



**Australian Government**  
**Refugee Review Tribunal**

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# Country Advice

## Turkey

Turkey – TUR39341 – Arranged Marriage  
– Honour Killings – Kurdish Community –  
Istanbul – Legal Provisions – Police  
Protection – Community Attitudes –  
Women’s Organisations – Relocation

17 October 2011

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**1. Please provide information on the incidence and extent of arranged marriages within the Kurdish community in Turkey and in particular in Istanbul.**

A book published in 2007 contains dated statistics specifically regarding Kurdish arranged marriages in Turkey; in 1993, 86 per cent of married Kurds and 73 per cent of married Turks had arranged marriages. Furthermore, 39 per cent of married Kurds and 21 per cent of married Turks were married to relatives. From 1993-1998, 50 per cent of women in Turkey who were married for the first time had an arranged marriage.<sup>1</sup>

Other sources discuss arranged marriages in Turkey without specifically mentioning the Kurdish community. Marriages in Turkey are reportedly widely arranged in both developed and less developed areas,<sup>2</sup> and occur throughout the country, albeit more often in the eastern regions.<sup>3 4</sup> According to academic Layla Pervizat, arranged marriages are often in effect forced marriages; often, parents force the arrangement on children or young adults, with the bride and groom having little, if any, say over whether the marriage occurs.<sup>5</sup>

A 2008 article in *Today’s Zaman* reported on forced marriage in Turkey’s southeast; in 1996, 51 per cent of women in the region were married against their will, and that 51.6 per cent did

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<sup>1</sup> Nauck, B. & Klaus, D. 2008, ‘Family Change in Turkey: Peasant Society, and the Revolution “From Above”’, in Jayakody, R., Thornton, A. & Axinn, W. (eds), *International Family Change, Ideational Perspectives*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, p. 295-297 Google Books website  
<http://books.google.com.au/books?hl=en&lr=&id=3IR8Kk2CwvIC&oi=fnd&pg=PA281&dq=prevalence+kurd+%22arranged+marriage%22+Turkey&ots=1LWJumr72i&sig=XIIP74dRffuXf59RhJkMNIWPwmo#v=onepage&q=arranged&f=false> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>2</sup> Pervizat, L. 2007, ‘Lack of Due Diligence’, in Idriss, M. & Abbas, T. (eds). *Honour, violence, women and Islam*, Oxon, Routledge, Google books website, p. 147  
<http://books.google.com.au/books?hl=en&lr=&id=xYiBpntDmaEC&oi=fnd&pg=PA67&dq=%22forced+marriage%22+turkey+kurd&ots=MUoDNO5t96&sig=TYq8hHx5udkiD3jbfNniu4AMkU#v=onepage&q=Turkey&f=false> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>3</sup> ‘Forced marriage in Turkey under spotlight at Istanbul conference’ 2008, *Today’s Zaman*, 14 June  
[http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=144818](http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=144818) – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>4</sup> Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre 2004, *Report of a fact-finding mission to Turkey*, October, p. 31-32

<sup>5</sup> Pervizat, L. 2007, ‘Lack of Due Diligence’, in Idriss, M. & Abbas, T. (eds). *Honour, violence, women and Islam*, Routledge, Abingdon, Google Books website, p. 147  
<http://books.google.com.au/books?hl=en&lr=&id=xYiBpntDmaEC&oi=fnd&pg=PA67&dq=%22forced+marriage%22+turkey+kurd&ots=MUoDNO5t96&sig=TYq8hHx5udkiD3jbfNniu4AMkU#v=onepage&q=Turkey&f=false> – Accessed 11 October 2011

not meet their husbands before their wedding.<sup>6</sup> A 2004 Norwegian fact finding mission found that while forced marriages still appeared to be common in Turkey, reliable statistical data was not available. According to the mission report, young girls from rural areas and girls with limited or no primary education were most likely to be subjected to forced marriages.<sup>7</sup> The UK Home Office has also cited reports which argue that those with limited education are most likely to be subjected to forced marriage, particularly in the eastern regions.<sup>8</sup>

**2. Please provide information on the incidence of honour killings of women for refusing to accept an arranged marriage within the Kurdish community in Turkey, and in particular in Istanbul.**

