

SPEAK UP

Research on Domestic
Violence in Roma
Communities



Funded by
the European Union



CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Context	5
Methodology	6
Research Sample	7
Research Limitations	7
Analysis and Conclusions	7
Characteristics of the Research Sample	8
Awareness of Domestic Violence and its Forms	10
Experience with Domestic Violence	11
Support and Assistance for Victims of Domestic Violence	14
Views on Gender Roles and Domestic Violence	15
Protection from Domestic Violence	19
Conclusions and Recommendations	21
References	23

Foreword

Although domestic violence is not a phenomenon limited to certain groups, but rather occurs across all cultural, economic and social strata, within the context of Roma communities it takes on specific intensities and characteristics. The reasons are varied – from deeply rooted stereotypes that women are obliged to protect their families at all costs, to a patriarchal structure that attributes a dominant position to men, while women are considered subordinate to men.

Domestic violence is a topic that is difficult to talk about openly, not only in Roma communities. It occurs behind closed doors of our homes; victims often remain silent about their experiences, do not seek help, frequently blame themselves, feel ashamed of their situation, and fear negative reactions from their extended families and surroundings.

Slovo 21 has been implementing projects for years to support the empowerment of Roma women under the slogan “Education, Self-Confidence, Emancipation.” Although the topic of domestic violence has been cautiously addressed in the past through the activities of the Roma Women’s Group Manushe, there has been a lack of relevant indicators suggesting that this taboo issue should be explored in depth. However, based on our longstanding experience and knowledge, we are well aware that domestic violence is indeed present in Roma communities, and that it is high time this issue was addressed seriously.

We hope that the results of this research will be a useful source for further activities aimed at preventing and combating domestic and gender-based violence in Roma communities. We also believe that there will be more and more not only Roma women who choose to speak up.

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Roma women who participated in the research as respondents, as well as to the interviewers - members of the Roma Women’s Group Manushe.

Slovo 21, z.s.

The survey was conducted from March to September 2024 as part of the “Speak Up” project funded by the European Union (OP Employment +).

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Author: Selma Muhič Dizdarevič, Ph.D., Faculty of Humanities, Charles University
Prague, January 2025

Context

Research on domestic violence within Roma communities is a sensitive topic for several reasons. It is therefore not surprising that there is a lack of data on this phenomenon in the Czech Republic. As part of the project **Speak Up!**, we are presenting a survey for the first time that asks questions regarding the attitude of Roma women towards this issue. This unique data is now available not only to those who work with Roma communities, but also to politicians, administrative workers, social workers, representatives of non-governmental non-profit organisations, lecturers and researchers.

Why is there a research gap when we talk about the topic of domestic violence against Roma women? First, it must be taken into account that any research in Roma communities takes place against a background of general discrimination and exclusion, including violence against Roma men and women. Reports from the Czech Government, as well as many domestic and international organizations, have been drawing attention for decades to discrimination in education, housing, access to the labour market, poorer health indicators, manifestations of antigypsyism, systematic discrimination, both direct and indirect, etc. (Government of the Czech Republic, 2024; Brablec et al., 2024; FRA, 2022).

There is relatively little research focused specifically on Roma communities, and even fewer international reports addressing the situation of Roma women. In the Czech Republic, the most comprehensive research on Roma women to date was conducted by Slovo 21 (Slovo 21, 2014). While there are some individual studies (see, for example, Čanigová & Suralová, 2024), it cannot be said that Roma women receive the attention they deserve. As women in particularly vulnerable positions, they often experience multiple layers of discrimination, from both the majority society and within their own communities.

Domestic violence in Roma communities is a particularly sensitive issue. If we examine the problems associated with domestic violence among a completely different group of women, African American women in the USA, who in some ways share a similar position to Roma women in the

Czech Republic, we encounter the following issues: fear of isolation, family structure, religious beliefs, and loyalty to their community, which all represent some barriers to seeking help. Some misconceptions and stereotypes, stemming from the history of slavery and segregation, are perpetuated by racism. They depict African American women as strong and angry, but also as individuals who undermine Black men. This affects African American women in such a way that they may be perceived as dangerous rather than vulnerable victims. The overlapping identities of Black women can also hinder them from reporting abuse and seeking help. Many remain in abusive relationships and avoid any contact with the legal system due to fear and distrust of the systems that are supposed to aid them. This fear and distrust are justified because even if they choose to speak out about the abuse, they may not be trusted by support services. They fear losing their children, being imprisoned, or having their claims questioned. Some women may find solace in their faith through prayer, church, or the support of a close circle of friends and family (Hampton et al., 2008, see also Ba, n.d.).

To what extent are these theses also applicable to Roma women in the Czech Republic? Our research offers answers to these questions. Research and data collection on domestic violence in the Czech Republic that focus on women in the general population are relatively numerous (e.g., DOHNAL et al., 2017; Pod Svícnem, IPSOS, 2022; IKEA, Kantar, 2022; Topinka, D., 2016). By contrast, there is a notable absence of research specifically addressing Roma women, or, to our knowledge, such studies are virtually non-existent. Therefore, comparing the responses of the entire population of women (which may also include Roma women) and our research sample is methodologically inappropriate. Nevertheless, where comparable data were available, such comparisons were made. It is also essential to underscore that, from a general perspective, conducting research on domestic violence presents substantial challenges due to issues of trust. This challenge is not unique to Roma women but is relevant across all social groups. Disclosing experiences of intimate partner violence is inherently difficult, particularly given the private and stigmatized na-

ture of the issue. These challenges are compounded in the case of a marginalized and discriminated population. Roma women who speak openly about domestic violence risk exacerbating existing prejudice, as their testimonies may be met not with support but with hostility or the instrumentalisation of their experiences by the majority population. This can lead to an even greater risk of violence against Roma men and the Roma community in general, as knowledge about domestic violence can be misused for racist purposes.

