



Permanente Vertegenwoordiging van het  
**Koninkrijk der Nederlanden**

→ MY for log  
MW for action  
09/05/05

Ms. Carolyn Hannan  
Director Division for the Advancement of Women  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
Room DC2-1250  
2 United Nations Plaza  
NEW YORK, NY 10017

Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of  
the Netherlands to the United Nations  
235 East 45 Street  
16 floor  
New York, NY 10017

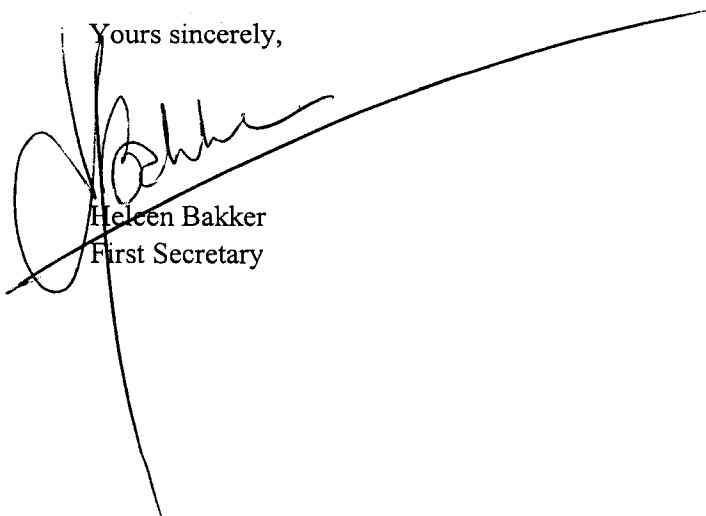
*Date* 04 May 2005  
*Our ref.* NYV/2005/984  
*Page* 1/1  
*Encl.* 2  
*Re* Response to questionnaire 58/185  
*Cc* --

*Contact* Miranda van Iersel  
*Tel.* (212) 519-9523  
*Fax* (212) 370-1954  
*E-mail* miranda-van.iersel@minbuza.nl  
*Web site* www.pvnewyork.org

Dear Ms. Hannan,

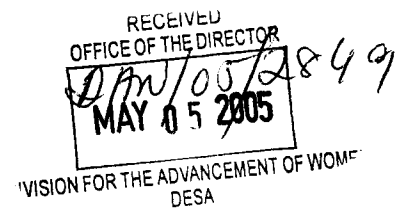
With reference to the Secretary-General's note DAW/2005/002 dated 31 March 2005, requesting information on General Assembly resolution 58/185 of 22 December 2003, entitled "In depth study on all forms of violence against women", please find attached the response of the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Please note that this document is in addition to the Netherlands progress report on Beijing & 10, as well as the fourth periodic report to CEDAW.

Yours sincerely,



Heleen Bakker  
First Secretary

→ WRS



Se

# Domestic violence

February 2005 / F&A 5840

This fact sheet provides information on the Government's approach on tackling private violence.

## Definition

Domestic violence is an act of violence that has been committed by a person from the victim's family circle. It may include physical and sexual violence as well as mental violence such as threatening behaviour or stalking. Domestic violence may take the form of child abuse including sexual child abuse, partner-relation violence in all its conceivable forms, as well as abuse or neglect of the elderly.

## Forms and extent

Violence in the private realm is the most extensive form of violence in Dutch society. Domestic violence takes place in all socio-economic classes and within all cultures. Women and children are the most likely victims but men, parents and elderly people also fall victim to this type of violence.

Research<sup>1</sup> indicates that more than 40% of the Dutch population have experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives. Ten per cent of this group experiences this form of violence everyday or every week. Nearly one third of those who experience this violence have seen their lives changed drastically as a result. This type of violence is predominantly committed by men, constituting 80% of all cases.

