



**Report about the Work of the Team for Assistance and Support
for Victims of Domestic Violence in Banja Luka (Mobile Team) in
2008**

United Women Banja Luka

Address: Kalemegdanska 18, 78000 Banja Luka
Bosnia and Herzegovina

Telephone/fax: 051 463 143

Telephone: 051 462 146

E-mail: office@unitedwomenbl.org

Web: <http://www.unitedwomenbl.org>

1. Introduction

Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence (Mobile Team) Banja Luka has been established based on the **Protocol for Assistance and Support to Victims of Domestic Violence**, signed in June 2007 by the City Administration Banja Luka, Center for Social Work Banja Luka, Center for Public Security (police) Banja Luka, and nongovernmental organization “United Women” Banja Luka.

The Team has been established with the objective of prompt and efficient protection of victims of domestic violence, and undertaking adequate measures for urgent protection of victims, as well as conducting necessary activities for initiating judicial procedure against perpetrators of domestic violence.

The Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence in Banja Luka consists from following members:

- Representatives of police – police officers authorized to intervene in region where a case of domestic violence is reported,
- Representative of the Center for Social Work Banja Luka,
- Representative of the nongovernmental organization „United Women“ Banja Luka.

Representative of „United Women“ Banja Luka on a duty shift joins the Team upon call from representative of the Center for Social Work Banja Luka. Together they go to the place where case of domestic violence was reported. The duty shifts are organized within 24 hours period, during working days, weekend, and holidays.

Responsibilities of the representative of “United Women” Banja Luka are following:

- Enabling a victim to, without fear and disturbance, say all the facts relevant for reported domestic violence toward her and children;
- If there is a need for immediate accommodation of a victim of domestic violence in the safe house, accompanying a victim of violence together with the representative of the Center for Social Work in medical examination and afterwards to the Safe House;
- Securing procedure of accommodation of a victim of domestic violence in the safe house
- Preparing official note/report about all activities undertaken after acquiring information that domestic violence occurred.

2. Activities of „United Women“ Banja Luka in the Area of Protecting Women from Domestic Violence Prior to Establishing the Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence in Banja Luka

Since 1997, “United Women” Banja Luka cooperates with Helsinki Citizens Assembly Banja Luka on implementation of the project “Woman and Law,” with the key objective to offer support to women survivors of domestic violence in Banja Luka region. Key project activities include work of SOS telephone for women and girls victims of violence, free legal counseling and assistance, as well as psychological support for women survivors of violence. During that time, there was no legislative and public policy framework covering the area of protecting women from violence.

During past 11 years, “United Women” Banja Luka strived to establish good cooperation with the Center for Social Work Banja Luka and police, with objective of more efficient protection of victims of violence. We organized numerous workshops and seminars about domestic

violence and other forms of gender based violence for women and men police officers, health professionals, and representatives of centers for social work in Northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina. We also actively participated in working meetings with women and men representatives of official institutions authorized to work with women survivors of domestic violence, in order to influence implementation of the right of women to live free from violence, and increase sensitivity of women and men representatives of public institutions for women's human rights, need for securing legal and social protection of women, and implementation of laws that are protecting women survivors of violence in the practice.

During 2003, "United Women" Banja Luka succeeded to secure financial support from the Government of Republika Srpska and Open Society Fund of BiH to buy the house for opening the Shelter for Women and Children Victims of Violence in Banja Luka. This was result of 9 years of lobbying and public advocacy toward official authorities on entity and local level, as well as the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Reconstruction of the Shelter was done thanks to the support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, and final works and buying furniture and appliances for the Shelter were supported through the Governance Accountability Project (GAP) implemented through the City Administration Banja Luka and financed by Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the USAID.

In 2004, "United Women" Banja Luka received the Award of City of Banja Luka for courage and actions on fighting domestic violence. In 2005, we signed Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation with City Administration Banja Luka, Center for Social Work Banja Luka, Health Center Banja Luka, and Public Prosecutor's Office of Republika Srpska. The Safe House for Women and Children Victims of Violence in Vanja Luka was officially opened at the end of 2006, and received the first women and children beneficiaries at the beginning of 2007, after receiving one time financial assistance of the City Administration Banja Luka.

