



ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND WOMEN FROM RUSCA PRISON: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Authors:
Eudochia Saharneau, PhD, University Professor
Tatiana Margarint, Master of Anthropology

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*“If you lose your freedom –
you lose everything...”*

Inmate from Rusca Prison

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FOREWORD

The Norwegian Mission of Rule of Law Advisers to Moldova (NORLAM) is a sector program implemented by the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Safety, and financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

One of the objectives of NORLAM's activity is to reduce violations of human rights in prisons and to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Department of Penitentiary Institutions and the prisons. In order to achieve this objective, NORLAM selected Prison No. 7 – Rusca for Women to understand the extent to which domestic violence is a consequence of the commission of crimes by women and the impact of detention on them.

Based on NORLAM's request, this Study was developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Penitentiary Institutions (DPI) by the Centre for Qualitative Researches in Anthropology affiliated to the State University of Moldova. A Cooperation Agreement was signed in July 2016 to this end.

The NORLAM team would like to express its gratitude to the Ministry of Justice and the management of the Department of Penitentiary Institutions for supporting the idea to conduct this study and for facilitating the access to prison of the team of researchers. We are also grateful to the management and the staff of Prison No. 7 – Rusca for their openness and cooperation.

We would like to express our gratitude to the team of authors who developed this Study: Habilitated Doctor, University Professor, Eudochia Saharneanu and Master, Anthropologist, Tatiana Margarint. At

the same time, we would like to specially thank the researchers who travelled to Prison No. 7 – Rusca to discuss with the inmates the issues covered in the Study: Master, Anthropologist, Tatiana Margarint, PhD, Communication Expert, Eugenia Bogatu, Master, Psychologist, Victoria Vrabie, Master, Anthropologist, Natalia Barduc.

We express our hope that this Study will be used by the decision-making authorities in the Moldovan society and penitentiary system to develop policies and mechanisms to prevent crime as a consequence of domestic violence.

It shall be mentioned that the opinions and remarks formulated in the Study belong to the interviewees, while the conclusions reflect the opinion of the authors and do not necessarily represent the point of view of NORLAM. The authors of the Study undertake the responsibility for the interpretations and conclusions of the Study.

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Siri Fjørtoft
Head of Mission,
NORLAM



Natalia Vilcu
Legal Counsellor,
NORLAM



Nadia Burciu
Prison System Consultant,
NORLAM





I. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a wide-spread phenomenon in the Republic of Moldova. The concern with the expressions of violence is a subject for reflections of researchers in the socio-human sciences such as anthropology, psychology, sociology.

The development of the Anthropological Study was justified by the need to understand the manner in which violence exerted against women led to their committing crimes of violent nature, such as murder, domestic violence, severe bodily injuries, etc. To this end, the conducted research focused on the analysis of the life of women before and after detention, and of the impact of detention on their self-perception and identity.

The issues raised in this research are referred to socio-cultural anthropology as a branch dealing with exploring the relations between people, relations between individuals and institutions, the manner in which individuals use the social and cultural symbols, etc. As a holistic science, anthropology studies all human beings and all dimensions of human existence, such as physical dimension, which implies adjustment to the environment and includes the body, physical environment, objects and material goods of the individual, health or disease, etc.; through the social dimension an individual adjusts to other individuals and interacts with them; reactions to the culture he/she lives in, reactions to his/her status can be found here; relation with him/herself, understanding his/her own character, the past experience and the vision of the future are part of the personal dimension; the spiritual dimension allows to create a system of values, to understand existential issues, creates the understanding about the world [1]. Prison for women as an institution is a space where women with similar status are placed being separated from the rest of society for a certain period of time. They have a lifestyle strictly delimited and officially regulated by the institution [2].

The Study focused on the analysis of the dimensions of existence of women in detention. In addition, its goal was to provide a description of the phenomenon of violence which affected the convicted women. At the same time, the analysis of life stories told by women tried to identify the connection between the committed crime and the trauma suffered by women earlier as a result of domestic violence and abuse; to present the evaluation by the inmates of the treatment during the criminal proceedings and the serving of punishment; to determine the impact of detention of women on their family members; to assess the perception of the future by the women in Rusca Prison.

The discussions with the women detained in Rusca Prison revealed the fact that the desire of the women-victims of domestic violence to stop violence, the tendency to protect their children from violence, as well as negative emotions accumulated during years and resulting from acts of violence committed by persons who a priori should be the closest to them, were factors contributing to the commission of crimes by the women.

We hope that the statements and conclusions in this Study will be used by the decision-making authorities, international organisations, donors and non-governmental organisations as a baseline document to further develop studies on the psychological profile of women-victims of domestic violence serving their sentences in Rusca Prison. At the same time, it is highly recommended to conduct an in-depth analysis of the sentences issued with regard to convicted women who had been victims of domestic violence, in order to identify, among others, the degree of uniform application of judicial practice in such cases. We also hope that following this Study and the other researches a solid documentary foundation will be created to ensure protection of the interests of convicted women, observance of their rights and promotion of the solutions to improve their condition.

1 Emmy van Deurzen, Adams Martin, Skills in Existential Counselling & Psychotherapy, Herald, 2011

2 Goffman Erving, Asylums, Polirom, 2004, p.p.16-17



II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

During August 2016 a team of researchers from the Centre for Qualitative Researches in Anthropology affiliated to the State University of Moldova conducted seven visits to Rusca Prison. Considering the complexity of the investigated subject, the team focused on a research based on two methods: interview and survey. During 3-5 August 2016 interviews were conducted, while during 18-23 August 2016 – questionnaires were applied. The target group of the interviews and questionnaires were the women detained in Rusca Prison. According to the data as of 1st of July 2016, 362 women were detained in Rusca Prison.

The *interview method* implied the application of 50 interviews (*Annex No. 1*). This method allowed collection of data regarding the subjective perception of a person's life. During the interviews the interviewee tells the story of her life, while the research team member guides her through this process. The convicted women taking part in the interview were selected based on the type of committed crime. Most of the women selected for the interview (41) were convicted for crimes of violent nature (*Table 1*). The selection of convicted women based on this criterion resulted from the presumption that in most cases women victims of violence respond with acts of violence.

Table 1. Number of women detained in Rusca Prison who took part in individual interviews

Article from Criminal Code	Number of interviewed women	Total number of convicted women per type of crime
Article 145. Intentional murder	24	112
Article 201/1. Domestic violence	8	44
Article 151. Severe bodily injury	5	29
Article 165. Trafficking in human beings	4	57
Article 186. Theft	3	13
Article 217. Drugs trafficking	3	15
Article 190. Fraud	3	36
Total	50 individual interviews	Total 306 women from the target group on which research was focused



At the stage of preparing the interviews, the team of researchers assumed that the interviewed inmates would not be as open as they wanted, limiting themselves only to short descriptions of some specific events from their life in prison. Following the application of different verbal and non-verbal communication methods, the researchers managed to ensure, in most cases, the openness of the women in terms of their telling the story.

During the *method of survey* out of 362 inmates specified above 300 women expressed their consent to fill-in the questionnaire (*Annex 2*). It allowed the researchers to identify quantitative data for the purpose of this Study. The refusal of other inmates to take part in the research by filling-in the questionnaire was justified by their lack of trust in change. Those 300 inmates include 104 women aged 18-35, 166 women aged 35-57 and 30 women aged over 58 (*Table 2*).

Table 2. Target group by age

Age category	Number of inmates	Percent
18-35	104	34,7%
35-57	166	55,3%
Over 58	30	10,0%
TOTAL	300	100,0%

Out of 300 inmates taking part in the quantitative analysis, 3,3% have no education, while 4,3% have only primary education. According to the interviewed women, the level of education has a negative impact on their status in the community, considering the impossibility for them to find a well-paid work-

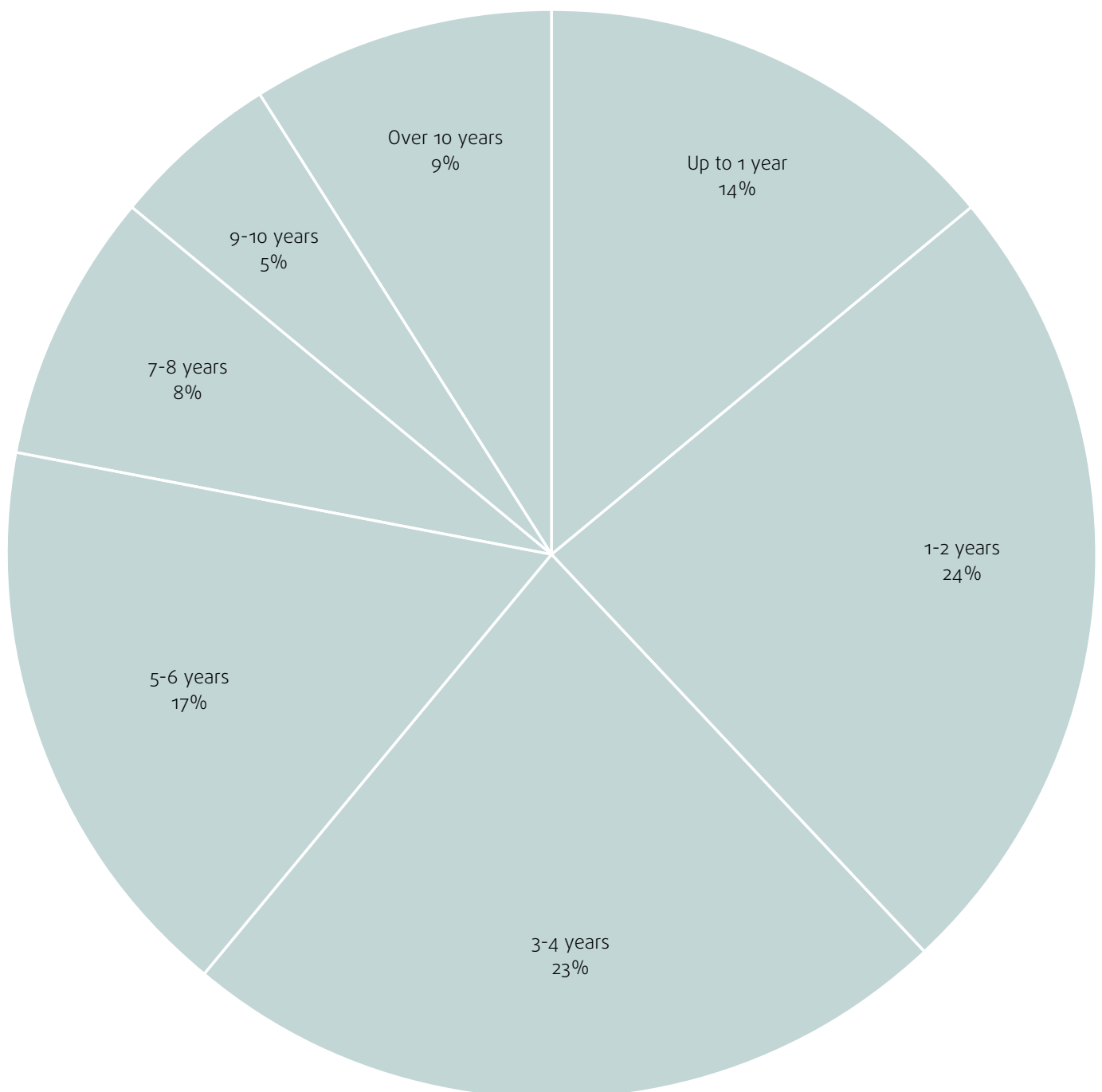
place in the community they belong to. Gymnasium education, i.e. completion of 8-9 years of mandatory education, was reported by 35% of women. Professional education was referred to by 10,7% of women, secondary education – 36,7% of the inmates, while higher education – 10% of the respondents.

Table 3. Target group by level of education

Category	Number of inmates	Percent
No education	10	3,3%
Primary education	13	4,3%
Gymnasium education	105	35,0%
Professional education	32	10,7%
Secondary education	110	36,7%
Higher education	30	10,0%
TOTAL	300	100,0%

Figure below illustrates the break-down of the target group depending on the term served in Rusca Prison.

