



The Knesset
Research and Information Center

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

with an emphasis on
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

2016–2017 Police Data



**Submitted to the Committee on the Status
of Women and Gender Equality**



Summary

This document was prepared at the request of MK Aida Touma-Sliman, Chair of the Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality, ahead of the committee's discussions marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This document presents police data on cases that were opened due to complaints of domestic violence (hereinafter: DV).

- In 2017, 17,587 cases of DV crimes against partners (both men and women) were opened. Of these cases, 69% **were reported by women**, 11% by men, and a fifth of the cases by both partners.
- **Prior offenses:** Some 14% of those suspected of domestic violence against women were the subjects of more than one DV case in 2016–2017. The vast majority of them (92%) are the subjects of 2–3 cases; the minority (8%) are the subjects of 4–12 cases. This is most likely an underassessment of prior offenses, as these suspects might have had cases opened against them prior to 2016.
- In both 2016 and 2017, the police received reports of 11,800 cases of DV against women annually. **In 2017, these cases included some 15,600 criminal counts (each case can encompass more than one crime), among them 26 murders, attempted murders, and manslaughter; about 300 sex crimes; approximately 7,700 assaults; and some 7,600 threats.**
- **In 2016–2017, 35 women were the victims of murder or manslaughter. Half of the victims—17 women—had filed police reports about violence before they were killed.**
- **Some 23% of women's DV complaints were filed for crimes against non-Jewish women,** a rate that is higher than the percentage of non-Jewish women in the general population (18% of adult women).
- Some 21% of women's DV complaints were recorded for crimes against immigrant women, at a rate similar to their percentage in the population.
- **As mentioned above, in both 2016 and 2017 some 11,800 cases of DV against women were reported per year. Each year, the Israel Police closed some 9,000 DV cases (not necessarily those that had been opened during those years). The most frequently cited grounds for closing a case was insufficient evidence (in 87% of closed cases).**
- **Some 2,800 indictments for DV crimes against women were filed in 2016; about 2,600 indictments were filed in 2017.**
- In recent years, various entities in Israel and around the world have been discussing economic violence, highlighting it as a manifestation of DV. The Ministry for Social Equality and the Ministry of Justice prepared **the Prevention of Domestic Violence (Amendment No. 16) (Prevention of Economic Violence) Bill Memorandum, 5777—2017**. The bill memorandum was not advanced due to disagreements between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services over the funding for positions for the social workers needed to implement the law.



This document was prepared at the request of MK Aida Touma-Sliman, chair of the Committee on the Status of Women and Gender Equality, ahead of the committee's deliberations marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The document presents police data on cases of domestic violence opened in 2016 and 2017.¹

1. Data on DV in the General Population²

The following police data were produced at the request of the Knesset Research and Information Center, and relate to cases opened due to **domestic violence between partners**, hereinafter referred to as DV crimes. Although there are other types of domestic violence, such as violence against children, this document focuses on violence between partners—in particular, violence against women. According to the police, the definition of a "partner" includes members of a couple who are married, separated, divorced, common-law spouses, etc.

First, we will present data on **all DV cases**, including cases in which the victim was female, cases where the victim was male, and cases in which each partner filed complaints against the another. According to the Israel Police statistical abstract, some 22,230 DV cases were opened annually in 2016 and 2017. This document presents data on DV crimes provided to us by the police; these data do not include property crime.³ According to police data, 17,587 DV cases were opened in 2017. The two most common crimes for which complaints were filed were assault (53% of crimes) and threats (45%); additionally, 35 of the opened cases regarded murder, attempted murder, and manslaughter, and 400 complaints concerned sex crimes (as noted above, only between partners). In 2016, 17,505 DV cases were opened with a similar distribution in the types of crime.

In 2017, most DV cases (69%) were opened following a complaint by a woman, about 10% followed a complaint by a man, and a fifth of DV cases registered complaints by both members of the couple.

We emphasize that cases that are closed due to absence of guilt are registered in the police computer system as noncriminal cases and are excluded from the statistics. Therefore, the number of cases that were actually opened is probably greater than the number submitted to us by the police; data from previous years indicate that only a small number of cases are closed due to "absence of guilt," but we have no way of knowing the exact number of such cases.⁴

The rest of this section will present only DV crimes against women.

¹ This document amends a previous version which had several data typos on Section 2.

