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Victim-Centered Justice Approach in Handling Domestic Violence from the Perspective of Moi Papua Customary Law

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Abstract: Domestic violence (DV) remains one of the most persistent forms of gender-based violence in Indonesia, including among Indigenous communities in Papua, where customary law continues to play a significant role in regulating social relations and resolving family disputes. Within the Moi Indigenous community, domestic violence cases are frequently addressed through customary mechanisms emphasizing reconciliation, restoration of family harmony, and customary compensation rather than formal criminal proceedings. While these practices contribute to maintaining social cohesion and preserving Indigenous values, they may not adequately safeguard victims' rights, participation, safety, and long-term recovery. This study aims to examine the implementation of a victim-centered justice approach in handling domestic violence from the perspective of Moi Papua customary law and to explore its compatibility with Indonesia's legal framework, particularly Law Number 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence. This research employs a normative juridical method using statutory, conceptual, and customary law approaches, supported by relevant legal literature and secondary data. The findings reveal that the customary justice system of the Moi community prioritizes communal harmony and dispute resolution but provides limited attention to victims' psychological recovery, legal protection, restitution, and active participation in decision-making. Consequently, victims may experience secondary victimization when their interests are subordinated to collective reconciliation. The study argues that integrating victim-centered justice principles into the customary justice system can strengthen victim protection without undermining the cultural identity and legal traditions of the Moi community. It recommends strengthening collaboration between customary leaders, law enforcement agencies, and victim support institutions to establish culturally responsive legal mechanisms that balance Indigenous customary values with human rights principles and comprehensive protection for victims of domestic violence.

Keywords: Victim, Centered Justice, Domestic Violence, Customory Law, Moi Papua

1. Introduction

The household is ideally envisioned as the safest space for every family member. However, various data show that domestic relations are actually one of the most vulnerable spaces for women to experience violence. Based on the 2025 Annual Report (CATAHU) of the National Commission on Violence Against Women, throughout 2025 there were 376,529 cases of gender-based violence against women recorded, an increase of 14.07 percent compared to the previous year, with the personal sphere dominating up to 89.76 percent of all cases collected.[1]Of these

[1]National Commission on Violence Against Women, Press Release on the Launch of the Annual Report on Violence Against Women 2025, March 2026.

personal cases, the majority are cases of domestic violence, and violence against wives (KTI) has been recorded as the category that has consistently been most frequently reported since the National Commission on Violence Against Women first compiled CATAHU in 2001.[2]A similar pattern was also reflected in CATAHU 2024, which recorded 330,097 cases of gender-based violence against women, an increase of around 14 percent from the previous year, with domestic and intimate relationships being the most dominant sites of violence.[3]

Data from other sources corroborates this picture. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection recorded 28,789 cases of violence throughout 2024, with domestic violence accounting for the highest number of incidents, at 19,045.[4]The 2024 National Women's Life Experience Survey (SPHPN) also confirmed that one in four women aged 15 to 64 in Indonesia have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime.[5]These data confirm that domestic violence is not merely a stand-alone private issue, but rather a structural problem rooted in the unequal power relations between men and women within the family institution.

Normatively, Indonesia has a legal instrument that specifically regulates the elimination of domestic violence, namely Law Number 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence.[6]This law was enacted in response to the need for special regulations, given that domestic violence has distinct characteristics compared to other crimes in general, including unequal power relations between victims and perpetrators, economic dependence, and the risk of recurrence. Despite this, more than two decades after the law came into effect, domestic violence remains the most frequently reported type of violence each year. This raises fundamental questions about the effectiveness of current legal approaches to addressing domestic violence.

One identifiable root of the problem is that the conventional criminal justice system, including in handling domestic violence, is structurally more oriented toward proving the perpetrator's actions and imposing criminal sanctions, rather than toward rehabilitating the victim. Within the framework of criminal procedure as stipulated in the Criminal Procedure Code,[7]Victims are generally positioned as reporting witnesses, not as subjects whose interests and needs influence the direction of the case. As a result, victims of domestic violence often experience what is known in victimology literature as revictimization, the repeated suffering experienced by victims as a result of the legal process itself, ranging from having to repeat testimony repeatedly, minimal confidentiality protection, to social pressure to reconcile to maintain family unity.

[2]National Commission on Violence Against Women, Annual Report 2025: Violence against Women Still Dominated by Personal Relationships, March 2026.