There are reportedly few targeted studies of honour killings, as those involved may not wish to co-operate with researchers. Many families deny that honour killings occur, instead stating that the victim is missing or has committed suicide.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, within Turkey, violence against women including honour violence is considered a private matter by many members of the public.<sup>10</sup> Many honour killings either go unreported or are recorded as accidents, or suicide.<sup>11 12</sup>

The US Department of State (USDOS) reports that honour killings have remained widespread.<sup>13</sup> In 2007, a Turkish government report dubbed honour killings a “serious communal problem”.<sup>14</sup> Sources indicate that honour killings occur across Turkey, including in the Kurdish community. As discussed in the response to Question 5, sources suggest the presence of public opinion that equates honour killings with Kurdish communities in the remote southeast.<sup>15 16</sup> An article on the Washington Kurdish Institute website argues that honour killings, whilst not exclusive to Kurds, are not an uncommon feature of Kurdish patriarchal culture.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Ending forced marriage requires persistence, legal implementation’ 2008, *Today’s Zaman*, 22 June [http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=145452](http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=145452) – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>7</sup> Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre 2004, *Report of a fact-finding mission to Turkey*, October, p. 31-32

<sup>8</sup> UK Home Office 2010, *Country of Origin Information Report – Turkey*, 9 August, p. 113-114

<sup>9</sup> Chesler, P. 2009, ‘Are Honor Killings Simply Domestic Violence?’, *The Middle East Quarterly*, Spring, p.61-69 <http://www.meforum.org/2067/are-honor-killings-simply-domestic-violence> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>10</sup> Ghosh, P.R. 2011, ‘Honour killings: The scourge of Turkey’, International Campaign Against Honour Killings website, source: *International Business Times*, 10 July <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/8116> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>11</sup> Ghosh, P.R. 2011, ‘Honour killings: The scourge of Turkey’, International Campaign Against Honour Killings website, source: *International Business Times*, 10 July <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/8116> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>12</sup> Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre 2004, *Report of a fact-finding mission to Turkey*, October, p. 31-32

<sup>13</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010 – Turkey*, 8 April, Introduction

<sup>14</sup> Human Rights Presidency 2007, *Honour Killings Report*, 25 June

<sup>15</sup> Zelnick, J. (undated), ‘Honor Killings: Remnants of the Past or Consequences of Recreating the “Other”?’ , *Journal of Undergraduate Anthropology*, Binghamton University, Issue 1, p.7

<http://anthrojournal.binghamton.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Jennifer-Zelnick1.pdf> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>16</sup> ‘Honor’ crime defiance in Turkey’ 2005, *BBC News*, 19 October <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4357158.stm> – Accessed 28 April 2008

<sup>17</sup> Mojab, S. & Hassanpour, A. (undated), ‘In memory of Fadime Sahindal’ Washington Kurdish Institute website, <http://www.kurd.org/fadime.html> – Accessed 23 April 2008

According to the USDOS, most honour killing cases tried in court during 2010 involved conservative families in the rural southeast, or migrants from the southeast who were living in the cities.<sup>18</sup> One of the cases listed by the USDOS is that of teenager Medine Mimi, who was allegedly killed by her father and grandfather for talking to boys. Mimi was reportedly buried alive near the family's home in southeast Turkey.<sup>19</sup> An article in *The Star* suggests that Mimi was Kurdish, and that she had been sent home after she approached police for protection.<sup>20</sup> A 2009 USDOS report explicitly linked honour killings to the Kurdish community. The report stated that "1000 honor killings between 2003 and July 2008, mainly in conservative Kurdish families in the Southeast or among migrants from the southeast living in large cities." "Disobedience" was cited as the most frequent justification for honour killings.<sup>21</sup>

In 2011, a spokesperson from the Human Rights Council in Istanbul stated that many honour killings in Istanbul are committed by migrants from villages in the southeast: "[w]omen who didn't previously go out on the streets are part of community life in a way they didn't used to be. They want to study to go to school and to express themselves, and families don't approve of this". The spokesperson does not explicitly state whether the migrants they refer to are Kurdish.<sup>22</sup>

According to a March 2009 article in *The Independent*, government sources indicate that honour killings in Turkey had reached "record levels", with "more than 200 a year", with most occurring in the Kurdish southeastern region. According to the article, there was approximately one killing per week in Istanbul:

