



**VAN HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN AND  
THEİR FAMILİES ASSOCIATION**

**Report on Violence Against Disabled Women and Girls**  
*For all women and girls to live in a world free from violence...*

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**VAN HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES  
ASSOCIATION**

Van Hearing Impaired and Their Families Association (VİED) was established in 2007. VİED has been working locally since 2007 within the framework of the access of hearing impaired individuals and their families to equal rights and equal opportunities regardless of discrimination, gender, race, language, religion.

VİED, which works to prevent discrimination against the disabled, to ensure the development of disability rights and respect for differences and to ensure that the disabled benefit from equal opportunities, aims to create common working areas among non-governmental organizations and to contribute to the strengthening of the information sharing network.

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## Entry

All kinds of violence against women is one of the most widespread human rights violations on a global scale. Studies around the world reveal striking and terrifying facts about violence against women and girls. According to the data of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2019, 35% of women worldwide are subjected to physical or sexual violence. In other words, 1 out of every 3 women experience violence at least once in their life.

In Turkey, violence against women is also a very serious problem.

Unfortunately, Turkey ranks first in the field of violence against women and women's murders within Countries of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

For the research called 'Society at a Glance 2019' published by OECD in 2019, data were collected from 36 OECD member countries. According to this research; the rate of women subjected to physical or psychological violence by their spouses at least once in their life is 38 percent in Turkey. This rate is the highest in the OECD.

During the pandemic period that we started to experience as of March 2020, women all over the world are exposed to more violence. Psychological, sexual and physical violence against women and child abuse are increasing. This plight was also revealed in the assessment made by the UN Women unit (UN Women). According to the data provided; During the pandemic period, violence against women increased by 25% worldwide, while the demand for emergency hotlines increased 5 times. 8

While "being at home" was imposed as a health measure during the epidemic process, many women are forced to live with men who inflict violence on them, and are exposed to more violence at home due to this measure. In addition, children who witness violence are also constantly traumatized and / or exposed to sexual and physical abuse. 9

'A report was prepared on the impact of women by the Covid-19 quarantine and violence against women and children. The report was prepared about pandemic process in 28 cities of Turkey, with 1873 women's poll by Socio Political Field Research Centre.

According to the findings of study of 'Turkey research report', 84.8% of the interviewees say to the question "Have you been subjected to any violence in the household before the quarantine process?" but this rate dropped to 57% during the quarantine process. In other words, it was observed that violence against women increased from 15.2% to 43% with a difference of 27.8% during the pandemic process. Accordingly, violence against women increased approximately 3 times (183%) during the pandemic process. 10

Turkey Federation of the Blind has reached 225 disabled women and mothers of children with mental disabilities from different region of Turkey via a research. The Federation reported the rights violations experienced by disabled women during the pandemic period.

According to the report data, 33.4% of women with disabilities were exposed to any type of violence before the pandemic, while this ratio increased to 39.6% during the pandemic process. This study prepared by Van Hearing Impaired Association, aimed to monitor and report

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialdevelopment/brief/violence-against-women-and-girls>

violence cases against women and girls with disabilities, especially in Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia. The monitoring study was created mainly by examining the media data and the limitations of access to information due to the pandemic caused the other data collection methods not to be used effectively enough. For this reason, with a decision taken while the study continues, media data were collected not only from the region, but also from the whole country, and the cases were analysed through the data across the country.

Violence against women and girls in the province of Van:

This report has attempted to provide a situation analysis of violence against women with disabilities by analysing the limited amount of news in the media. Women with disabilities are exposed to all forms of violence - regardless of their disability. They are often subjected to violence by someone they know and cannot easily leave the violent environment.

We hope that this report, prepared in order to make the violence experienced visible, will serve as a basis for future studies and contribute to the empowerment of women with disabilities. We emphasize the necessity of mainstreaming the disabled women perspective in the services to be provided for women. In this study, relevant news in the eastern and southeastern Anatolia region between January 2019 - August 2020 in news sites on the internet and the print media were also scanned.

