

UNITE. ENGAGE. ELEVATE.

National Strategy on
**Gender-Based Violence and
Domestic Violence**

2023 – 2028



GOVERNMENT
OF MALTA

MINISTRY FOR HOME AFFAIRS,
SECURITY, REFORMS AND EQUALITY
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT
FOR REFORMS AND EQUALITY



**STOP
VIOLENCE**
Commission on Gender-based Violence
and Domestic Violence

**UNITE.
ENGAGE.
ELEVATE.**

National Strategy on
**Gender-Based Violence and
Domestic Violence**

2023 – 2028

November 2023



GOVERNMENT
OF MALTA

MINISTRY FOR HOME AFFAIRS,
SECURITY, REFORMS AND EQUALITY
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT
FOR REFORMS AND EQUALITY




CONTENTS

Acronyms	4
Message by the Minister for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms And Equality	6
Message by the Parliamentary Secretary for Reforms and Equality	8
Message by the Commissioner on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence	10
Introduction	12
Definitions of Gender-Based Violence & Domestic Violence	14
Summary of the Previous Strategy	16
Development of the Third National Strategy on Gender-Based Violence & Domestic Violence (2023 – 2028)	18
Coordination, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation	20
National Action Plan for 2023 to 2028	22
1. Integrated policies, legal measures and data collection	24
2. Prevention	29
3. Protection and support	32
4. Prosecution	35

ACRONYMS

AG	Office of the Attorney General
CfC	Commission for Children
CGBVDV	Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence
CRPD	Commission for the Rights of People with Disability
CSA	Court Services Agency
DoJ	Department of Justice
DPP	Department of Probation and Parole
DRLLE	Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning & Employability
DV	Domestic violence
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
FGM	Female genital mutilation
FSWS	Foundation for Social Welfare Services
GBV	Gender-based violence
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
HA	Housing Authority
HRD	Human Rights Directorate

IMC	Inter-Ministerial Committee
LAM	Legal Aid Malta
LGBTI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer community
MARAM	Multi-agency risk assessment meeting
MEYR	Ministry for Education, Sports, Youth, Research and Innovation
MFH	Ministry for Health
MFJ	Ministry for Justice
MGOZ	Ministry for Gozo
MHSR	Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality
MPF	Malta Police Force
MSPC	Ministry for Social Policy and Children's Rights
NCPE	National Commission for the Promotion of Equality
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSO	National Statistics Office
PDPI	Policy Development and Programme Implementation Unit within MHSR
VSA	Victim Support Agency

A portrait of Byron Camilleri, a man with short dark hair, wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a white shirt, and a light-colored tie. He is smiling and looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm, bokeh-style lights.

Message by the
Minister for Home Affairs,
Security, Reforms And Equality

Byron Camilleri

“Unite, Engage, Elevate” is a phrase often used to express the idea of bringing people together, getting them involved, and raising them to higher levels of achievement or well-being.

This Third National Strategy aims at mitigating gender-based violence and domestic violence. Strategies of this nature involve a combination of legal measures, support services, public awareness campaigns, and coordination among various government agencies and non-governmental organisations which have been roped in to contribute their say.

Any strategy on gender-based violence and domestic violence should reflect the pain, suffering, and injustice many people face daily. Thus, it is our collective responsibility to address and combat these pervasive problems.

This scourge is not confined to a single region or demographic grouping. Global issues cut across borders, cultures, and socio-economic backgrounds. In Malta, we must continue to develop and refine a comprehensive strategy to tackle these problems head-on.

Prevention is key. We must teach respect, equality, and consent early on through comprehensive school education. Awareness campaigns can also help challenge harmful stereotypes and educate the public on gender-based and domestic violence. We must UNITE and work to end violence against women.

We must ENGAGE and involve communities in addressing gender-based and domestic violence by working with leaders, organisations, and individuals to change social norms. Victims face significant barriers to seeking help, so we are improving support services and legal procedures to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.


We must prioritise women's empowerment by ensuring equal access to education, employment, and leadership roles. This not only promotes gender diversity in decision-making positions but also reduces their vulnerability to domestic violence. We must take concrete steps towards achieving this goal and ensure that women's voices are heard at all levels of society.

Fourthly, we need a robust legal framework that not only criminalises gender-based and domestic violence but also enforces strict penalties for offenders. Additionally, we should work on simplifying the legal process for victims, providing them with the support they need to navigate the justice system.

