



Kadın Zamani Derneđi  
Komeleya Dema Jinan  
Women's Time Association

# MONITORING REPORT ON THE ACCESS OF KURDISH WOMEN IN ISTANBUL TO VIOLENCE RESPONSE MECHANISMS IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE

2023-2024





Kadın Zamani Derneđi  
Komeleya Dema Jinan  
Women's Time Association

Prepared by  
**Newroz ÜNVERDİ**

Consultant  
**Hunav ALTUN**

*We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the monitoring & reporting process.*

*This report is dedicated to Fatma Altınmakas, who was murdered by her husband  
in Malazgirt district of Muş on July 14, 2020.*

**2023/2024**



This publication was created and maintained with the financial support of the European Union provided under Etkiniz EU Programme. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Women's Time Association and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Method	8
2. Monitoring Findings	10
3. Conclusions	22
4. Recommendations	26

# INTRODUCTION

Discrimination and hate speech, fueled by unequal policies and sexist rhetoric in Türkiye, are among the most pressing issues that rights advocates face today. It is crucial to highlight that the most pervasive form of domination resulting from these policies and discourses is gender inequality and ensuing discrimination. This gender inequality affects all segments of society and represents the greatest barrier to building a free and equal society.

International conventions to which Türkiye is a party outline the elimination of violence and discrimination against women, the promotion of gender equality, and the comprehensive implementation of policies to combat violence against women. In particular, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (*CEDAW*) is integrated into Türkiye's legal framework through its principles and articles.

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (*Istanbul Convention*), from which Türkiye has recently withdrawn, also provided comprehensive and holistic policies to combat violence against women. Law No. 6284 on the Protection of the Family and Prevention of Violence against Women is significant because it reflects the Istanbul Convention within Türkiye's domestic law and remains in force. Türkiye should adhere to the conventions to which it is a party.

Implementers of violence prevention mechanisms, public institutions that operate these mechanisms, and institutional officials should take responsibility in line with these principles. Understanding, adopting, and implementing the necessary regulations as a party to these conventions constitute the most important steps in operating violence prevention mechanisms.

Article 40, paragraph "b" of the General Recommendation No. 35 on Gender-Based Violence against Women, which is a recommendation issued by the CEDAW Committee <sup>(1)</sup>, includes several key measures: Removal from home, protection, restrictive or extraordinary prohibitive decisions against alleged perpetrators of violence, monitoring and imposing adequate sanctions for non-compliance, and emergency risk assessment and protection. Despite these measures, many women in Türkiye have been killed even when protection and restraining orders were in place.

*1- Providing appropriate and accessible protection mechanisms to prevent further or potential violence, without the precondition for victims/survivors to initiate legal actions, including through removal of communication barriers for victims with disabilities. This should include immediate risk assessment and protection, comprising a wide range of effective measures and, where appropriate, the issuance and monitoring of eviction, protection, restraining or emergency barring orders against alleged perpetrators, including adequate sanctions for non-compliance. Protection measures should avoid imposing an undue financial, bureaucratic or personal burden on women victims/survivors. Perpetrators or alleged perpetrators' rights or claims during and after judicial proceedings, including with respect to property, privacy, child custody, access, contact and visitation, should be determined in the light of women's and children's human rights to life and physical, sexual and psychological integrity, and guided by the principle of the best interests of the child.*

Additionally, this article stipulates that there should be no preconditions on women victims/survivors to initiate proceedings and obliges the state to provide appropriate and accessible protection mechanisms to prevent further or potential violence. However, Fatma Altınmakas was forced to return to the scene of violence because her application- made in her mother tongue- was not received, and she was later murdered. <sup>(2)</sup>

The violence count prepared by the We Will Stop Femicide Platform for 2023 states that 28 women were killed despite having protection orders. <sup>(3)</sup> This is an indication that Türkiye is not in compliance with its obligations under international conventions to which it is a party.

The policy of impunity, which has developed as a result of legitimizing sexist discourse and behavior continues, and the lack of effective implementation of protective and preventive measures increases the femicide. Eliminating these problems in practice will only be possible if Türkiye fulfils its obligations as a party to international conventions on the protection of women's rights and gender equality and harmonises its own legislation.

As Women's Time Association, we monitor the accessibility of anti-violence mechanisms for Kurdish women living in Istanbul in their mother tongue. With this report, which we have prepared within the framework of the Human Rights Monitoring Support of the Etkiniz EU Programme, we want to contribute to this issue by making visible the difficulties encountered in this field and the current situation.

In 2020, Fatma Altınmakas was forced to return to the scene of violence in the Malazgirt district of Muş because she could not express the violence she experienced or file a complaint in her mother tongue. Her statement was not taken, and she was subsequently murdered by her husband upon her return. We aim to highlight the rights violations faced by dozens of women like her, who cannot escape violence due to the lack of access to support and service mechanisms in their mother tongue, and to find an urgent solution to this issue.

In our monitoring study on gender equality and combating violence against women, we focused on how aware Kurdish women living in Istanbul are of the relevant legislation and violence prevention mechanisms, whether they can access these mechanisms in their mother tongue, and what obstacles and difficulties they face in using them. Based on the observations from this monitoring, we assessed the extent to which anti-violence mechanisms in practice comply with national and international standards.

Various legal regulations and international documents were referenced in the monitoring study, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), CEDAW Committee General Recommendation No. 35, the Council of Europe Convention on

2- <https://www.birgun.net/haber/oldurulen-fatma-altinmakas-in-sikayeti-kurtce-tercuman-olmadigi-icin-alinamamis-309477>

3- <https://kadincinayetlerinidurduracagiz.net/veriler/3088/2023-yillik-veri-raporu> - :-:text=As long as impunity continues, protective orders are a lifeline for women.

Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (*Istanbul Convention*), Law No. 6284 on the Protection of the Family and Prevention of Violence against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Action Plan, and the European Convention on Human Rights.

In its 35th General Recommendation on Gender-Based Violence against Women, the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (*CEDAW*) provides a comprehensive analysis and detailed recommendations on the underlying causes of violence against women and the measures necessary for its prevention. Our recommendations are based on General Recommendation 35, which asserts that the prevention of violence against women is a norm of international law for states. <sup>(4)</sup>

This study aims to contribute to improving the accessibility of anti-violence mechanisms in Kurdish and other languages, to ensuring that these mechanisms are effectively implemented and meet universal standards, to addressing the multi-faceted discrimination faced by Kurdish women, and to contributing to the broader fight against violence.

