



2021

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# Activity Report







# **Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation**

**2021 Activity Report**

Translator: Eda Sevinin

# PREFACE

We, Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation, have been struggling for a world where women can live a violence-free, equal, and free life since 1990. We establish solidarity with women in our shelter and solidarity center; we also bear witness to the workings of violence that women are exposed to, the methods they develop against violence, and the effectiveness and operability of the mechanisms they resort to while striving to stay away violence. In the wake of Turkey's overnight withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention with the signature of the President, the year 2021 has assumed a special place in the memories of women living in Turkey as well as of organizations working to combat violence. The Istanbul Convention, the most comprehensive international legal document for combating male violence against women, is profoundly important legal text for us, as it informs the states about their obligations to eliminate and prevent violence. This convention, which had never been fully implemented in Turkey even though it was the very first signatory state, provided us with an important legal baseline and, most importantly, is the only legal text that represented our shared understanding on male violence. Turkey's withdrawal from the convention, on the other hand, evidently exemplified how women have been deprived of their rights by ways of restrictions and obstacles to accessing their rights. And, due to problems in implementation, we had been observing it for a very long time in the field.

For a long time, we have been bearing witness to how Turkey's path to withdrawing from the Istanbul Convention was built with the assaults on women's rights. On the one hand, the continuity of the male-dominated system in which women are oppressed through the naturalization of gender roles is ensured, on the other hand, discrimination and male violence are virtually encouraged to prevent women from building equal and free lives. Ignoring that the root-cause of male violence is gender inequality renders inoperative the mechanisms for combating violence. The works carried out after Turkey's withdrawal decision attempt at demonstrating that the Turkish state has not given up on the fight against violence against women. However, these works, lacking a gender equality perspective, are far from proposing a solution to the problem and instead lead to a misuse of time and resources.

The fact that the Assembly Research Commission for Determining the Causes of Violence against Women tries to rediscover the root-causes of violence by summoning non-experts and individuals who openly oppose women's rights, the fact that the IV. National Action Plan for Combating Violence against Women does not mention the term "gender" even once, and the fact that the recent Turkish Penal Code amendment reduced the combat with violence against women to the penal code not only fails to rectify the policy gap caused by the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, it also proved to us once again that any work carried out without a gender equality perspective would be baseless and inoperative.

As our 2021 research on *Violence against Women: Women's Experiences, Institutions and Paths* demonstrates, when women want to get away from violence, social focal points such as family, close circles, and institutions play a decisive role in women's struggle to get out of the violent relationship either by supporting or by restraining women. In addition to the solidarity that we form with women at Mor Çatı, we continue to fight for gender equality so that women can build free lives and to closely monitor and advise the institutions that are incumbent on combating violence and tell how they should work. Examining all the works we did in 2021, you could see that all the activities are based on promoting gender equality and feminist social work practices and informing practitioners about the problems faced by women and their solutions.

Undoubtedly, women who have crossed path with Mor Çatı since 1990 and feminists who have always kept an eye on Mor Çatı made all these works possible. We hope that this annual report will contribute to our feminist solidarity against male violence.

**KADINLARIN EŐİT,  
ÖZGÜR VE BAĐIMSIZ  
HAYATLAR YAŐADIĐI  
BİR DÜNYA İÇİN**

**YAŐASIN KADIN  
DAYANIŐMASI!**

**YAŐASIN FEMİNİST  
MÜCADELEMİZ!**



\*Long live women's solidarity, long live our feminist struggle for a world where women live equal, free and independent lives.

# SOLIDARITY CENTER

Women's solidarity centers are places where women access the needed support to get empowered, to stay away from violence or to cope with violence. These centers provide consultancy, information or guidance support if needed. It is of great importance to have solidarity centers where women who want to stay away from violence can talk about their experiences without being judged or facing discrimination and where they can receive support in accordance with their decisions as a dignified individual and in line with their unique conditions. Mor Çatı volunteers have been in solidarity with women and their children at these centers since 1990. To date, more than 40.000 women and children have received support. An average of 10 women receive support from Mor Çatı via phone, e-mail, and in face-to-face interviews every day. The center keeps up its activities not for helping women but for forming women's solidarity against violence and combating violence together. Women apply to Mor Çatı to share their experiences and to be informed about their social and legal rights. Mor Çatı provides social assistance to every woman who seeks it, and it also offers legal and psychological support as well as shelter support if needed be. Women might reach out to Mor Çatı one or more times and be in need of more than one kind of support simultaneously.

## Our Social Work Method

Social work at Mor Çatı includes analyzing the women's needs and strengths and risks they face through social work and concomitant in-depth interviews with applicant women who reach out to Mor Çatı via phone or e-mail because they have experienced violence. During the social work, women are listened without any judgment, and it is emphasized that the violence they have experienced emanate from the patriarchal system and that women are not responsible for the violence. In these interviews, we determine women's strengths we give basic information about their rights and about the social assistance they can apply. In the meantime, meetings are held with relevant institutions if necessary. We are aware that it is the women themselves who will give the best decision about their lives. Mor Çatı volunteers who provide support are not survivor women. For this reason, throughout the process we also question our prejudices and value system in these meetings with the applicant women.

Planning the shelter admission process is a part of the social work we do at the Mor Çatı solidarity center. Women are trying to fight the violence

they are exposed to with numerous ways they devised. Systematic violence sometimes causes us to devise methods to protect ourselves and our children (if we have any) in the environments we find ourselves in and compels us to make serious effort even to meet our needs or the needs of our children or home. In a violent environment, we begin to prioritize safety only and we make emergency or short-term plans. Facing such a situation, sometimes we need to get away from the environment we are in. Shelter is one of the very basic mechanisms to be able to make life plans in a violence-free and safe environment, to engage in long-term thinking, and to focus on alternatives. Shelters are places where women can rebuild their social life without facing isolation, recuperate from their mental and physical fatigue, and enjoy a collective life. When women reach us to express the violence they have been subjected to and for various forms of support, they can request shelter directly, or we can discuss this option in the follow-up meetings. In these meetings, our primary focus is on understanding the situation. The very first steps of shelter-planning consist of listening to women's experiences of violence, understanding the workings of violence, getting information about the mechanisms they have applied thus far and what their experiences have been, and focusing on the privacy- and security-related risks. Other main points that we focus on in shelter-admission process are the expectations of women from the shelter, their goals for the time they plan to stay in the shelter, their strengths to achieve these goals, and the forms of support they need. Women requesting shelter can express this need for varying reasons. The most common situations include being thrown out of the house by the perpetrators of violence and running away or planning to run away from the house for their or their children's safety. Women who have a need for shelter can ask for shelter support or demand to be taken to a safe place by going to or calling the police. However, in many interviews, we realize that women may not know that the shelter support in Turkey is provided in Turkey and guaranteed by the law. There may also be misconceptions that every women's shelter is affiliated to Mor Çatı, or women might lack the information that they have the right to request shelter from the police. All of these indicate that the state fails to fulfill the necessary task to enable women to access information and know about their rights.

Confidentiality and non-violence are the fundamental principles of the shelter work at Mor Çatı. We inform every woman who wants to stay in the shelter about these principles, and we base the entire shelter-planning on these two pillars. We let the women know that there is a collective life in the shelter, that more than one woman and their children (if any) might stay together, and that there are some responsibilities that might be required

by the collective life at the shelter, and we get their consent. Moreover, in our shelter work, we discuss with the women that they will play the decisive role in achieving the goals they set for themselves and that they might have to apply to the courthouse, the bar association, social services or other relevant institutions. We oftentimes see that women reach us having already contacted various institutions in order to receive the support they need. Women may be reluctant to reapply to these institutions due to the lack of coordination, attitudes hostile to women, and bad practices in the institutions, or they may experience difficulties at the beginning if they have not made any applications before. However, we observe that with the impact of the social work carried out in the shelter and after women realize their own power, they in the course of time become more determined to reach these supports. We share this experience-based information in our meetings with the women requesting shelter, and as solidarity center and shelter social workers, we discuss these meetings and plan the shelter-admission process, taking into consideration the women's thoughts and feelings on the issue.

In 2021, with the changing dynamics brought about by the pandemic, we focused on the new social work needs at Mor Çatı. We held meetings with public institutions in order to grasp how women's request for social assistance to municipalities, social service centers, ŞÖNİMs, and other relevant institutions are responded, what resources the institutions provide regarding current needs, and to the extent to which women can access these mechanisms. In addition to these meetings, we organized trainings and workshops on various topics with the employees of various institutions.

Moreover, as Mor Çatı volunteers, we received various trainings on topics such as Communication Skills, Interview Dynamics, Psychological Resilience, Basic Motivations in Social Work and Solution Offers in order to empower ourselves and strengthen our social work. We received regular supervision so that we could talk about our needs and feelings emerging during the social work with women who were subjected to violence and receive support on this issue.

We organized workshops for social workers, lawyers, and psychologists and volunteer meetings to expand our solidarity with women. With workshops, meetings, and supervision we aimed to empower both ourselves, Mor Çatı volunteers, and the social work we carried out.

**Legal Support:** The vast majority of women who have been subjected to violence do not know their legal rights and how to enjoy them. Women's needs in this area are met by the legal consultancy provided by our

volunteer lawyers. Women are informed about the laws that they can benefit from in the event of being subjected to violence, what kind of legal procedures they should follow, and how they can access free legal support in case they cannot afford it. A commonly observed situation in the legal field is that even the positive legal provisions cannot be implemented due to the implementors' attitudes that are not sided with women. For this reason, it is of great importance that legal counsellors have a pro-woman perspective.

**Psychological Support:** Mor Çatı provides psychological support to women so that they can cope with the intense feelings of helplessness, guilt, shame and fear they experience due to male violence and create new life options away from the effects for violence. In this sense, psychological works carried out are important for women and children to be recognized, seen, and heard and for providing a safe space for them. For this reason, it is expected from everyone working in this field primarily to not have any belief that any woman provokes violence or deserves it. In sum, psychologists who are to support women who have been subjected to violence should adopt a pro-woman perspective and be aware of the dynamics of violence.

## 2021 in numbers

**The number of women applying for the first time: 1306,** and a total of 3270 interviews were held with the first-timer women.



**The number of women who had applied in previous years and whom we had interviews with in 2021: 201,** and a total of 1220 interviews were held with them.



**Total number of women we met in 2021: 1507**



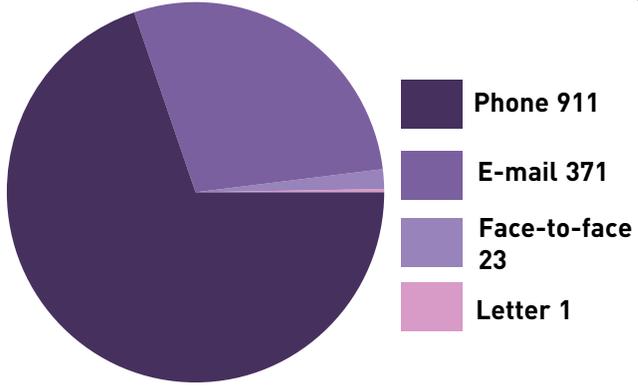
**Total number of interviews made in the Women's Solidarity Center: 4490**

In our work at Mor Çatı and while forming solidarity with women, we value one-on-one meetings. It is important for volunteer social workers to have one-on-one meetings with women so that they could have a holistic understanding of women's needs, form a solidarity in the most appropriate way, and most importantly, hear and talk about what women want. Having the interview with the woman who expresses her need for one-on-one support is also a crucial part of mutual empowerment. Although our experience indicates that most of the time women reach out to Mor Çatı themselves, we also see cases where people around them reach Mor Çatı in cases that women or children cannot directly get in touch with us or that they have people who want to help them. If the woman or child is unable to communicate with us in any way, we share basic information with the caller, emphasizing nonetheless the importance of providing support on one-on-one basis.

### **Friends/acquaintances calling instead of the women (proxy contacts):**

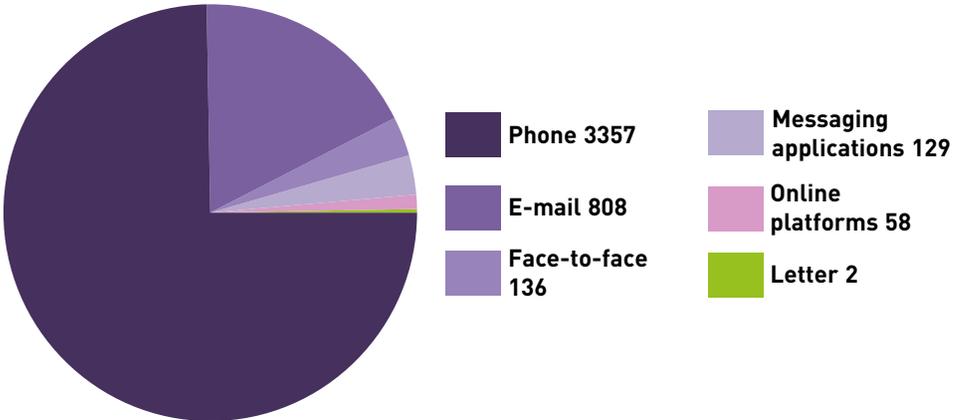
**O**f 1306 women who applied to Mor Çatı in 2021, 1089 reached out to us themselves while for 217 women, proxy contacts reached us first. Among proxy contacts were relatives of women, acquaintances or friends, lawyers, institutions that the women receive support from, psychologists or teachers, or strangers they have never met. Statistically speaking, we see that only 83% of the first-time applications received in 2021 were made by the women themselves while the rest of the applications were made by proxy contacts. This figure is parallel to the last year's statistics. With the decision to pull out of the Istanbul Convention and the increasing visibility of bad practices by the institutions that are supposed to provide support against male violence, we observe that women's relatives/friends/acquaintances witness the bad practices, worry about the women who are subjected to violence, try to reach out to women's organizations on behalf of the women for them to get support, and search for alternative ways. In a few cases where the lawyers contacted Mor Çatı on their clients' behalf, we learned that the women staying in the shelter could not access basic support such as healthcare and that they could not receive counselling from the institution they were staying in. The lawyers contacted us to ask about the ways they could resort to. We also learned in these applications that the support women get from these mechanisms to rebuild their post-violence lives is not sufficient even for their basic needs. Also, we hear that the relatives who reach us are seriously concerned about the safety of women and children.

### Contact methods used by the first-timer applicant women in 2021:



We observed that with the outbreak of the pandemic, women are increasingly more inclined to use e-mail as a contact method. Especially last year, e-mail had been an important medium used by women who wanted to reach out to us for the first time. While the e-mail use in first contact was 23% last year, it has increased to 28% this year. The fact that women had to stay at home due to the pandemic and hence spend more time in the same place with the perpetrator led women to adopt this medium. Also, due to increasing digital literacy rates and expanding access to digital communication tool as well as young women’s preferences to use e-mail as the communication tool of choice, e-mail has become a method that we frequently use in first application contacts.

### Interview methods:



### 45% of the women were interviewed more than once.

In the interviews we have at the solidarity center, we sometimes meet with a woman only once and inform her about her rights. Some other times, we monitor women’s application processes: we follow which institutions they have applied to, what sort of support they have received from the

institutions they have applied. Yet other times, we maintain solidarity with women by having more than one interview while the women put their plan into action step by step. In addition to the interviews, we also have meetings with various institutions that women are receiving or considering to receive support so that we learn about the women do and can receive and to support women in the process. An important part of the experience we lay out in this activity report comes from this monitoring activities and the interviews we conducted.