Crucially important is to ELEVATE awareness through education and awareness campaigns to change attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions related to gender-based violence and domestic violence and to encourage survivors to come forward.

Women must have equal access to education, employment opportunities, and leadership roles. Empowering women economically not only provides them with financial independence but also reduces their vulnerability to domestic violence. We must strive for gender diversity in decision-making positions to ensure women's voices are heard at all levels of society.



A portrait of Ms Rebecca Buttigieg, a woman with red hair and glasses, wearing a white blazer. The background is a blurred green outdoor setting.

Message by the
Parliamentary Secretary
for Reforms and Equality

Ms Rebecca Buttigieg

The third National Strategy on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence continues to build on the previous two strategies and the valuable work achieved over the years.

During the development of this strategy, the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence analysed the legislative and administrative changes effected over the past years and also took into account the various recommendations put forth by the different entities to develop an action plan which will strengthen the implementation of the Istanbul Convention on a national level.



UNITE.
ENGAGE.
ELEVATE.

We are conscious that domestic violence is a complex issue which not only affects persons in Malta but in other countries as well. This strategy has been inspired by local and foreign experiences and strives to achieve the best possible results in addressing this social plague which is, unfortunately, difficult to eradicate.

This strategy and action plan are a roadmap for the various government entities to implement measures which reflect our commitment to collectively fight the suffering caused by domestic violence, in collaboration with NGOs working in the sector, in providing support to victims.

This document will serve as a tool to guide the implementation of a series of measures between now and 2028. This strategy prioritizes prevention measures, such as, the introduction of technological means to prevent potential cases of gender-based violence and domestic violence.

As legislators, we shall continue to reinforce the legislative framework on domestic violence. More importantly, we need to ensure there are sufficient financial and human resources to implement this strategy, whilst also sustaining awareness-raising and educational campaigns which are crucial in overcoming the monster that is gender-based violence and domestic violence.

A portrait of Ms Samantha Pace Gasan, a woman with long, dark, curly hair, looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored top. The background is a blurred indoor setting with a flag visible on the right.

Message by the
Commissioner on Gender-Based
Violence and Domestic Violence

Ms Samantha Pace Gasan

Taking on the role of Commissioner on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence is a tremendous privilege and I take it on with a sense of great responsibility. This role gives me the opportunity to work towards social justice for victims and survivors of gender-based violence and domestic abuse.

It is with great honour and responsibility that I will lead the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence in monitoring the implementation of Malta's Third National Strategy on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence (2023 – 2028). Any strategy document should be a living document, and as Commissioner, I commit to adhering to the Istanbul Convention and this strategy.

This strategy aims to strengthen policies and legislation, as well as to contribute to the creation of coalitions between stakeholders in order to prevent violence and continue building onto the quality of the current services being provided to victims. Perpetrators and potential perpetrators will also continue to be given an opportunity for rehabilitation, while protection and prosecution will be re-enforced through actions that are specifically aimed at ensuring better collaboration. Being the first strategy which establishes a five term duration for implementation, this strategy allows us to gain foresight to where we want to be as a country in addressing this societal and economic challenge.

Education will continue to be one of the main pillars for the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence. Multiple efforts to target specific social groups are being introduced, with intersectionality being at the heart of the Commission's efforts to safeguard the rights of victims from diverse minority groups. As a team, we will be actively working towards strengthening our current communication strategy in order to reach these groups but also to reach out to the general public and raise awareness towards ending gender-based violence and domestic violence.

A whole family approach to domestic violence has been adopted. Children witnessing violence are victims too and focusing solely on the direct victims and perpetrators is an injustice to those children who are indirectly impacted, even if they have grown up without the awareness of the trauma they have endured. Thus, it is essential that we address the potential damage made to these children's psychological wellbeing. The Commission will continue to bring this to the forefront of its discussions, not only as a way of targeting injustices, but also as a way by which we can break the cycle of violence in the long run.

The participation and inclusion of non-governmental organisations will also be a priority throughout the next five years. Their voice as representatives of the issue, as well as the stories and experiences of victims, will be prioritised throughout the next five years to ensure that we, as advocates for such vulnerable people, stay grounded and open to continuous positive development. This will ensure that re-victimisation of these individuals and families is prevented because ultimately, our role as a Commission in society is to empower.

As stakeholders, we will UNITE our resources, ENGAGE with the public and ELEVATE our standards.