Through media and public advocacy activities, "United Women" Banja Luka succeeded to increase public visibility of the issue of violence against women in a family, We secured free access to information for women survivors of violence through free legal counseling and publication "A Book of My Friend," with represents a self-help guide for women, and brings the overview of key legislative provisions in force in Bosnia and Herzegovina that are protecting women from violence, and contact information of nongovernmental organizations and public institutions that are offering support to women victims of violence.

"United Women" Banja Luka paid special emphasis on adoption of legislation and change of discriminatory legal provisions in the area of protecting women from gender based violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We influenced on recognition of domestic violence and rape in a marriage as criminal acts in changes of the Criminal Code of Republika Srpska adopred in 2000. These provisions were also integrated in the Criminal Law of Republika Srpska adopted in 2003 (Official Gazette of Republika Srpska no. 49, from 25 June 2003, Article 208 regulates violence in a family and family community).

"United Women" Banja Luka participated in the activities of Gender Coalition of Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with other women's associations throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, and influenced adoption of the Law on Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2003 (Chapter XI: Prohibition of Violence, Articles 4, 17 and 27 of this Law are regulating gender based violence. We participated in the Working Group that prepared the Law on Protection

from Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska (Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, no. 118 from 30 December 2005), which introduced special protection measures in cases of domestic violence. With changes and amendments of this Law adopted by the People's Assembly of Republika Srpska in January 2008 (Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, no. 17/08 from 31 January 2008), domestic violence is recognized as severe violation of human rights of women and children. Furthermore, changes of the Law introduced obligation of financing the safe houses for women and children victims of domestic violence in Republika Srpska through public budgets on entity and local level.

3. Results and Indicators of Good Practice in Providing Support and Assistance for Victims of Domestic Violence in Banja Luka

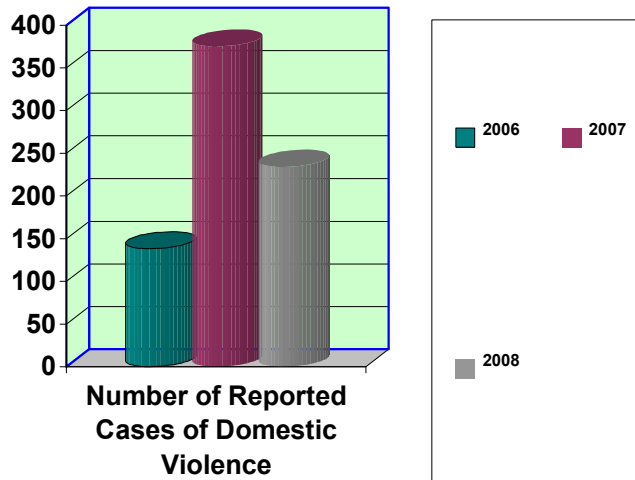
Based on experiences in work with the Center for Social Work Banja Luka and Center for Public Security Banja Luka in the Mobile Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence in Banja Luka, we can emphasize **following results and indicators of good practice:**

- Improved coordination and exchange of information between Center for Social Work Banja Luka, Center for Public Security Banja Luka, and "United Women" Banja Luka with purpose of support and assistance to victims of domestic violence,
- Established multi-disciplinary intervention system supportive to victims of violence and available for 24 hours,
- Women and children survivors of domestic violence are receiving urgent medical assistance if necessary,
- Admittance in the Safe House for Women and Children Victims of Violence in Banja Luka is conducted based on joint assessment of women and men members of the Mobile Team in the moment of acute violence, and based on voluntary acceptance of a victim to be sheltered in the Safe House,
- Women survivors of domestic violence and their children are receiving counselling and support by qualified women and men professionals from the Mobile Team and the Safe House,
- Whenever possible in concrete cases, we are striving to keep women and children survivors of violence in their home,
- During stay in the Safe House, women and children survivors of domestic violence are taking first steps of re-socialization,
- Women and men representatives of the Center for Social Work Banja Luka and "United Women" Banja Luka are together searching for exit strategies for women survivors of domestic violence in order to help their re-socialization and return to normal life,
- Adequate shelter is secured for women survivors of domestic violence so they can leave violent partners,
- Women survivors domestic violence have support in safe and sustainable life (through re-socialization, education, re-entering labor market, and other types of support),
- Secured continuous financial support for the work of Mobile Team and Safe House for Women and Children Victims of Violence in Banja Luka through the public budget of city Administration of Banja Luka.

