

# **Country Policy and Information Note**

## **Turkey: Women fearing gender-based violence**

**Version 3.0**

**July 2025**

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# Executive summary

The Constitution provides for equality of all individuals regardless of sex and legal protections for women exist. However, patriarchal attitudes and societal norms continue to reinforce discriminatory and stereotypical roles, rights and responsibilities according to gender.

Women who have experienced gender-based violence (GBV) form a particular social group (PSG) in Turkey within the meaning of the Refugee Convention.

GBV in Turkey includes domestic, sexual violence and workplace violence, 'honour' crimes, femicide and, less commonly, forced/early marriage. Whilst GBV is reportedly widespread, prevalence is difficult to assess due to underreporting and the lack of comprehensive national data collection system. The last national prevalence survey (2013–2014) found 38% of women had experienced physical and/or sexual violence. Most GBV, including femicide, occurs in a domestic context. According to NGOs, 394 women were killed by men in 2024.

Women, in general, are unlikely to face a real risk of GBV from non-state actors. While GBV can encompass various forms of harm, not all forms, or instances, are sufficiently severe to meet the threshold for persecution or serious harm. The onus is on the person to show otherwise.

Turkey has a functioning criminal justice system and legal framework to address GBV. GBV, including spousal and intimate partner rape, sexual harassment, stalking, and 'honour' crimes, is illegal and penalties are commensurate with other serious crimes. Various mechanisms to protect women and enable victims of GBV to access justice are in place, particularly in relation to domestic violence. This includes a nationwide domestic violence hotline, a web application and specialist police units, although the quality of services provided in response is varied. Violence Monitoring and Prevention Centres (VMPCs) operate in all 81 provinces and aid domestic violence victims, however a lack of co-ordination, and staffing and financial issues affect capability. According to the government of Turkey, over 270,000 women and children were assisted in 2022.

There are 145 state run shelters across the country accommodating around 3,500 women. Services include legal, medical, and psychological support, although sources indicate numbers are insufficient to meet demand and conditions within them vary. Some shelters in the south-east have been closed.

In general, the state is willing and able to provide protection.

In general, internal relocation is likely to be viable, particularly to larger cities such as Istanbul.

In general, 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.

All cases must be considered on their individual facts, with the onus on the person to demonstrate they face persecution or serious harm.

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# Assessment

Section updated: 26 June 2025

## About the assessment

This section considers the evidence relevant to this note – that is the [country information](#), refugee/human rights laws and policies, and applicable caselaw – and provides an assessment of **whether, in general**:

- a woman faces a real risk of persecution/serious harm due to gender-based violence by non-state actors.
- the state can provide effective protection
- internal relocation is possible to avoid persecution/serious harm
- a claim, if refused, it is likely or not to be certified as ‘clearly unfounded’ under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Decision makers **must**, however, consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case’s specific facts.

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## 1. Material facts, credibility and other checks/referrals

### 1.1 Credibility

- 1.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and [Gender identity issues in the asylum claim](#).
- 1.1.2 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](#)).
- 1.1.3 Decision makers must also consider making an international biometric data-sharing check (see Biometric data-sharing process (Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process)).
- 1.1.4 In cases where there are doubts surrounding a person’s claimed place of origin, decision makers should also consider language analysis testing, where available (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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### Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

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## 1.2 Exclusion

- 1.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons for considering whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses is applicable. Each case must be considered on its individual facts.
- 1.2.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection (which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status).
- 1.2.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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## 2. Convention reason(s)

- 2.1.1 Actual or imputed particular social group (PSG).
- 2.1.2 Women who have experienced gender-based violence form a PSG in Turkey within the meaning of the Refugee Convention because they share an innate characteristic or a common background that cannot be changed (their experience of gender-based violence), or share a characteristic or belief that is so fundamental to identity or conscience that a person should not be forced to renounce it **and** have a distinct identity in Turkey because the group is perceived as being different by the surrounding society.
- 2.1.3 Although women who have experienced gender-based violence form a PSG, establishing such membership is not sufficient to be recognised as a refugee. The question to be addressed is whether the person has a well-founded fear of persecution on account of their membership of such a group.
- 2.1.4 For further guidance on the 5 Refugee Convention grounds, see the Asylum Instruction, [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 3. Risk

### 3.1 Risk from non-state actors

- 3.1.1 Women, in general, are unlikely to face a real risk of GBV from non-state actors.
- 3.1.2 GBV, although reportedly widespread in Turkey, contains a wide spectrum of behaviour, much of which is not likely to be sufficiently serious by its nature and repetition to reach the high threshold of persecution or serious harm. The onus is on the person to show otherwise.
- 3.1.3 Around half of Turkey's population are women. Patriarchal attitudes and

societal norms continue to reinforce discriminatory and stereotypical roles, rights and responsibilities according to gender. Concerns about the 'normalisation' of GBV increased following Turkey's 2021 withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention. However, it remains unclear whether this has influenced societal attitudes towards GBV or women more broadly, and no causal link can be established between the withdrawal and GBV rates (see [Position of women in society](#)).

- 3.1.4 Education for all children is compulsory until age 18, although some girls in poorer, religiously conservative, rural, or Kurdish areas may only complete primary education. Women have legal employment protections and their participation in the labour market continues to increase across a variety of sectors. Some face barriers to employment due to stereotypical ideas on the role of women, and access to childcare facilities. In rural areas, informal agriculture roles are the main source of income. Although still underrepresented, women's participation in public and political life has been increasing. The local elections in March 2024 saw a rise in female candidates and the appointment of 11 female mayors (an increase from the 4 elected previously) (see [Socio-economic indicators](#)).
- 3.1.5 Around 65% of women are married. Divorce is legal and over 170,000 couples were divorced in 2023. Women may decide not to seek a divorce, or delay divorcing due to fear of stigma, blame, exclusion and financial constraints. A 2022 survey of amongst 2499 adults representing the urban population found however, that attitudes towards divorce were changing with 77% of participants believing violence was a reason to divorce, a general upward trend from 2016 (63%). The Turkish Statistical Institute revealed a rise in lone parent households in 2023 (over 10% of households), 8% of which were lone mothers (see [Socio- economic indicators](#).)
- 3.1.6 GBV, which includes domestic and sexual violence and femicide, occurs however there is no comprehensive data collection system to record violence against women, making it difficult to assess prevalence. The US Department of State (USSD) noted 'extensive' gender-based violence in 2023 and The Human Rights Foundation described it as 'pervasive' in January 2025, however, the sources provided no further detail on how many women were affected or the nature and scale of violence encountered (see [Gender-based violence against women](#)).
- 3.1.7 The last national prevalence survey in Turkey was carried out between 2013-2014, primarily through surveys with over 15,000 households and indicated 38% of women have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual violence during their lives. Other reports based on 2018 data indicated 12% of women experienced GBV in their lifetime. Government data showed that 1.4 million women reported being subjected to domestic violence over an 11-year period between January 2013 and July 2024. Whilst existing societal attitudes which blame or shame victims, particularly in relation to sexual violence may result in underreporting of incidents or affect the content of answers women give in surveys about their experiences, government figures released in 2024 indicated a consistent year-on-year rise in the number of women reporting domestic violence between 2013 and 2023, including 272,222 reports in 2023. An increase in reporting does not necessarily reflect a rise in the actual incidence of violence, as it may also indicate growing public awareness, improved access

to support services, or increased trust in reporting mechanism. Most GBV, including femicides occurs in a domestic context (see [Gender-based violence against women](#)).

- 3.1.8 Data on femicides provided by Turkey's Interior Ministry indicated 309 women were killed in 2023 and 394 in 2024. Other sources such as Turkish news outlet Bianet, which monitors women killed by men as reported in news agencies, national and local media, and the We Will Stop Femicides Platform which uses similar sources, indicated slightly higher numbers for the same periods. Figures are likely to be affected by underreporting. The extent to which 'honour' plays a part in femicides and other instances of domestic violence is also unclear. The USSD noted 'occasional' reports of honour killings predominantly within Kurdish communities in the south-east of the country and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) noted a 'small number' per year whereas the UN Human Rights Committee noted more generally 'many crimes' and 'very high numbers' of femicides in the context of domestic violence and 'honour' in its 2023 and 2024 reports (see [Femicide and 'honour' killing](#).)
- 3.1.9 Forced marriage through unofficial religious ceremonies is uncommon although it, and bride kidnapping, occur in some rural, highly religious areas and in the southeast of the country. In sources consulted there was no information to indicate Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) occurs (see [Bibliography](#), [Forms of violence and prevalence](#) and [Early and forced marriage](#)).
- 3.1.10 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## 4. Protection

- 4.1.1 A woman who has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a non-state and/or 'rogue' state actor is, in general, likely to obtain protection from the state. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise.
- 4.1.2 The government operates a generally effective criminal justice system, including a police force and a functioning judiciary. Furthermore, the state has taken reasonable steps to prevent GBV by operating a legal system for the detection, prosecution and punishment of acts constituting persecution or serious harm, which is accessible to women.
- 4.1.3 The Constitution provides for equality of all individuals regardless of sex. In 2023, the OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) assessed Turkey as having a 'low' level of discrimination against women. However other more recent global equality rankings have highlighted inequalities and in May 2025, the European Parliament expressed concern about the deterioration of women's rights (see [Constitution](#) and [Global equality/inclusivity ranking](#)).
- 4.1.4 On 20 March 2021, Turkey announced its withdrawal from the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence ('Istanbul Convention'), a decision which has been widely criticised, including by the UK government, UN and European Parliament. Some sources opine this has affected levels of violence against women and made it harder to obtain protection and prevention orders;



though the extent to which this has occurred is unclear due to a lack of reliable data (see [Legal context](#), [Cultural and societal attitudes](#) and [Access to justice and protection](#)).

- 4.1.5 Despite the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, Turkey remains bound by international human rights law to combat violence against women such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). It retains domestic laws, many of which derive from the Istanbul Convention, regarding protection from and prevention of GBV. GBV including spousal and intimate partner rape and 'honour' crime, sexual harassment and stalking are illegal. Available penalties for GBV offences are commensurate with other serious crimes. In 2022 the Penal Code was amended to increase sentences for serious offences committed against women, including murder by men (see [Legal context](#) and [Prosecution and sentencing](#)).
- 4.1.6 The law defines 18 as the minimum legal age for marriage, although girls can marry at 17 with parental permission and at 16 with court approval. There are no laws specifically prohibiting forced marriage but marriage by coercion or other means are listed as grounds for annulment or divorce in the Turkish Civil Code (see [Legal context](#)).
- 4.1.7 Despite conflicting statements from government officials on GBV, and plans to change protections under Law No. 6284, the Turkish government emphasises its zero-tolerance policy on domestic violence and President Erdoğan has expressed support for women's rights. Several programmes and policies have been introduced to combat domestic violence such as the introduction of local risk management teams and training of those involved in GBV prevention and protection including law enforcement personnel, health workers, prosecutors and judges (see [Statements by public and government officials](#) and [Government policies and programmes](#) and [GBV training and specialised police units](#)).
- 4.1.8 Whilst implementation has been criticised as uneven, various mechanisms to protect women and enable victims of GBV to access justice are in place. For example, a nationwide domestic violence hotline and a web application for women to report domestic violence, although the quality of services provided in response is varied. There are specialist domestic violence police units responsible for the registration of complaints, building a prosecution case and serving protective and preventative orders. Pervading societal views that domestic violence is a private matter can affect or prevent action being taken by some law enforcement personnel when crimes are reported, and responses can be hampered by a lack of resources and specialised training (see [GBV training and specialised police units](#) and [Protection and prevention orders](#)).
- 4.1.9 Prevention orders, issued in domestic violence cases to stop harassment and abuse, include provisions for electronic tagging or short-term detention for those perpetrators who do not comply. However, orders are often issued for only short periods and enforcement is weak. Victims can also apply for protection orders, which offer measures like shelter, temporary housing, police protection on demand, and concealment of the victim's identity or whereabouts. Protection orders are less common than prevention orders. In 2022, around 10,000 protection orders were granted. Human Rights Watch estimated that only about 20% of cases received protection orders, although

the UN Special Rapporteur noted in 2023 an increase in both types of orders in recent years. There are limited examples of women being killed whilst their abuser was subject to a prevention or protection order (see [Protection and prevention orders](#)).

- 4.1.10 There are no official statistics on the number of arrests, prosecutions or convictions for offences related to GBV. Court processes can be lengthy and prosecutions ineffective. Courts sometimes give lighter sentences to men convicted of GBV, citing reasons like good behaviour or unjustifiable provocation by women. The government has made efforts to support victims and witnesses of GBV by establishing Judicial Support and Victim Services' Directorates (ADMs), which are in place in 99 courthouses across the country and by opening child sexual violence health clinics (see [Prosecution and sentencing](#) and [Access to justice and protection](#)).
- 4.1.11 Violence Monitoring and Prevention Centres (VMPCs) operate in all 81 provinces and provide coordinated assistance to domestic violence victims social and health services, and legal support. However, capability is affected by lack of co-ordination, staffing, and financial resource issues. According to the government of Turkey, over 270,000 women and children were assisted by VMPCs in 2022 (see [Violence Monitoring and Prevention Centres \(VMPCs or SONIM\)](#)).
- 4.1.12 State shelters provide accommodation, psycho-social, legal, medical, economic, and educational support although availability is limited, particularly in rural areas. There are 145 women's shelters able to assist around 3,500 women at a time, however, sources indicate this is insufficient to meet demand and conditions within them vary. Some shelters in the south-east have been closed. Women with older children and those with disabilities can find it harder to obtain a place. Most shelters although able to provide pre-emptive support to victims, in practice, due to capacity only take women once they have been subjected to violence (see [State-funded shelters and support](#)).
- 4.1.13 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## **5. Internal relocation**

- 5.1.1 Where a woman has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a non-state or 'rogue' state actor, they are likely to be able to internally relocate to escape that risk. This is because, in general, there are parts of the country, such as Istanbul and other larger cities, where it will be reasonable to expect a woman who fears GBV to relocate to. Each case must be considered on its own facts. Decision makers must take into account the woman's particular circumstances.
- 5.1.2 The law provides the right to freedom of movement which applies equally to women (see [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 5.1.3 There was no specific information found in the sources to indicate that across the country women in general face difficulties in obtaining employment or accessing healthcare, or that girls are unable to access education. These services are likely to be more available and accessible in

larger towns and cities. It may be more difficult for Kurdish women to access services due to ethnic and language barriers (see [Socio- economic indicators](#)).

- 5.1.4 Women who have family support or who can live with relatives are likely to find it easier to relocate. Single women, including those with children may face difficulty in obtaining accommodation, as women living alone is still uncommon in Turkey. However, it does occur, particularly in larger cities such as Istanbul. Data from TurkStat in 2023 showed a notable rise in one-person households in Turkey, increasing from 14.4% in 2015 to 19.7% in 2023, though no gender-specific breakdown was provided.
- 5.1.5 The TurkStat data additionally indicated a rise in lone parent households with at least one child in 2023 (10% of all households), the majority of which (8%) were lone mothers. The same report highlighted regional disparities in the prevalence of lone mothers with children, with the highest rates in Elazığ, Bingöl, and Adana. Single women with children may have difficulty accessing childcare while they work (see [Single and divorced women and mothers](#)).
- 5.1.6 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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## **6. Certification**

- 6.1.1 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.
- 6.1.2 For further guidance on certification, see [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

## About the country information

This section contains publicly available or disclosable country of origin information (COI) which has been gathered, collated and analysed in line with the [research methodology](#). It provides the evidence base for the assessment.

The structure and content follow a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to the scope of this note.

This document is intended to be comprehensive but not exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned this does not mean that the event did or did not take place or that the person or organisation does or does not exist.

The COI included was published or made publicly available on or before **20 May 2025**. Any event taking place or report published after this date will not be included.

Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

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## 7. Legal context

### 7.1 Constitution

- 7.1.1 Article 10 of the Constitution states that ‘All individuals are equal without any discrimination before the law, irrespective of language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such considerations...’<sup>1</sup>
- 7.1.2 For additional articles in the Constitution that apply broadly to women, see the [Constitution of the Republic of Turkey](#).
- 7.1.3 Following a visit to Turkey in July 2022, the UN Human Rights Council’s (UN HRC) Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls published a report in April 2023 (UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023). The Turkish government provided a response, in which it stated: ‘The 1982 Constitution protects the rights of citizens of the Republic of Türkiye ... All citizens benefit from these rights without any discrimination such as religion, language, race, gender. Within the scope of the fundamental rights and freedoms recognized by our Constitution, there is no discrimination or intersecting discrimination against any ethnic group or gender.’<sup>2</sup>
- 7.1.4 The US State Department 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices covering events in 2023, published 22 April 2024 (The USSD 2023 Country Report) noted ‘The constitution permitted measures to advance gender equality.’<sup>3</sup>
- 7.1.5 The Australian Government’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) report Türkiye, published May 2025 (DFAT report 2025) replacing their 2020 report, based on their ‘knowledge and discussions with a range of sources in Australia and overseas, and taking into account open-source reports’<sup>4</sup> noted ‘Article 10 of the Constitution states all individuals are equal

<sup>1</sup> Govt of Turkey, [Constitution of the Republic of Turkey](#), 7 November 1982

<sup>2</sup> UN HRC/Turkish govt, [... Special Rapporteur... Comments by the state](#) (paras 78,79), 15 June 2023

<sup>3</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>4</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (1.4), 16 May 2025

without discrimination before the law, regardless of sex. A 2004 amendment added the state has an obligation to ensure women and men have equal rights in practice.<sup>5</sup>

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## 7.2 International law and instruments

7.2.1 Turkey has ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women and is bound by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)<sup>6 7</sup>. It acceded to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol) in 2003<sup>8</sup>.

7.2.2 Human Rights Watch (HRW) noted in its September 2024 Submission to the UN HRC that ‘Turkey is obliged to implement European Court of Human Rights judgments, including those relating to the Court’s finding of a pattern of state failure to protect women from domestic violence in the case of *Opuz v. Turkey*, and four other similar cases.’<sup>9</sup>

7.2.3 On 20 March 2021, Turkey announced its withdrawal from the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (‘Istanbul Convention’)<sup>10</sup>. On 23 March 2021, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) issued a press release, which noted the UN ‘...deeply regretted... [that] decision by the President of Turkey....’<sup>11</sup>. The UK government similarly expressed disappointment in the decision and endorsed statements of criticism by UN Women, the Organisation for Security and Operation and the Council of Europe (CoE)<sup>12</sup>. On 1 July 2021, the withdrawal decision came into effect<sup>13</sup>.

7.2.4 An article published 11 December 2024 by Turkish Minute, a Turkish news source<sup>14</sup>, noted the failed legal challenge to the decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention:

‘Turkey’s Constitutional Court has found no violation of rights in the application of a woman and a women’s association that challenged Turkey’s withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, an international accord designed to protect women’s rights and prevent domestic violence...

‘... The individual application...contested the presidential decree, arguing that it violated several constitutional rights, including the rights to respect for private and family life, fair trial, effective legal remedies and the principle of equality.

