



السلطة الوطنية لحماية الأسرة  
Family Protection Authority

# 3rd NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION STRATEGY

2023 - 2027





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# Foreword

The National Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy is the national framework for implementing the Domestic Violence Prevention Act of the Maldives. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy, formulated with the aim to effectively respond to and prevent domestic violence through an integrated effort by both State and non-state actors.

In line with the Constitution of the Maldives and the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, every human being has the right to live free from fear of violence and be safe in public and at home, regardless of race, national origin, disability, colour, religion, sex, age, or other status. Violence perpetrated in the home or among intimate partners is as much a matter of public concern as any other form of violence and must be dealt with a zero-tolerance policy. To address this social malice, there is no doubt that a whole-of-state whole-of-community approach is necessary.

Like many other countries, the domestic violence situation in the Maldives is dismal. Available data, statistics, and anecdotal evidence portray a high level of prevalence rate, and significant disjuncture between estimated victimisation and reported cases. However, multiple enabling factors of domestic violence remain unchanged.

Despite State interventions and efforts by Civil Society Organizations, preventing and responding to domestic violence shows slow-paced progress. With limited resources, unhindered willingness and effort are required to ensure quality and contemporary approaches are implemented to prevent domestic violence in the Maldives. Ambiguities in the State apparatus need to be addressed. While essential services are provided to the victims of domestic violence, additional effort, including effective decentralisation of services, is required to ensure that the most vulnerable constituencies can access such services.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> National Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy carries forward multiple goals which were not fully achieved by the end of implementation period of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Strategy. While Protection is highlighted as the most urgent area of the strategy, emphasis is also given to ensure that the Strategy is cohesive and implemented through an integrated approach by key stakeholders.

This Strategy is formulated with involvement and invaluable feedback from several people and organisations who informed on how we can work together to end domestic violence in the Maldives. Thank you for your contribution.



**Ibrahim Thayyib**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Ahmed Anwar**  
Board President

# Introduction

Domestic violence is a fundamental violation of human rights, a challenge to public health and development, and a detriment to economic growth. Though it can impact anybody, prevailing social norms and practices and the surrounding systems result in a disproportionately high percentage of women being affected.

1 in 3 Maldivian women aged between 15-49 face violence from an intimate partner at some point in their lives. This statistic is reflective of the global prevalence of intimate partner violence, but it is an alarmingly high prevalence for an issue that has multiple adverse effects on women's health and wellbeing.

The need to address this problem led to the passing of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act (Law No: 3/2012) (DVPA), followed by the establishment of institutions and frameworks to implement the legislation across the country. The Family Protection Authority (FPA) was established as a nationwide monitoring authority, working towards the elimination of domestic violence, raising public awareness on the issue, and coordinating with relevant stakeholders to assist survivors.

Alongside the formation of FPA, the Domestic Violence Prevention National Strategy 2014-2016 (DVPNS I) was formulated as a framework to implement the DVPA across the Maldives. A second strategy followed (DVPNS II), spanning five years between 2017-2021. This strategy (3<sup>rd</sup> National Strategy) aims to strengthen the existing system by building on previous successes and restructuring the framework where required.

Over the decade that has passed since the passing of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, there are several civil society actors, community groups, and individual advocates working with the state and independent institutions towards the prevention of domestic violence in the Maldives. However, the national mechanism created to address the issue remains in its infancy, though considerable strides have been made towards raising awareness and establishing authorities to address cases.

It is hoped that the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Strategy for Domestic Violence Prevention will begin to address the significant gaps in the system, to ensure that all survivors are able to access justice, no matter their age, ability, nationality, or island. While this strategy is a state-led one, combatting domestic violence is the responsibility of every person at every level. Educate yourself, unlearn your biases, and take a stand against domestic violence.

# Domestic Violence in the Maldives

- ◆ **1 in 3** women in the Maldives aged between 15-49 has experienced Intimate Partner Violence(IPV) at some point in their lives.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ **Women** face a disproportionately higher risk of domestic violence than any other group in the Maldives.
 

Other people in vulnerable situations include **children, adolescents, persons with disabilities, the elderly**, and migrant workers (particularly **domestic workers**).
- ◆ The main laws dealing with domestic violence prevention are **the Domestic Violence Prevention Act** (Law No: 3/2012), and the **Domestic Violence Prevention Regulation** (Regulation No: 101/2018) (including its First Amendment).
- ◆ Domestic violence prevention in the Maldives also responds to the state's commitments under the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women** (CEDAW) and its **Optional Protocols**. Various other national policies have also begun to include components to combat domestic violence, indication positive steps towards cross-sector integration.<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ Key stakeholders in domestic violence prevention include: the **Family Protection Authority, the Ministry of Gender, Family, and Social Services, the Maldives Police Service, the courts**, and the **health sector**.
- ◆ The **Domestic Violence Prevention National Strategy I** and **II** have been the primary documents outlining a framework for implementing the Domestic Violence Prevention Act in the Maldives.

## Overview of the DVPNS I and II

The DVPNS I was implemented between 2014-2016 and established the national mechanism and system to combat domestic violence. The DVPNS II expanded on the previous strategy, increasing the implementation period from three years to five (2017-2021), and adding accountability as a new priority area to strengthen the system and facilitate justice for survivors.

Successes of the previous strategy include increased awareness on the topic of domestic violence and increased reporting by survivors. However, several setbacks still exist, particularly regarding poor coordination between stakeholders, a lack of accountability for perpetrators and systemic actors, and the inadequate consolidation of the governance of the system.

