

# WOMEN'S RIGHTS

## Bulletin №69/2020



## RESULTS OF THE #allJobs4AllWomen CAMPAIGN

**In the three years since the launch of the #allJobs4AllWomen campaign, three countries have fully repealed legally enshrined professional bans for women and several countries have opened access to hundreds of specializations for women. Women have already started working and realizing their careers in hundreds of jobs that were banned to them for over 40 years.**

*In March 2017 ADC Memorial launched the campaign #allJobs4AllWomen against restrictions on professions for women in Eastern European and Central Asian countries. At that time, gender-related bans on employment affected hundreds of jobs, including prestigious and high-paying jobs, in 10 countries in the region. Lists of professions banned for women, a relic of the Soviet era, legitimized employment discrimination against women, justifying this with concerns about their “reproductive function.”*



The cancellation and revision of these lists were achieved by the women themselves, the heroines of this campaign, who were vocal in their fight for the right to work in their chosen professions, and through cooperation with unions and deputies. In addition, human rights defenders have repeatedly pointed out to UN experts (the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) that gender-based bans on employment violate international agreements and conventions and have recommended that these bans be recognized as discrimination.

An important step towards the cancellation of bans on professions was the decision of UN CEDAW in the case of Svetlana Medvedeva (2016), which recommended that countries in the region repeal the lists of banned professions and grant women the right to choose their own careers.

*The Committee is of the view that the introduction of such legislation reflects persistent stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society that have the effect of perpetuating traditional roles for women as mothers and wives and undermining women's social status and their educational and career prospects. No evidence has been provided to the Committee that the inclusion of the position of helmsperson-motorist in the list of prohibited jobs is based on any scientific evidence that it may be harmful to women's reproductive health. The Committee observes that the adoption of a list of 456 occupations and 38 branches of industry contradicts the State party's obligations under the Convention because it treats men and women differently, it in no way promotes the employment of women and it is based on discriminatory stereotypes.*

*(From the CEDAW decision (2016) in the case of Svetlana Medvedeva, who couldn't finish her education and work as ship navigator due to the list of professions banned for women)*

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## COUNTRIES THAT HAVE REPEALED LISTS OF PROFESSIONS BANNED FOR WOMEN

### Armenia and Georgia

In adapting their laws to European standards, the governments of Georgia and Armenia cancelled their lists of banned professions, but left parts of them in effect for several groups of women: pregnant women (both countries), mothers of children under the age of one (Armenia), and nursing mothers.

At the same time, in Armenia the employer has been obliged to determine the duration and the character of exposure to hazards affecting the safety and health of pregnant women. And labor standards in Georgia do not provide for the transfer of women of special categories from harmful and dangerous jobs to safe for their health and the health of their child. The result of such prohibitions is predictable: the employer will deny employment to women both for lack of clear rules, cost obligations and fear of sanctions for hiring the «prohibited» category.

### Moldova

On August 25, 2017, just six months after the launch of the campaign, Moldova became the first country to change its Labor Code. New norms providing additional rights for pregnant women and new and nursing mothers were added to the code. These norms included the possibility to transfer temporarily to a job safe for their situation with retention of salary, to reject overnight work, and to switch to a part-time workday or work-week.

In an alternative report for CEDAW, ADC Memorial noted that Moldova must do more to inform both potential workers and employers that the bans have been lifted. Moldovan women still earn less than men, they still represent a smaller

part of the economically active population, and are disproportionately engaged in unpaid domestic work. Unfortunately, deep-rooted patriarchal stereotypes significantly slow down the process of achieving equality in labor sphere. Employment spheres are often quite distinctly divided in terms of gender: while healthcare, education, social welfare and hotel/restaurant business are considered to be typically “female” occupations, more highly paid and prestigious positions are occupied mainly by men. This situation currently leads to increased female migration, when working as nannies and caretakers abroad seems more promising even for women with higher education.

### Ukraine

On December 21, 2017, nine months after the start of the campaign, Ukraine repealed its discriminatory list, which banned women from over 450 jobs.

This was achieved thanks to the efforts of human rights defenders in cooperation with Ulana Suprun, who was acting minister of health at the time and Svitlana Voytsekhovska, a people's deputy in the Verkhovna Rada, who came out strongly in favor of repealing the list.

Human rights defenders continue to work towards amendments to the Labor Code regarding expansion of the rights of pregnant women and new mothers and towards the cancellation of an irrelevant article banning women's employment in certain positions.

CESCR experts have asked Ukraine to detail specific steps it is taking to promote training and employment for women seeking previously banned jobs. Human right defenders have noted that



*"We should not be banning professions for women, but creating conditions for them to work. And they should be able to choose for themselves if they want to fly planes or operate underground trains."*

Svitlana Voytsekhovska, a people's deputy in the Verkhovna Rada

neither women nor employers have not been sufficiently informed about the removal of the bans (for example, women are not widely invited to apply for jobs as train, metro, or bus operators).

### Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan repealed its list in March 2019, two years after the campaign's launch, and women gained the opportunity to work in 477 previously banned specializations on May 1, 2019. Lawmakers also made amendments to the Labor Code that repealed any professional bans on the basis of gender, expanded measures to support working parents (both mothers and fathers), and established additional guarantees for gender equality in employment and women's rights.

