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Russian Federation

Women's shelter needs funding

[Action text]

Liuba's husband started beating her soon after they were married 20 years ago. She would call the police, but they would either have a friendly chat with him and let him go or blame her for his aggression.

After her husband beat her youngest son and threatened to kill her when she intervened, Liuba (not her real name) filed for a divorce. However, she had nowhere to go, so ended up living with her former husband for over a year. He continued his abuse, including by attacking her with a hammer and destroying all her possessions.

Liuba tried to take her former husband to court, but on one occasion the files got lost and on another the judge told her not to bother the court with her family problems. Liuba lives in Barnaul, capital of Altai Region.

In 1998 a group of people in Barnaul formed Women's Alliance, an organization that provides training for police and social workers, and supports women who have suffered violence. In August 2004, in cooperation with Women's Alliance, a state-sponsored crisis centre was opened in Barnaul. It is one of the few in the country that has a 24-hour telephone hotline. However, it does not have a shelter – a place where women like Liuba can find temporary protection.

In early 2005, at a meeting with Amnesty International and the crisis centre, the Deputy Head of Altai Region's administration offered to pay half the funds needed to provide a shelter if the other half came from elsewhere. In summer 2006, at a meeting of relevant bodies of the administration of the region, it was decided that a detailed proposal to open a shelter should be presented to the head of the administration of Altai Region before December 2006.

The shelter is desperately needed. Too often, women in Altai Region make a complaint about domestic violence but withdraw it the next day because they know they will have to carry on living with the perpetrator.

[Call to action]

Write to Head of the Administration of Altai Region, urging him to ensure that a women's shelter in Altai Region is built.

[Sample letter]

Dear Aleksandr Bogdanovich,

The crisis centre for women in Altai Region provides important support for women who have suffered violence, including domestic violence. Many of these women have nowhere safe to go and are forced to live in a violent relationship at great risk to their life and health.

I am aware of the progress in recent years in providing support to survivors of domestic violence in Altai Region. However, a shelter for women survivors of domestic violence is urgently needed.

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I urge you to ensure that such a shelter is built and adequately resourced as soon as possible, and to encourage social services, police and forensic experts to co-operate with women's organizations that are tackling the problem of domestic violence.

This appeal is part of Amnesty International's worldwide campaign to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November, focusing on shelters for women who suffer domestic violence.

Yours sincerely,

[Target contact details]

1)

Head of Administration of Altai Region
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Russian Federation

2)

You can send copies to:
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