

The Effects of Intervention by International Financial Institutions on Women's Human Rights in Ukraine

**Joint Shadow Report
CEDAW Committee, 66th Session**

Shadow Report on Ukraine on behalf of:

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom with the following Ukrainian women's groups:

Centre for Social and Labour Research, Theatre for Dialogue, Gender Dnipro, NGO Center for the Future, Child Smile, and Alternative Center.

The report is drafted with the help of the Charity Fund East SOS and independent activists Nick Pidgora, Oksana Pokalchuk, Uliana Egorova, Aliana Yaroslavska, and Oksana Potapova.

© 2017 Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Permission is granted for non-commercial reproduction, copying, distribution, and transmission of this publication or parts thereof so long as full credit is given to the publishing organisation; the text is not altered, transformed, or built upon; and for any reuse or distribution, these terms are made clear to others.



Women's International League
for Peace & Freedom
Rue de Varembe 1
Case Postale 28
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland

1ST EDITION

JANUARY 2017

Design and layout: WILPF

www.wilpf.org

The Effects of Intervention by International Financial Institutions on Women's Human Rights in Ukraine

Shadow Report to CEDAW Committee, 66th Session

Table of Contents

1. Introduction: the Committee's concerns about macro-economic reforms and its effect on women in Ukraine, allied with the effect of the current armed conflict in Ukraine	2
2. The effects of intervention by international financial institutions on women's human rights in Ukraine	3
a. Elimination of subsidies for fuel and heating and impoverishment of women (Articles 3, 11(1)(e) and 14(h)).....	4
b. Reductions of employment in the state sector has a disproportionate effect on women's human rights – Article 3, Article 11 (b)(c)(d)(e)	5
c. Reductions of pension payments due to systemic reform has a disproportionate effect on women (Article 3 and Article 11(1)(e)).....	8
d. Reductions in child and family benefits (Article 3 and Article 11(2)(c))	8
3. The human rights of women affected by the armed conflict	9
a. Prostitution, sexual exploitation and violence - "survival sex" (Article 6)	9
b. Freedom of movement and access to healthcare (Article 12)	10
c. Freedom of movement and access to justice for gender-based violence (General Recommendation 19)	12
d. Violations of the human rights of internally displaced persons	13
4. Recommendations to the State of Ukraine	15

1. Introduction: the Committee's concerns about macro-economic reforms and its effect on women in Ukraine, allied with the effect of the current armed conflict in Ukraine

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom together with the following Ukrainian women's groups, the Center for Social and Labour Research, the Theatre for Dialogue, Gender Dnipro, NGO Centre of the Future, Child Smile, and the Alternative Centre with the help of the charity fund East SOS, and the following Ukrainian independent activists Nick Pidgora, Oksana Pokalchuk, Uliana Egorova, Alina Yaroslavska, Oksana Potapova and Iryna Chorna, respectfully submit the following comments to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women ("the Committee") to assist the Committee in its consideration of Ukraine's eighth periodic report, during its session in February 2017.

During the last two years, Ukraine has experienced considerable humanitarian consequences of the conflict in the east of the country, causing extensive suffering of civilians in the conflict area and throughout the country as a whole. Parts of the population of Ukraine are on the brink of survival. Insecurity in accessing basic needs has led to a narrowing of women's access to all of their human rights - their human right to an adequate standard of living and also, in particular, their human rights to work, education, health and access to justice.

We are concerned that the armed conflict has exacerbated the already dire situation of economic and social rights for women, and has led to increased interventions by international financial institutions, mainly the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The conditionalities linked to the funding provided by these institutions have required the State to cancel fuel subsidies, which has led to higher prices for gas, and to reduce spending on areas such as health, education and social wellbeing. One of the main requirements of the IMF remains the cancellation of fuel subsidies and consequently higher prices for gas, heating, electricity, transportation and other goods and services related to fuel use, and also cut spending on areas such as health, education, and social services as well as raising the retirement age.

