



2024

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# Activity Report

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# Mor atı Women's Shelter Foundation

2024 Activity Report

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# INTRODUCTION

At Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation we have been drawing on feminist methods in our struggle against violence against women since 1990. We derive strength from women's solidarity in our fight against discrimination and violence against women, both of which are deeply rooted in gender inequality. Since our establishment, both in our solidarity center and shelter, we have closely witnessed the determination of women who strive to break away from violence and change their lives, despite facing immense oppression and obstacles. Based on these experiences of women, at Mor Çatı, we work to transform the system in favor of women.

This year, once again, we frequently witnessed that women who seek to break away from violence are left without support by the very institutional mechanisms they turned to for support. In Turkey, we have been facing at various levels systematic assaults at women's rights for many years now. These include direct attacks on the laws and regulations that benefit the women, the removal of the term gender from public documents, the development of social policies that prioritize the family over the women, and public statements denying the equality of women and men. Since 2021, in the aftermath of Turkey's overnight withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention with the signature of the President, we have witnessed that the systemic bad practices women face when trying to access their rights—especially Law No. 6284—gradually worsen and women are left without support against violence. All the while, we are confronted with a political will that has declared 2025 as the “Family Year” instead of focusing on empowering women.

In 2024, killings of women and children once again caused public outrage. As gender inequality deepens, we know that the system which doesn't protect women and children against violence and allows perpetrators of violence go unpunished is responsible for these killings. These murders are the ultimate culmination of the various forms of violence women are subjected to every day. While women struggle to get away from male violence, the very mechanisms established to support them and combat violence continue to fail them. These mechanisms fall short in understanding women's needs and in accurately assessing the risks they face. The failure to sentence perpetrators of violence, the overturning of convictions by higher courts, or the release of the perpetrators without serving full terms due to execution laws, undermine both women's and society's trust in the justice system.

This year, in light of the local elections, we placed strong emphasis on the critical role municipalities must play in developing mechanisms to combat violence. As detailed in this report, we have carried out extensive work to encourage municipalities to establish effective support systems to combat violence against women. On the other hand, we have observed that municipalities face numerous internal challenges—most notably, the lack of institutionalization in the fight against violence, austerity measures, and the looming threat of trustee appointments—which have severely hindered their effectiveness. We know that when democracy and the rule of law do not function properly, the discrimination women face in a male-dominated system gets worse and policies that are in favor of women are swiftly abandoned.

As we emphasized on November 25th this year, the responsibility to combat violence against women falls on each and every one of us. As in previous years, we have learned from women’s experiences and once again reminded the state of its primary responsibility to combat violence against women. We endeavored to raise awareness with respect to violence through our efforts in different areas. In this report, you will read not only about our work, but also about the experiences and struggles of women. We are sharing with you this report where we strived to put to words our feminist solidarity that fosters our will to struggle.



# ŞİDDETEN UZAKTA ÖZGÜR YAŞAMLAR KURABİLMEK İÇİN SIRTIMIZI YASLAYABİLECEĞİMİZ BİR YER VAR KADIN DAYANIŞMASI



# SOLIDARITY CENTER

Since our establishment in 1990, we have been drawing on feminist principles both in the solidarity we build with women and children at our solidarity center and in the social work we carry out with women. Feminism, which lays at the foundation of and informs our solidarity with women, emphasizes that we are exposed to violence on account of being a woman, and that male violence against women is rooted in gender inequality. As feminists, we understand that the struggle against male violence and its root cause, gender inequality, must be centered on women's solidarity. We believe that the work against violence in solidarity centers should not be approached with the mindset of helping women, but rather with the goal of building solidarity and collectively fighting against violence. Bringing these points to attention is crucial for understanding that violence is not something that happens only to us. Contrary to what we have been taught in the patriarchal system, male violence is not the fault of women nor is it related to men's mental states. Therefore, stopping violence cannot be achieved through women changing their behaviors.

At Mor Çatı, when forming solidarity with women, providing the room for them to share as much as they are willing to disclose, we first listen carefully to their experiences. Drawing on our knowledge about the experiences of other women whose paths crossed with Mor Çatı, we think together with the women about their needs and what they want to do. At the same time, we evaluate the available support mechanisms and explore what women can do together with them, providing support both in planning and implementing their decisions. We are aware that it is the women themselves who will make the best decision about their lives. Thus, the solidarity we build with women is grounded on the principle of not making decisions on behalf of women. We aim to mirror their experiences and inform them about their options. Male violence aims to eliminate women's ability to make decisions about their own lives. We believe that every woman knows what is best for herself, and that breaking free from violence is only possible through self-determination. Therefore, we do not make decisions on behalf of women or judge them; instead, we offer our support and discuss the possible outcomes and risks of their decisions—regardless of what those decisions may be. Once women share their experiences with us and learn about their rights, we emphasize that they are not obligated to take immediate action, that they can make plans for future steps if they choose, and that they are welcome to reach out to us whenever they feel the need.

Our interviews sometimes begin with women putting a name to the violence they have been exposed to, as they often need to hear that what they went through is indeed violence—and that it is valid and normal to want to resist it. The need to identify violence often arises because perpetrators tend to justify their actions, while society frequently normalizes such behavior.

It is important not only to conduct in-depth interviews, but also to assess the urgency of the situation of the women at the time they contact us and to make referrals accordingly. When women reach out to us, they may need to leave their current environment without delay, access a shelter, involve law enforcement units, seek medical support and report physical violence, or, in cases of sexual assault, apply to the relevant institutions if they wish to file a complaint. In such situations, ensuring women's safety, filing complaints or documenting the physical and psychological effects of violence—if they wish to do so before evidence is lost—and confirming their well-being or referring them to the appropriate support mechanisms become immediate priorities. Therefore, when we encounter such situations, instead of conducting in-depth interviews, we prioritize making referrals and closely follow the process, tracking the support women receive from institutions with them.

The solidarity we form with the women aim to empower them so that they can reclaim the strength they have lost or were denied due to discrimination and violence, name and confront male violence in a non-violent environment, and openly discuss their rights and the actions they can take against violence. Women are thus able to cope with the effects of violence as well as the obstacles before breaking free of violence by recognizing their own potential and resources.

Women can contact Mor Çatı one or more times, and be in need of more than one kind of support simultaneously. Mor Çatı provides social support to every woman who seeks it, and it also offers legal and psychological support as well as shelter support if need be.

## in 2024

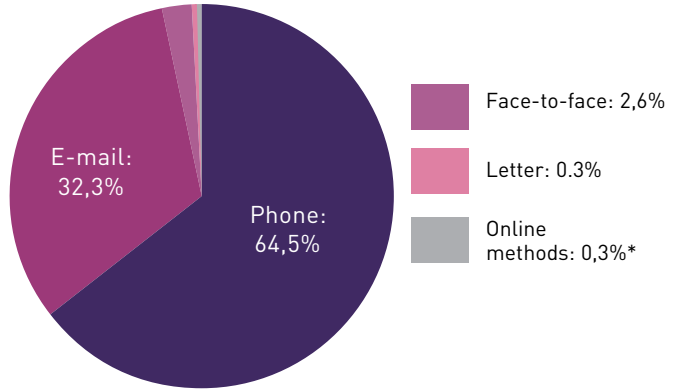
In 2024, a total of 2496 interviews were conducted with 1027 women who have contacted Mor Çatı for the first time.



893 interviews were conducted with 127 women who have reached out to Mor Çatı in previous years.

In 2024, a total of 3433 interviews were conducted with 1154 women.

## Contact methods used by the first-time applicant women in 2024:



\*Online methods include remote video calls.

## How did Women Contact Mor Çatı?

In 2024, women were interviewed face-to-face and via phone, email, letter, SMS and other online platforms. We mostly conducted these interviews with the women themselves. In cases where women could not reach us directly for security or other reasons, we interviewed the proxy contacts.

Women and organizations from Istanbul and other cities and even other countries contacted Mor Çatı in 2024. As in previous years, the most used methods were phone calls and emails.

Especially in high-risk situations, women often reach out to us and maintain communication through email. In some cases, email was the only available method of communication—particularly when women had no access to a phone, were prohibited from using one, or when their calls were being monitored.

## Proxy Contacts

Women can reach out to Mor Çatı directly, and if they are unable to do so themselves, they can seek support through their relatives or acquaintances. We prioritize meeting with women one-to-one, as it is important for the volunteer social worker to hear directly from women in order to better understand their experiences, needs, and wants. When a proxy contact such as a relative, an acquaintance or someone they sought support from reaches out to Mor Çatı, we underline the importance of one-to-one meetings and share basic information with the caller. However, in cases where the woman or child is unable to communicate at all, we also provide the necessary information to the person who contacted us.

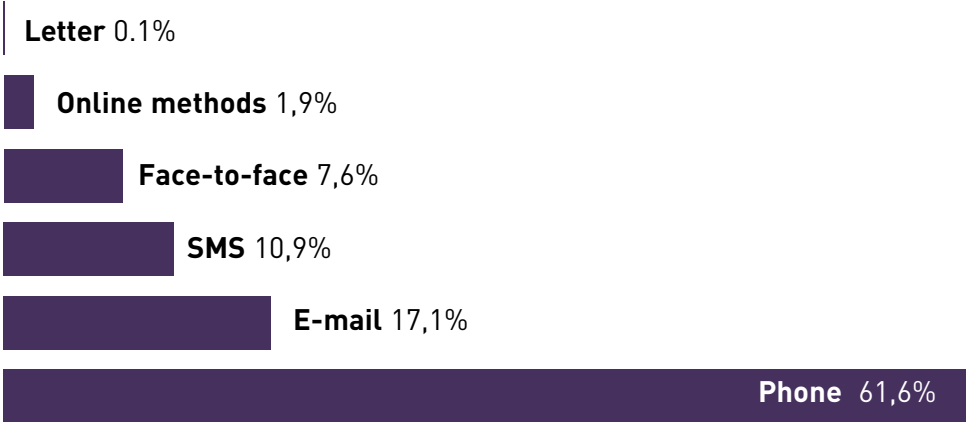
Of the 1027 women who applied who applied to Mor Çatı for the first time in 2024, 924 contacted us themselves, while for 103 women, proxy contacts reached us first. Among proxy contacts were children, siblings, and other relatives of

women, friends, acquaintances like neighbors, lawyers, institutions or women’s organizations that the women receive support from, interpreters or strangers they have never met.

Proxy contacts reached out to us either to report a situation of violence they had witnessed, to seek guidance on how to refer women, or to provide interpretation support to women. They also accompanied women who did not feel comfortable speaking on the phone. Due to the inadequate approaches and bad practices of institutions and support mechanisms that are meant to assist women in cases of male violence, we observe that women’s relatives, friends, or acquaintances often seek alternative solutions and contact women’s organizations on behalf of women to help them access support.

In particular, instances where public institution employees or lawyers contact Mor Çatı instead of the women themselves reveal several systemic shortcomings: women are not properly directed by law enforcement to obtain medical reports for documenting violence; doctors issuing such reports may face interference; there is a lack of proper guidance during complaint procedures; the legal steps that should follow incidents of violence are not consistently observed; and the institutional support women receive when trying to rebuild their lives—especially financial support—is often insufficient to meet even their most basic needs. In such situations, concerned relatives reach out to Mor Çatı due to fears about the safety and well-being of women and children, and also seek consultation regarding legal options their lawyers can pursue.

## Interview methods we used at Mor Çatı Solidarity Center in 2024:



\*44% of the women were interviewed multiple times.

At the Mor Çatı Solidarity Center, we conduct interviews with women once or multiple times depending on their need. Sometimes we meet with women to inform them about their legal rights and related processes, at other times we monitor women's application processes. This way, we can follow which institutions they applied to and what sort of support they received from these institutions. Yet other times, we maintain solidarity with women by having more than one interview as the women put their plan into action step by step. Through these interviews, we are also able to monitor both the good and bad practices women encounter in their struggle against violence, the rights violations they are subjected to, the types of support they need from various institutions, and whether or not they are able to access this support. In addition to conducting interviews, we also meet with various institutions from which women are receiving—or considering receiving—support, in order to gather information about the services they offer and to monitor their practices. Everything we share publicly about the Mor Çatı experience is informed by what we learn through these monitoring activities.

In some cases, after assessing the needs of the women and obtaining their permission we confer with various public institutions, lawyers, or specialists such physicians as we conduct our social work.

We make a particular effort to meet women face-to-face at our solidarity center whenever possible, especially those living in Istanbul. Many women feel anxious about leaving their neighborhoods or homes, using public transportation, or traveling alone. In such cases, the interviews conducted at our center can serve as an empowering experience—helping women recognize their own strength and capabilities, and challenging the dynamics that undermine their self-confidence and leave them feeling powerless.

When women are unable to come to the solidarity center in person—either due to personal circumstances or because they live in another city—we turn to online methods. Even for women living in Istanbul, online interviews have become an essential means of communication—particularly for those who cannot travel to other districts due to childcare responsibilities, face difficulties using public transportation with their children, are persons with a disabilities, or are unable to attend in-person meetings due to work commitments. Likewise, phone calls and messaging applications are among the tools women frequently use in their daily lives. Online video and voice calls have also made it significantly easier to conduct interviews with women living in other cities or countries.

Sometimes, we hold only a single meeting with the women who reach out to Mor Çatı. In other cases, we meet with them multiple times, and the solidarity we build may continue for many years. The number and frequency of these interviews vary depending on each woman's needs, circumstances, and safety concerns. This number may also vary depending on the referrals we make and the need to work in coordination with different institutions. We may hold multiple meetings with women we refer to public or other institutions, and sometimes, we call the institutions with the consent of the women in order to follow up on their application processes or to coordinate the support to be provided to women. We also make follow-up calls to monitor the support process, track developments in women's lives, assess the outcomes of the steps they've taken to build a life free from violence, and check on the well-being of both the women and their children, if they have any. The women who reach out to us often speak about the psychological distress they experience as a result of violence; some even share thoughts of suicide. In such cases, we maintain regular follow-ups to support their psychological well-being until they can establish a sustainable plan for themselves.

## Nationalities of Women:

**Migrant and refugee women: 94**



### Women's nationalities:

Afghanistan, USA, Argentine, Azerbaijan, the UK, Brazil, Algeria, Chad, Philippines, Palestine, France, South Korea, Iraq, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Columbia, Libya, Lebanon, Mexico, Egypt, Norway, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Russia, Serbia, Sudan, Syria, Taiwan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Venezuela

### Languages that the women who reaches us speak:

Turkish, English, Arabic, Persian, Russian, French, Kurdish, German and other languages.

Migrant and refugee women living in Turkey reach out to Mor Çatı to get informed about the violence they have been exposed to, the available support mechanisms, and their legal rights in Turkey. Similarly, Turkish women living abroad and women from other countries contact us to seek information about the violence they were subjected to while in Turkey and the support services available to them. Some women contact us because they have married or been in a relationship with a man from Turkey, while others are referred by organizations acting on their behalf. When refugee and migrant women reach out to Mor Çatı, we first ask which language they feel most comfortable in expressing themselves and endeavor to conduct the interviews accordingly. For those who prefer to speak in a language other than Turkish or English, we provide an interpreter. At Mor Çatı, we place great importance on ensuring that interpreters—whether paid or volunteers—are women, have experience working on violence against women, adopt a women-centered perspective, and strictly adhere to Mor Çatı’s principles of confidentiality.

The recent attitude towards migrants and refugees in Turkey, the difficulties in obtaining legal status, the economic crisis, and deportation practices may have contributed to the increasing number of migrant and refugee women reaching out to Mor Çatı. That said, we have observed that the following factors also significantly impact women’s decision to contact Mor Çatı: challenges in accessing institutions working on migration, difficulties in acquiring information, the interpretation support provided by Mor Çatı, and the fact that legal status is not a criterion for admission to Mor Çatı’s shelter. In 2024, 16.3% of the applications from migrant or refugee women were made through a proxy contact. The lack of easy access to support, particularly in their native language, and the fear of experiencing discrimination or not receiving help when applying directly, are among the reasons preventing women from reaching out to Mor Çatı themselves. That said, it is these same factors that lead women to seek support from women’s organizations rather than state mechanisms.

Migrant and refugee women who contacted Mor Çatı recounted that they are often subjected to physical violence and oppression at home by their husbands or other family members. They also experience isolation, and their children are used as leverage to threaten them. In such situations, migrant and refugee women have difficulty in accessing information about their legal rights or requesting shelter support and they need legal support. For all these reasons, just as in previous years, they sought support this year for legal processes and security concerns. In our interviews with migrant and refugee women, we observed that they were unable to obtain information about the official processes concerning the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management. They also reported that the institutions they applied to for needs such as financial support are unresponsive and that they couldn’t get support in areas such as

obtaining information, accessing and receiving psychological or psychiatric care, and healthcare procedures. Following Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention in 2021, women—especially those who have fallen into undocumented status for various reasons—can no longer access the support they once could when subjected to violence. The Istanbul Convention allowed migrant and refugee women who were exposed to violence to benefit unconditionally from all relevant public mechanisms. However, following the withdrawal from the Convention, these public mechanisms have become even more uncertain for migrant women. Migrant women living in Turkey, not only as asylum seekers but also as residence permit or visa holders, have shared with us the difficulties they face in accessing mechanisms to combat violence when subjected to it. While all women, regardless of their legal status in Turkey, should have access to protection mechanisms, we see that this is not the case for migrant and refugee women.

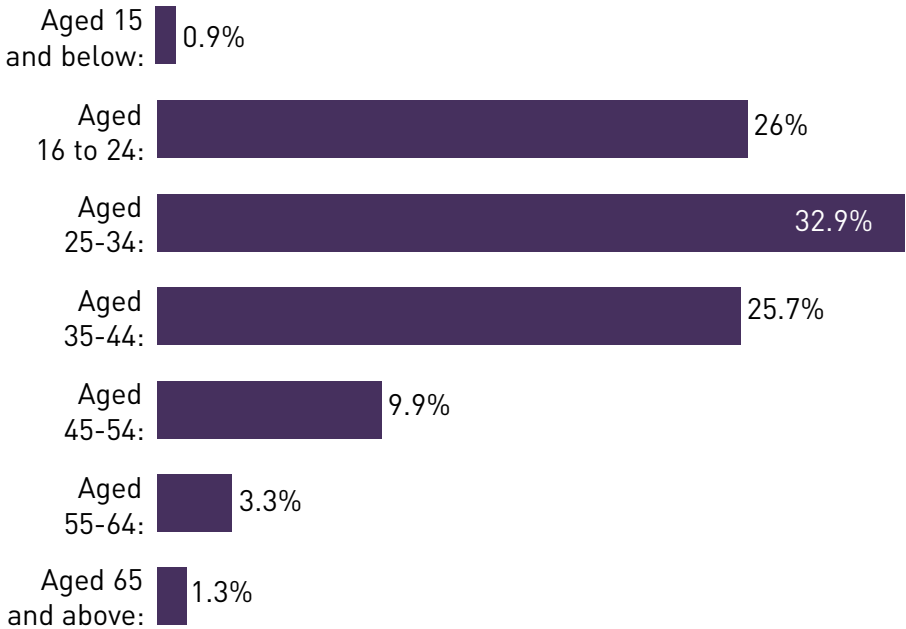
We have also observed that migrant and refugee women's precarious legal status in Turkey is used by men as an instrument of violence. We learned from women married to Turkish citizens that they are not supported by their husbands in applying to the necessary institutions for extending their residence permits, are threatened with deportation, are deliberately prevented from meeting application deadlines, and are confined to their homes. On top of these, confiscating the identity cards or passports of women and children, and intimidating women by giving false or inaccurate information about legal processes are some of the common methods of violence used by men. For example, one woman shared that she was unable to renew her residence permit on time because her husband withheld permission to do so and physically abused her. As a result, she lived without a valid permit for years and was unable to take any official action, as renewing her permit required her to return to her home country, leaving her in a state of undocumented status. Another woman reached out to Mor Çatı because her husband, from whom she was in the process of divorcing, threatened her with the custody of their children. We provided her with information about custody and divorce, and she decided to proceed with filing for divorce. After taking several steps, we learned that her husband had stolen her passport and identity documents, forcing her to return to her home country to retrieve them.

In our meetings, women frequently shared that their husbands—who are themselves refugees or migrants—threaten them with deportation, using intimidation to force them to remain in violent situations. Despite their own legal uncertainties and risk of deportation, men often continue to perpetrate violence. Threats to return women to the countries they fled for various reasons, or to relocate forcibly, are among the tools of control and violence used by both Turkish citizen men and migrant or refugee men. The lack of support for migrant women, along with the uncertainty and inadequacy of support mechanisms in

Turkey, often becomes a tool that perpetrators of violence understand well and exploit. A woman who reports violence may be taken to a Deportation Center and sent back to her country. This state approach reinforces the precarious position of migrant women and enables men to perpetrate violence more easily. We inform migrant women facing such situations about their rights in Turkey and the steps they can take to protect themselves from violence. We offer social, legal, psychological, and shelter support, and refer them to relevant public institutions or non-governmental organizations. Depending on each woman's needs and circumstances, we sometimes continue our solidarity in coordination with other mechanisms that can support women in their efforts to break free from violence.