**UNITE.
ENGAGE.
ELEVATE.**

INTRODU

The Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence (CGBVDV) presents its third and longest national strategy on gender-based violence and domestic violence. It was brought to fruition through desk-based research and interagency consultation with all stakeholders mentioned herein.

UCTION

Much like its precedent, it is built on the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention: integrated policies, prevention, protection and support, and prosecution. Through its five-year action plan, it seeks to sustain the achievements of the two previous national strategies whilst also integrating a more longitudinal vision in its measures and expected outcomes. Through this strategy, Malta continues to honour its commitment to attain the 'golden standards' of the Istanbul Convention, to prevent violence and bring justice to all who are concerned.

**UNITE.
ENGAGE.
ELEVATE.**

DEFINITION

OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act
(Chapter 581) of the Laws of Malta defines:

Gender-based violence

“All acts or omissions that are directed against a person because of their gender, that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” (Chapter 581, Part 1(2)).

UNITE.
ENGAGE.
ELEVATE.

'IONS

Domestic violence

"All acts or omissions including verbal, physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence causing physical and, or moral harm or suffering, including threats of such acts or omissions, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, that occur within the family or domestic unit, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim, and shall include children who are witnesses of violence within the family or domestic unit." (Chapter 581, Part 1(2)).

SUMMA

OF THE PREVIOUS STRATEGY

Malta's second National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence (2021-2022) was launched in June 2021. In accordance with Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention and the Gender-Based Violence & Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 581) of the Laws of Malta, CGBVDV was tasked with developing, coordinating, and monitoring the implementation of this two-year action plan.

Throughout 2021 and 2022, the Commission chaired monthly meetings with the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), made up of high-level representatives from various ministries, entities, and agencies. The purpose of these meetings was to provide the necessary space for representatives to share their progress on implementation, point out current concerns and sustain networking relations with other stakeholders in the field.

ARY

Documented updates were also requested from each stakeholder through quarterly progress reports. A compilation of these reports resulted into two Annual Reports on the implementation of the National Strategy. Final results are summarised in the table below:

List of expected actions	49
Number of actions which have been implemented and/or are ongoing	38
Number of actions whose implementation is in progress.	5
Number of actions which have been delayed.	6

In preparation for the closing of the second National Strategy, the Commission co-ordinated one-to-one meetings with each IMC focal point. These meetings enabled the Commission and each individual stakeholder to collaboratively determine the way forward on respective measures, and identify the strengths, good practices and room for improvement which revealed themselves during implementation.

DEVELO

OF THE THIRD
NATIONAL STRATEGY
ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(2023 – 2028)

PREPARATORY

The Commission initiated preparatory work on the drafting of the third National Strategy and Action Plan by carrying out desk-research on both EU and national priority areas in relation to gender-based violence and domestic violence. The recommendations put forth by the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) following their country monitoring visit in 2020 were also considered.

One-to-one meetings with the members of the IMC were held to discuss policy measures within their respective remits, as well as the possibility of including their own additional initiatives given the five-year timeframe. This strategy also brought about the inclusion of other national stakeholders whose work may be peripheral to gender-based violence and domestic violence but whose services are nonetheless vital for holistic prevention, protection and support. The consultation process concluded with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for them to have the opportunity to contribute their perspective, suggestions, and long-term vision for their respective entities, to ensure that these are adequately reflected in the scope of this strategy.

COORDII

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In line with Article 10 of the Istanbul Convention and the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act (Chapter 581) of the Laws of Malta, the Commission on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence will once again assume a coordinative and evaluative role throughout this five-year strategy. The Commission will sustain the practice of monitoring implementation through the IMC and regular requests for progress reports, both of which have proven themselves to be effective and efficient means of securing input from all stakeholders.

UNITE.
ENGAGE.
ELEVATE.

NATION

The monthly IMC meetings will continue to be chaired by CGBVDV and include representatives from the Office of the Attorney General (AG), the Court Services Agency (CSA), the Department of Justice (DoJ), the Department of Probation and Parole (DPP), the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS), the Human Rights Directorate (HRD), Legal Aid Malta (LAM), the Ministry for Education, Sports, Youth, Research and Innovation (MEYR), the Ministry for Gozo (MGOZ), the Ministry for Health (MFH), the Ministry for Justice (MFJ), the Malta Police Force (MPF), the Policy Development and Programme Implementation Directorate (PDPI) and the Victim Support Agency (VSA). The IMC meetings will also include input from NGOs on a quarterly basis.

