



Rights of Women and Children

A home should be a place of safety, respect and peace for every family member. But violence within the home is a serious tragedy faced by many women and children. In Sri Lanka, Domestic Violence is a punishable criminal offence, and the law protects the rights and safety of victims. The Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, No. 34 of 2005 provides strong legal protection and support for victims.



WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Any act of physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, or economic abuse by a family member or someone in a close relationship.

 PHYSICAL ABUSE Hitting, pushing, slapping, choking, or any form of harm.	 EMOTIONAL ABUSE Insults, humiliation, threats, intimidation, or constant criticism.	 SEXUAL ABUSE Any form of sexual act without consent or under pressure.	 ECONOMIC ABUSE Controlling money, assets, or preventing financial independence.	 VERBAL ABUSE Using abusive language, shouting, or threatening words.
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YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS

- ✓ **Right to Protection** – You have the right to live free from all forms of violence and abuse.
- ✓ **Right to Reside at the Matrimonial Home** – You cannot be forced to leave your home.
- ✓ **Right to Protection Orders** – You can request the court for immediate protection from further violence.
- ✓ **Right to Residence Orders** – You can ask the court to order the abuser to leave the house.
- ✓ **Right to Monetary Relief** – You can claim financial support for yourself and your children.
- ✓ **Right to Custody Orders** – You can seek temporary custody of your children.

WHERE TO GET HELP?

 POLICE Call 119 or visit your nearest Police Station.	 MAGISTRATE'S COURT You can file an application for protection orders.	 WOMEN & CHILD DESK Available at many Police Stations to assist you.	 NATIONAL HELPLINE 1919 (Government Information Centre)	 NGOs & SHELTERS Many non-government organizations provide counseling, legal aid and shelter.
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REMEMBER

You are not alone. You have rights. You are not to blame. Seek help. Stay safe. Stay strong.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A CRIME, NOT A PRIVATE MATTER. SPEAK UP. SEEK HELP. PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS AND YOUR DIGNITY.



1. Types of Abuse Recognized Under the Law

The Prevention of Domestic Violence Act does not limit violence to physical harm only. Under this law, the following acts committed within the home are considered as Domestic Violence:



1

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Hitting, pushing, causing bodily injury, confinement, or any act that causes physical pain or harm.



2

EMOTIONAL / PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Constantly intimidating, threatening, insulting in public or in private, belittling, causing mental distress, or creating situations that lead to self-harm or suicide.



3

SEXUAL ABUSE

Forcing sexual intercourse without consent, even within marriage, coercing into unnatural or painful sexual acts, and all forms of sexual abuse towards children.



4

ECONOMIC ABUSE

Intentionally withholding money or basic needs for household expenses, forcefully restricting a woman's independent income, or depriving her of her property, money, or valuables.



Domestic Violence is a crime. You have the right to live with dignity and safety.

Speak up. Seek help. Protect yourself and your children.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.
USE YOUR RIGHTS.
PROTECT YOUR FUTURE.



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2. HOW TO OBTAIN A PROTECTION ORDER FROM THE COURT

A woman or child facing domestic violence, or someone acting on their behalf, can request a “Protection Order” from the Magistrate’s Court to ensure their safety. Here is the step-by-step legal process:

<p>1</p> 	<p>SUBMIT AN APPLICATION</p> <p>The victim, through themselves, a lawyer, a police officer, or a Probation Officer, must submit an application for a Protection Order to the nearest Magistrate’s Court.</p>	 <p>MAGISTRATE’S COURT</p>
<p>2</p> 	<p>INTERIM PROTECTION ORDER (IMMEDIATE PROTECTION)</p> <p>If the Magistrate believes the victim is in immediate danger, an Interim Protection Order will be issued instantly. This order is effective immediately and prohibits the abuser from causing any further harm.</p>	
<p>3</p> 	<p>FINAL PROTECTION ORDER AND CONDITIONS</p> <p>After hearing both parties, the court may issue a Final Protection Order valid for up to one (1) year against the abuser, with strict conditions.</p>	


RESTRICTIONS THAT CAN BE IMPOSED ON THE ABUSER



-  Prohibited from entering or being near the victim’s home, workplace, or children’s school.
-  Prohibited from contacting the victim through phone calls, social media, messages, or through any other person.
-  Even if the home is a shared property, the court can order the abuser to leave the house. The victim has the right to stay in the home.

IMPORTANT: BREACH OF PROTECTION ORDER

If any person violates a Protection Order, it is a serious offence. They can be arrested immediately without a warrant.

Penalty: Fine and/or imprisonment for up to one (1) year.



 **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE WITHOUT FEAR AND VIOLENCE.** 

Seek help. Take legal action. You are not alone.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS


PROTECTION FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



YOUR RIGHT.
YOUR POWER.
YOUR FUTURE.


