

Cyprus's Compliance with The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

**Submitted jointly by
The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies
and**

The Advocates for Human Rights

a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1996

**for the 138th Session of the Human Rights Committee
26 June 2023–28 July 2023**

Submitted 29 May 2023

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The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) was founded in 2000 by a group of researchers, academics and gender equality practitioners, and it is based at the University of Nicosia. Combining research, training, and advocacy, MIGS promotes women's rights and gender equality in public policies in Cyprus and the Euro-Mediterranean region. As a leading organization that contributes to social change at various levels, MIGS provides a range of specialized services for the development of gender equality plans, strategies and mainstreaming, and gender-impact assessments towards the achievement of gender equality and equity in decision-making centers and help make equality a political priority gender in research, innovation, and sustainable development. www.medinstgenderstudies.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report addresses Cyprus' laws and policies with respect to non-discrimination of women and girls, including lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LBT) women; combatting violence against women; and protecting the rights of women asylum seekers. While Cyprus has made advances to promote the human rights of women, including LBT and migrant women, the responsible institutions lack capacity, transparency, and coordination. Laws on domestic violence lack harmonization and do not adequately protect victims. Cyprus does not adequately support all victims of gender-based violence, as it has not developed rape crisis centers, sexual violence referral centers, or an adequate number of shelters. Additionally, Cyprus has failed to provide consistent, transparent, and disaggregated data on the implementation and effectiveness of its programs and the breadth of crimes of violence against women.

Cyprus fails to uphold its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

- I. **Cyprus fails to promote non-discrimination against women, girls and LGBTQI+ communities in decision-making and in the peace process. (List of Issues paragraphs 5 and 6)**
2. The Committee asked Cyprus to close the wage gap between men and women.¹ In its 2019 List of Issues Prior to Reporting ("LOIPR"), the Committee required further information on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security and on Law No. 177 of 2002 on equal pay between men and women for the same work or for work of equal value.² These concerns have been consistent since, in its 2015 Concluding Observations, the Committee recommended greater participation for women in decision-making, in both public administration and the peace-process. The Committee also requested updated information on measures taken to end discrimination against LGBTQI+ persons, especially through data on hate crimes.³
3. In its fifth periodic report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Cyprus highlighted the adoption of a new National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2019-2023⁴ and of a National Action Plan on Equality between Women and Men 2019-2023.⁵ Cyprus did not provide statistics on the overall representation of women in public and political life.⁶
4. In its State Party report, Cyprus reported efforts to supervise the mainstreaming of gender in its foreign policy and in the peace process. Cyprus appointed a Gender Advisor in the Minister

¹ Human Rights Committee, *Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Cyprus*, (Apr. 30, 2015), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/CO/4, ¶ 8.

² Human Rights Committee, *List of issues prior to the submission of the fifth periodic report of Cyprus*, (Aug. 9, 2019), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/QPR/5, ¶ 6.

³ Human Rights Committee, *List of issues prior to the submission of the fifth periodic report of Cyprus*, (Aug. 9, 2019), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/QPR/5, ¶ 5.

⁴ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶ 47.

⁵ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶ 47.

⁶ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶¶ 42–63.

of Foreign Affairs, created a Technical Committee on Gender Equality in the peace process, and entrusted the Commissioner for Gender Equality with the drafting of a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2020-2024.⁷ Cyprus did not provide statistics on women's participation in the peace process.⁸

5. Regarding the implementation of Law No. 177 of 2002, Cyprus mentioned ongoing actions stemming from a 2010-2015 project with the European Union ("EU"), such as inspection and complaint mechanisms as well as a certification program for companies promoting gender equality in the workplace.⁹
6. Women in Cyprus remain largely excluded from decision-making and leadership positions, especially in public and political life.¹⁰ In the May 2021 parliamentary elections, only 8 women, out of 56 representatives, were elected.¹¹ According to the 2022 EU gender equality index, only 25% of Ministers, 14.3% of Members of Parliament and 15.3% of members of regional assemblies are women.¹² Overall, there is a lack of political will, on the level of the government as well as political parties, to promote gender mainstreaming in policy processes and adopt positive action measures, including quotas, in line with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.¹³
7. In the economic sphere, Cypriot women still earn on average 10.2% less than their male counterparts.¹⁴ Women's employment rate is still at 70.1% compared to 81.7% for men, and women's part-time employment rate is nearly twice men's, making Cyprus one of the most gender-segregated countries in employment in the EU.¹⁵

⁷ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶¶ 48, 50, and 54–55.

