

## 1 - My rights as a victim of crime

### What information will I get from the authority (e.g. police, public prosecutor) after the crime occurred but before I even report the crime?

The Police will inform you, without undue delay, of your right to obtain the following information on:

1. The Police Station or Police Department where you can file a complaint;
2. The type of support you can receive and from whom, including, where relevant, basic information regarding access to medical support, any specialist support, including psychological support, and alternative accommodation;
3. how and under what conditions protection is provided , including protection measures;
4. how and under what conditions you may claim compensation;
5. how and under what conditions expenses incurred as a result of participation the criminal proceedings can be reimbursed;
6. how and under what conditions you are entitled to interpreting and translation services;
7. the procedures available for filing complaints where your rights are not respected by the department involved;
8. the contact details of the Police officer handling your case, for communication purposes.

### I don't live in the EU country where the crime took place (EU and non-EU citizens). How are my rights protected?

If you are resident in another Member State, the Cyprus Police will obtain a deposition from you right after you report the crime, in order to limit difficulties pertaining to how the procedure is organised.

If the crime was committed in the Republic of Cyprus and you are resident in another Member State, you can report it to the competent authorities of your Member State of residence, in so far as you are unable - or, in the case of a felony - unwilling to do so in Cyprus.

If you file a complaint for a crime committed in another EU Member State to the Cyprus Police, the latter must forward such complaint to the competent authority of the Member State where the crime was committed, where it does not have jurisdiction to initiate proceedings.

### If I report a crime, what information will I receive?

When you report a crime to the Police, you will obtain the following information, depending on what stage of the procedure your complaint is at:

1. the details of the police officer handling your case;
2. any justified decision not to proceed with or to end an investigation or not to prosecute the offender;
3. the time and place of the trial, and the nature of the charges against the offender;
4. information enabling you to be briefed on the course of the criminal proceedings. In exceptional circumstances, where the proper handling of the case may be adversely affected by disclosing such information, it may be withheld following a reasoned opinion of the Attorney General of the Republic of Cyprus.
5. Information about your right to be informed if the person remanded in custody, prosecuted or convicted for the crime related to you is released or has escaped. The above information may be withheld if there is a

potential or established risk of harm for the offender.

## Am I entitled to free interpreting or translation services (when I contact the police or other authorities, or during the investigation and trial)?

If you wish to report a crime but you are unable to understand or speak Greek, you can file a complaint in a language you do understand, with the necessary linguistic assistance.

Furthermore, the Police must ensure that you are offered:

- free interpreting services during the investigation if you do not understand or speak Greek;
- free translation of all information collected during the investigation, at your written request, to the extent that such information is essential for you to exercise your rights.

## How does the authority ensure that I understand and that I am understood (if I am a child; if I have a disability)?

- The Police will use simple and comprehensible language to communicate with you, taking into account your personal situation, including any disability which may affect your ability to understand or to be understood. Communication, both oral and written, shall be in a form accessible to people with disabilities, including, where necessary, Braille or sign language.
- If you are a minor under the age of 18, you will be evaluated based on your age, maturity level, views, needs and concerns, to ensure that you can understand and be understood. Your parent, guardian or other legal representative will be informed of any rights that may concern you.
- At your first contact with the Police, you may be accompanied by a person of your choice, save where this is detrimental to your interests or to the course of the proceedings. If you are a person with disabilities, you may be accompanied by a person of your choice throughout the investigation of the case.

Moreover, if you are a minor, information will be supplied to you by the Social Welfare Services (through an interpreter, where necessary) in a language which you understand and with due regard to your age and maturity level. If you are a person with a disability, you will receive information in a way you can understand (e.g. in sign language).

## Victim support services

The following organisations provide victim support services:

- Medical Services,
- Social Welfare Services,
- Mental Health Services,
- Educational Psychology Service at the Ministry of Education and Culture,
- Non-Governmental Organisations

The Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Employment, Welfare and Social Security offer support to vulnerable groups, including victims of crime, by:

- supporting the family, with a view to enabling its members to fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively; resolve family disputes that threaten family unity; protect the safety and welfare of children; prevent delinquent behaviours and domestic violence and encourage the rehabilitation of persons involved in anti-social behaviour and delinquency;
- supporting vulnerable groups;
- helping local communities identify and handle the specific needs of vulnerable groups;
- putting victims in contact with other competent authorities and NGOs that are able to provide additional services and support.