‘The court, however, found no rights violation in the case, ruling it “inadmissible”...“To submit an individual application to the Constitutional Court, the applicant must demonstrate that they are personally and directly

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<sup>5</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.126), 16 May 2025

<sup>6</sup> HRW, [Combating Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Summary), 26 May 2024

<sup>7</sup> ICNL, [Türkiye](#), (International and Regional Human Rights agreements,) 7 January 2025

<sup>8</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 23, 24), 25 April 2023

<sup>9</sup> HRW, [Submission to the UN HRC on Türkiye](#) (page 10) September 2024

<sup>10</sup> CoE, [Turkey’s announced withdrawal ... Istanbul Convention ...](#), 22 March 2021

<sup>11</sup> UN OHCHR, [Turkey: Withdrawal from Istanbul Convention ...](#), 23 March 2021

<sup>12</sup> UK Government, [Istanbul Convention: Position of the UK Government Debate](#), 26 May 2021

<sup>13</sup> ICNL, [Türkiye](#), (International and Regional Human Rights agreements,) 7 January 2025

<sup>14</sup> Turkish Minute, [Homepage](#), no date

affected by the public action or decision that allegedly caused the violation. In this case, the court concluded that there was no personal and direct impact from the public action or decision in question,” the top court said.<sup>15</sup>

- 7.2.5 The European Parliament resolution of 7 May 2025 on the 2023 and 2024 Commission reports on Türkiye, in consideration of Turkey’s accession to the EU noted that it ‘...reiterates its strong condemnation of Türkiye’s withdrawal [from the Istanbul Convention], by presidential decree, from this international agreement and reiterates its call to reverse this decision...’<sup>16</sup>

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### 7.3 Statutory provisions

- 7.3.1 The USSD 2023 Country Report noted, ‘Women enjoyed the same rights as men by law, although inequities remained.’<sup>17</sup>
- 7.3.2 In relation to GBV, the USSD report noted: ‘The law criminalized gender-based violence and sexual assault, including rape of a person, and spousal and domestic or intimate partner rape, with penalties of two to 10 years’ imprisonment for conviction of attempted sexual violation and at least 12 years’ imprisonment for conviction of rape or sexual violation.’<sup>18</sup>
- 7.3.3 The same USSD report noted ‘The law required 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 mandated government services, such as shelter and temporary financial support, for survivors and provided for family courts to impose sanctions on perpetrators. The law provided for the establishment of violence prevention and monitoring centers to offer economic, psychological, legal, and social assistance.’<sup>19</sup>
- 7.3.4 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023 noted, ‘Considerable strides have been made over the last 15 years to strengthen the country’s legal framework to eliminate discrimination and combat violence against women and girls, including through the adoption of Law No. 6284/2012 on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women...’<sup>20</sup> Similarly, the UN Committee against Torture (UN CAT) in its Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Türkiye (UN CAT report 2024) published 14 August 2024: ‘[Acknowledges]... the steps that the State party has made during the reporting period to ... reinforce its domestic legislation to respond to acts of gender-based and domestic violence.’<sup>21</sup>
- 7.3.5 The 2022 HRW report noted ‘Police, prosecutors, and judges to whom Human Rights Watch spoke, all emphasized that Law No. 6284 contains all the legal measures they believe they need to respond to domestic violence allegations robustly, allowing them to target perpetrators and protect victims. They said that they rely entirely on the provisions outlined in this law to do their work.’<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Turkish Minute, [Top court rejects application challenging Turkey’s withdrawal...](#) 11 December 2024

<sup>16</sup> European Parliament, [Resolution 7 May 2025](#), 7 May 2025

<sup>17</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>18</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>19</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>20</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 50), 25 April 2023

<sup>21</sup> UN CAT, [Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report](#) (paragraph 32), 14 August 2024

<sup>22</sup> HRW, [Combating Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.1), 26 May 2022



7.3.6 The same HRW report explained Law No. 6384:

‘...derives many of its provisions from the [Istanbul] convention... Some of the key provisions are those related to issuing protective and preventive orders....a system of coordination between different government agencies and social services combatting violence, notably through establishing Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers in each province, and [it] enables the provision of temporary financial support and alimony to beneficiaries of protective orders.’<sup>23</sup>

7.3.7 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023 noted:

‘Law No. 6284 extends existing protective measures to all women, regardless of their marital status, and proposes numerous protective measures. While the Law protects survivors of all forms of violence against women it does not qualify acts of violence against women as misdemeanours [sic] or criminal offences. For example, psychological violence is recognized in Law No. 6284, but it is not explicitly criminalized in the Penal Code...

‘...[M]any of the interlocutors... indicated that withdrawal from the Council of Europe Convention had... created confusion as to the legality and continued applicability of key provisions in Law No. 6284 that were based on the Convention.’<sup>24</sup>

7.3.8 In their response to the UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023, the Turkish government stated: ‘... [The] Turkish Penal Code and Law no. 6284 [has] a principle of equity [sic]. According to the Article 3 of the Code, “Any penalty and security measure imposed upon an offender should be proportionate to the gravity of the crime...”’<sup>25</sup>

7.3.9 Regarding ‘honour’ crime, the UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023 stated:

‘In its Decision No. 2010/111 of 11 May 2010, the General Assembly of the Supreme Court of Appeals attempted to resolve this ambiguity by introducing three categories: (a) perpetrator acts, which carry the “belief of having a duty” to commit the crime in the name of “custom”; (b) “unjust provocation”, which cannot be applied if the crime is committed in the name of “custom”; and (c) “provocation”, whereby the crime is qualified as “honour killing”. However, the Supreme Court found it difficult to establish criteria for determining the content of murder in the name of “honour” since there was no category for the application of “unjust provocation provisions in such conditions”.’<sup>26</sup>

7.3.10 Generis Global Legal Services (GGLS), a network of lawyers and legal professionals<sup>27</sup> in its report Domestic Violence Protection Measures in Turkey: A Comprehensive Guide, published 30 November 2024 noted: ‘The Turkish legal framework defines domestic violence broadly, encompassing actions that inflict harm or distress upon victims by current or former partners. This includes not only physical assault but also psychological

<sup>23</sup> HRW, [Combatting Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.1), 26 May 2022

<sup>24</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (paras 50, 55), 25 April 2023

<sup>25</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (paras 78,79), 15 June 2023

<sup>26</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 10), 25 April 2023

<sup>27</sup> GGLS, [About Us](#), no date

manipulation, financial control, and sexual coercion.’<sup>28</sup>

7.3.11 The same GGLS report noted

‘...domestic violence is considered a grave offense, and the legal framework aims to impose stringent penalties on offenders...The law outlines specific criminal charges that can be brought against abusers, depending on the severity of the offense. Offenders may face charges such as assault, injury, or in severe cases, murder. The penalties vary significantly based on the nature and extent of the violence inflicted.

‘For physical assault resulting in minor injuries, offenders may face imprisonment ranging from six months to three years. If the injuries are more severe, the sentence can increase significantly, potentially reaching up to ten years. In cases of aggravated assault, where premeditation or severe harm is evident, the penalties are even harsher. Moreover, in incidents involving minors or vulnerable individuals, the law mandates stricter sentences to emphasize the need for protection within familial structures.’<sup>29</sup>

7.3.12 The UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OCHCR) in the Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions on Türkiye as part of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) (Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions) published on 22 January 2025, noted ‘[The Turkey Human Rights Litigation Support Project and the London Legal Group]...stated that the Penal Code did not define violence against women as a separate offence’<sup>30</sup>

7.3.13 The DFAT report 2025 noted

‘Women enjoy considerable legal protection in many areas including personal safety, participation in the workforce and mandatory schooling for girls. However, some discriminatory clauses persist. Article 287 of the Criminal Code (2004) on genital examinations allows a judge or prosecutor to authorise virginity testing, even if the subject does not consent. A law which would have allowed men accused of having sex with girls under 18 to escape punishment by marrying them, dubbed by critics the ‘marry your rapist bill’, was introduced into parliament in 2016 and again in 2020, but was defeated both times.’<sup>31</sup>

7.3.14 The same DFAT report noted ‘The Law on the Prevention of Violence against Women and the Protection of the Family (2012) provides for orders aimed at protecting ‘the women, the children, the family members and the victims of stalking, who have been subject to the violence or at the risk of violence’<sup>32</sup>

7.3.15 Other relevant laws relating to GBV are:

- Article 105 of the [Criminal Code](#) which addresses sexual harassment and specifically refers to the misuse of a position of power and outlines the available sentencing provisions, including up to 3 years in prison<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> GGLS, [Domestic Violence Protection Measures in Turkey](#)..., 30 November 2024

<sup>29</sup> GGLS, [Domestic Violence Protection Measures in Turkey](#)..., 30 November 2024

<sup>30</sup> OCHCR, [Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions](#), (paragraph 120) 22 January 2025

<sup>31</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.126), 16 May 2025

<sup>32</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.132), 16 May 2025

<sup>33</sup> Govt of Turkey, [Criminal Code](#), 26 September 2004



- The crime of stalking, a law passed by parliament on 12 May 2022 with an available prison sentence of six months to two years<sup>34</sup>.
- Article 80 of the Turkish Penal Code No. 5237 defines and prohibits trafficking<sup>35</sup>
- According to the most recent English-language publication of the [Criminal Code](#), provisions criminalising Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or the act of coercing or inciting someone to undergo FGM in Turkey are not included. However, Articles 86 and 87 of the Criminal Code refer to punishments against a person who 'executes an act which may lead to deterioration of health or mental power of others,' specifically citing 'Loss of any one of the senses or organs of the victim... risk of life... loss of sensual or bodily functions... loss of ability to speak and give birth to a child...'<sup>36</sup>

See [Statements by public and government officials](#) and [Government policies and programmes](#) for further information on implementation of Law No. 6284 including proposals to repeal the law.

Further information about the legislative framework for combatting discrimination and violence against women is available in the [UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023](#) (paragraph 50 on).

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## 7.4 Marriage, divorce, custody and inheritance rights

- 7.4.1 There are no laws within the [Criminal Code](#) that specifically prohibit forced marriage<sup>37</sup>. However section 4 of the [Turkish Civil Code](#) stipulates that marriages are deemed void or can be annulled in the following circumstances:

'Article 149- One of the spouses can sue for annulment of marriage in the following circumstances:

'1. If the person is mistaken into consenting to the marriage even though they didn't have an intention to marry at all or didn't intend to marry with the person in question,

'2. If the person married by being mistaken about a certain trait of their spouse, the absence of which can make the life unbearable.

'Article 150- One of the spouses can sue for annulment of marriage in the following circumstances: 1. If the person consented to marriage by being deceived about their spouse's honor and dignity by their spouse directly or by someone else within their spouse's knowledge...

'Article 151- The spouse that consented to marriage by being intimidated with an immediate and severe danger to their own life or that of their relatives, their health or honor and dignity can sue for annulment of marriage.

'Article 152- The right to sue for annulment shall cease to be within six months as of the date when the reason for annulment is learnt about or the

<sup>34</sup> HRW, [Combatting Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.1), 26 May 2022

<sup>35</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 23, 24), 25 April 2023

<sup>36</sup> Govt of Turkey, [Criminal Code](#), 26 September 2004

<sup>37</sup> Govt of Turkey, [Criminal Code](#), 26 September 2004

effects of fear die out and within five years as of the start of marriage under any circumstances...<sup>38</sup>

- 7.4.2 In September 2022, the Turkish news outlet Daily Sabah published an article which stated that ‘...the majority of divorces ended up with children’s custody handed to mothers.’<sup>39</sup>
- 7.4.3 The USSD 2023 Country Report noted, ‘The law defined 18 as the minimum legal age for marriage, although children could marry at 17 with parental permission and at 16 with court approval...The law acknowledged civil and religious marriages, but the latter were not always registered with the state.’<sup>40</sup>
- 7.4.4 The same USSD report stated: ‘Legal restrictions existed on women’s right to remarry... The law provided the same legal status and rights for women in property, [and] inheritance...’<sup>41</sup>
- 7.4.5 The World Economic Forum (WEF) published its Global Gender Gap 2024 report in June 2024 which noted equal rights for widows and daughters to inheritance<sup>42</sup>.
- 7.4.6 duvaR.English an independent news outlet, in its article published 3 January 2025 noted:
- ‘Birsen Baş Topaloğlu, head of the Women’s Center at the Istanbul Bar Association... said that despite the Constitutional Court annulment of the law requiring married women to adopt their husband’s surname, which took effect on Jan. 28, 2024, the ruling remained unenforced.
- “Marriages continue to be registered as if the law is still valid, forcing women to litigate for their rights. Proposed legal amendments to reinstate the annulled provision were only withdrawn after resistance from women’s organizations and bar associations. However, no positive legislative steps were taken, and unlawful practices persist,” she stated.’<sup>43</sup>
- 7.4.7 DFAT noted:
- ‘Grounds for divorce include the breakdown of marriage, separation, mutual consent, mental illness, adultery, cruelty, desertion (for a period exceeding six months), criminal conviction and addiction. Turkish law does not permit joint custody of children. Courts typically grant the mother custody of an infant child. Judges determine child support according to the financial situations of the parents and the child’s age and needs. Child maintenance automatically ceases when the child turns 18.’<sup>44</sup>
- 7.4.8 See section 4 (part 2) of the [Turkish Civil Code](#) for more details on divorce rights.

See also [Early and forced marriage](#)

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<sup>38</sup> [Turkish Civil Code](#), (section 4) 22 November 2001

<sup>39</sup> Daily Sabah, [Divorced Turkish women face risk of social exclusion: Experts](#), 22 September 2022

<sup>40</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>41</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>42</sup> WEF, [Global Gender Gap 2024](#), (Türkiye), June 2024

<sup>43</sup> duvaR.English, [Women’s rights advocates highlight 2024 challenges](#), 3 January 2025

<sup>44</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.129), 16 May 2025

## 8. Socio- economic indicators

### 8.1 Global equality/inclusivity ranking

- 8.1.1 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) measures discrimination against women in social institutions across 179 countries. It considers laws, social norms and practices that restrict women's and girls' rights and access to empowerment opportunities and resources<sup>45</sup>. The SIGI report 2023, which is the most recent at the date of publication and used legal information collected until 31 August 2022, scored countries on the level of discrimination women faced. 0-20 being very low and 50-100 being very high. Turkey scored 24 with overall 'low' levels of discrimination<sup>46</sup>. It broke down this score across 4 different areas as outlined in the table below<sup>47</sup>:

<b>Discrimination in the family</b>	31
<b>Restricted physical integrity</b>	13
<b>Restricted access to productive and financial resources</b>	30
<b>Restricted civil liberties</b>	21
<b>Overall SIGI score and classification</b>	24 – low

- 8.1.2 The report explained the 4 different areas (dimensions) covered the major socio-economic areas that affect women and girls. The indicators within each of the 4 areas are outlined in the table below<sup>48</sup>, although no further breakdown on how Turkey scored against the individual indicators was available.

<b>Discrimination in family</b>	Child marriage	Household responsibilities	Divorce	Inheritance
<b>Restricted physical integrity</b>	Violence against women	FGM	Missing women	Reproductive autonomy
<b>Restricted access to productive and financial resources</b>	Access to land assets	Access to non- land assets	Access to financial services	Workplace rights
<b>Restricted civil liberties</b>	Citizenship rights	Freedom of movement	Political voice	Access to justice

- 8.1.3 The Georgetown Institute for Women Peace and Security (GIWPS) published its Index 2023/24 (The WPS Index 2023) which ranks and scores 177 countries on women's status, considering 13 indicators under justice, security and inclusion<sup>49</sup>. Turkey ranked 99 (by comparison Denmark was top

<sup>45</sup> OECD, [Social Institutions & Gender Index Dashboard](#), no date

<sup>46</sup> OECD, [SIGI 2023 Global Report](#), 18 July 2023

<sup>47</sup> OECD, [SIGI 2023 Global Report](#) (page 164), 18 July 2023

<sup>48</sup> OECD, [SIGI 2023 Global Report](#) (page 167), 18 July 2023

<sup>49</sup> GIWPS, [The WPS Index 2023](#) (page 16), 2023

and the UK was 26)<sup>50</sup>. See also [Legal context](#)

- 8.1.4 The World Economic Forum (WEF) Global Gender Gap 2024 report ‘...annually benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment.’<sup>51</sup> The report ranked Turkey 127<sup>th</sup> out of 146 countries (1 being the most equal) in 2024<sup>52</sup>.
- 8.1.5 The European Parliament resolution of 7 May 2025 noted that: ‘Türkiye is ranked 127th out of 146 countries in the 2024 Global Gender Gap Index, underscoring severe gender inequality and systemic failures in protecting women’s rights...[The European Parliament] Expresses its deep concern at the deterioration in women’s rights...’<sup>53</sup>

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## 8.2 Education

- 8.2.1 Education is compulsory for children aged 6-18<sup>54</sup>.
- 8.2.2 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated, ‘Human rights NGOs and others expressed concern that despite the law on compulsory education, some families kept girls home from school, particularly in religiously conservative rural areas, where girls often dropped out of school after completing their mandatory primary education.’<sup>55</sup>
- 8.2.3 In February 2023, UN Women published an article about the provision of aid to women in the south-east following the recent earthquake. Whilst written in the context of the earthquakes of 2023, the article also referred to experiences generally for women in the Kurdish areas of the south-east, stating, ‘...[women in predominantly Kurdish areas experience] multi-dimensional poverty as a result of being deprived of educational rights, having low levels of income, lacking access to equal opportunities, and facing communication problems due to language barriers...’<sup>56</sup>
- 8.2.4 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published ‘Education at a Glance 2024 – Country Notes: Türkiye’ on 10 September 2024 which stated, ‘Compulsory education in Türkiye lasts from the age of 6 to 18 for a total of 12 years, which is above the OECD average of 11 years.’<sup>57</sup>
- 8.2.5 The source noted, ‘a tertiary educational attainment rate of 46% for women and 40% for men... in Türkiye.’<sup>58</sup> OECD also provided information about relative achievement levels of boys and girls and stated ‘...[they] performed at similar levels on average in mathematics but girls outperformed boys in reading.’<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> GIWPS, [The WPS Index 2023](#) (Forward), 2023

<sup>51</sup> WEF, [Global Gender Gap 2024](#), (Key Findings), June 2024

<sup>52</sup> WEF, [Global Gender Gap 2024](#), (Türkiye), June 2024

<sup>53</sup> European Parliament, [Resolution 7 May 2025](#), 7 May 2025

<sup>54</sup> OECD, [Education at a Glance 2024 - Country notes: Türkiye](#) (p3), 10 September 2024

<sup>55</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#), 22 April 2024

<sup>56</sup> UN Women, [Civil society steps in to heal women’s post-earthquake...](#), 27 February 2024

<sup>57</sup> OECD, [Education at a Glance 2024 - Country notes: Türkiye](#) (p3), 10 September 2024

<sup>58</sup> OECD, [Education at a Glance 2024 - Country notes: Türkiye](#) (p1), 10 September 2024

<sup>59</sup> OECD, [Education GPS - Türkiye - Student performance \(PISA 2022\)](#), no date

- 8.2.6 The UN published an article on the report by the Association of Women with Disabilities (ENG-KAD) published in December 2024 and written in collaboration with UN Women (available in Turkish [here](#)). ENG-KAD research was conducted between September and November 2023, the fieldwork surveyed 991 women with disabilities. The UN article reported that ENG-KAD found ‘Women with disabilities face challenges in continuing their education due to insufficient family financial resources (47%), physical barriers to school access (35.6%), and lack of family support (27.5%).’<sup>60</sup>
- 8.2.7 The MFA Netherlands report 2025, covering the period from September 2023 up to and including 20 February 2025, noted ‘In the field of education, women’s participation continued to increase.’<sup>61</sup>
- 8.2.8 In March 2025, Türkiye Today reported on the results of the TurkStat Life Satisfaction Survey 2024 and noted that: ‘In 2023, women aged 25 and over had an average education duration of 8.6 years, compared to 10.1 years for men.’<sup>62</sup>
- 8.2.9 For more data on education see TurkStat [Women in Statistics 2024](#). See [Shelters](#) for information about education which is provided for women at shelters.

