

Guidelines on

**MEDIA
REPORTING**

on Violence against Women

**Journalists against
Violence against Women**

About the Guidelines on Media Reporting on Violence against Women

The guidelines are a result of several months' analyses and discussions of the group Journalists against Violence against Women, comprising about thirty journalists from national and local media, which was formed thanks to UNDP Serbia and the B92 Fund. Through talks and sharing experiences – both within the group and with peers with whom group members met, as well as by monitoring the media situation and reporting on the social issue of violence against women, we identified a personal, professional and social need for a document of this kind.

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About Journalists against Violence

Journalists against Violence is a group comprising over 30 journalists who fight violence against women in an organised, public and outspoken way. In reporting on violence against women, the group appeals for presenting violence as a social problem, highlighting its causes, clearly condemning any form of violence and holding perpetrators and protection institutions accountable. In our view, such reporting is consistent with the journalists' code of ethics, respects the dignity of the persons concerned and, most importantly, does not compromise survivors' safety. By responsible reporting, we provide support to women survivors to leave violence and encourage society to view violence as absolutely unacceptable. By inadequate or stereotypical media reporting, violence is normalised in public opinion. Journalists against Violence aim to build a country-wide network to support the fight against violence against women through joint media efforts.

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1. INDICATORS – Is Our Reporting on Violence against Women Ethical?

- Does the media report reveal the identity of the survivor and her family members?
- Does the media report shift responsibility for the violence from the perpetrator to the survivor?
- Does the media report contain information that could justify an act of violence by external circumstances or the perpetrator's personal characteristics?
- Does the media report disclose details of the act of violence/murder or interlocutors' statements that are not relevant to the act?
- Does the media report use sensationalist or stereotypical expressions referring to violence, the survivor, the perpetrator?
- Does the media report diminish or ridicule violence or distrust the survivor?
- Is the media report headline/announcement contrary to any of the indicators above
- Does the media report include photographs/video footage that depict violence, victims and perpetrators in an inadequate and stereotypical manner?
- **Does the media report clearly indicate that violence against women is a social problem stemming from unequal power relations between men and women?**
- **Does the media report fulfil its educational role?**

2. INTRODUCTION

The present guidelines are a result of several months' analyses and discussions of the group Journalists against Violence against Women, comprising about thirty journalists from national and local media, which was formed thanks to UNDP Serbia and the B92 Fund. Through talks and sharing experiences – both within the group and with peers with whom group

members met, as well as by monitoring the media situation and reporting on the social issue of violence against women, we identified a personal, professional and social need for a document of this kind.

Historically, the media have been important allies when it comes to raising awareness of the prevalence of violence against women, as well as its

public recognition. In Serbia, even today, the media are the only publicly available source of data on femicide, i.e. the killing of women, on the basis of which women's organisations, gathered in the Women against Violence Network, prepare reports and provide information to the public. Yet, despite this crucial role to raise awareness of and report on the existing problem, research in Serbia also points to sensationalism and stereotypical media reporting, most often with regard to specific cases, without a substantial number of prevention- or education-oriented media reports. We believe that this is partly the case precisely because our peers themselves – journalists and editors, men and women alike – sometimes face questions they are unable to answer, and that they will find this document useful in those situations.

The present guidelines have been written so as to be useful to all media: print, electronic and digital. They address all journalists' dilemmas that can be anticipated when it comes to reporting on domestic violence, violence against women and children, intimate partner violence, as well as

the specific features of violence against particular groups of women, such as minors, Roma women, women with disabilities, etc.

We believe that these guidelines will help our peers in all aspects of journalistic work, from conduct during field work and treatment of violence victims, direct and indirect witnesses, to choice of interlocutors, identification of adequate institutions to approach, and choice of precise wording to be used in drafting texts and headlines.

All guidelines have been designed carefully in order to be consistent with the Serbian Journalists' Code of Ethics, which served as the basis for their development.

