the-books employment	19	20	8	20
Unemployed	9	10	2	9
Pensioner (old-age pension)	8	6	5	6
Getting education	4	3	4	4
Unemployed because of disability	3	4	3	4
Household management	9	10	4	10
On child-care leave	13	14	9	14
Other	1	1	1	1
Entrepreneurial businesses	5 respondents	2 respondents	4 respondents	1 respondents
Self-rating on material household status				
We are without need for anything and we have savings	1	1	1	1
We can afford basic goods and services but we	13	10	11	10

can't save money				
We have finances only for the most necessary and we must cut down expenses	49	47	47	48
We do not have finances even for essentials	34	39	39	39
Hard to tell	3	3	3	3

Such special patterns characterize also age-specific classification of the female victims (Table 5.1.4). However, it is necessary to mention markedly higher risks of physical and sexual violence faced by younger women as over 70% of the female victims who suffered from this type of violence within the period after their internal relocation were in the age of up to 40 years old (Table 5.1.4). Contrariwise, the women of all age groups are presented more evenly among victims who suffered from different forms of psychological, economical violence and those who were abused by controlled behavior.

Table 5.1.4

Classification of internally displaced female victims according to age groups and forms of violence, % of female respondents who faced at least one form of violence

Age groups	Before relocation, n=614					After relocation, n=564						
	All forms of violence	Among them:					All forms of violence	Among them:				
		Psychological	Controlled behavior	Economical	Physical	Sexual		Psychological	Controlled behavior	Economical	Physical	Sexual
18-29 years	19	19	15	14	17	17	20	22	18	19	27	32
30-39 years	37	38	44	46	44	45	38	38	41	43	43	41
40-49 years	22	22	22	18	19	19	23	22	20	20	14	14
Over 50 years	22	22	19	22	20	19	20	19	21	18	16	14

5.2. Circumstances of violent situations within the armed conflict period after internal relocation

Although most of women who suffered from different form of violence reported on these issues as being made by unknown individuals (28% of the victims during the conflict period and 38% of the victims after the relocation), the domestic violence role remains highly critical (Table 5.2.1). At the same time the main category of offenders is represented by women's direct intimate partners because the level of exposed violence on the part of other family members (parents, children, other relatives) is significantly lower. Therewith, every 8th woman has experienced certain violent actions on the part of her current husband/partner.

"My husband humiliated and treated me badly for no reason" (City of Kharkiv).

At the same time over quarter of the female respondents faced violence by their ex-husbands within the conflict period.

"My ex-husband was always there on my back and here he doesn't want to leave me alone!" (City of Izium, Kharkiv region).

“My ex-husband was very aggressive: he beat me, called me names, gave me no money, turned me out of the house” (City of Kharkiv).

But after the relocation to the government-controlled areas the numbers of polled women who experiences violence on the part of their ex-husbands have decreased three-fold (*“my husband was freaking me out but now he is quiet”* town-like Kupiansk-Vuzlovy, Kharkiv region) and this tendency can be explained as marital relations termination due to the relocation.

Table 5.2.1

Classification of internally displaced female victims of violence according to categories of offenders, % of female respondents who faced at least one form of violence*

Categories of possible offenders	Before relocation, n=614	After relocation, n=564
Current husband / partner	13	12
Ex-husband / partner	27	8
Father / step-father	6	1
Mother / step-mother	3	2
Son / daughter	1	1
Father of husband / partner	2	1
Mother of husband / partner	3	2
Other male family member	2	2
Other female family member	2	2
Friend / known person / neighbor	20	24
Employer / fellow worker	15	20
Law enforcement official	3	3
Medical worker	6	19
Social services worker including social psychologist	8	13
Worker employed in education sector	2	2
NGO / charitable foundation worker	2	3
Parson	1 (respondent)	1 (respondent)
Military formations representative	15	9
Unknown person / persons	28	38
Other individual	2	6

**Total number exceeds 100% because these female respondents could choose several variants of the answers*

Results of the poll showed the increase of women’s vulnerability level towards various expressions of violence on the part of other people who aren’t their family members under the conditions of internal relocations. Similar risks are intensified not only on the part of unknown people but also because of the actions taken by known men, neighbors or colleagues at work who can abuse vulnerability of internally displaced women who have no strong relationship with members from receiving communities and who are helpless against potential offenders.