## COUNTRIES THAT HAVE REVISED THEIR LISTS OF BANNED PROFESSIONS AND PARTIALLY LIFTED SOME BANS

*Several countries in the region have already curtailed their lists of banned professions or have at least attempted to broaden the employment sector and opportunities for professional realization for women by providing them with the opportunity to work in certain sectors, including ones in which they already work.*

### Russia

The new list of banned professions, which was developed over the course of a year and a half, was adopted in Russia in August 2019. Even though the bans were not completely lifted, over 100 professions will be opened for women on January 1, 2021. Most of the heroines of the #all-Jobs4AllWomen campaign who spoke out

openly about the bans on the campaign's website will be able to work officially in professions such as truck driver, ship mechanic, sailor, and press operator.

The process of fighting against professional bans in Russia has been long and complex. First, CEDAW issued its decision on the complaint of Svetlana Medvedeva,<sup>2</sup> a ship's navigator, who was not able to continue her career in her dream



*It is great that the list is considerably shortened and the transport sphere is excluded from the list. It will be easier for women in the navy to find jobs without pitfalls. This is a huge breakthrough, but still the list remains discriminatory. There is still a lot of work to be done for human rights defenders: women have the right to make their own decisions.*

Svetlana Medvedeva, sailor

job because of the professional bans. Later, CEDAW and CESCR experts recommended that the government repeal the list of banned professions. At the same time, domestic courts issued a decision finding professional bans in Russian law discriminatory after a repeat appeal by Svetlana Medvedeva.

Women have already started training for previously banned specializations like metro operator and engine mechanic for marine and inland water transport.

## Kazakhstan

In September 2018, Kazakhstan curtailed its list from 287 to 219 jobs. Curiously, the specializations that are no longer banned for women differ between Russia and Kazakhstan: while Russia has essentially fully opened the transportation sector to women, jobs in this sector are still banned in Kazakhstan. Noting these contradictions, CESCR raised the issue of the lack of medical grounds for harm purportedly caused by these jobs in Kazakhstan.

After analyzing the situation with gender equality in employment in Kazakhstan, UN CEDAW experts noted the following problems: a significant gap in the remuneration between men and women (34%), horizontal and vertical segregation in the labor market, which was further complicated by the existing prohibition for employment of women in 191 professional occupations, concentration of women in traditional and low-paid sectors of the economy and the existence of the so-called "glass ceiling", which didn't allow women to occupy leadership positions. The UN CEDAW recommended not only to cancel the list

of professions prohibited for women, but also to ensure effective access to these jobs for women.

Members of the Committee recommended ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, as well as expanding the employment and training opportunities for women, including representatives of vulnerable groups.

## Kyrgyzstan

The discussion about repealing the list of banned professions in Kyrgyzstan started by civil society has reached the government level. The Federation of Unions and state labor inspectorates have come out against repealing the list because they believe the list provides important protection of the rights of pregnant and nursing women. The Ministry of Labor has yet to establish its position on the list. Meanwhile, several members of the government, including some deputies in parliament, the deputy prime minister, and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs believe that the list is outdated and want to allow women to choose their own professions.

Noting the exclusion of women from a number of areas of employment and violation of the principle of equality in the la-



*I'm troubled by this kind of restriction on women's rights. I work in a sphere that is permitted by law, but society doesn't see this profession as "female." And there are lots of stereotypes like this around. I meet all kinds of different people and get a variety of reactions, especially from men, at least until they start talking about technical topics with me. I wish that our choices were treated with understanding and support. There are no "female" and "male" professions. This division exists only in people's heads'*

Alina Anisimova,  
programmer

bor market, CEDAW called on the Kyrgyz government to legalize work in 446 professions for women and encourage their desire to study and work in "non-typical" specializations.

## Belarus

In September 2019, the Belarusian Ministry of Labor announced plans to curtail the existing list of 182 banned professions. In addition, the Labor Code was amended to add guarantees for new mothers and enshrine parental leave for fathers.

Anna Kanopatskaya, a deputy in the National Assembly, supports a full repeal of the list. CESCR noted the connection between the list of banned professions and entrenched gender stereotypes in the country.



*With the cancellation of the list, the ability for women to find employment, particularly in rural areas, will definitely improve. This will help not just women looking for work, but also the employers that agree to hire them. Because while men have the opportunity to leave the country to earn money, women generally cannot do this because of various circumstances. They remain behind in sparsely populated localities and look for any work there is. And, as a rule, these jobs—all agricultural—are for some reason on the list of jobs banned for women. This list is at the very least unacceptable from the standpoint that employers must make sure that any worker, male or female, works in safe and acceptable conditions. And again, we're talking about work conditions: it's the 21st century and modern tractors should be come with power steering, safety forks, anti-dust devices, and air conditioners. This means that work conditions will improve for both men and women.*

Anna Kanopatskaya,  
an ex-deputy in The House  
of Representatives of the VI  
Session of The National Assembly  
of The Republic of Belarus



## DEEPENING OF ENTRENCHED STEREOTYPES

*Patriarchal stereotypes that set gender roles and severely restrict women's rights still have a significant impact in certain countries. The governments of these states have yet to publicly discuss the possibility of repealing lists of banned professions, even though they are amending their laws in the direction of achieving equality between men and women.*

### Azerbaijan

With over 670 jobs on its list, Azerbaijan is the leader in terms of number of banned professions. It is the only country in the South Caucasus which still has bans of this nature. Armenia and Georgia only have bans in place for pregnant women and young mothers.

CESCR experts have asked the government of Azerbaijan for information about measures to lift restrictions on the employment of women.

### Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan's list of banned professions has been criticized by CESCR experts, who believe that women in this country continue to face discrimination in the labor market and in daily life, including under the powerful influence of gender stereotypes.

**We call upon women to continue fighting for their rights and we support women who want to train for or hold jobs they have chosen for themselves instead of jobs that have been imposed on them by the state**

ADC Memorial continues its battle against any professional bans for women that deprive them of the right to choose their careers and restrict their right to labor. Discriminatory, gender-based restrictions lead to the systematic violation of women's rights and impact various areas of life, making it difficult for women to achieve financial independence and, as a result, manage their lives as they see fit.

### Tajikistan

In 2017, Tajikistan reapproved its list of 326 jobs banned for women. UN experts on women's rights have noted that gender segregation must be overcome in the labor market, including by repealing discriminatory norms in the Labor Code and the list of banned professions.



*I obviously knew that banned professions exist in Tajikistan, but I didn't know that there are 326 of them! These bans are clearly unjust, because women have always done arduous work: in our villages, women chop firewood, graze cattle, build fences, work in cotton fields, which is arduous and hot. If both the man and woman work, then the household chores fall entirely on the woman. Many women can't find work: employers don't hire them because they fear maternity and sick leave. So they can write that they're only looking for single women'*

Marifat Davlatova, feminist artist

## UN CESCR drew Azerbaijan's attention to gender equality in the implementation of socio-economic rights

*During the 65th pre-session of the United Nations' Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN CESCR) its members formulated questions to the Azerbaijani authorities concerning respect for women's rights in education and employment.*

UN CESCR experts asked for information on the measures aimed at abolishing restrictions on employment for women. Hundreds of professional occupations, including better-paid and well-demanded jobs, remain inaccessible to women under the pretext of protecting their reproductive function, while these restrictions do not take into account women's age, their ability and/or desire to have children. The lack of similar protective measures for men leads to the creation of unequal conditions in the labor sphere for men and women, while also to creation of barriers not only for professional fulfillment of women, but also for their economic independence. Anti-Discrimination Center (ADC) "Memorial" has raised the issue of discrimination related to the existence of the lists of professional occupations prohibited for women in its campaign #AllJobs4allwomen and has called for the abolition of all gender-based restrictions on employment.

UN CESCR asked the Azerbaijani authorities to report on measures to ensure permanent, stable and official employment for women, to solve the problem of gender segregation and to promote representation of women in spheres, which were previously atypical employment areas for the latter. Experts are eager to learn about steps aimed at improving girls' and young women's access to vocational education and training in secondary specialized and higher educational institutions.

ADC "Memorial" has submitted alternative information to the Committee and noted the negative impact of deeply rooted gender stereotypes, which lead, inter alia, to violation of women's rights in employment. Despite the almost equal number of economically active residents of Azerbaijan of both sexes, higher unemployment exists among women (approximately 20% of total unemployment, according to independent experts), and only one third of women in Azerbaijan have official status of unemployed. Azerbaijani women are still predominantly employed in low-paid jobs, while the problem of gender-related pay gap remains relevant.

## UKRAINIAN EXPERT COMMENTS ON QUESTIONS OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE ADDRESSED TO THE GOVERNMENT OF UKRAINE

*Topics related to the situation of vulnerable groups were included on the list of questions addressed to the Ukrainian government during the 127th session of the UN Human Rights Committee.*

In assessing the level of representation of women in political and social life, the HRC asked Ukraine to report on measures taken through the implementation of the State program for ensuring the equality of rights and opportunities of men and women up to 2021.

In reviewing Ukraine's antidiscrimination laws, the HRC requested clarification on plans to improve the effectiveness of norms (including inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity among the protected grounds, the sharing of burden of proof in discrimination cases, the creation of effective remedies for victims of discrimination).

The HRC noted several instances of discrimination, hate speech, violence, and calls to violence against LGBT people, particularly ones that were perpetrated at the Equality March in Kyiv on June 19, 2019. The HRC noted with concern the police's failure to take action, the lack of effective investigation in response to homophobic and transphobic violence, and the failure to properly classify such incidents as hate crimes. Council members also considered it appropriate to recognize hate motives on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity as aggravating circumstances for all offences set out in article 161 of the Criminal Code.

The HRC expressed interest in the government's plans to improve the law regulating peaceful assembly and bring it into line with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and asked for a response to alleged violations of the right to peaceful assembly perpetrated by extreme right-wing groups, including attacks on women's marches in Kyiv, Lviv and Uzhhorod on March 8, 2018, and frequent attacks against participants in, or violent disruption of, peaceful assemblies organized by Roma and LGBT persons.



*Yevheniya Lutsenko,  
director of the Center for Social  
and Gender Studies "New Life"*

The HRC will examine Ukraine's implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in the summer of 2020. Below are the comments of Ukraine experts on the HRC's questions.

In terms of gender equality, the representation of women in politics, including participation in the decision-making process, has improved significantly. In fact, there has never been such impressive representation in high-level government bodies: women make up one-third of the Cabinet of Ministers (six of 18; prior to this, the highest number of female ministers at one time in independent Ukraine was three) and have almost doubled their representation in parliament (from 11.5 percent to 20.9 percent, or 88 of 422 deputies). The 9th convocation of the Verkhovna Rada, like the previous convocation, created an inter-factional association known as Equal Opportunities that representatives of all factions agreed to participate in. Local elections are expected to be held in 2020. The question of promoting and advancing women is very relevant right now in Ukraine, so I hope that this will be reflected in the new groups of deputies on city and district councils. Under Ukrainian law, the president appoints administration heads. Oblast administrations are mainly led by men: there is only one woman out of 25 heads (acting head of the Sumy Oblast State Administration).

