



Strengthening of HIV/STI interventions
in sex work in Ukraine and the Russian Federation



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How violence affects sex workers in Ukraine and the Russian Federation



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- **CONECTA website** | A tool for networking and sharing of information available in three languages: English, Russian and Ukrainian
- **CONECTA Mapping Reports on Sex Work** | Sex workers' working and living conditions in Ukraine and the Russian Federation | Regional trend report
- **Manual of Good Practices** | Collection of Good Practices
- **Educational Materials** | Leaflets and information for sex workers in Russian and Ukrainian
- **Policy Paper** | Laws and Policies Affecting Sex Workers' Vulnerability to HIV/STIs in the Russian Federation

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ABOUT THE BOOKLET

The project *Strengthening of HIV/STI Interventions in Sex Work in Ukraine and in the Russian Federation* (“Conecta project”) is implemented jointly by TAMPEP International Foundation (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), Humanitarian Action Foundation (St. Petersburg, Russia), and SALUS Charitable Foundation (Lviv, Ukraine).

The main objective of the project is to reduce the vulnerability of sex workers to HIV/STIs through the development of a model of integrated services based on human rights and addressing the problems associated with the effects of HIV/STIs among sex workers. The challenges addressed by these activities can be divided into three groups.

- Increasing the capacity for the dissemination of information and the development of a network of sex work projects;
- Improving the quality of services in response to the needs of sex workers; and
- Promoting an enabling legal and policy environment to enhance access of sex workers to HIV prevention, care and treatment.

The purpose of this *booklet* is to provide a better understanding of how violence experienced by sex workers infringes their civil and human rights and increases risk to HIV/STI infection. It presents data collected during Conecta project in Ukraine and the Russian Federation revealing high levels of violence against sex workers in both countries. Violence is a key factor to sex workers’ vulnerability to HIV/STI infection.¹ Hence, several typologies of violence and their impacts on sex workers will be examined.

This *booklet* underscores the need of development of programmatic strategies to address violence and support sex workers in reducing their vulnerability to violence and accessing justice and equal legal protection. The experiences of sex worker-led organizations *Silver Rose* (Russia) and *Legalife* (Ukraine) are particularly relevant for acknowledging the key role of sex worker communities in the struggle against violence and abuse.

Hence, the booklet provides evidence on how to consider violence when designing and implementing projects aimed at sex workers, particularly by ensuring their right to legal support and access to judicial and extra-judicial mechanisms.

¹ WHO, *Prevention and treatment of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections for sex workers in low- and middle-income countries*, 2012.

It is fundamental to implement violence reduction strategies within HIV prevention programmes focusing on sex workers. There is also a need of having a broader recognition of violence against sex workers as an abuse of their human rights, not only when it relates to HIV and STI prevention.

Finally, this *booklet* seeks to call on states to recognise human rights obligations, especially the highest attainable standard of health ('right to health') and right to life. It is the duty of the states to respect, protect, and fulfil human rights, which includes sex workers' protection from violence and health-related violations.





METHODOLOGY



The *booklet* presents the results of a survey on violence against sex workers, which was carried out in Ukraine and the Russian Federation during Conecta project. Evidence was gathered in order to examine in which way violence affects sex workers and violates their human rights, and increases their vulnerability to HIV/STIs.

A specific questionnaire was developed for the purpose of this data collection. It has several questions that intend to identify the patterns of violence that most affect sex workers. Other questions were based on age, gender, safer sex, and working conditions of sex workers.

Interviews were carried out *directly* with sex workers during outreach and counselling activities done by service providers in both countries.²

In addition to that, this *booklet* reviewed several international guidelines on HIV/AIDS and human rights. Specialized United Nations agencies reports recognize the role of structural barriers in fuelling the HIV epidemics, as well as their role in increasing human rights violations against sex workers.³ They clarify that structural determinants put sex workers at a higher risk of violence and HIV/STI infection and call on states' obligation to protect, respect and fulfil the human rights of sex workers.

² All interviews were carried out with informed consent of sex workers.

³ The International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights promulgated by UNAIDS and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights state that: "Criminal law prohibiting sexual acts (including adultery, sodomy, fornication, and commercial sexual encounters) between consenting adults in private should be reviewed, with the aim of repeal.... With regard to adult sex work that involves no victimization, criminal law should be reviewed with the aim of decriminalizing, then legally regulating occupational health and safety conditions to protect sex workers and their clients, including support for safe sex during sex work." (UNAIDS Inter-Agency Task Team on Gender and HIV/AIDS, 'International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights', 2006, p. 18).

PART 1

Violence is linked to stigma and discrimination experienced by sex workers.⁴ Discrimination against sex workers is rooted in stigmatization of sex work, as well as in its position as an illegitimate occupation.

Violence does not affect sex workers evenly; it depends heavily on the working conditions, settings, and the structural conditions of sex work in each country.

The levels of violence experienced by sex workers, albeit high, are likely to be underreported, due to the reluctance of some sex workers to report violence in contexts where they are criminalised and face stigma and discrimination instead of protection.

This *booklet* adopts a broad conception of violence, which includes restriction and abuse of rights. For instance, the denial of antiretroviral therapy (ART) treatment for sex workers who inject drugs and live with HIV is considered a form of violence, since it restricts sex workers' access to health services and medicine. This denial violates the fundamental right to health of those people and is considered a form of institutional violence that does not respond effectively to the public health needs.

DEFINING VIOLENCE AGAINST SEX WORKERS

International Definition of Violence

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the World report on violence and health (WRVH) (2002), violence is defined as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.”⁵

The Fourth World Conference on Women - Beijing Declaration (1995) defines violence, and specifically gender-based violence, as: “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”.⁶

⁴ WHO, *Violence against sex workers and HIV prevention*, 2005, p. 1.

⁵http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en (accessed by 08.08.13)

⁶<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/Beijing%20full%20report%20E.pdf> (accessed by 08.08.13)

Same definition is mentioned in the General Recommendation No. 19 on Violence against Women, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1992.⁷

Typology of Violence WHO

The WHO also presents a typology of violence that, while not uniformly accepted, can be a useful way to understand the contexts in which violence occurs and the interactions between types of violence. This typology distinguishes four modes in which violence may be inflicted: physical; sexual; and psychological attack; and deprivation.⁸ In order to explore to which extent sex workers and their communities experience violence, *Conecta project* uses only the following definitions of violence.

Physical Violence

Physical violence shall include any violence that affects the physical integrity of the person. Physical violence includes sexual violence. Sexual violence shall include a wide variety of abuses, including rape, sexual threats. Sexual abuse is any kind of physical intrusion of a sexual nature, perpetrated whether by violence, under coercion, threat or surprise. It can also include sexual behaviour that the victim finds humiliating and degrading.

Psychological Violence

Psychological violence shall include any kind of violence that aims to destabilize the victim, to affect and/or destroy the victim's self-confidence and mental health.