“Sometimes I fight with neighbors” (City of Kharkiv).

Every fifth female respondents after the relocation faced specific violent actions by the employer or colleagues at work (against 15% of the victims before the relocation) and every 4th woman was abused by her friend, know person or neighbor (20% of victims before the relocation accordingly). Despite the marked drop in the numbers of violent situations associated with actions by the representatives of various military formations (*“over there the military guys abused us psychologically”*, City of Kharkiv), 9% of the polled women mentioned them facing similar cases when they left conflict areas. By answering the open questions, the female respondents also underline high risks of violence IDPs face at the border crossing points at the demarcation line between the sides (checkpoints).

Special concerns are caused by different forms of violence by the representatives of public institutions who are intended to provide assistance for vulnerable population categories including internally displaced persons. However, the number of the female respondents who reported on cases of unreasonable behavior on part of medical workers have increased threefold after the relocation to the receiving communities (from 6% to 19% women), but the number of female respondents who experienced violent situations of any type on the part of social services workers (including social psychologists) is 1.5 times higher (from 8% to 13% of women accordingly). Among other categories of offenders, the single cases were mentioned in connections with actions by law enforcement officers, NGOs and humanitarian organizations, workers employed in education sector and even on the part of the parsons.

The characteristic aspects of gender-based violence in a way depend on the category of offenders (Table 5.2.2). Especially the cases of physical violence mentioned by the polled women mainly referred to domestic violence sphere and were associated with actions by their direct intimacy partners. 40% of the female respondents got physical traumas caused by their ex-husbands before the time of relocation to the new place of residence, 16% out of them experienced traumas caused by the current husbands. Therewith, nearly two-thirds of the female respondents faced insult and humiliation situations and third of women suffered of psychological pressure, threatening and stalking on the part of their ex-husband before the time of relocation. Occurrences of the controlled behavior while being married also remain quite common as every 10th female respondent remembers restrictions established against her by her ex- or current husband regarding her communication with close people, 13% of women mention social circle restrictions on the part of their current husband at the new place of residence.

“I didn’t nearly communicate with neighbors because my husband forbade me speaking with neighbors, friends” (City of Kharkiv)

Sexual violence expressions are mostly related to actions by current or former intimate partners but there are facts on harassment by unknown individuals and known males, employers, law enforcement officers.

Cases of unacceptable behavior on the part of the officials are defined by psychological violence expressions – insults, pressure including improper fulfillment of direct professional duties. Notably, two-thirds of female respondents underlined their experience after the internal relocation on restricted access to medical services, medicines or treatments needed by them caused by medical workers

While commenting their own experience, the female respondents also recall rough attitude by medical workers (*“After the relocation I was accused by medical worker – rough treatment, comments, insults – saying ATO is our fault,”* City of Poltava), by officials at the state employment center (*“At the employment center local personnel are rude,”* City of Iziium, Kharkiv region), by personnel at educational establishments (*“at educational establishment personnel blame IDPs for ATO,”* City of Poltava). Quite common are the complaints about pressure by landlords who own accommodations rented by the internally displaced women (*“The landlord was worried the woman with three children wouldn’t be able to pay for the rent,”* City of Chornomorsk, Odesa region) and administrative workers who are responsible for temporary accommodation for IDPs.

Table. 5.2.2

Commonest expressions of violence depending on categories of offenders,
% of female respondents who faced at least one form of violence