⁸ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶¶ 48–60.

⁹ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶¶ 61–63.

¹⁰ Cyprus Women's Lobby, *Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 70th Session, Cyprus Shadow Report*, by Susana Pavlou and Josie Christodoulou, CEDAW/NGO/CYP/31500, (Nicosia: Cyprus Women's Lobby, Nov. 2018), 11.

¹¹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Country report on femicide research and date: Cyprus*, by Alexia Shakou, Christiana Kouta, Elina Kofou, and Susana Pavlou (Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2021).

¹² <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2022/domain/power/CY> European Institute for Gender Equality, "Gender Equality Index: Power in Cyprus in 2022," accessed May 24, 2023, <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2022/domain/power/CY>.

¹³ Cyprus Women's Lobby, *Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 70th Session, Cyprus Shadow Report*, by Susana Pavlou and Josie Christodoulou, CEDAW/NGO/CYP/31500, (Nicosia: Cyprus Women's Lobby, Nov. 2018), 11.

¹⁴ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Country report on femicide research and date: Cyprus*, by Alexia Shakou, Christiana Kouta, Elina Kofou, and Susana Pavlou (Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2021), 19.

¹⁵ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Country report on femicide research and date: Cyprus*, by Alexia Shakou, Christiana Kouta, Elina Kofou, and Susana Pavlou (Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2021), 19.

8. In 2020, Cyprus adopted its first National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security for 2021-2025.¹⁶ Women have historically been under-represented in the peace-process negotiations on both the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot sides.¹⁷ Women's underrepresentation in the peace-process is an example of a broader struggle for women's access justice in Cyprus, where they face gender stereotypes and deeply rooted sexist attitudes.¹⁸ These barriers are even higher for particularly disadvantaged groups such as migrant women,¹⁹ women with disabilities,²⁰ lesbian, bisexual, and transgender ("LBT") women,²¹ and Turkish Cypriots,²² as intersectional discrimination is overlooked at all levels of the criminal justice and political system in Cyprus.²³
9. Authorities approved the National Action Plan for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace & Security in December 2020,²⁴ but there is no available information on its implementation. NGOs have not been informed on how they can be involved or supported financially in implementing its actions.²⁵ Additionally, the Gender Advisor, tasked with supervising the implementation of a gendered perspective in its foreign policy and in the peace process, left her post in January 2022, and Cyprus authorities did not replace the Gender Advisor position.²⁶
10. The lack of political will to address gender-based and intersectional discrimination in Cyprus translates into the general lack of data available on women in decision-making and in the peace-process.²⁷ It is impossible to combat discrimination and promote gender equality in

¹⁶ https://www.wpsnaps.org/app/uploads/2022/12/Cyprus-NAP-2-2021-2025_greek_ENG-translation-Google-Translate.pdf *Women, Peace, and Security: National Action Plan 2021-2025 of the Republic of Cyprus for the Implementation of the United Nations Resolution 1325* (Unofficial translation, funded by ARC DP160100212 [CI Shepherd]).

¹⁷ Cyprus Women's Lobby, *Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 70th Session, Cyprus Shadow Report*, by Susana Pavlou and Josie Christodoulou, CEDAW/NGO/CYP/31500, (Nicosia: Cyprus Women's Lobby, Nov. 2018), 13, 61.

¹⁸ Cyprus Women's Lobby, *Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 70th Session, Cyprus Shadow Report*, by Susana Pavlou and Josie Christodoulou, CEDAW/NGO/CYP/31500, (Nicosia: Cyprus Women's Lobby, Nov. 2018), 7 ; Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Joint Shadow Report - Cyprus*, 7, June 22, 2021.

