**TO:**

**GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA**

**Subject: Request for amending the Decision for prohibition of movement of citizens over the entire territory of the country of 06.04.2020 (36th session of the Government of RNM)**

**Respected,**

Due to the current situation with the COVID-19 virus and the already declared state of emergency, you as the Government have adopted additional measures and recommendations for all citizens in the country. On 6 April 2020, at the proposal of the Commission for Infectious Diseases within the Ministry of Health and the General Crisis Headquarters, an amendment was made to the Decision on Prohibiting the Movement of Citizens on the Whole Territory, i.e. extending the curfew to the entire territory of Republic of Northern Macedonia.

With this decision, every violator of the same will be sanctioned by the authorized police officers. We demand immediate amendment to this Decision in order to protect women victims of violence and domestic violence. Namely, during curfew there exceptions from sanctions should be allowed for women victims and their children who have left their home due to threats and direct risk of violence. Victims who are at high risk of violence should be able to go out during curfew in order to report the violence to a competent institution or seek help at a health facility, as well as their children, older family members who need to go out with them to protect themselves from violence, without risking being sanctioned if met by police officers. Furthermore, they should be provided with the appropriate assistance and referred to a competent institution if meet by patrolling police officers.

**Also, when domestic violence is reported during curfew, we are asking that perpetrators be removed from the home and subject to appropriate sanctions (detention, issuance of temporary protective measures, etc.) in order to protect the victim from future violence in her home.**

Regarding the justification of our request, we would like to state that the risks for increasing the violence in these extraordinary circumstances are numerous. Namely, with the measures and restrictions that are in force, the children are at home all day. All cafes, restaurants, bars and betting shops are closed, leaving people with limited options for socializing (cinemas, theatre, sport). Friends are at home with their families, and all places where people could channel their aggression are closed. All that is left are the wife/partner, the children and the parents.

Many citizens are under the pressure of losing their jobs after the end of the state of emergency ends and the government measures, which increases the potential risk of poverty. All of these factors lead to intensive increase in the stress among citizens, frustrations, fears and serious concerns about the future, which are triggers for aggressive behavior, outbursts of irritability, increased need for control and expression of power, violent conflict resolution and increased use of violence.

Given the urgency of the situation, we are asking that you adopt this request as soon as possible and to amend the Decision on the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence and their Children, regarding the social concept of the state and family care.

**Skopje**

**08.04.2020**

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