Categories of offenders	Before relocation, n=614	After relocation, n=564
Unknown individuals	<i>n=172</i> : insult, humiliation (31%); psychological abuse (12%); inappropriate comments or actions of sexual character (9%)	<i>n=212</i> : insult, humiliation (39%); psychological abuse (18%); inappropriate comments or actions of sexual character (6%)
Friend/ someone I know/neighbor	<i>n=124</i> : psychological abuse (34%); insult, humiliation (33%)	<i>n=136</i> : psychological abuse (45%); insult, humiliation (39%)
Ex-husband/partner	<i>n=165</i> : insult, humiliation (60%); physical abuse (40%); psychological abuse (39%); blackmailing, threatening, bullying (33%); physical harassment (19%); pocketing money, belongings, documents (16%); social circle restriction on communication with close people (13%); inappropriate comments or actions of sexual character (12%); sexual abuse (10%)	<i>n=43</i> : insult, humiliation (18%); psychological abuse (14%); blackmailing, threatening, bullying (13%); physical abuse (9%)
Employer, colleague at work	<i>n=93</i> : psychological abuse (33%); forcing to work without payment (23%)	<i>n=113</i> : forcing to work without payment (60%); psychological abuse (16%)
Medical worker	<i>n=39</i> : restriction of access to medical services, medicines, treatments (11%)	<i>n=105</i> : restriction of access to medical services, medicines, treatments (64%)
Current husband/partner	<i>n=82</i> : insult, humiliation (62%); psychological abuse (19%); physical abuse (16%); social circle restriction on communication with close people (10%)	<i>n=68</i> : insult, humiliation (65%); psychological abuse (27%); physical abuse (15%); social circle restriction on communication with close people (13%)

Categories of offenders	Before relocation, <i>n=614</i>	After relocation, <i>n=564</i>
Military formations representative	<i>n=91</i> : insult, humiliation (26%); psychological abuse (17%); social circle restriction, restriction of ability to visit place of work/education (17%); blackmailing, threatening, bullying (11%)	<i>n=50</i> : physical harassment (58%); insult, humiliation (16%); eviction from home / apartment (10%)
Social services worker	<i>n=48</i> : psychological abuse (42%); insult, humiliation (18%)	<i>n=74</i> : psychological abuse (76%); insult, humiliation (34%)

The cases of economic violence are mostly caused by actions taken by employers / colleagues at work which are expressed in forcing women to work without proper payment. Apart from this, 16% of the female respondents remember cases of money and their belongings pocketing by ex-husbands, every 10th woman speaks about situations about forced eviction from home which also was initiated by the representatives of military formations. At the same time while analyzing data regarding offenders and types of abuse it is necessary to take into account moderate fullness of the analyzed subgroups which limits data analysis and needs follow-up studying.

Reasons and precipitating factors for violence. While analyzing the circumstances of experienced violence, the female victims (28% of the respondents) mostly underline the absence of any precipitating factors for such behavior (Table 5.2.3). Therewith, every 4th woman connects the motives for aggression with offender's individuality in particular with his mood at the moment of incident or personal character traits, quarter of victims – with offender's status.

Table 5.2.3

Reasons / precipitating factors for violence, % of female respondents who faced at least one form of violence*

№	Precipitating factors	n = 564
1.	No special reasons	28
2.	Offender's mood	27
3.	Offender's personal character traits	27
4.	Issues with accommodation, living conditions, way of life	22
5.	Status of offender	21
6.	Issues with earnings, income	19
7.	Differences in political views	18
8.	Offender's drunken state	17
9.	Jealousy	16
10.	Issues with expenses, costs	15
11.	Gossips about victim	15
12.	Offender didn't like victim's behavior	12
13.	Health issue	9
№	Precipitating factors	n = 564
14.	Relations with parents / children / other relatives	6

15.	Offender didn't like victim's appearance	5
16.	Distribution / fulfillment of household duties	4
17.	Sexual relationship issues	4
18.	War actions, shellfire	4
19.	Differences in religious views	2
20.	Other	2

**Total number exceeds 100% because these female respondents could choose several variants of the answers*

Financial factor also plays quite important role in provoking domestic violence as virtually every 5th woman thinks the corresponding act of violence was caused by unsatisfactory living conditions, way of life or low income, every 7th woman also associates such incidents with problematic distribution of household expenditure. Differences in political views were also mentioned among other reasons of inappropriate behavior (18% of female respondents), alcohol abuse (17%), jealousy (16%), reaction on gossips about victims (15%).

Intrafamilial circumstances (like relations with parents, children or other relatives, distribution of household duties, sexual relationship between the partners etc.) are considered by the polled women as less significant reason for violence.

