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Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Turkey: Women fearing gender-based violence

Version 2.0

May 2018

Preface

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and policy guidance to Home Office decision makers on handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. This includes whether claims are likely to justify the granting of asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave and whether – in the event of a claim being refused – it is likely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under s94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers must consider claims on an individual basis, taking into account the case specific facts and all relevant evidence, including: the policy guidance contained with this note; the available COI; any applicable caselaw; and the Home Office casework guidance in relation to relevant policies.

Country information

COI in this note has been researched in accordance with principles set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#) and the [European Asylum Support Office's research guidelines, Country of Origin Information report methodology](#), namely taking into account its relevance, reliability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, transparency and traceability.

All information is carefully selected from generally reliable, publicly accessible sources or is information that can be made publicly available. Full publication details of supporting documentation are provided in footnotes. Multiple sourcing is normally used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, and that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided. Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source is not an endorsement of it or any views expressed.

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

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The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to make recommendations to him about the content of the Home Office's COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the COI documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's website at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>

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Policy guidance

Updated: 19 April 2018

1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 Women in fear of persecution or serious harm due to gender-based violence.

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1.2 Points to note

- 1.2.1 For the purposes of this note, gender-based violence includes, but is not limited to, domestic abuse, rape, forced marriage, FGM, and honour killing.
- 1.2.2 Domestic abuse is not just about physical violence. It covers any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. It can include psychological, physical, sexual, economic or emotional abuse. Children can also be victims of, or witnesses to, domestic abuse. Anyone can experience domestic abuse, regardless of background, age, gender, sexuality, race or culture. However, to establish a claim for protection under the refugee convention or humanitarian protection rules, that abuse needs to reach a minimum level of severity to constitute persecution or serious harm.
- 1.2.3 In addition to this guidance decision makers should also refer to the Asylum Instruction on [Gender issues in the asylum claim](#).

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Particular social group

- 2.2.1 Women in Turkey form a particular social group (PSG) within the meaning of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention because they share a common characteristic that cannot be changed and have a distinct identity which is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.

2.2.2 Although women in Turkey form a PSG, establishing such membership is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question is whether the particular person will face a real risk of persecution on account of their membership of such a group.

2.2.3 For further guidance on particular social groups, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.3 Assessment of risk

a. Attitudes towards women

2.3.1 Although women have the same rights as men under Turkish law, there are reports of both state and societal discrimination and patriarchal, stereotypical views of a woman's traditional role are particularly prevalent in rural areas. Sexist rhetoric from government representatives continue to undermine women, but President Erdogan has highlighted the need to combat violence against women. Sources vary regarding the extent of official discrimination against women (see [Status of women](#)).

2.3.2 Although discrimination against women exists, it is not sufficiently serious by its nature and repetition to amount to persecution. Simply being female will not in itself indicate a need for protection. However, each case must be assessed according to its own facts.

b. Domestic abuse

2.3.3 Violence against women is likely to be under-reported for reasons including stigma, fear of reprisals, economic dependence on the perpetrator, a lack of understanding on the part of women of their rights, language barriers (particularly for Kurdish women), and a lack of trust in law enforcement. Societal acceptance of domestic violence also contributes to under-reporting. Although the law prohibits violence against women, human rights organisations claimed that the law was not effectively enforced (see [Domestic violence: Barriers to justice](#)).

2.3.4 Hacettepe University published a report in December 2014 on violence against women, which found that 38% of women had experienced physical and/or sexual violence in 2014 (see [Domestic violence: Introduction and statistics](#)).

2.3.5 Whether a woman is at risk of domestic abuse is a fact-sensitive exercise based on the specific facts of the case.

c. Rape

2.3.6 101 women were raped in 2017, according to the media. Turkey has a very low rate compared to other OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries but it must be borne in mind that violence against women is likely to be under-reported and it is therefore not possible to obtain accurate figures (see [Domestic abuse: Introduction and statistics](#)).

d. 'Honour' killings

2.3.7 It is reported that so-called 'honour' killings and forced suicides in the name of 'honour' continue to take place but are declining. In 2014, the OECD

stated that this issue particularly affected rural areas of the south-east and migrants from these areas to other parts of Turkey. Although accurate, up-to-date data is hard to obtain, the most recently published government statistics indicated that more than 1,000 women were victims of 'honour' killings from 2003 to 2008. An academic study of 60 suicides by women in Siirt from 2000 to 2013 found that many cases were likely to be forced suicides in the name of 'honour.'

- 2.3.8 It was reported that in 2015, 303 women were murdered and the majority of these murders were 'honour' killings. It was reported that 328 women were murdered in 2016 - but NGOs believed this number was too low due to under-reporting - and that about 34 per cent of these murders were unresolved; it is not clear how many of these were 'honour' killings (see ['Honour' killing](#) and [Domestic violence: Introduction and statistics](#)).
- 2.3.9 It was reported that of the women killed by men in 2016, 68 per cent were killed by partners or former partners and ten per cent by relatives (see [Domestic violence: Introduction and statistics](#)).
- 2.3.10 'Honour' killings continue to take place and particularly affect Kurdish communities of a traditional nature in the south east and migrants from that area to other parts of Turkey. Whether a woman is at risk of honour killing is a fact-sensitive exercise based on the specific facts of the case.
- 2.3.11 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 Protection

a. Domestic abuse

- 2.4.1 In 2012 the Law on the Prevention of Violence against Women and the Protection of the Family was adopted. The law prohibits violence against women. Sexual assault, including rape and spousal rape, is prohibited, with penalties of two to 10 years' imprisonment for attempted sexual violation and at least 12 years' imprisonment for rape or actual sexual violation. The law covers all women, regardless of marital status. The law also provides criminal penalties for crimes such as assault, wrongful imprisonment, or threats. However, the law did not criminalise domestic violence or make provision for the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators (see [Law: Gender-based violence](#)).
- 2.4.2 The Government drew up a National Action Plan on Combating Violence Against Women 2016-2020 and various campaigns and activities are underway in Turkey to raise awareness and tackle violence against women, including training for police on the issue (see [State action to address violence](#)).
- 2.4.3 Protection orders are available to victims of domestic abuse and law enforcement agents must monitor compliance with the order. Although courts regularly issue restraining orders to protect victims of violence, human rights organisations reported that the police failed to implement and monitor them effectively, yet there were also signs that, in part due to improved training, police were beginning to respond more positively to requests for

protection. There were reports that judges gave lenient sentences to perpetrators of domestic abuse, citing good behaviour during the trial or 'provocation' by women. However, in one such example of the trial of a man who had killed his wife and whose sentence of life imprisonment was reduced, partly due to 'unfair incitement' and partly due to good behaviour during his trial, his sentence was nevertheless twenty years (see [Police intervention](#) and [Action by the Judiciary](#)).

2.4.4 As of November 2016, there were 137 women's shelters in Turkey. Women and accompanying children receiving services from shelters are granted financial support, legal support, health services and psychological counselling. There is also a hotline for women and children at risk of violence which is operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There are nearly 60 women's counselling centres, which provide counselling and support for victims of violence (see [Protection for women: overview](#), [Women's shelters/guesthouses](#), [Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers \(ŞÖNİM\)](#), [Hotlines](#), [Assistance for victims of sexual violence](#), [Women's counselling centres and family centres](#), [Assistance for children](#)).

2.4.5 In general, effective protection is available. The onus is on the woman to show why she would be unable to obtain protection on return.

b. Rape

2.4.6 Rape and spousal rape are prohibited by law (see [Law: Gender-based violence](#)).

2.4.7 Victims of sexual violence can be assisted by Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres (VPMCs), which are widespread. Women are provided with medical care and trauma support at the VPMCs and are provided with accommodation if needed. The government is continuing to work on plans to improve services for victims of sexual violence (see [Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers \(ŞÖNİM\)](#) and [Assistance for victims of sexual violence](#)).

2.4.8 In general, effective protection is available. The onus is on the woman to show why she would be unable to obtain protection on return. Each case must be considered on its individual facts.

c. 'Honour' killings

2.4.9 In general, effective protection is available but potential victims of 'honour' killings which are planned, or thought to be planned, may in some circumstances be unable to obtain effective state protection and the onus is on the woman to show why she would be unable to obtain protection on return. Each case must be considered on its individual facts.

2.4.10 For information about actors of protection, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Turkey: Background information](#).

2.4.11 For further guidance on assessing the availability of state protection, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Internal relocation

- 2.5.1 There are no restrictions to freedom of movement for women, and statistics indicate that twice as many women as men live alone between the ages of 30 and 64; one sociologist speculated that these women may be the second or third wives in polygamous marriages but did not provide evidence for this (see [Law: Freedom of movement](#), [Employment: The impact of education](#) and [Minority groups](#) and [Unmarried women](#)).
- 2.5.2 Services provided by the Turkish government include relocation and changes of identity. A woman who is at risk may be able to relocate within Turkey to escape localised threats from members of her family, but some women, especially single women with no support networks, may be vulnerable. In some cases this could be mitigated by shelters and assistance available from both state and civil society organisations. Decision makers must also consider the support available after a woman leaves a shelter.
- 2.5.3 Internal relocation to avoid risk of gender-based violence is likely to be reasonable in many cases, but each case should be considered on its individual circumstances. The onus is on the woman to demonstrate why she would be unable to relocate to avoid any risk.
- 2.5.4 For further information about internal relocation, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Turkey: Background information](#).
- 2.5.5 For further guidance on internal relocation and the factors to be considered, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.6 Certification

- 2.6.1 Where a claim is refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 .
- 2.6.2 For further guidance on certification, see the [Appeals Instruction on Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under Section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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Country information

Updated: 8 February 2018

3. Law

3.1 Women under the constitution

3.1.1 The constitution grants women full equality before the law.¹

3.1.2 A report published by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in September 2016 stated:

‘There is no constitutional discrimination against women. While provisions of the Turkish criminal code have in the past discriminated against women, these have largely been removed. Women’s rights groups in Turkey spoke relatively positively about the Government’s efforts to reform the criminal and civil law codes and bring them more in line with EU standards, drawing on significant consultation with women’s rights groups. Credible sources in Turkey reported that the issue was not in the law, but in its implementation, which is inconsistent and, in domestic violence cases, not focused on prevention.’²

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3.2 Gender-based violence

3.2.1 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 noted that ‘The law prohibits violence against women... The law prohibits sexual assault, including rape and spousal rape, with penalties of two to 10 years’ imprisonment for attempted sexual violation and at least 12 years’ imprisonment for rape or actual sexual violation... The law covers all women, regardless of marital status... the law also provides criminal penalties for crimes such as assault, wrongful imprisonment, or threats.’³

3.2.2 In July 2016, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women stated that ‘The Committee notes the adoption in 2012 of Law No. 6284 on the Prevention of Violence against Women and the Protection of the Family. It notes with concern, however, that the law does not criminalize domestic violence as such, and includes no provision relating to the prosecution or punishment of perpetrators.’⁴

3.2.3 See [Domestic violence](#) for further information on this subject.

¹ Freedom House. ‘Freedom in the World 2017;’ Turkey, 15 April 2017

<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/turkey> Accessed: 27 November 2017

² Australian Government. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. ‘Country Information Report;’ Turkey, paragraph 4.96, 5 September 2016 <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-turkey.pdf> Accessed: 15 January 2018

³ US Department of State. ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016;’ Turkey, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

⁴ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 32, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017

3.3 Sexual harassment

- 3.3.1 The law provides for two to five years' imprisonment for sexual harassment. If the victim is a child, the recommended punishments are longer.⁵ The Labour Code of 2003 also criminalizes sexual harassment in the workplace.⁶

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3.4 'Honour' killing

- 3.4.1 The OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index for 2014 stated: 'The Penal Code of 2004, under Article 82, removed previous sentence reductions for murder in the name of custom, and now honour killing is criminalized with life imprisonment. According to an expert paper published by the UN, there have been a few examples of Turkey enforcing the law by issuing life prison sentences for those convicted of an honour killing...'⁷
- 3.4.2 In July 2016, the UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women noted:
- '...the information provided by the State party that article 29 of the Penal Code providing for mitigating circumstances in the case of "unjust provocation" is not applied to killings in the name of so-called "honour". The Committee is concerned, however, that this does not constitute a sufficient legal safeguard, given that the provision explicitly prohibiting the application of article 29 addresses only killings in the name of "custom" (töre) and thus may not always cover killings in the name of so-called "honour" (namus).'⁸
- 3.4.3 See section on ['Honour' killing](#) for information on this subject.

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3.5 FGM

- 3.5.1 The OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index for 2014 noted that 'In 2012, Turkey became the first country to ratify the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence and Domestic Violence against Women, which criminalizes FGM, among other forms of violence against women.'⁹
- 3.5.2 See section on [FGM](#) for further information on this subject.

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⁵ US Department of State. 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016,' Section 6, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

⁶ OECD Development Centre. 'Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.' <https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

⁷ OECD Development Centre. 'Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.' <https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

⁸ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. 'Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey' [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf. Accessed: 24 November 2017

⁹ OECD Development Centre. 'Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.' <https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

3.6 Marriage: forced and underage

3.6.1 The UN Population Fund noted:

'Turkey has ratified both the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The Child Protection Law, adopted in 2005, incorporates most of the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and in line with the convention, identifies children as "individuals below 18 years of age" (Article 3). Article 11 of the Turkish Civil Code states that the "age of majority is 18", but also states that on marrying, a person under the age of 18 assumes the same rights and responsibilities as an adult.

