

NEWSLETTER

no. 44 (2026)

STOP VIOLENCE



JANUARY to MARCH

WOMEN'S LAW CENTRE

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The newsletter reflects the activity of the Women's Law Centre in preventing and responding to domestic violence and violence against women

WLC LAUNCHES A FUNDRAISING PAGE FOR THE “TRANSFORMARE” PROGRAM — A REAL CHANCE AT INDEPENDENCE FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE SURVIVED VIOLENCE

On March 1, 2026, WLC launched a fundraising page dedicated to the “TransFormare” Program, an economic empowerment program for women who have survived violence.

The “TransFormare” Program was developed based on a clear reality: without economic independence, many women cannot permanently escape abusive situations.

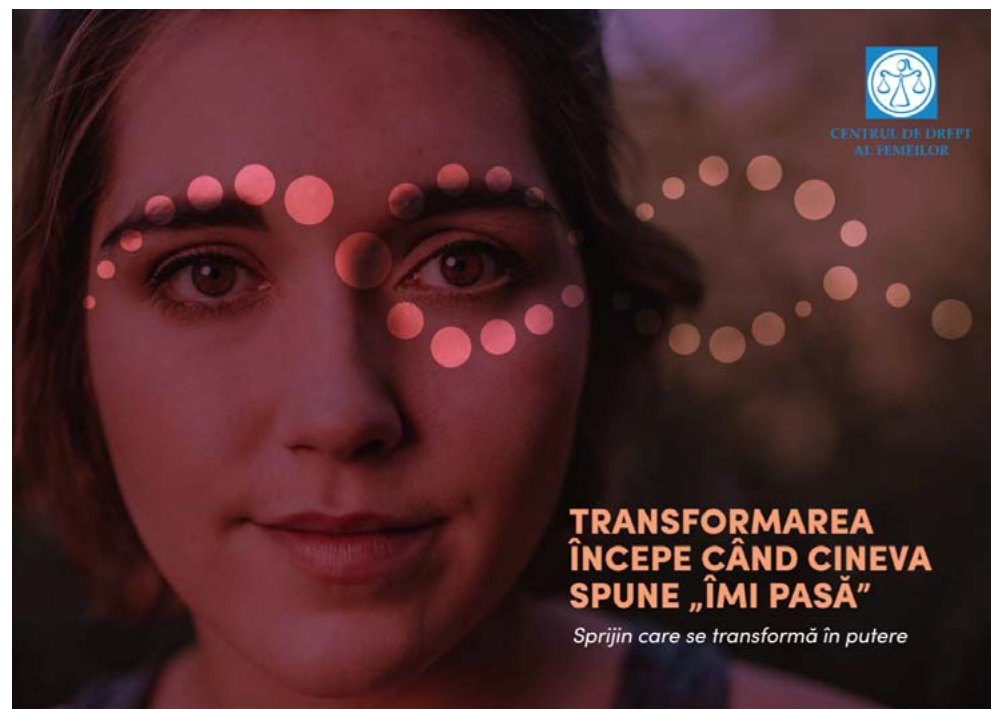
Although they benefit from legal protection and psychological support, a lack of financial resources often causes them to return to violent relationships.

“TransFormare” offers comprehensive, long-term support, including individual assessment, psychological and legal counseling, career guidance, training or retraining, support for employment or starting a business, as well as mentoring during the early stages of economic independence.

The program creates a complete pathway – from immediate safety to autonomy and stability.

The impact is already visible. Over the past two years, more than 300 women have participated in career guidance and entrepreneurship training sessions. At the same time, more and more women are seeking support, and the program cannot meet all requests without additional resources.

Stories of women like Maria – who managed to escape an abusive relationship and wants to rebuild her life for herself and her four children – show just how important this support is. For many women, help offered at the right time can make the difference between returning to abuse and a fresh start.



A woman's transformation begins when someone says:
“I care.”

When a woman is seen, heard, and supported, her story changes. From a victim, she becomes a survivor. From fear, courage emerges. From silence, a life lived with meaning.

Your support can give her the chance to live
a life free from fear.

I CARE

WE ARE STRENGTHENING SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE BY VALIDATING A METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE DEVELOPED BY WLC DEDICATED TO SUPPORT GROUPS

On February 11, 2026, WLC organized an event to validate the Methodological Guide for facilitating support groups for women who are survivors of gender-based violence. The event brought together a community of specialists in the field, providing a space for dialogue, reflection, and the exchange of experiences regarding interventions centered on the needs of survivors.