² Superintendent Adv. Lee Pearl-Bahiri, Head of Domestic Violence Squad, letter dated 8 October 2018, sent via email to Daniel Wildlansky, 22 October 2018. A letter dated 31 October 2018, sent via email by Limor Cohen, 5 November 2018.

³ Israel Police, Planning and Organization Division, Strategy Department, Research and Information Unit, [2017 Statistical Abstract](#). Police DV data do include property crimes. [Hebrew].

⁴ The exclusion of cases closed due to "absence of guilt" from police statistics started in 2018 following the Attorney General's ordinance. This may change in some cases in the "opened cases" category based on the data production date. Moreover, it may be difficult to compare data produced after 2018 with data produced prior to that year. Attorney General Ordinances, [Ordinance 1.3, Closing Cases due to "Absence of Evidence" or "Absence of Guilt"](#). 14 January 2018. [Hebrew].

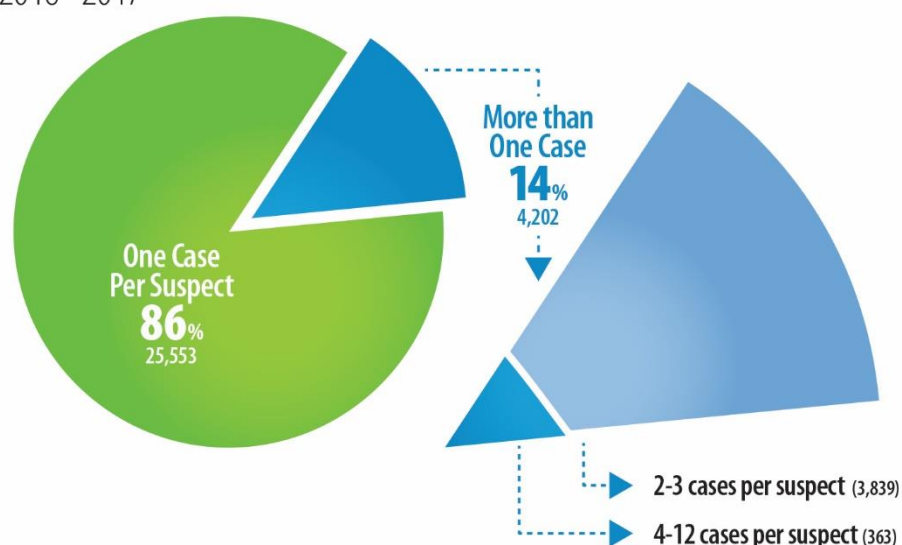


2. Data on Repeated DV Crimes⁵

In order to assess repeated crimes in DV cases, we asked the Israel Police to provide us with a segmentation of data on opened cases by whether the subject is involved in previous cases **of DV crimes**. As previously stated, these data do not include property crime.

The following chart shows data on 29,755 suspects in DV cases opened in 2016 and 2017. Note that the police have provided the Knesset Research and Information Center with data only on the previous cases opened in 2016 and 2017, while cases against some of the suspects date to previous years.

Number of DV cases per suspect
2016–2017



According to the chart, 86% of DV suspects have had one DV case opened against them by the police in 2016 and 2017. Some **2,872 suspects (14%) have had more than one case opened against them during these two years.** Of these 2,872 suspects, some 92% (2,645 suspects) have had 2–3 cases opened; some 8% (227 suspects) have had 4–12 cases opened against them. **The number of previous DV crimes is likely an under-assessment, because—as noted above—these data include only previous cases from 2016 and 2017, and these suspects may also have cases that date back to previous years.**