Psychological violence may also be used in order to maintain control over the victim and to intimidate her/him. It may include threats, bullying and intimidation; harassment, persecution and terror; control, harassment and psychological terror; stalking.

Economical Exploitation

Economical exploitation shall include, at a minimum forced labour, servitude and slavery. However, there is no international definition of exploitation.⁹ The only reference at the international level is a non-exhaustive list of forms of exploitation, given in the Palermo Protocol (Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, 2000) in its article 3a: "Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of

⁷<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm> (accessed by 08.08.13)

⁸<http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en> (accessed by 08.08.13)

⁹<http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en> (accessed by 08.08.13)

others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”.¹⁰

Verbal Violence

Verbal violence shall include any violence that takes the form of insults, humiliation, and defamation. This violence may also have a psychological impact and be considered as psychological violence by the person.

Violence and HIV Programmes

Sex workers are well-known for being a vulnerable group, which means that their risk of violence and HIV/STI infection is higher than that of the general population.¹¹

According to the WHO, violence *per se* increases sex workers’ vulnerability to HIV/STI infection (directly or indirectly).¹² Stigma, discrimination, and lack of access to health services are added factors that increase this group’s vulnerability to violence and HIV/STI infection.¹³

In this context, state laws have the duty to protect sex workers’ rights by creating an enabling environment in which they are able to fulfill their fundamental rights, and be free from practices that put them at risk.¹⁴ Vulnerability is a phenomenon that can be reduced by applying good practices in governance and lawmaking, which are in line with international standards of health, safety, and well-being.

Where sex workers are more vulnerable, they normally have less access to justice, and face institutional repression instead of protection.

Sex workers in many places are highly vulnerable to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) due to multiple factors, including large numbers of sex partners, unsafe working conditions and barriers to the negotiation of consistent condom use. Moreover, sex workers often have little control over these factors because of social marginalization and criminalized work environments. Alcohol, drug use and violence in some settings may further exacerbate their vulnerability and risk.

UNAIDS | 2012

¹⁰http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/Conventions/dcatoc/final_documents_2/convention_%20traff_eng.pdf (accessed by 08.08.13)

¹¹ According to the *World Aids Day Report* 2012, ‘HIV continues to have a disproportionate impact on sex workers (...). A recent review of data in 50 countries showed that 12% of female sex workers are living with HIV and the chance of women who engage in sex work being infected is 13.5 times higher than others’ (UNAIDS, 2012, p. 36).

¹² WHO, 2012, p. 8.

¹³ INDOORS, ‘*Outreach in indoor sex work settings: A report based on the mapping of the indoor sector in nine European cities*’, 2012.

¹⁴ WHO, 2012, p. 8.

Therefore, laws play an important role in the configuration of repressive systems or enabling legal environments to implement effective HIV/STI prevention, care, and treatment programmes.¹⁵ Therefore, WHO emphasizes that ‘criminalization of sex work contributes to an environment in which, violence against sex workers is tolerated, leaving them less likely to be protected from it’¹⁶.

Laws can and should reduce sex workers’ vulnerability and risk of violence and HIV/STI infection, but advocacy for legal reform depends heavily on evidence-informed data and community mobilization.

Efforts to reduce violence and repression at the community level include organizing and mobilizing sex workers to fight for their civil and human rights.⁷

WHO | 2005

Civil society also has an important role in supporting sex workers’ organisations in advocating for their rights. TAMPEP (*Transnational AIDS/STI Prevention among*

Migrant Prostitutes in Europe) throughout several years of intervention has developed different educational resources and materials providing safety tips¹⁸, and has raised awareness to the need of recognizing human and civil rights of sex workers.

Stigma and Discrimination

Sex workers’ vulnerability to violence is connected to stigma and discrimination. These are intrinsic elements of most human rights violations that have as an outcome the increase of sex workers’ vulnerability to violence, abuses, and consequently, to HIV/STI infection. Stigma and discrimination are results of different social processes that are related, but not limited to legal environment and criminalization of behaviours. Several subgroups such as LGBTI people, migrants, people who use drugs, and others, face multiple forms of stigmatization and discrimination.

Discrimination on several grounds, including health status, too, can be considered a violation of human rights. There are no international laws

¹⁵ Laws, police practices and policies in many countries undermine sex workers’ enjoyment of their rights. Criminalisation of sex work and the application of non-criminal laws to sex work exacerbate the stigma and moralist approaches towards sex workers. Law and law enforcement practices often leave sex workers open to extra-legal abuses, including sexual and physical abuse by police and violations of due process. Creating a legal and policy environment conducive to sex workers’ access to comprehensive HIV services is good practice from both public health and human rights perspectives. Male, female, and transgender sex workers have the right to protect themselves from discrimination, violence, abuse, and disease. Realizing that right, enables them to lead lives of dignity and to be agents of HIV prevention and information with their clients and the larger community. (International HIV/AIDS Alliance and Commonwealth HIV, 2010).

¹⁶ WHO, 2005, p. 1.

¹⁷ WHO, ‘Violence against sex workers and HIV prevention’, 2005, p. 3.

¹⁸ See brochures: <http://tampep.eu/documents.asp?section=infobrochures> (accessed by 08.08.13)

against stigma, although its effects can be very negative towards vulnerable populations.

This *booklet* underscores the impacts of stigma and discrimination on sex workers. Because of stigma and discrimination, sex workers (and subgroups of sex workers) often experience violence on the streets, at work, and at home. In their work and lives, sex workers experience disproportionate levels of violence, including police abuse, sexual assault, rape, harassment, robbery, extortion, and abuse from clients, agents (pimps), sex establishment owners, intimate partners, local residents, and public authorities. Lack of access to social and health-related services and justice are also direct consequences.

Legal and policy reform are fundamental to address the impacts of stigma and discrimination on sex workers. Positive actions should favour their access to targeted services and justice.

Forms of stigma are not seen as forms of violence, just like theft and verbal abuse are seen as consequences of sex work. Even those who talk about feeling the pressure of the stigma still underestimate its range and see it as an inevitable part of being a sex worker.

Committee for the Civil Rights of Prostitutes | Italy

Legal and Policy Environments

Globally, sex workers of all genders face violence. This includes physical, psychological, economical, and verbal violence, often with impunity.

Sex workers are targeted and attacked by people posing as clients, by police, law enforcement officials, civil servants, religious groups, to name a few.

The criminalisation and legal oppression of sex work and activities relating to sex work make it difficult for sex workers to report violence.

Accounts of violence against sex workers are often not taken seriously by the police and impunity is often observed, even in extreme cases when sex workers are murdered.

