

Annual Report 2025-2026

SUPPORT AND EMERGENCY UNIT

Quantitative and Qualitative Interpretation of Women's Experiences with Violence

Focus on Violence as a System, not as Isolated Incidents

To focus on violence as a system, rather than as isolated incidents, means to view it as an integrated structure that is rooted in laws, institutions, and everyday discourses, rather than merely the incidental actions of lone individuals. This perspective reveals how violence is reproduced through unequal power relations, systematic discrimination, and social normalization combined with exclusion and oppression, so that it becomes part of the “natural” and the familiar. When violence is reduced to an individual incident, its context is removed, and the responsibility is assigned to specific individuals, while the broader mechanisms that allow its recurrence remain without accountability. Understanding it as a system, however, enables holding accountable the structures that create and nurture it, and shifts the debate from fleeting moral condemnation to contemplating fundamental change and sustainable justice.

This report provides a comprehensive reading of inquiries received through the Support and Emergency Hotline, as a reflection of structural and recurring patterns of violence, rather than isolated individual incidents. The report combines quantitative analysis (what is happening?) with qualitative analysis (how and why does it happen?), while focusing on gaps in the protection for women, and the essential role played by the Support and Emergency Unit as an alternative safety space.

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Quantitative Part – What Is Happening?

595 Voices and Cases

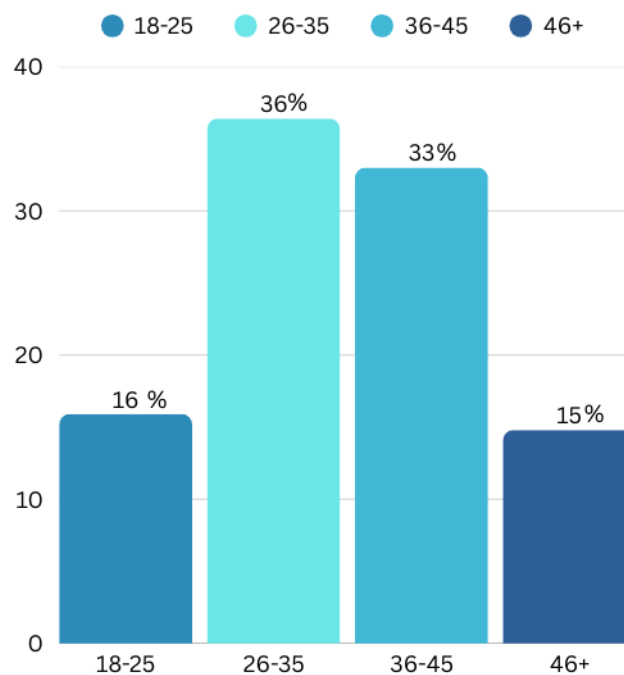
Age Groups of Callers

Women between 26 and 45 years of age constituted 69% of the callers.

36.4%	26-35 years old
33.0%	36-45 years old
15.9%	18-25 years old
14.8%	46 years old and over

The group that called the Hotline the most was women of working age and at the family building stage.

Age Groups of Callers



Nature of Inquiry

The nature of the inquiries received through the Hotline was classified using four categories.

- 40.6% Violence**
- 32.1% Sexual violence**
- 17.0% Personal status**
- 10.0% Work-related**

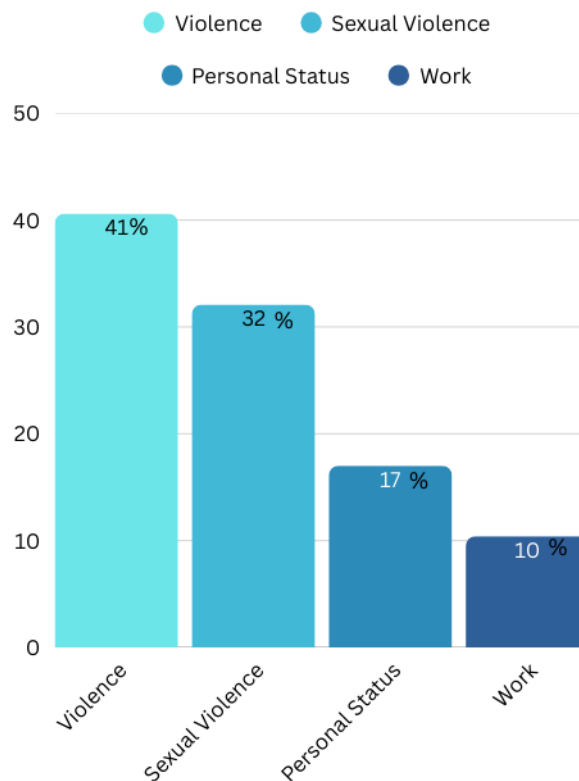
Work-related: Calls related to arbitrary measures by the employer and the workplace related to issues of freedom of expression.

