SPEAKING UP AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The current restrictions in movement and confinement of personnel of the Vienna-based UN organizations to family homes in the Vienna duty station and elsewhere may cause additional stress for us and our families. Living in close quarters and not being able to avoid each other at times may add to potential conflict. Parenting in such circumstances of stress and lockdown could also add an additional potential compounding element.

In addition to each Organization’s duty of care towards its staff members, we wish to recognize and address issues of domestic violence that we may witness and that may increase and intensify during this stressful period. Children in particular are negatively affected by living with domestic abuse, whether or not they witness it directly.

In Vienna, there are 24-hour telephone hotlines, such as Frauenhelpline gegen Gewalt* (Women’s helpline against violence), Frauennotruf* (Women’s emergency call), and Rat auf Draht* (a helpline for children and their caregivers), which provide services in many languages, including English.

HelpChat is a 24-hour online counselling service for women and girls affected by violence, available in German, English and Turkish.

There are also advice centres – for example the Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Vienna (Wiener Interventionsstelle gegen Gewalt in der Familie*) and Viennese Women’s Shelters (Wiener Frauenhäuser*), where victims can work with a counsellor to find a path out of violence. We want to be clear that abuse is always unacceptable and that it may constitute criminal behaviour. Therefore, local authorities - in particular, the Police - can be of immediate help, including through issuance of a restraining order (“Betretungsverbot” or “Wegweisung”) and may forward your details to Domestic Abuse Intervention Centres in Vienna that will then contact you to offer support.

For more detailed information, please visit: Metropole* or Interventionstelle-Wien* or Gewaltschutzzentrum*.