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Uzbekistan: Attempted silencing of human rights portal Nemoichi.uz

On 27 March 2020, the Agency of Information and Mass Communications under the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan notified the online human rights platform **Nemoichi.uz** that one of the anonymous [stories](#) of victims of sexual violence published on the website contradicts the Uzbek law. The Agency further requested the story to be deleted.

Nemoichi.uz is an independent online platform that collects and publishes anonymous stories of survivors of violence, in particular gender based violence. The platform provides an opportunity for victims to share their stories and find necessary help and advice, including psychological support. [Irina Matvienko](#) is the founder of Nemoichi.uz and a human rights defender who pioneered the use of social media to raise awareness about gender-based violence in Uzbekistan.

On 27 March 2020, Nemoichi.uz received a notice from the Agency of Information and Mass Communications under the Administration of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan stating that one of the stories published on the Nemoichi.uz website “contradicts the national mentality and may adversely affect the spiritual and educational upbringing of citizens, especially the youth”. The Agency quoted an anonymous story of a woman who was sexually assaulted and raped as a child. The story was published on the website on 19 February 2020.

In the notice, the authorities asserted that the publication of the story may have led to the violation of a series of laws, including Article 5 of the Law “On the state youth policy”, Article 16 of the Law “On the protection of children from information harmful to their health” and Article 12.1 of the Law “On Informatisation”. Based on the identified violations, the Agency asked the administrator of the [www.nemoichi.uz](#) domain to remove the story from the website. In case of non-compliance with the Agency’s recommendation, a case may be opened against Nemoichi.uz.

Front Line Defenders is concerned about the notice issued by the Uzbek authorities, as it is believed to be aimed at intimidating human rights defenders working on issues of gender-based violence and silencing their work. Gender-based violence against women and LGBT+ persons remains a serious problem and a taboo in Uzbek society, which makes the awareness-raising work of local human rights defenders crucial.

Front Line Defenders urges the Uzbek authorities to:

1. Immediately retract the notice issued by the Agency of Information and Mass Communications and cease all further harassment of Nemoichi.uz, as Front Line believes that the human rights platform is being targeted for its legitimate work in defence of human rights;
2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Uzbekistan, in particular those working on sensitive issues such as gender-based violence, are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.