



## Gender-Based Violence: A Primer



### Handout 3: Character Statements

**(I/R 1)** My name is Alma. I am married to Kebede. We used to be okay, but nowadays Kebede shouts at me a lot and even sometimes hits me. It's especially bad when he's been drinking. I fear him and so do my children. But where can I go if I leave him?

**(I/R 2)** My name is Kebede. I am married to Alma. For some time now things at home have not been so good. My wife annoys me and does stupid things, and I have no choice but to shout at her. Sometimes I even beat her. I guess this is what happens in marriage. I don't always feel good about it. But I think about what my mother said—that my father beat her because he cared enough to correct her when she was wrong.

**(I/R 3)** I am Kebede's father. We were raised knowing that men can discipline women. This is how things should be.

**(I/R 4)** I am a friend of Kebede. We go to the drinking joint together. I see how you drink and then go home angry. But it is normal for men.

**(I/R 5)** I am a friend of Alma. You and I discuss everything together. My relationship is similar to yours. We have to be careful not to annoy our husbands.

**(I/R 6)** I am Alma's sister. I had a violent husband too—and tried to leave him. I left for a shelter in the city (60 km away) with my two children, when he hit my son who had gotten big enough to want to try to defend me. But at the shelter, I realized we could not make it on our own with my limited economic resources. So I returned home with the children. I have never talked about it since.

**(I/R 7)** I am your relative. I ensure you respect the family customs. Men has to remind women their position sometimes.

**(I/R 8)** I am Kedebe's mother. You are now part of our family where women stay quiet and do not complain.

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**(I/R 9)** I am Alma's mother. We women have to endure every challenge in marriage for the sake of our children. I did it in my marriage, and Alma has to be patient.

**(C - 1)** I am an elder. You respect me and follow my advice. Men have to make all the decisions for a family.

**(C1 - 2)** I am your neighbor. I hear your fights at night but say nothing. Fighting happens in all marriages. When they have bigger fight and she leaves her home, I advise her to be patient and go back home.

**(C1 - 3)** I am an adolescent. I keep silent—what can I do?

**(C1 - 4)** I am a food seller. I see her bruises but keep silent.

**(C1 - 5)** I am a farmer. I think a woman is not equal to a man. Just like there are roles for the sun and the rain, there are things for women to do and for men to do to be able to create good soil and crops. In the household, a woman should obey her husband.

**(C1 - 6)** I am a university student. I know that there are a lot of movements about women's rights. Girls' clubs are established everywhere. I believe that these hectic movements have given girls the wrong idea about their role. Now they run to the police station for every silly fight. It is difficult to have a good girlfriend these days.

**(C1 - 7)** I work in the city municipality marriage licensing department. I have noticed that in the recent years the divorce rate has increased. Most of the divorces are initiated by women. Those educated women have forgotten the tradition that kept our society's integrity for the last 3,000 years. They have no patience in their marriage.

**(C2 - 1)** I am a priest/Imam. I keep silent. God/Allah will take care of things.



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**(C2 - 2)** I am a police officer. Men sometimes cannot avoid using some small violence at home. It is in our nature. And besides, it is not an issue for the police. It is a domestic issue.

**(C2 - 3)** I am a local leader. Violence in relationships is a domestic issue—I don't have time for it!

**(C2 - 4)** I am a pharmacist. You buy things from me and ask for my advice. I think women must be patient and endure.

**(C2 - 5)** I am a teacher. Making jokes about girls is just for fun. It does not do any harm.

**(C2 - 6)** I am your doctor. I advise you on many issues but have very limited time. I do not ask about violence because I am afraid you might have more to tell me than I would have time to listen.

**(C2 - 7)** I am a football coach. I tell the young men that whether we win or lose, it's most important that we always take it as a man. We have to show people that we are always in control.

**(S 1)** I am a judge. Sometimes women file cases just for simple violence. I advise them to solve their problem with the local leaders before they come to the court.

**(S 2)** I am a parliamentarian. There are now laws in my country specifically about domestic violence—we did that. But we need to be patient and let local provinces take their own time to figure out how to implement the law, as it will take time for customs to change.

**(S 3)** I am a donor. I fund family planning programs and HIV in Africa. My priority is getting results—while I think violence against women is important, I cannot afford to fund such complex problems with ill-defined results. I need to show results to keep being able to get funds allocated.



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**(S 4)** I am a radio announcer. You hear my messages every day. We joke about women and violence—what’s the harm?!

**(S 5)** I am a Minister of Health. I decide which services are available at the health centers. It’s not that women’s rights issues do not belong in clinics. But we are still not even meeting our goals on our core business—such as delivering essential medical services. We have to prioritize.

**(S 6)** I am a newspaper editor. I show explicit photos of women in my paper, because it sells—and as much to women as to men, I might add!