<sup>1</sup> The Maldives Study on Women's Health and Life Experiences

<sup>2</sup> Notably the Gender Equality Action Plan, Government of Maldives Strategic Action Plan (2019-2023), Health Sector Response to GBV: National Guideline on providing care and prevention for Health Care Providers

## The COVID-19 pandemic

The pandemic severely disrupted the implementation of the DVPNS II, but more importantly, placed many survivors in situations where they were trapped with their abusers with little recourse. Though the government utilised alternative reporting pathways, social media, and other strategies to ensure that urgent assistance could be provided, it is imperative to implement crisis mitigation strategies into future policies.

### Lessons learned from COVID-19:

- ◆ The need to keep alternative reporting pathways open (e.g. online pathways).
- ◆ The need for safe shelters.
- ◆ The importance of court hearings continuing to run online to increase access to justice.
- ◆ The need for income support to reach all who need it, including the large proportion of women in the informal sector.<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ The need to keep up healthcare for vulnerable communities so that violence is not exacerbated against them (maternity care, healthcare for the elderly and persons with disabilities).
- ◆ The importance of community support networks.

# The Strategy

## Overview of the strategy

The 3<sup>rd</sup> National Strategy is the official national framework for implementing the Domestic Violence Prevention Act. It builds on the previous two strategies by strengthening already successful methods and maintains the five national priority areas from the DVPNS II, with variations implemented where necessary. It also addresses gaps in the previous strategies and restructures elements that were less successful or unsuccessful.

The five national priorities under the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Strategy are:

<p><b>Prevention</b></p> 	<p>Covers a range of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies focused on raising awareness on and understanding the root causes of and contributory factors to domestic violence in the Maldives.</p>
<p><b>Protection</b></p> 	<p>Focused on providing support services, safe spaces, and emergency care to survivors.</p>
<p><b>Collaboration</b></p> 	<p>Outlines coordination strategies with other stakeholder agencies to provide timely and adequate assistance to survivors.</p>
<p><b>Accountability</b></p> 	<p>Aims to hold perpetrators accountable for domestic violence, and systems accountable for violations that enable and perpetuate harm against survivors.</p>
<p><b>Governance</b></p> 	<p>Outlines the framework for governance, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the strategy.</p>

The development of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Strategy was overseen and co-ordinated by the Family Protection Authority and drafted by a consultant team of two lawyers and a gender specialist from Riza & Co. LLP. A number of stakeholders were consulted during the development process, including key stakeholders from the government, civil society organizations and the general public (full list appended in annex).

## Scope of the strategy

This strategy is aimed to respond to the following target groups:

### Adults

Those who experience domestic violence in the home, and intimate relationships extending outside of the home environment.

Given the disproportionately high percentage of women who face domestic violence, this strategy and its underlying goals carry a gendered approach to respond to them. However, the need to provide services that cater to male survivors is also recognised.

### Elderly individuals

Those who experience domestic abuse due to a combination of limitations of age, ability, gender, and/or economic independence.

### Persons with disabilities

Those who experience domestic abuse as a combination of limitations posed by their disabilities, limited economic (and in some cases, functional) independence, limited awareness of their rights, and limited support

