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TURKEY

Shelters need government support

In 2005, a legal provision came into force in Turkey for municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants to open at least one shelter for survivors of domestic violence. According to this law, over 3,000 shelters should be opened around the country. To date, not a single municipality established a new shelter because of limited budgets and a lack of political will.

Across Turkey, there are currently 16 shelters in total. One of them is Mor Çatı (Purple Roof), a well-known women's solidarity center in Istanbul. For the last 16 years, the center has helped women fleeing from domestic violence by providing shelter and psychological and legal support.

"I've had very positive experiences since working for Mor Çatı's shelter. People I know outside the center have started to speak more openly about domestic violence and some ask me for advice."
- Volunteer working at Mor Çatı shelter

Most women get in touch with the centre via its confidential telephone helpline, while others are referred to it by the police or social workers. Mor Çatı cooperates with other organizations and authorities to offer women information and advice over the telephone and during face-to-face meetings.

In many cases, women urgently need a safe place to stay. Mor Çatı shelter tries to help wherever possible, but it is in desperate need of more capacity and resources. Many women arrive at the shelter having escaped from their homes with little more than the clothes they are wearing.

Apart from accommodation, the shelter offers women a community and prepares them for living independently. Residents of the shelter, in the best of circumstances, start to work and earn money two months after they arrive. However, for those who cannot work, and for the most traumatized, this process can last for many months, increasing the shelter's need for space and financial support.

The Turkish government needs to immediately support shelters and urgently open new ones by providing funding and practical support. Municipalities need government support to help women who have escaped from domestic violence live independently.

Call to action

Write to the Minister of State, responsible for issues on Women and Family, urging her to immediately provide funding and practical support to help municipalities open safe and adequate housing for survivors of domestic violence.

Sample letter

Dear Minister,

I appreciate the progress made by your government in terms of new legislation to penalize violence against women and your cooperation with NGOs to effectively implement it.

However, the 16 domestic violence shelters that currently exist in Turkey are not enough.

Mor atı is an independent women's solidarity center with a domestic violence shelter in Istanbul. Together with the few other shelters that exist across the country, Mor atı cannot satisfy the demand for protection and support for women fleeing from domestic violence in Turkey.

I urge you to provide sufficient funding to the municipalities to open and support more domestic violence shelters such as the Mor atı's.

This appeal is part of Amnesty International's worldwide campaign to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November, focusing on shelters for women who suffer domestic violence.

Yours sincerely,

Target contact details

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