

Hungary: justice denied to victims of rape in the home

Web action: EUR 27/005/2007

WA 012/07

"At least 85% of them are whores: but they do not manage to come to an agreement. They are prostitutes: overtly or secretly ..."

A police officer and expert on rape issues

The government in Hungary is failing to protect women from rape and sexual violence in the home. Widespread prejudice, government inactivity and deficiencies in the criminal justice system mean that many women are denied justice.

Many cases never reach court. Women are reluctant to report rape, fearing reprisals and having to go through a humiliating reporting procedure. The police frequently do not conduct proper investigations and forensic evidence is not gathered properly. Those who do reach court face the obstacle of public attitudes that it is acceptable for a husband to force his wife to have sex and that it is the woman who provokes rape.

"I have worked as a judge for 10 years, but to tell you the truth, I myself would not report rape. It is the victim who has to defend and prove everything". Woman judge.

The government of Hungary must act now to stop this abuse.

Take action!

Write to the Prime Minister of Hungary to urge him to ensure that women and girls are properly protected from rape in the home.

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to express my concern about the insufficient measures taken to protect and ensure redress for women who are survivors of intimate partner rape and sexual violence.

I am concerned at the low level of reporting by women of intimate partner rape and other crimes of sexual violence in the home in Hungary; at the often inadequate response by the state, police and judiciary to complaints of sexual violence by women; and the continued existence of social attitudes which reinforce the belief that it is acceptable for a husband to force his wife to have sex.

I urge you to fulfill your international obligations to protect women and girls by appropriately addressing the issues of rape and sexual violence in the home as a matter of urgency. I urge you to take all the necessary steps in order to address rape and sexual violence in the home in Hungary. In particular,

- o Ensure that legal changes and procedural reforms within the police and judiciary take place in order to adequately protect and give redress to women who are survivors of rape and sexual violence in the home in Hungary
- o Ensure that specialized support services for women who are survivors of rape and sexual violence are available across the country, and that health care and social workers are appropriately trained about the realities, experience and needs of these women
- o Organize and fund a national public awareness campaign, in cooperation with civil society organizations, to challenge existing prejudices around rape and sexual violence in the home, leading to discriminatory treatment, stigmatization of victims and inadequate response to their complaints

I appeal to you to take all the necessary steps in order to address and break stereotypes around the issues of rape and sexual violence in the home in Hungary.

Yours sincerely,

Please send appeals to:

Prime Minister: Ferenc Gyurcsány

1055 Budapest

Kossuth Lajos tér 1-3.

Hungary

Fax: (+36 1) 441-2112

E-mail: Ferenc.Gyurcsany@meh.hu