¹⁹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*, 9-10, Sept. 2021.

²⁰ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*, 8, Sept. 2021.

²¹ Cyprus Women's Lobby, *Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 70th Session, Cyprus Shadow Report*, by Susana Pavlou and Josie Christodoulou, CEDAW/NGO/CYP/31500, (Nicosia: Cyprus Women's Lobby, Nov. 2018), 8-10, 52-53, 56, 62, 71.

²² Cyprus Women's Lobby, *Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 70th Session, Cyprus Shadow Report*, by Susana Pavlou and Josie Christodoulou, CEDAW/NGO/CYP/31500, (Nicosia: Cyprus Women's Lobby, Nov. 2018), 50.

²³ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Joint Shadow Report - Cyprus*, 7-8, June 22, 2021.

²⁴ Republic of Cyprus, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Press Release regarding the approval of the National Action Plan 2021-25 for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security," (Dec. 29, 2020), <https://mfa.gov.cy/press-releases/2020/12/29/national-action-plan-uns-c-resolution-1325/>.

²⁵ Personal communication with Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies, (May 25, 2023).

²⁶ Personal communication with Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, (May 25, 2023).

²⁷ All reports cited here from the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies highlight a lack of data.

policy and practice without comprehensive and disaggregated statistics allowing Cypriots, including decision-makers, to grasp the extent of this problem.

II. Cyprus fails to implement comprehensive laws and policies to combat violence against women. (List of Issues paragraph 8)

11. In its 2015 Concluding Observations, the Committee expressed concerns about the lack of investigations, convictions, and prosecutions of perpetrators of domestic violence,²⁸ and asked Cyprus to provide data on these topics.²⁹ In its List of Issues, the Committee also requested information on the bill aimed at implementing the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (“Istanbul Convention”), specifically asking about provision of services to survivors and training to state officials, as well as measures taken to improve reporting of domestic violence, including among foreign nationals.³⁰
12. At the time of the State Party report, the bill on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention into national law and a bill aiming to criminalize stalking and harassment were yet to be made law,³¹ and a new National Action Plan on the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family was also still in the making.³² Despite adopting a new protocol on Risk Assessment of Intimate Partners Violence,³³ the manual used to handle cases of domestic violence as provided in the Violence in the Family Law (L.119(I)/2000) has not been updated since 2002.³⁴ Cyprus also did not provide any data on reporting among foreign nationals.³⁵ More generally, data on domestic violence provided in the State Party report was limited to reported incident of domestic violence by type and complainants and accused of domestic violence by sex/age.³⁶ In 2019, Cypriot authorities approved the opening of a one-stop-shop service specifically dedicated to women survivors of violence and their families, the “Women’s House” (“WH”).³⁷ The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Domestic Violence has operated the WH since 2020. The State Party report also mentioned sporadic trainings on domestic violence

²⁸ Human Rights Committee, *Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Cyprus*, (Apr. 30, 2015), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/CO/4, ¶ 16.

²⁹ Human Rights Committee, *List of issues prior to the submission of the fifth periodic report of Cyprus*, (Aug. 9, 2019), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/QPR/5, ¶ 8.

³⁰ Human Rights Committee, *List of issues prior to the submission of the fifth periodic report of Cyprus*, (Aug. 9, 2019), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/QPR/5, ¶ 8.

³¹ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶¶ 74 and 76.

³² Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶ 69.

³³ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶ 67.

³⁴ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶ 67. This excludes the handling of cases of domestic violence against children. Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶ 67.

³⁵ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶¶ 65–90.

³⁶ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, Annex F.