"Families who move here are suddenly faced with modern, secular Turkey," said Vildan Yirmibesoglu, the head of Istanbul's department of human rights. "This clash of cultures is making the situation worse as the pressure on women to behave conservatively is become more acute. And of course there are more temptations".<sup>23</sup>

A Norwegian fact-finding mission in 2004 found that more cases of honour killings were reported in the Black-Sea Region and the Kurdish dominated areas in the southeast where tribal customs are widely followed. There were few cases reported in the central-Anatolia area, which is inhabited by both Kurds and Turks. The mission report states that "the number of unreported or undetected cases was significantly higher than the official numbers".<sup>24</sup> One non-government organisation reportedly recorded 294 cases in the first seven months of 2009, which is higher than the official estimates of 200 per year.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010 – Turkey*, 8 April, Section 6

<sup>19</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010 – Turkey*, 8 April, Section 6

<sup>20</sup> Ward, O. 2010, 'G20 Girls, Turkey: Killing for 'honour'', *The Star*, 15 June – <http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/torontog20summit/article/823746--g20-girls-turkey-killing-for-honour> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>21</sup> US Department of State 2009, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2008 – Turkey*, 25 February, Section 4

<sup>22</sup> Christie-Miller, A. 2011, 'Turkey grapples with spike in 'honour' killings', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 14 April <http://www.csmonitor.com/layout/set/print/content/view/print/377137> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>23</sup> Navai, R. 2009, 'Women told: 'You have dishonoured your family, please kill yourself'', *The Independent*, 27 March <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/women-told-you-have-dishonoured-your-family-please-kill-yourself-1655373.html> – Accessed 2 December 2009

<sup>24</sup> Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre 2004, *Report of a fact-finding mission to Turkey*, October, p. 31-32

<sup>25</sup> Christie-Miller, A. 2011, 'Turkey grapples with spike in 'honour' killings', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 14 April <http://www.csmonitor.com/layout/set/print/content/view/print/377137> – Accessed 11 October 2011

There have been at least two high profile cases in the past decade whereby Kurdish women in Turkish diaspora communities have been subjected to honour killings: Gonul Karabey was shot at a Berlin bus stop by her youngest brother in 2005, years after having left a forced marriage.<sup>26</sup> In 2002, Fadime Sahindal was shot in Sweden by her father after living with her Swedish boyfriend of four years.<sup>27</sup>

Bingul Durbas of the University of Sussex states that honour crimes are not exclusively linked to Kurdish communities, but occur “in all regions, across all ethnic groups, social classes, professions and among all age groups in Turkey”. According to Turkey’s General Directorate of National Security, 1,091 honour crimes were committed during 2001-2005. However, this survey was restricted to cities which recorded honour crimes.<sup>28</sup> This supports the notion that honour killings occur outside of the rural southeast.

An article posted on the International Campaign Against Honour Killings website draws a general link between arranged marriages and honour killings. The article states that honour cultures all tend to feature arranged marriages, and that refusing an arranged marriage is one action which is “strongly linked with ‘honour’-based violence”. According to this source, at least half of all honour killings recorded in the United Kingdom were reportedly linked to forced marriages.<sup>29</sup>

**3. Please provide information on the Turkish law in respect to honour killings. Is it treated as a criminal offence, and if so what is the record of the Turkish government and authorities in fighting and controlling honour killings?**

A provision in the Turkish penal code, which came into effect on 1 June 2005, states that “killings in the name of of töre (custom) constitute aggravated homicide and the perpetrator must be sentenced to life imprisonment”.<sup>30</sup> Sentences for customary killings cannot be reduced specifically on the grounds of unjust provocation.<sup>31</sup> People convicted of honour killings in Turkey may therefore receive life imprisonment. According to the US Department of State (USDOS), eight honour killing cases involving eleven victims were finalised by the Turkish Ministry of Justice in 2010, and ten people were convicted.<sup>32</sup>

However, as there is only mention of töre, and no specific mention of namus (honour) killings in the penal code, other provisions within the code may be used to reduce the sentences of those who have committed honour killings.<sup>33</sup> In a July 2011 interview, doctoral researcher

