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## REPORT ABOUT SHELTERS IN THE PROVINCE MUĞLA / TURKEY

**BKD - Bodrum Kadın Dayanışma Derneği / Bodrum Women's Solidarity Association**

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## The Shelters

The population of the city of Muğla is 908.877; 49.01% of this population are women.

In 2015, in the ranking of cities in which violence against women increased; Muğla was in the third place. Unfortunately, in this city where there is an intense violence, there is only one woman shelter.

The most important reason of this fact is the ignorance of local authorities and municipalities towards violence against woman and their legal negligence on the article that states "in places where the population is higher than 100.000, a woman shelter should be opened".

The local and central authorities/ the governorates/ the directorates of ministries are extremely insufficient to implement laws.

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The first problem that we face in the shelters is that addresses of these houses should be kept in secret; however, the privacy policy has been violated. The opening of woman shelter with press leads husband or relatives of woman under protection to reach her easily.

The only shelter in the city of Muğla is in the district of Fethiye; in Fethiye, the location of the shelter is known by taxi drivers, by craftspeople and local people.

According to the regulation of shelter; if the son of woman who is subjected to violence is older than 11 years old, the son would not be allowed in to the shelter. Those boys are being disposed to "love houses". Because of this implementation, many women turn back to houses where they were subjected to violence and they were prevented to go to the woman shelter.

Woman does not only leave her house to go to the shelter but also is forced to leave her child. Women do not want to leave their children. The child is devoid of both her/his house and her/his mother. This is emotionally a hard process for both woman and the child.

Once a woman who was subjected to violence goes to the police authorities; it is these authorities that provide the transportation of this woman to the shelter. The police authorities should provide a vehicle and personnel to take woman to the shelter. If in the practice, there is a lack of personnel or vehicle; woman (if there is a child, with the child) is being kept waiting in a room in the police station or in the gendarmerie. Women with children might have some difficulties to find food, diaper and baby food. This situation creates a new unjust treatment for women. It takes a lot of time to reach shelter because of long distances. For instance, from Bodrum to Fethiye, it takes 4 hours of a journey. Women are transported to the shelters by their own economic means.

The shelter regulations on disabled woman and children are almost never implemented. If a woman with a disabled child is subjected to the violence, there has been no implementation to provide an option of a shelter for her. The reason for this is that there is no such a shelter in the city of Muğla. Disabled women are not even visible because of family pressures and being kept away from social life. For instance, in Bodrum, we could not get any results from a case that a mentally disabled woman being systematically harassed by a man from her family despite our complaints and interventions.

Women can stay at shelters generally up to three months. This period can be prolonged in proportion to the violence or to the risk of death.

The biggest complaint of women on shelters is that the confiscation to their own cell phones, the obligations on the entrance and exit hours and some similar rules that restrict women. Hence, from a pressure at home, they are subjected to a different kind of a pressure at the shelter; because those imposed rules are not for their own security but only appear as a different control and hierarchical pressure.

That is why, shelters are insufficient to strengthen women, to support them to find jobs and to prepare them for their new lives. However, in the regulations there are conditions for shelters to provide women legal, psychological, medical and economic support; these conditions are not provided. For instance, in each shelter there are different implementations on economic support and opportunities.

Women are almost leading their own legal processes and follow them.

If a woman is transported from a shelter to another, there will be some problems to transfer information on her legal process; so even if the legal procedure has been started since the woman is unable to access this information, cases can be resulted as inconclusive. That is why, women who are subjected to violence inevitably handle their legal process by their own or apply to the woman solidarity associations like ours.

There is no control on the shelters. Both implementations on protection and implementations at the shelters are not controlled. However; according to law, these injunctions, institutions and implementations should be controlled. Moreover, they should be controlled by woman solidarity and/or women consultancy groups who work actively on violence against woman.

It is important to create a mutually controllable and transparent order because woman solidarity groups would facilitate woman-sided implementations, prevent arbitrary acts, hostile acts against woman who is subjected to violence (humiliation, lecturing, threatening, putting pressure on woman). Shelters cannot be intrusted to the goodwill of personnel working at the police stations, hospitals, prosecutors' office. As seen, unfortunately, on the contrary of implementations all of these units cause problems in terms of method and implementation. They are insufficient to provide minimum legal obligations.

### **The Order of Protection**

As of 2016, as a preliminary injunction, deposition sentences would have been given to men implementing violence for 1 up to 3 months period. However, recently, deposition sentences are given for 10 days up to 1 month. This implementation changed and even men implementing violence call for deposition sentences against women or courts cancel deposition sentences against men.

Once women who are subjected to violence go to the prosecutor's office, they are directed to the police station or to the gendarmerie by personnel or by the prosecutor. However, the law foresees that those who sustained damage from the crime can apply to the law enforcement officers or directly to the public prosecutor of the city they are present.

Neither the police station nor the gendarmerie are places where women can easily go or where they can express themselves easily.

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There is a difficult process for women who sustained damage from crime in the law enforcement offices because of physical conditions and behaviours of personnel. Women feel uncomfortable because of the treatment. Once a woman would like to apply to lodge a complaint, she has to explain her problem to more than one officer. Sometimes, there can be only one officer who take the woman's deposition however many other officers can enter to the room and ask her questions about her problem. Woman feels shame and tries to explain her intimate issues to officers.

At the same time, the man who executes violence to the woman is brought to the police station and kept at the same location where the complainant woman is present. There might be a dispute, fight or insult between parties. Sometimes offenders and officers may know each other or simply support each other as a solidarity based on gender; at that time women who are subjected to crime are being undermined and even the parties may be reconciled. This type of events happening at the law enforcement offices lead women to be scared, to be intimidated and to not express the violence they are subjected.

At the law enforcement offices, there are few female personnel. These few women personnel work at the day time. However, events do not only happen at the day time. That is why the processes like declaring deposition, accompanying to urgent medical examination, collecting evidence etc. are all lead by male officers. For women who are already subjected to a crime by men, it is much more difficult to explain what happened to another stranger men.

It is obvious that for a woman who was subjected to rape, to declare her deposition in a room full of male police officers, she would feel difficulty and fear. For a child who was subjected to incest and a woman who was subjected to rape, at the law enforcement offices; it would become impossible to stand for their rights because they would face humiliation, underestimation and pressure by male officers. In one our interviews (as Bodrum Women Solidarity Association) with a police officer, he stated that "not all rapes can be considered as rape". This is because Bodrum is a touristic town and he thought that "our men meet with women for 3-5 days they go out and man wants more (meaning: sexual intercourse) once woman refuses; this does not necessarily be considered as a rape". As seen in this example, the officer at the police station decides whether the happened rape can be considered as a crime or not; based on his personal opinion, the treatment of the complaint (taking deposition, drawing up a record, medical examination etc.) is happening. Bodrum, 31.01.2017

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