³⁷ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶ 73.

provided to police officers through EU programs or the Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Combatting Office.³⁸

13. In 2021, Cyprus passed the new Prevention and Combatting of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Law to implement the Istanbul Convention.³⁹ While authorities consulted civil society organizations in the drafting stage, the government bypassed civil society in the final steps of the process and modified the final draft behind closed doors.⁴⁰ As a result of these last-minute changes, the Law encompasses definitions of women and gender conflating gender, gender identity, and biological sex.⁴¹ These definitions are problematic as they may allow national policies and implementation practices to not fully acknowledge the gendered nature of violence against women and girls. This approach may also allow Cyprus to overlook intersectional discrimination against LBT women in data collection.⁴²
14. Historically, domestic violence and violence against women have been framed within the concept of violence in the family through the Violence in the Family Laws 2000 and 2004. These laws fail to harmonize definitions of domestic violence as well as other provisions, which risks leaving survivors of domestic violence without adequate protection. .⁴³ These weakened protections are especially concerning since, during the first lockdown imposed in March and April 2021, there was a 30% increase in calls to the National Helpline for Violence in the Family (1440) and a 58% increase in incidents of domestic violence.⁴⁴
15. While the 2021 Prevention and Combatting of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Law did not define femicide, Cyprus passed a law on femicide under the Law on the Prevention, Protection and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Amendment) (No. 2) Law of 2021. The law specifically defines femicide as the intentional killing of a woman because of her gender or in the context of intimate partner violence. This definition recognizes that femicide is often motivated by gender-based discrimination and seeks to hold perpetrators accountable for the specific harm caused by gender-based violence. Additionally, the law foresees the establishment of a national database to track femicides and other forms of violence against women.
16. Despite this protection, other forms of violence against women, including rape, sexual abuse, and female genital mutilation are overlooked in policy and practice in Cyprus. None of the National Action Plans mentioned above include specific actions to combat female genital

³⁸ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶¶ 81, 83, and 86.

³⁹ The Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and for Related Matters Law (2021) Law 115(1)/2021.

⁴⁰ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Joint Shadow Report - Cyprus*, 11, June 22, 2021.

⁴¹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Joint Shadow Report - Cyprus*, 6, June 22, 2021.

⁴² Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Joint Shadow Report - Cyprus*, 6, June 22, 2021.

⁴³ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Joint Shadow Report - Cyprus*, 6, June 22, 2021; Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, *Report submitted by Cyprus pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report)*, July 30, 2021.

⁴⁴ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Country report on femicide research and date: Cyprus*, by Alexia Shakou, Christiana Kouta, Elina Kofou, and Susana Pavlou (Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2021).

mutilation,⁴⁵ and to date, there are no rape crisis centers nor sexual violence referral centers in Cyprus.⁴⁶

17. According to the latest available data, there is only one women's shelter operating in Northern Cyprus⁴⁷ and 3 shelters, currently operating in the Republic of Cyprus,⁴⁸ notably in Nicosia, Limassol and in Paphos, with a capacity of, respectively, seven, five and two rooms, hosting victims for periods of between four and six months. Shelters are constantly at full capacity and the number of family places is insufficient. Indeed, a total of 14 rooms on offer in Cyprus for women seeking shelter from domestic violence falls short of the target of one family place per 10 000 head of population, the number of beds would need to be significantly increased to meet demand. These shelters also do not address the specific needs of particularly disadvantaged groups such as migrant women, LBT women, and women with disabilities.
18. The Woman's House (Σπίτι της Γυναίκας) was set up at the end of 2020 in Nicosia. It is a multiagency and multi-professional crisis center for victims of violence against women and their children. It is based on the Family Justice Centre model and operates as a "one-stop-shop" according to which all the services involved are co-located and coordinated under the same roof, with the aim of effectively managing cases. The provision of services is not conditional on the victim having to press charges against the perpetrator. The multi-professional network of services in the Woman's House includes services provided by social workers, psychologists, healthcare professionals, legal professionals and the police. The mother and her dependent children will receive the initial services at the Woman's House in order to avoid their separation and thus avoid further revictimization.
19. Despite having handled 106 violence against women cases (up to March 2021),⁴⁹ the WH has yet to be rolled out nationally and does not compensate the lack of service provision for survivors of domestic violence in Cyprus.⁵⁰ WH cannot operate effectively due to the inadequate funding from the government, a difficulty compounded by the lack of cooperation from the police and social services to implement it.⁵¹ Overall, there is a lack of funding

⁴⁵ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Joint Shadow Report - Cyprus*, 8, June 22, 2021.