Every six months, the Commission will request one-to-one meetings and quarterly documented feedback from each stakeholder on progression with their respective measures. Individual reports will be compiled by the Commission to generate an Annual Report on the implementation of the Strategy. This report will be presented to the Parliamentary Secretary on Reforms and Equality and the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry for Home Affairs, Security, Reforms and Equality (MHSE) in the first quarter of the subsequent year.

The Action Plan does not necessarily dictate all gender-based violence and domestic violence-related initiatives that will be undertaken in the upcoming five years. Other additional measures and initiatives may be necessary or recommended according to presenting circumstances, events and evidence of good practices.

NATION ACTION

FOR 2023 TO 2028

AL PLAN

UNITE.
ENGAGE.
ELEVATE.

1.

Integrated policies, legal measures and data collection

Measure	Action	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
1.1 Ensure that Maltese legislation sufficiently safeguards victims of gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic violence (DV) and that it is effectively implemented.	a. Monitor and evaluate reforms in family, civil and criminal courts, juridical developments, and implementation of relevant law.	CGBVDV, MPF, DoJ, MFJ, CSA	Ongoing
	b. Monitor the progress of legal amendments in the legal definition of the family and domestic unit.	CGBVDV, DoJ, MFJ, MPF	1 year
	c. Consult with NGOs, service users, survivors, professionals and entities to identify necessary legal amendments.	CGBVDV	Ongoing
	d. Systematically analyse court decisions for cases of DV to highlight patterns in legal proceedings.	CGBVDV, MFJ, CSA	2 years
	e. Consultation with the judiciary to follow analysis of court decisions.	CGBVDV	3 years
	f. Criminalise the act of virginity testing to eradicate this traumatic and violent experience against women and girls.	HRD	1 year
	g. Monitor the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (Act No. XVIII of 2023) to ensure access to information on whether potential partners were ever found guilty of DV in the past.	CGBVDV	3 years

Measure	Action	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
	h. Initiate discussions on preventing perpetrators of GBV and DV from working within organisations which provide services to victims.	CGBVDV	
	i. Coordinate discussions to strengthen court orders with regards to supervision during access arrangements in cases of DV.	CGBVDV, FSWS, MFJ, CSA	
	j. Explore good practices of measures to protect victims and children with regards to alimony and parental alienation and co-ordinate discussions with relevant entities and NGOs.	CGBVDV	3 years
	k. Develop a strategy to address human trafficking, addressing issues related to forced prostitution and exploitation for sexual purposes as a crime.	HRD, FSWS	1 year
1.2 Ensure that laws and administrative procedures do not prevent migrant victims from leaving violent relationships due to fear of deportation, loss of legal status or revoked custody over the children.	a. Update existing residence criteria regarding the residence status of victims of DV.	PDPI (MHSR), Identity Malta	3 years
	b. Conduct research on the prevalence and barriers encountered within migrant communities to inform policy development.	CGBVDV	2 years
	c. Develop training programmes for professionals who work with migrants on recognising early signs of abuse and the barriers encountered by migrants who are victims of DV and GBV.	CGBVDV, FSWS, AWAS	3 years

Measure	Action	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
1.3 Strengthen a coordinated and well-resourced multi-agency approach to increase capacity building across agencies in order to provide victims of GBV and DV with immediate, comprehensive and coordinated support.	a. Develop and strengthen guidelines and memoranda of understanding among service providers to reinforce multi-agency coordination and cooperation, including:		
	i. Strengthen the role of MARAM in sharing expertise and experience in handling high-risk cases.	MSPC, FSWS, MPF, DPP, VSA, MEYR, MFH, CGBVDV	Ongoing
	ii. Addressing significant challenges faced by victims in Gozo.	MGOZ, FSWS, MPF, VSA, GBVDV	3 years
	iii. A contingency plan for future national emergencies in view of national stakeholders' experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic.	CGBVDV, FSWS, MEYR, MFH, MPF, VSA, DPP	5 years
	iv. Entities should consult with CGBVDV and equality bodies to ensure implementation of evidence-based policies which consider the co-morbidity of GBV and DV with other social problems (e.g., substance abuse and mental health) and intersectional discrimination.	CGBVDV (IMC)	Ongoing
	v. Ensuring that the implementation of policies and standard operating procedures adopt an inclusive and a holistic approach to DV and GBV.	CGBVDV (IMC)	Ongoing
	vi. Targeted policies on specific forms of GBV and DV, including FGM, forced marriage, sexual violence, sexual harassment and gender-based cyberviolence.	CGBVDV, MPF, MFH, MEYR, FSWS, VSA	5 years
	b. Strengthen the coordination of the IMC for the implementation of the GBV and DV Action Plan and enable the exchange of best practices among professionals.	CGBVDV	Ongoing