Interestingly, despite the consequences of the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine, female victims at most do not associate the motives of aggressive behavior they faced before and after relocation with the influence of the combat operations. This information confirms the theory that gender-based violence remains deeply-rooted inside the Ukrainian society and is accepted by the citizens as something normal of day-to-day routine.

6. BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES IN CASE OF DOMESTIC AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND REQUESTS FOR HELP BY VICTIMS

6.1. Behavioral models in case of violence

Gender-based violence remains as the “secret” issue as only few women choose to share such experience on these matters being afraid of the payback by the offenders or expecting stigmatization and accusations from the society.

Lack of familiarity by citizens with their basic rights and their distrust in law enforcement agencies prevent offenders from being brought to responsibility while the underdeveloped system of institutions on gender-based and domestic violence assistance restricts access to protection and support for victims.

According to the representative surveys on Ukrainian population, only third of the victims of physical and/or sexual abuse request any kind of help after the incident¹⁴². The results of this poll fully confirm the similar tendencies: most of internally displaced women who were in the target group of the study selected passive behavioral strategies in case of violence (Table 6.1.1).

In particular, near third of them speak about their obedient acceptance of such attitude and actions towards them when they did nothing to counter offenders or tried peacefully to defuse the conflict. Moreover, every fifth victim confessed she silently suffered acts of aggressive behavior and unaccepted attitude towards her.

Table 6.1.1

Behavioral models by victims in case of violence, % of female respondents who faced at least one form of violence*

Behavioral models	<i>n=564</i>
Tried to defuse the conflict, calm down the offender	31
Did nothing	30
Shouted, yelled	26
Suffered, cried etc.	22
Called relatives, family members	12
Called female friend, male friend, close person	11
Used physical force (fought back) to protect herself	10
Called police	10
Tried to call / called for help	10
Tried to run away / managed to run away	9
Tried to stay away from home for more than 1 day / left home	5
<i>Other</i>	3

* Total number exceeds 100% because these female respondents could choose several variants of the answers

¹⁴² UNFPA (2014). Violence outspread towards girls and women Поширеність насильства щодо дівчат та жінок / United Nations Population Fund, GfK. – Kyiv, 2014. – 60 p.

The study results also confirmed the issue of domestic gender-based violence is mostly perceived by the population as intrafamilial problem. Those women who tried standing against acts of violence at most requested help from their close people – relatives or family members (12% of female respondents), friends and surrounding community (11%). Only every 10th woman remembers her using physical force to protect herself, trying to run away and calling for help. Only 10% of the victims who suffered different expressions of violence called police and this fact can be both indicative of the lack of trust in law enforcement agencies and of the negative acceptance of these situations as crimes for committing which offenders must be brought to justice.

Over one third of the women who suffered from different forms of violence after the internal relocation not even tried to counter violence but also weren't determined to share their experience with anybody. Among the reasons because of which they kept these stories to themselves only are at most the ones associated with influence of the long-standing public views on gender-based violence problematics (Table 6.1.2). One third of the female victims accepted these situations as something normal meaning no special attention should be paid to such cases (32% of the female respondents who didn't tell anybody about their experience of violence) or thought they could overcome negative consequences of these situations by themselves (34% of the female respondents).

Extended guidance documents on victims' victimization on the community level have caused expressions of self-stigmatization because almost every 6th woman recalls she was ashamed to tell anybody about the fact of violence, 9% of the female respondents were afraid of public disclosure and social condemnation, 7% of women were afraid to make their situation even worse and kept their experience of violence as their secret.

Essential number of the female victims (10%) remember them being in the situation when they didn't know whom to ask for help in case of experienced violence. This information shows low public awareness on the available mechanism to counter and prevent gender-based violence in Ukraine and as well defines the necessity to perform additional public awareness campaign, increase circulation of hot lines contacts where people can get primary assistance and/or be redirected to the specialized institutions.

Unfortunately, victims do not believe they have any possibilities to get any type of help they need in case of violence because every 7th woman didn't ask for help because she was sure anybody was capable of helping her and this fact must be taken into consideration.

