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In Focus

Law N. 2/2016 Domestic Violence Legal Framework

In order to address the utter viciousness of domestic violence, the Legislative Assembly of Macau has approved the Law n. 2/2016, listing domestic violent actions as a public crime. The approved bill came into effect 120 days after the official dispatch appears in the Official Gazette (article 35 of Law n. 2/2016).

Under Law n. 2/2016 any physical, mental or sexual mistreatment between kinships or equivalent relationships will be perceived as domestic violence. Perpetrators can be sentenced to jail for a period of one to five years (article 18, n. 1 of Law n. 2/2016) or, in the worst case scenario – the death of the victim –, the offenders are liable to a jail sentence for a period of five to fifteen years (article 18, n. 2 of Law n. 2/2016).

In light of Law n. 2/2016, domestic violence refers to violent acts committed by a family or household member against another, such as the mistreatment of one's spouse or even living partner. In short, domestic violence can refer to physical, sexual, or emotional harm inflicted on a member of a household or family, by another member of the same household or family. The catch-

all term domestic violence can generally apply to any partners - married or unmarried, straight, or simply living together.

As far as Law n. 2/2016 is concerned, many forms of abuse are included in the definition of domestic violence, such as physical abuse, which can include hitting, biting, slapping, battering, shoving, punching (any type of violent behavior inflicted on the victim); sexual abuse that occurs when the abuser coerces or attempts to coerce the victim into having sexual contact or sexual behavior without the victims consent; finally, emotional abuse involves invalidating or deflating the victim's sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem.

Conversely, Law n. 2/2016 has been widely pervaded by deep social concerns towards the victims of domestic violence.

As such, a vast array of administrative entities will, through permanent linkage and exchange, jointly convey their efforts to curb the illegal phenomenon of domestic violence and provide both an effective and accurate social assistance to the victims of the aforesaid crimes. From such fact one should infer that, Victim Assistance Program has the main aim of providing guidance, information and resources to the victims in order to pave their way to a safe, stable and peaceful life, evicted from the noxious domestic violence.

As a result, Law n. 2/2016 has enshrined the right of the victims to be free from domestic violence and, foremost, that the social assistance provided to them by the Government of Macau is a human rights issue under international human rights law.

Overall, Law n. 2/2016 is deeply ingrained by a paradigm shift in the conceptualization of domestic violence from a private matter into a human rights issue.

Macau in Numbers

The International Monetary Fund has forecast that Macau's Gross Domestic Product will contract by 4.7 per cent year-on-year for 2016 but rebound to 0.2 per cent growth in 2017. The MSAR economy is predicted to contract for the rest of the year, seeing a 4.7 per cent year-on-year decrease in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for 2016, according to the latest projections by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). However, this prediction shines a more positive light on the local GDP compared to the Fund's April forecasts. The latest estimates were released in the IMF's World Economic Outlook, October 2016 edition comprising a World Economic and Financial Survey conducted by IMF staff twice yearly on average. In April, IMF predicted a 7.2 per cent year-on-year reduction in the local GDP. In addition, IMF is projecting a lower GDP growth for 2017, adjusting from the initial forecast for a 0.7 per cent to a 0.2 per cent increase year-on-year.

source: Macau Business

Press Room



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