Figure 1. Term served in Rusca Prison based on data as of August 2016





III. THE PAST. VIOLENCE IN THE LIFE OF CONVICTED WOMEN

3.1 REPRESENTATIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE

From the anthropological perspective, it is important to understand women's lives, to interpret the way they describe their past experiences, to analyse their relations with others, as well as to make heard the voices of women affected by violence during various stages of their lives: childhood, adolescence, maturity. These women talked about themselves, for themselves and for the future change. Not all women perceived the life-story type interview the same way. Some women had regrets related to certain aspects of their lives, for others – it was painful to recollect the drama they

went through, and some of them became reconciled with themselves, telling that they accepted the guilt for the events that had occurred in their lives.

Families affected by violence can be found in any social layer, irrespective of the level of education, social status, age or nationality. When asked about their understanding of violence, the questioned women were requested to refer to an expression of violence first coming to their mind. As a result, the detained women referred to violence as being an expression of physical aggression, verbal aggression, as well as the main cause for the material damages and emotional sufferings (*Table 4*).

Table 4. Understanding of violence

Responses	Number of inmates	Percent
Physical aggression	234	78,0%
Verbal aggression	34	11,4%
Material damage	3	1,0%
Emotional sufferings	18	6,0%
Other	1	0,3%
Do not know	10	3,3%
TOTAL	300	100,0%

Being asked whether they had been victims of domestic violence prior to being convicted, 129 questioned women or 43% answered positively (*Table 5*).

Table 5. Number of convicted women victims of domestic violence

Responses	Number of inmates	Percent
Yes	129	43,0%
No	171	57,0%
Do not know	0	0,0%
TOTAL	300	100,0%



The interviewed women, just like the questioned ones, after being asked to define violence, talked about physical and verbal violence, and more rarely – about sexual abuse.

REFLECTIONS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT VIOLENCE

“Being beaten, humiliated.”

“Physical violence, beating or verbal violence, abusive language, things said to one another... Violence – an offensive force that causes either physical or emotional pain...”

“Domestic violence, when someone offends or beats you. Sexual – when someone rapes you.”

“Violence might be verbal, physical, even just a hit. Violence – is a conflict emerging in family, between parents and children, between older persons, and not only, it can even emerge between an elderly woman and an adolescent...”

Many women referred to the fact that both fathers during childhood and adolescence and husbands/cohabitants after marriage or life together, manifested violence towards them.

REFLECTIONS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THEM

“I am remarried. My first marriage lasted 16 years, there was domestic violence. I have three children with my first husband. I was beaten, cut, I endured, I was in pain – till one day... One day he was very drunk and stabbed me with a knife. It was the second time. I was taken to the hospital, but usually you try to hide it, so I told a lie then. He stabbed me in my back with a knife (shows a scar), I called an ambulance, and when they came I was fallen beside the well.”

“My mother lived with my second father, and he beat her and us heavily. I was 12 when my father died, and when I myself got married there were lots of beatings in my family as well, I even have scars. It lasted for 6 and a half years. I endured because I wanted my children to have a real father, not a stepfather like me. When I saw him raising hand against my children as well, I couldn't take it much longer and we broke up.”

“In my family I was abused both by parents and by my cohabiting partner, there were some unpleasant moments. My husband used drugs and acted aggressively with me. I didn't know he used drugs. He was very jealous. He beat me often. Even when I was pregnant, my cohabiting partner beat me so that I would lose pregnancy. My husband broke my ribs. I endured as long as I could, but finally I left him, and when I met my cohabiting partner I had already been pregnant and I had nowhere to live, so I started living with him. He was violent because of jealousy and because he used drugs.”

“...I suffered a lot from domestic violence. I lived with my husband for 21 years, and when he beat me, I concealed it, no one knew about it. I didn't want anyone to know about it at my work too, I tried to conceal from my colleagues that I am cut and beaten by my husband. I worked anyways, and no one knew what had happened to me, I worked anyways. I hid this fact because I had young children and I wanted their father to be there for them, I wanted them to have a father.”

"I didn't have any fatherly warmth, I don't know what it is, I had a mother, in fact, I have her still... (cries). It is painful indeed. I got married when I was 14 and I gave birth to my daughter when I was 15. My father was an alcoholic, he beat my mom. When we went to sleep, we had our clothes on and our shoes near the bed... We had been running out in the cold, going to sleep where we could, be it a tractor trailer, be it a piggery... with my girl in my arms. I remember that when we were there, my mom brought a plate of soup for us to eat, covertly, I was with my girl. My father caught her and beat her... we went from door to door, looking for work, in order to have something to eat, to have a warm place to sleep... He was inhuman... I can't find words to talk about him. I want to say something good about him, I try to find good words and I can't... He was my father... Was he an alcoholic?"

"Yes. He brought other women to our home, he slept with them and he beat my mother. He told me (about my daughter) – take your brat and get out of here (curse words). We had our own house, it was rather pathetic. He kicked my girl – bounced her all the way to the middle of courtyard... she was one year and a half, and he kicked her..."

There were cases when the mother of the convicted women behaved violently during childhood and adolescence.

REFLECTIONS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THEM

"I was beaten. Sometimes my mother beat me when I disobeyed or when I didn't do what I had to, or when I did it wrong – eventually, I got a hit with a broom. My brothers were not beaten, while me, as the older one... I was."

"Both mother and father beat us. Both of them consumed alcohol. Later she left us."

The violence described by these women represents a range of situations forming a chain of pain that heavily affected them. Physical violence is described as slapping, pushing, hair pulling, punching, kicking, threatening with dangerous objects (knife, axe), and bone fracturing. Psychological violence is referred to as insulting, belittling, and humiliating in front of others, bullying, and verbal threatening. Economic violence by husband/cohabiting partner implies at least one of the following situations: taking woman's earnings; refusing to give enough money for current household expenditures; taking advantage of the fact that the woman has nowhere else to go. Social isolation of the woman is expressed by the husband/co-

habiting partner prohibiting, limiting meetings with friends, limiting family visits, permanent insistence on knowing where the woman is, becoming furious if woman talks to another man. The interviewed women refer to physical aggression as an expression of violence. It is also the case of 78% of the questioned inmates (Table 4).



Those 129 convicted women who acknowledged they had been victims of domestic violence (*Table 5*) also confirmed that their husbands/cohabitants and parents were the ones who aggressed them in the past (*Table 6*).

Table 6. Connection to the aggressor

Aggressor	Number of inmates	Percent
Mother	6	4,7%
Father	9	7,0%
Both parents	5	3,9%
Husband	78	60,5%
Cohabitant	30	23,3%
Siblings	1	0,8%
Step-parents	0	0,0%
Other	0	0,0%
TOTAL	129	100,0%

Both women and their children suffer the consequences of domestic violence. Consequences of violence vary depending on its nature and gravity, short-term and long-term consequences being severe.

Violence can lead to greater vulnerability, to social, emotional, cognitive and behavioural problems, endangering health.

STATEMENTS OF THE CONVICTED WOMEN

“When he has been very drunk, my three children could sleep with me in the barn with our goat, because he chased them through the vineyard. They were very afraid. This fear in their eyes – years have passed and they still cannot forgive him, he is already dead, but they don’t want to hear anything or know anything about him....They remember everything, they didn’t forget and they will never forget. It’s Day of Rejoicing and I ask him, he is 36 years old, to give away food to his (his father’s) memory, And he tells me: “Mom, please, I’ll do anything for you, just not this, he doesn’t exist for me.” It means that everything originates in childhood.”

The interviewees say that violence can be avoided and misunderstandings can be solved by means of communication, by treating others as equals, by controlling aggression, by means of education in cases when there is a tendency of perceiving the opposite sex as an inferior one, by creating a loving atmosphere, mutual trust, compliance with laws that prohibit violence, cultivation of human values we now lack. An existing problem among women, who suffered from domestic violence, is that they didn’t ask

their parents, police, social assistance, etc. for help, thinking that it was a family problem. They thought that people in their community would talk about them, or that the police won’t help.

STATEMENTS OF THE CONVICTED WOMEN

"...to resolve a problem one can also communicate. A mother and her child could communicate, not necessarily through beating."

"In a family everyone has to be on the same level, instead of one being higher than another."

"I do not support violence, I don't like and don't respect people who swear, raise hand against others; it is very bad when people can't control their aggression..."

"I want to talk about the culture, men have to know their obligations, have to take care of women, and women in their turn have to be aware of their obligations. They have to obey men, while men shouldn't offend women with curse words."

"Boys should be told that a woman who gets married is not obliged to endure, that men don't have any right to abuse women, that it is illegal, that men can be punished."

"Where does the domestic violence come from? We don't have any cultural values. There wasn't anything like this in USSR. There are no spiritual values. People grew up as they wanted to... I feel like all men have one and the same mother here, in Moldova. They are all the same. The good ones are all abroad now, only the bad ones remained."

"We ourselves are to blame, because we endure a lot, hide a lot, do not say a lot and thus worsen the situation. For so many years I kept my mouth shut and haven't told my parents anything. You don't want to reveal this because you feel ashamed. You sacrifice a lot for the good of children."





3.2. PERCEPTION OF THE AGGRESSOR IN CASES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

As it derives from the interviews and the quantitative data (Table 6), the aggressor is the husband, cohabiting partner or father, and in rare cases violent acts are committed by other persons. Out of the 129 wom-

en who declared they had been victims of violence, 118 speak, first of all, about physical violence and other forms of its expression.

Table 7. Form of expression of violence

Type of violence	Number of inmates	Percent
Physical violence	118	91,5%
Curses	9	7,0%
Threats	1	0,8%
Sexual abuse	1	0,8%
TOTAL	129	100,0%

The collected life stories show that in most cases aggressive husband/cohabitant, father is described as a person consuming alcohol.

STATEMENTS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE AGGRESSOR

"My husband has been aggressive since he was young. He was an agronomist. They had to promote him, to give him a better qualified and better paid job, but instead they hired another person in his place, and he was hurt a lot. He started drinking, taking out his misfortunes on me, and beating me. I don't know why he behaved so aggressively. At home he did nothing, didn't work. He got used to someone else taking care of him, doing everything for him. I didn't go to the police. How could they help me?"

"I was beaten and kicked out by my husband, because his sister was looking for trouble and inciting him against me. You know. It's easy to do a bad thing; it's not easy to do a good one. That's it. I didn't go to the police, I talked to my mother's sister, since both of my parents are deceased, as well as his. I didn't want to do it, I thought that in all families there are similar cases, that I'm not the only one with such problem."

"At first we were getting along well with my husband, but then he became very aggressive, beat me violently, we were fighting often. I went to the police, but everybody in the village knew him and they didn't punish him much. Once they put him in a detention cell, but he beat me even worse when he returned home. In fact, I am not a conflict type of person, I was defending myself, while he was drinking alcohol and beating me. After losing his job he beat me even harder, especially after drinking alcohol. I didn't tell my parents that he beats me, nor my workmates, I was ashamed, since people in the village knew us."

"I was subjected to sexual violence and I was beaten. My first husband beat me and then raped me, few are the things that he didn't put me through. I was alone, had no job, and the second husband also beat me, and not once, but you have to live further... like in a family. My mother told me: you are married now, so you have to endure, it's women's destiny."

"I did not feel the warmth of a father. I did not know what the warmth of a father means. I had and I still have a mother and now... (crying). It is painful indeed. I got married when I was 14 and I gave birth to my daughter when I was 15. My father used to drink and beat my mother. We used to go to bed dressed and with our shoes next to our beds."

During the interviews we identified victims of domestic violence where the aggressor was the mother. The interviewees describe them as mothers consuming alcohol or as very strict persons.

STATEMENTS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE AGGRESSOR

"I wasn't getting along well with my family, my mother was drinking, I have younger brothers whom I had to take care of, to bring up. I finished only 7 forms, since I didn't have the possibility to study further. Negative moments in my life – my mother was often drinking alcohol and beat me when she was drunk, she also beat my brothers."

"My mother left when I was little. I do not know what kind of education she could have given me – she was an alcoholic. My grandmother took care of me."

