



Are you a victim of  
**Domestic  
Violence?**

Help us to help you

**Many victims  
feel trapped  
and powerless  
but there  
is a  
way out**



You are not alone,  
speak out and get help.



Did you know that  
**in Colombia**  
**7 out of 10 women**  
**are victims**  
of some form of  
gender violence?



Domestic abuse can affect anyone regardless of age, gender or social background, and is not limited to acts of physical violence. It can include a range of other abusive behaviours, such as psychological, sexual, emotional, verbal, or financial abuse.

Domestic abuse is never the victim's fault. It is a form of power and control. Some victims endure many incidents before they feel able to report the problem.



**Freephone:155**  
for general assistance and guidance  
on gender violence issues.

# Gender violence can be linked to domestic violence.

Watch out for the warning signs and seek help before it is too late

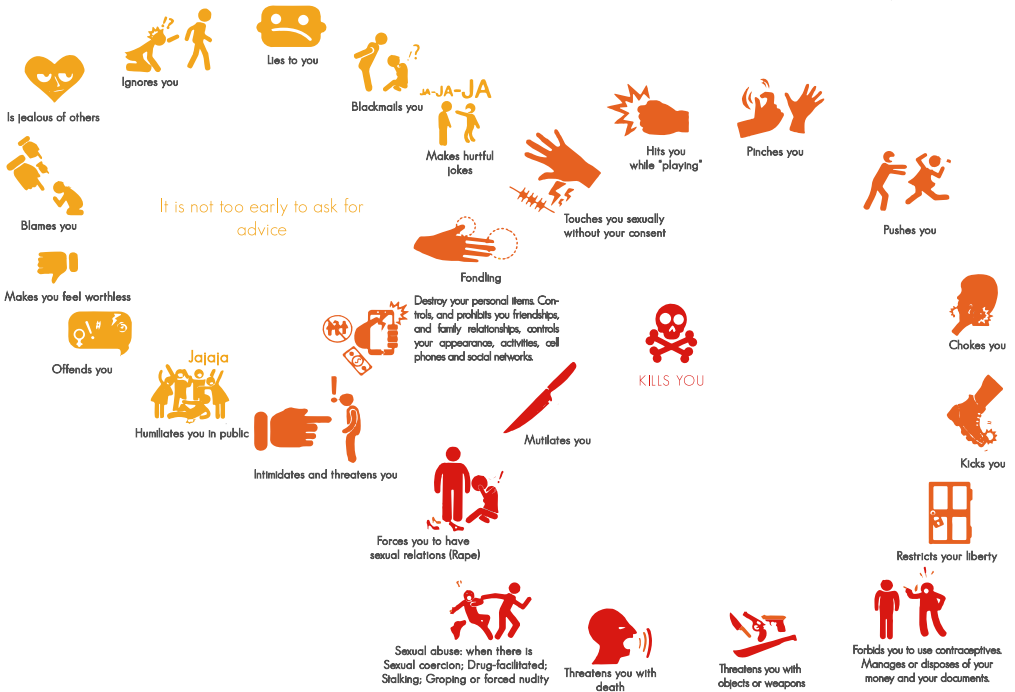
## VIOLENCE-METER

Violence can escalate!

Urgent, report to the authorities **90**

React, violence is increasing **50**

Alert, violence could increase **01**



Telephone lines where you can ask for guidance or report

District Purple Line: 01-8000-112-137

155 National line of orientation to women victims of violence.

123 Emergency line, where you must report and request immediate help in case of violence. It is not an advisory line.

ACT AND REPORT!

**In Colombia, assistance to victims of gender violence is free of charge and must be considered as a medical emergency, regardless of the time elapsed between the aggression and request for help.**



**Victims are guaranteed access to medical assistance, legal assistance and protection measures, should these be necessary.**

## **Victims of domestic violence have the right to:**

1. Receive respectful and dignified treatment.
2. Express all opinions, needs and concerns regarding the care provided.
3. Receive comprehensive, timely, specialised and quality medical care.
4. Receive free and specialised legal assistance.
5. Receive clear and comprehensive information about their rights.
6. Decide voluntarily if they want to be confronted with the aggressor, while receiving medical care or during the administrative or judicial process.
7. Authorise medical-legal examinations in case of sexual violence and choose the sex of the doctor who will provide the care.
8. Receive clear, comprehensive, truthful and timely information regarding sexual and reproductive rights, including the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy.
9. Be treated anonymously when receiving medical, legal or social assistance. Family members' data should also be treated with confidentiality.
10. Access to free services by a translator or interpreter if they speak a language other than Spanish.
11. Receive specialised and comprehensive medical, psychological, psychiatric and forensic care.
12. Access, together with their children, to any protection measures set out in Law 1257 of 2008.

“In 85% of domestic violence cases the affected person is a woman, 14% are men”



## WHAT ARE THE STEPS TO FOLLOW IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF DOMESTIC ABUSE IN COLOMBIA?

The most important thing is to make sure that you are as safe as you can be. If you are alone, or with a stranger, get help from the police (call 123), a hospital or the British Embassy (call 1 3268300). If you are still with the aggressor, call the police emergency number (call 123).

