

**WOMEN  
AGAINST  
VIOLENCE.**



**WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE**

Concept note of the campaign

## Background

Violence against women remains widespread in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CEECA). Despite the fact that general violence against women is well-documented, specific groups of women who use drugs and/or live with HIV are missing from the wider picture. Women who use drugs and live with HIV are the most vulnerable group for many reasons, including strong prejudice and stigma against them, which often result in gender-based discrimination and violence.<sup>1</sup> When drug use, HIV status and sex work intersect, discrimination and violence doubles and women become more vulnerable to violence by police.

In countries where drug use and sex work are criminalised, access to legal aid and basic health care is limited leaving women who use drugs powerless and unprotected at the hands of police.

Research shows that women who use drugs in the CEECA region experience heightened police violence coupled with physical, emotional and sexual violence either during or after detention. Human rights violations, including ill treatment and torture, are commonly used to get confessions or false testimonies. Forced collaboration, falsification of criminal cases and extortion are widespread and there is solid evidence of unjustified detentions, refusal of right to a lawyer and violation of personal security for women who use drugs.

Police violence affects women who use drugs in a variety of ways, including serious and often life-threatening physical and psychological health problems. This type of treatment further increases stigma and discrimination against women and creates artificial barriers to access health services, which contributes to the HIV epidemic in the region. It also discredits police as an institution and contributes to expanding gender inequality and social injustice.

## WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN

On March 8, 2014, the Eurasian Harm Reduction Network, in partnership with women who use drugs and harm reduction organizations from 16 cities of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia,<sup>2</sup> will launch the three-year regional campaign on WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE. The concept for the campaign was developed in cooperation with people who use drugs, harm reduction service providers, women's rights activists, and international and national experts. Online and face-to-face consultations were used as a tool for gathering information. The consultation commenced on 1 December 2013 and will end on 8 of March 2014.

## Key Challenges to Stop Police Violence Against Women Who Use Drugs

Five major challenges were identified as conducive for police violence against women who use drugs:

- Low level of awareness by law enforcement and other decision makers on police violence against women who use drugs
- Low level of mobilization and empowerment of women who use drugs
- Lack of knowledge and experience to address police violence
- Absence of partnership and dialogue with other stakeholders and decision makers in responding to police violence
- Stigma and discrimination against women who use drugs

<sup>1</sup> *Women who use drugs, harm reduction and HIV*. The Global Coalition on Women and AIDS. Available via <http://womenandaids.net/>

<sup>2</sup> Mobilization of 16 cities to take action in relation to police violence against women who use drugs is directly related to the concept of 16 days of activism that is between 25 November and 10 December period. This Campaign is strategically linked to the International Day of Violence Against Women (25 November) and Human rights day (10 December)

The three-year Campaign of WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE is designed to respond challenges highlighted above and to develop joint solutions together with its partner organisations and other stakeholders from 16 target cities to reduce police violence against women who use drugs. Active involvement and mobilization of the community will be essential throughout the campaign.

## Goal of the Campaign

To empower women who use drugs to combat police violence

## Objectives and Outputs of the Three-year Campaign

### Year 1: The Year of Breaking the Silence

The objective of the first year is to raise awareness of law enforcement and other decision makers on police violence against women who use drugs by mobilizing women who use drugs and building their capacity to document and communicate police violence.

#### **Key activities:**

- Developing community based online instruments to document and report about cases of police violence
- Collecting data and mapping cases of violence
- Capacity building for women who use drugs to communicate about police violence
- Using UN human rights instruments to advocate against police violence toward women who use drugs
- Preparing a regional report mapping police violence against women who use drugs in CEECA
- Capacity building for the campaign partners, including women who use drugs, on campaigning and advocacy
- Organizing roundtables and meetings with stakeholders and decision-makers to present data collection and mapping results
- Presenting data collection and mapping results to media representatives

#### **Key outputs of the year 1:**

- A community-based system of reporting police violence
- Regional, country and city level maps on police violence against women who use drugs developed through introducing community-based reporting on police violence in 16 selected cities of CEECA
- A regional database of personal stories and testimonies on police violence published online
- Statements at regional and international events (conferences, meetings, UN human rights bodies) by high-level speakers, human rights activists and drug user communities on the issue of police violence
- Establishment of a network of regional and local level allies that respond to police violence against women who use drugs
- Working relations between women who use drugs, activists and national level decision-makers established via roundtable discussions on police violence
- Identify leaders and spokespersons on police violence among WUD (selected by the community and trained using online communication tools by EHRN and other regional partners)

## **Year 2: The Year of Dialogue**

The main objective of the second year is to build dialogue between women who use drugs, decision makers and other stakeholders in order to create effective solutions in combating police violence against women who use drugs.

