



Spotlight Initiative
To eliminate violence against women and girls



TEN THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT



TEN THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT (DVA)

1. The Domestic Violence Act (DVA) provides protection to victims of physical and mental abuse from persons they reside with or are involved with in an intimate or familial relationship. This includes abuse involving:
 - Heterosexual couples living together (married or unmarried);
 - Heterosexual couples in a visiting relationship
 - Any children in the household, including children who are not the biological children of both or either spouse;
 - Any other members of the household.
2. The DVA is classified as a Civil Law, which means:
 - The affected party must bring the issue before the Family Court
 - As a civil dispute, it is seen as a 'private matter'
 - The Court plays the role of referee between private parties
3. Under the DVA, victims of domestic violence can apply for two orders from the court:
 - A **Protection Order**
 - An **Occupation Order**
4. A Protection Order is made by the Court to prohibit an abuser from entering or staying in the home, workplace, place of education or any particular place where the abuser could encounter the victim. A Protection Order can also prevent an abuser from bothering a victim or a person he/she lives with.
5. An Occupation Order allows persons or any member of the household the right to live in a residence and to exclude the abuser from the premises. This order is often made only in cases where the Court is convinced that it is either necessary for protection or the protection of a member of the household; or that it would be in the best interests of a child involved.
6. The court may also make a **Maintenance Order** in combination with either a Protection or Occupation order to provide financial support to either the applicant or another member of the household who is entitled to support by the abuser.
7. One can apply for a Protection Order or an Occupation Order by filling out an application at the nearest Family Court/Parish Court. To complete the application, persons need to explain the circumstances and reasons for the application in a written affidavit.
8. The DVA does not criminalise domestic violence, but it does criminalise the breaching of any of the above orders with penalties of fines and jail time.
9. The Act addresses physical and psychological abuse, infractions include using abusive language and the destruction of property and making harassing phone calls or visits to the home, school or workplace.
10. The current fine is J\$10,000 or up to six (6) months if a Protection Order is breached.

OVERVIEW OF THE SPOTLIGHT INITIATIVE

The global Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls is a United Nations initiative in partnership with the European Union and other partners.

We are the world's largest targeted effort to end all forms of violence against women and girls.

Launched with a seed funding commitment of €500 million from the European Union, we represent an unprecedented global effort to invest in gender equality as a precondition and driver for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Spotlight Initiative is responding to all forms of violence against women and girls, with a particular focus on domestic and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, femicide, trafficking in human beings and sexual and economic (labour) exploitation.

The Spotlight Initiative in Jamaica is national in scope and targeted intervention focuses on the following four parishes: The Kingston Metropolitan Area (Kingston and St. Andrew), St. Thomas, Clarendon, and Westmoreland. It addresses three key priority areas within the overall focus on Family Violence against women and girls: 1) Child Sexual Abuse, 2) Intimate Partner Violence and 3) Discrimination against vulnerable groups. The approach is guided by the core principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – Leaving No One Behind and underpinned by an intersectional approach that will ensure interventions address key social factors such as socio-economic status, age, sexual orientation, health, educational and disabilities status when responding to family violence in Jamaica.

As a demonstration fund for action on the Sustainable Development Goals, we are demonstrating that a significant, concerted and comprehensive investment in gender equality and ending violence can make a transformative difference in the lives of women and girls.



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**If you or someone you know is affected by
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, get help.**

Key Contacts:

Bureau of Gender Affairs Helpline:

Tel. no: 1-888-NO-ABUSE

Domestic Violence Intervention Centers:

Tel. nos: 876-224-4274 or 876-224-4275

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING 24-hour HOTLINE: call 211

LOOK OUT FOR MORE UPDATES ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

INSTAGRAM: IGDS_RCO

FACEBOOK: IGDS.UWI

TWITTER: @IGDS_RCU

LINKEDIN: IGDS REGIONAL COORDINATING OFFICE



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