“

I am 28 years old. At the beginning of this year I went with a client to his flat. Everything was well, and then he asked me: Are you okay with fisting? I answered: you can if you do carefully. It resulted in three cuts, I was bleeding and he threw me naked out on the stairwell. I got home, called an ambulance, had the cuts stitched up, treated, etc. I wanted to report the client to the police, but did not dare, I thought that the police would not open the case, but rather say something like: So, you're a prostitute, it's your fault, you shouldn't engage in prostitution. Now I regret not reporting the crime, I could do it for example with the support of a lawyer from *Legalife*.

Sex worker | Ukraine

Structural and institutional violence through state-based interventions mean that sex workers regularly face violence during arrest, forced detention, and deportation (undocumented migrants) or removal, often in the name of public order and/or anti-prostitution and/or anti-migration measure. Criminalisation and legal oppression of sex work, sex workers, clients, and managers, creates conditions that contribute to labour exploitation and forced labour.

Conecta projects opposes criminalisation of sex workers based on the evidence that such legal systems reduce sex workers ability to organise, empower themselves, and exposes them to several forms of abuses, including severe human rights violations.

Human Rights of Sex Workers

States that fail to address violence against sex workers violate their human rights, which are guaranteed by the following international human rights treaties:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (**ICCPR**)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (**ICESCR**)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (**CEDAW**)
- [European] Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (**ECHR**)
- European Social Charter (**ESC**)

Each of these treaties has an enforcement mechanism to ensure governments comply with their obligations. Therefore, documenting human rights abuses against sex workers is fundamental for giving visibility and supporting the empowerment of sex workers. It is fundamental that sex workers' voices are heard.

Human Rights and HIV/AIDS

As mentioned above, several recent reports of UN Specialized agencies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) underline the importance of including human rights violations as a main risk factor for sex workers' vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Violence can lead to several human rights violations.

Considering that the actual international policy on HIV and sex work has human rights at its very centre, it should be clear to which extent

the Russian and Ukrainian governments are accountable to the evidence on violence against sex workers, including their heightened risk to HIV/STI infection.

The Russian Federation and Ukraine are party to several international and regional human rights treaties¹⁹. Thus, human rights are not alien to their legislation having the States committed themselves to the various conventions that establish fundamental rights of all citizens such as rights to life, health, non-discrimination, liberty, information, expression, privacy, association, participation, among many others.

Considering the relation between human rights and HIV/AIDS, the right to highest attainable standard of health (also referred to as 'right to health'), will be examined, according to the international obligations that were undertaken by both states. It is important to initially frame what is the normative content of this right and clarify its relation with HIV and sex work. Other human rights violations against sex workers could be further examined.

Right to health: the key right

A wider definition of health also takes into account such socially-related concerns as violence.²⁰ The investigation of the right to health (as a human right) reveals the framework under which states can develop their national public health programmes and laws.

Several key human rights documents shed light to the importance of the right to health as a core human right, such as the WHO Constitution²¹ and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25.1)²².

The first binding international document in relation to the right to health is the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The Russian Federation and Ukraine are parties of this convention.

Gives the most comprehensive information on the right to health in its article 12 and provides for a monitoring Committee²³ which among other things monitors the implementation of this article.

¹⁹ UNAIDS, *Discussion paper*, 2013, p. 6.

²⁰ UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), *General Comment No. 14*

²¹ According to the WHO's Constitution, the right to health is "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

²² According to the UDHR, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

²³ Monitoring of States parties' compliance with treaty provisions is primarily done through the examination of their regular reports on how they are implementing the rights nationally. The Committee examines these reports together with other relevant information submitted by United Nations agencies and civil society organizations (these are also called shadow reports or parallel reports).

ICESCR | Article 12

- (a) The provision for the reduction of the stillbirth-rate and of infant mortality and for the healthy development of the child;
- (b) The improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene;
- (c) The prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases;
- (d) The creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.

The indicators to the right to health and its peculiarities have been shaped by other relevant human rights treaties²⁴ that have a provision on the right to health. However, for understanding the relation between the right to health, HIV and sex work Article 12 of the ICESCR is plentiful.

Obligations towards sex workers

The right to health has specific normative content which has to be taken into consideration by the Russian and Ukrainian states when designing public health laws and HIV programmes. As stated by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) “Health is a fundamental human right indispensable for the exercise of other human rights”.²⁵ Its realisation is also considered a precondition for living a life in dignity.

A fundamental characteristic of this right is that it is **universal** and **non-discriminatory**, as other human rights. Therefore, **all sex workers are entitled to the right to health** and cannot be discriminated against.

Sex workers living with HIV are particularly protected by human rights and the right to health, since discrimination on the ground of health status, including HIV status, is prohibited.²⁶

It is a programmatic right that demands progressive implementation and efficient laws. Moreover, this right has a **socio-economic dimension and should always consider vulnerable populations** in its implementation (principle of inclusiveness).

To fulfil its international obligations the Russian and Ukrainian states are obliged to respect, protect, and fulfill the right to health of every person, including (migrant) sex workers. When the state fails to do so, it violates the right to health of sex workers.²⁷

²⁴ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Articles 11.1 (f)); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Article 12); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 24); and several regional human rights instruments.

²⁵ UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), *General Comment No. 14, paragraph 1*.

²⁶ UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Fact Sheet No. 31*, 2008.

²⁷ UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), *General Comment No. 14, paragraph 52*.

The specific implications of this international legal framework to sex workers in the Russian Federation and Ukraine, reads as follows.

Respect

Refrain from interfering directly or indirectly with the right to health.²⁸

States have the duty to respect sex workers' rights by enabling an environment in which they are able to fulfil their fundamental rights, and be free from practices that put them at risk to HIV/STI infection.

Protect

Prevent third parties from interfering with the right to health.²⁹

Sex workers are often exposed to violence and to health-related risks because of lack of laws protecting them against abuses committed by third parties.

Fulfil

Adopt appropriate legislative, administrative, budgetary, judicial, promotional and other measures to fully realize the right to health.³⁰

Sex workers are often excluded (or discriminated against) when accessing public health support. Public health measures should be programmatic and proactively implemented for reaching better public health goals, in accordance with human rights standards.

Overcoming Violence

Several NGOs in Ukraine and the Russian Federation are dealing with sex workers and implementing programs focused on HIV/AIDS and STIs prevention. This means that many sex workers have access to information and services that addresses their vulnerability to HIV/STIs,

²⁸ UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Fact Sheet No. 31*, 2008, p. 25; and M Daniel, S Sangeeta, S Sandesh, 2010, pp. 130-131.

²⁹ Toebes, 1999, p. 26.

³⁰ UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Fact Sheet No. 31*, 2008, p. 27.

as well as to care and treatment. Many organisations also provide free of charge condoms, testing, and some other health services.

In spite of the great effort of these organisations, an enabling legal environment for HIV/STI prevention is still not available in both countries. Policy and legislation against sex workers are repressive and do not favour safe working environments, protection from violence and workers' rights. Evidence shows that sex workers in the Russian Federation and Ukraine are often exposed to violence which relates most of the times to unsafe working conditions.

To reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS in sex work, it is advisable to review legal frameworks and adapt them to international human rights laws and guidelines. This can also increase the efficacy of HIV prevention programmes developed by the governments, international organisations, and several NGOs.

It should be highlighted that information and services for sex workers are not enough for reducing SWs vulnerability; much needs to be done to encourage safer working spaces, where sex workers can work freely from violence, coercion, and other forms of abuses that put them at risk.

Moreover, usually sex workers are aware about HIV/STIs and safer sex. Organisations have prepared several materials targeting this group's needs and most sex workers know where to be tested for HIV/STIs, where to collect condoms, or receive services.

Still, without safe working spaces, autonomy, self-determination, freedom from discrimination and stigma, sex workers are often exposed to several forms of violence and increased risk to HIV/STIs.

Legal Services and Strategies to Combat Violence

Services for sex workers in the two countries have surely contributed to tackle health-related information, care, and treatment for sex workers; yet much needs to be done to prevent violence and provide access to justice for sex workers.

This *booklet* points out a gap in legal and social services that could help to prevent the negative effects of violence.

The first step in addressing the problem of violence against sex workers is to create an opportunity for sex workers to determine the meaning of violence in their lives. This results from a comprehensive analysis of violence in different sex work settings, working situations, and contexts.

Before offering strategies, projects must begin with an exchange of experiences and ideas with sex workers themselves. Service providers should be trained to address sex workers' needs, not only those which refer to their health.

Legal information about sex work and how to avoid violence are lacking. Protection of rights of sex workers should be imperative in HIV programmes. Sex workers must be informed about their rights and how to claim for these rights in national courts, and if applicable international courts. Information can minimize risk of violence, HIV infection, and reduce impunity. Sex work projects can effectively intervene in violence prevention strategies with consideration of sex workers' experiences.

Additionally, sex work projects can collect cases of violence (including illegal detentions, fraudulent raids, etc.) and build up evidence to counteract the negative effects of violence on sex workers. Conferences, forums, and policy events are important moments for sensitizing stakeholders on the need of legal and policy reform.

Sex work projects should count with lawyers who bring cases of sex workers to court. This can reduce impunity and favour sex workers access to justice.

It is fundamental is to always work with the different sex worker communities and consider the knowledge and expertise of sex workers in any strategy to combat violence. Their communities know their needs. Thus, sex work projects can learn from the expertise of sex workers and with resources engage with the government to tackle violence and HIV risk with their resources.

On this matter, we have selected two examples of strategies coming from the sex worker organisations **Silver Rose** (Russia) and **Legalife** (Ukraine), which inspire the development of further services on violence prevention and access to justice across the two countries.



The most effective strategy to protect sex workers from violence is through community mobilization, which is promoted by the sex worker-led organization *Silver Rose*. Through community mobilization *Silver Rose* is able to promote: training on legal issues around sex work and its legal implications; legal advice; filing complaints; and legal representation in public institutions and courts.

In order to effectively target violence and provide legal solutions for sex workers, *Silver Rose* is in direct contact with sex workers who have been victim of violence and provides them access to justice and support. Sex workers are instructed on how to counteract in case of police arrests, confiscation, and when they are victim of abuse. Their rights are informed but also how to use them in their favour. There are several strategies to minimize risk of police violence and to access better the judicial system.

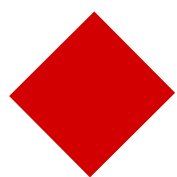
The organization collects data from sex workers on cases of violence perpetrated by third parties and documents their stories. In such a way it has built knowledge on the patterns of violence that most affect sex workers in the Russian Federation.

Legal services of *Silver Rose* include case management and representation of sex workers in national courts. For that goal collection of evidence of violence is fundamental to ensure sex workers' rights and fair trial.

In order to combat violence and enhance access to justice for sex workers, the organisation recommends and promotes:

- respect and protect of human rights of sex workers;
- evidence-based data on violence in different sex work settings;
- efficient public health methods to prevent HIV/STI infection among sex workers;
- community support and empowerment initiatives for sex workers to fight stigma, discrimination, violence, and abuse;
- sex workers access to health care, justice, crisis centers, psychological and social support, particularly in cases of violence; and
- awareness raising to the general public about the rights of sex workers and the consequences of stigma, discrimination, and violence on the lives of sex workers and their families.

Silver Rose also engages in several awareness raising campaigns on the issue of sex work in the Russian Federation and globally. It participates in several human rights and women forums, conferences, and has actively engaged in a political debate in the Russian Federation. It targets many of its advocacy efforts against institutional violence against sex workers, particularly coming from the police.



Legalife

Ukraine

The sex worker-led organisation *Legalife* (Department of Kirovograd) provides sex workers with a package of legal services such as: training on legal issues around sex work and its legal implications; legal advice; filing complaints; and legal representation in public and private institutions. The project is supported by Open Society Institute (OSI).

Its legal expertise embraces health-related and sexual and reproductive rights. For instance, in case of ill-treatment in public health services, lack of medical care, treatment, or quality in services, *Legalife* follows up cases and facilitates access to justice.

The legal services also encompass cases of:

- disclosure of private information;
- wrongful application of administrative penalties by law enforcement officials;
- violence against sex workers;
- abuse of authority;
- inhuman treatment; and
- other human rights violations perpetrated against sex workers.

Sex workers that participate at *Legalife's* activities receive training on legal matters around sex work. Informational material considers international human rights protection system, as well as the Ukrainian Constitution and (administrative and criminal) laws. It highlights the rights and duties of the police, as well as other state institutions.

Training is provided on monitoring police actions by using videotaping, audio, camera to record human rights violations perpetrated by police officers. According to *Legalife*, sex workers must be aware of how to behave with police officials, particularly if they are being subjected to administrative liability.

Legalife's lawyers are specifically trained to provide access to justice for sex workers in case of violence and abuse. The legal team carries out regular on-site monitoring visits where human rights violations against most vulnerable sex workers are committed.

Police abuse is reported by sex workers to be very high in the highways of Ukraine. Thus, representatives of the organisation monitor human rights violations in these areas by means of technology, questionnaires, and interventions. Abusive police actions are recorded and reported.

The legal team asks for the reason of the police visits to the highway, what are the grounds of checking the personal belongings of sex workers, inspection of documents, and arrests.

The team calls on the prosecutor's office in case of violations against sex workers. Because all evidence of irregular/illegal actions is recorded, sex workers have the chance to file complaints against the police officials who perpetrated violent acts or abused them. Further legal support and follow up is provided by *Legalife*.

Sex worker-led organisations are by their very essence activists. *Legalife* is an example of community mobilization, solidarity, and support. One of its main goals is legal and policy reform by raising sex workers' voices, participating in protests, organising campaigns, and conferences. *Legalife* sensitizes policy makers about the negative impacts of the actual legal framework on sex workers.