Measure	Action	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
1.4 Strengthen multi-agency collaboration between national stakeholders and NGOs to ensure adequate and timely legal and psycho-social support for victims of GBV and DV.	a. Continue coordinating monthly meetings between national stakeholders to discuss policy development and provision of services.	CGBVDV	Ongoing
	b. Continue coordinating quarterly meetings with NGOs and the IMC to promote regular cooperation and consultation with civil society to ensure their participation in the design of policies, legislative changes and programmes.	CGBVDV	Ongoing
	c. Host monthly fora with NGOs to strengthen representation of service users and victims.	CGBVDV	Ongoing
	d. Collaborate with NGOs in delivering and attending training for professionals, and designing and implementing awareness-raising campaigns, subject to their area of expertise.	CGBVDV	Ongoing
	e. Create a safe space where victims of GBV and DV can voice out their concerns to contribute towards policy development and strengthen service provision.	CGBVDV	2 years
	f. Monitor the progress of the coordination between the Family Court and the Criminal Court.	CGBVDV, MFJ, CSA	5 years
1.5 Monitor the development of coordinated action on GBV and DV at EU and international levels.	a. Monitor adherence to legal, policy and service provision standards enshrined in dedicated multinational frameworks, EU directives and strategies, and the Istanbul Convention.	CGBVDV	Ongoing

Measure	Action	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
	b. Provide feedback on policy formation on GBV and DV to EU and international entities as requested.	CGBVDV, PDPI	Ongoing
1.6 Continue work on the systematic collection of statistical data in relation to GBV and DV.	a. Strengthen guidelines/ protocols to collect disaggregated data across national service providers working in the field of GBV and DV.	CGBVDV (IMC), NSO	Ongoing
	b. Observe data collection guidelines issued by the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE), the Istanbul Convention and the European Commission (Eurostat).	CGBVDV, NSO	Ongoing
	c. Participate and collaborate in EU-wide population-based surveys as requested, and coordinate with relevant entities for implementation.	CGBVDV	Ongoing
1.7 Conduct, support and make use of research on all forms of GBV and DV, including research on intersectional discrimination which leads to violence on specific groups of victims such as ethnic minorities, persons with a disability and the LGBTI+ community.	a. Conduct a research study examining the incidence of GBV and DV as experienced by individuals belonging to specific vulnerable groups.	CGBVDV	3 years
	b. Improve understanding of legal definitions and forms of gender-based cyberviolence and good practices on an EU and international level which serve to inform future research and policy formation.	CGBVDV	3 years
	c. Evaluate existing legislation and policies vis-à-vis research findings to ensure an evidence-based approach.	CGBVDV	Ongoing

2.

Prevention

Measure	Action	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
2.1 Implement awareness-raising campaigns to increase awareness among the general public on all forms of GBV and DV, including online violence.	a. Conduct thematic and strategic awareness-raising campaigns on a quarterly basis for the general public which incorporate an active bystander approach.	CGBVDV	Ongoing
	b. Develop targeted awareness-raising campaigns addressing specific communities where there is greater prevalence of violence and abuse.	CGBVDV	Ongoing
	c. Implement an awareness-raising campaign which encourages adults who have been exposed to violence and abuse in their childhood to seek professional psychosocial support.	CGBVDV	2 years
	d. Assess the impact of awareness-raising campaigns to better shape policy measures and service provision.	CGBVDV	1 year
	e. Quarterly dissemination of information material in various languages to service providers across Malta and Gozo.	CGBVDV	Ongoing