### ***Key activities:***

- Sharing knowledge and experiences, collecting effective solutions and evidence in responding to police violence against women who use drugs
- Organizing meetings and roundtables with stakeholders and decision makers to discuss implementation of effective solutions to respond to police violence against women who use drugs
- Developing strategies to stop police violence against women who use drugs at the local level
- Appealing to national governments and local authorities to take commitments in responding to police violence against women who use drugs
- Urging high level police offices to take leadership in combating police violence against women who use drugs

### ***Key outputs of year 2:***

- A regional database of effective solutions and supporting evidence published online
- Police officials and national or local authorities from 16 target cities participate in the campaign and show commitment to combat police violence against women who use drugs
- Develop national and local strategies and action plans to respond to police violence against women who use drugs
- Establish dialogue between women who use drugs, partners, including representatives of other vulnerable groups, decision makers and other stakeholders

## **Year 3: The Year of Monitoring and Accountability**

The main objective of the third year is to monitor implementation of police and other governmental stakeholders' commitments to combat violence against women who use drugs.

### ***Key activities:***

- Capacity building for women who use drugs to monitor and keep decision makers accountable
- Building alliances with human rights organizations and controlling bodies to monitor implementation of police and other governmental stakeholders' commitments to combat violence against women who use drugs
- Rewarding police officers and government stakeholders who take leadership in stopping violence and successfully implemented commitments

### ***Key outputs of the year 3:***

- Regional network of supportive police officers developed
- Regional database of success stories created

## Roles and Responsibilities of Campaign Implementers

**Campaign coordinator:** EHRN holds main responsibility for successful implementation of the campaign. In the framework of the campaign, EHRN:

- Provides campaign partners with information package (campaign concept note, work plan and other relevant documents) and visual materials (logo, letterhead, and other)
- Provides campaign partners with technical assistance in data collection and police violence mapping, organizing roundtable discussions and meetings with stakeholders and decision-makers, sharing experiences and collecting solutions to respond to violence, building dialogue, and keeping decision makers accountable
- Will use regional and international platforms to discourage police violence against women who use drugs (conferences, meetings, UN human rights bodies etc.)
- Will build advocacy capacity of women who use drugs to carry out information campaigns against police violence (WEBINAR – online teaching, trainings on blog posting at the Drug User Forum in May 2014)
- Will strengthen cooperation with UN organizations in dissemination and adaptation of technical guidance and recommendations in CEECA.

**Women who use drugs are the driving force of the campaign.** They are actively involved in:

- Data collection/reporting on police violence
- Capacity building activities, public naming and shaming of police who engage in or encourage violence
- Taking cases of police violence to court
- Exchanging experiences and providing possible solutions to reduce police violence
- Meetings and roundtables with stakeholders and decision makers
- Monitoring the implementation of police and other governmental stakeholders commitments in combating violence

**Suggested role for the Eurasian Network of People Who Use Drugs (ENPUD):**

- Mobilize women who use drugs around the issues of police violence  
Coordinate reporting on police violence against women who use drugs and ensure that reports are uploaded in the regional database including maps and photos
- Participate in regional and international forums to raise concerns regarding police violence, including, the use of video statements
- Participate in local meetings organized by national partners
- Local partners (harm reduction organizations, women who use drugs communities) will:
- Mobilize women who use drugs around the issue of police violence at local level
- Coordinate reporting on police violence against women who use drugs at city level and ensure that such reports are uploaded in the regional database, including maps and photos
- Provide support to women who use drugs in organizing meetings and roundtables with stakeholders and decision-makers to present reports about police violence and other data collected by women activists
- Provide support to women who use drugs in sharing experiences and finding solutions to support the campaign

- Provide support to women who use drugs in building dialogues and keeping decision makers accountable

**International partners** (e.g. UN agencies)

- Put the issue of police violence against women who use drugs on agenda of events, which are organized by UN agencies on national and international level
- Provide technical assistance

**Suggested role of the Campaign Ambassador:**

- To act as an ambassador for the campaign in high level meetings with governments and international multilateral agencies
- Actively support the idea of combating the police violence against women who use drugs at international and regional forums as relevant
- Liaise with EHRN as the Campaign Coordinator and provide advice on how best to act for promoting the rights of women who use drugs in the context of police violence
- Be a face of the campaign and communicate the goals and objectives to media at the national, regional and international levels

**The Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN)** is a regional network with a mission to promote humane, evidence-based harm reduction approaches to drug use, with the aim of improving health and protecting human rights at the individual, community, and societal level.