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### 8.3 Employment and economic participation

- 8.3.1 Women are protected in employment under Articles 5, 13, 74, 75, and 88 of the Labour Law No. 4857, which provide safeguards against discrimination, ensure maternity and breastfeeding rights, and regulate working conditions including part-time and night work<sup>63</sup>.
- 8.3.2 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023 noted the ‘...amendments to the Labour Law to prohibit harassment in the workplace [although] much work is needed to implement them fully’.<sup>64</sup>
- 8.3.3 The WEF Global Gender Gap 2024 report noted equal rights for women to financial services and land and non-land assets.<sup>65</sup> For more information see [Legal context](#).
- 8.3.4 The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has a Partnership Programme with Turkey which provides support to reduce rural poverty, amongst other aims<sup>66</sup>. In April 2023, the UN FAO published an interview with Neşe Çakır Sayran, a gender specialist at the FAO<sup>67</sup> who noted ‘Approximately 45 percent of [agricultural workers]...are women. In rural Türkiye, informal employment in the agricultural sector is higher for women than for men...The rate of women working informally in the agricultural sector is 98.3 percent, which means that women are deprived of basic rights and social security....’<sup>68</sup>

<sup>60</sup> UN Women, [New report highlights challenges and rights of women](#) ...20 December 2024

<sup>61</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.1), 25 February 2025

<sup>62</sup> Türkiye Today, [Women in Türkiye...](#), 6 March 2025

<sup>63</sup> Govt of Turkey, [Turkish Labor Law](#), May 2003

<sup>64</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 17), 25 April 2023

<sup>65</sup> WEF, [Global Gender Gap 2024](#), (Türkiye), June 2024

<sup>66</sup> UN FAO, [After the FAO training, I see that there is a common awareness](#), 4 April 2023

<sup>67</sup> UN FAO, [FAO Digital Media Hub - TÜRKİYE 2023](#), 14 December 2023

<sup>68</sup> UN FAO, [After the FAO training, I see that there is a common awareness](#), 4 April 2023

- 8.3.5 The European Commission (EC) Türkiye 2023 Report published in November 2023, noted, ‘The share of women in managerial posts in the civil service is still low’<sup>69</sup> and ‘Out of 23,826 judges and prosecutors, 8,871 are women.’<sup>70</sup>
- 8.3.6 The EC noted, ‘Women’s participation in the labour market continued to increase, although the gap with male participation remained very high... Türkiye maintained its strong focus on supporting entrepreneurial learning and women’s entrepreneurship. However, job creation lagged and the gap between the male and female employment and unemployment rates widened further.’<sup>71</sup> For information about employment rates, see the [Türkiye 2023 Report](#) (page 68).
- 8.3.7 The EC further noted, ‘Despite a 2.3 percentage point increase, the labour force participation rate of women (15+) remained low at 35.1% ... The barriers that women still face in accessing employment include the lack of childcare facilities, gender bias in caring responsibilities, and discriminatory stereotypes ... Further action is needed to prevent harassment and violence at work, including data collection and awareness raising.’<sup>72</sup>
- 8.3.8 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated, ‘Women faced discrimination in employment. According to the Turkish Statistics Institute, in 2022 women’s employment was at 30 percent compared with men’s employment at 65 percent.’<sup>73</sup> The same report noted ‘To encourage the hiring of women, the state paid social services insurance premiums on behalf of employers for several months for any woman employee older than 18.’<sup>74</sup>
- 8.3.9 The Asylum Information Database (AIDA), co-ordinated by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), published a Turkey 2023 update report on 2 August 2024 (The AIDA Turkey 2023 report), which stated:  
 ‘Women, in particular, face significant challenges in obtaining effective access to the labour market. This is due, on the one hand, legal restrictions [sic] such as obstacles to access childcare, lack of information and training opportunities. On the other hand, traditional gender roles assigned to women as caretakers, especially in southern Türkiye regions such as Gaziantep, mean that women’s access to public space is limited compared to men, while training opportunities mainly revolve around traditional vocations such as hairdressing or sewing.’<sup>75</sup>
- 8.3.10 The WPS Index 2023 noted in respect of financial inclusion, 62.5% of women and girls aged 15 and older reported having an individual or joint account at a bank or other financial institution or using a mobile money service in 2021<sup>76</sup>.
- 8.3.11 The WEF Global Gender Gap 2024 report in relation to economic participation stated: ‘Only one of the 40 economies in the region [Europe] shows gender parity in labour-force participation rate lower than 50%, [which

<sup>69</sup> EC, [Türkiye 2023 Report](#) (p 21), 8 November 2023

<sup>70</sup> EC, [Türkiye 2023 Report](#) (p 21), 8 November 2023

<sup>71</sup> EC, [Türkiye 2023 Report](#) (p 68), 8 November 2023

<sup>72</sup> EC, [Türkiye 2023 Report](#) (p 102), 8 November 2023

<sup>73</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>74</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>75</sup> AIDA, ECRE, [Türkiye, 2023-Update](#) (p173), 2 August 2024

<sup>76</sup> GIWPS, [The WPS Index 2023](#) (page 84 and 87), 2023



is] Türkiye (49.2%)... Workforce indicators suggest that women represent... 18.5% ...of the workforce at the senior leadership level, and ... 42.4%... at the technical and professional level.<sup>77</sup>

8.3.12 The UN article on the ENG-KAD report noted “Women with disabilities face significant barriers to participating in the workforce and securing employment... One in four women has experienced discrimination in the workplace... 37.7% are employed in income-generating jobs, a figure higher than the general employment rate for women (32.5%) and the rate for women with disabilities in the general population (12.6%) in Türkiye.”<sup>78</sup>

8.3.13 Freedom House’s 2025 report covering events of 2024 noted ‘Women make up a growing part of the workforce, but gender bias and inequality remain pressing issues.’<sup>79</sup>

8.3.14 The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands General Country of Origin Information Report on Türkiye covering events from August 2023 to 20 February 2025, based on various sources, published 25 February 2025 (The MFA Netherlands report 2025) noted

‘As noted in the preceding COI Report, gender inequality to the detriment of women occurred in some areas, including public administration and the labour market. This situation remained unchanged during the reporting period. For example, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 35.5% of women were participating in the labour market in 2023. It should be noted that the percentage of working women in Türkiye during the period 1991–2023 has never been higher. A survey by a women’s organisation indicated that women fifty years of age and older were particularly likely to experience distance from the labour market. They encountered a combination of gender and age discrimination.’<sup>80</sup>

See also [Global equality/inclusivity ranking](#) and for more data on employment see TurkStat [Women in Statistics 2024](#)

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## 8.4 Political/public representation and participation

8.4.1 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023 noted:

‘One of the main barriers preventing women from participating in political and public life is the risk of being subjected to gendered violence or harassment. While there is lack of solid evidence base on its root causes, manifestations and consequences in Türkiye, testimonies by women in public positions reveal widespread online and offline violence cutting across party and other lines. Acts of such violence tend to be treated as isolated incidents rather than manifestations of widespread, structural discrimination against women in political and public life.’<sup>81</sup>

8.4.2 The EC Türkiye 2023 Report noted, ‘The level of participation of women in decision-making, politics and employment remained low by international standards. Following the May 2023 elections, the percentage of women in

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<sup>77</sup> WEF, [Global Gender Gap 2024](#), (page 22), June 2024

<sup>78</sup> UN Women, [New report highlights challenges and rights of women](#) ...20 December 2024

<sup>79</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025 Country report](#), 2025

<sup>80</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.1), 25 February 2025

<sup>81</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 19), 25 April 2023

the parliament increased from 17.1% during the previous term to 20.1% (from 104 to 121 out of 600). This is the highest ever ratio of women's representation in the parliament but women are still under-represented.'<sup>82</sup>

8.4.3 The MFA Netherlands report 2025 noted

'In the 2023 parliamentary elections, women were under-represented amongst the parliamentary candidates. The number of female MPs nevertheless rose from 103 to 121 (of 600 total seats).

'Local elections in March 2024 seemed to display a similar pattern. Female candidates were also under-represented in this case, although the number of female representatives increased. In 11 out of 81 cities, a woman was elected mayor. In the 2019 local elections, four women had become mayors of cities.'<sup>83</sup>

8.4.4 The Freedom House, Freedom in the World report 2024 (covering events in 2023) and the Freedom in the World report 2025 (covering events in 2024), noted that women '... remain underrepresented in politics and in leadership positions in government.'<sup>84</sup> <sup>85</sup> DFAT similarly noted 'Women are generally underrepresented in politics and positions of leadership.'<sup>86</sup>

8.4.5 Freedom House's 2025 report noted 'Women held about 20 percent of the seats in the Grand National Assembly after the 2023 elections, a slight increase from the 2018 elections.'<sup>87</sup>

8.4.6 Turkish British, a UK based magazine noted on 22 May 2024:

'The local elections held on March 31, 2024, represent a watershed moment for gender equality and female leadership in Turkey. Women candidates achieved significant victories across a spectrum from metropolitan mayoralships to small district leaderships. These successes are reshaping the role of women in Turkish political history and setting an encouraging precedent for future elections. In an unprecedented wave of change, women have claimed victory in 11 provinces, including major urban centers such as Aydın, Diyarbakır, Eskişehir, Gaziantep, and Tekirdağ.'<sup>88</sup>

8.4.7 Reporting on the same elections, NADJA a news and opinion website focused on women noted: 'The increase from four to 11 female mayors may seem small, but is a significant step forward. The 2024 local elections saw a higher number of women candidates compared to previous years, resulting in a greater number of female winners. According to the 2023 Global Gender Gap Report released by the World Economic Forum, only 17% of parliamentarians in Turkey are women.'<sup>89</sup>

8.4.8 MedyaNews, an outlet which '...covers the news, events, activities and initiatives of Kurds...' <sup>90</sup> published an article on 26 November 2024 which stated: 'State-appointed trustees in Kurdish-majority areas have deepened

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<sup>82</sup> EC, [Türkiye 2023 Report](#) (p 14), 8 November 2023

<sup>83</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.1), 25 February 2025

<sup>84</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2024 Country Report](#), 29 February 2024

<sup>85</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025 Country report](#), 2025

<sup>86</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.127), 16 May 2025

<sup>87</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025 Country report](#), 2025

<sup>88</sup> Turkish British, [A Major Step Towards Gender Equality](#), 22 May 2024

<sup>89</sup> NADJA, [Women's mayoral wins signal change in Turkey's politics](#), 4 April 2024

<sup>90</sup> MedyaNews, [About us](#), no date



gender inequality and worsened violence against women, according to a report by Human Rights Association (İHD) Diyarbakır (Amed) branch. ... the report highlights how the policy of replacing elected officials, particularly women, with government appointees undermines women's rights and fuels systemic inequality.'<sup>91</sup>

- 8.4.9 duvaR.English, in an interview with Birsen Baş Topaloğlu, head of the Women's Center at the Istanbul Bar Association in its article published 3 January 2025 '...a lack of progress in achieving gender equality in politics.'<sup>92</sup>
- 8.4.10 The European Parliament resolution of 7 May 2025 '...urge[d] the Turkish authorities to... advance towards gender equality, particularly with regard to the participation of women in decision-making and policymaking processes.'<sup>93</sup>

See also [Forms of violence and prevalence](#)

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## 8.5 Healthcare and reproductive rights

- 8.5.1 Article 99 of the [Criminal Code](#) makes abortion without consent illegal, makes abortion after 10 weeks of pregnancy illegal save for medical reasons and allows for abortion in cases when a woman has been a victim of an offence up to 20 weeks of pregnancy. Penalties for committing offences under Article 99 range from fines to 10 years imprisonment, depending on the offence<sup>94</sup>. Under Article 100 of the Criminal Code, the punishment for a woman aborting after 10 weeks is imprisonment up to one year or punitive fine<sup>95</sup>.
- 8.5.2 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 noted: 'Access to sexual and reproductive health services, including modern contraceptives, is very limited, especially for women belonging to ethnic minorities and rural women... [T]he ability of women to exercise their legal right to abortion within 10 weeks of pregnancy is not effectively possible in practice given that a large number of public hospitals refuse to perform abortions, which compels many women to resort to expensive private clinics or to unsafe abortion.'<sup>96</sup>
- 8.5.3 The AIDA Turkey 2023 report noted a project between UNFPA Türkiye and Doctors of the World, [DDD, an NGO <sup>97</sup>] : '...on Provision of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services through Mobile SRH Medical Teams in Hatay Türkiye was completed between July 2023 and December 2023. The project offered both static and mobile sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services to the most vulnerable women and girls in Hatay province, including... pregnant women, and lactating mothers.'<sup>98</sup>
- 8.5.4 An article by Ash Davas and Nilay Etiler, published on 4 September 2024 in the BMC Public Health journal titled 'Gender differences in cost-related unmet healthcare needs: a national study in Türkiye', through analysis of the

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<sup>91</sup> MedyaNews, [Turkey's trustee policy linked to gender inequality...](#), 26 November 2024

<sup>92</sup> duvaR.English, [Women's rights advocates highlight 2024 challenges](#), 3 January 2025

<sup>93</sup> European Parliament, [Resolution 7 May 2025](#), 7 May 2025

<sup>94</sup> Govt of Turkey, [Criminal Code, Law No. 5237](#), 26 September 2004

<sup>95</sup> Govt of Turkey, [Criminal Code, Law No. 5237](#), 26 September 2004

<sup>96</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 85), 25 April 2023

<sup>97</sup> AIDA, ECRE, [Türkiye, 2023 Update](#) (p185), 2 August 2024

<sup>98</sup> AIDA, ECRE, [Türkiye, 2023 Update](#) (p185), 2 August 2024

2019 Türkiye Health Survey data noted: ‘The study revealed that 15.4% of individuals cannot access healthcare due to financial constraints, with 16.8% for women and 13.5% for men. The highest level of unmet needs is associated with accessing dental care services for both sexes...’<sup>99</sup>

- 8.5.5 The UN article on the ENG-KAD report noted in relation to women with disabilities:

‘Nearly half (47%) of the participants report difficulties in physically accessing healthcare services....Among women who participated directly in the survey, 4 out of 10 face challenges in accessing assistive devices, while this figure rises to 7 out of 10 among women whose information was provided by caregivers. Women with intellectual disabilities report the highest difficulty (82.4%) in accessing assistive devices. Despite having social security through Türkiye’s Social Security Institution (SGK), 9.9% of respondents lack any form of social security. The research highlights the need for inclusive, directly communicative healthcare services tailored to the needs of persons with disabilities.’<sup>100</sup>

- 8.5.6 The WEF Global Gender Gap 2024 noted near equal rights in terms of reproductive autonomy<sup>101</sup> although there was no further detail on the areas of inequality.

- 8.5.7 The 2023 USSD report stated: ‘There were no reports of coerced abortion or involuntary sterilization on the part of government authorities. Women generally had access to at least one family planning method, and women could access contraceptive methods for free in government funded primary health-care units and hospitals or pharmacies and private practitioners for a fee. Abortion was legal upon request to all women up to the 10th week of pregnancy, and up to the 20th week for medical reasons, and according to the law was provided in public hospitals for free. Women’s rights organizations reported it was becoming increasingly difficult to find public hospitals that would perform abortions, leading many women to seek help from private clinics’<sup>102</sup>. In relation to victims of sexual violence the USSD report stated, ‘The government provided access to sexual and reproductive health services for survivors of sexual violence. Emergency contraception and postexposure prophylaxis were available as part of clinical management of rape.’<sup>103</sup>

- 8.5.8 The European Parliament resolution of 7 May 2025 on Türkiye, noted that the European Parliament ‘...warns against further encroachments on women’s rights, as exemplified by Türkiye’s recent ban on elective caesarean sections at private medical centres without medical justification, which constitutes an unacceptable infringement on women’s bodily autonomy...’<sup>104</sup>

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## 9. Position of women in society

<sup>99</sup> Davas, A., Etiler, [N. Gender differences in ...healthcare...\(Results\)](#), 4 September 2024

<sup>100</sup> UN Women, [New report highlights challenges and rights of women](#) ...20 December 2024

<sup>101</sup> WEF, [Global Gender Gap 2024](#), (Türkiye), June 2024

<sup>102</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>103</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>104</sup> European Parliament, [Resolution 7 May 2025](#), 7 May 2025

## 9.1 Demography and geography

9.1.1 Originally published in Turkish and translated using free online translation tools, the government of Turkey's Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) 'Results of Address Based Population Registration System, 2024' report noted:

- The total population at the end of 31 December 2024 was 85.66 million
- The population residing in Türkiye increased by 292,567 thousand people compared to 2023
- The male population was 42.85 million (50.02%) and female population was 42.81 million (49.98%)<sup>105</sup>

9.1.2 The same TurkStat data provided the following graph<sup>106</sup> detailing the 5 largest populations by province including breakdown by sex:

The first 5 provinces with the largest population by sex, 2024

Provinces	Total	Male	Female	Proportion in the total population (%)		
				Total	Male	Female
İstanbul	15 701 602	7 820 462	7 881 140	18.33	18.25	18.41
Ankara	5 864 049	2 888 062	2 975 987	6.85	6.74	6.95
İzmir	4 493 242	2 223 833	2 269 409	5.25	5.19	5.30
Bursa	3 238 618	1 616 941	1 621 677	3.78	3.77	3.79
Antalya	2 722 103	1 370 170	1 351 933	3.18	3.20	3.16

9.1.3 Using 2023 estimates, the CIA World Factbook noted that 65.4% of women were married<sup>107</sup>.

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## 9.2 Cultural and societal attitudes

9.2.1 The Turkish news outlet Daily Sabah published an article on 22 September 2022, which noted 'A patriarchal mindset still runs deep in Turkish society...'<sup>108</sup> The UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 noted '...entrenched patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes...'<sup>109</sup>

9.2.2 The UN HRC report 2023 stated, 'Although public awareness on violence against women has increased in recent years, there remain harmful stereotypes about sexual harassment often resulting in victims being blamed. ...'<sup>110</sup>

9.2.3 The Women and Families Studies Research Center (WFSRC) at Kadir Has University conducted a study between June and July 2021 and January and February 2022 with 2499 people aged 18 and older representing the urban population. The Survey: Public Perceptions of Gender Roles and the Status of Women in Turkey (the WFSRC survey 2022) measured public opinion in Turkey concerning domestic, social and political issues and to ascertain the

<sup>105</sup> TurkStat, [The Results of Address Based Population Registration System 2024](#), 6 February 2025

<sup>106</sup> TurkStat, [The Results of Address Based Population Registration System 2024](#), 6 February 2025

<sup>107</sup> CIA World Factbook, [Turkey \(Türkiye\)](#), last updated 3 December 2024

<sup>108</sup> Daily Sabah, [Divorced Turkish women face risk of social exclusion: Experts](#), 22 September 2022

<sup>109</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 7), 25 April 2023

<sup>110</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 17), 25 April 2023

level of women's participation in the public sphere<sup>111</sup>. The survey asked participants what is the biggest problem women face in society and 68% said violence. More women (70%) than men (63%) listed it top. The study compared the responses to previous years which showed a general increase in people listing violence as the biggest problem from 53% in 2016<sup>112</sup>.

- 9.2.4 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated that both societal and official discrimination of women was widespread<sup>113</sup>. However, it did not provide any detail about the nature of, or scale or extent of such discrimination.
- 9.2.5 The Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), an international NGO network, in respect of gender roles noted 'Current representations in media are ...stuck in clichés and stereotypes.'<sup>114</sup>
- 9.2.6 The GGLS 2024 report noted 'Societal attitudes towards domestic violence in Turkey have begun to shift, yet traditional norms often perpetuate the cycle of abuse.'<sup>115</sup>
- 9.2.7 Amnesty International's submission to the UN HRC, for the 142<sup>nd</sup> Session 14 October – 8 November 2024, published 16 September 2024 noted in Turkey '...the current context of discrimination and harmful stereotypes about women that underlie gender-based violence...'<sup>116</sup>
- 9.2.8 The UN HRC November 2024 report stated, 'The Committee is concerned about reports of the normalization of violence against women, which might have been encouraged by the withdrawal of the State party from the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in 2021.'<sup>117</sup>
- 9.2.9 The UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OCHCR), Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Türkiye published 22 January 2025, noted '[Human Rights Foundation] HRF stated that discriminatory practices and societal norms hindered gender equality...'<sup>118</sup>
- 9.2.10 The UN article on the ENG-KAD report noted 'Four out of 10 women with disabilities express concerns about giving birth and raising children due to societal expectations and prejudices...'<sup>119</sup>
- 9.2.11 Ted University (TEDU), Ankara conducted the Woman and Employment Survey in Turkey, published in February 2024. The survey used a representative sample of 1000 men and women aged 18+ and interviewed them via telephone between 14 – 26 January 2024<sup>120</sup>. In relation to traditional gender roles the survey found that: 'More than half of the society has positive perceptions towards women's education and employment .... On the other hand, one in every ten people in society supports the traditional division of labor within the family and thinks that the mother's duty is to take care of the children and the father's duty is to take care of his family. In

<sup>111</sup> WFSRC, [Study: Public Perceptions of Gender Roles...](#) (page 2), 2022

<sup>112</sup> WFSRC, [Study: Public Perceptions of Gender Roles...](#) (page 12), 2022

<sup>113</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>114</sup> IWPR, [Turkey: "Media Can Show Solutions"](#), 28 November 2024

<sup>115</sup> GGLS, [Domestic Violence Protection Measures in Turkey...](#), 30 November 2024

<sup>116</sup> Amnesty, [Report to the UN HRC](#) (Section 6), 16 September 2024

<sup>117</sup> UN HRC, [Concluding observations Türkiye](#), (Paragraph 19.) 28 November 2024

<sup>118</sup> OCHCR, [Summary of Stakeholders' submissions](#), (paragraph 122) 22 January 2025

<sup>119</sup> UN Women, [New report highlights challenges and rights of women](#) ...20 December 2024

<sup>120</sup> TEDU, [Woman and Employment Survey in Turkey](#) (Methodology), February 2024

parallel, it is thought that men have to meet the economic needs of their families more than women (men should meet 36.5% - women should meet (35.9%)).<sup>121</sup>

9.2.12 The DFAT report 2025 noted, 'Women participate in almost all areas of public life including politics, business, the security forces, sport, media and the arts. Nevertheless, significant social, cultural and religious barriers remain to gender equality in Türkiye and men generally dominate positions of power.' DFAT further noted based on information from in-country sources, the presence of '...social norms emphasising women's importance as homemakers and mothers over them becoming wage earners.'<sup>122</sup>

9.2.13 In relation to family attitudes towards a woman who has experienced domestic violence, DFAT noted 'While some women were supported by relatives to leave abusive relationships, others were encouraged to stay 'for the good of the family.'<sup>123</sup>

See also [Single and divorced women](#)

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### 9.3 Single and divorced women and mothers

9.3.1 Originally published in Turkish and translated using free online translation tools, TurkStat published a newsletter on 22 February 2024 which provided marriage and divorce statistics for 2023, noting:

- There were 565,435 married couples in 2023.
- There were 171,881 divorced couples 2023<sup>124</sup>.