The guidelines are aimed, on the one hand, at improving the quality of reporting on this topic, addressing the dilemmas often faced by journalists who report on this problem, and on the other, at avoiding or at least reducing the traumatising of women with experience of violence, resulting from public exposure.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO EDITORS

- ◆ Editors are recommended to assign the topic of violence against women only to women journalists who are knowledgeable or experienced in reporting on this phenomenon whenever possible, especially if field work involves interviewing the survivor, because – however sensitized they may be – men may instil fear and discomfort in women with experience of violence.
- ◆ Editors are also recommended to encourage journalists to attend training events and to refer them to manuals, recommendations and

guidelines for responsible media reporting on sexism, discrimination and violence against women, and to refer them to peers who have pertinent experience and who report on the topic in an ethical manner.

- ◆ Further, editors are recommended to approach the topic of violence against women comprehensively:
 - ◆ *when reporting on specific cases of violence, follow the event from beginning to end (including the legal penalty imposed on the perpetrator); reporting on legal penalties contributes to violence*

prevention, as it informs the public that violence is punished and further victimization stopped; it also indirectly influences public views and awareness of the unacceptability of violence and the need to protect victims;

- ◆ *report not only on specific cases, but also on the phenomenon of violence against women, with a view to prevention and education.*
- ◆ When reporting on cases of violence, have in mind – as an editorial office – that other victims of the same perpetrator or of the same form of violence may contact you to tell their stories and seek support (see the section on interviewing survivors).

- ◆ *The section Further Literature and Resources contains the contact details of relevant organisations and institutions to which you may refer survivors when they approach you.*

- ◆ Given that, in most print and online media editorial offices, headlines are decided by the editor, it is especially important to pay attention to headlines, since they are the most visible, and often are the only part that the audience reads. Even when the text is entirely appropriate, the headline may be inappropriate. Good headlines on violence against women must not begin with sensationalist wording such as “**brutal**”, “**horrid**”, “**shocking**”, “**creepy**”, “**horror**” and the like. Headlines should be consistent with all of the above guidelines.

4. REPORTING ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In a media report, as long as the proceedings are underway, the identity of the survivor/victim and her family members should not be revealed.

- ◆ The survivor's/victim's identity or details that could indicate her identity, including photographs of the place/building/home where the violence took place should not be disclosed.
- ◆ The survivor's/victim's family members' identity should not be revealed, especially in case of underage children.
- ◆ The presumption of innocence should be respected with regard to the perpetrator and his identity should not be revealed (especially where it leads to the disclosure of the survivor's/victim's identity), in conformity with the legal provisions and the Serbian Journalists' Code of Ethics.

In a media report, responsibility for the violence should not be shifted from the perpetrator to the survivor/victim.

- ◆ Clear wording should be used that does not blame the survivor/victim, but rather places responsibility on the perpetrator, who is always and solely responsible for violence:
 - ◆ *after the information on violence, do not use the expressions “**because**”, “**but**”, “**owing to**”, “**however**” and the like, whereby the act is associated with the survivor's behaviour, clothing, change of partners or any other personal characteristic.*
- ◆ Particular attention should be paid to this when reporting on sexual violence, given that it is most frequently presented as the woman's responsibility, thus causing additional victimisation and a sense of self-guilt.

A media report must not contain information that could justify an act of violence by external circumstances or the perpetrator's personal characteristics.

- ◆ Violence must not be justified by external circumstances or the perpetrator's personal characteristics (e.g. poverty, culture, high temperatures, job loss, mental illness, alcoholism, drug addiction):
 - ◆ *violence against women is never a tragic event, but rather a calculated act on the part of the perpetrator;*
 - ◆ *violence is not a reflection of the perpetrator's mental illness; if we depict perpetrators as mentally ill persons, we affect the creation of an erroneous perception of the perpetrator and, at the same time, stigmatise persons with mental illnesses who are not violent;*
 - ◆ *likewise, violence is not a reflection of addiction; persons addicted to alcohol or psychoactive substances may be as violent as persons who do not consume any of these; further, persons addicted to alcohol or psychoactive substances are not necessarily violent at all.*
- ◆ The perpetrator should not be given justification, even if he is well-known and influential person:
 - ◆ *the perpetrator could be from any social stratum, including public personalities and office holders; this must not be a reason to justify violence.*
- ◆ Especially in case of sexual violence, expressions such as “maniac”, “satisfaction of uncontrolled urges” and the like should not be used. These are not mentally ill persons and this is not about an inability to control their urges. Violence is not linked to sexual desire, but rather to the need to establish power and control.
- ◆ Violence should not be justified – either indirectly or directly, by questioning the victim's behaviour that could have incited the perpetrator (e.g. she borrowed/spent money, she was unfaithful, she

nagged the perpetrator). Remember, the perpetrator always has a choice other than violence.

