

## Domestic violence in Indonesia

### 1. The situation

For many years, the issue of violence against women was of no interest to the public. Victims did not know what they should do if they experienced domestic violence, or whom they should turn to for help. Because of the influence of culture and religion, they preferred to keep their experiences to themselves and bear the violence silently.

Mass rapes in May 1998 triggered a new awareness of violence against women.

In May 1998, Soeharto fell. Riots and mass rapes in Jakarta and the surrounding provinces revealed the facts about sexual violence against women. Mobilized by the tragedy and a new spirit of openness under a new president, many women's NGOs became aware of the lack of prevention programs for violence against women. Compared to other countries, Indonesia had fallen behind in providing services, legal assistance, and laws for the victims. It was admitted that there were serious problems with all forms of violence against women in the society, especially in conflict areas, but these problems were not given attention from the public, especially domestic violence. In today's more open era, women's NGOs are free to promote the issue of violence against women.

### Statistics

A number of major obstacles pose difficulties in uncovering and recording the number of cases of domestic violence. These obstacles include societal norms, myths surrounding domestic violence, and the fact that this issue is very sensitive and tends to be rationalized away due

Domestic violence is very difficult to quantify: women are reluctant to report, and reporting procedures are not standardized.

to conflicts of interest and the prevailing cultural norms. Moreover, there is no standardization in the recording of cases. Therefore, domestic violence is very difficult to quantify, because so many cases go unreported.

**Women's NGOs now operate in a more open environment.**

**Number of cases at the Women's Crisis Centre,  
Central Hospital Cipto Mangunkusumo – June 2000 to December 2001**

	2000 (June to Dec)	2001
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	68	105
Other violence (rape, sexual assault)	138	264
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>369</b>

The figures are not complete enough yet to show any patterns. But they are likely low as the crisis center has not been adequately publicized, and cultural norms prevent women from reporting domestic violence. Volunteers at the crisis center report that most survivors who come to the center have been dealing with violence for a long time and, as a result, are desperate and sometimes near death. The norm is for a survivor to contact the crisis center only for assistance with a divorce or at the request of the police.

**2. Existing policies and law**

The government established the National Commission on Anti-Violence Against Women in October 1998 based on Presidential Decree No. 181/1998. The Commission has the objective of eliminating violence and all of forms of discrimination against Indonesian women.

Indonesia has a National Commission on Anti-Violence Against Women.

The Criminal Code protects victims of domestic violence. If the violence is perpetrated by a member of the family, the perpetrator can receive a stricter sentence than a perpetrator outside the family.

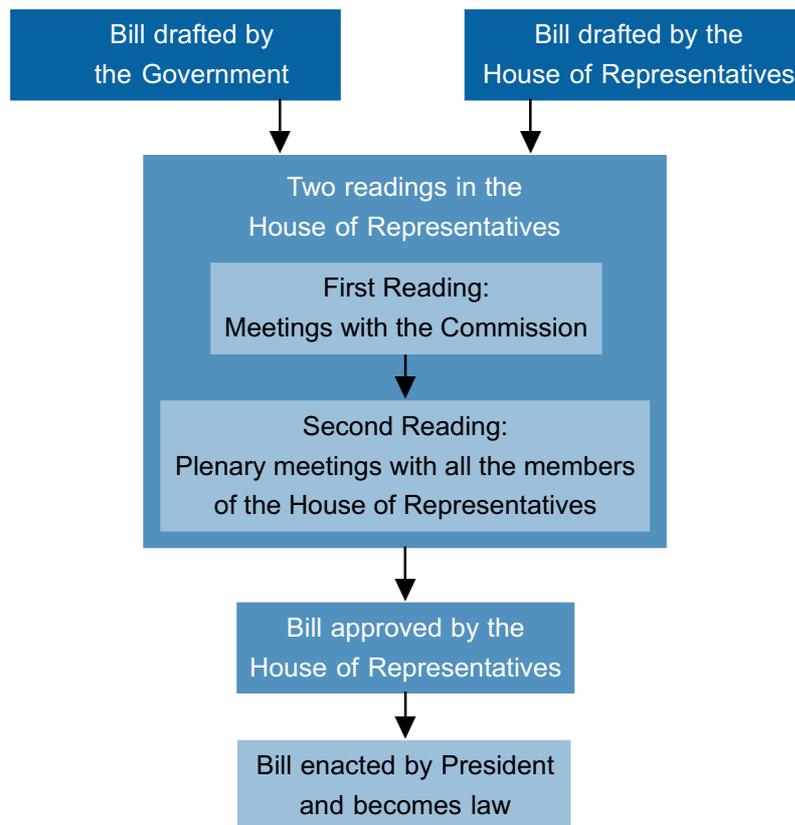
Unfortunately, women have to fight to have the law implemented. The problem is that women are reluctant to report violence to their families and even more so to report it to the police. Communities and law enforcers, such as the police, generally do not motivate the victim to bring the case to court.

