

Eureka Journal of Humanities and Social Research (EJHSR)

ISSN 2760-4934 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 4, April 2026



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<https://eurekaoa.com/index.php/4>

REFORMS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN)

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Abstract

This article analyzes the reforms being implemented in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of combating domestic violence, their social and legal significance, as well as measures being taken in cooperation with international organizations. The study examines the law "On the Prevention of Domestic Violence", state programs and social initiatives adopted in the country. The results of the article show that a systematic approach to the prevention of domestic violence is being formed in Kazakhstan, but there are certain shortcomings at the practical stage.

Keywords: Crisis centers, Human centers, gender equality, harassment, violence, National Agency for Social Protection.

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ISSN 2760-4934 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 4, April 2026



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OILADAGI ZO'RAVONLIKKA QARSHI KURASHISHDA OLIB BORILAYOTGAN ISLOXATLAR (QOZOG 'ISTON RESPUBLIKASI MISOLIDA)

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Annotatsiya

Mazkur maqolada Qozog'iston Respublikasida oiladagi zo'ravonlikka qarshi kurashish sohasida amalga oshirilayotgan islohotlar, ularning ijtimoiy va huquqiy ahamiyati, shuningdek, xalqaro tashkilotlar bilan hamkorlikda olib borilayotgan chora-tadbirlar tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda mamlakatda qabul qilingan “Oilaviy-maishiy zo'ravonlikning oldini olish to'g'risida”gi qonun, davlat dasturlari hamda ijtimoiy tashabbuslar o'rganilgan. Maqola natijalari Qozog'istonda oilaviy zo'ravonlikning oldini olish sohasida tizimli yondashuv shakllanayotganini, biroq amaliy bosqichda muayyan kamchiliklar mavjudligini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: Inqiroz markazlari, Inson markazlari, gender tenglik, tazyiq, zo'ravonlik, Ijtimoiy himoya milliy agentligi.

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Introduction

In today's era of globalization, the issue of social stability and the protection of human rights is a priority in the policies of all countries. In particular, the problem of domestic violence is becoming an urgent issue not only as a social, but also as a legal, moral and psychological problem. Every year, thousands of women, children and men around the world suffer from domestic violence. Therefore, in many countries, including the Republic of Kazakhstan, large-scale reforms are being implemented to eliminate this problem and form healthy family relations in society.

The Government of Kazakhstan has developed a number of laws, programs and initiatives in the field of preventing domestic violence, providing social and legal assistance to victims, holding offenders accountable and ensuring gender equality. In recent years, special attention has been paid to this issue within the framework of state policy, and systematic work has been launched on the basis of civil society institutions, non-governmental organizations and international cooperation. The purpose of the article is to analyze the content of the reforms being implemented in Kazakhstan to combat domestic violence, their practical results and existing problems. For this purpose, the legislative framework, state programs and international experience were studied.

Main part

One of the issues that is becoming increasingly relevant in the world arena is domestic violence. This topic is also relevant in the Republic of Uzbekistan and the neighboring country of Kazakhstan. This issue was especially relevant in Kazakhstan after the death of Saltanat Nukenova, who was subjected to cruel threats by her husband. Not only women in the neighboring country, but also women around the world rose up to support women. They asked for a fair verdict in the case of the former Minister of Economy Kuandik Bishimbayev, who was accused of murder. The court found Kuandik Bishimbayev guilty and sentenced

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him to 24 years in prison. Asosiy qism¹. The two-month process has caused a wide resonance both within the country and abroad. Such issues are now receiving great attention at the socio-political and legal levels.

Kazakhstan has both state and non-state crisis centers for women and children who have suffered from violence and other difficult situations. For urgent help, you can call the children's hotline "111" or the police "102". For psychological, legal and social assistance, you can contact specialized centers such as "Komek-Otbasy" in Astana or assistance centers such as "Korgau", or use the portal qamqor.gov.kz to submit an online report. ("Crisis centers" in Kazakhstan began operating in 1995.)