A media report must not contain the details of the act of violence /murder, or interlocutors' statements that are not relevant to the act.

- ◆ The narrative presentation of concrete, graphic depictions of the violent scene with details should be avoided, on the one hand – because they offend the survivor's/victim's dignity and put the public in a voyeuristic position, and on the other – because they give other perpetrators ideas for violent behaviour.
- ◆ With regard to information sources and interlocutors:
 - ◆ *by all means, have in mind the Serbian Journalists' Code of Ethics, chapter Treatment of Information Sources and, in particular, chapter Journalists' Due Diligence:*
 - ◆ *only publish information that has been verified from at least two independent sources;*
 - ◆ *rely on official sources to the greatest extent possible (e.g. the police, court, prosecutor's office, attorneys, experts on violence against women);*
 - ◆ *avoid interlocutors who are ideologically biased in terms that they frequently take the perpetrator's side, have a history of victim-blaming public statements and/or belong to misogynous men's rights groups;*
 - ◆ *bear in mind that people close to the perpetrator view him through the lens of their own relationship with him, which usually bears no resemblance to his relationship with the survivor/victim; avoid taking statements from people close to the perpetrator;*
 - ◆ *if statements are taken from people from the survivor's/victim's and perpetrator's environment, convey them carefully and provide a context (e.g. in case a woman is murdered, if the murderer's*

neighbours state that he was “quiet and reserved, a reputable person”, explain in the text or feature that anyone can be an abuser and that, in the external environment and relationships with other people, they often seem to be ordinary people, while in the privacy of their home and with the victim, they are completely different);

- ◆ *do not use social networks as sources of information about survivors/victims and perpetrators; by doing so, we further victimise survivors and encourage a culture of violence through comments and messages, which are often left on perpetrators’ or vic-*

tims’/survivors’ profiles and which are of a violent nature;

- ◆ *at the same time, through the case reported on, try to convey information that illustrates “warning signs” (ask witnesses or neighbours meaningful questions and link answers to the context – e.g. ask whether they have seen the survivor/victim out of home without him, whether the perpetrator has been coming to her place of work, whether she has seemed scared, upset, whether she has had bruises, whether she has friends).*

A media report must not contain sensationalist or stereotypical expressions referring to violence, the survivor/victim, the perpetrator.

- ◆ Stereotypical depiction of the survivor/victim implies that she is crying, shaken up, with visible physical consequences of violence. This often may not be the case, especially when it comes to psychological, economic or sexual violence, which creates a misconception that every woman reacts to and deals with violence in the same way.
- ◆ The perpetrator’s ethnic, religious or other background should not be emphasised unless it is closely linked to the act of violence itself (e.g. do not stress that the perpetrator is Roma, Albanian, Muslim, migrant).
- ◆ When reporting on violence against women committed as a result of religious or cultural customs:
 - ◆ *collect key information and become familiar with forms of violence against women, such as sale of girls into underage marriage, practices of genital mutilation, so-called corrective rape (rape as an act of punishment and correction with respect to something the woman has done, such as falling in love with another woman, seeking divorce from her husband), honour killings and the like;*

- ◆ *make sure you avoid prejudice and nationalist, racial and other tension;*
- ◆ *avoid headlines and narratives that express surprise and shock when reporting on these forms of violence – whether they happen in Serbia or worldwide, they must be approached in a responsible and professional manner;*
- ◆ *do not justify violence by cultural and religious customs or stereotypes associated with a specific social group (e.g. do not use expressions such as “Gypsy ways” for violent acts committed by Roma men against Roma women).*
- ◆ Particular attention should be paid to reporting on violence against women with disabilities and ensuring they are not depicted as asexual persons who cannot be subject to any form of violence.
- ◆ It should be borne in mind that multiply marginalised women (e.g. women belonging to ethnic, religious, sexual minorities, women with disabilities, rural women) are more often at risk of violence – use relevant statistics and do not use stereotypical depictions.