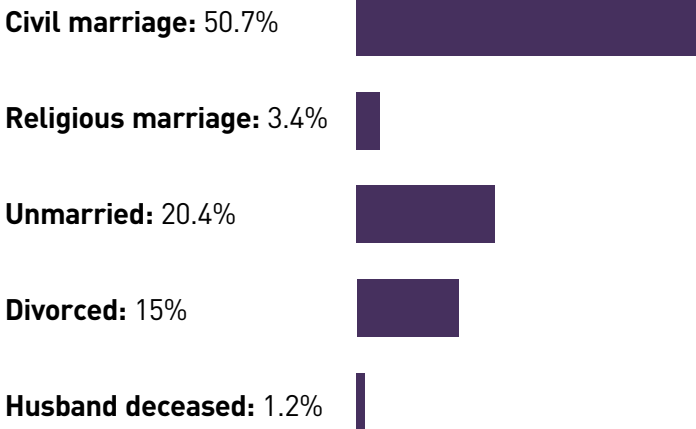
Women who came to Turkey for tourism and are exposed to physical violence or sexual assault in hotels or elsewhere in the city also reached out to Mor Çatı, seeking support regarding legal procedures and available mechanisms. These women reported difficulties in giving statements after sexual assault, as well as a lack of information about critical steps such as forensic examinations. They also shared that they were redirected to the tourism police due to language barriers, were not provided with interpreters during the complaint process, and encountered judgmental and accusatory attitudes from law enforcement officers.

## The number of women who contacted Mor Çatı for the first time in 2024 and whose age we know: 474



As in previous years, the majority of women who contacted Mor Çatı were between the ages of 16 and 44. In particular, young women reached out to Mor Çatı to share the steps they wanted to take to break free from the violence they were experiencing, along with their plans and needs. We observed that young women are often subjected to violence and pressure within their families. Some recounted that they were either forced into marriage or chose to marry at an early age as a means of escaping family violence. Others who experienced violence in dating relationships also reached out to us, seeking various forms of support and expressing how difficult it is to speak about the violence they have been exposed to in these relationships. Women over the age of 65, who were not admitted to shelters due to their age, contacted us to receive support for the violence they had been subjected to as well as the housing problems they experience due to the ongoing economic crisis. The applications of women within this age group shows that the perpetrators of violence were often husbands, ex-husbands, children, or landlords.

## The number of women who arrived for the first time in 2024 and whose marital status we know: 289



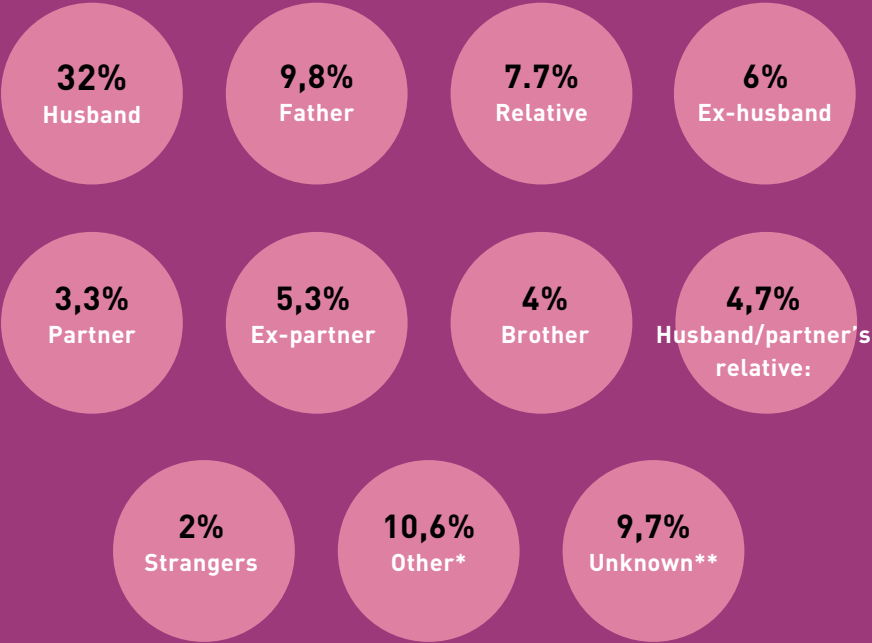
In 2024, as in previous years, we observed that women lose many of their rights during the divorce process. We also witnessed the hardships faced by women who are in the process of divorce due to the prolonged divorce proceedings. Women stated that, since the divorce proceedings continue for a long period of time, their husbands often return home under various pretexts and continue to interfere in their lives. They reported that, since they are still officially married, they are at times unable to access social and economic support. Many can only find irregular daily work or jobs that pay minimum wage, and they face serious challenges in securing a livelihood and building a life free from violence,

especially given the current economic conditions in Turkey. Many women shared with us that they entered into marriage as a means of escaping violence—either due to pressure from their families and communities or because they were experiencing violence within their own homes. At the same time, some women expressed that these same pressures compelled them to remain in their marriages. They reported receiving little to no support from their families or relatives when they expressed that they want to get divorced.

We also observed the challenges faced by divorced women or those in the process of divorce—particularly those with children—stemming from the visitation rights granted to fathers by family courts. Women reported that, because of these court-mandated arrangements, they were forced to maintain contact with the very men who had subjected them to violence, solely for the sake of their children. They added that having to communicate with these men—typically once every two weeks—caused them ongoing difficulty. The requirement for women to meet with their husbands as part of court-ordered visitation arrangements—despite existing confidentiality measures and restraining orders—not only endangers their safety, but also pulls them back into the cycle of violence. Women stated that men continue to threaten and blackmail them through their children. Several women shared that their requests for children to be handed over at designated child visitation centers and for expert supervision during visitation were denied. They said that, despite repeatedly filing complaints, their children returned from visits with their fathers having been subjected to violence.

On the other hand, we observed that religious marriage is used by men as a means of controlling women. Women mostly recounted that they had to wait a long time for a civil marriage and that their husbands told them that they were not suitable for civil marriage, sometimes due to financial difficulties and sometimes for other reasons. Some women stated that they were forced to marry, through a religious ceremony, the very men who had raped them as children. Their families pressured them into these marriages because they were under the age of 18. We also saw that religious marriages are often used by men as a means to exclude women from property division, evade alimony and compensation obligations, and deny responsibility for the care of any children born from the union. One woman reached out to Mor Çatı to share the difficulties she faced after her husband insisted on maintaining their civil marriage while unilaterally ending their religious one. She stated that he expelled her and their baby from the home, claiming, “It is not religiously permissible; we can no longer live under the same roof.” However, he also refused to initiate official divorce proceedings, deliberately preventing her from accessing legal rights such as temporary alimony and housing allocation that would have been available had a divorce case been filed.

## Perpetrators of violence committed against women who reached us for the first time in 2024:



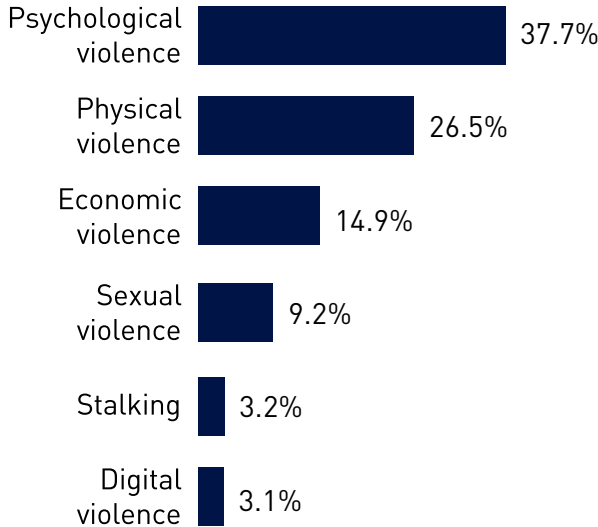
### The number of women who mentioned multiple perpetrators: 16%

**\*Other:** Neighbor, landlord or apartment manager, employer or former employer, colleague, teacher/lecturer (course instructor, etc.), classmate, new acquaintances, online acquaintances or friends, relative of the woman (mother, friend, cousin, children, etc.), person from whom the woman receives services or support (lawyer, psychologist, psychiatrist, doctor, physiotherapist, masseur, police, security guard, civil servant, etc.).

**\*\*Unknown:** At times, women choose not to share the identity of the perpetrator or the information pertaining to the degree of their relationship, or proxy contacts may be unaware of or unwilling to share this information. In such cases, the term "unknown" is used to describe the perpetrator.

## Types of violence

**The number of women who contacted Mor Çatı for the first time in 2024 and that we know which form of violence they experience:**



Violence against women refers to systematic acts and attitudes of violence directed at women specifically because of their gender. Male violence draws its strength from gender inequality and patriarchal structures. Men consciously use violence as a means to control women, exert power, punish, or release anger. This violence can manifest in psychological, physical, sexual, economic, and digital forms. Because violence is a deliberate choice and a reflection of a mindset, men may choose to inflict it in multiple and varied ways. In 2024, approximately 15% of the women who sought support from Mor Çatı had been subjected to more than one form of violence.

## Psychological Violence

As in previous years, we see that psychological violence remains the most prevalent form of violence to which women are subjected.

Psychological violence is the use of emotional force or needs as a means of violence to control, belittle, punish, humiliate and exert power over women. In 2024, women who contacted Mor Çatı reported being exposed to various forms of psychological violence by men, including verbal abuse such as swearing and insults, shouting, humiliation, slander, coercion, and threats of harm directed at themselves, their children, or relatives. Some women shared that men threatened to kidnap—or actually kidnapped—their children. Others described

being subjected to controlling behaviors such as being made to feel inadequate, extreme jealousy, being forced into marriage, being thrown out of the home, or being forbidden from going outside or seeing friends or partners. Deception and infidelity were also frequently reported.

Most of the women we interviewed said that their husbands compared them to other women, cheated on them and blamed them for the infidelity. One woman stated that her husband would point out other women on the street and compare them to her, criticizing a different aspect of her appearance each day. She said that he constantly pressured her to change the way she looked, and that she fell ill because of this. Another woman recounted that her husband insulted her with demeaning remarks such as, “Are you even a woman? As a man, it’s painful to look at your face every day.” One woman described how her husband made her feel worthless in the following words: “He told me that he kept me in the house because of the children—he saw me only as a caretaker.”

Women also expressed that men often attempt to intimidate them by belittling and accusing them of inadequacy. One woman recounted that when she told her husband she wanted to leave, he responded, “You think you can survive on your own? You are nothing without me.” Another woman stated that her father repeatedly told her she couldn’t make decisions without a man by her side. Several women spoke about the impact of such statements, explaining that they undermined their confidence, caused them to doubt their own abilities, and instilled a deep fear of being alone.

Men not only choose whom to direct their violence toward and in what form, but they also act with full awareness of how their behavior will affect women. One woman stated that her husband appeared to be an angel outside the home—always calm and helpful to others—while at home, he was consistently violent toward her. She explained that he would deliberately provoke her by making inappropriate advances, insulting her, and trying to enrage her. When she eventually reacted, he would record those moments and send the audio to her family.

Men who are aware that women have been exposed to violence by their own families—or have no other sources of support—often exploit this vulnerability to escalate the violence. One woman recounted that the man she was married to would repeatedly tell her, “You’re orphaned; you have nowhere to go,” in an effort to make her feel helpless. She added that the violence intensified over time.

Another woman recounted that her father used to call her insulting names during her childhood, leaving an emotional wound. She stated that her husband later repeated the same pattern—resorting to insults and demeaning nicknames whenever he wanted to inflict violence.

Young women, in particular, reported that male family members threatened to kill them, isolated them by locking them in the house, and intimidated them by citing examples of women who had been killed by men in Turkey. One woman said that her father told her, “I will kill you and throw your head on the side of the road.” Another woman recounted that she was reminded of the murders of Münevver Karabulut and Pinar Gültekin and was intimidated with sentences such as “Do you want to end up like them?”. Another woman shared that her husband threatened her by pointing to news reports about the women killed by men on television, saying, “This is how you will end up.” One woman spoke about her mother, who had suffered a stroke and later passed away, and recounted how her husband threatened her by saying, “I will leave you bedridden like your mother—you won’t be able to even touch your children for the rest of your life.”

### **Social Isolation**

Another form of violence against women is social isolation. Controlling women’s relationship with the outside world—such as severing their connection to their social networks and resources, including friends, acquaintances, neighbors, and family members who could offer support; restricting their access to communication tools; confining them to the house; and forbidding them from going outside—are all forms of this violence. Many women stated that their mobile phones were controlled or taken away, and that efforts were made to sever their connections to the outside world in various ways. Young women in particular shared the oppression they experienced in their families, where they were often isolated and their access to support mechanisms was restricted. Some young women recounted that they were locked in their rooms, isolated from the outside world, and had very limited communication—even with family members—if they did not adhere to the rules set by their fathers or brothers. Despite these restrictions, women made efforts to break away from the environment of violence. One young woman who reached out to our solidarity center stated that her family took her to a completely different city to isolate her from the outside world and prevented her from accessing all technological tools. Another woman, who was forbidden from going out or meeting her friends and had her phone confiscated, found a way to communicate with her friends by accessing her social media accounts on her computer when she was alone at home. Through these connections, she was able to learn

about her rights, thanks to her friends contacting us on her behalf. She was able to find a way to send us an e-mail and made a plan to leave the house. Another woman reported that she was allowed to leave the house only to visit the hospital, accompanied by her mother and brother. When she reached out to us via email, we discussed her options for addressing her situation and informed her that she could request shelter support. We made a plan with the woman to ask for support from the doctor/nurse, the hospital social worker and the hospital police when she went to the hospital. The woman informed us that, during her next hospital visit, she was able to seek help from the doctor and hospital security and go to a shelter.

Even when women manage to distance themselves from violent men and attempt to build independent lives, men often find ways to reach them and continue inflicting violence in various forms. In some cases, men can use societal judgments against women to the detriment of women. Several women who reached out to Mor Çatı in 2024 reported that their husbands, from whom they were in the process of divorcing, or their ex-boyfriends, had shared their phone numbers publicly—on the streets, at subway and metrobus stops, and even on sexually explicit websites. Women recounted that they had to change their phone numbers after their numbers were shared in various places as “Escort X”.

Women also shared that in an effort to cope with the effects of violence, they sometimes sought psychological or psychiatric support, only to find out later that this support is used against them as a tool of violence. They faced consequences such as discrimination, stigmatization, and being labeled as insane. We also observed that this discrimination and stigmatization significantly worsened women’s daily lives, leading many to abandon seeking psychological support for fear of further stigmatization. It also made it difficult for them to maintain their regular routines and daily activities. One woman shared that she began receiving psychological support as a result of the violence inflicted by her husband, but became deeply afraid of losing her divorce case after her psychologist recommended that she should also consult a psychiatrist. Similarly, multiple women shared that they were worried that if the psychiatrist prescribed medication, their husbands would use it against them in the divorce case. Many men, who are aware of these stigmas and patriarchal norms in society and use them to their advantage, continued this year to threaten women who seek psychiatric support with taking custody of their children or to make women’s mental health the subject of litigation in divorce cases. A woman who

had received psychiatric support stated that, after being exposed to violence by her family members, she was dismissed as “insane” and not taken seriously by institutions to which she applied for support. She expressed feeling relieved and grateful to finally be heard during her meetings at Mor Çatı. Some men deliberately manipulate women in ways that cause them to question their own mental health. One woman recounted that her husband repeatedly told her, “You’re mentally ill, go to the hospital,” which led her to feel compelled to make a psychiatry appointment. During the consultation, the psychiatrist told her, “What are you doing here? It is your husband who needs counseling, not you—don’t do this to yourself.” It was at that moment she realized that what she was experiencing was a form of violence. Another woman living in a family home recounted that she was constantly called “half-wit” and “crazy” and that she started to doubt her own sanity because she was constantly called these names.

## Physical Violence

Physical violence refers to actions and behaviors that use physical force to control, oppress, and exert power over women, violating or threatening to violate their bodily autonomy and physical boundaries. In 2024, as in previous years, physical violence had been the second most common form of violence women are subjected to after psychological violence. Women reported being subjected to various forms of physical violence, including beatings, battery, hair pulling, assaults with knives and firearms, attempted poisoning, forced drugging, strangulation with hands or objects, having objects thrown at them, displays of power through breaking items and punching walls, being tied up and tortured, abduction, detention, denial of access to healthcare, being left naked in the cold, and being forced to have an abortion.

Some women stated that, as a result of physical violence, they had spent extended periods in intensive care and suffered serious injuries, including the loss of limbs and organ function. They reported living with permanent disabilities and becoming unable to work or care for themselves. Women who had miscarriages or had to give birth prematurely due to physical violence also contacted Mor Çatı. One woman recounted that her estranged husband kidnapped her and tortured her for hours in a vacant lot, repeatedly threatening to kill her while physically assaulting her. As a result of the violence, she sustained multiple fractures throughout her body.

Women also talked about the psychological effects of physical violence, including fear, anxiety, helplessness, loss of self-confidence, self-blame, and feelings of worthlessness. Killings of women are the ultimate culmination of the various

forms of physical violence women are subjected to every day. Throughout the year, relatives of women who had lost their lives or been hospitalized due to violence by men reached out to Mor Çatı in search of solidarity. We held meetings with these family members and informed them about the steps they could take and the support available to them.

Despite the psychological and physical effects of violence, women are struggling hard and are determined to find a way to break away from violent environments and rebuild their lives. One of the most significant signs of this struggle is that women reach out to Mor Çatı or other organizations, openly sharing their experiences of violence and seeking support.

## Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is the use of sexuality as a tool of violence to control, humiliate, surveille, punish, and degrade women, and the violation of women's sexual boundaries. Sexual violence is a form of violence that often causes women to develop a reflex to blame themselves when they are subjected to it. The fact that sexuality is a taboo subject in society also makes it difficult for women to talk about sexual violence. In our interviews, women often do not disclose experiences of sexual violence initially or are reluctant to express them directly. They may feel shame, helplessness, and guilt which may cause women to speak about these experiences with greater hesitation compared to other forms of violence. As a sense of trust is established and interviews progress, women become more able to speak about their experiences of sexual violence. They reported being subjected to various forms of sexual violence, including rape, coerced sexual intercourse in exchange for money, being forced to watch pornographic content, being made to listen to or observe others' sexual relationships, forced impregnation, refusal to use protection, transmission of sexually transmitted infections, forced virginity testing, coerced intercourse at undesired times or in unwanted ways, and sexual humiliation.

In our meetings, women sometimes talk about the forms of violence and abuse they were subjected to as children and ask for support. They state that they have been subjected to sexual violence and abuse as a child by family members within the household, by individuals they trusted—such as acquaintances, relatives, neighbors, or guests—or by strangers. Women who were subjected to sexual violence and abuse during childhood and who confided in an adult often reported receiving neither support nor solidarity. They shared that their words were frequently dismissed or not believed, which later made it even more difficult for them to speak out, as they feared they would continue to be disbelieved.

## Economic Violence

Economic violence refers to the systematic use of financial power and superiority to control and oppress women, or systematic behaviors that prevent women from accessing these resources. In 2024, as in previous years, women reported being subjected to economic violence in multiple forms including the following: men controlling the family's finances by either not leaving any money at home or leaving an amount too small to cover basic living expenses, burdening women with debt, preventing women from working or forcing them to quit their jobs, forcing women to work and confiscating their earnings, denying women financial support for household and childcare expenses, and not paying the alimony, depriving women of their right to education or forcing them to drop out of school, confiscating or stealing women's valuable possessions or pressuring women to make a living by selling household items. One woman, who was forced to work from a young age, shared that her father—who neither cared for her nor met her basic needs—would show up at her workplace on payday to take her entire salary, without even leaving her enough money for transportation.

Some of the women stated that their husbands confiscated their salaries and gave them cash only for travel money and controlled all their expenses except for commuting to and from work. One woman recounted that her husband started a business using her savings, then pressured her into taking out a loan and purchasing a car to support the business. When the business later went bankrupt, she said that although she wanted to leave the house due to the violence, she was afraid to do so because of the debts she had been forced to incur. In addition to indebting women or withholding cash, men also perpetrate economic violence by refusing to take responsibility for household or childcare needs, or by placing the entire burden of earning a living on the woman.

Several women said that their husbands did not buy bread for the house, saying "I don't eat bread," and that they and their children could not eat bread because they could not afford it. Another woman recounted that her ex-husband refused to spend his pension income on the household expenses or children, and that she was unable to work due to disability due to violence. As a result, her 15-year-old child had to take on work to support the family. Another woman shared that although she had divorced her husband, he had failed to take the necessary steps to finalize the process. As a result, they were still officially considered married. Furthermore, despite being separated for years, her ex-husband had been using her insurance to cover both his and his mother's medical expenses, leaving her burdened with debt for years.

Men use economic violence to prevent women's economic development and empowerment and thus control their decisions and lives. With the deepening

economic crisis and increasing poverty this year, economic violence played an important role in women's accounts of violence. It became even more difficult for women to rebuild their lives and meet their needs such as renting a house. Inadequate social supports and difficulties in accessing them also increased the impact of economic violence. Many women contacted Mor Çatı expressing concerns that it would be impossible for them to leave the homes where they had been subjected to violence, seek refuge in a shelter, or secure the financial means necessary to rebuild their lives from scratch.

## Digital Violence

Digital violence refers to the use of technological tools to control, surveil, humiliate and/or punish women. Social media platforms in particular enable constant surveillance and monitoring in the digital environment. Men who perpetrate digital violence against women may ban them from using social media, monitor their online activity, control their accounts by hacking passwords, or demand constant accessibility through digital platforms. Additionally, women's husbands or partners can obtain women's private digital information, such as E-Government, E-Nabız and bank accounts passwords, and track women's bureaucratic procedures, the hospitals they visit, and their savings. Furthermore, men who gain access to this information can put women in debt by taking out loans in their name or making purchases using their credit card details. Another form of digital violence frequently reported by young women this year involves men sharing or threatening to share women's private messages, photos, or videos. Men secretly or forcibly obtain such images, or distribute those shared voluntarily within dating relationships or online interactions. These materials are often shared with women's families or the threats to share them are used to coerce women into complying with various demands.

