



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Turkey - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 25 June 2009**

### **Women subjected to domestic violence in turkey**

The *US Department of State* reports under section women:

"Violence against women, including spousal abuse, was a serious and widespread problem. The law prohibits violence against women, including spousal abuse, but the government did not effectively enforce it. Domestic human rights organizations reported that these laws were partially effective; more women called the police emergency hotline to report domestic violence and went to police stations to file abuse reports.

In October 2007 the governor of Istanbul and the Foundation to Support Contemporary Life launched a domestic violence hotline financed by the EU and staffed by operators who screened calls and then forwarded legitimate calls to police, attorneys, or psychologists." (US Department of State (25 February 2009) *2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Turkey*)

Also in the same report:

"Women's NGOs reported that more than 150,000 women were victims of domestic violence between 2001 and 2005, the latest period for which statistics were available. According to the most recent available government data, there were 646 domestic violence cases brought to court in 2006, a decrease over previous years. The Institution for Social Services and Orphanages operated 23 shelters with a total capacity of 405 for female victims of domestic violence and rape. The government reported that provincial government offices, municipalities, and NGOs operated 38 shelters and that one private foundation operated a shelter. During the year there was one shelter bed for every 144,000 persons in the country, which observers noted was an inadequate amount of shelters for towns with populations of more than 50,000." (Ibid)

*Freedom House* states:

"...Domestic abuse and so-called honor crimes continue to occur; a 2007 study from the Turkish Sabanci University found that one in three women in the country was a victim of violence. The 2004 penal code revisions include increased penalties for crimes against women and the elimination of sentence reductions in cases of honor killing and rape. Suicide among women has been linked to familial pressure as stricter laws have made honor killings less permissible. A 2006 national poll found that Turks hold deeply conservative values, including disapproval of homosexuality and the cohabitation of unmarried couples." (Freedom House (2 July 2008) *Freedom in the World 2008 – Turkey*)

*Amnesty International* states under section Violence against women and girls:

"Laws and regulations designed to protect women and girls from violence were inadequately implemented. Insufficient funds and inaction by government departments undermined a 2006 circular from the Prime Minister aimed at combating domestic violence and preventing "honour" crimes. Limited progress was made in providing shelters for women survivors of violence to the extent stipulated by the 2004 Law on Municipalities – at least one shelter per settlement with a population of over 50,000." (Amnesty International (28 May 2009) *Annual report 2009 – Turkey*)

The *UK Home Office* reports:

"1.05 In a World Bank 2003 report 'Bridging the Gender Gap in Turkey' it was noted that "Domestic violence, which primarily takes the form of wife battering, also includes other physical, verbal, psychological and sexual violence including incest and marital rape... Studies indicate that physical violence against women in the family can take various forms including pinching, punching, kicking, striking against walls, slapping, and beating using a variety of instruments, and ultimately killing." [27]

1.06 Furthermore, the 2003 World Bank report noted that "Forced and early marriages are themselves forms of domestic violence. Often, they also function as a foundation for violence-ridden family lives... These marriages cannot be registered as official marriages... Not only is this a union that has no legal validity in Turkey, it is, under Turkish law, a punishable crime to have or to conduct a religious marriage in the absence of a legal registration." (UK Home Office (23 July 2008) *Report of Fact Find Mission 11-20 February 2008 Turkey*)

Also in the same report:

" 1.11 The EU Commission Delegation to Turkey (which represents the European Commission on the diplomatic and political level) advised that domestic violence was more common in the South Eastern region, but was a problem throughout the whole country. In this region, there was less access for women to education, judicial and social services. The EU delegation also cited the example of the city of Urfa, where women were particularly vulnerable to domestic violence as a result of strong tribal bonds and a lack of shelters." (Ibid)

Further in the report:

" 1.23 The FCO have provided information from an article on domestic violence which appeared in the Turkish newspaper, *The Milliyet* on 8 June 2007. The newspaper quoted the Directorate-General of Policing crime statistics for 2005 and 2006 as showing that, in this two-year period, there were 333,237 crimes committed which had elements of violence against women. A Turkish woman suffered from violent crime once every 3 minutes, on average, during those two years; 1,985 women lost their lives and 56,445 women were injured in these occurrences. (Information provided by the FCO, 29 May 2008.) [36]

1.24 In the same article it was recorded:

Occurrences increased in one year

In 2005 there were 46,612 instances of beatings, climbing to 71,564 in 2006. 36,72 women were the victims of beatings.

In 2005 the number of instances of mistreatment of family members was 9,901 and in 2006 17,64. The total number of victims in 2005 and 2006 was 23,683. The number of instances of threat was 10,809 in 2005, rising to 28,88 in 2006. The total number of women who were victims was 13,186 in total.

Whilst the number of women suffering from violence was 5,257 in 2005, it rose to 9,317 in 2006.

Moreover, whilst 8,773 women were injured in 30,621 suicide attempts, 858 women lost their lives in 3,266 occurrences of suicide." (Ibid)

The *Irish Times* reports:

"THE EUROPEAN Court of Human Rights has ruled that Turkey failed adequately to prosecute a man who brutalised his wife and her mother for a decade before fatally shooting his mother-in-law, in a case that once again exposes Turkey's shaky record on women's rights.

"The general and discriminatory judicial passivity in Turkey created a climate that was conducive to domestic violence," the court stated in a press release yesterday, ordering Turkey to pay the plaintiff, Nahide Opuz (37), €36,500." (Irish Times (10 June 2009) *Rights court censures Turkey over attitude to domestic violence*)

## References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

**Sources Consulted:**

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