Table 6.1.2

Reasons why victims seek no help in case of violence, % of female respondents who faced at least one form of violence, but told nobody about it*

Reasons	n=207
I thought I could deal with consequences by myself	35
I didn't see anything special in this situation / I consider it normal	32
I was embarrassed	16
I thought there was nothing to be done / anybody can help me	14
I didn't whom to ask for help	10
I was afraid of public disclosure and social condemnation	9

I was afraid my situation would get even worse if I told anybody	7
Other reason	1

* Total number exceeds 100% because these female respondents could choose several variants of the answers

The positive fact is that most of the women with experience of violent situations (63%) decided to share their own traumatic memories anyway with other people (Table 6.1.3). However, victims' female friends and close friends had the highest level of trust (31%) as well as their parents (23%). Only every 7th woman told her husband about the case of unacceptable attitude or actions, every 10th woman shared her negative experience with other family members. According to the classification of the answers given by the female respondents, the victims got substantive support specifically from their family members and close friends, however, female friends and respondents' parents turned out to be the most useful for them.

Information level on the cases of violence against other individuals outside the family remains quite low. As it was mentioned, only tenth of the victims appealed to law enforcement agencies and virtually the same numbers of the female respondents told social workers about their own experience (Table 6.1.3).

It is expected these statistics reflect the level of redirection of victims by law enforcement officers to social services which provide corresponding social and psychological services and support vulnerable population categories.

Table 6.1.3

Experience in asking for help in case of violence, % of female respondents who faced at least one form of violence*

Categories of individuals	Told about the incident (n=564)*	Got support (n=357)*
<i>I didn't tell anybody</i>	37	-
Husband/partner	15	21
My parents (mother and father)	23	32
Parents of my husband / partner (mother and father)	5	5
Other family member	11	14
Female friend / male friend	31	43
Categories of individuals	Told about the incident (n=564)*	Got support (n=357)*
Medical worker	4	4
Social worker	9	9
NGO worker / legal advocate	4	5
Representative of law enforcement agency or lawyer	10	9
Parson	2	4
Psychologist / psychotherapist	6	8

Mass media /journalist	1 (respondent)	0
Other person	1	1
Children (son / daughter)	2 (respondents)	1 (respondent)
Neighbors	1 (respondent)	0

** Total number exceeds 100% because these female respondents could choose several variants of the answers*

Despite the documented experience of received physical injuries and traumas, very few victims asked medical workers for help (4% of the women who confirmed cases of violence after the relocation). The level of requests for psychological assistance is also low while the poll results show at least half of the victims suffered from certain psychological disorders after the incident. Therewith, the female respondents are quite skeptical in their assessments regarding efficiency of such request because less than 10% of all female victims who requested help from specialists of different qualifications actually got the necessary support.

As for the reactions from close people, members of society and specialists on the cases of violence – less than third of the female victims who appealed for help to other people actually got the necessary support (Figure 6.1.1). The female respondents recall such forms of this assistance: providing temporary accommodation and facilitation of the relocation to the new place of living, financial support, assistance with documents (e.g. drawing up the request to law enforcement agencies), conducting explanatory work with offenders, assistance with employment and medical treatment etc. Nearly the same numbers of the women got recommendations to address other people with their issues including specialists at the law enforcement agencies, medical institutions, social services centers or psychologists.

Victims' parents and their close female friends/male friends were the most active in terms of direct help. Women most of all recall law enforcement officers (11% of victims who asked for help of any kind) and psychologists (8%) among those specialists who provided direct assistance for them after experienced violence. At the same time over half of the female victims underline the fact they got notably moral support because they were listened to and comforted but they decided not to do anything to punish their offenders. Moreover, 5% of the female respondents say they were condemned and accused of their provocative behavior instead of getting support and virtually every 10th women emphasize her request for help caused no reaction.