We believe that this study will contribute to the fight against violence and intersectional discrimination based on gender inequality. It will inform the development of mechanisms to prevent violence against women and ensure their accessibility in different languages. We reaffirm our hope for the creation of a world free from violence, exploitation and inequality.

4- <https://kadinininsanhaklari.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/CEDAW-General-Recommendation-35-%C3%A7eviri-Nazan-Moro%C4%9Flu.pdf>

# 1. METHOD

This report is based on the information collected via face-to-face and focus group interviews with 75 women in the Bağcılar, Beyoğlu, and Sultanbeyli districts of Istanbul, as well as interviews with representatives from Avcılar Municipality and Beşiktaş Municipality and was conducted between September 2023 and December 2023. Following a consultation with an expert supporting our study in September 2023, we developed a monitoring strategy for the initial phase of the study. This strategy outlined the reasoning for the monitoring study, its primary objectives, the monitoring methodology, and the work schedule.

A desk-review of legislation on combating violence against women was conducted, and relevant reports and studies were examined. The primary reference of this monitoring study is the applications made to the Women's Counseling Center of the Women's Time Association, which was opened in 2021. These applications were examined to identify the districts where the highest number of applications were received and those where Kurdish women reside in Istanbul.

Interview questions for the target group and focus groups were prepared and subsequently reviewed and finalized by incorporating various changes to ensure relevance and effectiveness, in collaboration with the expert in October 2023.

In the monitoring study, data collection methods included face-to-face interviews with women, focus group discussions, and face to face interviews with representatives of Avcılar Municipality and Beşiktaş Municipality. A total of 75 women, with 25 women from each determined district, participated in the face-to-face interviews. Additionally, two focus group discussions were conducted, each involving six women. These focus group sessions allowed for more detailed and in-depth interviews with the participants.

The most significant challenge we faced during the monitoring study was reaching women for face-to-face interviews and their hesitation to express themselves during these interviews. Another challenge was the lack of any response from Kadıköy and Şişli municipalities.

These were two of the four municipalities we contacted to schedule interviews, and their non-responsiveness caused disruptions in our work schedule.

Data analysis was conducted based on the data collected via the face-to-face interviews with seventy-five women. The data and experiences from in-depth interviews with two separate focus groups of six people each, as well as interviews with municipal representatives, were also reviewed. The difficulties and rights violations were identified with the data analysis presented in the report, in comparison with the obligations outlined in Türkiye's national legislation and international conventions.

In compliance with the purpose and scope of Law No. 6698 on the Protection of Personal Data, the private information and names of the women interviewed were not used in the report.

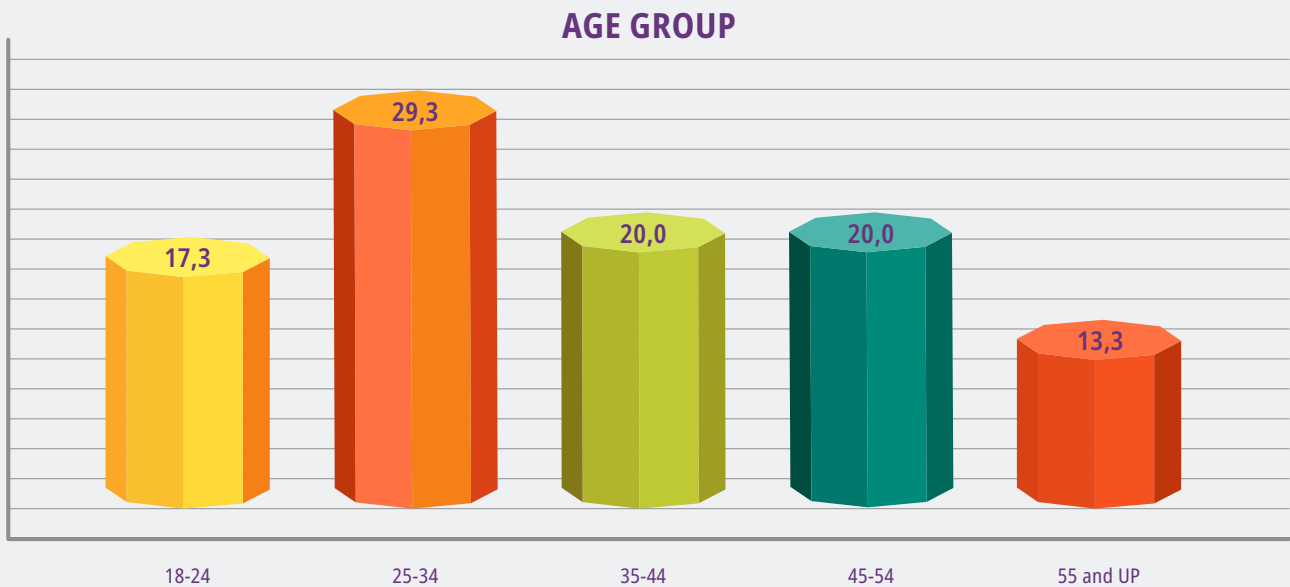


## 2. MONITORING FINDINGS

Within the scope of this monitoring study, data from interviews conducted by the Women's Time Association with women in the Bağcılar, Beyoğlu, and Sultanbeyli districts, as well as interviews with municipalities between October 2023 and December 2023, were analyzed.

Accordingly, data on the following variables were collected and presented in tables: Age group, marital status, definition of violence, whether the applicants have been affected by violence, whether they have applied to any institution after experiencing violence, the source of the violence, awareness of support mechanisms in Kurdish, whether speaking Kurdish would make them feel more comfortable during the application process, the main difficulties faced when speaking Kurdish and suggested solutions for addressing language-related challenges in combating violence:

The majority of the women we interviewed were in the 25-35 age group, followed by those in the 35-44 and 45-54 age groups.