**Evidence is important.** Despite being a distressing situation, where possible, try to record any physical violence (photos or recording).

**If you have serious injuries or are a victim of rape approach the nearest Hospital Emergency Unit.** Colombia has different kinds of medical facilities (Hospitals, ‘Centro de Atención Médica Integral’, ‘Prestadoras de Salud’, ‘Unidades Primarias de Atención en Salud’ and ‘Unidades Básicas de Atención en Salud’). These centres are trained in assisting victims of gender violence. The preliminary medical assessment will be included in any formal report.

**To report the abuse, approach the nearest Prosecutor’s Office** (“Fiscalía General de la Nación”, [www.fiscalia.gov.co/colombia](http://www.fiscalia.gov.co/colombia)). The Prosecutor’s Office (Fiscalía) is the only authority in charge of investigating acts of domestic abuse; however, you can also reach out to the following entities to make the report:

- Comisarias de Familia (where you can also request protection measures)
- Centro de Atención e Investigación Integral a las Víctimas de Delitos Sexuales (CAIVAS)\*

(\* These centres also have lawyers who provide free advice for victims of violence.



# In 2017, Domestic Abuse cases increased by 16% in Colombia.

- Centro de Atención e Investigación Integral contra la Violencia Intrafamiliar (CAVIF)\*
- Centro de Atención Penal Integral a Víctimas (CAPIV)\*
- Unidades de Reacción Inmediata (URI)
- Salas de Atención al Usuario (SAU)
- Police Stations
- Personerías y defensores del pueblo\*

As part of the report, the Prosecutor will order a comprehensive report which includes physical and psychological assessments. Both examinations are an important part of the evidence gathering process and are free of charge. These examinations will take place at 'Medicina Legal' ([www.medicinalegal.gov.co](http://www.medicinalegal.gov.co)).

Please be aware that a "no-revictimisation" policy is now in place. This means the Prosecutor or other officials should remain objective and not ask you to repeat your statement or any personal information.

In our experience, there is often no member of staff who can speak English. You have the right to an interpreter free of charge.

The police will be delegated to investigate the case. A judicial case number will be opened.

A Judge will review your case and will arrange a hearing. In normal circumstances, a judicial case is a lengthy process. You do not need to remain in Colombia for this period of time.

If you are under 18, you must be accompanied by an adult (throughout the whole process), either a parent or guardian.

You can seek free legal advice at the closest 'Casa de Justicia', Centro de Atención e Investigación Integral a las Víctimas de Delitos Sexuales (CAIVAS), Centro de Atención e Investigación Integral contra la Violencia Intrafamiliar (CAVIF), Centro de Atención Penal Integral a Víctimas (CAPIV). However, only a few of the lawyers may speak English.

(\* These centres also have lawyers who provide free advice for victims of violence.

# 9 out of 10 acts of sexual violence in Colombia were committed by a person within the family group.



## WHAT ARE THE PROTECTION MEASURES AVAILABLE?

Victims of domestic violence are entitled to, together with their children, any protection measures set out in Law 1257 of 2008.

These protection measures can be requested at the 'Comisaria de Familia' and will aim to guarantee and restore the rights of victims of violence.

### The protection measures include:

- To request the eviction of the aggressor from the place of residence that he/she shares with the victim, when his/her presence constitutes a threat to the life, physical integrity or health of any member of the family.
- To prohibit the aggressor from entering any place where the victim is, so as to prevent intimidation or threats.
- To prohibit the aggressor from hiding or removing children and disabled persons from the family residence.
- To force the aggressor to attend and pay for re-educational and therapeutic treatment.
- To request that the aggressor pay the expenses of any legal, medical and psychological counseling required by the victim.
- To request special temporary protection of the victim by the police authorities, both at home and at their place of work.
- To provide a police escort for the victim to re-enter the place of residence when he/she has been forced to leave to protect his/her safety.
- To determine a provisional regime of visits and custody of the children while the civil authority ratifies or modifies this measure.
- To suspend the aggressor's permission to own, carry or use weapons.
- To impose provisional subsistence payments for the children.
- To determine provisional use of the family residence, while the civil authority ratifies or modifies this measure.
- To request the immediate return of objects for personal use, identity documents and any other documents or personal items of the victim.
- To have access, together with their children, to a shelter.



There is a helpline for children and young adults (Call 141).

# WHAT ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN?

If a minor is involved, contact child services, the 'Instituto Colombiano del Bienestar Familiar' (ICBF), who can support and provide guidance on children and adolescents at risk of violence.

You can also seek advice from the 'Comisaria de Familia', to request protection measures for children and adolescents.

If required, and if you and your children are at risk, the Judge and Comisaria de Familia may be able to assign you a temporary shelter.



**Over 80% of cases of sexual violence  
in Colombia involve children.**

*130,000 children (in the UK) live in households with high-risk domestic abuse (Source: Radford, L. et al (2011) Child abuse and neglect in the UK today)*

Colombia and the United Kingdom are signatories of the Hague Convention for Child Abduction. The Central Authority in Colombia is responsible for enforcing this international regulation.