The discussions highlighted the importance of long-term psychological support provided through support groups – an essential component of the integrated services developed by WLC. From June to December 2025, the organization piloted such a group, with the support of the Association for Community Relations, as part of a grant program to combat psychological violence, often considered “the hidden part of the iceberg.”

Over the course of 10 sessions, 17 women participated in meetings held in a safe, empathetic, and confidential environment. This process helped reduce isolation, boost self-confidence, and regain control over their own lives.



Building on this experience, WLC developed a methodological guide designed to provide a clear and effective framework for facilitating support groups. The document includes basic principles, working strategies, techniques for man-



aging group dynamics, examples of practical exercises, and topics relevant to the recovery process.

During the validation event, participants contributed reflections and recommendations that will be integrated into the final version of the guide, transforming it into a tool adapted to on-the-ground realities. The guide has significant potential for replication, as it is designed as a practical resource for organizations interested in developing and implementing their own support groups, thereby contributing to the expansion of services for survivors of violence at the national level.

Following these efforts, on March 23 and 24, 2026, UNFPA Moldova and the Women’s Law Center organized two training sessions in Ștefan Vodă and Rîșcani, dedicated to specialists from the Safe Spaces for Women and Girls. The training aimed to develop skills for facilitating

support groups, based on the methodological guide developed by the Women’s Law Center.

Forty specialists—psychologists, social workers, and other service providers—participated in the training, strengthening the skills necessary to create safe, empathetic spaces centered on the needs of women who have survived violence. The sessions were facilitated by Gabriela Popenco, a psychologist and integrative psychotherapist specializing in working with psychological trauma.





“Victim-centered intervention begins the moment we choose to see, above all, the person behind the case file. Support groups offer a safe and confidential space where every woman is listened to without judgment, can rebuild her confidence, and can regain her autonomy. We, as professionals, have a responsibility to restore hope and strength to women survivors and their children”

**Angelina Zaporozjan-Pîrgari,
Executive Director of WLC**



WLC IS EXPANDING ITS PARTNERSHIPS TO ENSURE A MORE EFFECTIVE, INCLUSIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The Women's Law Center continues to strengthen its role in preventing and combating gender-based violence by developing new strategic partnerships designed to improve access to services and better address the diverse needs of women affected by violence.

International data show that women with disabilities face violence at least twice as often as other women, often being exposed to additional risks due to a lack of accessible information and unsuitable services.

To address this reality, **WLC** and **the Alliance of Organizations for People with Disabilities in the Republic of Moldova** have signed a collaboration

agreement aimed at providing coordinated support for women who are victims and potential victims of violence, including those with disabilities.

The partnership involves developing joint projects focused on the actual needs of beneficiaries, exchanging expertise among specialists, transferring knowledge in an accessible format, and conducting public awareness campaigns.



WLC signed a cooperation agreement with **the Chisinau Municipal Police Directorate** within the General Police Inspectorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), thereby strengthening inter-institutional cooperation in responding to cases of domestic violence and gender-based violence.

This partnership is based on a long-standing collaboration between the WLC and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, built on trust and joint efforts to prevent violence, raise public awareness, and strengthen the capacities of frontline police officers.

At the same time, the agreement marks a new phase of collaboration between



the WLC and the Family Justice Center, with a focus on strengthening intervention mechanisms and providing specialized services centered on the needs of victims.

Another important step in expanding partnerships is strengthening collaboration with the academic community. The WLC has signed a collaboration agreement with **the Department of Criminal Law at Moldova State University**, reaffirming the importance of integrating a gender perspective into legal education.

This collaboration builds on an existing and productive relationship, within which training sessions for male and female students of the Faculty of Law, thematic summer schools, conferences, public lectures, and interactive sessions have been organized, as well as awareness-raising initiatives, including impactful exhibitions such as “Don't Blame the Clothes!”, designed to encourage critical reflection and dialogue among young people.

The new agreement will enable the development of educational programs,

joint research, awareness-raising activities, and legal support initiatives, contributing to the training of a new generation of legal professionals who understand and promote gender equality.