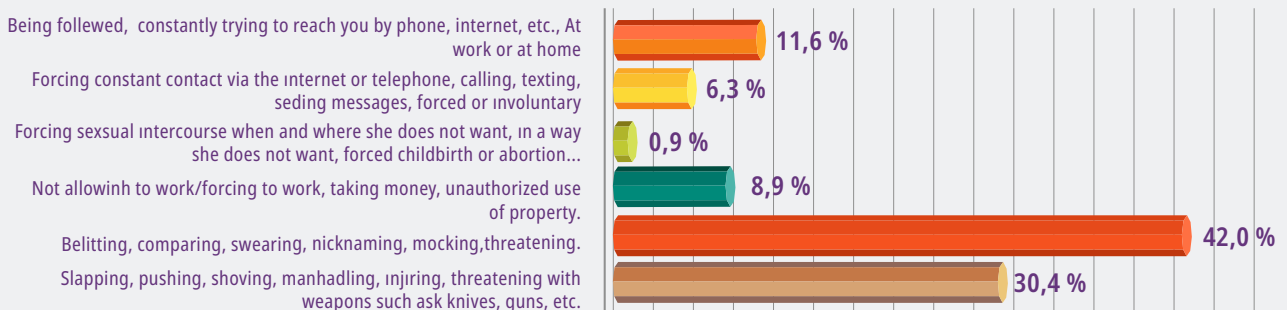
It was found that more than half of the women we interviewed do not have access to paid employment and are engaged in domestic labor. The interviews reveal that women are not equally included in economic life, highlighting inequality in employment.

This indicates that the right to work, which is an inalienable right of all human beings and includes equal opportunities to work with men as stated in Article 11, paragraphs (a) and (b) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), is not being exercised. Consequently, women's participation in economic life and their right to work are being violated. <sup>(5)</sup>

### DO YOU WORK AS A PAID EMPLOYEE?



### HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE SITUATIONS MENTIONED BELOW?

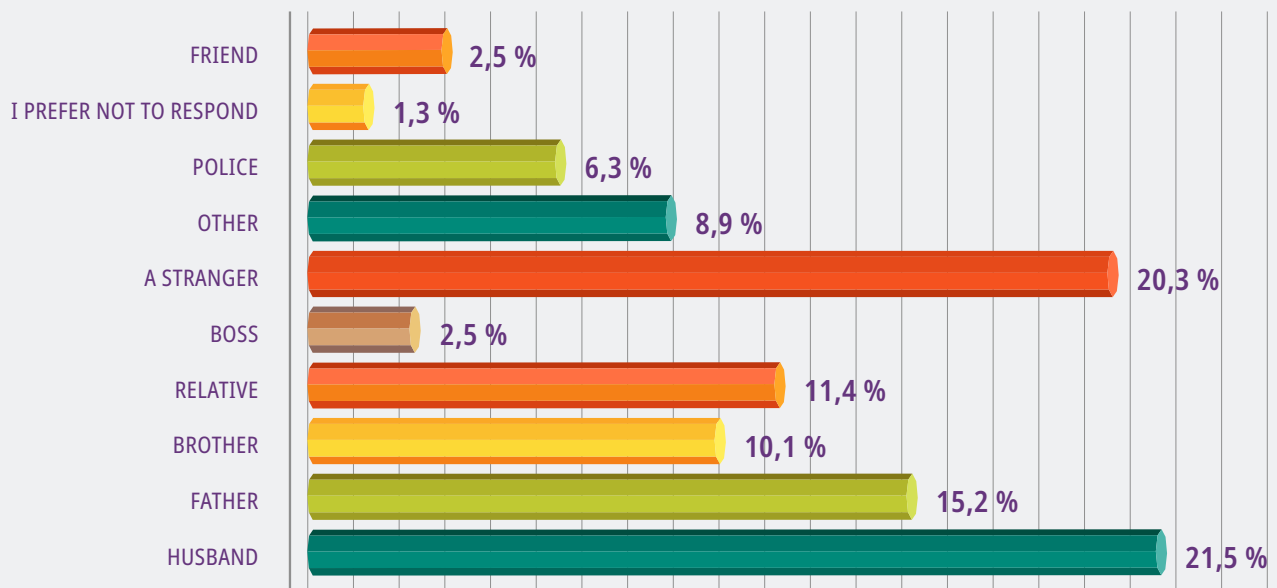


5- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Article 11, paragraphs a and b; the right to work, which is an inalienable right of all human beings, and the right to have equal opportunities in the field of employment, on a basis of equality of men and women.

It is observed that 42% of the women interviewed were affected by psychological violence, 30.4% by physical violence, followed by stalking and economic violence.

Article 1 of General Recommendation No. 19 defines discrimination against women. According to this definition, women who are affected by different forms of violence violate their right to life, right not to be subject to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, right to liberty and security of person. <sup>(6)</sup>

### ( IF YES TO QUESTION 15 ) FROM WHOM DIDYOU EXPERIENCE THIS VIOLENCE?



58.2% of women stated that they experienced violence from their husbands or male family members.

The responses we received from the women highlighted that the home and family, often perceived as **“safe spaces”** for women in society, are actually unsafe and risky.

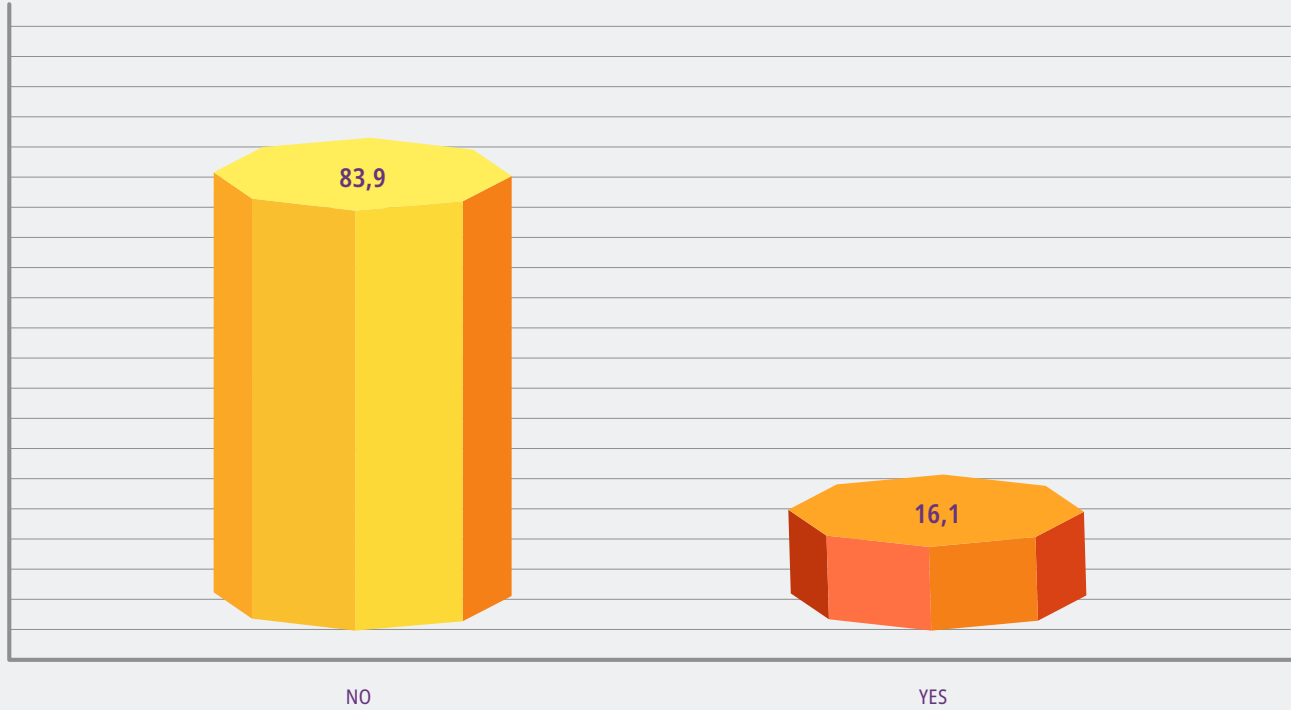
The increase in violence within the family-household cannot be separated from the recent targeting of women’s achievements.

