

1- Perpetrators should not be allowed to insult or name-call the victim, especially before the Judicial Registrar. If this occurs, the Judicial Registrar should impose a penalty, issue a warning, or sanction the perpetrator. Therefore, the Family Court should consider that in cases involving domestic violence, it should not allow the perpetrator to continue the abuse and should take steps to stop the perpetrator.

2- The Family Court must be informed about domestic violence (DV) cases in order to ensure that the hearings provide a safe environment for the victims. For instance, local and family courts should maintain continued communication; both courts should have access to critical information such as AVO, hearings, and criminal charges.

3- The Local Court Magistrates and the Judicial Registrars should have access to important information such as defendant criminal records, AVO history, Property Settlement, and Child Custody matters.

4- Public service organisations that aid victims, such as Neighbourhood Centres, should have staff available seven days a week or after weekday office hours. Victims require substantial support at any time, and sometimes, the services offered by organisations like 1800-RESPECT are insufficient. Victims who need after-hours support from the service organisations must wait until 8.30 am on a weekday to find help (if they need help during the weekend, they must wait for the following working day).

5- Law enforcement should actively encourage victims to come forward to report incidents of domestic violence, including rape. Unfortunately, in my experience, detectives specialising in sexual abuse cases often discourage victims from reporting the crimes. Instead of offering support, they emphasise the challenging nature of the legal process, including the need for witnesses and the prospect of facing a jury. This approach is disheartening; victims are advised to keep their experiences hidden and not pursue their cases. Moreover, when they have reported it, they are encouraged not to pursue the case further. The police tell us that the case will remain on file; the perpetrator will always have a record, but it will be hidden; if we decide to pursue the case, it is more likely that we do not have a case and the perpetrator will go free of charge.

6- The police need to take domestic violence more seriously. Currently, it seems that the officers only consider a breach of an apprehended violence order (AVO) if the perpetrator physically harms or kills the victim. This means that emotional and verbal abuse is not considered a breach of an AVO. The police say that an Apprehended Violence Order (AVO) is breached if the victim can produce a witness or evidence of the perpetrator making threats or attempting to harm or kill the victim. Perpetrators subject to an Apprehended Violence Order (AVO) who engage in coercive control can act with impunity, as law enforcement agencies typically only intervene in cases

involving physical harm. Furthermore, the perpetrator can send as many people as they please to threaten or intimidate the victim without this act being considered a breach of the AVO.

Therefore, the police need proper training to know how to identify and properly deal with confirmed cases of domestic violence, changes in guidelines of AVO breaches and investigating domestic violence with possible penalties for not fulfilling their duties.

7- According to the police, emotional or verbal abuse alone is insufficient to constitute a breach of the AVO. There should be strict changes to what constitutes domestic violence and breaching of AVOs, which includes not only physical but verbal violence, the destruction of property, humiliation, intimidation, and coercive control.