A media report must not diminish or ridicule violence and should not imply that the survivor/victim is not to be believed.

- ◆ The terms and language describing violence should be chosen carefully so as not to downplay it.
 - ◆ *Do not romanticise violence:*
 - ◆ *violence must not be presented as an expression of love or a consequence of jealousy, but only as an expression of the need for power and control;*
 - ◆ *pay special attention to this when reporting on femicide followed by the perpetrator's suicide; the act of suicide after murder is not an act of love, but rather an act of ultimate control and taking of life, after which the purpose of one's existence is lost since the object of control is no longer present; do not present this crime as a "tragic/unfortunate ending to a love story".*
- ◆ Do not equate violence with an argument:
 - ◆ *during an argument, the participants are equal and there is no feeling of fear, while violence involves inequality and a feeling of fear of the consequences;*
 - ◆ *do not equate violence with domestic/marital problems;*
 - ◆ *clearly name and distinguish between rape (any sexual intercourse without consent) and sex (consensual sexual intercourse between two people), e.g. a sexual intercourse with a minor, irrespective of consent, is not an "affair", "sex scandal" etc., but rape;*
 - ◆ *if the survivor is not physically injured during sexual violence, do not depict her as "unharmmed" – sexual violence is, in itself, a crime and may or may not involve the use of force; therefore, there are no "unharmmed" rape survivors, as they have certainly*
 - sustained different – often psychological – consequences of what happened to them;*
- ◆ *use wording that places responsibility on the perpetrator and avoids passivisation and further victimisation and distrust of the survivor ("he raped her", not "she was raped"; "he was arrested for reported rape", not "he was arrested for alleged rape");*
- ◆ *especially make sure to avoid downplaying "minor" forms of violence, such as sexual harassment, which is a criminal offence (e.g. do not confuse it with flirting and do not justify it by culture or mentality);*
- ◆ *especially in situations of sexual violence, always bear in mind that sexual violence is any act in the sphere of sexuality committed against a person without that person's consent; therefore, avoid seeking and providing evidence of the use of force, since it is not a necessary element of sexual violence, and this also downplays acts of violence in which force was not used – in situations of sexual violence, one of the most common reactions is "freezing up", i.e. the body's inability to defend itself;*
- ◆ It should be noted that, if violence is not proved and the perpetrator is not convicted, it does not mean that it did not happen:
 - ◆ *this is especially important in cases of sexual violence, which is more difficult to prove, which is why it is crucial not to call the survivor a liar;*
 - ◆ *in particular, refer to the Due Diligence chapter of the Serbian Journalists' Code of Ethics, since two seemingly contradictory things need to be done: keep in mind that violence may have happened and, at the same time, respect the presumption of innocence; nevertheless, this is all easily achievable in reporting if the above guidelines are followed.*

A media report should not be accompanied by photographs/video footage that depict violence, survivors/victims and perpetrators in an inadequate and stereotypical manner.

- ◆ Photographs and video footage that reveal the identity of the survivor-/victim and/or her family members should not be used.
- ◆ Photographs and video footage showing simulations of violence (e.g. a woman cowering in a corner and a man standing over her with a raised fist/knife):
 - ◆ *such contents, although not real, lead to retraumatisation and consolidation of the sense of victimhood, rather than to a sense of own strength and transition from victim to survivor.*
- ◆ Photographs and video footage showing women with bruises should not be used – both because of retraumatisation and because this creates a profile of survivor/victim who is always physically injured, which lowers the awareness of psychological, sexual and economic violence.
- ◆ Ideally, drawings or other types of illustrations showing the survivor's/victim's feelings, as well as their strength, should be used:

A media report should clearly indicate that violence against women is a social problem stemming from unequal power relations between men and women.

