

IMPROVING JUSTICE FOR AFGHAN WOMEN

By strengthening cooperation and increasing legal awareness, the Victim Witness Assistance Program is enabling cases of gender-based violence to be prosecuted more effectively in Afghanistan.

REDUCED REFERRAL TIME

"In the past, it could take months for a case to be referred, by which time the victim's injuries had healed up and there was no physical evidence left. Now, the cases are referred immediately and can be processed before the injuries have healed."

Brishna Kohistany

Head of the Huquq/Rights Division, Department of Women's Affairs (Nangarhar province)

DETERRENT TO CORRUPTION

"Powerful people sometimes stop the investigation of cases by threatening doctors and others. Now, when cases involve powerful people as the accused or a relative of the accused, a high-level government official is invited to attend the VWAP meeting. Their presence alone serves as a deterrent to powerful persons becoming involved in cases."

Nooria Niazi

Head of the EAW Unit, Attorney-General's Office (Jowzjan province)

GROWING NUMBER OF CASES

Previously, we processed around 50 cases of violence against women per year. Now, thanks to improved coordination between service providers, that number has risen to over 100. Survivors are able to access justice because they have support."

Maria Akbari

Head of the Family Response Unit, Ministry of Interior (Badakhshan province)

POLICE RESPONSE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW

"As a result of the meetings, I have observed a number of changes in our work: summons are served according to the law; only male officers search men, and only female officers search women; no arrests at night-time; and accused females are not delivered to shelters."

Lina Hamdard

Head of the Police Family Response Unit (Laghman province)

SAME-GENDER FORENSIC EXAMS

"The doctors conducting forensic examinations used to be unaware of the legal requirement to have survivors examined by medical experts of the same gender. There is now stronger legal awareness because we discussed victim examinations in one of the VWAP meetings."

Nooria Niazi

Head of the EAW Unit, Attorney-General's Office (Jowzjan province)