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<sup>26</sup> Wessel, R. (undated), ‘A Matter of Honor, Your Honor?’, International Campaign Against Honour Killings website, source: World Politics Watch <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/655> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>27</sup> ‘Hogsby retrial brings ‘honour’ killings back into focus’ 2011, International Campaign Against Honour Killings website, source: *The Local*, 17 June <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/8019> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>28</sup> Ghosh, P.R. 2011, ‘Honour killings: The scourge of Turkey’, International Campaign Against Honour Killings website, source: *International Business Times*, 10 July <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/8116> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>29</sup> ‘Anatomy of honour-based violence’ (undated), International Campaign Against Honour Killings website <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/3773> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>30</sup> Human Rights Watch 2008, *We Need a Law for Liberation – Gender, Sexuality, and Human Rights in a Changing Turkey*, May, pp.46-47

<sup>31</sup> Ghosh, P.R. 2011, ‘Honour killings: The scourge of Turkey’, International Campaign Against Honour Killings website, source: *International Business Times*, 10 July <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/8116> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>32</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010 – Turkey*, 8 April, Section 6

<sup>33</sup> Human Rights Watch 2008, *We Need a Law for Liberation – Gender, Sexuality, and Human Rights in a Changing Turkey*, May, pp.46-47

Bingul Durbas of the University of Sussex explained that as the word ‘honour’ is not included in the code, different kinds of honour crimes were not encompassed by the code and honour was in fact left as a mitigating factor.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, it can be difficult to prove an honour crime has occurred as judges often require evidence that the killing occurred based on the decision of a family council; however, sources state that family councils do not always occur prior to an honour killing.<sup>35 36</sup> More generally, academic Layla Pervizat argues that honour crimes are not prosecuted with due diligence at the judicial level.<sup>37</sup> In 2006, the Supreme Court has upheld that the perpetrator of an honour killing may not appeal for a reduction in their sentence based on provocation. However, a 2009 report suggests that some men still attempt to appeal their life sentences on these grounds.<sup>38</sup> While no sources indicate the degree to which such appeals are successful, the US Department of State reports that as sentence reductions are available for juvenile offenders, leading to a trend whereby young male relatives have often been designated to carry out honour killings.<sup>39</sup>

Due to the penalties associated with honour killings, families sometimes pressure young women to commit suicide to preserve their family’s honour instead.<sup>40</sup> There was a reported rise in the rate of female suicides in the year immediately following the introduction of the 2005 provisions regarding customary killings.<sup>41</sup>

Turkey is signatory to a May 2011 international treaty to prevent violence against women, including honour crimes.<sup>42</sup> In July 2007, the Prime Minister’s Office issued a declaration on the prevention of honour killings, and in 2004 the Turkish government sponsored a resolution regarding honour crimes at the UN General Assembly Third committee.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ghosh, P.R. 2011, ‘Honour killings: The scourge of Turkey’, International Campaign Against Honour Killings website, source: *International Business Times*, 10 July <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/8116> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>35</sup> Ghosh, P.R. 2011, ‘Honour killings: The scourge of Turkey’, International Campaign Against Honour Killings website, source: *International Business Times*, 10 July <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/8116> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>36</sup> Commission Of The European Communities 2008, *Turkey Progress Report*, 5 November, p.20 [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press\\_corner/key-documents/reports\\_nov\\_2008/turkey\\_progress\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008/turkey_progress_report_en.pdf) – Accessed 9 December 2009

<sup>37</sup> Pervizat, L. 2007, ‘Lack of Due Diligence’, in Idriss, M. & Abbas, T. (eds). *Honour, violence, women and Islam*, Routledge, Abingdon Google books website, p. 147 <http://books.google.com.au/books?hl=en&lr=&id=xYiBpntDmaEC&oi=fnd&pg=PA67&dq=%22forced+marriage%22+turkey+kurd&ots=MUoDNO5t96&sig=TYGq8hHx5udkiD3jbfNniu4AMkU#v=onepage&q=Turkey&f=false> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>38</sup> ‘My sister was murdered; I do not want a reduced sentence’ 2009, *Hurriyet Daily News*, 7 August <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=8216my-sister-was-murdered-i-do-not-want-any-plea-bargain8217-2009-08-07> – Accessed 7 December 2009

<sup>39</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010 – Turkey*, 8 April, Section 6

<sup>40</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010 – Turkey*, 8 April, Section 6

