

What to do when faced with domestic abuse on post?

Is there an immediate (physical) danger to you or the children?

No,
I need help or just would like to talk.

Family Officer: **eleonore.laming@diplobel.fed.be**
 +32 2 501 47 31
 +32 496 15 07 62

Gert De Beleyr*: **gert.debeleyr@diplobel.fed.be**
 +32 2 501 40 82

Website resources: **see attached list**

Yes,
I feel my life is threatened

Can you leave the location of the
threat? (e.g. your house)

No, I cannot leave

Try to find a safe space in the house and contact one of
the following people for immediate assistance:

- Family Officer: **eleonore.laming@diplobel.fed.be**
 +32 2 501 47 31
 +32 496 15 07 62
- Gert De Beleyr*: **gert.debeleyr@diplobel.fed.be**
 +32 2 501 40 82
- Friends

Depending on the host country / case:

- Ambassador, Deputy HOM, Consul or other Belgian agent (duty phone)
- The Police
- Neighbours

Yes, I can leave

It is generally recommended to leave.
Depending on your situation, the following
spaces may provide safety:

- Friends
- Hotel

Depending on the host country / case:

- House of another Belgian agent
- Embassy, residence or house of a befriended nation
- Police station
- Neighbours

Contact the Family Officer as soon as possible after an incident.

The Family Officer offers an initial consultation to help you gain clarity and to direct you to specific associations with whom you can speak in confidence. If you need further support from the SPF, the situation will also be reported to the hierarchy at an appropriate and agreed time.

Contact details

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Mobile Number</u>	<u>Email</u>
Eléonore Laming	Family Officer	FOD Buitenlandse Zaken SPF Affaires étrangères	+32/ 2/ 501. 47. 31	+ 32/ 496/ 15. 07. 62	eleonore.laming@diplobel.fed.be
Gert De Beleyr*	Adjoint directrice de la carrière extérieure	FOD Buitenlandse Zaken SPF Affaires étrangères	+32/ 2/ 501. 40. 82		gert.debeleyr@diplobel.fed.be
Ecoute Violences conjugales		24/7 – gratuit - anonyme	+32/ 800 / 30. 030		
Collectif des femmes (FR)		ASBL	+32/ 10 / 47. 47. 69		accueil@collectifdesfemmes.be
<u>GlobalARRK</u> (EN)		Charity specialising in helping stuck parents			info@globalarrk.org <u>Contact Us – Globalarrk</u>
Centrum Algemeen welzijnswerk - <u>CAW</u> (NL)		Hulp en steun in Vlaanderen – publieke organisatie	+ 32/ 800/ 13. 500		https://www.caw.be/contacteer-ons/mail/
CPVCF - Centre de Prévention des Violences Conjugales et Familiales (FR)		ASBL	+32/ 2/ 539. 27. 44		info@cpvcf.org

At several embassies (of other European Nations, e.g. French, Dutch) there is a police (liaison) officer in case you cannot turn to the local police.

* A former police officer, Gert De Beleyr has been working for the SPF since 1999 and after several years in post, he has been the deputy to the Director of Expatriate Personnel for the last 3 years. He is currently undergoing training in mediation and is a good listener in the absence of the Family Officer.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE : GUIDE CHART, CONTEXT AND CONSIDERATIONS



Why this chart?

Domestic violence is a serious issue that exists within society, susceptible to also affect the diplomatic community.

This document serves as a **guide for action in cases of domestic violence**. While it cannot provide a perfect solution or address every possible scenario due to the complexity and variety of such cases, it represents the crucial first step.

Victims of domestic violence within the diplomatic community are in an **especially vulnerable position**. Recognizing this, **BeFamily and the Family Officer** have collaborated to produce this chart with a threefold purpose:

1. **Deterrence:** The document's validation by People & Operations (P&O) sends a clear message that domestic violence is not solely a private matter and will not be overlooked by the Ministry.
2. **Prevention:** It includes references to relevant services, information, and support resources for those facing or witnessing potentially abusive behavior.
3. **Help:** It outlines a pathway for action and available resources in cases of domestic violence, including situations where there may be a threat to one's life or the safety of children.

While the document is not perfect, it clearly demonstrates our commitment to addressing these situations and providing support to victims.

What is domestic violence?

Domestic abuse, also called "domestic violence" or "intimate partner violence", can be defined as a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviors that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound someone. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. It can occur within a range of relationships including couples who are married, living together or dating. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. (*UN Women definition*).

The role of the Family Officer (FO) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)

The Family Officer is the single point of contact for partners within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (S)he is responsible for providing information and support to diplomats' partners. In the event of domestic abuse, (s)he is available to talk and can help with logistical aspects (flying tickets, moving, etc.) in a strict confidentiality at first. Once you have given your consent, the information will have to be reported to the hierarchy.

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The Hague Convention

If a partner leaves the country with a child without the diplomat's consent (and if the diplomat has parental rights), they could be accused of child abduction under [the Hague Convention](#). However:

- If the partner also has diplomatic immunity (as a family member of the diplomat), this might temporarily protect them from legal action in the host country.
- But this immunity does not apply in their home country (or in another third country), and the immunity can be lifted by the sending State (in case of separation/divorce).
- In case of a dispute, it can be difficult to determine which court has the authority to decide, especially if both parents are protected by immunity.

In summary:

- Yes, there are legal risks for the partner if they leave the country with the child without permission.
- Diplomatic immunity can complicate or delay legal proceedings, but it is not absolute.
- The diplomat could invoke the Hague Convention to request the return of the child.

It is important to keep this information in mind when deciding to leave the country with children in case of domestic abuse.

The role of the police and your partner's immunity in cases of domestic violence abroad

Diplomats are protected from prosecution under criminal, civil and administrative law in the country where they are posted.

Police interventions are possible only to a limited extent in the event of specific danger and after prior authorization.

In cases where urgency is required because of danger to human life, a police head of operations can make the order for intervention at his or her own discretion.

In many countries, even within Europe, laws and legal norms against domestic violence are lacking or lack enforcement by the police.