### **What important things are the inter-factional association Equal Opportunities doing for women?**

This association has existed in the Verkhovna Rada since 2012. Its top priorities are combating domestic violence, protecting the rights of women and children, and creating equal opportunities for men and women in various areas of public life. Today its work focuses on two key themes: advocating for gender equality, including in the area of involving women in public and political life, and joint legislative initiatives to advance this topic.

There are plans to create a Public Council within the association. Generally important questions are raised during these meetings that require a legislative initiative for resolution. This was how I was able to draw deputy Svetlana Voytsekhovskaya's attention to the issue of employment discrimination against women and the list of banned professions. Effective cooperation in this matter led to the list's cancellation in Ukraine.

## FEMALE TRANSPORTATION WORKERS GET THE GREEN LIGHT, BUT FEMALE FIREFIGHTERS AND COAL MINERS MUST PRESS ON IN THE FIGHT FOR LABOR RIGHTS

*The new list of banned professions for women lifts restrictions in transportation and other spheres, but leaves over 320 of the 456 bans on the existing list in place.*

ADC Memorial and the campaign #allJobs4AllWomen welcome the first successes for Russian women who have triumphed in the fight to have bans on their chosen professions revoked. A draft of a new list of banned professions was registered by the Ministry of Justice on August 14, 2019—one-and-a-half years after work was started on it.

Employment restrictions for women will be removed from over 100 jobs when the new list finally takes effect. The majority of the heroines of #allJobs4AllWomen who openly spoke out against the bans on the campaign's website can now officially work in their chosen professions as truck drivers, machinists and sailors on ships, and print workers.

**The fight waged by these claimants has opened up the transportation sphere to women. This sphere includes many good job opportunities on sea and inland water vessels, the railways, and the metro, as well as is civil aviation.**

Reviews of the case of Svetlana Medvedeva, a navigation officer, in Russian courts and by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women ended with an RF Supreme Court judgment finding the ban on the employment of women on river vessels discriminatory and the Samara District Court's de facto recognition that Russian norms do not correspond to international standards for equality and non-discrimination in employment. In November 2017, female workers in banned professions (passenger, freight, and water transport, print shops, and small businesses) addressed an open letter to Russia's human rights ombudsman T.N. Moskalkovaya appealing for protection of their labor rights. In 2018, Russian Railways, the largest railway transportation company in Russia, came out in favor of allowing women to work in this industry. In addition to the applicants, commercial organizations, and NGOs, Russia's professional union of sailors also voiced its support for cancellation of the ban.

On September 15, 2017, the Samara District Court completed its review of the case of Svetlana Medvedeva v. the Samara River Passenger Enterprise. The court found that the internationally-recognized ban on discrimination against women means that women cannot be denied employment in "dangerous" specializations, even though a ban of this nature has been enshrined in Russian law.

Dozens of jobs will be accessible to women as a result of these changes. These jobs include machine operation work, some metalwork, construction, installation, and renovation jobs, geological surveying and topographic-geodesic work, processing of a number of chemical substances (rubber compounds, oil, gas, shale, and coal), tire production, maintenance, and repair, jute and hemp production, the manufacturing of musical instruments, and work in a number of areas of the food industry (fish harvesting and processing, baking, tobacco and fermentation, the perfume and cosmetics industry, and the mining and processing of salt). Cancellation of the ban on jobs at heights will allow women to work as parachutists and to repair

fourth version of the new list of banned professions. There were initially plans to replace the old list within six months from the day of the approved draft's publication, but by the winter of 2019, there were already proposals to change the effective date to January 1, 2020. Under the most recent version, the list will only enter into force on January 1, 2021.

In reality, the revocation of these bans is not enough to allow women to occupy previously inaccessible professions; in addition, actual conditions must be created for them to be hired for vacancies, and special temporary measures like the ones recommended by UN CEDAW must be adopted. These measures would include notifying employers and potential workers that women are now eligible for positions like metro operator and bus driver that have been banned to them for decades. For example, ads for vacancies for both positions have stated that only men are eligible, so it is important to notify women about the possibility of training and working in these specializations using all possible means (media, employers' websites, unions, employment services).

*The profession of firefighter is officially banned for women, but this does not mean that women in Russia do not put out fires. They do, but they are not paid a fair wage and are not insured against the risks inherent in this profession. The situation is similar for porters—just because this job is on the list of banned professions does not mean women do not have to move heavy objects as part of their jobs. At the same time, they do not receive the compensation required for these risks. For women living in company towns connected with various areas of heavy industry, dividing professions into "female" and "male" leaves women without decent wages, since only various low-paying specializations remain open to them in these towns. And this is on top of the fact that many of them also provide for their children.*

Anastasiya Dmitrievna Kosheleva,  
of the summary of proposals resulting from the posting of the  
draft on the preparation of a standard-setting instrument

power stations and networks. But women will have to wait for official employment in previously banned professions: this bill has not been able to reach the final stage of official publication for two years in a row. The current draft, which was written in July 2019, is the

**Even though the new list has not yet entered into force, work must be started now to change the rules for accepting women into academic institutions for training in previously closed professions (including machinists, assistant engi-**



