**Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on functioning of safe houses in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Every second woman in BiH has experienced some form of abuse, including intimate partner violence, stalking or sexual harassment, since the age of 15. (OSCE, 2019.)

There are **8 safe houses** for women and children victims of domestic violence and other forms of violence in BiH.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the already burning issue of domestic violence is exacerbated, because women are confined to their homes, living with violent partners.

Women often do not have the chance to call SOS helplines or seek support using digital platforms and applications, because of the constant presence and control of the violent partner.

In times of crises, persons who survived some forms of trauma in the past or groups of populations who faced difficulty accessing services before the crisis, are especially vulnerable. Those groups include:

- Persons who survived war trauma
- Marginalized groups of population: Roma men and women, persons with disabilities, elderly persons and those living in rural areas

There is evident increase in needs for the following support services:

- **Shelter in safe houses**
- **Calls to SOS helplines**
- **Psychosocial support and counseling**
- **Legal aid**

Some safe houses do not have adequate space for isolation of potentially infected persons and because of this they are forced to refuse new admissions.

Safe houses are in dire need of protection equipment and disinfectants.

Safe houses need additional trained staff who could provide support and counseling through SOS helplines and digital applications and platforms.

Some other needs include covering basic expenses such as food, medicine, clothes and shoes for beneficiaries, as well as equipment for children to be able to continue their education online.

This crisis and its socio-economic impacts have detrimental consequences on women, who are vulnerable in the current market and economy.

Women who stay at safe houses, as well as those who leave, are additionally vulnerable due to the situation on the labor market and difficulty in finding or keeping jobs.

**Socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis**

Report violence to the police at 122 or call the SOS helpline:

Federation BiH 1265
Republika Srpska 1264

REPORT VIOLENCE!

Source: UN Women, Rapid assessment of needs of safe houses in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the COVID-19 crisis, March 2020