



LATVIA

Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review

Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights,

a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1996
and

**Women's NGOs Cooperation Network of Latvia/ Latvijas Sieviešu nevalstisko organizāciju
sadarbības tīkls**

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The Advocates for Human Rights (The Advocates) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact-finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publications. The Advocates works to end violence against women by changing laws and their implementation, as well as through monitoring and documentation, trainings, and advocacy.

Women's NGOs Cooperation Network of Latvia/ Latvijas Sieviešu nevalstisko organizāciju sadarbības tīkls (WNCNL) is uniting 46 women's organizations to promote gender equality, protect women's rights, and strengthen women's participation in public life. WNCNL serves as a key voice for civil society in national and international policy processes, working to eliminate violence against women, empower women and girls, and foster inclusive, equitable communities. WNCNL works through engagement in development of legislation, programs, services, advocacy, awareness-raising, research, training, and collaboration with government institutions, international partners, and local communities securing that women's rights and equality are upheld in law, policy, and everyday practice.

I. Legal, institutional and policy framework, Gender-based violence against women

Status of Implementation: Partially Implemented

1. In the third cycle, Latvia received 58 recommendations to increase its efforts to promote gender equality and women's rights.¹ Latvia noted or partially accepted half of these recommendations, notably the ones urging the State to ratify the Istanbul Convention and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.² Additionally, Latvia noted all recommendations to amend its domestic legal framework or expand existing mandates with the aim to improve gender-based violence prevention and gender equality.³
2. Latvia's legislative and policy framework on gender equality does not adequately meet its international legal obligations on women's rights, and current political will does not proactively prioritize gender and other intersecting identities within policies.⁴ A gender focus is not mainstreamed into different government agencies' mandates, including ministries, with one expert elaborating that "gender equality is seen from a very narrow point of view. The [government] sees it as something more connected with the labor market."⁵ To illustrate, an expert explained the lack of initiative perceived of lawmakers: "I would say politicians are not seeing gender equality as a problem, or lack of gender equality as a problem."⁶ Latvia acknowledged such shortcomings, reporting in its Beijing +30 (National) Report "a lack of regular funding for gender equality policy and poor understanding of gender mainstreaming in line ministries and state agencies ... especially in areas which are not obviously related to gender equality ... remain significant challenges."⁷
3. Also, institutional capacity to promote gender equality remains limited. The Ministry of Welfare, which holds a gender equality mandate, reportedly has only two staff members on this issue.⁸ The absence of adequate human and financial resources constrains the State's ability to design, coordinate, and implement comprehensive gender equality initiatives across sectors. This lack of proactive policy-making on gender on different government levels is reflected in Latvia's gender-equality index, which stands at 62.6, below the EU average.⁹
4. Despite gradual improvements in some indicators, intersectionality remains almost entirely absent from Latvia's gender equality framework. An expert corroborated the lack of attention to intersectionality, explaining, "In reality, the aspect of intersectionality, which would take into account ethnicity, ability, and sexuality, is never considered. I have to say this is not a part of the narrative."¹⁰ This omission means that policies and programs rarely recognize or adequately address the compounded forms of discrimination faced by women and gender-diverse persons at the intersections of multiple identities. A lack of disaggregated statistics by both ethnicity and gender further hampers targeted policymaking.¹¹ As a result, the specific needs and risk factors of groups, such as women with disabilities and Roma women, remain largely overlooked in both policy design and implementation.
5. Findings indicate the absence of proactive policies to specifically address gender and its intersectionalities, along with attempts to dismantle existing legal protections, reflects the emergence of anti-gender political views and movements within decision-making

spaces.¹² Despite broad awareness of the measures needed to advance gender equality, political will remains limited. As one expert observed, “there is actually quite deep knowledge of what needs to be done to improve the situation.”¹³

6. One recent example of attempts to dismantle legal protections for women concerns the Istanbul Convention. Latvia ratified the Council of Europe’s Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (“Istanbul Convention”), and it entered into force on 1 May 2024, thereby creating legally binding obligations on Latvia.¹⁴ However, in October 2025, members of several parliamentary factions, including the National Alliance, United List, Latvia First, and the Greens and Farmers’ Union (ZZS), requested the Saeima Foreign Affairs Committee consider Latvia’s withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention. During parliamentary discussions, they cited the perceived lack of tangible results from the convention and concerns it was “perilously undermining the very foundations of the nation.”¹⁵ Yet, these claims fail to take into account the inadequate political will and resourcing to proactively prioritize women’s rights on the policy agenda in the first place and to engage diverse partners, especially women’s working on violence against women and supporting victims, in helping overcome barriers to prosecution of perpetrators. We commend the Ministry of Welfare for its participatory approach in developing the “Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence 2024–2029,” having engaged input from across regions of Latvia and women’s NGOs.
7. Persistent gender stereotypes and traditional gender-role narratives continue to influence policymaking and public discourse in Latvia. Interviewees highlighted the prevalence of so-called “traditional gender values,” which prioritizes women’s position in the private home and their roles as mothers and caregivers. These narratives are often linked to demographic concerns about declining birth rates and reinforced by nationalist political actors and religious institutions. Such misconceptions bolster existing resistance to promote gender equality measures.¹⁶ One expert was unaware if the Ministry of Welfare, which is mandated to address gender equality, has any dedicated budget for information campaigns to combat gender stereotypes,¹⁷ particularly as campaigns are generally run with EU funding.¹⁸
8. Media in Latvia continues to reflect harmful stereotypes and traditional and unequal gender norms, frequently portraying women through narratives of victimhood, dependence, or domesticity.¹⁹ Coverage of gender-based violence often emphasizes sensational or emotive aspects of women’s suffering which reinforces perceptions of female vulnerability while depicting men as active agents, authorities, or isolated offenders rather than part of a systemic issue.²⁰ Broader reporting on disability, poverty, and housing rarely applies a gendered lens, contributing to the invisibility of women—particularly women with disabilities—in public discourse.²¹ Even in positive health coverage, women’s roles are framed primarily around caretaking and compliance which reflects persistent stereotypes about women’s social roles.²² As a result, media narratives tend to reproduce rather than challenge structural gender inequality, limiting progress toward equitable and empowering representation of women and girls in Latvian media.²³