*This list is too general and has not been worked through. Certain positions raise questions in principle. Like item 8 "Firefighting." Why? How can this work impact a woman's reproductive health? Does this mean it is not harmful to a man's reproductive health? All the lists of banned professions should be revoked. The government should be working exclusively on occupational health and safety. Every position, every profession should be accessible and safe and should not present any great risk to workers' health.*

Anna Yevgenyevna Tartakovskaya,  
of the summary of proposals resulting from the posting of the  
draft on the preparation of a standard-setting instrument

**neers, bus and truck drivers, ship mechanics and motorists, sailors, and others) so that they can actually start working in these positions in 2021.**

### **Broken promises" and "a long process for not much change"**

Registration of the new draft of the list of banned professions with the Ministry of Justice is, without a doubt, a victory for the applicants who were fighting for their rights, but this document still has a number of shortcomings. According to information published by journalists, the list proposes restricting the labor of women in 98 jobs and positions, but, upon closer inspection, it turns out that many of the items on the list include dozens of professions from the old list.

**In fact, the new draft contains 263 industries, jobs, and positions instead of the under 100 touted and bans women from over 320 professions of the 456 banned professions on the current list.**

While trumpeting the reduction in bans, the authorities have worked zealously to retain as many restrictions as possible, as if they want not just to delay the new list's adoption, but also to hide the final version from citizens critical of this discriminatory document. It's no accident that the latest version of the list has still not been published on the website of the federal regulations portal, which reflects the process of the draft's adoption, and that the available text of the list sent to the Ministry of Justice does not correspond to the latest version of the Ministry of Labor order.

The draft of the new list has repeatedly changed form: it initially listed 156 first and second hazard classes of chemicals that, if present at the work-

place, prevented women from working there, but sweeping criticism of the obligation to determine the impact of these substances and the high likelihood of inconsistencies resulted in changes to this section. Curiously, the first version used the wording "chemical substances harmful to a person's reproductive health," which was replaced with "a woman's health" in all subsequent versions, while the list of substances itself provided in one of the draft's subsequent versions was not changed at all.

After an expert review of the draft, lawmakers decided to replace the inconvenient proposed list of the first and second hazard classes of chemicals with a list of chemical productions banned for women. But while the existing document lists specific positions like "workers, shift leaders, and specialists working with boilers and in the hand-crushing/processing stages" during the production of certain products, the new draft proposes banning women from all production in general and from using 23 organic and inorganic chemicals.

The July version of the list has a structure similar to the existing Resolution and proposes reducing the number of sections from 39 to 21. Even so, the document's final version was not its shortest. The draft of the list published in February 2019 contained the least number of banned professions: it

consisted of only 28 items, not including sections, four of which contained ambiguous restrictions connected with the impact of chemical factors, vibration, ionizing radiation, and cooling or warming microclimates. However, most of the remaining bans (20 of 28) are contained in only one section of the new draft.

The content of the proposed list also raises questions: a small number of jobs ban the labor of women only if they are performed manually (unlike the full ban in the current Resolution). These include pitch grinding and loading and unloading work at ports; other professions like spinning lathe operator are banned even if they are mechanized. New bans have been added to the list like wing technician. A number of jobs in the textile and light industries are duplicated in the new draft (sections 68, 69, 70, and 71). It is sometimes difficult to explain the appearance or disappearance of certain bans, while the legislature has not found it necessary to justify the significant differences between the drafts submitted over the past year-and-a-half.

### **Purported concern for women's health**

Following the fundamental principle of a ban on discrimination (which was cited by participants in the public debate), the legislature dropped its proposal to restrict the list to women aged 18 to 49. Unfortunately, the state continues to maintain that the document itself does not restrict rights and to amend the list instead of admitting that it is simply irrelevant and that this form of concern about a woman's health amounts to unjustified interference in women's lives that conflicts with their freedom of choice and the right to self-realization. During public debate, a female representative of Lukoil proposed a more economically favorable and effective way of solving the problems of violation of the

*Men also have reproductive health, and there are also infertile people and people above child-bearing age who have not retired. If work conditions at a company affect the reproductive health of workers, the government should improve conditions instead of depriving half of the country's working population, which includes a tremendous number of single mothers doomed to eke out a living due to lack of jobs, of the chance to earn a living.*

Maksim Volgin,  
of the summary of proposals resulting from the posting of the  
draft on the preparation of a standard-setting instrument

*I'm child-free, and I believe that I have the full right to manage my life: to choose my profession in accordance with my wishes and not with someone's instructions. And let's not even mention that many women are shut out of high-paying professions in light of their "danger." A large number of children are raised by single women, but these women don't have the right to get a job that would allow them to feed and successfully raise their children, while arduous and low-paid jobs like cleaners are open to them. This doesn't look anything like concern.*

Alena Kraeva,  
of the summary of proposals  
resulting from the posting of  
the draft on the preparation of  
a standard-setting instrument

principle of equality in employment, restrictions on women's labor in a number of professions, and staffing shortages by using the concepts of "access with informed consent," "when a woman may be allowed to work in harmful conditions if she provides confirmation, in writing," that she understands the risks to her health.

Unfortunately, the legislature has yet to consider this form of consent, so female rescuers still cannot officially work as firefighters or divers, despite their professionalism and calling.