## Will the police automatically refer me to victim support?

The Police will refer you to governmental or other support and assistance services, if this is considered necessary,

and will inform you about the existing services mentioned above:

## How is my privacy protected?

Police officers must comply with the requirements of the Constitution, the applicable legislation and the Police Code of Conduct, which ensure that your privacy and family life will be respected and your personal data adequately protected.

According to the law, your name and the contents of your deposition may under no circumstances be publicised or howsoever disclosed.

Data processing is governed by special legislation, which ensures the protection of your personal data.

## Do I have to report a crime before I can access victim support?

Yes. After you file a complaint with the Police, the Social Welfare Services will ensure that you are offered free support services, according to your needs, including services from NGOs capable of offering special support.

## Personal protection if I'm in danger

The Police will take all steps necessary to protect your safety, especially where special protection needs are established. Thus, depending on the nature/circumstances of the criminal offence, your personal situation and any special protection needs, specific protection measures may be applied in various phases of the criminal proceedings, as follows:

(1) Victim integration in witness protection schemes, subject to supervision and control by the Attorney General

By decision of the Attorney General, you may be integrated in a witness protection scheme, involving Police measures to protect your personal safety as well as the safety of your family, where necessary.

(2) Victim protection during criminal investigation:

During the criminal investigation:

- You will be interviewed by the Police without undue delay right after you file a complaint;
- The number of interviews is kept to a minimum and interviews are only conducted where this is imperative for the purposes of the criminal investigation;
- You may be accompanied by your legal representative or a person of your choice, unless a reasoned decision has been made to the contrary in relation to either or both persons;
- Medical examinations are kept to a minimum and are carried out only where this is imperative for the purposes of the criminal proceedings.

(3) Right to protection of victims with specific protection needs during criminal proceedings:

If you are identified as a victim with specific protection needs, the following options are available to you:

- All interviews are carried out on premises designed or adapted for that purpose;
- All interviews are carried out by professionals adequately trained for that purpose;
- All interviews are carried out by the same person, save where this contravenes the effective administration of justice, and
- If you are a victim of sexual violence, gender-based violence or violence in close relationships, your interviews shall be conducted by a person of the same sex as you, if you so wish, provided that the course of the investigation is not prejudiced.

In particular:

If you are a victim of domestic violence:

- no disclosure of the personal information in your deposition shall be allowed;
- you may be referred to a shelter operated by the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in

the Family;

- the court may order the defendant's detention until the case is referred to court, or his/her release, on the condition that he/she will not visit or harass any members of his/her family in any way.

If you are an underage victim of sexual abuse:

- your personal information shall not be disclosed in your deposition;
- The Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Employment, Welfare and Social Security will take all steps necessary to protect your safety, if your interests conflict with those of your parents.

If you are a victim of human trafficking and exploitation:

- no disclosure of the personal information in your deposition shall be allowed;
- Your case must be reported to the Social Welfare Services by any government official who is aware of your situation - the Social Welfare Services must inform you of your rights;
- You are entitled to protection without discrimination, irrespective of your legal status or any cooperation you may have with the Police.

Who can offer me protection?

The Police are primarily responsible for offering you protection. If necessary, the Police will cooperate with other competent bodies of the public or private sector to ensure that you are effectively protected.

Will someone assess my case to see if I am at risk of further harm by the offender?

The Police will assess your case in order to:

(a) identify any specific protection needs, and

(b) determine whether and to what extent you would benefit from special measures in the course of the criminal proceedings due to your particular vulnerability to secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation and retaliation.

An individual assessment shall be carried out with your close involvement and shall take into account your wishes, including your wish not to benefit from special measures.

Will someone assess my case to see if I am at risk of further harm by the criminal justice system (during investigation and trial)?

Individual assessment includes an assessment of your exposure to the risk of secondary and repeat victimisation, so as to exclude all possibility of you sustaining secondary and/or repeat victimisation by the bodies of criminal justice.

What protection is available for very vulnerable victims?

Very vulnerable victims are offered the following types of protection:

(1) Victim integration in witness protection schemes, subject to supervision and control by the Attorney General.

By decision of the Attorney General, you may be integrated in a witness protection scheme, involving Police measures to protect your personal safety as well as the safety of your family, where necessary.