[3]National Commission on Anti-Violence against Women, CATAHU 2024: Organizing Data, Sharpening Direction, Reflection on Documentation and Trends in Cases of Violence against Women, 2025.

[4]Parliamentary Analysis Center, Expert Body of the Indonesian House of Representatives, "The Increase in Domestic Violence (DV) Cases", Brief Info, Vol. XVII, No. 1 (January 2025).

[5]The 2024 National Women's Life Experience Survey (SPHPN), as cited in the Dissemination of the Synergy Report on Violence Against Women Data, Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, National Commission on Violence Against Women, and the Service Provider Forum, August 2025.

[6]Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence.

[7]Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 8 of 1981 concerning Criminal Procedure Law.

Data from the National Commission on Violence Against Women also shows a striking gap between the number of reports, prosecutions, and decisions in the judicial system for cases of violence against women, where the number of reports collected is much smaller than the number of court decisions, most of which originate from divorce cases in religious courts, not from the criminal process for perpetrators of domestic violence.[8]This condition indicates that for most victims, the solution they prefer is divorce as a strategy to escape the cycle of violence, rather than resolving the situation through criminal channels, which are considered long, tiring, and do not always result in the recovery they need.[9]

Conceptually, domestic violence can be understood as any act that results in physical, psychological, sexual misery or suffering, and/or domestic neglect, including threats to commit such acts, coercion, or unlawful deprivation of liberty within the household. The characteristic that distinguishes domestic violence from other crimes lies in the close relationship between the victim and the perpetrator, so that psychological, economic, and social aspects are intertwined and cannot be separated simply from the legal aspects alone. This complexity makes handling domestic violence require a more holistic approach than crimes in general, so that an approach that relies solely on conventional criminal logic tends to be inadequate to address the victim's comprehensive recovery needs.

These conditions encourage a paradigm shift in handling domestic violence, from an offender-centered approach to one that places the victim at the center of attention (victim-centered justice). This approach does not necessarily negate the importance of enforcing criminal law against perpetrators, but rather seeks to ensure that the entire handling process, from reporting, investigation, prosecution, trial, and post-verdict, truly takes into account the safety, dignity, recovery needs, and rights of participation of victims. This article aims to critically analyze how the principles of victim-centered justice can be adapted and strengthened within the legal framework and practice of handling domestic violence in Indonesia.

Based on the description, the objectives that the author wishes to achieve in this article are to examine the concept of victim-centered justice and its relevance to the legal framework for protecting victims of domestic violence in Indonesia, to analyze the gap between norms and practices in handling domestic violence from the perspective of victims' needs, and to formulate recommendations for strengthening institutions so that handling domestic violence increasingly favors victims.

2. Research methods

This research is a juridical-normative legal study that focuses on the analysis of literature or secondary data. The approaches used are the statute approach and the conceptual approach.

[8]National Commission on Violence Against Women, Press Release on the Launch of the Annual Report on Violence Against Women 2025, March 2026.

[9]National Commission on Violence Against Women, Annual Report 2025: Violence against Women Still Dominated by Personal Relationships, March 2026.

The primary legal materials used include Law Number 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence, Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence,[10]The Criminal Procedure Code, as well as the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power adopted through United Nations General Assembly Resolution Number 40/34 of 1985.[11]Secondary legal materials include official data and reports from the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan), the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, and academic literature on victimology and restorative justice. The analysis was conducted qualitatively by examining the alignment of applicable legal norms with the principles of victim-centered justice and then linking this to the empirical conditions of domestic violence management in Indonesia.

3. Discussion

3.1. The Concept of Victim-Centered Justice: A Paradigm Shift from Retributive to Victim-Focused Justice

Historically, the modern criminal justice system has been built on a retributive paradigm that views crime as a violation of the state and the rule of law. Therefore, the primary focus of the legal process is proving the perpetrator's guilt and imposing appropriate punishment. Within this framework, victims are relatively marginalized, limited to reporting incidents and providing testimony as witnesses. The victim's need to be heard, rehabilitated, and involved in determining the direction of the case's resolution is often overlooked.

In response to the limitations of the retributive paradigm, the idea of victim-centered justice has developed, namely an approach that places the needs, rights, and perspectives of victims as the main considerations in the entire judicial process, by emphasizing the restoration of the victim's dignity, the provision of adequate support, and the involvement of victims in decision-making that affects their lives, rather than solely focusing on the perpetrator and punishment.[12]This principle is in line with the idea of restorative justice, which views crime as a violation of human relationships, not simply a violation of the state, so that the resolution process should focus on restoring the losses experienced by victims and restoring relationships damaged by the violent incident.