**The realization of rights in today's conditions requires an active position. ADC Memorial calls on women who want to find employment and receive training in their desired professions to send statements to academic institutions about opening admission to women and intends to support applicants who achieve open access to banned professions.**

Inessa SAKHNO

## WOMEN EMPLOYED IN SHIPBUILDING SECTOR DISCUSS GENDER DIFFERENCES

*Starting 2021, women in Russia will get better access to work in dozens of professional positions in the transportation sector, including work on maritime and riverine vessels. This means that educational institutions will also accept women to departments and faculties previously inaccessible to them. For several years this was advocated by the Anti-Discrimination Centre "Memorial" and participants of the campaign #alljobs4allwomen. However, simply abolishing the prohibitions and restrictions is not enough: it is important to improve working conditions in the workplace, regardless of the gender of the employees, to widely inform women about opportunities that they have, and to change the all too familiar gender stereotypes, including the ones existing among teachers and students.*

Two women talk about their experiences in education and work in the shipbuilding industry and share their thoughts on gender stereotypes in the world of work.

**A., deputy technical director at a fiberglass shipbuilding enterprise**

We have a fairly large factory, which manufactures vessels out of fiberglass. There is gender division of labor here: only men work in the welding workshop, while only women work in the polymer workshop. Polymer workshop is considered to be hazardous production, there is a very pungent smell of tar there. Shapers, who work in this shop, lay out fiberglass cloth, impregnate it with glue, make a sort of a big "sandwich". It is believed that this is "female" work, women do it better and faster, although hypothetically men can also work there. In this "women's workshop" there are special bonuses for work in harmful conditions, employees there get milk and certain "health days" (extra days off). Previously, this workshop was very poorly ventilated, but now proper ventilation system was installed there and the situation improved. When hiring women, the managers conduct job interviews in several stages, they talk about the health risks, ask about having children (whether the women already have or plan to have children), but the decision on getting employed there is left to the employee.

One hundred years ago, women could not even vote, but the outstanding women of that era made a great contribution to science and culture – my idol, Marie Curie, who received the Nobel Prize, immediately comes to mind. Now gender roles have shifted so much that we all do what we want, and we are conscious about this, and this is OK. I am glad that in the modern world women have the opportunity to engage in science and other spheres that were previously inaccessible to them. It seems to me that in Russia women are particularly underestimated, their intellect and their self-consciousness does not really matter to anyone, and this is very sad.

**Alexandra, employee in shipbuilding sector**

I am 29 years old, and for 10 years now I have worked in my professional occupation. I received education in shipbuilding, and this was by chance, I ought to say: I didn't get a non-paid place in college, so I decided to go to another faculty, where free scholarship was available, and it turned out to be shipbuilding. During my first two years I thought: "What am I doing here?" But then during the third year, we started special courses, it became more interesting for me, and I thought that it was great, that there were great prospects, that this was great work. I must admit, there were teachers who told us that we "girls" should go home to cook borscht and this used to bring us to tears. However, all the four girls who studied at the faculty went to work in shipbuilding sector.

During my studies, I went to work at the largest shipbuilding research center in Russia. It sounds beautiful, but the work was not particularly interesting. At the same time, I got a job in a design bureau at a shipbuilding plant. I worked for two years simultaneously at the plant and in the research center, then I went to work for a private company. Here they treat women decently, there are no wage differences. I deal with the internal construction of ships and vessels, with decoration and finishing works, insulation and furniture.

A lot of my friends work in spheres, which were completely atypical for women in the past: one works as a technologist in a metal smelting shop, another a specialist at a heating power plant, in a position related to nuclear reactors and IT. At the same time, one of my male friends got a job as a manicurist. Everything is so mixed up now that I don't really understand how in the modern world there can only be male or female professional occupations.