The most recent police figures confirm this<sup>2</sup>. The police have set up a special registration procedure for domestic violence and it has been calculated that over 56,000 domestic crime reports are entered into the police database each year. It is a known fact that only 12% of all domestic violence cases are reported to the police. This means that roughly 500,000 domestic violence incidents take place each year. The study shows that in more than 36% of the incidents reported, this has led to the victims lodging an official complaint with the police. In 58% of the domestic violence incidents where victims have lodged an official complaint with the police, the perpetrator was actually apprehended. Research<sup>3</sup> has shown that domestic violence also takes place on a disturbing scale within ethnic minority groups yet its precise extent is difficult to determine as there remains a taboo on domestic violence with these groups finding it even more difficult than the native Dutch residents to talk about the issue. Moreover, certain ethnic minority groups

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Huiselijk geweld – aard, omvang en hulpverlening' (Domestic violence – nature, scope and support) Intomart, 1997

<sup>2</sup> 'Huiselijk geweld: de voordeur op een kier – omvang, aard en achtergronden in 2004 op basis van landelijke politiecijfers' H.B. Ferwerda, November 2004' (Domestic violence: leaving the front door open – scope, nature and backgrounds in 2004 based on national police figures).

<sup>3</sup> Survey: 'Huiselijk geweld onder Surinamers, Antillianen en Arubanen, Marokkanen en Turken in Nederland – aard, omvang en hulpverlening (Domestic violence among Surinamese, Antillians and Arubans, Moroccans and Turkish people – nature, extent and welfare services' Intomart, 2002.

have their own specific customs of dealing with domestic violence. Avenging the family honour is one such an example.

It is estimated that 100,000 children witness domestic violence each year. 40,000 of them will run an increased risk of being faced with psycho-social problems or behavioural problems. People who were victims of violence when they were young run a higher risk of becoming perpetrators or victims of domestic violence when they are older.

### **Context**

In 2002, the Government introduced the policy document called *Privé Geweld - Publieke Zaak (Private Violence – Public Issue)*. The policy document does not only describe the nature and extent of domestic violence but also cites more than fifty concrete measures designed to improve the existing approach for dealing with this issue. The Government indicated in the Coalition Agreement of June 2003 that it wanted to pursue an effective policy against domestic violence. To this end, an interdepartmental project was introduced, coordinated by the Ministry of Justice for the period between 2002 and 2007 with the following remit: implement the measures and intentions mentioned in the document in mutual consultation and take new initiatives together with the 'field' where necessary.

The approach on domestic violence is part of the Government's Public Safety Programme which aims to combat crime and nuisance that affect the public directly. It also forms part of the Government's Major Cities Policy (*GSB*) in which the central government and major municipalities have reached agreement on activities and intended results for the period between 2005 up to and including 2009. Agreements have also been made on the approach towards domestic violence.

### **Services**

An effective approach on domestic violence includes the use of a system of services that provides timely recognition, tighter risk assessment, swift and effective interventions, assistance for victims and corrective help for perpetrators.

The Government intends to have an infrastructure in place with the following elements:

- *Local and regional working partnerships who form binding agreements and develop an airtight plan.*

No single authority can combat domestic violence effectively on their own. The police, the Public Prosecution Service (OM), probation and after-care services, child care services, women's shelter groups and other care organisations jointly form a chain and they will need to come up with an airtight plan. In recent years, dozens of municipalities and regions have formed working partnerships to combat domestic violence. Many of the partnerships started out as projects subsidised by the Ministry of Justice. Practically all the projects are currently continuing with the financial support of municipalities. The inventory concerning the approach towards domestic violence in 2003<sup>4</sup> shows that 32 of the 37 centres and other municipalities interviewed for the investigation have formed working partnerships. The inventory will be repeated in 2005.

- *Local advice and support centres*

The State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport has drawn up an incentive scheme for advice support centres on domestic violence. The 35 centre municipalities for women's shelters may apply for a grant to set up or expand working regional advice or support centres. In an advice centre, victims, perpetrators or other people involved in domestic violence can receive advice or

---

<sup>4</sup> *'Inventarisatie stand van zaken aanpak huiselijk geweld 2003' (Inventory of the State of Affairs concerning the approach on domestic violence) L. van Lier, December 2003.*

support on the steps required to stop violence in private circles. These centres are therefore a kind of front office for the local and/or regional authorities that work together. They must be operational by 1 January 2006 at the latest. Agreements concerning the setting up of advice and support centres have also been made in the context of the major cities policy.