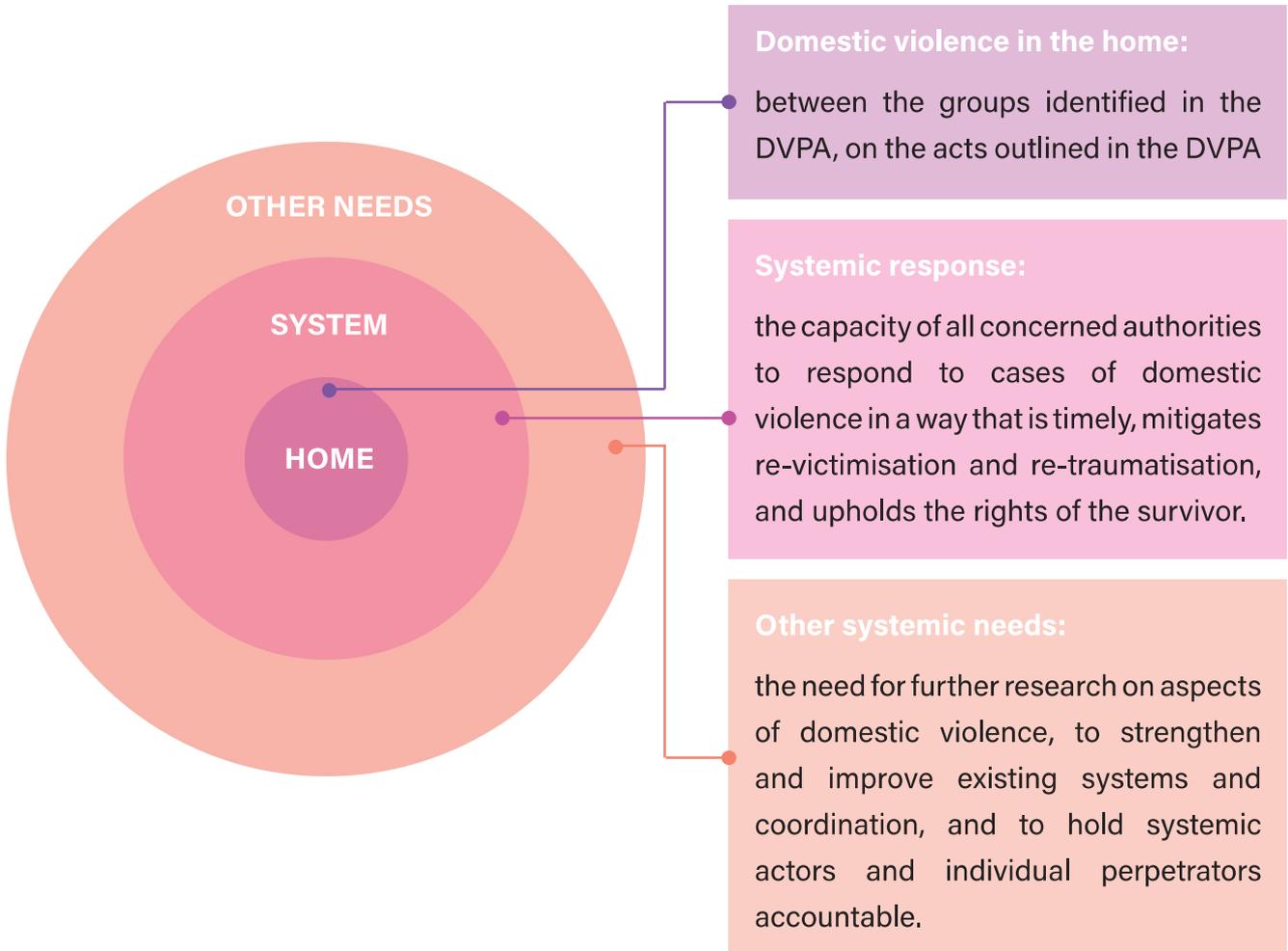
### The migrant community

This includes domestic care workers based in private homes, and other migrants who fall under the relationship categories outlined in the DVPA, who experience domestic violence due to a combination of their (often precarious) positions as migrants, their limited access to social and systemic support, and their gender.

### Children and adolescents

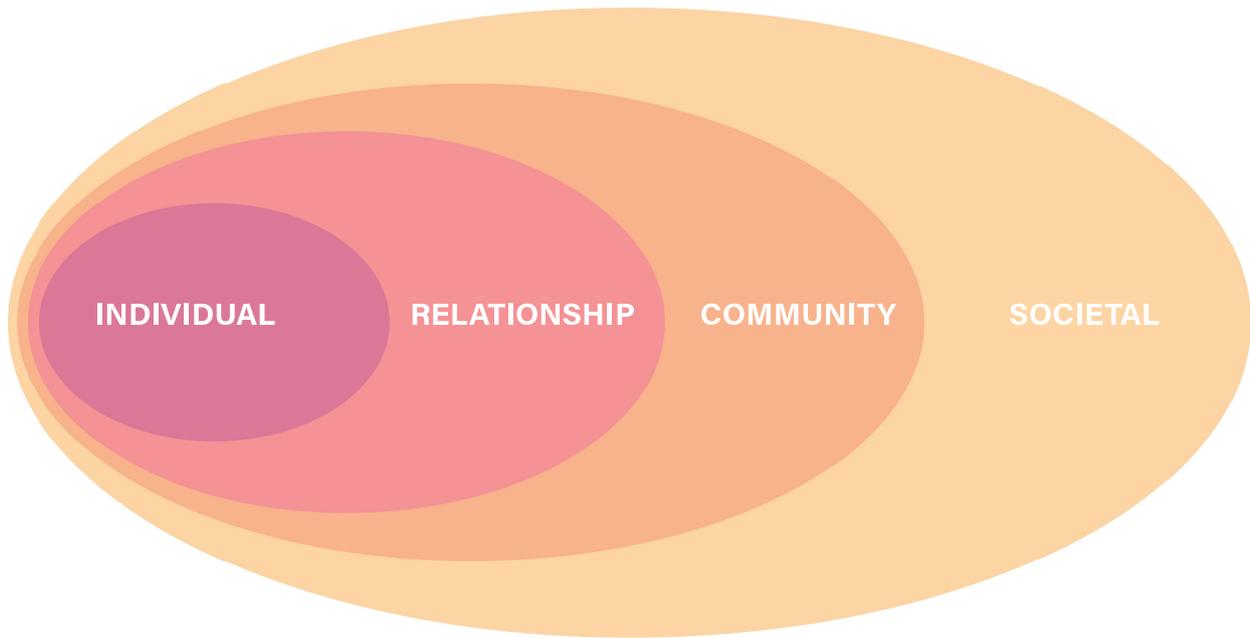
Those who experience or witness domestic violence in the home, and experience it because of their young age and limited power within the home and society at large.

This strategy aims to address the following contexts:



## Violence prevention: The social-ecological model

This strategy uses the social-ecological model to understand and build the framework for national domestic violence prevention. This model operates on the understanding that there are multiple factors that contribute to higher risks of violence for some and lower risks for others.



The model is split into four levels—the individual, the relationship, the community, and the societal—but considers each level equally important and considers interpersonal violence as the result of interactions among factors from all levels<sup>4</sup>.

Some examples of each level may be:

- ◆ **Individual:** a girl, Aisha
- ◆ **Relationship:** Aisha and her mother
- ◆ **Community:** the island Aisha resides in
- ◆ **Societal:** the country Aisha lives in

*(For a more detailed breakdown of the model with examples, please refer to the annex.)*

<sup>4</sup> Information about the social-ecological model taken from the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) websites: see also <https://www.who.int/groups/violence-prevention-alliance/approach>; [https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sem\\_framework-a.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sem_framework-a.pdf); <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/about/social-ecologicalmodel.html>

## Defining Domestic Violence in the Maldivian context

Violence is the intentional use of force or power (whether threatened or actual), against oneself, another person, a group, or community, that results in (or has a high likelihood of resulting in) injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation<sup>5</sup>. When understanding violence of all kinds, it is necessary to acknowledge the role played by power (either the existence of it, the lack of it, or the perceived lack of it) in these cases.