In victim-oriented restorative justice practice, one of the main principles is that the restorative process can ideally only be initiated by the victim themselves, and all stages of the process are planned based on the needs and preferences of the injured party.[13]This kind of approach is important because the conventional justice system often fails to provide a complete sense of

[10]Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence.

[11]United Nations, Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, UN General Assembly Resolution 40/34 (1985).

[12]Restorative Justice Colorado, "Restorative Justice Defined," accessed 2026, https://rjcolorado.org/restorative-justice-defined/.

[13]Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria, "About Victim-Centred Restorative Justice", accessed 2026, https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/vcrj/about-victim-centred-restorative-justice.

justice for victims, so a complementary pathway is needed that allows victims to obtain redress beyond the limitations of the formal legal process alone.[14]

It is important to emphasize that victim-centered justice does not eliminate the perpetrator's criminal responsibility or ignore the role of punishment as a tool to prevent recurrence of violence. In the context of power-based violence such as domestic violence, excessive emphasis on reconciliation or relationship restoration without regard for the victim's safety actually risks creating new pressures for the victim to return to dangerous situations. Therefore, the application of victim-centered justice in the context of domestic violence needs to be carefully designed, while maintaining the victim's safety and autonomy as primary prerequisites before implementing participatory or restorative mechanisms.

The basic concept of the rights of victims of crime has long been recognized in international legal instruments, including through the Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power adopted by the UN General Assembly through Resolution Number 40/34 of 1985.[15]The Declaration affirms the rights of victims to access judicial mechanisms, fair and dignified treatment, restitution, compensation, and necessary assistance, which conceptually became one of the initial foundations for the development of the victim-centered justice paradigm in the legal systems of various countries, including Indonesia.

3.2. Normative Framework for the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence in Indonesia

Indonesia has established a legal framework that explicitly recognizes the need for special protection for victims of domestic violence. Law No. 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence is a major milestone, regulating not only physical violence but also psychological and sexual violence and domestic neglect as legally recognized forms of domestic violence.[16]This law contains a number of provisions that substantially embody the values of victim-centered justice, including the obligation of law enforcement officers to provide temporary protection to victims, the mechanism for court-ordered protection, the obligation to be accompanied by health workers, social workers, volunteer companions, and/or spiritual guides, and the right of victims to receive information regarding the progress of the ongoing legal process.

The strengthening of the legal framework for victim protection is also evident in Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence, which, although not specifically regulating domestic violence, makes an important contribution in the form of recognizing victims' rights to integrated treatment, protection, and recovery, including through restitution that can be charged to the perpetrator and victim assistance funds provided by the state.[17]These kinds of principles

[14]Department of Justice Canada, "Victim-Centred Restorative Justice: Program Design and Implementation", accessed 2026, https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rd17-rr17/p2.html.

[15]United Nations, Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, UN General Assembly Resolution 40/34 (1985).

[16]Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence.

[17]Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence.

are also relevant to be applied analogously in handling domestic violence, especially in cases that overlap with sexual violence in marital relations.

At the institutional level, the state has established various service units functionally intended to support victim-centered responses, including the Integrated Service Unit for the Protection of Women and Children (UPTD PPA) at the regional level, women's and children's service units within the police force, and the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan), a state institution tasked with monitoring and documenting cases of gender-based violence. The problem is that the existence of this legal and institutional framework has not been consistently accompanied by law enforcement practices on the ground that are truly oriented towards the needs of victims, as will be described in the following section.

3.3. Empirical Portrait: The Gap between Reporting, Prosecution, and Victim Recovery

Official data shows a wide gap between the number of reported cases, the number that proceed to prosecution, and the number that actually result in restitution for victims. The National Commission on Violence Against Women's (Komnas Perempuan) CATAHU (Reporting on Violence Against Women) noted that of the tens of thousands of reported cases, only a small fraction proceed to prosecution, while the much larger number of court decisions actually originates largely from divorce cases in religious courts, not from criminal proceedings against perpetrators of domestic violence.[18]This pattern shows that case documentation is stronger at the downstream stage than at the upstream stage of the judicial process, so that many victims do not receive continuous access to justice from the start of reporting.