9.3.2 The TurkStat Statistics on Family 2023 (the most recent available data at the time of writing) provided information on the proportion of households by type between 2015 and 2023. The data<sup>125</sup> indicated a rise in lone parents residing with at least one child and showed it was more common to be a lone mother with a resident child than a lone father. In 2023 over 10% of households were lone parent households, of which 8% were lone mothers:

Type of households	Proportion in total households								
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
One-person households	14.4	14.9	15.4	16.1	16.9	17.9	18.9	19.4	19.7
One-family households	66.9	66.4	66.1	65.3	65.1	65.2	64.4	64.5	63.8
Couple without resident children	14.3	14.2	14.2	14.1	13.9	13.5	13.5	13.8	14.0
Couple with at least one resident child	44.8	44.0	43.5	42.3	42.0	42.0	40.8	40.4	39.2
Lone parents with at least one resident child	7.8	8.2	8.5	8.9	9.2	9.7	10.1	10.3	10.6
Lone fathers with at least one resident child	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.4
Lone mothers with at least one resident child	6.2	6.5	6.7	7.0	7.2	7.5	7.8	8.0	8.2
Extended-family households	16.5	16.3	16.0	15.8	15.0	14.0	13.5	12.8	13.2
Multi-person no-family households	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.8	3.0	2.8	3.2	3.3	3.3

Source: TurkStat, Address Based Population Registration System, 2015-2023

Figures in table may not add up to totals due to rounding.

<sup>121</sup> TEDU, [Woman and Employment Survey in Turkey](#) (Executive Summary), February 2024

<sup>122</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.125 and 3.127), 16 May 2025

<sup>123</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.134), 16 May 2025

<sup>124</sup> TurkStat, [Marriage and divorce statistics, 2023](#), 22 February 2024

<sup>125</sup> TurkStat, [Statistics on Family 2023](#), 15 May 2024



- 9.3.3 According to the same TurkStat report, the proportion of one person households increased to 19.7% in 2023 from 14.4% in 2015 although there was no breakdown by gender<sup>126</sup>.
- 9.3.4 The same report noted that ‘The provinces with the highest proportion of lone mothers with at least one resident child were Elazığ with 10.3%, Bingöl with 10.2% and Adana with 9.9%. The provinces with the lowest proportion were Ardahan with 5.2%, Kars and Yozgat with 6%.’<sup>127</sup> The data did not provide a breakdown of the proportion of mothers who were single, divorced or widowed.
- 9.3.5 In a paper entitled, ‘Women's High-Conflict Divorce Experiences and Access to Statutory Social Services in Turkey,’ published in 2024, Görkem Kelebek-Küçükarslan and Reyhan Atasü–Topcuoglu, Faculty members at Hacettepe University<sup>128</sup>, drew on 20 semi-structured interviews, held from December 2020 to April 2021, with women in Istanbul who had undergone high-conflict divorces. The paper stated, ‘Divorce in Turkey, a country with dominant patriarchal ideologies, remains taboo. The prevailing patriarchal and conservative family ideology discourages women from seeking a divorce.’<sup>129</sup>
- 9.3.6 The same paper noted:
- ‘This study highlights that factors such as having children, financial dependence, fear of violence, and concerns about the legal system can delay the divorce decision...
- ‘Each participant encountered negative attitudes and behaviors regarding their divorce. They faced societal blame for the marriage’s failure, manifested through labeling and exclusion. Some endured derogatory “widow” jokes, while others dealt with women who perceived them as threats to their own marriages and husbands...
- ‘Throughout the divorce process and its aftermath, ex-husbands often resort to various forms of violence to regain control and restore the threatened status quo. This includes threats, intimidation, and economic coercion...
- ‘Divorced mothers generally ... face more economic difficulties compared to childless divorced women....[including... claim[ing] unpaid child support...’<sup>130</sup>
- 9.3.7 The Turkish news outlet Daily Sabah published an article on 22 September 2022, which stated:
- ‘... divorced women are often at risk of exclusion from society. ...Studies show divorces often push women to the fringes of society, experts say, putting more social pressure on them and, sometimes, discrimination.
- ‘Sadıkoğlu [Dr. Zehra Zeynep Sadıkoğlu, a sociology expert from the Istanbul University] told Anadolu Agency (AA) ... that despite regional differences, divorced women without financial independence “tend to keep a low profile to avert social pressure.”...
- “... challenges are more for single mothers. “They face pressure like prejudice over their lack of care for their children (if they seek to socialize

<sup>126</sup> TurkStat, [Statistics on Family 2023](#), 15 May 2024

<sup>127</sup> TurkStat, [Statistics on Family 2023](#), 15 May 2024

<sup>128</sup> Academia.edu, [Reyhan Atasü - Topcuoglu | Hacettepe University](#), no date

<sup>129</sup> Kelebek-Küçükarslan, Atasü–Topcuoglu, [Divorce Experiences...](#) (pages 3, 12), 2024

<sup>130</sup> Kelebek-Küçükarslan, Atasü–Topcuoglu, [Divorce Experiences...](#) (page 7, page 12-14 ), 2024

without the presence of their children).” However, she acknowledges that divorces have been “more tolerable” recently. “Yet, although divorce is no longer a matter staining ‘honor’ in some places, mothers seeking divorce are forced to continue their marriage by social pressure which tells them that they have to continue the marriage for the sake of their children,”...

‘Lawyer Fatma Bakırcı says divorce rates increased especially after the COVID-19 pandemic and women were now “less tolerant” toward problems stemming from their marriage.’<sup>131</sup>

- 9.3.8 In relation to access to housing for single women and their ability to live alone, a blog by Ceren Lordoğlu, a lecturer in Sociology at the Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, based on research conducted with 28 single women in Istanbul, posted on the Forum of Housing-Related Research and Debate in September 2023 noted:

‘...living alone as a single woman is not a common nor an acceptable situation in Turkey. Every year, more women want to live alone, particularly in large cities. Instead of directly expressing their wants to their parents, they justify their desire to live alone on various grounds, such as stating that they must move to another city for employment or study. In order to deal with the patriarchal gaze and moral questioning, they generally play a role as a mother, a student, a grieving widow, or a mad woman in the neighbourhood.’<sup>132</sup>

- 9.3.9 The source explained the reference to playing the ‘role of a mad woman’: ‘When a single woman continually breaks her neighborhood’s patriarchal norms, such as arriving late to her house or having male visitors, her neighbours can warn her in a variety of ways. If the women (as some of my research interviewees did) fight with those who threaten them and do not follow these unspoken rules, they may be labelled insane.’<sup>133</sup>

- 9.3.10 The same blog post noted:

‘Although financial difficulty is at the forefront of housing problems for single women from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, this is not the sole problem...

‘Patriarchal norms, moral questionings, security issues and financial constraints limit women’s ability to live in single, separate homes. Building a separate house is extremely difficult in these social and economic constraints, where unsystematic social aids and family network support are constantly decreasing. During my field research, however, almost all of the single women I interviewed described their single life as an essential source of empowerment and emancipation. ...Aside from the heteronormative family structure, different housing and household types are being discussed, particularly in feminist circles.’<sup>134</sup>

- 9.3.11 In relation to violence and divorce the WFSRC survey 2022 found 77% of participants believed violence was a reason to divorce, a general upward trend from 2016 (63%). Within this, the age group 18-30 were more likely to believe violence was a reason for divorce (75%) compared to the 50+ age

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<sup>131</sup> Daily Sabah, [Divorced Turkish women face risk of social exclusion: Experts](#), 22 September 2022

<sup>132</sup> Lordoğlu, Ceren, [Blog: Housing Difficulties for Single Women in Istanbul](#), 7 September 2023

<sup>133</sup> Lordoğlu, Ceren, [Blog: Housing Difficulties for Single Women in Istanbul](#), 7 September 2023

<sup>134</sup> Lordoğlu, Ceren, [Blog: Housing Difficulties for Single Women in Istanbul](#), 7 September 2023

group (68%). There was a decrease in the number of people who believed a man could resort to violence from time to time to keep the family in order from 14% in 2016 to 4% in 2022, and a decrease in the number of people who thought that violence could be ignored for the sake of the family from 18% in 2016 to 6% in 2022<sup>135</sup>.

- 9.3.12 In relation to caring responsibilities the same WFSRC survey found fathers were more involved in childcare in 2022 than in the previous survey periods back to 2016. In 2022 the 25-35 age group were more involved than older fathers and as age increased, involvement in childcare decreased<sup>136</sup>.
- 9.3.13 The TEDU survey 2024 found that ‘...when it comes to child care. More than half of the society (61.2%) thinks that the mother will take care of the child best...’<sup>137</sup>

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## 9.4 Freedom of movement

- 9.4.1 The USSD Country Report 2023 noted, generally:  
‘The constitution provided for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, but the government limited these rights... The constitution provided that only a judge could limit citizens’ freedom to travel and only in connection with a criminal investigation or prosecution ... The lack of freedom of movement was a problem in parts of the east and southeast of the country, where countering PKK activity led authorities to block roads and set up checkpoints,’<sup>138</sup>
- 9.4.2 The WEF Global Gender Gap 2024 report noted equal rights to freedom of movement for women<sup>139</sup>.

In sources consulted, no further information could be found in relation to women’s freedom of movement specifically (see [Bibliography](#))

See also [Demography and geography](#).

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## 9.5 Freedom of expression in relation to women’s rights

- 9.5.1 The European Commission (EC) Türkiye 2023 Report published in November 2023, noted, ‘Dozens of women and a journalist were detained for gathering to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women in November 2022. There were reports of torture and ill-treatment by the police in Cizre. The ‘November 25 Platform’ lodged a criminal complaint about the police brutality on that day in İstanbul.’<sup>140</sup>
- 9.5.2 The MFA Netherlands report 2025 noted ‘During the preceding reporting period [March 2022 to August 2023], the women’s movement faced repression from the Turkish state. This situation persisted during the reporting period [September 2023 up to and including 20 February 2025]. Nevertheless, the women’s movement in Türkiye exhibited defiance and

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<sup>135</sup> WFSRC, [Study: Public Perceptions of Gender Roles...](#) (page 18), 2022

<sup>136</sup> WFSRC, [Study: Public Perceptions of Gender Roles...](#) (page 18 and 19), 2022

<sup>137</sup> TEDU, [Woman and Employment Survey in Turkey](#) (Executive Summary), February 2024

<sup>138</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 2), 22 April 2024

<sup>139</sup> WEF, [Global Gender Gap 2024](#), (Türkiye), June 2024

<sup>140</sup> EC, [Türkiye 2023 Report](#) (p 38), 8 November 2023



vitality.’<sup>141</sup>

9.5.3 The same MFA Netherlands report 2025 noted:

‘On 25 November 2023, women throughout the country demonstrated to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. In Istanbul, riot police prevented protesters from entering Taksim Square. In contrast to the preceding reporting period, there were no arrests and police violence at the demonstration in Istanbul during the current reporting period.

‘The outlook seemed different in south-eastern Türkiye. In Diyarbakır, police arrested 3 women and, in Şırnak, they detained 21 women... eighteen [of the 21] women were prosecuted for violation of the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations. According to one source, they were all acquitted on 27 June 2024.

‘On 8 March 2024, women and LGBTIQ+ protesters gathered in Istanbul in observance of International Women’s Day. Once again, police prevented protesters from entering Taksim Square. In contrast to the preceding reporting period, no arrests were made in Istanbul this time.

‘When asked, two sources explained why no arrests were made in Istanbul on 25 November 2023 and 8 March 2024. This was because the use of physical force was said to reflect negatively on Turkish authorities, especially so close to the local elections on 31 March 2024 ...Both sources traced the fact that there was a tougher crackdown on women’s rights activism in the south-east to the convergence of two grounds of discrimination... feminism and for their Kurdish consciousness...

‘On 25 November 2024 hundreds of people once again took to the streets in Istanbul on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. They tried to reach Taksim Square and were stopped by police. The demonstration then moved to the pier in Karaköy. This time, the police arrested 169 protesters. According to one source, 162 women were released after giving statements at the police station. Five women were released on parole...

‘On 14 February 2025, feminists in Istanbul demonstrated against gender-based violence against women in connection with Valentine’s Day. They also spoke out against hate killings of transgender people. The solidarity shown with the LGBTIQ+ community prompted the police to arrest dozens of women’s rights activists. Overnight, they were released.’<sup>142</sup>

9.5.4 On 8 March 2025 the Associated Press (AP News), a global news agency noted in relation to International Women’s Day protests

‘On the Asian side of Istanbul, Turkey’s biggest city, a rally in Kadikoy saw members of dozens of women’s groups listen to speeches, dance and sing in the spring sunshine. The colorful protest was overseen by a large police presence, including officers in riot gear and a water cannon truck.

‘The government of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared 2025 the Year of the Family. Protesters pushed back against the idea of women’s role being confined to marriage and motherhood, carrying banners reading

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<sup>141</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.4), 25 February 2025

<sup>142</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.4), 25 February 2025

“Family will not bind us to life” and “We will not be sacrificed to the family.”<sup>143</sup>

- 9.5.5 The DFAT report 2025 noted: ‘Police have used force, including pepper spray and tear gas, to break up International Women’s Day marches in Istanbul, including in 2018, 2019, 2022 and 2023. International Women’s Day marches have proceeded in other parts of the country without incident.’<sup>144</sup>
- 9.5.6 The Amnesty International report ‘The State of the World’s Human Rights; Türkiye 2024’, published 29 April 2025 covering 2024 noted: ‘The Istanbul governorship banned a night march to commemorate the 25 November International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Law enforcement officials used unnecessary force against those who gathered despite the ban, and arbitrarily detained at least 169 people, including two protest observers, three foreign citizens and bystanders.’<sup>145</sup>

See also [Non-state assistance](#).

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## 10. Gender-based violence

### 10.1 Forms of violence and prevalence

- 10.1.1 For a definition of gender-based violence see the Asylum Instruction [Gender issues in the asylum claim](#) and UN Women [FAQs: Types of violence against women and girls](#)
- 10.1.2 Gender-based violence covers a wide spectrum of behaviour. Where possible CPIT has differentiated between types of violence women experience in the sections below, but there remains overlap.
- 10.1.3 On a search of the government’s TurkStat Data Portal on 24 March 2025, originally published in Turkish and translated using free online translation tools, no data could be found on gender-based violence<sup>146</sup>.
- 10.1.4 The MFA Netherlands report 2025, based on information in the Mor Çatı, (a woman’s shelter NGO) report submitted to the Committee Against Torture, 17 July 2024 noted the difficulty in assessing prevalence of GBV in Turkey: ‘It is impossible to obtain a complete overview of the extent of gender-based violence in Türkiye. This is because, in general, women are reluctant to report violence for several reasons. They have little confidence in the actions of the authorities, fear that they will face further violence and/or lack sufficient legal knowledge and financial resources to initiate legal proceedings, which tend to be long and drawn out.’<sup>147</sup>
- 10.1.5 In December 2014, The Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies published a report of findings of research into domestic violence against women in Turkey, which was carried out in 2013-2014<sup>148</sup>. This was the last national prevalence survey in Turkey<sup>149</sup>. The report explained that data was gathered using both

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<sup>143</sup> AP News, [International Women’s Day protests](#), 8 March 2025

<sup>144</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.100), 16 May 2025

<sup>145</sup> Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights; Türkiye 2024](#), 29 April 2025

<sup>146</sup> TURKSAT, [Data Portal for Statistics](#), no date

<sup>147</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.2), 25 February 2025

<sup>148</sup> Hacettepe Uni, MFSP, [Domestic violence against women in Turkey](#) (pVII), December 2014

<sup>149</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 67), 25 April 2023

quantitative and qualitative research methods through the target sample of 15,072 households through face-to-face interviews with women aged 15-59<sup>150</sup> and in-depth interviews with 10 women who had experienced violence, 12 men who had been sentenced due to their violent acts and 21 professionals who provided services in this field<sup>151</sup>. The results of the research noted that '38 percent of women have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual violence at any point in their lives...' <sup>152</sup>

- 10.1.6 The HRW report of May 2022 noted: 'Poor data collection prevents authorities and the public from having a solid grasp on the scale of domestic violence in Turkey or the gaps in implementing protection which contribute to ongoing risks for victims.'<sup>153</sup> Similarly The EC Turkey 2023 Report noted that 'There is no comprehensive data collection system in this [the number of women killed as a result of gender-based violence per year] area.'<sup>154</sup>
- 10.1.7 In relation to data collection and gaps, the UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 noted:  
  
'The National Action Plan (2022 -2025) includes a specific goal relating to the collection of data and statistics, which is much needed, and the Special Rapporteur welcomes the proposed follow up national prevalence survey for 2024.  
  
'Non-governmental organizations, particularly women's organizations, have been working to complement national statistics with data gathering, documentation and analysis at the local level of violence against women and girls, including femicide... We Will Stop Femicide (WWSF), has been ...collating information and data on gender-based violence and associated injuries and femicide over many years.'<sup>155</sup> CPIT was unable to find information about a national prevalence survey for 2024 in the sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)).
- 10.1.8 The same UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 stated that 'Online violence against women and girls is ... an emerging issue in the country.'<sup>156</sup> However, the report did not provide examples of online violence, or give details of the scale or extent of such violence.
- 10.1.9 The UN HRC report also noted that 'Violence against women from minority groups is of particular concern... [the] vulnerable economic status [of disadvantaged and marginalised groups of women including Kurds, those with disabilities and those living in rural areas], combined with the patriarchal values, exposes them to various forms of violence.'<sup>157</sup>
- 10.1.10 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated, 'Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: ...extensive gender-based violence, including domestic or intimate partner violence, sexual violence, workplace violence...forced marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, femicide, and

<sup>150</sup> Hacettepe Uni, MFSP, [Domestic violence against women in Turkey](#) (pIX), December 2014

<sup>151</sup> Hacettepe Uni, MFSP, [Domestic violence against women in Turkey](#) (p5), December 2014

<sup>152</sup> Hacettepe Uni, MFSP, [Domestic violence against women in Turkey](#) (p34), December 2014

<sup>153</sup> HRW, [Combating Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Summary), 26 May 2022

<sup>154</sup> EC, [Türkiye 2023 Report](#), November 2023

<sup>155</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (paras 67,68), 25 April 2023

<sup>156</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 7), 25 April 2023

<sup>157</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#), 25 April 2023

other forms of such violence...'<sup>158</sup> The report further stated: 'Gender-based violence, including domestic and intimate partner violence, remained a serious and widespread problem both in rural and urban areas.'<sup>159</sup> However, the USSD did not provide further detail on the scale or extent of reports of gender-based violence. By way of comparison, the USSD 2022 Country Report stated, 'Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: ... lack of investigation and accountability for gender-based violence...'<sup>160</sup> The USSD 2021 Country Report stated, 'Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: ... gender-based violence...'<sup>161</sup>

10.1.11 In relation to gender-based violence in employment, the AIDA Turkey 2023 report noted '...women in the textile sector often face discrimination and ill-treatment, especially single women face gender based violence in workplaces...' <sup>162</sup> See also [Employment](#).

10.1.12 In June 2023, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) reported on data obtained from an analysis of more than 28,000 calls received between 2007 and 2021 by the TKDF's (Turkish Women's Associations Federation's) domestic violence emergency hotline. Most calls were made in 2020 when the pandemic started and lockdowns were implemented,<sup>163</sup> indicating an average of fewer than 2,000 calls per year over the 14-year period. The data showed:

- 8 in 10 people who were subjected to violence were women;
- 73% were married, 12% were single and 7% were divorced;
- 42% were between the ages of 31-55 (42%)
- 37% were in the age group 19-30<sup>164</sup>.