Access to justice

9. In the third cycle, Latvia received seven recommendations on addressing and preventing gender-based violence throughout the country.²⁴ Despite Latvia accepting all these recommendations,²⁵ they have not been fully implemented as the general public has continued reporting barriers when attempting to access justice.
10. Overall, it is unclear to what extent the Ministry of Welfare and other government bodies prioritize combatting misperceptions about gender-based violence against women. Without dedicated and consistent public education, gender stereotypes prevail among the public. According to research, 31% of the population view domestic violence as a private matter to be addressed within the family.²⁶ In cases where children are exposed to domestic violence, 44% of respondents chose not to intervene in what they saw as “family matter,” and 36% simply “did not know what to do.”²⁷ Only 64% perceive that violence against women should always be punished.²⁸ Government actors’ responses have at times perpetuated these harmful misconceptions. For example, officials have told victims, “Jūs pati izvēlējāties ciest vai neciest” or “You yourself chose whether to suffer or not suffer,” showing deep-seated gender stereotypes and placing responsibility on the victim by the very institutions charged with protecting them.²⁹ Such attitudes can deter women experiencing violence from reporting or seeking assistance. One lawyer acknowledged that women in small towns may be reluctant to report where “everyone knows everyone.”³⁰ Some victims of violence even refuse social rehabilitation services because they require disclosure of personal information for data processing.³¹ While the Ministry of Welfare conducts some campaigns and conferences, including a 2022 campaign called “Emotional Violence - Invisible But Real,” one lawyer opined such public awareness efforts are infrequent.³² This places the de facto responsibility on civil society and media outlets to fill those gaps and ensure the public understands the problem of gender-based violence and their remedies.
11. Recent reforms have expanded services for victims of violence. The law on legal aid now provides free legal assistance in civil disputes, certain administrative cases, or Constitutional Court proceedings to those persons who: have a low-income household status, as confirmed by Social Services; have found themselves in a situation and material condition that prevents them from protecting their rights (e.g. natural disasters, force majeure, or other circumstances beyond their control, such as violence), or; have the state or municipality’s support to receive such legal aid and as confirmed by a certificate issued by the institutional head.³³ As of 2023, crisis apartments provide housing for up to 30 days, with extension up to 180 days.³⁴ 2021 amendments to the Law on Social Services and Social Assistance also state that victims of violence who do not have a permanent residence, are refugees, third-country nationals, or asylum seekers, can access services under that law.³⁵ Plans are underway to ensure social rehabilitation services can be delivered to clients who wish to remain anonymous.³⁶ In regions outside of major municipalities, however, many women seeking assistance find they are reliant on local councils.³⁷ It is incumbent on the local government to submit data to the Ministry of Welfare to receive funding for up to two months’ residential support or outpatient social rehabilitation services vis-a-vis the councils.³⁸ One interviewee explained that where they live, the council itself does not proffer all the services that it could or others do.³⁹ While municipalities can refer a victim to an NGO or other municipality’s shelter, stakeholders

noted a breakdown in communication and access to information in service provision. Institutions and civil society observed an uncoordinated system where police or social services must first call each shelter or service provider on an individual basis to find services for referral, which adds additional steps to getting a victim to safety.⁴⁰

12. The Ministry of Welfare, in collaboration with NGOs, provides training to systems actors, including police, social workers, and other specialists, on the issue of violence against women and domestic violence.⁴¹ One interviewee still expressed their concerns that not all municipal police are guaranteed to have completed training on domestic violence.⁴² And in areas where services are limited, the municipal police may be one of the few options for victims to turn to for assistance, meaning inconsistent training of police creates another obstacle for victims. One lawyer described it as a "game of luck" whether you encounter a police officer who understands the dynamics of domestic violence.⁴³ Given 2022 amendments to the Law on Police authorizing police to conduct a risk assessment and separate the offender and victim—without a formal victim request—police training on domestic violence dynamics is crucial to ensure they make decisions in the victim's best interests and safety.⁴⁴

II. Members of minorities, Gender-based violence against women, Equality & non-discrimination.

Roma women and girls

Status of Implementation: Partially Implemented

13. In the third cycle, Latvia received five recommendations to eliminate discrimination and remove barriers against the Roma population.⁴⁵ Latvia noted one of these five recommendations, notably the ones calling for taking legislative and administrative measures to eliminate discrimination against ethnic minorities, including Roma descent.⁴⁶ While Latvia readily accepted the other four recommendations on improving the Roma population's access to education, employment, and other services, they did not explicitly recognize the discrimination faced by Romani women and girls, which is most notable in the absence of data collection for this subset.
14. Desk research indicates a dearth of up-to-date information on Roma women and girls in Latvia. For example, in Latvia's 2025 report to GREVIO, the State mentions Roma people one time and in the context of Roma mediators involved in the Public Health Guidelines 2021-2027.⁴⁷ The U.S. Department of State Human Rights report notes high levels of discrimination, unemployment and illiteracy among Roma but does not provide specific information on Roma women and girls.⁴⁸ Other reports focus on education, employment, health care, children, and culture, but without a gendered dimension that focuses on Roma women and girls.⁴⁹ One scholar observed the absence of activities specifically aimed at Roma women.⁵⁰ To them, this gap constitutes double marginalization for Roma women based on both their ethnicity and gender.⁵¹ Such marginalization is compounded when societal attitudes dismiss Roma issues as being "just in their community" and not a mainstream priority in the public arena.⁵²
15. While the authors were unable to identify the reasons for the lack of information, possible causal factors that should be examined for recommendation purposes may include: a lack of political will to gather data on Roma women and girls; insufficient resources dedicated

to monitoring and documenting the human rights status of the Roma population, and; inadequate connection to the Roma community that would facilitate information exchange, among others.

16. Available information on the Roma typically presents initiatives that are spearheaded by civil society, with the support of the Ministry of Culture and the Society Policy and Civil Society Unit.⁵³ The activities primarily focus on professional etiquette, health education, social inclusion, cooperation with institutions and the media around Roma cultural activities, performance, art, and music, skills development in the labor market, and accounting and budgeting trainings.⁵⁴ Public perceptions of state funding for Roma integration and public awareness initiatives are that it is inconsistent.⁵⁵
17. Other Ministries that address domestic violence, such as the Ministry of Justice or Ministry of Interior, are not systematically engaged in activities aimed at the Roma community and gender-based violence, and civil society requests to collaborate on data collection remain unanswered.⁵⁶ For example, the Ministry of Culture established a working group to create the Plan for Implementing Measures of the Roma Strategic Framework for 2024-2027 in 2023.⁵⁷ The group included the “Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Economy, the Agency for International Youth Programmes, the State Employment Agency, representatives of the Office of the Ombudsman, the Latvian Association of Local Governments, the Society Integration Fund and representatives of Roma and civil society organizations working in support of Roma.”⁵⁸ Notably, the Ministries of Justice and Interior were not documented members of the working group. In addition, the plan lacks dedicated state funding, placing the responsibility on civil society to execute activities under 5.4 for the information, education, and participation of Roma women with foreign state and EU funding.⁵⁹
18. Laws and policies to address gender-based violence do not consistently address the needs of Roma women and girls as a group. For example, Latvia’s Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for 2024–2029 does not explicitly mention Roma women and girls.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it is generally documented that Roma women experiencing domestic violence do not report at the same levels of the general population, and they encounter increased barriers due to scarce local services, insufficient financial resources, and social marginalization.⁶¹
19. Latvia’s Plan for the Implementation of the Measures of the Roma Strategic Framework for 2024-2027 includes 17 activities that address Roma inclusion in the community, promote Roma culture, language, and history, advance employment and vocational education of Roma, build awareness of social inclusion matters among specialists, and address housing accessibility.⁶² The plan includes some initiatives for Roma women including a pilot program for professional development in employment, as well as the Latvian Roma Platform to facilitate activities of municipal-based Roma mediators and provide seminars aimed at empowering Roma women.⁶³ It does not include a specific gendered focus on overall Roma women and girls’ rights, including gender-based violence. Of positive note, NGOs were involved in the plan’s drafting, including the Women’s NGOs Cooperation Network of Latvia and Roma Women’s Organization “Sare khetene” and executed plan activities with their own or outside resources.⁶⁴