- ◆ Violence against women should be considered and reported on in the context of unequal power relations between men and women.
- ◆ It should be borne in mind that there are different forms of violence against women and that each has its specific features (e.g. domestic/intimate partner violence, sexual violence, trafficking in women, forced or early marriage), and that, at the same time, each constitutes a gross violation of human rights and a severe social problem, rather than a private one.

- ◆ *for instance, it is acceptable to use drawings or animation, but, preferably, female figures should not be shown only with their lips sealed, without voice;*
- ◆ *female figures may be shown crying/worried, but, preferably, their strength and determination should be noticeable at the same time (e.g. her fist is clenched; her gaze is determined; she stands upright, rather than sit or cower; she holds a child tight, whose face is not visible; she looks out of a window, worried but standing tall; a man stands behind her, but she holds a child tight and is seen going away from him, leaving him).*
- ◆ It should be noted that not every report needs to be accompanied by a photograph or video; it is also possible to use infographics or charts showing statistical data on violence, or photographs/video footage-/other materials from women's organisations' protests, photographs of hands in handcuffs, a police vehicle, a judge's gavel, etc.
- ◆ Reports may also be accompanied by a photograph/video footage of an expert or other interlocutors.
- ◆ The statements of persons suspected or convicted of violence should be conveyed carefully:
 - ◆ *avoid giving public space to perpetrators, who may use it to manipulate survivors, the public and the system, by presenting themselves as victims as well;*
 - ◆ *never air a "confrontation" of the survivor and the perpetrator on the programme or use polygraphs on air to provide further proof of violence; the role of the media and media content consumers is not to act as judges.*
- ◆ When addressing all forms of violence against women, the survivor's subjective feeling should be acknowledged:

- ◆ *this is especially important with regard to sexual harassment, which entirely depends on the survivor's subjective feeling;*
- ◆ *this rule does not apply to violence committed against a minor (even where she does want a relationship with an older man, it is his responsibility not to agree to it; otherwise, it is a criminal offence).*
- ◆ *When reporting on women who have committed violence:*
- ◆ *do not hesitate to state the fact that there are women abusers, and report on it in accordance with all other recommendations given herein; however, keep in mind that men prevail among perpetrators of domestic and intimate partner violence, while women are victims in most cases (official statistics of reported domestic violence cases is available on the Ministry of Justice's website *Isključi nasilje (Stop Violence)*);*
- ◆ *keep in mind that a woman's violent behaviour is often a reaction to the violence she has been subjected to in the relationship, try to obtain data on it and examine the case thoroughly;*

- ◆ *where a woman has killed her partner, always examine whether she has killed an abuser.*

A media report should fulfil an educational role as well.

- ◆ Reporting on specific cases of violence should be set in a broader context of this problem by using statistical data, highlighting the prevalence of violence against women and possibly describing the phenomenon.
- ◆ Reporting on specific situations of violence should be substantiated by statements from experts (from the state or civil sector), who can provide a context for each specific case.
- ◆ At every opportunity, the key risks that increase the likelihood of a fatal outcome (femicide) should be pointed out – jealousy, the moment when the woman decides to leave or report the abuser, and the fact that the abuser possesses a weapon or has access to one.
- ◆ At every opportunity, the media report should mention the contact details of organisations and institutions that survivors may approach.

Further Specific Features

- ◆ When reporting on femicide:
 - ◆ *research whether there were prior reports of violence and how the institutions responded;*
 - ◆ *do not convey surprise if there were no prior reports of violence – this shifts the responsibility to the victim by implying that she should have sought help, while the perpetrator is relieved of responsibility;*

- ◆ *put femicide in the context of the story of prior violence, although it was not reported – femicide is always the final and most brutal form of violence against a woman;*
- ◆ *keep in mind the data indicating high risk of femicide and make a link with them (jealousy/control, victim's decision to leave, weapon possession);*
- ◆ *where the murder was committed with a firearm, report on this fact, check whether the perpetrator possessed the firearm legally or not, and mention the context surrounding the prevalence of legal and illegal firearms in households;*