WLC LAUNCHES A STUDY ON BARRIERS TO ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



On February 19, WLC, in partnership with UN Women Moldova, launched the study “Access to Justice for Women Victims of Domestic Violence, Including Those from Groups with Multiple Vulnerabilities,” a qualitative research project that analyzes women’s real-life experiences in their interactions with state institutions and the obstacles preventing them from receiving protection and justice.

Conducted by a team of experts from the WLC, the study brings to the forefront the voices of women who have experienced violence and have interacted, at various stages, with key actors in the criminal justice sector – police officers, lawyers, prosecutors, judges, probation officers, and specialists from nongovernmental organizations.



The research reveals a troubling picture: although the legal framework in the Republic of Moldova has seen significant improvements, real access to justice for women who are victims of domestic violence remains limited and unequal. Their protection often depends on random factors, such as the individual empathy of certain professionals or the support provided by civil society organizations.

According to data from the General Police Inspectorate, in 2025 there was an increase of nearly 50% in reports of domestic violence compared to the previous year. However, study participants frequently expressed dissatisfaction with how cases are handled: a lack of empathy, persistent stereotypes, complex bureaucratic procedures, the lengthy duration of legal proceedings,



and the difficulty of obtaining effective protective measures.

Even when emergency restraining orders or protection orders are issued, many women do not feel safe, reporting non-compliance with these orders and delayed responses from the responsible institutions. At the same time, economic dependence and social vul-

nerability lead many women to remain in abusive relationships or return to the abuser.

The study highlights that survivors’ needs extend beyond the legal sphere and include personal safety and that of their children, access to housing, financial support, psychological counseling, medical care, and legal information.





During the launch event, participants emphasized the need for an approach centered on the real needs of survivors and for more effective cooperation among institutions.

“In many cases, women come to us after knocking on many doors and not being believed or being discouraged from seeking help. NGOs offer them not only legal assistance and psychological support, but also the assurance that they are not alone and are being heard. This role should complement a justice system that truly functions and provides real protection,” said WLC Executive Director Angelina Zaprojan-Pîrgari.

The lack of resources and integrated services keeps many women in high-risk situations.

Special attention is given to women from vulnerable groups – women with disabilities, Roma women, refugee women, and older women – who face multiple forms of discrimination and additional barriers in accessing services.

The UN Women Moldova Country Representative Dominika Stojanoska emphasized that equal access to justice is essential for ensuring fairness, and clearly identifying barriers is a necessary step toward developing effective solutions.



mechanisms for women leaving abusive relationships.

The research was conducted between February and November 2025, based on in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with survivors and professionals involved in managing cases of violence.



The Danish Ambassador to Chisinau, Søren Jensen, reiterated the commitment to support efforts to strengthen access to justice for all women and girls, emphasizing that behind every statistic there is a person whose safety and rights must be protected.

The study makes concrete recommendations for improving the institutional response, including the establishment of a national monitoring mechanism, capacity building for professionals, more effective sanctions against perpetrators, the development of programs dedicated to them, as well as the expansion of specialized services and economic support



WLC STRENGTHENS THE CAPACITIES OF JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS FOR A COORDINATED RESPONSE TO VIOLENCE

- ✓ “And it’s really that bad that you had to put him in handcuffs...”
- ✓ “The police told me there was nothing they could do, that if he didn’t kill you, we have no reason to intervene.”
- ✓ “And even when I was attacked with an axe and there was video footage... the judge said he didn’t see any criminal element.”

These are just a few of the testimonies from women who participated in a recent [study](#) conducted by WLC on access to justice for women who are victims of domestic violence. Their experiences show that, beyond the existing legal framework, victims continue to face serious obstacles: inappropriate responses from authorities, stereotypes, and a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of protective measures.



To change this reality, ongoing training for justice system professionals is essential – so that the response to cases of violence is swift, coordinated, and truly centered on the victims’ needs.

For the first time in the Republic of Moldova, the National Training Program on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence



was launched at the initiative of ANPCV, with the aim of strengthening the justice system’s capacity to provide a coordinated response centered on victims’ needs.

180 judges, prosecutors, and criminal investigation officers from across the country were delegated by the Superior Council of Magistracy, the General Prosecutor’s Office, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs to participate throughout the year in regional training sessions structured into four modules.