Personal Status: Calls clearly related to incidents of violence involving legal procedures in personal status cases (divorce, custody, alimony, separation).

Sexual Violence: Inquiries related to cases of sexual assault, harassment (physical, online, verbal) and rape, whereby women requested support exclusively for cases of sexual violence.

Violence: This covers a broad spectrum of any form of gender-based violence, including domestic, economic and psychological.

Call's Subject

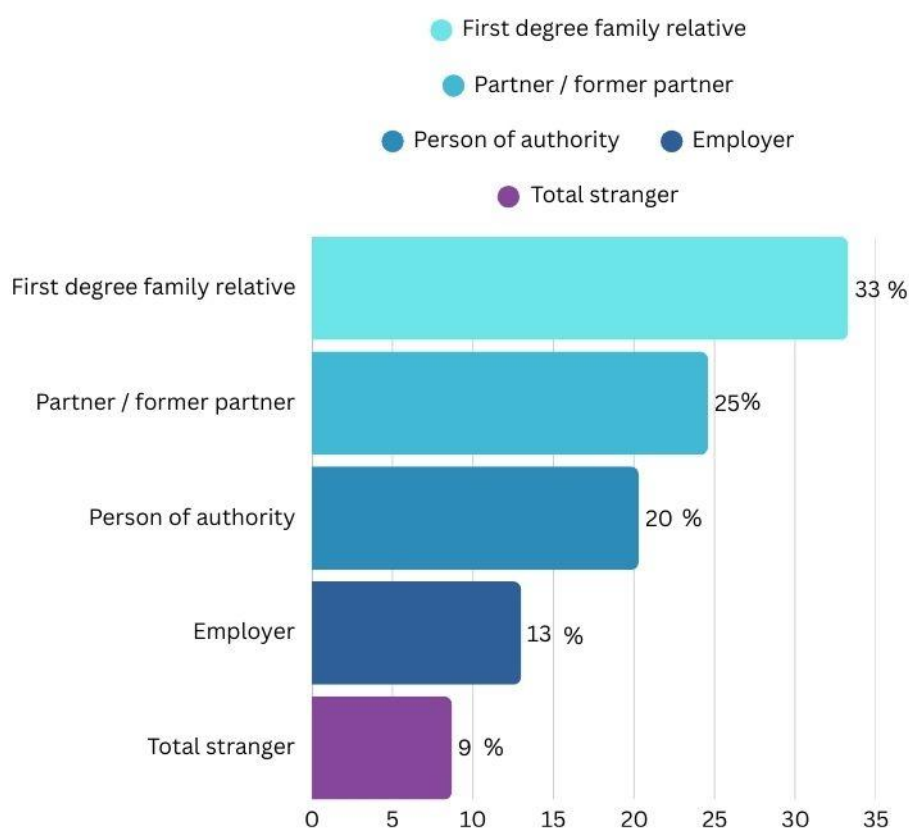


Identity of the Assailant

Of all the assaults, 78% were committed by people from the immediate circle of the victim, or those in a position of power.