⁴⁶ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*, 17, Sept. 2021.

⁴⁷ Cyprus Women's Lobby, *Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 70th Session, Cyprus Shadow Report*, by Susana Pavlou and Josie Christodoulou, CEDAW/NGO/CYP/31500, (Nicosia: Cyprus Women's Lobby, Nov. 2018), 41.

⁴⁸ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶¶ 72–73.

⁴⁹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Country report on femicide research and date: Cyprus*, by Alexia Shakou, Christiana Kouta, Elina Kofou, and Susana Pavlou (Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2021), 15.

⁵⁰ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*, 17, Sept. 2021.

⁵¹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*, 16-17, Sept. 2021.

dedicated to combatting violence against women and domestic violence in Cyprus,⁵² including regarding funding for⁵³ providing services to survivors, training of frontline professionals,⁵⁴ in education and in the media,⁵⁵ feeds the underreporting of domestic violence cases in the country.⁵⁶

20. Overall, there is a lack of intersectional data collection on domestic violence at all levels in Cyprus.⁵⁷ This is problematic, as it impedes an in-depth understanding of the root causes but also the extent of these issues in Cyprus.⁵⁸ The data gap can have dramatic consequences for women who reported domestic violence: as it is not possible to assess the number and type of protection orders, it is not possible to assess their effectiveness in protecting victims or in preventing further violence, including femicide.⁵⁹
21. In Cyprus there is fragmented implementation of measures to prevent and combat domestic violence across different government departments and services. The lack of coordination and communication among government bodies and services has led to a large number of initiatives and actions without any policy dialogue, involvement of women's organizations and NGOs, and often without specific objectives, impact indicators, funding allocation, follow-up or evaluation. The responsibility for implementing policies and measures on domestic violence rests with the competent state authorities by law, but the current coordinating body comprises members who work in a volunteer and advisory capacity without executive power or mandate to implement policies and measures on domestic violence. The 2021 Prevention and Combatting of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Law foresees the establishment of a coordinating body that is accountable to the Minister of Justice and Public Order. However, the structure and composition of the coordinating body falls short of what is required by Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention. The coordinating body does not have the necessary government machinery or resources to carry out its mandate. Therefore, a

⁵² Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*, 9-10, Sept. 2021.

⁵⁴ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*, 14-15, Sept. 2021.

⁵⁵ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*, 15, Sept. 2021.

⁵⁶ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*, Sept. 2021.

⁵⁷ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*, 11-12, Sept. 2021.

⁵⁸ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*, 11-12, Sept. 2021.

⁵⁹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Country report on femicide research and date: Cyprus*, by Alexia Shakou, Christiana Kouta, Elina Kofou, and Susana Pavlou (Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2021), 36.

government unit/department under the Ministry of Justice and Public Order with sufficient technical, human, and financial resources to carry out its mandate is needed.

III. Cyprus fails to systematically address the specific needs of asylum seekers. (List of Issues paragraph 18 and 19)

22. In its 2015 Concluding Observations, the Committee expressed concern about the length of detention for asylum seekers waiting for deportation and recommended that in the case of women who have young children, detention be considered only under very exceptional circumstances.⁶⁰ In its 2019 LOIPR, the Committee then asked Cyprus to provide disaggregated statistics on detained asylum seekers, including their number, the time they were detained and the use of alternatives to detention, alongside information on assistance and support for vulnerable asylum seekers, including survivors of sexual violence.⁶¹
23. Cyprus reported that detention cases are evaluated monthly, and that the Alien and Immigration Law (Cap. 105) and Refugee Law (L.6(I)/2000) provide alternative measures to detention although Cyprus's policy follows the EU directive on return.⁶² The State Party report also underlined the creation of a screening system in the first reception "Pournara" center alongside the management of survivors and vulnerable persons' cases by trained officers.⁶³ Cyprus did

⁶⁰ Human Rights Committee, *Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Cyprus*, (April 30, 2015), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/CO/4, ¶ 15.