'However, a common definition of a child as a person under the age of 18 does not exist in Turkey's laws. For instance, Article 6 of the Turkish Penal Code defines a child as anyone under 18, but in Articles 103 and 104 of the same law, which refer to "child molestation", a child is defined as an individual below 15 years of age.'¹⁰

3.6.2 The UN Population Fund also noted the minimum age for marriage:

'Until 10 years ago, the statutory minimum age for marriage was 15 for women and 17 for men. The revised 2002 Turkish Civil Code raised the statutory minimum age to 17 years for women (Article 124), putting it on par with that of men. The current minimum age (17) is not in keeping with international norms, however, which hold that 18 should be the minimum age for marriage. The 2002 Civil Code also states that "marriage of a person (both men and women) of the age of 16 is allowed by the court decision based on exceptional circumstances".'¹¹

3.6.3 The UN Population Fund further noted the law on forced marriage and sexual assault against a child:

'Under the Civil Code, if a woman has been forced into marriage, she can file a criminal complaint; she also has the right to file for an annulment within the first five years of marriage. The Turkish Penal Code does not include any specific sanctions against child marriages. Sexual assault committed against a child aged 15 or under is considered a crime, subject to a complaint from the victim. However, the right to make a complaint is only given to the child, who may fear the consequences of going to the police, or may be unaware that she has the right to do so.'¹²

3.6.4 See [Underage and forced marriage](#) for further information on this subject.

¹⁰ UN Population Fund. 'Child marriage in Turkey (overview),' page 2, June 2014 <http://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/unfpa%20turkey%20overview.pdf> Accessed: 23 November 2017

¹¹ UN Population Fund. 'Child marriage in Turkey (overview),' page 3, June 2014 <http://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/unfpa%20turkey%20overview.pdf> Accessed: 23 November 2017

¹² UN Population Fund. 'Child marriage in Turkey (overview),' page 3, June 2014 <http://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/unfpa%20turkey%20overview.pdf> Accessed: 23 November 2017

3.7 Marriage: civil and religious

- 3.7.1 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 noted that 'A May 2015 Constitutional Court decision legalised the right to be religiously married without obtaining a civil marriage.'¹³ An article published by Al-Jazeera noted that there was concern from legal and human rights groups that this could encourage child marriage, and stated, 'Religious Muslim marriages, which are frequently carried out in the country, are not recognised by Turkey's secular system and therefore provide family members with no legal rights, including inheritance rights.'¹⁴
- 3.7.2 The Iranian Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation noted the following in October 2017:
- 'A new Bill allowing muftis [religious representatives] to authorise civil marriages threatens to increase child marriage and has drawn outrage from women's rights campaigners...
- 'Women's right campaigners fear that this move will open the way for more underage marriages and make it much harder to protect young girls. Child marriage is already a significant problem in some parts of Turkey and it is feared that the change in law will only increase the harmful practice.'¹⁵
- 3.7.3 See [Civil and religious marriage ceremonies](#) for further information on this.

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3.8 Marriage: polygamous

- 3.8.1 The Huffington Post noted the law relating to polygamous marriages: 'Polygamy was outlawed in Turkey in 1926 and carries a two-year jail sentence for violators... Because their marriages aren't recognized by law, second wives have few rights to divorce, inheritance or child support. And the children of polygamous marriages are legally considered the kids of single, unwed mothers unless their Turkish fathers claim paternity.'¹⁶
- 3.8.2 See [Polygamy](#) for further information on this subject.

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3.9 Cohabitation

- 3.9.1 Al-Jazeera also noted the legal position for couples who live together without marrying, stating, 'As there is no regulation in Turkey on couples who live

¹³ US Department of State. 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016,' Turkey, Section 6, 3 March 2017 <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 5 December 2017.

¹⁴ Al-Jazeera. 'Turkey court ruling on religious marriages spurs uproar,' 30 May 2015 <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/05/turkey-court-ruling-religious-marriages-spurs-uproar-150530151909516.html> Accessed: 5 December 2017

¹⁵ Iranian Kurdish Womens' Rights Organisation. 'Turkey: New Bill has drawn outrage from women's rights campaigners,' 23 October 2017. <http://ikwro.org.uk/2017/10/turkey-outrage-campaigners/#more-3008> Accessed: 23 November 2017

¹⁶ Huffington Post. 'Activists Condemn Turkey's Polygamous Marriages Targeting Syrian Refugees,' 25 July 2016, updated 2 January 2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/polygamy-in-turkey_us_57964212e4b01180b52fae27 Accessed: 24 November 2017

together or have extramarital children, their relationships have no legal status without any rights or penalties.’¹⁷

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3.10 Divorce and child custody

3.10.1 The OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014 noted:

‘No discrimination between men and women was found regarding the right to initiate divorce in Turkey. One of the spouses may file for divorce in the case of “irretrievable breakdown of marriage” caused by a variety of circumstances, including adultery, desertion, insanity, detrimental treatment, or commitment of a humiliating act. The law also does not discriminate between men and women with regards to alimony and compensation for damages resulting from the divorce. The Civil Code of 2001 held that property acquired during marriage must be shared equally between the spouses in the case of divorce, easing the financial burden of divorce for many women. However, a divorced woman, though not a man, is forbidden from remarrying without special court permission for up to 300 days after the dissolution of her prior marriage.’¹⁸

3.10.2 The OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014 further noted:

‘Prior to the Civil Code of 2001, the father was deemed the head of household in Turkish law, bearing responsibility for maintenance of the family. This provision has since been eliminated. Article 41 of the Constitution was revised to note that the family in Turkish society is “based on equality between spouses.” Under Article 335 of the Civil Code, both parents share parental authority unless this right is nullified due to legal reasons. The mother has sole authority of a child born out of wedlock; however, the father is required to provide assistance to a woman he has impregnated if he was living with her at the time, whether or not they were married. In the case of divorce, the judge may place the child under guardianship of either parent. In practice, judges tend to award guardianship of younger children to the mother. The parent who does not gain guardianship continues to bear a share of the monetary responsibility for bringing up the child.’¹⁹

3.10.3 See [Reasons for divorce](#) for information on this subject.

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3.11 Inheritance

3.11.1 The DFAT report of September 2016 stated that ‘the civil law code provides for equal inheritance between men and women. In practice, [an NGO] 2013

¹⁷ Al-Jazeera. ‘Turkey court ruling on religious marriages spurs uproar,’ 30 May 2015 <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/05/turkey-court-ruling-religious-marriages-spurs-uproar-150530151909516.html> Accessed: 5 December 2017

¹⁸ OECD Development Centre. ‘Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.’ <https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

¹⁹ OECD Development Centre. ‘Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.’ <https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

survey suggests that approximately 75 per cent of families share inheritance equally between men and women.’²⁰

- 3.11.2 The OECD [Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014](#) provided further information.²¹

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3.12 Access to land, property and services

- 3.12.1 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Centre’s (OECD’s) [Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014](#)²² provided information on these issues.

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3.13 Freedom of movement

- 3.13.1 There is no evidence of restrictions on women’s access to public space.²³

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3.14 Employment

- 3.14.1 L&E Global, ‘An international alliance which specializes in providing counsel to employers on labour relations, employment law, immigration law and employee benefits,’ published an [Employment Law Overview 2017](#)²⁴ which noted anti-discrimination laws for the workplace, protection against harassment in the workplace, and the position with regard to maternity leave.
- 3.14.2 The website ‘Turkish Labor Law’ noted the requirement to provide childcare at workplaces with over 150 women workers.²⁵ However, Public Radio International stated that ‘most companies either deliberately keep the number of female workers below 150 or ignore the law and pay a small fine, the equivalent of \$365 to \$1,000 a month. According to data from Ministry of Education, there is only one company in Turkey that has a child care facility on premises. Anecdotal evidence suggests there are more, but it’s difficult to pinpoint how many.’²⁶

²⁰ Australian Government. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. ‘Country information report;’ Turkey, 5 September 2016. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-turkey.pdf> Accessed: 15 January 2018.

²¹ OECD Development Centre. ‘Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.’ <https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

²² OECD Development Centre. ‘Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.’ <https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

²³ OECD Development Centre. ‘Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.’ <https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

²⁴ L&E Global. ‘Employment Law Overview 2017;’ Turkey, undated http://knowledge.leglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/LEGlobal_Memo_Turkey.pdf Accessed: 4 December 2017

²⁵ Turkish Labor Law. ‘Lactation Rooms and Child Care Units for Working Mothers in Turkey,’ 12 May 2017 <https://turkishlaborlaw.com/news/business-in-turkey/497-lactation-rooms-and-child-care-units-for-working-mothers-in-turkey> Accessed: 4 December 2017

²⁶ PRI.org. ‘Why more Turkish women don’t work,’ 4 May 2017. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-05-04/why-more-turkish-women-dont-work> Accessed: 4 December 2017

3.14.3 Further information about the employment of working mothers is available [here](#).²⁷

3.14.4 See the section on [Employment](#) for further information on this issue.

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4. Status of women

4.1 Gender-based disparities

4.1.1 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 noted that ‘While women enjoy the same rights as men under the law, societal and official discrimination were widespread.’²⁸

4.1.2 The World Economic Forum produces the Global Gender Gap Index, which is ‘a framework for capturing the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress over time. The Index benchmarks national gender gaps on economic, education, health and political criteria, and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons across regions and income groups.’ The Global Gender Gap Index 2017, published in November 2017, placed Turkey in the following rankings:

- Turkey was ranked 131 out of 144 countries in the overall Global Index
- Turkey was ranked 128 out of 144 countries in the ‘Economic participation and opportunity’ category and a rank of 131 for ‘Labour force participation’
- Turkey was ranked 101 out of 144 countries in the ‘Educational attainment’ category
- Turkey was ranked 59 out of 144 in the ‘Health and survival’ category
- Turkey was ranked 118 out of 144 in the ‘Political empowerment’ category.²⁹

4.1.3 The same report noted that ‘...Turkey (131) marks progress on closing its gender gap in legislator, senior official and manager positions, in addition to professional and technical roles as well as in enrolment in tertiary, secondary and primary education. However, it also experiences a widening of the Political Empowerment gender gap and re-opens its Health and Survival gender gap for the first time since 2013.’³⁰

4.1.4 In July 2016, the UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women declared that it was ‘...concerned about the low participation of women at all levels of decision-making, both national and local, including

²⁷ Turkish Labor Law. ‘Happy Women's Day: Part Two - Working Mother IN Labor Law,’ 17 March 2016. <https://turkishlaborlaw.com/news/business-in-turkey/374-happy-women-s-day-part-two-working-mother-in-labor-law> Accessed: 4 December 2017

²⁸ US Department of State. ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016,’ Turkey, Section 6, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dld=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

²⁹ World Economic Forum. ‘The Global Gender Gap Report 2017,’ pages 11 and 234, 2 November 2017 http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf Accessed: 28 November 2017

³⁰ World Economic Forum. ‘The Global Gender Gap Report 2017,’ page 21, 2 November 2017 http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2017.pdf Accessed: 28 November 2017

within the Government and the parliament, which is below the global average and has even decreased following the elections of November 2015, and among the judiciary and civil service, and the lack of specific steps to address the underlying causes, including prevailing social and cultural attitudes.’³¹

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4.2 Attitudes to women: state and societal

4.2.1 A report published by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in July 2016 stated:

‘The Committee is concerned about the persistence of deep-rooted discriminatory stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society. They overemphasize the traditional role of women as mothers and wives, thereby undermining women’s social status, autonomy, educational opportunities and professional careers, as well as constituting an underlying cause of gender-based violence against women. It notes with concern that patriarchal attitudes are on the rise within State authorities and society, and that gender equality is being openly and increasingly undermined by vaguely defined concepts of “gender equity” or “gender justice”. The Committee also notes with concern that high-level representatives of the Government have, on several occasions, made discriminatory and demeaning statements about women who do not adhere to traditional roles.’³²

4.2.2 The same report mentioned the position of women in rural areas, stating:

‘The Committee also notes with concern that women in rural areas are exposed to particularly discriminatory stereotypes about the traditional roles of women which, among other things, prevent them from participating in key domestic decisions.

‘The Committee... recommends that the State party develop and implement measures, including temporary special measures, to accelerate the achievement of substantive equality for rural women in all areas in which they are underrepresented or disadvantaged, including political and public life, education, health and employment. It should put in place programmes to reduce the engagement of rural girls in unpaid care work, which constitutes a barrier to school attendance, and design and implement targeted measures to create income-generating opportunities for rural women in their localities.’³³

³¹ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 41, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017

³² UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 28, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017.

³³ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraphs 49 and 50, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf. Accessed: 24 November 2017.

- 4.2.3 In April 2017 The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly reported that, 'Our attention was also drawn to the fact that the failed coup had nurtured a male chauvinist mentality, which was now operating unimpeded. This, according to women's associations, had resulted in an increase in violence against women, in particular in public places such as buses, where there had been an increase of attacks on women, and even rapes, in recent months.'³⁴
- 4.2.4 In the 'Freedom in the World 2017' report, Freedom House awarded Turkey 7 out of 16 for 'personal autonomy and individual rights,' and under this section of the report it noted:
- 'In March 2016, Erdoğan, who has claimed that gender equality is "against nature," proposed reforms that would embrace "Turkish-style" women's rights. In May, he condemned use of birth control and declared that women who work are "deficient" and "half-people." Some issues, in particular the problem of violence against women, have gained more visibility in recent years. However, critics argue that the government is often more concerned with family integrity than women's rights. For example, a parliamentary commission on protecting the integrity of the family issued a May 2016 report that proposed lowering the legal age of marriage to 15, favored mediation over shelter for abused women, and urged more involvement by the Religious Affairs Directorate in family counseling. In November [2016], the government proposed a bill that would lift some convictions for child sexual assault if the perpetrators marry their victims; the measure was withdrawn amid domestic and international protest.'³⁵
- 4.2.5 In February 2015, the New York Times noted that on 'occasions involving violence against women, senior officials have implicitly or explicitly accused the victim of provoking her attacker...'³⁶
- 4.2.6 However, Daily Sabah published an article in March 2017 which stated:
- 'President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan issued a written statement Tuesday on the occasion of today's International Women's Day, highlighting the need to combat violence targeting women. The president, who championed more measures to curb domestic violence and played in TV ads to raise awareness on the issue, described it as "a crime against humanity" in the message.
- "We have to work harder to completely eliminate violence against women. It needs a change of mindset and the state, universities and civic society have an important duty to bring a solution to this issue. I believe we will resolve it with the power we draw from our civic values based on our history and culture," he said.

