



**Annual Report on the SOS telephone line for children and youngsters  
0800 1 2222 (tool free) and the pro bono legal council within the First  
Children's Embassy in the World-Megjasi  
(January –December 2010)**

**We should not be silent about the violence!**

**За насилството не треба да се молчи !  
Për dhunen nuk duhet qe te heshtet !**



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- **The children are still silent and suffer violence! In 2010 only 30 children, got courage and spoke up about the violence that they are exposed to.**
- **The largest part of the reported cases in 2010, are connected with the violation of the children’s rights during divorce procedures.**
- **In 2010 there is an increase of 0.13% reported cases of sexual abuse against children and paedophilia**
- **The violence within the educational-upbringing institutions is growing.**
- **17.99% of the reported cases are coming from the violence within the families**
- **In 2010 the SOS telephone line for children and youngsters recorded 239 cases of violation of the children’s rights and non-respect of the children’s personality**

SOS telephone line for children and youngsters 0800 1 2222 within the First Children’s Embassy in the World Megjasi, was active during the 2010, when it marked 17 years of its introducing. During this period, we have registered 18,000 reports related to the children’s protection, their rights and interest.

**SOS telephone line statistics in its 17 years of operation:<sup>1</sup>**

Year	Number of calls	Sex of the caller		Age of the caller		
		male	female	Up to 12 years	13-18 years	Over 18 years
1993-1994	<b>3769</b>	537	2496	471	2192	370
1994-1995	<b>4609</b>	136	2474	339	2088	183
1995-1996	<b>990</b>	88	328	22	279	115
1996-1997	<b>1294</b>	108	598	46	469	191
1997-1998	<b>1200</b>	107	399	59	279	168
1998-1999	<b>1250</b>	62	259	14	202	105
1999-2000	<b>1000</b>	92	184	11	113	152
2000-2001	<b>143</b>	29	114	43	46	54
2001-2002	<b>77</b>	19	58	0	18	59
2002-2003	<b>324</b>	77	247	12	103	209
2003-2004	<b>414</b>	98	316	43	117	254
2004-2005	<b>912</b>	320	592	198	225	489
2005-2006	<b>704</b>	190	514	/	/	/
2006-2007	<b>361</b>	/	/	/	/	/
2007-2008	<b>360</b>	/	/	/	/	/
2008-2009	<b>377</b>	128	231	6	18	353
2009-2010	<b>239</b>	163	205	5	16	208
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.023</b>					

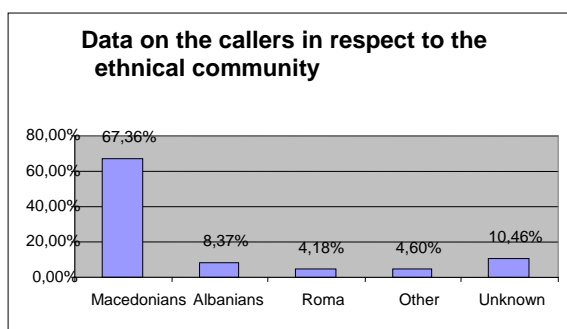
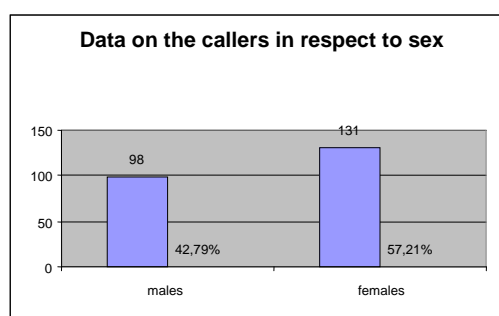
**\* Data on the caller**

<sup>1</sup> In the period 1993-2000, we have been recording all calls at the SOS telephone line; since 2000 we are recording only the cases where the SOS service has acted upon. Several meetings and consultations have been led on each separate reported case, so that it does not reoccur.

During the period January –December 2010, we have recorded 239 call reports, of various cases of violation of the children’s rights.

During 2010, the trend of having adults reporting at the SOS telephone line, seeking for an advice, information, expressing concern when witnessing cases of violation of the children’s rights has remained. Out of the total number of reported cases 87,03% are coming from adults and only 7,95% of the cases were reported by the children, which shows that the children are still afraid to speak openly on the cases of violation of their rights, which on the other hand shows low degree of trust that the institutions will help. The fear, insecurity, the low level of self-confidence, lack of trust in the institutional protection and lack of informing on the services that exist to provide aid and support, are the most common reason because of which the children are quiet, suffer the violence and rarely speak about it.

The violation of the children’s rights in 131 cases, was reported by females, in 98 cases by males, and in 10 cases by legal entities and media.



