

# The Mechanisms of Hotline in Responding to Gender Based Violence in the Directorate of Combating Violence Against Women & Family- Erbil

### Research project

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#### **Abstract**

This research focused on the mechanisms of Hotline in responding to GBV cases in Domestic violence. I proceeded with this topic because, despite the Hotline's significance and seriousness, not everyone is aware of it, and since both the reported and unreported victim counts are rising daily. It used a qualitative approach to gather information and conducted interviews with 10 hotline staff members and their supervisor. The investigation revealed that the hotline has had set procedures and mechanisms for dealing with the cases ever since it was established, and hat the employees are graduates of many different institutions and departments. The emphasis was on the employees' knowledge and experience when responding to victims, as well as the trainings and seminars they attended. The hotline employees helped and saved many cases and victims despite the shortcomings and gaps in the Hotline.

#### Acknowledgment

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Last but not least, I want to express my gratitude to everyone who helped me, directly or indirectly, finish the study project.

#### **Dedication**

My devotion to my ever-loving parents who have never left me with lasting spiritual sentiments. My research project is dedicated to my family, relatives, friends, and everyone who was a part of my journey. Honorable mentions also go to my supervisor *Mrs. Dunya Mirdan*, and all of my teachers as well.

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# **Chapter One**

### List of abbreviation

GBV Gender-Based Violence

DCVAW General Directorate of Combating Violence against Women

UNFPA United Nations Population Fund

IT Information Technology

GPS Global Positioning System

IDHS Illinois Department of Human Services

#### 1.1Introduction

In the Kurdistan region, a directorate for combating violence has been informed and established since 2011 according to the Law and the policies of the government, yet cases of violations have been increased. Cases are often documented, but the main concern lies in in unreported ones. Focusing on the Hotline to highlight how the Directorate of Combating Violence against Women and Family (DCVAW) responds to such circumstances is the attempt that I am trying to figure out. Issues and difficulties between the employees, the mechanism of the work in the center, and the actual situation might also result from the overall lack of social awareness about Hotline. The significance of a hotline center in the Kurdish community is likewise not well known. Considering how much attention has gone into promoting awareness of the Hotline.

In 2018, the hotline center in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Duhok was financially supported by UNFPA<sup>1</sup>). The family counselor is an essential member of the DCVAW. The increase of violation cases and the need to mitigate it were the reason for the formation of the Hotline center. Therefore the initiative started with a 24-hour free hotline to give legal, psychiatric, and social assistance to the rescue of violent situations. Employees are not all university graduates, they are either specialties or high school graduates, with one being legal and the other being psychiatric and social professionals. All employees have been trained as a result of the installation of the hotline.

The General-Directorate for Combating Violence against Women and Families establishes the direction for how the center operates. However, It only has one local ministry order, and that one created the hotline division at the center and erected a memorial for the Family Counseling Centre. Legal and social therapy will be provided to survivors who require counseling. Those in danger of being sent to the relevant authorities, such as the police station, security, hospital or court, if they have a high risk of life, will be sent to the residence of the case. Employees often listen to cases first so they can examine them and determine how to assess the cases and to where they should be referred.

In the hotline center, a database of all callers' basic information, the nature of the problem, the type of violence perpetrated against them, the perpetrator(s), and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ministry of Interior: General Directorate of Combating Violence Against Women. 2018

geographic location is documented, however, it is permitted to be accessed considering the confidentiality of these cases. Additionally, there is no set period of time after which the line must be closed, so they can continue speaking as long as they like, despite that it is a free line. Although the hotline center operates in accordance with instructions, there are occasionally some circumstances that go outside of the scope of the government's power, for example, if the attacker is outside the country and his identification is not disclosed or known, government authorities cannot assist the victim inside the country.

One of the main challenges for the hotline center was that when it first started, many from traditional backgrounds as well as those who are closed-minded had different opinions on such facilities due to their beliefs and the social taboos. They often contacted the hotline and used abusive language complaining that they are sabotaging the community

This hotline's mission is to lessen domestic abuse, especially violence against women. Through this facility, people can contact the hotline to request psychiatric, social, and legal help, as well as to demonstrate to them that there are rules and regulations on which they can rely.

#### 1.2 Research Problem

On a daily bases, people hear about so many GBV cases, Gender-based violence refers to damaging acts done towards a person based on their gender. It is based on gender inequity, and misuse of power, and it is a serious violation of human rights, and life-threatening, health, and protection issues. Inflicted physical, sexual, psychological, and financial harm can be categorized as gender-based violence. Female genital mutilation, child marriage, intimate relationship violence, and so-called "Honor killing" are just a few examples of the numerous forms existed violations in Iraq (UNHCR, 2022).

Nevertheless, there are cases that are not reported even with the existence of the hotline. One might say that the reason for this is the lack of social awareness, and not realizing the existence of such center. Here we can meet the responses of Hotline to GBV cases, by using many mechanisms, which can be by providing them the legal, social, and psychological support, and counseling as well. While it can also cause difficulties and problems between the employees and the whole center, and the case itself, because of the lack of social awareness about the hotline, which is the main character in this situation<sup>2</sup>

The lack of social awareness and not having enough information or even about the services and the background of the hotline center can cause real damage which is not realizing the importance and the seriousness of such centers and how helpful they can be. Furthermore, difficulties and threats against hotline staff can cause serious harm due to a lack of knowledge and social awareness in society. Also, not understanding the significance of a hotline center in the Kurdish community.

Not trusting nor relying on the employees who are responsible in responding to the cases is also another challenge because the cases think if they call they might not find any response, also they might fear disseminating their information in public. As well as the limitation of time for the case when they contact the hotline employees as they're afraid to be heard by their families and relatives.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Safin 2022

### 1.3 Research Objective

This research aims to gain an understanding of the mechanisms of Hotline in responding to GBV cases and domestic violations, and I will accomplish this aim by meeting the following objectives:

- 1. Explaining the mechanisms of Hotline when responding to GBV cases.
- 2. To explain the background of the employees and their experiences and to make a link between the employees and how well they are trained and how effective it is.
- 3. To what extent the center is responsive by its employees for reported cases.
- 4. How practitioners in the hotline center provide services.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

- 1. What are the mechanisms of responding to GBV cases (domestic violation)?
- 2. What qualifications do employees have who are recruited and are responsible to respond to cases?
- 3. Do employee practitioners receiving regular training in practicing their profession?
- 4. What are the reasons that maintain some cases un-reported?