My mother was very strict. If I had 6 classes, I had to be home at 1:30 p.m. If I was 5 minutes late, she would come after me to see where I stopped. She was extremely harsh."

Some studies revealed that poor relations with the family directly contribute to delinquency [3]. There are specific situations affecting the behaviour differently depending on gender. For instance, in case of parents consuming alcohol, the share of girls prone to delinquency and alcohol or drug abuse is much higher than in case of boys [4]. Weak emotional connections with the family result into acts of violence committed by girls with a higher frequency as compared to boys [5]. In addition, the convicted women tend to view their parents more

negatively as compared to women in freedom [6].

The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data highlighted the fact that in most cases violence is expressed through acts of physical aggression against the woman. The aggressors who, as a rule, are husbands/cohabitants and/or parents are described as persons with no occupation or goals in their lives, persons consuming alcohol or drugs. Jealousy was declared as one of the most frequent reasons for violence. In some cases, apparently the reasons for violence were not understood by the convicted women. Violence is facilitated by the permanent access to the victim. All the family members become direct or indirect victims of violence.

3 Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck, *One Thousand Juvenile Delinquents: Their Treatment by Court and Clinic* (Harvard University Press, 1934)

4 T. E. Keller and others, "Parent Figure Transitions and Delinquency and Drug Use among Early Adolescent Children of Substance Abusers," *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* (2002): 399-427

5 Karen Heimer and Stacy De Coster, "The Gendering of Violent Delinquency," *Criminology* 37, no. 2 (1999): 277-318

6 Steven E. Kroupa, "Perceived Parental Acceptance and Female Juvenile Delinquency," *Adolescence* 23, no. 89 (1988): 171-85



3.3. REPORTING CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES ON THE WOMAN

In this part of the Study the team of researchers raised the issue of reporting cases of violence by the women-victims. As it results from Table 5, out of 300 questioned women 129 were victims of domestic violence. The analysis of quantitative data revealed that

35,7% of women victims of domestic violence did not appeal to anyone due to their confidence that they would have not availed of any real assistance. 42,6% of women appealed to police (Table 8).

Table 8. Reporting cases of domestic violence

	Number of inmates	Percent
Relatives	22	17,1%
Friends	3	2,3%
Police	55	42,6%
Social assistant	0	0,0%
Other	3	2,3%
No one	46	35,7%
TOTAL	129	100,0%

The questioned women who appealed to police were asked about the punishment applied/measures undertaken with regards to the violent person. Most women out of 55 women who mentioned they had

appealed to police, referred to the fact that the aggressor was not punished or was arrested for several days. In some interviews they speak of their lack of trust in police officers.

STATEMENTS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF APPEALING TO POLICE

"What did you do when your father beat you? Have you reported it to the police? Yes, Miss, and more than once... I've told them countless times. Usually they came, took him for several minutes, then he would return home drunk, singing and telling obscenities all the way home, and as soon as we heard him coming – we would run out of the house... My mother had her teeth knocked out, head injuries, that was the result of telling the police... – nothing, nothing... They were laughing at us, drinking alcohol together, and after that my father would return home..."

"I appealed to police when I was beaten. I ran from home just once and I wrote a complaint in the police office. They arrested him. But when he was released he beat me even worse because I complained against him."

The analysis of quantitative data also proved that out of 129 women victims of domestic violence 109 were convicted for crimes of violent nature (Figure 2) committed either against their husband/concubine or against one of the parents or against any other person.

Figure 2. Share of convictions of victims of domestic violence for crimes of violent nature

The acts of violence against women and their children cause a number of consequences affecting their life quality. Their physical health, emotional condition, social life and social status are affected. During the interviews the women said that after the acts of violence they suffered physical trauma such as bruises, wounds, broken bones, cranial fractures, lost pregnancies, etc. From emotional and psychological points of view, the victims experienced depression, anxiety, phobias, post-traumatic stress. From professional point of view, as it results from the interviews, the women had to take sick leaves caused by the acts of violence.





REFLECTIONS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE

"These articles, let us say 201 – that is domestic violence, there is a woman who works with me, she was married, had children, she was severely beaten by her husband. There are lots of women working in my section, who are mutilated, you know, their faces are cut here, chapped there, torn – that's how men had tortured them, had beaten them. They have holes in their heads, they were broken. But during a fight, when, they couldn't stand it anymore – they hit back but it was an ill-fated riposte. The partners of many of them, however, stayed alive, they are at home while the women got into prison. How's that possible?"

"If he was drunk, I knew he would beat me. In the morning he used to ask me: 'X, am I really so bad?' I felt sorry for him, I thought he would change. And here I am."

"One day he beat me so that I lost conscious, he poured water for me to recover and he beat me again."

"I was ashamed to go to work; I had bruises on my face. I had to take a sick leave."

"I talked to one of our acquaintances; I asked him to repair our telephone that my husband smashed. When my husband saw him, he started beating me saying that I should not have talked to him."

The interviews reveal acts of violence which become systematic and are preceded most frequently by alcohol consumption by the aggressor. Women suffer from post-traumatic stress described in the literature as permanently experiencing intense fear, hyper-vigilance, rejecting any support from outside and commission of crimes [7].

Specialists stated that abuses are directly related to subsequent violent behaviour of the victims. Abuse and exposure to uncontrollable stress environment are precursors of behaviour problems delinquent women experience [8]. Any malfunction of the mechanisms overcoming stress may later increase the neg-

ative effects of traumas suffered in childhood and of victimisation [9]. In other words, women who committed crimes not only went through the experience of victimization, but also have more limited capacity to face stress factors, considerably increasing, thus, its effects [10].

7 Nica-Udangiu, L., Managementul diagnostic și terapeutic al tulburării post-traumatice de stres și al tulburării acute de stres, Revista Română de Psihiatrie, nr.3-4/2002

8 David F. Tolin and Edna B. Foa, "Sex Differences in Trauma and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Quantitative Review of 25 Years of Research," Psychological Bulletin 132, no. 6 (2006): 959-92

9 Elizabeth J. Susman and Kathleen Pajer, "Biology-Behavior Integration and Antisocial Behavior in Girls," Aggression, Antisocial Behavior, and Violence among Girls: A Developmental Perspective, Duke Series in Child Development and Public Policy, edited by Martha Putallaz and Karen Bierman (New York: Guilford Publications, 2004), pp. 23-47

10 Maude Dornfeld and Candace Kruttschnitt, "Do the Stereotypes Fit? Mapping Gender-Specific Outcomes and Risk Factors," Criminology 30, no. 3 (1992): 397-419

3.4. REFLECTIONS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS

The team of researchers considered it necessary to raise the issue of the convicted women's perception of the criminal proceedings, considering the fact that they were involved in all their stages: criminal investigation, case hearing, and enforcement of the conviction sentence. The criminal proceedings were a decisive part and an important stage of their lives. Thus, the team undertook to present the opinions of convicted women about the activity of defence attorneys, police officers, judges and prosecutors.

During the individual interviews, while referring to the criminal proceedings, in general, and to the activity of the institutions involved in the criminal proceedings, in particular, the interviewed inmates highlighted a number of drawbacks. Some of them referred to lack of objectiveness and to corruption in the justice sector.

REFLECTIONS OF THE CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE CRIMINAL PROCEEDING

"Justice, criminal proceedings are rather rusty in our country. If they worked well, our prisons wouldn't be overcrowded. It would be like in Europe: in case you break the law, you get charged with a fine and you know you won't do it again, because it'll hit your wallet. Either you buy your kid a car, or pay for his studies, or you pay this money to the state and do not break the law ever again."

"Here in Moldova the law is violated, only money matters. If you have money, you are... down, and if one hasn't – he won't get any justice. That's how it goes."

"It would be good if they reviewed everything, so that committed violations would be punished as violations, crimes punished as crimes. They have to reconsider who they are punishing and how, because there are lots of innocent people, when it comes to Articles 201, 165; and I also saw a woman who was prosecuted under Article 145, while her husband is alive and married to another woman. He was in court too. And he tells the judge: I'm alive!"

"They have to check for sure if was committed; ever since I've got here I see that lots of people are here because they don't know the law..., it's all because of not knowing the law and of responsibilities."

"They are not interested in an objective approach... They only see their own interests and that's it. They are complicating everything, impute people with the actions they didn't do..."

"I stay with a prisoner X who was sentenced to 6 years in prison under 145/1, but nothing is clear. She had a fight with her mother-in-law and scraped her with a knife. And why is she here for 6 years? Her mother-in-law is alive, everything is fine. A young girl, 23 years old. What are these cases, what are these sentences for? To destroy people here? And her mother-in-law is alive. Instead of reeducating them, telling them about motherhood, they stay. I can't understand where the problem is, either with the Criminal Code or with the judges."

"I paid for lawyer's services, I collaborate with my lawyer for a long time. Despite of the fact that he is a professional and does his work well, he couldn't pass over the police; the head of the Anti-Drug Department demanded bribe, he has been receiving bribes from the Roma, who had sold me the drugs. I use drugs since the year 1991 and I know this world well, a lot is concealed, it's an entire network."



3.4.1 PERCEPTION BY CONVICTED WOMEN OF THE ACTIVITY OF ATTORNEYS

The analysis of questionnaires revealed the fact that all inmates had been proposed legal assistance guaranteed by the state, while 84% of them accepted the services of attorneys providing free legal aid.

Table 9. Presence of ex officio attorney

Responses	Number of inmates	Percent
Yes	252	84,0 %
No	48	16,0 %
TOTAL	300	100,0 %

Being asked whether the ex officio attorney objectively presented their case in court, out of 252 women who worked with an ex officio attorney, 74 convicted women consider that the attorney had an objective approach to their cases in court, while 160 consider that the attorney was not objective (*Table 10*).

Table 10. Objectivity of ex officio attorney

Responses	Number of inmates	Percent
Yes	74	29,4 %
No	160	63,5 %
Do not know	18	7,1 %
TOTAL	252	100,00 %

The convicted women also expressed their opinion about the quality of the services of attorneys providing legal assistance guaranteed by the state. Thus, 25,4% of women were satisfied with the services of ex officio attorneys, while 40,4% referred to low quality of their services (*Table 11*).

Table 11. Quality of assistance by ex officio attorney

Responses	Number of inmates	Percent
Very good	22	8,7 %
Good	42	16,7 %
Medium	58	23,0 %
Bad	52	20,6 %
Very bad	50	19,8 %
Do not know	28	11,1 %
TOTAL	252	100,00 %

In case of ex officio attorneys the wish of the prisoners who have assessed their activity is that they put their heart in the activity they've chosen and in cases they are involved in. The characteristics they consider important for a lawyer are the skills of effective communication; knowledge in the domain of psychology, capacity to represent and protect the interests of their clients in the best manner possible. According to some convicted women, the ex officio attorneys do

not undertake enough effort to defend them. In the court they do not have any objections against what is being discussed in the court hearing. In results from the conducted interviews that the reasons for their lack of professionalism are the lack of financial motivation, limited degree of professional commitment, lack of perseverance. Convicted women also referred to cases when ex officio attorneys did not know the criminal procedure and the human rights legislation.

STATEMENTS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE ACTIVITY OF EX OFFICIO ATTORNEYS

"I had a lawyer, but he didn't help me at all. He was state-appointed."

"Yes, they've offered me one. I thought he would be my lawyer, it seems that they all work together here. A lawyer has to be a good psychologist, to see if you indeed had committed that crime and defend you, and if you are innocent – help you get out of the prison. And what do we have instead? The innocent end up in prison, and the guilty ones are out, that's how it goes. When I saw it, I felt so vexed... Maybe they haven't killed anyone, but still they are convicted under the Article 145, there are lots of them who haven't killed but still stay in prison... and those who steal remain free... Do you think there are few of them?"

"A lawyer, even that appointed by the state, anyway charges 600 Euros, it's a standard price. The prosecutor said – 'That's life.' 'We know they do it, we know the situation, but what can we do...' 'What do you mean, what can you do? – Do justice...' If she's lying, and I can tell she's lying! Why do you think I wrote to the Parliament? Why don't you control the police? They are all corrupted there, they have cars, millions of dollars paid by IOM, money paid by us, by everybody, how is that? For a year – one thousand dollars... They told me to pay 50,000 dollars if I didn't want to end up in prison. They trial is conducted without any witnesses..."