Measure	Action	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
2.2 Educate boys and girls about gender equality and support the development of non-violent relationships, at all levels of education, adapted to the evolving capacity of learners, in consultation with national expert entities on gender mainstreaming and equality.	a. Strengthen teaching on dating violence prevention, gender equality and the intersectional element of violence and assist schools and colleges in Malta and Gozo to deliver effective and updated lessons, in consultation with national expert entities on gender mainstreaming and equality.	CGBVDV, MEYR, NCPE	3 years
2.3 Awareness-raising with parents and caregivers on DV and GBV.	a. Reach out to parents through the education system by delivering information sessions and disseminating promotional material also targeting parents/caregivers whose children are more prone to absenteeism.	CGBVDV, MEYR	Ongoing
2.4 Provide in-house training programmes on GBV and DV for all professionals working in the field and professionals who may not be directly involved in the field but have the potential to encounter victims of GBV and DV.	a. Conduct an annual training needs analysis through the IMC set-up for the implementation of the GBV and DV strategy, and in consultation with NGOs.	CGBVDV	Ongoing
	b. Evaluate and improve the provision of multi-agency training to strengthen coordination and cooperation in service provision.	CGBVDV	Ongoing
	c. Conduct an evaluation to assess improvement in knowledge and approach with professionals who participated in the multi-agency training.	CGBVDV	3 years

Measure	Action	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
	d. Develop and provide specialised training targeting specific professionals, addressing specific themes (e.g., co-morbidity of GBV and DV with other social issues).	CGBVDV	Ongoing
	e. Develop, deliver and monitor initial and in-service training.	CGBVDV, MPF, FSWS, MEYR, MFH, MFJ	3 years
2.5 Strengthen treatment programmes for perpetrators and incorporate them into the criminal justice system as a form of secondary prevention and a tool to reduce recidivism.	a. Provide training opportunities to the judiciary and lawyers on the importance and preventative role of perpetrator programmes.	CGBVDV, MFJ, FSWS	2 years
	b. Assess and strengthen the efficacy of perpetrator programmes.	CGBVDV, FSWS	3 years
2.6 Engage the media and the private sector in addressing gender stereotypes, the prevailing acceptance of GBV and DV and discriminatory cultural norms.	a. Strengthen collaboration with the media and private sector through active participation and maintaining good public relations.	CGBVDV	Ongoing
	b. Revise the reporting guidelines for journalists when reporting cases of GBV and DV.	CGBVDV	3 years
	c. Encourage the systematic use of reporting guidelines for journalists when reporting cases of GBV and DV through continuous training.	CGBVDV	5 years
	d. Ratify the ILO Convention on Violence & Harassment to implement measures which address and mitigate the impact of violence at the workplace.	NCPE	Ongoing

3.

Protection and support

Measure	Action	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
3.1 Ensure that victims receive adequate and timely information on available support services and legal measures.	a. Provide up-to-date and accessible information material, including easy-to-read versions, on victims' rights and access to services, both online and in hard copy, and ensure that it is made readily available across various agencies and in various languages.	CGBVDV, VSA, MEYR, MPF, MFH, DPP, FSWS, NCPE, CRPD	Ongoing
3.2 Evaluate current legal practices and to what extent these are effective in protecting victims and their children.	a. Study the possibility and develop an action plan for eventual implementation of a centralised system recording bail conditions, protection orders, restraining orders and temporary protection orders when these are issued by the courts and make the system readily accessible to the police and the courts to ensure that violations are registered and sanctions are imposed within the shortest timeframe possible.	CSA, MPF	5 years
	b. Monitor breaches of bail conditions (in cases of DV), protection orders, restraining orders and temporary protection orders to further safeguard victims through the introduction of electronic tagging and panic buttons.	MPF, DPP	5 years
	c. Ensure that prosecuting officers request the courts to issue bail conditions (in cases of DV), protection orders, restraining orders and temporary protection orders in view of the risk assessment and other evidence.	MPF	3 years

Measure	Action	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
	d. Provide training opportunities for the police, lawyers and judiciary on the role of risk assessments, protection orders, restraining orders and temporary protection orders in breaking the cycle of violence in cases of DV.	CGBVDV, MFJ, MPF	2 years
	e. Provide training opportunities to law enforcement (police and attorney general) and judiciary on the prosecution of psychological violence, stalking, sexual violence and economic violence based on the national legislative framework.	CGBVDV, MFJ, MPF, AG	3 years
3.3 Guarantee victims' rights and interests, including specific target groups (e.g., LGBTIQ+, persons with disability, migrant populations, etc.).	a. Consult with national equality bodies and other respective entities to ensure that information and services are sufficiently equipped to cater for victims with different needs through accessibility audits, capacity building and policy development.	VSA, MPF, CSA, LAM, FSWS, CGBVDV, NCPE, CRPD, Cfc	Ongoing
	b. Identify barriers to & increase awareness of lifelong learning and employment opportunities and services among victims of GBV and DV.	Jobsplus, MEYR (DRLE).	Ongoing
	c. Identify barriers to access social benefits and housing services for victims of GBV and DV.	HA, MSPC, CGBVDV	3 years
	d. Develop a strategic plan to address barriers highlighted for victims of GBV and DV to access housing services.	HA, CGBVDV	5 years