It is necessary to mention the position of Roma women in Czech society within the framework of intersectionality.

This concept highlights that the status and discrimination of women are shaped by various di-

mensions of their identity. In this case, Roma women are exposed to discrimination both from the majority population due to their ethnic background, and also from within their own community – particularly by Roma men – on the basis of gender. Through the intersection of these identities, Roma women face multiple forms of discrimination, which stem from the combination of their marginalized positions within social structures. All these aspects were taken into account in the design of our research and in the following section, which deals with methodology, we outline the specific measures taken to obtain relevant data and avoid some of the problems mentioned above.

Methodology

The research was conducted on a sample of 500 Roma women from nineteen cities across the Czech Republic (Prague, Chodov, Chomutov, Písek, Ostrava, Brno, Krupka, Náchod, Budišov, Rokycany, Trmice, Broumov, Mladá Boleslav, Bruntál, Olomouc, Břeclav, Stříbro, Teplice, Česká Třebová). The questionnaire was compiled by Selma Muhič Dizdarevič from the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University, based on relevant examples from professional literature. She is also the author of the above-mentioned research on the position of Roma women from 2014, which was also created in cooperation with Slovo 21. The questionnaire was consulted and modified in cooperation with the Slovo 21 expert team, particularly the Roma Women's Group Manushe, which was founded in 2000. Based on feedback from Roma women, we arrived at the final form of the questionnaire. The involvement of Roma women from the Manushe group was absolutely crucial for this research to be possible. The above-mentioned problem of trust would have been very difficult to overcome without the resources of Slovo 21. Respondents were guaranteed anonymity, which is another essential aspect of Manushe's involvement in the research, ensuring that the respondents could fill out the questionnaires with full confidence.

The Slovo 21 expert team also participated in the training of the interviewers, who numbered 26 in total and were financially rewarded for their work. Along with the training, this research provided the interviewers with valuable knowledge and skills that will certainly be useful in the future.

After the respondents had filled out the questionnaire in its physical form (the research was not conducted online), the Slovo 21 expert team created a table of results, which the author then analysed.

The methodology follows the rules of quantitative research, namely the method of data collection using a questionnaire survey, where the questionnaire contained closed questions. However, some questions allowed for multiple choices; therefore, they exceeded the total number of respondents. When the result value was equal to or less than 1%, we sometimes did not report it in the analysis; therefore, the sum of the responses may be lower than 100%. Where the number of responses was numerically low, we report numbers, not percentages. It is clearly indicated everywhere when percentages are used and when numbers are used.

Research Sample

The research sample was determined using the snowball technique, which can be useful when researching a population that is difficult to access directly. The interviewers from the Manushe group knew the potential circle of respondents. Others were recommended by the respondents themselves during the research. At the same time, the

respondents had to be relatively easily accessible to them. We aimed (and succeeded) to include women from different age groups in the sample, reflecting the educational structure of the Roma population in general, from different types of residence, with different numbers of children (or no children), and with different sources of income.

Research Limitations

Certain limitations result from the chosen research method. The number of respondents is not small, but it is not representative. On the other hand, a representative sample, which would reflect the representation of individual demographic groups in the Roma population, encounters a lack of reliable information. This information cannot be obtained from the census, so it is necessary to rely on qualified estimates, which also have their shortcomings. However, the sample of this research was very diverse and provides relevant knowledge.

Closed questions do not allow for returning to problems or deepening the meaning and answers

to individual questions. At the same time, their structure forces respondents to answer only the questions proposed in the questionnaire.

On the other hand, as we have already emphasized, data and knowledge about Roma women in general and domestic violence from the perspective of Roma women in particular are lacking, and this questionnaire survey is one of the first more comprehensive attempts to obtain at least a basic idea of how Roma women experience the issue and reality of domestic violence, what they know about it, what help they have or do not have, and what they would need. In this sense, the research fully fulfilled its purpose.

Analysis and Conclusions

The questionnaire was structured into several thematic sections. The first section focused on basic demographic data about the respondents, the second one on issues directly related to domestic vio-

lence, the third one addressed personal space, while the last section addressed the topic of protection from domestic violence. The analysis will be based on the answers received within these sections.

Characteristics of the Research Sample

In terms of age, the sample was dominated by women of productive age, i.e., those aged 26–35 (25%), 36–45 (22%), 15–25 (18%), and 46–55 (17%), although there were also women aged 56–65 (10%) and 65+ (8%). In this sense, the sample was diverse and relevant, as it was possible to establish contact with women of all age categories.

The same applies to the characteristics of the sample in terms of marital status, where single (25%) and married (23%) women slightly predominated, but widows (18%), divorced (17%) and those in cohabitation at a rate of 16% were also represented. Most Roma women in the research sample had either two (26%) or four or more children (20%), but the differences compared to women who had three (19%), one (19%) or no children (14%) were not large.

The sample was dominated by women from a small town (43%), followed by Prague (18%), a large city (17%), a socially excluded locality (12%) and a vil-

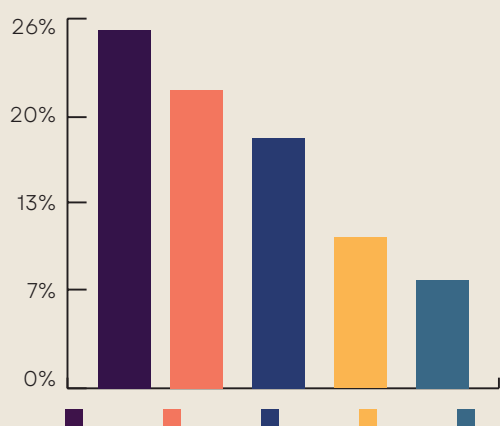
lage (6%). The remaining 3% of respondents could not answer this question.

Graph 5 shows the values of the answers regarding the highest education attained, where women with primary school (44%) predominate, followed by respondents with an apprenticeship certificate (26%), with secondary school (16%), without education (12%) and 2% of respondents who completed university.