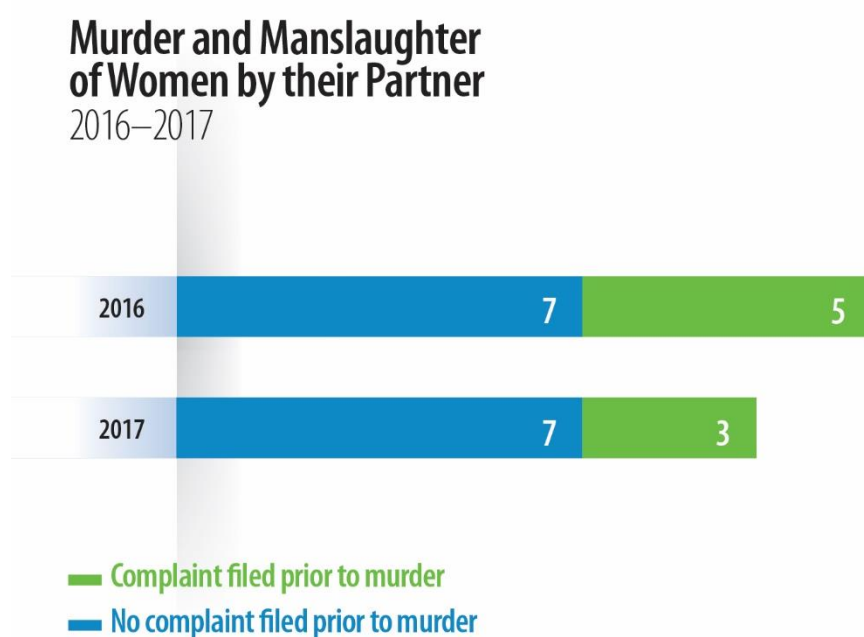
⁵ Superintendent Adv. Lee Pearl-Bahiri, Head of Domestic Violence Squad, letter dated 8 October 2018, sent via email to Daniel Wildlansky, 22 October 2018. A letter dated 31 October 2018, sent via email by Limor Cohen, 5 November 2018



3. Data on the Distribution of DV by Crime Type, Emphasis on Murder and Killing⁶

The police opened some 11,849 DV cases in 2017 based on reports by women; these cases included some 15,624 crimes (there may be more than one offense in each case). These crimes included 26 reports of murder, attempted murder, and manslaughter; 295 sex crimes (about 1.9% of crimes); 7,719 assaults (49% of crimes); and 7,584 threats (48% of crimes).

Because murder, attempted murder, and manslaughter are such severe crimes, we asked the Israel Police for detailed data on these crimes. The Israel Police provided us with data from two different police sources: the Planning Directorate and the Crime Victims Unit. Since each entity collects its data differently, there are some differences between the data sets. The data below come from the Victims of Crime Unit alone, because, according to a response by the Ministry of Public Security, these data are more accurate, as each case is reviewed individually. The following charts present data on **the murder and killing of 35 women by their partners or other relatives**. These data **do not** include complaints of attempted murder (which are not collected by the Crime Victims Unit). The following charts use different colors to indicate cases in which a police complaint had been filed and those where not complaint had been filed. This information is significant to the question—**Did the law enforcement agencies not know beforehand of the dangers faced by the murdered women?**

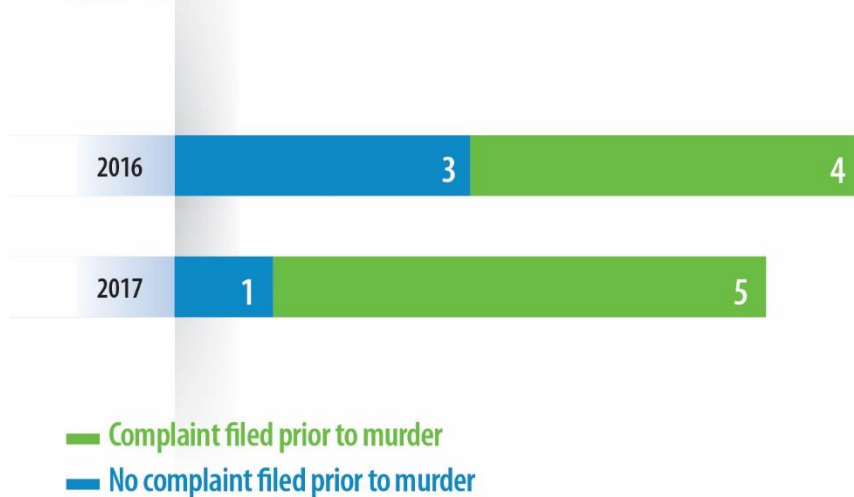


⁶ Superintendent Adv. Lee Pearl-Bahiri, Head of Domestic Violence Squad, letter dated 8 October 2018, sent via email to Daniel Wildlansky, 22 October 2018. A letter dated 31 October 2018, sent via email by Limor Cohen, 5 November 2018.