4. Activities of the Team for Assistance and Support to Victims of Domestic Violence in Banja Luka in 2008

In the period from 1 January until 31 December 2008, three female and one male representatives of “United Women” Banja Luka participated in two hundred and thirty four (234) field interventions of the Mobile Team.

Chart 1 – Reported Cases of Domestic Violence in the Period from 2006 until end of 2008



Period	Number of Reported Cases of Domestic Violence
2006	158
2007	375
2008	234

According to the data collected by “United Women” Banja Luka in 2006, there were 158 reported cases of domestic violence in the area of Banja Luka. In 2007, the number of reported cases raised to 375, while during 2008, number of cases decreased, and the Mobile Team conducted 234 field interventions.

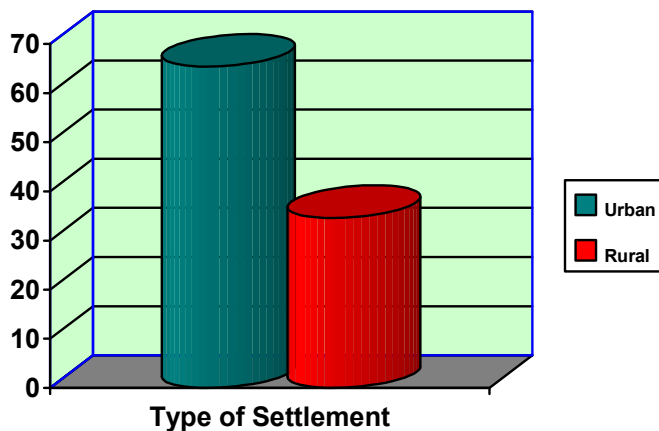
We believe that increase in number of reported cases of domestic violence in 2007 was result of increased interest of women and men citizens to report violence, as well as increased media promotion of the work of Mobile Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence in Banja Luka.

During 2007, “United Women” Banja Luka participated in large number of media presentations aimed to present the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in Republika Srpska to the wide public, and promotion of work of the Safe House for Women and Children Victims of Violence in Banja Luka. Domestic violence largely stops to be taboo topic, and women are encouraged to report it.

“United Women” Banja Luka believe that decrease in number of interventions of the Mobile Team during 2008 is result of following:

1. Women survivors of domestic violence expected from public institutions that their problems will be solved,
2. Cases that involve domestic violence are slowly processed by the judicial institutions,
3. Protections measures regulated by the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence in RS are not implemented by courts,
4. Number of women survivors of domestic violence that received help from the system is not corresponding to expectations of victims.

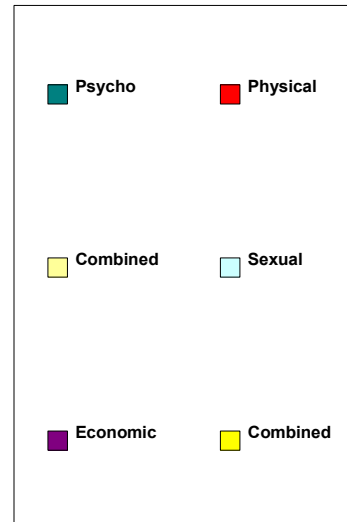
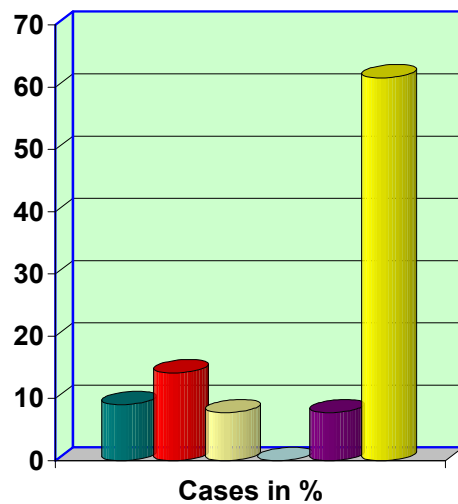
Chart 2 – Type of Settlement where the Violence was Reported



Type of Settlement	Number of Cases	%
Urban area	153	65.4
Rural area	81	34.6
Total	234	100

The largest number of cases of domestic violence was reported in families living in urban settlements – 65%. Smaller number of cases reported from rural settlements can be result of much visible patriarchal family relations, and due to that, women are more hesitant to report violence, because they see it as their own guilt. Women in rural areas are more prone to believe that domestic violence is something that must be kept in a family, far away from the public, because it would stigmatize them within a community. Additional reason is that women in rural areas lack information how they can get help and support.