By law, if they are travelling only with one parent, dual national children must have the other parent's permission to leave Colombia. This is issued by a Public Notary, or, if there is a disagreement, by a Court.

Sole parental-responsibility/custody ("patria potestad") cases may take between 6 months and 1 year to be resolved.



## Can I follow up the case when back in the UK?

It is the obligation of the Prosecutor's Office to investigate the crime even if you have left Colombia.

If you wish, you can appoint a representative (lawyer, relative or any person you trust) to act on your behalf, while you are out of Colombia. To do that you will have to sign a Power of Attorney (Poder Judicial). If you prepare this from the UK it needs to be duly legalised (apostilled).

Your representative will be able to ask the authorities for details and updates and submit documents on your behalf.



## How can the British Embassy help?

Our staff will be polite, patient, sensitive and non-judgmental, and can provide information on local police, medical procedures and support agencies. Anything you tell us will be treated in the strictest confidence.

British Honorary Consuls are available in Cali, Cartagena and Medellin. We also have a number of volunteers in cities across Colombia who can help.

- If you contact us outside working hours, you will be assisted through our Global Response and Emergency Operation Centres (24/7)
- British Embassy: +57 1 326-83-00 | [Colombia.Consulate@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Colombia.Consulate@fco.gov.uk)  
[www.gov.uk/world/colombia](http://www.gov.uk/world/colombia)
- A Consular Officer may be able to accompany you to report the incident at the Prosecutor's Office or Hospital and for the forensic examination.
- The Consular team can also liaise with other local agencies to provide you with this assistance, if required.
- We can also help you contact family or friends, if you wish.
- We cannot represent you legally or give you legal advice, but can provide you with a list of English-speaking private lawyers.
- We can also provide you with a list of English-speaking private doctors.
- The Embassy cannot translate for you but can help you find a private translator/interpreter.
- If you wish, we can also help you find sources of support in the UK:  
[www.gov.uk/fco](http://www.gov.uk/fco) - Information for Victims – "Rape and Sexual Assault Abroad".

# Key contact numbers for assistance and free legal advice



## Call 123

for the police emergency line, where you can report any gender violence incident and request immediate help from the police.



## Call 155

for the national helpline for victims of sexual violence and domestic violence. This number is available 24/7, and can guide you through how to seek medical care and report the crime.



## Call 01-8000-112-137

for the 'Purple line' (Linea purpura). Women's support and advisory group, available every day between 8am and 8pm.



## Call 01-8000-918-080

or (571) 437-76-30 if a minor is involved. Child services, the 'Instituto Colombiano del Bienestar Familiar' (ICBF) can support children and adolescents at risk.



## Call (571) 570-20-00

or (571) 414-90-00 for the Prosecutor's Office (Fiscalia General de la Nacion). They have emergency services (URI) available 24/7 to take sexual violence reports.



## Call (57) 1 406-99-44

or (57) 1 406-99-77 for Medicina Legal, who can provide the comprehensive sexual offence report, once requested by the Prosecutor's Office.



## Call 01-8000-914-814

or (57) 1 314-73-00 for pro-bono legal advice from 'Defensoria del Pueblo'.

# Support groups and institutions to approach for assistance



## **Las Casas de Igualdad de Oportunidades para las Mujeres**

[www.goo.gl/ty26si](http://www.goo.gl/ty26si)



## **Las Casas de Justicia**

[www.casasdejusticia.gov.co](http://www.casasdejusticia.gov.co)



## **Las organizaciones de mujeres y redes comunitarias de la Localidad**

[www.redmujeresvisiblemente.org/#](http://www.redmujeresvisiblemente.org/#)



## **Comisarias de Familia**

[www.bogota.gov.co/tag/comisar%C3%ADas-de-familia](http://www.bogota.gov.co/tag/comisar%C3%ADas-de-familia)



## **Policía Nacional**

[www.policia.gov.co/](http://www.policia.gov.co/)



## **Fiscalía General de la Nación**

[www.fiscalia.gov.co/colombia](http://www.fiscalia.gov.co/colombia)



## **Medicina Legal**

[www.medicinalegal.gov.co](http://www.medicinalegal.gov.co)



## **ICBF**

[www.icbf.gov.co](http://www.icbf.gov.co)



## **Defensoría del pueblo**

[www.defensoria.gov.co/](http://www.defensoria.gov.co/)



## **Secretaria Distrital de la Mujer**

[www.sdmujer.gov.co/](http://www.sdmujer.gov.co/)





A phone call can  
**make all the  
difference,**  
reach out for help!

Help us to  
**help you**



British Embassy  
Colombia

**Call 155**

For general advice and information on gender violence issues.

**Call 141**

For advice for children on domestic violence.

*Disclaimer: This informative document is provided for your convenience. The British Embassy cannot make any guarantee in relation to its content or probity of these agencies, nor can they be held responsible for the advice provided.*