³⁴ Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly. 'The functioning of democratic institutions in Turkey' [Doc. 14282], paragraph 37, 5 April 2017 https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1397366/1226_1491999505_functioningdemocraticinstitutionsturkey.pdf Accessed: 15 February 2018

³⁵ Freedom House. 'Freedom in the World 2017,' Turkey, 15 April 2017. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/turkey> Accessed: 27 November 2017

³⁶ The New York Times. 'Turkish men get away with murder,' 23 February 2015 <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/24/opinion/ozgecan-aslan-and-violence-against-women-in-turkey.html> Accessed: 24 November 2017

‘Erdoğan stated that women's rights in Turkey improved significantly compared to before 2002 - the year the Justice and Development (AK) Party was elected - and the education rate among girls and the female employment rate increased, also adding that the number of female lawmakers tripled. "Still, these improvements are not enough," he said.’³⁷

- 4.2.7 The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) published a report in September 2016 which stated:

‘... there is little official discrimination against women in Turkey. Marriage, divorce, inheritance and child custody are regulated by a civil law code that respects gender equality. Bans on the wearing of a headscarf or female pant suit in Parliament were lifted in 2013. Abortion remains legal up to ten weeks, and up to 24 weeks in cases of rape or danger to the mother, although doctors now have a right to conscientious objection to performing abortions.’³⁸

- 4.2.8 The same report noted that ‘Women’s representation in national Government, having stagnated for many years, is now increasing, though it remains at significantly lower rates than international averages. There are currently 82 women in Parliament, constituting 15 per cent of the 550 seats and there is only one female cabinet member, the Minister of Family and Social Policies. Three of 81 provincial governors are women.’³⁹

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5. Domestic abuse and rape

5.1 Introduction and statistics

- 5.1.1 In July 2016, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women noted that ‘It is ...concerned about the persistence of systematic and widespread gender-based violence against women in the State party [i.e. Turkey], including sexual violence, psychological violence and deprivation of access to essential goods, against women in the private sphere and notes with concern: (a) That a large number of women are murdered by their intimate or former intimate partners or husbands or members of their families...’⁴⁰
- 5.1.2 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 stated ‘The law prohibits violence against women, but human rights organizations claimed the government did not effectively enforce it... Government statistics on violence against women

³⁷ Daily Sabah. ‘Erdoğan highlights combatting violence in Women's Day message,’ 7 March 2017 <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2017/03/08/erdogan-highlights-combatting-violence-in-womens-day-message> Accessed: 27 March 2018

³⁸ Australian Government. Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade. ‘Country Information Report,’ Turkey, paragraph 4.98, 5 September 2016. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-turkey.pdf> Accessed: 15 January 2018

³⁹ Australian Government. Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade. ‘Country Information Report,’ Turkey, paragraph 4.98, 5 September 2016. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-turkey.pdf> Accessed: 15 January 2018

⁴⁰ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 32, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017

were incomplete, and human rights organizations had little confidence that official statistics were comprehensive or captured the magnitude of the problem.⁴¹

5.1.3 The DFAT report of September 2016 noted:

‘Violence against women remains a problem across Turkey, and particularly in the more conservative, traditional, rural areas. In the most recent credible nationwide survey published in 2009, ten per cent of women reported suffering violence from intimate partners over the preceding year, and 39 per cent reported suffering violence from intimate partners during their lifetime. Public reporting of domestic violence has increased substantially over the last decade. Reliable statistics are difficult to find but according to the NGO Platform to Stop Violence against Women, 303 women were murdered in Turkey in 2015, the majority victims of honour killings.’⁴²

5.1.4 Al-Monitor reported that 240 were murdered, 77 women were raped and 286 female minors were sexually abused in the first ten months of 2017.⁴³ According to the Umut Foundation, 226 women were killed by men in the first six months of 2017 across Turkey.⁴⁴ In comparison, the Turkish news agency, Bianet, recorded that during 2017, men killed at least 290 women, raped 101 women, harassed 247 women, sexually abused 376 girls and injured 417 women.⁴⁵

5.1.5 The Turkish news agency Bianet compiled a record of the violence inflicted by men on women which is reported in the media. In February 2017 Bianet stated:

‘According to reports bianet compiled from national and local newspapers, news websites and agencies, men killed 261 women and girls; raped 75 women; harassed 119 women; sexually abused 417 girls; injured 348 women in 2016.

‘Men killed over 284 women in 2015

‘Men kill 281 women in 2014

‘Men kill 214 women in 2013...

‘68% of the women were killed by their partners (husband/boyfriends/fiance) or ex-partners, 10% were killed by relatives...

‘At least 75 rapes of women appeared in the media in 2016...

⁴¹ US Department of State. ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016;’ Turkey, Section 6, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

⁴² Australian Government. Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade. ‘Country Information Report;’ Turkey, paragraph 4.99, 5 September 2016. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-turkey.pdf> Accessed: 15 January 2018.

⁴³ Al-Monitor. ‘#MeToo movement is stillborn in Turkey,’ 8 December 2017. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/12/turkey-me-too-movement-is-stillborn.html> Accessed: 31 January 2018

⁴⁴ Stockholm Center for Freedom. ‘Report: 226 Women Killed By Men Across Turkey In First Half Of 2017,’ 13 July 2017 <https://stockholmcf.org/report-226-women-killed-by-men-across-turkey-in-first-half-of-2017/> Accessed 15 February 2018

⁴⁵ Bianet. ‘Men Kill 13 Women, 2 Children in January,’ 8 February 2018, <http://bianet.org/english/women/194132-men-kill-13-women-2-children-in-january> Accessed: 15 February 2018

'24% of the rapists were strangers to the women they attacked, 11% were husbands/boyfriends of the women who broke up or sought to break up with them...

'Men harassed at least 119 women in 2016.

'62% of the harassers were male strangers, 10% were chiefs or bosses at their workplaces, 6% were the men they were paying for services (waiter, hospital staff, etc.)...

'Men inflicted violence on 348 women in 2016...

'56% of the women were subjected to violence by partners, 11% by ex-partners or men whose proposal to commence a romantic relationship were rejected, 11% by male relatives...

'According to reports in the media in 2016, the most femicides occurred in İstanbul, İzmir, Antep, and Antalya provinces. 30% of the femicides covered by the media occurred in this four cities.

'At least 26 women were killed in İstanbul, 21 in İzmir, 16 in Antep and 16 in Antalya...

'Sexual and physical violence cases constitute only peak of the iceberg. Millions of women are subjected to harassment, various sexual and physical violence forms in Turkey everyday. We know that many married women are subjected to domestic rape everyday. However, these violence cases, which are inured in society and turned into an element of "embarrassment" for women, are mostly not recorded. When women inform law enforcers of what they go through or take legal steps, they are subjected to trauma over and over. Rapists, harassers, men inflicting violence lodge libel suits against the women who file a complaint against them.

'Even though all femicides are not reported in the media, femicides are newsworthy for particularly local newspapers, so most of the femicides are covered by the media.

'We can report the cases, which managed to "qualify as news" in the bianet tally.'⁴⁶

- 5.1.6 A comparison of crimes in OECD countries published by Civitas in 2012 indicate a rape rate of approximately one person in 100 000 of the population in Turkey compared to approximately 28 in England and Wales.⁴⁷
- 5.1.7 Haaretz.com, which provides news from Israel and the Middle East, noted on 12 May 2015 that 'Turkey's Family and Social Policies Ministry reported that its domestic violence hotline received over 100,000 calls last year, and estimated that the number of unreported cases is three to five times that.'⁴⁸
- 5.1.8 For further information about the hotline, see [Hotlines](#).

⁴⁶ Bianet. 'Men Kill At Least 261 Women, Girls in 2016,' 3 February 2017. <http://bianet.org/english/women/183255-men-kill-at-least-261-women-girls-in-2016> Accessed: 12 January 2018.

⁴⁷ Civitas Crime, Comparisons of Crime in OECD Countries, 2012 http://www.civitas.org.uk/content/files/crime_stats_oecdjan2012.pdf. Accessed: 3 April 2018

⁴⁸ Haaretz.com. 'Lifting the veil on violence against women in Turkey,' 12 May 2015. <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.655944> Accessed: 15 January 2018

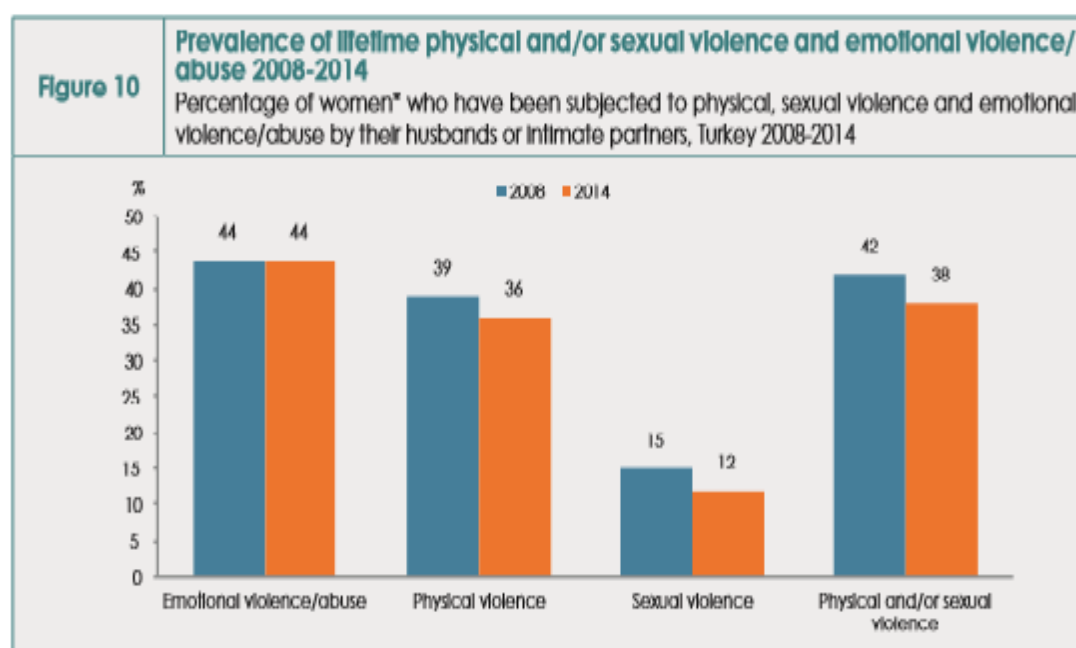
- 5.1.9 Hacettepe University published a report in December 2014 on domestic violence against women. The table below is extracted from this report and it shows the percentage of ever-married women who have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence and emotional violence/abuse by their husbands or intimate partners in Turkey from 2008 and 2014. The table gives the following percentages:

Emotional violence/abuse: 44% in 2008, 44% in 2014

Physical violence: 39% in 2008, 36% in 2014

Sexual violence: 15% in 2008, 12% in 2014

Physical and/or sexual violence: 42% in 2008, 38% in 2014.⁴⁹



*Calculations are based on ever-married women.

- 5.1.10 The OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014 referred to the most recent Government statistics, stating:

‘In 2008, 42% of Turkish women have been subjected to physical or sexual domestic violence in their lifetime, and about 14% have faced it in the 12 months prior to the study. 42% have been subjected to physical or sexual domestic violence. The lifetime prevalence rate for physical domestic violence in Northern Anatolia is more than half, with the majority of cases reported to be “severe.” While about half of low income women in Turkey reported having faced physical or sexual domestic violence, the rate for high-income women is also high compared to OECD averages, at nearly three in ten. The study also found that 92% of women who report suffering from domestic violence do not report it to any official authority or NGO. Moreover, about one in two women in the study agreed with the statement that a wife should obey her husband, and 14% agreed that a man may beat his wife...

⁴⁹ Hacettepe University. ‘Domestic violence against women in Turkey,’ Summary Report, page 12, December 2014 <http://www.hips.hacettepe.edu.tr/ingilizceozetraporweb.pdf> Accessed: 9 April 2018

'The National Study on Violence against Women (2008) found that approximately 3% of Turkish women have faced sexual violence by someone other than a husband or partner since the age of 15, and 7% were sexually abused as a child below the age of 15. 15% of survey respondents reported facing sexual violence by a husband or partner in her lifetime, and 7% in the 12 months prior to the survey.'⁵⁰

5.1.11 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 noted:

'Violence against women, including spousal abuse, remained a serious and widespread problem both in rural and urban areas. Spousal rape is a criminal offense, and the law also provides criminal penalties for crimes such as assault, wrongful imprisonment, or threats. Despite these measures the number of killings and other forms of violence against women remained high. According to research undertaken by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, 86 percent of women surveyed stated they had been subjected to physical or psychological violence by their partners or family. Approximately 70 percent of women reported they were physically assaulted by partners, family members, or neighbors...