As women’s achievements are undermined, the normalization of violence against women is rapidly spreading both in law enforcement and within families.

*have no or limited knowledge of the official languages of the country, of the legal and social resources available to victims/survivors of gender-based violence against women, including reparation, through diverse and accessible media and community dialogue.*

*6- Article 1 of General Recommendation No. 19 defines discrimination against women. The definition of discrimination includes gender-based violence. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. Gender-based violence, which impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of human rights and fundamental freedoms under general international law or under human rights conventions, is discrimination within the meaning of article 1 of the Convention. These rights and freedoms include: ((a) The right to life; (b) The right not to be subject to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; (c) The right to equal protection according to humanitarian norms in time of*

**( IF YES TO QUESTION 15 ) DID YOU SEEK HELP FROM ANY INSTITUTION AFTER EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE?**



To this question, 83.9% of women answered no.

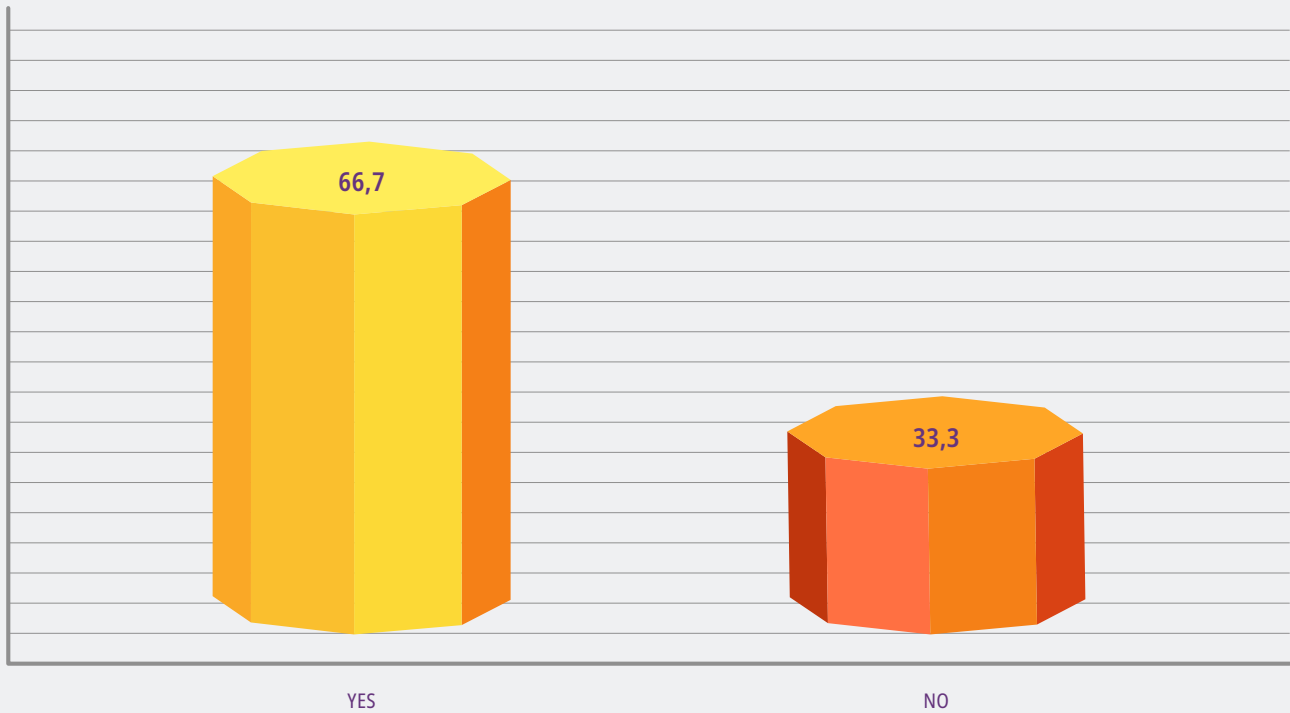
Additionally, when asked why they did not seek help, women responded that they did not apply to any institution because the perpetrator of violence was a family member, because of the increase in the number of women killed in Türkiye despite prevention/protection and restraining orders, <sup>(7)</sup> and because they did not trust the institutions.

Article 24, paragraph (b) of General Recommendation No. 19 <sup>(8)</sup> states that the failure to ensure laws against gender-based violence provide adequate protection for all women, but the lack of gender-sensitive training for judicial and enforcement personnel and public officials, and the failure of institutions to fulfill their responsibilities, leads to women distrusting institutions and not accessing these mechanisms.

7- <https://kadincinayetlerinidurduracagiz.net/veriler/3088/2023-yillik-veri-raporu> - :-:text=As long as impunity continues, protective orders are a lifeline for women.

8- General Recommendation No. 19, Article 24, paragraph b. States Parties should ensure that laws against family violence and abuse, rape, sexual assault and other gender-based violence give adequate protection to all women, and respect their integrity and dignity. Appropriate protective and support services should be provided for victims. Gender-sensitive training of judicial and law enforcement officers and other public officials is essential for the effective implementation of the Convention.

