



ISTIQBOLLI AVLOD

NATIONAL REPORT

**On providing access to justice for women
victims of trafficking**

Uzbekistan

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Resume of the Report

KAPAT initiative in the field of women's access to justice is part of the project on CEDAW Convention implementation in 5 countries of the region (2010-2012).

The research is aimed at identifying the need for gender approach to this issue, by means of analyzing the experience of women victims of trafficking, in the areas where their rights have been violated and where their ability to protect and claim their rights using legal remedies are limited, due to their dependent and vulnerable situation in the society.

The report was prepared on the basis of the results of interviewing 130 respondents from 8 regions of Uzbekistan. The respondents represent three groups, directly involved in human trafficking issues:

- Women victims of trafficking – women who became victims of discrimination and whose rights were violated;
- Practicing lawyers – advocates of the rights of women victims of trafficking;
- NGOs working with women victims of trafficking.

Obtained results:

In spite of achieved results in the field of combating human trafficking and realizing by women victims of trafficking of their rights for court protection, there are still problems that need to be solved. The stories of women victims of trafficking show that their rights are violated both BEFORE and DURING the trafficking process, and (what is most sad) AFTER their repatriation when the crime of trafficking seems to be stopped.

Among the interviewed women were both victims who suffered from human trafficking outside the country (transnational trafficking) and those who were victims of internal trafficking.

The destination countries from which interviewed women victims of trafficking were repatriated (or returned by themselves and then applied to NGOs for assistance) were the UAE, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation. In some cases women were trafficked from rural areas to big cities and were exploited in brothels, forcing to receive clients.

In spite of the fact that some of the interviewed women were enough, in their opinion, economically independent and had education, they became nevertheless trafficking victims abroad.

The reasons for that were: domestic violence, they were subject to from their husbands or other family members (parents, parents-in-law, brothers), divorce (which makes them even more socially vulnerable due to the existing stigma towards divorced women), desire to strengthen their economic independence, or marry a foreign national. To the two latter factors the interviewed women were also pushed thanks to well-thought actions of their recruiters who professionally "processed" them filling them with hope that all their problems will be solved once they go to work abroad.

Not all women, even being aware that their rights have been and are violated, dare to seek justice (see table 5.1). Among the reasons for non-applying to court institutions women enlist shame, fear for their security, unwillingness to stir their past, fear of becoming known to public, including fear of publicity because of their children, ban of their relatives to seek justice.

Besides, not all repatriated and interviewed women starting to seek justice are able to finish their cases to the end. Among the reasons – desire to leave the country of destination as soon as possible, imperfect legislation, bureaucracy, bribing, rude attitude of law enforcement and court bodies. Thus, according to the data of our research, out of 17 women, applying to court, only 5 of them (29%) were satisfied with the court decision.

Analyzing their sad experience, women come to the conclusion that they initially lacked information on rules of legal employment abroad and human trafficking crime; they lacked support of their relatives and more attentive attitude of the society to their vital problems. As for assistance – women mainly received it from the NGO network "Istiqbolli Avlod" and their partners.

2. Structure of the report

Section "Problem description" contains information about the selected form of women's human rights – human trafficking, specifically, trafficking in women; on social, cultural, traditional, historical, traditional, religious and other factors; on usage/non-usage by women victims of trafficking of justice mechanism, for protecting their rights at the national level.

Section "Methodology" provides descriptions of the used instruments and generalized portraits of the respondents (women victims of trafficking) participating in the interviewing process.

Section "Presenting results" includes the review of legal framework, with the help of which the problem of women's rights violation could be solved; analysis of barriers

emerging on the way of their access to justice; conclusions made by the researchers on the basis of the obtained information.

The concluding section contains our recommendations on the problem.