Compared to 2020, the year the pandemic broke out, there was less lockdowns last year; therefore, we were able to continue our solidarity works and interviews at our solidarity center. We were able to return to our work where we could meet with women face-to-face. We also continued to use the online tools that we had started to use more frequently during the pandemic and made them a part of our daily work with women. This way, we were able to make video calls with women residing in Istanbul but unable to leave the house as well as with women living in other cities. This experience shows us not only the importance of digital literacy and the accessibility of digital tools for women, but it also gives us the opportunity to figure out and try alternative methods while providing support to women, and to unearth the alternatives that institutions incumbent on combating male violence against women can and should use during service provision for women.

## Applicant women's nationalities:

**Migrant and  
refugee women:**

83

**Women with dual  
citizenship:**

9



### Women's nationalities:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Egypt, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Palestine, Sweden, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, the Netherlands, the Philippines, the UK, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, USA, Uzbekistan.

### Countries from which women or institutions reached us:

the number of women who contacted us while living abroad is 17. The list of countries from which women or institutions reached us is as follows: Austria, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Germany, Malta, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, the UK, TRNC.

In addition to women who contact Mor Çatı from different districts of Istanbul and from various provinces of Turkey, migrant and refugee women living in Turkey and women from Turkey or foreign women living abroad also contact us. Migrant and refugee women living in Turkey contact us about the violence they have been subjected to in Turkey and the forms of support they can receive. Women calling from abroad or institutions contacting on their behalf reach out to us to get information about the violence women have been subjected to during their stay in Turkey and about the support mechanisms they can receive in Turkey. Women and institutions from abroad were given information and guidance regarding the support mechanisms in Turkey. We carried out social work with the women who reached out to us regarding their experience of violence, as we do with all women. E-mail and online tools have been the most frequently used methods to communicate with those who reached us outside Turkey. In our works of forming solidarity, migrant and refugee women, if they knew Turkish or English, directly contacted volunteer social workers. In cases where these two languages were not sufficient to conduct the interview, we kept up our solidarity with migrant and refugee women with the interpreters who supported the women in their native language accompanying the meetings.

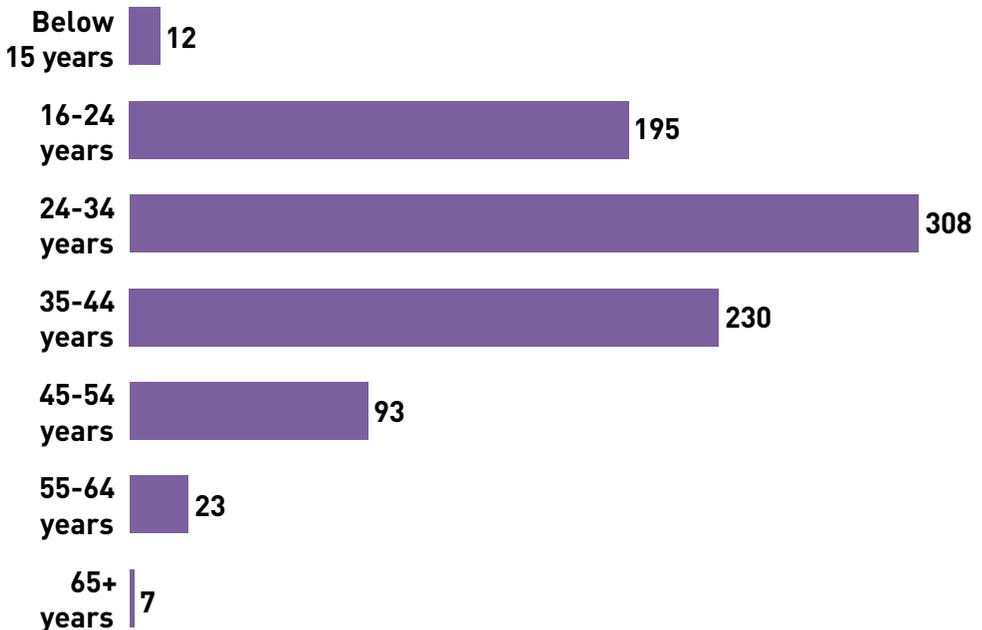
In addition to women who came to Turkey who fled war or persecution in their country of origin and who are under the Temporary Protection Status, or are waiting to be resettled in the third safe country, we also had interviews with women who first came to Turkey with a tourist visa and are trying to build their life here. While explaining their reasons for migration, these women stated the difficulties they had experienced as a woman in their country of origin, the exploitation of their labor at home, the oppression and hatred they were subjected to because of their sexual orientation, and the interference in their daily lives. They also explained the cross-border nature of patriarchy and the oppression it poses on women. They shared that as a woman they were considering changing the country as an alternative for building a free, peaceful, and violence-free life.

One thing that we frequently encountered in the applications by migrant and refugee women was that they had applied to various non-governmental organizations in this field before applying to Mor Çatı. They often stated that they could get in-kind/cash assistance from these places and that these supports were short-term solutions. However, they also shared with us that in these organizations they were not provided with a long-term and in-depth social work or with psychological and social support that would address the effects of the violence they have experienced. The support provided by NGOs working in the field of migration and asylum is often funded by fixed-term projects, planned according to a schedule and subjected to various limitations. These factors prevent women from

receiving long-term support from these institutions and developing a relationship of trust and make them feel hesitant to openly speak about the dynamics of violence they experienced.

For foreign women, both women's organizations in the country of origin and the consulates in Turkey contact with Mor Çatı. In some cases, we work in cooperation with the consulates. For instance, in one case, we carried out our social work for a foreign woman, who came to Turkey and was subjected to violence here, with the cooperation of the consulate of her country of origin, and with the woman's permission, we maintained close contact and supported her safe return to her country. Mor Çatı's experience in combating male violence and its solidarity with migrant women showed us that we needed to translate our brochure in which we explain the Law No. 6284 into new languages, and this brochure was also translated into Spanish and Portuguese. As an outcome of this study, we saw that migrant women's groups form solidarity networks, and when a woman in their group experiences violence or reaches out to them for this reason, they reach out to us for support and direct the affected women to us.

## The number of applicant women whose age we know (2021): 868



## Applications by Young Women

Similar to previous years, young women constitute a significant portion of the applications made for being subjected to violence. Last year, women had returned to their family home after the pandemic pushed universities to switch to online education and dormitories to be closed, and they had contacted us about the violence they were subjected to at home. Once again, we had witnessed how the patriarchal system intervened in women's lives. This year, women continued to express the violence they have been subjected to during the period they had stayed with their families, and they contacted us to get out of the violent environment and learn about their rights. The determination of the women who contacted us and their stance against violence showed us their strength. This year, young women contacted us especially to express issues such as not being sent to school even when in-class education re-started during the pandemic, not being able to find support for formal education expenses, being deprived of pocket money, unpaid domestic labor during their stay in the family house, exploitation, not being able to find themselves a place to continue their education. In addition, women who have recently left their family home to start their education or professional career stated that they had problems in covering the expenses for dormitory, housing, scholarships, furniture, and healthcare, and made requests in these issues. We have seen how the current economic crisis has caused restrictions and made it difficult for women to move away from the violent environment and to continue their own lives.

On the other hand, we have observed that with the online education that became a part of children's lives after the pandemic, children's access to digital tools increased and that they have considered it as a possibility enabling them to make applications to tell the violence they have been subjected to. This year, 12 children under the age of 15 contacted us directly. Among the issues they shared with us were the pressure and restrictions they experienced at home, the physical violence and sexual abuse they were subjected to, and refusal to be physically sent to school and being forced to online education.

Compared to previous years, we observed an increase in the applications made by women with children. Many women stated that their children witnessed and were affected by the violence they were subjected to, and they expressed their concerns about not being able to see their children again and not being able to get their children's custody. In addition, they shared with us that they needed a lot of support to meet their children's needs. Reasons such as not being able to meet their basic needs, not being able to access sufficient education services such as daycare, study and school, and the lack of services which facilitate childcare provision for women while they search for job or start a new job often led women to request economic support in their applications.

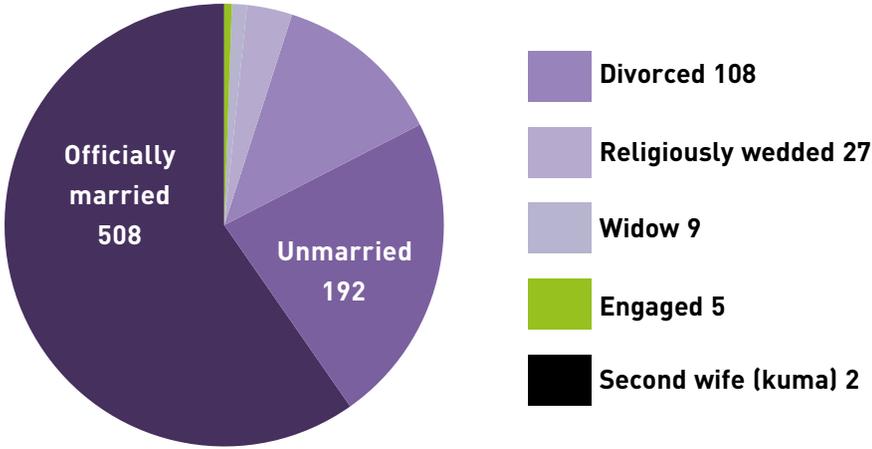
We notice that the number of married women among the 25-34 age group applicants has been increasing in recent years. This shows us that child marriages or marriages in their 20s are increasing in Turkey and/or that women realize violence at a young age and take steps to move away. At the same time, we see that women in this group have multiple children. The most important factors in women's early marriage include the violent and oppressive environment that women are exposed to in their families and the fact that women, over the years, are taught that marriage and building a family is the required for social recognition. Moreover, early marriages by women are seriously influenced by other reasons such as the following: strong emphasis on the importance of the family for many years in the gradually shortening formal education and in many social mechanisms young women have access to; the fact that family unity and order is considered to be the most reasonable way of building a life; and the fact that this approach is formally promoted by the government.

Early marriages and child marriages have individual, economic, societal, and social reasons. The most common reasons we hear from applicant women are as follows: thinking that they should get married, staying away from violence in the family, having children shortly after getting married so that the marriage would be socially acceptable, and re-marrying shortly after the divorce due to the need for social and familial recognition.

We hear in women's narratives that, similar to the cycle of violence, all these reasons follow one another in their lives. We see that women have difficulty in accessing contraceptive methods after marriage for various reasons. Some factors that lead women to have early and, in some cases unwanted, children include the following: women are not given any money by their husbands who want to prevent them from going to hospital; women are requested to present their husband's permission to be able to have an IUD even though it has no legal basis; they need health insurance and/or budget for birth control methods; they are not provided with extensive and effective family planning services and, thus, they cannot access free contraceptive methods.

On the other hand, considering the child as a way to fix the marriage in a violent environment is one of the shared experiences stated by women. Many women in the 25-34 age group, who have two or more children, expressed that they had thought that the violence will end or at least calm down in the presence of children. But then again, our interviews with women showed that violence does not necessarily diminish when a new child joins the family. In fact, in some cases children's needs, development and relationships within the home constitute separate areas of pressure and of violence against women for the perpetrators.

## The number of first-timer applicant women, whose marital status we know, in 2021:



One of the common points that came up in our interviews with women this year was that divorce process takes a long time in Turkey and causes loss of rights for women. Many married women who are in the divorce process and divorced women expressed that they can generally find day-to-day jobs during the separation process, that they can only earn minimum wage when they get a regular income-generating job, and that this is insufficient for building a new post-violence life. Women were taking care of their children's basic needs as well as education and healthcare needs while at the same time monitoring the relationship they have with their abusive fathers and its psychological effects. Another difficulty that women try to cope with was the direct impact of alimonies unpaid by their husbands or ex-husbands on children's needs. On the other hand, the fact that divorce process takes long causes men to come home with various excuses and claim rights in the decisions regarding children or the house and to interfere with the decisions and lives of women.

Many women with whom we have been in solidarity described marriage as a form of gaining social recognition. They stated that they got married under the pressure of their families and close circles, that they felt to be in their marriage under the same pressure, and that it was challenging not to receive any support from their families and close circles when they set out to divorce. In this process, women faced difficulties in accessing support and solidarity and they were ignored both by their own social circles and by the relevant mechanisms. Some of these situations include experiencing financial difficulties while their married status continues, not being able to various forms of support because they are married and being rejected because of their marital status because they applied for these

## The number of perpetrators of violence against the first-timer women in 2021:



The number of women who mentioned multiple perpetrators: 17

support mechanisms during the divorce process. One of the most arduous issues for women is to keep up the domestic and childcare responsibilities that they had already taken during the marriage in the divorce process. Lacking support from the husband or the family, women both have to allocate time to issues such as divorce, complaints, applying for economic support and have to monitor the childcare and arrange family relations. Trying to keep up these responsibilities coming from all quarters makes it difficult to talk about the violence women are subjected to and focus on it. Because women are compelled to prioritize basic needs. The lack of a support mechanism which makes easier to keep track of all of these can cause exhaustion and disempowerment in women, can lead them to delay applications, to feel fatigued to follow up on their applications, and can render them financially stuck or physically tired. At this point, we think that it is of great importance to focus on women's strength in our social work and to provide spaces where they can talk about their emotions. Sometimes we hear from women in interviews that just telling what is going on is very comforting, and this gives us strength, too.

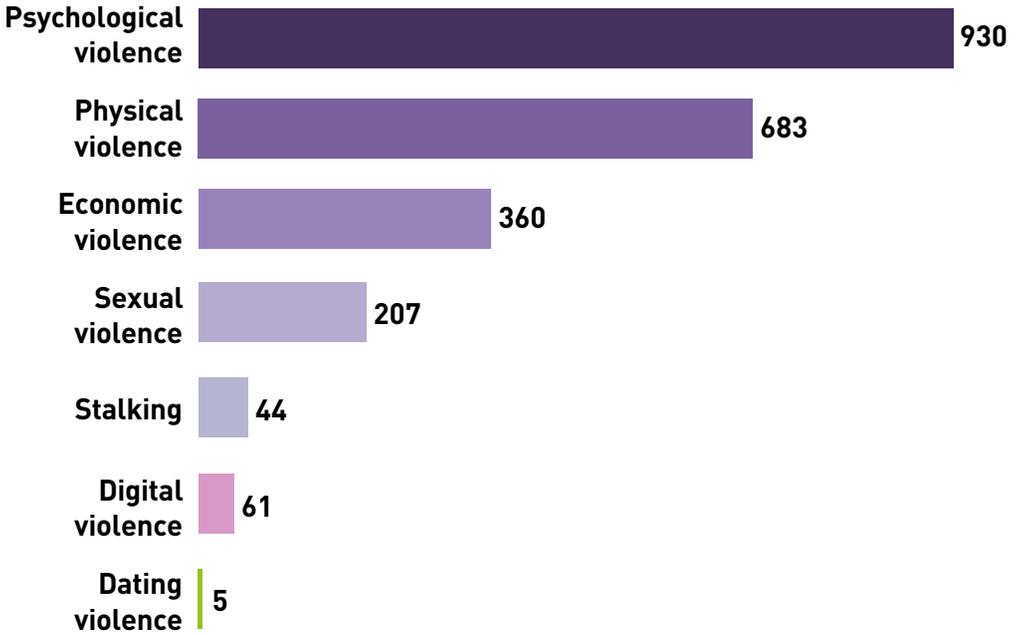
When women apply to Mor Çatı to get support for the violence they have been subjected to, they describe the violence that they have just experienced or are currently experiencing. In our in-depth interviews, if women want to share, we can access the information of those who have cooperated with the perpetrator and those who have been violent to the women before. In addition, when we define what violence is together with the applicant women during the interview, it becomes possible for women to express and describe the violence they have been subjected to previously, including their childhood and youth.