59 judges, prosecutors, and criminal investigators

February 2-4, Chişinău / March 4-6, Bălţi – Module I: “Women’s Access to Justice: The Applicability of the Istanbul Convention”

Module I is implemented by the WLC in partnership with the National Institute of Justice and coordinated by the ANPCV of the Republic of Moldova, as part of the Council of Europe project “Support for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova – Phase II.”

37 judicial assistants, court clerks, and prosecutors’ advisors

March 13 – seminar “Women’s Access to Justice – Specifics of the Applicability of the Provisions of the Istanbul Convention”

36 judicial assistants, court clerks, and prosecutors’ advisors

March 19-20 – seminar “Specifics of Investigating and Prosecuting Crimes Related to Violence Against Women, Domestic Violence, and Femicide”

Training sessions organized by the WLC in partnership with the National Institute of Justice, as part of the Council of Europe project “Support for the Implementation of the Istanbul Convention in the Republic of Moldova – Phase II”

18 police non-commissioned officers

March 16-20 – 5-day training course “Best Practices for Police Response to Cases of Domestic Violence”

Course organized by the WLC and the Integrated Law Enforcement Training Center (CIPAL) of the “Ştefan cel Mare” Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with the support of the Association for Community Relations.



WLC ACTIVITIES TO PREVENT AND COMBAT SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

One in five women has experienced some form of sexual harassment at least once in her life. Sexual harassment in the workplace is not a myth and cannot be hidden behind files or closed doors. Every employer, in the public or private sector, has an obligation to adopt a clear policy that ensures a safe environment for every employee.

WLC continues to contribute to the prevention and combating of sexual harassment in the workplace through information and training activities aimed at employees and union representatives.

February 25 – an information session for 25 members of the Primary Trade Union Organization of Employees of SRL “Chişinău-Gaz.” During the session, participants discussed recognizing forms of sexual harassment, employees’ rights, and employers’ responsibility to ensure a safe and abuse-free work environment.

March 9-10 – We conducted the second phase of the “Preventing and Combating Sexual Harassment in the Workplace” trainer-of-trainers program. The training was attended by 28 union members from various sectors, who will



become advocates for the “zero tolerance” principle in the institutions where they work.

The program provided participants with practical tools for identifying, preventing, and managing cases of sexual harassment. Topics covered included: handling complaints, conducting sensitive interviews with victims, implementing

protective measures, investigating cases, and the role of unions in monitoring internal policies.

The activities were organized by WLC in partnership with the National Trade Union Confederation of Moldova, as part of the project “Strengthening Gender Equality in Moldova,” implemented with financial support from KVINFO.



The awareness campaign “What you’re doing is harassment!”

In March, when public discourse is dominated by messages of appreciation for women, we chose to bring attention to a less-discussed reality: sexual harassment in the workplace.

As part of the awareness campaign “What you’re doing is harassment!”, WLC has produced a series of three videos illustrating common situations in the workplace – often tolerated or downplayed – but which constitute forms of harassment: sexually suggestive comments, “innocent” jokes, unwanted touching, insinuations, pressure, or the use of professional opportunities as leverage.



[▶ WATCH VIDEO](#)



[▶ WATCH VIDEO](#)

Respect in the workplace is not a favor, but a right, and sexual harassment is not “part of the culture” or a “working method,” but a violation of rights that must be recognized and reported. The campaign encourages women who have gone through such experiences to speak up and seek support.



[▶ WATCH VIDEO](#)

The Women’s Law Center

HOTLINE

08008 0000

offers free and confidential support.

INCARCERATED WOMEN RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM THE WLC TEAM



On February 10, 2026, the Women's Law Center relaunched the therapeutic book club at Penitentiary No. 7 – Rusca, offering female inmates a safe space for dialogue, reflection, and reconnecting with themselves. The first meeting brought together 27 participants, marking the start of a new series of activities dedicated to emotional support and personal development.

Throughout February and March, **four club sessions** were held, each facilitating in-depth discussions and reflection exercises based on literary texts. During one of the meetings, the participants read an excerpt from the book “The Price of a Smile” by Ionela Hadârcă, which sparked a candid dialogue about personal experiences, emotions, and the healing process.

The therapeutic book club aims to create a supportive environment where women feel seen, heard, and encouraged to re-discover their self-worth. Through reading and dialogue guided by the psychologists on the IFIS team, participants develop their capacity for introspection, express their emotions in a safe way, and build their self-confidence.