This reduction in public spending has disproportionately affected women in two ways: first, women and their families tend to be the primary beneficiaries of pro-social spending, and, second, because women tend to be employed in the sectors where most job cuts have taken place. State benefits, including pensions, and subsidies for basic living requirements, such as heating, have also been cut. Again, these cuts have had a disproportionate negative effect on women, many of whom are elderly, sick or disabled, or who take on the extra care work of the elderly, sick and children.

2. The effects of intervention by international financial institutions on women's human rights in Ukraine

Our concerns are mainly connected with the armed conflict and the associated disruption of State spending on economic and social rights, which particularly impact women. We are also concerned that the situation has been exacerbated by the interventions of international financial institutions, mainly the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The Committee has previously expressed concern about the overall socio-economic situation and its disproportionate effect on women. During the review of Ukraine's seventh periodic review in February 2010¹, the Committee stated:

“36. The Committee is concerned that, as indicated in the replies to the list of issues, “the conduct of the liberal reforms gave rise to mass poverty, which made it practically impossible, especially for women, to exercise the majority of their constitutional rights”. Moreover, the Committee is also concerned that poverty has reached over 70 per cent in Ukraine, according to an assessment by the Commissioner for Human Rights, and that this may affect women disproportionately.”

Accordingly, the Committee made the following recommendation:

“37. The Committee urges the State party to assess the impact of domestic economic reforms and of the international financial and economic crisis on women, counter the negative effects on women through adequate measures and sufficient funding and inform the Committee thereof in its next report. Moreover, the Committee recommends that the State party use a gender-sensitive approach with respect to all poverty alleviation programmes and strategies and take into account the particular needs of women belonging to vulnerable groups.”

In early 2014, the Government of Ukraine requested support from the IMF to restore macroeconomic stability in Ukraine. In early 2015, a revised economic reform programme totaling 17.5 billion USD was agreed between the IMF and the Government, requiring the restructuring of the state debt on the terms and conditions proposed by the IMF. The IMF remains the only active lender of “last resort” in Ukraine because Ukraine does not have access to international debt markets.

IMF loans play now a very important role in maintaining the required amount of reserves of the National Bank of Ukraine and, more generally, in ensuring the relative stability of the financial system. Each new tranche of funding from the IMF, however, leads to additional requirements of budget savings, including the elimination of subsidies and social guarantees.

¹ UN Doc CEDAW/C/UKR/CO/7, 5 February 2010

The requirements of the IMF on Ukraine are based on a standard set of measures, which is based on prioritizing financial stability and suppressing inflation in relation to living conditions, social stability and economic growth. Accordingly, the priorities of the IMF in Ukraine have been, and remain, austerity measures and particularly the elimination of subsidies for fuel.

We note that the Committee has included in its List of Issues² a request to the Ukrainian government to “provide information on the type of alternative sources of livelihood for family survival and the assistance provided, in particular for female-headed households, in those territories affected by the conflict and under the control of the State party, as well as in those territories not controlled by the State party, namely certain parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol”.

We note also that the Committee has requested that the State “provide comprehensive data on women employed in the informal sector and at home, as well as on measures taken to provide them with access to full-time and permanent employment with adequate social benefits. Furthermore, please provide information on measures taken to allow for the reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities, especially in rural areas, and to promote the sharing of domestic and family responsibilities between women and men”.³

a. Elimination of subsidies for fuel and heating and impoverishment of women (Articles 3, 11(1)(e) and 14(h))

As mentioned above, one of the main IMF requirements for lending was and remains the elimination of fuel subsidies. This elimination has led to higher prices for gas, heating, electricity, transportation and other goods and services related to the use of fuel. The corresponding increase in tariffs, whilst reducing the chronic deficit of the national oil and gas company, Naftogaz, and increasing profits for gas, heat and electricity distribution companies, has had an extremely negative impact on the living standards of much of the population. In fact, in a country in which prior to the conflict some 60-80% of households received subsidies to pay for utility bills, energy consumption has decreased by 30% compared to 2011. This reduction is not due to energy efficiency, but results directly from elimination of the fuel subsidies.