Chart 3 – Types of Domestic Violence

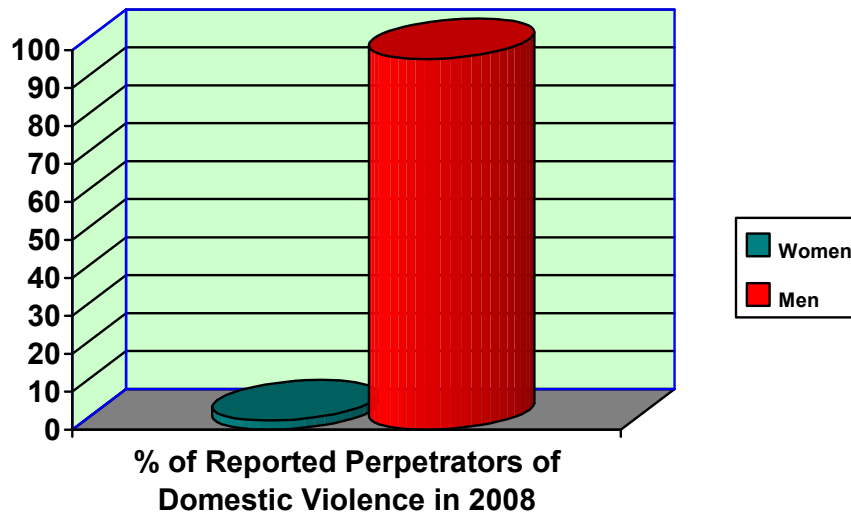


Types of Domestic Violence	Number of Cases	%
Psychological violence	21	9.0
Physical violence	33	14.1
Combined psychological and physical violence	18	7.7
Sexual violence	0	0
Economic violence	18	7.7
Combined all forms	144	61.5
Total	234	100

During 2008, the largest percentage of victims recognized domestic violence as combined in all its forms – 61.5%. Beside that, in 14.1% cases, victims recognized it as physical violence. Victims of domestic violence are hesitant to talk about sexual violence, because they perceive sexual intercourse with perpetrator of domestic violence as their marital obligation. ualnom nasilju jer smatraju da im je seksualni čin sa počiniocem nasilja u porodici bračna obaveza.

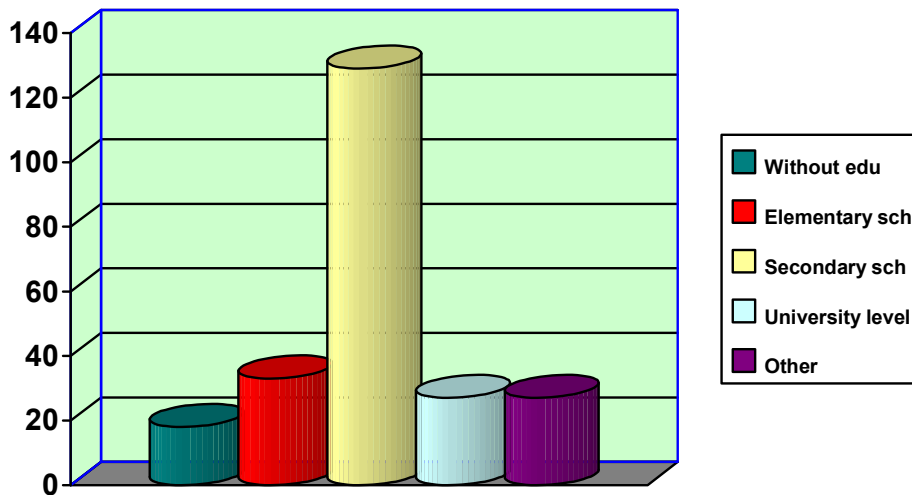
It is encouraging that women survivors of violence are recognizing combined forms of domestic violence. We believe this also represents the result of intensive media campaign led by “United Women” Banja Luka since 1996.