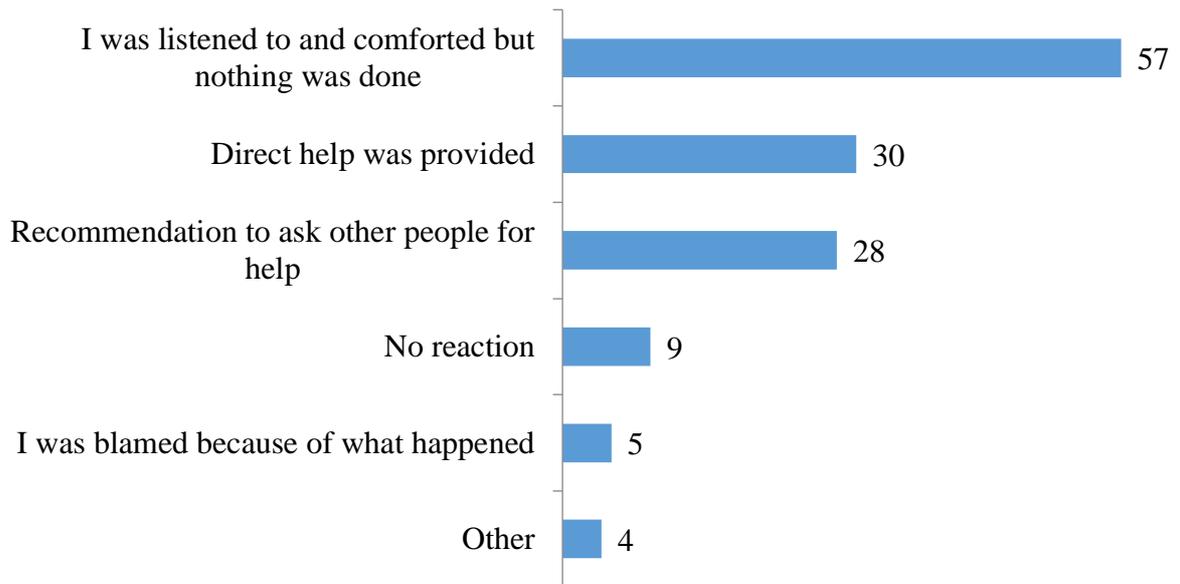


Figure 6.1.1. Aspects of reactions on victims' appeal for help, % of female respondents who applied for any external help (n=357)

Consequently, the poll findings have confirmed the issue of common suppression of gender-based and domestic violence in Ukrainian society and the fact this issue is accepted as intrafamilial affairs which shouldn't be publicly disclosed. These tendencies apparently are intensified inside the society of internally displaced women who aren't deeply-rooted at the new place of living, who may face situations of social exclusion in the receiving communities and who suffer from unsettled life, uncertainty of their future, broken social connections. Therewith, absence of usual practices on seeking assistance from specialists in case of violence is caused by low public legal awareness level, lack of trust in chances to get help from the representatives of social institutions as well as by lack of information regarding available instruments to counter and prevent gender-based and domestic violence.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the performed situational analysis under the project entitled Mobilization of Internally Displaced Women Against Domestic and Gender-based Violence have given grounds to make the following conclusions:

1. Almost two thirds of the internally displaced women involved in this study before the relocation lived in Donetsk region, all the rest in Luhansk region. Most of the female respondents (66%) moved out from the occupied areas 1-2 years ago, just at the beginning or at the active stage of the armed conflict. Over half of the polled women (57%) mentioned all their family members moved out together with them during their forced relocation. Most of the relatives who continue living in ATO zone are the elderly. After the relocation majority of the female respondents registered themselves with the state institutions (86%).

All women involved in this study are of reproductive and working age and the female respondents aged 30-39 years old (36%) make the most complete age group. Nearly half of the polled women are married – official marriage (39%) and de facto relationship (10%). Half of the polled women (50%) have children up to 17 years old.

The study results show that due to the forced change of the place of residence the employment status of the person has also changed: after the relocation the number of women excluded from active social and economic life has increased. The level of official employment among the partners of the polled women also drops but there is increase in numbers of unofficially employed and unemployed men.