According to the State Statistics Committee, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from December 2010 to November 2016 was 209%, while the price index for housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels was 450%, and the price index for transport 240%. During the same time, the average pension increased only by 64%. This

² UN Doc CEDAW/C/UKR/Q/8, 2 August 2016, paragraph 2

³ UN Doc CEDAW/C/UKR/Q/8, 2 August 2016, paragraph 17

means in actual terms, there was an increase in prices for pensioners of 150%, whilst the prices of housing, water, gas rose by 300%. Further, real wages in 2015 compared to 2013 decreased by at least 25%. Thus, the share of household expenditures on housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels increased from 2010 to 2015 by 27% with a corresponding decrease in the share of expenditures on clothing, shoes, recreation, culture, education and communications. The Ukrainian population as a whole has experienced severe impoverishment, leading to a reduction in all consumption that is not related to immediate survival.

The situation remains extremely difficult for those living in rural areas, where one third of the total population is located. Most of these rural residents are women. The composition of the population of Ukraine is characterized by a significant gender imbalance in general: overall, there are 1161 women per 1000 men; in urban areas the ratio is 1180 women to every 1000 men, and in rural areas, the ratio is 1120 women to every 1000 men⁴. The mortality rate in rural areas is much higher than in urban areas. Rural women tend to age faster and suffer from worse health than urban women. Rural women also tend to suffer more than both urban women and rural men from unemployment, domestic violence and harsh living conditions including because, as a general rule in Ukraine, women earn less than men. Consequently, the impact of the cancellation of fuel shortages on residents in rural areas, primarily women, who rely more on gas boilers, coal and firewood than on central heating found in urban areas, is highly disproportionate.

Case study

A, a 58 year old woman pensioner, is living in a village in the Kirovograd region, with her mother who is bedridden. A receives a very small pension from the state. The two women did not have money to pay for heating and just about survived the 2015-2016 winter in a very cold house. The cold conditions exacerbated A's kidney disease. The state refused to grant A a fuel subsidy because A was registered as self-employed. However, as her accounting reports attest, A has not received income from this business.

b. Reductions of employment in the state sector has a disproportionate effect on women's human rights – Article 3, Article 11 (b)(c)(d)(e)

We note that in its List of Issues, the Committee referred to “previous concluding observations, [in which] the Committee reiterated its concern about the persistence of traditional stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in

⁴ Data from the State Statistics Service report Demographic situation in Ukraine, 2014

the family and in society at large, which represented a significant impediment to the implementation of the Convention and were root causes of women's disadvantaged position in political life, the labour market and other areas⁵.

Even before the conflict, the overall policy relating to provision of social services and employment in the state sector caused us great concern. The financial effects of the armed conflict have exacerbated the situation. Although Ukrainian legislation does not contain discriminatory norms on equal access for men and women to social services, de facto distribution of resources among men and women is unequal, primarily due to a much greater level of involvement of women in the household, taking care of children, and taking care of sick and elderly family members. Therefore, the lowering of social standards and narrowing of access to social services, arising from the armed conflict and macro-economic reforms, significantly and primarily reduces the quality of life and safety of women.

In accordance with IMF requirements, during 2014-2015, 165,000 civil service jobs were cut, with overall plans of a 20% reduction in the civil service workforce. This reduction has been accomplished through, inter alia, the reorganization of ten and liquidation of eight government agencies, with plans for further downsizing of the public sector with the goal of lowering the wage bill to around 9% of GDP in the medium term. Women comprise more than 75% of the civil service, predominately in non-managerial positions. Accordingly, women have been disproportionately impacted - and will continue to be - by these cuts in the public sector workforce.

While recognizing that civil service employment and management structures do require overhauling, the cutting of jobs should have taken place in parallel with professional re-orientation programmes for affected employees so that they could secure work in other sectors of the economy. (Inter alia, the weakness of the trade union movement and grass-roots non-governmental organizations led to this re-orientation not taking place, or taking place in a very unsatisfactory manner.)

