



**Міжнародний день  
проти насильства над  
секс-робітниками**



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## PRESS-RELEASE

Four years in a row, on this day, the representatives of local sex workers community, and organizations sympathetic to the problems urge the state and society to respect civil and human rights of sex workers, combat violence and discrimination against one of the most marginalized groups of population in Ukraine.

On December 17, the Ukrainian League "LEGALIFE", a self-organization of sex workers in Ukraine, and International HIV/AIDS Alliance in Ukraine traditionally shared their problems and achievements of the year with the media at the annual press-conference.

In 2010, the State, for the first time, legally recognized the existence of sex workers in Ukraine and cemented this fact in the domestic legislation. In particular, the Order № 3123/275/770 "On approval of standards for the provision of social services to representatives of risk groups" (<http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=z0904-10>), which establishes the definition of "persons in sex business", was signed by three ministers and the profile is registered with the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine. On November 1, this binding for all authorities of the legal act entered into force.

Unfortunately, this progressive innovation is in no way reflected on reducing violence against sex workers. "The Red - beat and robbed, the Orange - robbed and beat, the new government came - the same story," - says Irina Mishina, the head of Ukrainian League of LEGALIFE. "The girls do not usually file complaints of unlawful actions by police officers and violence in general, because they fear what may be even worse."

*"In many respects the illegal status of sex workers does not allow to adequately respond to violations of their rights. Only under the condition of complete confidentiality do sex workers talk about such cases."*

*- "To get us to sign the detention report we were kept in the police station most of the night, being called names, being hit. They may offer us to provide sexual services to them in exchange for their not filing that report";*

*- "My sister and I refused to get into the car and we were dragged there by the hands";*

*- "Police officers come and demand money. They can order me to give them 10-20 Hrivna or buy them vodka." - these are only some parts of video footage of sex workers from one of the regional centers of Ukraine, who are understandably unwilling to open their faces.*

Elena Tsukerman, the deputy head of Board of Ukrainian League of LEGALIFE, sees a possible solution to the problem in following: *"Article 181(1) of the Code of Administrative Offences provides for a penalty for sex work. Law enforcement officials in Ukraine use this article to cover up their own lawlessness and arbitrariness. From personal experience I can say that it includes extortion, blackmail, violence (both physical and sexual, and psychological) and fabrication of criminal cases. The cancellation of administrative punishment for prostitution, in my opinion, will lead to great reduction in cases of abuse, especially violence against sex workers. "*

Illegal detention of Natalia Isaeva, the leader of the initiative group of sex workers in Kirovograd, was resolved by formal punishment police. *"They did not suffer any consequences, they were just transferred to other departments - the Department for the fight against drug trafficking and the department for combating organized crime. Previously fed on prostitutes, and now they feed on drug user and thugs "* - comments on the situation Natalia.

In the context of the existence of sex business, it is important to remember that for the second consecutive year in Ukraine, the proportion of sexual transmission of HIV infection steadily continues to grow in comparison to cases of infections through injections. In this regard, within the framework of the State Program to address the epidemic, the International HIV/AIDS Alliance in Ukraine continues to implement innovative programs designed to protect sex workers, not only from multiple sexually transmitted infections, but also from various forms of violence.

*"Quality programs for HIV prevention among people involved in sex work should take into account the importance of preventing violence as a serious risk factor for HIV. In addition to providing prevention services such as information on safer sexual behavior, the distribution of male and female condoms (120,000 femidoms intended for distribution to sex workers through non-governmental organizations). Services to diagnose HIV and other sexually transmitted infections are now being offered, which will create favorable conditions for the effective prevention and control of the spread of HIV. Thus, over the past year through prevention programs we have managed to reach 25,000 sex workers, or 36% of the estimated number",* - sums up Oksana Matiyash, manager on technical assistance to projects involving sex workers in the framework of the International Alliance on HIV / AIDS in Ukraine.

It is known that on December 15, 2010 The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has taken a decision to support Ukraine's application for funding programs to combat HIV/AIDS for the period 2012-2016 with a maximum amount of funding of 305 million U.S. dollars ([http://moz.gov.ua/ua/portal/pre\\_20101216\\_0.html](http://moz.gov.ua/ua/portal/pre_20101216_0.html)) . Part of the program focuses on providing comprehensive prevention and other services to sex workers. It is expected that within the framework of such integrated services by 2016 will cover at least 33,000 sex workers (47% of the estimated amount).

*On December 17, as part of the events for the International Day to End Violence against Sex Workers, the sex workers' activists organized flash mobs and processions, with red umbrellas (the traditional symbol of protection of sex workers) were held in Kiev, Kirovograd and Vinnitsa.*

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