3. Problem description

Since 2008 the Government of Uzbekistan has actually made visible efforts on criminalizing human trafficking through legislative changes – this is confirmed by the official statistics of criminal cases on prosecution of trafficking. But the problem of protecting and assisting trafficking victims remains rather serious. Many victims of trafficking remain unidentified and are thus deprived of protection. Trafficking victims' identification is a necessary condition of their access to assistance and protection. There is not a well established mechanism of trafficking victims' identification and referral yet. When victims report their cases to the police, the latter tend to view the victim as an offender and charge them for violation of the border-crossing regime, rules of stay in the country of destination, or illegal prostitution abroad. Besides, in practice there are many challenges in initiating criminal cases. When a criminal case is initiated, the police and other law enforcement services are often unable to collect the necessary evidence due to their insufficient experience of investigating trafficking cases and weak cooperation with law enforcement agencies in the countries of transit and destination. The counter-trafficking legislation regulates victims' rights very restrictively, their protection and assistance is put into dependence from their cooperation in investigating trafficking cases. There is no guaranteed security and access to justice mechanism. Access to justice is regulated on a general basis by criminal procedure legislation. Thus, Chapter 2 „Principles of criminal process“, articles 20, 25, 27 ensure the right to make statements in a native language, use the services of an interpreter, take part in court hearings and have equal rights to provide testimony, participate in investigation, submit solicitations, express their opinion on any issue, appeal a procedural action or the decision of an investigator, prosecutor, judge or court at any stage of the process.

On the basis of the Law “On combating human trafficking” – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of embassies and consulates, provides information and assistance to trafficking victims; Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population provides trafficking victims with free of charge legal assistance and information in the Rehabilitation Center for Trafficking Victims (opened under that Ministry). General norms of Code of Criminal Procedure, regardless the status peculiarities of victims of trafficking or other serious crimes, include responsibilities of victims and witnesses for refusing to provide testimony or for providing false testimony, are subject to being brought to law enforcement bodies in case of default, which again contradicts the general principles of the Protocol and impedes the establishment of cooperation. Next, a witness has the right for an advocate, and a victim, civil claimant – for a representative. But these rights are not guaranteed, they do not have an obligatory, free of charge basis. A significant gap in the legislation is the absence of victims' right for compensation – this issue is solved on a general basis, and the whole procedure has a complicated nature.

Thus, victims that are trafficked from or within Uzbekistan, or are returning from abroad, fear recriminalization by traffickers, border guards, customs or law-enforcement officers

and have little faith in the ability of the law enforcement to protect them and bring the traffickers to justice. Among the reasons for non-seeking justice by women victims of trafficking are:

- Prevalence of social stigma among women victims of trafficking, which impede development of conceptual differentiation between the process of trafficking and voluntary prostitution;
- Poor conceptualization by the authorities of trafficking crimes as constituting a grave violation of human rights, which contributes to mistreatment of women victims by law enforcement officers;
- A tendency on the part of the authorities to associate victimization only with overt signs of physical abuse, which fails to validate those victims who have suffered from psychological torture and abusive manipulation;
- Limitations experienced by law enforcement in cooperation on investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases that involve jurisdictions of two or more states, which decreases the likelihood of investigation and conviction in a trafficking case;
- Weak and ineffective mechanism of protection and assistance to trafficking victims, as well as limited access to justice.

4. Methodology

The report is prepared on the basis of results of interviewing **130 respondents** from 8 regions of Uzbekistan.

The instruments of interviews are 3 questionnaires recommended by KARAT and adapted to the national context of Uzbekistan. The questionnaire for women consists of guiding questions and is actually an instrument for structuring a conversation. The questions are divided into 3 parts:

1. personal information;
2. review of the context and situation, in which the rights of women victims of trafficking were violated;
3. working with the situation and seeking justice.

The questionnaire for lawyers also consists of 3 parts:

1. general legal system – protection of women victims of trafficking;
2. status and application of CEDAW Convention in the national legislation;
3. court protection of women victims of trafficking.