In 2014, 12,000 social workers lost their jobs; many of them were women. These cuts had extremely negative consequences for both the beneficiaries of social services and the women whose jobs were cut.

In 2015, 25,000 healthcare professionals employed by the state lost their jobs, again disproportionately impacting women professionals.

The Government also plans to reduce workers in the education sector. "Optimization" of the network of schools and educational institutions is one of the requirements of the IMF. Since 2013, there has been a sharp decline in state spending on education services; most employees in the education sector find it necessary to look for additional part-time jobs to supplement their income.

⁵ UN Doc CEDAW/C/UKR/CO/7, paragraph 24

In 2016, 45 billion USD was allocated to the education system; in 2017, the Government is planning to reduce this funding to 41.9 billion USD - a reduction of approximately 7%. At the same time, the Government has undertaken to increase the salaries of teachers by 20-30% during 2017. Such an increase, together with the projected reduction in funding to the sector, can only be undertaken through the radical reduction of the number of teaching staff, increasing the working hours of teachers and thereby reducing the quality of school education.

“Optimization” of schools and hospitals is taking place in almost all areas of Ukraine. Throughout Ukraine, there are approximately, 20,090 schools. Of these, approximately 900 schools have been closed within the last three years, with 200-300 secondary schools closing annually. This trend is expected to continue: there are now 2,500 schools that are candidates for closure due to their small numbers of pupils (10-100 pupils). Currently 14,000 villages do not have schools, which is a cause for concern because there are already 120,000-150,000 illiterate children in Ukraine today.

This policy of cutting jobs in the health, education and social services sectors primarily affects women who pre-conflict constituted up to 80% of the total number of employees. While the wages in these sectors are the lowest, women employees have previously benefited from a stable income and guarantees of social protection of workers, including pensions, paid holiday, maternity leave, etc.

As well as reducing social spending, the Government has also reduced the tax burden on big businesses, whilst simultaneously increasing the tax burden on end-users, employees, and medium and small businesses. The vast majority of people affected by these changes are women.

Decentralization initially agreed by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in April 2014, and as required by the IMF, has in the last three years, led to a significant transfer of responsibilities for the financing of education, science and healthcare to local budgets, most of which have very limited financial resources. This has led to a reduction in the number of hospital beds and hospital staff, and in many cases, local government authorities have had to close schools, hospitals and clinics due to the lack of resources. One of the most well known examples was the closing of the hospital and several schools in the town of Romny, which caused a wave of protests and outrage across the country. As mentioned previously, the vast majority of workers in schools, hospitals and clinics are women.

c. Reductions of pension payments due to systemic reform has a disproportionate effect on women (Article 3 and Article 11(1)(e))

In response to IMF requirements, the Government has undertaken major reform of the pension system to address the pension fund's deficit, which in October 2016, stood at 150 billion UAH (more than 5 billion USD)⁶. These reforms include eliminating special pensions for civil servants, the majority of whom are women, and other groups, including those working in hazardous conditions, and by increasing the retirement age.

Specifically, the Government has significantly reduced the classification of professions eligible for enhanced retirement benefits due to the hazardous conditions in the industries in which they work. According to the State Statistics Service, in 2016, the number of workers employed in hazardous industries was more than one million people. Following the adoption of Resolution №461, 40% of these workers have lost the right to their retirement pension on preferential terms. These workers comprise health care workers, teachers, labourers in certain enterprises, actors and geologists, who are predominantly women, as well as handymen. Those professions that remain eligible to receive pensions on preferential terms are sectors in which men tend to dominate, including miners, nuclear engineers, pilots, and medical specialists. The slashing of the preferential pension terms should be considered in light of the fact that not only have working conditions in most sectors not improved, they have actually significantly worsened.

