

General Discussion on Women's Access To Justice

54th Session of CEDAW

written contribution submitted by KARAT Coalition

Through this contribution KARAT Coalition would like to highlight the important aspect of women's access to justice – the fact that in many cases of gender-based discrimination women do not even try to use the domestic remedies to exercise their rights.

This has been observed during the multiyear campaign focused on promotion of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia¹. Women's rights advocates, involved in the initiative, reported that the potential of the communication procedure can hardly be used to help the victims of the grave women's rights violations in the region due to the major barriers that prevent them from seeking justice at the national level, not to mention exhausting domestic remedies. Such situation in turn deprives them of access to the regional and universal human rights bodies and thus of the opportunity to benefit from international justice system.

The problem may be easily noticed in case of broadly spread and usually most common forms of gender-based discrimination that are deeply rooted in traditional and/or religious value systems, hence widely accepted in the societies. The social acceptance for such forms of gender-based discrimination generates barriers that make claiming rights a real challenge for women experiencing the violations.

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action² as well as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action³ state: *while the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms.* Yet women's experience in the region prove that despite this international commitment the national justice systems commonly fail when it comes to addressing women's rights violations that are perpetuated by tradition or religion.

In the pilot study conducted by KARAT and partner organisations⁴ in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia the barriers that prevent women from seeking justice and their needs in this area were explored. The research focused on specific types of women's rights violations embedded in traditions or religions of the countries concerned and allowed to formulate recommendations aimed at improving the situation. The specific types of women's rights violations that have been analyzed are: **domestic violence** in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, **bride kidnapping** in Kyrgyzstan, **access to lawful abortion** in Poland and **discrimination against female victims of trafficking** in Uzbekistan^{5 6}.

¹ The campaign coordinated by KARAT Coalition was conducted with partner organizations in: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

² Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, Chapter I par. 5

³ Platform for Action, Chapter II, par. 9

⁴ Azerbaijan Gender Association "Symmetry", Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan, Public Foundation "Panorama" from Tajikistan, "Istiqlolli Avlod" from Uzbekistan.

⁵ The country reports from the study are available at: <http://www.karat.org/programmes/womens-human-rights/regional-coalition-on-cedaw-access-to-justice-2010-2012/publications/>

⁶ For more information about the situation in the countries see the Annex, p. 5.

The analysis of the women's experience as well as that of their advocates revealed that even though the legal barriers seriously hamper women's access to justice, these are those of sociocultural and economic nature that play the major role in women's decisions whether to seek justice or not. The substantial barriers identified in all case studies are connected with the fear of the consequences that might result from breaking the social taboo, from questioning the value system that is being supported by tradition or religion. These consequences, often intertwined with socioeconomic subordination of women, embrace *inter alia* the social ostracism, exclusion from the family, loss of livelihood and /or custody of children.

In all countries under review the traditional and religious value systems influence also the attitude of the legislature and of the law enforcement institutions towards women's needs related with access to justice. Adopting laws responding to women's needs becomes at best not a priority for legislative authorities. On the other hand the implementation of the laws in force is in many cases inadequate. The law enforcement institutions are often reluctant to counteract the discrimination against women. They often scorn sexual violence, in case of Poland - the violation of reproductive rights, and choose not to "interfere" in the so-called family issues even though it is where most of the acts, including all forms of violence against women, take place. The victims of women's rights violations are frequently approached in a judging, paternalistic manner and their complaints and requests for protection are commonly ignored. The attitude of the law enforcement, and in Polish case also of the health care providers, is an additional factor that discourages women from applying domestic remedies to claim or protect their rights.

Although KARAT's submission builds on the specific types of women's rights violations in five countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, we believe that the conclusions are coincident with the perception of women's rights advocates dealing with gender inequality in the whole region.

We recommend that the General Recommendation on access to justice highlights the obligation of the States parties:

- to recognize and explore the impact that traditions and religions have on women's rights and
- to implement comprehensive policies, including revision of laws, aimed at eliminating harmful gender stereotypes and at eradicating the practices that deprive women of their human rights.

OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY CONDUCTED BY KARAT COALITION AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

1. BARRIERS TO ACCESSING JUSTICE

1.1. Legal barriers:

- Imperfect or harmful laws that do not recognize the needs of women (e.g., lack of definition of a "victim of human trafficking" in Uzbekistan, criminalization of abortion in Poland).
- Lack of domestication of human rights treaties.
- Lack of ratification of OP CEDAW in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- Lack of monitoring of the impact of given laws on women's situation in all areas of life, including their access to justice (e.g., criminalization of abortion in Poland seriously hampers women's access to lawful abortion).

1.2. Institutional barriers:

- Excessive and often corrupt bureaucracy.
- Gender-biased approach of the law enforcement institutions (e.g., victims of human trafficking in Uzbekistan are often humiliated and charged for illegal prostitution or border crossing).
- Lack of institutional mechanisms for women's rights protection (e.g., institution of attaché for protecting Uzbek migrants' rights in destination countries; Women's Rights Ombudsperson).
- Insufficient knowledge about women's human rights and gender oriented legislation among people directly responsible for implementation of the laws like the police officers, custom officers, judges or health care providers.
- Insufficient number of women in the police forces in the countries of Central Asia and Azerbaijan.
- Limited access to the legal advice and judicial system (e.g., lack of legal institutions' representatives in rural areas, high costs of legal advice, lack of information on legal measures available to victims of women's rights violations).

1.3. Socio-economic barriers:

- Low status of women in society.
- Economical dependence of women on their husbands and their families (e.g., custom of early marriages in Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan deprives women of educations, condemns them to housework and prevents from earning their own money).
- Lack of confidence in the state's institutions which are not gender-sensitive (e.g., victims of domestic violence cannot rely on police support, victims of human trafficking in Uzbekistan often tend not to seek police's protection and punishment of their traffickers, in Poland women seeking access to lawful abortion risk that their private decisions will be revealed by the doctors).
- Growing influence of conservative and religious forces (e.g. Polish Catholic Church quarterbacks the state's policy concerning women's reproductive rights).
- Low level of women's education and legal literacy resulting from early marriages (e.g., girls in rural areas of Central Asia cannot often complete even secondary education, are not sent to higher education institutions and marry while still in their teens, Kyrgyz men usually kidnap and marry the teenage girls depriving them of decent education).
- Vulnerable position of internal and external women migrants.
- Strong position of informal religious leaders in the communities.

1.4. Cultural barriers:

- Traditional gender roles (e.g., perceiving a woman in the context of her reproductive role which results in early marriages in the countries of Central Asia, polygamy in Tajikistan or extensive abortion underground in Poland).
- Gender stereotypes persisting in a society.
- Stigmatization of certain behaviors as contradictory to traditional and/or religious values (e.g., reporting domestic violence exposes a woman to social ostracism in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, Kyrgyz woman who wants to leave the kidnapper's house is often condemned by her relatives and neighbors).
- Patriarchal, sexist and judging attitude of society towards women (e.g., negative attitude of public opinion towards divorced women in the countries of Central Asia, or women who terminated their pregnancies in Poland).

- Prioritizing the family unity at the cost of women's rights.
- Cultivation of the harmful practices (e.g., bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS AIMED AT ELIMINATING IDENTIFIED BARRIERS:

2.1. Improve the legal framework by:

- Reviewing and revising existing law in the context of its impact on women's rights observance and its compliance with CEDAW.
- Ratification of OP CEDAW by the states which have not done it yet.
- Establishing the Ombudsperson for gender equality.
- Adopting the specific legal acts addressing women's rights violations to guarantee women's protection from discrimination in all areas of life.
- Ensuring that existing law recognizes and respects full range of sexual and reproductive rights secured in the Beijing Platform for Action and ICPD Programme of Action.
- Monitoring of implementation of laws and their impact on women's rights observance.
- Observing the rule of secular state.