### 1.5 **Definition of concepts**

#### 1.5.1 Response mechanism

By response mechanism, I mean methods in which practitioners use to respond to GBV cases. It is the implementation process that practitioners apply on hotline

#### 1.5.2 Hotline

Collins dictionary defined hotline as follows "A hotline is a phone line that the public can use to contact an organization about a particular subject. Hotlines allow people to obtain information from an organization or to give the organization information." (Collins English dictionary)

Whereas the DCVAW hotline ISIS a phone line number where the public can reach a service provider, the person who answers the calls and provides counseling and assistance in addition to reporting their situation.

#### **1.5.3 GBV case**

Gender-based violence against women has been acknowledged as a worldwide health and development concern by the United Nations, and various policies, public education, and action initiatives aiming at reducing gender-based violence have been implemented around the world (Russo and Pirlott, 2006).

The UNHCR defined GBV as follows "Gender-based violence (GBV) is a serious human rights violation and major public health issue."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> (UNHCR, UNHCR Policy on the prevention of, risk mitigation, and response to Gender-Based Violence (2020).

#### 1.5.4 Domestic violence

A word used to describe the physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of women by male partners. Man-made abuse can involve social isolation, intimidation, bullying, and demeaning behavior, as well as economic deprivation (*Thomas and Pierson.*, 2010. P.178).

There are several terms for domestic violence, including intimate partner abuse, family violence, wife pounding, battering, marital abuse, and partner abuse. Domestic violence is a pattern of several physical, sexual, and/or psychological actions committed by a current or former intimate partner rather than a single act (Hornor, 2005, p.206-212).

However, in the Law in Kurdistan region of Iraq defines: domestic violence is any act, remark, or threat of an act based on gender in a family bond formed by marriage, blood to the fourth degree, or anyone else who is legally a member of the family, which may cause physical harm, sexual harm, psychological pain, or deprive a person of their freedom and liberties.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Act No. 8 From 2011: The Act of Combating Domestic Violence in Kurdistan region of Iraq.

### **Chapter Two**

#### **Literature Review**

In this literature review I will present the mechanisms of Hotline, and demonstrate the reality to show the gap or the needs if there was any, as well as showing the reason why Hotline have been established. Then worldwide I found some researches and articles that argue about the Hotline and what mechanisms they use in general.

Slem's research in 1973 entitled 'Crisis Phone Services: Evaluation of a Hotline Program', showed that a Hotline telephone crisis intervention service was investigated in terms of its historical roots as well as its current orientation and operation. The hotline was described as a model of a modern community-based mental health service staffed by nonprofessionals. The program was evaluated by surveying consumers in the target population, analyzing data collected from the actual Hotline operation, and examining juvenile court records. Also mentioned that an estimated 500 crisis phone services now exist in the United States, and here more Hotline was needed. Slem's research focuses on the direction and operation of a Hotline telephone service. It presents a paradigm for assessing such a program. He also highlighted that there are three types of phone services available to people suffering from mental illnesses. Type I is primarily informative and is regarded to be a development of social agency referral systems. Type II systems are found in larger multiservice businesses like crisis centers. Suicide Hotline is a type III system with no operational or financial ties to any other organization and no face-to-face services. By his research explained that the Hotline was established to achieve three key objectives. which include assisting callers in resolving general issues with living with family members and friends, assisting callers in dealing with immediate crises (drug problems, intense anxiety, suicidal thoughts), and serving as a resource for the community by providing information about current adolescent problems and potential grounds for further community action. For their methodology, they used A "Community Awareness Questionnaire" to assess Hotline's effectiveness. Respondents were asked to assess a variety of community services, including some purposefully obscure services. Questions were arranged so that recall questions preceded items requiring recognition and/or ratings (Slem, & Cotler, 1973,P 219). In contrast, the hotline in Iraqi Kurdistan was established due to a rise in the number of victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence. Moreover, they only

offer limited social, legal, and psychological help; in emergency situations, they may also direct clients to the hospital, police station, or judge's court, or sometimes they only provide some counselling services. Beside that we need Hotlines for several reasons, including Immediate assistance, Confidentiality, Information and referral and Support and advocacy. Overall, hotlines play an important role in providing support, assistance, and resources to people in need, and can help to connect individuals with the help and services they need to overcome challenges and improve their lives.

However, in a Journal of interpersonal violence, under a title of Effectiveness of Hotline, Advocacy, Counseling, and Shelter Services for Victims of Domestic Violence: A Statewide Evaluation which was first published online on July 2, 2016 by Bennett, to proved that domestic violence programs for victims of domestic violence are an essential component of community-based violence prevention efforts (Bennett, 2016). The aim of the project was to collect and analyze one fiscal year's worth of data on how well these services served victims of domestic violence. The evaluation of these programs is both recent and restricted in scope. Program evaluation may necessitate scientific and administrative resources that are beyond the capabilities of small, local shelters. Domestic violence agencies offer a variety of services to victims of domestic violence, including, crisis phone number, guidance, emergency shelter, and advocacy Shelter stays can lessen the frequency and intensity of fresh violence, but the outcomes are dependent on whether the woman has made major adjustments in her life prior to entering the shelter. Data collection and analysis of data from 54 IDHS-funded domestic violence programs were carried out by staff at shelters, hotlines, and advocacy groups. Questionnaires were put in sealed even clients' sealed envelopes and mailed to the evaluation team by designated agency staff. The surveys were distributed by hotline and advocacy workers before and after each client's services. Women who received advocacy, shelter, a hotline, or counseling services from one of the 54 state-funded domestic violence programs in Illinois were eligible to participate in this study. The data support the effectiveness of domestic abuse interventions in all five service areas studied. The data were self-reported, there were no control groups, and large quantities of data were missing at the time of follow-up. By improving the outcome measure and employing comparison groups, the assessment of domestic violence treatments can be improved. Domestic violence service providers work with women

who have suffered much more than physical abuse. The modest effects discovered in this assessment of women's abuse programs were to be expected (Bennett & Wasco, 2004). The impact of advocacy, support, and counseling on women will depend on their individual circumstances and the specific services they receive. However, in general, women who receive these types of services may experience a range of positive outcomes, such as Improved emotional well-being, Increased safety and security, Improved social support and Increased empowerment and self-efficacy. Furthermore, advocacy, support, and counseling can play a critical role in helping women, men and children to heal from trauma, violence and addiction.. etc, rebuild their lives, and move forward in a positive direction.