PART 2

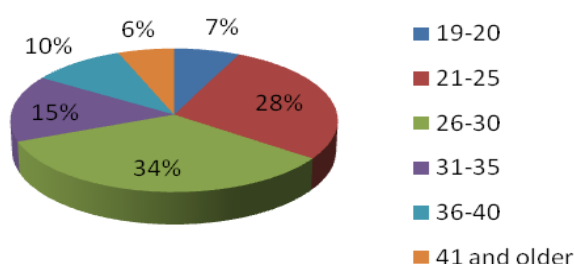
EVIDENCE ON VIOLENCE UKRAINE

Information was collected by 7 NGOs working with sex workers in the field of HIV prevention, care, and treatment in Ukraine in 2012. The questions were based on experiences of sex workers that happened in the past year.

Respondents are coming from 7 different cities of the country: Kyiv, Lviv, Zaporizhzhia, Kirovohrad, Ternopil, Irpin, and Brovary.

87 sex workers were interviewed. 84 were female and 3 transgender sex workers. Female sex workers had different ages, whereas transgender were all below 30 years old (see graphic 1).

Graphic 1 | Age distribution of sex workers



Among the interviewees, 39 sex workers (45%) were working autonomously on their own terms and 48 (55%) with or for third parties (see graphic 2). From this group, two transgender sex workers were working autonomously and 1 for/with a third party within the sex industry.

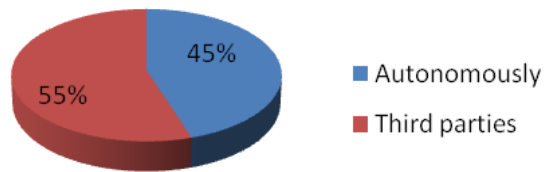
Third parties

There are many different ways that individuals can act as third parties in the sex industry. The roles and responsibilities of third parties are diverse. Sex workers may hire, work with, or work for, third parties.

In sex work, a third party is anyone involved in the transaction who is neither the client nor worker. The term refers to an individual who supervises controls or coordinates some of a sex worker's labour process (what they do, when and where) or labour practices (how they work) for direct or indirect financial compensation. This may include owners, managers, receptionists, security, and drivers, someone who does advertising and other facilitators of the sex workers activities.

Working with, or for, a third party in the sex industry is often assumed to be inherently abusive or exploitative. However, managing a sex business requires similar management strategies as in other industries, which does not mean necessarily that exploitation or abuse of control is present.

Graphic 2 | Control of working conditions



■ Autonomy at work

In relation to the working context and the level of autonomy of sex workers it appears that there is no relevant difference between the group that works with/for third parties or the sex workers that work autonomously on their own terms.

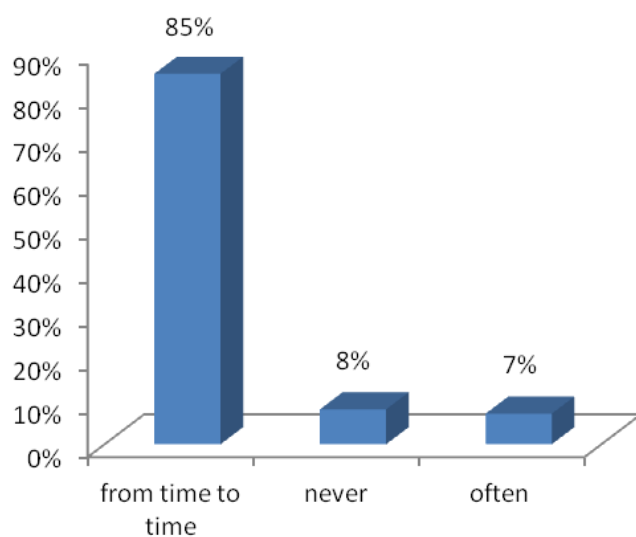
89% of sex workers affirmed that they could decide about the time when they work, 83% could leave their working place at any time, and 79% of them affirmed that they could make decisions about what clients they will work with.

This result suggests that the level of autonomy in work-related decisions is generally high among sex workers. It seems that the control or authority that sex workers have over their working conditions is not necessarily dependent on being autonomous or not, but more likely to be a result of the working environment and how the work is organized. Moreover, it is a clear connection between incidence of violence and adverse (unsafe) working environment.

■ Typology of Violence

92% of all respondents answered that they have experienced violence in the last year. 85% of these reported that they have experienced violence from time to time, and 7% often. The frequency of violence varies (see graphic 3).

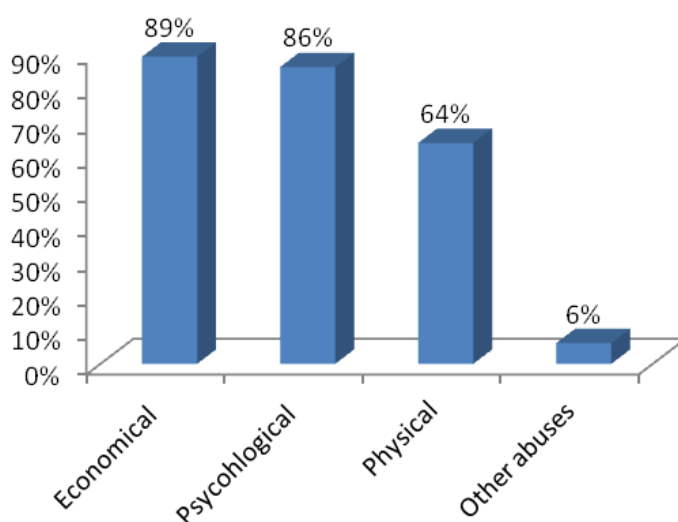
Graphic 3 | Violence against female sex workers



The transgender sex worker who works for/with a third party reported to have experienced violence often and the other two transgender sex workers working autonomously reported that they had been experiencing violence from time to time.

According to all respondents, 64% of them had been experiencing physical (beaten, coercion to sex, threats of weapon), 86% – psychological (insults, abusive language, threats, harassment, blackmail, humiliation, work in risky environment), 89% – economical (unpaid sex, amount of received payment was less than agreed, coercion to work without pay, stolen money or other items during work), and 6% mentioned deprivation of documents as other abuses.

Graphic 4 | Typology of violence affecting sex workers



A high number of sex workers have undergone unpaid sex, amount of received payment was less than agreed (83.9%), insults and abusive language (80.5%), humiliation (50.5%), coercion to work without payment (41.4%), beaten (40.2%), and physical coercion to sex (37.9%).

Most often sex workers experience episodes of working in risky environment (53.6 average episodes a year), threats, harassment, blackmail (31.7), humiliation (27.6), and insults, abusive language (20.9). Table 1 illustrates the patterns of violence against sex workers.

