

# CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

## Snapshot: Women in Israel | 5.4.2020\*

**The challenge:** The Corona virus crisis has unique gender implications; it has a highlighting effect on the gendered aspects of social and economic life in the Israel; Women have an over-representation among the newly unemployed; There has been an increase in reports of domestic violence. There are many emerging needs in face of the crisis and deep concern for the day after, due to job loss and increased violence. In order to illuminate these, and other aspects, it is important, particularly in a time of crisis, to actively bring these issues to the forefront and specifically to the media.



## Snapshot: Needs and Responses | Government-Nonprofit Covid-19 Subcommittee



➤ **Domestic violence** – an increase in reporting of domestic violence; organizations are operating hotlines. Over populated shelters and transitional apartments, and a delay in shelter exit processes. **Extra personnel and financial support for services are required.**

➤ **Sexual assault injuries** – Psychological services are continuing only partially. There is no capacity for response to new inquiries due to the dramatic social workers position cuts and due to the closure of assault units in psychiatric hospitals. Organizations are advising to acknowledge and define any forced physical contact as an indication for a corona test.



➤ **Single mothers** – There are no suitable childcare arrangements for single mothers who work in essential jobs. There is growing concern for the health of women working in the private, personal care sector – care givers, social workers, nursing staff, etc. – they must be supported with appropriate protective equipment.

➤ **Partially functioning courts** – Given the fact that courts are functioning with limited capacity, there are no satisfactory resolutions for issues of spouse and children alimony and parents' custody arrangements.



➤ **Ministry of Welfare and Labor** – Out-of-home services, including cases where quarantine is required as well for children at risk, homeless, prostitutes and addicts are all operating. Developing artificial intelligence apps for diagnosing domestic violence; Exploring the expansion of shelter services; Call Center 118 allows text messages to be received. An effort to allow social workers to return to work is challenging, given the need to adhere to the Ministry of Health's guidelines.

\* This brief offers the latest picture as evidenced by the information available to us. The briefing will be updated from time to time. Knowledgeable and interested parties are invited to contact us with updates.



- **Ministry of Public Security** – There has been an increase in domestic violence reports; Weapons are collected from security workers whose work has been terminated; Local authorities are permitted to continue to employ workers in the fight against violence, drugs and alcohol; Hotline 105 (for cyber safety child protection) continues to operate and has moved to a zoom platform;
- **Police** – There is proactive monitoring of domestic violence, increased contact with women at risk as well as the possibility of filing an online complaint.

## Additional actions and needs in the field \*\*

- **Women at Risk of Violence and Violence Victims** – In the face of state budget constraints, public funding for shelters, was cut by 30% while at the same time schools were closed down, which makes for a 24/7 stay of mothers and children in shelters. Resulting from budget constraints, personnel at the shelters has also been cut short and there is a strong need for its increase and also for the personnel increase for the provision of hotline emergency responses including psychosocial support. The shelters are also in growing need of food and essentials, hygiene products, private transportation and activity kits for quarantined children.

Additionally, women at risk of violence find themselves trapped in quarantine at home and there is a need to expand responses and provide physical solutions to these stressful situations.



- **Funding to expand hotline activity for violence cases: the hotlines are flooded calls for support; To expand activities and shelters in order to meet the need for “social distancing” and to provide continuous activities for children of different ages and emotional support; support for women who have recently left the shelters who suddenly find themselves without income and support for women in transition apartments.**
- **Financing for rehabilitation of violence-affected women, in particular to help them integrate into open emergency and essential positions in the job market: in supermarkets, medical administration, etc. In some cases, the Corona crisis may open up opportunities for integration into employment.**

- **Arab women** – food baskets, addressing children with special needs, exercising their legal rights.



**Access to Arabic language services – answering hotlines for assistance, shelters and centers. There is a 40% increase in domestic violence calls among Bedouin women in the Negev.**

- Additionally: Translating and transmitting official messages from the Ministry of Health, from the National Insurance Institute, employment services regarding the crisis, and legal rights procedures.
- Even more: online learning systems in Arabic and their accessibility through distribution of computers and supplementary equipment.

- **For women in separation process** –



**Urgently needed: funding for online group, text support and emotional and practical support, for women in separation process who are quarantined at home with their ex-partner at a high level of conflict. There is also growing financial need for divorced women due to cessation of alimony payments. An increase in legal representation is also expected in the near future.**

\*\* Courtesy of the Rakman Center for the Advancement of Women, Israel Women's Network, Female Spirit, Economic Empowerment for Women, Female Yard, Nirot- Young Women Organizations Forum, Ta'ayar, Sidra Negev Association, The Readeress, Bat Melech, Itach-Maaki

- **At-risk girls and young women** – The frameworks that have been closed down leave and girls at high risk upon returning home; There is a noticeable increase in the rate of roaming the streets. Organizations endeavor to offer support to hundreds of young women at risk; moving the response to the online space, maintaining personal contact on the one hand, and grouping on the other while addressing the various needs; emotional support for post-traumatic situations, a marked increase in the need for food assistance and hygiene products in the wake of unemployment; In multi-tenant housing spaces, study assistance, sports activities and activities to pass the time, preparation for employment, counseling and legal fees for the exercise of rights and more.
- **For single mothers** – such as sole providers in the ultra-Orthodox society and single mothers. Increases in call on the unemployment hotlines are evident, as many women have been placed on leave, vacation or laid off. The need for assistance in exercising their legal rights will grow over time, even as the economy begins to return to a “new regular routine” and women will need to fight for their jobs back.
- **Transparent employees** – In agriculture and cleaning – in cases where there is no eligibility for unemployment benefits or leave of absence – support and response are required. The law does not permit to terminate a pregnant women’s employment or to place on leave. A possible alternative is maternity bedrest.
- **For ultra-Orthodox women** – the mikvahs are open which pose a health risk issue. A boarding school for at-risk ultra-Orthodox girls was closed and the girls were sent home.
- **For small business owners**- there is a growing need for emergency loans, online workshops, and counseling and mentoring for business growth for the day after the crisis.

## Philanthropic Response

Foundations and donors are welcome to reach out and to the interest group within the framework of the Forum of Foundations in Israel, led by Liron Peleg Hadomi, NCJW Representative in Israel ([Lpeleg-hadomi@ncjw.org](mailto:Lpeleg-hadomi@ncjw.org)) and Ofer Lichtig, the Jewish Federation of Miami in Israel ([ofer.lichtig@Jewishfederations.org](mailto:ofer.lichtig@Jewishfederations.org)).