"It is not good when the attorneys work free of charge... He did not even come up to me. I stayed in the hospital when they arrested me. The hearing took place in my absence. They convicted me in my absence..."

"I had a state-appointed lawyer. I think that he wasn't even familiar with the case, and he wasn't even present at all the hearings."

"I had a state-appointed lawyer. I had no money to pay him. It all went wrong... when my mother has found money after all and offered it to the lawyer... he said that he didn't need anything anymore, that he will make sure I go to prison, and that someone else had already paid him (aunt)."

"I had a state-appointed lawyer, I don't think he has done his job well, he did not defend me at all, instead of saying that I defended myself, he said that I had killed him. I think he didn't care."

"Yes, I had a state-appointed lawyer, but he was of no use. He didn't defend me, when he came to court he either kept silent or was sleeping. He told me from the very beginning that I would be convicted for murder and that he could do nothing about it."

"They've offered me a state-appointed lawyer, but since I wasn't paying him, he wasn't defending my interests. During the entire session I wasn't given a chance to say a word. They thought that if I had had conflicts with him, and this was confirmed by the witnesses, this means that I've killed him, but I couldn't have killed him because I had been sleeping after coming home from work."



Some of the interviewees provided a positive feedback about the activity of ex officio attorneys mentioning that they have performed their work in a correct manner.

STATEMENTS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE ACTIVITY OF EX OFFICIO ATTORNEYS

"I had a lawyer, and I want to say that he was appointed by the state – he was an adviser. He was that kind of person you can call at 2-3 in the morning and he would support you. I knew that there was a person who would put every effort so that I could go back home to my child. I could never accuse him of not doing his work. I knew for sure that I had to go to prison for what I had done."

"I cannot say anything bad. He did his job. I committed a crime and I had to take responsibility for it. He was good as an attorney."

The services of a private defence counsel are not accessible to many inmates due to high fees they cannot afford. Nonetheless, 48 inmates availed of the services of a selected defence counsel. Thus, 32 of the 48 inmates consider that the selected defence counsel reflected objectively in the court their situation.

Table 12. Objectivity of the selected defence counsel

Response	Number of inmates	Percent
Yes	32	66,7%
No	11	22,9%
Do not know	5	10,4%
TOTAL	48	100,00%

During the interviews some of the inmates indicated they availed of the services of selected defence counsels with experience in the area and that the assistance and/or their representation before the courts was at a high level. The interviewees mentioned that they performed their duties well because they had been paid.

STATEMENTS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE ACTIVITY OF SELECTED DEFENCE COUNSELS

"I had paid for lawyer's services and he represented my interests well and did his work well, I had paid a lot of money, but it didn't help me."

"I had paid for lawyer's services, I think he did his work well, the circumstances were difficult, however, so I ended up here."

"He worked hard and he was paid for his efforts."

3.4.2. PERCEPTION BY CONVICTED WOMEN OF THE ACTIVITY OF POLICE

Many victims of domestic violence do not report cases of violence, other than they are very serious cases or numerous acts of violence took place before. This means that all the notifications to the police about the cases of domestic violence have to be taken seriously and prompt actions need to be undertaken. The intervention of police must be based on two principles: *ensure safety for victims of domestic violence and make the aggressors liable for their actions* [11].

The quantitative analysis of data revealed the fact that 119 of 300 questioned women qualified the manner of treatment during the criminal investigation by the police officers as very good and good, while 101 women assessed the manner of treatment as very bad and bad (Table 13).

11 Efficient intervention of police in cases of domestic violence in Moldova. Training course., <http://cdf.md/files/resources/5/interior.pdf>

Table 13. Manner of treatment during the criminal investigation by the police officers

How have you been treated during the criminal investigation by the police officer?	No. of persons	Percent
1. Very well	21	7,0%
2. Well	98	32,7%
3. Medium	62	20,7%
4. Badly	39	13,0%
5. Very badly	62	20,7%
6. Do not know	18	6,0%
TOTAL	300	100,0%

In the interviews the women said that during the criminal investigation the persons involved in the investigation of their case admitted acts of violence against them. The negative aspects resulting from the interviews that refer to the treatment of women by police officers are related to cases when no measure is being undertaken in regard of the aggressor and when he returns home and continues his violent behaviour, and to cases when a police officer is the one who was violent with the woman during the criminal investigation.



STATEMENTS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE TREATMENT BY POLICE OFFICERS

"The police have known about my relations with husband, however, they did not take any measures, an when I got here, no one listened to me, although I went to the police before ending up here."

"I had terrible arguments with the police when I was going to court. I was beaten by a policeman, or an investigator, I can't tell them apart, Mister X. It was in 2012, he kicked my leg. It was at the prosecutor's office in our district. He also hit my brother in the head with a folder with his personal files, and his head against the wardrobe. My brother was standing and then he hit his head against the wardrobe. Then he turned over to me, slapped and kicked me. This leg became swollen, I couldn't step on it. The left one. I have had some hard times with them."

"My husband and I were beaten by the policemen upon apprehension. My husband had been beaten hard; he couldn't walk for about two weeks."

"The policeman beat me so that I would admit my guilt. He beat me with his legs and with his baton."

"We didn't want to say the full truth, since my brother-in-law had been visiting us, so they beat us hard. They hit my husband's head against the wall, and kicked me, as I'm a woman. We had reported on them, had documented our injuries, but it disappeared from the file. There wasn't anything at the first court hearing."

"I guess the police have to have a certain number of solved cases, so they write and accuse innocent people without any investigations."

"The policemen treated me extremely badly; they beat me and made me take the blame upon myself, made me admit that I sell drugs. I complained to other authorities that they had been aggressive, but no one took this fact into consideration."

Considering the analysis of the quantitative data and the verbal statements of the convicted women, some of the police officers displayed respect during the criminal proceedings, acting in a professional, integer and honest manner.

STATEMENTS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE TREATMENT BY POLICE OFFICERS

"The policemen behaved well. They knew me, they knew the case because I appealed to them before. We live in the same village, we knew each other and they even respected me."

"The policeman from Rascani behaved in a normal way. But the one from our village did not have a good behaviour – he shouted at me."

"The policemen behaved well, and the prosecutors as well."

"They had no reasons to be violent, everything was ok, I think."

3.4.3. PERCEPTION BY CONVICTED WOMEN OF THE ACTIVITY OF PROSECUTORS

Following the analysis of the questionnaires filled-in by the convicted women it had been stated that out of 300 questioned women 80 women were satisfied with the manner they had been treated during the

criminal proceedings by the prosecutors, while 128 women expressed their dissatisfaction with the manner of treatment (*Table 14*).

Table 14. Manner of treatment during the criminal proceedings by the prosecutors

How have you been treated during the criminal proceedings by the prosecutor	No. of persons	Percent
1. Very well	13	4,3%
2. Well	67	22,3%
3. Medium	85	28,3%
4. Badly	62	20,7%
5. Very badly	66	22,0%
6. Do not know	7	2,3%
TOTAL	300	100,0%

During the interviews the convicted women referred to acts of corruption and inequity to the person accused of the commission of a crime.

STATEMENTS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE TREATMENT BY THE PROSECUTORS

“The prosecutor said: pay me 2 thousand Euros and the question will be solved. But I paid him nothing, since I didn’t have that amount of money.”

“The prosecutor... threatened me. He said that if I took the entire criminal case upon me, the term would be of 23 years, however, I’ve got 13, the half of it. Hancesti and the Court of Appeal took 2 years off and changed the article. Initially it was 141 (1) (j), which means with brutality.”

“So, I spent 12 years in prison, I worked, and after these 12 years, when I returned to Moldova, they’ve put me into the pre-trial detention centre and made my son call my other son in Spain, both the lawyer and the prosecutor, and ask him to send 5,000 Euros from Spain so I would stay under house arrest. The next day my son received 5,000 Euros sent by a nephew from Spain. He went to the prosecutor’s office with this money and gave it to the prosecutor and the lawyer, after that they brought me in and summoned me to the court. I knew nothing. During the court session, my mother was ill, seriously ill, and my son obtained a certificate that my mother was bedridden, and that I also have a minor child, so they placed me under house arrest. I found out about these 5,000 Euros only after I’d got free.”



“During the criminal proceedings, neither judge nor prosecutor wanted to communicate with me, they didn’t let me express my opinion about what had happened. They’ve treated me badly to put behind the bars an innocent person after all.”

Beside the negative feedback on the activity of the prosecutors, the interviewed convicted women referred also to positive aspects related to the manner of their treatment by the prosecutors (24,6% of questioned women considered they had been treated very and well by the prosecutors (*Table 14*)). The

interviewed women mentioned the fact that during the criminal proceedings the prosecutors displayed empathy, while communication was good due to the fact that the interviewee came on time to the court hearings.

STATEMENTS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE TREATMENT BY PROSECUTORS

“The prosecutor was good, he felt sorry for me, and she could not convict me when in the second hearing the prosecutor was changed.”

“The prosecutor was not against the term of 4 years the judge set. They saw before the hearing that I came to them, the prosecutor saw him and his condition (drunk again) and I told the prosecutor “Do you what condition he is in?” I told him he was like that every day. He did not want to leave me and he gave me a hard time and the police could not do anything. Where should I have had to go? Live in the street?”

“The prosecutor had nothing against. He did not say anything. Every time he told me to come at a certain date and hour to the prosecutor’s office, I always was there on time, even earlier. I used to come to avoid problems. The communication was normal with everyone.”

“I had a good prosecutor and judge, but the attorney went out to the hallway and asked for money. He said that I should have expected a term of 5-15 years. She did not defend me, she did not tell me what I should have said, how I should have said things.”

“Everything was according to the law. There were no cases of humiliation. Even the prosecutor, he used to speak to me in such a nice manner. He also used to give explanations to me and the attorney, so that I sometimes would not understand who of them was the attorney. He treated me very well.”

3.4.4. PERCEPTION BY CONVICTED WOMEN OF THE ACTIVITY OF JUDGES

Being asked about their perception of the treatment by judges, 113 women out of 300 questioned women expressed their satisfaction with the manner they had been treated by judges, while 92 convicted women were dissatisfied with the manner of treatment by judges (*Table 15*).

Table 15. Manner of treatment during the criminal proceedings by judges

How have you been treated during the criminal proceedings by the judge?	No. of persons	Percent
1. Very well	12	4,0%
2. Well	101	33,7%
3. Medium	89	29,7%
4. Badly	51	17,0%
5. Very badly	41	13,7%
6. Do not know	6	2,0%
TOTAL	300	100,0%

During the interviews the inmates referred to the fact that the judges should have considered the factor of “time”. According to the convicted women, incorrect qualification of crimes is mostly caused by the *limited time* and *issuing in a rush certain court judgments*, which deprive the women of everything they could enjoy being free – they steal their lives. In the case of women convicted for domestic violence

or murder, the prisoners’ questions were: *Why don’t they consider self-defence? Why didn’t the judge take into account the violence manifested by the victim against the woman over these years? How come the prosecutor, the judge, the investigator did not see these women were mutilated, deformed because of the violence manifested by the victim towards her?*

REFLECTIONS OF CONVICTED WOMEN OVER THE ACTIVITY OF JUDGES

“Everything has to be changed. The judges’ mentality must be changed. They should catch those who are real criminals. Many women are destroyed here. How do they hear the case if they do not even listen to you? If they set a term up to 5 years... but they set a term from 10 years up. You go to prison for 10 years, but there are women convicted for 15 years, others for 17 years, and others for 26 years. Here’s how they approach women.”

“I think they give women too long sentences. Of course, there are women who committed such crimes that they agree to get such punishments. They deserve such punishments for killing children and many other crimes, but not 25 years, 10 years is enough for her to serve and to rehabilitate... or like they do in Europe when they impose fines and psychologists work with them and they serve unpaid work punishments. Thus you can be with your family, child, you can work and this is already a motivation. It is very difficult for me to live in Moldova and to support my family. This is already like a prison to me... I can say that they apply very harsh punishments to women. Half of the women are here for just being asked to translate into English and here they are...5 years.”



