

10. Elimination of All Forms of Violence against Women

■ Eradication of All Forms of Violence against Women

Violence against women is a serious human rights infringement that includes criminal acts. It is the government's duty to work to improve the situation, and also an important task to be overcome in order to form a gender-equal society. Essentially, violence cannot be excused, regardless of the gender of the victim or the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim. However, looking at the current situation of violence and Japan's social structure in which men and women are placed, it is particularly necessary to deal with violence against women.

Based on the "Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality", which was decided upon in December 2010, the government is making a wide range of efforts such as creating an environment that prevents violence against women and conducting investigative research about violence against women, in order to eradicate violence against women.

■ Promotion of Prevention of Violence by Spouses, etc. and Protection, etc. of Victims

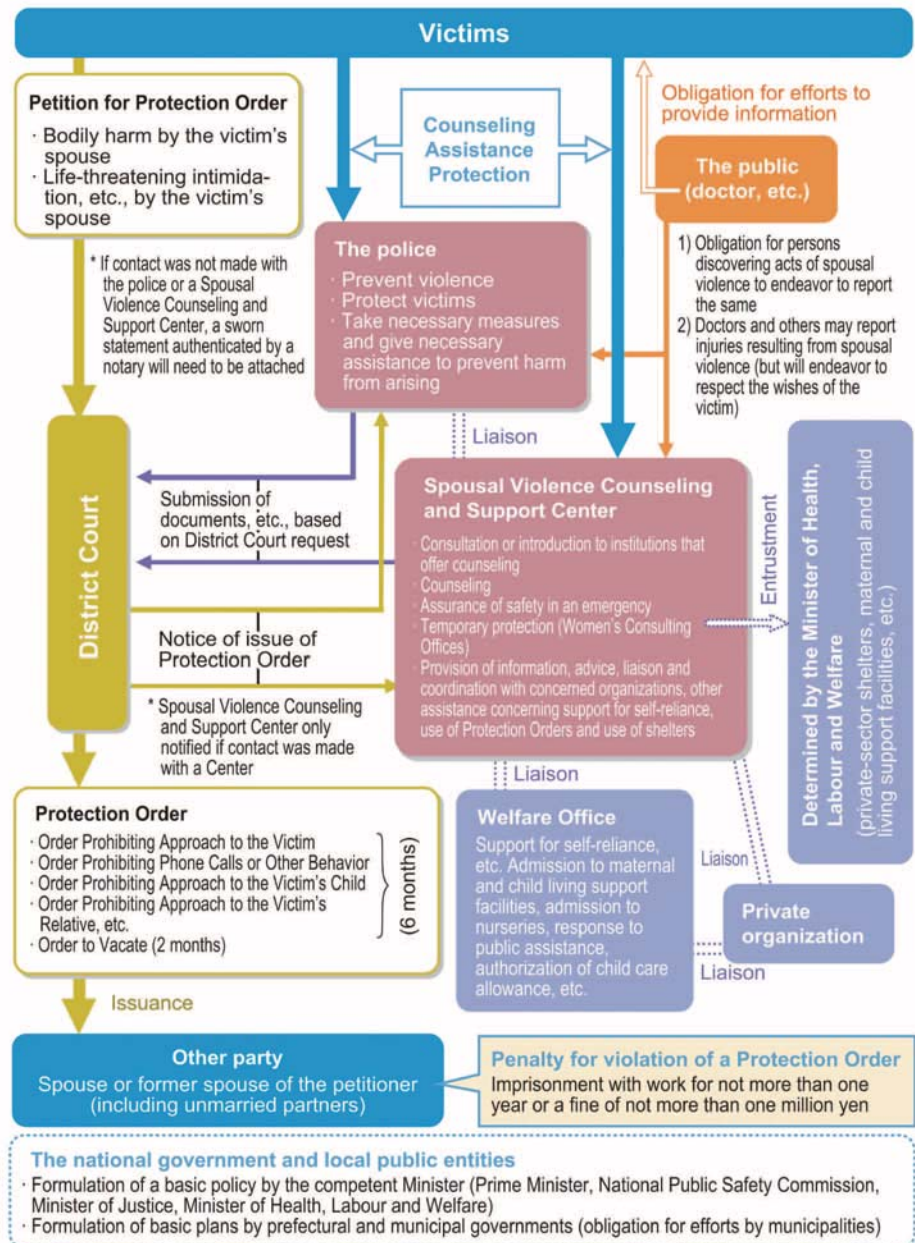
In accordance with the "Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims" and the "Basic Policy Concerning Measures for the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims" (hereinafter the "Basic Policy"), which has been based on the "Spousal Violence Prevention Act," and the "Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality" approved by the Cabinet in December 2010, efforts are being made to further improve measures to prevent spousal violence and to protect and support the independence of victims.

In 2007 the Act was revised to expand the scope of protection orders, making not only bodily harm but also cases of life-threatening intimidation subject to protection orders. The revisions also newly created orders prohibiting phone calls or other behavior and orders prohibiting approach to the victim's relatives, etc.

The revisions also stipulated obligations for municipalities to make efforts to adopt the basic plan and establish spousal violence counseling and support centers.



Symbol for the Elimination of Violence against Women



Overview of laws to prevent spousal violence (chart)

Under the “Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims” that was enacted in 2001, violence between men and women in legal marriages or common-law marriages that had previously been latent was exposed, protection and support for the victims was made a government duty, and various measures were stipulated such as establishment of Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers and creation of a system of protective orders, etc. In addition, based on the “Basic policy concerning measures for the prevention of spousal violence and the protection of victims” that were based on the Act and the “Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality”, efforts are being made to further improve measures to prevent spousal violence and protect victims and support their self-sufficiency.