III. Violence against women, Equality & non-discrimination, Persons with disabilities: protection against exploitation, violence and abuse; Persons with disabilities: protection and safety in situations of risk

Women with disabilities experiencing gender-based violence

Status of Implementation: Partially Implemented

20. In the third cycle of the UPR, Latvia received 17 recommendations to adopt necessary measures to guarantee the full enjoyment of rights for persons with disabilities, especially in the education, employment, health, and political sectors.⁶⁵ All these recommendations were supported, except for one calling for the Latvian government to increase efforts to deinstitutionalize all persons with disabilities.⁶⁶ Notably, these recommendations do not explicitly mention women with disabilities or address their rights when they experience domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence.
21. Women with disabilities face heightened risks of violence and distinct barriers when seeking help. The European Disability Forum reports that women with disabilities are two to five times more likely to experience violence than other women; the high prevalence rate is exacerbated by harmful stereotypes—e.g. women with disabilities are asexual or unlikely to be targeted—that can discourage disclosure and reinforce disbeliefs when they report abuse.⁶⁷ In Latvia, women with disabilities encounter obstacles when reporting violence. For example, available public information does not indicate consistent availability of text- or sign-language modes in Latvian crisis hotlines, making it more difficult for victims who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to access gender-based violence response and support services.⁶⁸ Fear of exposure and lack of confidentiality also discourages reporting. As one interviewee explained, “In small towns ... women don’t go to the police because they fear everyone will know.”⁶⁹ Persistent social stigma, disbelief of victims, and lack of trust in law enforcement compound these barriers. Interviewees described judicial and law enforcement failures, including cases where women’s repeated complaints were dismissed until violence escalated into even more severe harm.⁷⁰ Such responses suggest a pattern of systemic shortcomings rather than isolated incidents.
22. Comprehensive data collection remains a gap. Latvia’s national statistics and surveys disaggregate information by gender, geography, and age but not disability.⁷¹ The UNECE confirms that Latvian surveys routinely collect data on sex, age, marital status, and education, yet “there are no routinely asked questions on disability....”⁷² This omission is inconsistent with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which mandates that States collect disability-disaggregated data to enable informed policymaking.⁷³ Without such disaggregated data, the state cannot accurately assess the experiences of women with disabilities experiencing gender-based violence, their prevalence, or whether they receive equitable support and protection.⁷⁴
23. Access to services for women with disabilities remains inconsistent. Research indicates that women with disabilities, particularly those living in rural areas, are more likely to face challenges in seeking help due to longer wait times for assistance and travel distances, limited transportation, and high costs.⁷⁵ Local councils (pašvaldības) are the primary providers of social and psychological support services, but those resources vary widely by region, with the government funding the municipality for victim services.⁷⁶

While Riga offers more comprehensive services and shelters, smaller municipalities often lack staff trained in disability-sensitive support, transportation services to transfer the client to health or shelter services, and qualified interpreters.⁷⁷ One lawyer explained, “The council I live in does not provide everything that it should... If you are disabled, I know some people, even though by law there are rehabilitation programs, they have to cross country or go to Riga and it is not doable for all.... [For] women with disabilities, especially if they are victims with abuse, it is difficult to get help.”⁷⁸ When these systems fail, victims may need to rely on family members or NGOs, which provide essential—but underfunded—support.⁷⁹ Although Latvia’s 2024–2029 Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence includes language on inclusive policy and victim support, the text does not explicitly specify persons with disabilities as a distinct protected priority group, nor does it in its public version allocate dedicated funding or measurable accessibility commitments.⁸⁰

24. Despite some progress, Latvia’s framework lacks disability-specific protections and enforcement mechanisms. The Invaliditātes likums (Act on Disabilities) defines disability as a long-term limitation affecting work capacity, self-care, and social inclusion.⁸¹ The law does not, however, contain explicit gender-sensitive measures or provisions on violence or protection tailored for women with disabilities. Although Latvia ratified the Istanbul Convention, ensuring full accessibility of victim services in line with Article 20 remains a challenge. The GREVIO baseline report notes some support services (e.g. online consultations, crisis apartments) but does not confirm that all services across Latvia meet comprehensive accessibility standards.⁸² Implementation gaps persist due to limited funding, uneven municipal capacity, and absence of monitoring indicators. As one expert observed, “If we change the law, [but] we do not have the facilities, the funding, we [cannot] do much.”⁸³

IV. Right to health care, Health awareness raising, access to information, Equality & non-discrimination, Discrimination against women

Status of Implementation: Partially Implemented

25. In the third cycle, Latvia supported all four recommendations on adopting measures to improve the access to health-care services.⁸⁴ Although there was no direct mention of women’s health, Latvia demonstrated its support to continue taking steps to realize the right to health for all, which hopefully includes increasing preventive screening for breast cancer.

Prevalence

26. Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among Latvian women, comprising 21.2% of all newly diagnosed cancer cases.⁸⁵ Approximately 1,100 women in Latvia are newly diagnosed with breast cancer, a rate that has remained constant in the past decade.⁸⁶ Latvia’s duty to protect the right to life involves taking steps to address societal conditions that threaten the right to life, including life-threatening diseases.⁸⁷ Breast cancer is among the leading causes of cancer-related deaths in Latvia.⁸⁸ One oncologist described how Latvia’s high mortality rates rank higher than other European countries.⁸⁹ In 2021, the cancer mortality rate for women was 12% higher than the EU average, while the treatable mortality rate from breast cancer was 22% higher than the

EU average.⁹⁰

27. The World Health Organisation (WHO) outlines three pillars in its Global Breast Cancer Initiative, focusing on: 1) early detection through promotion of health; 2) timely diagnosis, and; 3) comprehensive breast cancer management.⁹¹ While Latvia has undertaken initiatives to address screening gaps and other challenges, it still falls short in fulfilling the three pillars in a way that effectively protects women's right to health in the context of breast health. This shortfall is aggravated by inequities that exacerbate breast cancer-related deaths, including late diagnosis, insufficient services and infrastructure, and inadequate health coverage.⁹²