Murder and Manslaughter of Women by Other Relatives

2016–2017



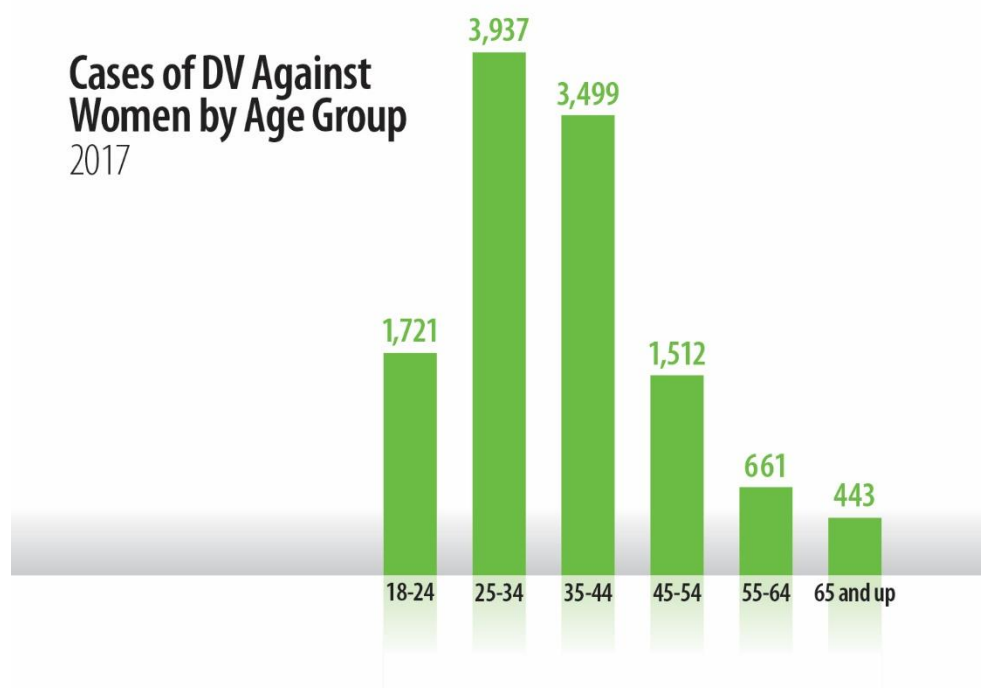
The charts raise the following findings:

- **In 2016 and 2017, 35 women were the victims of murder or femicide by their partners or another relative. About half of these incidents—17 murders—a police complaint had been filed prior to the murder.**
- In 2016, 12 women were the victims of femicide committed by their partners; in five cases, a police complaint had been filed previously.
- In 2017, 10 women were the victims of femicide committed by their partners; in three cases, a police complaint had been filed previously.
- In 2016, seven women were the victims of femicide committed by another family member; in four cases, a police complaint had been filed previously.
- In 2016, six women were the victims of femicide committed by another family member; in five cases, a police complaint had been filed previously.



4. Distribution of DV Cases, by Age⁷

The following chart presents police data on 11,733 cases of DV against women, by the victim's age.



The chart data indicates that women of all ages reported acts of DV against them to the police, the majority of whom (54%) were aged 25–44.

5. DV Cases Sorted by Population Group⁸

The following chart presents police data on 11,847 cases of DV against women opened in 2017, divided between Jewish and non-Jewish women. Note that the Israel Police classified women who are not Jewish by religion but are members of "Jewish society" as Jewish. According to the police, the non-Jewish population includes Christians, Arab-Christians, Muslims, Druze, and Circassians. In 2017, 2,723 police complaints were filed by non-Jewish women; these compose 23% of all DV complaints by women—a higher rate than the percentage of non-Jewish women of relevant age within the general population. (Non-Jewish women over 18—the marriage age—make up 18% of the population).⁹