2.2. Improve the implementation of adopted law by:

- Providing the special trainings for law enforcement officers, judges and officials on the women's human rights and gender equality legislation.
- Providing the comprehensive system of support for victims of women's rights violations which would facilitate their access to justice and offer them a broad support such as shelters, hot lines or free legal, psychological and medical services.
- Ensuring the criminal liability of perpetrators of women's rights violations and the adequate compensation for the victims.
- Allocating budget for financial compensation to victims of women's rights violations.
- Gathering and reviewing data on women's rights violations.
- Ensuring the genuine accessibility of law enforcement institutions, legal services and courts in respect of their proximity as well as their economic and procedural availability.
- Establishing the state's institutions responsible for protecting women's rights and gender equality, e.g. Ombudsman's institution.
- Ensuring that the number of women in the police forces is adequate to protect women's rights.
- Taking actions to counteract corruption and uphold the rule of law.
- Establishing the institutional platform of regular cooperation between women's rights oriented NGOs and the state's institutions.
- Developing the programs aimed at increasing the legal literacy of women at national and international level.

2.3. Improve the socio-economic situation of women by:

- Providing the comprehensive system of support for women who want to continue their education and/or to become economically independent from their families (e.g. gender sensitive labor law, vocational guidance and courses, scholarships).
- Providing the social guarantees for women like social benefits, medical insurance, pension and alimony.

- Conducting the regular campaigns on raising awareness in a society on women's human rights and gender equality.
- Sensitizing the public authorities and institutions to vulnerability of women migrants, including women from informal religious marriages and victims of human trafficking.
- Guaranteeing the separation of Church and State in the public institutions.
- Encouraging public media to promote gender equality concept in a society.

2.4. Eliminate the cultural barriers by:

- Ensuring that the education system - for both girls and boys - is free from the stereotypes of gender roles and promotes gender sensitive behaviors.
- Developing the programs for boys and men to increase their knowledge about the women's human rights and gender equality.
- Developing the programs for girls and women to increase their self-esteem.
- Monitoring of the impact of customs and traditions on the women's situation in all spheres of life.
- Eliminating traditional harmful practices and gender stereotypes.
- Involving the men in women's rights discourse and activities.
- Involving the informal religious leaders in activities for raising the women's status in a society and eliminating discrimination against women.
- Ensuring that the rights of people who are directly responsible for implementation of women's rights in the certain areas do not violate or limit these rights (e.g., conscience clause and its influence on women's reproductive rights in Poland).

ANNEX

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AZERBAIJAN⁷: According to Azerbaijan's official data from 2010, over 35 percent of women declared that they were abused at homes by their husbands or husbands' relatives. A number of reported cases on domestic violence, however, is extremely low compared with a huge number of abused women who remain the silent victims⁸.

This large-scale violation of women's human rights occurs despite the fact that Azerbaijan has a fairly comprehensive anti-discriminatory and gender equality oriented legislation, including on equal access to justice. The Azeri women's rights are legally protected in Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic, Criminal Code⁹, the Law On States Guarantees of Equal Rights for Women and Men as well as in a number of ratified by the country human rights treaties, including CEDAW Convention. The government has also taken specific measures to combat violence against women by adopting the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence.

⁷ More information in: Gender Association "Symmetry". (2012). *Women's Access to Justice in Azerbaijan. Report*. Available at: <http://www.karat.org/programmes/womens-human-rights/regional-coalition-on-cedaw-access-to-justice-2010-2012/publications/>

⁸ In Azerbaijan lives more than 4 million women, among them approximately 1 400 000 experience domestic violence. However, in 2010 there were only 3500 cases of official reporting on domestic violence.

⁹ Article 154 of CC states that violations of the principle of citizens' equality is punishable.

Despite a wide range of legislation which guarantees the Azeri women a right to seek justice in case their human rights are violated, the anti-violence legislation is ineffectual.

The main reasons why women hide being mistreated by the members of their families are the instilled in people's minds subordinate role of a woman in family and society, and traditional attitude of Azeri society towards domestic violence as a "natural" and private matter. The women fear that turning to the law enforcement bodies for help and de facto breaking the taboo would bring shame upon the families and expose them to social ostracism. Abused women are often afraid of their husbands' retaliation as they do not think the law enforcement authorities are able to protect them. It is not rare that the police ignore a woman's testimony and expect her to reconcile with her husband regardless of its future consequences to her health or even life. If a woman, despite being intimidated and mocked, is determined to file for divorce she has to anticipate a long court battles for property and custody of children, as well as condemnation from her family and lack of any support from them. Many Azeri women are not even entitled to claim the assets or children after leaving their husbands since they were married in a presence of local religious leader and were not registered as wives in the official records.