“They convict for many years, they do not consider whether you are guilty or not. They caught a person and saw she can be convicted: “Why don’t we give her 10-12 years”. They found the person, and this means they will find an article for her.”

“The judge gave me 12 years and that’s it. However, she didn’t take into consideration the fact that I was 2 weeks pregnant, I gave her the certificate and she said that it is freshly made and threw it away. She also didn’t take into consideration that I had 2 minor children, of 4 and 2 years old. It didn’t matter to her.”

“The judge doesn’t take into consideration the motives. Outside of our country they take motives into consideration, but here – they don’t. They just judge you under a certain article and that’s it. But they don’t want to know anything about what had happened and how.”

“They were sleeping... I’m serious – they were sitting and sleeping... All my acquaintances came to the court to say: “Come on, this woman is innocent”... there was no one to talk to... there were 3 of them sitting, I see them as if it were today – a man and two women... they were sleeping.”

Some of the interviewed women were satisfied with the respectfulness and attitude of the judges towards them during the hearings. The convicted women referred to the possibility to speak, to be understood, they saw interest in their case.

REFLECTIONS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE ACTIVITY OF JUDGES

“The judge treated me well, I mean he didn’t tell me to shut my mouth when I wanted to speak. I attended every hearing, and the prosecutor told me that he would do everything possible to put me in prison.”

“I am pleased by judge’s work, because she understood that I am innocent, however, they had it their way, under the pretext that I had been under the influence of alcohol because I drank. They put me into detention at 12 a.m. and in the morning they took me to the hospital to take a blood test. The expertise showed that there was no alcohol in my blood, however, in my file it was said that I had been intoxicated.”

“In the court of first instance I had a judge about whom one could say that she is a truly good person... she was first of all a woman, a mother. In terms of the law, she looked deeper, as a person... and so did the lawyer.”

“The judge in the first instance court treated me well. I told the truth. I thought that would consider something else. But all in all, it was ok.”

The reflections of convicted women about their perception of the activity of defence attorneys, police officers, prosecutors and judges confirms that some representatives of the aforementioned professions are guided in their activity by such values as integrity and professionalism. Nevertheless, considering the

analysed information, the share of attorneys providing legal assistance guaranteed by the state who do not execute their duties properly accounts for 40,4% (Table 11), of police officers – 33,7% (Table 13), of prosecutors – 42,7% (Table 14) and of judges – 30,7% (Table 15).

IV. THE PRESENT. RUSCA PRISON AS PART OF THE CONVICTED WOMEN'S LIVES



4.1 LIFE IN PRISON

The conditions in Rusca Prison are assessed by the inmates as compared to what had been there 5-10 years ago or what they had seen (experienced) in the pre-trial detention centres, as being good. The same is stated also by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) during the visit to the

Republic of Moldova on 14-25 September 2015. According to the report, the cells were repaired, light, ventilated and clean. In general, there was enough space for the detained women (2-6 inmates per cell). Nonetheless, some cells were overcrowded (cells of 9 and 14 m² with four and six inmates) [12].

12 Report to the Government of the Republic of Moldova on the visit to the Republic of Moldova carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 14 to 25 September 2015

ASSESSMENT BY CONVICTED WOMEN OF DETENTION CONDITIONS

“The conditions are better lately, we are not staying 80 persons crammed in a single cell, the toilet is not outdoors, I think it is better now, but not as good as at home.”

‘Currently the prison conditions are good and acceptable, we have water, power, the cells were renovated, the road to the prison was repaired, the director tries to do his best... the market is under construction, but the prisoners are not content, they are explained but they disagree. We have food, which is not that bad. The food in other prisons is much worse. I have been here for 5 years and 4 months.’

“You see, this is a prison, and whatever the conditions we are provided, it is still a prison.”

“When I came here I saw it was not as bad as in Chisinau. I stay with women who didn’t murder, who are kind, even though they had stressful situations, too. We stayed in the same cell since I came here, and we support one another. The work is also good.”

“The conditions are good, and if we need something, or something brakes up, like the washing machine or the fridge, we tell them. We have a gas stove. We tell the director, the administration, and they help us with what they can. I mean I speak for myself. My problems would always be solved.”

One of the dissatisfactions is due to the fact that prisoners are distributed per cells without clear criteria or without caring whether the prisoners will be happy with the distribution. Problems occur also when some employed inmates when getting ready for work have to bear insults of those not employed, being blamed for disturbing them during the morning preparations.



ASSESSMENT BY CONVICTED WOMEN OF DETENTION CONDITIONS

"Those convicted for economic crimes cannot be put together with those convicted under Article 145 or 201 on domestic violence, because people are different, they are aggressive. I stayed with these murderers, and I couldn't even speak to them. My article is different, I can have a look at a person and say whether she is convicted under the same article as me, i.e. Article 191 – educated, intelligent."

"You can't keep all the prisoners together. And it takes a lot of time until you get used to the people that you stay with in the cell. If women were convicted under the same article, they have something to talk about, but it's not interesting for me to stay with those who served 4-5 terms, and I find it hard to see those women who serve their 5th or 6th term for murder. It is the fault of the psychologist."

"I wake up in the morning to go to work, but they get angry with me because I disturb them while I get ready. They don't work."

"There is need for psychological help. The psychologist should distribute them in the way so that they can find each other and get along with each other."

"I wake up in the morning to go to work, but they are angry because I disturb them while I am getting ready. They do not work."

Some of the inmates referred to overcrowding in prison leading to tense relations and more violence among inmates, to limited space in the cell, permanent lack of privacy, inaccessible medical services, and limited workplaces.

ASSESSMENT BY CONVICTED WOMEN OF DETENTION CONDITIONS

"They rebel because they are too many in the cell, they suffocate, it's stuffy, there are many people."

"This happens when many women stay in the same cell, there always appear conflicts. As it happens when living in a residence hall, there I know I can go out and have a walk, but here it gathers and gathers... and someday they take revenge. There are such women here, too."

"We see here too little. We need a workplace, space. They give very long sentences to women."

"My relations with the cell mates are good, we get along well, we may quarrel because we don't have enough room, but we try to understand each other, we are not home and must concede, have patience, sympathy. I wouldn't say women here are very mean, it depends on how you receive it, what you offer."

"When I came here in 2012, there were 248 women here, it was different, there was no such aggressiveness between prisoners, their traits differ. But now we are like in a glass jar, they gathered us together and that's all."

Some interviewed women mentioned that it was not possible to have a balanced food or diet in prison in case of those with health problems. One of the ways to settle the issue identified by the interviewed wom-

en was to purchase food in prison or receive parcels from relatives. The dissatisfaction of several women was expressed with regards to the interdiction to receive certain food products from close relatives.

ASSESSMENT BY CONVICTED WOMEN OF DETENTION CONDITIONS

“When you are isolated, you are torn apart from your family. My rights are not violated, but it’s a prison after all.”

“They remind you all the time: presence, selector: ‘That convict’. You can’t forget it even for a minute, although you want to, but you can’t. But this is the law, we can’t do anything about it. We violated the law, we ended up here, it’s our fault. Absence of freedom. We lost it.”

“Alignment 3 times a day, it’s psychologically difficult, counting 3 times a day, the badge always attached, wherever you go... I am afraid to forget it... I may be reported for that, and I fear that it can hinder my arrival at home to my child.”

“You may lie on the bed, but you can’t sleep, otherwise – report... It is fearful until you get used to it. Nobody sleeps at noon... It is hard, I feel very tired.”

“Lack of understanding... Neither the woman knows how to behave here nor the administration.”

“The idea that you have the lowest social statute originates in your head – psychologically you are at the lowest level. The statue of a prisoner is very hard to accept, you have to acknowledge it and live with it. The place doesn’t change the man, i.e. you can be a human in prison, too. The most difficult is when you are referred to as prisoner, but you get used to it, there is no human who doesn’t get used to anything.”

The conducted interviews reveal that being in detention women can display different types of behaviour adjusting to the detention regime:

- **Aggressive behaviour** – high level of aggression manifested against other prisoners, employees or themselves. It is the case of regime breakers. Some of them resort to self-mutilation.

TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN IN DETENTION

“Prison is not as bad as the people here. If I must quarrel with prisoners or the administration, I can’t be silent until I say everything I think, and I don’t hide it.”

“... but other prisoners do not try hard, they don’t want to do the 2 hours of community work, which are compulsory according to the regulation. 2 hours for landscaping, because we are women, we do it for us not for the administration. We clean the place, but not many of us work hard.”

“During these 4 years I got sick and tired of it, I’d rather be reported and isolated and stay alone, without hearing or seeing anybody. I am sick and tired of them.”

“If you are conflictual, the administration reports you and it’s not good for you. I behave well, so I had the opportunity to be released earlier and easier.”

“Here like everywhere people are different, but I can tell you that women here are aggressive. There are more important women or who consider themselves more important, especially those who are not for the first time here. It is a prison, all kind of stuff happens here, but I personally try to stay aside.”

“There are persons who generate conflicts intentionally.”



“There are cases when women generate conflicts by themselves and are punished by the administration which writes reports. I think that this behaviour has to be punished, otherwise there would be chaos.”

“In general I get along well, but there are cases I disagree with. For instance, here are women who beat other older inmates or steal. I cannot accept such a thing.”

“There is a lot of aggressiveness here. Everyday there is verbal violence. I feel sick to go out. I do not know. These women... I work and am not interested... I work in tailoring, I do not want to see anyone and I do not want to know anyone. They can mock you – this is usual. It is a prison.”

• **Defensive behaviour** – introversion, withdrawal of prisoner from other prisoners, the case of women who “invited God into their hearts” and withdraw to the prayer hall or to church, and also those working in manufacturing, who have no time to communicate

with other prisoners. A woman blocked in the defensive state chooses not to express her feelings and thoughts, she fears to put herself into a more vulnerable position and remains blocked in this state.

TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN IN DETENTION

“I try to take care of my life and not to get involved into conflicts or aggressive talks with anyone. I work the land, I spend much time working for time to pass quicker, and try not to get involved, hear or see anybody. I mind my own life. Moreover, I have a wage here and can support my family at least somehow. I get along well with the administration, I have no conflicts with anyone.”

“I do not have problems, I do not interfere... I am always silent. There was a case when I got burnt with a cup of coffee. They told me not to speak of her in the prison. I am not of a kind to speak to someone or to interfere in a discussion, I am very silent...”

• **Behaviour of consent** – passive compliance of the prisoner with the prison rules.

TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN IN DETENTION

“I came here to be punished, forgiven, maybe I will be granted amnesty, if not – then it is God’s will.”

• **Behaviour of integration** – relates actively with the prison environment (initiative, leadership etc.) – sentry prisoners, women on duty on the floor, in the livelihood field, prisoners responsible for certain sectors or activities: library, computer hall, prayer hall. The integration process ensures the interaction between the individual and the group, social environment that ensures a functional balance between the parties.



TYPES OF BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN IN DETENTION

“I participate in all the activities here, I draw posters and participate in all the internal activities, and therefore I get along well with the personnel, administration and all the prison employees. I get along well with the personnel and nobody is aggressive with me.”

“I participate in all the cultural activities, draw posters, write poems, take part in performances.”

During the interviews some women describe close relations they established with other women in prison, friendship relations, relations where women have a caring treatment of younger inmates.

ASSESSMENT Y CONVICTED WOMEN OF THEIR RELATIONS WITH OTHER INMATES

“There are four of us. We eat together because all of us had been convicted under the same article. We are all mothers. There is something that joins us. The youngest is 33. I perceive her as my own child. I can scold her like “You went out and did not eat”. The relations are very good, but it depends who they place you with.”

“I am in a friendship relationship with a woman and I call her sister. That’s because we are convicted under the same article.”



"I stayed with two girls. They did not get proper guidance from their parents and we used to discuss in the room how to do things, how to take care of ourselves. They did not know what manicure was, what a crème is. I like when they thank me."