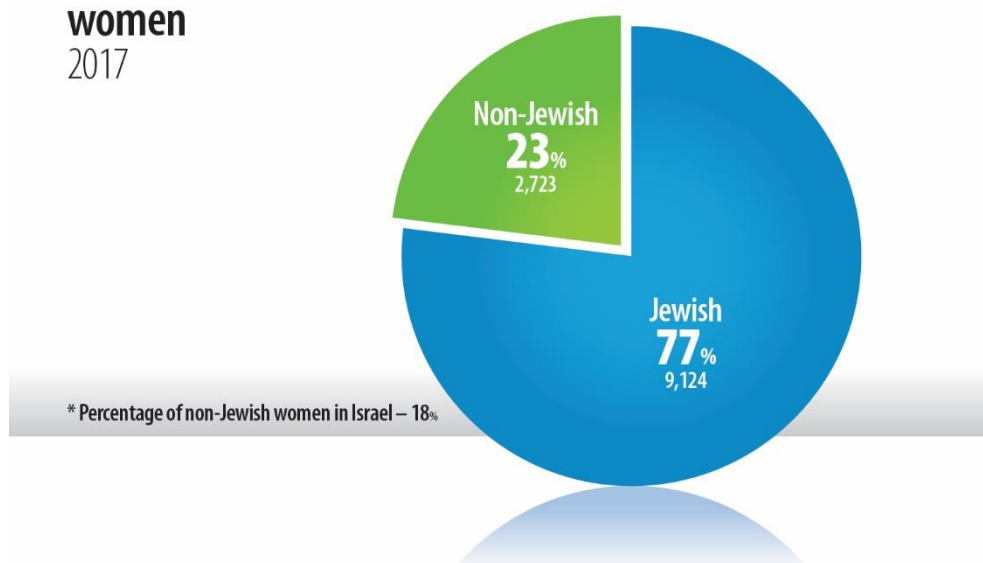
⁷ Superintendent Adv. Lee Pearl-Bahiri, Head of Domestic Violence Squad, letter dated 8 October 2018, sent via email by Daniel Wildlansky, 22 October 2018. A letter dated 31 October 2018, sent via email by Limor Cohen, 5 November 2018. As previously stated, this data does not include property crimes.

⁸ Superintendent Adv. Lee Pearl-Bahiri, Head of Domestic Violence Squad, letter dated 8 October 2018, sent via email by Daniel Wildlansky, 22 October 2018. A letter dated 31 October 2018, sent via email by Limor Cohen, 5 November 2018.

⁹ Central Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Abstract of Israel 2018, [Table 2.3, Population, By Population Group, Religion, Sex and Age](#). In 2017 there were some 2,988,300 women over the age of 18 living in Israel of whom 545,700 were not Jewish. Note that there are cases of child marriage and DV incidents against minors in Israel; these are not reflected in the data presented in Chart 6.

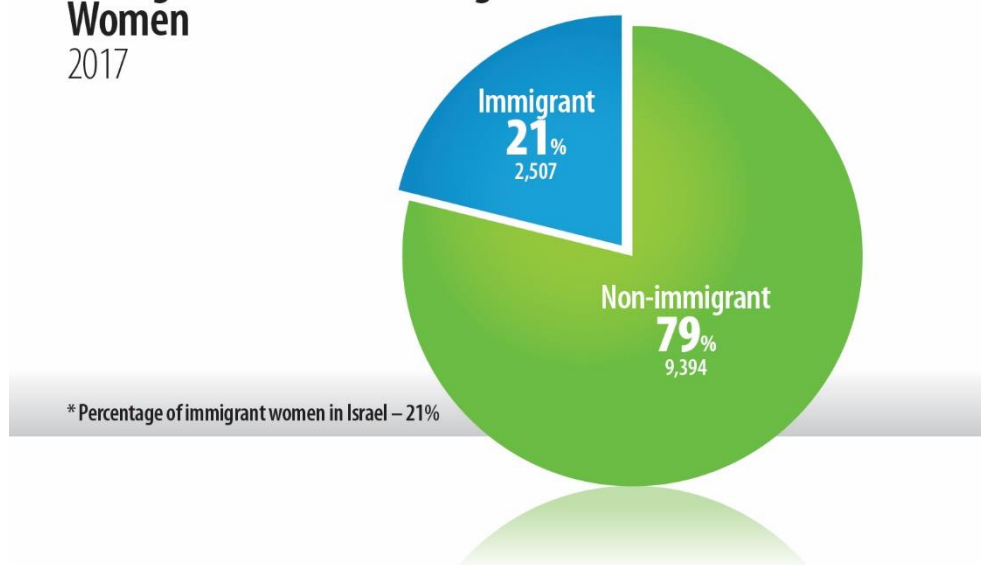


Distribution of DV Cases, Jewish and non-Jewish women 2017



The following chart presents police data on 11,856 cases of DV against women opened in 2017, divided between immigrants and veteran Israelis. We emphasize that the data on non-immigrant women include the Arab population.