An article published by Richard P. Kusserow in February 2014 about 'Essential Policies and Procedures for Effective Hotline Programs', which showed the importance of how the hotline employees have to be and the policy of the place. Richard focused that hotlines are an important communication route for healthcare businesses, and they play an important role in their compliance operations. Employees must be aware of and eager to use hotlines for them to be effective. As a result, procedures must be made to guarantee that the hotline is run professionally and that each contact is treated consistently. Establishing rules and processes with defined objectives and standards is one method to guarantee this. It is also worth noting that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the Department of Health and Human Services emphasizes the need of establishing documented policies and procedures in their compliance program guidance publications. He then discussed a number of hotline-related regulations and processes that help to develop and enhance the hotline program. Included that the Hotline Operation Policy gives workers more avenues to report any misconduct. Also, Managers and employees have a responsibility to disclose any suspected misconduct since failing to do so might result to adverse action. As well as the non-retaliation policy forbids retaliation against workers who in good faith disclose suspected misconduct or concerns, and any employee who does so will face disciplinary action up to and including termination. Organizations should have anonymity policy to ensure employees can report suspected wrong doing anonymously, fostering a sense of security and encouraging more willingness to report. In addition to this as well that those who report issues and want that their identities be kept anonymous shall have their confidentially safeguarded under the Confidentiality Policy and

Anonymity Policy. The answering procedure should guarantee uniformity, accuracy, professionalism, and the secrecy and privacy of callers. The Compliance Office and the Human Resources Department are formally connected under the Coordination of Effort Policy to share reports and address pressing issues. And in his last two points was focusing on that the employees should report problems or information in "good faith" if they think it is factual, but misuse of the hotline policy should be discouraged. And finally, the Hotline Records Management Policy specifies how hotline reports and related materials are received, generated, and documented in both electronic and hardcopy modes. A typical document management policy dictates which records should be kept or destroyed and for how long. Some records must be kept for a specific amount of time (Kusserow, 2014). Hotline employees should be trained to handle sensitive situations and should have excellent communication skills, including active listening and empathy. They should be knowledgeable about the issues or topics that the hotline covers and should have the ability to remain calm and professional under pressure. In terms of policy, the hotline should have clear guidelines and protocols for handling different types of calls or situations, including escalation procedures if necessary. Confidentiality and data protection policies should also be in place to protect the privacy of callers and their information. Additionally, hotline employees should receive ongoing training and support to ensure they are equipped to handle the emotional toll that their work can take on them. This includes access to counseling or other resources as needed. Overall, the policies and procedures of a hotline should prioritize the well-being and safety of callers while also providing a supportive and empowering environment for employees.

While in Kurdistan region Iraq hotline center has been established for the purpose of decreasing domestic violence and GBV cases, which are the most common cases in Kurdistan. The mechanisms of responding that have been used are either legal, psychological or counseling supports. However, for the urgent cases they use other methods and take different steps. From the beginning of the establishment of this center untill now the rate of connection of cases is increasing year by year. The data shows that 189 persons in 2018 had approached the Hotline in Erbil, then raised to 1,269 persons in 2019, till it reached 3,415 persons by 2021. But in Sulaymaniyah the first data shows that it started with 685 persons in 2018, then got the highest rate which is 6,686 persons in 2020, then the reached cases decreased to 2950 by 2021

which maybe the Covid has affected the reported cases obviously, Domestic violence is more likely to occur as a result of COVID-19's conditions, which include lockdowns, social isolation strategies, and an increase in calls to Hotlines and support agencies. In Duhok in 2018 only 440 persons reached the hotline center, then it increased to 4,872 persons in 2019 then again decreased by 2021 to 1,709 persons. So, these data prove that such Hotline are active in providing legal, psychological, and social support. People can rely on the hotline center to keep their life safe and trust them enough to share their cases with them.

Relying on the previous studies and researches it is apparent that each hotline center has been established after facing a phenomenon such as mental illness, domestic violence, suicide, and GBV cases, etc. As a comparison it can be observed that in KRI we only have one official hotline center which is 24 hours 7 days a week works to serve for the cases. Meanwhile there are many different categories of the Hotline abroad, using different approaches and mechanisms to help the cases.

The argument that I would like to build is whether the hotline center satisfies the needs of the cases by using their specific mechanisms or there should be changes in the methods, approaches and mechanisms. As well as the importance of capacity building for the employees. Moreover, one might argue that the lack of professionality in practicing in the field can also effect on the way of applying the mechanisms, they must commit to putting social professionals on the hotline. If we are to be realistic, the employees of the hotline, and even all those who reply to the case, must hold a scientific profession of social work with a skilled capacity, because they have studied and practiced this part to some level and know how to deal with the issue in all areas. Also, the carelessness in the field of technology, IT and the communication network is always a major issue. Sometimes the concern is the location of some unreachable areas, as many might be out of the network coverage, which makes us question the seriousness of the available service as the circumstances of the case should be considered if they are under a severe risk or threat. . While another point is the lack of enough employees which creates pressure on the place and the employee at the same time, then the employee will not be able to respond to the case well.

Although there is hotline center in KRI but still we can indicate that the number of GBV cases and domestic violence are increasing. Based on the given data and the

explanation for the obstacles and challenges in the hotline center, we can conclude that the gap lays in the mechanism itself and the implantation of it.