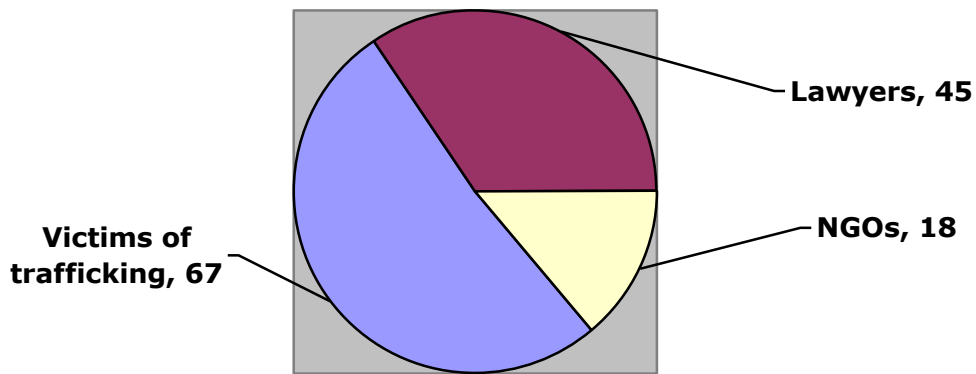
The questionnaire for NGO representatives includes 2 sections:

1. general information on the organization;
2. experience in the field of protecting women victims of trafficking.

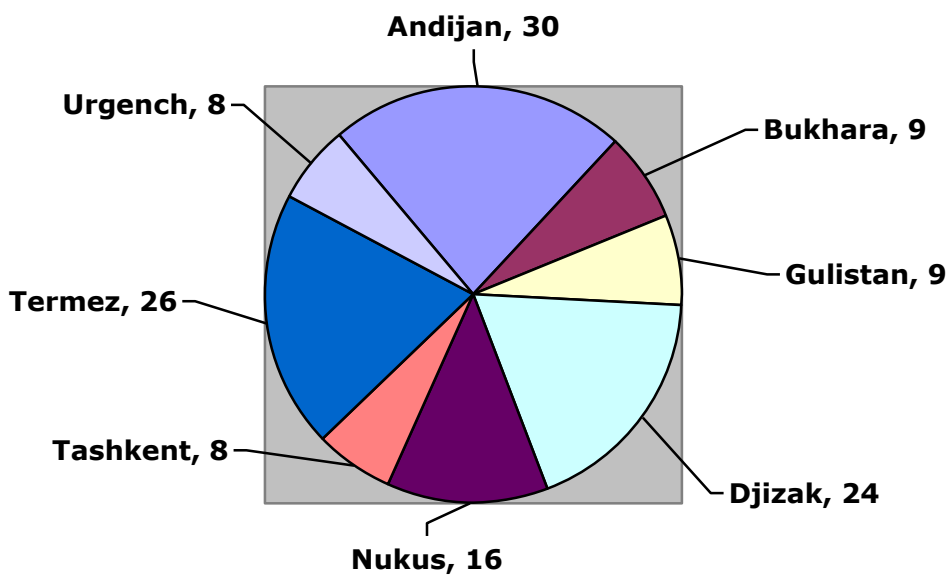
The respondents represent three groups directly facing the problem of human trafficking:

- victims of trafficking – women who became victims of discrimination and/or whose rights were violated;
- practicing lawyers – advocates of the rights of women victims of trafficking;

- NGOs working with victims of trafficking.



Pic. 4-1. Distribution of respondents by groups



Pic. 4-2. Distribution of respondents by regions

More detailed portraits of respondents of each group are presented in the tables.