The increase in retirement age has also impacted women. For instance, many women who hold most of the part-time jobs in hazardous industries, such as in iron and coal mines, had earlier planned to defer having children until the age of 40. With the recent increase of retirement age, these plans have now been significantly impacted, with potential health risks of continuing to work in hazardous industries and having children.

d. Reductions in child and family benefits (Article 3 and Article 11(2)(c))

On 1 July 2014, the payment of assistance for childcare until the age of three was abolished, as part of the IMF required reforms in social assistance reform. These payments, which ranged from 130 to 1032 UAH (from 11 USD to 88 USD)⁷ on a monthly basis for childcare costs, were one of the most effective types of social assistance to families with children. In the case of low-income families and single parents, this benefit helped families to survive during their time away from the labour market. In addition to this monthly payment for childcare, each family received 30,000

⁶ Official National Bank of Ukraine rate 1 USD = 25,91 UAH (01 October 2016)

⁷ Official National Bank of Ukraine rate 1 USD = 11,79 UAH (01 July 2014)

UAH (2500 USD) for the birth of the first child, 62,000 UAH (5300 USD) for the birth of the second child, and 124,000 UAH (10,500 USD) for the third and subsequent child. Since July 2014, the monthly payment for childcare up to the age of three has been abolished and the family now receives only 40,000 UAH (1500 USD)⁸ for each child.

According to state statistics for 2013, only 1% of men took the opportunity to take parental leave to care for children: therefore the burden of children remains on women. As such, these changes primarily affect the economic independence of women, and tend to particularly aggravate economic violence against women in intimate relationships.

3. The human rights of women affected by the armed conflict

Women living in the zone close to the front line of the armed conflict and throughout the whole territory of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions, where survival is dependent upon the support of mainly local humanitarian organizations, are experiencing significant human rights violations and abuses. Many people continue to live in this zone – though this exposes them to daily danger - in order to have access to humanitarian aid. This is because in safe areas away from the conflict, many people do not have any economic or social support required, particularly as a result of the difficulties in finding affordable housing and jobs.

a. Prostitution, sexual exploitation and violence - "survival sex" (Article 6)

In its List of Issues, the Committee has expressed concern about information indicating that “a significant number of women have fallen victim to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence committed by the State party’s armed and security forces, as well as by armed groups having control over certain parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The Committee also has received information that a number of women and girls engage in so-called “survival sex”. Please indicate the measures taken to provide women in disadvantaged situations with access to essential goods and services, as well as to income-generating activities through microcredits and self-employment opportunities, in order to reduce their risk of having to engage in “survival sex”.

Please supply information on measures taken to assist all victims of sexual violence during the conflict and to provide them with access to means of redress, in addition to legal, medical and psychological support”⁹.

⁸ Official National Bank of Ukraine rate 1 USD = 27,43 UAH (23 January 2017)

⁹ CEDAW/C/UKR/Q/8, paragraph 10

Reports have been received that in the zone close to the front line of the armed conflict (known as the “grey” zone) combatants often exchange money and food for sexual acts with civilian women and girls. There are also reports involving children in this kind of sexual exploitation and violence; both boys and girls regularly visit military units in exchange for money and “gifts”. Non-governmental organizations in the town of Bakhmut have noted a substantial increase over the last year in the number of single mothers who have given birth; it appears that soldiers of the Ukrainian Armed Forces are the fathers of these babies.

Case studies

B, a woman aged 24, lived in the town of Alchevsk, in non-government controlled territory, “Luhansk Peoples Republic”, before the conflict. Her ex-husband is a member of one of the illegal armed opposition groups. In early 2015, B moved with her 2-year-old child to live with her aunt in a village near Bakhmut in Donetsk region. B was unable to arrange social security payments as an internally displaced person (IDP), a small amount of money, but which would have covered her basic living expenses. B’s first experience of sex work with a member of the Ukrainian armed forces was arranged with a friend who offered to “walk” around to the roadblock. In exchange for sexual acts, B received from the member of the Ukrainian armed forces, several jars of canned meat and money that she used to pay the rent. In the beginning, she tried to hide her participation in sex work, but very soon her neighbours began to talk about it. According to B, there are a lot of women in her situation who have no work, no home, and a child to care for in desperate circumstances. B considers that her only hope of improving her situation is to marry another soldier who can take her away from this place, where she has a bad reputation due to her involvement in sex work.