**The number of women who have been subjected to violence by their husbands, ex-husbands, partners, or ex-partners and whose duration of relationship/marriage we know: 268**



## Types of violence:

The number of women who applied for the first time in 2021 and for whom we know the form of experienced violence: 1066



Male violence against women denotes violent attitudes and behaviors that are systematically directed at women because of their gender inside or outside the domestic space. Men use violence against women only because they are women, because of the existing gender inequality and for perpetuating this inequality. The violence perpetrator man uses violence consciously; in other words, he chooses to be violent. The male violence women experience may come from stranger men they do not know, but it mostly comes from men closest to them, from men they with whom they share the same house. Men use violence to control women, to vent their anger, as a show of strength, to punish, or to gain advantage over women. Among the types of violence used by men for these purposes are physical, psychological, sexual, economic, and digital violence and stalking.

Women who applied to Mor Çatı in 2021 shared their experiences of violence both recently and in their past. Some women called immediately

after being subjected to violence and requested emergency support, while some women had their phones taken away shortly after they called.

When women call to share their experiences, they do not always directly name the types of violence. But this year we very often witnessed that some women we interviewed clearly gave their own definitions of and named the type of violence they were subjected to, saying “there is a lot of emotional violence” and “there is normal violence, sexual, economic, all types of it”. Not unlike the previous years, some women did not know how to describe the violence they have been subjected to and where to start, while some other women briefly described their experience of violence and moved directly on to their own requests. We heard from some applicant women that they received more information by reading the publications on our website or by reading about male violence, and after that they decided to call after having named the violence that they were subjected to.

Women are often subjected to more than one type of violence simultaneously. In 2021, women who received support from Mor Çatı were subjected to psychological violence the most. Psychological violence occurs when emotional integrity and needs are not met and are used to control, humiliate, and exert power over women. Although psychological violence is not as easy to detect and name as physical violence, we also observe that some women felt uncomfortable with the psychological pressure they were subjected to, and they named some types of it as “verbal violence” or “emotional violence”. Or, some women realize after the in-depth interviews that what they have been experienced is actually a form of psychological violence. When we talked to women, they shared with us that they were subjected to at least one form of psychological violence such as threatening, harming or threatening to harm a child or family member, cheating, throwing out of the home, isolating her, accusing, lying, forcing to marry or preventing women from divorcing, treating her as insane, or threatening with suicide. Unlike the previous year, we see that psychological violence manifests itself also in novel forms such as hindering women’s access to mental health, belittlement, comparing families, hindering children’s right to education and healthcare, restraining the woman’s communication with her family, and putting pressure on having children.

The second most common type of violence women were subjected to was physical violence. We see physical violence take place when physical and bodily strength and advantage is used to humiliate, control, and exert power over women. While it is possible to detect the marks of physical violence on women’s bodies, in some cases we observe that perpetrators consciously choose to use violence in ways that will not leave any traces. Besides, even when the physical integrity of women and children is not directly targeted, acts such as breaking things, displaying physical advantage

by damaging things and using it as a means for pressure constitute other forms of physical violence. Women shared with us that they were subjected to forms physical violence of beating, coming at her, breaking things, stabbing, trying to strangle, shooting with a firearm, hitting with an object, forcing to use drugs and to take weight loss pills, trying to run over with a car, starving, leaving them in the cold, and depriving women and children of access to healthcare services. They stated that as a result of physical violence, they suffered from physical injuries such as head trauma, broken bones, wounds, bruises, loss of organ function as well as from psychological effects such as not being able to continue their daily lives, high-levels of anxiety, loss of self-confidence, self-blame and feeling of worthlessness.

Similar to previous years, this year we heard that women were subjected to physical violence in the form of forced use of drugs and weight loss pills, trying to run over with a car, starving, leaving them in the cold, and depriving women and children of access to healthcare services. The types of physical violence that caught our attention in women's testimonies include preventing women from going to the hospital due to the worry of virus infection and hence not giving her money to see a doctor, not taking her to the hospital, and stopping her from going to the hospital. A migrant women stated that at the time that she did not understand Turkish, she was subjected to psychological violence by her Turkish-speaking husband and his family, but when she started to speak and understand Turkish, the type of violence took a physical form. Other migrant women stated that while they were legally staying in Turkey in conjugal union, their husbands threatened them with not extending their residence permit or not applying to citizenship and did not collect the necessary documents. Once again, these testimonies reveal both that the perpetrators resort to violence consciously and that violence is used as a means of controlling women.

We observe that economic violence is used in cases where economic power and superiority is used to control, oppress, and benefit from women, or women's economic empowerment is hindered. Women state that men perpetrate economic violence by depriving them of their education in both their childhood and adulthood, forcing them to work or to quit their jobs, by not giving money for household expenses, confiscating their earnings, not taking responsibility for household and children's needs, and forcing women to undertake care work and find economic resources. Women's experiences also showed us that men push women into indebtedness by taking out loans in women's names or using their debit cards without her permission, do not pay alimony after divorce or separation, sell the property they own and work informally so that they do not have to share

the property or pay alimony in cases of divorce. This year, economic violence and its effects became one of the widely shared experiences by women. Women's experiences of being exposed to economic violence in a violent environment or in their post-violence lives, of receiving inadequate social assistance were coupled with economic crisis and inflation, causing difficulties for women in meeting even the most basic needs for themselves and their children. Economic violence and the lack of adequate social assistance sometimes made it difficult for women to get away from the violent environment and some other times laid the groundwork for women's return to the environment of violence.

Sexual violence describes situations where sexuality is used to control, punish, and display power over women. Women may avoid sharing the experiences of sexual violence due to feelings of shame and guilt. In our interviews, women told that they were subjected to forms of sexual violence such as marital or extramarital rape, sexual abuse in childhood, incest, threatening with sexual violence, forced pregnancy, forced prostitution, forced anal intercourse, sexual assault with an object, forced sexual intercourse in front of children, transmission of STDs, and forcing to watch pornographic content. Similar to previous years, women also shared that they were subjected to forms of sexual violence such as forced abortion, refusal to use birth control methods, using sex as a tool for manipulation, raping women's pets, and sexually transmitted infections.

Digital violence takes place when technological tools and knowledge is used to control and punish women. In our interviews, women told us that men use various forms of digital violence such as confiscating women's passwords on digital tools, preventing or restricting women from using electronic communication tools, making video/image/audio recording without women's consent and threatening to disseminate them or to distribute and publish images taken with women's consent, sharing women's contact information with third parties, and publishing/disseminating/sharing or threatening to share private conversations with women. We observe that men mostly use digital violence to threaten women to stay with them, to control the social circles that support women, or to completely isolate women from their social environment. We know that multiple types of violence are used simultaneously; in this context, for instance, digital violence can turn into a means of perpetrating sexual violence. A case in point is sharing sexual content without women's consent. Systematic digital violence can lead to women's distancing from digital media and prevent women's progress in digital literacy. Women who were subjected to digital violence stated that they limited their use of technological tools to end the violence, and some of them stopped

using digital tools altogether. As a control mechanism, digital violence makes it difficult for women to continue their daily lives, prevents them from accessing information about their health and education and from performing banking transactions. We also observe that digital tools are used to exert violence, to intervene in women's lives, and to make it possible to use violence virtually at any moment. Even when women and perpetrators are not in the same environment, perpetrators try to control women any minute by using digital tools.

Stalking takes place in cases where there are deliberately repetitive threatening attitudes and behaviors that make women feel constantly on edge and not safe and that cause them to fear and worry about violence. Women shared with us that men subject them to violence by constantly sending messages or e-mails, repetitively calling, trying to reach women by disturbing women's families, stalking her on social media, appearing in unexpected places, sending romantic or creepy gifts, locating her, taking her pictures with a drone, and humiliating women with people around them. We also noticed that some women had to quit their jobs or were fired as a result of stalking violence. Stalking has yet to be defined as a penalizable offense in Turkey's penal system. Although stalking is included as a criminal offense in the draft law submitted to the Presidency of the National Assembly in 2021, the penalties stipulated are far from being deterrent. Women shared with us that when they apply to public institutions regarding the stalking they are exposed to, they are not understood, the behaviors they are exposed to are not considered violence, the psychological damage stalking causes on women as well as difficulties it poses on women's daily lives are not comprehended and women's experiences are belittled. In these institutions, women face with attitudes such as "are you here again?" or "what's wrong with it?". On the one hand, all this makes it difficult for women to meet their most basic needs and move on with their lives. On the other hand, not being understood when they file complaints or apply to support mechanisms causes women to feel fatigued, distance themselves from existing resources, and sometimes isolate themselves. As a result, women face difficulties in getting away from the violent environment and building a free life.

## Violent Men

Women, before starting any intimate relationship, have various strengths. Men use violence to undercut women's existing strengths, to isolate them, and to alter their sense of self. Every woman who experiences violence in intimate relationships develops various resistance mechanisms within the violent environment. In order to undermine these mechanisms and to

perpetuate violence and oppression, men use violence against women in various forms. Against these forms of violence, which change depending on current context, women continue to create their own spaces and develop various resistance mechanisms.

Men use violence to control, punish or exert power over women. In 2021 too, limiting women's access to economic resources (i.e., not allowing women to work), confiscating their salaries, and preventing their access to education were widely shared experiences that we frequently heard from women who have been subjected to economic violence. A woman who applied to Mor Çatı to get away from violence told that her husband did not allow her to study for the public exams. According to her statements, on the one hand, her husband humiliated her for not working, on the other hand he constantly created obstacles to her working with various excuses and was saying "you will divorce me when you are appointed". We often see that various types of violence intertwine in an intimate relationship. As we have seen in this example and in the experiences of many other women, men can resort to humiliating women for not working while at the same time stopping women from creating economic resources for themselves.

Just like the last year, this year we heard from women who applied to the solidarity center that men took courage from impunity. Impunity encourages men while shaking women's trust that the mechanisms will work when they want to take a legal action. We have heard many times that women felt helpless for this reason. Taking courage from impunity, men continue to commit acts of violence, saying "they will release me anyhow". On the other hand, they perpetrate violence thinking that women are alone and not supported in cases that the woman is left alone and without support or that woman's family cooperates with the perpetrator.

This year, we have observed that many women have family members who cooperate with the perpetrator in their experience of violence. Constantly suggesting that women be patient and endure violence not only normalizes violence but also makes women more alone in the face of violence. A woman who applied to Mor Çatı shared her experience of being pressured both by her parents and by her children to be patient and continue her relationship and described her situation saying "they try to make a slave out of me". Similarly, we observe from the experiences of women who applied to Mor Çatı that at times, in the absence of physical violence, psychological violence is perceived more bearable for families. Therefore, women can be pressured and told by their families that they can endure

violence, since there is no incidence of physical violence. Conversely, women voice their own ideas and experiences through the methods they have devised to avoid violence and create space for empowerment. For instance, a woman who applied to Mor Çatı expressed her situation in the following words: “No one understands me. They act as if I have to endure violence just because I have not been beaten. Having left home, I told them that I have my own opinions.”

**W**hen women are subjected to violence, they make their own plans regarding the obstacles they face. With the feminist solidarity we built at the Mor Çatı solidarity center, we closely examine these obstacles together with women and try to think together about ways to build an independent life. In this work, we also witness how strong women are and we get stronger together. A woman who applied to the solidarity center in 2021 and received various forms of support from Mor Çatı in her experience of getting away from violence described her empowerment as follows: “Maybe I was not physically dead, but I left that house emotionally dead. (...) But I’ve erected my boundaries and I am not letting him in.”

## The Role of the Family:

In order to understand the role of women’s families or the families of the perpetrator in entering in or leaving the relationship in which women are subjected to violence, we analyzed in detail the content of our solidarity with 830 randomly selected women who contacted Mor Çatı for the first time in 2021. We aimed to understand whether the family of the woman or of the partner/



husband or both act in cooperation with the perpetrator. We defined cooperation in a way to include not only inflicting violence on women with the perpetrator but also not stepping in against the perpetrator and creating an environment enabling of violence. We asked the questions

of whether women, who contacted Mor Çatı and shared with us their experience of violence, can share their experiences with their families, if yes, how they can share it, and whether they have any comments on their families' approach. Another question we wanted to answer was what kind of support families did or did not offer while women were trying to get out of the relationship and environment in which they were subjected to violence, and whether they supported or tried to hinder this process<sup>1</sup>. Yet another point that we focused in our evaluations was how both the women's own families and the family of the abusive partner/husband approached children. The reason why is that, as we have repeatedly mentioned in our activity report, women with children also consider their children's needs and conditions while making plans to leave the environment of violence. Perpetrators of violence, on the contrary, can instrumentalize children as a tool of oppression and violence.

In cases where the perpetrator of violence is the family itself, violence can take the form of oppression; interference with women's clothing, lifestyle, and times of entering and leaving the house; asking questions such as "where have you been, what are you doing"; restricting women's access to digital tools, not allowing them to continue their education in their childhood; forcing them to work and exploiting their labor; hindering their access to various rights such as right to work, education and healthcare. These forms of violence cause women to distrust their families, and women define this violence as a restriction of their freedom. They contact with Mor Çatı with questions such as "do shelters provide accommodation to women whose freedom has been restricted?" In order to leave such an oppressive environment at family home, women may see marriage as a way out, and sometimes they are subjected to violence by the people they meet while seeking ways to get away from home.

Young women can be subjected to physical, psychological and economic violence by their fathers. Violence by father, again, can take the form of depriving women of their right to education or preventing them from working. While sharing their experiences of violence, young women can also talk about the violence their mothers are subjected at home. Some women seek for a safe environment, whereas some others say that they do not want to leave their mother alone at home and look for alternative ways for their mothers, and hence face difficulties leaving the house.

1 For a conceptual analysis of families' attitudes when women have been subjected to violence, please see the research titled "Violence against Women: Women's Experiences, Institutions, and Paths" conducted by Dissensus Research for Mor Çatı: <https://morcati.org.tr/kitaplar/kadina-yonelik-siddet-kadinlarin-deneyimleri-kurumlar-ve-mecralar/>



In cases where the perpetrator is a family member and judicial processes have begun, women can face other types of violence such as disbelief, accusations, and restrictions on women's movements by the extended family. We have encountered numerous examples where families, instead of supporting women and ensuring that they can access the support they need, worry about the family name being defamed and the violence being heard in the broader circles. This, in turn, leads women to feel helpless, try to make alternative plans, and reach us seeking support. Worries about the reactions from the social circle become so important that women may be told to have "eloped" even when they are forced into marriage. Women sometimes express that the concept of "honor" is used as a justification by their families for committing violence. A woman told us that her family constantly pressured on the ground of honor while other family members did not step in against it and that she was thrown out of the house. She explained that her twin brother was also subjected to the same treatment, but she said, "Because he is a man, he has a lot of places to go and so he does. But I am not like that, they are pushing me to death." Another woman shared with us that her family forced her into a marriage with the rapist after she had been raped as a child.