A young woman who contacted us this year recounted that after having a digital conversation with a man she met on social media, he located her family online and threatened to send them their messages and photos. Another woman stated that during her divorce process, after blocking her husband on all platforms, he made a bank transfer and used the description section of the receipt to write his threats. Yet, another young woman shared that she was forced to keep her live location on at all times while commuting to and from university, as her father monitored her movements this way—calling her repeatedly throughout the day and even showing up at the school gate when she did not answer her phone. One woman stated that her husband, whom she had been trying to divorce for many years, remotely tracked her phone, identified the people she had messaged, had them followed, and presented this information to the court in the divorce proceedings as supposed evidence of "adultery".

One woman shared that her ex-boyfriend posted sexually explicit photos and videos of her on his WhatsApp status, attempting to make her relatives view them after she expressed her desire to break up with him. Another woman shared that her ex-boyfriend would text her late at night, sending screenshots and links showing that he had uploaded her videos and photos to pornographic websites. He would then delete the messages and links within a few hours, using this tactic to continuously threaten her. Yet another young woman reported that she was videotaped by a man without her knowledge or consent, and that this video was sent to her intimate partners over time. One woman reported that her boyfriend, whom she was trying to break up with, stole her phone and tried to humiliate her by calling her contacts. Additionally, several young women reported that their families confiscated their phones, forcibly read their text messages, and uncovered details about their private lives—such as conversations with partners and friends—which then became a basis for violence inflicted on them. Another woman said that her employer uploaded sexually explicit videos of her to free pornographic websites and that she had to fight hard to get them removed.

## Stalking

Stalking refers to a pattern of deliberate, repeated behaviors that undermine women's sense of safety and instill fear and anxiety about the possibility of being subjected to violence. Stalking has been criminalized in the Turkish Penal Code as of 2022 and is subject to punishment. Men stalk and intimidate women both physically and through digital means and contact their relatives, workplaces, and social circles in order to collect or share information about them, ultimately aiming to obstruct women's efforts to build independent lives. This year, as in previous years, women who contacted Mor Çatı shared that they were subjected to persistent stalking by men they knew or identified. The women reported that these men repeatedly tried to contact them by calling, sending messages, or using social media applications; followed them physically or through digital means; found out their addresses and showed up near their homes; monitored their social media accounts to track their every move; harassed them by reaching out to their friends or families; and went to their workplaces uninvited, attempting to humiliate them in front of their employers and colleagues or threatening to do so.

One woman stated that her ex-boyfriend knew her home address and wandered around her house and sometimes sent other men to her house. She said that she couldn't feel comfortable in her own home in any way, and that whenever

she was away for a few days, she constantly worried that someone might have entered the house in her absence. Another woman shared that her ex-husband had accessed her email account, copied her private documents, and continued to send them to her even years after their divorce, persistently disturbing her. A woman, who works as a senior manager, shared that her boyfriend showed up uninvited at her workplace and attempted to contact her. When he was unable to reach her, he created a scene in front of her colleagues in an effort to humiliate her. A woman who had built an independent life for herself after divorcing her husband and earned a living by sewing at home shared that her ex-husband contacted her customers and subjected them to harassment and violence, ultimately making it impossible for her to continue her work. The same man also contacted the institution where the woman was receiving support, slandered her and disrupted the assistance she was receiving. Women experience the social, psychological, economic and even physical effects of stalking in their lives. Women may be forced to find solutions such as changing their homes, relocating to a different city, or discontinuing their education or leaving their jobs. The lack of deterrence in judicial and criminal proceedings can lead men to continue stalking even after women have filed complaints.

## Violent Men

The experiences of women who reached out to the Mor Çatı Solidarity Center show that perpetrators of violence against women include husbands, partners, fathers, family members, institutional staff, colleagues, and strangers they do not know. We observed that men who perpetrate violence come from diverse professional fields and educational backgrounds. Regardless of their socioeconomic background, men chose to perpetrate violence simply because they are men. Women stated that the men who subjected them to violence are from a wide range of professions, including government officials, security personnel, police officers, real estate agents, shopkeepers, managers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and teachers. Some women reported that the men who perpetrated violence against them were unemployed.

This year, some of the women we stood in solidarity with shared that the professionals they approached for support at institutions also perpetrated violence by abusing the power of their positions. We observed that men perpetrated violence against women by way of using their influence to exert pressure or gain personal benefit, among other reasons. When the perpetrator is a professional expert, women often stated that they struggled to define the situation they faced and to make sense of the violence.

One woman stated that she realized her therapist had used the needs and vulnerabilities she had disclosed during therapy to perpetrate violence against her. She described the violence by saying, “I think he controlled and manipulated me because he knew my weaknesses and traumas.” Another woman recounted that the psychiatrist from whom she was receiving support manipulated her into feeling as if there was a relationship between them, expressed his sexual desires about her, and then reminded her that he was her doctor—creating a situation where it seemed as though she had wanted all of it. Another woman shared that the psychologist she consulted for support after experiencing violence made degrading remarks and insulted her for maintaining contact with the perpetrator. Women who wished to file complaints about the unethical conduct of male psychologists and psychiatrists also shared how difficult it was to find someone willing to listen to and address their concerns.

This year, multiple women who contacted our solidarity center stated that it was a police officer who subjected them to violence. These women explained that these men were their friends, husbands, or partners. There were also women who were subjected to violence by police officers they did not know. One woman reported being sexually assaulted by a male friend, and that the perpetrator continued to exert violence through threats and manipulation. Another woman shared that a man she was dating inflicted psychological and sexual violence on her. One woman said that after an incident at her workplace, a police officer singled her out and used violence against her simply because she was a woman, using her as an outlet for his anger. Several women reported that police officers who had perpetrated violence against them used confidential information, such as their national ID numbers, to track them and continue the violence. It is common for women to come across institutional staff who exhibit a biased attitude in favor of the perpetrator. However, when the perpetrator is a male police officer, we see that women face new barriers in accessing support mechanisms. One woman shared that she was accused by the superior of a male police officer who had perpetrated violence against her of making false allegations that could cost him his job, and she was pressured to withdraw her complaint.

Women who reported that they were subjected to violence by colleagues also shared that the violence led to fears of losing their professional reputation in the workplace. One woman stated that she felt worried and anxious about filing a complaint and reporting the violence she experienced at her workplace, fearing she would be accused and judged, which would damage her reputation and position at work.

## Substance Abuse

Some of the women who reached out to our solidarity center stated that the men who subjected them to violence were using substances. The forms of violence these men inflicted on women include attempting to kill and physically assault women, damaging household items, taking women's money to buy drugs, or forcing women to be with third parties in exchange for money. At times, women gave perpetrator's drug addiction, mental illness, or psychological problems as the reasons for the violence. However, we know that substance abuse is not directly related to the men's use of violence. That said, in some cases, based on some experiences of women, we observed that the intensity of violence perpetrated by men increases with alcohol or drug use. Alcohol or drugs, sometimes embolden the men who commit violence and increase the risks faced by the women. One woman who contacted our solidarity center stated that she was hospitalized after being subjected to violence by her husband, who was using drugs. Another woman reported that her husband subjected her to sexual violence in order to obtain money for drugs, attempted to take photos and videos of her without her consent, and tried to bring other men into their home to engage in sexual activities in exchange for money. Yet, another woman said that when her husband used drugs, he began to inflict violence on both her and their children. She recounted an incident where he forcibly put her and the children in the car, drove them to a secluded area, and held a gun to their heads.

Some women stated that their husbands, who are imprisoned on account of substance abuse, continue to inflict violence on them by calling from prison. In our meetings with women, we emphasize that while drug or alcohol use may influence the dynamics of violence, it is not its root cause. In the solidarity we build, we support women in making sense of the violence they experience, based on their individual needs. We discuss the precautions they can take and inform the women about their other rights in case they face a life-threatening or similar risky situation.

We also spoke with women who had reached out to us for support in assisting their husbands or children, who had been exerting violence on them, in overcoming their substance abuse and recovering. The women shared that they had previously tried various approaches, such as attempting to persuade their husbands or children to seek treatment, forcibly admitting them to the hospital, and reporting them to the police, but these efforts had been in vain. Women contacted us because they were seeking alternative steps they could take in such situations. From their experiences, we learned that public institutions, such as Yeşilay and AMATEM, which are supposed to address substance abuse, do not effectively monitor the men's addiction and recovery process. In such cases, we engage with women to discuss their needs, options, rights, and what they may encounter during the process. The effects of violence can lead women to rationalize the situation, convincing themselves that the perpetrator is sick or has problems. We engage in conversations with women who are seeking treatment or support for the perpetrators of violence, addressing both the impact of this dynamic and the violence they face. We also provide information about how institutions should function and the kinds of support that can be obtained from them.

## Effects of Violence on Women

Violence can have many different psychological, physical, economic and social effects on women. These effects can be short-term and long-term, and may continue even after the acute violence situation has ended. Violence can have a range of effects on women, but these impacts should not be interpreted as signs of weakness or passivity. On the contrary, these are entirely natural responses that women may have when exposed to violence.

Physical effects of violence include injury, permanent disability and loss of limbs, death, chronic pain and health problems, chronic illnesses due to denial of access to health care or neglect of health problems, menstrual irregularities, stomach, back and headaches, fainting, paralysis, miscarriage and stillbirth, and low birth weight of the baby. Since physical violence against women during pregnancy is also a widespread form of violence, some of the women who contacted Mor Çatı reported experiencing pregnancy complications as a result of such violence. One woman shared that her husband drove a car toward her while she was pregnant, which resulted in her giving birth prematurely.

Some of the women with whom we built solidarity at Mor Çatı in 2024 told us that they had to cope with undiagnosed chronic pain for years. They shared that their pain was not taken seriously—neither at home nor by the healthcare institutions they turned to—that it was dismissed as merely psychological, and that they had to wait for years to access proper treatment. While we found that their psychosomatic symptoms were not taken seriously and that no psychiatric treatment was recommended, we also observed that some women declined psychiatric support due to fear of stigma. One woman shared that despite experiencing unbearable pain, she was still expected to flawlessly manage housework and childcare, and that she continued to face physical violence as a result of her pain and fainting spells. Another woman recounted experiencing severe pain throughout her marriage, only to be diagnosed with fibromyalgia years later. She noted that her pain significantly subsided after leaving her violent husband, but returned each time she encountered him. Another woman, with whom we have been in solidarity for many years, suffered a stroke due to a cerebral hemorrhage, temporarily lost her motor activities such as speaking and walking, and had to undergo a very long treatment after the man she had been separated from for a long time returned home.

The effects of violence are widespread, impacting women not only physically but also psychologically. The psychological effects of violence include feelings of fear, guilt, shame, powerlessness, loneliness, worthlessness and despair, lack of self-confidence and self-respect, being constantly alert, worried, and anxious, extreme emotional reactions to stimulation, agitation, repetitive self-harming behaviours (cutting, plucking wounds, etc.), suicidal ideation and suicide attempts, alcohol and substance abuse, eating disorders, sexual disorders, sleep disorders, outbursts of anger, feeling unclean, feeling completely different from others, feeling completely changed and lost, self-isolation, withdrawal, and repeatedly putting oneself in dangerous situations.

All these effects complicate women's lives, erode their self-confidence, and hinder their full participation in society. When violence persists or its consequences remain unaddressed, women may suffer permanent loss of rights, and the impact of violence can be transmitted across generations. Beyond the physical and psychological effects, women's exposure to violence also carries significant social consequences, which can persist over time and continue to determine women's lives even after the violence ends. When women experience violence, they may withdraw from social life and disengage from their everyday routines. Social isolation, early marriage and motherhood, maternal and infant mortality, absenteeism and dropout from school or work, economic hardship due to

inability to work, impoverishment, strained family and social relationships, and the inability to adequately meet the emotional and social needs of children are among the social consequences of violence.

Women experience the economic impacts of violence in diverse ways. Women subjected to violence may be deprived of educational and employment opportunities or feel compelled to hold themselves back. When they do work, their income may be confiscated and they may find themselves unable to make long-term plans for their lives or invest in their future. Housing problems also have a serious impact on women. Men can use property ownership or lease agreements against women and throw them out of their homes. Given the current economic conditions, women often find it difficult to meet their housing needs on their own, and hence, prefer to stay in a violent environment or become homeless. Women facing housing problems or homelessness may become increasingly vulnerable to various forms of violence and abuse, and may also experience new or worsening physical and mental health challenges. In sum, when violence persists or its effects remain unaddressed, both the violence and its consequences perpetuate themselves, creating a cycle that affects women and, if they have children, extends to the next generation.

## Women Experiencing Suicidal Ideation

Some women who reached out to Mor Çatı to talk about the violence they had been exposed to and to seek support stated that they were having suicidal thoughts. Compared to previous years, we have observed an increase in the number of women contemplating suicide as a result of the psychological impact of male violence. Some women, struggling with the psychological effects of the violence they have been exposed to and grappling with feelings of guilt, shame, and helplessness, expressed that they feel isolated and unsupported and therefore viewing suicide as a last resort. Women feel unsupported and powerless for many reasons, some of which include lack of access to quality support from state institutions and municipalities, widespread impunity, and an approach that protects perpetrators while blaming victims of violence.

Women who stated that they have suicidal thoughts described various forms of violence they have been exposed to, including sexual assault, denial of the right to education, social isolation, and physical violence amounting to torture. Women's experiences reveal that the lack of support following violence, barriers

to accessing necessary support mechanisms, and judgmental attitudes from both their surroundings and institutions played a role in the emergence of suicidal thoughts.

In addition to the violence they are exposed to, migrant women must also fight against discrimination and arbitrary treatment stemming from their migrant status. For undocumented migrant women, the compounded inequalities resulting from their lack of legal status can further intensify suicidal thoughts. A woman who fled her country and came to Turkey without a visa after her abusive husband attempted to kill her, and who is now in the process of applying for residency, shared that the mental toll of living in uncertainty as a migrant, on top of the years of violence she had faced, has been extremely difficult for her. She shared that the fear of being sent back to her country was so overwhelming that she would rather die than return and that she was contemplating suicide.

Women with suicidal thoughts need access to psychiatric support before they can build a life free of violence. Women who had previously sought psychiatric support reported difficulties such as long wait times for appointments, not being able to see the same doctor consistently, not being adequately heard by physicians, and approaches that failed to consider the impact of violence against women which left them feeling unsupported. In terms of psychological support, the limited availability of services from a small number of institutions over a short period falls far short of meeting women's needs. Women's experiences reveal that accessing psychological and psychiatric support through public institutions is challenging, and many cannot afford private services due to current economic conditions. While some women receive regular follow-up care initiated by their physicians, we observe that women experiencing suicidal thoughts or attempts are often not monitored consistently by physicians or hospital social workers, nor do they receive regular counseling sessions.

In this gap, the psychological and psychiatric support that Mor Çatı offers to women who struggle against violence serves as one of the most important resources available to them. We are able to provide women with the support they need by referring them to psychiatrists who adopt a women-centered approach and who are informed about the effects of violence. We refer women to psychiatric services to ensure they receive expert support promptly. As an emergency measure, we establish a suicide prevention agreement with them until they can access psychiatric care. We maintain frequent contact and closely monitor their process.

Male violence also causes children to experience psychological challenges. This year, we learned that several children who witnessed the violence their mother has been exposed, or who were directly subjected to violence themselves, have contemplated or attempted suicide. Children who cannot receive the care they need in an environment of violence may feel helplessness and guilt in the face of violence and may find it difficult to cope and see suicide as a solution to their difficulties. In addition to suicidal ideation, children may also have thoughts of self-harm. A woman shared that her husband inflicted systematic violence on both her and their child, and that her child attempted suicide by taking pills as a result of the violence. Like women, children are often unable to access the support they need in the absence of quality mental and social support. Although public institutions offer some support to children, it is often limited, short-term, and accompanied by difficulties in securing appointments. We know from the experiences of women and children that support is not provided even in cases that require urgent assistance. For instance, a child who attempted suicide by slitting her wrists was denied hospitalization on the grounds that the hospital did not have a child-adolescent psychiatry clinic and was not offered the option to be transferred to another hospital.

The responsibility of following up on women who experience psychiatric difficulties or psychological challenges and who have suicidal thoughts falls on the public institutions. To this end, the diagnostic capacity of community mental health centers should be expanded to include chronic depression within their scope of support. The deterioration of psychological health due to violence and women's withdrawal from work and social life are among the symptoms of chronic or severe depression. People with these symptoms should receive support from community mental health centers and be actively followed up by these institutions in the course of their recovery process. In the absence of adequate support, an important part of our solidarity at Mor Çatı is to refer to women in need of psychological support and to closely monitor their progress.

## Women in Need of Psychiatric Support

Systematic violence can cause women to suffer from chronic psychological disorders or impair their ability to carry out everyday activities. Moreover, women facing various psychological challenges may become more vulnerable to violence and abuse, which can further exacerbate their mental health issues. Many women struggling to establish independent lives due to psychological difficulties and psychiatric conditions are unable to access the support they need

because of the absence or inadequacy of available services. When women seek support from institutions, they may encounter dismissive, judgmental attitudes and feel unheard—often resulting in further challenges such as homelessness and unemployment. In the absence of institutional mental health support, critical steps like medication management, regular follow-up appointments, and access to therapy are often lacking. For instance, many women who had previously been diagnosed and prescribed medication reported that they did not have regular access to a psychiatrist and had stopped taking their medication.

Since psychiatric conditions resulting from violence can make it difficult for women to articulate their support needs or take steps in their best interest, one of our priorities in building solidarity is to refer them to appropriate mental health services. Women may be reluctant to seek psychiatric support for various reasons, including past negative experiences in healthcare settings, fear that the perpetrator will use their treatment against them, or concern about being perceived as mentally unwell. An important part of our solidarity is listening to women's concerns and hesitations and supporting them in accessing the mental health care they need.

Women whose mental health has been affected or who require psychiatric support, as is the case with women having suicidal thoughts, often face challenges in receiving consistent follow-up and accessing quality care services. We observe that women with psychiatric conditions, with whom we are in solidarity, often lack access to regular psychiatric care. We rarely encounter women receiving support from community mental health centers (CMHCs) established for this very purpose. Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) should serve as spaces where women can access not only psychiatric care but also the broader support needed to build independent lives, with the involvement of social workers. However, this holistic approach is rarely reflected in practice. For example, a woman diagnosed with bipolar disorder and in need of regular follow-up shared that she was denied support at a CMHC on the grounds that her pregnancy required hospital-based care, despite her diagnosis falling within the scope of services CMHCs are supposed to provide.

We know from experience that combating male violence and its effects requires the cooperation and coordination of many institutions. In order to ensure that women receive quality support even when facing psychiatric challenges, we engage with various institutions based on each woman's specific needs. In the absence of institutional follow-up, we maintain regular contact with the women and closely monitor their progress. When necessary, we also coordinate with the institutions to which we refer them, jointly planning the support to be provided.

## Family

Family-centered policies and patriarchal norms reinforce the pressure placed on women to marry or remain in their marriages—often by the very institutions they turn to for help in escaping violence, as well as by their families and social networks. When social support mechanisms prioritize family-centered policies over women’s individual needs, women may feel compelled to remain in their marriages or return to their family homes. We also observed that such policies not only prolong the process of breaking away from violence for women but can also discourage them from pursuing it altogether. Moreover, the deepening economic crisis and the financial barriers to women building independent lives further force them to be bound to their families.

Women are subjected to different forms of violence from their childhood onwards. We learned from the women who contacted Mor Çatı that they had experienced indifference, neglect, and unequal treatment since childhood and that, even in the absence of physical violence, such experiences were often normalized. Some women were denied their right to education and forced into domestic labor during childhood. One woman shared that, after witnessing the hardships her mother faced while raising children, she dropped out of school in the fourth grade to help her. Some women are forced into marriage as children or at a young age, while others marry early to escape family violence. These women most often than not share that the circle of domestic violence continues in their own marriages. One woman, who married at an early age to escape the violence inflicted by her father, described the violence she later faced from her husband and said, “I will never return to the hell of my father’s house.” Women are demanded to normalize the violence by expressions such as “We have also been through similar things,” or “It’s your father or brother, they can act like that”. Women who are told that family is their primary source of support may feel helpless, unsupported, and powerless when subjected to violence by family members. This attitude that normalizes violence also silences children when they speak out about abuse. A child who was sexually abused by her two brothers said that when she told her father about what her brothers did, her father said, “You are slandering them.” When the same child reported his brothers a few months later and a legal investigation was initiated, we learned that the family told her, “You have disgraced us in front of the state,” and pressured her to withdraw the complaint.

Women who are exposed to violence by their family members or receive no support from their families often feel unable to turn to them for help when

they face violence in romantic relationships or marriages. And when they do seek support despite all obstacles, they may encounter further violence, obstruction, judgmental attitudes, complicity with the perpetrator, or outright refusal of support by their families. Families may obstruct or hinder the steps women want to take to break away from violence on grounds such as “honor” or “disgracing the family name”. Believing that seeking refuge in a shelter brings “dishonor,” families may resort to violence or pressure to prevent their daughters from going. One woman told us that even long after she went to a shelter, her family contacted her and pressured her, saying, “You ran away with another man, you call it a shelter.” In order to avoid this kind of judgment, many women leave letters saying that they are going to the shelter when they leave the house.

The attitudes of the family towards the woman’s children can also be decisive in the steps women take or plan to take to break away from violence. Many women shared that when they told their families they wanted to leave, they were told, “Leave your children and come.” Such a response can be deeply discouraging for women who are unwilling to leave their children with the man they are married to or who feel they lack the means to build an independent life. One woman who heard these words from her family said, “They want me to leave my children because they are going to remarry me. In their eyes, I only exist to get married,” she said. Women who risk returning to the family home to get away from violence may also be subjected to violence in the family home. A woman who returned to her family home with her child shared that her father had been violent toward her, and her brothers had been violent toward her child. As a result, she felt compelled to return to her husband’s home. In some cases, even in the face of violence, families may place the burden on women to remain in the marriage. They may discourage women by saying “children should not grow up without a father”.