C and her friend are sex workers, from small towns in Donetsk region. They rent an apartment, which costs them 2800 UAH per month. It is impossible for them to find work in the nearby towns. Sex work is their only option; they charge 500 UAH for sex acts. They need to spend a lot of money on contraceptives and medication for sexually transmitted infections, as the soldiers from the Ukrainian Armed Forces who buy their services do not like to use condoms.

b. Freedom of movement and access to healthcare (Article 12)

In the areas close to the armed conflict, there are significant problems with access to primary medical services and medication. There are no clinics, laboratories, prenatal

centers, or medical staff in the areas close to the armed conflict. There is no vaccination for children. Because of poor working conditions, low pay, and the reduction in numbers of medical professionals, there is a critical shortage of medical staff and medical services. In order to access medical services in district or regional urban centers in areas close to the armed conflict, people have to spend up to 100% or 200% of their monthly income on transport. In such a situation, people do not even try to access medical care. Further, because of the poor condition of roads, closure of roads, checkpoints and the exorbitant costs of transport, and because many consider the roads insecure, some women do not consider that it is safe to travel, even for emergency obstetric care. Specifically, according to the amendments of the Temporary Order issued by the Headquarters of the counter-terrorist operation, which establish the legal conditions for crossing the contact line, public transportation via the contact line is prohibited. Thus, since June 2015, it has not been possible to cross the control points and “zero” check points¹⁰ by public transport. Currently, there are five operating traffic corridors via the contact line; four serve both pedestrians and vehicles in Donetsk region, and one serves only pedestrians in Luhansk region.

Case studies

B, a woman aged 27, lives in the small town of Verhniotoretske, in Ukrainian government controlled territory. Before the armed conflict, women from this town gave birth in the hospital of Yasynuvata, currently in non-government controlled territory. Currently, women from Verhniotoretske can get access to obstetric treatment in Yasynuvata but if they go there to give birth, they cannot get Ukrainian identity documents for their child. The other alternative is to go to the hospital in Toretske, an area also close to the armed conflict and, to give birth, but in this case, women have to cross three Ukrainian armed forces’ checkpoints, undergo the checking of documents and the checking of personal belongings by the customs police. There is no public transport connecting Verhniotoretske and Toretske. It usually takes about 30 minutes to get from Verhniotoretske to Toretske by car. During journeys to access antenatal care, women have to cross checkpoints, where Ukrainian military personnel constantly harass them. When B went into labour early, the military did not allow the village ambulance to enter Verhniotoretske and B herself was not allowed to leave the village in any other vehicle. This situation lasted several hours, during which time the soldiers did not give any explanation for their actions. B received a permit to travel to the hospital only when she had gone into labour.

¹⁰ “Zero” checkpoint – the last checkpoint before the contact line

C, a female teacher, lived in Ocheretyno, Donetsk region. Ukrainian government armed forces are based in the town, which is around 50 km from the front line. As there are no gynecologists working in the town, women are left without specialized medical care. C was diagnosed with cancer and went for treatment in Donetsk town, approximately 40 kilometers away. After the outbreak of hostilities, C's condition worsened and she went for treatment to Donetsk Cancer Centre, where she had been diagnosed with cancer before the armed conflict began. However, soon her condition deteriorated further and she died. Her mother went to Donetsk from Ocheretyno to claim C's body, but was delayed for a day whilst trying to pass through the checkpoints, apparently as a punishment for C going to Donetsk for medical treatment.