33.3%	First degree family relative
24.6%	Partner / former partner
20.3%	Person of authority
13.0%	Employer
8.7%	Total stranger

Assailant's Identity



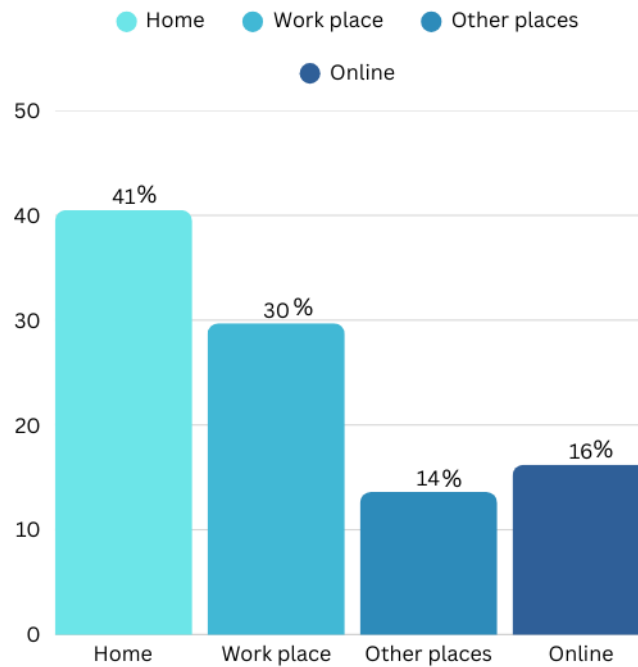
Place of the Assault

A significant portion of the assaults, 40.5%, occurred in places that were considered to be safe.

40.5%	At home
29.7%	In the workplace
16.2%	Online (electronic)
13.6%	Other (street, public place, not accurately identified)

The pattern above shows the spreading of assault locations beyond the traditional places, and now includes syberspace (online).

