

PRO BONO

An Overview of the Domestic Violence Act

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Recognising that domestic violence in South Africa is a serious social evil, and that victims of domestic violence are amongst the most vulnerable in society, the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) was introduced to provide victims of domestic violence with the maximum protection against domestic abuse that is available in law.

Despite the implementation of the DVA, South Africa still has unacceptably high rates of domestic violence, femicide and gender-based violence. At the Presidential Summit against Gender-Based Violence and Femicide in 2018, femicide and gender-based violence were declared a "national crisis".

One of the undertakings made at the summit was that government should amend the DVA to improve the protections available to victims of domestic violence. On 14 April 2023, the DVA was amended by the DVAA, in two main ways.

First, it expanded the definition of domestic violence by introducing new definitions and revising some pre-existing ones. Secondly, it addressed various technical and procedural issues to provide better protections for victims of domestic violence.

This pamphlet provides a general overview of your rights in terms of the DVA, following the enactment of new provisions, processes and obligations introduced by the DVAA.



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