**IF YOU OR SOMEONE CLOSE TO YOU IS AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE, DO YOU KNOW WHICH INSTITUTIONS TO CONTACT? IF SO, FROM WHOM OR WHICH INSTITUTION DID YOU OBTAIN THIS INFORMATION?**

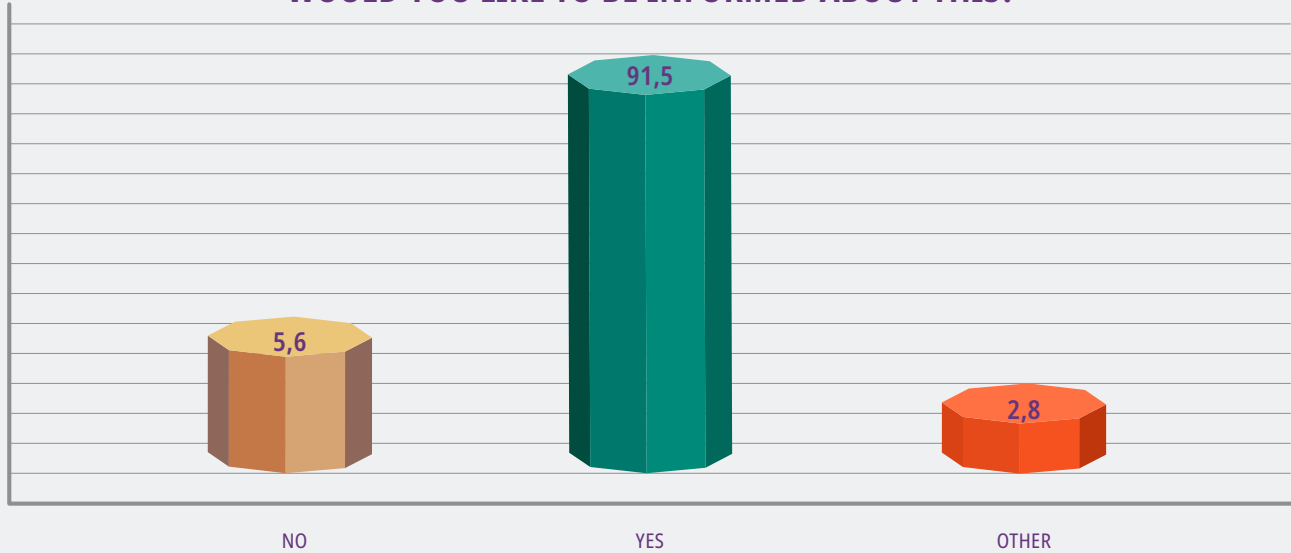


The fact that more than half of the women answered “yes” indicates that they are aware of the institutions to contact when affected by violence.

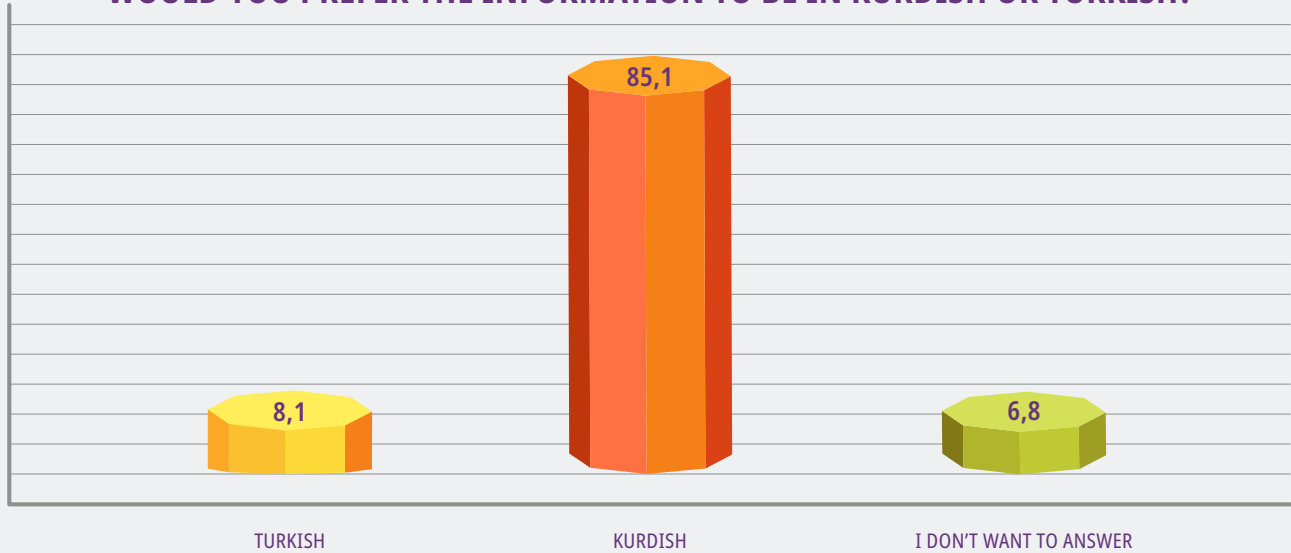
Specifically, 26.2% of the women stated that they obtained this information from women’s associations and social media, 16% from the police, and 12% from political parties, while 45.8% did not respond to this question.

91% of women stated that they would like to receive more information on combating violence.

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE INFORMED ABOUT THIS?