- ◆ *avoid details concerning how the murder was committed, the specific location and the like;*
- ◆ *follow the story through – report on the progress of the trial and the penalty imposed on the murderer;*
- ◆ *clearly specify the motive (e.g. hatred towards a specific woman) in cases of multiple murders (e. g. the Žitište case).*
- ◆ *When reporting on violence, with regard to women with children, or where children themselves have survived violence:*
- ◆ *keep in mind that children are always victims of domestic violence – either directly or indirectly;*
- ◆ *avoid stereotypes about children needing both parents – children need parents and an environment that are not violent;*
- ◆ *avoid taking statements from children because of the sensitivity of the situation and vulnerability of this group, even where a parent or guardian has given consent;*
- ◆ *be careful with the amount of information conveyed – never reveal the child’s identity or details that could lead to his/her identity being revealed; it is acceptable to convey the information about the number of children and their ages, but not their initials, place where they live, school they attend or full name of a relative, since those details can easily lead to their identification.*

5. HOW TO APPROACH A WOMAN SURVIVOR OF VIOLENCE

- ◆ Taking statements should be avoided, unless the journalist has been specifically trained (familiarity with the phenomenon of violence, basic knowledge of trauma, understanding of laws and interviewing skills are required).
- ◆ If talking to a survivor cannot be avoided, it is essential to consult women experts (e.g. women psychologists, lawyers, activists) who work with survivors (contact details provided below).
- ◆ If talking to a survivor cannot be avoided, choose an interlocutor who has overcome trauma, has an experience of life without violence after having lived through this experience and is capable of encouraging and empowering other women.
- ◆ Take care of the survivor’s safety (take account of the circumstances, her location and the perpetrator’s location), even when the statements are anonymous.
- ◆ Believe survivors!

- ◆ Bear in mind that a survivor in a state of trauma is not a reliable interlocutor, her train of thought is unclear and she may give contradictory statements – these are all normal characteristics of a person who has survived a traumatic experience.
- ◆ The survivor should be warned of the possible consequences of her statement (regardless of whether she contacted the media first, or the media contacted her first): the impact of a public statement on the survivor's (and her children's) safety, the possibility of her community questioning her statement and doubting her, not believing her statement, laying blame, retraumatisation etc.
- ◆ No questions should be asked about children, as the fact that she exposed her children to public attention can be used against the survivor in the custody trial, of which survivors are often not aware or lack knowledge.
- ◆ **“Why didn't you”** questions should not be asked and, in general, particular attention should be paid to anything that can cause the secondary traumatisation of the survivor (the violence a woman has experienced, especially sexual violence, is accompanied by feelings of guilt, shame and embarrassment; the interview should, therefore, be conducted by using carefully chosen words that in no way imply that the survivor has done anything wrong or that she is responsible; do not touch the survivor or make sudden moves, especially if she is still in a state of trauma).
- ◆ It is especially important not to ask questions such as **“Why didn't you leave him?”** or **“Why did you go back to him?”** – having in mind that it has been established that a woman leaves the abuser and goes back to him, on average, between seven and eleven times before finally leaving him, and that there are many reasons why this happens (e.g. loss of self-confidence and faith in herself, loss of resources and support, inadequate institutional response, impunity if the abuser is reported, economic situation).
- ◆ Never cross-examine the abuser and the survivor (either indirectly – through the print media, or directly – through the electronic media) or bring them to the same place at the same time.
- ◆ Never tell the survivor what you would do in her situation or what you think she should do – regardless of the fact that she may ask you to.
- ◆ Keep the promises you give to the survivor – if you say that you will send her the text before publishing it, do so. She also has the right to change her mind. It would be good to send her the parts of the text that contain her statements; it will mean a lot to her to read her own words, you will also build trust, and she may want to put a stronger emphasis on something when she reads the text.
- ◆ Thank the survivor for her statement and remind her how brave she is to talk about it.
- ◆ Try to remain available for a follow-up interview with the survivor (especially if the text/feature becomes highly visible and influential).
- ◆ Bear in mind that interviewing the survivor may affect you – prepare for it psychologically in order to be aware that you may be overwhelmed by emotions; work on yourself before and after the interview.
- ◆ Do not get emotionally attached to the survivor – you are a journalist and should not intervene in any way except by professional and ethical reporting; you must have empathy, but any closer bonding may be bad for both you and her.