Women can create resistance mechanisms against violence by contacting the nearest available resources within their reach to stay away from violence. In some cases, these resources may be family or extended family members/relatives. However, we sometimes observe situations where the woman's family is not supportive of her in the abusive relationship in which she is subjected to violence. Women sometimes tell us that they are told by their families to stay in the violent environment and keep suffering the violence or pressured to stay in a violent environment. Some of the obstacles and unsupportive family attitudes that are told us by women include the following: exerting pressure on women to stay in a violent relationship; using physical and psychological violence against women; talking against divorce on the grounds that the husband is a member of the extended family; not listening to the woman; making statements that the woman is mentally unstable; uttering things about the violence such as "endure it", "you've left this home in a wedding dress, you can only come back in a shroud", "if you have a baby, your problems will be solved", "he's your husband, he does whatever he wants", "the most appropriate place for you is to stay with your husband", "you are delusional", "let him cheat, so what"; condemning women for claiming their rights for seeking alternatives such as shelter; not allowing her to file a divorce case; threatening the woman to withdraw her complaint; refusing to let her children in the family house when the woman leaves the violent environment. These approaches by

families cause women to refrain from sharing their experiences of violence with their families and makes women feel helpless when they, despite everything, go to family home yet are refused and sent back to the violent environment.

In cases where families do not believe in the violence women experience, where women were forced to work and subjected to violence by their families in their childhood, and where families continue their relationships with the perpetrators of violence, women lose their trust to their families, refrain from reaching out to them when they need them and feel helpless. A woman shared with us that she was disappointed that her family communicated with the perpetrator on social media. She told us that knowing it prevented her from sharing her current experience of violence with the family, saying "I was left alone although I was not alone". Another women, who had been forced into marriage because of the family's pressure on her, said that her father was very oppressive and that if she had left home her family would have followed her. In her statement, she talked about the pressure her family put on her while she was trying to stay away from violence and how much it made her feel stuck and constrained.

A woman, who applied to Mor Çatı after she was subjected to violence by her husband, said that she had first asked her family's support but they, let alone being supportive, gave her children to her husband and had her withdraw her complaint by putting pressure on her. She told us that she did not expect to have been through so much trouble in her own family's place. Some women said that these forms of pressure took a physical form: they were kept in the cold, not given food, exposed to physical violence and threatened so that they would return to their home, where they were subjected to violence, and sometimes they were not let in by their own families who say, "what would other people think". Some women, on the other hand, do not even consider their family as an option because they know that had they returned to their family home, their families would have committed violence against them. One woman explained this by saying, "If I go to my father's, he is even worse than my husband and son." In some cases, we observe that after women get away from violence and get divorced, their families force women to marry again, put pressure on them, and in these cases, women seek for other ways to get rid of this pressure.

Similarly, some acts by men's family such as interfering with women's lifestyle, slandering women for having an affair, and accusing them of unchastity function as steps enabling or accelerating separation. Women,

in turn, can get furious in the face of this unfair attitudes and injustices, and it can be difficult for them to plan their exit from the violent environment. A woman, who was forced into pregnancy and learned of it only later, said that the man's family accused her of having an affair. She said that due to her current current health problems it would be very challenging for her to carry pregnancy to term; however, she was worried that, in the event of having an abortion, she would face comments from the man's family that "so, it was someone else's child". We have once again seen that even if the woman is certain of what she wants to do, various forms of pressure by the family make it difficult to get out of violent environment.

Another factor that affects women's decision to leave the violent environment or not pertains to the families' comments on the children. We witness these cases a lot, especially during the separation process, when men instrumentalize children to try to harm women. In such cases, men use methods such as threatening women to kidnap the children, get their custody or harm them. In addition, the man's family may refuse to give the children's custody to the mother, and they may put pressure on and threaten her, using the custody as a leverage. Coming from multiple fronts, this threat causes worry in women, and this is perhaps one of the most frequently brought up subjects in our conversations. The woman's family, on the other hand, may have different approaches to children. Sometimes they tell women, who are in the process of leaving the violent environment, to "leave the children" as a condition of accepting them into their homes, which creates an obstacle for women to stay away from violence. Some other times, families may preach women to endure the violence they are subjected to in various ways and tell them to be patient. Such approaches manifest themselves in statements such as "hang in there, you have two children", "you have children, be patient. You can't take care of them by yourself, you need to be patient". While uncertainties of post-violence life and the inadequacy of the support mechanisms are already challenging enough for women, the fact that the child issue, which is important to them, keeps coming women's way in various forms turns into one of the dynamics that makes it difficult to stay away from violence.

In cases where men's families become accomplice to the violence against women, the support received from her own family can prove particularly important for women. When women can share their experiences of violence with their families and when families support women by helping them with accommodation and childcare during their attempt to get away from violence, by facilitating women's access to legal support, by calling the police in cases of acute violence, and by offering financial support to

women to make their own plans, women feel empowered against violent men and their families.

In some cases, some family members pressure the woman to stay in a violent and abusive relationship, while other members secretly support the woman. This support can take the form of providing financial support, guiding women to seek support, supporting women to get a divorce and opening their home. These forms of support not only encourage women, but also provide her with resources that she can benefit from while making plans to stay away from violence. For instance, a woman shared with us that she stayed at her uncle's home for a while and received financial support. Her father, who had not wanted her to divorce at the beginning, started to support her, saying "after this man's threats, I don't know if you will be killed or not". Having supported by her family, she said that her decision to get a divorce and her application to the shelter became faster.

## Psychologization of Violence

An issue that captured our attention in the information and experience shared by the women who applied to Mor Çatı was the widespread tendency to attribute reasons for male violence to psychological reasons, which we have also frequently observed in public discourses recently. We have noticed that women tend to explain reasons for male violence with men's inability to control their anger and having mental disorders. We have observed that this is also used by perpetrators to normalize or legitimize violence. This approach, however, leads women to see the violence they are subjected to as a behavior that men "can't control" or that they cannot change. Thus, it fosters the belief that the source of male violence is not social but individual, isolated incidents caused by personal problems and renders invisible the fact that male violence is a systematic problem and a crime. We also have seen that if deemed a psychological problem, male violence has more complicated impacts on women. Women then can think that they deserve the violence, that it is their fault. As they adopt this way of thinking, they may feel responsible for stopping the violence or transforming the perpetrator.

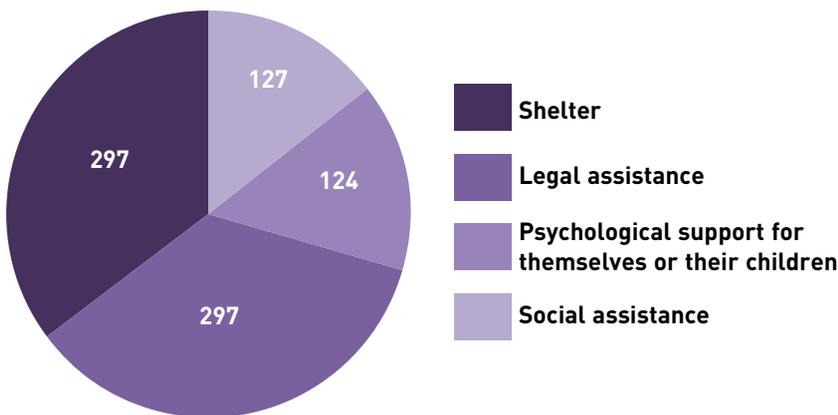
However, contrary to popular beliefs, we know that male violence is not an anger management problem or a psychological disorder. We also know that, except for a very small group, men who use violence do not have psychiatric or clinical condition. Violent men are usually the ones who are closest to women in their daily and social life. The source of male violence is the power inequality rooted in gender roles. Privileges and power cre-

ated by gender inequality beget male violence. Resorting to violence is a selective behavior, indeed, a way of thinking. Men, encouraged by this very field of power, do not feel the need to control their anger; instead, they consider violence legitimate. The purpose of systematic male violence is to control, punish, and exert power over women. Therefore, acts of violence do not indicate inability of anger management or a psychological problem. Violent men resort to violence not because they cannot control their anger, but because they do not feel the need to control their anger and they want to control women. For this reason, putting an end to the violent behavior requires that men accept their violent behavior, reflect on themselves, and become aware of their privileges. Changing violent behavior is only possible by reckoning with the power asymmetries created by gender roles and taking responsibility. That said, some legal sanctions such as interventions, “rehabilitation” programs, anger management trainings in which men are pushed into are doomed to fail.

## Forms of support women need to get away from violence:

When women call us to get away from the violence they experience, they can as well express their needs and requests. Every woman may have a differing need for support, given the uniqueness of their experiences. In our social work at the solidarity center, we both listen to women’s demands and, based on our experiences, draw their attention to various forms of support that may be important for them. In 2021 too, women reached out to Mor Çatı to share their experiences, to learn about their social and legal rights, and to receive legal support.

## Requests by women we had interviews with in 2021:



Since we have more than one interviews with the applicant women, women can express different demands in each interviews. When we look at all of the requests made to the solidarity center in 2021, we see that the requests by women are as follows:

### Sharing about the processes of combating violence: 1817

463

Women requested experience sharing regarding processes of combating violence

402

Legal assistance

339

Shelter

339

Social assistance or social support

176

Psychological support

56

Finding a job

20

Finding accommodation

16

Abortion

7

Medical assistance

7

Psychological support for their child/ren

4

Daycare/ school support

Besides all of these, women can also contact Mor Çatı for support in finding a home and job, asking for guidance on abortion, finding a school or daycare center for their children, and requesting medical assistance. Women reach out to us either because they do not know where to address these needs, or because they have tried out many other support mechanisms before contacting us and were unable to receive support because of intimidating and negligent attitude or false information. We carried out social work with women contacting Mor Çatı in order to have a holistic understanding of their demands and needs and to refer them to relevant institutions, and to provide them with social support. In accordance with women's needs and requests, Mor Çatı volunteer lawyers gave legal consultancy, and the applicant women were directed to relevant institutions such as the Legal Aid Units of Bar Associations, where they could get long-term and sustainable legal assistance. Similarly, in line with women's needs and requests, Mor Çatı volunteer mental health professionals provided psychological/psychiatric support and women were directed to institutions such as hospitals and psychological assistance units of municipalities. In addition, applicant women's requests related to their children were directed to relevant institutions. Women received free of charge support from Mor Çatı volunteer professionals. Due to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, most of this communication took place on online platforms.

The violence women were subjected to can affect women's mental and psychological health; this being the case, male violence can deprive women of their ability to keep up their daily lives. Violence can cause women to experience mental health problems and somatic disorders, creating difficulties for women in matters such as childcare. Such difficulties can shape women's needs and requests while they get away from the violent environment. In this sense, we observe that women have requests for economic support and assistance. We have seen that these demands for social assistance increased in women's narratives due to unemployment, economic crisis and inflation, major price hikes in basic needs and housing expenses due to the pandemic. So much so that in the current economic conditions, some women contacted us only to share not the violence they have been subjected to but their need for financial and social assistance. They stated that they had difficulties in meeting their healthcare, housing, and education expenses and that their social resources do not suffice for them. In addition, we see that existing mechanisms do not define the impact of violence on women's health and resources as an obstacle. While in some cases this approach may hinder women's opportunity to benefit from social assistance, in other cases, social assistance itself poses a problem for women to build their lives freely. We observe that

women who do not have children or who have grown-up children cannot benefit from various social support mechanisms, nor are they offered any other alternatives. Furthermore, in cases where women live with their families and where there is a formally (with insurance) employed person in the household, women are deemed to be benefitting from the economic resources coming to the household and their applications to various social assistance are not evaluated although they, in reality, cannot receive any support other than accommodation from the family. As we explained in Monitoring Report on Coordination in Combating Male Violence in Turkey<sup>2</sup>, published in 2021, once again we figured how important it is to consider women's specific needs while providing support to them in their attempts to stay away from violence, to organize these support mechanisms in line with women's unique needs, and to evaluate each woman as an individual independent of her family. Considering the effects of violence, women should be able to access temporary and sufficient financial support until they can come through, and this support should be provided for all women including those who do not have children or have grown-up children.

## Child and adolescent social work in the solidarity center

The experiences of women who applied to Mor Çatı enable us to see not only what women's and their children's needs and what sorts of obstacles they face in their effort to stay away from violence but also what is the impact of domestic violence on children. Children can be directly subjected to violence as well as they can experience the effects of witnessing violence their mothers subjected to. For this reason, in Mor Çatı solidarity center, we carry out social work with children who are subjected to violence, too. We not only carry out one-to-one social work with children whose mothers receive support from Mor Çatı or who apply to Mor Çatı with an adult they trust. We also frequently address experiences of women who were subjected to violence in their own families in their childhood.

In 2021, we had a total of 32 interviews directly with children at the solidarity center. Apart from one-to-one interviews, we have also formed solidarity with women who call for cases where their children experienced violence or abuse. We have also encountered situations where some women called for requesting daycare support or psychological support for their children.

<sup>2</sup> Monitoring Report on Coordination in Combating Male Violence, see <https://en.morcati.org.tr/reports/the-effects-of-male-violence-and-mechanisms-to-combat-male-violence-on-childrens-rights/>



Violence has numerous behavioral and emotional effects on children.<sup>3</sup> Witnessing the effects of violence on their children, women also applied to the solidarity center to receive information on how they can access support against such effects. While trying to stay away from violence women try to devise mechanisms to cope with the effects of violence on themselves on the one hand, they strive for generating resources to cope with the effects of violence on their children, on the other. Because of this, women may face difficulties in their effort to build a violence-free life. On the other hand, required to take care of their children's basic needs, women may have difficulty in generating economic resources especially in cases where children are under 12 and there is no one else to take care of them. In some cases where there is a double-shift school system and children leave school early during the day, where women have relocated while escaping from the perpetrator and have not yet formed new social networks, where they cannot receive support from family and friends and cannot receive daycare support for pre-school or school-age children, women's opportunities to form a sustainable and violence-free life are restricted.