"I tell the younger inmates not to get involved in conflicts. I explain to them certain things. Often the newcomers get involved into conflicts. This is until they get used to the rules here."

The interviewed women also referred to the rights and obligations of a convict considering that some of their rights are observed, other – to a smaller degree. We selected a part of the statements of convicted women about the rights violated in prison.

Some women refer to the violation of the right to high-quality medical assistance, to receipt of parcels with food, to the possibility to purchase food from the prison shop, to the right to vote, etc.

STATEMENTS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS

"Many of my rights are violated. First and foremost – nutrition. If I cannot eat properly... The State feeds us properly, but there is a market here that opens once in 3 months and they sell only coffee and cigarettes there. They work only with women who smoke and drink coffee, but for me food is important. For example, in summer they do not allow our relatives to bring us salami and dairy products because they alter. But I want to eat. I am sentenced to be deprived of freedom, not of proper nutrition. So I have to watch those who smoke and drink coffee."

"Even the right to choose our cell mates; we are placed here in cells with HIV/AIDS positive people, who after a quarrel can take my razor blade, cut themselves and put it back... Then I shave and get infected with HIV/AIDS. It's for a lifetime... I think all these things should be taken into consideration. But nothing here preoccupies the administration, absolutely nothing. And I know for certain that this is how it works."

"The shop – once in 3 months, sweets, biscuits, coffee and cigarettes, but people want some cheese, milk, sausage, frankfurters. I should not be deprived of these."

"They don't allow religion here, every time we would encounter obstacles, it is not permitted, it is not permitted... (religious confessions), then the voting – why should you tell me for whom to vote... it is a kind of pressure, too."

"Violated rights – the right to vote, the right to stay in a healthy cell, health should be taken into account."

"First – they force us to work on Saturdays and Sundays. On holidays, and even on the 8th of March. I was shocked when I was told that on holidays like New Year we would work. There were many such holidays."

"There are many violations... Even the right to speak to the regime boss sometimes – they put me into a cell with people I am not content with. I beg you, put me into another cell, I am not fine with it. I was told the following: What, you don't know where you are? – in prison, so stay there."

4.2 RELATIONS BETWEEN INMATES AND EMPLOYEES/ADMINISTRATION

The research conducted in Rusca Prison revealed that 33,7% of the convicted women refer to their relations with the staff of the prison as being very good and good, 50% – very bad and bad, and 16,3% – medium (Table 16).

Table 16. Relations with the staff of the prison

Assessment	Number of inmates	Percent
Very good	41	13,7%
Good	60	20,0%
Medium	49	16,3%
Bad	60	20,0%
Very bad	90	30,0%
TOTAL	300	100,0%

During the interviews the inmates referred both to positive and negative aspects of their relations with the staff of the prison. It had been stated that the interviewees who have a job in prison qualify the relations with the staff in a positive manner mentioning

lack of any conflicts. The relations are also positively described by the mothers in detention taking care of their children until they reach the age of 3. They mentioned that they were supported whenever assistance was needed.

STATEMENTS OF WOMEN ABOUT THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE PRISON STAFF

“I am a doctor, so I get along with all employees and prisoners here, and when I have the possibility I even help the women.”

“I had the opportunity to build good relations with the personnel, and when I ask for help, they help me. Nobody was aggressive towards me, although there are teasers here.”

“The administration is always receptive. When I had a problem, or any questions, they would always help me.”

Appreciation of the relations with the personnel is done as a whole, but each convicted woman starts her explanations from something that is inherent to her in that relation.

STATEMENTS OF WOMEN ABOUT THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE PRISON STAFF

“I get along badly with the nurse, she doesn’t believe me when I tell her I have high blood pressure, and she keeps telling me to come during her office hours. The personnel reports me often, they think I



STATEMENTS OF WOMEN ABOUT THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE PRISON STAFF

am a drug user and Russian, and this affects my conditions here.”

“I am discriminated by the administration here because I speak Russian, and while Moldovan women are allowed to wear no badge, I am not. I am a drug user and I am also discriminated against by the medical officers.”

“In 5 years my health status changed, they don’t give me medicines, the medical officer speaks ill and acts badly. When I want to have tests done, they ask: “Why are you coming for lab tests every single day?” I never had my lab tests taken in 5 years... Upon my word... I went to see the doctor because my hand and my leg hurt, they made us plough, and after you do that the leg hurts even more... When I get sick, they don’t take care of me... I take pills I was brought from home... When we have to check our organs – not all of them, though – they would say: “We have no money to pay for the car”.”

“I think that the women on duty are so mean, they are told to be so... They say food used to be worse, that’s what it used to be, but we don’t want it as in the past.”

“There should be no discrimination – some are allowed, some are not... Some are allowed to have food, some are not, some are praised for their work, some are not... Who is privileged here? I don’t know why the administration favours certain women, since we are all the same here.”

“I was... a regime breaker... just look at me... Me – a regime breaker... I beg you to get me right (crying)... Me – a regime breaker. The former head of the prison, Mr. Deviza, I don’t know what bad I did to him... why would he always be angry with me, shout at me, tell the women on duty to report me, tell the prisoners to tease me – yell at me, hit me, so I would do something and be reported... Only I know how difficult it was... Take a look at me, please; if you have a camera, record me, it’s impossible... (crying). Look (showing her hands).”

Difficulties in communication are multiple. They result from the attitude of the employees qualified by some inmates as being incorrect and limited only to the failure to provide healthcare when needed, to

imposing women feeling sick to work, to unfair staff reports against the inmates, to unjustified dismissal from work and to a differentiated attitude towards the women.

4.3 IMPACT OF DETENTION ON THE QUALITY OF WOMEN’S LIFE

When we launched this study, we asked ourselves about the consequences of detention on the women. We assumed that the emotional condition of women and their children were affected, relations with their families were destroyed, and that there was a real risk of discrimination upon return in the community. At the same time, we anticipated that the financial condi-

tion was also affected as a result of the money invested for their defence in court, current expenses, health-care costs, their relatives’ attempts to get the property of women, destruction of their houses and money stolen from abandoned houses, and, eventually, the refund of the money debt.

4.3.1 IMPACT OF DETENTION ON THE FAMILY OF THE CONVICTED WOMAN

When speaking about their families, the majority of inmates speak about the children and parents. In their statements we find that the notion of family begins to be defined by the word *everything*. *Everything* – a whole universe which they currently partially lack, *everything* made up of *her* and those *dear* to her. *Everything* implies *unity*, to be one with the others who may be the child, parent or husband. It results from the inter-

views that if you have nobody outside the prison walls, it is very hard to survive in prison. The thought that there is somebody out there who waits for them, with whom they communicate and for whom they are important – helps the women get easier through all the negative moments. A lesson learnt by the convicted women is the understanding of the family's value.

STATEMENTS OF THE CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE FAMILY

"Family is life, it is everything. All the support I ever received was from my family. I miss them very much. My children come and see me, they never forgot about me. We talk by phone and during visits."

"It is everything. Especially my daughter, she gives me life. I know that every Saturday I have to make a call, to hear my mother and my daughter, and then I can work, and feel no pain."

"It is my life, it is everything I have got. If I had no children, I wouldn't have survived all these years."

"Family means everything to me. When you are here it is very important to know that your family waits for you out there. I see here women crying because they do not communicate with their families or are not accepted. Thank God, my husband loves me and accepts me, he waits for me and respects me. He believes that I have no blame."

"Family is family... it means support, it means everything... family is life."

"Family means everything to me, my life, my oxygen. Even while I am here I try to make up for my absence, I send gifts to my daughter – toys, purses, I try to support them from here as much as I can. I send them all I earn here. I leave the minimum for myself. 400 lei is enough for me here. I send the rest home."

"Family – is where life is, where you have support... where there are no problems, but a happy relationship, as in God's arms, as in Heaven. Whatever happens to you – good or bad, they are there to help you."

"Family is a human environment where you feel very well. They are my hope. I never felt that they would blame me for disgracing them. One more lesson – the prison taught me how important the family is. It is different outside – job, friends, various environments push family on the second place, but here you realize its role to the fullest."

"Family is the extension of life on Earth. It is the beginning and the continuity on Earth."

"The sense of life..."



The families support the inmates to the extent they can. This emotional support gives them hope for the future, which is near for some of them and far away for others.

STATEMENTS OF THE CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE FAMILY

"But now my second husband supports me and my family encourages me. I pray for them to have patience and wait for me, and I am happy to have a mother-in-law who understands and encourages me. They say they need me and love me. We must persevere."

"I am grateful to God that she (my mother) reacted wisely. Regardless of the situations that I was in, they do not look down on me... Although I am aware I hurt my mother and brothers, all of them. But they encouraged me even more. I say it because many mates of mine were abandoned by their families too. My family works a lot so that I could have a relationship with them, with my daughter, so that they could bring her here, once in 3 months, for 3 days, for her not only to see me, but to sleep beside me, to take a shower with me, to cook, and to spend time as we would at home."

"As I said, my family is with me, I matured and they matured. I appreciated them, they appreciated me. They cannot live without me, I cannot live without them."

"My family waits for me, loves me, respects me. I hope to return and find them all alive. My family supported and continues to support me. I only wait for the time to pass quicker and for me to get out of here."

"Very good relationship – my children come and visit me. They love me, and I love them."

"I can say that most of my friends turned their back on me, and even many of my relatives did... Somebody believes me, somebody doesn't. My mother didn't leave me. She always supports me. The dearest persons are with me and support me. They didn't give up on me."

The prisoners who have no support from their parents, siblings, or children perceive negatively their families. The prisoners say straightforward that their families turned their backs on them, and they do not

communicate with their families. After saying that they perceive negatively their families, they do not provide too many explanations. Very often they simply say "I don't know".

STATEMENTS OF THE CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE FAMILY

"I perceive my family badly."

"They gave up on me."

"I have no family anymore. When I am released I want to raise my child. I don't want to get married any more. I am disappointed. I have no faith in family and I don't communicate with my mother. I don't communicate with my biological family; they virtually turned their back on me, but I want to help my brothers to the extent possible."

"I don't communicate with anybody. My mother is alive, but she believes that since I ended up here I have been disgracing her, so she refuses to speak with me by phone."

“Because you are far from your family and they give up on you. My sisters turned their back on me, and so did my mother. I was dead for them since the very day that I got here. They decided so knowing that I am not guilty. That means it should be so. I can’t settle this until I get out of here and have to talk to them.”

The interviewees spoke about the possibility to communicate with relatives through short and long-term visits, or by phone. The problem which some of the women face is the long distance from their home to the Rusca Prison. It is a serious obstacle for their

relatives to be able to come, especially for the elderly parents or children left with relatives. Another barrier for visits is the impossibility to be visited because of scarce financial resources of the members of the convicted women’s families.

STATEMENTS OF THE CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE FAMILY

“Yes, being near Chisinau, my family comes to all short and long term meetings. I also call them every week. I personally had no obstacles in communicating with my family.”

“I communicate by phone with my mother who is here in Moldova, and with my husband who is in Russia. 20 minutes is too little for me, and I am only allowed to call one person... so I have to decide, whom I shall call today, this week – my mother to encourage her, or my husband. It is difficult. For the rest, I see no obstacles.”

“I have the possibility. The obstacle is represented by the prison wall.”

The children of the inmates have also a hard time coping with their mothers’ detention. The analysis of quantitative data revealed that out of 300 women who filled-in the questionnaire, 94 have children aged up to 16 (Table 17).

Table 17. Number of inmates with children aged up to 16

Response	Number of inmates	Percent
Yes	94	31,3%
No	206	68,7%
TOTAL	300	100,0%

Women speak about situations where their children suffer at school and in the community because of their mothers’ statute, and also about their worries regarding the present and the future of their children. The children grow without their mothers’ love; they are discriminated because of their mothers’ deten-

tion. Being separated from their mothers, they opt for a negative and anti-social behaviour. The recommendation of psychologists in this regard is to make as much as possible to preserve the relationship of the parents with their children.