<sup>41</sup> Rodriguez, B. (undated), ‘Justice through Domestic Violence Legislation: Improving the Implementation of Turkey’s Law 4320 on the Protection of the Family’, *Princeton Journal of Public and International Affairs* <http://www.princeton.edu/jpia/past-issues-1/2009/2.pdf> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>42</sup> Ghosh, P. R. 2011, ‘Honour killings: The scourge of Turkey’, International Campaign Against Honour Killings website, source: *International Business Times*, 10 July <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/8116> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>43</sup> Pervizat, L. 2007, ‘Lack of Due Diligence’, in Idriss, M. & Abbas, T. (eds). *Honour, violence, women and Islam*, Routledge, Oxon, Google books website, p. 151 <http://books.google.com.au/books?hl=en&lr=&id=xYiBpntDmaEC&oi=fnd&pg=PA67&dq=%22forced+marriage%22+turkey+kurd&ots=MUoDNO5t96&sig=TYGq8hHx5udkiD3jbfNniu4AMkU#v=onepage&q=Turkey&f=false>



**4. Please provide information as to the independence of, and effectiveness of, the Turkish police and other relevant authorities, if any, in enforcing the laws relating to honour killings, and protecting women who claim they fear they are the target of an honour killing.**

Sources report that police have not protected women who fear honour killings and other forms of violence. According to the chair of the Turkish Association of Women's Federations, "[l]aws have been made but they are not being applied...police stations don't work as they should". Activists reportedly claim that police are unable or unwilling to help women in vulnerable situations, sometimes rejecting requests for police protection outright. According to the Human Rights Association (HRA), the majority of women who had been killed by husbands or partners, including through honour killings, in eastern and southeastern Turkey during 2010 had previously appealed to the authorities. According to the HRA, in these cases there were no preventative measures taken, and women were "sent back to be with the people they had filed complaints against".<sup>44</sup>

According to the European Commission's *Turkey 2006 Progress Report*, "in practice women's rights are not always protected, in particular in the poorest areas of the country. 'Honour crimes' need to be investigated more systematically and where appropriate followed-up with prosecution and convictions."<sup>45</sup>

A 2004 report by Amnesty International is critical of the level of protection provided by police to woman at risk of honour killings. The report cites an example whereby a woman was apparently stabbed “at least 52 times” in front of her son and “at least 10 police officers”. According to Amnesty International, the police officers were suspended, however “returned to duty after the Ministry of the Interior determined that they had no case to answer”.<sup>46</sup>

In January 2010, *Voice of America* reported that a 26-year-old gay man was allegedly murdered by his father, who drove over 900 kilometres to Istanbul to commit the crime, in what was thought to be Turkey's "first gay honour killing". The man had "repeatedly filed complaints at the local prosecutor's office that he was receiving death threats from his family".<sup>47</sup> Amnesty International has stated that the incident "has come to symbolize the authorities' failure to respond to violence based on an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity".<sup>48</sup>

Sources suggest that there are difficulties in enforcing the legal provisions relevant to honour killings. The USDOS reported that ten cases involving 25 suspects and 18 victims of honour killings began during 2010. Eight of the ten cases were finalised by the end of the year, with ten people convicted.<sup>49</sup> These numbers are well below government estimates that 200 women

[22+turkey+kurd&ots=MUoDNO5t96&sig=TGyq8hHx5udkiD3jbfNniu4AMkU#v=onepage&q=Turkey&f=false](http://22+turkey+kurd&ots=MUoDNO5t96&sig=TGyq8hHx5udkiD3jbfNniu4AMkU#v=onepage&q=Turkey&f=false) – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>44</sup> Christie-Miller, A. 2011, 'Turkey grapples with spike in 'honour' killings', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 14 April <http://www.csmonitor.com/layout/set/print/content/view/print/377137> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>45</sup> European Commission 2006, *Turkey 2006 Progress Report*, 8 November, p. 61

<sup>46</sup> Amnesty International 2004, *Turkey: Women confronting family violence*, 2 June

<sup>47</sup> 'Death of gay activist brings Turkey's attitude toward gays into focus' 2010, *Voice of America*, 21 January <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/europe/Death-of-Gay-Activist-Brings-Turkeys-Attitude-Toward-Gays-Into-Focus-82239372.html> – Accessed 22 January 2010