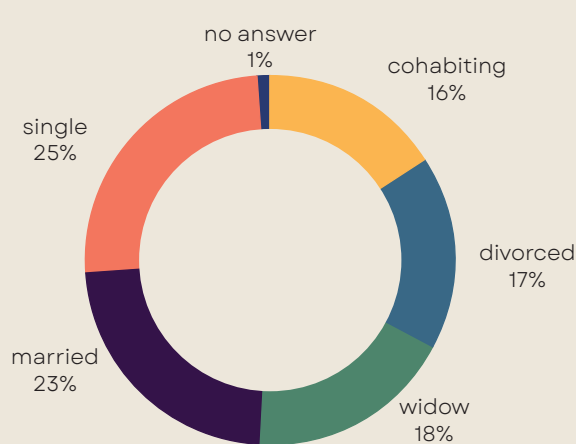
Regarding sources of income, 42% of respondents indicated employment or personal income as their main source. They were followed by women registered at the employment office receiving unemployment benefits (27%). Women receiving a pension (13%) or dependent on their spouse/partner's income or receiving maternity or parental allowance (9%) were less represented in the sample. 7% of respondents were without any income.

The following graphs detail the characteristics of the sample.

Age
Graph 1. Sample by age

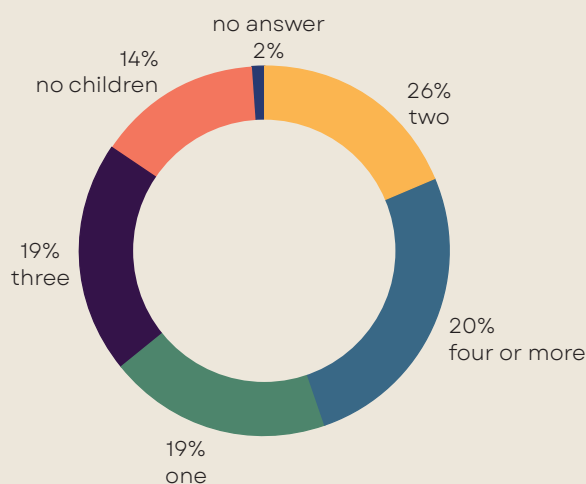


Marital status
Graph 2. Sample by marital status



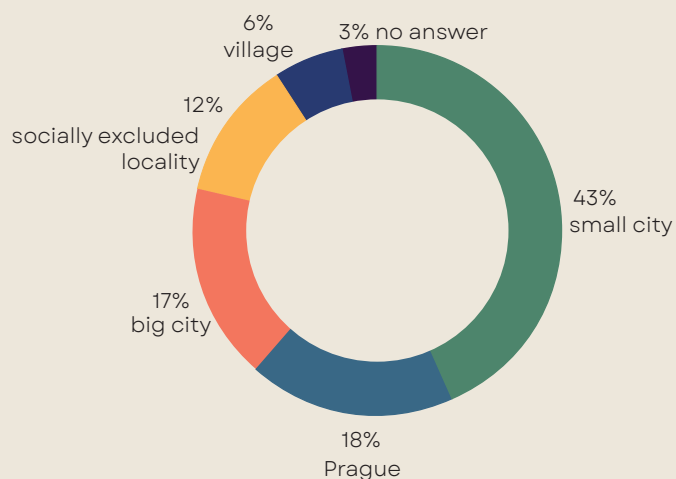
Children

Graph 3. Number of children



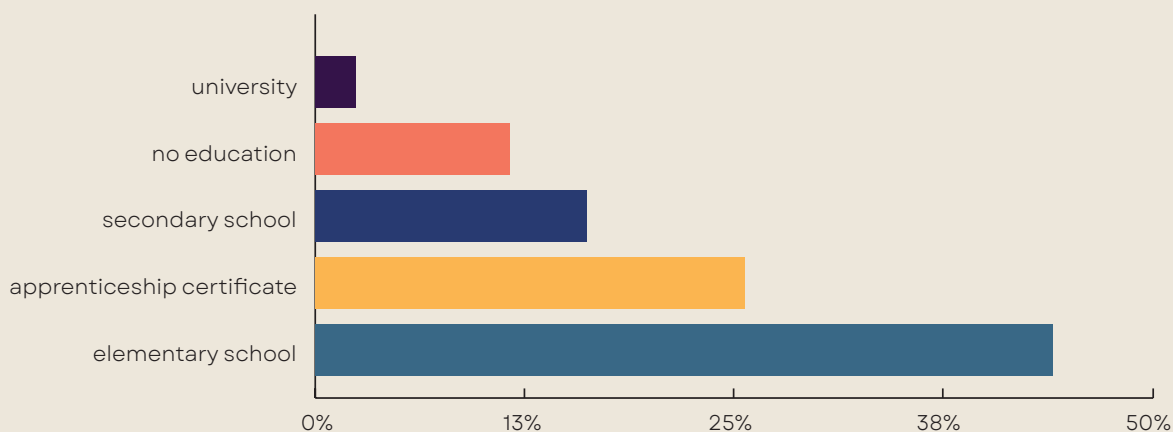
Size of residence

Graph 4. Size of residence of respondents



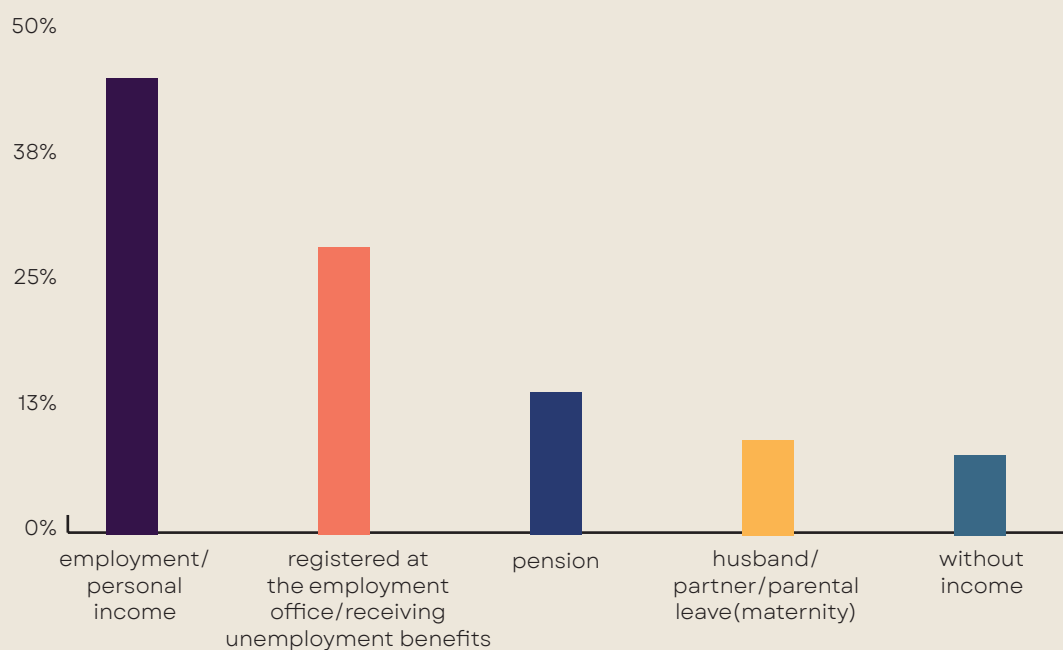
Education

Graph 5. Sample by education



Income

Graph 6. Sample by income source

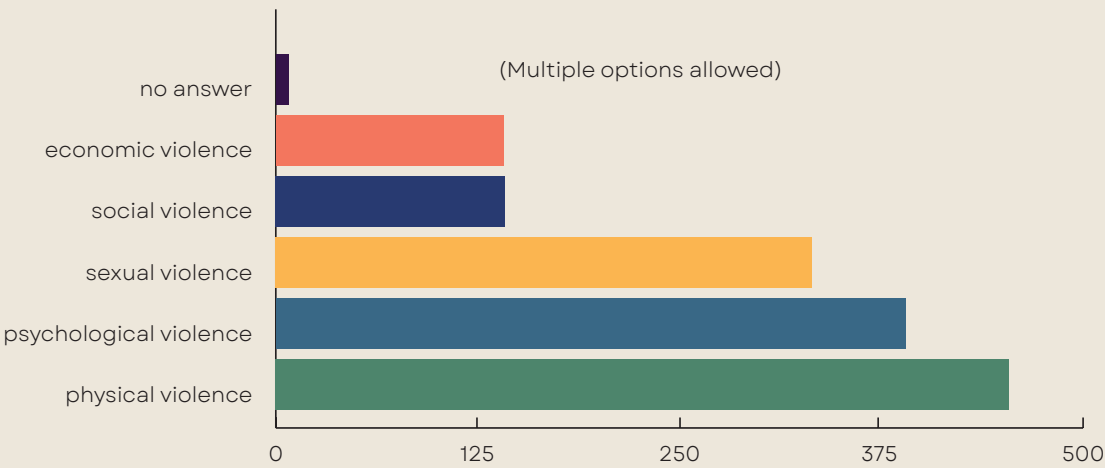


Awareness of Domestic Violence and its Forms

How do respondents perceive the phenomenon of domestic violence, what do they understand by this term from the options we offered, and do they know someone who has experienced domestic violence and who has committed it? The respondents demonstrated a high level of awareness of the concepts of physical, psychological and sexual violence. However, they were less likely to identify social and economic violence. This question allowed multiple answers, with eight women not answering it. In other questions in the questionnaire (which

focused on specific forms of social violence, such as isolation from relatives, prohibition of telephone calls or visits), it turned out that this phenomenon is present in Roma communities. On the contrary, economic violence, defined as restricting access to financial resources, was less frequently represented in the responses. Nevertheless, in questions related to personal space (see Table 15), 83% of respondents disagreed or rather disagreed with the statement that the husband or partner should be the sole decision-maker on the family budget.

