

From: <http://www.radionz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/301786/marshallese-women-look-for-protection-from-domestic-abuse>

Marshallese women seek protection from domestic abuse

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Marshall Islands women are seeking legal help to prevent domestic violence more than ever before.

The number of requests this year by women for protection orders from the High Court suggests domestic violence could be on the upswing in the Marshall Islands.

However, the director of the national women's group Women United Together Marshall Islands, Kathryn Relang, said increased awareness about domestic violence and the right to access legal services could be the reason for the increased orders being sought.

Ms Relang said she didn't think there was an increase in violence because it had always been high in the Marshalls.

Five complaints of abuse by husbands or boyfriends were filed with the High Court in the first three months of the year, a rate that if it continues would top 2015's record-setting 10 violence complaints to the High Court.

There were nine requests for a temporary protection order in 2014, none in 2013 and only two in 2012.

The High Court recently streamlined the process so that an abuse victim can request court protection without engaging a lawyer.