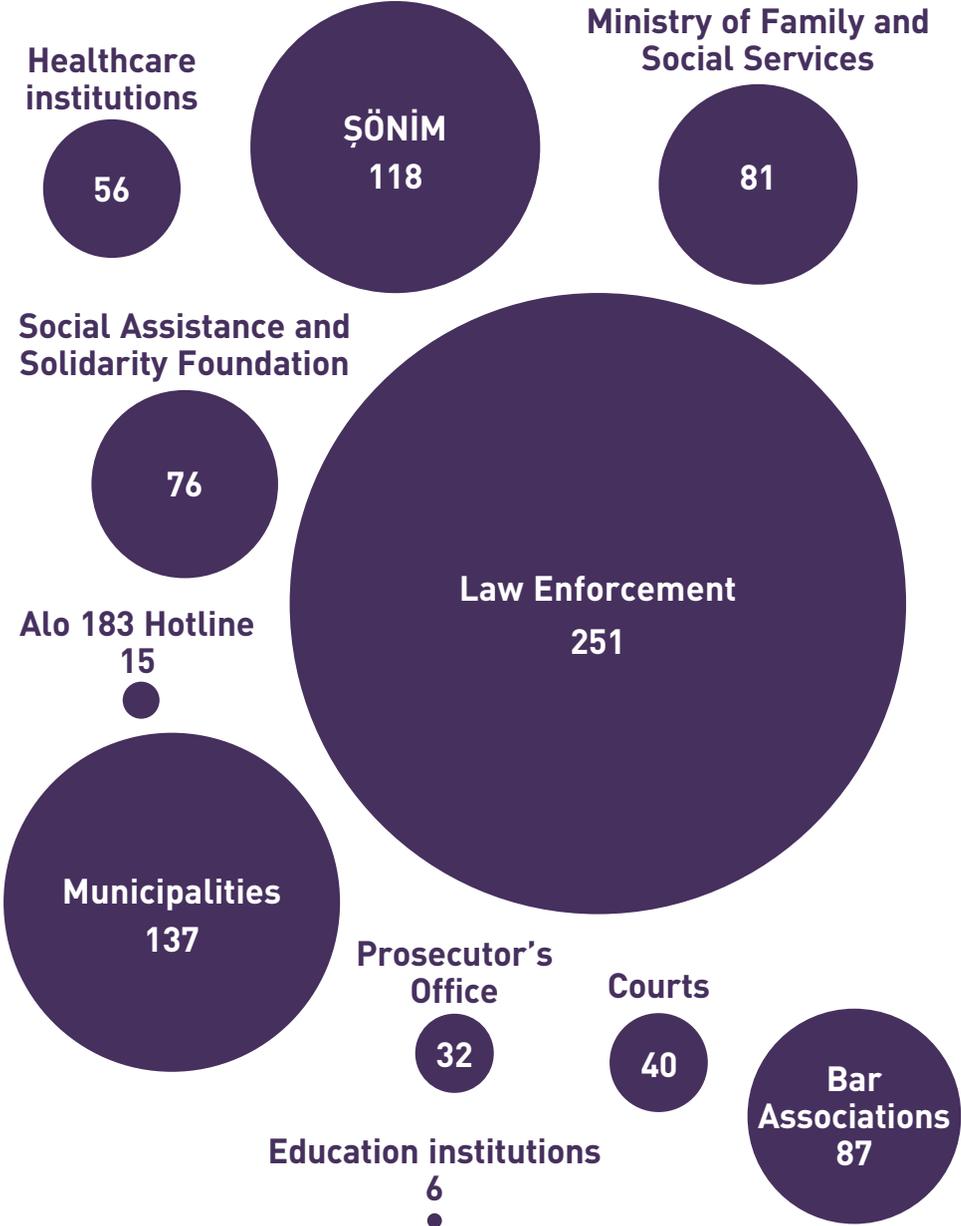
## Support Requested from Institutions Responsible for Preventing Violence against Women

When women experience violence, they apply to different institutions, request various forms of support, and try to access the mechanisms they need in their post-violence life. We have observed that, this year more women compared to the previous year, applied to institutions such as ŞÖNİM, law enforcement, and the Ministry of Family and Social Services (ASHB) before contacting Mor Çatı. Every woman needs different resources due to varying conditions such as socio-economic status, the support they receive from her family and social circles, social background, whether or not she has children, and the childcare support she needs for children. This situation requires that appropriate services be provided by relevant institutions so that women and their children, if they have any, can build a violence-free life. In this respect, the Istanbul Convention not only laid the groundwork for a legal basis, it also drew attention to the functioning capacity of the support systems that women need and the importance of holistic policies. We observed that rapid responses by the mechanism applied to by women especially in cases of acute violence, have a positive effect on the steps that women will take in the future. Conversely, cases

3 For details on the subjects and our experiences as Mor Çatı, see our shadow report titled "The Effects of Male Violence on Children's Rights and Mechanisms to Combat it in Turkey", written in 2022. <https://en.morcati.org.tr/reports/the-effects-of-male-violence-and-mechanisms-to-combat-male-violence-on-childrens-rights/>



where women are misinformed and disinformed, being exposed to intimidating responses, and encountering sexist approaches have negative impacts on women to tell the violence they have been subjected to and to seek support. Many women with whom we formed solidarity expressed their concerns that the violence they experience would deteriorate or that they would not get any results if apply to such mechanisms.



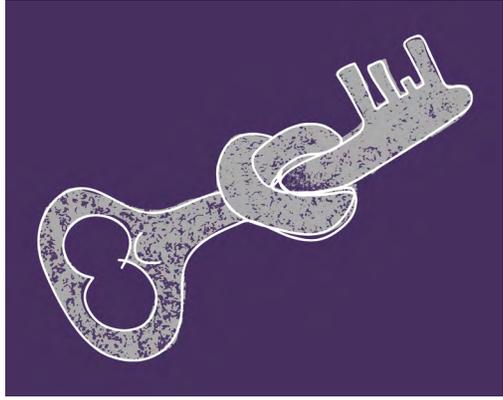
When women apply to judicial mechanisms such as prosecutor's office, bar association and legal aid in order to file a lawsuit, to request restraining order, or to receive legal information, the most common bad practices they encounter are as follows: not being listened to, not being sufficiently informed, not being taken seriously, being forced to wait for a long time, their experience being belittled and disregarded and facing a sloppy approach.

Other problems women face when they apply to judicial mechanisms include the following: not being able to have an interview in their native language when they call the bar association; being given incomplete/incorrect information about the measures within the scope of Law No. 6284; being told, "we cannot issue a restraining order without him harming you", by the prosecutor's office; being told that they can be referred to a shelter only after they get assault incident report by the forensics unit; persistently requesting residence information from women who have confidentiality order; not being able to communicate with private or legal aid lawyers; not being provided sufficient information on the Law No.6284; and not having their protective/preventive orders monitored fully by their lawyers.

Although there are ŞÖNİMs in all 81 provinces and they are the most basic mechanism established to combat violence, we see that ŞÖNİMs in many cities are not properly functioning. We see that women are not enabled to access social support suited to their needs, that the only mechanism women can apply for protection order is the law enforcement, that social work is provided only during their stay in the shelter. Besides, we see that the social work carried out while living outside the shelter lacks a holistic perspective, is uncoordinated and far from responding to women's needs. The combat against violence against women in Turkey does not offer specialized social services and this lack manifests itself in women's lives. Because the shelters are becoming dysfunctional every other day and the shelter conditions are challenging for women, we encountered situations that women felt compelled to return to the violent environment, where they were subjected to violence without getting empowered while leaving the shelter.

In their current conditions, ŞÖNİMs are far away from serving as a preventive and monitoring mechanism; moreover, with the pandemic, we have also seen that the law enforcement has come to be initiated as the first point of application in every possible scenario. Following the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, we have witness that the law enforcement and some

government institutions started to act as if the Law No. 6284 was null and void. This, in turn, instills insecurity and anxiety in women. When women are subjected to violence, they refuse to go to the police or think that they will not get a response even if they do. After emphasizing in our interviews over and over again about the rights defined within the scope of the Law No. 6284



and how we can claim them, that we have to be persistent, and that this is our fundamental citizenship rights, we realized that we started to get positive response in the applications. In the solidarity center, we develop an approach together with women that every woman is unique and has right to be heard as a respectable individual and that our struggle for our lives empowers us all. We have seen that this approach we developed together enables women to be insistent and demanding about their rights when they face an intimidating and deterrent approach from the law enforcement or other institutional mechanisms.

### **Some of the bad practices women faced when they made an application were listed below:**

- A woman's father was in contact with the police, so the location of the shelter she stayed was disclosed and she was forced to leave the shelter.
- When a woman, who called the police because her husband, for whom a restraining order was issued, came to the house and damaged the doors and windows, a female police officer said to her, "Can you not handle a drunk man?"
- A woman who had an interview with ŞÖNİM in a city and requested shelter was told "We can only deal with security; we don't have the means to send you another city or to do anything about your children's school".
- An unmarried and pregnant woman confronted a judgmental and accusatory approach and heard statements such as "will you not feel upset" when she applied to the social services for various supports and adoption procedures.

- When a woman, who receives 300 Liras of financial assistance from the district governorship every three months, reapplied to the Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation (SYDV) because the financial assistance she gets was not even enough for kitchen expenses under current conditions, she was told “We have already helped you, do not get dependent on the state. The state is already doing what it can”.
- In her interview with SYDV, a woman was told “we do not give assistance to women whose husband is alive”.
- Many women who have confidentiality orders cannot even apply for various support mechanisms from the district governor’s office, municipality, health services, school enrollment or social service centers because they are automatically rejected on the grounds that their residence information is not seen on the system.
- When a woman applied to the law enforcement two days after the sexual assault, she was told “it must have been healed by now” and was not taken to the medical examination.
- When a woman reported that she had issued a restraining order against her husband and the perpetrator (the husband) violated this order, the police said “Hire a muscle and have him beaten up”.
- When a woman applied to the law enforcement and requested shelter, the police, judging by her ID number starting with 99, told her that she could not be taken to the shelter because she was a foreigner and that they could not refer her.
- When a woman called the law enforcement for reporting violence, the police came to the scene after one hour despite being at a 5-minute distance. After that the police disclosed her caller ID saying “your daughter called” even though during the application the woman explicitly demanded her name to remain confidential. Finally, in the same police station, the police pressured the woman not to file a complaint saying, “he is your father”.
- When a woman called ŞÖNİM for psychological support, ŞÖNİM called her back as late as a week later and asked for a written application. Later, when the psychologist said, “I will call you at 16.30”, the woman replied, “Don’t call, my husband will be at home at that time”. They nonetheless called the women, putting the woman in a difficult situation.

- A woman, whose father is a police officer and who was subjected to violence by her father, brother and sister-in-law, stated that when she called the police after the incidence of violence, the police acted in a deterrent manner and did not receive her complaint, saying “you call tomorrow again. You will see, you’ll think different tomorrow”.
- When a woman’s application to the police station for a restraining order was not processed, we called the same station and declined with the answer, “I have been issuing restraining order all day, how should I know who is having what problem!”.

All these deterrent and sexist discourses, incomplete and inaccurate information, and intimidating and accusatory behaviors are the most common bad practices we see in the field. When the lack of coordination between institutions is coupled with mistreatment faced by women, it becomes increasingly difficult to access the holistic support women need to stay away from violence. Moreover, this lack of coordination prevents women from simultaneously accessing support from different institutions. Kinds of approaches exemplified above make it difficult for women to talk about what they have been through, forcing them to apply over and over again. Compelling women to run between different institutions, this problem brings about both financial burden and physical and mental fatigue. A woman said in our interview “I wouldn’t have contacted you if I had been getting the support from the state”, summarizing the fact that women do not receive the required treatment when they reach these institutions. We, Mor Çatı volunteers, face similar difficulties when we want to meet with government institutions regarding the needs of applicant women. The most problems we experience include having our calls directed to other offices, the lack of information about who the authorized person is in the same institution, having us wait until the authorized person is question is reached, not giving sufficient information when we can reach them, and encountering negligent attitudes.

## Good Practices

We have also encountered good practices where women are supported in their efforts to stay away from violence. Some examples are listed below:

- When a woman who applied to ŞÖNİM shared her previous experiences in ŞÖNİM and other institutions before relocating to another city, she received the response “How come they were not helpful” and the ŞÖNİM in the new city had her files brought and supported her to have interviews with other institutions.

- A woman, who was going through an acute situation at the time, applied to the bar association and was able to get a fast-track appointment the next day. She was appointed a lawyer by the bar.
- A woman who needed daycare support for her children while she was starting to work made an application to the municipality and was provided with daycare support for her two children.
- A woman who applied to the Social Service Center for daycare support was able to enroll her children in the kindergarten, which she found appropriate in terms of transportation and confidentiality, and she was given the information about alternative institutions in the city she lived, taking into account her need for privacy and security.
- A woman who applied to the law enforcement for restraining order was given detailed information about the protective measures within the scope of the Law No. 6284 and was told that she could request shelter, too.
- A woman who applied to the Gendarmerie was informed that it was important to have the assault report and the 3-month restraining order so that she could use her right to file a lawsuit for compensation in the future.
- A woman we referred to a metropolitan municipality shared with us that she received a follow-up call because she couldn't attend the interview due to Covid lockdowns. She continued that the municipality, taking into account her conditions, paid her a house visit for an interview.
- A woman staying in a metropolitan municipality shelter said, "They scare us by saying that shelters are bad. I wouldn't have found this place if I hadn't called you. There are great opportunities here," and she gave information about a well-working shelter work.
- A woman, who left the shelter and whose confidentiality order is still in force, was supported by higher education institutions in providing dormitory and school change.

A woman, who stayed in the shelter with her child for a while but had to leave sooner than she needed due to the challenging physical conditions, stated that she was able to talk about the cycle of violence with her social worker during her stay in the shelter: "The cycle of violence is a bottomless

pit. We fell in love and got married, then came pregnancy, and came other things and it always went on like this. But now, I say no and I response back. He hears things that he had not heard from me last ten years.” Her statements implied that the social work in the shelter made her feel good for understanding her feelings and experiences, and she left the shelter empowered, being aware of the cycle of violence.

We know both from our experience of working with women and our communication with institutions that these good practices played a major role for women to build their lives. We know that most of the examples we listed as “good practices” are actually practices that these institutions are responsible for and authorized to do as per their regulations and institutional duties. Thanks to the positive approach they encounter, many women find courage to make future plans, to set new goals by pushing their limits, and to tell their experiences without feeling shame, worry, anxiety, guilt, or fear. Not only economic assistance but also enabling women’s access to their rights, listening to them without rushing off, judging, or accusing them has direct effects on women’s lives.

## MOR ÇATI WOMEN'S SHELTER

Shelters are facilities where women who are subjected to male violence stay with their children and receive social, psychological, legal, etc. support that they need to build a violence-free and independent life. In addition to staying away from violence and accessing the support they need, in shelters women can also in solidarity in the combat against violence they experienced by virtue of being women.

Mor Çatı Women's Shelter, opened in 2009 with an 18-bed capacity, moved to its new building bought in 2021 thanks to our supporters, expanded, and made more accessible, inclusive, and in further conformity with our feminist principles. As of August 2021, the shelter continues its activities with a capacity of 25 beds.

During the Mor Çatı Shelter improvement process, we had meetings with the District Governor's Office, municipalities and other relevant institutions in order to facilitate the processes through which women receive support from the shelter. In order to make sure that children do not have any problems in accessing the school and regarding their privacy and security, we had meetings with school principals in which we underlined the Law No. 6284 and the processes regarding the confidentiality orders and guidance was provided accordingly.

In January-December 2021, in addition to three women who were receiving ongoing support from 2020, a total of 29 people received shelter support, including 18 women who were accepted into the shelter in 2021, 1 adolescent, and 7 children. In shelter admission process and provision of necessary support in Mor Çatı, we do not discriminate anyone based on their age, language, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and legal status. While the age of the women who came to the shelter varied between 18 to 48, that of children ranged from 2 to 14 years old.

Boys aged 0-18, who came with their mothers, can also stay in the Mor Çatı shelter regardless of their age. We embrace the principle that everyone is a child until the age of 18. In state and municipality shelters, in contrast, boys over 12 who come with their mothers are not accepted to the shelter. This, in effect, causes the women, who do not want to leave their children, to choose not to go to the shelter.

There is no pre-determined duration of stay for women who come to the Mor Çatı shelter; their length of stay varied depending on their resources, conditions, and goals.

Among the women staying in the Mor Çatı shelter, 2 were primary school graduate, 9 were elementary school graduates (including one whom was forced to drop out at high school), 10 were high school graduates (including three who were university dropouts), one was university student, and one was university graduate.

## The reasons why women applied to the Mor Çatı shelter and the types of violence they have been subjected to

Below are women's statements as to why they applied to the Mor Çatı shelter:

- 15 women were exposed to physical, psychological, and economic violence by their husbands during their marriage, and the violence experience of 4 of them were at the level of bodily injury,
- 8 women were exposed to sexual violence by their husbands during their marriage,
- 6 women applied to the shelter because they were subjected to violence by their father/brothers,
- 5 women were forced into marriages in their childhood and then they were subjected to physical and psychological violence by that person,
- A migrant woman was exposed to physical, psychological, and economic violence by her husband for years, she was subjected to social isolation. Another woman was isolated at home by her husband and his family for many years since the day she got married and could not go out. 2 women were deprived of their right to education by their brothers and left home due to physical violence. And a woman moved in with another relative of hers due to the pressure and physical violence by her brother,
- 4 women shared with us that they had to choose marriage to escape the violence they experienced in their families, and one woman shared that although she did not want to, she had to marry her then boyfriend because of family's pressures about virginity. All 5 women reported that they were subjected to psychological, physical, economic and sexual violence by their husbands throughout their marriages.