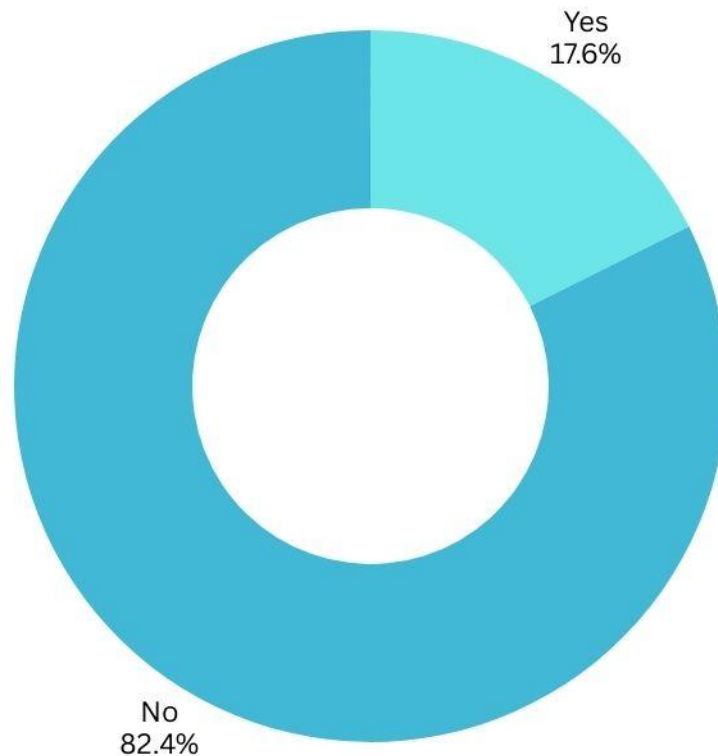
Place of the Assault



Filing a Report / Police Complaint

82.4% No
17.6% Yes

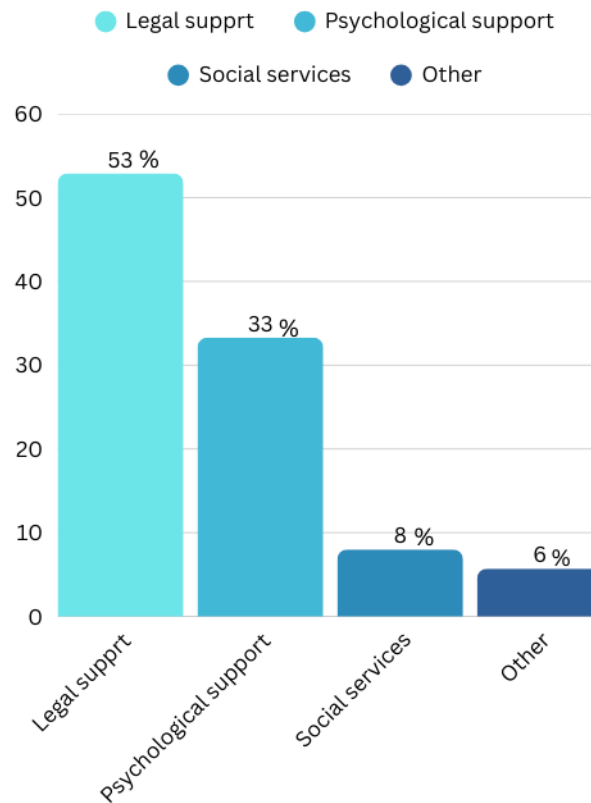
Filing a Report / Police Complaint



In summary, the data indicate that 36.4% of the inquiries were by women 26–35 years old, and 33.0% were 36–45 years old. In 33.3% of cases, the abuser was a first-degree family relative, and a partner or a former partner in 24.6% of the cases. The location of the assault occurred inside the home in 40.5% of the cases, expected to be the safest place, while 27.1% happened in the workplace. Cases of complex violence (physical and psychological), other than sexual violence, constituted 40.6% of the calls, while cases of sexual violence amounted to 32.1%.

What Did the Callers Request?

What Did the Callers Request



An Analytical Interpretation of the Results

1. Legal assistance was the most requested, but not necessarily for litigation purposes.

More than **half of the respondents (52.9%)** requested legal assistance, but this did not necessarily indicate a desire to file a lawsuit. Rather, it often meant:

- Understanding legal options
- Knowing their rights
- Assessing the risks before any future step

As such, legal assistance is sought as a tool of protection and knowledge, not to enable an immediate judicial process.

2. A third of the callers requested psychological support.

A third (33.3%) of the callers needed:

- Psychological embracing and empathy
- Therapeutic support
- Addressing the effects of long-term violence

This percentage reflects the extent of the women's psychological exhaustion, not only the severity of violence.

3. Limited requests for social services is actually a risk indicator.

Only **8%** of callers were referred to social services, which may indicate limited access to such services, or a lack of confidence in their effectiveness (requests for social services primarily included going to the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services offices to follow up on previous requests or procedures).

4. A hidden gap: what does not get requested

Only a small percentage of callers requested emergency protection or direct formal intervention, which reinforces the conclusion that women did not see official systems as a safety space, but rather an added risk.

Although more than 52% requested legal support, the overwhelming majority did not file police reports, indicating that the women sought knowledge and protection, not confrontation.

Analytical Interpretation

A. Sexual Violence

In cases of sexual violence, the need for psychological support appears to override any other recourse, being the top request among women callers, while legal support is often requested for counseling and evaluating, not for immediate litigation purposes. This is due to the fear of not getting believed, social stigma, or repeated abuse after resorting to litigation, making both the psychological embracing and a safe space prerequisites before any subsequent formal action is considered.

It is worth noting, based on what some callers shared with us, the perceived difficulty in establishing equal relationships with parity among those affected by violence, which reveals one of its deeper and less clear effects; violence does not leave an impact on the body or the moment only, but rather reshapes the victim's perception of herself, and the relationships around her. Often, repeated exposure to violence normalizes the power imbalance, causing an unequal relationship to become familiar, even expected, which makes it more likely to enter into toxic or harmful relationships. This is not due to a "wrong choice" as much as it is the product of eroded self-confidence, fear of parity, or unconsciously making a link between intimacy and harm.

Further, this impact is not limited only to women, but also impacts those affected by violence in general, as it hinders their ability to build healthy relationships based on mutual respect, and reproduces the cycle of violence in various forms unless its psychological and social roots are dismantled.

"I needed to understand what was happening, before I decided to take any step."

B. Non-Sexual Violence as a "Legal Issue"

Cases of physical or psychological violence are primarily associated with seeking legal support and advice. These types of violence are considered a clear violation that requires knowledge of available legal options, such as restraining orders or filing complaints. At the same time, the data show a continuing occurrence of requests for psychological support in these cases, which reflects

the impact of repeated and long-term violence on the mental health of the callers, and confirms that the legal path alone is insufficient without parallel psychological embracing and support.

Also of note is the difficulty that many women face in interpreting violent behavior and diagnosing it as such, violence. Even when many models and cases do classify a partner's behavior to be violent, the affected women, or those around them, consider it "normal" or "justified" behavior. This owes largely to the prevailing societal concepts that enshrine and reinforce the concept of ownership and control by the partner, the father, or brother over the woman. The result is blurring the boundaries between care and domination, and between concern and violence, and makes identifying and naming violence a complex and ambiguous process.

