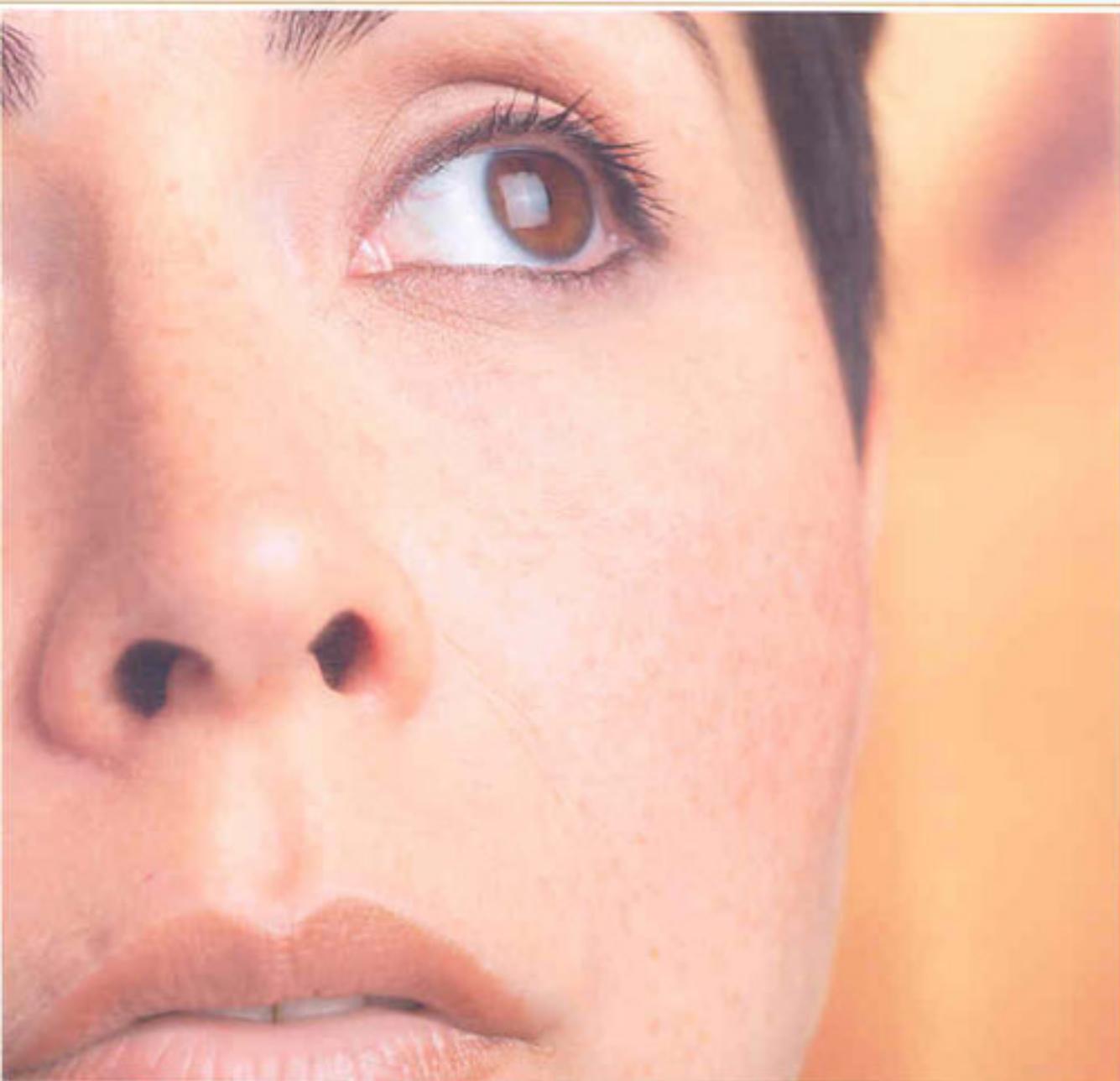


*The Dynamics of  
Honor Killings in  
Turkey*

PROSPECTS FOR ACTION



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PROSPECTS FOR ACTION

by  
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# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>10</b>
Methodology of data collection	12
Scope and target groups	12
Data collection, transcription and evaluation	13
<b>Perceptions of honor</b>	<b>16</b>
Honor with a focus on women and women's sexuality	16
How should honorable men and women behave?	19
Other perceptions of honor	21
From honor based on the control of women and women's sexuality to honor crimes	24
<b>Cases of 'dishonorable conduct': causes and consequences</b>	<b>28</b>
A married woman having an extra-marital relationship	29
A married woman running away with a man	31
A married woman getting separated or divorced	32
A divorced woman having a relationship with another man	32
A young unmarried girl having a relationship	33
A young unmarried girl running away with a man	35
A woman (married or unmarried) being kidnapped and/or raped	38
Experiences of 'dishonorable conduct' and 'honor killings: factors involved, responses and interpretations of causes	42

<b>What can be done to stop honor killings?</b>	<b>50</b>
General overview of proposals	50
Proposals	51
Proposals by individuals	51
Proposals by professionals and organizations	52
Thinking about an action program: possibilities and constraints	54
Important considerations	54
Suggestions for action	55
<b>Summary and Evaluation</b>	<b>60</b>
Prevalent perceptions of honor and communal surveillance	60
How are honor killings perceived?	62
The emphasis on inevitability in honor killings	62
The reasons behind honor killings	63
Not all 'dishonorable conduct' results in murder	64
What can be done to stop honor related murders?	65
<b>Appendices:</b>	
Appendix I: Number of interviews conducted	68
Appendix II: Information about the quarters in which research was conducted in the four cities	76
Appendix III: List of professionals interviewed	78
Appendix IV: Information about NGOs	80
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>84</b>

# Foreword

In September 2000, 191 World leaders gathered at the United Nations in New York, at the dawn of a new millennium, to reaffirm their commitment to the UN and its core values and principles. Through this Millennium Declaration, the world leaders recognized their collective responsibility to uphold the universal principles of human dignity, equality, and freedom from the fear of violence, oppression, and injustice. “equality” is defined as the recognition that the equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured.