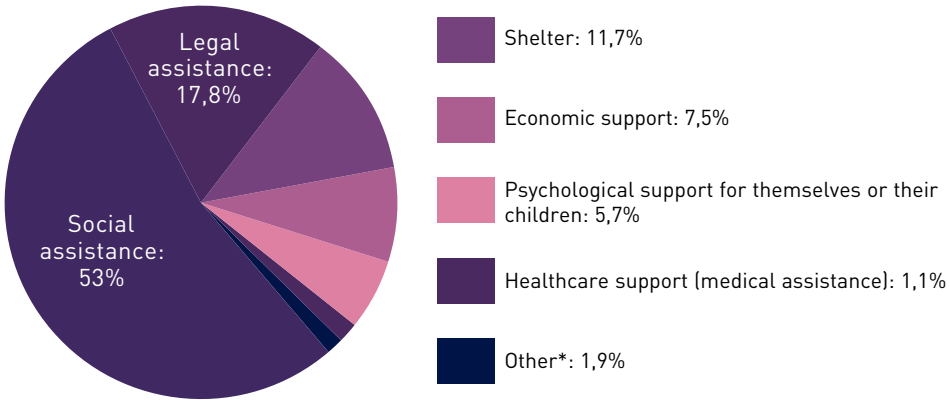
It is very important for women to receive support from their families or at least not to be “hindered” by their families in the process of breaking away from violence. When a woman is able to speak openly about the violence she has experienced and hears from her family that such violence is not acceptable, it can be empowering. Support with housing and childcare—even if temporary—as well as financial and emotional support during legal proceedings, can significantly strengthen a woman’s ability to leave a violent situation. Women can decide more swiftly to divorce, end relationships, ask for legal support and go to a shelter.

However, men who perpetrate violence against women sometimes target family members who support the women. In these cases, women may remain in a violent environment or hesitate to take legal action in order not to put their families at risk. One woman reported that the man she was trying to leave attacked her father's shop and injured both her father and brother in an attempt to force her to return home. When we told her that she could go to a shelter, she said that she could not go to a shelter when her family is under threat. In such situations, women may feel obligated to shoulder the heavy burden of protecting their families.

Even in cases where the family supports or does not hinder the women, they may not be able to provide all the support women need to build an independent life free from violence. The family may not be the setting where women choose to seek support for needs such as housing, employment, or childcare. In such cases, the absence of independent social support mechanisms—or their tendency to prioritize the family—can once again leave women dependent on the very structures they wish to leave.

In our solidarity with women, we see that the family can be an important resource for women from time to time, and that the material and moral support of the family can give women self-confidence and strength in their struggle to break free of violence. However, we also observe that such support can sometimes be conditional, with women facing additional pressures within their families after escaping acute violence—pressures that may directly or indirectly obstruct the independent lives they strive to build. Family relationships that help women break away from violence but fail to support their empowerment are quite common. In these situations, women's empowerment as independent individuals is only possible through solidarity and support mechanisms that prioritize women's needs and wants. This calls for the development of women-centered social policies, the reform of family-centered social service systems, and the prioritization of women's freedom and independence by all individuals and institutions working to combat violence against women.

## Requests of women who contacted Mor Çatı in 2024



\*The category “Other” includes requests for accommodation or shelter, support services available to perpetrators of violence (such as psychological counseling), assistance with residency applications for migrant women, help with work permit processes, and support in connecting with civil society organizations.

The support women need to get away from violence and rebuild their lives varies based on factors such as their individual circumstances, financial resources, whether they have children, their relationship with the perpetrator, the nature of the violence, and the strength of their social networks. The types of support women need to break away from violence are diverse and unique to each individual. At Mor Çatı, we listen to women attentively and respectfully, based on what they are willing to share. We discuss their needs and what they want to do from a holistic perspective, guided by what they choose to disclose. In addition to the initial support women request, we also share with them the needs and alternative options we identify. We conduct this needs assessment and guidance with full consideration of their current circumstances, always aiming to assist them in their process of recognizing and building on their own strengths.

In 2024, women frequently contacted Mor Çatı to share their experiences, to exchange information, to get answers to their legal questions and to request shelter support. When women contact Mor Çatı, the most common request is simply to be heard without judgment and to be able to share their experiences in a supportive environment. It is very important for women to tell about the violence they have been subjected to and to share its effects. At times, women state that they are not truly listened to by the institutions they contact for support after violence and that they face various challenges. These experiences often discourage them from seeking further help—they hesitate to reach out

to the same institution again or avoid calling altogether, feeling unsupported. Many women even ask us whether we believe them. They explain that relatives, acquaintances, or institutional staff often make assumptions about their needs and make decisions on their behalf.

When women reach out to Mor Çatı, we begin by conducting interviews to understand their needs and provide appropriate guidance. In these interviews, we listen to what they choose to share and ask about their wishes and plans. We support women in realizing the plans they have made, and we explore available options together—always with the understanding that the final decision about their lives belongs to them.

Shelters are one of the most important support mechanisms for women in their efforts to break away from violence. In 2024, women reached out to Mor Çatı requesting shelter in situations where their safety was under immediate threat, when they needed a secure environment, or in circumstances such as being forcibly removed from their homes, facing homelessness due to the impact of violence, or lacking the necessary conditions to build an independent life. Many women who were unable to access shelter services due to the conditions and rules set by the “Regulation on the Opening and Operation of Women’s Guesthouses” governing shelters affiliated with ministries and municipalities reached out to Mor Çatı with shelter requests. Women reported issues such as receiving misleading information from law enforcement—the first point of contact for accessing shelters—and not being referred to a shelter at all.

Some women stated that they were worried about going to the shelter with their children and were informed that their children would be placed in dormitories regardless of their age. Several women reported being misinformed that the guesthouse regulation’s restriction on boys over the age of 12 also applied to girls, and that law enforcement told them they could not take their daughters to the shelter. Women over the age of 60, women with disabilities, and women struggling with problems such as addiction also contacted Mor Çatı because they could not receive shelter support. Women over 60 years of age experiencing domestic violence reached Mor Çatı saying that they had nowhere to go. On one hand, although the regulation does not explicitly state so, trans women’s shelter requests are often evaluated based on whether they have completed gender reassignment, and discriminatory practices have prevented many trans women from applying to state shelters and accessing support mechanisms after experiencing violence. Similarly, we observed that migrant and refugee women were denied shelter support either because they were unregistered or because they sought shelter in a city different from where they were officially registered.

When women contact Mor Çatı seeking shelter, we inform them about their rights under Law No. 6284, explain how to access shelters, the admission criteria, the roles of ŞÖNİM and municipal shelters, and the types of services provided in these facilities. While building solidarity with women at Mor Çatı Shelter—the only independent shelter in Turkey—we focus on the impact of male violence and do not impose admission criteria based on age, assigned gender identity, sexual orientation, religious belief, appearance, or citizenship. If there is space in the Mor Çatı shelter, we evaluate the needs and demands of women and discuss the process together through face-to-face meetings. Afterward, we admit women to the shelter along with their children, if any, without discrimination based on immigration status, the children’s ages, or gender identity. Boys up to 18 years old, transgender women, refugee and migrant women, and women who speak different languages can stay at Mor Çatı shelter.

In addition to seeking shelter for safety from violence, being expelled from their homes, or experiencing homelessness, women also request support simply for accommodation. In 2024, as in the previous year, there were women who were forced to leave their homes due to excessive rent hikes or inability to afford rent, women who relocated to different cities to escape violence, and women who became homeless after being unable to find employment in their new locations. Together with the women who seek shelter support at Mor Çatı, we assess their situation and refer them to appropriate public institutions, municipal temporary shelter centers, or relevant non-governmental organization services.

Legal support plays a crucial role in the assistance women seek after experiencing violence. When women reach Mor Çatı for the first time, they may have questions about their basic rights. Issues such as divorce, custody, alimony, complaint procedures related to violence, requests for legal representation, and protective orders issued under Law No. 6284 are among the topics women most frequently want to discuss and seek guidance on. When women contact Mor Çatı for support regarding legal processes, basic information is shared by Mor Çatı volunteers who conduct the first interview. Afterwards, according to the needs of the women and the details of the legal process, Mor Çatı volunteer lawyers provide legal counseling and answer women’s questions. If women wish to pursue a legal process, we emphasize the importance of doing so with legal representation to ensure regular follow-up and to protect their rights. If they do not have the

budget to allocate for a lawyer, we direct women to the Legal Aid offices of the bar associations in the cities where they live. We also evaluate other options together with women according to their own plans and budgets.

Among the women who reach out to Mor Çatı, some already have legal representation but seek additional support from a feminist perspective. In these cases, women can consult with Mor Çatı's volunteer lawyers to discuss their concerns and may choose to reconsider the plans they have made with their current attorneys. Women receiving free legal aid through legal aid appointments often share difficulties they face with their lawyers. With the women's consent, we can contact their lawyers and collaboratively plan the next steps. To ensure women do not lose their rights, we also liaise with bar associations to facilitate access to legal support through women's rights centers within bar associations in their respective cities.

Additionally, male violence can disrupt women's daily lives and significantly impact their mental health. As a result, psychiatric and psychological support was one of the key types of assistance women sought for themselves and their children in 2024. Women came to Mor Çatı seeking psychological or psychiatric support, sharing struggles such as difficulties maintaining daily routines, inability to cope with emotions stemming from violence, somatic symptoms, and challenges sustaining work, school, or social relationships. Occasionally, women also requested psychological support for their children due to experiences of physical, psychological, or sexual abuse; neglect of basic needs; witnessing violence against their mothers or siblings; or the need for special education and/or psychological care. While requesting psychological support for themselves or their children, women also shared the difficulty of accessing such support in public institutions and finding experts who would listen to them with a women-centered approach and with whom they could easily share their experiences. Many women also shared that, even if employed, they struggled to afford current psychotherapy fees and were unable to access or maintain treatment due to financial constraints. In 2024, Mor Çatı volunteer mental health professionals provided psychological support to women and children, and referrals were made to public institutions such as municipalities, social service centers, and hospitals.

## Psychologization of Violence

Some women who contacted our solidarity center believed that the perpetrator's violence stemmed from psychological or psychiatric issues. Within a male-dominated system, the root causes of violence against women can be obscured, leading women to describe men as having anger management problems, narcissistic traits, or mental health issues linked to past traumas, and to perceive the violence they are exposed to as somewhat psychologically justified. Some women who reached out to Mor Çatı shared that, despite the men who inflicted violence on them sometimes behaving kindly and sometimes badly, they believed these men were inherently good and could "get better" with psychological support. Some even requested psychological help for the perpetrators, thinking it would end the violence they have been exposed to. In our conversations with these women, we emphasized that male violence is not caused by psychological problems. We discussed how the root of violence lies in gender inequality and that violence is a deliberate choice. We supported women in making sense of the violence they experience within this framework.

In addition to the psychological impacts of violence, women also reached out to us for medical support due to its physical consequences. Several women shared that they had developed physical disabilities as a result of violence inflicted by their husbands or ex-partners, and that they were struggling to access necessary medical care. One woman contacted us to share that she had lost a limb after being shot by her ex-partner, and that her request for support to obtain a prosthesis had not been met by public institutions. We learned that although she was under a protection order at the time of the attack, state institutions neither compensated her for the harm she suffered nor provided the medical support she needed. Additionally, due to ongoing barriers in accessing abortion—despite it being a legal right—women who faced unwanted pregnancies contacted us for guidance on how to obtain abortion services. In all these cases, women were informed about their health rights and the mechanisms available to meet their needs, and were referred to the relevant institutions for support.

Additionally, women may need various forms of support to cope with the effects of violence and rebuild their lives. These include finding employment, securing housing, accessing school or daycare for their children, and receiving financial

assistance. Among the needs women expressed this year were requests for social assistance. The ongoing economic crisis and rising rent prices have made it increasingly difficult for women to meet basic needs such as housing, clothing, and food, and to build independent lives free from violence. Women also contacted Mor Çatı to express their need for financial support and social assistance. They shared that they were struggling to cover housing and education expenses, that they lacked support for the care and needs of their children, and that their own social networks were insufficient. Additionally, young women who are university students reached out to Mor Çatı with requests for financial support to leave homes where they were subjected to violence, either for themselves or for their mothers and siblings. They expressed their need for support with basic necessities such as scholarships, dormitories, and school materials in order to continue their education or start a new life with their families.

Men's violence also hindered women's access to social support during the ongoing economic crisis. Several women shared that they were unable to receive social and economic support because their husbands—whom they were in the process of divorcing—were officially registered as residing in the home and had insurance. Likewise, we witnessed that women who work to meet their own needs and those of their children could not receive economic support or had to work in very low-paid and precarious jobs. Women who requested legal support to prevent the loss of their rights during divorce proceedings or in response to rent hikes shared that they were unable to receive assistance from the legal aid offices of bar associations, particularly in certain cities. They also noted that, given current financial conditions, hiring a lawyer privately was not an option. Those who were able to access financial aid from social services—such as the Social and Economic Support or the Family Support Program—said that the assistance barely covered rent, utility bills, and basic food expenses.

We always refer women to the appropriate institutions and support mechanisms to help them access the economic resources they need to rebuild their lives. Occasionally, depending on our available resources and capacity, we can provide one-time financial assistance or in-kind support through our volunteer network. This support may be used for household essentials, children's school-related expenses, or the purchase of books. In such cases, we continue to guide women toward the relevant institutions and follow up on the support they receive and the overall process. Throughout the year, municipalities, employment offices, and companies engaged in social responsibility projects may reach out to us for collaboration, or we initiate these connections based on the needs women express.

When women apply for economic support from public institutions, the evaluation process can take several months, and even if approved, the assistance is often delayed. Based on the experiences shared by the women, we know that this waiting period is particularly difficult for those with very limited resources who are trying to rebuild their lives free from violence. As part of our solidarity efforts, we provided economic support to women who were unable to access public assistance or whose access was delayed due to bureaucratic obstacles, in order to help them leave violent environments and rebuild their lives more quickly.

### **The Feminist Psychological Support We Provide**

Psychological support is one of the most crucial forms of assistance needed by women who apply to Mor Çatı in their process of breaking free from violence and coping with its effects. Women sometimes seek this support as a means to break free from the cycle of violence directly, and at other times to heal from the psychological effects of violence, even after they have distanced themselves from immediate danger. Sometimes, women reach out to describe a mental state they cannot fully articulate but experience as distressing, seeking understanding and support to find relief. While we know that not every woman who has been subjected to violence may need psychological support, we know how critical it is for women to access psychological support with a feminist approach when they need it.

This year we made several important observations during the psychological support we provided to women. We saw that judgmental, blaming, and interrogative approaches in the mental health services women received prior to contacting Mor Çatt—approaches that reinforce gender roles, frame male violence as an issue of anger management or mental illness, and overlook the role of gender inequality—negatively impacted women’s healing processes. In contrast, we observed that encountering mental health professionals who listen without judgment or blame and who understand the dynamics and effects of male violence significantly empowered women in their healing journey

## Psychological Support, Court Testimonies and Reports in Legal Proceedings

This year, through the psychological support we provided, we witnessed how women's experiences were often closely intertwined with legal processes. Women may seek psychological support to overcome the hesitation they feel when deciding whether to pursue legal action against the violence they've been exposed to, or to feel mentally stronger while navigating these processes. We observed that systemic issues—such as malpractice, rights violations, and a lack of accountability—particularly in cases of divorce, custody, and sexual violence, can intensify the impact of violence and hinder women's recovery. While not sufficient on its own, we have consistently seen that the restoration of a sense of justice plays a crucial role in women's healing processes.

Divorce and custody proceedings can be not only legally but also psychologically exhausting for women who have been subjected to violence. During these processes, women are under intense stress as they struggle to defend their rights and fight for the safety and well-being of their children. This situation becomes even more complex for women trying to leave relationships marked by violence. In such cases, it is essential that women receive support from mental health professionals who understand the dynamics of violence and adopt a women-centered, empowering approach. This is especially critical in cases of sexual violence, where taking legal action often carries the risk of re-traumatization due to victim-blaming attitudes. Practices that undermine the credibility of women's testimonies or reinforce societal biases not only obstruct their pursuit of justice but also leave them feeling psychologically vulnerable. Throughout the year, in addition to providing psychological support to women involved in sexual violence cases, we stood in solidarity with them to help prepare for the witnessing process and to support their emotional recovery afterward. We prepared expert reports to document the psychological impact of trauma and address the challenges women face during legal proceedings. We also provided written and verbal support grounded in feminist principles—particularly in divorce and custody cases—against tactics used to delegitimize women, such as prolonged court proceedings, victim-blaming, and efforts to portray them as “mentally unwell” or “unfit parents.”

These reports highlight that male violence is not merely an individual issue but a systemic one rooted in gender inequality. They also underscore the importance of acknowledging—particularly during legal proceedings—the psychological trauma that violence inflicts on women. Mor Çatı's expert reports contextualize the effects of male violence within its broader social framework,

aiming to support women's healing processes and strengthen their legal claims. By providing a concrete basis to validate women's experiences, these reports help clarify the impact of trauma and contribute to the pursuit of justice. They are especially vital in cases involving divorce, custody, sexual violence, and other forms of violence, as they make the psychological consequences of male violence more visible.

## Child and Adolescent Work at the Solidarity Center

In 2024, as in previous years, we received applications directly from children themselves. Children reached out to us to share the abuse they had experienced at the hands of family members, relatives, or partners. They asked what could be done for themselves or their mothers in the face of the violence occurring in their homes. When children contacted us by phone, we arranged to hold interviews in the presence of a trusted adult to ensure their safety and well-being.

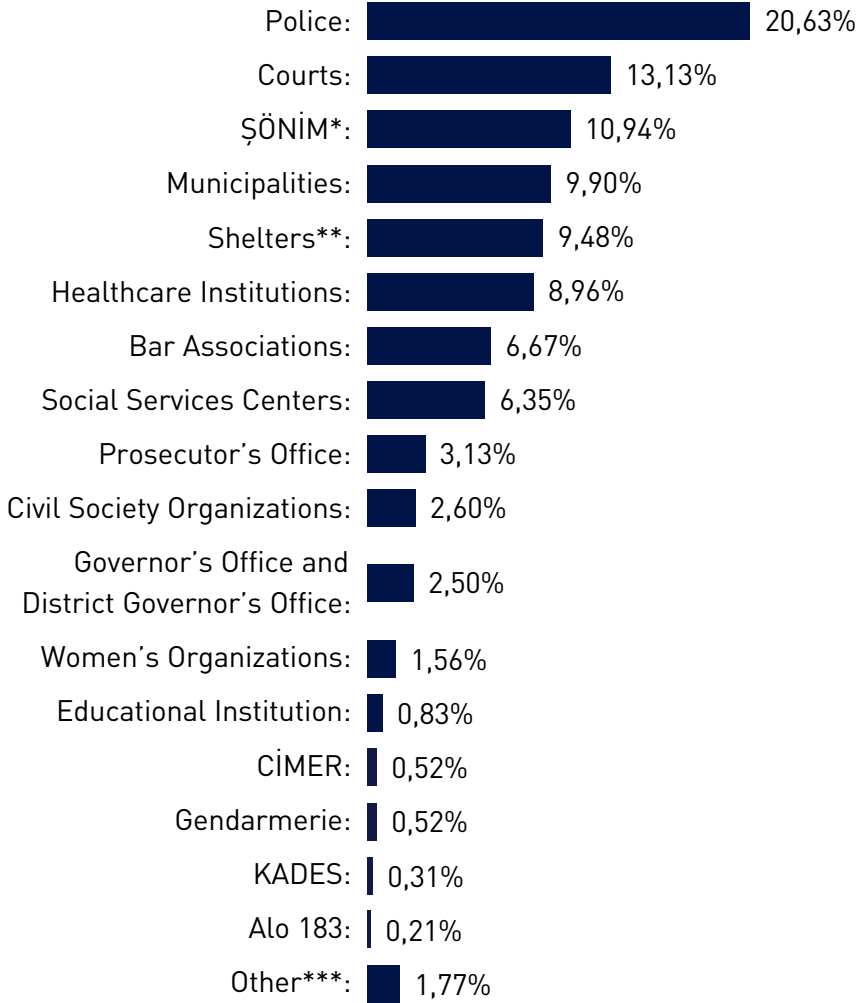
This year, women contacted us because they wanted to receive support for their children as well. They explained how their children were affected by violence at home and asked what they could do to reduce the effects of violence on their children. We assessed the needs of their children with the mothers and referred them to psychological and psychiatric support.

We also referred mothers to parent counseling to help them understand the emotional challenges their children were facing, support their children emotionally, and explore ways to assist them academically, socially, and physically. Through these interviews, we observed that when children moved away from violent environments into safer, violence-free lives, they felt more secure. Seeing their mothers receive support and improve their well-being encouraged children to seek help for themselves and strengthened their social relationships. These insights from children also provided valuable perspectives that we shared during our conversations with women who struggled with the decision to leave home.

Another significant issue that emerged during parental counseling interviews was the physical and psychological abuse of children by their fathers during visits after divorce. Additionally, behavioral changes—such as age—inappropriate sexual interest, genital bleeding, and physical injuries—raised concerns among women that their children might have been subjected to sexual abuse during these visits. We also observed that women's requests to have these visits supervised by an expert or to terminate them altogether, in order to protect their children from further harm, were often not legally upheld. In response, we provided both legal and psychological support to women and their children as they navigated this difficult struggle.