Graph 7. Have you ever heard of these terms?



Perceptions of What Constitutes Violence

When respondents were asked to tick which behaviours they considered to be forms of violence (multiple answers were possible), the most frequently selected included: physical assault, threatening or forcing a woman to do something against her will, swearing, mocking and accusing her of every little thing, and demanding intimate contact or touching her against her will. In contrast, the behaviours least frequently considered

as violence included: the prohibition of earning one's own money, demanding strict rules in the household (e.g. hot meals, impeccable cleaning) or controlling movement and communication. Overall, it can be concluded that respondents demonstrate a solid understanding of various forms of violence, with economic and social violence perceived as less frequent than physical violence.

Table 1. Do you consider it violence if someone repeatedly harasses you with this behaviour? (Multiple options allowed)

physically assault	433
threatens or forces you to do something you don't want to do	312
swears, mocks, and accuses you of every little thing	301
demands intimate contact or touches you, but you don't want to	298
breaks things in the household to scare you	285
forbids you to leave the house	268
forbids you to have friends	266
humiliates you in private or in front of others	258
prevents contact with family	241
checks where you are, who you are talking to, checks your phone	213
demands strict rules (hot food, impeccable cleaning, controls the time, how long you are shopping for example)	181
forbids you to earn your own money and/or to co-decide on the family budget	175
no answer	7