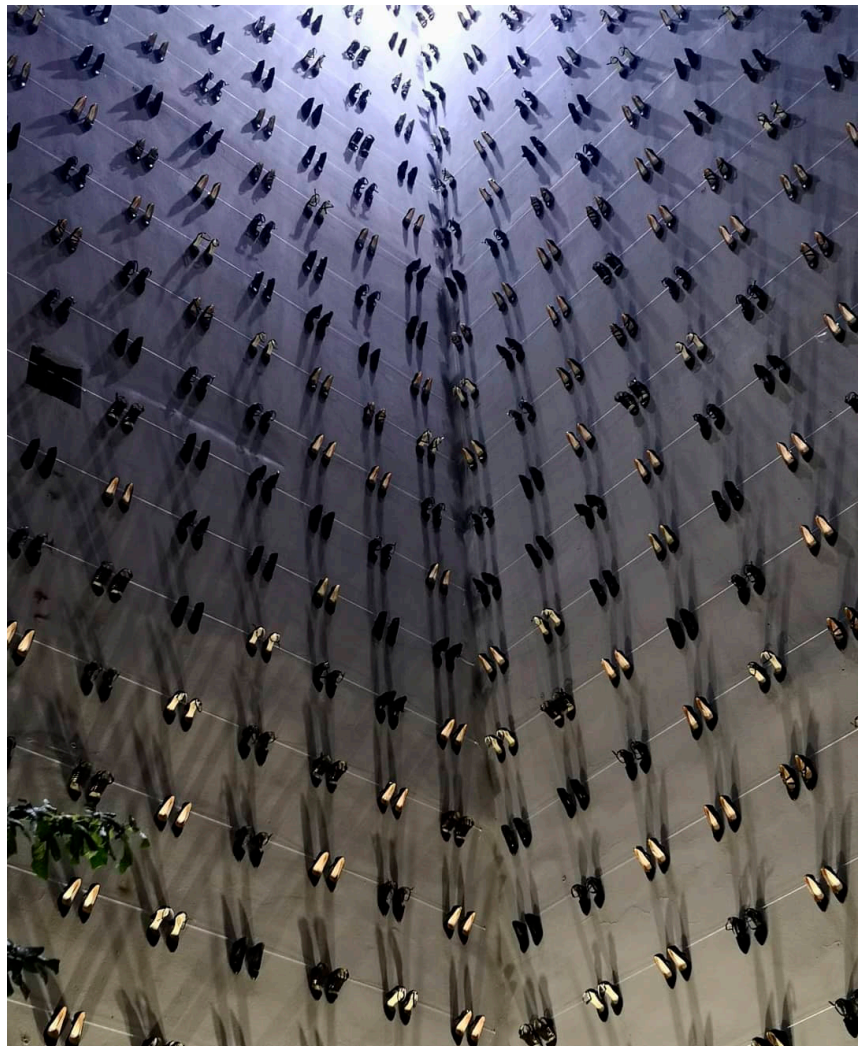
## HIGH HEELS FROM ISTANBUL

*In a touching memorial to female victims of domestic violence recently unveiled in Istanbul, the Turkish artist Vahit Tuna attached 440 pairs of women's high-heeled shoes to two walls. This is the number of women killed by their partners in the past year alone. A memorial such as this would be very fitting indeed for Russia, where thousands of women die every year at the hands of their (former) partners. At a time when women are so defenseless, Putin's statements that "Russian women are the best" appear particularly cynical. After all, there are over 16 million victims of domestic violence in Russia—and that's only according to official statistics.*

I would advise any artist wishing to organize such an installation in Russia to place the high heels next to the entrance to the State Duma and within its building—in stairwells, hallways, and offices—to show deputies the results of their failure to take action. Because the fact is that parliament is not even considering a domestic violence law. Experts from the Anti-Discrimination Center Memorial recently participated in a discussion about gender discrimination at the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting held by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, where they talked about the judgments of international courts that have recognized violence against women in Russia as discrimination, including the recent ECtHR judgment in the case of Volodina v. Russia. They noted in particular that Russia does not have a comprehensive domestic violence law and also focused on the position of a UN committee, which pointed out that complaints about domestic violence are still considered "private charges," which is to say, a personal dispute between a victim and an abuser.

High heels should also be arranged near the police stations whose officers failed to respond to the cries for help from domestic violence victims. The blood and deaths of these women are also on them.

Sometimes it seems, deceptively, that adding the adjective "domestic" to the noun "violence" softens this violence and makes it less serious. In a Levada Center publication, researchers looked at the results of a study on what Russians think about domestic violence. Predictably, men were more indifferent:



They are more likely than women to believe that domestic violence is something of a squabble between spouses (this isn't surprising—just look at the comments on any article about violence against women). This seems logical at first glance: men are far removed from women's experiences, they don't feel the pain of domestic violence as frequently, they are impassive to the sufferings of women, and, of course, they need to justify their behavior somehow. But the truth is that everyone suffers in this situation.

Domestic violence and femicide are the overall results of the customary division of social power, where men view women as their property. There's no question that women are more frequent victims of domestic violence, but everyone is the victim of toxic masculinity. Is a man who cannot express his emo-

tions in human terms without displaying aggression really happy? Is a man who uses alcohol to manage his emotions really happy? Is a man living with constant disputes really happy? And is a man who bullies his wife, attacks her with his fists, or launches heavy objects at her really happy? If no one is happy, then why isn't society changing? Because it is accustomed to this routine?

Everyone knows about the case of the Khachaturyan sisters. All my sympathies lie with these young women, who were victimized by their terror of a father and forced to take the extreme measure of murdering their abuser for their own self-protection. But, in the end, the father was also a victim of this situation; he became the executioner not just of his daughters, but also of himself.

The Levada Center study showed a difference in perception not just between men and women, but also between generations. Older people generally do not view verbal threats of physical violence (like “I’ll kill you), constant humiliation and criticism (“bad wife,” “good-for-nothing husband), or loud disputes, scandals, and fights as violence. My grandmother once told me about how lucky her friend was: when her husband was younger, he drank a lot, treated her badly, and thought that, as head of the family, he could act like a domestic tyrant, but then he mellowed out as he grew older... Now, however, more and more people are starting to realize that constant screaming and humiliation cannot be part of a “healthy relationship” between partners. More and more people are starting to understand that a woman’s body belongs to her and that marriage does not deprive her of the right to make decisions: until recently, sexual violence in marriage was not considered rape, and even now 50 percent of people surveyed agree. It would be good to win over this half, which apparently views spouses as sex slaves and not partners.

The study also reflected changes in the conception of personal borders. There used to be one home phone for the entire family, but now family members each have their own phones and their own social media accounts. Twenty-one percent of people surveyed believed that demands to see text messages and online correspondence amount to violence. At first people think is that yes, of course, people who decide to live together retain their independent identities and have the right to their own lives. But then they think, well, what if I suspect my partner of deceiving me or cheating? Do I have the right to look at text messages, or is this already violence?