Measure	Action	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
3.4 Ensure that child witnesses of all forms of violence are provided with necessary support and their rights adhered to.	a. Strengthen the provision of age-appropriate psychosocial and counselling services, including psychosocial support for adults who were exposed to violence in their childhood.	CGBVDV, FSWS, MEYR	2 years
	b. Update procedures related to parental consent to ensure children have equal opportunities to leisure, educational activities and medical services in cases of DV.	CGBVDV, MEYR, MFJ	2 years
	c. Identify any additional barriers for the inclusion of children in situations of GBV and DV.	CGBVDV, CfC, MEYR	5 years
3.5 Strengthen specialised services for victims of GBV beyond DV in Malta and Gozo.	a. Develop sound protocols for the management of cases of sexual violence and rape, including referral structures, to ensure the prompt and efficient coordination between all professionals.	MFH, MPF, FSWS	3 years
	b. Increase the capacity of first stage emergency shelters for victims of GBV and DV, particularly by opening new shelters which also cater for different target groups, including victims, or their minor children, with substance abuse, male victims and persons within the LGBTIQ+ community, ensuring that these are accessible for all.	FSWS	5 years
3.6 Provide better psychological support for professionals working directly with victims and perpetrators of GBV and DV.	a. Coordinate discussions with relevant stakeholders on the provision of psychological support and mandatory supervision.	CGBVDV (IMC)	2 years

4.

Prosecution

Measure	Action	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
4.1 Equip the Police with the knowledge and powers to respond promptly and appropriately to all forms of GBV and DV.	a. Reinforce interdepartmental protocols and strengthen guidelines between GBDV Unit and other units within the MPF and interagency protocols to improve support for victims of GBV and DV and prosecution of GBV and DV, including gender-based cyberviolence.	MPF	Ongoing
	b. Ensure that evidence is collected through on-site investigations by law enforcement officers when reports of GBV and DV are received.	MPF	Ongoing
4.2 Reduce the risk of secondary victimization of victims of GBV and DV and protect the rights and interests of victims.	a. Collect data on a regular basis and carry out research, including from a victim's perspective, on the effectiveness of the measures in place to avoid repeat victimisation through the justice system.	CGBVDV, MPF, VSA, LAM	Ongoing
	b. Continue to ensure that risk assessors, the police and courts implement the necessary measures to minimise the risk of secondary victimisation during judicial proceedings.	CSA, VSA, MPF	5 years
	c. Examine and minimise barriers to reporting which are encountered by victims in Gozo.	MGOZ, MPF	2 years

Measure	Action	Responsible Entities	Timeframe
	<p>d. Relocate the Domestic and Gender Based Violence Unit from the Police Headquarters to dedicated hubs around Malta and Gozo which are equipped with all necessary resources and professionals, promoting a one-stop-shop approach.</p>	<p>MPF, FSWS, CGBVDV (IMC)</p> <p>Supporting Ministry: MFH</p>	2 years
	<p>e. Develop a list of interpreters, experts and interviewers to assist the police and the courts.</p>	MFJ, CSA, DOJ, MPF	2 years
4.3 Provide victims with adequate and timely access to legal counsel.	<p>a. Recruit and train lawyers who are specifically assigned to provide legal counsel to victims.</p>	LAM	Ongoing
4.4 Ensure the effective prosecution of all forms of GBV and DV, including psychological and economic violence, as stipulated by national law.	<p>a. Promote the use of risk assessments as a form of evidence in court.</p>	AG, MPF, FSWS	Ongoing
	<p>b. Update the risk assessment methodology from DASH to a modern evidence-based approach, which can be used by the courts (family and criminal courts).</p>	FSWS, MSPC, CGBVDV	3 years
	<p>c. Explore the possibility of having in place the legislative framework that allows for medical evidence to be lifted from victims of sexual violence should they so wish whenever they seek medical assistance, regardless of whether they have filed a report with the police.</p>	CGBVDV, MFH	5 years