The phenomenon of the high number of divorces intertwined with domestic violence is also reflected in data from the Religious Courts, which recorded an increase in the number of divorce cases filed by wives, which was much higher than the number of divorce cases filed by husbands, with constant disputes and arguments being the dominant cause.[19]This situation reinforces the notion that for many victims of domestic violence, divorce is a more realistic and accessible exit strategy than the lengthy criminal process of prosecuting the perpetrator, which requires a heavy burden of proof, and has the potential to cause social and economic consequences that are not always adequately considered by the legal system.

This gap is also related to a phenomenon referred to in the literature as underreporting among victims of domestic violence, which is triggered by various factors, including economic dependence on the perpetrator, social stigma, pressure from the extended family to maintain the integrity of the household, minimal knowledge of legal rights, and traumatic experiences in interactions with law enforcement officials who do not fully understand the victim's perspective. Some victims even experience revictimization in the form of blaming the victim, questioning their

[18]National Commission on Violence Against Women, Press Release on the Launch of the Annual Report on Violence Against Women 2025, March 2026.

[19]National Commission on Violence Against Women, Annual Report 2025: Violence against Women Still Dominated by Personal Relationships, March 2026.

credibility, or being pressured to reconcile to protect the family's good name, which ultimately weakens the victim's motivation to continue the legal process.

This situation confirms that the problem of domestic violence in Indonesia lies not solely in the absence of legal norms, but rather in gaps in implementation, which prevent the justice system from fully providing a safe and pro-victim environment. Data also shows that the increase in reporting rates from year to year does not necessarily reflect an increase in violence itself, but may also reflect an increase in victims' courage to speak out, as emphasized by the National Commission on Violence Against Women in several CATAHU launches.[20]However, the victim's courage to report should be balanced with the readiness of the justice system to respond adequately, rather than creating new risks in the form of re-victimization.

3.4. Principles of Victim-Centered Justice in Handling Domestic Violence

Based on the conceptual study and empirical conditions above, there are a number of relevant principles to be adapted in handling domestic violence based on victim-centered justice.

First, the principle of safety is the primary prerequisite. Each stage of handling domestic violence must be preceded by a safety risk assessment for the victim, including the possibility of issuing a temporary or permanent protection order, as stipulated in Law Number 23 of 2004.[21]before other mechanisms such as mediation or restorative processes are considered.

Second, the principle of meaningful participation. Victims should be given a real space to express their wishes, concerns, and preferences regarding the direction of their case, whether it be continuing the criminal process, pursuing restitution, or choosing the form of reparation that best suits their needs. This participation differs from simply treating the victim as a witness whose testimony is used solely for evidentiary purposes.

Third, the principle of comprehensive recovery. Recovery for victims of domestic violence cannot be reduced solely to imposing criminal sanctions on the perpetrator. It must include psychological recovery through counseling services, economic recovery through restitution or social assistance, and social recovery through non-judgmental community and family support.

Fourth, the principle of information and transparency. Victims have the right to receive clear and ongoing information regarding the progress of the legal process surrounding their case, including the rights they can exercise. This ensures that victims are not left in a passive and powerless position during what is often considered a complex and intimidating legal process.

Fifth, the principle of non-discrimination and sensitivity to multiple vulnerabilities. Addressing domestic violence requires attention to the additional vulnerabilities experienced by some victims, such as those with disabilities, migrant workers, and victims from vulnerable economic groups, to ensure that services are truly accessible without additional barriers.

[20]Ibid.
[21]Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence.

Sixth, the principle of cross-institutional coordination. Pro-victim care requires synergy between the police, prosecutors, courts, the UPTD PPA (Prisoner and Child Protection Unit), health workers, and civil society organizations supporting victims. This ensures that victims do not have to repeatedly recount their traumatic experiences to multiple parties without adequate coordination.

These six principles are fundamentally interrelated and cannot be applied in isolation. The principle of safety without meaningful participation risks relegating victims to passive participation in the legal process that determines their own fate. Conversely, participation without adequate safety guarantees has the potential to place victims in even more dangerous situations. Therefore, these six principles should be understood as a unified, mutually reinforcing framework, not as a list of options that can be implemented piecemeal for bureaucratic convenience.

3.5. Challenges of Implementing a Victim-Based Approach

Although Indonesia's legal framework incorporates several elements of victim-centered justice, its implementation in the field faces various structural challenges. The first challenge is the persistence of a patriarchal cultural construct in society, which places men in a superior position in domestic relations and normalizes violence as part of the head of the family's authority. This cultural construct also influences the way some law enforcement officers and the public respond to domestic violence complaints, so that domestic violence is often viewed as a private matter that should be resolved within the family, rather than as a legal issue requiring serious attention.