Analysis shows that, according to the National Commission for Women, Family and Demographic Policy under the President of Kazakhstan, over the past seven years, the number of serious crimes committed against women and children in the country has increased, and domestic violence has more than doubled. UN agencies in Kazakhstan have been assisting women seeking to protect themselves from domestic violence. For example, according to statistics, in 2023, Kazakhstan's law enforcement agencies received more than 99,000 applications for domestic violence, 69 women and 7 children died as a result.²

It is worth noting that many domestic and foreign sources have conducted scientific research on this topic. In particular, A. Nazarbayeva, in her study "Gender Policy and Family Stability," analyzed the mechanisms of state policy to protect women's rights in Kazakhstan.³ S. Ibrayeva focused on the social causes of domestic violence and the importance of the social services system in preventing it.⁴

According to Gulmira Shrahmetova, Senior Inspector of the Astana Office of the UN Information Service on the Protection of Women from Violence, the Astana

¹ Tengrinews.kz.

² <https://tengrinews.kz/news/>

³ A. Nazarbayeva. Gender siyosati va oilaviy barqarorlik, 2019y.

⁴ S. Ibrayeva. Oilaviy zo'ravonlikning ijtimoiy sabablari va uning oldini olishda ijtimoiy xizmatlar tizimining ahamiyati, 2021y.

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police receive 10-15 calls from women asking for help every day, and on holidays and weekends the number of calls reaches 30. In her opinion, the increase in appeals to law enforcement agencies is due to the fact that today's generation of young women does not tolerate violence. That is, in this regard, it can be understood that women have paid attention to the issues of gender equality in the laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Analysis shows that today's generation of women does not tolerate violence. When the first violence occurs, either from a husband, relatives or strangers, they immediately contact the police. They are turning to emergency hotlines and "crisis centers" via the Internet and special applications on their mobile phones. In particular, in the Republic of Uzbekistan, such centers are called "Human Centers".

In addition, according to 2023 indicators, Kazakhstan ranked 28th in the world among UN countries in the Digital Government Development Index. This is certainly a great achievement. Now it has become easier for women to contact hotlines through various mobile phone applications. In addition, the Republic of Kazakhstan, in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank, has developed the "Digital Family Map" project. This project allows social workers to collect all information about families at risk. Thanks to the "Digital Family Map", a family in which potential violence is detected according to specially developed indicators is offered several options for providing assistance within five days.

The lower house of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan adopted the law on February 28, and the Senate approved the law on April 11. According to it, the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed the law "On Ensuring the Rights of Women and the Safety of Children", aimed at combating domestic violence. *Zakon.kz* reported this with reference to the presidential press service.⁵ The law was developed to improve the legal, economic, social and organizational foundations of state policy to ensure women's rights and child safety. The

⁵ <https://www.zakon.kz/>

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publication notes that norms are being introduced that strengthen responsibility for any form of violence against women and children.

In particular, the law introduces criminal liability for intentional bodily harm and beating (previously administrative liability for beatings was provided). Fines, community service, and imprisonment are provided for causing harm to health and body. Up to 50 days of imprisonment have been introduced for causing harm to health, and up to 25 days for beatings, and it is reported that the perpetrators will be held in a pre-trial detention center.

In addition, the law excludes the possibility of reconciliation between the parties in cases involving physical violence and cruel treatment of children, as well as in cases where the acts provided for in the articles on beatings and causing minor harm to health are committed repeatedly within a year.

The law also provides for the establishment of support centers designed to provide special social services to victims of domestic violence. At the same time, the law introduced criminal liability for sexual violence against persons under the age of 16. For the first time, administrative penalties were introduced for bullying and cyberbullying of minors.

Law No. 72-VIII of April 15, 2024 "On Ensuring the Rights of Women and the Safety of Children":

— Signed by the President. The law strengthens the protection of women and children from violence.

— Criminal liability for minor bodily harm and battery, which were decriminalized (converted into an administrative offense) in 2017, was reintroduced.

— Penalties for serious crimes against children (murder, violence, rape) were strengthened.

— Even if the victim does not file a complaint, or if reports appear in the media or on social networks, the police are obliged to collect evidence and conduct an investigation.

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Regarding the creation and expansion of a victim support system:

— It is planned to establish family support centers in each district that can provide temporary housing, psychological, social, and legal assistance to victims.—

— Crisis centers/shelter centers already exist. NGO centers such as the Komek Center in Shymkent are an example. They offer shelters for women and children for up to six months, as well as psychological and legal assistance.

