

## **Domestic Violence in North Tajikistan**

**Author:** [Kamar Ahror](#)

Domestic abuse remains common in Tajik families, where wives live with their husbands' families and few means of defending themselves from violence or pressure exerted by their in-laws.

Of the 2,000 women who sought help from the Gulrukhsor charity in the northern Soghd region last year, most fell into this category. About four out of ten wanted help with legal issues such as divorce, alimony and claiming a fair share of common property.

Rano Bobojonova heads the government committee for women's affairs in Soghd, and argues that the family – traditionally the most important institution in Tajikistan – is in deep trouble.

One contributory factor, experts say, is that extended families live together in increasingly cramped conditions, a reflection of the general economic hardship in this poorest of Central Asian states. Unemployment affects women more than men, and equal rights before the law do not translate into equal treatment. Abuse within the home is not a subject many people are prepared to discuss frankly.

A law specifically outlawing domestic violence has been delayed repeatedly.

*The audio programme, in Tajik and Russian, went out on national radio stations in Tajikistan, as part of IWPR project work funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

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