In Novoluhanske, a village in the area close to the conflict, according to information provided by the rural council, there are approximately 1000 IDPs from Donetsk region, most of whom are women. IDPs residing in Novoluhanske have, since the beginning of the conflict, experienced difficulties in crossing checkpoint No 31 established near Novoluhanske to enter government-controlled territory. IDPs cannot obtain official registration of their residence in Novoluhanske thus, they were unable to cross the checkpoint and enter other parts of government-controlled territories. Thus, there are cases reported that women who were registered as unemployed at the district employment center in the town of Bakhmut were forbidden to cross the checkpoint from Novoluhanske and go to Bakhmut to visit the employment center. A woman IDP who moved to Novoluhanske from Donetsk region was banned from crossing the checkpoint in order to undergo a medical examination in the town of Bakhmut to extend her disability group – a requirement to receive disability payments. Women-pensioners among IDPs have experienced similar limitations of freedom of movement, as they could not cross the checkpoint to go the district center, Bakhmut, to reissue the bankcard at Oschadbank for pension payments, which require their personal presence. From 1 July 2016, all IDPs payments of pensions and social benefits will be done only through Oschadbank. All IDPs pensioners in order to receive pension are obliged to issue a bankcard in Oschadbank and not in the other bank.

c. Freedom of movement and access to justice for gender-based violence (General Recommendation 19).

Again, because of the poor condition of roads, closure of roads, checkpoints, the high costs of transport, and the risk of physical violence, people are not willing to travel in order to report crime incidents to police and law enforcement authorities.

Recent information received by non-governmental organizations indicates that there are cases of sexual violence against women. However, people prefer to keep silent about cases of violence committed against them because they do not have access to state mechanisms to protect their rights.

d. Violations of the human rights of internally displaced persons

We note that the Committee has referred in its List of Issues to information indicating “the lack of adequate support services in host communities for internally displaced persons has a particularly negative impact on women, whose traditional role of caring for their family is increased and who also have to provide economically. Please indicate the measures taken to increase support provided to internally displaced persons, in particular to women, including in terms of access to housing, and to counter the various forms of discrimination faced by internally displaced Roma women. Furthermore, please provide information on the measures taken to increase the presence of internally displaced women in the formal labour market and to increase their access to labour rights.”¹¹

Internal displacement has a particular impact on women internally displaced persons (IDPs): women tend to be tasked with searching for resources in the new place of residence - housing, work, social benefits and humanitarian aid. Because of well-established gender norms and stereotypes that "woman should take care of comfort, children and men" - it is women who take on themselves the search for accommodation, placing their children in kindergartens and school, receiving humanitarian assistance and looking for work - for themselves and often also for men. They also have to deal with the daily burden of finding and preparing food, and other domestic work. This leads to double or triple burden on women, which causes stress, fatigue and exhaustion and also reinforces traditional gender stereotypes. The situation is exacerbated by the difficulties of men in finding work when they are displaced. Eastern Ukraine's economy was based on industry and mining, and men working in these industries are not well equipped to find other work in the areas when they have moved to as a result of displacement. Women, on the other hand, have found it easier to find work in their new locations. This leads to a disruption of gender roles as women become the main breadwinner, in addition to their other roles, as main carers for the family and the household: therefore their overall workload has increased substantially. Men's unemployment is often leading to conflicts in the family and domestic violence.

Although the Government has urged residents of opposition-controlled territories to leave their homes, it has not provided them with their full citizenship rights once they

¹¹ CEDAW/C/UKR/Q/8, paragraph 17

are displaced in other areas of the country. Today there are 1.8 million displaced people, of which 66% are women, mostly with children. Since spring 2016, the Government has been systematically blocking social payments, and these payments are the only source of income for many IDPs. The Security Service of Ukraine has carried out inspections of individuals' homes, and if they could not find the residents there, their social security payments were stopped. There have been cases of people whose payments were stopped while they were temporarily living in other regions.

Individuals who have been internally displaced to other regions have been deprived of their right to social protection until they have been granted official IDP status or until these territories are returned to the control of the Government of Ukraine. This means that no social benefits, including pensions, are being paid to the residents of Donetsk and Lugansk regions, who have been internally displaced to other regions of Ukraine but who have not yet officially registered as internally displaced persons.