The impact of the therapeutic book club:

- reducing feelings of isolation
- increased self-esteem
- developing empathy and communication skills
- supporting the process of social reintegration

To complement this program, every Saturday, a psychologist visits Rusca Penitentiary and provides individual psychological counseling to female inmates, ensuring ongoing emotional support and interventions tailored to each beneficiary's needs.



Therapeutic book club at Penitentiary No. 7 – Rusca

The activities are organized by the Women's Law Center, in partnership with Penitentiary No. 7 – Rusca, with financial support from Sweden, in collaboration with the National Penitentiary Administration of the Republic of Moldova.

WLC CALLS FOR A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION OF THE CASE IN HÎNCEȘTI AND THE SEPARATE CRIMINALIZATION OF FEMICIDE IN THE CRIMINAL CODE

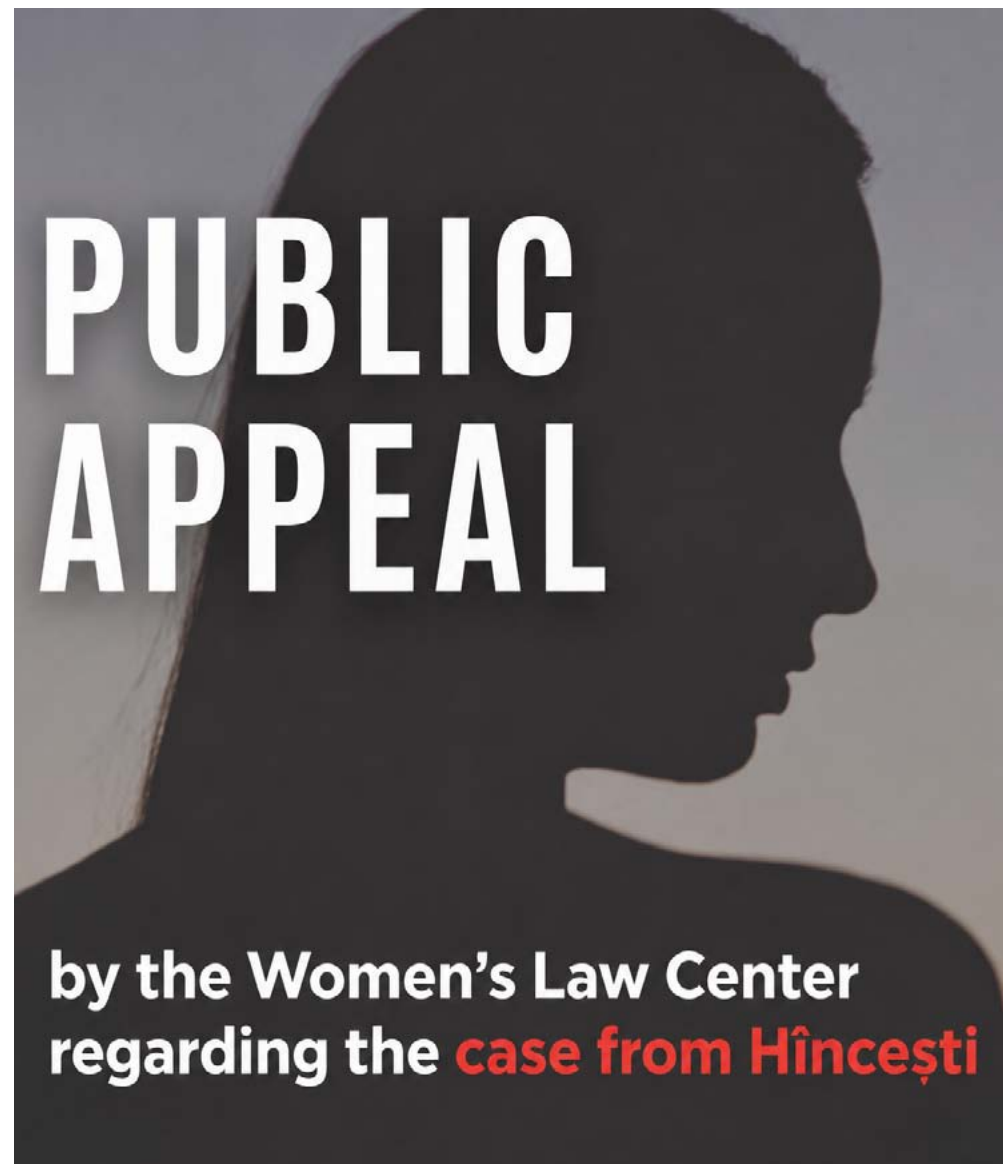
The WLC expresses its deep concern and solidarity with the family of Ludmila, a 38-year-old woman from Hîncești, who lost her life after falling from the 11th floor of an apartment building in Chișinău.