In most parts of the world, the phrase “domestic violence” means violence between two intimate partners, and violence between other members of a household or family (including children) falls under “family violence”. In the Maldives, the terminology is different, and thus the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Strategy is based on the definitions provided in the Domestic Violence Prevention Act.

In the Maldives, domestic violence (“**ދިވެހި ގެ ތެރޭގ**”) can be broadly defined as a pattern of behaviour that is used to maintain power and control over another person within the context of certain relationships in a household. Under the DVPA, these relationships are termed “domestic relationships (“**ދިވެހި ގެ ތެރޭގ**”) and includes<sup>6</sup>:

1. persons who are or were married to each other;
2. persons who live together in the same place of residence, or have recently lived together in that manner;
3. being parents, or being a person entrusted with the upbringing of a child as a guardian or a custodian;
4. persons who are family members related by consanguinity, affinity or marriage;
5. domestic child care workers or domestic workers at home;
6. persons who are in intimate relationships

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.saferspaces.org.za/understand/entry/what-is-violence>

<sup>6</sup> The Domestic Violence Prevention Act, Law No. 3/2012

## The law also clearly outlines the acts of domestic violence (seventeen in number). These include the following:

1. Physical abuse;
2. Sexual abuse;
3. Verbal or psychological abuse;
4. Imposition of financial or economical restrictions;
5. Impregnating the wife, without concern for her health condition and against the advice of a medical doctor to refrain from impregnation for a specified period of time;
6. Impregnating a woman without her consent, while she is trying to get out of an abusive relationship;
7. Deliberately withholding property that belongs to another person in a manner that will prevent him from being able to use it;
8. Intimidation;
9. Harassment;
10. Stalking;
11. Destruction of property;
12. Entry into, and being present thereafter at the residence of the victim of domestic violence without consent, in cases where the parties do not share the same residence;
13. Any other act which may be perceived as an act of violence, or one of asserting control over the victim of domestic violence;
14. Coercing, intimidating or forcing a person to do something which he would not have done or would not have wanted to do with his own volition;
15. Confining a person to a particular place without his consent, or restricting a person's movement from one place to another on his own volition, or restricting a person's movement or transportation on his own volition;
16. Attempting to commit any of the aforementioned acts, or causing apprehension of fear in a person that such an act may be committed;
17. Causing a child to witness or hear an act of domestic violence or presenting or placing a child in such situation where the child may witness or hear an act of domestic violence.

## Factors leading to domestic violence in the Maldives

Domestic violence can occur due to a variety of factors. While further research needs to be conducted to fully understand the range of causes leading to domestic violence in the Maldives, the following have been recorded as factors contributing to, or exacerbating domestic violence<sup>8</sup>:

1. Disobedience of the wife
2. Jealousy
3. Refusing sex
4. No food at home
5. Problems with family
6. Intoxication
7. Financial issues
8. Difficulties at work/while unemployed
9. Pregnancy

During the COVID-19 pandemic, reported cases of domestic violence increased<sup>9</sup>, mirroring global trends. The following causes were documented<sup>10</sup>:

1. A loss of jobs and financial security
2. Living in confined spaces for prolonged periods of time
3. Child custody and welfare
4. Repeated drug use
5. Inappropriate use of technology and mobile phones

<sup>8</sup> The Maldives Study on Women's Health and Life Experiences.

<sup>9</sup> Refer to Fig 1 – 2019, 2020, 2021 (2020 being the first year of the pandemic)

<sup>10</sup> Gender-Based Violence during COVID-19 Pandemic in the Maldives: An Analysis of Reported Cases, 2020, UNFPA

# Important considerations when developing and implementing service provision and training

## Marginalisation and Privilege

Marginalisation involves the exclusion of individuals or groups from rights, opportunities, and/or resources that are normally available to other individuals or members of a different group. These rights, opportunities, and/or resources are often fundamental to human rights and full integration within that society, meaning that those who are 'marginalised' are pushed to the edges (or the margins) of that particular society.

Privilege refers to special rights, advantages, or entitlements that are available onto to a particular individual or a group, often to the detriment of other groups. Individuals or groups with privilege may be privileged based on a number of factors. In the Maldives, factors such as age, wealth, gender, ability, citizenship, and location may play a strong part in determining privilege, though there are many other factors that can be included in this.

No discussion of violence can be complete without a thorough understanding of marginalisation and privilege. It is important to note that this is not a zero-sum quantity nor a hierarchy: some may be privileged in some ways but marginalised in others. When developing and providing services for domestic violence survivors, it is vital to understand how different intersections (or combinations) of marginalisation and privilege may require adjustments to the types of services provided.

## Systemic Inequality

Systemic inequality refers to the specific procedures, routines, standards, attitudes, and practices that are embedded in institutions such as schools, workplaces, healthcare centres, politics, etc. This is often a result of existing sociocultural attitudes being replicated in the institutions of a particular society, which leads to deeper prejudices or discrimination against certain groups of people.

When considering how to strengthen the national mechanisms to combat and prevent domestic violence, it is also important to take note of the embedded inequalities in the system and address them, or else run the risk of survivors having to experience discrimination (or in some cases, re-traumatisation) while they try to seek help.

## Groups with Protected Characteristics

Domestic violence can affect anybody of any age, gender, nationality, location, economic status, or ability.