⁶¹ Human Rights Committee, *List of issues prior to the submission of the fifth periodic report of Cyprus*, (Aug. 9, 2019), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/QPR/5, ¶¶ 18–19.

⁶² Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶ 220.

⁶³ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶¶ 224–225.

not provide statistics on the implementation of these measures, however, nor did it mention similar measures in detention centers.⁶⁴

24. Migrant women and girls have historically been excluded from policies, structures and administrative practices in place in Cyprus.⁶⁵ Even though the Refugee Law entails gender-based provisions, its implementation remains fragmented. Authorities carry out individualized assessments in Cyprus' reception centers on an *ad hoc* basis.⁶⁶ 50% of women arriving in Cyprus from March to November 2019 reported some form of sexual and/or gender-based violence ("SGBV"),⁶⁷ and LGBTQI+ individuals have been identified as clearly being at heightened risk of SGBV.⁶⁸ Yet, reception services fail to address the specific needs of SGBV survivors.
25. Integration policies are also failing migrant women in Cyprus.⁶⁹ Migrant women are at increased risk of femicide,⁷⁰ face additional barriers to access help,⁷¹ and are more likely to experience specific forms of gender-based violence such as rape and sexual abuse⁷² or female genital mutilation.⁷³ Despite these intersecting discriminations, migrant women are "invisible" to national laws and policies.⁷⁴
26. Undocumented domestic workers, who are mostly women in Cyprus,⁷⁵ are particularly at risk of trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation,⁷⁶ as domestic work is often the only job migrant women can have access to.⁷⁷ Domestic workers mostly live in the private households of their employers and many report physical, psychological, and sexual abuse.⁷⁸
27. Asylum-seeking and other migrant women also experience barriers to accessing specialized support services such as those provided by the Women's House and/or shelters, as a referral from the welfare services/or the police is always a prerequisite. Therefore, there is a need to develop and improve accessibility to protection and support services, including social welfare services, the Women's House and shelters for asylum-seeking and/or migrant women, including domestic workers.
28. Overall, there is a lack of intersectional and systematic data and research on refugee and asylum seekers at all levels in Cyprus.⁷⁹ This further prevents disadvantaged groups of asylum seekers to find services responding to their specific needs and access help without risking revictimization.

IV. Suggested recommendations for the Government of Cyprus

29. We suggest that the Committee pose the following recommendations to the Government of Cyprus:

⁶⁴ Human Rights Committee, *Fifth periodic report submitted by Cyprus under article 40 of the Covenant pursuant to the optional reporting procedure, due in 2020*, (Nov. 26, 2020), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/CYP/5, ¶¶ 220–234.

⁶⁵ Cyprus Women's Lobby, *Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 70th Session, Cyprus Shadow Report*, by Susana Pavlou and Josie Christodoulou, CEDAW/NGO/CYP/31500, (Nicosia: Cyprus Women's Lobby, Nov. 2018), 10.

⁶⁶ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*, 21–22, Sept. 2021.

- Collect and publish comprehensive data on all forms of violence against women disaggregated by sex and age of victim and perpetrator, type of violence, and relationship between victim and perpetrator.
- Provide resources, including adequate technical, human, and financial resources, to the proposed structure of the National Coordinating Body that is responsible for preventing and combating all forms of violence against women, in order for it to carry out its mandate effectively.
- Create more shelters to meet the international standard of one family place per 10 000 head of population, and include specific services to meet the needs of migrant and LBT women in such shelters.
- Harmonize definitions of domestic violence in Violence of the Family Laws of 2000 and 2004.

⁶⁷ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)*, 22, Sept. 2021.

⁶⁸ UN Office of the High Commissioner on Refugees and Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Sexual and Gender-based Violence among Asylum-Seekers in Cyprus*, Dec. 2021, 35.