3. OFFICIAL SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR VICTIMS

The government has established a special system to ensure that victims of domestic violence are not alone and receive protection, medical care, and guidance.




1. CHILDREN & WOMEN BUREAU (CWB) – POLICE


Available at every major Police Station




Specially trained women police officers are available to listen to and support women victims without fear.




Immediate Medical Assistance
The victim is immediately taken to a hospital and medical reports (JMO Report) are obtained. This is essential evidence to prove physical abuse.




Shelter & Safe House Support
If the victim is in danger and cannot return home, police will refer her to a Safe House / Shelter for temporary protection.




Legal Action
Police will take the necessary steps to file a case and support the victim through the legal process in court.






2. PROBATION AND CHILD CARE SERVICES DEPARTMENT


(Probation Officers)



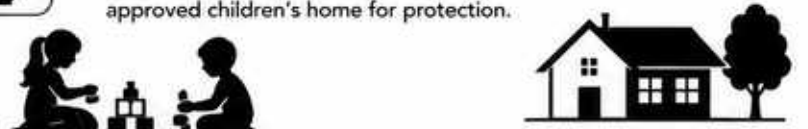
If children under 18 are living in a home where domestic violence occurs and they are also victims, Probation Officers will intervene immediately.



Counselling for Children
Counselling and psychological support are provided to help the child recover from trauma and fear.



Child Protection
If the child's life is at risk, the Probation Officer will seek a court order to place the child in the care of a suitable relative or in a government approved children's home for protection.



WHERE TO GET HELP?

 <p>Police Emergency 119 (Immediate Help)</p>	 <p>Women & Child Helpline 1919 (Government Info Centre)</p>	 <p>Children & Women Bureau At every major Police Station</p>	 <p>Probation & Child Care Services District Offices Island-wide</p>	 <p>Safe Houses / Shelters Available through Police & NGOs</p>
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IMPORTANT



You are **NOT** alone.
The law is on your side.
Help is available.
Reach out and stay safe.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS A CRIME, NOT A PRIVATE MATTER.
SPEAK UP. SEEK HELP. PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS AND YOUR CHILDREN.**



4. EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS & SUPPORT SERVICES

Do not stay silent in the face of violence. Reach out and get help immediately through the following official helplines and support services.



SERVICE	EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER	MAIN ROLE & SERVICES
 <p>Women's Help Line (Kawontha Pihita)</p>	 <p>1935 (Toll Free – 24/7)</p>	<p>Operated by the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs. Provides 24/7 free telephone support including counselling, legal advice, and information.</p> 
 <p>National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) (Jathika Lama Rakshaka Adhikaariya)</p>	 <p>1929 (Toll Free – 24/7)</p>	<p>For reporting all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or violence against children. Provides intervention and protection services.</p> 
 <p>Sri Lanka Police Emergency Hotline (Sri Lanka Police Hadisi Amuthuma)</p>	 <p>119 (Emergency)</p>	<p>For any immediate emergency where life is threatened. Get instant police assistance. Available 24/7.</p> 
 <p>Women's In Need (WIN) (Kawontha Aadharaka Padanama)</p>	 <p>011 4718585 (Office Hours)</p>	<p>A leading organization providing free legal advice, counselling and confidential shelter homes for survivors of domestic violence.</p> 



YOU ARE NOT ALONE. HELP IS AVAILABLE.
SPEAK UP. SEEK HELP. PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS AND YOUR CHILDREN.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.
USE YOUR RIGHTS.
PROTECT YOUR FUTURE.



Help is just
one call away.



Your call is
confidential.



Your safety is
our priority.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



YOUR RIGHT.
YOUR POWER.
YOUR FUTURE.

PROTECTION FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

KEY MESSAGES TO VICTIMS AND SOCIETY

1 VIOLENCE IS NOT A PRIVATE MATTER

Do not ignore the screams of a child or a woman in fear from inside a house saying "it's their family problem".

As a neighbor, it is your human responsibility to act.

SPEAK UP. REPORT. YOU CAN SAVE A LIFE.

2 TOLERANCE IS NOT THE SOLUTION

Thinking about "family honor" or "the children's future" and enduring domestic violence only makes the abuser more violent.

It destroys children's mental development and their future.

SILENCE HURTS. BREAK THE CYCLE. PROTECT THE FUTURE.

3 THE LAW IS ALWAYS ON YOUR SIDE

The law provides maximum protection for the identity and confidentiality of the victim.

You have the right to live with dignity and safety.

YOU ARE PROTECTED. YOU ARE NOT ALONE. WE STAND WITH YOU.

“ No citizen should have to live in fear and suspicion in their own home. Rising against violence is not only your right – it is your dignity and your strength!