— State crisis centers and private NGOs provide hotlines and counseling. However, NGO centers are often underfunded.

— The high-profile case of the murder of former minister Saltanat Nukenova, who died of domestic violence, sparked widespread public outcry and accelerated the adoption of the law.

— Fines and penalties are being introduced for cyberbullying, violence against minors, and sexual violence against children under 16.

Strengthening penalties:

— Severe penalties for repeated offenses and in extremely serious cases.

— Penalties have been strengthened for the disappearance, abduction, illegal detention of children, and other crimes.

It should be noted that the bride kidnapping ceremony is traditional on the border of Uzbekistan with Kazakhstan, and this process exists in many cultures. However, from the point of view of modern laws and human rights, the practice of bride kidnapping is not legal and can be legally punished. Today, many countries, including Kazakhstan, reject such traditions and consider them a violation of human rights. The bride kidnapping ceremony is often carried out without the consent of the woman, which violates her rights. Therefore, such practices are prohibited by law and are widely discussed in public.

It should be noted that during the pandemic, harassment and domestic violence have also increased in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Such cases have been regularly reported on social media. Currently, the National Agency for Social Protection under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been established to prevent

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harassment and domestic violence against women, children, and the elderly, as well as to provide social services to the population. The Agency was established by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On comprehensive measures to provide high-quality social services and assistance to the population and establish an effective control system for them” dated June 1, 2023. The Agency is an authorized state body for the development and implementation of a unified state policy in the field of social protection of the population and the provision of social services and carries out its activities independently of other state bodies and organizations, their officials.⁶ In addition, the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-175 dated May 10, 2024 "On additional measures to improve the provision of social services to victims of oppression and violence" was adopted.⁷

Conclusion

The above analysis shows that the issue of combating domestic violence in the Republic of Kazakhstan has now become one of the priorities of state policy. The incident of Saltanat Nukenova went down in history as a tragedy that woke up society not only in Kazakhstan, but also throughout Central Asia. This case showed the need to reduce violence against women, strengthen legal mechanisms and expand public control.

The 2024 law “On Ensuring the Rights of Women and the Safety of Children”, implemented by the Kazakh government in recent years, restored criminal, rather than administrative, liability for domestic violence. This law was an important turning point in the path of gender equality and the protection of human rights. It also toughened penalties for physical, sexual and psychological violence against children, and abolished the possibility of reconciliation for repeated crimes.

⁶ <https://ihma.uz/agency/social-protection>

⁷ <https://lex.uz/docs/-6916638>. O‘zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidentining qarori, 10.05.2024 yildagi PQ-175-son

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At the same time, initiatives such as the “Digital Family Map”, “Korgau”, “Komek-Otbasy”, “111 Hotline” are helping the population protect their rights. These digital solutions have launched a new stage in ensuring human security and social justice in modern society. Crisis centers for women and children, psychological rehabilitation centers, as well as the activities of NGOs are strengthening the social protection system of society.

However, practical results show that, despite the strengthening of the legal framework, patriarchal stereotypes, gender inequality, and the habit of resolving family conflicts through violence still persist in society. Therefore, one of the most important areas of reform is to strengthen spiritual and educational work in the field of education, culture, and upbringing, and to form healthy family values in the younger generation.

Also, the experience of the Republics of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in this regard is complementary. In Uzbekistan, the National Agency for Social Protection under the President is also implementing decisions on providing assistance to victims of oppression and violence. This indicates that a common regional strategy is being formed in the countries of Central Asia to reduce violence against women and strengthen their legal and social protection.

In conclusion, domestic violence is not only a legal or social problem, but also a moral one. Combating it is a common task not only of Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan, but of all humanity. Therefore, this scourge can be eliminated only if state bodies, non-governmental organizations, the media and educational institutions act together.

In order to increase the effectiveness of the fight against domestic violence in the future, it is necessary to:

- regularly monitor the implementation of reforms;
- expand the system of psychological and legal assistance;
- introduce preventive and educational programs;
- and continue the policy of making women economically independent.

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Only such a comprehensive approach will create a non-violent, just and compassionate family environment in society and become a true mirror of a humane state.

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