Table 4.1

Information on respondents from the group of women victims of trafficking

Indicators	NN	Indicators	NN	Indicators	NN
Nationality		Country of residence		Country of birth	
Uzbekistan	65	Uzbekistan	67	Uzbekistan	63
other	2	other	0	other	4
Place of living		Religious belief		Age	

City	46	Islam	49	Under 20	8
Village	21	other	18	21-30	37
				31-40	16
				41-50	6
Marital status		Number of children		Education	
Married	16	No	41	Primary	7
Divorced	15	1	15	Secondary	56
Single	36	2-3	10	Higher	4
		4 and more	1		
Employment		Income		Economic status	
Unemployed	56	Upper average	3	Economically independent	19
Employed	11	Average	21	Economically dependent	48
		Below average	13		
		Insufficient	30		
Total	67				

Table 4.2

Information on respondents from the group of lawyers

Profession	Number	Profession	Number
Advocate	16	Investigator	1
Judge	2	Crime prevention inspector	10
Prosecutor	2	Other	14
Total	45		

Table 4.3

Information on respondents from the group of NGOs

Field of activities	NN	Field of activities	NN	Field of activities	NN
Educational	9	Human Rights	2	Legal	3
Consultative	12	Providing services	7		
Total	18				

5. Presenting results

5.1. Review of legal framework, with the help of which the problem of women's rights violations could be solved

The principle of equality between men and women and non-discrimination, including on the grounds of gender, found its reflection in such international documents, besides CEDAW, as International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 2,3) and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (art. 2,3). All of these documents were ratified by Uzbekistan.

The Constitution and laws of Uzbekistan, as well as international human rights acts, proclaim equality between men and women.

The basics of equality between men and women, as well as principles of protecting maternity and childhood are laid in the Constitution of Uzbekistan. Thus, article 18 of the Constitution of Uzbekistan envisages equality of everyone before the law, regardless gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social background, belief and private and social status. According to article 46 of the Constitution – women and men have equal rights. Article 44 of the Constitution guarantees everyone court protection of his/her rights and freedoms, rights for appealing to court in case of illegal actions of state bodies, officials and public associations.

Significant number of legislative acts existing in Uzbekistan concretizes the above provisions of the Constitution in applicability to the field covered by the given act. For example, article 6 of the Labor Code of Uzbekistan envisages non-discrimination in the field of labor and proclaims the opportunity of court protection from discrimination.

It should be noted that the legislation of Uzbekistan is, on the one hand, proclaims equality between men and women, non-discrimination on the grounds of gender, and on the other hand – for the purpose of ensuring de facto equality of women envisages positive discrimination measures, providing women with additional guarantees in various fields. Thus, in article 22 of the Law of Uzbekistan "On elections to the Parliament of Uzbekistan" an addition was made on 30-percent quota of women when delegating candidates to the Legislative Chamber by political parties.

A system of preparing and submitting national reports and national action plans on implementing the provisions of CEDAW Convention has been set up in Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan has also ratified a number of international documents on combating human trafficking, specifically, the UN Convention against Human Trafficking and Exploitation in Prostitution by Third Persons, the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Protocol on Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking, especially Trafficking in Women and Children, and Punishment for it, supplementing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The Law "On combating human trafficking" has been adopted, and relevant amendments to the national legislation have been made, supplementing the norms of the international law.

In connection with the adoption of the above Law, National Action Plan on raising effectiveness in combating human trafficking for 2008-2010 was adopted (it was then

prolonged in 2011). In accordance with this Plan, a complex of measures aimed at combating human trafficking was set up; Republican Rehabilitation Center for assisting and protecting trafficking victims was opened, Republican Inter-Ministerial Commission on Combating Human Trafficking was established. Besides, relevant amendments were made to the Criminal Code of Uzbekistan.

In spite of achieved results in the field of combating human trafficking and realizing by women victims of trafficking of their rights for court protection, there are still problems that need to be solved.

5.2. Analyzing barriers evolving on the way of women's access to justice

The stories of women who became victims of trafficking show that their rights are violated both BEFORE and DURING the trafficking process, and (what is the most sad) AFTER their repatriation, when, the crime of trafficking seems to be stopped.