Health Promotion

28. Health promotion is a factor that can improve chances of early detection of breast cancer, aiming to diagnose 60% of cancers at Stages I or II.⁹³ Health promotion relies on actions such as raising public awareness, diminishing risk through healthy lifestyles, and reducing stigmatization around breast health.⁹⁴
29. Findings indicate a gap in effective public education efforts around breast cancer. One doctor observed the deficiencies in public outreach on breast cancer screening and prevention, with educational campaigns not impacting public understanding and participation.⁹⁵ Research corroborates this gap and reveals public misperceptions. For example, the most common reasons for women's non-participation in screening was the absence of symptoms and therefore self-perception of good health (49%), as well as a lack of understanding about the goals and significance of mammograms (24.2%).⁹⁶ Inadequate public awareness efforts result in low screening rates in the country, as described below.
30. Some initiatives to promote screening are underway. For example, four mobile vehicles visit regions located outside of cities with mammography equipment.⁹⁷ In 2022, the Improving Cancer Care Coordination and Screening (ICCCS) Project was launched in Latvia.⁹⁸ This two-year project analyzed public health regarding cancer and made recommendations including: the adoption of a standard operating Cancer Registry with quality control procedures; a revised Cancer Screening program; and implementation of an accredited Cancer care infrastructure.⁹⁹ A new project, the Screening, Training, and Implementation Research for Improved Breast Cancer Detection and Evaluation (STRIVE) seeks to enhance breast cancer screening effectiveness through a high-quality process.¹⁰⁰
31. Nevertheless, participation in breast cancer screening has historically been low and even declined in Latvia.¹⁰¹ 2022 statistics indicate that just 36% of the population eligible to participate in screening did so.¹⁰² More recent statistics do not demonstrate a notable increase. Despite the creation of a national screening mammography program in 2009, the 2024 participation rate was just 38.1%, falling short of the European goal of 70%.¹⁰³
32. Findings suggest several factors that may contribute to women's low participation in screening. First, multiple state institutions are responsible for different aspects of breast cancer screening, meaning no centralized body oversees service quality and consistency in implementation.¹⁰⁴ Quality assurance is another concern, and current screening programs meet only 9 of 16 ICCCS program requirements.¹⁰⁵

33. Second, ineffective public outreach and communications, as noted above, impede women's participation in screening. For example, although the mobile mammography units visit various parts of the country, there is no communication plan to inform women about the timing and location of these screening vehicles.¹⁰⁶
34. The state's delineation on age is another factor in low participation. The state sends a communication to women ages 50-69 every two years inviting them to a free, state financed screening.¹⁰⁷ The Society of Breast Imaging recommends women begin annual mammography by age 40, as one of six new breast cancers develop between 40 and 50 years of age.¹⁰⁸ Yet, Latvia's invitation program excludes women in this age group, thereby missing a population segment vulnerable to breast cancer. One interviewee noted an estimated 20% of breast cancer cases are diagnosed in women under the age of 50 and who do not receive the screening invitation because of their age.¹⁰⁹
35. Gaps in current infrastructure hinder consistent and greater participation. A recent evaluation noted the absence of a call-recall system that could promote participation among non-participants and reduce attrition rates.¹¹⁰

Risk Reduction

36. States bear an obligation to seek to decrease levels of unhealthy or high-risk lifestyles, which includes educating the public on health lifestyles, nutrition, and making informed health decisions.¹¹¹ Healthy lifestyle choices can reduce risks around breast cancer. For example, the WHO highlights risk mitigation through measures such as addressing obesity and restricting alcohol consumption.¹¹² Social health issues that contribute to the risk of breast cancer, including high rates of alcohol consumption, high rates of obesity or being overweight, and lack of sufficient physical activity among Latvian women, however, remain prevalent.¹¹³ Public health policies have not yet been successful in driving the needed awareness and change in these important areas.

Timely Diagnosis

37. In terms of timely diagnosis, the WHO highlights training of health care workers on identifying symptoms for patient referral and minimal delays between the patient's first interaction and treatment.¹¹⁴ The STRIVE mid-term report identified the absence of consistent, ongoing, and long-term national training for personnel conducting breast cancer screening, partly because of reliance on external funding.¹¹⁵ Among the 24 facilities that screen for breast cancer, compliance with NHS requirements is confirmed through written documentation during the contract process; observers note no protocol for ongoing, on-site inspections to ensure facilities' conditions, including qualifications and training of screening personnel and quality of procedures and equipment, meet NHS criteria.¹¹⁶
38. Latvia lacks a comprehensive data registry on cancer patients, meaning data is fragmented, incomplete, and lacks detailed qualitative indicators.¹¹⁷ The problem is compounded by the absence of data-sharing and coordination across hospitals.¹¹⁸ The lack of data coordination impedes timely diagnosis and reducing the waiting period for initiation of cancer treatment.¹¹⁹ Without a centralized, single screening database, the population cancer registry, screening data, and hospital registries remain unconnected, creating an obstacle to efficient follow-up.¹²⁰ Experts also documented the absence of any

system to monitor patient compliance with instructions for further examinations post-screening.¹²¹

39. State funding for breast cancer prevention and care is insufficient.¹²² A 2023 report notes Latvia's funding for cancer is among the lowest in the EU.¹²³ Latvia's current financing is not adequate to ensure comprehensive diagnosis and treatment services nor completely cover patient costs.¹²⁴ A doctor expressed frustration the government continues to deny resources for a national approach to address breast cancer, genetic testing, and a national database.¹²⁵ A Petition "For State Funded Breast Reconstruction after Breast Cancer" on the "Mana Balss" Platform collected 13,785 signatures within a few months, but took WNCNL 10 months of volunteer lobbying to secure the 1 million euros needed annually for 300 reconstructions.¹²⁶
40. The WHO cites late diagnosis of breast cancer as a global inequity factor.¹²⁷ Findings indicate a high percentage of breast cancer cases are diagnosed in late stages, requiring expensive treatment.¹²⁸ The WHO also notes greater effectiveness and tolerance occurs when breast cancer interventions are initiated early.¹²⁹ Genetic testing and counseling is still in its infancy, compounded by a shortage of geneticists and long waits for consultations of up to six months.¹³⁰ Without genetic testing that could help identify high-risk women, more young patients are diagnosed in the advanced stages of breast cancer.¹³¹ Additionally, women in rural areas face challenges in accessing services, which can contribute to delayed diagnoses.¹³²

Breast Cancer Management

41. The WHO's third pillar is comprehensive breast cancer management, including access to surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, rehabilitation, and palliative care.¹³³ There are reports the state does not pay for post-mastectomy breast reconstruction surgery when the procedure is performed for prophylactic reasons.¹³⁴ Yet, gender affirming care, which includes medical procedures to "affirm, actualize, or embody" a patient's gender sense, can include breast reconstruction.¹³⁵

V. Recommendations

42. This stakeholder report suggests the following recommendations for the Government of Latvia:
- Prioritize adequate resourcing in terms of personnel, ongoing public education campaigns, budgeting for gender equality and violence against women policies and activities, with a focus on intersectionalities such as disabilities and ethnicities.
 - Reject efforts to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention, remain committed to its full implementation, and undertake public awareness campaigns to dispel misconceptions about the treaty.
 - Improve university curricula for journalists on understanding gender stereotypes and responsible gender reporting and include ongoing training on gender equality for media representatives and personalities.