Chart 4 – Sex Disaggregated Data on Reported Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in 2008



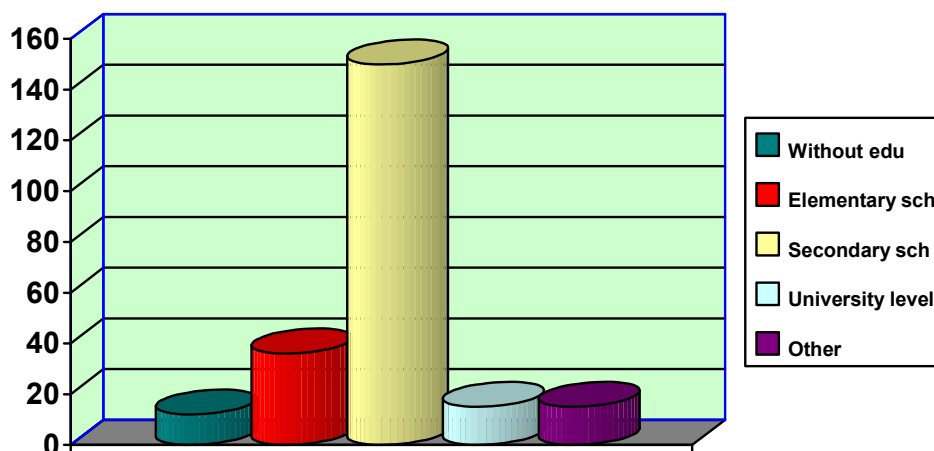
Sex Disaggregated Data on Reported Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in 2008			
Women		8	2.4%
Men		226	97.6%
Total		324	100.0%

Chart 5 – Educational Level of Perpetrators of Domestic Violence



Educational Level of Perpetrators of Domestic Violence				
Without education	Elementary school	Secondary school	University level education	Other
18	33	129	27	27
7.7%	14.1%	55.0%	11.6%	11.6%

Chart 6 – Educational Level of a Victim of Domestic Violence



Educational Level of a Victim of Domestic Violence				
Without education	Elementary school	Secondary school	University level education	Other
12	36	150	18	12
5.4%	15.8%	65.7%	7.7%	5.4%

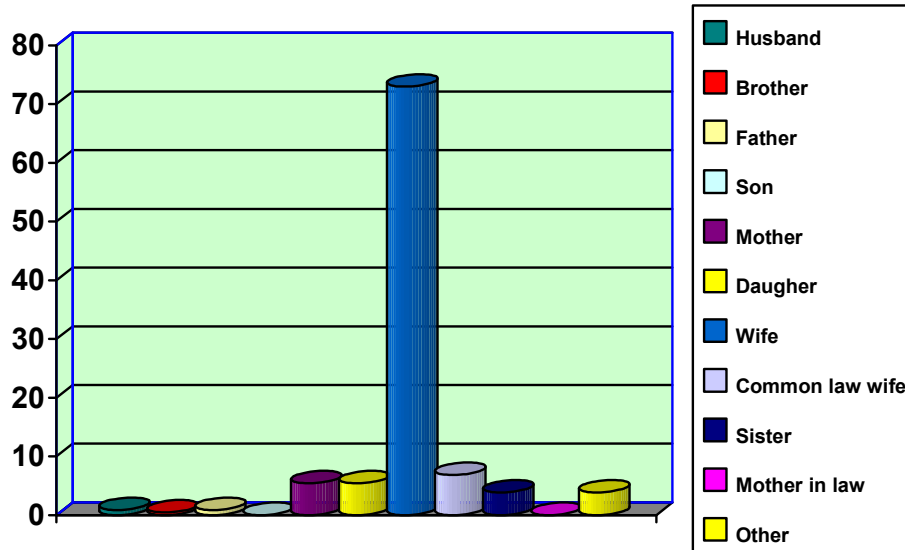
During 234 field interventions of the mobile Team for assistance and support for victims of domestic violence in Banja Luka in 2008, it has been registered that predominant perpetrators of violence were men - 226 (or 97.6%), while only 8 women (or 2.4%) were registered as perpetrators of violence. Majority of perpetrators (55%) and victims of violence (65.7%) have secondary school level education, while 11.6% perpetrators and 7.7% victims of violence have university level education. These data are speaking against deep rooted stereotypes that violence happens in families where both perpetrators and victims of violence are uneducated.