As a result of the search, 75 news articles focusing on violence against persons with disabilities were found in the relevant time period, and violence cases against women and girls with disabilities were detected in 40 of this news. In 32 of the 40 cases included in the study, the age of the victim was directly stated. Accordingly, the youngest of the victims is 9 years old and the eldest is 66 years old.

In 16 cases, the victim of violence was identified as a disabled girl (under 18 years of age) and it is observed that children were the most exposed to sexual violence in cases.

In the light of this data, it is necessary to interpret some of the cases of violence against women as violence against children and violations of children's rights. Information on the age of the perpetrator was accessed in 13 news reports, and according to this, it was found that the youngest 16 and the oldest 57 years old were subjected to violence in the cases examined. In 2 cases, the perpetrators (sexual violence) were under 18 years of age. In 4 cases, neglect and maltreatment experienced in the care centres were reported, and it was stated that disabled individuals of different ages remained in the centres. While mentally disabled and psycho-social disabled children constitute the most disadvantaged groups in the environment of violence compared to all disability groups, these groups become victims of sexual violence 4.6 times more and suffer 3 times more bullying (peer and adult violence). As a result of the detailed news reading, it was determined that 23 out of 40 news articles were written directly as a result of the court decision.

During the preparation of the study, the VİED team interviewed Halis Keve, who works as a social researcher at Van Yüzüncü Yıl University and the relevant people working in the field. In addition, Keve prepared an article dealing with the example of Van province in cases of violence and shared it with the VİED team. The researcher revealed the relationship between the social and cultural dynamics of the region and the province and the incidents of violence with his own interpretation.

Keve examined the cases that took place in 2009 and discussed in the article "Sexual Abuse in Children in Van Region" published in Van Medical Journal of Van Yüzüncü Yıl University Faculty of Medicine. Keve found that in most of the cases studied there were cases of sexual abuse of boys. He stated that the reason for this is that, when the traditions and customs of the region are examined, the cases of abuse against girls have not come to light. In addition, he emphasized that he thinks that all domestic cases remain hidden within the family.

However, according to Keve, it is a fact that girls suffer more in this regard. This is true in the region; it is thought that there are cases that have not been uncovered and their number is quite high. Wrong practices depending on traditions and customs in the region can create a basis for sexual abuse. The fact that family members sleep together in the same room or even in the same bed causes them to have wrong relationships, cases of abuse, unwanted pregnancies, murders, honour cases and the birth of unseen children. Due to the increasing migration to the province of Van, there are cases in which women and girls of Syrian origin are also victims of abuse in the region.

### Basic Headings for Combating Violence

\* Accessible information sources are needed.

It is a fundamental requirement in combating violence for women to have knowledge about their rights and mechanisms for protection from violence. For this reason, it is imperative that women be informed about violence in various ways at every opportunity, learn about their rights, and have information about where they can apply when exposed to violence. This is necessary both for them to recognize and not normalize violence, and to report violence when faced with violence and leave the environment of violence. For women with disabilities, making this information accessible is crucial for women's access to information.

The International Disability Alliance has summarized the accessible information formats for people with disabilities under eight headings. These are;

- Texts written in Braille (Braille),
- Voice description,
- Texts or websites printed in large font size,
- Texts or websites prepared in contrasting colours,
- Detailed subtitles,
- Sign language translation,
- Text formats suitable for screen readers,
- Easy to read texts,

Information texts, booklets, websites, videos, public spots etc. to be prepared for women with disabilities. All sources of information should be prepared taking into account these accessible formats. For example, a public spot prepared for the ALO 183 line and broadcast on television channels should be prepared with a simple narration, supported by audio description, sign language and subtitles in order to address people from different disability groups.

In addition, women's organizations working on violence against women and all other relevant institutions should do mainstream the issue of disability and reflect this perspective in their own studies and publications, and prepare their productions in formats accessible to women and girls with disabilities.



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