<sup>48</sup> Amnesty International 2011, *Not an Illness Nor a Crime: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People in Turkey Demand Equality*, 21 June, p.29 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR44/001/2011/en/aff47406-89e4-43b4-93ed-ebb6fa107637/eur440012011en.pdf> – Accessed 16 September 2011

<sup>49</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010 – Turkey*, 8 April, Section 6

are killed in honour crimes each year.<sup>50</sup> A 2006 report produced by the Kurdish Human Rights Project stated that “police and the courts still tend towards sympathy for the attacker in the commission of these acts and do astoundingly little to ensure his arrest or conviction”.<sup>51</sup>

As noted in the response to Question 2, it is likely that the actual number of honour killings is higher than reported figures, as many honour killings are thought to be recorded as accidents or suicides. Others remain unreported.<sup>52 53</sup> The following, also cited in the response to Question 3, may also hinder effective implementation of the law as it relates to honour killings: pressure on some women to commit suicide<sup>54</sup>; sentence reductions for juvenile offenders<sup>55</sup>; a lack of judicial due diligence<sup>56</sup>; and a judge’s requirements that the meeting of a family council must be established before a murder can be considered an honour killing.<sup>57 58</sup>

## **5. Please provide information on community attitudes towards arranged marriages and honour killings in Turkey, and especially in Istanbul.**

Limited information was located regarding attitudes towards arranged and forced marriages. The organisation Women for Women’s Human Rights (WWHR) has stated that many young women’s lives are shaped by custom and tradition rather than law, and that as such, many such women are unaware that they may be an alternative to forced marriage. WWHR argued that, as of 2008, women’s awareness of their right to resist a forced marriage was increasing, and women generally appeared more interested in women’s rights issues than they had in the past.<sup>59</sup>

A 2008 article in *Today’s Zaman* reported that “powerful personal, familial and social factors are involved in the forced marriage phenomenon”. The article noted that families who refused to marry their daughters may be subjected to adverse reactions from their communities;

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<sup>50</sup> Navai, R. 2009, ‘Women told: ‘You have dishonoured your family, please kill yourself’’, *The Independent*, 27 March <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/women-told-you-have-dishonoured-your-family-please-kill-yourself-1655373.html> – Accessed 2 December 2009

<sup>51</sup> Yildiz, K. & Bringham, C. 2006, *Human Rights Defenders In Turkey*, Kurdish Human Rights Project, September, pp.142-143

<sup>52</sup> Ghosh, P.R. 2011, ‘Honour killings: The scourge of Turkey’, International Campaign Against Honour Killings website, source: *International Business Times*, 10 July <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/8116> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>53</sup> Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre 2004, *Report of a fact-finding mission to Turkey*, October, p.31-32

<sup>54</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010 – Turkey*, 8 April, Section 6

<sup>55</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010 – Turkey*, 8 April, Section 6

<sup>56</sup> Pervizat, L. 2007, ‘Lack of Due Diligence’, in Idriss, M. & Abbas, T. (eds). *Honour, violence, women and Islam*, Oxon, Routledge, Google books website, p. 147  
<http://books.google.com.au/books?hl=en&lr=&id=xYiBpntDmaEC&oi=fnd&pg=PA67&dq=%22forced+marriage%22+turkey+kurd&ots=MUoDNO5t96&sig=TGyq8hHx5udkiD3jbfNniu4AMkU#v=onepage&q=Turkey&f=false> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>57</sup> Ghosh, P.R. 2011, ‘Honour killings: The scourge of Turkey’, International Campaign Against Honour Killings website, source: *International Business Times*, 10 July <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/8116> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>58</sup> Commission Of The European Communities 2008, *Turkey Progress Report*, 5 November, p.20  
[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press\\_corner/key-documents/reports\\_nov\\_2008/turkey\\_progress\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008/turkey_progress_report_en.pdf) – Accessed 9 December 2009

<sup>59</sup> ‘Forced marriage in Turkey under spotlight at Istanbul conference’ 2008, *Today’s Zaman*, 14 June  
[http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=144818](http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=144818) – Accessed 11 October 2011

between 1999 and 2004, at least one family had their house stoned for refusing to force their daughter to marry.<sup>60</sup>