'The Stop Women Murders Now platform reported at year's end that 328 women had been murdered during the year. NGO groups maintained this number was probably lower than actual occurrences due to underreporting. The Stop Women Murders Now platform assessed that the most common reasons behind women's killings were women's attempting to take charge of decisions relating to their bodies, finances, or social relationships (26 percent of all cases) and women's decisions to end a marriage or relationship (19 percent). It reported that approximately 34 percent of women's killings went unsolved.'⁵¹

5.1.12 See [Law](#) for legal provisions regarding domestic violence. See [Barriers to justice](#) for further information about under-reporting of violence against women.

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5.2 'Honour' killing

5.2.1 The report by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted that 'The Committee is concerned about the persistence of crimes, including killings, committed in the name of so-called "honour", and about the relatively high number of forced suicides or disguised murders. It notes with concern that the State party's efforts to raise the awareness of the public in order to reject the concept of "honour" that perpetuates and condones the killing of women have been insufficient.'⁵²

5.2.2 The OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index for 2014 stated:

⁵⁰ OECD Development Centre. 'Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.' <https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

⁵¹ US Department of State. 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016;' Turkey, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

⁵² UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. 'Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey' [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 34, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017

‘So-called “honour killings” have been reported in Turkey. They particularly affect families in the rural Southeast and urban migrants from that area...

‘Despite this Government’s efforts, honour killings continue to occur in Turkey. In 2006 the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women reported on the prevalence of the practice in eastern and southeastern Turkey, noting, “There are reasonable grounds to assume that some of the recorded suicide cases are indeed disguised murders. In other cases, family members appear to have instigated the suicide.” In 2006, a Parliamentary Committee dedicated to investigating the issue of honour killings found an average of more than four such murders per week over the prior five years. 19 honour killings were officially reported in the first three-quarters of 2012.’⁵³

- 5.2.3 In May 2017 The New York Times reported that ‘Accurate data about honor killings in Turkey is hard to come by. According to government figures issued in 2008, more than 1,000 women were victims of honor killings from 2003 to 2008. In 2016, 328 women were killed for gender-related reasons, according to statistics compiled by the Initiative Against Femicide.’⁵⁴
- 5.2.4 The DFAT report of September 2016 stated that ‘While accurate statistics are unavailable, DFAT has been told that the practice [of honour killing] continues, but is declining.’⁵⁵
- 5.2.5 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 noted that ‘Family members sometimes pressured girls to commit suicide to preserve the family’s reputation. On September 18, a team of academics reported a study of 60 cases of female suicides occurring in Siirt between 2000 and 2013 indicated many cases were likely forced suicides or effectively honor killings.’⁵⁶
- 5.2.6 In a report published in July 2016, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about ‘Reported cases of girls who have been raped or harassed being forced to marry their perpetrators in the name of preserving so-called family “honour”...’⁵⁷
- 5.2.7 See [Law](#) for information about the legal position with relation to ‘honour’ killing. See [Underage and forced marriage](#) for further information on the use of marriage to preserve ‘honour.’

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⁵³ OECD Development Centre. ‘Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.’

<https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

⁵⁴ New York Times. ‘Turkey Acquits 2 Men in Berlin “Honor Killing” of Their Sister,’ 30 May 2017 <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/30/world/europe/turkey-germany-honor-killing.html> Accessed: 24 November 2017

⁵⁵ Australian Government. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. ‘Country Information Report;’ Turkey, paragraph 4.100, 5 September 2016. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-turkey.pdf> Accessed: 15 January 2018.

⁵⁶ US Department of State. ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016;’ Turkey, Section 6, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dlid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

⁵⁷ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 30, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017.

5.3 Barriers to justice

5.3.1 In a report published in July 2016 by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, it was stated:

‘The Committee is concerned about persisting barriers to women’s access to justice, including:

‘(a) Lack of knowledge by women of their rights; (b) Language barriers faced by women wishing to claim their rights, in particular Kurdish women, women belonging to other minorities and refugee women; (c) Limited knowledge of gender equality on the part of law enforcement officials and legal practitioners; (d) The limited scope of legal aid, both economically and substantively, resulting in non-eligibility for legal aid for women who earn the minimum wage, as well as the non-availability of legal aid in criminal proceedings, and the cumbersome procedure to prove eligibility when it exists; (e) The lack of independent economic resources for, the limited power of and the lack of a separate unit for women and children within the Ombudsman Institution.’⁵⁸

5.3.2 The same report noted ‘That violence is considerably underreported owing to stigmatization, fear of reprisals, economic dependence on the perpetrator, legal illiteracy, language barriers and/or lack of trust in the law enforcement authorities...’⁵⁹

5.3.3 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 stated that ‘The government did not effectively or fully enforce ... laws or protect victims, who often waited days or weeks to report incidents due to embarrassment or fear of reprisals, hindering effective prosecution of assailants.’⁶⁰ The same report noted that ‘Societal acceptance of domestic abuse in some cases contributed to its underreporting.’⁶¹

5.3.4 The Women’s NGOs’ Shadow Report on Turkey’s Implementations of the Istanbul Convention for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence submitted to the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) in September 2017 found that:

‘The main problems women experience when they apply to law enforcement agencies are as follows: they do not take action at all or they put pressure on women not to make a complaint. In some cases, they do not act in that way clearly but choosing implicitly discouraging women to report the case by making women wait hours at the police station or start to chat unofficially and

⁵⁸ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 22, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017.

⁵⁹ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 32, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017.

⁶⁰ US Department of State. ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016,’ Turkey, Section 6, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

⁶¹ US Department of State. ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016,’ Turkey, Section 6, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

saying such no legal remedy is effective in violence cases, the legal mechanisms are tiring so better not to report, shelters are not proper places for “good women” etc. Main problems observed by women organizations are that there is a common conviction that domestic violence is to be resolved within the family, violence is normalized, women are not taken into consideration even in case of visible signs of battery and injury or women state that they worry about their life security, they do not take action with respect to their complaints. It is frequently witnessed that women are held responsible for violence with a gender bias and accusations of “not obeying their husbands” or “provoking them.” When the law enforcement agencies refuse to take action, the crimes are not conveyed to the prosecutor, hence no proceedings can be initiated.

‘Sometimes, law enforcement agencies do not intervene in acute incidents. According to the information conveyed by independent women organizations working on VAW, they are said to remain passive and keep waiting out there in the crime scenes when the perpetrator refuses to open the door or even during the violent acts on the street. Statements of women are not taken into consideration, evidence is not properly collected, which all lead to unfavourable results and eventually impunity in the legal proceedings in VAW cases generally witnessed only by the women subjected to violence and the perpetrator and no further evidence can be collected.’⁶²

- 5.3.5 A 2016 Women Against Violence Engagement (WAVE) report, financed by the European Commission and the Republic of Turkey, identified the following issues regarding the implementation of the law regarding violence against women in Turkey:

‘Despite the existence of a variety of legal arrangements in the Turkish legislation, implementation can somehow be considered as ineffective and selective, majorly due to lack of resources, including insufficient human resources and funds; lack of monitoring, evaluation and follow up of measures; inadequacy of support mechanisms such as shelters and intervention centres; and lack of indicators and objectives.’⁶³

- 5.3.6 See [Law](#) for legal provisions regarding domestic violence. See [Attitudes towards women: state and societal, urban and rural](#) for further information on this subject.

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5.4 State action to address violence

- 5.4.1 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 noted that ‘The Jandarma [a paramilitary force] reported that more than 2,000 personnel were trained on human rights topics, which included training on gender-based violence and

⁶² Shadow NGO Report on Turkey’s First Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for submission to the GREVIO Committee, page 53, September 2017 <https://www.morcati.org.tr/attachments/article/442/turkey-ngo-shadow-report-grevio.pdf> Accessed 15 February 2018

⁶³ Violence against Women Country Report, Turkey, page 16, January 2016 https://notus-asr.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/WAVE_Report_Turkey_FINAL_EN_6March2016-3-3.pdf Accessed: 15 February 2018

domestic abuse. The TNP [Turkish National Police] reported that more than 8,000 personnel received some kind of human rights training through September.’⁶⁴

- 5.4.2 In November 2016, Daily Sabah reported on an interview with Family and Social Policies Minister, Dr. Fatma Betül Sayan-Kaya, who said that ‘The Prevention and Tracking of Violence Centers (ŞÖNİM), which aim to investigate the causes and outcomes of domestic violence, were introduced in 49 cities as of September 2016. We are aiming to increase the numbers of these centers so that they will cover the whole of Turkey.’⁶⁵
- 5.4.3 See [Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers \(ŞÖNİM\)](#) for further information on this subject.
- 5.4.4 UN Women noted Turkey’s National Action Plan on Combating Violence Against Women 2016-2020, which has 5 primary goals with 31 main activities:
1. Legislative arrangements;
 2. Creating awareness and transformation of mentality;
 3. Providing protective and preventive services and strengthening the victims of violence;
 4. Regulation and implementation of health services;
 5. Cooperation among institutions and policies.⁶⁶
- 5.4.5 A number of campaigns and activities are underway to raise awareness and tackle violence against women; further information can be found in the [report](#) submitted by Turkey to the Council of Europe in July 2017 (page 16 on).⁶⁷

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5.5 Police intervention

- 5.5.1 The DFAT report of September 2016 stated that ‘DFAT has been told that Turkish police were becoming more responsive to requests for assistance, in part thanks to training on the new laws. However, in some cases, women were told to reconcile with their partners.’⁶⁸
- 5.5.2 Hacettepe University published research in 2015 which stated:

⁶⁴ US Department of State. ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016;’ Turkey, Section 1d, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

⁶⁵ Daily Sabah. ‘Ministry of Family and Social Policies’ 2023 project hopes to increase women’s labor force to 41 percent,’ 13 November 2016 <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2016/11/14/ministry-of-family-and-social-policies-2023-project-hopes-to-increase-womens-labor-force-to-41-percent> Accessed: 28 November 2017

⁶⁶ UN Women. ‘National Action Plan on Combating Violence Against Women; brief description’ <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/asia/turkey/2016/national-action-plan-on-combating-violence-against-women> Accessed: 28 November 2017

⁶⁷ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). ‘Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),’ received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

⁶⁸ Australian Government. Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade. ‘Country Information Report;’ Turkey, paragraph 4.102, 5 September 2016. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-turkey.pdf> Accessed: 15 January 2018.

'The narrations of the interviewed women [who had experienced domestic violence] reveal that they usually became aware of the institutions that combat violence through television and that they have limited information on and prejudice against these institutions. Concerning the applications, the police stations, to which more than half of the women have applied, is in the first place among institutions to where applications were made.

'There are both positive and negative comments on the behaviors of the police officers. Some of the interviewed victims of violence stated that they were not referred to services of guidance and support by the police and instead they were sent back to their homes and tried to be reconciled with their abusive husbands. Although the training programs which aim to raise the awareness of the police on gender equality are being organized widely under the efforts to combat violence, the perception of the police being based on the patriarchal system disappoint and weaken women during the process of ending the violence.

'Although there are women who apply directly to the hospitals in case of injuries, there are also injured women who go straight to the police stations. The narrations of women reveal that women hide the cause of their injuries, even though it is understood by the health care personnel. During the reporting of the injuries due to physical violence, this situation weakens women in their combat against violence.'⁶⁹

5.5.3 The OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014 noted the position regarding protection orders:

'Protection orders are available to victims of domestic violence under the Protection of the Family Law (1998). The law requires the abuser to vacate the home and refrain from contacting or approaching the victim. A judge may order the perpetrator to make maintenance payments to the victim. In March 2008, a regulation on the law further stipulated that law enforcement agents must monitor compliance with the order, including via weekly visits to the house. In 2012, the protection order law was amended to allow police to issue emergency protection orders without going through normal court procedures and to allow courts to order abusers to be tracked with electronic monitoring devices. Also, it extended protection to all women, married or not.'⁷⁰

5.5.4 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 noted: 'Courts regularly issued restraining orders to protect victims, but human rights organizations reported that police rarely enforced them effectively. One women's advocate charged that, following the July 15 [2016] coup attempt, the government's reassignment, suspension, and firing of police officers jeopardized the safety of some women who had been assigned protection.'⁷¹

⁶⁹ Hacettepe University. 'Research on domestic violence against women in Turkey,' page 229, 2015 <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/vaw/vaw%20survey/turkey%20vaw%20survey.pdf> Accessed: 28 November 2017

⁷⁰ OECD Development Centre. 'Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.' <https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

⁷¹ US Department of State. 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016;' Turkey, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482>

- 5.5.5 In a report published in July 2016, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted ‘That protection orders are rarely implemented and are insufficiently monitored, with such failure often resulting in prolonged gender-based violence against women or the killing of the women concerned...’⁷²
- 5.5.6 Al-Monitor reported that nearly 6,000 women were under police protection in 2013. Thirteen women killed by their partners in 2013 had received police protection by court order.⁷³ Bianet reported that 13.5% of the 214 victims killed in 2013 had sought help from the authorities and/or had a protection order.⁷⁴ Bianet further reported that ‘6% of the [261 women killed by men in 2016] were killed despite protection orders. 9% of the women were killed despite demanding (and not receiving) protection orders against their husbands who were inflicting violence, or were killed right after a protection order had expired.’⁷⁵
- 5.5.7 A Bianet article of November 2017 noted that of the men who inflicted violence on 32 women in October 2017, ‘Six assaulters were detained and released; one was released on probation; four were arrested; investigation warrant was issued for one who is a judge. One assaulter was killed by boyfriend of his ex-wife whom he assaulted. Legal proceedings about 19 assaulters weren’t reported in the media.’⁷⁶

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5.6 Action by the judiciary

- 5.6.1 In a report dated July 2016, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern ‘That lenient judgments are given to perpetrators of sexual violence, including those found guilty of the rape of girls, and reduced sentences are imposed owing to the perpetrator’s “good behaviour” during trial...’⁷⁷
- 5.6.2 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 noted:
- ‘Courts continued to give reduced sentences to some men found guilty of committing violence against women, citing good behavior during the trial or “provocation” by women as an extenuating circumstance of the crime. In one

Accessed: 27 November 2017.