Chart 7 – Employment Status of Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

Employment Status of Perpetrators of Domestic Violence				
Sex	Employed	Unemployed	Total	%
Men	91	135	226	59.73%
Women	2	6	8	75%

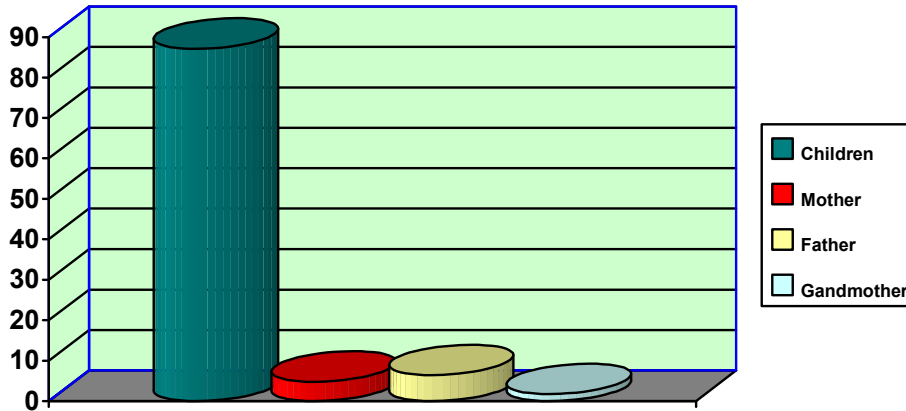
Majority of perpetrators of domestic violence registered by the Mobile Team in Banja Luka during 2008 are unemployed – 135 (or 59.73%). Number of women that were perpetrators of domestic violence in 2008 was insignificant for analysis.

Chart 8 – Relation of a Victim with Perpetrator of Domestic Violence



Relation of a Victim with Perpetrator of Domestic Violence		
Kinship	Number	Percentage
Husband	2	0.86
Brother	1	0.43
Father	2	0.86
Son	0	0
Mother	12	5.41
Daughter	12	5.41
Wife	170	72.95
Common law wife	16	6.83
Common law husband	1	0.43
Sister	9	3.84
Mother in law		0
Other	9	3.84

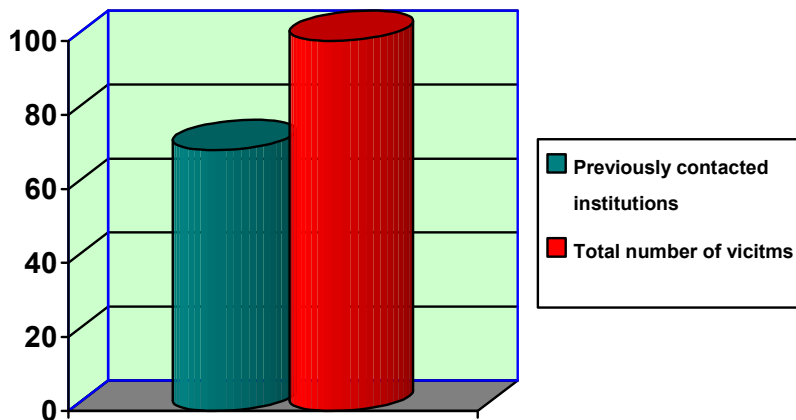
Chart 9 – Other Victims of Domestic Violence



Victims of Violence	Number of Cases	%
Children	162	87.1
Mother	9	4.8
Father	12	6.4
Grandmother	3	1.7
Total	186	

According to data collected by the Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence in 2008, almost 73% of victims of violence were wives of perpetrator of violence, while together with mother children were victims in 87% of cases. Common law wives and parents of perpetrator of domestic violence are also appearing as victims.