Let's listen to their real stories:

"I got married to a 55-year old man, our interests did not coincide; he used to beat me. Every time he accused me that had married a prostitute, and beat me to bruises. The husband himself goes on long hauls. He beats me at my parents' home, in front of my parents. After one month of our marriage he beat me badly, my mother called the district militia, they asked to write a statement, but I refused, because I am afraid of him. NGO "Istiqbolli Avlod" could have helped me, but I did not agree. My fault was that I returned from the UAE, and when marrying my husband I did not tell him that I had been there. I need to fully obey, as I have an 8-month child. I hope that it is temporary, and it will pass. I am a human, too, I want to live normally, but I am to blame, and therefore have no right to undertake anything". (26 years old, Bukhara region)

"After finishing general education school I went to work in a canteen at the State Auto Inspection. Once late evening, when I was returning from work by taxi, a taxi driver raped me, but I did not tell anybody about it. After that I left my job, fell in love with a young man from the city, and bore a child from him. But the young man denied his paternity. I had to leave my child in a maternity hospital, and he was adopted by some unknown people. After that my boy-friend started using me in prostitution against my will, in a sauna. It could not have happened if he had married me as I bore a child. I was trying to see my child but was warned that I had refused him myself". (20 years old, Bukhara region)

"I have been experiencing hardships all the time – when my mother died, I was constantly exposed to rapes; my father took me out of home. I was sold to a brothel abroad. Sometimes clients paid me for the whole day, I slept, ate and did not drink alcohol. After deportation, I was told by the police – "Who asked you to go abroad?" I feel bad now, I have no place to live, my child does not go to school as I have no money for clothes, and I am ill. When I wrote a statement to the police, the latter said – "You are a prostitute, and if you get paid, you will withdraw your statement, but for us it is a job". (27 years old, Djizak region)

"I was forced to get married. I was not able to bear a child, and was turned out of my husband's place. I am at my parents' place now. Every day my brother and his wife are beating me, my father, after drinking alcohol, turns me out of the house. At first nobody is helping, and after that everyone is accusing us". (26 years old, Djizak region)

"I was promised a job and went abroad, having spent all my money for a ticket, but my employer deceived me. My countrymen helped me a little – they gave me a place in a van. I myself am to blame as I trusted a completely unknown man, dreamt about big money and luxurious life. I did not apply to the police – I was afraid. I did not apply anywhere, as I hoped to find a job and earn some money at least for my way back". (44 years old, Syrdarya region)

"I became a trafficking victim in Shymkent, Kazakhstan – I was sold to a brothel there. I escaped from there, but was caught by my traffickers. I did not apply to the police. It was in another country, and I was constantly told by my traffickers that they had relations everywhere". (25 years old, Karakalpakstan)

"My rights were violated when I tried to get my passport back and receive compensation for the harm caused in the result of trafficking. I have visited the Passport Unit (within the police) numerous times. Reasons – bureaucracy and imperfect legislation. I was helped by the NGO". (25 years old, Karakalpakstan)

"I was kept in prison illegally. The situation was very unpleasant for me – humiliation, abuse and beatings... I was isolated from the world, and was denied to receive medical assistance. The Orthodox Church in the UAE, with the assistance of NGO "Istiqbolli Avlod" in Tashkent, helped me with passport and ticket home. I hired an advocate then, but he turned out to be a fraud, running his own brothel". (39 years old, Tashkent region)

"My boy-friend betrayed me and married another woman. I got acquainted with a foreigner who invited me to his country, promising to marry me. But upon my arrival there he said that he would be just cohabiting with me. I did not apply to the police. Upon my returning home I had to write numerous explanations about what I had been doing abroad. I was charged to administrative liability and had to pay a big fine for illegal border-crossing (with my expired exit visa)". (28 years old, Khorezm region)

"My acquaintance sold me to a brothel by means of deceit, and I was exposed to violence there. My case was suspended as my pimp escaped..." (26 years old, Surkhandarya region)

"I was a trafficking victim. When I applied to local community for receiving a paper that I am in need of assistance from the government, I was told there "Such women like you should not be living with us". (27 years old, Surkhandarya region)

A critical moment making women realize that their rights were violated is their exhausted patience. In other cases talks with NGO representatives push them to such consciousness.

