

## Apprehended Violence Orders

**Music & sound effects** – a woman pouring a cup of hot drink for a friend

**Maseray:** You are looking happier these days

**Fatmata :** Yes. Thank you for your advice

**Maseray:** Did you go ahead to the court?

**Fatmata :** Yes. A worker helped me at the Community centre. She helped me prepare information about what happened to me when Tamba was hurting me. It was quite difficult, but she also got an interpreter that helped explain the information about apprehended violence orders or AVOs.

**Maseray:** Did they explain that an Apprehended violence order is a warning that he can't ever hurt, threaten or harass you. And after you take this order out, in the court, and he didn't follow it, he will be committing a crime. The police can bring him to court, if this happens, and if found guilty he could end up in jail or pay a fine.

**Fatmata :** Yes. They also told me that because I wanted to do it myself in the local court, and I couldn't afford a solicitor, I could get help from the Court Assistance Scheme or could get help from Legal Aid. And they said if Tamba didn't agree to the AVO, after the police or solicitor talked to him about it, I would have to tell my story in a hearing. So that's what I am doing.

**Maseray:** That must have been quite difficult for you.

**Fatmata:** It's okay, besides my own information, the solicitor helped me recall witnesses who knew about the violence and when it happened, which doctor I went to and which services I phoned for help. Although, I wished I arranged for someone to take my child while I was at Court. I didn't realise that being in Court could mean being there all day.

**Maseray:** Yes. You must go to court for an AVO. Did you have somewhere safe to wait?

**Fatmata:** Yes. Although I knew I would see him at court, but I didn't need to talk to him while I was there.

**Maseray:** Did you ever consider still living with him in the same house even after having taken out an AVO?

**Fatmata:** Yes I did, because I was thinking about my child still wanting to see his father. The court said I could do that. But, I wasn't sure that he could keep to the condition to not hurt me, so decided against it. I did tell the lawyer and the police, that even after separation I wanted my child to see his father. We had an arrangement in the order that will still protect me and my child, even if we did this.

**Maseray:** So, does it mean that he can come and visit you or the children if you let him?

**Fatmata:** No he can't, because one of the conditions I wanted in the AVO is that he cannot enter the house where I live. Even if I agreed for him to do that, he would be breaching the AVO and get into trouble. If I wanted him to be able

to come and visit, then I would have to ask the Court to remove this condition from the AVO first. But for the moment, I think I will keep it.

**Maseray:** Will you ever change your mind about the AVO?

**Fatmata :** I'm not sure yet. They explained to me that if I no longer fear for my safety I can ask the court to withdraw the order. Or I could change some of the conditions. If I withdraw the order and then violence happens again I could go back to court and apply again for an AVO.  
But I think it would be a good idea that I talk to someone before I do this, like a worker at a community centre, so I can get all the information and support I need.

**Maseray:** Yes, it is always good to get as much information as possible. You know, when violence happened to me I thought I couldn't get an AVO because Saidu told me I was not a permanent resident and that if I left him he would have me deported. But when the worker at the Community Centre checked it, it turned out I was a permanent resident and he was just saying that to scare me.

**Fatmata:** That's terrible. But anyhow you do not have to be a permanent resident to get an AVO.  
The Immigration Advice and Rights Centre can help women who are not permanent residents to apply for Permanent Residency if they separate from their husbands because of violence.

**Fatmata :** You know, I didn't realise before that there are all these places you can ask for help when experiencing violence at home.

**Music and sound effects** – Maseray pours another cup of hot drink.

**Narrator:**

If like Fatmata you are having problems with violence, and need help please ring:

The Domestic Violence helpline on 1800 656 463. They are open 24 hours each day.

If you are in immediate danger, contact the Police on 000

If you need help with English call the Translating and Interpreting Service (or TIS) on 131450. It is a free interpreting service

This program was produced by Immigrant Women's Speakout. Sydney. You can contact us on 02 96358022.

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