⁷² UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 32, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017.

⁷³ Al-Monitor. ‘Laws fail to stop violence against women in Turkey,’ 27 February 2014. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/02/turkey-laws-fail-stop-violence-women.html> Accessed: 1 December 2017.

⁷⁴ Bianet. ‘Istanbul Convention: A New Hope For Turkey to Say “Women” without Fear?’ 22 July 2014. <http://bianet.org/english/women/157363-istanbul-convention-a-new-hope-for-turkey-to-say-women-without-fear> Accessed: 9 January 2017.

⁷⁵ Bianet. ‘Men Kill At Least 261 Women, Girls in 2016,’ 3 February 2017. <http://bianet.org/english/women/183255-men-kill-at-least-261-women-girls-in-2016> Accessed: 12 January 2018.

⁷⁶ Bianet. ‘Men kill 31 women in October,’ 9 November 2017. <http://bianet.org/english/women/191365-men-kill-31-women-in-october> Accessed: 9 January 2018.

⁷⁷ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 32, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017

example, a court lessened the penalty given in January to Ibrahim Yilmaz, who stabbed his wife to death in front of their children in Diyarbakir in February 2015. Yilmaz was first sentenced to life imprisonment for “deliberate murder,” but the court lessened his sentence to 24 years after ruling that the crime was committed under “unfair incitement.” Subsequently, the court reduced the sentence to 20 years for the perpetrator’s “respectful stance” during the court hearing.⁷⁸

5.6.3 In February 2015, Al-Monitor published an article which noted:

‘Researchers have listed several reasons a man could receive a reduced sentence for murder or rape, such as: a man who says, “she was wearing jeans; she came home an hour late; there were birth control pills in her purse”; a rapist who could not complete the attempted rape; a victim who fails to scream during rape, which is viewed as giving consent and criminals who come across as well mannered in court. Yet, there has never been a discussion on “registering sex offenders” in Turkey. With this mindset, perpetrators of sexual crimes receive a slap on the wrist at best.’⁷⁹

5.6.4 The New York Times reported on justice for female victims of violence in February 2015:

‘Turkey saw nearly 300 women murdered last year [2014], and 27 more just this past January [2015], a 20 percent increase over the same period last year. Few of those killings received much news media and political attention.

‘Since the 1990s, activists have scored several legislative victories aimed at ending violence against women, and this Muslim country certainly leads the Middle East on the issue. But the laws have been undermined by loopholes that allow judges — mostly male — to reduce sentences at their discretion. In hundreds of cases, men who murdered were able to argue that a woman provoked them, or that their dignity was impugned, and they received a reduced sentence, some to just a few years in prison.

‘Over the last five months, I have worked alongside Turkish women’s rights activists researching dozens of domestic violence cases in which men have received little or no punishment for their crimes. In 2014, a man in eastern Turkey who stabbed his wife multiple times was given a reduced sentence after he argued she was wearing “provocative” leggings and speaking with another man. Also last year, a 62-year-old man who appeared on a TV dating show bragged about how he had killed two women, the first his wife, and later a lover. For those murders, he served a total of 14 years in prison.

‘Turkish lawyers and activists say these mild penalties stem from a culture that views women as second-class citizens. Advocates complain that sometimes a woman’s death is not even investigated because the husband claims it’s a suicide or an accident, and the police look the other way. In so-called honor killings, a woman is murdered following a rape or accusation of

⁷⁸ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017

⁷⁹ Al-Monitor. ‘Have AKP’s policies caused rise in violence against women?’ 20 February 2015 <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/02/turkey-ozgecan-sex-crimes-murder.html> Accessed: 12 January 2018

indecent, but the family, complicit in her death, refuses to press charges against any suspect. Volunteer activists sometimes take up those cases, only to see judges side with the perpetrator's defense that the woman was promiscuous or that the man's entire life shouldn't be ruined.

"Judges follow their social agenda and give discounts according to their own opinions," said Ipek Bozkurt, an attorney in Istanbul who specializes in domestic violence cases. "Even the existing laws in Turkey are not enforced in practice because judges don't care about women."

'In 2014, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Turkey had failed to investigate the suicide of a woman known to be abused by her husband. The judges found that "discriminatory judicial passivity in Turkey created a climate that was conducive to domestic violence."...'80

- 5.6.5 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 noted the following in relation to 'honour' killing:

'Individuals convicted of honor killings may receive life imprisonment, but NGOs reported that actual sentences often were reduced due to mitigating factors. The law allows judges, when establishing sentences, to take into account anger or passion caused by the "misbehavior" of the victim. Local political and human rights representatives noted that society largely downplayed the issue of women killed by family members because there was an underlying assumption that some type of "honor" violation was involved, perhaps justifying the killing.'81

- 5.6.6 The OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index for 2014 stated '...there are reports that strategies to avoid criminal prosecution for the crime include designating a young male relative to perform the killing (juvenile offenders may receive reduced sentences) or pressure girls into committing suicide...'82

- 5.6.7 See [Law](#) for information about the legal position in relation to 'honour' killing.

- 5.6.8 See [Attitudes towards women: state and societal](#) and ['Honour' killing](#) for further information on these subjects.

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5.7 Protection for women: overview

- 5.7.1 The DFAT report of September 2016 noted that 'the Government provides a range of protection services, including relocation and changes to women's identities.'83 The same report noted that 'The Turkish Government has set up

⁸⁰ The New York Times. 'Turkish men get away with murder,' 23 February 2015 <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/24/opinion/ozgecan-aslan-and-violence-against-women-in-turkey.html> Accessed: 24 November 2017

⁸¹ US Department of State. 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016;' Turkey, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

⁸² OECD Development Centre. 'Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.' <https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

⁸³ Australian Government. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 'Country information report;' Turkey, paragraph 4.102, 5 September 2016. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-turkey.pdf> Accessed: 15 January 2016.

a network of approximately 50 shelters for women (and sometimes men) fleeing family violence but this number is far below that required by Turkey's laws. Non- government organisations provide further shelters (approximately 50 in total), as well as relocation assistance services.' ⁸⁴

5.7.2 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 stated:

'The law covers all women, regardless of marital status, and requires police and local authorities to grant various levels of protection and support services to survivors of violence or those at risk of violence. It also requires government services, such as shelter and temporary financial support, for victims and provides for family courts to impose sanctions on perpetrators...

'The law provides for the establishment of prevention-of-violence and monitoring centers to offer economic, psychological, legal, and social assistance. As of December 2015, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies reported there were 133 women's shelters: 101 run by the central government and 32 by local administrations. The shelters had a capacity of at least 2,388. Domestic NGOs also operated a few shelters. An Istanbul-based NGO, Purple Roof, reported that in the first six months of the year, 493 women and children applied for assistance with domestic violence issues.

'Regulations call for a state-funded women's shelter for every 100,000 persons. There were no sanctions for noncompliance. Observers noted an inadequate number of shelters--or no shelters at all--in many cities with populations above 100,000. For example, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies noted three shelters in Ankara, a city with a population of five million.' ⁸⁵

5.7.3 In the interview of November 2016 with Daily Sabah, the Family and Social Policies Minister, Dr. Sayan-Kaya, said that 'Currently there are a total of 137 women's hostels able to shelter 3,443 women, 101 of which are directly administered by our ministry, while the rest are run by local governments and NGOs.

'Moreover, we have 25 First Admission Units where women who were subjected to domestic violence are received. We investigate their economic, psycho-social conditions in these centers.' ⁸⁶

5.7.4 In July 2017 Turkey submitted a report to the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) which included the information below. NB: GREVIO carried out an

⁸⁴ Australian Government. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 'Country information report,' Turkey, paragraph 4.101, 5 September 2016. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-turkey.pdf> Accessed: 15 January 2016.

⁸⁵ US Department of State. 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016,' Turkey, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dld=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

⁸⁶ Daily Sabah. 'Ministry of Family and Social Policies' 2023 project hopes to increase women's labor force to 41 percent,' 13 November 2016 <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2016/11/14/ministry-of-family-and-social-policies-2023-project-hopes-to-increase-womens-labor-force-to-41-percent> Accessed: 28 November 2017

[evaluation visit](#) to Turkey from 30 October to 5 November 2017 and will publish an evaluation report before the end of 2018.

‘Women who receive services from women's shelters are provided with financial support in accordance with the Regulation on Opening and Operation of Women's Shelters. In this context, women and children who benefit from the first step stations or shelters and have no income are granted allowance based on social investigation reports in case that it is not ordered to make temporary financial aid under the Law No. 6284. Cash allowance is granted on the first day of month on signature according to bordereau prepared by the shelter and not cut till the salary is paid to them...

‘Apart from this, "Clothing aid" is paid in kind. The color and form of the clothing to be given according to needs is determined by the relevant women's shelter and these are bought according to standard body size, season, child age and gender and delivered to women. It is paid attention that color and models of clothing are not the same.

‘In scope of the Law No. 6284, VPMCs [Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres] provided legal aid to 1,218 people in 2014, to 1.411 persons in 2015 and to 1.509 persons in 2016.

‘Legal support and counseling service were provided to 5,201 women in 2014, to 5,201 women in 2015, and to 5,158 in 2016 in women's shelters. Bars are cooperated to provide legal support to the victims.’⁸⁷

5.7.5 The same report submitted to the Council of Europe noted:

‘At women's shelters, 18,384 women and accompanying children in 2014, 15,547 in 2015 and 15,526 in 2016 received psychological support and counseling services.

‘7.327 women in 2014, 7.167 women in 2015 and women 6.764 in 2016, who benefited from sheltering service, participated in awareness raising activities funded by the allocations from the MoFSP budget. In women's shelters, literacy courses were benefited by 905 women in 2014, 1,067 women in 2015, and 1,003 women in 2016.

‘15.291 women in 2014, 16.962 women in 2015, and 16.520 women in 2016 benefited from health services in women's shelters. In 2016, 10,094 women who applied to health institutions due to violence were given free health care. The relevant public administrations are obliged to pay premium for these persons.’⁸⁸

5.7.6 See [Health services](#) for further information on this subject.

⁸⁷ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). ‘Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),’ received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, page 32, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

⁸⁸ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). ‘Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),’ page 33, received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

- 5.7.7 The same report submitted by Turkey to the Council of Europe noted that assistance is provided in employment:

‘Within the framework of the cooperation protocol signed between the MoFSP [Ministry of Family and Social Policy] and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security in 2012 in the context of the counseling services for women victims of violence in women's shelters are referred to the Turkish Employment Agency. In addition, special courses are organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security for disadvantaged groups of women. 36,160 people participated in the courses organized for groups requiring special policy, and about 78% (28,364 people) of the participants were women.

‘Job seeking skills seminar was organized for 613 women victims of violence in January 2017 and 66 women victims of violence in 2016 through VPMCs.’⁸⁹

- 5.7.8 See [Employment](#) for further information on this subject.

- 5.7.9 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 noted:

‘Women’s associations ... charged that government counselors sometimes encouraged women to remain in abusive marriages at their own personal risk rather than break up families. During a workshop on women’s issues on April 14, Justice Minister Bekir Bozdag defined domestic violence as a “family matter and internal issue.” He reportedly stated, “How correct is the state’s interference in disagreements between men and women with its police, military, judiciary, psychiatrists, social workers, and experts? Do they really work saving the family...or are such practices carrying it to an irreversible place? We need to discuss this without the fear of the reactions that may come from the civil society organizations.”’⁹⁰

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5.8 Applying for shelter

- 5.8.1 The report submitted by Turkey to the Council of Europe in July 2017 stated:

‘In accordance with the applicable privacy and security principles, direct application to the women's shelters is not possible. Women demanding for admission by a woman's shelter may apply to law enforcement agencies, Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Policies, VPMC [Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centre], health care organizations, judicial authorities or non-governmental organizations. Notifications of third parties who are aware of violence are accepted as denunciations.

⁸⁹ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). ‘Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),’ page 34, received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

⁹⁰ US Department of State. ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016;’ Turkey, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

‘Applications for women's shelters are assessed by VPMCs and Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Policies in provinces where no VPMC is in service. The social investigation reports prepared by the social workers in the provincial directorates are based on the interview and the file examinations on the statement of woman without going to the residence of her. In the scope of Law No. 6284, women are admitted to stay at first step stations or women’s shelters by violence prevention and monitoring centers on the decision of local authority, family court judge and, in non-delayable cases, law enforcement chief.’⁹¹

- 5.8.2 The Women’s NGOs Shadow Report on Turkey’s Implementations of the Istanbul Convention for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence submitted to GREVIO Committee in September 2017 found that:

‘Although women can have access to some of the VPMCs [Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres] 24 hours a day, it is seen that required services are not given 7/24 due to lack of experts available at all times. After all, not all VPMCs are open 7/24. It is possible to call staff called “officers on stand-by duty” out of office hours. In the “emergency” system conducted by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, applicant women can only see social workers through the medium of police forces.