**3. Current status of the Domestic Violence Bill**

An NGO movement consisting of 15 organizations began in 1997 to create a draft law on Domestic Violence. The movement promoted the draft bill throughout Indonesia to bring attention to its importance to all stakeholders.



After lobbying for the bill for four years, the draft was finally submitted to the House of Representatives in July 2001. Commission VII of the House of Representatives agreed to use the draft as their proposal for discussion. On 13 May 2003, the plenary of the House of Representatives agreed to use the draft as the House of Representatives' proposal to be discussed and processed as a law. The draft bill is now in the second stage of the law-making process. Unfortunately, Indonesia will be holding elections for new Representatives in 2004, and so the draft bill still has a long way to go before being passed into law. In order to become a law, a bill has to pass through the following steps:



#### 4. Availability of services

Survivors of domestic violence have access to the following services:

- Women’s Help Desks (Ruang Pelayanan Khusus, or RPK) in police offices. As of May 2001, there were 163 Women’s Help Desks in police offices in 19 provinces.
- Crisis centers in hospitals in Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and 30 other cities.
- Shelters for survivors provided by Rifka Anissa and SIKAP, two women’s NGOs.
- Legal aid assistance provided by LBH APIK, a women’s NGO.

## 5. Activities of the ERAW network

- The Ministry of Women's Empowerment (MOWE) facilitated the National Plan of Action on Violence against Women 2001-2005. It involved 150 NGOs, mass organizations, UN agencies (UNIFEM and UNFPA), and donor agencies (Australia and Canada). It was launched in November 2000.
- The main force behind the establishment of the Women's Help Desks in police offices was Derap Warapsari, an organization established by retired policewomen. Derap Warapsari also trained the police to be sensitive to the issue of domestic violence, and encourages survivors to pursue trials, rather than merely reporting the violence to the police.
- The Crisis Centre for Women and Children was established in Central Hospital Cipto Mangunkusumo, Jakarta, in June 2000. This pilot crisis center was followed by crisis centers at Navi Hospital, the Police Hospital, and the Army Hospital, all of which are in Jakarta. In Yogyakarta, a private hospital named Panti Rapih and the Women's Crisis Centre Rifka Anissa have worked together to serve survivors since 1999.
- As of 2000, 70 community-based Women's Crisis Centres (WCCs) had been established in 30 cities.

## 6. Indonesia's needs and recommendations for the future

There are two prime needs in handling domestic violence in Indonesia. The first is to strengthen the capacity of organizations providing services to survivors through the following activities:

- The state and society need to allocate public resources to provide, and increase the quality of, services to survivors.
- The synergy of women's NGOs, law enforcers (such as police and attorneys), and health institutions needs to be increased at both the national and local levels.
- Concepts of and standards for services for survivors need to be included in higher education.

The second need is to establish a system of documentation on violence against women, as follows:

- The national system for recording violence against women needs to be standardized in order to establish a national database that is consistent over regions and times.
- The state and society need to increase the capacity of, for example, women's NGOs, health institutions, and the Indonesian Statistics Bureau to document violence against women.

### References

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