**\* Manner of calling:**

Most of the contacts and reports in 2010, as up to now, were at the toll free SOS telephone line for children and youngsters 0800 1 2222. 59.83% of the total number of calls were received reports, but there were cases when the citizens were asking for help, support and information, at the same time directly visiting the SOS service within the Children’s Embassy Megjasi and sending an e-mail.

During 2010, the calls received at the SOS telephone line and the visits at the SOS service were in a far higher number, since the expert counsel and the following of the cases need realisation of more contacts, with which the number of meetings and discussions is much higher.

Manner of making the reporting in 2010a					
	SOS telephone	e-mail	mail	visit in Megjasi	Total
<i>total</i>	143	24	18	54	239
	59,83%	10,04%	7,53%	22,59%	

## Problems category

### \* Problems connected with the violation of the children's rights during divorce procedures:

In respect to the cases that we have received most of the reporting by the citizens, the largest number or 46 are related to the problems connected with the violation of the children's rights during divorce procedures. This means that the problems connected with the custody over the children, without considering the opinion of the child with which parent he/she wants to live with; problems connected with the realisation of the rights of visiting/seeing the parent with the child, achieving the right of alimony, as well as calls connected with the change in the physical condition of the children during the divorce procedure and the disturbed communication among its parents.

These data show that in the largest number of these cases, the children are direct witnesses of the disturbed communication among his/her parent, but are also a victim in these procedures. In large number of the reported cases, there is child's personality misuse and violation of the children rights by one of the parents, who do not take into consideration the children's opinion, needs and interest in this kind of situations.

At the same time, during 2010, we have registered 14 cases of problems in mutual communication within the family. It is significant to emphasize that we have been contacted by the children, in respect to the problems in communication among the parents. The children between the age of 13 and 18 (in their development period ) do not feel sufficiently understood by the parents and very frequently face conflict situation with them.

### **Problems connected with the children's rights during divorce procedures and problems during disturbed family communication**

	Number of reported cases	
<b>Divorce procedures</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>19,25%</b>
Problems with custody	20	
Problems with seeing the parent-child	18	
Alimony problems	8	
<b>Problems in mutual communication</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4,60%</b>
parent-parent	4	
parent-child	7	

### \* Family violence:

Every year the family violence is another „trend” that is among the top reported cases at the SOS telephone line for children and youngsters within the Children's Embassy Megjasi. The problems connected with the family violence, include physical and psychological violence against the children, as well as lack of care of certain number of

parents for their children, that are immediately after the divorce procedures with total number of 43 reported cases, i.e. 17.99%. Out of all these case, 25 refer to the reporting of the physical violence against the children, 7 are for physical violence and 11 are for miss-care or negligence of the children by their parents.

Following the data from the SOS telephone line, there is larger and larger number of physical and psychological violence that are coming as a consequence of using alcohol or narcotics by violators.

Considering these data, 32% of the total 25 reported case of physical violence are coming as result of the problem with addiction that the violators have, i.e. among the parents as the most frequent executors of the violence against the children.

From the aspect of children victims of the family violence, the data received from the SOS telephone line show that the most common victims from this type of violence are children age 7-13, represented in 54.84%. At the same time, the data from the SOS telephone line, are saying that largest number of children victims, are coming from urban areas or they report the violence more commonly, which is different from the situation in the smaller communities that do not have sufficient information where to address when they are victims of violence coming from their parents.

### **\* Violence within the educational-upbringing institutions**

Problems referring to the violence within the educational-upbringing institutions were the next ones in respect to the total number of reported cases received at the SOS telephone line, with 7.95%

The received data are saying that the violence within the schools continues to grow. Even though the physical and psychological molesting of the pupils is prohibited by the law, there are no relevant sanctions that contribute in the lowering of such occurrences among the pupils in the Republic of Macedonia. In 2010, there were 19 reported cases at the SOS telephone line that were connected with the physical and psychological violence in the relation teacher-pupil, as well as relation pupil-pupil.

The largest number of these type of reported cases, total 7, refer to the physical violence by the teachers against the pupils, 4 reported cases on the problems that refer to the physical violence among the teacher-pupil, and 4 reported cases of physical violence among the pupils. The results have shown that the boys are the most frequent victims of physical and psychological violence within the school, including the violence on the side of the teachers and the violence among the peers. From psychological aspect, the fact that the boys are more frequently victims from this type of violence due to their temperament and wish to self-confirm themselves and to dominate, by showing physical power and aggression.

What is specific about these cases is the fact that total 3 out of 4 reported cases of violence in the line teacher-pupil, had occurred within the schools that are in rural areas and in smaller cities in the Republic of Macedonia. This data is signifying that measures should be taken over and that regular monitoring over the schools' work should be conveyed.