Ludmila's death raises serious questions about the circumstances leading up to this tragedy. According to information in the public domain, the woman had been subjected for years to multiple forms of violence – psychological, physical, economic, and coercive control.

In such situations, a woman's death cannot be analyzed outside the context of gender-based violence in which she lived.

WLC makes the following appeal to authorities:

- We call on the criminal justice system to investigate Ludmila's death with due diligence as a case of domestic violence and to punish the perpetrator accordingly, in accordance with Article 201¹(3)(b) of the Criminal Code (domestic violence resulting in the victim's suicide).
- We call for the case to be analyzed through the lens of gender-based violence, including acts of psychological, physical, and economic violence and the coercive control exercised over the victim, taking into account the ECHR judgment in *Vieru v. Republic of Moldova*, in which the Court found a lack of due diligence in investigating the circumstances of a suicide case and a violation of Articles 2, 3, and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- We call for the guarantee of an independent investigation, in accordance with the ECtHR case law in *A. and B. v. Georgia*, particularly when the perpetrators are public officials or law enforcement personnel, and the responsibility of the authorities is heightened under Articles 2 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights.



- We call on the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova to introduce a distinct offense of "femicide" in the Special Part of the Criminal Code.

WLC's full statement!



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY WORKSHOPS AT WLC: SPACES FOR HEALING, EXPRESSION, AND RECONNECTION

WLC continues to organize occupational therapy workshops – activities designed to support the process of emotional healing and reconnection with oneself for the center’s beneficiaries.

On **February 21**, WLC beneficiaries participated in a creative scrapbooking workshop, where they personalized their own planners, transforming them into emotional and inspirational journals. Through this artistic technique, participants had the opportunity to express their thoughts, emotions, and hopes in a free and safe way, using visual elements, messages, and personal reflection exercises.



On **March 14**, another workshop was dedicated to creating a “wish map” – a simple yet profound exercise that helped participants reflect on their own needs and aspirations. Through collages and evocative images, the women shaped their visions of the future, exploring aspects such as safety, relationships, financial stability, and personal development.



These activities offer more than just moments of creativity – they help boost self-esteem, reduce stress, and rediscover one’s identity. In a safe and empathetic space, women allow themselves to dream again and take steps toward a more balanced and autonomous life.

NEWS IN BRIEF

WLC participated in the meeting of the Communication and Coordination Platform with NGOs, organized by ANPCV Republic of Moldova

The event was dedicated to strengthening cooperation between public authorities and civil society in the field of preventing and combating gender-based violence, with a particular focus on the economic empowerment of women subjected to violence and those from socially vulnerable groups.

During the panel discussion, Eleonora Grosu, WLC Program Director, presented the impact of the economic empowerment programs implemented by WLC, highlighting the crucial role of financial autonomy in reducing dependency, increasing resilience, and preventing the revictimization of women.

WLC, in partnership with UN Women Moldova, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova, and with financial support from Sweden (Embassy of Sweden in Chisinau), has developed and implemented five local economic empowerment programs in five districts of the Republic



of Moldova, through which 270 women and girls benefited from essential services and economic empowerment opportunities, and 24 of the participants also received financial support vouchers of up to 50,000 MDL to start or develop income-generating activities.

The presentation highlighted the need for integrated programs that combine legal and psychological support with vocational training, mentoring, and facilitating access to the labor market, so that women can build a real path toward an independent and secure life.

The meeting served as a valuable platform for dialogue and coordination, contributing to the identification of common courses of action and the strengthening of partnerships to develop sustainable solutions centered on the real needs of women and girls affected by violence in the Republic of Moldova.



WLC in Geneva: the voice of Moldovan civil society before the UN Human Rights Committee

Our colleague, Anisoara Tun, a legal advisor at the Women's Law Center (WLC), participated in the 61st session of the UN Human Rights Committee, held in Geneva, where the Republic of Moldova's report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was reviewed.