However, some groups are affected more than others. In the Maldives, those who experience domestic violence are predominantly women, but other groups such as persons with disabilities, the elderly, children, and domestic workers are also at risk of higher levels of domestic violence.

At the core of domestic violence is the gaining or maintenance of power and control. Many acts of abuse involve intimidating, threatening, harming, or manipulating someone, often someone who has less power in that particular context. A thorough understanding of **systemic inequality** is therefore important in combatting domestic violence.

As such, this strategy will also account for and respond to the needs of groups with protected characteristics in the Maldives. These include:

- ◆ Age
- ◆ Sex
- ◆ Disability
- ◆ Pregnancy and maternity
- ◆ Migrant status

This strategy will use women and groups sharing protected characteristics as part of the language to encompass the affected parties<sup>11</sup>.

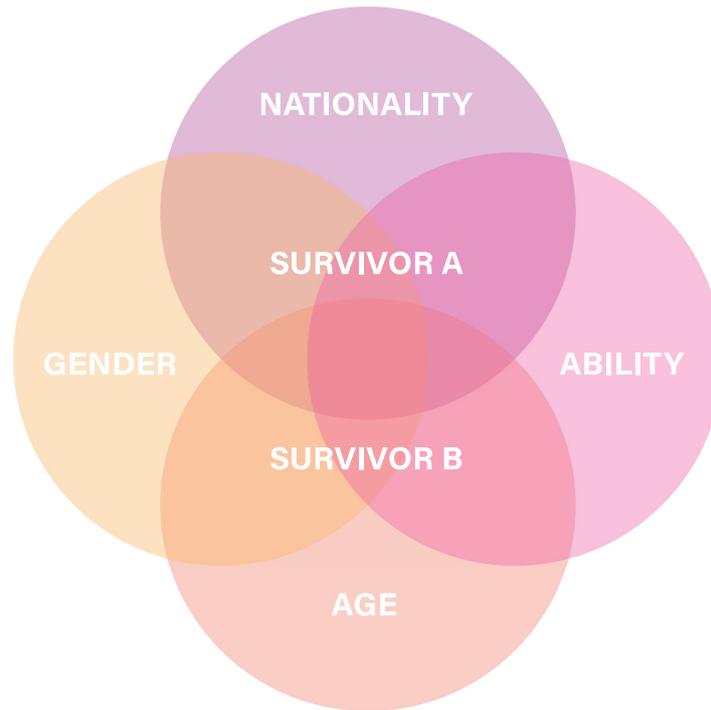
## Intersectionality

Although it is known that women are disproportionately affected by domestic violence in the Maldives, there is a need to understand the experiences of other groups, as well as the factors that can lead to worse abuse and limited recourse in some cases, while other cases may be less complicated to find solutions for. Therefore, the use of an intersectional lens is vital to provide more responsive assistance to domestic violence survivors.

Intersectionality is a framework<sup>12</sup> that is used to understand how the different aspects of a person's identities can overlap or combine in a way that impacts their experiences of discrimination or affects the level of privilege they have. One person may face different kinds of oppressions due to the combination of identities they have. As such, domestic violence prevention cannot focus solely on eliminating gender inequality, but must also consider aspects such as ableism, ageism, xenophobia, classism, amongst many others.

<sup>11</sup> Adopted from the Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2018-2023, Birmingham City Council

<sup>12</sup> The concept was coined and developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a black American civil rights advocate, law professor, and critical race scholar



**An example of how the intersectionality framework functions. Practical realities are often more complex than the diagram may imply.**

Each survivor in the diagram above is placed between multiple identity circles, which may affect the type of abuse they face and the services they require.

- ◆ For example, **Survivor A** may be a non-Maldivian woman with a disability. She may require assistance with language interpretation and the necessary assistance for her disability, alongside the standard services provided for her. Additionally, there may be a need to involve immigration, or the diplomatic mission of her country
- ◆ **Survivor B** may be a young boy with a disability. His case will need to be taken by child protection departments, while also responding to his disability.

It must be noted that the points in the diagram are often connected in a way that makes separation of identities impossible. Hence, the need to consider multiple axes of oppression when dealing with domestic violence survivors, to understand how their identities and situations result in unique needs for them.

The development of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Strategy was overseen and co-ordinated by the Family Protection Authority and drafted by a consultant team of two lawyers and a gender specialist from Riza & Co. LLP. A number of stakeholders were consulted during the development process, including key stakeholders from the government, civil society organizations and the general public (full list appended in annex).



## National Priority One: Prevention

Prevention is the foundation of any effective anti-domestic violence strategy. Acts of domestic violence can have long-term impacts that span the breadth of society, as well as consequences that can last generations.

Domestic violence is often hidden and downplayed by women who experience it. Cultural expectations and norms have imbued the issue with shame and stigma, where victim-blaming is commonplace, accountability for perpetrators is low, and violence is justified or overlooked due to a variety of beliefs. As such, domestic violence prevention work involves changing societal attitudes towards domestic violence to foster a culture of intolerance towards violence.

Effective strategies will involve fostering a deep understanding of domestic violence and its effects, offering alternative methods of conflict resolution, and instilling an ideology of respect and gender equality.