### Chapter three

### Methodology

#### 3.1 Method

It was preferable for the researcher to choose the qualitative method which is the most suitable approach because the ability of qualitative research to produce detailed textual descriptions of how people experience a given study subject is one of its strengths. Qualitative methods are effective in allowing for in-depth exploration of topics, providing valuable and rich insight. Also, noticed remarks during conducting open-ended interviews, and written documents are analyzed in qualitative research. (*Patton, 2005.*)

For collecting the information, a qualitative approach was the best option. Therefore, I chose Semi-structured interview method because it was the most appropriate method to be used which combines a set of open questions with the possibility for the interviewer to go deeper into specific themes or responses. Moreover, I decide to choose my samples purposely, the participant should be those employees that deal with the GBV cases in the hotline center because they know the mechanisms and contact the cases directly, as well as the managers since they have the full information about the center and its employees.

### 3.2 Sampling and Data Collection

Hotline consists of 12 employees including the supervisor. Their time hours are multiplied to two shifts, the first shift (morning) is from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. And the second shift (evening) is from 3:00 pm to 8:00 am. Throughout the shift, there are just two persons present. women in the morning shift and men in the evening shift. Because of their shift timings, I had to visit them at different times for interviews. I interviewed two of them via the phone since they were unavailable at the hotline due to vacations, while the others I interviewed in person. One of the employees did not attend the interview due to personal reasons and a lack of time.

### Hotline employee's biography:

Age	Male	Female	Marital	Grade
			statues	
32-36	4	4	7 married	4 Bachelor's degree in (Law and
			1 single	Politics, Computer science,
				Sociology, International Relations)
				1 Diploma in (IT)
				3 (12 grade graduated)
36-40	3		Married	2 Bachelor's degree in (Sociology)
				1 (12 grade graduated)

#### 3.3 Research obstacles

Each researcher faces different obstacles, depending on the type of research. In this research, I faced more than one problem, including the lack of previous research to rely on and use as a reference. In addition, I had difficulty accessing official papers and data regarding the establishment of the place. Also one of the employees gave me wrong information about the place and the employees, the limited access to some of the employees who worked in different shifts obliged me to revisit the location many times and set different timeline over and over until I was able to conduct my interviews. Despite that some of them where very concerned in providing me with information.

### **Chapter Four**

### 4.1 Data analysis

I came across several significant data and information that need discussion when gathering information and questioning the employees in order to obtain information and ascertain the facts. Although they all operate in the same space and make use of the same processes, there were various points of view. I will try to analyze the data using some thematic approaches as following.

None of the following names exist, they are only used in purpose to help analyze the data.

#### Academic requirements for practicing in the Hotline

As it is mentioned in the employee's biography previously, none of the practitioners are certified from social work or any relevant profession. The lack of social work graduates or experts causes a invalidity in the process of dealing with and supporting the case, because the social worker's approach of thinking differs from the graduates of other departments. The social worker is able to think critically and effectively using the studies, research, and ideas that they have studied. The way an employee from the Faculty of Computer Science and an employee from the Faculty of Social Work respond differs depending on their academic, scientific, and practical experience. The case will undoubtedly affect the employee's experiences since the employee's response to the case will alter the psychology of the case and his life, thus it is necessary to have social workers in the field in hotline.

### Capacity building for the staff

According to the encounter with hotline employees, they receive two trainings each year, once every six months, and this training focuses on law, psychology, and social support. Employees compile daily reports by entering case information into the database, which will be used to generate a monthly report to gather data more readily. They also stated that they have a supervisor that assists the hotline personnel with the collected cases and holds meetings as needed. However, in general, the supervisor does not provide them daily instructions or advise; instead, the instructions are only given when the employees require them.

### Lack of skills and acknowledge

It was clear from interviewing the employees and gathering and analyzing their information that some of the employees lacked strong information or background on the mechanisms and alternative methods, which means that if there is an exceptional case, there is a high probability that some of the employees won't be able to help the case completely or almost completely because, as I previously mentioned, the lack of social workers in the field in hotline can effect such exception cases. Unprofessionalism can have a significant negative impact on the response to cases of gender-based violence (GBV) and domestic violence. Unprofessionalism can manifest in various ways, such as inadequate training, lack of empathy or sensitivity, failure to follow established procedures, or engaging in behaviors that can retraumatize survivors.

#### The mechanisms of responding to the cases

The responses varied somewhat in terms of the mechanisms they use to approach the problem. Employees giving different response or inaccurate information casts doubt on this claim due to incompetence. As Sara, Ahmed, Karzan, Anna, and Marwa described their processes, "Our method consists of three phases, which are to introduce ourselves, the location and the services we offer in the second step, and then to listen to the case in order to understand their demands in the third step." The processes of their work are as follows: first, we introduce ourselves, then we inquire about the case's circumstances, and last, we describe our services, which include legal, social, and psychological assistance. This is where Mr. Azad and Mr. Yasir's answers diverged from the earlier responses. Then we request both general and specific information from them, which is then entered into the database. After that, we forward it to the proper ministry, center, or organization based on the problem. Then, in addition to their supervisor, I questioned two additional employees, and they detailed the methods in full and clearly, as follows: (To begin, when people contact us, they will receive information about the hotline and services in Arabic and Kurdish, and this will be in the waiting time until the staff answers, which is within 50 seconds. When the employee responds, they identify themselves and ask the case, "How can I assist you?" After listening to the case, they explain the services they provide; if the case only requires guidance or instruction, the employee can provide it; if they require more, they will ask the case for personal and general information, enroll it in the database, prepare a report, and send it to people in higher positions than them and specialists. Although some staff stated that it is for 40 seconds, we

corrected the facts by phoning the helpline and timing the seconds. The lack of vital information or failure to put it in the first place might be seen as neglect or unprofessionalism on the part of certain workers. On the other hand, they have a number of employees who have comprehensive knowledge and follow the necessary actions.