As is the case in the previous years, we saw as a result of in-depth interviews with women following their arrival at the shelter that although many were

admitted to the shelter for the reasons listed above, they had also been subjected to various types of violence by other people. For instance, two of the women staying in the shelter in 2021 were subjected to sexual abuse in their childhood; 15 of them shared that they were exposed to physical, psychological, and economic violence by their families or relatives, their husband's families or relatives. ,

## Women's experiences

In this section of the report, we will focus on the experiences of women and children who stayed in the shelter in 2021 and whose experiences of violence we had touched upon above. The social work we carried out with the women and their children in the shelter allows us to obtain detailed information about the other types of violence they have been subjected to, besides the experience of violence which was the reason for applying to Mor Çatı.

### Physical violence

We observed that women were exposed to life-threatening and serious injuries as a result of the physical violence perpetrated by men or that they carry permanent scars on their bodies. Besides battering, men caused physical harm in women by methods such as hair pulling, slapping, dragging by the hair, hitting with an object, throwing objects, strangling/ attempting to strangle, coming at women, pulling a knife, stabbing, beating women in deserted places, threatening to kill them by hanging them from the balcony, holding a gun to their head, torturing them by tying their hands and feet, and isolating them.

We learned that one woman was stabbed and seriously injured by her husband and hospitalized in intensive care; one woman had to go to the hospital more than once because she was subjected to sever physical violence by her husband, one woman was taken to the forest, beaten up and left there injured by her ex-husband. One woman stated that she had almost lost her sight due to the systematic physical violence by her husband and that she had a bone fracture in her body that gave her chronic pain.

Women told us that they are frequently threatened by the perpetrators of violence with the most serious version of physical violence, that is death or harm to their families. Sometimes this threat was carried through with tools such as gun or knife and got intensified when women expressed that they wanted to separate, to take their children with them, or to get divorced. We observed that although women sometimes applied to an institution after their experience of violence, they usually refrained for a

long time from applying to any healthcare or law enforcement institutions. The reason why was that they were often afraid of the perpetrator or did not have trust in the judicial authorities which, they thought, might cooperate and collaborate with the perpetrator and because they were exposed to mistreatment in their previous applications and could not receive any support. In addition, we observed that women experienced chronic health issues due to the severe physical violence they were exposed to.

We also saw that physical violence against women continued during pregnancy and women were compelled to work under challenging physical conditions during their pregnancy.

We learned from women's narratives that in the cycle of violence, husbands used violence when women returned home after separation. Women who went back home after applying to institutions such as law enforcement and especially shelters were subjected to psychological violence such as insults, slander, accusations as well as severe forms of battering.

Two young women who were subjected to violence by their families shared with us that their families prevented them from studying but they secretly prepared for the university exam. When they were admitted to the universities they wanted to go, they were exposed to physical violence and were stopped from continuing their education. Hence, they escaped from home and applied for shelter support.

Three women shared with us that they had to return to the violent environment due to shelter conditions, the lack of a quality social work, and the lack access to the legal, social, and psychological support they needed. Another woman stated that she had to go back to the violent environment because her husband located the shelter she was staying in, and when she returned, the violence increasingly continued.

A woman, who applied to the shelter because her family did not support her after she decided to leave home, said that her brother threatened to kill her when she expressed that she was going to the shelter.

## **Sexual Violence and Marital Rape**

We observed that women were frequently exposed to sexual violence by men inside or outside the domestic spaces. Marital rape is one of the most widespread cases. In addition, we saw that women did not think that marital rape is a crime under the law. When they learned that it is a crime, they were surprised because of the widespread belief that all sexual conduct

should be responded positively within a conjugal relationship. On the other hand, women, who voiced that forced sexual intercourse in marriage is a crime and they do not deserve it, also stated that they experienced even more severe violence and psychological pressure when they expressed it to their husbands.

We learned that women were subjected to various forms of sexual violence such as forcing women to have sexual intercourse by threatening her with violence against children, forcing anal intercourse, forcing the use of objects during intercourse, forcing unwanted sexual fantasies upon women, forcing women to have sexual intercourse during their menstrual period, not allowing them to use birth control methods, preventing the termination of unwanted pregnancies, and forcing women to get pregnant by not using any contraceptives. Some of the sexual violence experiences that the women shared with us include the following: two women got pregnant after being raped by their husbands; one women said her husband use sexual violence as a method for punishment so that she would not break up with him; one woman told us that her husband said to her that she is his property and she had no right to say no; one women told that her husband accused her of not being woman-like which he used as a reason for rape and that he considered rape as his right. One woman stated that her husband did not allow her to use contraceptive methods, that he constantly took her to see the doctor especially for her to get pregnant and threatened her not to ask the doctor for help on contraception. One woman shared with us that she was subjected to physical and psychological violence by both her husband and his family because she could not get pregnant for a long time. Another woman stated that she was subjected to sexual violence by her husband while her little child was sleeping next to her.

While two of the women shared their sexual abuse experience in childhood, many other women expressed that they were pressured to marry or forced into marriage at an early age or as a child by their families.

## Psychological and Digital Violence

We saw that men used psychological violence to undermine women's self-confidence, to make women feel scared and helpless, and to control them. Women shared that their bodies and sexuality are insulted and belittled, especially with sexist swearwords and insults and that they were often faulted by being compared to other women. Women frequently voiced in their narratives that when they did not comply by the gendered division of labor or did not act in conformity with men's wishes, they faced ridicule,

humiliation, degrading, and insult such as “what kind of a woman are you”, “what kind of a mother are you”.

We also noticed that men chose methods such as punishing women by cheating on them for years on end or by telling women about their affairs. On the other hand, we frequently saw cases in which men used psychological violence and pressured women by accusing them of having an affair. One woman said that her husband followed her every day to her workplace and until she left work because he thought that she was cheating on him. Furthermore, women frequently stated that men with whom they wanted to break up threatened with harming themselves and women’s families and children. Perpetrators also used methods such as locking women in their rooms, preventing women from going out by taking the house keys with them, confiscating women’s communication tools, remotely controlling internet access, and thus isolating women in order to punish them.

We found out that young women, who applied to our shelter due to their experience of violence by their families, were also often subjected to psychological violence by their fathers and brothers. Among the types of violence young women are exposed to were being forced into marriage, being deprived of their right to education, being forced to wearing headscarf, being threatened with physical violence and death, being insulted, and being exposed to isolation due to their sexual orientation.

One woman stated that she could not file a complaint about her husband, for whom she had restraining order issued, because her family put a pressure on her saying “you cannot stay at home alone”.

When women who experience violence in their marriages want to get away from the violent environment and when they are not supported by their families, they experience severe psychological violence. Especially in cases where families say, “leave your children and then you can come here” or “such things happen in the family, people are going through much worse”, women feel unsupported and lonely. These attitudes create psychological pressure on women for they do not want to leave their children in a violent environment.

A woman, who was forced to marriage when she was a child, talked about the pressure by her family, saying, “they tell me not to bring my children. Because, if I don’t have my children with me, they can force me to marry again. They won’t accept me to be on my own”.

Another type of violence, especially expressed by young woman, is digital

violence. Women shared with us that their social media accounts are constantly monitored by their partners and husbands or they are banned from using such media, that they were threatened with messages especially when they expressed that they wanted to break up, and that their phones were taken away from them for punishment.

A foreign woman expressed that her husband could remotely control her internet access and that he banned her from using a smart phone. Also, her husband not only prohibited her from leaving home when he was not at home, but he also isolated her by blocking her access to communication channels. She told us that her husband always stopped her efforts to return to her country, prevented her from meeting new people, integrating into culture, and learning the language during her stay in Turkey. This way, she expressed, her husband made sure that she could not get out of violence for many years.

Another foreign woman spoke about the discrimination she was exposed to by her husband and her husband's family. She argued that because she is a foreigner, she and her son are often subjected to insults and sexist and racist slurs.

## **Divorce/Separation**

In 2021 too, men inflicted psychological violence on women in the process of divorce/separation. This type of violence particularly became manifested in the children's custody. We observed that men, who did not take any responsibility in childcare and in children's emotional and physical needs during the marriage, were persistent about the children's custody only for intimidating women, putting pressure on them, and maintaining a controlling relationship. As a result, divorces usually are contested and take a very long time. We have observed that women are psychologically worn out during these processes. We learned that in one case, the husband withdrew the divorce suit, claiming that the woman had eloped with another man, cheated on him and expressing his disbelief in her stay in the shelter. We have also seen that some men first agreed to an uncontested divorce but later gave up on divorce altogether, trying to prevent women from rebuilding their lives.

In addition to psychological violence in the divorce/separation process, most women who want to separate or get divorced are exposed to threats, stalking, and digital violence by the men who were violent against them in the first place. Women were threatened by the men, with whom they wanted to break up, on the phone and social media and were subjected

to stalking because men tried to locate women's workplace, children's schools, and where they lived. One woman stated that she had a hard time during the divorce process because her husband tried to reach her and said that he would commit suicide in the case of divorce. One woman shared that her husband, who had first agreed to an uncontested divorce, attempted at beating her in the courtroom, tried to manipulate her to convince her to return with her children. She told us that she could leave the courtroom with a police escort.

Women shared with us that during their stays in the shelters they had to constantly change places or cities due to the stalking by the perpetrators. A woman said that she relocated in another city and applied to our shelter because she did not feel safe in the previous shelter due to her husband's persistent stalking. In addition, women were often exposed to stalking through digital violence.

A woman shared with us that two different phone numbers she purchased were identified by her relatives, and that she was subjected to stalking for five months by her family and relatives. She eventually moved to another country because she did not feel safe.

## Social Isolation

Men systematically exposed women to isolation, another widespread type of violence, by preventing women and children from going out and communicating with other people, especially under the pretext of jealousy. In line, 18 women shared that they were exposed to severe restriction by their families, husbands, or partners and that they were subjected to forms of isolation such as home confinement, having their phones taken away, not being able to go even to the grocery store, not being able to look out the window, and being insulted even when a random man passes by on the road. A foreign woman told us that she was isolated at home for years and her husband did not allow her to learn Turkish. Women also often stated that in addition to social isolation, they were thrown out of the home by their husbands whenever they wanted to. We have also understood that women were often threatened with alleged claims that they would lose their children if they got divorced or separated, and that they were forced to stay in a marriage or relationship by way of threats such as "You will go, but I am not letting the children go" and "You cannot see your children if you go".

A woman said that her husband did not allow her to go out without an elder family member's company; a woman stated that her husband monitored her working hours, and she was having problems at home even when she

was one minute late and had to run home every day; a woman said that her husband did not even allow her to go to the market, saying “I am living the life of an inmate at home with my children”.

As another oft-mentioned type of violence, most of the young women said that they were forced to drop out of school or to work by their families, or they were forced to quit their education because their parents did not send them to school. The women we interviewed also said that their husbands attempted to cut women’s ties with their families and prevented them from meeting with their friends. This situation, in turn, poses a severe obstacle to women’s access to social and economic resources, and causes them to be left unsupported when they experience violence.

## Economic Violence

Similar to previous years, this year has also shown that men practiced economic violence rather heavily. The types of economic violence based on women’s statements include forcing women to work and confiscating their wages, keeping women from making saving or confiscating their savings, not allowing them to work, and expecting women to meet household and food expenses and children’s needs with extremely little money.

The women shared that they experienced impoverishment to the extent of starvation, and that they had come to the shelter when there was nothing left to eat at home. We have also observed that women who could not have a wage work due to childcare responsibilities were also frequently exposed to economic violence.

Another common form of economic violence was the seizure of a woman’s credit or debit card by the husband, father, or brother. In doing so, they made the woman indebted by doing the shopping on her cards or taking out loans on her behalf.

One woman stated that her husband took her salary card and gave her only the allowances for commuting to work while checking her accounts regularly. Another woman shared with us that she was exposed to social isolation for years and her husband did not allow her to work. Yet another woman stated that her husband put her in debt by getting a credit card and taking out loan in her name.

Additionally, most of the women shared with us that men kicked or threatened to kick them out of the house after using violence against them.

## Male Violence against Infants, Children and Adolescents

We have seen in 2021 that the physical, economic and psychological violence experienced by women during pregnancy had reflections on the infant, and malnutrition among women who were subjected to economic violence negatively affected the infant's health even before it was born. In addition to the physical and psychological problems instigated by children's exposure to violence, we observed the fact that children witnessed violence frequently at home caused them to be subjected to abuse and negative psychological impacts. We have also observed that fathers neglected their children by not meeting their basic needs. This neglect and abuse caused children to have problems in their physical, mental, emotional, and linguistic development and to experience nutritional problems.

**In our one-to-one interviews with children, adolescents, and mothers, we learned about many different forms of violence that children were exposed to:**

- Two children at the age of 1.5 were born out of marital rape,
- A 2.5-year-old girl witnessed physical and psychological violence by her father against her mother,
- A 4-year-old boy witnessed his mother's experience of physical and psychological violence by his father and was subjected to physical abuse by his father,
- A 6-year-old boy and his mother were subjected to room confinement until the age of 2, and his emotional needs were not, subjecting him to psychological neglect,
- A 12-year-old boy witnessed physical, psychological, and economic violence by his father against his mother,
- A 14-year-old girl witnessed domestic violence and was forced by her father to be his "confidant" in her private relationships. She was also compelled to parent his father and experienced reversal of roles within family,
- A 5-year-old girl witnessed domestic violence and was abducted from her mother for a short time,

- A 3-year-old boy witnessed domestic violence, was exposed to psychological and physical violence by his father, and was subjected to psychological violence by his father's relatives,
- An 8-year-old boy witnessed domestic violence and was subjected to his father's manipulations,
- A 10-year-old girl witnessed domestic violence and was subjected to her father's manipulations.

One of the striking points in children's biographies was that most of the children were born out of unwanted pregnancies occurred after marital rape. We understood that this has a negative impact on the mother-child bond. In particular, the fact that fathers do not take any responsibility for the childcare and children's basic needs compelled women to take the responsibility for their children on their own and caused women to have difficulties in childcare. For this reason, women often fear that children's custody will be given to the father, thinking that they could not do enough although they try really hard to take care of their children.

Another point that grabbed our attention was that men exert psychological violence on women using their children. Men used methods such as kidnapping children and threatening women with not showing their children to them and telling misleading and negative stories to children about their mothers. These experiences, we have realized, have negative effects on children.

## Support Provided to Women and Children in the Shelter

The women, children, and adolescents staying in the shelter were provided with different forms of support through individual and group work. Every woman, adolescent, and child staying in the shelter had an interview with their social worker once a week. These interviews were conducted with an approach which asserts that the first step towards women's empowerment pertains to recognizing the dynamics and mechanisms of violence and making sure that women realize that the experience of violence is not women's fault. In these interviews, women discussed with the social worker, with whom they have regular interviews, their goals and plans in order to build a violence-free life, the resources they have to attain these goals, and how they can overcome the difficulties throughout.

We organized regular weekly meetings where adults attended in order to plan the daily life in the shelter and to improve the experience of living together. We observed that these meetings created a field of solidarity by contributing to the development of problem-solving skills of women and children and by contributing to the ways in which problems related to collective life in the shelter are discussed and resolved. After the outbreak of the pandemic in March, both interviews and meetings continued on a regular basis both face-to-face and by the use of online tools.