Goal	Levels	Strategies
<p><b>Goal 1</b></p> <p>Increase public awareness on domestic violence and foster attitudes of respect, and intolerance to violence</p>	<p>Individual</p> <p>Relationship</p> <p>Community</p>	<p><b>1.1.</b> Introduce minimum qualifications and content criteria for trainers and facilitators who conduct domestic violence prevention awareness sessions for various stakeholders and groups</p> <p><b>1.2.</b> Increase public awareness on domestic violence and redress mechanisms through sessions, workshops, campaigns, etc.</p> <p><b>1.3.</b> Increase public understanding on healthy relationships and rights and responsibilities (rights of persons with disabilities, migrant rights, child rights, gender equality) through incorporation into domestic violence awareness programmes</p> <p><b>1.4.</b> Run targeted domestic violence awareness programmes for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and migrant workers</p> <p><b>1.5.</b> Evaluate the existing pre-marriage awareness course and ensure the course is conducted across the country with the inclusion of domestic violence prevention, gender equality, and healthy relationship topics</p>

Goal	Levels	Strategies
		<p><b>1.6.</b> Develop and implement targeted programmes for men, boys, and fathers on domestic violence prevention</p> <p><b>1.7.</b> Develop and implement age-appropriate domestic violence awareness programmes for children and adolescents</p>
<p><b>Goal 2</b></p> <p>Train frontline workers to understand and work within anti-discrimination frameworks</p>	<p>Community</p> <p>Societal</p>	<p><b>2.1.</b> Develop and implement domestic violence prevention training for frontline staff of all relevant stakeholder authorities in a manner specific to their roles and responsibilities under the law</p> <p><b>2.2.</b> Ensure the inclusion of value clarification, unconscious bias, and anti-discrimination training in these training programmes</p> <p><b>2.3.</b> Develop a plan to mobilise local agents from relevant stakeholder communities and train them on domestic violence prevention</p> <p><b>2.4.</b> Mobilise local agents from stakeholder communities to lead regular domestic violence prevention awareness programmes</p>
<p><b>Goal 3</b></p> <p>Gather research and data on the root causes of domestic violence, and other gaps and specific issues</p>	<p>Societal</p>	<p><b>3.1.</b> Undertake a comprehensive nationwide study on domestic violence in the Maldives</p> <p><b>3.2.</b> Identify data gaps in understanding domestic violence in the Maldives, and undertake research to address these gaps</p> <p><b>3.3.</b> Conduct research that explores the culturally specific factors and causes of domestic violence in the Maldives, and explore relevant strategies to combat it</p>



## National Priority Two: Protection

The main and most urgent aim of domestic violence prevention strategies must involve the protection of survivors. This is a multi-fold approach that requires the immediate care and protection of survivors after they have experienced violence, ensuring that they are not further traumatised in the process of seeking assistance, and that they have access to resources that aid their safety and recovery.

Goal	Levels	Strategies
<b>Goal 1</b> Strengthen survivor support services at all levels	Community Societal	<p><b>1.1.</b> Conduct a diagnostic review of existing survivor support services within key stakeholder organisations and enhance survivor support services within those organisations based on the review</p> <p><b>1.2.</b> Integrate and engage CSOs and private sector entities which provide survivor support services</p> <p><b>1.3.</b> Extend primary care health services of regional hospitals modelled after the Family Protection Unit of IGMH</p> <p><b>1.4.</b> Incorporate secondary and tertiary preventative services to survivor support services based on empowerment of survivors</p> <p><b>1.5.</b> Enhance existing mechanisms related to psychosocial care focusing on increasing accessibility and availability of such care from outer islands</p> <p><b>1.6.</b> Establish a survivor support mechanism within the judicial sector</p> <p><b>1.7.</b> Establish a state legal aid mechanism and ensure accessibility for women, and groups with protected characteristics</p>
<b>Goal 2</b> Ensure survivors are protected from harm and supported to recover	Community Societal	<p><b>2.1.</b> Review Domestic Violence Prevention Act] to reflect survivor’s testimony as a competent witness in cases of domestic violence and violation of protection order</p> <p><b>2.2.</b> Enhance emergency care services and protocols for survivors of domestic violence</p>

Goal	Levels	Strategies
		<p><b>2.3.</b> Ensure the existence of accessible emergency care services that responds to the particular needs of women and groups with protected characteristics</p> <p><b>2.4.</b> Establish safe shelters for survivors which integrates survivor empowerment services</p> <p><b>2.5.</b> Develop a regulatory mechanism to oversee the operation and services of domestic violence shelters</p> <p><b>2.6.</b> Train shelter staff to be adequately responsive to needs of domestic violence survivors</p> <p><b>2.7.</b> Establish robust safeguards to ensure that perpetrators (or others linked to the perpetrator) cannot access safe shelters where survivors reside</p>
<p><b>Goal 3</b></p> <p>Ensure that front line staff are able to adequately respond to survivor needs</p>	<p>Community</p> <p>Societal</p>	<p><b>3.1.</b> Conduct a needs assessment regarding front line staffing needs and accessibility of services at key stakeholder authorities</p> <p><b>3.2.</b> Secure adequate funding to meet frontline staffing needs of key stakeholder authorities</p> <p><b>3.3.</b> Train front line staff at all domestic violence service providers in programmes that include anti-discriminatory service provision, in-depth understandings of domestic violence as a concept, and the Domestic Violence Prevention Act</p> <p><b>3.4.</b> Establish accessibility services in the relevant institutions so that women and groups with protected characteristics can seek assistance (e.g., interpretive services, physically accessible building spaces, material in different languages, etc.)</p> <p><b>3.5.</b> Ensure that all front-line staff are aware of reporting protocols and follow the relevant pathways to report cases of domestic violence if required</p> <p><b>3.6.</b> Ensure that healthcare staff are able to recognise cases of domestic violence and provide the necessary treatment for sexual violence and trauma when required</p>



## National Priority Three: Collaboration

Despite the efforts of the previous two strategies, inter-agency collaboration or partnership remains one of the most difficult areas to implement. However, multi-sectoral collaboration is vital to the success of the strategy, and it will involve all relevant stakeholders taking ownership of the work at large.