C. Complex Violence Imposes Complex Demands

In cases of complex violence (domestic violence accompanied by economic and psychological violence), any single support path is not sufficient to deal with the complexity of the situation. The callers demonstrate a simultaneous need for a legal understanding that clarifies the options and risks, and also for psychological embracing that addresses the effects of overlapping and long-term violence, in addition to social support in some cases, such as the need for shelter or social services support. This pattern clearly reveals the limitations of partial or emergency interventions, and confirms that complex violence requires comprehensive and integrated protection paths, not separate or short-term solutions.

D. Economic and Online Violence: Legal in Appearance, Psychological in Essence

Faced with economic and electronic violence, as the data also show, women's demands are directed, on the surface, toward legal support, with the aim of stopping the threat, protecting financial resources, or reducing defamation and damage to reputation. However, this legal approach does not reflect the full extent of the harm, as the psychological impact in these cases often appears to be more severe and longer-lasting than the direct harm, resulting from constant attrition, constant fear, and the loss of the sense of security. This pattern confirms that dealing with economic and online violence cannot be limited to legal solutions alone, but rather requires parallel psychological support that addresses the invisible impact of these types of violence.

Identifying economic violence is difficult in its early stages, as it often hides behind the prevailing allocation of gender-based roles, where men are seen as having power over financial resources and decisions. In this context, women often do not know the reality of the husband's or partner's economic situation, including property, loans, financial obligations and debts. At the moment of separation, this "secret" information explodes in the woman's face, becoming an additional pressure tool that results in more physical and psychological violence, through making divorce conditional upon the woman waiving her rights, or even holding her fully responsible for the debts, and other forms of economic blackmail.

Analytical Summary

The type of violence usually determines the type of request for support, but it rarely is just one type of request. The closer to home, the longer and the more overlapping the violence is, the greater the need for psychological support in parallel with the legal path.

The data show that callers do not seek one type of support to the exclusion of others. Sexual violence mainly triggers the need for psychological embracing, while non-sexual and economic violence

prompts the seeking of legal advice. Further, cases of complex violence reveal the need for comprehensive and overlapping protection paths.

Gender-based violence, in comparison, falls within a broader context governed by the social structure that is based on a traditional division of roles and growing gender discrimination, where power relations are reproduced on a daily basis within the family and society. In this context, men are assigned the roles of authority, decision-making and control, while women are confined to the roles of caring and obedience, as well as economic and emotional dependence. This division is typically presented as “natural” or “cultural”. This system contributes to legitimizing control and inequality, limits women's independence and decision-making ability, and weakens their ability to resist violence or hold violent people to account. Gender discrimination intersects with social, economic and legal factors, creating an environment conducive to the continuation and normalization of violence.

Qualitative (Narrative) Part – How and Why It Happens?

Analyzing the issues and requests received through the Support Hotline

This section presents a qualitative analysis of the calls that reached the Support Hotline during the reporting period. **The analysis focuses on recurring patterns, issues that were identified, similarities between cases, and structural gaps in the protection systems and services**, in addition to practical recommendations based on field experiences.

Recurring Patterns Observed through the Support Hotline

Incoming calls to the Support Hotline show a number of recurring patterns that intersect across the experiences of a large number of callers. One of the most prominent patterns is the **delay in seeking help**, as many women reach the hotline after long periods of violence or attrition, having exhausted attempts at silence or endurance. This is accompanied by a **deep fear of “scandal”**, not only as a social stigma, but also as a danger that threatens reputation, family relationships, and status within society, all of which prompt many women to delay disclosure or avoid going to official authorities altogether.

Self-blame has also emerged as a recurring psychological pattern, with women holding themselves responsible for what they have experienced, or questioning the legitimacy of their feelings of harm, especially in cases of unclear or **socially-normalized violence**. In many cases, **economic violence** has emerged as a central tool of control, through the control of resources, denial of work, or threats of material deprivation, thus restricting women's ability to make independent decisions, or leave abusive relationships.