However not all women victims of trafficking, even being aware that their rights are violated dare to seek justice (see table 5.1). The reasons for their non-applying to law enforcement institutions are shame, unwillingness to stir their past, mistrust to law enforcement bodies, fear of those who involved them in a trafficking situation, fear of

being known to public, as well as fear of being known to public because of their children, ban of their relatives to seek justice.

Besides, not all women starting to seek justice manage to finish their case to the end. Among the reasons – desire to leave the destination country as soon as possible, imperfect legislation, bureaucracy, corruption and biased attitude of law enforcement and court representatives. Thus, according to the data of our research, out of 17 women applying to court, only 5 of them (29%) were satisfied with the court decision.

Table 5.1.

Quantitative results of the interviews with women

Indicators			Number
Number of women interviewed			67
From the total number of women interviewed:			
1.	Applied anywhere for the protection of their rights		40
2.	Did not apply anywhere for the protection of their rights		27
From the number of women applying for the protection of their rights :			
	1.1.	Applied to the police	34
	1.2.	Applied to the Prosecutor's	9
	1.3.	Applied to court	17
	1.4.	Hired an advocate	13
	1.5.	Applied to other institutions	2
From the number of women applying to court:			
		1.3.1. Received positive experience of their rights protection	5
		1.3.2. Received a conditionally positive experience of their rights protection	6
		1.3.3. Received negative experience of their rights protection	4
		1.3.4. Did not bring their cases to court (took their statements back)	2
From the total number of women interviewed:			
3.	Had access to legal assistance		48
4.	Did not have access to legal assistance		4
5.	Did not report about access to legal assistance		15
From the number of women having access to legal assistance:			
	3.1.	Access was charged	6
	3.2.	Access was free of charge	42

Analyzing their sad experience, women come to the conclusion that they lacked timely information on legal employment regulations and human trafficking crime; they lacked support of their relatives and more attentive attitude of the society to their vital needs and problems.

As for assistance received by the women interviewed – they received it mainly from NGOs, namely members of the NGO network “Istiqbolli Avlod” and their partners. The assistance was provided to them in the form of repatriation from destination countries, rehabilitation in the shelters operated by NGO “Istiqbolli Avlod” in Tashkent and Bukhara, free of charge legal consultations, free of charge participation of NGO lawyers in court proceedings, restoration of their passports and lobbying for their interests at the community level.

5.3. Conclusions

1. The existing counter-trafficking legislation and practice of its application has a number of shortcomings. Thus, the major shortcoming of the Law of Uzbekistan “On combating human trafficking” adopted of 17 April 2008 does not contain the definition “victim of human trafficking”. As a result, the absence of precise definition of this notion does not allow identifying persons who should be acknowledged as trafficking victims.

The above Law has also a number of other shortcomings – specifically, among the state bodies directly engaged in combating human trafficking, there is no Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, though the State Rehabilitation Centre for Trafficking Victims is operated under this Ministry.

Besides, the Law has not solved the issue of compensation to trafficking victims, in cases when it is impossible to receive it in the full amount from their perpetrators or from other sources. It is necessary to undertake measures on providing financial compensation to trafficking victims who received significant corporal damage or broken their physical or psychic health in the result of trafficking related crimes; to families of trafficking victims, specifically, their dependants, who have died or become physically and psychically incapable in the result of such victimization.

The above mentioned State Rehabilitation for Trafficking Victims, opened and functioning under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection has a capacity for accommodating 30 trafficking victims at a time. However, this figure is too small, compared to the scale of the country’s population, and access to receiving assistance is limited.

2. Uzbekistan has not still adopted the Law “On equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men”, though the draft of such Law exists. Absence of above mentioned provisions does not ensure equal rights of men and women for court protection, including the protection of women victims of trafficking by court.