#### Mechanism update

When I questioned whether there had been any changes to the mechanisms since the hotline's inception up until this point, I received three different responses, which it implies that none of the employees have the same information or knowledge: he first was "no, nothing has changed since the establishment of the place up until now," the second was "yes, only one thing has changed, which is the exchange of information that is given to the case within 50 seconds," and the third and final response was "As a result of the development of this department". Because people's needs and mindset have changed, and since there are more working women and educated women now, not modifying or upgrading the processes will result in a gap being created. We must now have more organizations and sections, which implies more linkages with them and more subject-matter experts.

Then we addressed the mechanism again in order to obtain more and more accurate information. In this we discussed the necessary changes or if they need any change in their mechanisms and steps, and the response was divided into two groups: some said we do not need any change because it is good as it is, while the second group demanded changes from the techniques, which is the lack of a system to locate (GPS) the aggressor or abuser. "We need a system that detects the location (GPS) of the caller when he phones us or to locate People who threaten victims through social media by using phony identities," each of Sara, Adam, Yasir, Amir, Marwa and Zana stated. They also advocated advancements in the place and develop it. The question about the employee's opinion on the positive changes needed for the hotline provided me with answers, but it also generated more questions, and from the answers they provided, they explained the changes they require, according to Azad, Adam, Zana, and Karzan, they demanded to attend more seminars and training for development and to provide their best. At the same time, Mr. Adam had other claims and proposals, such as offering more special services to our families, i.e. the families of the employees, as he indicated, and saying that other governments provide complete

support and services to hotline workers, as well as health insurance. They also requested increased emphasis and attention on social media platforms in order to raise awareness. Some even wanted the presence of a dedicated team to work on the GPS, while others agreed to create another hotline in the affected areas and communities. They also requested that the Ministry of Culture create a collaboration program on media and publications, the majority of which are uncensored. Also, to work on fixing their line because some cases are unable to contact them due to a poor connection. "There must be a complete system according to all agencies and ministries, i.e. the same number of contacts for all of them," one of the employees said.

#### The gaps in the mechanisms

When people want to change, there must be a gap, which some workers noted, and we have previously addressed one of them, which is the need for a system to discover places (GPS) s readily and quickly as feasible. Then Mr. Azad, Adam, and Mr. Yasir remarked that there is pressure on the staff, which he meant that they have a limited number of employees while there are many instances, therefore they need something to help and support them mentally. Then Azad, Anna and Zana stated that there are some difficulties with the calling lines and connections, particularly with Korek Telecom<sup>5</sup>they stated that some cases wanted to call us but were unable to reach us. This link can be a severe issue, since what if someone's life was in danger and they tried to phone the hotline but couldn't get through? How about them? Following that, Mr. Azad noted that there is a gap between their social media platform and general sharing awareness, which they need to focus on more in order to be recognized to more people.

### IT support from the administrative part

When there is a chance of a serious situation at a time when the line may not operate or there is a defect in the communication network, the lack of efficiency or speed in fixing the malfunction and maintenance in the area endangers the lives of people. As the workers made clear, they repeatedly urged for the communication network to be fixed. They also sought the appearance of a whole team with expertise in computers

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Korek Telecom is an Iraqi Kurdish mobile phone operator company in Erbil, Kurdistan Region.

to determine the victim's address, as soon as they phoned the hotline, by which they meant the GPS specialist.

#### The mechanism effectiveness on the cases

All the employees agreed that the hotline is very important for the citizen and they get to benefit from it one of the interviewees mentioned that "we have saved many lives, because when they call us they just need someone to talk to, so when they do with us they calm down and forget about all the bad thought just like suicide for example. The other good thing about here is that people feel more relaxed to express their feelings because it's not face-to-face."

#### The collaboration and relationships with other relevant institutions

We reached a conclusion after discussing their collaboration and communication with other ministries, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and departments, which is that they must maintain continuous relations with all Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs, the most important of which are the police and security forces, as well as the Ministry of Health. Furthermore, they have excellent relationships with organizations, the most significant coordination is UNFPA, which provides moral support to all staff as well as lectures, trainings, and workshops.

respondents highlighted the collaboration saying that: "The organizations send cases to us when they require our assistance, and at the same time they give seminars, trainings, workshops, and psychological support to the staff, as well as attorneys, psychological counselors, and social workers when we need them. When the police and security forces are unable to access a case or when a case requires immediate assistance due to their critical circumstances, the security forces dispatch a detachment to bring or rescue the case. Hospitals and the Ministry of Health assist us by preparing medical reports for instances that require them to be sent to court or for inquiry. Also, when there are patients in the hospital who need to speak with someone, they phone the hotline. They also have links with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, which sends women to shelters where they are safeguarded. However, depending on the situations, the obligations and contributions to each other might be adjusted." (Adam, male. 34 years old.).

#### **Types of cases**

Then we had a comprehensive talk regarding the nature of the situations, all the employees agreed and mentioned the same points which are as follows "we have many various sorts of cases some of them only requires some instructions or counselling while some others are sever instances which demands an instant response. Those who are subjected to rape, assault, or abuse, as well as those who are imprisoned at home, require prompt assistance. As well as youngsters who are victims of street violence and are homeless."

Some others also stated that they have seen several situations of persons who did not have Iraqi ID, and that they utilize the same process as Iraqis. However, in some severe cases, we must contact the ambassador of the country from which the non-Iraqi citizen came from outside Iraq, or we must send urgent warnings to the nearest embassy or consulate, and vice versa, in some cases, the embassy or ambassador contacts us to send help to the non-Iraqi citizen.

#### Reasons of the increasing number of cases

Regarding the factors that might cause the increase of the GBV cases despite the existence of the hotline, one of the respondents said: "Family awareness in general and women awareness in particular have been reasons for issues, and today women are demanding greater rights and not taking insults. Through the fictitious account, social media abuse and girl deception have also risen, and one of the most significant aspects of the issue is that economic instability has become a concern for families."