Experience with Domestic Violence

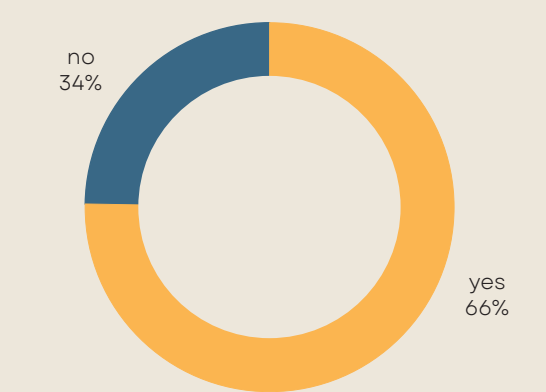
The question was formulated so that the respondents did not have to reveal whether it was their own experience. Almost two-thirds of the respondents stated that they knew someone who had been a victim of domestic violence, which is a relatively high number. According to the Action Plan for the Prevention of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence for the Years 2023–2026:

“Domestic violence is one of the most widespread forms of violence in terms of incidence. Representative quantitative research has long shown that 17–40% of the population has experienced domestic violence. The incidence rate varies depending on the method-

ology used, but it is always a representative sample of the population. Data from 2022 show that almost 30% of women and 12% of men have experienced domestic violence.” (Government Office, 2023, p. 14).

Because the research focused on identifying personal experience and we do not know whether it was also someone else’s experience, we cannot say with certainty that in our sample, knowledge of someone who has been a victim of domestic violence is higher by 49% or 36%, or even 26%. In addition, some research also included DV committed against men. However, we can say that the result of 66% is relatively high.

Graph 8. Do you know someone who has been a victim of domestic violence?



Among those who answered affirmatively, the most commonly reported victims were the respondents themselves (28.6%) or their friends (20.8%). The third most common answer was “someone else”, followed by their sister and mother. The least common victims were mothers-in-law or daughters.

Table 2. If yes, please specify the victim

myself	143
friend	104
someone else	69
sister	44
mother	41
no answer	36
neighbour	21
cousin	19
daughter	17
mother-in-law	6

Types of Violence Experienced

When asked about the types of violence they had personally experienced, respondents most frequently identified physical and psychological violence. Notably, social violence was the third most common response – ranked even higher than sexual violence – while economic violence remained at the bottom of the list. As multiple answers could be selected, the results suggest that some respondents were subjected to more than one form of violence simultaneously.

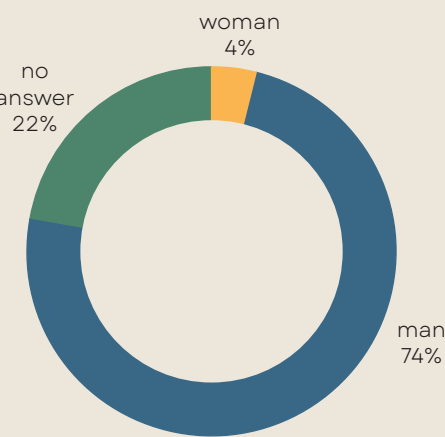
**Table 3. Type of Violence Experienced by the Victim
(Multiple options allowed)**

physical violence (slapping, kicking, etc.)	272
psychological violence (insults, ridicule, accusations, blackmail, instilling fear)	263
social violence (isolation from relatives, friends, ban on phone calls, visits)	101
sexual violence (rape)	68
economic violence (preventing access to money)	65
no answer	2

Perpetrators of Violence

In nearly two-thirds of cases, the perpetrator of violence was identified as a man, 22% of respondents did not answer this question and only 4% identified a woman as the perpetrator.

Graph 9. Who committed violence against you or someone you know?



Among men perpetrators, husbands or partners were clearly the most frequently mentioned. A positive finding is that fathers, brothers, fathers-in-law or sons were only rarely identified. It is important to emphasize that 22 percent of respondents did not answer this question.

Table 4. If the perpetrator was a man, who was he?

husband	35%
partner	27%
no answer	22%
someone else	7%
father	3%
father-in-law/brother-in-law	2%
family member	1%
son	1%
brother	0%

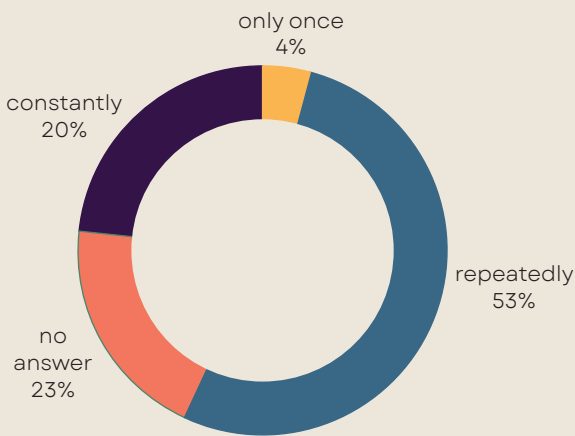
According to the above-mentioned Action Plan, the majority of domestic violence cases involved partner violence, while 17% involved abuse by other family members (Government Office 2023). As for female perpetrators, the most frequently mentioned was a friend, while other categories were minimally represented.

Table 5. If the perpetrator was a woman, who was she?

friend	7
mother	4
mother-in-law	3
daughter	3
aunt	2
sister	1

More than half of the respondents reported repeated experiences with violence. A notable 20% stated that they or someone they know experience violence continuously. Approximately a quarter of the respondents did not answer this question, while the answer “only once” was rare.

Graph 10. Frequency of violence experienced (personally or by someone you know)



Support and Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence

In response to questions about assistance provided to victims of domestic violence, respondents most frequently indicated that no one had helped them, primarily because they had managed the situation on their own.

Table 6. If you or someone you know experienced violence, who helped?
(Multiple options can be ticked)

no one	155
relatives	127
no answer	102
police	61
mother	54
father	41
children	21
social department	18
non-governmental organisation	12
neighbour	6

However, a significant proportion of the respondents also stated that they did not believe the situation could be resolved, that they had nowhere to go, or that they hoped the situation would improve over time.

Table 7. If you ticked “no one”, what was the reason?