‘One of the most significant problems witnessed by women in rural parts of Turkey with a lower population, social workers in VPMCs might as well be relatives, associates, friends or acquaintances of the perpetrator of violence. Therefore, women abstain from making applications in fear of lack of confidentiality and the possibility of the perpetrator to hear about the application.’⁹²

- 5.8.3 See [Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres \(ŞÖNİM\)](#) for further information on these Centres.

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5.9 The First Step Centres

- 5.9.1 The report submitted by Turkey to the Council of Europe in July 2017 stated:

‘First step stations besides VPMCs and women’s shelters are the units where the preliminary observations and examination of psycho-social and economic statuses of women who apply to the Provincial Directorates of Family and Social Policies or VPMCs are carried out and where they can stay up to two weeks. Woman victim of violence is admitted to the first step

⁹¹ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). ‘Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),’ received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, page 36, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

⁹² Shadow NGO Report on Turkey’s First Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for submission to the GREVIO Committee, page 34, September 2017 <https://www.morcati.org.tr/attachments/article/442/turkey-ngo-shadow-report-grevio.pdf> Accessed 15 February 2018

stations in case that there is no shelter in the province or the capacity of shelter in the province is insufficient or conditions of woman are not suitable for direct settling to shelters.

‘According to the preliminary observations conducted by the professionals in the first step stations, the appropriate social service model and procedures to be carried out for women and their children, if any, are determined, and if necessary, they are admitted to appropriate women's shelter. There are 25 first step stations affiliated to our Ministry in 24 provinces.’⁹³

5.9.2 Research published by Hacettepe University in 2015 stated:

‘The First Step Center, is where women who have applied to the Provincial Directorates of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies or to ŞÖNİM can stay up to two weeks. In this unit, women's psycho-social and economic statuses are analyzed by performing preliminary observations. The First Step Centers have been active since 2009. In contrast with the positive impression of ŞÖNİM on women, the comments on the First Step Centers reveal the negative views of women who have been referred to these institutions. The criticisms of interviewed women are generally related to the overall hygiene of the Centers and the attitudes of the personnel...

‘The main factors for the negative evaluations is the crowded environment of the Centers and having women with different characteristics in the same environment. Due to the short accommodation periods of the First Step Centers, there is a constant circulation.’⁹⁴

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5.10 Women's shelters/guesthouses

5.10.1 The report submitted by Turkey to the Council of Europe in July 2017 stated:

‘A total of 19,865 people, 14,123 women and 5,742 children in 2014; a total of 27,761 people 18,562 women and 9,999 children in 2015; a total of 47,568 people, 29,612 women and 17,956 children in 2016 were offered service [in shelters]...

‘The shelters employ adequate number of and qualified social workers and nurses, child trainers, officers, cooks, cleaning and maintenance personnel, security personnel and drivers who graduated from institutions providing training in psychology, child development, teaching and social services among preferably women candidates.’⁹⁵

⁹³ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). ‘Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),’ received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, page 37, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

⁹⁴ Hacettepe University. ‘Research on domestic violence against women in Turkey,’ 2015, page 225. <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/vaw/vaw%20survey/turkey%20vaw%20survey.pdf> Accessed: 28 November 2017

⁹⁵ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). ‘Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),’ received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, page 37, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

5.10.2 The same report noted:

‘Maximum stay in shelters is six months from the date of acceptance of the woman to the first step stations. The duration of stay can be extended if necessary by evaluating the empowerment process of women. The extension period is determined by the evaluation committee, taking the opinion of a social worker and, if the woman has a child, the opinion of a child development specialist. Those who are ordered sheltering injunction by a local authority or family court judge benefit from services of the shelters for the period specified in the decision.

‘No discrimination is made regarding the race, language, religion, gender, marital status, disability, nationality, status and similar conditions of the individuals in execution of the services and activities covered by the Law No. 6284. There is no discrimination or criterion for the delivery of service within the framework of the Regulation on Opening and Operation of Women's Shelters, except being a victim of violence or under risk of violence.

‘In scope of the support services for victims of sexual violence, the institutional service units make their services available for women who are victims of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence, without any sort of discrimination whatsoever and based solely upon the statements of the women concerned.’⁹⁶

5.10.3 The same report noted the approach taken to the women staying at shelters:

‘The woman's statement is essential in the operations to be done at the women's shelters, and she cannot be obliged to show any evidence. Women victims of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence are delivered free service in women's shelters by only taking into account the woman's declaration without any discrimination. ...Women staying at the shelters are themselves responsible for the decisions they make and for the positive or negative consequences of their decisions. The main objective is to ensure economic, social and psychological empowerment of women. It operates with an understanding of the protection of the right to nonviolent life. Employees cannot propose compromise with the person who is perpetrator or potential perpetrator and mediate between them...’⁹⁷

5.10.4 A report published by Hacettepe University in 2015 found:

‘Although interviewed women generally made positive comments on women's guesthouses/shelters, which they considered a place for salvation when they were in need of a place to live, there were also negative comments. The complaints are generally about women finding themselves,

⁹⁶ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). ‘Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),’ received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, page 39, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

⁹⁷ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). ‘Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),’ received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, page 38, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

once again, in an oppressive environment after coming from a place where they already experienced pressure...

‘Another source of discomfort for women who stay in women’s guesthouses/ shelters is the attitudes of the shelter personnel. Since these women’s guesthouses/ shelters accommodate people who came out of traumatic environments and who bear traces of the detrimental effects of these environments, a sensitive approach toward the mental status of women who have been subjected to violence gains importance...

‘Some of the women stated that they felt relieved by coming to the women’s guesthouses/shelters and that they benefited from the guidance and consultancy services. A 33-year-old woman with primary school education stated that there was no discrimination between women, no hierarchy between women and the personnel of the women’s guesthouse/shelter and that she regained her selfconfidence.’⁹⁸

5.10.5 The Women’s NGOs Shadow Report on Turkey’s Implementations of the Istanbul Convention for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence submitted to GREVIO Committee in September 2017 found that:

‘Shelter work is depleted due to government’s not seeing them as an instrument to combat gender inequality in the society, but as places it is obliged to establish/manage under various types of outside pressure. Experience shared by women staying in shelters evincing the lack of quality of social services is indeed worrisome. Women state that staff, as nurses, security officers, cleaning staff, care workers, who are not well equipped to work with women subjected to violence are authorized in the management of shelters and they are frequently subjected to mistreatment.

‘It is seen that, most of the shelters are inadequate to provide services systematically and empowering activities. There are many cases in which women stay in shelters for months without ever seeing a professional. The lack of regular social work to cover the needs of women, consultancy and orientation services with regards to career planning and placement as well as social works regarding children is a common practice, while it is also common that children not to be registered to schools or the registration is not kept confidential, leading the whereabouts of them to be disclosed, and/or children under 3 years old not to be sent to day care centres and children above 7 years old not to be sent to kids’ clubs.

‘It is complicated for women to find a job, get their work done to build a life after the shelter and expand their social network as the use of mobile phone, landline and internet is restricted and entrance and exit hours to shelters are not in line with office hours.’⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Hacettepe University. ‘Research on domestic violence against women in Turkey,’ 2015. <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/vaw/vaw%20survey/turkey%20vaw%20survey.pdf> Accessed: 28 November 2017

⁹⁹ Shadow NGO Report on Turkey’s First Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for submission to the GREVIO Committee, page 37, September 2017 <https://www.morcati.org.tr/attachments/article/442/turkey-ngo-shadow-report-grevio.pdf> Accessed: 15 February 2018

5.10.6 In July 2016, the UN Committee for the Elimination of Violence Against Women noted that:

‘...inadequate assistance and remedies are offered to women seeking to escape violent relationships, reflected, inter alia, in insufficient numbers of shelters in an inadequate geographical distribution, inappropriate conditions for women in shelters including invasive searches, confiscation of the women’s cell phones and restricted hours for entering and exiting the shelter, as well as the frequent practice of sending victims back to their abusive partners or compelling them to part with their children...’¹⁰⁰

5.10.7 The report of July 2017 submitted by Turkey to the Council of Europe noted the issue of confidentiality and safety:

‘Addresses and phone numbers of organizations are kept confidential due to the risk of women’s safety and the sensitivity of the issue. For this reason, a sign that introduces the organization is not hung and the groundbreaking and opening ceremony are not organized. The names of the women, children and employees are not mentioned in the correspondences to be made, the mutually agreed codes are used if necessary and the information and addresses of women, children and the third parties, if necessary, are kept secret in all official records.

‘For the security of the women’s shelters, photographs of the shelters’ external front, employees and beneficiaries are not contained in any document, material, written or visual press and publication made on the internet. Personal information about women who stay at any women’s shelters cannot be requested by any public official except in cases where the judicial authority is utilized. No public official can conduct a direct referral to shelters and shelters do not accept visitor.

‘Public institutions and organizations act in accordance with the rule of confidentiality in the use of information, communication and publishing tools in all official correspondence they carry out with respect to women and children in shelters. They take measures to prevent breaches of confidentiality in their units without delay. Materials such as guns and similar materials used for damaging purposes are not allowed in shelters. Recording with a camera and sound recorder is not allowed in the shelters.’¹⁰¹

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5.11 Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres (ŞÖNİM)

5.11.1 Hacettepe University published the results of research in 2015 which found:

‘ŞÖNİM did not receive any negative comments from women who have contacted this institution. ŞÖNİM, which was opened for service with Law No. 6284, as a pilot program in 14 provinces since 2012, are among the

¹⁰⁰ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 32, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017

¹⁰¹ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). ‘Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),’ received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, page 39, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

institutions to which women have applied or have been referred. The interviewed women have reached ŞÖNİM with the referrals of other institutions such as the police or municipalities rather than individual applications. Women who have applied to police stations have been transferred to the ŞÖNİM with police escort and in a vehicle provided by the police.

‘ŞÖNİM, which was established for providing support services for the prevention of violence and for the implementation of protective and preventive cautionary decisions, has made a good impression on women. In the evaluations on ŞÖNİM, it is observed that both the environment provided for women who came to the center and the service delivery have pleased the women. Although, the women’s lack of information on institutions like ŞÖNİM is among the findings of the research, it is possible to say that ŞÖNİM is only just starting to be recognized since they were established a short time ago.’¹⁰²

- 5.11.2 In July 2017 Turkey submitted a report to the Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) which stated:

‘In scope of Law No. 6284, psycho-social support units located in VPMCs [Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres] deliver services to both victims of violence and perpetrators and potential perpetrators. These units interview with victims of violence and perpetrators, prepare necessary reports, determine the service model to be provided, carry out and coordinate the support and guidance services for the resolution of the problem, monitor the results and prepare and follow the measure plan. Psycho-social support unit has sections such as a professional interview room and a rest room. 646 people received psycho-social support services from VPMCs between 2014 and 2016.’¹⁰³

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5.12 Hotlines

- 5.12.1 The report submitted by Turkey to the Council of Europe in July 2017 stated:

‘The ALO183 Social Support Hotline is operated 24/7 within the MoFSP [Ministry of Family and Social Policy], providing support free of charge and in Turkish, Arabic and Kurdish. The "ALO183 Hotline" operating under the roof of MoFSP serves as a psychological, legal and economic counseling hotline for women and children who are victims of violence or under risk of violence and who need help and inform these people about their rights and institutions to be applied. In addition, denunciations are taken to prevent negligence, abuse and violence or custom and honor killings and the emergency intervention team responsible for the incident and / or the law

¹⁰² Hacettepe University. ‘Research on domestic violence against women in Turkey,’ page 224, 2015. <http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/vaw/vaw%20survey/turkey%20vaw%20survey.pdf> Accessed: 28 November 2017

¹⁰³ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). ‘Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),’ received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, page 33, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

enforcement officials are informed to provide intervention taking into consideration the case.

‘For hearing-impaired citizens who cannot make phone calls with the call center, it is possible to have a video call on a separate line. In addition, citizens with hearing and speech impairment can send free SMS, and the call center personnel provide the necessary guidance and referral services by calling back the citizen...

‘Moreover, women exposed to violence and witnesses of violence can report to law enforcement officers on hotlines of 155 (police) and 156 (gendarmerie) on 7/24 basis. The "ALO 112" Emergency Call Center, which is an emergency hotline which can be called by those who suffered from any injuring or health problem due to domestic violence, is also the preliminary hotline to respond to calls for help against violence from the "ALO 155" police hotline and "ALO156" gendarmerie hotline in many cities with the help of recent restructuring process. In addition, efforts are maintaining to create a "Single Emergency Call Number" in Turkey and it has been already expanded to 25 provinces. The hotlines obtain only those pieces of information required by the relevant people in scope of the need-to-know principle, observe the rules of confidentiality and the staff members are trained accordingly.’¹⁰⁴

- 5.12.2 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 noted that ‘The government operated a nationwide domestic-violence hotline, but women’s rights NGOs criticized authorities for changing its focus from violence against women to broader issues, including challenges faced by families, women, children, the disabled, and families of martyrs and veterans. NGOs reported the quality of services provided in calls was inadequate for victims of domestic violence.’¹⁰⁵

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5.13 Assistance for victims of sexual violence

- 5.13.1 The report submitted by Turkey in July 2017 to the Council of Europe stated:

‘Victims of sexual violence can refer to VPMCs [Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres] which are currently available in service in 49 cities nationwide and to be opened in each city by the end of 2017. VPMCs hold the first interview with the victims of sexual violence commissioning staff members trained on trauma, apply to the relevant authorities for issue of injunction orders suitable to their conditions in line with the report drafted taking their needs and requests into consideration and provide medical and

¹⁰⁴ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). ‘Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),’ received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, page 41, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

¹⁰⁵ US Department of State. ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016,’ Turkey, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

judicial examination and trauma care for the victims of violence where necessary.