Goal	Levels	Strategies
<b>Goal 1</b> Consolidate the FPA steering committee	Societal	<b>1.1.</b> Create a Joint Action Plan for the implementation of the 3rd National Strategy <b>1.2.</b> Host meetings with regularity, and ensure that emergency meetings can be held during times of crisis <b>1.3.</b> Investigate and rectify resource duplication issues <b>1.4.</b> Consolidate domestic violence reporting and assistance pathways for FPA to disseminate to the public
<b>Goal 2</b> Combatting domestic violence at all levels	Individual Relationships Community Societal	<b>2.1.</b> Establish clear referral pathways at central and regional levels to record and refer cases of domestic violence amongst key stakeholder authorities <b>2.2.</b> Engage businesses in domestic violence prevention work through targeted training programmes and encouraging DV-related CSR initiatives <b>2.3.</b> Engage local councils and women’s development committees and sensitise and train them on the issue <b>2.4.</b> Strengthen media ties to encourage the dissemination of accurate information regarding DV <b>2.5.</b> Collaborate with civil society and community-based organisations to conduct activities related to domestic violence prevention <b>2.6.</b> Engage with foreign missions in the Maldives to explore pathways to disseminate domestic violence prevention information to migrant workers

Goal	Levels	Strategies
		<p><b>2.7.</b> Develop partnerships with regional and global organisations to share knowledge and experience</p>
<p><b>Goal 3</b></p> <p>Build awareness on domestic violence prevention policies among key stakeholders and frontline staff</p>	Societal	<p><b>3.1.</b> Communicate the existence of the 3rd National Strategy to representatives from key stakeholders at the central and local levels, and provide a general sensitisation training within the first six-months of the implementation of the strategy</p> <p><b>3.2.</b> Mobilise representatives from key stakeholders to disseminate information about the 3rd National Strategy to other members of their organisations</p> <p><b>3.3.</b> Ensure that key stakeholder authorities are running their respective domestic violence prevention programmes for their staff</p>



# National Priority Four: Accountability

Accountability is vital to keep systems strong and functioning effectively. Nonetheless, this remains one of the least achieved areas of previous strategies. Carrying over this priority area from the DVPNS II, this strategy will also focus on ways to keep perpetrators of domestic violence and the overarching systems and mechanisms accountable for their actions or inaction. This is necessary to ensure justice for survivors, and to strengthen the protective mechanisms currently in place.

Goal	Levels	Strategies
<b>Goal 1</b> Consolidate the FPA steering committee	Individual Relationships Community Societal	<p><b>1.1.</b> Encourage public level understanding of the severe harm of shielding perpetrators</p> <p><b>1.2.</b> Strengthen reporting procedures by increasing accessibility and harmonising them across stakeholders and strengthen organisational commitment to prevent and report domestic violence</p> <p><b>1.3.</b> Develop restorative-justice mechanisms for domestic violence perpetrators</p> <p><b>1.4.</b> Develop strategies to address domestic violence suspects whose cases have been closed without further action and propose law reforms where necessary</p> <p><b>1.5.</b> Develop and provide necessary re-integrative assistance for domestic violence perpetrators who have served time</p> <p><b>1.6.</b> Coordinate with correctional agencies, Maldives Police Service and Prosecutor General’s Office to incorporate psychosocial services and behavioural change training within rehabilitation programmes</p> <p><b>1.7.</b> Ensuring that non-local perpetrators are also held accountable for acts of domestic violence against non-local survivors</p>

Goal	Levels	Strategies
<p><b>Goal 2</b></p> <p>Systematic accountability across the mechanism</p>	<p>Community</p> <p>Societal</p>	<p><b>2.1.</b> Develop domestic violence specific standard operating procedure as applicable to key stakeholder authorities; this includes administrative steps to ensure survivors receive timely follow-ups to their cases, with a view of harmonising response and referral pathways across stakeholders</p> <p><b>2.2.</b> Incorporate and implement domestic violence specific standard operating procedure across all regional offices of key stakeholder authorities</p> <p><b>2.3.</b> Enact council and court regulations required under Domestic Violence Prevention Act</p> <p><b>2.4.</b> Conduct regular sensitization and training on domestic violence prevention for high-level actors and staff of key stakeholder authorities</p> <p><b>2.5.</b> Monitor incidents of systemic violations and track them to ensure that the relevant actors implement the recommendations of FPA</p> <p><b>2.6.</b> Develop a mechanism to incorporate FPA's monitoring and review recommendations into justice sector institutions</p>



## National Priority Five: Governance

Running the DVPNS III smoothly requires good governance of the mechanism at large. Though the core stakeholder of this strategy is the Family Protection Authority, it is a multi-sectoral plan that involves the participation of various stakeholders across the country. These stakeholders bring together a variety of knowledge, training, and experience, strengthening domestic violence prevention efforts across the board.