10.1.13 The same UNFPA report noted that '[The] [f]ollowing words were recorded at some calls to the hotline that report violence; "custom", "honor", "incest", "child abuse", "trauma", and "suicide".'<sup>165</sup>

10.1.14 The ASASV (Association for Struggle against Sexual Violence) report from June 2024 stated: 'Turkey consistently fails to share systemic, disaggregated and transparent data [regarding sexual violence]... A total of 22,517 crimes related to the crime of sexual assault were recorded between 2014 and 2021. Of the crimes committed, 17.7% were sexual assault crimes.'<sup>166</sup>

10.1.15 In September 2024, Turkish Minute reported on figures released by the Family and Social Services Ministry: 'Between 2013 and 2018, the total number of women who applied to ŞÖNİM [Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers] was 271,058. However, this figure saw a dramatic increase, rising to 164,945 in 2019 alone. The number of women reporting domestic violence increased to 255,515 in 2021 and to 273,222 in 2023, the

<sup>158</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (Exec summary), 22 April 2024

<sup>159</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (Section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>160</sup> USSD, [2022 Country Report](#) (Exec summary), 20 March 2023

<sup>161</sup> USSD, [2021 Country Report](#) (Exec summary), 12 April 2022

<sup>162</sup> AIDA, ECRE, [Türkiye, 2023-Update](#) (p173), 2 August 2024

<sup>163</sup> UNFPA Türkiye, [UNFPA-TKDF Domestic Violence Report Has Been Released!](#), 21 June 2023

<sup>164</sup> UNFPA Türkiye, [UNFPA-TKDF Domestic Violence Report Has Been Released!](#), 21 June 2023

<sup>165</sup> UNFPA Türkiye, [UNFPA-TKDF Domestic Violence Report Has Been Released!](#), 21 June 2023

<sup>166</sup> ASASV, [Alternative \(shadow\) report to the Committee Against Torture...](#) (p13), 5 June 2024

data showed.<sup>167</sup>

- 10.1.16 Global Voices, a media NGO based in the Netherlands<sup>168</sup>, cited an article on sexual harassment published in Turkish in October 2024, stating: 'Comparing data from 2021 and 2022, [Journalist Melisa] Gulbas wrote there had been an approximately 60 percent increase in sexual assault cases against women in 2023'.<sup>169</sup>
- 10.1.17 A study on workplace violence and harassment conducted by Özyeğin University in collaboration with the ILO Türkiye Office and published in October 2024 found that: 'Sexual violence disproportionately affects women, with one in four women experiencing it at least once in their working lives. The prevalence of sexual violence among women is more than twice that of men.'<sup>170</sup>
- 10.1.18 The OCHCR Summary of Stakeholders' submissions from January 2025 noted 'Human Rights Foundation (HRF) stated that femicide and violence against women remained pervasive, with insufficient protection and support for victims.'<sup>171</sup>
- 10.1.19 The UN article from December 2024 on the ENG-KAD report noted in relation to women with disabilities: 'Nearly 4 out of 10 women with disabilities (35.8%) report having experienced violence. Among those, 89.5% have faced emotional /psychological violence, 23% socio-economic violence, 13.5% sexual violence/harmful practices, and 4.7% physical violence. Women with psychosocial disabilities report the highest rates of violence (68%). However, only 31% of women who experienced violence reported or disclosed their experiences to an institution or someone else.'<sup>172</sup>
- 10.1.20 The WEF Global Gender Gap 2024 report noted in relation to prevalence, 12% of women experienced gender-based violence in their lifetime<sup>173</sup> The WPS Index 2023 also reported the same figure for 'intimate partner violence' based on 2018 data<sup>174</sup>
- 10.1.21 The WPS Index reported findings from the Gallup World Survey 2020-2022 which indicated 48% of women and girls aged 15 and older felt safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they lived<sup>175</sup>.
- 10.1.22 Türkiye Today reported on the results of the TurkStat [Life Satisfaction Survey 2024](#) and noted that '...one of the most concerning findings relates to the safety of women in their daily lives. The ...Survey reveals that 35.9% of women feel unsafe walking alone at night, a stark contrast to 15.2% of men. Similarly, 8.4% of women report feeling unsafe when home alone, compared to just 3.1% of men. These figures highlight the ongoing safety concerns for women in Türkiye.'<sup>176</sup>
- 10.1.23 The Amnesty International report 'The State of the World's Human Rights;

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<sup>167</sup> Turkish Minute, [Over 1.4 million women in Turkey...](#), 10 September 2024

<sup>168</sup> Global Voices, [What is Global Voices?](#), Undated

<sup>169</sup> Global Voices, [Violence against women is met with impunity in Turkey](#), 17 October 2024

<sup>170</sup> ILO, [Perceptions and experiences of workplace violence...](#), 16 October 2024

<sup>171</sup> OCHCR, [Summary of Stakeholders' submissions](#), (paragraph 119) 22 January 2025

<sup>172</sup> UN Women, [New report highlights challenges and rights of women](#) ...20 December 2024

<sup>173</sup> WEF, [Global Gender Gap 2024](#), (Türkiye), June 2024

<sup>174</sup> GIWPS, [The WPS Index 2023](#) (page 84 and 87), 2023

<sup>175</sup> GIWPS, [The WPS Index 2023](#) (page 84 and 87), 2023

<sup>176</sup> Türkiye Today, [Women in Türkiye...](#), 6 March 2025



Türkiye 2024', published 29 April 2025 covering 2024 noted 'Violence against women and girls remained widespread'. However, the only detail provided in the report in relation to violence against women in girls was reference to the data from the We Will Stop Femicides Platform that men killed 394 women and 259 women were found dead in suspicious circumstances in 2024<sup>177</sup>.

10.1.24 The European Parliament resolution of 7 May 2025 on Türkiye, stated that it 'Expresses its deep concern...at gender-based violence and at the increase in the incidence of femicide in Türkiye in 2024, which has been the highest since 2010, the year before the signing of the Istanbul Convention.'<sup>178</sup>

10.1.25 The DFAT report 2025 noted: 'Gender-based and family violence is widespread in both urban and rural areas. More than 1.4 million women reported being subjected to domestic violence between January 2013 and July 2024. Regional variations exist, with studies finding women in Northeast Anatolia were most likely to experience intimate-partner violence....'<sup>179</sup>

10.1.26 The same DFAT report noted 'In-country sources told DFAT Türkiye leaving the Istanbul Convention emboldened perpetrators of violence against women.'<sup>180</sup>

10.1.27 The World Bank, which used data from UNICEF on FGM rates globally, had no data on the prevalence of FGM in Turkey<sup>181</sup>. In sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) no further information on whether Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) occurs in Turkey and if so, to what extent.

See also [Domestic violence](#) and [Femicide and 'honour' killing](#)

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## 10.2 Domestic violence

10.2.1 The Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies 2014 report found:

- '36 percent of married women reported having been subjected to physical violence at any point in their lives by their husbands or intimate partners...
- '12 percent of married women reported having been subjected to sexual violence at any point in their lives by their husbands or intimate partners...
- 'Nearly half of the married women reported having been subjected to acts of emotional violence such as threatening, swearing, being insulted and humiliated by their husbands/ intimate partners.'<sup>182</sup>

10.2.2 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 stated: 'Domestic violence is still considered mostly a private matter and not an issue of public concern in most parts of the country. Incidences of domestic violence are still underreported, owing in part to the lack of public awareness about this problem, fear of retaliation and stigmatization, the lack of trust in law

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<sup>177</sup> Amnesty, [The State of the World's Human Rights: Türkiye 2024](#), 29 April 2025

<sup>178</sup> European Parliament, [Resolution 7 May 2025](#), 7 May 2025

<sup>179</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.130), 16 May 2025

<sup>180</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.133), 16 May 2025

<sup>181</sup> The World Bank, [Female Genital mutilation prevalence \(%\) Türkiye](#), 2024

<sup>182</sup> Hacettepe Uni, MFSP, [Domestic violence against women in Turkey](#) (p34), December 2014

enforcement agencies and the low quality of existing services and protection mechanisms for victims of violence.<sup>183</sup>

- 10.2.3 The same UN HRC report stated, ‘Domestic violence continues to pervade society in Türkiye, with incidents recorded by the police over the past six years indicating a steady rise. In 2016 there were 162,110 recorded incidents and this had risen to 268,817 incidents in 2021.’<sup>184</sup> However, the source did not clarify whether the increase in reported cases was due to improved or changed methods of recording such crimes, a shift in women’s willingness to report gender-based violence, or whether it reflects an actual rise in the prevalence of domestic violence. The report is available [here](#).<sup>185</sup>
- 10.2.4 Regarding sexual violence against women, the same UN HRC report stated: ‘Sexual violence within intimate partner relationships is still largely a taboo subject, with low levels of reporting.’<sup>186</sup>
- 10.2.5 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated, ‘Gender-based violence, including domestic and intimate partner violence, remained a serious and widespread problem both in rural and urban areas.’<sup>187</sup> The USSD 2022 and 2021 Country Reports included the same statement<sup>188 189</sup>. The USSD did not further quantify the scale, extent or nature of domestic or intimate partner violence.
- 10.2.6 In June 2023, the UNFPA reported that, according to its analysis of calls to the Domestic Violence Emergency Hotline, the between 2007 and 2021:
- ‘... the most common forms of violence are physical (17,601), emotional (15,059), social (5,608), economic (4,346), and sexual (1,456).
  - ‘79 percent of people who are subjected to sexual violence are women and the perpetrators are mostly spouses (68%)
  - ‘95 percent exposed of those subjected to economic violence, 76 percent of those subjected to emotional violence, and 55 percent of those subjected to social violence are also women.
  - ‘8 percent of the violence cases are sexual violence. Of the ones who are subjected to sexual violence; 73 percent women, 11 percent women and children, 10 percent girls...’<sup>190</sup>
- 10.2.7 The UNFPA’s data also indicated that 90 percent of the perpetrators of violence were men, and the highest percentage was spouses (63%), followed by family members (21%). In cases where the perpetrator was a ‘family member,’ 29% were fathers, 19% were ‘other family members,’ and 16% were siblings (16%)<sup>191</sup>.
- 10.2.8 The DFAT report 2025, based on their ‘knowledge and discussions with a range of sources in Australia and overseas, and taking into account open-

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<sup>183</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 11), 25 April 2023

<sup>184</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 11), 25 April 2023

<sup>185</sup> Hacettepe University, [Research on Domestic Violence Against Women in Turkey](#), 2015

<sup>186</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 14), 25 April 2023

<sup>187</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>188</sup> USSD, [2022 Country Report](#) (section 6), 20 March 2023

<sup>189</sup> USSD, [2021 Country Report](#) (section 6), 12 April 2022

<sup>190</sup> UNFPA Türkiye, [UNFPA-TKDF Domestic Violence Report Has Been Released](#), 21 June 2023

<sup>191</sup> UNFPA Türkiye, [UNFPA-TKDF Domestic Violence Report Has Been Released](#), 21 June 2023

source reports<sup>192</sup> assessed that ‘Turkish women face a moderate risk of societal violence in the form of domestic violence. In rare cases, this can extend to femicide or honour killings.’<sup>193</sup>

- 10.2.9 DFAT also noted ‘In-country sources said reporting rates for domestic abuse were low, as cultural norms and economic dependence discouraged many women from reporting abuse’.<sup>194</sup>

See also [Femicide and ‘honour’ killing](#)

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### 10.3 Femicide and ‘honour’ killing

- 10.3.1 In the report of May 2022, HRW noted, ‘Turkey’s Interior Ministry, in a report to a 2020-21 parliamentary commission looking at the causes of violence against women, provided fluctuating numbers of femicides over the past five years, the lowest being 268 femicides in 2020, with the figure for 2021 having risen again to 307.’<sup>195</sup> The report added, ‘All these are judged by the Interior Ministry to be murders of women falling within the scope of Turkey’s Law to Protect the Family and Prevent Violence against Women (law 6284), and thus mainly linked to domestic violence.’<sup>196</sup>

- 10.3.2 The UN HRC report from April 2023 stated ‘According to government sources, at least 3,175 femicides have been reported in Türkiye between 2010 and 2020 and more than 300 women were murdered in 2021 ... The actual numbers are estimated to be much higher due to widespread underreporting...

‘Reports of suspicious deaths and forced suicides among women and girls is particularly concerning.’<sup>197</sup>

- 10.3.3 Sources differ in their estimates of the prevalence of ‘honour’ based violence. The USSD 2023 Country Report stated, ‘There were occasional reports of so-called honor killings of women, mainly in the southeast of the country.’<sup>198</sup> In contrast, the UN HRC 2023 report stated, ‘Many crimes against women and girls, including femicide are committed in the name of so-called “honour” ...’<sup>199</sup> The UN HRC November 2024 report stated ‘The Committee is concerned about the very high number of femicides and other killings in the context of domestic violence and in the context of so-called honour crimes...’<sup>200</sup>

- 10.3.4 In their response to the UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023, the Turkish government stated: ‘It’s mentioned at the report that “at least 3,175 femicides have been reported in Türkiye between 2010 and 2020”. According to the data from Ministry of Interior, between 2017- 2020, 1,237 women were killed...between 2014-2021, 2,513 women were killed.’<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (1.4, page 4), 16 May 2025

<sup>193</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.129), 16 May 2025

<sup>194</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.134), 16 May 2025

<sup>195</sup> HRW, [Combatting Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Summary), 26 May 2022

<sup>196</sup> HRW, [Combatting Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.I), 26 May 2022

<sup>197</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 9 and 10), 25 April 2023

<sup>198</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>199</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 10), 25 April 2023

<sup>200</sup> UN HRC, [Concluding observations Türkiye](#), (Paragraph 19) 28 November 2024

<sup>201</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (section 4), 15 June 2023



- 10.3.5 In January 2025, duvaR.english reported, ‘The We Will Stop Femicide Platform (KCDP) revealed that 394 women were killed by men in Turkey in 2024, marking the highest recorded figure to date...[KCDP Secretary-General Fidan Ataselim] addressed discrepancies between KCDP's data and government statistics ... According to Interior Ministry figures, there were 284 femicides in 2022, 309 in 2023, and 276 in the first 10 months of 2024.’<sup>202</sup>
- 10.3.6 The HRW World Report 2025, covering events of 2024 noted that ‘While the interior minister announced in July that 166 women victims of violence had been killed by men in the first six months of 2024, research by independent media organization Bianet put the number at 193<sup>203</sup>. At the time of writing, no further information on these Interior Ministry figures could be found by CPIT on the [Ministry of Interior website](#).
- 10.3.7 Also in January 2025, duvaR.english reported, ‘Fidan Ataselim, general secretary of the We Will Stop Femicides Platform, highlighted the rise in femicides in 2024... [stating] “2024 saw a peak in femicides, the highest since 2010...”<sup>204</sup>
- 10.3.8 The Turkish news outlet Bianet monitors women killed by men as reported in news agencies, national and local media<sup>205</sup>. The monthly tallies are available [here](#)<sup>206</sup>. Bianet recorded the following statistics of women killed by men in the last 3 years:
- 2022 – at least 327
  - 2023 – at least 333
  - 2024 – at least 359
- 10.3.9 The We Will Stop Femicides Platform (KCDP) also appears to keep track of femicides reported in the media. Originally published in Turkish and translated using free online translation tools, it stated: ‘We analyze the data reported according to the concept of “Femicide” and share them with the public every month. Upon the increase in murders disguised as accidents and suicides, we have also been reporting suspicious female death data since 2018.’<sup>207</sup> The platform keeps a monthly tally of femicides and suspicious deaths of women, which is available [here](#)<sup>208</sup>. The Platform recorded the following statistics of women killed by men in the last 3 years:
- 2022 – 334 femicides, 245 suspicious deaths of women
  - 2023 - 315 femicides, 248 suspicious deaths of women
  - 2024 – 394 femicides, 259 suspicious deaths of women<sup>209</sup>
- 10.3.10 Fidan Ataselim, KCDP Secretary General in an interview with ANF News stated in relation to their 2024 data:

“Seventy-one percent of the women were murdered within their families.

<sup>202</sup> duvaR.english, [Turkey records highest-ever femicide rate in 2024](#), 3 January 2025

<sup>203</sup> HRW, [World Report 2025 Türkiye](#) (Women's rights), 16 January 2025

<sup>204</sup> duvaR.english, [Women's rights advocates highlight 2024 challenges...](#), 3 January 2025

<sup>205</sup> Bianet, [bianet is Monitoring Male Violence](#), last monthly update: November 2024

<sup>206</sup> Bianet, [bianet is Monitoring Male Violence](#), last monthly update: November 2024

<sup>207</sup> We Will Stop Femicides Platform, [About Us](#), no date

<sup>208</sup> We Will Stop Femicides Platform, [DATA](#), no date

<sup>209</sup> We Will Stop Femicides Platform, [DATA](#), no date

...Forty-two percent of women were killed by their husbands. Women were murdered by their fathers, husbands, men they were trying to divorce, or former husbands. ...Fifty-seven percent of women were killed in the homes where they were confined, within the so-called sacred family structures...” Ataselim underlined that only 42 of the perpetrators had criminal records...’.<sup>210</sup> The source did not state the total number of perpetrators involved in the reported femicides.

10.3.11 The MFA Netherlands report 2025 noted that ‘In 2024, the number of femicides in Türkiye increased,’ and cited the figures (above) from KDCP and Bianet. In addition, it noted ‘According to the Human Rights Association (İHD) and the Human Rights Foundation of Türkiye (TİHV), 344 femicides were committed in the first eleven months of 2024. The Turkish Federation of Women’s Associations documented a total of 421 femicides in 2024.’<sup>211</sup>

10.3.12 The MFA Netherlands additionally noted: ‘Figures from the KDCP pointed to the Turkish government’s limited ability to protect women from femicide. In 2022, at least 23 women were killed who were in situations in which protective measures had been taken. According to the same platform, this number was 28 in 2023<sup>574</sup> and, in 2024, it was 20.’<sup>212</sup>

10.3.13 The DFAT report 2025 noted ‘In-country sources cited femicide...as a major concern. While the per capita rate of femicide in Türkiye is lower than the global average, it is higher than many European countries.’<sup>213</sup> DFAT also cited the data from the Federation of Women’s Associations of Türkiye which found 421 femicides occurred in 2024 and further noted ‘Similar numbers have been reported for at least the last decade. KDCP, a local NGO, reported most perpetrators were close male relatives or current or ex-boyfriends.’<sup>214</sup>

10.3.14 In relation to ‘honour’ killing’ DFAT noted a ‘small number’ per year although accurate figures were unavailable at the time of their May 2025 report. It referred to figures from NGOs who reported between 1 and 31 honour killings in 2019. DFAT explained ‘Honour killings in Türkiye are defined as a murder committed or ordered to punish a family member believed to have damaged the family’s reputation. Actions considered damaging can include extramarital sex, refusal of an arranged marriage, choosing one’s own spouse without family approval, becoming a victim of rape, same-sex sexual acts or liberal behaviour and dress.’<sup>215</sup>

See also [Domestic violence](#).

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## 10.4 Early and forced marriage

10.4.1 The USSD 2023 Country Report noted the law governing the legal age for marriage (18, unless with parental consent at age 17, or a court order at age 16) was effectively enforced<sup>216</sup>.

<sup>210</sup> ANF News, [We Will Stop Femicide Platform: At least 394 women](#) ..., 4 January 2025

<sup>211</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.2), 25 February 2025

<sup>212</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.3), 25 February 2025

<sup>213</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.131), 16 May 2025

<sup>214</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.131), 16 May 2025

<sup>215</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.131), 16 May 2025

<sup>216</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

- 10.4.2 The USSD 2023 Country Report noted in relation to unofficial religious ceremonies: ‘NGOs reported children as young as age 12 were sometimes married in unofficial religious ceremonies, particularly in poor and rural regions ... Women’s rights groups stated there were instances of forced marriages and bride kidnapping, particularly in rural areas in the southeast of the country, although the practices were not widespread. Local NGOs worked to educate and raise awareness among individuals in ... southeastern provinces.’<sup>217</sup>
- 10.4.3 The Association of Civil Society Development Center (STGM) noted the publication of the report by the Hayat Sende Youth Academy Association an organisation that addresses forced early marriages specifically for children under state care, available in Turkish [here](#), published in November 2024. According to STGM: ‘The report contains the results of the workshop which took place on 2 and 3 December 2023 in Ankara with the participation of 21 institutions, as well as recommendations for the prevention of these marriages... The consequences of early and forced marriage at a young age were domestic violence, psychosocial problems and alienation from social life, early pregnancy and motherhood, and vulnerability to risk.’<sup>218</sup>
- 10.4.4 DFAT noted:
- ‘Child, early and forced marriage has declined in recent years but still occurs. According to UNFPA data from 2018, around one per cent of girls are married by age 15 and 15 per cent are married by age 18 (underage marriage for boys is much less common). In-country sources told DFAT marriages of girls as young as 10 sometimes occurred in highly religious communities, including in urban areas and were not reported until the girl attended hospital to give birth....In September 2024, a court sentenced a member of the Ismailaga religious community to 36 years in prison for marrying a six-year old girl. The girl’s father, who consented to the marriage, received 18 years and nine months for accessory to sexual abuse.’<sup>219</sup>

See also [Marriage, divorce, custody and inheritance rights](#)

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## 11. State attitudes and treatment

### 11.1 Statements by public and government officials

- 11.1.1 The Fuller Project, which reports on global news affecting women<sup>220</sup> noted ‘In March 2022, the governor of Istanbul banned demonstrations and marches for International Women’s Day. In November 2022, Zeki Sayar, a leader in Turkey’s religious affairs ministry, said on television that women should not travel more than 55 miles from home without a male relative.’<sup>221</sup>
- 11.1.2 The UN Special Rapporteur’s report 2023 noted that entrenched patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes ‘...are compounded by official declarations made by some public and religious figures concerning the roles and responsibilities of women in the family and in society which overstate the traditional role they play as mothers and wives, undermining women’s social status, autonomy,

<sup>217</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>218</sup> STGM, [Prevention of child, early and forced marriage for girls....](#), 29 November 2024

<sup>219</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.128), 16 May 2025

<sup>220</sup> The Fuller Project, [About Us](#)

<sup>221</sup> The Fuller Project, [For Turkey’s women the fight doesn’t end with the run-off](#), 26 May 2023

educational opportunities and professional careers, and constitute an underlying cause of gender-based violence against women.'<sup>222</sup>

