

Preventing And Responding To Violence Against Women In Uzbekistan: Legal And Institutional Measures

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Abstract. This article critically reviews measures to prevent violence against women and protect survivors in Uzbekistan. Using a qualitative doctrinal method, it examines the 2019 legal framework for protection from harassment and violence, constitutional equality guarantees and subsequent legislative amendments. The analysis distinguishes prevention, immediate protection, survivor assistance and accountability as related but separate policy functions. Historical figures mentioned in the source manuscript are treated as period-specific background rather than current prevalence estimates because primary datasets are not supplied. The article concludes that protection orders and legal guarantees must be supported by coordinated services, informed access to remedies and transparent evaluation to assess their effectiveness.

Keywords: Violence against women; domestic violence; protection orders; survivor support; legal remedies; Uzbekistan

1. Introduction

Violence against women represents a challenge to personal security, dignity and the effective exercise of legal rights. The consequences of violence may extend beyond an individual incident: survivors can encounter interrupted education or employment, reduced mobility, difficulty in obtaining care and the costs of legal proceedings. A proportionate policy response must therefore combine prevention, immediate protection, accessible assistance and appropriate legal accountability.

The author's original article discusses the development of protective legislation in Uzbekistan and describes historical protection-order figures from 2020. Those numbers provide context for the period in which they were reported but should not be generalized to present-day prevalence. A broader analytical assessment requires distinctions among reports of violence, risk assessments, orders issued, service contacts and judicial outcomes. These indicators capture different stages of the response system.

The present article asks how the principal legal provisions can be understood as a coordinated protection system, which operational weaknesses merit attention, and what evidence would be necessary to evaluate results. Rather than claiming that a particular programme has caused a reduction in violence, it develops a survivor-centred analytical model for assessing legal and administrative design.

2. Conceptual and legal background

Violence against women may include physical and psychological harm as well as other forms specified in applicable law. The language of legal categories must be used carefully: an experience can be harmful without necessarily meeting the elements of a

particular criminal offence, and different forms of legal responsibility may apply. For this reason, the analysis distinguishes lived harm, the scope of statutory protection and the formal qualification of conduct under substantive law.

A survivor-centred approach begins with safety, informed choice and confidentiality. These principles are especially relevant where victims may face repeated contact with an alleged perpetrator, economic dependence or concern about the consequences of reporting. Institutions must be capable of explaining available measures without promising outcomes they cannot guarantee. Assistance should not be conditioned on assumptions concerning the survivor's preferred legal route.

Prevention, protection and accountability are mutually reinforcing but distinct functions. Prevention seeks to reduce risk factors and improve knowledge of rights; protection addresses immediate exposure to harm; assistance responds to practical and health-related needs; and accountability considers evidence and lawful sanctions. A policy that monitors only the number of orders issued may neglect the availability of assistance or the safety of a person after an order expires.

3. Materials and methods

The analysis employs a doctrinal reading of the Constitution of Uzbekistan (2023), Law No. O'RQ-561 of 2 September 2019, Law No. O'RQ-562 of 2 September 2019, and Law No. O'RQ-829 of 11 April 2023. Statutory guarantees are evaluated in relation to implementation duties rather than being treated as evidence of real-world outcomes. Article 58 of the current Constitution affirms equal rights of women and men [1].

The research is based on legal documents and a critical reading of the author's original manuscript. It does not use new surveys, interviews, experiments or unpublished case files. Any recommendations are normative deductions from the documentary review, not findings of a statistical impact study. Historical numerical statements from the original submissions are not reproduced as current statistics without attributable, dated primary sources.

The analysis classifies potential state responses into five stages: identification and initial contact, safety assessment, urgent measures, service referral, and follow-up or adjudication. Each stage is assessed against four procedural questions: who is responsible, what information is needed, what safeguards apply, and how completion is documented. This structured documentary method can indicate design issues but cannot measure the rate of unreported violence or the effect of reforms on victimization.

4. Results: normative protection mechanisms

The Law on the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence, No. O'RQ-561, supplies an explicit framework addressing the relevant conduct and protective measures [2]. Article 58 of the Constitution provides the broader principle of equal rights [1], while Law No. O'RQ-562 addresses equal opportunities and supports the wider equality agenda [3]. The 2023 amendments under Law No. O'RQ-829 are relevant to the development of legal responsibility and protection for women and children [4].