Responses to a survey question about blackmail or denial of money are also interesting. Financial dependence has long been thought to be the chief reason for women’s vulnerability. Having one’s own money signifies independence from a partner, “a safety net” in case a partner becomes a threat. Many generations of women have fought for the right to work and for an independent income. This problem has now been partially resolved: women are active in the labor market and most have financial resources, although these may not always be sufficient. But many women also stay home to manage the household and raise children. And while I can state unequivocally that blackmail involving daily matters (“I won’t give you money for the apartment, for food!”) is violence, I also know there are cases where

the situation is not so clear. The market is still structured around the model of “the man is the breadwinner,” and men frequently earn more than women. Is a man required to share all his income with his spouse? Should the partner who earns money for the family accommodate all the wishes and needs of the other partner? Does one partner have the right to decide what the other does and does not need (in other words, does a man have the right to decide when to give or deny a woman money)? Who has the deciding voice in spending and why?

The survey’s questions about forms of non-physical violence are theoretical for many people who believe that even the worst violence is not obvious. Russia lacks any forms of protection for victims of the most terrible domestic violence crimes. If you fall into a cycle of violence, you will remain a victim without solid support from the people around you. You will either be abused and killed or forced to protect yourself at the risk of being jailed. There is a vital need for a domestic violence law protecting victims and not their abusers. If this law is adopted (which I truly hope will happen), the path to change will still be very long. Much will depend on police officers, who will take statements and decide how to respond to them; on social services, which will have to respond to the very first signs

of violence; and on ordinary people, who will have to decide if they are going to take the victim’s side or remain silent and hold the victims themselves responsible for their tragedy. One-quarter of the Levada Center respondents did not consider serious beatings by a family member as violence. Over half did not believe that verbal threats of physical violence (“I’ll kill you!” and so forth) constitute violence, and over 60 percent did not believe that forbidding communication with friends or relatives is violence. But the tragedies of domestic violence victims that we know of started exactly in these ways—the victims were not killed or severely wounded right away; instead, it all started with these little things. But only the police, social services, and society have ignored these first signs of terrible disaster.

Wouldn’t it be worthwhile for us to install high heels in our squares, in front of our cathedrals, and around our homes?

**Patrycja POMPALA**

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of Radio Svoboda*

*Photo from the Instagram of @vahit-tuna, the Turkish artist Vahit Tuna*



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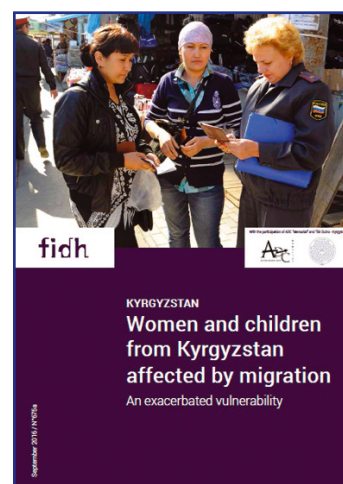
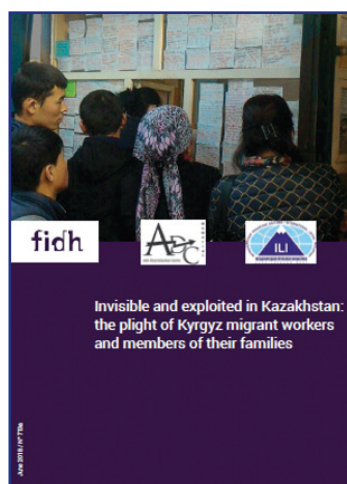
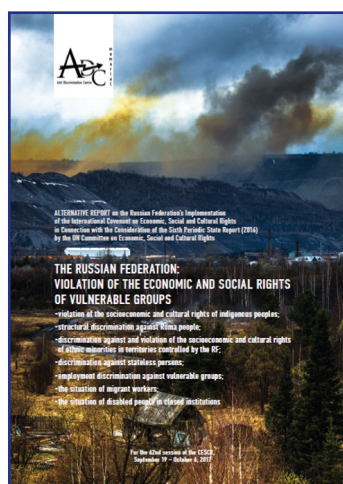
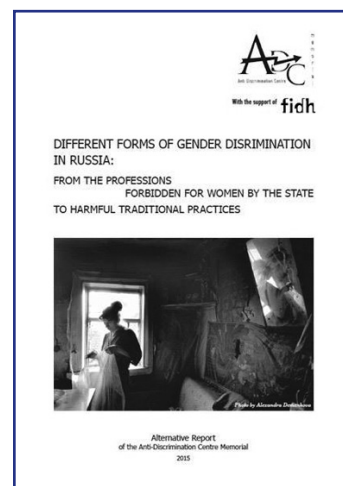
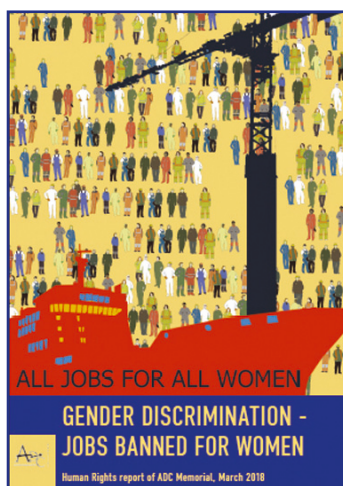
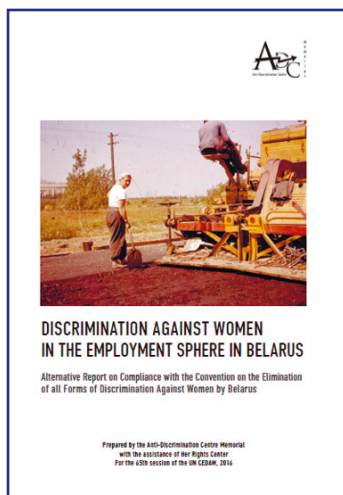
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