#### Covid-19 and the increase number of the case

The findings showed that between 2019 and 2021, the number of cases during the Corona epidemic increased from 3,474 to 5,220. The COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to control its spread have created conditions that can increase the risk of domestic violence. The pandemic has resulted in increased stress, financial insecurity, and social isolation, all of which can exacerbate pre-existing tensions and contribute to an increase in domestic violence incidents. Additionally, lockdowns and social distancing measures have made it difficult for victims of domestic violence to access support services and escape abusive situations. Similarly, some countries reported a significant increase in calls to helplines and support services related to domestic violence. However, it is important to note that COVID-19 is not

the cause of domestic violence. Rather, it has created conditions that make it more likely for incidents to occur. Domestic violence is a complex and pervasive issue that existed long before the pandemic and will require sustained efforts to address it. Here, it is the responsibility of the media and the government to constantly raise knowledge of the hotline's existence and how it can assist people 24/7 via social media platforms.

The most frequent incident was the posting of images on social media, which increased significantly in frequency from 237 in 2020 to 931 in 2021 and resulted in either the victim's suicide or her relatives threatening cases lives. The second most common crime was domestic violence, which had 232 occurrences in 2020 and 718 cases in 2021.

Moreover, there are many other cases that should also be taken into consideration. From the perspective of the increase in cases and their abundance, we can say that it is good that there are those who report, that is, to inform the victim about their cases. Since we know that the hotline is trusted through well, the victim reports and the community as a whole is more aware of the severity of the circumstance as well as their rights and the protection of their lives.

From a different perspective, we may argue that despite the advancement and openness of our society. it is regrettable to witness so many victims and challenging circumstances. Despite widespread awareness campaigns, the presence of hotlines like the one mentioned above, and other resources, violence and threats persist to this day. These numbers only include the depressing cases that were reported; however, if you include the cases that were not reported, you can safely assume that there are many more.

### 4.2 Findings

Using a series of questions, this study sought to examine how Hotline respond to cases of domestic violence with GBV. I conducted interviews as my primary technique of data collection, and I was able to get answers to every question I had. According to the interviews I've conducted on the mechanisms of responding to the cases, the mechanisms were outlined. The case will receive information about the hotline and the services in Arabic and Kurdish when they contact them, and this will happen while they wait for employees to respond, which takes around 50 seconds. The employee introduces themselves and inquires, "How may I serve you?" when the customer answers. After hearing the case, they describe the services they offer; if the case only needs direction or instruction, the employee can give it; if more is needed, they will ask the case for personal and general information, enter it in the database, create a report, and send it to specialists in positions of authority higher than them.

Interviews with the employees revealed that the majority of them had university degrees, with only 4 of the employees having simply received their high school diplomas. They didn't have any graduates of social work as far as their major was concerned; instead, they had graduates of sociology, IT, or international relations.

In accordance with the hotline employees I have interviewed, they had trainings and seminars before beginning their jobs to help them comprehend and know how to handle and respond to the cases. Also, they attend twice a year, or every six months, training sessions with an emphasis on social, psychological, and legal support.

From the start of the hotline's inception till today, there have been a variety of reasons why individuals haven't reported their situations since at first, neither the public nor society were aware of its existence. A place like the hotline was also regarded as taboo and embarrassing for society, particularly Kurdish society, which is seen as patriarchal and adheres to ancient customs and ideas, even when they are unjust toward women. Another issue is that individuals lack faith in the establishment and its personnel, wondering how a stranger could possibly assist them when they are inside their homes. However, as time has gone on and more people have become aware of hotline, along with the work of numerous seminars in the ministries of education and elsewhere, the reasons for not reporting their cases have changed. One of these reasons is that people are skeptical of the location in that

they do not comprehend or recognize its significance and seriousness, or the benefits that the hotline can provide Due to the aggressor's presence at the victim's house or close by, most incidents do not afford the victim the time or chance to phone the hotline. Add to this the fact that in isolated and poor areas there is no hotline.

Consequently, the causes differ according on the time, place, and the type of instance. Moreover, regardless of how much awareness is raised, there will always be a void within a certain population.

### **Chapter Five**

#### 5.1 conclusion

I reached these conclusions based on my research, which revealed that only a few details of the mechanisms have changed but not been updated regularly. Also, hotline staff members are not social workers, which may have an adverse effect on the effectiveness of their responses and their ability to offer aid. However, some employees lack the knowledge and skills necessary to handle severe instances because they don't hold a profession degree that will enable them to practice properly. The trainings, workshops, and seminars in which the staff have attended so far, as well as their expertise and experience in responding to victims, are additional factors to be taken into account. Another point to be considered is and the is the existing needs and gaps that have not been appropriately addressed; as a result, the case's need won't be met in whatsoever situation. We may also claim that some citizens and the tribal individual have an imprint of shame on the Hotline, and count hotline as taboo which prevents some from accepting the place and its services which shows the negative influence of the cultural aspect and the social norms. Despite all of this, the hotline workers were nevertheless able to assist many people, rescue many victims, prevent suicide attempts among teenagers and young adults, etc. In addition to divorce problem remedies, and share awareness on how individuals should be aware of the several ways that a person can defend themselves.

#### 5.2 recommendation

In light of the findings, the research makes the following recommendations:

- 1. The first and most important point is to incorporate employees of Department of Social Work graduates to Hotline.
- 2. Then there is a whole team of computer professionals to discover the victim's or aggressor's address.
- 3. In addition, staff receiving ongoing qualified trainings, workshops, and seminars, not just twice a year to raise their capacity
- 4. Repair and ongoing maintenance on communication networks due to the existence of ongoing communication line difficulties
- 5. Increased emphasis on social networking platforms and promoting awareness via websites
- 6. Spreading more awareness and holding seminars about the presence and significance of the hotline in all schools, colleges, and other institutions as well as in all private and public sectors.
- 7. Focusing on the financial and psychological demands of employees
- 8. Increasing the workforce since they are few in number
- 9. The expansion of locations such as the Hotline, particularly in isolated and undeveloped regions.