Distribution of DV Cases, Immigrant and Non-immigrant Women 2017



Some 21% of the DV complaints by women received by the police in 2017 were filed by immigrant women; this rate is similar to the percentage of immigrant women in the general Israeli population.¹⁰ Note that a previous document by the Knesset Research and Information Center included a detailed analysis of DV against immigrant women.¹¹

6. Status of DV Case Handling and Grounds for Closing Cases¹²

The following table presents police data on the status of handling DV cases opened in 2016 and 2017. We empathizes that **this data is dynamic and is current to the date of production for the Knesset Research and Information Center (4 October 2018).**¹³ Note that the sum of the figures regarding the handling of cases is greater than the number of cases opened. This is because each case can have more than one suspect. Also note that some cases, which were closed in the years covered by the table, had been opened in preceding years. As such, we have no way of calculating the rate at which cases were closed in each of the years.

Below are the key findings from the table data:

Handling Status of DV Cases 2016–2017

	2016	2017
Cases opened	11,895	11,842
Closed	9,052	8,957
Under investigation	8	23
State Attorney's Office or Police Prosecution Division	707	1,640
Indictment	2,827	2,640
Judicial Decision	2,105	1,197

In both 2016 and 2017, around 12,000 DV cases were opened, and some 9,000 cases were closed (some of the cases closed in a particular year may have been opened in a previous year). Note that cases that were closed following a decision by the police that the suspect is not guilty have been excluded from the statistics and the police does not provide data regarding them.

¹⁰ Ibid. In 2017, there were some 2,680,500 women over the age of 20 living in Israel. That year, there were 565,000 women living in Israel who immigrated to Israel from 1990 onwards. See, Central Bureau of Statistics, "Population of Immigrant Women from 1990 + by age in fives," data submitted by Shlomit Cohen Elkaslassy, Director of the Information Dissemination Branch, email, 31 October 2018.

¹¹ The document revealed that immigrant women are more exposed to DV and that in the decade between 2007 and 2016 there was a consistent gap between immigrant and native women DV rates; during those years there was an average of 591 DV cases for every 100,000 immigrant women compared to 504 cases for every 100,000 native women. Nurit Yachimovich-Cohen, [Data on Domestic Violence against Immigrant Women](#). Knesset Research and Information Center, 20 November 2017.

¹² Superintendent Adv. Lee Pearl-Bahiri, Head of Domestic Violence Squad, letter dated 8 October 2018, sent via email by Daniel Widlansky on 22 October 2018; letter dated 31 October 2018, sent via email by Limor Cohen on 5 November 2018.

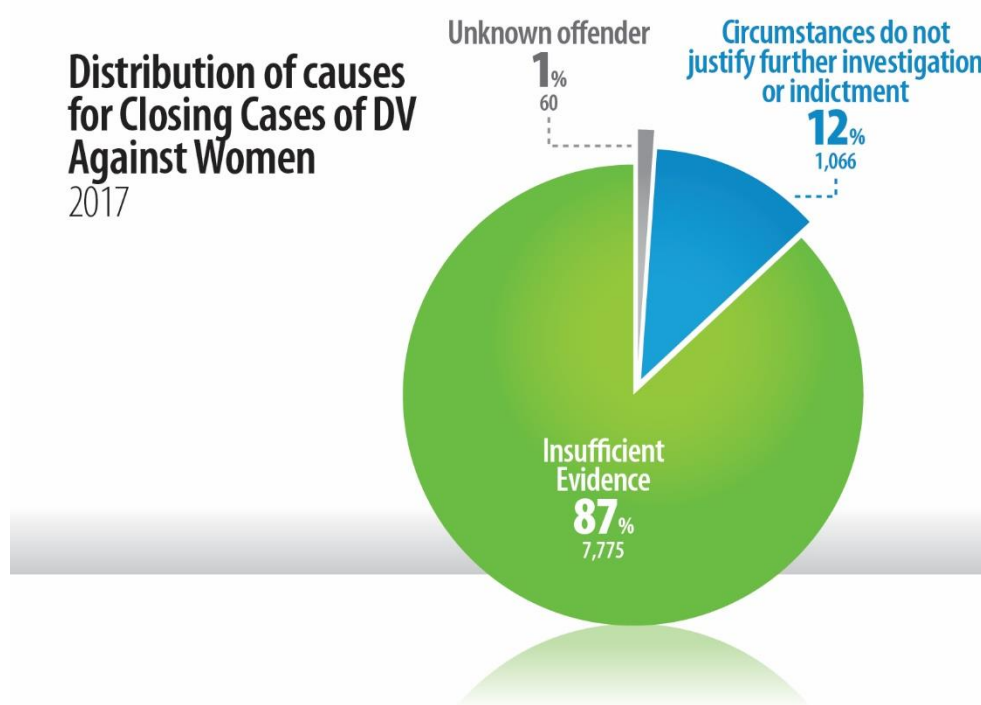
¹³ This data does not include cases closed due to absence of guilt. These cases become noncriminal on the police computer system and are excluded from the statistics.