Women's decision to exercise their rights to justice is also seriously influenced by a lack of own money, which is needed to seek legal assistance and to support themselves and their children after a divorce. In cases when parents arrange marriages of their underage daughters, these girls usually leave schools and do not receive proper education, which subsequently has an impact on their future lives, as it is very difficult for undereducated women to find decent jobs.

The traditional system of values, based on patriarchy, especially in rural regions of the country, puts women in a disadvantaged position irrespective of whether she is single, married or divorced. For many Azeri women - victims of domestic violence seeking justice at the national level means making a choice between being mistreated but continuing to live within a family, and initiating a long and difficult to win legal proceedings, the results of which do not always satisfy the women, and in many cases leave women after the divorce without social protection. Hence, it is not surprising that not many victims of domestic violence decide to exercise their human rights through legal remedies.

BRIDE KIDNAPPING, KYRGYZSTAN¹⁰. Every year hundreds of young Kyrgyz women are kidnapped and forced to get married to the complete strangers in most cases¹¹. Thousands of them suffer in silence not daring to object to the custom of bride kidnapping.

This obvious violation of the women's rights occurs despite the fact that Kyrgyzstan has adopted the comprehensive legislation against women's discrimination. The Kyrgyz Constitution guarantees gender equality, the practice of bride kidnapping is criminalized by the state's Criminal Code¹², the Law On Social-Legal Protection from Domestic Violence¹³ has been adopted and CEDAW Convention as well as other human rights treaties are ratified. Despite this the number of bride kidnapping cases reported to the law enforcement bodies is extremely low. According to the Institute of Ombudsman, in 2011 only 68 cases were reported but the criminal charges were brought in only 6 of them.

One of the main reason why the majority of kidnapped and abused women do not even make an attempt to seek justice is the way a girl child is brought up in obedience to traditional values and practices. The education system does not challenge this approach, despite the fact that such values and practices are contradictory to the state's legislation. Most of the victims of kidnapping and

¹⁰ More information in: Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan. (2012). *Access to justice for victims of bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan. Report*. Available at: <http://www.karat.org/programmes/womens-human-rights/regional-coalition-on-cedaw-access-to-justice-2010-2012/publications/>

¹¹ According to the Ombudsman of Kyrgyzstan and NGOs' data annually on average 14,000 girls and women fall victims to the bride kidnapping custom in the country.

¹² According to CC, art. 155 bride kidnapping and forced marriage are punished by fine or imprisonment up to five years.

¹³ Kyrgyzstan has implemented a number of other legislative acts which directly or indirectly address the women's human rights: Family Code, Administrative Code, Legislation on Legal Procedure and Procedural Law, Labor Code, Election Code, Law on Education.

forced marriages are not even aware that there are laws aimed at protecting them. Those who are and consider applying them, are afraid to address the law enforcement bodies because a level of confidence in the state's institutions is very low in Kyrgyz society.

A kidnapped woman is put under immense psychological pressure to stay with her kidnapper as she fears not only being damned and later harassed by him and his relatives if she decides to leave, but above all she fears a negative reaction from her own relatives, neighbors and others who know her. This is due to a deep-rooted belief that a woman should accept her fate and private matters should not go public as this brings shame on the family. In consequence, most of the kidnapped women succumb to persuasions and stay at kidnappers' homes. There they often suffer from physical and psychological violence being raped, beaten, forced to hard work and humiliated.

Since approaching the law enforcement institutions is such a challenge for the kidnapped women, it is not surprising to learn that going through all proceedings in order to exhaust the domestic legal remedies is almost impossible to expect.