- Ensure systems actors, including police, judges, and prosecutors, complete ongoing training on domestic violence, led by or in consultation with NGO service providers. Police particularly should be regularly trained on domestic violence and risk assessment, given their new authorities under the Law on Police.
- Strengthen efforts to enhance the systematic collection, dissemination and analysis of data related to women's rights, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, religion, geographical location, disability and socioeconomic context, in all spheres. Create and fund a legal framework for collecting data disaggregated by gender and ethnicity in fields relevant to the human rights of Roma women and girls and to evaluate the impact of government policies on this group.
- Modify the legal framework of the public work, education, and health system to ensure Roma women and girls fully enjoy their rights in this regard without discrimination, ensuring specific interventions focused on improving their access to employment, education, and health.
- Ensure policies and plans related to the Roma integrate a specific focus on Roma women and girls' rights, including a focus on gender-based violence and improving public awareness of those dynamics and the remedies available.
- Enhance state-funded integration and public activities into more sustainable and consistent activities to include Roma women and girls as relevant stakeholders in Latvian society.
- Regularly conduct anti-discrimination and gender equality training for public sector employees and include anti-discrimination training in curricula to end stereotypes and discrimination against Roma women and girls.
- Expand the mandate of all law enforcement and government ministries that routinely address gender-based violence to record, investigate, and prosecute all perpetrators of violence against Roma women and girls.
- Conduct targeted campaigns encouraging Roma women to report experiences of violence by State and non-State actors, including domestic violence, to relevant authorities. Information should be disseminated on how to bring complaints and should be always available to the public
- Amend Latvia's Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for 2024–2029 to include protection against discrimination based on ethnicity, gender and multiple discrimination, including an effective remedy in cases of discrimination and violence against Roma women and girls.
- Strengthen national policies and strategies on gender-based violence to explicitly address the intersection of gender and disability, recognizing women with disabilities as a distinct target group.
- Embed disability competence into victim support services by requiring specialized training for law enforcement, social workers, counsellors, and shelter staff to identify and address risks specific to women with disabilities.

- Reform disability assessment and welfare procedures to remove bureaucratic barriers that prevent women with disabilities from accessing social protection and victim support in cases of violence.
- Ensure proactive outreach and accessible information on available services in formats accessible to women with different disabilities (Easy-to-Read, sign language, Braille, plain language websites).
- Guarantee accessibility of shelters and victim support services (physical accessibility, adapted communication tools, staff trained in disability-sensitive support), and ensure councils throughout the country receive adequate funding for such services.
- Allocate sustainable state funding to civil society organizations, particularly organizations representing disadvantaged groups of women and women's organizational networks, and reduce reliance on external donors.
- Introduce targeted budget lines within gender equality and disability inclusion policies for measures that address violence against women with disabilities.
- Establish regular consultation mechanisms with organizations of women with disabilities to co-design policies, monitoring systems, and service provision standards.
- Enhance coordination among hospitals, research institutes, universities, patient organizations and networks of women organizations (e.g. organizations of breast cancer survivors) and expand treatments, implement efficiency in record-keeping, and strengthen interdisciplinary cooperation to reduce delays in treatment and increase access to services.¹³⁶
- Create a national quality control system by establishing a centralized authority to oversee quality assurance and audit screening facilities, including a centralized national breast cancer screening registry under the National Health Service.
- Allocate funds to establish a national strategy that ensures mandatory, ongoing training and capacity building of screening providers.
- Implement a call-recall system to ensure clients undergo follow-up procedures following their screening results. Establish a tracking system for invitation screening letters to identify non-attenders and issue automated reminders.
- Prepare a public communication strategy to raise awareness on the importance of regular screenings for breast cancer in collaboration with women and patients' organizations. This should target vulnerable population groups and receive a dedicated budget.

¹ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Latvia*, (16 July 2021), U.N. Doc A/HRC/48/15 ¶132.19 Continue assessing the possibility of the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Romania); ¶132.20 Examine the possibility of acceding to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Niger); ¶132.21 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Ireland) (Montenegro) (Namibia) (Turkey); ¶132.22 Consider the possibility of ratifying the European instrument on human rights, the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Dominican Republic); ¶132.23 Continue fighting

gender-based violence and prioritize the swift ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Italy); ¶132.24 Accelerate steps towards the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Ireland); ¶132.25 Further continue steps towards the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Georgia); ¶132.26 Ratify swiftly the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Austria); ¶132.27 Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Cyprus) (Denmark) (Estonia) (France); ¶132.28 Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (known as the Istanbul Convention) (Netherlands); ¶132.29 Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, and criminalize violence against women and girls as specific crimes in the Criminal Code (Spain); ¶132.30 Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and, in accordance with its provisions, prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence (Finland); ¶132.31 Step up efforts to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Albania); ¶132.32 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Belgium); ¶132.33 Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Costa Rica); ¶132.35 Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Germany); ¶132.36 Consider the possibility of ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Argentina); ¶132.37 Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Chile); ¶132.38 Ratify the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, the European Convention on Nationality and the Council of Europe Convention on the Avoidance of Statelessness in relation to State Succession (Luxembourg); ¶132.50 Expand the remit of the Ombudsman's Office to promote and defend gender equality, and provide sufficient financial resources for the Ombudsman to fully discharge their mandate (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); ¶132.51 Broaden the mandate of the Office of the Ombudsperson to include the promotion and protection of women's rights and gender equality (Luxembourg); ¶132.52 Consider expanding the mandate of the Office of the Ombudsman to promote and protect women's rights and equality between women and men (Bulgaria); ¶132.56 Strengthen efforts to ensure equal participation in political and public life, as well as education and employment (Slovakia); ¶132.60 Dedicate more resources to promoting tolerance and combating discrimination, as well as preventing, documenting and responding to hate crimes and gender-based violence, including domestic violence (United States of America); ¶132.84 Continue efforts to champion gender equality, especially in its development cooperation (Ethiopia); ¶132.85 Continue its efforts to achieve gender equality by adopting legislation implementing gender equality laws to combat stereotypes and multiple forms of discrimination and by strengthening efforts to reduce the high rates of violence against women (New Zealand); ¶132.86 Adopt a comprehensive strategy to combat discriminatory stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society (Rwanda); ¶132.119 Take further measures to ensure the effective implementation of the law to increase transparency in government and to eradicate corruption (Indonesia); ¶132.120 Continue taking steps towards poverty reduction, particularly among women and children (Malaysia); ¶132.132 Increase efforts to counter gender-based violence (Uzbekistan); ¶132.133 Include domestic violence and marital rape as specific crimes in the Criminal Code (Austria); ¶132.134 Consider amending its legislation to include domestic violence and marital rape as specific crimes in the Criminal Law (Greece); ¶132.135 Consider progressive law reforms on gender-based violence, including in the area of domestic violence (Fiji); ¶132.159 Strengthen efforts to enforce equal pay for equal work (Maldives); ¶132.160 Design and implement concrete measures for the reduction of the gender pay gap (Lithuania); ¶132.161 Effectively enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in order to narrow and ultimately close the gender pay gap (Iceland); ¶132.162 Continue efforts made to develop measures to prevent discrimination against women and promote gender equality, including in the area of treatment, work and wages