These same principles are at the heart of Turkey’s ambitious reform and development agenda, which is also in line with its process of accession to the European Union and the EU political criteria which emphasizes respect for, and protection of, fundamental freedoms. In spite of this important progress, however, Turkey is still facing serious challenges to gender equality related to women’s participation in social, economic and political life. According to the 2005 Gender Empowerment Measure, Turkey ranks 76 out of the 80 countries that are ranked within the GEM for gender equality and participation. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is working with the government, civil society, and the UN family in Turkey to increase women’s political participation and to increase their opportunities and choices in the social and economic sphere.

However, one of the most significant challenges that continues to undermine women’s freedom and equality in Turkey is the persistence of honor killings. Through this report on “Dynamics of honor killings in Turkey: Prospects for Action”, UNDP and UNFPA are seeking to further contribute to the discussion and debate in Turkey about honor killings through perspectives from a cross-section of society: women and men of varying ages, educational levels, and social backgrounds; public officials; religious leaders, non-governmental organizations; and the media. Importantly, the report provides examples where public officials are committed to actively protecting the rights and fundamental freedoms of citizens and to dispelling the notions that killing based on the concept of honor is acceptable in a democratic society. Equally important, however, the report also highlights examples where public officials support beliefs and promote an environment in which honor killings, and thus the extreme violation of women’s rights, is deemed permissible.

Such examples illustrate the vital Turkey’s democratic institutions can and should play in promoting the protection of women’s rights through rule of law and through upholding the universal principles of freedom and equality. It is also abundantly clear that dispelling the notion of honor killings as acceptable is shared responsibility among all seg-

ments of Turkish society: public officials, including educators, police, lawyers and judges, legislators, the media religious leaders, youth organizations, communities and families themselves. For this season, the report provides specific recommendations for training state employees, NGOs, community leaders, schools, and youth on gender equality, and creating mechanisms through which issues of “honor” can be resolved through discussion and mediation rather than violence.

Without recognizing and addressing the issue of honor killings, Turkey will continue to face challenges in achieving its own ambitious reform and development agenda. UNDP and UNFPA urge serious consideration to the findings and dynamics of the report, and to pursue its recommendations

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