STATEMENTS OF THE CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE FAMILY

"When my daughter was at schools she was told that her mother is in prison. Back in the village people rumour, and children go to school and repeat what they heard. So they told my daughter about it. She answered: "I know where my mother is. You take care of your mother, and I shall take care of mine." She didn't quarrel, nor did the children say anything to her."

"It keeps me calm that there are no problems. My children are in the 6th, 4th and 1st grades; they go to the village school. Those from the school know that I am in prison, there were problems in the beginning, but now everything is very well. And the villagers got used to it."

"My son is a good boy. It seems that everything is fine. But there are moments when he gets out of control of his aunt who takes care of him."

Various studies underline the critical importance of the mother to be with her children both in the early years and later to satisfy their emotional needs. As a result of mother's absence children are shy, withdrawn, without self-confidence and confidence in relationships. There are cases where the children do not know anything about their mothers' detention and it does not always work as protection, but can cause harm. "Love of a mother for a child is a source and an essential condition which transforms a child

into a social being." [13]

The convicted women are worried about their not being next to their children when they need them the most. The interviewees are aware of the importance of maternal care, guidance, communication, which altogether contribute to a harmonious development of the child.

13 Ciofu C., *Interacțiunea părinți-copii*, Editura medicală Almatea, București, 1998. ru.scribd.com/doc/3228911/Carmen-Ciofu-Interactiunea-parinti-copii

STATEMENTS OF THE CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE FAMILY

"I fear to miss something from my child's life, I wish I were with him, it hurts me to think that I wasn't there when he made his first steps, I understand that I can't see what he is doing and it hurts me."

"Of course I communicate with my son, I love him very much. And he loves me. You know this age, I should be with him, he can stay with grandparents until he is 12, but then it begins – friends who distract them from studies, and you must advise them whom to trust... So as for them not to be naive."

"I want home because my daughter is a teenager and the young people are dangerous. I am afraid, because she is a beauty. I think every mother has such worries."

Studies reveal that the children of convicted women (convicted parents) are prone to a risk for delinquent behaviour in the future and, eventually, for detention, because, in most cases, they grow up in orphanages or their grandparents take care of them. For instance, in the Correctional Facility for Juveniles in

Nebraska 44% of inmates had parents who were or still are detained in prisons [14].

14 Henriques, Z. 1982. *Imprisoned mothers and their children: A descriptive and analytical study*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America. Locy, T. 1999.

4.3.2 IMPACT OF DETENTION ON THE FINANCIAL CONDITION OF THE INMATES

During the interviews the inmates spoke about the impact of detention on their financial condition. The reasons invoked by the women are multiple: poor health condition which does not let them get employed, thus, the expenses incurred by them in pris-

on are higher; the sold house and/or huge amounts spent to pay for the services of a defence counsel; goods from their house stolen after their conviction; obligation to compensate the material damage.

STATEMENTS OF CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE IMPACT OF DETENTION ON THEIR FINANCIAL CONDITION

"The expenses. A lot of money is spent, especially because I am allergic I can't eat everything they serve here, I can't work in the field, sunrays are dangerous for me, and if you don't work, you have no money... The family takes care of you. And in 19 years – \$10,000 are spent or so. Let's estimate – 700-800 lei are spent per month..."

"I sold my house to avoid getting into prison, and I am here nonetheless. But my future husband has recently bought a house."

"She put us here (her and her husband), because she (her sister-in-law) wanted our household. She said a lot of things, lies, because she wanted our house, the old man's share, her father, everything. And where am I supposed to live?"

"I have a house. And I've got a small portion of land around the house, I don't have other goods, the house belongs to me, I am registered there. The only thing is that since I am here my house has been burgled and many goods, furniture, goods from around the house were stolen."

"The fireplace is destroyed, the wardrobe and the bed are broken, everything is broken, there are no curtains, no blankets, the house is empty. If you'd want to live there, I don't know how. And if it's winter, cold, raining, snowing?"

"A lot of money has been spent since I am here, tens of thousands of Euros... my mother told me: 'You could have bought yourself an apartment.' My attorney was one of the top 5 attorneys. He is very good."

"I have to pay them the money back."

The negative impact of detention on the financial condition of inmates intensifies the worries about the future of the women outside the prison related to their living place, job, position in the society, attitude of the community towards her. Thus, through the conducted interviews we also intended to analyse the reflections of the women about their future, which are presented in the following chapter of the study.



V. REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE

The women describe in the interviews their fear for the future. They explain it by the fact that someone could remind them of their conviction and thus damage the present and the future. The future is uncertain because of a potential discrimination against the women, lack of a job, which is very difficult to find after release, the shame to return to the community,

the fear for the inability to adjust to freedom after many years in detention, lack of a place to live and because of no one waiting for them.

This negative perception of the future makes some women think of how they will be able to survive in the society. There are cases when the women see their future by referring to the realities in the prison: *to have a permanent workplace in prison, the family is the ones I live with here.*

REFLECTIONS OF THE CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE FUTURE

"It's for a lifetime. Even if I know why I am here, it is a mark forever. I think when I am released, people will point their fingers at me."

"Bad, I don't know why but bad, I see nothing good. I don't know why. I feel ashamed to go back into the village."

"I am afraid of the other side, afraid of what waits for me on the other side. You have to know where to go, what to do, where to work... The first time I was released I found a job related to my speciality – culinary chef at Green-Hills. When I filled in the form, there was the question whether I had been in prison, so I wrote "no", but in a half a year they checked it, they were not angry with me, they summoned me and asked: "Why didn't you write it?" I answered: "If you were me, would you have written it?" They said: "We are not allowed to hire former prisoners"... I filed thus a resignation letter... This thing is very bad in my village, you may find a public workplace but you work for miserable salaries... you can't apply for another workplace, you have got a white spot... this is scary, because no one knows what follows, where to find a job."

"What will I do outside? Will I be able to get a job? How will I support my family? Will I be able to bring up my children? Will I have any support, and least temporary? Because I don't want to end up here again..."

"It is a huge shame to stay in prison....It really is..."

"I want to pay back all my debts, even those gained unfairly, and I hope to be accepted back to my workplace, and that the fact that I had criminal convictions will not affect my employers. I miss my family."

"When you are released, it is obvious that you were in prison, and you can't find a job. And when you apply somewhere, they ask for certain documents. And when they see you were in prison, they do not accept you. When they find that you were locked up.... Those who get out of here can't find a job. A woman has been recently released, she got married, but can't find a job, so she works illegally in various places. Why? Because she has been recently released and people are afraid to hire her. Even the family... they wait for you, but when you return home... they might not accept you with open hearts and arms, either."

"I have the fear that I won't be able to cope, after so many years spent here, I don't know whether I'll manage it."



“Anxiety – How will the society accept me? Will they point their fingers at me? I have a house in the village, I will stay there with my grandchild. I don’t know whether I will have a job, since it is rather difficult to find one after having been in prison.”

“I’m afraid that society might accuse me for what I committed. I fear that my mother won’t be alive when I am released, I hope she will.”

“I am restless because I think that when I am released I won’t be able to find a job. I heard that even your children are not enrolled at school if you are a former prisoner.”

“Please, tell them that we would like to attend free trainings outside, too. We would like to participate in different trainings like those organised here.”

“If you were convicted, that’s it, you are no human anymore, the others treat you as junk.”

“The first thing I would do after being released – I would prepare the documents and leave the country. I would change my nationality and never ever hear about Moldova. People are much kinder out there, they have a different mentality.”

The women prisoners who must serve their sentences for more than 10 years see a future linked with prison. It is important for them to have the opportunity to work and make a living, and also to have their terms “cut”.

REFLECTIONS OF THE CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE FUTURE

“To have a workplace elsewhere, to have a permanent work... not like here where I work one day out of two... I want to have a workplace, in summer and in winter... I wish for nothing more. To be able to earn my money...”

“My family are those who surround me here..., I have 15 years more.”

Nonetheless, several interviewed women expressed their certainty that their relatives will support them in the future and that they will make it through, because they realized many things. Some women

mentioned the trainings they attended in prison and hope that the knowledge gained will be of great use. Other women define their future by education, family, job, new friends, etc.

REFLECTIONS OF THE CONVICTED WOMEN ABOUT THE FUTURE

“I do not fear my future, because my children wait for me and I have no misunderstandings with anybody.”

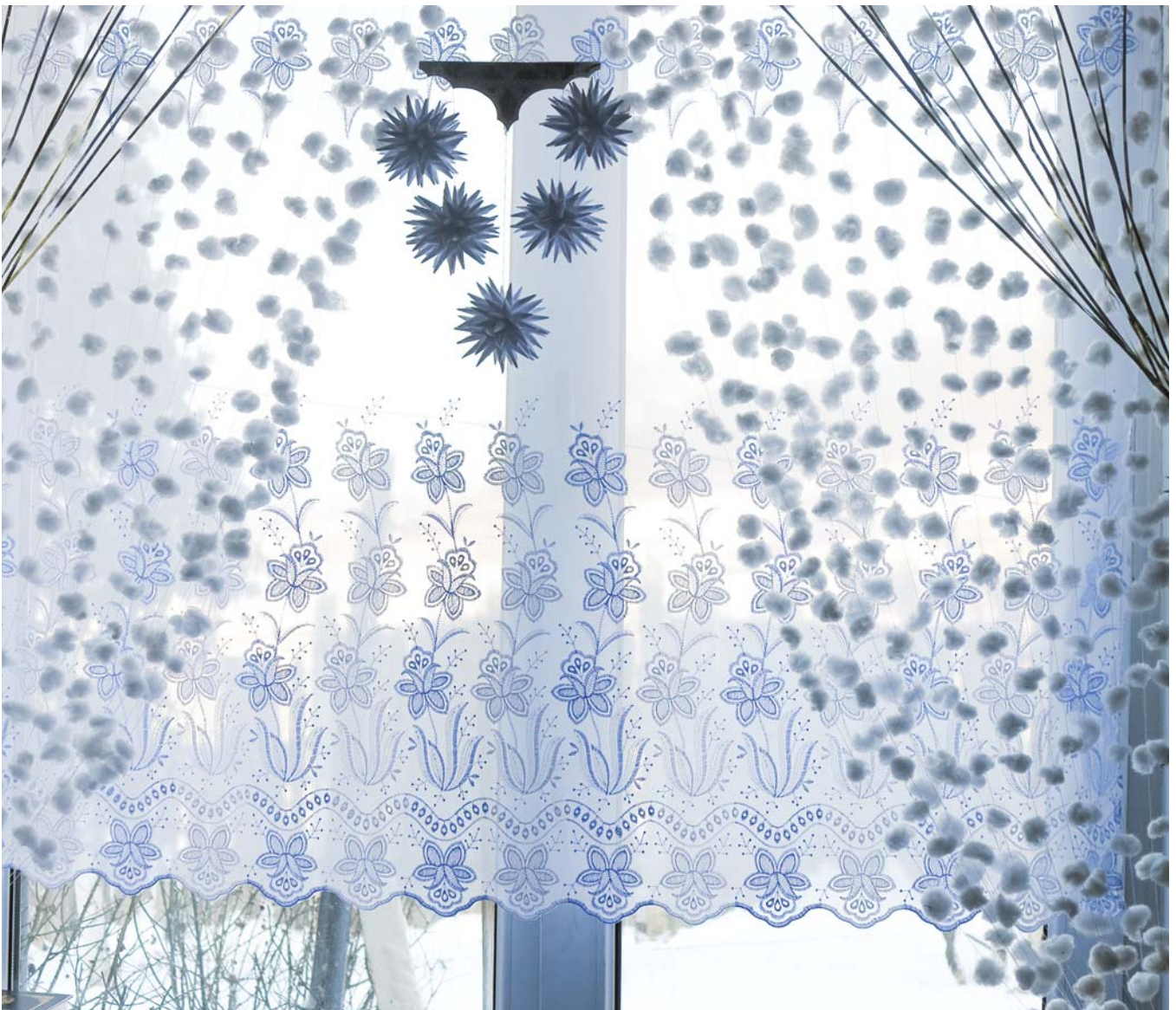
“The prison taught me a lot of positive things. I know the people whom I can trust, I understood who my real friends are, because time chose them, not me.”