In Turkey, honour killings appear to be often regarded as a 'Kurdish issue'. An article submitted to Binghamton University's Journal of Undergraduate Anthropology discusses the cultural significance of honour killings in Turkey. The author makes mention of conversations which she had with university students in Istanbul and Ankara. Those interviewed equated honour killings with Kurdish communities in the eastern regions. The author stated that Turkish scholastic and fictitious literature, as well as literature written by Westerners, also appeared to equate honour killings with specific demographics, namely Kurds in rural eastern areas.<sup>61</sup>

In 2005 *BBC News* reported that honour killing continued to receive support from some members of the Kurdish community. Reporting the findings of a study in the predominantly Kurdish city of Diyarbakir by an unnamed Turkish university, *BBC News* states that "when asked the appropriate punishment for a woman who has committed adultery, 37 per cent replied she should be killed. Twenty-five percent said that she deserved divorce, and 21 per cent stated that her nose or ears should be cut off".<sup>62</sup> Convicted perpetrators of honour crimes may reportedly be highly regarded by their fellow inmates.<sup>63</sup>

**6. Please provide information on whether there are specific authorities or agencies in Turkey set up to provide assistance or advice or protection to women who seek to avoid an arranged marriage or who are in fear of an honour killing.**

In 2005, the Turkish government passed a law which recommended that municipalities with more than 50,000 residents should have a women's shelter. This would equate to 1,400 women's shelters nation-wide. However, the legislation is vaguely worded and non-compulsory. In April 2011, *The Christian Science Monitor* reported that 65 such municipal shelters were operating.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to these local government-established shelters, in 2009 there were reportedly 29 shelters run by the Institution for Social Services and Orphanages, which housed up to 650 victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. A further 54 shelters were operated by non-government organisations (NGOs), and a private foundation operated one shelter.<sup>65</sup>

According to USDOS, 62 women from the east and southeastern regions contacted the women's organisation KA-MER during 2010 to report that they had been threatened with honour killings. It is unclear from either the USDOS report or KA-MER's website exactly what support was provided to these women.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> 'Ending forced marriage requires persistence, legal implementation' 2008, *Today's Zaman*, 22 June [http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail\\_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=145452](http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&link=145452) – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>61</sup> Zelnick, J. (undated), 'Honor Killings – Remnants of the Past or Consequences of Recreating the "Other"?', *Journal of Undergraduate Anthropology*, Binghamton University <http://anthrojournal.binghamton.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Jennifer-Zelnick1.pdf> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>62</sup> 'Honor' crime defiance in Turkey' 2005, *BBC News*, 19 October <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4357158.stm> – Accessed 28 April 2008

<sup>63</sup> Ghosh, P. R. 2011, 'Honour killings: The scourge of Turkey', International Campaign Against Honour Killings website, source: *International Business Times*, 10 July <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/8116> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>64</sup> Christie-Miller, A. 2011, 'Turkey grapples with spike in 'honour' killings', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 14 April <http://www.csmonitor.com/layout/set/print/content/view/print/377137> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>65</sup> UK Home Office 2010, *Country of Origin Information Report -Turkey*, 9 August, p. 111

<sup>66</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010 – Turkey*, 8 April, Section 6



In 2010, the government reportedly worked with non-government organisations to establish “rescue teams” and hotlines for women and girls who were at risk of suicide.<sup>67</sup> This may include women and girls being pressured to commit suicide for reasons of honour.

Whilst not specifically established to combat incidences of forced marriage or honour killings, the WWHR Human Rights Education Program aims to educate participants on women’s political, civil and economic rights. WWHR claims that participants have been able to participate more equally in family decision-making and effect positive changes in their husbands’ attitudes towards them after completing the program.<sup>68</sup>

**7. Please provide information as to any particular obstacles facing a woman who might seek to relocate within Turkey on the basis of avoiding her family.**

August 2011 guidelines from the UK Home Office state that, taking account of personal circumstances, relocation to an area where an individual does not have a well-founded fear of ill treatment may be a reasonable option.<sup>69</sup> However, whether a person fearing an honour killing can effectively avoid their family would likely depend on the particular family concerned.