Table 1

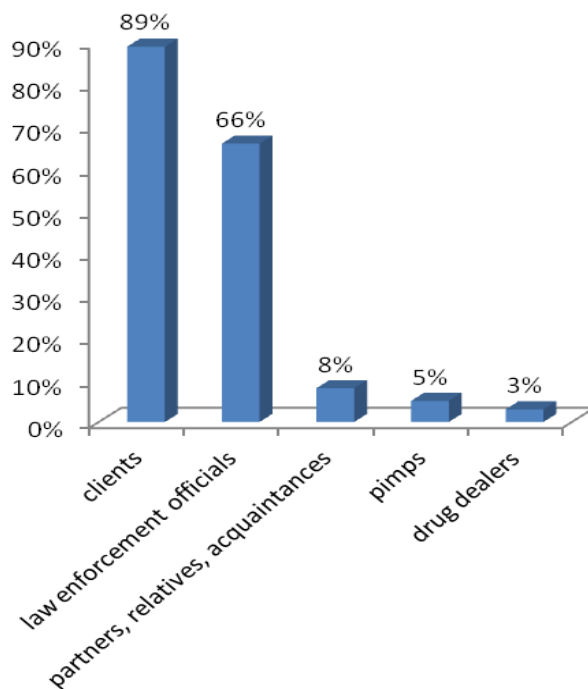
Proportion of sex workers who have had experienced violence and frequency of episodes of violence during a year

Typology of violence	Number of sex workers	Percentage	Average episodes a year
Physical violence			
Beaten	35	40.2 %	3.4
Coercion to sex	33	37.9 %	4.2
Threats of weapon	20	23.0 %	1.5
Psychological violence			
Insults, abusive language	70	80.5 %	20.9
Threats, harassment, blackmail	15	17.2 %	31.7
Humiliation	44	50.5 %	27.6
Work in risky environment	32	36.8 %	53.6
Economical violence			
Unpaid sex, amount of received payment was less than agreed	73	83.9 %	5.6
Stolen money or other items (while working)	19	21.8 %	6.3
Coercion to work without pay	36	41.4 %	6.6
Other types			
Deprivation of documents	4	4.6 %	2.3

Perpetrators

89% of respondents reported that acts of violence against them were committed by clients, 66% – by law enforcement officials. Only 8% mentioned as violators partners, relatives or acquaintances, 5% – pimps, 3% – drug dealers.

Graphic 4 | Most cited perpetrators



Most of the respondents affirmed that clients and policemen are generally the perpetrators of violence against them. The frequency of violence towards sex workers from their clients and from policemen is approximately the same (5.9 and 5.0 episodes in the last year, respectively).

Anecdotes | UKRAINE

The following are anecdotes that illustrate some situations in which sex workers are exposed to violence in Ukraine.

“

I am 35 years old and I've recently had a baby. When I was pregnant, practically about to give birth, I had to go to an ATM machine to withdraw money from a card, to do some shopping and just to have cash. I went up to the cash machine and all of a sudden a road police car comes to me with two policemen inside. One of them suggests: get into the car and let's go to the police department.

I asked: What is it? The answer was: You're in our database for prostitution, so let's go. I got in the car, worried that they could use force.

While in the car, I dialled my lawyer and handed the phone to the policemen. I do not know what did the lawyer say, but obviously they were very scared and took me to the same place I was taken away from, apologized and quickly left.

Sex worker | Ukraine

“

I am 33 years old and I have drug addiction.

The policemen constantly bother me by the road and I have to pay them bribes to work; otherwise they would park a few meters away and I would get no work at all because the clients would be too scared to stop by. I am afraid to complain; in fact they might even take me because of the drugs.

Sex worker | Ukraine

“

I am 29, and had to pay policemen bribes to work, but I was not afraid and asked for assistance at the League. They accompanied me to the police station where I filed a complaint that was handed over to the prosecutor. Although they were not punished, the result is that they do bother me anymore.

Sex worker | Ukraine

“

I am 40 years old, and I am accused of pimping and even the involvement of underaged individuals in prostitution. I'd like to clarify that I have always worked only on my own, and I do not even know the young person that I am accused of involving in prostitution. In my case there were initially two men being accused for the same thing, but now just me... it is likely they paid off and now I am the only one being accused. This is the situation.

“

Katya went with a friend to Moscow to earn more money. Immediately upon arrival they were taken to a country house where there were drunk customers (about 20-30). Katya and her friend were raped. After a while they fell asleep, there was only person sober (probably waiter), he helped Katya to escape.

Sex worker | Ukraine

PART 2

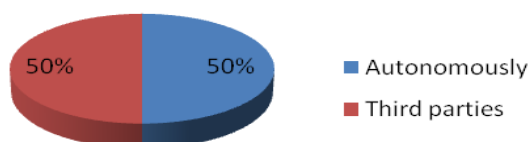
Humanitarian Action carried out an assessment for Conecta project on the typology and the frequency of episodes of violence experienced by sex workers in the city of Saint Petersburg, Russia. The anecdotes illustrate situations of violence experienced by sex workers working in different setting across the country.

The survey was undertaken in 2012 and involved 102 female street-based sex workers. The questions were based on experiences that happened in the past year.

Sex workers were from different ages. 50% were working autonomously, 50% of them were working for or with a third party (graphic 1).

EVIDENCE ON VIOLENCE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Graphic 1 | Control of working conditions



■ Autonomy at work

97% could decide when they will work, 89% could leave their job at any time, and 98% could make decisions about what clients they will work with. These numbers indicate a generally high occupational autonomy, yet this does not mean necessarily that the environmental conditions of work are good.

■ Typology of Violence

The following sheds light on the typology of violence affecting sex workers and its frequencies.

100% of respondents have reported that they have experienced some sort of violence, while assessment of the role of violence in their lives was often inadequate. The option "rarely" was selected by women who

have been beaten up to 10 times in the previous 12 months, and women who reported being exposed to economic, verbal and psychological violence answered “never” to a question of how often they suffered from violence. It means that sex workers understand “violence” as causing physical damage and sexual coercion only, while all other types of violence are not perceived as such, what reveals a very serious level of self-stigma due to their stigmatised and marginalised status.

Also sex workers themselves often consider violence as a 'natural' risk of their work and do not think that existing institutions are available for support. Sex workers reported that they are constantly intimidated by hostile attitudes and practices, particularly by law enforcement authorities. They also reported to be unprotected against violence while the perpetrators remain unpunished. Police often refuse to register or investigate complaints and effectively hampers sex workers access to justice and safety.

Physical violence

82% of respondents have reported being physically abused. The most frequently encountered type of physical violence is beating. 80% of respondents were beaten 2.8 episodes at average a year (from 1 to 15 times). 43% of respondents experienced coerced sex (rape), 1.4 episodes at average a year (from 1 to 5 times). 15% of respondents reported, that they were threatened with weapons.

It is important to notice that physical violence violates human rights of sex workers and hampers sex workers ability to negotiate condom use and therefore it increases their vulnerability to HIV/STIs.