I/she managed it on my/her own	76
I/she do/does not believe that the situation can be resolved (has nowhere to go)	35
I/she am/ is still going through it, but believe/believes it will get better	24
I/she am/is still going through it, but want/wants to resolve the situation	20

Among those who did provide assistance, relatives were the most frequently mentioned, followed by the police, mothers and fathers. Conversely, neighbours, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), social services and children were mentioned less frequently. The relatively high ranking of the police may be interpreted as an indication of expectations of institutional support, which contrasts with the experiences of some other marginalized groups. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that, in practice, the majority of victims reported receiving no help; they either had to rely on them-

selves or encountered barriers to seeking support, such as having nowhere to go. The distribution of these responses is shown in the tables. It is also important to highlight that research on the general population of women in the Czech Republic has identified a notable feature of domestic violence – its high level of latency. Only one in five victims contacts the police. When victims do confide in someone, it is most often a family member (47% of cases), and in 20% of cases they seek help from psychologists or psychiatrists (Government Office, 2023, p. 14).

Views on Gender Roles and Domestic Violence

Most respondents disagreed with the statement that decisions about family matters should be made exclusively by men.

Table 8. Only a man should decide on important family matters

disagree	57%
tend to disagree	29%
tend to agree	9%
agree	4%
no answer	1%

Similarly, the majority disagreed with the view that excessive jealousy is a sign of love; however, most 24% of respondents still agreed with this statement.

Table 9. If a man is excessively jealous, he is saying that he loves you

disagree	40%
tend to disagree	32%
tend to agree	16%
agree	8%
no answer	4%

Most respondents also rejected the statement that “one slap doesn’t mean anything,” although a total of 28% agreed or tended to agree with it.

Table 10. One slap means nothing

disagree	41%
tend to disagree	28%
tend to agree	14%
agree	14%
no answer	3%

Almost all respondents (94%) said they would help their daughter if she were in danger.

Table 11. If your daughter complains that someone threatened her repeatedly, would you help her?

agree	91%
tend to agree	4%
tend to disagree	2%
disagree	2%
no answer	1%

More than 80% of respondents disagreed with the statement that a married woman should obey her parents-in-law.

Table 12. If a woman is married, should she obey her parents-in-law?

disagree	52%
tend to disagree	31%
tend to agree	11%
agree	4%
no answer	2%

Nevertheless, almost a quarter of respondents believe that women are sometimes to blame for domestic violence, a view that is also shared by the majority population. Given the limited resources within the Roma community, this attitude may have more serious consequences for victims of domestic violence. One contributing factor to the low rate of reporting domestic violence cases and seeking professional help in the general population is the widespread trivialization of the issue and victim blaming. Current research indicates that 26% of people in the population believe that victims of domestic violence are solely responsible for their situation. While 37% of men agree with this statement, only 15% of women share this view. The reasons per-

ceived by society as legitimate justifications for domestic violence include the partner's nervousness regarding financial responsibility for the family (31% of people), insufficient care for the household (29%), and the woman's failure to meet the man's sexual needs (54% of men and 41% of women) (Ikea, Kantar, 2022).

Therefore, when comparing the responses from our sample to those of the general population (noting the limitations of such a comparison, as mentioned in the introduction), a similar percentage of victim blaming emerges. However, focusing specifically on women, a smaller percentage of Czech women in the general population agree with this statement compared to the women in our survey sample.

Table 13. Women who suffer from domestic violence are sometimes the ones to blame

disagree	41%
tend to disagree	33%
tend to agree	17%
agree	7%
no answer	2%

Conversely, more than three-quarters of respondents disagreed with the statement that women should not assert their opinions (Table 14). An even higher proportion rejected the notion that the family budget should be decided solely by the man (Table 15). These findings may suggest that Roma women tend to assert economic equality or, alternatively, may be less aware of the link between economic violence and other forms of domestic violence.

Table 14. A woman should not assert her opinion

disagree	53%
tend to disagree	24%
agree	12%
tend to agree	10%
no answer	1%

Table 15. The spouse/partner should decide on the family budget

disagree	54%
tend to disagree	29%
tend to agree	10%
agree	5%
no answer	2%

However, traditional gender roles remain evident in Roma families. More than one-quarter of respondents agreed that sons should be raised as future heads of households (Table 16), while most half agreed with the view that daughters should be raised to be obedient (Table 17). On the other hand, most respondents rejected the statement that women should stay at home and go out only with their husbands/partners (Table 18).

Table 16. Sons should be raised as future “heads” of their families

disagree	42%
tend to disagree	29%
tend to agree	18%
agree	9%
no answer	2%

Table 17. Daughters should be raised to be obedient

disagree	32%
tend to disagree	24%
tend to agree	22%
agree	21%
no answer	1%

Table 18. A woman's place is in the home; she should go out in public only with her husband/partner

disagree	45%
tend to disagree	36%
tend to agree	11%
agree	7%
no answer	1%

The following five tables again assess awareness of domestic violence. The results confirmed a relatively high level of awareness of domestic violence (DV) among Roma women in the sample. However, responses also indicate that there is still a need for further education, as roughly one-fifth to one-quarter of respondents showed uncertainty or disagreement with definitions of certain forms of violence.

Table 19. Swearing and insults is domestic violence

agree	46%
tend to agree	30%
tend to disagree	18%
disagree	5%
no answer	1%

Table 20. Restricting access to money is domestic violence

agree	46%
tend to agree	30%
tend to disagree	18%
disagree	4%
no answer	2%

Table 21. Isolation from family and friends is domestic violence

agree	45%
tend to agree	29%
tend to disagree	17%
disagree	8%
no answer	1%

Table 22. Constantly checking my phone and where I am is domestic violence

agree	46%
tend to agree	31%
tend to disagree	16%
disagree	5%
no answer	2%

Protection from Domestic Violence

In questions regarding protection from domestic violence, respondents most often stated that they would contact the police, if necessary, which can be considered a positive signal (especially when compared to answers in Table 6 about who actually helped them). This was followed by the possibility of contacting family members, mothers or fathers. Social services, non-governmental organisations, and doctors were mentioned less frequently.