ACCESS TO LAWFUL ABORTION, POLAND¹⁴: In Poland abortion is criminalized. The Polish Family Planning Act, however, allows three exceptions: when a pregnancy constitutes a threat to woman's health or life (without time limits), when it results from an illegal act (up to 12 week) and when a fetus is heavily, irreversibly damaged or suffers from an incurable life threatening illness (up to fetus's viability).

Although there are approximately 10 million women of reproductive age in Poland, the annual number of legal abortions is incredibly low, ranging from 124 in 2001 up to 641 in 2010¹⁵. Every year hundreds of Polish women are forced to continue the pregnancy threatening their health or life or are denied their right to decide whether to give birth to an incurably sick child or one conceived as a result of rape. However throughout 20 years only few women sought justice on the grounds of the violations of the right to lawful abortion. Four of them filed cases to ECHR out of which three were decided in the women's favour.

One of the main reasons why the women in Poland are being openly denied access to lawful abortion is the fact that abortion is being criminalized. The criminalization of pregnancy termination together with the propaganda of the Catholic Church underlies the attitude of the health care providers towards women seeking lawful abortion.

The Church's long-term aggressive campaign has resulted in number of serious obstacles that women have to face when trying to exercise their right to lawfully terminate pregnancy. Firstly, they are denied the referrals necessary to get abortion. Secondly, they are openly denied the service by the hospitals. Since the time limits work against them, most of them decide to use the abortion underground or terminate their pregnancies abroad instead of claiming their right.

The recently introduced appealing mechanism¹⁶, meant to enable women to challenge the doctors' opinions concerning the eligibility for legal abortion, is not adjusted to the needs of pregnant women because of the duration of the procedure and in fact has never been used by them¹⁷. This means that the appealing mechanism is not only of no help, but on the contrary – it blocks women's access to justice at international level as it is now a necessary step to exhaust domestic legal remedies.

¹⁴ More information in: KARAT Coalition. (2012). *Women's access to justice in Poland. Analysis of barriers to access to justice for women who were denied the right to lawful abortion. Report*. Available at:
<http://www.karat.org/programmes/womens-human-rights/regional-coalition-on-cedaw-access-to-justice-2010-2012/publications/>

¹⁵ According to the official Report on Realization of the Polish Family Planning Act.

¹⁶ Poland has been obliged to introduce the appealing mechanism from doctor's opinion by the verdict of the European Court of Human Rights in the case *Alicja Tysiak v. Poland* in 2007.

¹⁷ The mechanism does not guarantee that the appeals will be examined objectively, a decision-making process is excessively long, and its procedure demands from women a certain level of legal literacy. Besides, the women are not informed about the possibility to appeal from doctors' opinions.

The negative attitude towards abortion instilled by the Church causes that the women who seek an access to legal abortion fear not only the negative reactions of the hospitals' staff and law enforcement officers but also from their families. The women who live in small communities are especially exposed to social rejection as these communities are usually strongly influenced by the Church's teaching.

The taboo of abortion in Polish society is so strong that it is not surprising that women in general do not have enough courage or determination to demand and fight in courts for their rights to lawful abortion.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, TAJIKISTAN¹⁸: In Tajikistan "wife beating" is a widely spread phenomenon. Every year over 2,500 women - victims of domestic violence seek help in Crisis Centers which provide support for victims of violence. However the vast majority of oppressed wives and daughters-in-law never seek help from the police or social services.

The state's commitment to gender equality and anti - discriminatory policy and practices has been expressed in the number of national legal acts. These include, but are not limited to the Constitution of Tajikistan, the Law On State Guarantees of Equality between Men and Women and Equal Opportunities for Their Realization and recently adopted Law on Counteracting Domestic Violence. Tajikistan has also ratified a series of international human rights treaties, including CEDAW Convention¹⁹.

Traditionally the status within the family of a young girl and newly married daughter-in-law is very low. A girl is brought up in obedience to her father or brother who possess the major decision-making authority. Once married, she is expected to be at the service of her in-laws and commit her life to children and housework, especially in rural areas. The instilled meekness and belief that she will be condemned by family, public opinion and law enforcement officers if she openly talks about being mistreated by a member of her family, refrain a woman from seeking justice.