Under this United Nations monitoring mechanism, states periodically report on their progress in upholding fundamental rights. Civil society plays a vital role in bringing the reality on the ground to the attention of experts.

On behalf of civil society, WLC – together with The Advocates for Human Rights – contributed to the drafting and submission of an alternative report (Shadow Report), a process carried out with the support of WAVE – Women Against Violence Europe.

In the Shadow Report, WLC highlighted several systemic issues in the state's response to violence against women and domestic violence, including:

- legislative gaps that allow perpetrators to receive overly lenient punishments or even avoid accountability;
- fragmented investigation of violence cases, without analyzing the context and the repetitive nature of the abuse;
- frequent disregard for psychological violence and major difficulties in obtaining the necessary expert assessments;
- ineffective enforcement of protection orders and insufficient penalties for violating them;
- limited access to specialized services for women in rural areas and for women from vulnerable groups.

Among the recommendations submitted to the Committee are:

- repealing Article 78¹ of the Code of Administrative Offenses and examining all cases of domestic violence under Article 201¹ of the Criminal Code;
- the separate criminalization of femicide in the Criminal Code;
- strengthening the capacities of specialists and responsible institutions and monitoring repeat offenders;
- improving mechanisms for enforcing protection orders and increasing penalties for violating them;
- ensuring sustainable state funding for specialized services provided by civil society organizations and including them in the public policy-making process.



Here is the report prepared by WLC



Women in the penitentiary system: different realities, but joint challenges

On March 26, a roundtable was held to present the results of the project “Women on Both Sides of the Bars: Between Equity and Resilience,” organized by AFI: Act For Involvement in partnership with the National Administration of Penitentiaries of the Republic of Moldova. The event brought together representatives of public institutions, experts, and civil society organizations to discuss the results of extensive research on gender inequalities in the prison system of the Republic of Moldova.

Key findings of the research presented at the event:

- Female prisoners face stress, anxiety, and limited access to services, including reproductive health care;
- Female staff experience burnout, barriers to career advancement, and exposure to abuse and harassment.



Our colleague, Eleonora Grosu, WLC Program Director, spoke during the discussions, highlighting our organization’s experience in working with women in detention.

WLC is among the few organizations that, for over 9 years, has provided direct support to women deprived of their liberty, while also contributing to systemic change through the training of prison staff.

The discussions reaffirmed the need for integrated interventions: gender-sensitive institutional policies, expanded support services, and better conditions for all women in the system.

WLC promotes women’s economic empowerment in dialogue with authorities

On March 3, 2026, the executive director of the Women’s Law Center, Angelina Zaporozjan-Pîrgari, participated in the meeting of the working group of the National Council for Economic Empowerment and Gender Equality, organized within the Economic Council under the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova.

Discussions focused on implementing the Roadmap for women’s economic empowerment and strengthening cooperation among authorities, development partners, and civil society to promote gender-sensitive public policies.

During the meeting, WLC presented the findings of a study on women’s access to essential services and economic empowerment opportunities, conducted in five districts (Bălți, Soroca, Telenești, Hâncești, and Ștefan Vodă) in partnership with UN Women Moldova and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, with support from Sweden. The data show that over a third of the women surveyed have experienced violence, and access to



services remains limited due to information barriers, costs, or a lack of nearby services.

The central message conveyed by WLC was that economic empowerment is essential for escaping situations of violence and rebuilding an independent life. At the same time, the need for an integrated and accessible system that provides coordinated support centered on women’s real needs was emphasized.

WLC will continue to contribute to the development of public policies, bringing women’s voices and on-the-ground realities to the forefront.