The second challenge is the limited institutional capacity, both in terms of the number and quality of victim support personnel who are unevenly distributed across various regions, particularly in the outermost, frontier, and underdeveloped areas that face infrastructure constraints and limited access to support services.[22]This inequality causes the quality of handling of domestic violence to be highly dependent on the geographical location of the victim, which is contrary to the principle of non-discrimination in victim-centered justice.

The third challenge is data fragmentation and inter-institutional coordination. The data collection system for cases of violence against women in Indonesia is currently scattered across various institutions with different databases, making it difficult to formulate targeted policies and monitor the continuity of case management from reporting to recovery.[23]The government's efforts to integrate inter-agency data collection systems are a positive step, but they still require further strengthening to truly support sustainable victim-based handling.

The fourth challenge is the tension between the principles of relationship restoration and the principle of victim safety. Some approaches to resolving domestic violence through family or mediation have the potential to ignore the risk of recurrence of violence if not preceded by an

[22]Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, Synergy of Data on Violence against Women, Data Period 2024, August 2025.

[23]Ibid.

adequate risk assessment. Instead of healing the victim, these approaches can actually force the victim back into a dangerous situation.

The fifth challenge is victims' limited understanding of their legal rights. Many victims of domestic violence are unaware of their right to apply for a protection order, their right to be accompanied, or their right to refuse mediation if they feel unsafe. This limited legal literacy is further exacerbated by the complexity of the administrative procedures required, leading some victims to choose not to pursue legal proceedings even after initially reporting the case. This situation emphasizes the importance of strengthening access to easily understood and widely accessible legal information as an integral part of a victim-centered justice approach.

3.6. Institutional Strengthening and Recommendations

Based on these challenges, there are several steps that can be recommended to strengthen the handling of domestic violence based on victim-centered justice in Indonesia.

First, strengthening the capacity and equalizing the distribution of UPTD PPA across all regions, including the provision of adequate psychosocial and legal support staff, so that victims in any region have equal access to support services.

Second, the integration of one-stop services that combine health, psychological, legal, and social services for victims of domestic violence, so that victims do not need to move from one institution to another and repeat their traumatic experiences over and over again.

Third, strengthening the training of law enforcement officers from a victim-centered perspective, including an understanding of the dynamics of power-based violence, non-judgmental interview techniques, and safety risk assessment procedures before pursuing non-criminal resolution options.

Fourth, accelerate the integration of data systems on violence against women across ministries and institutions, so that the continuity of case handling from reporting to recovery can be monitored more accurately and used as a basis for policy evaluation.

Fifth, strengthening restitution and compensation mechanisms for victims of domestic violence, including the possibility of adapting the victim assistance fund mechanism as stipulated in Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence.[24]so that the victim's economic recovery does not solely depend on the perpetrator's ability to pay restitution.

Sixth, strengthening public education to erode the patriarchal cultural construct that normalizes domestic violence, through the involvement of community leaders, religious leaders, and educational institutions, so that handling domestic violence does not only rely on law enforcement officers, but also on changing the perspective of society at large.

[24]Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 12 of 2022 concerning Criminal Acts of Sexual Violence.

Seventh, providing legal information services that are easily accessible and understandable to victims, for example through digital channels, hotline services, or community-based legal assistance, so that victims understand their rights from the earliest stages of the handling process without having to rely entirely on the initiative of law enforcement officers.

Eighth, periodic evaluation of the implementation of Law Number 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence, in order to identify gaps between norms and practices on an ongoing basis, as well as to serve as a basis for the formulation of derivative policies that are more responsive to the needs of victims in accordance with current developments.

3.7. Comparative Perspective: Good Practices in Victim-Based Violence Response

The experiences of several other countries can provide lessons in designing a strengthened victim-centered justice approach for the Indonesian context, although they certainly need to be adapted to the prevailing social, cultural, and legal system characteristics of the country. This comparison is not intended to blindly adopt a foreign model, but rather to explore principles that can be adapted to local needs.