In addition, the **use of children as a means of pressure** has been observed within violence settings, whether through threats of custody, incitement, or holding women responsible for “family disintegration”, which further complicates the decision to seek protection. In other cases, **fragile legal conditions, including permit issues**, constituted an additional obstacle to seeking help, as the fear of reporting or appearing before official institutions was linked to potential legal risks affecting the destination itself, not just the aggressor.

The Rise of Sexual Violence Linked to Powerful and Influential Figures

The data from the Support Hotline show a worrying rise in calls related to sexual violence committed by **figures with professional or symbolic authority**, such as doctors, psychotherapists, spiritual

therapists, or professional officials in workplaces or institutions. In these cases, violence is not based solely on the sexual act itself, but on **an unequal power relationship and undue influence** in which trust, need, or professional status are exploited to cause abuse followed by silencing the aggrieved person.

The pattern of abuse within these contexts often takes seemingly “ambiguous” forms, such as **inappropriate examinations** that transcend and violate the boundaries and sanctity of the body, often presented as a medical or therapeutic procedure, or improper contact and transgressions justified in the name of professionalism or care. This intentional ambiguity makes female respondents question their experiences, and leads to **a long delay in identifying what happened as an assault**, especially when the assailant is a “respectable” person or projects a professional reputation.

It was also noted that **authority connections were directly exploited** to silence the women, whether by questioning their stories, belittling what happened, or suggesting that objection would lead to the loss of treatment, work or reputation. In some cases, women expressed an intense fear of confronting someone with institutional or social influence, being aware of the unequal power, and the significant difficulties in proving the violation or obtaining formal authentication.

Within this context, many women **took a long time to understand that they were subjected to actual sexual violence**, not a “misunderstanding” or an “uncomfortable experience”, a delay that does not stem from a lack of awareness, but rather from a system that dresses violence in the guise of professionalism, and gives the aggressor indirect protection through status and authority. This pattern reveals a serious gap in oversight and accountability mechanisms, and an urgent need for safe and independent complaint paths that protect women from repeated abuse, and break the silence imposed upon them through undue influence and unequal relations.

Sexual Violence: Beyond Reporting

Calls related to sexual violence reveal that the challenge does not begin with the decision to report, but is preceded by a complex path of silence and hesitation. In a large number of cases, women faced difficulty in identifying what they had experienced as sexual assault. This is particularly so when the assault occurred within a marital or intimate relationship, as marital rape is still not socially recognized or clearly identified, leading to the normalization of the violation and the postponement of seeking help. This is accompanied by a deep fear of not getting believed, whether by family, society, or official bodies, a fear that feeds on previous experiences of skepticism and blame, and makes disclosing violence a great psychological and social risk.

Furthermore, silence within the family plays a central role in the persistence of violence, as direct or indirect pressure is exerted to protect “the family reputation,” or maintain superficial cohesion, often at the expense of women's safety and right to protection. Instead of being a starting point for justice, reporting becomes, in the minds of many women, a potential for additional abuse, thus explaining the widespread reluctance to use official paths, and resorting instead to the Support Hotline as a primary and safe space to acknowledge and identify what happened.

Obstacles to Survival

The inquiries to the Support Hotline show that the path to surviving violence is impeded by not just one obstacle, but by an overlapping network of barriers that interact to limit women's ability to escape safely. Foremost are **legal obstacles** in the form of conditional or temporary protection

pathways or procedures that require proof of “imminent risk”, leaving many abused women without actual long-term protection. Frail legal situations, such as residency or permit issues, also deepen the fear of going to the official authorities, since requesting protection may turn into a legal risk for the woman herself.

Additionally, **social obstacles** create constant pressure, manifested in the fear of being stigmatized, of maintaining the “family reputation”, or of being blamed and ostracized, which leads many women to remain silent, or tolerate violence as a socially less costly option. These obstacles are reinforced by **economic obstacles**, where financial dependence on the assailant, or the absence of an independent income, become decisive factors in prolonging violence, and reducing the options available to women, especially in light of the lack of safe alternatives or sustainable financial support.

Finally, these factors cannot be separated from the **psychological obstacles** that accumulate as a result of long-term violence, and include fear, exhaustion, loss of self confidence, and hesitation in making pivotal decisions. All of these obstacles often intersect, making survival a complex, non-linear path that requires integrated and continuous support, not emergency or partial intervention.

