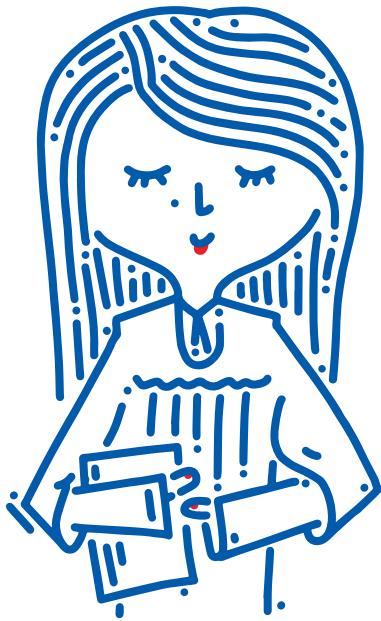


**I cannot afford a lawyer.**

**What should I do?**



organisations is provided on the Ministry of Justice's website. A police officer is also obliged to provide you with this list and will help you contact the selected organisation if you want. In the case of court proceedings, an attorney may also be appointed to assist you with legal matters. Under certain conditions, the Centre for Legal Aid can also provide you with free legal aid.

**I filed a criminal complaint but I want to withdraw it. What happens next?**

A criminal complaint cannot be withdrawn. However, for some crimes, your consent is required for the criminal proceedings to continue. You can revoke this consent at any time and the criminal proceedings will then be terminated, without the perpetrator being convicted or you receiving any compensation for damages.

**What will happen after the criminal complaint is filed?**

The competent police officer will determine what happened. They will attempt to collect evidence and question other witnesses. Gathering of evidence on the crime and verification of events is performed by the police. If you know of any evidence, you can submit or suggest it (e.g. documents, witness names). The police officer may repeatedly summon you and ask you additional questions. They are obliged to communicate with you with respect and ask you questions in an understandable way at all times. In some cases, the police officer is required to record your questioning on camera so that you do not have to repeatedly describe the events of the crime and are not thereby forced to relive it.

**When does it all end?**

The length of criminal proceedings varies, depending on the seriousness of the crime and the evidence.

However, as a rule, within 30 days after the filing of the criminal complaint, the police / prosecutor will decide whether or not to continue the criminal proceedings. At this stage of the proceedings, the police officer / prosecutor will issue a decision by which, for example, they initiate criminal proceedings against a specific perpetrator or reject the criminal complaint (termination of the proceedings, no further stages of the criminal proceedings follow). A decision on rejecting of a criminal complaint can be appealed against by a complaint filed within 3 business days after it has been delivered or notified to you.

The initial stage of criminal proceedings may be followed by the preparatory proceedings (the prosecutor decides on the filing of an indictment, the termination of criminal proceedings, an agreement on guilt and punishment, or decides on a settlement with your consent) and court proceedings.

All decisions concerning criminal proceedings will be delivered to you at the address you have provided. If you have appointed a representative or a lawyer, these decisions will be delivered directly to them. Non-acceptance of the delivery may prolong the proceedings, or result in for example, not knowing the date of the court hearing.

#### **IMPORTANT CONTACTS**

Integrated Rescue System	112
Police	158
Child safety hotline	116 111
Missing children hotline	116 000
Children's helpline	55/ 234 72 72
UPSVAR (Centre for Labour, Social Affairs, and Family) hotline to report neglect	0800 191 222
National hotline for women	0800 212 212
Prosecutor's office hotline for reporting domestic abuse	0800 300 700
Human trafficking victims hotline	0800 800 818

<https://www.justice.gov.sk/>  
<https://detstvobeznasilia.gov.sk/>  
<https://www.zastavmenasilie.gov.sk/>  
<https://prevenciakriminality.sk/p/pomoc-obetiam/>  
<https://www.pomocpreobete.gov.sk/>

**CONTACTS FOR VICTIM SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS WHICH MAY ASSIST YOU**

The project **Enhancing the efficiency of the justice system through the protection/empowerment of victims and vulnerable parties** is supported by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Grants. Co-financed by the State Budget of the Slovak Republic. The given information reflects the views of the author. The program administrator is not responsible for any information included in the document.