- During this period, we continued group works and interviews with mothers in order to support mother-child communication, to increase cooperation between them, to discuss the difficulties children experience in an environment of collective living, and to help them overcome the difficulties they may face in their new life.
- In the shelter, we did information-sharing and art workshops in the group meetings organized to support children in issues such as recognizing and expressing their feelings, problem-solving, recognizing and affirming their bodies, and creativity and productivity.
- Within the scope of our work with adolescents in the shelter, we carried out group work on topics such as gender, domestic violence, and human rights. In the group work, methods such as painting and drama were used.
- In addition to the support provided in the shelter, women and children were directed to other institutional support mechanisms that would help them leave the violent environment and contribute to their empowerment.
- In response to the needs and requests of women staying in the shelter, we organized workshops on the topics of women's health, feminism, and collective life as well as yoga activities.
- For legal support, women were referred to the Istanbul Bar Association's Legal Aid Unit and to Mor Çatı volunteer lawyers.
- For psychological support, women and children were referred to Mor Çatı volunteer psychologists, psychological counselling units of municipalities, and Maya Foundation.

- Women and children were directed to Mor Çatı volunteers and municipalities' academic support units for their schoolwork.
- For temporary rent support, women were directed to the Istanbul Governorate Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation.
- For regular financial assistance, women were directed to the Social Assistance Units of the municipalities.
- Women who needed support for furniture or moving expenses in their moving out process, were directed to Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality.
- Women were directed to the District Governor's Office in order for them to benefit from free healthcare services.
- Women were directed to İSMEK for vocational training.

In addition, daily necessities, clothing and school supplies were met by in-kind donations given to Mor Çatı. Besides, women and children were provided with regular support for their medical needs and transportation expenses.

## Leaving the Shelter

- Two women left the shelter with their children after renting an apartment with the economic and in-kind support they received from the Istanbul Governorate Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Women's Coordination Center, municipalities, and Mor Çatı volunteers.
- One woman moved to another shelter because she was still in need of support and needed a different form of shelter support.
- One woman, who worked during her stay in the shelter, moved to her own apartment by receiving in-kind and economic support from the district municipalities, Istanbul Governorate, and Mor Çatı volunteers.
- One woman left the shelter in order to work and build her life on her own.

- Two women moved in with their families from whom they will get support.
- Three women returned to the environment where they experienced violence.
- One woman transferred to another university and moved to a student dorm to continue her university education.
- Two women left the shelter by renting apartment with their mothers.

## **Lack of Social Policies Makes It Difficult for Women to Leave the Shelter and Build an Independent Life!**

Since the day one women come to the shelter, they need social support and policies that are favorable to women so that they can build and maintain a post-shelter life. However, ineffective implementation of existing mechanisms, approaches varying from person to person, and the refusal to adopt policies favorable to women not only extend the duration of women's stay in shelters but also indirectly subject them to indirect violence and make them have difficulties in building an independent life. In the last two years, we have witnessed many cases in which women staying in shelters under the pandemic conditions had difficulties in accessing their right to healthcare. Accessing free healthcare services, PCR tests, and vaccination has been one of the most fundamental needs for women under pandemic conditions; however, since institutions do not effectively implement confidentiality orders and cause implementation-related difficulties, women who have confidentiality orders within the scope of the Law No. 6284 were not able to get an appointment through the centralized system (MHRS) or were not able to receive support when personally applied to the hospitals. Women stated that because they have confidentiality orders, they could not use applications such as E-Nabız, MHRS, E-government which they need to use in their daily life or while accessing healthcare services. They also stated that they were replied by healthcare institutions that they could use these services only after temporarily revoking their confidentiality orders because their information was encrypted in the Ministry of Health systems. We have observed that experiences conveyed above pose multiple risks for women and demonstrate not only that Law No. 6284 is not properly and effectively implemented but also that women are systematically exposed to aggravated living conditions. Women also encountered bad practices in hospitals due to lack of coordination between

institutions when they sought other ways to get a hospital appointment than MHRS. Women, who applied directly to the hospital because they could not get an appointment, could not be examined, and they could only access their right to healthcare in some hospitals with the help of the hospital staff or by contacting the patient rights units and social workers at the hospitals.

Women stated that due to confidentiality orders that they had issued, they had implementation problems with telecommunication companies alongside the healthcare system. When some women, who have confidentiality orders by the court, change their phone numbers, the institutions share their contact number and personal information with third parties, putting them at risk. This, in effect, not only caused women to worry about their post-shelter life and safety, but also proved once again that the system poses challenges to women.

One of the primary needs for women both during their stay in the shelter and during the separation/divorce process is daycare support for their children and, relatedly, working or benefiting from economic support. Other factors that pose obstacles to women leaving the shelter include not being able to find vacancy in daycare centers, not being able to receive social and economic support on the grounds that they already benefit from daycare support or that they stay in a shelter, the inadequate number of daycare institutions that provide care after school hours for women with school-age children.

When women who experience physical violence come to shelters, they need to benefit from healthcare services regularly and work on the psychological effects of violence. They have difficulties in accessing the support they need for their empowerment process due to inadequate social policies.

For women and children, who need to continue their education, to be supported within the scope of Law No.6284 and to be transferred to different schools without violating their privacy, inter-institutional correspondence is required. However, this correspondence takes a long time, prolonging the process for women to leave the shelter. The lack of inter-institutional coordination has engendered cases where the teachers and educators working in the schools took initiatives to have the process completed. In 2021, we contacted schools one-by-one and underlined the Law No. 6284 so that a woman who wanted to continue her university education can be supported to enjoy her right to be transferred to another school and do not have to drop out.

Receiving support from the shelter, women, who had the opportunity to identify and define violence and its effects, began to push the boundaries

of the system, which was based on protecting the family, for their own freedom. Thanks to goal-oriented social work, they could insist on their basic rights such as education and healthcare. We supported women, who had difficulties in making decisions on their own lives and identifying their needs due to the effects of violence, so that they would be aware of the mechanisms they could use to claim their rights. The women, who stated that they had no voice at home and that their existence was ignored, were able to figure out new ways thanks to the empowerment of hearing their own voices in their shelter life. One of the women shared that she had been through a dark phase for years and that she has revived and blossomed with the empowerment in the shelter.

Women, who were prevented from making decisions about their own lives and whose freedoms were restricted, needed shelter due to not only husband/partner violence but also violence by father and brothers. The women, who had to leave home in order to violence and familial pressures they experienced and to build an independent life, had the opportunity to define their experiences and demand their rights through the shelter work. They were able to continue their education, which was interrupted due to violence; they could start the vocational courses they wanted to initiate their professional life; and they started to work in order to build a free life. What was specific to 2021 was that young women needed shelter to get away from home, as their freedom was further restricted due to the pandemic.

## Shelter Employees

As was the case in previous years, in this period too, shelter employees continued to get supervision with a specialized psychologist. In addition, child supervision work was carried out by a specialist psychologist in order to enhance the social work with children in the shelter. To be able to carry out our works in coordination with the solidarity center, we held regular meetings with the participation of volunteer social workers in the shelter and solidarity center. Since we carried out remote work during the pandemic, we did not accept any interns.

In this period, shelter employees completed a first aid training so that they could be able to respond to accidents and injuries that may occur in the shelter. In order to enrich the social work with women, expert trainers gave capacity building trainings on psychological first aid, communication skills, interview techniques, and group work.

# INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCE SHARING

## Expansion of the Network of Volunteers

Mor Çatı keeps up its struggle against male violence through a large network of volunteer women. Becoming a Mor Çatı volunteer requires attendance in the Purple Meetings (Mor Buluşma) and periodic volunteer workshops. Meetings and workshops aim to raise awareness about gender and male violence. In these meetings, we give information on the history of the struggle against violence against women in Turkey, legal regulations, the work we carry out with feminist methods in the solidarity center and shelter, and we share experience. Voluntary work not only contributes to Mor Çatı, but it also helps us reckon with ourselves. In 2021, 1407 people applied to volunteer in Mor Çatı by filling out the contact form on our website. In the volunteer workshop organized this year, we aimed at introducing Mor Çatı policies to the women who wanted to volunteer and expanding our solidarity network on the basis of feminism.

After the volunteer workshop, we intensively worked with the volunteers who wanted to do social work at the Mor Çatı solidarity center and shared our experiences. Workshops and experience-sharing meetings were organized with new volunteer psychologists. Based on the needs identified by our group of volunteer lawyers, we organized two online seminars open to Mor Çatı volunteers about impunity and the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention. We also organized a series of meetings where we discussed Mor Çatı work, shelter experience, and feminism with women who wanted to volunteer at Mor Çatı.

## The Istanbul Convention and the Mor Çatı Activities

The withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention with the President's overnight decision on March 20, 2021, was a significant loss in the combat against violence against women in Turkey. As Mor Çatı, we have monitored the implementation of the Istanbul Convention since the day it was signed. We contributed to the GREVIO report prepared together with women's organizations and played an active role in the determination of Turkey's GREVIO candidate. We were observing that the assault on the Istanbul Convention had been going on for a long time and that this adversarial position was actually targeting gender equality and women's liberation. Our insistence on the Istanbul Convention is based on the fact that it is the

most comprehensive international text to combat violence against women. By recognizing that male violence is rooted in gender inequality, it offers a holistic approach to combating violence by holding the states responsible for preventing violence, protecting women from violence, punishing perpetrators, and coordination institutions incumbent on combating violence. We further insist on the Istanbul Convention as it encompasses the approaches and solutions that are in conformity with our more than 30 years long experience.



Following Turkey's withdrawal from the Convention, we participated in events where we talked about the significance of the convention in every field. We gave interviews to 13 different international media organizations to tell the current situation. Since the media in Turkey gives increasingly shrinking space to independent and dissident voices, we were featured only in 11 national media outlets.

Beginning from the moment that we heard the news of the withdrawal decision, we have been sharing our views on the situation. In order to combat the intentionally disseminated misinformation, we posted information on our social media accounts about the content of the convention and what the convention is actually about. We added a new section to our website that features the full text of the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO reports as well as the documents and materials we prepared concerning the convention so that all existing contents can be accessed all at once.

As an Istanbul-based feminist organization, we have been participating the protests organized by the "Implement the Istanbul Convention Campaign Group" in Istanbul. In this period, we saw that the support for the Istanbul Convention and opposition to Turkey's withdrawal decision mounted in the streets, on social media, across the country, and in the international arena.

As part of international solidarity, we received solidarity messages from women’s organizations in Europe and the WAVE Network with which we have contacts. We were invited to the events organized by UN Commission on the Status of Women held in those days, and in two sessions, we presented the process of pulling out of the Istanbul Convention and the current state of the struggle against violence against women in Turkey.

As Mor Çatı, Women’s Human Rights New Solutions Association, and KAOS GL, we sent a letter to the Council of Europe on March 23 regarding Turkey’s attempt to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention by a Presidential decree and called for an immediate action to take all legal and political measures possible. We had a meeting with Nacho Sánchez Amor, the European Parliament’s rapporteur on Turkey, and gave information about the current situation. Together with different women’s organizations that are members of the European Women’s Lobby, of which we are a member, we participated in meetings with the members of the European Council, the European Parliament, the European Commission and the CEDAW Committee and shared the latest developments. At the meeting organized by the Conference of International Non-governmental Organizations of the Council of Europe and the meeting organized by the International Association of Judges, we gave information on the decision to withdraw. We attended the meeting by the European Parliament EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee and gave a presentation on Turkey’s withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention and its repercussions for women and gender equality.

We participated in the United4Istanbul Convention campaign, jointly organized by many different feminist and LGBTI+ organizations from Turkey and Europe and became a part of international solidarity against Turkey’s withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention as well as the global assaults on gender equality. We filed a lawsuit at the Council of State on May 20, 2021 and demanded that the execution of the presidential decree to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention be suspended; threat regarding the annulment of the convention in Turkey as of July 1, 2021 be ceased; and the withdrawal decision be cancelled.

## “Mor Çatı Shares” Podcast Series

In 2021, we broadcasted an 8-episode podcase series titled “**Mor Çatı Shares**”. In the series, based on their experiences in Mor Çatı, volunteers discussed the impact of male violence on women, the reasons that

keep women in a violent relationship, and women's struggles to stay away from violence. In the first episode titled **"Is it violence that I am experiencing?"**, we discussed violence against women, types of violence, and how all this affects us, the women. And we sought an answer to the question, "why is it difficult to identify the violence we experience?" In the second episode named **"Resilience and Recovery"**, we discussed our resilient



attributes and recovery processes while getting away from violence. In the third episode titled **"How Do We Understand Whether Our Relationship is Safe?"**, we talked about the signals indicating whether or not our relationship is safe and how we can detect them. In the fourth episode named **"Shame, Guilt, and Helplessness"**, we discussed the feelings of shame, guilt, helplessness, and isolation engendered by violence and how naming violence could be empowering vis-à-vis these complicated emotions. In the fifth episode we focused on **"Violence against Young Women"** and addressed the impacts of domestic violence against young women, how the characteristics of this form of violence differs from violence by husbands, and how a new life is possible for young women. In the sixth chapter titled **"Being a Parent and Child in a Violent Domestic Space"**, we discussed the effects of violence on children and on mother's relationship with the child, the contradictory feelings one might have as a mother who is subjected to violence, and how being a parent poses obstacles that prevent women from leaving the violent relationship. Episode seven, **"How Knowing Our Rights Empowers Us"** sought answers to the following questions: what does rights-based policy making mean; why do we, as feminists, engage in rights-based policy-making; what is the use of knowing our rights while getting away from violence and how does it empower us? In the eighth and final episode, **"What Does Our Work at the Solidarity Center and Shelter Do?"**, we explained solidarity centers and shelters, our method of work, and how we provide support.

## The General Assembly of Women’s Shelters and Solidarity/Counselling Centers

The General Assembly of Women’s Shelters and Solidarity/Counselling Centers is a platform created to share experiences in the struggle against violence against women, to determine common policies, and to establish a permanent network between organizations and institutions. The very first General Assembly was held, with call made by the Mor Çatı Women’s Shelter Foundation to women taking part in the combat against violence against women across Turkey, in 1998 under the name of “The First Assembly on Women’s Shelters” with the context of the November 25 “International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women”. In the 5<sup>th</sup> Assembly in 2002, it was renamed as “The General Assembly of Women’s Shelters and Solidarity/Counseling Centers”. The Assembly has revised its content and methods of discussion depending on the changing needs over the years and continues to be organized every year in a different province since 1998. This year, the Assembly, titled “Anti-Gender Equality Policies and Feminist Strategies to Combat Violence against Women”, came together online on November 6-7 and 9, with the participation of 267 women. As the members of the Assembly, we organized throughout the year the “**We Want Shelter**” campaign and wrote the monitoring report titled *Shelters and Solidarity/ Counseling Centers in the Combat against Male Violence in Turkey*.

## International Conference on “Feminist Approaches to Social Work in the Struggle against Male Violence – World Experiences”

In Mor Çatı, we not only monitor the functioning of the existing mechanisms for combating male violence in Turkey, we also follow up on good practices abroad, report them and put pressure on the public authorities to make changes accordingly. To that end, we organized an online international conference titled “Feminist Approaches to Social Work in the Struggle against Male Violence – World Experiences” on



October 9-10, 2021. 200 women attended the conference, and speakers from 10 different countries including Austria, Germany, England, Italy, France, Scotland, Sweden, Ireland, Hungary and the USA, presented the good practices of feminist approach in social work as well as of women’s counseling centers, shelters, and alternative methods to combat male violence.