Chart 10 – Previous Requests of Victims for the Assistance and Measures that were Taken



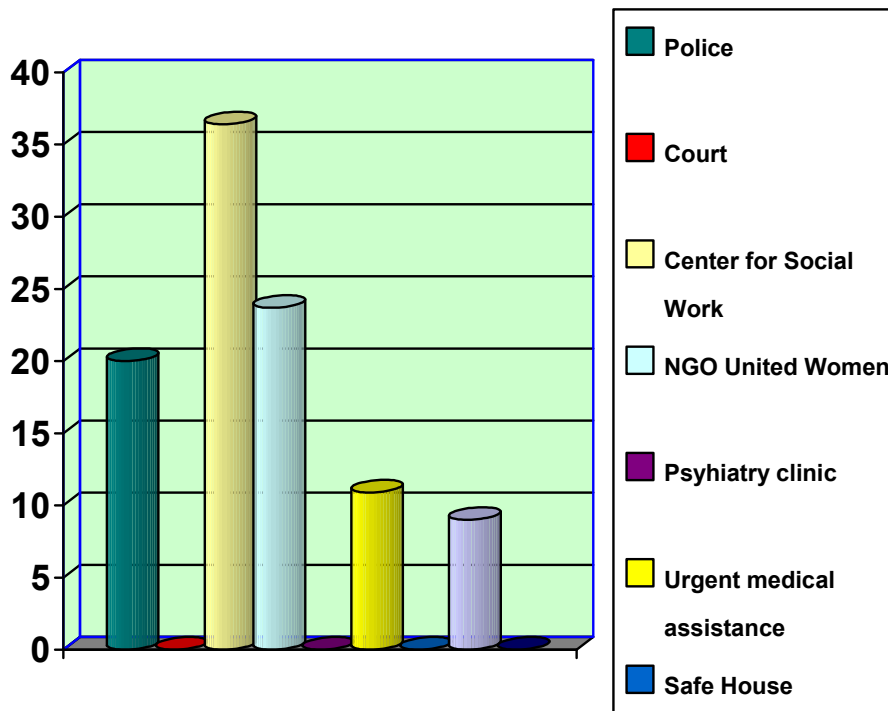
Victims of Violence	Number of Cases	%
Victims that previously contacted institutions for help	165	70.5
Total number of victims	234	100

Chart 11 - Institutions/organizations that were previously contacted by victims of domestic violence

Institutions/Organizations	Number	%
Police	33	20.0
Courts		
Center for Social Work	60	36.4
NGO United Women	39	23.7
Psychiatry Clinic		
Urgent medical assistance	18	10.9
Safe House		
Mobile Team	15	9.0
Ombudsmen	0	
Other institutions	0	
Total	165	100

During interventions of the Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence in Banja Luka during 2008, it was registered that 165 persons that received assistance of the Team (or 70.5%) previously contacted public institutions or NGO “United Women” Banja Luka. Majority of the victims of domestic violence contacted the Center for Social Work Banja Luka - 60 (or 36.4%). Approximately 20% of women victims of violence that received assistance of the Mobile Team in 2008 previously contacted NGO “United Women” Banja Luka. 15 victims of violence (or 9%) repeated the call to the Mobile Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence.

18 victims of domestic violence (or 10.9%) previously contacted urgent medical assistance. It is important to emphasize that victims of domestic violence that were registered by the Mobile Team did not previously seek direct help from Ombudsmen or the Safe House for Women and Children Victims of Violence in Banja Luka.



Measures Undertaken by the Institutions/Organizations During Field Interventions of the Team for Assistance and Support for Victims of Domestic Violence

Chart 12 – Center for Social Work Banja Luka

-Recommendation for sheltering in the Safe House for Women and Children Victims of Violence in Banja Luka	33
-Work with child psychologist	18
-Invitation for visit to the Center for Social Work Banja Luka	196
- Recommendation for family counseling	63
- Recommendation for treatment of alcoholism and contact with social worker authorized to work with alcoholics	18
-Contact with psychiatry clinic	9
-Accommodation of children in temporary shelter	6
-Intervention and official report	234

Chart 13 – Police

-Issued order for arrest of perpetrator	2
-Report of misdemeanor	6
-Assistance with transporting of perpetrator on psychiatry clinic	9
- Assistance for taking over the children	0
- Contacts with department for narcotics	0
- Confiscation of weapon	0
-Notice and official report	234

Chart 14 – Urgent Medical Assistance

-Order for psychiatry clinic	12
-Assistance with transporting of perpetrator on psychiatry clinic	18
- Examination of children and issuing order for children's surgery	0
- Medical examination and intervention	36

Chart 15 – NGO „United Women“Banja Luka

-Recommendation for sheltering in the Safe House for Women and Children Victims of Violence in Banja Luka	29
-Free legal assistance	169
- Accompanying victims of violence to urgent medical assistance service	9
- Interview and official report	234