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# Appendix

### Appendix (1)- College Support Letter

حكومة أقليم كوردستان العراق رئاسة مجلس الوزراء وزارة التعليم العالى و البحث العلمي رئاسة جامعة صلاح الدين - أربيل كلية الآداب الموارد البشرية



حکومهتی ههریمی کوردستان ـ عیراق سەرۆكايەتى ئەنجومەنى وەزيران وهزارهتی خویندنی بالا و تویژینهوهی زانستی سەرۆكاپەتى زانكۆي سەلاحەدىن ــ ھەولىر كۆلىزى ئاداب

سەرجاوە مرۆپيەكان

Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq Council of Ministers Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific research Salahaddin University - Erbil College of Arts\ Human Resources

No:

زماره: کا ۱۷ - ک

Date:

ریکهوت: ۲۰۲۲ / ۱۱ / ۲۰۲۲ زاینی

بۆ/ بەرێـوەبەرايەتى بەرەنگاربـوونەوەى توندوتيـژى دژى ئـافرەتـان وخێزان/ھەولێـر

ب/ ئاسانكارى

سلاو و ریـز....

داوا له بەریزتان دەكەین ئاسانكاری بكەن بۇ قوتابی ( زینب فلاح حسن ) قۇناغی چوارەمی بەشى كارى كۆمەلايەتى كۆلترەكەمان بە مەبەستى ئەنجامدانى توپرينەوەى دەرچوون، پێۅیسـتی به هاوکاری بهرێزتانه ، هاوکاریتـان جێگـای رێـزه .

لهگهل ريزدا ٠٠

راگری کۆلیّـژ

وينەپەك بۇ:

- سكرتاريەتى بەرنزراگرى كۆلنىڭ. لەگەل رنزدا...

- بەرىزى.داگرى كۆلىـد. لەگەل رىزدا...

ـ دەركىردە ....

### Appendix (2)- DCVAW Respond to College Support Letter

حكومة أقليم كوردستان العراق حکومهتی ههریّمی کوردستان ـ عیراق رئاسة مجلس الوزراء سەرۆكايەتى ئەنجومەنى وەزيران وزارة التعليم العالي و البحث العلمي وەزارەتى خوێندنى باڵا و توێۯينەوەى زانستى رئاسة جامعة صلاح الدين ـ أربيل سەرۆكايەتى زانكۆي سەلاحەدىن – ھەوئير كلية الآداب – كۆلىرى ئاداب الموارد البشرية سەرچاوە مرۆپيەكان Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq Council of Ministers Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific research Salahaddin University - Erbil College of Arts Human Resources No: زماره: کا ۱۷ - ک Date: رنکەوت: ، 📉 / ۱۱ / ۲۰۲۲ زاينى بـۆ/ بەرێـوەبەرايەتى بەرەنگاربـوونەوەى توندوتيـژى دژى ئـاڧرەتـان وخێزان/ھەولێـر انکاری بکەن بۆ قـوتـابی ( زینب فلاح بەشى كارى كۆمەلايەتى كۆلپرەكەمان بە مەبەستى ئەنجامدانى تۇرۇپنىۋەي دەرچوون ، ひんない ـ سكرتاريەتى بەريزراگرى كۆلتىر. لەگەل ريزدا ـ بەرىز ى.راگرى كۆلىت. لەگەل رىزدا...

E- mail: Arts . college @su.edu.krd

Iraqi Kurdistan Region- Erbil

عمريمي كوردستاتي عيراق - عمولير

#### **Appendix (3)- Consent Form**



حکومه تی ههریمی کوردستان ــ عیراق و هزار متی خویددی بالا و تویزیده وهی راستی کولیزی ناداب به دی کاری کومه لایه تی

بهٔ بهریوبه رایعتی بهرهدگار بووده و می توند و نیژی نژی نافرهتان و خیزان ـ بعدی هیلی گهرم سانو ریز

#### فؤرمى رمز امعدى

من (رینب فاتح حسن) قوتایی بعنی کاری کومهایاتی له کوانیزی ناداب . کار ناصهر تویزیده ویهک دهکم به داو بیشانی (میکانیزمی هیلی قادرم بؤ وه اداده و فی کمیسهکانی تو نتوزی له بهریوبه ایمتی بهرهنگار بووده وی توند و تیزی داری نادرمی هیلی گادرم بؤ وه اداده و همدا پئویستم به هاوکاری بهریزتاده چاویئکهوتن و چهند پرسیار پُکتان کار استه بکهم میکانیزمی کارکردنی هیلی گادرم بؤ وه ازمداده و می مهمستی سهر مکی من له که جهدادی کهم رایرسیده بریتیه له ( را ایدی کمیسهکانی توند و تیزی ل جیده می و حیزانی). که رایراریاده ی بهریزتان تعیها بؤ معهمستی رانستی به کاری کوهه ازیمتی و مؤ و مرگرتنی برواداه می به کائوریؤس له رانستی کاری کوهه ازیمتی.

هاوكاريكردنتان له وه لامداده وهي راست و دروستي پرسيار مكان جيگهي ريز و سوياسه

#### تىبىدى:

- داوى بەرئزتان ئامارە بئداكريت.
- هەر پرسپارتىكت لە لا روون دەبوو دەكرىت پرسپار لە تونزەر (سۆشپال وۋركەر) لە كاتى ئەجامدادى چاوپىكەوتن بۇ ئەوەى بۆت روون بكەمەوە.
  - هەر پرسیاریک به دلت معبور دمکریت وهلامی معدمیتهوه.
  - 4. تو دارادي له همر كاتيك ويستت باشمكشمي بكمي له چاوييكموتدهكه.
  - ئەو زائىلرىك لاى من بارئزراون وە تەنھا بۇ مەبەستى توئزىدەوەى زائستى بەكاردەفئىرىت.
  - گام رازی بووی نصام ریکوردکردداوهی چاوپذکاوتناکه تکایه نیشانامی راست دابدی له شوئنی دیاری کراو.
    - 7. گامر رازى بووى للمسمر وه لاهداد مومى برسيار مكان تكايه له خوار موه والاوويه كمان بؤ بكه.