Kurdish women may experience discrimination in non-Kurdish dominated areas of Turkey, particularly with regard to employment and housing. Sources indicate that the Kurdish/eastern accent is recognisable to other Turkish people<sup>70</sup> to the extent that many Kurds attempt to conceal their accent to avoid being recognised as Kurds.<sup>71</sup> The Kurdish accent is reportedly less noticeable in women than men.<sup>72 73</sup>

The following is a quote from a Kurdish man living in Istanbul:

“The Kurds ... try to speak Turkish without an accent. The Kurdish accent sets you apart socially and culturally and makes it difficult to secure a job and live among Turks. Many Turks who look for work in Ankara, Istanbul or Izmir conceal the fact that they are Kurdish.”<sup>74</sup>

However, although estimates regarding precise numbers of Turkish Kurds vary,<sup>75</sup> Istanbul reportedly has a large Kurdish population. According to an unofficial translation of an article in *TimeTurk*, Istanbul has the highest concentration of Kurds compared with Turkey’s other

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<sup>67</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2010 – Turkey*, 8 April, Section 6

<sup>68</sup> ‘Human Rights Education Program for Women (HREP)’ (undated), Women for Women’s Human Rights website <http://www.wwhr.org/hrep.php> – Accessed 11 October 2011

<sup>69</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *Operational Guidance Note – Turkey*, August, p. 4

<sup>70</sup> ‘700 News Jobs at New Call Centers in Eastern Turkey’ 2011, *Business Turkey Today*, 11 March, <http://www.businessturkeytoday.com/700-news-jobs-at-new-call-centers-in-eastern-turkey/> – Accessed 28 April 2011

<sup>71</sup> ‘Kurdistan – Turkey’ (undated), Global Security website <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/kurdistan-turkey.htm> – Accessed 28 April 2011

<sup>72</sup> Secor, A. (undated), ‘“There Is an Istanbul That Belongs to Me”: Citizenship, Space, and Identity in the City’, *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, Vol 94, Issue 2, May [http://www.uky.edu/~tmute2/geography\\_methods/geography\\_methods\\_pdfs/secor.pdf](http://www.uky.edu/~tmute2/geography_methods/geography_methods_pdfs/secor.pdf) – Accessed 28 April 2011

<sup>73</sup> ‘700 News Jobs at New Call Centers in Eastern Turkey’ 2011, *Business Turkey Today*, 11 March, <http://www.businessturkeytoday.com/700-news-jobs-at-new-call-centers-in-eastern-turkey/> – Accessed 28 April 2011

<sup>74</sup> Lotfi, M. 2007, ‘Kurd: The Forbidden Word in Turkey’, *Asharq Alawsat*, 16 December, <http://www.aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=3&id=11177> – Accessed 28 April 2011

<sup>75</sup> UK Home Office 2010, *Country of Origin Information Report -Turkey*, 9 August, p. 96 This is not located on this page

cities.<sup>76</sup> According to an article published on the Kurdish Media website, Istanbul's city of 12 million includes a large concentration of around 2 million Kurds. The central area of Turkey is home to around 3-5 million people of Kurdish origin. There are 21 provinces in the southeast which the article considers to be Kurdish dominated.<sup>77</sup>

In Turkey two major Kurdish dialects are spoken: Kermanji, which is used by the majority of Kurds in Turkey, as well as by some of the Kurds in Iran and Iraq; and Zaza, spoken mainly in a triangular region in south-eastern Turkey between Diyarbakir, Ezurum, and Sivas, as well as in parts of Iran.<sup>78</sup>

However, women's right to work is limited in some areas, and continue to face discrimination in employment; in 2009, only 65 of every 1,000 women reportedly had access to the labour market in Southeastern Anatolia. Around 25 per cent of women are part of the national workforce, compared with just over 52 per cent of women globally.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> 'En büyük Kürt şehri, İstanbul' 2010, *TimeTurk*, 25 March (unofficial translation)

<http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2010/03/25/en-buyuk-kurt-sehri-istanbul.html> – Accessed 14 October 2011

<sup>77</sup> Rahmani, K. 2011, 'Demographic Status and its impacts on Kurdish nationalism', Kurdish Media website, 19 May  
<http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2010/03/25/en-buyuk-kurt-sehri-istanbul.html> - Accessed 14 October 2011

<sup>78</sup> 'Kurdistan – Turkey' (undated), Global Security website

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<sup>79</sup> UK Home Office 2010, *Country of Origin Information Report -Turkey*, 9 August, p. 121 This is not located on this page

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