

## Women's Spirit Statement at the 43rd Pre-sessions:

Thank you UPR Info for the opportunity to speak here today,

Dear Fellow panelists and state representatives,

**Women's Spirit** focuses on rewriting the story of women survivors of abuse. We are an Israeli non-profit that promotes the economic independence of women survivors of abuse and strives for social justice and gender equality. Our work with women survivors of abuse is based on the notion that financial independence is an integral part of a woman's well-being; Women's Spirit focuses on gender-based violence in general and economic abuse in particular. We work to promote change and legislation on economic abuse in Israel since 2007. We build awareness via education including conferences, lectures, workshops, and social media campaigns.

In December 2022, the Israeli government held a round table with NGOs on the subject of abuse against women. Women's Spirit participated in the session dedicated to economic abuse.

Economic abuse is a severe and dangerous phenomenon and oftentimes results in keeping a woman in the cycle of abuse and poverty for years and years. Economic abuse severely violates a woman's autonomy. In its extreme versions, economic abuse deprives a woman and her children of the most basic needs, including food and medicine.

While the State of Israel has made progress in the matter of fighting violence against women, a law against economic abuse has not been passed.

One of the most critical parts of a law against economic abuse is first and foremost naming the abuse. **This** clarifies that economic abuse is abuse like any other. In addition, introducing such a law raises awareness and will assist women in recognizing that they are in an abusive relationship.

Seven recommendations referring to gender-based violence and domestic abuse have been supported by the State of Israel in the third UPR cycle, following the



recommendation of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences on her mission to Israel in 2017 including a recommendation to "*promptly adopt the draft law on economic violence*".

Many objections to a Bill against Economic Abuse were heard during the discussions in the Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee of the Israeli Parliament in 2020. Since the submission of our report, the political climate in Israel has shifted. Parliament Members who were against the Bill, are in positions of power in the current government. Also, the Coalition Agreements include a written promise not to join the Istanbul Convention, which states economic abuse is a form of gender-based violence.

We acknowledge that Israel has noted in the UPR National Report that economic abuse against women is an ongoing challenge and that social workers have received trainings on the subject. However, Israel did not indicate the scope of the trainings and did not address their effect on assisting women suffering from economic abuse. While these trainings are important, they are only the tip of the iceberg, in the ability of the government to combat gender-based violence. They are a small part of what the State must do to eliminate economic abuse.

Understanding that Economic abuse is abuse can be a turning point for many women and in fact, may save lives. A law against economic abuse can carry significant weight in making a difference.

***In conclusion, our recommendations are as follows:***

1. We recommend that the State of Israel adopt the recommendations given by the Special Rapporteur and supported by fellow states, to promote a law that acknowledges and prevents economic abuse and assists its survivors/victims.
2. The State of Israel should continue its efforts to eliminate domestic and gender-based violence against women in all its forms, including Economic Abuse, in conformity with Sustainable Development Goals 5.2 and A5.

Thank you.