- 11.1.3 In the response of June 2023 to the UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023, the Turkish government stated: 'Türkiye has adopted the policy of zero tolerance against domestic violence and violence against women. The state mechanism takes effective measures in line with this policy. As a head of the state, the President Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN states at every opportunity that we have a zero tolerance policy and we will continue to do so.'<sup>223</sup>
- 11.1.4 Originally published in Turkish and translated using free online translation tools, a July 2024 article published by state-run news agency Anadolu Agency noted that the Minister of Interior Ali Yerlikaya stated 'We never, ever accept violence against women, as we do all forms of violence. We find even one number too much and we do not accept it. ...we support all kinds of studies and initiatives for the solution of this problem in the strongest way.'... "We consider all kinds of violence, negative attitudes and behaviors against women not only in the person of that woman, but also as an attack on our nation, state and values."<sup>224</sup>
- 11.1.5 The New Arab, a UK-based English-language news and current affairs website focusing on the Middle East and North Africa<sup>225</sup>, reported on protests following the murders of two women Aysenur Halil and Ikbal Uzuner in Istanbul in October 2024, noting Erdogan's public response: 'Erdogan, having initially blamed alcohol and social media, on Wednesday promised to toughen the justice system and crack down on crime.'<sup>226</sup>
- 11.1.6 An article published by the Wilson Center, a US-based think-tank<sup>227</sup>, in October 2024 cited specific examples of statements displaying patriarchal views made by Erdogan between 2011 and 2014. The article stated: "Discursively, Erdoğan tends to blame victims for the violence they endure... For Erdoğan's government, women's rights are secondary to the sanctity of family. According to Erdoğan, women are only worthy because they are mothers, their recognized role in his interpretation of Islam. He also believes women need not ask for equality, as men and women are not and can never be equal by natural creation.'<sup>228</sup>
- 11.1.7 On 23 November 2024, duvaR.english reported comments from the same Minister of Interior : 'Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya on Nov. 21 blamed some women for their own murders...Yerlikaya said."...even though they had a protection order, last year 32 ladies did not obey our warning, opened the door when a man came to the door, and he shot her inside," he added, blaming the women for the femicides.'<sup>229</sup>
- 11.1.8 On 25 November 2024, Türkiye Today, which described itself as 'Türkiye's leading English newsroom',<sup>230</sup> reported:

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<sup>222</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 7), 25 April 2023

<sup>223</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (paras 2-5), 15 June 2023

<sup>224</sup> Anadolu Agency, [Minister of Interior Yerlikaya...](#), 10 July 2024

<sup>225</sup> The New Arab, [About Us](#), undated

<sup>226</sup> The New Arab, [Protests in Turkey over double murder...](#), 13 October 2024

<sup>227</sup> Wilson Center, [About the Wilson Center](#), undated

<sup>228</sup> Wilson Center, [Violence Against Women in Turkey is Political: Here is Why](#), 23 October 2024

<sup>229</sup> duvaR.english, [Turkish interior minister blames murdered women...](#), 23 November 2024

<sup>230</sup> Türkiye Today, [About Us - Türkiye Today](#), no date

'In his speech marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reaffirmed Türkiye's commitment to protecting women's rights. He emphasized that violence against women is unacceptable and that it is laws, not conventions, that will ensure their safety...President Erdogan reiterated his firm commitment to defending the dignity and rights of women, both in Türkiye and globally. He called violence against women a betrayal of humanity and stressed that it must be eradicated...'<sup>231</sup>

11.1.9 The Atlantic, a US based magazine, noted on 24 July 2024, in respect of suggestions to repeal Law 6284:

'Last month, Erdoğan announced his plans to amend and weaken Law 6284, and on July 3, his party submitted an omnibus bill to the Turkish Parliament that removes an important provision for protection. Currently, a domestic abuser who violates a preventive order is subject to temporary imprisonment. If the proposed reforms pass, the abuser can avoid this preventive confinement. Equally concerning to the women's movement, the legal reform would require married women to take their husband's name, emphasizing the family as the basis for society. Parliament is reviewing the bill.'<sup>232</sup>

11.1.10 The Stockholm Center for Freedom (SCF), a non-profit advocacy organisation that focuses on human rights in Turkey<sup>233</sup> noted on 8 October 2024: 'Women's rights advocates are now worried that the future will be even more grim for women as the government and its allies have been calling for further rollbacks, urging the repeal of Law No. 6284, which is a domestic provision that provides protection mechanisms for women and children who have suffered or are deemed at risk of suffering domestic violence. Many human rights advocates have been saying the law is not being implemented by the authorities, anyway.'<sup>234</sup>

11.1.11 SCF noted on 9 January 2025, in respect of suggestions to repeal Law 6284: '...the ruling Justice and Development Party, along with their conservative allies, such as the New Welfare Party (YRP) and the Free Cause Party (HÜDA-PAR), have continued to call for the repeal of Law No. 6284, which safeguards families and seeks to prevent violence against women. While the Turkish government has been willing to consider repealing the law, activists across the country expressed outrage, saying it was the only legal measure against gender-based violence.'<sup>235</sup>

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## 11.2 Government policies and programmes

11.2.1 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 noted:

'... the General Directorate on the Status of Women... is designated as the body responsible for ensuring the full application and fulfilment of the relevant rights enshrined in the Constitution and in international human rights instruments, and for gender-mainstreaming across all public policies related

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<sup>231</sup> Türkiye Today, [Erdogan calls violence against women a betrayal of humanity](#), 25 November 2024

<sup>232</sup> The Atlantic, [When Women Fight Back Against Autocracy](#), 24 July 2024

<sup>233</sup> SCF, [About us](#), no date

<sup>234</sup> SCF, [Following the murder of 2 young women...](#) 8 October 2024

<sup>235</sup> SCF, [Women's Rights in Turkey: 2024 in Review](#), 9 January 2025



to the rights of women....

'[However,] ... the percentage of the official budget allocated for the implementation of gender equality policies is insufficient. Furthermore, coordination between the Directorate and other line Ministries in the implementation of the National Action Plan on violence against women and children should be strengthened.'<sup>236</sup>

11.2.2 In the state response of June 2023 to the UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023, the Turkish government set out the 'duties and authorities' of the Directorate General on the Status of Women, which can be found [here](#) (para 259).

11.2.3 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 stated:

'During her visit [of July 2022] the Special Rapporteur was informed of the significant efforts being made to afford women and girls economic independence, in line with the 2018-2023 Strategic Paper and Action Plan on Women's empowerment. Efforts being made in some provinces is laudable, and some women and girls are benefiting greatly from the programmes that have been established....The Special Rapporteur was also encouraged by the Government's commitment to recognize unpaid care work.'<sup>237</sup>

11.2.4 The same UN HRC report also noted the following measures to deal with domestic violence:

'The dissemination of a new circular in April 2022 by the Ministry of Interior outlining a range of measures to combat domestic violence is a welcome development. It includes establishing local risk management teams to monitor threats to victims of recurrent domestic violence and those at high risk, creating a system of instant notification to the police when convicted perpetrators of domestic violence are released from prison, increasing the use of electronic tags to be worn by perpetrators, providing more training for police officers, and increasing financial resources.'<sup>238</sup>

11.2.5 In the state response of June 2023 to the UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023, the Turkish government stated: "Provincial Action Plans on Combating Early and Forced Marriages" has been was [sic] put into effect to ...24 provinces...Action Plans focused on awareness activities. Activities aimed at researching early marriages, preparing visual and written materials, and meeting girls with role model women were included.'<sup>239</sup>

11.2.6 The WFSRC survey 2022 found that 87% of participants thought the government did not take necessary measures to prevent violence against women<sup>240</sup>.

11.2.7 The EC Turkey 2023 Report stated, 'Despite the continued implementation of the Fourth National Action Plan for Combating Violence against Women (2021-2025), there are no effective policies (including deterrent sentences), implementation of legislation is weak...'<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 69,70), 25 April 2023

<sup>237</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 15), 25 April 2023

<sup>238</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 13), 25 April 2023

<sup>239</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (para 60), 15 June 2023

<sup>240</sup> WFSRC, [Study: Public Perceptions of Gender Roles...](#) (page 13), 2022

<sup>241</sup> EC, [Türkiye 2023 Report](#), November 2023



- 11.2.8 In July 2024, Anadolu Agency reported information provided by the Minister of Interior, Yerlikaya 'Stating that they have implemented many innovations in the fight against domestic violence and violence against women, Yerlikaya said that they have succeeded in preventing high-risk violence cases with the electronic handcuff project. Noting that they increased the electronic handcuff capacity by 50 percent to 1500 last year, Yerlikaya stated that as of July 1, 2024, 689 cases are actively monitored by the electronic monitoring center.'<sup>242</sup> In sources consulted see [Bibliography](#) no further information on the electronic handcuff project could be found.
- 11.2.9 The UN HRC November 2024 report stated 'The State party should carry out a comprehensive legal and policy reform to prevent, address and eradicate violence against women and girls that explicitly addresses all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence and so called honour crimes. In particular it should ... strengthen public education programmes aimed at raising awareness of the criminal nature of such acts and combating stereotypes that normalize violence against women'<sup>243</sup>

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### 11.3 GBV training and specialised police units

#### 11.3.1 In the report of May 2022, HRW noted:

'While judges deal mainly with case files, police officers deal with victims and perpetrators and play the frontline role in efforts to combat domestic violence. Domestic violence police units are composed of officers who undertake different functions, including conducting interviews with victims and perpetrators, preparing reports to the courts and prosecutor's office and ... completing a 12-page risk assessment, serving perpetrators with protective or preventive orders, monitoring the orders, and following up with victims.'<sup>244</sup>

#### 11.3.2 The same HRW noted: 'Turkey's General Directorate of Security introduced its own measures in January 2020 to rearrange and increase the number of police units assigned to dealing with domestic violence, including issuing preventive and protective orders. Many women officers have been appointed to work in the units and in each of the nine units Human Rights Watch chose to visit, from January 2020, a woman superintendent had been appointed to run the unit.'<sup>245</sup>

#### 11.3.3 HRW further stated:

'Human Rights Watch also interviewed police officers working in dedicated district units to combat domestic violence...[and] was struck by the lack of resources available to some units visited that would enable them to uphold best practices for responding to domestic and other gender-based violence. Several units were operating in a physical environment lacking private spaces in which to interview victims of violence....Other police units Human Rights Watch visited were operating in newer buildings and had spaces separate from other regular crime units.'<sup>246</sup>

<sup>242</sup> Anadolu Agency, [Minister of Interior Yerlikaya...](#), 10 July 2024

<sup>243</sup> UN HRC, [Concluding observations Türkiye](#), (Paragraph 20) 28 November 2024

<sup>244</sup> HRW, [Combatting Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.I), 26 May 2022

<sup>245</sup> HRW, [Combatting Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.I), 26 May 2022

<sup>246</sup> HRW, [Combatting Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.III), 26 May 2022

- 11.3.4 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 stated, '...in 2022 some 140 provincial staff received trainings (sic) on supporting implementation of provincial action plans on combating early and forced marriage.'<sup>247</sup>
- 11.3.5 In the state response to the UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023, the Turkish government outlined the numbers of personnel trained in relation to combating violence against women and domestic violence in 2022, this included 76,115 law enforcement officers working in rural or urban areas. Other professionals trained included healthcare personnel, trainee law enforcement officers and teachers. Awareness raising and capacity building activities were provided for judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers and civil servants<sup>248 249</sup>.
- 11.3.6 In July 2024 the Minister of Interior stated GBV awareness programmes and prevention training on domestic violence were provided to staff in the Ministry<sup>250</sup>.
- 11.3.7 The Turkish Ministry of Interior also announced in July 2024 that '...the number of units operating in the field of combating violence against women in the police and gendarmerie organizations has been increased to 1287.'<sup>251</sup> There were no further details provided on the number of officers staffing the units or the populations they covered.
- 11.3.8 The UN CAT 2024: '[Acknowledges]... the steps that the State party has made during the reporting period to train law enforcement officers ... to respond to acts of gender-based and domestic violence.'<sup>252</sup>
- 11.3.9 The UN HRC November 2024 report, in its recommendations stated that the government of Turkey should 'Ensure that judges, prosecutors, law enforcement authorities and health personnel continue to receive appropriate training that empowers them to deal with cases of violence against women effectively and in a gender-sensitive manner...'<sup>253</sup>
- 11.3.10 The same UN HRC report stated in its recommendations that the government of Turkey should '...increase the number of police officers and of women members of units specialized in addressing such violence.'<sup>254</sup>

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## 11.4 Prosecution and sentencing

- 11.4.1 In sources consulted (see [Bibliography](#)) no statistics on the number of arrests, prosecutions or convictions for offences related to GBV could be found.
- 11.4.2 The USSD 2023 Country Report stated:
- 'Courts in some cases gave reduced sentences to men found guilty of committing gender-based violence, citing good behavior during the trial or "unjustifiable provocation" by women as an extenuating circumstance of the

<sup>247</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 22), 25 April 2023

<sup>248</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (para 96-98), 15 June 2023

<sup>249</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (para 234-236), 15 June 2023

<sup>250</sup> Anadolu Agency, [Minister of Interior Yerlikaya...](#), 10 July 2024

<sup>251</sup> Anadolu Agency, [Minister of Interior Yerlikaya...](#), 10 July 2024

<sup>252</sup> UN CAT, [Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report](#) (paragraph 32), 14 August 2024

<sup>253</sup> UN HRC, [Concluding observations Türkiye](#), (Paragraph 20 (d)) 28 November 2024

<sup>254</sup> UN HRC, [Concluding observations Türkiye](#), (Paragraph 20 (d )) 28 November 2024

crime. The criminal code allowed defendants to receive a reduced sentence if the offense was committed “in a state of anger or severe distress caused by an unjust act.”... The criminal code prescribed life imprisonment for killings perpetrated with the motive of “custom,” but NGOs reported courts often reduced actual sentences due to mitigating factors, including “unjustifiable provocation.”<sup>255</sup>

11.4.3 The same report noted ‘In October [2023] an Istanbul court sentenced the parents of a victim of forced marriage, age six, along with the person to whom the child was married, to a total of 66 years in prison for the forced “religious marriage” of a child.’<sup>256</sup>

11.4.4 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023 noted: ‘When intimate partner sexual abuse is reported, it is often less likely to result in prosecutions and convictions than assault by a stranger.’<sup>257</sup>

11.4.5 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023 further stated that, ‘... the ineffective prosecution of perpetrators also discourages reporting and only seeks to embolden the culprits....When courts convict perpetrators of domestic violence for crimes such as intentional injury, threats and insults, which happens rarely, the penalties are often issued late and are too little to constitute an effective deterrent to prevent further abuse.’<sup>258</sup>

11.4.6 In the state response to the UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023, the Turkish government stated, ‘... reasons such as culture, custom, tradition and honor are not accepted as mitigating factors in any type of crime in the Turkish Penal Code.’<sup>259</sup>

11.4.7 The state response continued:

‘The Law No. 7406 amended the articles of the Turkish Penal Code on 27.05.2022. with this regulation, in order to combat violence against women more effectively and to provide deterrence, the penalties for deliberate killing, intentional injury, threat, torture and torture against women were increased.

‘The Law No. 7406 amended the article on grounds for discretionary mitigation. According to the amendment: the perpetrator's formal attitudes and behaviors aimed at influencing the court at the hearing are not considered as grounds for discretionary reduction. The reasons for the discretionary discount are indicated in the decision with their justifications.’<sup>260</sup>  
See also [Statutory provisions](#).

11.4.8 In June 2024, the Association for Struggle against Sexual Violence (ASASV) published an alternative (shadow) report to the UN Committee against Torture concerning the review of Turkey’s Fifth Periodic Report. ASASV noted:

‘The length of legal proceedings in sexual assault cases is detrimental to the psychology of survivors ... The significance of the Fethiye Case goes beyond its lengthy duration [over 10 years], revealing deep-rooted problems

<sup>255</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>256</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>257</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 14), 25 April 2023

<sup>258</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (paras 78, 81-83), 25 April 2023

<sup>259</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (para 24), 15 June 2023

<sup>260</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (paras 28,29), 15 June 2023

such as the lack of specialized training for judicial officers dealing with sexual violence, social stigma against survivors, and the extensive difficulties in collecting and preserving evidence in sexual assault cases. Since there are no rape crisis centers in Turkey, there is no state-affiliated institution that survivors can consult and ask for evidence to be preserved. These systemic problems deepen the practices of inadequate state mechanisms to address sexual violence and highlight the need for comprehensive legal and social changes.<sup>261</sup>

- 11.4.9 HRW in its submission to the UN HRC in September 2024 noted:  
‘...penalties for men who murder women have risen over the years...’<sup>262</sup>
- 11.4.10 On 29 October 2024, Women Against Violence Europe, a network of 180 member organisations<sup>263</sup>, published an article co-authored by Mor Çatı Women’s Shelter Foundation, which stated: ‘...in cases of femicide, judges not only grant perpetrators mitigating circumstances and unjust provocation discounts but also fail to take into account the systematic violence that the murdered woman experienced prior to her death. Contrary to the legal provisions regarding unfair provocation discounts, these gender-biased practices lead to significant reductions in sentences...’<sup>264</sup>
- 11.4.11 The UN HRC November 2024 report stated: ‘The State party should... Ensure that all cases of violence against women and girls, including so called honour crimes, are promptly and thoroughly investigated and that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence.’<sup>265</sup>
- 11.4.12 The UN HRC November 2024 report stated: ‘The Committee is concerned about... the lack of ... effective investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators.’ and in its recommendations, that the government of Turkey should ‘...increase the number of women judges,[and] prosecutors...’<sup>266</sup>
- 11.4.13 The GGLS 2024 report noted in relation to domestic violence offences:  
‘Factors influencing harsher penalties include the offender’s prior criminal record, the use of weapons during the act, and any retaliatory actions against victims. Furthermore, courts often consider the psychological impact on victims, which can lead to longer sentences in cases where repeated abuse has occurred. Despite these legal provisions, challenges persist in the prosecution of domestic violence cases. Victims frequently face societal stigma or fear of retaliation, which can deter them from reporting incidents. Additionally, inconsistencies in the enforcement of laws and varying interpretations by law enforcement can undermine effective prosecution.  
  
‘While the legal framework provides a foundation for addressing domestic violence in Turkey, ongoing challenges highlight the need for reforms that could enhance the effectiveness of the judicial response.’<sup>267</sup>
- 11.4.14 SCF stated, in a review of events in 2024: ‘rights activists criticized courts handing down reduced sentences to perpetrators of gender-based violence

<sup>261</sup> ASASV, [Alternative \(shadow\) report to the Committee Against Torture...](#) (p8), 5 June 2024

<sup>262</sup> HRW, [Submission to the UN HRC on Türkiye](#) (page 10) September 2024

<sup>263</sup> WAVE, [About WAVE](#), undated

<sup>264</sup> WAVE, [Femicides in Türkiye: The Feminist Struggle Against Systemic Male...](#), October 29, 2024

<sup>265</sup> UN HRC, [Concluding observations Türkiye](#), (Paragraph 20(a)) 28 November 2024

<sup>266</sup> UN HRC, [Concluding observations Türkiye](#), (Paragraph 20 (c )) 28 November 2024

<sup>267</sup> GGLS, [Domestic Violence Protection Measures in Turkey...](#), 30 November 2024

on the grounds that they were “provoked,”... Article 29 of the Turkish Penal Code (TCK) has often been used to reduce sentences for men accused of such crimes on the grounds that the victim provoked the murder with her actions<sup>268</sup>.

11.4.15 The European Parliament resolution of 7 May 2025 stated it ‘...urges the Turkish authorities to improve the legislative framework and its implementation, including by fully applying Protection Law no. 6284, in order to effectively tackle all forms of violence against women and the practice of so-called ‘honour killings’, end the persistent policy of impunity by holding abusers to account...’<sup>269</sup>

11.4.16 The DFAT report 2025 noted

‘In-country sources...said lenient sentences for men who beat, raped or murdered women created a culture of impunity for gender-based violence...Some abusers went to prison but others escaped punishment or received lenient sentences on grounds such as ‘good behaviour’... when women did report abuse, police were often reluctant to file charges and instead encouraged the victim to reconcile with her abuser. However, according to in-country sources, in cases where the woman insisted on making a complaint or received serious physical injury, police did press charges ...’<sup>270</sup>

11.4.17 The same DFAT report, in relation to ‘honour’ killings noted ‘Defence of honour is not considered a mitigating factor by Turkish courts. Individuals convicted of honour killings can be sentenced to life imprisonment but in-country sources said judges often gave lenient sentences in cases of honour killings on the grounds of 30 ‘provocation’ or ‘good behaviour’. In February 2025, a court handed a reduced sentence to a man who killed his daughter-in-law on the grounds he was ‘provoked’.’<sup>271</sup>

11.4.18 The case referred to by DFAT would seem to be the case heard in Turkey’s Supreme Court of Appeals in February 2025 which overturned the aggravated life sentence of a man who murdered a woman he had previously been in a relationship with in 2020, on grounds of provocation<sup>272</sup>.

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## 11.5 Protection and prevention orders

11.5.1 The GGLS 2024 report explained the protection and prevention provisions available:

‘...orders can be classified into two broad categories: temporary restraining orders and long-term protection measures. Temporary restraining orders provide immediate relief, allowing victims to create distance from their abuser, while long-term measures aim to establish ongoing protection. To initiate the process of obtaining a protective order, victims must submit an application to a family court or the relevant authorities. This application typically includes a detailed account of the violence experienced, along with any evidence that supports the claim. The legal framework supports victims

<sup>268</sup> SCF, [Women’s Rights in Turkey: 2024 in Review](#), 9 January 2025

<sup>269</sup> European Parliament, [Resolution 7 May 2025](#), 7 May 2025

<sup>270</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.133 and 3.134), 16 May 2025

<sup>271</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.135), 16 May 2025

<sup>272</sup> SCF, [Turkey’s top court overturns....](#), 5 February 2025



by allowing a swift evaluation of the case, often resulting in a decision being made within a short timeframe, sometimes even on the same day of application.