# Support Requested from Institutions Responsible for Preventing Violence Against Women

Institutions Contacted by Women We Interviewed in 2024:



\*ŞÖNİM: Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers

\*\*Shelter requests are listed separately because they can be made to various agencies, including the Ministry of Family and Social Services, ŞÖNİM, and Law Enforcement Units.

\*\*\*Other category includes institutions such as Provincial Migration Management, consulates, universities.

After violence, women may reach out to one or more institutions responsible for preventing violence and talk about the support they need. Women who contact Mor Çatı often describe their interactions with these institutions—both before and after reaching us—and the types of support they were able to request and receive. While some institutions handle these processes effectively, others make it difficult for women to have their needs heard. Common issues women report include receiving false, discouraging, or incomplete information, being denied access to support, or receiving assistance that falls far short of their actual needs. For example, a woman who contacted Mor Çatı out of concern that her children were being abused by their father shared that, in the institutions she had previously approached, she was not believed and was accused of lying to prevent her children from seeing their father. In response to such practices, which we have learned from women’s experiences, we are able, with their consent, to contact relevant institutions to advocate for their support requests. Through social investigation reports, we inform these institutions about the specific assistance women need after violence.

Our years-long experience in the field of combating violence has repeatedly shown the importance of adopting a holistic approach when addressing the needs of women. This is only possible when institutions responsible for preventing violence against women coordinate effectively with one another. Regardless of which institution women approach, all mechanisms must operate based on women’s specific needs—prioritizing confidentiality, security, and thorough risk assessment. This year, we often encountered cases where we had to contact and follow up with multiple institutions due to a lack of effective inter-institutional coordination. Women may initially seek support from law enforcement agencies, such as the police or gendarmerie, or from Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers (ŞÖNİM). We frequently refer women to ŞÖNİM, as it is the key public institution responsible for coordinating efforts to combat violence against women and providing around-the-clock support. We witness that some of the women who call Mor Çatı have never heard of ŞÖNİM. Sometimes, women are not informed about or referred to ŞÖNİM even after contacting law enforcement. Additionally, women whose complaints have been recorded by law enforcement or the prosecutor’s office, or who have been hospitalized with serious injuries, have reported that ŞÖNİM has not contacted them. In our interviews with women, we explain the role and coordination responsibilities of ŞÖNİM. After women contact ŞÖNİM, we monitor the process. One woman shared that despite having a restraining order against her violent husband, he attacked her with a knife, and ŞÖNİM did not contact her even after the necessary official actions were taken. In response, we reached out to ŞÖNİM to inform them of the woman’s high-risk situation and urgent need for support, ensuring they closely follow up

on her case. As a result, a monitoring process was initiated tailored to her needs. Another woman was referred to the bar association, where a lawyer was appointed to handle her divorce case, and arrangements were made with the SHM to provide economic support for her children. We also facilitated meetings with ŞÖNİMs in various provinces for many women facing similar situations. One woman reached out to us, fearing for her safety, reporting that the perpetrator continued the violence despite being monitored with a tracking device. Together with the woman, we were able to make a risk assessment and follow up the process in coordination with ŞÖNİM. As part of our solidarity efforts, we assisted a woman who was shot by her husband while trying to leave him, ensuring she could continue her legal process without losing her rights. To avoid delays, we informed her that she could give a statement to the prosecutor's office while still receiving treatment at the hospital. We first contacted ŞÖNİM in her city to inform them so they could monitor her situation and closely follow her needs. Subsequently, the woman was able to coordinate with the hospital social worker and hospital police, allowing her to provide her statement to the prosecutor's office during her hospital stay.

Law enforcement units, such as the police and gendarmerie, are often the first and most immediate points of contact for women before they reach other institutions. When women are at risk or have just experienced violence, they typically go to the nearest police station or quickly contact the police by phone. In 2024, women who reached out to Mor Çatı shared their experiences with law enforcement units or KADES, an emergency application linked to the law enforcement. After violence, law enforcement units should promptly remove women from the environment where the violence occurred, refer them to confidential and safe shelters based on the risk to their safety and needs, inform them of their rights under Law No. 6284, and handle the entire process with a women-centered approach that acknowledges the effects of violence. Many women have shared that they hesitate to contact law enforcement until it becomes a last resort, often fearing negative or inappropriate treatment by the police or gendarmerie. A woman who called the police through the KADES application reported that when officers arrived, they told her they did not have the authority to take her to a shelter and that she would need to go to a police station in a different neighborhood to arrange it. Another woman shared that when she called the police due to violence, the officers at the station made negative remarks about shelters, which made her afraid to seek shelter. When women encounter difficulties asserting their rights at the police station, we encourage them to contact us so we can intervene and follow up, including meeting with the police if needed. These issues may arise from misinformation about Law No. 6284 or language barriers

faced by migrant or refugee women. For example, when a migrant woman called us from a police station seeking shelter support and fearing loss of her rights, we contacted the police on her behalf and guided her to access the necessary assistance.

In 2024, many women who interacted with the police were faced with deportation practices. We frequently witnessed cases of discrimination and arbitrary treatment when women approached the police or applied to the Provincial Migration Administration. For instance, one woman shared that her petition to resolve issues with her residence application was rejected by the Provincial Migration Administration without explanation. With the support of a Mor Çatı volunteer lawyer, she was able to successfully resubmit her petition. Similarly, numerous other migrant and refugee women reported that they received no response to their applications and were unable to access assistance for their identity card and residency processes.

Some women applied to legal aid offices requesting a free lawyer, but despite meeting the criteria, they were either not assigned a lawyer or did not receive adequate support from the lawyers appointed to them. Many women shared difficulties in contacting their assigned lawyers—whether through bar association legal aid offices or paid services—in obtaining accurate information and ensuring their requests were properly addressed. One woman recounted that she was unable to reach her court-appointed lawyer, and because her lawyer filed a restraining order application one day late, her husband exploited this delay to return home and inflict violence on her.

Women who do not receive quality legal support or are not properly informed about their rights may experience anxiety due to the violence they have been exposed to and face difficulties in making decisions. When in high-risk situations, taking timely action is crucial. In this context, legal assistance from lawyers who understand these challenges and respond with sensitivity is one of the most vital resources for women in their fight against violence. At Mor Çatı, the support of lawyers who understand the nature of male violence, its impact on women, and who adopt a women-centered approach to legal assistance is a vital part of our solidarity. The commitment of volunteer lawyers offering legal counseling has empowered many women to find answers to their questions and alleviate their concerns.

We also listened to the experiences of women who contacted Mor Çatı for legal support regarding how their judicial processes were unfolding. Women face significant challenges in accessing justice in both family and criminal courts. One of the most frequently mentioned issues is the prolonged duration of divorce proceedings. During these processes, women's access to temporary custody,

interim alimony, and other protective measures—crucial for alleviating concerns about their children and enabling them to build a life free from violence—can be obstructed by the slow functioning of the courts. Such obstacles can deeply erode women’s sense of justice. This year, many women with whom we built solidarity at Mor Çatı opted for uncontested divorce, often partially or entirely waiving their rights to alimony and compensation, due to the prolonged nature of court proceedings and the lack of access to qualified legal support.

Even in cases where women agree to uncontested divorce, men may exploit the judicial system to continue exerting control and violence, prolonging women’s uncertainty within the same legal process. For example, men who have never cared for or financially supported their children after separation—and who may have even used violence against them—may initiate or threaten custody proceedings to assert power. Similarly, they may file adultery or infidelity claims to have women’s private lives scrutinized in court, aiming to have the woman declared “at fault.” Accusations that women are unfit mothers or fail to adequately care for their children are also common. In one case we observed, a man who had been violent toward both her wife and child requested the termination of the mother’s visitation rights as a form of punishment. Despite the documented violence, the court accepted the man’s request and revoked the visitation arrangement. In another case, a man with custody—who had abducted the child multiple times and inflicted psychological harm by claiming the mother had abandoned them—was still favored in court decisions. These outcomes demonstrate how the judiciary can fail to prioritize the well-being of the child or recognize the ongoing violence women face.

Many women reported that criminal proceedings initiated following their complaints of violence by their husbands became an obstacle to the finalization of their divorce cases. Family court judges often refrained from concluding divorce proceedings until the related criminal cases were resolved. As a result, women whose divorce processes were prolonged shared that they were unable to move on with their lives, that their future plans were constantly disrupted by the court process, and that their husbands continued to harass and control them as if the marriage were still ongoing. One woman, speaking about her divorce case that had remained unresolved for years, said: “Maybe I wasn’t subjected to violence, maybe I wasn’t cheated on, maybe I just didn’t want to share a life with this man—but the court doesn’t allow me.” In such cases, we reached out to women’s lawyers to offer support in navigating the legal process or contacted the women’s rights centers of bar associations to advocate for action in support of the woman.

In addition to family courts, women also shared their experiences with criminal courts. Many filed criminal complaints against men for offenses such as

attempted murder, battery, deprivation of liberty, intentional injury, extortion, threats, blackmail, insults, sexual harassment, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, and sexual abuse. Women reported encountering significant challenges during both the investigation and prosecution phases. They faced discouraging and judgmental attitudes, and their statements were often not taken seriously or recorded properly. For example, one woman shared that despite going to the prosecutor's office multiple times to file a complaint against her ex-boyfriend—who had followed her on public transportation, assaulted her at the bus stop where she got off, and stolen her phone—the perpetrator had still not been summoned to testify months later.

Even when lawsuits are filed, men are often prosecuted in ways that downplay the severity of the crimes they committed—either because women's testimonies are disregarded or due to pro-male biases within the system. For example, one woman shared that her boyfriend confined her in a house, beat her, and attempted to strangle her with a cable. Despite this, he was charged only with "simple injury." After we established solidarity with her, Mor Çatı's volunteer lawyers provided legal guidance and helped coordinate her efforts to work with a lawyer. As a result, she applied to have the case heard by the high criminal court. Similarly, many women reported that perpetrators were either not punished, received minimal fines, or were acquitted entirely due to procedural failures—such as improper collection of evidence or the failure to accurately take and consider the statements of the woman and child.

We also observed that women's needs and safety concerns are often disregarded during the investigation and prosecution phases of criminal proceedings. In one case, a woman disclosed a qualified sexual assault to a public institution while seeking support. Instead of first listening to her concerns and assessing the risks she faced, the institution initiated an ex officio investigation. Despite her clearly stating that the process was harming her, that she was at risk of violence from both her husband and the rapist, and that her mental health was deteriorating, public officials proceeded without informing her of available security measures or referring her to appropriate support services. As a result, she had to repeatedly give testimony without consideration for her psychological well-being, received no support from public institutions for her health problems, and ultimately felt compelled to withdraw her complaint due to fear of further violence. Through our solidarity with her, we focused on addressing the impacts of both the violence she has been exposed to and the wearisome legal process. Although we were able to coordinate psychological support, our efforts during the legal process, unfortunately, failed.

There were also women who shared that they were able to distance themselves from violence through qualified and effective support from the institutions they

applied to. One woman explained that, in addition to receiving her complaint and issuing a restraining order, the police also informed her about her other rights under Law No. 6284, as they are required to do. As a result, she requested precautionary alimony and a housing annotation, received a favorable decision, and described how this process enabled her to build a violence-free life, which she now recounts with happiness. Another woman stated that she was treated with care and received clear guidance at the prosecutor's office when filing a complaint for stalking, and that the perpetrator, frightened by the legal process, ceased the violence. Similarly, a woman who sought support for violence shared that ŞÖNİM informed her about the electronic monitoring system, and as a result, a tracking device was put on the perpetrator.

## Men Who Call the Solidarity Center

In 2024, 162 different individuals contacted the Mor Çatı Solidarity Center a total of 183 times to seek information about women who had gone to shelters or left their homes to get away from violence.

**105**

Relatives

**61**

Husband

**13**

Father

**9**

Brother

**8**

Son

**7**

Other relatives

**4**

Partner

**2**

Friend

**2**

Public officials\*

\*From the police or prosecutor's office.

As in previous years, men who called often claimed that the women exaggerated the violence due to psychological issues or had simply left home to go to a shelter. In 2024, men frequently used children as an excuse to contact the women. The men searching for the women who went to shelters without their children expressed how difficult it was to care for their shared children alone, while the men searching for the women who took their children to the shelter voiced concerns for the children and insisted on contacting the women to see them. In 2024, 12 women were called multiple times by men close to them, and one woman was contacted 11 times by different individuals.

In some of these calls, men who continued to perpetrate violence through stalking revealed how they tried to prevent women from building lives free of violence by monitoring their health, banking, and phone records. There were also men who threatened, shouted, cursed, and complained about Law No. 6284 when they found they could not obtain information about women in shelters—at times prompting another woman to call our solidarity center.

# MOR ÇATI SHELTER

The shelter work at Mor Çatı offers a vital opportunity to witness the impact of social work grounded in a feminist perspective—supporting women and their children in leaving violence behind, making autonomous decisions, and building lives free from violence. At Mor Çatı shelter, we do not discriminate based on age, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnic origin, or legal status. We also do not impose a fixed length of stay; instead, each woman’s time at the shelter is tailored to her individual resources, circumstances, and goals.

Each week, we conduct in-depth interviews with women staying at Mor Çatı shelter. During these meetings, we talk about their needs, discuss the impact of male violence on both women and children, jointly assess the support required, and connect them with the appropriate resources. When existing support systems are inaccessible, we collaboratively identify alternative solidarity networks. We accompany women throughout their entire shelter journey, from their first day until they leave. One woman who left the shelter in 2024 with her two children shared her experience of empowerment during her stay as follows:



*“It was the best decision I’ve ever made in my life [...] Here, I was able to say things I couldn’t even say to myself or to anyone else. In fact, being able to speak out felt as natural and necessary as eating or going to the bathroom. For the first time, I voiced many things [...] There were things I thought would never happen in my life — like freeing myself from that man. I did it. I couldn’t even ask a cashier in a supermarket, ‘Can you please come here?’ Now, I can. I’m stronger, I’m braver [...] When I first arrived here, my body would shake just thinking about what I went through, about that man. Now, I’ve overcome that fear [...] We were always told that men do the harm and women just endure it, but it doesn’t have to be that way. When my mother said, ‘He is your husband, and you have to bear it,’ I told her, ‘You may accept it, but I don’t.’ Even that was a huge source of encouragement for me.”*

Thanks to the solidarity built with women in shelters, women and their children not only build lives free from violence but also boost their self-confidence, achieve economic independence, express themselves more freely, overcome their fears, gain courage, and discover their own strength. One woman who stayed at a Mor Çatı shelter said, “It feels great to talk to you. Here, I realized that feminism is not a dream but a reality.” Another woman, who had previously stayed in a state shelter, reflected on the difference by saying, “There, you get the feeling that you have nowhere to go. It’s not like that here.” These statements highlight how a feminist approach makes a difference for women receiving shelter support. A migrant woman preparing to leave the shelter shared, “At first, we had no home, but now we can choose which house we want to go to. We have four different options. It’s unbelievable.” This underscores the crucial role of shelter support in helping women make plans, reach their goals, and build a life free from violence.

Women who came to the shelter often expressed anger that the men who had perpetrated violence were able to remain in the home and continue their lives, while they themselves had to leave behind their homes and the lives they knew. Along with this anger, they also shared how, after arriving at the shelter, leaving the violent environment affected their daily lives in many positive ways. For example, one woman who stayed at the shelter said she had left behind the fear she used to feel when returning home in the evenings: “I met my friends over the weekend. It felt so good to be able to come home at eight o’clock without constantly checking my phone, without stress. I didn’t even have my phone in my hand—it was just in my bag.”

In 2024, 11 women and seven children who began receiving shelter support in 2023 continued their stay. Additionally, 17 women and 14 children started to stay at the shelter during 2024. In total, 49 individuals—28 women and 21 children—received shelter support throughout the year. One woman who had previously stayed at the shelter returned, and another called the solidarity center expressing her wish to come to the shelter on her 18th birthday; she was subsequently admitted. The ages of women who came to the shelter in 2024 ranged from 18 to 64, while the children’s ages ranged from newborns to 16 years old. Regarding education, one woman had never attended school, two were primary school graduates, seven completed middle school, 10 graduated from high school, seven held university degrees, and one was a PhD student. Among the 10 women currently staying in the shelter, one was over 60 years old, four were migrants, and one was both a migrant and a trans woman. Two women were not permitted to stay with boys over 12 years old, and two trans women had been unable to access support from ministry and municipal shelters they had previously applied to.

In the remainder of the report, we will share the experiences of women and children who received shelter support from Mor Çatı, detailing the violence they faced and how they came to seek support from Mor Çatı.

## Women's Experiences and the Forms of Violence They Face

The social work carried out with women and their children in the shelter provides detailed insight into the various forms of violence they have experienced beyond the immediate reason for seeking support from Mor Çatı. In-depth interviews conducted upon their arrival revealed that many women had been subjected to multiple forms of violence by individuals other than the primary perpetrator. Six women who stayed at the shelter in 2024 disclosed that they had been sexually abused as children. Nearly all had been subjected to physical, psychological, and economic violence by their own families, relatives, or their husband's family. Many women shared that they viewed marriage as a means of escaping the violence they have been subjected to within their families.

Among the women who received shelter support in 2024;

- 13 women stated that they have been exposed to physical, psychological, and economic violence by their husbands,
- Eight women stated that they have been exposed to marital sexual violence,
- One women said that she decided to come to the shelter after finding out that her husband had sexually abused a child,
- Nine women said that they sought shelter support because of the physical, economic, sexual, and psychological violence inflicted by their fathers, brothers and/or other relatives,
- Four women stated that the violence to which their children were subjected had a great impact on their decision to seek shelter support,
- One women said that she was forced into marriage as a child by her family,

- Six women said that they were sexually abused as a child,
- Two women stated that they were forced into having an abortion by their husbands,
- Three women reported that when they tried to end their relationships, the men began stalking them.
- Seven women said that they were deprived of their right to education by their families,
- Three women said that their partners threatened to kill them and their family members,
- 11 women said that they had been subjected to violence since childhood, and they have been physically and emotionally neglected and abused,
- Four women shared that they felt compelled to marry as a way to escape the violence inflicted upon them by their families,
- Two women stated that their families tried to force them into marriage.

## Physical Violence

In interviews with women who received shelter support from Mor Çatı in 2024, we learned that 10 women were subjected to physical violence by their husbands or partners, while another 10 were exposed to physical violence at the hands of their fathers or other male family members.

Physical violence inflicted by men has been observed to have serious and lasting physical and psychological impacts on women. During a weekly shelter interview, one woman described the effects of the violence she has been exposed to in the following words: “I wasn’t like this before. I used to be fearless and could go anywhere, even places with men. But after facing death, now I’m anxious even to walk the streets.”

The types of violence inflicted by men include punching walls, shouting, dragging by the hair, cutting women’s hair, slapping, punching, pushing down stairs, harming or killing pets, hitting the body with wood, throwing objects, attempting to strangle or choking, coming aggressively at women, threatening with death, hitting in a way that causes bone fractures, beating with sticks, hitting the face, hitting in a way that causes vision loss, threatening with a weapon, holding a gun to the head, frightening by speeding while driving, detention, preventing

hospital visits for medical support, threatening to physically harm women's relatives, threatening with a knife, locking women in the house, beating with a belt, throwing a fork at the face, and restricting access to food. In addition to the direct physical violence against women, men were also observed using methods such as threatening women's relatives, causing permanent disability, coming at women aggressively, and threatening with a knife.

One woman recounted that one day, when she returned home from work, her husband was waiting for her with large cleavers and knives on the kitchen counter to threaten her. When she went to her room to change clothes, her husband began to strangle her. Another woman stated that her husband beat her until she lost consciousness.

Women reported that perpetrators often threatened them with death or harm to their families using guns, knives, or blunt objects like firewood—most often when the women expressed a desire to separate, take their children with them, or file for divorce. One woman, who sought help from her family while fleeing her ex-husband's violence, shared that he threatened her relatives and ran over her mother with a car, leaving her permanently disabled. Another woman recounted how her husband killed the family's pets with a gun as a form of punishment directed at her and their children. These accounts reveal that perpetrators often plan their violence in advance and carry it out in isolated areas where there are no witnesses.

One woman shared that she was systematically subjected to physical, psychological, and sexual violence by her husband's family members. Another woman recounted that during a high-risk pregnancy, her sister-in-law and mother-in-law forced her to serve them, pulled her hair, and verbally abused her. She also recounted how her father-in-law would intentionally enter her bedroom while she was getting dressed to watch her, and would openly stare at her body, particularly her breasts, even in the presence of other family members.

Women also described they form solidarity with the relatives of the perpetrators. One woman shared that her husband deliberately turned off the natural gas in their home during the winter, and that both she and her mother-in-law left the house and sought support in a shelter.

A trans woman shared that her father tried to strangle her upon seeing her wearing makeup. Another trans woman recounted how the violence from her mother intensified during puberty, as her trans identity became more visible. Her mother, ashamed and intent on hiding her, forced her to leave home at an early age. To survive, she had to take on various precarious jobs. Due to their gender identity, many trans women are forced to leave home early, facing systemic barriers to accessing education and basic healthcare. From a young

age, they are confronted with serious security risks, are unable to access state support mechanisms effectively, and are compelled to work under unsafe and exploitative conditions. This year, once again, we observed how trans women face poverty, homelessness, and safety concerns in compounded ways.

Physical violence against women was reported to continue throughout pregnancy. Women shared that they were prevented from attending necessary prenatal check-ups, denied adequate nutrition, and left without support during both the prenatal and postnatal periods. One woman described how her ex-husband meticulously counted every piece of fruit and vegetable in the kitchen, controlling exactly how much they were allowed to eat. She was forbidden from eating eggs, while her young daughters were permitted only one egg per day—an amount he monitored. Another woman said that her husband kept the pantry locked. A third woman shared that while breastfeeding, she often went without food because her husband refused to leave money at home. She also reported that the physical violence had continued during pregnancy, and that he hit under her arm while she was nursing her baby.