Protection orders can be understood as one instrument within this framework. Their protective value depends on accurate identification of risks, prompt processing, adequate explanation to the protected person, lawful notification of relevant parties and workable responses if restrictions are breached. A document cannot, by itself, substitute for practical safety planning or access to support. Monitoring should

consider whether orders are timely and enforceable, not merely whether they are issued.

The legal analysis should avoid describing every incident of gender-based violence as an automatically separate offence. Criminal and administrative classifications depend on the elements provided by the applicable law, the date of the alleged conduct and the facts that can be established. Clear distinction among reporting, investigative and adjudicative stages is also necessary to preserve due-process rights alongside meaningful protection.

5. Results: interagency response and service delivery

A functional response requires coordination among law-enforcement bodies, medical providers, social services and legal-aid institutions. These actors do not perform interchangeable functions. Law enforcement may deal with urgent risk and investigation; healthcare providers respond to physical and psychological needs; social services may address shelter or financial vulnerability; legal professionals explain rights and procedures. An effective referral process states who takes the next action and when.

Confidentiality is a central operational concern. A record should contain information necessary for a legitimate purpose, with access limited according to applicable safeguards. Repeated requests that survivors recount traumatic experiences to different offices can increase distress and discourage further engagement. Referral protocols should therefore seek continuity while respecting consent, safety and applicable reporting obligations.

Information accessibility can influence early help-seeking. Instructions about emergency assistance, complaint procedures, protective measures and available services should be understandable and available through more than one communication channel. Training for professionals should address respectful questioning, risk awareness, documentation and referral. Training attendance alone is an output indicator; competence and practical application require separate evaluation.

6. Discussion: measurement, ethics and implementation

The historical protection-order counts in the original article are not an appropriate estimate of the incidence of violence in contemporary Uzbekistan. The number of reported cases may change because of awareness, access, recording practices or genuine incidence. Similarly, an increase in applications for assistance can indicate improved trust in institutions rather than deterioration in safety. These possibilities make causal interpretation difficult without a study design that addresses competing explanations.

A more credible monitoring framework would record separately: requests for assistance; time from request to decision; protective measures adopted; documented referrals; subsequent service access; and legally resolved cases. Each indicator requires a denominator, reporting period and definition. Repeated victimization and perceived safety are potentially important outcomes, but collecting them can create risks for participants and should occur only with appropriate ethical safeguards.

Future empirical research might combine analysis of anonymized administrative records with confidential interviews conducted by trained researchers. Sampling should include people who did not obtain protection measures, where such recruitment can be conducted safely, to avoid excluding difficult-to-reach cases.

Findings must not expose survivor identities, and published tables should suppress small cells when disclosure risks arise.

Implementation also requires attention to the possible effects of institutional fragmentation. If a survivor is referred from one service to another without a clear handover, the same request may need to be repeated and urgent needs may be delayed. A procedural protocol can specify the responsible institution, minimum information needed for a lawful referral, time-sensitive cases and steps for documenting contact. Evaluation should inspect anonymized process records to determine whether referrals are completed, not assume completion merely because a referral was issued.

Preventive work should be assessed separately from the response to specific complaints. Community information campaigns, professional education and workplace awareness may improve recognition of unlawful conduct, but reliable evaluation requires indicators beyond the number of events organized. For example, researchers could assess whether participants correctly understand available protection mechanisms before and after training, while safeguarding privacy and avoiding questions that pressure individuals to disclose personal experiences. These measurements would support future empirical assessment rather than constituting proof that violence itself has declined.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

Uzbekistan's legal framework recognizes the need to prevent harassment and violence and offers a basis for protective procedures. This review finds that the quality of implementation cannot be inferred from statutory adoption alone. The relevant policy chain extends from initial contact and risk assessment to urgent safety measures, referrals and legal accountability.

The study recommends establishing clear responsibilities at each stage, ensuring accessible survivor information, strengthening confidentiality protocols and distinguishing output counts from genuine safety outcomes. Evaluation must rely on appropriately sourced, dated data and ethically designed research. Such an approach can support more effective practice without overstating the evidence currently available.

References

1. Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (2023), Article 58. <https://konstitutsiya.gov.uz/en>
2. Law No. O'RQ-561 of 2 September 2019, On the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence. <https://lex.uz/>
3. Law No. O'RQ-562 of 2 September 2019, On Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men. <https://lex.uz/>
4. Law No. O'RQ-829 of 11 April 2023, concerning measures to strengthen protection of women and children. <https://lex.uz/>