The Act was revised in 2004 and 2007, and under the 2007 revisions protective orders were expanded to include not only physical violence but also threats to a person’s life or body, and orders to prohibit phone calls and orders to prohibit being in the vicinity of a victim’s family members, etc. were newly established. Roles of municipalities were also strengthened by stipulation of duties to formulate basic municipal plans and make efforts to establish Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers.

■ Promotion of Measures against Sex Offences

Efforts are being made to strictly enforce various regulations related to rape crimes, forcible indecency assault crimes and crimes of promiscuous acts under the Child Welfare Act and enforce appropriate penalties, while simultaneously appropriately and powerfully investigating sex offences. The Cabinet Office is also cooperating with private organizations to conduct a 24-hour telephone consultation project, called “Purple Dial Telephone Consultation Project”, intended for victims of sexual violence and spousal violence. The national government is examining the sexual violence situation for the first time, and policies are being formed based on the voices of women who have been victims of sexual violence.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet Office is introducing one-stop support centers for sex offences that provide comprehensive support in one place for victims immediately after sex offences, and working to establish at least one of these centers in each prefecture. The Council for Gender Equality prepared reports related to promotion of measures against sex offences and decided to promote efforts to prepare seamless support systems for victims of sex offences.

■ Promotion of Measures against Prostitution

Strict crackdowns are being made for actions that violate the Anti-Prostitution Act, the Law Regulating Adult Entertainment Businesses, etc., the Act on Punishment of Activities Relating to Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Protection of Children, the Child Welfare Act, the Penal Code, and the Prefectural Ordinance of Juvenile Protection stipulated by local governments, and efforts are being made to protect women who have been victims of prostitution and support their return to society. In addition, crackdowns are being promoted against problems of child prostitution in other countries by Japanese nationals, investigative personnel from countries in Southeast Asia are being invited to conferences to exchange opinions about efforts related to measures against commercial and sexual exploitation of children, and efforts are being made to strengthen collaboration for information exchanges with investigative organizations, etc. of other countries.

In order to eradicate prostitution, which commercializes sex and damages human dignity, we are strengthening strict operation and enforcement of relevant laws and ordinances, and promoting protection of women who are victims of prostitution, efforts to support mental and physical recovery and return to society, and activities to enlighten the young generation.

■ Promotion of Measures against Trafficking in Person(TIP)

Efforts are being made to crack down on TIP, such as revision of the Law Regulating Adult Entertainment Businesses, etc. in 2005, adding crimes, etc. of TIP to reasons for disqualification for permission for food and entertainment business, and taking measures such as requiring confirmation of date of birth, nationality, and working qualifications, etc. for people engaged in customer service such as entertaining customers as they eat and drink. In 2005 TIP was newly added as a crime by revisions of the Penal Code.

Protection measures for stabilization of the legal position of victims were also put in place based on the provisions of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. These measures and policies were set forth in the “Action Plan of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons” formulated by the government as a whole in order to promote measures against TIP, and they have been steadily implemented. After that, a “Japan’s 2009 Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons” was revised in order to make sincere efforts against TIP, the Penal Code and orders have been strictly applied against perpetrators in order to prevent and eradicate TIP and protect victims, and efforts have been made to realize appropriate regulations and penalties. In addition, in order to further improve protection of victims, collaborations are being made with the governments in other countries and NGOs, and integrated and comprehensive measures are being promoted.

■ Promotion of Measures to Prevent Sexual Harassment

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is conducting publicity activities and guidance so that business owners will take effective measures against sexual harassment according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Law. It is also assigning advisors with specialized knowledge to the Equal Employment offices at Prefectural Labour Bureaus and responding appropriately to consultations from workers and business owners, etc. And, in non-employment situation also, necessary measures to prevent sexual harassment are also being made such as education is conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

■ Promotion of Measures against Stalkers

Efforts are being made to appropriately use the Anti-Stalking Law that was enacted in 2000, collaborate with related organizations, and make prompt and appropriate responses and support from the perspective of victims. In particular, in light of a murder case in Saikai City, Nagasaki Prefecture in which two people were killed in 2011, organized and prompt measures against stalkers are being promoted. Public awareness and enlightenment activities related to measures against stalkers are also being promoted so that victims can make consultations at an early stage.

■ PR and Awareness Activities in order to Eradicate Violence against Women

In order to eradicate violence against women, cooperation is being made with local governments, private organizations, etc., and in light of international trends publicity activities are being conducted through various media to increase awareness widely among the general public, including men and young people in addition to women, in order to prevent violence.

(1) Campaign for Eliminating Violence against Women (every year from November 12 through November 25)

The Headquarter for the Promotion of Gender Equality is developing a movement to eradicate violence against women, and through collaboration and cooperation with local governments, women’s groups, and other related bodies it is further strengthening efforts related to violence against women including a program to enhance social awareness.

(2) Preventive Enlightenment

From the perspective of preventing people from becoming perpetrators or victims of violence against women, the Cabinet Office is creating preventive enlightenment education materials targeted at the young generation.

(3) Provision of Information to Victims of Spousal Violence through a Website

The website of the Gender Equality Bureau of the Cabinet Office provides information related to laws and systems, etc. useful for supporting victims of spousal violence. It also posts examples of local governments' and companies' efforts to support victims.

(4) Telephone Guidance Service on Organizations Offering Consultation to Spousal Violence Victims

The Cabinet Office provides an automated voice service through a national telephone number to give information about nearby Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers, etc. in order to connect with victims who are unaware of places where they can make consultations about spousal violence and to make it easy for them to obtain information about support, etc.