The traditional attitude of Tajik society to domestic violence as a natural occurrence within a family is also reflected in a dismissive attitude of the law enforcement authorities towards domestic violence victims. The women are often urged to drop the charges against their oppressors and there are cases where victims are later being accused of spreading slander about their husbands or relatives and penalized. All of these effectively discourage women from looking for help and creates conviction that seeking justice is pointless since they as women do not have any rights.

In Tajikistan a rather new concept of gender equality is valued much less than a traditional concept of family which determines a role of individual in society. Many women perceive losing their families²⁰ as a result of reporting the incidents, as much worse than suffering from domestic violence. Claiming their human rights may also mean losing a livelihood as many Tajik women are fully dependent on their husbands and their families. Very often their marriages are unregistered what deprives them of their rights to property and children in case of divorce.

It is difficult to expect women who are not aware of their rights, fear their husbands' reactions and social ostracism, do not have own money to live on, do not trust the law enforcement authorities and state's institutions, and know nobody who would give them at least a psychological support²¹ to strive for exercising their human rights at the national level, not to mention international one.

¹⁸ More information in: Foundation "PANORAMA". (2012). *Access of women, victims of domestic violence, to justice. Report.* Available at: <http://www.karat.org/programmes/womens-human-rights/regional-coalition-on-cedaw-access-to-justice-2010-2012/publications/>

¹⁹ Tajikistan is not a State Party to the OP CEDAW

²⁰ In many cases a woman who objects to family violence is expelled from a husband's house and taken away her children. To regain custody of them often means long battle in a court.

²¹ A woman who leaves her husband is often condemned and rejected also by her parents.

DISCRIMINATION OF FEMALE VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING, UZBEKISTAN²²: Uzbekistan is a source country for women and girls who become victims of trafficking, specifically for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Although the government of Uzbekistan has made strides in addressing transnational sex and labor trafficking by adopting the counter-trafficking legislation the problem of women who fell victims of trafficking and then were left without proper legal assistance still exists.

In Uzbekistan the principle of equality between men and women and non-discrimination, including on the grounds of gender, is guaranteed in several legal acts such as the state's Constitution, Labour Code, CEDAW Convention²³, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Uzbekistan has also adopted the law specifically addressing the issue of trafficking in persons such as the Law On Combating Human Trafficking, and the human rights treaties on combating human trafficking.

For Uzbek women who fall victims to traffickers returning home²⁴ does not necessarily mean the end of their psychological ordeals. There is a deep - rooted bias towards prostitution in the society and a woman is condemned and stigmatized regardless of the reasons why she became a sex worker. This lack of effort to understand the woman's situation and distinguish between a victim of trafficking and a voluntary prostitution is also seen in the work of the law enforcement officers whose attitude towards women who found the courage to testify against their traffickers is often prejudiced and abusive. It is not rare that these women later experience re-victimization being accused of illegal border-crossing, using false identity documents and being engaged in prostitution.

Consequently, the abused women whose fundamental human rights were seriously violated often do not seek justice on a basis of domestic anti-discriminatory and counter-trafficking legislation as they fear of social ostracism affecting not only them but also their relatives, negative attitude of the law enforcement institutions and retribution by their traffickers. They do not turn to the law enforcement bodies also out of cultural shame, unwillingness to stir their past, lack of trust in the state's institutions, including courts²⁵ or because they are not aware of their women's human rights and the fact that they can demand justice for themselves.

²² More information in: Istiqbolli Avlod. (2012). *National report on providing access to justice for women victims of trafficking*. Available at: <http://www.karat.org/programmes/womens-human-rights/regional-coalition-on-cedaw-access-to-justice-2010-2012/publications/>

²³ Uzbekistan has established a system of preparing and submitting the national reports and action plans on implementation of the provisions of CEDAW Convention. However, Uzbekistan is not a State Party to the OP CEDAW.

²⁴ The women fall victims of international trafficking (UAE, Russia, Turkey, Kazakhstan) as well as internal trafficking (usually from rural areas to the big cities).

²⁵ According to the project's research data, out of 17 women who applied to the court only 5 of them (29%) were satisfied with the courts' decisions.