

**SUPREME COURT**  
**THE JUDICIARY**  
**REPUBLIC OF PALAU**

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August 30, 2017

**PRESS RELEASE # 115**

*Palau Judiciary Reviews Family Protection Act cases 2014-2016*

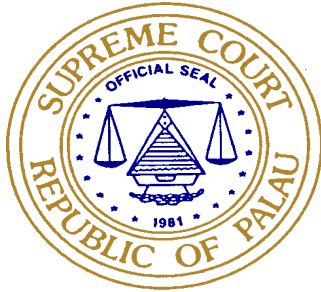
*(It is our duty at the Judiciary to inform the people what we do.  
This Press Release is one way to achieve that responsibility.)*

The Palau Family Protection Act was enacted in 2012 and the first family violence cases were brought before the Palau Court of Common Pleas in 2014.

Under the new Act:

- Parties may seek a temporary and then permanent protection order to prevent family violence.
- These protection orders are free of charge.
- Parties may seek protection orders directly from the court without having to go first to the police or another agency.
- These orders may be obtained from the court 24/7 as there is an emergency phone line for assistance outside court hours (775-2607 and 775 7024).
- If parties are facing difficulties coming to Court the marshal can bring them to the court.
- Court officials may assist the victim of family violence to complete the application for a temporary protection order.
- The Court can assist with finding safe temporary accommodation for women and children while they apply for a protection order.

The Palau Judiciary has reviewed the first three years (2014-2016) of cases brought under the Family Protection Act and has found that the number of Family Protection Act criminal charges filed by the Republic of Palau has increased from only one case in 2013 to 31 cases filed in the



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Court of Common Pleas and Supreme Court in 2016.

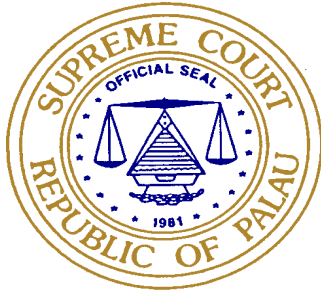
At the same time, the number of Domestic Abuse Restraining Order Cases brought to the court has increased from 0 in 2013 to 60 cases in 2016. From 2014-2016, women brought 82% of the Domestic Abuse Restraining Order Cases, men brought 14% and 4% were brought jointly by women and men. The court grants 94% of all applications for Domestic Abuse Restraining Order Cases.

In 2014, The Ministry of Health and UNFPA published *The Palau Family Health and Safety Study – a National Research Project on Violence Against Women in Palau*. The study found that:

- One-quarter of the 931 women surveyed (25%) had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner in their lifetime.
- Over 8% experienced such violence in the 12 months prior to the interview. The Palau 2014 Household Income and Expenditure Survey found that Palau's population included 8,718 females of which 6952 were aged 15 years and over.
- A majority of women (66%) who experienced violence did not seek help from formal services or authorities.
- The most common reasons cited by women for not seeking help was a woman believing intimate partner violence was normal (45%) and fear of not being believed (25%)

Based on the *The Palau Family Health and Safety Study* this would mean that approximately 550 Palauan women (8%) experience violence each year. Yet the Palau Judiciary receives approximately 100 Family Protection Act Criminal Cases and Domestic Abuse Restraining Order Cases.

The increase in numbers of Domestic Abuse Restraining Order Cases being filed and the high



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percentage (94%) being granted demonstrates that the Palau judiciary is responding to violence within the family very seriously.

From 2014 – 2017 the Palau judiciary has raised awareness of the Family Protection Act through meetings at public and private schools in Palau, through collaborating with other Republic of Palau Government agencies in workshops and in the successful 16 Days of Activism to Stop Domestic Violence in collaboration with the Youth Justice Working Group and Koror State Youth Council, Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice, MOJ.

So what more can be done?

Given the numbers of women experiencing violence each year in Palau it is important to spread the word that women, men, girls and boys can apply directly to the Palau judiciary for assistance with protection orders, that this service is free.

The Palau Judiciary is exploring with the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs an information Facebook page linked to 16 Days of Activism to Stop Domestic Violence which could provide information to young people in Palau through social media.

For more information contact Palau Judiciary at: 488-2607 and 488-2573.

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