Table 23. If I experienced domestic violence, I would contact (Multiple options can be ticked)

police	286
family member	214
mother/father	195
friend	153
neighbour	128
doctor	106
non-governmental organisation dealing with domestic violence	70
social care department	68

Most respondents (88%) are aware that domestic violence is prohibited by law, though 10% of them reported lacking this information.

Table 24. Do you know that domestic violence is prohibited by law?

yes	88%
no	10%
no answer	2%

Similarly, 74% of respondents know that forced sexual intercourse (including within marriage) is illegal, though nearly a fifth of them are unaware of this fact.

Table 25. Do you know that forced sexual intercourse (also within marriage) is illegal?

yes	74%
no	23%
no answer	3%

When asked about reporting domestic violence, 28% of the respondents said they would not report it if they witnessed it, while 35% of them said they would not report it even if they themselves were the victims.

Table 26. If you witnessed domestic violence, would you report it?

yes	69%
no	28%
no answer	3%

Table 27. If you were a victim of domestic violence, would you report it?

yes	61%
no	35%
no answer	4%

The main reasons cited for not reporting included financial dependence and fear of the perpetrator. Other frequently mentioned reasons were concerns that no one would help the victim and a lack of information about whom to turn to. Fewer respondents mentioned fear of not being believed.

Table 28. If you would not report it, why? (Multiple options can be ticked)

I am financially dependent on my partner	380
for fear of the abuser	320
I would be afraid that no one (including family) would help me	185
I would have nowhere to go	160
I do not know whom to turn to	145
I would be afraid that no one would believe me	70

What would respondents need to feel better protected?

Respondents most often mentioned the need for more support from family and friends, more information on how to defend themselves, and the opportunity to talk about their experiences. Less frequently, they cited psychological support, or access to shelters and NGOs.

Table 29. What would help you if you were suffering from domestic violence? (Multiple options can be ticked)

more support from family and friends	230
more information on how to defend yourself against domestic violence	209
opportunity to talk to someone about domestic violence	194
to be able to recognize what exactly domestic violence is	134
to have contacts for shelters where I can hide with my children	132
psychological support	115
contacts with support groups for women who have experienced domestic violence	103
contacts with non-governmental organisations dealing with domestic violence	90
no answer	21

In conclusion, 95% of respondents agree that the issue of domestic violence within Roma communities should be discussed more. Only 3% of respondents disagree, which is a negligible proportion.

Table 30. Domestic violence should be talked about more in Roma communities

yes	95%
no	3%
no answer	2%

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the data collected through the questionnaire survey, we cautiously offer the following conclusions and recommendations:

The research showed that Roma women have a relatively high awareness of various forms of domestic violence – particularly physical, psychological and sexual violence. However, social and economic violence are recognized less frequently, which may reflect a lack of understanding of these forms of violence.

Almost two-thirds of respondents (66%) reported knowing someone who has been a victim of domestic violence. This indicates a high level of exposure to such experiences within the community. The research demonstrates that Roma women frequently endure multiple forms of violence simultaneously. Physical and psychological violence were the most reported, followed by social and sexual violence. Economic violence was cited least often, which may suggest a lower level of awareness or understanding of this form of violence.

In the vast majority of cases, the perpetrator of violence was a man – most commonly a husband or intimate partner.

Nearly half of the respondents (48%) indicated that they had experienced violence on a repeated or ongoing basis, which indicates the chronic and systemic nature of the problem.

The findings also revealed that most victims of domestic violence do not rely on formal support systems such as the police, social services, or non-governmental nonprofit organisations. Instead, they tend to seek help from family and friends or attempt to manage the situation by themselves.

Almost 40% of respondents reported that no one had helped them, primarily because they managed the situation on their own. This may reflect a lack of trust in formal institutions or limited avail-

ability of professional support. Although the police were mentioned as a potential source of assistance, only 12% of respondents indicated that they would seek help from non-governmental nonprofit organisations, suggesting a lack of awareness regarding these services.

With respect to attitudes, the majority of respondents disagreed with traditional gender roles that position men as dominant figures within their families. However, nearly one-quarter of respondents agreed with the notion that women are sometimes to blame for domestic violence – an attitude that may discourage women from seeking support. This view aligns with prevailing attitudes in the general Czech population, where 26 percent of individuals reportedly hold a similar belief. Just over one-quarter of respondents agreed with the statement that sons should be raised to become future heads of their families, while nearly half of them agreed that daughters should be raised to be obedient, indicating that traditional gender norms remain present within Roma communities.

Most respondents (88%) were aware that domestic violence is prohibited by law. However, nearly one-fifth of them was unaware of the fact that forced sexual intercourse is also illegal. Almost one third of respondents would not report domestic violence if they witnessed it, and 35% of them indicated they would not report it if they themselves were victims. The primary reasons for not reporting included financial dependence on the partner and fear of the perpetrator. This points to the need for more support for victims, particularly in enhancing financial independence and ensuring their safety.

Respondents most frequently expressed the need for more support from family and friends, more information on how to protect themselves, and opportunities to talk about their experiences. Psy-

chological support and contact with shelters or non-governmental organisations were mentioned less often. This suggests that victims of domestic violence within Roma communities frequently lack access to professional services and instead rely predominantly on informal support networks.

Nearly all respondents (95%) agreed that the issue of domestic violence within Roma communities should be discussed more openly. This highlights the need for increased awareness and prevention efforts, especially concerning social and economic violence, which is often perceived as less severe. Educational initiatives should be directed not only toward victims but also toward the wider community, with the aim of reducing victim stigmatization and fostering a greater willingness to seek help.