IDPs are subject to increased monitoring by State authorities, for example, through regular inspections of places of their residence, which limits their freedom of movement, access to information on bank accounts and transactions, and limiting the choice of the bank through which IDP can receive social benefits to only state-owned bank.

The registration process for IDPs is onerous. Initially, IDP registration certificates were considered as valid only if they bore the stamp of the State Migration Service. In January 2016, these mandatory stamps were abolished. Nonetheless, the labour and social protection authorities continued to demand them until mid-June of 2016 and discontinued all kinds of social benefits where such stamps were not present. In 117 labour and social protection offices, the officials require that parents bring their children with them to register as internally displaced persons.

The linking of social benefits to an official IDP registration certificate status deprives people of the right to receive pensions, payments for maternity leave, payments for assistance for childcare, and other essential social benefits, leading to difficulty in securing the most basic means of survival. This linkage particularly affects women IDPs, as opposed to men IDPs, as they are not able to receive payments for maternity leave, assistance for childcare, assistance for single mothers, which are usually paid to all women. Some women IDPs are particularly affected because of the changes and procedures of issuing IDP certificates: contradictory provisions of these new laws and the previously approved regulations have led to some women IDPs not receiving payments for maternity leave and child allowance for their newly born child. Termination of payments of social assistance to IDPs is frequent and recovery procedures are complex and non-transparent.

According to information received from the workers of the Pension Fund of Donetsk region, termination of pension payments to internally displaced pensioners is carried out according to so-called "Security lists" of persons crossing the front line of fighting. The basis of inclusion in such a list is unclear and of concern.

Case studies

D, a woman aged 42, was injured during shelling. She lost her legs and received 40% burns, and her house was destroyed. She has remained in hospital over the past 20 months and has been deprived of her social payments, and, instead, supported by volunteers. Her 19-year-old son is trying to work and also take care of his mother. They do not have the money to rent a flat and so he sleeps between the hospital and social housing for the homeless.

E, a pregnant IDP, applied for registration at the antenatal clinic in her temporary place of residence in government-controlled territory, having all the documents (work book, certificate of tax payment, a reference from the pension fund, a reference from her workplace). She has not received benefits for sick leave or maternity leave. The relevant Order provides that payment for sick or maternity leave for women who were previously employed and living in the non-government-controlled territory will only be made within 30 weeks of the move to government-controlled territory.

4. Recommendations to the State of Ukraine

We submit that each state continues to be bound by its international human rights treaty obligations as member of an international body, such as the International Financial Institutions. Hence the policies and conditionalities imposed by these bodies must uphold the obligations to respect, protect and fulfill the rights contained in the various treaties and covenants. The State of Ukraine has reciprocal obligations in relation to accepting conditionalities required by the international financial institutions. Hence at a minimum the State of Ukraine should conduct a human rights, gender and environmental impact assessment before accepting conditionalities, address the outcomes of these assessments with the international financial institutions, including the IMF, and seek and implement alternative policies to those which would lead to rights violations arising from those conditionalities.

The revision of such policies would lead to ending the practice of termination of social benefits, to develop a mechanism for the payment of pensions to the residents of

non-government controlled territories, to develop laws and regulations that will implement IDPs` rights to housing, education and health care, to increase the amount of targeted assistance to IDPs, and to facilitate transportation between government controlled territories and non-government controlled territories.

It is recommended that the State of Ukraine gather gender-disaggregated data on women`s enjoyment of their economic and social rights, including access to pensions and social security, and also access to medical care and education for themselves and their families.

It is recommended that the State of Ukraine ensure the effective, meaningful and inclusive participation of women and women`s organizations in preparations for a peace process, peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction in those parts of the State party affected by hostilities, including by integrating women into the Trilateral Contact Group and as heads of some of the working groups.

It is recommended that the State of Ukraine strengthen implementation of the national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), including by increasing the resources allocated to its implementation.