Psychological and verbal violence

100% of the respondents have been exposed to verbal and psychological violence. Some affirmed to have been victim of this sort of violence on a daily basis. 100% of sex workers have been subjects to insults, 54 episodes at average a year (from 10 to 365 times), 88% of sex workers have heard threats against them, 12 episodes at average a year (from 1 to 100 times), 84% of sex workers have been subjects to humiliation, 48 episodes at average a year (from 1 to 100 times). 100% of sex workers work in a risky environment, 126 episodes at average a year (from 50 to 365 times).

Economical violence

100% of the respondents have been exposed to economical violence. The most frequently encountered type of economical violence is unpaid or underpaid sex. 100% of respondents experienced this type of violence 8.3 episodes at average a year (1 to 30). 56% of the respondents had their money or other valuables stolen while working 1.3 episodes at average a year (from 1 to 8 times). 43% of sex workers

experienced coercion to work without payment 3.2 episodes at average a year (from 1 to 18 times).

Graphic 2 | Typology of violence affecting sex workers

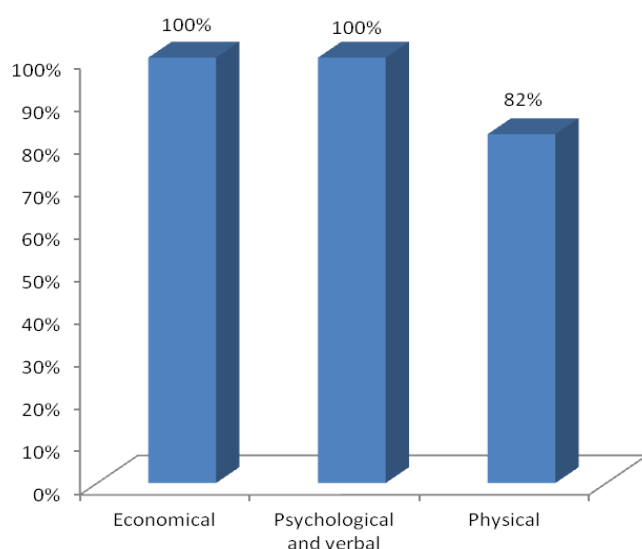


Table 1

Proportion of sex workers who have had experienced violence and frequency of episodes of violence during a year

Types of violence	Percentage	Average episodes a year	Minimum and maximum
Physical violence			
Beaten	80 %	2,8	1-15 times
Coercion to sex	43 %	1,4	1-5 times
Threats of weapon	15 %	x	x
Psychological violence			
Insults, abusive language	100 %	54	10-365 times
Threats, harassment, blackmail	88 %	12	1-100 times
Humiliation	84 %	48	1-100 times
Work in risky environment	100 %	126	50-365 times
Economical violence			
Unpaid sex, amount of received payment was less than agreed	100 %	8,3	1-30 times
Stolen money or other items (while working)	56 %	1,3	1-8 times
Coercion to work without pay	43 %	3,2	1-18 times

Other abuses

35% of the respondents reported that they had their documents illegally confiscated. This practice is directly related to unsafe working environment, which is directly related to criminalization of sex work.

■ Perpetrators

100% of respondents have reported that perpetrators of violence are generally clients and policemen, and the frequency of violence towards sex workers from their clients and from policemen is approximately the same.

Sex workers in the Russian Federation experience **extremely high levels of violence** (physical, economical, psychological, and verbal). In this context, sex workers have their human rights hampered and many are murdered. The situation points at the need of urgent interference, primarily through legal and policy reforms.

Nevertheless, strategies to combat violence against sex workers should be based on:

- respect and protect of human rights, as recognized by the international community;
- evidence-based data on violence in different sex work settings and cities, its consequences for public health and proven methods of preventing violence;
- support for community mobilization of sex workers to overcome stigma, discrimination;
- access to health care, justice, crisis centres, psychological and social support;
- awareness for general public about the rights of sex workers and the consequences of stigma, discrimination, and violence.

Anecdotes |

RUSSIAN

FEDERATION

The following anecdotes illustrate some examples of the manifestations of violence against sex workers in the Russian Federation.

““

I am 30 years old. I work on the streets. In November last year, I was on the Prosvescheniya Avenue. I was arrested by the police together with other sex workers. We were taken away somewhere out of town, beaten, forced with a gun to undress and enter the river. The air temperature at the time was below zero. We were forced to be in the icy water for a long time, and then they left, taking our clothes. It is better not to remember how we got back home. All five had temperature damage and kidney failure. We were then very ill for a long time. One of the girls died.

Sex worker | Russia

“ “

I'm 27 years old. I work individually as call-girl. I had a regular customer, I trusted him as a good customer, without any problem. One day he called me to his birthday party in a country house, to serve him after the party. I knew him very well, so I went. There were about 20 men, all already drunk. I went with my client in the room, he was drunk and he did not succeed. Then he told me to serve his friends, but I refused. He dragged me into the common room and said that they can do with me what they want. As a result, almost all raped me. When I was released, I almost could not walk. I stopped a car, there were two men. They asked what was wrong with me and offered a ride.

Sex worker | Russia

“ “

I'm 23 years old. A friend of mine has been controlled by the road police for a year: she had to stand in a special place in strictly limited hours. They controlled all of her customers, all earnings and took a larger share of her income.

Sex worker | Russia

“ “

I'm 28 years old. On the street I was approached by two clients and invited to their home, which they said is in the woods on the other side of the road. I went with them. In the forest, another friend of theirs joined us. We walked along the railway. Then one behind pushed me into the ditch, and they raped me in the woods.

Sex worker | Russia

“ “

I'm 24 and working on the streets in an area of St. Petersburg. One customer invited me to his home. At first we were only two of us. Later, as it turned out, came three more of his friends, he threw them the keys out of the window. They went up to the apartment and began to force me to give them sexual services. Then I jumped out of the window from the third floor and broke my legs.

Sex worker | Russia

“ “

I'm 26 years old. I agreed with the customer to give him sexual services. After sex, he threw me out of the car and drove off without paying.

Sex worker | Russia

““

I'm 28 years old. On the street I took a client and he took me to his country cottage. When we arrived, he forced me to undress, tied me and shot everything on camera, as he subjected me to various humiliations: seared with cigarettes, poured boiling water on me, making cuts on the skin, etc. He held me there and raped for three days. After that, he took me back to the track and said he would look for me to meet up again. He has a sick mind.

Sex worker | Russia

““

I'm 29 years old, 8 years working in the sex industry, indoors. Recently there were frequent detentions. Once we arrived at a fake order, they handcuffed the driver to the battery as we sat in the car, and told us: "everyone out, face-to-car, hands behind the head", they searched our bags and took everything. "You and you - will go to the sauna," one of the men was with a friend, as I understand, the girls were needed to the sauna. A friend of his, for which girls were needed, then returned the wallet, there was my picture with my child, and let me go, perhaps because of the photos. Two girls were taken to a sauna, as one of the men said: "if she does not want to get into the car – hit her at the liver." Then, we had the local authorities who came and allegedly began to write protocol, while all of us were herded into a room and locked, our purses and passports were checked at the security guard took the money. The next day other people came from the same local police authority, from a different unit. We were taken to the police office and held there. I called to our "manager", he got in touch with this police office, and they let us go.