### WOULD YOU PREFER THE INFORMATION TO BE IN KURDISH OR TURKISH?

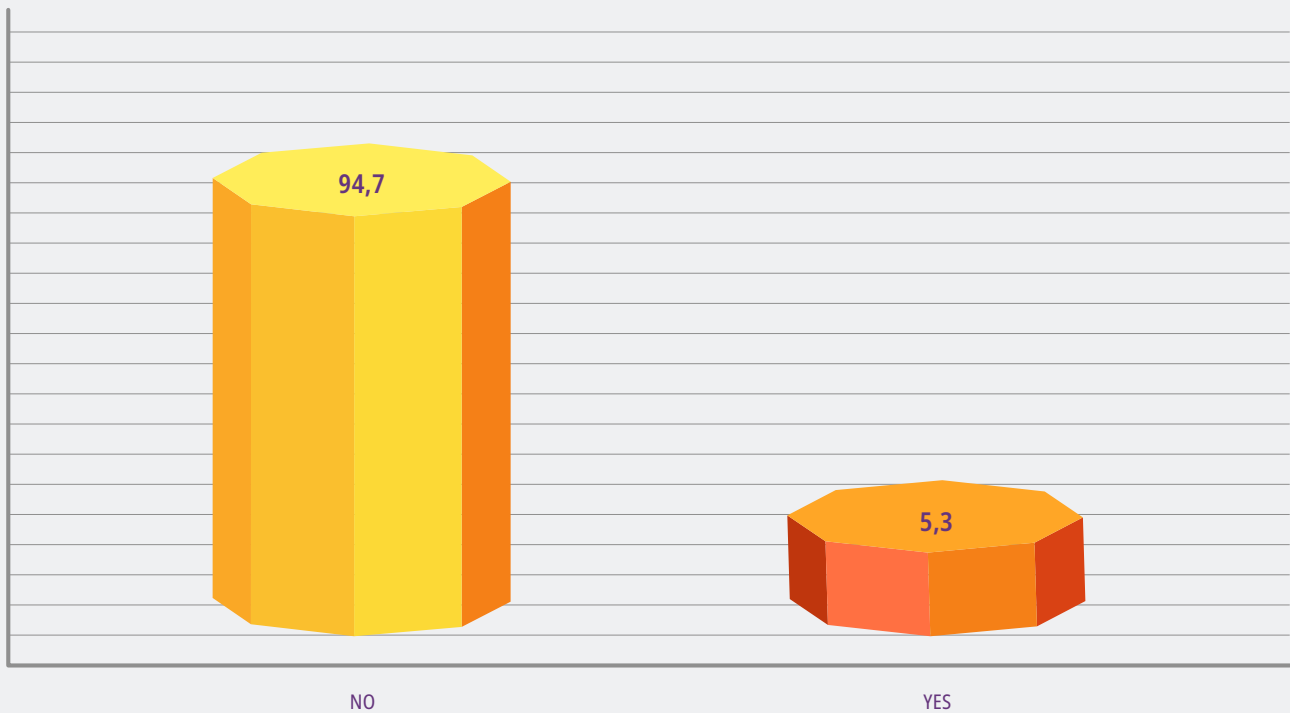


The majority of women prefer that the information they receive to be provided in Kurdish.

94.7% of women, meaning almost all of them, stated that they were not aware of the existence of support mechanisms in Kurdish. They also mentioned facing problems such as being neglected even if they found someone to help them when they spoke Kurdish in official institutions. This indicates that communication in Kurdish is not accommodated in official institutions such as police stations and security bureaus, who receive the first applications. Additionally, it shows that municipalities, who adopts measures for multilingual work in local governance, have failed to expand their efforts in this area.

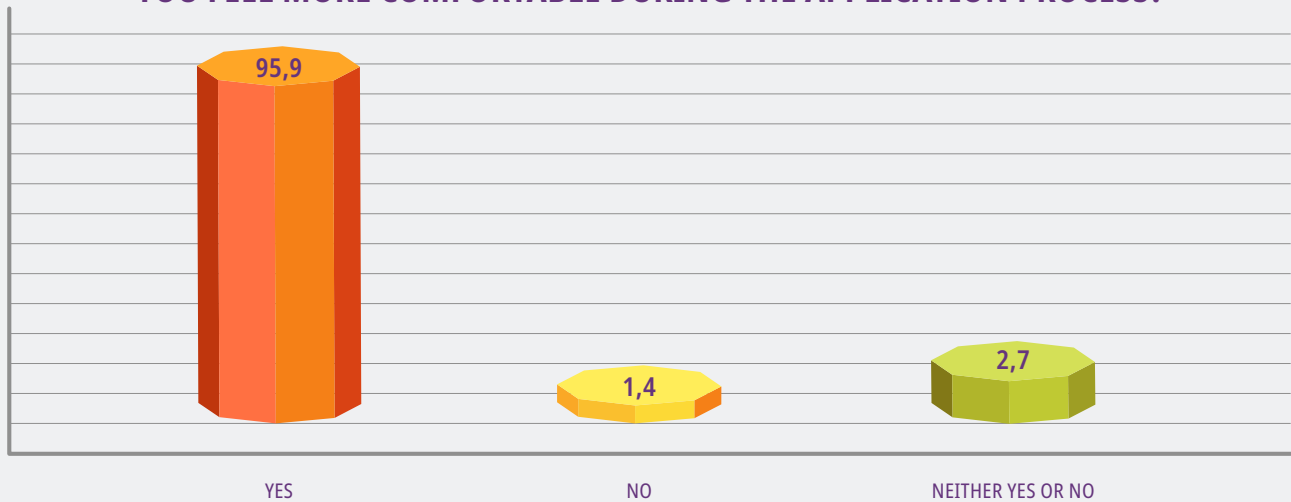
Per Article 43 of General Recommendation No. 35, <sup>(9)</sup> Türkiye has an obligation to create and disseminate accessible information on legal and social resources for women who face intersectional discrimination and do not speak the official language of the country in which they reside. Despite the existence of support mechanisms, the Kurdish women living in İstanbul are not provided with support in Kurdish or with information on the resources available to them in their mother tongue to combat violence.

### ARE YOU AWARE OF THE EXISTENCE OF SUPPORT MECHANISMS AVAILABLE IN THE KURDISH LANGUAGE?



9- Article 43 of General Recommendation 35: Developing and disseminating accessible information aimed at women, in particular those affected by intersecting forms of discrimination such as those who live with a disability, are illiterate, or

### WOULD THE AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION AND SUPPORT SERVICE KURDISH MAKE YOU FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS?



Almost all women stated that having information and support services available in Kurdish would make them feel more comfortable during the application process.

### WHAT IS THE PRIMARY CHALLENGE YOU ENCOUNTER WHEN SPEAKING KURDISH?



Half of the women we interviewed stated that they experienced discrimination when speaking Kurdish in the institutions they applied to. According to Türkiye's national legislation and the obligations under international conventions to which Türkiye is a party, the country should develop and effectively implement policies to eliminate discrimination stemming from violence against women and gender inequality. Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights prohibits discrimination based on language differences. Therefore, the discrimination faced by women in these institutions due to speaking Kurdish constitutes a violation of Article 14 of the ECHR.



When we asked the women we interviewed, “What kind of solutions would you suggest for the difficulties you face when speaking Kurdish in the institutions you apply to when affected by violence?”, their first suggestion was a constitutional solution. The second suggestion was to employ personnel who can provide support in Kurdish and to increase the availability of services in their mother tongue within the mechanisms.