- *A coordinating role for the municipal authorities*

The '*Privé Geweld – Publieke Zaak*' memorandum places the coordinating role for tackling domestic violence in the hands of the municipal authorities. Their task is to bring the local working partnerships together, stimulate them to agree on mutually binding and airtight agreements and ensure that they honour the agreements. Municipal authorities can assume the managing role themselves or delegate it to, for instance, the Municipal Health Service (*GGD*). Since 2003, the Association of Dutch Municipalities (*VNG*) has implemented an extensive programme, subsidised by the Ministry of Justice, aimed at stimulating municipal authorities to promote the tackling of the domestic violence issue and to provide them with tools in order to carry out their coordinating role in this matter. The programme runs until the end of 2006 and its object is to stimulate 250 municipalities into assuming up their coordinator's role.

- *Women's shelter*

The women's shelter groups increasingly shelter women and children who have serious and complex problems. The Government has allocated extra money for expanding the capacity of women's shelter. The emphasis is on the nationally accessible shelter facilities for women (and their children) who are in great danger, including victims of family honour revenge and women trafficking.

Access to the women's shelters has been organised inefficiently<sup>5</sup>. The sector has developed a plan to improve accessibility with financial support from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (*VWS*). Consultations on the implementation of the plan are currently still ongoing. The Trimbos Institute launched a large-scale investigation into the supply and demand for women's shelters in the autumn of 2004. The results of this investigation will be available in mid 2005 and then measures will be introduced to balance the welfare service better with the need for help.

- *Offender treatment programmes*

An effective approach to domestic violence requires not only providing shelter for the victims but also treatment for the perpetrators. The term 'corrective help' is used in this respect. Forensic psychiatry has been involved in shaping the treatment of domestic violence perpetrators over the past few years. An inventory has been made and will be disseminated concerning best practices and effective lines of approach for voluntarily help to perpetrators; a basic course on helping perpetrators will also be introduced early next year. TransAct will systematically promote the development and dissemination of useful methods.

- *National support point for domestic violence*

TransAct provides a national support point for domestic violence that provides support to the whole chain involved in tackling domestic violence. To this end, it has a website ([www.huiselijkgeweld.nl](http://www.huiselijkgeweld.nl)) which also contains a quarterly magazine on this subject ('*Huiselijkgeweld.nl*'). TransAct also organises the national network meetings on domestic violence, sets up databases, gathers examples of best model practices and makes these as widely known as possible. TransAct also supplies material that can be used for information to the public

---

<sup>5</sup> '*Aan de voordeur van de vrouwenopvang, een onderzoek naar de instroom*' (*At the front gate of women's shelters, an investigation into the influx*), Trimbos Institute, 2003.

on the issue. TransAct will continue to perform these duties for three years, starting from January 2005. An evaluation will be made after this period.

#### **Awareness, law and legislation**

Government and professional organisations must jointly express the message that domestic violence is unacceptable and cannot be justified by any kind of excuse. The message can be expressed in various ways.

- *Publicity campaigns*

In 2004, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of VWS assembled toolkits and distributed them among the municipal authorities to encourage them to carry out local and/or regional publicity campaigns. A toolkit is a package containing practical information for a publicity campaign on domestic violence<sup>6</sup>. In the autumn of 2003, provincial authorities and major city regions introduced campaigns to promote the Advice and Reporting Centres for Child Abuse (AMKs). In 2005 a decision will be taken about a national publicity campaign on domestic violence, which may be carried out in 2006.

- *Legislation: restraining orders from entering a house for perpetrators of domestic violence*

By introducing a separate law, the Government intends to create ways of imposing temporary restraining orders for perpetrators of domestic violence in situations where there is an acute threat to victims and/or any children. The Government is working on a ten-day refraining order which will be imposed by the police with the mayor's consent. The court will test the order within three days after its commencement date. The court can then decide whether the order be cancelled, reinforced or extended for a maximum period of four weeks. The refraining order from entering a house may also apply for child abuse cases. The legislation process is now under way and the legislative proposal will be submitted to the Lower House of Parliament in 2005.

- *Official guideline by the Board of Procurators General*

In 2003, the Board of Procurators General issued an Official Guideline for the Public Prosecution Service (OM), the police and the probation and after care services in which it is clearly propagated that domestic violence is unacceptable. The Guideline includes guidance on apprehension, official reports, interrogation of the suspect and pre-trial assistance by the probation services. The Guideline will be evaluated in 2004/2005 and the evaluation report will be published in 2005.