3. Significant part of problems in the given field emerges in Uzbekistan due to the undeveloped migration legislation. Uzbekistan has not adopted the law “On migration”, which would also ensure legal protection of labor migrants including women victims of trafficking. There is a number of migration related by-laws in this field, however a range

of issues is outside legal regulation. So far there are no precise mechanisms of managing migration processes (both within the country and across its borders).

4. A vital role in ensuring protection of the rights of women victims of trafficking should be played by NGOs, specifically, lawyers working there. However, this issue is not sufficiently addressed. Thus, at present there are only 9 NGOs in 9 regions of Uzbekistan providing legal, social and psychological assistance to women trafficking victims. Two of those NGOs ("Istiqbolli Avlod" in Tashkent and "Istiqbolli Avlod" in Bukhara) run specialized shelters for women trafficking victims, accommodating 12 and 6 victims at a time respectively. It is completely obvious that the number of NGOs working in this field is not sufficient.

5. There are a number of international legal tools of universal nature that envisage protection mechanisms, including the right of women for court protection, but they have not been ratified by Uzbekistan yet. Among those tools are Optional Protocol to CEDAW Convention and International Convention on Protecting All Labor Migrants and Their Families.

Uzbekistan is a member of the CIS Convention of 15 April 1994 "On cooperation in the field of labor migration and social protection of labor migrants", and has also ratified a number of agreements with the Russian Federation in this field. But it is important to note that neither the above CIS Convention nor those bilateral agreements mention issues of access of women victims of trafficking to justice.

With many other countries, where main migration flows from Uzbekistan are observed, such agreements have not been signed at all.

6. The legislation of Uzbekistan envisages the possibility for applying of women victims of trafficking to law enforcement bodies for the protection of their rights, and also the possibility of protecting their rights at court. However, despite this possibility, women often do not apply to the law enforcement bodies for the following reasons:

- low level of legal literacy and lack of knowledge where they can apply for the protection of their rights;
- established mentality, adherence to customs and traditions of the past;
- fear of being made public;
- mistrust to law enforcement bodies;
- fear of reprisals, etc.

7. Among the reasons impeding the realization by women trafficking victims of their right for court protection are also negative attitude towards trafficking victims deep-rooted in people's minds. Majority of women becoming trafficking victims are asocial persons with anti-social behavior, in the eyes of other people. Such crimes are difficult to be proven, and only few victims agree to testify in court.

8. One of the reasons for non-realizing by women victims of trafficking of their right for protection, including court protection, is negligent attitude of law enforcement bodies, border guards, labor inspectors, consular officers and judges of their duties. This negligent attitude is reflected in the fact that the above representatives often refuse to take written statements from women trafficking victims, for various reasons, and their cases are often not initiated, in spite of availability of sufficient grounds.

9. The existing legislation (including by-laws) does not sufficiently ensures the obligation of officials on providing legal and other assistance to trafficking victims during any criminal, civil process and other actions taken against persons suspected for being involved in trafficking. There is no well-established mechanism of access to justice, recommended by the UN in its Declaration on Victims' Rights.

6. Recommendations

1. Considering that various legislative acts regulating rights of nationals (Laws of Uzbekistan „On education“, „On state pension provision to nationals“, and others) do not only contain norms envisaging non-discrimination (including non-discrimination of women) and setting valid measures of protection from it, but also even do not use the term „discrimination“. A gender expertise of normative acts needs to be conducted, with a special focus on how equality between men and women, non-discrimination on the grounds of gender and provision of court protection in case of discrimination is ensured in them. Besides, it is necessary to develop and establish mechanisms for prevention and suppression of domestic violence.