A migrant woman shared that when she discovered she was pregnant, her husband pressured her to have an abortion. When she refused, he forced her to take a cancer medication intended to stop the growth of cancer cells, a drug that can indirectly induce miscarriage by preventing fetal development. She recounted, *“I ran away from home for my life. I left that house for her—the baby—to protect her. I risked everything and faced many uncertainties with the baby in my womb. Of course, being a divorced woman in my country is not easy, but I had no other choice to protect my child.”* She described how she ultimately decided to seek support from Mor Çatı.

Another migrant woman, pregnant when she arrived at the shelter, shared that her partner once forced her to have an abortion at an underground clinic. She also explained that when she became pregnant a second time, her partner took all her money and disappeared, leaving her unable to find him.

Several women reported that physical violence began during pregnancy. One woman explained that although there had been constant arguments throughout her marriage, the first physical assault happened while she was pregnant. She described waiting by the window for her husband to return from work when, upon opening the door, he shouted, *“How dare you look out the window with your head uncovered!”* and punched her in the face. She said the violence continued throughout their marriage despite her objections. Reflecting on this, she said, *“The more I raised my voice, the more he beat me. It was because of him that I learned to cry silently.”*

Some women shared that the violence intensified when they returned home for economic, personal, or social reasons. One woman recounted that when the police arrived after neighbors reported hearing her father beating her, the officer spoke to her in front of her father. She could only signal with her eyes and eyebrows that she wanted to speak privately. Eventually, when the officers took her outside, one said, *"I would have done the same,"* and the officers did not refer her to a hospital for a medical report or to a shelter, despite her warning that staying at home was dangerous. She emphasized that she didn't know her rights at the time and felt unable to challenge the police's actions. Following that day, the pressure at home escalated, and her father began tracking her constantly via live location. Conversely, women who accessed shelter support and then returned to the men who had subjected them to violence reported coming back stronger than before. One woman, who sought shelter support because of the physical violence perpetrated by her father, said that after returning to her family, they were fearful of using physical violence, although psychological violence persisted.

Men who perpetrate violence are often fully aware of the harm they cause or intend to cause. When physical violence does not serve their purpose, they shift to other forms of violence. A woman who has been subjected to violence by her father since childhood shared that physical assaults stopped two years ago because her father wanted her to look presentable for marriage. He ceased physical violence to avoid leaving visible marks on her body.

## Sexual Violence and Marital Rape

In 2024, many women who received shelter support from Mor Çatı shared that they were subjected to various forms of sexual violence such as rape, forced sexual intercourse, forced sexual intercourse in the presence of their children, harassment, forced anal intercourse, unsolicited sexual conversations and sexual advances.

Eight women reported that their partners/husbands forced them into sexual intercourse. One woman shared that her husband forced her into sexual intercourse in order to announce to neighbors and relatives that they had reconciled after being beaten up: "This is sexual violence. He committed many crimes against me. Sometimes, when I raised my voice, he would throw me to the floor. Afterwards, he would apologize and even kiss my feet. He bruised my neck deliberately to show others that we were fine—that we had made up. People would ask me, 'Did you two reconcile?' I would reply, 'I didn't make up with him; he did.'"

Six women shared that they had been sexually abused when they were kids. Women who had been sexually abused were generally able to share this experience in follow-up interviews instead of the first interview. This reveals the importance of regular interviews in the shelter. A woman who has been subjected to years of sexual abuse by a relative during her childhood shared that it was only after a friend disclosed her own experience of sexual harassment that she realized what she had experienced was not normal, but sexual violence. One woman said that her father would say things like “Is your vagina watering?” and “Have your breasts gotten bigger?” Another woman said that her father would break into the bathroom while she was in the shower. And another woman said that her father would watch her through the bathroom door.

Another woman in the shelter described being sexually abused as a child by her older brother. She recounted that while she was sleeping at night, her brother would lie next to her and ejaculate on her by stroking her vulva and that when she woke up in the morning and saw the liquid on her, she was very scared. She added that when she showed it to her mother, her mother had threatened her with cutting her if she told anyone about this incident. She said that the sexual abuse she was subjected to at night continued, but her mother allowed them to sleep in separate beds after her older brother attempted to rape her.

One woman shared that her family forced her into marriage as a child. She said that she did not know what marriage was because she was a child at the time, and she thought that if she got married, the violence she suffered from her family would end and she would have a happy home. She said that children cannot make this decision even if they want to, that they see it as a game of marriage and that parents should not marry off their children. Two women came to the shelter because their families tried to force them to marry.

Sexual violence often occurs alongside physical violence, and it is common for women to face barriers to accessing pregnancy-related care and abortion. This highlights that violence rarely occurs in isolation but rather in multiple, interconnected forms. It was observed that men frequently restrict women’s access to contraceptives, with migrant women being especially vulnerable to such limitations. One migrant woman shared that she entered into a religious marriage with a man she met in Turkey to escape violence in her home country. However, he forced her to work in a textile workshop, confiscated her earnings, prevented her from using contraceptives, and compelled her to have an abortion in clandestine clinics under the stairs when she became pregnant. One woman said that when she had to remove her spiral due to an infection, her husband refused to use contraceptives, saying, “*Let’s have another child. What kind of woman are you?*” and raped her. A woman said that her husband systematically raped her, saying “*I will continue the family*

line”, and that she was pressured by her husband’s family to get pregnant. The same woman, who gave birth after her first pregnancy resulting from rape, shared that she sought to have an intrauterine device inserted at a health center, anticipating that her husband would try to impregnate her again quickly. However, the physician at the family health center referred her to a hospital, explaining that the procedure required a gynecologist’s examination and tests. Because the hospital was far from her home and her husband forbade her from traveling that distance, she was unable to get the IUD inserted. As a result, she became pregnant a second time in a short period, again due to rape.

## Psychological Violence

Men use psychological violence to undermine women’s self-confidence, foster feelings of helplessness, and exert control over them. In 2024, all women who received shelter support from Mor Çatı stated that they had experienced psychological violence by their husbands/ex-husbands/partners, fathers, brothers or other relatives.

Men perpetrate psychological violence by swearing, insulting, slandering, and threatening women; by making them question their mental and psychological health; accusing them of being bad mothers; controlling their clothing choices; restricting their social interactions and communication; belittling and humiliating them to damage their social relationships; pressuring them to conceal abuse; falsely accusing them of behaviors they did not commit; manipulating them; threatening harm to their families and children; forcing marriage; locking them in rooms; preventing them from wearing makeup; and combining these tactics with physical violence and insults.

One woman explained that her husband oppressed her by accusing her of having a “psychological disorder”. As a result of his manipulations and the violence she was exposed to, she began experiencing delusions. To recover, she left the violent environment and stayed in her hometown for three weeks, during which her delusions subsided. She also shared that after her husband found a job requiring him to wear a suit, he adopted an “elite” persona, humiliating her more frequently, especially in front of her friends. When she confronted him about this behavior, he dismissed it as a misunderstanding. Additionally, she revealed that after his release from prison, his jealousy and paranoia intensified and he subjected her to violence over a dream in which he believed she and her brother were lovers and accused her of infidelity during his imprisonment.

In the interviews we conducted, women expressed that they were not allowed to have a say in their families. They reported being excluded from decision-making about their own lives and their children's, and unable to express their opinions openly. Their thoughts were neither respected nor taken seriously—not only on life plans but even on current events or issues beyond the family.

One woman shared that her husband asked for her opinion on political matters and who she would vote for, secretly recorded her response, and then sent the audio to his family, saying, "Look at your daughter-in-law, what a traitor I live with." As a result, she was insulted and humiliated by her husband's family. Another woman said she was subjected to psychological violence by her brothers for voicing opinions that differed from the men in the family and for identifying as a feminist. At the shelter, women described finding a space where they could finally hear their own voices again, and they emphasized the importance of being able to make decisions for themselves.

We have also observed that men use the news covering violence against women as a tool of violence. A woman, who was threatened with death and subjected to severe physical violence by her ex-husband, shared that while inflicting violence, her husband would show her news about killings of women on his phone and say "Which way do you prefer to die?".

The women with whom we built solidarity often shared that the psychological violence they had been exposed to has damaged their self-confidence. One woman recounted how, as a child, her family told her that her feet were too large and ugly. They made her wear shoes several sizes too small in an attempt to shrink them. She remembered going to a carpenter as a child and asking, "*Can you cut off my toes?*" She said she believed she was ugly until she arrived at the shelter. After coming to the shelter, she said she finally saw herself as beautiful and gained confidence, stating, "*There are no ugly women.*" Another woman, who realized she had been neglecting herself as a result of the violence she has been subject to, described the transformation she experienced after arriving at the shelter in the following words: "*Struggling and fighting are different. I forgot myself while fighting. The other day I drank coffee here for the first time in years because I actually enjoyed it. I realized how much I had forgotten myself. Then I started crying. It felt so good to do something just because I wanted to. Then I went up to my room and looked in the mirror. I told myself: get your teeth cleaned, get your hair colored, take care of yourself—look at yourself, see how much you've withered. It felt so good.*"

## Social Isolation

It was observed that men systematically isolated women by way of preventing them and their children from leaving the house or communicating with others. Nine women shared that they were subjected to severe social restrictions by their families, husbands, or intimate partners. This social isolation took many forms, including being placed under house arrest, having their phones confiscated, being forbidden to go out alone, having their ID cards and passports torn or withheld, losing access to the internet through surveillance or blocking, being isolated due to gender identity or sexual orientation, and being cut off from neighbors and relatives. One woman described the isolation imposed by her husband in the following words: “He wouldn’t let me go out or work. When I had to go somewhere, he would take me and bring me back himself. I had no social circle, not even friends. If I talked to a neighbor, he’d say something and start pushing me away from everyone. He left me completely alone. He even interfered with my relationship with my family—he would speak badly about them too.” A migrant woman shared that her family had confiscated both her and her sister’s passports. She said that while their passports were being used in an official process, they saw an opportunity, took them back, and managed to escape. Another woman said she was no longer allowed to leave the house after marriage. One woman shared that she was forcibly taken to her mother-in-law’s home in a remote province, where she was locked up for five years. Another woman said she was never permitted to go out alone—if she needed to go somewhere, she was driven by her family and brought back the same way.

## Digital Violence and Stalking

Another form of violence experienced by women was digital violence. Women reported that their partners, husbands, or family members monitored their social media accounts and mobile phones, restricted or banned their use, and prevented them from repairing broken devices. They were also subjected to constant location tracking and had their passwords for e-government services, health records and bank accounts accessed without their consent. This digital surveillance often extended into physical stalking, with perpetrators appearing at women’s homes or workplaces.

We also observed that other men sometimes became complicit in the threats made by perpetrators. One woman, whose husband had threatened to kill her, recounted that he said, “*I won’t get my hands dirty for you; I’ll have someone else kill you.*” Not long after, a man she didn’t know approached her on the street and handed her a bullet sent by her husband. In some instances, women

seeking help from other men were subjected to further violence. One woman shared that after confiding in a man about her plans to escape, he posed as an anonymous hacker and began threatening her, saying he would expose her plans to her family.

During the interviews, women said that in their efforts to escape violent partners, they often had to change their homes, workplaces, and even their children's schools. Some women reported that their children missed school entirely as a result. Those staying in shelters shared that they were forced to move frequently or relocate to different cities due to the persistent stalking and threats from the perpetrators.

## Economic Violence

In 2024, we continued to witness numerous cases where men restricted women's freedom to generate and manage economic resources. Ten women reported that the perpetrators of violence prevented them from working, saving money, attending trainings or courses, and confiscated their savings or bank cards. Some women were forced to take out loans under pressure. They shared that men often refused to contribute to household expenses or take responsibility for the needs of their children.

One woman shared that her husband took out multiple loans in her name and failed to repay his own debts, deliberately pushing her into financial dependency. Another woman said her father caused disruption at her workplace, leading to her dismissal. One woman recounted how her husband confiscated her salary, discovered the money she had tried to hide, and resorted to physical violence when she refused to hand it over.

Four women shared that their fathers prevented them from attending university, while seven others stated they were forced to leave school due to child labor or early marriage. One woman recounted having to work after school and during summer holidays, handing over all her earnings to her family. She also shared that her father forbade her from going to school, forcing her to wait until he left the house in order to attend. When her father eventually discovered this, she was only able to continue her education thanks to the intervention of the school guidance counselor, the principal, and ultimately, the police. Her experience highlights the crucial role of public officials in upholding girls' and women's right to education.

Women who were deprived of both educational and employment opportunities also described being denied access to even the most basic necessities. One

woman said she secretly took money from her husband's pocket just to buy yogurt for her child. Another shared that her husband spent his entire salary outside the home, leaving her to purchase groceries using her own limited savings. A woman recounted how seeing feta cheese at the shelter reminded her of her sister, who loved it—but their father never bought it for them despite having the means.

One woman said that her family made no effort to provide for her or her sister, that they had no belongings of their own, and that they were even forced to wear their brothers' old, shrunken underwear.

## Divorce/Separation

Women face heightened risks when they take steps to escape men's violence, with the separation period often becoming the most dangerous phase for both women and children. In 2024, it was observed that men perpetrated various forms of violence during the divorce or separation process. Notably, women reported facing significant challenges related to child custody, as men used custody battles as a tool of psychological and economic violence. Many of these men had shown no interest in their children's care or emotional and physical needs during the marriage, yet they persistently demanded custody—not out of concern for the children, but to intimidate women, maintain control, and prolong contact. These led to contentious and drawn-out divorce proceedings, which women described as a major barrier to rebuilding their lives independently and as a source of psychological distress.

During divorce proceedings or in cases where temporary or full custody of children is granted to mothers, courts may issue visitation arrangements, but guidance on how to implement these safely is often inadequate. One woman, who brought her children to a designated child visitation center for visitation, shared that her ex-husband's relatives waited nearby during drop-off, leaving her feeling threatened and unsafe.

Men frequently use the pretext of wanting to see or missing their children as a tactic to harass, threaten, or exert control over women. One woman explained that although the father had been granted visitation rights every weekend, he took the children only once after the divorce and never showed interest again—despite having made emotional appeals in court. Another woman reported that her husband, who claimed in court to love her and the children deeply and insisted on seeing them, never once contacted the child visitation center afterward.

In 2024, a positive precedent was set when the court ruled that “there is no need to establish a personal relationship with the father” in a case where a woman and her children faced significant safety risks. This decision prioritized the safety and well-being of both the woman and her children.

## Experiences of Migrant Women

We observed that in 2024, the challenges of building a life free from violence became even more severe for migrant women, and that bad practices targeting them have become increasingly normalized. One woman shared that, seeking a way to escape the violence she faced in her home country, she came to Turkey after a man she met online promised marriage. Once in Turkey, her partner refused to let her apply for a legal residence permit after her visa expired. He forced her to work in an unregistered textile workshop, confiscated her wages, and subjected her to physical, sexual, and economic violence. The same woman explained that when she was later abandoned by this man—while pregnant and refusing his demand to have an abortion—she went to the police to file a complaint about the violence to which she was subjected. Instead of receiving support, she was sent to the Deportation Center (GGM), where she was arbitrarily detained under harsh physical conditions despite her pregnancy.

This year, alongside the already significant challenges migrant women face in accessing support mechanisms in the aftermath of experiencing violence, we observed that the assistance available to those who do manage to access these services is often limited by multiple criteria. Particularly, undocumented migrant women have almost no accessible support options. While migrant women’s access to social support was already severely restricted, in 2024, they were left nearly entirely without support due to restrictive anti-migrant policies and the gradual reduction of services offered by migration organizations. One woman, who fled violence in her home country since childhood and migrated to Turkey, expressed her situation in the following words: “*All I wanted was a peaceful life. It shouldn’t have been this hard.*” She struggled with numerous risks and precariousness caused by difficulties obtaining residency, anti-migrant policies, and her undocumented status.

We observed a case where a migrant woman was unable to access the free transportation support offered by the municipality to mothers with young children, despite her child being a Turkish citizen and her having official residency in Turkey. Migrant women often work in precarious jobs under harsh conditions and face significant barriers to accessing fundamental rights such as education, healthcare, and justice.

## Male Violence Against Babies, Children, and Adolescents

In environments where women are subjected to violence, children are at heightened risk of experiencing physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse. The children either directly witness violence against women or are subjected to violence themselves. Over the past year, we encountered numerous instances where violence against children began as early as the prenatal period. We observed cases in which stress caused by violence during pregnancy negatively affected fetal development, leading to complications such as premature birth and developmental problems.

Barriers to accessing healthcare during pregnancy, physical violence such as pushing, hitting, and punching, as well as deprivation of food, were among the forms of violence we documented. One woman shared that she had difficulty breastfeeding because her husband had injured her armpit by hitting her, and that ongoing stress caused her milk supply to decrease. She was then blamed by her husband and his family for allegedly failing to properly feed and care for her baby. Another woman recounted being beaten unconscious by her husband while she was pregnant.

A woman who had previously stayed in a shelter during her childhood and later returned with her mother to a violent home environment shared that the intensity of violence against her significantly increased after their return. While still a child, she attempted suicide multiple times—by cutting her arms, attempting to hang herself, and ingesting detergent or pills. In an effort to escape the violence, she began running away from home, which led to unsafe friendships and further risks. She described how the systematic violence she has been subjected to from an early age made her increasingly vulnerable to danger and exploitation.

The home environment, which should provide safety for children, often becomes a source of harm in the context of violence, undermining the conditions necessary for their healthy mental, cognitive, emotional, and physical development. In addition to the physical and psychological harm caused by direct exposure to violence, we observed that witnessing violence at home frequently results in psychological abuse and lasting emotional impacts. The positive effects of getting away from violent environments and participating in child-focused support activities at the shelter were clearly visible in the children's behavior. These changes were observed both by the shelter's social workers and the mothers. One woman reflected on her

children's transformation by saying, "I see that not only me but also my children have changed. I see that they are calmer, more understanding, more at peace." A 14-year-old girl described the impact of her shelter experience in a final interview before leaving: *"The shelter is like a harbor. We came here with our broken ship, you repaired our ship. Now we are sailing to our destination."*

It was also observed that many fathers neglected their children, failing to meet their basic emotional and physical needs. This neglect, combined with abuse, led to problems in children's physical, mental, emotional, and linguistic development, as well as nutritional deficiencies. Witnessing violence also created deep fears in children that their mothers might be harmed, leading to intense separation anxiety. Children at the shelter often struggled to be apart from their mothers, frequently experiencing crying spells during even short separations and needing extended time to calm down. These experiences also had negative effects on their social and academic development.

**One-on-one interviews with children, adolescents, and their mothers revealed the many forms of violence to which children are subjected:**

- Two children were born as a result of marital rape,
- All children staying in the shelter had directly or indirectly witnessed the physical and psychological violence inflicted on their mothers by their fathers,
- Nine children aged 3, 4, 8, 9, 13 and 15 were beaten and subjected to physical violence by their fathers,
- A 4-year-old child was beaten with a belt by his father, who punched and hit the head of the child on the wall; this child also witnessed the violence his mother and sister was subjected to,
- Two children aged 4 and 8 were subjected to psychological neglect by their father who did not meet their emotional needs, and when they did not eat or cried, their father used physical violence by shouting and slapping them,
- A 3-year-old child had witnessed the physical, psychological and sexual violence her mother had been exposed to, and the child was subjected to physical violence by his father in the form of slapping, hitting on the chest, and throwing on the bed,

- An 8-year-old child was abducted from home by his father, who manipulated him using negative narratives about his mother,
- Exposed to neglect and abuse by his father since infancy, a 14-year-old boy, who also witnessed the violence his father inflicted on his mother, slept with a knife under his pillow for a long time before coming to the shelter,
- A 10-year-old boy, who witnessed the sexual violence his mother was subjected to as a baby, was forced by his father to buy alcohol when he grew up, and when he refused to do so, his father threatened to kill his mother,
- A 15-year-old boy was forced by his father to exert pressure and violence on his siblings, and when he refused, his father inflicted violence on him,
- A 15-year-old girl was a 10-day-old baby when her father inflicted violence on her for the first time, and when she later asked her father “Why did you beat me when I was 10 days old?” he replied “What could I do, you were crying?”,
- A 13-year-old boy was systematically subjected to torture-level violence by his father since he was 4 years old, and once fainted from blows to the head,
- We learned that a man made death threats to his ex-wife and children in the presence of his children, saying “Either you kill me or I will kill you.”

Violence perpetrated by men often leads children to develop intense fears that their mothers will be harmed, along with deep anxiety about being separated from them. We observed that many children who came to the shelter experienced significant difficulty separating from their mothers. We also observed children taking measures to avoid being found by their fathers—wearing masks and gloves in public, applying makeup, or attempting to disguise themselves in various ways both before arriving at the shelter and while staying there. One child shared that, in an effort to protect her mother, she had made pepper spray at home using a recipe she found online and gave it to her mother.

A striking theme in the children's stories was the emotional and physical neglect they experienced at home. This neglect deprived them of their most basic rights as children, including the right to grow up in a safe environment, access to nutritious food, play, healthcare, and education. Witnessing violence frequently led children to assume parental responsibilities, reversing roles in the mother-child relationship and turning them into caregivers for their mothers. Within the shelter, children often took on responsibilities related to legal and social processes that should have been handled by adults. Interviews revealed that this dynamic caused children to experience heightened anxiety, anger, and psychological distress, as well as a sense of hopelessness about the future.