#### **Specific projects**

Various organisations and professions are developing policies, specific training methods and specific programmes which enable them to act effectively in cases of domestic violence reports. One of these organisations is the police.

- *Police project*

On 1 January 2003, a nation-wide project on domestic violence, 'Huiselijk geweld en de politietaak', was launched and initiated by the Board of Police Commissioners. Its object was to encourage all police regions to develop a policy on tackling domestic violence, promote police expertise and enable the national registration of domestic violence cases. Based on the registration developed by the police, an investigation was conducted into the nature and

---

<sup>6</sup> The toolkits consist of CDs that make a reference to the website [www.aanpakhuiselijkgeweld.nl](http://www.aanpakhuiselijkgeweld.nl) set up by the VNG for the domestic violence project.

backgrounds of domestic violence in 2004. The study<sup>7</sup> supplied figures on the reports of incidences and on the victims of domestic violence. 80% of the victims are women, 18% men, 9.3% children below the age of 18 and 3.3% people above 55.

By now, all police regions have appointed regional portfolio holders at the strategic level and regional coordinators for domestic violence at the tactical level. Furthermore, police forces are training many police officers so they become certified professionals who know how to handle victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. The police project includes a national registration of domestic violence cases and this is now being applied almost entirely throughout the Netherlands.

#### **More information**

The website [www.huiselijkgeweld.nl](http://www.huiselijkgeweld.nl), containing a quarterly magazine on domestic violence, 'Huiselijkgeweld.nl', provides victims and organisations involved in tackling domestic violence with concrete and up to date information. The website also has news articles and recent publications on domestic violence. Information on the various organisations and projects in the Netherlands concerned with combating domestic violence is also available. The website provides links to the sites of the various organisations. Municipal authorities can also obtain further information through the VNG's website: [www.aanpakhuiselijkgeweld.nl](http://www.aanpakhuiselijkgeweld.nl).

---

<sup>7</sup> 'Huiselijk geweld: de voordeur op een kier - omvang, aard en achtergronden in 2004 op basis van landelijke politie cijfers' H.B. Ferwerda, November 2004 (Domestic violence: leaving the front door open - scope, nature and backgrounds in 2004 based on national police figures).

## **Annex I**

Following the adoption of resolution 58/185, the “Fourth Dutch Implementation Report on the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women” has been implemented. The resolution has given a new impulse to the theme “Prevention and elimination of violence against women” and, in addition, the Ministry of Justice introduced a new project called “Private Violence- a public matter”, to achieve public action against cases of domestic violence. At the same time there has been increased attention for human trafficking (partly because of the nomination of a National Reporter of Human Trafficking) Furthermore, the increased attention for enhancement of the role women and the role gender expertise play in conflict situations and it’s the solution there-of, in its turn has led to increased attention for the safety of women, both in domestic and in public life.

The priorities of the policy are twofold: prevention and elimination of violence against women and the exchange between the Netherlands and the international emancipation policy.

### ***I ‘Private violence – a Public Matter’, a paper on the integrated approach of domestic violence***

A cabinet memorandum, ‘Private violence – a Public Matter’ (28345, nr.2), has been presented to Parliament in spring 2002. The method of action in the area of domestic violence is part of the integral safety-policy as well as of the public-health-policy. The memorandum is a result of the project ‘Prevention and elimination of domestic violence’. During the project an interdepartmental steering committee consisting of high level officials, was created for co-ordination purposes.

Also, on the basis of a study on the nature and dimension of domestic violence against immigrant women en men, several social institutions were requested to design a plan of action. This in order to promote a discussion on the subject.

### ***II ‘A safe country where women would like to live’***

A memorandum ‘A safe country where women would like to live’ has been presented to Parliament in response to the study ‘prevention and elimination of violence against women’ and to an advice regarding violence against women by the Advisory Council on International Issues. This memorandum contains the policy framework on the subject, the assumptions, recent governmental activities, general policy conclusions, and (in area of functions) the way in which further improvement of the policy will be initiated with respect to co-ordination of the emancipation policy