Recommendations

It is essential to raise awareness of social and economic violence, which is often underestimated within Roma communities. Awareness campaigns should aim to educate the public about all forms of domestic violence, including their long-term impacts on victims and their families. These campaigns must be culturally and linguistically tailored to the specific context of Roma communities.

Trust in formal institutions – such as the police, social services, and non-governmental organisations – must be strengthened among victims of domestic violence. This can be facilitated through targeted training for staff within these institutions to enhance their understanding of the unique needs and circumstances of Roma victims. In addition, programmes should be developed to provide victims with a safe and trustworthy environment in which to seek assistance.

Financial dependence on an abusive partner is a major barrier preventing victims of domestic violence from seeking assistance. Therefore, it is crucial to implement programs that promote financial independence of the victims. These may include retraining courses, employment support, and access to temporary housing.

A significant number of victims remain in abusive relationships due to the lack of alternative accommodation. To address this, there is a pressing need to expand the availability of shelters and support centres that offer secure housing for victims and their children. These services should also be accessible in smaller towns and rural areas, where support options are often limited.

The prevention of domestic violence should engage the entire community, not solely the victims. Men and young people, in particular, should be included in awareness-raising initiatives that promote gender equality and the rejection of violence as a means of conflict resolution. Community programmes should be aimed at transforming attitudes and behaviours that contribute to the perpetuation of domestic violence. Psychological support must be made more accessible to victims of domestic violence. Long-term psychological assistance should be developed not only for victims but also for their children. These services must be culturally sensitive and tailored to the specific needs of Roma individuals.

Social workers should receive regular training on domestic violence, with a particular focus on the context of Roma communities. This training should encompass an understanding of specific forms of violence, relevant cultural considerations, and effective strategies for assisting victims.

Support groups for victims of domestic violence can serve as an effective tool for sharing experiences and fostering mutual support. These groups should be easily accessible and provide a safe environment in which victims can freely express themselves and explore solutions to their situations. It is essential to ensure the active involvement of Roma women in the design and implementation of programmes aimed at preventing and addressing domestic violence. Their lived experiences and insights are critical for the development of effective, culturally appropriate interventions.

Sustainability and Monitoring

It is essential to ensure the provision of long-term support for victims of domestic violence, as well as to regularly monitor the effectiveness of existing programmes. This process should also include systematic data collection and analysis of trends related to domestic violence within Roma communities, in order to adapt strategies and interventions to evolving needs. Non-governmental organisations should receive continued support in their efforts to develop awareness-raising initiatives and provide comprehensive support services addressing domestic violence within Roma communities.

The implementation of these recommendations must be carried out in close collaboration with Roma communities, non-governmental organisations, and state institutions to ensure their effectiveness, cultural relevance, and sustainability.

References

- Aissata Ba, (n.d.) The Intersectional Identities of African American Women and Domestic Violence.
- Brablec, D., Mann, R., & Feilzer, M. (2024). Social reproduction and contestation of racialized Roma exclusion: The role of civil society organisations in the Czech Republic. *Journal of Civil Society*, 1–20. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17448689.2024.2427162>
- Čanigová, K., & Souralová, A. (2024). Coping with housing precarity: Roma women's responses to housing insecurity in the Czech Republic. *Housing Studies*, 1–23. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02673037.2024.2418837>
- DOHNAL, D., HOKR MIHOLOVÁ, P., ŠPRINCOVÁ, V., DOMESOVÁ, S. (2017) Analysis of the incidence and latency of domestic violence in partner relationships. Government Office, 2017. Pp. 44. Available from: https://vlada.gov.cz/assets/ppov/rovne-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu/dokumenty/Analyza-vyskytu-a-latence-DN_final.pdf
- FRA (2022). Roma in 10 European Countries – Main results. Available from: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2022/roma-survey-findings>
- Hampton, R. L., LaTaillade, J. J., Dacey, A., & Marghi, J. R. (2008). Evaluating Domestic Violence Interventions for Black Women. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 16(3), 330–353. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10926770801925759>
- IKEA, Kantar (s.d.). Czech Society and Domestic Violence. Available from: https://www.ikea.com/cz/cs/files/pdf/e8/09/e809c5cf/211104_ikea_da_vyzkum_prezentace_final.pdf
- NYSCADV (s.d.). The Intersectional Identities of African American Women and Domestic Violence Available from: https://www.nyscadv.org/file_download/f44eb56c-c342-4a8e-9658-4bb779f3cdb3
- Pod Svícnem, IPSOS (2022). Research: Every fifth person has become a victim of domestic violence. Available from: <https://www.pravniprostor.cz/aktuality/vyzkum-kazdy-paty-clovek-se-stal-obeti-domaciho-nasili>
- Slovo 21 (2014). Research on the status of Roma women in the Czech Republic. Available from: https://assets-global.website-files.com/61c1d8d802122cb75d70dc8c/644bb42471dc1a0b2e0ebdb2_VÝZKUM%20O%20POSTAVENÍ%20ROMSKÝCH%20ŽEN%20V%20ČR_pdf%20publikace.pdf
- Topinka, D. (2016). Domestic violence from the perspective of applied research. Basic facts and results. Available from: <http://www.domaci-nasili.cz/wp-content/uploads/Domáci-násilí-z-perspektivy-aplikovaného-výzkumu.-SocioFactor-2016..pdf>
- Government Office (2023). Action Plan for the Prevention of Domestic and Gender-Based Violence for the Years 2023–2026. Available from: https://vlada.gov.cz/assets/ppov/rovne-prilezitosti-zen-a-muzu/dokumenty/AP_DGPN-2023_final.pdf
- Government of the Czech Republic (2024). Report on the status of the Roma minority in the Czech Republic for 2022. Available from: <https://vlada.gov.cz/cz/ppov/zalezitosti-romske-komunity/aktualita/zprava-o-stavu-romske-mensiny-v-ceske-republice-za-rok-2022-212008/>