“The future? My speciality is cooking, and I would like to learn other professions as well. I want to be with my family, my child, to see my child learning and developing.”

“I wish for a family, I want to study, and I want to become an interior designer.”

The success of the women’s reintegration originates in their views upon time – the past, the present and the future. Temptation, weakness, impulsiveness, and lack of common sense brought the women there where they would have never thought to end up. Most women focus on a negative past with more neg-

ative than positive experiences, on a fatalistic present in which they accept their fate without striving for a change, on an uncertain future without set objectives. Many things would change if they realized their own perspective upon time and tried to change it.





GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The research focused on the analysis of life stories told by the convicted women, where they referred to their past and present, but also to the manner they perceive their future. We tried to analyse primarily the extent to which the women in detention suffered from violence, their perception of aggressors, the assessment made by the convicted women of the process of administration of justice, the consequences of detention on women and the impact on detention of a mother on the child.

The told life stories made us understand the diversity of the roles existing in a closed community, apparently homogenous. The homogeneity results from the fact that the women are in detention and had been convicted. The diversity refers to different ages of the inmates, different level of education, involvement or non-involvement into available production activities, availability or lack of support by the family.

The collected life stories made us understand the manner the convicted women interpret the events in their personal lives and, namely, that the violence against women is one of the reasons for committed crimes, in particular, in case of convictions for murder or other violent crimes.

The conducted research confirmed that out of 300 women who took part in the quantitative research, 43% acknowledged that they had been subjected to domestic violence by the husband/concubine and/or their parents. Out of these 43% of women victims of domestic violence, 84,5% of women were convicted for violent crimes. Thus, domestic violence is an important factor contributing to feminine delinquency that, very often, is nothing else than a response to long-lasting sufferings in their life.

The team of researchers stated that out of 43% of women who acknowledged to have been victims of domestic violence, 83,8% were abused by their husband/concubine, 7% – by their fathers, 4,7% – by their mothers, 3,9% – by both parents, and 0,8% – by their siblings.

Victims of domestic violence are reluctant to report their cases to police because they consider it is a family issue or they are afraid of what the others will say. Moreover, the involvement of the police very often implies the application to the aggressor of a fine paid from the sometimes scarce budget of the family. This makes the victim of violence renounce to reporting the case of violence to the police. However, sometimes, another reason for the women's reservation to report cases of violence is the intensification of aggressiveness when the aggressor returns home from the police. Thus, out of the 43% of women victims of domestic violence, 42,6% reported their case to police, while 35,7% did not tell anyone about the acts of violence.

Violence against women has severe physical and emotional consequences on their children. The children live in a constant state of anticipation, expecting the aggressiveness to be displayed anytime. The effects may include the feeling of fear, mistrust, shame, helplessness, low self-esteem, and the risk of delinquent behaviour in the future.

The perception of the treatment of women during the criminal proceedings varies depending on the qualification of the treatment and on the representatives of the institutions who were in contact with the women. Thus, 39,7%, 26,6% and 37,7% of questioned convicted women assert that they had been treated very well and well by the police officers and, correspondingly, by the prosecutors and judges. The negative assessment of the treatment during the criminal proceedings was limited to 33,7%, 42,7% and 30,7% of convicted women who referred to police officers and, correspondingly, to prosecutors and judges.

The verbal and physical aggressiveness in prison displayed by some convicts is part of the traumatising experience some women in detention go through. Causes for aggressive conduct are different – overcrowding, stress caused by detention, frustrations of any kind, low degree of education, mental disorder,



lack of skills to manage conflicts without violence. At the same time, the convicted women also referred to friendship relations or the care they display to younger inmates.

The relationship with the staff of the prison is assessed as being very good and good by 33,7% of convicted women, while 50% of women consider that their relations with the prison staff are bad and very bad. The assessments refer to the current interpersonal relations between the inmates and the staff (administration, medical personnel, psychologist, social assistant, etc.).

The most important values from the perspective of the inmates are freedom and family. The interviewees assert that detention has a negative impact on their affective relationships. During the interviews the women mentioned that one of the consequences of detention is the destroyed relationship between the mother and the child. The physical protection, affective, moral and social relationships cannot be

displayed to their fullest, while the children of the inmates suffer from emotional traumas caused by the incarceration of their mothers.

The convicted women perceive their future in dark colours. They acknowledge that their reintegration in the society will be very difficult as they realize how difficult it will be for them to find a job and to return to a community where former prisoners are stigmatized. In some cases, the family members and the longing for them are the factors that make the women look into the future with more hope and confidence.

We saw in women's eyes sadness, regrets, and willingness for freedom especially of mothers for whom their children, irrespective of the age, remain a part of them. The case of mothers with small children is even more painful due to the fact that these children who need the care and love of their mothers will be separated from them. The years lived in prison – 5 or 10 or 15 ... are years from the life of an individual.



SUGGESTIONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CONVICTED WOMEN

“Speaking about the possibility to improve the conditions, I’d want for more washing machines, because we have to wash everything manually, and duvets in winter are especially hard to wash and dry.”

“There, the yard for children should be bigger. We are 9 mothers and 10 children in a house, of which 2 minors.... So we are mothers and children, all staying in a small room, in a very small yard where the children cannot stay. I wish there was the chance to stay at home, at least until the child turns 8...”

“I think mothers with young children should be given a better health care. As for me, my rights are respected, we have food, we can make a call once a week, the administration is good, I even think that for some people too good conditions are created, therefore having no one outside they commit repeated offence to come back here.”

“We are mothers and we have children who are God knows where, on the streets or in asylums, and after coming out from there they remain on the streets because nobody needs them. At least they could help our children.”

“They should make reforms, like regarding the amnesty. They should release some people, because there are women here who serve many sentences in a row here. And the pensioners? Why is he here? Are you not sorry for him? He barely crawls. Why?”

“They do not show any mercy for women, but they should. They ought to be more gentle and kind especially with mothers who give birth to children here or who are convicted while being pregnant. It is not fair that a woman who should be with her children be treated like this.”

“The personnel here pulled some levers so that I could be released sooner, if only it wasn’t for the corrupt judges from Hancești who sentenced me.”

“At the beginning of family life neither men nor the women are ready for a family life, there should be a school where they could learn to overcome all unpleasant moments in family.”

ANNEXES

Annex 1 Interview Guide

(Target group: detainees of Rusca Prison)

We secure the observance of the principle of confidentiality, objectiveness. The goal of the research is to identify the key aspects related to the impact of domestic violence and subsequent detention on women.

Presentation: age, locality, education, number of children, nationality.

Past

1. Tell us about your life prior to getting to Rusca Prison? What was the relationship with your family: husband, parents, children, siblings, relatives? What were the positive, beautiful moments in your life? What were the negative moments you went through?
2. What do you understand by violence?
3. Describe situations when you were subjected to violence in your family: beaten, abused, turned out of the house, threatened, sexually abused, etc. What were the reasons for these actions of violence against you? Other cases.
4. How did you react, what did you do in different cases when you were subjected to violence? Did you appeal to police, do you go to your parents, did you divorce, etc.? How were you helped?
5. How were you affected by the cases of violence against you, your children, parents, siblings, relatives?
6. How was the person who committed the acts of violence against you punished?
7. Tell us about what happened, how did you get to Rusca Prison? What were the reasons that made you commit the act you were punished for?
8. Have you been proposed the assistance of an attorney? Do you think the attorney reflected correctly, objectively and fully your case in the court hearing? Did the attorney present in the court hearing information about your condition (in the family)? Why do you think so?



9. Tell us about the manner you were treated during the criminal proceedings: attitude of the policeman, prosecutor, judge, attorney towards you. How did you feel during the communication with these persons: policeman, prosecutor, judge, attorney, etc.
10. Were you supported by the family, friends during the criminal proceedings?
11. Did you have any negative experiences in pre-trial detention, such as verbal violence, physical violence, sexual abuse? Describe the cases.
12. Speak about the negative experience in prison, such as verbal violence, physical violence, sexual abuse (by other women or by the administration). Tell us more about these cases.
13. How do you assess the process of administration of justice with regards to women? What are your recommendations in order to improve the justice dispense process, the detention conditions in prison, etc.?

Present

14. What is family to you?
15. How do you assess the relations with your family while in detention? Where are your children, what are your relations with them. Describe their life during your detention. What is the relationship with your parents, relatives (siblings, grandparents, etc.)?
16. Do you have the possibility to keep in touch with your family? What do you do to keep in touch? What are the barriers to maintain relations in with the family?
17. Assess your previous and current financial condition (house, property). Why do you think so? Other. Describe.
18. Tell us about your relations with other inmates of Rusca Prison. Describe. Tell us about the categories of women in prison (current social statuses, relations among them).
19. What is the most unpleasant about being convicted? What rights do you think are violated?
20. What are your relations with the prison staff. Describe. Why do you think so?

Future

21. How do you see your future? When you think about the future, what makes you feel anxious?
22. What are your wishes? What are your suggestions related to any area?

Annex 2

Questionnaire

My name is _____. We conduct an anthropological study among detainees from Rusca Prison. Please give us several minutes of your time to fill in this questionnaire. We guarantee confidentiality. Your replies will be processed and statistically analyzed and will be included in the study report.

Social and demographic characteristics

1. Age: _____

2. Family status:

1. Married
2. Widow
3. Divorced
4. Cohabitation
5. Not married

3. Education:

1. No education
2. Primary education (4 grade)
3. Gymnasium education (9 grade)
4. Complete secondary education/lyceum
5. Professional studies
6. College
7. University studies

4. How long have you been staying in Rusca Prison?

1. Up to one year
2. 1-2 years
3. 3-4 years
4. 5-6 years
5. 7-8 years
6. 9-10 years
7. Over 10 years

5. Based on which article have you been convicted?

6. Do you have children aged up to 16 years?

1. Yes
2. No

7. What do you understand by violence?

1. Physical aggression
2. Verbal aggression
3. Material damage
4. Emotional suffering
5. Abused
6. Other
7. Don't know/No response

8. Have you been a victim of domestic violence before being convicted?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/No response

9. If yes, who have you been aggressed by?

1. Mother
2. Father
3. Both parents
4. Husband
5. Brothers
6. Step parents
7. Other
8. Don't know/No response

10. What form was the violence against you?

1. Physical violence
2. Verbal abuses
3. Threats
4. Theft
5. Sexual abuse
6. Other
7. Don't know/No response



11. Who did you appeal to?

	Firstly	Secondly
1. Relatives	1	2
2. Friends	1	2
3. Police	1	2
4. Social assistant	1	2
5. Other	1	2
6. I did not appeal to anyone, indicate the reason	1	2

12. Have you been proposed in the court the assistance of an ex officio attorney?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/No response

13. How to you assess the quality of the assistance of the ex officio attorney?

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Medium
4. Bad
5. Very bad
6. Don't know/No response

14. Did the ex officio attorney correctly and objectively reflect your case in the court?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/No response

15. How were you treated during the criminal proceedings by:

	Policeman	Prosecutor	Judge
Very well	1	2	3
Well	1	2	3
Medium	1	2	3
Bad	1	2	3
Very bad	1	2	3
Don't know/No response	1	2	3

16. Were you sexually abused in pre-trial detention?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/No response

17. If yes, by whom?

1. Employee
2. Female detainee
3. Male detainee
4. Other _____
5. Don't know/No response

18. Were you sexually abused in prison?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/No response

19. If yes, by whom?

1. Prison employee
2. Female detainee
3. Male detainee
4. Other _____
5. Don't know/No response

20. Evaluate your relations with the prison staff?

1. Very good
2. Good
3. Medium
4. Bad
5. Very bad
6. Don't know/No response

21. Do the prison conditions prepare you for reintegration in the society?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know/No response

22. Why do you think so?

23. What should be changed in prison to ensure your better reintegration in society?

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FROM RUSCA PRISON:
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Authors:
Eudochia Saharneau, PhD, University Professor
Tatiana Margarint, Master of Anthropology

Photos: Ramin Mazur

Translation: Intart Design SRL

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