### WHAT SOLUTIONS WOULD YOU SUGGEST FOR THE DIFFICULTIES YOU FACE WHEN SPEAKING KURDISH IN THE INSTITUTIONS YOU CONTACT WHEN AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE? ( YOU CAN CHOOSE MORE THAN ONE )



# MONITORING THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY MUNICIPALITIES

We recognize that local governments and NGOs play a crucial role in preventing violence against women. Within the scope of the study **“Monitoring the Access of Kurdish Women Living in the Bağcılar, Beyoğlu, and Sultanbeyli Districts of Istanbul to Violence Response Mechanisms in Their Mother Tongue in the Context of Local Governments,”** conducted with the support of the ETKİNİZ EU Programme, interviews were held with the Avcılar Municipality Women’s Counseling Center and the Beşiktaş Municipality Women’s Counseling Center. These interviews were carried out after the fieldwork conducted in the three districts of Sultanbeyli, Bağcılar, and Beyoğlu.

The first of the interviews with municipalities, which is one of the data collection steps of our monitoring study, was with the Avcılar Municipality Women’s Counseling Center, the second interview was with the Beşiktaş Municipality Women’s Counseling Center. During these interviews, we informed them about our study, **“Monitoring the Access of Kurdish Women Living in Istanbul to Violence Response Mechanisms in Their Mother Tongue in the Context of Local Governments,”** and explained the necessity of this monitoring study. We discussed their work that intersects with our study and shared the difficulties women face in accessing these mechanisms, as identified through our field interviews. Additionally, we shared our views on the responsibilities of local governments in combating violence against women, addressing gender inequality, and the need for remedial policies to eliminate discrimination.

## Key Questions We Asked:

- How many women’s counseling centers are there in your municipality?
- Are services at the Women’s Counseling Center offered in the mother tongue of the users?
- Do you have neighborhood houses located outside central areas that women can access more easily?
- What measures are you taking to prevent rights violations experienced by women of different ethnic identities when affected by violence?
- Is interpreter support available?
- Are multilingual services provided, considering all ethnic identities living locally?
- Are multilingual services included in both digital and printed materials?

# Visit to Avcılar Municipality Women's Counseling Center

During our interview with the Avcılar Municipality Women's Counseling Center, we were informed that there are Kurdish-speaking staff members at the center who handle applications from Kurdish-speaking women. These staff members stay in contact with the applicants until their processes are completed. However, it was mentioned that there is no interpreter support and that local governments should work more actively to provide such services. The Center noted that Kurdish-speaking applicants primarily come from the Yeşilkent and Tahtakale neighborhoods. They also emphasized their commitment to multilingualism in their printed materials, producing brochures in Kurdish, Turkish, and Arabic.

It was reported that there is a women's counseling center and two women's social life centers affiliated with this counseling center. The women's counseling center conducts preliminary interviews with nearly a thousand women each year. In addition to the counseling services offered, a total of 3,500 women are engaged through activities such as training sessions, excursions, and workshops. The center employs seven staff members, and a psychologist is always present at the social life centers in the neighborhoods.

# Visit to Beşiktaş Municipality Women's Counseling Center

During our interview with the Beşiktaş Municipality Women's Counseling Center, it was stated that the Center not only handles applications related to violence but also conducts empowerment activities. The Center employs a two-tiered approach, which includes empowerment initiatives and collaboration with mukhtars in the neighborhoods. Since its establishment, 370 women have applied to the Center for violence-related issues, and necessary referrals have been made. They stated that women mostly reach the Women's Counseling Center through referrals. Although they have never received Kurdish applications due to the population demographics of the district, they can make referrals if applications in Kurdish are received. They have the capacity to provide support in Turkish and English.

It was also noted that multilingualism is not practiced in their promotional materials, which are printed only in Turkish.

Although we requested meetings with several municipalities, recognizing their significant responsibility in combating violence according to national and international standards, only Beşiktaş Municipality and Avcılar Municipality responded positively to our request. This situation indicates that certain municipalities in Istanbul do not prioritize partnering with organizations working in the field of combating violence against women or conducting inclusive work. Meeting with only two municipalities in Istanbul, which has 39 districts, does not provide a comprehensive view of how all municipalities are addressing violence against women. However, our interviews with women in various neighborhoods indicate that municipalities are lacking in disseminating information about their violence prevention initiatives and increasing their accessibility to women.

## 3. CONCLUSIONS

This monitoring report was prepared to assess the extent to which Kurdish women living in Istanbul have access to mechanisms for combating violence in their mother tongue within their municipalities.

It aims to highlight the difficulties they face in this field and contribute to facilitating easier access to these response mechanisms.

With this objective, the monitoring study examined the obstacles Kurdish women face when accessing anti-violence mechanisms in their mother tongue and the issues they encountered during the application process.

Additionally, the monitoring study sought to determine the extent to which Kurdish women are aware of their existing rights and relevant legal legislation.

In line with the data and observations obtained from the monitoring study, the aim was to highlight the difficulties experienced in accessing violence prevention mechanisms in the mother tongue, raise awareness about how Kurdish women define violence, and make visible the experiences and struggles of women who have been affected by violence.

The study also aimed to promote gender equality in Türkiye and to contribute to the effective implementation of all articles of international conventions to which Türkiye is a party, specifically concerning the mechanisms for combatting violence against women. In this regard, deficiencies were identified, and various recommendations were developed to eliminate rights violations and to support the human rights-oriented design and effective implementation of these mechanisms.

As the Women's Time Association, the following key points have been highlighted through the applications received by our Women's Counseling Center, the data on violence against women that we monitor, and the findings obtained from interviews with women as part of our monitoring study;

- Following Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, there has been an increase in femicides. According to data from the We Will Stop Femicide Platform, 737 women have been murdered and 557 women have been found dead under suspicious circumstances since July 1, 2021.
- Following the withdrawal from the Convention, the difficulties for women living in Türkiye in accessing anti-violence mechanisms have increased. The absence of services and support mechanisms in their mother tongue has created significant obstacles for Kurdish women, in particular, to escape situations of violence.
- The lack of proficiency concerning the legislation and rights-oriented work among officials in authorized institutions has led to a lack of trust in support mechanisms among women.
- Furthermore, women's unequal inclusion in economic life and inequality in accessing employment have led to precarious employment conditions and deepening poverty among women.