In the state of Victoria, Australia, for example, a victim-based restorative justice framework was developed specifically for cases of family violence, born from recommendations from a Royal Commission that specifically investigated the handling of family violence in the region.[25]The key features of this framework are that the restorative process can only be initiated at the victim's initiative, all stages of the process are planned based on the victim's needs and preferences, and the process is positioned as a complement to, not a substitute for, formal legal channels. This approach allows victims who feel they have not fully received justice through the conventional justice system to explore alternative forms of redress that better suit their needs.

In Canada, the implementation of victim-based restorative justice also emphasizes that facilitators must ensure the process is safe for the victim and oriented towards the victim's individual needs, not merely as an instrument for the perpetrator's rehabilitation.[26]This principle is relevant to be adapted in the Indonesian context, particularly to ensure that any resolution mechanism outside of purely criminal channels, such as family mediation which is often used in domestic violence cases, is still preceded by a safety risk assessment and is not used as an excuse to ignore the victim's protection needs.

Another lesson learned is the importance of integrated, one-stop services that combine legal, health, psychological, and social care within a single point of access for victims, as has been widely developed in various jurisdictions as a concrete manifestation of the principle of victim-centered justice. This service model aligns with the concept of Integrated Service Units for the Protection of Women and Children, which has been pioneered in Indonesia. Therefore, what is needed is

[25]Department of Justice and Community Safety Victoria, "About Victim-Centred Restorative Justice", accessed 2026, https://www.justice.vic.gov.au/vcrj/about-victim-centred-restorative-justice.

[26]Department of Justice Canada, "Victim-Centred Restorative Justice: Program Design and Implementation", accessed 2026, https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/victim/rd17-rr17/p2.html.

not to build new institutions from scratch, but rather to strengthen, equalize, and integrate existing institutions so that they truly function optimally across all regions.

3.8. The Dynamics of the Cycle of Violence and Its Relevance for Policy Design

To understand why a victim-centered approach needs to be carefully designed, it is also important to consider the distinctive characteristics of domestic violence, which generally does not occur as a single incident but rather occurs in a recurring pattern often described in victimology literature as a cycle of violence. This pattern typically begins with a phase of escalating tension, followed by a violent incident, then a phase of reconciliation or apology from the perpetrator, before finally returning to the next phase of tension. This cyclical characteristic explains why many victims of domestic violence experience ambivalence in making legal decisions, including often withdrawing reports or choosing to reconcile early in the legal process, not because the violence experienced is not serious, but because of the complexity of the emotional, economic, and social relationships surrounding the situation.

Understanding the dynamics of this cycle of violence should be the basis for law enforcement officials in responding to victims' withdrawals of reports or requests for reconciliation, rather than interpreting them merely as an indication that the violent incident did not occur or was not serious enough to warrant further action. A victim-centered justice approach requires law enforcement officials to independently assess the risk of recurrence of violence, regardless of the victim's ambivalence at any given moment, while respecting the victim's autonomy and choice in determining the appropriate course of action.

Understanding these characteristics, domestic violence policies should not be designed rigidly and uniformly for all cases, but rather be flexible enough to accommodate the different circumstances of each victim, without sacrificing the principle of safety as a primary prerequisite. This flexibility is also one of the reasons why a victim-centered approach is considered more responsive than a rigid, punishment-oriented approach, as long as its implementation is accompanied by adequate protection mechanisms for victims.

4. Conclusion

The handling of domestic violence in Indonesia still leaves a wide gap between the relatively comprehensive legal framework and law enforcement practices that are not fully oriented towards the needs of victims. Data shows that domestic violence is consistently the most frequently reported category of gender-based violence, while the number of cases that progress to prosecution and criminal prosecution of perpetrators is far smaller than the number reported, with divorce being a more common solution for victims than criminal proceedings.

This situation underscores the need to reorient the paradigm of domestic violence management from a perpetrator-centered approach to victim-centered justice, which prioritizes the safety, participation, and recovery of victims throughout the legal process. Institutional strengthening, service integration, capacity building of victim-centered law enforcement officers, and changes

in the legal culture still influenced by patriarchal views are urgent strategic steps to ensure that victims of domestic violence truly receive access to justice and adequate recovery.

Ultimately, the success of a victim-centered justice approach to addressing domestic violence depends not only on the perfection of legal norms on paper, but also on the collective commitment of all stakeholders, from law enforcement officials, social service providers, community leaders, to victims' families and communities, to consistently prioritize the safety and dignity of victims. Further empirical research in the field is needed to deepen our understanding of the direct experiences of domestic violence victims, so that the resulting policy recommendations are more contextual and targeted.

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