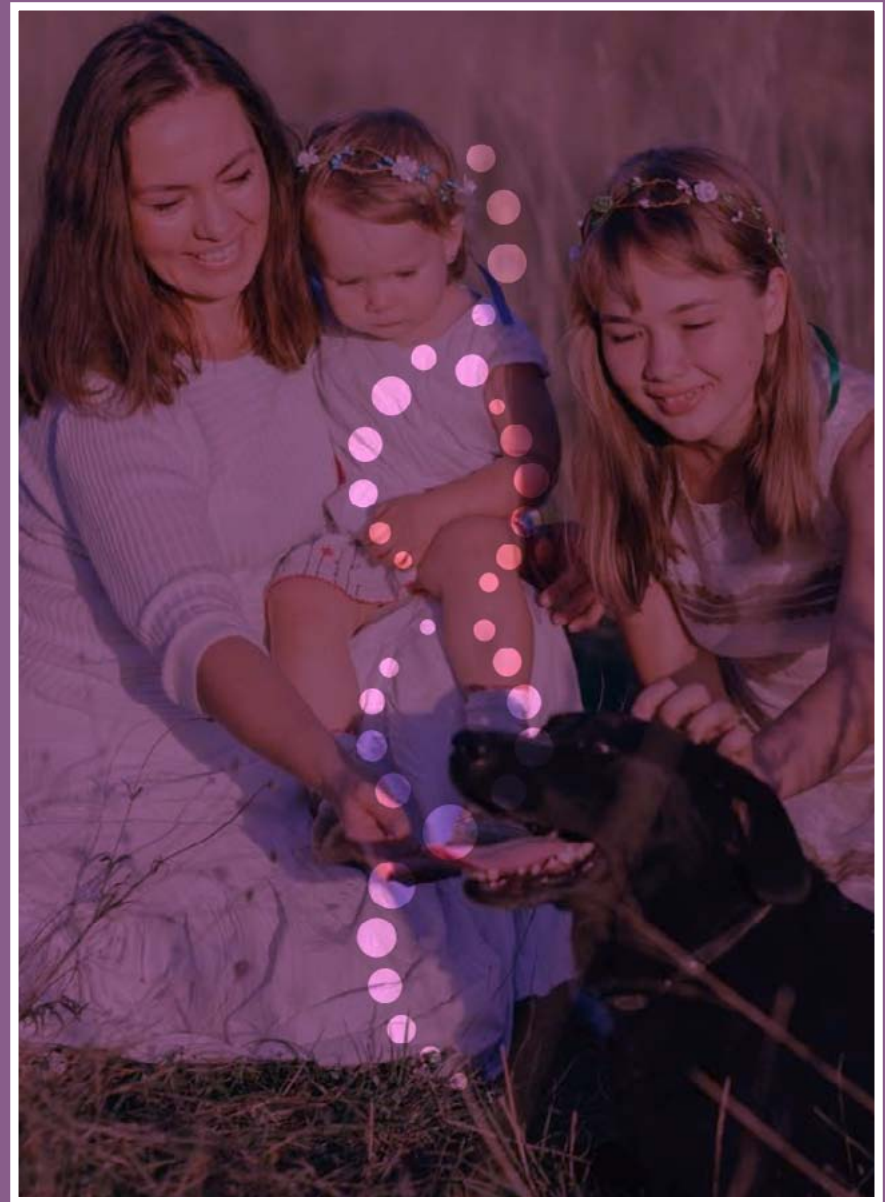
TOGETHER WE ARE CHANGING LIVES!

Every month, about **100 women** take an important step in their lives. Sometimes, this step is their last hope to be heard, understood and supported. Every month, about **100 women** choose not to tolerate domestic violence anymore and turn to WLC for specialist support.

We offer to these women **legal and psychological support, social assistance, and opportunities** for economic empowerment, so that they can step confidently into tomorrow. **Our support is free and confidential!**

You can also help women and children of Moldova. Visit the WLC website and make a donation to support victims of domestic violence. Every donation is a chance for these women to rebuild their lives. Every donation enhances the power of our community.

DONATE



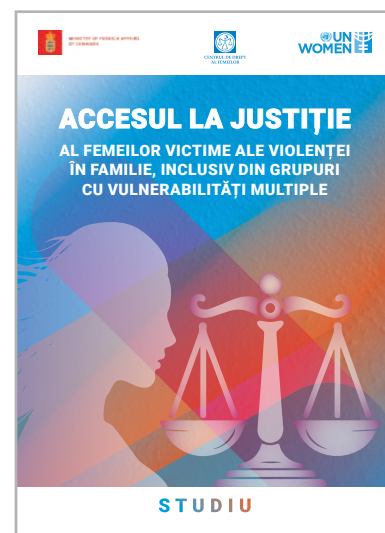
USEFUL RESOURCES:



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WHO ARE WE?

WOMEN'S LAW CENTRE (WLC) is a non-governmental organisation founded by a group of women-lawyers from Moldova. WLC advocates for equality between women and men in the public and family life and helps prevent and combat domestic violence and gender-based violence against women.

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