Interviews with children in the shelter revealed that the economic hardships of starting a new life weighed heavily on them, often as much as on their mothers. We observed that children—particularly those over the age of 10—were deeply concerned with expenses such as rent, utility bills, transportation, and food. Many felt compelled to support their mothers financially and prioritized working and earning money over continuing their education when thinking about their future. Children who planned to work often considered alternatives to formal education, such as transferring to open high schools, enrolling in Vocational Education Centers (MESEM), or dropping out of high school altogether. It was also noted that children in this age group were frequently included in their mothers' plans to leave home—or began making their own plans independently, even when not directly involved. One girl shared that at the age of 12, she secretly saved her pocket money to run away from home with her mother. When her father discovered the money, she was subjected to violence.

Since men often refuse to take responsibility for the care and basic needs of their children, women are left to shoulder these responsibilities alone. Despite their lack of involvement, men frequently criticize the care provided by women, accuse them of being inadequate mothers, threaten to take custody of the children, and continue to perpetrate violence. Although women make significant efforts to care for their children under difficult circumstances, many express feelings of inadequacy and fear losing custody to the father. A particularly concerning form of violence is the use of children as tools of psychological violence against women. We observed cases where men kidnapped children or threatened not to let mothers see them, told children false or disparaging stories about their mothers, claimed that the mother did not want them, or accused the mother of having psychological issues. These behaviors negatively impact children.

Another noteworthy theme that emerged during individual interviews and home meetings with children was their reflections on previous shelter experiences. One woman shared that when her husband became violent, her child told her, “Mom, let’s go to the shelter.” This response reveals how children who have been subjected to or have witnessed violence recognize the shelter as a place of safety and refuge. Overall, children expressed that they found the shelter rules at Mor Çatı to be reasonable and meaningful. One child, reflecting on a previous shelter, said: “Can you believe it? In the old shelter, the door to the playroom was locked, and when we played in the living room, they would get angry with us.” Children noted that in some other shelters, they were left in the care of kitchen staff, and strict meal times posed difficulties for them. Through these comparisons, children and adolescents identified and articulated their needs in the current shelter.

## Support Provided to Women and Children Staying at the Shelter

Women, children, and adolescents staying at the shelter received various forms of support through both individual and group sessions. Each individual had regular one-on-one meetings with their assigned social worker.

To help structure daily life and foster a sense of community within the shelter, weekly meetings with adult residents were held regularly throughout the year. In addition, children’s meetings were organized to better understand their needs and provide space for expression. These gatherings aimed to create an atmosphere of solidarity by strengthening nonviolent problem-solving skills and offering a platform to address and resolve challenges related to communal living. Mor Çatı volunteers also facilitated thematic group sessions—offering both information and peer exchange—on issues such as discrimination, basic legal rights, nonviolent communication, collective living, safe relationships, digital security, and social media use.

As in previous years, an 8-week structured group work program was carried out with women receiving shelter support. These sessions created space for deeper engagement, helping women navigate communal life, resolve conflicts nonviolently, process their emotions and experiences, and develop healthy coping strategies. Women stated that, despite living together for extended periods, they had not previously had the opportunity for such in-depth conversations. Many expressed that through these meetings, they realized they were not alone in their struggles and shared the experiences of others in the shelter.

In addition to individual meetings with women and children in the shelter, joint activities such as workshops, group sessions, and household meetings were found to strengthen solidarity among women, reduce prejudices, and positively impact collective living practices. One woman shared that her biases toward migrant women diminished after experiencing solidarity with them during her stay. Another woman said that she learned the value of solidarity in the shelter and wished to pass this on to others. A departing women reflected on the solidarity between the women in the shelter in the following words:

“You live here with people you might never have socialized with outside. But you build solidarity, and that gives you strength. When you’re too exhausted to cook, someone else shares their food with you. The friendships here are very different. In your own family, you might not want to stay in the same house with a sibling, a sister-in-law, or your uncle—but here, when it’s time to leave, you feel sad. I actually had an argument with Ms. X when she first arrived, but in the end, we hugged and cried. I used to dislike hugging, but now it gives me strength.”

Mother meetings continued this year as well, providing space to support communication between mothers and their children. These gatherings also helped women to talk about the challenges their children face in their shared lives and the possible difficulties they might encounter in the new life they will build after leaving the shelter.

Through games and group meetings with women and children staying in the shelter, efforts were made to strengthen their social connections and deepen interpersonal relationships. Movie screenings were also held regularly for children, followed by discussions to reflect on the themes and messages of the films. In the shelter, regular meetings and educational activities were organized for children and adolescents to support their development in areas such as communication, gender equality, peer violence, emotional awareness and expression, body awareness, and consent. As part of the work with adolescents, individual sessions focused on issues like gender roles and experiences of peer violence.

Beyond the support provided within the shelter, women and children were also referred to other institutions and programs that could support their empowerment and help them get out of violent environments. Women and in relevant cases children were referred to;

- Mor Çatı volunteer psychologists and psychological counseling units of municipalities for psychological support.
- Mor Çatı volunteer psychologists and relevant CSOs for parenting counseling.
- Mor Çatı volunteer psychiatrists or psychiatrists who provide support in public hospitals in case they need support.
- Istanbul Bar Association's Legal Aid Unit and Mor Çatı volunteer lawyers for legal support.
- Social Service Centers of the Ministry of Family and Social Services for nursery support if they have a child between the ages of 0 and 6.
- Mor Çatı volunteers for educational support and support in their studies.
- Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation for temporary rent support, health needs, cash support for starting a business.
- Social Assistance Units of municipalities for temporary cash support.
- Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and relevant district municipalities for furniture and financial assistance to support their transition into a new home.
- Municipal polyclinics and state hospitals affiliated to the Ministry of Health for free health services.
- Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB) Trainee Centers and Women's Centers for vocational training opportunities and activities designed to support the developmental needs of their children.
- IBB Regional Employment Offices and İŞKUR if they are seeking employment.
- Organizations working with migrants and refugees for counseling on identification processes and immigration-related questions.
- Relevant women's organizations for strengthening solidarity networks.
- Trainings and meetings on topics of interest organized by provincial and district municipalities.

Daily needs, clothing, and school supplies were largely met through in-kind donations to Mor Çatı. In addition, women and children received regular support for medical needs, transportation, communication, and notary expenses.

## Leaving the Shelter

Despite the deepening economic crisis and the lack of social support mechanisms, women continued to struggle this year to create opportunities for a life without violence. There was an intensification in the tendency to plan to move out of the house due to economic reasons. Many women explored the possibilities of establishing a life outside of Istanbul and tried to make plans in this direction.

- One woman left the shelter with the intention of relocating to another country, as she did not feel safe building a life in Turkey.
- One woman left the shelter after she started working and rented a shared house.
- One woman left the shelter after finding a job with housing.
- Two women left the shelter within a few hours of their arrival, deciding to go to their families' homes.
- Seven women's shelter support was terminated due to rule violations. With the women whose shelter support was terminated, a safety plan for the post-shelter period was made and they were referred to alternative support.
- One woman left the shelter and relocated to another city due to serious concerns for her life safety.
- Two women left the shelter after finding a job and renting an apartment.
- One woman left the shelter after her husband agreed to an uncontested divorce, enabling a swift legal process, and she returned to her family home.
- Two women left the shelter after finding a job and a house, and shortly after leaving the shelter they moved to another country after completing the official process.

# Challenges Women Face in Their Encounters with Support Mechanisms and Setbacks to Their Efforts to Build Independent Lives

## Challenges Related to the Healthcare System

In 2024, we witnessed numerous obstacles women and children faced in accessing the healthcare system. A pregnant, undocumented migrant woman could not access adequate prenatal care. For months, she was unable to receive examinations or treatment at public hospitals because of her undocumented status. We referred her to a feminist gynecologist, who conducted the necessary prenatal check-ups and confirmed that she was nearing delivery. When the woman subsequently went to the emergency department of a state hospital, she was told after routine tests that it was not yet time to give birth and was discharged. This scenario repeated over the course of three consecutive weeks and she was turned away following minimal evaluation. Just days after her last visit, she returned to the emergency room in active labor, only to be told that the baby had died. The attending doctor informed her that the fetus needed to be removed urgently but refused to proceed with the procedure unless she first paid for a prior emergency visit.

After the payment was made, and following half a day of repeated attempts to induce labor, it was determined that the baby's physical size far exceeded the woman's capacity for vaginal delivery. A caesarean section was eventually performed. The physicians did not provide a definitive explanation for the baby's death but told the woman that stillbirths can sometimes occur without an identifiable cause. After she was discharged, the hospital refused to release the baby's body until the costs of the treatment and delivery were paid in full.

A child reported that after being physically assaulted by his father, they were taken to the hospital. There, the father claimed the injuries were due to a fall from a bunk bed. Despite visible signs of violence, the doctor failed to notify the hospital's social service unit. The child expressed this experience in the following words: *"Doesn't the state protect its people? When I told that doctor I fell off the bunk bed, he should've asked, 'Where is the bunk bed in your house?' and come to see for himself. We didn't even have a bunk bed for me to fall from!"*

In another case, a woman recounted being slapped by a doctor during childbirth in an attempt to silence her while she was crying and screaming in pain. We also learned of a child who, after being hospitalized for a traffic accident and sustaining head trauma, was prematurely discharged by his father before the medical examinations were completed.

## **Education**

In our work with children throughout 2024, we frequently encountered significant barriers to accessing education, as well as systemic setbacks and bad practices within the education system. Deepening poverty continued to play a critical role in pushing children out of school and into child labor, as many felt compelled to contribute to their family's livelihood.

In one case, we learned of a child who had not attended school for several years but was still being passed to the next grade without taking exams, through an informal agreement with the school principal. Rather than being encouraged to continue his education, the child was employed by his father in construction from a young age, a situation which was supported by the school's failure to monitor or follow up on his absence.

Another woman shared that, as a child, she had struggled to adapt to school due to the violence she had experienced at home and that the school principal recommended that her family enroll her in a boarding Quran course.

In our work with adolescents, we also observed growing feelings of hopelessness and despair. Many young people expressed a lack of belief in education, convinced that completing school would not secure them a future of economic stability or meaningful work. They doubted that gaining a profession aligned with their education would provide a living wage or allow them to live in dignity. As a result, some began to set their sights on alternative paths that promised quicker and easier financial gain.

## **Implementation of Law No. 6284**

We continued to observe significant shortcomings in the implementation of Law No. 6284. For instance, while confidentiality measures were generally granted for six months, protection measures such as restraining orders were either not issued at all or granted for only very short periods. Preventive alimony and temporary custody requests were frequently rejected, with judges deferring these decisions to divorce courts. In one case, a woman's request for the confiscation of the perpetrator's weapon was denied. Another woman had three separate applications for restraining and no-contact orders rejected. We also witnessed how confidentiality orders had the unintended consequence of limiting women's access to essential services. Women subject to these orders were often unable to use platforms such as E-Nabız,

MHRS, or the E-Government portal, all of which are critical for accessing healthcare and conducting daily activities. In many cases, women attempting to obtain healthcare appointments through channels other than MHRS or 182 were mistreated or turned away because of the lack of institutional coordination. Some were only able to exercise their right to health after direct interventions from hospital patient rights units or when individual hospital staff took the initiative to help. Despite women reporting violations and implementation issues to Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers (ŞÖNİM), we observed that many of these applications went unanswered. Confidentiality orders were not consistently respected across institutions: for instance, a woman's workplace information was accessed by her partner, and another woman was located by the perpetrator through an SMS sent to her father following a hospital visit. Legal procedures were also obstructed. Some women were unable to issue powers of attorney at notary offices due to their confidentiality orders, which delayed their divorce proceedings. In two cases, women seeking protection under the Law 6284 together with their children initially received no protective decisions for the children. These were only granted after appeals. The staggered start and end dates of different protective orders further burdened women, requiring multiple courthouse visits just to extend decisions. A woman who went to the police station to request a restraining order was told to go to the courthouse instead. A migrant woman who applied for a confidentiality order at the courthouse received no response for months.

### **Challenges Related to Daycare Centers and Childcare**

In addition to the many hardships caused by violence and its long-term effects, we observed that practices that entrench gender inequality further hinder women from planning a life free from violence. One of the most urgent needs for women entering the shelter is access to childcare—particularly daycare—so they can find employment or receive economic support. Women with young children often face a lack of available spots in daycare centers. Some are denied social or economic assistance because they are receiving daycare support, while others are told they cannot receive additional support because their basic needs are considered met through shelter services. Moreover, the limited availability of after-school care for women with school-age children makes it nearly impossible for them to find or keep a job, further complicating their ability to leave the shelter and build a sustainable life. One woman, determined to become self-sufficient, tried to save money while

in the shelter to support herself and her two young children. Despite her efforts, the lack of adequate support made it extremely difficult to plan for her future. We observed that existing mechanisms are particularly inadequate for women with children aged 0–3, who face some of the greatest barriers to independence. One woman who entered the shelter while pregnant planned to return to work after giving birth by enrolling her child in a daycare center. Her application was rejected due to the extremely limited quota for children aged 0–3. In another case, a migrant woman who gave birth while at the shelter could not access any daycare or nursery services because her baby was unregistered. Private nurseries that do accept children in this age group were found to charge fees higher than the minimum wage.

### **Life After Shelter: Deepening Housing Problem**

This year, the worsening housing crisis and deteriorating economic conditions emerged as some of the most significant challenges preventing women from making exit plans. In 2024, poverty deepened further as wages were rapidly eroded by inflation, and average rental prices exceeded the minimum wage. By June, the average monthly rent for a home in Istanbul had reached 22,535 TL, while the minimum wage stood at 17,002.12 TL. According to data from the Istanbul Planning Agency, by July 2024, the cost of living in the city had climbed to 66,500 TL. Meanwhile, most women receiving support in our shelter were able to secure only minimum wage jobs or slightly above.

For women attempting to establish a sustainable life in Istanbul, renting a home often meant seeking housing in the city's outskirts or turning to alternatives such as shared housing, employment that included lodging, or dormitory-style accommodations. In response to these challenges, we organized home economy workshops at the shelter, where women focused on coping with financial hardship, budgeting, managing rent and utility costs, and meeting basic needs like groceries.

In 2024, one woman, unable to establish a stable life in Istanbul with her two children due to financial constraints, migrated to another city. Another woman left the shelter to move abroad, as envisioning a sustainable future in Turkey had become nearly impossible.

A migrant woman accepted a job that offered accommodation in a room above her workplace to avoid paying rent. However, she had to work six days a week for less than one-third of the minimum wage.

2024 was marked by increasingly limited access to social support services that should have been provided by public institutions. Even where support existed, it was often insufficient. For women preparing to exit the shelter, 2024 was a year of hardship, as they struggled to survive on the wages they earned. Finding housing, acquiring basic furniture, and covering essential needs such as childcare, food, hygiene, healthcare, and education remained ongoing challenges.

## Shelter Social Workers

At the Mor Çatı shelter, social workers who build solidarity with women and children continued to receive individual and group supervision throughout the year. In order to ensure coordination between the work carried out at the shelter and the activities at Mor Çatı's solidarity center, regular shelter-center meetings and case meetings were held with the participation of volunteer social workers from both spaces. Child-focused supervision sessions also continued in order to strengthen the work we carry out with children at the shelter. To reinforce one-on-one solidarity with women, meetings were organized throughout the year bringing together social workers, lawyers, and psychologists. Besides Mor Çatı volunteers, three students supported the shelter work as part of their internship programs.

# KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE SHARING

## Expanding the Volunteer Network

At Mor Çatı, we derive our strength in combating male violence from the solidarity we build as women and the commitment of our volunteer network. In order to become a Mor Çatı volunteer, one must identify as a feminist, embrace our approach to combating male violence, and participate in periodic meetings and workshops we organize. Through our Purple Meetings [Mor Buluşmalar] and volunteer workshops, we aim to deepen awareness and knowledge on gender and male violence. These sessions focus on key topics such as gender, feminism, our legal achievements, feminist methods in fighting male violence, and Mor Çatı's organizational policies. Coming together in these meetings creates a space for women to share their own experiences and reflect on their understanding of violence through open conversations about feminism and lived realities. In 2024, 3,714 women expressed their interest in volunteering by completing the contact form on our website. Volunteer workshops were carefully structured to facilitate experience-sharing and to prepare volunteers who wanted to engage directly in solidarity work with women at our shelter and solidarity center. Additionally, volunteers offering their professional skills—particularly lawyers and psychologists—shared their expertise to support women more effectively.

In the Purple Conversation [Mor Muhabbet] meetings, where Mor Çatı volunteers and women interested in volunteering come together, we discussed topics including women's unique health issues, dating violence, the impact of violence on women and children, the dynamics of safe versus violent relationships, women's solidarity, legal measures to combat male violence, and the provisions of Law No. 6284.

## Assembly of Women's Shelters and Solidarity/ Counseling Centers

For 27 years, the Assembly of Women's Shelters and Solidarity Centers has convened twice a year to exchange experiences in the field of combating violence against women, develop common policies, and establish a continuous communication network among organizations and institutions. This year, the interim assembly was held in Urfa and the main assembly in Ankara. As Mor Çatı, we participated in the organization of both assemblies as the permanent secretariat.

The Interim Assembly of Women’s Shelters and Solidarity/Counseling Centers took place in Urfa from June 7–9, 2024, with the participation of 65 women from member organizations. Discussions focused on post-election relations with municipalities, monitoring efforts in the fight against violence against women, the theme and agenda of the upcoming main assembly, and the organization that would host it.

The 27th Assembly of Women’s Shelters and Solidarity/Counseling Centers was held in Ankara and hosted by The Foundation for Women’s Solidarity [Kadın Dayanışma Vakfı]. The assembly, held on November 2–4, 2024, convened under the main theme: *“Rethinking the Role of Local Governments in Combating Violence against Women.”* It brought together 341 women from 168 institutions, including 56 women’s organizations—29 of which are components of the assembly—4 LGBTI+ organizations, 8 bar associations, and 75 public institutions and municipalities. On the final day, as discussions focused on policy recommendations and the assembly’s final declaration, news broke that government-appointed trustees had replaced elected mayors in the municipalities of Batman, Mardin, and Halfeti. In response, a press statement titled *“As Feminists, We Say No to Trustees”* was issued and read aloud. As with every year, following the assembly, feminist, women’s, and LGBTI+ organizations that had gathered came together to draft a final declaration outlining our collective demands for combating violence against women. This declaration was publicly shared on November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

## Meetings with Women’s Organizations and Civil Society Organizations

We come together with women’s organizations and other civil society groups working in diverse fields to exchange experiences, develop policies, and seek solutions to the common challenges we face. This year, in addition to our collaborative efforts as part of the Assembly of Women’s Shelters and Solidarity/Counseling Centers, we actively contributed as members of the Women’s Coalition. Together, we carried out joint monitoring of municipalities and collaborated on the preparation of various international reports. We also worked closely with the Women’s Human Rights Association on the issue of abortion rights. As part of this collaboration, we participated in their Feminist Gathering titled *“Looking Together at the Recent History of Our Struggle with Organizations Celebrating Their 30th Anniversary,”* where we shared our tools of resistance and the organizing experiences.

We organized a roundtable meeting with Kaos GL in Ankara to discuss the solidarity and support networks we have built with LGBTI+ individuals, share our experiences, and explore opportunities for joint action. We also met with the Civil Society in the Penal System Association (CISST) to address the state of women in prison who have been subjected to male violence. Throughout the year, we came together with civil society organizations in a total of 48 events focused on knowledge sharing, workshops, and promotional activities. In addition to organizations from Turkey, we also hosted institutions from Europe visiting Turkey on study trips who sought to learn more about our work.

## Our Transnational Feminist Networks

The feminist networks we are part of provide valuable spaces for sustaining our transnational struggle against violence against women and for developing joint policies through solidarity with other women's organizations. As Mor Çatı, we are a member of the WAVE Network (Women Against Violence Europe) and the European Women's Lobby. We are especially active within the WAVE Network, where we serve on both the Executive Board and the Advisory Board.

This year, on April 18–19, we hosted the Southern Europe Regional Experience Sharing Meeting in Istanbul with the participation of member organizations from Spain, Italy, Malta, Greece, Cyprus, and France, along with the WAVE team. On the second day, the meeting continued with a broader discussion that included feminists from Turkey. Topics such as attacks on women's rights, challenges faced by migrant women, the EU Directive on combating violence against women, and the killing of women were discussed. The meeting also highlighted the importance of regional partnerships and explored strategies for collective feminist struggle.

This year, we actively participated in the Preventive Work, Migrant Work, and Legal Working Groups within the WAVE Network. We also contributed to *Fempower* magazine with an article focusing on the killing of women in Turkey. In May, we took part in the Advisory Board Meeting held in Vienna. The annual WAVE Conference, titled "*From Emergency Support to Violence Prevention: 30 Years of Championing Women's Rights*," took place in Vienna from September 30 to October 2. During a session where organizations from WAVE shared their experiences, we presented the journey and work of Mor Çatı. Additionally, we participated in the meeting organized by the European Women's Lobby Violence Observatory, where we exchanged insights and experiences with women's organizations from across member countries on strategies to combat violence against women.

## Our International Monitoring Activities

At Mor Çatı, we contribute to international monitoring mechanisms by preparing reports and participating in meetings organized by relevant committees alongside other civil society organizations. While international monitoring strengthens the global struggle against violence against women, we also use international reporting as a strategic tool to advocate for change within Turkey, aiming to transform mechanisms for combating violence in favor of women. Through our reports, we highlight the structural barriers and challenges women face in their fight against violence and bring these issues to the attention of the international community.

In 2024, we prepared reports for various international monitoring mechanisms. One of these was submitted to the 38th Plenary Session of the United Nations Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. [Our report](#) focused on the gender-based discrimination faced by migrant women in Turkey and the challenges they encounter in accessing support mechanisms when subjected to violence. On June 3, we participated in the plenary session in Geneva, where we presented our findings directly to the committee and responded to their questions.