'Within this framework, the victims in need of emergency medical care, judicial examination and trauma support are provided with access to the relevant health units. The victims are accompanied by either nurses or health officers during the medical attention process; and by female professionals during the procedures at the law enforcement or courthouses. In scope of the Law Nr.6284, victims of sexual violence are referred by VPMCs to the first-step stations or women's shelters, in case the need for accommodation arises. In addition, shelters and VPMCs provide psychosocial support and guidance services for women victims of violence. Furthermore, the victims of sexual violence who refer to the Family Health Centers, Community Health Centers and hospitals have access to the services of diagnosis, medical care, risk assessment and psychological support.

'Efforts have been underway to institutionalize the rape crisis centers or sexual violence referral centers in Turkey in pursuant to Article 25 of the Istanbul Convention.

'Accordingly, the MoFSP and the Ministry of Health signed "The Cooperation Protocol on Combating Violence against Women" on 8th March 2015 and the protocol included an article which read "in pursuant to the Istanbul Convention; increase the number and capacity of Crisis Response Units, Medical Social Service Units and other related units to prevent secondary victimization and loss of evidence in judicial cases concerning violence against women, create special service models for victims of sexual violence, improve information and sensitiveness of the relevant units about the issue". Protocol activities have been continued with participation of the relevant stakeholders.

'Furthermore, "The National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women (2016-2020)", the third of which has been effective since 2016, embodies a measure that follows "Special service models are going to be developed and implemented for the victims of sexual violence as per the Istanbul Convention".'¹⁰⁶

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5.14 Non-Governmental organisations

5.14.1 Research carried out by Hacettepe University in 2015 found that 'NGOs are also among the institutions that women subjected to violence who are in search of institutional support apply to. The evaluations of the interviewed women regarding NGOs to which few interviewed women have applied are mostly satisfactory.'¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). 'Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),' received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, page 40, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

¹⁰⁷ Hacettepe University. 'Research on domestic violence against women in Turkey,' page 226, 2015.

5.15 Womens' counselling centres and family centres

5.15.1 The report submitted by Turkey to the Council of Europe on July 2017 stated:

'Women Counseling Center, one of the most important mechanisms of combat violence against women based on gender, is counseling, informing and referring unit where women can apply through calls, direct applications or internet when they experience any kind of violence. It can provide free support for the issues they need in combating violence against women and children or refer them to relevant organizations.

'There are nearly 60 women counseling centers in Turkey. Women Counseling Centers, which are affiliated to the municipalities and women's organizations, maintain their activities as important specialist mechanisms of combating violence against women. NGOs such as KAMER in Gaziantep, Women's Solidarity Foundation and Purple Roof are examples of women counseling centers. Nilüfer Municipality, Kecioren Municipality, İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, Yenimahalle Municipality and Ankara Metropolitan Municipality are among municipalities containing a women counseling center.

'There are also Women or Family Centers, where municipalities provide support to women and conduct various empowerment activities for them. In these centers, various services are provided for empowerment of women and awareness raising activities are carried out to develop an understanding far from violence against women, men and children. The establishment of specialized sub-units on violence or the empowerment of the already established units for violence in these organizations where women victims can also apply and these centers' conducting their activities with the support and coordination of Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers provide important contributions to meet the needs in the field.'¹⁰⁸

5.15.2 The Women's NGOs Shadow Report on Turkey's Implementations of the Istanbul Convention for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence submitted to GREVIO Committee in September 2017 found that:

'There is inadequacy of free or low-cost, extensive, reliable psychological counseling centres to satisfy the needs of women and children who have been subjected to violence. In the few present institutions, high demand and lack of staff result in low service quality. Allocation of the budget to psychological services for perpetrators of violence from the limited share of

<http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/vaw/vaw%20survey/turkey%20vaw%20survey.pdf> Accessed: 28 November 2017

¹⁰⁸ Council of Europe. Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO). 'Report submitted by Turkey pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report),' received by GREVIO on 3 July 2017, page 41, published 4 July 2017. <https://rm.coe.int/turkey-state-report/1680737201> Accessed: 29 November 2017

GDSW [General Directorate on the Status of Women] also negatively affects quantity and quality of services provided to women and their children.¹⁰⁹

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6. Harassment

6.1.1 The US Department of State's Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016 reported that whilst the law provides for two to five years' imprisonment for sexual harassment, 'Women's rights activists reported that authorities rarely enforced these laws.'¹¹⁰

6.1.2 In February 2015, Al-Monitor noted a social media campaign with the hashtag #sendeanlat ('you tell your story'):

'Under this hashtag, women from all walks of life shared their stories of sexual and physical harassment. The floodgates to shocking revelations had been opened. Over 1 million tweets were posted. These devastating firsthand accounts of victims showed no women in Turkey were immune to sexual harassment; it affects minors, hijabis, the elderly and disabled, those living in urban and rural areas, those with little education and graduate degrees, the rich and poor and tourists and locals. All these women had been taught since early childhood to hide in shame and remain quiet in the face of rape and sexual harassment. Now it was out in the open.

'However, not all reactions were in support.'¹¹¹

6.1.3 See [Law](#) for the legal situation regarding sexual harassment.

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7. FGM

7.1.1 The DFAT report of September 2016 noted that 'Turkish human rights group told DFAT that female genital mutilation was a new and still rare phenomenon in Turkey concentrated in Arabic-speaking areas. It was primarily associated with more fundamentalist strains of Islam reaching Turkey through migration and the internet.'¹¹²

7.1.2 The OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index for 2014 noted that 'No statistics are available on the prevalence of female genital mutilation (FGM) in Turkey, though it does not appear to be a common practice. While FGM is

¹⁰⁹ Shadow NGO Report on Turkey's First Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for submission to the GREVIO Committee, page 32, September 2017 <https://www.morcati.org.tr/attachments/article/442/turkey-ngo-shadow-report-grevio.pdf> Accessed: 15 February 2018

¹¹⁰ US Department of State. 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016,' Turkey, Section 6, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

¹¹¹ Al-Monitor. 'Have AKP's policies caused rise in violence against women?' 20 February 2015. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/02/turkey-ozgecan-sex-crimes-murder.html> Accessed: 12 January 2018.

¹¹² Australian Government. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. 'Country information report,' Turkey, paragraph 4.104, 5 September 2016. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-turkey.pdf> Accessed: 15 January 2018.

found in some Kurdish communities in other countries, it is reportedly not practiced among the Kurds of Turkey, with the possible exception of some communities along the border with Iran.’¹¹³

- 7.1.3 See [Law](#) for information on the legal position with regard to FGM.

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8. Marriage and divorce

8.1 Civil and religious marriage ceremonies

- 8.1.1 The Turkish Statistical Institute published the results of a survey carried out in 2016 with the cooperation of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy which noted, ‘When the form of solemnization of marriages was analyzed, it was seen that 97.1% of all solemnizations was both civil and religious, 1.8% was only civil and 1.1% was only religious.’¹¹⁴
- 8.1.2 See [Law](#) for information about the legal position with regard to civil and religious marriage.

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8.2 Underage and forced marriage

- 8.2.1 The US Department of State’s Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016 noted:
- ‘On April 19 [2016], then minister of family and social policies Sema Ramazanoglu, citing the Turkish Statistics Institute data, announced that since 2010 there were 232,313 girls under the age of 18 years old officially married in the country. Media noted that official marriages only captured a fraction of underage marriages, since many such marriages were concluded as religious marriages only. A May 2015 Constitutional Court decision legalized the right to be religiously married without obtaining a civil marriage. Observers noted that, as a result, official marriage statistics increasingly may not reflect overall numbers of marriages (civil and religious) nationwide.’¹¹⁵
- 8.2.2 In a report published in July 2016, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about ‘The significant number of child marriages, especially in deprived rural areas, their wide acceptance in society and the insufficient efforts made by the State party to prevent them and adequately punish perpetrators.’¹¹⁶
- 8.2.3 In November 2016, The Independent noted that ‘Although the legal age of consent is 18 in Turkey, child marriage is widespread, particularly in the

¹¹³ OECD Development Centre. ‘Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.’ <https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

¹¹⁴ Turkish Statistical Institute. ‘Family Structure Survey 2016,’ published 18 January 2017. <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=21869> Accessed: 23 November 2017

¹¹⁵ US Department of State. ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016,’ Turkey, Section 6, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

¹¹⁶ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 30, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017

South-east. The country has one of the highest rates of child marriage in Europe, with an estimated 15% of girls married before their 18th birthday.¹¹⁷

8.2.4 The Turkish Statistical Institute published the results of a survey carried out in 2016 with the cooperation of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy which found that 17.9% of marriages took place under 18 years old.¹¹⁸

8.2.5 The DFAT report of September 2016 recorded that:

‘Children as young as 12 are reportedly married in unofficial religious ceremonies. Underage and forced marriage, particularly of young girls, is reported to be prevalent but survey results vary. One NGO survey suggests that the prevalence of marriages under the age of 18 is decreasing but remains high, at around 35 per cent of surveyed women in 2013. Another NGO put the current number at 38 per cent, while the Ministry for Family and Social Policy’s survey indicated the number was only 9.3 per cent. Women’s rights groups in Turkey told DFAT that awareness of underage marriage is increasing. DFAT was also advised that the incidence of underage marriage between Turkish men and Syrian refugee girls was increasing.’¹¹⁹

8.2.6 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 stated that ‘Although the practice is not currently legal, some NGOs reported that the country’s conservative rural populations still used early marriage as a means to preserve a girl’s “honor” after she has had sex, even in some cases of rape.’¹²⁰

8.2.7 The UN Population Fund summarised the key points concerning child marriage in Turkey as below:

‘Although marriage can be contracted by two persons of 17 years of age according to the Civil Code, marriages occur before that age. Implementation of the laws is not influential in preventing child marriages.

‘The Grand National Assembly of Turkey has recognised the issue of child marriage as a social problem; however, discrepancies in the definition of the child between the Child Protection Law (which defines a child as anyone under 18), the Penal Code (which defines a child as anyone under 18 in some articles, and under 15 in others), and the Turkish Civil Code (which defines 17 as the legal minimum age for marriage) still exist...

‘Due to lack of knowledge of contraception, child marriages result in early motherhood in Turkey. The fact that the use of both traditional and modern methods of contraception was lowest among women aged 15-19 indicates

¹¹⁷ The Independent. ‘Turkey scraps plans for law that would have pardoned rapists who marry underage victims,’ 22 November 2016. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turkey-underage-sex-rapists-law-marry-children-withdrawn-pm-a7431171.html> Accessed: 23 November 2017

¹¹⁸ Turkish Statistical Institute. ‘Family Structure Survey 2016,’ published 18 January 2017. <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=21869> Accessed: 23 November 2017

¹¹⁹ Australian Government. Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade. ‘Country Information Report,’ Turkey, paragraph 4.103, 5 September 2016. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-turkey.pdf> Accessed: 15 January 2018

¹²⁰ US Department of State. ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016,’ Turkey, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

the necessity of raising awareness of reproductive health among adolescent girls.

‘Child marriage is a social problem that is prevalent in all regions of the country and primarily affects girls. Gender inequality embedded in traditions and values rises with poverty and lack of education, and results in the child marriage of girls.’¹²¹

- 8.2.8 See [Law](#) for information on the legal position in relation to forced and underage marriage. See [‘Honour’ killing](#) for further information on this subject.

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8.3 Arranged marriage

- 8.3.1 The survey carried out in 2016 by the Turkish Statistical Institute also provided information about arranged marriage:

‘How ever married individuals got married in Turkey was analyzed, it was seen that 47.8% of first marriages was arranged marriages with his/her decision, 12.1% of first marriages was arranged marriages with the decision of their family without taking his/her opinion. The proportion of individuals who preferred his/her spouse with their own decision and family's approval was 30.2%. The proportion of individuals who married with own decision without family's consent was 2.5%. The proportion of eloping/being eloped marriages was 7%...

‘When the decision of marriages of ever married individuals was analyzed in terms of educational status, it was seen that as educational status increased, the proportion of marriages with individuals' own decision increased and the proportion of arranged marriages decreased. While the proportion of individuals who did not complete any school and got married with their own decision and family's approval was 10.6%, this proportion was 67.1% for individuals with higher education school, faculty, master/doctorate graduates.’¹²²

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8.4 Polygamy

- 8.4.1 In March 2015, Al-Monitor noted: ‘...in rural and southeastern and eastern parts of the country, men marrying multiple wives is known to be common. Yet, polygamy in Turkey is not confined to rural areas...it is uncommon to find polygamous relationships among the secular, educated middle- and upper-middle class in urban areas...Despite the legal ban and social stigma, polygamy in Turkey has not disappeared.’¹²³
- 8.4.2 The Huffington Post reported the following in an article published in July 2016 and updated in January 2017: ‘Polygamy was outlawed in Turkey in 1926 and carries a two-year jail sentence for violators. But with the recent

¹²¹ UN Population Fund. ‘Child marriage in Turkey (overview),’ June 2014 <http://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/unfpa%20turkey%20overview.pdf> Accessed: 23 November 2017

¹²² Turkish Statistical Institute. ‘Family Structure Survey 2016,’ published 18 January 2017. <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=21869> Accessed: 23 November 2017

¹²³ Al-Monitor. ‘Big love in Turkey,’ 24 March 2015 <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/turkey-polygamy-acceptable-conspicuously.html> Accessed: 24 November 2017

influx of refugees into Turkey, most of them Syrian, activists say the practice is on the rise. And they accuse the government of turning a blind eye, failing to prosecute men who break the law by taking second and third wives, some as young as 10.