نهم معداري و بشتگيريهي نيوه معرز دهر مينيت

(	رازى يىم چاوپئىكەرتەكەريكۇرد بكرئىت (	لايم چاوينكهوشهكه ريكۇرد بكريت ( )
	يعروارا	الروو

# Appendix (4)- Interview Questions (Employees)

رسيار نامه:
رو . اتیاری کهسیهکان
مگرن نثیر ( ) مئ ( ) مگانز: نثیر ( ) مئ ( )
ىغىر ) ئىر )
اری کومهلایعتی: سعلت ( ) خلیزاندار ( ) تعلاقتراو ( )
ری دو۔ دیائی۔ ۔ ۔ ۔ ر ) ۔ یو ۔ در ر ) ۔ یا در ر ر ) اسکی خواند دو ار ر ی : ( ) ۔ یا در ان ر ) ۔ یا در ان ر کی د
روانامه: کولتر ( ) بعن: ( ) سألي دهر جوون
ية : ( ) ع دروي شه: ( )
رسیاری توټرینموه:
١٠/ چەند سالله (له كەپەرە) دەست بەكاربوون لە ھۆلمى گەرەدا؟
۲۰/ تایا بیش دهستینی کردنت به کار هکعت هیچ راهیّنانت بیّکرا؟ تا در می سیدند.
بطن ( ) نعظیر ( ) *الله که کار ادامه در است است از در در کاران در
۳۰ / له کاتی کارکردنندا رِ اهنِنالنکردنی بعردموام هعیه؟ باخود هیچ سعریعرشتیاریِّک هعیه که روّزانه، هعقاله باخود للگانه داوای رایورنتان لی بکعت باخود هاریکاریتان بکات؟ 
ب٤/ میکاتیز می کار کردن / هعنگاو مکانی کار کردن (و الامدانه و می که پس) کانی که خطک به بو مندیکان یبیوه دمکهن جو نبیه؟ اسی بکه
به/ له کاشی دامهزر اندننکهوه تا نیّسنا هیچ گور انکاریهک بهسهر میکانیز مهکاندا هاتووه باخود همر و مک خوباشی؟ ( نُعگمر ملّی نکایه روونیبکهوه چون)
ىگىر بىلى:
۱۰/ بینت والیه ئعر میکانیز مانه می به کاری دنینن کاریگامریان هعیه العسامر زیانی کامیسهکان؟ چؤن؟(استفاده)
ب٧٠ يعيو منديمكاني نتّوه لمگعل كام له دمز گاكان ، و مزار متمكان ، ياخود ريكخر او مكاني نره ؟ چؤنه ؟(ثمگعر بعلّي تكايه و ، نندكه ه)



### **Appendix (5)- Interview Questions (Supervisor)**



ئامادمكرىدى قوتابى: ريىب فلاح بە سەريەرشتى مامۇستا: دونيا مردان

#### The mechanism of hotline centers in responding to reported GBV cases

```
ب١/ هؤكاري دامهر الدي سعتهري هنلي گهرم بؤ چي دهگهريتهوه؟
ب٢/ كورتايك لمسار نام سانتار وإله چلاد باش يذكانت؟ له چلاد شار نام سانتاره كراوهيه؟ كن باريرسه لاسار نام باشه؟ وه كن
                                                                                 بغريرسه لعسار ميكانيزماكاني باكار هاتوو؟
                                     ب٣/ لايلاي ياسايي كه نام باهمه ياحود نام ساهتهرهي بي دانر اوه چيه و بؤ چي دهگار يُتهوه؟
                                                                         ب٤/ چەند كارمەندى تايىەتمەند ھەيە بۇ وەلامدادەوە؟
                                               ب٥/ سعبار عت به كاسايش و سهلامهني و كارامي كعيس ج ريكاريك دهگرنه بعر؟
                                                                                ب٦/ ئه كار معداده كين كه و ولام دهدهه و؟
  ب٧/ دايا كار معدد كاني قايبات به و ولامدادهوه بيشوش هيچ معدقيكيان بيكر اوه؟ ياهود حاومن برو ادامهى قايباتن؟ وه له لايهن كليهوه
                                         ب٨/ ميكانيزمي و ولأمدادهوه، دايا كار معدان چؤن و ولام دهده وه به ج ميكانيز معك؟
                                           ب٩/ نص هدگاو و ريكارانه چين كه كارمهدهكان دهيگرنه بص له كاتي وه لامدانموه؟
                                                    ب ١٠/ رؤريدهي كاليساكان له ج داستيكن؟ ياهود ج جؤريكن؟ كام جيدوره؟
                               ب١١/ سعبار مت به كعيسي تودد و دَالْوُر ، و الاهداد العومان چؤن دهينت؟ ج هيكانيز هيك دهكر ده بعر؟
پ١١/ ذايا كەيس بۇي ھەيە (جلسات) ى ھەبئت لە رئىگەي ھىلى گەر ،؟ مىتۇدى بەدواداچوونتان (ئۇلۇ ئاپ) ھەيە؟ ھىچ ماوھەكى كاتى
                                                                                                      هميه يو وهلامدادموه؟
                  ب١٣/ كايا هيچ داتايهكتان بهر دهسته؟ سهبار هت به چهد كهيستان رزگار كر دووه؟ وه چهد كهيس شكستي هيداوه؟
                                  ب٤ ١/ بعو مديتان له كلم كام و هزار مت ياحود دهر كا حكومي بان داحكومي يلحود سعتهر هعيه؟
پ٥١/ دايا دمتواني باسي ميكانيز مي وهلامدادموه و ميتودي پهيو هديمكانتان لمگامل و هزار مت ياخود دهرگا حكومي يان داحكومي ياخود
                                                              سعته مكان بكهيت سعبار عت به حرمه تكور اريه كاملامكر اومكان؟
                                                            ب١١/ ئايا وشياري كومه لايعتيانه لعسعر نعم بابعته بالوكر او متعوه؟
                                                                  ب٧١/ ئايا ئام حؤره ريكريه كومه لاياتيانه جين لهم بالمقانه؟
                        ب١٨/ نعو كؤسب و تعكم انه چين كه روبهروتان بوهوه له سعرهتاي دامهرر اللدي كعم سعتهره تاكو تيستا؟
                                                                ب١٩ / هيچ تنبيدي ياحود حاليك هعيه كه بؤمان شي بكعيتهوه؟
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