6. REPORTING ON JUDICIAL PROCESSES CONCERNING VIOLENCE/DIVORCE/CHILD CUSTODY

- ◆ Reporting on proceedings under way should be avoided.
- ◆ No statements should be taken from either party.
- ◆ If a statement must be taken, only seek one from attorneys.
- ◆ Any questions about children should be avoided, including those such as **“Why did you leave your children with your husband?”**, because we do not know under what circumstances the survivor escaped and how she is now fighting to regain custody of her children.
- ◆ Questions such as **“Why did you drop charges/refuse to testify?”** should be avoided, because this shifts responsibility back to the survivor, and domestic violence is a criminal offence prosecutable ex officio, irrespective of the survivor’s willingness to take an active part in

the process, which she is often incapable of doing owing to the psychological and other exhaustion resulting from being subjected to violence.

- ◆ When reporting on criminal proceedings, the terms defined by the Criminal Code should be remembered and consistently used (**“suspect”, “defendant”, “accused”, “convicted”**); do not use terms such as **“alleged”, “wrongly accused”** and the like – judgment should be left to the judicial authorities.
- ◆ Where fathers claim that children have been taken away from them unfairly, it should be checked whether they are being or have been prosecuted for domestic violence.

7. COMMENTS ON PORTALS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

- ◆ In general, it would be preferable to lock articles on violence for comments, owing to a high probability that commenters will cause secondary victimisation and retraumatisation – either of the survivor concerned or of women who have had or are having the same experience, which may discourage them from reporting the abuser.
- ◆ On media outlets’ social network accounts, increased attention should be paid to the administration of comments (e.g. on Facebook and You-

Tube, while these news items should preferably not be posted on Twitter, where moderation is not possible, unless the media outlet has a dedicated staff member dealing only with social networks, who can respond to a problematic commenter and/or block him/her).

- ◆ Be prepared for the possibility of survivors contacting you in comments or by direct messages and provide clear instructions to moderators on how to act in such cases, i.e. where to refer the survivors.

8. FURTHER LITERATURE AND RESOURCES

1. Mediji u Srbiji o rodno zasnovanom nasilju u 2015. i 2016. godini: Kako protiv nasilja – uloga medija (Serbian Media on Gender-Based Violence in 2015 and 2016: How to Counter Violence – the Role of the Media) / Published by: UNDP/ Year: 2017. (<https://www.rodnaravnopravnost.gov.rs/sites/default/files/2018-06/Kako%20protiv%20nasilja%20-%20uloga%20medija.pdf>)
2. Vodič za novinar(k)e: Nasilje u porodici, II izdanje (A Guide for Journalists: Domestic Violence, Second Edition) / Published by: Autonomous / Women's Centre / Year: 2018. (https://womenngo.org.rs/images/publikacije-dp/2018/Vodic_za_novinarke-nasilje_u_porodici-2018.pdf)
3. Kako vas žene čitaju? – Medijsko izveštavanje štampanih medija o muškom nasilju prema ženama u porodici i partnerskim odnosima iz perspektive žena koje su preživele nasilje (How Women Read You? – Print Media Reporting on Men's Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence against Women from the Perspective of Survivors) / Published by: Autonomous / Women's Centre / Year: 2017. (https://zeneprotivnasilja.net/images/pdf/literatura/Kako_vas_zene_citaju.pdf)
4. Medijski kodeks – Vodič za profesionalno i senzibilizirano izvještavanje o nasilju prema ženama i femicidu (Media Code of Ethics – A Guide for Professional and Sensitive Reporting on Violence against Women and Femicide) / Published by: Gender Equality Ombudsperson of the Republic of Croatia / Year: 2019. (http://vawa.prs.hr/storage/uploads/publikacije/MEDIJSKI-KODEKS-vodic-za-profesionalno-i-senzibilizirano-izvjestavanje-o-nasilju-prema-zenama-i-femicidu_PRS_VAWA-800a.pdf)
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