High Occurrence of Complex Violence Cases

The incoming calls to the Support Hotline show that the majority of cases do not relate to a single or isolated form of violence, but rather to complex violence in which multiple forms of abuse overlap at the same time. As observed in many calls, **physical** or **psychological violence** combines with **sexual violence**, and both intersect with **economic violence** that is based on control or deprivation, along with **direct threats or long-term blackmail**. These complexity of these cases increases in the presence of frail legal situations, such as permit, identity or custody issues, which multiplies the risks and severely restricts the options.

This overlap between several forms of violence not only accumulates harm, but also weakens women's ability to **seek protection or take clear legal steps**, as each potential step turns into a multidimensional risk – psychological, economic and legal. This pattern again confirms that partial or emergency interventions are insufficient to deal with these cases, and that complex violence requires integrated support paths that take into account the full context of the caller's life, not just the visible form of the violence.

Electronic Defamation and Blackmail as Central Tools of Violence

Electronic defamation and blackmail have emerged as a central pattern of violence in an increasing number of calls, including the **publication or threat of publication of private images**, and the use of **fake accounts** for harrasment or defamation. This form of violence is characterized by its persistence and potential to extend over time, leading to **long-term psychological and economic attrition**, and undermining the callers sense of safety, even outside immediate tangible spaces. Previous experience has shown a slow or ineffective response from law enforcement agencies in dealing with this type of cases, which exacerbates the harm for the victims, and reinforces the sense of impunity among the abusers.

Long-Term Violence within the Family

The calls to the Support Hotline show that, in a large number of cases, especially in the older age groups, violence within the family takes on a long-term nature, extending for years. In these contexts, violence is not viewed as an exceptional event, but rather as part of everyday reality, which leads to its normalization within the family, and a decline in the ability to identify or confront it. This

is often accompanied by the abuser's control over resources (even when the woman works and receives a good salary), whether due to the absence of an independent income, or restrictions imposed on the woman's work, thus limiting her options for leaving or seeking protection. Further, weak family or community support networks stand out as an additional factor that keeps women trapped inside harmful relationships, and makes the decision to seek help even more complex and costly, both psychologically and socially.

Gaps in Responding

The qualitative analysis of the calls shows **clear and recurring similarities** between the various paths of the women who contacted the Support Hotline. In a large number of cases, seeking help was repeatedly delayed until the women reached a stage of **severe psychological and physical exhaustion**, following long periods of enduring or trying to deal with violence individually. There was also the pattern of requesting a **preliminary consultation only**, without the ability to continue on the path of support or follow-up, often due to the complexity of the reality surrounding the women, or the limited options available to them. Even when some women did continue beyond that stage, it was observed that they **withdrew from the follow-up after the first or second contact**, a withdrawal often associated with fear, family or social pressures, or anxiety about the consequences of any subsequent step. In this context, **the heavy reliance on the Support Hotline appears as the first, and sometimes the only, safety space**, reflecting not only the importance of the hotline, but also the limited safe alternatives available to the women in the broader protection system.

Within that protection system, the calls to the Support Hotline reveal wide gaps in the official response to cases of violence, as the intervention, in many cases, remains **conditional on the presence of "immediate risk"**, which excludes cases of ongoing or long-term violence from obtaining effective protection. In addition, **restraining orders are short-term and insufficient** to ensure safety, and often end without real follow-up mechanisms, exposing affected women to the risk of returning to the same circles of violence. In fact, in many cases, women have been actually or practically returned to **unsafe environments** under the pretext of having exhausted procedures or lack of alternatives, which undermines the primary purpose of the intervention. In addition, there is a clear lack of long-term follow-up, as affected women are left without continuous accompaniment, even though the effects of the violence and their protection needs do not end when with the initial intervention ends.

The Role of the Support and Emergency Unit

The qualitative analysis of the calls reveals that the Support Hotline is not utilized by the callers as a transient service, but rather as an essential safe space in a context where institutional security is absent. In many cases, the hotline was the **first safe point** from which women could speak without fear, and the **first admission** of violence after long periods of silence or denial. This role is not limited to listening, but extends to being a space for **validating and renaming violence**, where the caller is able to understand that she has been subjected to abuse or violation, not an isolated experience or personal failure.