## **Workshop on Combating Violence against Women in the Face of Ongoing Loss of Rights**

We, Mor Çatı, organize meetings with women working in the field of struggle against violence against women in women’s organizations, non-governmental organizations, bar associations and municipalities. In these meetings, we discuss the latest developments and changes in the field and evaluate how we can fight against violence. This year, on April 17, we organized the “Workshop Combating Violence against Women in the Face of Ongoing Loss of Rights” to discuss the recent transformation in recent government policies and mechanism to combat violence. 130 women from women’s organizations, feminist platforms, and municipalities came together in the workshop. We discussed what are the possibilities owned and difficulties faced by the municipalities which we can still work together and, in some cases, we can direct women to get support as well as the areas which municipalities abstain from or stay out of. Also, as women’s organizations receiving applications for exposure to violence, we shared our experiences about the difficulties we faced and the ways in which we find solutions to these difficulties. Finally, we compiled a publication covering the presentations and discussions held here.

## **“Violence against Women: Women’s Experiences, Institutions, and Paths” Webinar**

This year, we requested from Dissensus Research to conduct a research in order to learn about the experiences of getting away from violence by women with whom we haven’t formed solidarity in Mor Çatı. We have also wanted to see a different point of view and unearth the academically analyzed results regarding women’s experiences which we have been bearing witness for years. During the research that took place between November-December 2020, in-depth interviews were conducted with 29 women living in Istanbul, Trabzon and Mardin and having varying backgrounds in terms of age, education level, and socioeconomic status. We published the results with a report titled “Violence against Women:

Women Experiences, Institutions, and Paths”. We also organized a webinar on September 16 where we discussed the structure and forms of male violence against women, and the trajectories of women struggling to get away from violence in the light of new conceptualizations presented by the research.

## Meetings with Women’s Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations

Our main goals include sharing the knowledge and experience we gained through our solidarity with women in Mor Çatı, raising awareness, and disseminating feminist methods in the struggle against violence against women. We keep up our struggle with violence against women in different parts of the country, by keeping in touch with women and non-governmental organizations continuing their struggle and by learning from each other. To that end, we co-organize campaigns on various platforms, work in cooperation, attend the meetings to which we are invited, and share experiences and knowledge with each other. In 2021, we organized 80 meetings, gave interviews, or attended events together with 65 women’s organizations and NGOs.

## International Activities

We keep up our work by learning from each other and communicating with women who fight against make violence in different parts of the world. As Mor Çatı, we share our knowledge and experiences by participating in meetings and conferences which we are invited to or which are organized by the networks we are a member of. As the assaults on the Istanbul Convention persist both in Turkey and in many other European countries and especially after Turkey’s decision to withdraw from the convention in March, expanding transnational feminist solidarity, knowledge- and experience-sharing, and exchanging information in the international arena have become particularly important for us.

We attended the Advisory Board Meeting in May and the annual conference in October, both organized by the WAVE (Women against Violence Europe) Network, of which we are a member. We also participated two other WAVE events: the capacity building training aiming to contribute to the development of good practice standards in combating sexual violence and the online event focused on combating domestic violence in the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the light of the information and experienced we learned from women, we regularly monitor the work and policies of public institutions that have authority and responsibility in combating violence against women and present reports to international monitoring mechanisms on the current situation, in order to eliminate the implementation-related shortcomings. This years, we had a seat in the writing process of the Eighth CEDAW Shadow Report. We prepared the *Shadow Report on ECtHR Opuz Class Action Case* to be presented to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. We also wrote the shadow report *The Effects of Male Violence and Mechanisms to Combat Male Violence on Children's Rights* to be presented at the 91<sup>st</sup> session of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

In addition, we continued our meetings with the EU institutions and the consulates of various countries in order to share our experiences we gained in our fight against violence against women and the information and experiences about the support foreign women in Turkey need in the struggle against violence. We took part in meetings and workshops with EU-affiliated institutions and presented our experiences to EU institutions and NGOs that receive support from them. We also participated in the survey on the III. EU Gender Action Plan prepared by the Delegation of the European Union to Turkey for the 2021-2025 period. We had meetings with the Colombian and Argentinian Consulates about the Mor Çatı experience, the needs of women who reside in/are subjected to violence in Turkey and the support that can be provided. In the events organized by the Argentinian Consulate and the American Consulate, we shared our experiences on the causes and dynamics of violence against women. Dutch, American, and German Consulates paid visits to our solidarity center.

Furthermore, we attended and organized meetings with different international women's organizations, institutions, and individuals, where we shared our knowledge and experience. We had an online meeting with Gender Hub, a women's organization in Azerbaijan, which was followed by their visit to our solidarity center and experience-sharing. We had a meeting with the Sydney-based United Against Domestic Violence Association. We took part in the conference organized by Frauen Gruppen Treffen Erlangen, a Germany-based women's organization, and shared our experiences.

We had a meeting with the Danish Refugee Council Turkey Office about the Mor Çatı experience and possible collaborations. We also shared our experiences in the Gender-Based Violence Sub-Working Group meetings organized by UNHCR and UNFPA.

## Meetings with Municipalities and Public Institutions

The information we gathered in our solidarity work with women at Mor Çatı equips us with the information about the necessary mechanisms to combat violence and the data on the difficulties women encounter in the existing mechanisms and institutions responsible for combatting violence. In our meetings with public institutions and municipalities, we share our experience, remind them of their standards and obligations, and offer support if needed. In 2021, we attended one of the two Biannual Provincial Coordination Committee for Monitoring and Evaluation of Violence against Women Meetings organized by the Istanbul Governorate. We could not attend the second meeting because we were informed on so short a notice that it was not possible for us to attend. On June 23, 2021, we sat in the Parliamentary Research Commission for Investigating All Aspects and Causes of Violence against Women and Identifying the Measures, and we expressed our criticism regarding the decision to pull out of the Istanbul Convention and emphasized the link between gender inequality and violence against women. We shared our opinions at the 2021 Meeting of the Committee for Monitoring Violence against Women, organized under the coordination of the Ministry of Family and Social Services, and by the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Interior.

In 2021, besides Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, we had meetings with Avcılar, Beyoğlu, Beşiktaş, Büyükçekmece, Kartal, Kadıköy, Pendik, Sancaktepe, Sarıyer, Şişli and Zeytinburnu Municipalities. We also touched base with Bodrum Municipality. We provided support to and shared our experiences with some of these municipalities concerning women's counseling centers and shelters they have. We attended meetings for the local equality action plan organized by some of these municipalities. We have also been in contact with the governor's offices, that are important in terms of providing support to women. Besides the Istanbul Governorate, we had meetings with the Gaziosmanpaşa and Pendik District Governor's Offices.

Exercising our rights under the Right to Information Act, we made a total of 216 applications to acquire information from public institutions and municipalities and asked questions about their activities in the field of combating violence against women.

## Meetings with the Bar Associations and Lawyers

We organize meetings, workshops, and seminars with bar associations and lawyers to foster women's access to justice and to reinforce pro-women approach among lawyers supporting women. This year, we had a meeting with Atty. Nurcan Bingöltekin, a member of the Union of Turkish Bar Associations Legal Aid Supreme Committee and Istanbul Bar Association Legal Aid Attorney in Charge, and discussed the support given to women by the legal aid units of the bar associations. We had another meeting with Sibel Suiçmez, TÜBAKKOM (Union of the Turkish Bar Associations Women's Law Committee) spokesperson, about they ways to improve free legal assistance provided to women who have been subjected to violence by the legal aid units. We organized an online experience-sharing workshop with lawyers, for which we posted an open call on social media. We held a focus-group meeting with Mor Çatı volunteer lawyers and lawyers working in other public and/or private institutions to gather information and experience to be featured in the shadow report focusing on the impact of domestic violence on children, to be presented to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

## Workshops with Social Workers and Psychologists

We organize experience-sharing workshops in order to raise awareness among social workers and psychologists on violence against women, to improve the work with women who are subjected to violence, and to help them cope with secondary trauma. In the workshops, social workers and psychologists working in public institutions, municipalities, NGOs, or women's organizations collectively evaluate the work carried out to combat violence against women while good practices are unearthed and solutions for challenging situations are offered. In 2021, we organized a three-day experience sharing workshops with social workers and psychologists. We also organized workshops with women who participated in volunteer workshops in 2020 and who wanted to offer their support in social work and psychological work. The workshops focused on information sharing on psychiatric conditions and social work in the shelter and solidarity center. We carried out psychological work relay activity with volunteer psychologists. We organized focus group meetings with social workers and psychologists who are Mor Roof volunteers or working in other public or private institutions to gather information and experience to be featured in the shadow report focusing on the impact of domestic violence on children, to be presented to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

This year, based on the need arose from the social workers experience-sharing workshop in 2020, we organized a 4-week supervision work with social workers who participated in the workshop.

## Youth Work

We not only participate in conferences in universities, but also have the opportunity to contact and share experience with youth through our interviews, meetings and panels with high school and university students. This year, we attended a total of 80 events in clubs and centers working in different fields such as psychology, political science, and law in high schools and universities. In these events, we discussed the Mor Çatı experience and addressed male violence against women, the effects of violence, our rights in the struggle against violence, and the significance of the Istanbul Convention in combating violence.

## Student and Research Interviews

In 2021, we had a total of 79 interviews with students and researchers from various schools in Turkey and abroad, including high school, undergraduate and graduate students and contributed to their research. In these interviews given by our volunteers, we shared information about the struggle against violence against women, gender equality, our activities at the solidarity center and shelter, and the decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention and its consequences.

## Private Sector Meetings

This year, we continued to share our experience in the field of violence against women and gender equality with the private sector. We made presentations on male violence against women and gender roles to 3 private sector institutions.

## Mor Çatı in the Media

We issue press releases and share opinions with the press with the aim of informing the public about the struggle against violence against women and raise awareness. In doing so, we also aim at putting pressure on the public authorities regarding both reforms and changes in favor of women and the shortcomings in the implementation of the existing laws. This year,

we expressed our opinions to various media outlets in Turkey and around the world on different issues. Especially due to Turkey's decision to pull out of the Istanbul Convention, the international press had an increased interest.

Since the mainstream media in Turkey increasingly lost its pluralism and failed to represent opposing views, we were able to find a very limited space in the mainstream media. In 2021, we were not invited to any TV channel. In the mainstream media, only Hürriyet and Milliyet newspapers featured our views. Our activities and opinions were frequently represented in the alternative media, especially in Bianet, Birgün, Evrensel, DW Türkçe, and Cumhuriyet. We were featured in a total of 82 news story, 13 of which featured in the international media.

## Social Media Campaigns

This year, we organized social media campaigns in order to share and disseminate our monitoring and policy making activities with the public and exert pressure on the public institutions through social media. We organized social media campaigns in order to disseminate *Shadow Report on ECtHR Opuz Class Action Case*, our 2020 Activity Report, our research report titled *Violence against Women: Women's Experiences, Institutions, and Paths* conducted by Dissensus Research for us, the Turkish translation of the WAVE report titled *Promising Practices of Establishing and Providing Specialist Support Services for Women Experiencing Sexual Violence*. We prepared social media content to protest the decision to withdraw from the Istanbul convention and spread our word about the scope of the agreement and its importance in combatting violence. On social media, we shared information and experience regarding the assaults on our vested rights, legal changes, and the news stories about violence against women and femicides.

Furthermore, we produced and disseminated content that draws attention to the problem of psychologization of violence that we increasingly encounter and underlines the relationship between violence and male-dominated policies. We continued to share different contents on the mechanisms that women can apply to when they are subjected to violence. Finally, we aimed at reaching out to more women by posting our podcast series, webinars, and conferences.

## Publications

We prepared new publications and revised and reprinted earlier ones with the aim of sharing with the public the knowledge and experience we learned from women in Mor Çatı, the findings of our monitoring research, and the discussions we had in the workshops we organized. We also translated some of our publications into other languages, aiming at reaching out to non-Turkish speaking women in Turkey. We disseminated online and print versions of publications to relevant institutions and individuals.

This year, we wrote a report titled *Monitoring Report on Coordination in Combating Violence against Male Violence in Turkey*, covering the period of January 1-August 31, 2021. The report focuses on the difficulties caused by the lack of inter-institutional coordination in the struggle against violence against women and reveals the impacts of the existing system on women's struggle to get away from violence. The monitoring report draws on the experiences of 1072 women who applied to Mor Çatı.

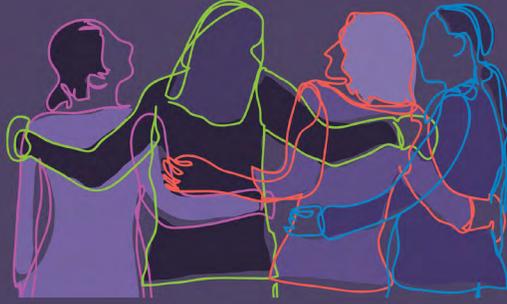
Also, this year we published the following sources: A monitoring report titled *Women's Access to Justice: The Role of Bar Association Legal Aid Units in Combatting Violence against Women*, a report on the findings of the research, titled *Violence against Women: Women's Experiences, Institutions, and Paths*, conducted by Dissensus Research, and a report covering the discussions and presentations in the *Workshop on Combating Violence against Women in the Face of Ongoing Loss of Rights*.



We revised and reprinted our books titled *25 Years with Feminist Solidarity; Legal Experiences in Combating Male Violence; International Legal Mechanisms in Combating Violence against Women: A Handbook for Practical Information*. We revised and reprinted our institutional brochure about Mor Çatı in English and Turkish. This year we also translated our brochure titled Law No. 6284 for Preventing Male Violence into Spanish and Portuguese. We translated and printed the report titled *Promising Practices of Establishing and Providing Specialist Support Services for Women Experiencing Sexual Violence* prepared by the WAVE Network.

We sent our monitoring report titled, *Women's Access to Justice: The Role of Bar Association Legal Aid Units in Combatting Violence against Women*, and other revised publications to 33 lawyers who participated in the focus groups, workshops and interviews that took place during the writing of the report as well as to the Women's Rights Units and Legal Aid Units of the Bar Associations in 81 provinces of Turkey. We sent our brochure, Law No. 6284 for Preventing Male Violence, in Turkish, English, Arabic, and Persian to nine migration organizations to give information to those who give support to women in these organizations and to distribute to the applicant women. We sent the Braille-alphabet print of our four thematic brochures, called "Stand Against Male Violence! Change the Life!", "Shelters in Combating Violence against Women"; "We Can Prevent Child Neglect and Abuse!", "Don't be Silent! Don't be an Accomplice!", to a total of seven libraries for both the general public and specialized for visually impaired people. We sent our report, *Violence against Women: Women's Experiences, Institutions, and Paths* and *Workshop on Combating Violence against Women in the Face of Ongoing Loss of Rights* to a total of 196 university libraries in all provinces of Turkey, to a total of 35 gender studies and women's studies research centers, and to 31 university faculty members working in the field of gender equality and violence against women. We sent the English translation of our 2020 Activity and our Law No. 6284 for Preventing Male Violence brochure to 19 consulates and embassies. Furthermore, we sent our publications to Eskişehir Tepebaşı Municipality Directorate of Health Affairs, Avcılar Municipality women's counseling center, Beşiktaş Municipality women's counseling center, Kartal Municipality women's counseling center, Milas Municipality women's counseling center, Bodrum Municipality women's counseling center and shelter, Samsun ŞÖNİM (Violence Prevention Monitoring Center), Bodrum Women's Solidarity Association, Ayvalık Women's Initiative, Malatya Battalgazi Counselling and Research Center, Eskişehir Osmangazi University Youth Counseling Unit (ESOGÜ GEDAB), and Turkish Medical Students' Association as well as to individuals upon request.





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