‘The duration of protective orders can vary considerably. Temporary restraining orders are often granted for an initial period, usually ranging from a few days to several weeks, depending on the case’s specifics. In contrast, long-term protection orders can last for months or years, providing extended security for victims. To secure such orders, victims must demonstrate ongoing threats or risk factors associated with their abuser.’<sup>273</sup>

11.5.2 The HRW 2022 report noted discrepancies in the data on the number of protective and preventive orders issued over the past five years but provided data from The Justice Ministry showing that in 2021, 272,870 individuals received preventive orders and 10,401 received protection orders<sup>274</sup>. HRW noted that Government data does not provide information about implementation.<sup>275</sup>

11.5.3 DFAT noted more than 10,000 protection orders were issued in 2022 under The Law on the Prevention of Violence against Women and the Protection of the Family (2012)<sup>276</sup>. When HRW interviewed police officers for their report of May 2022, one officer estimated that, ‘...while preventive orders are now served in all cases, protective orders (providing a shelter and other proactive protective measures) were only served in about 20 percent of cases.’<sup>277</sup>

11.5.4 The same HRW report noted:

‘This report reviews 18 cases of domestic violence during the period 2019 to 2022, with one case from 2017, in which women lodged complaints with the police and prosecutors concerning violence by current or former spouses and partners...For those who are subject to criminal prosecution and conviction, it often comes late and the penalties are too little to constitute an effective deterrent. In the most severe cases, six examples of which are included in the report, women have been murdered even though the risk they faced was known to the authorities and perpetrators had been formally served with preventive orders.’<sup>278</sup>

11.5.5 HRW further stated:

‘All [police] officers [interviewed] mentioned cases of women in their district for whom there was a protective order including “protection on call,” meaning that immediate police protection would be made available should they contact the police.... [Police] Officers said they telephone victims weekly and sometimes visit the neighborhood to make sure perpetrators are not violating orders by approaching the victim, but they also said women are now often ready to call to report that the perpetrator had turned up at the door.’<sup>279</sup>

11.5.6 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023 stated, ‘There are discrepancies in the data on the number of protective and preventive orders

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<sup>273</sup> GGLS, [Domestic Violence Protection Measures in Turkey](#)..., 30 November 2024

<sup>274</sup> HRW, [Combating Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.III), 26 May 2022

<sup>275</sup> HRW, [Combating Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.III), 26 May 2022

<sup>276</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.132), 16 May 2025

<sup>277</sup> HRW, [Combating Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.III), 26 May 2022

<sup>278</sup> HRW, [Combating Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Summary), 26 May 2022

<sup>279</sup> HRW, [Combating Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.III), 26 May 2022



issued over the past five years but the available data shows that the number of orders being issued is increasing.<sup>280</sup>

11.5.7 The same UN HRC report stated:

‘Courts often issue preventive orders for short periods, in some cases just weeks or a month, irrespective of the persistent risk and threat of violence...

‘In December 2019 the Ministry of Justice issued a circular outlining steps to overcome problems during the implementation of preventive and protective orders, which includes the introduction of specialist prosecutors to deal with domestic violence and violence against women; and provides detailed guidance on: applying protective orders, dealing with the police; referral to social services and SONIMs [Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres]; among others...

‘While there are provisions in law to address femicide, data shows a lack of effective enforcement of protective and preventive orders. ... in around 8.5 percent of cases of women killed between 2016 and 2021, the woman had been granted an ongoing protective or preventive order at the time of her death.<sup>281</sup>

11.5.8 In the state response to the UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023, the Turkish government stated:

‘According to the Law no 6284 Article 8: The cautionary decision is taken either upon a request of the relevant person or law enforcement officers or public prosecutor. The cautionary decisions may be requested from the judge, administrative chief or law enforcement unit, whichever is in the nearest and easiest location.

‘No evidence or report proving the violence is required in order to take cautionary decision. The preventive cautionary decision is taken without delay. This decision cannot be delayed as to endanger the realization of the aim of this Law.

‘The cautionary decision is pronounced or notified to the protected person and perpetrator of violence. Regarding to the refusal of the request for a cautionary decision, only the protected person is notified. In cases where the delay is considered to be risky, the perpetrator of violence is immediately notified with an official report on the cautionary decision taken by the related law enforcement unit.<sup>282</sup>

11.5.9 In the state response to the UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023, the Turkish government outlined the law on protection orders and measures that can be applied to the perpetrator such as moving out of a shared house, not to approach the victim or their friends/family, schools or workplaces. The government stated : ‘The orders can be easily available 24/7 and enforced to protect the well-being and safety of those under their protection, including children.<sup>283</sup> For further details of the provisions and criteria, see the full report.

11.5.10 HRW in its submission to the UN HRC in September 2024 noted:

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<sup>280</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (paras 67,68), 25 April 2023

<sup>281</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (paras 81-83), 25 April 2023

<sup>282</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (p 28), 15 June 2023

<sup>283</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (paragraphs 241-246), 15 June 2023

‘Human Rights Watch’s research demonstrates the failures of implementation of measures in Law 6284 to protect women and girls from violence. [It] shows that while police and courts are issuing preventive and protective cautionary orders, failure to ensure they are observed leaves dangerous protection gaps for women if not rendering them meaningless. Courts often issue cautionary orders for far too brief periods, and the authorities fail to undertake effective risk assessments or monitor the effectiveness of the orders, leaving survivors of domestic violence at risk of ongoing – and at times deadly – abuse. Some perpetrators breach the terms of preventive cautionary orders without penalty...

‘In 2021, 38 of the 307 women killed were under protection [orders], the highest number over the previous five-year period for which figures are recorded. There has been no official announcement of the numbers in subsequent years.’<sup>284</sup> The submission was published in September 2024 however it repeats information contained in its May 2022 report, based on research from 2019-2022 and one case from 2017 (see the [HRW May 2022 report](#), paragraph 19).

- 11.5.11 The USSD 2023 Country Report further reported that, ‘Courts regularly issued restraining orders to protect survivors, but human rights organizations reported police rarely enforced them effectively.’<sup>285</sup>
- 11.5.12 The UN HRC November 2024 report stated ‘The Committee is concerned about... the lack of effective prevention, protection measures...’<sup>286</sup>
- 11.5.13 The UN CAT report 2024 noted ‘The Committee is concerned about allegations that preventive and protective cautionary orders are not granted for sufficient periods of time...’<sup>287</sup>
- 11.5.14 The MFA Netherlands report 2025 noted: ‘Mor Çatı [NGO]...reported on situations in which aggressive men had repeatedly and with impunity violated a restraining order. The same women’s rights organisation observed that the duration of a restraining order was short, ranging from 24 hours up to a maximum of 6 months. As a result, women were constantly having to reapply for a restraining order. Mor Çatı also reported that the authorities had intervened appropriately in some cases.’<sup>288</sup>
- 11.5.15 The DFAT report 2025 noted ‘In-country sources and international observers have criticised these [protection] orders as ineffective and weakly enforced. In-country sources pointed out many victims of femicide in recent years were killed despite having active protection orders against their murderers.’<sup>289</sup>
- 11.5.16 For further detail on the processes for obtaining and issuing a prevention or protection order, see [HRW report, Chapter 3](#) and GGLS [Domestic Violence Protection Measures in Turkey: A Comprehensive Guide](#) (Protective Orders: Legal Safeguards for Victims). For more information on law 6284 see [Statutory provisions](#)

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<sup>284</sup> HRW, [Submission to the UN HRC on Türkiye](#) (page 10) September 2024

<sup>285</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>286</sup> UN HRC, [Concluding observations Türkiye](#), (Paragraph 19.) 28 November 2024

<sup>287</sup> UN CAT, [Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report](#) (paragraph 32), 14 August 2024

<sup>288</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.3), 25 February 2025

<sup>289</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.132), 16 May 2025

## 11.6 Violence Monitoring and Prevention Centres (VMPCs or SONİM)

- 11.6.1 In the report of May 2022, HRW described Violence Monitoring and Prevention Centres (VMPCs) as providing, ‘...a one-stop shop aimed at providing victims of domestic violence with coordinated assistance from social services, the health system, and the justice system.’<sup>290</sup>
- 11.6.2 In the same report, HRW reported that they had interviewed lawyers and civil rights groups working on domestic violence who had said that, ‘... the ...Centers’ effectiveness was hampered by lack of coordination, the absence of a holistic approach, and lack of resources.’<sup>291</sup> However, the report did not explain in what way or to what extent effectiveness was hampered.
- 11.6.3 The UN Special Rapporteur’s report 2023 stated: ‘Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers (ŞÖNİMs) are in service in all 81 Provinces. These Centers do not operate on a 24/7 basis, and they also lack adequate human and financial resources, including translation capacity. Women’s counselling centers are also deficient nationwide, as are outreach services to the most vulnerable groups ... [including] women from ethnic minorities and women and girls in remote areas.’<sup>292</sup>
- 11.6.4 The state response to the UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023 stated: ‘...a contact point for combating violence was established in each 397 Social Service Centres throughout the country... In 2022, a total of 298,178 people, including 256,507 women, 25,441 men and 16,230 children, received service from VPMCs.’<sup>293</sup>
- 11.6.5 The UN Human Rights Committee, in its Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Türkiye, published 28 November 2024 (The UN HRC November 2024 report) noted: ‘The Committee welcomes the... adoption of Circular No. 2023/16 of 25 November 2023, which established the Coordination Board for Combating Violence against Women and expanded the capacity of violence prevention and monitoring centres...’<sup>294</sup>
- 11.6.6 The DFAT report 2025 noted ‘Türkiye’s Government operates Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centres (SONİM) in all 81 provinces, offering health, legal and psychosocial support for victims of gender-based violence.’<sup>295</sup>

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## 11.7 State-funded shelters and support

- 11.7.1 The UN Special Rapporteur’s report 2023 stated:
- ‘Service providers and other interlocutors ...all pointed to the dire shortage of adequate shelters across the country offering a safe house for women and girls who have been victims of violence, particularly within ... Kurdish communities, and in rural and remote areas.
- ‘Municipal Law No. 5393 requires that every municipality with a population over 100,000 establish a guesthouse/shelter. Currently there are 149

<sup>290</sup> HRW, [Combatting Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.I), 26 May 2022

<sup>291</sup> HRW, [Combatting Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.III), 26 May 2022

<sup>292</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (paras 72-74), 25 April 2023

<sup>293</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (paragraphs 33-36), 15 June 2023

<sup>294</sup> UN HRC, [Concluding observations Türkiye](#), (Section B.) 28 November 2024

<sup>295</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.138), 16 May 2025

shelters operating with a total capacity of 3624 which is insufficient to cover the needs. There are only 33 women shelters which belong to a municipality, and several municipalities have not yet opened shelters... According to Government figures as of 2023, women's shelters across the country are operating at an 80 per cent occupancy rate.

'The limited support provided to those shelters that are in place, as well as a lack of coordinated, gender-friendly and comprehensive essential services for the survivors of violence is of considerable concern. The lack of safe refuge, as well as awareness of their rights in such cases only seeks to contribute to the high level of impunity of perpetrators.'<sup>296</sup>

- 11.7.2 The AIDA Turkey 2023 update report noted that, according to data shared by the Ministry of Family and Social Services:

'In 2023, in total there are 149 women's shelters with a capacity of 3,650; 112 shelters affiliated with the Ministry in 81 provinces provided services with a capacity of 2,805; 33 women's shelters affiliated with municipalities in 13 provinces with a capacity of 735;... and 3 women's shelters affiliated with PMM [Provincial Directorate for Migration Management] with a capacity of 90. The number of existing women's shelters, managed by the municipalities and their capacities are not sufficient.'<sup>297</sup>

- 11.7.3 The report continued:

'...although the law clearly provides that both women at risk of violence and women who have actually been subjected to violence should be able to access shelters, in practice due to capacity problems only women who have actually been subjected to violence are offered access to existing shelters. In most cases, shelters also inquire into the women's claim to ascertain that violence is "certain" and request evidence such as an assault report or a criminal investigation, although practice is not uniform across the country. In South-Eastern Anatolia, the need for women's shelters is very high. Due to capacity problems, some shelters give priority to women with an assault report or a criminal investigation... As a rule, women placed in shelters can stay in the facility for up to six months. Even if they are lucky enough to find a place in a women's shelter, they generally return to the house where they experienced violence at the end of six months...'<sup>298</sup>

- 11.7.4 The state response to the UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 described services provided by shelters. In addition to shelter, they provided psycho-social, legal, medical, economic, vocational and educational support. Services for children included assessment by child development specialists and/ or teachers after arrival and the preparation of intervention plans for education, social activities, counselling, and language, music and craft activities and daycare. The same report noted 'However, in some provinces [the plans]... cannot [be] prepared owing to lack of personnel in women's shelters.'<sup>299</sup> The source did not specify which provinces this applied to. For more details see the full report.

- 11.7.5 The same state response noted once women with children leave the shelter,

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<sup>296</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (paras 72-74), 25 April 2023

<sup>297</sup> AIDA, ECRE, [Türkiye, 2023-Update](#) (p104), 2 August 2024

<sup>298</sup> AIDA, ECRE, [Türkiye, 2023-Update](#) (p191), 2 August 2024

<sup>299</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (paragraphs 307 and 308), 15 June 2023

they could receive further economic support<sup>300</sup>. For further details, see the full report.

11.7.6 The USSD 2023 Country Report noted that

‘The law required police and local authorities to grant various levels of protection and support services to survivors of violence or those at risk of violence... The government did not effectively or fully enforce these laws.... Women’s rights advocates asserted there were not enough shelters to meet the demand for assistance and shelter staff did not provide adequate care and services, particularly in the southeast of the country’ and that the lack of shelter services was more acute for women with older children and elderly women.<sup>301</sup>

11.7.7 The EC Turkey 2023 Report stated ‘...the quality of available [state] support services is low.’<sup>302</sup>

11.7.8 The UN CAT report 2024 noted: ‘The Committee is concerned about allegations... that the provision of shelter accommodation is discriminatory towards older women and women with teenage sons or children with disabilities.’<sup>303</sup>

11.7.9 The UN HRC November 2024 report stated, in its recommendations that the government of Turkey should: ‘Ensure that victims receive, without discrimination of any kind, the necessary legal, medical, financial and psychological support and have access to adequate remedies and means of effective protection, including access to shelters for themselves and their children.’<sup>304</sup>

11.7.10 The GGLS 2024 report noted

‘...victims of domestic violence can access a variety of support services designed to help them regain control over their lives and ensure their safety. These resources include shelters, hotlines, and counseling services, which play a crucial role in the recovery process...

‘One of the primary resources available to victims is the network of shelters established across the country. These shelters provide not only a safe haven but also essential support services, including legal advice, psychological counseling, and assistance in finding long-term housing solutions. They are staffed with trained professionals who can help survivors navigate the complexities of their situation and can often facilitate access to medical care and social services.’<sup>305</sup>

11.7.11 The OCHCR Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions published on 22 January 2025, noted ‘[The Turkey Human Rights Litigation Support Project and the London Legal Group]...recommended that Türkiye increase the number and capacity of shelters, improve shelter conditions, and ensure a 7/24 available hotline service that specifically supported combating violence against women.’<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (page 37 and page 38), 15 June 2023

<sup>301</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>302</sup> EC, [Türkiye 2023 Report](#), November 2023

<sup>303</sup> UN CAT, [Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report](#) (paragraph 32), 14 August 2024

<sup>304</sup> UN HRC, [Concluding observations Türkiye](#), (Paragraph 20(b)) 28 November 2024

<sup>305</sup> GGLS, [Domestic Violence Protection Measures in Turkey](#)..., 30 November 2024

<sup>306</sup> OCHCR, [Summary of Stakeholders’ submissions](#), (paragraph 121) 22 January 2025



- 11.7.12 The Freedom House report 2025 covering events of 2024 noted ‘Police are reluctant to intervene in domestic disputes’<sup>307</sup> but did not provide further detail.
- 11.7.13 The MFA Netherlands report 2025 noted during its previous reporting period (March 2022 to August 2023) Turkey had a total of 149 shelters for women however ‘According to one source, these numbers may no longer have been accurate, as the Turkish authorities had closed some shelters either temporarily or permanently.’<sup>308</sup>
- 11.7.14 The same MFA Netherlands report noted
- ‘As indicated in the preceding COI Report, there were too few shelters for women in Türkiye, and the services of most shelters were deficient in several areas.
- ‘This situation persisted during the reporting period. For example, Mor Çatı observed that there were long waiting times at shelters run by the authorities. There were also instances in which government shelters were full or staff discouraged women or turned away. Furthermore, the freedom of movement of women in government shelters was severely restricted, and they were not allowed to leave the shelter except for shopping, job applications and work. When staying in government shelters, women were under camera surveillance, were not allowed to use mobile phones and were searched. In addition, these shelters tended to lack recreational activities and specialised staff.’<sup>309</sup>
- 11.7.15 The DFAT report 2025 noted
- ‘According to local media and NGO reporting, there are 145 women’s shelters across Türkiye, with the ability to accommodate around 3,500 women. Most are run by the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services. In-country sources described the number of places in these shelters as adequate but said living conditions in them were “very bad”. A number of well-run shelters in the southeast were reportedly closed following the takeover of their municipalities by government-appointed trustees (see Political Opinion), reducing the options for women in that region to leave abusive relationships.’<sup>310</sup>
- For specific information on trafficking shelters see the [UN HRC Special Rapporteur’s report 2023](#) and the [AIDA Turkey 2023](#) report.

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## 11.8 Access to justice and protection

- 11.8.1 The WEF Global Gender Gap 2024 report noted equal rights to access to justice for women<sup>311</sup>.
- 11.8.2 The WPS Index 2023 noted the extent to which women had access to justice, in relation to bringing cases before the courts without risk to their personal safety, participating in a free trial, and seeking redress if public authorities violated their rights on a scale of 0-4 (0 being the lowest). Turkey

<sup>307</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025 Country report](#), 2025

<sup>308</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.5), 25 February 2025

<sup>309</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.5), 25 February 2025

<sup>310</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.137), 16 May 2025

<sup>311</sup> WEF, [Global Gender Gap 2024](#), (Türkiye), June 2024



scored 1.867 in 2022<sup>312</sup>.

11.8.3 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023, in relation to access to justice stated:

'...women with psychosocial disabilities faced significant obstacles to obtaining access to justice. The prevalent practice of restricting the exercise of legal capacity makes it impossible for such women to initiate or participate in legal proceedings on their own behalf, and public officials, because of their prejudices, tend to doubt the credibility of their testimonies.

'... considerable efforts have been made to introduce various mechanisms and policies to protect victims of violence, including through the establishment of Judicial Support and Victim Services' Directorates (ADMs), which are currently in place in 99 courthouses across the country; the implementation of hospital-based Child Monitoring Centers (ÇİM), primarily for victims of sexual or other violence; as well as an increase in the numbers of well-equipped child-friendly interview rooms in courthouses.

'While the afore-mentioned developments are indeed positive, the Special Rapporteur is concerned that many women who she interacted with are unaware of their rights to access justice or are otherwise discouraged to report abuse based on the interactions they have with the law enforcement officers. ...The limited scope of legal aid, both economically and substantively, resulting in non-eligibility for legal aid of women earning the minimum wage, the cumbersome procedure to prove eligibility, and language barriers faced by women seeking justice, including Turkish women of different ethnic backgrounds, and women who are refugees, migrant or under temporary protection or no regular status is of considerable concern.'<sup>313</sup>

11.8.4 The USSD 2023 report stated:

'The government operated a nationwide domestic violence hotline and a web application...that provided women with a means to report domestic violence. NGOs asserted the quality of services provided in response to calls was inadequate for survivors of domestic violence and that women were at times directed to mediation centers or told to reconcile with their husbands... Women's associations ... stated government counselors and police sometimes encouraged women to remain in abusive marriages at their own personal risk rather than break up families.'<sup>314</sup>

11.8.5 According to the Turkish government the Regulation on the Implementation of Law No. 6284 does not allow for reconciliation or mediation to be offered to the victim and perpetrator '...at the stage of taking and implementing protective or preventive measures.'<sup>315</sup>

11.8.6 Sources noted the development of KADES, a mobile phone application (app) which has speeded up women's access to emergency help. The app can be downloaded to report violence or breaches of preventive orders<sup>316 317</sup>.