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[www.eeagrants.sk](http://www.eeagrants.sk)

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SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY



**I AM A VICTIM OF CRIME...**

**WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

**WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?**

**HOW DO I MOVE FORWARD?**

## I am a victim of crime...

Any of us may become a victim of crime, regardless of the type of crime that occurred. Anyone who has been injured, suffered damage or other harm as a result of a crime is considered to be a victim of crime. Relatives of a person who died as a result of a crime are also considered victims.

Every victim has the following rights regardless of whether a criminal complaint is filed or not:

## What are my rights?

### ● RIGHT TO BE HEARD

You have the right to say what happened and how you were hurt and to describe how you feel. The police, the prosecutor or healthcare provider are obliged to listen to you and provide you with the necessary assistance.

### ● RIGHT TO TREATMENT WITH DIGNITY, RESPECT, AND SENSITIVITY

All state authorities have a duty to communicate with you so as not to deepen the trauma caused by the crime. They are obliged to take into account the situation you are in and your needs. If the questions of a police officer, prosecutor or judge hurt you or if their remarks seem out of place, you have the right to report them and ask them to stop.

### ● RIGHT TO INFORMATION IN AN UNDERSTANDABLE MANNER

The police and the prosecutor's office have a duty to inform you about the possibility to file a criminal complaint, about the process and progress of criminal proceedings, and contact details for organisations that can help you. Upon your request, the police or the prosecutor's office will help you to contact a victim support organisation, which will further address your needs. A healthcare provider is also obliged to provide you with contact information for the victim support organisations.

### ● RIGHT TO PROFESSIONAL HELP AND SUPPORT

You have the right to request professional support from one of the victim support organisations or an intervention centre for victims of domestic violence. Professionally trained staff will help you with legal issues or provide you with psychological support. If necessary, they can help you arrange emergency housing, contact your family or obtain financial support.

## I want to file a criminal complaint...

A criminal complaint **can be filed by anyone at any police station, prosecutor's office, or court.** It can be filed in writing, verbally into the official register, or electronically with an authorized electronic signature. The police will then provide you with additional information about your options and rights.



The authorities (i.e. the police, the prosecutor's office, the courts) cooperate with each other and, if necessary, forward your complaint to the relevant authority that will deal with it in more detail. Once a criminal complaint has been filed, the police officer or prosecutor will give you written confirmation which shall indicate when the complaint was filed, the authority which received it and a brief description of the subject of the complaint.

## What can I achieve through a criminal complaint/proceedings?

**Within criminal proceedings, you will be called an injured party,** which is someone who has suffered physical injury, pecuniary or non-pecuniary damage or other damages, or whose rights and freedoms were violated or endangered by a criminal act. Position of an injured party is primarily related to your rights during the criminal proceedings, for example to submit evidence, file complaints or appeals.

### What is the purpose of criminal proceedings and what can I achieve with it?

Criminal proceedings is primarily intended to determine what happened, to ensure the perpetrator is punished, and victims are compensated for the damage they suffered. At the same time, it has a preventive role, which means that it should deter the perpetrator or other people from committing a crime. In particular, a criminal proceedings may facilitate for the victim (injured party) gaining of satisfaction, help them to rid themselves of the trauma caused by the crime and also obtain financial compensation for



damages, such as a loss of earnings caused by an absence for work as a consequence of a crime. Criminal proceedings is intended to help the victim regain a sense of security.

### I don't want to go to the police alone...

You have the right to be accompanied by a confidant at all times. They may be anyone, a close friend, boyfriend, girlfriend, family member, or an acquaintance. It is important that you feel safe with your confidant and they can emotionally support you.

### What if I cannot remember every detail of the crime?

It is important that you state everything you remember in the criminal complaint. You don't have to know what kind of crime it is, all you have to do is describe in your own words what happened. You can think about it, write down any notes you need about any details you remember, and bring these notes with you.

### I don't understand and don't speak Slovak language very well, what can I do?

You have the right to ask for an interpreter, who will be provided by the police. You do not incur any costs associated with interpretation as these are covered by the state. You also have the right to have important decisions translated or interpreted into a language you understand.

### I cannot afford a lawyer/an attorney and I don't have anyone to consult...

Contact a victim support organisation or an intervention centre for victims of domestic violence for help. A list of these