⁶⁹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Country report on femicide research and date: Cyprus*, by Alexia Shakou, Christiana Kouta, Elina Kofou, and Susana Pavlou (Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2021), 36; Christiana Kouta et al., “A Qualitative Study of Female Migrant Domestic Workers’ Experiences of and Responses to Work-Based Sexual Violence in Cyprus,” *Sexes*, July 7, 2021.

⁷⁰ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Country report on femicide research and date: Cyprus*, by Alexia Shakou, Christiana Kouta, Elina Kofou, and Susana Pavlou (Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2021), 25.

⁷¹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Country report on femicide research and date: Cyprus*, by Alexia Shakou, Christiana Kouta, Elina Kofou, and Susana Pavlou (Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2021), 16; Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Gender Dynamics across Reception and Integration in Cyprus*, by Maria Angeli (2020) <https://medinstgenderstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/WP6-Report-Cyprus.pdf>.

⁷² UN Office of the High Commissioner on Refugees and Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Sexual and Gender-based Violence among Asylum-Seekers in Cyprus*, Dec. 2021, 20.

⁷³ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies and End FGM European Network, *Joint Shadow Report – Cyprus*, 2021,

⁷⁴ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Country report on femicide research and date: Cyprus*, by Alexia Shakou, Christiana Kouta, Elina Kofou, and Susana Pavlou (Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2021), 36.

⁷⁵ Cyprus Women’s Lobby, *Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 70th Session, Cyprus Shadow Report*, by Susana Pavlou and Josie Christodoulou, CEDAW/NGO/CYP/31500, (Nicosia: Cyprus Women’s Lobby, Nov. 2018), 21.

⁷⁶ Cyprus Women’s Lobby, *Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 70th Session, Cyprus Shadow Report*, by Susana Pavlou and Josie Christodoulou, CEDAW/NGO/CYP/31500, (Nicosia: Cyprus Women’s Lobby, Nov. 2018), 10.

⁷⁷ UN Office of the High Commissioner on Refugees and Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Sexual and Gender-based Violence among Asylum-Seekers in Cyprus*, Dec. 2021, 35.

⁷⁸ Cyprus Women’s Lobby, *Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 70th Session, Cyprus Shadow Report*, by Susana Pavlou and Josie Christodoulou, CEDAW/NGO/CYP/31500, (Nicosia: Cyprus Women’s Lobby, Nov. 2018), 10.

⁷⁹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Country report on femicide research and date: Cyprus*, by Alexia Shakou, Christiana Kouta, Elina Kofou, and Susana Pavlou (Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2021), 12; UN Office of the High Commissioner on Refugees and Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Sexual and Gender-based Violence among Asylum-Seekers in Cyprus*, Dec. 2021, 36.

- Remove barriers to access to comprehensive protection and support to all women and girls, particularly women who are in situations of disadvantage and facing multiple forms of discrimination, including migrant women.
- Promote the development of both comprehensive and holistic general services, as well as specialized services for survivors of female genital mutilation in Cyprus, which are adequate, of quality, non-discriminatory and accessible to all survivors, regardless of migration and residence status.⁸⁰
- Institute and strengthen a systematic mechanism for early identification of vulnerable asylum seekers and a referral system between reception centers and services for survivors of gender-based violence, including sexual assault, rape, domestic violence, and female genital mutilation.⁸¹
- Ensure systematic data collection on SGBV among first arrival asylum-seekers in order to inform programming and develop policies and measures that respond to the specific needs of SGBV survivors.⁸²
- Provide gender-sensitive support services in reception centers for migrants in order to prevent the risk of violence among women refugees and/or provide specialist support to women survivors of SGBV.⁸³

⁸⁰ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies and End FGM European Network, *Joint Shadow Report – Cyprus*, 2021, 10.

⁸¹ Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies and End FGM European Network, *Joint Shadow Report – Cyprus*, 2021, 11.

⁸² UN Office of the High Commissioner on Refugees and Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Sexual and Gender-based Violence among Asylum-Seekers in Cyprus*, Dec. 2021, 36.

⁸³ UN Office of the High Commissioner on Refugees and Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, *Sexual and Gender-based Violence among Asylum-Seekers in Cyprus*, Dec. 2021, 36.