Our interviews with Kurdish women, conducted as part of this study, revealed that they face multiple challenges in accessing violence prevention mechanisms in their municipalities. These difficulties can be listed as follows;

-Kurdish women residing in the impoverished neighborhoods of Istanbul are often overlooked concerning their local specificities and are denied their right to receive services in their mother tongue,

- Kurdish women encounter language barriers and face stereotypical cultural norms that obstruct their access to violence prevention mechanisms in their mother tongue,

- Kurdish women are being discriminated for speaking or wanting to speak Kurdish in institutions they apply to for combating violence,

-The municipalities fail to inform local women about the multilingual services offered,

-Kurdish women who were forced to migrate to the poor neighborhoods of Istanbul are unable to participate effectively in social life, while economic opportunities are not created, and equal employment conditions are not provided,

-Preventive and protective activities within the anti-violence mechanisms do not reach women living in poor neighborhoods, leaving them unaware of these mechanisms,

- Because of women's self-confidence issues stemming from gender inequality, they often fail to recognize the violence they experience and lack the perceived power to combat it,
- Violence is frequently perpetrated by those closest to women, complicating their efforts to seek help and combat the abuse,
- The absence of support mechanisms in Kurdish prevents women from comfortably expressing themselves, leading to a lack of trust in official institutions,
- Deepening poverty restricts women's access to transportation and essential services,

Another significant finding from the report is that women are actively seeking to learn more about their rights. Many interviewees emphasized that the most crucial step in escaping violence is the ability to define it and understand their rights. However, they acknowledged that they lacked this awareness and knowledge at the time they were experiencing violence.

The report reveals there are several critical issues including the ineffective implementation of policies and mechanisms to combat violence against women and eliminate discrimination arising from gender inequality in comparison to national and international standards that the state is obliged to uphold.

Additionally, it highlights the lack of trust among Kurdish women living in Istanbul towards anti-violence and support mechanisms, their inadequate access to services and support in their mother tongue, and the increasing poverty among women.

While oppression, sexist discourse, and practices against women are increasing in Türkiye and around the world, we also observe a growing, borderless struggle for women's rights and human rights. We express with great pride the importance and value of standing together and walking side by side in an unprejudiced and equal struggle based on solidarity that transcends borders.

When women's organizations, feminists, civil society organizations, professional chambers, bar associations, trade unions, and all institutions engaged in rights-oriented work support and collaborate with each other, violations and usurpations of rights can be significantly mitigated.

This collaboration will also expand and strengthen the network of struggle. Employment opportunities for women, policies to combat violence against women, and the existence of effective preventive and protective mechanisms are essential in the struggle to build an equal and violence-free life for women.

As the Women's Time Association, we prepared this study to reveal the intersecting discrimination faced by Kurdish women living in Istanbul and the difficulties arising from their double disadvantage.

This report, informed by our extensive activities and monitoring efforts related to women's human rights, underscores the importance of maintaining a rights-oriented approach. It reinforces the need to recognize and showcase the uniqueness of each woman's experience and to persist in our collective struggle for women's rights.



## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Mechanisms should operate based on international conventions, including CEDAW, of which Türkiye is a party. Egalitarian policies should be developed on the basis of these conventions to protect women’s human rights and eliminate discrimination arising from gender inequality.
- According to the Law on Municipalities, metropolitan municipalities and municipalities with populations over 100,000 are obliged to open guesthouses for women and children. Other municipalities should assess their financial situations and service priorities to consider opening guesthouses. These facilities should cater to the specific needs of women.
- The number of women’s counseling centers within municipalities should be increased, providing comprehensive psychosocial and legal support.
- Based on Article 40, paragraph “e” of CEDAW Committee General Recommendation No. 35, municipalities should collaborate fully with women’s civil society organizations to establish and effectively implement multi-sectoral application mechanisms, ensuring comprehensive services for women survivors.
- All competent institutions should effectively implement the preventive measures mandated by Law No. 6284, ensuring that victims of violence are fully informed of their rights and available protections.
- In accordance with Article 43 of CEDAW Committee General Recommendation No. 35, diverse and accessible information on legal and social resources should be provided through various media channels to women affected by multiple or intersectional discrimination.
- Women in shelters should be provided with access to economic resources to sustain their lives post-shelter.
- All services provided by the municipalities should be accessible in the mother tongue of the residents.

- Mechanisms should be established to allow individuals to express themselves and access services in their mother tongue. Personnel handling violence applications should be familiar with relevant legislation and understand the languages spoken by women. Interpreter support should be provided if necessary.
- Anti-violence mechanisms should be inclusive and accessible regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, language, gender identity, religion, marital status, health status, disability, or class.
- Municipalities should organise meetings and disseminate printed and digital materials in Kurdish, especially for Kurdish women who were forced to migrate to poorer neighborhoods of Istanbul, to inform them about combating violence.
- Municipalities should develop local equality action plans and strategic plans with the participation of civil society organizations and women.
- Municipalities should implement gender-sensitive budgeting to eliminate rights violations faced by women and LGBTQI individuals, particularly regarding transportation and employment rights.
- Municipalities should create safe urban environments by illuminating dark streets and avenues.
- Municipalities should establish art and activity centers that offer free or low-cost services for women and children.
- Cultural sensitivity trainings should be provided to staff in official institutions to prevent discrimination based on mother tongue and culture. Municipalities should partner with cultural institutions in Istanbul to support such initiative.
- 
- In order to ensure gender equality, informative workshops in Kurdish should be organized in neighborhoods with a dense Kurdish population to inform women about accessing violence prevention mechanisms.
- Policies should be developed to create safe spaces for women and for establishing accessible, understandable, and unbiased mechanisms for combating violence.
- Municipalities should extend multilingual work principles to all women in the region, making these services visible and accessible beyond central locations.

- It should be ensured that law enforcement officers, judiciary members, family court staff, legal aid providers, and health professionals provide counseling and guidance based on national regulations and professional principles, considering the best interests of women and children affected by violence.
- Municipalities should collaborate with women's associations in Istanbul and other NGOs working in this field to conduct joint studies and initiatives.
- It should be ensured that individuals receiving initial applications in institutions are informed about relevant legislation and receive supervision support from experts in the field.
- It should effectively implement the obligations of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which Türkiye has accepted, to create a favorable environment for gender equality.



Kadın Zamani Derneđi  
*Komeleya Dema Jinan*  
*Women's Time Association*



KADIN ZAMANI DERNEĐİ

**KADIN ZAMANI DERNEĐİ**  
Şehit Muhtar Mahallesi Bekar Sokak No:7  
Daire:5 Beyođlu İstanbul

[info@kadinzamani.org](mailto:info@kadinzamani.org)