Nevertheless, after the relocation the women with husbands/partners faced more difficulties with employment assistance that affected their employment level in the official economy sector. Before the relocation the difference in levels of official employment between males and females was 12% (62% of women and 74% of men were officially employed on full time basis) but after the relocation the difference increased to 19%. Because of this development, the women became more dependable on their partners and, consequently, more vulnerable. In general, according to the survey results the women among IDPs are in difficult financial conditions: third of them (43%) have no money for the necessities while the half (49%) have money for the most needed items but they must save money. As for the sources of income more than half of the polled women (61%) receive social payments from the government and 55% count on their salaries or salaries earned by their husbands. Absence of own accommodation is the important factor which complicates the social and economic life causing poverty as only 2% say they live in their own residential property after the relocation.

2. Gender-based violence for modern Ukraine is quite the pressing issue. It is connected with the increase of violence in the society along with military actions in Eastern Ukraine which cause displacement of the people living in these areas while ATO veterans come back home without participating in proper rehabilitation and adaptation programs focused on getting them ready again for peaceful life, herewith, deterioration of general psychological and social life of the nation also intensifies expressions of violence. According to the experts and internally displaced women, women and children suffer the most because of such violence. The experts consider social factors the main reasons for GBV (critical political and economic situation in the country, outspread of stereotyped images, low level of legal consciousness and public awareness on violence etc.) and personal psychological

characteristics both of the victim and the offender. According to the polled women among IDPs financial issues (reported by 85% of the female respondents) and intrafamilial issues (56%) are the main reasons for family conflicts.

In general, the polled women show their personal disagreement with patriarchal stereotyped images on matrimonial relationships, in particular 73% disagree with the stereotype that a good wife should always listen to her husband even if she doesn't agree with him. Furthermore, most of the female respondents (92%-98%) have negative attitude towards physical and sexual domestic violence. Despite the fact that most of the women among IDPs consider expressions of violence unacceptable in the family, almost half of them say disputes/conflicts in the families very often end in expressions of violence.

3. The results of the study have confirmed the risks of gender-based violence significantly escalate under the conditions of the armed conflict and concern every category of women one without exceptions. Therewith, the process of internal relocation comes with increasing vulnerability of the women against various expressions of violence outside the families as internally displaced person have any of strong connections with the receiving communities and have any support from the local population. The special concern is caused by the cases when employers or owners of the rented accommodations violate the rights of internally displaced women while the situations when the officials and the representatives of the social institutions who in their turn must support IDPs are aggressive and abusive towards these women.

Psychological violence is the most common form of GBV: 57% of women suffered from psychological abuse before the relocation and 50% - after the relocation. The following expressions of GBV are less common but topical:

- Controlled behavior experienced by 22% of the polled women before the relocation and 24% after the relocation;
- Physical violence (15% and 4% accordingly);
- Economic violence (13% and 17% accordingly);
- Sexual violence (11% and 4% accordingly).

Domestic violence remains the essential element of gender-based violence as most of the cases of physical and sexual aggression reported by the female victims are related to the actions taken by ex- or current husband. The study show domestic violence remains to be deeply-rooted issue in the Ukrainian society and these cases aren't considered by people as something extraordinary. The motives for aggression are mostly associated with offenders' personal traits of character but the financial factor plays the systematic role: unsatisfactory conditions of live, unsettled life and low income are very often mentioned as the factors which trigger expression of violence.

It is necessary to consider the fact that today according to the experts who are directly involved in GBV problematics, the sensitivity threshold has notably increased: those expressions of violence which caused immediate reactions by women now aren't perceived as acts of violence. Even in cases of physical abuse women ask for help only in extreme cases. Thus, the changes in levels of violence against internally displaced women are impossible to consider as improvement of the situation.

What is important is that GBV consequences are linked not only with physical harm

and health deterioration. Experienced stresses cause long-term psychological and emotional issues, harm relations between close people, affect victims' professional activities. Constant feeling of fear and guilt significantly degrades victims' quality of life and create conditions for self-stigmatization, limits their possibilities to live full social life.

4. The results of the survey on the internally displaced women have confirmed the common suppression of gender-based and domestic violence in the Ukrainian society as well as these issues are considered as intrafamilial problems and thus they shouldn't be disclosed widely in public. These tendencies evidently aggravate in the community of internally displaced women who have any deep-roots at the new place of residence, who may face expressions of exclusions in the receiving communities, who suffer from unsettled life and breach of social connections, feel uncertain about their future.