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<sup>312</sup> GIWPS, [The WPS Index 2023](#) (page 84 and 87), 2023

<sup>313</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (paras 77,78), 25 April 2023

<sup>314</sup> USSD, [2023 Country Report](#) (section 6), 22 April 2024

<sup>315</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (para 199), 15 June 2023

<sup>316</sup> HRW, [Combating Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.III), 26 May 2022

<sup>317</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 76), 25 April 2023

Originally published in Turkish and translated using free online translation tools, the Ministry of Interior stated in July 2024 that since its launch (in May 2018<sup>318</sup>) over 6 million people have downloaded it and over 1 million reports have been made via the app<sup>319</sup>.

- 11.8.7 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 noted that, 'Whilst the introduction of a general social support helpline 24/7 (Alo 183) is a step in the right direction, there are concerns that it is not specialized and not offered in all relevant languages. In addition, there is no specialized hotline that provides services for victims of sexual violence.'<sup>320</sup>
- 11.8.8 In the state response of June 2023 to the UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023, in relation to the 183 helpline the Turkish government stated:  
"183 Social Support Line" ...works as a psychological, legal and economic advisory hotline for women and children who are at risk of violence and who need support and assistance; they are provided with information about their rights and where to apply. It is also taken as a precautionary measure for negligence, abuse and violence or for the prevention of honour killings; considering the urgency of the situation, the emergency response team responsible for the incident and/or the law enforcement officials are informed to intervene. This hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is free. The hotline is service in Arabic and Kurdish...'<sup>321</sup>
- 11.8.9 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 noted that '... in many cases of killings committed by former or current intimate partners, the victims had previously reported acts of violence to the police but had not been provided with adequate and effective protection.'<sup>322</sup>
- 11.8.10 The same report noted, 'The view that violence against women is a private matter remains prevalent among law enforcement officers, leading to interventions being delayed, signs of domestic violence being ignored, and claims being dismissed. Victims are often discouraged from reporting offences and investigations into reports of violence against women are often less than diligent.'<sup>323</sup>
- 11.8.11 The same UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 noted that '... considerable gaps remain with respect to both the scope and implementation of laws relating to the rights of women and girls, and as such continue to pose significant challenges particularly at the local level and in remote areas.  
'...[the] implementation [of Law No. 6284] is limited owing to its incomplete "operationalization". There is a lack of proper coordination between the police, the judiciary, social services, the health-care system and other relevant actors.'<sup>324</sup>
- 11.8.12 In the Türkiye 2023 Report, published in November 2023, the European Commission suggested that Turkey should '...improve the legislative framework and its implementation, in order to effectively tackle all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, psychological and

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<sup>318</sup> Daily News, [Turkey launches mobile app...](#), 17 May 2018

<sup>319</sup> Anadolu Agency, [Minister of Interior Yerlikaya...](#), 10 July 2024

<sup>320</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 75), 25 April 2023

<sup>321</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (para 192, 193), 15 June 2023

<sup>322</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 10), 25 April 2023

<sup>323</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 84), 25 April 2023

<sup>324</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 50), 25 April 2023

physical abuse, sexual harassment, rape, so-called “honour” crimes, stalking and forced marriage...<sup>325</sup>

- 11.8.13 Amnesty International’s submission to the UN HRC, published 16 September 2024 noted discrimination and stereotypes ‘...impact the responses of police and judicial officials to women who try to access protection and justice, further entrenching impunity for these crimes’<sup>326</sup>
- 11.8.14 The UN CAT 2024 noted ‘The Committee is concerned about allegations that ... complaints of gender-based and domestic violence are frequently dismissed, in particular in rural areas...’<sup>327</sup>
- 11.8.15 The UN HRC November 2024 report, in its recommendations stated that the government of Turkey should ‘Reinforce mechanisms to facilitate and encourage the reporting of cases of violence against women and girls, including by ensuring that all women have access to information about their rights, protection measures and remedies; and avoid the social stigmatization and revictimization of women seeking help.’<sup>328</sup>
- 11.8.16 The same UN HRC report stated: ‘The Committee is concerned that women who are victims of any kind of violence are afraid to lodge complaints, given the passivity of the authorities and the risk of stigmatization and revictimization.’<sup>329</sup>
- 11.8.17 In June 2024, the Association for Struggle against Sexual Violence published an alternative (shadow) report to the UN Committee against Torture concerning the review of Turkey’s Fifth Periodic Report. This report stated, ‘Survivors of sexual violence in Turkey do not have access to the support they need. Even though there are regulations in place such as the Turkish Penal Code, internal directives and national action plans, survivors of sexual violence still face difficulties in accessing justice.’<sup>330</sup> Further information about potential difficulties in obtaining justice in cases of sexual violence can be obtained in the [report](#).
- 11.8.18 IWPR in its report, International Women’s Day 2025 Surviving as a Single Woman in Turkey, published 4 March 2025 noted some of the precautions the women it interviewed took in relation to personal security:
- ‘Living alone as a woman in a conservative country with high rates of violence against women comes with its own risks and struggles, not least feeling pressure to remain constantly vigilant. Many women interviewed by IWPR said that they routinely took a series of measures including pretending they had a man living in their house, coming home early or having someone on the phone if a workman was present. Experts argue that this phenomenon should be viewed not as a personal issue of protection but a public and systemic problem that required the state’s intervention...
- ‘Psychologist Esra Kahraman works for the Time of Woman Foundation, established in 2020 to promote ways of protecting women from violence. She told IWPR that social norms, gaps in legislation and state policies that

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<sup>325</sup> EC, [Türkiye 2023 Report](#) (p 29), November 2023

<sup>326</sup> Amnesty, [Report to the UN HRC](#) (Section 6), 16 September 2024

<sup>327</sup> UN CAT, [Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report](#) (paragraph 32), 14 August 2024

<sup>328</sup> UN HRC, [Concluding observations Türkiye](#), (Paragraph 20 (c )) 28 November 2024

<sup>329</sup> UN HRC, [Concluding observations Türkiye](#), (Paragraph 19) 28 November 2024

<sup>330</sup> ASASV, [Alternative \(shadow\) report to the Committee Against Torture...](#) (p4), 5 June 2024

encouraged impunity all impaired women's sense of security. Turkey's March 2021 withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention had only increased the violence against women, Kahraman continued. "It is harder to obtain injunctions or protection orders in related cases. Impunity policies reflect on many femicide or violence against women cases," she said. She concluded, "If they had felt safe in terms of legal arrangements, women wouldn't need these many precautions."<sup>331</sup>

11.8.19 The Freedom House report 2025 covering events of 2024 noted 'few shelters for victims [of GBV] exist.'<sup>332</sup> but did not provide further detail.

11.8.20 The MFA Netherlands report 2025 noted

'During the preceding reporting period, the implementation and enforcement of the existing legal remedies set out in Protective Law 6284 left much to be desired. This situation persisted into the reporting period. For example, the women's rights organisation Mor Çatı ('Purple Roof') documented several cases of women who had reported violence to the police or the public prosecutor's office but had not been taken seriously. They were discouraged from reporting or referred to women's organisations, even though these organisations had no mandate to act against violence. There were also instances in which police officers or prosecutors treated women in a sexist or misogynist manner. These officers and prosecutors were not held to account for this...

'One source indicated that the police had not standardised their approach to reports from women. As a result, police officers acted as they saw fit, dealing with reports in different ways. Police were more inclined to help women who bore traces of physical violence or who had suffered sexual violence. In contrast, victims of 'invisible' violence (such as online harassment, psychological violence and financial abuse) were taken less seriously, the source said.'<sup>333</sup>

11.8.21 The DFAT report 2025, based on their 'knowledge and discussions with a range of sources in Australia and overseas, and taking into account open-source reports'<sup>334</sup> assessed that 'While state protection mechanisms exist, enforcement is often weak and may provide limited or no protection against a highly motivated abuser.'<sup>335</sup>

11.8.22 See also the state response of June 2023 to the UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023, which provided further information about KADES (WSS)

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## **12. Avenues of redress**

12.1.1 In the report of May 2022, HRW noted:

'...the findings of the European Court of Human Rights in its judgment in *Opuz v. Turkey* [2009<sup>336</sup>], a case concerning the failure of Turkish authorities to protect a mother and daughter from recurring and escalating violence by

<sup>331</sup> IWPR, [Surviving as a Single Woman in Turkey](#), 4 March 2025

<sup>332</sup> Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025 Country report](#), 2025

<sup>333</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.3), 25 February 2025

<sup>334</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (1.4), 16 May 2025

<sup>335</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.140), 16 May 2025

<sup>336</sup> CoE, [The landmark judgment ...](#), 2009

the daughter's husband, culminating in the mother's murder. The Court found that despite receiving repeated complaints and having knowledge of the real and imminent risks the women faced, the authorities had failed to protect them and failed to ensure that perpetrator was held accountable. .... Since then the Court has made similar findings in at least four other similar domestic violence cases against Turkey and the Committee of Ministers has linked the cases together for the purposes of monitoring implementation.'<sup>337</sup>

12.1.2 In the report of May 2022, HRW noted the role of the Constitutional Court:

'When ordinary legal remedies are exhausted, individuals can apply to the Constitutional Court if they claim that the authorities have violated one of their fundamental rights and freedoms enshrined in Turkey's constitution or in the European Convention on Human Rights. Concerning the implementation of [the Protection of the Family and to Combat Violence against Women] Law No. 6284, Turkey's Constitutional Court had at the time of writing published judgments delivered in 27 individual applications.'<sup>338</sup>

12.1.3 In its 'About Us' page the Ombudsman Institution explained its role:

'The main duty of the Institution is to advocate for individuals against the administration, as well as protecting and promoting human rights, and it is considered the "conscience" and "lawyer" of the people in the system that is based on individuals and rights.

'In addition to examining and investigating the complaints, the Institution aims at preventing violations of individuals' rights and violations of justice, as well as preventing violations against individuals who are experiencing a similar situation...

'The complaint ...[can be] lodged with a petition written in Turkish...[to] the Ombudsman Institution...No price is charged due to any reasons for lodging a complaint.'<sup>339</sup>

12.1.4 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 made the following recommendation: 'Expand the activities of the Ombudsman, particularly in relation to receiving complaints from women who have been victims of gender-based violence including rape and sexual violence.'<sup>340</sup>

12.1.5 The Turkish government responded to the recommendation above in June 2023, stating, 'For expand the activities of the Ombudsman, particularly in relation to receiving complaints from women about violence, various collaborative activities are being carried out. For instance, in March 2023, the new institution's experts were informed about the human rights of women and the fight against violence.'<sup>341</sup>

12.1.6 HRW in its submission to the UN HRC in September 2024 noted: '...there needs to be more focus on the failure of the authorities to prevent these murders [of women]. There should be clear processes for investigating and holding to account public authorities in cases where they have not exercised

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<sup>337</sup> HRW, [Combatting Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.I), 26 May 2024

<sup>338</sup> HRW, [Combatting Domestic Violence in Turkey: ...](#) (Ch.III), 26 May 2022

<sup>339</sup> Ombudsman Institution, [About Us](#), no date

<sup>340</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye: Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 89(i)), 25 April 2023

<sup>341</sup> Govt of Turkey, [State report to the HRC](#) (paragraph 260), 15 June 2023



due diligence in preventing and protecting victims of domestic violence.’<sup>342</sup>

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### 13. Non-state assistance

13.1.1 Although written in the context of the earthquakes of February 2023, an article published by UN Women on 5 February 2024 described the assistance available to women suffering from domestic violence, even after crises:

‘As the risk of violence against women increases after crises, UN Women supported national partners to provide uninterrupted and continuous protective and preventive services. This resulted in: Enhanced response capacities and gender knowledge of law enforcement officials, social workers and local lawyers; Refurbished Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers in Hatay and Kahramanmaraş and initiated collaboration with Ministry of Family and Social Services for the reconstruction of damaged women’s shelters; Designed local action plans for service provision in crisis; First of its kind Emergency Coordination Plan for Women Services in Kocaeli as disaster preparedness measure. Women’s access to justice was increased by enhancing their post-earthquake legal literacy in partnership with the Union of Turkish Bar Associations...’<sup>343</sup>

13.1.2 The AIDA Turkey 2023 report noted, aside from state run shelters there was one shelter affiliated with NGOs with a capacity of 20<sup>344</sup> in 2023.

13.1.3 NGOs working to assist and empower women and advocate for women’s rights include the following:

- [Kamer](#): activities include the provision of emergency support for female victims of violence, awareness-raising of women’s rights, and provision of early childhood education.
- [KADIN DAYANIŞMA VAKFI \(Women's Solidarity Foundation\)](#): works to combat violence against women, runs a counselling centre for women in Ankara.
- [KAHDEM \(Women's Legal Support Centre\)](#): provides legal advice on violence against women and family law.
- [KADIN İNSAN HAKLARI YENİ ÇÖZÜMLER DERNEĞİ](#): works to advocate for women’s rights.

13.1.4 The AIDA Turkey 2023 update report noted:

‘Under the collaboration between the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (İBB) and the Istanbul Bar Association, lawyers will be available on specific days of the week at the Municipality’s Women’s Centres to provide legal counseling services to combat violence against women. The İBB, which has been offering a 24/7 Women’s Support Line in multiple languages – Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic and English- will now provide free legal counseling at three of its Women’s Centres—Esenyurt, Gaziosmanpaşa, and Ümraniye— and refer women needing legal representation to the Bar Association’s Legal Aid

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<sup>342</sup> HRW, [Submission to the UN HRC on Türkiye](#) (page 10) September 2024

<sup>343</sup> UN Women, [A year aftermath: UN Women’s response...](#), 5 February 2024

<sup>344</sup> AIDA, ECRE, [Türkiye, 2023-Update](#) (p104), 2 August 2024



Office.<sup>345</sup>

- 13.1.5 The report further noted, 'Initiatives such as the Child Protection Centre run by Türk Kızılay in Altındağ, Ankara offer information to women on early pregnancy, child marriage, sexual harassment, reproductive rights and contraception. Many NGOs have child protection activities.'<sup>346</sup>
- 13.1.6 The report further noted, 'There are also NGOs helping vulnerable groups such as Women's Solidarity Foundation (KADAV) for women in İstanbul, the Foundation for Women's Solidarity in Ankara, Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) and Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation...'<sup>347</sup>
- 13.1.7 The UN HRC Special Rapporteur's report 2023 noted 'One of the country's largest women's rights networks, We Will Stop Femicide (WWSF), has been providing legal support to survivors of domestic violence'<sup>348</sup>
- 13.1.8 WWSF was shut down by the Prosecutor's Office in April 2022<sup>349</sup>. On 13 September 2023, duvaR.English, reported the reversal of that decision: 'The 13th Court of First Instance of İstanbul on Sept. 13 dismissed the lawsuit aimed at shutting down the We Will Stop Femicide Platform on the grounds of alleged "immoral activities" during its fourth hearing...'<sup>350</sup> The MFA Netherlands report noted that 'The women's movement and its allies considered this acquittal a boost in the fight for gender equality'.<sup>351</sup>
- 13.1.9 The MFA Netherlands report 2025 noted the presence of one non-state shelter run by Mor Çatı: '...Mor Çatı stated that it had accommodated 58 people in its own refuge centre by 2023. Thirty of these individuals were victims of physical violence.'<sup>352</sup>

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## 14. Internal relocation

- 14.1.1 The MFA Netherlands report 2025 noted:

'No straightforward answer can be given concerning whether women can settle with relatives elsewhere in the country to escape gender-based violence. As noted by one source, this remained highly situation-dependent...if she escaped to her family as a divorced woman, relatives could regard her as 'sexually available'. In this case, her 'honour' had to be protected, which in turn could lead to all sorts of restrictions. For example, it was common for a divorced woman's family to decide what clothes she should wear, that she should not work and under which circumstances she could leave the house.'<sup>353</sup> This was based on information from one confidential source in February 2024.

- 14.1.2 The DFAT report 2025 noted:

'A woman's ability to relocate to escape an abuser depends on a variety of factors, including her degree of financial independence and whether she has

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<sup>345</sup> AIDA, ECRE, [Turkiye, 2023-Update](#) (p105), 2 August 2024

<sup>346</sup> AIDA, ECRE, [Turkiye, 2023-Update](#) (p192), 2 August 2024

<sup>347</sup> AIDA, ECRE, [Turkiye, 2023-Update](#) (p72), 2 August 2024

<sup>348</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (paras 67,68), 25 April 2023

<sup>349</sup> UN HRC, [Visit to Türkiye; Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#) (para 68), 25 April 2023

<sup>350</sup> duvaR.english, [Turkish court rejects lawsuit...](#), 13 September 2023

<sup>351</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.4), 25 February 2025

<sup>352</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.5), 25 February 2025

<sup>353</sup> MFA Netherlands, [COI report Turkey](#) (7.3), 25 February 2025

a network of family and friends in the new location. While large cities can offer a degree of anonymity, in-country sources said social media had made it easier for abusers to track their victims, making it difficult to escape highly motivated abusers. There have been cases of femicides and honour killings being committed months or even years after the victim relocated and took steps to conceal their whereabouts from their abuser.<sup>354</sup>

See also [Freedom of movement](#), [Single and divorced women and mothers](#), [Protection and prevention orders](#), [State-funded shelters and support](#), [Access to justice and protection](#) and [Non-state assistance](#)

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<sup>354</sup> DFAT, [DFAT report 2025](#) (3.136), 16 May 2025

# Research methodology

The country of origin information (COI) in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual](#), 2024. Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources

Commentary may be provided on source(s) and information to help readers understand the meaning and limits of the COI.

Wherever possible, multiple sourcing is used and the COI compared to ensure that it is accurate and balanced, and provides a comprehensive and up-to-date picture of the issues relevant to this note at the time of publication.

The inclusion of a source is not, however, an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a footnote.

Full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

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# Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) provides a broad outline of the issues relevant to the scope of this note and forms the basis for the [country information](#).

The following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- **Societal attitudes towards women and girls**
  - What are societal attitudes towards women and girls in general?
  - What are societal attitudes towards the role of women and girls – in the home/ in education/ in the workplace/ in positions of leadership?
  - Do attitudes towards women vary in different parts of the country? Or among different ethnic groups?
- **Prevalence of violence against women and girls**
  - How prevalent is VAWG in Turkey?
  - Do rates of VAWG vary in particular areas of the country? Is there a difference between rural/urban areas? Or among particular ethnic groups?
  - What are societal attitudes towards VAWG? (i.e., is it tolerated? Accepted? Disapproved of? Is the victim blamed?)
- **Risk factors for VAWG**
  - Who are the perpetrators of VAWG likely to be? (i.e., family member? spouse? stranger?)
  - Are there particular factors which lead to VAWG? If so, what are these?
  - Are there particular factors which might make a girl/woman more likely to become victims of VAWG? If so, what are these? (e.g., level of education? socio-economic status? arranged marriage? early marriage?)
  - If early and or arranged marriage is a factor, how common is it? Where is it practised, and by whom?
  - What is the situation for Kurdish women?
  - What is the situation for women with disabilities?
- **Shelters**
  - How many shelters are there for female victims of VAWG? How many places do shelters provide? Is this sufficient?
  - Do shelters provide places for children, as well as women? Is there a sufficient number of places for children?
  - Are there shelters in every area of the country?
  - What services do shelters provide?
  - Who funds shelters?
  - Is the funding for shelters sufficient?
- **Rehabilitation**
  - Is there specialist medical/psychological assistance for female survivors of

VAWG in general? Or sexual violence in particular?

- If so, how do women access these services?

- **Practical assistance**

- If a woman leaves a violent situation, would she receive assistance with education/training/help in finding employment? If so, who provides it?
- Would a woman leaving a violent situation receive help in finding/paying for accommodation? If so, who provides the assistance?
- Is there state financial support or any other support for female victims of VAWG?
- Is state childcare available?

- **Societal views**

- Is it seen as acceptable for a single woman to live alone, working and paying rent? If so, would this be the case in every area of the country, or only in parts of it?
- What are societal views of single women?
- What are societal views of divorced women?
- What are societal views of unmarried mothers?

- **Police protection**

- How do the police respond to victims of VAWG?
- What steps do the police take to protect women from VAWG?

- **Judicial system**

- Are victims of VAWG provided with legal aid? Or the services of a lawyer?
- Are victims of VAWG provided with protection by the courts, if needed?
- Does the judicial system give appropriate sentences to perpetrators?
- How is child custody dealt with? Could a single/divorced woman be awarded custody of a child?

- **Internal relocation**

- Could a woman move to a different part of the country to find safety?
- How likely is it that a perpetrator could find a woman who had moved? (e.g., is there a registration system?)
- How would society view a woman who had moved to a different part of the country on her own and away from family?

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# Version control and feedback

## Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **3.0**
- valid from 2 July 2025

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### **Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section**

The information in this section has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

### **Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section**

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## Changes from last version of this note

Updated country information and assessment.

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## Feedback to the Home Office

Our goal is to provide accurate, reliable and up-to-date COI and clear guidance. We welcome feedback on how to improve our products. If you would like to comment on this note, please email the Country Policy and Information Team.

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## Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support them in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

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. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

### **Independent Advisory Group on Country Information**

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration

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Clive House

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London

SW1H 9EX

Email: [chiefinspector@icibi.gov.uk](mailto:chiefinspector@icibi.gov.uk)

Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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