2. Amendments to the Law “On combating human trafficking” should be considered, namely:

- To clarify the definition “victim of human trafficking” in art. 3 of the Law. It would contribute to common application of the Law and, specifically, to the precise identification of persons eligible for receiving assistance and protection, envisaged in Chapter 3 of the given Law;

- To clarify state bodies engaged in counter-trafficking, and include the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection in this list;

- It is necessary to pay attention to the development of effective court protection mechanism for women victims of trafficking;

- To introduce a provision, from specially created funds, dealing with compensating victims in cases when it is impossible to receive it in full amount from their perpetrators or other sources. The State should take measures on providing financial compensation to trafficking victims who received significant corporal damage or broken their physical or psychic health in the result of trafficking related crimes; to families of trafficking victims, specifically, their dependants, who have died or become physically and psychically incapable in the result of such victimization;

- To introduce a provision exempting trafficking victims (especially women) from administrative and criminal liability for crimes committed in the result of her/his involvement in the trafficking process;

- To envisage creation of a larger number of Rehabilitation Centers for trafficking victims, as the existence of only one such center (run by the State) in Tashkent is obviously not enough.

3. It is necessary to adopt the Law „On equal rights and opportunities for women and men” which would contain the definition of discrimination, envisage prevention of direct

and indirect discrimination against women in state and private spheres, consolidate equality between men and women including women victims of trafficking, for the protection of their rights and legal interests.

4. To improve the legislation on detection and suppression of any kinds of violence against women, to create and establish mechanisms of assistance to trafficking victims and prevention of such crimes.

5. Bearing in mind that one of the important conditions for combating human trafficking is the existence of developed migration legislation, it is necessary to adopt the Law "On migration".

6. For the purpose of ensuring protection of Uzbek nationals going abroad for a long period of time, it is reasonable to envisage the establishment of an institution of attaché for protecting migrants' rights, to work in destination countries with the most significant migration flows from Uzbekistan. The number of such attachés should be set taking into account the size of a destination country, in order to ensure their availability to all nationals in need (especially women victims of trafficking).

7. An important role in protecting the rights of women victims of trafficking should be played by NGOs. In this regard it is necessary to expand the network of NGOs specializing on counter-trafficking issues and also on the provision of assistance to women victims of trafficking, and to increase the number of shelters to be run under such NGOs. The expansion of such NGO network would contribute to the increased number of NGO lawyers who could be trained to provide necessary legal assistance to women victims of trafficking and ensuring their access to justice. An important role in improving the capacity of NGO activities in this field should be played by the State, through the provision of such forms of support as grants, social orders, subsidies, etc. (in accordance with the Law of Uzbekistan "On ensuring NGO activities").

8. For the purpose of ensuring protection, including court protection, of women victims of trafficking, and bringing the national legislation in the conformity with international standards, it is necessary to speed up the matter of ratification by Uzbekistan of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW Convention, International Convention „On protection of all Labor Migrants and Members of Their Families“. Besides, it is necessary to develop further bilateral and regional cooperation in this field.

9. It is necessary to develop and legally consolidate the system of measures aimed at ensuring security of trafficking victims before, during and after criminal prosecution, and in relevant cases, protection of closest members of their families and witnesses from revenge on the side of persons involved in trafficking.

10. For the purpose of ensuring the rights of women victims of trafficking for court protection, it is necessary to develop and realize a system of concrete measures aimed at raising legal culture. At present National Action Plan in the Field of Human Rights is being developed. It will envisage, specifically, measures for raising legal culture and legal conscience of the population. Special attention should be paid in this Action Plan to the issues of raising legal culture of women, and realization by them of their right for court protection.

11. It is necessary to realize measures aimed at further changing the society's attitude to women victims of trafficking, at forming attitude to such women not as to asocial persons but as to victims who are in need of assistance. Significant role in it should be

played by mass media, local state authorities, local communities (makhallas), with the support of NGOs and other civil society institutions.

12. It is necessary to further upgrade the work of law enforcement and court officials, border guards, labor inspectors and consular representatives, making a focus on the specifics of working with women victims of trafficking, training and building the capacity of the above officers, and also to improve the system of monitoring the effectiveness of the bodies engaged in counter-trafficking issues.

13. For the purpose of improving the legislation and taking effective measures on providing access of women trafficking victims to justice, it is reasonable to learn positive international experience in this field.