### **\* Sexual abuse and paedophilia:**

**In 2010 the number of cases with reported sexual violence against the children is rising again.** Compared with 2009, in 2010, the number of these kind of cases has increased in 0.13%, i.e. this year we have 13 reported cases of sexual abuse and paedophilia. Among these cases, we have received reports on cases where Internet photographs with sexual contents were shown to children and youngsters.

The most frequent victims of paedophilia are the children age 7-13, where as the doer of the act, are most frequently connoisseurs or close friends of the victim.

<b>Problem category for 2010</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>Percentage representation of cases</b>
Problems in divorce procedures	46	19,25%
Family violence	43	17,99%
Violence at the educational upbringing institutions	19	7,95%
Request for financial or material aid	18	7,53%
Information on the children's rights and children's protection	14	5,86%
Sexual abuse	13	5,44%
Legal advice and information	13	5,44%
Problems in mutual communication	14	5,00%
Expert council and consultation on the physical condition of the children and youngsters	11	4,60%
Children victims of violence from adults	7	2,93%
Other	6	2,51%
Violence at street (among peers)	4	1,67%
Institutional abuse	4	1,67%
Abuse on the side of the media	3	1,26%
Children whose families are at social risk	3	1,26%
Pregnancy informing	3	1,26%
Problems with proving fatherhood	3	1,26%
Information on the SOS telephone line for children and youngsters	3	1,26%
Underage delinquency	2	0,84%
Adoption problems	2	0,84%
Problems with learning and grades	2	0,84%
Health problems	2	0,84%
Begging among children and youngsters	1	0,42%
Addiction problems	1	0,42%
Underage prostitution	1	0,42%
Love among underage and an adult	1	0,42%

\*The complete record of the work of the SOS telephone line and the pro bono legal council can be found at the web page of the Children's Embassy Megjasi-  
[www.childresembassy.org.mk](http://www.childresembassy.org.mk)

### **Further information on the SOS telephone line for the children and youngsters:**

The SOS telephone line for the children and youngsters is a direct service for assistance and support of the children, youngsters and their families, by enabling them with only one telephone call, to obtain assistance and information, expert advise, psycho-social support or simply to discuss about the problems they are facing.

The principle of work of the SOS telephone line consists of conversations with the caller on the problems, where the operators from Megjasi do not offer ready/final solutions of the problem, but an alternative possible solution on resolving the problem/s, all for the purpose of having the caller managing to find the solution of the problem.

Within the Children’s Embassy Megjasi, the callers are offered a possibility for direct addressing within the Megjasi facilities, where experts will give them the appropriate psycho-sociological support needed.

The experts working at the toll free SOS telephone line for children and youngsters 0800 1 2222 are: a pedagogue, a psychologist, a social worker and a lawyer. The volunteers are also included in the activities. They are most frequently students and graduates from the faculties of pedagogy, psychology, law, the Institute for sociological works and other.

SOS telephone line for children and youngsters 0800 1 2222, within the Children’s Embassy Megjasi is a member of the international network „CHI–Child Helpline International“, that unites the SOS services which provides aid to the children in many countries all over the world.

#### Reported cases at the SOS telephone line in the period 2007-2010

Type of problem	Abuse and violence against children (physical, psychological, sexual and family)	Problems within the family (disturbed communication, custody, divorces)	Problems in the educational upbringing institutions (violence at school, problems with studying)	Request for material and financial help for children whose families are at social risk
<b>2007</b>	13,43%	24,62%	7,08%	7,46%
<b>2008</b>	39,19%	34,17%	5,53%	2,01%
<b>2009</b>	48,28%	18,3%	4,24%	6,63%
<b>2010</b>	29,29%	25,11%	8,79%	8,79%
<b>ratio 2009/2010</b>	<b>decrease 18,99%</b>	<b>increase 6,81%</b>	<b>increase 4,55%</b>	<b>increase 2,16%</b>

#### Pro bono legal council:

Depending on the type of problem that the callers are contacting us, in parallel with the SOS office, there is pro bono legal council that acts as per the written requests in front of the different state and social institutions, whenever needed.

**During 2010, this legal council has acted upon 105 written request** in front of the relevant institutions, and in all cases has requested protection of the children, their rights and interest.

Most of the written requests (total 44), were addressed in front of the Social Work Centres, and the others were in front of the Ombudsman, relevant Ministries, State educational inspectorate, the municipalities and other relevant entities.

We have always requested the relevant institutions to inform us on the measures and the activities that will be taken over on their side, so that we can follow the cases actively and react additionally, if needed.

In this manner the Children’s Embassy Megjasi was monitoring the institutions, so that they make more efforts and react promptly in resolving the problems, all for the purpose of protecting the children.