- As of October 2018, 707 of the cases opened in 2016 were still being handled by the State Attorney or the Police Prosecution Division. Of all the cases opened in 2017, 1,640 cases are still pending with the State Attorney's Office or the Police Prosecution Division.
- As of October 2018, approximately 2,800 indictments had been filed in cases opened in 2016, and about 2,600 indictments had been filed in cases opened in 2017.
- Judicial decisions had been rendered in some 2,100 cases opened in 2016 and some 1,200 cases opened in 2017.

The chart below presents the breakdown of the **grounds given for closing DV cases**, for cases closed in 2017:¹⁴

These data indicate that nearly all the cases closed (87% of them) were closed due to **insufficient evidence**. In some 12% of the cases, the police stated that "the circumstances of the case do not justify further investigation or an indictment," and, as expected in DV crimes, the rate of cases closed because of an unknown offender is low—some 1% of the cases. Note that cases that were closed due to a finding of factual innocence become noncriminal cases in the police computer system and are excluded from the statistics.



¹⁴ The 2016 data is very similar to that of 2017: 86% due to insufficient evidence, 14% due to "circumstances do not justify further investigation or indictment"; less than 1% due to "unknown offender". Superintendent Adv. Lee Pearl-Bahiri, Head of Domestic Violence Squad, letter dated 8 October 2018, sent via email by Daniel Widlansky on 22 October 2018; letter dated 31 October 2018, sent via email by Limor Cohen on 5 November 2018.



7. Economic Abuse

What is economic abuse?

In recent years, the world has become more aware of economic abuse as an expression of DV. **Various international and Israeli entities recognize this as a type of violence.** Economic abuse can be used as a tool for asserting power and control, causing social isolation, denying someone's independence, and even issuing threats and causing intimidation—in family relationships in general and between partners in particular.

The United Nations (UN) defines economic abuse as a situation in which an individual denies his intimate partner access to financial resources, typically as a form of abuse or control or in order to isolate her or to otherwise harm her. The UN provides several examples of economic abuse: Denial of access to financial resources, property, and durable goods; the deliberate failure to comply with economic responsibilities, such as alimony or financial support for the family; denial of access to the labor market and education; and denial of participation in decision-making relevant to economic status. However, the UN emphasized that economic abuse can take many different forms in different countries and cultures.¹⁵

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (also known as the Istanbul Convention) included economic abuse along with physical, sexual, and psychological violence in its definition of DV. According to the convention, the definition encompasses a partner or former partner, even if the partners have not lived together.¹⁶ Note that Israel has yet to sign the convention (which all countries may do), although it did declare its intention to do so about a year ago.¹⁷

According to the definition of the **European Institute for Gender Equality**, economic abuse is any act or behavior causing financial damage to a partner. Economic abuse can be manifested, *inter alia*, in damage to property; restricted access to financial resources, education, or the employment market; or failure to meet commitments such as alimony.¹⁸

A comparative legal review by the Legislation and Legal Research Unit of the Knesset Legal Department examined **international legislation on psychological and economic abuse, as part of the effort to combat domestic violence.** According to the review, international organizations such as the UN and Pan American Health Organization include economic abuse in their definitions of violence against women. By 2013, this subject had been incorporated into the national legislation of 28 countries. Note that in most countries that were reviewed, economic abuse is considered a matter of civil law, but in Tasmania (Australia), it is also considered a criminal offense punishable by a fine or two years in prison.¹⁹

In addition to the above examples, the authors of a 2016 article on economic abuse in the Tel Aviv University Law Review argued that economic abuse could also include denial of mobility and avoidance of child care

¹⁵ United Nations, [Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence against Women – Statistic Surveys](#), 2014, pp. 17–18.

¹⁶ [Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence](#), Istanbul, 2011.