We submitted [a report](#) to the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) detailing the shortcomings in Turkey's mechanisms for preventing violence against women under the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The report also highlighted the misconduct of public officials responsible for law enforcement. On July 16, we participated in the committee's meeting with civil society organizations in Geneva, where we presented our findings.

For the 142nd Session of the UN Human Rights Committee, which reviewed Turkey under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, we prepared a report addressing killings of women, the inadequacy of preventive measures, barriers to accessing justice, and violence against feminist activists. We also contributed to the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Turkey's fourth cycle with a joint report on violence against women, prepared in collaboration with other women's organizations.

Additionally, we submitted [a report](#) to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for the Opuz Group Cases. These are cases in which the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) found Turkey in violation for failing to prevent violence against women. Our report focused on ongoing issues in the implementation of protective and preventive measures, particularly the misconduct of public officials, and highlighted persistent problems such as killings of women and impunity.

## Meetings with Municipalities and Public Institutions

In 2024, we held numerous meetings with public institutions and municipalities to share the knowledge we have gained at Mor Çatı through our solidarity with women, particularly regarding mechanisms to combat violence and the institutional challenges women face. We engaged with decision-makers at both central and local levels, provided consultancy support to municipalities upon request, organized experience-sharing workshops to support and empower municipal employees, and actively participated in strategic planning and local equality action plan meetings.

At the national level, we took part in several key meetings organized by the Ministry of Family and Social Services, including the “Coordination Board on Combating Violence against Women” on January 3, the “Istanbul Provincial Coordination on Combating Violence against Women and Provincial Action Plan IV Technical Committee Meeting” on February 9, and two consultation meetings with civil society organizations held in Ankara on October 16 and December 20.

We met with the mayors of Beşiktaş on July 4; Küçükçekmece and Şişli on July 30; Esenyurt on August 1; Maltepe on August 6; Üsküdar on August 15; Eyüpsultan on August 19; Beyoğlu on September 30; and Bakırköy on December 16. During these meetings, we received information on the municipalities’ plans regarding their efforts in combating violence against women and we shared our experiences and evaluations. Additionally, we visited the women and family services directorates of Beşiktaş and Avcılar Municipalities on June 27, Kartal Municipality on July 23, Konak Municipality on October 7, Şişli Municipality on November 19, and Maltepe Municipality on December 23. During these visits, we discussed the support services offered to women, municipalities’ plans to open women’s counseling centers and shelters, and their procedures for receiving applications from women subjected to violence. We also participated in the strategic planning workshops of Avcılar (July 9), Küçükçekmece (July 10), Esenyurt (July 11), Şişli (July 20), Üsküdar (July 24), Bakırköy (July 31), and Maltepe (August 9), where we shared our evaluations and recommendations on combating male violence. Moreover, we took part in the Local Equality Action Plan workshops organized by Avcılar Municipality on October 15 and Maltepe Municipality on December 4, contributing our perspectives on the plans and trajectories regarding our struggle against violence against women over the next five years.

Our collaboration with the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (İBB) on combating violence against women continued actively throughout the year. On January 18, we held an experience-sharing meeting to which staff from

the IBB shelter and the Mor Çatı shelter participated. On July 2, field staff from the IBB Social Assistance Unit visited our solidarity center. On July 24, we met with the Head of the IBB Social Services Department to evaluate the municipality's current work on violence against women and explore potential areas for collaboration. One outcome of this meeting was the planning of a gathering for anti-violence centers across Istanbul's district municipalities. On October 9 we held a workshop titled "Workshop on Feminist Approaches to Combating Violence against Women in Municipal Services." The workshop focused on key themes including inclusivity and accessibility, risks and threats, challenges in service provision, strategic planning and policy development, collaboration and inter-institutional cooperation, and building long-term partnerships with district municipalities aiming at capacity building for services offered to combat violence against women. Based on the needs identified during the July 2 visit by IBB field staff, we prepared a directive for field staff focusing on ways to recognize violence, understand its dynamics, and intervene using a feminist approach. We subsequently delivered a training focusing on the implementation of this directive to approximately 400 IBB field workers across four sessions on August 27–28 and September 5–6. On November 14, we conducted a visit to the IBB Temporary Shelter Center.

We also shared our experiences in operating women's counseling centers and shelters with various municipalities. During our meeting with the Mayor of Beyoğlu and the Women's Directorate on September 2, we learned about the municipality's plans to open a women's counseling center and were asked to support the center's logistical preparations. We held a follow-up online meeting on October 14 to discuss the center's physical setup, followed by an in-person meeting on October 22 to exchange ideas and evaluations. On November 24, we attended the official opening of the Beyoğlu Municipality Women's Counseling Center.

On August 13, we held a workshop for Urla Municipality employees, followed by sessions for Avcılar Municipality social workers on October 2, Şişli district mukhtars on November 14, Konak Municipality employees on December 4, and social workers from municipalities in Van and neighboring provinces on December 11–12. In each of these workshops, we shared Mor Çatı's experience in combating violence against women. Additionally, on September 7, we met with the Van Metropolitan Municipality to discuss the support we could provide in strengthening their response to male violence. On September 11, we met with the Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality to share our experiences and learn about the current situation and new developments in their anti-violence mechanisms following the appointment of a trustee. Alongside these events, many institutional staff members from various

municipalities and social service institutions across Turkey also took part in the workshops and the main assembly we organized for women working in the field of combating violence against women.

This year, we continued to take part in the monthly meetings of the Executive Board of the Istanbul City Council Women's Assembly. We also participated in meetings organized by Şişli Municipality regarding the First Step Center, held on August 15 and September 24, as well as a consultation meeting with women's NGOs hosted by Beyoğlu Municipality on October 16. In addition, we attended and gave presentations at various events organized by the municipalities of Esenyurt, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB), Avcılar, Diyarbakır, Sancaktepe, Eyüpsultan, Bayrampaşa, and Şişli. Exercising our rights under the Law on Right to Information Act, we submitted three applications to public institutions and municipalities to inquire about their efforts and activities in the field of combating violence against women.

## Family Court Practices and Meetings with Lawyers

In December 2023, we came together as feminist lawyers and Mor Çatı volunteers to discuss potential changes to the Civil Code and the challenges encountered in the practice of Family Courts. During this initial meeting, we decided to continue our discussions on issues related to divorce, obstacles to preventing violence, and the sexist attitudes often encountered in family court proceedings. The second meeting took place on February 26, 2024, where we focused on topics such as fault-based divorce, alimony, mediation, and the role of bar associations. On March 4, 2024, we held focus group discussions with Mor Çatı volunteer lawyers and social workers where we discussed the role of family courts in the fight against violence and their real-life implications.

Drawing from these discussions and shared experiences, we prepared the report titled "*Family Courts in the Fight Against Violence Against Women*" and published it on our website. On December 16, we launched the report with a meeting where we presented our findings to lawyers and held a joint discussion. The report highlighted two key issues: the implementation of cautionary (protective) decisions and violations related to divorce proceedings in family courts. We also drew attention to how harmful practices in these courts often render the impact of violence on children invisible in the broader struggle against male violence.

## Social Workers Workshop

This year, we organized the “Social Workers Workshop on Combating Violence Against Women” on January 27-28 and December 21-22, with the participation of 46 social workers from local governments, public institutions, and non-governmental organizations. During the workshop, we talked about male violence against women and its effects, feminist social work, solidarity with women and their children in solidarity centers and shelters, and relevant legal mechanisms. Besides Mor Çatı’s experience, participants also found the opportunity to listen to each other’s institutional experiences. Through group work and discussions, we identified factors that facilitate solidarity with women, as well as challenges faced in combating violence against women. The workshop concluded with a conversation on strategies social workers can use to protect themselves from secondary trauma.

## Psychologists Workshop

This year’s “Workshop on Psychological Support Work in the Field of Violence Against Women” was held on June 29-30, with the participation of 23 psychologists working in public institutions, local governments, and non-governmental organizations. During the workshop, participants shared experiences related to the psychological dynamics and effects of violence against women, feminist approaches to psychological and social work, solidarity center and shelter work with women, working with children, secondary trauma, and setting boundaries while building solidarity with women. Psychologists from various institutions also exchanged insights regarding institutional dynamics and psychological practices. We emphasized that combating violence against women is hindered by discourses that legitimize gender stereotypes and male violence, as well as common practices that overlook the gender-based nature of violence, making solidarity processes with women more difficult. Within this framework, it was emphasized that providing mental health support from a feminist perspective creates a space for women’s empowerment, fosters egalitarian and solidaristic relationships, and contributes to social transformation grounded in individual experiences. In order to sustain the experience sharing and solidarity among workshop participants, we expanded the communication network established in the previous workshop by including new members. This network has enabled ongoing contact, collaborative assessment of support needs, and the development of new plans moving forward.

## Psychological Counselors and Guidance Counselors Workshop

On February 17–18, we held the “Knowledge and Experience Sharing Workshop for School Psychological Counselors and Guidance Counselors” with the participation of 24 psychological counselors and guidance counselors working in schools across various provinces in Turkey. Throughout the workshop, we focused on strengthening the gender equality perspective in school settings when working with children. We explored fundamental concepts and approaches related to gender equality, examined violence against women through a feminist lens, and discussed the conceptual framework around child neglect and abuse. Legal mechanisms concerning violence against both women and children were also addressed in detail. On the second day, drawing on Mor Çatı’s experience, we discussed our methods of feminist solidarity with women and children exposed to violence. Participants also exchanged ideas on the challenges faced in this process and explored possible solutions together. The workshop also covered the fundamental concepts of dating violence, along with protective and preventive approaches applicable within the school environment. Participants shared their professional experiences and collaboratively developed solutions to the challenges they face in the field. Throughout the workshop, it became clear how crucial the knowledge and approach of psychological counselors in schools are for supporting women and children exposed to violence, even if they do not directly receive reports of violence. We were reminded of the importance of having adequate knowledge on this issue and of ensuring that all protective and preventive efforts are carried out through a gender equality perspective.

## Healthcare Professionals Workshop

At Mor Çatı, we draw on the experiences gained through our solidarity with women throughout the year to advocate for systemic change in favor of women. Recognizing the vital role that primary health care professionals play in combating violence against women, we organized a one-day workshop aimed at raising awareness among health workers and supporting them in addressing challenges encountered in the field. The “Workshop on Combating Violence Against Women for Health Workers” was held on September 22 and brought together 18 participants, including general practitioners, specialists, family physicians, midwives, nurses, and public health experts working in primary care settings across Turkey. In the first part of the workshop, we explored in depth the feminist perspective on violence against women, our methods of solidarity, and our women-centered approach when supporting

those who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing violence. We also discussed relevant mechanisms and practices for combating violence, as well as referral procedures, particularly focusing on scenarios health workers are likely to face. The second part of the workshop focused on the institutional challenges and needs health professionals encounter in such cases and we reflected on possible solutions and strategies for addressing these difficulties.

## Lawyer Workshops

This year, we held experience-sharing workshops in Istanbul, Van, Trabzon, and Muğla with around 90 lawyers who work on cases involving violence against women. In these workshops, we shared insights on the nature and impact of violence against women, as well as Mor Çatı's feminist methods, approaches, and boundaries in offering solidarity against male violence. We exchanged knowledge and experiences on the effective use of Law No. 6284, criminal and civil law, and international mechanisms in a way that supports and empowers women in their struggle against violence. Together with the lawyers, we reflected on how legal support can be provided with a women-centered approach to help women build lives free from violence.

Workshop participants shared their reflections afterward, expressing that it was valuable to collectively consider the kind of support women need when experiencing violence. They noted that the workshop allowed them to explore how Law No. 6284 can be applied creatively in ways that benefit women, and that they gained insights into how to utilize international mechanisms in response to rights violations. Following the workshop, some participants stayed in touch by joining the email group where Mor Çatı volunteers and past workshop participants exchange precedent-setting rulings, information, and experiences. They also reached out to request seminars and publications for the bar associations with which they are affiliated.

## Activities Focusing on Young People

At Mor Çatı, we make a concerted effort to respond to invitations from young people, aiming to share both our experiences and our approach to combating violence against women. In 2024, we had the opportunity to engage with high school and university students through seminars, lectures, interviews, and panel discussions. This year, we took part in activities organized by 12 high schools, 39 universities, and 5 schools abroad.

## Activities Focusing on Children

Children are not only witnesses to domestic violence—they are often directly exposed to it. Providing children with information about violence and reminding them of their right to safety are essential steps in protecting children from harm. To this end, we carry out activities for children at Mor Çatı. In 2024, we prepared a brochure for children titled “*There is No Place for Violence in My Life, I Have the Right to Be Safe*.” In this brochure we explained domestic violence, its effects and what children can do when they are exposed to violence. We distributed the school notebooks titled “*I Have the Right to Say No to Violence*,” which we had previously prepared for children. These notebooks include information about violence and the



support mechanisms children can turn to in case of exposure. This year, we shared them with institutions working directly with children. We also organized a workshop for teachers, hosted by the Pera Museum, focusing on the impact of violence against women on children.

## Interviews with Students and Researchers

In 2024, we conducted 80 interviews with students and researchers from various schools and universities in Turkey and abroad. In the interviews, we shared information on a range of topics including violence against women, the current state of efforts to combat violence in Turkey, feminist social work, shelter practices, housing issues, the experiences of migrant women, and Mor Çatı’s approach to working with and supporting women in solidarity.

## Abortion is My Right

Together with the Women’s for Women’s Human Rights Association and Women on Web, we launched the *Abortion is My Right* project to highlight the barriers women in Turkey face when they seek abortion, inform them about safe abortion methods and their legal rights, and advocate for a shift in healthcare professionals’ attitudes toward abortion in favor of women. As part of this effort, we launched the website [kurtajhakkim.org](http://kurtajhakkim.org) and produced two brochures—one for

women and one for healthcare workers. The website provides information on contraceptive methods and abortion, as well as women's legal rights in Turkey and guidance on how to navigate obstacles to accessing these rights. On February 28, we held a launch event to introduce the website and share upcoming project activities with women's organizations, healthcare professionals, and relevant civil society groups. Going forward, we plan to continue the project with workshops aimed at healthcare workers.



## International Hrant Dink Award



This year, Mor Çatı was given the International Hrant Dink Award. We received this award in recognition of the work we have carried out collectively since 1990, using feminist methods, and on behalf of the solidarity that gave rise to Mor Çatı, as well as the women who have reached out to us and become part of this solidarity. As Mor Çatı volunteers, we attended the award ceremony, where Rugiatu Neneh, a long-time activist fighting against female genital mutilation in Sierra Leone, was also given an award. As part of the award program, we took part in a panel organized by the Hrant Dink Foundation, where we had the opportunity to share Mor Çatı's work.

## Mor Çatı in the Press

In order to raise awareness about Mor Çatı's work and the issue of violence against women, and to help transform the mechanisms for combating violence in Turkey in favor of women, we regularly prepare press releases and bulletins and share our insights with the media upon request.

In 2024, Mor Çatı was featured in the press 200 times in coverage related to our activities, and 60 times in news reports highlighting the social responsibility campaigns of institutions that support our work. This year, we also participated as a guest in the special episode on Law No. 6284 of *Issues: Open Microphone* [Mevzular: Açık Mikrofon], a program broadcast on digital platforms.

## Social Media Campaigns

In 2024, we organized social media campaigns to raise awareness about violence against women, publicize our work and disseminate policy recommendations. We started the campaigns for 2024 with a campaign focused on the Opuz Group Cases report that we shared at the end of 2023. We place importance on making international reports, which are often aimed at a specific audience but containing vital information for the wider public, more accessible by transforming them into social media content. As part of this effort, we prepared and shared posts that focused on key issues such as how violence against women should be addressed, the use of short-term protective measures by family courts, cyberstalking, and the refusal to admit boys over the age of 12 into shelters.

While disseminating our 2023 annual report, we aimed to render women's experiences of violence more visible. In



addition to highlighting psychological and economic violence, we focused on social isolation and how men use child custody as a vehicle of violence.

As close witnesses to how knowledge of legal rights empowers women in

their struggle against violence, we created social media visuals containing practical legal information that addressed common challenges women face. These included protective measures during divorce proceedings, the criminalization of physical violence, custody issues, and the use of reconciliation/mediation.

Each year, we organize communication campaigns for March 8 and November 25. This year's March 8 campaign emphasized the power of women's solidarity, while our November 25 campaign highlighted that combating violence against women is a shared social responsibility.

## Publications

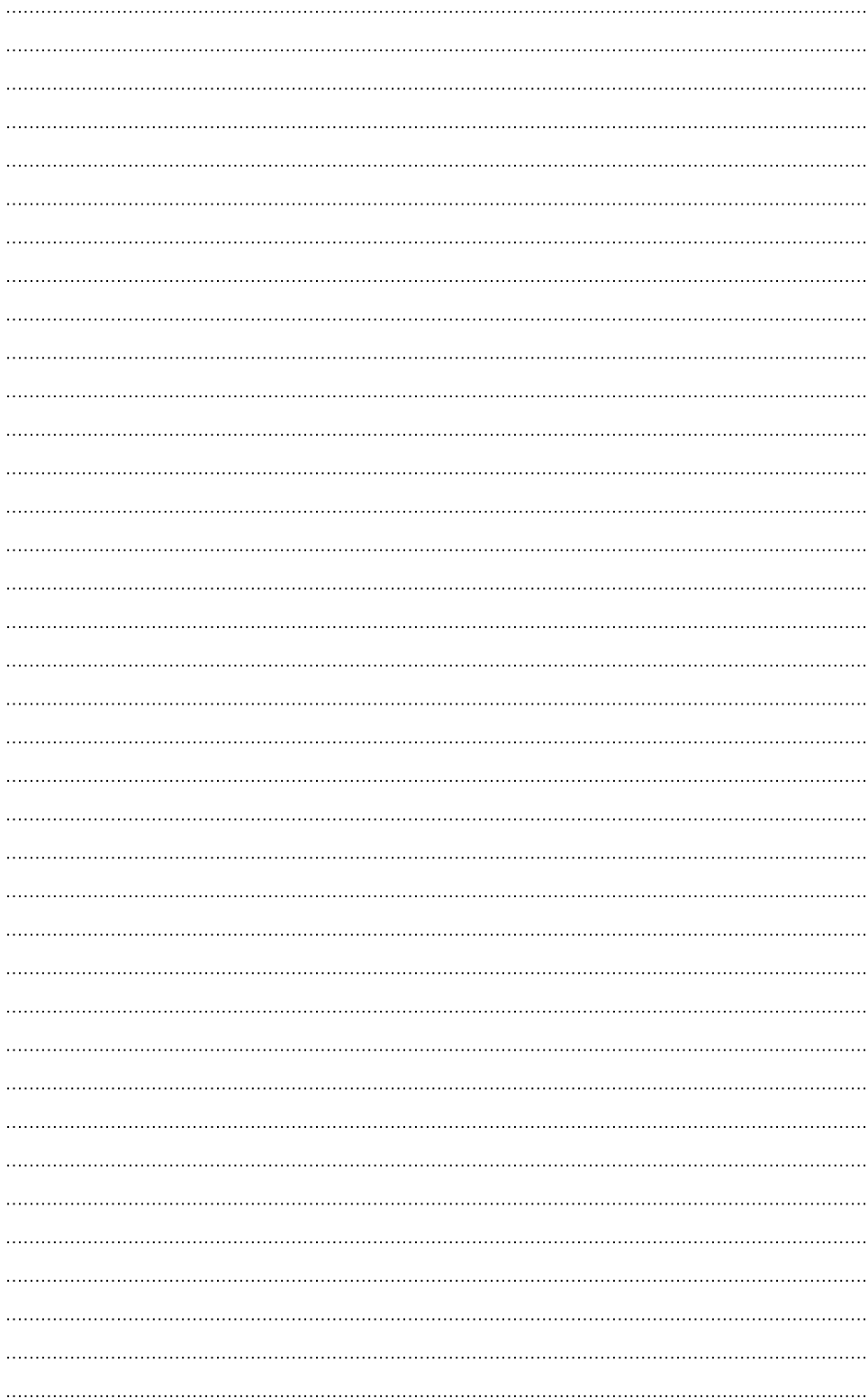
At Mor Çatı, we prepare a range of publications tailored for women, young people, children, policymakers, and professionals working in the field of combating violence against women. Through these publications, we aim both to raise awareness about violence against women and to share insights into the current state of support mechanisms, along with our experiences in building solidarity through feminist methods. This year, we reprinted several existing publications and produced new ones aligned with this goal. We distributed them not only to relevant institutions but also to university students who wished to share them at their events, ensuring that the materials reached a wider audience.

We prepared a handbook for both social workers and lawyers titled *Practical Information for Social Workers and Lawyers on Legal Support with Feminist Methods*, which compiles essential information on feminist social work approaches and women's legal rights in the face of violence. In addition, we published a report titled *Family Courts in Combating Violence Against Women*, which focuses on the practices of family courts—responsible for issuing protective measures and overseeing divorce proceedings—particularly in relation to Law No. 6284. The report highlights how certain practices by the courts and other authorized institutions can hinder, and at times even obstruct, women's efforts to get away from violence.

Building on the study visit we organized in previous years and the subsequent meeting where we shared the insights gained, we prepared the report *European Study Visit: Experiences in Combating Sexual Violence in Vienna and Budapest*. We also compiled the reports we had previously produced on the impact of male violence on children and published them under the title *The Impact of Male Violence on Children and Problems Regarding Custody*.

Additionally, we created a brochure for children titled *There is No Place for Violence in My Life, I Have the Right to Be Safe*, which explains domestic violence, its effects, and what to do when experiencing violence—using language and visuals designed specifically for a young audience.









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