(Tunisia); ¶132.187 Consider additional measures such as a comprehensive gender equality strategy and a gender-based budgeting strategy to address gender-based discrimination (Bhutan); ¶132.188 Adopt a comprehensive gender equality strategy that includes combating violence against women, combating gender stereotypes and increasing the representation of women in decision-making bodies in political life (Argentina); ¶132.189 Adopt a comprehensive gender equality strategy, including gender mainstreaming in budgetary processes (Portugal); ¶132.190 Implement effective measures in favour of gender equality and increase the participation of women in public and political life (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela); ¶132.191 Strengthen its efforts to increase the representation of women in political life at the decision-making level in both elected and appointed governmental bodies (Timor-Leste); ¶132.192 Consider introducing electoral gender quotas, with a view to increasing the political representation of women (Albania); ¶132.193 Adopt a comprehensive law on gender-based violence against women (Rwanda); ¶132.194 Consider adoption of comprehensive legislation on gender-based violence against women (Bhutan); ¶132.195 Continue to improve the legal framework and implement practical measures to prevent violence against women (Viet Nam); ¶132.196 Continue efforts to improve its legal framework to prevent violence against women and consider adopting comprehensive legislation on gender-based violence against women and domestic violence (Republic of Korea); ¶132.197 Strengthen legislative and political measures to prevent, investigate and punish violence against women, and consider ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Mexico); ¶132.198 Strengthen efforts to ensure the protection of women against rape and sexual violence through possible legislative reform and establishing appropriate avenues for reporting abuse (Australia); ¶132.199 Take further measures to eliminate violence against women (China); ¶132.200 Continue to address violence against women and, in particular, provide the appropriate support services to rape and sexual assault survivors, including through completing the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Iceland); ¶132.200 Continue to address violence against women and, in particular, provide the appropriate support services to rape and sexual assault survivors, including through completing the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Iceland); ¶132.202 Successfully realize the first National Action Plan on the Implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (Ukraine).

² Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Latvia* (16 July 2021) U.N. Doc A/HRC/48/15/Add.1. ¶132.19; ¶132.20; ¶132.2; ¶132.2; ¶132.23; ¶132.24; ¶132.25; ¶132.26; ¶132.28; ¶132.29; ¶132.30; ¶132.31; ¶132.32; ¶132.33; ¶132.35; ¶132.36; ¶132.37; ¶132.38.

³ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Latvia* (16 July 2021) U.N. Doc A/HRC/48/15/Add.1. ¶132.50 Supported in part. Latvia supports recommendation on providing sufficient financial resources (See 134.48): The recommendation has already been implemented. Latvia notes the rest of the recommendation. The Ombudsman is independent in the exercise of his/her activities; ¶132.51- ¶132.52 Latvia supports recommendation on providing sufficient financial resources (See 134.48): The recommendation has already been implemented. Latvia notes the rest of the recommendation. The Ombudsman is independent in the exercise of his/her activities; ¶132.133- ¶132.134 Marital rape qualifies under the respective paragraph of Article 159 of the Criminal Law, or, where murder has been committed, under Article 117, Clause 7 of the Criminal Law. Aggravating circumstances specified in Article 48, Paragraph 1, Clause 15 of the Criminal Law apply in both cases. The fact of domestic violence, depending on consequences, qualifies under Article 125, Paragraph 2, Clause 9; Article 126, Paragraph 2, Clause 7, and Article 130, Paragraph 3, Clause 6 of the Criminal Law; ¶132.188 Latvia supports the recommendation till its part on women's participation in decision-making in politics, because the State cannot influence it directly; ¶132.191 No measures addressing such challenges have been set out in the Plan for the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for 2021- 2023. The activities are of an indirect nature, which can influence attitudes, changes in the understanding of gender roles in society and family, awareness of the aspects of diversity management in a company, an organisation; ¶132.192; ¶132.193- ¶132.194 Latvia's criminal law is based on gender equality. A comprehensive and gender-neutral legal framework for combating violence has been in place in Latvia since 2014 (See 134.135): A comprehensive legal framework for protection against violence has been introduced in Latvia since 2014. It is being continuously improved and developed in order to protect those suffering from domestic violence and offer them assistance, to punish the perpetrators as well as preventively affect violent persons and reduce criminal behaviour. Protection measures are accessible to any person affected by domestic violence regardless of gender and other characteristics. The Criminal Law is gender-neutral and domestic violence is criminalised; ¶132.196.

⁴ Interview with Professor, Sept. 22, 2025 (on file with authors).

⁵ Interview with Professor, Sept. 22, 2025 (on file with authors).

⁶ Interview with Professor, Sept. 22, 2025 (on file with authors).

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- ⁷ Republic of Latvia, National Report, Aug. 2024, 4, <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/Latvia-Report.pdf>.
- ⁸ Interview with Professor, Sept. 22, 2025 (on file with authors).
- ⁹ European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2023 – Latvia*, <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2023/country/LV>. The index for Latvia has improved since 2023. *Id.*
- ¹⁰ Interview with Professor, Sept. 22, 2025 (on file with authors).
- ¹¹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, *Concluding observations on the combined fourth to seventh periodic reports of Latvia*, (Mar. 10, 2020), U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/LVA/CO/4-7, ¶ 34, <https://docs.un.org/en/CEDAW/C/LVA/CO/4-7>.
- ¹² Interview with Professor, Sept. 22, 2025 (written communication with M.P., Lawyer), 2024 (on file with authors).
- ¹³ Interview with Professor, Sept. 22, 2025 (on file with authors).
- ¹⁴ Council of Europe, *Latvia Ratifies the Istanbul Convention*, (Jan. 10, 2024), <https://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/-/latvia-ratifies-the-istanbul-convention>; Latvian Public Media, *Istanbul Convention in Force in Latvia*, May 1, 2024, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/society/02.05.2024-istanbul-convention-in-force-as-of-may-1-in-latvia.a552556/>.
- ¹⁵ Latvian Public Media, *Latvian Lawmakers Consider Pulling Out of Istanbul Convention*, Sept. 25, 2025, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/politics/saeima/25.09.2025-latvian-lawmakers-consider-pulling-out-of-istanbul-convention.a615762/>.
- ¹⁶ Interview with Professor, Sept. 22, 2025 (on file with authors).
- ¹⁷ Interview with Professor, Sept. 22, 2025 (on file with authors).
- ¹⁸ Personal Communication from Civil Society to The Advocates for Human Rights, Oct. 9, 2025 (on file with authors).
- ¹⁹ Latvian Public Media, *Teacher Arrested in Latvia for Child Porn Production, Possession*, Aug. 22, 2025, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/crime/22.08.2025-teacher-arrested-in-latvia-for-child-porn-production-possession.a611355/>.
- ²⁰ Latvian Public Media, *Judge's Decision Under Scrutiny in Domestic Violence Case*, Mar. 6, 2024, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/society/06.03.2024-judges-decision-under-scrutiny-in-domestic-violence-case.a545692/>; Latvian Public Media, *Man Who Punched and Kicked Woman Avoids Prison Sentence in Ogre*, Dec. 21, 2023, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/crime/21.12.2023-man-who-punched-and-kicked-woman-avoids-prison-sentence-in-ogre.a536262/>; Latvian Public Media, *Year Passes Since Murder in Jēkabpils; Authorities Work on Prevention*, Apr. 8, 2024, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/crime/08.04.2024-year-passes-since-murder-in-jekabpils-authorities-work-on-prevention.a549501/>.
- ²¹ Latvian Public Media, *People with a Disability More Likely to Face Poverty, Social Exclusion in Baltics*, Aug. 19, 2025, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/society/19.08.2025-people-with-a-disability-more-likely-to-face-poverty-social-exclusion-in-baltics.a610913/>.
- ²² Latvian Public Media, *Breast Cancer Screening Takes a Step Forward in Latvia*, Nov. 4, 2024, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/health/04.11.2024-breast-cancer-screening-takes-a-step-forward-in-latvia.a575072/>.
- ²³ Latvian Public Media, *Jēkabpils Murder Case Prompts Discussion on Stalking Victim Protection*, Apr. 19, 2023, <https://eng.lsm.lv/article/society/crime/19.04.2023-jekabpils-murder-case-prompts-discussion-on-stalking-victim-protection.a505487/>.
- ²⁴ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Latvia*, (16 July 2021), U.N. Doc A/HRC/48/15 ¶ 132.136 Close remaining gaps in the legal framework to prohibit all forms of gender-based violence, particularly intimate partner violence. This includes investigating all allegations, prosecuting perpetrators, ensuring victims have access to medical, legal and rehabilitation services, and implementing targeted awareness-raising campaigns (Canada); ¶ 132.137 Continue efforts to prevent and combat gender-based violence, both in law and in practice, and ensure that all competent authorities have the necessary capacity to investigate, prosecute and penalize this type of violence (Belgium); ¶ 132.138 Step up efforts to address the rise in domestic violence cases during this time of pandemic (Indonesia); ¶ 132.139 Take measures to strengthen the independence of the judiciary and reinforce its capacity to effectively fight corruption, as well as to improve the investigative capacity and the independence of the public prosecutors and the office for the prevention of and fight against corruption (Uruguay); ¶ 132.140 Consider taking measures with a view to guaranteeing equal access to justice for persons belonging to ethnic minorities (Peru); ¶ 132.141 Guarantee the right of access to a lawyer by all persons in Latvia (Islamic Republic of Iran); ¶ 132.205 Provide significant assistance to children exposed to domestic violence and address the psychosocial rehabilitation needs of each child (Cuba).