Goal	Levels	Strategies
<b>Goal 1</b> joint implementation of 3 <sup>rd</sup> National Strategy	Societal	<b>1.1.</b> With the leadership of the steering committee, implement the Joint Action Plan for domestic violence prevention across all key stakeholders <b>1.2.</b> Ensure that all stakeholders are adequately sensitised to their roles in the joint action plan
<b>Goal 2</b> Full implementation of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> National Strategy	Community Societal	<b>2.1.</b> In accordance with the Joint Action Plan, develop a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan to oversee the implementation of the 3rd National Strategy <b>2.2.</b> Ensure that the Joint Action Plan includes the buy-in of local councils and/or WDCs <b>2.3.</b> Ensure that monitoring is carried out at agreed intervals
<b>Goal 3</b> Build capacity of FPA and other relevant organisations	Community Societal	<b>3.1.</b> Provide FPA staff with opportunities to participate in training programmes related to domestic violence prevention <b>3.2.</b> Develop FPA's internal capacity to monitor the 3rd National Strategy and other FPA-led programmes <b>3.3.</b> Develop FPA's internal capacity to formulate key strategies, conduct research, and evaluate plans and programmes <b>3.4.</b> Share capacity building opportunities in the area of domestic violence prevention with members of key stakeholder authorities, including those in the outer islands

Goal	Levels	Strategies
		<p><b>3.5</b> Explore opportunities for an emergency fund and facilitate the establishment of a fund that is accessible to relevant stakeholders</p> <p><b>3.6.</b> Assist civil society organisations and community-based organisations both in the Greater Male' Area and the outer islands in gaining funding for their work in domestic violence prevention</p>
<p><b>Goal 4</b></p> <p>Harmonise data gathering across relevant stakeholder authorities</p>	<p>Community</p> <p>Societal</p>	<p><b>4.1.</b> Develop and establish a harmonised system of data collection across the key stakeholder authorities: Family Protection Authority, Ministry of Gender, Family, and Social Services, Maldives Police Service, Ministry of Health, Prosecutor General's Office, courts, local councils, and Women's Development Committees</p> <p><b>4.2.</b> Investigate domestic violence related data gathering strategies in the health and education sectors, and develop collaborative methods to harmonise it across the system</p> <p><b>4.3.</b> Gather survivor feedback on their experiences (within the system) and utilise data to implement improvements</p>

# ANNEX

1. Family Protection Authority
2. Ministry of Gender, Family & Social Services
3. Family and Children's Service Centres
4. Maldives Police Service
5. Family and Child Protection Department (MPS)
6. Ministry of Health
7. Prosecutor General's Office
8. Victim Support Unit
9. Human Rights Commission Maldives
10. Family Court
11. Criminal Court
12. Magistrate Courts
13. Department of Judicial Administration
14. Judicial Service Commission
15. Family Legal Clinic
16. Hope for Women
17. Society for Health Education
18. Blind and Visually Impaired Society Maldives
19. Maldives Association of Persons with Disabilities
20. Maldives Deaf Association
21. Maldives Mission for Migrant Workers
22. Women's Development Committees
23. Members of the public

## Breaking down the social-ecological model<sup>13</sup>

Level	Examples of factors that can increase likelihood of becoming a survivor or perpetrator	Examples of strategies to address domestic violence at every level <sup>14</sup>
<b>Individual</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Personal characteristics</li> <li>◆ Biological factors Behaviour</li> <li>◆ Personal Experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Age</li> <li>◆ Sex</li> <li>◆ Ability</li> <li>◆ Belief supporting use of violence</li> <li>◆ Unemployment</li> <li>◆ Substance abuse</li> <li>◆ Social isolation</li> <li>◆ Prior experience of abuse or violence</li> <li>◆ Anger or hostility towards others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Awareness programmes on domestic violence prevention</li> <li>◆ Anger management group sessions</li> <li>◆ Workshops on healthy relationships and safe dating</li> <li>◆ Pre-marital courses on conflict resolution and communication</li> <li>◆ Parenting skills classes</li> </ul>
<b>Relationship</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Interactions between two or more people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Tension or fighting within the family</li> <li>◆ Marital instability, divorces or separations</li> <li>◆ Poor communication between parents</li> <li>◆ Poor supervision of children</li> <li>◆ Emotionally unsupportive families</li> <li>◆ Association with aggressive or delinquent peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Youth mentorship programmes to pair adolescents with caring adults or elders</li> <li>◆ Relationship workshops where couples can work with other couples</li> <li>◆ Peer group youth programmes on promoting healthy relationships</li> <li>◆ Education and family support to promote positive child development</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Settings or institutions where social relationships occur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Level of social connectedness within the community</li> <li>◆ Income levels of the community</li> <li>◆ Limited economic opportunities</li> <li>◆ Lack of recreational opportunities</li> <li>◆ Poor physical layout of a neighbourhood (e.g. limited open public space)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Councils developing public recreation spaces Residents organising community events</li> <li>◆ Community organisations partnering with schools to host extracurricular programmes for students</li> <li>◆ Councils leading development for accessible buildings and public spaces for persons with disabilities</li> </ul>

28 <sup>13</sup> Information about the social-ecological model taken from the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) websites: see also <https://www.who.int/groups/violence-prevention-alliance/approach>; [https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sem\\_framework-a.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/sem_framework-a.pdf); <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/about/social-ecologicalmodel.html> (for further reference and detail, please refer to the links above)

<sup>14</sup> These examples are solely illustrative and not evidence-based

Level	Examples of factors that can increase likelihood of becoming a survivor or perpetrator	Examples of strategies to address domestic violence at every level <sup>14</sup>
<p><b>Societal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Societal factors that increase or decrease violence, and sustain (or decrease) gaps between different sectors of society</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Socio-cultural norms that see violence as acceptable/violence results in minimal consequences</li> <li>◆ Policies that sustain socioeconomic gaps (health policies, economic policies, educational policies, social policies)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Legislation that mandates family leave options</li> <li>◆ National media campaigns on domestic violence prevention awareness</li> <li>◆ National media campaigns to reduce stigma of mental health issues and seeking help</li> </ul>



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