In part of the addressing in front of the relevant institutions, the legal council is using relevant international documents and the national laws, where the children’s rights are given, the manner of their realisation, as well as the mechanisms for their protection. On the first place, we are following and implementing the United Nations Convention for Children’s Rights and the two facultative protocols towards this convention; then we are using the Convention of the Council of Europe for protection of the children from sexual exploitation and abuse, the Convention of the International organisation of the labour on the worst forms of children labour and a number of other international and national standards on the children’s rights.

Our practice has shown that the relevant institutions, during its work, vary rarely or never use the Convention of the Children's rights, by giving explanations that this Convention can not be used directly, even though, where we have cases of collision, the international conventions are in a superior position in respect to the national laws.

### **Financial sustainability of the SOS telephone line for children and youngsters**

The SOS telephone line for children and youngsters 0800 1 2222 as a service of public interest gives direct aid and support to the children and their parents, and it is not financially supported by the state, even though this is one of the recommendations that the UN Committee on the children's rights in Geneva. This body has addressed the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, and in the paragraph below we are quoting their recommendations in respect to the SOS telephone line for children and youngsters:

*„The Committee has recorded the operation of the 24-hour toll free SOS telephone line for children and youngsters, operated by one NGO, but is worried that this line does not have long term financial support and that it is available only through one telephone operator, being unavailable through mobile telephone line.*

*The Committee recommends that the state-member ensures continuity, including allocation of relevant funds, for the 24-hour toll free SOS telephone line, to expand its capacity on receiving telephone calls from all telephone operators, to allocate the telephone line the six digit European number and to approve of it as a source for information and data on the policies and the laws of the rights of the children as a tool in early intervention and prevention.“*

The First Children's Embassy in the world Megjasi, considering the necessity of these services, has taken over the responsibility to provide self-sustainable 17 year continuous operation of the SOS telephone line, by supporting the citizens to donate in our classical donation boxes, that are placed in several locations in the country, through sale of Season greetings' cards and by the support of the business sector.

The activities of the SOS telephone line and the pro bono legal council are supported by volunteers, that are investing their knowledge and spare time to protect in the children and their rights.

The First children's Embassy will continue to keep the operation of these services and will address in writing the Government and the National Committee of the children's rights, on the operation of these services, requesting from them to follow the recommendations received from the Committee.

At the same time, we would like to thank everybody that supported the operation of the SOS telephone line for children and the youngsters.

### **General conclusions and recommendations:**

**Out from the received statistical data, we have come to conclusion that the children rarely have the courage to report violence, they are scared and they feel helpless.** Very frequently the children victims are facing threats, are scared by the abuser and do not believe that anyone can help them.

- The children need to feel protected, understood and accepted. It is necessary that they learn to recognise their feelings, to be encouraged to speak. The parents have to be in constant communication with their children and to give them more love and attention, as the



love and the harmonious family environment enables building of the feeling of self-confidence and self-respect among the children.

-For the purpose of lowering the level of aggression and destructive behaviour among the youngsters, we need to increase the public conscience, to educate and make the parents and the adults more sensible. Gaining skills in non-violent resolving of the conflicts, developing skills on mutual tolerance and empathy, as well as becoming to know the children and the adults with their rights is a necessity.

- When we are dealing with children victims of home or sexual violence, we need to react promptly, we need to take care of the victims in the specialised shelters, where they will be offered appropriate psychological-social aid and support. Only with the regaining of the trust in the institutional aid, they will be directly encouraged and the victims will report the violence.

- The Centres for social work have to be more mobile and have overall insight on all disfunctionalities of the families and the families at risk, so that the appropriate activities on preventing the violence against the children in the families are taken.

During this, the Centres for social aid have to take measures whenever needed, by taking care not to obstruct the procedure on temporary taking over the parents' right as a prevention measure, until the relations in the family are not brought in a situation that will guarantee the children safety and protection, which is a first parents' responsibility.

Unfortunately, in practice, the Centres for social works take the parents' right in consideration, even after severe damage and consequences on the side of the children.

- Generally speaking there is need of additional training of the educational, medical, social and the other profiles of experts working with children, all for the purpose of increasing the awareness from the serious consequences on the children's development from inappropriate and non-professional conveying of the activities that they are doing.

- The fights against the violence and the abuse of the children, requires team and multi-disciplinary approach, through cooperation of the civil organisations and the state institutions, particularly the Centres for social work, judiciary, the Public defender, the police and the schools. This requires synchronised and mutual prevention activities of all relevant factors that have part in the children education and the care like the family, the state institutions and the civil organisations.

***We would like to encourage the children and the adults not to be silent on the violence and to report it at the closest police stations or at the SOS telephone line for children and youngsters 0800 1 2222 within the First Children's Embassy in the World - Megjasi.***

*Translated by Aleksandra Arsik*