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- ²⁵ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Latvia* (16 July 2021) U.N. Doc A/HRC/48/15/Add.1.
- ²⁶ Communication from Civil Society, *Research for Information Strategies for State Plan to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence 2024–2029*, sent Sept. 7, 2025 (unofficial translation) (on file with authors), at 3.
- ²⁷ Communication from Civil Society, *Research for Information Strategies for State Plan to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence 2024–2029*, sent Sept. 7, 2025 (unofficial translation) (on file with authors), at 3 (noting uncertainty whether the child is experiencing or witnessing domestic violence).
- ²⁸ Communication from Civil Society, *Research for Information Strategies for State Plan to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence 2024–2029*, sent Sept. 7, 2025 (unofficial translation) (on file with authors), at 4 (citing Eurobarometer data).
- ²⁹ Latvian Public Media, “Jūs pati izvēlējāties ciest.” *Vardarbības upuri nereti sastopas ar amatpersonu nosodījumu*, May 9, 2019. Latvian original: “Jūs pati izvēlējāties ciest vai neciest,” – šādu frāzi upuri nereti dzird no amatpersonām, kurām vajadzētu palīdzēt, nevis nosodīt. English translation: “You yourself chose whether to suffer or not suffer”—such a phrase is often heard by victims from officials whose role should be to help, not to condemn. <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/jus-pati-izvelejaties-ciest-vardarbibas-upuri-nereti-sastopas-ar-amatpersonu-nosodijumu.a318500/>.
- ³⁰ Interview with Lawyer, Sept. 17, 2025 (on file with authors).
- ³¹ Latvian Public Media, *Sociālo rehabilitāciju daļai vardarbībā cietušo kavē saņemt – prasība atklāt personas datus*, Aug. 2016. Latvian original: “Daļa vardarbībā cietušo atsakās no sociālās rehabilitācijas, jo viņiem jāatklāj personas dati un jāparaksta piekrišana datu apstrādei.” English translation: “Some victims of violence refuse social rehabilitation because they must disclose personal data and sign consent for data processing.” <https://www.lsm.lv/raksts/zinas/latvija/socialo-rehabilitaciju-dalai-vardarbiba-cietuso-kave-sanemt-prasiba-atklat-personas-datus.a196711/>.
- ³² Communication from Civil Society, *Research for Information Strategies for State Plan to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence 2024–2029*, sent Sept. 7, 2025 (unofficial translation) (on file with authors), at 6; Interview with Lawyer, Sept. 17, 2025 (on file with authors).
- ³³ Court Administration of the Republic of Latvia, Procedure for Receiving Legal Aid. <https://www.ta.gov.lv/lv/juridiskas-palidzibas-sanemsanas-kartiba>.
- ³⁴ Communication from Civil Society, *Research for Information Strategies for State Plan to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence 2024–2029*, sent Sept. 7, 2025 (unofficial translation) (on file with authors), at 4.
- ³⁵ Communication from Civil Society, *Research for Information Strategies for State Plan to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence 2024–2029*, sent Sept. 7, 2025 (unofficial translation) (on file with authors), at 4.
- ³⁶ Communication from Civil Society, *Research for Information Strategies for State Plan to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence 2024–2029*, sent Sept. 7, 2025 (unofficial translation) (on file with authors), at 4.
- ³⁷ Interview with Lawyer, Sept. 17, 2025 (on file with authors); Association of European Border Regions / ARL International, *Local Government in Latvia*, <https://www.arl-international.com/knowledge/country-profiles/latvia>.
- ³⁸ Personal Communication from Civil Society to The Advocates for Human Rights, Oct. 9, 2025 (on file with authors).
- ³⁹ Interview with Lawyer, Sept. 17, 2025 (on file with authors).
- ⁴⁰ Personal Communication from Civil Society to The Advocates for Human Rights, Oct. 9, 2025 (on file with authors).
- ⁴¹ Communication from Civil Society, *Research for Information Strategies for State Plan to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence 2024–2029*, sent Sept. 7, 2025 (unofficial translation) (on file with authors), at 6.
- ⁴² Interview with Lawyer, Sept. 17, 2025 (on file with authors).
- ⁴³ Interview with Lawyer, Sept. 17, 2025 (on file with authors).
- ⁴⁴ Communication from Civil Society, *Research for Information Strategies for State Plan to Prevent and Combat Domestic Violence 2024–2029*, sent Sept. 7, 2025 (unofficial translation) (on file with authors), at 5 (describing the amendments to the Law on Police).
- ⁴⁵ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Latvia*, (16 July 2021), U.N. Doc A/HRC/48/15 ¶ 132.75 Increase its efforts to counteract xenophobia and combat stereotypes and prejudices in political discourse, including for Roma who continue to face barriers to education, employment and access to services (New Zealand); ¶ 132.76 Take further measures to eliminate racial discrimination, including that

against the Roma people (Japan); ¶ 132.77 Take effective legislative and administrative measures to eliminate discrimination against ethnic minorities including Roma, Asians and people of Asian descent (China); ¶ 132.163 Redouble efforts to integrate into the labour market Roma women, women from other ethnic minorities, migrants, women with disabilities and women from rural areas (Peru); ¶ 132.185 Strengthen efforts to protect the human rights of Roma people and take further concrete steps towards improving the situation of Roma children's access to education (Australia).