Sex worker | Russia

““

I am 34 years old. I work in a salon. Using drugs gives a sense of happiness and removes all the complexes. Taking it more than once in three days is dangerous, those who do it often lose their working place. They leave to sleep off a long time at home. However, customers like it when we are under the influence of chems, and liberated. Even without this there is no way, you either drink, or take drugs. Most of the people are like me, very few do not take drugs or drink. Our house rules are hanging in the kitchen - for getting drunk there is a fine of 1,000 rubbles, for chems - 2000 rubbles, other fines for being late etc. The owner does not want us to do, but he knows that we do it. He wants to have order, he had worked at another salon as a guard and has now become a business owner. We have two company names and two telephones. He sometimes tells us that we should serve his friends - not for free, but cheaper.

Sex worker | Russia

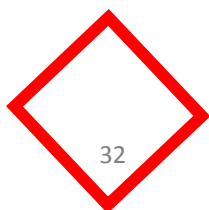



"I am 32 years. I worked pregnant on the streets, almost to the birth. Some clients just gave me money, felt sorry for me and wanted me to go home. When the birth began, the other girls called me an ambulance and I was taken to give birth right from the street. When the hospital staff found out who I am, I've had awful stuff from medical workers. Sex workers and drug addicts were put in a separate room, where no one came until the birth, even if we called. It was also scary to call, as they would not help but threaten to throw us out as soon as we gave birth. And they did.

I gave birth to a son, but they did not bring him to me because I do drugs, and he had withdrawal syndromes. In two days the medical worker opened the door and said that I should get out of there. A doctor did not even look at me. At home I continued having a bleeding. I could only make money by doing oral sex. After two weeks, my body temperature became high, as it turned out there were the remnants of the placenta, and I had something like sepsis. An ambulance took me to the hospital again, with an extra dose of humiliation, but I was healed and released.

My child has not yet been given to me, they are coming up with all sorts of reasons not to give him to me, perhaps they think I will soon forget about it and do not come back and they sell the child for adoption abroad. It is believed that if one is a drug addict, there is nothing in life but drugs. But I will take my son; if they don't give him to me as they should, then I will find a good lawyer. "

Sex worker | Russia





Violence is a key factor to sex workers' vulnerability to HIV/STIs. It must be considered a structural determinant that impacts negatively on sex workers' right to health and life.

CONCLUSION



Stigma and discrimination against sex workers often results in episodes of violence and abuse, but also in lack of social and health care support and justice.

Criminalisation of sex workers and repressive legal environment pressures sex workers work under dangerous conditions, most of the times in isolation, factors which contribute to sex workers being targeted for acts of violence. Laws that criminalise people living with HIV (including HIV exposure and transmission) and men who have sex with men further oppresses sex workers.

Tackling violence need a proactive and coordinated measure on behalf of the governments, responsible authorities and civil society. Organisations carrying out HIV programmes among sex workers must assume that violence is a key factor in vulnerability to HIV infection and respond to that by developing targeted strategies.

The levels and patterns of violence against sex workers are inadmissible, as they violate several human rights of sex workers. The booklet highlighted that governments should be held accountable for their human rights promises.

Sex workers have the right to be free from violence, as well as be free from discrimination, health, and be protected by the law based on the principle of equality.



Sex workers have the right to be free from violence

- Live and work free from violence.
- Be free from slavery-like practices such as forced or bonded labour and servitude.
- Be free from forced rehabilitation programmes including forced drug rehabilitation.
- Be protected against forced labour and providing sexual services against their will and against providing sexual services that place their health at risk.
- Be free from degrading treatment including mandatory health interventions
- Be taken seriously by police and the courts when reporting or testifying about crimes against them.

- Safe systems to report state authorities for acts of violence, neglect of duty and corruption, and have disciplinary action taken against those who undertake this violence.

CONECTA demands that governments and responsible authorities take the following proactive measures to realise and respect this right

- Remove criminal laws and other legal oppressions that increase sex workers' isolation and place sex workers at risk of violence.
- Treat reports of violence against sex workers seriously and provide accessible ways for sex workers to report violence against them.
- Stop institutional and state-based violence against sex workers in the form of arbitrary detention, deportation, or removal.
- Provide support for sex worker-led programmes that are able to address occupational safety, risk management, and develop a support system for accessing justice.
- Reallocate the time and resources used to investigate and prosecute sex workers and their clients, and channel these into working towards guaranteeing equal access to police protection and the justice system when sex workers are victims of crime.
- Promote evidence-based prevention measures and provide support for sex worker-led rights-based assistance and anti-violence programs that prioritise the needs, agency, and self-determination of all sex workers.

Protection by the law means having the same protections as any other human being. It also means having access to justice in cases of violence or discrimination and being entitled to equal treatment before the law. Legal oppression and criminalisation force sex workers into isolation and dangerous working conditions, factors which contribute to sex workers being targeted for acts of violence. Laws that criminalise people living with HIV, HIV exposure or transmission, further oppress sex workers.

Sex workers do not receive equal treatment before the law. Inequality includes lack of occupational protection. The culture of stigma affects judicial decision-making (e.g. sex work being used to demonstrate bad parenting, flawed moral character, or behaviour) and this stigma creates a climate of mistrust between sex workers and officials.

Stigma and discrimination, coupled with the legal oppression of sex work, make it unlikely that sex workers will report acts of violence against them. Sex workers experience legal oppression in the form of policies and practices that seek to disrupt sex work.

Sex workers have the right to be protected by the law

- No arbitrary or unlawful detention, arrest, removal or deportation, whether a national or migrant.
- Non-judgemental access to a fair trial and other justice mechanisms including compensation, which allows sex workers to access and use the justice system. This must include having sex workers' testimonies being taken seriously and not having sex work histories used against them.
- Non-discriminatory and non-intimidatory formal complaints procedures against police and immigration authorities.
- Report crimes against them without fear of repercussion, arrest, confinement or bribes by authorities.

CONECTA demands that governments and responsible authorities take the following proactive measures to realise and respect this right

- Repeal laws that criminalise, oppress or penalise sex work and sex workers.
- Repeal laws that criminalise HIV exposure, transmission or non-disclosure.
- End the practice of using sex workers' possession of condoms as evidence of prostitution.
- Implement effective monitoring systems to end police corruption, including ensuring sex workers access to complaints procedures and to initiate disciplinary action for cases of discriminatory treatment.
- Implement curriculum and training for law enforcement, judges, lawyers, court personnel and other relevant bodies, to ensure understanding of sex workers' realities and human rights.



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