‘Frustrated by what they see as the government’s failure to protect the victims of polygamy, aid organizations are focusing on increasing awareness about the issue. Letting people know, for example, that if an underage girl can prove her family forced her into marrying an already married man, she has the right to get the union annulled.’¹²⁴

- 8.4.3 See [Law](#) for information about the legal position of polygamous marriages.

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8.5 Brides and blood feuds

- 8.5.1 In a report published in July 2016, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about ‘The ongoing practice, especially in rural and remote areas, of giving girls as brides to settle blood feuds, and the continued payment of “bride prices” in certain regions...’¹²⁵

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8.6 Reasons for divorce

- 8.6.1 The [Family Structure Survey 2016](#),¹²⁶ carried out by the Turkish Statistical Institute in 2016 indicated the main reasons for divorce. The most significant reason for divorce was an irresponsible and indifferent attitude at 50.9%. It was followed by being unable to provide financially for the family at 30.2% and a disrespectful attitude towards the spouse’s family at 24.3%.
- 8.6.2 In September 2014, Al-Monitor noted that Turkey’s divorce rate had increased by 38% over the past decade.¹²⁷
- 8.6.3 See [Law](#) for information about the legal position regarding divorce. See [Domestic violence](#) for further information on this subject.

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8.7 Unmarried women

- 8.7.1 In March 2015, Al-Monitor noted:
- ‘Interestingly, the percentage of women living alone between the ages of 30 and 64 is twice as high as men. Several pundits have questioned how this finding can be explained in a patriarchal society.

¹²⁴ Huffington Post. ‘Activists Condemn Turkey’s Polygamous Marriages Targeting Syrian Refugees,’ 25 July 2016, updated 2 January 2017 https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/polygamy-in-turkey_us_57964212e4b01180b52fae27 Accessed: 24 November 2017

¹²⁵ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 30, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017

¹²⁶ Turkish Statistical Institute. ‘Family Structure Survey 2016,’ published 18 January 2017. <http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=21869> Accessed: 23 November 2017

¹²⁷ Al-Monitor. ‘Turkey’s Family Ministry shames singles in new ad,’ 19 September 2014. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/09/turkey-family-ministry-battle-aloneness.html> Accessed: 30 November 2017.

‘Surviving as a single working woman in Turkey, either as a divorcee or bachelorette, is possible and quite pleasant if you have sufficient income and support. ...So who are the women able to live alone?’

‘One prominent sociologist in Turkey, who asked to remain anonymous for fear of losing his job, told Al-Monitor, “The household numbers for single females are skewed because most of these are the second and third wives of polygamous, pious men. If you look at the data for single parent households you will see a direct positive correlation. The majority are single women who are not mistresses. They have advanced degrees plus financial and emotional support from their families and can afford to live in fancy gated communities.”

‘Overall, we may conclude that given the high rates of divorce and women's murder in Turkey, despite all the social pressures — whether religious or secular — educated working women seem to have a carefree and happier lifestyle than their happily-ever-after married female friends.’¹²⁸

The Australian Government's Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade report of September 2016 recorded that it ‘has been told that divorced and widowed women ...suffer from societal discrimination, including difficulty in securing access to housing and employment.’¹²⁹

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9. Employment

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 Freedom House noted that ‘Only about 32 percent of working-age women participate in the labor force. One cabinet minister is female.’¹³⁰

9.1.2 The OECD Social and Institutions Gender Index 2014 noted the following reasons which discouraged women from working:

‘Social and cultural factors may be more decisive in preventing women from working. A 2004 study by a sociologist and MP, cited in the Turkish daily Hurriyet, found that 0.5% of women named the headscarf as the reason they did not work, while 23% cited caring for children, 18% said that men in their family did not want them to work, and 17% said they could not find a job. 8% believed women should remain at home, 3% said the circles they live in did not approve of working women, and 1% did not want to work among men. Similarly, a qualitative research study by Gfk Consulting, carried out in 2008, found that “traditional views of gender roles and relations” are primarily

¹²⁸ Al-Monitor. ‘Turkish independent women don't need to put a ring on it,’ 27 March 2015. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/03/turkey-marriage-stress-over-thirty-women.html> Accessed: 30 November 2017

¹²⁹ Australian Government. Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade. ‘Country Information Report,’ Turkey, paragraph 4.102, 5 September 2016. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-turkey.pdf> Accessed: 15 January 2018

¹³⁰ Freedom House. ‘Freedom in the World 2017,’ Turkey, 15 April 2017. <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/turkey> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

responsible for the differentiated levels of participation in the labour force by men and women.’¹³¹

- 9.1.3 Public Radio International reported that women were much less likely to work outside the home after marriage:

‘In a striking study, İlkkaracan [professor İpek İlkkaracan, a prominent economist at Istanbul Technical University] demonstrated the labor force participation rate among urban, single, female high school school graduates in Turkey is 63 percent whereas this rate falls to below 30 percent for their married counterparts.

“The problem is not that women are not entering the labor force, it’s that they’re leaving once they get married,” İlkkaracan said.

‘According to one study, when a Turkish woman gets married the time she spends on unpaid care work increases by 49 percent, whereas men’s decrease by 38 percent.’¹³²

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9.2 Discrimination

- 9.2.1 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 noted:

‘Women continued to face discrimination in employment and generally were underrepresented in managerial-level positions in business, government, and civil society. According to government statistics, women’s participation in the labor force was at 29 percent during the year, corresponding to more than eight million women. According to the July employment outlook report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the gender participation rate gap in the country stood at 43 percent.’¹³³

- 9.2.2 In July 2016 the UN Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women noted ‘...with concern that the employment rate of women remains particularly low, and that housework is disproportionately carried out by women. It is furthermore concerned about:

- (a) The higher rate of unemployment among women than among men, especially among young women;
- (b) The persistent gender wage gap in the public sector and elsewhere;
- (c) The significant number of women working in low-paid jobs in the informal sector in precarious conditions and without access to health insurance or social security...

‘The Committee is concerned about the precarious situation of women in rural areas, who are disproportionately affected by poverty and have limited access to education, employment, social security and health care. The

¹³¹ OECD Development Centre. ‘Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.’

<https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

¹³² PRI.org. ‘Why more Turkish women don’t work,’ 4 May 2017. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-05-04/why-more-turkish-women-dont-work> Accessed: 4 December 2017

¹³³ US Department of State. ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016,’ Turkey, Section 7d, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

Committee also notes with concern that women in rural areas are exposed to particularly discriminatory stereotypes about the traditional roles of women which, among other things, prevent them from participating in key domestic decisions.¹³⁴

9.2.3 The DFAT report of September 2016 stated that ‘DFAT has been told that divorced and widowed women also suffer from societal discrimination, including difficulty in securing access to housing and employment.’¹³⁵

9.2.4 See [Law](#) for information about the legal rights of women in the workplace.

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9.3 Assistance for women in employment

9.3.1 The USSD Country Report covering 2016 further noted that ‘The constitution permits measures, including positive discrimination, to advance gender equality. To encourage the hiring of women, the state paid social services insurance premiums on behalf of the employer for several months for any female employee over the age of 18 years old.’¹³⁶

9.3.2 The OECD ‘Better Life Index’ (2017 edition) noted that ‘Government subsidies for hiring female and younger workers, coupled with the increased need of families to secure second earner incomes in the global crisis, increased labour market participation among aged 25-54-year-old women from 29.3% in 2008 to 37.3% in 2012.’¹³⁷

9.3.3 In the interview of November 2016 with Daily Sabah, the Family and Social Policies Minister, Dr. Sayan-Kaya, said:

‘We have Family Support Centers (ADEM), which is crucial in providing vocational training to women, allowing them to be a part of social life. We will be increasing the numbers of these centers.

‘Moreover, the AK Party granted women the rights for maternity leave and allowed women with newborn children to work part-time while being fully paid. We grant the right to work part-time to women with children, until their children reach the age of six. Previously, most of the women who faced the dilemma of work or childcare usually went for taking care of their children. Now, they can do both simultaneously, freeing them of this obligatory and difficult decision.

¹³⁴ UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ‘Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey’ [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraphs 45 and 49, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017

¹³⁵ Australian Government. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. ‘Country Information Report,’ Turkey, paragraph 4.102, 5 September 2016. <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Documents/country-information-report-turkey.pdf> Accessed: 15 January 2018.

¹³⁶ US Department of State. ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016,’ Turkey, 3 March 2017. <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2016&dliid=265482> Accessed: 27 November 2017.

¹³⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. ‘OECD Better Life Index – Edition 2017’ Turkey (Jobs) <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/turkey/> Accessed: 28 November 2017

‘...Our aim is to increase the labor force participation rate to 34.5 percent and the employment rate to 30 percent by the end of 2018. Our 2023 projection is to increase the women's labor force participation up to 41 percent.’¹³⁸

- 9.3.4 See [Law](#) for further information about womens’ rights in the workplace.

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9.4 The impact of education

- 9.4.1 The OECD ‘Better Life Index’ (2017 edition) noted:

‘Traditionally, women have had very low labour force participation rates in Turkey, reflecting shortcomings in human capital as 78% of the female working age population have less than high school education, 58% have primary education or less and 17% are illiterate.

‘However, between 2005 and 2012, female participation and employment in urban areas both increased by over 50%. About half of the increase in urban female employment was achieved by university-educated women, reflecting an increase in female higher education. Employment rates also improved for women with high school education and, more drastically, for women with less than high school education, whose participation rate rose from 11.7% in 2008 to 16% in 2012. Female employment increased more rapidly in services. Nevertheless, the expansion of manufacturing jobs has also been an important driver for women with less than high-school education.’¹³⁹

- 9.4.2 The OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014 noted that ‘...among university graduates, there is less of a gap in women’s labour force participation. Women are better represented in certain higher-skilled professions than might be suggested by the overall labour participation rate, for example comprising over half of bankers, 39% of architects, and 41.5% of university staff (though, still only 27.4% of full professors).’¹⁴⁰

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9.5 Minority groups

- 9.5.1 In a report of January 2016, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination declared that it was concerned that ‘Roma, particularly Roma women, are disproportionately unemployed; ...The Committee is concerned about reports that members belonging to the Kurdish community are discriminated against in the labour market and the unemployment rate of Kurdish women in particular remains high.’¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Daily Sabah. ‘Ministry of Family and Social Policies’ 2023 project hopes to increase women's labor force to 41 percent,’ 13 November 2016 <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2016/11/14/ministry-of-family-and-social-policies-2023-project-hopes-to-increase-womens-labor-force-to-41-percent>
Accessed: 28 November 2017

¹³⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. ‘OECD Better Life Index – Edition 2017,’ Turkey (Jobs) <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/turkey/> Accessed: 28 November 2017

¹⁴⁰ OECD Development Centre. ‘Social Institutions and Gender Index 2014.’ <https://www.genderindex.org/country/turkey/> Accessed: 24 November 2017

¹⁴¹ United Nations. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. ‘Concluding observations on the combined fourth to sixth periodic reports of Turkey,’ paragraphs 27 and 29, 11 January 2016.

- 9.5.2 The July 2016 Concluding Observations of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concern about 'The persistent disadvantaged situation of Kurdish women that is exacerbated by prejudice against their ethnic and linguistic identity, leading to their further marginalization with respect to their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.'¹⁴²
- 9.5.3 See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Kurdish ethnicity](#) for further information about the position of Kurdish people in Turkey. See [Law](#) for information about the rights of women in the workplace.

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9.6 Childcare

9.6.1 Public Radio International noted:

'In Turkey, 89.6 percent of children are taken care of by their mothers, according to data from TurkStat, the country's official statistics agency. Only 2.4 percent of children are in child care facilities.

'About 40 percent of Turkish families don't have preschools in their vicinity and two out three families can't afford them, according to a recent study by the Bernard van Leer Foundation. In one other study, 80 percent of Turkish women who quit their jobs after having children said that they would return to the work force if they were to receive financial aid to pay for preschool.

'Providing such services is expensive. Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV), an NGO that has been at the forefront of the effort to widen children's access to preschool since the 1990s, has calculated that it costs on average 1000 Turkish lira (\$270) per child per month to operate a preschool with minimum quality standards.

"If left to the private sector, an entrepreneur would need to charge more than this amount in order to make a profit. We cannot expect low income families to afford such private services in a country where minimum wage is 1400 TL (\$380 U.S. dollars)" commented Yasemin Sirali, AÇEV's International Programs Advisor.'¹⁴³

- 9.6.2 The Women's NGOs Shadow Report on Turkey's Implementations of the Istanbul Convention for Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence submitted to GREVIO Committee in September 2017 noted that 'Another problem with women's employment is that the need for children's nurseries is often not met. It is virtually impossible to access free nursery services, especially for children under 3 years of age.'¹⁴⁴

Available at: https://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1465552297_g1600350.pdf Accessed: 1 December 2017.

¹⁴² UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. 'Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Turkey' [CEDAW/C/TUR/CO/7], paragraph 12, 25 July 2016. Available at: http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/1930_1484750203_n1623344.pdf Accessed: 24 November 2017

¹⁴³ PRI.org. 'Why more Turkish women don't work,' 4 May 2017. <https://www.pri.org/stories/2017-05-04/why-more-turkish-women-dont-work> Accessed: 4 December 2017

¹⁴⁴ Shadow NGO Report on Turkey's First Report on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence for submission to the GREVIO Committee, page 31, September 2017

- 9.6.3 See [Law](#) for further information about womens' rights in the workplace, including the right to childcare.

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Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- Version **2.0**
- valid from **8 May 2018**

Changes from last version of this note

Updated country information and guidance.

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