⁴⁶ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Latvia*, (July 16, 2021), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/48/15/Add.1, ¶ 132.77 (stating that Article 91 of the Constitution contains a general prohibition of discrimination and Articles 149.1 and 150 of the Criminal Law criminalize violations of this prohibition).

⁴⁷ Council of Europe, *Report Submitted by Latvia Pursuant to Article 68, Paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Baseline Report)*, Mar. 25, 2025, GREVIO/INF(2025)2, ¶ 8.

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State, *2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Latvia*, Sec. 6 Discrimination and Societal Abuses: Systemic Racial or Ethnic Violence and Discrimination.

⁴⁹ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), *ECRI Report on Latvia (sixth monitoring cycle)*, Council of Europe, June 19, 2025, ¶¶ 65–74, available at <https://rm.coe.int/sixth-report-on-latvia/1680b66aea>.

⁵⁰ Interview with Professor, Sept. 22, 2025 (on file with authors).

⁵¹ Interview with Professor, Sept. 22, 2025 (on file with authors).

⁵² Interview with Professor, Sept. 22, 2025 (on file with authors).

⁵³ Women's NGOs Cooperation Network, *Mid-term Report on the Execution of Contract No. 2.5-12.5*, 2025 (on file with authors).

⁵⁴ Women's NGOs Cooperation Network, *Mid-term Report on the Execution of Contract No. 2.5-12.5*, 2025 (on file with authors).

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State, *2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Latvia*, Sec. 6 Discrimination and Societal Abuses: Systemic Racial or Ethnic Violence and Discrimination.

⁵⁶ Personal Communication from Civil Society to The Advocates for Human Rights, Oct. 9, 2025 (on file with authors).

⁵⁷ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), *ECRI Report on Latvia (sixth monitoring cycle)*, Council of Europe, June 19, 2025, ¶ 71, available at <https://rm.coe.int/sixth-report-on-latvia/1680b66aea>.

⁵⁸ European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), *ECRI Report on Latvia (sixth monitoring cycle)*, Council of Europe, June 19, 2025, ¶ 71, available at <https://rm.coe.int/sixth-report-on-latvia/1680b66aea>.

⁵⁹ Personal Communication from Civil Society to The Advocates for Human Rights, Oct. 9, 2025 (on file with authors).

⁶⁰ Cabinet of Ministers, *Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for 2024–2029*, Order No. 1221, Dec. 19, 2024 (Minutes No. 54, § 38), available at <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/357535-vardarbibas-pret-sievieti-un-vardarbibas-gimene-noversanas-un-apkarosanas-plans-2024-2029-gadam>.

⁶¹ N. Milenković, *Nowhere to Turn: Gender-based Violence against Roma Women* (2018), at 3 (report focuses on Roma populations of Albania, Montenegro, and North Macedonia).

⁶² Ministry of Culture, *Government Approves Plan for Roma Inclusion and Participation Measures until 2027*, Aug. 27, 2025, available at https://www.km.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/valdiba-apstiprina-planu-romu-ieklausanas-un-lidzdalibas-pasakumiem-lidz-2027-gadam?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F.

⁶³ Cabinet of Ministers, *Plan for the Implementation of the Measures of the Roma Strategic Framework for 2024–2027*, Order No. 709, Aug. 27, 2024, Secs. III–IV, available at <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/354561-plansromu-strategiska-ietvara-pasakumu-istenosana-2024-2027-gadam>.

⁶⁴ Ministry of Culture, *Government Approves Plan for Roma Inclusion and Participation Measures until 2027*, Aug. 27, 2025, available at https://www.km.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/valdiba-apstiprina-planu-romu-ieklausanas-un-lidzdalibas-pasakumiem-lidz-2027-gadam?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F.

⁶⁵ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Latvia*, (July 16, 2021), U.N. Doc A/HRC/48/15, ¶ 132.164 Help people with disabilities to access employment in the open labour market, in inclusive environments and on the basis of equality with others (Côte d'Ivoire); ¶ 132.171 Ensure inclusive health policies and equal access to health care for persons with disabilities, including persons with Down syndrome and their families (Philippines); ¶ 132.181 Take the necessary measures to guarantee the full enjoyment of the rights of

persons with disabilities, in particular in the field of education (France); ¶132.182 Continue efforts to ensure access to education for all children and ensure that no child is refused admission to schools based on disability (Maldives); ¶132.183 Take steps to improve the accessibility of inclusive education for children with disabilities (Malta); ¶132.184 Provide adequate training and resources to public schools and teachers to ensure that the regulations establishing the requirements for general schools to be able to admit students with special needs can be fully implemented to enable inclusive education for children with disabilities (Singapore); ¶132.218 Continue its efforts to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities (Viet Nam); ¶132.219 Maintain the achievements registered in mainstreaming the interests of persons with disabilities (Ethiopia); ¶132.220 Strengthen efforts to further promote the rights of persons with disabilities (Japan); ¶132.221 Strengthen the development of various policies to ensure the full enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities (Turkmenistan); ¶132.222 Strengthen ongoing efforts to ensure the full enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly by improving accessibility to general health services for all persons with disabilities (Republic of Korea); ¶132.223 Continue to develop policies to ensure the full enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly in terms of inclusive education and accessibility, as previously recommended (Israel); ¶132.224 Take measures to ensure an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities and for their full and effective participation in society, including access to inclusive education and labour opportunities (Portugal); ¶132.225 Coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including ensuring an adequate standard of living for persons with disabilities and facilitating the accessibility for students with disabilities to quality, inclusive education (Czechia); ¶132.226 Adopt a new action plan on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Montenegro); ¶132.227 Continue improving the availability of education and involvement in politics to persons with disabilities (Greece); ¶132.228 Consider progressive law reforms to ensure the full legal capacity of persons with disabilities through a decision-making regime that respects their autonomy, will and preferences (Fiji); ¶132.229 Enhance efforts to achieve complete deinstitutionalization of all persons with disabilities (Bulgaria).

⁶⁶ Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Latvia*, (July 16, 2021), U.N. Doc. A/HRC/48/15/Add.1, ¶ 132.229 (Noted).

⁶⁷ European Disability Forum, *Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities in the European Union* (Brussels: EDF, May 2021), at 3, 11, available at <https://www.edf-feph.org/content/uploads/2021/05/final-EDF-position-paper-on-Violence-against-women-and-girls-with-disabilities-in-the-European-Union.pdf>.

⁶⁸ European Disability Forum, *Violence against Women and Girls with Disabilities in the European Union* (Brussels: EDF, May 2021), at 11 (“Interpreters or alternative communication channels are almost never considered”); see also Republic of Latvia, *State Report of Latvia Addressed to the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Mar. 2025), Sec. IV.B (no reference to disability-accessible hotlines).

⁶⁹ Interview with Lawyer, Sept. 17, 2025 (on file with authors).

⁷⁰ Interview with Professor, Sept. 22, 2025 (on file with authors).

⁷¹ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), *National Human Rights: Latvia Report*, 2024, at 55, available at <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/Latvia-Report.pdf>.

⁷² United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), *National Human Rights: Latvia Report*, 2024, at 55, available at <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/Latvia-Report.pdf>.

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