¹⁷ Nurit Yachimovich-Cohen, [Aspects of Treating Sexual Victims with Emphasis on Collecting and Preserving Forensic Evidence](#). The Knesset Research and Information Center, 10 December 2017 [Hebrew].

¹⁸ European Institute for Gender Equality, European Union, [Glossary of Definitions of Rape, Femicide, and Intimate Partner Violence](#), p. 46.

¹⁹ Adv. Lior Ben David, [Legislation on Psychological, Economic Abuse in Combatting Domestic Violence](#). Knesset Legal Department, Legislation and Legal Research Unit, 11 May 2015 [Hebrew].



in order to force women into performing the majority of these duties.²⁰ Note that such behaviors may be linked to cultural and societal characteristics, so the line between social norms and economic abuse may vary by society or country.

Shortage of Data on Economic Abuse in Israel and the World

The collection of data on domestic economic abuse is still in its infancy, both in Israel and in other countries. According to the aforementioned article, there are countries where the phenomenon is so common that several dozen percent of women have experienced economic abuse by their partners. Little data has been collected on this issue in Israel to date.²¹ According to a previous document by the Knesset Research and Information Center, some 4% of women treated by social services at hospitals and health funds have suffered economic abuse and/or denial of rights.²² According to the Israel Police, because there is currently **is no concrete definition of economic abuse, this type of violence is sometimes described within the complaint but is not classified as a crime**; therefore the Police data do not reflect economic abuse.²³

Economic Abuse Prevention Memorandum Bill

In 2016, an inter-ministerial committee for combatting and preventing domestic violence was established. Among other things, the committee recommended that the Ministry for Social Equality and Ministry of Justice spearhead the inclusion of economic abuse into the Prevention of Domestic Violence Law.²⁴ The Ministry for Social Equality provided the Knesset Research and Information Center with the **Prevention of Domestic Violence Memorandum Bill (Amendment No. 16) (Prevention of Economic Abuse), 5777-2017**,²⁵ which defines economic violence as the ongoing behavior of a person towards his or her partner through intimidation or coercion, or by asserting dominance, which is manifested in one of the following ways:

- a. Behavior that prevents or restricts the partner's economic independence, including going to work and opening a bank account;
- b. Behavior that prevents or restricts the use of assets to which the partner is entitled, or access to them, by denying the use of a credit card, concealing the existence of assets and information about them, including concealing related transactions and obligations;
- c. Economic conduct that denies the partner the ability to lead a reasonable and normal life, *inter alia*, by controlling the partner's everyday economic conduct.

The memorandum bill proposed defining economic abuse as a civil tort under the provisions of the Torts Ordinance. Furthermore, it proposed authorizing the courts to **issue a protective order against economic abuse** at the partner's request that would protect the injured partner (or any other family member). It also proposed that in preparing the protective order, the court could order a social worker to prepare a written

²⁰ Arianne Renan-Barzilay and Shirley Youseri, [Domestic Economic Violence: Between Male Dominance and Forced Masculinity?](#) Tel-Aviv University Law Review 39 (2016): 613–660 [Hebrew].

²¹ Ibid.

²² According the Ministry of Health data presented in the document 163 out of 3,880 women were treated by social services. Shelly Mizrahi Simon and Ayala Eliyahu, [Spotlight, Violence Against Women – Summary of data for 2016](#). Knesset Research and Information Center, November 2016.

²³ Superintendent Adv. Lee Pearl-Bahiri, Head of Domestic Violence Squad, letter dated 8 October 2018, sent via email to Daniel Wildlansky, 22 October 2018. A letter dated 31 October 2018, sent via email by Limor Cohen, 5 November 2018.

²⁴ Action Plan for implementing Inter-Ministerial Committee to Combat and Prevent Domestic Violence Recommendations. March 2017.

²⁵ Prevention of Domestic Violence Memorandum Bill (Amendment No. 16) (Prevention of Economic Abuse), 5777-2017. The most recent version of the memorandum bill was sent to us by Ministry for Social Equality Legal Advisor Adv. Sorel Harlev, email, 2018.



report on the social aspects related to economic abuse.²⁶ According to the Legal Advisor to the Ministry for Social Equality, Adv. Sorel Harlev, **the memorandum bill was not advanced due to a disagreement between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services over funding for additional positions for social workers in the welfare authorities.**²⁷

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Phone call with the Legal Advisor to the Ministry for Social Equality, Adv. Sorel Harlev, 11 November 2018.







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Research and Information Center