The hotline also becomes a **functional bridge** linking the women callers to legal and psychological support options, and allowing them to evaluate such options without pressure or obligation, in light of their widespread reluctance to approach official systems. In quite a few cases, the Support Hotline was the **lone entity constantly following up**, at the time other paths got interrupted by circumstances, fear, or lack of resources. In this sense, the hotline not only reflects women's needs,

but also serves as a **mirror of the social reality**, exposing protection gaps, the limitations of the official response, and the burden that non-governmental initiatives bear in filling gaps that the state is supposed to cover.

Issues Raised by the Report – The Protection Gap

When Silence Becomes a Decision of Necessity, not a Real Choice

The Support Hotline data shows that the overwhelming majority of women callers did not file a police report, not because of the absence of violence, but because of the lack of effective protection after reporting.

This reluctance does not reflect individual reluctance, but rather a **deep structural gap** between the security assumed to be offered by the legal system, and what the women experience on the ground.

Why Do Women not File Reports?

1. Fear of Escalation, not of the Violence Itself

In a large number of cases, the callers expressed a genuine fear that reporting would lead to an escalation of violence, rather than an end to it, and a loss of control over the complaint process. Therefore, reporting is **not seen as a protective step, but rather as an additional risk**.

“Fear is not about getting beaten; it is about what might happen if I complain.”

2. Lack of Confidence in the Law Enforcement System

Previous experiences – personal or other women’s – have established a widespread conviction that complaints may be closed without follow-up, that protection is temporary or a mere formality, and that doubt may be cast upon the complaint, or that the complainant may be held responsible for what happened. **Justice, as it is applied, is not equally available to everyone.**

“I was sure they would not believe me.”

3. Reporting as a Threat to the Family, not as Protection

In many cases, especially when there are children, **reporting may mean, for a woman, the loss of whatever relative security remains**. This is manifested in the fear of losing custody, or interference by Social Services, as well as fear of stigmatizing the extended family or its breakup.

4. Legal Consequences for the Affected Person Herself

A number of women face a confrontation owing to their legal status, such as lack of residency permits, unstable civil conditions, or legal or economic dependence on the abuser. In such cases, reporting becomes a legal risk to the victim herself, not just the aggressor.

5. Violence from within the Immediate Circle Complicates the Complaint Decision

When the assailant is a:

- . Husband
- . Partner
- . First-degree relative
- . Figure of authority

Reporting could mean:

- . Confronting the family

- . Breaking the long silence
- . Challenging unequal power relations

Reporting, therefore, is not simply a legal procedure, but a verdict for a painful social exclusion.

What Does the Protection Gap Mean?

The system requires women to report, but it does not provide them with sustainable protection after that, so silence turns into a survival strategy, and support lines become the only safe alternative.

“The support line was the only place that did not ask me to choose between security and reality.”

The overwhelming majority of women did not file a report, not because violence was not serious, but because protection afterward would not be guaranteed.

The protection gap is not a gap in awareness, but a gap of **trust, security and institutional responsibility**. When these elements are absent, women bear the cost of silence alone, and support lines bear the roles of the state.

Conclusion

Selected Quotes

“These are not isolated stories, but a repeated pattern in the absence of protection.”

“Behind every number in this report is a woman who tried to survive”

“Real support begins when the victim is not asked to prove her injuries.”

Concluding Remarks

This report shows that calls to the Support Hotline do not reflect urgent isolated crises, but rather structural and recurring patterns of violence, fueled by gender discrimination, power imbalances, and institutional protection gaps. The data show that women seek knowledge, protection and embracing, not confrontation, and that reluctance to report does not mean a lack of awareness, but rather the lack of security afterward.

In this context, the Support Hotline stands out as an essential space of validation and security, and as a mirror that reflects the limitations of the official response, resulting in a protection gap. Bridging this gap requires a transition from the logic of emergency intervention to comprehensive policies that recognize violence as a system, and place the safety and dignity of the affected women at the heart of any response.

Support and Emergency Unit Staff

Jumana Ashkar – Unit Director

Alhan Daoud & Abeer Bakr – Attendant Lawyers for consultations and legal advocacy to the callers

Volunteer staff for receiving the calls (names held in confidentiality)