Therewith, absence of usual practices on seeking assistance from specialists in case of violence is caused by low public legal awareness level, lack of trust in chances to get help from the representatives of social institutions as well as by lack of information regarding available instruments to counter and prevent gender-based and domestic violence. According expert assessment, 2%-10% of the victims appeal for help to law enforcement agencies, healthcare institutions, social services centers, care-giving institutions, local authorities by themselves in case of violence.

5. Most of the polled women (83%) think the victims should appeal for help only in extreme cases. Majority of them (70%) think victims should go to law enforcement agencies, far less – to crisis centers for victims (47%), legal aid bureaus (36%), FCYSC (34%). According to the polled women, the most effective in term of providing support for victims are: law enforcement personnel (55), psychologists/psychotherapist (55%) and family members (46%). Only 15% of the female respondents consider support by workers from different NGOs effective in cases of violence.

From the perspective of the polled women, the most necessary service the victims require are: social and psychological support (47%) and temporary accommodation services (45%). Almost third of the female respondents (40%) say they do not need any additional information regarding counteraction or prevention of violence. Nevertheless, almost every 2nd female respondent need the contacts of the telephone hotlines (46%). Less critical but still necessary for the female respondents is the information on:

- Services provided for victims (29%);
- Specific organizations providing such type of support (28%);
- Crisis centers/shelters (25%);
- How to behave in case of violence (in printed form) (23%);
- Legislation on domestic violence and victims' rights protection (19%);
- Working hours of psychological groups on victim support services (15%);
- Existing intervention program for aggressors (10%).

According to the polled women the most effective sources of information on violence prevention and supporting victims are: telephone hotlines, TV and the Internet.

The experts think Ukraine lacks prevention measures in the GBV sphere and has neither resources nor understanding of the preventive control in regard to violence prevention.

The current system of services mainly works with the consequences of violence but not on abuse prevention. Today it is vitally needed to raise public awareness by holding campaigns focused on different population categories regarding GBV issues, introduce changes to educational program and top up qualifications of the specialists in diverse fields (education, medicine, law enforcement, psychology, social services). These activities must be done on a regular basis considering modern challenges and specific aspect of violence.

In Ukraine there are telephone hotlines called “Trust”, special institutions (Child guidance and family counselling centers, social and psychological assistance centers), Family, Children and Youth Social Services Center, public and human rights groups etc. providing complex assistance to those who suffer from abuse. Nevertheless, these services aren't sufficient as the activities by these institutions is non-systemic, the system lacks specialized and well-trained specialists (specific qualifications) on GBV issues.

According to the experts' opinion, special attention must be paid to the efficiency level of the services provided. Now Ukrainian society has great demand for social services focused on GBV prevention and counteraction. Despite the fact the experts have the favorable view of support provided for victims, still issues with lack of the resources, absence of the required services and qualified specialists especially in small populated areas continue to be the topical ones.

6. The results of self-evaluation performed by the female respondents show women's level of self-evaluation is slightly higher than average: they have desire to live, they are almost entirely self-satisfied, they are self-confident and want to help the victims. Therewith, the female respondents often underestimate their leadership skills, general state of their health and level of trust in men. The analysis of the integral indexes has showed 57% of the polled female respondents demonstrate self-confidence and 47% have intentions or have already started assisting actively with countering violence against women.

The performed study has identified significant human potential for supporting women who suffered from violence:

- 18% of the polled women already are employees or volunteers at NGOs which mostly provide assistance for IDPs or victims of abuse;
- 26% female respondents have declared their determination to work at the non-governmental organization focused on providing assistance for victims of violence. The positive fact is that most of these women are well-educated and of working age.

According to the results of the performed study the list of contacts on 152 women leaders among IDPs was created who are ready to work at NGOs focused on providing assistance to the victims suffering from violence and who are ready to participate in trainings and take active part in the project entitled Mobilization of Internally Displaced Women Against Domestic and Gender-based Violence.