(2) Victim protection during criminal investigation:

During the criminal investigation:

- You will be interviewed by the Police without undue delay right after you file a complaint;
- the number of interviews is kept to a minimum and are only conducted where this is imperative for the purposes of the criminal investigation;
- you may be accompanied by your legal representative or a person of your choice, unless a reasoned decision has been made to the contrary in relation to either or both persons;
- the required medical examinations are kept to a minimum and are carried out only where this is imperative

for the purposes of the criminal proceedings.

### (3) Protection of victims with specific protection needs during criminal proceedings:

If you are identified as a victim with specific protection needs, the following are available to you:

- all interviews carried out on premises designed or adapted for that purpose;
- all interviews carried out by professionals adequately trained for that purpose;
- all interviews carried out by the same person, save where this contravenes the effective administration of justice; , and
- if you are a victim of sexual violence, gender-based violence or violence in close relationships, interviews shall be conducted by a person of the same sex as you, if you so wish, provided that the course of the investigation is not prejudiced.

## I am a minor – do I have special rights?

If you are a minor, your best interests are protected, which are assessed on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration your age, maturity level, views, needs and concerns.

As a minor you have some additional rights:

- throughout the proceedings, you can be accompanied by your parents or by an officer of the Social Welfare Services, if you are in the care of the Social Welfare Services.
- if you are a victim of domestic violence, a complaint may be filed on your behalf by the Social Services Director of the Social Welfare Services, and all measures necessary for your safety can be applied.
- if you are a victim of sexual abuse, a complaint may be filed on your behalf by any government official and all measures necessary for your safety can be applied.
- if you are unaccompanied, you will be placed in the care of the Director of Social Welfare Services and will have access to your rights, e.g. your right to education, health services etc. as well as your right to family reunification.
- Right to Privacy.-The Police will take all lawful measures necessary to prevent public dissemination of any information that could lead to your identification.
- Specific protection needs. The Police:
  - must ensure that investigation and criminal prosecution proceedings are conducted irrespective of whether you or your representative has made a formal complaint, and that the criminal proceedings can be continued even if you withdraw your deposition;
  - continue prosecution even after you reach majority;
  - may record your interviews, as part of the investigation.

During interviews, you may be accompanied by your legal representative or by an adult of your choice, unless a reasoned decision has been made to the contrary with respect to that person.

Interviews will be carried out:

- without unjustified delay, from the moment the incidents are reported to the Police;
- where necessary, on premises specifically designed or adapted for that purpose;
- where necessary, by or through a professional who is properly trained for that purpose;
- only to the extent necessary for the purposes of the criminal investigation/proceedings whereas the number of interviews will be kept to a minimum;
- in case of sexual abuse, interviews will be carried out by trained professionals who are the same sex as the child.

## My family member died because of the crime – what are my rights?

You may seek support from the following victim support services:

- State Medical Services,
- Mental Health Services,
- Social Welfare Services,

- Educational Psychology Services (in the case of a minor);
- The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family - operates a special hotline (1440) (for victims of domestic violence);
- NGOs engaged in victim support activities.

The law allows you to file a claim for damages against the offender. You may also address the Social Welfare Services to obtain information about your right to claim damages.

## My family member died because of the crime – what are my rights?

You may seek support from the following victim support services:

- State Medical Services,
- Mental Health Services,
- Social Welfare Services,
- Educational Psychology Services (in the case of a minor);
- The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family - operates a special hotline (1440) (for victims of domestic violence);
- NGOs engaged in victim support activities.
  - The law allows you to file a claim for damages against the offender. You may also address the Social Welfare Services to obtain information about your right to claim damages.

## My family member was a victim of crime – what are my rights?

You may seek support from the following victim support services:

- State Medical Services,
- Mental Health Services,
- Social Welfare Services,
- Educational Psychology Services (in the case of a minor);
- The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family - operates a special hotline (1440) (for victims of domestic violence);
- NGOs engaged in victim support activities.

## Can I access mediation services? What are the conditions? Will I be safe during mediation?

In Cyprus there is no legislative framework governing mediation services.

## Where can I find the legislation governing my rights?

The legislation governing your rights is

- The 2000-2015 Domestic Violence Act (Prevention and Victim Protection) .
- The 2014 Act on Prevention and Control of Sexual Abuse, Child Sexual Abuse and Child Pornography.

You can access the legislation governing your rights through the [Cyprus Bar Association](#) website.

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